



Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation

Newsletter

Issue 18 – December 2020

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Greater Manchester Archaeology 2020

We are living through extraordinary times. Norman Redhead details elsewhere in this newsletter some of the changes at GMAAS, who have secured a new six-year contract but will also see the retirement of Dr Andy Myers at the end of the year – he will be greatly missed. There have been changes at Salford Archaeology, our local professional archaeology unit at Salford University, with Mandy Burns and Rachael Reader moving on to new jobs – we wish them well. Sadly, Ann Hearle, one of the founders of the Mellor Archaeological Trust, died in November 2020. Some of you may also have noticed that I started a new job at the beginning of March at Ironbridge (interesting timing – see below!), although I remain an honorary research fellow in archaeology at Salford University.

The dominant feature of 2020 has and is, though, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It continues to change the way we live and work, and voluntary and professional archaeology are no different. Whilst developer-funded archaeology has been able to continue, the public interface of open days, site tours, and public lectures have had to be suspended. The advice from the Council for British Archaeology remains that voluntary archaeology activities should be limited and field work suspended. We are all missing our archaeology family. Yet, as can be seen in the pages of this newsletter, research within Greater Manchester continues from home and via online video conferencing, which is rapidly becoming normal.

The Federation needs to adapt to the new times. Both the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival and Greater Manchester Archaeology Day have had to be postponed to 2021. In their place we are organising an online Greater Manchester Archaeology weekend in December, with a series of free, online, events over the weekend of 12 and 13 December. Details will be emailed to members and posted on the GMAF website shortly.

Dr Mike Nevell, STAG & 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

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service: A Review and Update, December 2020

Norman Redhead

It has been an extraordinary year for GMAAS, and not just because of Coronavirus. At the end of March 2020 our annual contract was due to expire. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (who provide a strategic steer) recognised the value of the archaeological advisory service and the need to create greater stability for future delivery. In autumn 2019 they put out to tender a service contract for 6 years plus another 6, subject to a review. I am pleased to report that the University of Salford won the tender, securing the longer-term future of GMAAS. As well as being a relief for the staff, this provides a firm base for future applications for project grants such as enhancing the Historic Environment Record. This welcome commitment from AGMA will also benefit the protection and promotion of Greater Manchester's amazing archaeological resource through our advice in the planning system together with community engagement.

Another important event this year was the retirement at the end of November of our long-serving Senior Planning Archaeologist Dr Andrew Myers. Andy came to Greater Manchester from Derbyshire County Council in 2008 to take up the planning advisor post with Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit at the University of Manchester. Following closure of GMAU in 2012 he came across to the Centre of Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford to continue his important work as part of GMAAS, alongside colleagues Lesley Dunkley and Norman Redhead. In his time with us he has advised on more planning applications than he would care to count! His advice has led to some extremely important archaeological excavations and historic building surveys. Andy has also made a significant contribution to research in the region through his expertise on all things Mesolithic. His passion for worked flints will no doubt continue into retirement and we hope he will carry on offering advice and providing lectures on this subject well into the future.



Andy (far right) explaining worked flints to Mellor Archaeological Trust volunteers at their excavation of Shaw Cairn, Stockport

GMAAS produced an annual report on our work from April 2019 to March 2020. This enabled us to share key statistics and highlights with our clients and others. Some of the key numbers are as follows:

- The Historic Environment Record (HER) database contains **19,111** entries
- There are **54,000** records for the Historic Landscape Characterisation project which was completed in 2012
- We now hold over **95,000** images in our archive.
- The HER archive also contains **3,231** reports on archaeological investigations carried out in Greater Manchester since 1989, with **181** reports being added in the last year alone
- GMAAS were consulted on **342** planning applications by the ten local planning authorities of Greater Manchester, with **147** having an archaeological interest which resulted in conditions being applied to planning consents to secure programmes of archaeological work.

As usual much of the archaeological work has focused on the city centres of Manchester and Salford where the pace of new development has been extraordinary, although there have been significant archaeological investigations in each of Greater Manchester's boroughs. One of the stand-out subjects of recent investigations has been Manchester's historic glass industry which operated on a major scale in the 19th century. Two sites have been excavated: Dantzic Street where the remains of a short-lived 1850s glass furnace were uncovered, and Molyneux Webb in Ancoats which was Manchester's largest glassworks. Here the kiln structure did not survive so well but a large quantity of glass waste was recovered which will provide important scientific data on the 19th century glass making process. Included in the glass material were broken vessels of the distinctive 'Pomona Green'. These two investigations, combined with a previous excavation of three kilns and an annealing workshop at Pervical Vickers site in Ancoats, will provide for a significant research publication on Manchester's nationally important 19th century glass industry.



Dantzic Street glass kiln (left) after excavation and (right) finds trays of glass waste at Molyneux and Webb, Ancoats, with several pieces of the distinctive Pomona Green visible

At Piercy Street in Ancoats Salford Archaeology were able to excavate the well-preserved archaeological remains of Phoenix cotton mill which was established in the 1830s. A double steam engine bed, boilers, flues and chimney base were exposed. The drone photograph below wonderfully captures the historic textile mill landscape along the Ashton Canal in east Manchester, with the archaeological excavations visible in the foreground.

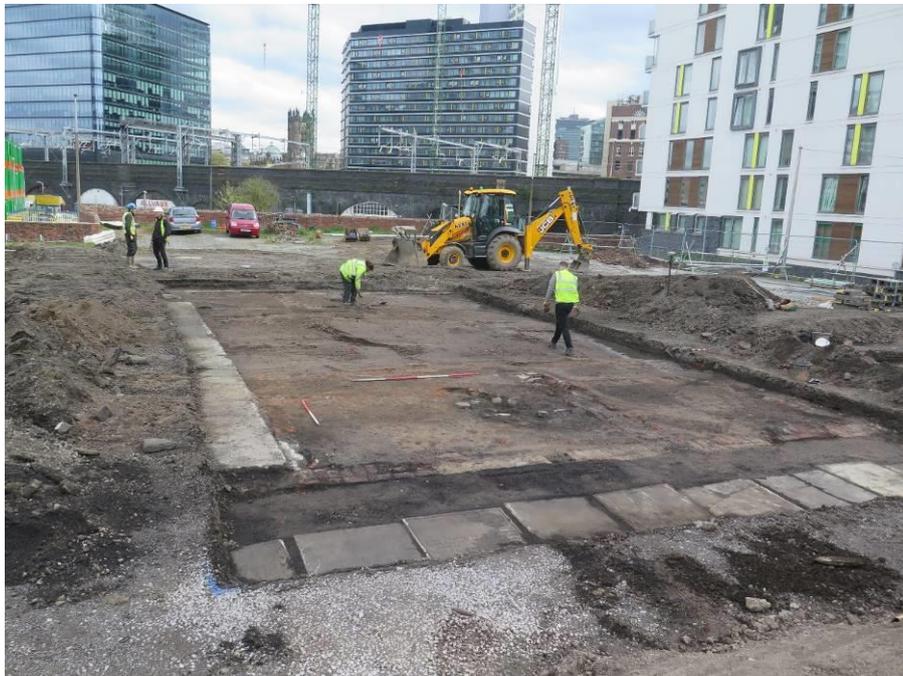


Excavation of Phoenix Mill, Piercy Street, Ancoats (courtesy of Salford Archaeology)

On a sad note, and still on the subject of textile mills, Greater Manchester lost two of its listed mills: Hartford Mill in Oldham, which has been in a poor condition for many years, and Beehive Mill in Bolton, which was in a fair condition but deemed to have no economic future. Both were recorded archaeologically ahead of and during demolition.

One of the most interesting sites that has come to light is that of Christ Church near Greengate in Salford's historic core. This was the subject of one of the talks at the GM Archaeology Day at the end of November 2019, given by Ian Miller who is the Assistant Director of Salford Archaeology. Reverend William Cowherd established the Bible Christian Church here in 1800. He was one of the early exponents of vegetarianism, with his congregation being both vegetarian and teetotal. Joseph Brotherton, Salford's first MP, took over preaching duties following Cowherd's death. After closure in 1868, the site was used as a timber yard, metal dealers and finally a car park. The site of the church and its attendant large graveyard, with up to 30,000 burials, was sealed under the car park surface and it was not known whether the ledger stones were still in place. Renaker's proposed development led to GMAAS recommending early trial trenching to establish the archaeological interest of the site.

Initial trenching showed good preservation of ledger stones and the church foundations, but also an area of the churchyard that was used for pauper burials where the remains were shallow and partly disturbed from ground works undertaken in the 1860s. The unique opportunity was taken to fully expose the graveyard and church site so that it could be recorded ahead of the development going forward, with the results informing development plans. Interestingly, an evaluation trench cut through the centre of the church revealed evidence of the 1640s siege of Manchester in the form of a 17th century musket ball, stamped clay pipe bowl and pottery sherds. At the very bottom of the trench was the cut of a ditch linked to the medieval borough of Salford. Now that archaeological levels and sensitivity are established, GMAAS have been able to advise on the layout of a proposed public park so that the remains are protected *in situ*. Information boards will be erected to tell the story of this remarkable site.



Excavating the site of Christ Church, with ledger stones visible in the foreground

Denton and Stockport are well known for their historic hatting industry and it was pleasing therefore to be afforded two opportunities through the planning system to investigate hat manufacturing sites. One was a full historic building survey of Battersbys Hatworks on Hempshaw Lane, Offerton, prior to its conversion to residential use. This was a leading manufacturer in felt hats operating in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The second was the excavation of a substantial portion of the Edward Street Hatworks in Denton, which yielded remains of the mid-19th century dye shop as well as an adjacent steam engine, two boiler beds and a flue system.

A large-scale housing development of a former car park impacted on an area of early workers' housing that was made famous in World War 1 for the very high number of men who volunteered for the army from one of the streets, named Chapel Street. The housing dated to the early 19th century and was demolished in the mid-20th century. A condition recommended by GMAAS secured an extensive programme of evaluation and excavation by Archaeology England which revealed the foundations of terraced houses, a school, the former Wesleyan chapel, as well as cobbled streets and a midden/courtyard. It was intended to hold a public open day as the local community displayed tremendous interest in the dig. However, due to Covid-19 this has not been possible and the archaeologists have instead created a website to describe the results and history. It is hoped that a public lecture will be possible at some point in the future.



Regent Road: an archaeologist holds a chimney sweep brush found in a cellar (left) and the blue plaque on an adjacent building commemorating the WWI volunteers from Chapel Street

The current financial year from 1st April 2020 has been dominated by the impact of Covid-19 and its resulting restrictions and changes to our way of working. Yet, remarkably, in much of Greater Manchester, and in particular Salford and Manchester city centres, the construction industry has remained buoyant. Our planning workload has not reduced and the levels of consultation work matches that of the previous year. Some very interesting archaeological remains have come to light which would normally be described at our annual GM Archaeology Day – but unfortunately not this year, due to the coronavirus.

