

# Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 3

March 2010

## 30 Years of STAG

Including:

From this



To this



Pat Faulkner of STAG reflects on their activities since their foundation, particularly about the work at Timperley Old Hall, from overgrown wilderness (top, photo STAG), to excavated site (bottom, photo GMAU) and some plans for the future.

The South Trafford Archaeology Group was formed in 1979 and has since become established as one of the most active archaeology groups in the region. In 1983 it became a registered charity.

Since the Group's formation, many projects have been successfully undertaken, including excavations at Urmston Hall, and the site of Chorlton Chapel on Chorlton Green. A medieval malt/corn-drying kiln was excavated and recorded in the centre of Altrincham, also a well on an adjacent site which yielded several thousand sherds of pottery. Between 1984 and 1986 S.T.A.G. undertook the geophysical survey and excavation of a late

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### John Hearle MBE

It is fair to say that John's fantastic input to the Mellor community archaeology project has had an extraordinary impact on Stockport Borough's heritage. Over ten years of archaeological investigations at Mellor, facilitated by John's tireless efforts in raising funds and chairing the Mellor Archaeological Trust, have transformed our understanding not only of the origins of settlement in the Mellor area but also across a wide swathe of the central Pennines and North West Region. The educational and community benefits have been recognised through a series of awards: the 2007 Marsh Archaeology Award, the Sandford Award for Education, and Ann Hearle's sterling efforts earning her the accolade of Nationwide Heritage Hero for the North West. John's achievements have been realised without financial reward and are the product of his calm and committed leadership, hard work and personal vision in guiding the development of the Mellor Archaeological Trust. Over the course of 10 years he has led the Trust from modest beginnings comprising a small band of volunteers to become a substantial community-based archaeological and heritage project that has attracted thousands of volunteers and visitors to a remote Pennine hilltop to share in the discovery of its archaeology and history. John has freely given his time and energy to develop the organisation of the Trust and has been directly involved in and responsible for key aspects of the project. These include grant applications,



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Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter. Keep those contributions coming in. This issue contains material about two notable achievements, celebrating 30 years of South Trafford Archaeological Group, from 'Out in the cold and nowhere to go!' in 1979 to still digging 'in the cold' (particularly at the moment), but with a headquarters and 30 years of investigations to reflect upon and also the end of the current phase of investigations by the Mellor Archaeological Trust. Congratulations to both groups. Finally, a warm welcome to the Manchester Regional Industrial Archaeology Society who are now members. I hope that you all enjoy the newsletter.

Peter Leeming

## Some Forthcoming Talks

### **Bolton Archaeology & Egyptology Society—(at Loyals Lounge, The Town Hall, Bolton , 7:30pm)**

17/03/2010 "Baubles, Bangles and Beads: Jewellery from Ancient Egypt" by Carol Andrews

21/04/2010 AGM followed by talk by Ben Edwards

19/05/2010 "News from Egypt. Recent Excavations and Discoveries" by Bob Partridge

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

Friday 12th March 2010 - 'Nostalgic Journey by tram through Manchester to 1948' Richard Pink

Friday April 9th 2010 Richard Hills 'Dalton's Manchester - First Industrial City'

Friday May 14th 2010 Peter Connolly of York Arch. Trust 'Hungate Excavations of Mill site and Industrial Works'

### **Royton Lives Through the Ages (at Downey House, Church Street, Royton, Oldham, 7:30pm)**

8th March 2010 - The Glen Mill John Fidler

12th April 2010 - Derek Slater Victorian Theatre

10th May 2010 - Ray Hoerty Manchester's Hidden History

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

16/03/2010 The John Buckley Lecture: "Lentworth Hall Mill, Wyreside." A slide lecture by Ben Edwards

13/4/2010 "Medieval settlement in Saddleworth." A slide lecture by Stephen Moorhouse

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

26/03/2010 "Excavations at Besthorpe" by Adam Thompson

23/4/2010 "Shaw Cairn" by Pete Noble

21/05/2010 "Churches" by Mike Nevell

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

07/04/2010 "A Tale of Two Sites: Mellor and Shaw Cairn" by Andy Myers

05/05/2010 "Excavations at the end of the M62" by Ron Cowell

## Federation members

The following groups are members of the Federation:

Bolton Archaeology and Egyptology Society, Bury Archaeological Group, Darwen Local History Society, Glossop and Longdendale Archaeological Society, Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society, Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society, Mellor Archaeological Trust, Moston And District Archaeological 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.

Neolithic / Early Bronze Age settlement, and investigated a Bronze Age barrow containing a cremation burial and associated knife/dagger, both sites being at Little Bollington. Radiocarbon dating has placed the burial in the latter part of the Early Bronze Age. This project later became part of a more extensive historical/archaeological survey of Little Bollington, the results of which have now been published.

The Group also excavated a Roman rubbish dump at Northwich and assisted the late Professor Barri Jones of Manchester University on the excavation of a Roman fort, also at Northwich. Other projects include the location and recording of the original garden levels at the Apprentice House, Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, for the Quarry Bank Mill Trust.

In 1989, S.T.A.G. began the long term investigation of Timperley Old Hall medieval moated site, which comprised environmental study, geophysical survey and excavation. A geophysical survey and excavation of a ditched enclosure site was carried out at High Legh in 1999. In 2002, trial slots were cut on a small fortlet site at Warburton where a vast amount of Roman artefacts have been recovered by a metal-detectorist.

### Timperley Old Hall 1989-1999

Work on the Timperley Old Hall moated site began in 1989 after a two year study of the wild life on and around the platform. It quickly became apparent that most of the stone and brickwork had been robbed out, but that which did remain gave a good idea of the layout of the 17<sup>th</sup> century hall. Although practically nothing remained of the medieval hall, a great deal of medieval pottery was recovered and, including post-medieval pottery, some 10,000 sherds were found, and quite a number of pots have been reconstructed.

