SMART recently combined with CFAA to carry out a community dig at the 18th Century Cheadle Hall on Cheadle Green, initially the plan was for a 9 day dig to incorporate two weekends and get local school involvement, but this unfortunately was subject to major cuts as a consequence of political intervention and withdrawal of funding. However despite this we redesigned the scheme to cover 2 open days and two days to cover preparation and closure of the site over the weekend of 11th and 12th September. The dig ran over the Heritage Weekend and its aim was to establish what archaeological remains were still in situ from the property commissioned by the Reverend Thomas Edgerton in 1756. SMART had previously carried out a one day evaluation under the expert tutelage of Norman Redhead and Brian Grimsditch on 11th April 2010, where we opened 6 trenches, five of which proved positive and archaeology was found, we then submitted a brief report to the Cheadle Civic Society advocating the value of a larger and more intrusive dig.

SMART and CFAA deturfed on Friday 10th September ready for the weekend, and I don't think anyone could have anticipated the interest shown by the local community, in so much we estimated that over 800 people took part in the dig and the numerous tours of the site, this did not include those who just turned up to watch. We had set up an area for daily visitors to take part and carry out their own archaeology, kids and parents flooded down over the two days, and combined with GMAU providing a Historic Environment Record session at St Mary's, and Abney Hall having its open day I can safely say the weekend was an inordinate success and opened up many possibilities for future work, which I feel would be beneficial to expand the understanding of the hall, given we uncovered vaulted cellars in the two trenches we opened, this of course we could not pursue with vengeance as we were restricted to time. Many Federation members were involved from Mellor, STAG, TAS and MADASH. So all in all another fantastic example of Federation co operation on the back of our fantastic dig at Dunham, where several other Federation groups were involved, and that this in itself inspired Norman into taking up the trowel and get stuck in.

What more evidence do we need to support the value of community archaeology and advocate investment into such projects?

Andy Coutts

Stop Press! New Publication

Greater Manchester’s Past Revealed—The Rock Triangle

The first to be released (although numbered 2 in the ongoing series) in the new series of popular archaeological booklets has just been published.

A full review of this volume and the shortly to be released vol 1 on Piccadilly Place will be included in the next newsletter.
Editorial

Dear All

Once again, thank you for your contributions and keep them coming in! Another bumper issue, and in fact one where I’ve held over some contributions until next time.

Finally, Seasons Greetings to you all and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Greater Manchester Archaeology Day in February.

Editor

Some Forthcoming Talks and Events

Bolton Archaeology and Egyptology Society (at Friends Meeting House, 50 Silverwell Street, Bolton, 7:30pm)
- Tues 18/1/2011 Carolyn Routledge New Insights on Akhenaten
- Tues 15/2/2011 John Prag Macedon, Mycenae, Molars and More: Reconstructing Ancient Faces

Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society (Littleborough Coach House, Lodge Street, 7:30pm)
- 13/1/2011 Chris Bryning Edwards and Bryning
- 10/2/2011 Tony Young Rochdale Trams Old & New
- 10/3/2011 David Grayson Cleggswood Colliery

Prestwich & Whitefield Heritage Society (at the Church Inn, Prestwich, 7:30)
- 3/2/2011 Noel Proctor Talk from Strangeways Chaplain about the riot

Royton Local History Society (at Downey House, Church Street, Royton, Oldham at 7:30pm)
- 10/1/2011 Patricia Abram The Adventures of an Education Welfare Officer
- 14/2/2011 Glen Atkinson Barton’s Bridges Falling Down
- 14/3/2011 John Fidler The Hollinwood Murder

Saddleworth Archaeological Trust (Masonic Hall, 138 High Street, Uppermill, 7:30)
- 13/12/2010 Norman Redhead Recent Excavations at Buckton Castle
- 20/1/2011 AGM and Paul Renshaw An Informative Roman Quiz
- 17/2/2011 Peter Leeming (Some of) Orkney’s Archaeology
- 17/3/2011 Laurance Donnelly The Legacy of Mining in Oldham and its Implications for Land Development (The John Buckley Lecture)

