



MILLOM AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
10 a.m. Saturday 29th November 2023
Millom Library

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Jan Bridget, Liz North, Jonathan Powell, Margaret and Geoff Edmondson, Sue Dawson, Alison Holburn, Jenny Case. Apologies from Mary Wilson, Wendy and Ken Battersby

1. Minutes from last AGM: accepted as an accurate record.

2. Objectives of Society:

To promote and encourage interest in and research into the local history of Millom and its surrounding areas.

To arrange events and activities which will cater for the above, including lectures, outings and exhibitions.

To acquire funding to commission relevant geophysical surveys and archaeological digs within Millom and its surrounding areas.

3. Overview of 2024-2025:

- Facebook: 1,655 members of Facebook – 307 more than last year. Several posts each week, sharing activities, posts from members and publicising other History Group events throughout the year
- Website: Unique visitors: 2,286. No of visits: 2,804 Hits: 34,260 Pages: 4,880 Have removed groups as the Society no longer runs any groups. Have added new section: Millom Footprints which includes access to Duane Farren's impressive footprint photograph archive (a major task). Medieval section of Millom Through Time added. Two new sections in Projects: Father John Huddleston; The Huddlestons and Cotherstone; plus the Sykes Project and Millom Names Project up-dated.
- Publicity:
 - CUMBRIA LOCAL HISTORY FEDERATION NEWSLETTER: Winter 2024; Summer 2025; Winter 2025

- [BBC series Digging for Britain covers Bronze Age axe heads | Times and Star](#) 22 December 2024
- [Cumbria Life: BBC's Digging for Britain to feature Millom in January 2025 | Great British Life](#) 31 December 2024
- [BBC's Digging for Britain features Millom's 'very rare' finds | The Mail](#) 9 January 2025
- [Cumbrian historians worried by nuclear waste dump plans | The Mail](#) 22 February 2025
- ['Millom's No.1 historian', Duane Farren, passes away age 59 | The Mail](#) 13 March 2025
- [Millom: Art exhibition set to bring town's industrial past to life | The Mail](#) 29 May 2025
- [Millom: Descendant of Millom Lords returns to trace family legacy | News and Star](#) 6 August 2025
- [VJ Day: Rare WWII India photos to be shown in Millom | The Mail](#) 12 August 2025
- [Millom and District Local History Society to hold AGM | The Mail](#) 11 November 2025
- [New publication focuses on Millom's prehistoric footprints | The Mail](#) 13 November 2025
- CWAAS: Summer 2025: Sykes Update and David Bates
- BBC2: Digging for Britain
- Events:
 - Digging for Britain, Millom Baptist Church, 14 January 2025
 - David Bates exhibition and talk, Holy Trinity Church, 14 June 2025
 - Medieval Millom, Holy Trinity Church, 16 August 2025
 - Tribute to Duane, Holy Trinity Church, 27 September 2025
 - Dorian Players, Holy Trinity Church, 1 November 2025 - CANCELLED DUE TO ILL HEALTH
 - AGM Father John Hudleston
- Groups: After having run several groups at Millom Library for 18 months, due to a disagreement with a member, the Chair of the Society decided to hand the History Group over to its members. It is now run by Kathryn Miller. The group has continued to meet (successfully) but have recently changed venues and now meet at Millom Heritage and Arts Centre. The same group are now organising regular events at the Pensioner's Hall in Millom. Unfortunately, because they are called Millom History Group many people are confusing them with the History Society and vice versa.
- Projects:
 - The **Sykes Project** has been completed with the exception of some documents held at Carlisle Library which is currently closed. An update on the project was included in CWAAS News Bulletin.
 - The **Heritage Triangle Project** has been abandoned as the CiC were unable to acquire funding to buy the Old School from the Diocese (£150,000) and to renovate it, which would have cost around another £250,000. We really tried to save the school for Millom and to help ensure the future of Holy Trinity Church but after three years we gave up.

- **Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church Archaeology Project** was completed when the dig appeared on Digging for Britain. Unfortunately, two farmers did not give us written permission (we thought we had verbal permission) to dig investigative sites identified in the first two stages of the project. Perhaps with a change of heart this project can be completed and who knows what we might find. But we were happy with Millom appearing on Digging for Britain.
 - **Millom Castle, the Huddlestons and the English Civil Wars** has now been split into two books and further research is needed.
 - The **Millom Names Project** came out of the archaeology project; permission was gained from the National Archives, Cumbria Archives, and the Lowther Estates to photograph extracts from the Manorial Records and place these on our website: it seems highly likely about a third of families who live in Millom can now trace their heritage back around 500 years.
 - In response to feedback from Professor Angus Winchester, the chapters on the Huddlestons and Cotherstone and Father John Huddleston have now been taken out of the book and placed on the website.
 - Finally, two new Projects have arisen: a new book, **Medieval Millom**, much of which has already been written and **The Prehistoric Footprints of Millom**, a booklet on the incredible photographic archive of the human and animal footprints Duane Farren took over eight years of monitoring.
 - Two memory sticks full of local photos and footprint photos: now available on website.
 - Dr Alison Burns has agreed to read the draft before print early next year.
4. Membership: Members agreed there would be a membership scheme to support the work of the Society. Members pay £1 and complete the membership form. The AGM ratified this decision. There are currently 22 members but the scheme has yet to be widely publicised.
5. Evaluation
- Complete and publish: Josh Carr's Best Finds/Digging for Millom: unable to complete as not acquire right kind of photographs, nor did Prof Alice Roberts get back to us with a comment for the book.
 - Continue exploration of finds: completed as much as possible – unfortunately not able to find more information about the wonderful little badge (boar's head)
 - Complete and publish: Millom Castle, the Huddlestons and the English Civil Wars: draft submitted to Professor Angus Winchester who suggested to split the book into two – Medieval Millom and Millom Castle, the Huddlestons and the English Civil Wars. This requires further research which has yet to be completed.
 - Organise series of events to uncover and celebrate history of Millom: five events organised.
6. Chair's Report: this was covered by the above.
7. Election of Committee: previous officers agreed to re-stand and were unanimously accepted:
- Chair: Jan Bridget
 Treasurer: Liz North
 Secretary: Liz North
 Membership Secretary: Margaret Edmondson

Other Members: Geoff Edmondson, Jonathan Powell.

