RHOS ON SEA COASTAL PROTECTION WORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT



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Fig 1. General location plan.



Fig 2. Coastal features identified.

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Fig 3. Location of evaluation excavation trenches.

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Fig 4. The linear slot - excavated trench sections

a) Trench 1 - narrow slot.

b) Trench 1 - wide slot.

c)Trench 4 - narrow slot in elevation.

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RHOS ON SEA COASTAL PROTECTION WORKS - Archaeological Evaluation Report

1. INTRODUCTION:

Colwyn Borough Council are proposing to carry out works to upgrade the coastal sea defences at Llandrillo yn Rhos (Rhos on Sea) Clwyd. This will comprise raising the height of the existing sea wall, the construction of a new access road to the sea front, and the planting of a 'skirt' of large boulders in the sand of the foreshore. These proposed works will result in the disturbance of a strip of the foreshore approximately 15m wide and 1500m long from Rhos Point to the Rhos on Sea Golf Course Club House.

An archaeological evaluation was carried out for Colwyn Borough Council between Nov. 30 and Dec. 16 1992 by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in accordance with the evaluation brief agreed with the Clwyd Archaeology Service, Clwyd County Council.

2. THE EVALUATION BRIEF:

There have been casual finds in the area of prehistoric stone tools and a hoard of Roman coins (see below). However, the main implications of the project with respect to the known archaeology involve: 1) the remains of a fishing weir, possibly medieval in origin, and perhaps associated with the nearby Cistercian monastic site known as Rhos Fynach, and 2) St. Trillo's Chapel, a supposed 16th century structure which may have had early Christian connections.

The area around St. Trillo's will be disturbed by the laying of the 'skirt' of boulders, and the construction of the access road approximately 40m to the SE of the Chapel. The SW end of the fishing weir was potentially threatened by the laying of the boulder 'skirt'.

The aims of the evaluation brief were threefold:

1) to identify any previously unknown archaeology which is likely to be threatened by the proposed works,

2) to investigate the character and complexity of the surviving remains of the threatened section of the fishing weir,

3) to produce a report identifying all threatened archaeological features outlining where possible their character, extent, state of preservation, date, function, and relative importance. In addition specific recommendations will be made as to means of mitigating the detrimental effects of the proposed works on any archaeology identified.

These aims were to be fulfilled in four stages of archaeological work:

Stage 1 - a desk based study of all available, relevant records

Stage 2 - fieldwalking of the threatened foreshore zone

Stage 3 - a small scale excavation to assess the character of any surviving remains of the fishing weir

Stage 4 - a written report

3. PROCEDURES AND METHODS:

STAGE 1 - Desk Based Study

The Clwyd Sites and Monuments Record for the development area was consulted. In addition, the Gwynedd Archives based at University College, Bangor and The Clwyd Record Office in Ruthin were visited to inspect the relevant records. The following records were consulted:

Maps:

- "Description of the Sea-Coast of England and Wales", S. Fearon & J. Eyes, Liverpool (1738)

- "The Coast Of N. Wales" (Admiralty Chart, 1835)
- Tithe map and apportionment (1847)
- OS 6" 1871
- OS 25" 1900
- OS 25" 1913
- OS 25" 1937
- OS 1:1250 1958 (revised 1963)

Other Documents:

- Records of the Courts of Augmentation
- (from Cernioge/Thorne Schedules, Gwynedd Archives, UCNW, Bangor)
- Rhos Fynach, The Marsh of the Monks; N. Tucker, Conwy (1950)
 Colwyn Bay, Its Origin and Growth; N Tucker, Colwyn Bay (1953)
- Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales; D H Williams, Cardiff (1990)
- Colwyn Bay Before the Houses Came; G Porter, (1938)
- Colwyn Bay 1934-1974; G Edwards,(1984)
- History of the Diocese of Saint Asaph; D R Thomas, (1913)
- Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society
- Archaeologia Cambrensis, 3rd Series Vol.I (1855) and 4th Series Vol.XX (1880)
- 'Walls in the Sea the goradau of Menai'; C Jones, The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology & Underwater Exploration, (1983), 12.1
- 'Gorad Beuno: investigation of an ancient fish-trap in Caernarfon Bay N. Wales'; G Momber, The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology, (1991), 20.2
- The Prehistoric & Roman Remains of Flintshire; E Davies, (1949)
- The Prehistoric & Roman Remains of Denbighs.; E Davies, (1929)
- Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments, Denbighshire (1912)

STAGE 2 - Fieldwalking

Field walking of the entire length of the proposed development area from Rhos Point to the County boundary in the west was carried out in two transects taking in a 30m wide strip of the foreshore. Features were identified and the foreshore areas containing these were then walked again while the features were located by EDM total station and described on Gwynedd Archaeological Trust standard forms.

