



Merseyside Archaeological Society Newsletter 2/2014

Registered Charity No 510831

Merseyside Archaeological Society Conference 2014

Book Now! Please see further details on page 2 of this Newsletter.

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 2014 Lecture and Fieldtrip 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.

2014 Fieldtrips

Saturday, 6th September

Field trip to Knowsley Park and Prescot, led by Maurice Handley and David Scott

Saturday 6th September 10.00 a.m.

The morning will be spent interpreting the landscape of Knowsley Park, the home of Lord Derby who has given special permission for this visit. Afterwards there will be an opportunity for lunch in Prescot followed by a guided walk around the historic town. The walk in the Park will be 2-3 km, partly on rough ground which may be muddy. Waterproof clothing and stout footwear will be needed. There are no toilet facilities inside the Park.

Booking is essential for the visit to the Park, directions and further information can be obtained from Maurice Handley (details below).

To book a place contact Maurice Handley: mahandley@tesco.net (0151 426 8157).

Note that we will not be visiting Knowsley Hall or the Safari Park. The Hall is not open to the public except in October 2014. For details of this see :- <http://www.hha.org.uk/Property/585/Knowsley-Hall>

Lectures

Thursday, 16th October 2014

Dr Ben Croxford, Historic Environment Record Officer, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service

Merseyside Historic Environment Record

The Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) has recently transferred from National Museums Liverpool to Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. As part of this the entire paper archive is going to be digitised and updated. The aim is to make this information freely accessible to the public online. There is a lot of work to do first and this talk will go over some of that, including explaining how MAS members can assist.

Merseyside Archaeological Society

Web Site: <http://merseysidearchsoc.weebly.com>

Thursday, 20th November 2014

Dr. John Hill, the University of Liverpool

Astronomy in Prehistoric Britain

This talk explores the cosmological beliefs of the British Neolithic and Early Bronze Age communities (circa 4000 – 1800 BC) and explores the quest to incorporate the secrets of the universe into the design of British prehistoric monuments. Arguably, many ancient cultures used the sun for determining direction; the moon for determining time; and the stars for determining the seasons. But were our British prehistoric ancestors doing the same? And if so, was it science or symbolism?

Thursday, 18th December 2014

Members' Evening

This year our annual pre-Christmas meeting will take the form of a members' evening. All members are invited to bring a few photographs, either digital or hard copy, of their favourite archaeological site or visit. As usual, we'll have a digital projector on hand, so a USB drive/'memory stick' with individual photos or a 5-minute powerpoint presentation would be ideal. With mince pies and cake on hand, this promises to be an enjoyable evening in good company.

Spring 2015 lecture dates are:

Thursday, 15th January; Thursday, 19th February; Thursday, 19th March and Thursday, 16th April (AGM).

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

MAS Conference 18 October 2014

The Society is hosting a conference on Saturday 18 October on recent archaeology projects in the North West.

Title: The Archaeology of Merseyside: recent work in the region and beyond

Date: Saturday 18 October 2014

Time: 10.00-16.15

Venue: Museum of Liverpool, Pier Head, Liverpool

A range of speakers will be attending, presenting talks on various topics including the Prehistoric Formby Footprints, the Mesolithic site at Lunt Meadows, recent Roman treasure hoards from Cheshire, and the Rainford's Roots community archaeology project.

Booking is essential. Please fill in the attached form and return it, with payment, to Sam Rowe. You can also download the form from our website <http://merseysidearchsoc.weebly.com/>

MIHS Anniversary Lecture - an invitation to MAS members.

The Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society will be holding a special 50th Anniversary Lecture in the Quaker Meeting House (where MAS meets), on Monday October 13th at 7 pm. The distinguished speaker will be Sir Neil Cossons.

Booking is required and a supper will be available. For more details visit the MIHS website www.mihs.org.uk/ or contact the secretary Malcolm Verity at malcolm.verity1@btinternet.com

MAS Annual General Meeting 2014

Our 38th AGM was held at the Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool City Centre on Thursday 17th April 2014. The well attended meeting was chaired by Nancy Jenkins.

Formal minutes will be circulated, as usual, prior to next year's AGM but this report, albeit a summary, is intended to keep all our members up to date on the main issues of business.

The current Council was re-elected as follows:

Rob Philpott, Hon Chair.

Dave Roberts, Hon Treasurer.

Martin Cox, Hon Secretary.

Joyce Hughes, Membership Secretary.

Members: Diana Goodier, Maurice Handley, Nancy Jenkins, Kerry Massheder-Rigby, Gina Muskett, Sam Rowe, Chris Wood and Jenny Woodcock.

