

# A MONUMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

## Project Friends Newsletter



### Welcome to the third edition of the Monumental Improvement project delivery stage newsletter!

Arriving a little later than planned, and with 6-months of content to catch up on, this is another bumper edition of the newsletter. In this period we've welcomed a new member of the project team, secured lots of new contractors, commenced the archaeological programme of capital works and welcomed over 500 people to our events! We therefore have lots of exciting content to help catch you up with everything that's been going on.

From page 3, you can find out what's been happening in our archaeological programme. The team have been working hard behind the scenes to secure all the necessary consents and contractors for our capital programme, which

### IN THIS ISSUE

**P3-6 - Archaeological Updates**

**P7 - King Arthur's Hall Update**

**P8 - Linus' Excavation with CAU**

**P9-15 Activity Programme  
Update**

**P15 - Upcoming Activities**

**P16-17 - Project Staff Update**

**P18 - How to get involved**

**P19 - Coming Soon**

# A MONUMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

will help to remove some of the scheduled monuments from the Heritage at Risk Register. We also have the latest on the King Arthur's Hall excavation on page 7, and our Archaeological Technician apprentice, Linus gives an update on his excavation experience with the Cornwall Archaeological Unit on page 8.

Our activity programme is now well underway. To date, we've provided training to over 150 volunteers to help develop the skills needed to care for the scheduled monuments, including vegetation management and survey training. We've also welcomed hundreds of people to our outreach events which help to raise the profile of the scheduled monuments and the risks they are facing, (find out more about these events from page 9). As we enter the summer period, we are commencing our programme of conservation works and we have lots of opportunities for volunteers to get involved. With our second annual Monument Celebration Week also approaching in September and plenty of exciting activities to join, we hope to be able to welcome you to another event soon! Please check out page 15 for more information on how to get involved.

I also wanted to say a big (belated) welcome to James, our Business Admin Apprentice. James joined us at the end of 2022 and we are so pleased to have him onboard, helping with many aspects of the project including marketing and event planning. On page 16 you can meet James, who tells us about some of his favourite places to visit in Cornwall.

All in all, it's been another action-packed 6 months for the project and we are incredibly grateful for the continued support from our Partnership board, funders and partners. I also want to say a huge thank you to the project team and our colleagues at the AONB who have worked incredibly hard over the past year to achieve so much for the project, with lots more to come! A special thank you also to everyone who has attended one of our events or training days since the project commenced. Your support makes all the difference and without you, we wouldn't be able to ensure a more supportive future for the scheduled monuments in Cornwall's protected landscape. We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and we look forward to seeing you at more of our events very soon.

Natalie

*Project Manager, Monumental Improvement*

# Archaeology Programme Updates

Since our last issue of the newsletter at the end of 2022, we've been working closely with landowners, community groups and our project partners to find the best solutions for managing the risks to the monuments. We've been busy planning out the capital programme, securing consents, and starting our survey programme which will help us to understand more about the monuments.

## Consents

Our team have been working hard to get all the relevant consents in place for our broad programme of archaeological works. This involves writing detailed method statements in partnership with our contractors which are then submitted to Historic England for approval. These are required for all works which will disturb the ground, and so far our archaeological team have submitted over 15 consents which have all been approved. Well done Jeanette and Linus!

16 of the monuments are also located within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and a further 12 are in European Designated sites which have the highest levels of environmental protection in the UK. Our ecology team at Woodfield Ecology have been helping to secure all the necessary permissions from Natural England and Cornwall Council to undertake works without impacting the environment.



Photo: Site visit to Chapel Porth Chapel with National Trust and Historic England.

## Survey works

In January, the project engaged South West Archaeology to carry out geophysical surveys of 7 of the scheduled monuments, with funding from the AONB's Access Fund and the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme. Geophysical surveys allows us to see beneath the soil and identify archaeological features to a depth of around 1.5 meters. Readings from specialised equipment are collected in a systematic fashion over a site using a range of different instruments to measure the magnetic, electromagnetic and moisture contrasts



# Archaeology Programme Updates

associated with archaeological features. These surveys will help us to understand more about the make-up of the sites, and will ultimately help to inform the interpretation which will sit onsite and online. We were joined by lots of volunteers who learnt these survey techniques including laying the survey grid, accurately geo-locating the markers using a GPS device and even having a go on the Resistivity and Magnetometry equipment. With the support of these volunteers, and their new skills we will be able to better support our protected landscape and enable the wider public to enjoy their local heritage.



