



## **The Cambrian Archaeological Association is 175 years old!**

*2021 succeeds 2020, which was possibly the most disrupted year for the Association since the Second World War, with our summer and autumn meetings and the Darganfod spring conference all cancelled. So far 2021 has been no better with lockdown continuing and friends and families affected terribly by the pandemic. Nonetheless, this year is the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association and we want to mark the occasion with as much celebration as we can.*

*Our summer meeting in Lincoln, we are hopeful, will still go ahead, the Darganfod conference will be delivered to members free of charge in April on Zoom and a conference to celebrate this anniversary, entitled 'Illustrating the Past', organised by Heather James, will take place in Llangollen in October. A new venture, a series of Walks and Talks in different parts of Wales, is planned for the summer.*

*We thought that, in addition to these events, it might be timely to celebrate our membership and how members contribute to the study and enjoyment of Wales's past through the wide variety of measures that the Association organises and supports. Some of these are well known, others perhaps less so. The following pieces aim to describe our work that plays so important a part in the life of the historic environment of Wales.*

*Firstly, we have a note from one of our most senior members, Dr Peter Jarvis, who, with Sue, his late wife, were well known to all of us, attending meetings regularly and always unhesitatingly sharing their extensive knowledge, particularly of industrial and railway archaeology, with others.*



### **A Senior Member of the Cambrian Archaeological Association Speaks.**

**by Peter Jarvis**

I represent, I suppose, the tradition of the classic amateur archaeologist within the Cambrian Archaeological Association membership. As a citizen of Conwy - I live by 'le ferry' at Tywyn by Deganwy - I have always had a fascination for castles, developed in Conwy, where lie not only a splendid castle but also the finest town walls and the finest Elizabethan town house in the country. Added to which it rejoices in important road and rail archaeology - I was always impressed by Telford's respectful treatment of the town when he built the Suspension Bridge of 1826, a model for future developers, and by Stephenson's rather brutal Tubular Bridge, the earliest of its type (now the only one remaining).

The first excavation I joined in 1948-52 was under Norman Tucker at Llys Euryn, Llandrillo yn Rhos, the house of Ednyfed Fychan, seneschal to Llywelyn the Great and a rather underestimated figure in

C13th history. I was proposed as a member of the Cambrians in 1958. Blodwen Jerman greeted me memorably at my first Summer Meeting with the words, 'You're young!'

Having qualified in medicine in Liverpool, I settled with my wife Sue (whose historical qualifications were much better than my own) in Bletchley. Noel Jerman, General Secretary of the Cambrians, looked startled when he heard this and said 'Anywhere near Bletchley Park? Can't talk about it, you understand, but keep your eyes and ears open – it will come out some day.' Eventually it did come out, and Sue and I became founder Trustees of Bletchley Park Trust and gave over a thousand lectures and tours of the place. In 2003, we were pleased to welcome the Cambrians, several of whom had been involved there during the war. At the same meeting, the Cambrians also visited a hammer-beam roofed hall of 1476, the restoration of which Sue and I had been involved with.



Harry Rees, CAA General Secretary in the 1970s and Stationmaster at Aberystwyth, encouraged me in my interest in the archaeology of railways. I was involved in a small way in the monumental restoration of the Ffestiniog Railway, during which Noel Jerman offered very useful advice about the Parliamentary powers of the Railway Company dating to 1832. That project has been a great

success, attracting some 200,000 visitors a year. I have a full-length picture of myself in a top hat at Tan y Bwlch Station and another in railway overalls peering out of a locomotive cab in Caernarfon.

Membership of the Cambrians has given me friends and an abundance of memories and stories from past great archaeologists of Wales - I heard tales of conservation at Conwy, about the wartime work of Raleigh Radford, Oswin Craster and Arnold Taylor, about David Cathcart King saving the Roman ruins in Libya. Since retiring in 1992, I have kept up my interest in archaeology and have spent much of the last twenty years writing pamphlets and platelaying; by the age of 75 I was a lot fitter than I had been at 60! Sue, who had loved being a Cambrian, sadly died in 2019 but I continue to participate. The Cambrians have been a rich source of interest and, in my archaeological endeavours, of unstinting help – if members cannot help me with a question themselves, they always know somebody who can.

## The Meetings of the Association

*The aspect of the Cambrians best known to members and probably the oldest of our activities is that of our meetings. Summer meetings go back to the very foundation of the Association, while the shorter Autumn annual meetings and biennial spring conferences are more recent additions. Here, a long-standing loyal member, Jeremy Knight, thinks back to past meetings and how valuable they have been to him through his life and career.*



## **'Out with the Cambrians': The Summer Meetings    by Jeremy Knight**

'I think it's time you joined the Cambrians'. These words, from the devoted Cambrian Cefni Barnett, Director of Newport Museum, heralded the start of an enjoyable journey over many years. If Osbert Sitwell was 'educated in the holidays from Eton', as someone involved with Welsh field monuments for much of his life, I can claim to have received an education in Cambrians' coaches at their summer meetings. My title is taken from Evelyn Lewes's book of 1934. Her first Cambrians' meeting was in 1906.

The 'bearded, spectacled long-coated, clerical-hatted elderly and most learned looking persons' were at first glance intimidating, but she soon found plenty of friendly younger faces. She was relieved when, after a few years, the horse-drawn wagonettes, whose discomforts she vividly describes, were replaced by 'comfortable motor charabancs'.

Our first Summer Meeting was at Aberystwyth in 1847. Apart from visits to such Marcher outposts as Ludlow or Hereford, our ventures outside Wales were to the Isle of Man (1865, 1929); Brittany (1889, 1924), Ireland (Kerry 1891, Galway 1934) and Scotland (1899). In Kerry, one of the smaller vessels of the Royal Navy was put at our disposal to visit some island monastic remains. The Captain initially refused to take women aboard, but, faced with formidably indignant Cambrian ladies on the quayside, backed down. At this time, private cars were rare. Travel to our meetings depended on the rail network. When Sir John Rhys published a newly discovered inscription, he often gave the nearest railway station, much as we might give a grid reference.

After the war, the Cambrians flourished. Coaches were divided between Parties A (more strenuous archaeology), B (less strenuous houses and churches) and, briefly, C (industrial archaeology). People one knew only from their publications became good friends, through the site visits, conversations on coaches and often by sitting late into the night, glasses in hand, as Peter Grimes reminisced about Sutton Hoo or J.D.K. Lloyd told stories of Montgomery. David Cathcart King, 'King of the castles', survived an active war unscathed, winning a Military Cross in the process, only to lose a leg in a road accident on V.E. Night. He brought his model siege engines to summer meetings. A crossbow bolt came through my open window one morning. I looked out - 'Good Morning Jeremy'.



