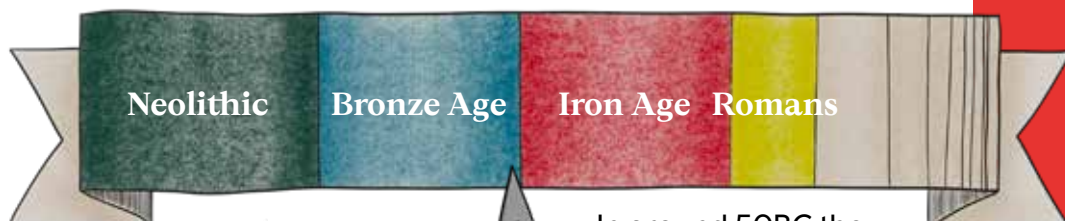


# Llanmelin Wood Hillfort

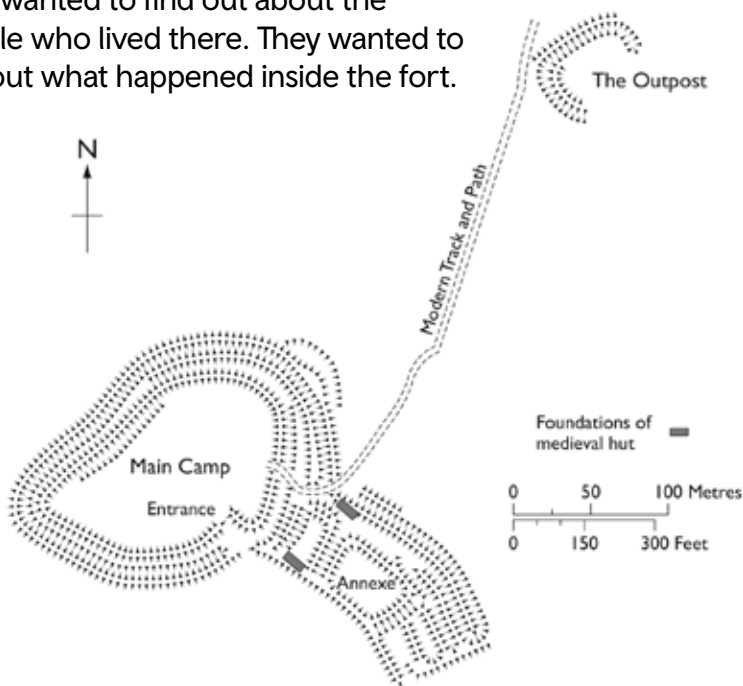
Excavations between 1930 and 1932 showed that the hillfort was begun about 2,300 years ago and was small. Around 150 years later, it was made bigger. The banks were made stronger with stones.

We think people lived here, but there is no evidence to help us. There were animal bones found. There were also Iron Age cooking things!



In 2012 a team from Cadw went back to Llanmelin. They wanted to see if they could find out anything new.

They wanted to find out about the people who lived there. They wanted to find out what happened inside the fort.



In around 50BC the entrance was made stronger. Were they under attack?



The found bones that told them the Iron Age Celts here had animals. The Celts had sheep, goats, horses, deer and dogs! The team also found more pottery. They found a Roman nail too. That tells us that the Romans came to Llanmelin.



The last finds were pieces of pottery from AD75. Archeologists think this was when the fort was abandoned.

# Llanmelin Wood Hillfort

## 2012 excavations

In 2012 Cadw carried out another excavation at the hillfort with the help of the community. They dug their trenches carefully so that they didn't disturb the work that had been done before. This team also found animal bones, and were able to identify sheep, goat and pig as well as a few fragments of dog, horse and red deer.

Initial studies of the pottery suggest that the areas excavated were in use during the middle Iron Age — between 400 and 100BC. There was also evidence of activity in the main enclosure during the first century AD. This could mean that Llanmelin was occupied at the time the Roman army arrived in Wales and made their base at Caerleon in 79AD.

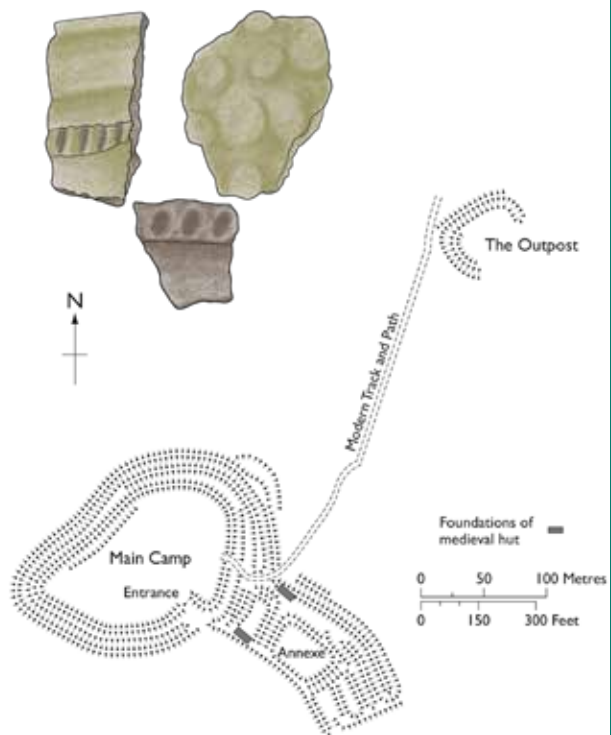
Both excavations have given us a taster of the archaeology at Llanmelin and how well it is preserved. The dates of the pottery show that this site was used throughout the Iron Age and helps us to learn more about what people were doing here.



