



**From the Editor**

Welcome to the June News Bulletin. We keep to the theme of the last couple of issues with a mixture of articles and news. In this edition Maurice continues his discoveries under the banner of ‘Archaeology is Everywhere’. Mark has contributed an article on the ‘Sandstone Project’. Roy has undertaken further research into the origins of Liverpool’s streets and Ben reports on an interesting new discovery in Sefton. If any MAS members who live around Sefton have any further information I’m sure Ben will be delighted to hear from you.

June has been a pretty busy month for myself. Typesetting is well underway on the forthcoming Journal of the Merseyside Archaeological Society 16, with about two thirds of the Volume completed. Work has resumed on the graveyard survey at Childwall. Over 2100 monuments have been recorded, with about 20 modern graves still to be looked at.

We still do not have any firm information on fieldtrips, the Autumn lecture programme and our October Conference but we have a Council meeting scheduled for mid-July. We are very hopeful that we shall be able to let you have some good news soon.

Dave Roberts

**Archaeology is Virtually Everywhere**

The Covid-19 crisis has forced many of us to work, study and research on-line at home. In last month’s Newsletter, I wrote about the packhorse bridge on Two Butt Lane in Rainhill and on a rainy day in June, I tried to find out more about the bridge and the brook it crosses. The first place to look on



Yates 1786 showing Pendlebury Brook

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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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the Internet is the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (MHER) accessed via the Heritage Gateway.<sup>1</sup> The MHER entry informs us that the stream is called the Pendlebury Brook. It can be seen on Yates 1786 map of Lancashire, where Two Butt Lane crosses it at a dog-leg between Prescott and Sutton Heath.<sup>2</sup>

To trace the brook's route I used the National Library of Scotland's Side by Side Maps on which you can locate a point on a late 19th century OS map in tandem with an up to date Bing satellite view.<sup>3</sup> There is a choice of maps and the National Grid Reference is also given for the location of the pointer. I also accessed the 1st edition 6" OS map which shows the next bridge downstream is named 'Hanging Bridge' where it carries the road from Rainhill to Thatto Heath.<sup>4</sup> The bridge marks the junction of three civil parishes and its name may derive from the practice of hanging at a liminal location. Nearby, is the former site of Hangingbridge House recorded on deeds from 1637 so the bridge is likely to have been in existence then.<sup>5</sup>

Moving further downstream using the National Library of Scotland's maps, the brook passes underneath the Liverpool to Manchester railway line, the first inter-city passenger railway in the world. In 1829 this stretch of the railway was used for the 'Rainhill Trials' competition, won by the Rocket locomotive. The brook passes St Anne's Well<sup>6</sup>, a holy well and scheduled monument on the edge of a cultivated field. Oxford Archaeology excavated the site in 2016 and re-exposed the well. It lies on private land but can be spotted as a rectangular feature on Google satellite maps.

Beyond the modern A570 St Helens Linkway the brook flows under Chapel Lane in Micklehead, The 1st Edition O. S. map (Sheet 108) records 'Sutton Smalt Works' at this point and later 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show it as 'Brook Works (Ultramarine and Smalts)'. The term 'smalt' had been mentioned during a recent virtual MAS Council meeting using Zoom. It transpired that Salford Archaeology excavated the site of The Seacombe Smalt Works'.<sup>7</sup> Smalt is a pigment used by artists (Ultramarine and Cobalt Blue) and it is also used to colour glass and ceramics. The Brook Works<sup>8</sup> manufactured 'Dolly Blue', an additive used by my Mum when she was washing white sheets but that was before we had TV at home and the only computer I used was called a 'slide rule'.

