

CLASP

Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project

Registered Charity number 1111667



Eighth Annual Report Year ending 31 August 2012

Alan Watson

Chair of the Trustees

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Report by the Chair of the Trustees

Archives

There has been some development in the search for storage. Robert and Jenney Hawtin have allowed us to keep a container & artefacts on their land - Bay Farm Buildings, Pound Lane, Eastcote. The local media ran stories about the search which led to some offers but unfortunately they didn't come to fruition but at least it did help to raise our profile. There are one or two more irons in the fire that might work out. Once again, if you think you might be able to help, please speak to any of the Trustees.

Thank you all.

I would like to thank all the Trustees, the members of the Organising Committee and all other groups and individuals associated with CLASP for their help and advice over the last 12 months. I would like especially to put on record my thanks to:-

- Fred Kay and a dedicated band of followers who have spent many a Friday morning walking up and down, up and down, up and down at sites at either Tiffield or Bannaventa.
- Ruth Downie for putting together this Annual Report from her home in the West Country.
- Norman Garnett for volunteering to take on the role of Secretary to the Organising Committee.
- Nick Adams for allowing us to dig at Whitehall over the last 13 years.
- Stephen Young for pointing us in the right direction.

Finances

As you may remember at last year's AGM we talked about the need to increase individual membership subscription from £5.00 to £7.50. At the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 12th March it was eventually proposed and agreed that we raise the subs from £5.00 to £10.00

I commend this report to you as a true record of the work undertaken by CLASP during the past year. If you have any questions about the report, they may be raised at the Annual General Meeting.

Alan Watson
Chair of the Trustees
August 2012

The Director of Archaeology Report:

The focus of fieldwork undertaken since the last annual report has been a concentration of resources on completing extensive geophysical surveys of three selected Romano-British sites that are amongst our current investigative sample of settlements. We now have fully or partially completed surveys on over twenty settlements. An overall aim for this year was to establish a workable and effective approach to field work using CLASP's Bartington magnetometer by furthering our experience and understanding of the technical possibilities as well as to build on our volunteers' capacity to engage in survey activities through the provision of 'real life' training opportunities. The instrument was also utilized in two other exploratory projects connected with landscape analysis at Newport Pagnell and settlement identification on Barby Hill. These initiatives were organised by other groups and individuals but CLASP members were involved and happy to collaborate in their execution.

The first large scale investigation by CLASP volunteers was on one of the sites that comprise a group of settlements centred on the parish of Tiffield. These settlements are important in that they will help broaden and develop our model of understanding concerning the nature of locality and its interface with Romanization and for recognising the archaeological profiles that will support the theoretical arguments subsequently engendered. Our investigation covered an area of five hectares of the complex and its surrounding neighbourhood. Initially the fieldwork was designed as a reconnaissance to provide a different geological and natural environment for survey, along with another location in Paulerspury, within which the instrument and our growing level of competence could be tested. However the quality of the results encouraged us to proceed with a much larger and more inclusive study across the full extent of the settlement. These results have enabled us to catch our first archaeological glimpse of the reality of rural settlement in the hinterland of Lactodurum lying to the north of that roadside station and urban centre.

This geophysical survey revealed a landscape dominated by a complex of buildings, potentially a villa establishment, located within a larger banked and ditched enclosure. These features appear to be lying over an earlier system of enclosures containing roundhouses associated with field systems. At first sight many of the elements suggest a close affinity to the development of the estates in the hinterland of Bannaventa (Whilton Lodge) the next Roadside Station along Watling Street to the north. Therefore we may be able to prove there are potential similarities in site development and that the character of settlement between the two areas mirrors each other to some extent. However a detailed field walking analysis of the Tiffield site beyond the initial three quarter hectare inspection already carried out will have to be undertaken to ascertain more detail.

