



## **FINAL EVALUATION REPORT FOR**

### **'Redefining Roman Castleshaw: understanding and sharing our past'**

**PROJECT REF: OH-13-09299**

#### **1. Introduction**

This document sets out the key aims of the project, as section headings, and reports on the degree of achievement for each one with additional information on what worked and what didn't. There are also sections on volunteer and schools feedback, volunteer contributions and future plans. It is hoped that this information will be useful for any future community projects that are taken forward at the Castleshaw Roman Forts. The report has been compiled by various committee members of the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts.

#### **2. Deliver a 4 week community Excavation at Castleshaw Roman Forts**

The aims of the dig were met, and in a very positive and successful way. The structural archaeology was superb and several issues were clarified. Also special areas of interest were identified for future work. There were many interesting finds too. There will be a full report from the finds group.

We had good community involvement, and more or less filled the digger quota each day with volunteer contributions.

During a four week period in July experienced archaeologists from the University of Salford worked with around 116 adult volunteers and the Friends to open up 5 archaeological trenches across the fort site. Around 80% of the volunteers had no prior experience of archaeology so it was a great chance for them to get hands on in exploring their local heritage. The volunteers had the opportunity to attend a number of training workshops on archaeological techniques and finds, and there was plenty of on-site tuition during the dig. Several special interest groups also took part, including the Manchester and Huddersfield Young Archaeologist Clubs, Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award students, and even Rangers from United Utilities (who are the landowners). Dr Rob Isherwood, a specialist in educational archaeology, and a committee member of the Friends, went into all the Saddleworth primary schools to give classes on the Roman fort site and its archaeology, before the school children took the opportunity to come and take part in the live dig and find out about the rich history and archaeology of the Castleshaw valley. In all a total of 270 local school children took part.

The dig itself proved a great success! Trenches were targeted on areas previously investigated by Bruton in 1907-8 and Thompson in 1960-3. No less than 5 Roman roads were uncovered! The east gate was opened up and a substantial section of the road exiting the gateway was cleaned and recorded. This showed at least two phases of Roman road, the first one dating to the time of

Agricola, the Roman governor of Britain, who traditionally has been credited with erecting the first timber and turf fort on the site in AD 79. The fort held a standard infantry cohort of 500 men and guarded the trans-Pennine highway linking the fortresses at Chester and York. Evidence of massive post holes was found which held the posts supporting the timber gate structure. In between these posts the archaeologists discovered a fine metalled road surface. As the road exited the gateway its character changed and it became more uneven and less well made. It is believed that this is a later road, laid down in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In another trench, located in the north-eastern quarter of the fort, no less than 3 roads were found: one was the main axis road through the fort, the *via principalis*, whilst the other 2 were service roads for barrack blocks to house the garrison. Roadside drains were excavated and these had some interesting finds, such as a large 'melon' bead made of glass paste, and Samian ware (the finest Roman table ware).

In one of the trenches an area close to the Roman rampart was found to contain lots of charcoal and ashes, as well as many pieces of burnt red clay which turned out to be daub. This had once been part of the walls of the Roman timber framed buildings and had clearly been burnt at the end of its life and the debris deposited in pits in an out of the way corner of the fort. Elsewhere, several hearths, spreads of stone, post settings and slots, which once took the foundations of timber buildings, suggested the position of barrack blocks alongside the service roads.

In another trench the archaeologists found remains of a workshop building which had seen many changes and rebuilds. A number of hearths were present as well as building slots and floor surfaces, pits and post setting. Thompson's 1963 excavations found a pit full of Bronze Age domestic pottery dating to around 1500 BC. This was re-excavated but no further pottery was located. However, nearby was a stone-filled curving gully which might be the remnants of a prehistoric structure. This was built over by Roman fort buildings. The presence of even earlier prehistoric finds, in the form of Mesolithic flint tools, provide a picture of continuous use over many millennia of this spur of land within the Castleshaw Valley.

The eastern defences of the fort were examined and a section across the rampart showed the individual turfs that had been dug out by the Roman soldiers and carefully piled up to create the core of the rampart. At the back of the rampart was found a stone structure which may have been a bread oven for an adjacent barrack block. Towards the north-east corner of the fort, a drain was found running out from under the rampart. It is hoped that the silts from this drain will preserve organic material, such as pollen grains, which can tell us something about the environment at the time of the Roman occupation.

Archaeology is rarely predictable! The recent excavations have thrown up a few surprises and demonstrated that the site is far more complex than previous excavators have led us to believe. On the east side of the defences there is a rampart but no defensive ditch. This is remarkable given that this is the flattest approach to the site. Perhaps there was a military annex here or some other special use of this area that meant a ditch was not required. This theory is supported by the discovery of the start of what appears to be a service road running outside of and parallel with the rampart and associated with possible building platforms. The excavations have found several phases of Roman activity, suggesting that the fort was rebuilt at some stage and that after its final demolition the land was re-used by the Romans for other purposes. The archaeological results have been outstanding. A summary report is being prepared for English Heritage to satisfy Scheduled

Monument Consent, with the fully detailed report on the results to follow next spring at the end of the project.

