Chapter 1

An Archaeological Research Framework for the North West Region: Resource Assessment Introduction

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'By way of introduction it will be fitting to recall something of the past history of archaeological research in this country, since an understanding of it can alone make the present situation fully clear.'

Hawkes & Piggottt 1948

This document represents the first phase of a three-stage process for the production of an archaeological Research Framework for the North West region. The *Resource Assessment* presents the current state of archaeological knowledge and describes the nature of the archaeological resource within the counties and metropolitan boroughs of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside (Fig 1.1). The current work provides the basis for identifying major gaps in knowledge and formulating archaeological research priorities for the region. The assessment process has initiated discussion between and involvement from many members of the archaeological community within and beyond the North West region.

This Assessment will be followed by the formulation of a *Resource Agenda*, highlighting the gaps within current knowledge and work which could be done to address these gaps. The agenda will ultimately lead into the final *Strategy* phase of the project, which will lay out the perceived archaeological priorities and a proposed methodology for delivery of future work programmes.

An Archaeological Research Framework for the North West Region

The nature and circumstances of archaeological fieldwork have changed radically over the past century. What was seen as largely an amateur and academic pursuit became increasingly concerned with rescue excavation in response to the redevelopment and transformation of Britain's inner cities after the Second World War. Early on a significant volunteer element provided the bulk of the archaeological workforce, but the discipline became increasingly professionalised during the 1970s as central government funding for archaeological work increased. From 1990 PPG16 (Planning Policy Guidance note 16) introduced archaeology as a material consideration in the planning process. Since then development proposals have needed to include an assessment of the impact of construction on archaeological remains and developers must provide resources for any necessary investigation and recording in advance of their development. The last 16 years have consequently seen a rise in the number of excavations taking place in England (Darvill and Russell 2002, 53), but many archaeologists have seen the increased professionalism of field archaeology as sometimes running counter to the principles of research that the discipline held for so long. The popularity and interest in archaeology in Britain has probably never been higher, with many archaeological programmes on terrestrial television channels, and universities offering a wide range of archaeology courses. Not discounting the many amateur and university field projects that take place, most archaeological work

carried out in Britain today remains tied to the planning process and redevelopment. Work is located and driven primarily by construction projects and land-use change, rather than research issues.

In response to this situation English Heritage undertook an extensive consultation and survey within the discipline over the subject of research and research frameworks. The resulting document *Frameworks for Our Past* (Olivier 1996) indicated that, while Research Frameworks were reasonably well developed on a national scale, major gaps existed, especially at a local level. It was also noted that the subjects covered within existing Research Frameworks still reflected the interests of those individuals writing them, and that certain subjects and periods were under-represented (Olivier 1996, 9). The need for Research Frameworks was widely endorsed by participants in the consultation, and it was recognised that there was a need for a framework on a regional level. This framework would provide the context within which to consider curatorial concerns, to make recommendations for the protection and recording of archaeological sites, and would place developer-funded work in its proper context (Olivier 1996, 2).

The existence of a Research Framework will not automatically provide answers to the questions seen to be a priority by those compiling research agendas. This document represents a multi-layered statement compiled by the archaeological community in the North West between 2003 and 2005, setting out the state of research and the perceived regional research priorities at that time. It aims to provide a context in which to place the results of all archaeological work. Elements of archaeological projects can be related to points within a research agenda at any stage of fieldwork and post-excavation, from the setting up of a project, to on-site sampling strategies, including programmes of finds and environmental analysis, and the use of scientific dating techniques.

Methodology

The production of this document has been initiated by the Association of Local Government Archaeologists (North West) and English Heritage, as outlined in a project design produced in 2002 (Lancashire County Archaeological Service 2002). The proposed stages for the production of an Archaeological Research Framework are outlined within *Frameworks For Our Past*. The first phase of the process must be an assessment of the archaeological resource, comprising an evaluation of work previously undertaken and the state of current knowledge. This is essentially a 'stocktaking' exercise, bringing together the results of fieldwork with a view to assessing the results and then planning future research policies (Hawkes & Piggott 1948, 9). From there it should be possible to identify the major gaps in current knowledge, and thus identify research priorities.

The Authors

The document has been written by archaeologists based in or familiar with archaeological research in the North West region. They have collaborated in five period specific groups under the coordination and editorship of period specialist coordinators. Membership of the period groups was initially based upon the attendees of the *Framing the Past* conference held in Lancaster in December 2001. A wider consultation was undertaken during the Autumn of 2003, inviting members of the archaeological community within the North West Region to participate within the Research Framework process.

The document therefore represents the collated and edited texts of multiple authors. The method of collation has meant that the authors' names cannot be directly assigned to individually authored texts. All contributors are listed at the end of this volume and copies of the original papers and texts are held in the project archive at the Cumbria County Council SMR in Kendal. All those named at the beginning of each period chapter have made major written contributions to that overview.

The scale and level of contributions from all members of the archaeological community within the North West region are a clear demonstration of the widespread expertise and commitment of archaeologists working within and beyond the current study area. The document can boast multiple authorship, but also widespread ownership, across all spheres of the archaeological discipline.

THE REGION

The Government Office region for the North West consists of the modern counties and metropolitan boroughs of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside, along with the Unitary Authorities of Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Halton and Warrington (Fig 1.1). This comprises the administrative area for the principal regional agencies and NW Regional Assembly and, unless otherwise specifically stated, these boundaries represent those referenced throughout the document. The bracketed letters (Ch, C, GM, L, M) following some of the place names within the assessment chapters relate to the county location for those sites. The sites within the unitary authorities are included under the wider county areas within which they fall. Nearly 20% of the region lies within national parks (Fig 1.2); the Lake District National Park, the western extremity of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the western fringes of the Peak District National Park. The North West also includes some of the mostly densely

Fig 1.1 Administrative boundaries within the North West region.

developed urban areas in the metropolitan authorities of Greater Manchester and Merseyside as well as some of the most sparsely populated rural authorities in England.