Meanwhile at Bannaventa (Whilton Locks) a geophysical survey in a field to the north of the scheduled walled area covering about twelve hectares has produced some startling results to match those found previously by us in the NE quadrant of the town which had supposedly been destroyed in the soil stripping of 1970. The interpretative plots indicate extensive settlement, enclosures and field systems laid out between Watling Street and a previously un-located road heading towards the north-west. These findings when combined with those found further east and to the south appear to confirm a possible late Iron Age origin for the site with a reorganisation of the overall layout in the late 1st century AD. There is no apparent evidence of an early military facility being present to affect the rationale for development but we should remain cautious with such interpretative pronouncements as more

area remains to be surveyed than has been investigated and it is too early to state this as categorical fact. The number of round houses identified indicates a significant population or an extended period of habitation or a mixture of both possibilities. In addition the layout of the field systems is reminiscent of land tenure known as *strigatio* and *scamnatio* which reflects native organisation rather than an imposed approach like *centuriae* which denotes imperial land holding division of the landscape. The existence of such an extensive area of occupation within sight of the major Iron Age settlement excavated at DIRFT highlights the complexity of settlement distribution in this early period in the area raising many new interesting questions.

Right: CLASP magnetometer in use at Whitehall

The final season of large scale open area excavation was undertaken during June and July on the research excavation of the Roman villa at Whitehall Farm. Excavation on the initial larger bath house for the estate was completed and the area will be covered over and returned to pasture in September. This is not the end of fieldwork at Whitehall farm but it does signal the end of an era in terms of the month long excavation during the summer. Further investigation into the developmental and environmental aspects of the field systems and the location of the estate cemetery or burial plots will be continued as will exploration of the Iron Age antecedents of the settlement as time and opportunity affords. Undoubtedly this will form part of a larger strategic approach to the investigation and interpretation of Romano-British settlement in the locality for which Whitehall Farm has provided the core research paradigm.



Several late 3rd and early 4th century coins were retrieved from the suite of rooms and on the archaeological surfaces to the east of the building. A notable inclusion from those found in the building was a possible *foliis* of the emperor Maximianus - the colleague of Diocletian. Several shards from beakers and cups of Central Gaulish black-slipped ware and Trier black-slipped ware (Moselkeramik) were indicative of the strong economic continental link recorded previously in fieldwork relating to this late 3rd early 4th century AD period of occupation. The first written graffiti from the site, a letter R, was also identified on a fragment of the base of a greyware pot. It was probably the first letter of someone's name but unfortunately not enough of a second letter survived for us to hazard a guess as to the actual name of an inhabitant of Roman Whitehall.

Room 7 contained possibly the most interesting technical find from this year's excavation in that the under-floor drainage features of the sunken bath that occupied the space above the hypocaust revealed an interlinked drainage pipe for evacuating the dirty waste

water from the building into an external drain between Room 4 and 7. This is a fascinating insight into the complexity of the civil engineering aspects of bath house construction and maintenance.

A further demonstration of the overall complexity of the development of the bath house was the identification of a suite of three rooms from the initial phase of the building upon which Room 2 and 3 were later remodelled and constructed. These earlier rooms were not fully explored as it would have required the destruction of the hypocaust from the later heated rooms to do so and little of the early interiors other than the wall foundations could be seen to have survived archaeologically.

Further reconnaissance fieldwork has also continued towards identifying the Roman landscape in the survey associated with the Lactodurum Hinterland project and an intensive field walking and geophysical exercise was undertaken at Descote in the parish of Pattishall. Some assistance and support is also being supplied by CLASP members towards the archiving and evaluation of the important findings from the 1960's excavation of the Roman settlement at Woodburcote near Towcester which could reveal as much about site development in the area as Whitehall Farm has done for rural settlement near Bannaventa. Three other potential sites in Paulerspury have been identified by metal detecting and will be subject to further fieldwork in the future.

Stephen Young

Chair of Organising Committee

Having only assumed this role since the last meeting before this report has to be written there is little I can say as to progress of the Organising Committee from the perspective of the Chair. I must however reiterate remarks I made at that meeting to thank the outgoing Acting Chair, Jeremy Cooper, for performing the role for such a long time. As always Jeremy's involvement has been wise and taken the Committee forward with quiet and wise counsel. I hope that his work with CLASP and the Committee will continue to advise us on such things as information technology, media relations and photography.

During the year, as part of its role in bringing the member organisations together on issues of common interest, the Committee considered the issues around CLASP's relationship with new initiatives and projects and established the principles that should govern such relationships in future and be reflected in the new Research Strategy.

The Committee was pleased to receive an offer of financial assistance towards the purchase of GPS Survey Equipment from the Friends of the Daventry Museums which it intends to take up.

Two members, David Adams and Tony Kesten, attended a Conference at De Montfort about new technologies such as 3D printing in case these were of relevance. They concluded that, while very interesting, the costs were going to be too great for CLASP for the foreseeable future.

