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Newsletter**



CLASP ROUND BRITAIN GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

Margaret MacIntosh won the £20 prize by answering 43 out of the 45 questions correctly. Total funds raised with this questionnaire so far is £90 with more expected.

The CLASP Organising Committee wish to express their thanks to Dr Martin Weaver for his sponsorship and patronage of this third issue of the CLASP newsletter.

This newsletter is produced and distributed by the CLASP Organising Committee members. Items for possible inclusion in the next edition should be submitted by 10th June 2006 via email to jane@pigyard.com or phone Jane McCarthy the Editor on 01604 830321 or Kate the Chairman on 07703 548662. This third issue was printed in January 2006.



Website : www.claspweb.org.uk
Charity No. 1111667

CLASP Community Landscape & Archaeology Survey Project NEWSLETTER



Local Heritage initiative ISSUE 3

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Happy New Year for 2006 - it hardly seems possible that we are already on our third CLASP newsletter. I am pleased to say that we have had a very busy six months since June: after a bit of a break in August to recover from the Whitehall dig, we had an opportunity to carry out some field walking and a metal detecting survey at Bannaventa. Several members managed to come along to help and were rewarded with an interesting and exciting time in the sunshine - a bit different to the similar survey earlier in the year which was a little chilly!

We also managed to do some field walking at Sharoah, Harlestone. Unfortunately, we were limited to just a few days due to pressures of work, farming and the weather. More recently we also undertook a small scale excavation in Mans Head Wood, Bannaventa thanks to the storms earlier in the year that had caused some of the large trees to fall, the roots having exposed some interesting Roman stone. This work was done over two days, including a Saturday which allowed those members who are in full time employment to have a chance to join in - although I fear some had a prior commitment to Christmas shopping.

I am delighted to report that, thanks to the generosity of Neil Turner, we have managed to fund production of a CLASP T shirt. Our initial investment will soon be recouped through sales and it is anticipated that we will then gain some profits to help with more projects. So, for those of you who did not get a CLASP T shirt from Santa please see our advert for details of how to get yours.

I am very pleased to report that our application to become a registered charity has been successful - this will open many more doors for us and is a real boost to the Group. A big thank you to Jeremy Cooper for his hard work on this; Jeremy has also been busy updating the website with data for the Local People - Local Past project which I hope you have all been looking at.



Kate at Mans Head Wood 'Doing her stuff'

Finally I would like to say thank you to all our members - I know I've said it before but your membership fees and support do make a big difference to our projects. Enjoy the rest of your newsletter and do keep in touch with our projects through the website if you can.

Kate Weaver
Chair - Organising Committee

The View From The Archaeological Director.

It has been a busy time since the last newsletter and although fieldwork has been restricted to a limited number of sites the scope of the work carried out continues to illuminate our understanding of the Roman landscape in the local study area. The focus for the most recent initiatives have centred on the continuation of the survey work at the Roman small town of Bannaventa and on another large courtyard villa site in Harlestone parish. In addition members have had the opportunity to be involved in some exploratory excavation work and I have pursued opportunities for obtaining grant aided funding. CLASP will also be making representation about community archaeology to the committee stage of the proposed new heritage bill. I am also personally extremely pleased that CLASP is now a fully registered charitable body, which will help immensely in raising future funding.

Unfortunately it was difficult for us to be proactive in setting our fieldworking priorities for the autumn. We were already committed to undertaking a field-walking survey on the Roman site at Sharoah Field, Harlestone. However an unexpected switch in the agricultural management of the core area of

Organising Committee - Secretarial Report

Since my contribution to the last Newsletter I view CLASP as having entered a consolidation phase. Our efforts to achieve Charitable Status have been successful thanks in no small part to the hard work of Jeremy COOPER. The Executive Committee formed by the Trustees has become more established and the delineation of responsibilities between the Organising Committee and them has become clearer. They have invited the Chair of this Committee and myself to attend their meetings as observers. Our Annual Open Meeting at Bugbrooke was well attended and the presentation on various aspects of Romano-British settlement in the Nene Valley in Northamptonshire was very informative and helpful in our understanding of the Landscape at that time. Please note in your diaries that the date for this year's meeting is 12th September, the venue and speakers are yet to be confirmed. Copies of the Annual Report were circulated to all member organisations and placed in Northampton Central Library and the County Record Office.

