



Newsletter

Issue 15 – October 2017

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Dig Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival 2017

After the success of various other festivals in Greater Manchester, the decision was taken by the Federation to hold an Archaeology Festival.

The first ever Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival took place from the 22nd June to the 25th June 2017. It had 17 free events to choose from across Greater Manchester and nearly every member of the Federation took part. Organised by the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation, the festival aimed to increase access, encourage the exploration, and celebrate the archaeology of Greater Manchester. Just over 300 members of the public took part in the four day festival with activities ranging from walks and talks to surveys and excavations on sites from the Roman period to the 20th century.

The feedback from societies and participants was very positive and the next Festival will be in June 2018.

Dr Mike Nevell
University of Salford

Federation members

The following groups are members of the Federation:

Bolton Archaeology and Egyptology Society, Bury Archaeological Group, Cheadle & Gatley U3A, Darwen Local History Society, Glossop and Longdendale Archaeological Society, Historic Graffiti Project, Holcombe Moor Heritage Group, Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society, Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society, Mellor Archaeological Trust, Middleton Archaeological Society, Moston Archaeology Group, Peel Tower Research Group, Prestwich Heritage Society, Royton Lives Through the Ages, Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts, Salford Archaeology & Local History Society, South Manchester Archaeological Research Team, South Trafford Archaeological Group, Tameside Archaeological Society, Wigan Archaeological Society, Wilmslow Community Archaeology

South Trafford Archaeological Society

Altrincham Archaeological Pub Crawl Thurs. 22nd June, 2017

STAG had recently been doing research to update and expand on their record of historic Altrincham. It, therefore, seemed appropriate to develop this theme to research the town's historic 'pubs'. Technical terms have changed over the years, so this term will be used for brevity.

Our starting point was the Pigot & Co. Trade Directory of Cheshire dated 1822-23 and from this we selected a number of establishments to visit. These were pubs still bearing a name that was included in the directory and are currently within the Old Market Place Conservation Area, as delineated by Trafford Council.

Some pubs were found to have been so renovated over the years as to show no visible signs of their age; some were too small for a group visit and for others the name had been adopted by another building in the intervening 200 years. We were welcomed in all the pubs during our initial forays, and found that experience in itself a pleasurable exercise and to be recommended.

Eventually, the number was whittled down to three hostelries that would give ample opportunity in the allotted time to do justice to both the exteriors and interiors. However, this would still allow other buildings to be acknowledged as we moved around the town.

We started in a room on the first floor of the Orange Tree kindly set aside by the landlord for us. We began with the H&S requirements and then went on to give a potted history of Altrincham to put the talk on pubs in context. This all hinged on the Royal Charter of 1290 which created the borough, and allowed for a weekly market on Tuesdays and a three day annual fair on the Feast of the Assumption on 15th August.

We were then able to continue with a visual survey of the building which included how the building had expanded over the years and the examination of some of the timber construction which is still visible in a number of the rooms.



Regrettably, we still had to inform the group that this building is not the one mentioned in Pigots. That had stood elsewhere and had been demolished when Stamford New Road was built in 1880. From the architecture, the building we visited would probably have been a private house in the 1820s. Further research will hopefully tell us who actually lived there.

Outside the Orange Tree, in Old Market Place, we were able to point out other buildings of interest. On the same row as the Orange Tree stood The Horse & Jockey, The Red Lion and the Wagon & Horses. The position once occupied by The Red Lion is still licensed and looks very similar to that on an old photograph. However, the original building was demolished in the 1980s and the planning department of the time passed plans for a replacement in a style consistent with the buildings around.

We were by then ready for another drink and went into the Old Market Tavern. This had undergone many name changes in the 20th century but in the 19th century was the Unicorn. (Not to be confused with a new pub on Ashley Road, Altrincham but a nice nod to an old name).

The Unicorn, as it was known in its heyday, was probably one of the largest establishments in the town, having gradually grown from a thatched roofed section facing south, to an addition facing to the east and then the absorption of the adjoining old town hall when a new town hall was built at the beginning of the 20th century. The landlady was kind enough to allow the group to access some back rooms which gave a hint of its previous glory.

We left the Unicorn to enjoy a guided walk along Church Walk, through St. George's churchyard and across to Church Street. Some Georgian buildings can still be identified on this part of Church Street. We made our way to Victoria Street, known as Well Lane in 1822, passing the Old Roe Buck, once one of the coaching stops.



