

**Volume Nine : 1976-77****Contents**

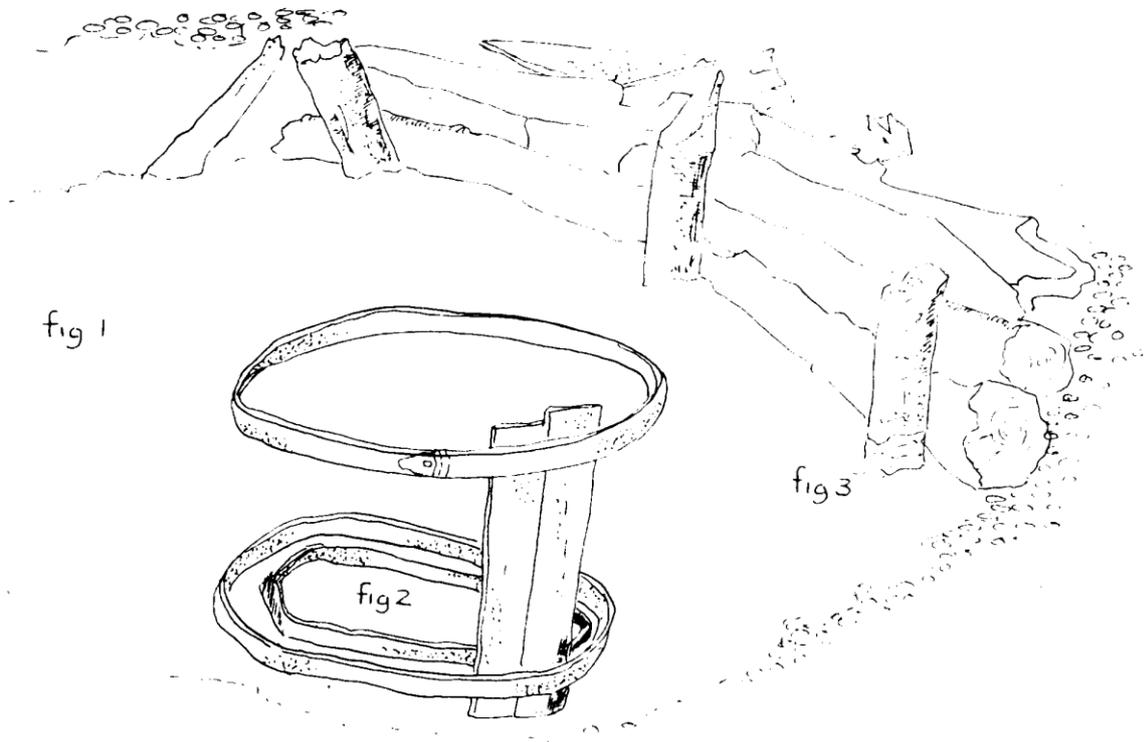
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**CONTENTS OF A MEDIEVAL PIT AT COVEHITHE.SUFFOLK***by Paul Durbidge*

The extensive storms of January 1976 brought down many tons at cliff at Covehithe and at the same time exposed several unknown medieval features in the clay beds near Long Covert. Some of these features were salt troughs and from examination of the soil content of these troughs much pottery has been recovered including both coarseware and glazed types. After the strong gales it was noticeable that a considerable amount of the clay beds had been destroyed and this in turn revealed a large dark spread on the beach from which timber and pottery were visible. Various small section timbers in short pieces were protruding upwards with several larger pieces lying horizontally, the tops of three vertical posts were also observed.

The handle and side of a green glazed jug lay flat on the feature with further pieces of pottery in various positions beside and under timber remains. A small piece of leather lay beneath the green glazed handle adjacent to which lay two more broken jug necks. With the tide about to cover the feature in a matter of hours, it was decided to gain as much information as possible with the rare chance that it would not destroy the feature in the meantime. In fact it was possible to work on the feature over several sessions covering up with timber, polythene and shingle after each session. This made much work in re-clearing the feature prior to reworking but it would have been impossible to remove the contents in any order between high and low water in one operation. The diameter of the feature was approximately six feet nine inches and it was made up of clay mixed loam and black silt. In scraping the entire surface it was found that we were examining a large pit with one or two additional features. The three vertical posts observed on the first day were circular in section and had been driven into the clay floor of the pit to retain a horizontal wall of rough timbers,. The scraping also revealed a circular band of timber enclosing an infill of dark top soil, this was an interesting development as the band had been joined at the two ends by rough splicing and this joint had then been bound by three small strips of split cane. Seven inches from the binding a small  $\frac{3}{8}$ " square peg had been driven into one splice but not through the second. The purpose of this peg is obscure but from the chamfered end of the peg it is possible that it may have been purely decorative in purpose. The surrounding infill outside the timber ring was mostly made up of mixed grey clay with small amount of peat and loam. Careful removal of the band showed two oak liner boards in vertical positions and from the colour of the soil and the clear round shape it appears that at one time the band enclosed many more vertical boards which were later removed for another purpose. The excavation of the pit for obvious reasons was undertaken half at a time, concentrating on the seaward side of the timber wall first. Pottery was mostly encountered on the lower levels of the infill with comparatively few shards recovered in the early stages. The fractured remains at a thumb impressed pot lay amongst dark grey silt and it was at this point that the first wooden spoon was recovered. The spoon which lay beneath the potsherds was exceptionally thin but also in remarkably good condition. Part of the small squared stem was still attached and this was certainly an important discovery. Beside this spoon lay the remains of a two handled vessel most likely of French origin, its fabric was very creamy in texture and its buff colour was sprinkled with dark green glaze. Several pieces of coarseware were found to be heavily soot stained while on the fractured base of one pot there was distinct bubbling as if milk had been upset on the fire. From some of the sherds later assembled after cleaning, it showed they belonged to a large coarseware jug with applied strip ornamentation, a type at decoration now

