



STRATA FLORIDA
YSTRAD FFLUR

28th June to
24th July 2022

ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

Archaeological
training for all!



StrataFloridaAFS



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STRATA FLORIDA
YSTRAD FFLUR



archaeology + training + support



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ABOUT THE STRATA FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

Foreword by Prof. David Austin, SFAFS Director



The Strata Florida Archaeology Field School (SFAFS) opened its doors (and trenches!) for the first time in 2019 and we are now running our excavations again after we had to cancel due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are very fortunate to have received a grant from AllChurches Trust to support our first three years of operation.

Come and join us for what will be an 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, Breaking Ground Heritage, AllChurches 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. By taking part in the excavation and survey work at SFAS you will be making a direct contribution to the creation of the proposed Strata Florida Centre!



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION & SURVEY



The 2022 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



Breaking Ground Heritage (BGH) is the SFAFS's social inclusion partner. BGH specialises in promoting well-being and rehabilitation through heritage-based activities, specifically individuals with severe physical/psychological challenges (largely but not exclusively veterans). Operating on an inclusive mentoring model here at Strata Florida, BGH will be broadening their reach and engaging with people in civilian communities suffering from exclusion or mental/physical health issues. This proved incredibly successful in the first year with participant feedback such as:

"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.

ACCREDITATION, UNIVERSITY COURSES AND ARCHAEOLOGY SKILLS PASSPORT

Accreditation

SFAFS is now able to offer an accredited 4 week, 20 credit transferable module for students. This will deliver skills in field archaeology and excavation, knowledge of archaeological systems for processing and recording data, in addition to experience of a variety of activities and techniques applied on site. Teaching and training will be delivered by expert archaeologists and fully qualified site supervisors.

SFAFS will be using the Archaeology Skills Passport training pathway developed by BAJR (British Archaeological Jobs & Resources). The Archaeology Skills Passport details lots of 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 can be signed off in your booklet. You will be given your passport on the first day of the course and the cost is included in the fees.

University courses

We are also running dedicated training courses for universities, with UWTSO, Cardiff University and University of Worcester attending in 2021. 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 for more information

Accreditation

- Handtools
- Site Photography
- Site Formation Processes
- Site Grid & Trench Layout
- Artefact Recovery & Recording
- Stratigraphic Excavation

Secondary 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 Tuesday 28th June through to Sunday 24th July. You can book 1,2,3 or 4 weekly residential or non-residential courses or Digger Day courses weeks.

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 mixture of fieldwork and talks on the history of the site and surrounding landscape. 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 BGH, 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.



“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”



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 either set up camp under the stars in the field at the rear, or pitch your tent inside the large, warm and dry main hall area, or move between the two as you wish - there's plenty of room!

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.

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. Once a week Steph will bring her BBQ Train and lay on a feast of different foods! We will be showcasing fresh local produce wherever possible.



“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 Train 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

Course	Dates	Residential	Non-Residential	Deposit
Archaeological Excavation & Survey (1 week) Booking essential	28th June–3rd July 5th July–10th July 12th July–17th July 19th July–24th July	£345 per week	£345 per week	£175 for every week booked
Accredited 20 credit module (4 weeks) Booking essential	28th Jun–24th July	£1780	£1780	£890
Archaeological Excavation & Survey (Full 4 weeks) Booking Essential	28th Jun–24th July	£1380	£1380	£690

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 and equipment will be provided. Limited number of places available, booking essential.

Dates

Any Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday between 6th July and 24th July 9.15am–5pm.

Residential

N/A

Non-Residential

£40 per day

Deposit

N/A

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 or get in touch via email at 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!

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 and 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 am wheelchair bound (or have mobility issues), will I be able to participate?

Yes! At SFAFS we strive to be as accessible as possible and, with support from BGH, 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?

Yes! Thanks to the AllChurches Trust grant our prices are very competitive, however due to the generosity of a donor, we are also able to offer two 50% bursary places. Please get in touch to discuss.

Is it possible to gain transferrable university credits for taking this course?

Yes, SFAFS offer an accredited and transferable 4-week long 20 credit module. If you are studying outside the UK please check with your university the conversion of credits.

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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