



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 3/2014

Registered Charity No 510831

MAS 2015 Winter 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.

Thursday, 15th January, 2015

Rethinking the West Kirby Hogback: *Professor Howard Williams, the University of Chester*

Over recent years, the hogback stones of northern Britain have been firmly and repeatedly interpreted within a context of early tenth-century Viking colonisation around the Irish Sea and either side of the Pennines. They have been widely seen as mortuary monuments raised over the graves of settling and converting Hiberno-Norse elites. This presentation draws on this work using the case study of the West Kirby hogback.

Thursday, 19th February, 2015

Discovering Bromborough 2013: *Joanna Kirton, Project Manager, Big Heritage*

Over the last 2 years Big Heritage has been leading a community archaeology project on Wirral, based around the village of Bromborough. In 2013, 27 test pits were opened around the village core and a further 23 test pits followed in 2014. As part of the 2014 season a survey and small-scale excavation were undertaken at Bromborough Court House. This talk will set out the findings from both the Court House excavation and the test pitting project.

Thursday, 19th March, 2015

Curvilinear Enclosures in Willaston: *Anthony Annakin-Smith*

The lecture will focus on the large features identified in some medieval or earlier landscapes, known as 'oval' or 'curvilinear' enclosures in one Wirral township but there will also be discussion of such enclosures elsewhere in the north-west and in the rest of the UK. The form and apparent origin of these features is very varied and they have been relatively little studied, but they may help take us back to the very roots of communities.

Thursday, 16th April, 2015 (AGM)

Augustinian lifeways: reconstructing medieval diet, disease and trauma from Norton Priory, Cheshire: *Shirley Curtis-Summers, the University of Liverpool*

This talk will present key results from recent PhD research on the Norton Priory skeletons (12th-16th c. AD); with evidence for diet (from stable isotope analysis) and disease and trauma (from osteological investigations). The extent to which a religious way of life had an effect on the medieval body will be discussed.

If you have heard a particularly interesting talk or site visit please pass the information on to Gina as an idea for a future event. Georgina.Muskett@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

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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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In Memory of Ron Whyard

It is with great sadness that we have to report the recent passing of Ron Whyard. Ron was a stalwart member of MAS for nearly 40 years. He took part in most MAS activities and was a regular attendee at lectures, fieldtrips and weekends away. He also attended numerous WEA and Liverpool University Continuing Education courses. Ron also took part in many field archaeology projects on Merseyside including the Rainford excavations in the late 1970s. Although he rarely spoke about his life outside MAS, Ron will be remembered for his great enthusiasm for archaeology and his good humour. He will be sadly missed.

MAS has a new Membership Secretary....

After many years on the MAS Council, Joyce Hughes has decided to stand down as Membership Secretary. The Council would like to thank Joyce for the time and effort she has put into the job. We are pleased to welcome Anthony Sinclair to the MAS Council and he has offered to take over the role of Membership Secretary later this year. Please note that in the interim period, cheques etc. should be sent to Dave Roberts at the address on the renewal form.

Award Success!

Merseyside Archaeological Society's Rainford's Roots community archaeology project has been highly commended in the national Marsh Award for Community Archaeology, and has won the 2014 St Helens Heritage Network Award for Archaeological projects.

The project involved MAS members, local people and students in six excavations, two building recording exercises, and research. Hundreds of people donated a total of over 3000 volunteering hours to the project. Thousands more people attended events, village walking tours, handling sessions, museum store tours, and exhibitions.

The project has now come to a close, and a book about the archaeology of the village is available for purchase: <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/onlineshop/books/archaeology-books.aspx>

Publications

The Rainford's Roots project (see above) is now drawing to a close and the findings are being published. The popular booklet "Rainford's Roots : The Archaeology of a Village" is already available. Work is almost complete on the first 'Rainford monograph' which should be completed within the next couple of months. A second monograph will follow during 2015.

Work is well underway on JMAS Volume 15 which will contain papers on Speke Hall, the excavation on the site of Garston Mill and the Meadow Lane excavation in West Derby. We are expecting to produce this publication in time for the 2015 AGM.

