

A drone shot from Lossenham overlooking Rother Valley

Welcome to Issue 11 of the Lossenham Project newsletter, keeping you up to date with the latest news and any events you can get involved in.

An introduction



A Birds eye view of Trench 3

'Historia magistra vitae' (History is life's tutor)

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Seneca famously wrote 'Non vitae sed scholae discimus' - we learn not for life, but for school - a barb at sterile school learning with no practical application. Through the Lossenham Project, though, we are learning some very interesting things and are inclined to go with Cicero instead.

The last month has seen significant discoveries at the excavation of Lossenham Friary, of which more below, but other aspects of the Project are making good progress too. Now that the season is turning from outdoor activities to the indoors, we have a great calendar of events to look forward to, and word of the project is spreading internationally as well as locally. Please keep in touch, and let us know if you have any particular interests you would like to see covered by the Project.

*Åke Nilson, Chairman, The Janus Foundation
(chair@janusfoundation.org)*

Exploring Great Dixter

On one of our days off from the excavation, Maeve and I decided to visit Great Dixter House and Gardens and enjoy the last of the summer displays. Of course we paid the extra to go into the house - how could we not! - and managed to sweet-talk our way into the parlour room currently closed off to visitors due to covid restrictions.

In this room the volunteer guide was keen to point out some graffiti carved into the beams in the ceiling in 1595 by John Harrison, a tenant who had been living in the house since 1558 and who had been evicted when the house changed hands. I immediately recognised the name from one of the wills I had been transcribing from the parish of Northiam; that of William Harrison, father of John who had died at 'Dextacre' in 1560. John is mentioned in the will along with his mother Johan, his siblings, and other people living in the house and community. Once I have finished gathering the information I will share my findings with Great Dixter, and of course all of you!

No one knows what happened to John after he was evicted in 1595. Perhaps with a bit of detective work we might be able to trace where he went...watch this space!

I would like to extend my thanks to Jillian Eldridge from the Selmes Field Meadow Restoration Project who very kindly loaned me a space under her gazebo when it rained at the Newenden Family Fun Day. We were able to bring some of the latest finds from the excavation and Maeve was invited to judge the dog show - we had a lovely time meeting you all (and your dogs!) so thank you for inviting us to attend.

*Annie Partridge
Project Archeology Director*



Maeve enjoying the sunshine (Great Dixter Gardens)



Annie also enjoying the sunshine (Great Dixter Gardens)



Annie not quite enjoying the weather as much! (Newenden Fun Day 2021)

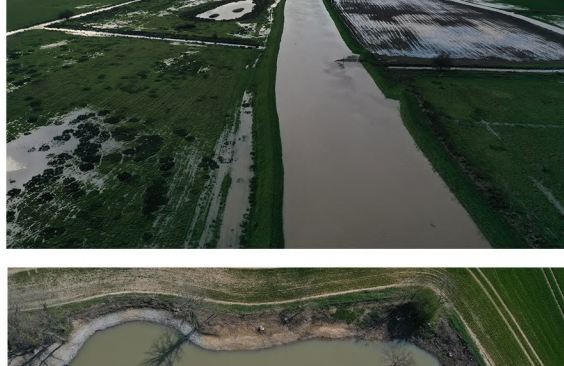
Sound recordings in the field at Lossenham

Acoustic ecology, ecoacoustics, or the sonification of landscape are all terms for a growing field in the worlds of art and ecological science. They have entered many unusual realms such as the creation of historical soundscapes and the mysterious subject of psychosonography.

For me, gathering sound recordings in the field at Lossenham has so far been a summer pursuit which I hope will continue over these months of changing weather. Although Lossenham is a relatively quiet place, it is quite amazing the way the slightest sound of machinery, hardly discernible by the ear, becomes audible in a recording, often altering the quality of what one is aiming to capture. During times of farm activity I have found that windy days are ideal as the movements of nature are amplified by the flow of air through dry reeds or leafy trees. I have also had success with focused rifle mics and my hydrophone underwater.

I am looking to create a series of meditative pieces that evoke certain atmospheres I have encountered throughout the landscape. I am hoping the wetter months will yield some interesting sounds on the wetlands such as rain on ground and marsh frogs in the early spring. Some of these field recordings are destined to become sound paintings, mixed with lengthy tones or drones and paired with fairly minimal instrumentation. Several musicians are due to collaborate with me as well as one expert in Early Medieval landscapes, to explore incorporating spoken word in Old English.

*Russell Groves Burden
Artist in Residence*



Archaeological Update

Building 1 at Lossenham Friary

We have now completed recording for this year in the trenches on the site of Lossenham Friary. The plan next Spring is to expand Trench 1 to further expose the building (Building 1) that it had revealed. It now seems likely that this large structure, with thick buttressed walls of sandstone, which runs along the south side of the cloister, is in fact the Priory church of St Mary. Although churches were usually (but not always) positioned to the north of the cloister range, the discovery of several graves immediately south of, and parallel to, Building 1, strongly suggests that this is the church. Situating the church to the south of the cloister range meant there would have been an unobstructed view of it across a wide area, and it seems likely this was the intention. Next year, we aim to reveal much more of this important structure.

