



ANNUAL REPORT (Nov 2021-Nov 2022)

At our last AGM held on 30th November 2021 the aims of the organisation were amended to:

- A) promote and encourage interest in and research into the local history of Millom and its surrounding areas.
- B) arrange events and activities which will cater for the above, including lectures, outings and exhibitions.
- C) acquire funding to commission relevant geophysical surveys and archaeological digs within Millom and its surrounding areas.

The following is a report of what the organisation has achieved during the last year.

Committee

The following were elected: Jan Bridget chair; Liz North treasurer; Simone Faulkner secretary; Jonathan Powell talks co-ordinator; Stephe Cove occasional walks co-ordinator; Geoff and Margaret Edmondson. The Committee meets monthly.

There have not been any walks so Stephe Cove was not called on to join us. Simone Faulkner resigned in August and Louise Thomson volunteered to become secretary. We would like to thank Simone for her support and welcome Louise to the Committee.

Bank Account

We have had a lot of problems with the bank account and decided to move the account to Lloyds, not least because there is still a branch in Ulverston. This has made the tasks facing our Treasurer significantly more difficult and frustrating.

Society Meetings

In light of the successful Roman Millom events held last Autumn we decided to change the format of the meetings: instead of monthly evening meetings we are organising bi-monthly half day events (1-3/3.30 pm) with several speakers, to be held on the first Saturday of alternate months with the aim of working through the historical periods and concentrating on what was happening in Millom and District and, when possible, encouraging local participation.

Membership

We needed a membership scheme so that we would be covered by insurance for walks. However, given that we are not currently organising any walks and with the change from monthly meetings to

bi-monthly events we decided to drop the membership scheme for the time being. Six people joined the Society before we made this decision and their membership has been respected.

Facebook Group

It was agreed early on that as well as a website we would set up a public Facebook group which people could join and where we could share information. We are delighted that there are currently 837 members! This is a fairly interactive group with regular requests for information, discussions, regular posts, publicising relevant events and so on. It is a useful way of keeping those who are on Facebook and are interested in local history connected and celebrating our incredible history.

Website

Our other way of communicating with those interested in local history is via our website. The chair set up the website which was launched in December 2021. Between 10th December 2021 and 27th November 2022 there have been 1,629 unique visitors: 2,689 visits: 8,704 pages have been visited and 28,738 files downloaded (hits); most of the visitors were from Great Britain.

The front page gives a brief history of the Society and includes information about the two successful Roman Millom events held in 2019; there are links to videos about these events and the presentations. At the bottom of the page are links to many relevant organisations and resources which are extremely useful for research.

There are five further sections: the **News** section includes relevant news items about local finds, events and press coverage; the **Programme** section looks at what events we have planned and gives a report on them; **Millom Through the Ages** is a work in progress, to date there are sub-sections on Prehistoric Millom and Roman Millom – the aim is to work through the historic periods. The **Project** section includes information about the various projects we are pursuing (see below); finally there is the **Membership** section which explains our current policy regarding membership and admission fees for the events.

Publicity

Our main source of publicity is via our Facebook Group and Website. We also forward posters to other local Facebook Groups which are usually publicised. We are aware not everyone has internet connection so we try and publicise our events via posters which we display in various venues in Millom, Haverigg and Broughton in Furness as well as sending out press releases. To date coverage in the local media has been very good: we usually get a write up for each event. We are also members of Cumbria Local History Federation and our events are widely publicised through their networks.

Events

Although the ‘season’ does not start until September we have organised or helped to organise several events during the past year.

Millom Looking Back, 5th March 2022

The Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary in March this year so we organised an event to celebrate this. Sixty-five people attended. An overview of the Society was given by Jonathan Powell followed by metal detectorist Josh Carr who shared his findings and was particularly proud of the Roman trumpet brooch and the Iron Age terret ring as well as various coins found in the vicinity of the Church and Castle ranging from a Roman silver denarius with the head of Marcus Aurelius to Edward

1,2,3rd; Henry 7th and 8th; Elizabeth 1st; Victoria; George 5th. Local historian Duane Farren shared many finds from Prehistoric footprints, quern stones, Roman objects, and cannon balls; again all found locally. Jan Bridget looked at how the Society hoped to move forward. A PDF of the presentations has been added to the feedback on the Programme Section of the website.

Family History, 7th May 2022

We had planned to hold another half-day event in May with Bry Cooper looking at the amazing work he has compiled over the years on Millom Families and Jan Bridget sharing a particularly interesting branch of her family history. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, we had to cancel this event.

Holy Trinity Charter Fair, 11th May 2022

Although not part of our planned programme of events, the Society organised an event on the Saturday of the Charter Weekend to celebrate when Henry III gave John de Huddleston permission to hold a weekly market and a weekend fair on Holy Trinity weekend. We invited arts and crafts stalls, Josh Carr ran a practical metal detecting session whilst music was performed inside the church by Mel Holmer, a newly formed local band. Part one of the Stones Project (see below) also took place.

