

Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

Newsletter

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What's On

13 October 2005 "500 years of Shopping in Beccles" by David Lindley

This expert Beccles historian will describe town shopping between 1430 and 1930

27 October 2005 "Suffolk Museums Working Together" by Lyn Gash

(Suffolk Museums Officer and Curatorial Adviser)

10 November 2005 "Aviation Archaeology – The Search for East Anglia's Missing Warplanes"

by **Bob Collis** (Lowestoft War Memorial Museum)

24 November 2005 "Landmarks in Movie History" by Mark Mitchels The story of a wonderful invention, with extracts from many important moments (1.5 hr programme)

12 January 2006 "What William Butterfield did for us" by Terry Weatherley

The story of William Butterfield, Ringsfield Church and its restoration

All meetings are held in the SOUTH LOWESTOFT METHODIST CHURCH HALL, at the corner of LONDON ROAD SOUTH and CARLTON ROAD, at 7.30 pm (Entry via LONDON ROAD SOUTH)

Please ring bell if the door is locked

Chairman's Column

We have already had two interesting talks – the *Diary of a Poor Suffolk Woodman* by Pip Wright and, on 22 September, Duncan Allen came to speak on *The Barber's Point Project*, about how Suffolk Archaeology Department guided a local history society through their excavation by the River Alde (see overleaf). Unfortunately, I had to miss this one.

Since Easter, the Museum has, as usual, played a big part in our activities. As I wrote last month, we have lost one or two regular stewards who were on duty during the week. It needed a lot of reorganisation to fill their places and we are very grateful to those others who stepped in to help. Please help us by becoming a steward next season, even if you can spare only one or two afternoons each week. The Museum will close for the winter break at the end of October, and the end-of-season get-together and buffet for all our museum helpers will be held in the Bowls Pavilion, in the Park, at 2.30pm on Saturday 5 November. I shall soon be sending out invitations and hope you can come along to join us.

I have to report that the popularity of the restaurant at Lowestoft College is such, that we are unable get a reservation for our Annual evening meal until the New Year (as happened by default last year). The comments we received last time were very favourable, and I have therefore booked us in for Thursday 2 February, 2006. Can you please put this date in your diaries? We will obtain a menu and price list as soon as possible to enable you to make reservations.

With good wishes **Lilian Fisher**

Your Committee

Lilian Fisher Chairman Irene Ashman Secretary Ray Collins Treasurer

Don Friston Newsletter Editor Keith Davies Prog. Sec. until Dec. John Knowles Prog. Sec. after Dec.

Ron Ashman Comm. Member Les Wilmot Comm. Member Cyril Percival Comm. Member

Society Web Site: www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk

Please give any items you have for inclusion in the Newsletter to Don Friston, at Society meetings.

Don't worry if spelling is not your strong point, we can help out.

22 September, 2005

"The Barber's Point Project" by Duncan Allen

Duncan Allen gave members an entertaining view of a recent 2-week excavation project to investigate this possible Roman site on the north bank of the River Alde in Suffolk. The dig was only made possible by the energy of the Aldeburgh and District Local History Society in gaining funding through a Heritage Lottery grant. Currently, many building-site digs are developer-funded but, for other isolated sites, local groups could obtain finance elsewhere if they put forward strong enough proof of the site's historical importance. Duncan emphasized professional guidance was essential to ensure accurate records, photos and plans were kept in addition to the more exciting digging.

Roman, and Saxon period remains had been recorded at Barber's Point in the early 1900s and the aim of the new dig was to confirm the results, urgent now as the site is subject to river erosion; also to find if the site was ever an island (to do this, experts used magnetometry and auguring techniques and developed a contour map). The auguring showed the point had been an island in the 2nd and 3rd Roman occupation periods. After this, sea levels rose and flooded the area but 2–300 years later resumed lower levels, when the Saxons may have occupied the site.

The enthusiastic society members helped open two trenches, each some 20 x 50m in area. Large clay-lined post holes (probably Roman) and smaller unlined ones (probably Saxon) were exposed and mapped, along with part of a 3m-wide ditch. Work in trench one produced around 2000, mainly grey, low status pre-12th-century Roman pottery sherds and large

quantities of briquetage, identified as fragments of large containers used in the production of salt. (Several other salt works have been discovered on the opposite bank of the Alde.) 7–8th century Saxon Ipswich-ware and later Thetford-ware have also been found nearby. Disappointingly, no coins were found in this dig but a fine Paleolithic hand axe was recovered from a spoil heap.

The site was back-filled and turf replaced at the close of the project. Future research now remains to try and establish if the site represents an early trading post or the remains of a settlement.

SOMETHING NOT TO MISS!

Ray Collins reports on a most enjoyable visit to an English Heritage event.

When we see something really good it is an idea to pass it on through these pages. In August, I went to the English Heritage *Festival of History* at Kelmarsh Hall near Rugby. This event comprises two days packed with so many things that you can't see everything. There are over 1000 performers doing re-enactments and dramas, camps showing how they lived, lectures, period music, jousting tournaments; and in 2005, on the last day, a display by three Spitfires to mark the 60 years since VE Day.

We were even able to help with a Caesium survey, with the latest state of the art equipment (like they do on Time Team) on a medieval village at the site. The equipment which can see down several feet through the earth looks primitive, being mainly plywood, but this is necessary as even the smallest metal screw would interfere with the readings. It is worth taking some children with you so you can have a go at everything, pulling the equipment back and forward and making a map of the streets, etc. The main battle in this region was Naseby, which happened only a few miles away, and the troops most likely crossed the field we were in. There was also a Napoleonic Peninsular battle (on the first day the French won, on the second we did).

What I liked best were the characters in the camps; a Paymaster for Cromwell explained his job and showed his coins and artefacts, Captain Scott and our Queens Victoria and Elisabeth were there, and so many more. Almost every period from the Iron Age to WWII was represented, mostly by amateurs doing it just for fun. TV's Blue Peter were filming their presenter Matt Baker jousting. This event was screened in the middle of September and you may have seen it. There was just so much to experience; over 17,000 people attended and everyone appeared happy at the end, despite rain on the Saturday. Next year it is at the same place on 12 and 13 August. Tickets are available on the Web (or, I expect, by post).

If members have experienced similar 'good' outings or been to see places of historic interest, please pass on a short write-up to Don Friston at a meeting and, space permitting, we will include it in a future Newsletter.

**PLEASE NOTE! Copies of the 120-page CARLTON COLVILLE VILLAGE
HISTORY BOOK are now
available to members at the half-price offer of £2.50. Order through Newsletter editor
Don Friston.**

**Full reports of our Society talks and meetings will appear in the Society's Annual
Report,
the next issue of which will be published in May 2006.**