



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 3/2018

Registered Charity No 510831

MAS Membership Subscriptions 2018

Subscriptions for 2018 fell due on 1st January. Please contact the Membership Secretary if you have not yet paid.

A note from the Chair

I had my car serviced recently and I had to sign a consent form so that the garage can send me an MOT reminder. At one stage this year hardly a day passed without some communication from a society, association or business regarding the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Merseyside Archaeological Society stores members' information so that they can be kept informed about events and activities. The MAS Council is developing a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. Your personal data is stored securely and we will not pass it to a third party without your consent.

We are very lucky in Merseyside to have so many museums and most are free. The Terracotta Warriors exhibition at the World Museum has been a huge success and more than matched the 'Wow' factor of the Mayan exhibition of 2015. It was a unique opportunity to see the soldiers and other finds so closely and without the overcrowding that was my experience in Xian. The exhibition included information about the history and description of the artefacts and I certainly learnt a lot about China's heritage. The Atkinson in Southport has also had a superb exhibition which brought a once in a lifetime chance to see several priceless collections from the Viking hoards. Norton Priory has a superb new building and excellent displays.

I will continue with events organisation until the end of the year so that there will be a transition as Mark takes over the role with a small sub-committee. We are also finalising the one day conference in October. Many of our speakers at evening meetings are recommended by members so please continue with those suggestions. I hope you find the autumn lectures appealing and I look forward to seeing you at the Quaker Meeting House.

Maurice Handley

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.

Thursday, September 20th 'Place Names in West Derby Hundred': Pam Russell

Pam's research degree was on The nomenclature of the West Derby Hundred and she has published several articles and chapters on various aspects of this subject. Her talk will look at some place-names that will be of interest to members.

Merseyside Archaeological Society

Hon Chair:
Maurice Handley

Hon Secretary:
Liz Stewart

Membership Secretary:
Chris Wood
e-mail: C.M.Wood@ljam.ac.uk

Hon Treasurer & Newsletter Editor:
Dave Roberts
e-mail: drandpr@blueyonder.co.uk

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

Subs Renewal.....	1
A note from the Chair	1
Lectures - 2018.....	1
MAS Conference October 2018.....	2
IMPORTANT NEWS - The Calderstones.....	3
Norton Priory Conference.....	3
Museum of Liverpool Facebook Page.....	3
Lister Steps Project.....	3
Graveyard Recording, Childwall.....	4
Calderstones Book.....	4
2018 Field Trips Report.....	4

Thursday, October 18th ‘The North West Historic Graffiti Survey’: Carolanne King and Ellen McInnes

The North West Historic Graffiti Survey is recording the marks & graffiti found in accessible areas of buildings. These tell the story of the hopes and fears of ordinary people not often seen in the official histories of the time. The Survey is also adding to the nationwide recording that is developing around the original Norfolk Medieval Graffiti project.

The talk will introduce the project and give a broad overview of its discoveries. These range from the apotropaic, marks made to protect against witchcraft that include deliberate burn marks and daisy wheels, to names, dates and initials commemorating more recent events such as WWII. A fundamental aim is to provide training for a volunteer activity that can be undertaken throughout the year by local groups.

Thursday, November 15th ‘Developments in the understanding of early man’: Lis Rushworth

Research into hominin development is closely interlinked with the environment in which our early ancestors lived. The availability of fresh water, food, shelter and geological resources for stone tool making are all essential for hominin development. This talk will focus on how we can reconstruct the environments in the understanding of early man at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania. It will describe how our early ancestors lived and developed by considering the environmental and ecological drive to that change

Thursday, December 13th: Members’ Evening

As usual, a chance for members and friends to bring an artifact for discussion or a few Powerpoint slides of a site they have visited. There will be a non-competitive quiz and mince pies will be provided with tea or coffee.

Thursday, January 17th 2019 ‘Fibulas, focolare and false teeth: the Etruscan Collection in World Museum, Liverpool’; Gina Muskett

World Museum in Liverpool has one of the most representative Etruscan collections outside Italy. Bronze brooches, mirrors and vessels, ceramics of various types and intricate gold jewellery, including splendid examples of false teeth, illustrate aspects of life and death, giving a fascinating insight into pre-Roman society in central Italy.

