
A Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales
Southeast Wales – Medieval
22/12/2003

Introduction

This paper is primarily the work of group of archaeologists and historians who met at the University of Wales, College Newport's Caerleon Campus on 30 October and of those who, whilst unable to attend, submitted written contributions. This document aims to review the themes discussed at that meeting and concludes with a series of SWOT analyses covering five thematic strands: rural settlement, housing and landuse, urban archaeology, castles and defensive structures, the archaeology of religious buildings and sites and material culture; finally some general concerns common to all themes are explored.

The study of the archaeology and history of south-east Wales has benefited from the work of several generations of scholars, stretching back at least to the pioneering work of G.T. Clark in the late nineteenth century and that of William Rees in the 1920s and 1930s. Glamorgan is especially fortunate in having both a complete county history, one volume of which is explicitly focused on the Middle Ages (*Glamorgan County History*, 1971) and a largely complete series of Royal Commission inventories, with the most recent volumes covering medieval rural settlement and castles (*The Glamorgan Inventory*, 1982, 1991 and 2000). There is however what might be termed a "Gwent-shaped gap" in such provision - fortunately this should be temporary as a county history is at an advanced stage of preparation.

Rural settlement, housing and landuse

South-east Wales presents a rural environment typical of much of south-western Britain and in many areas (outside of the valleys) one that is better preserved. The area benefits from a good survival of sites and landscapes of both nucleated and dispersed settlement patterns exist. Yet it might be felt that the study of the landscape has not really advanced in the last two decades. Synthetic studies, targeted fieldwork and a process of "catching up" with past projects are now all urgently needed. There is the opportunity that current research will have the potential to lead to a better understanding of the socio-economic context of rural settlement and of rural/urban interaction and to provide an appreciation of time-depth in the rural landscape and its significance. This opportunity should not be missed.

A number of sites have been excavated and published. The partial excavations of a number of DMVs, for example Barry and Rhossili (Thomas and Dowdell 1987; Davidson *et al*, 1987) has now been complimented by work at other types of rural sites. On Cefn Drum the first platform houses have been excavated since the work of Lady Fox at Gelligaer Common in the years immediately prior to the war (Fox 1937 and 1939; Kissock, 2000). The later stages of the complex site of Llanelen provide a perspective on the economy of a farmstead on the "fringe" of highland and lowland Gower in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Schlesinger *et al*, 1996). Yet there remains the need to excavate a valley floor farmstead and, equally importantly, to be able to place it and other sites in their environmental and ecological contexts. Survey and subsequent excavation are seriously needed in Gwent. Martin Locock (1997) has drawn attention to the

settlement pattern of the early modern period, but its precursor - perhaps a landscape of dispersed settlement or at least one where villages were not the dominant form - is far from understood. Even in the thoroughly researched Gwent Levels (Rippon, 1987) there remains uncompleted work. The Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Survey was only a broad study of the historical landscape, not an archaeological survey (for example, no survey work was carried out on the area's earthworks). Here, the study of the development of settlement and landuse remains a high priority for future work. Survey work is in progress on certain other types of rural site - notably moats (Travers, forthcoming).

Thanks to the *Inventory* there is plentiful evidence on those domestic standing structures which remain in Glamorgan and as a result of the work of Peter Smith (1975) this can be placed in its wider Welsh context. The evidence for Gwent has been assessed by Newman (2000), a regional study of Gower has been undertaken by Morris (1998) and a study of the archaeological evidence has been provided by David Robinson (1982). However for certain topics - notably peasant housing in the Gwentian mountain zone - only limited advances have been since the preliminary work conducted by Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan almost half a century ago (1951, 1953 and 1954). Further work is also required on non-domestic sites. Structures such as grain-drying kilns, barns, byres and other types of agricultural buildings all need to be examined too. The infrastructure of the iron smelting, charcoal manufacturing and fishing industries all need further scrutiny. The evidence for fishing, for example, is in the main restricted to the Gwent foreshore (Godbold and Turner, 1994) and a few sites in Gower (Kay and Davies, 1993). Mill sites are perhaps better understood, at least in Gower, with two studies describing the surviving structures (Taylor, 1991 and 1997) and a third which reviews the associated manuscript material (Kissock, forthcoming).

