

News NW

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Council for British Archaeology North West Regional Group

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CBA North West publishes two newsletters each year, in the spring and autumn. Contributions are invited from Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside on all aspects of archaeology in the North West. If you wish to contribute information that you feel would be of interest to members of CBA NW, please contact the Newsletter Editor:

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Please note that contributions may have to be edited.



St. James Church, Brindle

CBA North West Spring Reports Meeting 2009. Lancashire Hotpot: A rich mixture of Heritage

This one day meeting took place in the picturesque village of Brindle near Chorley and was hosted by the Brindle Historical Society. The day was introduced by **Peter Carrington**, the out-going *CBA North West* chairman.

Drawing evidence from two excellent web-sites **Steve Williams**, of *Brindle Historical Society*, gave an '**Introduction to the history of Brindle**'. The Society was formed in 2002 and has done valuable work to preserve the history of Brindle which is one of Lancashire's oldest parishes,

dating back to c1190. At lunchtime many CBANW members visited the ancient church of St. James which is at the centre of the village. Of particular interest is the role that Brindle played in two world wars and the resulting effect on the village. For more information see:

<http://www.brindlehistoricalsociety.org.uk/>

<http://www.brindle-at-war.net/>

Mark Lewis of *Matrix Archaeology* gave an interesting lecture on '**The Lost Palace-fortress of Lathom**'. He described the connection with the Lathom family and the history of the house. Two possible locations for the site of the medieval building were discussed. The findings from an excavation in the paddock south

of the surviving west wing revealed a substantial ditch and some medieval tile. An excavation inside the house in 2003 revealed medieval elements within the internal walls and a cobbled surface. The conclusion drawn was that the medieval building stood on the site of the west wing. There then followed a reconstruction of what the medieval house may have looked like.

John Trippier, a freelance archaeological consultant, talked about **'The Rise and Fall of Industrial Archaeology'** in Lancashire. Using examples of some of the lesser industrial buildings that survive within the former north-east Lancashire cotton belt he raised issues concerning the future of Industrial Archaeology within the region and the seeming lack of concern for our industrial heritage by some local councils. He showed how our industrial forebears used the landscape sympathetically when planning their towns compared to the apparent disrespect sometimes expressed by planning authorities today. The problems regarding renovation were discussed with some buildings lending themselves for conversion to modern use more than others. Many of our industrial buildings are now disappearing and a recording programme should be set up urgently before more of our heritage is lost. However, all is not lost yet. A particularly good internet resource set up by Blackburn and Darwen Council can be found at: <http://www.cottontown.org/page.cfm?pageid=257>

Lisa Keys from the Lancaster branch of the *Young Archaeologists Club* described how the club had won the group award for **Young Archaeologists of the Year in 2008**. The project was based on the bath-house at Lancaster and was covered in detail in the Autumn 2008 edition of the CBA North West newsletter. Members of the group took photos and interpreted the site and helped to clean up the remains. Finds retrieved from the site were drawn and included in a display that lasted six months. A leaflet about the bath-house was produced. As their prize the group, dressed in their T-shirts provided by CBA North-West, took a trip to Murton Park in York where they experienced what life may have been like as a Viking, spending a day in the recreated Viking village.

Jeremy Bradley, *Oxford Archaeology North*, gave a short presentation on **'Post-medieval farmsteads in Lancashire'**. He described

how the post-medieval landscape was built up during the Industrial Revolution. Many farms in Lancashire would have needed a dual income to survive which is difficult to pick up in the archaeological record. Some information can be gathered using patterns in the landscape. Much of the information we have comes from documentary records giving clues to the relationship between farming communities and their hinterland.

David Ratledge, formerly of *Lancashire County Council* talked about **'Roman Roads in Lancashire'** concentrating on the two north-south routes and the main east-west route which went through Ribchester. He described the way the roads were constructed and how engineers went about setting alignments using natural features in the landscape to their best advantage. There was an interesting discussion regarding the evidence that he has used to discover the route of Roman roads including alignments on old maps, place name evidence and aerial photography. For anyone who is interested in further information on Roman Roads in the region the Lancashire County Council Historic Highways web-site may be of interest: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/historichighways/index.asp>

Nigel Neil, *Neil Archaeological Services*, gave a fascinating summary of archaeological work that has been done at **'Whalley Abbey eighteen years on'**. The Abbey was founded in 1296 and has a chequered history down to its use as a Diocesan retreat house, a private house and today as a conference centre. Archaeologically, much survives including the fine north-west gateway. A full topographical survey of the site has been carried out and in 2002 a conservation plan covering all aspects of the conference house from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries was drawn up. Work done in 2005 included 15 dendrochronological samples which showed the main period of construction lay between 1485 and 1508.

