

**An Archaeological Excavation on Hilbre Island, Wirral,  
Merseyside  
NGR SJ 185 881**

C. Ahmad and J. Speakman

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**National Museums Liverpool  
Field Archaeology Unit,  
Dock Traffic Office,  
Albert Dock,  
Liverpool  
L3 4AX  
Tel: 0151 478 4041  
Fax: 0151 478 4090**

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## Non-Technical Summary

This report describes the results of an archaeological excavation conducted prior to the erection of two composting toilets north of the 'bunkhouse' and immediately east of the 'slate shed' on Hilbre Island, Wirral, Merseyside. The island, the largest of a group of three islands in the Dee estuary off the north-west coast of the Wirral peninsula, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, the island has no statutory protection for its archaeological remains although the island has produced not only a wealth of archaeological finds but also has recorded activity from the medieval period which make the whole of this small island an area of high archaeological potential.

The site lies on the sheltered eastern side of the island on a natural slope at NGR SJ 185 881. The excavation consisted of one trench (c. 5.50 by 6.00 m) directly adjacent to the eastern side of the 'slate shed'.

The wall foundations of what appears to be an open-air animal pen were uncovered, the position of which corresponded to that of a building shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1898. A cluster of three buildings is shown opposite the 'bunkhouse'. The 'slate shed' and a smaller building to the north (not exposed during this excavation) are shown shaded, presumably indicating that they were covered whereas the third remains unshaded and was probably open to the elements. The wall foundations lay over Permo-Triassic sandstone bedrock which had been purposely 'punched' in order create a sloping floor surface. Two rock-cut features and a natural channel packed with red brick were also visible within this surface.

There was evidence of an earlier wall foundation running north-south across the trench which had been robbed-out, the materials presumably re-used in the existing exposed foundations.

The pen appeared to have been used as a dumping ground for rubbish dating from the 1970s onwards. The site had then been backfilled with a mix of loose topsoil, general refuse, and demolition debris which had been left to overgrow until the present day.

The finds present on the site are characteristic of the casual dispersal of domestic refuse, with a few residual earlier finds amongst predominantly 19th century and later material.

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Methodology.....	4
4. Results .....	4
4.1 Trench I .....	5
Methodology .....	8
6. Conclusions.....	15
7. Acknowledgements .....	15
8. References.....	15
Figures .....	16
Plates .....	20

## **1. Introduction**

Hilbre Island, the largest of the three islands of the Hilbre group, lies in the mouth of the Dee Estuary west of West Kirby (Fig. 1). The island has produced important archaeological remains and has documented histories since the medieval period. In the light of the variety and date of the archaeological material recovered since the 19th century on the island, the observed archaeological features and its documented history, the island is an area of high archaeological significance and potential.

Although Hilbre has no statutory protection for its historical or archaeological remains, in view of the sensitivity of the archaeological remains, the proposal to create a new composting toilet near the 'slate shed' was considered by officers of Wirral Borough Council and the local group Friends of Hilbre to merit investigation prior to construction.

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council proposed to construct a new composting toilet to serve the visitors to Hilbre. The scheme received planning permission in 2007 and the Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned to undertake an archaeological excavation in advance of construction to record any remains which might survive on the site.

This report describes the results of the archaeological excavation which was carried out intermittently from September to November 2007. The site is situated on the eastern side of the island, at NGR SJ 185 881, on a natural slope close to the top of a slipway (Fig. 2). The excavation was carried out over a total of two weeks during September, October and November 2007.

## **2. Methodology**

The following summarises the key elements of the excavation.

All excavation was undertaken by hand under archaeological supervision.

Finds were collected from across the site and processed and recorded in accordance with NMLFAU guidelines.

Advice was received from Dr. R. Philpott (NMLFAU) regarding any archaeological deposits encountered.

The report was written by Clare Ahmad and Jeff Speakman using reference notes, scaled drawings and photographs taken during the periods spent on site.

## **3. Map Evidence**

The sequence of maps for Hilbre provides some indication of the construction of the slate shed. The 'Plan of Helbre Island' dated 1836 shows the 'bunk house' and telegraph keeper's house but the area of the slate shed is devoid of buildings at that time (reference\*). By the time the First Edition Ordnance Survey map was surveyed in 1871 (published 1874; Cheshire sheet 12.06) the site was occupied by two adjacent structures, representing the slate shed and the structure excavated to the east which is reported on below. Subsequently, Ordnance Survey maps show the same two structures with a small addition to the north.

## **4. Results**

Only one trench was excavated in order to cover the site of the proposed construction of two composting toilets.

#### 4.1 Trench I

The trench was situated directly to the east of the 'slate shed' (Plate 1), a building still currently in use. The trench measured c. 5.50 m east-west by 6.00 m north-south (Fig. 3.). The uppermost layer (1) consisted of a mix of loose silty sand and dumped material dating from the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the general rubbish dumped within context 1 consisted mainly of sherry bottles, beer cans, plastic wrappers, polystyrene, metal and yoghurt pots. There was also a moderate amount of demolition rubble within this layer containing asbestos roofing sheets, brick, fragments of North Welsh slate and sandstone. None of this material was retained.

