

# CLASP

## Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project

Registered Charity number 1111667



## Twelfth Annual Report

Year ending

31 August 2016

**from the Trustees**

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*Photo: Alan Standish, used with permission.*

## **1. Report from Chair of Trustees**

Hopefully you will agree with me that CLASP is now starting to push forward with strength and resonance. This has been as a result of different initiatives and energies. It is rewarding to note that our abilities and standards have been recognised by professional agencies to the effect that CLASP has been suggested as a possible provider of archaeological service for planning related investigation and excavation for small charities etc. As I write this report I can mention that we have just received an invitation to assist another charity with an excavation on a small urban site. Currently it seems probable that we will be progressing with this job thereby providing our members the opportunity to work for the first time in an urban environment.

Additionally CLASP was invited by MOLA to assist with a commercial investigation on a site at Upper Heyford. This was undertaken outside our normal seasonal period of activity, it was wet, muddy and cold but we maintained our standards through the mud and were subsequently congratulated by the professionals on the standard of our members' work. We hope to be able to repeat this exercise in due course.

Our work supporting the National Hillfort Mapping Project, which was undertaken by Oxford and Edinburgh Universities, entailed visiting and recording all of the hill-forts in the county. These range from Borough Hill at Daventry, the second largest nationally, to others that are no more than a memory having been obliterated by agriculture or development. This work was ably led by our colleague Gren Hatton.

Whilst I mention Gren Hatton it is appropriate to note that the project undertaken by the Barby Hill Archaeological Project has drawn to a close with the final reports being written to a high standard. Gren reported his project to the CLASP Archaeology Day. The project has kindly donated their equipment to CLASP.

I must now turn, in detail, to our first Archaeology Day. This was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2016 at the Icon Centre and was well attended by members of the public. The purpose of this event was to bring the three facets of modern archaeology together, academic, community and professional (or commercial). This was achieved by inviting professionals to talk on various commercial developments across NW Northamptonshire. The day was concluded with a talk by our Archaeological Director on the interface between community and professional archaeology and a panel discussion. This was chaired by Dr. Jeremy Taylor from Leicester University.

The day was recorded for a post event video, additionally a written record of the day will be produced as well. It is intended that the video will be launched at our AGM and open Meeting.

I must also record my thanks for superb support from Prologis, the developers of DIRFT and Apex Park, Cotswold Archaeology, MOLA, Daventry District Council and Mott MacDonald the consultants for Barby Hill Reservoir and RPS the consultants for DIRFT. Currently we intend to hold a similar day next year, probably based in the southern part of CLASP's area of interest.

Where next for CLASP?

Technically there are possible new projects in the pipeline that are being discussed with others, as soon as more details are available they will be taken to the Organising Committee for discussion and hopefully approval. Details will be circulated as soon as they have been finalised.

Away from archaeology itself we must 'futureproof' CLASP by recruiting a younger element who must be prepared to pick up the reins of our older members as they prepare for their second retirement! We need both members who can bring specific archaeological skills with them and those who bring wider skills and are prepared to learn archaeology in the field. I urge you all to get out and spread the word.

Thank you all for your efforts.

D. F. Hayward MBE

Chair of Trustees

## **2. Archaeological Director's Report**

CLASP has been active in the field providing opportunities and experience to develop the practical and interpretative skills required for recording and understanding our local archaeological resource. We continue to develop our outreach and networking options as the field work with the Museum of London Archaeology Unit and the day conference on promoting archaeology in your community organized by Chair of Trustees Dave Hayward demonstrates very well.

Besides undertaking a range of fieldwork this year that included the usual geophysical survey (particularly at Bannaventa), trial trenching and excavation, the greater focus on preparing and producing academic and popular articles and accounts for wider dissemination of the archaeological work initiated by CLASP has continued. In particular the following reports: Barn Close Geophysics, Thrupp Cable Trench Excavation and Upper Heyford Geophysics have been produced and are available on our website. In addition a fourth pamphlet has been produced outlining the work undertaken on the Iron Age settlement at Barby Hill by Gren Hatton and Barby Historical Society which continues to demonstrate our commitment to disseminating CLASP's Archaeological findings.

