



# Lossenham Project Newsletter

ISSUE 18



## Introduction

This poem has always been a favourite of mine – these are just four lines of a happy and sun-blessed verse – it also references a river and its towpath, though a rather larger one than the Rother. Apollinaire really was a major character of the early 20th century – he is believed to have invented the term “Cubism” for the works of his painter friends, as well as “Surrealism”, which richly applies to his own works. Having survived WWI, he died in the Spanish flu, just 38 years old.

Lots to read and look at in this issue, including a new monthly feature on the progress of our village cricket team. Watch out for the post-pandemic revival of artistic performances at Lossenham – more details soon.

*Or des vergers fleuris se figeaient en arrière  
Les pétales tombés des cerisiers de mai  
Sont les ongles de celle que j'ai tant aimée  
Les pétales fleuris sont comme ses paupières*

*(Now the orchards blossom late with ice  
The fallen petals of May's cherry trees  
Are fingernails of her, my heart's one ease  
The flow'ed petals like the lids upon her eyes...)*

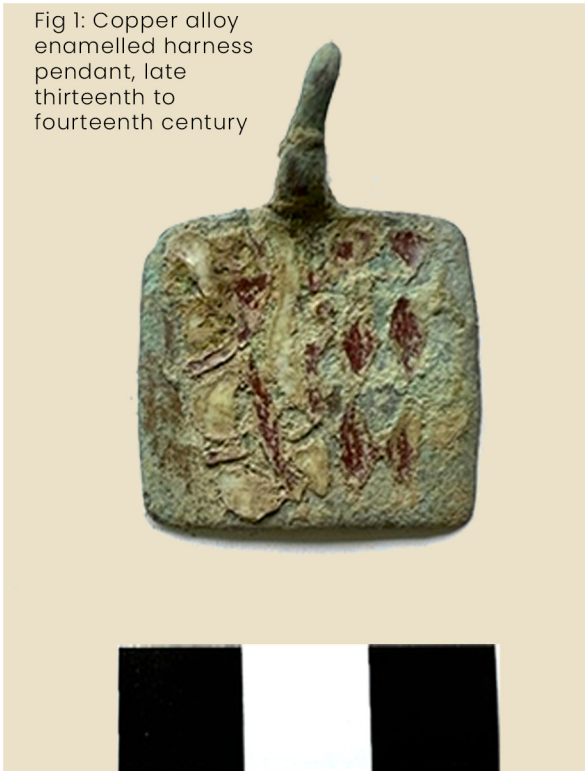
*From Mai, by Guillaume Apollinaire  
(my translation – apologies)*



## New Discoveries at Lossenham Priory

As I write this in late April, we are just concluding several days of further fieldwork on the site of Lossenham Priory. This follows our return to the site in March, when we opened a large new trench (Trench 5) immediately to the west of the Priory itself. This is an area, devoid of buildings, where we intend to put the spoil heap that our excavation of the priory complex will generate over the coming seasons.

Fig 1: Copper alloy enamelled harness pendant, late thirteenth to fourteenth century



Before we did this, we wanted to characterise and record any archaeological features present in this area. Sure enough, several were found. These included a metallised surface, probably a yard or working surface that may be associated with the western range of the priory, although it is also possible it is of slightly later date. To the south and downhill of this was an area of demolition deposits and pits/ditches, apparently of late medieval date, bounded to the south by an east-west ditch, again probably of medieval date. All these features are likely to be associated with the priory or its subsequent life as a residence. One feature, a ditch or pit, produced an important find; a copper alloy enamelled pendant (Fig.1). This is a harness pendant bearing an enamelled heraldic device. Such pendants date from the reign of Edward I and were popular throughout the 14th century. It is possible that further research may enable us to identify who the arms were attributed to.

On the east side of the priory complex, work has continued on Trench 4, which has remained open since last year. Here we have identified a ceramic water pipe, a large ditch, and a chalk-capped feature which turned out to be a medieval cesspit. The latter has produced many finds, including a complete copper alloy thimble of the fifteenth century (Fig. 2).

At the end of March, we were visited by Luke Barber, who looked at all the pottery recovered from the site so far. This revealed that we had a range of medieval pottery, mostly produced locally at Rye, but with a number of finds of German and French stoneware dating to after 1475. Luke's visit also threw up two major surprises. One was that the ceramic water pipe in Trench 4, which we had presumed to be a



Fig 2: Copper alloy thimble, fifteenth century

post-medieval field drain, was in fact of late medieval (AD 1475-1550) date, and also a product of the Rye industry. Further work to follow its course and determine its origin and destination will now take place.

