

**ST DOGFAEL'S CHURCH,
MELINE, PEMBROKESHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
2019
(SN 11802 38753)**



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
For: Bluestone Builders



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Gan / By

James Meek

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by DAT Archaeological Services during drainage replacement works at St Dogfael's Church, Meline, Pembrokeshire. The observed works included the removal of existing drainage and the excavation of two new run-off drains to the north of the church.

Excavation on the southern side of the church was undertaken by hand and those to the north using a small mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. The extant drain probably dated from 1865 when the church was rebuilt. Disarticulated human bones were recovered from the drainage trenches, mostly in the areas surrounding the chancel. Building rubble and waste material had been dumped to the north of the church to level the ground slope also likely to date from 1865. The disarticulated human bone recovered from the excavations was reburied within the drainage trenches as close to where they were found as possible. The excavations required for the replacement drainage works did not appear to disturb any in-situ deposits pre-dating the rebuilding of the church in 1865.

CRYNODEB

Cynhaliwyd brîff gwylio archeolegol gan Wasanaethau Archaeolegol YAD yn ystod gwaith adnewyddu draenio yn Eglwys Sant Dogfael, Meline, Sir Benfro. Roedd y gwaith gweledig yn cynnwys tynnu'r draeniad presennol a chloddio dau ddraen newydd i'r gogledd o'r eglwys.

Ymgwymerwyd â chloddio ar ochr ddeheuol yr eglwys gan law a'r rhai i'r gogledd gan ddefnyddio cloddiwr mecanyddol bach tan oruchwyliad cyson archeolegol. Mae'n debyg bod y draen sy'n bodoli yn dyddio o 1865 pan ailadeiladwyd yr eglwys.

Adenillwyd esgyrn di-cymalog dynol o'r ffosydd draenio, yn bennaf yn yr ardaloedd o amgylch y gangell. Roedd rwbwl adeiladu a deunydd gwastraff wedi cael ei ddympio i'r gogledd o'r eglwys i lefelu'r llethr daear hefyd sy'n debygol o fod yn dyddio o 1865. Cafodd yr asgwrn di-cymalog dynol a gafodd ei adfer o'r cloddiadau ei ail-gladdu yn y ffosydd draenio mor agos â phosibl. Nid oedd yn ymddangos bod y cloddiadau oedd eu hangen ar gyfer y gwaith draenio newydd yn amharu ar unrhyw ddyddodion yn y fan a'r lle cyn yr ailadeiladu yr eglwys yn 1865.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Proposals and Commission

1.1.1 St Dogfael's Church became redundant in the early 21st century and was taken into the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches in 2017/8. A series of repairs and restoration works were undertaken at the church during 2018, including roof repairs and a replacement drainage scheme around the perimeter of the building. The works were undertaken by Bluestone Builders who appointed DAT Archaeological Services to carry out a watching brief during excavation works associated with the replacement of the perimeter drain at St. Dogfael's Church, Meline, Pembrokeshire (SN 11802 38753; Figures 1 and 2).

1.1.2 The requirement for the archaeological watching brief during the drainage works was requested by the Friends of Friendless Churches following advice from the archaeological advisor to the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

1.2 Scope of the Project

1.2.1 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) for archaeological mitigation was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services for the watching brief which was sent for approval by the archaeological advisor to the Diocesan Advisory Committee and the archaeological advisor to the planning authority (Appendix 1). The WSI outlined the project objectives as:

- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which DAT Archaeological Services will undertake the archaeological watching brief.
- To monitor ground works in order to identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

1.2.2 The overall aim of the works was stated as: archaeological attendance during the excavation of drainage runs around the church of St Dogfael's, Meline near Castell Henllys, Pembrokeshire; where said works have the potential to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains. Appropriate investigation and recording of any such remains will be undertaken if revealed. A report and archive of the results of the works will be prepared.

1.3 Report Outline

1.3.1 This report is an addendum to the detailed report undertaken as part of the main works undertaken at the church as part of the Heritage Llangwm project in 2016 (Day 2016). It uses some of the archaeological background from that report and describes the location of the development works and discussion of the archaeological watching brief results.

