

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

News Sheet 7 - January 2008

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

A story of fossils, fertiliser, farming, fortunes and failure. A fascinating story told by one involved in its unravelling. Some of the places involved were Billington, Slapton, Cheddington, Northall, Stanbridge and Ivinghoe.

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

An exploration of the variety of records held at County Record Offices with particular reference to the area around Regent Street, Leighton Buzzard

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

Andy will talk 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. When he was a young curator at the Natural History Museum in London back in the 1970s he came across a lady, Mrs Davis, in one of the galleries trying to identify some bones she had dug up near Marsworth, and he has been closely involved in the interpretation of the finds ever since. The site is unusual for a number of reasons and he hopes to explain the discoveries and their national importance at the meeting.

Workshop on Maps. Followed by the AGM - 9th April 2008

May Fayre Stall - 5th May 2008

This is a pick-a-ticket stall and we need prizes and helpers. Prizes can be anything that is new as long as it is not alcoholic and is worth more than 20p. Please help, this is our main fund raising event of the year.

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

Elizabeth Knight, a Trustee of the Cowper and Newton Museum, in the Market Place at Olney, Bucks, will give a slide show and talk to the Society on both the Museum and its historic garden. The poet William Cowper, 1731-1800, was the son of the rector of Great Berkhamstead. He was trained in the law but suffered depression for much of his life, spending time in private asylums. He came to live with John Newton, the Evangelical curate of Olney in 1767, and the museum is in the house that they shared with their pet hares. It also houses a collection of local history including Olney lace. Last year the museum acquired a fascinating new collection of letters, books, portraits and other relics of the poet, including two miniatures by William Blake. The lovely garden is planted in the style of the eighteenth century when Cowper and Newton lived there, and opens regularly in June for the National Gardens Scheme. Elizabeth is an informative

and amusing speaker who brings to life this famous friendship. It is hope to arrange a Society visit to the museum and garden in June.

All talks are at the Duncombe Drive Centre & start at 8pm. All welcome. Non-members are £2.

Pond Meadow

Fieldwork has now ended for the winter. Please contact Bernard Jones, Site Director, (376550) for details of forthcoming activities.

St Leonard's School visit - 10th October 2007

The weather was good and we hosted a visit from 38 children, parents and teachers from the school. All the activities, pot firing, finds identification, what will be left in 50 years, learning about the dig and finds drawing were enjoyed by those attending. The exploded pots were the stars.

Living History Day - Leighton Middle School, Church Square - 13th October 2007

Thanks to the sterling efforts of members we once again put on a show of old photographs to delight the public. The theme this year was Popular Pastimes and we are most grateful to members and members of the public for kindly loaning their precious photographs for this display.

Council for British Archaeology Day Conference - 27th October 2007

This Day Conference was hosted by the Society on behalf of the Council for British Archaeology South Midlands Region and was a great success.

Workshop on Wills – Maureen Brown - 14th November 2007

Once again Maureen gave the Society a fascinating talk. She showed a number of local wills and showed the wealth of information which they contained about the people who played a part in the district's history.

Round up of the year - 12th December 2007

This was a celebration of the Society's achievements over the past twelve months and of some of our plans for 2008. Bernard Jones told us about the field activities at Church Avenue and Pond Meadow while the Chairman told us about the geophysical survey activities. Pauline Hey gave details of our experimental pot firing activities and of our first school visit. The Chairman then told us about the Sandpit and Sandstone building surveys undertaken by the Society on behalf of the Greensand Trust before Paul Brown told members about our ambitious project to publish "The History of Leighton Buzzard" in collaboration with Phillimore. To cater for a younger generation we will be publishing a colouring book for children. The evening ended with coffee and mince pies served by Jill Jones.

Chairman's Remarks

Happy New Year.

Anyone who attended the Round up of the Year cannot fail to have been impressed by how much the Society achieved in its second year. By this time next year we hope "The History of Leighton Buzzard" and the colouring book for children will have been published. Bernard Jones has a number of potential fieldwork sites in mind so who knows what we will find this year.

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

Barry (bhorne@globalnet.co.uk)

(Hon Sec Bernard Jones, 01525 376550)