The second surprise was that the assemblage included small amounts of Late Iron Age to early Roman (circa 50 BC to AD 100) grog-tempered pottery, including some from features in trenches 1 and 5 that did not contain later material. It would appear that the site of the medieval priory occupies the site of a much earlier settlement. This adds a new dimension to the site, and to our understanding of Lossenham, and so we shall look out for more evidence of what may be a small native farmstead.



For those readers interested in the finds, we have a workshop with David Dungworth, a specialist on ancient metalworking, on Monday 9th May. David will be looking at the samples of iron working byproducts and residues, including slag, that we have recovered at Lossenham so far. Anyone wishing to join us for this workshop should contact Annie Partridge. This is just the first of many workshops with leading finds specialists that we will be running. If you'd like to take part, or sign up as a finds volunteer, please let Annie know.

**Andrew Richardson**  
*Project Archeology Director*



# Update from Visiting Artist Paul Cheneour

I have invited four gifted musicians to help me realize my musical concept. They will become familiar with the Lossenham landscape and the historic Carmelite presence during the four-day recording session.

We will be recording a full-length album:

'Drink Only, from the Fountain of Light'

With instrumentation:

1. Oboe/Cor Anglais – Maureen Wolloshin
2. Violin – Izolda Reeder
3. Viola – Benedict Taylor
4. Double Bass – David Leahy
5. Flutes – Paul Cheneour

The sonic landscape I am hoping to achieve for this album will be like a classic wind and strings chamber ensemble but with a twist, as it will involve, not only technical prowess, but also the creative and compositional abilities of each player, playing spontaneously in the vein of: Listen, Observe, Feel and Do.

The process of obtaining confirmation from the musicians chosen for the recording project from 11th-14th July at Lossenham has not been easy, however, with the final confirmation around the corner, I feel it will be a great ensemble and the work will be stunning. Daily recording sessions will start at 11am-15.00pm (4hrs) allowing time for the players to soak in the Lossenham atmosphere which will inform the music being created. Russell Burden will provide the artwork for the album which will be available in CD format. In addition, we will also create, for a later exhibition, two short stand-alone collaborative audio-visual pieces using Russell's graphic scores and sonic drones with myself on Flutes and David Leahy on Double Bass.

**Paul Cheneour**  
(Visiting artist Oct 21-Oct 22)





# The Oxus Foundation – Janus' sibling

Far grander than the Rother, the mighty River Oxus (that's the classical Latin name for what is now called the Amu Darya) does share certain characteristics in that whereas the Rother might be seen as the border between Kent and Sussex, in ancient times the Oxus was viewed as the boundary between Greater Iran and 'Turan' (central Asia).

With this background, the Oxus Foundation is in the process of being established as a similar charitable foundation to Janus – Janus funds archaeological projects, Oxus will fund historical ones, that is those which involve documentary research in some form. This means Oxus will prioritise projects that are focused on the history

of Kent and its people, and, again like Janus, this foundation will solicit applications for funding for projects that meet its aims. Such a proactive approach will allow the foundation to include projects within its portfolio that support and encourage understanding and appreciation of the county's social and cultural history and heritage among people of all ages.

Kent has a rich tradition of local and regional history through its many local societies, its regional organisations, now principally the Kent Archaeological Society, and its universities, especially the Centre for Kent History and Heritage at Canterbury Christ Church. Consequently, Oxus has been able to draw together a group of trustees who have strong links to these various constituencies, as well as several being active practitioners in the researching and writing of Kent history. This means going forward Lossenham and other projects will be able to benefit from this holistic approach to funding.



*Sheila Sweetinburgh*  
Principal Research Fellow







# Newenden Cricket Club

Newenden Cricket Club have started the season with a bang. A very healthy crowd were treated to a pulsating season opener on Good Friday, as the Over 25s were victorious against the Under 25s, which takes the series to 2-1 in favour of the old boys. We then followed that up with an emphatic win over our noisy neighbours Northiam on Sunday, which also included a splendid tea provided by Ian Jones, which was our first since 2019.



The club experienced a first on Sunday as the Telegraph sent down a photographer to cover the match, the images will accompany an article they are writing on the club, which is due out in May.

