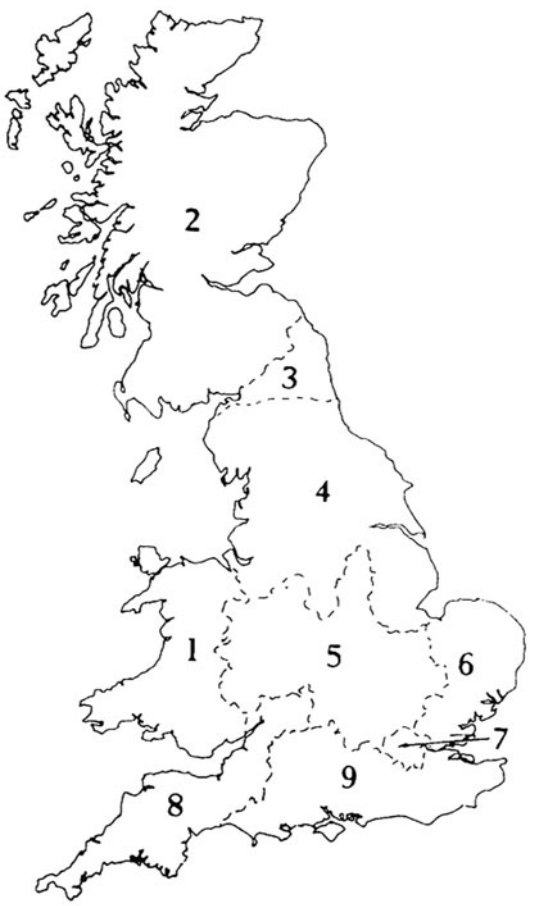
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Roman Britain in 2023

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Key to numbered sections of Part I (Sites Explored).

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I. SITES EXPLORED
Edited by PETE WILSON

Please note that only the most significant sites and discoveries for each region are included here; for further information, see the supplementary material for each region, available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000412; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000424; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X2400045X; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000461; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000473; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000485; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000497; https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000503

1. WALES

By EVAN M. CHAPMAN

CARMARTHENSHIRE

(1) **Llangyndeyrn** (SN 49 14): A hoard of 96 denarii dating from 32 B.C. to A.D. 168 was discovered partially scattered; 40 of the coins were found in the same hole and the remainder were scattered across the whole of the field, roughly half a hectare. The composition of the hoard is consistent with other hoards of the period. The coins from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the last struck in A.D. 168, show very little use-wear suggesting that they had not been in circulation long before being buried. Mark Antony, 2; Nero, 2; Otho 1; Vespasian, 15; Titus as Caesar under Vespasian, 1; Domitian as Caesar under Vespasian, 1; Titus, 1; Domitian as Caesar under Titus, 1; Domitian, 7; Nerva, 4; Trajan, 24; Hadrian, 17; Sabina, 1; Antoninus Pius, 9; Diva Faustina I, 3; Marcus Caesar, 2; Marcus Aurelius, 2; Divus Pius, 1; Lucius Verus, 2.[1]

CEREDIGION

(1) **Cwmystwyth**, *Penparc* (SN 7970 7400): The iron-smelting evidence was more fully investigated and appears to be medieval rather than Roman, as previously thought.[2] A fragment of charcoal embedded inside a piece of tap slag was submitted for radiocarbon dating giving a date of cal. A.D. 1047–1256. An adjacent charcoal clamp, some 25 m to the west, however returned a 149 cal. B.C.–cal. A.D. 60 date, indicating an earlier phase of activity on the site.[3]

GWYNEDD

(1) **Rachub**, *Llwyn Bleddyn Road* (SH 6195 6802): excavations on a 1.2 ha site identified and investigated the remains of five roundhouses, and a number of other related structures and features. The substantial remains of two drystone-built roundhouses, built side-by-side, along with a drystone-built animal pen were uncovered at the lowest part of the site to the immediate west of the stream that bounded the site. The houses and pen had cobbled floor surfaces. The

[1] Treasure case Wales 22.24. To be acquired by Carmarthenshire Museum. Alastair Willis provided information.
[2] See *Britannia* 54 (2023), 335.
[3] Work by Simon Tmberlake, Phil Andrews, John Pickin, Brenda Craddock and Anthony Gilmour of the Early Mines Research Group.

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houses also included capped stone drains, and one had a central hearth. The roundhouses and pen were enclosed within an earthen and stone wall, with large facing stones. All these features continue east beyond the limit of the site boundary.

