



# Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 3/2019

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## 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.

## A note from the Chair

As a qualified mechanical engineer I naturally have an interest in Industrial Archaeology (I A). In common with several other members of MAS I am also a member of the Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society (MIHS). Founded over 50 years ago, originally as ‘North Western Society for Industrial Archaeology and History’, and renamed MIHS in the 1990s, it is in a way our ‘big brother’. Other cities such as Bristol and Manchester also have Industrial Archaeology societies although they have retained the I A in their title.

Industrial Archaeology is concerned principally though not exclusively with the archaeology of industry of the post-medieval and modern periods, particularly those industries which developed during the period of rapidly increasing industrialisation of the 18th and 19th centuries. In Merseyside the opportunity to excavate former industrial sites usually arises as part of a planning requirement for a commercial development, as for example Mark Adam’s recent watching brief at the Atlas Foundry site in St Helens. Commercial ‘digs’ rarely offer the opportunity to visit a site and are often subject to strict health and safety restrictions - there may even be a risk of hazardous chemicals or metals on a former industrial site.

Archaeology embraces the study of past human activity through the discovery, recording and analysis of material remains which include buried sites as well as standing earthworks and buildings. The Association for Industrial Archaeology publishes a quarterly newsletter, usually 24-28 A4 pages. It is significant that in recent issues there has been little or no mention of sub-surface excavation - almost all the articles are about standing buildings and often about their threatened demise. So IA has also become concerned with the identification, recording and conservation of existing structures and machinery or what might fall under the heading of ‘Industrial Heritage’.

In Liverpool there are now numerous examples of the adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings - not least the conversion of warehouses into museums, art galleries, shops, bars and restaurants, hotels and in many cases living accommodation. It seems incredible that fifty years ago the Albert Dock was under serious threat of demolition! There is now great interest in workers’ housing from the industrial period, - including occupied buildings (Hartley’s Village, Vulcan Village, Port Sunlight and Price’s Village) and uninhabitable (Galkoff’s Court Housing and hopefully temporarily Eldon Grove).

There is no doubt that Industrial Archaeology is of great significance in Merseyside and the surrounding area, and it forms an important part of our cultural heritage. Next August, the Association for Industrial Archaeology will be holding its Annual Conference at Hope University and MIHS will be hosting the week-long event. A few members of MAS are involved with this either as lecturers, field trip leaders or organisers. It is hoped that some of the lectures will be open to MIHS and MAS members.

Maurice Handley

## Contents

A note from the Chair .....	1
Field Trips - 2019.....	2
Lectures - 2019.....	2
Graveyard Recording at Childwall.....	2
Field Trip Reports Summer 2019.....	3
Courses at Liverpool University.....	4
IHBC Conference.....	4
Courts & Alleys book.....	5
L&CAS Day school.....	5
Lelia Shipwreck.....	5
YAC Mersey & Dee Branch.....	5
More ‘New ‘ Old Maps of Liverpool.....	6

## Field Trips 2019

**Saturday 21st September. Venue: The Calderstones and The Mansion House, Calderstones Park**

Details: Meet at The Reader Cafe (part of the Mansion House) at 11 a.m. We will be hearing about the relocation of the Calderstones to their new setting and the exciting work that has been undertaken by The Reader Organisation in restoring The Mansion House.

**Contact: Mark Adams 07469 144227/07773938120 mhadams@rsk.co.uk if you require further information.**

## 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 19th September 2019. Bonnie Effros. 'Violence, Ideology, and Classical Archaeology during the Early Decades of French Colonization in Algeria'.**

In 1830, in a last-ditch effort to save his reign, the Bourbon king, Charles X, authorised a French attack on the city of Algiers with the excuse of putting an end to piracy and white slavery on the Barbary Coast. In the course of the invasion and subsequent "pacification" of the region, the French army in North Africa (known as the armée d'Afrique) confiscated homes, land, and mosques from the indigenous population and massacred tribes that resisted French domination. Along with the normalisation of violence against civilian inhabitants, classical monuments fared badly, being reused as fortifications or destroyed as material for building French barracks, roads, and hospitals. This talk will examine the contributions of nineteenth-century officers, who, raised on classical accounts of warfare, developed interest in the Roman remains they encountered throughout Algeria. Linking archaeological studies of the Roman past to French narratives of the Algerian occupation, I will examine the role of Roman archaeology in fostering an identity for military and civilian settlers. I will show how classical studies were deeply entangled with politics in metropolitan and colonial France, and how French archaeological studies were shaped by the colonial experience of war.

