



CLASP

Community Landscape &
Archæology Survey Project

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667



August 2007, Issue 6

As many of you will know from the grapevine, Jane has retired from producing the CLASP Newsletter and Julia Johns, my wife, has got me involved in my old age! I am sure you all thank Jane for the effort she has put in and while my knowledge of archæology is zilch, I will endeavour to produce editorial that I receive within deadlines agreed with your committee.

The Organising Committee has decided that in order to reduce costs, the newsletter will in future be sent by email (pics etc in full colour) to all CLASP members having an email address. If you are on email, but would prefer to receive a printed copy (in B/W), please let me know (tony@tonyjohs.co.uk) or by post to the address below. The newsletter will also be included in the 'Members Only' area of the CLASP website; 5 months after publication, the newsletter will also appear in the 'Spoilheap' area where anyone can view it."

If you change or have changed your email address, it is vital Tony knows the up to date version!

Annual General Meeting

The CLASP AGM will be held on Tuesday, September 18th at 7.00 pm in the Riverside Centre, Islington Road, Towcester, NN12 7AU.

(See page 2 for Agenda, accompanying notes and details of the Public Open Meeting to follow).

Please renew your membership during September or at the AGM and let Julia have a cheque payable to CLASP, value £5, by hand or post to Julia Johns, 7 Eton Close, Weedon, Northants, NN7 4PJ. A form is enclosed or can be downloaded from the CLASP website. This will ensure that members' contact details including email addresses are up to date.

AGM Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last AGM, September 12 2006
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Appointment of Trustees*
8. Appointment of Officers: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
9. AOB

*Please note that nominations for appointment to the Trustees must be received by the Secretary, R Downie, 21 Stacey Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5DN prior to the AGM.

The notice must be signed by a member entitled to vote at the AGM, ie a member of CLASP or an organisation approved by the Trustees.

It must state the member's intention to propose the appointment of a person as a Trustee or as an officer.

Following the Annual General Meeting there will be a public Open Meeting with the theme:

Lactodorum and Bannaventa, The Roman Towns of the Northamptonshire Watling Street

Lactodorum The current excavations at Bury Mount, Towcester

Speaker: Iain Snoden – Northants Archæology

Recent archæological investigations at Bannaventa

Speaker: Stephen Young – CLASP Archæological Director

Admission is free but any individual donations will be welcome

Refreshments

Raffle

The view from the Archæological Director:

Since my comments in the last newsletter there is little more of substance to report on any of the current initiatives involving CLASP. However a great deal of field-work is being planned for the late summer and autumn of 2007. The scope of the fieldwork will add immensely to our current understanding of the Bannaventa / Lactodurum hinterland and offer exciting challenges which I am sure will highlight a variety of new directions for our research to follow.

We have been extremely fortunate to secure a second grant of £3,000 from the Roman Research Trust which will enable CLASP to continue its ambitious geo-physical survey of Bannaventa. I think this continued financial support demonstrates the importance attached to our activities by those interested in Romano-British studies. In particular, I hope this money will allow us to complete a magnetometer survey of the entire scheduled area which is between a third and a half of the entire site. One of the most important initiatives currently being planned for late August is the re-scheduled field walking of Manshead Field on the site of the Roman town of Bannaventa. This field now constitutes the only remaining large area of the site that is under arable cultivation and available for investigation. I expect us to field walk about 5 hectares of the field and this will be done in conjunction with the usual recorded metal detecting survey.

Once the large scale field walking exercise has been completed, we will undertake some 'test pitting' on a small Roman rural settlement in the parish of Gayton. It is one of three settlements that are available for study that lie within a kilometre of each other in Gayton and Tiffield parishes all of which will require field walking, hopefully in October and November. An initial analysis of the pottery from the Gayton site indicated that the settlement was particularly active during the late 1st to early 2nd century with 61% of the diagnostically datable pottery identified as belonging to this period. Although the settlement undoubtedly flourished into the 2nd and early 3rd centuries it is interesting that the diagnostically datable material is only 36% of the total assemblage and approximately 50% of that available in the previous period. In the late Roman period of the mid 3rd to 4th centuries AD, associated pottery accounts for only 2% of the remaining sherds. Unlike the sites in the Bannaventa area, the chronological accent is on the early Roman period as opposed to the development of Romanisation during the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries AD. Should this result prove to be the 'norm' for the site profiles around Towcester, then we can start to see that the 'imperial experience' is going to be different across each area.