As last year, CLASP volunteers have also continued to undertake Post-excavation work on preparing and analysing the assemblages and field record on the Whitehall Farm Roman Villa Research Excavation. The post-excavation activities revolve around the digitisation of plans and sections for utilisation and interpretation in the GIS programme MapInfo - an essential tool in the visualisation of the archaeological record and the archiving of the photographic record. CLASP volunteers also continue to develop their practical skills with the geophysical equipment and it is our intention to build on this capability within CLASP for members to gain the ability and confidence to write certain elements of the interpretative reports.

An unexpected development since last year's report was the discovery by our metal detecting colleagues, Dave Derby and Alan Standish (NARC), of new finds associated with the location of the Post Roman and Early Anglo – Saxon cemetery at Whitehall. The site had

been extensively excavated mainly by CLASP volunteers several years ago and nine inhumations were recorded. The surface finds included a brooch and shield boss, the latter of which was left in situ for further archaeological exploration. Their discovery signified that the fieldwork undertaken, although meticulous, had failed to identify the full extent of the burial ground. In addition the chance discovery highlighted two important points: that modern agricultural practice continues to actively erode the subsoil and that this was posing an ongoing threat to the surviving archaeological stratigraphy.

CLASP's original exploratory test pitting of the site covered a significant area of the field. However the limitation of the methodological approach adopted for the test pits meant that graves may have evaded detection. At the time it appeared that we had identified the nucleus of the cemetery and that further outlying graves were unlikely. However the new finds demonstrate beyond doubt a number of other burials existed, denoting a more extensive distribution over a wider area. Even more intriguing is that this supports the possibilities previously considered of at least two focal points for burial or family groupings within the graveyard and the probability that other unidentified burials are waiting to be found. An exploratory field visit revealed that the artefacts were associated with two new graves both of which were consistent in date with those previously recorded. Therefore CLASP obtained a licence from the Home Office to exhume any connected skeletal material and the remains of the two individuals were recovered. These are currently being cleaned before submission to scientific analysis.

One burial was of an adolescent female which had been considerably damaged by the plough, decapitating the skeleton and crushing the skull most of which had been diffused into the surrounding plough soil. Her grave was orientated east/west and she was buried with a brooch, personal knife and blue glass bead consistent with the other excavated female inhumation 5<sup>th</sup> century. However the other inhumation was of a male lying on his back with a shield laid on his chest of which the iron shield boss and outer shield rivets had survived. This grave had been subjected to plough damage but was more intact due to its proximity to the other grave which had protected the remains to some extent. Typologically the shield boss can be quite closely dated to the late 6<sup>th</sup>/early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

These new burials not only increased the skeletal assemblage available for study from the Whitehall Farm Post Roman cemetery but they proved to be of greater significance than they first appeared. Indeed their excavation will enable us to re-examine the historical context of the site and obtain a greater understanding of the development of the cemetery through time. In short these inhumations prove that there were in fact two cemeteries of different periods associated with the Whitehall Farm site. Both the carbon dating from the earlier excavated skeletons and the dating of the material assemblages from all the burials indicate two relatively small cemeteries one belonging to the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century with the other in use in the late 6<sup>th</sup>/early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The first point to notice is that the burials of the second latter grave yard grouping lie immediately on top and across the southern area of the earlier one (approximately 0.5h) suggesting a degree of synchronicity of layout. Interestingly only in one case does a grave from the later cemetery cut through an earlier internment, however whether this is by design or chance is difficult to determine in relation to the overall layout of the wider burial distribution. Therefore the position of the earlier burials is respected by the latter ones.

This could be interpreted as a mystical and sacred regard for the area through an extended period of time. Crucially though, it should be noted that although the burial ground can be seen to be in use during both periods there is no sign of continuity between the two phases of internment. A gap of up to a hundred years between the active internments of bodies in either of the cemeteries has startling ramifications for any interpretation of the development of the site. The underlying archaeological profile distinguishing the graves groupings from one another also appears to confirm differences in layout, ritual observance and general burial practice.

