

Parc Cybi, Holyhead, Anglesey: update

Last year this newsletter published a note on the excavations run by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust just south of Holyhead, Anglesey. These are being funded by the Welsh Assembly Government in advance of a mixed use development site to be called Parc Cybi. The excavations, which started in November 2006, continued until the end of June this year, 2008 and much more has been found.

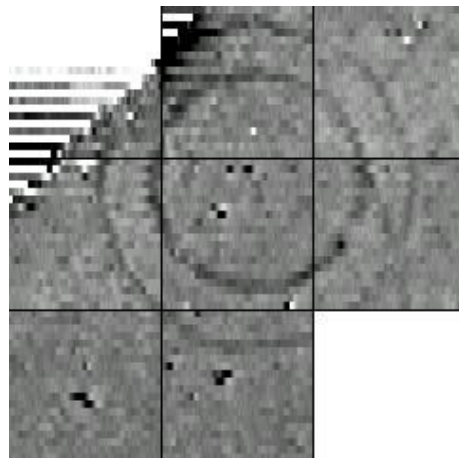
Previously described were an Early Neolithic timber building and a complex stone-built Iron Age roundhouse settlement, but the note hinted at other discoveries just coming to light at the time of writing. Two areas were mentioned containing possible early medieval long cist graves. One turned into a compact cemetery of 23 graves on top of a small hill. These were typical early medieval long cists of all sizes representing the burial ground of a small population.

Three small cists found at the north end of the site (500m north-west of the medieval cemetery) proved not to be children's long cist graves as initially thought, but small Bronze Age cists. Hidden by clean gravel backfill almost indistinguishable from the natural gravels were a further five much larger cists. All the cists were arranged as if to be sealed beneath a single barrow and we believe this is the first example of a multiple cist barrow found in North Wales. The large cists were completely sealed and undisturbed, and it is likely that chemical processes have leached away the bones of probable crouched inhumations that are likely to have occupied them. However, two of the cists each contained a single intact pot. This barrow was close to the mysterious figure of 8-shaped enclosure previously reported and a more conventional small barrow defined by a ring ditch. Creating what can be considered as a Bronze Age ritual complex.

The story of the Neolithic occupation of the area was also further expanded. A natural hollow, about 490m north-west of the timber building, had preserved part of the Neolithic land surface from ploughing and in this were found the stakeholes and fires of many small temporary shelters and the pot sherds and flints of numerous short-lived activities. Most of this activity seemed to date from the Early Neolithic but there were traces of a Mesolithic and Bronze Age presence. Elsewhere other pits and postholes extend this dispersed, temporary activity into the Mid Neolithic period. Inevitably burnt mounds were found; although there were only two. One was small

signed forms.

Archaeology in Wales reached new lengths with Volume 46 coming out at 263 pages. The long term sustainability of Archaeology in Wales, both in terms of cost and the amount of work involved in producing it, continues to be a key concern of the committee. It is realized that we need to be in a position to pay for the time of an assistant editor, to undertake the more technical parts of layout and preparing text for the printers, even if, for the present, we are able to maintain production through the hard work of unpaid volunteers. A further, fresh, call on funds to be considered next year, is a request from Central CBA for a small contribution to help fully cover the current costs of the Conservation Coordinator post.



2008 has been a quiet year for the Committee with no major decisions to be made. The Committee, as usual, met twice during the year, in January and June. Between meetings matters have been dealt with by the exchange of emails. The Business meetings have also been quiet. The autumn mailing was seriously disrupted by the postal strike. While the spring meeting probably, just could not compete with the excitement of the Wales v. Ireland match.

The creation of the part-time post of Conservation Coordinator (Development Officer) has continued to bear fruit. The results for the first year, in general, far exceeded expectations. Seventeen of the twenty-two Local Planning Authorities in Wales are now notifying CBA of listed building cases as are two of the three National Park planning authorities. The five Local Planning Authorities which are not notifying us are also ignoring the other amenity societies. Now getting a steady 20-25 applications a month of which about 10 per cent are responded to, with positive outcomes in most cases. A number of volunteer caseworkers have been recruited to work with the Conservation Coordinator and undertake site visits as part of the listed building consultation process. This should mean an increase in the number of cases responded to by the CBA and hopefully a greater involvement in local heritage protection.

From last years autumn mailing over seventy completed Gift Aid forms were returned. These have allowed CBA Wales/Cymru to ask the Inland Revenue for a number of years of unclaimed Gift Aid, amounting to £1,343.17. Thank you to all members who returned

and perfectly formed, but one was large with what appeared to be a well down to the water table.

While the excavations of the main part of the Iron Age roundhouse settlement finished in September 2007, a considerable area on the outskirts remained. Excavation of this area revealed three probable granary structures, of a local type using stone pillars rather than timber posts. These were associated with the fragmentary remains of a small stone-built roundhouse, but beneath this was a busy yard covered with burnt stone and related to a large roundhouse (c. 10m in diameter) with extensive hearth deposits in the middle. The building had an entrance possibly with a complex porch on the north-west side, but there was apparently a large gap in its south-eastern wall. The wall itself may have been built with thick planks, or possibly stone slabs, and its interior was full of pits, gullies and a stone-lined trough. This was probably the earliest structure in the settlement and it was located on the very edge of the marsh that seemed so important to the later settlement.

