

# Leighton Buzzard and District Archaeological and Historical Society (LBDAS.org.uk)

## News Sheet 8 - June 2008

### **Fieldwork - summer 2008**

This year we are looking for a Mesolithic site on a terrace above the Ousel valley at Woodland Avenue, off Taylors Ride. Excavation will initially take place on 5th, 10th and 15th June from 10am until 5pm weather permitting. Further details from Bernard Jones, Site Director, Tel 376550.

### **Town Tour led by Maureen Brown - 25th June 2008**

Starting at 7pm from the Market Cross, this will include Leighton's historic High Street and Market Cross.

### **Heath and Reach Barn Bonanza - 6th September 2008**

We will have a stall at this event which starts at 4pm. We would appreciate help.

### **Films of Leighton Buzzard - Colin Holmes - 17th September 2008**

Colin will show films of life in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade in 1965. The films will include the canal, the sand industry and the cattle market.

### **"I've come about the drains" - Tony Rook - 8th October 2008**

An amusing talk about Roman Baths by the man who excavated, and preserved, the Welwyn bath house. He is the author of the Shire book on Roman bath houses.

### **Heath and Reach, what we know so far - 25th October 2008 at 2pm**

The venue for this afternoon is the Heath Barn. The Society will hold an audio-visual event presenting the results of our excavation and research into the history of the village.

### **Henry VIII, Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn - Vivienne Evans - 19th November 2008**

Vivienne will tell the story of Henry's first two Queens, their relationship with Henry and the momentous events which decided both their fates at Dunstable Priory in 1533.

### **Round up of the Year - 10th December 2008**

A celebration of the year. Members will present the results of our researches in 2008.

### **The History of Leighton Buzzard**

Paul Brown is writing this book on behalf of the Society. The final chapter will be about the 20th century and we would be interested to know if members have photographs of industries and events which we can consider including. In particular we are interested in photographs of events concerning the Great Train Robbery.

**All talks are at St Barnabas Church Hall, Waterloo Road, Linslade & start at 8pm unless otherwise advised. Everyone welcome. £2 for non-members**

**Hunters Garage**

*Pleased to support Local  
Activities*

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## **The Local Coprolite industry - 9th January 2008 – Barry Horne**

Barry told us about how he had become aware of this almost forgotten industry and how he met Bernard O'Connor, the World expert. He explained how this meeting had led to him identifying some of the fields in Buckinghamshire which were "coprolited". He showed how Earl Brownlow tried to conserve the countryside, and way of life, by the restrictions placed on the coproliters.

## **Archives – Bringing the past to life - 13th February 2008 – Sue Baxter**

Sue gave a fascinating talk about the records held at County Record Offices which can be used to investigate the history of a house and street. Particular reference was made to the houses, and the people who lived in them, in the area around Regent Street, Leighton Buzzard. A tantalising reference was made to a shooting at a school.

## **Fossil Mammals of the Ouzel Valley - 12th March 2008 - Andy Currant**

Andy told us about the fabulous fossil mammal finds made over a period of years at the Pitstone Quarries, Marsworth and a remarkable nineteenth century find of a mammoth skeleton at Leighton Buzzard, now in the University Museum of Natural History at Oxford. He brought along various fossil teeth for the audience to examine.

## **Adventures in Science and Art - 9th April 2008 - Prof Richard Hark. Followed by the AGM**

Dr Richard Hark's illuminating talk demonstrated how the apparently different disciplines of science and art come together both in the creation of works of art and in the detective work involved in authenticating them.

One might think that the beauty of a work of art lies in the artist's talent for putting paint on canvas or wielding a tool to create a figurine or statue but there is far more to it than that. The skill of the artist also lies in the chemical composition of pigments and alloys, the light effects of building up layers of paint, the melting points of the different metals involved in creating bronzes and a detailed knowledge of how to adjust the process if things start to go wrong.

Similarly, science plays its part in tracing the history of an item and detecting forgeries or alterations. Scientific analysis may show that a forger has used a pigment which was not available to the artist he is copying or x-rays might reveal earlier images beneath the layers of paint. Even carbon-dating can be used, as was seen in the recent tests on the Turin Shroud. The only limitation to the use of Science in Art appears to be that although science can suggest or sometimes prove a fake, it cannot as yet positively authenticate the real thing.

*We launched Transactions 2 and our colouring book.*

## **May Fayre Stall - 5th May 2008**

The pick-a-ticket stall raised the magnificent sum of £350.50 and we are extremely grateful to the members, and non-members, who supplied prizes and helped on the day.

## **Olney, the Cowper Museum & Historic Gardens - 14th May 2008 - Elizabeth Knight**

The May meeting of the Society was entertained by two speakers from the Cowper and Newton Museum at Olney in north Bucks. Mrs Elizabeth Knight, a trustee of the independent museum, took us through the sometimes difficult life of the poet William Cowper who lived from 1731 to 1800. For a key part of his adult life - between 1768 and 1786 -he lived in Olney with the radical preacher and curate of Olney John Newton, 1725-1807, ex-slave trader and best remembered today as the author of the hymn Amazing Grace. He became a leading campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade along with William Wilberforce. The house they shared overlooking Olney's market place is the home today of a great many objects associated with their lives.

Cowper was also a keen gardener and kept a number of pets including three hares. The second part of the talk by Elizabeth's husband took us round the restored garden, planted with many rare and old varieties of flowers and vegetables that would have been familiar to Cowper and Newton. Their summer house has also been restored and can be visited.

## **Chairman's Remarks**

We have maintained the high standard of talks with some first class speakers. The number of members, and non-members, attending has been encouragingly high. For winter 2008/9 we have tried to put together a varied programme to appeal to all tastes and I would urge you to come along to all the talks, even those not "up your street". You never know what you might learn.

Please note the change of venue.

We are grateful to Hunters Garage for sponsoring this Newsheet.

We are arranging excavations and other fieldwork during the summer so check with Bernard regarding the latest information.

Paul Brown is hard at work on the History of Leighton Buzzard which we hope will be launched in December. Further details nearer the date.

Finally I would like to thank all those who give so willingly of their time and talents to make LBD AHS the success it is. It is you, the members, who are the key to our success. Thank you for your support.

Barry (bhone@globalnet.co.uk)

(Hon Sec Bernard Jones, 01525 376550)