*Jeremy expounds upon a cannon at Fishguard Fort at the 2019 Summer Meeting*

Younger Cambrians, archaeologists of the future, benefitted enormously from the knowledge bequeathed by older scholars; and seeing them in more frivolous and relaxed surroundings did no harm at all. On one memorable occasion, they found their distinguished elders barricaded at each end of the hall, bombarding each other with the leftovers from an earlier reception through miniature trebuchets. King produced mock medieval documents from the University of Shepton Mallet (then a military prison) featuring the supposed exploits of Cambrians. Lily Chitty, the prehistorian, always travelled with a veritable library, uncomplainingly carried by younger Cambrians 'The youths who carry the Abbess of Pontesbury's baggage'. Lal's encyclopaedic knowledge was the dread of museum curators on Cambrian visits, as she demanded to see some obscure prehistoric artefact. I still associate many places with Cambrian visits- a youthful Nancy Edwards making her Cambrian debut at Maen Achwyfan or Josiah Jones Davies, already a sick man, waving us off from his church at Llywel, with its collection of early inscribed stones, to which he had made a notable addition.

## **Cambrian Archaeological Conferences**

*The Spring conferences of the Association were initiated in 1952, to ensure that the Association contributed to scholarship and debate in a more formal setting than the summer meetings allowed. Initially held annually, from 1956 biennially, the conferences offered widely ranging subject matter often particularly relevant to the needs of the time. The first was 'The Archaeology of South East Wales'.*



*Selecting just a few, one might mention the 1968 'The Irish Sea Province in Archaeology and History' in Aberystwyth - (the first one I attended as a schoolgirl; I recall my formidable great aunt Anne introducing me to Leslie Alcock) – of such importance that the proceedings were published. The 1976 conference on 'The Slate Industry of North Wales and its associated Land and Sea Transport' is recognised today as particularly noteworthy, as the area has now been nominated as a World Heritage Site. Then in 2004 'Wales and the World' looked at World Heritage Sites in Wales, held at Llangollen within the Pontcysyllte world heritage site.*

*We anticipate with pleasure the conferences and day schools planned for the future. In Autumn 2021 we visit Llangollen to celebrate our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary by examining the role of the CAA and Arch Camb in promoting the illustration of archaeological sites, while joint meetings with the Society of Antiquaries of London, the Prehistoric Society, and the newly instituted Darganfod day schools will extend the reach of the CAA into research and the dissemination of new scholarship including that of young emerging professionals.*

*The contribution that our conferences make to scholarship and the uniting of the activities of the amateur scholar and the professional is here articulated by our past president, David Austin.*



## **The Conferences of the Cambrians**

**by David Austin**

When I first came to Wales as a young archaeologist in 1976, I immediately joined the Cambrian Archaeological Association, the premier organisation dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and ideas about the

heritage of Wales. I was, at that time, largely ignorant of the scholarship which our society has represented and promoted over the last 175 years. Familiar enough with the castles and the other monuments of Wales, I remained largely unaware of how the Welsh historic landscape had evolved, and found that the upland valleys of central Wales, where I had come to live and teach, appeared lacking in the local historical scholarship and field archaeology on which I had cut my teeth in England.

I can remember vividly, therefore, the first of the CAA conferences I was involved in when in 1984 I was approached by Donald Moore, a distinctive man of immense presence and deep knowledge, who asked me to help organise the 1985 CAA Easter conference at Lampeter on the 'Welsh Archaeological Heritage'. With the creation of Cadw in 1984 and maturity of the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts founded some ten years previously, it was felt to be an opportune moment to review where we were as a collective of practising professionals. A wide array of organisations was present, describing their roles and the issues facing them, and it was impressive. I met many new colleagues – one of the important aspects of these conferences, especially for young scholars.

Only in hindsight now, do I realise that the place of local amateur societies, the CBA, even the CAA itself with its distinguished history of scholarship, was disregarded. Archaeology was increasingly becoming professionalised in the 1970s as the institutions and practices of a new field archaeology and heritage management were established. This came at a price - those cohorts of amateur diggers giving their time and immense expertise on excavations in the later 1960s were largely gone by the 1980s. I recall around that time travelling to Prague and hearing young Central European archaeologists tell me how lucky I was to be researching in a country with centuries-long traditions of amateurs studying their localities, architectures, documents, lifeways and landscapes, holistically and seamlessly.



*The Historic Woodland and Parkland in Wales, Conference April 2016, my Presidential year. Cambrians visited Piercefield where we went up to the Eagle's Nest to look down over the meanders of the River Wye, a small sample of the 6 miles of picturesque walks available there.*

The importance of maintaining that spirit of enthusiastic amateur research cannot be overstated and in 2006, the Association, recognising this, organised a Spring conference to look at the future of the many local history societies with which we are linked. Every time I attend a Cambrians' Meeting, I feel, with relief, the ancient hwyl. It was, indeed, at our most recent conference, one of the new joint meetings with other societies, held in Cardiff in October 2019 with the Society for Landscape Studies, on 'Recent Work on Landscape History in Wales', that I experienced the joy of finding the old spirit alive and kicking. It was, as CAA conferences always are, an immensely stimulating and challenging day with a large range of new research initiatives, methodologies and historical insights. Such occasions are vital to scholars who can hear of what is going on long before publication; and the new CAA Darganfod day schools, the first of which will be held this year, will be instrumental in continuing to promote the dissemination of new research.

A final personal memory is of Philip Nanney Williams giving, in the 2019 Cardiff conference, a joyous account, a pilgrimage through the marvels and history of his ancestral Nannau

estate near Dolgellau. His was the excited, breathless and enthusiastic voice of the unalloyed amateur, the true lover of his *bro*. So, yes, for me, these conferences will continue to give us access to the best of Welsh professional scholarship, but in combination with the ancient traditions of our antiquarian society, amateur and professional together. What a pleasure – Diolch o galon i Cymdeithas Hynafiaethau Cymru.

