

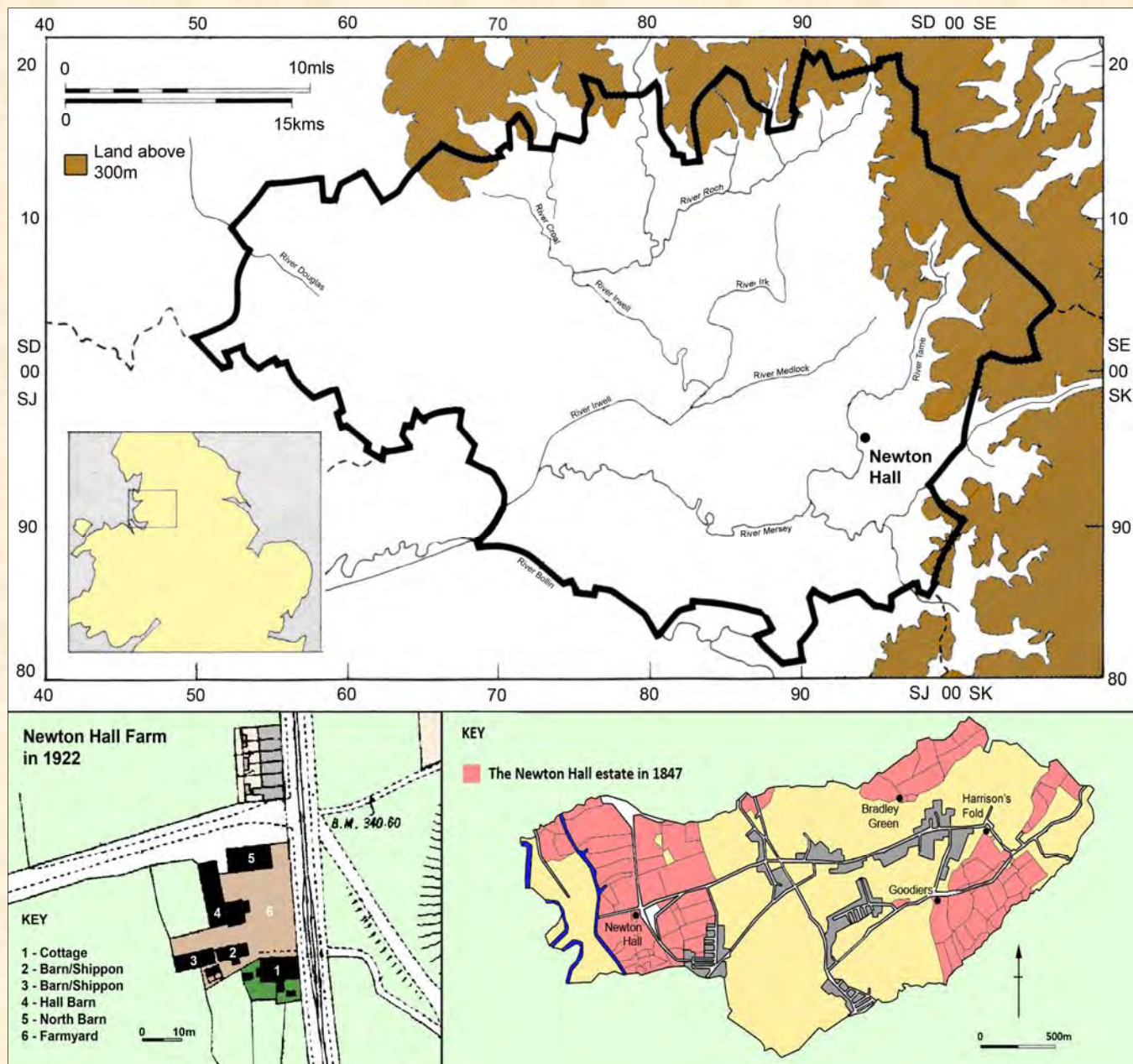
**GREATER
MANCHESTER'S
PAST REVEALED**

·7·



NEWTON HALL

REDISCOVERING A MANORIAL COMPLEX



The location of Newton Hall

FOREWORD

Many of Greater Manchester's medieval hall sites were demolished in the post-war years. The story of Newton Hall's survival is thus a remarkable one. Having come so close to being lost it has been saved, restored, and is now one of Tameside's most significant heritage assets. Its historical importance has been enhanced by research carried out by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit as part of the Tameside Archaeology Survey and, more recently, by the community archaeology project organised by the Tameside Local History Forum and the University of Salford Centre for Applied Archaeology.

These investigations have demonstrated that the surviving cruck-framed hall was just one part of a much larger complex of buildings originating as a manorial complex. Recent excavations have revealed well-preserved remains of a farmhouse and its outbuildings, and also tantalising glimpses of much earlier features relating to the first occupation of the site. But what is even more rewarding is the way in which the community of Newton and Tameside, young and old, ably supported by professional and experienced volunteer archaeologists, have come together to share the excitement of exploring and understanding the site's heritage. This booklet sets out the captivating story of the preservation and rediscovery of the historic fabric and buried remains of Newton Hall.

Spreading the word about Greater Manchester's fascinating but relatively unrecognised archaeology is challenging. One of the ways to do this is through publication in the form of 'popular' booklets. I have considerable pleasure, therefore, in introducing you to this publication, which is Volume 7 in a series covering the archaeology of the whole of the Greater Manchester area: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. This series is called 'Greater Manchester's Past Revealed' and provides a format for publishing significant archaeology from developer-funded research or community projects in an attractive, easy-to-read, and well-illustrated style.

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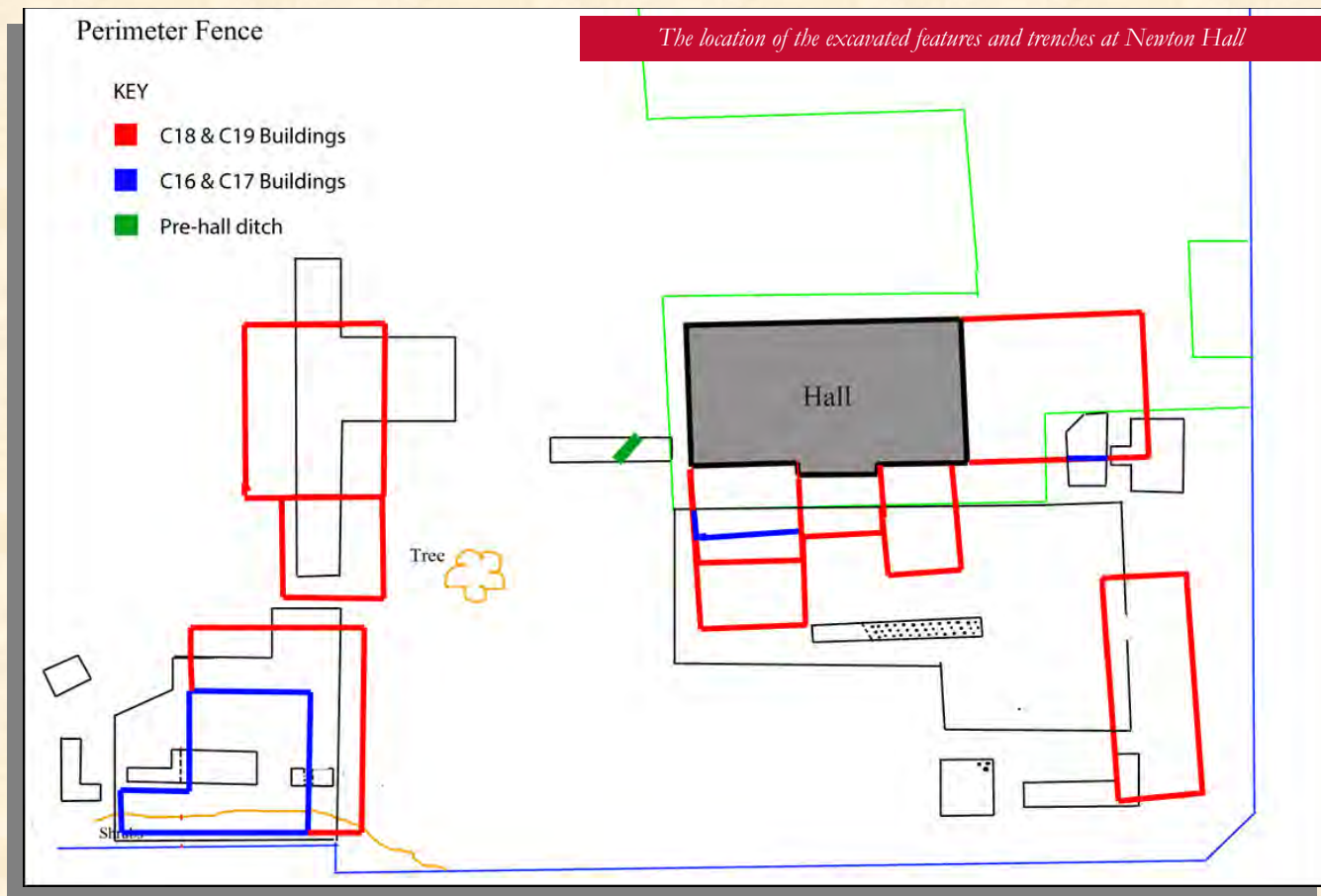
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INTRODUCTION