There are however some major deficiencies in the knowledge base. First, the lack of academic (as opposed to populist) studies of place-names is obvious - only for Dinas Powys hundred is there a level of understanding that parallels that available for many English counties (Pierce, 1968). It is understood that the Welsh universities considered their own version of the English Placenames Society once the dictionary project was completed - and the first part of *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* appeared in 1950. Second, the study of field systems in southeast Wales lags well behind that of England. The most recent study of field systems was completed in the 1970s and is, at best, little more than a county-by-county listing of places where open-fields survived, coupled with a general assumption that these were the product of the Norman Conquest (Davies, 1973). Advances are slowly being made towards analysing aspects the field systems of the uplands (Kissock and Johnston, forthcoming) - but research still has along way to go. Third, environmental analysis is still not as widespread or advanced as might be desired. With the exception of the work done on the Gwent Levels, palynological studies are rare; the work at Cefn Hirgoed (Walker et al, 1997) is the only recent reference to a study of this type to be found in *Archaeology in Wales*. The questions raised in the 1990 environmental research agenda still need answers (Caseldine, 1990) - for example, have advances been made in identifying differences or indeed similarities across the Englishry-Welshry divide? Only when much more work has been done will it be possible to write a general overview.

The list of weaknesses unfortunately continues. Four, limited knowledge is available for the pre-Conquest period and in discussing themes such as continuity of building traditions across the period of the Norman Conquest the lack of evidence becomes particularly acute. For example, little is known about the origins of the traditions of building with rounded corners, noted from the twelfth century and sometimes later. Five, a number of important datasets gathered in

the 1980s have not been analysed - there seem to be no discernible plans for post-excavation analysis and the publication of the Cosmeston DMV site. Worryingly many of these archives are paper based and growing increasingly fragile. Six, the dating of rural settlement and a fuller understanding of its evolution, growth and shrinkage is heavily dependent on pottery. More use should have been made and must be made of absolute dating; the use of magnetometry to detect hearths and then to target excavation might be a worthwhile strategy.

Despite the specific weaknesses noted above the archaeology of the later medieval rural landscape stands at a threshold of great opportunities with the Deserted Rural Settlements project and the Upland Initiative. The latter has provided a vast increase in data available and corrected the traditional bias towards our knowledge of the lowlands. The availability of this data should enable the generation and testing of a range of models on variety of themes. The Norman Conquest might be revisited. As far as rural settlement goes there is an assumption that villages form part of an imposed "landscape package", however the inconclusive morphogenetic study carried out fifteen years ago needs a thorough revision (Kissock, 1990). Questions such as the changes brought about in agricultural practice, technology and the economy might also be explored. Other concepts might prove more difficult, more rewarding and surely therefore worth a review; for example transhumance and the range of other possibilities for using seasonal resources, like upland pasture and the not necessarily valid equation of upland and marginal land are worthy topics for our attention.

Castles and defensive structures

The *Glamorgan Inventory* (1991 and 2000) clearly identified the key sites and histories of the Glamorgan castles. Both Gwent and Glamorgan were covered by King (1983) with its gazetteer and bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Through the work of John Kenyon (1978, 1983 and 1990) and, more recently, the Castle Studies Group a number of high quality bibliographies now exist. There is a variable state of preservation of castles. Those stone castles in state and local authority care are a well-preserved resource. All sites are monitored regularly and have been subjected to modern review for scheduling purposes. Yet castles in private hands are generally in a poor condition. At certain sites there is a steady erosion of unconsolidated and exposed masonry, particularly when excavations remain. There is also a good range of documentary sources, although a potential for further research exists here.

Once again a "Gwent-shaped gap" exists in our knowledge. There have been limited studies on castle sites here - but work is in progress on mottes (Phillips, forthcoming). Some of this work will help redress the apparent lack of information from modern archaeological excavations of earthworks sites. One identifiable need is to follow up previous excavations at certain sites to modern standards. In addition there is also a requirement for studies of Gwent earthwork sites - especially the ringworks, found in a distinct cluster in the centre of the county. Other studies are needed and there are general themes which might now be profitably addressed: we ought to try to develop a greater understanding of the ceremonial and spatial use of castles, to examine associated features, for example gardens, and to consider the landscapes within which the castles are to be found.

This part of this study might encompass a diversity of sites beyond timber and stone castles. Strong houses and fortified manor houses and fortified churches and defended monastic sites all need study. Moated sites and town walls may

also have been included here; however the former have the most minimal defensive attributes and the later are covered under urban archaeology.