One of the most exciting projects has been the archaeological excavations under railway arches beside the former Central Railway Station and Beetham Tower in Manchester. These have been undertaken ahead of a 40 storey residential tower being erected. Salford Archaeology have found substantial Roman remains in the form of a large edge-of-settlement defensive ditch and smaller property boundary ditches running at right angles to it, along with a variety of pits and other cut features. There has been a good range of pottery finds from the 1st to 3rd centuries. To find so much Roman evidence a considerable way from the heart of the Roman settlement of *Mamucium* at Deansgate and Liverpool Road is remarkable. One theory is that these are land plots given to retired veterans alongside the road to Castleshaw leading out of the settlement. The road has not yet been found and the dig is only two-thirds of the way through so any theories are quite speculative at this stage. A definite candidate for the 2021 Archaeology Day! It is anticipated that a monograph will be produced on the results of this project, which will also provide an up-to-date overview of Roman Manchester including previously unpublished excavations.



Recording Roman ditches at the former Bauer Millet Garage (Viadux) site, Manchester

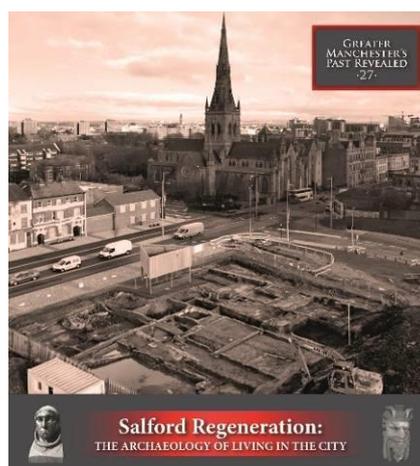
This summer has been an extraordinary one for revealing remains of early mill water wheel pits. Three have been excavated and recorded ahead of development. One is late 18th century in origin and formed part of Wrigley's textile mill at the site of the new Saddleworth high school at Dobcross, a second is the former early 19th century textile mill at Bevis Green Works in Bury, and the third was an early mill site at Kersal Vale Works in Prestwich. The latter may have originated as a medieval corn mill for Kersal Vale Priory, before being adapted for textile manufacturing.

Rochdale Town Hall is undergoing a major project of restoration and has seen a detailed historic building survey (including completed laser survey) and analysis of its historic development and significance as part of this process. Salford Archaeology and GMAAS have suggested the area covered by car parks to the east of the town hall would make a suitable site for a community dig. The reason for this is that the car park covers over one side of Packer Street which was once lined with houses probably going back to the medieval period. This was the main route from St Chad's

medieval church to the river crossing. This project would provide a unique opportunity to examine Rochdale's early development.

Another exciting project is taking place behind the former Mayfield Railway Station near Piccadilly in Manchester. A major landscaping scheme is due to take place to create a new urban park focused on the River Medlock. A diverse range of industrial businesses were based in this area, attracted by the location on the edge of Manchester as well as easy access to the River Medlock. One of the earliest, and certainly most famous of these businesses was Thomas Hoyle and Sons Mayfield Printworks, which grew from humble beginnings in 1782 to become the largest textile finishing business in the country during the 19th century. The changing fortunes of the industry meant however that by 1897 the company had gone into voluntary liquidation. Salford Archaeology have just started archaeological investigations of the below-ground remains of the printworks, 1857 public baths, other industrial remains and early workers housing. There will be a significant heritage display within the new park.

The Greater Manchester's Past Revealed series (GMPR) has continued to grow. Early this year, number 26 was published by Wessex Archaeology: 'Life on MARR: archaeological remains along the Manchester Airport Relief Road'. More recently, Salford Archaeology produced number 27: 'Salford Regeneration: the archaeology of living in the city'. Two more volumes are imminent: one by Salford Archaeology on Worsley Delph, Salford, and the other on the Metrolink Second City Crossing investigations by CFA Archaeology which includes the Cross Street Chapel burial ground excavation. Given the current difficulties of handing out these booklets and others in the series at public events, GMAAS will be adding these to the Greater Manchester Archaeology Festival Blog site: <https://diggreatermanchester.wordpress.com/publications/>



The covers of GMPR 26 and 27

Several significant archaeology/heritage displays have been completed or are close to completion. The Duke of Bridgewater's canal basin and coal mine canal tunnel portals at Worsley Delph has been subject to a scheme of de-silting, conservation and presentation. It is a fascinating site, with an excellent display of the heritage and well worth a visit. Another remarkable heritage display will soon be ready at the site of the historic Arkwright's Mill in Shudehill. This forms part of a major regeneration development scheme around Miller Street known as NOMA. There will be interactive displays on site within the public realm space linked to extensive web resources. A timeline of information panels and a public sculpture made from cast iron retrieved from Salford Archaeology's excavation of Salford Trist Mill No. 3 are being set up on Clowes Street at the Chapel Wharf development in Salford. The mill was built in 1800 and was one of the world's first cast iron framework and gas lit mills.



Before and after photos of the restoration project at Worsley Delph, Salford

It is frustrating that we are unable to run the GM Archaeology Day this year, but we are looking at some opportunities to share our archaeological work and discoveries online. I know that some local archaeology societies have been able to run events via Zoom and other media, but many have suspended activities until the COVID-19 situation has been resolved. Field work has pretty much come to halt, including the research I have been undertaking with the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts. I wish our local societies all the best for recovery next year and fervently hope that we can get back to organising and enjoying our archaeology events and investigations as quickly as possible.

Finally, I am sad to report that Ann Hearle died recently. Ann and her husband John lived at Mellor Old Vicarage and it was their interest, enthusiasm and support that initiated a long campaign of archaeological investigations of the remains of an Iron Age hillfort within their gardens and on adjacent farm land. They established the Mellor Archaeological Trust and over the 12 seasons of excavation many thousands of volunteers and visitors enjoyed this fascinating site. Ann was always very welcoming to her gardens and was keen to engage with as many people across society as possible. Quite rightly the project was presented with a national award for best community archaeology project in 2008. A tremendous legacy is the archaeology garden at the entrance to their drive which was donated to the people of Stockport Borough in 2011. This incorporates original prehistoric features, interpretation, sculpture and historic plant species and is freely accessible.



Ann Hearle receiving the best community archaeology project award in 2008 on behalf of Mellor Archaeological Trust

The successful garden-focused excavations mushroomed into wider and larger projects based on Mellor and Marple's heritage, including the Mellor Heritage Project and Revealing Oldknow's Legacy. Ann was a leading light in all these projects, which benefited immensely from her deep knowledge of local history and organisational skills. It is fair to say that Ann and John facilitated an extraordinary transformation of our knowledge of Stockport Borough's early and industrial past. Ann will be greatly missed.

Moorland Projects

Steve Milne, Freelance Archaeologist

Over the last three years, various projects have been undertaken by myself and two other associates from two other local Societies

Each project has taken place on the uplands around Stalybridge and Arnfield, Tintwistle. The projects have stemmed from certain questions, which were unanswered back in 2009 by Ron Cowell who undertook the excavations at Iron Tongue Hill moor.

These have continued, from the discovery of the field system on Slatepit moor, and with a large cairn system, which was discovered on Hare Hill Moor near Stalybridge back in 2018. The landowners of these moorlands were contacted, these being Stamford Estates and United Utilities PLC. Each landowner was given an assessment of the works, after which, when the project was completed a final report was sent to these landowners.

Our endeavours led us to areas around Tintwistle and Arnfield Moor, where it was thought that some aspects of our prehistoric landscape may continue onto the lower fringes of the moorlands. We were wrong to assume this and found something quite surprising. What we had found was possibly a late medieval/prehistoric landscape on Boar Flat. Permission was sought to do a moorland survey late 2019/2020 and to record what we found. This survey had also included aspects of any remaining prehistoric archaeology within the moorland. We produced an interim report, while the lock down was on, of our findings. These were sent to various bodies including Salford University.

When the lock down was lifted, a further request was made to United Utilities, that we may be able to complete the moorland survey. In the meantime, we were able to do small walk overs on the moorland areas around Boar Flat, this, we thought might give us some indication to what extent the prehistory covers the immediate area. To our surprise, we found yet other large area, another field system, which was higher up on the moorland, overlooking Boar Flat (400AOD). This would need further survey work as to assess its potential importance.

The Land agents of United Utilities PLC made a request that a written scheme of investigation was prepared (Project design) along with a up to date risk assessment which would include aspect of any potential problems concerning the Covid-19. These were completed and sent back to the land agents. We now await further permission to carry on with the survey. All aspect of the survey follow the guide lines and code of practice set down in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

One small note of possible interest, to anyone who may know about the pipeline built across the upper part of Irontongue Hill Moor in 1907. This supplied water from the Chew reservoirs down to Manchester. The system did not use a pumping action but was supplied under gravity. Some of the building mechanism is still in place on the moorland.

Holcombe Moor Heritage Group: Tottington Lower End Tithe Plan Project 2020

Due to the Covid19 pandemic lockdown earlier in 2020, our excavations on Cinder Hill Field had to be put on hold and so we had to find a new project to occupy our time in lockdown. Over many years, several dozen photographs had been accumulated by members of HMHG of the 19th century tithe map and schedule of Tottington Lower End and it was decided it was time something was done with these images. The tithe map and schedule give us a variety of data as to the land use, estate names, field names, field usage, size of asset, occupiers and landowners. It was decided it would be useful to have these online, overlying the modern map and to be interactive, enabling the user to query the map to receive details about the various assets shown on the map.

The first task was to determine the best way to achieve this. Using a Geographical Information System (GIS) would enable me to create the various map layers. I had already been using such a piece of software called QGIS, which I use to model the LIDAR data for the area and so had the base ready to go. I now needed a way to interpret the tithe map and transfer the field pattern onto the modern map.

By taking an image of the 1850 OS First Edition map and geolocating it onto the base map in QGIS, this provided me with a very accurate snapshot of the field patterns in the area at a time very close to when the tithe survey took place. The next step was the extremely time-consuming job of transferring the tithe assets onto the first edition map. This painstaking task involved taking the relevant asset from the tithe map image and then finding the corresponding asset on the “modern” map and drawing the asset boundary as a new layer over the mapping. Once created, the asset details were then added to the layer database which would then later be search enabled. As you may imagine this task took many hours to complete! Sometimes the asset boundaries had been altered from the tithe compared to the first edition map but it was fairly straightforward to recreate the boundary as shown on the tithe plan. Some assets were unfortunately unreadable from the images and had to be ignored, leaving the occasional blank space in the mapping.

The tithe assets were collated by “estate” or holding. So, it was decided to colour code these “estates” so it was obvious which assets belonged to which “estates”. However, this in itself was a challenge given the number of different “estates”, finding different colours that didn’t clash with nearby “estates” was sometimes very frustrating. The final result though was very satisfying to look at!

Once all the data had been input, the 1850 map images were removed, leaving the tithe plan overlying the modern map of Tottington Lower End. The map used was from Openstreetmap, this being a fairly easy process due to the functions in QGIS. There are some slight discrepancies on the mapping, but overall the maps are very useful and the data available gives an interesting view of how the landscape has changed over time.