Over 100m from the main settlement and hidden by a hill were two clay-walled circular structures containing complex stone-lined drains. The drains may suggest that they were not domestic and alternative uses will be explored in the post-excavation analysis. Nearby another probable farmstead was located. This is so far undated but seems to include rectangular rather than circular buildings. Parts of the complex were investigated revealing a large number of postholes probably for sheds and granaries but the rest have been carefully covered over to be investigated in the near future.

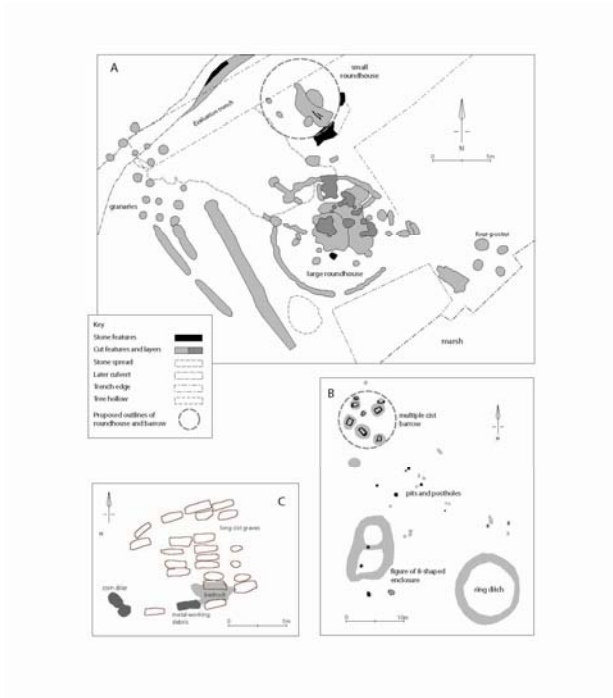
So far over 22 hectares of the 40 hectare site have been investigated. Some of the remainder will be undisturbed but there are significant areas still to explore in a future stage of the project. The site has produced a vast range of archaeology much of national importance and the post-excavation work will add even more to our understanding, including, it is hoped, one of the best dated Iron Age settlements in Wales.

Jane Kenney
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Caption for illustration

A: plan of large, early roundhouse on the edge of the main Iron Age settlement and surrounding features. B: Plan of multiple cist barrow

and adjacent monuments. C: plan of early medieval long cist cemetery.



Not only has this small scale project provided a potentially important archaeological return, it has also shown that with a little effort what might have been a fortnight of photocopying has been turned into a rewarding, enjoyable and useful experience for students and professionals alike.



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Photograph legends:

The cropmark 'ring ditch' selected for investigation

Work Experience students lay out transects for the gradiometer survey

John Burman of Merionydd Geophysical Services carrying out the gradiometer survey

The previously unknown double-ditched hengiform monument

Free back numbers of Archaeology in Wales!!!!

We still need to reduce our stock of back numbers because of the amount of space they occupy and the fact that apart from the most recent volumes, AiW will be available on line in the near future. Your committee has decided that rather than pulp excess stock, we should firstly offer volumes to members, free of charge, other than the cost of postage.

The following volumes are available: 6, 19, a few of 27 and 29, 30 – 34 inc., 36-44 inc. Vol. 45 is also available but at the full price of £8. Postage for a single volume is £2. As an indication, the complete available run, at a standard second class parcel rate, would be £10.



Let us know how you are supporting your YAC branches or if you have any ideas that might benefit the club. If we don't know what you are doing or what you can offer, we can't publicise this to the branches. It would be great if we could have a named committee member to liaise with; if this would be possible, please forward their contact details to Wendi Terry.

We look forward to your support!

Wendi Terry, YAC Network & Events Officer, CBA, St. Mary's House, 66 Bootham, York, YO30 7BZ, 01904 671417, wenditerry@britarch.ac.uk

Students make significant discovery!

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) recently proved the value of hosting a Work Experience fortnight when four local school students, led by CPAT staff on a bespoke geophysical training project, revealed a significant piece of unknown archaeology.

The site selected was a cropmark ring ditch (PRN 3608), first noted in aerial photography taken in the 1970s, at Mathrafal near Meifod in north Powys. The field in which it lay hidden had since been used as a car park for the 2003 Eisteddfod, and by local agricultural shows.

While the weather let up and gave the team near-perfect conditions, John Burman of Merionydd Geophysical Services completed a gradiometer scan across some 2500m². The twenty metre transects were laid out by the students, under the leadership of Jeff Spencer, CPAT's Historic Environment Record Officer. Meanwhile, the writer and Sophie Watson, Heritage Management Archaeologists with CPAT, led the recording of the site, including making a measured plan, photographic archive and plotting grid reference locations using GPS, thus fixing the site into the National Grid. Despite the closest attention of fifty or more cows and their bull(!), the exercise was completed quickly and, as we later discovered, with unimagined success.

