



## **MILLOM AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

**DECEMBER 2023-NOVEMBER 2024**

#### **Objectives**

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.

#### **Committee**

The committee meets monthly to discuss and agree the programme, projects, funding bids, etc. Current members are: Jan Bridget, chair; Liz North, treasurer and secretary; Jonathan Powell; Geoff and Margaret Edmondson.

#### **Facebook**

Our Facebook group now has over 1,400 members, 178 more than last year. It is fairly active with new posts several times a week and members participating in discussions. It is the main method we use to communicate with members, although not everyone is on Facebook!

#### **Website**

Our website, which we regularly up-date, is another communication method. Here are the statistics for the period 23rd November 2023- : Unique visitors to site: 2,098; Pages downloaded: 4,816; Hits: 41,330. There is now a link to our website on Wikipedia (Millom Castle).

#### **Other Publicity**

As well as our Facebook Group and Website, when we are holding events we design posters and distribute them around Millom and Haverigg and sometimes in Broughton-in-Furness, as well as posting on other relevant Facebook groups and emailing Cumbria Local History Federation who include details in their mail outs; information was included on: 19th April

2024; 26th April 2024; 10th May 2024; 17th May 2024; 31st May 2024; 7th June 2024; 14th June 2024; 21st June 2024; 28th June 2024.

We had very good coverage in the local news media (NW Mail) this last year:

12th April 2024: Funding Received for Archaeological Dig in Millom, Cumbria, The Mail.1

14th April 2024: Man finds rare pilgrims' ampullae near Millom, Cumbria.2

21st May 2024 People have inhabited Millom for 'at least 3,000 years' The Whitehaven News.3

15th June 2024: Millom diggers find pieces likely from old vicarage, The Mail.4

27th June 2024: The latest finds in Millom's massive archaeological dig, The Mail.5

5th July 2024: Final Week of over 20 Volunteers Digging for Millom, The Mail.6

5th July 2024: BBC's Digging for Britain visits Cumbrian archaeological dig, The Mail.7

14th July 2024: Millom Castle sketch reveals life of teenager from 200 years ago.8

17th August 2024: Digging for Millom will put on their finds day soon.9

29th August 2024: Lead shot from English Civil War found in Millom.10

18th September 2024: Alice Roberts interviews Millom man for Digging for Britain.11

We also had an article about the dig in Cumbria and Lakeland Walker, August 2024, p30-31, as well as articles in regional historical journals:

Cumbria Past: 21st July 2024 publicising the Final Events Day.

An article about the dig was published in CWAAS News, Summer 2024, No 106, p 8.

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<sup>1</sup> [Funding received for archaeological dig in Millom, Cumbria | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/04/12/funding-received-for-archaeological-dig-in-millom-cumbria/)

<sup>2</sup> [Man finds rare pilgrims' ampullae near Millom, Cumbria | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/04/14/man-finds-rare-pilgrims-ampullae-near-millom-cumbria/)

<sup>3</sup> [People have inhabited Millom 'for at least 3,000 years' | Whitehaven News](https://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/2024/05/21/people-have-inhabited-millom-for-at-least-3000-years/)

<sup>4</sup> [Millom diggers find pieces likely from old vicarage | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/06/15/millom-diggers-find-pieces-likely-from-old-vicarage/)

<sup>5</sup> [The latest finds in Millom's massive archaeological dig | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/06/27/the-latest-finds-in-millom-s-massive-archaeological-dig/)

<sup>6</sup> [Funding received for archaeological dig in Millom, Cumbria | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/04/12/funding-received-for-archaeological-dig-in-millom-cumbria/)

<sup>7</sup> [BBC's Digging for Britain visits Cumbrian archaeology dig | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/07/05/bbc-s-digging-for-britain-visits-cumbrian-archaeology-dig/)

<sup>8</sup> [Millom Castle sketch reveals life of teenager from 200 years ago | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/07/14/millom-castle-sketch-reveals-life-of-teenager-from-200-years-ago/)

<sup>9</sup> [Digging for Millom will put on their finds day soon | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/08/17/digging-for-millom-will-put-on-their-finds-day-soon/)

<sup>10</sup>

<https://news.google.com/read/CBMiiAFBVV95cUxQQVVRdFVOMklvUjJUVXNTaHMzM3d5S1ZJZ1hfb1UNk1NUW9LQnM1YU05aIM4VUVzMXdzSONhQ3RnX3F6ZkRIRnN5TU5XYXhYeEc3Mmxzb29BT1VCSW12TTAwQnZNY1FieE5vbG1FSXJTY0RZVG16UXoyRUNQVVZDRjZvUIBRSDU1?hl=en-GB&gl=GB&ceid=GB%3Aen>

<sup>11</sup> [Alice Roberts interviews Millom man for Digging for Britain | The Mail \(nwemail.co.uk\)](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/2024/09/18/alice-roberts-interviews-millom-man-for-digging-for-britain/)

Another article was published in Cumbria Local History Federation Bulletin 95, Summer 2024, p26-28.

