

# Archaeological Evaluation of Area 8, Dirty Lane, Castleshaw, Saddleworth

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Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts volunteers undertaking test pitting

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Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

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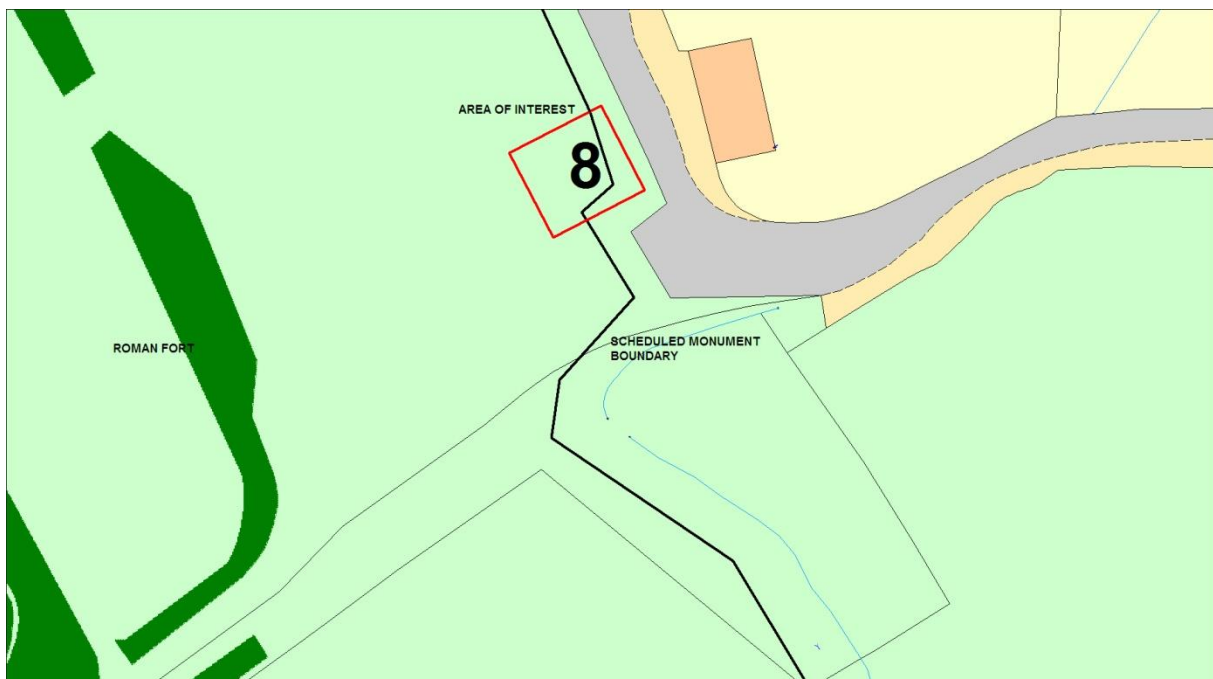


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## **Background**

As part of the Castleshaw Roman Forts Hinterland Survey, the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts obtained Scheduled Monument Consent (dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013) to carry out an archaeological evaluation of a 10 metre square area covering the southern part of the site of a former dwelling with outbuildings located on the west side of Dirty Lane. This site lies within the Scheduled Monument boundary of the Roman Forts (SM 30359, Heritage Asset No. 1017837). The land is owned by United Utilities and farmed by David Hurst.

The proposal was to undertake archaeological test pitting to determine the site's archaeological potential. It was hoped that this would reveal and record remains of the outbuilding or dwelling aiding our understanding of the character and evolution of Castleshaw settlement. A further objective was to examine potential for Roman deposits beneath and adjacent to the former building footprint (Redhead 2013). Test pitting comprised a maximum of 10 x 1 metre square pits, centred on SD 9983 0953.

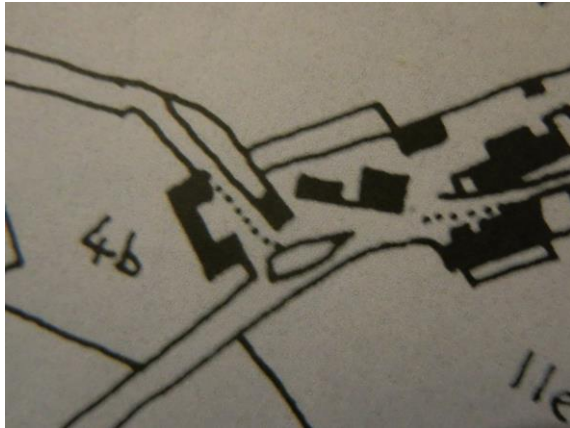


Detail of location of area of proposed 10 m square investigation

This report can be accessed as a pdf on the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts website: [www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk) .