South Trafford Archaeological Group (STAG HQ, Timperley Old Hall, 7:30pm)
- 28/1/2011 Peter Leeming The Archaeology of the Defences of Greater Manchester in World War 2

Federation members

The following groups are members of the Federation:

Scenes from the successful Cheadle Green dig, courtesy of SMART and GMAU.
TAS to investigate further areas of Moorland in Tameside

TAS have been negotiating to start non intrusive surveys of an area known as Boar Flat. As the area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) it has required acquiring permission not only from the current land owners, United Utilities, but also the RSPB, an access road owner and Natural England. Final permissions are expected soon. The area is in close proximity to Irontongue Hill, the focus, of TAS rescue dig during the last two winters. In preparation for survey work a DBA is in an state of advanced research. Which has included visits to Manchester museum for example with the help of Bryan Sitch to analysis previous surface finds (for example the Bronze Age Barbed and Tanged Arrowhead below).

TAS welcomes federation members who would like to be involved during the project. Insurance cover by your society or TAS will cover individuals where there is no insurance cover. A risk assessment will be available. A reasonable state of health will be required. For those with little experience free teaching on site available.

Start date is weather dependent.

Contact Kevin Wright 0161 3306438 or wright727@btinternet for further details.


**Wigan Rectory Project**

Excavations in our first area at the Rectory are nearing completion, having now achieved our primary goal (i.e. finding and establishing the nature of old Frog Lane). Our latest trenches confirm that the road was constructed in two parts in this area. The main part (which continues on to the west) is made from gritty pit dirt, compacted to render it almost impervious to even a pickaxe. It’s thickness on average is 10cm and it lies on a thick bed of course sand. On the south side the sand changes to a band of compacted sandy dirt, which may have been an earlier path. Cutting through this (but not through the road itself) is a clay filled trench containing an iron pipe. This runs parallel to the road but as yet we have no idea of its purpose.

As the road approaches the turn into Hallgate (towards the east), it changes quite abruptly into the second part. This can only be described as a concrete raft extending across the full width of the road. It may have been put down as a repair as the ground surface here is quite soft consisting backfill, indicating that a large pit had been dug here at some point. Subsequent settling has occurred causing cavitations under the concrete.

From the few pieces of pottery recovered from the road layers it’s difficult to put a date on its construction; however the iron pipe seal below its surface suggests nothing earlier than the late 18th century.

Lying in the centre and sealed by the road layers (as mentioned in our previous newsletter), is a sedimentary ditch dating from the late 16th century. We initially thought this could be the reputed moat. However its depth is only 45cm (1.5 feet) and with a width of no more than 1.8m (4 feet), this is unlikely (it could be, however, the ditch described by Sibson and others in the 19th century. It surrounded the whole town and Sibson thought it was Roman but others have suggested late medieval, which would fit nicely with our date).

Cutting through this ditch and the road itself, is a mysterious deep trench which we still haven’t found the bottom of. Strange finds are coming out of it including a piece of iron stone. This material was mined extensively in the Douglas Valley towards the end of the 18th century for the Haigh foundry which was located down Leyland Mill Lane. Whether this piece comes from the Douglas valley seams is hard to say and there is no indication why it would be in our trench. Another find from near the bottom of the trench is this delicate clay pipe bowl (right). Clay pipes can be precisely dated and this one comes from 1650 (give or take 5 years). This doesn’t fit with our sequence for the trench which probably means it came originally out of the sedimentary ditch. We are now about a metre down in this trench and probing suggests it goes at least a further 30cm. We still have no idea why it was cut, although there is a field drain on its north edge. Its shallow depth of 40cm suggests it is in a later re-cut and the fill looks more like building rubble than the soft clay fill in the rest of the trench.

