

President Dr Paul Booth FRHistS

# The Chester Antiquary

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

2022 Issue 4 – December

## Comings and Goings

Since Advent is almost upon us, it seems like a good moment to provide a short update on the comings and goings of the Society, ready for the New Year ahead.

The Society's advocacy work is a continuing activity, as members will see from our social media posts, but one which is therefore easily overlooked when we discuss what we have been doing. However, the coincidence of Cheshire West and Chester Council consultations on their Heritage Strategy, *One City Plan* and budget constraints has made it a busy period for advocacy on substantial proposals, so we thought it worthwhile to draw your attention to some of our comments.

An aspiration of the Society is to become a force for fostering collaboration between the many heritage institutions and organisations doing great work across the city and region. With this in mind, we provide a brief summary of the wonderful Cathedral Heritage Discovery Day, which represents just the sort of collaboration that becomes more than the sum of its parts. At the same time, we take the opportunity to remind you of the regular Cheshire Archives and Local Studies blog posts, this month on the moustaches and railways of Cheshire's past, and

the Grosvenor Museum exhibitions on the Rows and on cultures of collecting, with exciting associated tours and talks.

Having only taken over as Chair earlier this year, it has been a real pleasure to begin hosting this year's online lectures. So far we have been treated to two excellent talks – from our own Andrew Reynolds, revealing the fruits of his amazing doctoral work on prehistoric hoards from Wales and the Marches, and from Rob Philpott, revisiting the rich archaeology of Wirral. Next we look eagerly forward to Pauline Clarke on the material culture of the Welsh Marches in the early middle ages. Below we signpost once more the lectures to come as well as other free online talks available from the Department of History & Archaeology at the University of Chester.

Once you have finished admiring advocacy work, exploring exhibitions, browsing blogs, and listening to lectures, you might have a little energy left for sustained reading. If so, we advertise a number of works arising from conferences and projects in Chester.

**Tom Pickles**

*Chair, Chester Archaeological Society*

## Journal volume 92

Happily, albeit delayed, publication of the latest issue of our journal is almost upon us. The volume is now at proof stage and we hope that it will be with members in early February. At 80 pages it is much shorter than in recent years – one of the delayed consequences of Covid-19 – but we hope that you will find plenty of interest in it. We already have promises of plenty of interesting articles and for the next two issues, together with some fascinating new items that we hope will become regular contributions.



Silver Arabic dirham issued by Caliph Al-Mahdi, dating to 159 AH (AD 775–6), found at Clatterbridge ([LVPL-OCF3FO](#)). One of the items in our annual roundup of PAS finds. © National Museums Liverpool

## Lecture Programme 2022–2023

*Wednesday 7 December at 7:30 pm, online via Zoom*

**The early medieval period in the Welsh Marches: the material evidence.**

Presented by Pauline Magdalene Clarke, post-graduate researcher, University of Chester

[Click here](#) for more information.

*Wednesday 4 January at 7:30 pm, online via Zoom*

**Beacon Ring.** Presented by Dr Paul Belford, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

*More information coming soon.*

*Wednesday 1 February at 7:30 pm, online via Zoom*

**Recording the past for our future: the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Cheshire.** Presented by

Heather Beeton, Finds Liaison Officer for Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

[Click here](#) for more information.

*Wednesday 1 March at 7:30 pm, online via Zoom*

**Prehistory and afterlives: reconstructing the biography of the Pillar of Eliseg, an early medieval cross in north Wales.** Presented by

Professor Nancy Edwards, School of History, Law and Social Sciences, Bangor University.

[Click here](#) for more information.

*Wednesday 5 April at 7:30 pm, online via Zoom*

**Commerce and consumers: the ubiquitous chest of the late Middle Ages.** Presented by

Dr Katherine Wilson, Associate Professor of Later Medieval European History, University of Chester. [Click here](#) for more information.

*May lecture: to be finalised.*

Check our website [www.chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk/lectures](http://www.chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk/lectures) for up-to-date information.