The Old Roe Buck



The Malt Shovels

The last pub we enjoyed a drink in was The Malt Shovels. This view shows the white painted section of the pub which is the oldest part and bears a strong resemblance to private houses of the era. The position of an old fireplace can be seen with its old Bressumer beam.

Numbers had to be kept to a minimum out of necessity but we were still pleased to find that the event was fully booked. A good time appeared to be had by all and STAG looks forward to researching another walk for 2018.

Jane Darwin

Archaeology North West Programme, Friday 23rd June, 10am - 3.30pm

This free seminar was part of the *North West Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* update e project, funded by Historic England. It was attended by 20 people.

Since 2006, despite the economic recession of the period 2008 to 2012, developer-funded archaeology has revealed some important and spectacular archaeological sites in North West England, from the Mesolithic to the 20th century. The HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) has also been responsible for funding dozens of community archaeology projects across the region since 2006, the Portable Antiquities Scheme is revolutionising our understanding of several periods, whilst local societies and the universities based in the area have continued to rediscover the region's past. The following are just some of the highlights from amongst the hundreds of projects undertaken during the years 2006 to 2017. From the deep time of the Prehistoric period, the Mesolithic sites at Stainton West at Carlisle and Lunt Meadows in Merseyside stand out as finds that are changing our understanding of the period. The prehistoric Formby coastal footprints are another discovery that is bringing us closer to the people of the past; whilst the Bronze Age cemetery excavations at Shaw Cairn and Seven Lows are revealing that early farmers buried their dead. For the later prehistoric period the Cheshire Hillforts and Habitants project and the excavations at the Iron Age and Roman hilltop settlements at Mellor, Stockport and at Poulton in Cheshire, along with Iron Age metalwork, are beginning to change our impression of how these communities interacted with the rest of Britain.

For the Roman period highlights include the discovery of the Crosby Garret Roman cavalry helmet; the Knutsford and Malpas coin hoards; and new research, led by local societies, on Roman roads courtesy of free access to LIDAR data. The excavations at the vici at Manchester, Maryport, Papcastle and Ravenglass, and fresh excavations at the forts at Castleshaw and Ribchester are all extending the chronological range of occupation at these important urban sites. The Roman altars excavated at Manchester and Maryport, remind us how diverse this society was. Yet, the continuing rediscovery of Roman rural settlements from the Chester urban fringes and Salford, to the Pennine uplands around Alston Moor are also a reminder of the continuities with the communities of the late prehistoric period.



For the Early Medieval period the growing use and accuracy of radio-carbon dating is identifying early medieval settlements in Cumbria. The discovery of the Furness and Silverdale Viking hoards demonstrate how widespread their influence was, whilst the excavation of the Cumwhitton Viking burials gives a rare chance to analyse the remains of the Norse settlers themselves.

The Later Medieval period has seen research and excavation at several castles, including Buckton, Halton, Lancaster and Wolsty Castle. Medieval longhouses have also been identified and excavated in the Duddon valley by local groups. Late medieval buildings were studied in the rural village of Warburton, as well as timber-framed halls in Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside and tower houses in Cumbria. Redevelopment has also led to further medieval town excavations in Chester and Salford; and industry research has revealed more bloomeries located in East Coniston and the Castleshaw valley.

For the Post-medieval period new research includes the excavation of the Rainford pottery and their regionally important pottery production from the 17th and 18th centuries. There have been notable excavations of post-medieval halls in the Greater Manchester region as part of community projects, from Etherstone Hall to Royton Hall. In industrial terms 17th and 18th century watermills have also been excavated at Lymm and Northenden, and the early 18th century Cunsey Forge in Cumbria investigated. The rediscovery of Liverpool's (perhaps the UK's) first wet dock from the early 1700s is discovery of national importance. In the countryside the recording of barns in Lancashire and elsewhere before conversion is throwing light on the agricultural revolution as are estate surveys in areas such as Dunham, Kingsway in Rochdale and Warburton.

And finally, the industrial period and the 20th century. Studies of the environmental impact of pollution in Greater Manchester and the northern Pennines have started to record the impact of industry in the 19th century. There have been new surveys and excavations of manufacturing industries, from the textile mills of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Lancashire, including Manchester's first cotton spinning mill built by Richard Arkwright, to urban glass and iron manufactories. Canal and railway transport networks have also been the subject of detailed investigation from the Bridgewater Canal and the Liverpool to Manchester railway, to warehouses and railway signal boxes, as have the navvies who built these transport networks and their camps such as Risehill. The domestic side of industrialisation has been the subject of excavations on worker's housing across the region, but especially in Manchester and Salford, as has how to order this new society with the excavation of prisons at New Bailey in Salford and military barracks. The growing interest in 20th century archaeology has also seen a focus on military sites including World War 1 trenches at Blackpool and Walney Island, as well as air raid shelters and the role of new forms of building materials such as concrete as used in the Preston bus station of the 1960s.

