

Autumn has arrived again, with the summer's programme of outreach events over, and the



Excavations on the site of the coach park at Abernant

AGM in prospect. It has also seen most of the projects staff disappear out of the office to Bulmore, where some Roman buildings have unexpectedly appeared on either side of the road between Caerleon and Usk. Nothing new about that, you might think, except that these buildings are about 1km north of the stream that we thought

signalled the furthest extent of the Roman settlement, beyond the cemetery at **Abernant**. In the summer, Martin Tuck had found part of the road during trial work in advance of the construction of a coach park for the Ryder Cup at Celtic Manor next year. When construction work started, the not-very-interesting-seeming deposit of stone rubble in one of the evaluation trenches turned out to have come from a large building or enclosure. Following negotiations with Celtic Manor we have a month to find out what is happening. This followed another discovery in September, during the construction of a new cycleway parallel with **Pillmawr Road**. A small team led by Andy Sherman excavated a mass of sandstone slabs overlying a horizon with Roman pottery at the edge of an inlet of the River Usk downstream of Caerleon, at the bottom of Lodge Hill. We are clearly going to have to rethink our ideas about the Roman landscape around Caerleon.

For Cadw projects, survey by Richard Roberts and Ellie Graham continues on the **Ironworks** project coalfield rim, and on **Prehistoric and Roman Settlements**, where Sven Egloff is doing a second year of fieldwork. However, our highest-profile project over the summer was the community excavation at **Oystermouth Castle**. Cadw funded a three-week programme of investigation on The Knoll, a natural outcrop just outside the western half of the castle entrance. Rob Dunning and Andy Sherman led a team composed mainly of local volunteers and students from Swansea University, many of whom were having their first hands-on experience of archaeology. Tours were also provided for visitors to the castle, and for four local schools.



The deposits on the Pillmawr Road cycle track

We wanted to locate the castle ditch and find out more about the base of the towers, which have always appeared as re-entrants in the castle wall rather than the projections they should be. We were also trying to find the possible wall here that appeared on a geophysical survey commissioned by the Friends of Oystermouth Castle in 2006. The outer walls of the bases of the towers proved to be square rather than the circular shape we were expecting – they must have formed massive buttresses like those that appear on Marten's Tower at Chepstow Castle. The ditch proved to be very wide and deep, deeper in fact than we were able to get during the three weeks. We are still not sure of the exact width, as it was greater than the length of the trench we dug to

examine it. We hope to come back next year to find out more about it, and also to investigate some of the earthworks behind the castle which were surveyed by Rowena Hart and a group of school students doing work experience. Certainly the outreach side of this year's work was a great success, with all the participants saying that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We hope to continue the excavation next year, and will run a newsletter feature on it after the second season.



Visitors learn about the excavation at Oystermouth Castle

The rest of our outreach programme was more familiar. In August we attended the Chepstow Agricultural Show in Monmouthshire and St Teilo's Heritage Day in Blaenau Gwent. Trust staff again participated in the Gower Walking Festival, this year with two new walks, on the archaeology of Llanmadoc and the industrial remains of the lower Clyne Valley. We also offered more walks for the Festival of British Archaeology (National Archaeology Week extended to a fortnight and rebranded) – Roman Caerleon, medieval Monmouth, the industrial archaeology of the lower Swansea Valley, and the forts and flora of Mumbles Hill. Our main event was again a collaboration with Swansea Museum, which clocked up 1370 visitor movements through the Museum doors over the course of the day. This year we presented the children's prehistoric pottery-making activity as living history with Paul Huckfield as a Bronze Age potter. This did seem to be more successful in focussing the children on the meaning of what they were doing, rather than just regarding it as messing around with clay. Sue Cicotti, who used to head our illustration department and is now a prize-winning sculptor, brought her facial reconstruction of a Neanderthal – she had the children making their own



Explaining how the Neanderthal reconstruction has been based on the model of a skull

Neanderthal heads. We are grateful to Alan of Systembox, Port Talbot, who supplied the clay for these two activities free of charge. There was Roman cookery as usual, and also our old friends, the medieval archers of Meibion y Ddraig. They were joined by Charlie Ferris of the Friends of Newport Ship, minting medieval coins.

Inside the museum talks on the history and archaeology of Swansea were given by Gerald Gabb of the museum and Neil

Maylan of the Trust. Stalls were manned by Aberavon Historical Friends, the Friends of the Newport Ship, the Friends of Oystermouth Castle, Gower AONB, Swansea Bay 1940s Museum, Swansea Metal Detecting Club (also featuring detectorist Ron Saunders' fine collection of flints), Swansea University Extramural Department, West Glamorgan Archive Service and West Glamorgan Family History Group. The Trust's stall featured an exhibition on the Oystermouth Castle community excavation, with Andy Sherman on hand to talk about it and answer questions. He also identified finds brought in by members of the public, and Charina Jones was there to provide HER consultations.

The new on-line system for the HER is inching its way towards a full launch. Earlier this year the four Welsh Trusts held a competition for employees to come up with an official

name, which was won by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust with ‘Archwilio’ (Welsh for ‘to examine’). Paul Huckfield is designing its new website.