### Timperley Old Hall 2009

Following receipt of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £44,400 in October 2007 and with help from Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, work commenced on the final phase of the project in March 2009, when some 1,300 tons of spoil, using a machine, was used to backfill the gaping hole left by the previous dig. This allowed the area of the west wing of the Hall to be investigated and some 40 tons of overburden was removed by hand to reveal the limits of two later brick phases c AD 1670-1700 along the north and west walls, but to date there has been no trace of a south wall foundation. The original profile has been recorded in the west moat, suggesting that the moat may have been a great deal wider than presently indicated by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century revetment structure and possibly much deeper when originally constructed.

A trench located three additional rubbish pits, all cut by one revealed during the first excavation phase, which gave a collagen date of c. 1340. More quantities of medieval ridge tile and chopped bone have also been recovered. Some 97.5kg of pottery with a date range of c. 1300-1800, were found last year, causing much thought and many headaches. The bulk seems to be from the post-Civil War period (c.AD 1650). Twenty-seven cups have been identified and to ensure our identifications are correct, a day school has been arranged for March 2010. It has been suggested that, in total, approximately 1 ½ tons of finds from this site are unique in the north-west, requiring a professional report not allowed for in our HLF budget

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Some of the pottery from the excavations (photo GMAU)



Our ultimate aim is to produce a late Georgian walled garden with appropriate types of fruit trees and plant species, together with a footprint of the Old Hall and its wells, with information boards, presented as an historic haven for the benefit of the citizens of Timperley and Altrincham.

So far, we have a beautifully restored garden wall for the first time in 200 years and a replacement bridge over the north moat with, at present, big holes at each end crossed by stout planks, a vast improvement giving us great encouragement.

The location of the Anglo-Saxon hearth (c AD 840) and many flint and chert fragments c 1500-2000 BC suggests that there has been human activity in this landscape over a period of 4000 years.

We are an amateur archaeology group relying entirely on the enthusiasm of volunteers, so if you would like to join us on our project, you will be made very welcome. Apart from digging, there is geophysical survey, fieldwalking, documentary research and conservation, and several schools have taken advantage of our educational facility based on the Timperley Old Hall project. For the active and non-active members of the Group alike there are slide talks with guest speakers, and a quarterly newsletter keeps members in touch with Group activities.



The old bridge over the moat (photo STAG)

Pat Faulkner



Derek Pierce and your editor on the new bridge over the moat. Note the stout wooden planks in the foreground and the restored garden wall at the back (photo GMAU).

## Completing the Mellor Heritage Project 2007-9

In 2006, after nine years of excavations in the Old Vicarage garden (OV) next to Mellor Church, with support from HLF grants of £25,000 and £50,000 and £6000 per year from Stockport MBC, we were encouraged to go for a bigger grant. It had to be something new, so we embarked on the Mellor Heritage Project 2007-9, which covers the whole history of the whole parish of Mellor. The award of £455,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was matched by financial contributions from SMBC and Trust funds and overwhelmingly by in-kind volunteer contributions, which were put at £270,000 in the bid to HLF but have amounted to at least three times that amount. With the help of the late Fred Broadhurst, the story starts with the laying down of the rocks 300 million years ago, when "Mellor" was a swamp on the equator, and continues through deposition of more rocks, upheavals and erosions to the present landscape. As described in an article in *British Archaeology*, January/February 2010, the digs at the OV site have produced features and finds from Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, medieval and later times. The archaeology was led by Peter Noble of UMAU, supported by Adam Thompson, Brian Grimsditch and the return in 2010 of John Roberts, with around 30 volunteers on site each day for six weeks a year. The archaeology is difficult because there is little topsoil, so that post-holes and linear features may have been dug over 5,000 years ago or less than 100. The 2009 dig completed excavations of all accessible areas of the Old Vicarage garden.

The archaeology went beyond digging up the OV garden. Philip Day had acquired ground radar, magnetometry and resistivity equipment and with the help of volunteers had carried out many surveys. His death last year was a great sadness. His last "anomaly" led to the discovery of a 200-year old lime kiln in a Knowle Farm field. (Editor's note—see pg 7).



John Roberts at the Knowle Farm Lime Kiln (photo GMAU)..

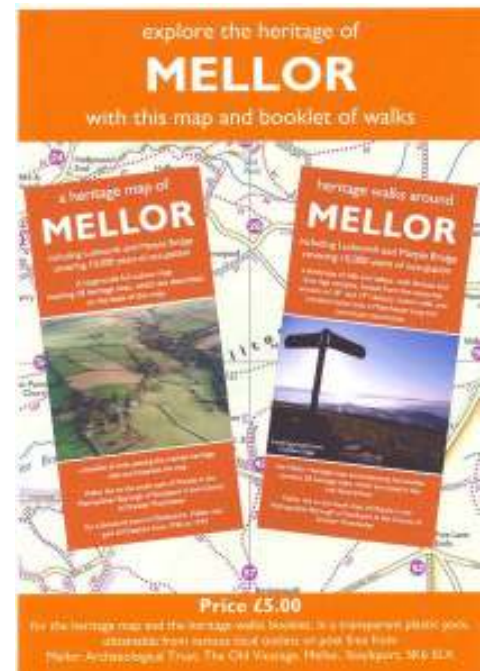
A more expensive part of the project was the evaluation and conservation of finds by experts. Supplementary digs were carried out on Mellor Moor, where Shaw Cairn was found to have an early Bronze Age cist with nearly 100 amber beads of a necklace, and on Oldknow's Mellor Mill, built in 1790-92, where bits of textile machinery that had survived the fire of 1892 were found in the lower levels.