What is clear is that the July dig was a great success – even the weather was remarkably kind! The excavation finds and records have been analysed and a detailed report produced. This has been put on to the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts website where all sorts of other information can be found on this wonderful ancient monument: <http://www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk> . Many finds from the Roman and post-medieval periods have been found. This material has been cleaned, catalogued and stored at Saddleworth Museum. In due course some of the material will be displayed. The Friends are providing advice to Museum staff on the Roman display within the refurbished Museum, which is the subject of a HLF supported project.

The Friends are already making plans for the future. The current Heritage Lottery project culminated in a Roman Castleshaw Archaeology Day on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015, at Uppermill Civic Centre. Guest speakers talked about recent excavations on various Roman military sites, near Hadrian's Wall and more local fort sites, as well as presenting an in depth account of the Castleshaw dig. The Friends have organised a series of winter lectures on a variety of archaeological and historical topics

During the community dig considerable efforts were invested in getting participants to complete feedback forms. These were tailored for the schools, workshops, excavation volunteers, and visitors to the dig (both groups and individuals).

However there were some problems. All of which were overcome but at some cost to individuals who had to give more time and effort than could reasonably be expected.

Overall as the project started it was soon clear that we were several meetings short of an organized approach. We had little idea of the needs and demands of the project on a day-to-day basis. There was no committee 'team leader' to oversee or to ensure jobs were covered and managed, which would have been OK if we'd had a list of definite contributions – but in the event it meant that a large share of work fell to the willing few.

It was certain by the middle of that first week that we needed at least one finds person and one support person every day.

Coordinating transport was a task in itself – people had to be picked up from the station and from The Old Bell but during the last two weeks when we had a bit better understanding it was more easily arranged.

Giving tours to visitors was regular and often required and was more time consuming than we had expected,

Feedback forms by visitors/diggers/course attendees had gone through format/process changes and so did not provide an entirely consistent measure over the course of the dig. Also people ran out of appropriate forms and used alternatives, which was better than nothing, but not ideal. Nevertheless we are currently collating much good feedback and the responses so far are universally positive

### **3. Recruit and train up to 200 volunteers from the local community**

We had volunteer contributions from 116 people: 115 who took part in digging on at least one day and 1 who was in support. An effective booking system was operated by the supervising archaeologist, Vicky Nash from CfAA Salford University. This was necessary as the demand exceeded places available. She and her team provided induction sessions for all new starters. One problem was that some volunteers just did not turn up on their allotted days so that it became apparent that a reserve system was needed. This was duly put in place for the last two weeks of the dig. On-site training was given in excavation techniques, good health and safety operations, and archaeological recording. Experienced volunteers from the Friends committee worked alongside some of the novice volunteers. There was a high turn round of volunteers which meant that a good deal of time was spent training and therefore it was not possible to achieve all of the archaeological objectives. However, the excavation results were amazing. In particular, the exposure and cleaning of the Roman roads is noteworthy as this was a difficult task that was executed with great enthusiasm and determination - the results were superb.

The feedback from volunteers has been very positive with most relishing the chance to excavate this unique site.

### **4. Provide opportunities for young offenders and unemployed people to gain skills and work experience**

One of the aims of the project was to provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups to gain skills and work experience through volunteering. During the set up phase of the project contact was made with several organisations including; the Oldham volunteer link, the Saddleworth Carers Group, the Manchester Learning Disability Partnership and the Back on Track probation scheme. Initially each of these groups were keen to become involved in the project, however the rugged terrain, exposed nature of the site and transport issues caused difficulties for some of these groups to access the site and as a result we were unable to attract the number of volunteers we would have liked. Despite these issues the opportunity to be involved in the excavation of a Roman Fort did encourage some individuals and carers from the aforementioned groups to take independent steps to volunteer. This in itself was a huge achievement as many of these volunteers rarely acted outside of their support groups. In total nine individuals plus six carers volunteered on the project and all of these individuals volunteered for at least 3 days on site.

### **5. Deliver archaeology workshops for volunteers**

As set out in the Project Plan 6 workshops were delivered:

- geophysics,
- excavation techniques,
- archiving and cataloguing,
- Samian ware (the finest quality Roman tableware made in southern France), identification and recording,

- Roman coarse ware pottery identification and recording,
- Roman ceramic building material,

The workshops were fully booked and attended by 15 volunteers each session, with the addition of a few Saddleworth Museum staff and volunteers at the archiving, Samian ware, Roman coarse-ware, and ceramic building material workshops which were held at the Museum.

Norman Redhead provided an extra workshop, attended by 8 people, entitled 'Interpreting the Archaeology of the Roman Fort'. In total, 98 people attended the workshops.

## 6. The Feedback from Volunteer diggers, visitors and course attendees

We asked everybody that had any contact with the dig to provide feedback whether they were volunteer diggers, visitors to the site or course attendees.

Not everybody wished to fill in our forms but we received a total of 67 volunteer digger forms, 55 visitor forms and 43 course attendee forms from 81 individuals.

Of the total number of respondents in all of the categories only three were under 25. Five were 17 to 25: Nine were 26 to 40; twenty seven were 41 to 60 and the remainder (35) over 60. Two did not respond. Nearly 77% of participants were over 40.

