



CAMBRIAN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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Church Cottage, Discoed Powys

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MIFA

Report No. 659

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd
Old Chapel Farm, Llanidloes
Powys SY18 6JR
Telephone: 01686 413857
E-mail: info@cambarch.co.uk





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Church Cottage, Discoed Powys

Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared For: Maggie Taylor Sanders

Edited by:

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Authorised by:

Signed:

Position:

Date:

By

Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MIFA

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Non Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) for Maggie Taylor Sanders of Ross on Wye. It draws upon the results gained by a watching brief on the excavation of service trenches during extension works on Church Cottage, Discoed, Powys. The area immediately adjacent to the cottage is recorded in the regional HER as a motte and bailey castle (SAM RD059). A single wall of likely medieval date was located during the work. Further watching briefs were undertaken by Cadw within the area of the scheduled ancient monument.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

In June 2010 Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Church Cottage, Discoed, Powys NGR SO 27617 64778 (Fig 1).

A watching brief was carried out as part of the planning process at the request of Mark Walters (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust). A brief was provided by CPAT against which a works specification was drawn up by Mark Houliston (Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd).

The assessment area is located adjacent to the Discoed castle mound and bailey. This is a scheduled ancient monument (SAM RD059).

1.2 Geology and topography

The solid geological formations beneath the assessment area are mainly composed of limestone rock formations of the Silurian era (British Geological Survey 2001).

Church Cottage, Discoed, is located at 200m AOD on the north facing slope above the River Lugg, 3km to the west of Presteigne. The route of Offa's Dyke runs approximately 500m to the west of Discoed. The surrounding landscape is characterised by sparsely wooded undulating agricultural land rising to some 372m AOD to the south.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1.1 Samuel Lewis, in his Topographic Dictionary of Wales (1833), states that 'PRESTEIGNE, otherwise LLANANDRAS, a parish, partly in the hundred of WIGMORE, county of HEREFORD, and partly in the hundred and county of RADNOR, SOUTH WALES, in which latter it comprises the township of Presteigne (including the market and assize town of that name), and the chapelry of Discoed, which separately support their own poor, 8 miles (E. N. E.) from New Radnor, and 152 (W. N. W.) from London; the whole parish contains 3282 inhabitants, there being in that part of it which is in the county of Radnor 1629, of which number, 1513 are in the township of Presteigne, which includes the whole of the town, together with an

extensive tract of land surrounding it on the east, south, and west. This place, of which the latter name is derived from the dedication of its church to St. Andrew, appears to have remained in obscurity till towards the close of the thirteenth century, and to have first risen into importance during the prelacy of David Martin, Bishop of St. David's, who was raised to that see in the year 1293. This prelate, who continued to preside over the see till 1328, was a munificent benefactor to it, having obtained for the inhabitants the privilege of holding a weekly market, which, according to Leland, was in his time celebrated for its corn, and frequented by the people of the cantrev of Maelienydd. Either from its retired situation or its want of local importance, it appears to have been altogether unconnected with any of the military events that so often disturbed the internal tranquillity of the principality, or made the marches the scene of havoc and slaughter. During the parliamentary war in the reign of Charles I., that monarch, retreating before Cromwell, then in the neighbourhood of Hereford, appears from an entry in an old parish register to have passed two nights at the house of Nicholas Taylor, Esq., who lived in this parish, at a place called the Lower Heath, near what is now called " the King's Turning," probably from the circumstance of the king having turned thence over the hills to Newtown in Montgomeryshire, from which place he proceeded to Chester.

- 1.3.1.2 The town, which is now the chief town in the county of Radnor, is pleasantly situated in the midst of a fertile vale surrounded by hills, of which some are richly wooded, and is separated from that part of the parish which is in Herefordshire only by the small river Lug, which here forms a boundary between the two counties, and is crossed by an ancient bridge of three small arches. It consists of one principal thoroughfare, from which two smaller streets diverge nearly at right angles, and parallel with each other, in a direction towards the river. Though of an irregular form, it has an air of neatness and respectability superior to most of the towns in this part of the principality: the houses, though in general small, are well built and of neat appearance, and are interspersed with several of larger size, inhabited by respectable families of independent fortune, and professional individuals. The streets are partially paved, though not lighted ; and the inhabitants are amply supplied with water by means of pumps and open wells. The surrounding scenery is finely varied, and in many points highly picturesque ; and from the hills by which the vale is surrounded are some interesting and extensive views over the country adjacent. An eminence called Warden, a little to the west of the town, supposed to have been the site of an ancient castle, of which there are no remains, was presented to the inhabitants by the Earl of Oxford, and has been laid out in agreeable walks, forming a pleasant promenade, which is a favourite resort of the inhabitants : it commands a very delightful prospect, embracing a fine tract of highly cultivated country, embellished with pleasingly diversified scenery, and enlivened with numerous gentlemen's seats, among which Boultibrook, the seat of Sir Harford Jones Brydges, Bart., an elegant mansion situated in beautifully disposed grounds, forms a conspicuous object. The river Lug is celebrated for its trout and graylings, which are taken here of superior quality. A woollen manufacture was formerly carried on, but it has been for some time abandoned, and the town has now no branch of manufacture : the trade is principally in malt, of which a great quantity is made, the soil in the neighbourhood being favourable to the growth of barley. Some trade is also carried on in timber, which is

brought from the counties of Hereford and Radnor, and in coal, brought by land carriage from the Clee Hill in Shropshire, and also from Monmouthshire, by a railroad to Kington, in Herefordshire, and thence by land carriage to this town. A portion of traffic arises also from its situation on the turnpike roads leading from New Radnor to Leominster, and from Knighton to Kington; and the neighbourhood for five miles round is principally supplied with grocery, drapery, iron work, and shop goods in general, from this place, which has become a central depot for those articles of trade. The market is on Saturday : the principal fairs are now held annually on May 9th and October 13th, of which the former is also a statute fair for the hiring of servants ; and there is a smaller fair on December 11th. A fair formerly held on the 20th of June has been superseded by a celebrated wake, called Warden Wake, now annually held on that day upon the eminence called Warden.

