



Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation

Newsletter

Issue 16 – October 2018

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Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival 2018

After the success of the first Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival in 2017, the decision was taken by the Federation to hold another in 2018, working as before with the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford. The Festival ran from Thursday, 21st June to Sunday, 24th June 2018 and aims to increase access, encourage the exploration, and celebrate the archaeology of Greater Manchester. Thus, there were 17 free events to choose from across Greater Manchester and nearly every member of the Federation taking part. This newsletter covers reports on all of those events, from digs to talk via workshops and exhibitions. Around 300 people attended and the feedback from societies and participants was very positive, so we now have to think of new ideas for the third festival in June 2019.

Dr Mike Nevell
University of Salford

Federation members

The following groups are members of the Federation:

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

Launch Event & Lecture ‘The K8 – 50th Anniversary of Britain’s last red phonebox’

The launch event for this year’s Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival 2018 was held at the University of Salford on Thursday, 21st June and featured a talk by Prof Nigel Linge of the University of Salford:

‘The K8 - the 50th Anniversary of Britain's last red phonebox’.



He looked at the manufacturing material of this modernist-looking phone box, with its angular design, plate glass windows, and cast-iron panels on a concrete base. The style was designed to save the Post Office build-costs, with just 183 manufactured parts compared to the classic K6 phonebox’s 450. Introduced in 1968 it was once the most common of all pay phone boxes in the UK, to be found in the concrete shopping centres and social housing schemes of the 1960s and 1970, with 11,000 produced until production ended in 1983. The brutalistic design discouraged any form of protection and meant that BT and its successors could replace the K8 sites with newer phone box designs, or abandon them altogether, without any hindrance. Consequently, the K8 is now a very rare sight, especially in North West England. One positive from the Nigel’s talk was the result of his appeal for any photos of K8s within Greater Manchester. GM Festival participants helped to locate images of a several more K8 phone box locations during the Festival – citizen science research in action!

Mike Nevell

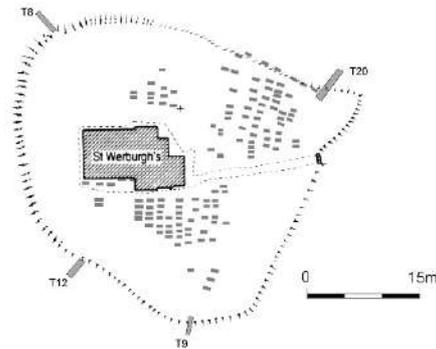
South Trafford Archaeological Society

Warburton Graveyard Survey - Thurs. 21st June, 2018

Graves in Old St. Werburgh's Church Warburton have previously been transcribed but no record of the position of each grave within the graveyard could be found.

It was decided to use the opportunity of the 2018 Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival to make a start on rectifying this.

On the day, eight people attended. As well as authors of the book on Warburton published by the University of Salford, other STAG members, neighbours and friends joined in.



It was decided to divide the churchyard into three sectors, North, South and West and a start was made on the row nearest the retaining wall of and to the south of the entrance path. Rows were labeled A, B, C etc and the grave nearest the path was number one.

A start was made by clearing any vegetation from the graves and then the graves were photographed and details of the deceased recorded on special recording sheets.



By the end of the session, 14 graves had been recorded and it is intended that further visits are made, as time permits, to make a record of all graves within the graveyard. This is a project for all STAG members and any visitors who would like to learn more about this valuable strand of history.

The final aim is for a plan to be published and displayed to help anyone researching their family history to locate the last resting place of their ancestors.

Jane Darwin

The Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society

Bellhouse Walk – Friday, 22nd June, 2018

This was a chance to tour some of the many buildings built by the Bellhouse firm of Manchester builders. David Bellhouse came from Leeds to Manchester in the late 1700s and started an engineering/contracting business (and a family). The family branched out into textiles (a mill in Chorlton, smallware manufacture on the Refuge Insurance Building site on Oxford Street) and timber (warehouse in Liverpool and they owned their own boats).

The Bellhouse Building in All Saints was named after the family who controlled much of the construction in Chorlton-on-Medlock.



