

Council for British Archaeology

Cyngor Archaeoleg Brydeinig

Wales/Cymru



The stunning Abergele Bronze Age hoard on display at Conwy Cultural Centre; read more on page 11.

Newsletter 68 Autumn 2024

<http://www.councilforbritisharchaeologywales.wordpress.com/>

Further Excavations at Bryneglwys

Philip Culver (for CRAG)

Photographs courtesy of Dr. Ian Brooks

(See CBA Newsletter 66 – Autumn 2023 p.12-15)

In our third season on the hillside above Bryneglwys, near Corwen, members of the Clwydian Range Archaeology Group (CRAG), under the eagle eye of Dr. Ian Brooks, carried out further geophysical work and excavation during July and August 2024. More magnetometry and resistivity were conducted, to supplement that of 2022, on either side of the field boundary to the northwest of last year's Ring Cairn. This revealed further evidence of human activity in the area over the millennia. Three trenches were opened over very different and probably unrelated features.



FIGURE 1.

Photogrammetric
Plan of Trench 7.

(1m. Poles in the
Trench; North is to
the Bottom of the
Picture.)

Trench 7 (5m x 6m with a 2m x 3m extension) took an 'in depth' look at the mysterious horseshoe-shaped bank and hollow in the south-west corner of the field which we had looked at briefly in 2022 (**Fig.1**).

The farmer had kindly, at our request, removed several large boulders that had blocked the hollow. Sections through the bank revealed its construction from soil thrown up from the hollow which was dug to at least a depth of 2 metres and contained at an upper level a large coil of rusty old barbed wire (hence the spike on the magnetometry). Beneath this was a thick layer of reddish burnt soil which contained several large stones. One of these had a circular cup mark hollowed out in it (**Fig. 2**).



FIGURE 2.
Cup Marked Stone at the Bottom of Trench 7.

A small amount of charcoal was obtained from this burnt layer which we hope will provide a C14 date for the feature. Whoever constructed this substantial monument was unusually tidy and left very little other evidence behind of their activity here. The feature remains as mysterious as ever, though we can say fairly definitely that it was not a burnt mound, nor a shooting butt nor an army training trench – all of which had been suggested.

Trench 8 (2m x 12m) was a slot through a circular feature about 5m in

diameter that appeared on the geophysics and on the Lidar survey of the area. This was the remnant of a stony bank surrounding a sub-rectangular cist-like hollow lined with small stones (**Fig. 3**). It is thought that many more stones that originally constituted this feature have been robbed when the adjacent estate boundary bank was built. A couple of hammer stones and several flints came from the surrounding area, including scrapers of Bronze Age type, and a small broken blade which Dr. Brooks has dated to the Late Mesolithic period. The cist itself had no contents. It is suggested that this feature may be a funerary monument of the early Bronze Age, possibly related to last year's cairn about 50m away to the south east. The geophysics revealed similar features 30m away in the next field which have yet to be investigated.



FIGURE 3. Circular Bank in Trench 8. The Cist is to the Right of the 1m. Pole. (North is to the Lower Right of the Picture.)

Trench 9 (6m x 7m) was opened to look at the relationship between a trackway, clearly visible on Lidar, and on the ground, running northwest from the open moorland towards Bryneglwys village and an old field boundary crossing it, which extends to run adjacent to the ring cairn excavated last year. This would suggest that the cairn was possibly used as a marker when laying out the fields (**Fig. 4**). Excavation revealed a well-

-used trackway, partially sunken, with signs of repair, and of having been built up as a causeway. This runs underneath the boundary bank, with two post holes, two and a half metres apart, marking the crossing suggesting a gateway. Later the track appears to be abandoned, and the field boundary is built up over the track. There was no datable evidence for these features but they must predate the existing enclosure of the moorland in about 1950. Neither of the features appears on easily available historic mapping, the 1845 Tithe map, and the Ordnance Survey mapping. The track passes underneath the existing modern field boundary, ignoring the present gateway, and appears, from the satellite imagery on Archwilio, to lead to a group of rectilinear features (buildings?) lower down in the next field. It is hoped to investigate these at a future time.

