

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales Later Bronze and Iron Age

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1. Summary list of relevant research undertaken since 2014:

Excavation/evaluation:

- [Penycloddiau hillfort](#), excavations 2012-2016 (Liverpool University)
- [Moel y Gaer Bodfari](#), hillfort excavations 2011-2015 (Oxford University)
- Moel Fodig hillfort, excavation (Bangor University)
- Beacon Ring hillfort, excavation and engagement (CPAT)
- [Mellionydd defended enclosure](#), excavation 2010-2016 (Bangor University)
- [Parc Cybi, Holyhead](#), settlement, excavations 2006/8 & 2009/10 (GAT)
- Dinas Dinlle, hillfort (CHERISH/GAT, 2019 & 2021)
- Wylfa landscape, 2018, settlements and hut groups (WA/GAT)
- [CAER Heritage project](#), Ely, Cardiff. Excavation and community work
- Llanmelin hillfort, excavation (2012) and survey (2015; Cadw/RC)
- LNG pipeline, various excavations in 2006/7 including 1st millennium BC sites
- [Castell Mawr, hillfort](#), 2012-13 (Stonehenge project)
- Porth y Rhaw, promontory fort (DAT, 2019 & 2021)
- [Caerfai promontory fort](#) (CHERISH/DigVentures, 2021)
- [Castell Bach, Cwmtedu](#) (CHERISH, 2017-2022)
- Skomer field systems, field survey and excavation (RC/CU/SU/AU, 2011-2018)
- Pen Dinas hillfort, Aberystwyth, community excavations (DAT 2021).
- [Five Mile Lane investigation](#) (Rubicon/NMW/Cadw)

Other relevant projects:

- Continuing research & fieldwork by the Portable Antiquities Scheme
- South Pembrokeshire chariot burial project (NMW/DAT, 2018 -)
- Castlemartin promontory forts, field survey (CHERISH, 2017-2022)
- Castell Nadolig and the Penbryn Spoons (RCAHMW, 2019-2022)
- Castell Henllys roundhouse excavation & rebuild
- St Fagans museum: Bryn Eryr roundhouse build 2015
- St Fagans: opening of national archaeology galleries.
- Carneddau Landscape Partnership, NW Wales.
- Launch of [Hillfort Atlas Project](#)

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2. Opening statement: How does this document fit with earlier Research Frameworks? How does it look forward?

- In the 2010 review, it was noted that Research Agendas were largely used to justify funding awards and grant applications for projects, but that they tended not to penetrate far into developer funded work and day-to-day curatorial work. Hopefully the process has moved on somewhat a decade later. The 2014 review was more expansive, listing key areas for focussed work including material culture, climate change, environmental data and resource utilization. But the present working group noted that some of the fundamental questions of 100 years ago persist: who, how, what, and why?
- The 2021-22 working group has attempted to develop a new iteration of the Research Framework which is less insular and more wide-ranging than previous iterations, aiming to build upon past documents rather than simply re-working them. The working group was tasked to see how we could widen the boundaries of the Framework to include European themes and issues of mobility, contact & exchange across the sea, the Welsh Borderlands and issues of contact with the SW and NW neighbouring regions of Britain. The recognition of British-Irish connections in later prehistory have been helped by the breadth of the recent Hillfort Atlas Project which included Ireland in the British Isles, and also joint-nation projects like CHERISH which have also linked the fields of archaeology, geography and palaeoecology across Ireland and Wales.
- There are some exciting new studies and PhDs taking a fresh look at artefacts and burials and participation of PhD students has been encouraged in this current iteration. There continues to be a steady stream of new finds emerging from the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which in turn highlights key landscapes of deposition and new potential foci for fieldwork away from known archaeological monuments.
- However there remain acknowledged challenges in how Iron Age material is currently represented/displayed in the country's museum. The surprising find of the Pembrokeshire chariot burial in 2018 also shows that we have been missing a major aspect of Iron Age culture & ritual in Wales during our last century of fieldwork.
- Issues of past climate change and better integration of palaeoenvironmental research into archaeological projects needs to be prioritised and more strongly represented in this new iteration of the Research Framework.

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- The last decade has seen a widening of prospection technologies and opportunities, usually with a reduction in upfront costs. These include better technologies for geophysical prospection and data analysis, including the routine deployment of cart- based systems; the deployment of project-based and national LiDAR surveys with a routine increase to sub-metre resolution more suited to archaeological prospection; the widespread availability of UAVs or drones for archaeological survey to suit every budget; and, improvements in the availability of vertical aerial imagery via platforms like GoogleEarth, often flown during drought periods with cropmarks visible.
- There continues to be a good level of survey, excavation, postgraduate research and community work in Wales by agencies, contracting units, universities and community initiatives within and outside Wales; this in turn has helped with the development of new and innovative 1st millennium BC research projects on Welsh sites and landscapes.
- There remain a number of significant excavations which are still unpublished. These include Moel y Gaer, Rhosesmor, one of the best large-area excavations of a Welsh hillfort. Also unpublished are Caer Cadwgan (Lampeter University; finds report only), Crawcwellt & Bryn y Castell (Snowdonia National Park), Twyn y Gaer (NMW) and Llanmelin Wood (Cadw). These sites should be a priority for funding bodies.
- Finally, there was a general appetite for the formation of a new discussion group on 1st millennium BC issues in Wales, inviting participation from the wider regions neighbouring Wales to place our western research in its broader context.

