



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 2/2021

Registered Charity No 510831

From the Chair

Welcome to the second News Bulletin of 2021. The days are getting longer and the overall outlook is also a bit brighter. The Programme Working Group has been considering options for possible summer visits and the Autumn programme which will be discussed at the next Council meeting and then presented for consideration at the members evening on the 16th of April (see the events section below). We still need further contributions of 10 – 15 minutes be it a PowerPoint presentation or showing a historical / archaeological object in order to make the members evening a success. Contact me at: roy.forshaw@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk if you want to take part.

This issue also includes the first of what we hope will become a regular feature in future News Bulletins. On page 4 you will find a photo of Shotwick Church with a short narrative. If you have an interesting photo, perhaps a site of interest or one taken a field trip please submit it with a description to the Newsletter Editor for inclusion in a forthcoming issue.

Roy Forshaw

Spring Meetings 2021

Meetings will be held 'virtually' via Zoom. A link to join the meeting will be issued via e-mail a few days beforehand.

Programme

Thursday 18th March 7.30 P.M. Claire Christie, Headland Archaeology: Triton Knoll, Lincolnshire

The Triton Knoll Electrical System (TKES) is a cable route which runs for about 60km from the East Lincolnshire Coast to Boston. Headland Archaeology conducted a number of investigations along the route which revealed that the current farmland was once rich coastal marshland with significant evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity, particularly salt production. Some of the sites also contained evidence for settlement and subsistence, ephemeral structures, cooking ovens and field boundaries. Artefactual and environmental analysis during the post-excavation assessment process has identified a number of exciting discoveries.

Thursday 15th April 7.30 P.M. Members Evening. *We have decided to postpone the 2021 AGM until Thursday 16th September as it is only a matter of months since we held the 2020 AGM in December. It has been suggested that we hold a Members evening which will give us the opportunity to try something a little less formal using Zoom. Members are invited to give a short (say 5- 10 minutes) presentation on a Site or Object of interest. A Photo or slides can be submitted in advance so contributors don't have to worry too much about operating the technology. Please let Roy know as soon as possible if you wish to contribute: roy.forshaw@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk*

Merseyside Archaeological Society

Hon Chair:
Roy Forshaw

Hon Secretary:
Liz Stewart

Membership Secretary:
Vanessa Oakden
e-mail:
Vanessa.Oakden@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Hon Treasurer & Newsletter Editor:
Dave Roberts
e-mail: drandpr@blueyonder.co.uk

Merseyside Archaeological Society publishes three newsletters each year. Contributions are invited on all aspects of archaeology in Merseyside. If you wish to contribute information please contact the Newsletter Editor. Please note that contributions may have to be edited.

Disclaimer: *Any views or opinions expressed by contributors to this Newsletter are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Merseyside Archaeological Society.*

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There are some technical points to put across to ensure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

1. Zoom sessions will last 40 mins; please make sure you log on promptly.
2. Please set your microphone to mute whilst the speaker is talking. This is to ensure that we get the best audio quality so that everyone can hear.
3. Just as we would in a physical meeting, please save any questions until the end of the session.
4. It's possible to post text comments during Zoom meetings, but we found this quite distracting, so please keep this to a minimum.
5. If you'd rather not appear by video that can be turned off and replaced with a photo.
6. A link to the Zoom meeting will be sent out by email to members in the week prior to the meeting, so please make sure that our membership sec, Vanessa Oakden, has your current email address.
7. There's a handy introduction to how to use Zoom in this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOUwumKCW7M> .

2021 Subscriptions

MAS Subscriptions fell due on 1st January. Renewal rates for 2021 are: Ordinary £15, Concession £10 (retired, unwaged, student over 18), Junior £2, Family £18, Institutional £25. Please remember to add £3 if you want to receive the Newsletter by post.

