



A drone shot down stream of the River Rother

Welcome to Issue 16 of the Lossenham Project newsletter, keeping you up to date with the latest news and any events you can get involved in.

## An introduction

*"L'histoire est une suite de mensonges sur lesquels on est d'accord."  
(History is a set of lies agreed upon.) Napoléon Bonaparte (allegedly)*

The month of March is named after Mars, the god of war and at the time of writing, he seems to be in charge, unfortunately. Old Boney's wisdom, quoted above, is always to be remembered and especially at times of conflict. The fog of war is often intentionally generated and, although we might think that technology allows citizen journalists to live-tweet the actual goings-on, the very same technology also allows propaganda to spread all the faster and can dress it up to the point where it appears indistinguishable from the truth.

Any writing of history is subject to the writer's opinions and preferences so, whenever possible, it is imperative to go back to the original documents. As you will see from this issue of the newsletter, that is just what we do in the Project. You will also see the dates for various Project activities, and this list will be expanding further over the next few months. Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Åke Nilson, Chairman, The Janus Foundation  
([chair@janusfoundation.org](mailto:chair@janusfoundation.org))



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# Farming the medieval Rother Levels

For the February history workshop, we explored a single account roll (1299/1300) for Christ Church Priory's manor at Ebony. Such rolls cover income and expenses, as well as details about the crops grown and livestock kept.

The key cereals were oats: the winter and spring sowing at a ratio of 1:4 where 117 acres were spring sown, with a small acreage (7 acres) of winter wheat as a cash crop. In other years legumes were grown for fodder/green manure. The previous year's oat harvest was used for seed, as liveries for horses (harrowing and ploughing) and for the workers – specialists and the farm servants, the latter living largely on potage and ale.

The demesne supported a mixed dairy of 30 cows and 142 ewes. Dairying taking place in summer as well as extending into early autumn, the dairymaid getting her oat allowance from St George's day until Michaelmas. Some cheese was sent to the priory's cellarer at Canterbury. Replacements came in the form of one of the manor's own heifers and a purchased in-calf cow, and for the ewes from Ebony's own lambs that had been reared at Appledore, returning to Ebony before tugging.

The pig herd comprised a boar and 3 sows, most older porkers sent to the cellarer. Peacocks and hens similarly ended up on the table at Canterbury, whereas geese, capons, and hens were sold. That year over £5 was spent on sea walls, 11s on ditching and almost 30s on the demesne buildings, but receipts exceeded expenses by about £7.

*Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh  
(Principal Research Fellow)*



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## Archaeology at Lossenham in 2022

What a relief it is to finally plan events without having to navigate the ever-shifting government guidance surrounding covid. Whilst we shall remain vigilant around any sudden changes, we have taken the opportunity to pencil in some dates for the diaries in the hope we can forge ahead unhindered.

Excavations this year will focus on the Priory and other sites across Lossenham, including Castle Toll and anomalies picked up by the extensive geophysical results undertaken by HAARG. You will notice in the program that we have released dates but not necessarily the specific sites we will be investigating – don't worry we will give you plenty of notice of where we will be!

Open Days and Events on site are in the pipeline too (dates forthcoming).

We are planning to hold events during the CBA Festival of Archaeology (<https://www.archaeologyuk.org/festival.html>) and the Heritage Open Days (<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>), and of course we have been invited to events off-site to promote the project. If you want us to attend any events with our stand do let me know.

All in all we are looking forward to a busy and exciting year of archaeology at Lossenham!

Annie Partridge  
Project Archaeology Director



Andrew digging last season





## Lossenham Open Days and Events

We have planned a series of open days on site in the summer – check back next issue for those dates. Volunteers to assist with the open days would be much appreciated.

# Zooarchaeology at York

My main objective in doing an MSc in Zooarchaeology is to improve my ability to identify animal bones found on excavations and I found that the 2 hour practical we had on that each week was nowhere near enough time. My tutor agreed that I could have extra time after both the main practical and the main seminar of each week to study their excellent reference collection of mammal bones.

I thus spent many very happy hours each week examining and photographing all the main species of domestic mammal bones, to build up a comparative reference collection of my own that I will have on my phone and laptop for future use.



Microfauna and amphibian bones



3 Atlas bones from dog, sheep & pig



3 lumbar vertebrae from pig, dog & sheep

The Skills Assessment at the end of the term was based on identifying and siding (left or right – surprisingly difficult in some cases!) nearly 100 mystery bones to species and element – covering mammals, birds, fish and microfauna.

Making the most of being at university again after 30 years, I have joined the Archaeology Society and have attended many evening talks on a wide range of interesting topics, including whether we should excavate human remains or not.

I have been visiting the museums and historic sites of York, including of course the Jorvik Centre and the wonderful York Minster. I have also built up a good collection of Zooarch books, which will be helpful in the future and am making some good contacts.

The Spring term is focusing on how to age and sex animals from their bones and teeth, animal pathology and how to record damage to the bones, and how to choose what to analyse and record, which I am finding fascinating.

Dr Maeve Moorcroft MVB MRCVS

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# Lossenham Project Archive

## - The Plan

According to the National Archives "The prospect of organising and developing an archive can be daunting." So, in planning ahead for the Lossenham Project archive what is proposed for this year?