**Thursday 17th October 2019. Sam Rowe. 'A Kiln dump at Shakespeare North Playhouse, Prescott'.**

In late 2017 Salford Archaeology excavated the site of a car park in Prescott town centre prior to the construction of a new theatre. The quantity of pottery recovered from the site was overwhelming, with 744kg of artefacts retrieved. This includes over 6,000 sherds of pottery, as well as kiln waste and kiln furniture. The majority of the pottery is 17th-18th century in date and includes dark-glazed coarsewares, mottled wares, sugar moulds, and beautiful examples of local slipwares. This talk will review the large assemblage, the circumstances of the finds, and their regional significance.

**Thursday 21st November 2019. Lancaster & District Heritage Group. 'The Roman Archaeology of Quay Meadow, Lancaster'.**

This talk will discuss recent community archaeology excavations on the banks of the River Lune at Lancaster which have found interesting evidence for Roman settlement beyond the fort.

**Thursday 19th December 2019. Members' evening.**

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

Awaiting abstract.

**Other 2020 dates:**

Thursday 20th February and Thursday 19th March - speakers and topics to be confirmed. Thursday 22nd April AGM. Further details will be in the January Newsletter.

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

Graveyard Recording at All Saints Childwall continues in 2019. 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).

## Field Trip Reports – Summer 2019

On a beautiful sunny afternoon in mid-May, a 15 strong group were led by Mark Adams around the Civil War sites in Liverpool. Using maps and plans from the 17th and 18th centuries, Mark indicated the position of the pool of Liverpool, the defences and location of the castle and various excavated sites.

In June we visited the site of the Roman town of Coccium (i.e. Wigan) again led by Mark. We were surprised to find a reconstruction of a Roman hypocaust found in a dig in the town centre. A Roman fort had occupied the highest part of the town commanding views over the River Douglas and on the road from Manchester to Ribchester. We explored the narrow medieval alleys of the town centre before visiting the Georgian quarter to the north. There were sites of Civil War battles and the strange story of Mab's Cross. We also saw the town's manor house and Victorian mills before reaching the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to see the underwhelming Wigan Pier. As often with towns like Wigan, there is more history and archaeology than might be apparent at first glance.



*Hulks of Mersey Flats and the new Mersey Crossing from Spike Island*

*Maurice Handley*

### Hilbre Island 24th August 2019

On a beautiful day in late August, Roy Forshaw led a combined group from Merseyside Archaeological Society and Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society to the Hilbre islands. Starting from the marina at West Kirby, the islands of Little Eye, Middle Eye and Hilbre were approached on foot across the sands at low tide. Eye is the Norse word for island. Unfortunately a fire on Hilbre, the largest of the islands, meant that we were prevented from exploring further than the northern tip of Middle Eye.

Middle Eye has evidence for Bronze Age cultivation and a burnt mound - a collection of cobbles which were heated in a fire and then dropped in to a container of water to boil food or treat skins. A cremation urn had also been discovered in the 1950s but has subsequently been lost. Roy also explained what archaeology had been found in an excavation behind the bird observatory.

Sitting on the grass after lunch, we were treated to a description of the buildings and archaeology on Hilbre. Roman pottery has been found there and also the remains of a Saxon or Viking building. In 1080 a cell and church were established on the island and were linked to Chester Cathedral.



*Approaching Little Eye*

For our July trip we joined Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society for a walk over the Mersey. Led by Maurice Handley and Malcolm Verity we started from the Catalyst Museum at West Bank and walked across the traffic free Silver Jubilee Bridge viewing the site of the Transporter Bridge and noting the shields and coat of arms on the 19th century railway bridge. Arriving in Runcorn, we followed the Bridgewater Canal to its terminus at Waterloo Bridge and then visited the site of the lock flight that took the canal down to the Mersey. We were shown round by Graham Wallace, Chairman of the Runcorn Locks Restoration Society. There is currently a £12-15 million project to restore the ten-lock flight, replacing it with a boat lift and inclined plane between two extant lock chambers. After lunch in Runcorn, we returned across the bridge to complete our visit with a short walk around Spike Island. An island formed between the Sankey Canal and the Mersey, it was the site of chemical works and the railway from St Helens terminating at the world's first purpose built railway dock. Pleasant late afternoon sunshine made a fitting end to the day.



