

CPAT Report No. 1625

St George Church, Abergele, Conwy




Archaeological Watching Brief



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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 Project Name: St George Church, Abergele
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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust during groundworks associated with the installation of a new oil tank and underground supply pipes for the heating system at St George Church, near Abergele in Conwy. The work was carried out under retrospective Faculty from the Diocese of St Asaph.

The watching brief revealed no evidence for archaeological features or burials within the part of the churchyard that was examined, though some memorials were observed adjoining the south transept. The church dates from the 19th century and it appears that burials have been focussed on the north side of the church, while the south side has not seen significant use for burials.

Crynodeb

Bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal briff gwylio archaeolegol yn ystod gwaith paratoi tir yn gysylltiedig â gosod tanc olew newydd a phibellau cyflenwi tanddaearol ar gyfer y system wresogi yn Eglwys San Siôr, ger Abergele yng Nghonwy. Cynhaliwyd y gwaith dan Ganiatâd ôl-weithredol Esgobaeth Llanelwy.

Ni ddatgelodd y briff gwylio unrhyw dystiolaeth o nodweddion archaeolegol neu gladdiadau o fewn y rhan o'r fynwent a archwiliwyd, er y sylwyd ar rai cofebau yn gyfagos at y transept deheuol. Mae'r eglwys yn dyddio o'r 19^{eg} ganrif ac mae'n ymddangos mai ar ochr ogleddol yr eglwys y canolbwyntiwyd y claddu, ac na fu unrhyw ddefnydd sylweddol o'r ochr ddeheuol ar gyfer claddiadau.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were engaged by the Reverend Kate Johnson, on behalf of the Church of St George, after advisement from the Diocesan Advisory Committee of St Asaph Diocese, to carry out a watching brief at St George Church (SH 97390 75806), located 3km south-east of Abergele. The watching brief was undertaken during ground preparation for a new heating oil tank in the churchyard and the installation of the associated pipes to supply the heating system in the church.



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Fig. 1: Location of St George Church

- 1.2. The watching brief was carried out on 2 November 2018, in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).

2 Background (see Silvester 1999)

- 2.1. It has been recorded that the parish was named after its founder, Sior, but that its earlier name was "Kegidog", and it appears in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 as "Ecc'la de Kegidauc", and in the Lincoln Taxation of 1291, as "Eccl'ia de Keydauc". In the 16th century Valor Ecclesiasticus it was recorded as "Rectoria de Kegidok".

- 2.2. The church is set on steeply sloping ground in the centre of the village of the same name and was built in 1887-94 in Perpendicular Gothic style; it replaced an earlier double-naved church with medieval origins that lay on a different site, about 50m to the north-west of the current church. The earlier church was presumably demolished when the current church had been completed, though it was still depicted on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:10560 map of 1900.