I could pick out many other community, developer-funded, voluntary and university projects that have taken place in the last 11 years, but this breakneck speed round-up should be enough to indicate that we are in the midst of a period of huge discovery with long term implications for how we interpret and present North West England's archaeological record.

Dr Mike Nevell
Head of Archaeology
University of Salford

Bury Archaeological Group event for the GM Archaeological Festival 2017

As part of the GM Archaeology Festival Bury Archaeological Group offered free conducted walks around Bury's historic landmarks which included Bury Castle, the Two Tubs public house, Parish Church, the old market sites and Kay monument, the Wylde, gutter ends, the Great Town Ditch and the Rock. All the locations are within a short walking distance of each other and the tour lasted about 1 ½ hours. We ended with a tour of the museum where finds from the BAG excavation at Bury Castle in the 1970s are on display. The exhibits at the museum are particularly interesting in that they included leather and wooden objects preserved in the anaerobic conditions of the castle moat. This includes an arrow spacer similar to the one recovered from the Mary Rose. Two tours took place on Saturday 24th June and were conducted by our knowledgeable chairman Jim Ashton. Both tours were well attended and enjoyed by the visitors.

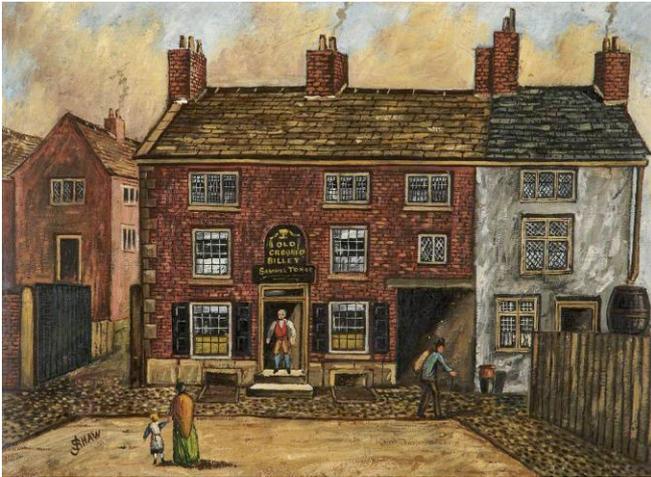


BAG stand at Bury Castle



Kay Monument in Kay Gardens

A small stand was set up adjacent to the Bury Castle meeting point for the tours. People attending the tours and passers-by were able to view a display of the work of the group, purchase copies of the group's publications and view and handle small finds from our current excavation at Lowes in Walmersley. For children visiting the stand, colouring books with an archaeological theme were provided free of charge and they were able to take away pottery samples recovered from the spoil heap during our excavations. Bury Castle is very close to the town centre but not on one of the main thoroughfares. As a consequence we had fewer visitors than we had hoped for. Despite this those people that did visit the stand seemed to enjoy the display and hopefully it raised their awareness of the history and archaeology of Bury and interest in our group.



The 'Old Crooked Billet' Inn, The Wylde, Bury
By James 'Clock' Shaw (1836–1915)



Two Tubs Public House.

The remains of Bury Castle had become neglected in recent years and with the agreement of Bury Council we undertook to tidy the site. Over a period of two days members of the group removed litter and weeds from the wall remains and gravel area surrounding it. Stubborn weeds were sprayed with weed killer. The grass on the embankment was trimmed to provide a clearer view of the remains. By the end of the two days I think that we had greatly improved the appearance of the castle remains and we received favourable comments from people passing by.



Cleaning up Bury Castle



Artist's Impression of Bury Castle

This was the first event of this type that group had taken part in for many years. Despite some problems setting up the stand in unexpectedly windy conditions the event went well thanks to the efforts of our member Charlotte who organised the event for us and liaised with Bury Council.

B.A.E.S at Hall i' th' Wood, Bolton – 24th June 2017

Bolton Archaeology and Egyptology Society took an enthusiastic group around the magnificent Hall i' th' Wood museum. The society has been surveying the graffiti marks in the building since April as part of the Greater Manchester Graffiti Survey. With an initial good response with bookings, even more people turned up on the day.