# COVEHITHE



Medieval PIT cut into orange clay showing main features and position of recovered material



fig 2 Reconstructed jug of 14-15th Century date

1 1/2 ins by 4 1/4 ins



fig 1 Imported ware from Saintonge Width 8 ins

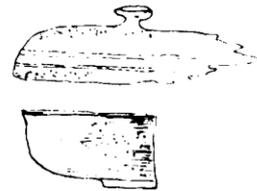


fig 3

Lid and part of wooden bowl with remains of small wooden spoon Width 5 1/2 ins

not to scale

frequently encountered at Covehithe. The soil content from which the pottery was now coming was extremely black and at the same time becoming very wet which accounts for the condition of the wooden spoon. A second discovery of timber was made near the base of the pit close to one of the vertical posts, again in very wet conditions. At first it was thought it was another of the small pieces of timber frequently encountered in the black silt although there was a suggestion of a rounded shape and difficulty of being able to see clearly in the wet conditions made it safer to lift the object out, encased in silt. This proved worthwhile because only then was it possible to see that we had, in fact, half of a timber bowl in good condition, in consequence this was then placed in an airtight bag and taken back to the car. Examination in better conditions of the bowl encased in the black silt, revealed we had in fact also got a lid as well. Both objects were in the region of six inches in diameter while the wooden lid had clear signs of lathe turning to its surface as well as a small lifting button on the top. At present the spoon and the two bowl remains are undergoing conservation at Norwich, so apart from saying they are of late medieval date we must in the meantime await results.

The examination of the soil content contained in the timber band was also beginning to produce material and again at the lower levels, small dark green glazed sherds with applied pellets and other small coarseware pieces began to appear. Examination of a number of the thin dark grey coarseware sherds suggested they were from one container and these pieces along with parts of neck handle and base were later skilfully rebuilt by Mr. Ray Smith, who undertook a very difficult project in assembling the sherds. The result was a large dark grey coarseware flagon of probable 14th century date with only a few sherds missing. It seems that the vessel was rejected by way of a broken spout which we were unable to find. At approximately three inches from the floor of the pit the remains of two parallel timber bands were uncovered in very fragile condition. These two bands acting as retainers for the upright liner boards were frequently fractured in obtaining the 33 inch diameter circle and although they were of the same half-round section of the top band, they differed by having the flat side facing inwards.

The space between the two lower bands was on average 2½ - 3 inches allowing plenty of room for the liner boards to fit between them, as regard to fixing of the bands to the boards, it is probable small iron nails were used, although little more than iron stains were visible, on the decaying bands. The method of jointing the bands was also obscure as again the advanced decay gave little or no assistance as to its construction. In clearing the content of the pit it was found to be 22 inches deep from the present clay beds with the sides of the pit being more sharp than gradually rounded. The floor was completely uneven with no attempt to flatten the surface and it was possible to see in detail the three vertical posts holding back the horizontal timbers. These posts were of birch and it was possible to see the bark still present on the timber. The horizontal timbers held back by these posts were dominated by a five foot long length of an old tree and although the timbers beneath this were not examined properly, several of the timbers protruding from the timber wall were, and these can be seen in detail from the drawings. The content of the pit on the landward side was comparatively small in area and was chiefly made up of a content of clay and silt from which part of a lava millstone was discovered. This was badly deteriorated and the working surface was of the pecked type comparing with a larger piece found at 006 and smaller pieces found in the salt pan at 009. Small broken jug necks were found close to the timber wall, one piece embedded in the clay content itself.

The continual problem of the sea was now giving much trouble by continuously washing over the feature and after a brief space away from one area it was found that the majority of the feature had been destroyed. Much of the adjacent clay bed was also broken up, bringing our results to an end as far as this pit was concerned although additional features were later to appear.

In conclusion I am indebted to Mr. R. Smith, Mr. J. Bloxham and Mr. R. Balls who undertook the majority of work often under very difficult conditions for without their help comparatively little would have been retrieved from the feature.

PMD 1976

**POTTERY RECOVERED ABOVE THE PIT FEATURE DURING NOVEMBER 1976**

The below mentioned pottery was recovered in top soil and clay above the pit and mixed in the adjacent clay around the pit.

Late Medieval types:

Glazed body sherds in sandy fabric

Small piece of grey impart. stoneware 16th Century

Shoulder of storage jar with applied strip ornamentation

13-14th century.

Bung hole spout. Neck and jug of hard fabric internal reduced external oxidised.

Grey glazed with applied vertical nicked strips in brown glaze.