- 1.3.1.3 This place is a borough by prescription; and there is a crown manor, styled "the Lordship, Manor, and Borough of Presteigne," comprising the township of Presteigne and the chapelry of Discoed. It has a bailiff and two constables, the former appointed annually at the court leet of the crown, but exercising no magisterial authority. The township is divided into the four wards of High-street, St. David's-street, Broad-street, and Hereford-street, of which the two former and the two latter collect their poor's rates jointly, and the whole are united for the maintenance of the poor. The borough formerly claimed to be contributory to New Radnor, in the return of a member to parliament ; but this claim of the inhabitants to exercise the elective franchise was rejected by the House of Commons, in 1690, on the assertion of the right, from which, according to the prevailing tradition among the inhabitants; they had been previously excluded, on refusing to contribute towards the expense of supporting their representative. But, under the recent act to amend the representation, the township of Presteigne, and the chapelry of Discoed, comprehending all that part of the parish which is situated within the county of Radnor, together with a small tract of the Herefordshire portion of it, on the banks of the Lug, immediately opposite the town, of which it contains a small suburb, form a contributory borough with those of Kevenleece, Knighton, Cnwclas, and Rhaiadr, in returning one member to parliament for the borough of Radnor. There being no former freemen, the right of election is vested in every male person of full age occupying, either as owner or as tenant under the same landlord, a house or other premises of the annual value of not less than ten pounds, provided he be capable of registering as the act directs : the limits of the borough are minutely defined in the Appendix ; the number of tenements of the above value, comprised within the Radnorshire portion of the borough, is one hundred and thirty-seven. In the 35th and 36th of Henry VIII. a statute was passed, ordaining that the county courts, which had been previously held alternately at New Radnor and at Rhaiadr, should be thereafter held alternately at New Radnor and at Presteigne, in consequence of a sheriff having been resisted in the execution of his duty, and killed in a tumult at Rhaiadr ; and it was subsequently arranged that the courts of assize should be held invariably at this place; where also the quarter sessions are held. The sheriff's courts are held here alternately with New Radnor. Presteigne is likewise, by the 2nd and 3rd of William IV., c. 64, constituted a polling-place for the election of the county representative. The shire-hall, erected in 1829, at an expense of £ 5000, defrayed by the county, is a handsome and commodious. edifice of brick and stone,

with a stuccoed front : it consists of a centre and two wings, the former ornamented with four equidistant pilasters of the Tuscan order, supporting an entablature and cornice, and the latter having each a receding portico, supported by three Tuscan columns : the centre comprises the court for holding the assizes and sessions, which is conveniently arranged : the north wing contains an apartment for the grand jury, a withdrawing-room for the petty jury, offices for the clerk of the peace, and apartments for the housekeeper ; and the south wing comprises a suite of apartments intended for the accommodation of the judges, consisting of two bedrooms, with dressing-rooms attached, a dining-room and a drawing-room, each thirty feet long, twenty feet wide; and sixteen feet in height. But the recent alteration in the Welsh judicature has rendered these preparations less necessary, as the judges seldom protract their stay in the town beyond two days, and the apartments which have not been yet furnished, are not likely to be occupied for that purpose. The county gaol, including also the house of correction for the county, was built in 1820, at an expense of £ 3500: it is situated on the east side of the town, and comprises three wards for the classification of prisoners, and, including the apartment for debtors, contains thirty-five sleeping cells, four day rooms, and four airing-yards : the prisoners sentenced to hard labour are employed in breaking, stones, there being no tread-wheel at present in the prison : the whole is enclosed within a wall eighteen feet high, and the entrance is between two massive three-quarter columns supporting an entablature.

- 1.3.1.4 The living is a rectory, with the chapelry of Discoed annexed, in the archdeaconry and diocese of Hereford; rated in the king's books at £20, and in the patronage of the Earl of Oxford. The impropriate tithes of this parish having been forfeited to the crown by the feoffees of the parish of St. Antholine, in the city of London, in the 15th of Charles I., in consequence of their purchasing impropriations for the purpose of maintaining " factious and seditious lectures," were granted by that monarch to the Rev. John Scull, B.D., rector of this parish, and to his successors for ever : this grant was revoked after the decapitation of that sovereign, but was restored by Charles II., in the first year of his reign. The church, dedicated to St. Andrew, is a spacious and handsome structure, partly in the decorated, and partly in the later style of English architecture, with a square western tower, strengthened with buttresses at the angles, and surmounted by a turret at one of them, and by pinnacles at the other three. The interior consists of a nave, chancel, and two aisles, the south aisle extending the whole length of the building, and forming a second chancel, which is claimed by the parishioners as their property : the nave is separated from the aisles by series of six pointed arches, resting upon octagonal pillars. The altar-piece is embellished with some fine tapestry, representing the entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem, the colours of which, though not vivid, harmonize well, and the whole is in a state of excellent preservation : above it is the following inscription, recording the name of the donor, - "*Richard de Brampton Parva, in hac parochia, Arm., 1737.*" This was Richard Owen, who also gave two silver salvers, to hold the bread at the communion. There are four small galleries, and in that at the west end is a good organ, presented to the parish, in 1819, by the late Robert Edwards, of this town. In the chancel are some handsome monuments to the memory of several deceased members of the families of Owen, Price, and Davies. There are places of worship for Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists. The free grammar school was founded in the reign of Elizabeth, by John Beddowes, formerly a clothier

