

Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

July 2009

Launch of Federation 29/11/2008



Welcome to the first edition of the e-newsletter for the Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation. This is designed to be a quarterly newsletter keeping members of local archaeology/history societies informed of other groups' activities and discoveries, as well as providing: advice on relevant heritage issues locally and nationally, lists of speakers, upcoming events and availability of specialist equipment and advice. It will take a little while for the newsletter to 'bed down' in terms of style and consistency, and of course its success will be entirely down to the willingness of Federation members to send in contributions. Its progress will be discussed at Federation meetings. Many thanks to Peter Leeming for putting the newsletter together.

Norman Redhead

Risk Assessment / Health & Safety Questions

With thanks to Peter Bone.

- Do you have a risk assessment procedure? YES/NO
- Who is responsible for it? / No One
- Is it used routinely on all projects? YES/NO
- Do you have a health and safety policy? YES/NO
- Is a copy of it available to all members? YES/NO
- Do members who take part in site activities read and sign the policy? YES/NO

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**One door closes
and another
opens**
Mike Nevell

The University of Manchester has announced that UMAU will cease to trade on 31st July 2009. UMAU staff have been offered redeployment out of the Archaeology subject area or voluntary severance. As part of the closure process, UMAU's archives will be deposited with a variety of local museums, leaving two projects (Mellor and Nantwich) to be completed by the end of January 2010.

(Continued on back page)

Welcome to **your** newsletter and thank you for all of the articles we have received, please keep this up!

On the front page is a small questionnaire kindly supplied by Peter Bone about Health and Safety and Risk Assessments which was discussed at the last Federation meeting. Please send replies to these to myself at GMAU.

I hope that what follows is useful and informative. If you have any suggestions about the format or content, please let me know.

Peter

Some Forthcoming Talks

MRIAS (at Rm E0.05/05A, John Dalton Building, Chester St, Manchester. Tel 0161 980 7612)

Friday 09/11/2009 "Greater Manchester Transport Museum" George Turnbull

Friday 13/11/2009 "Chetham's Library" Michael Powell

Friday 11/12/2009 To Be Announced

Saddleworth Archaeological Trust (at The Masonic Hall, High St, Uppermill at 7:30pm)

Tuesday 19/10/2009 "How Geologist, Archaeologist and Anthropologist help the police solve crime"

Dr Lawrence Donnelly

Saturday 07/11/2009 "Saddleworth's Industrial Heritage" Mike Nevell

Tuesday 17/11/2009 "The Mesolithic in Northern England, implications of recent research" Andy Myers

Tuesday 08/12/2009 "Recent Excavations at Buckton Castle" Norman Redhead

South Trafford Archaeological Group (at STAG HQ, behind Timperley Old Hall, 7:30pm)

Friday 25/09/2009 "Excavations at Berenike, Egypt" J.P. Wild

Friday 23/11/2009 To be announced

Wigan Archaeological Society (at Baden Powell Centre, Wigan at 7:30pm)

Wednesday 02/09/2009 "The North West in the Iron Age" Alastair Vannan

Wednesday 07/10/2009 "Viking Hoard" Robert Philipot (TBC)

Wednesday 04/11/2009 "Roman advance into Scotland" David Woolliscroft

Friday 02/12/2009 "OAN update" Ian Miller

Federation members

The following groups are members of the Federation:

Bolton Archaeology and Egyptology Society, Bury Archaeological Group, Darwen Local History Society, Longendale and Glossop Archaeological Society, Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society, Mellor Archaeological Trust, Moston And District Archeological and Social History society, Prestwich Heritage Society, Royton Lives Through the Ages, Saddleworth Archaeological Trust, South Manchester Archaeological Research Team, South Trafford Archaeological Group, Tameside Archaeological Society, Wigan Archaeological Society.

Bury Archaeological Group has resumed excavations at the site of Gristlehurst Hall near Heywood (SD.84691220), with the intention of working every Wednesday until October.