## The Association's Journal, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*

*The journal of the Association, published annually, digitally and in hard copy, and sent to all members and many learned institutions and libraries across the world, is rightly regarded as the foremost source of archaeological scholarship for Wales and the Marches. It is constantly used by scholars and students and is a source of pride to the Association. A distinguished Welsh scholar and past president, Nancy Edwards, describes the importance of the journal for the study of the past of Wales.*



### **Archaeologia Cambrensis** by Nancy Edwards

*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, the journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association, is the leading journal covering all aspects of the archaeology and material culture of Wales from prehistory onwards. The journal is key, both for researchers and those with a broader interest in the archaeology and history of Wales.

The journal is published annually. Fully refereed, it has a wide range of well-informed and well-illustrated articles that keep me up-to-date on important research and excavations projects in different parts of

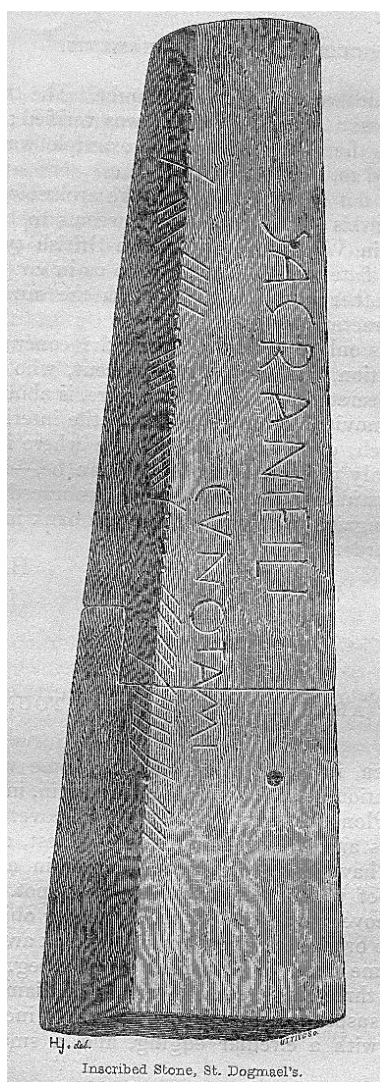
*Photo: Crown copyright RCAHMMW*

Wales, many of which fall well outside my own areas of research and expertise.

Furthermore, as *Archaeologia Cambrensis* has been published annually since 1846, it comprises a valuable archive covering all sorts of discoveries in Welsh archaeology, as well as important developments in how archaeological evidence has been interpreted and the heritage of Wales perceived over the past 175 years. Indeed, it is still going strong! Articles in past volumes together with indexes are now available for free via the Archaeology Data Service and the National Library of Wales journals online.

Since my primary interest is in the archaeology of the early Middle Ages in Britain and Ireland (c. 400–1100CE), I have used the *Archaeologia Cambrensis* archive as a key resource in my research and publications on the early medieval inscribed stones and stone sculpture of Wales. Using the index, I could discover where and how each monument had been found, sometimes by whom, and where it was moved to as well as different interpretations of inscriptions and other ornament.





In the nineteenth century, articles on a great variety of subjects from prehistoric burial chambers to late medieval houses were often illustrated by wood-cuts, such as the St Dogmael's Inscribed stone (left). The later specially-commissioned line-drawings of early medieval stones are in themselves a valuable record, which assisted me in building up full 'monument biographies' of the inscribed stones on which I was working, some of which I discussed in my recent Presidential Address to the Cambrians published in Volume 169 (2020) of the journal.

I have also used the early volumes of *Archaeologia Cambrensis* in my research on the history of archaeology and, in particular, to unravel attitudes to the adoption of the 'Three Age System' and why it took so long for the time-depth of prehistory to be accepted in Wales. It was particularly interesting to see who was on which side of what was a very lively debate played out in the pages of the journal and at the annual Summer Meetings, though I regret to say that (a telling feature of the period) those who spoke at these early meetings were almost exclusively men!

## Cambrian Archaeological Association Research Awards

*Many archaeologists and archaeological projects in Wales have been supported by the programme of research grants awarded annually over a wide range of subjects and specialist interests. Trustees scrutinise applications at our November meeting and awards are made on the basis of merit. The increase in demand for these grants over the last few years has been noticeable as government and universities face increasing financial challenges, but the Association is known for its capacity to grant aid projects undertaken by amateurs or those that would fall outside the normal parameters of institutional grant aid. Many of these, indeed, would not have happened at all without the support of the Association. We have picked three very different project recipients to give a flavour of these awards and their importance.*





## Archaeology at Moel-y-Gaer hillfort, Bodfari, Denbighshire

by Gary Lock

The Clwydian Range in North Wales provides a spectacular upland landscape that contains a series of well-preserved hillforts. Other than two or three small-scale excavations, these

have been little studied and are poorly understood, save for the pioneering work of the *Heather and Hillforts Project* run by Denbighshire County Council. The importance of hillforts is central to the understanding of the later prehistoric settlements of north Wales and it was through the generous support of the Cambrians that the work at Moel-y-Gaer Bodfari was able to enhance the existing record.

Bodfari is a small enclosure of c. 2ha with up to three ramparts in places, best preserved along the western side. In 2011 we employed a series of geophysical techniques which, together with enhanced LiDAR data, enabled us to model the surface and sub-surface features in detail. Based on these results, excavation targeted a single roundhouse together with ramparts and two entrances on the west and north. One conclusion of importance is that the enclosure is of two phases. The first is univallate, when both entrances were in use, a configuration later replaced by multivallation, at which point the western entrance was closed off. The second phase has been radiocarbon dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, while post-excavation work continues on material representing the earlier phase for which, we hope, dates will be forthcoming. A trench through the phase 2 rampart revealed an outer and inner wall of dry-stone construction with the box-like structure filled with rubble dug from an external ditch. The rampart had been modified three times with alterations to the rear wall increasing its width. Both the northern and western entrances showed evidence of the ramparts being inturned to create entrance passages, the western one having a possible stone-built guard chamber.

The number of finds has been minimal; only two stone spindle whorls have been uncovered, which, together with only a single roundhouse, makes the interpretation of the use of this hillfort difficult. Even so, the detail produced for the ramparts and entrances, together with the phasing and dating, make this excavation an important contribution to the understanding of these enigmatic monuments that continue to fascinate archaeologists and the public alike.