of this town, who endowed it with some houses, and with seventy-seven acres of land, in the township of Presteigne, now producing £ 150 per annum, and vested in eleven trustees : the present number of trustees is seven, who have power to fill up vacancies. There are also numerous charitable donations and bequests for the relief of the poor, and for various other purposes, of which the following are the principal; Nicholas Taylor, Sen., Esq., gave £30 for apprenticing one poor boy or girl of the parish, to which £20 was afterwards added by his son, who also bequeathed £30 to buy clothing for the poor; Ambrose Meredith, of Napleton, gave one-half of two parcels of land, and one cottage with a garden, for apprenticing children, and the other half to the poor generally; Sir Thomas Street, of Worcestershire, one of the judges on the circuit, gave £20, forfeited by William Whitcomb, high sheriff of Radnorshire, for his non-appearance at the assizes, towards apprenticing seven children ; and Margaret Price, of Pillith, left £ 50 for apprenticing one poor boy, and ten pounds for clothing to be given to two poor people annually. Ellen Harris, of London, in 1630, bequeathed the yearly sum of £ 4, of which four marks were to be paid for four sermons, one mark to be distributed among the poor on the days those sermons were delivered, and one mark to the churchwardens of the parish for ever. John Matthews, of Clerkenwell; London, bequeathed £50 to be lent without interest for two years to five or six poor tradesmen of this parish, and £2.12. per annum to be distributed in bread to the poor : he also bequeathed a fund for the distribution of six coats and six bibles to poor children. John Eccleston, Esq., of this town, gave £50 for the erection of some small houses, as rent-free residences for the poor. Edward Price, Esq., of Aylesbury, in the county of Bucks, bequeathed £ 50, now secured on the Radnorshire turnpike trust, the interest to be distributed in bread to the poor. Thomas Cornwall, Baron Burford, and lord of Stapleton and Lugharnest, gave several sums of money forfeited to him as lord of the manor, and amounting to £ 8. 12. ; and Nicholas Scarlet, of this town, gave £2 per annum, to the poor. Littleton Powell, Esq., of Stannage, one of the six clerks in Chancery, gave a large silver flagon for holding the sacramental wine, weighing seventy-four ounces three drachms, and valued at £25, to the church; and Giles Whitehall, Esq., of the Moor, gave to the township of Presteigne an engine with twelve leather buckets, for extinguishing fires in the town. Dr. Richard Lucas, master of the free grammar school at Abergavenny, and subsequently vicar of St. Stephen's, Coleman - street, London, and lecturer of St. Olave's, Southwark, a popular preacher of his time, was born in this town. A curious custom prevails here on Shrove-Tuesday, which is observed by one party pulling a rope upwards, and another downwards to the river, the successful party retaining the rope in token of victory; and it is popularly predicted that, if the party pulling the rope upwards prevails, grain will be cheap that year, but, if it goes down, it will be dear. The average annual expenditure for the support of the poor of the township of Presteigne amounts to £422. 7., and of the chapelry of Discoed to £ 17. 7.

- 1.3.2 Hinson's transcription of the 1868 National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (2003) states that: ‘

PRESTEIGNE, (or Llan-andras Of The Welsh) a parish, post and market town, and parliamentary borough, the parish being partly situated in the hundred and county of Radnor, and partly in the hundred of Wigmore, county Hereford. It is the county town

of the county of Radnor, 6 miles E. by N. of Radnor, and 151 N.W. of London. The parish, which is of large extent, containing 7,780 acres, includes, besides the town of Presteigne, the chapelry of Discoed, and the townships of Combe, Willey, and four others. It is situated in a valley on the Lug, a river celebrated for trout and grayling, and which here separates the counties of Radnor and Hereford.

