

# Bronze Age enclosure could offer earliest clues on the origins of Cardiff

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Credit: Vivian Paul Thomas

An archaeological dig at a city park has uncovered what could be the earliest house found in Cardiff.

The Caerau and Ely Rediscovering (CAER) Heritage Project, a partnership between Cardiff University, Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE), [local schools](#), residents and heritage partners, began excavations at Trelai Park, half a mile from Caerau Hillfort, a heritage site of national significance where Cardiff University archaeologists and [community members](#) have previously discovered Neolithic, Iron Age, Roman and medieval origins.

Experts believed the settlement, dubbed "Trelai Enclosure" could provide the missing link between the late Iron Age and early Roman period, showing what happened to people once they had moved on from the Hillfort.

But in fact, the roundhouse, located near Cardiff West Community High School, actually predates it. A clay pot discovered at the site has given the team a firmer indication of the time period the building can be traced to.

Dr. Oliver Davis, CAER Project co-director, based at Cardiff University's School of History, Archaeology and Religion, said, "What we've found is completely unexpected and even more exciting. This enclosure could be providing us with the earliest clues on the origins of Cardiff. The pot that's been found is beautifully decorated and well preserved. It is extremely rare to find pottery of this quality. It's also unusual to find a Bronze Age settlement in Wales —there are only one or two other Bronze age sites in this country.

"The people who lived here could have been members of a family whose descendants went on to build Caerau Hillfort."

Nearly 300 volunteers have participated in the dig so far, with around 500 visitors coming to the site since its start.

Fellow co-director Dr. David Wyatt added: "We came looking for the missing link between the late Iron Age and early Roman period. What we found is something much more remarkable and much older.

"We believe the roundhouse could now have been constructed in the mid to late Bronze Age, going back to between 1500 and 1100 BC. The enclosure definitely predates the hillfort. People were living here before the hillfort was built.

"The whole community—volunteers, [school children](#) and Cardiff University students, should be proud of what they've achieved here. It's an incredible development and sheds light on the earliest inhabitants of Cardiff."

Tom Hicks, an archaeologist who came through Cardiff University's Exploring the Past pathway and volunteer Charlie Adams both found and recovered the pot during the dig.



Credit: Vivian Paul Thomas

Hicks said, "This is a very well-preserved example of Bronze Age pottery and a significant find for the archaeological record in the region. It's a great opportunity for us to learn more about the lives of the people living on the site around 3,000 years ago.

"The beautiful decoration on the pot shows that these people wanted to display their creativity to others and further [scientific analysis](#) may be able to tell what the pot was used for before it ended up in the enclosure ditch and how or where the pot was made."

Martin Hulland, Headteacher at Cardiff West Community High School

said, "We are delighted to be involved in this exciting archaeological project. Our students have loved learning about the history that's just a stone's throw away from their school."

Provided by Cardiff University

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