



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 1/2020

Registered Charity No 510831

MAS Membership Subscriptions 2020

Subscriptions for 2020 fell due on 1st January. A renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter

A note from the Chair

For those who visited Hilbre on a sunny day in August it was disappointing to miss visiting the main island. A fire involving plastic in a sea cave had resulted in the police and fire brigade stopping access to the island. MAS has since learnt that contractors working to make the cliff safe were allegedly at fault and as well as damage to the natural environment, the archaeology of the site may have been compromised. The owners, Wirral Borough Council, has admitted they were at fault and are taking steps to deal with the matter. MAS has written to the Council, expressing concerns about the lack of due diligence in carrying out this work and has urged the Council to ensure proper consultation is carried out before further work is attempted. Roy Forshaw has provided an update in an article on page 3 of this Newsletter.

During recent years, local authorities have been stretched financially and have not been staffed to fully monitor planning applications and other permitted developments. Merseyside councils can however consult the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service and Merseyside Historic Environment Record - advisory bodies that are funded by the local councils. MAS members can help by keeping a watchful eye on applications and potential developments and informing the society or other heritage groups of any risk to an archeological site or failure to acknowledge the potential to discover archeology on a site.

On April 23rd, we will be holding the AGM when we will be electing members of the Council with responsibility for running the society. If you would like to be involved in this please let me or any other Council member know. If you would like to attend a Council meeting to observe how it works speak to me or a Council member at an ordinary meeting. I should add that I will have completed my stint as Chair in April and I would like to thank all the members of Council for their contribution and attendance at meetings - its been a pleasure to chair those meetings in Liverpool Library and on most occasions to finish before the Library's 'Big Brother or Sister' announces on the tannoy that "The Library will close in twenty minutes".

Maurice Handley

A Volunteering Opportunity....Graveyard Recording at All Saints, Childwall

Graveyard Recording at All Saints Childwall continues in 2020. We are looking for additional volunteers to finish this work and welcome any MAS members who might be interested. No prior experience is required. For further details of what we are doing and how to become involved please contact Dave Roberts (e-mail: drandpr@blueyonder.co.uk. Tel: 427 2980).

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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MAS Lectures at The Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool

Merseyside Archaeological Society meets at the Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BT. Tea and Coffee is available from 7 p.m. and lectures start at 7.30 prompt. All are welcome including non-members. There is a small charge.

Thurs 23rd Jan 2020 **Zosia Archibald** '*Tectonic plates – geological, cultural, and historical: recent archaeology in the northern Aegean and the Theraic Gulf*'.

Thurs 20th Feb 2020 - **Dan Garner** '*Recent Fieldwork on Merseyside*'. This talk will discuss some recent excavations in and around Liverpool including Tithebarn Street where a large dump of pottery manufacturing waste from a documented 18th century pottery (producing delftware) was found. At Melling an interesting assemblage of early Post-Medieval pottery has also been found.

Thurs 19th March 2020 **Heather Beeton** '*The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Merseyside: Artefacts from Merseyside identified and recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme*'. This talk will discuss finds from the North-West recently reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme

Thurs 23rd April 2020 AGM and **M. Adams** '*Atlas Street Copper Works St. Helens and Hervey, Peek and Hervey's Ordsall Chemical Works: Recent Excavation*'. This talk will provide 'edited highlights' of recent excavation on two industrial sites in St. Helens and Salford. The Atlas Works, St. Helens, was established in the mid-19th century as part of a resurgence of the copper smelting industry in the town. Hervey, Peek & Hervey's Ordsall Chemical Works produced a range of products, mainly related to the dye industry.

2019 Autumn Talks - A Review

'Violence, Ideology and Classical Archaeology in the Early Decades of French Colonization in Algeria' - Bonnie Effros (19/9/19). This correspondent did not attend the meeting but there is a comprehensive abstract by the speaker in the previous newsletter.

