



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST NEWSLETTER 2021



2021

Due to this year being another strange year, we decided that a round-up of 2021 was needed to keep in touch with you all who are interested in the work of Dyfed Archaeological Trust. Thankfully, we have been quite busy...

Due to the high volume of commercial fieldwork projects during the spring and summer the Trust employed several temporary members of staff. The Trust also won the contract to provide archaeological services on A40 road improvements near Narberth, so we will be employing other fieldworkers over the next few months.

In June, we appointed a new administration assistant, Rebecca Hopkins; our previous administration assistant joined our Heritage Management Section.

Erin Lloyd has been employed within our Heritage Management Section to work on the Cadw-funded Rivers and Riparian Environments project.

Starting in February 2022, Coastal Uplands: Heritage and Tourism is an Aberystwyth University, Dyfed Archaeological Trust and University College Dublin partnership project. The Trust has appointed Jessica Domiczew to run DAT's part element of this EU-funded project.

Sarah Rees who has been with the Trust for ten years left at the end of October in order to work on her family business. Sarah delivered many of our community outreach projects, including the highly successful Unloved Heritage project, which focused on engaging young people from Llanelli in heritage. Sarah will be truly missed.

Heritage Management Archaeologist Jenna Smith got married in September, the Trust wishes them both all the best for the future.

Ken Murphy, the Trust CEO, was appointed editor of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*.



Hubert Wilson surveying at Porth y Rhaw Promontory Fort.

Our Year in Numbers



Over **75**
Archaeological
Projects have been
undertaken



As advisors to our local
planning authorities, we
have processed and
assessed over **4000**
Planning Applications



We have added over
2000 new core records
and over **150** new event
records to the Historic
Environment Record



We have had over **100** enquiries
regarding the Historic
Environment, or archaeological
finds.



We have added over **130**
finds to the Portable
Antiquities Database.



Over **150** volunteers
gave more than **1000**
days of their time over
the last year. Thank you
all so much!



Trust staff and volunteers excavating during the dismantling and rebuilding of a 40m. section of churchyard wall at St Tyfie and St Faith Church, Lamphey, Pembrokeshire.



St Patrick's Chapel

This project was undertaken in partnership with the University of Sheffield , supported by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, with funding from the EU-funded Ancient Connections Project and Cadw.

The six-week excavation began in June, and built upon work undertaken in 2014/15/16 and 2019. The earliest recognised element of the site, dating to the 8th century, was a rectangular stone-built memorial or shrine occupying the centre of an oval, stone-built enclosure. Associated with it was evidence of occupation in the form of burnt animal bone and carbonised cereal grains and of light industrial activity, including bronze casting and the manufacturing of amber objects.

As time went on, wind-blown sand covered the memorial/shrine and oval enclosure new-born children and infants began to be buried. Not long after these first burials, a cemetery enclosure wall was built directly over the memorial/shrine and oval enclosure. Later burials included adults as well as children. Eventually wind-blown sand covered the cemetery enclosure wall, but burial continued. In the eleventh or twelfth century a stone-built chapel, St Patrick's Chapel, was built on top of the cemetery. The chapel was abandoned in the sixteenth century.

Katie Hemer ex- University of Sheffield will report on the human remains, including isotopic and other scientific analyses. Angelos Hadjikoumis ex- University of Sheffield will report on the animal bone. Nancy Edwards of the University of Durham will be reporting on the cross-marked and other decorated stones and Mark Redknap will report on the early medieval artefacts. Samples have been sent for radiocarbon determination and for palaeoenvironmental analyses.

This was a community excavation with 54 volunteers giving 530 days of their time to the project. St Patrick's Chapel stands on the edge of Whitesands beach St Davids, the most popular tourist beach in Wales, and thus providing site tours to members of the public was a major element of the project. In total c. 17,000 visitors were shown around the excavation. The popular BBC programme 'Digging For Britain' came to film the excavation to feature it on the programme, Professor Alice Roberts also came to visit the site and was enamoured by the archaeology, as well as the views!

