

Council for British Archaeology

Cynggor Archaeoleg Brydeinig

Wales/Cymru



Newsletter 55 Spring 2018

<http://britarch.ac.uk/cbawales>

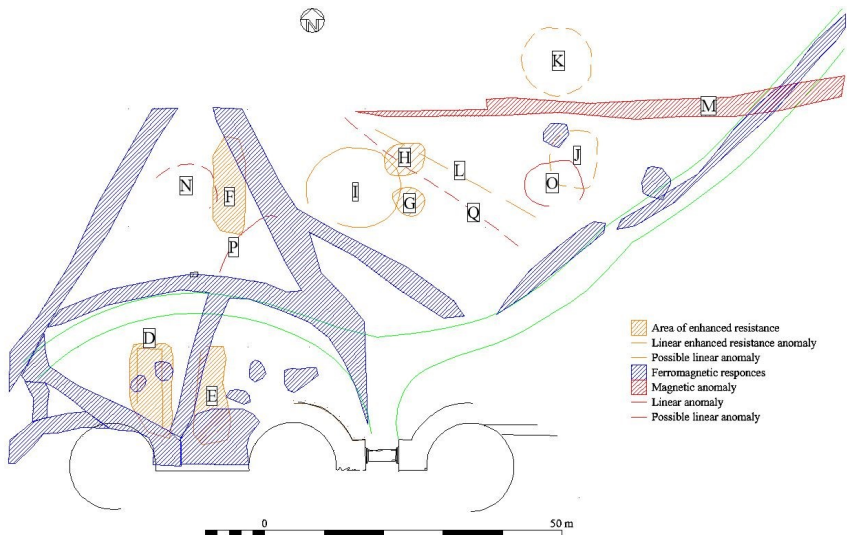
Community Archaeology Project at Chirk Castle

The National Trust are working to try to learn more about Chirk Castle's past and have just come to the end of a 2 month pilot community archaeology project to inspire volunteers and visitors to find out more about this fascinating site.

Volunteers have been busily carrying out non-invasive archaeological techniques to try to understand some of the secrets surrounding the castle. This has included carrying out a desktop study, ground truthing as well as carrying out a geophysical survey located immediately outside the entrance to the castle.



The results of the geophysical survey have been interesting. Amongst all the modern services the survey has revealed previously unknown archaeology. These include a possible unknown building at right angles to one of the towers along with a series of five circular features which may be prehistoric houses or barrows.



Geophysical survey results

The National Trust is currently looking into sources of funding to now develop this pilot into a longer term project. The joint project, with nearby property Erddig, will not only look into greater detail of these results but also look at the roles of Offa's and Wat's Dykes, sections of which can be found at these properties.

Samantha Jones, Project Coordinator

Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee

Membership

From 2017 membership of SELRC is free. The journal is being produced in digital form from 2017 onwards and will also be free to access. Members will receive SELRC newsletters and notification of the annual conference and may benefit from occasional special offers. Having members also benefits SELRC for grant applications so please do join.

To become a member simply send your full name and email address to the richard.brunning@swheritage.org.uk

Contact with members will usually be by email to reduce costs. If you do not have access to an email then send your name and postal address to ;

SELRC, FAO Richard Brunning, Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Somerset, TA2 6SF

CBA WALES CYMRU Journal Editor Wanted!

CBA Wales Cymru is looking for an editor for its annual journal, Archaeology in Wales. The role would suit somebody who works in, or is studying archaeology, and has time to compile the volume each year. Papers are submitted by end of May and the journal goes to print in September.

Traditionally the editor has led a team of sub editors for the gazetteer sections, recent publications section and the reviews section, and has been responsible for editing the journal, type setting the whole and liaising with the printer. The scope of the role is currently under review and it is likely that in future, the type setting will be done by a professional designer, although this is negotiable. The executive committee will take an active role in editorial decision making.