The planned work will enable us to examine in more detail the archæological context of the material retrieved during last year's field walking survey and to investigate the character of the site. The small scale excavation work on this site will also assist us in preparing an archæological profile for other rural settlement associated

with Towcester and against which other sites can be compared. We have another large site to field walk in late September at Easton Neston which, based upon the reconnaissance undertaken last year, indicates a settlement of some status.

I hope that we will be able to undertake further metal detecting surveys on the two Harpole villas to increase the size of their coin lists. The development of statistically credible coin profiles from both sites will help in the comparative work on coinage loss currently underway on the larger collections recovered from Bannaventa and Whitehall Farm. Detailed coin list analysis like this has been carried out on individual 'iconic' sites throughout Roman Britain but it has never been attempted on a localised scale featuring neighbouring settlements as CLASP is attempting to do in this case. Other activities on these sites will include a further resistivity survey, after the crops have been harvested, to determine the remaining elements of the north eastern wing of the overall floor plan of the Barn Close courtyard villa complex. Meanwhile at the Harpit villa some additional field walking is required to survey an area to the north of the current site that has not been investigated but is known to contain Roman material.

Towards the end of July at Whitehall Farm a small series of test pits are planned to establish the status of the archaeological remains of the early 'pre-Roman' pit alignments found during the geophysical survey and to investigate the possible evidence for a cemetery. The 'pits' will be excavated in the pasture field to the north of the villa complex.

Two other settlements in the parishes of Rothersthorpe and Kislingbury have also produced significant amounts of Romano-British pottery and coinage and these will need to be investigated at some stage. The work on both these sites has been instigated by our metal detecting colleagues and I hope we will be working closely with them on these settlements.

Finally I would like to ask for your patience as we move towards a new season of fieldwork for any tardiness in responding to your queries about 'when' and 'where' activities start. Please remember that those organising these events are few in number and they are doing their best to give you the information you need. It is also difficult to be precise about these planned events as farming regimes and availability of sites do not always coincide with our pre-arranged calendar. Sometimes you may be given wrong, out of date or misleading information.....but I would just ask you to take a deep breath and not take it personally if misinformed and please persevere until we are able to sort things out.

Hopefully there will be no problems but who am I kidding.

Stephen Young

CLASP TRAINING INFORMATION

As part of the CLASP commitment to training for all its members, I have put together the following list of archaeology websites - where to go for information on conferences, field-work, national email discussion groups, artefact resources, societies, courses - distance learning and local societies (including CLASP member societies) and, a general list of books 'that you might find useful. The list is also on the Members Only area of the CLASP website, so if you're in the library or an internet café you can log-on and use the links straight from the Document.

If you do not have access to the internet, if you ask (nicely) the Secretary of your member society or the CLASP organising committee secretary, Dave Hayward (see contacts page), they will be able to give you a current printed version.

The disclaimer: These are websites that I go to for information, and I have added my personal comments (not those of the CLASP organisation).

If you have any other general websites that you think I have missed, then please email me and I will have a look at them. I hope, with your help, this resource can be kept up to date and expanded (my thanks to Chris, who's already on the ball with this!).

Enjoy!

Barbara Evans Rees (CLASP Training Officer)

bevansrees@magictaxi.co.uk

Results of the CLASP Training Questionnaire

Firstly, a big thank you to all those who sent in questionnaires. It provided some very useful information for the Trustees on what the membership is looking for in terms of training. As a brief summary - 21 people responded from the 100 questionnaires sent out with the Newsletter. Only 1 person out of the 21 said that they didn't want to learn more about archaeology relating to the CLASP project. 12 people said yes to learning more about project planning and 7 said no.

In order of preference, the training methods most people were interested in were "on-the-job" training (18 people), talks by experts at CLASP group/society meetings (16) and study days with a maximum of 12 attendees on particular topics with an expert tutor (16). One person was prepared to pay under £30 for these study days, but more people (12) would be prepared to pay £30 per study day - and 6 were prepared to pay £40.

Conferences with a number of speakers came next with 12 responses. One person added that the speakers should be "real ones". The preferred cost of the conferences was £10 (7), £20 (6), £30 (5) and under £10 (1 person).

Self study was the next most popular training method - with 10 people happy to attend archaeological courses at local colleges (10), 8 people using books, periodicals and reports, and 4 people using distance learning courses.