Provisional meeting dates for 2018 - Feb 21st, Mar 21st, April AGM (date to be confirmed as it is Easter 19-21 April)

Saturday October 13th: One day conference at the Museum of Liverpool ‘Recent developments in Merseyside Archaeology’

Merseyside Archaeological Society jointly with National Museums Liverpool will hold a one-day conference in the Museum of Liverpool at Pier Head. A series of talks will cover recent archaeological discoveries in Merseyside ranging from an 8000 year old Mesolithic hunter-gatherer site to 20th century defence structures. The provisional programme is:-

Mark Adams: ‘Mark Rake, Bromborough’

Alison Burns: ‘Fort Crosby’

Ron Cowell: ‘The Mesolithic site at Lunt’

Vanessa Oakden: ‘PAS finds’

Rob Philpott: ‘Excavations in Prescott’

Liz Stewart: ‘The Secret History of Pembroke Place’

There will also be a handling session and book sale.

The cost will be £10 for MAS members, unwaged £12.50 and £15 for non-members.

Further information and access to tickets via Eventbrite can be found on our web-site. www.merseysidearchsoc.com

IMPORTANT NEWS

The Calderstones, Calderstones Park, Liverpool. Heritage Open Days

Liverpool's 4,000 year old Neolithic 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 which stood adjacent to the boundary of the modern Calderstones Park, the 6 highly decorated Stones were moved to a glasshouse in 1964, an unsuitable environment which has accelerated their deterioration. Thanks to funding secured by The Reader from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Liverpool City Council, the ancient monoliths are to be removed to undergo essential conservation work approved by Liverpool City Council and Historic England and carried out by Orbis Conservation Ltd. in London. Early next year the Stones will return to a new, specially designed home within the gardens of the Calderstones Mansion House when it reopens in Spring 2019 as The Reader's International Centre for Shared Reading.

Their journey starts on Heritage Open Days, during the week beginning 10th September, when conservation specialists will remove the Stones from the ground and unearth the hidden secrets below. Visitors will have the opportunity to watch the work as it's undertaken, to discover the history – and future – of the Stones and the Mansion House which is currently being transformed into The Reader's International Centre for Shared Reading.

On Thursday and Friday, 13-14th September, The Reader will be running free heritage tours which will also explore the rich history of Calderstones Park itself. Each tour has a capacity of 12 people and can be booked in advance at <https://www.thereader.org.uk/events/heritage-open-days-digging-up-the-secrets-of-the-calder-stones/>

Norton Priory 2018 bi-annual Conference - Saturday 6th October

Norton Priory's third bi-annual conference will cover the latest exciting research into the site and environment, and the extensive archaeological collection. Speakers will explore a diverse range of topics from the eighteenth century landscape to evidence for medieval inter personal violence! Preliminary results from the first season of a new series of research excavations at Norton Priory will be presented including some finds, as well as latest thoughts on Halton Castle.

Norton Priory and Halton Castle will have free entry on Sunday 16th September. There is also an Osteoarchaeology Workshop on Saturday 22nd September. Further details and booking at www.nortonpriory.org

Museum of Liverpool Facebook Page

With a new focus on community archaeology the Museum of Liverpool has a new Facebook page which will feature posts from the archaeology team, Museum of Liverpool Archaeology. The page will feature archaeology at the Museum of Liverpool, within Liverpool city region, Merseyside and the North West and updates from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). We are keen to work in partnership with our local communities, to facilitate accessible archaeology and to engage with people from diverse backgrounds who may traditionally have felt excluded from archaeology. Like and follow the page to hear updates from the team and find out about events and opportunities to get involved!



Lister Steps Project

Lister Steps childcare charity is restoring the Lister Drive Library, helped by National Lottery Players & HLF to be a flagship for community regeneration, education and fun. The renovated building will be a sustainable multi-use heritage destination, allowing them to relocate their existing childcare services and deliver an extended range of community services and events. The Old Library was formerly 'The Andrew Carnegie Library' serving the West Derby constituency in East Liverpool. Designed by architect Thomas Shelmerdine, it was the only library in Liverpool that wealthy philanthropist Andrew Carnegie chose to fund directly. Opening in 1905, this impressive and historic building served the public as a library until its closure in 2006.