STAGE 3 - Evaluation Excavation (Fig.2 & 3)

The precise location of the weir on the foreshore and the extent to which it mounted the foreshore were unknown. Therefore, in order to confirm the existence of the fishing weir within the threatened area with any confidence, it was felt necessary to ascertain something of its likely character from the area of the existing visible remains beyond the development zone, and then to trace these remains back into the zone.

The surviving visible weir structure comprises a gently curving band 4-6m wide of dispersed large boulders with short timber stubs forming a line located roughly centrally within the band of boulders. At a distance of some 35m from the existing sea wall the band narrows abruptly to 2m wide with no timbers visible and proceeds to a point approximately 15m from the sea wall. Initial work centred on this narrow boulder band as potentially tracing the line of the weir into the development zone.

The first step, before any wholesale clearance of stone from the foreshore could be contemplated, was to investigate the possibility that the weir was stone founded. Old photographs indicate that the weir had stone foundations further out to sea and other fishing weirs recorded in North Wales are stone founded.(1)

This was achieved by the machine clearance of three small areas at the base of the narrow band of stones (Fig), trench one (T-1) and trench two (T-2) located about halfway along on the E and W sides respectively and trench 3 (T-3) located on the W near the southern end of the stones.

T-1 initially measured approximately 1.5m sq., while T-2 was 1.5 x 2.0 and T-3 was 1.25m x 1.65m. All the trenches were excavated with a toothless bucket and to a maximum depth of about 0.30m initially.

In T-1, a large stone was located at the base of the narrow boulder band buried in the sea bed clays in the position where the stone foundation might be expected and oriented parallel to the stone band. Therefore T-1 was expanded along the base of the boulders towards the shore and was excavated deeper to prospect for more potential foundation stones. No further stones were uncovered, however, the expansion of the trench towards the SE did reveal a linear slot cut into the sea bed running towards the shore but at a slightly different angle to the narrow boulder band. This feature was sectioned and T-1 reached its final dimensions of 3.5m NW-SE x 2.8m NE-SW and 0.80m deep.

The length of the slot was then machine scraped back towards the shore to reveal its full extent and orientation on the foreshore. A further 2.5m stretch was hand cleared from T-1 seaward to reveal its character in that direction. Trench 4 (T-4) was then machine excavated immediately adjacent to the NW side of the slot in order to inspect the feature in elevation. The trench measured 3.0m long x 0.85m wide and 0.50m deep.

The final trench, T-5, involved clearance of the foreshore area immediately to the SW of the slot feature and the narrow stone band to inspect for further features or elements of the weir. This area was progressively machine scraped to a depth of maximum 0.30m and measured 18.4m NE-SW and 11.5m SE-NW.

Inspection of T-2 and T-3 revealed no features so they were abandoned. T-1 was hand cleaned and the NE and SW facing sections of the feature were photographed, drawn to scale, and described on standard Gwynedd Archaeological Trust record forms. The central partially machined area between the two sections was then hand excavated to reveal any further features in plan which were likewise recorded.

T-4 was hand cleaned and the slot was photographed, and drawn in elevation. It was then described on GAT forms and samples were taken.

The machine scraped area of the foreshore (T-5) was hand cleaned and revealed features were photographed, drawn to scale, and described.

An EDM plan was produced of the trenches and features including the main elements of the visible weir to a distance of 50m from the sea wall which was incorporated with the plan of the features discovered during Stage 2 (above). The trenches were then backfilled with the excavated spoil and stones.

