

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Foryd Harbour Infrastructure Works, Denbighshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 879

CPAT Report No 879

Foryd Harbour Infrastructure Works, Denbighshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

N Jones
July 2007

Report for Capita Symonds

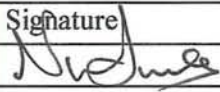
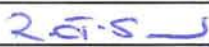

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DL
tel (01938) 553670, fax (01938) 552179
© CPAT 2007

CPAT Report Record

Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Foryd Harbour Infrastructure Works, Denbighshire: Archaeological Watching Brief		
CPAT Project Name	Foryd Harbour		
CPAT Project No	1426	CPAT Report No	879
Confidential (yes/no)	Yes	Interim/draft/final	Final

Internal control

	name	Signature	date
Prepared by	N. Jones		24/07/2007
Checked by	R. J. Silvester		24/07/2007
Approved by	R. J. Silvester		24/07/2007

Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

Internal memo

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

© CPAT

CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
- 3 WATCHING BRIEF
- 4 CONCLUSIONS
- 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
- 6 REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT ARCHIVE

APPENDIX 2: SPECIFICATION

FIGURES

Fig. 1 Foryd Harbour Infrastructure Works

Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25", 1912

Plate 1 North-east elevation of building

Plate 2 North-west and south-west elevations of building

Plate 3 Turntable base outside north-east door of building

Plate 4 Mooring posts along the quayside

Plate 5 Cast iron crane base along quayside

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were invited by Capita Symonds to undertake an archaeological watching brief during a programme of infrastructure works at Foryd Harbour, at the mouth of the River Clwyd, in Denbighshire.
- 1.2 Planning permission was granted by Conwy Borough Council for the construction of a new access to Foryd Boatyard and a dry storage area for boats, and it was agreed that there should be an archaeological watching brief during the initial ground disturbance. On behalf of the developer, Capita Symonds requested that Denbighshire Archaeology Service, part of the Countryside Service of Denbighshire County Council, provide them with an archaeological brief for the watching brief, which detailed the nature of the works required.
- 1.3 The settlement of Foryd is located at the mouth of the River Clwyd, on its western bank, opposite Rhyl and 3.8km north-west of Rhuddlan. The site in question lies at the seaward end of the settlement (SH 9980), occupying the site of a former timber yard (Fig. 1).
- 1.4 The archaeological interest is focused on the 19th-century timber yard and quayside, together with the potential for prehistoric activity in the same area. During the prehistoric period this part of the coast was subject to a series of marine transgressions as sea levels rose and fell. At times the area around Rhyl and Prestatyn was exploited by hunter gatherers in the Mesolithic era and settled farmers in the subsequent Neolithic, whose ephemeral remains have been discovered in a number of locations along the coast, usually in association with significant deposits of peat and tufa.
- 1.5 A comprehensive programme of geotechnical trial pits was undertaken on behalf of the client prior to the commencement of the watching brief, the results from which revealed no evidence for buried peat deposits within 2.5m of the present ground surface but indicated that the upper part of the site was formed by redeposited material, overlying naturally accumulated sand and gravel. On this basis it seemed likely that the watching brief would focus on recording surviving elements of the 19th-century timber yard.