Urban archaeology

Since Soulsby's consideration of medieval towns (1983) much more work has been completed, requiring a complete re-evaluation of the topic. There is also a lack of recent historic towns surveys; only in the study of Cowbridge is there a one volume accessible study (Robinson, 1980). The results of recent work in Swansea, Monmouth and, especially, Trelech needs to be integrated into wider regional studies. Penrose has researched urban development in the lordships of Glamorgan, Gwynllwg, Caerleon and Usk (1979); the multiplicity of lordships in Gwent has complicated further work here. In Monmouth there appears to be no prospect of any further research and whilst it is proper that much of what remains is being preserved *in situ*, this makes it even more important that what has been excavated - eight complete sequences spanning the eleventh to fifteenth centuries - is published. Trelech appears to be a unique site - undefended, situated on an inland plateau with no obviously access to a major river and yet, perhaps the largest town in medieval Wales. Archaeological and documentary evidence argues for it being a major centre of the de Clare family, who it is thought were responsible for the development of the town as an iron-making centre (Howell, 1998).

Steps are being taken towards an understanding of the trade that underpinned towns. Robert Weeks has looked at transport and trade throughout the region between c. 1100 to c. 1400 (forthcoming). Recent discoveries will, no doubt, have an impact on our understanding of ships and shipping; perhaps we should expand this to look at maritime communities? Further work is required on road systems, bridges and manufacturing sites within towns - the focus of study on mills has been the rural environment. Other topics that might repay study are street patterns and market places, the location of places of worship and other religious sites within towns and standing building surveys. A strange omission from the Inventories was town walls - in Abergavenny and Cowbridge sections remain and in Swansea and Monmouth excavation has revealed their extent. Town gates and extra-mural suburbs need also to be studied. When studied in the context of chartered towns, on the one hand, and market towns, on the other, interesting difference might be revealed.

Archaeology of religious sites and buildings

Much of what has been written so far in this review has acknowledged the value of *The Glamorgan Inventory*, yet its importance to studies of the Church is limited. The work needed to complete volume 2 of the *Inventory*, which would have dealt with church architecture, has not been completed. When "axed" three quarters of the parish churches and all the churchyard crosses and fonts had been recorded, but nothing had been published. Nevertheless, a good survey is available in Geoffrey Orrin's studies of Gower and the Vale of Glamorgan (1979 and 1988) - yet here the lowland bias is all too obvious. Sir Glanmor Williams has given us a wide-ranging history of the Church between the Conquest and the Reformation (1976). The recent completion of the Welsh Historic Churches Project has provided us with a detailed database of all medieval churches in southeast Wales. A number of thematic studies are being undertaken, for example that of wall paintings and churchyard crosses.

The archaeology of the Church brings with it special problems. First, there is the problem of conducting archaeology in sacred spaces. The structure through which church archaeology is conducted is different to that that exists elsewhere - certain exemptions exist and the DACs have certain powers, not paralleled in other circumstances. All parish churches face a multiplicity of demands and archaeology is probably low on the list of resource priorities. Nevertheless there is the potential of funding from tourist-related schemes and the needed integrated church and landscape schemes will be non-intrusive. Some work is however urgently required as the impending deconsecration and change of use of numerous churches will lead to a loss of the resource base.

The background work for the Inventory discovered a number of chantry chapels, closed at the time of the Reformation and later given over to other uses. At Gileston a chapel now serves as a barn, at Llanquian a chapelry of Cowbridge serves as a cowshed, and at Llanwensan a farmhouse poses a Norman tympanum over its door and traces of arch-braced trusses within. Others are known from old photographs – for example at Nash and North Cornelly. An obvious weakness here is the danger of losing former ecclesiastical buildings surviving as farm buildings. If they exist in Glamorgan they probably can be found in Gwent too - yet have they been searched for?

Monasticism, a major component of the medieval church, has been well served by its students. Cowley has produced an historical overview (1977) of the monastic system from the conquest to *c.* 1350. The *Inventory* details Cistercian grange sites and major studies of the Cistercian geography of Wales have been carried out by David Williams (1976 and 1990); the geography of the Augustinian Order and a review of monastic grange sites have been provided by David Robinson (1980 and 1981); although his map did omit the sites of the nunneries. Recent studies have been made of the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar continue to exert their historical fascination; none of the studies has an obvious Welsh dimension, this was however provided by William Rees (1947). The range of sites known is not confined to monasteries and granges. Two hospice sites have been identified - most recently at Trelech, where archaeological evidence alone points to its existence (Howell and Hamilton, 2000). Obvious weaknesses in our knowledge of religious sites are an examination of the friaries and the relative absence of excavated cemeteries. Hence there are no palaeopathological studies or examinations of burial practices.

