



### Welcome to the Lossenham Project newsletter

We will be regularly keeping you up to date with the latest news and any events you can get involved in.

*To sign up to the project or for further information email [info@lossenham.org.uk](mailto:info@lossenham.org.uk)*

Whilst the pandemic continues to disrupt our lives we are unable to plan for events that involve physical mixing and will not encourage such mixing until it is safe for all to do so. We understand that accessing digital events can be problematic and we are trying our best to ensure people do not feel like they are missing out on anything. Public events are recorded and a summary will be produced for this newsletter.

**Thank you for your continued support and look forward to better times ahead!**

## Covid statement

### CONTENTS

**The Lossenham Carmelites:** 2  
what did they wear?  
(Richard Copsey, O.Carm)

**Event summary:** 3  
15 December 2020

**Volunteering on the project:** 3  
what is it all about?  
(Annie Partridge)

**Upcoming events:** 5  
2 March 2021  
*Post-medieval Maps and  
Landscape History*



# The Lossenham Carmelites: what did they wear?



The religious habit for Carmelite friars is fairly simple and consists of three main parts. The basic garment is the tunic which is a full-length brown garment with long sleeves and buttoned up at the neck. Over this goes a long strip of cloth called the scapular with a hole in the middle allowing it to be put over the head and reaching down in the front and the back to just above the hem of the tunic. Basically, the scapular serves as an apron, protecting the tunic from getting dirty. In the medieval period, the tunic would be made of a fairly thick woollen cloth and so would take some effort to wash or brush clean. The scapular was easier to take off and to rinse through. Then there was a cappa which contains a hood and fits over the shoulders. Sandals were worn on the feet. Finally there was a leather belt around the waist, often with a sheath for a knife. This was needed at mealtimes as normally no cutlery was provided, apart from a spoon when there was soup. Forks were not yet in general use.

When a Carmelite wanted to go out, he would put on a cloak which fitted over the habit. This kept a friar warm and would protect him from the rain or snow if the weather was bad. When the Carmelites first came to Lossenham, in the early years of the Order, their cloak was made of striped cloth, probably from a local cloth made in the Holy Land. Which way the stripes went has been disputed for years among Carmelite historians and it is only recently, that we have discovered a picture painted at the time that they were worn. The



*The original habits of the Carmelites (until 1287)*

illustration given here comes from an icon painted in Cyprus around 1270-1275, and shows the striped cloaks being worn by the friars in Nicosia.

Now for some more personal points! Let's start with underwear. In the early years of the Order, the wearing pants or trunks was strictly forbidden. They were considered a luxury. Towards the end of the 13th century, this was relaxed and permission was given to wear trunks when riding a horse (so as not to expose oneself) or when a friar was sick. Then in the 1300's, they are not mentioned anymore and they had, one assumes, become the norm.

In a medieval friary, each friar had a cell, usually separated from the others by a lathe and plaster wall, but there was no form of heating and so it could be very cold during the winter. Friars, therefore, were allowed to wear a sleeveless garment like a gilet made of sheepskin or some thick woven material under their tunic. In fact, they were allowed to wear more than one, providing that the friar did not become noticeably "inflated".

At night, friars slept in their habits and it was the duty of the subprior to go around with a candle to make sure that no one took off their tunic or their scapular. (The subprior also checked that all candles were extinguished as fire was an ever-present danger).

*Richard Copsey, O.Carm.*



## Event Summary: 15 December

Our first meeting between the project team and volunteers happened on 15 December 2020 via Zoom. The event gave a quick introduction to the project team and what their individual interests are, then gave the volunteers an opportunity to speak. We had around 20 people signed in and we thank you all for supporting the event. We will eventually repeat the event in a physical setting so we meet each other properly.

To start, each of the project team presented a bit about their area of interest and role in the

project. Project Manager Andrew Richardson (CAT) updated us on the results of the borehole survey (to be replicated in the next newsletter); Åke Neilson spoke about his interest in the history of Lossenham; Brendan Chester-Kadwell elaborated on his landscape work with maps (Newsletter 3); Richard Copsey, O.Carm introduced his interest in the Carmelite Order (Newsletter 3 & 4); and Sheila Sweetinburgh (Centre for Kent History and Heritage) discussed the value of wills in populating the past and delving into the everyday lives of people. Helen Clarke was unable

to attend the meeting but will be continuing her research into late medieval ships and shipbuilding along the river.

Feedback from the event was positive and we have been able to get an idea of the sorts of research questions you are interested in and the events you want to participate in, so thank you for letting us know.