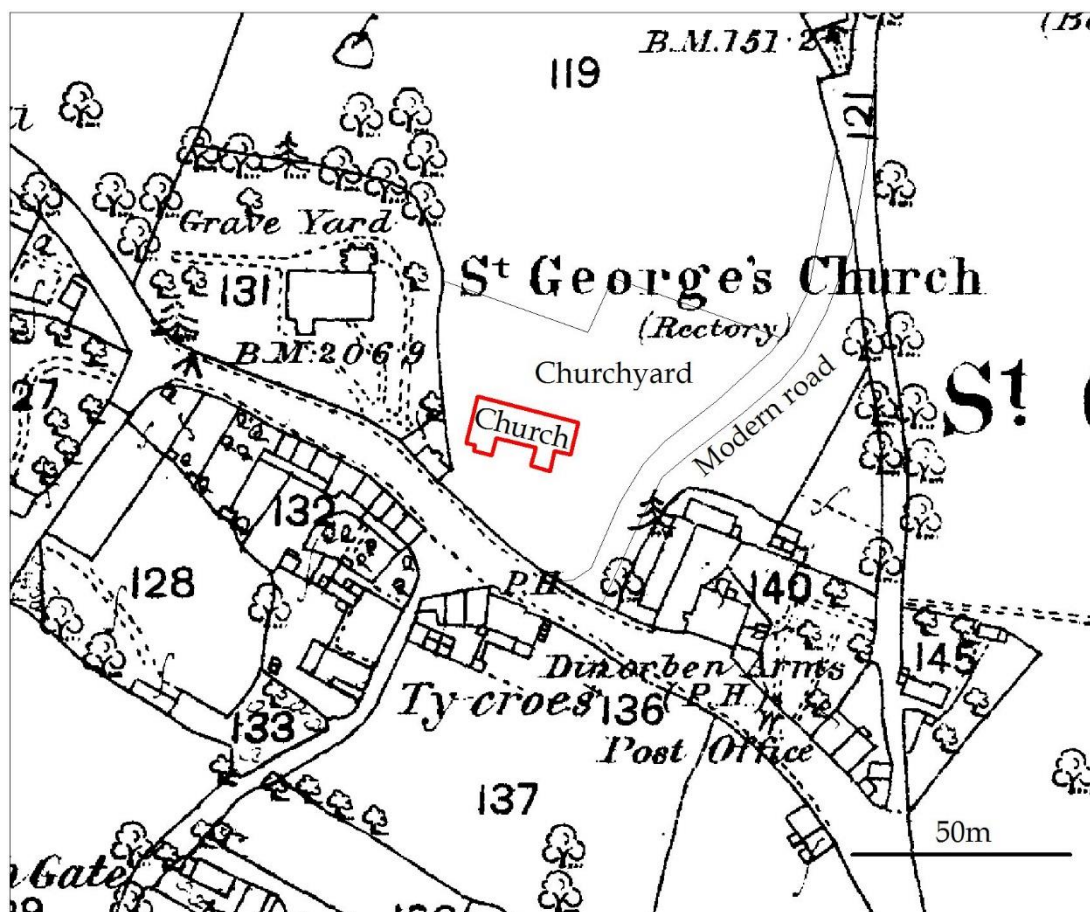


Fig. 2: The current church (outlined in red) and churchyard compared to the former church as it was depicted on the 1884 Ordnance Survey mapping

- 2.3. Little information exists about the earlier church. Glynne visited it in 1840 and again in 1869 and reported that it was double-naved with a late Perpendicular arcade, had a Tudor priest's door, a modern bellcote over the west end of the south nave and ugly new pews. Also that it contained a few monuments to the Carters and others of Kimmel, and to the family of Lord Dinorben, who built for himself the mausoleum on the north side.
- 2.4. The current church, built by C.H.M. Mileham at the expense of H. R. Hughes was consecrated in 1893, and is constructed of local limestone with yellowish sandstone detailing. It consists of nave and chancel raised on a platform under one roof, with service areas beneath on the north side, a south transept towards the east end, and towards the west end a spacious south porch, the front of which is raised as a gabled bellcote.

- 2.5. The churchyard is broadly rectilinear and elongated, combining the original and somewhat irregular core at the west end, where the early church was sited, and a more regular extension containing the new church to the east on a site that was part of a field on the first edition Ordnance Survey mapping of 1884 (Fig. 2).

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The area of the churchyard affected by the works lay to the south of the current church. The position of the new oil tank was first levelled and a trench was then excavated by machine linking this to the church, as depicted on Figs 3 and 4. It had originally been intended that the trench to the north of the main church access path would pass along the east side of the adjoining spur path, between it and the south transept of the church, but a small enclosed area containing what appeared to be memorial slabs was identified in that locality and the route was changed to follow the west side of the spur path instead.



Fig. 3: The southern section of the pipe trench. Photo CPAT 4560-0005

- 3.2. The oil tank location and the southern section of the trench fell within a grassed area bounded by the main church access path; the trench here was 0.25m wide and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m, though a wider area, to 0.7m wide by 1.2m long and an approximate depth of 0.5m, was dug adjacent to the path to allow for the section beneath the path to be mole bored. The northern section extended beyond the path and linked with an existing buried pipe that allowed access to the interior of the church at the junction between the south transept and the main body of the church; this section was also 0.25m wide and up to 0.4m deep.
- 3.3. The southern part of the trench and oil tank location revealed dark grey silt to a depth of 0.3m, below which there was a layer of mid-grey sandy silt containing a small

amount of 19th and 20th-century pottery. On the north side of the path, the trench was entirely in made up ground composed of rubble hardcore associated with the church path which ran parallel to the trench.