*Members will be sent emails inviting them to register for online lectures. Non-members can buy tickets; look out for notices on social media.*

## History & Archaeology Research Seminars

*4:00 pm Wednesdays (online via MS Teams unless otherwise stated)*

*30 November*

**Using history to inform the right to food.**

Bryce Evans, Liverpool Hope University

*11 January*

**Tik Tok pasts.** Ellie Mackin-Roberts, King's College London, in conversation with Howard Williams

*18 January*

**The Roman conquest and annexation of Wales.**

Peter Guest, Vianova Archaeology & Heritage Services

*1 February*

**Title tbc.** Sam Edwards, Manchester Metropolitan University. *In person – Binks CBK 106/1*

*15 February*

**A better future for the world: the UN treaty and the US Senate.** Donna Jackson, University of Chester

**Putting Star Carr in context: new research into the Mesolithic of the Vale of Pickering**

Amy Gray Jones and Barry Taylor, University of Chester

*1 March*

**70 years on: Remembering the East German uprising of 17 June 1953.** Richard Millington,

University of Chester

*15 March*

**Constructing social and political relations: women suppliers to medieval court.** Katherine Wilson, University of Chester.

**'Coax'd from a handicraft trade' (and run back again): tracking British army deserters using the early eighteenth-century press.** Jonathan Worton, University Centre Shrewsbury

*29 March*

**A voice for the voiceless? Bioarchaeology in popular culture.** Ellie Chambers, University of Chester

**COVID-19: disrupting the rituals of grief.**

Kara Critchell, University of Chester

*To attend the seminars, please contact [k.critchell@chester.ac.uk](mailto:k.critchell@chester.ac.uk) to receive a link to the Microsoft Teams site.*

## Heritage Discovery Day at the Cathedral

Building on the success of several new events over the past two years, Chester Cathedral hosted a fantastic and very well-attended Heritage Discovery Day on Saturday 22 October.

A series of lectures focusing on the Abbey of St Werburgh took place over the days leading up to the event, bringing together a previous and current CAS Chair, Rachel Swallow and Tom Pickles, Council member Katherine Wilson, representatives from the Human Remains Project from the University of Liverpool, and scholars from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Along the way, attendees were introduced to the cult of Werburgh, the abbey's burial rights, its patrons the earls of Chester, and the world of its most famous chronicler, Ranulf Higden.



*Above* 'Why was St Werburgh so important in Chester': one of the series of lectures leading up to Heritage Discovery Day

*Left* Tom Livingstone, stonemason in the Cathedral Works Department, demonstrating his craft. (Photo Isabella Nunns/<https://www.tricabellaphotography.com/>)



*Below* Medieval object handling session in the Chapter House

During the Discovery Day itself, people experienced a range of activities focused around the medieval history and archaeology of the abbey. Within the nave they learned about the Cathedral's manuscript of a continuation of Ranulf Higden's chronicle, browsed the stalls of re-enactors, and handled medieval objects from the Grosvenor Museum collection under the expert guidance of Senior Curator and CAS Vice-Chair Liz Montgomery. Within the Chapter House they handled even more medieval objects with help from Katherine Wilson and student volunteers from the University of Chester's Department of History & Archaeology. Outside, they enjoyed heritage skills demonstrations from the Cathedral Works Department. A beautiful soundtrack to the whole event was provided by members of the Cathedral choir performing medieval choral music.



If you were not lucky enough to attend, watch out for further events in 2023!



## Current and Forthcoming Events

A reminder about the Rows exhibition and tours, and a Christmas event at Stanley Palace

At the Grosvenor Museum we are currently being spoilt with two terrific exhibitions. Liz Montgomery introduced us to [On Another Level: Exploring the Unique Rows of Chester](#) in our last Newsletter. This runs until 30 April 2023, with a series of related events and activities. Amongst these, CAS members may want to sign up for guided tours – a walk by Chester's Green Badge Guides inspired by the Victorian watercolour painter Louise Rayner and her images of Chester on 25 November from 10:45 to 12:45, and a tour of the Rows by the museum's Archaeological Officer on 14 December from 13:00 to 14:00. Similarly, they may want to attend the talk on the Rows on 30 November from 13:00 to 14:00. Since 19 November, the Rows exhibition has been joined by [Collage and Curiosity](#), which runs until 26 February 2023 in Gallery 2. This is a fascinating artistic reflection on cultures of collecting by Charlie Holt, Michael Leigh and Hazel Jones.

