



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 2/2015

Registered Charity No 510831

2015 Subscriptions

MAS Subscriptions for the new year were due on 1st January. Quite a few people who were members in 2014 have not yet renewed their subscription. If you have not yet paid your membership fee please do so as soon as possible.

MAS Council

We are pleased to welcome David Scott and Sue Stallibrass as new members of MAS Council.

There are a number of positions still vacant on MAS Council. With the prospect that we will be losing further long-standing committee members next year, we are eager to attract new council representatives particularly younger members of the Society in order to maintain continuity for the future. If you are interested please contact our Secretary, Martin Cox (contact details aside).

MAS Lecture Programme

Our lectures are held at The Quaker Meeting House in School Lane in the City Centre. The room is booked from 7 p.m. for tea and coffee and lectures start promptly at 7.30.

All welcome - including non-members.

If you have heard a particularly interesting talk or site visit please pass the information on to Maurice as an idea for a future event. mahandley@tesco.net

MAS 2015 Field Trip programme

Thursday October 15th - '50,000 years in the rainforests of Borneo - geoarchaeology of cave sediments': Dr Chris Hunt (JMU) 7.00pm in the Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool

The great rainforests of the world have long been regarded as 'green deserts' hostile to human life because most wild food items are widely spaced in time and space and many animals and birds live their lives in the high canopy, high above the forest floor and largely inaccessible before the invention of projectile weapons. Archaeology is really difficult to do in rainforests, so very little research has been carried out.

This talk will discuss the results of 15 years research in three projects in Borneo although it will concentrate on results from a project at the Great Cave of Niah. The story is far more complex than we had thought. Modern people had entered forest environments in Borneo before 50,000 years ago and had developed highly skilled strategies to live in these difficult and dangerous habitats. They learnt to manage the forest using fire, to detoxify poisonous plants and to exploit animal populations. But they lived through times

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.

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of dramatic environmental change with very rapid climatic and vegetational shifts. And they developed some of the cultural traits that characterise Borneo people to the present day, with complex secondary burial and ritual involving human heads appearing before 35,000 years ago. They also developed very early food production.

Thursday November 19th - 'The Volcanic Eruption of Santorini and its effects on the Bronze Age Minoans of the Eastern Mediterranean.' Prof. Silvia Gonzalez (JMU) 7.00 pm in the Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool

Around 3,500 years ago, the Santorini Volcano in the eastern Mediterranean Sea produced one of the largest volcanic eruptions known in Europe. At the time of the eruption the Minoans were a sophisticated Bronze Age seafaring culture that lived in the region. During the talk we will discuss the impact of the eruption on the Minoans and will explore in detail the evidence of their culture derived from the study of Akrotiri "The Greek Pompeii", a city that was covered suddenly by volcanic ash, with amazing preservation of buildings, frescos, etc giving a unique and vivid picture of life at the time of the eruption.

Thursday December 17th - Members evening at 7.00 pm in the Ship and Mitre, 133 Dale St, Liverpool L2 2JH An open evening when members can bring a short presentation or an artefact for discussion. There will also be a brief introduction to the 2016 Summer Field Weekend in the Lleyen peninsula. A sandwich buffet will be provided.

Provisional programme for 2016

January 21st 2016 - Mike Taylor 'Fields and Field Names at Thelwall'

February 18th 2016 - Dr David Jordan (JMU) Forensic Archaeology t.b.a.

March 17th 2016 - Paul Knight 'The role of Archaeologists in Mesopotamia in World War One'

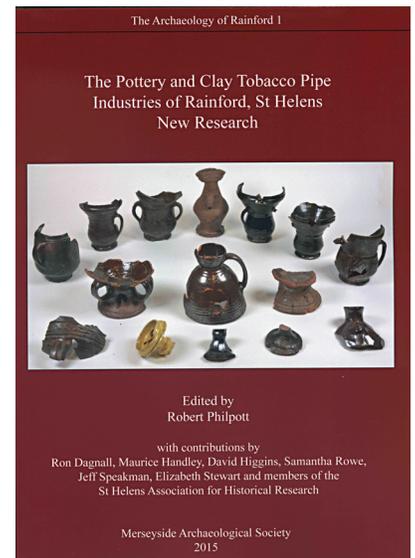
April 21st 2016 - AGM followed by 'a. n. other'.