32 were in some form of employment either full or part-time, 9 were students (11%); 36 were retired (44%); the remaining 13% either did not respond or were self-employed or unemployed.

We asked the volunteer diggers to rate the quality of their experience under 4 headings:

**Level of supervision** - 8 did not respond 12 gave "goods" and 47 gave "very goods"

**Interaction between volunteers and archaeologists** - 8 did not respond 13 gave "goods" and 46 gave "very goods"

**Explanation of archaeological information archaeologists** - 8 did not respond 14 gave "goods" and 45 gave "very goods"

**Explanation of archaeological techniques and skills archaeologists** - 8 did not respond 15 gave "goods" and 44 gave "very goods"

The same 8 people failed to respond each time so we imagine that there was some technical reason for this.

Visitors were asked to rate the quality of their visit and the response was 6 "goods" and 46 "very goods" and 3 non responders. There were a total of 123 visitors to site during the dig, with 55 filling in feedback forms. There were several organised group visits and a number of people came to site individually.

Visiting organisations were:

Mellor Archaeological Trust (10 visitors)

Greater Manchester Archaeology Federation (30)

Greater Manchester Conservation Officer Group (7)  
Oldham MBC Planning Officers (8)  
Castleshaw Centre Staff (5)  
Castleshaw Working Party committee members (6)  
English Heritage (1)  
United Utilities Rangers (3)  
Jubilee Colliery HLF project (from Shaw, Oldham) (16)  
Time Travellers Archaeology Group (Sheffield) (6)  
Huddersfield and District Archaeology Society (6)  
Kirklees Young Archaeologists Club  
Manchester Young Archaeologists Club

Course attendees were asked if they felt that they had improved their level of knowledge after their course and the response was unanimously positive. Most of the participants were reasonably local, from Lancashire, Derbyshire West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester , but there was one person from Perth in Australia and one from London. A variety of positive comments were evident, and there were no negatives a selection follow:-

### **Diggers**

*amazing loos, good cake, happy site. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves*

*It's a shame everything has to be filled in at the end*

*fascinating*

*Staff helpful. Facilities VG*

*very enjoyable, hard work as expected*

*Fab Day. Good for all family. Fun +V Interesting*

*Thank you for a lovely day. First time doing anything like this and think I'm now hooked*

*thank you to all the organisers and volunteers. It has been a very enjoyable project to be involved with*

*I have loved every minute*

*I have loved every min being on the site*

*Fun, sociable. Good to work on a local site, espec in Saddw'th*

*really enjoyable and informative. Great to have the opportunity to be involved*

*great dig and staff. Lovely place to excavate as a group*

*Thanks for the opportunity*

*very enjoyable, professionally rigorous. Inspired to do more. Thanks*

*very enjoyable, backbreaking. Love to do more*

*I have found it and am still finding it interesting and exciting*

### **Visitors**

*Important site which can contribute to our understanding of Roman Forts and associated features*

*very interesting*

*very good presentation by Norman redhead*

*Very interesting tour. Good to hear about the local history and environment*

*I have really enjoyed the visit the workers are very friendly and helpful and informative*

*Excellent site visit organised by Dr Norman Redhead Finds and site very well organised  
The talk and explanation of the history of the site was excellent and done in a very friendly manner  
It was a very good visit. The person who gave us information was so helpful  
nice tour  
A warm welcome. Excellent guided tour Good explanations. Questions answered  
excellent and very interesting work being carried out.  
very warm welcome and clear explanation  
Impressed by finds and scope of the dig  
This is an excellent event that brings people in the community together and sparks interest in the  
younger community and local schools  
very worthwhile project for the local community  
This is an important early Roman site about which much more needs to be known  
Glad to have such an interesting heritage site in the area  
clearly a very productive excavation which is achieving its objectives  
We were impressed to see so many people of different backgrounds working on the site.*

***Training attendees***

*more courses like this would be useful  
great to see CBM covered  
great to have the opportunity to be involved  
a fantastic project adding to local knowledge of Roman influence in the area  
I have a great deal to learn, but will in time  
great project for volunteers  
great excavation and pottery course*

The survey results suggest the project has been a great success.

**7. Deliver a programme of learning and engagement activities aimed at the general public and schools**

The educational archaeologist's days with the children went very well - he organized that aspect very well and could rely on his own programme and on archaeologist back-up. Again, there was good feedback. Here is his report:

*"The ethos behind the provision for schools*

The intention within the project design was to reach as widely as possible across community groups within the Saddleworth area and be as inclusive as possible. The participation of local school children served as a means to communicate the project across the breadth of the Saddleworth population. Children were introduced to the project in advance of the commencement of fieldwork and then became active participants in the fieldwork during the first half of the project period.

The period allocated for school visits to the project site was the first two weeks of fieldwork (Weeks commencing Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014). The schools broke up for summer holiday on 17<sup>th</sup> July, so this gave us nine potential days for school visits. The aim was to include a full day visit to the site for each of the nine primary schools in Saddleworth. We very much wanted to include all primary schools. Communication and outreach to the Saddleworth primary schools commenced in January 2014 by the educational archaeologist and eventually by a variety of means of communication including letters to headteachers, emails, and personal visits to schools, all nine schools were recruited and became project participants. Approximately 270 children from these schools participated in the project. The list of schools was as follows –

Delph Primary  
Christ Church (Denshaw) Primary  
Diggle Primary  
Dobcross Holy Trinity  
Friezland Primary  
Greenfield Primary  
Greenfield St Mary's  
St Chad's Primary Uppermill  
St Anne's Lydgate.