One cold evening in late February 2012 more than 50 enthusiastic archaeologists and historians gathered under the old beams of Newton Hall in Hyde. They had come to hear about a new heritage project organised by the Tameside History Forum and funded through the Heritage Lottery. That evening members of the Forum explained how the history and archaeology of Newton Hall, the very building where the gathering was being held, would be rediscovered and explored over the following spring and summer. This would be done through the efforts of local community volunteers and Tameside school children, with the support of professional archaeologists from the University of Salford. The results of that community dig, and the experiences of those uncovering their local past, are recorded in this booklet.

The timber hall at Newton is all that remains of a much larger building. The manor was founded by the Newton family in the early thirteenth century. In 1617 the hall had 21 rooms and the complex also included two shippons, two barns, a stable, an oxhouse and a brewhouse. The Newton estate passed by marriage to other families in the eighteenth century and the hall began a long decline. By the nineteenth century it was a farm and in the 1960s faced demolition: only a cottage, a barn, and a fragment of the hall surviving.

The remains of the old timber hall were rescued and restored in the years 1967 to 1970. A generation of fresh research on the fabric of the hall and the surrounding farm buildings has allowed a better understanding of the historical importance of the site. The timber-framed structure of the hall was re-examined in the late-1990s and dated to the fifteenth



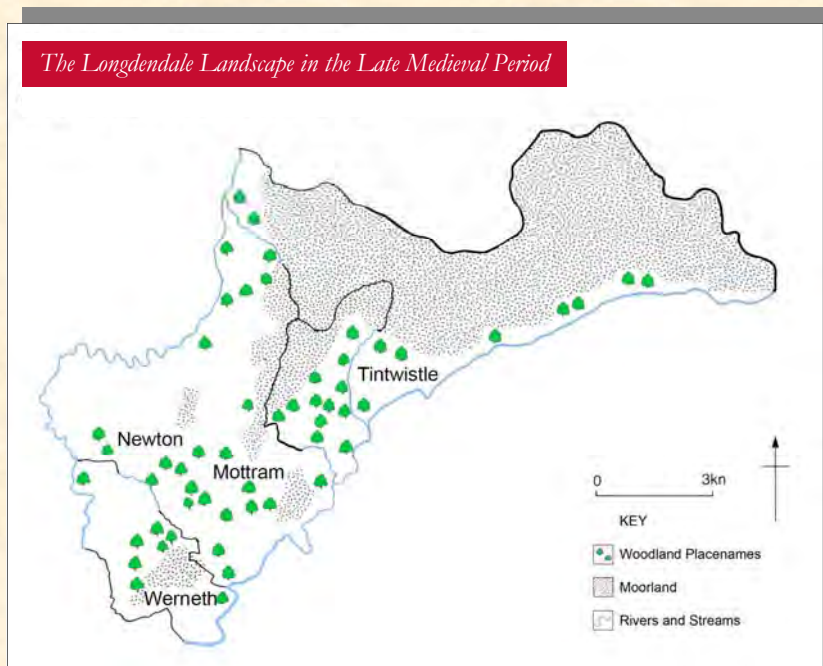
century. In 2008 for the first time the land around the hall was investigated, revealing fragments of the lost farm buildings. The dig in 2012 recovered a detailed plan of the farmyard and the project also captured memories of the old farm, allowing Newton's role as a manor house and farmstead to be recorded for future generations to enjoy.

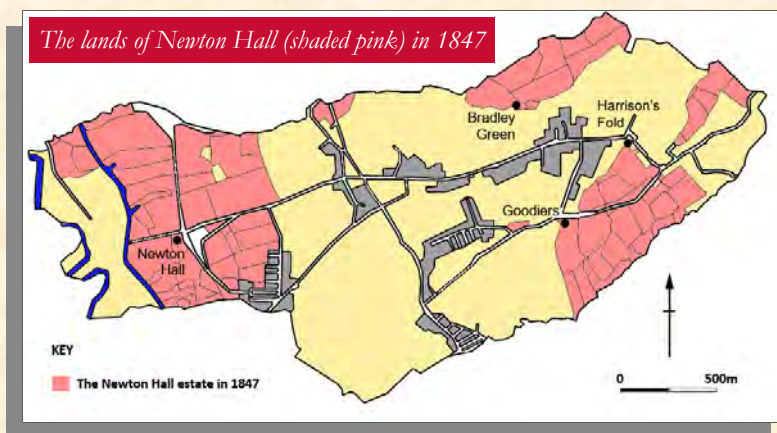
THE HISTORY OF NEWTON HALL

The first secure reference to the manor of Newton comes in the period 1211-25 when it was mentioned in a charter. In this charter Hamo de Massey confirmed to Robert the clerk of Stockport the land of Newton conferred on him by Thomas of Godley and confirmed by Thomas de Burgh, the Lord of Longdendale, in the early thirteenth century. Newton is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey, a tax assessment for the whole of England compiled for William I in 1086. It thus seems likely that before this period this area was included in one of those manors in Longdendale retained by the Earl of Chester in the Domesday Survey: perhaps the manor of Mottram.

A Robert de Newton and his son, also called Robert, were living at Newton in 1276 and 1306 and were probably descendants of Robert the clerk of Stockport. These were the first two members of the Newton family who were definitely the manorial lords of the manor. A Robert Newton was recorded in the Longdendale survey of 1360

The Longdendale Landscape in the Late Medieval Period





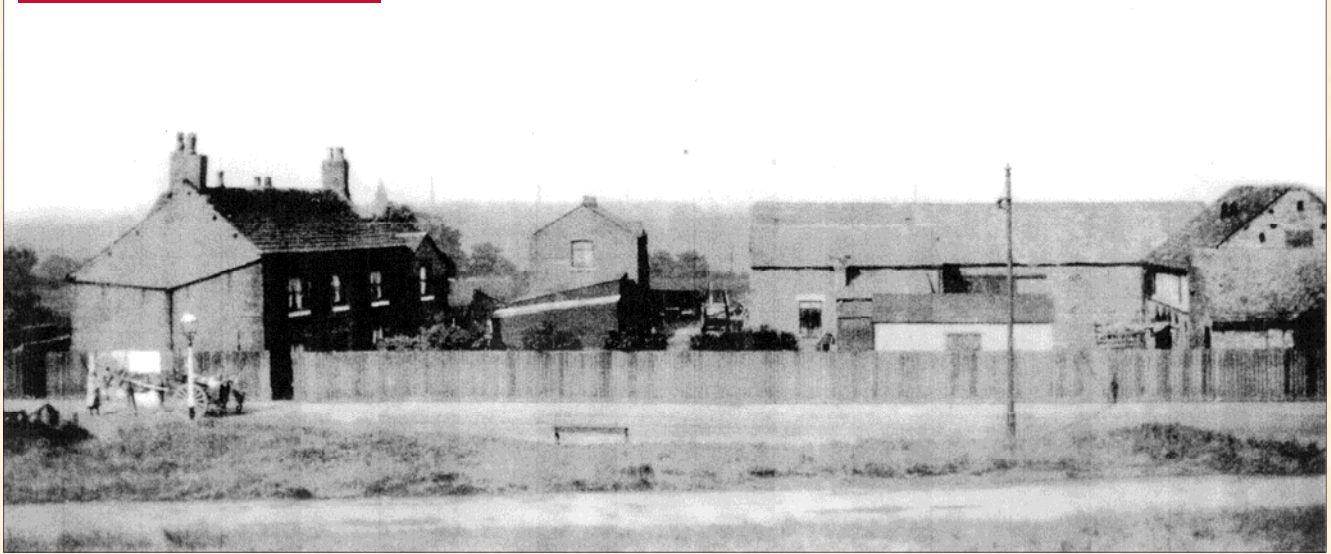
as holding the manor from the Lord of Longdendale. Robert was obliged to provide arms to the lord under his knight service, but he also had to supply labour and food from his own tenants for the Lord's annual harvest in the manor of Arnfield, next to Tintwistle, and for the annual spring

ploughing within the Lordship. By 1408 the feudal services listed in the 1360 survey were beginning to be turned into monetary payments: the plough services provided by Newton for instance were valued at 8s 1d in that year.