Acknowledging that it had been a hard year, Margaret thanked Jan for all her work in supporting Holy Trinity Church and uncovering and promoting the history of Millom.

8. Treasurer's Report

Millom and District Local History Society Financial Report Year Ending 31.8.25

The History Society has had a relatively quiet year financially due in part to fewer events and book sales slowing down, although expenditure for its archaeological work continued as the final stages of the Digging for Millom project were completed.

The Society carried forward a balance of £6,968.48 from 2023/4 and had a total income of £5143.16 of which £4,466.16 was the final instalment of the Digging for Millom grant.

Expenditure for the year was £9,104.92, again, the majority of this, £8260.80 for the Digging for Millom project and the Civil War Book research and ISBN number. Day to day essential expenditure for the Society included website/domain charges, printing and stationery and membership fees CLHF.

The carry forward is £3,038.82 including cash in hand of £32.10 of which £2,054.36 is unrestricted to be used for general Society activities and the remaining £984.46 is restricted.

The accounts have been independently audited and signed off by Elizabeth Johnson, ACT Technician.

Liz North, Treasurer

Millom and District History Society Income and Expenditure Year Ending 31 August 2025

Income

Book Sales	40.00	
Events	130.00	
Donations	50.00	
Grants		
	Digging For Millom	4,466.16
Other Income		
	Members Fees	16.00
	Speed Competition - Badge	
	Cleaning	341.00
	Metal Detector	
	Donation	100.00
Total Income		5,143.16

Expenditure	
Membership Fees	20.00
Venue	
Bank Charges	25.72
Website	99.67
Project Costs	
	Digging For Millom 8,260.80
	Civil War Book 313.00
	Badge Cleaning 314.00
Donations	58.75
Photocopying/Printer/Computer/Stationery	12.98
Speaker Expenses	
Total Expenditure	9,104.92
Profit/ (Loss) for the year	(3,961.76)
Balance brought forward 1st Sept 2024	
Balance at Bank	6,968.48
Cash in hand	21.80
Profit/ (Loss) for the year	(3,961.76)
Society worth at 31.08.25	3,028.52
Balance brought forward 31st August 2025	
Balance at Bank	3,006.72
Cash in hand	32.10
Society liquid assets at 31.08.25	3,038.82

Difference 10.30 cash income not recorded held in cash in hand

9. Thanks: Committee members; Volunteers; Funders – CGP; Greenlane Archaeology; Sharon Farren; Geoff and Margaret Edmondson, church wardens, Holy Trinity Church; Whitehaven, Carlisle and Barrow Archives

10. Looking Forward

- Complete and publish Millom Prehistoric Footprints
- Complete and publish Millom Castle, the Hudlestons and the English Civil War
- Complete and publish Medieval Millom
- Continue to update Facebook and the website
- Possibly small archaeological dig, if funding, specifically to see if we can find anything that predated Holy Trinity e.g. a monastery.

11. AOB: Duane's Twine

The Chair showed a series of photographs of twine (in situ) that Duane had found on the Duddon Estuary. It was Duane's dearest wish to get some of this radio carbon dated. The Society have been awarded a grant of £425 from CGP Trust for an assessment of the twine.

Assessment:

The find was examined under a binocular microscope at x20 magnification. The material identification was checked, with observations made about the condition and stability of the twine.

The collection consists of several twisted twine ties made from vegetable fibres, tentatively identified as flax through light microscopy at x400 magnification. Overall, the assemblage is in a fragile state, with ongoing fibre deterioration and the presence of surface coatings and salt deposits that may further affect long-term stability.

Radiocarbon dating is advised to establish the age of the twine and to inform whether further specialist investigation is appropriate.

Following dating, referral to appropriate specialists is recommended for determination of the object's function, form, manufacturing methods, provenance, parallels, and broader archaeological or ethnographic context.

The assessor recommended: Ideally, remove saline and tar, radio carbon date three lots of twine plus several hazel nut cases (before and afterwards salt and tar removed). But this would cost about £8,000 in total.

It is unlikely the Society would be able to get funding (funding channels for this sort of thing is extremely limited). Where the twine was found was in a dynamic environment (i.e. it could have come from Ireland or elsewhere) therefore there is no guarantee it was actually from Millom. It might not be prehistoric.

For a standard AMS radio carbon dating analysis (per sample) it would cost £550, plus Specialist Liaison (including postage) £141.24, plus VAT, so one item would cost £825.

The Chair suggested we have one lot of twine radio carbon dated at a cost of £825 (this sum or part of it would likely be recovered from book sales). If it comes back prehistoric we can look at what to do next, i.e. Referral to appropriate specialist for determination of the object's function, form, manufacturing methods, provenance, parallels, and broader archaeological or ethnographic context. But we would need a quote for this. And/or whether we want to raise money to have several lots radio carbon dated plus the hazel nuts.

The proposal was discussed and it was acknowledged the importance of having some of the twine at least radio carbon dated. It was unanimously agreed to ask the laboratory to radio carbon date one lot of twine costing £825 and to further discuss the situation when we get the results.

The meeting ended 11.45. The Chair thanked everyone for coming.