



Lanlivery churchyard wall, Cornwall

Archaeological watching brief



Historic Environment Projects

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Location (postal address; or general location and parish) Lanlivery church yard walling, Lanlivery, Cornwall.		
(Town – for urban sites) n/a	(Postcode) PL30 5BT	
(Easting) X co-ord SX 08021	(Northing) Y co-ord 59025	

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Project background

An 18m length of walling located on the south-eastern periphery of Lanlivery churchyard boundary wall (centred at NGR SW 08021 59024) required repair work following partial collapse. The weak and collapsing portion of walling formed the boundary between the churchyard and Lanlivery Cottage, and ran from the corner of the former vicarage in the west to the Listed (grade II) churchyard steps (adjacent to the hall) in the east.

Lanlivery churchyard has an oval plan and origins as a **lann** or 'early medieval enclosed cemetery', dating from the early medieval period (AD 411 to 1066). Since active churchyard use has now shifted east, beyond the original churchyard, Cornwall Council now has responsibility to maintain the original churchyard boundaries.

Dan Ratcliffe (Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer, Cornwall Council) requested an initial assessment, which recommended that a watching brief take place during wall repair works (Thomas 2010). This report is the result of those recommendations.

Site background

The site is located centrally within Lanlivery village, on the immediate south-south-eastern edge of the early medieval churchyard or lann, identified within the HBSMR as MCO26722, and shown on Figure 4. The place-name of Lanlivery is first recorded in 1170. It is Cornish in origin and contains the elements **lann** 'enclosed cemetery' and a probable personal (perhaps saints) name Livri (Padel 1985, 142; 1988, 106). The settlement of Lanlivery (MCO15295) has remained a churchtown, a small hamlet focussed around the church and its immediate lands. Reference to Figures 2, 3 and 4 shows that little expansion has taken place in the last couple of hundred years. Figure 4 also shows the site itself to be surrounded by a number of Listed Buildings, including the Grade 1 medieval church (MCO6351/DCO13358), numerous associated graveyard monuments, the former Sunday School (now village hall) located to the immediate east of the walling (MCO46204/DCO13141), and Churchtown House (the former vicarage) located to the immediate west of the site (DCO14043).

In 1994 a study into Cornish churchyards (Preston-Jones 1994) found that there is a great variety in churchyard shapes associated with lann place-names. Most are oval or sub-circular in shape - as with the churchyard at Lanlivery. This shape is clearly visible on Figures 2, 3 and 4. This research also identified clear links with pre-Christian or later prehistoric enclosures or 'rounds', as for example was found at St Buryan (Preston-Jones 1985, 158). It is likely that much of the original Lanlivery churchyard enclosure fossilizes an earlier enclosure, in keeping with its former Anciently Enclosed Landscape characterisation (digital mapping Historic Landscape Characterisation layer). Of a probably earlier date, and located within 200m to the east and west are two find-site scatters of worked prehistoric flint, while only 50 metres to the west is a Neolithic axehead find-site (MCO860 - see Figure 4). It is clear that since the prehistoric period, activity in this area has been near continuous.

The actual site itself lies within an area shown on the 1839 Tithe map (Figure 2) as a yard or garden. By c1880 (Figure 3) the immediate area of the site contained a small probable animal pen or enclosure, originally with an associated small structure at the western end of the site. This structure has now gone, although it may have left its mark in the form of a slight kink in the walling at this end, close to where the modern shed now stands. This kink is shown, in slightly exaggerated form on modern mapping (Figure 4). A single granite gate post marked the former presence of the enclosure (recorded by Thomas in 2010 and shown in this report - Figures 7 and 9).

Topographically the site lies on a terraced, south-east facing slope, overlooking a broad, flat valley, and overlooked by the 2m higher churchyard itself. The top of the wall stands at an approximate 149m above sea level. In terms of geology the site lies on land classified as St Austell Intrusion Granite, which consists of granite and other acidic igneous rock, overlain by well drained gritty loamy soils, with granite boulders and surface rocks locally (digital mapping physical geography layer). The 100% use of locally attained, variably shaped and sized granite in the construction of the walling is a reflection of this.

