



STRATA FLORIDA  
YSTRAD FFLUR

12th June to  
10th July 2023

# ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

Archaeological  
training for all!



StrataFloridaAFS



StrataFloridaAFS



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BENEFACT TRUST



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# ABOUT THE STRATA FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

Foreword by Prof. David Austin, SFAFS Academic Director



The Strata Florida Archaeology Field School gives you the opportunity to excavate at a site with centuries of history. The field school is run by the Strata Florida Trust and we are very grateful to the Benefact Trust to support this project.

**Come and join us for what will be another exciting year!**

The school will offer a fully accessible training programme to include a wide variety of archaeological excavation and survey techniques; from understanding how to correctly use a trowel through to the collection of geophysical data for archaeological mapping. In addition to field-based learning, the school will have a weekly programme of field trips to local sites and monuments and talks from experts on topics of local historical and archaeological interest.

**Our mission is to share Strata Florida's unique history, archaeology, heritage and links to Welsh culture, with as diverse an audience as possible, including members of the public, students, volunteers, veterans and others.**



The SFAFS will be delivered by the Strata Florida Trust in partnership with The Prince's Foundation, Benefact Trust, Sacred Landscapes Research Project and the University of Wales Trinity St David.

# STRATA FLORIDA

Strata Florida Abbey (Abaty Ystrad Fflur in Welsh) is a captivating, evocative and internationally significant site located in the heart of Wales. Known affectionally by some as the Westminster Abbey of Wales, it had its heyday in the 12th and 13th centuries and was once an important centre of culture, religion and trade, with connections spreading far across the Welsh landscape.

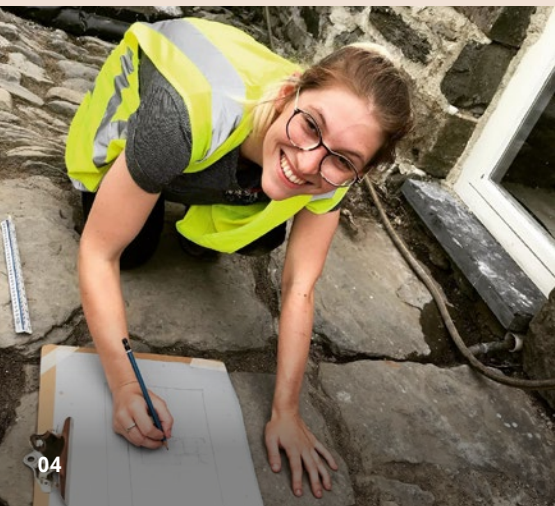
The Cistercian monks who founded the abbey were quite the entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the rural location to become self-sufficient, farm thousands of sheep and building roads and bridges to allow pilgrims and traders to visit the site. The abbey would have been a very striking and imposing building, and you are still, today, able to admire the majesty of its iconic, carved west doorway. The plan of the church can still be clearly traced and, rather remarkably, some of the original richly decorated tiles from the abbey have survived intact. One of them, 'Man with the Mirror', depicts a medieval gentleman admiring himself in a mirror!



Two of the foremost early Welsh historical sources the Brut y Tywysogion and Hendregadredd Manuscript, were probably written at Strata Florida, and the site has many connections with Welsh culture and identity. Dafydd ap Gwilym, Wales's most famous medieval poet, is buried in the churchyard, as are several medieval Princes of Wales.

Today, Strata Florida is made up of a variety of different elements, from the 12th century Abbey ruins now in the guardianship of Cadw; to the early 19th century St Mary's church built on the site of several original abbey chapels; through to the adjoining 17th century grade II\* listed Mynachlog Fawr Farm and 18th century farm buildings.

Working in partnership with The Prince's Foundation, the Strata Florida Trust is embarking on a journey to celebrate the site's rich history by developing a visitor attraction, training centre and field school by restoring the grade II listed farmstead we now have a number of buildings open to the public including our Arrdangosfa Mynachlog Fawr Exhibition in our restored Ty Pair and cartshed, and our office and community space in the converted Beudy (cowshed) and open to the public. By taking part in the excavation and survey work at SFAFS you will be making a direct contribution to the creation of the proposed Strata Florida Centre!



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION & SURVEY



The 2023 field season will focus on excavating the farmyard and doing wider landscape surveys and ground-truthing. Led by our fully qualified and very experienced staff, we will be excavating in the yard of Mynachlog Fawr farm whose historic buildings the Strata Florida Trust are working to conserve and put to new use. The farm was built over the remains of other structures, some which were part of a gentry house, outbuildings and gardens which go back to the early years of the Abbey's foundation in the Middle Ages. You could be part of the team that unearths these structures for the first time in hundreds of years and records them for future generations! Excavations so far have shown the complexity of these remains which will be further explored by the school participants.

