

PRINCE CHARLES QUAY CARDIGAN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2006



Paratowyd gan Archaeoleg Cambria
Ar gyfer Cyngor Sir Ceredigion

Prepared by Cambria Archaeology
For Ceredigion County Council



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PRINCE CHARLES QUAY, CARDIGAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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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

SUMMARY

An intermittent watching brief was undertaken during works on Prince Charles Quay, Cardigan, Ceredigion. The project lay just outside of the line of the medieval town wall and adjacent to the former town gate by the river. Other than a few timbers, probably recent, there was nothing of archaeological significance.

LOCATION

Prince Charles Quay is situated on the north bank of the River Teifi immediately adjacent to and west of Cardigan Bridge in Cardigan town at NGR SN 17728 45865. This area was also immediately outside of the Medieval Town Wall and adjacent to the Town Gate.

THE PROJECT

The work on Prince Charles Quay is just part of the overall Teifi Estuary Objective 1 scheme of works scheduled to being undertaken on the riverside in Cardigan.

The work being carried out at Prince Charles Quay aims to strengthen the quay wall in order to allow, amongst other land-based quayside developments, the construction of a pontoon, a new access ladder, and mooring ring.

In order to effect the strengthening of the quay wall a number of steel sheet piles were first to be inserted into the river bed some 3 to 4 metres in front of the existing quay wall and then new foundations and a retaining wall of reinforced concrete constructed and faced with stone. The space between the existing quay structure and the new retaining wall will then be backfilled.

To enable dry access to the quayside for the construction work an interlocking steel pile coffer dam was constructed.

HISTORY

A recent summary of this part of Cardigan was produced by the author (Crane 2001) and is summarised below.

W J Lewis (1990) has covered the history of Cardigan a great extent (1990); furthermore a new report on Cardigan is due soon (Cook and Poucher forthcoming). The topography of this natural crossing point of the Teifi and the adjacent rocky promontory, on which the castle now stands, would have lent itself to early settlement. However, the first castle was established in 1093 a mile to the west and the earliest castle on the present site was built in the reign of Henry I, probably c. 1110. The original town bridge was located further upstream from the present location and was destroyed in 1231. When it was rebuilt in its present position, shipping would have had to unload below this point (Canon Cunnane pers comm).

The castle was rebuilt in c. 1245 and work was begun on the construction of the wall, although it is possible that a line of defences had already been established (Soulsby 1983). The need for a town gate or water gate near this location would have been recognised from an early stage. However, the first grant for murage (permission to wall) was not made until 1281 (James 1983). Two houses belonging to the Coedmor Estate had been built c. 1507 outside the walls (Canon Cunnane pers comm), perhaps those indicated on the Speed Map of 1610 (Fig. 2) and a single building illustrated in 1748 (Fig. 3). Speed reported that the town walls were in need of repair. His plan clearly shows a town gateway adjacent to the west side of the castle, although there are elements of this map that are

unreliable (Murphy and O'Mahoney 1985). By 1638 the bridge was built of stone. Part of what may be the town wall can be seen on the left side of the 1721 print of Cardigan Castle and Priory by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck. However, by the time of Wood's map of Cardigan in 1834 (Fig. 4) all obvious signs of the wall had gone. Buildings constructed against the castle wall and on the lower east side of Bridge Street were demolished in the 1920s (Lewis 1990, 82) and the area now known as Prince Charles Quay was landscaped in the 1960s.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Due to the nature and the considerable duration of this project a full time archaeological watching brief would not have been practical. Therefore, there was a reliance on the contractor to inform of appropriate times to visit and if anything of possible interest was uncovered. However, another watching brief was being undertaken just downstream on the Net Pool and during visits to that site the progress on Prince Charles Quay was also monitored.

On the riverbed at the base of the quay wall there was a deposit of large, medium and small-sized fragments of thick slate which appeared to be the result of building demolition debris that had been dumped into the river (Photo 1). Some of the larger slate fragments had large holes drilled into them. The remaining visible deposits consisted of red brick fragments and assorted rubbish along with some *in situ* seaweed and soft grey brown silty mud.

A few large pieces of timber were recovered during the works. One large timber was possibly a pile as it appeared to have been deliberately pointed (Photo. 2). Five other pieces were found at the same time and all are probably of oak (Photo. 3).