Between 2003 and 2006 the Group discovered substantial stone foundations close to the present farmhouse. Immediately to the S.W. on Well Brow, and overlying an earlier ditch system, the ground plan of another building was found. It measured 6m wide by at least 5m long internally. In spite of extensive stone robbing when the Well Brow building was dismantled c. 1700, enough evidence survived to suggest it had been two storeys high, with a stone south gable and west wall, fronted on the east by a timber frame. It is thought this building was in close proximity to the hall, part of which is probably integrated with the farmhouse.

A well constructed open ended stone drain partly beneath and adjacent to the south side of the complex, ran S.W. to exit over a sloping consolidated gravel surface.

Ceramic evidence (including the presence of imported pottery not commonly found so far inland) seems to indicate an early 16th c. date for the above structures, attributable to a branch of the Holt family who were in residence from the mid 15th to mid 17th centuries.

It is hoped this seasons work will not only identify the north gable of the Well Brow building, but also provide more tangible evidence of medieval occupation.

Preliminary notes on the work carried out up to 2006, can be consulted at the public libraries in Bury and Heywood.

Norman Tyson

Royton Lives Through the Ages

Royton Lives Through the Ages (the archaeology group of Royton Local History Society) are hoping to conduct a final small excavation on the Royton Hall site in September. The digs of 2005-7 utilised the practical plots on the ground (most of east, all of the south, and main west wing. Attached cottages on northwest and north seem to have been of shallow foundation and little remained). However the north east corner contained remains of a probable late medieval or Tudor wall uncovered in 2007. We wondered if the odd alignment with existing walls had any bearing on the early building plan. Also what was its relationship with adjacent agricultural buildings shown on the 1840s OS and Tithe maps?.

TAS are helping us with planning and risk assessing. The dig will be a small affair of a few trenches only but any help would be appreciated. The one thing we lack is trained first aiders to ensure that there is one such on site each day of digging. Volunteers welcome.

We are currently raising money to fund landscaping of the site after this last dig is completed and Oldham Parks Department are working with us to outline the hall remains and improve site interpretation.

Michael Higgins, Chairman Royton Lives Through the Ages

Graham Pearson 1940-2009

Sadly, Graham Pearson who had been Secretary of Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society since 1994 died, aged 68, at the end of May. Graham was well known to many members of other local history and archaeology societies; he regularly attended meetings of the Lancashire Local History Federation, local history fairs and other events. He worked ceaselessly for the Littleborough Society, raising funds, attending local authority meetings and dealing with all manner of enquiries and correspondence. Graham never failed to be in friendly good humour whenever you met him; he will be sadly missed by many.

Peter Bone

This is the final year of the three-year Mellor Heritage Project with an HLF award of £455,500. A final conference/celebration will be held in Stockport Town Hall on Saturday, January 16, 2010. Open Days on the Old Vicarage site, next to Mellor Church, will be on September 5-6, 2009. There are three areas of excavation in 2009.

Mellor Mill

Samuel Oldknow erected the huge Mellor Mill next to the River Goyt in 1790-92. The mill was 400 feet long, 42 feet wide and 6 storeys high, employing 550 workers in cotton spinning. It was burnt down in 1892. The site also included a corn mill, workshops, stables, gasworks and the houses of Oldknow and his half-brother, the mill manager. The site is now overgrown with trees and undergrowth. Nothing is left above ground but there are deep holes where the wheelpits were, entrances to tunnels and the site of a later steam engine. Extensive dumping has occurred on top of the mill base. In March 2009, a trial evaluation was carried out. The first trench showed the walls and floor of a weaving shed at the back of the mill added in the 1880s. A second trench showed the back wall of the main mill and steps down to a room with two engine blocks. A large collection of bits of textile machinery were found. They have been identified as coming from a gassing machine used to singe hairs off yarns. A third trench showed the front wall of the mill. Derbyshire Cavers explored the tunnels, which were filmed by Chris Mann. This is a wonderful site for industrial archaeology and, if funding can be obtained, we would like to have a major project in 2011. Tours of the site were held during the Festival of British Archaeology.