We were very keen to involve volunteers in the excavations and many hundreds worked on the site over the years receiving training in excavation techniques and an introduction to prehistory. These included local people as well as others from within the UK and abroad, many of whom were visiting north Wales for the first time. With the help of Fiona Gale, the then County Archaeologist for Denbighshire and a Trustee of the Cambrians, many others visited the site on open days. The project also enjoyed the collaboration of two artists in residence who worked alongside the diggers, creating much interest. Their final artwork was exhibited as *'Rhych'* in 2018, at the gallery Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the Cambrians and the final report will appear in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* for 2022. Interim reports are available at <http://projects.arch.ox.ac.uk/bodfari.html>

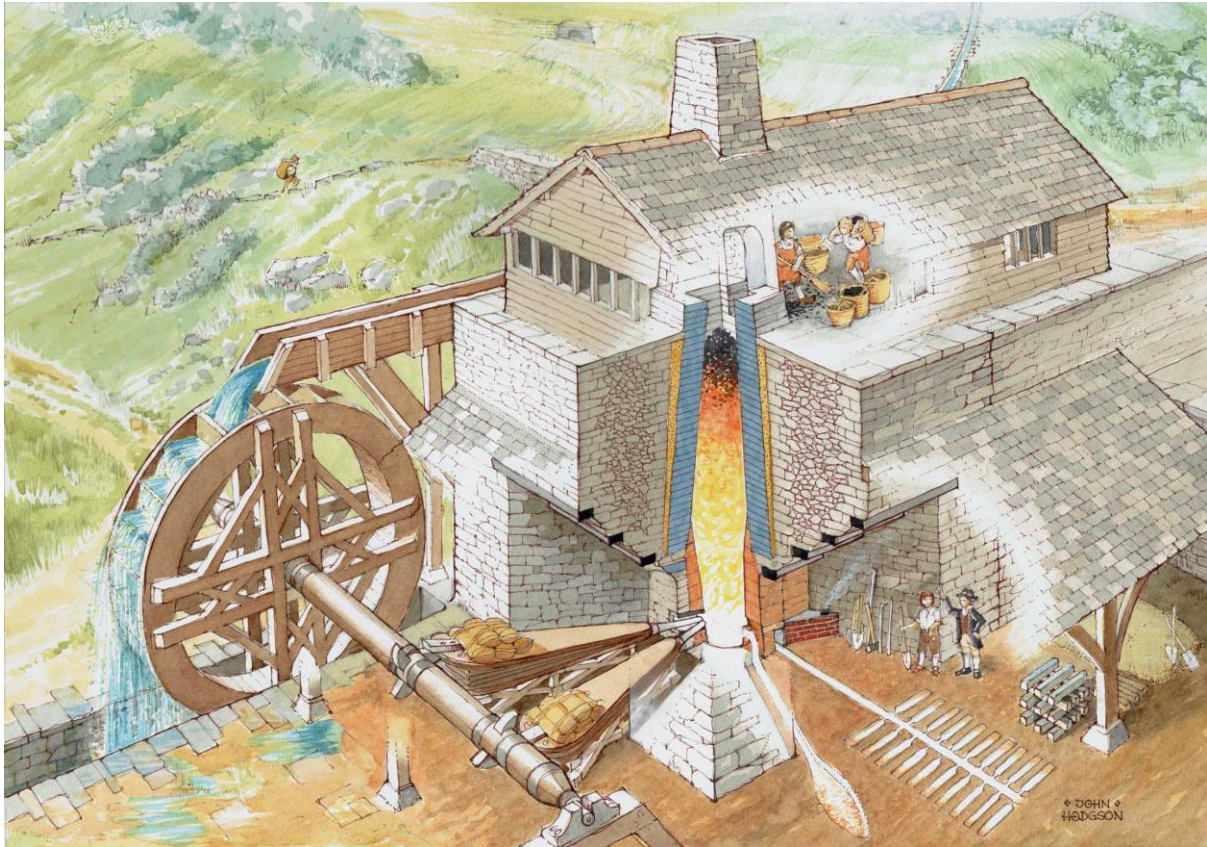
## **Dolgun Blast Furnace      by Peter Crew**



The early 18<sup>th</sup> century Dolgun blast furnace, located east of Dolgellau, was planned by Abraham Darby and managed for much of its life by John Kelsall, the well-known Quaker preacher. Kelsall's diaries provide a great deal of information about the operation of the site and the people involved. Excavations in the early 1980's by a team from Plas Tan y Bwlch showed the furnace to be particularly well preserved and it was consolidated and managed by the Snowdonia National Park until 2007.



March 21st 2019 was the 300th anniversary of this furnace being blown-in. This provided the stimulus for a new project to excavate more of the site to recover details of the hearth, to re-consolidate and to interpret the site. Two key aspects of the project, both kindly funded by the Cambrian Archaeological Association, were a series of drone photographs taken by Mark Walters of SkyWest Surveys used for interpretation drawings prepared by John Hodgson.



*Dolgun perspective drawing. The covering roofs over the bellows and tapping area, and the zone above the furnace pillar, are cut-away to show other detail. This drawing shows a theoretical reconstruction of the charging house as a timber-framed structure with workers feeding baskets of charcoal and ore. Charcoal and ore would have been stored in separate buildings. The water supply came from higher up the Afon Clywedog, via a leat.*

On the drawing, the core of the furnace is based closely on the archaeological evidence from the excavations, but there are many aspects of the furnace without direct evidence, which have had to be represented in as careful a way as possible. This required a great deal of research, as some details of early 18th century furnaces are not always clearly defined or well known. Various elements of the reconstruction are potentially controversial, some deliberately so, and will require discussion in the final report, which may generate some debate. There were two main objectives in preparing the drawing: firstly, to try to show the unique details of the complex three-dimensional structure, with the circular sandstone lining of the hearth and the square upper lining of slate blocks sitting on a step in the volcanic casing; and, secondly, to give an impression of how the furnace worked. This inevitably led to some compromises. In the latter case it was decided to compress all the stages of the process onto one drawing, so the furnace is shown with the wheel and bellows in operation and a cut-way shows the internal detail of the structure, the furnace with a full charge of ore and charcoal, getting progressively hotter as it descends through the stack, and with both the slag and iron being tapped.