*(Endnotes)*

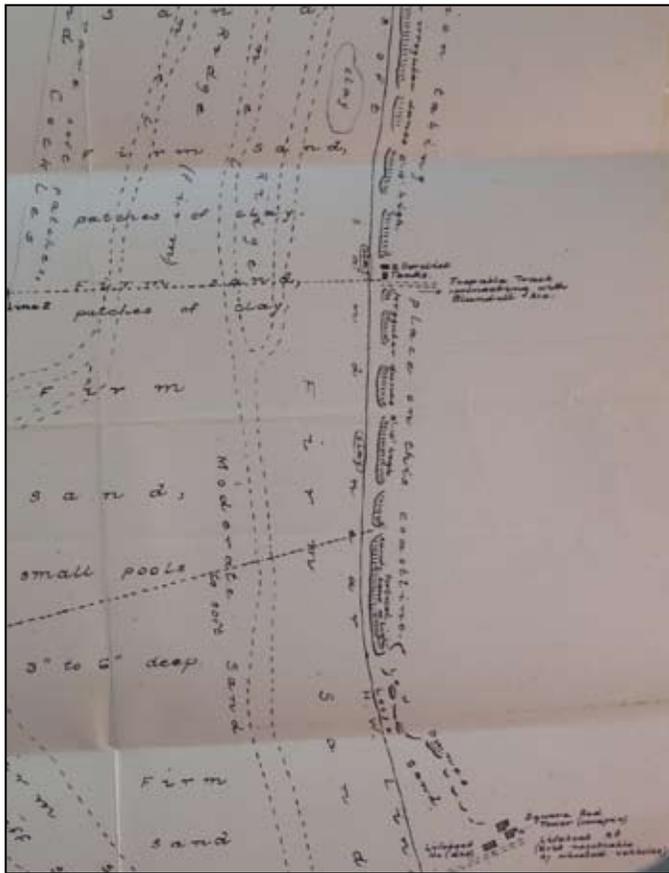
- 1 [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)
- 2 MHER ref. MME7176 Stone Bridge, Two Butt Lane, Rainhill .  
Yates Map is reproduced in Lewis, J. & Cowell, R. 2002 'The Archaeology of a Changing Landscape – The Last Thousand Years' *J. Merseyside Archaeological Society* 11 p193
- 3 <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/>
- 4 'Sheet 107', in Map of Lancashire (Southampton, 1846-1873), British History Online  
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/os-1-to-10560/lancashire/107>
- 5 MME 7434 Hanging Bridge, MME 14789 Former location of Hangingbridge House, Elton Head Road, Sutton.
- 6 MME7415 St Anne's Well, Rainhill
- 7 <https://lbdaily.co.uk/archaeologists-offer-window-wirral-industrial-past>
- 8 <https://www.suttonbeauty.org.uk/suttonhistory/industry1/> (click on 'Brook's Blue Works; accessed 16/062020)

*Maurice Handley*

## **Operation Sandstone, the Defences of the Mersey and Prehistoric Peat**

Most members of MAS will be familiar with the Prehistoric footprint exposures at Formby Point and also with Alison Burns' excellent booklet on Fort Crosby, produced for the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership (Digital copies can be downloaded here [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283300960\\_Forgotten\\_Fort\\_Crosby\\_Dune\\_Heritage\\_Revealed](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283300960_Forgotten_Fort_Crosby_Dune_Heritage_Revealed)).

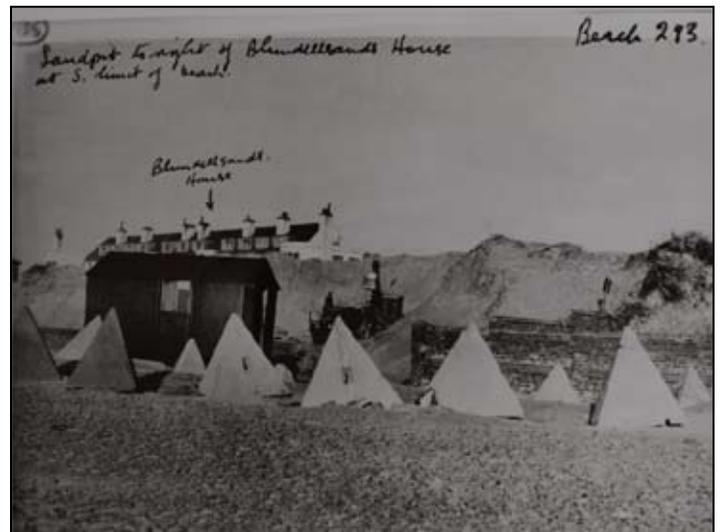
Whilst doing the background research for the Fort Crosby Booklet I came across the Admiralty's 'Operation



Lifeboat Road map showing the 'clay beds'.



