



### From the Editor

Welcome to the November News Bulletin. The MAS Council met on 11th November where we finalised the arrangements for our delayed 2020 AGM. Further details appear below. We also had our second lecture via Zoom on 19th November. Mark gave an excellent illustrated lecture on recent archaeological work at Princes Dock. The talk was well attended by 28 members and went smoothly. Now we have gained confidence in the technology we are expanding our Winter lecture programme to include guest speakers from outside the Society. Details of the January lecture can be found on page 2. The version of Zoom that we are using can accommodate up to 100 attendees so please try to join us for our AGM and Quiz on 17th December.

This Bulletin is again rather brief. Inside you will find Maurice's final instalment, as Society Chair, of 'Archaeology is Everywhere'. I am sure there will be further contributions from him in the coming months. There is also an article from the University of Liverpool Field School on excavations at Greasby and Prescot. Sue has been busy compiling further useful links to a variety of sites containing useful on-line information and activities to keep you entertained during lockdown and beyond. This month's list includes 2 TV series which you can catch up on if you have not been watching them.

### MAS 2020 AGM and Christmas Quiz

The 2020 AGM will be held via Zoom on 17th December starting at 7.30 p.m. A link will be sent via e-mail a week or so before the meeting.

Enclosed with this Newsletter you should find an AGM agenda, the minutes from the last AGM, the 2019 Chair and Treasurer's reports and Accounts. You will also find a voting paper which includes the nominations for the 2020 Council. This is the same list that appeared in the last Newsletter as no further nominations have been received.

There are 2 votes on the voting paper. The first is to accept the 2019 Accounts and to appoint an Auditor for 2020. The Auditor nominated by Council is named in the Treasurer's Report. The second vote is to formally accept the Officers and members of Council for 2020. If you intend to vote in the AGM you need to complete the voting form and return it using an e-mail attachment or via post in good time to arrive before 17th December. The return address is [vanessa.oakden@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](mailto:vanessa.oakden@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk) or to the Membership Secretary at 24 Rushton Avenue, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside WA12 0EN.

If there are any questions arising from the circulated AGM papers they should be submitted to the Chair, before the meeting. Return details for any questions are on the Agenda.

The next Newsletter will be issued prior to Christmas and will include the results of the AGM votes for those of you unable to join us on 17th December.

### Merseyside Archaeological Society

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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.

### Contents

From the Editor.....	1
MAS 2020 AGM & Christmas Quiz.....	1
Winter Meetings 2020/21.....	2
Archaeology is Everywhere.....	2
University of Liverpool Field School.....	3
On-Line Resources.....	3

## Winter Meetings 2020/21

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 17 December 7.30PM** Maurice Handley *AGM & Christmas Quiz*

Those without access to the internet will be able to submit a postal vote. This will be followed by Maurice's now traditional Christmas Quiz, though you will unfortunately have to supply your own mince pies and refreshments.

**Thursday 21 January 7.30 PM** Chris Kolonko, Citizan, 'Decoys and Rubble - Taking another look at the wartime coast'.

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.

There's a handy introduction to how to use Zoom in this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOUwumKCW7M>

We have now had 2 meetings using Zoom technology, both of which have been hugely successful.

## Archaeology is Everywhere

The meeting on December 17th will be our first attempt at a virtual AGM. As a charity we have to comply with the Charity Commissioners advice in these unusual circumstances. Please make sure you return your voting paper even if you can't or don't wish to attend the AGM.

The first AGM of the Merseyside Archaeological Society was in April 1977. There are still a few members who have been in the society since those early days, including Dorothy O'Hanlon and Dave Roberts who both served on the original steering committee. It won't be long before we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary and I'm sure the MAS Council would welcome any suggestions for a suitable event on reaching that milestone. Meanwhile we hope to be back to normal soon and will resume planning the Archaeology in Merseyside (AIM) conference that was postponed until October.

Professional archaeologists need a wide knowledge to be able to investigate so many different types of site. In an average year they might be involved with a range of investigations from Prehistoric to World War Two. However, for our Christmas Quiz after the AGM you will not need such a vast range of expertise. The short quiz, based mainly on what we have seen or heard about during this year, will consist of a series of illustrations followed by multi-choice answers. It's not competitive or intended to be difficult. Just bring a pen and paper to record your answers.