We shall also be undertaking geophysics and other survey work in the wider precinct areas and testing some of the features we find with small 'ground-truthing' excavations to discover their nature and date. All of the excavation and survey findings will be documented in a comprehensive report written by the SFAFS staff. As a participant you can have a copy of this report.

## MAKING ARCHAEOLOGY INCLUSIVE



Making archaeology inclusive and promoting well-being through heritage is at the core of our archaeology field school. Alongside archaeology training staff we will also have pastoral and mental health support staff on site. We want everyone to enjoy taking part in archaeology and experience the benefits of being part of this community.

**"I felt accepted and valued for what I was able to contribute rather than isolated because of what I could not"**



If you've always wanted to get involved in archaeology, but been held back by physical or mental challenges, then this is the place for you. The SFAFS aims to be the most open and inclusive field school in the UK. Please get in touch and we will work with you and find ways for you to get involved. In addition to archaeological skills training, we aim to harness the heritage of Strata Florida to encourage physical and mental well-being.

# UNIVERSITY COURSES AND ARCHAEOLOGY SKILLS PASSPORT

## University courses

We are also running dedicated training courses for universities, with UWTSO, Cardiff University and University of Worcester attending in previous years. If your university would be interested in attending and you would like to discuss our university training excavations, please get in touch.

## Archaeology Skills Passport

The Archaeology Skills Passport training pathway developed by BAJR (British Archaeological Jobs & Resources) is available to gain recognition for the skills gained at the SFAFS. The Skills Passport lists many archaeological excavation and recording techniques and breaks them down into individual tasks and activities. When these elements have been completed in the field and observed by one of our fully qualified site supervisors, they will be signed off in your own Skills Passport. You will be given your passport on the first day of the course and the cost is included in the fees.

No matter how much excavation experience you have, there are many benefits to keeping a Skills Passport: it tracks all areas of practice – from core techniques to more complex skills - so it's ideal for those starting out on their career in archaeology; but also for those who already have fieldwork experience as existing skills can be built upon and further developed. The Skills Passport will be a valuable addition to your CV, offering proof of experience and competence to prospective employers and university departments. Alternatively, if you are attending for recreational purposes it is a great way of documenting your time with us!

The Archaeology Skills Passport is accepted and endorsed by the Archaeology Training Forum (ATF), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and a number of commercial archaeology units. Visit [www.archaeologyskills.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyskills.co.uk) for more information.

### Skills

- Landscape Walkover Survey
- Field Walking
- Geophysical Survey
- Finds Processing
- Site Record Collation
- Total Station Survey



# GENERAL INFORMATION

**Duration:** The full school will last for four weeks from Monday 12th June to Sunday 10th July 2023. You can book courses for one, two, three or four weekly duration either as residential or non-residential options. We also offer Digger Day courses where you can come and join us for a day or two together that better suits you.

**Location:** Strata Florida, Pontrhydfendigaid (affectionally known locally as Bont), Ceredigion, Wales, SY25 6ES

**Timetable:** The digging week begins on a Tuesday with full field work days through to Saturday. Sundays will be a visit to a local heritage or visitor attraction to give participants the chance to explore the local area and history. Mondays will be the day off/change over day. The working days will run from 9am to 5pm with a break for lunch and tea breaks throughout the day.

**Field School Equipment:** Please bring your own trowel (exact specification will be circulated to those booked to attend the school). All other equipment and materials will be provided.

**Clothing:** When onsite you will need to wear comfortable clothing, sturdy shoes and layers suitable for hot and dry or cold and wet weather – it will be a British Summer after all! So sunscreen and a woolly hat...

**Onsite facilities:** We will have tea and coffee making facilities and access to drinking water. There will be toilet facilities onsite, including an accessible toilet. If you are attending the school on a full residential basis then you will be provided with a packed lunch each day. If you are arranging your own accommodation you will need to bring lunch with you to site each day as there is no onsite café/shop.

**Local facilities:** In the village of Pontrhydfendigaid there is a pub and a busy local shop. In the town of Tregaron, 6 miles away, there are a number of shops, pubs, restaurants, cash machines and takeaways. There is a regular bus service connecting Pontrhydfendigaid and Tregaron and there is also a local taxi service.

**Fitness Requirements:** Whilst most field schools set minimum physical expectations for excavation, here at Strata Florida we strive to be as accessible as possible and, with support from wellbeing support staff, the school will include people with a range of physical limitations and mental health challenges. Please get in touch with us to discuss your circumstances and so that we can help get you here. All enquires will be confidential. All participants will need to have an up-to-date tetanus injection prior to attending.



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**“It was by far the best dig I’ve ever been on. It was very well taught, with a human dimension I’ve never found anywhere else”**

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# ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

Welcome to Pantyfedwen Hall! Accommodation and catering will be provided at Pantyfedwen Hall in the village of Pontrhydfendigaid one mile from Strata Florida. Here, you can set up camp under the stars in the field at the rear of the hall.

