Tameside Archaeological Survey. Annual Report for 2009-10

A Report B Grimsditch, Dr M Nevell & S Mitchell
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Introduction

2009 proved to be a year of change and re-focus for the Tameside Archaeological Survey. In July the University of Manchester Archaeology Unit closed necessitating the transfer elsewhere of the long running research project, which had been founded in 1990 with Tameside MBC funding. The new home of the survey project from September 2009 is the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University of Salford.

The new Centre is based at the University of Salford's CUBE Gallery on Portland Street, Manchester, and is staffed by Dr Michael Nevell, Brian Grimsditch and Adam Thompson, all of whom have a long association with Tameside's archaeology and history. This newly established research unit will investigate archaeological sites, historic buildings and industrial heritage in Tameside and across the North West, giving local communities opportunities to take part in actual excavations. The Tameside Archaeological Survey will be one of the flagship research projects for the Centre over the next five years.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Salford, Professor Martin Hall, welcomed the new Centre stating that "The Centre's work is critical for preserving the region's urban fabric. It will also act as a dynamo for an army of volunteers from school kids to pensioners who'll turn out to work on sites. The Centre will make an important contribution to the University's emphasis on public engagement and help us extend our research and postgraduate offering so I'm pleased to welcome the team to Salford."

The Centre for Applied Archaeology looks forward to working with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council over the next five years in delivering one of the most varied and far reaching community and research archaeology projects in the country.

Dr Michael Nevell (Head of Archaeology)
Adam Thompson (Principal Archaeologist)
Brian Grimsditch (Senior Archaeologist)

March 2010
1. Research and Discovery

1.1 Emergency Recording at the Park Bridge Substation, April 2009

During April 2009 an archaeological building survey was undertaken of the electrical substation on Park Bridge Road, Park Bridge, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside, Greater Manchester (centred SD 9360 0240; Fig 1). The building was probably the last structure connected to the Park Bridge Iron Works that was constructed and as such forms the final link in the development of the site. This was done ahead of demolition.

The substation consisted of a single storey, brick-built, structure of small dimensions with a blue slate covered, timber, hipped roof. The substation was probably built around the end of the first quarter of the 20th century (ie 1920s) to supply electricity to the remaining buildings of the Park Bridge complex. The original transformer was replaced and upgraded during 1950s with a new transformer capable of producing 500Kva. Probably at the same time the two windows on the western elevation and the one window on the eastern elevation were blocked by the insertion of brick walls that extended c. 0.26m from the building line and a small ventilation window protected by bars, with a possible extractor fan, was inserted at the top of the eastern end of the southern gable. The substation was decommissioned recently and has now been replaced by a metal clad modern transformer box placed a few meters to the north of the northern gable of the substations.

Fig 1: The 1920s substation at Park Bridge supplied the Ironworks with lighting and power.
1.2 Emergency Recording of St Lawrence’s Church, Denton, Roof Repairs, May 2009

Fig 2: Plan of St Lawrence’s showing the location, shaded, of the roof works.

During May 2009 repair works were undertaken on the eastern end of the nave roof at St Lawrence’s Church, Denton. This work focussed upon repairs to the roof and roof valleys at the eastern end of the church over the nave, chancel and transepts (Fig 2). The thick stone slates above the 1530s nave and Victorian chancel were removed revealing the upper part of the roof structure. The eastern end of the roof structure was not available for archaeological study during previous investigations (Nevell M & Hradil I, 2005, St Lawrence’s Church and the archaeology of the Medieval Timber-framed Churches of England and Wales. The Archaeology of Tameside volume 4, Tameside MBC). This was, therefore, a unique opportunity to study this part of the 1530s timber-framed building.

The work uncovered the roof of the nave above bays five and six, counting from the west (see shaded area in Fig 2). The upper roof structure had been obscured in the nave by a plaster ceiling but this work revealed details above the ceiling level, between the fourth and fifth trusses. This revealed the apex of the fourth truss which proved to be a pegged lap joint, Below this was a deep collar with a central saddle and pegged tenon joints at either end. To either side were wind-braces the edges of which were decorated with a scalloped design (Fig 3).

