

## St Cadfan's Church Tywyn 2014

Archaeological Watching Brief



By  
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Report No. 686



CAMBRIAN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECTS

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## Non Technical Summary

*This report results from a one-day watching brief on the cutting of foundation trenches for a lean-to extension in the angle between the north transept and the vestry of St Cadfan's Church, Tywyn. The stone foundation for the late medieval north transept was recorded, and two skeletons noted, but left in-situ.*

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 The site is located in the angle between the north transept and the vestry of St Cadfan's Church, Tywyn (Fig 1).
- 1.1.2 The work is situated at National Grid Ref: SH5882400951.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The solid geological formations beneath the assessment area are mainly composed of glacial moraine (British Geological Survey 2001). Natural deposits located in the watching brief comprised sandy gravel with large rounded boulders.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following description of an extract from the RCAHMS details on St Cadfan's Church: The cruciform church is a Grade I listed building. It consists of aisled nave, north and south transepts, central tower and chancel. The nave, with its aisles, arcades and clerestory windows, are those of the original twelfth century building. The nave is unique in Gwynedd and is consequently considered to be of special architectural significance. Three bays remain of an original four. The arcades both have three massive, squat, drum columns from which spring plain rounded arches. The clerestory has small, deeply splayed, round-headed windows above the columns. The arch-braced roof of the nave dates to the fourteenth century. The octagonal font is also thought to be fourteenth century in date. Two fourteenth century effigies are situated within modern niches in the north wall of the chancel and sanctuary. One of the effigies is of an unnamed priest. The other is of an unnamed knight, traditionally Gruffydd ab Adda of Dolgoch. The original tower collapsed in 1692 and was replaced with a tower over the west end of the nave. The present character of the church owes much to an extensive program of rebuilding, modernisation and other alterations, completed in 1884. It was at this time that the 1792 tower was removed and replaced with the present tower. A new west wall was built, excluding the previous fourth bay of the nave. A new south door and aisle windows were also added. The present chancel was built at this time, although it is thought to have been built on the foundations of its predecessor.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

### 2.1 The archaeological investigation

- 2.1.1 The main scope and objectives of the archaeological watching brief was to keep a close watch on the machine excavation of foundations to ensure that no burials were disturbed and any archaeological deposits recorded.
- 2.1.2 The work was conducted in accordance with standards and guidance laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Scope of Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The watching brief was supervised by Dr Kevin Blockley of Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP).
- 3.1.3 A watch was kept on all foundations and records kept of the various deposits uncovered.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were made during the investigation, save two skeletons which were left *in-situ*.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.3.1 No palaeo-environmental samples were taken from the site.

## 4 Results of the work

### 4.1 Soils, ground conditions and contexts

- 4.1.1 Conditions on site were good.
- 4.1.2 All numbers in brackets within the text refer to context records in the investigation. A site plan, context information and digital photographs are held in the archive.

### 4.2 Archaeological watching brief

- 4.2.1 The area being investigated measured around 9m x 5m. Two trenches were dug for the extension to the vestry (red in Fig 1) and a section of raised area excavated to make way for a path (blue in Fig 1). The foundation trench was 1m wide and between 0.8 and 0.9m deep. The cutting into the raised area was 1m deep.
- 4.2.2 The stratification comprised two distinct areas: The material in the foundation trench and the material making up the raised area.
- 4.2.3 In the foundation trench the following deposits were recorded: layer (1) was a topsoil containing fragments of slate and lime mortar rubble, 0.3m deep, probably all associated with the 1884 construction of the vestry. Below this was a layer of mid-brown sandy gravel (2) interpreted as the natural glacial moraine. At the east end of the trench the



excavation cut down onto the stone and slate foundation (3) for the late medieval north transept. Towards the east end of the trench a skull and right shoulder were visible from an intact skeleton (7), which was not investigated further. More bones (perhaps for a second skeleton) were seen in the base of the trench close to the junction of the two trenches, but again left in-situ. Modern features comprised a 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramic drain (10) and an iron pipe (4) and recent services comprising electric (11), gas (9), earth cable (12), copper water pipe (13) and plastic water pipe (8).