The tour took a chronological approach showing the development of the building. A rare surviving example of a Tudor wooden-framed house, Hall i' th' Wood was originally built as a half-timbered hall in the early 16th century. During the mid-17th century, when it was owned by a family of wealthy yeomen and merchants, the hall was given a grand Jacobean style stone extension. In later years the building was split into several rented dwellings and, whilst living in one of these with his family, Samuel Crompton famously invented the Spinning Mule. This invention was the first multiple spindle machine capable of consistent fine yarn production. It revolutionised the UK's textile industry and literally shaped the fortunes of the town and the North generally.

Hall i' th' Wood was inhabited up until the late 19th century, after which it fell into disrepair. Thanks to Lord Leverhulme, a local businessman and philanthropist, the building was saved from ruin and much-needed repairs were undertaken. The house and grounds were presented to the people of Bolton in memory of Samuel Crompton and were opened to the public as a museum in 1902.



The tour also took a look into areas of the building that are normally not accessible to the public. This included the attic spaces where preservation of the medieval graffiti is excellent.

Among the markings society members were looking for were daisy wheels, taper burns, and the “VV” sign, which stands for “Virgo Virginum” and has traditionally been associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary.

All in all it was a brilliant day, enjoyed by everyone.

Robert Huddard

Salford Archaeology & History Society & The Centre for Applied Archaeology - Walking a Revolution: A Tour of Worsley Canal Village. Sunday, 25th June, 2017, 12-2pm

On behalf of the recently formed Salford Archaeology & History Society I led an exploration of the Worsley Village end of the world's first industrial canal, The Bridgewater. Highlights included the Delph entrance to the 50 miles of underground coal mine tunnels, The Packet House, miners' cottages, lime kilns, old warehouse and probably the oldest surviving dry dock on a British Canal.



The tour also explored Worsley's transformation from industrial canal village to middleclass suburb.



Around 20 members of the public took part, which meant that the tour was fully booked, which was gratifying and feedback was positive.

Mike Nevell
Industrial Archaeology Panel of
Council for British Archaeology North West

GREATER MANCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGY FESTIVAL 2017

Day at Castleshaw Roman Forts, Saddleworth, 24th June 2017

The Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts were greatly pleased to be able to take part in the first Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival, on 24th June 2017. Our contribution covered three main areas of interest. Two of these involved necessary permissions from English Heritage and we obtained this so that a dig could take place within the scheduled site at the Northern edge, and a geophysical survey covering the area from the East gate to the North East corner.

We also planned three tours of the site and close environs to take place throughout the day. The tours would start at the Castleshaw Centre car park, go up the hill to take in historic landscape features in the Castleshaw Valley, including medieval and early mill sites and engineering related to the building of the reservoirs in the 1890s. At the top of the hill any walker gains an easy view of the Roman Road stretching the length of the valley to Delph. The tour would then explore both the earlier and later forts, and observe the dig where Norman Redhead, Archaeological Advisor for the Friends, would give feedback. The Geophysical Resistivity Survey would be the last call with explanation provided by Phil Barrett and Jane Neild, along with a chance to have a little go with the resistivity meter!

THE DIG



Norman shows us on the map of the site where the test pits will be dug today. And here are the test-pitting aims for the day:

1. Undertake archaeological test pitting in the area to the north of the Roman Fort northern defences and bounded on the west by the Roman north road and to the north and east by Dirty Lane. The test pits will be dug at regular intervals to give good coverage across the area to determine the presence or absence of Roman features and deposits.
2. Locate and partly re-excavate several old excavation trenches located in or close to the north defences.
3. Undertake archaeological trenching across the site of a former field boundary identified in the 2014 geophysical survey.

Below a couple of test pits well underway, one with some stake holes appearing...



And some of the dig team: Sonia; Nick and Gill; Tom and Alan; Marc and Cliff



By lunchtime we had Roman finds:



From the left, the photos show a piece of daub, a rim sherd of orange ware flagon, a fragment of melon bead, and a grey ware base with a mortarium rim sherd.