The manor of Newton remained in the family's possession throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The last male heir, John Newton, died unmarried in 1692, whereupon the estate, including lands in Castleton in Rochdale, passed to his five sisters, Anne, Dorothy, Elizabeth, Katherine, and Mary.

In 1711 the neighbouring manorial lords, the Duckenfield family, bought the Newton estate from the surviving heiresses of the Newton family. Although the manor remained in that family's hands until the twentieth century it was not their main residence, and the hall was let to wealthy families and from the mid-nineteenth century was used as a dairy farm.

Newton Hall Farm around 1920



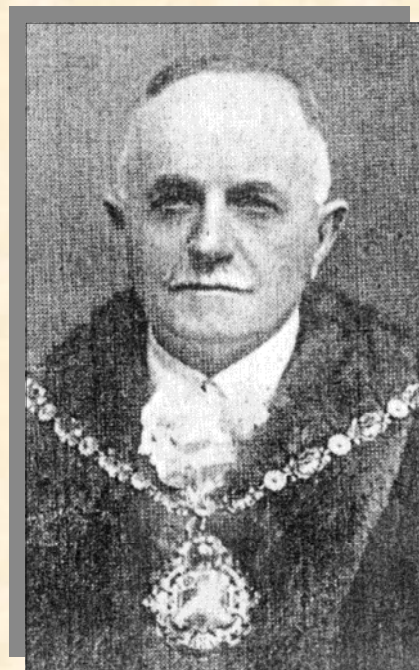
The census returns for 1841 and 1851 show that the farmstead was occupied by four families, and by three families in the period 1861 to 1881. By the end of the century the farm comprised a set of barns, a cottage, and a farmhouse set around three sides of a courtyard fronting, to the east, Hyde Road. In 1918 the farm tenancy was taken up by James Watt and his family, who became the final tenants.

In the 1950s the Dukinfield-Astley family sold much of what was left of the historic Newton estate: just 128 acres. In 1951 9.5 acres of land to the north and west of the hall were bought by Messrs William Kenyon and Sons Ltd, whilst in 1953 the two acres on which Newton Hall Farm stood were bought by the Municipal Borough of Hyde.

When James Watt, son of the original James, retired from farming in early 1967 Hyde Municipal Borough decided to demolish the remaining buildings on the Newton Hall farm site, the cottage and two barns, and once the Watt family left demolition of the surviving farm buildings began.

In 1982 Christopher Kenyon, son of Sir George Kenyon then the owner of William Kenyon and Sons, recorded in a letter what happened next:: ‘...when it became known that Mr Watts had retired, my father approached Hyde Corporation to purchase the two acres of land on which the outbuildings stood. He was told by the Corporation that there were some ‘old beams’ in the barn which were known to be of architectural interest and should be preserved in some form, though not necessarily within the existing barn. Having looked at the beams himself, my father called in Dr Marsden of Manchester University who pronounced the cruck framed structure to be of considerable historic and architectural interest’.

Although these ‘old beams’ had been noted as long ago as 1932 by the local historian Thomas Middleton in his book on Hyde, who mentioned that the old timber barn had been partially rebuilt after a recent fire, it was only when



James Watt, Mayor of Hyde for 1938-9



The old timbers at Newton Hall during demolition in 1967

the surrounding brick walls were removed that the full majesty of the surviving structure could be seen. At the time of the initial find it was still thought the cruck structure represented a late Medieval barn, but as the demolition of the surrounding brick walls

progressed the high quality of the cruck timbers, the chamfering on the blades, and the absence of lower tie-beams in each truss suggested that this was originally a three-bay Medieval open hall. With the support of the Ancient Monuments Society and Dr Marsden of the Architecture Department at the University of Manchester, Sir George Kenyon now began negotiations with Hyde Municipal Borough Council with a view to buying both the land on which the timber-framed building stood and the building itself. The purchase of the timber building, and the two acres of land on which it stood, for £2,000, was completed in April 1968. This marked the start of the scheme to restore what was now recognised as a Medieval open cruck hall. The restoration, envisioned as both a conservation project and a research exercise, took nine months and cost £23,000

to complete. It involved the re-creation of a three-bay cruck-framed open hall with around 35% of the timbers being original, including the two Medieval oak cruck trusses and part of the eastern external wall frame.

There were two phases to this work. Firstly, a concrete raft with under-floor heating was laid and the sandstone sill on which sat the timbers repaired and rebuilt. An additional truss for the southern gable and a new eastern wall-frame were built and raised. The western wall and the northern gable were built in brick and rendered, whilst the new cruck frame was made from a single 300-year-old oak tree seasoned for 30 years.

Secondly, there was the research element of the project. This focused upon the construction techniques needed for assembling the cruck truss and the eastern wall frame. At the time there was little experimental information on this aspect of Medieval timber-frame design and Newton Hall was one of the first research projects of its kind. As far as was possible



tools based upon surviving Medieval examples and manuscript pictures were used; these included borers, adzes, gouges and saws. These were used to re-create the mortices and tenons, lap joints, and scarf-joints that survived in the original timbers. The construction process showed that the wall sills for the east and west elevations would have been positioned first, with the rest of the wall-frame reared on top of this. In contrast, the wall sill for the gable-end cruck truss would have been fixed to the bottom of the cruck truss and reared into place as a single piece.



Preparing the new oak timbers



An adze being used on the new oak cruck truss

The replacement southern gable cruck truss, which included some original rails and posts but new blades from an oak tree in Bury St Edmonds, was lifted into place in March 1969. The gable end closed-truss weighed nearly four tons and the lifting was undertaken using a mobile long-jib crane. However, originally this would



Traditional tools used for preparing the new oak timbers

have been done using pulleys and scaffolding to prop the cruck as it was used. To support the cruck truss, temporarily, diagonal members were inserted and props secured to the ground. Surviving cruck trusses



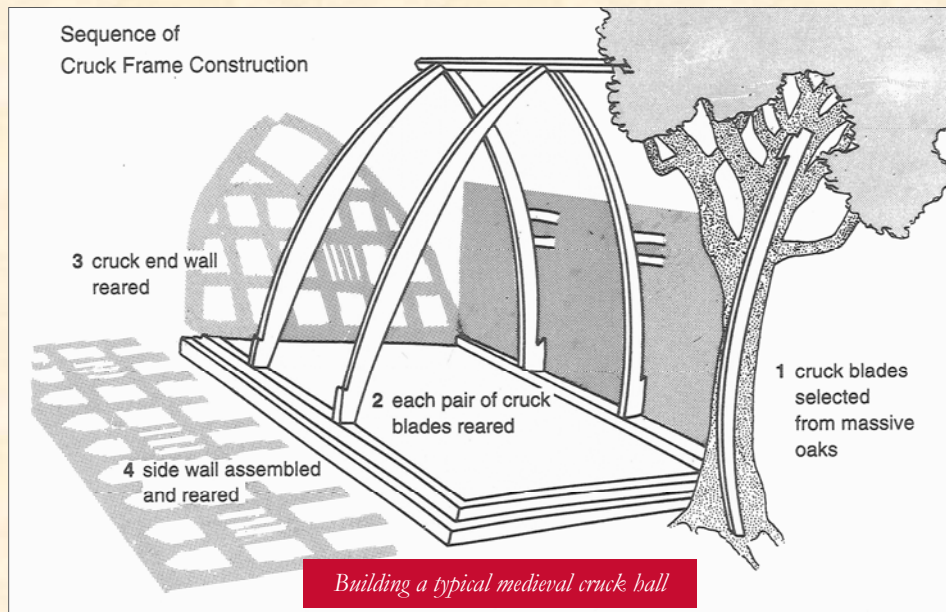
Erecting the new oak cruck truss in 1968



Planing one of the oak timbers

sometimes retain wedge-shaped seatings at about two-thirds of the height of the truss and these seatings served to secure the temporarily inclined props at an intermediate stage of the rearing of the truss. Such features can still be observed on all four original cruck blades at Newton Hall. The interior of the hall was fitted-out by October 1969 and the restoration, including landscaping, was completed in early 1970.