Rainford's Roots - new publication

MAS has published the results of the Rainford's Roots project in a monograph. This book presents an overview of the archaeology of the historically rich village of Rainford, near St Helens. The archaeological excavations produced regionally significant groups of 16th and 17th century pottery and clay tobacco pipes dating from the 17th through to the early 20th century. The manufacture of pottery and clay tobacco pipes became an important cottage industry for the local community. It is written by MAS members, local historians, and archaeologists from the Museum of Liverpool and has been published in partnership with the Museum of Liverpool. It explores a range of evidence for the heritage of Rainford, and presents the results of the archaeological investigations which have revealed fresh evidence of the village's industrial past. It focusses on the research carried out between 2011 and 2014 as part of the HLF-funded Rainford's Roots Community Archaeology Project.

The monograph contains 226 pages and is illustrated in colour.

The book is available from Liz Stewart at the Museum of Liverpool and costs £20.00 plus £3.50 p&p.



Calderstones - Big Dig

On 26th October a small exhibition will open at the Museum of Liverpool to display some of the finds and findings of the recent 'Big Dig' in Calderstones Park. While excavations didn't reveal any prehistoric remains, the finds tell some of the history of the park over the last 300 years. A group of fragmentary C18th ceramics could be remains of the practice of spreading town 'night soil' on agricultural fields; a series of parallel ditches in another trench might date from the Second World War 'dig for victory' campaign; and the method of construction of the sunken haha wall was investigated.

Liz Stewart

Merseyside Historic Environment Record update

The Merseyside Historic Environment Record (MHER) digitisation and modernisation project continues, now having reached 62% completion. All of Wirral and large parts of Sefton, Liverpool and Knowsley are now complete with information from the original paper Sites and Monuments Record entries transferred to the new system. This brings us a lot closer to having a fully functioning HER that can be used in the planning process to ensure archaeology is properly considered during redevelopment.

The MHER is also now available on Heritage Gateway (<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>), the national web portal that enables HERs across the country to be searched for free. The data on the website is a little out of date, as it is only uploaded periodically, and as such you will find a lot of placeholder records with not a lot of information attached to them. New uploads will be made in the coming months and areas gradually filled in as we complete the digitisation project. If you use the online service and spot any errors or omissions, please do let us know: Merseyside.HER@eas.sefton.gov.uk.

Finally, if you would like to get involved in working on the MHER, you can volunteer! No previous experience of working with HERs or archaeological information is required as full training is provided. We can also reimburse travel expenses (public transport within Merseyside or equivalent). If you have a day or two (or more) a week that you can spare, do get in touch for more information. It is a great opportunity to get involved in the preservation of our area's heritage and all from the comfort of an office.

Ben Croxford

Historic Environment Record Officer

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, 1st Floor Merton House, Bootle

Museum of Liverpool - Recent Acquisitions

We've had an exciting new acquisition to the Regional Archaeology Collection at the Museum of Liverpool – two hoards of Roman treasure! The Knutsford and Malpas Hoards were both found by metal detectorists and reported through the Portable Antiquities Scheme to Vanessa Oakden, Finds Liaison Officer, based at the Museum. The hoards of coins and jewellery have now been acquired by Museum of Liverpool in partnership with Congleton Museum with the support of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The funding has covered the purchase price and will buy equipment to create a touring exhibition of the hoards, which we hope to open at Museum of Liverpool in early 2016.

Go to <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/507605> to see one of the Knutsford brooches

Liz Stewart



Artefacts from the Cheshire Hoards

Continuing Education course at the Atkinson, Southport:

Introduction to the Archaeology of Merseyside and Beyond Part 1 - Dr Robert Philpott
5 meetings from Wednesday 14 October 2-4pm

The North West of England has a rich and fascinating history. Archaeological discoveries over the past three decades have changed our understanding of the past, casting new light on the people of the region, their lives and occupations, and the material possessions they used in everyday life and to display their status and identity. The course will take an overview through time from the Iron Age to the 18th century of the archaeology of the North West region of England. Based on Merseyside and its neighbouring counties, we will look at case studies of excavations and other research to gain new insights into life in the past. Some familiar modern themes - trade, industry, identity, the north-south divide and immigration - may turn out to have surprisingly ancient roots.

Further information : www.liv.ac.uk/continuing-education/

MAS 39th AGM Thursday 16th April 2015 held at the Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool.

At a well attended and successful meeting, proceedings were opened with Rob Philpott in the Chair. Apologies were received from Geoff Woodcock and Cathy Ingram. With a minor amendment, the minutes of the 38th AGM 2014 were accepted as an accurate record.