1.4 Abbreviations

- 1.4.1 Sites recorded in the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN). Sites recorded in the National Monument Record (NMR) held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) are identified by their National Primary Record Number (NPRN). Scheduled Monument (SM), Listed Building (LB). Sites are located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Altitude is expressed to Ordnance Datum (OD).

1.5 Illustrations

- 1.5.1 Photographic images are to be found within the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale.

1.6 Timeline

- 1.6.1 The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text.

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 –c.AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1086	
Medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period –	1536 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales



Figure 1: Location plan of St Dogfael's Church, Meline, Pembrokeshire

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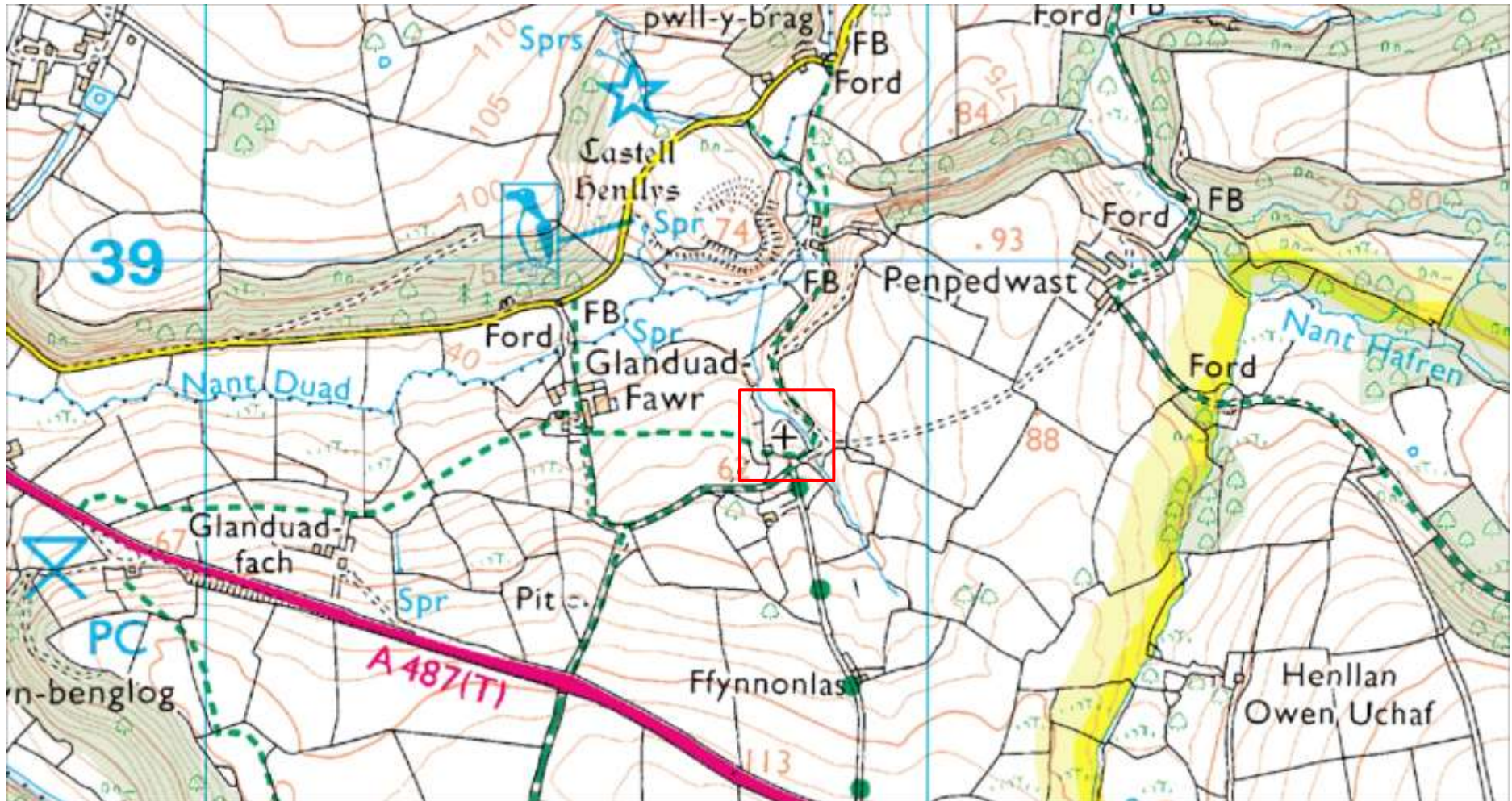


