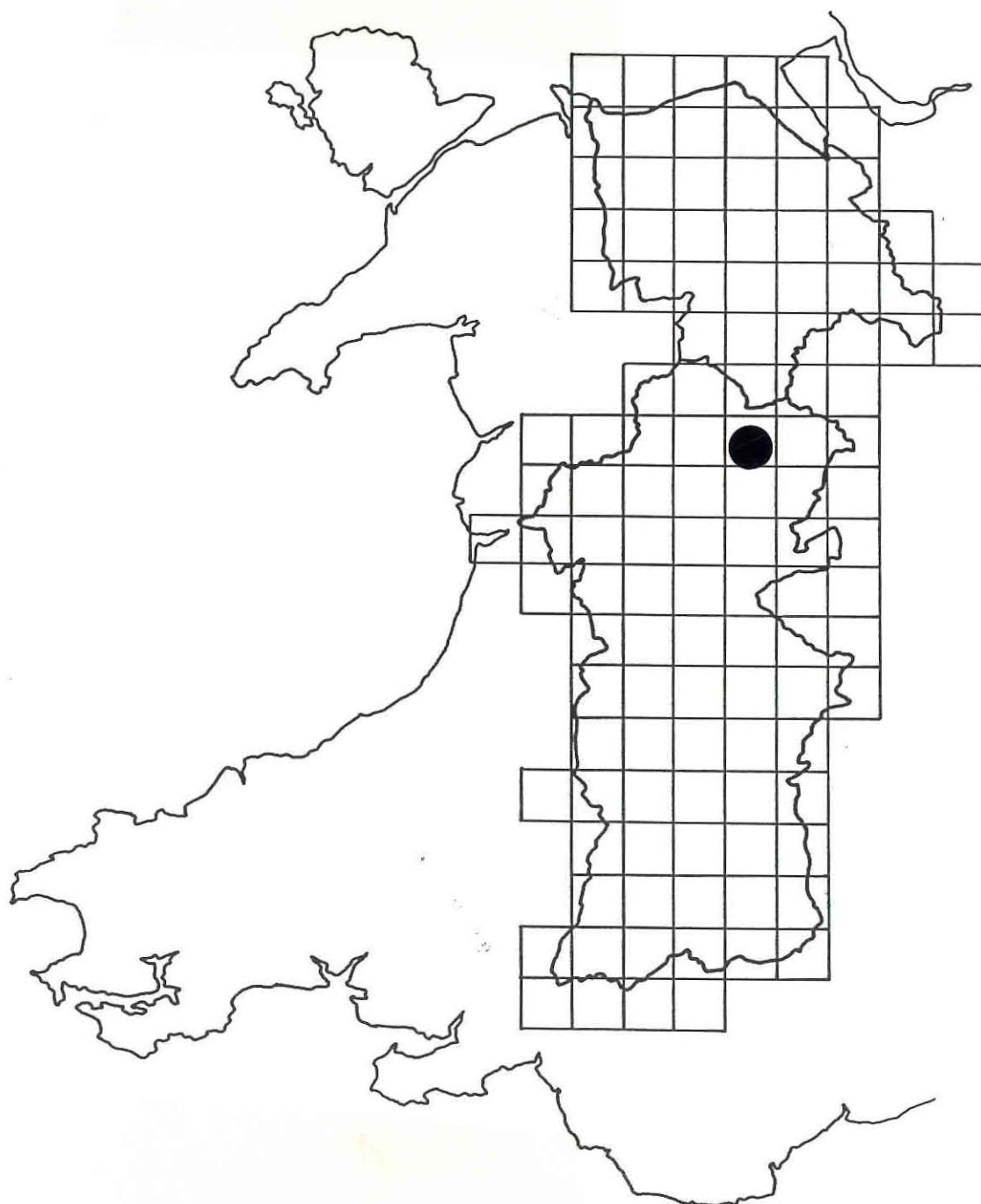


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Church Walk, Meifod, Powys*  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



CPAT Report No 57

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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Report prepared for Mr & Mrs N E Watkin

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following archaeological evaluation was carried out in response to a planning application for a single residential dwelling on land opposite No.2 Church Walk, Meifod, Powys (Montgomeryshire District Council planning application M22668). The proposed development lies immediately to the east of the Congregational Chapel and south of Church Walk (Fig 1).
- 1.2 The development is located within an area of considerable archaeological potential within the core of the medieval village. The plot is thought to contain part of the Early Medieval churchyard, and there is a high probability that the remains of the church dedicated to St.Gwyddfarch built c.550 AD lie at least partly within the development area.