As if this were not enough to be going on with, Historiographers Heritage will be holding a fundraising event for the Friends of Stanley Palace Trust at Stanley Palace on Saturday 3 December from 10:00 to 19:00 – [The Chester of Christmas Past](#). This will include talks from local heritage groups, historic food and drink, and Christmas gifts for purchase from local businesses.



Watergate Row North by Louise Rayner



## Advocacy

Over the course of the autumn, members of the Society have been busy continuing our advocacy work with relation to local heritage

For the developing Cheshire West and Chester [Heritage Strategy](#), the Council have commissioned [Heritage Lincolnshire](#) to canvass the views of people within the borough. Members of the CAS Council shared a detailed commentary document and took part in public consultation meetings in October and November. We are very grateful to those who gave up their valuable time and energy to participate.

CWAC's [One City Plan](#) was also recently re-launched and members of CAS Council provided detailed comments on those actions most obviously relevant to heritage.

You can view our comments on the CWAC Heritage Strategy and relaunched *One City Plan* on our website: <https://chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk/advocacy>.

In the context of continuing reductions in local council budgets, CWAC have launched a consultation – [Choices in challenging times](#) – which includes assessment of the value of a range of institutions including heritage institutions. CAS Council will prepare a collective response, but individual members may like to make their own returns via the weblink above.

## Winter Reading

Essays by our late Vice-President Dai Morgan Evans, Roman discoveries at Saughton, the significance of treasure for the public, and the mobility of objects in the Middle Ages

The publication of *Archaeologies and Antiquaries*, a volume of selected papers by Dai Morgan Evans, edited by Prof Howard Williams and his colleague Dr Kara Critchell of the University of Chester, together with Dai's widow Sheena, should be a matter of justifiable local satisfaction. Dai grew up in Chester, where he played an important part in Thompson's amphitheatre excavations and where his father was Honorary Secretary of our Society from 1961 to 1967. After his retirement as General Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries in 2004 Dai served as Visiting Professor of Archaeology at the University of Chester and as a Vice-President of our Society from 2005 until his untimely death in 2017.

The volume comprises eleven papers (the last in four parts), plus a detailed account of Dai's career. The first four papers address the history and archaeology of early medieval western Britain. The following three papers reflect on antiquarian accounts and on changing attitudes to the conservation and presentation of ancient monuments. Three papers have their origin in Dai's time at the Society of Antiquaries, examining its organisational history and publishing an account of an early nineteenth-century tour of north Wales in the society's collections. The final paper, in four parts, deals with the church and community of Llangar, near Corwen, in the early eighteenth century.

The papers, originally published in a variety of places, have been reformatted for consistency and in some cases slightly updated; they have also been beautifully printed. An enjoyable and stimulating read! A fuller review will appear in our next journal

*Archaeologies & Antiquaries: essays by Dai Morgan Evans*. Ed Williams, H, Critchell, K & Evans, S. Pbk. iv + 298 pages. (Archaeopress Archaeology). Oxford: Archaeopress, 2022. ISBN 978 1 80327 158 3 (print); 978 1 80327 159 0 (pdf)

The redevelopment of the former Saughton army camp for housing from 2005 onwards was accompanied by excavations by Northern Archaeological Associates. The medieval discoveries were published in the 2018 issue of our

journal, and these have now been followed by a monograph on the Roman site. This comprised a long-lived farmstead represented by a subdivided rectangular enclosure and accompanying field division ('centuriation'). The buildings were both circular and rectangular. The site is unusual among rural settlements in the North-West for its complex layout but especially for the wealth of finds, including a statue, altars and a hypocaust pillar. These have led the excavators to suggest that there was a villa to the south of the excavated area.

The report was originally intended for publication in our journal, but the need for extensive revision sadly made that impractical, and it has now appeared as a monograph, but it is pleasing to record that the Society's editorial input has been acknowledged. As one of our journal articles, the report would, of course, in due course have been publicly available online free of charge via the Archaeology Data Service. However, it is again pleasing to record that the Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service stepped into the breach and provided a grant that has made possible a free pdf.