Glazed Floor Tiles

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the glazed floor tiles that we had been finding at the Friary. I noted that although we had several types, all were plain, and that we had not yet discovered any decorated examples. No sooner had last month's newsletter appeared, than we found several fragments of decorated floor tiles were unearthed. All are incomplete, but none seem to match designs known from the Carmelite Friary at Aylesford. Clearly, however, Lossenham was sufficiently wealthy to have been provided with a floor or floors of decorated tiles; we look forward to finding more examples as the excavation of the site progresses.

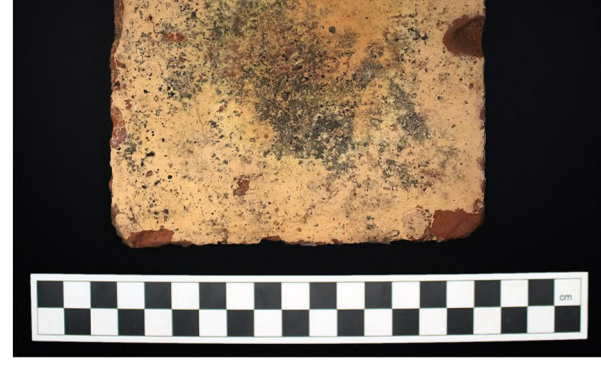
This is an abbreviated contribution - Read the full article on the Project Blog at <https://lossenham.org.uk/blog/2021/10/11/archaeological-update/>

*Andrew Richardson
Project Archeology Director*



Overview of all 4 Trenches

Other finds



Glazed floor tile - approximately 13cm



Silver penny of Alexander III of Scotland, AD 1280-6

Lossenham Project Archives update

The archives for the Lossenham Project may be at an embryonic stage, but I take this opportunity to update the community of the latest publications to the archive & book library.

The latest additions focus on the Hanseatic League and medieval trade across Northern Europe. The German Hanse was the most successful and most far-flung trade association that existed in medieval and early-modern Europe.

Another welcome addition over the summer was the purchase of the Kent History Project series, commissioned by Kent County Council (1989). The series is comprised of eight publications covering the whole of Kent from its earliest age to the present day. The final volume in the series, edited by Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh, is entitled 'Early Medieval Kent, 800-1220'. The essays collected in this publication provide insights into a range of topics of importance in the history of Kent during this period.

The archive also covers a wide range of topics for Lossenham Project, whether on archaeology, history, ecology or environment, through to spiritual and cultural references. For example, I recently discovered an article by Mary Adams, History of the Demense Farm at Appledore From Contemporary Building Records. This case study revealed building practice, and the role of the serjeant, to obtain a picture of the buildings making up the farm complex and the sourcing of building material across the landscape along the Rother. Such articles are of interest as they open up possibility for further investigation of local trade.

The Lossenham Project archive can be accessed by community members. If you have a research topic or request for information on a Kent history based topic, contact Jason on archivist@janusfoundation.org

Should you wish to visit the archive/ library, please email Jason in advance.

This is an abbreviated contribution by Jason Mazzocchi - Read the full article on the Project Blog at <https://lossenham.org.uk/blog/2021/10/11/lossenham-project-archives-update/>

Project definitions

Carmelite: Not very serious fate

Mendicant: No good at repairs

CIC: Life near Canterbury

Castle Toll: Sightseeing fatigue

Inspect: Small village with 16 pubs

Lossenham: Cannot find your sandwich

Northiam: A member of "One Direction"

Winchelsea: Export

Prior: Mediaeval voyeur

Friar: Mediaeval chippy

Upcoming Events - Dates for the Diary!

November 2021
3rd, 4th, 5th: Excavate small test pits to investigate the geophysics results outside the friary. Test pits are small exploratory holes for evaluation only and will dig and backfilled over the three days. This will involve heavy work and there will be no light duties this time. Email Annie at annie@lossenham.org.uk to express an interest.

19th: Metal detecting on the reed bed fields, and the Friary field. If you are interested, please contact Andrew Richardson andrew@lossenham.org.uk

23rd (evening; time and venue TBC): Public presentation in the village on the recent archaeological discoveries. No need to sign up.

December 2021
Monday 6th to Wednesday 8th: Excavate small test pits to investigate the geophysics results outside the friary. Test pits are small exploratory holes for evaluation only and will dig and backfilled over the three days. This will involve heavy work and there will be no light duties this time. Email Annie at annie@lossenham.org.uk to express an interest.

Thursday 9th to Sunday 12th: field walking plus further metal detecting on arable fields on Lossenham Priory Farm. To sign-up please contact Andrew Richardson andrew@lossenham.org.uk

January 2022
17th, 18th, 19th: Finds work at Lossenham Farm. This will include washing, bagging, and sorting the priority from the 2021 excavation before starting the 2022 season. Email Annie at annie@lossenham.org.uk to express an interest.

February 2022
Further finds work, dates tbc

March 2022
Friday 25th to Sunday 27th: Stripping and excavating a section of the site to allow for the spoil heap. Volunteers needed to help excavate and record any features that come up. Email Annie at annie@lossenham.org.uk to express an interest.

April 2022
Wednesday 20th to Sunday 24th: The second season of excavation starts! Email Annie at annie@lossenham.org.uk to express an interest.

You can find Annie's Dig Diary for this month on the Lossenham Project website.