Aims and objectives

The principal aim of this project was to monitor the removal of the collapsing, unstable churchyard walling. The objective was to produce a good record of the results of that work, with particular reference to the recording of earlier wall foundations and any deposits (including potential human remains) within the revetted churchyard fabric itself.

Working methods

The area of the watching brief had already undergone full assessment and photographic recording in 2010 (Thomas), prior to repair works being carried out.

Fieldwork – 29th to 31st March 2011.

- Garden soils and landscaped garden features (including 0.6m high raised beds defined by stone), established garden plants and decorative granite blocks were removed prior to work on the wall.
- The 'bulbous' planted area running along the southern edge of the Listed church steps (see Figure 5) was entirely removed to allow for the creation of a gravelled parking area.
- The 18m length of walling to be repaired had a series of boards and tarpaulin laid out along its southern edge.
- Piecemeal removal of collapsing stonework and any unstable revetted material and vegetation was then pulled south from the churchyard, working from top to bottom. The dislodged material was then allowed to fall on to the awaiting boards and tarpaulin – minimising disturbance of the underlying lawn.
- A series of alternate dumps of soil and stone were then created from the collapsed material (sorted by machine and by hand) – ready for reuse in the reconstruction of the wall.
- Earlier, markedly more massive and stable granite stone foundations running along the length of the walling to be repaired were left *in-situ*.
Note: These were retained as the base for the newly constructed wall.
- Digital colour photographs were taken prior to and during dismantling of the walling (see Figures 6 to 9).
- Obviously late (i.e. later post-medieval and modern finds) were noted and discarded on site by the recording archaeologist.
- Earlier finds were selectively kept; including two late terracotta ware pieces useful in the dating of the wall (see Figure 10).

Results

The above-ground 18m long walling to be repaired had an approximate 2m height along its length. Thomas (2010) recorded the likely presence of the original lann walling approximately 1m to the north, within the churchyard matrix itself. At the time of fieldwork, the potential top of earlier walling could still be seen as an uneven/stony break of slope – see Figure 6.

This section of the report describes those remains revealed beneath ground level after the removal of garden bedding, and the soil deposits revealed behind the removed sections of walling.

The removal of all loose and unstable dry stone walling took place from west to east and from top to bottom, with the intention of disturbing as little as possible. Roots and vegetation, including one live and one dead tree stump were removed as necessary, which caused very little disturbance of churchyard deposits. The results of this recording can most easily be discussed in sections, largely as revealed on site.

Wall - Western end

A granite gate post stood immediately in front of this approximately 5m long, 2m high stretch of wall. When the post was pulled up by machine (to allow access behind the

shed for the wall builders) it was found to be c1.8m in height. It was almost certainly linked to the animal enclosure or pen shown on the 1880 (Figure 3) and 1907 OS maps. It was lifted complete and stored for later reuse as a garden decoration. Photograph Figures 7 and 9 show the gate post *in situ*. Access behind the shed showed that an approximate 2m length of the extreme western end of the wall (at its junction with the modern walling separating the former vicarage garden from Lanlivery Cottage garden) was mortared, stable and did not require reconstruction. However, to the east of this point – extending from approximately 2m west of the gatepost eastwards the walling did need to have its upper dry stone courses removed. Below this a series of larger, granite blocks (up to 0.6m long) were recorded, supporting occasional horizontally lain, smaller blocks of up to 0.3m length and 0.55m high. To the immediate east of the gatepost two large (up to 0.8m long) granite blocks were seen (without overlying stones) – Figure 7, which were immediately abutted by smaller, neater, horizontally placed stones to the east – 0.75m high. Although visually these two basal sections of walling look strikingly different it is unlikely that they date to markedly different periods of construction. The pronounced difference at this point appears to be the result of the wall being destabilised during insertion of the gate post, and the result of other collapse and repair. It is probable that the whole length of walling in this area is of 19th century origin, with the earliest surviving section being the larger, basal granite blocks.

