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National Archaeology Day, 22nd August 2005

Powysland Museum, Welshpool

A very successful National Archaeology Day event was held this year. Hosted by Powysland Museum, Welshpool the event was a joint effort between museum staff, archaeologists from the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and members of re-enactment group Cwmwd Iâl (people of Iâl's commote or region).



*Left:
National
Archaeology
Day 2005 in
Welshpool
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Over 100 people, the majority children, visited the museum and the temporary Welsh

medieval campsite set up on the picnic area just across the canal from the museum. Members of Cwmwd Iâl gave demonstrations and spoke about aspects of medieval life in Wales. These included camping, cookery, healing and fighting. Authentic replica artefacts and costumes were used throughout. Fearsome swords, spears and axes were wielded, and shields clashed as individuals showed off their awesome fighting skills!

Below: Members of Cwmwd Iâl battle it out

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Two guided walks around local towns were led by staff from the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and proved popular with members of the public both young and old. Ian Bapty spoke about Montgomery and Offa's Dyke, the 8th century earthwork constructed on the orders of the Mercian King Offa that can still be seen in many places in the Marches, and Jeff Spencer led a stroll around Welshpool pointing out buildings of historic interest and talking about archaeological discoveries made in the town.

Meanwhile back at the museum, children were creating pots out of coils of clay as folk would have done back in prehistoric times, with very impressive results! There were Saxon costumes to dress up in, and visitors could also try their hand at writing in Saxon runes and drawing Saxon designs using pyrography

(decorating wooden objects by burning on patterns or letters using a special heated tool).

As well as Powysland Museum's permanent displays and temporary exhibition a range of finds were out from behind



glass for handling by anyone who wanted a closer look. A range of objects from a Palaeolithic hand-axe to Roman pottery to a piece of a Victorian gas lamp were available for close inspection! It was while a family were studying some of these that a photographer from the County Times arrived and took some great pictures, two of which we have reproduced here.



*Left: There were finds of all periods to study at Powysland Museum
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Look out on our website and in the local press in the early summer of

2006 for information on when and where to join in the fun next year!

Kids, also remember that if you are aged between 8 and 16, you can join the Young Archaeologists' Club. At the moment there is only one active group within the Clwyd-Powys area, which meets in Denbighshire, but if this is not convenient for you, you can still join the club and receive the magazine four times a year and enter competitions (including the annual Young Archaeologist of the Year award). To join the Young Archaeologists' Club, contact YAC, St Mary's House, 66 Bootham, York, YO3 7BZ, tel. 01904 671417. For details of the Denbighshire group, contact Fiona Gale on 01824 708262, fiona.gale@denbighshire.gov.uk.

Lastly, many thanks to all Powysland Museum and CPAT staff, and members of Cwmwd Iâl who helped make this such a great day for everyone! Many thanks too to the County Times for their permission to reproduce their photographs here.

Jeff Spencer, August 2005

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