



Summer Newsletter 2022

Here is some of the latest news from Holcombe Moor Heritage Group.



Children's Trail

We have created a Children's Trail leaflet which is now available to download on our website. Beginning at the car park on Lumb Carr Road, join Holly the Holcombe hedgehog on a 2.5km walk of discovery, looking at some of the historical features in the Holcombe Valley. Click on the link below to go to the publications page on our website, the Children's Trail leaflet is available to download at the bottom of this page.

<https://www.holcombemoorheritagegroup.org/publications>

Dig Update Holcombe Valley

Our excavations have continued at Cinder Hill Field throughout the spring and summer. We have continued to investigate and record the bloomery furnace that was discovered last season by extending the trenches around it. We have uncovered a string hearth which is associated with the furnace and was used to further process the bloom of iron produced from the furnace to drive out impurities.

Another trench was opened to find the continuation of a field drain that had been previously uncovered in 2018. We wanted to see where the drain originated and this was confirmed in the trench.

The group have invested in a software package that can produce a 3D model of the features in the trenches through converting a series of photographs into a 3D image. This has added to our techniques for recording our discoveries for future generations.

We are excited that a geophysical survey will be completed on the site in the next few weeks, the results of which will help us to decide the future of the Cinder Hill field project.

Our main small finds have been a large assemblage of medieval pottery, some of which are adjoining sherds and a few flints. There was also a vertical stone, placed close to the string hearth, which was covered in splashes of iron.

As usual, our dig director Neil Coldrick will be giving a dig update talk, the date is yet to be confirmed.

Talk Report - March 2022

On 9th March, Neil Coldrick, our dig director, gave an update talk about the 2021 excavations on Cinder Hill Field. Neil began the talk with an overview of the dig in 2018, which was followed by a description of the discovery of a string hearth in 2019. At the end of 2019 a second bloomery furnace was uncovered on the last digging day of the season, but was left to be excavated in the next season.

Unfortunately there was no digging in 2020 due to the Covid lockdowns, but HMHG completed a tithe map project which is available to look at on our website.

In 2021, the dig continued. Neil showed a plan of the proposed trenches for 2021, of the nine planned trenches, two of the trenches were not dug, four produced no archaeology, leaving 3 with archaeology in them. Neil then described the features in the trenches in more detail.

Trench 1 - contained an exceptionally well preserved bloomery furnace along

with a deep, very narrow ditch around it and a pit to the south of the furnace. The purpose of these features remains a mystery. The position of the bellows and the structure used to support them was still preserved which is very rare amongst previously discovered iron working sites. The hole for the tuyere was completely different to the one on the previous furnace uncovered in 2018. There was evidence that the furnace had been repaired by the people who were using it.

Trench 9 - this was related to trench 1 as the ditch uncovered in that trench continued into trench 9. It then petered out, could it have been a drainage ditch?

Trench 4 - this was positioned because of the concentration of pottery sherds discovered in the area and Neil was hoping it would have some evidence of habitation. The trench contained a hearth which was probably domestic but no evidence of structure was found associated with it.

Neil described some of the finds uncovered, including a shoe buckle and a range of pottery sherds.

There have been two different methods used to date the furnace, Carbon 14 testing and archaeomagnetic dating, which we were lucky to have carried out by a PHD student from the University of Bradford. The carbon 14 results dated the furnace to the mid - late 14th century. We are still waiting for the results of the archaeomagnetic dating.

Neil finished the talk by sharing the plans for the excavations in 2022.

Membership

We welcome new members wishing to join Holcombe Moor Heritage Group. To find out more, please visit our website.

<https://www.holcombemoorheritagegroup.org/join-us>