4. RESULTS

STAGE 1- Desk Based Study

Several finds have been recovered over the years in the area of Rhos Point indicating some prehistoric and Roman activity. A prehistoric stone tranchet or chisel (PRN 467) was found in 1929 on the foreshore and a polished stone axe (PRN466) was found the same year in the front garden of the Rhos Abbey hotel. A hoard of at least 6 Roman coins (PRN 463) some of which dated to the first third of the fourth century were found wrapped in a sheet of lead in an old stone drain also in the garden of Rhos Abbey during site clearance work for the construction of the hotel in 1898.(2)

Rhos Fynach Weir:

The earliest mention of Rhos Fynach is a charter dated 1230 which marks its purchase by Ednyfed Fychan the seneschal of Llewellyn ap Iorwerth. It defines his property including "all the water which flows down through the ditch itself as far as Aberdowyth, with all the apputenances and its liberties, buildings, mills and fisheries, the said Idnevet and his heirs shall possess without challenge, so that no one save Idnevet and his heirs, can fish or otherwise traffic in the same water."(3)

Ednyfed then transferred the property to the monks of Aberconwy. The weir reverted to the crown at the Dissolution and was granted to the earl of Leicester by Queen Elizabeth I as part of the Lordship of Denbigh.(4)

A record of 1550 in the courts of augmentation mentions that the weir had fallen into disrepair and had been refurbished.(5) A further entry that year records that the weir had been vandalised and mentions the "poles" being pulled out to make it unusable.(6)

A document of 1575 details the gift of Rhos Fynach by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester to Morgan ap John ap David "for services rendered at sea in connection with the Queen's enemies"(7). Lands are granted and reference is made to "pool waters, fishing waters".(8)

A map of 1738, "A Description of the Sea-Coast of England and Wales", shows the weir as a very prominent hook protruding from the coast.

During the Commission of Inquiry into the age of the weir in connection with the Salmon Fishing Act of 1861, various documents were produced in support of its antiquity. These included several deeds of ownership which appear to refer to the weir: one of 1741 shows the owner to be John Parry and mentions "the weirs, fishing hereditaments, and appurtenances whatsoever thereto belonging". In 1743 John Parry made over Rhos Fynach and the weirs to his wife Deborah Parry and it eventually passed to his sister Elizabeth Parry. A document of 1767 records a deed between Anne, the daughter of Elizabeth Parry, and her husband Thomas Evans which mentions "two weirs or fisheries belonging to the said last mentioned messuage".(9)

Another document dated 1774 recorded the tithe due from the fish weir,"three parts to the Rector and one to the Vicar".(10)This tithe continued to be levied by the vicars at Rhos Fynach weir until the end of the last century.(11)

A lease of 1804 to Thomas Ellis mentions "all the weirs, fisheries, fishing places".(12)

The tithe apportionment of 1847 records the owner of the "slope by the sea shore" as Mrs M Parry. It records no cultivation and no rents payable. There is no sign of the weir on the tithe map itself, although what looks like a large pond is illustrated to the S of Rhos Farm (Rhos Fynach), and also appears on the 1871 6 inch OS map.

In 1850 there was a record catch of 35,000 herrings at the weir.(13)

In 1865 an Act was obtained for the building of the pier at Rhos Point 400 yds in length to which steamers could call at all times of the year. It was opened in 1895.(14)

1867 the Commission of Inquiry mentioned above was held and the weir preserved from obligatory demolition because of its antiquity.

In 1917 a great storm destroyed the Rhos pier jetty and at about the same time the weir fell out of use.(15)

In 1954 the pier was demolished.

In 1966 because of the growth of small pleasure boat sailing the shortened stumps of the weir were judged to be a navigation hazard and so they were finally cut down.(16)

St. Trillo's Chapel:

The name suggests a sixth century connection though there is no other evidence for this.

The site was described by Pennant in the late 18th century and appears to have been of much the same character as now: stone vaulted roof, a window on each side and at the end with a small door and containing a well. The only difference being that he records a stone wall surrounding the structure.(17)

The chapel appears on an Admiralty map of 1835 marked in brackets 'ruin'.(18)

The building was described in 1855 in Archaeologia Cambrensis by which time it certainly was deteriorating. The accompanying illustration shows a hole in the roof and the door arch-head missing. It does not show the stone wall mentioned by Pennant nor the present stone buttresses and the roof appears considerably more peaked than it is now. A date of not earlier than the 16th century was postulated.(19)

The 1871 6 inch OS map shows what appears to be a causeway or path running from the SE end of the Chapel out onto the foreshore.