This decoration indicates that originally in the 1530s at least this end of the church, the chancel end, was open to the roof. Presumably the ceiling was inserted at the same time as the western gallery, that is during the 18th century re-ordering of the church, or chapel as it then was.
1.3 Emergency Recording at the Caxton Engineering Works, Mary Street, Hyde (centred SJ 945 952) August 2009

In July and August 2009 a square, two storey, engineering building to the west of Carrfield Mill in Hyde, was demolished. Although access to the interior of the building was not possible Centre staff were able to record the exterior and some of the partially demolished interior features of the building during demolition. The Caxton Engineering Works was established between 1872 and 1894, but probably in the early 1890s when it first appears on the Ordnance Survey map base, where it was named and lies on the northern side of Mary Street. This was one of the many engineering firms established in Hyde in the mid-19th century, when the presence of the railway network and the railway junctions around Newton to the north encouraged the development of a light and heavy engineering tradition in this area. In 1896 and in 1902 the works was occupied by Cartwright & Rattray Limited, lithographers and printers (Kelly’s Cheshire Directory 1896, 314; ibid 1902, 356).

The structure of the works reflected this business. The two storey offices lay at the western end of the works. Here was the entrance with a classical stone surround in the southern wall and on the top floor were the drawing offices lit by a glazed roof hidden by a terracotta balustrade. The engine house, boiler house, and circular chimney lay at the northern end of the works as a short projection. The engineering shop floors occupied the main body of the two storey range to the south and east. This had ten
windows on each floor in the southern elevation and 15 to the eastern elevation. This part of the structure was steel and cast-iron framed, a style of construction just coming into mill building, as at the 1884-5 Cavendish Mil in Ashton-under-Lyne. The top floor had a multi-ridged roof supported by wire trusses.

1.3 Evaluation Excavations at St Lawrence’s Church, Denton, November 2009

Ahead of installing a much need new under floor heating system CfAA were commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the interior of St Lawrence’s church by the church authorities.

Four test pits were excavated, one at the northern end of the modern chancel steps (TP1), one in at the southern end of the chancel steps (TP2), one at the northern end of the western entrance (TP3) and the final one being at the centre of the nave (TP4; Fig 4). These test pits were designed to reveal any under floor archaeology to a depth of 60 cm that would impinge on the plans for the heating system.

TP1
At a depth of around 20cm from floor level an articulated skeleton was revealed. Also at the north eastern corner was a red sandstone possible post pad along with the remains of a sandstone wall running beneath the modern chancel steps. This may suggest an unknown middle phase of alteration to the church.

TP2
Little was seen in this test pit apart from the ephemeral remains of the sandstone wall seen in test pit 1.

TP3
On lifting the floorboards the unused building material from the 1990’s restoration was revealed. Below this was a clay layer, seen in all test pits, directly below which another articulated and possibly disturbed skeleton was revealed.

TP4
After lifting two grave markers, which were not in their original location having been moved and re-sited in earlier times, that were inscribed with the names Noah Kinsey and John Angier (17th century incumbents) the clay layer was revealed. Immediately below this layer a skeleton lying east to west contained within the remains of a timber coffin were exposed.

Although no physical evidence was found to suggest the name of the deceased its location below the grave stone and that documentary evidence stating that John Angier was buried opposite the pulpit (which at the time would have been central to the pews) leads to the suggestion that this could have been the body of John Angiers.

The discovery of these remains and other disarticulated bones have forced the church authorities to reconsider their plans. However, consultation with the County Archaeologist and CfAA may be able to overcome the issues presented but may mean further archaeological excavations have to take place within the church.
This professional excavation has been complimented by the pilot study for the Tameside Graveyard Survey (see below Section 4).

1. 4 Buckton Castle Season 3, March to April 2010

This season’s work at Buckton Castle will commence on Tuesday 31st March 2010 and below are the planned trenches that will be excavated (Fig 5). It will be open to the public who will form the main core of excavators, some experienced and some with little or no experience and due to the suspected interest it was decided to have three professional archaeologists on site to supervise thereby giving a maximum of 15 volunteers per day who could participate. The excavations were only officially advertised on 15th March and at present over 40 different people have booked places and of a possible 280 places over the four week period only 41 places remain to be filled.

The excavations have provided an almost unique opportunity for members of the community to be involved in the excavation not only of a probable 12th century castle but to excavate an Ancient Scheduled Monument that would normally restricted to professional and academic researchers.

Below is an outline of the proposed trenches that will be excavated in this seasons work.