## 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The chapel dedicated to St.Gwyddfarch which was constructed around 550 AD forms the earliest known occupation in Meifod, and a settlement is assumed to have developed in association with it. Although the exact location of the chapel is unknown, a number of glazed floor tiles were recovered during the construction of the Congregational Chapel in the 1880's (RCAHM Inventory of Montgomery, 1911, 150).
- 2.2 During the medieval period, Meifod appears to have been a place of some religious significance. In the early medieval period a church dedicated to St.Tyssilio, a follower of St.Gwyddfarch, was constructed within a large 9 acre semi-circular churchyard. The church was of considerable importance, attaining clas status, and becoming the traditional burial place of the princes of Powys, whose seat was at Mathrafal, c.3km to the west.
- 2.3 The present church dedicated jointly to St.Tyssilio and St.Mary is thought to have been dedicated in 1156. There are reports that up to three churches may have existed within the churchyard, all of which may have been standing until the seventeenth century.

## 3 THE EVALUATION

- 3.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned to undertake the evaluation, which was carried out between March 22nd and 23th 1993. In accordance with the evaluation brief (CPAT EVB 30), a continuous L-shaped trench was excavated to determine the extent of the surviving archaeology and to evaluate the significance and likely dating of any features revealed (Fig 1). The trench was excavated initially by machine with subsequent cleaning, excavation and recording by hand. A full drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout. The results from the excavations were as follows:
- 3.2 **Trench A** (12 x 1.5m and 12 x 1.5m. Fig 3). Numbers in brackets refer to Figure 2.
  - 3.2.1 The main features identified are probably associated with a stone structure fronting onto Church Walk. The remains



of two walls were uncovered running parallel to the street front. The main wall (7) was composed of random unmortared angular stone, c.0.45m wide and located c.5.0m south of the boundary wall. It is likely that it formed the rear wall of the building. The second wall (9) was more fragmentary, also composed of random unmortared stone, and located c.2.0m south of wall 7. To the north of wall 7 a cut into the natural clay may indicate a robbing trench (10) which removed the majority of the walling. Pottery associated with the walls and filling the presumed robbing trench gave dates ranging from the late 17th century into the 18th century.

- 3.2.2 Three shallow slots (13, 21 and 27) may be associated with the same structure. A single earlier slot (15) was identified, but with no associated dating evidence. The remains of a possible hearth (11) were identified extending beyond the excavation to the north. The shallow pit c.0.35m across and 0.25m deep showed signs of burning with the surrounding clay considerably fire-reddened.
- 3.2.3 The other major features identified were a large pit (17) in the corner of the excavation, a shallow trench (2) and a substantial trench or ditch (4). The later was at least 5.30m long and over 1.50m wide, c.48m deep with sloping sides. All features contained pottery of the 17th and 18th centuries.
- 3.2.4 To the south of wall 9 a considerable depth of silts (8) had accumulated, up to a maximum thickness of c.0.5m. The layer contained quantities of post-medieval pottery as well as a coin dated 1694.
- 3.2.5 Beneath the silt deposit three shallow scoops were identified (31, 33 and 35). The largest was only 0.42m in diameter and 0.10m deep, and non produced any evidence to suggest their function or date.

#### 4 THE FINDS

- 4.1 A total of 101 sherds of Post Medieval pottery were recovered from the evaluation, the majority of which were probably of later 17th or 18th century date. 54 clay pipe fragments of similar date range were also recovered.
- 4.2 The most significant artefactual find was a coin of William and Mary dated 1694 which came from the silt layer (8) at the southern end of the excavation. The copper halfpenny is much worn, but the obverse depicts the busts of William and Mary with the Legend GVLIELMVS ET.MARIA, and the reverse showing Britannia with the date 1694 beneath.
- 4.3 The majority of the finds came from the fill of pits 2, 4, and 17, as well as layers 6 and 8. It is possible on this evidence to suggest a date range for the main occupation of the site from the later 17th century possibly until the early 19th century.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The evaluation produced no evidence for the existence of any ecclesiastical buildings or features within the area investigated. This would therefore suggest that the church dedicated to St.Gwyddfarch probably lies further to the west as was indicated by the discoveries during the construction of the adjacent chapel in 1881. There was no indication the such a building extended into the excavated area, nor was there any evidence for early burials as might have been expected following the assumption that the plot was formerly within the churchyard.
- 5.2 The evidence from the features excavated would suggest that the site was occupied by a stone built structure, possibly one or more cottages, from perhaps the end of the 17th century until the early 19th century. Pottery recovered from most features indicates that they belong to this period of occupation.
- 5.3 The only features identified which may belong to an earlier period of occupation were three shallow scoops (31, 33 and 35) sealed beneath layer 8. However, these have no clear interpretation and no no evidence for dating was associated with them.