People

Caroline Thomas has left the Trust. She had been with us since the beginning of 2005 when she arrived as a recent graduate to take up a post as Curatorial Assistant. During this time she set up our systems for dealing with Better Woodlands for Wales, and greatly expanded our outreach and community work, culminating in the HLC project reported on in the last number of the newsletter. She has gone to Groundwork Caerphilly to work on community projects. Following her departure, and Cadw’s decision as from next year to split the grant of the Regional Heritage Service to provide separate funding for outreach projects, Paul Huckfield has been confirmed by the Trustees in the new post of Outreach Officer. Other staff news includes Rob Dunning’s marriage to his long-term partner Liz Verrinder, the archaeologist employed by Miller Argent at Ffos-y-fran, and Rowena Hart and Martin Tuck’s new baby, Sebastian Atticus. We wish them all the very best.

FEATURE – Archaeology and Planning

We have decided this issue to run a feature on how archaeology fits into the planning process



We have upgraded our computers to cope with E-planning

– this is, of course the background to most of the excavations we have featured over the years. Since 1990, and the publication of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 16, archaeology has had to be considered as part of the planning process. Whilst PPG16 is still operational in England, it was replaced in 1996 in Wales by the rather stronger Welsh Office Circular 60/96.

The process begins when the Archaeological Planning team scan the weekly planning list (or lists, rather, since each of our twelve unitary authorities – and the Brecon Beacons

National Park – produces its own) to see which applications may affect archaeology. Some can be screened out very easily – putting up an advertisement for example. Others can’t be so easily discarded – just think about what you would need to do if you were changing the use of a building from a pigsty to a granny flat, or a night club to a crematorium, to quote two recent examples. All this used to be done entirely on paper, but some of our councils have already changed over to e-planning, where the weekly list can be viewed on line, along with details of the applications, responses by interested parties (including us) to individual applications, decisions and appeals. This means that we can check out the details of applications that we think might be sensitive straight away, rather than having to send off to the council for the plans and wait for them to come back.

The Trust then responds to the council. If there is no implication for the archaeology, this will be noted. If the team can provide advice from the information available, they will make a recommendation straight away to the planning committee. If there isn’t enough information, they will advise that it is obtained before the committee considers the application, with the work designed to a brief set by the Trust’s Archaeological Planning section. This may be a desk-based assessment, looking at the history of the area, and old maps, plans, documents, and air photos, followed by a walk-over survey to see if any of the features identified still exist, and in what condition, and whether there are other features to be seen. If it is a historic building that will be affected, a survey may need to be carried out to record the building as it is now. The other possible recommendation is for a field evaluation, an excavation to see where archaeological features are, what they are like, and how deeply they are buried. The Archaeological Planning team may recommend this straight away, or following the desk-based assessment. Developers have a free choice on the archaeologists they use for this work. However, contractors are expected to be able to meet the Standards and Guidance issued by



Trust project staff carry out a field evaluation for a proposed extension to a building in Caerleon

to see the site so that they will be better able to advise the local authority. Following the excavation, the contractor will write a report on the results, and this will be used as the basis of a recommendation to the planning authority on what should be done with the site. A condition will be written into the planning consent, setting out what the developer needs to do. Quite often, it is possible to modify the design of a development so that it avoids sensitive areas, or perhaps a watching brief will be all that is necessary to record anything that turns up during development work. On other occasions, however, it may be necessary to carry out more excavation to examine the archaeology fully before it is destroyed. A detailed specification, known as a Written Scheme of Works, is drawn up by a consultant or contractor on behalf of the developer to cover all aspects of the work as far as the preparation of the post-excavation research design.

The Archaeological Planning team will continue to monitor the project through the excavation and post-excavation stages. The planning condition will not be discharged until the contractor has arranged for the deposition of the archive, and has completed the final report and deposited it in the HER, and the team has recommended to the council that it is accepted.



Monitoring at the Copper Quarter development, Swansea

the Institute for Archaeologists, and our own Trustees have recently approved monitoring policies (on our website) that apply equally to all contractors doing work in our area.

During a field evaluation, one of the Archaeological Planning staff will visit the excavation to check that the work is being carried out to the brief and any specification they have agreed and is collecting all the relevant information, and

A LETTER TO MEMBERS

Dear Member,

As our Annual General Meeting approaches, it seems an appropriate time to write to thank you for your continued support of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

Members have an important role in enabling the Trust to meet its objectives as a registered Charity. An analogy with shareholders in a company comes to mind. Additionally, Members have a wide range of specialist expertise which assists GGAT employees in meeting their targets in many different ways.

We are keen to expand and develop the role of our Members. Receipt of this expanding newsletter is one way to keep you fully informed of the work of the Trust. In the new year, we plan to explore other ways to involve you even more fully with initiatives like preferential access to appropriate excavations being undertaken by the Trust. We are also always happy to hear your thoughts about development of the Trust and its relationship with Members. If you have ideas, please let me know about them.

Meanwhile, I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Best wishes, cofion gorau

Ray Howell, Chairman