



NEWSLETTER 63 MARCH 2023

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There were a number of fieldwork expeditions earlier this month. A good turnout of diggers ventured north around Caton to follow up hints of the possible Roman road from Lancaster to Borrow Bridge. Meanwhile a little closer to home, in Bilsborrow, there was a geophysical survey of a field where similar hints of a Roman route had been reported and a small team continued the dig at Brock cottage.

In other news, the Society's AGM was brought forward from May to 15th March. Twenty members and a surprise guest attended our usual venue at The Centre, Great Eccleston, and heard a very informative talk on the Lancashire Historic Environment Record by Joanne Smith Planning Officer with Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Team. An added attraction was the excellent buffet provided by Vivvy's Bespoke Catering of Garstang the cost of which was subsidised from Society funds, leaving members to pay only £5!

Our surprise guest was Michelle Harris, a founder member of Wyre Archaeology Group, and co-author of the Harris & Hughes series of local history titles.

AGM Resolutions included the re-introduction of the Associate Member class of membership at the reduced subscription rate of £5 per annum, the move of AGM to March (previously April) and the concomitant alignment of the subscription year to 1 April to 31 March.

Subscriptions for full membership were retained at the current level of £12 individual, £18 for two at same address and students 21 and under free. A slight amendment was the introduction of pro-rata subscriptions for those joining part way through the membership year. These changes have been included in an updated Constitution

that will be uploaded to the Members' Area of our website.

Executive Committee Election.

The existing officers had expressed willingness to continue in post and there were elections to vacant positions. The full committee therefore is now:

Chairperson David Berry

Vice Chairperson Mike Edwards (Elected)

Treasurer Simon Millward Hopkins

Secretary David Hampson

Immediate Past Chair Chris Clayton

Members: Peter Scott, Andy Jackson, Helen Coulthard, Juliette Gregson (Elected), Kevan Lathom (Co-opted H & S).

Lancashire Historic Environment Record

Guest speaker, Joanne Smith of LCC's Historic Environment Team gave a detailed insight into the responsibilities of the County's HER Team.

The key tasks include management of the HER, provision of advice on the impact of development management advice to Utilities, the Forestry Commission and to individual estates and owners. The HER team also provide public information on local places of interest, record information received from the public and respond to research requests from the public or academics.

Lancashire HER maintains a database of over 38,000 sites and over 3,000 events, a card index of around 6,000 records and over 3,000 aerial and other images. While the bulk (84%) of sites on the HER, comprising buried remains, find spots and buildings are 'unprotected', the record lists 153 Scheduled Monuments, 5,637 Listed Buildings, 39 Registered Parks or Gardens and 209 Conservation Areas, all of which enjoy statutory protection. Interestingly, although there are 47 known Civil War sites which are considered significant, they are largely unrecognisable because of redevelopment and are therefore not registered. Nor are any of the 57 known shipwrecks, since they are largely not intact, nor nationally significant. Joanne went on to describe how the record is compiled and maintained, giving examples of the various data forms used by the team.

The process of assessing proposed developments follows an established method that begins with a desk-based or site assessment of potential impact informed by the policy framework. This is followed by evaluation commissioned by the developer and may involve documentary research and field work including geophysical survey and excavation. The next stage, recording, may be a written or photographic record. In an extreme example, the north range of Whalley Abbey, prior to refurbishment, was recorded stone by stone! Mitigation often follows, that might involve excavation and recording or a simple watching brief. Since this is paid for by the developer as a requirement of planning permission, it can sometimes be the focus of conflict. The penultimate stage is the completion of a report to the planners, the client and to the HER. Sometimes a formal report may be published but more frequently it appears as a journal entry or press release. Finally, the report is archived.

Joanne provided the following useful sources:

- ▶ Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/>
- ▶ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: <https://www.archaeologists.net/>
- ▶ British Archaeological Jobs and Resources: <http://www.bajr.org/>
- ▶ Council for British Archaeology: <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/>
- ▶ Heritage Gateway: <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>
- ▶ Archaeology Data Service: <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch/>
- ▶ National Library of Scotland (includes English maps): <https://maps.nls.uk/os/>
- ▶ The North West England Regional Research Framework: <https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/>
- ▶ Lancashire County Council MARIO: <http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk>
- ▶ Lancashire County Council Historic Environment Record: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/planning/historic-environment-record/>

Dig Update

A team of 10 hardy diggers turned out on 5th March to investigate the site of a possible stream crossing of the Roman road from Lancaster to Burrow-in-Lonsdale (Margary 705). The site had been scouted previously by Andy, and stonework



observed in the stream, just north of **Caton**, suggested remains of a Roman bridge.



There were some indications of a road surface (*above left*) although it was felt that this may have been relayed/repared several times in the past and dressed stone from an ancient bridge may well have been robbed for other purposes. Andy later uncovered possible kerb stones (*above right*) so it may be worth another visit.

Chris has sent out an invitation for a return to **Wardleys** either 9-11 June or 23-25 June. If the weather is kind this is a great site by the river.



A very small team of Kev, Dave B and Colin braved the cold in early March to reopen the **Brock Cottage** dig. Kev reports: *We worked around the paved/cobbled area outside the building in the south-east corner. Once all the pavers were uncovered, it could be seen that the cobbled area formed a rectangle within the*

pavers! Yet more questions for this structure. Two of the larger pavers had clear signs of chisel or axes being used. The pavers seem to be continuous under a small tree, which is now designated for removal at the next visit to see how far the paving/cobbled area goes. The area to the east and north of our work area seems to peter out into a stoney surface similar to that found adjacent to the outside of the east wall.

As mentioned earlier, new member Andy Binley carried out a GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) survey on a field in **Bilsborrow** on the line of the Lancaster Roman road. He reported that initial findings were disappointing from an archaeological perspective but maybe we can put in a couple of test pits just to check. As luck would have it it's the field where we hope to site our new kit store when we buy it!

NEXT WA MEETING: 7.30pm WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 2023. VILLAGE CENTRE, GREAT ECCLESTON.

WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

Wyre Archaeology: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1091772967850657>
 Friends of Hurst Grange Park: www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/The-Friends-of-Hurst-Grange-Park-127722403929150
 Lancashire's Roman Roads (David Ratledge): www.twithr.co.uk
 Roman Roads Research Association: <http://www.romanroads.org>
 Lancashire Archaeological Society: <https://lancsarchaeologicalsociety.wordpress.com>
 Wigan Archaeology Society: www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk
 University of the 3rd Age: <https://u3asites.org.uk/lytham-st-annes>, <https://u3asites.org.uk/wyre-lancs>, <https://u3asites.org.uk/preston>

If you've had an interesting archaeological experience, a visit to a historical or to a pre-historic site send in a description and photos for inclusion in the newsletter.

WYRE ARCHAEOLOGY OFFICERS & COMMITTEE 2023-4

Acting Chair	Dave Berry
Vice Chair	Mike Edwards
Immediate Past Chair	Chris Clayton
Treasurer	Simon Millward-Hopkins
Secretary	Dave Hampson
Committee Members	Peter Scott, Helen Coulthard, Andy Jackson, Juliette Gregson, Kev Latham.