Fig. 1 Foryd Harbour Infrastructure Works

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Although the mouth of the Clwyd was traditionally crossed by a ford (the name Foryd is likely to be a corruption of *môr* – sea and *rhyd* – ford), this does not appear to have resulted in the development of a settlement until the later post-medieval period. ‘*y Vorryd*’ is mentioned in the *Welsh Port Books 1550-1603* (Lewis 1927) as being adjacent to Rhuddlan, but with no indication of its significance in the Tudor era.
- 2.2 As part of the programme of works initiated by Edward I in the late 13th century a new castle and town were founded at Rhuddlan, the siting of which was carefully chosen to allow access by sea-going ships. In order to achieve this, however, it was necessary to alter the meandering course of the River Clwyd with the construction of a new deep-water channel further to the east, which forms the present course of the river.
- 2.3 Before the growth of Rhyl in the early 19th century small fishing boats worked from Foryd and the port was mentioned by Samuel Lewis in 1833 who noted small vessels taking on corn and other produce from the Vale of Clwyd with more grain shipped here than at all the other north Wales ports collectively. The Ordnance Survey Surveyors’ Drawing (No. 309), dated 1819-20) gives no indication of a formal harbour at Foryd, although it is interesting to note that the eastern bank of the estuary is lined with sand hills, to the south of which the river follows a large meander in the area later occupied by Marine Lake.
- 2.4 The Abergele Tithe Survey of 1841 shows little detail of the quayside at Foryd, although a structure is depicted in approximately the same position as a pier or landing stage which was recorded in the late 19th century by the Ordnance Survey. The Tithe Survey does identify Foryd Fawr and Foryd Bach (later Foryd Lodge), both owned by the Right Honourable William Lewis, Lord Dinorben and occupied respectively by Thomas Blackbourne and Robert Hughes.
- 2.5 The growth of Foryd can be directly linked to the fortunes of its neighbours. The decline of Rhuddlan due to silting in the River Clwyd led to a corresponding expansion at Foryd, particularly after the construction of the bridge at Foryd in 1880 which prevented masted schooners from sailing to Rhuddlan. By contrast, as Rhyl expanded as a holiday resort, Foryd became an even busier port with steam packets sailing regularly to Liverpool.
- 2.6 Despite the expansion of Foryd during the 19th century, silting was a constant problem and a report by the Superintendent of Works for the Rhuddlan Marsh Embankment Trustees in March 1853 noted the accumulation of shingle and sand in the estuary, and proposed cutting a channel from the railway bridge to the sea, as well as a dam or breakwater to be used as a quay on the eastern shore (FRO DC/167). A further report for the Admiralty also proposed deepening the harbour at Foryd to make it accessible at all times (FRO DC/169). The problem was made worse by the construction of embankments on either side of the river for a new road bridge in 1863, reducing the scouring effect of the river.
- 2.7 Quite large vessels could enter the harbour, many bringing Scandanavian timber to Charles Jones’ timber wharf. Silting eventually prevented the large vessels from using the harbour and the last timber vessel docked in the 1960s.
- 2.8 During the construction of the Vale of Clwyd Railway in 1856-58 a temporary railway was constructed from Foryd beach in order to obtain stone for use as ballast. The line crossed land owned by Hugh Robert Hughes of Kinnel Hall, a Vale of Clwyd shareholder who had wanted the main railway to terminate at his pier at Foryd, rather than at the junction with the Chester and Holyhead Railway. In 1859 he took possession of the ballast branch and, although it remained fenced off from the main line, the branch carried freight and passengers to Hughes’ pier, from where James Napier operated his steamer ‘Lion’ to and from Liverpool. The following year the branch was reconnected to the main line and in 1862 the Vale of Clwyd Act

authorised a permanent replacement for the branch line with a new pier at the terminus, which opened in 1866 and eventually closed in 1959 (Baughan 1980, 67-72).

- 2.9 Before the construction of the first road bridge in 1880 the Clwyd was crossed by a ferry which replaced the ford.
- 2.10 Foryd supported a boatyard on the eastern bank of the Clwyd which included its own slipway and was owned by Robert Jones who moved from Rhyl to Foryd around 1857. At least 33 sailing ships were built at Foryd, including flat-bottomed coasters, barques, brigs, brigantines and schooners. A second yard was opened by James Patterson in the early 1860s, although this was short lived and by 1878 shipbuilding had come to an end as steam replaced sail (Harris 1991, 39-45).
- 2.11 The trade in timber appears to have been started with the opening of Evans' timber yard in the mid 19th century, which became Charles Jones & Sons from 1878 (Harris 1991, 147-149). The yard was located on the site of the old signal station (PRN 102875) which had been established in 1826 as one of ten stations at intervals along the North Wales coast, linking Liverpool and Holyhead. The timber yard relied on Scandinavian imports and remained in use until the 1960s. It had an extensive narrow-gauge railway system with numerous turntables to allow incoming and outgoing products to be moved easily to and from the quayside, and within the yard itself. The layout of the yard is clearly depicted on the Ordnance Survey 25" 3rd edition map of 1912 (Fig. 2).
- 2.12 Foryd was also notable for the local fishing industry, which once supported a considerable number of families and a sizeable fleet. As early as the 15th and 16th centuries salt was being imported to Foryd from Cheshire for use in the local herring industry.