Working in partnership with archaeologists from the Museum of Liverpool, Lister Steps are undertaking historic building recording of the old Carnegie Library on Lister Drive. The Old Library building recording project will take place over 11th, 15th and 19th

September 2018 and volunteers will learn new skills which are used in archaeological building recording. We are also looking for volunteers to take part in some research about the library building and grounds. This will be followed by a community excavation in the New Year within the grounds of the library.

The Museum of Liverpool and Lister Steps are looking for volunteers to get involved in the building recording, research and the excavation. If you're interested in helping us learn more about The Old Library and recording its heritage for future generations then email olivia.johnson@listersteps.co.uk. Or sign up on the Lister Steps website <https://listersteps-theoldlibrary.weebly.com/volunteer-with-us.html>



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

Graveyard Recording at All Saints Childwall has continued in 2018. 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).

Calderstones Book

The MAS publication entitled 'The Calderstones - A prehistoric tomb in Liverpool' is now back in print at the cost of £5 plus p.&p. and can be purchased direct from the Society. Alternatively, there should be copies available in Liverpool Museum shops.

Field Trips Report

Southport: The Atkinson and Lord Street: Sunday May 13th

On a sunny morning we were greeted by Viking re-enactors outside the Atkinson and then inside the museum we were conducted on a tour of the special exhibition - 'The Vikings: Rediscover the Legend' by curator Joanne Chamberlain. The legend was represented by an impressive display of Viking artefacts and hoards from Cuerdale, Silverdale, Bedale and the Vale of York. The hoards are a mixture of bullion, hacksilver - cut and bent fragments. Archeometric analysis of the Bedale hoard indicated that objects were made from silver from western sources and ingots were from melted down Arabic coins. It is thought that silver was acquired by trading with Arabs or as a 'tribute' in return for not attacking Anglo-Saxons.

Displays of everyday items also included amber beads, bone ice skates, chess pieces made from Walrus ivory and jet gaming pieces from a board game called Hnefatafl. In addition to the comprehensive explanatory notes with each display, Joanne's commentary helped to reinforce the idea that the Vikings were people who were more than just plunderers, pillagers and warriors - they had a particular influence on language and place names.

After lunch, MAS member David Scott took us on a short walk looking at the architecture along Lord Street. Southport developed from a sea bathing and fishing location in the 19th century. Many of the buildings on Lord Street were built between 1820 and 1900. Looking above the ground floor facade of the buildings we could see a great variety of architectural styles. Several buildings have changed use, for example the former Lord St. Railway Station is now a hotel; others have vanished such as the Winter Gardens complex of 1870 complete with conservatory, concert pavilion, aquarium and opera house. At the junction of Portland Street and Lord Street we came across a 'Sewer Gas Destructor Lamp' - basically a street light fueled by a mixture of town gas and methane from the Victorian sewer beneath the street. Archaeology is always full of surprises.

Castleshaw: June 9th

A small group from Merseyside Archaeological Society, joined by members of Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society and the Friends of Castleshaw, visited the Castleshaw Valley at Delph near Oldham. Led by Norman Redhead from the University of Salford, we started at the first of an excellent set of information boards placed around the site, Norman used a time line to introduce the idea of a palimpsest of occupation covering all periods from the mesolithic to the modern. Moving on we saw the embankment of a temporary railway built to bring supplies for the construction of reservoirs in the 19th century. Nearby there were the faint traces of the agger of the Roman road leading to Castleshaw fort. The route of the road (Margary 712) crosses the Pennines at its narrowest point between Chester and York.

The site lies below the crest at the head of the valley and is really two forts - a smaller later fortlet situated inside the larger fort established by Agricola in AD 79. Circumnavigating the fort we visited each of the four entrances. At the east and west entrances, the

road appeared to enter at an oblique angle. At the north entrance, a road was constructed for about 50m but ended abruptly possibly at a building. On the east side of the fort there is no defensive ditch but on the south side the defensive ditch has been obscured by a sunken way. The larger fort was abandoned by the mid -AD 90s and in AD 105 a fortlet was built within it about one third of its size. Excavation in the fortlet revealed a barracks accommodating about 50 men, a commander's house and a large granary thought to have supplied other military outposts in the area

The acidic soil in the valley does not preserve bones, coins or even pottery. Flints have been found - chalk flint from east of the Pennines and chert probably from the Carboniferous limestone suggesting that trading or exchange may have taken place at this crossing point. There was evidence for medieval and post-medieval development in the area around the forts - at Lower Castleshaw hamlet there were weavers cottages, farmsteads and a school.