Merseyside Archaeological Society Conference: The Archaeology of Merseyside: recent work in the region and beyond

MAS's conference was held at the Museum of Liverpool on Saturday 18th October 2014. Papers covered a wide range of periods and topics, and presented some of the latest research underway into the archaeology of the region. The day started with papers from Vanessa Oakden, Finds Liaison Officer and Liz Stewart, Curator of Archaeology at Museum of Liverpool. They both considered recent Portable Antiquities Scheme finds and the ways in which they are contributing to our understanding of culture, wealth and identity in the region in the Romano-British and early Medieval periods. A pair of papers then explored recent research into the prehistory of the region – Alison Burns, researcher at the University of Manchester spoke about the Formby footprints, and the ways in which they are revealing more about the lives and activities of individuals from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. Then Ron Cowell, Curator of Prehistoric Archaeology, Museum of Liverpool presented the excavation he's been undertaking at Lunt Meadows, revealing Mesolithic structures.

In the early afternoon delegates were invited to undertake a tour of the History Detectives gallery in the Museum of Liverpool where they were able to see a number of the finds mentioned in the talks throughout the day, and participate in a handling session with finds from the recent Rainford's Roots community archaeology project with Project Officer, Sam Rowe. The final paper from Mark Adams, Senior Archaeological Project Officer, Museum of Liverpool, considered the archaeology and documentary research he's been undertaking to reconsider the history of Newton Hall, Newton-le-Willows.

64 people attended the conference and feedback from delegates was very positive. Congratulations to Liz Stewart and Rob Philpott for putting such an interesting programme together and thanks to the Museum of Liverpool for hosting the conference.

2015 Subscriptions

MAS Subscriptions for the new year are now due. A membership renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

MAS Fieldtrip to Knowsley Park and Prescot

Undeterred by showers, an intrepid group explored a small part of Lord Derby's Knowsley Park estate. Starting at the ruined paddocks where previous Lords had kept their horses, we saw the high sandstone wall which runs for ten miles around the estate.

There has been horse racing in Knowsley Park since the early 18th century and a race course is marked on Greenwood's Map of Lancashire of 1818. The Tithe Map of 1847 shows the course in the area around Mizzy Dam. Although part of the course ran in what is now the Safari Park, it is possible to visualise the route as it climbs the hill between Mizzy Dam and Riding Hill. An enigmatic ditch was spotted and thought to be a remnant of the course.

Proceeding towards Stand Wood, we diverted to visit Bridge Lodge, a roofless, stone castle-like ruin (1847) over a picturesque dell linking White Man's Dam and Octagon Pond. From there we climbed to the trig. point where a Tower still survives and probably provided a view of the races. Close by is White Man's Statue from where we could see the surrounding countryside and identify features such as Billinge Hill, Kirkby Industrial Estate, the Helsby-Frodsham escarpment and our afternoon destination - Prescot.



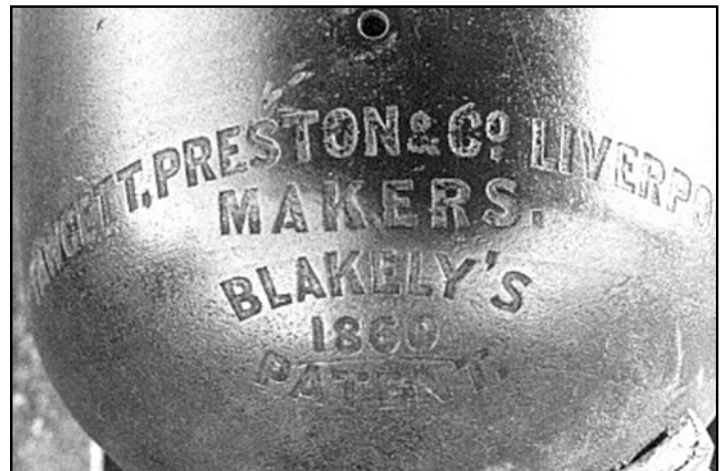
Tower in Knowsley Park

After an excellent lunch at The Clock Face, an attractive 1830s refacing of an earlier house associated with the Knowsley estate, we ascended West St with Margaret Jarvis (local resident and MAS member) looking at vernacular dwellings and a former clock workshop attached to a Victorian house. A broad alleyway led to the RC church by Joseph Hansom (1856-7) and Vicarage Place with its Georgian houses complete with rocco coat of arms of Kings College Cambridge saved from a demolished court house. The parish church of St Mary is possibly built on a pre-Christian site and had been subject to much rebuilding. The tower and spire are by Henry Sephton. Eccleston St. built originally as a late medieval