The region is defined by contemporary political and administrative boundaries that have had little or no bearing in the past, and many in their present form date from 1970s and 1990s. Prior to 1974 the contemporary regional boundary contained the counties of Cheshire, Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmorland. The region is bordered by two national boundaries, with Scotland to the north and Wales to the south-west. The current border with Wales has largely remained static since the late 13th century. The border with Scotland was the subject of dispute for many centuries, but the current line was established by the early 17th century. While it is recognised that modern administrative boundaries have little relevance to political boundaries in the past, it is accepted that any boundary around an archaeological study area, whether it be topographical, cultural, historic or political, will inevitably be arbitrary.

Geology and Topography

The region is topographically and geologically diverse (Fig 1.3), with a wide variety of landforms and geological types (Countryside Commission 1998). There

is no single landscape that could be considered typical for the region as a whole, as it includes wide coastal plains, rolling lowland pasture, industrial townscape, upland fells and mountains. The region extends from the Cheshire Plain in the south to the Solway Firth in the north, and is bounded by the Irish Sea to the west and the major landforms of the Pennines and the Peak District to the east. There are stretches of steep coastal cliffs in Lancashire and central Cumbria, but the coastline and its hinterland are predominantly low-lying, intersected by the estuaries of the major rivers Dee, Mersey, Ribble, Lune and Eden. The larger estuaries are mudflats skirted by saltmarsh, and subject to extensive tidal fluctuation.

The northern area of Cumbria is dominated by mountains and upland fells, dissected by steep-sided river valleys and skirted by low-lying plains. Geological deposits consist of a complex mix of slate and volcanic deposits with sandstone to the east and west, and limestone to the south. Many of the upland rock formations contain deposits of copper, iron ore, lead and zinc. Coal is present within the coal measures to the west, although there are no natural outcrops. The northern and eastern areas of Lancashire are fell and upland with a broad plain to the west and south-west, intersected by the Ribble estuary. The higher ground of the Bowland Fells is largely composed of millstone grits, containing deposits of lead. The grits are skirted by limestone, sandstone and mudstone. In the south and east of Lancashire the Coal Measures, including shales, mudstones, coals and fireclays, outcrop between Chorley and Skelmersdale and along the Darwen and Calder Valleys. The western Lancashire plain is formed by thick deposits of glacial tills, alleviated silts, windblown sands and peat, overlying mudstone and sandstone. The western area of Lancashire in particular has witnessed wide-scale drainage of former mires and reclamation of peat moss for agricultural use (Fig 1.4).

The northern uplands support grass and bracken on thin, mostly acidic soils, with widespread blanket peat formation. Traditional farming practices within the uplands are based upon sheep husbandry, with seasonal grazing on the higher ground. The lower-lying areas support dairy and sheep farming, with relatively large expanses of woodland and only a limited area of cereal cultivation. The richer soils are located within the Eden and Lune valleys and along the coastal plains, where woodland is sparser and arable land is more common.

The central area of the region contains the major urban conurbations of Merseyside and Greater Manchester (Fig 1.5). To the south of Liverpool Wirral is a wide peninsula of sandstone and boulder clay bordered by the estuaries of the Mersey to the north-east and the Dee to the south-west. The central Liverpool to Manchester band is largely low-lying, formed by glacial deposits, sand and alluvium, and dissected by the Mersey Valley. Towards the east, peat moss is more common, although a large proportion of this is now drained and reclaimed. Manchester is skirted to the north and east by the Pennines, a landscape typified by gritstone uplands overlain by extensive deposits of coal measures, with steep valleys and fast-flowing rivers. The central area accommodates a belt of industrial towns, with arable and pasture to the north and south beyond the urban fringes.

The southern area of the region is dominated by the Cheshire Plain, a largely low-lying, undulating landscape interrupted by a series of low sandstone ridges. Geological deposits are largely composed of sandstones and marls overlain by clay, glacial sands, gravels, tills and peat. Brine springs are a particular characteristic of the area, formed by dissolved rock salt from the Upper Triassic Marl, which emerge at the ground surface at certain points. The Cheshire Plain is traditionally rich pasture land, much of which supports mixed livestock farming, although there are areas of woodland and heath which also extend onto the sandstone ridges.

The Archaeological Evidence

The current distribution of excavations and known sites is inextricably linked to geology and topography, present day land-use, and development, as well as past antiquarian and archaeological work. In lowland areas identification of sites of most periods is hampered by the relatively low level of surviving material culture and by poor site visibility. The chance discovery of sites is further restricted by the nature of the surviving evidence, often consisting of exiguous traces of rural settlements heavily truncated by the plough. The structural evidence of timber buildings lacking stone footings renders them difficult to detect even by specialist investigation. In the uplands survival of sites in the form of stone walls and earthworks is widespread, but the majority of sites, even those that have seen excavation, lack dating evidence. There is a high potential for good organic preservation, not only in low-lying areas of peat moss but also in urban contexts, as excavation has revealed.