Other volunteers have been busy searching archives and surveying buildings. The geography of the ancient townships of Mellor and Ludworth is key to their importance. They form a cusp of land between the High Peak and the Cheshire Plain, bounded on the SW and NW by the Rivers Goyt and Etherow and on the east by a ridge, which looks out over a valley to Kinder Scout. Its prehistoric importance was followed by a time, in the medieval period, as the seat of a King's Forester of the Peak. Then it became an area of scattered farms before the valley streams were exploited to power textile mills. Decline in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was followed by the arrival of commuters. One project has been an external survey of the 200-year span of houses on the ribbon development from the top of Moorend to Marple Bridge. The group in their yellow jackets provoked curiosity among the residents.

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A successful celebration conference in Stockport Town Hall on January 16, 2010, was due to be the end of the project, but there is still some work to do on publications. The heritage map of Mellor (including Ludworth and Merple Bridge) was published in September 2009 and is available from Ann Hearle ([annhearle@hearle.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:annhearle@hearle.eclipse.co.uk)) and many local outlets.



To come are a popular book, *Mellor through the Ages: times of importance and times of obscurity*, a DVD, *Life on the Edge: a history of Mellor, Ludworth and Marple Bridge*, and academic reports on the archaeology of the Old Vicarage, Shaw Cairn and Mellor Mill sites.

There are two other legacies of the project. (1) The finds from Mellor are displayed in the Origins gallery of Stockport Story museum; a new design with enhanced information is currently being installed. (2) An area next to the entrance to the Old Vicarage is being given to the people of Stockport; a bridge over the Iron Age ditch (below, photo MAT) will **(cont on pg 7)**



lead to a lay-out of interpretation boards. These two facilities will be formally opened on Saturday April 10, 2010, 10-30 am outside the museum in Stockport market-place followed at 12-00 noon at the entrance to the Old Vicarage site next to Mellor Church.

## And for 2010 and beyond

The great work of the groups recording the buildings of Mellor and Ludworth and of other groups finding, reviewing and indexing historical records will continue at little or no cost. The wonderful work of Marie Widger in providing school visits and community activities will be continued as part of the regular Stockport Museum activities. Since this is no longer an HLF project, the normal SMBC charges will apply.

What about digging? The Trust's financial reserves are small and will allow for only limited payment for professional input, keeping in mind the need to cover excavation costs and proper evaluation and conservation of finds. However many of our volunteers have the experience to carry out excavations on their own. Andy Coutts and Steve Milne now have NVQs in archaeology (the first volunteers to achieve this) and four more are on their way. A volunteer group is being set up to carry forward this activity. There are areas in the triangular field and in Peter Hodgson's field where there is more to be uncovered and we plan a dig there in the summer of 2010. Unfortunately, we will only be able to accept volunteers who have previously dug at Mellor. The big Open Days on the first weekend of September, which have been so successful for many years, will not be repeated in 2010, but we hope to provide opportunities to view excavations in progress.



There are two greater challenges. Shaw Cairn, where the amber beads (see left) were found, is a site of great importance. Although some trial trenches could be dug to sample archaeology outside the cairn itself, the major project that is needed will have to wait until substantial funding can be found. Mellor Mill is of major importance as an industrial archaeology site, which should be opened to the public. It is the final flowering of water power and the first of the architecturally impressive textile mills. We are in discussion with HLF about an application for funds, but, if successful, this would not come until 2011. Some exploratory excavations will be carried out in 2010. Guided tours will be offered during the Festival of Archaeology. The whole valley shows Oldknow's achievements and includes the "Roman Lakes Leisure Park" based on the old mill-ponds. We are discussing the possibility of arranging an industrial archaeology conference there in September.

John Hearle

Photos—MAT

## Philip Day 1937-2009

Phil passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Retired from the School of Chemistry at Manchester University he found a passion for geophysical survey as part of the Mellor Heritage Project. He became a trustee and led a number of geophysical survey projects, at the Old Vicarage Garden Iron Age settlement site, Shaw Cairn and further afield. His scientific and analytical skills enabled him to master the difficult specialism of ground penetrating radar and I am particularly grateful to him for undertaking a survey at Bramall Hall which confirmed the site of a former west wing. His chemistry background came to the fore when he analysed, sourced and explained the origins and character of the early Bronze Age amber beads from Shaw Cairn. Reports on his work can be found at [www.timeslip-mellor.org.uk](http://www.timeslip-mellor.org.uk). Phil was a wonderful member of the Mellor team, patiently training volunteers and giving freely of his knowledge and time to promote the Mellor project and its objectives. He is sorely missed.

Norman Redhead





## Phoenix from the Flames

The Centre for Applied Archaeology based at the University of Salford and staffed by Dr Mike Nevell (Head of Archaeology), Adam Thompson (Principal Archaeologist) and Brian Grimsditch (Senior Field Archaeologist), was established at the end of September 2009. The Centre has been created at time of depression in the archaeological world and the team aim to build on their many years of experience in the field by extending and creating opportunities within the University and the outside world for increased public access to Heritage through industrial, community, and rescue archaeology.



Since opening they have been developing a project concerned with creating 3D models of historic buildings, artefacts, and landscapes. Part of this project would be to create such models for use in outreach and education contexts and to bring historical and archaeological heritage to a wider audience, especially with those who would not normally for a number of reasons have access to these heritage places. A pilot study of Ord-sall Hall is currently underway.

Left—3D scan of the Mellor Dagger

The team are also developing links with other areas of the University in order to explore possible partnerships between their disciplines, archaeology, and industry. Centre staff will be continuing their involvement in teaching and as a first step will be involved in teaching on existing MA modules such as the 'Conservation of the Historic Environment' module. Eventually, Centre staff will be involved in postgraduate teaching and research.