We have not established the northern extent of the road yet but our latest test pit, on the northwest side of our main excavation, reveals the road extending well beyond the deep trench cutting through

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it. Final recording is underway (both planning and sectioning) and soon we’ll be able to move on to our next area. There is a theory that the original entrance was not opposite Hallgate but further east nearer to New Market Street. This is quite possible as the rise to the Hall from the Hallgate entrance is far too steep. Much more likely coaches would have approached the Hall from the higher ground on the east side of it. Much of this area has been destroyed by the Wigan Tech buildings but there is a chance some of the entrance survives in the east corner of the current grounds. This will be our next target.
Roman Road Project

Last month saw our Society returning to an old favourite i.e. the Roman Road leading north out of Wigan. There has always been the question of Standish Wood Lane - was it the original route of the road? Many historians have thought so, as it lines up quite nicely with the road leading south out of Wigan on the other side of the Douglas valley. The route also has good potential as it runs quite straight for some distance between Upper Wood Fold and Standish itself. There are also the remains of two medieval stone crosses on it providing a clue to its ancient origins. However, was it Roman? One point against it is that towards its southern end it goes into a deep gully (almost 4 metres) which is not something the Romans tended to do, unless it was to alleviate a steep incline. From our previous investigations we have always believed the route ran further to the east, leading from Standish through Prospect and Brimlow Farm.

However the lane route could belong to an earlier phase before the settlement at Wigan was established. Proof of the theory would be if the road could be shown to project south through the fields between and beyond the Upper and Lower Wood Folds.

It was with this point in mind that we set off last month to carry out resistivity surveys in these fields. A previous recce by Eric Walter and I had established that the fields were owned by UK Coal Ltd and leased to local farmers (local but not living at either of the Wood Folds).

On the day we had a great turnout. After negotiating our way past a herd of inquisitive bullocks, we quickly established that the residence of the Wood Folds were very interested in our project and happy for us to carry out our work. The lady at the Lower Fold (which is now called Speckled Holly) even contacted the farmer to get permission for us (which was forthcoming as long as we didn’t disturb the cattle). The cattle did pose a bit of a problem but expert handling by Mark and Frank managed to keep them under control (well sort of).

Anyway we managed to complete a 40 x 25 metre square in the triangular shaped field just north of Speckled Holly (if the road did project through this field this square would capture it). The results however did not show evidence of a continuation of the road. What we did reveal, however, was a continuation of the farm track leading into the field. We did get high resistivity on the west side of the survey area but this is off the alignment and most probably relates to a natural slope (or terrace) which ran across the field at this point. On the 1849 OS map (as always) there is evidence of early mining and in this field a mineral line (or tram road) is shown running parallel to our alignment as far as the Lower Fold, before turning south-east along the edge of the field. Little evidence for this could be found, except for a line of low resistance crossing the high res of the farm track. Probing the ground with a 1 metre steel probe seemed to confirm our findings, with a hard surface being detected in the area of the suspect track, but nothing anywhere else. Only excavation would confirm the age of the track which isn’t shown on any map but whether we could get permission from the farmer is another thing - further surveys planned.
Location Plan for the Wigan Archaeological Society survey of the possible Roman Road at Standish Wood.
Dr Rob Isherwood runs Community Archaeology North West—here he discusses the works which arose out of the advice to Rochdale MBC by GMAU, namely that there should be a programme of archaeological work in accordance with PPS5. All parties were keen to engage the community in this process, as advised in paragraph 138 of the PPS5 Good Practice Guide. The first step was a DBA...

Community Archaeology North West

Earlier this year, Dr Peter Arrowsmith and Dr Rob Isherwood were commissioned to produce an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) for the Balsderstone, Kirkholt, Dicken Green and Queensway areas of Rochdale by 'Vision for Kirkholt'. 'Vision for Kirkholt' is a partnership project between the Oldham/ Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, Rochdale Council and Rochdale Boroughwide Housing. The project aims to transform an area of the borough, which had become an unpopular place to live, through a variety of strategic interventions. One of the key principles identified by the partnership was that the existent local heritage could play an important part in renewal strategies and that such heritage needed to be identified and built upon. Thus, the DBA was commissioned with the intention that it would not only inform future developments in the area, but also that it would identify potential sites for community archaeology.