Wall - Central portion

The central portion of the wall, which was approximately 10m long and 2m high, required all but the lowest c0.75m height of loose, unstable stonework to be removed. The retained basal section consisted of a mix of large granite stones with horizontally placed smaller stones (0.4m to 0.75m high) on top, which became less and less neatly arranged in the eastern 7m – see Figure 9. The easternmost 2.5m of this 10m length had largely collapsed, recently been rebuilt, had then collapsed again. The result was that the earlier basal part of the wall had essentially gone - see the foreground of Figure 9. Again, although displaying differences in building style and different levels of survival all the retained basal foundations of the wall are 19th century in date.

Wall - Eastern end

The eastern c3m long stretch of walling abuts the Listed churchyard steps – see Figure 8. Here a similar pattern of larger slab-like granite blocks formed the lowest layer, with horizontally laid smaller stones positioned above. These, smaller stones were notably neat and had a near vertical face, unlike the slight northward battering noted in the rest of the wall. It is likely that this short section – located between the church steps and the completely collapsed portion (shown in Figures 8 and 9), was laid with particular care because of its proximity to the steps. Again 19th century in date, this short stretch of wall had the most substantial retained height – up to 1.3m high (at the actual junction with the steps wall). Located between the basal slabs and the overlying smaller stones, two adjoining pieces of *in-situ* 19th century terracotta pottery were found (see Figure 10) - the only material dating evidence found for the wall.

Revetted churchyard soil

Running along the length of the removed upper section of loose walling was a single, dry, uniformly mixed, slightly gritty loam. Filled with roots and less frequently slate and granite pieces (the remains of dismantled/repared buildings), this soil also produced large, butchered animal (mainly cattle) bones – most with butchery marks on, and occasional pottery of variable date. None of the pottery was very modern, and there was no glass, metal or plastic. This would imply that much of this soil was the result of contemporary infilling behind the 19th century wall as it was being built. The small dark medieval sherd, the medieval white paint-decorated tile and the post-medieval buzza (storage jar) sherd all come from this deposit (see Figure 10), indicating that the material was mixed in date. Because of the finds it is unlikely that the soil came from the churchyard itself. It is more likely that this soil was the result of levelling or tidying up of the small mid to late 19th century enclosure area shown on Figure 3.

No human remains or other grave associated remains were disturbed, or seen. This supports the idea for the earlier lann/churchyard boundary to have been positioned approximately 1m inside the currently defined churchyard.

References

Primary Sources

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Websites

www.imagesofengland.org.uk English heritage's online database of Listed Buildings

Project archive

The HE project number is **2011032**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. Project file containing site records/notes, project correspondence & administration.
2. Digital photographs stored in the directory: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.I-L\Lanlivery WB churchyard wall 2011
3. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-98750

This report text is held in digital form as: G:\Historic Environment (Documents)\HE Projects\Sites\Sites L\Lanlivery churchyard wall WB\Lanlivery churchyard wall WB report 2011.doc