Fig 4: A grave-cut in the middle of the nave, opposite the former location of the pulpit. This could be the site of the rev John Angier’s grave.
**Trench 1 & 2**

Off the north western corner and outside of the ditch is a conical, flat topped earthwork that has been proposed as being caused by quarrying activity and a dump for spoil during the construction of the World War II air defence structures. However, the 16th century plan of Staveley (Fig.5) appears to indicate a possible masonry structure. The aim of the programme for this area is to ascertain the nature of this earthwork.

To complete this objective a trench (Trench 1) will be opened across the top of the earthwork to investigate any medieval remains or to determine if this was a later addition to the site. A further trench (Trench 2) will be opened across the pathway that leads from the earthwork to the castle entrance to ascertain if there were any defensive outworks associated with the entrance and earthwork.

**Trench 3**

Following on from the discovery of a fortified gateway across the entrance to the castle in 2008 an ‘L’ shaped trench will be opened running along the causeway with a perpendicular arm running down into the ditch off the western side of the gateway entrance.

The aim here will be to ascertain the nature of the causeway and if any further gateway features remain that would have extended out from the main line of the curtain wall that would have had any connection to the possible outworks. It could also give an indication of the makeup of the initial stage of the communication rout from the castle.

**Trench 4**

During the investigations of 2008 a trench was opened in the south eastern quadrant of the interior of the castle with the intention of locating a ruined structure as perceived on the Saddleworth geological Society survey plan of 1842. The results of the 2008 trench were inconclusive and it is intended to open a trench perpendicular to and south of the 2008 trench in a final attempt to locate any medieval structures in that area.

**Trench 5**

In the south western corner of the castle is a gap that has been suggested to be a second entrance to the castle. This ‘entrance’ does not appear on earlier antiquarian plans or on the Saddleworth Geological Society plan of 1842. It is therefore probable that this gap in the defences was the result of late 19th century vandalism. It is proposed that this point in the defences would be an appropriate place to obtain a good cross section of the embankment without causing further damage to the monument.

It is proposed that the most appropriate side of this ‘entrance’ will be cleaned and made into a vertical section for recording and analysing the construction of the embankment and curtain wall.
1. 5 Halls of Tameside Research

During the year documentary and map research was undertaken on the halls of the Tameside area as part of the preparation for the Staley Hall volume in the Archaeology of Tameside series. Few halls survive within the borough above ground, whilst of those sites that have been demolished three, Ashton, Denton and Dukinfield halls, have been excavated. All these have already been summarised in volume 2 of the Archaeology of Tameside series. It might be more appropriate, therefore, to discuss Staley Hall in the context of the tenanted farmhouses of the borough, and of which Staley was an example from hundreds of years. More than 100 examples of these farmhouses survive in the borough either as standing structures or below ground sites and the Tameside Archaeological Survey has already recorded more than 15 of these.
2. The ‘Archaeology of Tameside’ Series

2.1 The Archaeology of Tameside Volume 8: Newton Hall and the Cruck Buildings of North West England

This volume is completed and is now at the printers for typesetting and printing. The volume is 26,000 words in length and

Preface

Acknowledgements

1. The Cruck-framed Buildings of Greater Manchester and North West England

2. Excavating the Cruck-framed Building: the Archaeology of Newton Hall

3. Rediscovering Newton Hall: its History and Conservation


Glossary

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Volume 9 of the series will be on Buckton Castle and this is due for publication in November 2010.
3. Tameside Roots

3.1 Family History Centre

The Family History Centre continues to be busy. Family History outreach events during 2009 have been held at the following venues:

• St George’s Day event, 18th April
• Stalybridge Splash, 25th May
• Stalybridge Carnival, 28th June
• Proms in the Park (2 days), 25-26th July
• Bank Holiday Monday at Portland Basin, 31st August
• The Mellor Excavation Open Weekend (2 days), 5-6th September

All the above have been very successful in reaching those people who are interested but wouldn’t know where to start. At least 50% of the people seen at the outreach events have followed up with a visit to the Centre.

Eight family history talks were held during the year. These included: ‘The Newton Hall Excavations’ by Mike Nevell on 22nd May and ‘A Shot in the Dark’ by Sue Mitchell on 10th June. The last two took place in November and December, with the December talk being given by members of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Centre continues to be very busy after a slow start in January 2010 due to the snow and ice. One member of staff left because of the revised payment methods introduced with the move of the project to Salford University. A family history advisor second is an extended holiday in Australia and a third is awaiting a heart bypass operation. Sue Mitchell is therefore actively seeking extra staff to work on an ad hoc basis at the Centre. Unfortunately, there is quite a lead-in time with the new people sitting in with the regular staff on a number of occasions before they can be left on their own.

