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DUKESFIELD

Smelters and Carriers Project

Bulletin 4 : Summer 2014



Welcome to the summer roundup of news from the Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project. We have a report on the exciting archaeology that volunteers have already unearthed this summer, an appetising reminder of April's wonderful "cook-off", lovely pictures from our second print workshop and news of how local schools are enthusiastically joining in with the project. As usual, we end with notices of all our forthcoming events and volunteering opportunities.

Tasting the Past

What did lead smelters and their families eat? That's what the Heritage Cook Off on Easter Saturday was all about - exploring the simple diet of working people all those years ago, with the help of volunteers of all ages.

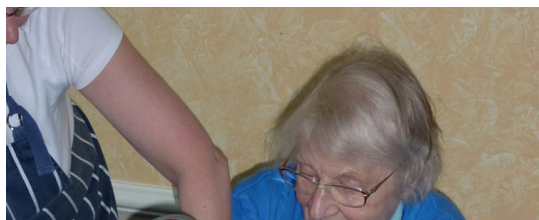
Three ladies in their 80s were there, one demonstrating how to make butter with untreated milk, others explaining the strange-looking utensils used to prepare simple food and making five different Gingerbreads - the "sweet treat" of the time.

Other cooks in their 60s gave us Mutton Broth, Maslin Bread, Carlin Peas and Pan Haggerty. Moving down a generation, the chef of the Traveller's Rest, Slaley, prepared a Rabbit & Mushroom Stew and Lemon Posset, while the chef of the Rose & Crown, Slaley, a mere stripling in his 20s

demonstrated Curd Cheese and irresistible Lardy Cake. The youngest of our cooks, children under the age of nine, made simple dishes like Barley Broth and Oat Cakes. Our youngest demonstrator made a wonderful Tharfe Cake.

The tasting tables were laid out in the style of regional food displays at County Shows, with lots of foods to try. The difference here was that the dishes were those eaten 200 years ago and not to be found in today's shops.

The Northumberland Sausage Company from Wark cooked sausages throughout, and rounded off the day with a demonstration, with hands-on volunteer assistance, of traditional sausage making. Fentiman's soft drinks and Allendale Brewery beers were a popular accompaniment to all the feasting.





Veteran butter maker May Kennedy works the hand churn



An eager queue to taste the gingerbreads

Keen to try these old recipes for yourself ? You will be pleased to hear that they will all be published on the Project's forthcoming new website - watch this space !

Local schools join the action

School children from along the lead routes have been discovering more about their lead mining heritage this term.

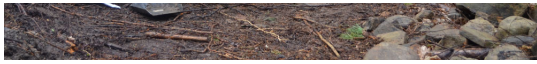
Whitley Chapel First School have been excavating and crushing 'lead' ore and washing it to get the glittery lead minerals ready for smelting (in reality it was glitter!). They then visited Killhope Lead Mine, whose ore originally crossed the moors to be smelted at Dukesfield. There they were inspired by the sparkling spar boxes on display, and went on to make their own to enter in the Hexhamshire Leek Show.

Allendale Primary School spent time with Bridget Kennedy, an Allendale artist who is inspired by the diaries of Thomas Sopwith (the former Allenheads lead mines manager). She showed the children round an exhibition of her work and explained how she conceived and made her sculptures. The children were then introduced to the geology of the area by Dan Gallagher the local geologist, before following the Carriers Way through the landscape, finding relics of the mines and the special lead-tolerant flowers, such as beautiful wild pansies.

Both schools also visited the Dukesfield site and worked alongside the archaeologists excavating the smelt mill remains. They also had a magical experience in the camera obscura set up there, gaining a very different perspective on their views. Some children were lucky enough to help rebuild the mill leat wall, under the expert supervision of Heritage Consolidation stonemasons.

Not only did the children gain real-world inspiration for their art works, but they also developed an understanding of the different careers and employment that stem from caring for our local heritage.





Camera Obscura

The mobile camera obscura, loaned by Visual Arts in the Rural Community, was at there Arches site for school parties and the public to enjoy on the 7th and 8th of June. Participants helped artist Ingrid Pollard and volunteer Karen Melvin put the structure in place, and then spent the morning sketching from the images projected by the camera onto the screen. They learned to make their own hand-held lenses and also looked at the site through Claude lenses (named after the seventeenth century painter Claude Lorraine who used this kind of device to create his landscapes). A group of walkers were also treated to a peak at the tent and emerged amazed!

On Friday the 6th the camera obscura became part of the artistic inspiration of the local lead industry heritage for Whitley Chapel First School children (see above). The Lapwing and Kestrel classes from Allendale Primary school will be enjoying a similar programme on July 9th.