The database of church structures, furniture and fittings, church yards and documentation brought together by the Welsh Historic Churches Project provide an important research archive and so a major opportunity for new studies (Evans et al, 2000). The material collected has been used to analyse the distribution of plan types, architectural styles and the survival of roofs and structural timber work; church yards and church fittings remain to be studied in any depth. The identification of surviving woodwork opens up the possibility for widespread dendrochronological studies, which would enable the dating of the various forms and alterations to them. Whilst the Victorian period of church restoration had a major impact, so might other events including the Reformation and the Norman Conquest. The latter would have had a considerable impact on the native church at a variety of levels. At Llanelen it may have been the factor, which led to a timber church being replaced with a stone structure (Schlesinger *et al*, 1996). With accurate dating a longer time perspective can be taken and questions such as "Do changes in church fabric relate to changes in liturgy?" be posed and hypotheses relating to the field of iconology can be explored.

Material culture

A quick survey of the work published on the material culture of southeast Wales over the last decade can be taken from the lists of publications in the *British Archaeological Bibliography* (1992 - 1996) and its successor the *British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography* (from 1997). Pottery dominates the list. A major survey exists of the region's pottery tradition (Papazian and Campbell, 1992) - and pottery is so often the dating medium for many sites. Work into the chemistry of certain fabrics and the implications this has for trading patterns are at an advanced stage of progress (Anthony, 2002). The former was intended to be a pan-Wales study, yet material from parts of north Gwent were omitted. Furthermore and sadly, some of the entries were incorrect. Kiln waste is leading to the identification of production areas, although few actual kiln sites have been located; providing a weakness in our fuller understanding. Sigillography has been covered in a number of papers, published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* and *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, by David Williams. Medieval rings brooches and pendants have been all examined (Cherry and Redknapp, 1991 and Redknapp, 1994). This brief study includes only those items published as separate works. Other detailed studies of finds are given in numerous excavation reports - for example from Loughor there are detailed studies of coins, pottery (both coarse and fine), metalwork, stone objects, bones (both butchered and worked in gaming pieces) and grain and weed deposits (Lewis, 1993).

The Pilot Scheme for the Recording of Archaeological Finds in Wales will gradually evolve into an important database of finds made by chance by the metal detecting community and others. The increase in metal artefact recovery should aid in identifying sites and the reconstruction of trading and similar patterns. The increase in metal artefact recovery should aid in identifying sites and the reconstruction of trading and similar patterns. There may already, however, have been a loss of resources to metal detectorists in the past. A major opportunity exists in the study of material culture for the creation of on-line databases - examples exist in the USA and nearer home there is the University of Glasgow's Scottish White Gritty Ware project (www.guard.arts.gla.ac.uk).

General issues

In addition to the thematic points raised above there are certain general issues which effect them all - and indeed no doubt have implications for all the periods considered and for the whole of Wales. Recent years have seen a change in the opportunities for publication of research findings. The once weighty *Archaeologia Cambrensis* now seems to appear two or three years behind schedule and whilst attempts are being made to resolve the situation, this has had serious consequences for authors, readers and the dissemination of findings. *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales* has not appeared since 1996 - and even that issue was intended for the years 1993 and 1994. However, thankfully, *Archaeology in Wales* seems to grow from strength to strength. Compare the issues of twenty years ago with those of today - to the essential notes on work in progress have been added an excellent range of important reports. We might also wish to consider that future publication will not necessarily be in paper format and that the making of data available through ICT applications is a major opportunity that needs to be explored and exploited.

Publication is of key importance to the discipline as a whole, and of especial importance to those of us who work in universities and are thus subject to the pressures of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The fourth round of it is scheduled for 2006. Whilst reform is likely before then, the RAE requires every

academic to produce four research papers published in appropriately refereed journals within each five year cycle. This hinders the ability to develop long-term projects - the question asked of every project is can it be completed before the RAE deadline expires and will the published output be in a suitable format for the RAE? Answer "No" to either question and the project is almost certain not to find funding. We might speculate on major projects of the past which would have fallen foul of these constraints.

Funding issues do not, of course, just effect the universities. Much of the money available elsewhere comes from developer funding which brings its own set of demands and constraints. The regrettable situation at Cosmeston has already been mentioned. A similar situation exists with processing the material from Monnow Street, Monmouth too - with both the Board of Celtic Studies and the lottery having declined to fund this work.