Figure 2: Location plan of St Dogfael's Church, Meline, Pembrokeshire

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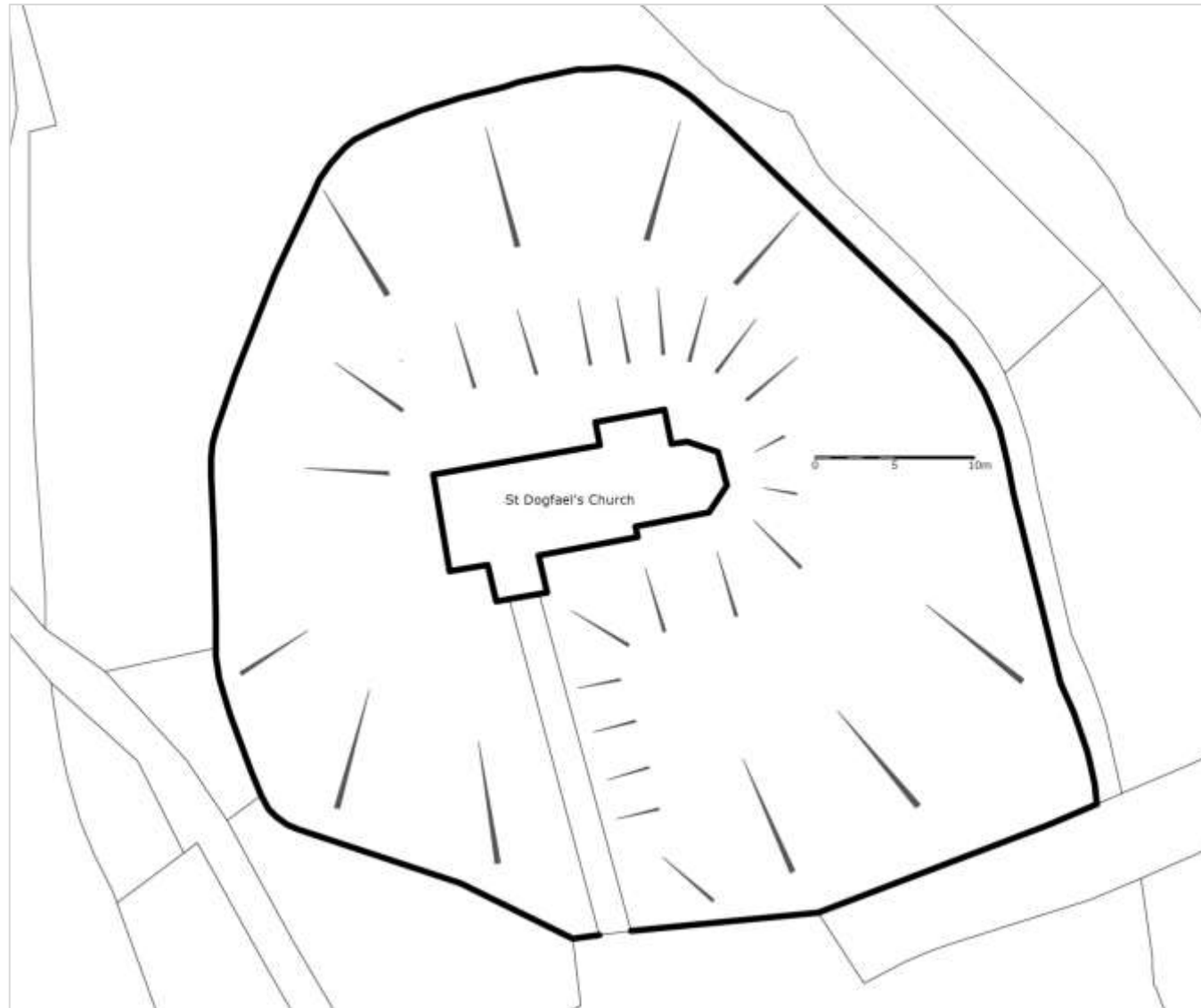