Your Committee has identified the need for an ongoing programme of training for our membership. It is hoped that the first course in desktop assessment of potential sites of archaeological interest will commence in late 2006. If there is any training you would like CLASP to consider then please pass your thoughts to your representative on the Organising Committee.

For those of you with access to the Internet then please visit our website www.claspweb.org.uk to view latest developments, including minutes of meetings and other activities, not least the technical reports for the 'Local People-Local Past' project. If you are not a member of the CLASP emailing group then I urge you to join, details can be found on the website.

Dave Hayward
January 2006



Report from Whitehall Roman Villa & Landscape Project

At Whitehall Roman Villa we continue to process finds from last summer's excavation on Tuesday afternoons and we have had a good number of volunteers helping to do this (most of whom I am pleased to report are individual CLASP members). We have made good progress and this means we will have time before this year's dig to look further at our small finds and carry out more detailed work on our general finds.

We had a great day out for our Christmas trip in December, when 25 of us went to Alcester Roman Museum, followed by Warwick Museum and a very interesting visit to the Lord Leycester Hospital in Warwick. Of course, this was interspersed with a lovely lunch at ASK! The Lord Leycester Hospital was so good another trip is planned for May, when we will be able to include their gardens in our tour. We are also planning a trip to look at fossils in a quarry near Rugby so a busy Spring for us all.



Steve Young at Whitehall Farm processing finds with Alan Priestly, Margaret MacIntosh with Pam & Alan Watson in the foreground

We will be back at Whitehall Farm on Tuesday afternoons from 17th January, 1.00 pm onwards, so, if you have a few hours to spare please come along to join us.

Kate Weaver
Whitehall Representative

Bannaventa from arable to long term pasture meant it became imperative to undertake a detailed study of the area affected. Undoubtedly for the core area of Bannaventa (Shawney field) this year will be the last opportunity to archaeologically investigate the site by systematic fieldwalking and quite possibly for our lifetime. However there are positive aspects to this situation, we have been able to fieldwalk the most interesting areas, the site is now safe from unrecorded exploitation and the pasture provides perfect conditions for extensive geophysical survey as funds become available.

A second very successful metal detecting survey was undertaken by PAST in conjunction with ourselves. Again nearly three hundred coins were retrieved along with other artefacts. These coins and those recovered last year form an assemblage of over six hundred items which once analysed will provide one of the most detailed chronological profiles and distribution patterns of any Roman small town in Britain. We will also be able to add to this database many other metal detected finds, including coins, found in the surrounding area to give a very comprehensive picture of the development of this settlement. Over 5,000 sherds were recovered during the fieldwalking survey making the total assemblage retrieved from the accessible areas of the site around the 20,000 mark. The total area investigated during survey covers nearly four hectares and completely encompasses the walled core of the town to the west of the A5 (Watling Street). Once the geophysical survey has been carried out the evidence obtained from Bannaventa will not only reveal the story of the site but it will also contribute in a major way to the general interpretation of Roman small towns.

Initial analysis of the finds confirms our previous belief about the development of Bannaventa from the 1st to 4th centuries AD. The coins are predominately 3rd and 4th centuries although a few earlier ones were located. Dr Martin Weaver has conserved all of the coins and they will be examined by Dr Mark Curteis who identified those found during the previous survey.



Metal Detectorists of NN PAST at Bannaventa

Unfortunately because of the need to concentrate our effort on one area of the site and commitments elsewhere we were unable to carry out an investigation of another part of the Roman town which will have to wait until next year (Manshead Field). Finds made in a wooded copse to the south west of the site enable some test pitting to be undertaken to establish the extent of the town in this area. Although we could not identify a defensive ditch to go with a very visible pronounced bank we did discover some unidentifiable archaeological features and material including coins of Roman date.