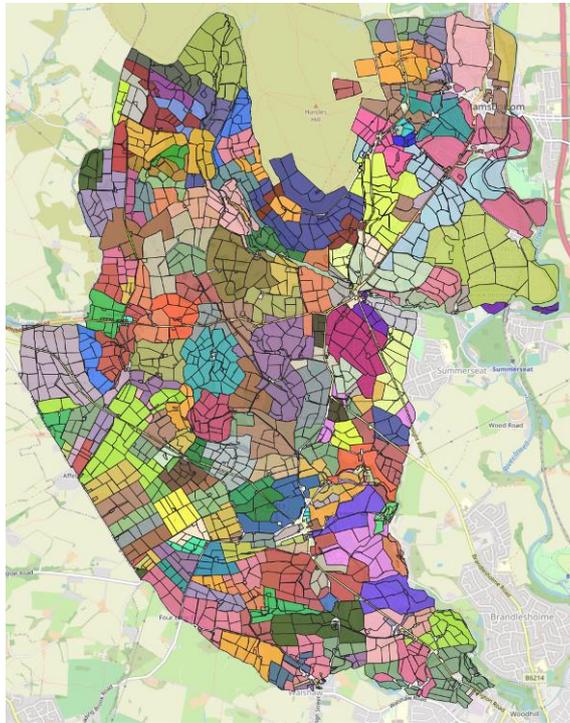


Figure 1 full colour tithe plan overlying the modern map

An optional add-on for QGIS enabled the creation of an interactive web page from the layers in QGIS. The web page was exported and the code for the page was tweaked to enable the user to alter the transparency of the tithe map over the modern map before being uploaded to our web page. Unfortunately, due to the amount of data involved, the web page with the full colour tithe map can take quite some time to load, and does require a fairly modern browser and powerful computer to load correctly. So, in order to facilitate less powerful systems, a monochrome version of the tithe map was then created which loads and runs easily on less powerful computers.

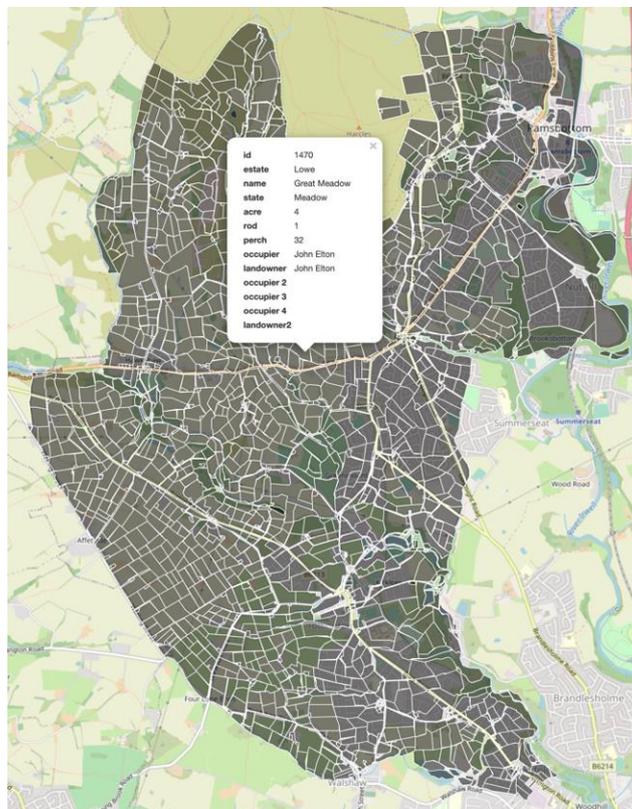


Figure 2 The monochrome version of the tithe map

A useful feature of the built-in database system in QGIS is the ability to manipulate the data it holds. As part of the tithe data was the land use for the asset, it was a fairly straight forward task to

produce a map showing the distribution of different types of land use, pasture, meadow, woodland etc. This was again exported, the code was edited and then uploaded to our server. A key is available in the top right-hand corner of the map web page showing the usage types.

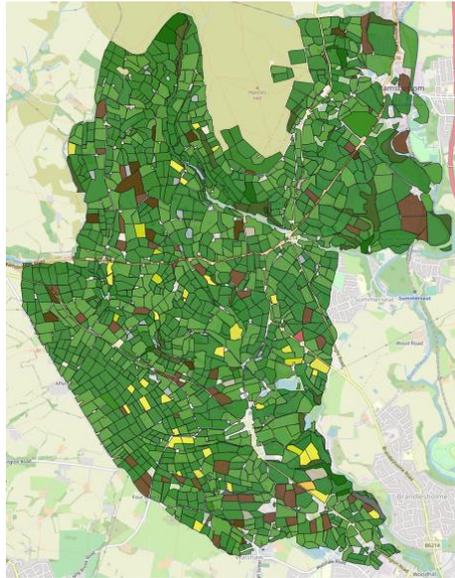


Figure 3 The field usage tithe map

Another rather nice touch is the ability to create interactive 3D maps via QGIS. Again, using the data that had been input, it was possible to create 3D versions of tithe and the land usage maps. These can be zoomed and rotated in all directions and can even be set to rotate automatically around an axis, giving the user a view of the maps that can be quite intoxicating! These were uploaded to our server and made available via our web site.

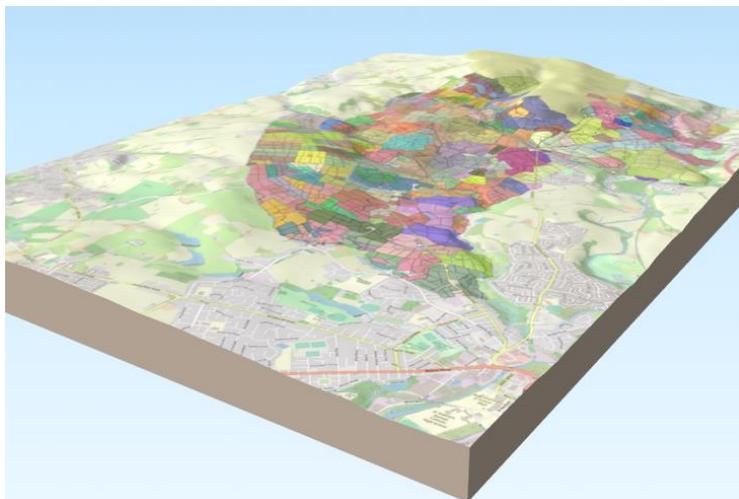


Figure 4 The zoomable, rotatable 3D version of the tithe plan

There are many other ideas that I have in order to improve these maps, including a mobile version that can be viewed via a modern smart phone with GPS enabled, enabling the viewer to see the details of an asset as they walk over the field. This is still in test as I write.

Useful links :

The tithe maps :

<https://www.holcombemoorheritagegroup.org/mapping/category/tithe-maps>

QGIS : <https://www.qgis.org/en/site/>

Old Maps : <https://maps.nls.uk/>

Neil Coldrick, Holcombe Moor Heritage Group

Tameside Archaeology Society

Graffiti and Marks at St Michael and All Angels, Mottram-in-Longendale.

Although graffiti has long been recognised as one of the earliest and most persistent ways of marking one's presence at a particular time and place, research into graffiti in the 20th century was largely confined to building specialists and academics. Community graffiti surveys, however, have become a recognised and valuable tool in undertaking research that could not take place without the generous participation of volunteers.

Most prevalent in the past decade have been community-led graffiti surveys that examine church buildings within the U.K. These surveys have identified marks dating from the medieval period to the modern day that represent different aspects of the lives of the people who used these buildings. The act of creating graffiti does not require any level of literacy and can be achieved rapidly with common tools making the practice more accessible than writing. Personal commemoration, inscriptions, significant dates and events, prayers, meaningful marks, and sketches can all be found in many of the churches surveyed to date.

It is within this tradition of community surveys that Tameside Archaeology Society (TAS) carried out a survey at St Michael and All Angels Church, Mottram-in-Longendale. The church at Mottram-in-Longendale sits on the end of a peninsular that projects into the Longendale valley shortly before the valley opens onto the flat plains of Manchester and Cheshire. It is likely that the first church was of wooden construction and a Norman font that survives in the current building may have belonged to this earlier building. Documentary evidence does not provide a date for the foundation of the church and no church is mentioned at Mottram in the Domesday Survey. A record from the 13th century does mention Clergy attached to the church and it is mentioned in 1291 in papal taxation records (Nevell & Hradil 2005, 53).

In 1488 Sir Edmund Shaa (Shaw) stipulated in his will that money be spent on the tower at the church at Mottram. A prominent Goldsmith, Court Jeweller and Lord Mayor of London, Sir Edmund Shaw had grown up in the area and also left money to Woodhead Chapel near Mottram and towards the foundation of Stockport Grammar School. The tower, built in stone, is four storeys, around 20m high and retains its 15th century roof timbers (Price 2001, 32). The construction of the tower seems to have been part of a broader project whereby an earlier church was replaced with a stone building, with some roof timbers in the Chancel also dating to the 15th century (Rees *et al* 2001, 17-20). A further trace of the work at this time is a 15th century 'scare-devil' figurehead on one side of the West Arch.

The earliest gravestone in the graveyard is inscribed 1649 with two further 17th century graves inside the Chancel. The Staveley Chapel however, features two effigies thought to be Sir Ralph and Lady Elizabeth Staveleigh. The former died in 1419 so the monument may predate the 15th century rebuilding (Price 2001, 13).

Although much of the structure and the footprint of the church date to the 15th century, extensive remodelling in the Victorian era removed much of the internal furniture including the pews, pulpit, lectern, and pillars although some of the internal panelling was reused within the church. This level of renovation during this period is common across Greater Manchester reflecting the period in which parishes had wealth to spend on their ecclesiastical buildings. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, the use of graffiti is a practice that continues into the modern era and the survey at St Michael and All Angels demonstrates that there can be much information drawn from these examples.

Before discussing the results of the survey at St Michael and All Angels, Mottram, it is important to note the difficulties in recording these marks. Although access to carry out the survey was

generously granted by St Michael and All Angels Church not all areas of the building could be surveyed. Even when identified, marks on wooden surfaces in general can be difficult to see and often unclear or challenging to decipher. These are even harder to capture via photography. A full record of the survey results is held by TAS but central themes will be discussed here as well as scope for further work.