new street, retains at least one original half timbered building dated 1614. Nearby is Knowsley's relocated public library and local museum which successfully outlines the history of Prescot and the growth/decline of its clock and watch making industry. Further exploration revealed more watch making workshops off Atherton St & Ackers St. Nearby, the 'Flat Iron' building was a store for the clock industry and later workshop for the successor to The Lancashire Watch Company. Adjacent is the graveyard of a long gone Methodist chapel. Eventually we arrived in Albany St to look at what remained of the factory built for LWC in 1889. Fortunately much has remained and is to be converted to a residential building. We gradually wandered back along neat terraced streets, looking at our final workshop off Grosvenor St before returning to the Clock Face

Maurice Handley

The Past in Shadow - Fawcett Preston & Co. Ltd (1860 – 1865)

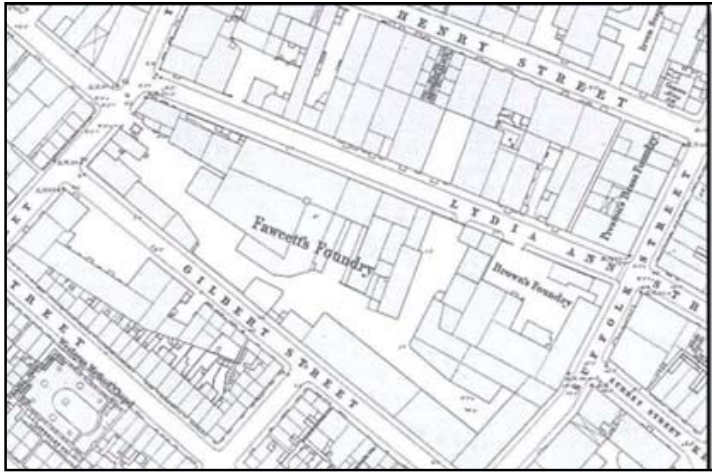


The base of the first rifled cannon used in America

In York Street, close to the Albert Dock and the (now lost) Custom House, was located one of the most important suppliers of ordnance and engineering expertise to the Confederate States during the American Civil War (1861-1865). The picture (above) provides an illustration of the trademark which survives to this day. Indeed, this cannon was the first of its kind to be used in anger on the American continent. It was unique, not only because it was rifled, but also because of its controversial design. Its effectiveness was heralded by the Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, when it was used in the bombardment of Fort Sumter S.C. (April 1861), an action that precipitated the American Civil War.

The history of the maker is linked to the industrial growth of Liverpool, and that of skulduggery, parliamentary controversy and crushing post-war reparations. The designer, while heralded as a visionary, was entangled in a labyrinth of claim and counter claim in terms of patents, patronage and nepotism. The purchaser was the banker for virtually all Confederate activity in the United Kingdom and Europe. All had substantial links to Liverpool and are now in jeopardy of being forgotten.

Fawcett Preston & Co. was established in Liverpool in 1758, when George Perry opened a foundry which specialised in manufacturing



The location of the foundry in 1864

three-legged iron pots. The arrival of William Fawcett, first as manager, and then owner changed the emphasis of production. Ordnance and steam machinery had become very lucrative and the opportunity was grasped in earnest. The company developed a reputation for excellence and innovation which did not go unnoticed by the agents of the Confederacy, who were searching for suppliers who could service their need for arms and ships. However, the role of Fawcett Preston was always under close scrutiny by Union agents and questions were asked in the House of Commons (1863). Nevertheless, over 30 examples of ordnance, including those recovered from Confederate surface raiders (CSS Alabama, CSS Florida) survive to illustrate the level of involvement. Unfortunately, such involvement led to reparations of over \$15 million being awarded to the United States (Treaty of Washington 1872).

The designer, under whose patent many of the cannon were manufactured, was Theophilus Alexander Blakely (1822-1868).