NEWTON HALL AND CRUCK CONSTRUCTION

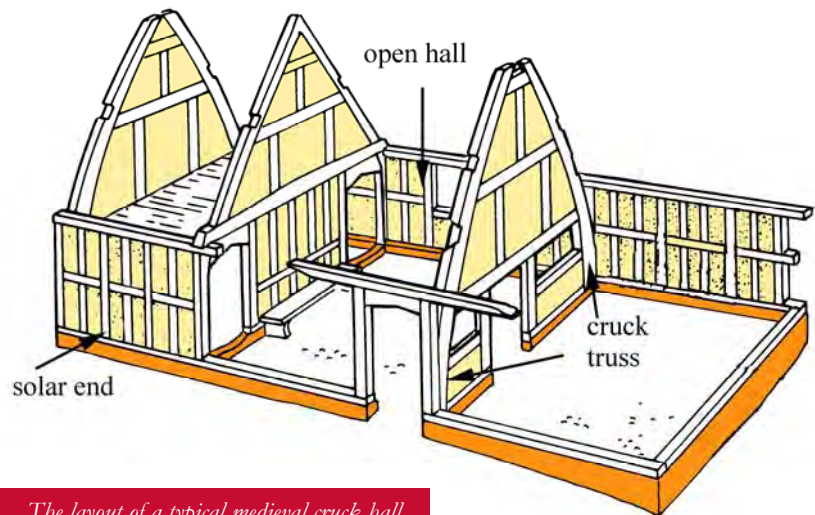


Newton Hall is a timber-framed cruck building. Crucks are large curved timbers, often referred to as blades and usually made of oak. They were formed by splitting or sawing a single curved tree trunk to form timbers roughly 10 to 12

inches (c. 0.30m) thick. Two such blades were then combined as an A-shaped truss, jointed at the top (the apex). Beams running across the two cruck blades three-quarters of the way up (the collar) and at mid-height (tie-beam) made the structure rigid and allowed the crucks to transfer the full weight of the roof to the ground. Pairs of crucks were linked by beams at apex height (the ridge tree) and at mid-height (the purlins), which formed the framework for the roof. In such a structure, as at Newton Hall, the side walls were independent of the roof and were not load-bearing, though the mid-height tie-beam was usually extended beyond the line of the blades as far as the feet of the truss to form the seating for the wall plates (the top of the timber-framed external wall). Sometimes the base of a cruck blade had a small notch into which an upright post for supporting

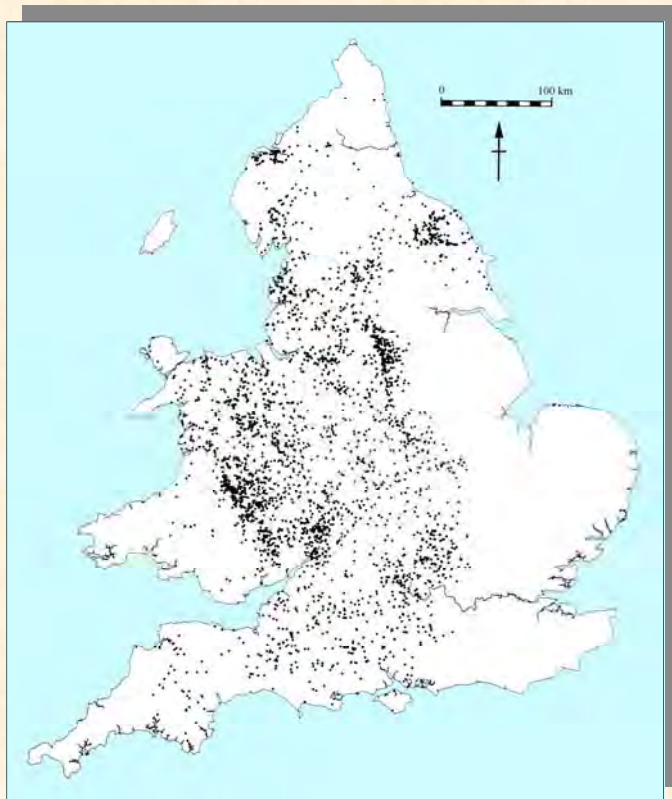
the external walls would have sat. The size of cruck trusses varied, depending upon the quality of timber available, but in general the truss was as broad as it was high with the wall plates one storey above ground level.

The tradition of cruck-framed timber building is long and its origins obscure. The earliest surviving examples have been tree-ring dated to the mid-thirteenth century. Whilst the earliest surviving example of a particular style of building is seldom the first one of its type there is no conclusive evidence that the building type was common before this date. Cruck structures are found in the northern and western parts of the Britain Isles, but not in the South-East and East Anglia. The reasons for this gap in the distribution, and the occurrence of the related building technique of the base-cruck in some of this blank area (a technique tree-ring dated to the period *c.* 1245 to *c.* 1460), has been hotly debated. The distribution of the



The layout of a typical medieval cruck hall

earliest thirteenth century examples may provide an answer. These can be found in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, and Shropshire in the Midlands, and Gloucestershire, Somerset, Hampshire, and Devon in the South-West. On the present evidence it seems likely that this is the home territory of the cruck building tradition. It emerged at a time when box-framed buildings were being revived in eastern and southern England. Along

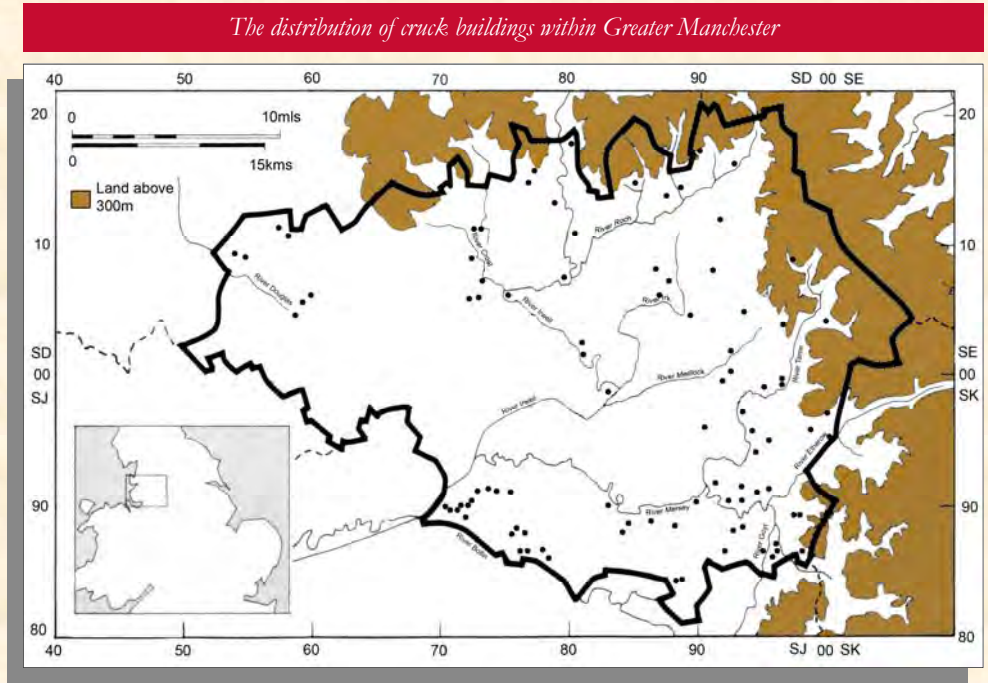


The distribution of cruck buildings in England and Wales

with aisled timber structures these three traditions, which used almost exclusively stone plinths and padstones, became the most common forms of construction during the thirteenth century, almost completely supplanting the earlier dominant technique of earth-fast posts.