Results of the Survey

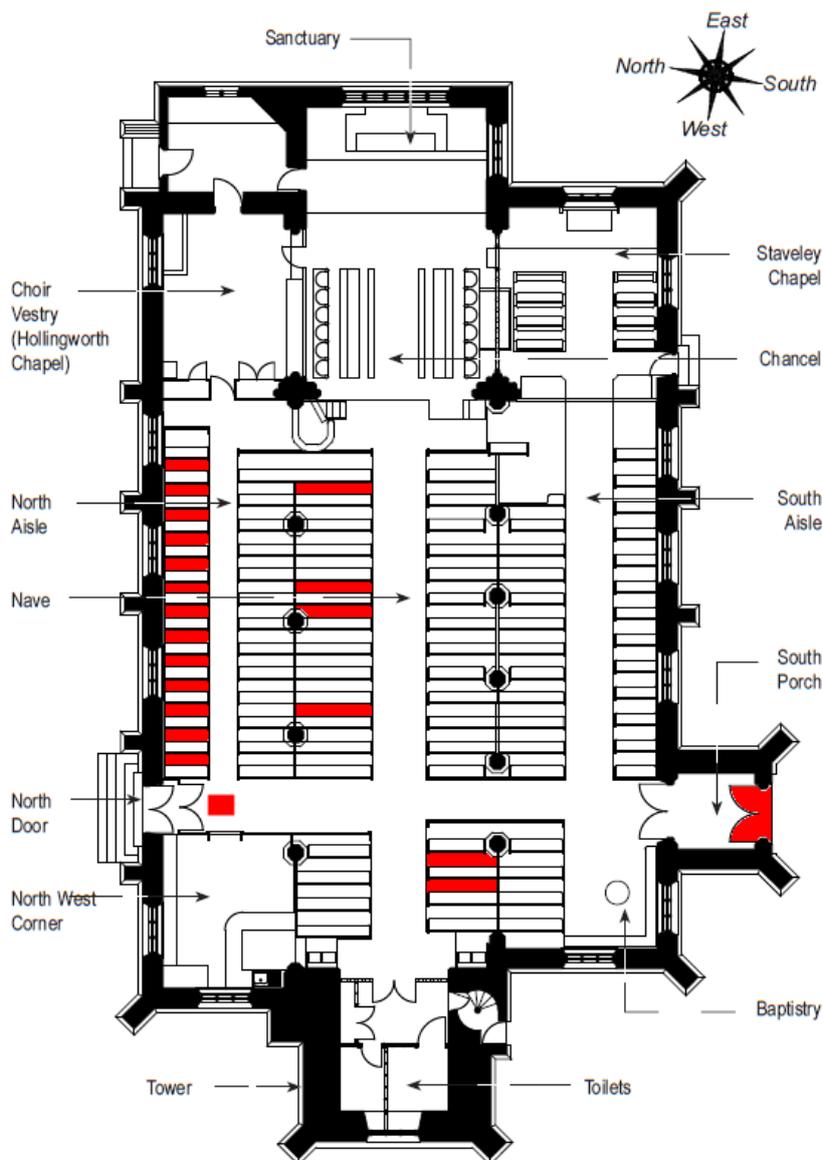


Figure 1. Plan of St Michael and All Angels Church (after Price 2001) with areas in red showing where graffiti was found by TAS.

Much of the graffiti found within the church was centered on the pews (Fig. 1.). Although these were replaced during the Victorian renovations the pew backs are thought to have been made from older pews and wood panelling that was being removed from the church. This reuse of materials means it is difficult to date any of the graffiti recorded.

It has long been accepted that where one example of graffiti is made others will follow. Once a mark has been made others have felt compelled to add their own, this is especially true where there has been a personal commemoration. The pews at St Michael and All Angels are an excellent example of this phenomenon (Fig. 2.) where the overlapping and repeated marks suggests a build-up of activity.

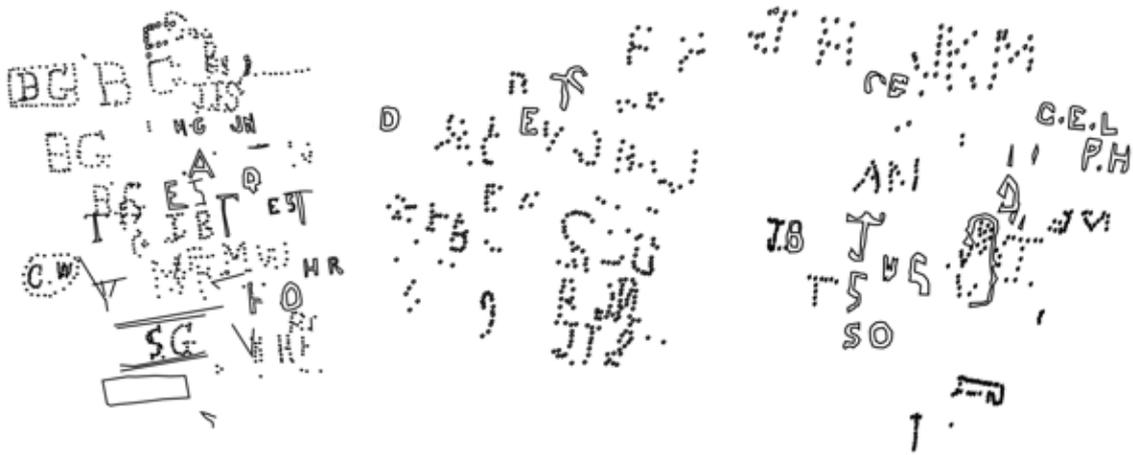


Figure 2. Clusters of graffiti found on the rear of pews 43 at St Michael and All Angels Church.

Many of the initials found within the survey by TAS are repeated at different places around the church allowing individuals to be tracked from pew to pew over repeated visits. Comparing these initials with parish records may prove fruitful in identifying some of these people (Fig. 3). In some instances, those involved had time to leave more than initials (Fig. 4) and even repeat those inscriptions multiple times.

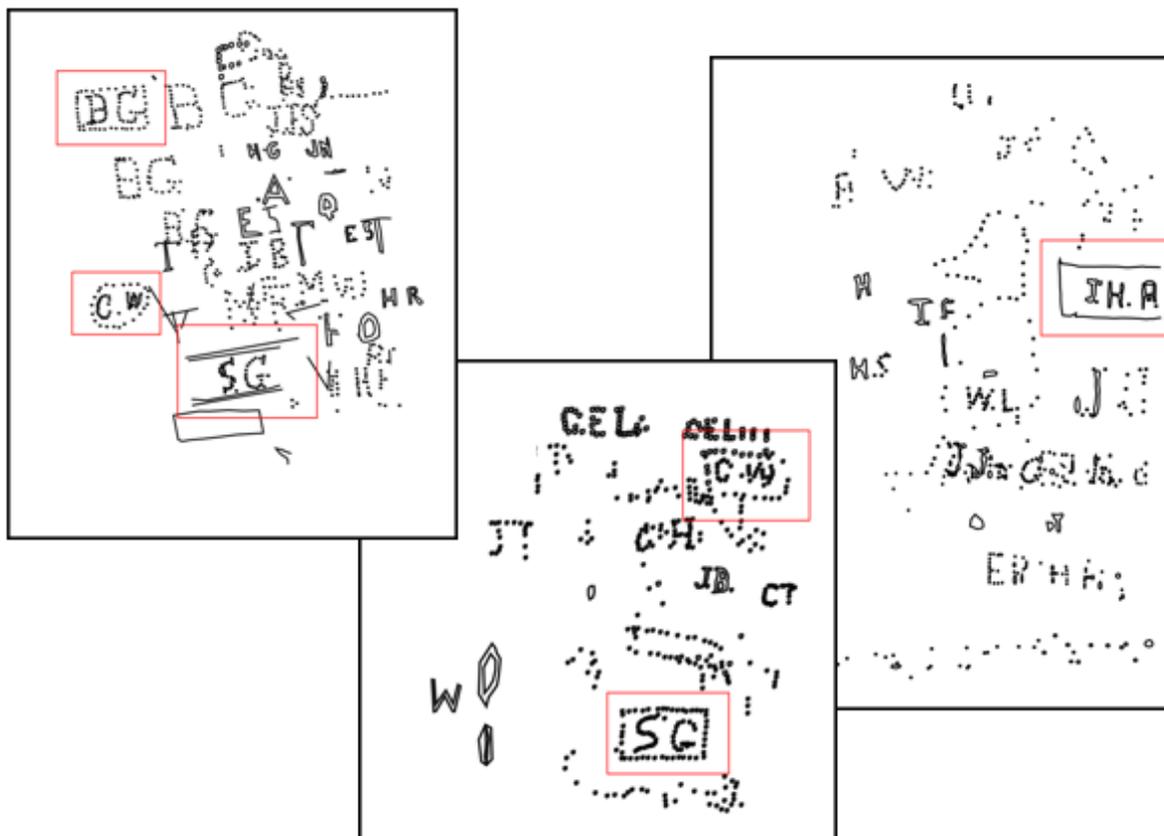


Figure 3. Repeated initials found on pews 44, 47, and 54 at St Michael and All Angels Church.

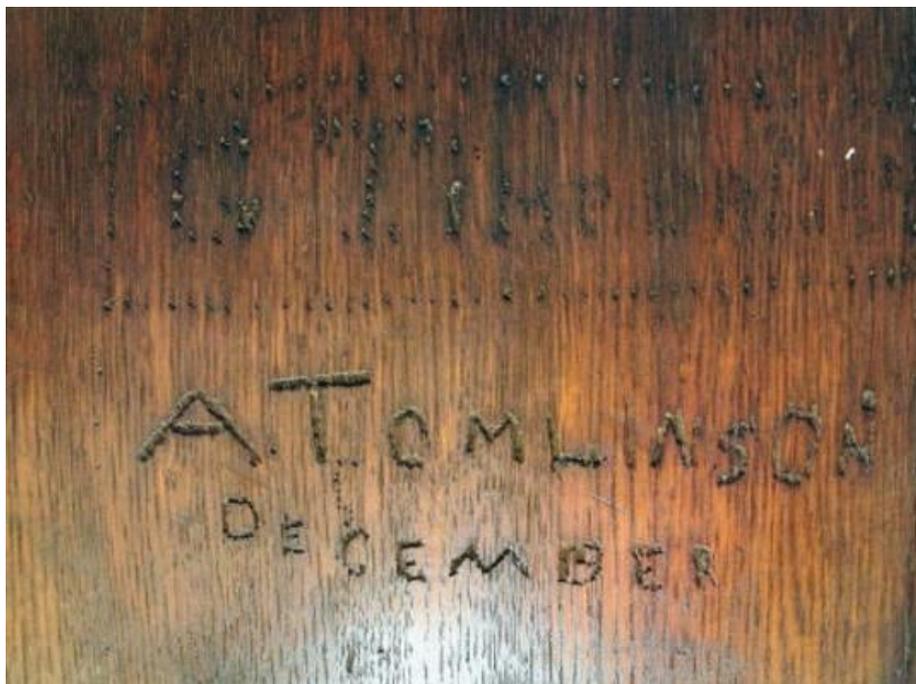


Figure 4. Personal commemoration on pews at St Michael and All Angels Church.

The style of the marks surveyed at St Michael and All Angels range from formal engraving (Fig. 5) to scratched or dotted forms (see above). This variation in style may attest to the skill of those involved, the time available, the likelihood of being disturbed, the tools available and the fashion of the times. A school boy adding his initials during a service may be limited in a way someone waiting in the porch on a quiet day might not be.