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3. Proposed new research themes & priorities for study

3.1 IMPROVING & REFINING CHRONOLOGY IN 1ST MILLENNIUM BC WALES

- Changing the scale of excavation
- Innovative dating solutions offer a way forward
- Greater granularity required in understanding regional settlement chronologies
- Carbonised plant remains are a key resource for dating Welsh sites

Changing the scale of excavation: More excavation at a sufficient scale to examine large areas of settlements is required. Small trenches will not answer big questions. One way to improve our understanding of chronology is to dig more, with more money for excavations, and more PhDs to study the evidence. The scale of excavation needs to be big enough to look at large areas, to recover dating evidence in context across horizons. We need a range of data to answer questions of longevity of occupation.

- This is a problem with scheduled sites where there can be resistance to excavating large areas; a way forward requires a change at Government level regarding scheduled monument consent for research excavation.
- We are about to enter a very different period for university archaeology funding. Some budgets have been cut by 50%, so opportunities for new project funding will suffer. This is compounded by Brexit and a loss of easy access to European funding opportunities.
- Developer funded archaeology is something to consider further. It has strengths as well as weaknesses and is often the best funding opportunity we have for the period. A smarter approach to developer-funded excavation and sampling is desirable.
- 'Sampling strategies' and so called 'percentage digging' ensure a minimal standard of recording but discourage a maximum understanding. In this sense, a more flexible approach allowing archaeologists to focus on salient questions (established by a well-rounded framework) would be the way to go.

Innovative dating solutions offer a way forward. There has been success on Skomer Island with single-grain OSL dating by Aberystwyth University producing results for the middle-late Iron Age where C14 dating is not successful. There has also been good progress in the application of Bayesian chronologies led by Alex Bayliss.

- There is also merit in new work on ceramic sequences in conjunction

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with new C14 dates, especially for MIA-LIA sequences, coupled with large scale excavations and integrated dating. Many dating projects are running at a UK level; Wales needs to ensure it builds and retains links with national projects, particularly in the fields of human remains and animal bone. This is the only way to progress ideas of mobility.

- Lipid residues: C14 dating of lipid residues in pots is showing promise for new precision dating. This has repercussions for changing excavation/finds washing protocols.

Greater granularity required in understanding regional settlement chronologies:

One approach is a series of targeted interventions across a number of hillforts, similar to the approach taken by Billy O'Brien in Ireland and in northeast Scotland where 6 or 7 hillforts of a similar type. There is much to learn from Ireland's focussed campaign of dating numerous MBA hillforts under the direction of Billy O'Brien. There may be merit in a 'strip > map > date > publish' model for some Welsh hillforts. However, the varied regional nature of defended settlement in Wales mitigates against a strategy of easily finding a group of very similar enclosures to excavate and date, to draw rapid conclusions.

- This may be a problem in Wales where the varied hillforts do not display simple typologies. Also it is acknowledged that narrow trenches produce very poor OSL/C14 date ranges. Therefore – trenching is one way but results may pose more complex questions than are answered. The excavation of two neighbouring coastal promontory forts in Pembrokeshire in 2021 (Porth y Rhaw by DAT; Caerfai by DigVentures for the CHERISH Project) offers – for the first time – the potential to study variable patterns of settlement & use at a key site type.

Carbonised plant remains are a key resource for dating Welsh

sites: one of the very few aspects of prehistoric material that actually survives well in the soils of Wales. It provides a better understanding of landscape and economy and excellent dating potential. Settlements are potential repositories of Wales' early crops and provide the story of the development of farming in the country. Therefore this is another strong reason for continued excavation of settlement sites.

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3.2 REINVIGORATING MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

- Understanding the artefact gaps
- Investigating & contextualising artefact deposition sites away from known monuments.
- Mobility, contact and exchange
- Raising the profile of finds & museum archaeology
- Animal bone as a priority
- Excavation backlogs
- Availability of artefact specialists

Understanding the artefact gaps: We need new enthusiasm for artefact studies to answer the big 1st millennium BC questions. Why is there no pottery in Iron Age Wales? There are conceptual issues around why we have low quantities of artefacts from large hillfort excavations. Absence of evidence is just as significant as a research objective. Absence of pottery from MBA to pottery-using LBA is very important transition. Not really explained. People could make pottery if they wanted. Why did they reject pottery? Most commercial excavations necessarily talk about what they have 'found' rather than what they have 'not found'. The PAS is intrinsic to the process of understanding artefact loss and deposition, particularly away from known archaeological sites.

- Querns: Why do we have a lack of rotary querns in Wales? There are a few finds and some small assemblages, However, you would expect to find more on some settlement sites. There is good potential to look at querns in the restricted region of NW Wales and Anglesey – perhaps a good community project. Saddle querns are also rare due to poor recognition of these finds in the field; note newly recorded saddle quern from Castell Nadolig, Ceredigion.
- Wood: What are people in most of Wales using during 1st millennium BC? Breiddin- style wooden bowls? But even on south Wales limestone there are not many bone artefacts even surviving.

Investigating & contextualising artefact deposition sites away from known monuments. PAS finds are shining a light into previously 'anonymous' landscapes. We should direct new excavation efforts to pursue artefacts, not hillforts/settlement foci. It is important to focus research in the kinds of places where artefacts are coming out, not where the hillforts are being excavated. There is considerable scope and benefit now in 'chasing' artefacts to investigate new landscapes.

- PhD research by Tiffany Treadway suggests it can be very difficult to

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identify a single find as a 'deposit'. One suggestion would be to catalogue all single finds in terrestrial locations regardless of if they are associated with a nearby hoard or deposition and then look for the patterns and the anomalies. Sometimes new patterns of practice in terms of desired environments/objects, can be identified.