Body sherd with fairly even green glaze.

Very fine creamy fabric probably French import.

The material recovered from this and all the other features at Covehithe is now in the Lowestoft Museum, Broad House, Nicholas Everitt Park, Oulton Broad.

The collection consists of both timber, bronze, lead and pottery and a paper will be produced shortly dealing with both the finds and features related to the situ.

**WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL RECREATION AND  
AMENITIES COMMITTEE - 9 JUNE 1976**

Report prepared by the Sub-Committee of the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

Sub-Committee Members: Mrs. Preston, Mrs. Turner, Mr. Durbidge, Mr. Turner

**THE MUSEUM SERVICE IN LOWESTOFT**

Introduction:

Last Year (1974/75) a Steering Committee consisting of three members of this Society and three members of the Lowestoft and East Suffolk Maritime Society was set up to discuss the future of a Museum Service in Lowestoft, its terms of reference being to discuss the ways and means of setting up a unified Museum for Lowestoft. This Steering Committee submitted a report to Waveney District Council which the Council accepted and acted on during August/September 1975.

In November 1975 the Lowestoft and East Suffolk Maritime Society was approached with a view to continuing the discussions, but replied that they had decided to 'go it alone' as they felt that little had been achieved by the Steering Committee.

This Society regrets that the joint membership of the Steering Committee has for the time being, been discontinued for the following reasons:-

1. A considerable degree of agreement had been achieved.
2. The financial and administrative advantages of ONE Museum are overwhelming,
3. The maritime history of Lowestoft is of considerable importance to the local history of the town, thus giving a natural area of overlapping of the two societies.

Clarification of certain points in the report submitted by the Joint Committee (dated May 1975):

It was apparently not entirely clear in this report what the intentions of the two societies would be in the event of a museum being set up by the County and/or District Council in co-operation with the two societies, regarding the future ownership of their respective exhibits. An attempt is made here to clarify this regarding the exhibits at present belonging to the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society.

In the transitional period in setting up a new museum, this Society would make its collection available to that museum on permanent loan, but the museum authorities would have complete control over the display of these exhibits. There would be no question of the Society withdrawing its exhibits. The museum authorities, however, would have no right to dispose of these exhibits without the written consent of the Society. If required, the Society would be prepared to give a written guarantee that it would not withdraw exhibits in order to set up a 'rival museum' but would reserve the right to

temporary withdrawal, subject to security agreements for, for example, any future Trades Fair in the town, etc.

Items which are at present on loan to the existing museum would, of course, remain the property of their present owners, and it would be up to the individuals concerned to:-

- (a) withdraw them
- (b) lend them to a new museum
- (c) present them to a new museum

Objects of a Museum in Lowestoft:

- (i) To widen the range of leisure and educational activities within the town and district.
- (ii) To stimulate interest in history generally (with special reference to the development of the area)
- (iii) To stimulate interest in natural history.
- (iv) To stimulate interest in painting and the decorative arts.
- (v) To help and encourage the recording and preservation of historic buildings and sites within the town and district.

With major museum services at Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, Lowestoft is ideally situated within the county for these purposes.

Of the reasons stated above (ii) and (v) are of particular interest to this Society and it is felt that a museum in Lowestoft should give an overall cover of the various stages in history, but with a particular slant towards the local history of the area.

Local history should not be taken to mean 'history within living memory' or even history from the end of the 18th century. There is considerable evidence from flint implements etc., found in the area of Stone Age activity. The Romans occupied this area – the Saxons probably invaded this coast. These are aspects of local history.

Financing of a Museum in Lowestoft:

The various alternatives would appear to be -

- (a) By the provision of premises and a direct grant from public funds to the Society.
- (b) Jointly by the County Council and the District Council.
- (c) By the District Council.
- (d) By the setting up of a Lowestoft Museum Trust in which the District Council and the Society would be considerably involved.
- (e) Jointly by the District Council (and/or the County Council) and the Society. (In this event it is suggested that the Field Club and Art Group should be invited to participate).

It should be stated here that this Society would not be in favour of a complete takeover by either the County Council or the District Council to the exclusion of the Society.

To help clarify the position, four museums outside this area have been contacted and have given considerably assistance. Of these museums, one is a County Council museum, one a District Council museum and two are private with very considerably District and County Council financial aid.

The first two museums (i.e. County Council or District Council controlled) do not themselves have to worry over the financial aspects. The two private museums obviously do, and from their reports it becomes obvious that as a museum grows, as by its nature it must, so these problems grow with it. They do, however, have one very great advantage in that, being attached (as this museum is) to a society, they have an enthusiastic and voluntary labour force to back up and assist the paid staff. The converse is also true in that if a museum is under local government control, continuity is assured.

This Society is of the opinion that in the long term the correct solution for Lowestoft would be for a museum to be financed from public funds and run by a Board of Governors, the majority of whom would be appointed by the District Council (and/or County Council), and the rest being appointed by this Society and any other interested bodies (in proportions to be agreed later).