Figure 5. Formal lettering in graffiti on the church doors at St Michael and All Angels Church.

Although most of the graffiti in St Michael and All Angels are personal commemoration there are a number of examples of marks made with a sharp blade circling a central point, commonly called compass-drawn circles. (Fig. 6) Although this is a common apotropaic mark the inability to date these and the proximity of an affiliated school nearby suggests we should be cautious in interpreting these marks as such. They do however, deviate from the more common tradition in the church of initials or names.

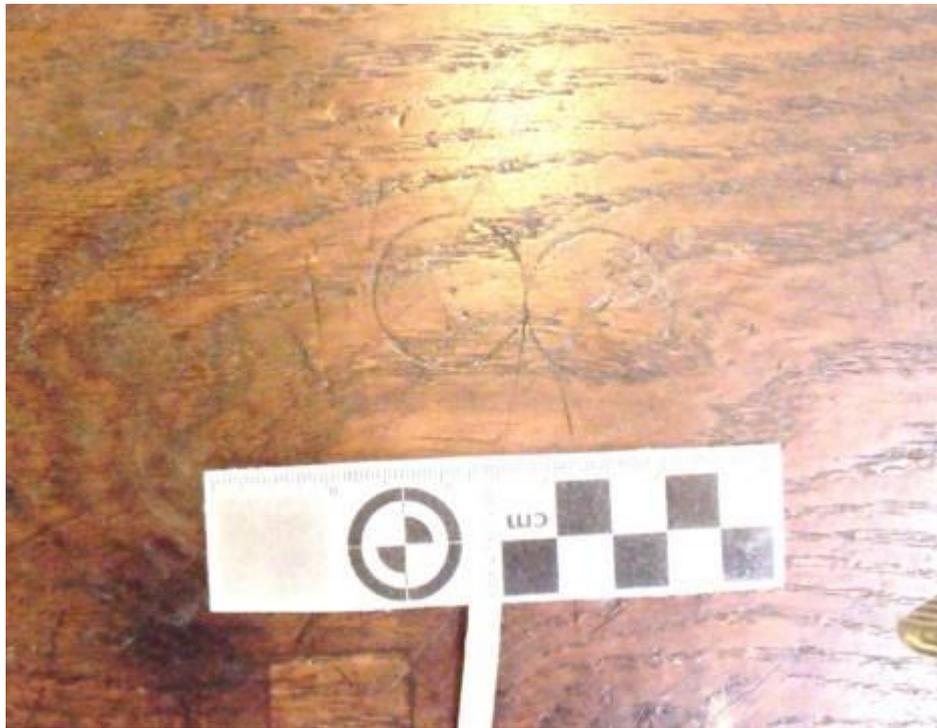


Figure 6. Example of a circular motif at St Michael and All Angels Church.



Figure 7. This example of a circular motif was found on a pew that had been made from wood salvaged from earlier pews. The truncated circle may suggest that the graffiti was made on the earlier pews.

Images of animals or people were also found by the survey carried out by TAS providing small windows perhaps into life in the area around the church. Sketches of animals (Fig. 8) of varying quality were found alongside a repeated image made of dots that outlined a man smoking a pipe (Fig. 9).



Figure 8. Sketch animal found at St Michael and All Angels Church.

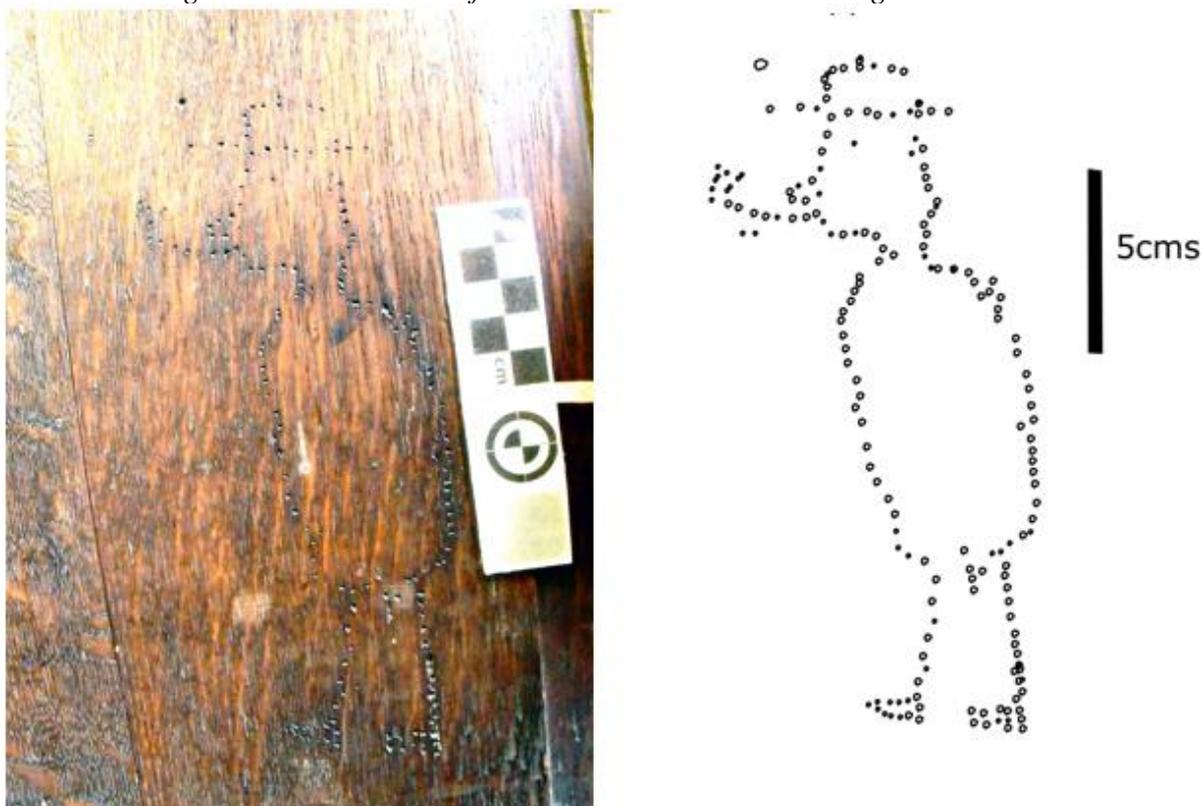


Figure 9. Completed 'dot man' image on pew 51 at St Michael and All Angels Church.

The completed survey by TAS yielded an extensive archive of the marks within the building, one that can be reassessed or added to in future. The additional value of this work comes from how this data can be used in conjunction with documentary sources. The examples above show the number of individuals that could be traced through the parish school, parish records and perhaps a graveyard survey. Local long-standing families may have connections and be able to provide more information on the individuals involved. Each act of graffiti represents a momentary action within the lives of these people but makes a record of their presence. By bringing together the many

different sources of information it is possible that the graffiti recorded can add something to a paperwork that might otherwise be only names and dates.

Many thanks to all volunteers who assisted in the survey and to St Michael and All Angels Parish wardens for facilitating and encouraging this work.

References

Nevell, M. and Hradil, I. 2005. *The Two Saint Michaels and the Archaeology of the Medieval Parish Church in North West England*. Tameside: Tameside MBC.

Rev. Price, J. R. 2001. *A Brief Guide to the Parish Church of Saint Michael and All Angels, Mottram-in-Longendale*. Mottram-in-Longendale: Mottram Parish Church.

Rees, A.J., Powell, J., Kershaw, T., Kershaw, C., Elwood, P. and Walker, T. 2001. *Mottram Parish Church. A guide to the Parish Church of Saint Michael and All Angels, Mottram-in-Longendale*. Mottram: Mottram Parish Church.

TAS Graveyard Survey

The society was approached to assist in a research project by St Johns Anglican Parish Church in Dukinfield, Tameside. All birth and death records were to be evaluated and the need to link these to the graves. TAS undertook a plan survey of the site in 2019 of all the visible surface graves. A few additional likely gravestones were identified during the survey due to changes in topography, these were not disturbed but added to the plan for future identification. A large area devoid of the obvious graves was surveyed with resistivity which did not identify any linear anomalies. All identified graves were catalogued to enable cross-referencing for any future family searches to link historical data with photographs and location. Sources included the Local Archives Centre, Chester Diocesan Archives, Canterbury and Lambeth Archives.



Figure 1 Grave plan



Figure 2 Sculpture integrated into a Headstone

This graveyard is a treasure of local history. Although only consecrated in 1841, the graves are a remarkable image of society in the late 19th century-early 20th century. They show different professions (surgeons, vicars, teachers, manufacturers), varied levels of homage to the dead (from Bible verses to commissioned poems), variations in residence (not only Dukinfield, but Ashton, Mottram, and Hyde... and abroad) and age (from ½ hour old to 98 years of age). Differing materials, changes in types of memorials, symbols, decoration and lettering, they also are witness of local disasters like at the Heys Colliery, Ashton under Lyne of 1857 and the vagaries of health and wealth.

Last but not least, the graveyard is the resting place from 1879 of Joseph Rayner Stephens, a local chartist who campaigned for factory reform and to repeal the Poor Law.

Within $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre are buried 4659 people, of which over 1800 are under the age of 2. 1001 people have now been cross referenced with the Burial, Baptism and Marriages Registers. Further research and digitisation by Delphine Wright will enable the public and future researchers to easily locate information. This has preserved the previously undocumented information and the decorations within the graveyard which sadly will be lost in many cases. Records will be kept within the church, Local Archives Library and at Chester Diocesan Archives.

Wigan Archaeological Society

The Douglas River Project (a river through time)

Bill Aldridge

With lockdown in full swing and fieldwork out of the question, we needed something to keep us going during the summer months and this seemed to fit the bill (being mainly desk based we are able to avoid the risks of outdoor communal activity). The idea is to research and record as many historical and archaeological features as we can, on and around the Douglas valley, from the River's source on Winter Hill all the way to the Ribble estuary. We are including all periods but most of it, as you can imagine, is going to be mainly industrial and post-Medieval. The project is drawing on existing projects undertaken by the Society and work done by others over the years. For example, in the mid-1990s we carried out studies on two water mills in the Arley Valley² and, not far away, investigated evidence of Roman coal mining activity³. The section from Wigan to the Ribble estuary has had particular attention in the past, as in the mid-18th century it was converted into the Douglas Navigation. This allowed boats to travel from the Ribble estuary to Wigan and back, carrying coal and limestone. This was before the Leeds and Liverpool canal was built later that century (canal historian Mike Clarke⁴ and Bill Froggatt⁵ from the Canal & River Trust have described in some detail how this was achieved). Also a few years ago, Derek Winstanley wrote a paper (with our help) about Wigan Pier and its river dock predecessor⁶. We also got involved in a project in 2017 looking for a possible surviving river lock at Appley Bridge.⁷



Objectives

The project's eventual goal is to produce a report with a gazetteer, and a PowerPoint presentation with maybe a trail guide. Our research mainly revolved around the use of map regression and information available on-line (essential visits to the archives will be added at a later date when this becomes possible). Some site visits have been allowed for photographic reasons but they have only

involved one or two people to keep risks to a minimum. Zoom meetings have enabled our volunteers to coordinate their areas of research, after breaking them into different sections and making decisions about what should and should not be included. We decided the project would be in two phases i.e. information gathering and then reporting/presenting. To help with the gathering phase, we have made an on-line database which enables our gathered information to be recorded and shared. It also includes a map version so site locations can be easily identified (at the moment this is only available to our members).