A number of archaeological assessments of parts of the region have previously been undertaken. Cumbria was included in the National Archaeological Survey which published *Archaeology in the North* (Clack & Gosling 1976), later revised with the publication of *Past, Present and Future* (Brooks *et al* 2002). Lancashire was assessed with *The Archaeology of Lancashire* (R Newman 1996b) and some aspects of Merseyside were covered in *Historic Towns of the Merseyside Area* (Philpott 1988). Across the region the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential of the wetlands have been published in a series of county volumes as part of the North West Wetlands Survey, following

Fig 1.2 National Parks and AONBs within the North West region.

the review *Peat and the Past* (Howard-Davis *et al* 1988). An assessment of the environmental potential of the northern part of the region was published in *Plant and vertebrate remains from archaeological sites in northern England* (Huntley & Stallibrass 1995), which is currently under revision.

Antiquarian and Archaeological Research up to 1945

The concept of what constitutes archaeology in the early 21st centuries is no older than the second half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, a great deal of modern work owes a debt to earlier observations. In the later 16th century both John Leland and William Camden (1586 and later editions) journeyed throughout much of England, including the North West, recording ancient sites and anecdotes. Leland journeyed somewhat erratically through the country and made copious notes before his reason left him. His notes remained unpublished until the 18th century, though they were used by various commentators before that. Camden acquired a network of correspondents whose information was supplemented by journeys such as that he made with Sir Robert Cotton in 1599 to Cumberland and along Hadrian's Wall. Perhaps the most notable of Camden's correspondents within the region was Reginald Bainbrigg, headmaster of Appleby Grammar School, whose letters to Camden also covered areas outside our concern, such as Redesdale.

There appears to have been less antiquarian work undertaken during the 17th century, perhaps partially due to the turmoil of the Civil War period. An exception is the observations of northern sites by William Dugdale and Hugh Tod, which were used by John Aubrey within the manuscript of his *Monumenta Britannica*. The antiquary Thomas Machell toured Westmorland and Cumberland during the last decade of the 17th century keeping a detailed journal and Charles Leigh's work on Lancashire and Cheshire (and the Peak) was published in 1700.

From the 18th century onwards new discoveries were made during building development, agricultural improvement and canal, road and railway construction, particularly in the more densely populated and industrialised southern part of the region. Roman settlements were recognised at Middlewich, Northwich, and Wilderspool and forts identified at places such as Chester, Lancaster and Manchester. Prehistoric monuments also attracted attention and were visited by travelling antiquaries. The century saw the appearance of works of national importance like Horsley's *Britannia Romana* (1732), and of many local histories which contained varying amounts of material relevant to archaeology. In Cumbria, the work of Nicolson and Burn (1777) exemplifies these. The second edition of Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1776) included the account of his northern journey with Roger Gale.

It was, however, in the 19th century that most of the foundations of the modern archaeological understanding of the region were laid. The Lysons brothers covered both Cheshire and Cumberland in their *Magna Britannia* (1810 and 1814), and Thomas Pennant journeyed through the North West in the late 18th century, his account being published in 1801. County histories blossomed following Hutchinson's work on Cumberland (1794-7), including Ormerod's work on Cheshire (1816-9 and subsequent eds), and Whitaker's on various parts of Lancashire (1801 onwards). The same period witnessed the formation of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire (1848), the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society (1849; Fig 1.6), the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (1866) and the Antiquarian Society of Lancashire and Cheshire (1883). These societies not only recorded chance finds and archaeological remains noted in building works, but also stimulated systematic archaeological research and excavation. They also provided a vehicle for publication in the form of journals. It is also notable that works of synthesis began to appear by the end of the 19th century (eg Simpson 1870). Revd Abraham Hume's detailed record (Hume 1863) of finds revealed through coastal erosion at Meols, Wirral, represented a seminal work on the identification and classification of later medieval objects in particular but also contained valuable insights on the processes of formation and erosion of the site. Hume's work was followed by that of Henry Ecroyd Smith on stratigraphy of the coastal deposits and finds recording at Meols. R S Ferguson had published *The Northmen* in Cumberland and Westmorland as early as 1865, though it contained little archaeology, but W T Watkin's volumes on *Roman Lancashire* (1883) and *Roman Cheshire* (1886) are still useful as near-complete summaries of the state of knowledge at that date.

Eminent workers of the later 19th century include Chancellor Ferguson in Cumberland and, perhaps more controversially, the Reverend William Thornber in Lancashire. Although the latter's work is sometimes difficult to read, it does represent the published results of fieldwork. Likewise, while Ferguson contributed articles on his observations in Carlisle, a recent critical assessment has considered his work prone to preconceptions (Caruana 1992). There was a tendency to focus on Roman remains, perhaps as a result of the classical education of those with the leisure to devote to such studies. John Garstang, later to be a professor of Egyptian archaeology at Liverpool University, excavated at Ribchester in 1898 and 1899, while Droop and Newstead, particularly the latter, began to unravel Roman Chester. Their publications mark one of the first

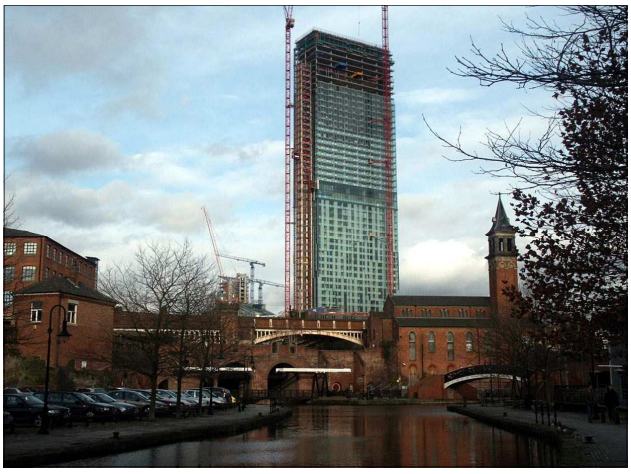
Fig 1.3 The topography of the North West region.