General view of the WW II defences at Crosby



'Dragon's Teeth' defences at Crosby.

Sandstone' files which are held by the National Archives at Kew (the file ref is ADM326). Operation Sandstone began in 1947 and was a survey of the UK's beaches designed to allow re-invasion should the country be over-run. Most of the survey work was undertaken in the 1950s and provides a fascinating record of the UK coastline at the time. The level of detail seems to vary markedly, some beaches just have a sketch map and a couple of photographs, though the Mersey coast seems to have had a lot of attention paid to it. There are no dates on the Merseyside surveys but they probably date to 1955, just after the closure of Fort Crosby. My initial interest was in Fort Crosby, and the survey produced some fantastic photographs which made it into Alison's book, but I also found a lot of other material, some of which is detailed below.

The files provide some oblique evidence for exposure of the Prehistoric footprint beds at Formby Point. The map of Lifeboat Road shows beds of clay just in front of the dunes; though unfortunately it doesn't mention footprints, the surveyors were more interested in access for landing craft, tanks and jeeps, but I think these must be the footprint beds. If that is the case then this is one of the first records of these outcrops. I'd heard anecdotal evidence of people visiting them in the 1950s, but this is the first contemporary record.

However, the files main significance is as a record of WWII defences made before most were cleared in the late 1950s and 60s. For example, the beach at Crosby was defended by lines of concrete pyramids known as Dragon's Teeth. Photographs of the Crosby defences are surprisingly rare given the popularity of that stretch of coast and the Operation Sandstone photographs are a relatively detailed record, including some low-level oblique aerial photographs which allows their extent to be plotted.



An early photo of rubble from central Liverpool dumped on the beach at Crosby

Sand extraction on the Sefton coastline.

Further to the north the files include some of the earliest photographs of the rubble from central Liverpool which was the subject of Emma Marsh's research and the recent BBC documentary: (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-49926429>)

One less well known aspect of the Sefton Coast's more recent history is the industrial scale extraction of sand. Quarrying of the dunes seems to have begun in the 1930s and continued into the late 1960s or early 1970s, reaching a peak in the 1940s and 50s. Anecdotally the sand was used to fill sand-bags during World War II. However, records are sparse and little is known of the location of sand-pits. The Operation Sandstone files contain several photographs of the sand-pits including the one above which also shows one of the machines used to extract sand. Aerial photographs of the Formby area mark the location of some sand-pits, though details are difficult to make out.

The Merseyside files also contain views of significant roads and other features immediately inland from the coast and provide an interesting record of the landscape in the mid-1950s.

Mark Adams

### A Pottery Site on Shaw's Brow.

In a recent MAS talk an illustration was shown of an early structure in Liverpool. The question was whether it was in fact a pottery kiln. I decided to do a bit of research and found the following.

The structure has been recorded at least twice. A colour illustration exists in the Herdman collection No 459 and is reproduced in Kay Parrots '*Pictorial Liverpool The Art of WG and William Herdman*' describing the image as Seth Pennington's works on the North Side of Shaw's Brow. The pottery specialism was punch bowls and imitation Oriental ware.

Knowles Boney's *Liverpool Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century and its Makers* has a different image from the same viewpoint describing Seth Pennington's oven in the 1850s. This can be a little confusing as by then it had ceased to be a pottery manufacturer. In both illustrations the kiln design is different to the



*Shaw's Brow. Herdman collection image No 459*



*Image from Knowles Boney 'Liverpool Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century and its Makers'*

Staffordshire pottery kilns. There is no cone as such and the flue appears to be to the side of the oven with a separate chimney.

In James Stonehouse's *'Streets of Liverpool'*, published in 1869 he refers to Herdman's illustration as a cone from the old pottery works, being in the same yard as Mr Parker's well. The well was famous for the quality of its water as a newspaper advert states below.