## **Events**

### **14th December 2023: Nostalgic Film Night**

Cumbria Film Archive showed several films about nearby areas with a couple related to Millom. Feedback from the participants was very good but it was a poor turnout: possibly because it was in the evening?

### **10th February 2024: Stone Circle Calendars**

Sue O'Neil spoke about the launch of her book based on her father's (Jack Morris-Eyton) research of 18 years about Swinside and other stone circles. A well-attended (free) event.

### **20th April 2024: "To the Lakes" Early Lake District Tourism and Norman Nicholson**

An excellent event but sadly a poor turnout.

### **15th 23rd and 29th June plus 1st July 2024: Open Day Presentations on Digging for Millom**

The presentation was given twice on each open day; attendance improved as the dig progressed.

### **24th August 2024: Finds Day**

The results of the Community Dig were shared with the public. A well attended (free) event.

### **12th October 2024: Cumbria Local History Federation Convention**

## **Groups**

### **Millom History Group**

Attendees at the two groups, Prehistoric Appreciation and Detectorists, has been sporadic consequently we decided to amalgamate the groups. The group is for anyone interested in local history and meets the first Saturday of the month, 10-12 in Millom library.

## **Projects**

### **Heritage Triangle**

The Chair supported South Cumberland Cultural Heritage CIC to submit an Expression of Interest to the national Heritage Lottery to purchase the Old School from the Diocese of Carlisle, renovate it and turn it into a history and archaeology centre.

### **Millom Castle and the English Civil Wars**

A significant amount of research has been conducted and the first draft of several chapters completed. However, because of the archaeological project, this project was put on hold for about six months resulting in the expected completion date slipping to 2025.

### **Sykes Project**

The church wardens at Holy Trinity Church, Millom, hold three notebooks written by Rev Sykes: Two are hand-written: "Kirksanton"; "Roads in and through Millom"; and one is typed, "The Place Names of South Cumberland Collected and Annotated."

The notebooks have been scanned by Barrow Archives and volunteers Susan Cawthorne, Alison Holburn and Fiona Pervez have transcribed them. They are now on our website.

We are hoping that Whitehaven archives will digitise the notebooks they hold and we can organise for these to be typed up.

### **Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Archaeology Project**

As a result of drone survey we now have a 3D image of the Castle with a link on Wikipedia.

This has been our largest project to date and has taken up a lot of time and energy but the results have been worth it. We successfully acquired a grant of £29,774.38 from Copeland Community Fund (government Levelling Up Scheme). Not only did we meet the funding outputs but exceeded them in some instances. Our report was distributed at the Finds Day and has been available at Holy Trinity church and Millom Library; it is also available to download on our website. Our key outputs:

We now have a team of 32 trained and experienced volunteers who can take part in further archaeological digs should we gain permission and funding.

We have the largest collection of Medieval pottery ever found in the area (South Copeland).

We have discovered the moat around Millom Castle was larger than previously known about and that during the Medieval period not only did weaving take place in or close by the Castle but also iron working.

We have an array of artefacts some of which are on display in the church for visitors to see.

We have extra evidence from the project to include in the book we are researching and hope to publish about Millom Castle, the Huddlestons and the English Civil War.

Should permission be granted in the future, we now have 12 places to sink investigative trenches.

### **Evaluation**

Our objectives for 2023-24 were:

**Complete and publish Millom Castle, the Huddlestons and the English Civil Wars.** As noted above, this has been put back till 2025.

**Conduct the drone survey, produce article on findings for CWAAS Transactions.** The drone survey was completed and an article appeared in CWAAS Newsletter. An added extra was the 3D model of Millom Castle which has been accessed by over 1,600 people.

**Submit funding bids to conduct the community archaeology project.** A funding bid was successful and Digging for Millom was the main project for 2023-24. This was a big project taking up much of our time so other projects had to be put on hold. We will appear on the next series of Digging for Britain!

**Develop and organise a programme of activities to meet our objectives.** Five events were organised plus four open days and an extra presentation at Millom Library. It is worth noting that several of these events, whilst having very good content, did not attract the usual 60+ attendees. It is assumed the reason for this is that they were not specifically about Millom as, in the past, events about Millom's history have been very successful. This needs to be taken on board for future events.

