



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 2/2017

Registered Charity No 510831

MAS Membership Subscriptions 2017

Subscriptions for 2017 fell due on 1st January. If you have not yet renewed your membership please return the form which was sent to you at the beginning of the year or contact the Membership Secretary now.

MAS Lectures at The Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool

Our lectures are held at The Quaker Meeting House in School Lane in the City Centre (post code L1 3BT). We meet at 7 p.m. for tea and coffee and lectures start promptly at 7.30. All are welcome including non-members.

April 27th - Annual General Meeting followed by a talk from Samantha Rowe entitled- 'Assessing the condition of battle-related artefacts from conflict sites'.

Samantha made her mark as the project officer managing the highly successful 'Rainford's Roots' community archaeology project. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Huddersfield.

MAS Fieldtrips - Summer 2017

Saturday 3rd June - Castlefields, Manchester with Norman Redhead. Roman remains, workers' housing, railways, warehouses, canals and 21st century civil engineering. Meet at 10.30 in the Museum of Science and Industry cafe. The museum is near to Deansgate Station and Metro tram stop. There is car parking on New Quay street (see the Museum's website). This is a joint meeting with the Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society. Please let Maurice Handley know if you coming on this trip.

Saturday 5th August - Pen y Cloddiau Hillfort with Fiona Gale and Rachel Pope.

Sunday 6th August - From the Vale of Clwyd to the Dee Valley: a transect over the watershed visiting some little known localities.

This weekend can be done as separate days or combined with an overnight stay in the Ruthin area. Further details to follow.

Arrangements for additional trips will be confirmed by separate newsletter. For more details please contact Maurice Handley by email: mahandley@tesco.net or phone 0151 426 8157

MAS Web site

Please note the change to our web site address below. We have now made MAS Journals 1-10 available on-line in PDF format on the Publications page.

Merseyside Archaeological Society

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Mark Adams

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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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Remembering Ken Lamb

It is with great sadness that the Council has learned that Ken Lamb passed away at the end of 2016 after a lengthy illness. Ken was an active, long-standing member of the Society and when he finally resigned from the Council due to his deteriorating health he was awarded a life membership for the many years he served as Events Secretary. Ken was a lively, enthusiastic, individual and always managed to produce outstanding lecture and fieldtrip programmes. He had a great passion for archaeology and will be sadly missed.

World Heritage Big History Fair

The Big History Fair will be held at St George's Hall on Saturday 29th and 30th April. Admission is £2 and as well as tables, displays from local Societies (including MAS) and Institutions there will be a programme of talks from guest historians plus some special guests. Tickets for these sessions will be available on the day of the event.

We are currently short of volunteers to help run our stall on both days. If you have a few hours to help out please e-mail (contact details on page 1) or phone Dave Roberts (0151 427 2980).

MAS Conference - Past Forward 2016

Those of you who attended our 2-day Conference will be aware that the event was filmed. Videos of many of the talks are now available on You-Tube. If you want to see what you missed or wish to re-live the experience there is a link from which you can watch on the MAS web-site Events page:
<http://www.merseysidearchsoc.com/events-and-field-trips.html>

Museum of Liverpool, Festival of Archaeology 2017

To Celebrate the Festival of Archaeology the Museum of Liverpool will be hosting a range of free events to explore the archaeology collection and the long history of human activity in Merseyside!

Facelab

Discover the skills and technology behind Liverpool John Moores University's Face Lab with hands-on activities. Explore facial reconstruction including celebrity face ID from plaster casts, basic facial reconstruction skills and techniques, trials with haptic 3D modelling software, surface scanning and computerised facial reconstruction. Suitable for all visitors.
27th July 1pm-4pm

Stone Age Pendant-making

Join Travellers Through Time to try your hand at using a stone age bow drill to make your very own pendant. Suitable for all visitors.
29 July, 12.30-3.30pm

Little Diggers

Follow the clues to find the treasures hidden around the museum in this fun and informative hunt especially for our younger visitors. Suitable for children 3-7 years old.
22, 24-28 July, ticketed sessions 11.30am, 1pm and 2.30pm

Roman Fibula-making

Join Travellers Through Time to make your own Roman-style brooch using bent wire and beads. Suitable for all visitors.
22 July, 12.30-3.30

Let's Be Archaeologists

Be an archaeologist and make your own discoveries about Liverpool and the surrounding areas. Carry out excavations of Roman, Viking, Tudor and Victorian sites, whilst learning about the importance of evidence and investigating the finds. Suitable for families.
24-26 July, ticketed sessions at 11am, 2pm and 3pm

Archaeology Crafternoon

Get making! Learn more about the archaeology of our region and make something to take home with you too! Suitable for families.
24, 26, 29 and 30 July 1-4pm
25 and 27 July, 11-12.30 and 1-4pm

Curatorial Talks

Join our archaeologists to learn about latest discoveries and highlights from the collection in a series of five curatorial talks. Suitable for adults.
12.30pm-4.30pm

Archaeology Object Handling

Join the Museum's Education Team as we investigate our archaeology handling collection. Suitable for all visitors.
At intervals each day 24-30 July

Fun Finds

See some of the latest discoveries from Merseyside and learn how archaeologists interpret and record finds. Suitable for all visitors.
24 July 1.30-4pm

Timeline Tours

Explore our timeline of Merseyside's past from Ice Age to present through this fascinating tour.
27 July 11.30

Ron Cowell is also planning to run some Lunt site visits, but the dates aren't set yet.