Fawcett Preston foundry in 1935

His contribution to the development of rifled ordnance has been obscured because of a dispute about the originality of his design. Sir William Armstrong decisively registered a similar patent during the same year (1855), Armstrong was responsible for ordnance procurement for the British military, and as a result, no Blakely

patented ordnance was ever acquired. Blakely's widow continued to seek redress and questions were still being asked in the House of Commons in 1900, but without satisfaction.

The purchaser of the cannon was Charles Kuhn Prioleau. A native of South Carolina, with strong business links between Charleston S.C and Liverpool. He ran Fraser Trenholm & Co., situated in 10 Rumford Place, near St Nicholas's Church. It was through this business that financial support was given to the Confederate procurement agents. Most notable of these was the purchase of the CSS Florida and CSS Alabama, built by W. Miller & Sons and Laird Bros, respectively. The cannon was a gift, which had inscribed on a plaque, "*Presented to the State of South Carolina by a citizen resident abroad in commemoration of the 20th December, 1860. . .*". It now resides in a memorial park in Galena, Illinois. Curiously, it is also the birthplace of Union general and later U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant. Prioleau is buried in Kensall, London, but the home he built in Liverpool, survives at 19 Abercromby Square, later more famous as the residence of the Chavasse family.

The above, albeit brief, sketch demonstrates the level of involvement of Liverpool in the American Civil War. Nevertheless, it is in danger of being forgotten. The Maritime Museum, has attempted to rectify this, but the exhibition focuses, unsurprisingly, mainly upon the naval aspect. More, significantly, the archives of Fawcett Preston and Fraser Trenholm, despite being fragmentary, have received limited interest. The foundry has long been demolished and the artefacts are mainly situated abroad. Those buildings that survive, are little known, or have become understated. Has the legacy of Fawcett Preston and its involvement with the Confederate war effort become an inconvenient truth? It is with this question that I ponder, is indeed the past in shadow?

Peter Norris, PhD student at the University of Liverpool in Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology.

The Lister Steps Carnegie Community Hub project

The Lister Steps Carnegie Community Hub project aims to regenerate the former Andrew Carnegie Library on the corner



Green Lane Elevation - Full Building



Lister Drive Reading Room

of Lister Drive and Green Lane. The project is currently in a Heritage Lottery Fund development stage as we investigate the extent of the damage in the former library and carry out consultations with stakeholders and the community to identify new uses for the building.

The emergency holding works are ongoing at the former Library. Contractors from Robinsons Preservation Ltd have continued to work hard to stop the rot by removing the saturated and mouldy plaster and vinyl flooring and preparing the building for a period of drying out and ventilation. They have completed this work ahead of time and have now moved on to investigating the condition of the timber structure. Sadly the roof continues to leak significantly in places and so we are in discussions with Liverpool City Council to resolve this as part of the £100,000 emergency holding works they are funding.

The great news is that preliminary investigations hint that much of the historic fabric will be saved and retained rather than replaced which is fantastic news for the conservation of the building. Much of the plaster detailing has been left in situ at this stage while some has been wrapped in bubble wrap to ensure we have samples saved and some has been sent off to be dated. Curiously investigative work has found that not all the plasterwork is authentic to the Edwardian period! Much of the plaster detailing is hollow plaster board and so we are researching the Library Museum and Arts Committee minute books to find out when the plaster replacement work took place. The consultation process to identify new uses for the building is ongoing and we welcome the input of MAS members. Please visit www.listerstepshub.co.uk for more information and for regular project updates.

Kerry Massheder-Rigby

The Poulton Research Project

The Poulton Research Project was founded in 1995 as a training and research excavation in rural Cheshire, but the story starts in the late 1960s when the farmer kept hitting a buried structure within a 52 acre area known as Chapel Field. He conducted a small excavation which recovered a glazed medieval floor tile and human mandible. This raised interest locally as Poulton has long been known to be the site of a short-lived but now lost Cistercian

Abbey which existed in the 12th/13th century.