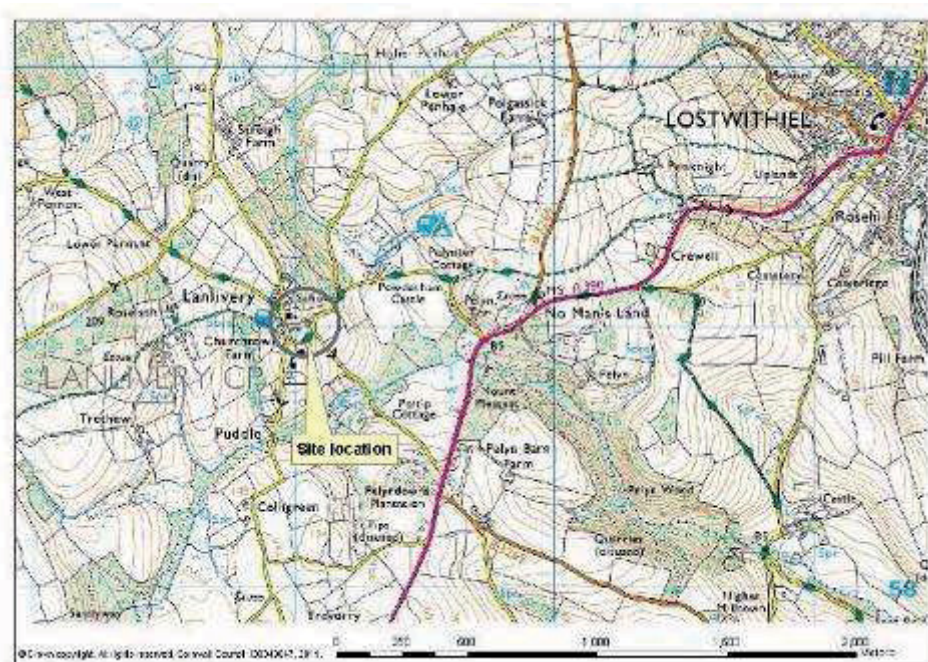


Figure 1 Lanlivery site location map



Figure 2 Lanlivery 1839 Tithe map extract showing the area of the site.

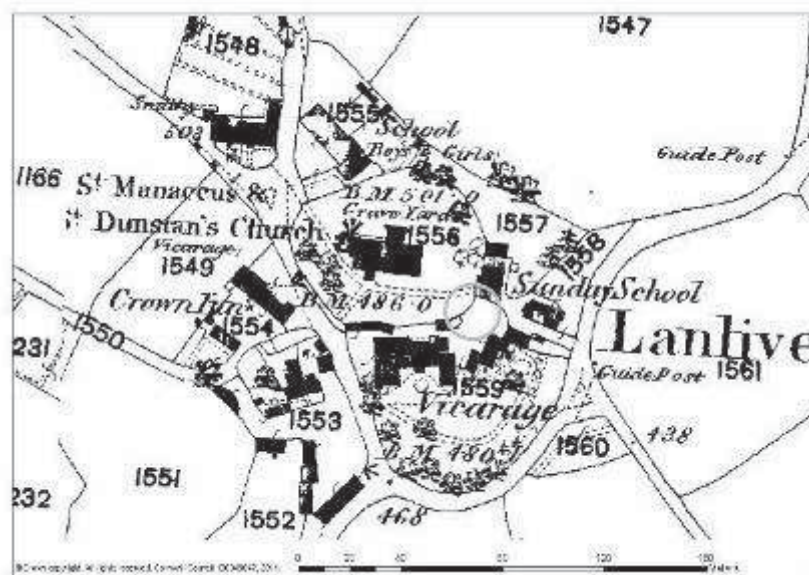


Figure 3 c1880 Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map showing the area of the site.

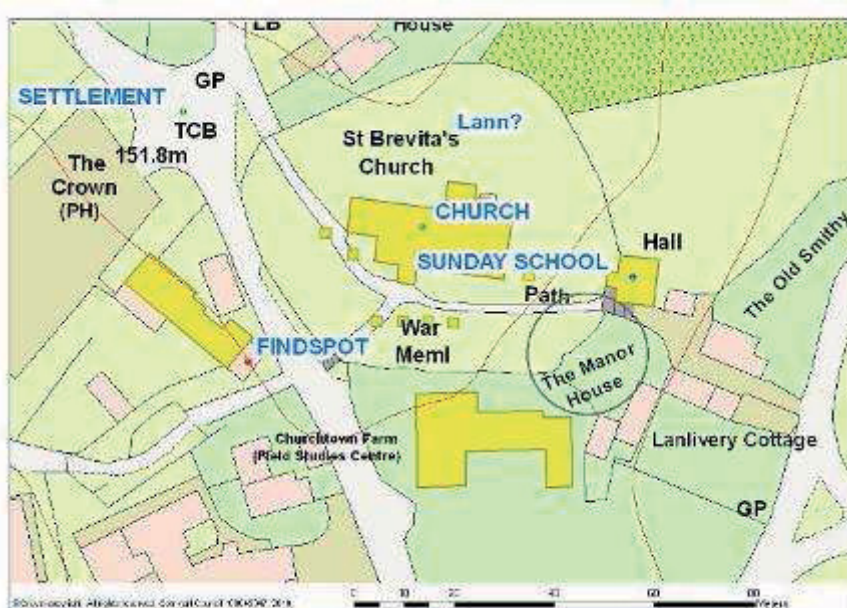


Figure 4 HBSMR identified sites and Listed Buildings (coloured yellow) within the area.

