



# LYMINGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Spring Newsletter 2021

With Spring in the air and the Covid lockdown easing, there is much more optimism about the future, being in the garden, getting out and about and being with loved ones again.

The Committee has been working on your behalf during the Winter months and here is a summary of our activity.

**New LHS Website:** Our web designer has made good progress with the new site with ongoing input from the Committee. Both he and his wife have been working full time from home and with a 4 year old demanding daughter (his words) progress has nonetheless been slower than he anticipated. Richard Chubb has applied for, and received, two grants to cover the cost, from the Parish Council and the Lyminge Association.

**PayPal:** In order to facilitate payments for LHS History publications, we are adding Paypal to the site. Richard Chubb has been working tirelessly setting this up and deserves our thanks as it has been an exceedingly fraught process.

**Lyminge a History publications:** These have sold well and Daphne Andrews has been liaising with customers wishing to purchase the books. 43 books have been sold in the last 11 months bringing in £221, this includes 3 bundles of Parts 1-10, the rest being private buyers. Interestingly a young villager approached us. He was an art student at the Harvey Grammar School and he asked if he could either borrow or purchase 4 books (Parts 4,7,8,9) which he purchased. Daphne tells us he's a lovely lad. It is so nice to see that a local young man wants to do some research on our village. We still need to find an editor for future books.



**Archaeology in Lyminge** – New Pentland Homes alongside the New Surgery: You will no doubt have seen in the April issue of the Lyminge Newsletter that the site is currently undergoing a full archaeological excavation for 8 weeks. Gabor Thomas is liaising with the archaeological team on this.

Rob Baldwin has expanded on this as follows:

“All of this work is going on with the full involvement of Casper Johnson, the Senior Archaeological Officer at KCC. I was able to put him in touch with Gabor so they and the archaeological team carrying out the work on-site are liaising on the results and interpretation of the excavation. When the original trial trenching was conducted before Christmas, Casper invited me to go over the site with him. He has told me that the initial investigation revealed so much archaeology that he would have recommended a detailed archaeological excavation as a planning requirement. In fact Pentland Homes are so keen to proceed with development that they have commissioned the full excavation in advance of planning permission being granted or the constraint being specified.

Casper has advised that the spread of activity spans the 4,000 years from the Bronze Age up to the Victorian period. Initial spot dating indicates that much of the activity is likely to be medieval (post-Norman Conquest) in date, which could mean that many of the features found are pits and boundary ditches of a field system associated with the Archbishops' residence, which lay in the area of the churchyard and Court Lodge Green.



However, the structures that have been found are earlier than this, and appear to relate to a late Iron Age farmstead, dating to the 1st Century AD, around the time of the Roman Conquest. Intriguingly, these structures include what are commonly known as 'Sunken Featured Buildings' (SFBs), a type of building that is more often associated with early Anglo-Saxon occupation sites. The hollow scraped in the ground surface within an SFB is usually interpreted as being covered by wooden planking, creating a level floor surface. The surrounding structure was most likely a rectangular timber building with a thatched roof. Finds in SFBs, in particular loom weights, suggest they were normally used for craft activities like weaving, or for storage, and were not living accommodation. SFBs have been found elsewhere in Lyminge at the Anglo-Saxon occupation sites on Tayne Field and at the end of Rectory Lane. There was a time when SFBs were considered diagnostic of Anglo-Saxon sites, but a number of recent excavations, most notably associated with the new road construction around Thanet, suggest that SFBs may have been part of the local building tradition and that they have a much longer history. These structures at Lyminge are an exciting addition to this new and growing body of data. This raises yet another question mark over how much of the change in the years after the end of direct Roman rule at the beginning of the 5th Century occurred because of the arrival of people from elsewhere (ie "Anglo-Saxons" arriving from Continental Europe) and how much was change driven by the existing population. This debate will continue to rage, and it is good to see Lyminge continuing to make a significant contribution.



Several of the features excavated on the Pentland site are relatively artefact rich with pottery, animal bone and metal objects. Organic samples have been taken that it is hoped through radio-carbon analysis will give some absolute dates. These will be particularly valuable if they can date the farmstead more precisely.

Those familiar with the archaeology of Lyminge may be disappointed to learn that there has been no evidence for human burials. The cemetery found north of New Lyminge Surgery in 1885 when the railway was built therefore probably did not extend over the East Brook. It now seems more likely that it extended under and to the east of Greenbanks.

I have been in contact with the director of the site and he has advised me that as it is currently impractical for site visits to be organised, because of Covid restrictions, video footage of the excavations is being recorded. He has promised a talk about the results at some point later in the year when more analysis has been carried out. At this point, he will be able to share with us the conclusions it seems reasonable to draw about the history of this part of Lyminge, and what it adds to our knowledge of the development of our village."

The LHS Committee wishes you a Very Happy Easter and looks forward to meeting up again with our monthly talks at the Tayne Centre. However, the Tayne Centre Committee are currently going through protocols and safety issues, and do not anticipate re-opening before September this year.