In his summary of the test pits Norman reports:

“Five test pits were dug in a line parallel with and just outside the defensive ditches on the north side of the Roman fort. The western most test pit revealed the edge of an old excavation trench dug at right angles across the road leading from the north gate. A shallow Roman deposit of burnt material was found overlying natural. This contained a sherd of early 2nd century AD black burnished ware. In the plough soil layer above the Roman deposit was found a fragment of Roman melon bead along with several sherds of post medieval pottery, including a nicely decorated body sherd of late 17th/early 18th century trail slipped ware. Another test pit was located over the line of an old excavation trench running north from the rampart. The old trench backfill was excavated to reveal a well-cut trench with vertical sides going down into natural clay. The date of this trench is not known. Within the back fill, and therefore unstratified, were several Roman finds, including: a rim sherd of mortarium, a base sherd of grey ware, and a piece of daub probably for a timber building wall. These finds might indicate that there was a building nearby. The presence of these sherds within the backfill suggests that this trench was probably dug in 1907-8 when it is known the workmen kept only the larger pieces. One of the other test pits had several stake holes in the base, cut into natural, but there was no discernible pattern and it is not known what these were for. The last two test pits went down onto natural and had no Roman deposits or finds, but one of them showed clear signs of plough marks cut in to natural yellow clay. This indicates that this north area of the defences has been affected by deep ploughing. There were no Roman features but this is the first of three day’s test pitting in this area so we may well find these when we come back to the site at the end of August.”

THE GEOPHYS

Meanwhile, over on the East side of the fort Phil and Jane were doing the resistivity survey of an oblong area from the East Gate to the fence.



Here is an image of the geophysics result, overlaid on to the familiar aerial photo of the forts... you can see the markings of the East Gate at bottom left corner of the geophysics overlay and, very clearly, the newly-found road.

A very pleasing finding – the newly discovered road that was hinted at in the 2014 excavations can be seen to continue running at an angle, northwards from the main road exiting the east gate. It runs across what should be the site of defensive ditches, raising all sorts of interesting questions....

THE TOURS

Altogether around 40 people took advantage of the tours of the forts and environs, and we hope they enjoyed the day!



From the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts and its Committee and Associates we offer grateful thanks to all who took part in every aspect of the First GM Archaeology Festival day.



Castleshaw committee members attend the official photo call for the new information panels at Castleshaw Car Park, a joint project between the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts and United Utilities.

Further information, including blogs and reports on the work of the Friends, can be found on the website, <http://www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk/>, along with details of upcoming events/talks and membership application.

Jane Neild, Treasurer
Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts

Tameside Local History Forum

TLHF held their exhibition for the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival at the Fairfield Moravian Settlement, Droylsden, Greater Manchester.

The participants of the Forum were, Friends of Dukinfield Old Hall Chapel, the Forum's exhibition of the excavation at Newton Hall, Hyde and of the excavation at Buckton Castle, Stalybridge. There were also displays given by Tameside Archaeological Society and the Dukinfield Branch of the Cheshire Family History Society. There was a book stall selling many interesting books on the history of the region run by a Mr. Bob Dobson.



The Friends of Dukinfield Old Hall Chapel's display included photographs of the two archaeological excavations held at the Hall. The first excavation in 1982 was on Dukinfield Old Hall itself and photographs taken at that time show the Chapel complete with four walls and a roof. The photographs taken at the excavation in 2013 now show the chapel without its roof and with only three walls remaining. This is evidence of the neglect the Chapel has been subjected to since the first excavation. The photographs also show the grave cuttings of Sir Robert Dukinfield and his two daughters inside the Chapel.

The display of Buckton Castle really interested the visitors. One was a young archaeological student who is studying archaeology in Wales. He had heard of the castle but was really interested to see what had been discovered. Two other young men with an interest in archaeology who were among the visitors were excited to discover the existence of a castle in the area.

Situated on a rocky peak off Castle Lane (which runs between Buckton Vale Road and Huddersfield Road) Carbrook, Stalybridge. Buckton Castle has commanding views to the west and north. It has been the subject of all kinds of speculation which has resulted in several unauthorised digs and treasure hunts. The first authorised archaeological dig did not take place until the 1990s.

Possibly built in the 12th or 13th century it is thought to have been built by the Earl of Chester during the anarchy of the reign of King Stephen. It was never completed and not of high status as no dressed stone was found and there was very little datable evidence on site.

Photographs of the Newton Hall excavation also roused interest in its archaeology especially regarding to the finds on the site and the history of the hall. Many visitors had passed the building and had been curious about its story but knew little about it.