It was difficult to differentiate any layers below at this stage as modern rubbish was found directly over sandstone bedrock at a depth of 0.50 m at the southern end and 0.75m to the north. Only in section, mid-way through excavating trench, did it become apparent that 'cleaner' layers lay at both the northern (2) and southern (3) ends, almost surrounding layer (1). Both layers 2 and 3 consisted of very loose light greyish brown sandy loam containing modern rubbish such as miscellaneous iron objects and plastic. Layer 2 also contained a moderate amount of small (c. 20 – 30mm) and crushed fragments of white mortar. These layers were interpreted as recent dumped deposits, c. 1970s onwards, lying directly over wall foundations and the natural bedrock (Plate 2).

The eastern foundation wall of the 'slate shed' made up the western boundary of the trench. During the excavation of layer 1 a further four to six courses of wall foundation were exposed. The wall (4/11) had been constructed from local dark red sandstone blocks, roughly finished and randomly coursed. The blocks varied in size from 60 x 100 mm to 110 x 480 mm. The foundation lay directly over bedrock (6). Context 4 denotes dry stone walling below the original ground level, whereas context 11 shows repaired dry stone walling seen at ground level and above, roughly in line with a concrete repair in the mid-section. There was also possible evidence for an entrance at the southern end of the wall (Plate 3).

A further three wall foundations were eventually uncovered (5, 9 and 10) which formed an enclosed rectangular structure measuring c. 5.30 m diagonally across floor surface (Plates 4 and 5). After the remainder of layers 1, 2 and 3 were removed, a wall (5) was exposed running north-south across the middle of the trench. This consisted of a cavity wall filled with loose soil and small sandstone fragments, four to five courses deep (under 0.50 m deep). As with wall 4 and 11, local red sandstone blocks had been used again roughly finished and randomly coursed with occasional red brick repairs. The size of stones varied between 80 x 80 mm up to 350 x 450 mm. The northern wall (9) and southern wall (11), both aligned east-west, were of a similar construction to wall 5.

The exposed bedrock floor surface (6) had been deliberately chiselled, the chisel marks still being visible, in order to level the natural sandstone (Plate 6). The floor naturally sloped eastwards and measured c. 2.80 m east-west x 4.40 m north-south.

Two rock-cut apsidal features (7 and 8), were observed in the north-west and south-west corners of the trench, within the walled structure. The function of both features was unclear but had been deliberately cut into the bedrock (6) on the same east-west alignment. Both 7 and 8 had 'punched' chisel marks similar to those observed in the bedrock surface (6). Context 7 measured c. 1.17 m x 0.41 m and had a maximum depth of 0.18 m (Plate 7). The backfill (17) consisted of a mid-brown loose silty sand loam containing occasional stone and slate fragments less than 10 mm in size. The fill also contained modern rubbish including burnt food wrappers, cinders, mortar, coal, glass, china and burnt iron fragments. The cut gently sloped southwards towards a flat-bottomed base. It is possible that both features represent substantial post settings for the stone-walled structure, or were part of an earlier structure on the same site.

Context 8 had been backfilled with a mid-brown loose silty sand loam (18) containing large pieces of sandstone and slate fragments ranging from 0.25m to 0.40 m in size. The sandstone

fragments appear to have been packed into the void with broken slate overlying presumably to even out the floor surface. The fill also contained modern debris including a 'Caballero' sherry bottle label and part of a rubber hose. The feature measured c. 1.30 x 0.38 m with a maximum depth of 0.20 m. Context 8 cut another narrower gully (21) running north-west by south-east, measuring 2.55 x 0.34 x 0.33 m (Plate 8). Context 22 consisted of tightly packed bricks and sandstone with compacted light grey sandy clay filling the voids (Plate 9). A total of sixteen red hand-made bricks had been purposely cut to fit the top of gully 21 and overlay the pebble and sandstone packing in order to level-out the floor surface (6). One of the bricks had a fingerprint impressed into it. The initial impression of gully 21 was that it had been used for drainage, but upon excavation of 22 it became apparent that this was a natural fissure in the bedrock due to the irregular nature of the base and sides coupled with the fact that no tooling was apparent; the bricks therefore represented a levelling and repair to the floor surface (Plate 10).

The function of this structure is uncertain. It is assumed that the structure was built sometime between 1836 and 1871 as it is not shown on the historical 'Plan of Helbre Island' of 1836, but does appear on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1871 (published 1874; Cheshire sheet 12.06). The requirement to level the bedrock surface suggests that the floor of the structure utilised the exposed rock. The proximity to the telegraph keeper's house may suggest a function such as a store building, workshop or an agricultural building for livestock, but none of these can be proven.

The trench was then extended c. 2.50 m eastwards of wall 5. Turf was removed onto a very dark brown loose silty sand loam topsoil layer (14). The topsoil contained an array of modern materials including pottery, glass, unidentifiable metal objects, broken fragments of brick and sandstone and animal bone.