You can find more information about St Patrick's Chapel excavations here -

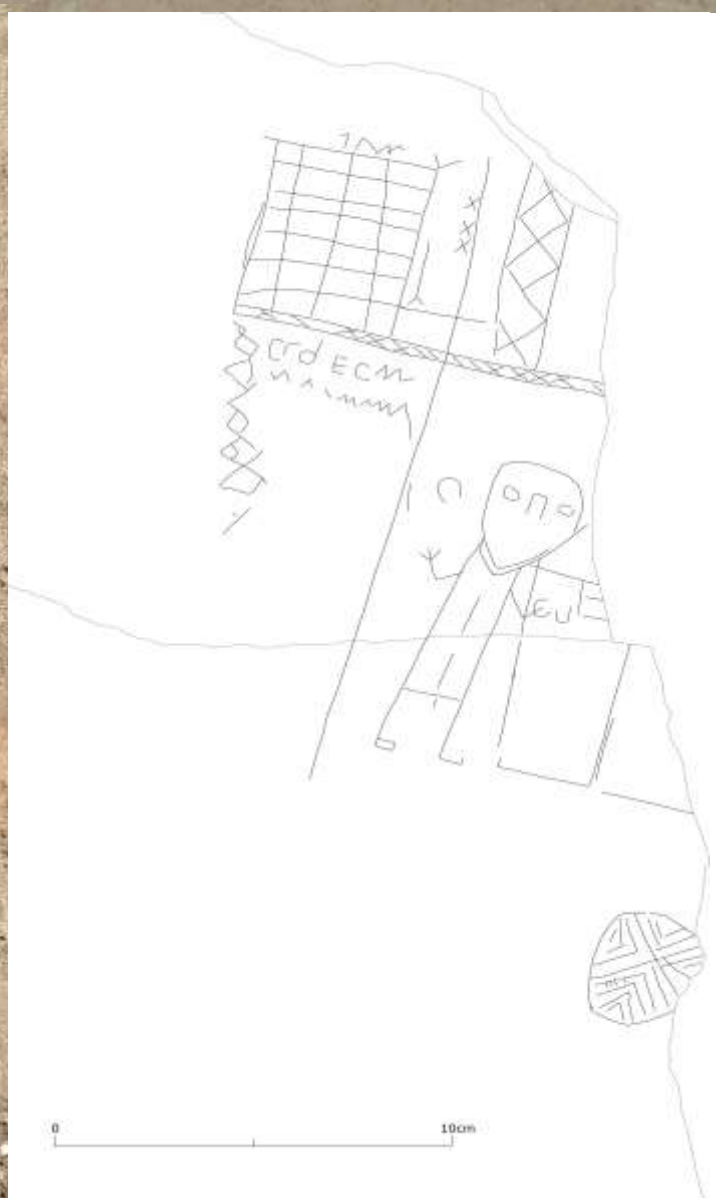
<https://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/wp/discovery/projects/st-patricks-chapel-whitesands-st-davids/>



Volunteers sieving at St Patrick's Chapel.

Trust staff with Digging For Britain Presenter, Professor Alice Roberts.





St Patrick's Chapel. Top: the rectangular memorial/shrine in the oval enclosure. Left: one of the cross-incised stones from the memorial/shrine. Right: a drawing of one of the decorated stones from the memorial/shrine.

Porth y Rhaw Promontory Fort

This community project ran for three weeks, starting in July and was funded by Cadw and with support from the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. The excavated area lay just inside the main entrance to the promontory fort, connecting the internal area excavated in the 1990s with the entrance area which was excavated in 2019.

A stone-built roundhouse lay immediately to the north of the entrance, tucked in behind the inner defensive bank. Part of the roundhouse has been lost to coastal erosion. It was clearly secondary, being built on material spread from the bank. A flag-stone path, incorporating pieces of broken quern stone led up to entrance of the roundhouse, which was defined by a long, dressed threshold stone. Only pockets of rough flooring survived within the roundhouse. At least one of the quern stones was Romano-British in character, and this coupled with pottery of a similar date from above the floor deposits, is evidence of a Roman date for the roundhouse, similar in date to the stone-built roundhouse south of the entrance that was partially investigated in the 1990s.