Those of the 5<sup>th</sup> century are aligned east to west with a mixture of head positions at either end of the grave whilst those of the late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> lie north to south without demonstrating a preference for a head position at either end of the grave. The graves of the inhumations within the earliest cemetery were roughly lined and capped with stone although these were found to be much degraded by the plough. The range of inhumations included men; women and children imply a family or small clanship grouping. None of the graves provided evidence of wooden coffins with the body posture of the 5<sup>th</sup> century females indicating the bodies were laid on their side while the males were positioned lying flat on their backs. Every individual burial contains personal items usually an iron knife, sometimes weapons for the men and brooches and glass bead jewellery for the women, although a 'toasting fork' and elaborate belt buckle were also retrieved from a female grave.

Conservation of the brooch from the adolescent female internment identified the imprint of a cross stitched fabric which is an extremely rare survival of material recovered from Post Roman funerary assemblages. Only three other examples of roughly the same date are known from Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. CLASP's principal conservationist Dr Graham Morgan has been able to identify flax threads and to conclude that the fabric was most likely linen. This could mean that a choice of fabrics was available to local people other than just woollen garments which would go against currently accepted belief on the interpretation of dress for this period. The other possibility was that the linen was being used for burial shrouds in the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century grave yard at least for some of the inhumations.

Those graves associated with the late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century so far only include male skeletons and are characterised by their martial assemblages. Again no evidence of wooden coffins or even the earlier tradition of stone lined and capped graves was found. The skeletons of the men are laid on their backs with each individual buried with a personal knife and a piece of military equipment; in one grave a sword whilst another contained a shield. The most important factor only one piece of equipment was included in each burial possibly denoting a tokenistic approach to deposition. This being said the equipment itself was of good quality with the sword blade having a steel edge and the shield boss an intricate three piece construction indicative of a skilled manufacturing process beyond the capacity of a local farming community. These burials are best interpreted as representing the arrival of the first English migrants into the area from Mercia after the collapse of British power in the region.

The earlier mid 5<sup>th</sup> century AD burial group probably are symptomatic of a mixed Christian/Pagan rite whilst the latter late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD appear to be out and out pagan in

their funerary tradition. One might expect that the sequence should be the other way round but there is a perfectly reasonable explanation to account for this apparent conundrum. The original burials are probably those of Post Roman '*foderati*' whose funeral rite adopts an element of local tradition specifically in this case the orientation of burials. These treaty troops, probably of continental origin, were brought in to help defend surviving estates that formed part of a nominally Christian enclave that might have eventually become part of the British kingdom of '*Calchfynedd*'.

The battle of Bedford in 571AD saw the demise of this eastern British power base and the eventual infiltration of central Northamptonshire and the watershed of the River Nene by English migrants in the succeeding fifty years. Archaeologically speaking the late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century cemetery of inhumations are aligned north to south. The date of these burials is consistent with the rise of the kingdom of Mercia during the early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. The kingdom is known to have remained pagan until the death of King Penda in 655 AD.

Subsequently during this summer more trial trenching was undertaken in an attempt to find further burials before any more inhumations were disturbed by the plough. This resulted in the location and excavation of a further complete grave of the late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century. The skull had been crushed by modern cultivation but otherwise the grave was undisturbed. This individual was a male whose grave goods included a spear and shield boss both of which were recovered and will be conserved. Undoubtedly, this demonstrated that potentially there could be several other internments surviving in the general area which are under threat and we will return to the site next year to continue our search and minimise any further destruction of the surviving archaeology.

The fieldwork on the Deserted Medieval Village of Thrupp undertaken in the last two years resulted in further exploratory excavation during this summer initially to achieve a greater understanding of the numerous anomalies located in our extensive geophysical survey of the area. We need to remember that Thrupp is of particular interest because of its proximity to Bannaventa and for the potential connection between the settlements in relation to continuity and mobility of occupation during the Dark Age and Early Medieval period. This year's 69m trial trench revealed several tenements and a significant trackway probably belonging to the demolition and clearance of the township in 1489 by Daventry Priory in its pursuit of large scale sheep farming. It is rare to be able to excavate the remains of a medieval street and these tenements of 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century date in association with a possible chapel should prove to be extremely illuminating in the future.

The blade retrieved from last year's trial trenching at Thrupp has been conserved and the initial interpretation of the object as a Saxon short sword or seax confirmed. The X ray clearly shows the forge welded steel edge applied to the blade and a decorative 'dog tooth' patterning is visible on the interface between the steel edge and the iron blade. Saxon short swords are rare finds and hopefully when this object and the other artefacts from Whitehall Farm are examined by a specialist more information may be available concerning its possible date range.