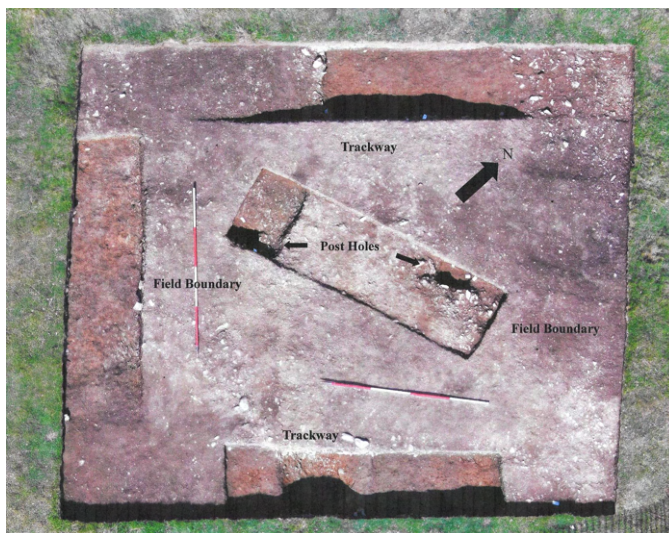


FIGURE 4. Photogrammetric Plan of Trench 9 Showing the Trackway Passing under the Field Boundary. (2m. Poles in the Trench.)

Once again CRAG is very grateful to the farmer and landowner for his kindness and enthusiasm, and for the hard work of all our volunteers, including three students, over four weeks of mainly very hot weather.

The CBA Wales AGM will be held on Saturday 9th November 2024 in Haverfordwest as part of the Pembrokeshire Archaeology Day. Admission to the AGM is free; for Archaeology Day tickets, see below.

Archaeology Day 2024

Saturday 9 November

Merlin Theatre, Pembrokeshire College, Haverfordwest

09.30 Registration, refreshments and exhibition

10:00 Welcome from Tomos Jones, Pembrokeshire Coast's Community Archaeologist

10:10 Morning session

1 Pembrokeshire Coast: Safeguarding Scheduled Monuments
by Tomos Jones

2 Fifty Years (Almost) of Dyfed Archaeological Trust
by Ken Murphy

3 The latest news from Wogan Cavern
by Dr Rob Dinnis

12:30 Lunch including exhibition, book launch
by Professor George Nash
and Council for British Archaeology Wales
Annual General Meeting

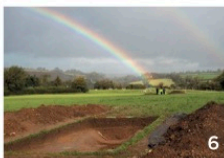
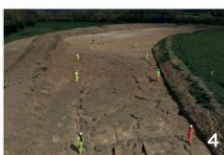
13:45 Afternoon session

4 Prehistoric Discoveries: An update on the excavations ahead of A40 Llandewi Velfry to Redstone Cross Improvements
by Luke Jenkins

5 Trelllyfaint: More than just a megalith
by Professor George Nash

6 Sourcing the Stonehenge bluestones: a ceremonial centre in west Wales
by Professor Mike Parker Pearson

16:30 Close of event



Ticket £25, available at:
https://pembrokeshirecoast.bookinglive.com/book/add/p/238?l=en_GB

Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park



Heneb

2000-Year-Old Settlement Unearthed by Heneb Archaeologists in North Wales

Zoe Arthurs, Heneb National Lead for Outreach

Our Heneb field services team working at the Greenfield Valley Heritage Park in North Wales have made an extraordinary discovery that has unearthed the remains of a 2000-year-old settlement. Led by archaeologists from Heneb's Welshpool office, the team, which included local students and volunteers, found the remains of two Iron Age roundhouses and a significant collection of artefacts, including a range of Roman ceramics and metalwork.

Among the finds, the most remarkable discovery was a fully intact Late Iron Age triskele mount, an ornate fitting used for

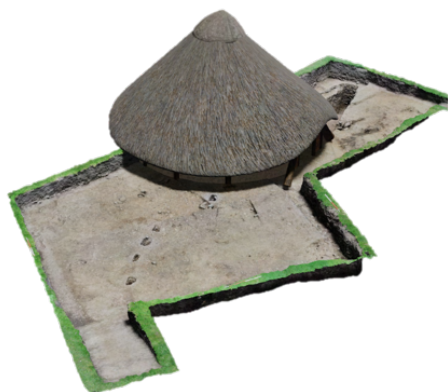
horse bridles depicting a Celtic triskele design that may have been made locally. This discovery shows us that there was clearly a prosperous trading relationship between the native Deceangli tribe and the Romans during the late first century AD, possibly centred on the production of metalwork.