An important part of the project design was to make the educational provision meaningful and relevant to the wider curricula of participant schools and to make the educational outcomes sustainable beyond the life of the project period. Thus the educational archaeologist was offered to schools to serve three functions -

1. Working in class to prepare children for the visit, to enable them to fully exploit the learning potential of the visit.
2. To organise visits to the site and design and provide appropriate learning experiences at the project site and in the surrounding historical landscape.
3. To work with teachers and to provide training for teachers in order to integrate the project and its learning opportunities into the wider school curriculum as well as developing new and exciting programmes of study tailored to the needs of individual schools.

### *The Educational Archaeologist in School*

Visits to all participant schools took place in the two week period between Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014. Individual schools selected which age range of children they wished to be the participant class. The majority of schools chose either Year 3 or Year 4 as this was the year group who had or would later study the Romans. Christ Church School (Denshaw) included all their Key Stage 2 children as they were a smaller school. They also included their Year 2 children in the school visit session.

Sessions in school and delivered by the educational archaeologist took the form of interactive presentations and utilised real and facsimile artefacts (some purchased by The Friends of



Castleshaw Roman Forts). The sessions lasted between seventy and ninety minutes and were very well received (see later analysis of feedback forms). Children and teachers were taught -

- What is archaeology?
- What sort of things do archaeologists do?
- How do archaeologists find out what life was like in the past?
- What sorts of things can artefacts tell us about the people who made them and used them?
- How do archaeologists create stories from things they observe and dig up?
- Who owns the things that archaeologists dig up?

Another element of the classroom presentations related to Castleshaw itself. The children and teachers were introduced to –

- A chronology of Castleshaw over time (travelling back through time) to provide a time perspective of Roman Castleshaw
- Why did the Romans build forts at Castleshaw?
- What was life like in the forts?
- What happened to the forts?
- Who has investigated the forts in the past?
- What has already been found out about the forts?
- What might people still want to find out about?

The final part of classroom presentations related to the preparation for the site visit itself.

- The logistics of the visit (what will happen and when).
- Clothing needs for the visit.
- Communicate what the children will do on the day (a mental picture of the activities)
- Answer children's questions about the day.

### *The Site Visit to Castleshaw*

The two week period allocated for school visits was most fortunate to experience ideal weather for outside activities. This meant that none of our contingency activities for very wet weather were called into use. Our daily timetable (below) worked extremely well and resulted in a very intense day of learning that was very well received by both pupils and teachers.

9.20 - 9.30	Schools arrive at Castleshaw Centre.
9.30 - 9.45	Introductory welcome
9.45 - 10. 00	Walk to Roman Forts with some learning stops
10. 00 – 10.10	Introductory talk from Salford University archaeologist
10.10 – 11.50	Half Group excavating on site; Half group local historical landscape tour
11.50 – 12.45	Lunch at Castleshaw centre with additional learning activities
12.45 – 12.55	Walk back to Forts
12.55 – 2.40	Reversal of morning activities and then return to Castleshaw Centre
2.45 – 3.00	Closing words, completion of teacher evaluation forms, bus for return.

At the end of a very busy day the lead teacher from each of the schools was asked to fill in a feedback form relating to the educational provision. The form was designed to be brief and succinct so that it could be filled in on the day rather than taken away and perhaps then not returned after the summer break.

Below is a summary table of the responses obtained on the feedback form.

	st chads	st marys	delph	denshaw	st annes, lyd.	h/t dobcross	diggle	greenfield	friezland	AVERAGE
<b>Part One - In School Visit</b>										
How useful...	5	5	5	5	5	4			5	4.86
How appropriate...	5	5	5	5	5	5			4	4.86
How responsive...	4	5	5	5	5	4			5	4.71
<b>Part Two - Site Visit</b>										
How valuable ...	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
How appropriate...	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.89
To what extent...	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.89
<b>Involvement in the Project</b>										
If the project develops ...	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	100% yes
Would you be interested...	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	100% yes

As part of the project's legacy, the replica artifacts purchased by the project have been loaned by the Friends to the Castleshaw Centre. Sarah Cattell (CfAA) and Norman Redhead gave an education session for staff at the Centre and 3 local primary school teachers. The finds can be borrowed for other events such as guided tours, displays, educational activities."

## 8. Display finds at Saddleworth Museum

The Friends have established a finds sub-group. They have been cleaning and cataloguing the finds for the 2014 excavation at Saddleworth Museum, with help from archaeologists at the CfAA. The finds were grouped according to type and sent off to specialists. Several of these specialists visited the excavations and ran training workshops for volunteers. The finds have been returned to the Museum and put in storage whilst the museum is refurbished under another HLF grant scheme. A number of specialist reports, which are included in the final excavation report, allow a better understanding of the finds, some of which will go on display when the Museum is refurbished. The synergy with the Museum has been excellent and mutually beneficial.