*Hilbre from Middle Eye*



*The layer in which Mesolithic artefacts have been found*

The island is rich in industrial archaeology. A salt works was set up in 1692 where rock salt from Cheshire was boiled using coal from Flintshire. We could easily pick out the Buoymaster's House as it is the largest structure and is the only listed building on the islands (Grade II). Built about 1836, it was used for maintaining the buoys in the approaches to Liverpool. In the 19th century, stone sleeper blocks and cast iron rails, discarded by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, were reused to provide a tramway ramp to the island. We also saw the scant remains of a navigation mark used by mariners to find the way in to the mouth of the River Dee. The island has been an important military facility in the past. It was used as a staging post for troops going to Ireland and in WW2 attempts were made to use the island as a decoy for German bombers. Due to the fire, the early telegraph that linked with similar signalling devices between Anglesey and Liverpool to indicate the arrival of ships from America, and the former lifeboat station would have to be visited on another day.

Everyone enjoyed the trip which was blessed with clear skies and high temperatures. A strong breeze kept us comfortable though. So many thanks to Roy for arranging and acting as guide on this trip.

*Maurice Handley & Chris Wood*

### ***Courses at Liverpool University***

Liverpool University is running a series of daytime and evening courses related to archaeology in 2019/20. Course details and booking instructions can be found here:

[https://payments.liv.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/continuing-education?mc\\_cid=a81ac2dc12&mc\\_eid=%5bUNIQID%5d](https://payments.liv.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/continuing-education?mc_cid=a81ac2dc12&mc_eid=%5bUNIQID%5d)

### ***Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) Conference***

The IHBC's North West Branch has launched its Day Conference for 2019, on 'Improving Accessibility – Overcoming the Barriers to Heritage', which will include local tours of sites, and takes place on 10th October in the Liverpool Medical Institution.

Heritage plays a key part in how we define our identity and, at a time of great debate over ideas of local and national identity, making heritage assets more accessible to a broader range of people is of great importance. Improving access to heritage can help promote a stronger sense of belonging and understanding of a place as well as stimulating wider public benefits such as improved health, wellbeing and job creation. Informed management of heritage assets can help to sustain and enhance those assets so that they become better used and valued both now and in the future. The conference will explore these interrelated themes, focussing on how to successfully overcome the accessibility barriers that can exclude groups from enjoying and experiencing historic buildings or sites or participating in heritage activities. These barriers may be both intellectual as well as physical, and the conference will provide an opportunity to learn of new and innovative approaches to formal and informal learning about, and engaging with, heritage.

Further details and booking information can be found here:

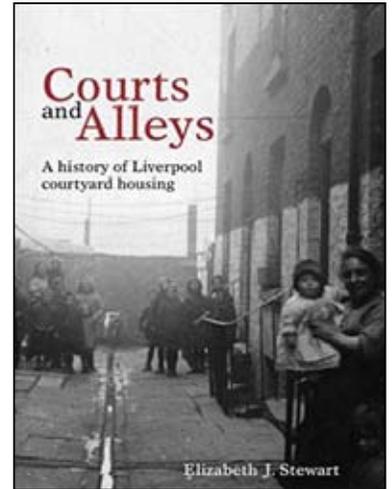
<https://ihbconline.co.uk/newsarchive/?p=23291>

### ***Courts and Alleys: A history of Liverpool courtyard housing by Liz Stewart***

Liverpool was a burgeoning trading centre and rapidly growing town in the early 18th century, developing into a thriving mercantile metropolis by the 19th century. The demand for new housing was high, and court housing largely filled that need. Court housing was a form of high-density back-to-back housing around courtyards. It provided homes to nearly half of Liverpool's working-class people by the mid 19th century. Contemporary descriptions highlight the cramped, dark and often damp conditions in these houses. This book uses a range of historical and archaeological evidence about courts to consider their development, life within them, and the measures eventually taken to rid Liverpool of them. It also makes international parallels to courts as well as some of the people involved in investigating this type of housing, providing historical context to this fascinating aspect of Liverpool's past.

The book is available on Amazon:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=courtyard+housing+liverpool&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=courtyard+housing+liverpool&ref=nb_sb_noss)



### ***Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society Day school - Edge of Empire - Recent work on Roman history in the North West***

A day school to be held at Wigan and Leigh College, Parson's Walk, Wigan on Saturday 5th October 2019. Non-members are welcome to enrol for this. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.landcas.org.uk/WiganProgramme.pdf>

### ***Lelia Shipwreck granted heritage protection***

One of the North West's most historically-significant shipwrecks the Lelia has been granted heritage protection by the DCMS on Historic England advice. The 19th century paddle steamer was on its maiden voyage to run guns and supplies for the Confederate Forces of the American Civil War when it foundered in Liverpool Bay in stormy weather on 14 January 1865, with the loss of 47 lives. In 2017, Historic England commissioned an assessment of the Lelia, as part of a larger project to carry out a national overview of vessels with early iron and composite hulls.