Council was asked to consider the co-option of Ben Croxford (HER Officer) at their next meeting.

The Treasurer's report (Dave Roberts) described the success of the Society's grant applications, last year seeing the award of a substantial grant for the Rainford's Roots project. The accounts reflect the first part of the Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £37550. Membership subscriptions had shown an improvement along with an increase in revenue from lectures but publications sales are down. Overall the cash situation continues in the same vein as the previous year. The Society's financial situation is "sound and should remain so if we can maintain our current level of membership".

Rob Philpott's Chair's report for 2013-14 spoke of "significant progress" in one of the most intractable issues that had faced the Society, namely the withdrawal of funding and closure of the Merseyside Archaeological Advisory Service. The districts have now reached an agreement to fund the HER and Dr Ben Croxford has been appointed as the new HER Officer. A two year project will see the creation of a new digital record. This will be supported by a new HER Project Officer funded by English Heritage.

Two new MAS journals are expected in the near future: Speke Hall and Newton-le-Willows.

Many members will know of Bill Highcock's contribution to MAS. Bill sadly died on 13 December 2012 but typical of his openhearted and generous nature, a legacy of £4500 was left to support a new publication. This will be used to bring together the narrative of the Rainford Tennis Courts excavation which began with the work of Peter Davey in 1979-80, producing a huge quantity of pottery and clay tobacco pipes dating from 1630-50. David Higgins and Susie White have been responsible for much of the work for publication.

There has once again been a stimulating and expert programme of lectures arranged by Dr Gina Muskett with a further programme of field trips arranged for this summer. Rob also commended the work of officers and council members in their diligence in ensuring the good running of the Society and enthusiasm and ideas for the future.

A highlight of the year has been the Rainford's Roots Project led by Sam Rowe and its success as a model for community archaeology. It is hoped that this can be replicated whether in Rainford or elsewhere.

NML continues to suffer ongoing cuts and the sector is now suffering serious damage. On a more positive note, the Reader Organisation has been successful in its HLF bid to develop the Mansion House at Calderstones Park as a secure home for the prehistoric stones and their interpretation.

Sam Rowe presented a comprehensive overview of the Rainford's Roots project which had seen over 1700 visitors and the donation of over 3000 volunteering hours. Its work is well documented both through the Newsletter and the Roots website. However, it is worth noting that its community engagement objectives have been enhanced by 40 finds processing sessions for volunteers and a range of workshops, lectures, events, open days and walking tours for members of the public. The project has supervised four student placements and created a wide ranging partnership network including the NML, University of Liverpool, St Helens College, local schools and societies and Young Archaeologists Club.

The project is now in a post-excavation phase with the preparation of site excavation reports and objects being catalogued. A popular book is in preparation and a paper will soon be published by the Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage discussing community archaeology in Merseyside.

(Note: the full versions of these reports are available from the Secretary).

Members requested that Council undertake a review of the Society's constitution (not undertaken for some time) and details of its requirements as a charitable trust. A report will be presented to the Society's next AGM.

Martin Cox, Hon. Secretary

MAS Council

We continue our profile of MAS Council members:

Council member: Maurice Handley - in brief

Qualifications	Degree in Mechanical Engineering (City University, London) Certificate in Technical Education (University of Birmingham) Diploma in Landscape Interpretation (University of Liverpool)
Career	1959 -1966 employed in Engineering Industries 1966 - 1993 Further Education Lecturer
Member	Merseyside Archaeological Society (MAS) Liverpool Geological Society (LGS) Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society (MIHS) Council for British Archaeology (CBA) Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA)
Volunteer	MAS Council member MIHS Committee member and Journal editor CBA Listed buildings correspondent, Knowsley Borough
Interests	Landscape Archaeology, Industrial Heritage
Likes	World travel visiting Archaeological and Geological sites (and grandchildren), Scotland, China, Railways.
Favourite Archaeological Site	-Tikal, Guatemala

The Merseyside Historic Environment Record Update

Dana Campbell has been appointed as the new Project Officer on a 2 year contract. The digitisation project has started with the Wirral records and is 12.5% complete. Ways of making the HER publicly accessible are currently being investigated.

The HER service can be contacted via Merseyside.HER@eas.sefton.gov.uk

CBA North West

The next meeting is entitled Castles to Castellations and will be held on Saturday 8 November 2014 at the Grosvenor Museum in Chester. More details (i.e. speakers!) will be available shortly at:

http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbanw/CBANW_meetings_intro.html

Merseyside Archaeological Society on Facebook

You can now follow us on Facebook:-

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1481822652#!/groups/151058304987687/>



Rainford Tudor Craft Day

Rainford's Roots

Tudor Craft Day, Event Review

On Saturday 2 August the Rainford's Roots project team hosted an 'Elizabethan Extravaganza' craft day at Rainford Village Hall. The day featured a host of demonstrators and different crafts for people to make and take home.