Photo: Survey volunteers at Veryan Castle



Photo: Linus, Archaeological Technician and Joe from SW Archaeology at Winecove Cliff Castle

Recently, the project has also engaged the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) to carry out the further survey work needed at 17 of the sites, which will include lidar analysis, GPS surveys, historic building records and photogrammetry to name a few. These will be commencing this month and will help us to understand more about how best to care for the sites, and will also ultimately update the Historic Environment Record for each monument.

We've also engaged BEA Engineering Design to carry out structural condition surveys of the Maker Heights bunker at Redoubt 1, St Constantine's Chapel and the rifle range at Black Head Cliff Castle so we can understand more about the work required to protect the monuments. These reports will be produced later this summer and will tell us the next steps for conserving the sites.

# Archaeology Programme Updates

## Conservation Repair works

We are pleased to announce that our programme of conservation repair works started over the weekend! This programme will take place across 7 of our scheduled monument sites between now and 2024, aiming to secure their removal from the Heritage at Risk Register. We will be working with our specialists, Attwell Associates on our four Bodmin Moor sites, and Treleven Countryside Services on three sites along the south and north coasts of Cornwall. Below we have outlined the upcoming works across the summer and autumn of 2023.

### Fox Tor Stone Alignment, 21-25 July

This prehistoric stone alignment on the east of Bodmin Moor is suffering from erosion caused by livestock. Sheep and cattle rub against the stones which is causing the ground around them to become eroded and then fill with water. Some of the stones have also fallen over.

Our team are infilling the worst eroded hollows around the stones, and will be re-erecting two fallen stones by setting them back into their original sockets.

This will help to protect the site against livestock and make the site more easily identifiable. We will also be carrying out archaeological recording of the site alongside the works.



### Emblance Downs Stone Circles, 5-7 August



This early Bronze Age monument, made up of two stone circles is also situated on Bodmin Moor and suffering the same issues - erosion caused by livestock.

We will be infilling the eroded hollows on the western circle, and re-erecting one fallen stone after we have carried out archaeological recording of the site.



# Archaeology Programme Updates

## Tehidy Round, 29-30 August

In Tehidy Country Park, near the North Cliffs Plantation lies the remains of a prehistoric settlement. This scheduled monument is classified as vulnerable due to the scrub and tree growth that obscure the monument and as a result of the desire lines which have caused erosion. Our conservation repair works at the site will focus on repairing the eroded areas on its northern bank.



## Castle Dore Hillfort, September



Castle Dore is currently listed on the Heritage at Risk Register due to erosion. Over the past year, the landowner and tenants of the site have been working closely with us and Historic England to find the best way to support the monument. This September we will be relocating the water trough away from the main area of erosion (in the image to the left) to encourage the cattle who use the site away from this part of the monument. We will also be carrying out erosion repairs and temporarily fencing them off to help them settle in, returning in the Spring to re-seed if necessary. The cattle also currently use the interpretation panel as a rubbing stone, so we will be relocating this to the entrance of the field outside the scheduled area.

**We have lots of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in our conservation programme. Please contact [monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk) for more information.**



# King Arthur's Hall Update

Last September, we undertook an excavation of King Arthur's Hall on Bodmin Moor to try and uncover when this mysterious site was constructed. Experts were divided, with some believing it was prehistoric and others favouring a medieval date, and local archaeology group, TimeSeekers had been campaigning for many years for an investigation to take place. Through Monumental Improvement we were able to raise the funds necessary to carry out an excavation with Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating and pollen, peat and water sampling to find a definitive date for the construction of the site. We are now very close to receiving the results of the investigation, and we hope to be able to share the news around the anniversary in September. Thank you for your ongoing patience - we can't wait to see the results!