The DBA has made a significant contribution towards enhancement of the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) for Rochdale. A total of sixty-two sites were identified in the report. Rochdale’s HER is in need of significant work, and this point was highlighted by the research for the DBA. A case in point was that of the site of Hartley (left), a large and significant farmstead site which was recorded in the Rochdale Manor Survey of 1626 as containing three tenements within Robert Holt’s Castleton estate. This site was not recorded on the HER, and significantly a major opportunity for archaeological research combined with a programme of community archaeology was missed when

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the site was built on in 2004-5 with the new Sandbrook Park Primary School. The site had previously been available, lying within the playing fields of the replaced Queensway Primary School. In 1726, Robert Heape, a Saddleworth clothier, settled at Hartley. The Heape family occupied Hartley for around 130 years and much detail of life there is recorded in *The Records of the Family of Heape*, 1905 (Heape and Heape). An interesting detail is that of a ‘time capsule’ being placed within the foundation stone of the new farmhouse built by the Heapes in 1837. This could potentially have been an exciting find within the context of a community excavation, particularly in respect of the current fashion for community groups to place time capsules within new builds.

The DBA has identified seven sites as having future potential for community archaeology and a programme of work with local schools has been announced by Vision for Kirkholt, to be led by Rob Isherwood of Community Archaeology North West. This work was previewed in a ‘Fun Day’ held at Balderstone Park on 11th September 2010. Rob is currently working on local history projects with two primary schools in Rochdale (Brimrod and Meanwood). At Brimrod, the Year 6 children have been exploring the historic environment around their school through field observation and archives. In particular, they have been utilising historic mapping derived from the HER. They have identified a number of sites. The work is not only giving them a better understanding of the place where they live but is also contributing to the enhancement of the HER.

Rob Isherwood

*Fun day at Balderstone Park, 11/9/2010*
Royton Hall Footprint

When Royton Local History Society was formed in 20002 almost the first suggestion put to the committee was to contact Time Team to dig up Royton Hall. The hall site had been a public open space since the hall’s demolition in 1939. The cellars and collapsed rubble had reputedly lain untouched for several years afterwards and older inhabitants of Royton remembered playing in the ruins as children. Legends of secret underground tunnels abounded.

Consequently the Royton Lives Through the Ages project was started as a sub-committee of the Society to oversee the endeavour. Thanks to lottery funding, local authority awards, and other public donations, alongside help and supervision from UMAU and CfAA, RLTA were able to undertake an exploratory dig, 3 large scale community digs, and one small dig from 2004-8. Although the excavations were successful beyond our original dreams in revealing the surviving foundations, cellars and lower walls this could not be the end of the project. The late Robina McNeil, County Archaeologist, was so impressed with the exposed walls (2 metres deep at the east wing section) that she wished the site could be preserved as exposed. Indeed the committee had already explored this option, hoping that the Parks department could somehow preserve the open ruins as a landscaped feature. An RLTA committee member, who was also retired architect, had drawn up a sketch of the proposed landscaping after one of our earliest meetings.

Needless to say the multi-million pound option of covering the site with Perspex, employing permanent caretakers and charging visitors to pay for the upkeep soon faded into the romantic mists and a more realistic and cheaper option presented itself. After many meetings with the more than generous Parks department it was decided that any attempt to keep the ruins open would run afoul of health and safety regulations. In any case leaving the site open would encourage local vandalism and site reduction in the long term. Nonetheless visitors to our public open days were not impressed to learn that the excavations would have to be backfilled. Our visitor comment book is full of public disappointment that there would be nothing left for the public to see but grass.

Robina’s original idea of ‘footprinting’ the site soon found favour with everyone and further funding was sought. This took a further two years, due to grant application problems and changes in local authority outlook and costing procedures. A Landscaping or ‘nagging’ sub group was formed from the more persistent ladies of RLTA, namely the formidable Frances, Pearl and Jess. This of course eased me (as chairman) out of the stalled proceedings and certainly got things moving. Stuart and his team at Parks Dept. drew up a plan showing a wheelchair friendly path leading to a stone ‘viewing turret’ on an artificial mound. The path was to be planted with an avenue of trees. Consequently we leafleted the householders in the neighbourhood with our plan, inviting their views. There were no real objections save the siting of the turret away from new flats built adjacent. The landscaping group also successfully obtained a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Manchester Grassroots fund.

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Added to an earlier increased grant from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Community Partnership we then had some £10,000, just enough to cover the new costings with some juggling and tweaking of the earlier plans.

Fortunately for us the same digger crew that helped in all of our Hall digs won the tendering bid this year and with our help were able to locate the SW corner of the hall (nearest point to Hall Street) and measure out the connecting walls. After some partial re-seeding, and slight grading, the surface outline of the hall walls were dug out and infilled with good compacting light-coloured stone. The mound was created and a crenellated but slightly reduced ‘semi circle’ of stone was erected. The wheelchair path was laid but has not yet been paved with cobblestones. While this was in progress the landscaping committee contacted the local schools to arrange a community tree planting session when mature trees were available. The Parks Dept gave us the nod for November 23 and eight schools duly sent down a planting group of 8 pupils at half hour intervals to plant the avenue along the path with mature lime, ash and silver birches. Craig, the site man, did a splendid job of getting the children involved and Stuart came on site to observe the event. Add to this an Oldham Chronicle photographer and Geoff Oliver, Royton Local History Society chairman, with his video camera, and the endeavour became a media event. Geoff is currently engaged with Frances Stott and history society members in creating a DVD history of Royton. And all the previous digs were recorded on DVD by Geoff.

We now await the spring when the grass is at its best, leaves are on our avenue of trees, and the crocuses and other wildflowers, donated by the Rotary Club, are in full bloom. Hopefully this new ‘park’ will become a focus for Royton and will encourage schoolchildren and adults alike to stroll round a visible hall outline, learn something of its history from a new interpretation board to be erected in the viewing semicircle, and generally enjoy a sense of community effort.

Michael Higgins
Excavations in 2008 at the site of Gristlehurst Hall, resumed the work postponed in 2007 at trench 6 (N) on the north end of the site. A new cut, trench 7, was dug at the south end. Trench 6(N) was extended and cleared of recorded 18th century features. This revealed that a clay floor and stone drain found fronting a wide stone foundation in 2007, had run under and not as previously thought against the foundation, indicating two phases. A section of the drain not built over was reused in the second phase, possibly to drain a downspout. The north section of 6(N) contained two post holes set 5.5m apart. They measured 50-60cm in diameter, each with packing stones, sited on either side of a burnt layer in section, suggestive of a hearth or kiln. Patches of compact gravel standing were also found in the trench, one of which produced a single medieval sherd. It seems likely the clay floor, drain, post holes, gravel standing and hearth were contemporary features of a late medieval phase.

Aims of trench 7 were to find a southern extent of the site, also determine how it related to the ditch system. Except for scanty remains of a shallow stone drain probably associated with building 46, no structures were found. Surrounding surfaces were compacted with gravel in the usual way, indicative of use during the late medieval to early post medieval period. The drain fabric had been almost completely removed by stone robbers, to leave a silted gully which with its surrounding area, became a convenient dumping ground from the 17th to late 18th centuries.

The contents from a 17th century rubbish dump here (context 180), included bottle glass with seals (last Newsletter), clay pipe bowls and the usual range of post medieval ceramics, including a few imported sherds from a late Saintonge polychrome pot. This particular deposit is thought to be from a house clearance in the late 17th century, when the property changed hands, so would contain material earlier than its date of deposition.