In the North West this transition can be seen at Tatton Old Hall in northern Cheshire. Here, an early thirteenth century earth-fast post structure was replaced by a winged open hall on a stone plinth in the fourteenth century, though this was a box-framed structure not a cruck building. Such buildings are one of the earliest building traditions to survive

within the region. They are often associated with the earliest settlement within a manor and are thus good indicators of the spread of Medieval settlement within an area. Yet precisely how many cruck buildings were built in the North West is unknown.



In 2010 the Vernacular Architecture Group recorded 630 known buildings of this type in the North West, with 125 in Cheshire, 226 in Cumbria, 73 in Greater Manchester, and 13 in Merseyside. This includes both surviving and demolished or lost structures. Recent research in Greater Manchester has increased the number of known crucks, surviving and lost, to 95.

One feature that is found in most linear plan-form cruck houses and in all winged cruck houses was the open hall. The houses of the manorial lords, freeholders, and some of the



Wall spurs for the northern Newton cruck truss

wealthier tenant or yeoman farmers, in the late Medieval period were focused upon such open halls. These were usually two or three bays in length, and were often, but not always, flanked by one or two multi-storey wings containing service rooms or private apartments, giving a characteristic T-shaped or H-shaped plan to the house. The term open hall indicates that the room was open to the roof timbers, with no first floor. This arrangement was necessitated by the heating of this space, which took the form of a

hearth centrally placed on the floor with the smoke exiting through a louvred opening in the roof. The gothic arch of the cruck truss lent itself naturally to this open hall style. Yet it also reflected contemporary society since the open hall was where guests and visitors were first received and was the administrative centre of the estate.

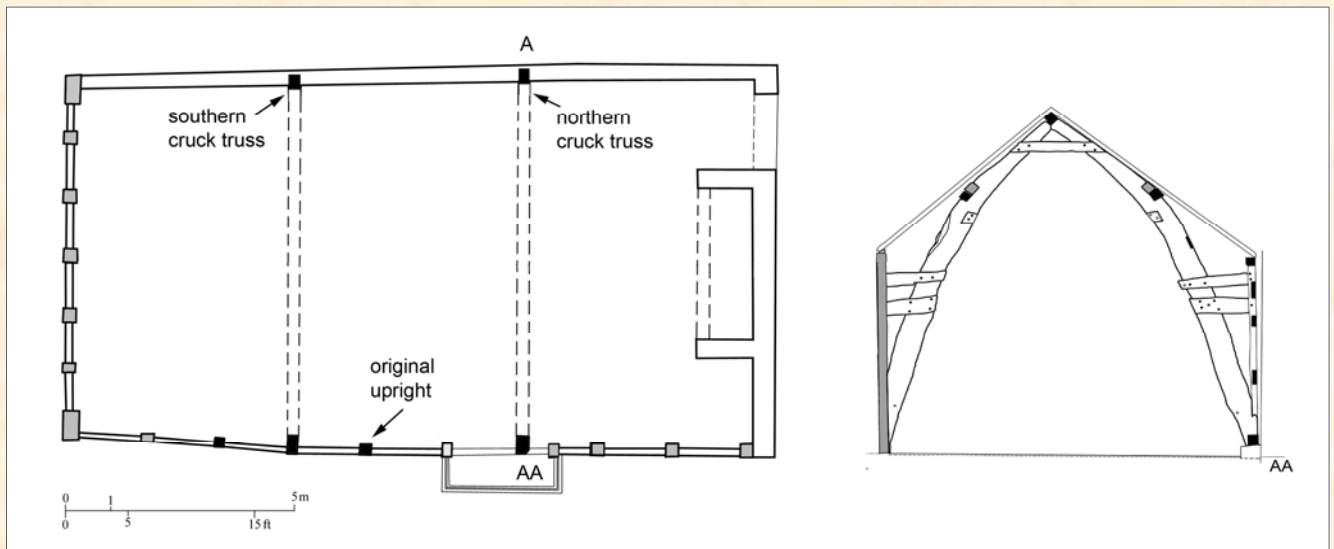
Within the North West the earliest surviving building with such a classic Medieval open hall and cross-passage plan-form is the ruinous stone structure of Warton Old Rectory, which is probably a manor house of the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. It even has the ruins of



Original (dark) and replacement (light) roof timbers at Newton

a separate kitchen wing, a Medieval design feature often used to reduce the risk of fires. The earliest surviving cruck open halls in the region appear to be fifteenth century, for instance Kirklees Hall and Peel Hall, both near Wigan. The open hall was sometimes emphasised by decoration. Within the Manchester region this was most typically by simple chamfering along the edges of the blades within the hall. Such examples include Apethorn Fold, Newton Hall, and Taunton Hall, all in Tameside. Occasionally wall paintings are found on one wall of the open hall, as at Onion Farm in Warburton. By the mid-seventeenth century the spread of brick as the main building material combined with the shift towards politer domestic architecture made timber-framed buildings, and the cruck truss in particular with its Medieval gothic-looking arch, outdated architecturally.

A measured plan and cross-section through the north cruck truss at Newton Hall showing the surviving medieval upright timbers in black



DIGGING NEWTON HALL

Newton Hall Barn around 1900



After the restoration of the hall a generation passed before historical interest in the site was revived. During the late 1990s survey work recorded the remaining timbers in detail, and suggested a construction date in the late Medieval period for the hall. A decade later archaeological excavation work was undertaken in 2008 with the digging of nine test trenches.

This investigation was part of the Tameside Archaeological Survey and showed that there were extensive remains of building foundations around the courtyard, and that some of these walls might be seventeenth century in origin.

Though this work was published in 2010, it left many questions unanswered. These included the origin of the farmhouse and cottage, evidence for the winged hall as suggested by the sixteenth and early seventeenth century Newton family wills, and the location of Medieval remains to go with the timbers of the cruck hall. The aim of the excavation work in 2012 was to answer these questions. Thus, three large trenches were opened over the



The early, pre-hall, ditch in T2

north-western part of the courtyard (T1), the farm buildings south of the hall (T4), and over the farmhouse and cottage range (T3). A number of smaller trenches were also excavated around the outside of the hall to the north (T6 & T7), west (T5), and south (T2).

The earliest evidence from the dig was found in T2, where an ancient ditch was discovered running beneath the south-western corner of the hall. There were no finds from this feature to date it, but it was cut by a later ditch, running west to east, which contained a large sherd of a Bellarmine jug from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The earlier ditch probably represents a field boundary before the first hall was built, whilst the later ditch provides the southern boundary for the hall complex. Two sherds of green-glazed late Medieval pottery,



Left, the remains in T6 of the north-eastern corner of the brick hall barn foundations, with a stone wall foundation for the northern end of the medieval Newton Hall visible

Right, the stone foundation for the southern wing of Newton Hall as excavated in T1





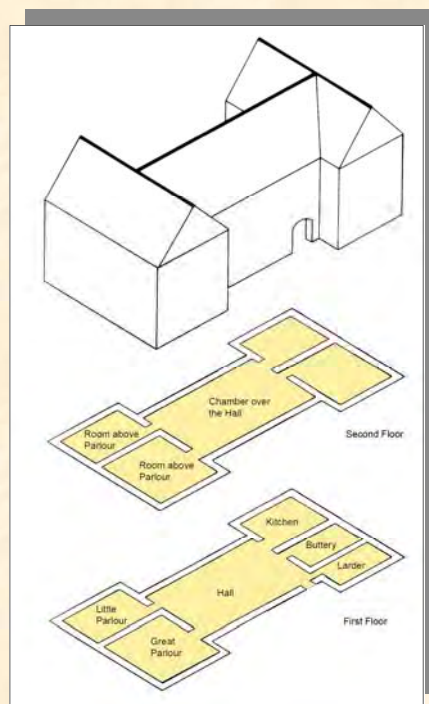
Top right, the seventeenth century stone foundations of the original timber-framed, farmhouse.