Shaw Cairn

The site on the highest point of Mellor (highest in Stockport MBC) was excavated by an amateur group around 1980. They found Bronze Age cremations, a funerary pot and flints. A report has been written based on their records and finds. In 2008, an evaluation exercise was carried out to see what might remain. This led to the find of 80 beads of an amber necklace, the only one found between Orkney and Wessex. Only part of the cist was excavated before the dig closed. In June 2009, the group returned to the site and excavated the rest of the cist, which turned out to be part of a longer double cist. Two more amber beads were found, but a large volume of soil is going to Durham to be searched, since two-thirds of the 2008 beads were found in this way. Trial trenches were dug around the cairn to look for other features. The area looks to be rich in archaeology and it is hoped that more extensive excavations will take place in 2010.

The Old Vicarage (OV) site next to Mellor Church

Following the crop mark in 1995, excavations started on the Mellor OV site in 1998. The major discoveries are a large outer enclosure ditch, probably Bronze Age, an Iron Age ditch round an area which was of high status into Romano-British times, but there have been many finds in what is a multi-period site from Mesolithic to post-medieval. Starting on July 27 2009, the last accessible area of the Old Vicarage garden will be excavated.

John Hearle

South Trafford Archaeological Group

STAG will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Friday 27th October. The main project over the summer is the Heritage Lottery funded Community Excavation at Timperley Old Hall. This involves the construction of a new public bridge giving access to the landscaped moated platform where ultimately there will be a reconstructed Victorian garden. Before then, the west wing of the Old Hall is being excavated on Sundays through Wednesdays, all volunteers welcome. This excavation has uncovered, so far, the C17th brick foundations of the west wing and rubbish pits with late medieval pottery, including some early Midland Purple ware.

Mike Nevell

The Five Stand Halls

In the area now known as Whitefield, at the corner of Stand Lane and Ringley Road there have been five Stand Halls, aka Pilkington Hall or Pilkington Tower. Pilkington, in the Saxon era, was a large township/manor but with no village called Pilkington inside it.

The five halls are as follows:

- 1) Old Hall — site down at the junction of Old Hall Lane and Copper Lane. An oval, medieval site of the hall of the Pilkingtons. Called by historians Stand Hall 1, although it was more properly Pilkington Hall.
- 2) 1405 A new Hall was built in a Plank Framing style. It allegedly was a flattened H shape with a great hall in the middle. The remains of the Great Hall are the subject of the current investigations. (The photograph below shows this Hall).
- 3) 1515 The earl of Derby built a new Hall 100 yards south of Stand Hall. Stand Hall 2 became a barn. The end wings removed and the ends built up in brick with stone quoins.
- 4) 1577 Stand Hall 3 burned down was replaced by Stand Hall 4. A half timbered house with a gallery that gave superb views over the Pennines, Derbyshire and Pilkington Deer Park.
- 5) 1836 Stand Hall 4 pulled down and replaced by large Victorian House — Stand Hall 5

In the early 1960s Stand Hall 2 and 5 were finally demolished. Stand Hall 2 was taken down to about three courses of stone and the demolition rubble put over it as a flat topped mound. The mound, by accident or design, has protected the site.

We have been doing exploratory excavations on the site and have found the stone plinth of the hall(2) and have fixed the corner of the barn building and can now fix the building footprint on the ground.

We will continue to dig test pits and hope to do a full dig at a later date.

Jack Barrett



Currently SMART are working on several projects, these range from a historical building survey of Wythenshawe Hall (pictured below) to a recently completed evaluation at Dunham Massey.

The work at Wythenshawe involved a small group of members carrying out a full diagnostic measurement and historical survey of each room within the hall. Thanks to the hall staff we have had unlimited access to all rooms. The project however did hit a stumbling block when it was established a condition survey had been commissioned separately. Since contacting the planning department at Manchester City Council I have been able to gain an overview of the depth of work carried out. I have requested a copy of the measurements taken by the architects and thus far have only received the cubic dimensions of the rooms surveyed, however with a little encouragement I believe I can acquire the full plans. This will make our job somewhat easier in so much as it will provide us with accurate measurements of the rooms, therefore saving considerable time for the team, who will then be able to concentrate on the structural and historical changes.

