

THE FRIENDS of SADDLEWORTH ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Newsletter

No 3

Winter 2007

Retrospect, 2007

The first meeting of this session actually took place during the summer. We support 'National Archaeology Week' which is organised by the Council for British Archaeology and held during the month of July. This year we explored the 'Industrial Archaeology of the Castleshaw Valley' and 31 delegates attended the morning lectures, which were held at the Castleshaw Centre in Delph. Norman Redhead began by explaining the Industrial Archaeology of the valley and was followed by Dr. Mike Nevell who put the Castleshaw Valley into its regional context. After a picnic lunch in glorious weather the party were taken on a tour of the valley to view the various industrial sites.



Norman Redhead and the Delegates at the Medieval Bloomery in Spa Clough

In July, the Trust played host to The Roman Antiquities Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society when they visited the Roman forts at Castleshaw. Ken Booth, who explained both the history of the archaeological excavations on the Castleshaw site as well as a detailed description of the earthworks of both fort and fortlet, conducted the tour. Donald Haigh, a Trustee, who led the team that discovered the Roman road through Saddleworth in the 1970's, described to the party the route of the road.

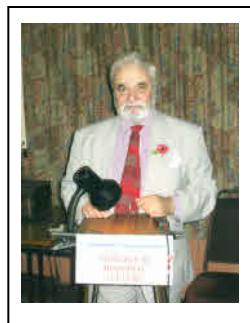


The Roman Antiquities Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society

Our winter session of in-door lectures began on Tuesday 16th October at Uppermill Masonic Hall when Bryan Sitch, Head of Humanities and Curator of Archaeology at the Manchester Museum gave a talk entitled 'Fort, Port or Villa; a Roman site at Faxfleet, East Yorkshire. Bryan wetted our appetite by making the case for each of the possibilities for the site, mainly based on the vast quantities of pottery that the site produced. At the end of the talk it is thought most of the audience considered that the site was a port.

November is the month of the '**Stonehouse Memorial Lecture**' which is held at the Royal George Hotel in Greenfield. This year an audience in excess of 50 people were given a very interesting talk on '**The Alderley Edge Project**' by Professor John Prag, Hon. Professor in the Manchester Museum and Professor Emeritus of Classics, The University of Manchester.

Professor Prag told of the origins of the project and then proceeded to tell us of each of the areas covered in detail. The archaeology covered survey, excavation and experiment in the ancient mining landscape.





The 2007 Stonehouse Memorial Lecture

On the 20th November we welcomed Mr Victor Blunden, who gave an appreciative audience of over 30 people an illustrated talk entitled '**Agriculture and Farming in the Nile Valley**'. Victor is a lecturer in Egyptology at the University of Manchester and for a number of years has given classes in Saddleworth organised by the WEA.

Normally a talk about Egypt concentrates on the Pyramids, Luxor or the Valley of the Kings but Victor told us of the activities of the people who built these monuments and how they lived and fed themselves.

The final lecture of the year, on December 4th, was given by Ian Miller of Oxford Archaeology North who are based in Lancaster. Ian is a Project Manager specialising in Industrial Archaeology and apart from Ancoats, the subject of his talk, he was also responsible for excavating the Roman Bath House at Wigan and the civil settlement at Old Carlisle Roman fort. Ian told us of the development of Ancoats as the worlds first industrial suburb based on steam power. He explained, using old maps of Manchester, the growth of the area and how the mills clustered to Shooters Brook initially but then moved to the River Irwell in order to take advantage of the increased water flow for their steam engines.

WHATS NEW

The first piece of news is that we have a Web Site (through the kind offices of member Phil Barrett) Please consult on a regular basis for items of news etc.

www.sadd-arch.org.uk

With great sorrow we have to announce the untimely death of Robina McNeil, the County Archaeologist for Greater Manchester, on the 28th July 2007. She had been a good friend of Saddleworth Archaeological Trust and we will miss her. A Memorial service for her was held in Manchester Cathedral on Friday 26th October and David Chadderton and Ken Booth attended on behalf of the Trust.

Earlier this year Norman Redhead, the Assistant County Archaeologist for Greater Manchester, was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London . This is the premier national society of this country for archaeologist and it is a great honour to be elected. Our congratulations go to Norman.

It has recently been announced that Norman has been appointed County Archaeologist for Greater Manchester and Director of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit. Again our congratulations to Norman.

Accompanying this Newsletter is the Programme Card for 2008. We hope that you will find the range of subjects interesting. The Third JOHN BUCKLEY lecture in March maintains it's Industrial Archaeology theme and in April we have invited back, by popular demand, Dr. Donnelly who is to give us a further presentation on Saddleworth's Landscape for those people who missed his excellent lecture in 2007. In July we hope to organise another One Day School based at the Castleshaw Centre in Delph. The proposed theme is the Geology and Occupation of the Castleshaw Valley. November is the month of the Stonehouse Lecture and we have been fortunate to engage the services of Dr. John Peter Wild, Research Fellow in the University of Manchester, to deliver a lecture with an Egyptian theme. (title not yet decided). Also in November Dr. Richard Gregory of the Department of Archaeology, University of Manchester will give a presentation telling us of his excavations in Roman Manchester. We end the year with an illustrated talk by Norman Redhead who will tell us of Castles in Greater Manchester including the recent work that has been carried out at Buckton Castle.

In an effort to keep down expenditure it is hoped that we can make more use of our Web Site and ask members with access to it to view future Newsletters on line rather than have one sent by post. Members with no access will still receive it by mail.

Enclosed is a Membership Renewal form for 2008. We look forward to your continued support in the work that the Trust carries out in protecting the rich Archaeological Heritage of Saddleworth. It is important that this work is kept alive and recorded for future generations.