Fig 1.4 Formby Point, Merseyside (National Museums Liverpool).

involvements of a local university (Liverpool) in archaeology. Prehistoric sites were also the focus of attention (eg Greenwell 1876; 1877; Dymond 1878-9; 1881; Dawkins 1900) and many casual finds of flint, stone and bronze implements were recorded. In particular C W Dymond's surveys and plans of many sites in the north of the region represent a valuable record, only recently superseded.

During the 20th century Hadrian's Wall and the Roman military installations became a major focus of attention with work undertaken by the Cumberland Excavation Committee, the Durham University Excavation Committee and later the Office of Works. Indeed, so many insights were discovered during the inter-war period that it was sometimes difficult for Roman scholars to keep up with developments (Richmond 1939). Although many archaeologists were involved in this work, particular mention must be made of Eric Birley, Ian Richmond, F G Simpson, and later John Gillam. W G Collingwood was at the forefront of Cumbrian archaeology for much of the first third of the 20th century, a position succeeded by his son R G Collingwood, who worked on an extremely wide range of material including prehistory (1933a), the Roman military, and Roman inscriptions. F A Bruton excavated the Roman fort at Manchester, and later Castleshaw, while Thomas May worked at Wilderspool. A series of investigations was undertaken in Ribchester, while Robert Newstead began work in Lancaster. Excavation was undertaken by W J Varley in Lancashire and Cheshire, including Castle Ditch Hillfort at Eddisbury and the Bleasdale timber circle complex. The Chester Archaeological Society dominated fieldwork in the city, and provided the principal means for its publication. Throughout this period the leading figure was Robert Newstead, often assisted by Professor John Droop of Liverpool University. Before the 1920s salvage recording predominated, but during the 1920s and 1930s targeted research excavation was carried out, especially on the Roman barracks in the Deanery Field, and at the amphitheatre, while rescue excavation in 1939 led to the discovery of the 'Elliptical Building'. The post-Roman periods were dominated by architectural studies, although a number of pit groups were excavated.

Fig 1.5 Castlefield Basin, Manchester (UMAU).



Up to 1945 the region was in the forefront of archaeological studies, most especially in relation to Roman military archaeology and Roman inscriptions. It maintained its place because of the work of many committed and skilled archaeologists, who built on the pre-eminence of their predecessors.

Archaeological Work Since 1945

When the British Association visited Liverpool in 1953, archaeological interest was summarised in two short chapters. Indeed, much of the region had attracted little attention since the end of World War II. Though in Cumbria the Romans continued to attract considerable interest, the Cumberland Excavation Committee was no longer engaged in large-scale targeted research. In contrast, at Chester the appointment of Graham Webster as Curator of the Grosvenor Museum in 1947 was the beginning of a new era of fieldwork in the city, following a research agenda set out by Ian Richmond. Terence Powell's summary of the region's prehistoric archaeology drew principally on works published before 1940, with reference to W J Varley's slightly later work on hillforts (Powell 1953, 210-13; Shotter 1984, 79-81; Walbank 1953, 214-20). Generally academics at Liverpool and Manchester Universities had but a passing interest in the region. This changed in 1964 when the late Barri Jones was appointed at Manchester University, and two years later David Shotter joined the new Lancaster University. Ben Edwards had already been appointed as Lancashire's County Archaeologist in the early 1960s, and interest in the region was strengthened by the late Hugh Thompson. He joined the Grosvenor Museum in 1955 and moved to Manchester University in 1962, all the time taking an active interest in Cheshire's archaeology and focusing particularly on Chester's Amphitheatre. However, it was Dennis Petch who as Curator from 1962 had to face a decade of intensive redevelopment in Chester city centre. Most of this early rescue work had a Roman focus, although part of the Benedictine nunnery was excavated in 1964. The pressures faced during these years led to the establishment in 1972 of a dedicated field unit in Chester (Fig 1.7).

In the 1970s extra-mural teaching at the universities at Lancaster, Liverpool, and Manchester extended archaeological interest to a new market, and opened up opportunities for research and fieldwork on sites of all periods. Adult students participated in Barri Jones' research at Castlefields in Manchester, and in Liverpool University's excavations at South Castle Street in Liverpool (Davey & McNeil 1980). Out of such activities came new archaeological societies with interests focused on their immediate locality. In a growing climate of awareness of the destruction caused by major development, the West Lancashire Archaeological Society (founded in 1973) and

Fig 1.6 Remains of the colonnade of the basilica of the Roman fortress baths at Chester, 1863 (Chester Archaeology).

Fig 1.7 Excavations at Crook Street, Chester, 1973/4, on the site of the Roman first cohort barracks. The excavations also revealed late Saxon timber buildings and a 19th-century iron foundry (Chester Archaeology).