In 1880 the chapel was again described in Archaeologia Cambrensis. By this time one third of the roof had collapsed.(20)

The chapel was finally extensively renovated in the 1890s (21)However, by 1934 it was apparently falling into a dilapidated state once again. (22) It was eventually acquired by the Colwyn Bay Corporation and restored.

STAGE 2- Fieldwalking

The following features were identified (Fig.2): (NB: posts are numbered starting from the shore)

F1- Linear arrangement of 10 timber posts stretching from a point 3.36m from sea wall to a point 15m to ENE of the sea wall. The posts stand a maximum 0.23m tall, and though badly eroded , it is probable that they are circular in section with a maximum recorded diameter of 0.11m.

F2-23 very closely arranged timber posts forming at times a double line stretching from a point 6.16m from the sea wall to a point about 15m to NE of the sea wall. The posts stand a maximum 0.24m high and though badly eroded they appear to be circular in section. The recorded diameter was generally no more than 0.09m though one post has a diameter of 0.16m.

F3- Linear arrangement of 11 timber posts stretching from a point 16m from the sea wall to a point 28m to NE of the sea wall. They stand a maximum 0.29m tall and though badly eroded are likely to be circular in section with a maximum recorded diameter of 0.10m.

F4- Linear arrangement of 4 timber posts stretching from a point 6m from the sea wall to a point 11m to NE of the sea wall. They stand a maximum 0.12m tall and though eroded they appear to be circular in section with a maximum recorded diameter of 0.07m.

F5- Linear arrangement of 4 timber posts stretching from a point 9m from the sea wall to a point 16m to NE of the sea wall. The posts stand a maximum 0.33m tall and at least two of them are split timbers ie half circular in section with the flat face to the W. They are a maximum 0.15m in diameter. Post 4 is lying prostrate towards the SE.

F6- Linear arrangement of 3 timber posts stretching from a point

20m from the sea wall to a point 26m to NE of the sea wall. Posts 1 & 2 are decayed points only, post 3 lies prostrate toward the E, appears to be circular in section and measures 0.10m in diameter.

F7- Linear arrangement of 4 posts stretching from a point 11m from the sea wall to a point 20m to the NE of the sea wall. The posts stand a maximum 0.10m tall and are generally just eroded points, however, post 3 is round in section with a diameter of 0.09m. Post 4 is lying prostrate towards the N embedded in the sand and is circular in section. It is unusual in that it is only 0.04m in diameter and it may be a wattle or an unassociated trapped piece of wood.

F8- Linear arrangement of 8 posts stretching from a point 10m from the sea wall to a point 20m to the NE of the sea wall. The posts stand a maximum 0.20m tall and though some are decayed they appear to have been circular in section with a maximum diameter of 0.11m. Several of the posts have flat tops appearing to have been cut off at their present length rather than eroded. Posts 6 & 7 are lying prostrate towards the SE

F9- 35 timber posts forming a gently curving line some 50m long very roughly parallel to the present shoreline opposite St. Trillo's Chapel. The NW end is 10m from the shore while the SW end is 26m clear. A further line of 9 timber posts runs at right angles from the main body towards the NNE. The posts are generally about 0.20m tall, round in section and up to 0.15m in diameter.

F10- 2 timber posts located approximately 14m from the sea wall and oriented almost due N. They are standing to a maximum 0.32m tall and though eroded to a point appear to be round in section with a diameter of 0.14m.

F11- Linear arrangement of 11 timber posts stretching from a point 10m from the sea wall to a point 14m to the N of the sea wall. The timbers are badly eroded standing only just proud of the sea bed. They take various shapes in section though where less eroded they appear to be largely circular with a maximum diameter of 0.16m

F12- Single post located 14m from the sea wall. It is 0.10m tall, circular in section with a diameter of 0.10m. The post is leaning towards the E

F13- Two posts located 14m from the sea wall forming a line oriented to the N. Both are lying prostrate towards the S. Post 2 is 0.43m long by 0.06m wide and the N end appears to be embedded in a concrete foundation measuring 0.5m by 0.6m. Post 1 is 0.49m long by 0.17m wide. A further concreted area appears just to the S of post 1 measuring 1.0m long N-S and 0.55m wide.