The 2021 excavation examined the area between the hillfort entrance and the roundhouse to the south of the entrance. Here, substantial layers of rubble had been laid down to create level platforms. These, and rubble from the roundhouse, walls sealed a series of pits containing charcoal deposits.

It is hoped to be able to excavate the roundhouse to the south of the entrance and associated stratified deposits in future years. A considerable amount of the 2021 three-week excavation was taken up with de-turfing and backfilling and therefore future seasons would benefit from being at least four-weeks long.

You can find out more information about the Porth y Rhaw Excavations here -

<https://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/wp/discovery/projects/porth-y-rhaw-coastal-promontory-fort/>



Volunteers excavating the edge of a roundhouse.

Volunteers and Staff at Porth y Rhaw, showing that we dig in all types of weather!





A flagstone path at Porth y Rhaw, a reused quernstone can be seen in the centre.

Volunteers in the main trench at Porth y Rhaw.



Pen Dinas Hillfort

This community excavation on a major hillfort on the outskirts of Aberystwyth ran for three weeks, starting in September. It was funded by Cadw.

Pen Dinas is one of the largest hillforts in the region and although most of it is owned by the County Council, has public access, and is highly visible from all parts of Aberystwyth and beyond, it is a much under-appreciated and under-used resource, with little to attract the public or interpret it to them.

This excavation acted as a focus and attraction for direct local community involvement in the excavation itself plus wider community-based activities. Staff and volunteers gave guided tours of the site to members of the public — over 1200 visitors made it to view the site! It is anticipated that the project will develop into a more ambitious three to four year project, with this, the first year, a relatively modest start.

C Daryll Forde excavated at Pen Dinas between 1933 and 1937. In 2021 we opened part of his trench in the south entrance and an area inside, taking in at least one house-platform which photographs suggest was excavated by Forde. It was quickly discovered that Forde's excavation in the entrance had been more extensive than he reported and re-excavating his trench would have been very time-consuming and therefore we concentrated on the area inside the entrance. Here, two house-platforms were discovered, neither of which had been excavated by Forde. Both were cut into hard bedrock. The largest area of excavation was on the lower house platform, just inside the entrance. Here a drain and other features including postholes were revealed, but with no clear pattern. A narrow trench was excavated across the upper house platform, revealing a mass of features. As per norm on Iron Age sites in west Wales, artefacts were rare, but of note was the discovery of a large amber bead.

We are currently writing up the interim report for this excavation, it will be available to view on our website once it has been completed. But you can view our updates and pictures on our social media, search for Dyfed Archaeological Trust (@DyfedArch) on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.



Spectacular view of Pen Dinas Hillfort at the beginning of our excavation.



Ken Murphy giving a tour to the DAT Members and others.



Aerial view of the Pen Dinas excavation trench.

A volunteer who found an amber bead.

Fran Murphy showing another bead that was found to volunteers.