Bottom right, a suggested reconstruction of the hall based upon the Newton family will of 1617



probably of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, came from beneath a wall of the farmhouse in T3 (see page 26).

On the eastern and northern sides of the hall two trenches revealed stone foundations relating to the surviving building. In T6 to the north of the hall was a stone wall foundation, with lime mortar, on the same alignment as the surviving eastern wall of the standing building. Although it had been truncated in the eighteenth century by the brick walls for the later barn, enough survived to indicate that the foundation may have carried a timber wall. Along the western edge of T4, close to the south-eastern corner of the present hall, a second stone foundation, c. 0.5m wide, was found. This ran parallel to and roughly 3m in front of

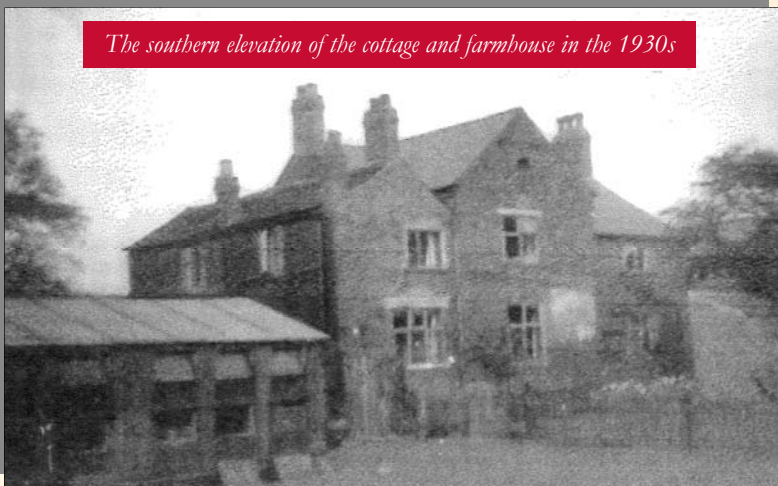




The farmhouse cottage cellar, T3

the hall, with what appeared to be a cobbled surface and stone drain to the east. This was below the nineteenth century stone sets of the farmyard. Again, this appeared to be the foundations for a timber-framed wall, perhaps a projecting eastern wing. The remains in these two trenches thus demonstrated that the surviving timber-framed hall was once much bigger and had at least one cross-wing.

Similar wall foundations were found in T3 associated with the part of the farmhouse and cottage that was available for excavation. This trench revealed floor levels and stone walls for a larger rectangular building



The southern elevation of the cottage and farmhouse in the 1930s

with at least two rooms at its western end perhaps forming a cross-wing. These remains were associated with seventeenth century pottery and clay pipes (see pages 26 to 27). This phase of activity marked a significant expansion of the hall site, with the creation of the farmyard to the east of the hall by the building of



The remains of a fireplace in the farmhouse

the northern stone barn (T7), which was to survive, like the cottage, until demolition in 1967. The timber-framed farmhouse in T4 appears to have been rebuilt in brick in the eighteenth century (a George I farthing minted between 1718 and 1724 was found in one of the brick walls), although the earlier stone foundations were re-used. This seems to have coincided with the conversion of the hall range into

the partially brick-built hall barn (T6). Later still, in the mid-nineteenth century, a one bay cottage, with a cellar, was added to the western gable of the farmhouse.

In the period 1898 to 1910 there was another major rebuilding of the farmyard. New stone setts were laid between the farmhouse, northern stone barn (T1), and the hall,



The foundations of the late nineteenth century brick barn (T4)



The foundations of the new single-storey range added to the hall barn

The hall barn range in the mid-twentieth century



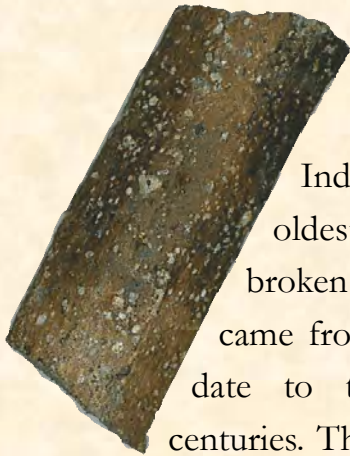
whilst a brick barn (T4) was built to the west of the farmhouse. An extra single storey brick range was also added to the eastern side of the hall barn. This included a concrete machine base for some form of farm machinery, perhaps associated with milking, which was introduced to the farm at the end of the nineteenth century, as was the western brick barn which appears to have been used as a shippin. This formed the farm complex rented by the Watt family in the first half of the twentieth century, memories and photographs of which have been captured for this booklet.

Excavating the stone setts of the farmyard in T1



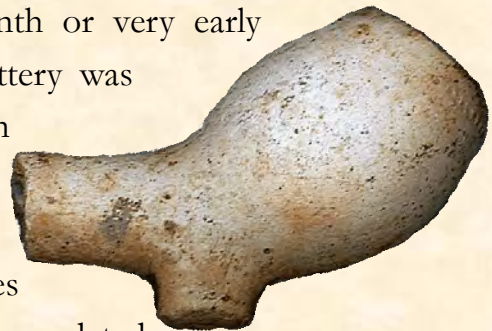
THE FINDS

The excavated remains of the Newton Hall manorial complex included not only brick walls, stone floors, and cobbled surfaces but also objects from the daily life of the families living and working on the farm.



Individual items from the earliest years of the hall have been rare. The oldest objects so far identified are a fragment of a green-glazed jug and a broken green-glazed jug handle, not necessarily from the same pot. These came from the deposits beneath the later farmhouse excavated in T3 and date to the Medieval period, probably the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. They are thus the earliest artefacts so far found at Newton Hall and help to confirm the documentary evidence for occupation during this period.

A single sherd of a Midland Purple pot (fifteenth and sixteenth century vessels fired almost to the point of fusion giving them a purple sheen to the surface) and several small fragments of Cistercian type pottery (a highly fired dark brown or purple fabric with a rich brown to black glaze) were also found in the deposits associated with the farmhouse. These latter sherds were probably sixteenth or very early seventeenth century in date. More Post-Medieval pottery was found in a ditch to the south of the current hall, in T2. This included a stoneware Bellarmine jug of the seventeenth century or early eighteenth century, probably imported from Germany. A range of clay pipes were also excavated from the farmhouse area and these dated



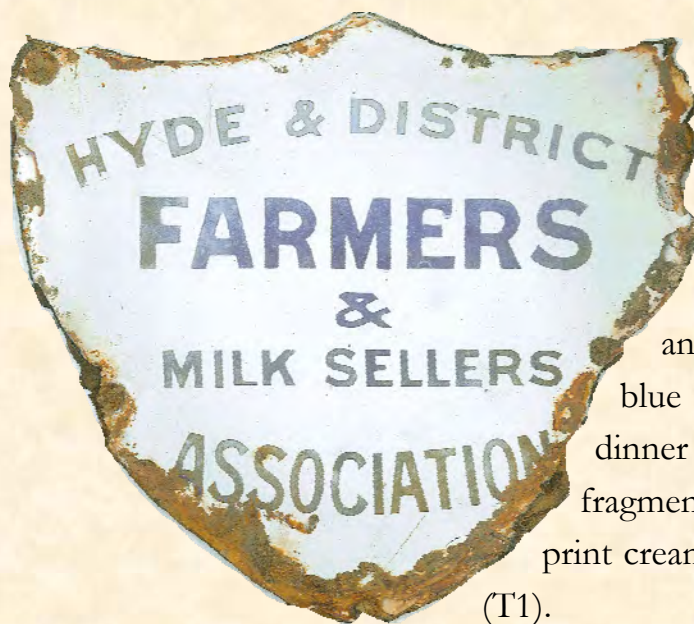
from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century. These finds included a seventeenth century pipe bowl with decoration around the rim.