We must also remember we live in area which sees the increasing loss of the resource base itself. Sub-urbanisation creeps ever outwards from the city centres, industrial and commercial development (essential for the health of the national economy) places its pressures on a finite resource; the development of the A48/M4 corridor and the renewal of drainage schemes on the Gwent Levels could lead to further depletion of the resource base. The forces of natural erosion also play their part - the DMV at Rhossili was to an extent removed by waves before it was excavated - and the tyre treads of mountain bikes are ripping the archaeology out of Cefn Drum.

In southeast Wales there also appears to be a disparate and dispersed research structure. In preparing this submission the contributors realised that many of us were unaware of work being carried out by others within the immediate region. To resolve this it has been proposed that a southeast Wales medieval archaeology and history forum be created to bring together those from the universities, GGAT, the National Museum and Cadw. There are also numerous local groups which might wish to become involved in wider research projects.

Finally, rather than end on a pessimistic note - this study has identified many strengths in the work that has been done. It has also identified many potential projects and topics where research in the near future will be fruitful. There are opportunities to be seized and seize them we must.

Jonathan Kissock

Other contributors:

<i>Mike Anthony</i>	<i>Richard Avent</i>	<i>Stephen Clarke*</i>
<i>Madeleine Gray</i>	<i>Ralph Griffiths</i>	<i>Charles Hill</i>
<i>Ray Howell</i>	<i>Neil Maylan</i>	<i>Richard Newman</i>
<i>Neil Phillips*</i>	<i>Stephen Rippon*</i>	<i>Jack Spurgeon</i>
<i>Cliff Travers</i>		

* Written contributions.

SWOT analyses

Rural settlement, housing and landuse

Strengths

- Excavations completed and published at a number of DMV sites - for example Rhossili and Barry.
- A range of other rural sites has been excavated too - Llanelen and Cefn Drum.
- Recent work in the form of the Uplands Initiative and the Deserted Rural Settlements project.
- Large datasets from past projects exist.
- Good survival of sites in nucleated and dispersed landscapes coupled with a strong tradition of rural settlement research.
- Good knowledge of certain related topics such as standing buildings.
- A rural environment typical of much of southwestern Britain and in many areas (outside of the valleys) one that is better preserved.

Weaknesses

- A number of important datasets have not been analysed - for example there are no ongoing post-excavation or publication plans for Cosmeston DMV site.
- The range of sites excavated is good - but far from complete. Valley floor sites? Non-domestic rural structures?
- Too much reliance on earthwork survey – this needs to be redressed, particularly by fieldwalking.
- Absolute dating has not been used to maximum effect - heavily reliant on pottery for dates.
- No placename studies - Dinas Powys hundred is exceptional.
- Knowledge of field systems is poor and very out-of-date.
- Limited palaeoenvironmental research - certain obvious lacunae continue to exist.
- Limited knowledge of the pre-Conquest period.
- Limited knowledge of settlement patterns of Gwent - is comparison with Glamorgan appropriate?

Opportunities

- Archaeology offers the main mechanism for rural settlement research.
- Current research has the potential to lead to a better understanding of the socio-economic context of rural settlement and of rural/urban interaction.
- A range of data has been made available, for example through the Uplands Initiative, enabling the study of landuse in peripheral areas and of topics such as transhumance and seasonal settlement.

Threats

- Physical decay of archives.
- Lack of appreciation of time-depth in the rural landscape and its significance.

Castles and defensive structures

Strengths

- *The Glamorgan Inventory* provides an up-to-date and high quality survey covering all castles here.
- High quality identification lists in King's *Castellarium Anglicanum*.
- High quality bibliographies - in the work of Kenyon and in the publication of the Castle Studies Group.
- Comprehensive documentary sources for Glamorgan have been published by G.T. Clark.

- Well-preserved resource in the form of those stone castles in both state and local authority care. All sites are monitored regularly and have been subjected to modern review for scheduling purposes.

Weaknesses

- Limited studies on castle sites of Gwent - but work in progress on mottes.
- Lack of information from modern archaeological excavations of earthworks sites.
- Generally poor condition of castles in private hands.

Opportunities

- Potential for more detailed research into documentary sources, especially in Gwent, but also on apparently well-known castles.
- Need to follow up previous excavations at certain sites to modern standards.
- Need for studies of Gwent earthwork sites - especially ringworks.
- Need to develop a greater understanding of the ceremonial and spatial use of castles.
- Need for an examination of associated features, for example gardens, and landscapes

Threats

- Steady erosion of unconsolidated and exposed masonry, particularly at unbackfilled excavations and at certain ruins.