## 6 REFERENCES

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments, An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire: 1. County of Montgomery, 1911.

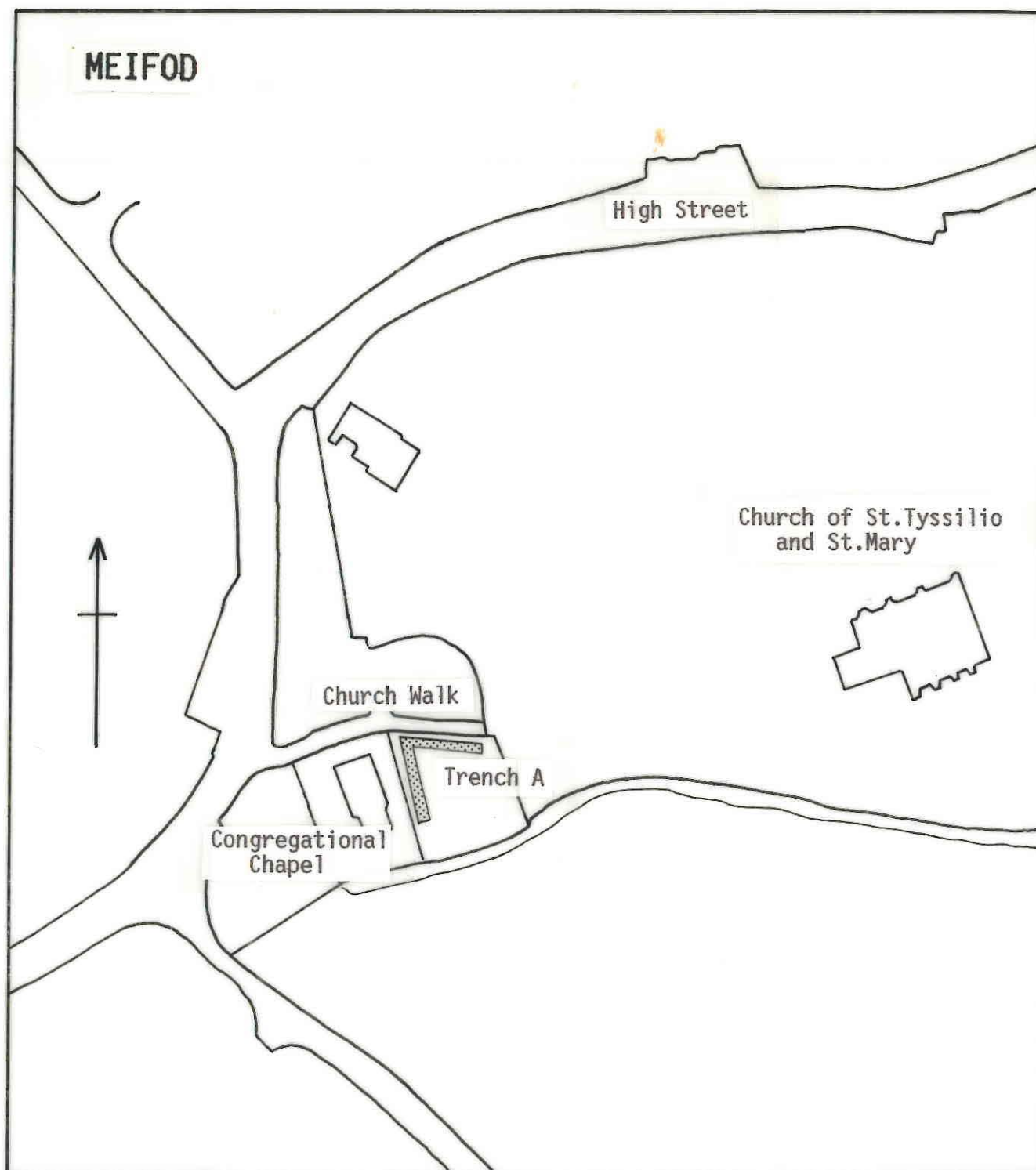


Fig 1: Church Walk, Meifod; Location, scale 1:1250