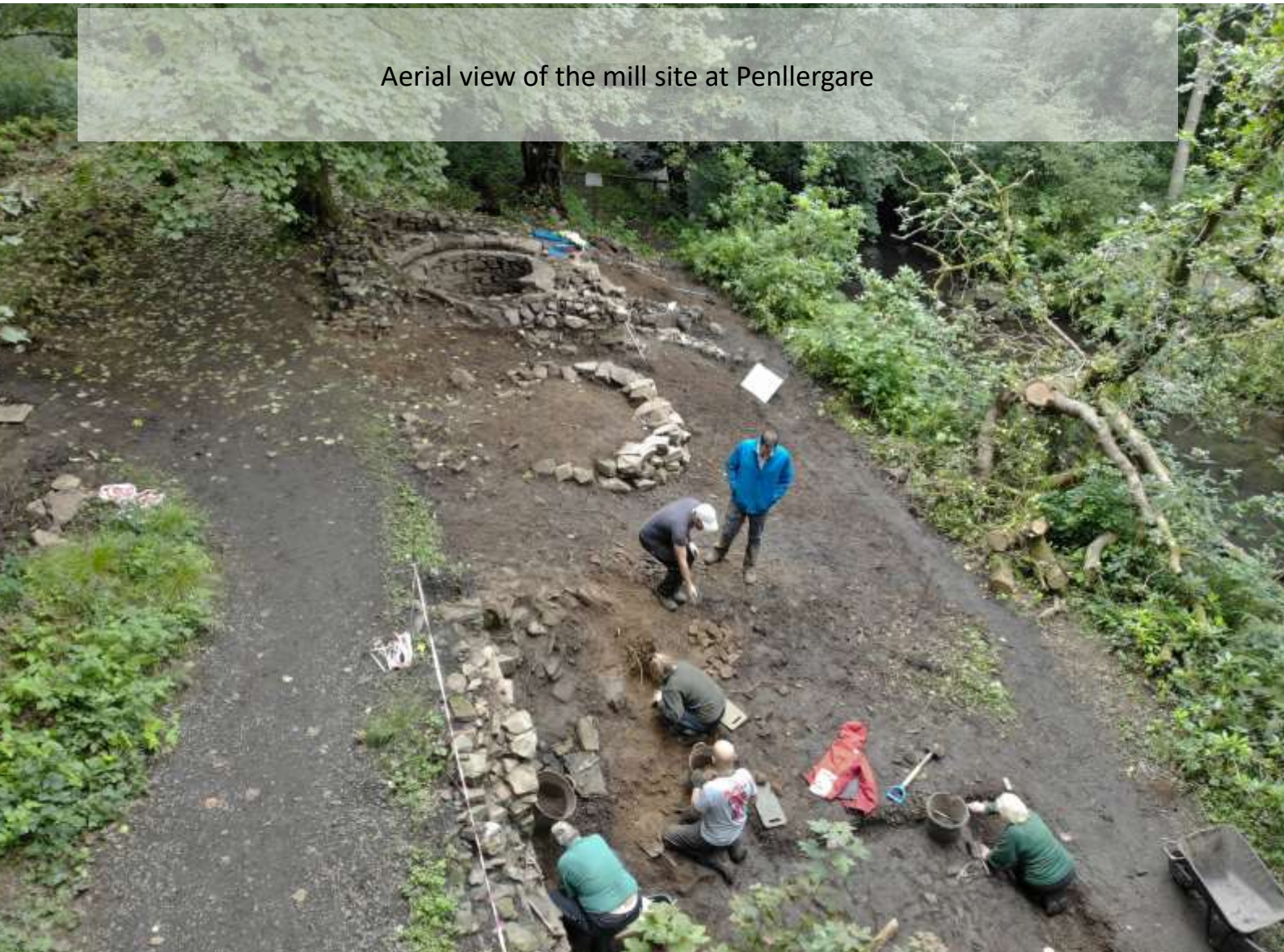
Penllergare Old Mill

The Trust ran a two-week long community excavation with the Penllergare Trust, funded by the Gower Society, using local volunteers to investigate the site of an old water mill in Penllergare Valley Woods in Swansea.

The site was of interest as it pre-dated the 19th-century estate landscape development of John Dillwyn Llewellyn, but for which very little was known. A range of drystone-built structures along the riverside were uncovered, including an unusual circular stone-lined pit with what was thought to be a water outflow channel, and old millstones re-used in its construction. Further mortared stone walling was uncovered within an enclosure above these remains.

Historical research, artefacts and excavation results, indicate the site was in occupation from at least the late 17th to early 19th centuries. Despite gathering plenty of local interest, and visits from industrial and milling experts, the structures remain enigmatic, but recent research indicates the circular pit is a corn dryer, with the channel a flue and not an outflow channel for water.

Aerial view of the mill site at Penllergare



Volunteers and staff at Penllergare in front of the circular stone-lined pit. A broken mill stone lies in the river below it.