Figure 3: Plan of church based on Ordnance Survey data, showing approximate topography of the churchyard area

2 THE SITE

2.1 Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1.1 St. Dogfael's Church is located between Felindre Farchog and Eglwswrw in the county of Pembrokeshire (SN 11802 38753; Figures 1 and 2; Photo 1). The church is presently quite isolated on a small road leading north from the main A487, which gives access to a number of properties and the reconstructed Castell Henllys Iron Age Village.
- 2.1.2 The church lies within a roughly oval churchyard on a north facing slope, running down to a tributary stream of the Nant Duad. The church lies in the centre of the churchyard, with the main burial area on its southern side laid to grass. To the south and west of the church the land is more uneven, mostly steeper and overgrown with boggier ground in the lower lying parts adjacent to the stream.
- 2.1.3 The church was surrounded by a perimeter drain comprising a concrete capped area of backfilled soil with mortar, slate and building rubble sitting on top of a red ceramic clay drainpipe. The archaeological watching brief monitored the replacement of this drain and additional drainage runs leading north from the church.
- 2.1.4 The underlying solid geology of the site consists of Nantmel Mudstones Formation – Mudstone, sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 444 to 449 million years ago in the Ordovician Period (British Geological Survey mapping portal). Superficial geology comprises Glacial Deposits, Heterogeneous, Devensian (Irish Sea Ice) - clay and gravel formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (ibid).

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.2.1 St Meline's Church is recorded on the Dyfed Historic Environment Record (Primary Record Number (PRN) 979) as follows:

St Dogfael, Meline, is a 3-celled church, of small size. It was entirely (re)built in 1863-5 to the designs of the architect R. J. Withers (Cadw, 1997, 16) on the site of the demolished medieval church, yet retaining no earlier fabric apart from a reused medieval door surround. The present church consists of a polygonal, apsidal 2-bayed chancel, a 2-bayed nave, a south porch and a lean-to vestry north of the nave. Construction is in roughly coursed, squared limestone rubble throughout. The external pointing is of 1863-5. All internal walls are rendered/ plastered. All dressings are in oolite. The openings are neo-gothic and the windows generally plain, but there is a fine rose window in the west wall. The west wall carries a low, gabled bellcote, with a single opening into the roof space. The floor level is raised 0.5m from the general level of the yard. The roofs are slated gables; the vestry has a slate lean-to roof through which emerges a plain chimney from a fireplace within. All the detail is, like the rest of the fabric, of 1863-5. There is a shallow drain around the east end of the church. A wide, earth-cut cutting runs along the southern wall and may be primary, for the medieval church.

The only structural evidence for the medieval church is a fine door surround, reused and re-sited (but not open) in the 1863-5 north wall; it features a simple drip-mould on stops with human head mouldings which, though crude, are probably 14th-15th century (Photo 2). However, the font was retained from the earlier church and has an octagonal font and stem 'of pre-Reformation date' (RCAHM, 1925).

At the rebuilding, a well-carved pew-back bearing a Latin inscription and the date 1626 was removed to a nearby mansion (ibid).

The pre-1863 church is shown in the same location on the tithe map (NLW, Meline, 1837), and appears to depict a single-cell structure without division into chancel and nave. No description is known, but the vestry book sheds some light on 18th-earlier 19th century expenditure upon the fabric. In 1777 the not inconsiderable sum of 5 4s 11d was spent on repairs (Lewis, 1972, 100) while in 1810 it was resolved that a new oak door be placed 'in the front of the church' (west door?) and that a sash window be sited to light the pulpit, the latter costing 6 10s 0d (ibid). In 1817 it was resolved to reroof the church for 27 (ibid), a sum which may indicate an entirely new roof including timbers. The present church was Grade II listed in 1998.

2.2.2 HER record PRN 46836 also notes that *'it may have Early medieval (pre-1086) origins being a (sub)circular churchyard occupied by Meline medieval parish church (PRN 979), entirely rebuilt in 1865. The benefice was held in multiple patronage, which may indicate early medieval origins. Adjoins St Dogfael's Well PRN 4977. Possible 'paired site'- 250m south of Castell Henllys, which was successively an Iron Age fort PRN 95, a possible early medieval ?secular enclosure PRN 9812 and a possible medieval castle PRN 953.'*

2.2.3 The church became redundant in the early 21st century and was vested in the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches in 2017/8. It has been subject to restoration and repair works during 2018 including improvements to the roof and bell tower, as well as the replacement of the rose window on its eastern end. The drainage works were also undertaken as part of this programme of restoration and repair, all funded by the Friends of Friendless Churches.