Our league campaign begins on May 8th as we pursue a third consecutive promotion. We are now in Division Two but definitely have aspirations of making it to the promised land of the top division. All our results and reports can be found on the club website <https://www.newendencecc.co.uk>

*Phil Morris*

*League Captain*







# Annie's Dig Diary

## April 20: day forty-two

Today was our first day back on site since we left at the end of March. There has been no rain so all that exposed clay is well and truly baked now. The sun is shining but there is a chill in the wind reminding us that summer is not here just yet!

Our original plan was to get the machine back in and open more of Trench 1 (the building that is possibly a church or possibly a refectory), but we did not finish Trench 5, which was due to become our spoil heap, last time so we had to continue with that.



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## April 21: day forty-three

The team are doing a sterling job at excavating the tough ground. Features in Trench 5 are taking shape. One of the main features is a courtyard surface, that went through a number of interpretations, but seems to be no more complicated than a much repaired trackway; repairs being made with broken tile, animal bone, cobbles, and other...well, rubbish. The volunteers working on this feature have done an excellent job in seriously hard conditions. Further down the trench the team are working on a few enigmatic features which will hopefully become clear over the weekend.





# April 22: day forty-four



Mick and Roy have removed the upper fill of the enigmatic grave feature in Trench 4 - although we need to stop calling it that because it is decidedly not a grave. We've been debating the function of this feature for a few days now and all of us have drawn a blank. It is a oval shaped pit with a chalk lining on top of a puddled clay fill. It is too large to be a post-hole, too small to be a grave (and suspiciously empty of people), and too much of a funny construction to be for water storage. If you want to see the feature in 3D then follow this link to see it in SketchFab: <https://skfb.ly/o9Hsy> The backfill has produced decorated floor tile, a lovely thimble from the 15th century, animal bone showing signs of butchery, an early example of a brick, and the ever present peg tile. Hopefully as they excavate the remaining fills of this feature it shall all become clear.

This was the day we had our volunteer thank you BBQ, although perhaps it was a mistake to have it on a day when a cold wind was blowing from the East. Andrew updated everyone on some of our star finds, and Maeve talked us through some of the animal bones she has been studying - so far mainly pigs and cows but she's only just started!

# April 23: day forty-five

Well it is safe to say we got to the bottom of our Trench 4 pit mystery, both physically and with our understanding of it. It is a cess pit! The chalk, which we thought was a lining, is actually a capping layer that has slumped into the pit as the cess has compacted over time. Cess pits are an archaeologists dream because all that soft matter helps protect and preserve anything that lands in there - and these pits were used to dump general rubbish as well as the normal cess.

So far we have had animal bone, metal finds, and a glass vessel! This one was quite small, definitely not one that was used for the lifespan of the Priory, suggesting there could be more of these

In Trench 5 the volunteers and Isle Heritage team are battling with some enigmatic geology which is not helped by a layer of mixed soil covering the site and hiding the features. One freshly found feature has produced an absolutely stunning copper alloy heraldic harness pendant (from a horse harness) with a lovely enamelled decoration featuring red chevrons against a white background. We will be sending this off for further conservation but what a lovely find!



# April 24: day forty-six

It was our last volunteer day today and I can safely say we were certainly all feeling the last week of work. Trench 5 was finished as much as it can be for now with the northern and southern parts of the trench completed, but there is a short section in the centre that will need to be revisited again.

Trench 4 was given a good clean before being soaked with the hose and put under tarp until we revisit in May. There are definitely more features in here, ranging from possible pits or post-holes (maybe even more cesspits?), and of course the large ditch which is now looking quite interesting with multiple fills and some depth to it!

All in all a productive week with lots achieved - and as always more questions than answers!



Working in Trench 4

## Dates for the Diary

### May 2022

Monday 9th to Sunday 15th: Excavation at Lossenham Priory

### June 2022

Saturday 4th: Newenden Platinum Jubilee Event, Newenden Cricket Ground (volunteers to assist with the stand much appreciated)

Tuesday 7th to Sunday 12th: Excavation site TBC

### July 2022

Monday 18th to Sunday 31st: Excavation site TBC

### August 2022

Wednesday 10th, Thursday 11th, Friday 19th, Sunday 21st, Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th: Excavation site TBC

Saturday 20th (TBC): Newenden Family Fun Day, Newenden Cricket Ground (volunteers to assist the stand much appreciated)