If possible please pay direct to the bank. The Society bank account details are:

Account: Merseyside Archaeological Society
Bank: HSBC, 99-101 Lord Street, Liverpool L2 6PG
Sort Code: 40-29-08
Account No: 11098705
Reference: MAS Subs

Please send any forms and cheques to: Vanessa Oakden, Museum of Liverpool, Pier Head, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool, L3 1DG
Email address: Vanessa.Oakden@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Archaeology is Everywhere

"You lot could shut this job down, couldn't you?" – archaeologists often hear this from workers on construction sites. There are many misconceptions about archaeological fieldwork and the belief that the unexpected discovery of buried remains can stymie a development is a particularly stubborn one. In reality, within well-managed projects, archaeological implications are considered from day one. With appropriate consultation with archaeological experts within local authority planning departments, developers can follow a tried and trusted sequence of investigations to minimise the likelihood of such unexpected discoveries. (Quoted from the booklet 'Life on Marr: Archaeological Remains Along the Manchester Airport Relief Road' accessed 19/12/2020 at: https://diggreatermanchester.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/gmpr26_life-on-marr-1.pdf



The Shakespeare North Theatre in Prescot is a construction site where archaeological potential was realised at an early stage of planning, thanks to the intervention of members of MAS. Following preliminary work by Rob Philpott and Mark Adams, Salford Archeology carried out a comprehensive investigation and hopefully we will one day be able to learn about the results.

I listened to the recent BBC Radio 4 episode of *The Infinite Monkey Cage* entitled 'Neanderthals'. Archaeologist Rebecca Wragg Sykes and palaeontologist Tori Herridge, joined Brian Cox, Robin Ince and comedian Alan Davies (star of *QI* on TV). The broadcast mixed humour with some serious science - we were told that nearly all Europeans have 2% Neanderthal DNA and *Homo neanderthalensis* made stone tools as skilfully as *Homo Sapiens*. Rebecca explained that the tell-tale characteristics of worked stone can be similar to that seen in 'knapping chocolate'. The best question came from Alan Davies who asked 'Did the Neanderthals die out as the result of a pandemic?'. Tori's answer was that although we have 'lots and lots and lots' of frozen remains of Woolly Mammoths from the permafrost, we do not have a frozen Neanderthal, only skeletal remains that do not show any evidence of disease. *The Infinite Monkey Cage* is available on BBC iPlayer.

Maurice Handley

The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Merseyside – A summary of MAS lecture 18th February 2021

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is a DCMS funded project aimed at the voluntary recording of archaeological finds discovered by members of the public. The Scheme covers England and Wales and is managed by the British Museum and Amgueddfa Cymru, National Museum Wales, in partnership with local museums and organizations. The PAS began in 1997 to support the implementation of the *Treasure Act 1996*, which set new provisions for Treasure items. Although working with Treasure is a significant element for the PAS, it focuses on recording all archaeological material, including non-Treasure items, which can be archaeologically more valuable than Treasure.

The Scheme is fronted by Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs), who are also supported by Finds Liaison Assistants and volunteers. FLOs primarily engage with members of the public and record their discoveries on to a publicly accessible online database (www.finds.org.uk/database), which is used for academic research and general interest purposes alike. The PAS database is currently one of a kind and has a wealth of artefacts ranging from Bronze Age hoards to Post Medieval buckles. Most discoveries are made by metal detector users, and so the number of metallic finds vastly outnumbers non-metallic discoveries. Many finds are also reported by individuals out walking, gardening, or going about their daily work. In July 2020, the PAS recorded its 1.5 millionth object which was a Medieval lead papal bulla/seal of Pope Innocent III (IV) which was discovered in Shropshire. To date, 674 objects have been reported to the PAS from Merseyside which range from Neolithic flint tools to Victorian leather shoes. A number of standout finds have been reported from Merseyside which emphasises the archaeological wealth of the county. A few of the more notable finds are included in the above image, from top left:



Neolithic polished axehead (LVPL-882DAE) from Wirral, dating to c.3500-2100 BC. First discovered in 1916 after being brought up by a plough it was donated to the Museum of Liverpool in the 1960s. The stone has been identified as porcellanite and it is thought it may have been sourced from County Antrim where a Neolithic quarry at the foot of Tievebulliagh Mountain is located. Similar examples of Tievebulliagh porcellanite can be seen in the Malone Hoard containing nineteen polished stone axes, now at Ulster Museum. This is the only example of porcellanite recorded on the PAS database.