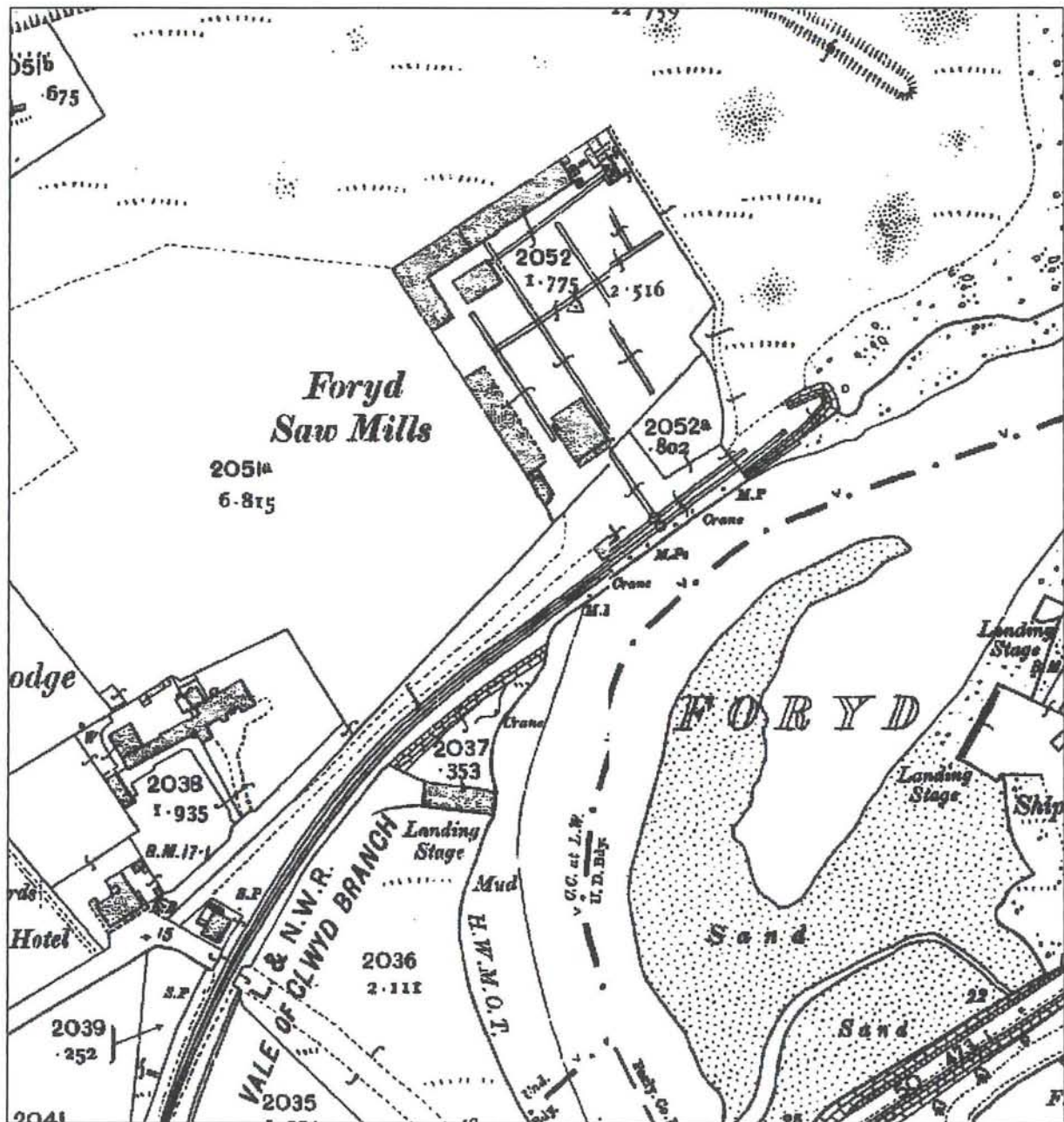


Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25" map, 1912

3 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1 Unfortunately, all but one of the buildings of the former timber yard had been demolished prior to the commencement of the project. The surviving building is located towards the north-west corner of the site and is of brick construction with a slate roof. The building measures 14.8 north-east to south-west by 10.8m north-west to south-east and is accessed via a flight of steps at the north-west corner of the south-west wall and a large sliding door at the north-west corner of the north-east wall. The latter provided access for one of the narrow gauge railway tracks which had a turntable immediately outside the building (Plate 3).



Plate 1 North-east elevation of building. Photo CPAT 2301.020

- 3.2 Three high-level rectangular windows are present on both the south-west and north-east elevations. Those in the south-west elevation are simply divided into four, whereas those in the north-east consist of sashes with upward-facing horns on the lower openers. The upper and lower parts of the windows are divided into eight small panes each, making 16 panes per window in total. The north-west and south-east elevations each have four large, blind windows.
- 3.3 Internally, the building is a single open space with a concrete floor. There is a hoist, currently stationed at the north-eastern end of the building, which can be moved across the length of the building along runner beams mounted on internal brick piers. The hoist is labelled with the following inscription:

George Russell & Co Ltd
Load 1 ton
Motherwell



Plate 2 North-west and south-west elevations of building. Photo CPAT 2301.019



Plate 3 Turntable base outside north-east door of building. Photo CPAT 2301.011



Plate 4 Mooring posts along the quayside. Photo CPAT 2301.001



Plate 5. Cast iron crane base along quayside. Photo CPAT 2301.004

- 3.4 The 19th-century timber wharf comprises a dressed stone revetment wall along which there were a number of mooring posts (Plate 4), either in timber or cast iron, as well as a cast iron base for a crane made by McKitchins of Warrington and set on a dressed sandstone base, measuring c. 3 x 3m (Plate 5). The mooring posts and crane base were removed into temporary storage during the project. To the north-east of the quay is a stone-revetted breakwater, now partly ruinous.
