

## ***Maryport Roman fort developments***

Maryport has been in the news recently. In February, the excavation of the temple complex, initiated and largely funded by the Senhouse Museum Trust and undertaken by Newcastle University, won the *Current Archaeology* award, sponsored by Oxbow Books, for the Best Research Project of the Year. Then, a month later, the North of England Civic Trust announced that it had completed the acquisition of Camp Farm at Maryport. The acquisition includes the farm steading and the land on which the visible fort and the invisible civil settlement sits. NECT announced its intention to work with the Senhouse Museum Trust to improve visitor access and interpretation at the site.

**David Breeze**

## ***Roman Temples Project, Maryport, 2015***

This summer sees the fifth and final season of the Roman Temples Project, Maryport. The project team, financed by Senhouse Roman Museum Trust and Newcastle University, will return to work at Camp Farm on 11 June and will remain on site until 14 August. As with all previous work by the project the aim this season is to understand the context in which the famous Maryport altars unearthed in 1870 were originally displayed. Work in the 2011 and 2012 seasons established that the altars were buried as part of the construction of massive timber structures in the twilight of imperial rule. Work in 2013 and 2014 focused 100 metres south of the project's previous investigations and reinvestigated an area where a further altar fragment was discovered in 1880 along with a rectangular temple and circular cult building.

The plan for the 2015 season is to explore the area between the temple and that where the 1870s altars were buried. Initial indications suggest that this area has suffered severely from plough damage but that important clues survive. In particular the discovery of a monumental base at the northern extremity of the 2014 excavation area may suggest that further elements of a larger Roman ritual landscape await discovery. The season will also see excavation of some of the ditches that appear in Alan Biggins and David Taylor's important geophysical survey - might these be linked to some sort of cult enclosure?

CWAAS members are warmly invited to visit the site at any time from 15 June on. Tours of the Temples excavation site, led by the museum's volunteer guides, start from the museum on weekday afternoons at 2pm & 3.30pm. Ian Haynes and Tony Wilmott will give a series of public lectures with updates on the progress of the project, at the Senhouse Museum at 7.30pm on 16 June, 30 June, 7 July, 21 July and 13 August.

**Ian Haynes**

## ***Gleaston Castle Grant Award***

Morecambe Bay Partnership has recently secured a Castle Studies Trust (CST) grant to undertake vital recording work at Gleaston Castle. Located in Furness, Gleaston Castle is a unique fortified residence which appears to have been constructed for John Harrington sometime in the early 14th Century. It is of major national and architectural importance, being designated as a Scheduled Monument and Grade 1 Listed Building.

Past investigations suggest that the walls and towers of the castle are of poor construction and may have been built rapidly, possibly in response to an attack from the Scots. The crumbling ruins of the castle bear testament to this, with the structure being at immediate risk of further decay. Historic England have assessed the site as a priority 'At Risk' site and it is now so unstable that visitors are no longer permitted access.

Whilst Gleaston Castle has been the focus for local historians over the centuries, fascinated by its construction, history and rapid demise, there are no modern accurate records of the structures forming the site. Morecambe Bay Partnership (MBP), working alongside Historic England's Heritage At Risk team and Cumbria County Council's Senior Historic Environment Officer, recognised the immediate need to obtain an accurate record of the castle before any more information is lost. Understanding future conservation issues and providing access to the site were also seen as priorities for this fascinating but poorly understood structure.

The £5,000 grant award from the Castle Studies Trust is allowing MBP and contractors from Greenlane Archaeology and Aerial Cam to undertake this vital recording work. Over the forthcoming weeks a detailed aerial photographic record of the castle and surrounding site will be captured using specialist photographic techniques. The photographs will record the site in detail, allowing experts to examine the remains and hard-to-reach towers. Dr Helen Evans will assist the team, using the data gathered to identify conservation issues for the site. John Goodall, architectural editor of *Country Life* and co-patron of the CST says:

*The Castle Studies Trust is delighted to be able to fund the photographic survey of Gleaston Castle. The project fits perfectly with the Trust's aims of advancing the understanding of castles by offering the opportunity to shed light on the little-studied northern border castles of Cumbria, with the added bonus of helping in the conservation of this Grade 1 listed site, which has been flagged by Historic England as at severe risk.*

This fantastic project doesn't just stop there; the photographs will be used to create an exciting 3D model allowing members of the public to 'explore', 'investigate' and 'visit' the site from the safety of a computer. The results of the work and 3D model will be published and available to view free online following the completion of the work later this year.

**Louise Martin**



Photographs by Greenlane Archaeology

Further information about the work of MBP can be found on our website: <http://www.morecambebay.org.uk> and on the Castle Studies Trust can be found at: <http://www.castlestudiestrust.org>

### *An Illuminated Manuscript of 1418 concerning Cartmel Priory*

In October 2014, CWAAS Council agreed to grant Lancashire Archives the sum of £1,000 towards the purchase of the Hulton of Hulton Collection which included a very rare contemporary document relating to Cartmel Priory – a finely executed work featuring an illustration of the Resurrection dated 1418. Lancashire Archives were successful in their bid and the document has now been catalogued as DDHU 53/3. A high-resolution image can be found on the Cumbria Past website. As far as we are aware this document has not been reproduced before, although a translation of it was published in Sam Taylor, *Cartmel People and Priory* (Kendal, 1955), p.151, in which the author said that the document had recently come to light in the Hulton muniments. How the Hulton family, of Hulton Park near Bolton, Lancashire, had obtained it is unknown.

The document was issued in the name of John Till, Prior Provincial of the Augustinians in England, dated the Feast of The Assumption (15 August) 1418, sent from Northampton, the headquarters of the Order, and addressed to 'the devout and prudent Dom William, Prior of the monastery of Cartmel'. It would appear that Dom William was dying, and so the Provincial ordered 'that special and universal masses and prayers shall be held for you and publicly offered throughout the Province of England, with fastings and vigils and all other good works, performed by the brethren of the Order'. He went on to state that after Dom William's death, 'your soul be commended by the prayers of the Brethren of the whole Province... Masses shall be offered for the occasion and sermons preached'. Presumably therefore copies of this order were sent to all the other Augustinian houses in England.



With an illuminated border on all four sides, the manuscript features a miniature of the Resurrection contained within the initial letter 'R' of 'religioso', decorated with leaves. Christ is shown emerging from a chest-like tomb wearing the Crown of Thorns and showing the marks of the nails in His hands and spear-thrust in His side. His head is surrounded by a nimbus or halo.

The importance of this manuscript lies in the fact that so very little documentary evidence survives for Cartmel Priory prior to the Dissolution. Dugdale's *Monasticon* lists nothing after the foundation charters, while the Victoria County History bemoans the 'great gap in our lists of priors' (vol 2, p.19). No prior is known between William Lawrence, who was deprived of office or died around 1395, and William Hale who was elected around a hundred years later, apart from a passing reference to another William (no surname) around 1441. Now we can add yet another William, who presumably followed William Lawrence. Assuming the references to William's devoutness and prudence are more than mere convention, we may consider him as one of the better of Cartmel's priors. They were not always so blessed, his predecessor having been accused of various unspecified 'excesses' – while the last prior of Cartmel hardly distinguished himself by fleeing to join the King's forces during the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, leaving four of his brethren and ten local laymen to suffer the terrible penalty of hanging, drawing and quartering.

**Bill Shannon**