The team are dedicated to facilitating the involvement of local communities in archaeology. One of their major projects, the Tameside Archaeological Survey run by Brian, has been designed with a great deal of community involvement. Currently Brian is coordinating a survey of the graveyards of Tameside which will involve volunteers transcribing ancient documents, inputting data and fieldwork at the graveyards. Early spring will see Brian, Adam and volunteers up in the mountains of Stalybridge excavating the earliest structure in Tameside: that of Buckton Castle, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Norman masonry fortification built during the reigns of Stephen and Matilda (see page 10).

Another major project, the rescue excavation of an Iron Age and Romano-British landscape at Besthorpe in the Trent Valley, run by Adam, will also involve not only local communities but also communities from the North West in all aspects of the fieldwork process including excavation, recording, photography and illustrations and finds analysis. Adam will also be concentrating on obtaining commercially funded archaeological work which will inform the community and research themes of the Centre. Thus, before Christmas the Centre undertook evaluation work at Bramall Hall in Stockport and at St Lawrence's Church in Denton, to investigate the interior of a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed chapel of ease.



Besthorpe—aerial view of one of the excavated areas

(Images from CfAA)

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Mike, apart from heading the team, is currently involved in writing several publications that include a major monograph on the birth of Industrial Glasgow, following on from major archaeological work in the construction of the new M74, and two books for the Archaeology of Tameside series, *Newton Hall and the Cruck Buildings of Greater Manchester* and *Buckton Castle*. He is also the new co-editor of *Industrial Archaeology Review* the national and international academic journal for industrial archaeology. Mike will be heading the links between archaeology and other subject areas within the University in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research as well as helping to deliver a series of archaeology training seminars for the construction industry.



Brian Grimsditch and Mike Nevell

### **Tameside Graveyards Survey Project.**

Since late October 2009 members of TAS and other volunteers have been involved with, fieldwork at the very fine half-timbered, 16<sup>th</sup> Century, St. Lawrence's Church in Denton. We have been assisting with supervising and recording all the Memorial Stones. This is a pilot project headed by Brian Grimsditch of the CfAA and is part of the Tameside Archaeological Survey.

The fieldwork aims to:

- Make a written record of each Memorial inscription.
- Record details of the actual stone itself, e.g. dimensions, material, orientation, etc...
- Make a digital photographic record of each Memorial Stone.
- Survey the Churchyard in order to plot each Memorial Stone onto a scale plan drawing.

There are in excess of 114 Memorials of which, to date, 96 have been recorded.

Although the oldest Memorial dates to 1677, due to wear or erosion many stones are either partially or totally illegible, therefore some may very well be of an earlier date.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have assisted so far. This is an ongoing project and it is hoped to provide further information and details in the next newsletter.

Lorraine Gregory

Right:

Graveyard survey at St Lawrence's, Denton (CfAA)

Below:

Detail of grave slab of a Masonic artilleryman (CfAA)



### Buckton Castle 2010

Brian Grimsditch has issued an invitation to Federation members to take part in a fairly unique opportunity, to excavate at a medieval castle site (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) in Greater Manchester. The excavations will start on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010 (no work on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April due to IFA conference) and will finish Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010. This will be the final year of the investigations and will be looking at the north western outworks, the approach causeway and ditch, the entrance, further work in the interior to locate a possible building and exposure of the profile of the masonry wall at the southern end of the castle.

In previous years, the excavations have found the curtain wall, ephemeral internal structures and a gatehouse at the entrance with other possible structures in that area. The site has produced few finds but five sherds of Medieval (11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> C) pot were discovered in the entrance.

Now for the bad news: there is a 400-500 yards climb up to the site which can be hard going! Only those certain of their fitness should contact Brian. All volunteers will have to pre book to ensure a place. You can do more than one day but it will be operating on a first come first served basis, with a maximum of 15 volunteers per day. There is parking, but it is limited and a bit of a problem.

Those wishing to go should contact Brian on 0161 295 3821

or email him on [b.grimsditch@salford.ac.uk](mailto:b.grimsditch@salford.ac.uk)

### Saddleworth Archaeological Trust

Ken Booth has reported that the Saddleworth Archaeological Trust has, due to demand, reprinted a limited reprint of *Roman Saddleworth* and has also recently published a new *Field Guide to the Ro-*

*man Forts at Castleshaw.*

This 12 page guide, with eight B & W plans and maps and four coloured plates, contains an explanatory walk around the forts and an illustrated route from Saddleworth Museum to the forts.

*Roman Saddleworth* costs £10.00 and the *Field Guide* costs £1.00 (not including P&P).

Both can be purchased at meetings of the Trust or from Saddleworth Museum, Uppermill.





## Dunham Massey community project proposal for 2010

Our project would seek to use archaeological excavation to uncover, record and inform the future management of the remains of a seventeenth century dairy or stable building in Dunham Massey, Cheshire. This building formed part of the early parkland landscape at Dunham Massey and as such is of great historical interest.



Extract from Dunham Massey 'View to the South-East' by John Harris c. 1711 showing the area of the buildings being investigated (circled)

This site was planted by the National Trust with trees around 10 years ago before the existence of the building was known. If it can be demonstrated that there is significant archaeology at risk from these trees the National Trust has indicated that it would remove those that are likely to cause the greatest damage. This will improve the long term conservation of this site.

