



STRATA FLORIDA
YSTRAD FFLUR

17th June to
15th July 2024

ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

Archaeological
training for all!



StrataFloridaAFS



StrataFloridaAFS



StrataFloridaAFS

info@strataflorida.org.uk | www.strataflorida.org.uk



STRATA FLORIDA
YSTRAD FFLUR



BENEFACT TRUST



skillspassport
archaeology + training + support



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



THE PRINCE'S
FOUNDATION

CONTENTS

-
- 3 About us

 - 4 Strata Florida

 - 5 Archaeological excavation & survey

 - 5 Making archaeology inclusive

 - 6 Qualification:
Archaeology Skills Passport

 - 7 General information

 - 8 Accommodation & food

 - 9 Course fees

 - 9 How to register

 - 10 How to get here

 - 10 A day in the life of Strata Florida
Archaeology Field School
Full residential basis

 - 11 What is there to do on my day off?

 - 12 FAQs

 - 12 Contact
-



ABOUT THE STRATA FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL

The Strata Florida Archaeology Field School gives you the opportunity to excavate at a site with centuries of history, and add your work and finds to the research and excavations which have been undertaken over the last 20 years at Strata Florida.

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 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.

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 SFAPS you will be making a direct contribution to the creation of the proposed Strata Florida Centre!



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION & SURVEY



The 2024 field season will explore a new area of the site. After excavating in the farmyard for the last couple of years, we will now be opening a brand new trench in the field to the rear of the farmhouse, where the remains of the Cistercian infirmary, and a mill are believed to be located.

Led by our fully qualified and very experienced staff, we will be starting a new area, giving you the opportunity to see an excavation at all stages, from lifting the first sections to turf to finds processing, troweling and recording. 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!

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. Helena Venables, a trained counsellor of Cambrian Counselling, will be on call 24/7, in addition to providing drop in sessions throughout the week. 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 health 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.

“Very supportive atmosphere and Helena is great!”

UNIVERSITY COURSES AND ARCHAEOLOGY SKILLS PASSPORT

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.

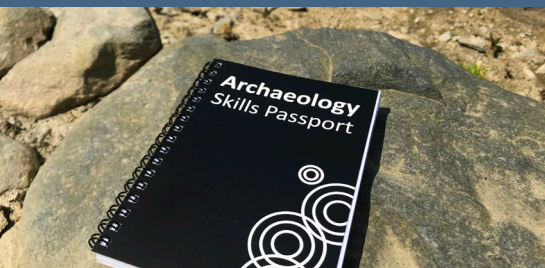
All of the staff were absolutely fantastic; everyone was friendly and approachable. All of the staff treated everyone as an individual and really tailored their approach to help attendees improve their skills and get the best experience possible.

University courses

We are also running dedicated training courses for universities, with UWTSd, 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.

Sample Skills

- Troweling and using other hand tools
- Stratigraphic survey
- Site Photography
- Using a dumpy level and staff
- Section drawing
- Artefact recovery
- Finds Processing
- Site Record Collation
- Geophysical survey
- Field Walking
- Landscape walkover survey



GENERAL INFORMATION

Duration: The full school will last for four weeks from Monday 17th June to Monday 15th July 2024. 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: After arrival on Monday, 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 West Wales and its history and 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). We also have trowels available to buy if you are unable to bring one due to travel restrictions. 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, a waterproof 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.

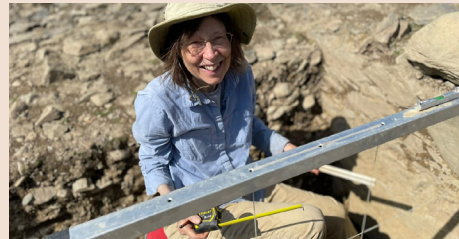
Fitness Requirements: Whilst most field schools set minimum physical expectations for excavation, here at Strata Florida we strive to be as accessible as possible and, with support from wellbeing support staff, the school will include people with a range of physical limitations and mental health challenges. 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.



“Some of the best weeks of my life!”

(...and no we didn't make this one up!)

“Thanks to all for a really great week - I definitely want to return to SFABS next year!”



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. In the evening, there's lots of space to socialise and get to know your fellow diggers, or have a bit of time to yourself to wind down and reflect.

You will need to bring your own tent, sleeping bag, air mattress, towels etc. We also have the option to rent camping equipment from us, please arrange this with us as part of your booking.

Local bus transfers to take you two miles to and from the excavation will be included.

Also included in the full residential package, will be breakfast, lunch and evening meal, 6 days a week. We will be working with local caterers and suppliers to provide healthy and balanced meals to keep you well fuelled for archaeology throughout your stay.

We pride ourselves on catering for all dietary requirements, so whether you're vegan or gluten intolerant, we're happy to arrange this.

“All the food was delicious and there was lots of variety.”



COURSE FEES

NEW DATES

Course	Dates	Residential	Non-Residential
Archaeological Excavation & Survey (1-4 weeks)	17th June–23rd June 24th June–30th June 1st July–7th July	£650 per week (Deposit £325)	£495 per week (Deposit £245)
Booking essential	8th July - 14th July		
Archaeological Excavation & Survey (Full 4 weeks)	17th June–14th July 2024.	£2600 (Deposit £1300)	£1980 (Deposit £990)
Booking Essential			
Digger Days (1 day)	Dates Any Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday between 26th June and 12th July 2023.	Residential N/A	Non-Residential £100 per day Deposit N/A
Come and join us for a day of excavating in the trenches. Learn the basics of archaeology with our team.			

Bursaries - We are dedicated to keep our archaeology field school inclusive and financially accessible. Therefore we have a number of bursary places available every week at the rate of £350 per week, throughout the field school. Please contact us to find out more about how to apply.

“The bursary through Strata Florida Trust helped me immensely to gain the hands-on work experience required for my future career in archaeology simply because it made field school accessible to a working-class single mom”

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 field 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 breakfast - toast, cereals, fruit and pastries, with 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, using local caterers and suppliers.

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 together in the Pantyfedwen Hall, prepared for you, using local caterers and suppliers, or on some evenings in one of the local pubs.

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, castles 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. In 2023 a number of participants registered for the free reader's ticket and accessed a range of research and archive materials at the National Library in Aberystwyth. A great way to expand your knowledge while you're here! 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 have mobility issues, will I be able to participate?

Yes! At SFAFS we strive to be as accessible as possible and 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.

Do you have any suggested reading before I attend?

We have a number of publications available on the history of Strata Florida and life of the Cistercan monks. Have a look on our Shop page on our website.



StrataFloridaAFS



StrataFloridaAFS



StrataFloridaAFS

info@strataflorida.org.uk | www.strataflorida.org.uk