In the present financial crisis it is accepted that these must be long term views, but the future must be planned. To this end the Society would like to set up a small working group with the District Council so that long term plans can be prepared and thus full advantage taken of any future easing in the

financial situation. Such a Committee would probably need to meet once or twice a year at present. It is also suggested that the Field Club and Art Group should be invited to nominate one member each to such a group. It is further suggested that a copy of this report be sent to the Field Club and the Art Group after it has been submitted to the Council.

Last year the Council made a grant of £500 towards the cost of toilet accommodation, the opening of a second section of exhibition space and security. By doing most of the work with a voluntary labour force, the toilet accommodation (for the people acting as attendants) has been completed and the first stage of the second room has been opened, but much remains to be done for security. In particular, a telephone needs to be installed so that an attendant can summon help and likewise a large alarm bell.

The Society asked the Council for an annual grant to cover the installation and rental of a telephone and a further grant this year of £300 or such similar figure as further investigation proves more accurate, towards improving security.

27 April 76 Town Hall Lowestoft

## POMPEII

The catastrophe which overwhelmed Pompeii in 79 A.D. was completely unexpected. For over a thousand years Vesuvius had stood silently overlooking the cities and villages of the Campania, giving no hint of the violence within. The summit was covered with trees and undergrowth, wild boar roamed there, the lower slopes grew some of the best olives and vines in the area. Today the vines are growing again, providing grapes for the famous Italian wine 'Lachrima Christi'.

In archaeological terms this was the most momentous happening in the history of the world. For the first time whole cities and villages were preserved showing how ordinary people lived, their houses, furniture, household goods and even the food they ate. In many houses tables were found laid ready for the midday meal (some with beautiful silverware), fish, chicken, cakes and fruit all set out ready to be eaten. In the market place fruit was found still under glass covers.

Pompeii was occupied from about 800 B.C. It was then an Oscan fishing village. Hardly anything is known about these ancient Italian people, they have left very little trace of themselves apart from the name which is of Oscan origin.

The Etruscans took the village not long after that time and probably could be regarded as the founders of the city, as it later became.

By 600 B.C. the Greeks were in possession, there are remains of a Doric temple of this date.

In 425 B.C. the Samnitas came down from the mountains and occupied, in turn, all the cities of the plains, including Pompeii.

Sulla with his army besieged the city during the Social War of 89 B.C. For nine years the people held out, but in 80 B.C. were finally beaten, from then on Pompeii became a Roman Province.

All these people left their mark on the city, artistically and architecturally.

The majority of the houses were built in the Etruscan style:

An entrance passage from the street leading to the atrium, a large room with an oblong opening in the roof, usually supported by beams, the roof sloping down to the opening caught the rain water in gutters, deposited it in the Impluvium below, from there it was carried to a cistern. The opening also gave light and air to the rooms, it was not customary in the earlier type house to have windows looking on to the street. There were rooms leading off all four sides of the Atrium with the main living room always facing the entrance, and a garden at the rear.

Greek influence later added the Peristyle, a large courtyard arcaded on all sides usually supported by columns of marble or brick covered with Stucco and painted. In the centre were statues, fountains, sometimes a fish pond and always flowers, trees and shrubs.

The Pompeians were passionately fond of gardens, the richer houses would have two or three very large and beautiful ones, the less wealthy people with a small garden had, in many cases, the garden walls plastered and painted with landscapes and trees to give the impression of space.

Pompeii was quite a large place having over 20,000 inhabitants. They had public baths, public lavatories, public libraries two theatres and about two hundred bars.

Drinking water was brought from the nearby mountains by aqueducts, going underground within the city walls. There were many drinking fountains. Pompeii was also well lighted at night having lamps outside all public buildings and street fountains, and most shops and houses would have a lamp hanging over the doorway.

The Oscans built an earthwork round the city following the line of the lava bed upon which Pompeii was built, this was later replaced by a wall of limestone and tufa. The whole wall has been traced but not yet completely excavated. There were eight gates all of which have been found.

In Roman times the streets were paved with blocks of Vesuvian lava, in places these show quite deep ruts due to the iron rimmed wheels of their carts. The streets are narrow with very high pavements, set at intervals with huge stepping stones, which were necessary because the streets would be flooded during wet weather, and probably had a lot of rubbish lying about.

There are three main thoroughfares, Via Stabie, Via di Nola and Via Dell Abbodanza. These names are all modern having been taken, in most cases, from the fountains at the street corners.

The Via Dell Abbodanza is aptly named, meaning 'Street of Abundance', as it seems to have been the main shopping centre.

Starting from the main entrance, the Marine Gate, you enter the city through a covered passage, there is another larger passage alongside for wheeled traffic.

The first of the excavations is the TEMPLE OF VENUS, protectress of the city. There is very little to be seen here as the temple was being repaired at the time of the eruption, having been badly damaged during the earthquake of 62 A.D.

A little further on is the TEMPLE OF APOLLO, consecrated to the cult of Diana and Apollo in 600 B.C. This temple had a colonnade of 46 Ionic columns; some of which are still complete. There are life size bronze statues of Apollo and Diana standing there; copies only, the originals being in the museum at Naples. The flight of steps leading to the shrine are nearly intact, and also parts of the altar. At the foot of the steps is a sundial.

Across the street from the temple is the side entrance to the Basilica. This was a very large important public building dealing with all the legal and commercial business of the city. There are the remains of many columns, and parts of the walls are still standing, but most of the decoration and statues are gone.