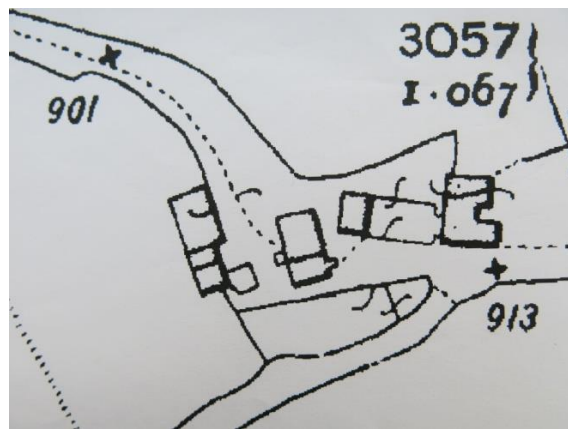
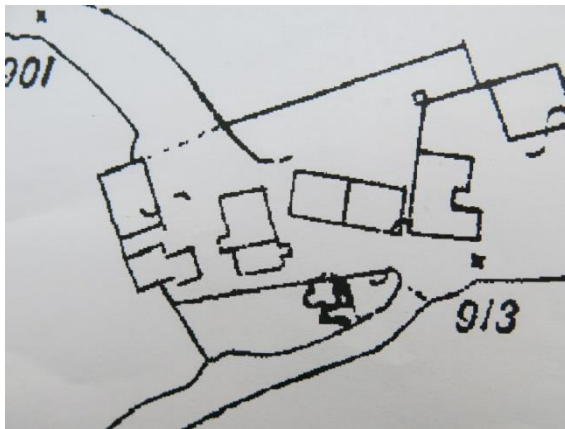
## **History**

A building is shown on this site from at least the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen from the sequence of historic map extracts below.



Left: Saddleworth Township Map of 1822 showing the building of interest (on the left edge of the settlement to the right of 4b).

Right: OS 6" map of 1854, showing a slightly different configuration for the building and the southern half as an enclosed area, apparently with no roof.



Left: OS 25" map of 1892, showing the southern building as a separate structure

Right: OS 25 " map of 1898, with the northern building perhaps being a barn and the southern subdivided into possible cottages.

Mike Buckley has kindly provided the following historical summary:

'The site of the Roman forts formed part of a small farm at Castleshaw. In addition to the three fields called Hustids which make up the site, it also included farm buildings on the north of the Roman site and two other fields called the Bentheads and the Lands. All these fields can be identified as numbers 4a-e on the 1822 township map and contained 7¾ acres in total (Buckley 2010, p182).

The first description of the farm is in a deed of 1767 where it is referred to as 'a cottage, messuage or dwellinghouse in Castleshaw, now or late in the occupation of John Scholefield, with three closes belonging called the Husteads, one other close called the Lands and two other closes called the Bentheads, late in the occupation of Miles Scholefield and Ambrose Scholefield, the younger (WYAS BG83 118).' John Scholefield, died in 1757 in his 77th year, and in his will he is described as of Husteads in Castleshaw, yeoman (Lancs Archives 1759). He apparently built the farmhouse which contained a datestone inscribed ISS 1737 (John & Sarah Schofield) (Radcliffe, undated). He is mentioned as churchwarden in 1737 where he is described as 'John Scholefield for Housesteads' (Radcliffe 1887, p525).

This is the earliest reference to Husteads in the church registers, however the farm must have existed in the seventeenth century, probably in its eighteenth century form as a John Scholefield of Hustids is listed in a tithe assessment of 1669 as growing ½ acre of oats, one of the smallest assessments in Castleshaw (Hunt 1984, p20-25). He also paid tax for one hearth from 1664 to 1674 (Buckley 2001, p 11-15, Buckley 2002, p 17-21, Buckley 2003, p6-13). Before this, the farm had probably been part of a larger unit, one of the farms sold to the tenants by Theophilus Assheton Esq in 1618.