Walk & Cycle Routes

Those of us wishing to sample something of the lead ore carriers' experience trudging the 15 miles from the North Pennine lead mines to Dukesfield will be pleased to know that two circular walks highlighting the area's lead industry past will be launched at the North Pennines Walking Festival this Autumn. Jennifer Norderhaug has designed the 10 mile Allenheads walk and to Richard Young the 6.5 mile Dukesfield walk. Thank you both ! Thanks also to Alan Judd, for organising the Tynedale Pathfinders' test of the Dukesfield walk in April.

Another event for the active will be testing the challenging bike route put together by volunteer Ted Liddle (many thanks, Ted, for all your work !). The whole 41 mile route is almost Tour de France standard for serious cyclists, but there are easy off-road sections that will make pleasant family cycle rides too. Get in touch for draft route leaflets to try yourself, or to join an organised ride this summer.





Tynedale Pathfinders cross the Dukesfield Mill weir during the Dukesfield Walk trial

Smelters & Carriers Research ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK, 2014 Peter Jackson

Excavation in 2013 focussed on the Mill chimneys and the flues leading over the Arches to them. The third year of our archaeological investigations at the Arches has revealed a great deal more about what happened at other sites at the Mill. When we started this exploration, we hoped to find buildings that are sketchily shown on old maps of the area. What has been revealed this year has exceeded these expectations.

Digging in the woods to the east of the Arches has unearthed the foundations of at least two buildings. The foundations seem to run parallel to the leaf that carries the Hall Burn down to the main river. It looks as though the buildings have been demolished and altered at least once in their life (below, top left). A particularly interesting wall foundation running towards the trackway has an inner core that has been completely mortared with hot lime. This method gives much greater strength to a wall and we think that this indicates that the building was an important structure. Our operations in July might tell us more about how this building was used.

Our midge-infested dig at the west end of the site is a small area with much detailed archaeology. The target area is the leat bringing water to the Mill from a weir on the Devils Water. We have assumed that there was a series of sluice gates controlling the flow of water into branch leats feeding waterwheels in the buildings shown on the old plans. So far, we have discovered that the foundations of the leat are constructed from redundant furnace iron blocks. There is visible evidence of two sluice gates (below, right) and an arched tunnel leads eastward under the trackway and into the Hall Burn. The branch leats show many alterations to the layout. We hope to find out more in July. We have completed some conservation work on the arched tunnel and are planning to consolidate the substantial remaining parts of the walls.

The piece of land at the north end of the Arches was always assumed to be one of the places where we might find some significant building remains. Some serious heavy digging this year has revealed part of a substantial building. We have found the remains of a waterwheel case and some working areas at each side of it. The wheel pit is constructed from large blocks of dressed sandstone, with distinctive differences between stones at each end (below, bottom left). The longer side walls of the wheel pit have partly collapsed inwards. There is evidence of wooden structures near the site of the wheel axle, which is where one might expect to see the driving mechanism for furnace bellows. Here and there are the remains of wood floors, thin layers of coal, and evidence of rebuilding. One structure which might be a pillar incorporates pieces of smelting furnaces that must have become redundant elsewhere. The wheel pit freely drains during rainy weather, raising the question - where does the water go? It seems that the drain must be at the same height as the Devils Water but we have yet to find the outlet anywhere in the valley.

Our final operations in July will be the last archaeological work that we will carry out at the site. Tantalising questions will have to be answered sometime in the future. Huge thanks are due to all the volunteers who have put so much into this exploration, and to the Archaeological Practice who have so expertly managed, supervised and recorded the

work.



Diary Dates

Here is a list of our forthcoming events. To book, or for more information, email Mandy at : Dukesfield@outlook.com

More detailed updates can be found on the project's website : <http://dukesfield.wordpress.com>

Archaeology Dig Days

For information and booking contact : p.jackson@ntlworld.com or 07718 385646

Wednesday, 9th July, Tuesday, 15th July and Wednesday, 16th July, 10 am - 4pm each day

The Dukesfield Carriers' Ride, Hexhamshire

for more information and booking, see : <http://ow.ly/xUW5B>

Saturday, 2nd August

Slaley Show, with special Dukesfield classes for exhibitors

see: <http://www.slaleyshow.org.uk>

Saturday, 9th August

Allenhead Walk - In the Footsteps of the Lead Miners

see:

<http://www.northpennines.org.uk/pages/NorthPenninesWalkingFestival.aspx>

Thursday, 2nd October

Meet at the Smelt Bridge, Allenheads (GR NY852464) 10.30 am

Dukesfield Walk

see:

<http://www.northpennines.org.uk/pages/NorthPenninesWalkingFestival.aspx>

Friday, 3rd October

Meet at Dukesfield Arches, 10.30 am

The Dukesfield Community Play

This will be touring the region during Winter 2014-15. Watch this space

The Lead Road Show - the culmination of the Smelters and Carriers Project
Scheduled for Spring, 2015



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The Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project, is led by the Friends of the North Pennines in partnership with Hexhamshire and Sleafy Parish Councils and has the active support of the landowner, Allendale Estates. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the generous support of other sponsors.

Friends of the North Pennines: Charity No: 1137467



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