After the removal of turf and topsoil to a depth of c. 0.15 m, a large flagstone and kerb edging became visible at the southern edge of the trench. Further investigation revealed a circular brick built well (15) below the flags, still containing water to a depth of 1.70 m. A rubble deposit (16) was also observed surrounding the well (Plate 11). The rubble was a mix of brick and stone packing which surrounded the exterior of the well shaft south-west of wall 5 and east of wall 10. Occasional broken slate fragments were also present and some of the rubble had been partially bound with concrete. All the brick and stone fragments were fairly large in size, up to 0.28 m.

The remainder of the trench east of wall (5) was made up of a series of dumping/demolition layers over bedrock (20) (Fig. 4). Topsoil over the northern half of this area of trench measured up to 0.40 m in depth. A thin layer, c. 80 mm depth, of loose and compacted light grey/buff sandy clay (19) was exposed adjacent to the mid-area of wall (5) (Plates 12 and 13). This deposit soon petered out at the southern edge possibly due to disturbance caused by the rubble packing (16) around well.

The next deposit encountered was a large spread, 2.50 m x 1.20 m, depth 0.10 m, of dark greyish brown silty sand, ash and burnt coal fragments (23). The layer was visible running north – south across the trench from the southern baulk and represented a probable dump of domestic hearth material containing plastic wrappers, polystyrene, post-medieval/modern pottery and clay tobacco pipe fragments. This deposit may have run further to the east but the trench was not extended due to time constraints and was therefore not investigated any further.

Layer 25 lay directly below context 23 and was similar to topsoil 14 but contained a higher percentage of sandstone fragments ranging from 40 mm x 30 mm x 20 mm - 120 mm x 60 mm x 60 mm. Other inclusions present included occasional slate and burnt material probably intrusive from (23). A probably demolition layer, (25), spread over 2.70 m north–south x 2.10 m east–west and had a maximum depth of 0.20 m.

At this level it was thought that 25 filled part of a robbed-out trench (27) seen in the south-facing section, in the eastern half of the trench. In plan, the cut 27 was defined as a linear boundary

between (25) and (26) – a distinctly loose, lighter silty sand than (25). Context 27 was a relatively shallow cut, c. 0.12 m depth, with the visible length measuring 1.40 m x 0.60 m width and aligned north-south.

The remains of an earlier wall (24) on the same alignment to (27) were also observed at this point. Five local red sandstone blocks (24), roughly finished and randomly coursed, represented the lower course of an earlier exterior wall foundation sitting directly on the sandstone bedrock (20). The size of the blocks varied from 0.35 m x 0.22 m x 0.08 m to 0.50 m x 0.41 m x 0.13 m. Although aligned north–south, the wall did appear to turn westwards. The missing blocks which would have filled cut (27) were probably re-used within wall (5) (Plates 14 and 15).

The aforementioned layer 26 was recognised largely in the north-eastern corner of the trench, east of wall (5) as a distinctly lighter layer below (25). This layer only spread over half the trench, c. 1.50 m x 1.25 m, with a maximum depth of 0.30 m, petering out towards the south-east corner. It consisted of a loose light ginger brown silty sand. The presence of frequent white mortar fragments, sandstone rubble and occasional red brick and slate fragments indicated evidence for the demolition of an earlier wall of which only traces survived (24). This layer at the northern end lay directly over bedrock (20), but at the southern end overlaid layer (28). Layer (28) was recognised as a ‘cleaner’ dark brown friable silty sand containing less sandstone rubble and was only 0.10 m deep, lying directly over bedrock (20). This probably represented a bedding layer of soil for wall (24) only appearing in the southeast corner where the sandstone blocks survive and not to the north where previous blocks had been robbed out.

The sandstone bedrock (20) east of wall (5) remained unworked with the exception of one rock cut drainage gully (31) running north–south, adjacent to wall (5), petering out midway across the trench (Plate 16). The gully measured 2.50 m x 0.15 m maximum; 0.15 m maximum depth.

Two possible post-hole cuts (29) and (30) were also observed at this final stage of excavation. Located near to the far eastern trench edge and measuring no more than 0.15 m the cuts were very shallow, 60 mm maximum, and were not entirely convincing but were recorded as similar features had been encountered during previous excavations on the island (Philpott 2007).

### Context Dating information

Con-text	Material included in context	Date range	Notes
1	Cast end of roof gutter, a ‘fine English bone china’ saucer dated from c. 1947, a sherd of late dark-glazed earthenware fused to a lump of mortar, brown stoneware, roof slate and a whetstone	The material dates from the late 19th century through to a saucer which can be no earlier than 1947.	
5	The base of a self-coloured earthenware bowl	17th to 18th century.	The base is similar in form to that of the conical bowls produced from a 17th century kiln site Rainford but is likely to be later.
10	Two clay tobacco pipe fragments, a glass bead a large fragment of glass tile/brick a lead weight and a small fragment of slip-coated earthenware.	The slip-coated earthenware is typical of an 18th century piece.	One of the clay pipe fragments appears water-worn and was probably recovered from the beach prior to being inserted within the wall. The glass brick is probably of 20th century date.
14	Animal bone and teeth, shell, ceramic drainpipe, moulded	Fragments of earlier material including 18th century mottled	Cross context joins with one dark-glazed earthenware