Subsequent descriptions of the farm occur in deeds of 1830 (when it was conveyed to John Taylor of Higher Ogden (Oldham Local Studies and Archives undated, 52/00130/2)), and in 1928, (when it was sold to Oldham Corporation (Oldham Local Studies and Archives, 52/00130/2)). In 1830 it is described as 'a messuage with barn and shippon &c at Castleshaw' and in 1928 as 'a messuage or dwellinghouse and tenement with the barn, shippon and other outbuildings'. In the 1890s the datestone is described as 'on the doorhead of a house (in ruins) in Castleshaw belonging to John Taylor of Ogden' (Radcliffe *ibid*).

## **Methodology**

### Test Pitting:

Test pitting consisted of one metre square sample excavations. A written description and photographic record was made of each test pit and its position recorded. Levels were taken of significant archaeological deposits, top and bottom of test pits. Finds were cleaned and described. This report sets out the results of the test pitting and a copy has been lodged with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record and put onto the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts website. An Oasis record form has also been created.

The investigations were undertaken by a mixture of experienced and inexperienced volunteers drawn from the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts, under the directorship of Norman Redhead. A risk assessment was prepared and agreed with the land owner. All test pits were excavated and backfilled in one day so that no holes were left overnight.



Location of test pits in Plot 8



## **Results**

### **Test Pit 1**

30cm deep topsoil came off onto medium to large angular and smooth stones, which in turn overlay a deposit of mortar and rubble. This was not bottomed as it appears to be filling a cellar. Topsoil contained a mixture of finds including: 1 worn body sherd of unglazed earthenware, 1 fragment of sheep femur, 1 dark brown glazed rim sherd, 1 white glazed fragment, 2 fragments of blue bottle including a rim, 3 fragments of clear bottle glass including a rectangular section. The rubble layer contained 2 body sherds of yellow glazed pottery, one rim sherd of dark glazed earthenware (Buckley Ware) - 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. Top of test pit = 278.21 m OD, rubble layer = 277.60 m OD.



### **Test Pit 2**

This test pit was located just outside the stone foundation for the adjacent former farm building. The topsoil contained a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century finds and small stones but not much larger material. Under the topsoil was a thin layer of dark brown silty clay with some small to medium stones. This overlay sub-natural which was characterised by mixed orange, cream and yellow clay. In previous excavations elsewhere, on the fortlet site, this material has displayed negative features cut into it representing Roman building foundation cuts etc. No clear evidence for such features was noted. Also, there was not the mid-brown plough soil layer that is found directly overlying the Roman levels in the fortlet.

Topsoil finds: 1 clear glass milk bottle top, 3 brown glass bottle fragments including a base stamped '1819-20', 4 blue transfer pattern fragments including 2 rim pieces of plates, 2 white glazed body sherds of a jar, 5 fragments of dark glazed earthenware, 1 sherd of earthenware with black exterior and brown internal glaze, 1 nail and 1 unidentified iron fragment, 1 bowl rim in light brown external glaze with vertical grooved decoration.

Top of test pit = 278.06 m OD, top of natural clay = 277.68 m OD.





### Test Pit 3

Topsoil overlay a rubble layer of mid- to large sandstones, with some angular and round stones. The rubble was only 15 cm deep and covered a well preserved flagstone floor. Topsoil contained 3 rusted iron objects resembling keys which were 10-11cm long, 1 iron shaft with a small hook at 10cm long, 2 fragments of brown glazed pottery (one with yellow slip decoration), 1 dark glazed earthenware sherd, 1 body sherd of dull red earthenware with evidence of fire blackening. On the flagstone floor was found a pair of tongs or pliers, long handled and measuring 21 cm, 2 iron shafts possibly nails, 1 white plastic cup or bottle base. Turf level = 278.06 m OD, top of rubble layer = 277.87 m OD, top of flagstone floor = 277.72 m OD.







#### **Test Pit 4**

Located on the site of the west wall of the building. A good inner face was revealed but a less well preserved outer (west) face suggesting the facing stones had been robbed out. The interior had what appeared to be deliberately laid stones rather than tumble or random rubble. This came off onto a well preserved flag floor with a flag being 53 cm wide and at least 57 cm long. Externally, natural yellow clay was evident.