## 9. Restore the site post excavation to an improved appearance

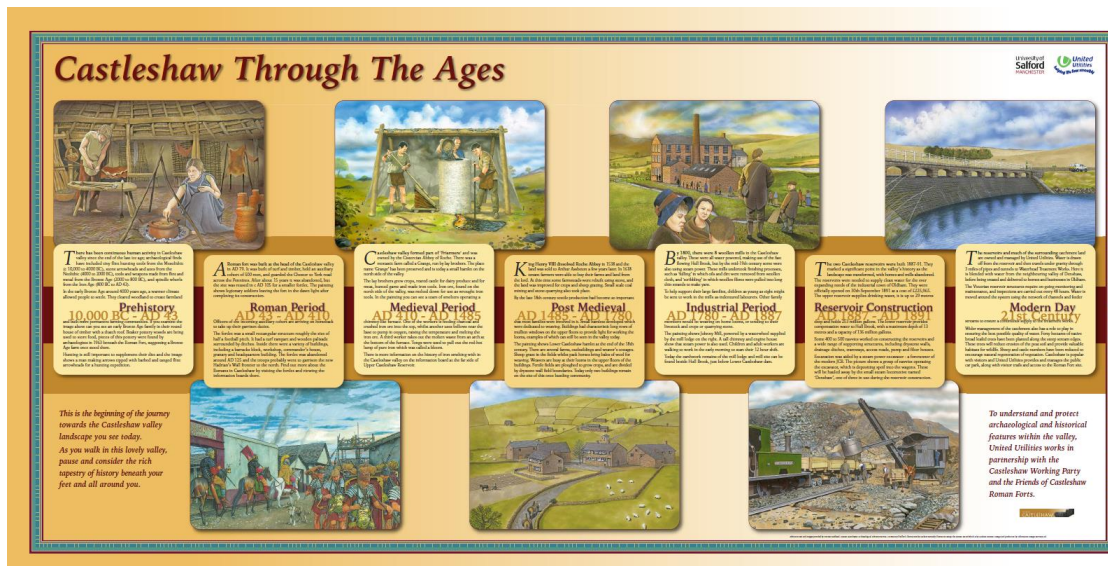
The trenches have been backfilled and the soil levelled so that it looks better than the surrounding rough vegetation and undulating landform. After about a year from the July 2014 excavation and backfilling, the United Utility Ranger who has responsibility for Castleshaw met with the Friends to assess the state of the backfilled trenches. They were found to be suffering from very little

subsidence and generally were blending in well with the landscape. Discussions were held on how to improve the rest of the site, and the Ranger agreed to sort out cutting of the longer vegetation including festuca (rushes) as well as commissioning contractors to consolidate slumping sections of the fortlet rampart and to re-mound the building outlines in the fortlet. Landscaping on the larger fort site would be a much larger project, informed by a programme of archaeological excavation. This will form a proposed follow-on HLF project. Details of progress towards the Conservation Management Plan, which include landscaping, can be found at the end of this report.

## 10. Introduce new interpretation including on-site panel, leaflet, web and social media content

### Information panels

Two panels have been prepared for the public car park adjacent to the Castleshaw Centre. Norman Redhead and the United Utility Ranger who has responsibility for the car park have met to discuss artwork, design and content. The main panel depicts a time line defined by paintings representing key periods in the Castleshaw Valley's history, and incorporating artifacts and relevant archaeological excavation evidence. This is sited on the revetting wall on the east side of the car park. A second board provides a map for the valley and linkages to the various trails, other information boards/archaeology sites (such as the Roman forts and the medieval iron smelting site) and web-based further information. It also describes the wildlife/ecology and what to do/do not when out walking. United Utilities have contributed £7,000 towards the boards as well as the time of the Ranger, who has led on this part of the project.



FINAL DRAFT – just the HLF logo to go on

### Leaflet

A leaflet was produced before the conference in March 2015, providing a review of the work undertaken during the excavation and the background to the site and project (see **ATTACHED LEAFLET**).

## *Website*

A considerable amount of social media content has already been produced. A Blog was organized on a daily basis and, and we were pleased with what has been produced :

<http://castleshawarchaeology.wordpress.com/>.

The web page is at [www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk) and reflects the success of the dig. There have been 4359 'hits' on the blog site. Our Facebook pages are at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Friends-of-Castleshaw-Roman-Forts/439510399422825> and is getting plenty of visits and "likes".

## **11. Organise a Conference on Roman archaeology, putting Castleshaw in context**

### **“Roman Castleshaw Archaeology Day 2015”**

The day was held at Uppermill Civic Hall from 10 am until 5 pm on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015; tickets were £15 and included lunch. There were a total of 9 speakers from a variety of Roman sites in the North of England. The conference was opened by Professor Mike Nevell from the University of Salford, pictured on the left below. Jointly introducing the day was Norman Redhead, Director of the Castleshaw Project and Heritage Management Director (Archaeology) of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, University of Salford, pictured on the right.