- 1.3.2.1 The town of Presteigne is small, and a borough by prescription, contributing, under the Reform Act, to New Radnor in returning one member to parliament. It first rose into importance under the patronage of Martin, Bishop of St. David's, who procured for it the grant of a market and many privileges about the close of the 13th century, and as New Radnor subsequently declined Presteigne became the capital of the county. During the civil war of the 17th century Charles I. stayed with the Taylors at Lower Heath, near the King's Turning, when flying from Cromwell.
- 1.3.2.2 It contains a shire hall, situated in Broad-street, and built in 1829, the county gaol, built in 1820, a townhall, commercial bank, a good hotel, and a bridge of three arches. The population of the parliamentary borough in 1851 was 1,617, inhabiting 345 houses, which had increased in 1861 to 1743 persons, and 378 houses. To the W. of the town is a public promenade, called the Warden, occupying an eminence formerly the site of the castle of Presteigne, but presented to the inhabitants by Lord Oxford, and now laid out in walks.
- 1.3.2.3 In the neighbourhood are many seats, the principal of which are Boultonbrooke, on the Knighton road, belonging to Sir H. Brydges, Bart., Evenjobb, the residence of Mrs. Harley, and between Presteigne and Radnor, Knill Court, the seat of Sir J. Walsh, in the grounds of which is the ivy-grown church of Knill, where Sir Samuel Romilly lies buried. The assizes and quarter sessions are held in Presteigne, and the county courts here and at New Radnor alternately. It is also the headquarters of the county militia, the seat of a Poor-law Union, comprising 4 parishes in Radnorshire and 5 in Herefordshire, and the head of a superintendent registry district. Races take place occasionally in the vicinity of the town, on a flat course of seven-eighths of a mile.
- 1.3.2.4 The living is a rectory* with the curacy of Discoed annexed, in the diocese of Hereford, value £1,380. The church, dedicated to St. Andrew, is an ancient structure with a square embattled tower, and bearing an inscription over the great chancel window on the exterior, "M. P. L., 1244". It contains a stained-glass window, a brass, and some monuments and tablets to the families of Owen, Price, Davies, and Parsons, also a piece of tapestry, in good preservation, representing Christ's entry into Jerusalem, said to have been worked by some ladies of the name of Taylor, then residing at Little Brampton, near Presteigne. There are two places of worship for Protestant Dissenters, also a free school, founded by John Beddoes in the reign of Elizabeth, which has an endowment of £150 per annum.
- 1.3.2.5 The principal antiquities are Offa's Dyke, which runs close by, crossing the wooded hills of Herrock and Knill Garraway, and about 3 miles to the S.E. of the town is Wapley encampment, a Roman fortification occupying a towering eminence 1,100 feet above the level of the sea. Between Knill and Presteigne is the rock of Nash Scar, formed of the Woolhope limestone, but subsequently fused into one sub-crystalline

mass of igneous rock. Market day is on Saturday. Fairs are hold on the Saturday before 13th February, on 9th May, 20th June, 13th and 14th October, and 11th December."

- 1.3.3 The motte and Bailey at Discoed is described by Wiles (2002) as a much disturbed mound, c.25m in diameter, interpreted variously as a motte, a sepulchral mound and as a garden feature.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Watching Brief

The watching brief was undertaken:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- The main objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

3 Methodology

3.1 Watching Brief

The watching brief was carried out on the excavation of around 100m of service trench. Excavation was carried out by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision.

Project Manager Chris E Smith (MIFA) and Project Assistant Irma Bernardus undertook the watching brief. All trenches were photographed using high resolution digital photography.

All works were undertaken in accordance with the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.2 Finds

Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

No deposits suitable to environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

4 Watching Brief Results

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

Generally the ground conditions were damp as heavy rain showers persisted throughout the watching brief.

4.2 Distribution of deposits

The topsoil was of a reasonably uniform distribution in all the service trenches, varying little in depth. The topsoil was mainly composed of a thin, moderately compacted, mid brown silt.

4.3 Description

4.3.1 Service Trenches (Plates 1-8)

The area subject to the watching brief consisted of approximately 100m of service trench and one area measuring 4 x 2m for the insertion of a septic tank. The service trench itself was an average of 0.4m wide and varied in depth, averaging approximately 0.5m. The septic tank area measured approximately 3m deep.

4.3.2 No features of archaeological interest or significance were noted in any area of the service trench subject to the watching brief. Depths of topsoil and subsoil varied across the area with natural stone and clay deposits uncovered also at varying depths.

4.3.3 The area of the septic tank was located on the very edge of the flat area of the castle bailey, immediately above the natural slope of the ground. Removal of topsoil revealed a wall of unbonded, flat, roughly hewn, limestone blocks. Only the bottom courses of the wall were present. The wall appeared to run along the edge or 'lip' of the flat area, defining the break of slope.

4.3.4 Further areas were subject to a watching brief carried out by Helen Burnham of Cadw. Her findings are located within Appendix 1.

5 Finds

5.1.1 Finds of 19th and 20th century ceramic and glass were present in excavated areas near the house. As excavation continued away from the house so finds became fewer in number. No material other than 19th and 20th century ceramic and glass was recovered. These were not retained.

6 Discussion and Interpretation

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The overall findings of the excavation were reasonably consistent with what would be expected within close proximity of a small motte and bailey. However, the lack of medieval ceramics was unexpected.

6.2 Overall interpretation

The overall interpretation gained from the watching brief is that the wall uncovered in the septic tank excavation is likely to be part of the medieval bailey wall. The lack of further features, however, points to no structures being built close to this fortification. This may have been for strategic purposes.

6.3 Significance

- 6.3.1 The work carried out on the church cottage site is significant in that it suggests that the motte and bailey fortification was, at least partially, consolidated in stone. The vast majority of such fortifications, especially such small examples, are thought to have only ever been timber structures. The evidence of stone construction may point to a longer period of use with the timber being replaced with stone.
- 6.3.2 This possible longer period of use, when combined with the landscape chronological evidence, is of significance to understanding the development of medieval Discoed.
- 6.3.3 In all likelihood, the church (or at least its original foundation), was established after the fortification, possibly to serve a small population around the castle. This juxtaposition of secular and ecclesiastical foci within the medieval landscape is a classic one and is seen in many small villages in the area such as Bleddfa, Bucknell and Evenjobb.
- 6.3.4 After the castle fell into disuse, the secular focus in the area appears to have shifted to the large manorial type house buildings on the other side of the church.
- 6.3.5 The medieval settlement, which is likely to have been present around the castle and church, appears to have shrunk to the point where it is no longer visible. Such settlement is likely to have been located beneath the area where the majority of houses in the area now stand.

7 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Irma Bernardus (CAP) for her on site assistance.

