

Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

NEWSLETTER

Society website: www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk

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What's On

27 April 2006 "The Yarmouth Story: 1000 years of history" by Colin Tooke
The changing story and development of a Norfolk coastal town

11 May 2006 "Pottery through the Ages" by Alice Lyons
(Norfolk Archaeological Unit)

25 May 2006 Annual General Meeting

8 June 2006 Special Event

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

I was sorry to have to miss two talks last month. I was told how interesting Arthur Middleton's talk on Roman Catholic and Classical Rome was on Thursday 9th March. This was followed by The Prehistoric Archaeology of Carlton Colville by Jezz Meridith on 23rd March, when he told of the village's history revealed by new development.

On Saturday morning, 18th March, there was a meeting of all the stewards and helpers in the Bowls Pavilion opposite the Museum to volunteer their services and to launch the new season for the Museum, which opened to the public on Monday 27th March. Then on Saturday, April 1st, we held the official opening of the museum with a visit by Andrew Currant from the Natural History Museum in London, who spoke on how important were the 700,000 year old finds by Paul Durbidge and Bob Mutch on Pakefield beach. Refreshments were then served in the Café next to the Museum – once the stables for Broad House. This was a very enjoyable and sociable afternoon.

On Thursday 8th June, we are booked at the Yacht Club to celebrate the Society's fortieth anniversary. The catering at the Yacht Club is now by Andy Willows, so that should be good. The tickets for this event will be £5 each, a reduction on the actual charge, which was our Treasurer's good suggestion. We shall, of course, need to know numbers attending. Tonight

we welcome Colin Tooke to talk about the Yarmouth Story: 1,000 years of history - the story of the development of this Norfolk coastal town.

With good wishes, **Lilian Fisher**

On Saturday 18 March, members Ray Collins, Irene and Ron Ashman, represented the society at the '**Societies Day**' event which was organised by the Suffolk Local History Council and held at Mendlesham Community Centre. The display of photographs of 'Old Lowestoft', together with a display of the recent Pakefield finds, which were supplied by Paul Durbidge, attracted much interest.

The organisers had expected about 60 people for the morning talks, but were pleased when over 80 attended.

The Port of Lowestoft Research Society were the only other Lowestoft society represented there.

Please hand in any items you have for inclusion in the Newsletter at the Society meetings.

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

Details of recent talks appear overleaf

9 March 2006, "Roman Catholic and Classical Rome" – Arthur Middleton.

The talk and slides related to a series of visits made to Rome over a period of about 10 years starting in the mid 1950's.

Starting with St Peters, Arthur showed the magnificent exterior and interior of this church. History tells that the church was built on the site where Peter was martyred, in what was then Nero's circus. The building took about 175 years to complete.

A tour of various churches, showing the external & internal architecture, included the story of one which had some very lifelike statues. It is said that Michelangelo unwittingly spoke to a statue and when it did not reply he threw down his tools which landed on the statue's knee, chipping out a piece of the knee. In Roman times the statues had painted eyes and were often dressed with clothes.

The Sacred Stairs, or Santa Scala, which can be found in one of the churches, came from Pontius Pilate's Palace and it is said that Christ descended these after his condemnation. The steps are made of marble and have red spots which are said to be the blood of Christ. Some pilgrims ascend and descend these stairs on their knees, often kissing the 'blood' spots as they go.

Many of the obelisks found in the city were brought back from Egypt by the Romans. This has probably resulted in them being preserved.

The Romans used marble, brick, stone, concrete and terracotta in their buildings. Most of the marble used is yellow or magnolia in colour, but one monument is white. This has been called the 'Wedding Cake' by the Italians.

Throughout the city there are many magnificent fountains, the water for which was conveyed via an aqueduct 35 miles long, which also supplied the rich Romans of the city with domestic water.

The Piazza Navona is the home of several fountains. One is called the Four Rivers fountain and represents the rivers that stood for the four continents known in the 17th century – the rivers Nile, Ganges, Danube and Plate. This Piazza had originally been used for chariot racing, later it was used for jousting tournaments and now, on one day in the year, it is the venue for a toy fair.

Throughout the city there are many ancient buildings, monuments, churches, triumphant arches and temples that intermingle with buildings from Roman times to the present time. Some of the 20th century buildings incorporated features of that earlier period, such as Roman style arches. Slides were shown of various buildings, from modern (1950s) back to Roman times. Some had been taken after dusk, giving the buildings a different perspective with their night-time illumination.

One of the best preserved buildings is the Pantheon. The original building was burnt down in 110A.D and then re-built into what is seen today. The centre piece is a magnificent dome that is 142 feet in diameter and was built using Roman concrete. The Pantheon was originally a temple to all gods, but was later consecrated to St. Mary and all the Christian Martyrs, and renamed Santa Maria ad Martyrs.

Leading out of the city is a road called the 'Via Appia', alongside of which are the tombs of Rome's most important citizens. It was the policy of the time that bodies would not be buried within the city boundary.

23 March 2006, "The Prehistoric Archaeology of Carlton Colville" – Jez Meredith

The talk mainly concerned the two sites excavated in Carlton Colville prior to the construction of the Carlton Colville bypass and finished with details of the latest excavation in Pakefield.

The first site was on either side of Uplands Road, where artefacts found dated from Neolithic to Romano British. One interesting find was the outline of a circular monument, approx 12 metres across. This dated from 4000 to 5000 years ago and is thought to have had a spiral entrance. The outer ring contained evidence of post holes, which are believed to have been part of a wooden screen rather than a henge like structure. The actual use of this circle is not known. Inside this ring was a smaller crescent shaped mark.

A later bronze age burial yielded grave goods but the body bones and wooden coffin had disappeared due to the acidic nature of the sandy soil. The only body parts found were tiny pieces of tooth enamel.

The second site was near Carlton Hall where finds dated from early Neolithic to Medieval times. Many flints were found ranging from actual tools to the 'cores' from which the 'tools' had been knapped.

The finds at both of these sites were contemporary with those found at various sites along the Waveney Valley.

To end the talk, Jez showed slides of the most recent site in Pakefield. These included a circular enclosure about 20 metres across, complete with ditch, post holes of a structure about 5 metres across and evidence of cremation burial. Initial dating is early iron age. One of the 'finds' being an early bronze age jet ornament, lozenge shaped (approx 7cm across) and decorated with an intricate dot pattern.

We need your help.

Would you like to become a committee member. We need three more people to make up our numbers. There are four meetings a year where we discuss and decide all issues relating to the Society.

On Saturday 1 April Andy Carrant, from the Natural History Museum, officially opened the display in the Lowestoft Museum of the recent important finds from Pakefield. The discovery made by society member Paul Durbidge, Bob Mutch and Adrian Charlton have put man inhabiting this area 700,000 years ago, 200,000 years earlier than previously thought. For further details, see the Society's Annual Report.