### *The Morning Speakers*

First was **Kurt Hunter Mann** from **York Archaeological Trust** who began with a paper on **Ravenglass**, and a particular project carried out in 2013 – 14, involving no less than 35 hectares of magnetic geophysical survey.



Four trenches were dug, the first of which contained a road going East from the site, probably to Hardknott and Ambleside. The road had been only a 'possible' until then, and overall they found evidence of previously unknown complex occupation and networks.

Next was **Steven Rowland from Oxford Archaeology North**, with news from the **Maryport** Roman settlement project, Cumbria 2013-14. The aim of the project was to look more closely at the civilian settlement in order to gain a fuller picture of ordinary life by the sea at Roman Maryport. Notable findings included a beautiful building with a very fine floor in a central room, and footings wide enough to support 2 storeys. Civilian finds were plentiful: Samian ware; a jet finger ring; a bracelet; querns; spindle whorls; cooking vessels; a cheese press. There were also some military finds: a clump of chain-mail; and a spear-head. Some possible Pictish carvings were discovered and part of an altar, probably domestic/portable.

Then **David Petts of Durham University** gave a paper on **Binchester**, probably the iconic Roman fort, complete with bath-house and many wonderful finds, including a stone head, a silver ring with early Christian symbol and two altars.

The last paper of the morning was given by **Norman Redhead from the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts**, with a summary of the **Castleshaw** excavation project of last summer – 'Redefining Roman Castleshaw'.



The dig took place over 4 weeks, with a further 2 weeks for preparation and closure. The local Key Stage 2 children were involved, along with approximately 130 community and interest-group volunteers, including Duke of Edinburgh Gold students. The aims of clarifying earlier excavations on

the site were successfully met, with intriguing questions raised by the archaeological findings - to be addressed by future projects.



### *The Afternoon Speakers*

A hearty lunch was followed by **Nick Hodgson from Tyne and Wear Museums** talked about **Wallquest** and recent discoveries on Hadrian's Wall, most outstandingly the bath-house at Chesters. Nick informed us of a potential good day out - a bus that goes the length of the Wall with interesting stop-points along the waygg

**Mark Graham of Grampus Heritage** then gave a paper on '**Discovering Deventio (Papcastle)**'. The site was discovered as a result of Roman pottery found in gravel deposits caused during the floods of 2009. The list of what was found is significant and impressive, for example, a Roman house, a 4<sup>th</sup> C Roman mill with slate roof and mill race, a mansio, 2 bath-houses, and many small finds. A Roman period skeleton was also found, of a person with spina bifida, locally born and raised.

After this **Mike Harding Brown of Glossop & Longdendale Archaeology Society** gave a talk about the desperate state of **Melandra** and the amount of archaeology that is lost from this site.

Also quite unsettling was **David Cockman's (Huddersfield & District Archaeology Society)** talk on **Slack Roman Fort**, notably covered now by a golf club and car park. Notwithstanding this depressing situation Huddersfield Archaeology Society continue excavations in the perimeters and hinterland; in the period 2007-10 a 'sealed fresh water conduit' was found, with water still going through it.

Finally **Ian Miller of Oxford Archaeology North** gave a paper on 'Salt making in *Salinae*: excavations in **Roman Middlewich**', particularly the last phase in 2012. A Roman timber-lined brine well was discovered, the timber with a felling date of AD147-8. Inside the well were, staggeringly, a quern stone with its metal pivot still in place, a folded lead sheet into which was tucked a piece of Samian dated to AD150-60. This seems to put the use of lead boiling pans for salt to an earlier date than previously thought and possibly in confirmation was a *dupondius* of Trajan AD103-17. A second oak timber-lined brine shaft was found and interpreted as a huge storage system dating to AD127-63.

The afternoon Panel appear here, from left to right: Mark Graham; Ian Miller; Mike Harding Brown; David Cockman, with Norman Redhead and Mike Nevell hosting the session.



The conference was then closed by **Mike Nevell, Head of Archaeology at Salford University**, who gave a vote of thanks to the speakers, the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts, Ravenstone caterers, the Civic Hall staff and all the audience.



### *The Audience*



The audience comprised approximately 140 people, including 10 or so of the Committee of the Friends of Castleshaw. Also all the speakers stayed in the audience all day to hear the other talks, with the exception of Nick Hodgson who had to leave early.

### *The Feedback from Participants*

A total of 72 feedback forms were completed. A minimal number of questions were not answered by the 72. Age group information showed that the three most predominant age groups present (and participating in feedback) were: 56% in the 61-80 age group; 31% in the 41-60 group; 8% in the over 80 group. These three groups therefore account for 95% of the feedback participation. Consistent with this figure 66% described themselves as retired. The audience (feedback participants) was 45% from local boroughs and 25% from elsewhere in Greater Manchester; thus 70% were from Greater Manchester. In addition there were 13% from West Yorkshire and 17% from outside these areas. More than half, 56%, had no previous experience of Castleshaw Roman Forts in any way. Of a total of 70 participants 21% had been volunteers on the dig project; that is, 34% of those with general or specific experience of the Castleshaw. Of those completing the question of membership question, 34% were members.