There was a fire in 1967 which almost completely destroyed the barn and during the demolition it was noted that the cruck frames were of historical importance. They date, according to dendrochronology, to timber being cut down in 1380. Mr. George Kenyon was informed and it is due to his generosity that the frames were saved and the hall was restored during the years 1967 to 1970. There were many interesting finds during the excavation of 2012 including evidence of earlier stone constructions and ditches.

On the whole the exhibition given by Tameside History Forum was a success considering it was a first attempt and perhaps the experience gained from this will help in any future planned archaeological festivals.

The event at the Moravian Settlement was given an article along with a photograph in the Tameside Reporter dated 6th July, with the comment "It is hoped the event will become an annual fixture and judging by attendance it can be expected to return in 2018". Let's hope so.

Valerie Bowker

Tameside Archaeological Society Finds Workshop at Portland Basin Museum Sunday, 25th June, 2017, 10.30 to 4pm



Various finds were set out on tables for everyone to handle, with some finds in cabinets. There was also a map of Tameside and a records book on display. TAS members were at each session to guide people through the different time zones.



We had lots of interest from people visiting the museum. About 50 people attended our displays, most of whom had no idea that so much archaeology was happening in our area and so many finds had been uncovered.

A lot of people also showed great interest in coming to Cheetham Park on the planned Archaeological Weekend because they can 'have a dig'.

All in all not a bad two days, as we had also joined our friends of the Tameside Local History Forum at the Moravian Centre on the Saturday of the Festival.

Keith Rigby

Littleborough Historical & Archaeological Society

Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival Report 2017.

We initially decided to take part in this year's archaeology festival at the behest of Norman Redhead who as our patron comes along annually to give us a report on what archaeology has been taking place within Greater Manchester.

As well as our normal displays of the "Littleborough Hoard" of roman coins and toll board from Steanor Bottom Toll House we decided to display some of the better flint implements from our large collection of lithics. We also decided to put on display some of the material found during excavations at the site of the former Cleggswood Colliery (a small local coal and clay mine which operated from around 1820 until its final closure in 1928).



Due to prearranged bookings we were only able to open on the Sunday, but thought this may be the day when people had more free time. In the end the number of visitors was disappointing as on the day we only had 15 visitors and only one came because of the archaeology festival, the rest came to look around (whilst waiting for their trains) after seeing the centre open signs on the gate. If we decide to take part again I think we will try to open for longer and advertise the event better locally. It may also be worthwhile to contact other societies by email and try to reach a larger audience and let them know what there is to see on the eastern periphery of Greater Manchester. On reflection it was a useful experience with positive comments and people saying they will spread the word that Littleborough's History Centre is worth a visit.

Littleborough's History Centre is situated in the station buildings on platform 2 at Littleborough Railway Station.

Or visit our website www.littleboroughshistory.org

David Grayson.

SMART Showcase Historic Cheadle

As part of the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival a weekend of events exploring the history of Cheadle, Stockport was coordinated by the South Manchester Archaeology Research Team (SMART) and Cheadle Civic Society. The Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival also fell close to the 10th anniversary of the formation of SMART, which itself grew from a Dig Manchester excavation. Close connections to Cheadle village have been fostered through projects carried out in the area, such as the excavations at Cheadle Green and a move to Cheadle for SMART meetings. The project on Cheadle Green was one of many recounted by Chair Carolanne King in a presentation that summarised a decade of work carried out by the team at sites in and around Cheadle. Many of these projects have been carried out in partnership with other archaeology or heritage bodies including The Cheadle Civic Society and this was a theme that continued in the weekend's activities.



A walking tour led by Andrew Frazer of Cheadle Civic Society proved very popular with a large group enjoying the journey through the history of Cheadle. Their website (www.cheadlecivicsociety.org) contains a wealth of information about the village both past and present and the Cheadle Events page has some information on the excavations of Cheadle Green carried out by SMART and GMAU. Norman Redhead, of both SMART and the Cheadle Civic Society, led a second, and equally popular, walking tour specifically exploring the archaeology of Cheadle as part of a 'Meet the Archaeologist' session. Both tours were supplemented by a comprehensive display about SMART and the Civic Society activities and there were opportunities for the public to handle finds.



Working with the Greater Manchester Medieval Graffiti Survey (GMMGS), SMART have completed a survey of man-made marks and inscriptions in St Mary's Church, Cheadle and the very generous church wardens agreed to open the church for the festival. Visitors could also join GMMGS for a tour of the marks and graffiti at St Mary's with SMART members and church volunteers on hand to point out the hidden secrets. Plans are under way for SMART to produce material for the church to allow visitors to explore the marks and graffiti themselves. The significant interest shown by the people of Cheadle, and Stockport, suggests there is a healthy appetite for future archaeology events in the village and plans for next year's festival have already begun.



