

JULY 2005

# ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, YERBESTON

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared by  
Cambria Archaeology  
For  
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## ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, YERBESTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

By

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**ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, YERBESTON  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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**ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, YERBESTON  
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**SUMMARY**

The redundant St. Lawrence's Church, Yerbeston (SN 06360927), is currently being converted into a single dwelling. The conversion works include the installation of an underfloor heating system, which required underground external pipes within the churchyard to the north of the church. Therefore, an archaeological watching was required to record any burials or other features that might be exposed.

The area to the north of the church had been stripped of topsoil to a depth of 20cm – 30cm during an earlier watching brief on a cable run from the south door and no grave cuts or other archaeological features were evident at that time.

No archaeological features were noted in the cable run or the pipe trench.

## INTRODUCTION

### Project background and commission

St. Lawrence's Church, Yerbeston (SN 06360927), is currently undergoing conversion into a single dwelling. The conversion works include the installation of underfloor heating system, which required the laying of external pipes in the area to the north of the church. The location of these external pipes within the churchyard meant that there was a real possibility of encountering unmarked burials. Therefore, an archaeological watching was required to record any burials or other features that were exposed. The developer, J Simpson, commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Services to carry out the watching brief in July 2005.

### The watching brief methodology

The watching brief was intended to record any features, in this case expected to be burials, exposed during the excavation of the pipe trench. The area had been previously stripped and this watching brief was focused on the cutting of the pipe trench itself.

Photographs were taken and notes were kept during the excavation of the trench.

### Scope of the report

This report briefly describes the history of the site (Section 2) before summarising the watching brief results (Section 3) and the conclusions (Section 4) based on the results of Sections 2 and 3.

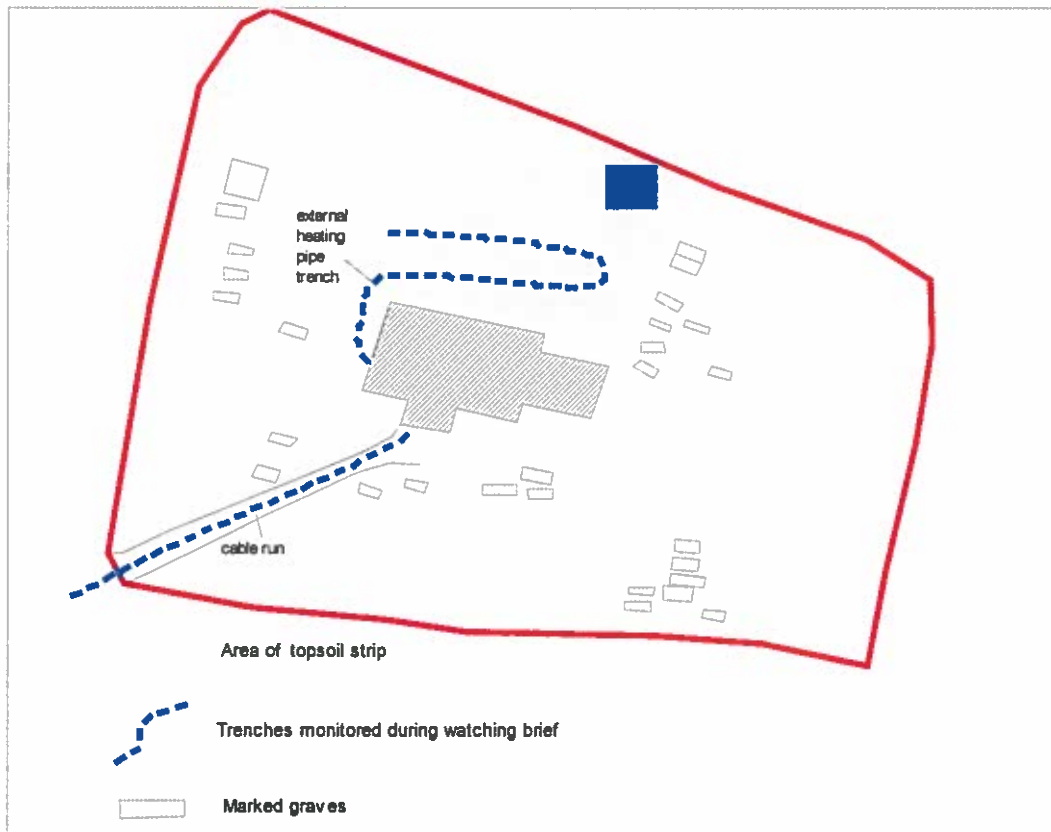


Figure 1: Plan showing trench locations and marked graves.

## **ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH: A SUMMARY HISTORY**

### **Foundation of the church**

The foundation date of the church is unknown, but it has been suggested that the 'plain pointed chancel arch date the nave and chancel to the 13<sup>th</sup> century' (Salter 1994, 76). The north doorway, south porch, and the corbelled belfry above the west gable, are later and may date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Salter 1994, 76). There is no evidence for an early medieval date.

### **Decoration**

The church appears to have always been fairly plain and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the antiquarian Samuel Lewis wrote that 'The church dedicated to St. Lawrence is not distinguished by any architectural detail of importance' (Lewis 1833). The church was 'extensively restored in 1869' (RCAHMW 1925, 419, No.1202), which seems to have included inserting new smaller windows.

### **The churchyard**

The church sits in the centre of a rectangular yard (Fig. 1). There are marked burials on the west, south and east sides. The burials are marked with a variety of memorials ranging from carved stone or slate headstones to simple metal crosses. There are also a few visible, but unmarked graves. Part of the yard has been cultivated for vegetables in raised beds.



*Plate 1: The church from the northeast showing the area of the external pipes and septic tank stripped. Some of the marked graves are visible in the foreground.*



## WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

### Earlier works

The trench for the external water pipe was largely dug through an area to the north of the church that had been stripped during an early watching brief carried out on a cable run along the line of the path from the gate to the south door (Plate 2). The watching brief on the cable trench revealed a small quantity of disarticulated and clearly disturbed human bone, but no burials or grave cuts. Monitoring of the stripping north of the church revealed no surface features or any indication of buried features.



*Plate 2: The cable run trench excavated along the line of the path from the gate to the south door.*

### External water pipes trench

The trench for the external water pipe measured c.50m in length (Fig. 1). From the west wall it curved around the northwest corner of the church and ran parallel to the north wall for the full length of the building, before curving back and again running the length of the building. Excavation of the pipe trench was carried out by a mini mechanical excavator fitted with a 30cm wide toothed bucket. Therefore, the potential for identifying features in plan was limited. However, the trench sides were clean and any buried features (if they extended into one or both sides) would have been visible (Plate 3).

No archaeological features were noted.

## Discussion

The watching brief suggests that this area of the churchyard has never been used for burials.



*Plate 3: Typical section of the heating system trench dug north of the church. The topsoil had already been removed from this area and the surface examined.*



## **APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF WATCHING BRIEF ARCHIVE**

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of final report.
- B.** Site records, including copies of entries in the site notebook.
- D.** Site photographs – CD copy of digital photographs.
- I.** Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- J.** Publication drawings.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories **C, E, F, G, H, K, L** and **N**.

The archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Liandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as Project Record No.54883.

**SOURCES**

- Lewis S      1833    *Topographical dictionary of Wales*. London.
- RCAHMW      1925    *Pembrokeshire Inventory*. London.
- Salter M      1994    *The old parish churches of south-west Wales*. Malvern Folly Publications.

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Report No.2005/83

July 2005

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Position: Project Archaeologist

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Position: Director

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on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

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