*"At Edmund Parker's pump, on Shaw's Brow, may be had water at 9d. per butt, for watering shipping or sugar houses ; and is as soft for washing, boiling pease, &c., as any in the town. Any merchant or captain of a ship, &c., sending to his house, next to Mr. Chaffer's china pothouse, may be served immediately by their humble servant, Edmund Parker."*

### **Locating the Works**



*Gore's map of 1796*

It was initially difficult to pinpoint the position of the cone as the Town plan of 1848 only shows a windmill. It is made a little clearer by a publication from 1863 *'Recollections of Old Liverpool by a nonagenarian'* John Hughes. In it he states *'The wells on Shaw's Brow were all laid open when the alteration took place in that vicinity. One of the wells was used at an emery mill, which was once the cone of a pottery. One of the wells was found where the Library is now erected.'* Therefore the windmill and the kiln were the same but the confusion is caused through the Knowles Boney caption to the illustration. Herdman was also known to use earlier illustrations to reproduce in his style so therefore his illustrations are not necessarily applicable to the date drawn. We will look at the date of the pottery a little later.

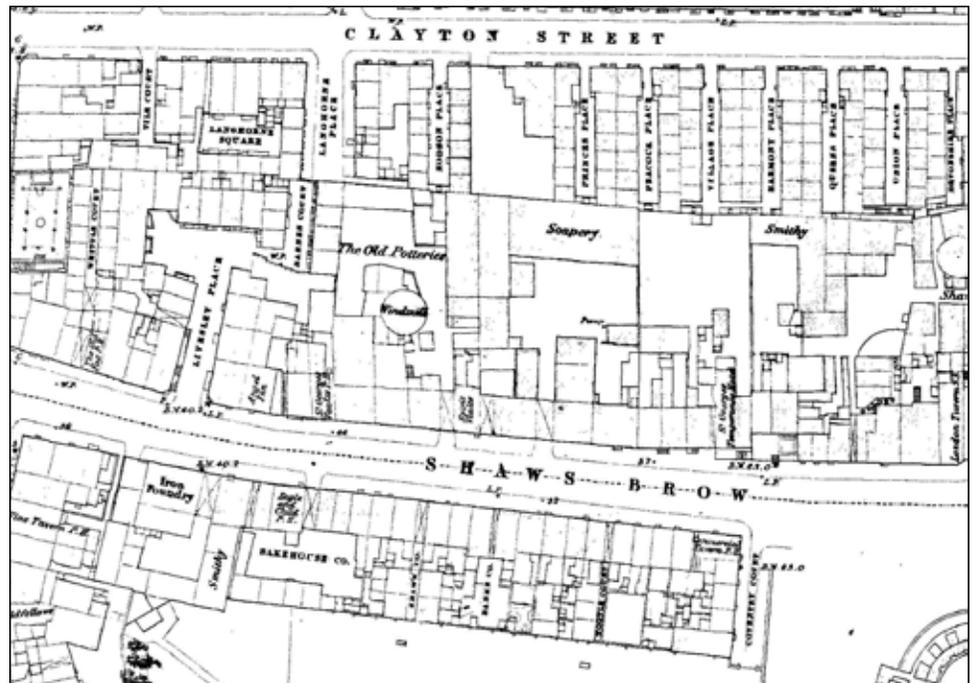
Looking into the development of the area we see on Gore's map of 1796 a windmill on the site of the present Picton Library plus a further mill on Islington Row where Mill Lane is now dividing the Walker Art Gallery from the County Sessions House. This site is now occupied by the Walker Art gallery picture store. The pottery and various other buildings off Shaw's Brow back onto open ground.



*Gage's map dated 1835 and detail showing location of the pottery*

By the time of Gage's map of 1835 we see Clayton Street occupying the vacant land behind the pottery which is dominated by Court Housing. The pottery is located above the 'H' in the Shaws Brow street name and the red circle indicates the Kiln / Windmill position.

The most detailed map available is the 1849 Town Plan which identifies the pottery site and the kiln converted into a windmill. There are what can be termed as unsociable industries all around such as a soapery and foundry. The court housing to the rear, by design, had a reputation for poor health conditions. The burial ground in what is now St George's gardens was also well over its capacity and was itself creating a nuisance. Clearance and improvement was necessary. By this time the construction of St Georges Hall had started in 1841 and opened in 1854 and gradually the older buildings were demolished and more prestigious buildings took their place.