The stalls included candle making, basket making, weaving, dyeing, grinding grain, clay-pipe making and pottery making. Horus Birds of Prey set up on the front lawn which enabled visitors to hold the birds and helped attract passers-by into the hall. Visitors were treated to an array of period songs by the talented Squeake's Noyse. The children's craft table remained busy throughout the day and Elizabeth Morris from 'A Tale to Tell' told a range of mythical children's stories.

In just 6 hours the event saw more than 300 visitors pass through the doors; the poor weather clearly hadn't put people off from venturing out! The Society is delighted that the event was so successful and the team has many positive comments from visitors:

"the event... was out of this world! My children and I had a wonderful time, the activities were really engaging and educational and fun."

"I just had to comment on the wonderful day we had in Rainford... a great topic for the children... a massive thank you for the kindness and time all [the] stall holders showed us..."

Visitors were treated to tastes of the Tudor period including flavoured cordials and homemade cakes from local resident Barbara Hurst who has always shown great support for the community project. The event took a lot of organising and a big thank you to the volunteers who helped the day to run smoothly. The Society would also like to show their thanks to all the demonstrators who shared their skills and knowledge and helped to make the event such a success.

Other news

The Rainford's Roots community archaeology project is coming to an end this autumn and the project team are busy editing their

popular book entitled "Rainford's Roots: the archaeology of a village" which will be published in the next few months.

The team would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has been involved in the project over the last 2 years. The project has been a tremendous success, with over 3,500 volunteering hours given and almost 2,500 visitors attending events and sessions throughout the course of the project!

Sam Rowe

Ruin, Regeneration and Re-use: The Lister Drive Carnegie Library

Lister Steps, a childcare charity, have secured initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund to regenerate the Grade II listed former Lister Drive Library in Tuebrook.

The Library, known locally as Lister Drive Library, was established with funding from an Andrew Carnegie grant, and opened in 1905. The library is a one-storey brick built structure with stone dressings, a slate roof and an octagonal turret. It was designed by Liverpool Corporation architect Thomas Shelmerdine who was responsible for a number of Liverpool's libraries. The library originally contained a lending library and a number of reading rooms. Sadly, following health and safety concerns, the library closed in 2006 and has remained vacant since. This period of un-occupation has resulted in the library being subject to theft, vandalism and neglect. Items stolen from the library include lead flashings, the glazing to roof lights and feature ridge tiles. There has been substantial rainwater ingress which has severely damaged the timber structure and internal decorative plasterwork and joinery and dry rot is common throughout the building.

The 'Lister Steps Carnegie Community Hub' project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is currently in its development stage, however once completed Lister Steps aim to relocate their existing childcare services into the building. The regenerated building will also serve as a centre for community engagement, a 'hub' offering refreshments, activities and training opportunities for the local community and visitors.



Lister Drive Library, Tuebrook



Lister Reading Room Doors. Image reproduced with kind permission of James Sanderson.

The project will shortly begin a period of consultation with stakeholders and members of the community. The project aims to host a number of heritage activities in the near future such as tours of the library and grounds, an oral history project, building recording activities and training opportunities. We welcome comments, suggestions and advice from Merseyside Archaeological Society members via our online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NPBB39Z> and we are keen to hear from members willing to share their research, best practice ideas and suggestions for match funding.

Please follow our progress on Facebook ([facebook.com/listerstepscarnegiecommunityhub](https://www.facebook.com/listerstepscarnegiecommunityhub)), Twitter ([@ListerStepsHub](https://twitter.com/ListerStepsHub)) and on our website (<https://listerstepscarnegiecommunityhub.weebly.com>)

Kerry Massheder-Rigby, Heritage Development Officer
Kerry.Massheder-Rigby@listersteps.co.uk

MAS Visit to Liverpool Central Library

A dozen members visited the Liverpool Central Library on the evening of June 19th. We were enthusiastically led by Roger Hull, researcher in the Liverpool Record Office, who gave us an informative tour of the impressive re-modelled library. He also revealed that the library had just been voted one of the top ten UK attractions by TripAdvisor.

