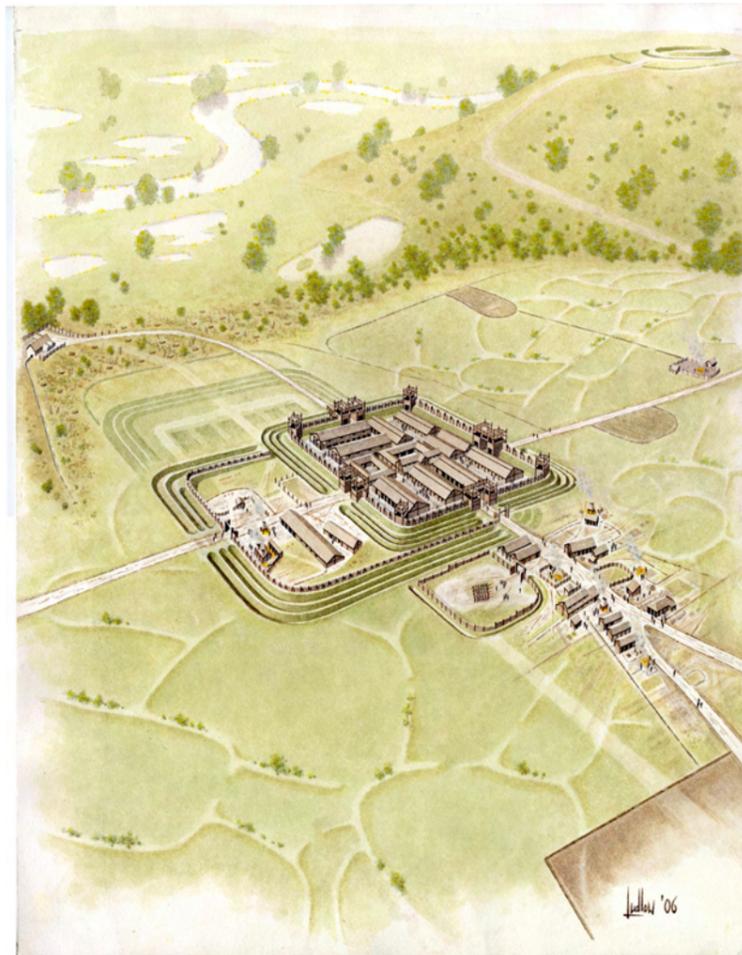


## The Fort in AD100

This painting by Neil Ludlow gives an indication of what the second fort might have looked like around AD 100. By this time the larger fort has been abandoned. However, part of the defences of this earlier fort may have been reused as a defended annex attached to the smaller fort. This may have been used for small-scale industrial activity. The reconstruction shows the layout of barracks and other military buildings within the defences of the fort itself as

well as the less formal buildings of the vicus. Alongside the vicus is a small enclosure used by the soldiers for practicing manoeuvres. The fort has been constructed in a landscape previously divided into small Iron Age fields. At least one defended Iron Age farmstead has now been identified within Dinefwr Park and it is possible that a second was located in the area later occupied by the medieval castle.



This is a relatively small excavation and has only scratched the surface of a major archaeological find. We hope that it will be the start of a wider examination of the impact of the Romans in the Tywi valley.

*Thank you for your support*

**Please go to [www.cambria.org.uk](http://www.cambria.org.uk) for further information**



## Llandeilo Roman Fort, Dinefwr Park

**Newsletter June-July 2006**

### Introduction

The outstanding discovery of a Roman Fort in the eastern part of Dinefwr Park was made during an archaeological survey in 2003. In fact the work, using specialist geophysical survey equipment, demonstrated the presence of not just one but two overlapping Roman forts of different dates. They were shown to be associated with roads and a civilian settlement. These structures have left little or no visible surface trace.

The archaeological work is being carried out by Cambria Archaeology and the National Trust and forms part of a wider project being undertaken by the Trust with the aim of restoring the designed landscape of Dinefwr Park, enhancing the natural landscape and facilitating access to all.



*The geophysical survey, Dinefwr Park by Stratascan*

This work is being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Welsh European Funding Office and the National Trust.



## The pottery from the excavation

The pottery included fine Samian tableware from Gaul, amphora for



A small, three-week excavation was undertaken in July 2005. We examined one of the entrances into the early fort, part of the interior of the later fort and investigated the area of the civilian

settlement or vicus. Large quantities of Roman pottery and glass were found along with other dating material. This confirms our initial belief that the forts

were occupied during the late first century AD and the early second century AD.

The project provided a unique opportunity to involve members of the public and local schools and colleges in the excitement of archaeological discovery. Cambria Archaeology and the National Trust allowed the opportunity both to those who wanted to gain some training in archaeological techniques and to those who wanted to participate for just a short time as an introduction to the process of excavation. Organised visits from local

carrying wine and olive oil from Italy and Spain, and mortaria for mixing and preparing food. The best-preserved find was a complete pot dating to the beginning of the second century AD. This appears to have been deliberately buried in the interior of the second fort, possibly after it was decommissioned and the soldiers had left. The vessel itself was made in the Malvern area of Worcestershire and may have been originally used as a salt container.

We simply do not know why it was subsequently buried intact in the middle of the fort although it may have contained something organic that has since decayed.

schools and educational activities were also arranged. Channel 4's Time Team carried out live outside broadcasts from the excavation on the nights of the 2nd and 3rd July 2005 as part of their 'Big Roman Dig' week.



## The 2005 Excavation

The first fort was much larger than the later fort and it may have been occupied by a large military unit, perhaps even a legionary detachment. If so, the presence of such a large unit so far west indicates the existence of a fierce resistance to the Roman occupation. We do not yet know when this early fort was established or why it was abandoned. We also do not know when the second fort was built, although this is likely to have been sometime during the mid 70s AD.

The later fort was a much smaller affair and was probably occupied by an auxiliary unit, or cohort, comprising about 500 foot soldiers.

The geophysical survey provided a lot of information about the layout of the later fort at Llandeilo. The fort was surrounded by an impressive set of defences, consisting of at least three substantial sets of V-shaped ditches and ramparts. A timber palisade would have run along the top of the inner rampart and would have had a series of square interval towers at regular intervals. The four entrances into the fort would have been flanked by massive timber gatehouses. The defences surrounded an area approximately 150m long by 100m wide; the equivalent of two rugby pitches sitting side by side.

*Carenza Lewis from the Time Team and the cremation pot found on the first day of the excavation*



## The layout of the forts at Llandeilo

*Volunteers washing and sorting the finds from the excavation*



A grid pattern of roads divided the interior into blocks of buildings including barracks, granaries and other stores.

In the centre of the fort, facing the main gateway, would have been the headquarters building or *Principia* and alongside this would have been the Commandant's house.

The geophysical survey suggests that the road approaching the main gateway was flanked by a series of other timber buildings. This may have been a small civilian settlement or *vicus*. The garrison forts often attracted such informal settlements, as members of the native population took advantage of the presence of a group of well paid Roman soldiers stationed far from home. This settlement provides an excellent opportunity to examine the nature of the first non-violent contact between the indigenous population and the Roman occupiers.

Although we can tell a lot from the geophysical survey, many of these suggestions can only be tested by excavation. Excavation will also provide the critical dating evidence (coins and pottery) that may confirm when the forts were built and abandoned.