- Adam Gwilt notes that there can still be a lack of structural integration of site, landscape and artefact studies (and also of the lack of integration of different areas of archaeology in Wales), and particularly when many interesting finds are made *outside* forts and settlements and often as metal-detected finds.
- **Hoard concentrations:** PAS and Treasure Act turning up vast discrepancies in finds, particularly in south-east Wales. Incredible BA finds coming up. 60-70 hoards discovered in the last 20 years through the Treasure Act, plus individual finds. **ACTION:** Needs contextualising urgently. By contrast the numbers of IA finds are modest. Museums and curators are asking for more IA objects that they can display in their collections.

Mobility, contact and exchange: Key topics were discussed within this theme, which has been missed in previous iterations of the framework. The preferred terminology was 'contact and exchange' rather than 'trade', perceived as a Roman concept.

- **How does material culture, and ideas, travel?** The panel noted the growing importance of isotopic analysis to provide evidence for the movement of humans and animals. There were open-ended questions to address in present and future research projects about how material culture travels, and what are the different motivations?
- **Connections, maritime & overland:** current national boundaries are a false construct. How did Wales interact and connect with neighbouring communities in Ireland, Devon and SW England, and also into NW England, via coastal/estuarine transport and overland?

Raising the profile of finds & museum archaeology: The public are fascinated by artefacts and stories they tell about the people who made, used and buried them, particularly at the showy PAS & Treasure end of the spectrum. In a recent informal museum consultation by NMW, staff in a number of local museums in Wales said they wanted better representation of Iron Age material culture in their collections, so they could more effectively display this period. Museums archaeology could be better acknowledged by the wider field. Another issue is the relative low priority given to 'finds reports' within site excavation reports and where

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opportunities for wider synthesis and contextualisation of artefacts are not really given/offered.

Animal bone as a priority: Animal bone is not a common find in Wales with its acidic soils. Where we do excavate sites with animal bone present it is crucial that it is fully recovered and promptly studied. This Framework group proposes 100% recovery on research and commercial excavations as a national priority.

- Preserved prehistoric animal bone is a critically important resource, contributing to our national story of the development of farming and animal husbandry. Animal bone can give us information on DNA, seasonality of settlement use, information on livestock regimes/economies, while isotope analysis can show the movement of animal populations through the landscape.
- It is important to flag up what we need to do to encourage planning archaeologists to 'raise the bar' in terms of the choice of company to undertake projects; perhaps not the cheapest bid, but the company that has the best track record for fully completing and reporting upon the archaeology during post excavation.
- With the priority which preserved bone represents for later prehistory and its rarity in Wales, a research priority for excavations could be targeted on settlement sites on the limestone geologies of Wales.

Excavation backlogs: GGAT has been excavating many important LBA and IA sites, particularly in the Gwent Levels areas, where bags of sample material are still awaiting post excavation. There may be problems when developer funded work is signed off too quickly, and before the developer has paid for post-excavation work. There are implications for the ways planning archaeologists deal with and sign off projects.

Availability of artefact specialists who understand Welsh later prehistoric materials. How many artefact specialists are there? How many younger researchers are studying and specialising in this area. There are some opportunities to study large artefact assemblages from parts of Wales which would make ideal studies for a PhD candidate. It is a wider problem in artefact studies in Britain. It appears to be difficult to make ceramic studies interesting and appealing. Skills are particularly lacking for the ceramic assemblages of south-east Wales. This is a structural problem. Commercial archaeology does not serve artefact studies well and specialist report-writing is not sufficiently funded.

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3.3 METALS, MINERALS & INDUSTRY

- Metal resources in 1st millennium BC Wales
- Wales as a repository of exceptional later prehistoric finds
- Changes in metal composition
- Problems of iron
- Great Orme Bronze Age mines
- Trade and shipping in metals

Metal resources in 1st millennium BC Wales. There are outstanding questions. How was metal ore prospected for and sourced in Iron Age Wales? Early exploitation and defence of key mining sites by Romans in C1st AD Wales (e.g. Erglodd mines, Frongoch & Cwmystwyth lead extraction and smelting, Ceredigion) clearly demonstrates local knowledge of key metalliferous sites in Wales by Iron Age populations. The Penpompren mine LIA/early Roman oak spade from Talybont is an important recent find. Changes in metal technology also an important theme.

Wales as a repository of exceptional later prehistoric finds: There are some interesting things happening in the M-LBA. Alan Williams's study showing the significance of the Great Orme mines. Also a recent project looking at BA gold; provenancing and artefact analysis. We have some of the best concentrations of artefacts in Wales. A rich resource.

Changes in metal composition: During the C1st AD there are major material changes in iron, but also in bronze. Where are the new recipes coming in? We need major pXRF studies of bronze and iron recipes to learn more. Also we need to identify wider trends. Note Pete Bray's work at Reading: FLAME Flow of Ancient Metals Across Eurasia project.

Problems of iron: Iron is a big problem. Wales was a big iron producer in C1st millennium BC. Evidence is problematic. Iron is not routinely picked up by detectorists and evidence decays in the soil. What about the North Wales bog ores? Very important work on early smelting sites in NW Wales by Peter Crew, but little of it fully published. Need to ensure project archives are properly maintained, or rescued through new research. **ACTION:** Current status of Bryn y Castell & Crawcwellt finds and archive in Snowdonia NPA.