Keep an eye on the Museum of Liverpool web-site for further details and booking arrangements.
<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mol/events/>

Community Excavation on Hilbre 2016



Hilbre Excavation 2017 - View of the North trench. Photo: Dave Roberts

In summer of 2016 a community excavation took place on Hilbre island, funded in part by Wirral Borough Council's Your Wirral fund, and in collaboration with the Friends of Hilbre. The work followed on from an excavation to create a pond in the Bird Observatory garden on Hilbre, in 2006-7, directed by the writer. The excavation revealed the remains of a structure defined by a series of post-holes cut into the top of the underlying bedrock, with stones packed around the original, now vanished, posts. In 2016, two new trenches were opened, one at each end of the 2006 trench, to examine the possible extension to the line of postholes.

The provisional results from the excavation show the following archaeological sequence. Under the modern topsoil, was a deep deposit of windblown sand which included modern finds. This had buried a turf and old topsoil layer of compact dark-grey soil which contained finds dating from the 16th – 19th centuries, including coal, window glass, and two very finely made Cistercian-type ware cup rims. This in turn lay above a weathered sandstone brash which was the weathered surface of bedrock. Within this deposit were a few small semi-circular edge areas of dark silty sand associated with one or more stones set on edge. The spacing and alignment was regular supporting the interpretation as a row of post-holes, which aligned on those found in 2006.

In the middle of the north trench there is a strong concentration of cobbles. These stones were probably collected from the beach and transported for use as building material. They seem to have been carefully selected for their size (8-15 cm) and rounded shape. At the west side of the area the stones are tightly packed between two larger cobbles before fanning out and becoming less concentrated at the east end. This cobbled area lies precisely along the projected line of postholes and appears to have been laid to consolidate an area of ground that was subject to a lot of wear or trampling. The most likely interpretation is that the area formed the threshold to the building.

So far we have not found any objects allowing us to date the building. The structure is earth-fast so is unlikely to be later than the 14th century or so, and the slight curve evident in the post-hole alignment

is reminiscent of Scandinavian-type houses. Our best estimate is currently that it belongs to the period between AD 400 and 1200. During the initial 2006 excavation, the contents of postholes were sieved in an attempt to find pieces of charred material suitable for radiocarbon dating. Unfortunately, no fragments were found so dating remained uncertain.

Further test-pitting on the northern part of the island by Roy Forshaw as part of the same project has begun to investigate the remains of the salt-works which are known to have been present in the late 17th and early 18th century.

Grateful thanks are due to Your Wirral fund, and Wirral Borough council for permission to excavate, Matt Thomas, the Friends of Hilbre and all the volunteers who did the hard work! A display in West Kirby Museum will present the results of the excavation, opening on 1 April.

Rob Philpott

West Kirby Museum commemorates Charles Dawson Brown

The newly refurbished West Kirby Museum opened in July 2013. Formerly known as the Charles Dawson Brown Museum, founded in 1892, it was hidden away for over a century, available to view by appointment only. It is housed in a pyramidal-roofed building, part of a range of traditional sandstone buildings which in turn form part of the St Bridget's Community Centre. The centre lies in the West Kirby Old Village Conservation Area which is dominated by the adjacent Grade II* listed St Bridget's Church.

Charles Dawson Brown was the local historian, antiquarian and benefactor who preserved the ancient stones which were being unearthed during the rebuilding of St. Bridget's Church in 1869. These stones form the core of the museum collection.

The original museum room has been completely transformed into a modern, spot-lit and accessible display area. This room tells the story of a thousand years of St. Bridget's Church including pre-Norman, Norman, Medieval and recent acquisitions relating to the church.

The stone collection includes 10th century Anglo-Saxon stone cross fragments, a Saxon font, Viking grave slabs, a 12th century child's coffin and what is thought to be a 10th century pilgrimage footbath. There are some fine architectural pieces including Norman pillar bases and capitals, stone heads and window tracery.

The museum space now extends into a new second room. This space allows us to include displays about the old village of West Kirby, the old school and other items found in or around the parish of West Kirby. Two additional new display cases provide an opportunity for the Museum Research Group to mount temporary exhibitions. These are changed every few months. The Research Group is very active and meets once a week in St Bridget's Centre.

Christine Longworth

Mersey and Dee Young Archaeologists Club (YAC)

Mersey and Dee YAC is open to everyone aged 8-16 years. At our club you will be able to come along and learn about different periods of history, visit and investigate local archaeological sites (and take part in excavations!) and historic places, try out traditional crafts, join in half term and summer clubs, and so much more!

We are based at the Museum of Liverpool on the iconic Liverpool Pier Head and, usually meet every other month and a few times through the school holidays; to get an idea about what we have to offer in our sessions, check out our 'What's On' page.

<http://www.yac-uk.org/clubs/mersey-and-dee/whats-on-at-mersey-and-dee-yac>

Our club is run by members of National Museums Liverpool's archaeology department, education department and, a team of dedicated YAC volunteers. If you'd like to know more about how we recruit our volunteers, please have a look at our FAQs at *<http://www.yac-uk.org/faqs-grown-ups>*

Our membership costs £30 for the year and includes both our weekend (running from 10am to 11:30 am) and school holiday sessions (lasting all day).

If you know anyone who would be interested in joining please contact Liz Stewart:

Tel:0151 478 4443

Email:madyac@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk