

THE FRIENDS of SADDLEWORTH ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Newsletter

No 2

Spring 2007

Retrospect, 2007

The first meeting of the year was the Annual General Meeting, which was held at Greenfield Conservative Club on Wednesday 17th January 2007. The meeting was very poorly attended but we managed to transact the business of the meeting. The main items being the election of the officers, who were re-elected on- bloc and the amount of the annual subscription, which, on the recommendation of the Treasurer, remained the same as the previous year. After the close of the AGM Ken Booth gave an illustrated Archaeological Quiz. Mike Howarth won the prize of a box of chocolates for having greatest number of correct answers. This was our last meeting at Greenfield Conservative Club due to our normal room having been changed to a smaller room located in the cellar. The committee felt that this room was unsuitable and decided to return to Uppermill Masonic Hall. Our thanks were given to the committee of the Conservative Club for helping us out during a difficult period.

In February, after a change in the programme, Ken Booth gave a talk entitled **‘Discovery & Exploration at Castleshaw Roman Forts; 1751-1964.**

The audience were told of discovery in 1751, rediscovery in 1897 by Ammon Wrigley, who subsequently excavated at the site and the work of local mill owner Mr G.F.Buckley. Samuel Andrews and Major Lees carried out the extensive and important work in 1908-09, which produced the first real plan of the site and a photographic record. The site again received attention in the 1960's by Manchester University.



Andrew and Lees excavation team. 1908

March was the month of the second John Buckley Lecture which was entitled ‘**Early Water Mills in Saddleworth**’, an illustrated talk given by Mike Buckley



An audience of over 50 people heard Mike tell of tracing some of the mills by the use of early deeds and field names. The talk was accompanied by digital images of sites, maps and early deeds. Mike held his audience spell-bound with accounts of his detective work in tracing these early mills.

The last lecture before the summer break was held on the 10th April and was given by Dr. Laurance Donnelly, an Exploration and Engineering Geologist who has spent considerable time exploring the Saddleworth hills. His title was ‘**The Evolution of the Saddleworth Landscape in relation to Archaeology**’ and the talk was illustrated by digital images of the Saddleworth landscape. An audience of over 40 people were enthralled to learn that the landscape of Saddleworth had originated from Antarctica millions of years ago and even now Saddleworth is moving towards Germany. Laurance answered many questions from the floor. Reports from a very appreciative audience indicated that this was our best lecture to date.

Each year The Council for British Archaeology organises a ‘National Archaeology Week’ during the month of July. In order to support this event, Saddleworth Archaeological Trust is organising a ‘One Day School’ in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit. The One Day School will be based at the Castleshaw Centre in Delph and will deal with the Industrial Archaeology of the Castleshaw Valley. In the morning we have arranged for two speakers, the first is Norman Redhead, the Assistant County Archaeologist for Greater Manchester who will give an illustrated talk entitled ‘**The Industrial Archaeology of the Castleshaw Valley**’. Norman is well known to the members of the Trust. The second speaker is Dr. Mike Nevell, Director of the University of Manchester Archaeology Unit. He will give an illustrated talk entitled ‘**The Industrialisation of Upland Valleys; Castleshaw in its Regional Context.**’ Mike delivered the first John Buckley Lecture last year and will be recognised from his appearances on ‘Time Team’.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the booking form for this event, places are limited to 50 and last years event was overbooked. If you wish to attend, please book early to avoid disappointment.

We welcome the following new members - Mrs M Bray from Stalybridge. Mr P Barrett from Leeds. Miss K Coldwell and Mr W Howard from Shaw. Drs. S & H Drake from Bamford. Mrs G Davison from Greenfield. Mr D Lloyd from Grotton. Mrs I Milhench from Sandbach.

From the Treasurer. A small number of members have not yet renewed their membership. We do hope they will continue to support the Trust and the work it does in trying to preserve both the archaeological and historical heritage of Saddleworth. If you have not rejoined, a subscription form is enclosed; we value your membership and hope that we can look forward to your continued support.

The **2007 STONEHOUSE LECTURE** will be held on Saturday 10th November 2007 at the Royal George Hotel, Greenfield. 2pm for 2.30pm..

**THE SADDLEWORTH ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRUST**

The Trustees invite you and your friends to the Sixth Annual
Stonehouse Lecture.

LIVING with the EDGE
THE STORY OF THE ALDERLEY EDGE
LANDSCAPE PROJECT

An illustrated talk by

Professor John Prag

Hon. Professor in the Manchester Museum and Professor Emeritus of Classics,
University of Manchester

Saturday 10th November 2007 2pm for 2.30pm
Royal George Hotel, Manchester Road, Greenfield.

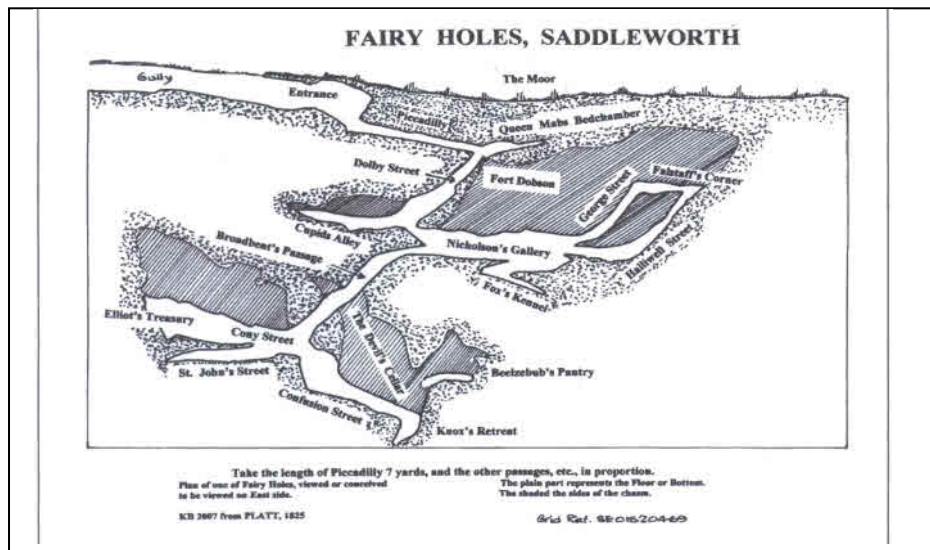
Change to December Lecture

Norman Redhead has volunteered to give a lecture in December relating to a ‘**Years Archaeology in Greater Manchester**’. The programmed talk ‘The Hidden Frontier’ will now be given in 2008. We have not yet obtained a date in December from the Masonic Hall due to Christmas bookings from members. As soon as we can fix a date it will be announced at forthcoming lectures and displayed on the usual village notice boards.

The Caves and Pot Holes in Saddleworth

Throughout history man and animals have lived in caves, for example Creswell Crags in Derbyshire and the Victoria Cave in Yorkshire to mention two. Saddleworth has three known ‘caves’ but no evidence of occupation by man or animal is known. Perhaps the best known of the Saddleworth caves is **Fairy Holes** which is to be found on the summit of Alderman’s Hill. A Victorian account of the exploration of Fairy Holes is to be found in Bradbury’s book *Saddleworth Sketches* published in 1871. It records an account of a descent by a Mr Robinson in 1871.

The entrance is about fifty yards from the summit of the rock on the top of the hill, rather north, descending a few yards. We lighted our candles, it being quite calm; the entrance for about six or seven yards is rather straight, with a vaulted roof, and is called Piccadilly, until it gives a turn or winding assuming the name of Dolby Street, when it descends almost perpendicularly for a considerable length. When we arrived at the bottom we came to a broad passage called Cupids Alley; it has two passages, following



one of which we came to a corner that is rather dangerous.. Here are projecting rocks about twelve feet high, and rather difficult of ascent. Arriving at the top, we found the road very good for a considerable way; then descending, and turning back to the right, under a large heap of rocks, to the same place where we had ascended the rocks at the corner, the passage became rather straight for some yards and then opened to a deep, dreary chasm called the devils cellar. The rocks on both sides are almost perpendicular, and nearly parallel to each other. We proceeded down the cavern until we came to the bottom, and finding the rocks lay upon the shoal, which was a plain indication that we were at the bottom of the subterranean vault, we returned back and measured the road, and taking the angles, the result was, from the bottom to the top 45 yards, and about 30 yards perpendicular from the surface of the earth.