Great Orme BA mines: The Great Orme mines are perhaps Wales' most significant site of international importance. Puts Wales on the international map. Should be a World Heritage Site. How does settlement work around a mine site like Great Orme? Poorly understood. Teaches us much about mobility. Was it worked year round? Who visited

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the mines and from where? If the Great Orme has universal and outstanding value then the WHS Tentative List is being re-established for new nominations. **ACTION:** Suggestions over next 12 months probably best to Kate Roberts, Cadw.

Trade and shipping in metals: Boats and maritime archaeology need to be incorporated into this period theme. We don't have many BA & IA vessels; known remains like Barlands Farm/Calidcot lake do not represent the original number of vessels. PAS records for foreshore finds, including those from Gower and Swansea Bay (see above) are also key evidence. There is also important evidence for prehistoric communications from rare BA ship timbers preserved in a burnt mound excavated at Porth Neigwl, a very significant find.

3.4 HILLFORTS AND ENCLOSURE – NEW PERSPECTIVES

- Large-scale excavations
- Regionality
- Early hillforts of the LBA
- Long and complex chronologies
- Caerau hillfort, Cardiff

Large-scale excavations: We still do not know enough about hillforts and defended settlements of the Welsh Iron Age. There have been too few large-scale excavations in modern times to understand use and function across hillfort interiors and through time. If we want to advance hillfort studies in Wales we must dig at least one on a large scale. There are limitations to a remote-sensing based approach to understanding defended settlements. Surface indications and earthworks seldom give a clue to the age or complexities of structural sequences below the soil.

At the same time more ephemeral LBA sequences of stake or post-built structures may prove elusive to most forms of remote sensing. There is a strong case to be made for understanding this class of monument. National agencies should be encouraged to permit more exploratory excavation in order to date and understand these monuments. It should be acknowledged that a large hillfort excavation may need to be funded for 10+ years, plus post-excavation, in order to properly understand a complex sequence over multiple areas.

Regionality: Acknowledged regionality in the settlement record of Wales and the Marches is a feature of the archaeological record, but its implications for understanding the 1st millennium BC settlement record is not yet thoroughly researched. Future research on hillforts is moving away from the 'Power of Place'. There is no 'one size fits all' for Welsh

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hillforts, no standard type of later prehistoric defended enclosure. Regional forts will be different, with different social structures, different chronologies and different regional narratives.

Early hillforts of the LBA: New results are still emerging from sustained, long-term large-scale excavations. Penycloddiau hillfort excavations by Rachel Pope, Liverpool Uni. Six dates from palisade and box rampart now returning solid Late Bronze Age dates 1200-800 BC. Wider work being contextualised by Loray Campbell's PhD thesis on LBA Hilltop sites.

Growing evidence of the establishment of early hillforts in NE Wales.

Outstanding questions about why there was 'a need to enclose', currently also being studied as part of the CAER Heritage project by Cardiff University. Why do LBA societies in Scotland, Wales and Wessex need these large communal enclosures?

Long and complex chronologies: One understudied regional group of hillforts is the NW

Wales group of stone forts, including Tre'r Ceiri and Braich y Dinas. It's not clear when Tre'r Ceiri was first constructed but there is evidence for long occupation into the RB period as well as early medieval, or possibly Viking-age, occupation (notable find of decorated bone comb). Possible evidence for a Wessex-style 'Developed hillfort' tradition. These NW Wales stone forts have potential to demonstrate Neo/BA > LBA > IA > RB > EM tradition of occupation. However for other hillforts like the well-excavated and understood Castell Henllys in Pembrokeshire we know that it was begun on a new site in the 5th-4th centuries BC, with no LBA antecedent.

Caerau hillfort, Cardiff: Large-scale excavations within a scheduled hillfort have challenged our preconceptions of Iron Age occupation, and how hillfort-based living emerged from the MBA-LBA landscape of dispersed farming settlements. The results have revealed a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, Iron Age settlement, Roman and post-Roman occupation, culminating in a Medieval ringwork. This shows a 'punctuated' occupation, sometimes inhabited, sometimes abandoned.

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3.5 EXTENDING REMOTE SENSING (RS)

- Remote sensing & understanding the wider landscape
- Huge potential from large-scale geophysics
- RS needs to be coupled with programmes of stripping & sampling

Remote sensing & understanding the wider landscape: New research on the period must be data led. Not just an inward focus on hillforts, but an outward focus on the wider landscape. New remote sensing is required along with high resolution LiDAR, similar to recent surveys commissioned by the Carneddau HLF project in north Wales, the CHERISH Project for the islands of Wales and by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park for north Pems. This will help us move from local to national perspectives. Also, it will help shine a light on anomalies in the record.

Huge potential from large-scale geophysics: A programme of widescale gradiometry on unexcavated hillfort interiors would be one way to progress our understanding of the discipline and would help to prioritise targeted intervention. New large-scale geophysical surveys, particularly using cart-based systems, have worked well for the investigation of the landscape around the Pembrokeshire chariot burial, and through Tim Young's surveys for Cardiff University in the Vale of Glamorgan which have revealed a densely occupied landscape which we know very little about. This type of survey must be extended, as it can change our understanding of how well used the later prehistoric landscape was.

RS needs to be coupled with programmes of stripping & sampling: Lowland developer- funded projects (e.g. 5 Mile Lane, Vale of Glam; LNG pipeline) reveal vast connected landscapes we didn't know existed. Technology has improved for geophysics particularly with cart-based systems deploying multiple sensor arrays. We need to work differently. We need more opportunities to ground truth the geophysics and explore the archaeology it is revealing. This requires more funding.