Norman Tyson

A near complete slipware dish and flagon from Gristlehurst.
Autumnal work by CfAA

After the community dig at Besthorpe in the Trent Valley during the summer (which included the excavated of a decapitated skeleton), activities at CfAA during the autumn turned to more local matters. The Newton Hall book, the first monograph produced by the Centre and reviewed in the last issue, was formally launched at the CUBE building in Manchester on 25 November, with an introduction by the Vice Chancellor of Salford University, Prof Martin Hall, and presentations from Dr Michael Nevell, Head of Archaeology, and Lynne Walker, the Historic Buildings Officer for the CBA. Bacon butties and cheese toasties were ordered for the early morning launch which coincided with the coldest night of the early winter (so far) in Manchester. Copies of the volume are available from the Centre and all Tameside libraries, whilst a pdf of the first chapter is available from the University of Salford website. Although the Tameside Archaeological Survey is finally coming to a close after 20 years of research and fieldwork, there remains the work at Buckton Castle to be published, so watch this space next year.

In amongst the community work at Cheadle, running an industrial building training day in Long Eaton, Notts, building survey work at Hawk Green in Marple and teaching courses for the WEA in Salford and Altrincham, CfAA undertook several developer-funded evaluations. Perhaps the most intriguing of these was the work commissioned to investigate the site of Newbold Hall, Rochdale (NGR SD913 134).

The site was previously evaluated by ARS Ltd in 2009 ahead of house building and CfAA undertook the final excavations during a very wet week during October. The area excavation exposed and recorded a substantial part of the hall’s external and internal footprint. These proved to be the remains of the Hall’s northern and central wings and the front, cobbled, courtyard. These remains represented a multi-period site, the earliest element of which appeared to be an early 17th century, stone-built, L-shaped freehold hall probably founded by a Richard Schofield This was expanded in the later 17th century by the addition of a two-bay, two-storey, stone range which abutted the north-western corner of the original wing, probably at the same time a north-western, two-bay, stone wing was added. This formed the courtyard arrangement which is shown on a drawing of 1840. The hall was further expanded in the early 19th century when the northern wing was rebuilt and enlarged. However, this prosperity was not to last and between 1844 and 1900 the building declined with the interior being split into separate tenements, whilst the northern wing was used as a public house. The complex was demolished in the early 20th century.

Although few finds were located during the excavations, partly due to later truncation of the deposits, the early development of the hall which fitted the pattern of manorial and freehold hall development within the region during the 17th century. This was a new hall on a new site and its expansion during the 17th century probably reflects the growing wealth of the Schofield family. Although today known as Newbold Hall, the Newbold family did not acquire the property until the 1800s and it seems likely they retained ownership until the property was demolished. Its rise and fall thus fits into a pattern of small gentry house development seen across the Greater Manchester area during this period.

Michael Nevell, University of Salford.
Two views of the excavations at Newbold Hall, Rochdale, showing the remains of the hall building and its cobbled courtyard.
Mellor Archaeological Trust

MELLOR MILL AND OLDKNOW’S LEGACY

The Trust recently applied to HLF for a grant to open up for public viewing the remains of Mellor Mill, other buildings of the industrial complex and Oldknow’s house. The work would be in association with Salford’s Centre for Applied Archaeology, but would provide opportunities for members of the Federation to join in. The first stage application will go to the December meeting of the NW HLF committee. If successful, we would hope to complete the development stage in three months, so that the final application can get to the June 2011 committee. A grant of the order of £800,000 would be needed and we would hope to start the project in October 2011. The following answers to questions on the HLF application form tell something of the story of Samuel Oldknow and Mellor Mill and what we hope to do.