Following a successful evaluation, in July 2009, it was established that a community dig involving the community would be an excellent opportunity to combine preservation of the archaeology discovered, add to the legacy of the park and gardens, and would give the opportunity for local groups schools and residents around the park and surrounding area the opportunity to uncover their own heritage. There is a requirement for conservation of the current landscape and redevelopment of the recent planting of trees, that following discussion has been established need to be relocated due to the intrusion into the archaeology uncovered during the recent excavation and evaluation. I feel following the interest and open door policy recently developed and promoted by Dig Manchester, it has proven to be a bridge builder between academia and the what was considered to be the closed shop of archaeology, and has brought this into the community. A self proven formula of enthusiasts, experience and local knowledge brought in by the community members who were involved highlighted the importance of including local knowledge in such schemes. It helped unite communities and gave all comers the opportunity to carry out some level of archaeology. We hope the dig will help promote the knowledge and history of the park, help conserve and restore the area to it's original form as portrayed in paintings we have access to in the hall.

The aim of our project is to open excavate at least one half of the seventeenth century dairy or stable building. This would allow trees to be removed from the site and improve its future conservation management.

Our intension would be to enable members of SMART (and members of other local groups who are part of the Manchester Federation of Archaeology) to undertake the excavation. We would also be keen to enable local people from the Dunham communities to join us and take part.

We also aim to run a series of pre dig learning workshops for all those volunteers taking part to be run by qualified archae-

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-ologists, this will establish a good data base of knowledge and improve skills and education in the techniques of archaeology to be used on-site.

As the site in question is inside the free to enter parkland at Dunham Massey and located alongside the main visitor route this seems like an excellent opportunity to introduce large numbers of people to issues of archaeology and heritage. This would present a real opportunity to engage with people on the subject of archaeology and encourage them to join a local group. Visitors would be able to see the excavations taking place and interact with those taking part. In addition we would have a series of archaeology themed activities that would appeal to family groups and children. This would combine to build an event that would be interesting for general visitors and include opportunities to 'have a go'.

As the proposed dig is timed to run during the 'Festival of British Archaeology' and local school holidays there is a real opportunity to get large numbers of participants and visitors. In order to be attractive and interesting to this later group the project will include a number of activities suitable for families. We anticipate having a mock archaeological trench for children to make discoveries and record objects, a finds processing tent where visitors can handle finds from the site and learn about them and an opportunity to try your hand at geophysical survey (just like Time Team). There will also be displays on local archaeology, heritage trails within the park and special guided history walks inside the park.

We anticipate starting 18th July 2010 and being completed by 30th July 2010, this will be a 10 day dig including the weekend and allow 1 day for preparation and 1 day to close the dig down.

We will require professional archaeological assistance in undertaking the excavations to the standard required by the National Trust and Institute of Field Archaeologists. In simple terms this means having professional archaeologist on-site to supervise the work of volunteers. Assistance will also be required in the delivery of some of the activities available to the public, delivery of the training workshops and in the and in the production of a final report that records what was found.

We estimate the project will cost around £20,000. These funds will be used to cover the costs of the professional archaeologists. The National Trust has indicated that it will not charge the project for the use of the site and has pledged the time of their events and education staff and park wardens, vehicles and materials free of charge.

Andy Coutts

## **Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT CLEGGSWOOD COLLIERY 2009 (Part 1)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Following three years of investigations into Littleborough's possible Roman links, the archaeological members of the society decided to carry out investigations into the area's industrial past. After discussion the site of the former Cleggswood Colliery was considered to be suitable for investigation. Permission was sought from the landowner to allow us to carry out a site inspection/survey and limited archaeological excavations. This was duly given and so in June 2009 work commenced. Initial research showed it to have been a drift mine for coal and later fireclay and to have had several entrances with associated surface buildings and tramways.

Part 2 of this article, dealing with the excavation so far will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

#### **LOCATION**

The site is located mid way up Cleggswood Hill just off Hollingworth Road, Littleborough (SD938 161).

#### **HISTORY**

In the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century Littleborough consisted of a number of scattered hamlets with the main industries being farming and domestic textiles. Early mechanisation of this industry being a number of water powered fulling mills situated close to a convenient watercourse to take advantage of this readily available power source. Coal mining at this time was small scale and consisted of small drift mines (day eyes) and shallow pit workings that produced coal for the local domestic market with any excess being transported by packhorse to surrounding villages and towns. An estate map from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century shows a small coal pit at the bottom of Inghams Lane close to the proposed route of the Rochdale Canal. As the newly formed canal company was concerned about the possibility of subsidence and leakage they actively discouraged any such mining activity from within twenty yards of any of their watercourses and navigation, and so it was that by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century this coal pit closed. With the opening of the canal the opportunity arose for the transport of goods in bulk and the possibility of opening new markets for the products of the area. Industry began springing up along the canal corridor taking advantage of the abundant water supplies that the area had to offer. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century local mill owners were beginning to install steam engines in an effort to supplement power supplies in the summer months when water levels were low. This created a new demand for coal. Local entrepreneurs were quick to notice an opportunity to fulfil this demand. They began scouring the locality for potentially viable coal seams.

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One such search was carried out on Cleggswood Hill with trial holes dug in an effort to find the Upper Mountain Mine coal seam. This was found at 108ft below the summit of the hill and was seen to vary between 24" and 40" and so was deemed economically viable to mine. So around 1820 mining commenced with the driving of a drift into the hillside.

Over the colliery's lifetime it had a number of owners although it is unclear who the first owner was, however, by 1827 it had come into the ownership of Mr Richard Sellers who was advertising a one sixth share in the mine, presumably in an effort to recoup some of his capital investment. He installed a steam engine and probably had built the coal wharf by the canal and the inclined plate way. Research has shown that the plate way would probably have been an endless chain haulage system, which was common for surface haulage in the Lancashire coalfield. It may be that the one sixth share was bought by Jonathon Dickinson and, sometime in the late 1830s, the mine changed hands, this time coming into the ownership of Jonathan Dickinson and partners. They too invested in the company, building coke ovens by the side of the canal in an effort to supply the increasing demand for coke from the many iron foundries that were opening in the area.