We are aware that the fencing at King Arthur's Hall is currently in need of repair and we are working closely with the landowner, commoners and Historic England to resolve this as soon as possible. Thank you to everyone who has been in touch about this issue. We will keep you updated in our newsletters and via our project website.



Photo above: King Arthur's Hall with the trench at the entrance



Photo: Dr Tim Kinnaird taking samples for Optically Stimulated Luminescence



Photo above: Main trench showing the stone bank and dark, buried soils beneath King Arthur's Hall.



Photo left: Project volunteers Elizabeth Dale, Jacqui Rukin, Stuart Dow and David Edyvean working on the trench.



Photo left: CAU and our volunteers hard at work on the excavation of King Arthur's Hall

# Linus' Excavation with CAU

Our Archaeological Technician Apprentice, Linus has recently accompanied the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) on a commercially funded excavation in Newquay to gain practical excavation skills as part of his apprenticeship. Linus' end-point-assessment for his will involve demonstrating his ability to conduct an archaeological evaluation, from the initial paperwork (including consents, contractor briefs and methods), the excavation itself, and the recording and post-excavation processing, preservation and archiving of finds. In order to gain experience in the field, Sean Taylor, Senior Archaeologist with CAU kindly invited him to work on their excavation of a prehistoric site in Newquay.

"Being able to get hands on experience excavating archaeological features is something I've wanted to do for as long as I can remember" says Linus, "I was so pleased to have the opportunity to carry out, from start to finish, the excavation of a pit with the very patient supervision of Lucy Osborne, a freelance archaeologist working on the project."

Linus also spent May and June on location with CAU on another site where he continued developing his excavation skills. Towards the end of the year, he will also be gaining experience of the post-excavation side, including the cataloguing, labelling and cleaning of artefacts to prepare himself for his observation, where he will need to demonstrate finding, cleaning, packaging and recording an artefact according to industry standards.

To read Linus' Full blog about his excavation with the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, please click on our project page [here](#).

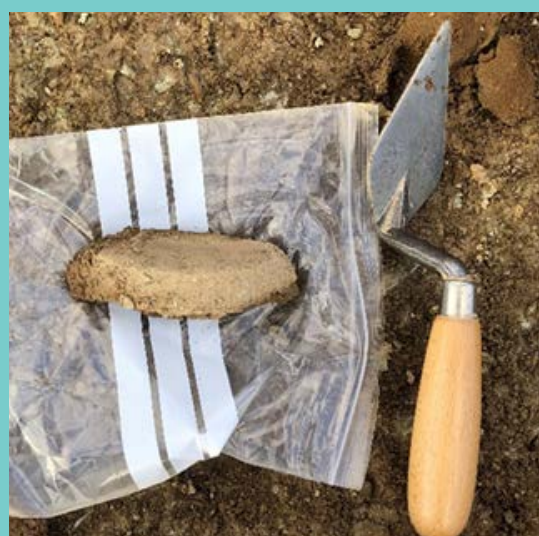


Photo: Top - A flint, which is not native to the local geology, likely imported from Devon.

Photo: Bottom - Part of the base and side of a pot. The base/rim can be tested for traces of organic material stored or cooked in the pot some 4,000 years ago.



Photo: Ariel view of the dig site



# Activity Programme Update



Our activity programme is now well underway and in 2023, we have been joined by lots of volunteers on a wide range of activities from hand tool training to survey training. We've also offered several teacher training sessions and been lucky enough to partner with the Dark Skies team again on Bodmin Moor for another stargazing session. Over the next few pages, we share an update on some of our recent events and upcoming ones, sharing ways that you can get involved.

## Recent Events



Photo: Volunteers at Tehidy Round

### **28th February - Tehidy Round Hand Tool Training**

At the end of February, volunteers went to help clear some vegetation from Tehidy round. They were shown how to use the tools, how to keep them well maintained and the health and safety considerations when using them on site. Our volunteer training programme is seeking to develop the skills needed to care for the monuments into the future. This will ensure that as many of the scheduled monuments can move off the Heritage at Risk register as possible. A big thank you to Richie Smith from Penwith Landscape Partnership for running another informative and beneficial training session.