Finds from topsoil were: 1 large rim and 1 body sherd of stone ware with external brown glaze and internal grey glaze with part of a simple handle on the rim sherd, 1 iron nail, 1 dark brown glaze sherd with cream fabric, 1 brown glazed body sherd, 1 rim sherd of yellow glazed earthenware, 1 light brown glazed earthenware body sherd. From against the external wall base came a rim fragment of an iron bucket, 1 rim sherd of light yellow glazed earthenware bowl, 1 body sherd of a blue-grey glass bottle.

Turf level = 277.98 m OD, top of wall = 277.89 m OD, top of flag floor = 277.73 m OD, top of natural clay = 277.55 m OD.



### Test Pit 5

A well preserved wall edge was revealed on the west side, with a wall at right angles just evident on south side of the test pit. The test pit was extended to capture both sides of the



two walls. The exposed south wall of the former building was 64 cm wide and the return wall running east was 52 cm wide. The south wall had a linear recess against its face which indicates where the floor was located. Beyond the walls topsoil came off onto a dark brown layer with frequent stones, then onto soft silty clay loam which had orange iron staining and light yellow and dark grey patches. A linear cut on the east side was found to be a modern cable trench.

From the topsoil came 1 cow femur bone fragment (butchered at both ends), a burnt clay pipe stem, 1 decorated and cream glazed bowl rim (20<sup>th</sup> century), 1 base fragment of dark glazed earthenware. There were many finds from the deposit adjacent to the exterior wall base. These consisted of: 34 sherds of dark glazed earthenware including 1 bowl and 1 rim fragment (all 19<sup>th</sup> century except 1 sherd which could be 18<sup>th</sup> century), 6 pieces of ceramic building material, 6 sherds of brown glazed earthenware including a base, 17 sherds of cream/white glazed vessels including 4 base sherds of one vessel and 2 rim sherds of a different vessel, 4 pieces of iron of uncertain function, 8 pieces of glass including a dark brown base, 4 blue, 1 clear and 2 green, 2 yellow glazed earthenware sherds, 1 white glazed sherd with interior blue glaze. Below is a photograph showing the range of finds from the deposits against the external face of the southern wall.

Top of test pit = 278.19 m OD, top of wall = 278.07 m OD, top of colourful soil layer = 277.82 m OD.