Roman Wirral brooch (LVPL-BFF3DB) from Sefton, dating to c.AD 100-200. Brooches of this type were first discovered in Wirral, hence their name. A study by Robert Philpott in 1999 suggests that these brooches likely originated from Wirral. Since the publication of this study, the number of Wirral brooches discovered has dramatically increased. Using PAS data and plotting a distribution map, it is clear that Philpott's initial theories are indeed correct. This demonstrates how useful PAS data can be in supporting archaeological research.

Gold half noble of Henry IV (LVPL-004154) from St. Helens, dating to AD 1412-1413. Gold half nobles are uncommon reported finds with only 88 so far recorded on the PAS database. This coin is interesting because it is particularly rare, and the only half noble of Henry IV recorded on the database. What is most interesting about this coin is that on the obverse side, there is no annulet positioned next to the trefoil on the side of the ship, which suggests a variant of the type, perhaps previously unknown.

Late Medieval to Post Medieval figurine/toy (LVPL-115092) from Sefton, dating to c.AD 1100-1700. An interesting figure with a humanoid body but a head that consists of three dice. The function of the object is uncertain, but it is likely a toy from a group of similar figurines that were perhaps used in a game that involved being knocked over and scoring the value of the dice, like shy cocks or skittles. It is a curious object that was no doubt locally made.

Heather Beeton

Finds Liaison Officer – Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

Prehistoric Lunt Meadows with University of Chester and Museum of Liverpool

Wednesday 7 April 2021 6pm - 7pm

The discovery of Stone Age settlements and artefacts at Lunt Meadows Nature Reserve in 2012 gives a fascinating glimpse into life as far back as 9,000 years ago. Join the Lunt Meadows Project Officers as they chat to senior archaeologists from the University of Chester and National Museums Liverpool about life in the Mesolithic.

A free digital event thanks to National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the Presenting Mesolithic and Modern Life Project. To book your place visit <https://www.lancswt.org.uk/events/2021-04-07-prehistoric-lunt-meadows-university-chester-and-museum-liverpool>

Port Sunlight Drawings.

Port Sunlight Village Trust has led a project to digitise Port Sunlight drawings under the “Drawn Together” project funded by the National Lotteries Heritage Fund. These records are now online and are grouped into the categories - *Civil engineering – Housing – Monuments – Non residential and Site plans*. The content is sourced from four archives:

Unilever Art, Archives and Records Management (UARM)
Wirral Archives
Bolton Libraries and Museum Services
National Museums Liverpool. (NML)

The following is a link to the website. <https://drawntogether.portsunlightvillage.com>

Ruthin Gaol.

The Society went to Ruthin a few years ago and visited the Gaol. Built in 1868 the Pentonville block used 30% of its space for Heritage in the form of a museum explaining the history of the museum and 70% for archive services. Funding permitting there is a proposal for the archive area to be reduced and some of Denbighshire’s Heritage Collection currently in store to be put on display ready for 2025. The prison cells will be used for an immersive cell experience and there will also be a large multi-function room.

Roy Forshaw



A Photo Opportunity

Shotwick Village is located on the west side of the Wirral peninsula. It is some two miles inland today but prior to the silting up of the River Dee and land reclamation the churchyard wall was lapped by the waves of the Dee. Shotwick, like numerous places along the Dee was a small port where cargoes were transhipped into smaller boats to proceed on to Chester. The village still consists of a small collection of houses on a narrow lane that originally led down the river and to the ford across to Flint. The site of the moated manor house survives a short distance from the later building. A short walk away is Shotwick Castle whose earthworks still survive. This Castle guarded the ford to Wales and the passage of ships on their way to Chester.