For more information on SMART please visit our website at www.southmanchesterarchaeology.wordpress.com

Manchester Museum - Event for the GM Archaeological Festival 2017



Manchester Museum's contribution to the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival was called: MANCHESTER VICTORIAN POTTERY

Visitors to Manchester Museum had an opportunity to stick together broken pottery from excavations in Manchester. It is a little-known fact that when archaeologists were digging on the site of the Roman fort in Manchester during the 1970s they kept the Victorian and Edwardian pottery that they disturbed. This material is the archaeological equivalent of a jigsaw, except that some of the pieces are missing and we don't have a picture on the outside of the box to help us. This hadn't stopped previous visitors putting together teapots, mugs and chamber pots.

Adults were invited to drop in and find out how much fun it can be.



The event leader was Kerry Beeston and she was available on Sunday, 25th June between 2pm and 4pm

Vanessa Oakden, the Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, is also available on other days during the year at the museum, so if you would like to go and see her to identify and possibly have your finds recorded check at:

<http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk>, the museum website for future dates. The Portable Antiquities Scheme includes all archaeological objects found in England and Wales, which date from before 1700. It is usually a 'drop-in' session, free to adults.

CASTLEFIELD WALK FOR GREATER MANCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGY FESTIVAL ON SATURDAY 24TH JUNE 2017

This guided walk was led by Gordon Browne on behalf of MRIAS. Castlefield is an historically fascinating area which is located on the confluence of the rivers Medlock and Irwell. The first intervention was by the Romans in AD 79, but of great importance historically are the substantial remains of early canal and railway structures. Very recently, and still ongoing, is the railway introduction of the 'Ordsall Chord', with its distinctive Corten Steel Bridge. Our walk started at the top of the steps overlooking the canal arm (old Staffordshire Arm and warehouse site) and the Castlefield Open Air Arena, at the side of the Castlefield Hotel on Liverpool Road.



From this one can see the rise of the sandstone bluff, with the replica fort, above the water of the canal. The canal level at this point is much higher than the original curving Medlock, which swept around the breast shaped sandstone bluff upon which the fort was built. This shape gave the name Mamucium which became Manchester. We were honoured to have on our walk, the two authors of one of the early Castlefield guides, Derek Brumhead and Terry Wyke. The guide is called 'A Walk Around Castlefield' produced in 1989 (Manchester Polytechnic). Also a local couple came, and the gentleman had worked at a Motor Engineers on Liverpool Road for 37 years so the guided walk became quite a cross fertilisation of information. The walk was in two parts, the morning covering the Roman Fort, Liverpool Road, the Grocers' Warehouse, Deansgate Viaduct, the area of the original Kenworthy's warehouse, the river Medlock weir, and the boundary stone marking Manchester and Hulme. Most of us spent lunch outside at the Wharf Hotel, next to the Middle Warehouse. After lunch, we compared the differences between the Bridgewater Middle and the Merchants' warehouses. There are 13 years between them but the later Middle Warehouse had the benefit of fireproof construction. We carried on over the sickle-arch bridge (by Whitby and Bird) admired the railway viaducts, moving on to the position of the Brindley Clover Leaf weir, which was later modified, and onto the confluence of river Medlock and diverted canal / overflow waters. From Potato Wharf we crossed over the river Irwell and walked along to admire the new Ordsall Chord Bridge. By complete contrast in age, we went into the Science Museum to meet David George, who took us round the 1830 Liverpool Road Station and admired the warehouse of the same date, which was unfortunately closed for refurbishment. We concluded our day with coffee in the Museum cafe.

Wigan Archaeological Society



As part of the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival, the Wigan Arch Soc invited six volunteers from the general public to come and help them with their excavations at Toddington Lane. Over the two days, they were shown how to dig trenches, trowel surfaces and survey site features. It was a great success and, despite the damp conditions on the first day, it was enjoyed by everyone, and has resulted in new members for the Society. One of the volunteers, Vanessa Oakden,

happens to be the Finds Liaison Officer for Cheshire, Greater Manchester & Merseyside. She came along with her seven year old son Lucas who definitely wants to come again. As yet we haven't turned up anything of particular interest for Vanessa, but she was intrigued by an item which came out of the stony layer in Test Pit 1. It turned out to be the fossil of an ancient calamite plant (a sort of giant horsetail probably about 300 million years old).



