

Flagstones may be from Gristlehurst Hall

Bury Times 22 March 1958

Amateur archaeologists have unearthed evidence which may help to prove the existence of the almost legendary Gristlehurst Hall, Birtle.

After five weekends of searching two local enthusiasts have discovered flagstones thought to be part of the paving outside the hall on a new dig only yards from Gristlehurst Farm.

They believe that stones from the hall may have been used in the building of the farm and it is also possible that the farm actually stands on the site of the old building.

Now members of the Bury Archaeological society want to obtain air-photographs of the area to help believed to belong to the sixteenth century.

History shows that Birtle may once have been connected with the Ancient Manor of Tottington. NOT CERTAIN YET

Said Mr Norman Tyson, who has been investigating the site with another member of the society Mr Bruce Farnworth:

"We are not certain yet what period the flagstones are from but it is more than likely that are part of the hall. Now we are going to try to find the remains of the building itself."

Bury's Oldest House Found in Heywood

Heywood Advertiser 10 April 1959

The site of Bury's oldest known domestic building Gristlehurst Hall, Birtle, which has remained untraced for over 100 years, has, it is believed at last been found – in Heywood!

Members of the Bury Archeological Society last weekend completed their season of excavations in a field not far from the Bury and Rochdale Old Road, Birtle, during which they unearthed a foundation wall which, says Mr Norman Tyson of Bury, leader of the search, is "more or less definitely the foundation wall of the hall."

Ottery found on the site is thought to date back to the 18th or late 17th centuries.

About 15 or 18ft of Wall has been uncovered including a corner stone which is particularly helpful to the archaeologists as it might give them an inkling of the lay-out of the building.

Another interesting discovery was a drain running under the foundation which was in remarkable state of preservation and throws some light on the technique of drainage at the time. "We have not been able to date the foundation we have discovered; at the moment we can only presume it is 17th century." Mr Tyson told the "Advertiser".

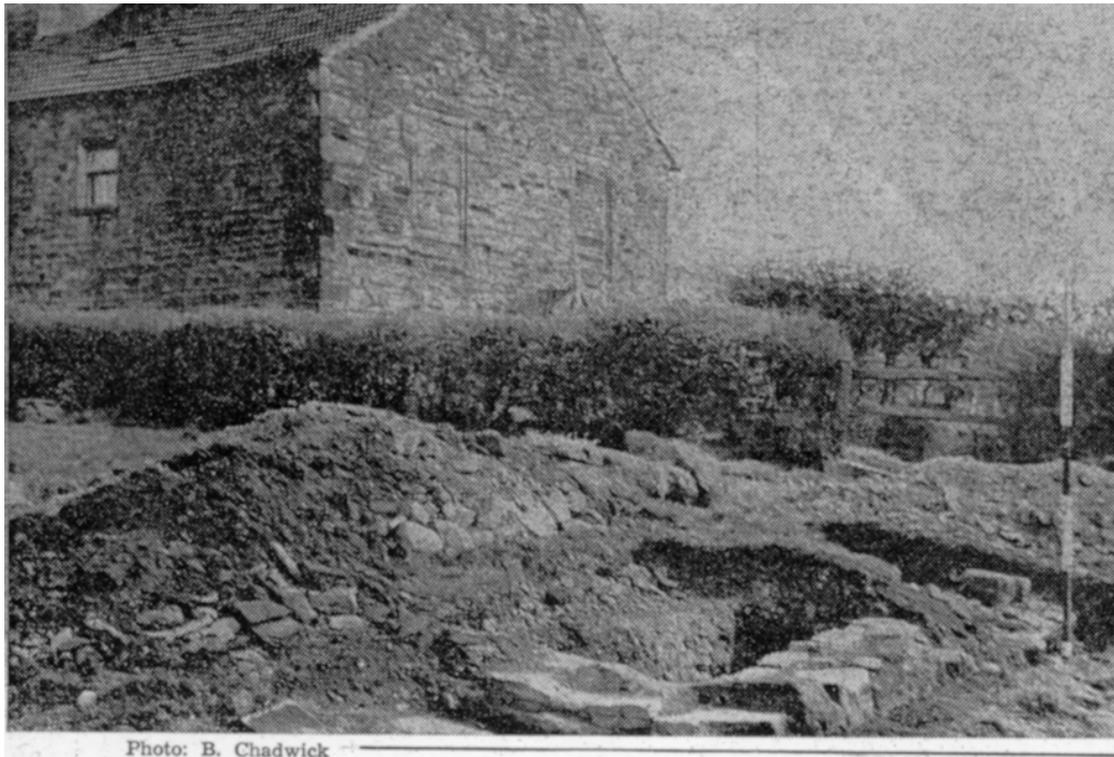
Search for Chapel

Twelve months ago when members of the society were excavating on the site they unearthed two flagged floors thought to be 200 years old. But Mr Tyson and his colleagues are not the only people who have searched for the site of the hall.

A hundred and seven years ago Edwin Waugh, the Rochdale born poet and writer himself made search somewhere in the region where the society have been excavating and there he met an elderly man who had known the hall in his boyhood days.

The society also hope to discover the remains of a chapel and an old road near to the site of the hall. They hope to resume their excavations next year.

Footnote: Birtle became part of the Borough of Heywood in 1934.



Heywood Advertiser 6 May 1959

The site Bury's oldest known domestic building, Gristlehurst Hall, Birtle, which has remained untraced for over 100 years, has, it is believed, at last been found. Picture shows excavations made recently by the Bury Archeological Society in a field off the Bury and Rochdale Old Road at Birtle