The 1995 excavation focused on the area where the ecclesiastical finds had been recovered but instead of an abbey, the foundations of a tripartite rural Chapel with Tower, Nave and Chancel were uncovered, in addition to a graveyard with an estimated 2,000 burials. The foundations of the structure showed clear evidence of being enlarged from a single celled building of possibly late Saxon date (supported by finds of 10th century pottery). What was even more surprising was the recovery of a large Roman assemblage from the grave fills (it is now known that the Chapel sits on top of a Roman building), which indicated a high-status settlement in the vicinity. Resistivity survey of the surrounding area revealed a circular feature approximately 40m to the north, but instead of a Roman structure, excavation surprisingly revealed an Iron Age roundhouse.

Continual excavation from 1995 until 2014 has revealed a large landscape with continuous occupation from the Middle Iron Age through to the early post-medieval period. The earliest structural phases comprise an extensive Iron Age lowland settlement, with multiple roundhouses built on the same site generation after generation. The ceramic and overall assemblage is large and indicates that a wealthy trading settlement existed. Later Roman activity currently comprises land division, industrial remains, some structures and a large and diverse assemblage indicative of high-status settlement from the late 1st-early 5th centuries AD. The Saxon period is represented by the single celled structure and a large assemblage of 10th century Chester Ware ceramics. This phase finally links into the tripartite Chapel, which records reveal was completely demolished by the early 18th century.



Poulton - Ring Ditches II and III

The archaeology of Chapel Field is of great importance for several reasons. Firstly, the extensive archaeology, continuity in occupation and deep stratigraphy is more akin to an urban than rural excavation. The remains are well preserved and very rare in Cheshire, a region which is still seen as being sparse for evidence in the late prehistoric, Roman and even possibly medieval periods. With this in mind, the multi-period assemblage now comprises approximately 75,000 items. This research excavation has the potential to become a type-

site, whilst simultaneously rewriting the distribution maps of several periods in British archaeology.

Kevin Cootes

A Roman Lamp Holder from Kelsall, Cheshire.



Oakden, V (2014) LVPL-3A55A3 A ROMAN LAMP Webpage available at: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/646088>

This incomplete cast lead alloy object was reported to Portable Antiquities Scheme by a local metal detectorist and is recorded as LVPL-3A55A3. It is a lamp holder of Roman date. The object is sub-oval in plan and consists of a sheet of lead, the edges of which have been folded inwards. In the centre of the object is a drilled hole with an internal diameter of 9.61mm. The object has a light brown patina and is undecorated.

Lead lamp holders were used during the Roman period to hold oil lamps, candles and lanterns. Although the perforation could be used to drain oil spilt from a ceramic or metal lamp a parallel with a hole has not been found and it may have caused impracticalities.

An example of an un-perforated lead lamp holder can be seen from the National Museums Scotland online catalogue <http://nms.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-100-102-484-C>. Another example at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester can be seen at <http://aroundchester.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/roman-lead-lamp-holder.html>.

Currently on the PAS database only 3 lamp holders have been recorded while we have records of 17 Roman lamps of various forms. In this flattened condition this lamp holder could have easily been dismissed as scrap so it is fortunate that the finder was able to recognise its importance and bring it along to a finds surgery for identification.

Vanessa Oakden

The Mersey and Dee branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club

The Mersey and Dee branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club have had a very busy summer!

The team at Big Heritage (<http://bigheritage.co.uk/>) led our two fieldwork sessions last summer. We joined them on their 'Discovering Bromborough' community excavations. In July we spent time with Big Heritage researching Bromborough and identifying changes in the landscape over time by looking at historic maps. In August we started our session by going on a tour of a local church where Dean from Big Heritage asked us questions about the landscape and how it might have changed over time, allowing us to put our research into practice. We then walked to site where, despite a heavy and lengthy downpour (!), we enjoyed helping Big Heritage to dig test pits, sieve and record. We especially enjoyed working with Film Fallon to record our day digging using handheld camcorders and interviewing site volunteers. Thank you Big Heritage ☺



YAC - Big Heritage at Bromborough

If you know a young person aged 8-16 years who would like to get involved in YAC please visit <http://new.archaeologyuk.org/join-a-yac-branch> to find your local branch, or for the Mersey and Dee branch please e-mail Fay.Eaton-Franks@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Kerry Massheder-Rigby