It is essential that the editor is part of the archaeological community and either works in or has links to Wales. Experience of editorial duties is desirable but not essential. Being familiar with design packages, such as InDesign is also desirable. A track record of publication and archaeological writing for a range of audiences would be an advantage. The role may suit a final year student, post graduate or early career professional who is looking to develop their skills in archaeological publishing.

For an informal discussion or more details please contact the secretary Janet Bailey by email using Engagement@cynonvalleymuseum.wales

The Hidden Landscapes Community Archaeology Project

The Aberystruth History and Archaeology Society (AHAS), in partnership with Blaenau Gwent Council, has secured HLF funding for a four year community archaeology project entitled the Hidden Landscapes Project. The project is already in its second year and the study area concentrates on the Cwm Celyn Valley near Blaina in Blaenau Gwent.

Cwm Celyn is an important survival of the pre-industrial landscape of the south Wales Valleys. It remains largely untouched by the widespread industrial activity of the 18th and 19th centuries and therefore retains important Medieval and Prehistoric landscape features that have not survived in other parts of the Valleys. The valley also has a rich folklore, first recorded in the 1770s by a local minister, and the potential for important oral history projects.

To date, ad hoc research has identified prehistoric hut circles and flint scatters, Bronze Age burial cairns and standing stones, medieval house platforms and field systems, post-medieval deserted rural settlements, early 19th century industrial sites, an early 19th bridge and World War I rifle range. There is also a previously unrecorded drift mine complex known as the Blaina Red Ash East Colliery.

The aim of the project is to identify and record the wealth of archaeological sites within the Cwm Celyn Valley. The project team is drawn from the volunteers of AHAS with Frank Olding, Heritage Officer for Blaenau Gwent Council, acting as archaeological advisor and mentor. The volunteers, who are based at Blaina Library, are working hard to engage local people with their heritage and the project offers free training and experience in archaeological fieldwork techniques and historical research. The results of this research will be widely disseminated to a variety of audiences via a dedicated website, guided walks, pop-up exhibitions and schools visits. The local scout troop will also be taking part.



Recording test pits



The Red Ash Level from the north

To date the fieldwork has concentrated on the remains of the Blaina Red Ash East Colliery. The colliery sits high on the mountainside to the east of Blaina and opened in 1925 after a prolonged legal battle by rival coal companies to prevent it starting work. The colliery closed in 1938 but does not appear on any Ordnance Survey map and has never been previously researched or recorded.

“Our volunteers have worked incredibly hard over the last year or so, but it’s been great fun,” says AHAS Secretary and Project Manager Ian Fewings. “We have been away on an archaeological field school down in Kent and the group has been out in all weathers surveying and evaluating the sites. The whole team seems to have huge stores of energy and enthusiasm and new volunteers are always warmly welcomed.”

Having been trained for the last year and a half, members of AHAS now act as mentors and facilitators to volunteers from the wider community. Local people have received training in plane table surveying, total station surveying, geophysics and evaluation excavation. There is also an active historical research group for volunteers who are less keen to be climbing mountains in the wind and rain. Their detailed investigations have uncovered the forgotten history of the Red Ash Level with group visits to the Gwent Archives, the South Wales Miners’ Archive in Swansea and the National Museum of Wales.

“We hope to offer a balance between archaeological fieldwork and historical research,” says John Mannell, leader of the historical research group, “and that allows us to include as many people as possible in our project”.

Frank Olding



Part of the surveying team!



Braving snow and ice!

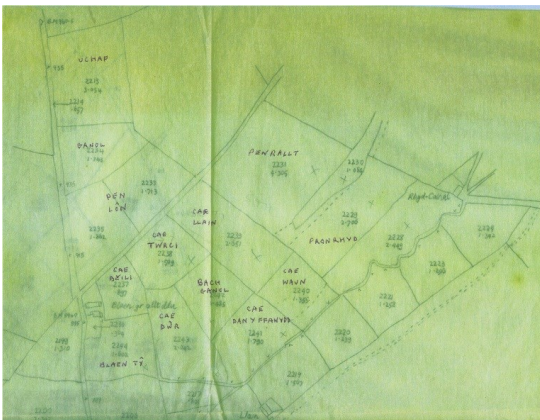
Providing Place Names

Part of our work with the list of historic Place Names is to encourage people from all parts of Wales to send their place names in to us. These names will not only be included in the List and kept safe there forever, but the public will also be able to search for them according to source on the website. As you'll see when using the Advanced Search function, the ones we have currently include names of houses, farms, fields and the like, which were sent in by people from Ceredigion. These were either the fruit of local place name projects, or were drawn from maps owned or compiled by the families who sent them in.