St Brevita Churchyard wall, Lanlivery – Proposed Works

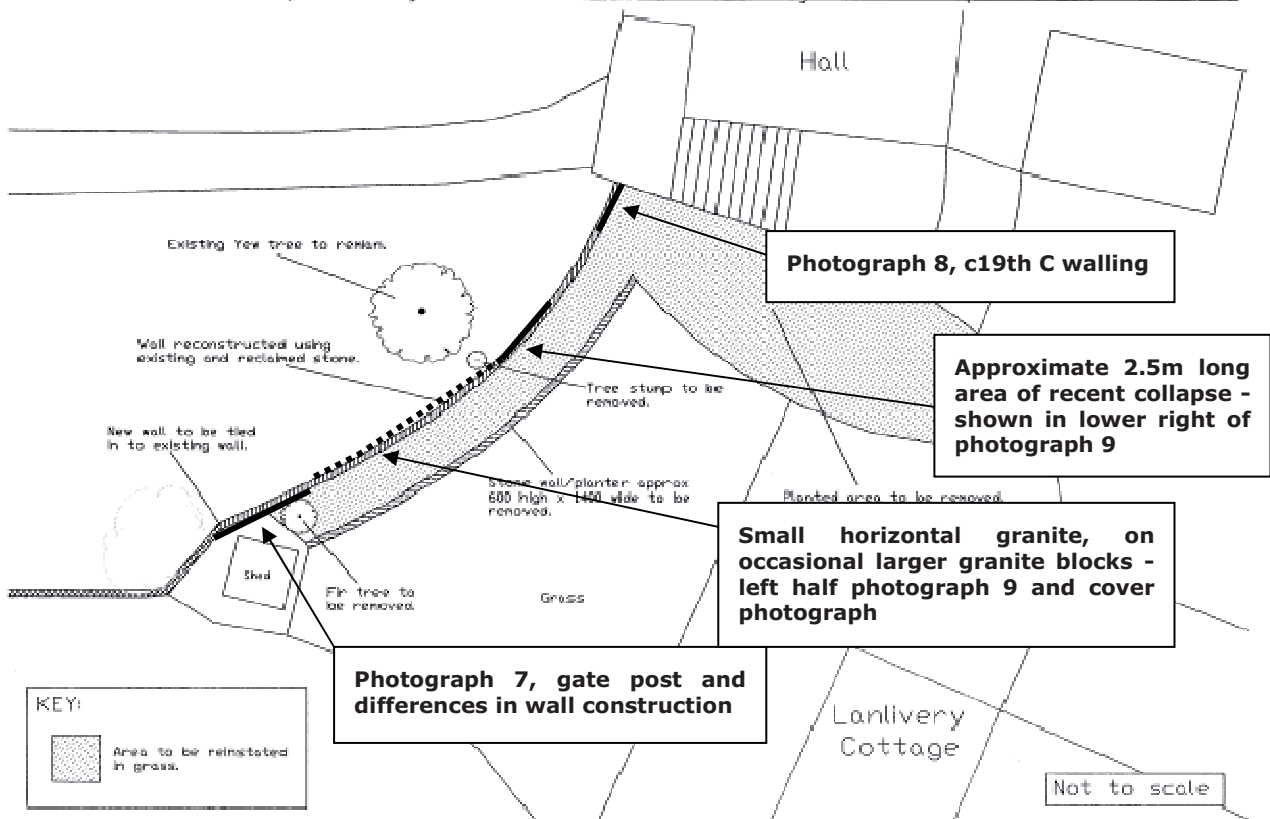


Figure 5 Measured sketch plan, showing works undertaken and main archaeological elements identified during fieldwork – with associated photograph numbers.



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Figure 11 Looking north along the completed new walling.