During the forthcoming year hopefully the Committee will drive the technical work of CLASP and ensure the involvement of as many members as possible, both group and individual, in both field work and documentary research. To have a thriving organisation it is essential that our membership do feel part of the ongoing work and have opportunity to make their contribution.

Dave Hayward

Finances

Accounts

CLASP Treasurer's Report AGM 2012

As usual I have tried to make the Accounts summary self explanatory.

After all the excitement of getting the Magnetometer last year, this year has been a relatively quiet one. One member this year has very generously made a donation of £500 to which we will be putting it to the cost of a GPS.

Like every other organisation we are looking for extra funds, as so much of our funding is earmarked for specific activities. So if anyone has any good ideas for raising funds we beg you not to be shy in coming forward.

Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project

Receipts & Expenditure Account for Year Ending 31 March 2012

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
B/f from 31.03.11 Bank	9,873.48		
Pd not on Statement	-400.00		
Cash in Hand	15.12	AGM Costs	90.00
	<u>9,488.60</u>		
Harpole Parish Council + cancelled cheque	1,400.00	Harpole spend	183.96
History Societies	165.00	Finds Processing	80.00
Other Donations	105.00	Website	83.48
Membership fees	370.00	Committee Room Hire	25.00
Bank Interest	16.58	Affiliation Fees	45.00
Profit from AGM	84.00	Insurance	505.98
Magnetometer Grants/ Donations	5.00 500.00	Other /Report/Repairs/ Batteries	40.75
Total Receipts	<u>2,645.58</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>1,054.17</u>
		Bank Statement	11,695.08
		Cash in Hand	43.42
		Paid not yet on Statement	-658.49
	<u>12,134.18</u>		<u>12,134.18</u>

At the year end then, the Harpole balance	£1,950.85
Roman Research Trust	£2,500.00
Lottery Heritage Fund	£5,930.64
Money raised by ourselves	<u>£698.52</u>
Thus usable funds	<u>£11,080.01</u>

Community Landscape Archaeology Project Accounts up to 2011/2012 Charity No. 1111667

04/04/2012

<u>Income</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>C'side Agency</u>	<u>Harpole PC</u>	<u>Other Donations</u>	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Balance</u>
To						To		
31.03.12 Harpole Heritage	9,400.00		1,400.00			31.03.12 Harpole Heritage	7,449.15	1,950.85
31.03.12 Lottery Heritage Fund	24,981.00					31.03.12 Lottery Heritage Fund	19,050.36	5,930.64
31.03.12 Roman Research Trust	6,000.00					31.03.12 Roman Research Trust	3,500.00	2,500.00
31.03.12 Ordinary	18,792.79				1,189.17	31.03.12 Ordinary	18,094.27	698.52
		0.00	1,400.00	0.00	1,189.17		48,093.78	11,080.01
Adjustments to	04/04/2012							59,173.79

Expenditure

		LP-LP										
		Total	Field Centre	Finds Processing	Geophys Survey	Website/ Leaflets	Travel Expenses	Committee Room Hire	Conting'cy Other	Affiliation Fees	Harpole	£
03.05.11	Dr M P Weaver chq cancelled											0.00
03.05.11	Nether Heyford Village Hall re Fete	10.00							10.00			10.00
03.05.11	D Scott re roof	61.50							30.75		30.75	61.50
05.05.11	Baptist Room re April 11	5.00						5.00				5.00
05.05.11	Harpole Bowls Club re Sept AGM	50.00						50.00				50.00
04.08.11	CBA	35.00								35.00		35.00
26.08.11	Dr M P Weaver re Paulerspury coins	80.00		80.00								80.00
31.08.11	A G Johns Aug 11 newsletter	29.12				29.12						29.12
12.09.11	Laurie Coleman speaker AGM	40.00							40.00			40.00
12.09.11	Harpole Bowls Club hire chq returned											0.00
12.09.11	Jeremy Cooper - Domain fees	23.66				23.66						23.66
14.09.11	Baptist Room 05.09.11	5.00						5.00				5.00
06.10.11	Milton Keynes Heritage Assoc 11/12	10.00								10.00		10.00
14.11.11	Baptist Room 14.11.11	5.00						5.00				5.00
21.02.12	Whitehall Roman Villa - Boxes Bags	152.51									152.51	152.51
27.02.12	AG Johns Feb 12 newsletter	30.70				30.70						30.70
13.02.12	Baptist Room 13.02.12	5.00						5.00				5.00
09.03.12	Towergate Insurance	505.98							505.98			505.98
09.03.12	Harpole - laminating pouches	0.70									0.70	0.70
14.03.12	Baptist Room 14.03.12	5.00						5.00				5.00