Of the 72 members of the audience who completed feedback forms, all said they enjoyed the day. A variety of positive comments were evident, the most popular comments included: informative (18%); well-organized (15%); good programme (14%); fabulous day (8%). Constructive criticism/feedback on the planning of the day included: lack of mid-morning break (10%); long day (6%). The most highlighted positive feedback points on the venue and practicalities were: excellent food (51%); ideal venue (32%). And constructive criticism/feedback points in this category were: queuing for lunch (15%); parking (15%); uncomfortable chairs (12%); screen too high (7%); soap dispensers empty (1%). Other constructive comments, each made by one participant only, included: lack of ethnic diversity; lack of young people, ticket price too low, poor vegetarian options; ventilation problems; seating at lunch not enough; microphone inadequate; bit rushed.

### *Additional Points and Overall Evaluation*

The most successful aspect of the day can be assessed as the quality of the information of the papers given by the nine speakers. All the talks were stimulating, rewarding and interesting, some raising important heritage issues (e.g. the papers on Slack and Melandra), many giving a new understanding of the Roman North, and many inspiring future plans for visits.

By consensus of the organizers the day was overly long: one 'problem' was that all the invited speakers attended, against expectations and important for future planning. But on the positive side of this point was the willingness to attend and enthusiasm for the conference itself. The issues of youth and ethnic minority attendance (each raised by one participant only) are also points to

consider in the organization of future events: although it is impossible to control who has a wish to attend such a day it is an aim of the project as a whole to widen participation as much as possible. There had been behind-the-scenes organizational problems with the Civic Hall personnel, but these were resolved without detriment to the audience or the speakers, and are unlikely to be repeated. The practical issues of chairs, parking, soap dispensers, may be out of organizational control in the future. Lunch queuing and screen position can be given attention. However perhaps none of the constructive criticism/feedback detracts from an understanding of overwhelming success of the conference, or from the great encouragement that all involved should take into the planning for the next such event.

## **12. Volunteer contributions to the project**

### Report on Voluntary Hours used as Match Funding for HLF Excavation at Castleshaw Roman Fort, July 2015

In total 232 days were logged by volunteers involved in the Excavation of 2015. Most of these were by members of the Friends of Roman Castleshaw Committee, but many others also made a contribution. 8 people contributed at least 10 days.

In total, volunteer hours equated to **£42,060** in contributions

Actual hours “digging” are not included

11 Volunteers were professionally qualified in the contribution they made.

7 Volunteers were skilled

14 Volunteered were unskilled

3 people spent 6 hours preparing initial Tender

Colin Berry spent 9 hours dealing with HLF Forms and Accounts

16 people spent 108.5 hours at Committee meetings

Norman Redhead spent 4 hours planning the excavation with Vicky Nash, the Excavation Director

Rob Isherwood spent 128 hours planning Education/Schools involvement, including visiting all the local Primary Schools, teaching in the Schools, planning the activities and meeting with Norman Redhead.

Rob Isherwood spent 67 hours working with 9 Primary Schools on site, including digging and a classroom session at Castleshaw Centre.

Rob Isherwood spent 24 hours on Primary School Feedback/post dig planning with Norman Redhead

2 People spent 12 hours doing test pits on site

Norman Redhead spent 7 hours planning and organising workshops

5 people spent 20 hours ordering, storing and marking up equipment

5 People spent 28.5 hours on site preparation/site delivery

Norman Redhead spent 65 hours on Site Strategy

4 People spent 66 hours on Publicity/Press Release/Photo Call

15 People attended 70.5 hours of workshops, including Geophysics, Pottery, Roman Tiles (taken out comma at the end and the word ‘worth’ and below)

9 People attended 30 hours of Archive meetings

3 People spent 200 hours cleaning/assessing/storing Finds on Site

10 People spent 91 hours cleaning/cataloguing/ storing finds in the Museum, Post Dig

3 People spent 19 hours assisting with transport of Volunteers to the site

3 People spent 14 hours preparing/collating feedback forms from the volunteers

Jane Neild spent 70 hours writing a Blog for the Friends Website

3 People spent 20 hours taking photographs for the website



4 People spent 37.5 hours conducting tours of the site during and Post Dig  
 3 people spent 20 hours dealing with finance  
 4 People spent 11 hours writing post dig reports  
 10 People spent 51 hours planning Post Dig Strategy, (including committee meetings)  
 Several People assisted with recording on site  
 Norman Redhead spent 12 hours preparing and delivering post Dig Lecture for Friends of RC  
 2 People spent 15 hours preparing/meeting/delivering New Information Boards on Site  
 Sue Exon spent 15 hours recording a log of volunteers' contributions  
 8 People spent 53 hours on Conference Planning/Preparation/Publicity/Meetings, etc.  
 5 People spent 14 hours putting Displays together for the Conference  
 8 Speakers spent 64 hours on presenting papers at the Conference  
 Sue Exon spent 10 hours dealing with Conference Bookings  
 11 People spent 98 hours supporting/hosting at the Conference  
 2 People spent 7 hours preparation and collation of Conference Feedback Forms  
 Jim Grady spent 8 hours running a stall, post Dig at the Oldham Festival  
 Norman Redhead and Morgana Restall, from United Utilities spent 12 hours preparing new Information Boards to be installed at the site.