2.2.4 The Friends of Friendless Churches website includes further details on the history of the church from which the following information is taken¹:

The church is dedicated to the 6th century St Dogfael or Dogwel, whose cult was confined almost entirely to this part of Pembrokeshire. Here, St Dogfael had a certain prominence, as the Tironian abbey founded in the 12th century by the Lord of Cemaes, Robert Fitz Martin, stands in a parish which still bears his name, and there are further dedications to him at St Dogwells near Fishguard, and Mynachlogddu. Capel Degwel, within the parish of St Dogmaels, now vanished, was described as a 'capella olim peregrinationis causa erecta', which probably implies that it housed the principal shrine of the saint.

'There was certainly an earlier church on the site of the present building, of which the blocked north doorway of the nave, with three grotesque headstops, and probably the wall in which it is set, is the sole survivor (Photo 2). In the 1860s, the lineal descendant of Robert Fitz Martin, the Lord Marcher of Cemaes and Gothic romanticist, Sir Thomas Davies Lloyd of Bronwydd (1820-1877) undertook the rebuilding of the church.

'Davies Lloyd chose R. J. Withers to design the High Victorian set-piece at Meline. A single apse-ended slate roof sweeps over both the nave and the chancel. The walling is sheer with tracery set flush.

¹ <http://friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk/st-dogfaels-meline/>

'The interior is light and airy, thanks in part to the lack of stained glass. The leading of the plain glass windows is a delight, with varied patterning, including an emblem of the Trinity, and Stars of Bethlehem in the splendid rose window in the west wall (Photo 3).

'There is only one stained glass window, the cusped lancet behind the altar, a Crucifixion with Saints Mary and John, in vivid colours, but a rather cramped design, by Lavers & Barraud of 1865, i.e. contemporary with Withers' rebuilding of the church.

'The present building comprises a nave and apsidal chancel (was Withers building here on the foundations of the original church?) under a single roof, a western bellcote sunk into the gable, a south porch and a north vestry. The chancel is stepped in, with taller eaves, but maintains the single ridge-line. The vestry chimney is described by the RCAHMS as 'handsome' – stepped in and topped with a hipped stone cap. The fenestration of nave and chancel is also worth noting; the tracery varied and giving the impression of having been punched through the stone, an effect brought about by the windows being set flush to emphasise the sheerness of the walls. By contrast, the west wall rises from a battered plinth.

'All the furnishings seem to be as Withers left them; pine pews, with shaped ends, a pulpit with vessica-shaped panels, stalls, communion rails, lectern and communion table. Withers paid particular attention to the sanctuary, where the reredos is of painted ashlar, with inset best quality five-colour tiled panels, which, along with the window, enliven an otherwise austere interior. The church is devoid of memorials; any there might have been in the earlier church have not survived. The octagonal ashlar font is also by Withers, though at some subsequent date seems to have been (inappropriately) painted a rather sludgy grey.

'The vestry, to the north of the chancel, contains a diagonally set fireplace and aumbry. On one wall hangs a plan of the new church, for the ICBS, as well as a standard ICBS board recording a grant of £75, on condition that the 77 seats 'at the least' were free.

'The church contains a SPCK Welsh Bible (1858), Book of Common Prayer, and an Illustrated Welsh Bible, with commentary by Owen Jones. Together they are indicative that, when the church was rebuilt, Welsh was the language used for public worship.'

2.2.5 There is a Star of David in the upper light of the window on the south side of the chancel contains (Photo 4). This is said to have been donated by a grateful Jewish family who were granted permission to worship in the church on the Sabbath as detailed on an information notice within the south porch.