The artefact was found by a budding young archaeologist, Edward, whose excitement was palpable. "It was amazing," he remarked. "The fact that it is around 2,000 years old is unbelievable."

Dr Carol Bell, Chair of Heneb, said:

"I am sure that discovering this important find will encourage Edward to learn more about local archaeology and history. This is testament to the work Heneb does to inspire the next generation of archaeologists and how our archaeological excavations involve local communities and encourage learning about the past through engagement."



This groundbreaking find not only enriches our understanding of the area's ancient history but will potentially become a valuable addition to the Heritage Park. The excavation aimed to build upon the success of a previous dig in 2023. It identified potentially significant Roman activity in the fields surrounding the remains of Basingwerk Abbey, a scheduled 12th-century Cistercian monastery. Both excavations are part of a wider programme to enhance Greenfield Valley, which received funding from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund, as well as a financial contribution from Flintshire County Council and the Greenfield Valley Trust. It will contribute a new chapter to the Park's story that will further inspire visitors and the local community.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Open Day Tours; Medieval Pottery; the Late Iron Age Mount; Roman Samian Ware; Trench 1 Excavation; Emperor Trajan Coin.

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Making a Donation or Bequest to CBA Wales

CBA Wales is a charity established to educate the public and advance the study and practice of archaeology, conduct and communicate the results of relevant research, and advance public understanding and care of the historic environment. Charitable donations are an important part of our fundraising income, and making a donation or leaving a gift in your will is a great way for you to support us to carry out our work. Any gift, no matter how big or small, will contribute to promoting interest in the historic environment of Wales and to bringing together those interested in Welsh archaeology.

All such funds received will not be used towards the day-to-day running of the organisation and will be ring-fenced in our accounts. While we are not in a position to say exactly what future projects they will be used to support, we can assure you that they will be used to further the aims specified in our constitution and to provide benefit to the wider community. In particular it is anticipated that, wherever possible, they will be used to leverage other sources of funding.

If you are in a position to make a bequest or a donation to CBA Wales please contact our Treasurer, Gary Robinson (treasurer@cbawales.org) for more information.



Abergele Hoard Bronze Age Talk with Gary Robinson at Conwy Culture Centre

Rachel Evans, Museum Development and Accreditation Support Officer, Conwy County Borough Council

In July, Conwy Culture Centre celebrated acquiring and displaying the Abergele Bronze Age Hoard. The Abergele Hoard was found in 2017 by metal detectorist Colin Rivett. After finding three objects, Mr Rivett responsibly left the remaining objects in the ground and reported the find. The follow-up archaeological investigation was undertaken by Mark Lodwick, Kenneth Brassil and Tony Daly, where a further ten objects were found.



The objects were acknowledged as a Late Bronze Age hoard and declared as treasure under the Treasure Act 1996. The hoard consists of 7 bronze socketed axes, 3 bronze palstave axes, 2 leaded bronze sword

scabbard chapes, and a copper ingot fragment.

Conwy Museum Service based at Conwy Culture Centre wished to display the hoard in the county where it was found, as opposed to it typically going to London or Cardiff, and were offered the opportunity to purchase the hoard. As a Local Authority museum facing austerity, funds were needed in order to acquire the hoard. We applied to the Headley Trust and the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, and were very kindly awarded both which enabled us to purchase the full hoard.

Conservation work was carried out on the hoard by Pieta Greaves from Drakon Heritage and Conservation in Autumn 2023, and in early 2024 it was finally returned to the county where it was found. Acquiring the Abergele Hoard for Conwy County has enabled local people to see their local heritage, for local children to learn about the Bronze Age, and allowed us to host a most inspiring talk by Dr Gary Robinson.



Conwy Culture Centre acquired Museum Accreditation status in 2023 and it is this accredited status of the Centre which allowed us to put the Abergele Hoard on display here. We were also able to produce replicas made by AncientCraft to be displayed in a location as close to the find site as possible, at Abergele Library. At Abergele Library, craft sessions were run to coincide with the Festival of Archaeology 2024 in July.