	tobacco pipe bowl with Masonic emblem and liver bird, other tobacco pipe fragments, 1965 pre-decimal one penny coin, complete Birkenhead Brewery bottle, other anonymous glass bottle bases, various iron objects, dark-glazed earthenware (one sherd joining others from contexts 25, 26 and 28), mottled ware fragment, 31 sherds of English china, stoneware, slate rooftile.	ware and clay tobacco moulded pipe probably from early 19th century. Also includes 19th and 20th century pottery, a 1965 coin and a Birkenhead Brewery bottle no later than 1971.	vessel found in contexts 14, 15, 26 and 28.
16	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragment, English china and brown stoneware.	Probably 19th and/or 20th century.	
17	English china, glass fragments various iron objects, mortar fragments, coal and cinders	Generally not dateable material but with 19th or 20th century English china.	
19	Iron bolt, animal tooth, shells.	Not dateable	
23	Clay tobacco moulded pipe bowl, glass, iron nail, English china, slip-coated earthenware and unglazed pottery fragments.	18th century slip-coated ware, probably early 19th century clay tobacco pipe moulded bowl, 19th and 20th century china unglazed earthenwares and glass and iron fragments.	
25	Clay tobacco moulded pipe bowl and stem fragment, English china, dark-glazed earthenware (six joining group from context 26).	Probable early 19th century clay tobacco pipe moulded bowl, 19th and 20th century china and dark-glazed earthenware.	Cross context joins with one dark-glazed earthenware vessel found in contexts 14, 15, 26 and 28.
26	Dark-glazed earthenware (joins to sherds from contexts 14, 25, and 28), shell edged earthenware, shells and animal bone	19th and 20th century dark-glazed earthenware and china	Cross context joins with one dark-glazed earthenware vessel found in contexts 14, 15, 26 and 28.
28	Glass bottle rim, clay tobacco pipe stem fragment and dark-glazed earthenware	18th century bottle rim and neck, 19th and 20th century dark-glazed earthenware and china; 19th century pipe stem fragment	Cross context joins with one dark-glazed earthenware vessel found in contexts 14, 15, 26 and 28.

## 5. The Finds Jeff Speakman

### *Methodology*

All finds were recovered from the excavations by context and retained for initial evaluation. The finds were processed at NML's Field Archaeology Unit, where they were recorded on the Unit's finds database having been identified by J. Speakman and C. Ahmad. Most of the undiagnostic modern material was discarded. This entailed the recording of the early and diagnostic finds to individual pieces and contexts containing larger groups of 19th and 20th century finds were bulk recorded.

Quantification is by total number of pieces and by weight. The pottery is recorded by general ware/fabric type, with a count of the individual sherds present and a total weight for each record. Each record was assigned a unique identification number.



No finds were marked during the recording process.

The vast majority of the excavated material consisted of mid-late 19th/20th century ceramics primarily dark-glazed wares, earthenwares and china recovered from topsoil. The remainder consisted of fragments of building materials of ceramic, plaster and stone; clay tobacco pipes, industrial waste, glass, metal, molluscs and animal bone.

### Summary of the Finds

A total of 217 objects were recorded, weighing 5.49kg. The largest categories (by numbers) were pottery (92), various metal objects (24), and shells and bone (46).

The finds can be classified by material as follows:

Material	Total Number of Objects	Total Weight (g)
Pottery	92	1595.0
Glass	10	1182.6
Clay Tobacco Pipe	16	48.4
<b>Metals</b>		
Copper Alloy	1	9.5
Iron	22	1195.2
Lead	1	246.5
<b>Building Materials</b>		
Ceramic Drainpipe	1	164.1
Mortar	9	76.2
Slate	4	377.7
Stone possible whetstone	1	343.1
<b>Organic Materials</b>		
Bone (including teeth)	23	161.3
Shell	23	61.9
Coal	4	11.8
Cinders	10	17.1
<b>Total Material</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>5490.4</b>

The finds were recovered from 11 contexts as seen in the table below.

Context		Total Number of finds	Weight (g)	Average weight (g)
1	'Make-up' layer containing undergrowth, soil and modern rubbish.	6	1077.1	179.5
5	Dry stone wall of building running north-south, mid-trench	1	50.1	50.1
10	Dry stone wall of building running east-west, south end of trench	6	621.2	103.5
14	Topsoil on eastern side of trench, immediately east of building	95	2083.6	21.9
16	?Wall/rubble aligned east-west, east of 10, southern edge of trench	4	6.5	1.6
17	Fill of cut 7	37	154.2	4.2
19	Light grey sandy clay, east of wall 5, towards the centre	4	59.0	14.8
23	Coal and ash layer at southern end of trench	12	117.9	9.8

25	Fill outside east wall of building, same as 14, demolition layer with sandstone inclusions	16	209.1	13.1
26	Light brown sandy silt demolition layer containing mortar inclusions.	30	952.5	21.8
28	Cleaner sandy silt below 25, south-east corner of the trench.	6	159.2	26.5
Totals		217	5490.4	

The largest number of finds are recorded from context 14, topsoil on eastern side of trench, immediately east of building, with 43.8% of the total. However, much of the dumped rubbish material from within the structure was not recovered from the excavations. Almost a third of the total from context 14 was made up of animal bone and shells.