In the 19th century, the Goyt Valley between Marple Bridge and Strines held an impressive industrial complex, which had gone by the start of the 20th century, in contrast to Arkwright’s mills, Styal Mill etc, which continued working much longer with the buildings remaining today. In 1787, Oldknow, who had made his fortune in the muslin trade by the time he was 30 and then built a mill in Stockport, bought the Bottoms Hall estate, changed the course of a river, dug large millponds, built the largest cotton mill of the time, and added workshops, an apprentice house, two mansions and stables. Tunnels carried water and housed drive shafts. Later gasworks, a steam engine and boiler house were added. The mill was burnt down in 1892. Unwin, writing in 1923, describes the mill as "a picturesque and interesting ruin". The mansions and other buildings remained but had been demolished by the 1950s. Nothing now remains above the main ground level. The site looks like old woodland, but wheel pits and tunnels remain. Two trial excavations have shown that floors, mill walls, basements, decorative brickwork, and pieces of textile machinery can be uncovered; the tunnels were explored by Derbyshire Cavers. Oldknow also built workers’ housing, with Red Row remaining, pioneered agricultural development in Mellor and was active in building canals and turnpikes and in the development of Marple. For capital works, he borrowed money from the Arkwrights, who took over the estate after his death.

Following the fire, Mr Furness, the mill manager, bought the site and converted the millponds to the "Roman Lakes" leisure park, with fishing, boating, picnicking, concerts and dancing. To the industrial heritage, this adds the social history of people coming out in their thousands from the towns to the country. Crowds continued to come during the Second World War. Since then the activities have continued on a smaller scale. A voluntary group, Friends of Our Valley, are developing ecological features, which will complement the industrial heritage.

Mellor Mill was the largest textile mill in the world when built in the 1790s, with the then largest wa-
The construction of the mill itself and the associated engineering works, was unique for its time. It was the final flowering of the water-powered textile mill. The water supply was obtained by diverting the River Goyt and from other ponds higher in the hills through a series of leats and reservoirs more complex than any other contemporary textile mill. (Unfortunately in 1892 the valve could not be opened to bring water from a pond built to meet the risk of fire.) The works included: long tunnels built with the highest standards of masonry, including one under the river to an outlet lower downstream; three large waterwheels with long shafts in tunnels leading to the drives for machinery in the mill and the workshops; and smaller wheels to drive cutting machines at Oldknow's farm and even to turn the spit in his kitchen. The mill itself became the template for the large, architecturally impressive, cotton mills built in SE Lancashire, NE Cheshire and NW Derbyshire in the early 19th century.

Twenty years ago, the Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit recommended that the site should be properly conserved. The present opportunity should not be missed.

The overall aim will be to develop the site to allow continued public access as a heritage attraction to be managed by a Mellor Mill Trust. To this end the Trust will clear undergrowth, survey and mark outlines of buildings, remove topsoil and clear wheelpits and other features. Some trees will be removed to improve viewing, but most will be left to show how an industrial site can revert to nature. The Trust intends to have a summer season of archaeological excavation to uncover the remains of buildings, including any basement areas; and to search for pieces of textile machinery or other artefacts and will arrange the display of finds in an information centre at the Roman Lakes or other suitable location and collaborate on displays at the Stockport Story Museum. Further plans involve teaching and dissemination and works to make the site more accessible, with associated signage etc.

John Hearle

**UPDATE ON SHAW CAIRN**

Shaw Cairn is the burial site on Mellor Moor where the amber beads were found in 2008/9. It had previously been excavated by amateurs in the 1970/80s. Alison Sheridan, who reported on the amber necklace, has now looked at the pottery from the 1970/80s and Terry Manby has commented that this is the most important Early Bronze Age funerary ceramic assemblage in the North West. Alison also arranged for the cremated bones to be examined. Radio-carbon dates from SUERC come out at 1700-2000 BC. This fits with the artefactual evidence and places the cairn at the transition between the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. The human bones from 11 cremations were examined by Cecilia Medina-Pettersson and the animal bones by Sheena Fraser, both of the University of Edinburgh. Some preliminary results of their findings are that there is less bone than normally expected from such cremations and that some of the bone in the cremations is animal in origin, indicating pyre goods.
in the aerial photograph taken by Greg Colley of sUAVe Aerial Photographers (He uses Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to take his photographs and his website details can be found on the back page). The kiln’s chimney had a dual function as it also vented gases from the adjacent Oak Colliery. The Academy are very excited about the archaeology and intend to use it for educational projects and display purposes.

