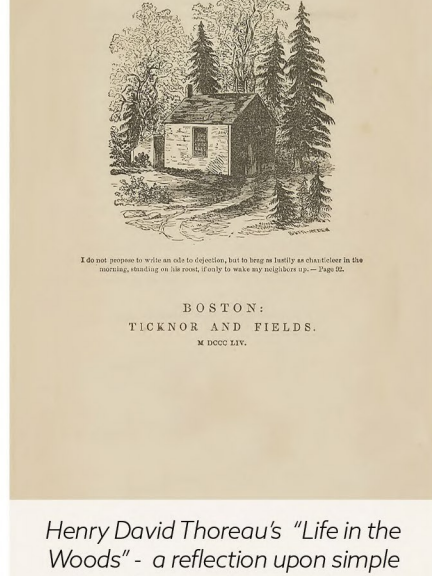


Drone shot overlooking Hexden Valley

Welcome to Issue 12 of the Lossenham Project newsletter, keeping you up to date with the latest news and any events you can get involved in.

An introduction



Henry David Thoreau's "Life in the Woods" - a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings

"When I hear music, I fear no danger. I am invulnerable. I see no foe. I am related to the earliest of times, and to the latest."

Henry David Thoreau

The role of the arts within the Lossenham Project is important. Landscapes and locations inspire creation, as Thoreau was keen to argue, not least in Walden, his perhaps best known work, describing his two years living with nature at Walden Pond. We are fortunate within the project to have two artists working with us, and in this issue, we present Paul Cheneour, the renowned flautist, in addition to regular updates from our other areas of interest.

Walden Pond is in Concord, Mass. and it was there Louisa May Alcott wrote her best known work, Little Women. But before that, at the time of Thoreau's death in 1862, she wrote an elegiac poem called Thoreau's Flute. What inspired connections will the Wealden location Lossenham bring forward, I wonder?

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

Introducing Paul Cheneour

For the 2021/22 year, our visiting artist is Paul Cheneour, a flautist and composer. He trained at the Guildhall School of Music and, in the 50 years since then, has produced 58 albums, five major films and many videos and documentaries. After returning from a séjour in Mexico (on the border with the US) in 2005, he has played with various bands and artists, as well as performing as a soloist.



Paul photographed at Lossenham

Paul says that "Listen, observe, feel and do, are the four key elements for me as a player/composer. With those fundamental elements in mind, I find the means to express myself." He is looking forward to presenting live performances utilising the in-house outdoor staging facilities both at the farm location and elsewhere, with various ensembles he works with, such as the Dragonfly project and The Zen Bicycle Band, as well as new collaborations with invited musicians, relating to the Lossenham project.

Having been a flute teacher and workshop facilitator for many years he is also hoping to be actively involved in mentoring students with instrumental learning, recording production, ensemble playing, spontaneous composition and performance coaching, both live and recording.

A final word: "To stand outside the whirlpool of influences and observe what we are doing, with awareness, is difficult, however, it must be remembered that we create our own storms by the choices we make."

Paul Cheneour (Visiting Artist)

Find out more about Paul on his website <https://cheneour.com/>

Making places, making lives: Landscape and settlement in coastal wetlands.

This conference was held from 9th-12th October in Holland. It's an annual gathering of academics who specialise in the study of the first millennium AD in northern Europe, known as the Internationales Sachsensymposium. There is usually a strong British contingent, but this year I was the only English person present, due to the uncertainty over international travel arrangements.



This year's symposium was very relevant for our Lossenham Project work and the study of the Rother valley and levels. Like the Rother valley and Romney Marsh, North Holland is an extremely dynamic landscape, whose geography and history has been dominated by changes in sea level, climate, and river courses. 'Millennia of coastal dynamics: A new series of palaeo-geographical maps of the province of North Holland', a paper by Peter Vos and Rob van Erden, was of particular interest. This showcased a series of new maps reconstructing the complex changes in the coastline and islands of North Holland over three millennia. I hope that in due course our own work on the Lossenham project will allow us to refine the maps we can present of the Rother Valley and its relationship with the marshes and coastline.

The new Dutch maps do not show a simple progression of land reclamation over time. Rather, the picture is much more complex, with areas becoming inundated, or becoming dry, in response to various environmental changes. In particular, the map for the thirteenth century showed many newly inundated areas, apparently due to great storms breaching coastal sand dunes and other defences. This is also what happened in our region from the mid-1200s onwards, culminating in the total destruction of Old Winchelsea in 1287. It was a reminder that what happens on the other side of the Channel is inextricably connected to Britain's past. That is what makes international networks such as the Sachsensymposium just as important and valuable as they ever were to understanding our shared European heritage.

