

Elsewhere on the estuarine levels inland of the sea wall augering and trial pit work provided data relating to the overall landscape development of the Rogiet/Caldicot area. Research on more recent episodes of landscape development was undertaken by documentary and cartographic research. In some instances this could be related to the stratigraphic data; for instance an area near Rogiet known as Nine Meads is probably an 'island' of early reclamation surrounded by estuarine clays and silts, and trial pits within this area showed it to be one which was evidently prone to episodes when drier conditions prevailed. In another case a particularly prominent sequence of laminated silts in trial pits in the vicinity of Caldicot Pill could be related to the diversion of the Nedern/Troggy and the establishment of a small shipyard by Henry Wise in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

In the intertidal zone reconnaissance was hindered by the frequent presence of modern semi-mobile sediments; however a number of artefacts (including a palaeolithic handaxe discovered by D. Upton) and Romano-British pottery were found, as well as hurdlework remains and several fish-traps. The wooden structures are difficult to date but the physical relationship of most of them to the grey clays indicate that they may well be broadly contemporary with the hurdlework, one piece of which has been radiocarbon dated to the tenth century AD (900±60 AD (CAR-1068); AD 900-1012 calibrated. I am grateful to B. Trett for this information). It is interesting to note that a charter in *Liber Landavensis* refers to fishweirs and landing rights at the mouth of the Troggy.

Recommendations have now been made for further work to be undertaken; to date no response has been received. It is to be hoped, however, that the next stage will be initiated without unnecessary delay.

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### ***Second Severn Crossing: Palaeoenvironmental Aspects on the Welsh Side***

Palaeoenvironmental assessment was concentrated on two key interfaces between dry land and the estuarine sequence. A large trench across the interface on the east side of Stoop Hill, Caldicot (Figure 5) showed basal deposits of sands and gravels which may represent beach deposits. These high energy conditions were succeeded by lower energy conditions under which oxidized silts were deposited. Grey reduced silts then encroached, giving rise to a banded sequence apparently representing periodic marine incursions. During this stage charcoal fragments and a flint flake were deposited. These banded deposits were cut by a palaeochannel (Figure 5) which contained two scrapers, bone and charcoal. Magnetic susceptibility results may indicate burning at this stage. The palaeochannel contained waterlogged environmental evidence. Chenopodiaceae and grass pollen indicates a saltmarsh at the base giving way higher in the palaeochannel fill to fen or alder carr, surrounded by stands of mixed woodland - oak, hazel, birch, lime, elm and bracken-covered slopes with open fields. This picture is complemented by plant macrofossil evidence for saltmarsh and also for cultivated/disturbed ground and nearby woodland.

Molluscan evidence in the basal palaeochannel fill includes brackish-water species with marine influence being confirmed by the present of *Littorina*, sea urchin tests and crab claws. There was no Molluscan evidence for freshwater influence in the channel. Above the channel were 2.5 m of reduced silts of probable marine origin. Upslope these were interstratified with colluvial deposits derived from the adjacent slope. Within these was a probable soil horizon with a fragment of Neolithic or Bronze Age pottery, bone and charcoal, and above this a colluvial horizon with some probable Romano-British artefacts.

The second interface just south of the Cardiff-England railway line at Llanfihangel Rogiet had a sequence of rather oxidized peat deposits thinning against the slope. Preliminary analysis of two sequences of pollen samples was carried out, one 30 m from the base of the slope. This peat probably post-dated the elm decline. The pollen indicated alder carr and a mixed woodland of oak, lime and hazel at the base, with evidence of a *Tilia* decline which might date to the earlier Bronze Age. In the upper part of the peat the pollen indicates a landscape of open grassland interdispersed with woodland and bracken. Pollen spectra at the base of the slope indicated a greater proportion of agricultural weeds, plantains and nettles, presumably reflecting activity on the immediately adjacent dry ground. Flint flakes were found in the upper part of a cut feature which contained pollen of the alder carr phase and they were also present in the upper part of the peat, apparently after clearance.

It was concluded that a range of palaeoenvironmental evidence was well preserved at both interfaces, in particular the peats have potential for producing environmental and land-use sequences which are likely to include evidence of Neolithic or Bronze Age activity.

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### ***Second Severn Crossing: English Side***

During 1990 staff of the Archaeology Section of Avon County Council carried out three fieldwork projects in connection with the proposed Second Severn Crossing.

A desktop study (Deborah Porter) examined published and unpublished sources, air photographs and other materials to establish the known incidence of archaeological sites on the proposed lines of approach to the bridge. This identified, discussed and recommended archaeological responses to twelve sites, mostly earthwork sites of probable Medieval origin.