*Sue Stallibrass*

### ***Young Archaeologists Club Mersey & Dee Branch***

The Young Archaeologist Club (YAC) is for 8-16 year olds who love the past and want to get hands-on with archaeology. The Mersey and Dee branch of YAC is hosted at the Museum of Liverpool and enjoys around 9 sessions a year, a summer school and when possible field work. This year our Summer School ran across two days and had a great turn out. On August 12th Travellers Through Time <http://www.travellersthroughtime.co.uk/> came and led a 'Sheep to Shirt' day which included spinning, weaving and designing clothes and textiles from throughout world history, from the middle East to Meso-America. The children had great fun learning and finished the day, experimenting with different dyes, recording their results and designing their own t-shirts!



On Tuesday the Young Archaeologists headed to Chester where we had a full day of events lined up. We began exploring Chester Cathedral where the children spotted graffiti, reused stone work and learned about the history of the priory and cathedral. We then headed to the falconry to watch a demonstration and discussed how we can spot evidence for falconry in the archaeological record. Luckily the sun came out for lunch and the children had some downtime before heading to Dewa Roman Experience where they learned about the life of a Roman soldier.

We had 22 children attend our YAC summer school and they all behaved brilliantly. It is great to know that we have so many enthusiastic young archaeologists getting excited about the past! If you would like to know more about the Mersey and Dee Young Archaeologists Club visit our website to find out more <https://www.yac-uk.org/clubs/mersey-and-dee>

*Vanessa Oakden*

### More 'new' old maps of Liverpool

In the last newsletter I discussed a recently discovered set of historic plans of the Liverpool area, held by the National Archives at Kew, which cover the period from 1759 to the early 19th century. The previous article briefly described the earliest, 'A Survey of the Town of Liverpool and River Mersey from thence to the Sea' dated 1759 and a detailed survey dated 1782 of a fort which was located where the northern end of Princes Dock was constructed at the beginning of the 19th century.



*Horwood Plan 1803*

The National Archives also hold copies of drawings by John Foster Senior of his proposals for a new dock, later named as Princes Dock, and it's those which will be described here. They're broadly contemporary with the Horwood map of 1803 and the 1785 Eyes map of Liverpool, but show the area in more detail.

By the late 18th century the site now occupied by Princes Dock lay on the northern fringes of Liverpool. In addition to the fort described in the last article, baths were constructed '...a little northward of the North Dock...', and consisting of separate baths and rooms for the sexes, each supplied with water and steps outside for '...swimmers who chose to launch into the open-water'

(Aiken 1795, 357). These are the baths shown on the 1759 map covered in the last article, though they do not appear on the Chadwick map of 1725 which shows that they were constructed in the period 1725-59. Aiken also discusses the custom of the '...lower class of people.....for many miles up the country...' of visiting Liverpool for '...the purpose of washing away all the collected stains and impurities of the year.....covering the beach with their promiscuous numbers'. The late 18th century shoreline in the area around the site is also described in Hughes (1863); 'Beyond the baths there were no houses, all was open shore consisting of boulder stones, sand and pools...there was hot as well as cold water bathing in the baths, and a palisade ran out into the river, within which, at high water persons could swim'. Another description of the area is provided by Troughton (1810, 361) who states that '...a person may either descend immediately into the river, by a flight of stone steps, or into private partitioned baths, in the same manner'. Troughton also mentions the bathing machines.

A guide to the town 'The Stranger in Liverpool', published in 1812 (<https://archive.org/details/strangerinliver00kaygoog>) provides the following account of the area north of Georges Dock '...pursuing a straight direction, we arrive at the south end of a gravelled terrace 280 yards in length, running along the side of the river; this is called the Parade, and is reserved solely for the purpose of a public walk. This is terminated by the Pier-head, on which is erected a battery of six guns...'. References to bathing machines on this part of the shore in all the contemporary accounts suggest that the sea wall at this point need not have been a substantial barrier, or that suitable access points such as ramps were provided. Contemporary illustrations of this section of the waterfront provide little evidence; those in Troughton (1810) imply a mix of stone and timber but are of uncertain reliability. There is some excavated evidence from recent fieldwork which suggest the use of stone (e.g. Gregory et al 2014, 78).