# Activity Programme Update

## 31st January - Geophysical survey training at Bottreaux Castle

On a drizzly January morning, the MI Team invited volunteers to help survey Bottreaux Castle in Boscastle. A motte and bailey castle at the summit of a steep natural hill. The Castle is likely to date from the middle of the 12th century in the reign of Henry II and was the seat of power for the Bottreaux family, one of the most important in medieval Cornwall.



Photo: Volunteers using the resistivity equipment at Bottreaux Castle

## 2nd February - Geophysical survey training at Castle Dore

During a day of sunshine and showers, our Activities Officer and Archaeological Technician Apprentice oversaw Volunteers surveying our site at Castle Dore near Par. Castle Dore is a hill top fort dating back to between 5BC - 4BC and previous excavation work revealed the site was used by parliamentarian forces during the Civil War which was laid to siege by the Royalists, led by King Charles I.



Photo: Our Archaeological Technician Apprentice Linus, helping to train volunteers

**SW Archaeology are now working on the final reports of the geophysical surveys and we hope to be able to share the results with you all soon. Please keep an eye on our website for the latest news.**

## Free Teacher Training

We have continued our partnership with Historic England's Heritage Schools programme to offer training to primary school teachers, exploring ways to help children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance. These sessions give teachers the opportunity to learn about ways they can implement Cornish history into the curriculum. With this knowledge, the children will be more aware of Cornwall's history and will hopefully feel more connected to their local heritage.



# Activity Programme Update



Photo: Teachers visiting King Arthur's Hall

## 24th February - Teacher training, St Breward, Bodmin

On a wet and windy winters day, our Activities Officer and Business Admin Apprentice coordinated a teacher training event at St Breward Village Hall, delivered by Historic England. During the session, the teachers got to visit one of our amazing sites at King Arthur's Hall on the moorland, where we were also joined by the Peatland Landscape Partnership to learn about their upcoming work on the moor.

## 7th March - Teacher training at Kresen Kernow

Around 30 teachers joined us for a session at Cornwall's record office for a day exploring the storerooms and archives and learning about local Cornish history. The group also travelled up to one of our 40 sites at Tehidy Round within Tehidy Country Park.



Photo: Teacher training at Kresen Kernow

## 20 April - Celebrating International Dark Sky Week with a Bodmin Moor Stargazing Event

A guided walk kicked off this event exploring the prehistoric heritage of the moor, ending with a beautiful sunset at The Hurlers stone circles. There we met the Dark Skies volunteers for a stargazing session under crystal clear skies which allowed us to see several planets and constellations up close, with the Milky Way shining bright. A huge thank you to the Dark Skies volunteers from Caradon Observatory for a truly special evening.

# Activity Programme Update

## 13th May - Guided Heritage Walk of the Roseland Peninsula

Beautiful weather and a group of keen explorers were both in attendance for the first walk led by volunteers recently trained-up as Walk Leaders by the Monumental Improvement project. Cathy Parkes of Cornwall Archaeology Unit and Nev Meek of the Old Cornwall Society led us to Vryan Castle and Carne Beacon, two of the 40 scheduled monuments included in the project. We are hoping that Cathy and Nev will be able to lead another walk later this year when the results of the geophysical surveys are back.



Photo: Walking Group on Carne Beach



Photo: Attendees of the ecology training event

## 14 June - Ecology Tool Box Talks at Maker Heights

A key aim of the Monumental Improvement project is to provide a legacy of support for the scheduled monuments, ensuring that a dedicated team of volunteers are able to keep caring for the sites into the future. As part of this initiative, we held our first ecological training session for volunteers at Maker Heights in June. This event is the first in a series, and was designed to show volunteers how to identify species of conservation concern and manage sites in a way that benefits both the historic and natural environments. Thank you to the team at Woodfield Ecology for an informative and engaging day.