- 3.5 A watching brief was conducted in late January 2007 during the excavation of a test pit, measuring 4m x 4m x 4.5m deep, which was positioned to allow the investigation of the landward side of the quay wall. The test pit revealed deposits of imported sand to a depth of 4m, overlying clay silts and shingle.
- 3.6 The monitoring of groundworks across the area of the former timber yard revealed little of archaeological significance, although a number of concrete bases for tramways and turntables were identified, all of which corresponded to features depicted on the Ordnance Survey mapping.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 During the 19th and early 20th centuries Foryd was an important harbour, much of its foreign trade being connected with the import of Scandanavia timber to the timber yard of Charles Jones & Sons. Unfortunately, most of the timber yard had already been cleared before the commencement of this project, with only a single building surviving, which has now been refurbished as part of the redevelopment.
- 4.2 The watching brief provided a rapid record of the building, together with quayside fixtures such as mooring posts and a crane base. The results from geotechnical investigations and observations during the watching brief provided no indication for any prehistoric deposits in this area and it seems that the area of the former timber yard lies on extensive deposits of sand, shingle and gravel associated with estuarine deposition and the formation of the spit at the mouth of the River Clwyd.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank his colleague, Dr Fiona Grant, for her assistance with the watching brief.

6 REFERENCES

Published sources

- Baughan, P E, 1991. *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain. Volume 11: North and Mid Wales, 2nd edition*. Nairn: David St John Thomas Publisher.
- Harris, D W, 1991. *Maritime History of Rhyl and Rhuddlan*. Prestatyn: Books, Prints and Pictures.
- Lewis, E A, 1927. *Welsh Port Books 1550-1603*. Cymmrodorion Record Series 12. London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion.