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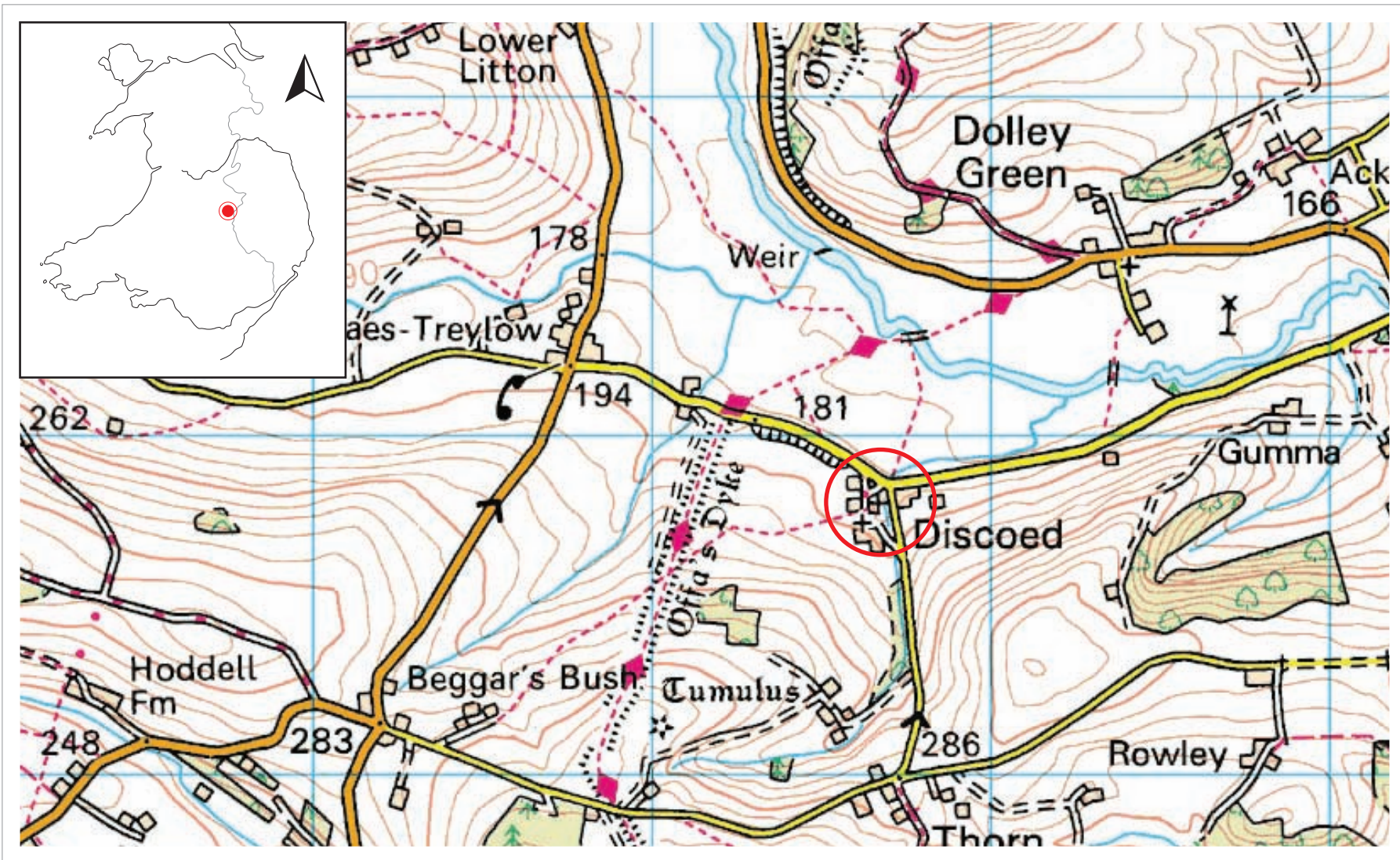
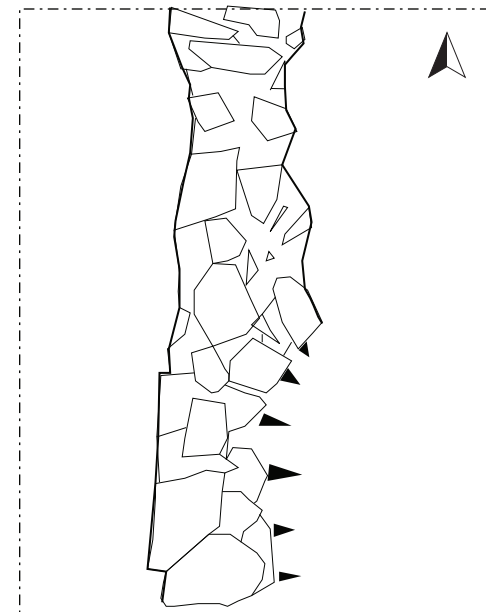
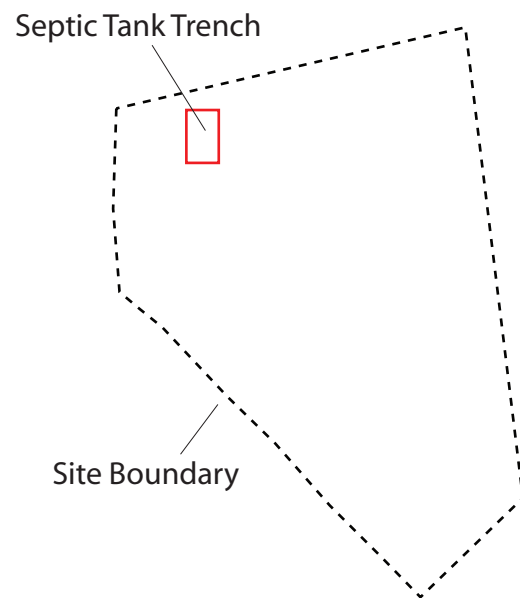


Fig 1: Map showing general location of assessment area



1:20 plan of possible medieval wall within septic tank trench



Fig 3: Plan showing possible medieval wall within septic tank trench running on north - south alignment



Plate 1: View of service trench, looking west. Scale 1 & 2m.