More than thirty names have already been collected by three people in Ceredigion, and there are more on the way, so come on rest of Wales! Don't let the Cardis take all the glory! We've already got names from Ffos y Ffin, Pont Siân, and Aberystwyth, with Cwmystwyth soon to follow, but what about Bethesda, Halkyn, Maenclochog or Patrishow? What about Sully or Abertillery? You can send your place names in either through the enquiries

form, which can be found on the website, by emailing us directly, or by speaking to our Place Names Officer, James January-McCann after he's given a talk on the List in your area. (Of course, you'll have to arrange for him to visit first... he doesn't charge an appearance fee!)



So what are you waiting for? The List belongs to the people of Wales, and it's vital that you take ownership of it. There are thousands and thousands of place names which only exist in speech, without any written record, and the only way for us to upload them to the List is for you to send them in to us. So, speak to your grandparents, ask your local historians and experts, and send the names in!

James January-McCann

<https://historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk>
James.january-mccann@rcahmw.gov.uk

Archaeology in Wales 56

We apologise for the delay of Archaeology in Wales volume 56 and anticipate it will be with members by the end of May at the latest. Meanwhile, if anybody has copy for volume 57 (for work undertaken in 2017) please forward it by email to the secretary: janet.bailey3@btinternet.com

Archaeology in Wales Conference 2017-18 - Book the Date!

Due to circumstances beyond our control the Archaeology in Wales Conference has been postponed and will now take place on 31 August - 2 September.



CBA Wales will be holding its first annual archaeological conference on the 31 August - 2 September 2018 at Lampeter, Ceredigion.

On offer will be an assortment of special trips out, presentations, activities, speakers, CPD and social events all set in lovely Mid-Wales and suitable for professionals, volunteers or simply anyone interested in the archaeology of Wales. We will be presenting findings from some of the last year's most exciting projects and visiting some exceptional places.

Arrangements are ongoing but there will be a choice of day tickets or full residential, with CBA members getting a special discount! Booking will be available later in the year but put the date in your diary now, so you don't miss out.

Register your interest here and we will send you more information about tickets and accommodation as soon as possible.

<https://cbawalesconference-register.eventbrite.co.uk>

Mapping and modelling Climate Change and Coastal Heritage: update on the CHERISH Project

On 1 January 2017, work began on Climate, Heritage and Environments of Reefs, Islands and Headlands (CHERISH), a five-year project that will receive more than €4m funding through the EU's Ireland Wales Co-Operation Programme 2014-20, priority 2 – adaption of the Irish Sea and coastal communities to climate change.

CHERISH brings together a cross-disciplinary team of experts who are working as an integrated, international survey team. The project is led by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in partnership with the Discovery Programme: Centre for Archaeology and Innovation Ireland, Aberystwyth University's Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, and the Geological Survey of Ireland. The key objective of the project is to increase knowledge and understanding of the impacts – past, present and near-future – of climate change, increased storminess and extreme weather on the cultural heritage of reefs, islands and headlands of the Welsh and Irish seas. The project seeks to address gaps in both data and knowledge for these remote coastal landscapes and develop a greater understanding of climate change impacts on fragile coastal heritage sites. The commissioning of new, high-resolution, light detection and ranging (LiDAR) surveys at the start of the project was designed to establish accurate 3D baseline data for the Welsh islands, against which coastal change could be measured in the future.