Cartographic Sources

Tithe Survey for Abergele parish, 1839

Tithe Survey for Rhuddlan parish, 1839

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" Denbs 2.13-4, 1877 (Flint 1.13-4, 1871)

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" Denbs 2.13-4, 1899 (Flint 1.13-4, 1899)

Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25" Denbs 2.13-4, 1912 (Flint 1.13-4, 1912)

Documentary sources in Hawarden Record Office

QS/DR/49 Foryd Bridge and railway 1859

QS/DR/64 Rhyl Harbour bridge and railway 1860

QS/DR/65 Rhyl Harbour bridge and railway 1861

QS/DR/188 Rhyl Voryd and Plastirion Tramways 1882

QS/DR/184 Rhyl Voryd and Plastirion Tramways 1881

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by Capita Symonds to prepare a specification for undertaking an archaeological watching brief in connection with Foryd Harbour Infrastructure Works.
- 1.2 Planning permission has been granted by Conwy Borough Council for the construction of a new access to the Boatyard and a dry storage area for boats. It has been agreed that there should be a programme of archaeological work, a watching brief, during the initial ground disturbance. On behalf of the developer Capita Symonds requested that Denbighshire Archaeology Service, part of the Countryside Service of Denbighshire County Council, provide them with an archaeological brief for the watching brief, detailing the nature of the works required.
- 1.3 The site is located just to the north of the River Clwyd, on the west bank, just into Conwy County Borough (SH 9980). The site is immediately adjacent to the River Clwyd and the drift geology is alluvium and gravels, parts of the area will have been reclaimed and formalised from the shifting estuary.
- 1.4 The area of the Foryd harbour is of interest archaeologically. In the prehistoric period this coastal area was part of the land mass proper and as such was exploited by hunter gatherers and settled farmers, whose ephemeral remains may still be preserved below the development area. In the medieval period the River Clwyd was canalised as far inland as Rhuddlan Castle and this had an impact on the mouth of the river. More recently the sea walls have been constructed, formalising the course of the river. There is the possibility of maritime remains also within the development area from the medieval to recent periods.
- 1.5 A comprehensive programme of geotechnical trial pits has been undertaken recently, the results from which revealed no evidence for buried peat deposits within 2.5m of the present ground surface and indicate that the upper part of the site is formed by redeposited material, overlying naturally accumulated sand and gravel. On this basis it seems likely that the watching brief will focus on recording surviving elements of the 19th-century timber yard.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives are:
 - 2.1.1 to record any archaeological features identified during the archaeological monitoring of groundworks to ensure their preservation by record;
 - 2.1.2 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Archaeological supervision of all groundwork's. To include: Recording whilst all initial ground disturbance takes place, including work on the new Access to Boatyard, Dry Storage Area alterations to Flood Walling and any other construction; Inspection of revealed surfaces for archaeological features; recording of archaeological features; limited excavation of features, where appropriate.

- 3.2 All archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be recorded and, where appropriate, excavated by hand and recorded by drawn section/plan and/or photography. All photography will be in 35mm format black and white negative and colour slide. All features identified will be tied in locationally to points which are identifiable on modern Ordnance Survey mapping.
- 3.3 The on-site contractors are required to allow sufficient opportunity for appropriate archaeological excavation and recording to be undertaken. Every effort will be made to minimise any disruption to the overall scheme of works.
- 3.4 Provision has been made for a programme of environmental sampling should this be appropriate.
- 3.5 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared. This will be in A4 format and contain, as necessary, conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Watching Brief; Conclusions and References, together with any appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.6 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The watching brief will be undertaken by an experienced field archaeologist and overall supervision will be by Mr RJ Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The duration of the watching brief will be entirely determined by the contractor's programme of work.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the fieldwork.
- 4.3 Copies of the report will be deposited with the client within one month of the completion of on-site works. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W. Jones
27 June 2006