Plate 2: View of service trench, looking east. Scale 1 & 2m.



Plate 3: Example view of service trench, looking north. Scale 2m.



Plate 4: Example view of service trench, looking south. Scale 2m.



Plate 5: View of service trench within SAM area, looking west. Scale 1m.



Plate 6: View of service trench, looking north east. Scale 1m.



Plate 7: View of possible bailey wall, looking west, Scale 1x1m



Plate 8: View of possible bailey wall
Looking south



APPENDIX I:

Watching Brief report from Cadw

Discoed Castle Mound (Rd 059)

Archaeological Watching Brief



By:
Helen Burnham
MA (Cantab)

Field Monument Warden



WELSH HISTORIC MONUMENTS

Discoed Castle Mound (Rd 059)

Archaeological Watching Brief



WELSH HISTORIC MONUMENTS

Prepared for:

Will Davies
Cadw
Plas Carew
Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed
Parc Nantgarw
Cardiff
CF15 7QQ

August/September 2010

By:
Helen Burnham
(MA Cantab)

Field Monument Warden

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NON - TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The following report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief undertaken during works to re-route electricity supplies around the village of Discoed, in conjunction with a development on the south-west of the scheduled area of Discoed Castle Mound (SAM no. Rd 059). In the course of this work, holes for new poles and stays and trenching for underground wiring were dug between 23rd and 25th August 2010, while redundant poles were removed on 21st September 2010. The work extended beyond the scheduled area and parts of it were watched by Cambrian Archaeological Projects. Apart from modern land drains and a soakaway near the church, and a possible feature west of the house, no in-situ deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were exposed during the Watching Brief.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during works to re-route electricity supplies around the village of Discoed, in conjunction with a development on the south-west of the scheduled area of Discoed Castle (SAM no. Rd 059). Figure 01 shows the positions of the new poles and wiring.

In the course of this work, the existing electricity pole on the north of the castle mound was replaced, while a new pole was put in near the eastern edge of the site, replacing one on the summit, which was subsequently removed. Both the new poles had accompanying stays, which required the excavation of further pits for their insertion. Trenches were dug around much of the perimeter of the site in order to underground the wiring in this area.

The substation was also relocated from the scheduled area to a new position outside it, to the east of the church; the pole on the castle mound which had supported it was subsequently removed. The work left the main part of the castle mound free of any poles (see cover picture).

Parts of the work, particularly off the scheduled area, were also being watched by Cambrian Archaeological Projects, who have been watching various other works, including drainage and sanitary arrangements, relating to the substantial reconstruction and extension of the house on the south-west of the scheduled area.

2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief is, 'To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or potentially disruptive works' (*IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*).

The primary objective of this assessment was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological features and deposits exposed during the ground disturbance works were adequately recorded, interpreted and reported.

