



# Y Fryngaer ar Bendinas, Aberystwyth

## The Hillfort on Pen Dinas, Aberystwyth



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Uchod: Adluniad o'r porth dwbl cywrain ym Mhendinas, lle'r âi'r llwybrau mynediad o dan bontydd cadarn a safai ar ben pyst enfawr o goed. Gallai codi amddiffynfeydd cerrig a phren pedwar hectar y fryngaer fod wedi gofyn cwmpo a chludo hyd at 4,600 o goed o 76 hectar o dir. Byddid hefyd wedi gorfod dod â bwyd a diod i'r gweithwyr rhywsut. Ffrwyth cydymdrech fawr, felly, oedd y gaer hon.

Above: Reconstruction of an elaborate double gateway at Pen Dinas, with entrance passages passing below stout crossing bridges supported on massive timber posts. Simply to build the stone and timber defences of this four hectare hillfort may have required up to 4,600 trees, felled and transported from 76 hectares of land. Somehow the labour-force would also have been fed and watered. In all, it is a remarkable feat of human endeavour.

Y fryngaer o'r Oes Haearn ym Mhendinas ger Aberystwyth yw un o'r mwyaf ar arfordir Bae Ceredigion, a hi yw'r gaer fwyaf yn y sir. Mae'r gwrthgloddiau a welwn ni heddiw ymhell dros 2,000 o flynyddoedd oed, ac efallai i'r gwaith o'i chodi gychwyn ar y bryn amlwg hwn tua 400 CC, ymhell cyn i'r Rhufeiniaid ddarostwng gorllewin Cymru. Saif y gaer uwchlaw cymer dwy afon fwyaf y sir, Rheidol ac Ystwyth, a gallai'n hawdd fod wedi tynnu ar adnoddau'r arfordir, y dyffrynnoedd a'r tiroedd ymhellach o'r môr. Mae i'r fryngaer gynllun trawiadol ac mae terasau serth ei hamddiffynfeydd i'w gweld am filltiroedd ar draws Ceredigion. Yr oedd yn un o ddyrnaid o gaerau tebyg yng Ngheredigion a phob un ohonynt, efallai, wedi'i chynllunio a'i chodi o fewn traddodiad pendant. Drwy gydol ei bodolaeth yn yr Oes Haearn byddai Pendinas wedi bod yn bentref prysur ac yn ganolbwynt i ffeiriau a marchnadoedd tymhorol.

The Iron Age hillfort at Pen Dinas, Aberystwyth, is one of the largest on the coast of Cardigan Bay and Ceredigion's biggest fort. The earthworks we see today are well over 2,000 years old, and construction may have begun on this prominent coastal hill around 400 BC, long before the Romans brought west Wales under their control. The fort overlooks the confluence of north Ceredigion's two main rivers, the Rheidol and Ystwyth, and may well have commanded coastal, valley and inland resources from this vantage point. The design of the hillfort is striking, with its steeply terraced defences visible for miles across Ceredigion. Pen Dinas was one of a handful of similarly-built forts in Ceredigion, perhaps all designed and built within a distinctive tradition. Throughout its lifetime Pen Dinas would have been a busy Iron Age village and the focus for seasonable agricultural fairs and markets.



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Uchod: Adluniad o Bendinas o'r gogledd-ddwyrain. Codwyd y gaer gyntaf yn fryngaer hirgron ar gopa gogleddol y bryn (de), sef yr un isaf a lletaf. Ar ryw adeg, ac efallai o dan arweinydd newydd, ehangwyd Pendinas drwy godi caer newydd ar y copa deheuol sy'n uwch ac yn gryfach (chwith), a phyrth o gerrig iddi yn y gogledd a'r de. Efallai i'r garneidd gladdu o'r Oes Efydd ar y copa deheuol fod yn gysylltiad â hynafiaid mewn oes gynharach ym marn adeiladwy'r yn yr Oes Haearn.

Above: Reconstruction of Pen Dinas from the north-east. The fort began life as an oval hillfort on the lower, broader north summit of the hill (right). At some point, perhaps under new leadership, Pen Dinas was expanded with a new fort on the higher, stronger south summit (left), entered via stone-walled gateways at the north and south. A pre-existing Bronze Age burial cairn on the south summit may have been seen by Iron Age builders as an ancestral link to earlier times.

Chwith: Awyrlun o Bendinas, Aberystwyth. Yn ystod y cyfnodau olynol o ailadeiladu ac ehangu, tyfodd y fryngaer nes cwmpasu dau gopa'r bryn, a bu'n rhaid codi rhagfuriau ar draws y culdir a'u cysylltai. Ar ochr ddwyreiniol y gaer ceid terasau amddiffynnol mawr (y copa ar y chwith), a chloddwyd yr un uchaf o'r graig. Gorfennwyd y rhagfuriau drwy godi muriau cerrig trawiadol iddynt, ond wedi iddynt gwmpo daeth gwair i dyfu drostynt.

Left: Aerial view of Pen Dinas, Aberystwyth. During successive phases of rebuilding and enlargement the hillfort grew to encompass both summits of the coastal hill, with ramparts built across the linking isthmus. Great defensive terraces flanked the east side of the fort (left summit), the upper one dug from solid rock. Ramparts were finished with impressive stone walls, now tumbled and overgrown.