*Maurice Handley*

## University of Liverpool Field School October 2020

Despite the best efforts of the pandemic, the University of Liverpool undergraduate training excavation took place, directed by Harold Mytum and Rob Philpott. We picked two contrasting sites to provide a varied experience for the students. At the first, in Greasby, Wirral, we investigated a sub-rectangular enclosure which had been found in aerial reconnaissance in 1991. Superficially this resembled Romano-British enclosures in the lowland North West. However, the enclosure is unusual for this region as it has a small annexe at one end and is divided into two compartments by a cross-ditch. There is also a sinuous feature, apparently a trackway, running across it which must therefore be later in date. We cut nine (socially distanced) trenches as an evaluation across the enclosure ditch and in the interior. The enclosure ditch had a uniform fill, suggesting it had not filled in gradually with the kind of detritus and rubbish accumulation found elsewhere, including nearby in the Romano-British enclosure ditch at Irby, but had rather been largely backfilled in a single operation. The three main ditch sections produced no artefacts. Within the enclosure there were traces of structural gullies and post-holes but they required a wider area than the narrow trenches to make coherent sense. The trenches also identified the trackway, which had been consolidated with pebbles. The results were somewhat unexpected. The lack of Roman finds, especially pottery, suggests it was not occupied during the Roman period but during an aceramic period. The Iron Age is a possibility but so is the early medieval period. It is worth noting that the early medieval site at Digg Lane, Moreton was surrounded by an enclosure ditch. One highly speculative thought is that the place-name Greasby appears in Domesday Book in 1086 as *Gravesberie*, Old English for 'stronghold (burh) at a wood'. Could this enclosure be the 'stronghold' which gave Greasby its name? We have no dating evidence yet but radiocarbon from charcoal may yet provide us with at least the correct millennium.

The second week saw test-pitting in Prescott Vicarage garden. The walled garden here, mapped in 1809 and probably of 18th-century date, has a fine south-facing aspect. It lies close to the church, in part of an ecclesiastical complex which has been defined since at least the mid 15th century when a vicarage was built by King's College Cambridge, the lords of Prescott manor.

We dug 10 one-metre square test-pits to the natural glacial till, identifying the whole sequence of build up in each trench. Unsurprisingly, the layers showed much reworking through gardening and cultivation. However, they produced a large and interesting sample of cultural material with connections to Prescott's industries. They included glass waste probably from the early 18th-century glass factory nearby in West Street. Thin-walled table wares in white salt-glazed stoneware, and coarser brown salt-glazed stoneware were probably products of the factory recorded in the mid 18th century by Dr Richard Pococke. There was a little abraded medieval pottery, with the heavily sanded fabrics and thin splash-glazes characteristic of local products, and the usual dark-glazed wares in profusion. Further work is planned in Prescott in 2021 involving the local community and the University and a project which enables local people to investigate the historic fabric of their own town through archaeological excavation. We anticipate more pottery! We will put a notice in the newsletter when details of the community project are finalised.

*Rob Philpott and Harold Mytum*

## On-Line Resources

### *TV programmes to watch or catch up on*

**Surviving the Stone Age** 7.10 - 8.10pm Channel 4 started Sat 7<sup>th</sup> November 3 programmes. A group of people are in Bulgaria in a 'living experiment'

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/surviving-the-stone-age/episode-guide>

**Britain's Most Historic Towns** 8.10 – 9.10pm Channel 4 started Sat 7<sup>th</sup> November

There will be 5 programmes and the first ones have been Medieval Lincoln, Restoration London, and Nelson/Trafalgar era naval Portsmouth. This is Series 3 and the two previous series (6 programmes each) are also available at

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/britains-most-historic-towns/episode-guide>

### *Dates for your diary*

Free online two-day conference for a research project looking at **farming and food production in the Anglo-Saxon period** FEEDSAX.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> Dec from 9.30am – 5pm, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec morning only 10 am – 12.30**

To participate, **register in advance (free)**. Registration and full programme here:

<https://feedsax.arch.ox.ac.uk/conference.html>

NB if anyone is interested in the publications of the **Medieval Settlement Research Group**, the last 12 years of their journal are available to download free from the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). There is a very short time delay ie 2018 can be downloaded

now, 2019 will be available from November 2021 but you can see the 2019 Contents pages now at:  
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/series.xhtml?recordId=1000235>

If you go to the **ADS library** browse page <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse.xhtml> you can see what other journals, monographs etc are also available!