Merseyside Archaeological Society (founded in 1978) joined forces to conduct a survey along the line of the M58 motorway. Extra-mural students undertook rescue work at Stainmore (C) and Newby (C), while in 1975 Chorley Archaeological and Historical Society undertook rescue excavations on a Bronze Age barrow at Astley Hall, Chorley (L). In Carlisle a multitude of smaller excavations and observations were carried out during rapid redevelopment of the city, as well as the major excavations on Annetwell Street directed by Dorothy Charlesworth. The Department of Environment was also funding rescue work on Roman military sites beyond the urban fringes (Potter 1979). Across the region aerial survey was identifying increasing numbers of sites in both upland and lowland locations, which became the subject of a number of investigations by Barri Jones and Nick Higham. The importance of the North West as a centre of industrial archaeology was also being recognised with much early recording work undertaken by Owen Ashmore of the Extra-Mural Department at Manchester University as well as by amateur enthusiasts, while Cumbria County Council and the Lake District National Park recognised the need for the preservation of industrial sites and undertook conservation work on industrial monuments.

Local government reorganisation in 1974 resulted in new authorities in Greater Manchester and Merseyside, which absorbed parts of north Cheshire and south Lancashire. In the north, the boundaries were also redefined as Cumberland, Lancashire North-of-the-Sands and Westmorland became Cumbria. County Archaeologists and Sites and Monuments Officers were appointed with partnership funding by the Department of the Environment, universities, museums and local authorities, to provide a formal framework of archaeological recording and advice to planning departments. Rescue units were set up at the universities of Lancaster, Liverpool, Manchester and the city of Carlisle in the late 1970s, to respond to the threat of development. Salaries for the principal staff were underpinned by the universities, local authorities and the Department of Environment, while the Manpower Services Commission provided the labour force. In this climate of activity, it could be difficult to maintain clear research objectives and with little time or resource for post-excavation, there was even less provision for publication, with notable exceptions such as Robina McNeil's publications of excavations at Nantwich and Halton Castle (McNeil 1983, 1987).

Following the publication of PPG16 in 1990, new market forces came into play. With the withdrawal of core funding for the archaeological units set up during the 1970s, several professional archaeological organisations were established in the region as their successors. Manchester University is now the only academic institution housing a local archaeology ser-

vice and field unit. Chester Archaeology and the National Museums Liverpool Field Archaeology Section are based respectively in the museums in Chester and Liverpool. After several name changes, Lancaster University's archaeological unit (Fig 1.8) merged with Oxford Archaeology, to become Oxford Archaeology North. The City Council-based unit in Carlisle was, however, disbanded a few years ago following a brief association with Bradford University. With its headquarters in Southampton, Gifford Archaeology and Heritage Services have had an office in Chester since 1989. More recently the North Pennines Heritage Trust has established a unit at Nenthead and there is a plethora of small-scale archaeological contractors and consultants throughout the region. In local government planning archaeologists provide advice and guidance on development-led projects and are based within individual county authorities and the national parks, with Manchester University hosting the curators for Greater Manchester and National Museums Liverpool for Merseyside.

Influenced by a past emphasis on Roman archaeology, some of the more important recent excavation projects have included Birdoswald (Wilmott 1997), Ribchester (Buxton & Howard-Davis 2000), and currently the Chester Amphitheatre. Beyond the forts excavations have provided information on industrial production and military supply at sites such as Middlewich, Nantwich, Walton-le-Dale and Wilderspool. The region's two historic cities of Carlisle and Chester have both witnessed major programmes of excavation, with significant results from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. Multi-period programmes investigating rural sites are well represented by Higham's work at Tatton Park, Keen and Hough's work at Beeston Castle (Ellis 1993), and the continuing work at Alderley Edge. The region has been at the forefront of exploring industrial sites with notable excavations at the Hotties, St Helens (Krupa and Heawood 2002), and ongoing projects in Ancoats, Manchester, Park Bridge in Tameside, Liverpool Docks and Nenthead. Other influential and innovative excavations have been undertaken at Norton Priory (Greene 1989), and Old Abbey Farm, Risley (Heawood *et al* 2004), where the study of a moated site involved the full integration of excavation with building survey.

The role of local and county societies has been central to research and rescue excavation since the 19th century. Thus, in an increasingly professionalised archaeological environment, they have continued to undertake survey and excavation, fund research, and provide a major vehicle for the publication of fieldwork. These workers and groups are varied and widespread, as is the scope of their work, although mention should especially be made of the Bolton Archaeological Society, the Chester Archaeological Society, the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, the Mellor Archaeological Trust, the Merseyside Archaeological Society, the Saddleworth Archaeological Trust, the South Trafford Archaeology Group, the West Lancashire Archaeological Society, and the Wigan Archaeological Society. Research by university staff within the region has been spearheaded by the University of Manchester, with recent projects at Tatton Park and Alderley Edge building on earlier work by Barri Jones and Nick Higham. Liverpool University staff are currently involved in work at Carden Park (Ch), and staff from Liverpool John Moores University are involved in several projects within the north of the region. In addition, the University of Glasgow, University College London and the University of Sheffield have recently undertaken fieldwork within the region, and Exeter University is currently undertaking a major programme of environmental analysis in north Lancashire and south Cumbria. Research by historical geographers such as Angus Winchester and Ian Whyte at Lancaster University, and Graeme White at Chester College, provides a context for archaeological sites of post-Roman and later date. Sadly, Lancaster University closed its archaeology department in 1987, although new departments are expanding and offering an increased number of archaeology courses at the University of Chester and the University of Central Lancashire in Preston.

Fig 1.8 Landscape survey in Langdale by LUAU (OA North).

Field Surveys

The long-term and wide-scale survey by the Cherrys in Cumbria has begun to broaden the distribution and nature of prehistoric occupation in both coastal and upland areas. Similarly the work of Ron Cowell has challenged the apparent absence of prehistoric monuments and the paucity of finds in the urbanised landscapes of Merseyside and south Lancashire. By the mid-1980s Mesolithic and later sites had been identified on both sides of the Mersey.