Set on a modified terrace in the south-east corner of the development, overlooking and to the immediate west of the drystone walled roundhouses, there were the remains of two timber-walled roundhouses. These houses were defined by gullies that held the walls, probably constructed of planks. Both houses had been rebuilt at least once to a slightly larger size, and the two houses were in use sequentially, with the later one partially built over the site of the earlier one. The first phase of the later house had substantial post-holes intended to hold posts to support the roof. There were many other post-holes in this area, but work in the post-excavation phase is needed to see which post-hole belongs to which house and phase. In its second phase the later house had a stone-capped internal drain. The earlier of the two houses had the remains of an iron-working furnace in its centre. It is uncertain whether the 'house' was used to shelter the furnace or whether the furnace was a later structure which post-dated the two roundhouses. However, the discovery of iron-working waste within the early levels suggests the former. To the immediate north-west of the two roundhouses there was a series of post-holes, the remains of a granary.

The remains of another probable house, defined by a stone-lined hearth and post-holes, was uncovered beneath the floor of a post-medieval farmhouse. A further probable roundhouse was positioned on level ground along the southern edge of the development, to the immediate south-west of the two timber-walled roundhouses. This roundhouse was defined by a drain capped with substantial slabs of quarried slate and a slate-paved floor. This was covered by a mound of stones. Roman pottery was recovered from the mound of stones and also the house. There was a contemporary oven or corn dryer adjacent to the house and another small furnace nearby.

At the western end of the development the remains of old field boundaries were identified. The walls were drystone built, consisting of a range of differently sized stones incorporating glacial boulders. These relict field walls were badly preserved and no finds were recovered from them, but based upon map evidence and what had been found elsewhere on site it seems likely that they date from the same period as the roundhouses.[4]

NEWPORT

(1) **Bishton**, *Craig y Perthi solar farm* (ST 39338 88375): trial-trenching of a site on the margins of the Gwent Levels, targeting features identified by a previous geophysical survey, showed the landscape, geology and archaeological potential in different parts of the site were very variable. The highest density of archaeological features was recorded in the western part of the site, located on a plateau of higher or rising ground. Within Area 2 a ditched enclosure and iron-working pit were recorded dating to the early Roman period, suggesting smithing as a primary activity. In Area 3, north-east of Area 2 and in an area of shallow soil sequences overlying Mudstone bedrock, no archaeological features were found in test-pits, but the morphology of geophysical survey features suggests the presence of a minor rural farmstead or enclosure of later prehistoric or Roman date. In Area 4, south-west of Area 2 and at the edge of the plateau of dry ground beside the wetland edge, a probable Roman settlement was recorded, with features including ditches, occupation horizons and a masonry wall footing, along with small

[4] Work by Robert Evans of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, for Adra, in advance of a housing development (Gwynedd HER no. 45473).

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assemblages of late Roman pottery and metalwork. There is thought to be a high potential for the presence of waterlogged archaeological features of Roman date at the adjacent wetland edge.[5]

PEMBROKESHIRE

(1) **Solva**, *Porth y Rhaw promontory fort* (SM 756 242): excavations revealed that the curving revetment wall to the inner defensive bank appeared to have been modified into a structure or building. A large threshold stone marked the doorway to this structure, outside of which there was a path made from large stones, which included broken querns. Finds indicate a Roman date for the structure. In the southern end of the trench layers of stone and soil of Roman date, adjacent to the wall of a stone-built roundhouse, sealed several pits and post-holes.[6]

VALE OF GLAMORGAN

(1) **Whitton (**ST 0808 7135):[7] an assemblage associated with the grave of a male aged between 21 and 25 years old consisted of a silver crossbow brooch, an iron sword in a wooden sheath, hobnail boots, and eight large iron nails. The sword was of 'Straubing/Nydam' type used by the Roman army in the third and fourth centuries A.D. and the silver crossbow brooch of Type 2iii dated from A.D. 335 to 365. Radiocarbon dating placed the individual in the range of cal. A.D. 244–392. Slightly lower oxygen isotope values suggest he was likely to be of non-local origin, possibly from the Welsh border region or further east in Britain.[8]

WREXHAM

(1) **Rossett**, (SJ 3428 5867): a geophysical survey revealed a winged corridor villa, together with ancillary structures, a trackway, and an associated field system. To explore these features three trenches were opened. One trench (Trench 3) over the eastern side of the villa revealed traces of the corridor and the eastern wing, together with rooms to the north of the corridor. The villa was stone-built utilising a variety of different stone types. The rooms to the north of the corridor appear to have been heated with a hypocaust flue extending away from the east wall of the building. Preservation here was variable with some walls present only as mortar spreads over a clay foundation, while others were better preserved. The pottery assemblage suggests occupation from the early second century A.D., while a single coin dating tightly to the late A.D. 307 was recovered from a trench dug for an internal wall. This suggests that the building was still being modified early in the fourth century A.D.