Dave Roberts presented his report on the 2014 accounts. The society has moved from a deficit in 2013 to a current surplus and a further expected surplus in 2015. Much of this has been due to the Rainford's Roots Project and income from the October conference. Publication sales have also improved due to the sales of the Rainford's Roots publication and sales at the conference. Membership subscriptions have been very similar to that of 2013.

Our expenditure (and income) on lectures has increased, due to expenses, but administration costs have remained the same as 2013. The Society remains in a healthy financial situation providing our current level membership remains the same. Our membership list is some 105 though at this date, 50 memberships remain due.

Thanks were given to Neil McLaughlin Cook for examining the Society's accounts this year.

Our outgoing Chair, Rob Philpott, reported on a successful past year. There has been continued progress on the Merseyside HER which has been transferred to the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, managed by Dr Ben Croxford and assisted by Dr Dana Campbell. The two year project to create a digital record is well underway.

The Society has two journals in planning. Volume 15 is themed on Liverpool District and Volume 16 on Newton-le-Willows. There has been a highly successful programme of lectures, expertly organised by Dr Gina Muskett, from the curvilinear enclosures in the Wirral, astronomy in prehistoric Britain, the Big History project in Bromborough, West Kirby Hogback, to progress with Merseyside HER.

Excellent field trips have been organised by Maurice Handley taking us to Knowsley Park and Prescot, Liverpool Central Library archive and Rainford. Our grateful thanks to all our excellent speakers and field trip leaders.

Rob thanked Dave Roberts for his outstanding work in ensuring a sound financial basis for the Society and in particular our high quality newsletter, essential to the good working of MAS. Rob also thanked all Council members for their continued support and hard work.

Rainford's Roots has now reached its conclusion. This highly successful project was led by Sam Rowe who has now left to take up a funded PhD at Huddersfield University. A hallmark of the project was the engagement with the local community and this year saw the publication of an article on the society by Dave Roberts, Sam Rowe and Liz Stewart in the new journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage, Vol 1 no 2, exploring the role of MAS in community engagement since its inception 40 years ago.

The day conference 'The Archaeology of Merseyside': recent work in the region and beyond' was held on 18th October 2014 and was very well attended and promoted the value of the society to a wider public.

The Heritage Lottery Fund continues to be a good friend to the heritage of the region supporting, for example, work on coin hoards in Cheshire and the development of the mansion House at Calderstones Park.

Ben Croxford reported on progress with Merseyside HER with 40% digitisation of the record to date, to be completed by March 2016. This is very good progress.

The meeting received the report of progress with our constitutional review. The meeting supported the next steps proposed to improve our constitution in accordance with the best advice of the Charity Commission, subject to the approval of the Society.

The following were elected to Council for 2015/ 16:

Dave Roberts – Treasurer/ Editor, Newsletter
Anthony Sinclair, Membership Secretary
Maurice Handley, Events Co-ordinator
Rob Philpott, Past Chair
Martin Cox, Secretary
Ben Croxford, Michael Chapman, Diana Goodier, Sam Rowe,
Sue Stallibrass, David Scott, Chris Wood, Jenny Woodcock.

The meeting was unable to elect a Chair. A vote of thanks was made to outgoing members: Nancy Jenkins, Kerry Massheder-Rigby and Dr Gina Muskett.

NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY

The majority of our communications are by email and often by group email. There may be a problem with group email insofar that such an email might be 'junked' or in the case of a professional email address, blocked by a firewall. This is not a common problem but may have happened in the instance of one of our members. If you think this may be happening to you, please ring me (07843 200486) and I will endeavour to solve!

Martin Cox, Secretary

Bright Park – a Bright Future

Bright Park in Knotty Ash is the former site of Ashfield, the house of Henry Arthur Bright, 19th century shipping magnate, philanthropist, poet and gardener. Bright's family left the park and house to the council for the education of girls in the early 20th century.

The house was closed in 1987 and vandalism led to its demolition in 2003. The council, unwilling to invest in the park, gave the site to Liverpool Lighthouse, an Anfield based charity that serves the community and runs education courses.

The site is being revived for the community beginning with a

Heritage Open Day launch on the 13th September 2015. Plans for the park include a heritage centre, outdoor theatre and perhaps a Viking Longhouse reflecting the park's position in Thingwall, a centre for a Viking parliament a thousand years ago.