F14- Two posts located 12m and 17m from the sea wall forming a line oriented due north. The posts are badly eroded and survive only as small 'claws' of wood protruding from the sand.

F15- Two timber posts located 14m from the sea wall and forming a line oriented towards the NW. Both posts are circular in section, post one is 0.18m in diameter and post 2 is 0.15m. They are leaning gently towards the shore and stand to a maximum of 0.35m high. Two pieces of potential wattle were located with the posts and embedded in the sea bed. The first piece is located immediately to the E of both posts and measures 1.5m long and is circular in section with a diameter of 0.03m. The second piece is located a metre of so to the N of post 2 but still

roughly on the same orientation. It is 0.92m long, circular in section and 0.02m in diameter.

F16- A linear band 5.15m long and 0.52m wide consisting of closely packed rounded stones embedded in the sea bed. It is located 12m from the sea wall and is oriented towards the NW. There is no sign of a matrix. There are four timber posts associated with this feature, three are located within the stone band at its N end and one 1.5m to the NW of the feature. Posts 3 and 4 are semi-circular in section, ie split posts, while 1 and 2 are circular. They are some 0.16m in diameter and stand to a maximum 0.40m tall, leaning moderately towards the shore.

F17- Four timber planks forming a linear arrangement approximately one metre long running from a point 4m from the sea wall towards the N on a similar alignment to F16. Planks 1,2 & 3 are 0.27m long and 0.06m thick, 4 is 0.17m long and 0.06m thick. They are arranged end to end with 1 and 2 butting and 3 and 4 butting. They stand to a maximum 0.15m tall with eroded, rounded edges and they lean slightly towards the NW.

F18- A linear arrangement of 5 timber posts running from a point 12m from the sea wall to a point 18m to the NW of the sea wall.

Posts 2 and 5 are semi- circular in section is split posts, the others are circular. They range in girth from 0.09m to 0.19m, and are all over 0.30m tall. Two pieces of potential wattle were observed embedded in the sand one on either side of the base of post 3. One was 0.20m in length the other 0.55m.

F19- Five short stretches of rough dry stone wall ranging from 2 to 5m long running from a point 40m to the SE of St. Trillo's Chapel along the base of the turfed bank towards the SE for a distance of 32m. They are heavily overgrown and engulfed by the bank forming the present shore. The walls comprise rounded stones 0.15-0.25m in size and measure a maximum 1.0m tall.

STAGE 3- Evaluation Excavation

Introduction:

The sea shore area here consists of several different profiles. In the east at Rhos Point it takes the form of a steep turfed bank which drops abruptly down from road in the SW towards the sea in the NE. A concrete wall some 1.5m high stands on the foreshore retaining the bank and runs from the site of the old pier in the E to a point approximately midway between there and St. Trillo's Chapel. From the end of this sea wall up to the Chapel, the bank slopes down virtually onto the foreshore and is retained in places by short sections of a ruinous dry stone wall (F19). From St. Trillo's to the County boundary, the shore does not drop down to the sea but is retained by a concrete sea wall.

To the east of Rhos Point is a small harbour protected by a large modern stone breakwater at its N end near the Point. According to local people, the breakwater is responsible for the deposition of considerable sand which has radically reduced the breadth of the harbour area.

The foreshore itself slopes down very gently S to N and comprises a very compacted mid brown clay containing frequent small stones and moderate larger stones to 0.20m. This layer is extremely stiff and is almost impervious to hand excavation.

The basal clay layer is overlain by a layer up to 0.15m thick of medium sand and frequent rounded stones and shell fragments. The lower half of the layer contains dark grey silt which grades to a clean mid brown colour in the upper half.

The foreshore area is littered with stones and boulders some up to several metres in length, as well as large blocks of concrete near to the shoreline.

During the period of the excavations from November 30 1992 to December 16 1992, the tides varied from a low of 1.2m to a high of 9.5m above OD. Because of the timing of low tide and the shortness of daylight at the time of the year, it was generally possible to work for only about a

half day at a time. The shortest day was November 30th at 3.75 hrs, and the longest December 4th at 7.0 hrs.