Finds from the Newton Hall dig. Clockwise from the top of the page opposite: a late Medieval jug handle; a nineteenth century transfer-print dinner plate; sherds of a yellow and orange slipware plate of the early eighteenth century; and a seventeenth century clay pipe bowl

Most of the objects recovered from the farmhouse and cottage trench (T3) were domestic crockery of the late seventeenth to early twentieth centuries. These included a large number of sherds from eighteenth century slipware storage jars, in a ridged red fabric with a thick black- or brown-glaze, probably produced at Buckley in north-east Wales. There were also slipware sherds from plates and bowls with feather decoration, probably manufactured in the Stoke area during the late seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

Nineteenth century material included an almost complete buff



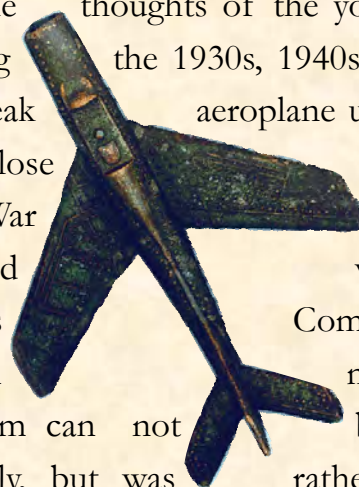
- coloured earthen ware storage jar found in the cellar of the cottage (T3) and parts of a blue transfer-print dinner plate and other fragments of transfer-

print creamware cups and plates in the farmyard area (T1).



A collection of early to mid-twentieth pottery that included a spout from a mid-twentieth century brown-glazed teapot and white-glazed cups and plates from the farmhouse and cottage area (T3) probably belong to the period when the Watt family were tenants of Newton Hall Farm. They may well have graced the Sunday dinner table. Bronze buttons and glass marbles from this same area also belong to the Watt family era. Material relating to the farm's final use as a dairy unit included a complete milk bottle, inscribed 'EXPRESS - THIS BOTTLE COSTS 4D PLEASE RINSE & RETURN - CONTENTS 1 PT'. There was also an enamelled metal badge for the 'Hyde and District Farmers and Milk Sellers Association'.

It is, though, easy to get carried away with the thoughts of the young Watt children playing in the farmyard with their toys during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Thus, a die-cast toy model of an F-84 Thunderstreak aeroplane used in the Korean war by the USA and found in the spoil heap close to the cottage might suggest a vivid link with the Cold War and the Watt children. However, this item was stamped with the brand Dyna-Flites, one of the lines of the Zee Toys Company of California manufactured in Hong Kong. This firm manufactured toys from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. So this item can not be associated with the Watt family, but was rather, perhaps, lost by another local child playing in the grounds of the newly restored Newton Hall.



Finds from the Newton Hall dig. Left to right: an enamelled plaque, a mid-twentieth century milk bottle; and a die-cast metal toy plane.

LIFE AT NEWTON HALL FARM

Nineteenth-century documents show that Newton Hall farmhouse and cottage regularly changed tenants during this period. In the 1841 census the farmhouse was occupied by George Derbyshire, farmer, and his five children. But there were also three other families (Charlesworth, Thorpe, and Wilde) giving a total of 20 people living at the farmstead: Newton Hall Farm was a hamlet. The 1847 tithe map for Newton records that the farmstead was rented by Henry Lees and Samuel Swire from the landowner, Francis Duckenfield-Astley, neither of whom occur on the 1851 census. In that year there were four families once more: the Bayleys, Thorpes, Walkers, and Whittakers (23 people). By 1871 the number of families living at the farm had dropped to three (the Astleys, Willsays, and Whittakers) and the number of people to 10. Three families, amounting to 13 people, are also recorded in 1881 (Dobsons, Nobles, and Whittakers).



Newton Hall Farmhouse and Cottage, home of the Watt family from 1918 until 1967

By 1891 this had dropped to just two families and seven people. John and Martha Ashton lived with their daughter, son, and a servant in the farmhouse. Rachel Whittaker and her daughter Ann lived in the cottage, as they had probably done since c. 1851. The Whittakers had gone by 1901, leaving just John and Martha Ashton, their two children, a servant and a cattle man. The family were still at Newton

Hall Farm in 1911, although by 1914, according to *Kelly's Directory of Cheshire*, the farm was run by just Martha Ashton. This directory also described Newton Hall in that year as 'an ancient mansion about 200 yards west from the church, [that] has been converted into cottage houses; on a stone over the porch door is inscribed "H.I.L. 1670"'. These same documents also show that the farm estate was gradually shrinking. In 1847 the farmstead had 128 acres, but by 1881 this had dropped to 82 acres and by the time the Watt family took over the tenancy in 1918 this had shrunk further to around 40 acres.

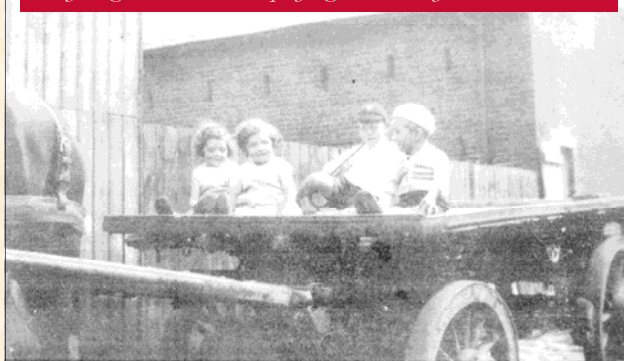


The life of this final family to live at the farm sheds light on how a small dairy farm functioned on the fringes of large industrial urban area in the mid-twentieth century. James Watt, his wife Elizabeth, and their two children, Annie and James, moved from Stronsey in Orkney to the Hyde area in 1902, renting Harbour Farm near Hyde Mill. By the time the family arrived at Newton Hall Farm there were six children: Annie, Charlie, Ena, James, Lillian and Margaret. They drove their cattle down from Werneth to Newton Hall during the move, which was on a misty day, losing two cattle en route for several days. James and Elizabeth's youngest children went to the Flowery Field primary

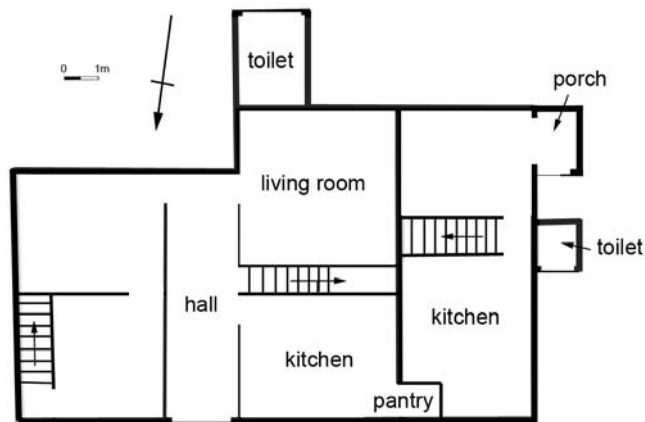
school in Newton, but helped out with the two milk rounds, as later did the grandchildren, morning and evenings, measuring the milk into jugs straight from the churn, before and after school. James senior did the farm accounts, and quickly became an important figure in the town, as a Liberal Councillor, eventually becoming mayor of Hyde in 1938-9. James' son, also called James, took on the tenancy at the end of the Second World War. His family occupied the farmhouse whilst one of his sisters, Annie and her husband, Jack Chatterton, occupied the cottage until the whole family moved out in early 1967, when James Watt junior retired.

Two of the grandchildren remembered living at the farm in the 1930s and 1940s. The farm had up to 30 cows (milked by a machine), geese, hens, horses (for the milk floats), and pigs. Charlie Watt, who was a butcher, took and prepared the pigs whilst Jack Chatterton, Annie's husband, acted as a farmhand. A land girl, Edna Lamb, provided additional help on the farm during the early 1940s, and for the first time a tractor was used. The family were obliged to grow crops by

The younger Watt children playing on the dairy cart in the 1920s



The Watt family in the 1920s



The layout of the farmhouse and cottage during the Watt's tenancy

the Ministry of Agriculture - potatoes and oats - for the war effort. Hands from the local mills helped with the harvest during the war, but it was mainly a family business and there was never much money to spend on the buildings. The grandchildren played in the meadows by Nicholson Road and helped make the hay stacks. Their friends also helped with the milking and played around the farm in the farm buildings, including the old hall

barn and its old timbers, which had hay stacked up to the roof at harvest time.