- 4.2.4 The excavation into the raised area north-west of the vestry revealed the following sequence of deposits: topsoil 0.3m thick (1), over mid-brown sandy gravel (5) which was a re-deposited natural, over a thick layer of slate and mortar rubble (6) presumably material left over from the 1884 restoration work.

## **5 Discussion and Interpretation**

### **5.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 5.1.1 The results of the work and interpretation of the remains found are considered reliable.

### **5.2 Overall interpretation**

- 5.2.1 The earliest feature recorded was the stone foundation for the late medieval north transept. The two skeletons noted are likely to be 19<sup>th</sup> century in date since they were both located 0.9m below ground and in good condition. Deposits of slate and mortar rubble found in both the foundation trench on forming part of a raised area are thought to have been from the 1884 re-building of the church.

### **5.3 Significance**

- 5.3.1 The remains found show that the raised area in the north-east corner of the graveyard is likely to date to the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and that 19<sup>th</sup> century burials survive in the graveyard.

## **6 Recommendations for further work**

- 6.1.1 The results will be held in archive and copies of the report deposited with St Cadfan's Church, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and the Royal Commission (RCAHMW).

## **7 Acknowledgements**

- 7.1.1 My thanks go to Gruffydd Price (architect for the scheme) and Barry Shellis and his staff (building contractors).

## 8 **Bibliography**

British Geological Survey 2001    *Solid Geology Map. UK South Sheet. 1:625000 Scale.* 4th  
edition