'Pottery Finds at Chapel Wharf, Salford' - Samantha Rowe (17/10/19). Sam was due to talk about archaeological investigation at the Shakespeare North Playhouse Site in Prescott but in a last minute change she spoke instead about pottery finds at Chapel Wharf in Salford. Finds were of material dumped in ditches that formed the boundaries of small fields and burgages - narrow plots of land rented from the town's burgess. Over 2500 sherds were recovered, ranging from 13th to 20th centuries, the finds were mainly mis-shaped or broken pottery. Finds of typical local medieval pottery included Northern Gritty Ware and oxidised Sandy Ware. Early post-medieval pottery included Midland Purple, Dark Glazed Fineware and Yellow Ware similar to that found at Rainford and Norton Priory. Some of the pottery was probably from Staffordshire or was made by a Staffordshire potter who had settled in the Manchester area. The absence of kiln accessories implied that pottery was not manufactured at the site. Sam suggested that it could have been imported from Merseyside or the Midlands. In a brief reference to Prescott finds, Sam showed a picture of a plate with highly decorated slip ware. Sam will be returning to talk about the Prescott finds at this year's October Conference.

'The Roman Archaeology of Quay Meadow, Lancaster' - Andy Reilly (21/11/19). In November, Andy Reilly, the chairman of Lancaster and District Heritage Group gave a well illustrated and informative talk about the Group's foray into community archaeology. They started with an excavation in Quay Meadow, with lies in the flood plain of the River Lune just below Lancaster Castle. With around 25-30 members, their group managed to secure Royal support with a grant from the Duchy of Lancaster. Helped by former Time Team archaeologist, Raksha Dave of Dig Ventures, they succeeded in uncovering evidence of Roman activity just below the surface - the nearby Castle lies within a known Roman fort. They uncovered the remains of buildings and a road as well as about 1500 finds. In the 18th century a quay was constructed on the edge of the river and it is likely that this was on the site of a port in Roman times. The group made an application for a second dig at the site but were frustrated by the Council. So, they moved to the garden of a nearby house and low and behold found part of the ramparts of the Roman fort. The group has engaged with the community by inviting schools to the digs. For most of the group it was their first experience of archaeology - 'Thank God for Knee Pads' said Andy - and they have much to celebrate at their regular meetings in The George and Dragon on the Quay.

Maurice Handley

Members of MAS can now receive a 10% discount on the price of becoming a National Museums Liverpool member!

All you have to do is phone the membership team on 0151 478 4157 and quote the code 'MAS10'. You can find out more about the benefits of membership here: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/development/membership/>

Free On-line courses

University of Reading is running free on-line courses for anyone with a general interest in Archaeology or who wishes to go on and study the subject at degree level. For further information go to: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/archaeology?utm_campaign=fl_january_2020&utm_medium=futurelearn_organic_email&utm_source=newsletter_broadcast&utm_term=030120_NL_BOW_00_30&utm_content=course01_location

Wigan Archaeological Society Special Meeting

Wigan Archaeological Society will be having a special meeting in March having invited Dr Andrew Birley to come and give them a talk on the Excavation of the Roman Fort at Vindolanda. Andrew, who is current director of the excavations, will be telling us all about the latest developments and fascinating discoveries made during the last few seasons. The venue is the Mercure Oak Hotel in Wigan on 4th March (starting at 7.00pm). Tickets are £5 - available on Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talk-on-the-excavations-of-the-roman-fort-at-vindolanda-tickets-85573640061> or contact Bill Aldridge on 01257 402342 (bill@wiganarchsoc.co.uk).

Chester City Wall Collapse

A section of Chester's historic defensive wall has collapsed after earth was removed from its base by developers planning to build luxury apartments. A spokesperson for Chester Council said that the removal of too much earth exposed a section of the wall's foundation. The city was founded in northwest England as a Roman fort in the first century A.D. The full circuit of the nearly 2,000-year-old wall is thought to be the oldest and most complete in Britain.

Hilbre Island Update



Hilbre from Middle Eye on our field trip last summer

Those who attended the intended walk over to Hilbre Island last summer will recall that things did not quite go to plan. Whilst travelling over on the train to lead the walk I received a phone call from Wirral Borough Council to say that the island was closed due to a fire in a cave. The cave repairs had caused a number of archaeological and ecological concerns as the extruded polystyrene used as a support had been inundated by the tide resulting in small pieces of polystyrene spread all over the coastline. The method of work also appeared to disregard the archaeology on the island with vehicles and materials left over features and earthworks. The fire happened because I believe the curing process in the confined cave caused the inflammable material to ignite covering the island in smoke and toxic gases. Hence our walk terminated on the cliffs of Middle Eye. At least it was a sunny day and we could look over and admire the island whilst having lunch in pleasant surroundings.