Photo 1: View north from entrance into churchyard down to St Dogfael's Church



Photo 2: Part of the surviving medieval fabric on the north wall showing former blocked north door and two simple carved heads on either side



Photo 3: Newly re-glazed rose window on western end of nave



Photo 4: South window of chancel with Star of David top window light

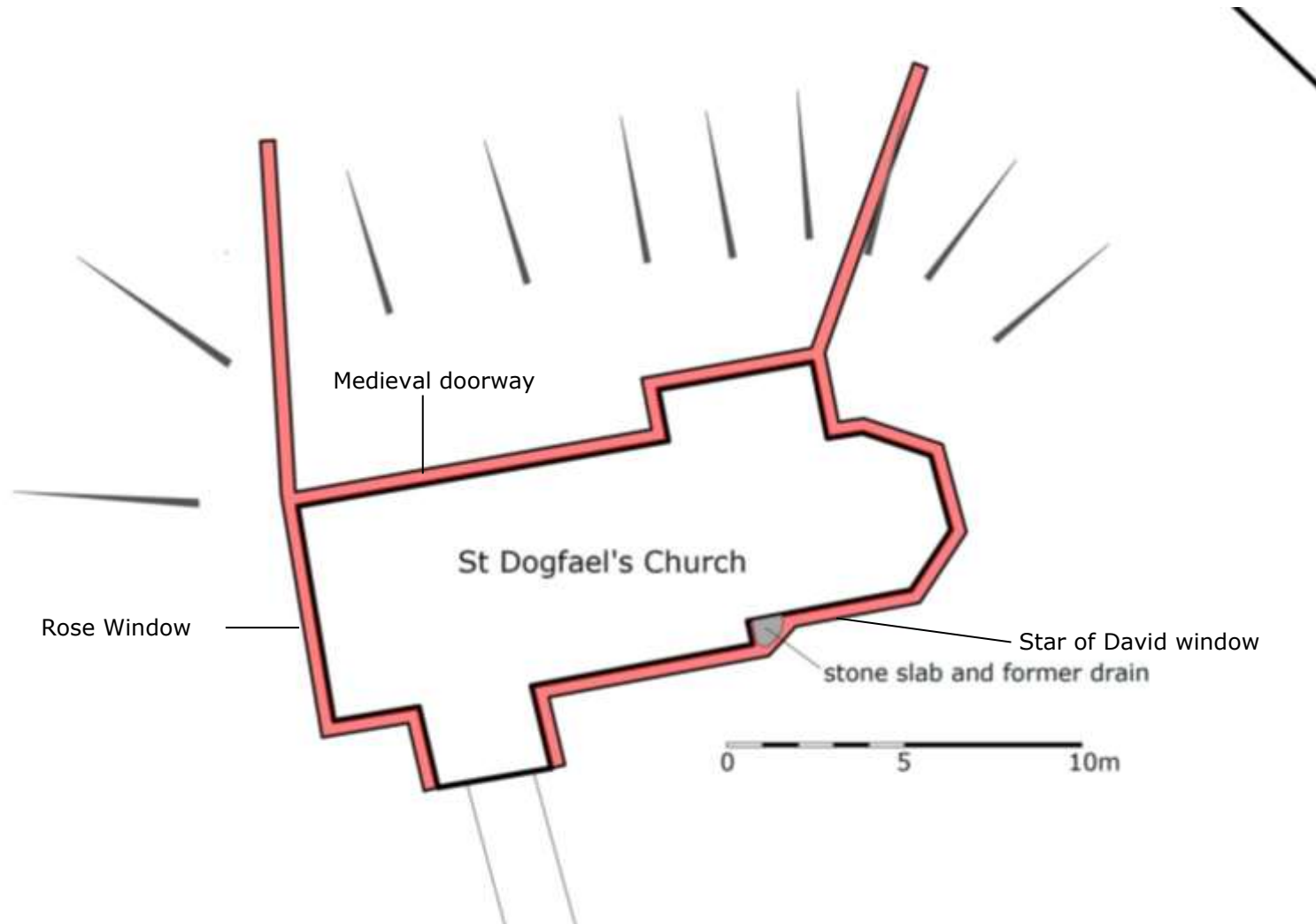


Figure 4: Plan of St Dogfael's Church showing the approximate layout of the replacement drainage and area of watching brief