Leaving the Basilica by the main entrance you come into the Forum; which is a large rectangular space 516 feet long. It has three rows of marble columns stretching the whole length. Many of these columns are still standing. On the north side is the TEMPLE OF JUPITER which was built about 150 B.C. There is a double flight of steps leading to the shrine, which once contained statues of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. In the square at the foot of the steps is the market weighing table, a marble slab with holes set in it to check weights and measures. On the east side is the Macellum. which is a covered market with shops, offices for money changers and taverns. Also in the Forum is the City Treasury, the Comitium where the magistrates were elected. There is a very fine doorway still standing leading to a warehouse used by the Corporation of Fullers, who stored and probably sold their fabrics here. The building was sponsored by the priestess Eumachia. It was dedicated to the Concordia Augusta, part of the dedication can still be seen over the doorway. There are the remains of two more temples in the Forum. One is the TEMPLE OF VESPASIAN. Hardly anything remains of the temple, but, a beautiful white marble altar decorated with bas-reliefs showing scenes of sacrifice, is completely undamaged. The other temple is dedicated to the City Lares. This is the guardian god of the city. All the houses in the city had their own small private shrine to The Lares (Household Gods). Alongside the TEMPLE OF JUPITER is the triumphal Arch of Tiberius, this leads to the Via Del Foro. This is just a short street of shops and taverns, at the end of which is another arch, that of Caligula or Germanicus, there is some doubt as to whom this Arch was dedicated.

To the left of the Arch is the Forum baths. Most of this building is standing. The changing room still shows the shelf which runs completely round the room, it is divided into sections for holding the bathers clothes. One room in the baths still shows the remains of a lovely vaulted ceiling.

Almost facing the baths is the HOUSE OF THE TRAGIC POET. This has a narrow entrance squeezed between two taverns, there is a mosaic pavement in the entrance lobby showing a chained dog and the words Cave Canem. This house has a large Atrium with the usual rooms opening off it. The living room facing the entrance has no back wall so that one looks from the Atrium straight into

the garden, which contains a small temple for the household Gods. This was the house chosen by Bulwer Lytton as the residence of Glaucus in his book *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

Further along this street is the HOUSE OF THE FAUN. Named after the beautiful bronze statue of a Dancing Faun, which was found in the Atrium. The original is in Naples Museum, but a copy stands just where it was found. This is a very large house, with two large gardens and a lot of good mosaics which are now in Naples. One very famous one of the Battle of Alexander, which covered the living room floor, a nice touch is the mosaic on the pavement in front of the house with the inscription 'Have' (Welcome).

The house of CASTOR AND POLLUX is another fine large house. The roof opening in the Atrium is supported by twelve columns instead of the more usual beams. There are some very fine paintings here.

An interesting collection of Surgical instruments has been found in one house.

Undoubtedly the most famous house in the city, is the HOUSE OF THE VETTI. This belonged to two brothers, Aulus Vettius Restitutus and Aulus Vettius Conviva, wealthy Roman merchants. This house is beautifully preserved. There are many paintings here of famous myths, Leda and the Swan, Hero and Leander and many more. The main living room has a frieze of cherubs working and playing, there are scores of these little figures all around the room, they are exquisitely drawn and painted. There are also panels of Nymphs and garlands of flowers, the background is painted in red and black. The peristyle is very large, with many statues including two of cherubs holding ducks which spout water into marble basins. There are also two fountains in the middle of the garden. This house is one of the new excavations, whose garden has been replanted with the same sort of trees, flowers and shrubs which originally grew there. This is something that the archaeologists are attempting to do wherever possible.

The HOUSE OF JULIA FELIX is the largest in the city. A very beautiful house, which had a row of columns along the front, three gardens, and very unusual for the time, large windows in the rooms overlooking the gardens. There were also private baths attached to the house and a swimming pool. It would seem that the lady became short of money as the baths were let to the public at a later date, and part of the house was being let – as apartments. One still showing a 'To Let' notice.

Close by is the huge Amphitheatre, the oldest known to us. It was started in 80 B.C, but not completed until Augustan times. It differs from later Amphitheatres in that the lower tiers are in four unconnected sections, each reached by its own entrance. The upper section (reserved for women) can only be reached by external staircases, which with the supporting arenas are intact. Twenty thousand spectators, almost the entire population, could be seated.

Next to the Amphitheatre is the Gymnasium, where the youth of the city exercised and held their gymnastic competitions. This was built round a huge square, with a large swimming pool in the middle, surrounded by a double row of plane trees.

The type of tree was found by filling the holes left by the decayed roots with liquid plaster, by examining the shape of the roots it was possible to recognise the type of tree.

Over a hundred skeletons of youths were found here during excavations,

Apart from the very large Forum, there was a small one known as the Triangular Forum. This is thought to be the oldest part of Pompeii – it was here that they found the remains of the Greek doric temple, dedicated to HERCULES.