On the death of Mr Dickinson the mine was again put up for sale and was this time bought by Messrs Crossley, Landless, Wilkinson and Whithead. They operated the mine until 1852 when again the mine was put up for sale this time being bought by Messrs Knowles Brothers who operated a number of collieries in the Wigan area. They retained ownership until 1859 when the mine was sold again. This time it was bought by Hall & Rogers who had recently taken over a brick and pipe works at Smithy Bridge and were looking for a suitable supply of fireclay. In June of that year they had been granted a 7-year lease to mine coal and clay. However the takeover of the mine must have exhausted their finances as in December they put the whole company up for sale. It is not known who took over the business but they carried on trading under the name of Hall & Rogers. They were the mines longest owners and retained ownership until the mine finally closed in 1928. The total scale of the mining operations is as yet

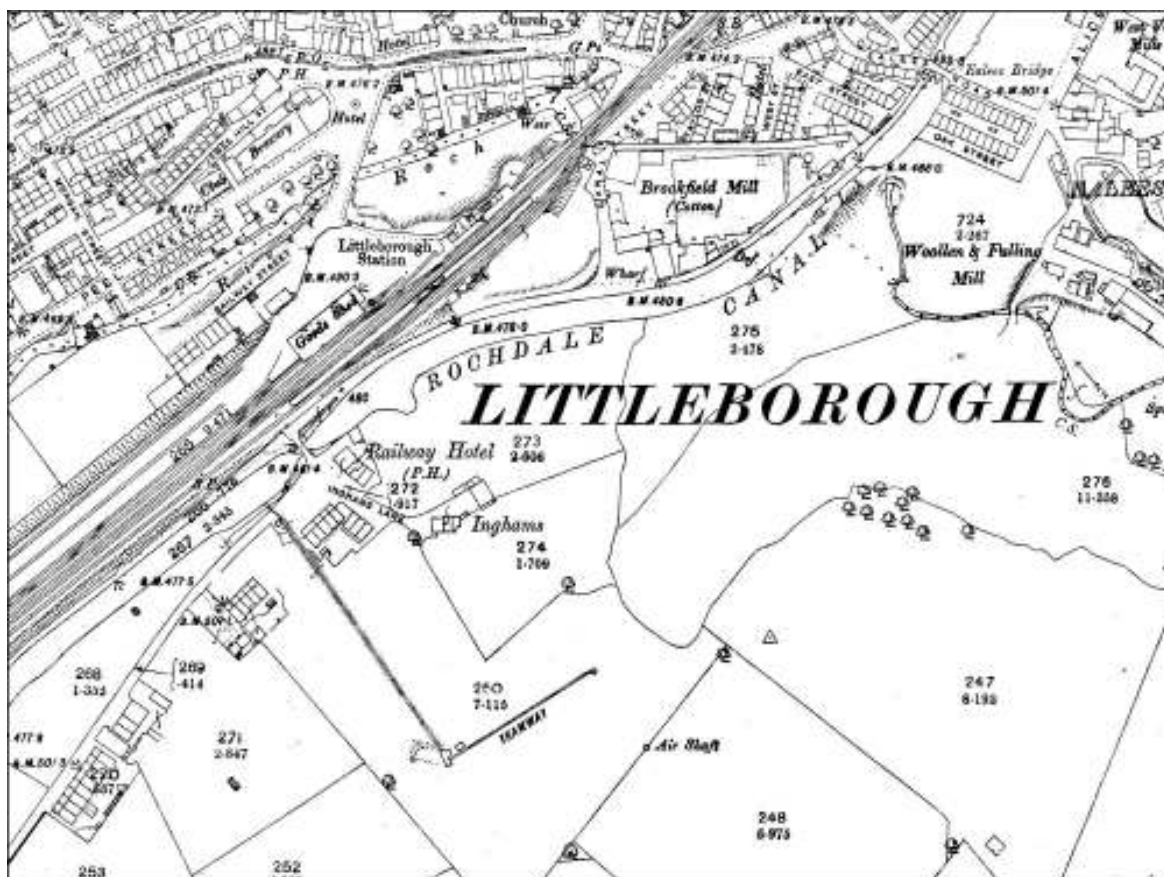
1893 OS map showing inclined plate way and plate way to later eastern mine.

unknown, however in 1827 Richard Sellers had a lease to mine from under 500 acres of land. By the sale of 1852 there were still 279 statute acres left to mine.

A look at the various OS maps of the area clearly shows the mines expansion and eventual decline. On the 1851 map only the original inclined plate way and mine buildings are shown. However by the 1893 map (right) a new entrance and connecting plate way had been put in about 200 yards to the east of the main building, also a third mine is

shown about 200 yards to the west and approx. 100 feet below the original mine but did not have a connecting plate way at that time. By the map of 1910 the eastern mine seems to have been abandoned and the plate way removed and relocated to the lower western mine. Moving to the 1930 map and more or less all trace of the mine had been removed.