Our second project has recently been completed and involved a geophysical survey of two plots within the grounds of Dunham Massey. We had been asked by Jamie Lund, the archaeologist for the National Trust, to carry out geophysical surveys on two sites known to have been the location of C18 out-buildings. The sites were based on the results of the geophysics, information from the Ordnance Survey, and paintings held at the hall. A small team successfully established a level of archaeology still in situ just below the surface of the deer park. This will help the trust establish a redevelopment of a tree replanting scheme that took place approximately 15 years ago and to relocate a number of trees now intruding onto the archaeology. In addition it is hoped this could lead to a community dig next year. There was great interest in the work we were doing and I believe could be of great benefit to the park itself. The report is to be completed within the next couple of weeks and the findings presented to the trust.

Andy Coutts



Ironstone Hill (IRT116)

Field survey and rescue evaluation of Mesolithic site at 400m OD on moor land under supervision of Ron Cowell Curator Prehistory Archaeology, National Museums Liverpool. Activity was undertaken primarily over weekends between December 2008 and April 2009 by TAS and Glossop and Longdendale Archaeology Society members.

Phase one has been to establish the extent of the site with flint scatter in an area of high peat erosion and the level of potential for archaeology in an upland setting. Geophysical survey with gradiometer to identify select anomalies for excavation and correlation with contexts and lithic material. Presently lithic assessment and environmental assessment are being undertaken.

The initial results are a flint scatter with a distribution suggesting differing patterns of raw material use and flint density may indicate several focal areas of human activity. Associated with this are a number of features including probable hearth and adjacent pits. Further not fully excavated contexts suggest the possibility that some of the features were within a standing structure but needs further evaluation to prove or disprove its existence.

If you are interested and fully fit as the site is extremely difficult to access then please contact me on wright727@btinternet.com and when we have further season two excavation details I will email these to federation members.

Ron Cowell is giving a talk on the dig on the 30th of September, at Tameside Local Studies and Archives, Ashton-under-Lyne.

Chair: Kevin Wright

<http://www.tas-archaeology.org.uk/>



'A well earned snowy rest'

ACTIVITIES UPDATE – JULY 2009

The Society continues to work on the Manchester to Wigan Roman Road project in the Ince and Amberswood Common areas of Wigan. Despite the recorded sightings of remains of the road by antiquarians in the early 19th century it is proving difficult to discover any remains today. Extensive mining activity and more recent development would appear to have either destroyed or covered those remains. However, the Society continues with resistivity surveys and work on projected alignments using information from early maps and written evidence relating to those areas that offer potential.

Our most recent project involves a field evaluation in the grounds of Wigan Hall, which was also the Rectory, in the centre of Wigan (see photograph below). It is a grade 2 listed building that is currently on the market for development. The Society's interest focuses on the potential for below ground archaeological remains. The site is owned by the Diocese of Liverpool who approved our project plan.

The present building was erected in 1875, replacing one that direct evidence first records in 1616 and which implied a moated site. Secondary evidence indicates that the Hall existed during the later medieval period. The first reference to a rector of Wigan was in 1199.

We believe that in some areas the grounds may remain basically undisturbed since much earlier times and now lie below more recent landscaping.

Initially we have planned five exploration trenches. We hope to locate and discover dating evidence for the early Frog Lane, find evidence of early garden features and buildings and locate the foundations of walls from the SW wing of the earlier building. We have no information that suggests the location of a moat within the present curtilage but we will investigate possible locations. We must also consider the Civil War fortifications which enclosed much of the town. Evidence states that the site lay outside this boundary and ditch feature. However boundary changes to the site offer the possibility that remains may lie within the present curtilage.

The Society is also preparing to carry out a watching brief on behalf of the Diocese of Liverpool. This covers a site adjacent to the Parish Church of All Saints in the area of the War Memorial where the council are to re-lay the pavement, which comprises sandstone slabs. Several of these were originally memorial stones and inscriptions are still visible. The Society will examine all slabs to discover if inscriptions occur on their undersides and record and report any archaeological features that are seen.

