Archaeology In Merseyside 2026 (AIM26):
From Trenches to Tomorrows: 50 Years of Merseyside Archaeological Society, Recent Research and Excavation

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the Merseyside Archaeological Society MAS) which was established as a result of the South Castle Street excavation which took place in 1976 in advance of the construction of the law courts which now occupy the site. Since then MAS has played a significant role in archaeological research and fieldwork on Merseyside.

AIM 26 is the latest in a biennial series of conferences celebrating the work of MAS, commercial contractors and amateur researchers in Merseyside.

Programme

Time	Duration	Title	Abstract	Speaker
10:00-10:20	20 mins	Doors open & registration		NA
10:20-10:30	10 mins	Introduction & House keeping		Roy Forshaw
10:30-11:00	30 mins	Birkenhead Blues: The Archaeology of the Seacombe Smalt Works	An archaeological excavation carried out in Seacombe during 2020 was targeted on the footprint of a works that had been established in c.1808 to produce smalt, a vivid blue pigment used in oil painting and by the pottery, paper and glass manufacturing industries. The works passed through several owners during its early years and was taken over in the 1820s by John Mawdesley, who is accredited with being the first to manufacture smalt in this country successfully. There is a paucity of historical accounts describing	Ian Miller

			the process of producing smalt and as no early works had been investigated archaeologically, the excavation in 2020 presented a unique opportunity to research a poorly understood historic industry. Extensive foundations of the smalt works were uncovered, including probable roasting kilns, a glass-melting furnace and processing areas, together with cottages that had been built for the workers. Numerous samples of production waste were also recovered for scientific analysis.	
11:00-11:30	30 mins	The aesthetics of gentry culture and landscape change: The Blundells' learning, leisure and liturgy at Little Crosby	The University of Liverpool archaeological field school is investigating landscape change at Little Crosby. After examining aspects of the recusant Roman Catholic with a focus on the Harkirk, attention has now shifted to examine the late 18th- and 19th-century creation and modification of the estate landscape. This involved the creation of the wall-bounded park, removal of buildings and parts of gardens, and the creation of parkland, woodland belts and Vista wood with its paths, Folly Hall and family Museum. This talk will outline the sweep of landscape modifications and offer results of the first season of investigation in Vista wood.	Anna Fairley
11:30-12:00	30 min	Recent Work on Hilbre Island's Historic Buildings		Dominic Wilkinson
12:00-13:00	60 min	Lunch		
13:00-13:30	30 mins	Coasts in Mind		Kelly Griffiths

13:30-14:00	30 mins	Excavation at Carnatic Halls		Steven Tamburello
14:00-14:30	30 mins	History of Merseyside Archaeological Society		Dave Roberts
14:30-15:00	20 mins	Coffee break		
15:00-15:30	30 mins	The Battle of Winwick, Understanding the Evidence		Dr Andrew Abram
15:30-16:00	30 mins	Geophysical survey and excavation at Speke Hall	This talk will discuss the results of a geophysical survey and excavation undertaken by Merseyside Archaeological Society at Speke Hall, Liverpool. The excavation examined a pair of estate cottages constructed in the late 19th century. Geophysical survey found evidence for 18th century formal gardens and an infilled section of the moat.	Mark Adams
16:00-16:30	30 mins	Summing up by Chair		Roy Forshaw

Abstracts

Harold Mytum

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