So what has happened since? Wirral Borough Council was heavily criticised for lack of consultation with the island stake holders, Historic England and the County Archaeologist. A meeting on the island then took place between ecologists and engineers but unfortunately the archaeology was not represented. Further concerns expressed over lack of consultation has now resulted in Wirral Borough Council discussing options with Vicky Nash who is County Archaeologist, Christine Longworth and myself. The authority was looking at three options to resolve the problems they were having with the cave. Due to erosion in and around the cave a large part of the cliff was starting to become unsafe and cracks were appearing. The options were as quoted from their report:

- a. A least cost option of allowing the cliff to deteriorate naturally but managing the risk through the provision of appropriate warning signs and potentially physical barriers to keep the public away from the danger area, as much as possible;
- b. Repairing the defence line. The breach in the defences has caused scour behind and underneath the rock cliff, so any option would need to fill that cavern in before providing reinstating protection to the outer face; or
- c. Provision of a rock armour buttress directly in front of the cliff to prevent further undercutting.

Following advice from RSK Environmental the Authority has decided to go for option A and allow the substantial area of rock face to collapse naturally. In early February, the beach area around the cave and the land above will be fenced off preventing access close

to it. It is hoped that the final position of the fence will take into account known and potential archaeology. I have identified buried masonry walls in the area and there could also be prehistoric remains as the fence is close to a shell midden. The method of erecting the low fence is also important as the intended blind driven posts could damage buried features. The shallow topsoil overlying the natural rock in many places may also be insufficient to retain a fence. A decision needs to be made as to whether the area of grassland over the cave needs to be investigated for potential archaeology before it is allowed to fall into the River Dee.

Building consultants have also been appointed to appraise the condition of the buildings on the island. There has been minimal maintenance over the years and the buildings are falling into disrepair to a stage where they are at risk due to water damage and decay. It is hoped that the required repairs will be done and the buildings such as the Telegraph Keepers House, Buoy Masters House and Buoy Store workshop are brought back into use. The buoy store has already been tidied up in readiness for opening as a small museum.

I am sure the society will repeat the Hilbre visit with greater success next time.

Roy Forshaw

The Calderstones, Calderstones Park, Liverpool.



The Calderstones comprise a collection of internationally significant prehistoric rock-art and represent the earliest evidence of settled life in the region. Originally part of a passage-grave, the 6 highly decorated stones were moved to a glasshouse in 1964, an unsuitable environment which accelerated their deterioration. Thanks to funding secured by The Reader from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Liverpool City Council, the ancient monoliths have undergone essential conservation work, laser scanning and re-location.

Last Autumn the stones returned to a new, specially designed home within the gardens of the Grade II listed Mansion House in the centre of Calderstones Park. The Mansion House has re-opened as The Reader's International Centre for Shared Reading. The changes that have been made in the way the Calderstones are presented are significant. Instead of the former mis-leading stone circle arrangement the stones are now displayed in 2 rows of 3, with a path between the rows to represent the interior of a passage-grave.

The monoliths are now more accessible. Rather than being locked away in a glasshouse for much of the time the stones are on open display so visitors can view their decoration at close quarters. There is an informative museum display in an adjacent room within the Mansion House, which explains the pre-historic background to the area and describes the historic journey that the stones have made to their present location.

The Mansion House itself has also undergone extensive renovation. Closed since the early 1970s, the building was in a poor state of repair when The Reader took on the restoration project a few years ago. The house has now become a 'unique public space' hosting Shared Reading groups and other activities. Visitors can walk through 'The Calderstones Story' to discover the history of the house from its beginnings as the residence of a successful businessman and its connections to a world-famous shipping line. A time-line documents historical events that shaped the history of the house. Key dates in the house's past are illustrated by literary events that occurred in the same year thus connecting the Mansion House with its new occupants.