Next to the Forum, standing side by side are the two theatres. Both were built in the usual Greek style. The larger theatre seated 5,000 people. Like most ancient theatres it was open to the sky, but on the walls can be seen iron rings for holding poles which could support a canvas awning as protection against the sun and rain. This theatre was built circa 200 B.C. and is thought to be on the site of a much older one. It was here that Nero gave one of his public performances on the Lyre, much to the disgust of the senators, who thought it very undignified behaviour for an Emperor. Nero paid many visits to Pompeii, probably because his wife Poppaea had relatives living there. During July and August operas are staged here today, not very comfortable seating, but the acoustics are said to be superb.

The smaller theatre, known as the Odeon, held only 1,000 people and was used for poetry reading and concerts. This theatre is in a much better state of preservation than the larger one, retaining some of the carvings and statuary. The stage originally had a wooden floor which was reached by steps

leading from the orchestra. It was built in 80 B.C. and, unusually for the time, had a permanent roof. Behind the theatres is a large open square surrounded by an arcade with 74 columns, originally a foyer for the theatre, it was converted into a gladiators barracks. Many pieces of armour and weapons were found here, including some of the beautifully decorated Gladiators helmets. 63 skeletons were found in the barracks including one of a woman.

The street of many shops, the Via Dell Abbondanza runs along here. The first building is a laundry with the baths for washing clothes still there, also baths for bleaching (done by sulphur vapours) a necessity with all these white togas, which, according to contemporary writers were heavy cumbersome garments in constant need of washing.

There is a workshop for making cloth, and in the same building, a room for making felt goods.

Verus the Blacksmith had a shop here on which was found many articles of bronze and iron, apparently left for repairing.

There is a dyers with large vats for the dyes and a huge furnace.

Nodeustus the Baker had four grindstones behind the shop which are almost intact, and a huge oven containing 81 loaves, flat round loaves, marked like the rings of scones which we buy here. The same type of loaves can be bought in Naples today.

There are many bars, all much the same, with a marble counter running parallel to the street, with shallow containers set in at intervals, which would contain fruit, cakes etc. At the back of the bar the shelves contain amphorae of wine.

There are houses along this street as well as shops, one, the House of Menander apparently a meeting place for chess players, according to a notice found on the wall.

In one house there is a marble table bearing the inscription, P. Casca Longus, one of the conspirators who assassinated Julius Caesar, it is assumed this was bought at an auction of Caesar's property after he was exiled.

The House of Menander was a rich house thought to belong to a relative of Poppaea. The name Menander was applied to the house simply because of a portrait of the poet which was found in one room.

The House of the Silver Wedding was a lovely house, very large and beautifully painted. So named, because the excavation was made in the presence of King Humbert and Queen Margharita in 1893; the year of their Silver Wedding.

Walking through quite uninteresting, crumbling walls, sometimes one stumbles upon unexpected and quite perfect things, like the beautiful mosaic fountain in one garden, looking as bright and new as though it had just been made. This has been built into the garden wall made with small pieces of enamel and marble it shimmers with colour. In front of the mosaic is a charming statue of a cherub holding a dolphin.

By the House of the Surgeon is the Herculaneum Gate, the newest and most important gate, built at the close of the 2nd century B.C. Outside the gate lies the Street of Tombs. Taverns and villas alternate with the tombs.

The first villa being that of the famous writer Cicero, unfortunately this was one of the first excavations and has been covered in again.

There is an imposing tomb to a priest of Augustus. Then the villa of Diomedes, so called because facing it across the road is the tomb of M. Arrius Diomedes. This villa had the largest garden in Pompeii and was undoubtedly a very rich house, but unfortunately is very badly damaged, hardly anything remains. The garden has the remains of a fountain and an Arbor supported by 6 columns. In a cellar beneath the garden arcade were found many Amphorae of wine and skeletons of 18 people, children and adults. The owner, thought to be a wine merchant was found lying by the door with a key in his hand and a slave nearby carrying money and valuables.

200 yards further along the road is the villa of the Mysteries. A very large house; built about 300 B.C. added to later until it became a Manor House of 60 rooms. Later it became a Farmhouse. It takes its name from the hall with its 24 life-size figures, painted on three walls of the room, representing the initiation rites of the cult of Dionisus. These paintings are beautifully done and well preserved. There is a massive kitchen with two fireplaces.

The tragedy which overwhelmed this lively, busy city, has been described by contemporary writers.

The most famous being Pliny, the nephew of Pliny the Elder.

For two or three days there had been slight tremors felt in the ground, but not enough to cause alarm. Life was going on normally, when the 24th August, 79 A.D. dawned. 'Hot, heavy and with an ominous stillness in the air, no birds sang'. At midday without warning; there was a tremendous explosion and a great column of smoke was seen to rise from Vesuvius. From there on there was nothing but terror, the whole top of the mountain literally blew apart. Flames, rocks and lava poured out of its crater. It became pitch dark and torrential rain came down. The chaos was unbelievable, children screaming, parents calling to them. People all trying to find each other in the utter darkness, lit intermittently by flashes of lightning.

Herculaneum was more fortunate, its people could see a wall of mud lava flowing down the mountain engulfing everything in the way. It was obvious that shelter in the houses was impossible, they did the most sensible thing and ran towards Naples. Nearly all the population escaped, about a dozen people only have been found there.