- The case study of the Five Mile Lane assessment in the Vale of Glamorgan was noted. New geophysics revealed a lot of sites, but subsequent turf stripping revealed many sites previously invisible on the geophysics dated particularly to the MBA-IA. One major issues was that stake-walled buildings were revealed which hadn't shown on geophysics. This has implications for how we understand landscape use and demographics of prehistory.
- The LNG pipeline was a major project in the south Wales landscape which revealed scores of high quality archaeological sites

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which were hitherto invisible in the landscape; published in 2021 as 'Timeline', a Cotswolds Archaeology Monograph.

3.6 LANDSCAPES OF DEPOSITION incl. WETLANDS & WET LANDSCAPES

- Better funding and research on wetland landscapes of deposition
- New research on lowland & upland lakes as potential deposition sites
- Understanding LBA hoards in south-east Wales
- Llyn Cerrig Bach
- Better palaeoenvironmental sampling and study of Welsh bogs

Better funding and research on wetland landscapes of deposition:

Need to use PAS data and records of single finds. Look at areas where there has been deposition. We have the data, we have the material; now we need the funding to bring the research together. Some priority PhDs and post-docs to research particular under-researched themes in this agenda. Antiquarian bog finds can be revisited; some useful research by Tiffany Treadway.

New research on lowland & upland lakes as potential

deposition sites: A better understanding of the role of lowland and upland wetlands and lakes in the settled 1st millennium BC landscape is required to better understand their roles. We have old discoveries of 'sacred lakes' and centuries of deposition in Llyn Fawr, Rhigos and Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey, both found accidentally through intrusive development. New prospection projects could be developed using scaled-down technology from marine archaeological survey and diving.

Understanding LBA hoards in south-east Wales: There is a real buzz about SE Wales during LBA; a 'Golden Age' of artefact deposition is emerging through PAS work. More than 40 hoards, 1000-700BC. A real peak in deposition in SE Wales Swansea Bay saw a large deposition of LBA artefacts; actually would have been a wetland landscape in prehistory rather than a sandy bay. It has also been noted there is a difference in the type of material being deposited in Swansea Bay as distinct from dryland sites. Exotics but also blades including rapiers and daggers.

Llyn Cerrig Bach: A major study of the ironwork from Llyn Cerrig Bach is still outstanding. Need a research team approach. Previous work by MacDonald, Steele. Gareth Derbyshire completed a PhD in the 1990s but only focussed on two categories of artefact in the assemblage. Llyn Cerrig Bach mirrored in a Polish lake deposition site, with repeated deposition. New CHERISH Project environmental work on NW

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Gwynedd/SW Anglesey yielding new evidence for catastrophic coastal storms and sand dune inundation around Llyn Coron/Llyn Maelog/Dinas Dinlle in LIA/early Roman period, giving new context for the deposition of prestige metalwork.

Better palaeoenvironmental sampling and study of Welsh bogs:

Wales is ideally placed for new and bigger palaeoenvironmental studies; huge bog resource, many of which are in lowland landscapes adjacent to densely settlement areas. These wetlands do not occur just in the remote uplands.

3.7 A NEW FOCUS ON BURIAL EVIDENCE

- Re-examination old burial evidence from Wales
- Contextualising Welsh burial evidence within the UK
- Cremation cemeteries and landscape use
- Cave burial tradition
- Searching for Chariots; identifying IA burials outside hillforts

Re-examination old burial evidence from Wales: A recent paper by Oliver Davis looked at the entire IA burial resource for Wales at the time. A relatively large number were from south Wales. There were some skeletal remains. There is a huge potential to re-examine evidence from whole of Wales. New PhD research by Adelle Bricking, together with the South Pembrokeshire chariot burial shows what we have been missing.

Contextualising Welsh burial evidence within the UK: Burials are clearest window onto population demographics in IA Wales. We must study every individual. Every burial must be dated & analysed with isotopic analysis & osteoarchaeology; DNA evidence is also valuable. There is the opportunity to say interesting new things about the IA population. It was noted that Mel Giles is also doing new work on bog bodies from Wales. It is very important that Wales is involved in wider funerary studies, despite prevalence of acidic soils. Wales should be on the UK map more.

Cremation cemeteries and landscape use: A number of MBA & LBA important cremation cemetery sites have been recorded from the Vale of Glamorgan, although there are better studies of LBA sequences and traditions from elsewhere. Llanmaes also illustrated a possible extension of Late Trevisker Pottery traditions into a narrow coastal strip of south Wales. The site represents an important transition from a burial landscape to a landscape of settlement.

Cave burial tradition: Also need to remember cave burial tradition.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

South Wales has internationally important cave burials. Dan yr Ogof has LBA and IA cave burials; IA cave burials from Gower dated by Rick Schulting. Many antiquarian finds not properly dated.

Searching for Chariots; identifying IA burials outside hillforts:

Following the 2018 discovery of a chariot burial in South Pembrokeshire, the focus for some remote sensing work has shifted to the identification of missed IA burial evidence. Cadw has been working with the Dyfed Archaeological Trust to extend geophysical surveys out to the environs of other hillforts in SW Wales. The resulting pilot study (Enright 2020) has indeed shown the existence of other circular burial mounds on the approaches to several inland promontory forts, some of which may contain Iron Age burials.