Shotwick church has been much altered over the years but dates back to at least early Norman times. The tower was built around 1500 and as well as a place of worship the church was also the venue for the ecclesiastical court. Henry VIII made it obligatory to make and keep in order shooting butts for archery practice and the men of the village were obliged to practice on Sundays and Holy Days. Inside the church porch can be seen the marks in the sandstone walls forming the back of two benches where arrows were sharpened presumably prior to practice.

Roy Forshaw



Online resources

Ongoing live talk series (Jan/Feb to April/June):

1. The **Nene Valley Archaeological Trust** is holding its 2021 conference as a series of five monthly live online talks from February to June **Bronze Age Britain: Migration, Ritual and Everyday Life** Talks are free but donations (it is a charity) welcome. Talks are by leading national experts and you will need to book a place. BA research themes, Must Farm pile dwelling, isotopes & aDNA, burial customs, Stonehenge

<https://www.nenevalleyarchaeology.co.uk/2021-conference-bronze-age-britain>

2 **The Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership** is holding webinars every fortnight on Wednesday afternoons at 3-4 p.m. from February to April. You need to register to be sent the link, but they are free.

<https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Default.aspx?CategoryTitle=westmorland-dales-heritage-talks&SubsiteTitle=westmorland-dales-hidden-landscapes-partnership>

Talks become available afterwards as recordings. Started 3rd Feb **Great Asby Scar survey**. 17th Feb David Johnson: **excavating an early lime kiln** (a sow kiln) at Pendragon castle, 3rd March **Tree planting**, 17th March **Routes through the Dales** 31st March **Geology of the Dales**, 4th April **Gamelands Stone circle**

3 **The Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group (YVBSG)** (Jan – March) are holding monthly evening lectures on the third Thursday of each month. This means that they clash with MAS lectures! But you can get the best of both worlds as the YVBSG talks are made available as YouTube videos. January's talk on the possible **reuse of ships' timbers** in vernacular architecture is available now. February's talk is on **cowhouses & smallholdings in a miner-farmer landscape** around Castle Bolton area, and 18th March will be on **Vernacular architectural features in Upper Wharfedale**. Further details and video links:

<https://www.yvbsg.org.uk/events.html>

One-off online free conferences

1 **Saturday 6th March** by the Prehistoric Society **Barrows of the Yorkshire Wolds: Prehistory, Inspiration and Legacy**

Talks include antiquarian histories of investigation; the latest research on the barrow makers, their origins, funerary rites and grave goods; re-use in the early medieval period; new methods of recording & analysing funerary monuments, and public, creative value. An all day event, free to attend but registration required

http://www.prehistoricsociety.org/events/event/barrows_of_the_yorkshire_wolds_prehistory_inspiration_and_legacy/

2 **Saturday 10th April DARGANFOD – DISCOVERY: a celebration of new archaeological research in Wales** a biennial conference hosted by the Cambrian Archaeological Society. Twelve talks about new research in Wales and the Marches (including Dodleston Castle, Cheshire). For a list of all talks, summaries and timetable see the conference webpage. Free, but need to register at:

<https://cambrians.org.uk/darganfod-discovery-conference-saturday-10th-april-2021/>

Past talks:

1 Recordings of all of the talks from the **Derbyshire Archaeology Day** (4th/5th Feb) are available on their Youtube channel (one video for each day).

4th Feb: excavations of a **post-med pottery** ('**Martincamp flasks**') **production** site at Ticknall, digging the **medieval centre of Derby**, repairs to **barrows after a moorland fire**, excavations of a **timber weir** or river revetment, a **Roman vicus dig** (Navio).

5th Feb: **survey of a stone quarry & mine**, quirks of **timber buildings**, **excavating a windmill**, and a historical, documentary, mapping and field visit **study of monastic granges**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TsXHSV2iZo>

There are articles about some of these projects, and various others, in the annual **Archaeology and Conservation in Derbyshire and the Peak District** (ACID) magazine, available to download at

<https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/learning-about/archaeology/acid-magazine>

2 **The CBA Yorkshire Autumn Showcase 2020** (CBA = Council for British Archaeology) talks covered a wide range of mainly community projects involving geophysics or excavation, advice about how to make successful funding bids for community projects (by a successful community group), & 'coping with Covid' support. All are available as videos at <http://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/videos/>

3 **CBA Yorkshire Video Archive**. <http://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/videos/> The first three Fireside chats from Series One 2020 have been added.