Bellhouse Building, All Saints

The family was also involved in construction of the Manchester/South Junction viaduct and market buildings on Liverpool Road. They were 'Pillars of Society', helping found and support the first Mechanics Institute, Art Gallery and the Portico Library. The businesses declined in late 19th century, one of the last active members being 'Evans Bellhouse' builders merchants.



Manchester/South Junction Viaduct

Brimelow Farm Excavation - Wigan Archaeological Society

The weekend Festival and Open Day was a great success with plenty of volunteers and a good number of visitors over the two-day event. Friday volunteer numbers were down, probably because it was a weekday but, on the Saturday, we were oversubscribed. Throughout the two days though, we had a constant stream of visitors, mainly from the local residents who were keen to see the Roman road we had discovered on their door step (these were ably directed by one of our members on the farm gate).



The Project. The Roman road in the south field at Brimelow was first discovered in an excavation in 2004. It showed it to be a thin layer of cobbles, 9 metres wide with a possible shallow ditch on the west side but no ditch could be found on the east side. In 2016 we carried out a GPR survey of an area on the line of the road just south the excavation. The intention of this was just to see if GPR could detect the road where resistivity had patently failed over the years (resistivity, it turns out, is notoriously unproductive on boulder clays typical of this area). The survey result was a success showing indications of the road running south along the alignment. This gave us confidence with this method and in fact was later used successfully at Garstang where David Ratledge had been looking for the road.

The GPR result indicated that the road was slightly wider than our excavation had revealed, so this year we decided to revisit the site to see if the survey result was correct. As well as the road, the result also indicated a thin linear anomaly running across it with a right angle end to it. It looked like a field drain but why would it have a 90° bend in it (could it be the foundations of a building). This would also be a target for this year's investigations.

Excavation. Test pits had been put in a few weeks earlier, initially targeting the linear anomaly. As suspect, this turned out to be a field drain but the purpose of the bend was still a mystery. This would be a task for our volunteers to investigate. Further test pits were put in to find the road edges to determine its width and also show up the roadside ditches if they existed. These test pits revealed good areas of the cobbled surface showing the road to be about 10 metres wide confirming the GPR result (only a couple of months earlier, a large section of the road had been found at Leyland and significantly this was also 10 meters wide).



The next task was to put sections through the edges to see if we could understand the roads construction. To do this we needed to widen our trenches. By the end of the two days our volunteers had uncovered more of the road surface and the field drain was fully exposed. It was revealed to be constructed of inverted 'U' shaped pots lying on a bed of flat stones. This shape it seems dates from the early 19th century as mid 19th century drains had the word 'drain' stamped on them to exemption them from the brick tax which came into force at that time. Later on a machine for extruding pipes had been invented but our drain sections are crudely made suggesting an early date. However the fill from our trench suggests a much more recent construction, even post war, as apparently an agricultural depression up to the 1930's meant very little drainage took place. This suggests that the farmer reused, relayed or just cleared the original drains. Still, after all our work on this feature, the reason for the 90° turn remained a mystery.

In test pit 4 we managed to excavate a deep cut through the western edge of the road but this failed to produce an underlying structure or the telltale roadside ditch. It seems clear from this result that the Romans must have cleared the site before the road surface was laid (maybe even levelling it as we detect a slight slope of the original ground surface running across the road).



Despite these small setbacks, all the volunteers expressing how much they enjoyed the weekend. It was also a great opportunity for us to promote the site to the general public and particularly the local community. Further work has continued on the site and you can see more details of all our activities at Brimelow Farm this year on our blog site here: www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/blog/?page_id=1372

Bill Aldridge

Bolton Archaeology and Egyptology Society

Saturday, 23rd June, 2018



Between 10am and 4pm, visitors were able to explore of the History of Hall i'th' Wood, an early 16th-century manor house in Bolton. Samuel Crompton's family lodged there and this is where he invented the spinning mule and spun previously unheard of quantities of fine cotton thread

Some visitors got involved with geophysics as the group surveyed the lawns. Others took a guided tour through the hall's history including access into the hidden attics.



There were family craft activities in the Great Hall from 12pm until 3pm.