The first section of the event was recorded and we will let you know when it is available to watch online.

## Volunteering on the project: what is it all about?

The project is recruiting volunteers to help with two strands of research: archaeological investigations and historical research. History and archaeology can be compared to cheese and wine – perfectly fine by themselves but it is only when they are brought together that you have a party! They feed into each other, often complimenting and contradicting in equal measure, and it is only by exploring both that you get closer to the truth.

You do not need any experience to join either group as all training will be provided. You can volunteer to belong to both groups, or just one if you have a particular interest, and all results will be shared in this newsletter.

### **Volunteering as an archaeologist with Canterbury Archaeological Trust**

Most of you will already have an idea of what archaeology is and what it entails, either from personal experience or through the TV. Our planned investigations include excavation, surveys, and field walking. The physical demands of these roles will vary but as a minimum you should be able to walk quite a distance across uneven ground. Where possible we will adapt activities to suit individual needs, but this may not be possible for all the events.

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*East Wear Bay Field School run by CAT 2015-2017*

'Digging' is the traditional go-to image when thinking of archaeology but there is more to it than sticking a spade into the ground. We allow volunteers to participate in all aspects of excavation from the physical excavation, photography, recording, finds processing, and data basing. We won't ask you to participate in anything you don't want to but we do try to give you the full experience so you understand the whole process of archaeology.

Before we get to excavation we will be undertaking some surveys, which can include geophysical surveys (with the Hastings Area Archaeological Group), metal detecting (with KAMSU), and field walking. These activities are predominantly walking based were started in autumn last year but were put on hold because of the lockdown. We will let you know when we can re-start these again.

We hope to be able to offer some archaeological volunteering opportunities in 2021, but we are waiting on the covid-19 situation to vastly improve before setting any dates.

### **Volunteering with the History Group**

The History Group will be focussing their research efforts on analysing documents, books, and maps relating to the area. Through this research we are able build a detailed picture of the communities that have lived in the landscape for centuries, chart changes over time, and give a voice to those people that came before us. Each of the specialists in the History Group has a particular field of interest, set out in the Event Summary in this newsletter and in Newsletter 2, and they will be able to train and guide you through accessing the huge amount of information available. The group welcome any of your ideas on research topics and will be of invaluable assistance to you.

In the future this will include training on accessing physical archives but for now the focus will be on sources found readily online. The first History Group event will take place on Tuesday 2 March – further details can be found on [page....]

### **Other volunteer roles**

When we are able to we will have public events, activities for young people, and other engagement opportunities. We always appreciate help with these events from a few hours sitting on a stall to volunteer guides or stewards, or even getting really stuck in with things like planning children's activities!

We welcome any and all offers of assistance from video creation and editing, offers of help with refreshments, or even just letting us know you'd be happy for us to dig up your garden. Any and all help is very much appreciated!



*Images from the East Wear Bay Field School  
run by CAT 2015-2017*



## Lossenham Project: Virtual Workshop for volunteers

There will be a Zoom session for the Lossenham Project at 7.00pm on **Tuesday 2 March**, when Brendan Chester-Kadwell and Helen Clarke of the History Group will present a virtual Workshop on the following topic:

### Landscape History: Historic Maps and their uses

Brendan will be giving an illustrated presentation on the kinds of historical map material available. Moving from historic maps to large-scale OS maps of the Rother Levels and the local area around Newenden, Helen will present a case study on Rother river ports, harbours and shipbuilding sites, showing how maps can be combined with fieldwork on a research project. The talks will last for an hour in total, followed by the opportunity for questions.

**You are welcome to join; please email [andrew.richardson@canterburytrust.co.uk](mailto:andrew.richardson@canterburytrust.co.uk) for an invitation.**

This will be the first of a series of Workshops on different topics presented by members of the History Group which will be held online at roughly monthly intervals until the end of Lockdown. The two following workshops will be on **Tuesday 30th March** and **Tuesday 27th April**. As soon as the virus and the weather allow, we are looking forward to meetings and fieldwork that will take place in person rather than virtually.

Everybody is welcome to take part in this Workshop or subsequent Lossenham Project meetings, but it would be helpful for us to hear about any particular interests or practical experience that you might have. *For example, do you see yourself as a novice learner, having some practical experience, very knowledgeable?* Please let us know by email to Helen ([helenclarke2012@gmail.com](mailto:helenclarke2012@gmail.com)).



*The mill site in Benenden, c. 1630 (CKS U1506/P1)*

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be with you at the end of March. Andrew Richardson will be writing up the results of the borehole survey and what that means for our possible excavation sites.