Further large groups are recorded from context 17, the fill of a rock cut feature (7), in the north-west corner of the trench, with 17% of the total number of finds, and context 26, a light-brown, sandy-silt, demolition layer with 14.8% of the finds.

Analysis of the average weight of finds recorded from each context shows that much larger finds were recovered from contexts (1) and (10) suggesting that these features may have been relatively less disturbed.

### The Pottery

There was a total of 92 sherds of pottery weighing 1595g.

The pottery types can be classified as follows:

Pottery Type	Quantity of sherds	Weight (g.)
Unidentified English China	42	384.5
Shell-edged earthenware	1	9.4
Dark-glazed earthenware	38	1035.8
Mottled ware	1	2.6
Self-coloured ware	1	50.1
Slip-coated ware	3	49.3
Stoneware	4	49.1
Unglazed	2	14.2
Total	92	1595

### China

The largest group consisted of unidentified and non-diagnostic pieces of English china, many of which were discarded. Amongst the china there was a single rim sherd of blue coloured Shell-edged ware.

One complete vessel a saucer (SF8 context (1)) had a makers mark. The saucer was made by R H & S L Plant (Ltd) Manufacturers of porcelain at the Tuscan Works, Longton. Early marks from this factory included the initials 'R H & S L P' and most marks including the trade-name 'TUSCAN'.

The maker's trade mark of a 'crown with wings' and the addition of the wording "FINE ENGLISH BONE CHINA" was introduced c. 1947.



### Dark-glazed earthenware

A total of 38 sherds of dark-glazed earthenwares was recovered from the excavation (weighing 1035.8g). Of these 34, weight 959.6g, came from a single vessel, a jug or globular vessel with a largely unglazed interior, recovered from four different contexts (SF44 context (28), SF45 context (14), SF46 context (25), and SF53 context (26)).

The remaining sherds represent four individual vessels, SF13 context (1), and SF62, SF63 and SF64, from context (14). Three of the four are from coarseware vessels, the exception being a fragment of a cup base (SF62). SF63 a small base sherd fragment is worn underneath from use but is also water worn.

### Self-coloured ware

There was one base from a 17th to 18th-century bowl, weight 50.1g, context 5). The exterior of the vessel is covered with a red slip, and there are patches of exterior glaze, uneven brown on the body and a dark, near black, glaze spot under the base colour. The colour of the interior glaze coating is an uneven brown colour.

### Slip-coated ware

There were three pieces of slip-coated ware, weight 49.3g from two contexts (10) and (23). All discarded.

### Mottled ware

There was a single tiny fragment of mottled ware, which was discarded, from context (14).

### Stoneware

There were four sherds of stoneware recovered, weight 49.1g, from contexts (1), (16) and (14). All were discarded. Two were recognised as brown stonewares but not further recorded.

### Unglazed

There were two unglazed pot fragments, which were discarded, from context (23).

### Glass

There was a total of 10 pieces of glass weighing 1082.6g. As listed below:

Find number	Type	Context	Number of pieces	Weight (g)
16	Tile	10	1	364.9
19	Bead	10	1	1.2
20	Bottle	14	1	650.7
24	Bottle bases; one water worn.	14	2	113.8
38	Water worn fragment	23	1	1.3
42	Bottle	28	1	45.4

58	Unidentified glass fragments from three vessels	17	3	5.3
Total			10	1182.6

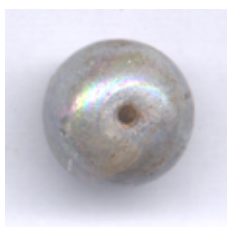
The glass included a number of interesting pieces:

SF42 context (28) a wine bottle rim in green glass with badly decaying surfaces. The wide bottle mouth, string rim, and what appears to be a short neck and widening body suggests a date from the end of the 17th or more likely the first third of the 18th century (Noël Hume 1969, 63-5).

SF 19 context (10), a small glass bead.



SF42



SF19



SF20

SF20 context (1) a large complete green beer bottle with swing-stopper; made of modern, none embossed, moulded glass but with uneven 'dimpling' effect in the glass. The ceramic swing-stopper is very faintly marked with 'Birkenhead Brewery Co. Ltd.' around what appears to be a star logo and the base of the bottle is also embossed with 'Birkenhead Brewery Co. Ltd.'.

A search of the National Archives reveals documents relating to the Birkenhead Brewery Co Ltd. listing an archive of material dating between c. 1865 and 1971 (GB/NNAF/C116743 - Former ISAAR ref: GB/NNAF/B2521).

The Brewery is listed in a number of the local directories of businesses, for example:

Slater's Directory (1880) of north and south Wales and including Cheshire lists the "Birkenhead Brewery Co. Limited at Bridge St – George Rigby Agent".