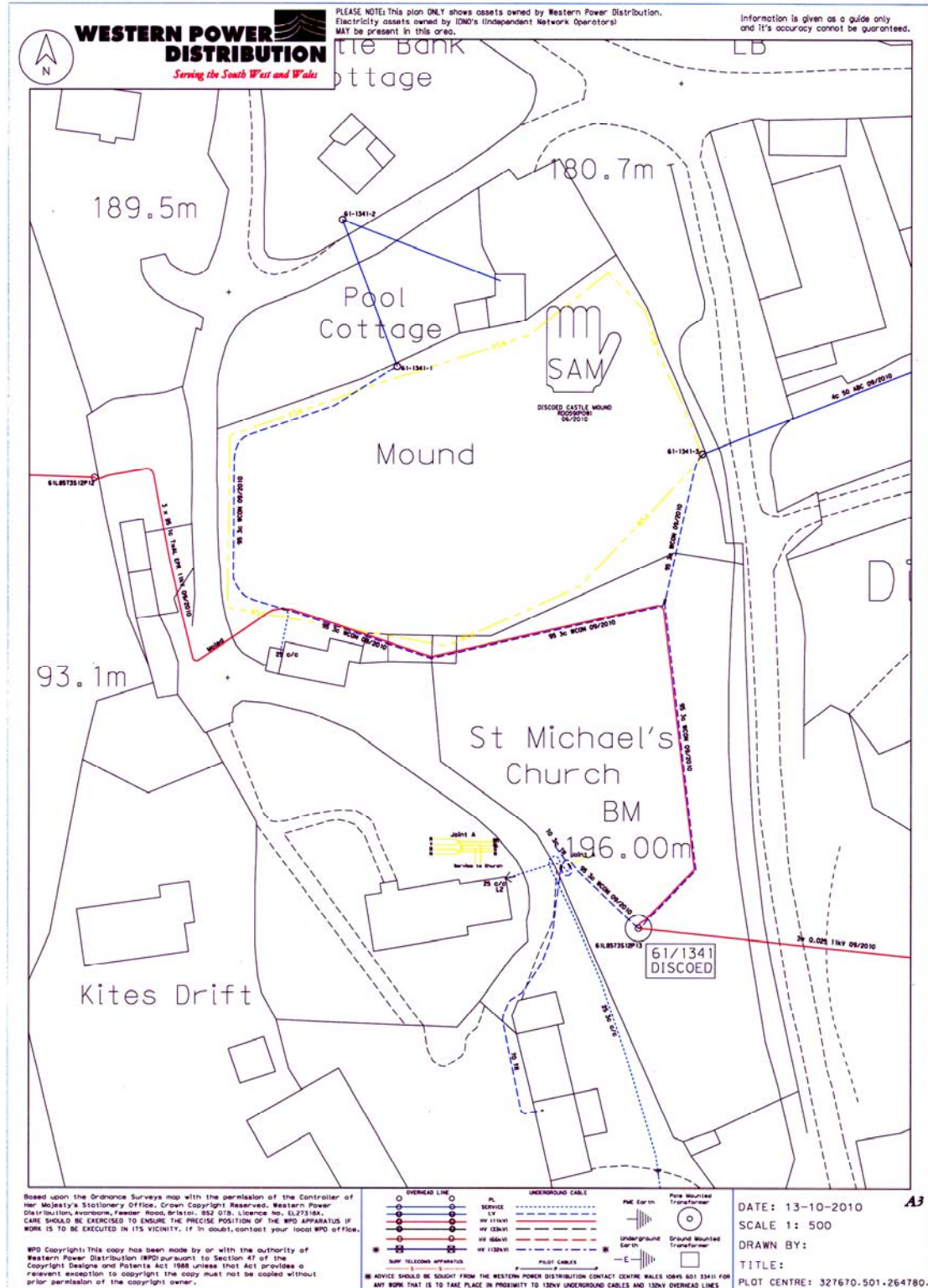


Figure 01: Plan showing positions of new poles and wiring

3. METHODOLOGY

The pits for the poles and stays and the trenches for the underground wiring were all machine dug, though the pits for the stays had an additional small hand-dug slot in one side to allow for the angle of the stay wire. The positions of the poles were designed to encroach minimally, if at all, on the scheduled area, and the trenches were designed to skirt around its edge, though inevitably clipping the area a little to allow room for the machine to work and to avoid overly sharp corners. The pits for poles and stays were dug with a JCB with a 0.5m toothed bucket. The trenches were dug using a 360° tracked mini-digger with a 0.65m toothed bucket.

The relocation of the substation to the new position east of the church allowed the removal of a substantial eyesore from the top of the castle mound, while the new pole to the east of the mound meant that the second pole formerly on the summit could also be removed. A further length of trench was provided to connect the substation with the remaining trenches at a junction on the south-east of the site.

In addition to the two poles on or adjacent to the scheduled area, the pits for the pole and stays for the substation were also watched as part of this brief, while the trenching between the substation and the junction to the south-east of the site, and that between the house and the same junction, were watched by Cambrian Archaeological Projects. CAP also watched a short stretch of trench on the north-west of the scheduled area in the author's absence; there were apparently no finds.

The pits for both poles and stays were about 2 to 3m long and 1.6 to 1.8m deep. The trenches were generally between 0.6 and 0.7m in both width and depth.

Recording of the work was in two formats:

- i) Photographic record shots taken in digital format.
- ii) Written records produced using a continuous numbering system for all contexts.

An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it. However, in this instance it was not felt that the deposits encountered required sampling.

All works were conducted whilst adhering to current Health and Safety regulations.

All works were undertaken in accordance with The Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

4. THE WATCHING BRIEF

Numbers in brackets refer to context numbers allocated during the work.



Plate 01: Pit for new pole on north of site

Pit for pole on north of site (Plate 01): Agricultural topsoil and hillwash [01] extended down to a depth of about 1.2m. Below this, grey clay subsoil [02] continued down to the completed depth of about 1.6m.

Pit for stay on north of site (Plate 02): Agricultural topsoil [03] extended down to about 0.5m, then loose, more yellowish material [04] down to the completed depth of about 1.7m. At this depth, loose stony material with brown soil matrix [05] was visible, possibly the bottom of the motte structure.

Pit for pole on east of site (Plate 03): Agricultural topsoil [06] extended down to about 0.5m. This was extremely dry because of the nearby hedge and a large ash tree. Below this, to the completed depth of about 1.6m, was rough stony material with a grey clay matrix [07], which was quite damp.

Pit for stay on east of site (Plate 04): The upper level of this pit consisted of quite stony material with a soil matrix [08], but by about 1m down, it changed to stone with a matrix of blue clay [09], probably natural.



Plate 02: Pit for stay on north of site



Plate 03: Pit for new pole on east of site



Plate 04: Pit for stay on east of site

Pit for pole to east of church (Plate 05): Good agricultural topsoil [10] right at the top, then beneath this quite stony upper levels [11], from which came a fragment of willow pattern china. Below about 0.3m, continuing down to a depth of nearly 2m, was a subsoil, with yellowish clayey deposits [12]. Right at the bottom of the cut, at the finished depth of about 1.6m, was blue clay [13], probably natural. No obvious features were seen.

Trench for two stays alongside hedge between pole and church (Plate 06): This trench encountered a land drain which has been infilled above plastic pipe using building rubble [14], which included some quite nice old bricks (one example was inscribed HOLMER WORKS HEREFORD). Apart from in the area of the infilling, agricultural topsoil [15] gave way about 0.3m down to natural brownish-grey clay [16]. At the northern end of the trench the rubble infill continued down further below the completed depth of nearly 2m, possibly to form a soakaway, but the southern end was entirely dug into natural.