# Activity Programme Update

## 18 March - Our First Monument Watch Training Day

One of the key aims of the Monumental Improvement project is to take as many of the scheduled monument sites as possible off the Heritage at Risk Register, and our archaeological programme of conservation works has been specifically designed to help achieve this. It is equally important however, that we focus on building a strong legacy of support for the sites to ensure that they continue to be cared for and prevent them from becoming at risk once more. To achieve this, over the course of the project we will be helping to build up the Cornwall Archaeological Society's Monument Watch programme which assists Historic England and Cornwall Council archaeologists in monitoring and recording the state of scheduled monuments in the county. Monumental Improvement will be running a series of training sessions for volunteers who are interested in helping to support their local monuments in this way, with training focused on vegetation management and site recording. We kicked off the first event in this series with a training session at Maker Heights on 18 March in collaboration with Cornwall Archaeological Society (CAS) and Rame Conservation Trust (RCT).

This event was primarily about adding to, or in many cases initiating attendees' knowledge of scheduled monuments. Cornwall has well over 1,500 of them, more than any other of the English counties! Maker has several scheduled monuments and the military fortifications named Redoubts 1-5 are part of the Monumental Improvement project which made it a perfect location for our first training session. These structures were built as part of major defensive plans after a little-known Armada of French and Spanish warships turned up in Whitsand Bay, then moved into Plymouth Sound in 1779 whilst the American War of Independence raged. John Manley of the RCT Redoubts Working Group discussed recent underground findings on the site and helped the group to understand these local heritage sites better. The Monument Watch training was then kickstarted by Hannah Curnow of



Photo: The 43rd on watch at R4

# Activity Programme Update



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones and the monument watchers at R5

Cornwall's Historic Environment Record (HER) who gave an introduction to reporting the condition of historic features and adding new ones to the HER via an online form. Ann Preston Jones, Historic England's Heritage at Risk Project Officer for Cornwall then led the afternoon site visit and our discussions on the problems of maintaining a historic site, especially in environmentally sensitive sites. We were also joined onsite by the 43rd Infantry Division re-enactment group who certainly added to the sights, sounds and smells (gunpowder from their musketry) of everyone's day. It was a fantastic way to launch the projects Monument Watch training and we will be holding lots of events in this series over the next year across the AONB. If you are interested in joining one of these events, or volunteering to help care for a scheduled monument near you, please reach out to [monuments@aonb-cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:monuments@aonb-cornwall.gov.uk).

We also had a group of participants from our recent Monuments Matter to People and Bee Mindful projects at Maker on the same day, who had planned a celebration event with their families to showcase some of the work they have been doing on the site to support both the heritage and environment of this special place. You can find out more by listening to our podcast about our Bee Mindful project [here](#), with our Activities Officer, Iain.



Photo: the 43rd firing off at R2



# Activity Programme Update

## Royal Cornwall Show - 9 and 10 June

The Monumental Improvement team attended the Royal Cornwall Show for the second year running. We were on the AONB's stand in the Forestry Tent and it was a great opportunity to talk to lots of people about the project, and showcase some of the work we have been doing.

## Other talks, visits and work experience

Lots more has taken place over the past few months, including talks to Memory Matters groups, visits to the Cubs and site visits with Truro College. The project also hosted two Year 10 work experience students last week in collaboration with the Cornwall Heritage Trust. They carried out a research project on Iron Age sites and it was great to see their enthusiasm for learning about the unique archaeological sites included in the project.

## Upcoming Events

With our Conservation Repair programme commencing on 21 July, we have lots of opportunities for volunteers to get involved across the summer and autumn of 2023. Please contact [monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk) for more information and to register your interest.

## Cornwall Heritage EXPO - 29 and 30 September

In September, the inaugural EXPO Ertach Kernow | Cornwall Heritage EXPO will be taking place at Godolphin House near Helston. The EXPO will showcase the work of the heritage sector in Cornwall and associated businesses that contribute to Cornwall's distinctiveness, including landscape management, conservation, traditional crafts, conservation architectural practices, leisure and hospitality. The Monumental Improvement project are taking part and we hope to see many of you there!