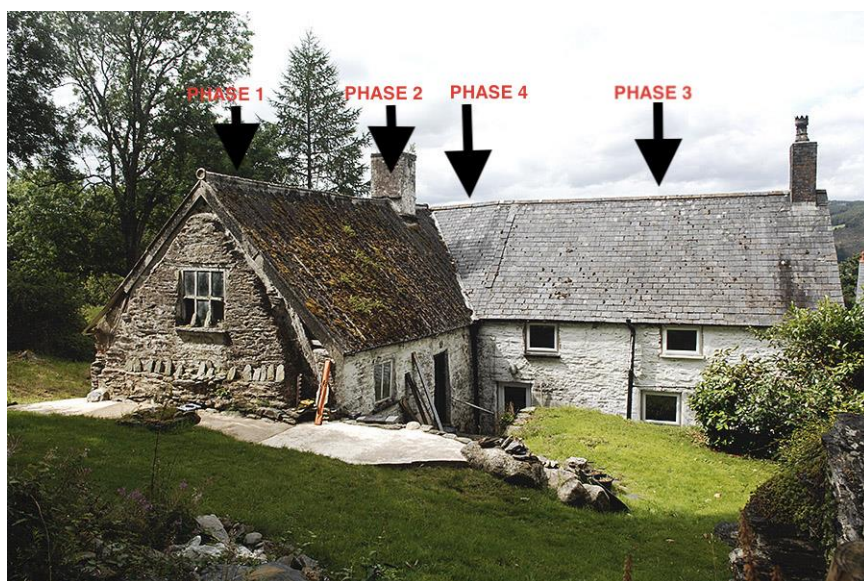
## Discovering Old Welsh Houses by Margaret Dunn



The Discovering Old Welsh Houses group (DOWH) has been a very grateful recipient of the Cambrians' research grants over a number of years. These grants have played an important role, often as match funding, in enabling DOWH, a relatively small heritage charity, to continue to research the dates of building phases in key pre-1700 houses as well as undertaking architectural surveys and house histories. The research started in Snowdonia around 2004 and has now extended across the counties of north Wales. DOWH's vision is of 'celebrating Welsh Heritage through the study of traditional houses and the lives of the people who lived in them'. This includes giving talks to many county and local organisations on our wide-ranging research, and receiving support and local knowledge of unrecorded houses leading to the involvement of

volunteers, especially in researching many house histories. There are now over 200 members and the six county branches hold meetings and arrange visits across their areas. The DOWH quarterly newsletters give details of all current activities, while the website [www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk](http://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk) contains all reports and much else for those who are interested.

The use of this inter-disciplinary approach has enabled DOWH to use dendrochronology to ascertain the felling dates of suitable original timbers and thus greatly increase knowledge and understanding about the architectural development of some of the earliest surviving north Wales houses through time and geographical location. Environmental evidence has shown that, along the coastal strip and several major river valleys, many early cruck-framed hall-houses and their successors were built using fast-grown timber that could not be dated with current technology, whilst more success in dating timbers was achieved in remote upland inland areas. Pre-1500 houses have been identified in Beaumaris and Conwy as well as in very rural locations.



DOWH research has shown that fully storied houses emerged much earlier than previously thought, with tree felling dates from 1516/17, although hall-houses continued to be built beyond the 1550s, when those of a higher status started building in the Renaissance style. In one outstanding example near Llandrillo, Corwen, four phases of one house were dated (see image) giving an incredibly detailed phasing history. A timber-walled, cruck-framed peasant downward-sloping open hall-house was erected in 1502/3 (phase 1); in 1587-87 a fireplace was inserted within the hall (2). In 1682/3 a fashionable parlour wing was added across the contour abutting the service end of the old house (3); then, in 1794, the services were replaced with a fully storeyed stone-built range. Prior to the extensive research by DOWH it was impossible to obtain such detailed information.

DOWH was pleased to be able to give the CAA Welsh lecture at the Llanrwst Eisteddfod in 2019. Fortunately, DOWH had planned to concentrate in 2020 – 21 on refining the collation of the digital records of each house so far visited, and for branch members to undertake mainly online parish by parish identification of pre-1700 houses. Both these projects will enable priorities for further research to be identified for post Covid-19 studies.

## **Blodwen Jerman Prizes**

*The Cambrians sponsor two prizes for archaeological or historical projects on Welsh topics, one for schools, organised by the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative for primary schools, and one for university undergraduate or masters' dissertations. The prizes were established in 1980 in memory of the former long-standing and devoted officer of the Cambrians, Blodwen Jerman. One recent recipient of each of these prizes describes their work and the difference the award made to them.*



**Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative Prize** by  
**Wendy Raymond** (Pennaeth/ Head teacher, Ysgol  
Casblaidd /Wolfscastle, Pembrokeshire)

Ysgol Casblaidd in Wolfscastle is blessed to be situated in a community which is rich with local and national heritage. The history of our area has always been included in our teaching and learning. The many tales and treasures range from the local legend of Sara Bevan, who foresaw the first train coming through Treffgarne gorge some one hundred years before Isambard Kingdom Brunel had even visited the area, to being the sanctuary of Owain Glyndwr after his last battle. It is the birth place of the eminent Victorian chess player and inventor of the “gambit move” Captain William Davies Evans, and Joseph Harries known as Gomer, the famous Welsh hymn writer.

I will always be indebted to local historian Martin Roberts for introducing me to the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative competition. Martin was aware of how proud we are as a school of the unique history we have on our doorstep, and helped me as an educator to develop detective skills in my pupils when studying old maps, photographs, buildings and much more.



Our successes in the competition with local projects on 'The 3 Rs of Wolfscastle' (Road, Rock and Rail) and St Dogwells' church (above, during the Cambrians' visit in 2019) gave us, as a school, an even greater buzz in our history projects. We have so much we can contribute to the competition just in our tiny village. Whilst the financial rewards of the competition are fantastic for a small school such as ours, the national prestige to be classed as winners of the Blodwen Jerman Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative award, which your Association kindly sponsors, has given the whole school community a boost and an even greater pride in our special little school. We are indebted to the generosity of your organisation for your support and encouragement for schools to instil an interest and excitement in the history that is all around us.



I was fortunate, together with some of my pupils, to meet the members of the Cambrian Archaeological Association in Wolfscastle during your 2019 Summer meeting, when we were invited to share our experiences of the competition. It was great to be able to thank you all in person for your generosity in sponsoring the award, which now we have been successful in winning for two consecutive years. The

children enjoyed demonstrating their knowledge of our local history with fellow history enthusiasts, and were very much up to the task of discussing the historical evidence they had found in their studies. It was a wonderful evening that they and I will always remember.