This month sees The Lossenham Project book library moving to a stylish new location just outside of Canterbury. Due to the demand and the growth of this special collection of books, both antiquarian and contemporary, a new space has been acquired to store and use the books. As you can imagine with this moving of the collection, each book has to be re-shelved, re-ordered and maintained. This space will also enable small groups or individuals to work quietly and collectively study in small groups. Further to this, conferencing is available along with a projector and refreshment facilities.

When the Lossenham Project Research Agenda is complete the archive will be catalogued and a database made available for the community in tandem with the research agenda. This will set out a series of more specific research topics organised under high-level research themes. It will also provide a list of questions to guide those looking to do research.

In the near future, Isle Heritage CIC will be adding archaeological data to the archive, which includes dig and finds details. This will include images and geophysics of the dig and some finds data. In addition, the History Wills Group have acquired (via the Kent Archives), pre-reformation wills for all the parishes on the Rother Levels. This huge resource will be made available for the Lossenham Project community, alongside the existing PCC Wills in the archive.

I am also planning to develop links with the Museum of English Rural Life, and the University of Reading by inviting the museum curator to visit Lossenham Farm, which holds a collection of over 400 medieval and late medieval horseshoes. These were originally displayed on the walls of Lossenham Farmhouse and have been previously looked at by a local farrier who was absolutely fascinated by the provenance of these horseshoes. He could explain how a set of shoes could be identified as belonging to a single horse that may have been shod by a local farrier over a period of time on the farm. The University of Reading currently holds two substantial collections of horseshoes and I am hoping that the curator will be able to come and inspect and assess the collection at Lossenham.

Lastly, a thank you to Mr Patrick Haydon, a KAS member from Whitstable, who has generously donated to the book collection a series of Archaeologia Cantiana 1974-2020. This donation is much appreciated.

*If you would like to use the library or book the space for research and reading of the publications held please do not hesitate to contact Jason at [archivist@janusfoundation.org](mailto:archivist@janusfoundation.org).*

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# Newenden Bridge

Newenden Bridge, recently repaired quite unsympathetically with bright brickwork, has a long history. The causeway (still visible on the Sussex side) was mentioned in 1332, and later in the 14th century, travellers complained that the lord of Newenden manor had allowed the bridge to fall into disrepair in order to make profit from a ferry operation.

In 1637, Camden noted a wooden bridge, but in the same year, Kent and Sussex (who still share responsibility for this border crossing) agreed to have built a bridge "three score foot in length whereof the middle Arch to be twentysix foot and the other two Arches seventeen foot across and the same to be erected and set up at the Place where the old Bridge now stands without removing of the old Foundation". The proportions of this new bridge are the same as those of the present bridge, but that was built in 1706, as you may be able to make out from the inscription on a stone set on the inside of the downstream parapet. To save you from trying to read it under threat of ever increasing traffic, the inscription reads: "This Bridge was built by Kent and Sussex in the Year 1706".



It wasn't however, very well built. Already in 1732, it had become "dangerous to pass" new paving and pointing was required, as well as the spreading of 19½ tons of shingle (as infill, I think). Then, in 1769, a survey found that "the East and West Buttresses and the North Core thereof are greatly decayed insomuch that had the Repairs of the Bridge been deferred the Arches would in a short Time have given Way".

In 1982, with the arrival of 40-tonne lorries, it was decided to replace the foundation of the bridge, and the old oak piles on which the bridge had rested were removed and replaced with a concrete raft. These piles dated at least back to 1706, but were possibly there earlier, in which case they may have been mediaeval, as the 1637 order asked for the new bridge to be built on the old foundation. Unfortunately it seems the piles were just disposed of without a dendrological investigation – it would have been very interesting to know how old they were!

The bridge still serves its purpose well, even when the Rother threatens the very top of the arches. For how long it will be the main connection across the river remains to be seen – it does get damaged regularly and, being single lane, it is a bit of an obstacle to the A28 traffic. But it is a listed monument and, even if a new bridge is eventually provided, it should stand for many years to come.

Åke Nilson, Chairman, The Janus Foundation  
([chair@janusfoundation.org](mailto:chair@janusfoundation.org))



Newenden Bridge (summer 2010)



# Upcoming Events - Dates for the Diary!

## **March 2022**

Friday 25th to Sunday 27th: Excavation at the Priory

## **April 2022**

Saturday 2nd: Ancestors: An Evening with Alice Roberts at Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone. 7.30pm. Tickets can be purchased via <https://www.atgtickets.com>

Thursday 17th: Mini conference and book launch of The Romano-British villa and Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Eccles at Aylesford Priory 10am-3pm. Free event, tickets can be reserved via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>

Wednesday 20th to Sunday 24th: Excavation at the Priory

## **May 2022**

Monday 9th to Sunday 15th: Excavation site TBC

## **June 2022**

Saturday 4th: Newenden Platinum Jubilee Event, Newenden Cricket Ground. (Volunteers to assist with the stand much appreciated).

Tuesday 7th to Sunday 12th: Excavation site TBC

## **July 2022**

Monday 18th to Sunday 31st: Excavation site TBC

## **August 2022**

Wednesday 10, Thursday 11th, Friday 19th, Sunday 21st, Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th: Excavation site TBC

Saturday 20th (TBC): Newenden Family Fun Day, Newenden Cricket Ground (Volunteers to assist the stand much appreciated).