3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 This watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief and the CIfA Code of Conduct (2014). The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), detailing the archaeological works proposed, was approved by the archaeological advisor to the DAC prior to the works commencing.
- 3.1.2 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual² used by DAT Archaeological Services.
- 3.1.3 The works were undertaken at short notice and an exhumation licence was not acquired for the works commencing. It was agreed within the WSI that *'Should unmarked and intact burials or other significant archaeological deposits be encountered a further scheme of archaeological mitigation may need to be implemented or more likely drainage routes will be re-routed to avoid disturbance of human remains. Where inhumations are identified, these should initially be left in-situ and only removed if absolutely necessary and following the granting of an exhumation licence from the Ministry of Justice. Any human bone recovered from the churchyard will be retained at the church for reburial by the within the churchyard. No human bone should be removed from the site.'*

3.2 Timetabling of Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken on 21st February 2019 during a bright and sunny day.

3.3 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 3.3.1 The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts. The report includes a desk-based research element to ensure that the site is placed within its wider archaeological context.
- 3.3.2 Due to the low significance of archaeological remains identified by the watching brief and lack of any significant finds, a separate archive for the project will not be created. This report will form the archive for the project, following the Dyfed Archaeological Trust 'Retention and Disposal of Archaeological Archives' policy (2018).

² DAT Archaeological Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Prior to an archaeologist attending the site, the site contractors had undertaken two small areas of partial excavation of the extant drainage around the church that was to be replaced to determine its depth and character. The concrete capping over the drainage trench had been removed. All other groundworks excavated under constant supervision of the attending archaeologist.
- 4.2 The exploratory holes into the extant drainage trench indicated the presence of a ceramic drain pipe some 0.35m below the ground surface lying within a roughly 0.4m wide trench backfilled with rubble.
- 4.3 The drainage trench around the church was emptied by hand by the team from Bluestone Builders (Photo 5), excluding on the northern side where a small mechanical excavator was used to dig out the perimeter drain and add the trenches heading roughly north from the church down towards the stream.



Photo 5: Hand removal of the drainage trench on the southern side of the chancel

4.4 The extant drainage trench was emptied of backfill and the ceramic pipes removed (Photo 6). Ceramic supports were identified along the lengths of the drainage pipes, presumably used to level the pipes to the correct height to allow water to flow (Photo 7). These measured 23cm in length, 9cm in width and 12cm in height made of a fine red clay. The upper part had a semi-circular hollow in which the ceramic pipe would sit.



Photo 6: Ceramic drain pipe exposed in the drainage trench on the eastern end of the chancel



Photo 7: One of the ceramic pipe supports removed from the perimeter drainage trench

- 4.5 A quantity of disarticulated human bone was recovered from the drainage trench during its excavation. An area of broken skull fragments was recovered from the drainage trench on the north side of the church adjacent to the vestry. These are likely to have been from the same skull, which had been broken when the extant drain was inserted.
- 4.6 A number of fragments of pelvis, leg bones and ankle bones were recovered on the southern side of the church adjacent to the junction between the nave and narrower chancel. This area was where a down pipe fed into the extant drain. A large stone slab was present in this area at the base of the excavated trench, at a depth of around 0.45m, the significance of which was uncertain (Photo 8; Figure 4). The number of leg bones recovered from this area and the drainage trench to the east indicates that a number of individuals had been disturbed when the earlier drain had been inserted and possibly when the chancel was built.



Photo 8: Stone slab revealed at the base of the excavated drainage trench at the junction between the nave and chancel

- 4.7 On the northern side of the church two additional drainage runs were inserted heading roughly northeast from the vestry and north-northeast from the northwestern corner of the nave. These were excavated through an area of made ground apparently dumped on the northern side of the church partly to level the slope leading down to the stream course. The drainage run off trenches were excavated to a minimal depth to avoid truncating undisturbed ground, and thus potential burials. The made ground comprised topsoil, mortar and rubble (including stone slabs and roof slates) potentially derived from the rebuilding of the church in the 19th century. More modern detritus including waste metal and ceramic pipes were also noted in this layer but not recovered. The trench to the northeast was a maximum of 0.70m depth, again only cut through the backfilled rubble (Photos 9, 10 & 11). The northwestern trench was a maximum of 0.40m deep (Photo 12 & 13). The intention was that rainwater run off would run directly into the boggy ground north of the church and into the stream.