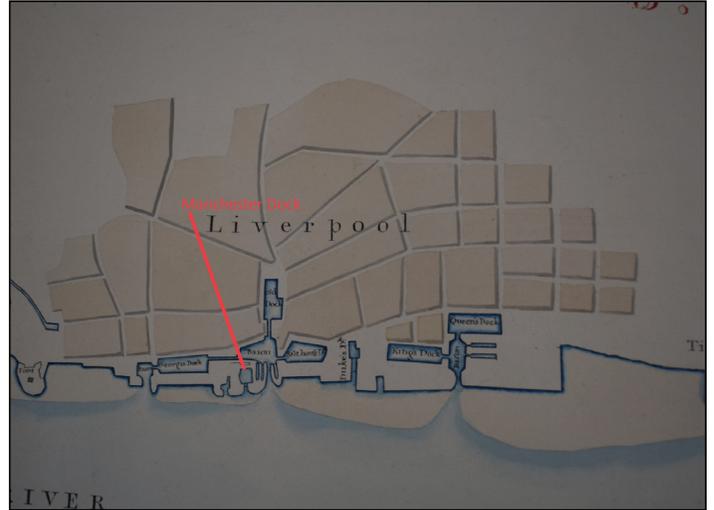
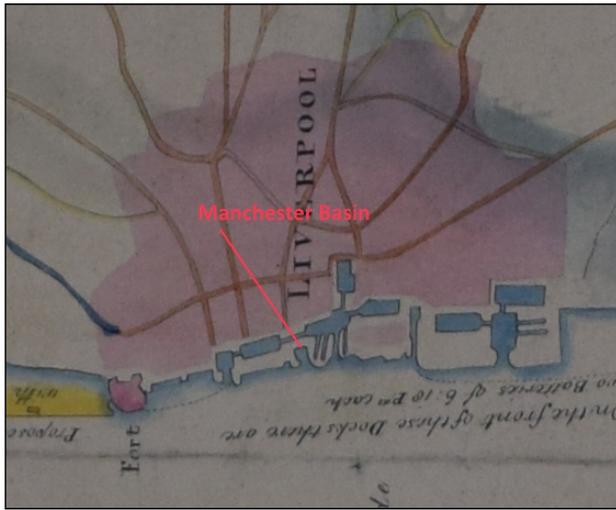
The Calderstones are open 7 days a week between 10 a.m and 4 p.m. and The Mansion House and its associated café and bookshop are open between 8.30 and 5 o'clock. For further information visit the Reader's web-site at: <https://www.thereader.org.uk/visit-calderstones/>

Dave Roberts

'New' Old Maps of Liverpool (Part 3)

Following on from the articles in the last two newsletters, this note will discuss two other maps of Liverpool found in the National Archives.

Most readers will be aware of the excavation of Manchester Dock and Chester Basin which took place in 2007 in advance of the construction of the Museum of Liverpool. Briefly, Manchester Dock was constructed as an open tidal basin in about 1785 and Chester Basin at about the same time, both mainly to serve smaller vessels such as ferries and Mersey Flats. At the beginning of the 19th century Manchester Basin was converted to an enclosed dock by the construction of an entrance lock containing a set of lock gates



1808 and 1809 maps showing Manchester Basin and Manchester Dock respectively

(parts of these are on display in Museum of Liverpool).

Manchester Dock continued to operate throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, but by the 1920s it was obsolete and in 1927 it was filled in with waste from the excavation of the first Mersey Tunnel. The excavation of these docks was published as Gregory et al (2014) 'Archaeology at the Waterfront: Liverpool Docks'. One of the issues with writing the report was determining the date at which the lock gates were added to Manchester Dock. The map evidence available at the time was often contradictory, with Manchester Dock being shown as an open basin on maps as late as the 1820s, and it was unclear whether the earlier maps were merely showing intended works. A broad date of about 1806-1809 for the construction of the lock gates was decided upon.