Progress

By September we had made good progress with nearly two dozen items entered onto our database. Gratifyingly some fascinating and little-known stories were beginning to emerge. A great example was the concrete viaduct at Adam Bridge carrying the Wigan to Liverpool (formerly the L&Y) Railway over the Douglas and now the new bypass road leading south out of Wigan (appropriately called Southgate). The viaduct is Listed Grade II as it is quite a unique structure, being the very first pre-stressed concrete bridge to be built anywhere in Britain (pre-dated only by ones in Switzerland)⁸. Constructed in 1947 it replaced an earlier cast iron bridge, but the original version was a 500m long wooden gantry that some have suggested was the origin of the age-old Wigan Pier joke⁶.



Adam Viaduct (Mick Byrne)

Dark Age

The Wigan Pier quarter itself has experienced many transformations over the years, not least its current incarnation i.e. a £1m project which is to include a wedding venue, gin-distillery, micro-brewery, food hall and waterside town houses. As mentioned above, Derek Winstanley's research had already identified the origins of this area i.e. being the terminus basin and dock for the Douglas Navigation, completed in 1741. We have the Manchester antiquarian John Whitaker, though, to thank for its Dark Age connection. In his *History of Manchester*, Whitaker points to the Anglo-Saxon chronicler, Nenius, who says Arthur's 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th battles were fought on the banks of the Douglas. In the construction of the basin at Wigan, Whitaker goes on to describe '*evident indications of a considerable battle on the ground. All along the course of the channel, from the termination of the dock to the point at Poolbridge from 40 to 50 roods in length and 7 to 8 yards in breadth, they found the ground everywhere containing the remains of men and horses, and 5 to 6 cwts of horse shoes were collected*'.⁹ Later historians have pointed out that the Whitaker's description of large spurs found there are more like to have been Norman rather than a Saxon¹⁰ (still quite significant).



Locks and Weirs

Another, little known, story to emerge is that of the large weir at Green Alley Wood. Although only dating from the 1930s (built to feed the canal more than 2 km away at Appley Bridge), its story dates back to the construction of the lock system at Dean near Gathurst (where the M6 viaduct crosses the Douglas valley). When the canal from Liverpool reached Dean in 1774, a lock was inserted to enable boats to sail all the way into Wigan on the Douglas. When eventually the canal reached Wigan in 1781, the Navigation was abandoned and the river locks removed. However, the weir at Dean was retained so that water could be ‘impounded’ for the canal’s use. It was only in 1935 that this weir was removed and the new weir built at Green Alley Wood (one of the weirs from the mid-18th century construction at Dean still survives abandoned in the undergrowth).



Mills and Millers

Amongst the many mills recorded, one of the more fascinating entries is the Jolly Mill on the road leading out of Wigan towards Chorley. When a former chairman of our Society, Adrian Morris, wrote about it in his book ‘Standish Mills and Millers’ in 1995, it was a derelict shell of a building. Since then, however, it’s been transformed into a sumptuous five bedroom dwelling with commanding views down the Douglas Valley. It recently went on the market for over £1.3m where it is described as having 2 bespoke kitchens, 3 reception rooms, 12 acres of land, a large pond and stabling facilities. The images show that the developer has sympathetically retained the internal wooden structure. The current building probably only dates to the 18th century but, according to Adrian’s research, the mill site itself goes back to the 14th century. However, it’s great to see old buildings such a these (as at Wigan Pier) refurbished and repurposed helping retain our regions heritage.



Finding the Source

Spotting a break in the weather, Eric Walter and I ventured onto Rivington Moor to see if we could trace the route of the River on the moor and possibly locate its source¹¹. Our first encounter was on Belmont Road, above the Japanese Gardens at a place called Brown Hill. Its little more than a brook at this point passing under the road through a concrete culvert. From here the river can be seen winding its way down the hillside towards Horwich, passing the Lower Reservoir and under Bolton Road on its way towards Anderton (and the site of the old Anderton Hall). Our journey onto the moor took us past Sportsman Cottage and the curious hill called Two Lads which sports not two but three cairns. Many myths are associated with these cairns and there have been some periods of rebuilding¹² but I don't think anybody has any real idea of their origin. These moors however have produced remarkable evidence of prehistoric activity over the years. Tumuli and many flints have been found through field walking.¹³ In the late 50's Winter Hill Cairn was excavated by Chorley Arch Soc¹⁴ and the mound at Noon Hill by Bolton Arch Soc, which produced Bronze Age material.¹⁵ Our focus however was on the source and wandering around the back of the TV station, we came across a concrete culvert carrying a track over what we perceived to be the early vestiges of the river. Just a few metres further up, Eric pointed out what he'd deduced to be the actual source, i.e. a spring (or at least one of them, we assumed it to be the highest). With photos taken we made our way back down, but not far from the TV mast, we stumbled on some intriguing features i.e. mounds of earth (surely not more tumuli?). The remains of stone and brick buildings gave clear evidence however that this was in fact mining activity. Later study of the 1849 OS map and websites¹⁶ revealed to us extensive coal mining on the moor but only on the east side – from our visit it was obvious this activity was evidently far more widespread.



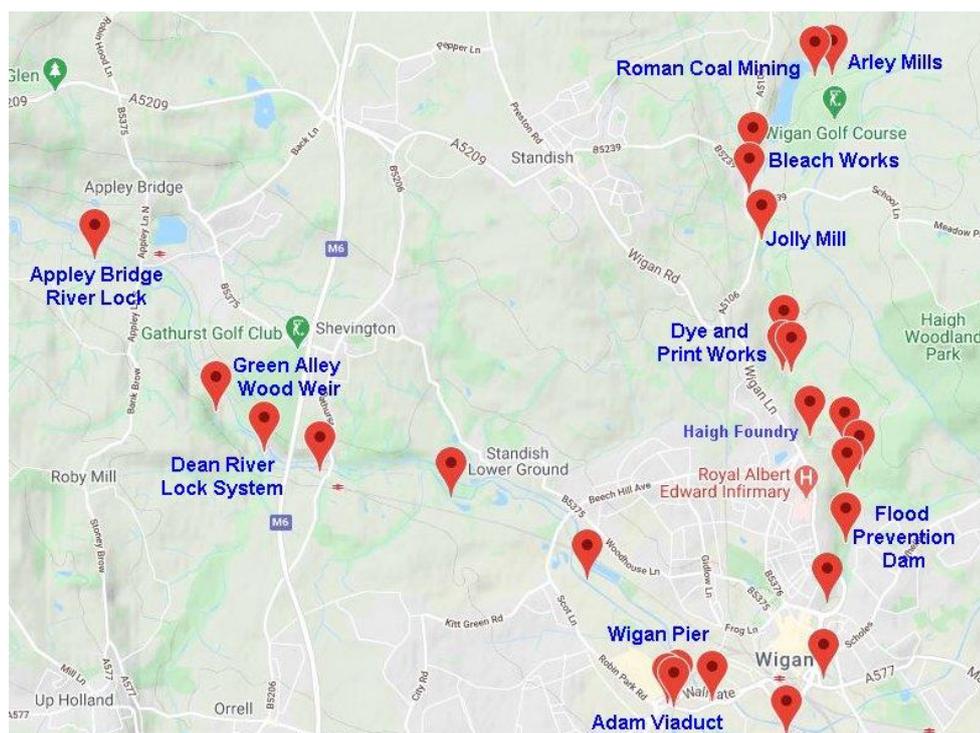
Present Day

The river has seen great changes over the years, particularly from a time when it could run different colours from one day to the next (this was from the dyeing, printing and bleaching works, combined with the discharge of effluent and mine water from the collieries all along its length). Due to treatment works and the closing of the mills, the river now thankfully runs clear and has seen many fish species returning (even reports of trout being caught near Wigan town centre¹⁷). Flood prevention schemes are the latest interventions, including a huge dam upstream of the town centre. This has been built to cater for hundred year events which allows the valley to be flooded all the way into the grounds of Haigh Hall (we've already had one event and I'm sure it won't be hundred years before we have another). There is further information about our project on our website and we offer a web membership for £5 (which seems a logical option in present circumstances).

On-line resources and references:

1. <http://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/>
2. http://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/content/Projects/Arley_Mills.htm
3. http://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/content/Projects/Roman_mining.htm
4. <http://www.mikeclarke.myzen.co.uk/Douglas%20Navigation.html>
5. <https://www.parboldonline.info/about/canal.html>
6. <https://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/content/Projects/WiganPier.htm>
7. http://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/content/News_Letters/news206.htm
8. Wigan MBC. List of Buildings of Special Hist/Arch Interest
9. History of Manchester Book 2 J. Whitaker 1775 (P37, 44-45)
10. Ancient Battlefields of Lancashire, C. Hardwick, 1882
11. <https://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk/blog/?p=2114>
12. http://chorleyhistorysociety.co.uk/articles_01/sys2286.htm
13. Survey and Excavation, Anglezarke Uplands C. Howard-Davis 1996
14. <https://www.about-rivington.co.uk/explore/winter-hill-tumulus/>
15. <https://boltonaes.co.uk/archive/projectarchive/noonhill.html>
16. <http://www.dave.daveweb.co.uk/winterindex.html>
17. <https://www.wildtrout.org/tint/river-douglas-wigan>

On-line map created from the database



South Trafford Archaeological Group

A New Cruck Building from Altrincham Old Market Place

Michael Nevell

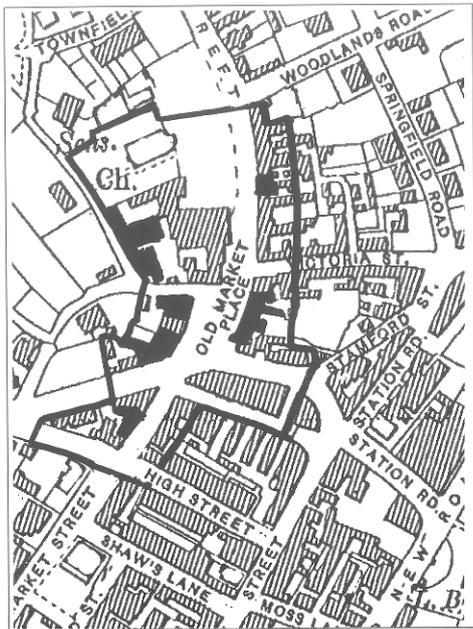


Fig 1: The location of the conservation area (outlined) at Altrincham Old Market Place.

