



A drone shot of the Lower Pond

Welcome to Issue 14 of the Lossenham Project newsletter, keeping you up to date with the latest news and any events you can get involved in.

An introduction

*"... like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific - and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise -
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."*

(John Keats)

For this first newsletter of 2022, we are going long on the poetry, hoping to inspire you to great deeds, literary and otherwise, in this New Year. The start of something new always fills me with wild surmise but with all the potential of the Lossenham Project in the coming season, we are surely entitled to a fair dose of surmise right now? Anyway, the Keats lines above should also remind you of the need to get your historical facts right, even in immortal verse - for he got something quite wrong here. If you spot it, send me a quick mail at chair@janusfoundation.org, but don't be too hard on the poet!

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



First European to see the Pacific Ocean

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

(William Butler Yeats)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

*Contributed by Russell Burden,
(Artist in Residence)*



New offices for Isle Heritage CIC



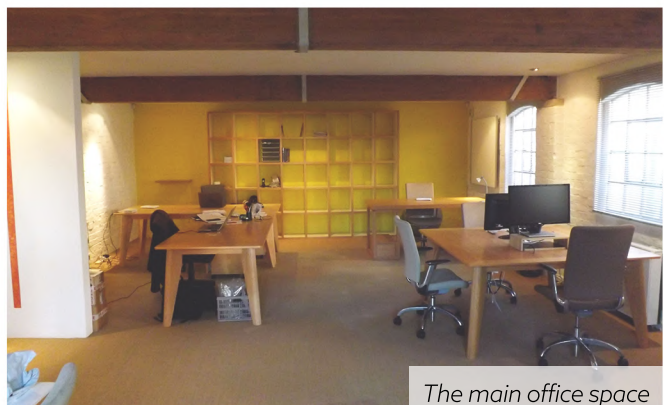
Andrew outside the new offices

Recently formed, Isle Heritage CIC is a non-profit company set up to be the corporate operating entity for the Lossenham Project, at least with regard to its archaeological activities, but also to carry out other archaeological projects, building on the skills and experience of its members: Andrew Richardson, Annie Partridge, Paul-Samual Armour and Jason Mazzocchi, all well known to regular readers of this newsletter.

The company has now found its permanent home in Sandgate, a village now part of Folkestone but which had its own District Council between 1894 and 1934, during which period it was the home of H.G. Wells and also saw the birth of Hattie Jacques – perhaps its previous greatest claims to fame. Isle Heritage's new offices can be found in a Victorian industrial building just off the High Street (and within minutes of the beach), which at one stage served as the headquarters for Sandgate's council workers, storing tools and materials for maintaining the sea wall, streets and other town assets.

The well-appointed offices include working and storage space for the company, with room for expanding activities, as well as a lean-to outbuilding suitable for cleaning finds and other non-office work, together with meeting rooms and other facilities. In short, the perfect location for the new company, which was made available through the good offices of Russell Burden, the Project's Artist in Residence.

Less than an hour's drive from Lossenham, the premises will develop into the administrative centre for the Project's archaeology work, so you may expect more updates from Sandgate as the company and its members settle in to their new facilities. The address is The Yard, 4 North Lane, Sandgate CT20 3AS and Andrew and his colleagues will be sure to welcome visits once they are fully up and running.



The main office space

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



From Twelfth Night

(William Shakespeare)

When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came, alas! to wive,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came unto my beds,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,
For the rain it raineth every day.

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.

*Contributed by Jason Mazzocchi
(Project Archivist)*

Janus

As you may know, the Lossenham Project is funded by a charity called the Janus Foundation, taking its name after a Roman god usually depicted with two faces. In Roman mythology, New Year's Day was sacred to Janus and it is also generally thought that the month of January is named after him. So this month's newsletter might be a suitable occasion for a short article on Janus himself.

Unusually for a Roman deity, there is no Greek equivalent to Janus and indeed, there seems to be no direct equivalent in any mythology. The Romans were proud that he was exclusively their own god and, although modern attempts have been made to find parallels elsewhere, they are not terribly convincing. Indeed, not much is certain about the origins or cult of Janus – he had no dedicated priest in Roman society and almost every aspect of the worship and manifestations of Janus are the subject of dispute between modern scholars.