The venue has showers, a dining area, communal seating and work areas, WiFi, laundry facilities and ample parking. The site is fully accessible with disabled toilet and shower facilities. You will need to bring your own tent, sleeping bag, air mattress, towels etc. Local bus transfers to take you two miles to and from the excavation will be included. If you would prefer to rent camping equipment please contact us to arrange this as part of your booking.

Also included in the full residential package, our in-house chef, Steph, will be providing a hot breakfast and a tasty packed lunch for you to take to site six days a week. In the evening there will be a choice of two meal options (including a vegan option), and dessert.

**“Steph’s amazing, honestly. Best residential food I’ve ever had.”**

## Mornings

Breakfasts will consist of a buffet with a hot option including, Welsh sausages, bacon, eggs, beans, mushrooms, tomatoes & toast. Veggie sausages will be available. The cold option will include cereals, fruits, yogurts, pastries and juices.

## Lunchtimes

Chorizo, mozzarella, rocket & cherry tomato baguette  
Sweet potato & chickpea falafel with beetroot hummus and micro herb salad box  
Coronation chicken pitta breads or quorn coronation chicken pitta breads

Lunches will include a bottle of water, fruit, crisps, and a snack bar and will be supplied in an eco-friendly lunch pack to be reused daily

## Evenings

Moroccan lamb tagine or apricot & aubergine tagine, both served with couscous.

Fish pie topped with Welsh cheddar or courgette, spinach, mushroom pie, both served with garden greens and crusty bread  
BBQ with Slow Roasted Pulled Pork, Chicken Wings, Cajun Tofu & BBQ Pulled Jack Fruit, Jacket Potatoes, Cobbed Corn, Salads and Slaw. Eton mess or vegan eton mess

Hot chocolate fudge cake with ice cream

Lemon tart with crushed berries and double cream





# COURSE FEES

## NEW DATES

Course	Dates	Residential	Non-Residential
<b>Archaeological Excavation &amp; Survey (1-4 weeks)</b>	13th June-18th June 20th June-25th June 27th June-2nd July	<b>£495</b> per week (Deposit £245)	<b>£395</b> per week (Deposit £195)
Booking essential	4th July-9th July		
<b>Archaeological Excavation &amp; Survey (Full 4 weeks)</b>	13th June-9th July 2023.	<b>£1980</b> (Deposit £990)	<b>£1580</b> (Deposit £790)
Booking Essential			

### Digger Days (1 day)

Come and join us for a day of excavating in the trenches of the farmyard, or do some finds processing, or carry out a geophysical survey of the field surrounding the abbey, or do some field walking in the countryside adjacent to the main site. Briefing, training, equipment and lunch will be provided. Limited number of places available, booking essential.

#### Dates

Any Wednesday, Thursday, Friday  
or Saturday between 21st June and  
8th July 2023.

#### Residential

N/A

#### Non-Residential

£75 per day

#### Deposit

N/A

**We are dedicated to keep our archaeology field school inclusive and financially accessible. Therefore we have a number of bursary places available every week throughout the field school. Please contact us to find out more about how to apply.**

Included in the cost of your fees are  
your Archeology Skills Passport and  
a souvenir dig t-shirt.

Limited number of places available,  
booking essential.

## HOW TO REGISTER

For more information and to register for  
your place at the school visit our website  
**[www.strataflorida.org.uk](http://www.strataflorida.org.uk)** or get in touch  
via email at **[info@strataflorida.org.uk](mailto:info@strataflorida.org.uk)**

Upon offer of a place on the weekly school  
you will be asked to pay a deposit to secure  
it, the balance of the fees will then be  
collected in March. Payment for day courses  
will be taken in full at the time of booking.



If you would like to arrange your own  
accommodation, there is a selection of  
B&Bs and self-catered accommodation in  
the Bont and Tregaron, as well as a caravan  
and camping ground on the outskirts of the  
village. Please get in touch if you would like a  
list of providers. We recommend you book  
early to avoid disappointment.

# HOW TO GET HERE

The nearest railway station is in Aberystwyth, 15 miles away from Pontrhydfendigaid. There are buses from Aberystwyth railway station to Pontrhydfendigaid throughout the day and the journey takes approximately 45mins. There is also a taxi rank at the railway station should you prefer. For further information on transport within the county visit <https://www.traveline.cymru/> or download the Traveline Cymru app.



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF STRATA FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

### Full residential basis

**8am** Start your day with a hot, full Welsh breakfast, or cereals and pastries and tea/coffee.

**9am** Bus transfer from Pantyfedwen Hall to the Strata Florida site.

**9am–9.15am** Morning briefing by Excavation and Survey Directors.

**9.30am–11am** Work & train by excavation in the trenches in the farmyard or do some finds processing or carry out a geophysical survey of the field surrounding the abbey or do some field walking in the countryside adjacent to the main site.