New LiDAR mapping of RSPB Ramsey Island, Pembrokeshire

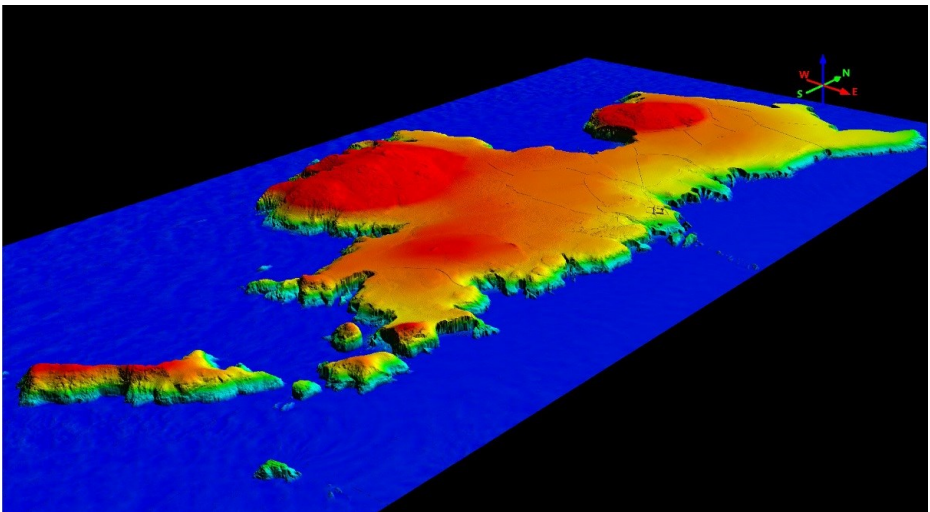
At the start of the CHERISH project, data coverage for the more remote stretches of the Welsh coastline and islands was poor or non-existent, especially LiDAR. Significant stretches of coast lacked any accurate 3D data, while others only had older two-metre resolution LiDAR data sets available. LiDAR at a resolution of 0.5 metres – the minimum required for archaeological interpretation and landscape mapping – was mainly absent, and there was no LiDAR data at all for the principal Welsh islands, including Skerries, Bardsey, the St Tudwal's Islands, Ramsey and Grassholm.

In early February 2017, Bluesky LTD was commissioned to collect 0.25m “leaves-off” (winter conditions with low vegetation and bare trees) LiDAR data of six Welsh islands at low tide. Wardens on both Bardsey and Ramsey islands watched the survey aircraft above, and even tweeted a photo of the flight.

The data captured during the survey has enabled the creation of a highly detailed 3D model of RSPB Ramsey Island for the first time. Previous surveys carried out during the mid-1990s by archaeologists Heather and Terry James for the RSPB recorded prehistoric cairns and field systems on the island's two summits of Carn Ysgubor and Carn Llundain; Heather's survey work continued until recently.

The CHERISH team has expanded on this work using computer aided mapping from the new LiDAR data, along with digitised historical aerial imagery. Different 3D visualisations have allowed many archaeological earthworks to be mapped for the first time which are either inaccessible on foot or are too subtle to see on the ground due to bracken and scrub vegetation. Not only has this led to the discovery of new archaeological sites but it also provides an accurate and precise dataset which can be used to monitor environmental changes on the island as a result of climate change.

The new survey has revealed plough levelled Bronze Age round barrows on the lower-lying fields, confirmed a prehistoric coastal promontory fort on the north of the island, clarified the possible site of a lost chapel and enabled precise mapping of the remnant ancient field systems. Following the initial mapping of Ramsey we will continue to work closely with the RSPB wardens to investigate some of the sites on the ground, and also enhance archaeological interpretation in the island's visitor centre. During 2018 LiDAR mapping will be completed for nearby RSPB Grassholm Island, and for the major landscape of Bardsey Island in Gwynedd.



3D view of Ramsey Island from the south-east generated from 25cm LiDAR (CHERISH Project).