(End of Part 1)



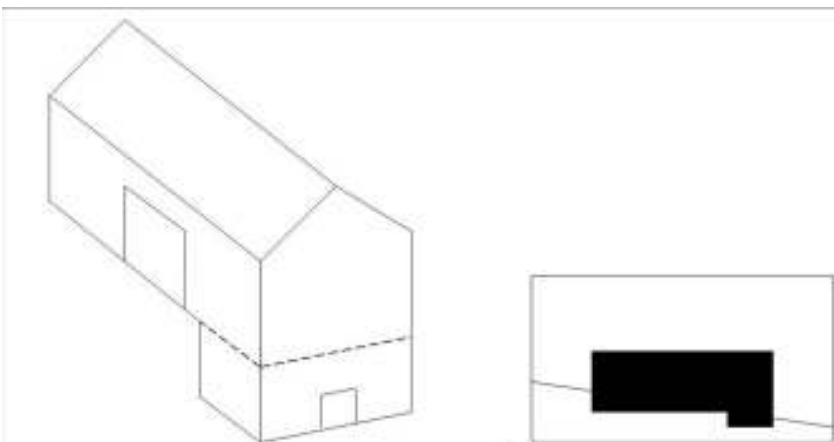
David Grayson

TAS have been split into two groups over the past few months, with the fitter, braver, souls heading up to Irontongue Hill, the Mesolithic site up on the moors and the others toiling over the computers to deal with reports. It is the last season of excavation at Irontongue Hill, which is located on a working grouse moor. Because of this access is limited to 12th December to the end of March. There is still time to participate in this excavation, but be warned that it is a long trek to the site, there are no lavatories there and the team stays on site for a full day. Those wanting to help can contact Kevin Wright at [wright727@btinternet.com](mailto:wright727@btinternet.com)



What often awaits at Irontongue Hill - frozen trenches!

The report writing for the building survey of the threshing barn at Brown Road Farm, Broadbottom has revealed an unusual surprise. The barn is the first known example within Greater Manchester of a type of barn found normally in the Lake District, the 'bank barn'. These are combination barns which take advantage of the upland topography and are cut into the slope to create the shippon under the hayloft. Brown Road farm barn is what Brunskill calls a 'variant bank barn', that is, one which is placed at 90 degrees to the contours, not along them. This means that one end is one storey higher than the other (see isometric sketch left).



The barn itself has undergone various episodes of repair and change of use, from combination barn to dairying. The report will be completed by the time of the next Federation meeting. Any other examples of these barns would be welcome. There are two other related barns which have been noted by the church at Dobcross, Saddleworth and at Widowscroft Farm, Hollingworth in Tameside.

Finally, there are two other projects also nearing completion: the excavation report on the coke ovens at Park Bridge from 2000-2001 (below left) and a small piece of recording of World War II anti-invasion defences, concrete cylinders at Hazel Grove (below right). The Park Bridge coke ovens are also a variant form of coke oven, being barrel shaped rather than beehive-shaped. The report is being produced as part of an effort to complete the backlog of reports which has built up since the Society began and they will inform a final publication, hopefully to be released as part of Tameside MBC's series *History in your Own Words*.



Park Bridge coke ovens

WWII anti-invasion cylinders at Hazel Grove



(All images from TAS)



The following article was printed in the previous newsletter with the wrong year and photographs, which should teach your editor to check things better! Therefore it is reprinted with the correct details and photographs with apologies to BAG.

## Gristlehurst 2007

At the site of Gristlehurst Hall (SD 84691220), further investigation in 2007 included extensions to the north (6N) and south (6S) sides of the previous excavation.

At its west end, trench (6N) contained part of a well-preserved late 18<sup>th</sup> century yard, paved with flagstones and cobble infill, terminating on the east against a flimsy stone foundation. A robbed stone drain and its adjacent ceramic replacement had seriously disturbed the area east of the foundation, in close proximity to the farmhouse.

In view of the complicated nature of its stratigraphy and lack of time, we postponed work at trench (6N) until the following season.

Trench (6S, see left) situated immediately south of the building found earlier on Well Brow, revealed the flagstone corner foundation of a small 17<sup>th</sup> century building, erected on a clay platform up to 0.36m thick. The foundation had been enclosed on its west and south sides by a narrow gully, probably dug to accommodate a wall of edge-set flagstones originally secured at the base with packing stones, surrounded by a compact gravel layer.

The purpose of the clay platform became clear when it was removed to reveal a backfilled ditch 1.5m wide by 0.6m deep, emerging from the east end of the trench for a short distance before joining a lower ditch running at right angles (see photo below). This second ditch also 0.6m deep by 1.5m wide at the base followed the downslope of Well Brow.

These ditches were part of an earlier system deliberately filled in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to provide more space (in places the backfill had been cobbled over). However, drainage remained a problem, evidently solved by laying a drain in the backfill. Hollowed out sections of split tree trunk laid end-to-end and covered by flagstones resolved this.

The ditch fill contained a few sherds of medieval and early post-medieval pottery, but more unusually fragments from a bakestone, perhaps made from local mudstone, or possibly imported from Delph near Saddleworth, which had a reputation for bakestone manufacture from the medieval period onwards.

Norman Tyson



Trench (6S) with one of the ditches visible at bottom right (photos GMAU).

The New Year has seen a number of historic building surveys undertaken in Greater Manchester. In Oldham the unfortunate impending demolition of Brook Mill No. 2 mill to make way for a modern Academy has been preceded by a fine historic building survey by Garry Miller.



Left—A familiar landmark soon to be lost:  
Brook Mill – the northeast elevation

Following demolition an extensive programme of archaeological fieldwork will be undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North to look at the remains of the mill's power systems and to examine what is left under the adjacent fields of Oak Colliery and of Oak Colliery brickworks. Garry Miller has also produced a historic building survey report on The Navigation, a late 18<sup>th</sup>/ early 19<sup>th</sup> century pub in Rochdale. Also in Rochdale, proposals to demolish the Leisure Centre on Entwistle Street have been accompa-

nied by a desk-based study and building assessment by Archaeological Research Services, and a subsequent historic building survey by ArchHeritage (Sheffield). This work records a fine example of a mid-1930s Art Deco public baths complex which sadly is to be lost to redevelopment. Oxford Archaeology North has also undertaken a historic building survey of Acme Mill, Swinton Hall Road, Pendlebury. In the same period field evaluations have been undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, project managed by Gifford's, on land at Carlyle Street, Bury Ground. This is the first phase of development at the site and the evaluation has uncovered well preserved evidence for a goit and a secondary water channel, a wheel pit, building walls and floors relating to Howarth, Peel and Yates Calico Print Works (1773) and subsequent developments. The developer has modified the proposed foundation designs to enable some areas to remain undisturbed and *in situ*, but it seems likely there will be open-area excavation in one part of the site that coincides with the earlier remains.