	1,054.17	0.00	80.00	0.00	83.48	0.00	75.00	586.73	45.00	183.96	1,054.17
* Latest Bank Statement	11,695.08										
* Banked not yet on Statement											
* Paid Not on Statement	-658.49										
* Cash in Hand	43.42	Actual Funds		11,080.01							
	12,134.18										

Auditor's Report

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP)

I report on the accounts of CLASP for the year ended 31 March 2012, which are set out on the attached page.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

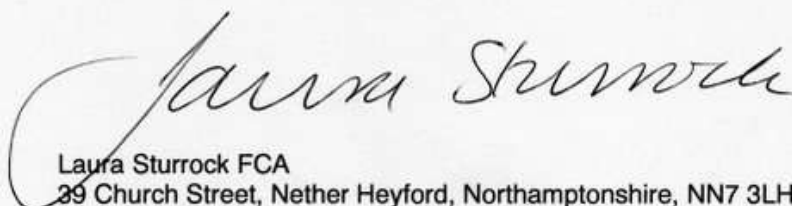
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Laura Sturrock FCA
29 Church Street, Nether Heyford, Northamptonshire, NN7 3LH
1 August 2012

Research and Planning

It is now nearly twelve months since I assumed the role of overseeing research and planning within CLASP. Progress has perhaps not been as fast as I hoped but a formal Research Strategy for CLASP is being finalised. Currently this is at the stage of crossing the T's and dotting the T's in the Organising Committee. The Strategy will hopefully be launched by the time of the AGM in September. Once this is in place, all work to be carried out under the name of CLASP or associated with it will have to be executed under this Strategy utilising the relevant procedure and proforma. This is not intended to create hindrance to work but to ensure that any work is carried out to appropriate standards and fulfils various strategies, both local and national, to ensure that work is relevant and contributes to the wider agenda.

I must make mention of some work that has been carried out during the past year, albeit that it will be reported on in detail elsewhere in this report. Firstly it is good that the second phase of Local People-Local Past is now virtually completed and is documented on the CLASP website. It is also appropriate to mention the Towcester Hinterland Project looking at relevant archaeological activity in that area. The investigation and collation of so many sites in that area will be very supportive of the Local People-Local Past project by identifying and highlighting both new and lost information. Lastly, whilst not a CLASP project itself but one we are associated with, the Barby Hill Project has been successful in identifying previously unknown Iron Age activity in the extreme north-west of the area. That project has also become aware of not insignificant Romano-British activity in the area that was previously unknown to CLASP.

I am also aware that work carried by our metal detecting members has been extremely useful not only in building on existing knowledge but also identifying new locations. Our members from this discipline are such a good example to the wider archaeological world with the professional way they carry out their research. I use the word 'research' intentionally here as their work is simply that.

On the question of planning it is essential that whatever we do is within both our logistical and expertise capabilities and we do not overstretch ourselves and that we keep to properly set timetables. This is something that the Organising Committee must oversee through the new Research Strategy.

Dave Hayward
July 2012

Membership

Julia Johns, membership secretary, reports that individual membership is 77 (with one more pending).

Participating Societies

Members of the participating societies are automatically associate members of CLASP - they enjoy the benefits of Individual Membership of CLASP but are not covered by CLASP's insurance for on-site activities, and may not vote at CLASP general meetings. Associate Members may become Individual Members by paying the appropriate subscription.

Blisworth Heritage Society
Brington History Society
Bugbrooke History Group
Daventry Local History Group
Flore Heritage Society
FOAM - Friends of Alderton Monuments
Friends of Daventry Museum
Harpole Heritage Group
History of Tiffield Society
Northamptonshire Artefacts Recovery Club (NARC)
Norton Northampton Portable Antiquities Search Team (NNPAST)
Towcester and District Local History Society
Weedon Bec History Society
Whitehall Farm Roman Villa and Landscape Project

News from the Societies

Bugbrooke History Group

Once again the Group has had a varied programme of meetings with topics ranging from the Suffragette Movement to The Battle of Naseby. In addition we have circulated copies of an enclosure map for 1756 and related it to our own knowledge of the village history. We also staged an exhibition of items illustrating the last eighty years of Royal Events as our contribution to the Village Jubilee Celebrations. People's personal recollections were recorded together with photographs where possible. As a Group we try to ensure that our village history is accurately recorded and believe that this includes recent years which are history in the making.