Trench 1 to the south-west of Trench 3 revealed the southern end of a substantial stone building oriented seemingly at right angles to the villa's main axis. This building still had *in situ opus signinum* flooring, as well as. evidence of internal modification. No evidence as to function was found, but its proximity to the stream, together with areas of intense burning revealed by the geophysical survey, may be indicative of a bathhouse.

Trench 2 on top of a square structure, 7 m by 6.2 m, to the south of the villa revealed a rather crude medieval building aligned east–west, with a sunken floor. The building had been constructed of recycled villa material. [9]

[5] Excavation written up by Stuart Foreman and Elizabeth Stafford of Oxford Archaeology for JBM Solar Projects 25 Ltd. K. Smith sent information.

[6] Work by F. Murphy, H. Wilson and L. Jenkins of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust, funded by Cadw, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the National Trust (DAT report 2022/33).

[7] See *Britannia* 51 (2020), 391.

[8] Previously unreported as constituting a Treasure Case. Work by Sam Pamment and Rachel Morgan, managed by Dave Gilbert of Rubicon Heritage Ltd, for the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

[9] Work by Dr Stephen Grenter of Wrexham Museum and Caroline Pudney of the University of Chester, funded by Cadwyn Clwyd Rural Communities Fund, The Roman Research Trust and Wrexham Museum.

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A further geophysical investigation identified a potential prehistoric enclosure in the same field as the villa, as well as the continuation of field systems likely originating in the Roman and medieval periods.[10]

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

For supplementary material for this article, please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000412

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2. SCOTLAND

By FRASER HUNTER

NORTH OF THE ANTONINE WALL

SHETLAND

(1) **Aith** (HU 44 30): metal-detecting[11] produced an unusual copper-alloy strip-bow brooch (FIG. 1). The near-flat, broad bow with narrow knobbed arms flanking the hinge for the pin has so far defied ready parallel among standard types, though various characteristics find first-century comparanda.[12]

PERTH AND KINROSS

(1) **Meigle** (NO 2883 4453): extensive excavation[13] of an unenclosed Iron Age roundhouse settlement with a substantial souterrain produced a number of Roman finds, including sherds of samian ware and the mortar and grinder of a cosmetic set, the first from an Iron Age site in Scotland.

THE ANTONINE WALL

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE

(1) **Kirkintilloch**, *Peel Park* (NS 65109 73994): magnetometer survey[14] within Peel Park located a feature likely to be the fort's western rampart or *intervallum* road.[15] Medieval structures appear to have removed all traces of the northern part of the fort.

[10] Work by Chris Matthews of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (Report 1920). Richard Hankinson sent information.

[11] Claimed as Treasure Trove and allocated to Shetland Museum. Length 46 mm.

[12] Other stray finds of Roman items allocated through Treasure Trove in 2023 were a headstud brooch fragment from near Liff, Angus, with trumpet motifs surrounding the headstud (D. Mackreth, *Brooches in late Iron Age and Roman Britain* (2011), 107 type 5b), a Polden Hill brooch found near Kincaple, Fife (*ibid.*, 72 type CD PH 4a), another from Ayton, Scottish Borders (*ibid.*, same type), a fragmentary enamelled headstud brooch from Currochs, Perth & Kinross (*ibid,*, 106 type 3a), and a Roman or early Medieval polyhedral-headed pin from Kinnaber, Angus. A *kräftig-profilierte* brooch said to have been found in the vicinity of Invergowrie (Perth and Kinross) is an unusual find for Scotland, and in the absence of supporting detail on the findspot it is not certainly an ancient loss. For details of all, see *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 2023*.

[13] Directed by C. MacIver of AOC Archaeology for Campion Homes.

[14] By N. Hannon and H. Blake of Historic Environment Scotland.

[15] For which, see A.S. Robertson and L. Keppie, *The Antonine Wall. A Handbook to Scotland's Roman Frontier* (6th edn, 2015), 98–9.

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