The South Trafford Archaeological Group has been exploring the historic Old Market Place in Altrincham since the group was founded in 1979 (see image, left). STAG have excavated in several locations and recorded a number historic buildings in this area. However, one set of properties, Nos 8 to 10 (SJ 768 880), remained off limits until they were sold in 2019.

Extensive renovation work followed during October to December 2019. This work revealed the fragmentary remains of a previously unrecorded cruck-framed timber building, a building type most commonly found in the late medieval period and 17th century in Britain. This building lies in the historic centre of Altrincham, a medieval market town with a charter from 1290. Although not a listed structure the property does lie within the Old Market Place Conservation Area.

Nos 8 to 10 Old Market Place is a two-storey timber and brick property (see below). The front two bays, which unusually for the Altrincham are aligned with their long axis to the Old Market Place, represent the earliest portion of the property and contained extensive timber-framing.

The current Old Market Place elevation is a 19th century rebuild, whilst the two-bay extension to the rear (east) appears to have been built in the period 1835-51. These properties were used as shops in the 19th and early 20th centuries and as offices in the later 20th century and until 2019.

Externally, the property is of brick construction and has a slate-covered roof suggesting that the building dated from the 19th century. Yet a stretch of timber-framed walling and two chamfered ceiling beams visible on the ground floor of Nos. 8 and 10 prior to renovation suggested an earlier origin. Sadly, all of these features were removed during the renovation work in the autumn of 2019.



Fig 2: Old Market Place façade of Nos 8-10.

Emergency recording (photographs and a measured survey of the cruck truss) was undertaken by the South Trafford Archaeological Group and Altrincham History Society revealing a single surviving cruck-truss exposed in the northern wall of No. 10. The cruck truss only survives at first floor and roof height and the wide cruck blades (up to 0.35m) were adzed finished. The blades were braced by a tie-beam and a collar beam, and at ground floor were probably c. 5m apart – although no evidence for this location was recovered. The apex of the cruck-truss is roughly 6m above the current ground level and followed Alcock's L1 style, where the two trusses were tied together at the very tip with the aid of a short brace. There was evidence at the top of the western cruck blade for blocking showing the original roof line.

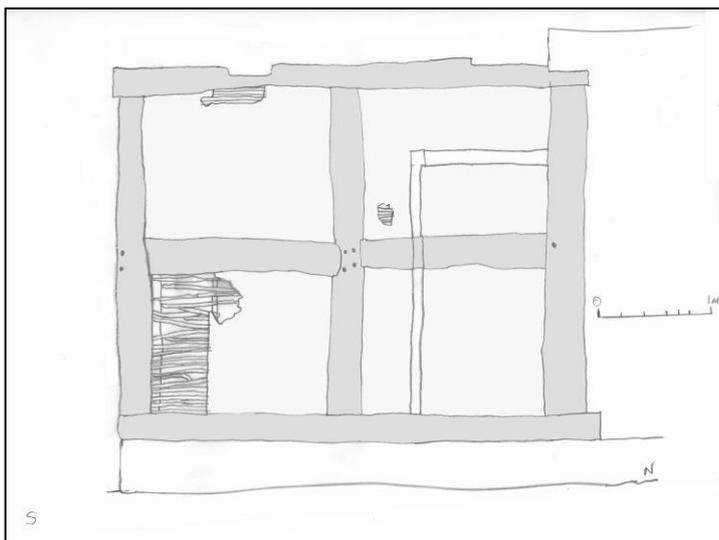
The evidence for wattle and daub panelling on the upper and underside of the tie-beam and a lack of any evidence for original door openings suggested that this cruck truss was the gable-end of a timber-building running into No. 12 Old Market Place (see right). It therefore formed a separate structure from the property in Nos 8 to 10 Old Market Place which had box timber-framing. Nos 8 to 10 appears to have been two units long and two storeys high.

The history of the two properties during the late 18th to early 21st century indicates that they were for many years in separate ownership. No 10 was owned along with No 12 by the Lupton family, clock makers and ironmongers from the 1780s until the 1850s. The two properties were split up in the late 1850s after the Luptons moved on and for the rest of the 19th century and most of the 20th century No 10 was occupied by a variety of businesses, including from the 1900s to the 1940s a tobacconist. No 8 was occupied by boot and shoemakers between the 1830s and 1870s, by oil and lamp dealers from the 1880s to the 1930s, and by a children's outfitters in the mid-20th century. In the mid-1990s Nos 8, 10, and 12 were bought and run as offices by a firm of medical insurers.



Fig 3: Cruck truss at Nos 8-10.

Nos 10/12 Old Market Place is not the only cruck building known from Altrincham Old Market Place. In 1932 a cruck-framed house was demolished on the corner of the Old Market Place and Victoria Street. This stood immediately to the north of No. 16 Old Market Place, on the same side as Nos 8 to 10. Other box-framed timber buildings are known to have existed in this area, including No 6 Old Market Place (demolished in 2004) and the Orange Tree Pub.



Although the buildings lie within the Old Market Place Conservation Area (established in 1973), unlike other historic properties in this area, Nos 8 to 10 were not listed buildings. This lack of protection undoubtedly helped lead to the removal of the box-timber framing (left) seen within these two properties.

Fig 4: Timber-framed wall on the ground Floor of Nos 8-10.

South Manchester Archaeological Research Team

Gatley Hill Project Update

Andy Coutts

As part of a long-term plan which has culminated in a project to attain funding for a community dig, SMART have been running an ongoing series of test pitting weekends at the site of Gatley Hill Farm circa 16th century since April 2017. The work has been carried out in partnership with Gatley U3A and Norman Redhead of GMAAS and has been to date very successful in our humble opinion in establishing the archaeological remains of the farm and associated buildings. In addition, there has been some considerable research work carried out by both members of SMART and Gatley U3A, to expand the knowledge of occupancy and the time lines of the building's usage which, once correlated, we hope to produce a full report of our work. **Fig 1** below shows an artist's impression of how the farm may have looked when it was first constructed, which is where this all started.



Fig 1: Image courtesy of (Mitchell & Mitchell 1980) Drawing of Gatley Hill Farm from an original painting by Peter Burrows

To date there have been 9 separate days where we were able to carry out work in what is a public domain so restrictive in access. On all test dates we have been successful in varying degrees to reveal a good level of archaeology. This has ranged from many types of floor surfaces both inside and outside the buildings, and in June 2018 the substantial foundation brickwork of the long barn which is highlighted in **Fig 2 and 3**.

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. **Fig 2 and Fig 3** below.



Fig 2: Gatley Hill Farm trench.

An external cobbled surface, with a cast iron drain cover had been revealed adjacent to the eastern wall of the barn as seen at the bottom of, as seen centrally and above the drain in **Fig 3**, which was deemed to have been part of the later phase of use for the building, when it was in use as a tannery. This was to date the most significant building that the remains revealed, however we have uncovered significant evidence of floor surfaces previously mentioned which I have briefly outlined below.

Our initial trenching in March 2017 revealed a cobbled floor surface, as well as sett floor surfaces found in the dig carried out in November 2019. Adding to the overall picture we had carried out test pits in March 2018 facing the full force of “the beast from the east” where the heroic team still turned out to reveal further evidence of floor surfaces within the boundary of Scholes Park and the adjacent car park of Gatley Hill House. I have taken a selection of images showing the types of surfaces revealed, and one significant one showing the conditions we were working in, and a plan of the layout of the farm.



Fig 3: Test pits At Gatley Hill Farm.

Combined with the extent of archaeological survival, and the range of finds we have recovered which range in date from 14th to 19th century, it was discussed at length with the local history group, Gatley U3A, schools and local councillors and community groups about the possibility of a funded community dig. This we hoped would get off the ground this year. Sadly, with various delays early on in the year with red tape, now compounded by the recent Covid 19 situation this project has been put on the back burner. However, once the air has cleared and we have the go ahead to commence proceedings once again it is certainly a route we will be taking as the early signs of local support from all areas is very positive.

SMART Gatley Hill Project Finds Update

Jane Jordan, Andrea Grimshaw and Nick Rogerson

Over lockdown we've been looking into our finds from our excavations over the past few years at Gatley Hill. A huge thanks to everyone involved in the excavation, sorting and washing of these

finds. Thanks also to Nick Rogerson who contributed all the historic research below, and Jane Jordan and Andrea Grimshaw for the information about the finds.



Fig 4: Early drawing of Gatley Hill Farm.

Written records indicate that there was a dwelling on Gatley Hill from as early as 1715 but this was probably the farm. The House has an architectural style that dates to the 1750s and it was certainly there in 1780 and onwards. At this time the farm and land was owned by the Alcock family. The first information that we have for John Alcock, the intial owner, comes from the records of Dean Row Chapel which tells us that in 1750 John Alcock is a yeoman farmer of Gatley. The House, farm and land was passed through the family to another John Alcock, the nephew of the original John, who with his brother Samuel had a cotton manufacturing business in Manchester and a second warehouse was built on Gatley Hill. The Alcocks continued to own the properties and land until it was purchased by Cheadle and Gatley Urban District Council in 1935.



Various members of the Alcock family were resident at Gatley Hill until 1861 when the house was let and John Baker, a wine and spirits merchant, took up residence from at least 1863. In 1882 James Dyson, a manufacturer of cotton goods, lived there until his bankruptcy in 1895. He did recover his fortunes again in later life, although no longer in Gatley. In 1891 the house was occupied by Thomas Herbert Kendal, one of the later owners of 'Kendal Milne & Co.' The business we now know as the House of Fraser or 'Kendal's' of Deansgate.



In 1901 John Worthington was the tenant of Gatley Hill Farm and remined the tenant until the sale of the farm in 1935. In 1911 Thomas Jardine Lockhart was living in the house with his wife and children. He was a cocoa room and coffee house proprietor. In 1927 Charles Robert Brown was residing in the house. He had a background in brick manufacturing and was the last tenant of Gatley Hill. We have just begun to look deeper into the finds at Gatley Hill house. We hope you enjoy what we have found.

Figs 5 & 6: Top Gatley Hill. Bottom A selection of 19th/20th century transfer printed sherds

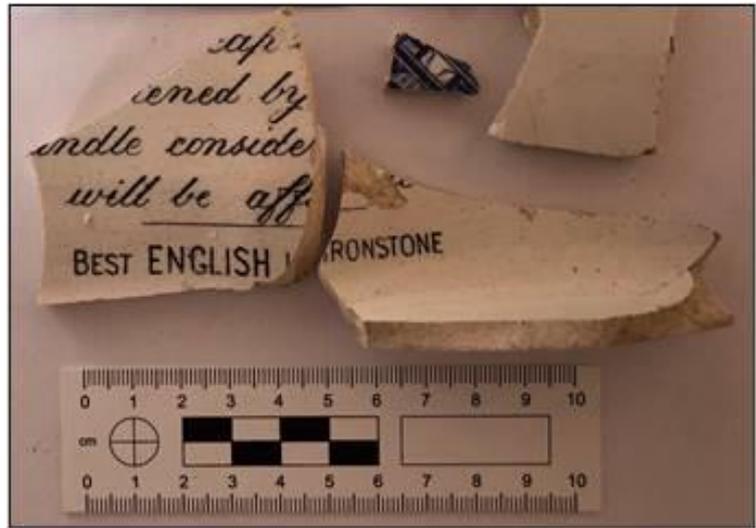


Fig 7: Finds from Gatkey Hill Farm

Can you guess what the pottery sherds might be in Fig 7? There are some clues in the text. If like me you've not got any idea here's the full text below.