A full review of the report will appear in our next year's journal.

[\*Excavations at Chester, Roman land division and a probable villa in the hinterland of Deva: excavation at Saughton Army Camp, Huntington, Chester.\*](#)

Wood, P N & Griffiths, D G. Pbk. viii + 101 pages. (Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 93). Oxford: Archaeopress, 2022. ISBN 978-1-80327-227-6 (print); 978-1-80327-228-3 (pdf)

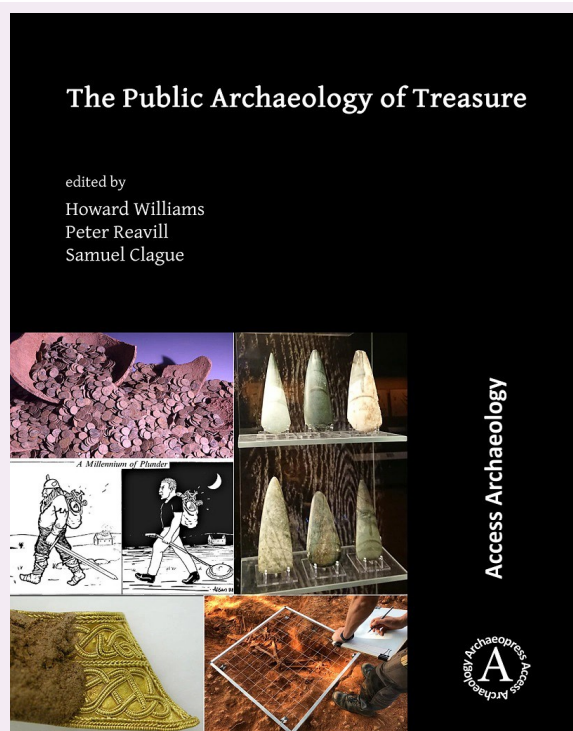
*The Public archaeology of treasure* resulted from the fifth University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference, which took place at the Grosvenor Museum in January 2020. It is co-edited by Howard Williams, Samuel Clague, a Chester History & Archaeology alumnus, and Peter Reavill, until recently the Shropshire PAS officer. To follow the process from conception to publication, members can read Howard Williams' helpful blog posts, brought together here: <https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2022/09/05/the-public-archaeology-of-treasure-2/>



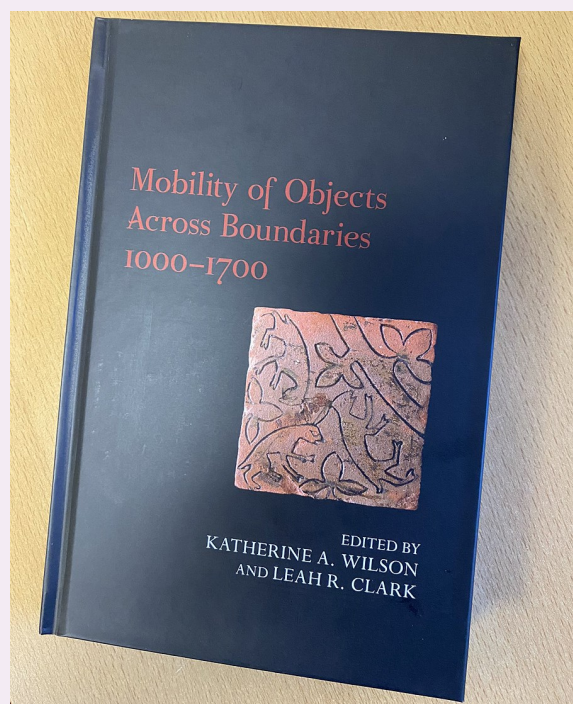
Contributors were asked to reflect on the meanings, values and significances of treasure for archaeology and public engagement. Their papers consider treasure from a variety of perspectives. Some begin from national structures and trends, including the possibility of a national strategy (Gail Boyle), the experiences of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (Peter Reavill), and the role of metal detecting (Pauline Clarke). Others take in case studies, from the Staffordshire Hoard (Pieta Greaves) to Sutton Hoo (Howard Williams). Still others take on treasure in different types of public context – museums (Edward Antrobus), online (Caitlin Green), or in the media (Sophie Brown).