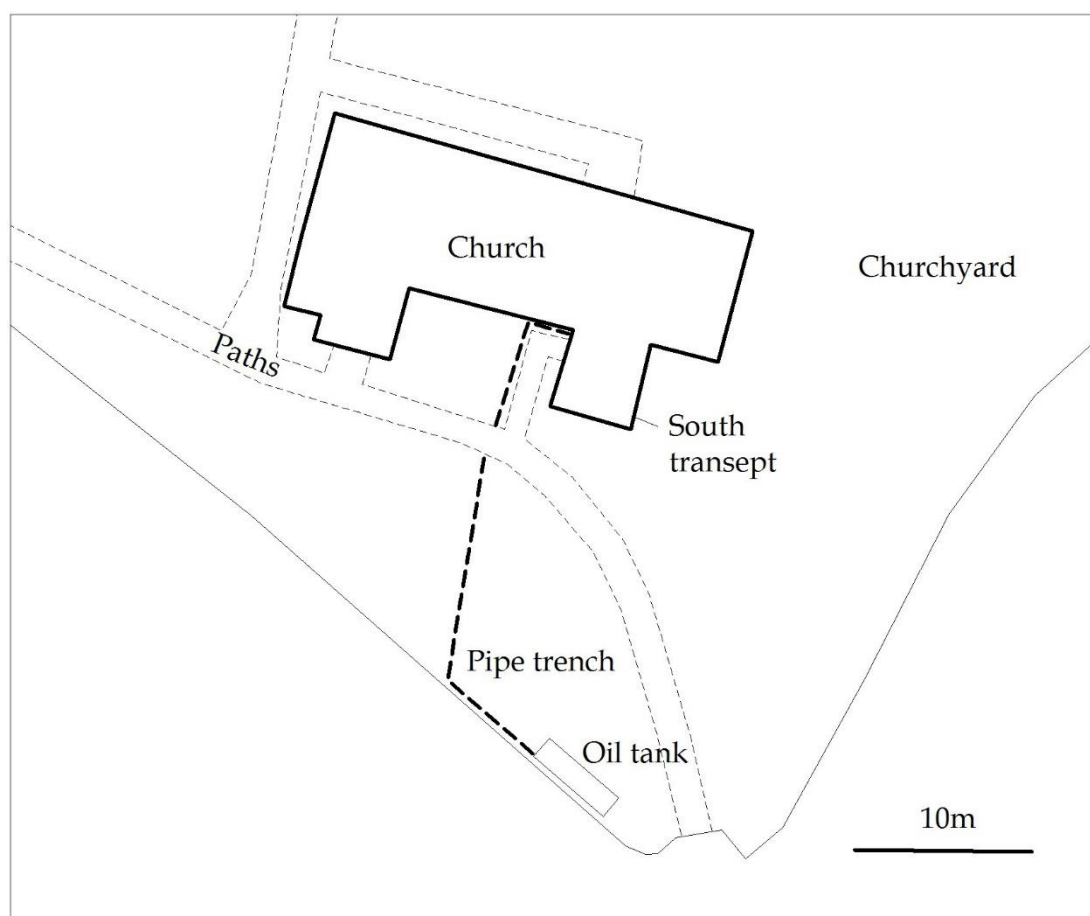


Fig. 4: Plan showing the locations examined by the watching brief

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. No burials or disturbed skeletal material were revealed by the trenching and the levelling of the oil tank location and no evidence was found that the part of the churchyard to the south of the main access path has been used for burial. The soils revealed were typical of what might be expected in a pasture field and it is known that this was the land-use here before the church was built in the late 19th century.
- 4.2. The archaeological supervision of the works proved worthwhile as it was possible to advise the contractors regarding the rerouting of the pipe trench to avoid an area which appeared to contain memorials adjoining the south transept of the church; as far as can be established the church and any associated features of archaeological interest were left unaffected by the oil tank and pipe installation works.

5 Sources

Unpublished sources

Silvester, R J, 1999. *Welsh Historic Churches Project. The Historic Churches of Conwy County Borough: church survey*, CPAT Report 311.

