

Newsletter

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GAT make progress at Towyn y Capel

Andrew Davidson

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust undertook four weeks of excavation at the site of Capel St Ffraid, Towyn y Capel, Trearddur Bay in July of 2002. The work was funded by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments with help from Menter Mon. Students from Cardiff University and University of Central Lancashire, Preston were supervised by Andrew Davidson and George Smith from the Trust.

This is the site of a former chapel and cemetery situated adjacent to the beach at Trearddur Bay, Anglesey. It is known from previous work that the cemetery contains burials dating from at least the 7th century AD to the 12th century AD. Erosion from the sea has washed away the majority of the site, including the chapel which was built on top of the mound.

The first phase of the excavations was designed to remove modern wind-blown sand off the top of the mound, and to excavate the rear, inland, face of the mound back to a dominant turf line discovered during excavations undertaken in 1997. This required the removal of some 200 to 300 tons of blown sand, and revealed the entire surface of the surviving portion of the

mound, as it existed in the second half of the 18th century when the ruins of the medieval chapel still stood.

Underneath the turf layer were remains of a stone wall encircling the mound which is thought to represent part of the boundary to the cemetery described by Stanley in the 19th century.

Once the wind-blown sand had been removed, and excavations had progressed to the upper turf line, the top of the mound was cleaned to the first burial layer, and the turf line and underlying sand removed. This revealed the first series of burials, though many were severely truncated or disturbed, and none were complete. There was also evidence for reburial of bones which had previously been eroded.

Excavation proceeded to the next layer, where complete inhumations were found. In all some thirty eight partial or complete inhumations were excavated, all from simple dug graves, though the nature of the deposits made it impossible to recognise the individual grave cuts. Some intercutting

of burials had occurred, suggesting a reasonably long period of use. It is thought that these burials are of 12th century date, though this has to be confirmed by radio-carbon dating.

There was variation in burial practice, though most were simply extended with hands crossed over the sacral region, in one case with an arm cradling an infant. Sometimes feet were crossed, probably indicating use of a shroud but there was no evidence of coffins. In two cases bodies were laid on their side.

Following excavation the site was covered with a semi-permeable mesh, and sand bags and sand were placed over the mesh, so that the mound and the excavated surfaces would be fully protected during the Winter months.

The skeletal remains have been catalogued and boxed, and are now at the Forensic Department of the University of Central Lancashire awaiting forensic and DNA analysis. A close working relationship is being maintained with Oriel Ynys Môn where the finds will be

deposited following analysis.

The Trust is very grateful to Mr and Mrs Mabbs of Sea Shanty House and Cyngor Ynys Môn for permission to excavate the site.



JO hangs up his Lens Cap

Our official unofficial photographer, Mr J.O. Hughes of Llanellian, has decided to stand down after many years of happy snapping. Excursions of all kinds were wonderfully archived by J.O. on film and his pictures were always full of smiling antiquarian explorers. J.O.'s carousels were always well received at the Pot Pourri as he accounted the events and mishaps. Thank you J.O.

The Society is therefore firmly focused on seeking a replacement. Any volunteers please contact a member of the Committee.

Recently Published Books !.....



The Vincent Family Diary— Gentry Life in Victorian Bangor Dennis S. Wood and Vanessa Field

James Crawley Vincent, vicar of Caernarfon and hero of the town's cholera outbreak died in 1869. His wife Grace and their eight young children were left without a home or income. They moved to Bangor and a distant relative bequeathed them the small estate of Treborth uchaf. This book tells the story of the family, its north Wales roots and the lives of the children. The Vincents kept a record of their movements and this diary gives a rare glimpse of the social life of the gentry in north Wales during the late Victorian period.

Vanessa Field will be giving a short talk on the subject at the forthcoming Pot Pourri at Oriel Ynys Môn on 7th March.

Copper Mountain

John Rowlands

The Anglesey Antiquarian Society first published Copper Mountain in 1966 as the first volume of a series of Studies in Anglesey History. This revised 2002 edition has been beautifully collated and published by Stone Science and is a refreshed account of our former Chairman's invaluable study of Anglesey's unique copper industry.

Copies retail at a very reasonable £6.

Anglesey Villages

Margaret Hughes

The Newsletters' former editor continues to be busy writing informative and interesting publications. Margaret Hughes' fifth book "Anglesey Villages" will be published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch in April, (£4.95), revealing many extraordinary aspects of seemingly ordinary Anglesey villages. Furthermore, the same author will publish "Anglesey Lighthouses and Lifeboats" in August, followed by "Museums and Galleries of North West Wales" for 2004.

