

A Neolithic Salt Production Site at Street House, Loftus, North-East Yorkshire

Royal Archaeological Institute and Tees Heritage Trust Joint Conference:

13–15 September 2024

A conference will be held in the autumn of 2024 to present the evidence for the Early Neolithic salt production site at Street House, near Loftus. The site was discovered in 2014 during a programme of excavations. It is the only currently known salt ‘factory’ in Britain and the earliest known saltern in Western Europe. This is the first presentation of detailed information on the site including an Early Neolithic pottery type-series and the largest assemblage of Carinated Bowls found in the north of England.

The conference begins on Friday evening with an opening lecture by Dr Alison Sheridan. A day of lectures will be held on the Saturday presenting the material evidence from the site at Street House. The second day will be held in East Cleveland. Starting at the Town Hall, Loftus, there will be an exhibition of site images, a poster session about Street House in the Neolithic, a representative display of the finds including briquetage, pottery, flint and worked stones, and three seminars. In the afternoon there will be a site tour of the 2024 excavations at Street House in addition to a demonstration of the technique proposed for salt production, a presentation by the Whitby Sea Salt Co. that produces an artisan salt by solar and wind power, and a short circular walking tour of the prehistoric sites in the immediate area.

Conference fee: January–28 June 2024, early bird bookings £65.00 per person; 29 June–23 August £80.00 per person. The conference fee includes: Friday evening buffet and Sunday late afternoon salad buffet, Saturday and Sunday buffet lunch and return transport between Middlesbrough and Loftus on Sunday.

Registration form, FAQs sheet and the Conference Programme can be downloaded from Tees Heritage Trust’s website: <https://teesheritage.org.uk/neolithic-salt-conference-2024/> or email: conference@teesheritage.org.uk

Speakers:

Prof Anthony Harding	(University of Exeter)
Tom Lane	(field archaeologist; member of ECOSAL-UK: group interested in the heritage and culture of traditional salt making in the UK)
Yvette Marks	(Laboratory Manager and Teaching Technician, Sheffield University)
Dr Laurent Olivier	(CNRS – The French National Centre for Scientific Research, France)
Dr Patrick Quinn	(University College London)
Dr Alison Sheridan	(formerly National Museums of Scotland)
Dr Stephen Sherlock	(Street House site director; Co-Investigator, University of Waterloo, Canada)
Dr Blaise Vyner	(former Cleveland County Archaeologist)
Dr Isabel Wiltshire	(Bristol University)
Dr Rob Young	(formerly Lampeter University and English Heritage)

Programme:

Friday, 13 September 2024: The Trinity Centre, Main Hall, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough TS3 6LD
17:30–18:30 Wine reception and buffet
18:30–19:30 Lecture by Dr Alison Sheridan, ‘Street House in the Context of Early Neolithic Britain’.
20:00 Disperse

Saturday, 14 September 2024: The Trinity Centre, Main Hall, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough TS3 6LD
09:00–9:15 Welcome and coffee/tea
Chairman (morning session): Dr Blaise Vyner
09:15–9:30 Introductions and setting the scene for Street House
09:35–10:25 Dr Steve Sherlock: The Neolithic Saltern: Discovery, Features and Function (questions)
10:30–10:50 Coffee/tea and biscuits
10:55–11:25 Yvette Marks: Reconstructing the Salt Process
11:30–12:00 Dr Rob Young: Mesolithic and Neolithic Flints from Street House
12:00–12:30 Tom Lane: Briquetage Vessels in Prehistory
12:30–12:50 Questions
12.50–14:00 Lunch

Chairman (afternoon session) Dr Rob Young

- 14:00–15:00 Dr Alison Sheridan: The Neolithic Pottery from Street House
with contributions by Dr Patrick Quinn on the Thin Section Analysis and Dr Isabel
Wiltshire: Lipid Residue Analysis of Carinated Bowl Pottery from Street House
- 15:00–15:30 Dr Laurent Olivier: The Evidence for Prehistoric Salt Production in Europe
- 15:30–15:50 Coffee/tea and biscuits
- 15:55–16:30 Prof Anthony Harding: Salt in European Prehistory: The Significance of the Street House
Site in its Wider Context
- 16:30–17:00 Questions and Discussion
- 17:00 Disperse

Sunday, 15 September 2024: Morning session at Loftus Town Hall TS13 4HG

- 10:00–12:00 Exhibition of images (photographs and reconstructions) of Street House
Display of selected finds from the excavation.
Poster session and interactive computer images by students from Waterloo University,
Canada
Seminars discussing the flints, ceramics and experimental reconstruction of the salt
production process.

Lunch: provided at the Town Hall.

- 13:30–16:30 Afternoon session on site at Street House TS13 4UX
Reconstruction of the Neolithic salt production process by evaporation.
Whitby Sea Salt Co. presents local artisan salt production techniques
Site visit, excavations 2024
Circular walk to prehistoric sites in the immediate area
- 17:00–18:30 Tiger Inn, Whitby Road, Easington, TS13 4NE
Whitby shellfish cold platter, Greek salad with chips/new potatoes buffet + tea/coffee
(alcohol and soft drinks available at the bar, not included in the conference fee)
- 18:30–19:00 Closing words by host societies and sponsors
- 19:00 Disperse



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Tees Heritage Trust Ltd

Registered Office: 17 Falcon Court, Preston Farm Industrial Estate, Stockton on Tees TS18 3TU;
Company Registration No.1618592 (inc. England); Charity Registration No.512497

T: 01642 475198; E: info@teesheritage.org.uk W: teesheritage.org.uk;
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