

The beginning of this excavation was spent attending lectures in order to familiarize ourselves with the area and for the lectures to discuss what we will need for the excavation. I spent this time reading up on how to write archaeological field reports and historic landscape characterizations to have a better idea of what the proper structure is. During these lectures we were briefed on the proper attire to wear in the field, such as coats, hats, shoes, etc. We were also told what to bring, such as food for lunches, water, and sunscreen. Since this excavation was taking place on a farm, there were no stores nearby which meant that it was very important to be prepared before arriving to the field. We were also told about the discoveries in this area during previous digs, including a medieval nunnery. This nunnery would have been built by Rhys ap Gruffudd who was a Welsh prince at the time and was a daughter house of the cistercian abbey in Strata Florida (Monastic Wales).

Before this excavation, I had not been aware as to what flint really was. It has the same chemical properties as quartz but had different ways of forming. Flint is classified as a type of chert that is found in chalk deposits from the Upper Cretaceous (Bowles & Wyer, 2026). It is also not a naturally occurring resource in Wales. The specific flint that we are finding on the site would have come from Northern Ireland during the Ice Age. Once the ice began to melt, the flint would become eroded and end up on the beach near the farm. Martin, our site director had told us that when the people of the mesolithic age would have gone to the beach, for fishing or other purposes, they would have grabbed some flint along the way. Since it was not the primary intention of the excursion, it explains why they were not as careful with the flint as other people would have been during this time. It also explains why the flint we were looking for on this site were different shades of orange instead of grey, like it would have been in places where it would naturally occur.

The drive to the farm showcased the valley and the different landscapes that could be seen from the bus. When first leaving Lampeter, there were a lot of trees which and forest areas. When I discussed it with Rod, who is a dendrochronologist, he informed me that most of the forest areas around this area were planted there since Wales does not have a lot of natural forests. Further down the drive we were able to see the vast amount of farmland that covers the hills of the valley. The farmland where we were working on was at the valley floor where a lake used to cover it. This is represented by the amount of juncus that covered the ground. Since juncus is a wetland grass the ground beneath it would be a lot more moist considering the lake that had been there during the mesolithic and neolithic times would have covered those areas, which is something that had been discussed during our lecture with Martin. There were obvious mound in the field where it was clear the lake did not submerge, which was where most of the trenches were including ours. We were shown how

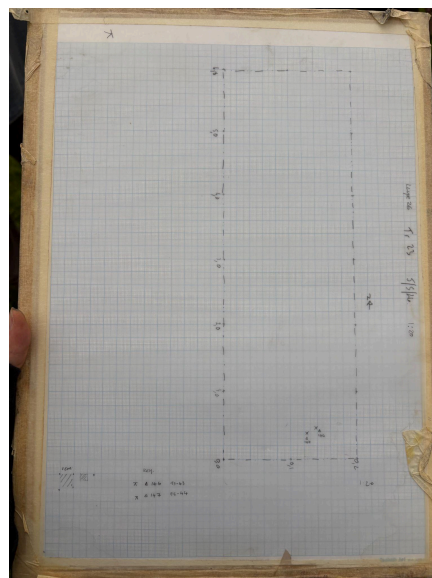


to properly measure out the trenches using the pythagorean theorem and how to yarn it off which is how we were able to properly deturf the sod layer.

Edging out the turf was done by using spades, initially edging the square and then cutting out bricks in rows to properly store them. Throughout this process, some artefacts came up, like pottery and old bits of metal and nails. This entire process took up the rest of the first day and we finished it at the beginning of the second. Once that was all cleared up we had to begin mattocking and trowelling which had already started to produce a couple of pieces of flint. This meant that the mattocking could not continue since the flint had come up to the topsoil, which was a bit unusual since they would usually be found in the lower context layers, but it is presumably caused by worms shifting the dirt and bringing the flint up during the process.



Since we had found three pieces of flint by the end of the day Quentin had gone through how to properly measure, level, and plot them in on a graph. To measure them in we had used tape measures to find out where they were in relation to the trench. Then we plotted them into a graph on a piece of paper.



Quentin then showed us how to use a dumpy leveler. You first have to find your temporary base level by which is how high we measured above sea level. We then measured the depth where we found the piece of flint and subtracted that from our temporary base level to find out how high above sea level it is. This was then added to the graph in order to get a full picture of where the flint was found.