'The slipper should be passed under the Patient in front between the legs. If a flannel cap is made for the blade fastened by strings under the handle considerable comfort will be afforded. Best English Ironstone': This is the 'New Slipper Bedpan'!

We can't find a date of manufacture but google seems to indicate that we are somewhere around the 1920s. This was a very common bedpan model, used in hospitals and at home for people who became bedbound. We can't find a manufacturer but there seems to be indications that this model was shipped to America as well as used in Britain, although there appears to be no shipping stamp on complete examples.

Transfer printing was developed in the second half of the 18th century, at first over glaze and later under glaze. It became commonplace in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 19th century transfer printing was mainly produced in one colour, usually blue e.g. the well know "willow pattern". Though Chinese in style, it was created from a design by Thomas Minton. Early blue printing was in light colours (e.g. bottom left and centre). A deeper blue was developed about 1820 (e.g. top left and the large plate rim top centre). Brown printing was developed by Wedgewood around 1835-40 and green printing around 1850 (e.g. right).

We can't find a date of manufacture but Google seems to indicate that we are somewhere around the 1920s. This was a very common bedpan model, used in hospitals and at home for people who became bedbound. We can't find a manufacturer but there seems to be indications that this model was shipped to America as well as used in Britain, although there appears to be no shipping stamp on complete examples.

Any ideas what this maker's mark relates to? Two clues: it's printed on sturdy white ceramic and we took an interest in researching it. If you haven't guessed yet, that's right, it's a piece of a toilet, or if we're lucky possibly a sink. We must have a knack for discovering loots!



Fig 8: Sherds from Gatley Hill Farm.

The maker's mark you can see is Alfred Johnson and Sons Ltd. It's their famous 'pyramid mark'. Alfred Johnson was the grandson of Alfred Meakin, a famous English potter.

Alfred started his career in 1883 as one half of English tableware manufacturers the Johnson Brothers. In 1896 Alfred left the family business to set up his own company and in 1908 Alfred Johnson and Sons Ltd. opened the Queensborough factory on the Ise of Sheppey in Kent. The company shipped their wares by barge to London and from there onto the British and American market.

The word 'England' showing on the pottery stamp indicates that the piece was manufactured after 1891 and 'Made in England' generally indicates a date of manufacture after 1921 when the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 was amended to require manufacturers to show the country of origin when shipping goods to America.

When SMART first found pieces of hard baked red clay with 'Rosemary' printed on them we initially assumed they were part of some kind of herb garden feature. Since the first days of digging however, we've found so many more complete examples there's no longer any doubt. They are the ubiquitous Rosemary roof tile.

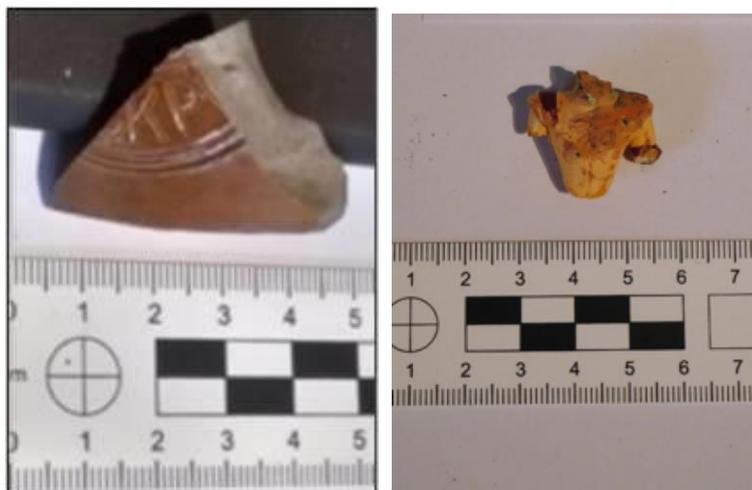


Fig 9: Roof tiles from Gatley Hill.

The measurements for roof tiles date back to Edward IV who in a 1477 Act of Parliament standardised the size of plain roof tiles. The dimensions are 10½ inches by 6¼ inches wide and 5/8th of an inch thick. This is pretty much the same size of roof tile we use today.

The original Rosemary tile was first produced by George Warburton Lewis in 1838. He liked his new tile so much he named it after his daughter Rosemary. It is possible that G.W. Lewis Ltd. trademarked the Rosemary name in 1928, so this could help indicate a date for our Rosemary tiles. The Rosemary tile is still in use today and the name has stuck with roofers who still refer to a plain red tile as a ‘Rosemary’.

Two Intriguing Items



On the left is a base sherd of a stoneware mug, bottle or jar. Could the inscription say Stockport? On the right is a small headless plastic torso of a female figure with a narrow waist. She has a silvery band round her neck and her dress is moulded on the figure with maroon shoulder straps and a maroon border on one sleeve. Is she a miniature dolls house figure? Or a toilet roll doll? But these sorts of doll usually have their clothes separate to the body. Any thoughts? Let us know!

Fig 10: Finds from Gatley Hill Farm.

We've still got a lot of research to do with the finds and lots more answers to uncover so we'll leave you with a couple of intriguing items where we are currently drawing a blank. If you have any ideas or information to share please get in touch.

SMART Proposed Excavations at Benja Fold Bramhall Stockport



Fig 11: Location of proposed excavation site shown as blue rectangle

In late March 2020 SMART were due to start a series of initial test pits on the site of a possible medieval building at Bramhall Stockport. The current crisis has put this on hold but the team have started to look for on-line and other archive sources that will tell us about the history and development of the site.

The site is an area of rough grassland within the grounds of Hillbrook Grange care home on a small rise overlooking the Lady Brook stream. To the south lies a group of listed cottages of brick and timber frame construction. The group of buildings is shown on the map of 1872 where they are named as Birchenough Fold. The cottages are listed on the Historic Environment record as Benja Cottage (HER 2809.1.0); Crocus Cottage. (HER 907.1.0) and Leah Cottage (HER 12946.1.0). The name Benja Fold currently applies to the road and this group of cottages at the southern perimeter of the grounds of Hillbrook Grange. The name is thought to be derived from Benjamin Birchenough, the owner in the mid-18th century. Leah Cottage was named after the Leah family, who lived there for many generations. A photograph published by Barbara Dean shows it with a single dormer to the roof and with what appears to be a cruck truss visible in the upper part of the north gable; set against the lower part of this gable was a single storey loom shop.

The site under investigation is named in the Historic Environment Record as Bongs Croft (site of) (HER 12874.1.0). The tithe map of 1841 shows a building to the north of the current cottages this was demolished by the time of the map of 1872. It is the site of this building that SMART has permission to investigate.

Information on this group of cottages held in the Historic Environment record is very brief. However, the style of the buildings, timber framing on a stone plinth, indicates 17th century origins for some of the current buildings. It is likely the demolished building is at least as old as these and it is possible the group of buildings occupy a site that has a long history of settlement that goes back to before the 17th C. Its location on a slight rise overlooking a water course has potential for early occupation

Aim

- Investigate the history of the group of cottages and its occupants (documentary research) This is currently being undertaken through online and local library resources.
- Identify possible below ground remains of the demolished building (excavation and geophysical survey). On hold until restrictions are lifted and the care home are happy for us to go on to their property
- If possible, survey the timber framed cottages (building survey). On hold until restrictions are lifted and we have owners' permissions.

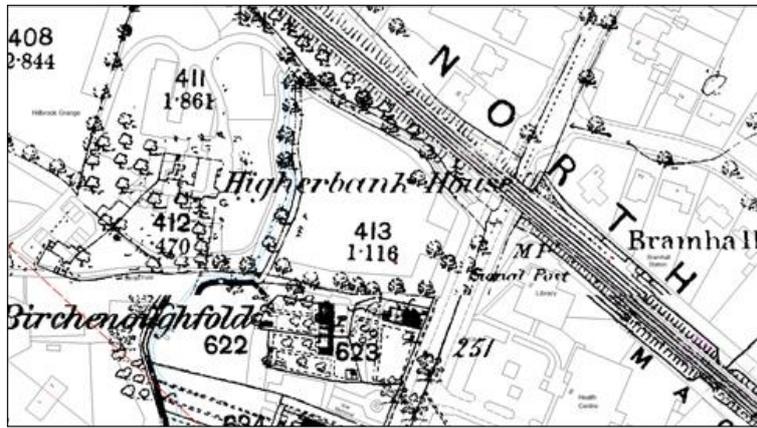


Fig 12: Map of 1872

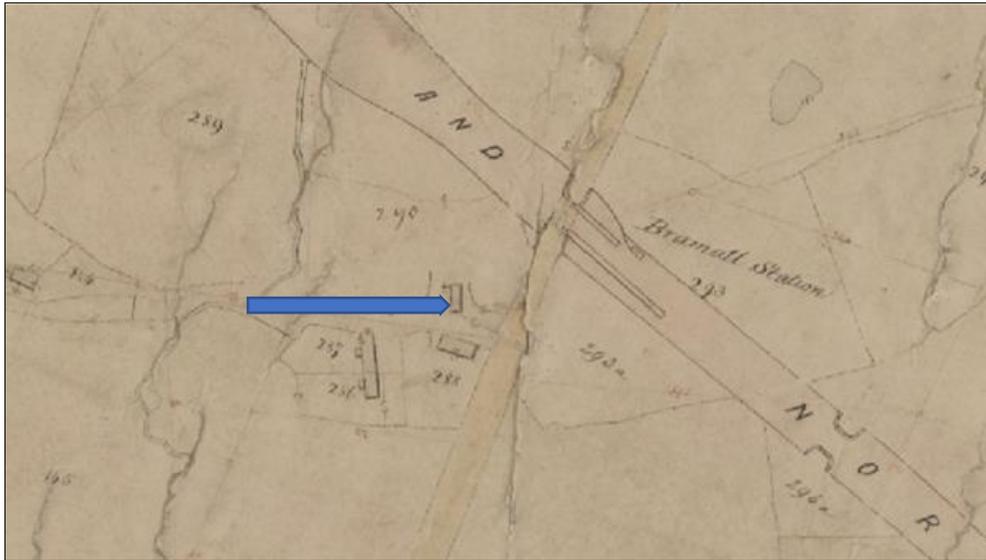


Fig 13: Tithe map showing building under investigation



Fig 14: Benja Fold looking to the south west across the site to be investigated