Walls and Boundaries in the Holcombe Valley

Saturday, 23rd June, 2018

Holcombe Moor Heritage Group held a guided walk in the Holcombe Valley to show the variety of walls and boundaries in the local area. The walk involved up and down varied terrain (4.5 miles) over 3 hours. It started at 1pm from the car park on Lumb Carr Road (B6214), 0.6 miles up the hill after the Hare & Hounds pub in Holcombe Brook.

The group led the walk, along with geologist and dry stone wall expert Ken Howarth, to explore some of the walls and other features in the valley.



Looking at a drinking trough



Large gatepost or 'stoop'



A dry stone wall in section, showing the way it was constructed



A weir, which was constructed to provide water power for Cinder Hill Engine House

Gatley Hill Festival of Archaeology 23/6/18

As part of the festival of Archaeology 2018, SMART decided to revisit a site where two evaluations had already been carried out. On both occasions the evaluations had proven profitable, and significant archaeological remains had been revealed, at least in the first visit, of what had been a 16th century farm house. The first evaluation was in April 2017 when six test pits had been opened and building, courtyard and interior floor surfaces had been revealed. This area proved to be of a greater success than the second evaluation carried out during the 'Beast from the East' month of March 2018, which also revealed some very significant archaeology. It was decided as part of the festival to return to site one and open up a much larger area rather than several test trenches. This was with a view to revealing how all the previous results related, if indeed they did, to each other. I have attached an image of the buildings that were the subject of the dig.



Image courtesy of (Mitchell & Mitchell 1980) Drawing of Gatley Hill Farm from an original painting by Peter Burrows

A 4m x 3m trench was opened up over the site of what had been established as the two storey barn, fortunately the archaeology was not very deep which gave ample opportunity to carry out a thorough investigation of what at first seemed to be a fairly large area. The results were very positive and demonstrated various phases of the buildings use. In addition how two of the main eastern walls of the barn were not actually keyed in together, or at least this appeared to be the case in the evidence that had been uncovered and seen in Fig 1 below.



(Fig 1)

An external cobbled surface and a drain with a cast iron cover had been revealed adjacent to eastern wall of the barn as seen at the bottom of (Fig 2), this probably originally served as an outlet for waste water from the downspout of the barn. A later and much more rudimentary outlet had been knocked through the eastern wall adjacent to the drain (Fig 2), which was deemed to have been part of the later phase of use for the building, which records show facilitated a tannery.



(Fig 2)

During the course of the day there were several visitors to the site and a number of participants had booked to take part. From 10 people who booked to come along 5 actually came over to have a go, some for the very first time. A tally of visitors to the site was taken there were over 25 visitors to the site 4 of which were in family groups. They took the opportunity to engage with the team carrying out the work on the barn, also to have a go at some geophysics and to make use of the activities provided to entertain the younger ones. A stall was placed on the site which outlined numerous excavations carried out by SMART, along with copies of associated reports. The stall was manned with members who were able to discuss the groups work, and future projects. This proved to be a very positive engagement with all the visitors on the day, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part and helped out.