Since the deturfing process caused a lot of divots in our trench, most of the time while trowelling and looking for flint was also spent levelling out the trench since it was likely that the flint would be found around the same level. This ended up being the case since every day on the field produced at least 3 pieces of flint. The middle of the trench seemed to be the hotspot for flint and it showed a bit of a scatter pattern as we went further away from it.

Once we had been trowelling for a few days, Quentin had gone through context sheets with us. These context sheets are to better understand the makeup of each different layer that we have been working on. The initial layer, context 23000, would be the turf and the second context was 23001 which was our top soil. We had not managed to make it to any other contexts while digging since it was a pretty slow process of trowelling the entire trench. The sheets gave the information of what was found, how big the context was, and the consistency of the soil. The peat in the top soil could consist of any mix of three things: clay, sand, or silt. Our trench's consistency was mostly a clay and silt mixture without much or any sand in the mix.

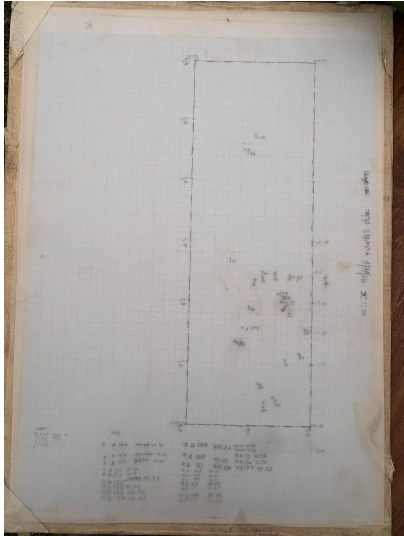
| Context | Description                             |
|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1       | Top of turf                             |
| 2       | Light brown peat, dry, brown, very soft |
| 3       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 4       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 5       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 6       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 7       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 8       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 9       | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |
| 10      | Dark brown peat, dry, brown, very soft  |

During day six we were showed the trenches that other archaeologists had been working on in another field. These trenches had been dug out near where the lake would have ended when it was around since there was no juncus in that area. The first trench had a ditch a couple feet down which was possibly to control the flow of water or was used for construction purposes. They had uncovered part of this ditch in a previous dig and had decided to work of it again in order to uncover the entire thing. The second ditch in this area had uncovered what looked to be a wall made of small stones, as well as what appeared to be stairs. They had also found bits of pottery in this trench that were very old. It was clear that these two features were not part of the same thing since they were different sizes and a couple meters apart.



The Ice age happened about 115,000-11,700 years ago and affected the entire globe. During this time Wales was covered in a thick sheet of ice that covered the ground and froze over the vegetation. One notable one that would have impacted Wales was the Welsh Ice Cap. During the last deglaciation this ice cap would form summits and were exposed to be nuntaks. Once the nuntaks had started melting, the weight and pressure on the ground would had enough force to shift the soil in order to create the valleys that are present today in the Aeron Valley (Mid Wales Geology Club). During this visit to the other trenches we were also given a brief history of the valley from Quenting and Ros. The water having been melted into the valley would have left the lake that covered the land and only left a couple of mounds above the surface which would later be used by the people during the mesolithic and neolithic eras for things such as fishing or flint working. The pressure from the ice on the soil would have caused peat to form in the soil. This peat would preserve pollen in the ground so that when archaeologists take samples from the ground they would be able to date the age of the soil.

The remainder of the days were spent trowelling and finding flint. Every piece that we had found was around the same level measuring in the 70.20-70.40 range above sea level. This means that our finds have been pretty consistent and that these pieces of flint would have been used around the same time. There were multiple different coloured flint as well including a more orange shade, a more red shade, and a grey piece which were all found in different areas of the trench meaning that there would have been multiple different pieces of flint being used in this area. This could potentially mean tat one person was using multiple different pieces of flint, or that multiple people had come to this area to work on the flint.



Since we had been finding a lot of flint in our trench, we were had spent the entire last day trowelling again while the other trenches prepared to backfill theirs. This process was done by replacing all the dirt that was removed during the digging process back into the trench and then adding all the bricks back into the ground. Our trench had went to help another trench finish up, which allowed us to gain a bit more experience into how to clean up and finish this process. Our trench was left open for another day or two in hopes of finding more flint before the site incompletely packed up.



## Sources

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