The uplands within the northern area of the region have seen considerable programmes of survey including the work of Dymond (1893), Spence (1938) and the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments of England survey of Westmorland (RCHME 1936). From 1982 onwards, the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit (later the Lancaster University Archaeological Unit), on behalf of the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) and English Heritage, undertook a major programme of survey work across the Lake District, which mapped over 14,000 monuments (Quartermaine and Leech forthcoming). In addition there have been smaller surveys undertaken by the RCHME, English Heritage, and other organisations and amateur groups. The extent of these collective surveys was monitored by a programme of survey of surveys (LUAU 1995e).

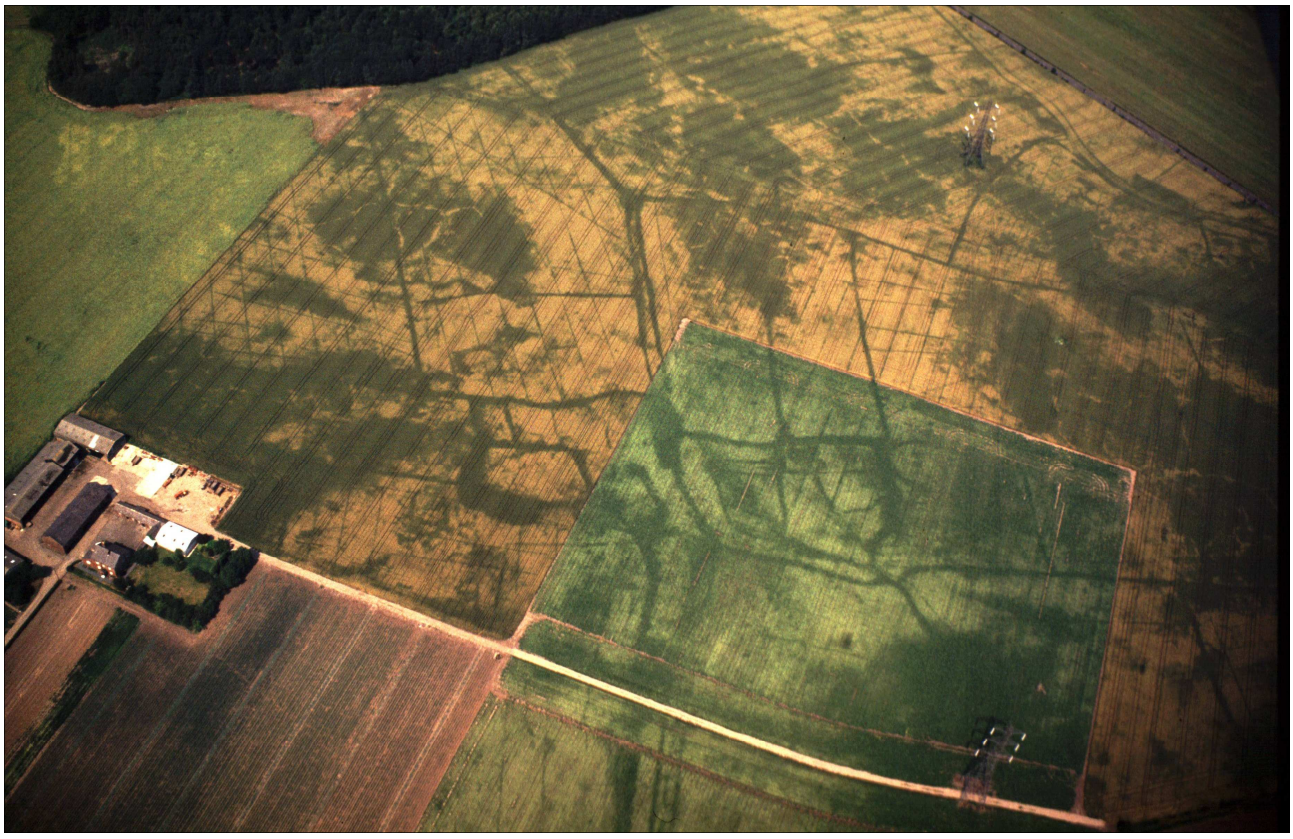
The North West Wetlands Survey (NWWS) was an English Heritage funded project which, between 1990 and 1997, sought to survey and assess the archaeological potential for the wetlands of the region, as well as those of Shropshire and Staffordshire. The final volume is now ready for publication.

The National Trust has undertaken or commissioned Historic Landscape Surveys of many of their properties, including Dunham Massey, Lyme Park and Tatton Park, the latter jointly supported by Cheshire County Council. At Alderley Edge a multidisciplinary landscape project was developed that set archaeological survey alongside research from other organisations and specialist groups. In Greater Manchester the Tameside Archaeological Survey run by the University of Manchester, and begun in 1990, continues to undertake landscape, excavation and building survey work with an emphasis on the Post-Medieval and Industrial periods. In the north of the region large-scale survey work has been ongoing since 1987, and has been completed for some of the most iconic valleys and landscapes, including Great Langdale (Fig 1.8), Wasdale Head, Hartsop, Coniston, Watendlath and Ashness, Borrowdale and Hawkshead, and Claife. Investigations of a number of designed landscapes have been completed, including Tarn Hows, Monk Coniston and the Wray Castle Estate.