Ex-cathedra Excursionista

Gareth Parry 01248 722697

The 2002 season was reasonably successful—those who joined us were pleased and, we hope, gained some new knowledge and something to think about. A disappointment was that so few members showed an interest, although 74 joined the visit to Hafoty, only half that number joined the other excursions. Are you trying to tell us something? If so please discuss it with me. A provisional programme for next year has been agreed. We are looking at Parys Mountain, the Rivals area, Vaynol Estate, the Llanberis district and some Anglesey churches. There will not be a weekend excursion on the 2003 programme as we lack an organiser. We are looking at some ideas for 2004. If any member has a suggestion please tell me. We look forward to your support in 2003.

O'r Gadair Wibdeithiol



Cafwyd tymor gweddol lwyddiannus y llynedd, pawb a ymunodd â ni wedi cael pleser, ac hefyd, gobeithio, tipyn o wybodaeth newydd a rhywbeth i feddwl amdano. Y siom oedd y nifer mor fychan o aelodau a ddangosodd ddiddordeb, cawsom 74 ar daith Hafoty a dim ond hanner hynny ar gyfer y gwibdeithiau eraill. Oes rhywbeth o'i le ar y rhaglen? Os felly, buaswn yn falch o drafod y mater efo chi. Mae braslun rhaglen 2003 wedi ei gytuno. Bydd Mynydd Parys, ardal Yr Eifl, Y Faenol, ardal Llanberis a rhai o eglwysi Môn yn cael sylw. Ni fydd gwibdaith penwythnos ar y rhaglen gan nad oes trefnwyr ar gael. Mae rhai syniadau ar gyfer 2004 o dan sylw. Os oes gan aelod unrhyw syniad yna cysylltwch â mi. Edrychwn ymlaen at eich cefnogaeth.

News & Additions at the Archives

Although some of the collections in the Record Office (RO) are official records, many come from individuals and organisations. Without the support of such people and groups, the archival heritage of the island preserved in the RO would be considerably weaker and therefore unavailable for the community in the future. We are extremely grateful to all donors and depositors for their support of the work of the RO.

A requirement for the use of photographs or any image from the RO collections in publications is the supply of the free copy of the publication to the RO. However, this is not an expectation from the many people who use the RO to undertake their own research for publications. We are therefore particularly grateful to Mr. W.H. James and Mr. John Gareth Roberts who have presented copies of their privately printed books to the RO.

Thanks to those who responded to the plea for copies of Papurau Bro. Gaps are now filled!

Microfiches of bishop's transcripts Caergybi, Coedana, Heneglwys, Llanddeusant, Llanfachraeth.

Mikroffilmiau o lawysgrifau'r Llyfrgell Brydeinig, presented by the Governors of the Welsh School London. Cym. Morris. Môn.

Additional papers of William Thomas, shipbuilders and family, 1708-1973, WD2/943-1065.

Atlas of Flowering Plants and Ferns by R.H. Roberts., WM/1986.

Cofrestru aelodau Cymdeithas Dirwestol Capel Bethphage, 1898-1930. WM/1858/4-5.

Llyfr Cofnodion Cyngor Plwyf Niwburch, 1908-1953. WP/59/8.

Llyfrau 'Ar drywydd y Fonesig Constantia'. 'The Search for Lady Constantia' gan Mr. W. H. James. WM/1987.

Cofnodion Camgen Ynys Môn, Undeb Amaethwyr Cymru, 1956-1979 a 'Telu'r Tir' - 'A Family Affair', story of the Farmers Union of Wales by Hsindel Jones. WM/1988.

Videos by Mr. G.H. Gautry of Beaumaris Events, 2000-2002. WM/VID/9-11.

History of Rowlands family of 'Morfa' Dulac and 'Auckland' Pensarn by Raymond John Rowlands. WM/1998.

Papurau Cymdeithas Cymru Fydd Caergybi, 1979-1991. WM/1247.

'Hard Men, Hard Stone, Hard Bricks', a story of a mountain and its men' by John Gareth Roberts. WM/2000.

Files of the Efail Newydd Residents Association, Benllech, 1967-2002. WM/2001.

Additional Railway Plans, 1870-1960. WCD/375-397.