Back in the office, John and the team downloaded the data, using Geoplot software, and were stunned to see the feature emerge not as a ring ditch as had been thought, but as a double-ditched and causewayed, hengiform monument! Thus turning what was thought to have been a relatively common Bronze Age barrow into a relatively rare Neolithic site.

This offer is extended only to members of CBA:Wales. However, non-members can acquire back numbers at a heavily discounted price. The discount is negotiable and depends on the number of volumes ordered.

Contact details: cdelaneyheritage@btinternet.com 01994 427019
11 Victoria Street, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire, SA33 4SE

The Hindwell causewayed enclosure

The recent discovery of an important early Neolithic 'causewayed' enclosure led CPAT to conduct a programme of geophysical survey and trial excavation during the summer of 2008, with funding provided by Cadw.

The enclosure, which is near Hindwell in the Walton Basin, first came to light as a result of aerial reconnaissance by Toby Driver, of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, in 2006. Photography taken in July of that year clearly showed a circuit of two roughly concentric interrupted ditches, visible as cropmarks in a field of ripening cereal. Although the enclosure itself was previously unrecorded, a number of flint artefacts have been recovered from the general area. The site lies only 400m west of the large Neolithic palisaded enclosure at Hindwell



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A magnetometer survey was carried out in two pasture fields during May 2008 in an attempt to identify the remain-

der of the enclosure which had not been apparent from cropmarks. Unfortunately, the survey results were not as clear as had been hoped in the western field, although sufficient information was recovered to confirm the line of the ditches. In the north-eastern field, however, the survey was more successful, identifying both circuits of interrupted ditches, as well as other features, such as later field boundaries.

Following on from the geophysics a single trench was excavated, which was positioned to include both ditches and an area of the in-

terior, together with a small extension to investigate one of the ditch terminals.

A machine was used to remove the topsoil, which proved to be very shallow, immediately revealing the position of the two ditches, which had been cut into the underlying gravel. The ditch sections were carefully excavated over a period of more than three weeks, eventually revealing two impressive features: the inner ditch measured around 2.5m wide and up to 1.7m deep, while the outer was around 2.8m wide and 1.5m deep. Both ditches had evidence for later, shallow recuts, and Early Neolithic pottery was recovered from the upper fills.

It is hoped that soil samples from the inner ditch will contain sufficient charcoal to obtain a radiocarbon date. Post-excavation analysis is now underway and a full report will be available in due course.

Nigel Jones

Forthcoming meetings

2009 Spring Meeting will be in Wrexham at the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, on the 14th March. The afternoon symposium will mark the fact that the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Wales will have been going for ten years in 2009. The day will be co-hosted by The Denbighshire Historical Society.

2010 Spring Meeting will be in Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, co-host by the Ammanford Archaeological and Historical Society.

Archery: a changing display in the Origins gallery, National Museum Cardiff

12th August – 7th December 2008

An exhibition highlighting archers and archery in Wales from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages. Take a look at the bow and arrow as it developed from tool for survival to weapon of war.

The Tomb Builders: Wales 4000-3000BC, Wrexham County Borough Museum

22nd September – 15th December 2008

The exhibition explores the lives of the people who built the great Megalithic tombs, through the evidence they left behind

Getting Involved With YAC: Wales

Who is in your region?

There are seven Young Archaeologists' Club groups in the CBA Wales/Cymru region.

They are: Aberystwyth and District, Bangor Gwynedd, Bridgend, Denbighshire, South East Wales, Wrexham and District and Ynys Môn

An up-to-date list of how to contact them can be found at: www.britarch.ac.uk/yac

How can you help your local YAC branches?

1. Time

The most important factor for most YAC branches is to have people's time! All the branches are run by volunteers and the most common reason for a branch closing is lack of volunteers. Could your group provide new team members? Could you support a branch by offering a one off session? These young people will be your CBA group's future members; are you enabling them to have the opportunities to progress?

2. Money

Most YAC branches have a very limited budget. They are supported centrally by a £50 annual grant; new branches get an additional start up grant of £50. Some branches charge a fee for each session they run, some do not in order to be as inclusive as possible. Whilst branches have been successful in attracting external funding from sources such as Awards for All, grants however big or small are always welcome. Each branch should have its own bank account.

3. Contacts

Your regional group will have a huge amount of knowledge contained within it. Have you considered sharing news with your local YAC leaders on a regular basis? They'd really appreciate it, especially if it involves opportunities for excavation experience or people willing to run sessions. If you ask them what they could do with help on I'm sure they'd appreciate your advice.

How can you help national YAC?

1. Time, again!

We really need new people to help us run our residential holidays. This could be a way of involving yourself in YAC but on a less regular basis. Please contact Wendi Terry, YAC Network and Events Officer at the CBA if you are interested; full training will be provided.

2. Keep In Touch