The story was quite different in Pompeii, no lava flowed there but; dust, red hot ashes and lapilli (small pieces of pumice stone) poured down on them, carried by a gale force wind. It must have seemed obvious to take shelter in the buildings, but they found out (too late) that sulphur fumes were suffocating them. Then it was impossible to get out of the houses, the lapilli and mud had piled up against the doors and they could not open them.

The people in the streets sank down under masses of mud and were suffocated.

The eruption was seen in Naples. Pliny the Elder, famous naturalist, was also commander of the fleet, he ordered the ships to sail across the bay; hoping to rescue some of the people. But, on reaching Pompeii, he found mountainous waves and huge mounds of lapilli on the beach. The sea had receded and he could not reach the shore, he tried for some time, but at last yielded to the pleas of the terrified sailors (the ships were being smothered in hot ash) and sailed further down the coast to Stabie, here he managed to get ashore. He died on the beach overcome by the poisonous fumes which were then reaching Stabie.

The gallant rescue attempt made by Pliny was futile right from the start, as he was ordering the fleet to sail from its base at Misenum, Pompeii and Herculaneum were already dead. It took only hours to bury these cities.

The volcano raged for three days, then suddenly everything cleared, the sun came out again. Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabie and scores of villas and farms around the countryside had been wiped out. For miles around towns were covered in lapilli and ash, some fell even as far away as Rome. Herculaneum had vanished completely, lying under 40 feet of lava. Pompeii was buried under masses of lapilli and fast hardening mud. Many people did manage to escape from Pompeii, but 2,300 bodies have been found so far, and two fifths of the city has still to be excavated. There must be many, many more who having got outside the gates died in the countryside. After a time even the sites of the ruins were forgotten.

Some ruins and inscriptions were found in 1600 whilst constructing an aqueduct but it was not known to be Pompeii. It was not until 1748 that excavations began which have been carried on more or less ever since, though, for some time it was more like a Treasure hunt. Everything beautiful was removed to Naples, hundreds of statues found their way to various museums in Europe. All the best of the mosaics and walls were removed and usually the sites filled in again.

In 1860 a regular plan of excavation was carried out by the Italian government under the direction of Giuseppe Fiorelli. From then on Pompeii was dug out street by street and left uncovered, in many places statues have been replaced in situ by copies of the originals.

Even better methods are now being used, nothing is to be taken away. All statues, if fallen, to be returned to their plinth, columns to be re-erected, and all Mosaics and paintings to be left untouched. Household goods and ornaments left in place where possible. Some gardens have already been replanted with the original shrubs and flowers. This will eventually be done throughout the city. It was Fiorelli who discovered that when the lava dust hardened it made a cast round the bodies long before even their clothing had disintegrated, and by pouring liquid plaster into the space, he managed to get a model of the bodies. There are hundreds of these casts now, of great interest to architects, but rather macabre and not many are shown to the public.

It is partly these tragic figures which give such poignancy to Pompeii. Who could fail to be moved by the young mother who fell near the Stabian Gate with her baby pressed against her shoulder, a vain

attempt to protect his face, two little girls clutching her dress, or the young girl with pretty embroidered sandals on her feet who had flung herself down in utter despair.

In one house the head slave sat bolt upright in his little entrance cubby hole, still holding his badge of office and the household purse in his hand. His little daughter lying on a seat beside him, her head covered with a cloak.

The priests of the Temple of Isis had stayed to collect the Temple treasures in a sack and lingered too long, they fell one after another along the road nearby. Their lunch of eggs and fish was found still undamaged on a table in the Temple.

Some of the people obviously did struggle in terror; others seemed to have resigned themselves quietly, as the husband and wife who lay side by side holding hands almost as though sleeping.

This was a beautiful city and must have looked so gay and bright, the houses roofed with red and yellow terracotta tiles, the walls painted and carved with the exquisite stucco work which is such a feature of Pompeii. With the marble statues, fountains, trees and flowers. One needs a powerful imagination now to see it as it once was, now the saddest ruins in the world.

## PRACTICAL FIELDWORK

*by Paul Durbidge*

During 1976 the Museum collection was considerably strengthened by a number of medieval finds recovered under rescue conditions by a few Society members. A large amount of pottery was retrieved as well as five medieval jugs and without intervention by the Society all the material would certainly have been lost to the sea. Recovering material in this way did have its problems, by reason of disturbance by the public and also the continual surveillance of visual features leading up to subsequent investigation. The very small working force of the Society has now had a chance of handling medieval items in the form of pottery, wood, bone and leather, with several other items of lead, iron and even bronze.

Prior to this type of practical fieldwork, we have been confined to fieldwalking and following up odd pieces of information regarding finds made by various people. Over the years this type of approach has been reasonably successful, but it does leave a great many gaps and it is hoped that given time, we can gradually work more to a concentrated pattern or project.

There can be no doubt that the area in which we live is extremely rich in archaeological remains and as yet it is virtually untapped as far as practical work is concerned. To give examples, the areas including Somerleyton, Lound and Blundeston have all produced Neolithic and Bronze Age material and in good condition with examples on display in the Castle Museum, Norwich. From Flixton, Gunton and Oulton village have come finds of a medieval pottery, with strong indications of kilns being once sited at Camps Heath. Lowestoft has now developed over a wider area but again we have records of chipped axes of both Bronze Age and the Neolithic being found from Normanston Park through to Kirkley, as well as all the subsequent associated material that went with them. Bloodmoore Hill did, during the latter part of the 1800's, produce the remains of a Saxon Chieftain and although the area is still ploughland, no examination has been, as yet, carried out of the adjacent land.