Kelly's Directory 1900, "Birkenhead Brewery Co. Limited (John Gallienne mngr & secy) registered offices Oriol Chambers 14 Water St. Liverpool, W; breweries & offices Oxtan Road & Livingstone Street. Birkenhead. Tel. Nos. Liverpool No. 2156, Brewery no. 306 Birkenhead Exchange, No. 2 Wine and Spirit Branch". Kelly's Directory of Cheshire of 1902 gives greater detail listing the Birkenhead Breweries at "69 to 75 Oxtan Road & 60 Livingstone Street & wine & spirit store, 72 to 76 Oxtan Road".

By 1940 it is listed as "Birkenhead Brewery Co. Ltd. Registered offices 73 Oxtan Rd Breweries & offices 69 -75 Oxtan Rd and 60 Livingstone St. & Cleveland St. Birkenhead" (Kelly's/Gore's Directory 1940).

## Clay Tobacco Pipes

A total of 16 pieces from clay tobacco pipes were recovered from the excavations, weighing 48.4g. These included 13 stems, one of which has a moulded design and one has a spur, and three moulded bowls.

SF17 context (10); is a small burnt stem which has rounded edges suggesting that it has been waterworn.

SF22 context (14); moulded stem from near base of bowl.

SF23 context (14); a bowl with spur, moulded with a 'Liver Bird' on one side and a Masonic design on the other.

SF36 context (23); a used moulded bowl with spur, moulded in the shape of the profile of a human head. The stem has been burnt or has iron staining residue.

SF50 context (25); a very simple moulded bowl with fluting along the line of the seam front and back; there is no spur or heel.



SF17



SF22



SF36



SF23

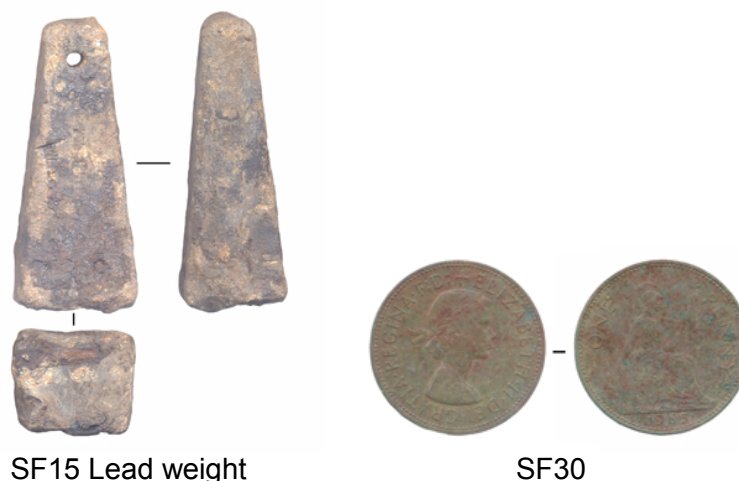


SF50

## Metalwork

There were a total of 24 pieces of metal recovered from the excavations weighing 1451.2g, as follows:

Material	Find Number	Quantity	Weight (g)
Copper Alloy one penny coin dated 1965	30	1	9.5
Iron bolt	7	1	5555.0
Decayed cast iron, probably the end off a roof gutter.	12	1	449.1
Various iron object	35	7	620.8
Iron nails	41	3	30.4
Burnt iron material	61	10	39.9
Lead weight possibly from a clock	15	1	246.5
Totals		24	1451.2



### Building Materials

There were a number of fragments which provide some information on the materials used in buildings in the vicinity. These included slate, a ceramic drain and fragments of mortar. Whilst the slate is identifiable as roof tile, the ceramic drainpipe was discarded and as with the mortar fragments provides little extra information. However, there is one piece of mortar attached to a sherd of dark-glazed earthenware pottery which suggests that the broken pot has been used as part of repair of infill in a wall.

### Stone

A possible whetstone, or other utilised stone, weight 343.1g, was recovered from context (1).



SF11

### Organic Materials – Bone and Shell

There were 23 pieces of animal bone and teeth recovered, weight 161.3g, from four contexts (14), (19) and (25), with 20 pieces, almost 87%, recovered from one context (14).

A specialist report has not yet been undertaken.

Description	Context	Total number	Weight (g)
	14	20	156.0
	19	1	0.1
	25	2	5.2
		23	161.3

There are also 23 shell fragments recorded, weight 61.9g, recovered from contexts (14), (19), (25), and (26). The majority, over 65% of the total, were also recovered from context (14). The shells included cockle, small whelk and oyster, all species which occur naturally around the island.

Description	Context	Total number	Weight (g)
Includes cockle and oyster shells.	14	15	46.0
Cockle shells.	19	2	3.9
Whelk shells.	25	2	2.8
Cockle shells.	26	4	9.2
		23	61.9

### Coal and Cinders

There were a small number of pieces of coal and 'cinders'; these amount to four pieces of coal, weight 11.8g, and 10 pieces of cinder, weight 17.1g. The cinders were discarded.