## 1930s excavations

In 1930 an archeologist called V. E. Nash-Williams came to excavate the hillfort at Llanmelin. These showed that building work began about 2,300 years ago. Around 150 years later, the fort was made stronger with bigger banks and stones.

There wasn't much evidence of round houses inside the fort but it is highly likely that people did live there. The archeologists found animal bones. This means that there were animals living there as well as people. There was also evidence of burning, copper smelting, antler carving, cooking and eating. The third and final phase of Iron Age Llanmelin began around 50BC. At this time the entrance was made much stronger. Were they under attack? Pottery found at Llanmelin, dating from around AD75, suggests that the hillfort was abandoned at this time, as no later pottery was discovered.



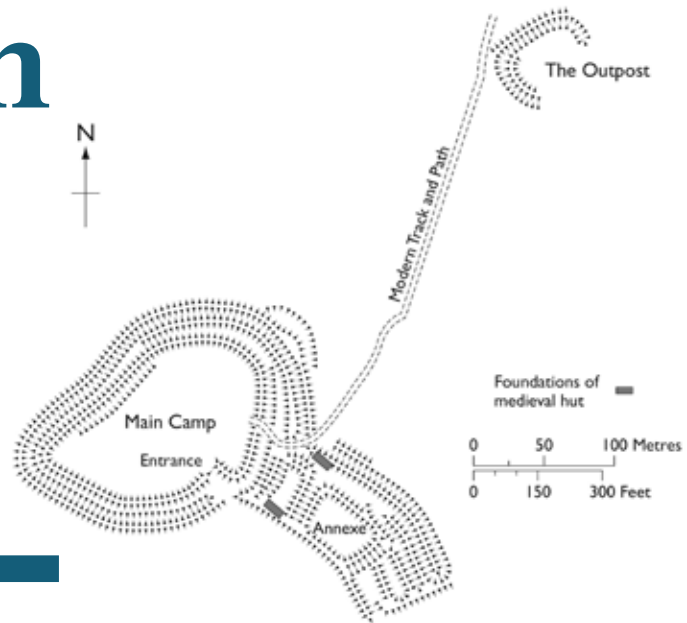
Neolithic

Bronze Age

Iron Age

Romans

# Llanmelin Wood Hillfort



## 1930s excavations

Excavations between 1930 and 1932 showed that the Llanmelin hillfort was begun in the third century BC — about 2,300 years ago — as a smaller enclosure surrounded by a single bank and ditch. Around 150 years later, the main enclosure was modified with the construction of additional banks.

There was very little evidence of round houses within the main enclosure but it is highly likely that occupation was more intense than these results suggest. Bones recovered showed that domestic

animals such as sheep and pigs as well as red deer were present.

Evidence of burning, copper smelting, antler carving and cooking/eating were also found indicating that a range of activities took place here.

The third and final phase of Iron Age Llanmelin began around 50BC when the entrance was remodelled and strengthened. Could this suggest an increased threat of attack at the time? Pottery found at Llanmelin, dating from around AD75, suggests that the hillfort was abandoned at this time, as no later pottery was discovered. Today, the hillfort is in Cadw ownership and the land around is home to many species of flora and fauna.





## 2012 excavations

In 2012 Cadw conducted excavations at the hillfort with the help of many members of the community as part of the Llanmelin Community Project. The aim was to learn more about how people lived at Llanmelin. When were people living here and what activities were taking place? Was Llanmelin a social and political centre at the time of the Roman conquest?

Five trenches were dug. One trench focused on the inner bank of the main enclosure, one on the entrance and three focused on areas within the main enclosure. The trenches in the main enclosure revealed a series of features, including a large midden deposit or rubbish dump. There were also some post holes which may mark the sites of structures used to dry and store grain as well as a couple of gullies. Although not certain, the gullies may indicate the circular footprints of the round houses which are so typical of the Iron Age in Britain.

The initial assessment of the animal bones found shows that cattle was the most common species recovered with some sheep or goat and pig as well as a few fragments of dog, horse and red deer. Further analysis has the potential to tell us much more about farming practices. We hope to learn whether the cattle were being killed at a young age for meat production or allowed to mature as dairy cows. We may be able to tell whether they were being grazed down on the coastal plain or on the high ground near the hillfort.



Initial studies of the pottery suggest that the areas excavated were in use during the middle Iron Age — a period between 400 and 100BC. There was also relatively intense activity in the main enclosure during the first century AD. This could mean that Llanmelin was occupied at the time the Roman army arrived in Wales and made their base at Caerleon in 79AD.

The discovery of a small Roman copper-alloy nail cleaner dating perhaps from the end of the first century AD or beginning of the second century suggests some Roman contact with Llanmelin.

Both excavations have given us a taster of the archaeology at Llanmelin and how well it is preserved. The dates of the pottery show that this site was used throughout the Iron Age and helps us to learn more about what people were doing here.

