

Cowbridge 'dig' uncovers 14th century house



AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL "dig" now taking place in the heart of Cowbridge has uncovered the site of what is believed to have been a medieval merchant's house... the first such house to be excavated in Wales.

The very substantial remains of a building dating back to the early 14th century have been uncovered in the High Street and finds made during the course of the excavation include medieval and post-medieval pottery, a few clay tobacco pipes dating back to the late 17th Century and material dating back to the Roman Period in large quantities, including 3rd Century coins.

Mr. Gareth Dowdell, Director of the Glamorgan — Gwent Archaeological Trust which started work on the site at the end of November told the Gazette that all the discoveries made so far lead him to believe that the building was the home of a wealthy individual.

"I suspect he must have been a merchant," said Mr. Dowdell "In which case, as far as I am aware, this is the only medieval merchants house to be excavated in Wales.

"It is very, very rare," he added. "People don't realise how rare these things are."

The Glamorgan — Gwent Archaeological Trust is one of four established in Wales over the last few years and whose job it is to undertake rescue excavation in advance of various forms of development.

Narrow Strip

Mr. Dodell said that up until now it had been believed that the Roman occupation of Cowbridge was confined to a narrow strip in the High Street but a number of interesting features uncovered to the rear of the building proved that there was a substantial Roman settlement in the town.

A bulletin issued by the Trust says "At present there are two main objectives of the excavation — the recovery of the complete ground plan of the medieval building and an attempt to determine what type of occupation was present during the Roman period."

PICTURE: Mr. Dave Allen of the Glamorgan — Gwent Archaeological Trust, director of the excavations at Cowbridge, gives a few tips to (from l to r): Karen Charters, Dorothy Sawyer and Andrea Monks, some of the sixth formers from Cowbridge Comprehensive School who have been helping at the "dig."