There was running water and gas in the downstairs of the cottage and farmhouse, but oil lamps were used in the upstairs bedrooms. There was a flushing toilet behind the cottage and a tippler toilet behind the farmhouse. Electricity was only installed during the early 1940s and a television for the first time in the 1950s. Family meals were in the living room, whilst bread, lardy cake, meat, pies, and tripe were cooked in a large range in the farmhouse kitchen. The kitchen of the cottage was smaller and one corner had been blocked off to provide a pantry for the farmhouse. The cottage kitchen contained a set boiler, Belfast stone sink, and a range. There was no bathroom in the cottage so they used a tin bath in the kitchen, and between times this was stored in the cottage cellar. The two grandchildren remembered their life on the farm as a wonderfully happy time.

INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION

An important aspect of the project was the involvement of local school children - the potential archaeologists and historians of the future. Despite the cold and wet weather 297 children from ten local schools with 40 teachers and helpers, 17 children from the Young Archaeologist's Club at Manchester Museum, 17 A-Level students from Oldham Sixth Form College, seven students from a pupil withdrawal unit with five supervisors, and seven local scouts enthusiastically helped with the dig in April and May 2012.



Primary school classes visited and explored Newton Hall from all over Tameside. Before the dig every class involved in a site visit was visited by the project's education archaeologist, Sarah Cattell. The school children were introduced to the site and historical maps for the hall area, told how archaeologists date finds, and shown the tools used by archaeologists.

During April each class came along to take part in the dig, experiencing the thrill of excavation, and the more mathematical task of surveying the hall building. The children followed up their visit with class work around their experiences. Finally, there was a second visit from the education archaeologist to report on what was found during the dig and to hand over a teachers' pack about the hall. The work of the children was presented at a special school's event held at the hall on the 6th July. Each school sent

four pupils and gave a five minute presentation about the work they had done back at school after the dig. This was supported by a display from each class. Bradley Green Primary School imagined living in Newton Hall and wrote brochures to persuade people to buy the hall. Broadbent Fold made a miniature model of Newton Hall and produced their own quiz about its history. Canon Johnson School made a DVD of their experiences and produced a timeline of the hall's history. Gorse Hall Primary performed a medieval square dance and wrote a series of poems about the hall's history. Milton St John's created a mosaic of the Hall. Oakfield School; present a history of the de Newton family. Finally, Yew Tree Primary School created a play about their dig experiences and ran a dig at their own school.

- ◇ *Newton Hall stands proud and small*
 - ◇ *Ebony and ivory walls*
 - ◇ *Wattle and lime-washed walls*
 - ◇ *Thatched reeded rooftop*
 - ◇ *Open cruck-framed rafters*
 - ◇ *Neat, cosy roaring fire*
 - ◇ *Hardly any glass windows*
 - ◇ *Archaeologists playground*
 - ◇ *Loads of mud everywhere*
 - ◇ *Lots of history and digging to share*
- By Year 5 Gorsehall School*

By the end of the project 126 adult excavation volunteers, 143 visitors during the excavations, and 397 visitors to the organised public open days had helped to dig up new material about Newton's past. Most agreed that the experience at Newton Hall, through the work of the Tameside Local History Forum and the University of Salford, had made history come alive.

Newton Hall

Are you looking for a large, spacious house with opportunities for starting your own business?

If you are looking for a large, spacious house with opportunities for starting your own business? farmer then come and have a look at Newton Hall.

A nice big field to put animals in, 3 scabbies to put horses in, a pig sty also there is a tube that gets rid of the bad stuff so you do not need to clean it out. There is a cellar for your all your storage spaces and there is a bar as well in the main room. There are 7 windows and 2 kitchens and two cow sheds and a bar. It is an animal attraction you will love it, it will give you a lot of fun. There are 7 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. There are 7 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. There are 7 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms.






GORSEHALL SCHOOL TIME

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM: School starts, children arrive at school.

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Morning lesson, children in classrooms.

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM: Lunch break, children in the canteen.

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Afternoon lesson, children in classrooms.

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM: School ends, children go home.




Some of the creative work generated by the school children who visited the Newton Hall dig

Thursday 26th April 2012
Dear diary,



In the afternoon we had to get our coats on and wellies on. Then we walked down the road from our school and there was the coach, then the driver had to drive us to Newton hall. We felt really excited because we haven't been before.

We went through the gate and a teacher called Sarah told us what we were doing for the day. She then put us into two groups and our group went to dig first. I couldn't wait until we started to dig.

We had to get a shovel for digging deeper around features and removing unwanted soil. Also we used wheelbarrows for moving soil to soil heaps. We had gloves for protecting hands from dirt and sharp objects, buckets for carrying soil to soil heaps and finely kneeling mats for protecting our knees when kneeling.

Then we started to dig up things like pottery, stones, pieces of old pipe and other things. Then Sarah told us to go around and look at what we discovered. We then swapped groups. We used a tape measure to measure to how big it used to be.

After we had finished digging we went into the hall and much needed a drink and a biscuit.

We really enjoyed the day and were really excited to go home and tell our parents all about it.

Then we all got together again and we got on the coach and went back to school and got our bags and coats and went home.



GLOSSARY

*** CRUCK-TRUSS:**

Pairs of inclined timbers or blades usually curved that rise from a plinth to meet at the top and support the weight of the roof.

*** PLINTH:**

Projecting courses at the foot of a wall or column.

*** PRINCIPALS:**

The pair of inclined lateral timbers of a truss which carry the common rafters and purlins

*** PURLINS:**

A horizontal longitudinal timber bracing the roof structure and supported by the roof trusses

*** SILL:**

Horizontal member at the bottom of a window, door, or wall-frame

*** TIE-BEAM:**

The main horizontal, transverse, timber which carries the feet of the principals at wall-plate level.

*** TRUSS:**

A main structural component of a roof formed by a horizontal tie-beam and inclined principle rafters.

*** WALL-FRAME:**

A timber wall (either exterior or partition), often standing on a plinth, comprising sill, posts, rails, and studs.

*** WALL-PLATE:**

The timber that lies on top of a wall and supports the rafters.

FURTHER READING

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All of the historical maps and images used in this booklet can be found at the Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre, Ashton Library, Ashton-under-Lyne

A copy of the detailed excavation report, together with the project archive and artefacts, has been deposited with Tameside Museums

Historical images can also be viewed at <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/archives/imagearchive>

Publications in the Greater Manchester's Past Revealed series are available from GMAAS at the University of Salford. Other titles in the History and Archaeology of Tameside and the Archaeology of Tameside series are available from the Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre

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The first excavations at Newton Hall were carried out in 2008 by a team from the University of Manchester Archaeology Unit, led by Brian Grimsditch, as part of the Tameside Archaeological Survey. The community archaeology excavations undertaken in April and May 2012 were led by staff from the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford, once more under the direction of Brian Grimsditch and with the assistance of Sarah Cattell and Vicky Nash. The open day, school events, and oral history research were organised by members of the Tameside Local History Forum.

Historical images of Newton Hall have been reproduced through the courtesy of the Tameside Local Studies Librarian, Alice Lock, and with the permission of Mrs Doreen Bailsford and Mrs Rita Friday who also passed on their memories of life at the farm in the mid-twentieth century.

This booklet is dedicated to Brian Grimsditch for all his hard work and enthusiasm over the last decade in supporting and encouraging volunteer participation in rediscovering Tameside's rich heritage

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The home of the Newton family from the thirteenth century until the early eighteenth century, Newton Hall is one of the oldest buildings in North West England. The surviving timber-framed cruck structure dates from the late medieval period, yet this is only a fragment of a much larger building. Much of that hall was lost when the estate was split up and sold. By the early nineteenth century the site was in use as a farm and in the 1960s was scheduled for demolition. Fortunately, the timber hall was saved and restored, but rest of the complex has remained hidden. In 2012 a community archaeology project, led by the Tameside Local History Forum with the assistance of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford, set out to rediscover the ancient manorial site. This booklet records the progress of that project as the twenty-first century inhabitants of Newton explored the archaeology of the hall and the history of some of its occupants.

Front cover: The southern gable of Newton Hall showing the reconstructed cruck truss erected in March 1969.

Back cover: Volunteers excavating the nineteenth century cellar at Newton Hall Cottage in May 2012.

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