Urban archaeology

Strengths

- Well-developed urban excavation programmes - Swansea, Monmouth and especially Trelech with on-going publication.
- Good understanding of certain associated aspects of trade - notably ships and shipping.

Weaknesses

- *The Glamorgan Inventory* hardly covered towns and recently volumes on defensive structures have omitted town walls.
- Split of Gwent into numerous lordships has hindered research.
- Lack of recent historic towns surveys as in rest of Wales.
- Further work is required on:
 - road systems,
 - bridges,
 - urban manufacturing sites (including mills),
 - street patterns,
 - the siting of market places,
 - the location of places of worship and other religious sites,
 - town walls and gates,
 - extra-mural suburbs.
- All these need to be considered within the context of different types of town.

Opportunities

- Time is ripe for a complete re-evaluation of urban archaeology in south-east Wales. Much work has been undertaken since Soulsby's 1983 consideration of the topic.

Threats

- No funding for Monmouth Archaeological Society's post-excavation work - will the results of this work ever be completed and published?

- Lack of awareness of towns in the wider context.

Archaeology of religious sites and buildings

Strengths

- Good histories of both the parochial and monastic elements of the medieval church. Hence studies are culturally embedded.
- Database exists in the form of the results of the Welsh Historic Churches project.
- Monastic studies - range of Orders studied: notably the Cistercians but also the Augustinians and the Templars/Hospitallers.
- Thematic studies are being undertaken, for example of churchyard crosses and wall paintings.
- Examples of other types of site being discovered - the hospice at Trelech.

Weaknesses

- Inventory volume for Glamorgan may never appear. Other studies exist, but have a lowland focus.
- Limited opportunity for excavation. Research at Llanelen has shown impact of Conquest on a relatively unimportant site. What might be revealed if other similar studies could be conducted elsewhere?
- Problem of archaeology in sacred spaces.
- Studies of friaries needed.
- Studies need to place churches and other structures in their landscape context.
- No excavation of graveyards. Hence no palaeopathological studies or examinations of burial practices.
- Possibility that a number of sites, notably chantry chapels, have been lost.

Opportunities

- Using the database that exists in the form of the results of the Welsh Historic Churches project for a series of studies:
 - Do changes in church fabric relate to changes in liturgy?
 - Studies of church fittings?
 - Impact of the Norman conquest?
 - Studies of iconology.
- Possibility of non-intrusive integrated landscape studies.
- Possibility of funding from tourism-related schemes.
- Possibility of integrated approaches from DACs and other bodies.

Threats

- Church exemptions.
- Impending deconsecration and change of use of numerous churches
- Other calls on parochial resources.

Material culture

Strengths

- Potentially an extremely rich resource - large collections exist in both public and private hands.
- Published studies of pottery tradition.
- Published studies of a range of other material - seals, rings, brooches and pendants.
- The Pilot Scheme for the Recording of Archaeological Finds

Weaknesses

- Insufficient post-excavation analysis - due to both lack of funding for it and possibly lack of interest in it.
- A tendency to view collections in isolation - material culture needs to be viewed as a whole.

Opportunities

- Potential of developing on-line databases.

Threats

- Possibility of past loss of resources to metal detectorists.

General issues

Strengths

- Historical research - continuous tradition stretching back to the work of G.T. Clark in the late nineteenth century and William Rees in the 1920s and 1930s.
- For Glamorgan - the Royal Commission's *Inventory* series and a completed county history.
- *Archaeology in Wales* as a medium of publication.

Weaknesses

- In all too many areas a "Gwent shaped gap". For example, there are no Inventory volumes and no county history - yet.
- A marked decline in the number of opportunities for publication - *Archaeologia Cambrensis* seems to have a future, does *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales?*
- Constraints imposed on long term projects by the Research Assessment Exercise imposed on universities and leading to mechanistic research funding. Next due: 2006.
- Disparate and dispersed research structure.

Opportunities

- The creation of new databases:
 - The Uplands Initiative,
 - The Deserted Rural Settlements project
 - The Welsh Historic Churches project,
 - The Pilot Scheme for the Recording of Archaeological Finds.

and the scope that these give for designing projects that will exploit the information gathered herein.

- Making existing studies and data available through ICT applications.
- Numerous useful local groups to assist wider research programmes.
- A south-east Wales medieval archaeology and history forum to bring together scholars from the universities, GGAT, the National Museum, Cadw and other interested parties.

Threats

- Loss of resource base to industrial and, especially, housing developments - the M4/A48 corridor and renewal of drainage schemes on the Levels.
- Physical erosion of resource base.