3.2 Heritage Open Days, 12and 13September 2009

For the 2009 Heritage Open Days events Sue Mitchell produced a leaflet for the Tameside participants based upon the information supplied by the Civic Trust. Over 7000 leaflets were distributed through mailings to libraries, record offices and museums. In addition the Tameside display caravan was used on the Friday and Saturday prior to HODs weekend to distribute leaflets directly to the public.

3.3 History in Your Own Words Series

No volumes were presented for publication in 2009-10. This led to the profile of the series being raised locally though the Heritage Forum and since the beginning of the year there have been several enquires and three slots have been reserved for the series.
3.4 Wills Transcription - Mottram

During this year the transcription of the first 20 photocopies of the wills and inventories from the township of Mottram, covering the period 1600 to 1700, was completed. A further 20 copies of wills and inventories for Mottram were ordered from the Cheshire Record office covering the period 1700 to 1740. However, there was a break in the transcription project between June and December 2008 during the transition from the University of Manchester to the University of Salford, but work began again in January 2010 and it is anticipated that the transcription remaining wills will be completed by the summer.

3.5 Voices from the Past, Volume 2: Mottram Wills and Inventories

Transcription of the first 20 photocopies of the wills and inventories from the township of Mottram, covering the period 1600 to 1700, has been completed. A further 20 copies of wills and inventories for Mottram has been ordered from the Cheshire Record office and these will cover the period 1700 to 1740.
4. Community Archaeology

4.1 The Tameside Burial Project (Graveyard Survey), Year 1

The Tameside Graveyard Survey funded by Tameside MBC was set up to enhance the partially complete burial record for the borough of Tameside that has recorded those of the municipal graveyards. This survey would record the burial record for all non-municipal graveyards.

The initial idea was to transcribe the parish register for burials and input the information onto a database that would be freely accessible on-line. This would be of benefit to family and local historians.

However, during consultations about this survey it was agreed that a more comprehensive study could be undertaken that would include the archaeological recording of the extant graveyards and their associated grave markers. This would add a further dimension to the survey in that the information would add further primary historical and archaeological information that could be used for regional and local historical research. An added dimension would be that a larger number of people could be involved in recording their local history and that a part of this work would be field work and not confined to the archive and local studies centres.
Regarding the transcription of the parish records and archive material there are some copyright issues that have to be overcome and the Tameside Archaeologist is in the process of addressing these issues.

In order to refine the methodology for this survey a pilot study was set up and is nearing completion. This is being conducted at St Lawrence’s Church in Denton utilising the skills and enthusiasm of the Tameside Archaeological Society. This pilot study involves transcription of the burial register that is now completed for the dates 1695-1756 and the archaeological recording of the surviving grave markers both inside and outside the church. There are several interesting results: a grave stone ledger that was first thought to be Masonic also revealed that the deceased was a company sergeant in the 3rd battalion of the Royal Artillery from around the Napoleonic Wars. On completion of the pilot study it is intended to target other graveyards in the borough and if the results are of equal interest the Survey should result in a valuable and useful study for a wide range of people interested in their local and regional history.

4.2 ‘T20: The Tameside Archaeological Survey at 20 years’ Exhibition Preparation

Work on developing the exhibition celebrating 20 years of the Tameside Archaeological Survey in 2010 began in September 2009. There will be three strands to the project; a travelling exhibition, a series of public heritage lectures and a day school, and archaeological community work at three sites across the year. The provisional programme is currently as follows:

![Image of a graveslab](image-url)

*Fig 7: The ‘mason’s’ graveslab recorded as part of the survey.*
March – Open T20 exhibition
Buckton Castle excavations

April – Heritage lecture on 20 years of the project
Buckton Castle excavations finish
Exhibition at Ashton for St George’s day

May – Heritage lecture
Launch of the Newton Hall Book
Exhibition at the Stalybridge Splash

June – Heritage lecture
Newton Hall community excavation

July – Heritage lecture
Broadbottom community excavations
Exhibition at Hyde for the proms in the park celebrations

August – Heritage lecture

September – Heritage lecture on Buckton Castle

October - Exhibition

November - T20 exhibition finishes at Ashton Library
Day School at Dukinfield Town Hall
Launch of the Buckton Book

4.3 Newton Hall Community Excavation

The application for funding for the proposed Newton Hall community excavation by the Tameside History Forum was delayed due to changes in the funding structure of the HLF. A revised design has been drawn up with the assistance of CfAA staff and will be submitted in April 2010.

4.4 National Archaeology Week 2009

No events were held during Archaeology Week in July 2009 during to the project transferring from the University of Manchester to the University of Salford.

4.3 Broadbottom Research and Community Archaeology Project

Introduction

Under the sections 1 (Research and Discovery) and 4 (Community Archaeology) of the revised milestones for the years 2010 to 2015 part of the Tameside Archaeological Survey (TAS) is scheduled to investigate the site of Broadbottom Mills, Broadbottom, Tameside. This will lead to a publication in the Archaeology of Tameside series. This is to include historic research to inform archaeological evaluation and excavation of
the industrial river valley that would be conducted by members of the community under professional archaeological supervision. Also included would be a summer school for buildings archaeology based on the historic buildings of Broadbottom connected to the development of the river valley before and after industrialisation.

Broad Mills, originally Broadbottom Mills were the largest of several textile works which were established in and around Broadbottom from the late 18th century. The textile works were responsible for changing a rural landscape into the extensive village of today. The attraction the textile producing industry was the natural resource of the River Etherow which, was harnessed through a series of weirs and mill leats to provide the power for their machinery. Broadbottom Mills were established by William and George Sidebottom in the early 1800s. By 1824 there were three large cotton spinning mills supplied by water-power was supplemented by steam in the mid 19th century. By the 1850’s the business expanded and included weaving but soon after the ‘Cotton Famine’ forced the closure of Broadbottom Mills. The community of Broadbottom heavily being dependent upon the textile industry was halved as people sought work elsewhere.

The Mills reopened in the 1870’s under the new ownership of the Hirst family and in the early 20th changed their name to Broad Mills with the construction of a new engine house. Following widespread decline in the industry production of cotton products came to an end. In 1949 fire damage resulted in the demolition of the greater part of the mill complex.

There are some above-ground remains of the mills that include the steam engine blocks, the water wheel system and walls of the single storey weaving sheds. Whilst these can be seen further archaeological work is planned for them but it is the demolished spinning mills along the banks of the river that will receive the main attention of the excavations.

In 2008 an area near to the derelict gasometers and demolished weaving sheds was subject to a short evaluation by post graduate students from the University of Manchester, supervised by staff from CfAA (then UMAU) as part of their port folio of work for an MA in fieldwork archaeology. This evaluation produced minimal results in the way of positive archaeological remains but did indicate that the area was covered with very compacted demolition rubble probably from the demolition of the cotton mills nearby.

In November 2009 a public presentation which included proposed work at Broadbottom was given to the Broadbottom history group who were excited about the project and pledged what support they could give.

Proposed work

It is intended to begin the project at Broadbottom during late spring 2010 and arrangements are in hand with the various stakeholders. The project is envisaged to span a time period of probably three years to complete and in addition to the technical reports associated with the various projects there will be a book for the Archaeology of Tameside series completed and published in 2014/15.
The work for 2010 is outlined below:

- Historic research based at Tameside Local Studies and Archives and regional records offices if necessary – scheduled to start May 2010
- Buildings archaeology summer school open to members of the public to be held at a suitable venue with fieldwork carried out in the Broadbottom area – scheduled for the week 12th – 16th July
- A two week archaeological excavation of a section of the Broadbottom Mills situated along the path through the woodland – scheduled to start Saturday 17th July and run for a two week period.

The date of the summer school and excavation work is designed to coincide with the national Festival of Archaeology thereby giving Tameside an organised event during this high profile national event.

Consultation has taken place with the Carl Baron and Sarah Hunt of the Tameside Countryside Ranger service who are to begin clearance of the vegetation cover of the area selected for excavation and will be assisting in making the event a success.

It was also thought that the area not only contained important industrial heritage requiring further investigation but that it also was a site of particular interest with regards to wildlife and nature conservation. It would be interesting to investigate the natural development of this river valley site before industrialisation, during the working life of the cotton industry based there and its recovery after the industry closed. With this in mind and to further interdisciplinary cooperation Dr Simon Hutchinson head of the Wildlife Conservation department at the University of Salford has been contacted who has shown great interest in becoming involved in such a project.

Progress of this new project will be outlined in the regular quarterly reports to Tameside MBC.
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