We are entering a period of significant change to the planning landscape where the focus will be on delivering essential services related to statutory undertakings. The fear is that heritage services would be a soft target and it is quite possible that much of the excellent work carried out in recent years in establishing good national coverage for archaeological curatorial services will be undone. This of course has implications for contracting archaeologists who have already been hit hard in during the economic downturn of the last two years. The lack of curatorial advice in Northamptonshire from 2006-2009 led to a dearth of commercial archaeology and the almost total loss of protection for undesignated archaeology. Let us hope this scenario is not repeated elsewhere. GMAU is also entering a period of wider review of all services by AGMA. We will keep you posted on developments.

Since the September newsletter, archaeological highlights have included a really successful community dig at the site of the mid-18th century Cheadle Hall at Cheadle Green, Cheadle, near Stockport. The dig, which only lasted over the weekend, coincided with the Heritage Open weekend and the Bicentenary of the village green under which the hall remains lie. I suggested a dig to interest the people of Cheadle in part of their history and to help us understand the hall site better in relation to proposed landscape improvements to the Green. Supported by Cheadle Civic Society, Stockport Council and the Friends of the Green, volunteers from SMART and archaeologists from Salford University CfAA opened two large trenches across the hall’s footprint. During the dig over 800 visitors were shown round the site and around 100 children had a go at excavating. Significant remains of foundation walls came to light and lots of artifacts were recovered. The dig has excited a lot of interest in Cheadle, at public and political level, and it is hoped to mark out and interpret the hall site as well as develop further archaeology projects in the village.

Finally, the Greater Manchester Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Project has advanced to the stage where seven of the ten districts have been completed. Salford is the latest area to be finished with GMAU staff giving a presentation on the UHLC results and a PPS5 workshop at the same time to around 30 Salford planners. Work on characterising Stockport’s historic landscape is well advanced. (see next page for an image showing the progress so far).

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Right: Part of the Castleshaw Roman Forts site in the snow. Note the marked-out footings of the buildings on the right of the picture.

Norman Redhead will be writing an article about conservation and archaeological projects in the Castleshaw valley, which he has been involved in, for the next newsletter.
Completed HLC project to date. Stockport and Tameside had pilot phase project work.
Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation

c/o Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit
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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.

GMAU have been busy delivering more best practice workshops to local planners for Planning Policy Statement No. 5 ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’. So far 8 GM planning authorities have been covered, with two left to do. Yet, even as we start to see encouraging signs that archaeological remains will be better protected (and regarded) in the planning system, threats to local government archaeological services loom on the horizon. In my 25 years at GMAU I have not seen such uncertain and worrying times for local planning authorities, caused by impending substantial cuts to services and lack of certainty in the national planning policy framework. With the Localism Bill imminent and a promise to review planning policies, we must hope that the well-focused, streamlined Historic Environment policies of PPS5 and the drive towards community engagement embodied in that document will survive.

On the development control side, GMAU asked for an open area excavation of a late 19th century Hoffmann Kiln site which was affected by the Oasis Academy development in Chadderton, Oldham. Oxford Archaeology North’s excavation of half the kiln site produced amazing results as can be seen (Continued on page 18)

Top: OAN’s excavations of the Hoffmann kiln at the Chadderton Oasis Academy site

Left: Another view of this spectacular monument, note the almost completely excavated chimney site represented by the darker area on the red brick structure and the flues at the semi-circular end.

Both photos are by Greg Colley (that’s him on the spoil heap) produced by a camera on a radio-controlled helicopter. For more information see his company website for sUAVe

www.suaveairphotos.co.uk/