

# **Leighton Buzzard and District Archaeological and Historical Society (LBD AHS.org.uk)**

## **News Sheet 5 - August 2007**

### **Summer/Autumn 2007**

The Society will be running field activities at our site at Pond Meadow, Heath and Reach, and possibly at other sites. Finds from our excavations will be processed in the Heath Barn, which adjoins the Pond Meadow site, on 17th August from 10.00 until 13.00.

The provisional fieldwork dates for August are 5th, 9th, 11th, 22nd, 26th and 30th. Please contact Bernard Jones, Site Director, (376550) for details of places and activities.

### **Leighton Buzzard's Past in Pictures - 12th September 2007**

A profusely illustrated talk by Colin Holmes. Photographs from yesteryear showing the many different facets of the town.

### **Living History Day - All Saints Church - 13th October 2007**

The Society will once again have a stand in All Saints Church. The theme this year is Popular Pastimes and we plan to put on a display of photographs showing some of the popular pastimes enjoyed in the town in the past.

This is an appeal to members to dig out any old photos they have of local sporting events, clubs and societies outings, amateur dramatics, carol singing, the Boxing Day walk, maypole dancing, local bands, pub quizzes, Morris dancers, tossing the pancake, cinemas, dance halls, street parties etc. In fact anything that is not to do with work.

Please contact Maureen Brown (374050) if you have anything which may be suitable. We will copy and return original photographs.

### **Council for British Archaeology Day Conference**

**27th October 2007**

This Day Conference is being hosted by the Society on behalf of the Council for British Archaeology South Midlands Region. The full programme has not yet been finalised but one of the speakers is Evelyn Baker who will speak about the origins of the Royal Estate of Leighton Buzzard. Another speaker will talk about the Royal Forest of Rockingham in Northamptonshire. Terry Warburton will give a conducted tour of All Saints Church. There will be a small charge but it promises to be an extremely interesting day.

### **Workshop on Wills – Maureen Brown - 14th November 2007**

Wills can tell you so much more than just a person's family details. By looking at a whole set of wills for a parish you can build up a picture of the inter-connections between the various families, and how the village or town worked as a whole. Wills often list property (women's wills can be especially detailed) and occasionally they are accompanied by an inventory, giving a much more detailed list of belongings. This workshop will build on Joan Schneider's introduction to reading old handwriting and we will look at wills from both labourers and the gentry, from plague victims to parsons. Photocopies of wills from Linslade, Heath & Reach and Leighton Buzzard will be provided - and do bring along any family wills you have been struggling with.

## Round up of the year - 12th December 2007

This will be an evening for members to find out what the Society has been doing over the past twelve months. We will have reports from the Site Director and other members about the various activities of the Society.

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**All talks are at the Duncombe Drive Centre and start at 8pm.**

**All welcome. Non-members are £2.**

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### **5 Church Avenue**

With the permission of the owner, Christine Walter, the Society excavated the lawn of this property in the hope that the excavation would throw light on the early years of the town. This was based on the close proximity to the church.

In our 2 metre by 2 metre trench we found a surprisingly thick layer of top soil with finds dating, in the main, from the early 18th century. These included a coin of George II 1727 - 1760, sherds of Staffordshire scribble ware pottery dating from 1720 - 1740 and fragments of clay pipe bowl dating from 1690 - 1730.

The bedrock was a gingery sand. Right at the edge of our trench was a feature dug into the sand. To investigate this further we extended the trench by 0.5 metre. This revealed more of the feature but it was still going down at the edge of the extension. The finds from this feature were few in number and consisted of two pieces of medieval pottery and a piece of clay pipe stem. It was not possible to extend the trench further as we had run out of places to put the soil.

In an effort to trace the feature further we borrowed some ground penetrating radar equipment from Geomatrix Earth Sciences Ltd who very kindly provided it free of charge. We had never used this equipment before and it was a steep learning curve. Sadly we were not able to identify our feature on the display.

A full report on the excavation will appear in the next Transactions.

We are grateful to Christine for providing tea and delicious cake to the team as well as making her garden available.

### **Barn Bonanza - 7th July**

The Society had a stand at this event which took place on Pond Meadow where we showed finds and told people about our work. A number of copies of Transactions were sold.

### **Leighton Linlade Town Council Grant**

The Society is most grateful to the Town Council for its continued financial support which allows us to continue to spread the word.

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### **Chairman's Remarks**

The Society has been busy over the months since the last News Sheet with the excavation at 5 Church Avenue and further work on the Sandstone building survey and Sandpit survey. We have been surprised by the number of different sandpits and confused by the fact that some have more than one name. Further confusion results when a modern pit includes the area covered by a number of older pits.

It is heartening to see more members getting involved in research.

Don't forget to look at the website for the latest programme of events, copies of old News Sheets and publications.

Once again I would like to thank all those who give so willingly of their time and talents to make LBD AHS the success it is.

Please continue to support your Society by attending the events and spreading the word amongst friends, relatives and work colleagues. Please encourage them to become members.

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(Hon Sec Bernard Jones, 01525 376550)