Andrew Myers

(photo from Garry Miller)

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### More recent publications relating to Greater Manchester

Andy Myers has recently co-authored, with Pete Noble, a paper on the Mellor flint dagger and its regional context in the 2009 issue of *DAJ*.

*Britannia* for 2009 has short pieces on Mellor, the Roman site on Chester Road, Manchester and on Wigan. It also has a transcription and translation of the altar discovered at Chester Road.

New MRIAS publication :

'Further Water Wheel Hydraulics - Some Notes on the Poncelet Water Wheel' compiled by Steve Stockley.



further

exciting projects to report on in the future as well as publications on investigations carried out to date.

The beautiful Castleshaw Valley in Saddleworth (Oldham District, see photo below left) is to see a resurgence in archaeological activity after a lull of 15 years. The Castleshaw Working Party has been reformed to develop a Conservation Management Plan for the Roman forts Scheduled Monument and to replace the 20 year old interpretation boards which are



worn out. A HLF bid for the Watershed Landscape project has been submitted which, if successful, will see archaeological research undertaken for a new heritage trail at the head of the valley and a Reservoir Heritage Trail. Archaeological remains, including medieval iron smelting furnaces, have been set aside from a woodland plantation scheme, also at the head of the valley, with the prospect of some survey work and an interpretation board.

In terms of development control related archaeology, there have been a number of building surveys and evaluation exercises involving trial trenching but no major excavations – which isn't a bad thing given the wintry conditions we have been experiencing. Oxford Archaeology North dug some trial trenches in the first week of the New Year on the site of Bradford Colliery beside Manchester City's football ground – a ther-

mometer placed in the trench read -10 degrees centigrade!! Do any society members have experiences to relate of equally challenging conditions which we could put in future newsletters? Which leads me nicely to Buckton Castle, (right) where Salford University (CfAA) intend to carry out a third season of investigations in Spring. I attach a photo of the interesting conditions encountered last year, again in



spring. My thoughts and admiration go out to the members of Tameside Archaeology Society (see photo of Kevin Wright, left) who are once again braving the winter elements on Irontongue Hill to record a significant Mesolithic site.

Norman Redhead

(Photo credits—Castleshaw and Buckton, GMAU. Irontongue Hill, TAS).

TAS Chairman Kevin Wright at Irontongue Hill. He is trying out an innovative way of cheap aerial photography involving a camera with a timer and a dumpy level staff. The editor also tried this and this recorded his feet and the top of his head until the technique was perfected.





## 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.

## GMAU report

In the last newsletter I reported on how difficult last year was for commercial archaeology and how we lost some of our long established archaeology units in the north (ARCUS and UMAU). There are signs of 'green shoots' in the commercial archaeology sector but I suspect it will be some time yet before levels of funding and employment return to those of 2007. Sadly, the economic downturn is now taking its toll on local authority spending. Many planning departments are lined up for budget cuts and this is likely to have a negative impact on curatorial archaeological services across the country. It will be interesting to see whether the new Planning Policy Statement on the Historic Environment, which is due out at the end of March, brings a change in attitude and funding levels, especially as it could significantly increase local authority archaeologists' workloads.

This issue reflects on the end of the three year Mellor Heritage HLF Project and its legacies. What a fantastic community project this has been and demonstrates how much can be achieved when a community and professionals pull together. I was pleased to see John Hearle, Mellor Archaeological Trust's Chairman, receive a well deserved MBE which is reported on in more detail elsewhere in this issue. But the Trust's work is not done and there will be

(cont on pg 17)

## 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.

## John Hearle *MBE* (cont from Page 1)

recruitment, training, project monitoring, finance, commissioning research and publications, and co-ordinating events, as well as education and outreach activities. However, I have to add that John's wife Ann has also had an enormous influence on the success of the Mellor project, not least for her wonderful hospitality to all the volunteers and archaeologists who have come to her house and garden! This brings me on to a further aspect of the project which requires recognition. The excavations on the hilltop at Mellor have taken place largely within the boundary of the Hearle's large Old Vicarage garden. John and Ann, who are keen gardeners, have allowed the annual digging-up of their garden (for plan, see below) to facilitate the excavations. Indeed they have endured this annual event with good humour and enthusiasm and assisted the archaeologists in whatever ways they could. My only regret was not being allowed to excavate the rhododendron patch where I am sure the most crucial archaeological evidence exists – this was the only area firmly out of bounds! Over the 10 years of the project a huge number of volunteers and visitors of all ages have been given access to their private garden and John and Ann have shown great hospitality to all who have visited the site. In doing this they have not only been motivated by the desire to facilitate the scientific investigation of this important site, but also by the desire to share the excitement of these discoveries with the rest of the community. In a further public-spirited gesture of great generosity, John is transferring a portion of the garden into public ownership so that future generations will be able to share in these exciting discoveries and to view and appreciate a section of the Iron Age ditch which will be interpreted with information boards. The award of an MBE in the 2010 New Year's Honours List is a fitting tribute to John's hard work and commitment.

Norman Redhead

(image from UMAU/CfAA)