Princes Dock was named after the Prince Regent and constructed between 1810 and 1821. Numerous delays were experienced during its construction, largely due to problems raising money and manpower during the Napoleonic Wars. Additional problems were created by the acquisition of the fort, which occupied part of the site, and by mismanagement and corruption (McCarron & Jarvis 1992, 71-73; Jarvis 1991, 8-22; Jarvis 1991a). Two Acts of Parliament were required to allow construction to progress and even after the dock's official opening on the 19th July 1821 substantial work remained to be done. Although the dock and entrance were completed, few of the buildings were finished, most had yet to be started and the passage to Georges Dock was incomplete, despite being shown on contemporary plans (Jarvis 1991, 29). It was constructed by the then Dock Surveyor, John Foster Senior, with some preliminary work by William Jessop and John Rennie, and was the largest dock on the Mersey until superseded by Jesse Hartley's docks to the north 20 years later. Hartley



*John Foster 1793 Existing Plan*



*John Foster 1793 Proposed Plan*



*Fish Dock*

or Horwood maps. Its precise function is unclear, though it was presumably used to store catches brought in by fishing vessels as it is too large for a fish trap. Some details of the structure are discernible. There are two tanks, the northern one appears to be accessed by steps and two structures on the west side are possibly sluices. The fish were probably sold at the town's Fish Market.

'A Plan of the North West Part of Town of Liverpool with the intended Alterations and Improvements, January 1793' shows extensive reclamation of land in the area north of the proposed dock. This was laid out with streets and a new battery is shown at the northern end. The battery was never constructed, presumably a victim of cost-cutting. Other details include proposals for warehouses along the eastern quay, though these were never constructed by Foster, and there is no evidence for the dock boundary wall. Elsewhere on the map the areas shaded pink are land 'now laid out for building upon', whilst dotted lines mark the streets and fort to be removed by construction of the dock.

The next set of proposals is dated 1803, though the drawing, untitled but also by Foster Senior, is too large to reproduce in full here. This shows a different scheme for land reclamation north of Princes Dock, including two small basins at the southern end. The proposals for Princes Dock had been reduced in extent, the fort was to be left in place and the graving docks and half-tide basin are not shown.

In the same file is a copy of Charles Eyes map of 1785. This has been annotated with revised proposals for Princes Dock, a note on the back dates them to 9 June 1808. This drawing shows the dock back to its original extent, though this time with the addition of a half-tide basin and two graving docks to its north.

These maps provide a useful addition to Liverpool's cartographic history, bringing new sites (e.g. the Fish Dock) to light and refining the locations of others. In addition, the copies of Foster's maps provide an insight into the design processes at work during the construction of Princes Dock which was clearly originally envisaged as being part of a much larger whole with the land reclamation to its north,

was appointed as Foster's replacement following the scandals surrounding its construction; accounting procedures were tightened up and an attempt made at making the Dock Committee more accountable (Jarvis 1991a). The earliest map to show the finished dock is Sherwood's map of Liverpool of 1821 which shows the dock empty of buildings prior to the construction of Hartley's transit sheds in 1826/7.

The first drawing described here is 'A Plan of the North West Part of the Town of Liverpool in its Present State, January 1793', is signed by John Foster and shows the fort with a very similar layout to that depicted in the 1782 plan described in the last issue. Also shown is a small square structure to the north of the fort which is labelled as a 'Fish Dock'. This seems to be an existing, not an intended, structure but was previously unknown. A search of the main documentary sources for the period, including town guides, has revealed no other details and it is not shown by the Eyes



*John Foster 1803 Proposed Plan*



*John Foster 1808 Proposed Plan*

though those works were not undertaken. Several changes were made to the proposals for its layout and extent, warehouses came and went, graving docks were added and removed, and the dock changed in size at least once. The reasons behind these will have been complex, but in large part will have been linked to changing finances for the scheme.

Aiken J. 1795 Forty Miles Around Manchester. Archive CD Books.

Gregory R., Raynor C., Adams M., Philpott R., Howard-Davies C., Johnson N., Hughes V. & Higgins D., 2014 Archaeology at the Waterfront vol 1: Liverpool Docks Lancaster Imprints; Oxford Archaeology: Oxford.

Hughes J. F. 1863 Recollections of Old Liverpool by a Nonagenarian. Archive CD Books.

Jarvis A. 1991 Prince's Dock: A Magnificent Monument of Mural Art. Merseyside Portfolios, Birkenhead.

Jarvis A. 1991a Liverpool Central Docks: An Illustrated History. NMGM, Liverpool.

McCarron K. & Jarvis A. 1992 Give a Dock a Good Name? Merseyside Portfolios, Birkenhead.

Troughton T. 1810 The History of Liverpool, From the Earliest Authenticated Period Down to the Present Time, William Robinson, Liverpool.