- Parallel research and geophysical survey at Castell Nadolig hillfort, Ceredigion, investigating the findspot of the Penbryn Iron Age spoons, by the Royal Commission has identified several large round barrows within and around this hillfort, in close association with several springs. An Iron Age burial tradition at Castell Nadolig and at Plas Gogerddan appears to be for boulder-capped burials, often outlining the shape of the inhumation within.

3.8 IDENTITY AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

- Prehistory and its developing role in the narrative of 'Wales as a Nation'
- The role of reconstructions in teaching at a primary level
- Engaging with teachers and the curriculum is challenging

Prehistory and its developing role in the narrative of 'Wales as a Nation': This is a topic of increasing importance. There have been recent (2021) discussions on social media which challenge use of the term 'Iron Age' as an unsatisfactory description of the original 'Welsh' inhabitants of hillforts. Terms such as Brythonic and Celtic are sometimes preferred. There are many contemporary questions about who lived in these places, what language they spoke, what was their identity and what was the nature of disruption from Roman invasion, linked to modern ideas of Welsh identity and language and a developing sense of Nationhood. How does the archaeological community & Research Framework usefully engage with these questions? Do we have answers?

The role of reconstructions in teaching at a primary level. This is a topic discussed in SCARF. Do roundhouses at museums adequately represent Iron Age life? Do they only convey an 'acceptable', domestic view of Iron Age Wales? These issues are usefully discussed by Steve

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Burrow (2015) on his experience of developing and managing the Bryn Eryr build at the National History Museum, St Fagans, and the challenges of authentic reconstruction versus the provision of a practical teaching space.

Engaging with teachers and the curriculum is challenging:

Teachers often do not have time to change or address new areas in teaching timetable. The next 2-3 years are critical as all schools develop their new curriculums, often with a focus on themes of Cynefin and local landscapes. Resources should be targeted to developing these in the right way. The Welsh ancient history PGCE for classics would be a good place to introduce archaeological themes. There was a desire among panel members to move away from learning about 'Celts vs Romans' in schools.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Recent or additional literature: 1st millennium BC (Adam Gwilt)

Synthesis & Surveys

Bell, M. 2013. *The Bronze Age in the Severn Estuary*, CBA Research Report 172, York: Council for British Archaeology.

Regional synthesis, environmental, Bronze Age settlements, wetland landscape study, wooden artefacts, pottery, tracks & footprints.

Davis, O. 2017. Filling the Gaps: The Iron Age in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 83, 325-56. Regional synthesis of Iron Age record.

Davies, J.L. & Driver, T.G. 2013. The Villa Hinterland: Recent Work on the Environs of the Abermagwr Roman Villa at Llanafan and Llanilar, *Ceredigion* 17(1), 1-12.

Geophysical survey of Pen y Castell, Castle Hill, Llanilar – Iron Age hillfort.

Johnston, R. 2021. *Bronze Age Worlds: A Social Prehistory of Britain and Ireland*, London: Routledge.

New general synthesis including material from Wales.

Lancaster, J. 2014. A Model of Decentralised Political Structure among the Silures, *Studia Celtica* 48 3-54.

Survey of settlement evidence in SE Wales and interpretation of political structure of Silures people.

Murphy, K. & Mytum, H. 2012. Iron Age Enclosed Settlements in West Wales, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 78, 263-313.

Regional settlement synthesis.

Silvester, R.J. 2011. Recent Research on Late Prehistoric and Romano-British Enclosures in Montgomeryshire, *The Montgomeryshire Collections* 99, 1-26.

Regional synthesis of settlement enclosures.

Walker, E. and Davis, O. 2021. Burry Holms, Gower, Wales: the prehistory of an island. *Archaeological Journal*

Hillforts

Barker, L. & Driver, T. 2011. Close to the Edge: New Perspectives on the Architecture, Function and Regional Geographies of the Coastal Promontory Forts of the Castlemartin Peninsula, South Pembrokeshire, Wales, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 77, 65-87. Survey & study of hillforts.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Crane, P., & Murphy, K. 2010. The excavation of a coastal promontory fort at Porth y Rhaw, Solva, Pembrokeshire, 1995-8, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 159, 53-98.

Excavation of LBA-IA promontory fort.

Davis, O. and Sharples, N. 2020. Excavations at Caerau Hillfort, Cardiff: Towards a Narrative for the Hillforts of Southeast Wales. In D. Delfino, F. Coimbra, G.P.C. Cruz and D. Cardoso (eds). *Late Prehistoric Fortifications in Europe: Defensive, Symbolic and Territorial Aspects from the Chalcolithic to the Iron Age: Proceedings of the International Colloquium 'FortMetalAges', Guimarães, Portugal*, 163-81. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Driver, T. 2013. *Architecture, Regional Identity and Power in the Iron Age Landscapes of Mid Wales; The Hillforts of North Ceredigion*, BAR British Series 583, Oxford: Archaeopress.

Regional hillfort synthesis.

Driver, T. 2016. *The Hillforts of Cardigan Bay, Discovering the Iron Age Communities of Ceredigion*, Herefordshire: Logaston Press.

Regional popular account and synthesis, including hillforts.

Enright, C. 2020. *Searching for Chariots: A Year of Discovery Project*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Report No. 2019-57.

Murphy, K. (ed). 2018. Iron Age Settlement in Wales.

Internet Archaeology 48

<https://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue48/7/toc.html>

Parker Pearson, M., Caswell, C. & Welham, K. 2018. A Late Bronze Age ring-fort at Bayvil Farm, Pembrokeshire, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 167, 113-41.