- The furthest away on the photograph had no visible joints (80mm x 140mm x 1400mm).
- The next had one bored hole 30mm dia. near a finished end, the other end appeared to be broken (40mm x 110mm x 1200mm)
- The next had similar features to the two nearest, of alternating bore holes, 30-35mm dia. with sub-rectangular through-mortises, 35mm wide and 85mm long. It was an incomplete length, but may have been very nearly complete as it had larger, c. 50mm holes at each end, one of which was a possible half joint (40mm x 100mm x 1070mm long)
- Same bore holes and mortises as above. One end finished with half joint with 45mm dia. bored hole, the other end was broken. This timber was not square and partly rounded on one corner, possibly natural edge. (70mm x 140mm x 1350mm)
- Similar bore holes and mortises to the two above. Also had one half joint with remains of 45mm dia. bored hole, other end broken. Timber rectangular (65mm x 120mm x 1230mm)

The remains of the building, probably on the quay, were landscaped in the 1960's when the quay gained its present name (Photo. 4) leaving part of the ground floor south elevation showing (Photo. 5). This area was rapidly excavated using a large tracked digger using a toothed bucket and it was not therefore practical to undertake any recording.

DISCUSSION

The slates slabs at the bottom of the quay are probably recent and may come from the partial demolition of the former Warehouses on what is now Prince Charles Quay. It is possible that the five timbers recovered (Photo. 3) may also come from this demolition. It cannot be ascertained what the original function of

these timbers might have been. There was no indication of the date of the probable timber pile but it too is likely to be relatively recent.

The remains of the former building on the quay may have its origins in the two houses recorded outside of the town wall in c. 1507, becoming the single building illustrated in 1748 (Fig. 3). The illustration of this frontage appears to correlate with that of the left hand side of the remaining ground floor (Photo. 5).

Unfortunately the methods being employed on this project were not conducive to recording the past elements of the site. Although there were obvious engineering and costs priorities, it is considered that some of these problems could have been addressed, especially in recording the remains of the former warehouse. These recording problems were exacerbated, to some extent, by Cambria not having a detailed description of the works and not being updated on the work timetable. It is hoped that these discrepancies will be addressed in any similar project. Furthermore the landscaping has removed all above-ground trace of the former warehouse on this site (Figs. 5 and 6). It is therefore hoped that an interpretation panel will be included in the near future to balance the visual loss.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

This will be held by Cambria HER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Canon Seamus Cunnane for his detailed knowledge on Cardigan. Thanks also to Richard Ramsey and Hubert Wilson who undertook most of the watching brief visits.

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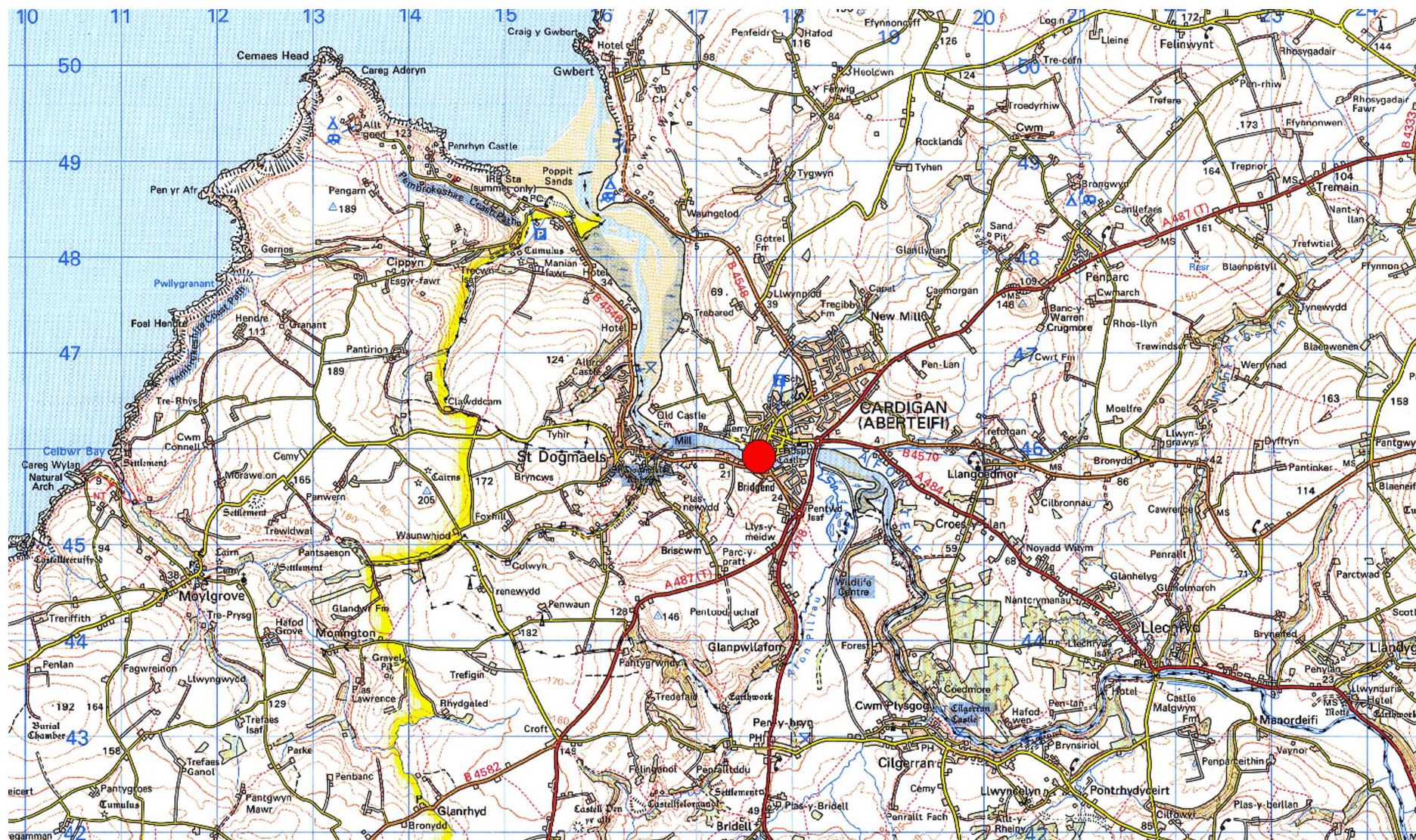