On behalf of Ysgol Casblaidd I congratulate you as an association on reaching a marvellous milestone of 175 years. May your excellent work of keeping history alive and interesting to your present and future members continue for many years to come. Estynaf ein dymuniadau gorau i chi fel cymdeithas ar yr achlysur pwysig ac arbennig hwn. Diolch yn fawr am eich cefnogaeth brwd i waith ysgolion Cymru wrth i ni agor llygaid ein disgyblion i'r hanes sydd o'u cwmpas.

## **The Blodwen Jerman University Prize    by Tudur Davies**



My membership of the Cambrian Archaeological Association (CAA) began in 2007 when I won the Blodwen Jerman University Prize for my Masters dissertation, obtained from the University of Sheffield, examining early medieval settlement in Llanfor, north Wales. Part of this prize included three years of membership of the Association, which was extremely useful at the time, given my status as a part-time PhD student, continuing my research into the early medieval period in Wales. With hindsight, I can now also see the long-term benefits of this prize for my personal development as an archaeologist and academic. On gaining this prize I gained increased faith in my abilities, providing a degree of

credibility in my own eyes to interact confidently with senior peers at conferences and other academic events. I have since discussed this with other Blodwen Jerman prize winners who have shared similar experiences, demonstrating the value of this prize in encouraging early career scholars in their ventures into academia and the promotion of the study of Welsh archaeology.

After winning the dissertation prize I have been fortunate to gain further support from the CAA during the course of my PhD and ongoing research. This has included funding for fieldwork expenses during my PhD and radiocarbon dating of material retrieved from archaeological excavation and environmental samples from a number of projects. The support received from the CAA has been invaluable in the successful completion of my doctoral research and providing information in support of a successful bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for my post-doctoral research on the *Manifestations of Empire* project.

The CAA has made an invaluable contribution in support of both my research and career development. My gratitude to the Association is what inspired my decision to apply for one of the vacant Trustee positions in 2020. I am now very happy to be able to repay the generous assistance given to me over the years by contributing to the Association as a Trustee. I hope that the experience I have gained whilst receiving support from the CAA will now be of benefit to the Association, its members and those whose research it encourages and supports.

## The Cambrians' National Eisteddfod Lecture

*For many years the Cambrians have organised a lecture on a subject of Welsh archaeology or history to be delivered in Welsh at the National Eisteddfod. The lectures, benefitting from English subtitles, are available to all visitors to the Maes and are well attended as a standard feature of the Eisteddfod. Professor Prys Morgan, a past president and one who has done much to support this lecture series, gives a personal account of the history of this tradition.*



### **The Cambrians and the National Eisteddfod of Wales by Prys Morgan**

Although the twin founders of the Cambrians in 1847, Henry Longueville Jones and John Willams 'Ab Ithel' were both deeply concerned for the Welsh language and, indeed, Ab Ithel was a leading light of the National Eisteddfod, over a hundred years passed before the General Committee of the Cambrians inaugurated in 1953 a series of lectures to be delivered in Welsh at the Eisteddfod. However, after only nine lectures, there was a long hiatus until 1992, when the programme restarted; with one or two gaps, including the plague-ridden 2020, when the Tregaron Eisteddfod was postponed, the tradition has continued until the present day.

The opening talk was by the rural anthropologist Alwyn D. Rees on the importance of folklore; the following year the geographer E. G. Bowen spoke on the Celtic saints in Wales, while in 1955 Donald Moore put the Cambrian Archaeological Association into the context of similar learned societies of the nineteenth century. There followed lectures by Glanmor Williams on the Welsh Church before the Reformation, J. Beverley Smith on the Lordship of Glamorgan, Emyr Gwynne Jones on the manuscripts of Plas Newydd and Trefor Owen on the importance of peat cutting in Welsh rural life and culture. In 1961 Mostyn Lewis lectured on stained glass in Welsh churches at a time when illustrated talks were a rarity on the Maes. The last in this series was in 1963, given by R. Geraint Gruffydd on the secret press of Catholic recusants in a cave on the Little Orme.

Almost thirty years later at Aberystwyth in 1992, Donald Moore asked me to give a talk on Iolo Morganwg, builder and architect, assuring me that there would be facility for illustration as he himself was in charge of the very fine Arts and Crafts Pavilion. Thus, the Eisteddfod lectures were relaunched; there followed in 1994 Morfydd Owen on folk music (the venue was a stone's throw from Aberpergwm, home of Maria Jane Williams) and continued with such luminaries as Muriel Bowen Evans on local history and J. Wyn Evans (twice) on pre-Norman St David's in 2002 and the early church in Carmarthenshire in 2014.

The subjects of the Eisteddfod lectures continued to range widely, revealing the huge variety of interests embraced by the Cambrians – the ancient boats of Newport by Owain Roberts in 2004,



David Gwyn on slate quarrying in 2005 (left), the present writer in 2006 on a local snakestone and its folklore, the importance of Roman Britain in Welsh literature by Ceri Davies in 2010, Nia Powell in 2011 on early modern Wrexham and Ffion Reynolds on Tinkinswood and St Lythan's Neolithic burial chambers in 2012, to mention but a few.

More recently topics have ranged from recruitment in Wales for the Great War to the industrial archaeology of Gwent, from Anglesey placenames to the ancient houses of Snowdonia. In 2018, along with Nia Powell, I gave a lecture on our kinsman Morgan Watkin, a secret agent and the link between Lloyd George and Lenin. As a speaker and occasional chairman, I have been intimately connected with the lecture series in recent years and can vouch for its popularity, now a fixture on the

Eisteddfod calendar and attended by many visitors to the Maes.

## The Cambrians Award of the GT Clark prize

*Every five years the Cambrians award the GT Clark Prize to archaeologists and historians judged to have produced the most important works of scholarship on Welsh subjects in the previous quinquennium. Two distinguished prize winners of recent years were asked to talk about their very different areas of work.*



### G.T. Clark Prizewinner for Prehistory 2017

**by Elizabeth A. Walker**

Wales has a wealth of natural caves, many of which were used by people in various ways throughout prehistory. During his lifetime G.T. Clark (1809–1898) would have seen Palaeolithic archaeology emerge from its roots in geology and, throughout the nineteenth century, advances were made in the understanding of the antiquity

of the first people to use these caves and of the natural cycle of the Ice Ages and their impact on



past landscape and environment. Welsh caves continued to be studied throughout the twentieth century and important papers were published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, including, notably, the work in the Caldey Island caves by Brother James van Nédervelde. Hubert Savory's work in Hoyle's Mouth Cave, Pembrokeshire, followed; later in that decade Stephen Aldhouse-Green commenced his important Palaeolithic Settlement of Wales project, which included the discovery of our first Neanderthal remains in Wales in Pontnewydd Cave, Denbighshire.