The Project

Earlier in the year we had started looking at the possibility of a Roman road from Wigan to Ribchester (a conjectured line mentioned in the 3rd century Antonine Itinerary). We'd had a call from a landowner in Haigh near Wigan who asked if we could do anything about the Roman milestone near her house that had recently been broken. Her belief that it was Roman came from the fact that she'd always assumed that the adjacent Toddington Lane was a Roman road - it lines up with Haigh Road which, in turn, aligns with the footpath known as the Wash Path, which points directly towards Wigan. To be honest we hadn't considered this alignment in the past as our searches have tended to be further to the west, e.g. a road leading off Leyland Mill Lane following the River Douglas valley on the east side, or Chorley Road, which follows the Douglas on the west side. The Haigh route however, is quite possible as its antiquity is attested by the fact that the Wash Path is the ancient boundary between the Salford and West Derby Hundreds.



Initial Excavations

We soon established, however, on our first visit that the stone was not Roman and not even a milestone - but what exactly was it? It looked just like a gatepost but nobody ever remembers a gate being there and nothing was showing on the early maps. In

fact our research has shown that in the past the lane was much wider at this point, being the main road north out of Haigh. This was because the current main road, Riley Lane, was only built in the mid 19th century.

We started our excavations in March and soon established that the stone was in fact the end of a large but well built dry stone wall that had been buried under piles of quarry debris. Early maps indicated that extensive quarrying carried out in the fields on both sides of the lane since at least the mid 19th century, had transformed the landscape. It had ended in the early 20th century, but it was only in the late 1960s that the final phase, at the top of the hill, had been filled in and the area landscaped. We thought that this was the end of our work here, as the wall seemed to be built on earlier quarry debris, indicating that perhaps it was part of that activity. However, on closer inspection, we could see that the wall was built on top of a well- made cobbled road surface. It continued across the full extent of our trench, confirming that



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the old road, shown on the early maps, had indeed survived - but how old was it? Could it even be Roman? The only way to find out, it seemed, would be to cut a section through it to find the edges and see if it had the usual ditches associated with Roman roads

Further Excavations

Extending our trench in this area proved impractical, as the overlying quarry debris rises by a few metres on either side of the current road making it seem like a hollow way. We therefore decided to open trenches further down the hill where the field levels off. Initial test pitting near the bottom of the field showed that the old road had not survived, being replaced by a modern road surface. This surface consisted of broken concrete roof tiles compacted onto a natural bedrock of Marlstone. Further excavations (with the help of the farmer's JCB) showed that this surface extended into the field, well beyond the width of the old road as shown on the early maps. (This surface must have been created in the 1960s but strangely nobody seems to remember it and it isn't shown on any map.) Again we thought we had finished in this area but a rock-cut ditch feature appearing in our first test pit caught our attention. It runs parallel with the lane and could be associated with an earlier road.



However, with no other sign of an earlier road in this area, we asked our JCB friend to open a new trench further up the hill, a few metres away from our first trench. This would hopefully enable us to pick up the old road again and also establish if, perhaps, our stone was part of a gate entrance. No sign of an entrance could be found however, but we were able to uncover a good section of the old road.



It showed it to be constructed of a deep (40cm thick) layer of compacted stone. Disappointingly, however, a piece of post-medieval pottery buried halfway down confirms that it isn't Roman.

We still haven't quite yet finished here, however, as our latest work has revealed a post hole buried by the old road. It punches through the underlying surface which we assumed to be the bedrock. Underneath is a layer of clay suggesting that once again we have another road surface to investigate.

Our team of volunteers has enabled us to make significant progress with our project. Vanessa and Lucas helped with trowelling the old road surface in Trench 3, while Ian and Lee helped with extending the test pits and cleaning Trench 1. Julie and her partner Paul help with trowelling the new surfaces discovered in the test pits and they learned how to record the levels using a dumpy level.



Lee, in fact, happens to be specialist in photogrammetry and has since been back to record Trenches 1 and 3 in 3D for us. These can be viewed (if you have decent internet speed) on his website here <https://skfb.ly/6s9pO> and here <https://skfb.ly/6s9q9>



You can also follow our progress in more detail on our blog site here: http://wiganarchsoc.co.uk/blog/?page_id=968

or our regular website here <http://wiganarchsoc.co.uk/>

Bill Aldridge (Secretary)