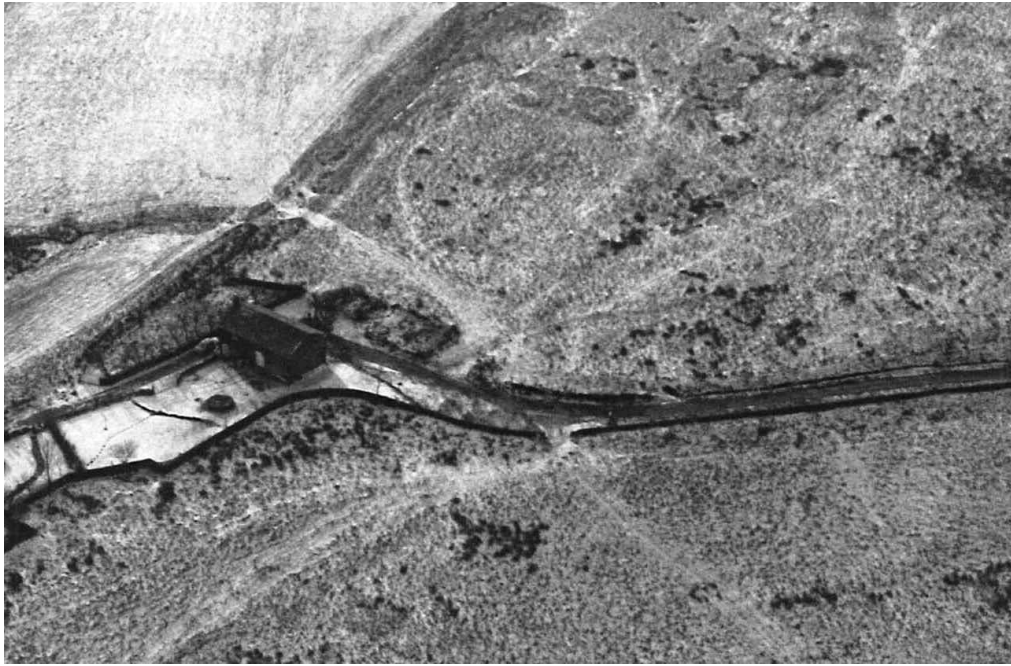




## Conclusion

The evaluation of Area 8 provided clear evidence for well preserved archaeological remains relating to the former building. These took the form of gritstone wall foundations and an intact flagstone floor sealed under a shallow rubble deposit. There was a large quantity of finds dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Only 5 test pits were excavated as it was felt that these had established the presence of well preserved archaeology; therefore the other 5 test pits that were allowed in the Scheduled Monument Consent were not used. No Roman features or finds came to light but there is the potential for this should the 10 metre square area be further investigated. It is intended to open up this area as part of the 'Redefining Roman Castleshaw' community dig in July 2014.

The oblique aerial photo from the 1970s, below, shows substantial walling for the former building that has been test pitted. Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit's compound in the 1980s was established on the site of the larger north building, which may have been a barn or farmhouse. It appears that the structure found by the test pitting was a small cottage or outbuilding. Further excavation will shed further light on its function and origin.

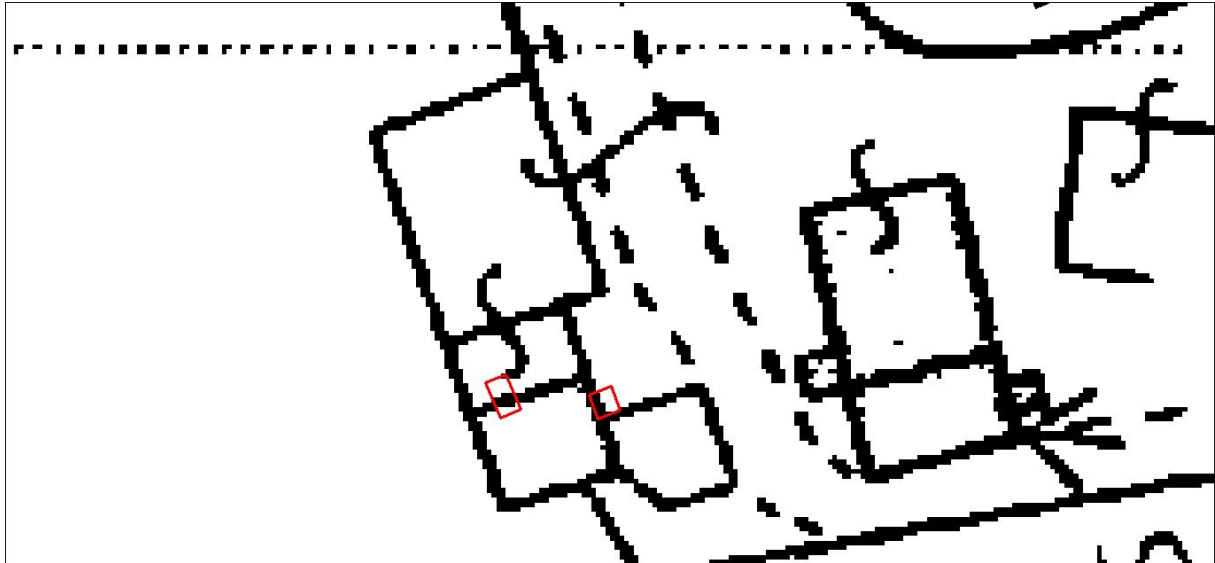


Aerial view looking south-west, undated but probably the 1970s, showing upstanding walls of the farmstead in Area 8 (to the right of the inhabited building)



Aerial view looking east, dated c 1989, showing the GMAU compound lying over the north side of the farmstead, whilst the rest of the site no longer has extant walls





Approximate location of test pits 4 and 5 in relation to wall foundations depicted on the 1892 OS map

### **Acknowledgements**

We are indebted to the following Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts who took part in the test pitting exercise: Jane Nield, Phil Barrett, Steve Milne, John Bowen, Jim Grady, Marija Curell, Lorraine Gregory, Linda Orritt, Colin Berry and Eve Avery. The evaluation would not have been possible without the support of United Utilities via their Ranger, Morgana Restall. A special thanks goes to the neighbours Ella Wellman and Linda Orritt for their support and interest and to Linda for providing refreshments.

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