Unfortunately, the period of the excavations also coincided with a sustained spell of torrential rain. This problem was magnified by the fact that runoff from the road above the site spilled onto the foreshore directly in front of the excavation area through an outlet pipe. Thus the working conditions were very poor. It was necessary to run a pump almost continuously to keep the trenches anywhere near workable and much time was lost pumping the trenches out and diverting the runoff away from the excavation area. In addition, the high tide dumped new deposits of sand and stone in the cleared areas and eroded the sides of the trenches.

The Excavations: (Fig.3 & 4)

The initial shallow machine trenches (T-1,2 & 3) revealed that the narrow boulder band consisted for the most part of stones which were merely sitting on the sea bed with no sign of any deliberate stone foundations. However, to the east of the boulder band in T-1 a narrow slot was identified cut into the sea bed and containing what appeared to be horizontal wattles. Once sectioned it became clear that what had appeared as one feature comprised two markedly different elements.

To the S it consisted of a "U" shaped profile slot cut into the sea bed clay measuring 0.37m wide and 0.35m deep and some 4m long which butt ended 18m from the present shore. The feature was filled with a soft homogeneous mid grey sandy clay containing moderate rounded stones. This fill surrounded a series of horizontal wattles which in section appeared arranged one above the other in two parallel vertical lines located centrally within the fill. In plan occasional wattle strands could be seen forming long shallow 'S' shapes on the surface of the fill of the slot. In elevation the wattles could be traced running down the length of the feature.

No posts were visible though the shallow "S" shape of the wattles in plan would suggest that they were originally woven around posts now lost. One possible post void was investigated though this was inconclusive.

To the N, the feature comprised a flat bottomed rectangular profile slot cut into the sea bed clays measuring 0.53m wide and 0.60m deep and was cleared to a length of 2.6m but certainly ran beyond the N limit of the T-1 extension. It contained a more complex sequence of fills, the lowest being a mid grey sandy clay similar to the fill of the S slot but containing only one wattle end in section. Above this was a soft brown clay filling the feature to three quarters of its depth. The top quarter of the feature was filled by a a dark grey very loose medium sand containing frequent shell flecks. This fill also formed a band 0.10-0.15m wide located in the centre of the feature which in section penetrated down through the lower fills to the bottom of the cut.

In plan the edges of the N slot were somewhat irregular, the fill appeared very mixed and stony.

Within the cleared area, two timbers were identified located in the centre of the fill of this N slot. They were in a line parallel to the orientation of the slot. The S post was lying nearly horizontal and parallel to the line of the slot with its top to the SW. It measured 0.11m in diameter and 0.54m long. 0.50m to the NE of the base of this post was a further timber standing only a few centimetres tall. Though decayed it appeared to have a maximum thickness of 0.12m.

Excavation of the slot in the base of T-1 revealed a large sub-circular shaped posthole located in the dead centre of the trench. It had a "U"shaped profile and measured 0.36m in diameter and approximately 0.25m deep. The fill was a soft mid grey sandy clay.

The machine scraping of the area to the S of T1 (T5) had revealed what at first appeared to be a further narrow slot running from the end of the wattle filled slot and curving off towards the SE. Hand clearance of this feature revealed it to consist of at least 21 closely aligned postholes some 0.35m in diameter filled with a mid brownish grey sandy clay. Some of the postholes contained post pipes 0.14m in diameter and 0.15m deep filled with a mid grey medium sand.

5. INTERPRETATION

It would seem most probable that the slot feature recorded during the evaluation excavation represents the remains of the weir. It is roughly in the position expected and butt ends some distance from the shore which would not be reasonable for a groyne or other breakwater structure. The effort taken to anchor the wattles in a slot cut into the extremely hard sea bed clays suggests some special purpose for which special effort had to be made. The feature is also much further from the shore than any of the other timber groynes identified and appears to line up fairly satisfactorily with the remaining visible weir remains further out to sea.

The two different characters of the sections of the slot probably indicate two phases of the weir, the larger feature cutting the earlier smaller one. The fills are certainly radically different and the lower fill in the large feature (with its single wattle) may represent redeposited material from the narrow feature.