There are two 19th century reservoirs retained by damming the valley. Although they avoid the Roman site, post-medieval mill buildings now lie below the water level. At the head of the upper reservoir we were taken to the site of a medieval bloomery - a small cylindrical furnace where a mixture of locally sourced ironstone, limestone and charcoal was smelted to produce a spongy mass of iron called a 'bloom'. Lumps of slag were scattered across the site and a slag heap of about 29 tonnes has been found nearby. Typically the waste material contains about 50% iron. Evidence for roasting the ironstone before smelting has also been found. Other nearby earthworks were associated with the construction and maintenance of the reservoirs.



Moving downstream we were able to view features in the landscape related to the water supply as well as medieval trackways, boundaries and the line of the Roman road. Norman had saved a surprise for last. At a point close to the Roman road, recent test pitting has discovered that a small section of the walls of a ruined building are part of a much larger building covering an area of about 75m x 10m. Most of the walls of the building have been 'robbed out' but fragments of pottery give a 13th century date. Norman interprets the building as belonging to the Grange of Friarmere held by the monks of Roche Abbey near Rotherham. Further investigation at this and at other locations in the valley will no doubt shed more light on a fascinating multi-period landscape. In the words of two of our members, Norman 'built up a picture of the archaeology of the valley' and 'brought every feature to life'.

The Westmorland Dales - South Cumbria: 14/15th July 2018

The sites visited during this weekend are not far from Tebay/M6 junction 38 and easily reachable on a day trip from Liverpool.

Orton - Saturday July 14th , Leader: Sue Stallibrass

The village of Orton lies at the southern edge of the Vale of Eden flanked by the Lake District to the west, the Howgills to the south and the Pennines to the east. Evidence of early occupation is indicated by a neolithic stone circle just over a kilometre to the east and finds of flint artefacts in the vicinity. The village church dates from the 13th century and has a sturdy 17th century tower built as a defence against the 'Border Reivers' (raiders and cattle rustlers). The settlement grew in the 18th century when the Appleby to Kendal turnpike passed through. A Roman road associated with a 'Street Lane' led to the Lune gorge at Tebay where there is the site of a fort at Low Boroughbridge and the modern M6 and main railway line squeeze through alongside the river.

Following footpaths and climbing on steps over stone walls, Sue led us to the stone circle at Gamelands [NY 64003 08164]. Described as an 'embanked' stone circle, it consists of 40 large boulders which, with one limestone exception, are of Shap granite - glacial erratics deposited by ice during the Ice Age. The site appeared to lie on a route now followed by Wainwright's Coast to Coast footpath and a drover's road now forming part of a long distance cycle route between Whitehaven and Whitby. Finds in the area include locally sourced chert tools and chalk flints from east Yorkshire suggesting a trading arrangement from mesolithic times.

We then walked to the modern farm of Friar Biggins ('Biggins' means buildings) - the name suggests a monastic connection and in the fields beneath the limestone escarpment of Orton Scar there is the site of a medieval monastic grange [NY 63845 09496]. This was a large structure similar in size to that described by Norman Redhead at Castleshaw, and was a farm owned by the Friary of Conishead at Ulverston. The fields below the farm appeared to lie on a spring line and despite the long dry summer still showed signs of flowing water. Following quiet lanes and footpaths along the contour we eventually arrived back at Orton just above the mill pond supplying Mill House, now without its wheel and undergoing 'gentrification' like many of the older buildings in the village.

After a tea break at the Orton Scar Cafe, the group drove in convoy to Crosby Ravensworth and then turned towards Shap, stopping briefly to look east across the Vale of Eden from a roadside viewpoint. Descending a steep and narrow track to Shap Abbey [NY 548152] we found this hugely impressive ruin in a secluded valley alongside a river for a self guided tour with clear information panels

and no entrance fee. This peaceful site in late afternoon sunshine was a fitting end to the day but the arrival of a drone enthusiast cut our visit short and we retreated to the M6 and our accommodation in the hotel in Orton or B&B's in Newbiggin.

