

Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

NEWSLETTER

Society website: www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk

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What's On

12 October "Suffolk's Ancient Woodland" by Simon Leatherdale

26 October "The Optical Telegraph, London to Great Yarmouth" by Bernard Ambrose

9 November "Bombs, beams and boffins – the secret site at Orford Ness" by Paddy Heazell

23 November "The History of the Lowestoft and East Suffolk Marine Society" by Peter Parker

5 December (Tuesday) Christmas Social, to be held at the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club.

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

Christmas Social.

This will take place on **Tuesday 5th December** at the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club. The time is 7.00pm, for 7.30pm, and the cost is £7.50 per person, which includes a buffet.

Tickets are available tonight, or at the meeting on 26 October, from the Treasurers table.

Recent Discoveries

Dutch historian Roelof van Gelder has discovered , in the National Archives at Kew, a collection of seeds that belonged to a Dutchman called Jan Teerlink. The seeds were found among papers that came from the Dutch ship Henriette which was captured by the Royal Navy in 1803. France had annexed the Netherlands in 1795, therefore Dutch ships were considered to belong to the enemy France and the taking of the ship was considered to be a 'prize' by the Admiralty. Jan Teerlink was a much travelled merchant and the seeds were found in 40 neatly folded packets, along with some samples of silk, in a red leather wallet

embossed in gold. It is thought that they were collected and packeted by a botanist, for they had been wrapped in the specialist way botanists use with a description on the packets. This identified the species and provided some helpful field notes and was not in the handwriting of Jan Teerlink. They may have been payment for goods bought from Jan Teerlink.

The seeds were passed to the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew, and samples went to the seed scientists at the Millenium Seed Bank in Sussex. These came from 32 species of plant that are found around Cape Town in South Africa and thrive in the dry conditions.

Normally seeds do not survive more than a few years unless they have been kept under controlled conditions. These seeds had been transported on a ship, then moved to the Tower of London before being stored with government records. Although the chances of germination were thought to be small, it was decided to try.

Many of these seeds will only sprout after fire has passed over them and for others, smoke triggers the germination. The scientists simulated these conditions by chipping the outer coating of the seeds with a scalpel and wetting them in water through which smoke had passed. The results were better than expected when 16 out of 25 seeds of the legume *Liparia* sprouted, as did one of two acacia seeds and one of 8 *Leucospermum* seeds.

The above came from an article called: Revival of the fittest, New Scientist 23 September 2006

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.

7 September 2006, "The Development of the Saxon State in East Anglia " by Andy Hutcheson, of the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service

The talk concentrated on Anglo Saxon Norfolk, from AD410 to AD1066. Following the departure of the Romans, the government of the country collapsed and the country entered the period often described as the Dark Ages. The Saxons, Angles and Jutes invaded the country from the coast of Northumbria, East Anglia round to the South Coast. There is evidence that Saxon invaders threatened East Anglia before the Romans left. This region, together with Kent and Sussex, was a large supplier of food to the Romans, and the Saxon Shore forts could have been built to protect that food source.

Historical evidence comes from place names, archaeological finds as well as literary works. Although historical documents are rare in East Anglia, sources include, Gildas (about 510) who writes about Saxon invaders; Bede (c673-735) ecclesiastical history; Felix, the life of St Guthlac; Various Monastic clerics in The Anglo Saxon Chronicles.

During this migration period goods found in Eastern Europe are similar to those found here. In Saxon times, women had a higher status than in Roman or later Medieval times. Finds include clothing adornments that were made of gold, silver and bronze.

During the late 7th century there was an increase in silver coinage, a concentration of which is found around place names ending in 'ham'.

Christian burials appear at this time and monastic sites are founded.

In the 8th and 9th centuries urban settlements are started. The earliest are found at Ipswich, London, Southampton and York. Norwich and Thetford were created around AD900. Trade at this time includes pottery, with Ipswich Ware being found all over East Anglia.

The Vikings and Danes started invading in the late 8th century, with the main thrust in the 9th century. The Vikings were not Christian when they first invaded, so this disrupted Christianity. The country was governed by the Danelaw from about 870 to 910. The Fleggs in Norfolk have a significant number of Danish placenames.

28 September 2006 "Norfolk villages lost to the sea" by Chris Weston

Ten Norfolk villages that were recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book have either been totally destroyed or have little remaining today. Locally the village of Newton Cross, which was located north of Hopton and about one and a quarter miles out to sea was destroyed during a great storm in the 14th century.

Chris Weston spoke of the way these communities were destroyed. As well as the loss due to flooding, such as Newton Cross, there is also loss due to cliff erosion and there is evidence of this all along the Norfolk and Suffolk coastline. There are two ways this occurs. The first is when waves wash away the base of the cliff and the land above falls onto the beach. The second is where rainwater running off the land creates gullies in the cliff and the land between two of these collapses onto the beach.

Some of the 'losses' occurred over a long period of time. For example, the village of Eccles was recorded in Domesday as having 2000 acres. During a great storm in January 1604 the sea reclaimed 1000 acres. The church tower fell onto the beach in 1895 and parts can still be seen today.

At Keswick, a pub, hotel and a residential home are all that remain of the old village.

Of those no longer here, Foulness had a population of 100 in 1086, Shipden had two churches and a weekly market in 1285, but by 1370 was virtually non-existent. One and a half miles east of Winterton was Ness which had a church.

The sea on occasions will wash away the sand from the beach to reveal evidence of these lost communities.

At Waxham, part of a cobbled road was revealed for a few hours after which the sea covered it over again. There were two Waxhams, Little Waxham, or Waxham Parva was lost in the early 20th century. What we call Waxham today is really Great Waxham and this is where you will find the Waxham Barn.

At Hunstanton in 1863 the sea went out further than usual at the low tide, and John Cobb found tree stumps, animal bones and a flint axe head in a tree stump.

Walcott had a sea wall up to 1953 and recently the sea removed 8 feet of sand from the beach in one night.

Happisburgh is losing a lot of land, with the worst year being 1996. Today the local authorities are attempting to reduce erosion by the use of offshore reefs, groynes and seawalls.

The Chairman's Column will return in the next Newsletter.