Buildings

Buildings survey and archaeology has understandably largely concentrated on particular types of building or on particular areas. A notable exception is the work

Fig 1.9 Cropmark complex at Bickerstaffe, Lancashire (National Museums Liverpool).



of Nikolas Pevsner, who published notes on the historic buildings for the counties of the region between 1967 and 1971 (Pevsner 1967; 1969a; 1969b; 1971). Survey work carried out by the RCHME is not uniform throughout the region, with a completed survey for the county of Westmorland (1936) only, and this undertaken almost seventy years ago. RCHME has, however, completed thematic surveys, including towns (Collier 1991), cotton and textile mills (Williams with Farnie 1992; Calladine and Fricker 1993) and fortified houses (Ramm *et al* 1970). Though the RCHME was merged with English Heritage in 1998 the tradition of thematic surveys continues, with recent projects undertaken by English Heritage on the Furness iron industry (Bowden 2000) and Cumbrian gunpowder works (Jecock 2003).

Surveys have also been undertaken on a thematic project basis such as the Chester Rows (eg Brown 1999) or on specific areas, such as Tameside (Burke and Nevell 1996). The work of Ronald Brunskill (2002) is also worthy of mention. There are major fabric surveys for Brougham Castle (Summerson *et al* 1998), Carlisle Castle (McCarthy *et al* 1990) and Furness Abbey (Harrison *et al* 1998).

Research has been carried on most National Trust properties within the region. Architectural surveys have been carried out on most but not all mansion houses, combined with research on the house and its history, the contents, the gardens and the wider landscape and grounds. The majority of vernacular buildings (231) in National Trust care in the north of the region have a building survey to a standard of Level 3/4 of the English Heritage recording standards, while many (250) in the south of the region have not been surveyed or have only a basic Level 1 survey. The range of building types include farmsteads, mills, chapels, lodges and workshops, and two 20th century Beatles' houses.

Aerial Photography

Within the North West the identification of archaeological sites from the air has been hindered by the presence of extensive subsoils which are relatively insensitive to cropmark development, notably those over boulder clay, and by an agricultural regime dominated by permanent pasture over large areas of the region. The extensive urbanisation of Greater Manchester and Merseyside, and the controlled air space around the international airports of the region, has also contributed to the small number of new discoveries of cropmark sites. Despite this, concerted programmes of flying have had a revolutionary impact on the density, distribution and nature of past settlement in the region, producing a significant body of data. The work of J K St Joseph and the Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography from the 1940s up to the 1990s greatly increased the aerial photographic legacy for the region, and increased the number of known sites for all periods. This work was significantly expanded during the 1970s by Tom Clare of Cumbria County Council with the support of the RCHME, and Nick Higham and Barri Jones of Manchester University (Higham & Jones 1975; Higham 1979a; Nevell 1989) and during the 1980s by Bob Bewley and Adrian Olivier (Bewley 1994).

Cheshire and Merseyside has witnessed a programme of reconnaissance carried out since 1987 by Rob Philpott, of Liverpool Museum (Fig 1.9), and Jill Collens, from Cheshire County Council (Philpott 1998; Collens 1999), building on earlier work, most especially that of Higham and Jones (Nevell 1989) and Rhys Williams in the 1970s and 1980s (Williams 1997). There are extensive collections of aerial photographs for the region currently housed at Cambridge University and the National Monuments Record in Swindon, and smaller collections housed within the region's SMRs and county councils, and at the University of Manchester Geological Unit.

Although the aerial photographic record for the region is extensive there are notable blank areas, and systematic mapping and interpretation of the resource have been undertaken only at a local scale. The English Heritage National Mapping Programme is currently undertaking a programme of systematic aerial photographic mapping and interpretation for Hadrian's Wall, with the Solway area completed. This survey can be placed alongside work already undertaken on the Howgill Fells, Warcop and Skiddaw.

Geophysics

The geology and soils of the region produce variable results from the use of geophysical techniques, and the results have not always been considered reliable (Jordan 2004, 1). Geophysical techniques have had some success, such as recent work at Maryport (Timescape Archaeological Surveys 2000), but mostly in the context of defining additional details on sites that were already previously known. The questionable effectiveness of geophysical survey in the region has led to only limited use in archaeological projects (Fig 1.10), and the North West currently has the lowest density of completed surveys in England (Jordan 2004, 4). The potential or limitations of such techniques in the region, with specific reference to aggregates extraction sites, is currently the subject of a project by Terra Nova Ltd, funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (Jordan 2004).

Current Surveys

Current approaches to the archaeological resource which are proving particularly informative are the

Fig 1.10 Geophysical survey in the south-west Fells, Cumbria (OA North).

historic landscape characterisation (HLC) and extensive urban survey (EUS) projects funded by English Heritage. EUS projects have been carried out on a county-by-county basis in England, and consist of the examination and spatial interpretation of the archaeology of historic towns (excluding cities). In the Lancashire EUS the principal urban plan components are divided on a zoning basis by the major types of buildings, as for example those concerned with industry, commerce, transport and domestic use, and this is used as the basis for characterisation. Unlike the Cheshire and Cumbria EUS (and many others in England), the Lancashire project examines urban development into the 20th century. The current, innovative, urban HLC project for Merseyside is developing this approach further to map and characterise its urban resource. The North West has had one extensive urban survey (EUS) completed for Cumbria in 2002, while Cheshire and Lancashire are nearing completion, the last being closely linked to a completed (2003) HLC project. In addition to EUS, urban archaeological databases (UAD) have been proposed for Carlisle, which has also been covered by a pilot project, and for Chester and Lancaster.

