

HOLCOMBE MOOR HERITAGE GROUP

Spring Newsletter

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Holcombe Orange and Holcombe Buff Gritty Ware

At the end of our five-year project at Cinder Hill Engine House (otherwise known as Bottoms), our finds were sent to Durham University for analysis and conservation. The report on the medieval pottery, compiled by renowned pottery specialist Dr Chris Cumberpatch, has revealed it to be a previously unknown pottery ware type, closely linked to Northern Gritty Ware. Dr Cumberpatch has named the two new pottery types as Holcombe Orange Gritty Ware and Holcombe Buff Gritty Ware, both of which are, so far, unique to the Holcombe Valley. We have found similar examples of this pottery during our dig on Cinder Hill field in 2018, and this has been found in a secure context, that has been dated to 1225-1289. We are hoping to find more examples of Holcombe Gritty ware as our excavations at Cinder Hill Field continue.



Members meal



On Friday 12th March our members enjoyed a meal at Al Bosco Restaurant in Summerseat. The food was excellent and the event gave everyone a chance to catch-up with the latest news from the group, especially our plans for excavating Cinder Hill field in 2019.. This is an annual event, why not join us next year?

Moor Holcombe Memories

We are still collecting memories, for our more Holcombe Memories project. We are looking for recollections of life in the local area, especially Holcombe and Hawkshaw. Please see our website for details of how to take part in this project.

We are now on social media. Keep up to date with the latest news on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



Holcombe Moor Heritage Group



@HolcombeMoor



holcombemoorheritagegroup

Talk Report

On Wednesday 27th February 2019, Dr Mike Nevell, Head of Archaeology at Salford University and formerly on Time Team, gave a talk entitled “Excavating Early Steam Engines Around Manchester. The talk was well attended and enjoyed by the members of the audience. Mike outlined



the development of the cotton industry and the innovations in steam engines. He then went on to describe some of the steam engines that have been excavated in the Greater Manchester area. At Arkwright’s Mill in Shudehill, which was built in 1781 there were six steam engines. Not all of the engines were running at the same time, one replaced the other. The mill was completely excavated and featured on Time Team in 2005. Murray’s Mill (1789-1806),

was for 20 years the largest cotton mill in the world, with 20,000 spindles, all powered by steam. New Islington Mill, which was close to Murray’s mill had two steam engines, with a wheel pit and small pumping engine. Here, new technology was found alongside old, perhaps evidence of a conservative approach, keeping old technology when new technology is introduced. Portwood Mills in Stockport was founded in the 1790s. A steam engine was put in in 1805 and there was a total of five steam engines on the site. Excavation of mills and steam engines can help historians and archaeologists in several ways. It confirms documentary evidence and highlights the craft of steam engine building. Thanks are due to Mike for delivering his interesting and informative talk.

Walls and Boundaries Project

Our project recording and locating the different types of walls and other features in the Holcombe Valley is almost complete. The intention is to produce a booklet, with further information about the different features and their location in the valley. The booklet will take the reader on a walk through the valley following public footpaths, with photos of the different features that can be explored from the path. Further information to follow when the booklet is published.

History Group

Chronicling 1,000 years of history has its challenges, the longer one goes back in time, the less documentation is available.

Over the last few years our historical activity has been driven by our archaeological excavations which has led us to a greater understanding of the families that lived around the moor, the work of the "textile titans" and types of industry involved in the textile industrial revolution.

More recently, our work has involved researching Anglo Saxon and medieval activity. Society changed very slowly, and it's likely that even 100 years after William the Conquerors' invasion the area was still inhabited and controlled by Anglo Saxon tribes. Pilgrims cross, formerly known as the Whowell Cross, was a waymark, but for whose devotion and where was the pilgrims destination? The cross refers to a charter dated 1176 and that pilgrims rested there on the way to Whalley Abbey, which was founded in 1296, 120 years later. Our current belief, and the area we are currently researching, is that it was St Paulinus, who was the first Archbishop of York and is said to have preached at the church in the 7th century.

All of this was at a time when our area was a backwater within a backwater, at a time when Lancashire didn't exist. A number of Norman families had occupation of the area, which was granted to Monk Bretton Priory in Yorkshire.

So, for any history enthusiast there is a rich variety to explore!

In April four members of H.M.H.G. attended a series of extremely interesting and informative talks on the North West in Medieval times, held at Whalley Abbey. The group are planning visits to Lancashire Archives and M/C libraries in the next few weeks, so if you would like to join us on these or would like to help in researching the history of the area, please contact us.

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Dig dates 2019

We have been digging on our site on Cinder Hill field since the middle of March. We have been joined by several new members and the trenches are looking promising, as we are just reaching the archaeology now. Non-members are welcome to join us for a free taster session. This year's dig dates have now been confirmed and have all been put on the website. We are hoping to hold one weekend dig each month and a couple of Thursdays. Emails will be sent to members before each dig with instructions about how to join the dig. We look forward to seeing lots of members on our digs.

May 18th/19th

June 13th and 22/23rd

July 18th and 20/21st and 25th

August 1st and 24/25th

Further dates will be organised for September and October as necessary.

Winter talks

Our winter talks have been booked for later in the year. The talks will be held at Greenmount Cricket Club, beginning at 7.30pm. Admission is £3 per person which includes light refreshments. There will be a raffle and the bar will be available.

Cinder Hill Field 2019 by Neil Coldrick (dig director at Holcombe Moor Heritage Group) Wednesday 16th October 2019

Lessons from the Mud: 55th (West Lancashire) Division at the Third Battle of Ypres by Major Paul Knight. Wednesday 27th November 2019

Talk title to be confirmed by Professor Richard Horrocks Wednesday 29th January 2020

Excavations at Calf Hill by Catherine Rousseau Jones from Pendle Archaeology Group Wednesday 26th February 2020