Janus is the god of beginnings, doors, thresholds and transitions. He was also the god of new ventures and the ancient tradition held that he was the first to mint coins. In Rome, the most visible manifestation of Janus was his gates, at either end of a building between the old and the new Forum. These gates were open when Rome was at war, and closed when the state was at peace – being in charge of transitions, he was the god of the declaration of war as well as the making of peace. As the kingdom, republic and later empire grew, it was almost constantly at war somewhere and so seeing the gates closed must have been a rare occasion. Emperor Augustus claimed that they had only ever been closed twice before his reign, but he was happy that, during his time, the Senate declared the gates should be shut on no less than three occasions.

As the god of transitions, Janus also had a role in rites of passage, as well as of marginal spaces – boundaries between different types of land, for example, which again makes him an appropriate symbol for Lossenham, at the border between the Weald and the Marshes, and between Kent and Sussex. For the Foundation, he symbolises looking back to draw lessons from the past and applying them for a better future – something that feels very relevant this New Year!

God Knows

(Minnie Louise Haskins)

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown".
And he replied:
"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way".
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the
night.
And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone
East.

*So heart be still:
What need our little life
Our human life to know,
If God hath comprehension?*

*God knows. His will
Is best. The stretch of years
Which wind ahead, so dim
To our imperfect vision,
Are clear to God. Our fears
Are premature; In Him,
All time hath full provision.*

*Then rest: until
God moves to lift the veil
From our impatient eyes,
When, as the sweeter features
Of Life's stern face we hail,
Fair beyond all surmise
God's thought around His creatures
Our mind shall fill.*



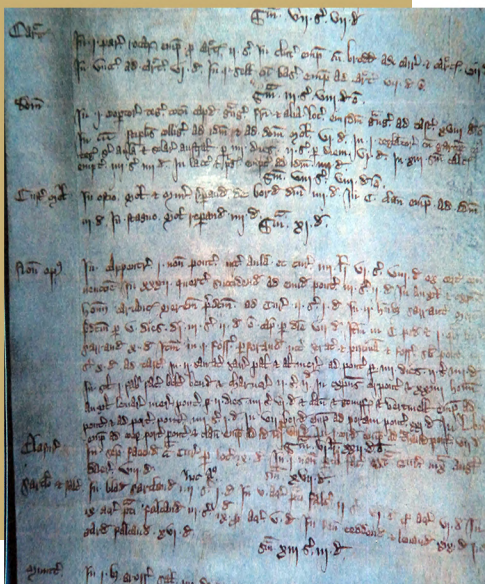
Contributed by Christopher Maclean

Introducing Bedels' Rolls

For those interested in medieval farming and land use, bedels' rolls offer fascinating insights into how manorial lords organised their agrarian estates - the sorts of crops they grew, which livestock were kept and why, the types of farm buildings and what was spent on maintaining them, who did the work and what were they paid, as well as matters concerning ditches, walls and other defences against the sea. These records survive from the 13th century onwards, although often becoming less detailed in the later Middle Ages due to changes in landlord policy from direct farming to the leasing of manorial lands.

Even though the bedels' rolls for Canterbury Christ Church Priory's manor of Ebony cover lands to the east of Lossenham at Oxney, they do offer ideas about farming practices in the area of the Rother Levels, especially during periods such as the 'Great Storms' of the late 13th century and the 'Great Famine' of the early 14th century. In this online workshop, we will look at one of these Ebony bedels' rolls to see how it is arranged and what was happening on the manor that year to introduce the potential of such primary sources.

The online workshop on Tuesday 15 February on Zoom at 7pm will be led by Sheila Sweetinburgh and if you would like to join, please contact Annie Partridge at annie@lossenham.org.uk



Upcoming Events - Dates for the Diary!

January 2022

Tuesday 18th at 7pm: Routeways of the High Weald - with Brendan Chester-Kadwell (please email annie@lossenham.org.uk to receive a link to join via zoom).

February 2022

Tuesday 15th: Introducing Bedels' Rolls - with Sheila Sweetinburgh (please email annie@lossenham.org.uk to receive a link to join via zoom).

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.