Eric Walter



GMAU Report

**Tramway dig
discovers
Tramway!**

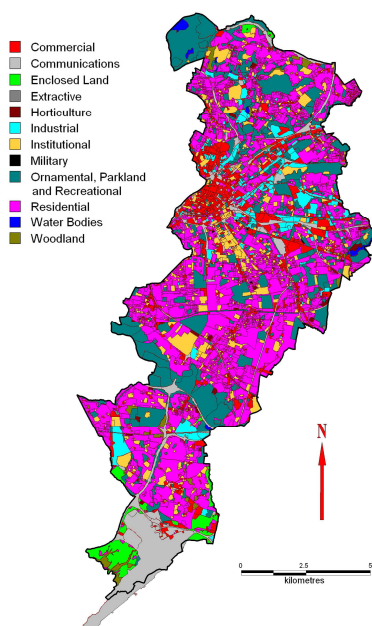


**Horse-drawn tramway discovered
by NAA during works at Pollard
Street. (Copyright NAA)**

The economic slump has had a dramatic affect on commercial archaeology, reflected by substantial job losses and the demise of some archaeology units. GMAU sadly are to close on 31st July 2009. Manchester University has undertaken to ensure that the Unit's records are dispersed to appropriate archive institutions. Staff have been working hard, in difficult circumstances, to catalogue finds and paper records to facilitate removal of the archive to museums across the North-West. GMAU have agreed to store the Unit's electronic archive on their server.

There have been some significant field investigations in Greater Manchester in recent months. These include Northern Archaeological Associates' excavation ahead of works for GMPT's Metrolink Extension to Ashton-under-Lyne. This uncovered remains of the early 19th century Pollard Street Mill and adjacent Soho Iron Works in Ancoats.. Features included engine beds, boiler houses, flues, a steam crane, coal store, canal arms, tramway, and part of a Nasmyth hammer. (See photograph on back page).

Oxford Archaeology North have evaluated, through trial trenches, a series of 19th basements and cellars under the former Victoria Bus Station by Victoria Bridge in Salford opposite Manchester Cathedral. This work was undertaken to inform archaeological interests in relation to a proposed footbridge and public realm scheme. Not too far away, on the other side of the river Irwell off Miller Street in Manchester, OAN have had another evaluation, this time on the site of the proposed Co-Op HQ. This area has revealed good survival of workers's housing which will be further explored through a larger scale dig which the public will be able to visit.



GMAU have been developing a new website, as the old University of Manchester Field Archaeology Centre one is defunct. We intend to put news items and notice of events on as well as providing an overview of the work of GMAU, links to other key archaeology and heritage management sites, and annual reports summarising archaeological work in Greater Manchester each year. Please visit www.gmau.manchester.ac.uk.

GMAU have been busy working on the Greater Manchester Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation project and have completed Bolton, Bury, Trafford and Manchester (see graphic to left) so far. The project is now programmed to finish in July 2011. See our website for further information.

Norman Redhead

Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation

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The Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation was formed in 2009. It is a loose organization of local archaeology societies from Greater Manchester with affiliated groups from neighbouring counties.



Excavations at Pollard Street, Ancoats, by NAA reveal the remains of the cotton mill and, where the mechanical diggers are, the canal arm. The tramway and iron works remains are on the far end of the site, as yet uncovered

New publications and reports

Does your society have a new publication or report which you would like to be included in the newsletter? If so contact Peter at GMAU.

One door closes and another opens

Mike Nevell

Continued from page 1

Salford University has decided to set up a new Centre for Applied Archaeology within the School of the built Environment, that will look at the linkages between local communities, industry and archaeology.

It will have a focus on community archaeology and industrial archaeology both in terms of research and commercial work and should be up and running by the end of September 09 under the leadership of Mike Nevell. Several projects (Tameside Archaeological Survey, Besthorpe) and UMAU staff will be transferring to the new centre.