**Volunteers at Mans Head Wood,
Roy, Celia and Marcus**

A survey undertaken by Little Brington Historical Society and other members of CLASP enabled us to explore a third major Roman site in Harlestone parish. Several thousand ceramic roof and floor tile fragments and over 4,000 sherds, two 4th century AD Roman coins and two glass beads were recovered during the fieldwalking survey. Nearly 4 hectares were investigated and the scatters of stone debris suggested a large villa complex. Boxflue tiles were also found indicating the utilisation of at least one hypocaust system (under floor heating) in the construction of the building. All of the material from this site, which was partially excavated or trial trenched in 1929 is currently being processed and cleaned.

Initial examination of the pottery evidence is consistent with the material found on adjacent sites. The assemblage appears to support the development of a Romanised way of life in the late 1st to mid 2nd century AD followed by a massive expansion in activity during the 2nd and early 3rd century AD.

We have been moderately successful in attracting some funding and I have been able to secure £3,000 from the Roman Research Group. This money will partly be used to fund the coin analysis and the initial geophysical surveying required to continue the work at Bannaventa. I have also started a dialogue with English Heritage about the possibility of further funding or support with a monograph on the site.

Conservation update

Since the last newsletter we have had some very exciting conservation projects.

From Whitehall, a Roman personal knife, and a wooden Roman wax writing tablet from the 2003 dig, a Saxon period iron belt buckle which still has fragments of leather attached, preserved by the iron corrosion products.



Saxon Buckle

The buckle and pin has a hatched decoration common in the 6th-7th centuries.

The most unusual find however was a Saxon two pronged iron fork; a possibly hitherto unknown (?) artefact. This was found in the grave of a woman and must have been an important personal possession.



Saxon iron fork

It is interesting that the tines of the fork are curved like the forks we have today, although it is small in size I think it unlikely that this fork was used for eating, I would suggest that it was more likely used to hold meat whilst carving.

The Bannaventa project produced a large number of coins to be cleaned and stabilised, mainly found by the good people of PAST during the metal detecting/field crawling survey.

As well as coins we had other interesting finds that may possibly be an early Roman iron seal ring, a rare find.

The recent Mans Head wood mini-dig also produced some interesting finds such as an intriguing trowel shaped piece of metal that I am working on now – will keep you posted.

Dr Martin P Weaver
Conservation and restoration specialist.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT DIARY DATES CONTACT:

Norton Northampton PAST	Brian Ives	01604 719288
Weedon Bec History Society	Julia Johns	01327 341729
Flore Heritage Society	Alan Priestley	01327 349594
Brington History Society	Andrew Shaw	01604 770668
Harpole Heritage Group	Jennifer Smith	01604 831294
Whitehall Farm Roman Villa & Landscape Project	Kate Weaver	07703 548662
Towcester & District Local History Society	Martin Winterton	01327 830876
Bugbrooke History Society	Alan Kent	01604 830518

CALLING ALL CLASP MEMBERS

Have you renewed your CLASP membership yet??

YES

Then you should have received a CLASP membership card. This card has this year's password for the member's area of the website: www.claspweb.org.uk
If you have renewed but not received your card contact the Membership Secretary :

JULIA JOHNS on 01327 341729

NO I have not renewed my membership!

Why on earth not??

For only £5.00 you receive invaluable information about what is happening around Northamptonshire.

Membership fees were due in September 2005.

Please contact Julia **TODAY**

The final growth of the site reflected in the development of the villa during the mid 3rd to 4th century AD. I noted in a previous newsletter that during aerial reconnaissance in the recent past I had identified a large courtyard villa from the air but had been unable to photograph the site. The fieldwalking survey indicates to me that the site under investigation is connected to the settlement seen from the air and I'm sure geophysical survey will verify my claim.