**11am** Mid-morning tea break.

**11.15am–1pm** Excavation/finds processing/ surveys etc.

**1pm–Lunch** Tuck into a tasty packed lunch prepared for you by our local chef which could include a chicken pesto & zucchini or wild mushroom noodle salad box, a bottle of water, fruit, crisps, and snack bar.

**1.45pm–3.15pm** Excavation/finds processing/ surveys etc.

**3.15pm** Mid-afternoon tea break.

**3.30pm to 5pm** Excavation/finds processing/ surveys etc.

**5pm** Bus transfer back to the Pantyfedwen Hall.

**6.30pm** Enjoy a hearty evening meal and pudding which could include honey roast ham or vegan seitan ham with buttered mash, peas, carrots and parsley sauce followed by lemon tart with crushed berries and double cream.

**7.30pm** until..... – have some chill-out time in one of the many communal spaces in the Pantyfedwen Hall, wander into the village and grab something from the local shop, go for a few beers at the pub, take an evening stroll in the summer countryside then back to base to camp under the stars or inside the main hall - whichever you prefer that night!

**Sunday excursions:** Every Sunday we will take the group to a nearby heritage or visitor attraction. This might include Devil's Bridge, Llanerchaeron, Hafod Estate, Cors Caron Nature Reserve and more! Specific details will be announced closer to the date.

# WHAT CAN I DO ON MY DAY OFF?

Strata Florida is in the centre of Wales, a place of spiritual presence where many come to enjoy its peace and tranquillity. It was also a place of hospitality and the village of Pontrhydfendigaid has a public house and a shop where you can stock up on things you might need during the week.

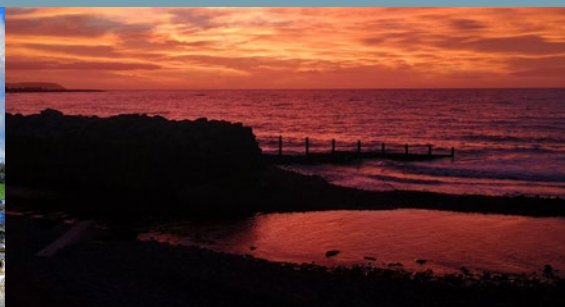
Both are in the heart of beautiful Welsh countryside. Immediately to the west lie the uplands of the Cambrian Mountains with forest tracks and paths for walkers and mountain bikers alike. To the east lies the world-famous Tregaron Bog, a National Nature Reserve, with board walks that take you right out onto the centre where the bird life is extraordinary. And on the edge of the bog, once a year in August, are the trotting races, much beloved by Welsh farming communities.

Just over the hills to the north are Hafod, a restored picturesque landscape, and nearby Devil's Bridge with its wonderful waterfalls and a light railway which runs down to Aberystwyth. To the south are the market towns of Tregaron and Lampeter and all around are small churches in lovely lowland settings.

Further afield are the coastal towns of Aberaeron and Aberystwyth with many attractions. Aberaeron is a wonderful Regency town and harbour with many good places to eat and admire the sea view. Over the summer too are festivals and events, many in the NT house and park of Llanerchaeron nearby. Aberystwyth is a sizeable university town and still has a pier!

For more information on what the local area has to offer visit:

**[www.discoverceredigion.wales](http://www.discoverceredigion.wales)** and **[www.thecambrianmountains.co.uk](http://www.thecambrianmountains.co.uk)**







# FAQS

## How do I get to the Field School?

Most participants are generally expected to make their own way to the field school. Further information on exact times and meeting points will be sent to you prior to the start of the course. See 'How to get here' for further information.

## In what language is the course taught?

The course is taught in English.

## Do I have to be studying Archaeology or have prior experience of field works to participate in the SFAFS?

No, SFAFS is suitable for all levels of experience, from beginner onwards.

## Is there a minimum age for participants?

Whilst we are unable to accept anyone under 18 on the residential courses, we are able to accept children from the age of 14 on the non-residential weekly courses and on the day courses as long as they are accompanied by a responsible adult at all times.

## I have mobility issues, will I be able to participate?

Yes! At SFAFS we strive to be as accessible as possible and, with support from support staff, the school will include people with a range of physical limitations and mental health challenges. Please get in touch with us to discuss your circumstances and so that we can help get you here. All enquires will be confidential.

## I'm struggling to get the money together for the fees. Is there anything I can do?

We are dedicated to keeping our archaeology field school financially inclusive, so are offering a number of bursary places every week throughout the whole field school. Contact us to find out more.

## Can I do volunteer work at SFAFS?

We are unable to offer volunteer places as the school is designed to train participants in the methods of fieldwork.



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