As part of the Festival, we worked with local children on artworks that explored their response to the Bronze Age, the Abergele Hoard and their sense of community. The artworks were facilitated by local North Wales artist Elly Strigner, who worked with printmaking techniques and collage.

Dr Gary Robinson presented a fascinating talk to members of the public. Dr Robinson, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at Bangor University, spoke about what Conwy was like 3,000 years ago and the wider context of the Abergele Bronze Age Hoard. During Dr Robinson's talk, attendees learned about the sources and locations of copper and tin, which were used to create bronze, how these materials were moved by boats, and the importance of prehistoric harbours, riverways and trackways. We also learned how rare axes would have been and how special metalworkers were considered, where Dr Robinson spoke about the fascinating concept of gift exchange being a symbol of power and relationships.

We hope all the attendees enjoyed Dr Gary Robinson's talk and we thank them for coming. And lastly, we wish to thank Dr Gary Robinson himself for delivering such an inspiring and engaging talk!

If you haven't yet visited the Abergele Hoard, you can see it on display at Conwy Culture Centre, and the replicas and children's artworks at Abergele Library.

The Abergele Hoard was purchased with support from Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and The Headley Trust. The replicas and artworks were funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



CALL FOR PAPERS

Society for Museum Archaeology Conference, Cardiff, 7-8th November 2024

The SMA is a recognised Subject Specialist Network within the UK museum sector (<https://www.subjectspecialistnetworks.org.uk/>) for Museum Archaeology. We exist to promote museum involvement in archaeology, promote greater public understanding of archaeology, campaign for the role of museums in our nation's heritage and support archaeologists working in museums.

The theme for the SMA conference is Archaeology Lifelines.

We welcome both presentations and practical based workshops from those working across archaeology in professional and non-professional capacities. We hope to use the conference to explore how archaeology

can be used to explore past lives, be a lifeline to users and communities, and what lifelines archaeology and its professionals needs today in order to thrive in the future.

We would love this opportunity to broaden the discussions around museum archaeology beyond those who work in the sector. Therefore, we are particularly interested in hearing from users of archaeology, from researchers and professional archaeologists to community partners and participants, to students and volunteers. Museum colleagues and aspiring and early career professionals are also most welcome, and we will be dedicating aspects of the conference to workforce conversations.

Ideas for contributions might include but do not have to be limited to:

- Showcasing the Archaeology of Wales – a celebration of our hosts at Amgueddfa Cymru, Museum Wales Cardiff, with updates from across the country, both within and beyond museum-based archaeology.
- Archaeology’s role and impact on wider society – Exploring the impact of archaeology on audiences, participants and users. This can include projects which promote wellbeing, sense of community or identity or which further research. We would particularly love to hear from participants and audiences on these projects, as well project coordinators and professionals.
- Professional life in the archaeology sector: including and beyond museums – Discussions relating to professional and sectorial challenges and opportunities from those within, without and breaking into the sector.
- Exploring past lives through archaeology – Papers relating to archaeology-based projects which tell us more about the lives of individuals through new or tried and tested techniques.
- The future of archaeological archives – Is there a lifeline for the future of Archaeology? – Discussions relating to the crisis in archaeology, particularly around storage and expertise.

Please see our website for full details:
<https://socmusarch.org.uk/conference/>

Committee Vacancies

At this year's AGM in November the posts of Chairman, Secretary, and Membership Secretary will all be up for elections. All the current post holders have reached the end of their second three-year term, and so by the constitution are not eligible to stand again at this year's AGM. There will also be four committee places to be filled.

If anyone would like to stand for any of the offices or is interested in joining the committee please get in touch with either the Chairman, Mike Greene (chair@cbawales.org) or Secretary, Evan Chapman (secretary@cbawales.org).

If you are receiving this newsletter by post, you either do not have or have not given us your most recent e-mail address. Given the recent increase in online archaeological activity, if you would now like to provide us with an e-mail address which you are happy for us to use for CBA Wales mailings, please contact the Membership Secretary: membership@cbawales.org

Newsletter Editor

We welcome items up to 600 words in length, with up to 3 illustrations, for inclusion in the newsletter!

Please send your contributions to Emma Wager: newsletter@cbawales.org

Archaeology in Wales

Items for inclusion in the journal should be sent to: aiw@cbawales.org

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