Alan Kent

Brington History Society

The Society was formed in 1980 when a small group of residents met to discuss their mutual interests in researching into local history. From these early origins the Society has

evolved into the best supported organisation within the parish. It has over 80 members and regularly draws more than 40 people to each of its meetings.

Each year the Society holds a winter programme of 7 meetings at which guest speakers talk about a wide range of subjects. This year there have been talks about the Duke of Wellington and his final battle; the Empress of Austria and her association with Cottesbrooke Hall; the secrets of Bletchley Park; Napoleon III; and, a talk about the many Roman settlements found within and nearby our parish. There are two regular features in our winter programme - a meeting when local residents reminisce about aspects of village life and our November social meeting when we hold our ever popular "Brington museum of mystery objects".

Each summer we hold two or three outings, often visiting locations or buildings relating to some of our previous winter talks – this summer members will be visiting Cottesbrooke Hall, Bletchley Park and the extensive Roman villa site at Nether Heyford.

In November 2009 Brington History Society commissioned the printing of the third edition of *Aspects of Brington*, a 220 page book written by local historian Stephen Mattingly which tells the history of Brington Parish including its connections with the Spencer and Washington families. As this third edition is now out of print, the Society arranged with the printers to produce a further 60 copies and these are now available. This latest edition, the fourth edition, includes a tribute to Stephen Mattingly, who died in January 2011. If you would like to purchase a copy of the new, fourth, edition then please telephone or email me and I will arrange delivery to you. The book costs £10.

Andrew Shaw
Secretary, Brington History Society
01604 770668 andrew.shaw4@btinternet.com

Friends of Alderton Monuments (FOAM)

No further archaeological work has been carried out at The Mount following on from the successful excavations in 2009 and 2010. However a Ground Probing Radar survey was commissioned and executed in March 2012. This covered an area of about 300 square meters. The result indicated the probable presence of further foundations beneath the ground in this area. A copy could be obtained from derek.batten@virgin.net. Work is being carried out to source funding for further excavations and to establish some sort of a Trust to take over the ownership of the Mount and thereby secure its future. In the summer of 2011 a successful production of "The Taming of the Shrew" took place on two nights.

Harpole

Due to a quick turn-around of crops we did not have a dig.

We had a visit to Quinton House, a private school, which is just along the road from Harpole, but no one had visited it. This is an old house with many historical features.

We raised money for our funds with a Lunch and a Dinner. Both were enjoyed by all who came. For many years we have helped out at the Harpole Scarecrow Festival catering for the many people who come to enjoy the scarecrows and our lovely village.

Over the year we have had interesting speakers, who have spoken on a wide range of subjects.

Our latest publication "FLIGHT LP826" - cost £8.50, researched and written by Patricia Betts - tells the story of a Wellington Bomber which crashed into Glassthorpe Hill with the loss of all lives on board. Copies of the book are available from Jennifer Smith: 01604 831294

Jennifer Smith
Harpole Heritage Group representative on the Clasp Organising Committee.

HoTS Activities 2012

During March, Fred Kay (from CLASP) led a team - including Tiffieldites – who used geophysics to scan the site of the Roman villa site. Both a magnetometer and a resistance meter were walked over the suspect area using a carefully laid out grid of squares. The interpretation is underway.



Using the Society's own broadcast quality recorder, interviews continue with older inhabitants of the Parish.

In the first half of 2012, HoTS has hosted 5 home speakers and had one 'away' trip.

In January Deborah Hayter, a lecturer at Oxford, explained how and why there are so many lost villages in the County. She summed up by grouping the reasons why as: Natural Causes; Murder; Suicide; and Euthanasia!!

Sue Constable, formerly the Shoe Heritage Office at Northampton Museum, talked us through 400 years of shoe fashion in February; understandably most of the surviving

examples are those belonging to the wealthy. Some snippets: shoes with heels weren't made in the UK till the 1580's; L & R footed shoes were rare until the 1850's.