Cartographic sources

1819 Ordnance Survey Surveyors' Drawing No 309

1884 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st edition Denbighshire 05.09

1900 Ordnance Survey 1:10560 2nd edition Denbighshire 5SW

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the CIfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The archive is entirely digital and will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140265

1 watching brief recording form

16 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4560

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1998

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by the Revd Kate Johnson to undertake a watching brief at St George's Church, Abergele, Conwy (SH 97390 75806), during the excavation of a service trench through the churchyard.
- 1.2. The works will be issued with a retrospective Faculty, although the Diocesan Archaeologist has advised that someone responsible should be present during earth-moving operations to ensure that any human skeletal material is dealt with appropriately.

2 Background

- 2.1. The church of St George is set on steeply sloping ground in the centre of the village of the same name, in a rectilinear churchyard used as a cemetery. It was built in 1887-94 in Perpendicular Gothic style to replace an earlier double-naved church on an adjacent site within the same churchyard, a site with medieval origins. It is built of local limestone and consists of nave and chancel raised on a platform under one roof, with service areas beneath on the north side, south transept, and towards the west end a spacious south porch the front of which is raised as a gabled bellcote.
- 2.2. The churchyard is rectilinear and elongated, a result of an original and somewhat irregular core at the west end and a more regular extension containing the new church to the east. The latter is set on a moderate slope, the former occupying a more level plot.

3 Methodology

- 3.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CifA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014, revised 2017).
- 3.2. Sufficient time must be allowed by the Contractors for the Archaeologist to record anything of archaeological significance which might be revealed, including structural features and burials. The Contractor should be made aware of the need to work closely with the Archaeologist during the on-site works.
- 3.3. The excavation of any archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
 - The presence or absence of archaeological features encountered during the ground works will be noted.
 - Where features of archaeological interest are identified during the ground works they will be investigated by hand with sufficient work being undertaken to determine their date, character and function, if that is possible, using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation and in accordance with CifA Standard and Guidance. Depending on the stability of the soils it may not be possible to cut back significantly the surface exposed by the removal of the existing wall.

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- All features will be located as accurately as possible on an overall plan of the work at an appropriate scale, showing boundaries depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
 - Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
 - Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate. It is envisaged that where the face exposed by the removal of the wall reveals evidence of in-situ archaeological features these will be drawn before the consolidation work starts.
 - All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.
 - A licence will be required from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in the event of burials, or parts thereof, being revealed and as such the client is recommended to apply for the licence in advance of the commencement of the project to avoid any delays. The client will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate legal considerations are adhered to in this regard. Any documentation submitted to MoJ should include provision for the appropriate reburial of any human remains that are disturbed in the course of the works. Any remains will be boxed for temporary storage within the church.
 - In the event of finding any artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996, the appropriate procedures under this legislation will be followed.
- 3.4. All artefacts and environmental samples will be treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and a sampling strategy will be developed as appropriate:
- All stratified finds will be collected by context, or where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest.
 - All finds and samples, with the exception of any human bone which is encountered, will be collected, processed, sorted, quantified, recorded, labelled, packed, stored, marked, assessed, analysed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their composition and in line with appropriate guidance. Human bone will be kept in an appropriate place within the church until such time as the work is complete and will then be reburied within the churchyard.
 - Arrangements will be made to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environment samples, if required.
 - Any artefacts recovered during the watching brief will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.
- 3.5. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Historical Background

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- Watching brief
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 3.6. A copy of the report will be provided to the client, the regional Historic Environment Record and the Churches Conservation and Development Officer of St Asaph Diocese in her capacity as Secretary to the DAC.
- 3.7. The report summary will be provided in English and Welsh, in accordance with the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

Site archive

- 3.8. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England 2006, the CIfA (2014) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* and *The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (NPAAW, 2017) and *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).
- 3.9. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (NMR), RCAHMW, including a copy of the final report. This archive will include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. NMR Digital archives will follow the standard required by the RCAHMW (RCAHMW 2015). A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

4 Resources and programming

- 4.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 4.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the site work. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 4.3. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.4. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones

31 October 2018