### 6. Conclusions

The excavation revealed details of the two phases of stone structure east of the 'slate shed' and demonstrated that the interior of this stone structure had been filled in as late as the 1980s. Map evidence suggested that the structure and the adjacent slate shed were constructed in the mid 19th century.

The excavation further revealed the deliberately worked surface of the bedrock. The function of the structure east of the 'slate shed' remains uncertain.

Excavations for the toilet block foundations are also likely to be limited by the presence of sandstone bedrock at only c. 0.80 m below the present ground level.

### 7. Acknowledgements

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## **Figures**



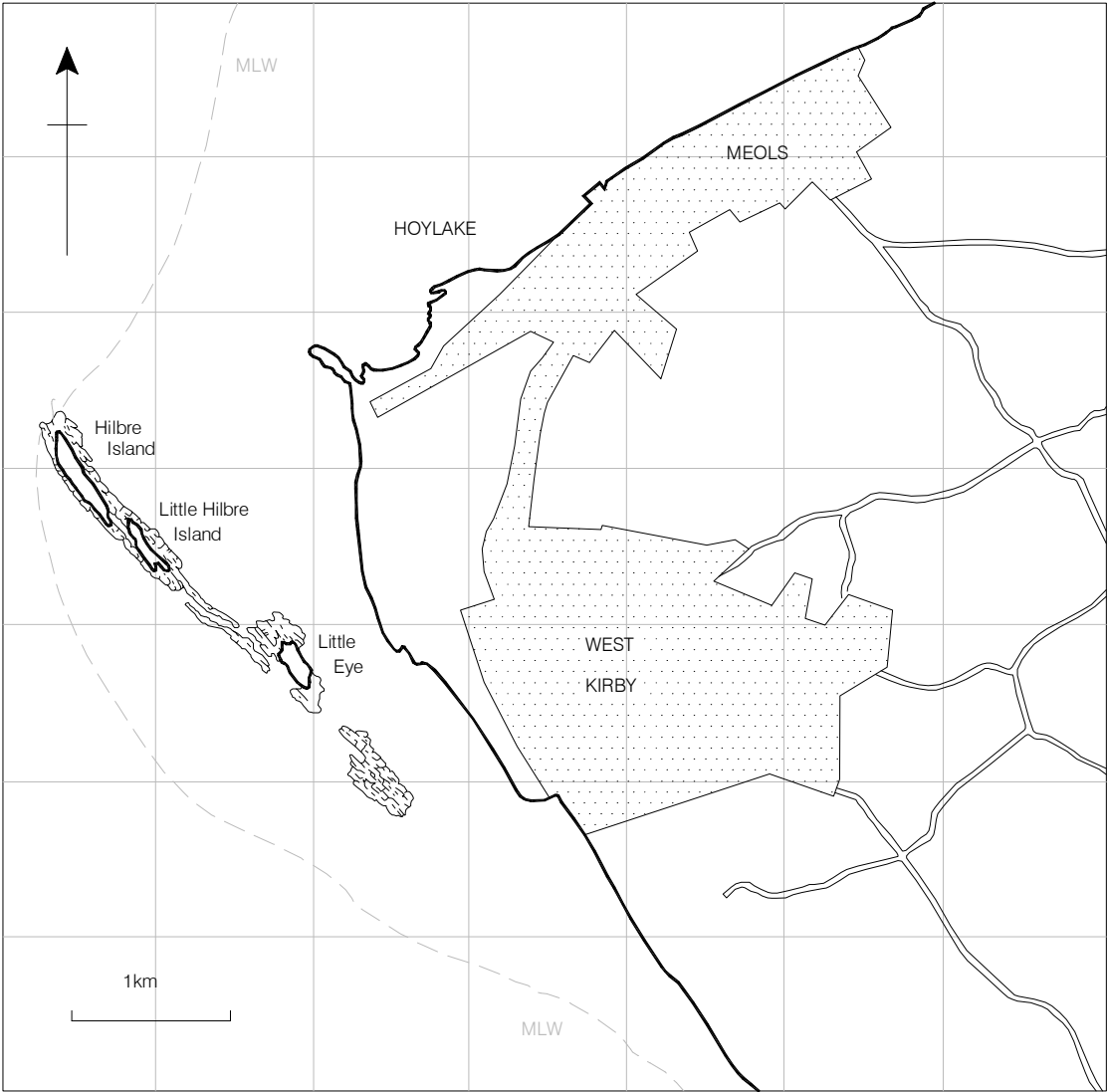


Fig. 1. Location of Site (courtesy of R. W. Cowell)