Understanding coastal erosion at Dinas Dinlle, Gwynedd

Late in 2017 survey work also began at Dinas Dinlle coastal fort in north-west Wales. Little is known about the coastal promontory fort due to a lack of excavation and dating. It is thought to be late prehistoric in date and chance finds also suggest occupation in the Roman period. In the early 20th century it formed part of a golf course, whilst during the Second World War a pill box, seagull trench and observation post were constructed on the northern slopes to protect nearby RAF Llandwrog – now Caernarfon airport.

The fort is protected as a Scheduled Monument whilst the cliff face is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, designated for the geological importance of exposed glacial sediments.

The fort and its environs are being tackled by a combined team of archaeologists, surveyors, geographers and geoscientists to provide a greater understanding of the fort in its landscape setting. Initial work by the CHERISH team has included photogrammetric modelling from new aerial photography, a new detailed ground survey of the earthworks, a new geophysical survey by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and initial palaeoenvironmental assessment of the surrounding wetlands by Aberystwyth University.

Future work during 2018-2020 will include gathering highly accurate (centimetre and sub-centimetre) 3D data to monitor the eroding cliff edge using techniques such as terrestrial laser scanning and drone survey. This will provide an accurate baseline for future monitoring and with analysis of historical documents such as aerial photographs and mapping, the team hope to reconstruct as accurately as possible erosion rates over the past 150 years. Extension of coring and sampling in the surrounding area alongside research of documents such as old newspapers and estate records will also reconstruct the past environment and weather history of the area.

The CHERISH project will be working closely with the National Trust who own the site, along with Cadw, Natural Resources Wales and the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. National Trust Llŷn Operations Manager, Andy Godber said, ‘we are delighted to be part of this exciting project. Dinas Dinlle encapsulates the risk to our coastline from climate change. As our coastal adaptation policy for Dinas Dinlle is to accept the loss of this important site, being part of this innovative project allows us to learn more about the history of human occupation here, while we still can.’



3D photogrammetric model of Dinas Dinlle coastal fort, Gwynedd, generated from oblique aerial photography (CHERISH Project). Images: © Crown: CHERISH PROJECT 2017. Produced with EU funds through the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020. All material made freely available through the Open Government Licence.

Dates for your diary

The CHERISH Project has two forthcoming free events in Wales; a professional seminar looking at Climate Change and Coastal Heritage at Venue Cymru, Llandudno, on Thursday 17th May 2018 (booking via Eventbrite) and a CHERISH Dayschool to celebrate the Year of the Sea in Aberystwyth University on Saturday 6th October 2018. You can also find us in Aberystwyth Bandstand on Europe Day on 9th May. Visit the website for a list of events.

Louise Barker, Toby Driver, Dan Hunt, (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales), Dr Sarah Davies and Dr Patrick Robson (Aberystwyth University).

Contact us:

Email: cherish@rcahmw.gov.uk

Visit our website and follow CHERISH on social media:

www.cherishproject.eu

Facebook: CHERISH Project

Twitter: @CHERISHProj

SUPPORTING ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE UK

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) has launched a survey about archaeology volunteering. We want to find who out takes an active part in community archaeology and what kind of things you get involved with. Most importantly we'd like to know about the kinds of additional support you need to thrive and how the Council for British Archaeology might be able to help you. The last time we asked you about this was 10 years ago and a lot has changed since then! We would appreciate it if you could distribute this email to your members, the survey can be completed by a representative of a group or an individual.

The CBA brings together the interests of a wide range of people and organisations involved with archaeology in the UK. This includes commercial archaeologists, those working in local authorities, museums or other parts of the archaeological heritage sector; universities; community archaeologists and volunteers.

We will use the results from the survey, which has been funded by the Headley Trust, to help shape the work of the CBA over the coming period and better tailor the support we, and others, can offer to community archaeology.

To start the survey, click below or go to

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CBA_Community_archaeology_2018

The survey closes on Thursday 29 March 2018.

Thank you for your help.

Debbie Frearson, Training Officer, Council for British Archaeology

Newsletter Editors

Items for inclusion in the newsletter should be sent to:

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or

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