Smardale - Sunday July 15th, Leader: Maurice Handley

Starting from the cafe at the garden centre in Newbiggin on Lune, following an old railway track we crossed the watershed into the valley of the Scandal Beck - a tributary of the Vale of Eden. The South Durham and Lancashire Union Railway opened in 1861 to bring coal and coke from the coalfields near Darlington to the ironworks at Barrow in Furness; it closed before the Beeching era. The track is now the linear 'Smardale Gill National Nature Reserve' with information boards at various points and profuse wildflowers at the south western end. To the north of the railway on Crosby Garrett Fell, are the remains of an extensive Romano-British settlement - one of several Iron Age settlements established on the thin soils of the limestone plateau [NY 719064]. These nucleated 'villages' and field systems show clearly as crop marks on the satellite view (www.bing) but are difficult to recognise at ground level.



From a convenient bench overlooking the Smardale Valley a myriad collection of archaeological and landscape features could be observed. Beneath us lay Smardale Bridge, a substantial stone bridge on the route used by packhorses carrying wool and other goods from Kendal to Barnard Castle. The track from the bridge climbs eastward up the hillside between dry stone walls which gradually fan out on to Smardale Fell. This 'funnel' would enable cattle to be driven off the fell and led down to the bridge and drinking water. Upstream a linear bank running along the valley side parallel to the beck is thought to be associated with medieval land division. To the west of the bridge we could see 'Strip Lynchets' - medieval cultivation terraces running along the contours of the hill side [NY 719058]. A substantial 3m high wall defined the boundary of a deer park - a farm named 'Park House' is nearby. Another farm called 'Friar's Bottom' implies monastic landholding. On the opposite side of the valley and downstream of the bridge, we could see 'Pillow Mounds' strangely marked as "Giant's Graves" on older maps [NY 725060]. These are rectangular earth mounds about 16m X 5m surrounded by a ditch and located on sloping land to facilitate drainage. They are the remains of artificial rabbit warrens thought to be a medieval farming system.

Moving further along the railway, we reached a limestone quarry with a pair of industrial size lime kilns [NY 724065]. These provided lime which was transported by rail to the iron smelters where it served as a flux. Across the valley we could see quarries in the sandstone which lies beneath the limestone of the fell. A short distance further along the railway we crossed the valley on Smardale Viaduct [NY 726068] - an impressive stone structure built by Sir Thomas Bouch, the engineer best known as the designer of the ill-fated Tay Bridge. Returning along the east side of the valley, our path followed the spring line beneath the sandstone, from which copious water flowed despite the drought conditions. Passing close to the quarries which provided sandstone for the railway bridges, we crossed Smardale Bridge to wend our way back to our starting point. The weather remained kind throughout the weekend - not too hot and no rain.

Norton Priory: August 18th

Our guide for this visit was Frank Hargrave, Director at Norton Priory, a very knowledgeable and excellent guide. Starting in the standing remains of the 12th century Abbey and 18th century mansion, we progressed through cloisters and out to the extensive ground level excavations of the monastery. Since 1970 Norton Priory has been the subject of numerous digs - the most recent in summer 2018. There are 100,000 objects in the collection and over 130 skeletons have been removed. A few of the skeletons are on display with an analysis of their cause of death and other injuries. Those from the Dutton family displayed symptoms of Paget's disease (a painful bone condition) and there was a full video explanation of this illness. The indoor section of the museum covers two floors and has something for everyone.

There was a rare opportunity to see a letter written by Henry VIII, on temporary loan from The National Archives. The letter was drafted in 1536 because the canons had prevented the King's men from closing the Abbey during the Dissolution. Henry first called for the Abbott to be hung, drawn and quartered, then changed his mind and asked for him to be hung; however, the abbot survived. Accompanying the display was a highly decorative gold Monstrance - a vessel used in churches for displaying the host. The abbey must have had similar valuable objects which Henry would have wanted to acquire.

Our visit was enhanced by the presence of a large group of medieval re-enactors indulging in fierce mock battles. They also gave demonstrations including cooking, crafts and weaponry which gave an opportunity to talk to the re-enactors. If you haven't been since the rebuild, the new Museum is well worth a visit. The Priory and Halton Castle will be open on September 16th and there will be free entry. There is also a one day conference on October 6th.

Maurice Handley & Nancy Jenkins