Helen Caffrey reports on the reopening of Clitheroe Castle Museum

After closure for extensive refurbishment, the museum is now open, and truly it is a new museum. The displays move logically

through landscape formation, explaining both the bigger picture and local features such as the high density of crinoids and the formation of the castle site as a mud mound due to carboniferous stretching. Local collector, Capt. Frank B. Mitchell, is recognised, with tactful explanation of what is now acceptable or not to collect, whilst natural history – with mention of places to explore further - leads into human influence on the landscape.

This is where prehistory appears, and I would have liked more. It felt strange to have agricultural settlement in Bleasdale portrayed for Bronze Age and Roman periods, without reference to the timber circle. However it was fascinating to read about the spa project at Shaw Well in 1838, while hunting and grouse shooting are presented in a manner both straightforward and sensitive.

Displays on the castle itself (and Henry VI's imprisonment) and the war memorial fundraising which created the public park in which the museum stands, cover the issues raised by the situation of a town museum in a site with its own significant identity, with the ubiquitous Victorian kitchen enlivened with detail on the method of water supply.

The upper floor galleries focus on more recent history, and what I like most here is the use of a range of images in varied formats, each explained and with a point to make: none of the photographs is used as 'wallpaper'. Transport, industry and sport are all represented, then the Pendle witches appear. The local suspects are set in context, with charms to keep them at bay, and current scholarly thinking apparent in the text, notably illustrated not only by Potts' title page but by Reginald Scot's contemporary refutation of witchcraft.

Coming into the twentieth century, push buttons offer some recordings from the North West Sound Archive (still housed in the building), and at the time of my visit, visitors were chuckling over Jimmy, the Clitheroe Kid!

The museum is open daily, 11 – 5 summer, 12 – 4 winter, admission £3.50/£2.50, with a good café, though disappointing shop – no local publications or cards. Overall, the museum has successfully overcome

the classic problem of proportion of text to exhibits, especially where the 'story' is not necessarily evenly represented by the collections. Labelling is succinct, informative and visible, while plenty is provided to entertain young visitors. A visit is thoroughly recommended!

CBA North West Autumn Conference 2009

The conference entitled 'A closer look - the archaeology of people in the north west' will be held on 24 October 2009 at the Leoni-designed Lytham Assembly Rooms, Dicconson Terrace, Lytham, Lytham St. Anne's, Lancashire, FY8 5JY

Speakers include: Peter Carrington, Steve Higham, Rob Philpott and Mike Nevell. Further details can be found on the flyer included with this newsletter.

Festival of British Archaeology 2009

Each year the festival helps organisations with an interest in heritage encourage people from all walks of life to get involved in archaeology and discover more about the area within which they live. Many events were held during July in north-west England and brief reports on four of them are included below.

Archaeology Festival at Leyland: Worden Hall and Park – Helen Caffrey

If I thought of Leyland, I would have said 'motor works' and their presence is still there in the town, as are the old buildings of the original village (with a heritage walk), and the remains of Worden Hall and Park.

David Hunt, the curator, took us on a gentle walk from the museum, through the churchyard noting Farington tombstones, past some estate housing, and into the modern park. This has been the property of the people of Leyland since the mid-twentieth century, after the emparkment a century earlier of the paupers' fields.

Our route was punctuated by information: ridge and furrow; the old tramway; the former Chinese garden; the largest sunken



Excavation at Waterfoot, Rossendale

garden in England; and finally the remains of Salvin's Hall, via earlier outbuildings, now craft workshops, small offices and a café.

The Faringtons' home was brought to life in our imagination, culminating in the walled garden, now under restoration and dripping with grapes and mulberries. It was a fascinating introduction to a place unknown to this visitor and provided a new dimension for locals on this well-attended event.

Lathom's Lost Palace Found! – Stephen Baldwin

In June this year, the Lathom Park Trust started an archaeological evaluation of the pleasure garden and parkland adjacent to the 18th century Leoni-designed Lathom House. Results from past and present surveys indicate that the remains of the late-medieval Lathom House (twice besieged during the civil war) underlie the 18th century mansion block and possibly extend into the garden to the east.

The house was of great importance, being the home of Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of King Henry VII and grandmother of Henry VIII. There is a surviving description of the house written in the mid-17th century, but unfortunately no contemporary illustration or plan. As a private residence, the house was on a scale comparable to that of royal

palaces elsewhere.

Prior to this project, very little was known with regard to the archaeological potential of the late-medieval house, its defences, and associated buildings within the park. Nothing was known of the potential for evidence with regard to the civil war defences and opposing siege works. A co-ordinated long-term research programme comprising geophysical investigation and evaluation by trial-trenching currently underway is funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Your Heritage Scheme.