The *trench for the underground cables running eastwards from the house* towards the junction on the south-east of the site was watched by Cambrian Archaeological projects. It attempted to follow the line of a diverted stream, which had already recently been culverted and watched by CAP, but by its eastern end it had swung off this line to the north by about 3m. The *trench running from the junction on the south-east of the mound to the new substation by the church* was also watched by CAP. Neither of these stretches of trench yielded any obvious features of archaeological interest.



Plate 05: Pit for new pole to east of church



Plate 06: Trench for stays to east of church



Plate 07: Trench junction to south-east of site, looking north



Plate 08: Trenching to pole on east of mound complete

The *trench running northwards between the junction on the south-east of the mound and the pole on the east (Plates 07 and 08)* met an old field drain [17] about 9m from the junction, probably an earlier line of the recently-culverted stream or drain, running alongside the former land boundary, of which no trace remained. The material revealed was all topsoil or rather loamy subsoil, and was very dry around the large ash tree on the eastern hedge but otherwise unremarkable [18]. To the north of the ash tree it was rather stonier [19], but still with no obvious features. A piece of dark glazed 18th- to 19th-century ware came from the base of the trench right beside the ash tree about 11m from the new pole.

The portion of the trench in front of the house had already been dug and provided with ducting, watched by Cambrian Archaeological Projects.

The fill of the *trench running west from in front of the house (Plate 09)* was very mixed and stony [20], probably disturbed but with no obvious features. The stony area extended for about 7-8m to the west of the house. A piece of double-sided flat cream glazed ceramic came from a point about 3m west of the join with the ducted section in front of the western part of the house.



Plate 09: Start of trench to west of house, from east

The *trench on the west of the site* had to curve round the corners. Continuing from the west of the house around the southern corner, the material towards the hedge became finer and much less stony, probably cultivated topsoil [21]. This material was crumbly and quite dry. Three small sherds of thin white ware glazed on both sides came from the corner to the west of the house.



Plate 10: Dark feature on west side of north-south trench on west of scheduled area



Plate 11: Trench on north of mound running west from new pole

Beyond the south-western corner, working northwards, the transition to a stonier material [22] was marked by a possible post-hole [23] with a charcoal lens [24] slightly to its south, visible in the western section roughly halfway between the front of the house and the bottom of the field (*Plate 10*). The work was left for the day not far beyond this point, to allow the field access at the north-west to remain open. The digger resumed work at the new pole on the north of the scheduled area, working westwards.

The *trench running west from the pole on the north (Plate 11)* contained no obvious features. Its contents were largely soil with some stones, similar to the fill of the northern portion of the trench on the west. The trench across the north-western corner of field was completed the following day (25th August) and was watched by Cambrian Archaeological Projects, who reported that nothing of archaeological interest was seen.

On 21st September, following further preparatory work both here and elsewhere in the village, the switchover to the new wiring took place. This enabled the removal of the two poles previously on the top of the mound, together with the stays for the substation pole. The removal was watched in order to ensure that no fresh disturbance took place. The poles and stays were cut off about 0.1m below the ground surface, to allow for possible future management of the area by mowing. Some very limited excavation was necessary to allow this, but it was well within the footprint of the pits which would have been necessary for the original erection of the poles and stays.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The various excavations involved in this watching brief revealed very little which could be related to the archaeology of the castle mound. The pit for the stay for the pole on the north (*Plate 02*) may have revealed some of the motte structure, but otherwise the majority of the contexts noted were either natural or of agricultural origin. The feature noted in the trench to the west of the field (*Plate 10*) is probably more likely to relate to the history of the nearby house and its curtilage. All the finds were of 18th-century or later date.

6. REFERENCES

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief.*

7. ARCHIVE LOCATION

A digital copy of this report will be archived with Cadw, along with copies of the digital photographs.

All site records will be archived with the Cadw Field Monument Warden, who will also retain a digital copy of the report and photographs.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

- 01 Agricultural topsoil and hillwash
- 02 Grey clay subsoil
- 03 Agricultural topsoil
- 04 Loose, yellowish material
- 05 Loose stony material with brown soil matrix, possibly the bottom of the motte structure
- 06 Agricultural topsoil
- 07 Rough stony material with grey clay matrix
- 08 Stony material with soil matrix
- 09 Stone with matrix of blue clay, probably natural
- 10 Agricultural topsoil
- 11 Stony agricultural soil
- 12 Subsoil with yellowish clayey deposits
- 13 Blue clay, probably natural
- 14 Building rubble infill of soakaway
- 15 Agricultural topsoil
- 16 Brownish-grey clay, probably natural
- 17 Old field drain
- 18 Topsoil or rather loamy subsoil
- 19 Stony topsoil or loamy subsoil
- 20 Mixed stony material
- 21 Fine loam, probably cultivated topsoil
- 22 Stony topsoil with loamy matrix
- 23 Dark feature, possibly post-hole
- 24 Charcoal lens



APPENDIX II:

Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Church Cottage, Discoed

Site Name:	Church Cottage, Discoed
Site Code:	CCD/10/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	SAM RD059
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SO 27617 64778
Site Type:	Motte and Bailey
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	June 2010
Categories Present:	Medieval to Modern
Location of Original Archive:	CAPLtd
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	CAPLtd
Restrictions to access:	None



Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd
Old Chapel Farm, Llanidloes
Powys SY18 6JR
Telephone: 01686 413857
E-mail: info@cambarch.co.uk