**Arrange to have the Sykes writings digitised (one needs typing up) with copies at Barrow Archives and made available via our website.** The note-books held at Holy Trinity church have been digitised and transcribed. We discovered there is another note book held at Whitehaven archive and are looking into having this digitised and transcribed.

### **Chair's Report**

The last year (2023-24), from an archaeological and publicity point of view, has been hugely successful. We have gained more publicity both locally and regionally than ever before. Our profile has been raised significantly.

We have completed a big archaeological project and have a group of keen, dedicated, trained and experienced volunteers to continue archaeological digs should further funding, and permissions, be obtained.

The dig discovered new evidence about Millom Castle, that the moat was much larger than previously believed, as well as finding the largest ever collection of Medieval pottery in this part of Cumbria, and other finds which are still under investigation and may reveal further history of Millom Castle and the surrounding area.

We were disappointed that two of the three farmers refused written permission (required by the funders) to dig on their land when we had assumed we had verbal permission. But the Diocese of Carlisle gave us permission to dig close by the Old School and School Master's house which meant we discovered the original moat and many items connected to the Castle and Old School.

Another disappointment was that some of our events were not very well attended (despite the content being excellent). Learning from this we need to try and ensure our events in future are Millom specific, and not held in the evening.

We also have a group of volunteers who visit the archives, photograph relevant documents and transcribe them. WE THANK ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS.

Overall, this last year has been an exhausting but hugely successful one and we look forward to 2025, not least when Millom and Josh Carr will appear on BBC's Digging for Britain.

### **Objectives for 2025**

- Publish a new book: Josh Carr's Best Finds/Millom Community Dig
- Continue to explore some of the finds from the Community Dig
- Complete the Huddlestons, Millom Castle and the English Civil Wars Project
- Continue to organise a series of events to celebrate the history of Millom and District

### **Financial Report**

The History Society has had a busy year financially to support its archaeological activities. The accounts have also been realigned in accordance with the rediscovered constitution that states the financial year runs 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August. There are, therefore, some transactions in this year's accounts that were inevitably included in last year's accounts; it was agreed at the 2023 AGM that the financial year would be adjusted.

The Society carried forward a balance of £2,251.34 from 2022-23 and had a total income of £32,290.18 – the bulk of this from two large grants for the Drone Survey and Digging for Millom, totalling £30,308.22. Two grants were also received for the production of the Millom Civil War book which is currently being researched and written. CGP also awarded a grant for the Society to purchase a metal detector (second hand) which was closely matched by a crowd funding appeal. Book sales and events have also raised income for the Society; this income is unrestricted and enables the Society to finance the day-to-day activities as it does not administer a membership to benefit from regular subscriptions.

Expenditure for the year was £27,573.04, again, the majority of this for the Digging for Millom project and drone survey. At the year end an underspend of £3,925.47 is carried forward to complete the archaeological project as Digging for Millom was completed in September 2024.

The Society purchased a printer and computer screen this year to support the production of our publicity, event posters, research and book writing. This is used by the Chair but remains the property of the Society.

Membership fees for BALH and CLHSF were paid, the former provide the Society with public liability insurance and the website/domain subscriptions are vital to mainly the public face of the Society. The website includes all our activities, reports and research links.

The carry forward is £6,968.48 of which £2,345.55 is unrestricted to be used for general Society activities and the remaining £4,996.93 restricted for the Civil War book, metal detector purchase and completion of Digging for Millom.

Liz North

Treasurer

**Millom and District History Society  
Income and Expenditure Year Ending 31 August 2024**

<b>Balance brought forward 1st Sept 2023</b>		<b>2251.34</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Book Sales		250.50
Events		435.00
Donations		20.00
Grants		31158.22
Digging For Millom	25308.22	
CGP Civil War Book	250.00	
Silecroft Civil War Book	350.00	
CGP Metal Detector Grant	250.00	
CWAAS Grant Drone Survey	5000.00	
Other Income		426.46
Metal Detector Crowdfunder	221.46	
Key Ring Sales	25.00	
Greenlane Archaeology Refund	180.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>32290.18</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Membership Fees		125.00
Venue		140.00
Website		135.34
Project Costs		26798.75
Digging For Millom	21882.75	
Knights Tale	42.00	
Drone Survey	4874.00	
Photocopying/Printer/Computer		268.95
Speaker Expenses		105.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>27573.04</b>
<b>Balance at 31 August 2024</b>		<b>6968.48</b> Unrestricted Fui
<b>Cash in Hand</b>		<b>31.80</b>

Jan Bridget, Chair, November 2024