**Colin Evans & Brian Culling at
Bannaventa**

The potential for fieldwork is still as great as ever and next autumn should give us plenty of opportunities for fieldwork. However in the short term opportunities maybe restricted, as our first publication on the Whitehall Farm villa excavation has to take priority during the spring and early summer. There is still a need to process material and anyone wishing to get involved should contact Kate or myself.

Finally I would like to urge you to look at and try out our website for the project Local People: Local Past (www.Claspsweb.org.uk). I know Jeremy our webmaster would appreciate some feed back.

Steve Young
Archeaological Director

HARPOLE HERITAGE GROUP

Archaeology in Harpole has been very quiet during the last few months, but we have plans to do field walking and geo-physical survey in a field adjacent to Harpit on the A45.

WATCH THIS SPACE

Jennifer Smith

Diary of Events for CLASP Groups from January 2006

This is not a totally comprehensive list, see the contact list for up to date information.

Date	Time	Subject	Village	Group
Thursday 26th January	7.30 pm	The Canal system with Reference to Bugbrooke By Geoffrey Starmer	Community Centre, Camp Close, Bugbrooke	Bugbrooke History Society
Monday 30th January	7.30 pm	Iron Working near Weedon By Geoffrey Starmer	School Room, United Reformed Church, Weedon	Weedon Bec History Society
Wednesday 1st February	7.45 pm	War Memorials in Northamptonshire By Neil Eaton	The Chapel School Room, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Wednesday 8th February	7.30 pm	A Monumental Love- Eleanor of Castille & The Eleanor Crosses By Chris Blythe	The Riverside Centre Islington Road, Towcester £2 visitors (incl drink)	Towcester & District Local History Society
Thursday 9th February	7.30 pm	Medals by Tanky Turner	Methodist Chapel Harpole £1.50 visitors	Harpole Heritage Group
Monday 20th Febru- ary	8.00 pm	A Countrymans Tales By David Banner	The Reading Room Great Brington	Brington History Society
Wednesday 1st March	7.45 pm	Technology on Country House Estates By Geoffrey Starmer	The Chapel School Room, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Wednesday 8th March	7.30 8.15 pm	A.G.M. Alderton Discoveries By John Kleine	The Riverside Centre, Islington Road, Towcester	Towcester & District Local History Society
Thursday 9th March	7.30 pm	Derngate Theatre Trust Speaker	Methodist Chapel, Harpole	Harpole Heritage Group
Monday 20th March	8.00 pm	Looking Back: Villagers recall Life 50 years ago.	The Reading Room, Great Brington	Brington History Society

Date	Time	Subject	Village	Group
Monday 27th March	7.30 pm	Boudicca’s Last Battle by Martin Marix Evans	School Room, United Reformed Church, Weedon	Weedon Bec History Society
Wednesday 5th April	7.45 pm	The Royal Ordnance Depot Weedon by Mike Rumbold	The Chapel School Room, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Monday 13th April	7.30 pm	Gorges Mansion House Alderton by John Kleine	Methodist Chapel, Harpole	Harpole Heritage Group
Monday 24th April	8.00 pm	The Treshams & their Buildings by Mark Bradshaw	The Reading Room Great Brington	Brington History Society
Monday 24th April	7.30 pm	Delapre Abbey By Colin Spears	School Room, United Reformed Church, Weedon	Weedon Bec History Society
Wednesday 3rd May	7.45 pm	Boddington by Barbara Hornby	The Chapel School Room, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Thursday 11th May	7.30 pm	A.G.M. followed by Designer Beads by Lilian Harper	Methodist Chapel, Harpole	Harpole Heritage Group
Wednesday 7th June	A Walk Around Boddington For details contact John Smith 01327 340387			Flore Heritage Society
Whitehall Roman Villa Dig Dates Monday 26th June to Friday 21st July. Digging will be from Monday to Friday only these weeks. More details available from Kate Weaver 07703 548662 or email Katemkweaver@aol.com				
Tuesday 12th Septem- ber	Time To be ar- ranged	CLASP A.G.M.	Venue & Speakers to be confirmed	CLASP