

Great Archaeological Sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf



1. CAIRNS IN CWM CADLAN



The moorlands of the Brecon Beacons are home to a huge number of sites dating back to the Bronze Age, preserved because the most of the land has never since been cultivated. There are the remains of fields and settlements of circular huts, and many, many cairns. Some of the cairns were the result of clearing stones from the fields, but many of them marked burials. The commonest are round cairns, which take the form of a heap of stones. There are also ring cairns, in which, as their name suggests, the stones are arranged in a wide band around a circle of clear ground. Quite frequently ring cairns are grouped with round cairns, often in a position overlooked by higher ground. Perhaps they were used to stage some sort of activity that was intended to be seen from a distance.

You can see splendid examples of both types ranged for about 300m alongside the mountain road through Cwm Cadlan, with a ring cairn at either end and a round cairn in the middle (SN 9958 1082). There are traces of a kerb of larger stones placed

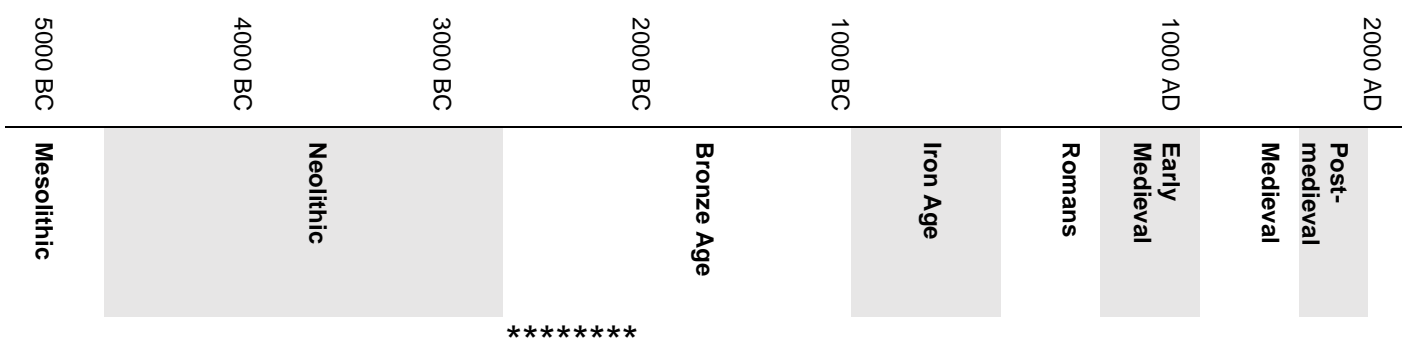
against the foot of the outside edge of the round cairn. Although the centre is rather disturbed, we cannot tell whether there was originally a central burial in a cist, built from stone slabs or dug into the ground like another cairn in Cwm Cadlan that was excavated at Nant Maden Farm in 1960.

The larger of the two ring cairns is the one on the west. Part of the ring of stones has collapsed into a natural sink hole, but like with all ring cairns there does not seem to have been an original break in the ring to form an entrance. The one on the east is smaller and less regular in shape internally, possibly as a result of disturbance. Some examples of this type of cairn have stone cists built into their rings but unlike with round cairns burial does not seem to be their primary purpose. Neither of these two ring cairns has one as far as we can tell.



This group of cairns is a short distance west of the forestry plantation on the south side of the unclassified road between Penderyn village (near the Lamb Hotel) and the Llwyn-on reservoir. The central round cairn should be visible from the road. There is space to park a couple of cars in the old quarry by the forestry cattle grid. Maps: OS Landranger Series sheet 160, Explorer Series Outdoor Leisure sheet 12.

Timeline (the asterisks indicate the time-span)



You can learn more about this site, and other similar archaeological sites in Wales, by going to <https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/>. Please read and observe the Conditions of Use. The group of cairns has the PRN (Primary Record Number) 04546m, with individual numbers for each monument 00738m, 00739m and 00758m. You can search for other similar sites here too. You can contact us via social media or through the methods given at the bottom of the page. See more prehistoric monuments at http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/fun_rit/english/fun_ritmain.html.