In March, Pat Perkins gave a very personal talk about her family when its members lived in Tiffield for well over one hundred years. Rich and poor, good and bad, some with their "fifteen minutes of fame" – or of infamy.

From a local family view of local history to one of differing views across the globe of the same historical event. In April Captain Len Holder amused us with anecdotes of his voyages, mainly to the Far East. His conclusion was that the three main ways of looking at history are: how it affects you and your family; what the current mainstream view is by one's own culture; the view as seen by other cultures.

The resulting totality is likely to be pretty close to the truth.

In May we arranged an evening visit to 78 Derngate, where the house was remodelled during WW1 by the world-famous designer and architect, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, in his iconic Modernist style. The décor was a mixture of traditional and, shall we say, startling. Memorable certainly.

Jon-Paul Carr, from Northamptonshire Libraries & IS, illuminated us in June with a talk on Victorian inventors in Northamptonshire. Unsurprisingly many patents were for improvements to boot & shoe making machinery; some of which were still useful up to the point when the BSC factories closed.

Steve Jowers
Hon Chairman, HoTS

NARC

The past year has been a very busy one indeed for the club members, with many important finds, including several treasure items and a hoard of 8 silver coins from Edward 11's reign being recorded with PAS by club members.

Club members have also been involved in delivering

- 16 talks to interested groups, with over 800 people in attendance.
- 3 events involving display and exhibition material, where 1000+ visitors took time to visit our tables.
- 4 events in support of Cynthia Spencer Hospice

We have had 2 guest speakers, giving talks on 'The Milestone Society' and an archaeological community project in South Leicestershire.

Club members have

- continued to support the work at Whitehall,
- participated in a structured detecting survey in support of the Barby Hill project, and
- have recorded well over 700 finds this year with the PAS scheme.

So yet again it's been a very positive year for the Northamptonshire Artefact Recovery Club, and the next 12 months look just as interesting as we continue to enhance our excellent reputation.

Here's wishing all CLASP groups another successful 12 months in their endeavours.

Alan Standish
Chair

Norton, Northamptonshire Portable Antiquities Search Team (NN PAST)

NN PAST continues to work within the local community and to support other related bodies whenever we can.

The Team and the Village History Group supported the Norton Village Community Association at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations in April, exhibiting a wide range of finds from the parish in the Village Hall. Although it was a cold, windy and rather dull day, the event was very well supported by villagers and people from the surrounding area. Our exhibition being adjacent to the refreshment area resulted in considerable interest from the public who were amazed at the variety of things unearthed in such a small area as Norton. It is always nice to have the opportunity to talk with people at such events and hopefully inspire them to take an interest in not only metal detection but local history in general.

The team has continued to support CLASP both at the 'geo phys' which has taken place on a number of Friday mornings on fields at the Bannaventa Site, albeit primarily as observers, and at the Whitehall Roman Villa dig where assistance has been given both excavating and detecting

In August of 2011 NN PAST displayed a range of finds from the parish at an exhibition at Daventry Museum.

Detecting activities have been somewhat limited this year due mainly to poor weather over the winter and a large amount of the available land being planted with oil seed rape. However it is expected that this autumn will be more productive.

Not being deterred, team members have continued to work the grass lands with moderate success resulting in a number of very nice finds:

A silver Gordian III Antoninianus Radiate depicting Salus the Roman goddess of health which is in beautiful condition; a silver Republican denarius which is as yet to be correctly identified but which is also in beautiful condition; a copper alloy Hod Hill open worked type 1st century brooch and lastly a copper alloy twisted wire bracelet which was unearthed in the true old style archaeological method, courtesy of a very industrious rabbit which had kindly left it lying on the surface next to its warren. Thank you Thumper - we are indebted to you.

In conclusion NN PAST would like to acknowledge the support and cooperation of the landowners of Norton Parish who allow the team on their land and enable us to continue in our efforts to uncover the rich history of this unique area of Roman occupation.

Bill Wiggins

Towcester & District Local History Society (TDLHS)

Guest speakers continue to be the focus of the TDLHS monthly meetings and provide expert knowledge on a wide range of historical topics.

In celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee TDLHS held an exhibition featuring royal connections to Towcester. It was an ideal opportunity to record the reminiscences of the local community over the past 60 years.