In conjunction with National Museums Liverpool and Travellers Through Time, the park is launching a community project, including an Oral History film of memories of the house, a geophysics survey of the site undertaken by local schools, culminating in a community dig in summer 2016, discovering the site of the original house and for any traces of Viking activity in the area.

See www.brightpark.co.uk and www.facebook.com/brightparkheritage for further information

Kerry Massheder-Rigby

Lister Steps Carnegie Community Hub

The team at Lister Steps, and the local community, continue to work hard to progress plans to regenerate the Grade II listed former Lister Drive Library (Carnegie Community Hub). The 'development' phase of our Heritage Lottery Fund bid is well underway and we have taken the comments and feedback received from our community consultations and used it to shape what the Hub will offer.

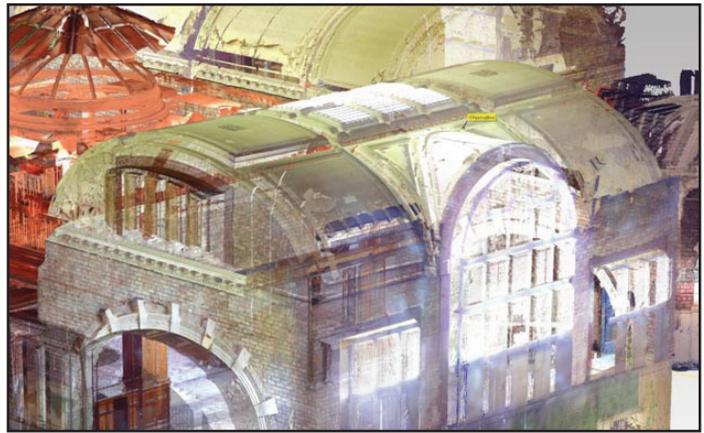
Summer at Lister Steps has been full of activities and great fun! Our Playscheme children have worked hard to produce the 'Tuebrook Heritage Trail' (which was kindly funded by Carillion plc) by visiting and researching historic places in our local area. We have been working with Film Makers and Community



Lister Steps Playscheme

Journalists from Periscope CIC to create a campaign video which we plan to release as part of our crowd funding appeal to raise money for the heritage project to go ahead.

We have appointed a 'Design Team' to work with us to develop our plans for the building and are in the process of appointing a Project Manager to support us through this critical stage of the Heritage Lottery Fund process. The team at Lister Steps has



3D laser scan image taken on 12th May 2015 by Dr Oriel Prizeman, Cardiff University

been very busy working towards our Heritage Lottery Fund 'Stage C' review. We have developed our 'Business Plan' and written an 'Activity Plan' detailing what the Hub will offer. A huge thank you to everyone who has attended our consultation and conversation events, completed surveys and commented on social media - your input has helped us shape and develop our proposals for the Hub.

We are planning a number of events to show everyone the first draft of the building designs so please visit www.listerstepshub.co.uk or 'like' us on Facebook to find out more.

Kerry Massheder-Rigby

A Roman Hair Pin

This copper alloy hair pin fragment was discovered in Farndon near Holt in Cheshire by a local metal detectorist. It has been recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database, www.finds.org.uk/database as LVPL-B4BC19.

The object is a fragment from a hairpin of Roman date. It depicts a dog or lion, but more probably a lion surmounted on an oval platform. The animal has a narrow face with pellet eyes and lentoid ears flat against the head. The mouth is open with the snout projecting beyond the lower lip. Surrounding the animal's neck is a thick collar, representing a rope or chain, with a rectangular projection below the neck to the front of the collar. The top of the head and the shoulders below the collar are decorated with deep grooves intending to represent a mane. The centre of the back is waisted which emphasises muscular hips and the back legs are standing but bent slightly forward. The animal is resting on its forelegs and appears to be in a 'pouncing position'. The tail curls up and forward over the animal before falling to one side.

Below the oval platform the object narrows into a circular-sectioned stem below which are two circumferential collars. Below the lower collar the object terminates with an ancient break. The object has a dark greenish brown patina and is in good condition.

Similar examples of Roman zoomorphic hairpins are illustrated in Kaufmann-Heinimann in August 26, p28. Currently on the PAS database we have 187 Roman hair pins recorded, most of which terminate with a conical or bi-conical knop. Only three examples,



Fragment of Roman hairpin

including this one, have zoomorphic terminals with both other examples being in the form of birds.

Dimensions: 26.41mm in length, 27.72mm in width, 9.22mm thick, 13.3g.

Vanessa Oakden

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