The maps in this note illustrate the problem nicely. They date to the period at which the lock was added to create Manchester Dock, and although they are clearly produced from different surveys, both are signed by Captain Robert Pilkington of the Royal Engineers. Given the stylistic differences and other discrepancies in the depiction of the waterfront between the two maps (afraid there's no prize for spotting them but there are at least 3 in addition to the one discussed here), it's likely that Pilkington had used other surveys as a base for his own, which was intended to show the locations of proposed new batteries (those are beyond the edges of the excerpts here). The first map is dated 3rd December 1808 and shows Manchester Basin without lock gates. The second is dated January 1809 and shows Manchester Dock, complete with lock gates. Clearly construction of the entrance lock didn't take place in under a month, and there's an entry in the Dock Committee minute book which suggests that it was underway by March 1807.

As stated above, it seems unlikely that either is based upon a direct survey by Pilkington, both maps are more likely to be tracings from other surveys. However, the later map strongly suggests that Manchester Dock was open and operating by January 1809 at the latest and that in December 1808 Pilkington had erroneously used an earlier survey showing Manchester Basin. Further research may allow me to identify whose surveys that Pilkington had used.

Mark Adams

Medieval vessel from Bromborough, Wirral (WREX-07A6F8)

This small ceramic vessel likely dates to c.AD 1300-1500. It is largely complete with only most of the mouth and two small handles missing. The exterior of the vessel has an olive green glaze that covers the entire surface apart from the base. The majority of the interior is covered in a brown glaze. Wire marks on the base indicate that it was wheel thrown and its fabric is a fine red clay with small sandy inclusions.

Small jars such as this one were likely used to contain ink, oil, ointments or mercury. Such small vessels have also been linked to monastic sites, which is particularly interesting when considering the close proximity of Birkenhead Priory to the find spot. Upon discussing the find with the Medieval Pottery Research Group it has been suggested that due to the fine fabric of the clay it is likely to have been imported from elsewhere. This is further apparent due to the fact that ceramic vessels dating to the late medieval period are relatively



uncommon finds in the North West of England, with no other comparative vessel so far discovered on the Portable Antiquities Scheme's database, thus making this a particularly interesting object.

The object was recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database by Dr Susie White, the Finds Liaison Officer for North Wales.

Heather Beeton

Christmas Quiz 2019 - Smardale in the Westmorland Dales

The quiz is based on the O. S. 1:25000 Pathfinder OL19 Howgill Fells and Upper Eden Valley between grid squares NY 7004 - NY 7404 and NY 7008 - NY 7408. The Smardale area is to the north of Ravenstonedale. It can be viewed on <https://www.streetmap.co.uk> by searching for Newbiggin on Lune. Zoom to the third bar and increase the map size, then move the map around in the widow. For a different view try the National Library of Scotland side by side maps which display the pre-war 1:25000 map alongside Bing Satellite View (<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side>). The Pillow Mounds and the Romano-British settlements show up quite well on these.

1. On Crosby Garrett Fell [NY709078] in 2010, a young metal detectorist found which one of the following ?

- a) a Bronze Age cooking pot
- b) an Iron Age sword
- c) a Roman helmet
- d) a Viking coin hoard

2. A long distance path devised by a famous author crosses Smardale Bridge. [NY720061] Name the author and the path.

3. 'Pillow Mounds' are marked at several points and are sometimes marked as 'Giant's Graves' on older maps.. Are they:-

- a) Glacial deposits
- b) Air Raid Shelters
- c) Artificial rabbit warrens
- d) Burial mounds

4. Find the name on the maps of the following, (e.g. 'Elevated Hanging Place' is Gallows Hill)

- a) 'Stinging trig point'
- b) 'Wood belonging to the lord of the manor'
- c) 'Monastic farm in a lower area'
- d) 'Heathery Encroachment'

5. Solve the anagrams of names on the map (SPACES MAY BE IGNORED):-

- a) BREWBORN
- b) DAYWORT
- c) LLANTHRAIN
- d) LEVERASS
- e) WETDIRT CHESS

Answers: 1(c), 2 Alfred Wainright, 'Coast to Coast', 3(c), 4(a) Nettle Hill [NY716078], (b) Demesne Wood [NY729077], (c) Friar's Bottom Farm [NY711057], Lingy Intake [NY730057] 5(a) Brownber [NY704057], (b) Todwray [NY716056], (c) Tranna Hill [NY702054], (d) Severals [NY715064], (e) Witches Stride [NY728070]

Maurice Handley