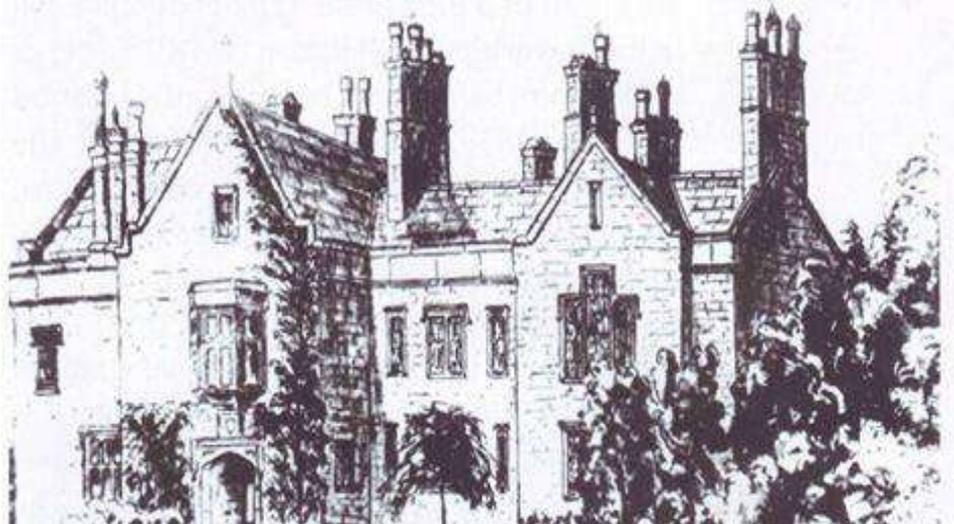
Andy Coutts, President of SMART

Prestwich & Whitefield Heritage Society

Sunday, 24th June, 2018

Philips Park is an area of parkland situated within the Metropolitan Borough of Bury on the boundary of Whitefield and Prestwich, in Greater Manchester. The park owes its name to the Philips family, who owned the land between 1799 and 1948. The land was originally part of the medieval Pilkington Park deer park.

Outwood Lodge was the former home of John Grundy (chairman of the East Lancashire Railway) and later the Liberal Party politician Mark Philips. It overlooked the North Wood and was designed by Johnson of Lichfield. It was replaced by the present North Lodge from around 1890–1900 and all that remains is part of a wall outside the North Lodge.



During the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival event in Philips Park the Prestwich and Whitefield Heritage Society gave guided walks of the Heritage of the Park.



Tours were given at 11.00, 13.00 and 15.00 starting at the Barn. This was an opportunity to learn about the history of the Park and see the recently discovered remains of Outwood Lodge.

Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts

Sunday, 24th June 2018

The Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts conducted two guided tours to the Roman Forts site. They took place at 11am and 2pm on Sunday 24th June and lasted about two hours. After meeting at the public car park on Waterworks Road, adjacent to the Castleshaw Centre near Delph, there was a fairly steep ascent to the Roman Forts site.

The tour explained the earthwork remains of the forts and the history of excavation that allows us to understand the Agricolan fort of AD 79 and its replacement by a much smaller fortlet in around AD 105. There was an opportunity to see archaeologists from the Friends undertaking exploratory excavations outside the fort's eastern defences, as well as geophysical survey. Other visitors to the site were also shown the archaeology and over the day some 60 people came along.



The investigations focused on re-excavating a 5 metre long section of an old, excavation trench (probably dug in 1907-8) located outside the eastern defences. There are no records for the old trench and the Friends were delighted to find remains of a Roman wall, stacks of stones and an area of burnt clay will be worthy of further investigation.

South Trafford Archaeological Society STAG HQ Sunday 24th June, 2018

Since 1990 STAG has been storing Roman finds from a dig on Weaver Street, Northwich and it was decided that this year's Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival would be an ideal opportunity to share this resource with a wider audience. From the thousands of finds, many ceramic, Kerry Beeston extracted samples for examination.



Prior to this, Kerry gave a presentation to explain the various types of fabric, form and function. It was explained that fabric can be divided into fine and coarse wares although different interpretations will be found. Form and function can be categorized in various ways and images were shown of domestic pots and dishes, cremation urns, mortaria and miscellaneous items.



It was especially nice to see a couple of children join the occasion so that they could have the rare opportunity of seeing and handling two thousand year old items that they would normally only be able to see in books.

This was such a successful event that STAG feels that this resource should be accessible to more people and would welcome the opportunity to host another similar event.

Jane Darwin

Tameside Archaeological Society

Displays 23rd & 24th June, 2018

TAS put on two displays for the weekend 23rd and 24th June. The first was at the Together Centre in Dukinfield. A steady stream of people appreciated the display and were interested about the varied programs we undertake. The talks were timed so that the people who were touring Dukinfield on the old Routmaster bus could also attend when they returned. The talk given by our Chairman was well-attended and received with lots of questions being asked both during and after.



On the Sunday, we moved the show down to Portland Basin Museum where we were ideally situated in the learning section at the lower entrance to the industrial history section of the museum straight next to the café. Anyone visiting came to enjoy our display of finds which mostly could be handled by the visitors, plus of course the slideshow as well.



As ever it was good to meet new people and to discuss the past work and the ongoing projects we are involved with.