- 4.8 The removal of the existing ceramic drain due to be replaced involved the excavation of the extant drainage trench and removal of backfill and pipework, excluding the two run off drains to the north. Once the old drain was removed, the trenches were cleared of loose material and geo-textile membrane laid across the full width of the trench. At this stage the disarticulated human bone recovered from the site was placed back into the trenches as close to where the material had originally come from. Crushed stone was then placed around a plastic drain pipe within the base of the trench within the geo-textile membrane, which was then folded over the top. The upper part of the trench was then filled with pea gravel to the surface of the trench, although this was due to be soil covered in the area to the north of the church.



Photo 9: Junction of perimeter drainage trench and run off drain at northeastern corner of chancel



Photo 10: View southwest along run off drainage trench through backfilled rubble area, looking towards vestry



Photo 11: View northeast along run off drain leading from vestry cut through backfilled material



Photo 12: View south-southeast along run off drain leading to northwestern corner of nave



Photo 13: View north-northwest along run off drain leading from northwestern corner of nave

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief has provided an appropriate record of groundworks carried out during the installation of replacement drainage at St Dogfael's Church in Meline, Pembrokeshire.
- 5.2 Due to the location of the proposed works within the churchyard there was a very high potential for the presence of human remains, and it was agreed with the site contractor at the outset that depth of excavation would be minimised. The site contractor excavated the majority of the drainage trench by hand, only using a machine under constant archaeological supervision on the northern side of the church. The trenches were mostly around 0.4 - 0.45m in depth, but slightly deeper on the eastern side of the chancel and within the run-off drains to the north.
- 5.3 The excavations around the perimeter of the church removed backfill and pipe work associated with the extant, but non-functioning rain water drainage. Based on the ceramic pipes and ceramic supports, as well as material in the backfill, it is likely that this drainage dated from the major rebuilding work undertaken at the church by Withers in 1865. Disarticulated human bone was recovered from the backfill of the drain representing a number of individuals.
- 5.4 Broken skull fragments were found adjacent to the vestry on the northern side of the chancel. A number of leg bones and part of a pelvic bone were recovered in the drainage trench along the south side of the chancel belonging to a number of individuals. It is possible that the rebuilding of the church in 1865 added (or extended) the chancel which in turn disturbed a number of burials directly east of the original church. There was a definite lack in frequency and size in the disarticulated bones on the western side of the church. It is presumed the nave is part of the original structure, as indicated by the surviving medieval elements on the northern side. Presumably the rebuilding in 1865 did not cause such extensive disturbance of earlier deposits around the nave.
- 5.5 The two run-off drains to the north of the church were excavated through a depth of made-ground containing building rubble. It is presumed that this material derived from the rebuilding of the medieval church in 1865, with rubble and debris thrown to the north to create a level terrace along its northern edge. The mortar, stone rubble and former roofing slates within the material would attest to this. It was noted that the depth of made ground was less to the west, which corresponds with the less steep topography of the original ground surface in this area requiring less material to create a level terrace.
- 5.6 The disarticulated human bone recovered from the excavations was removed during groundworks and then carefully laid back in the trenches adjacent to the church wall in locations as close to where they were found as possible. The new drainage materials, including the geotextile membrane, plastic pipe and crushed stone were to be placed carefully back in the drainage trench.
- 5.7 The finds recovered during the works were mostly in the form of building rubble, slates, ceramic pipes and supports originating from the rebuilding of the church in 1865. The finds have not been retained.
- 5.8 The excavations required for the replacement drainage works did not disturb any *in-situ* deposits pre-dating the rebuilding of the church in 1865.

6 SOURCES

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2019
(SN 11802 38753)
HERITAGE LLANGWM PROJECT**

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2019/21
RHIF Y DIGWYLLIAD / EVENT RECORD NO. 117986

Mai 2019

May 2019

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan
/ This report has been prepared by:

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Swydd / Position: **Head of DAT Archaeological Services**

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Date: 02/May/2019

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith

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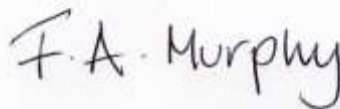
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Date: 02/May/2019

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report