It would seem likely that the section of the wider feature represents a post pipe within a post hole. No post was seen in this cut though posts occur immediately to the NE of the section. It may be that the particularly deep posthole excavated in T1 represents the anchor post at the S end of a fairly modern version of the weir. The two end posts (ie the anchor post and the post in the section drawing) were torn out perhaps by storm (possibly that of 1917 which also destroyed the pier jetty?) while the next post to the N has also suffered and is prostrate. No posts or post holes were identified in the narrow slot so it is perhaps not coincidental that surviving posts begin to appear at a significant change in the character of the slots.

How much earlier the narrow slot is than the wide one is open to debate. The 25 inch OS maps for 1900, 1913 and 1937 all show the weir coming right up to the shore. The 1:1250 OS survey of the weir (1958, revised 1963) indicates modern stakes running up to a point which appears to correspond with the S end of the narrow slot recorded in the present excavation. This may suggest that the narrow slot structure too is also relatively modern.

There is a significant deviation in the line of the weir as recorded on the OS maps which occurs at about 30m from the shore. Although it appears to be beyond the area of the excavation, it is possible that this represents the interface between the two features recorded in the present work.

It is also important to consider the likelihood that sections of the weir were destroyed by storm and replaced on a fairly regular basis, so that it may be that excavations elsewhere along the structure would also reveal different phases of construction not necessarily of great significance with respect to date.

The long series of postholes running from the S end of the narrow slot up to the shore is enigmatic. Its radically different character would suggest that it has a different function to the two slots. The most likely suggestion is that it represents a timber groyne extended to link up with the presumably still visible weir. This again suggests that the narrow slot is a relatively modern feature. However, it is also just possible that it is not a groyne but represents a further phase of the weir.

The 1937 edition of the 25" OS map shows a series of groynes extending into the sea from various points along the foreshore and it may be that the remains of some of these have been recorded in the fieldwalking stage of the present work. Certainly old photographs of the foreshore show a great number of timber structures running out from the shore as well as parallel to it. Some of these appear to have had wattling as suggested by the remains at F15, F18, and F7 above. The structure at F9 is interesting as it was the only timberwork identified running parallel to the shore. This may have been an earlier 'coastal protection work' designed to protect St. Trillo's Chapel. However, any timbers anywhere in the zone of interest still standing significantly above the level of the sea bed are not likely to be more than one hundred years old.

It should also be noted that the features identified here are only the presently visible timbers and that any disturbance of the sea bed is likely to turn up many more.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It would appear that the bulk of the weir remains are outside of the threatened zone and secure from further disturbance. The level of recording undertaken during the evaluation excavation is considered sufficient and therefore no further major archaeological works are deemed necessary. However, the string of 21 postholes which runs from the end of the narrow slot towards the shore will be disturbed by the proposed works. It is just possible that this represents a phase of the weir structure.

It is therefore recommended that a watching brief be maintained in the area of the weir during ground disturbance in order to recover any timber and to record any further details of the feature which may come to light.

2. In addition considering the lack of information regarding the date or history of the present St. Trillo's Chapel, and the possibility of precursors or associated features, a watching brief should also be maintained during any ground disturbance around the Chapel.

3. A quick photographic survey should also be undertaken of the ruined dry stone wall (F19) which revets the base of the bank to the SE of St. Trillo's.

SUGGESTIONS

1) It is suggested, considering the historical importance of the weir and other sites nearby, that the Council might investigate the feasibility of producing permanent information boards to cater to the obvious local interest in the area's heritage.

2) Important timber samples have been taken from the narrow slot excavated during the evaluation. Radio-carbon dating of these should produce a fairly precise date for what may potentially be an early phase of the weir structure. In order to maximise the results of the archaeological work, the Council might consider the possibility of funding the dating of a limited sample.

7. WORK PROGRAMME & COSTINGS

1 & 2. The duration and scheduling of the watching briefs and the number of staff involved will of course depend upon the programme of the developer and contractors.

3. The photographic survey of F19 would involve black and white prints and colour slides at a 35mm format or larger. This work would require a minimal resource and could probably be undertaken at the same time as the watching briefs

All work would be undertaken by an experienced project officer with possible assistance from trained archaeological assistants. The work would be monitored by a senior Trust officer who will be a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

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- 4 RCAHM Denbighshire (1912), pp 95-6, No.313
- 5 Records of the Courts of Augmentation, No.61
- 6 Ibid.,No.62
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