This is a summary of an article by Andrew Richardson. Read the full text at <https://lossenham.org.uk/blog/2021/11/08/a-report-from-the-72nd-sachsensymposium/>

Newenden in 1573

In 1573, some 25 years after the suppression of the Friary at Lossenham, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury 1559-75, ordered a visitation of the Kent parishes in the diocese. These covered not only the condition of the church but, in a number of cases, details of the clergy and the 'carrying on' of the parishioners.

It was found that the Steeple was in need of repairs, as was the parsonage barn. Ordinary sermons were not held and nobody could be found to preach. There were also various comments on parishioners, including a report that John a Rye was living apart from his wife and a certain Isaac Pelham had kept "suspicious rule" with one Anne Stone being kept in his house...

St Peter's Church was clearly having problems with the steeple, long before those referred to in Newsletter 5. That it was referred to as a steeple, rather than a tower, also suggests that alterations had been made to the structure prior to its collapse in or about 1693.

The John a Rye reported as living apart from his wife is almost certainly the same troublesome person identified by Åke in "Essays on Early Newenden". That John a Rye was a Lighterman, no doubt working, perhaps owning, boats on the Rother also helps to explain why he is mentioned as 'active' at various places along the river between Newenden and Rye.

This is a summary of an article by Alan Tyler. Read the full text at <https://lossenham.org.uk/blog/2021/11/08/newenden-in-1573/>

More Pollinators Please!

At Lossenham Priory Farm we are pleased to report that we have significantly modified the cropping plan across the farm for 2022. The planted fields now provide substantial areas for wildlife across the farm, both in the core and through connective corridors.

In the last few weeks some 47 acres of arable land has been seeded with a nectar-rich wildflower mix of native flowering species. Connecting these core areas for wildlife, we are also creating wildflower-rich margins along field boundaries, dramatically enhancing hedgerow and ditch corridors.

Elsewhere on the farm some areas will be left fallow for 2022, again to the benefit of native arable weeds and associated invertebrates. The remaining areas have been sown with wheat, barley and oats.

Through less intensive management of the farm we hope to create and enhance habitats for wildlife, which in turn will support and perhaps increase key species groups in the environment. We keenly await the fields in bloom next spring and summer; a riot of colour and humming with insects! We will be monitoring the results and will provide an update next year.

Simon Weymouth

Red clover - one of the species to be seeded at Lossenham



Archive News

Lossenham Project - Wills Group Archive

The Wills group held a face-to-face meeting in October, led by Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh. She has regularly blogged on the progress of the Wills group, and gathering information from the wills is only the first part of the process. This project wants to use the wills to gain a better understanding of Lossenham Priory, Newenden and the parishes around. A summary of individual presentations can be found via her blog post: <https://blogs.canterbury.ac.uk/kenthistory/maritime-kent-festival-lectures-and-lossenham-wills-group-more-riches/>

Archive Visits

Karen Brayshaw, Special Collections and Archives Manager at the University of Kent invited me to visit the impressive archives at the Canterbury campus of the University of Kent, to look at 16th century maps of Kent which are yet to be catalogued.

This is a service which can be used by our community for research purposes. The collection contains a Kent history catalogue of publications. Details of the collections are available on line, as is the guidance of how you can visit the Special Collections at the Templeman Library, see <https://archive.kent.ac.uk>

Newenden Census Surveyed

At the last Lossenham Project History Group meeting, Alan Tyler kindly presented a summary of his work on the census materials for Newenden from 1841 to 1911 and the 1939 register. Alan has all the downloaded records and his analysis has been archived as resource for the Lossenham Project, and are available upon request from the archive.

Book Library Update

There have been a number of new additions to the book library.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with suggestions for the archives, or with any questions you may have.

This is a summary of a longer article by Jason Mazzocchi. For the full text, see <https://lossenham.org.uk/blog/2021/11/08/archive-news---november-2021/>

Online workshop - church court depositions

Following on from the successful Lossenham History Group workshops last winter, there will be an online workshop (Zoom) to explore what Elizabethan church court depositions can add to our study of the social history of the area on Tuesday 14 December at 7pm. Drawing on the work of Dr Paula Simpson, an expert on tithe disputes in the Canterbury diocese, we will look at what these records look like, how they came about and then start to think what they can tell us about farming practices in this transitional region of marshland and woodland.

Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh
(Principal Research Fellow)



15th-century hay-making, depicted in an English stained glass window.

Upcoming Events - Dates for the Diary!

November 2021
15th: Metal detecting on the reed bed fields, and the Friary field. If you are interested, please contact Andrew Richardson andrew@lossenham.org.uk
23rd (18:30): Presentation in the village church on the recent archaeological discoveries. No need to sign-up.

December 2021
Monday December 6th - Sunday 12th: Test pitting, metal detecting, and field walking surveys. 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
Tuesday 14th December at 7pm: Sheila's event: Online workshop on Zoom: Elizabethan church court depositions. To sign-up please email Annie - annie@lossenham.org.uk

January 2022
17th, 18th, 19th: Finds work at Lossenham Farm. This will include washing, bagging, and sorting the finds 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.