

**CPAT Report No 922**

# **A5 Retaining Wall adjacent to Glyndŵr's Moat, Corwen**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



**THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

**CPAT Report No 922**

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## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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March 2008

Report for Conwy County Borough Council

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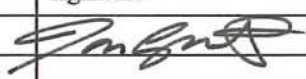


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## CPAT Report Record

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## **CONTENTS**

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

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2007, the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited by Highways and Transport Services, of Conwy County Borough Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with groundworks associated with the construction of a new retaining wall and embankment alongside the A5 Trunk Road near Corwen (SJ 12704305; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The construction site is in close proximity to two scheduled ancient monuments associated with Owain Glyndŵr, a motte and a moated site (SAM Me 017). Scheduled Monument Consent for the works was obtained by the client, a condition of which was that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during groundworks.



Plate 1 Aerial view of the A5 with Glyndŵr's Moat in the foreground and the motte in trees beyond.  
Photo CPAT 90-MB-846



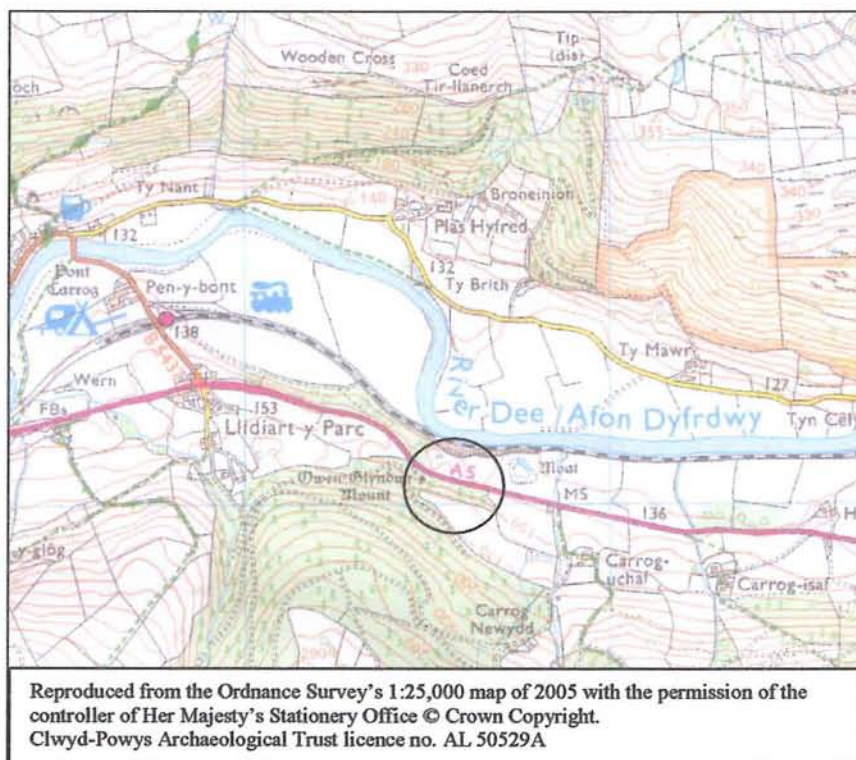


Fig. 1 Location of watching brief

## 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Glyndŵr's Moat (PRN 100963) is reputedly the second seat of Owain Glyndŵr, located in his manor of Glyndyfrdwy, which was destroyed by Prince Henry in May 1403 (Spurgeon 1981, 29). The moat surrounded a platform on which the house once stood.



Plate 2 Glyndŵr's Moat from the north-west. Photo CPAT 2525-013



Plate 3 Glyndŵr's Mount. Photo CPAT 2525-007

- 2.2 The nearby Glyndŵr's Mount (PRN 100960) is a prominent motte, although without a bailey, sited on a spur overlooking the River Dee. The motte is 6.5m high and 36m across at the base, and is protected by a ditch on the south and east sides. The motte is likely to date to the years immediately after the Norman Conquest, several centuries before Glyndŵr.
- 2.3 The A5 London to Holyhead road was constructed by the celebrated engineer Thomas Telford between 1815 and 1828. Many of the original structural features survive, including the retaining wall along the northern side of the road which was the subject of the recent works.



Plate 4 Carrog Searchlight Battery defensive position, with searchlight platform behind. Photo CPAT 2525-009



- 2.4 The remains of a World War II searchlight battery (PRN 100975) are located between the motte and the moat. Its site consist of a large circular platform 10.5m in diameter, with the earthworks of a defensive position nearby (Plate 4). Closer to the road are three rectangular platforms with the stone foundations of buildings associated with the searchlight.

### 3 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1 The watching brief was undertaken on 13 February 2008 during the removal of topsoil along a 12m-wide wayleave adjacent to a stone-built retaining wall on the north side of the A5. The topsoil was stripped by machine to a depth of up to 0.5m under archaeological supervision. A drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout. The site archive has been deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.
- 3.2 The only feature identified during the watching brief was a stone-built culvert, now blocked, at the base of the retaining wall which dates from the original construction of the road. The culvert would have carried surface water from the higher ground on the southern side of the road, preventing it ponding against the road. A fine silty deposit was observed in front of the culvert, demonstrating the flow and dispersal of water.



Plate 5 Stone-built culvert beneath the retaining wall. Photo CPAT 2525-031



#### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The watching brief revealed no evidence for any features or deposits associated with either of the scheduled medieval sites known as Glyndŵr's Moat and Glyndŵr's Mount.
- 4.2 The only feature which was identified was a stone-built culvert at the base of the retaining wall, which dates from the original construction of the road.

#### **5 REFERENCES**

Spurgeon, C. J., 1981. *Moated Sites in Wales*, in Aberg, F. A., & Brown, A. E., *Medieval Moated Sites in North-west Europe*. BAR International Series 121.



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