*Liverpool 1849 town plan*

You will not find Shaw's Brow on any modern map but it is in fact William Brown Street. Shaw's Brow was named after either Samuel Shaw, if Muir is correct, or Alderman Thomas Shaw who owned a pottery on the street and who was Mayor in 1794. The street changed its name in recognition of Sir William Brown's donation towards the Town Museum built 1857 – 60. The Walker Art Gallery and County Sessions House followed and finally the Central Technical School.

What is the relationship between Shaw's Brow buildings and the World Museum which occupies William Brown Street? As you pass through the main entrance of The World Museum you walk over the site of the windmill



1849 Town Plan overlaying modern Ordnance Survey data. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019

and standing in the museum atrium you can imagine being in the courtyard of the pottery. The relationship can be seen by comparing the 1849 town plan with modern Ordnance Survey Open Data.

### ***Seth Pennington's Pottery***

Very briefly the history of the pottery is as follows. Many books have been written about this important site including the manufactureres who produced on the site before the Penningtons. The illustrations which lead to this article only relate to the end of the pottery period when the site was in decline after failing to compete with its competitors in Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

Ramsay Muir in '*Bygone Liverpool*' published in 1913 writes about Shaw's Brow:

*'The industry whose sudden decay was most to be lamented was the pottery industry, of one branch of which Liverpool had been the main centre during the eighteenth century. The original inventor of the process of printing from engraved plates on pottery, John Sadler, had set up his pot-works in Harrington Street. But the great centre of the industry was Shaw's Brow ...which took its name from Samuel Shaw, a great master of the art in the first half of the eighteenth century.*

*Here almost the whole population was engaged in this artistic craft down to the end of the century, and there was a nest of potters' ovens here. In the middle of the century there were fourteen firms in the city engaged in this craft, six of them in Shaw's Brow ; and some of them produced work of high merit, specimens ... But the Liverpool pottery industry was killed by that of Staffordshire, ... the industry died out completely and the only*



*Shaw's Brow c 1850. Herdman collection image No 1462*

*explanation that can be given is that the conditions existing in Liverpool were increasingly hostile to the maintenance of a fine craft. In 1815 all the original potteries had died out.'*

Seth Pennington was a second-generation potter in the Pennington family. He was born in 1744 and after being a journeyman earthenware potter he changed to making china at 12 Shaw's Brow taking over the Christian's china works around 1778. Residing in 46 Shaw's Brow for a short while after selling up in 1784 he moved into the house at No 12 working over the shop, so to speak.

Mayer in *Lancashire and Cheshire Transactions 1854-55* recounted a story as follows:

*'Mr. Pennington was celebrated for making a very rich blue colour, for the recipe of which he was offered by a Staffordshire house 1000 guineas ; but he refused the offer, as it was a source of great profit to him, being kept so secret that none ever mixed the colours but himself. But about twelve months after the offer was made to him, another manufacturer produced the same tint of colour. It was said that his brother James, having persuaded him to tell the secret to him, and being a wild and extravagant young man, who had run through all his property, which he spent in dissipation, afterwards in a drunken fit divulged the secret to one of his pot companions, who immediately sold the recipe to the Staffordshire potter, and by this means the establishment of a rival in making their celebrated blue colour, destroyed the monopoly which he had created by his industry. After this disgraceful and thoughtless act, James Pennington and his family removed to Worcester, where one of his children painted a dinner service for the Duke of York, which at that time was considered to be a beautiful specimen of the art.'*

It can only be imagined that there may have been amendments for the Pennington's Christmas card list following this incident.

