

CPAT Report No S6

Valle Crucis Abbey, Llangollen, Clwyd

WATCHING BRIEF

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Report prepared for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments

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WATCHING BRIEF AT VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY, LLANGOLLEN

A watching brief was conducted by CPAT Contracting during the digging of the foundations and drainage trenches of a new visitor centre at Valle Crucis Abbey, near Llangollen, Clwyd (SJ 204442) by F. Galliers Ltd on behalf of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM De 3) and the building of the visitor centre had previously been the subject of an archaeological assessment and subsequent excavations conducted by CPAT and funded by CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments (Reports dated 1:2:93 and 25:10:93). The watching brief was conducted over a period of 5 days between the 10th and 18th November 1995

During the initial assessment a number of graves were identified within the area of the proposed visitor centre and close to it. The area affected by the proposed visitor centre was subsequently excavated and included the removal of a single burial. The line of drainage outflow from the visitor centre was altered as a result of the assessment to avoid the identified burials.

The digging of two lines of drainage were watched during the watching brief. Both the trenches were machine excavated with a one foot bucket, but collapse of the trench meant that the disturbed area was up to 1m wide in places. Two pits, both measuring approximately 3m in diameter, were excavated for the installation of septic tanks and another pit, measuring 1.5m in diameter, was excavated for the soakaway. A hand excavated trench dug along the northern side of the Abbey Church leading to the summer house for the replacement of an electric cable had already been partially dug by the start of the watching brief but followed the line of a previous service trench and disturbed no new ground.

The excavation of the lines of drainage revealed the presence of two previously unknown burials and one which had already been identified as a probable grave during the assessment in Area J. All the graves were close to the area of the visitor centre and were partially destroyed by the work so that only their positions could be recorded. All three of the burials were identified from fragments of skull and the presence of teeth, and were in a similar state of preservation as the burial excavated under controlled conditions in the area of the visitor centre where little of the skeleton remained apart from the skull and long bones. Further to the south no features of archaeological interest were identified apart from the general rubble layers identified during the initial assessment.

No finds other than occasional sherds of post-medieval and modern pottery from the topsoil were recovered from the site.

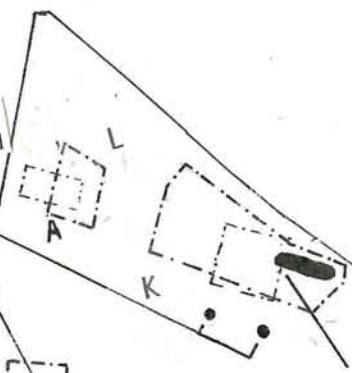
Work is also continuing on the post-excavation report for the previous work on the site. All conservation work has been completed on the metalwork finds which included a medieval padlock bolt and barb-spring padlock case. The report on the human bone has been completed and the reports on the pottery and small finds are nearing completion.

David Thomas
CPAT 15:2:95

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY

Showing previously excavated areas and features identified during the Watching Brief

f Burials recorded
Watching Brief



Position of Graves identified during Assessment.

ABBAY CHURCH

CLOISTER