## Monument Celebration Week September 2023

Our second Monument Celebration Week will take place in September. We will be putting on lots of events and volunteering opportunities. More will be announced soon, so keep an eye on the AONB events page for the latest information.

# PROJECT STAFF UPDATE

**In December of 2022 we were pleased to welcome James Richards as our new Business Administration Apprentice. Here we asked James some questions to get to know him better.**



## **What Inspired you to join the Cornwall AONB?**

Once I had finished college I had decided not to go to university and seek an apprenticeship to gain qualifications whilst earning money. I came across the Cornwall AONB whilst searching and found out what they stood for and what they are aiming to accomplish, which enticed me into applying so that I can help to achieve their vision. I have always been fascinated by Cornish heritage and I was thrilled to be offered a role within the Monumental Improvement team where I assist in preserving and enhancing the 40 heritage sites across Cornwall on the at-risk register.

## **Can you tell us a bit about you?**

I've lived in Cornwall for all of my 20 years having grown up in a rural village in the southeast of the county. I spent most of my childhood playing sports as I loved football and swimming, and being surrounded by the ocean was convenient as a beach was never far away.



Photo: Polzeath Beach



# PROJECT STAFF UPDATE

## Can you tell us about a place in Cornwall that is special to you?

One of my favourite places to go when I was younger was Hannifore beach. Just along the road from Looe, Hannifore has amazing views, beautiful coastal walks and a special view of Looe Island. The beach itself was the perfect place to explore all the amazing rockpools and find lots of different marine wildlife species hidden away under the seaweed or to relax under the summer sun. I also used to kayak around Looe Island from time to time, spotting lots of seals and jellyfish whilst heading over to Talland Bay.



Photo: Rockpools at Hannifore Beach



Photo: Duloe Stone Circle

## How do you like to connect with nature in your spare time?

Surrounding the village where I live is a variety of nature. We have a large woodland with part of the west Looe river running through, as well as country lanes surrounded by agricultural fields and open meadows. Whenever I get the chance I will always try and walk around the village taking in the scenery with the beautiful views all around me, especially after the Covid lockdowns which opened my eyes to nature's healing power.

**We are very pleased to have James onboard! During his time with us, James will be writing a series of online blogs about his apprenticeship. You can read James' first blog post [here](#).**

# MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Throughout the delivery stage of Monumental Improvement there are plenty of ways you can get involved to help protect and support the Scheduled Monuments in the AONB.

## Activities and Events

Stay up to date with our latest events and activities programme by keeping an eye on our social media channels, and our website [www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monumental-improvement](http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monumental-improvement).

## Volunteering

We're looking for volunteers who would like to learn new skills, meet new people, get outdoors and, ultimately, help to protect the monuments for future generations to enjoy and learn from! Coming up we have opportunities to take part in:

- Archaeological excavations
- Coastal erosion monitoring
- Conservation and stabilisation works
- Ecological risks

We are also be looking for volunteer heritage guides to lead guided walks of the Scheduled Monuments. Volunteer guides will be trained to become qualified Walk Leaders, with First Aid and Health and Safety training offered too. You can register your interest in becoming a volunteer or guide by emailing the project team at [monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk), or keep an eye on our website for more information in the new year.

## Student Visits, Placements & Dissertations

During the delivery stage, we will be working closely with local universities and colleges to offer archaeology and history students opportunities for free site visits to our Scheduled Monuments where they can meet industry experts, make valuable contacts, and take part in practical archaeological or heritage-based activities to support the project.

We will also be looking to support a range of student placements and site-specific dissertation research projects throughout the delivery stage. If you are interested in hearing more about these opportunities, please contact [monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk).



Photo: Falmouth University student filming project during Development Stage.



# Coming soon...

We will be sending out our next issue in the Autumn. In the meantime, if you want to find out more about the project or see our upcoming events, please visit: [www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monumental-improvement](http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monumental-improvement).

You can also follow us on social media:

 @CornwallAONB

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Or contact a member of the project team via email:  
[monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:monuments@cornwall-aonb.gov.uk)

