



Longstanton & District Heritage Society

Protecting and Promoting
the Heritage of
Longstanton & District

NEWSLETTER

No. 17 September 2024

5,000 Years of Northstowe's Fen Edge Heritage on Show at the Midsummer Festival

The Midsummer Festival was a fabulous celebration for the growing and vibrant Northstowe Community of today. But how many realised that they are heirs to some 5,000 years of rich heritage as a hub for the south western Fen Edge?

Longstanton & District Heritage Society (LDHS) organised a great showcase of that heritage by bringing together colleagues Dr Oscar Aldred and Chris Wakefield of Cambridgeshire Archaeological Unit (CAU), David Maile and Rory Bourne (AKA Hereward the Wake!) of the Wake Hereward Project alongside Swavesey & District History Society (SDHS) and ourselves.

Hereward the Wake gave a dramatic account of his life as an 11th century nobleman's son before leading the local guerrilla resistance against the occupying forces of William the Conqueror. Later in the afternoon he delivered demonstrations of Anglo-Saxon armoury and of beer making to the attentive crowds.

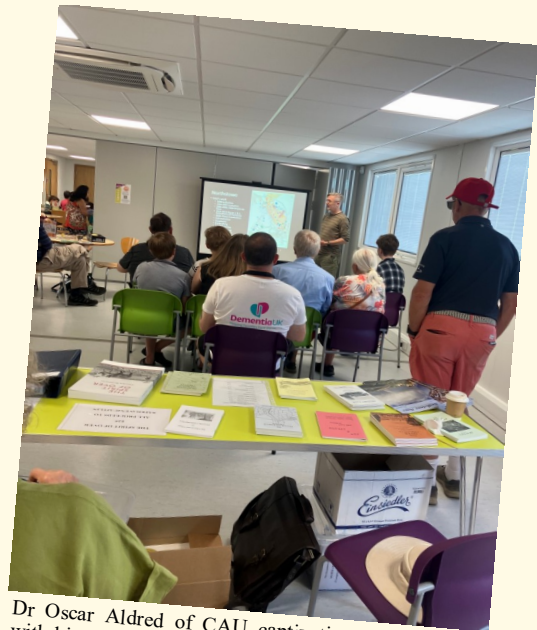


Hereward the Wake in full, dramatic flow.

It was apparent that while many Northstowe residents came knowing little of Northstowe's rich, 5,000-year heritage in the south western Fen Edge, they left with a thirst for knowing more.

Watch out for future heritage events for all ages!

The indoor displays of finds from CAU's Phase 1 and Phase 2 excavations, the heritage publications of SDHS, the LDHS rolling heritage presentation and the memorabilia selected from the LDHS archives were also very popular. Oscar's talk as to what the Northstowe archaeology has revealed, received much interest.



Dr Oscar Aldred of CAU captivating the audience with his account of what archaeology has revealed of Northstowe's past 5,000 years.



Chris Wakefield of CAU using Northstowe finds to enthral a potential, future archaeologist.

LDHS Community Engagement

We would like to thank all those people at the Midsummer event who took the time to complete our Northstowe Heritage Questionnaire. The responses so far have been really helpful in allowing us to plan for the future of the Heritage Society, our events and the LDHS Archives. Initial responses indicate, what has been suspected by the LDHS Committee for some time, that residents appear to favour day-time family friendly heritage events and we have welcomed the opportunity to offer events of this sort over the last year.

In October, we were pleased to have the support of Homes England so that visiting members of 7 Squadron Association could visit the former RAF Oakington site. This opportunity was much appreciated by those of us who attended, and the visit helped to strengthen the ties between Northstowe, the Heritage Society and 7 Squadron Association. Discussions took place regarding whether Northstowe library could provide the display and storage of the LDHS Archives which the members of LDHS and the former veterans have worked so long for.



Members of 7 Squadron Association visiting the site of RAF Oakington in October 2023

To date, there has been no confirmation as to whether the LDHS Archives will be supported so that they can remain a local community asset within the new town, but communications with the Chair of Homes England have been supportive, with his recommendation that we continue to work with all stakeholders in order to find a solution. LDHS continues to work hard and remains hopeful that those in decision making positions will see the value of the archives to both the new town and the surrounding region.

We welcome the increased collaboration we have established with Northstowe and Longstanton Councils and other groups working in the new town. In addition to our participation at the Northstowe Midsummer Festival, the Heritage Society has supported a number of community events over the last year, including supporting the 1st Northstowe Cubs to achieve their local knowledge badge. This photo showing final pieces of work by the Northstowe Cubs says it all:



**'LONGSTANTON & NORTHSTOWE
GREAT PLACES, BUILT ON AMAZING
HISTORY
COME VISIT'**

This detailed level of work could not have been achieved without the LDHS Archives and, as an important educational resource, we need to find a long-term solution which will save this community archive for future generations of local residents.

This was the feedback that we received from one of the Cub leaders:

'I just wanted to drop you a quick note to thank you and the LDHS for the support given to the 1st Northstowe Cubs in achieving their local knowledge badge. The images you provide from the archive were brilliant and really gave the young people an insight to the history of the place they live that they wouldn't have had otherwise'.

In July, LDHS participated in an evening event at the Northstowe Community Lounge and it is expected that a follow up evening will take place later in the year. LDHS has also produced a Longstanton and Northstowe Summer Quiz (<https://www.ldhs.org/summer-quiz-2024/>) to encourage local residents and their children to explore our two communities and find the answers to a number of heritage based questions.

**NORTHSTOWE
TOWN COUNCIL**

Community Lounge

A FREE WARM WELCOMING SPACE FOR EVERYONE

The Cabin, Assembly Room 1

1 The Green, Pathfinder Way, Northstowe CB24 1FD

What do you know about Northstowe and The Fens?

Join us to learn the rich history and a take away quiz to keep you occupied during the school holidays

Heritage Q & A

How old is Northstowe?

Thursday, 18th July

6 - 8 pm

Other Activities : Board Games, Mahjong, Table Tennis

Free refreshments, Food from Community Pantry

Children under 18 should be accompanied by an adult at all times

2024 AGM & Future Plans

Usually the LDHS AGM takes place each September, but with no commitment to the display and storage of the LDHS Archives following the collapse of the Heritage Annex building project and further meetings due to take place over the next few months, it has been decided to postpone the AGM until later this year. This will enable the meeting to reflect the most up to date information available. LDHS members will be provided with further details in due course.

Looking to the future: the Heritage Society, the LDHS Archives and our community engagement work depends on having more support from volunteers. Please do get in touch if you are able to help us secure the future of the LDHS Archives as a community heritage and educational asset within Northstowe or Longstanton.

Longstanton & District Heritage Society
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Many thanks to all our members - your membership is our mandate and every single member is invaluable. Remember, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you have any queries, would like any information or would like to contribute memories, photographs etc. Contact details are above.