CLASP volunteers have also been involved in an archaeological collaboration with commercial archaeologists from the Museum of London Archaeological Service on the site of a Roman Settlement at Upper Heyford. Following the sharing of information at an earlier stage of investigation CLASP members were offered the chance of further involvement

once large scale open area excavation got underway.

Individual members have had not only the opportunity to excavate with professional archaeologists on the site in advance of the construction of the Flore by pass but also to take part in providing additional geophysical survey regarding the extent of the site beyond that available under the development brief. CLASP will also be involved in the Post Excavation work of analysing the pottery and small find assemblages which should also enhance our own more extensive record of Roman settlement within the area.

The Upper Heyford site consisted of a series of enclosure and field boundaries probably representing different phases of activity. Several pits and a possible courtyard surface were also excavated. Initial on site analyses of the pottery and coins suggest a 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD occupation with a focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries consistent with the neighbouring settlements already examined by CLASP. Unfortunately a significant part of the central area of the site had been destroyed during the construction of the present M1. Subsequently it will be difficult to understand and characterize the function of the site particularly if the domestic areas of occupation have been destroyed by the motorway. On a more optimistic note the CLASP geophysical survey has located the layout of a previously unknown series of extensive field and enclosure boundaries (0.5h) to the north of the motorway. These findings are indicative of a type of landscape development called a ladder settlement and this may well be an example of a smaller scale of settlement to be found in the water shed of the River Nene. Upper Heyford's interest lying in the fact that it may represent another as yet not understood type of settlement that would have serviced the larger villa estates we have studied elsewhere in this area in greater depth.

I think this has been a great initiative which has provided a wide range of archaeological opportunities and the chance to show our skills and capabilities. It has enabled individuals to see field work in a different way and for those involved to enhance their archaeological experience. I also believe it has made commercial archaeologists more aware of the value and worth of community archaeological groups like ours in helping to record the heritage resource. I therefore hope there will be opportunities to repeat such collaborations on local sites in the future.

Stephen Young

Archaeological Director

### **3. Report from Chair of Organising Committee**

The three main roles of the Committee are to

- Plan, arrange and monitor the practical archaeological activities of CLASP.
- Take responsibility for specific activities and projects as delegated to it by the Executive Committee, particularly those contained within the CLASP Strategy Document and its relevant supporting sub-strategies.
- Ensure effective communication between CLASP's official bodies and its member

organisations and individual and associate members in support of CLASP's Constitutional Objective "TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE SUBJECT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, IN WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE."

In the CLASP financial year to end March 2016, the Committee met five times. Representatives from most of CLASP's affiliate societies attended the meetings. All affiliate groups are encouraged to send a representative. Meetings are now being held at Norton Church, the potential future site for the display of CLASP's artefacts.

Subjects covered at the meetings included

- Agreeing a policy for the retention and storage of artefacts
- Planning for the 2015 AGM
- Decision to place display boards in local libraries
- Recommendation that events be held to increase the awareness of CLASP
- Briefing on how to use LIDAR to identify potential archaeological features

Areas of future focus include:

- How we can most effectively communicate to the CLASP membership via the website, newsletters and other means.
- How we can increase the membership of CLASP.
- Supporting the Trustees in creating an environment to support the physical and digital storage and display of our artefacts.

By the time of the AGM members will have had the opportunity to be involved in two projects at Whitehall and Thrupp and we will hear about these from Steve Young. In November, some of us took the opportunity to work under the professional direction of MOLA at their excavation at Upper Heyford. This proved beneficial to both MOLA and CLASP and we look forward to future opportunities of working together.

The Organising Committee provided support to the successful July 2016 CLASP Archaeology day attended by nearly 150 persons at which professionals talked about projects in the locality. Dave Hayward, Chair of Trustees masterminded the day, finding speakers, sponsorship and the location and handling the publicity. I think it is important to note Dave's enormous contribution to the success of the day.

Rob Close

Chair of Organising Committee

#### **4. Membership Report**

CLASP currently has 45 Individual Members and 14 Groups.