Mayer visited Seth Pennington's daughter who showed him a collection of his work which he described as:

*'...Mr. Pennington was celebrated for his punch bowls, of which he made many very large ones, the earliest of which has in the inside a ship in full sail, and underneath is written, "Success to the Monmouth, 17CO." The outside is ornamented with birds, a butterfly, and trees, done in bright yellow and green. It was presented to me by Mrs. Twentyman, of Duke street. Another punch bowl has a subject on the outside, two sailors, one sitting on the stock of an anchor and holding in one of his hands a punch bowl, in the other a word ; the other sailor sits astride a barrel, whilst between them is a large chest or box, on which is written "Spanish Gold." Inside the bowl is a ship in full sail, and underneath is "1779, success to the Isabella;" the whole done in blue colour.*



*National Museums Liverpool has a collection of Pennington ware in store which is of fine quality and supports Shaw's Brow's reputation of producing fine pottery.*

*The largest punch bowl I have seen is one made at this manufactory ; it is 20½ inches in diameter, and stands 9 inches high. The ornaments are painted in blue colour. It has on the outside a landscape, with horses and trees, a church in the distance, and in the foreground two bridges, on which stand two men fishing in the water below. In the inside of the bowl is a group, consisting of ships and boats, surrounded by a deep border of trophies of warlike instruments, flags, swords, drums, trumpets, &c., arranged in six groups, which are divided by different kinds of shot, namely, chain, crescent, arrow, or triangle, shell with fusee burning, cross or bar, and grape shot...'*

It is difficult to identify when the pottery was last in production but 1806 seems to be the last date when the firm 'Pennington and Edwards' appeared in trade directories. Certainly by 1855 it was milling emery rather than pot making.

Roy Forshaw

### **A new Medieval cross base in Sefton?**



On a recent U3A walk led by Mike Morris it was noticed that there is a large stone with a socket in one face on the south side of Broom's Cross Road, on the north side of a balancing pond by Netherton Brook at SD 35851 00529. Tony Taylor on the walk suggested it was possibly a cross base.

It appears that the stone may have been found during the road building scheme and put up (sideways) as part of this. The road builders have been contacted in the hope that someone may remember where it was found. There is a likely site nearby though: the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6” OS map of 1850 shows a footpath between The Lodge in Netherton and Sefton Hall which crossed the township boundary c.40m from the stone’s current position (the red X on the map above).

The map is reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>).

*Ben Croxford*

## Museum of Liverpool

### *Climate Environment and Archaeology*

#### **2020 Museum of Liverpool Archaeology Twitter Conference Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2020**



*Plastic Archaeology!*

As part of this year’s Council for British Archaeology’s Festival of Archaeology the Museum of Liverpool is excited to be hosting its second archaeological Twitter Conference. This year’s theme is Climate, Environment and Archaeology. How have changes in the climate impacted societies in the past and what can we learn from them? How can museums use their archaeological collections to help us learn about the impact of climate change? How is climate change affecting archaeology and how can archaeology inform us and help us learn about these changes? How do museums control the climates in which their objects are stored and displayed? This conference will address these questions and more and we would like you to get involved.

***How a Twitter Conference works:*** *A Twitter conference means that anyone anywhere can attend, and you can even catch up after the event by following our hashtag #ArchMol20. The conference will be hosted by @MuseumLiverpool which will introduce the conference and each speaker.*

*Each presenter will be given 15 minutes during which they will tweet their presentation Twitter thread of around 10 tweets. Each tweet can include images, links, gifs etc and will need to include our hashtag #ArchMol20.*

**#Hashtag: [#ArchMol20](https://twitter.com/ArchMol20)**

## On-Line Resources

Thanks to Sue for the following links:

### ***Bryn Celli Ddu***

Bryn Celli Ddu project 2015-2020

<https://bryncellidduarchaeology.wordpress.com/the-bryn-celli-ddu-rock-art-project/>

An audio postcard of the sights & sounds of Bryn Celli Ddu in Wales

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08hgfz7>

<https://jonhughesmusic.com/>

### ***Manchester Centre for Public History and Heritage***

Includes another link to Bryn Celli Ddu along with other resources

<https://mcphh.org/>

<https://mcphh.org/bryn-celli-ddu-minecraft-experience/>

### ***Nautical Archaeology Society***

Weekly Webcasts can be found at:

<https://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/coved-talks-weekly-webcast>

### ***Roman Inscriptions of Britain***

Lots of information drawn from the writings of those who lived, served, and died in Roman Britain.

<https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/>

### ***International Medieval Congress***

Various interactive sessions including a virtual Conference to be held on 6th July. There is a small charge but the first 1500 applicants to book get free entry:

<https://www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc-2020/programme/>