Trust members and volunteers under the guidance of Oxford Archaeology North supervisors have already uncovered substantial medieval building foundations, cobbled yards and paths, all found below civil war destruction debris and eighteenth century levelling deposits. Finds include numerous flattened musket balls, high status ceramic roof tiles, decorated medieval floor tiles and medieval and post-medieval pottery.

Excavations at Waterfoot, Rossendale – Jeremy Bradley

In July 2009, Oxford Archaeology North was commissioned by Lancashire County Property Group to carry out an archaeological



Young Archaeologists at Speke Hall

investigation of a site to the south of Booth Road at Waterfoot, Rossendale (NGR SD 83955 21846). The work was targeted on the site of a building that is named as a 'tithe barn' on nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey mapping, but for which there is little, or no, additional documentation.

Initial stripping of the topsoil from the site exposed the remains of a stone-built structure, whilst more detailed excavation identified three main phases of activity. The earliest phase comprised an east/west-aligned stone building that measured approximately 16m by 7m, with opposing entrances in the north and south walls; the entrance on the southern side was flanked by short projecting walls. Whilst no artefacts were associated directly with this phase of the building, a single sherd of sixteenth-century pottery attests to activity on the site at that date. It is possible that the earliest occupation of the site may have had some connection to the medieval vaccary of Wolfenden, known to have existed in the area from the late thirteenth century, as noted in an inquisitio post mortem for one of the de Lacy family.

The building was extended subsequently to the south and east, creating the plan form depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848. In the later nineteenth century, however, almost the entire eastern half of the building was demolished. The resulting structure retained its southern

entrance, whilst that to the north appears to have been blocked; a stone-flagged floor was also laid internally as part of this remodelling. Excavated deposits attributed to this final phase yielded an assemblage of nineteenth-century pottery and window glass, indicative of domestic activity. The building is not depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1911, implying that it had been demolished by that date.

Events at Speke Hall, Liverpool – Dave Roberts

Between 16th and 20th July National Trust volunteers and members of Merseyside Archaeological Society, under the guidance of Carolanne King an Assistant Archaeologist with The National Trust, hosted archaeological activities at Speke Hall.

The main activity was to open 3 small trenches to see if traces could be found of farm buildings thought to be contemporary with the building of the Hall in the late 16th century. The farm buildings were demolished in the 1890s. Using an overlay from the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map it was possible to determine the position of the 3-winged farm building.

A trench was laid out across the line of each wing. Although there was neither the time nor the resources to mount a full investigation the remains of floor surfaces were uncovered in two of the three trenches. There were no significant finds but the exercise proved the potential of the site for future study. On the Saturday, the excavation team was joined by members of the Merseyside and Dee Young Archaeologists Club who commandeered the use of one of our trenches for the day. Much fun was had by all.

Other activities on site included guiding the public around the excavation and explaining what we were looking for and what had been found. People were invited to take part in the construction of a wattle and daub wall using willow and clay. There was an exhibition of archival material manned by National Trust volunteers and a popular finds processing exercise. The event was well supported with over 1000 visitors attending during the weekend.

Bronze Age Find from Gisburn

Amongst the few finds from Lancashire that have recently been brought in to Dot Boughton (Finds Liaison Officer for Cumbria and Lancashire) is this rather nice Bronze Age spearhead from the Gisburn area (Ribble Valley).

The spearhead, recorded as LANCUM-7609C0, is especially interesting because it is extremely well-preserved. It is a side-looped spearhead dating from the Middle Bronze Age, c. 1600-1400BC. It is complete, the blade and socket undamaged with a smooth chocolate-brown patina showing hardly any sign of decay. The head is leaf-shaped and the socket has a pronounced midrib. The tip of the spearhead is thicker than the rest of the blade and there are very fine, very clear re-sharpening marks all around the edges of the wings. There is some hatched decoration along the sides of the socket where the casting seams had been smoothed down. Side-looped spearheads like this one belong to the Acton Park 2, Taunton (Cemmaes) or Penard metalwork assemblages, corresponding to Needham's (1997) Period 5, c. 1500-1150BC. A side-looped spearhead from the Thames at Mortlake (DoB 31) has been radio-carbon dated by Needham et al (1997) producing an early radiocarbon date of 3225+/- 65BP (OxA-5948) 1680-1400BC with a 95% confidence rating.

If you have any finds from your garden, the beach, field-walking or metal-detecting and would like them identified and recorded, don't hesitate to get in touch with: Dot Boughton, Museum of Lancashire, Preston, PR1 4YP; Tel: 01772 532175; email: dot.boughton@lancashire.gov.uk



Bronze Age Spearhead