The first chat is particularly topical with the release of the Netflix film ... 'The Dig' This is a dramatic representation of the 1939 Sutton Hoo Excavation.

In our video production Eric Houlder describes the **post war excavations at Sutton Hoo** when he was a photographer and a site supervisor.

<http://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/fireside-chats-one/>

Follow-ups from MAS evening talks:

1 Feb 2021 Information on **Triton Knoll multi-period excavations** (the subject of March 18th MAS lecture by Claire Christie of Headland Archaeology) includes a short film from the public outreach sessions, a leaflet about what was found, and high resolution images of the display boards. <https://www.tritonknoll.co.uk/archaeological-mitigation/>

2 Jan 2021 If you want to know more about the **coastal archaeology project CITIZAN** (Coastal & InterTidal Zone Archaeology Network) after Chris Kolonko's excellent MAS talk on coastal defences in January (see January's newsletter for a report and some links), you might be interested in their armchair archaeology blog <https://citizan.org.uk/blog/2020/May/01/armchair-archaeology-citizan/>

And if you are able to get out during/after lockdown, there are two self-guided low tide walks in Merseyside: Liverpool docks & Liverbirds <https://citizan.org.uk/low-tide-trails/liverpool-bay-liverpool-docks/> and New Brighton <https://citizan.org.uk/low-tide-trails/liverpool-bay-new-brighton/>

Other online resources:

Current Archaeology – January heritage from home A wealth of resources, some of which featured in last month's MAS newsletter <https://www.archaeology.co.uk/articles/heritage-from-home-january.htm>

Current Archaeology – February Heritage from home
<https://www.archaeology.co.uk/articles/heritage-from-home/heritage-from-home-february.htm>

Historic Environment Scotland - A guide to Climate Change impacts
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=843d0c97-d3f4-4510-acd3-aadf0118bf82>

Forestry and Land Scotland – A song in stone: exploring Scotland's Neolithic rock art
<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/biodiversity-and-conservation/historic-environment-conservation/investigation/ormaig-neolithic-art>

Offa's Dyke Collaboratory - How much work was involved in building the Dykes of the Mercian frontier? Part 1, by Keith Ray
<https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/2021/01/29/how-much-work-was-involved-in-building-the-dykes-of-the-mercian-frontier-part-1/>

That Jorvik Viking thing – new podcast series
<https://open.spotify.com/show/3nCMdF9VtiyqfnaZGfsJml>

UCL Archaeology South-East – podcast
<https://soundcloud.com/uclarchaeologysouth-east>

The National Archive – **Manorial Documents Register** – new county content added
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search>

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust – **Searching for Shakespeare**: the artefacts of New Place 3D
<https://searchingforshakespeare.co.uk/>

Matthew Champion - Which Marks? Those marks... The case for Ritual Protection in Medieval Graffiti
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jV9i_mtTyuE

Group for Education in Museums - Self-led school trails: A toolkit for developing trails with impact

<https://gem.org.uk/resource/self-led-school-trails-a-toolkit-for-developing-trails-with-impact/>

Society of Museum Archaeology – Communicating archaeology: case studies in the use of, and engagement with, archaeological collections

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n4_CVGr4DKu-gzgKmT2ysymKfdLKMnvS/view

Museum of London - LGBTQ+ History Month stories and events

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london/whats-on/exhibitions/lgbt-history-month?series=LGBTQ%20month>

Royal Museums Greenwich - LGBTQ+ histories and events

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/see-do/LGBT>

National Gallery - LGBT History Month events and exhibitions

<https://www.npg.org.uk/visit/lgbt-history-month>

Brompton Cemetery Conservation Project – Queerly departed – videos added twice weekly profiling individuals of interest