Geophysics & excavation of LBA-EIA ring fort. C14 date. Ceramics. Stone tools. Plant macrofossils.

Parker Pearson, M., Caswell, C. & Welham, K. 2017. Excavations at Castell Mawr Iron Age Hillfort, Pembrokeshire, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 166, 141-73.

Geophysics & excavation of Earliest-Early Iron Age date.

Roundhouse with palisaded enclosure, later rampart. C14 & OSL dates. Flint & lithics. Plant macrofossils.

Seaman, A. & Lane, A. 2019. Excavation of the Ty'n-y-Coed earthworks 2011-14; the Dinas Powys 'Southern Banks', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 168, 109-35.

Excavation of Iron Age fort. Includes report by Jody Deacon on reconstructed decorated Glastonbury Ware bowl with C14 dated residue 1st BC – 1st AD.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Smith, G. 2014. A Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age Hilltop Enclosure with Evidence of Early and Middle Neolithic and Early Medieval Settlement at Carrog, Llanbadrig, Anglesey, *Studia Celtica* 48, 55-92. Survey & excavation of LBA/EIA defended enclosure.

Timberlake, S., Haycock, K., Driver, T., Barker, L., Andrews, P., Craddock, B., Gilmour, A., Mephram, L. 2014. The Strange Case of a Mysterious Lead Anomaly: Castell Grogwynion Hillfort, Ceredigion: Iron Age Smelting, Eighteenth Century Pottery or Post Medieval Prospection? *Ceredigion* 17(2), 1-27.
Iron Age hillfort excavation, metallurgy & lead isotope analysis.

Settlements

Waddington, K. 2013. *The Settlements of Northwest Wales; From the Late Bronze Age to the Early Medieval Period*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Regional synthesis of settlement evidence.

Burrow, S. 2020. Pre-Iron Age domestic buildings in Wales, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 169, 71-103.

Review of Bronze Age houses in Wales.

Burrow, S. 2015. From Celtic Village to Iron Age Farmstead: Lessons Learnt from Twenty Years of Building, Maintaining and Presenting Iron Age Roundhouses at St Fagans National History Museum. EXARC Journal Issue 2015/4

Murphy, F. & Murphy, K. 2015. Survey and excavation of multi-period sites at Crugiau Cemmaes, Nevern, Pembrokeshire, 2009-13, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 164, 37-56.

Exploratory excavation of Earliest-Early Iron Age enclosure in vicinity of barrow cemetery. C14 dates. Spindle whorls.

Cuttler, R. 2012. Cefn Du, Gaerwen: a Neolithic pit cluster and Iron Age / Romano-British farmstead, In R. Cuttler, A Davidson & G. Hughes, *A Corridor Through Time; The Archaeology of the A55 Anglesey Road Scheme*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 5-29.

Iron Age and RB open settlement. C14 dates. Chesshire briquetage.

Roberts, H., Cuttler, R. & Hughes, G. 2012. Cefn Cwmwd, Rhostrehwfa. Pit circle, early Bronze Age cremation cemetery, Iron Age / Romano-British farmstead and early medieval occupation, In R. Cuttler, A Davidson & G. Hughes, *A Corridor Through Time; The Archaeology of the A55 Anglesey Road Scheme*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 30-65.

Iron Age and RB open settlement. C14 dates. M/LIA pit group. C14 date.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Late Iron Age pit circle. C14 date. Cheshire briquetage.

Smith, G. 2012. Melin y Plas, Bryngwran. Iron Age / Romano-British farmstead, In R. Cuttler, A Davidson & G. Hughes, *A Corridor Through Time; The Archaeology of the A55 Anglesey Road Scheme*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 66-95.

Iron Age and RB open settlement. C14 dates Cheshire briquetage.

Burnt mounds

Hart, J., Rackham, J., Griffiths, S. & Challinor, D. 2014. Burnt Mounds along the Milford Haven to Brecon gas pipeline 2006-07, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 163, 133-72.
Synthesis including Middle and Late Bronze Age burnt mounds. C14 dating.

Maynard, D. 2012 The Burnt Mounds, In R. Cuttler, A Davidson & G. Hughes, *A Corridor Through Time; The Archaeology of the A55 Anglesey Road Scheme*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 122-9.
Middle and Late Bronze Age burnt mounds. C14 dates.

Trackways

Sherman, A. 2011. Recently Discovered Trackways in Swansea Bay, *Studia Celtica* 45, 1-25.
Middle and Late Bronze Age trackways. C14 dates.

Burials

Davis, O. 2017. Iron Age Burials in Wales: Patterns, Practices and Problems, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 37(1), 1-49.
Synthesis and review of IA burials from Wales.

Enright, C. 2020. *Searching for Chariots: A Year of Discovery Project*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Report No. 2019-57.

Havard, T., Darvill, T. & Alexander, M. 2017. A Bronze Age Round Barrow Cemetery, Pit Alignments, Iron Age Burials, Iron Age Copper Working and Later Activity at Four Crosses, Llandysilio, Powys, *Archaeological Journal* 174 (I), 1-67.
Circular IA barrows. C14 date.
Iron Age finger ring in grave context.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Jones, N. 2014. Excavations of the Site of the Fromer Welshpool Smithfield and the Welshpool Roman Burial; *The Montgomeryshire Collections* 102, 1-52.