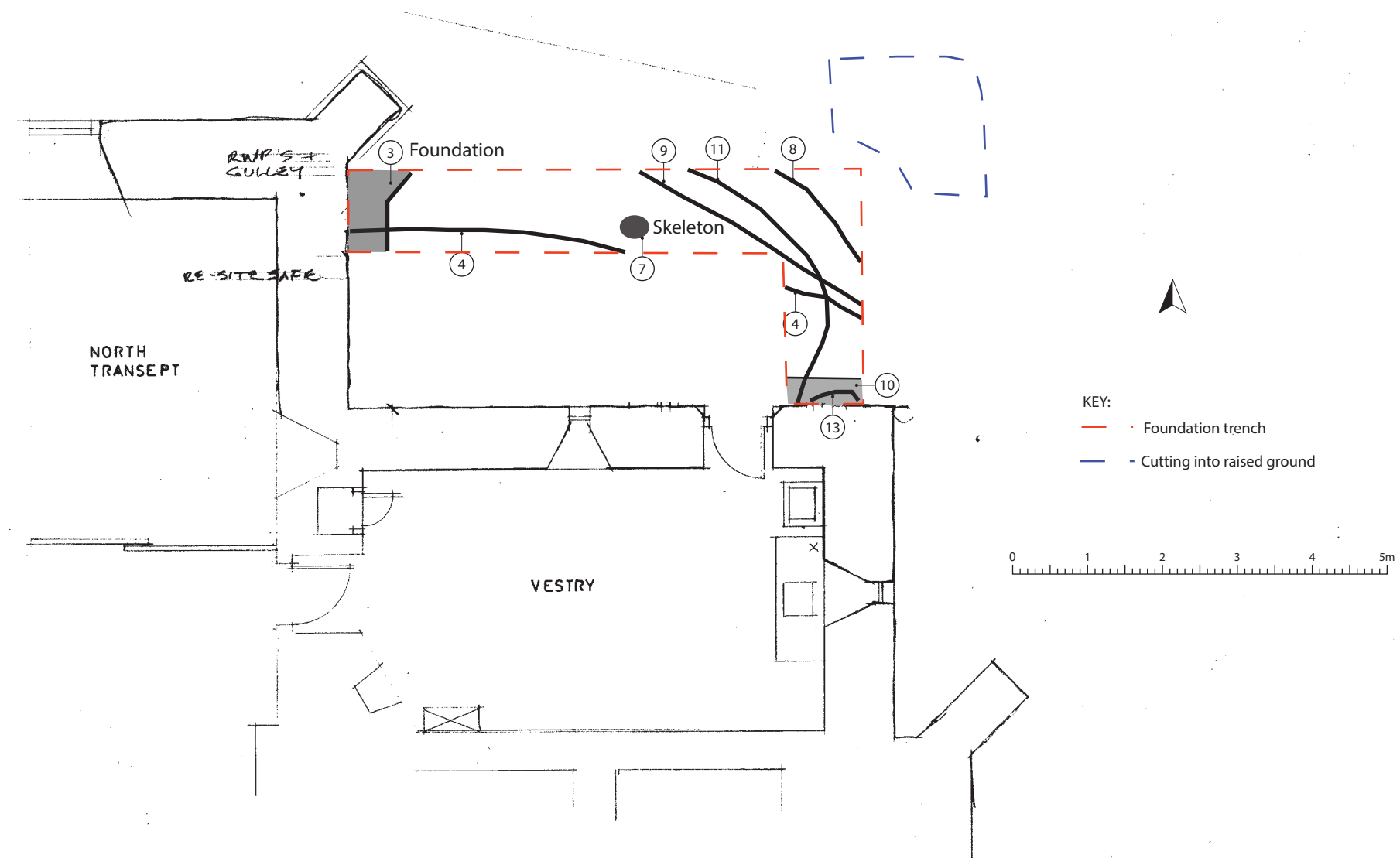


FIG 1: Plan of watching brief areas north of Vestry

## PLATES



Plate 1: General view of work in progress on foundations, looking south-east. Scale 2m



Plate 2: Detail of stone and slate foundation (3) for north transept, looking north. Scale 0.5m





Plate 3: General view of machine work on cutting into raised area, looking south-east. Scale 2m



Plate 4: Section of cutting into raised area, looking north. Scale in 0.5m divisions



Plate 5: Part of skeleton (7) uncovered. Note skull and left shoulder, looking north. Scale 0.2m

## APPENDIX I: Context List

<i>No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Topsoil with slate and mortar rubble	19th century-present
2	Natural mid brown sandy gravel	Natural
3	Stone and slate footings for transept wall	19th century
4	Disused oil/water pipe	19th century
5	Mid brown sandy gravel (redeposited)	19th century
6	Slate and mortar layer	19th century
7	Skeleton in-situ	19th century
8	Water pipe (blue plastic)	modern
9	Gas pipe (in yellow wrapping)	modern
10	Ceramic drain	19th century
11	Electric cable	modern
12	Earth cable (yellow and green)	modern
13	Copper water pipe	modern

## APPENDIX II: Site Photographs

<i>No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>direction</i>	<i>scale</i>
01	General view of St Cadfan's Church	east	---
02	Area of extension	south-east	2m
03	Foundation (3) to north transept	north	0.5m
04	Foundation (3) to north transept	east	0.5m
05	Work in progress on excavation into raised area	south-east	---
06	Section cut into raised area	north	0.5m divisions
07	Skull and shoulder skeleton (7)	south	0.2m
08	Work in progress	south-east	2m
09	Work in progress	south-east	2m
10	Work in progress	west	2m
11	Work in progress	west	2m
12	Work in progress	south-east	---



**APPENDIX III:  
Archive cover sheet**

**St Cadfan's Church, Tywyn**

Site Name:	<b>St Cadfan's Church, Tywyn</b>
Site Code:	<b>SCT/14/WB</b>
PRN:	<b>N/A</b>
NPRN :	<b>N/A</b>
SAM:	<b>N/A</b>
Other Ref No:	<b>CAP Project No. 1227</b>
NGR:	<b>SH5882400951</b>
Site Type:	<b>Urban</b>
Project Type:	<b>Archaeological Watching Brief</b>
Project Officer:	<b>Kevin Blockley</b>
Project Dates:	<b>April 2014</b>
CAP report number:	<b>686</b>
Categories Present:	<b>N/A</b>
Location of Original Archive:	<b>RCAHMW</b>
Location of duplicate Archives:	<b>N/A</b>
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