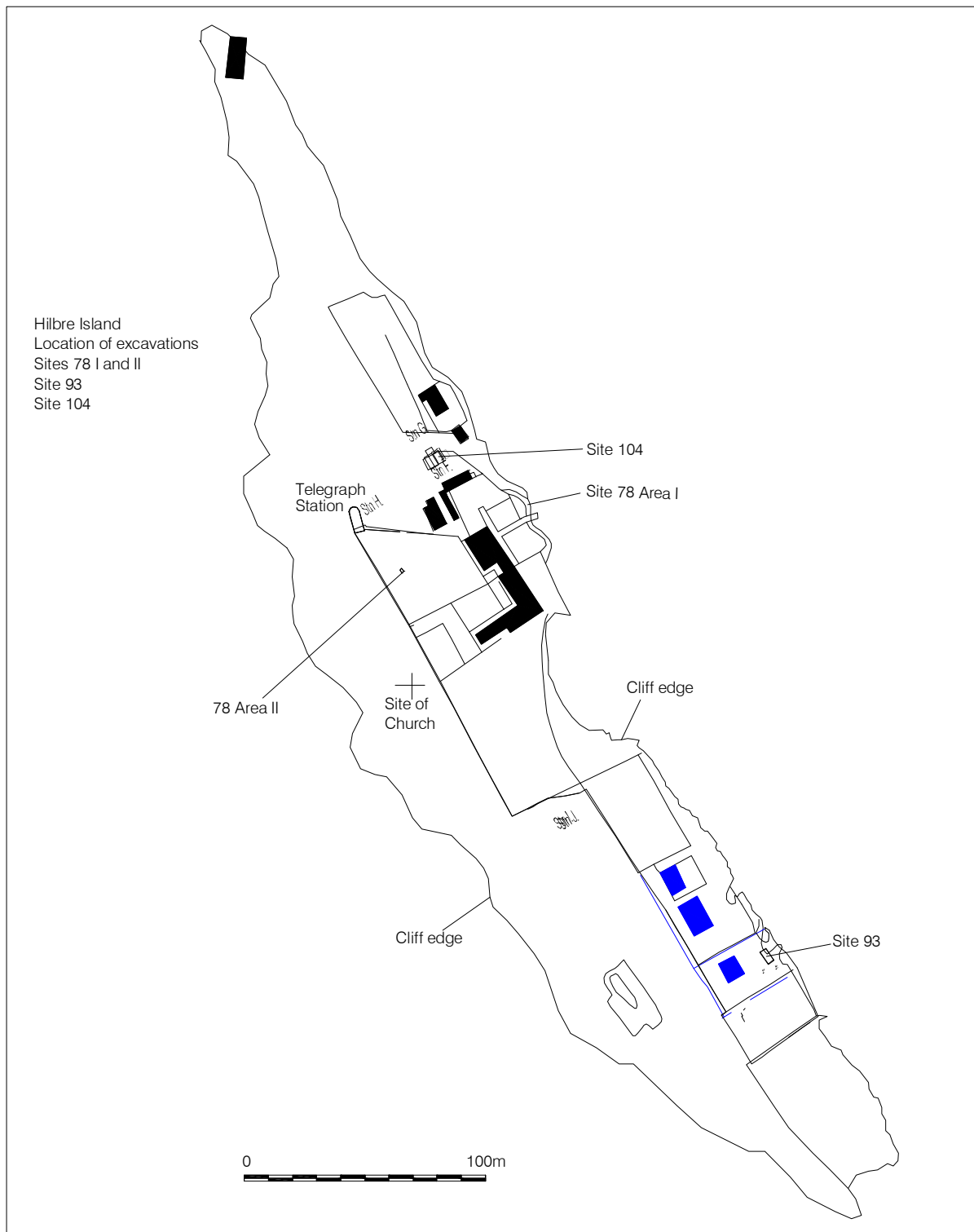


Fig. 2. Excavation location map



## **Plates**



Plate 1. Walls and interior floor of the structure showing the slate shed and bunk house in the background. From the north-east.



Plate 2. South-facing trench section showing modern dumped layers over wall (10). From the north.



Plate 3. Foundation wall (4/11) of the 'slate shed' showing possible blocked-up entrance at the southern end. From the east.



Plate 4. Eastern foundation wall (5) of structure. From the north-west.



Plate 5. Northern foundation wall (9) of structure. From the south.



Plate 6. Overview of structure showing the chiselled bedrock floor surface (6) sloping eastwards. From the south-east.





Plate 7. Rock-cut feature (7) within interior floor surface (6), showing chisel marks. From the east.



Plate 8. Interior of structure showing rock-cut features 7, 8 and 22. From the south.



Plate 9. ?Natural fissure 22 showing brickwork repair within interior floor surface of structure. From the east.



Plate 10. Rock-cut gully 21 after the removal of bricks. Context 8 also shown intercutting gully at the northern end. From the south-east.



Plate 11. Capped well 15 adjacent to wall 5, showing surrounding rubble deposit (16). From the north.



Plate 12. East of wall 5 showing initial dumping/demolition layers after the removal of topsoil (14). From the south.



Plate 13 Section through dumping/demolition layers, also showing unworked bedrock. From the south.



Plate 14 Remains of an earlier exterior wall foundation (24) observed east of wall 5, lying directly over bedrock. From the east.



Plate 15. Remains of an earlier exterior wall foundation (24) showing probable turn westwards. Also shows robbed-out trench (27) running parallel with wall 5. From the north.



Plate 16. Overview of eastern half of trench after excavation showing two possible rock-cut post-holes adjacent to the eastern baulk. From the south.