The volume is available Open Access as a pdf from the Archaeopress website.

[The Public archaeology of treasure](#). Ed Williams, H, Clague, S & Peter Reavill, P. Pbk. vi + 196 pages. (Archaeopress Access Archaeology). Oxford: Archaeopress, 2022. ISBN 978-1-80327-310-5 (print); 978-1-80327-311-2 (pdf)



The joint [Mobility of Objects Across Boundaries, 1000-1700](#) project by CAS Council members Katherine Wilson and Liz Montgomery, with Leah Clark (formerly of the Open University and now the University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education), acquired prestigious Arts and Humanities Research Council funding to work with the Grosvenor Museum's wonderful collection of medieval objects. The project encouraged academics, school teachers, pupils and members of the public to handle everyday objects and think about how and why they were produced and circulated across the period 1000–1700. If members visit the project website, they will see the results of an academic research network as well as a collaboration with teachers to produce resources with object boxes for loan to schools, and a collaboration with the Grosvenor Museum to put on an exhibition and pop-up handling sessions. Some members will have explored the recent exhibition at the museum, at the Cathedral or online, and participated in the handling sessions. The volume of essays, *Mobility of objects across boundaries, 1000–1700*, edited by Katherine Wilson and Leah Clark, arises from the academic research network and includes scholars from a number of disciplines – history, archaeology, and art history – writing about everyday objects like those chosen from the Grosvenor Museum collection. The papers concern brooches, strap fittings, shoes, pilgrim souvenirs, papal bullae, Limoges enamels, chests, ceramics, paintings,



furniture and letters. They approach these items as archaeological distributions, as inventoried goods, as household ensembles, as social agents, and as literary protagonists.

*Mobility of objects across boundaries, 1000–1700*. Ed Wilson, K U & Clark, L R. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022. Hardcover. 304 pages. <https://liverpooluniversitypress.blog/2022/10/12/mobility-across-boundaries/>

## Some More Entertaining Reads!

To add pleasure to those long winter evenings by the fire, you might enjoy reading the latest Cheshire Archives and Local Studies [Curiouser and Curiouser](#) blog entries. Many of you will know of the annual Movember event: to raise awareness of men's health issues and raise money, men are invited to grow moustaches. Indeed, some of you may have taken part this year. The first blog, [Merry Movember](#), provides a selection of the top ten photographs of historic moustaches from the CALS collections.

Most of you will be aware of the historic role that the railways have played in connecting Chester and the places of Cheshire to the wider world, thrown into relief by the current problems with our rail network! The second blog, [Third Stop – Maps and Plans](#), explores the rich variety of rail plans in the CALS collection and the huge array of historic issues on which they bear.

## Grants and Awards

We shall be making the following grants and awards in 2022:

### Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

Our annual prize of £100 for the best Final Year dissertation in the Dept of History and Archaeology at the University of Chester.

### PAS Finds Study Grant

A grant of up to £700 for the study of finds from the pre-1974 county of Cheshire reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the results to be published in our journal.

*The Society will advertise this grant, with a submission date for applications, in the new year.*

### St John's House Fund

Grants totalling up to £500 pa for archaeological work in Cheshire. Applications may be made at any time of year.

For more information on all these grants and awards, see <https://chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk/grants-and-awards/>.

## Contacts

**Chair Tom Pickles**

[chair@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk](mailto:chair@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk)

**Secretary Joanne Kirton**

[secretary@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk)

**Membership Secretary Hugh Bray**

[membership@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk](mailto:membership@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk)

**Acting Journal Editor Peter Carrington**

[editor@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk](mailto:editor@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk)

**Excursions Co-ordinator Kelly Griffiths**

[excursions@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk](mailto:excursions@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk)

**Webmaster Hugh Bray**

[webmaster@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@chesterarchaeolsoc.org.uk)

**General enquiries**

[chesterarchaeologicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:chesterarchaeologicalsociety@gmail.com)

*Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @ChesterArchSoc*



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