Starting from the stunning entrance area with a view rising to the the atrium four floors above, Roger took us into the children's 'Discover' area - once used as a Concert Hall. Here riveted iron girders exposed in the ceiling indicated the 19th century origins of the building and contrasted with the smooth modern support columns of the 21st century rebuild. On the floor immediately above is the circular Picton Reading Room, named after its benefactor and retaining many of its original features despite the WWII bombing which destroyed the adjacent part of the main library and neighbouring museum. We learnt that during the recent rebuild, valuable books were stored in the Cheshire salt mines whilst others were kept in the Merseyside area.

An exit from the Picton Room took us past an Art Nouveau copper plaque to H. F. Hornby who funded the Hornby Library - a surprisingly light hall-like room with stone columns supporting a gallery. A smaller adjacent room lined with shelves of valuable books, displayed a volume of the Audubon Book of American Birds. The library holds five volumes worth several million pounds and one volume is displayed in a special glass case with pages turned weekly by the library's conservationist.

Leaving the public area on the third floor, we entered the Search Room where items from the archives can be consulted (n.b. items must be booked at least one day in advance - see the Library's website). To visit the new archive storage and conservation building, we crossed a narrow bridge over a startling drop to the ground floor below. A variety of techniques to conserve books and other paper items are employed in the bright naturally lit conservation room. Fortunately the group was small enough to squeeze through the air lock into the temperature and humidity controlled store. We visited only one of the four floors to see the motorised mobile shelving system and briefly look at the storage for workhouse records and the extensive collection of maps.

Finally we finished an interesting and worthwhile visit on the top floor's outside balcony, which is accessible to the public and has extensive views across central Liverpool. A delightful finish on a beautiful sunny summer evening.

Maurice Handley



MAS Visit to Liverpool Central Library



Silver-Gilt Dress-Hook

Silver-gilt dress-hook

This silver-gilt dress-hook was discovered by a local metal detectorist and reported as Treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act, (Treasure number 2014 T71). On top of the back plate is a sub hexagonal cushion and shaped with this are four domes, one of which is placed in the centre, two now damaged. Around the base of each dome is a filigree wire border. The edges of the object are undulating and each point is decorated with a rounded pellet. More pellets separate each of the domes. On the reverse is a transverse attachment bar, under which is a hole. This hole may have accommodated a pin that secured an additional decorative element to the front, now missing. There is also part of the recurving hook in place, the remainder now missing.

This dress-hook has been identified as a Read class D, Type 10 (Read 2008, p84-85). Similar examples can be found on the PAS database (2013 T627, [WAW-BBB610](http://www.pas.gov.uk/record/id/600027) // 2003 T23; 2003 TAR, p.120; PAS ID: NMS2204).

The object has been soaked in olive oil by the finder obscuring the detail. The dress hook can be dated from AD 1500 – 1650. In terms of age and as the object contains a minimum of 10% precious metal it qualifies as Treasure under the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996. The full treasure act can be viewed at <http://finds.org.uk/treasure>. Depending on valuation National Museums Liverpool hopes to acquire this find.

The full record for this object on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database can be viewed at Oakden, V (2014) LVPL-4A0113 A POST MEDIEVAL DRESS HOOK Webpage available at: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/600027>.

Vanessa Oakden

Mersey and Dee Young Archaeologists' Club

The Mersey and Dee branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club have had a busy few months.

We celebrated World War One during our May meeting by taking a tour of the Museum of Liverpool (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mol/visit/galleries/peoples/western-front.aspx>), learning

about local and national heroes and by taking part in a debate about the validity and availability of source material. We particularly enjoyed using the handling collection to learn about clothing worn by Soldiers in the war. One of the more meaningful activities we engaged in involved each of us learning about a particular war hero, and then sharing our story with the group. This made us understand the human sacrifice of the war-some of the Soldiers were the same age as our oldest members!

In June we put on our new high-visibility vests and went on a fieldtrip to the Victoria Gallery and Museum (<http://vgm.liverpool.ac.uk/>) at the University of Liverpool, the original red brick university building. We took part in their Edwardian dig activities which involved us dressing up in traditional Turkish dress, digging for evidence of Hittite culture and making our own Cuneiform tablets. Education Officer Kirsty Hall then took us on a tour of the museum and gallery. We were particularly impressed with the Turner painting 'The Eruption of the Souffrier Mountains'. To end our fieldtrip we relaxed on huge beanbags to watch a cartoon which was being shown in an old lecture theatre!

Big Heritage (<http://bigheritage.co.uk/>) are leading our next two sessions which will involve taking part in pre-excavation activities before heading out to Bromborough in August to dig.



YAC Visit to the Victoria Gallery and Museum

If you know a young person aged 8-16 years who would like to get involved in YAC (<http://new.archaeologyuk.org/join-a-yac-branch>) please e-mail jon.marrows@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Kerry Massheder-Rigby