Figure 1: Location

Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

Figure 2: John Speed's Map of Cardigan 1610



Figure 3: Print of Cardigan Castle 1748

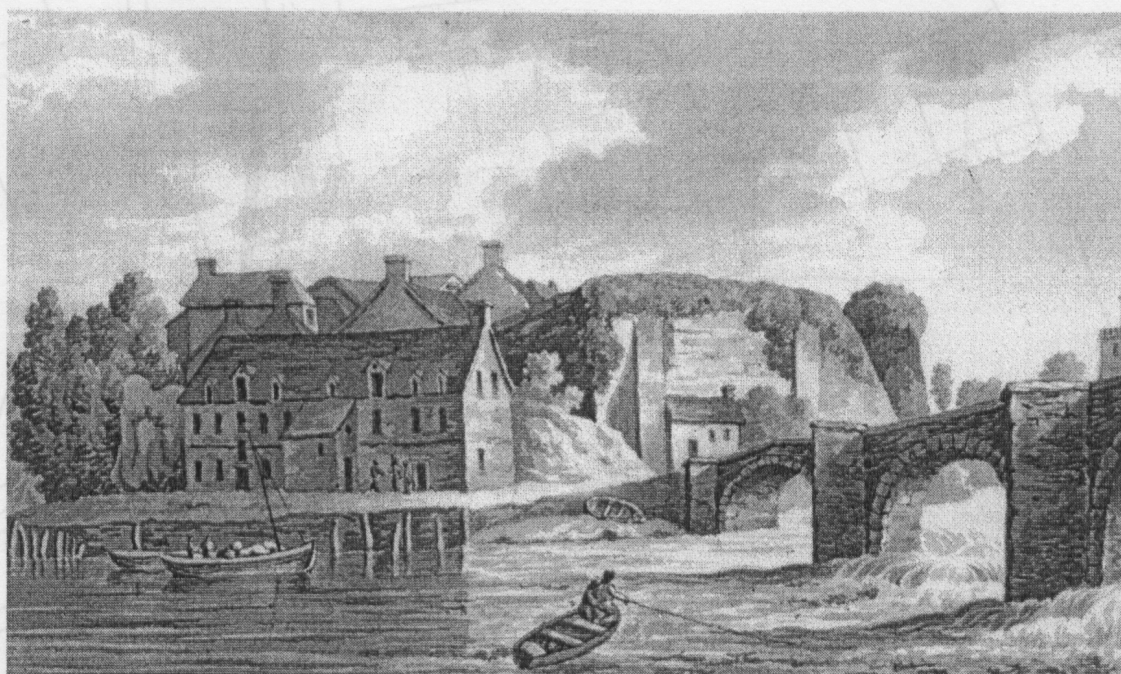






Photo. 1: Slate deposit at base of quay



Photo. 2: Probable large pile



Photo. 3: Timbers with joints. Scale 0.5m



Photo. 4: Commemorative plaque



Photo. 5: Remains of building on Prince Charles Quay before demolition. View E



Photo. 6: The newly built quay wall and landscaping. View NW