### **Greater Manchester Archaeology Day & Festival (virtual meeting) 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> December**

[www.digggreatermanchester.wordpress.com](http://www.digggreatermanchester.wordpress.com) this will be a twitter conference (like Liverpool Museum's Festival of Archaeology in the summer), a series of podcasts, plus some pre-recorded talks put online

### ***Self-guided walks***

Available to download from online websites:

**Southport area:** lots of local walks around the town and its hinterland available at

<https://www.visitsouthport.com/inspire-me/top-picks/top-10-walks>

and for cyclists: <https://www.visitsouthport.com/things-to-do/walking-cycling> This site uses an app to download the tours from the website <https://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org/programs/southport-historic-tours/>

This one for historical Southport town is a two sided A4 leaflet that you can print out

<http://southportnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/SHS-Self-Guided-Historical-Walking-Tour.pdf>

**Fort Crosby** (a Second World War military installation partly demolished and partly still visible in the open access dunes, accessible from the coastal path). As part of the HLF-funded Sefton Coastal landscape partnership scheme, Alison Burns created an illustrated booklet well worth reading about the site\*.

[https://www.academia.edu/17314554/Forgotten\\_Fort\\_Crosby\\_Dune\\_Heritage\\_Revealed](https://www.academia.edu/17314554/Forgotten_Fort_Crosby_Dune_Heritage_Revealed)

To help people explore the accessible remains (some are off-limits on the Altcar Military training site), she also published a guided walk called TRACING THE PAST (NB 24MB to download) [https://www.academia.edu/24614978/TRACING\\_THE\\_PAST](https://www.academia.edu/24614978/TRACING_THE_PAST)

\* If you are not already registered on academia you can do it for free and then access articles that people have published and made publicly available

### **Formby** prehistoric footprints, archaeology and history:

As part of the coastal landscape partnership project, Alison also published (\*on academia) a booklet on the human and animal footprints that are sometimes exposed on the foreshore at Formby

[https://www.academia.edu/8297938/The\\_Prehistoric\\_Footprints\\_at\\_Formby](https://www.academia.edu/8297938/The_Prehistoric_Footprints_at_Formby)

Other information about the area is available through the National Trust Formby website:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/formby/features/prehistoric-footprints-at-formby>

Lots of ideas for walks around Formby looking at evidence of past landuse and activities (marked on a map) also provided by the National Trust

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/formby/trails/undiscovered-formby>

### **Liverpool city**

**Book: Walks through History, Liverpool** by David Lewis published by Breedon Books in 2007. It includes 12 walks starting with the original seven streets dealing with the development of the city through its urban areas, docks, parks and personalities. The text and maps are easy to follow and very readable. And a downloadable app for a self-guided historical tour of Liverpool is available here:

<https://www.gpsmycity.com/tours/liverpool-historical-sites-walking-tour-4808.html>

**Wirral:**

Lots of good walking guides in Wirral (including the one for Bidston Hill that some MAS members explored in September) available from the Local authority website.

Each route has a clear map and a separate description to help you follow the route.

<https://www.visitwirral.com/things-to-do/activities/walking>

**Thelwall:**

The Thelwall History Group have devised a short walk (about 1 mile) around about the village. There are lots of interesting highlights clearly mapped on a map and the leaflet can be downloaded from here:

<http://thelwallcommunity.co.uk>

**Get involved:**

And if you fancy creating your own walking tour route, the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) has lots of ideas, some example tours and an app to help you create your own tour here:

[https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/blog/explore-heritage-your-local-area-1604591947?dm\\_i=10MV,748BX,MNXPP3,SS6T7,1](https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/blog/explore-heritage-your-local-area-1604591947?dm_i=10MV,748BX,MNXPP3,SS6T7,1)

**Take on the Local Explorer Challenge**

The CBA's Local Explorer Challenge is your chance to get out and about and discover the historic environment in your neighbourhood. We've created a challenge for you to do with family or friends, in person or online. Download the challenge card and see how many things you can find. From ghost signs to graffiti, evidence of the history of your local environment is everywhere without you necessarily noticing it. This activity is designed to reveal that history and get you thinking archaeologically about where you live.

Share what you find on social media using the [#LocalExplorerChallenge\(link is external\)](#) hashtag.

Download your challenge card here: <https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/events/local-explorer-bingo-challenge-1601911002>

If you missed the **CBA Festival of Archaeology**, which included a week of online events in October, several of them were recorded and are available through their website here:

<https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/about>

*Sue Stallibrass*