HLC involves the mapping of the landscape according to its historic attributes and current form, and dividing different areas into character types. What was initially seen as a tool primarily for research has been found to have wider applications for many aspects of planning guidance, agri-environment schemes and landscape planning and management (Clark *et al* 2004). Similar surveys to that completed in Lancashire (Ede with Darlington 2002) are currently in progress in Cheshire and Cumbria. In Merseyside an EUS is underway that incorporates HLC in what is an urban-dominated environment.

Portable Antiquities

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) has been established in the North West since 1997, providing a reporting mechanism for finders of archaeological artefacts. Finds Liaison Officers are currently based in National Museums Liverpool, covering Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, and the Museum of Lancashire in Preston, covering Cumbria and Lancashire.

Between 1997 and 2005 this scheme recorded over 2925 finds in the region. The majority are of metal, but pottery and stone artefacts have also been brought in for identification. The scheme has led to the discovery of several new sites and provides distributions of finds from different periods. All the records of the archaeological finds reported are

entered onto a national database which is accessible via the internet at http://www.finds.org.uk/.

The Defence of Britain Project

The Defence of Britain Project ran between 1995 and 2002, and consisted of an extensive programme of recording of 20th century military sites. The project recorded 356 anti-invasion sites within the region dating from this period, and a further 629 20th century military sites.

The results are accessible on the project website at http://www.britarch.ac.uk/projects/dob/index.html.

Dissemination

Over the last 30 years publication of archaeological reports has expanded beyond the old-established county societies, although these continue to play a major contribution. *Contrebis*, the journal of the Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society first appeared in 1973. Since 1978 Chester City Council has published excavation and survey reports in a series of monographs covering all periods of the city's history. Lancaster Imprints published the results of the North West Wetlands Survey and is now an important vehicle for publication of major surveys and excavations undertaken by the former Lancaster University Archaeological Unit, Oxford Archaeology North. The Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society produced a series of research and extra series monographs, covering fieldwork in Cumbria. Less focused on detailed fieldwork, publications by the Centre for North-West Regional Studies at Lancaster University also make a major contribution, as does the *History and Archaeology of Tameside* and *Archaeology of Tameside* series. Since 1990 short reports, bulletins and conference papers have been published from Manchester by the Council for British Archaeology North West in the journal *Archaeology North West*. Recent co-published and multi-authored issues include volumes on the Romano-British period, industrialisation in the North West, and Roman salt production (Nevell 1999c; 2003b; Nevell & Fielding 2005). Guidebooks on industrial archaeology exist for Cumbria (Bennet & Bennet 1993) and Greater Manchester (McNeil & Nevell 2000). The Merseyside Archaeological Society's first journal appeared in 1977, and since then major reviews of the archaeology of that area have been produced.

The majority of fieldwork reports in the North West remain archived as 'grey literature', the result of

Fig 1.11 The reconstructed northern gateway of the Roman fort at Manchester in Castlefield, an Urban Heritage Park that includes the Science and Industry Museum (GMAU).

recent developer-funded fieldwork or from earlier under-financed rescue excavations and research projects funded by the Manpower Services Commission. Beyond the assessments already mentioned reviews of the regions archaeology have most often been period- or area-specific. Useful syntheses include Higham's *Northern Counties to AD 1000* (1986), the four volumes of *The Archaeology of Manchester* series (Morris 1983; Tindall and Walker 1985; Walker 1986; 1989) and A *New Historical Atlas of Cheshire* (Philips and Philips 2002). In addition Ashmore's regional review of industrial archaeology (1982) remains a standard resource.

Information, Archives and Museums

Public archaeological services in the North West are based in Cumbria County Council, the Lake District National Park Authority, Cheshire County Council, Chester City Council, Lancashire County Council, Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (Manchester University), National Museums Liverpool and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Records of archaeological sites, findspots and interventions are maintained by these organisations and held in the Sites and Monuments Records (SMR), now known as Historic Environment Records (HER). The National Trust also holds an SMR covering its properties in the region. The SMRs currently use computerised databases, with paper archives stored in secondary files. The SMRs within the region do not currently use the same computer software or GIS mapping systems, due to varying histories and funding programmes. All the SMRs within the region have a data entry backlog to some degree, and each repository contains varying levels of detail on individual sites and projects.

Archaeological archives and local archaeological collections in the North West are located in a variety of national and local authority museums, and a number of independent museum trusts. There are regionally and nationally important excavation archives and collections in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester; Tullie House Museum, Carlisle; National Museums Liverpool; the Manchester Museum, and the Museum of Lancashire, Preston. Other local collections of significance within the region are held by Bolton Museum, Blackburn Museum, Cheshire Museums Service (Salt Museum, Northwich), Kendal Museum, Lancaster City Museums, Penrith Museum, the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester (Fig 1.11) and Warrington Museum. Important excavation archives and collections related to specific sites are also held at Norton Priory, Runcorn; Senhouse Roman Museum, Maryport (C); and Ribchester Roman Museum (L). There is also material from the region housed in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle. While this is not a comprehensive list, it illustrates the extent to which archaeological material is dispersed in many centres around the region. Thus, it is currently difficult to assess exactly how much material is held overall within these repositories and there is currently no gazetteer or guide to archaeological collections in museums in the North West. The proposed Museum of Liverpool plans to include a new archaeological resource centre providing access to digital archives.

There is currently a shortage of archaeological expertise in museums in the North West. A recent survey has shown that four museums with archaeological collections have no specialist curator and many other museums only have shared expertise. The survey also revealed that over half the museums with archaeological collections have not published any guidelines for the deposition of archaeological archives. Field archaeology units working in the region retain significant collections of archive and finds, awaiting transfer arrangements to an appropriate local museum. A number of important archives also remain in private hands awaiting publication.