### 13. Future plans

At the end of the project, the Castleshaw Working Party reviewed progress against the **Action Plan** set out the Conservation Management Plan funded by English Heritage and prepared in December 2011 to inform future management of the Scheduled site of the Roman Forts. The full version can be found under the documents section of the Friends website <http://www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk/documents/CMP4-Main.pdf>. The Action Plan is set out under section 5, pages 149-152. The tasks are repeated below (in bold), with comments on progress.

**Agree programme of consolidation for the Flavian fort.** Need to address this and should be discussed as an agenda item at next meeting.

**Explore ways to improve communication between stakeholders.** A website and blog has been established for the Friends. This advertises lectures and events. Better communication with the Historic Society now in place. The Working Party/Friends Committee system appears to work well.  
**Establish funding strategy.** Need to progress - agenda item for future meetings.

**Address any existing areas of erosion.** NR and MR to assess site. A programme of maintenance should be created. Link to 1.

**Agree strategy to deal with vegetation cover.** This has been subject of discussion in recent meetings. Programme needs to be firmed up but could include Friends volunteers helping the UU Rangers.

**Agree stock grazing policy.** As for 5. Could use small cattle/goats. Could offer rushes for the rush cart for Saddleworth Festival – contact Peter Ashworth at Saddleworth Morris Men.

**Establish procedures to deal with vandalism and litter incidents.** Covered by UU Rangers' procedures but could review on annual basis. Public car park has litter collected once a week.

**Improve signage.** A sign to the Roman Forts has been erected in Oldham town centre but need them in Saddleworth as well. Perhaps Cllr Sedgewick could assist on this. Scheduled Monument signs on site look rather tired. Could we replace these in the future? Will mention the fact the forts are

Scheduled Monument on the new information board in the public car park. Should re-new sign to the public car park at start of Waterworks Road.

**Establish on-going timetable of monitoring to assess the condition of the site.** Link to Friends' volunteers help. There should be an annual visit by the Working Party and Friends to assess condition. MR to put up sign by main gate to fort site to (and by style in south-west corner approach?) providing her contact details in case of damage/incidents.

**Form links with local detectorist groups through the Finds Liaison Officer.** Metal detecting on site has so far not been an issue, but we need a monitoring mechanism. MR contact details on signs at Fort site so that incidents can be reported. MR then to contact County Archaeologist and English Heritage to assess damage. UU policy is no metal detecting on their land; however, exception might be for responsible metal detectorist to aid archaeological excavations including checking spoil.

**Undertake an assessment of existing material.** Have made some progress through the establishment Friends' finds sub-group, who have visited Manchester Museum, Oldham Museum and Art Gallery, and Saddleworth Museum to assess collections. Workshops have been held to develop skills of the group. Work has focused on sorting and catalogued excavated material from last summer's dig.

**Establish overall collections policy.** Not yet addressed.

**Produce an online catalogue of the whole collection.** Not yet commenced. Need to discuss and agree with curators. Still need to acquire photo stand (part of HLF budget).

**Scan and re-locate paper archive.** As for 13.

**Agree policy for reporting spot finds from Castleshaw Valley area and the recording and collection of eroding material from within scheduled areas.** Go through MR as first point of contact then she will liaise with County Archaeologist (NR) and Peter Fox at Saddleworth Museum.

**Prepare site interpretation plan.** The recently re-newed information boards on the forts site have been a good start, plus education work through the current HLF project. However, there will be much more focus on the interpretation and presentation of the site as part of the next, much bigger HLF project proposal.

**Develop a dedicated Castleshaw website.** This has been done. It is a great asset and works well. Phil Barrett has done an excellent job.

**Undertake community excavation.** This was carried out in July 2014 and seems to have been very successful. Analysis and reporting stage still being worked on.

**Reconstruction of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD ramparts and internal layout.** Link to 1 and 16. This would be part of a major proposed HLF scheme. To be developed by the Working Party and FoCRF. But need to successful complete current HLF project first.

**Prepare events programme.** This is going well and the Friends have an interesting and well attended series of talks, as well as other events such as the upcoming Archaeology Day, Friends evenings, coach trips to Hadrian's Wall, and field work at the forts site and their hinterland.

**Produce online teaching pack.** This should be done in discussion with Castleshaw Centre staff, perhaps as part of next HFL project proposal.

**Produce touring exhibition and handling collection.** A set of replica artifacts, covering prehistory and Roman, have been purchased by the Friends and will be made available to the Castleshaw Centre for handling and teaching purposes. Rob Isherwood has left the area but NR and Sarah Cattell from CfAA are to give an archaeological teaching resource session at the Castleshaw Centre for their staff and local primary school teachers who wish to attend. Saddleworth Museum has its own HLF project about to commence and there will be opportunities to use the Roman Castleshaw material in the new displays and possibly for handling. The Friends will create a display of the Castleshaw project and results for the upcoming Archaeology Day and this could be used as a travelling exhibition to be taken to other events.

Overall, it can be seen that good progress has been in the 3 years since the Action Plan was published and the HLF 'Redefining Roman Castleshaw' project has been a key part of this.

This evaluation report has been compiled by the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts members:

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29<sup>th</sup> January 2016