Chipping Camden was the first destination of the annual outing and members enjoyed a guided tour of the town including a visit to the local museum. This was followed by a visit to Hidcote Manor Gardens and a talk on the history of the gardens.

Planning applications have been proposed for sites at Moat Lane, Towcester Southern Extension and Wood Burcote Court. The Society will continue to monitor and submit recommendations on safeguarding the environment and archaeology.

For the CBA's annual Festival of British Archaeology TDLHS organised a historical walk around Towcester covering the period of Roman to WWII. At the end of the walk, all participants gathered at the Brave Old Oak pub to enjoy a display on the history of the inn.

We received on behalf of CLASP the prestigious collection of David Hall's Romano British pottery from his many years of field walking in the county. Items have been catalogued by parish and stored in CLASP's temporary archive.

As part of the Lactodorum Hinterland Survey a report on the field walking and magnetometer surveys at Descote Close has been produced and presented to the Organising Committee and lodged with the HER.

Burcote Wood Farm Roman Villa Project under the auspices of CLASP is now underway. The Late Iron Age/Romano British settlement at Burcote Wood Farm is recognised as a key site in terms of understanding the development of Towcester hinterland. This site was excavated during the period 1972 – 1982 by Roy Turland. The wealth of his documented findings and artefacts is key to the research project. Our objective is to ensure its safe keeping and ultimately preservation. At his request his notes, drawing and physical artefacts will be brought up to the required standards for storage in any future county archaeological archive.

Georgina Boreham
Towcester & District Local History Society

Weedon

There isn't anything from Weedon this year, though Steve said that perhaps the test pits near the church may get done now the "big-dig" is done at Whitehall.

Julia Johns

Whitehall Roman Villa

What follows is a general impression from a digger's point of view. Moreover, it's from a digger who hasn't seen the Archaeological Director's official report yet. *You have been warned!*

The last-ever major dig at Whitehall Villa started and ended in terrible weather, but in between, a new area was stripped of topsoil and we began the search for the outer limits of the Villa complex as well as trying to answer some of the remaining questions about the 3rd/4th century bath-house on the lower part of the slope.

Test pits had been dug in the "new" area in previous years and we were not expecting to find any more buildings. Instead, we found lots of nails of all sizes in the soil north of the bath house, which suggested a workshop/industrial area. In the absence of our regular surveying team, the locations of the nails were plotted by a selection of novices who may not have learned to love "The Instrument," but did more or less manage to overcome their terror of it.

One of the nicest finds of the dig was a pot base with the letter “R” scratched into it. Writing materials have been found on site before, but as far as I’m aware, this is the first actual writing. Short but very sweet.

Although there were no new buildings, what seemed to be a wall foundation emerged lower down the slope. The CLASP magnetometer was put to work, and the diggers were divided into teams to search for the rest of the wall in three trial trenches unofficially christened Tom, Dick and Harry. It seems what had been found was a boundary wall, so possibly we have located the edge of the site – although it’s also been suggested that the wall might just be separating the bath house from something lower down the slope...

The mystery of the bath house structure was unravelled when it became clear that it must have had several incarnations, and that one of the heated areas now containing impressive stacks of hypocaust tiles had been built over the remains of other rooms.

Drainage has always been a problem on this site and we have had to disentangle the solutions put in by different generations of landowners. This year a row of wooden posts was found still standing on duty – although somewhat decayed - since Roman times, and the final surprise was the discovery of Roman drainpipes still in place below a hypocaust floor. As ever, our thanks are due to Nick Adams for welcoming and supporting both the excavation and the finds team who work throughout the year.

The excavations will soon be covered over and the site will become a field once more. Many people have said how much they will miss the annual dig, and this year’s T-shirt could not have had a better motto:

FORSAN ET HAEC OLIM MEMINISSE IUVABIT

which translates as something like, *Perhaps someday we will look back upon these things with joy.*

The good news, though, is that although there will be no major dig exclusively at Whitehall next year, there will be a month of concentrated fieldwork, at Whitehall, and other places nearby. This will include some digging and test pitting, and is likely to take place in the last two weeks of June and the first two of July. Details will appear on the Whitehall website - www.whitehallvilla.co.uk - early next year. This is also the place to go for more (and doubtless more accurate) information, updates, a blog, and superb photographs. Look out for the date of a meeting in November when our Archaeological Director will bring the Whitehall story up to date.

Ruth Downie