I was fortunate enough to be taken on as a volunteer by Stephen Aldhouse-Green at the National Museum of Wales during my vacations while studying as an undergraduate. Stephen introduced me

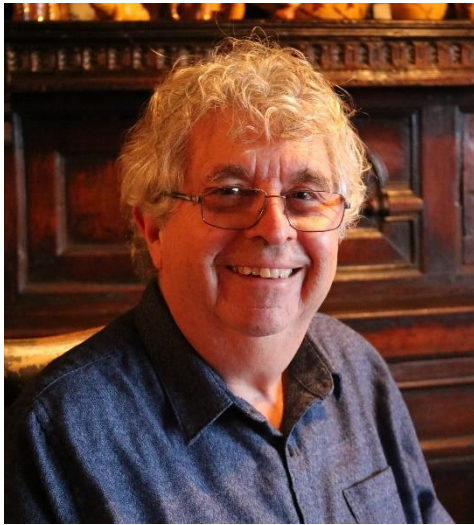


to the stone tool assemblage from Pontnewydd that has become such a feature in my career. The following spring saw me digging for Stephen in Hoyle's Mouth Cave. After graduating, I was appointed to a permanent position in the Museum, since when I have taken every opportunity to develop, research and publish papers about the collections.

This research has involved working with others, particularly with Stephen on both the excavations and the publication of the work at Pontnewydd Cave and digging at Hoyle's Mouth; I am currently working on the final publication for this. I have also directed my own excavations in Cathole Cave, Gower as well as on the early Mesolithic campsite on Burry Holms, Gower, (image on left), the report of which is now complete. Our Welsh museums hold a wealth of material recovered from caves and sites of all periods of archaeology, yet all too often research starts from the premise that new excavation is required. This is not always the case and museum collections hold considerable potential to

release new data about the past. Much of my research has sought to use such collections. By visiting museums and recording their holdings I have brought together all the finds of Palaeolithic age from south-east Wales published in a volume in memory of the late Roger Jacobi. Similarly, I have drawn together all the Mesolithic finds from Gwent and those of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic for the Pembrokeshire County History.

The G.T. Clark award was given to me by the Cambrian Archaeological Association for my contribution to Welsh Palaeolithic research and I have been able to use it to help my continuing research on this and Mesolithic lithic collections. In these Covid-19 days having a good private library containing all the core publications for my discipline has been a boon and the books I have purchased with this prize have come into their own, contributing to the completion of the Burry Holms report and to progress on the Hoyle's Mouth Cave publication. Being awarded this prestigious award has also been a confidence booster; the surprise of being selected as a recipient has encouraged me to continue to promote the important collections in our Welsh museums and ensure that one of G.T. Clark's maxims, to promote education and learning, continues both through my own work and in my support of others.



## Historical Welsh Furniture by Richard Bebb

The 2012 award of the GT Clark prize for my *Welsh Furniture 1250-1950: A Cultural History of Craftsmanship and Design* was an unexpected but satisfying event. Around thirty years previously, I had acquired an almost complete run of *Archaeologica Cambrensis* and the contents had given me the confidence to embark on my project.

I had initially intended writing about Welsh furniture from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the period in which everyone acknowledges a distinct tradition, with terms such as *cwprwdd tridarn* and *coffor bach* being universally recognised by scholars and collectors and the term “Welsh

dresser” being so familiar that it has been used by manufacturers for more than a century.

Since this furniture was so distinctive, there had to be something which preceded it and certainly many of the earliest pieces known from the British Isles had a secure Welsh provenance. But the orthodoxy in furniture history circles was that nothing of note that could be called Welsh pre-dated this period. Anything of quality found in Wales from an earlier date had to have been made in England (or France); and if it could be proved to have been made in Wales, for example by the type of timber, then it was not as early as it appeared.

I believed that, if there was a way around this circular argument, it would lie in the way that Welsh history has been studied so intensively and from so many angles, and I knew that much of the material had appeared in the pages of *Archaeologica Cambrensis*.

Furniture scholars place great store on fixed woodwork as reference points. There was no more intensive study of fixtures than that by Fred Crossley and Maurice Ridgway of Welsh medieval church screenwork, which appeared between 1943 and 1962; further research by Anthony Parkinson on a group of Tudor domestic screens appeared in the 1975 and 1976 editions. I realised



that my quest could start with this and it was clear that the evidence of a medieval and Tudor tradition in Wales was at least as good as that for any other country or region. This gave me the confidence to widen my project to include earlier periods and I found plenty more supporting material in the journals, from Celtic crosses and Roman finds through to an account of Rhys ap Thomas's tournament of 1509.

When I received the award at the Bangor AGM, I joined the Association on their visit to Anglesey. The breadth of interest and knowledge of members is as great now as in the past. One of my projects was

dating the buttoned clothing found on an early Tudor cupboard from the Welsh Marches and I was reluctant to accept the opinion of costume historians that, since buttons were not commonplace in England until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, they could not have appeared on Welsh carving at an earlier date. But at one of the site visits – Llangadwaladr church – a member pointed out a stained-glass window of circa 1490, with a figure wearing a buttoned tunic.

I had attempted a history of Welsh furniture from the point of view of material culture and cultural history, rather than the history of the decorative arts, and this recognition from the CAA encouraged me to believe that I had, in some measure, succeeded

## **Celtic Connections: The Cambrians Abroad**

*The Cambrians have always sought to nurture relations with the people of Celtic countries overseas who share many aspects of our archaeology and culture. Ireland has, from the beginning, been a favoured area for meetings and research, but relations with Scotland, Cornwall, Isle of Man and Brittany have not been forgotten.*