Millom Peninsula in Prehistoric Times, 3rd September 2022

Just under 70 people attended this event. We began by showing a video entitled Cumbria's Prehistoric Monuments by Carvetii Films which helped set the afternoon in context. Jan Bridget then shared some of the findings from her research in preparation for the booklet Millom and District Prehistory (see below, Projects). Jan was followed by Duane Farren who talked about his Prehistoric findings, in particular the footprints on the Duddon Estuary. Dr Alison Burns of the University of Manchester went further into how the footprints were formed, where they appear and shared her research on Walney Island and Formby. Claire Bradshaw of Morecambe Bay Partnership looked at the Neolithic and Bronze age in our area. Peter Barton, military historian, author and film maker spoke about the film he is making about Millom's history and shared the interim findings of a geophysical survey he commissioned in the field next to Archer's Field where there is a crop-mark: it is possible there may be a Roman road alongside this field! There is a link to the presentation PDFs on the website.

Holy Trinity, 5th November 2022

Just over 50 people attended this event. The Rev Robert Bracegirdle talked about the history of Holy Trinity Church from the 12th Century onwards and in particular the restoration of 1930 whilst Daniel Elsworth shared the findings of the Stones Project (see below). A tour of the outside of the church was enjoyed by participants. We are looking at ways that we can, in the future, do podcasts of the talks.

Projects

Holy Trinity Stones Project

We managed to secure two small grants, one from Silecroft School Education Charity and the other from CGP Millom Trust Fund to commission Greenlane Archaeology to facilitate a comprehensive study of the external stones of Holy Trinity Church. Part one took place in June with twelve volunteers; a further four took part in September. Photographs from the project are on the relevant Projects page of our website along with a link to the 3-D model of the church, created as a result of

the project. The findings of the project were presented at the event on November 5th and a report will be added to the Project section of the website.

Geophysical Project

The History Society applied for funding from the Castle Studies Trust to conduct a community geophysical survey of the fields surround Holy Trinity Church and Millom Castle. Unfortunately we were not successful. Meanwhile, local historian Duane Farren has been working with military historian, author and film-maker Peter Barton who is making a series of films about the Lake District including Millom's history. Peter commissioned a geophysical survey of the field next to Archer's Field in the summer; the results clearly show that something interesting was happening: there appears to be a straight track (possibly a road), a kiln and some other features that need further investigation. We have set up a Crowdfunder page (Millom Geophys) to raise some funding to help towards commissioning a ground penetrating survey which might give up clearer evidence. We have also submitted another funding bid to Castle Studies Trust (taking on board their feedback from the last application).

Millom and District Prehistoric Past Project

Having introduced a new section to the History Society's website, Millom Through Time which includes a section on Prehistoric Millom, it became clear that the whole area of the Millom Peninsula held significant evidence of people living in the area during the Prehistoric period.

As a result, the Society decided their first event of the 2022-23 season would look at the Prehistory of the area and that the chair of the Society, Jan Bridget, would conduct research and write a booklet on the same. The event was very successful with excellent feedback.

We have been awarded a grant of £500 from CGP and £350 from Silecroft School Education Charity to pay for the cost of printing and hope to have the booklet ready in the new year.

Heritage Triangle

This is by far our most ambitious project: There are two grade I listed buildings in Millom: Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church. Next to these buildings you find the Old School, built in 1858 and the School Master's House. All of these buildings are deteriorating and, without an injection of funding and an on-going maintenance plan, these incredible buildings are in peril. Millom Castle is already included in the Government's Buildings at Risk Register. The School, once used by the local scouts, has not been used for about ten years due to its unsafe condition and Holy Trinity Church requires urgent work to forestall water ingress and deterioration of significant features.

We cannot move forward with this project and apply for funding until the Diocese agree to release the Old School on a pepper-corn long term lease; in order for this to happen there will need to be a legal structure – as an unincorporated association the History Society cannot do this. We are, therefore, negotiating with the dormant South Copeland Tourism Community Interest Company to change their name to South Copeland or Cumberland Culture and Heritage CIC with amended aims.

Chair's Report

We have certainly met the first and second objectives: promote and encourage interest in and research into the local history of Millom and its surrounding areas; arrange events and activities which will cater for the above, including lectures, outings and exhibitions, as shown by the number of members of our Facebook group, the number of people who have visited our website and the people who attended the various events we organised.

Although we have not been able to secure funding for the Geophysical Project and our ambitious Heritage Triangle Project has been held up waiting for the Diocese to decide if we can take over the Old School, we have, nevertheless, completed the Church Stones Project and have almost completed the Millom and District Prehistoric Past Project. We were successful in being awarded small grants for these two projects and thank both CGP Books and Silecroft School Education Charity Trust which enabled the projects to go ahead.

I am proud of what we have achieved this year and look forward to the coming year. I thank our Committee members and others, especially the speakers, who have helped to make our events so successful as well as the support we have received from other organisations including Duddon Valley Local History Group; Morecambe Bay Partnership; Greenlane Archaeology; Millom Heritage and Arts Centre and Millom Town Council; as well as our funders, CGP Books and Silecroft School Education Charity Trust. Thanks also go to Claire Bradshaw, Morecambe Bay Partnership, Mark Brennan, Lead Officer Historic Environment and Commons, Cumbria County Council, and Bill Shannon, Vice President, CWAAS. I would also like to thank our local historian Duane Farren and metal detectorist Josh Carr and others whose incredible finds have enabled the Society to celebrate the amazing history of this part of South Copeland.

Our objectives for the coming year are:

1. **Complete and publish the Millom and District Prehistory Booklet**
2. **Organise further events**
3. **Try and move forward on the Heritage Triangle Project**
4. **Continue applying for funding for geophysical surveys**
5. **Increase active membership of the Organising Committee**
6. **Investigate the possibility of making podcasts of events**

Jan Bridget, Chair

Millom and District Local History Society

28th November 2022