Middens

Gwilt, A., Lodwick, M., Deacon, J. Wells, N., Madgwick, R. & Young, T. 2016. Ephemeral Abundance at Llanmaes: Exploring the Residues and Resonances of an Earliest Iron Age Midden and its Associated Archaeological Context in the Vale of Glamorgan, In J.T. Koch & B. Cunliffe (eds), *Celtic from the West 3; Atlantic Europe in the Metal Ages: questions of shared language*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 294-329. Earliest Iron Age midden & feasting site. Middle-Late Bronze Age settlement, Iron Age enclosure & Early Bronze Age barrow excavation. Geophysical survey. C14 dates. Cauldrons, Armorican axes, Trevisker pottery, Earliest Iron Age ceramics.

Waddington, K., Bayliss, A., Higham, T. Madgwick, R. & Sharples, N. 2019. Histories of Deposition: creating chronologies for the Laet Bronze Age – Early Iron Age transition in southern Britain, *Archaeological Journal* 176(I), 84-133. Includes discussion of Llanmaes midden & C14 dates.

Madgwick, R. & Mulville, J. 2015. Feasting on fore-limbs: conspicuous consumption and identity in later prehistoric Britain, *Antiquity* 89, 629-44. Zooarchaeological study / analysis of Iron Age pig bones from Llanmaes, Vale of Glamorgan

Mining and Metallurgy

Williams, R.A. & Carler de Veslud, C. Le 2019. Boom and bust in Bronze Age Britain: major copper production at the Great Orme Mine and European Trade, c. 1600-1400 BC, *Antiquity* 93, 1178-96. Bronze Age copper mining, lead isotopes, archaeometallurgy, exchange.

Environmental

Bell, M. 2013. *The Bronze Age in the Severn Estuary*, CBA Research Report 172, York: Council for British Archaeology. Regional synthesis, environmental, Bronze Age settlements, wetland landscape study, wooden artefacts, pottery, tracks & footprints.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Artefacts

Carlton, K.S. 2013. Ritual or Resistance? Hope and Hoarding in Late Iron Age South-east Wales, *Studia Celtica* 47, 25-39.
Study of landscape sitings and interpretation of Seven Sisters and Lesser Garth, Pentyrch LIA hoards. Includes goldwork from Wales in wider synthesis.

Treadway, T. 2021. *A reanalysis of wetland object deposition in Iron Age Wales and Scotland*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Archaeology Department, School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University.

Davis, M. & Gwilt, A. 2008. Material, style and identity in first century AD metalwork, with particular reference to the Seven Sisters Hoard, In D. Garrow, C. Gosden & J.D. Hill (eds.); *Rethinking Celtic Art*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 146-184

Garrow, D., Gosden, C., Hill, J.D & Bronk Ramsay, C. 2009. Dating Celtic Art: a major Radiocarbon Dating Programme of Iron Age and Early Roman Metalwork in Britain, *Archaeological Journal* 166, 79-123.

Includes C14 dating of Cerrigydrudion Crown, Boverton Collar, Brecon Grave Group, Llyn Cerrig Bach artefacts, Trawsfynydd Tankard and Welshpool Grave Group.

Garrow, D. & Gosden, C. 2012. *Technologies of Enchantment; Exploring Celtic Art: 400 BC to AD 400*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Includes survey overview of Celtic Art from Wales.

Gwilt, A. 2014. The Dating of the Welshpool Grave Assemblage: Radiocarbon Dating Evidence and Review, in N. Jones, 2014 Excavations of the Site of the Former Welshpool Smithfield and the Welshpool Roman Burial; *The Montgomeryshire Collections* 102, 35-46.

Hankinson, R., Lewis, J., Chapman, E., Toller, H., Webster, P., Owen, W. & Silvester, B. 2015. Recent work in the environs of Brecon Gaer Roman fort, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 164, 89- 130.

Includes description of LIA/ERB cremation burial with mirror, terret, tweezers, lamp and ceramic vessel (Chapman). Also metal detected artefact assemblage includes 2 tankard handles, 2 terrets and 2 strap-unions in LIA style (Lewis).

Horn, J.A. 2015. Tankards of the British Iron Age, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 81, 311-41.
Includes the many Welsh tankards in his wider synthesis.

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Joy, J. 2010. *Iron Age Mirrors; A biographical approach*, BAR British Series 518 Oxford: Archaeopress.
Synthesis includes Brecon & Llechwedd-ddu mirrors from Wales.

Mullin, D. 2012. The River Has Never Divided Us: Bronze Age Metalwork Deposition in Western Britain, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 31(1), 47-57.
Landscape deposition of Bronze Age metalwork

Nowakowski, J., Gwilt, A., Megaw, V. & La Niece, S. 2009. A Late Iron Age Neck-Ring from Pentire, Newquay, Cornwall, With a Note on the Find from Boverton, Vale of Glamorgan, *Antiquaries Journal* 89, 35-52.
Late Iron Age grave goods with Roman burial.

Roberts, B. 2007. Adorning the living but on the Dead: Understanding Ornaments in Britain
c. 1400-1100 cal BC, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 73, 135-67.

Webley, L. & Adams, S. 2016. Material Genealogies: Bronze Moulds and their Castings in Later Bronze Age Britain, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 82, 323-40.
Includes synthesis of Middle and Late Bronze Age mould evidence from Wales.

Seaman, A. & Lane, A. 2019. Excavation of the Ty'n-y-Coed earthworks 2011-14; the Dinas
Powys 'Southern Banks', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 168, 109-35.
Includes report by Jody Deacon on reconstructed decorated Glastonbury Ware bowl with C14 dated residue 1st BC – 1st AD.

Edited by Toby Driver, RCAHMW. 27th April 2022, with additions from the entire working group

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