### **Cambrians in Ireland – Minding one's Ps and Qs by Rory O'Farrell**

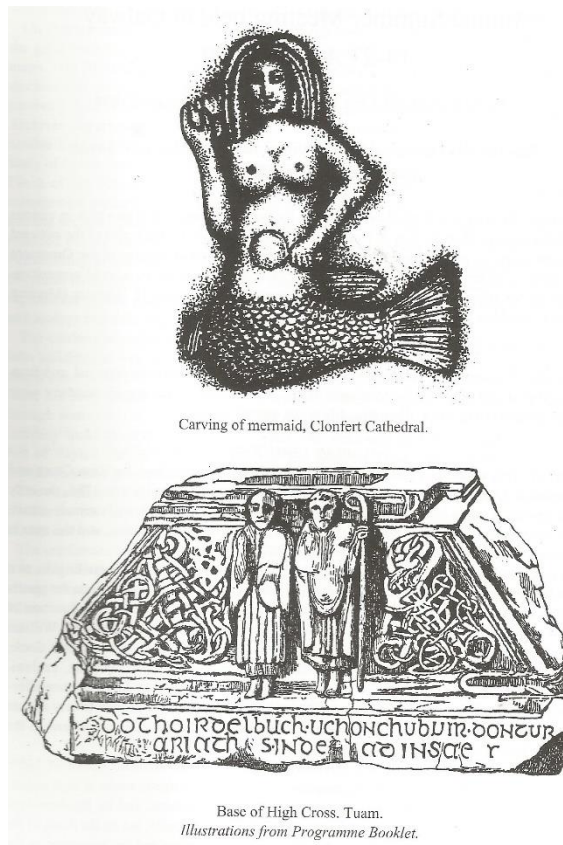
The Welsh tongue is a development of P-Celtic, and Irish comes from the Q-Celtic version. In spite of these linguistic differences, the common Celtic background and the overlapping Early Christian links of Wales and Ireland make for stimulating academic

comparisons and contrasts; the Celtic blood acts as a common bond, giving rise to ready acceptance and assimilation of Irish members into the Cambrian family, where many close friendships have grown over the years. The academic background of the Association notwithstanding, for us the social milieu of a Cambrian meeting was and is fully as important. Regrettably, many of the senior members who made us so welcome and so involved us have now passed on.

At the time a Council member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, I joined the Irish contingent at the summer excursion of 1984 in Anglesey to which RSAI members had been invited; President of both the CAA and the RSAI that year was Henry Wheeler. Press-ganged by David Francis into stewarding – my memory is that there were six coaches and over two hundred participants – I so enjoyed the excursion that I joined the CAA and have been an active member ever since.



As the Cambrians had not visited Ireland since 1961, members were anxious for another visit, so Henry, his daughter Debby, Hilary Field (all long-time Cambrians), and I organised a visit to the Leinster (eastern province) area in 1988, greatly aided by Henry's encyclopaedic knowledge of Irish antiquity. The projected CAA 1991 Spring Excursion became doubtful due to the illness of the organiser; at short notice we put together a replacement meeting based in Wexford, visiting sites



with connections to the Anglo (recte Cambro?) Norman invasion of the late 12th century. Having visited the eastern portion of the country, we next organised a visit to the Irish midlands area in 1994, based near Portlaoise. By popular demand we were requested to organise a visit to the west of Ireland in 1999, including the Aran Islands, Clonfert and Tuam (see images on left); the President for that year had to be Professor Etienne Rynne, a long-time member, also a resident of the area; members on that excursion will recollect his enthusiasm and his detailed knowledge of history and sites.

It was said of the Congress of Vienna "the congress does not move forward, it dances [to a conclusion]". It may equally be said that, when organising the various Cambrian meetings, we lunched our way to conclusions; we met on many Saturdays for lunch in our favourite restaurant in Dublin, which by coincidence happened to be

Etienne's Dublin base. Our liking for French cuisine and ambiance was later to lead to the organisation of a well-attended and well-appreciated autumn excursion for the Association to the Paris area in 2007.

## Wales and Brittany: a personal view by Michael Jones



At the end of a presidency in which bad news has dominated the world, it gives me great pleasure to contribute to the celebration of our Association's 175 years. A major achievement is the continuing lively dialogue and scholarly

cooperation that characterises the Association, its members, journal and meetings.

It is as an historian of medieval Brittany, rather than of Wales, that my research has been focussed throughout my academic career, though how this came about remains something of a mystery. My parents adventurously took me on my only childhood holiday abroad in Dinard in 1949. Arriving by ferry from Southampton, the sight of Saint-Malo *intra muros* devastated by Allied bombing in World War II was all too evident. In other respects, however, Brittany seemed a land flowing with milk and honey compared with the drab post-war, rationed, English Midlands whence we had come. Local produce, butter for breakfast and real leather shoes (of which a pair was bought for me!), were luxuries unknown at home.

That experience must have made a lasting impression, such that, much later, when searching for a doctoral topic, Brittany came to mind. Following the publication of my thesis as *Ducal Brittany 1364-1399. Relations with England and France during the reign of Duke John IV*, my interest in the former duchy continued. This led to a string of publications whilst pursuing a university career first, briefly in Exeter, and then in Nottingham until retirement.



*Bienassis en Erquy, Côtes-d'Armor, from the east. A detailed inquiry of 1434 reveals that an earlier open, ground-floor timber hall on a moated platform was rebuilt in stone between 1414-1434 (Archives départementales des Côtes-d'Armor, 1 E 1529). This was later modified and extended to the west in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*Photograph: Bienassis, Erquy, Côtes-d'Armor, © Gwyn Meirion-Jones*

Since 1963 medieval Brittany has thus been my central intellectual concern, first its military and diplomatic history, but increasingly its development as a late medieval state with its own administration, institutions, and ideology within the greater kingdom of France. From the early 1980s, this expanded into social and cultural developments, notably as one of a small group of multidisciplinary specialists investigating the seigneurial residences (*manoirs* and *châteaux*) of a numerous nobility. This long-term project, initiated by Gwyn Meirion-Jones (President 2012), has led to over fifty substantial joint publications, papers as well as three collected volumes, much in French, with more envisaged. My principal role has been to bury my head in the archives, discovering documentary evidence relating to the buildings of interest, marrying the archival discoveries with archaeological and scientific evidence of other members of the team.

Over the years this partnership has not only worked productively, but our collaboration has brought about my main involvement in the life of CAA when, in 2013, we led a Summer Meeting to north-eastern Brittany. It is no longer just the megalithic monuments that claim our attention as they did in early CAA visits to the region. Intellectual enquiry has evolved, and an appreciation of its heritage greatly widened to include medieval and modern periods. To understand how Brittany has evolved

from antiquity to the present day we must not only analyse its Celtic past and links with other Celtic peoples - like the Welsh or Cornish - but how contact with Imperial Rome, the Franks, the Normans, and many others, has created a rich and diverse culture in a distinctive region of modern France.