Julia Johns

Membership secretary

## 5. Treasurer's Report

The following details were submitted by the Treasurer, Angela Evans, and reviewed by Rob Close:

### CLASP Treasurer's Report AGM 2015/16

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

#### Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project

Receipts & Expenditure Account for Year Ending 31 March 2016

#### Receipts

B/f from 31.03.14 Bank	13,055.12
Pd not on Statement	-32.93
Cash in Hand	3.41
	<u>13,025.60</u>

Harpole Parish Council	1,000.00
History Societies	110.00
Other Donations	1,035.00
Membership Donations	510.00
Bank Interest	6.33
Income from AGM	101.10
Marketing Funds/Leaflets	480.00
Magnetometry Donations	660.00
Cancelled cheques	32.93
For use of Projector	10.00
Total Receipts	<u>3,945.36</u>

16,970.96

#### Expenditure

Insurance	521.36
Harpole spend	6.17
Finds Processing/Bannavent	131.48
Website & Leaflets	121.01
Committee Room Hire	25.00
Affiliation Fees	84.00
AGM Costs	85.00
Marketing Funds/Leaflets	460.00
Mag'try Travel Expenses	100.00
Other	128.58
Container	2,388.00
Total Expenditure	<u>4,050.60</u>

Bank Statement	12,963.62
Cash in Hand	15.00
Paid not yet on Statement	-58.26
	<u>16,970.96</u>

At the year end then, the Harpole balance	£2,100.00
Roman Research Trust	£2,500.00
Lottery Heritage Fund	£2,653.48
Money raised by ourselves	£793.66
GPS	£707.49
Marketing Funds	£180.00
Money raised by Magntometer	£3,985.73
Thus usable funds	<u>£12920.36</u>









Community Landscape Archaeology Project Accounts up to 2014/2015 Charity No. 1111667

08/04/2016

Income	Total	C'side Agency	Harpole PC Donations	Other Donations	Ordinary	Expenditure To	Total	Balance
31.03.15 Harpole Heritage	11,100.00		700.00			31.03.15 Harpole Heritage	9,000.00	2,100.00
31.03.15 Heritage Lottery Fund	24,281.00				300.00	31.03.15 Lottery Heritage Fund	21,627.52	2,653.48
31.03.15 Roman Research Trust	6,000.00					31.03.15 Roman Research Trust	3,500.00	2,500.00
31.03.15 Ordinary	23,270.05				2,599.02	31.03.15 Ordinary	22,476.39	793.66
Magnotometer	4,425.00				3,225.00	Magnotometer	439.27	3,985.73
GPS	1,000.00				1,000.00	GPS	292.51	707.49
Marketing	870.00				870.00	Marketing	690.00	180.00
	70,946.05	0.00	700.00	0.00	7,994.02		58,025.69	12,920.36
								70,946.05

Adjustments to 08/04/2016

CLASP

CAPITAL ITEMS REPORT 2015/16

Items Purchased by CLASP

<u>Purchased</u>		Purchase Price	
		<u>£</u>	
09.03.07	Projector	598.88	nrv
10.03.07	Computer	399.15	nrv
28.02.07	PA System	85.10	nrv
10.09.14	GPS	249.95	nrv

	<u>Items Still of Value</u>		Value 15/16	
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	
28.01.11	Magnetometer	10% Dep p.a.	7,576.00	4,475.00
11.11.15	Container	10% Dep p.a.	1,990.00	1,791.00
				<u>6,266.00</u>

We have a few other items of no residual value due to age ie over 30 years old, they were donated by a gentleman who has since died.

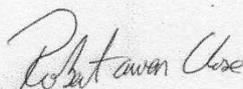
**Independent review of the Report and Accounts for CLASP – year ended 31/3/2016**

The trustees of CLASP consider that an audit is not required for the year ending 31/3/2016 and that an independent review is sufficient.

Although I am Chairman of CLASP's Organisation Committee, I am not directly involved in the financial decisions of the Trustees nor involved in any management of the Accounts by the Treasurer. Hence it was deemed that I able to conduct an independent review.

I am not a member of a recognised accounting body but I do have considerable experience in financial management.

I have reviewed all receipts relating to donations and to expenditures and reconciled them all to the bank account, implied cash book and creditors account. Whilst I would have accounted for a few items differently these have no material effect and the balances of the individual sub-accounts are accurate.



**Robert Close** OBE  
BA, MSc, ACIB

25<sup>th</sup> July 2016