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/brompton-cemetery/whats-on-in-brompton-cemetery/queerly-departed>

London Historic Buildings trust – New **virtual building tours**

<https://www.londonhistoricbuildings.org.uk/index.php/2020/12/16/new-virtual-tours-reveal-london-historic-buildings-trust-projects-inside-and-out/>

SAHGB - Architectural Tourism in a Time of Pandemic

<https://www.sahgb.org.uk/features/architectural-tourism>

SAHGB – Post-war designed landscapes: heritage values and forgotten spaces [blog post]

<https://www.sahgb.org.uk/features/post-war-landscapes-in-britain-heritage-values-and-forgotten-everyday-landscapes>

Royal Horticultural Society – Gardening by the book: a history of gardening in 12 books

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/digital-collections/gardening-by-the-book>

National Trust: archaeologist's blog

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/blogs/archaeologists-blog>

Colchester & Ipswich Museums – Decolonisation + democratisation – webinar series recordings

<https://cimuseums.org.uk/dandd/>

BBC Radio4/BBC Sounds – Start the week: Empire and class, shaping Britain

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s1rh>

Apollo Magazine - The British government thinks archaeology doesn't matter. It couldn't be more wrong

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/archaeology-funding-cut-uk-government/>

Major new project to study countryside rights of way Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) the project is called In All Our Footsteps: Tracking, Mapping and Experiencing Rights of Way in Post-War Britain, and will run for three years from 2021 to 2024. Not sure if/how people can get involved

<https://www.universitynewshq.com/university-news/major-new-project-to-study-countryside-rights-of-way/>

And more info on Clare Hickman's blog In All Our Footsteps: Tracking, Mapping and Experiencing **Rights of Way in Post-War Britain**

<https://drclarehickman.wordpress.com/footsteps/>

SAHGB - Post-War Designed Landscapes — 'Elegant and Simple Solutions' to 'Down to Earth Problems': The Landscape Architecture of Michael Brown and Preben Jakobsen

<https://www.sahgb.org.uk/features/post-war-landscapes-in-britain-the-landscape-architecture-of-michael-brown-and-preben-jakobsen>

British Museum blog - Inside 'The Dig': how the star-studded film squares with reality of Sutton Hoo

<https://blog.britishmuseum.org/inside-the-dig-how-star-studded-film-squares-with-reality-of-sutton-hoo/>

TV programmes on catch-up

New series:

1 The story of Welsh Art. Three one-hour programmes. Starts Monday 1st March 9.00 – 10.00 pm BBC Wales & BBC4 First episode looks at prehistoric burial chamber rock art, the bronze Age Mold cape. 2nd looks at landscape in art, 3rd is 20th Century art

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000st2j/episodes/guide>

2 The Great British Dig: History in your back garden. Starts Weds 17th Feb More4 (Freeview 18) 9.00 – 10.00. Fronted by Hugh Dennis. First episode = Benwell Roman fort, Newcastle; 2nd = Early Medieval burials in Masham, Yorks; 3rd = a lost Norman priory in Nottingham. A pilot episode was made last year in Maidstone <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-great-british-dig-history-in-your-garden/on-demand/70176-001>

3 Raiders of the Lost Past with Janina Ramirez. Starts Friday 19th Feb, 9 – 10pm BBC2, Three one-hour programmes, Series 1 and 2 both available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0008569/episodes/guide>

New one-off programme: Stonehenge BBC2 Friday 12th Feb. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s5xm> Plus an illustrated news article <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-56029203>

Repeated series:

Digging for Britain (various series) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b014hl0d>

Secrets of Orkney: Britain's Ancient Capital three one-hour episodes. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b087vh70>

Rome, a History of the Eternal City BBC4 three one-hour programmes focusing on religion in Rome, presented by Simon Sebag Montefiore. Apologies if these have disappeared by the time the newsletter comes out.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01p6vtb/episodes/player>

Sue Stallibrass