The same picture extends further down to Wrentham, where several discoveries of medieval pottery have been recorded in small pockets, Kessingland, Benacre, Rushmere and Henstead have yielded large numbers of prehistoric tools, with Kessingland producing finds involving no fewer than five periods of history. So the picture goes on, the presence of moated sites at Carlton Colville and Gisleham is noted, and we find more of these interesting features in the Brampton sector. Many of these are thought to be of medieval date but fieldwalking on adjacent land may well provide completely different dating to some of them, while at the same time, confirming the period on others.

The hot summer weather of 1976 was used to considerable advantage by both the Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Units as it provided extremely good photographic conditions of both meadow land and ploughland.

From three areas photographed at Lound, there were very clear indications of large field systems showing across present ploughland and in addition to these systems the dark black rings at two Bronze age ring ditches were also very clear.

Close to the B1074 near Flixton, were two more circular rings of Bronze Age date and further on, near Somerleyton, two more ploughed out rings were sited, one on each side of a hedge with an artificial intrusion passing between them.

A morning of fieldwalking over this feature showed a slight spread of small stone, but little else, although two small flint tools were picked up a short distance away. It was however, interesting to hear the landowner tell of two more features appearing in another field in the shape of an extremely large cross, causing very strong growth in the crops at that point.

The dry spell also revealed strong suggestions of probable medieval activity showing through meadowland on Benacre Estate, the features appear to be comparable to a street system and a similar photograph can be compared at Frostenden Bottom, where again wide lines can be seen running across two fields.

Undoubtedly this is only the tip of the iceberg, and a gradual fieldwalking system over the entire area should be the main objective. It could be carried out at such time as various fields became clear of crops, and subject to the landowners permission. The fields covered could be related by grid references or numbered with the objects found being positively identified and subsequently recorded. From the results it would be possible to compare any previous finds made and in some cases relate them to any documentary evidence we may have at hand.

As a project it would be constructive and it is really a question of choosing an area, and slowly working across it and finding out just what lies beneath the soil.

PMD 1977.

#### POSTSCRIPT

At the time of writing, a local man showed me an almond shaped Neolithic axe he had found on ploughland at North Cove. After a short lapse he returned to the field and later produced a box of broken pottery sherds he had picked up from one corner of the field. The majority of the sherds were of 14-15th Century date and they included both rim and base types. In walking on the bed of a ditch close to the find spot, he also retrieved part of a coarseware cooking pot sticking out of the side of the bank, but obviously related to the previous pottery finds. The find spot is comparatively close to the large moated site at Wade Hall where further finds of pottery were found after clearing out part of the large defensive moat some years ago.

### REYNOLDS' SMOKE HOUSE

*Martin Westgate*

Reynolds' smoke house in Raglan Street was, until quite recently occupied by its present owner Reginald Reynolds. The family had owned the business since the latter half of the 19th Century and curing kippers became a family trade, (they even had their own special family recipe).

The smoke house may originally have been intended to smoke the traditional red herrings, but Mr. Reynolds used to cure the more modern kipper. Mr. Reynolds was one of the last people in Lowestoft to practice the art of curing kippers, and when he retired last year the last one of many smoke houses in Lowestoft became inoperative.

The smoke house itself is quite small in comparison to the larger commercial smoke houses, and, excluding the adjoining cottage consists of three rooms. A preparation room where the fish were sliced, gutted, washed, and soaked in brine. They were then hung on wooden spledts and put into the smoke room. This is a tall room, well ventilated to prevent the kippers drying and concrete floored to burn oak dust and chippings on. The finished kippers were then sold in a small area at the front of the building.

Today most kippers are made on a vast scale and lack both the flavour and individual touch present in those prepared and smoked in the old houses. The houses are a remnant of the days when the drifting fleets caught thousands of herring in the North Sea; an era which my generation cannot remember.

This is why this smoke house should be preserved, the building is in an excellent state and the equipment is the same as that in use a century ago. It is typical of the one man businesses of the period and represents a way of life which has now, sadly vanished. When the last British stocks of herring are fished out around the Scottish coast people may not only wonder how the old kippers used

to be cured but what a kipper was. So unless action is taken immediately to save it, it may suffer the same fate as have many old buildings such as the fisherman's cottages, and bath house in the beach village, and the rows in Yarmouth. In short, it may be demolished and if this is allowed to happen a valuable relic will be lost for future generations.

It is easy to realise why a building such as a church should be preserved but something small and seemingly insignificant such as the smoke house is all too often overlooked. But if this building is preserved it will be able to tell people far more about this aspect of social history than any book is able to do.

The property would cost under £10,000 to secure with the adjacent cottage, which could be let as a council house with the condition that the tenant would look after the smoke house and show visitors round if they so wished.

Entry for Archaeological Society Essay Competition

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Lowestoft.

Age 13, Pupil of the Harris School 29.4.76

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