The subjects respondents would like to learn were: fieldwork techniques such as field walking, excavation (15); Roman culture and Roman settlements in Britain (both 14); pottery identification (13); artefact analysis after discovery, coin identification and history of the Romans in Britain (all 12); metal detecting, geophysical survey and desk-top assessments (all 11); archaeological contexts and surveying (both 9); planning and drawing techniques (6); preparing projects for submission to CLASP and seeking funding for projects (both 4). In the comments section one person wrote, "Sorry, too old to learn and no time" and one said, "I would have liked to have ticked all the boxes, but I thought I ought to show some restraint!!"

Barbara Evans Rees
CLASP Training Officer

From David Hayward, Secretary of the Organising Committee

I am pleased to be able report that an active programme of fieldwork is being assembled for the late summer and autumn this year. Your committee is looking for as much help as possible with this work from all members. At this stage it is not possible to specify exact dates, as we are very much subjected to the needs of farmers and landowners when we can enter their land. The length of time each site will take for us to complete cannot be predicted in advance and this of course has a 'knock on' effect on later sites. I do therefore urge you to liaise with the relevant contact person shown in the table below to register your interest in helping and also note the information regarding dates, times and site access. Hopefully we will be able to give an update for the later activities at the AGM/ Public Open Meeting on 18th September at Towcester.

FIELDWORK

Dates	Locations	Activity	Contact
17/08/07 for 2 weeks	Manshead Field, Bannaventa	Field walking & metal detecting	Stephen Young 07986 940605
On completion of above for 2/3 days	Gayton	Test pits	Stephen Young 07986 940605
Mid-September	Harpit Field, Harpole	Field walking & metal detecting	Jennifer Smith 01604 831294
22/09/07 until completed	Easton Neston	Field walking	Gina Boreham 01327 352687
Mid-October/November	Tiffield	Field walking	Stephen Young 07986 940605

In addition to this programme of work there is a chance that more work will arise as the year progresses as a result of negotiations the Archaeological Director and myself are currently having with an outside body. Apologies for sounding cryptic at this stage but these are currently very sensitive and embryonic. Hopefully we will be in a position to report fuller details at the AGM.

Work to identify a location for a permanent repository of CLASP artefacts (including facilities for processing and research) continues but nothing definite to report at this stage. Your Committee however thanks Brian Culling, Gillian Biddle and Fred Kay for their maintenance work at the current Whitehall archive.

David Hayward

When on-line, Do as the Romans Do!

What on earth was I doing? It was coming up to 10 years since I had last written an essay and I had hated essay writing at school. Would I be able to cope with it and how could I fit the study around a full time job. These were the thoughts going through my head after I had enrolled on "Exploring Roman Britain" an online archæology & history course offered by the Oxford University department of Continuing Education.

It was a ten-week course, with ten modules running chronologically from late Iron Age through the Roman Invasion of Britain and a look at life in Roman times before ending on the demise of Roman Britain. Each week we investigated knowledge gained through archæological techniques and current thinking on topics as diverse as Roman religion, town and country architecture, engineering, art and culture. Looking back at history lessons at school, we had quickly skipped through Roman History on our tour of the brief history of everything. It was good to see the course challenging my school, TV gained knowledge and preconceptions of the Romans.

The course tutor guided us each week to read specific chapters from our textbook and to read selected online articles. As we did so we were asked to consider various questions about the week's subject.

As the course progressed, the 32 participants discussed the topics on the course's website. People outlined their own thoughts on the topics, fascinating debates would ensue with helpful comments and additional information sources offered up. There were also many interesting debates that, although related to the Romans, were not directly part of the course. Some topics really fired up the participants, discussions on Roman ablutions and bathing practises for example went into overdrive as well as discussions about the impact of the Romans on the modern world.

Although the majority of my study was done during the evenings and weekends, I would occasionally escape work during lunchtime to grab an hour at the library and read up on the week's topic allowing me to access a greater breadth of books on Romans. I also chose to complete the two optional assignments on the course, two discussions of 500 and 1000 words respectively each answering a question picked from a short list.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course and learned a massive amount - much more than I could ever have imagined. I found the mechanism through which the course was delivered particularly useful as I was benefiting from the thoughts and opinions of 31 other people rather than just relying on my own thoughts and the books to which I had immediate access. I found the

course complemented the experience I have gained digging at Whitehall Roman Villa site as well as adding to my understanding of the site. I am now looking at the other distance learning courses available, with the possibility of a qualification in archaeology further down the line.

I would strongly recommend anyone to consider taking such a course. You would ideally need a fast internet connection, ie Broadband or the ability to freely access the internet at work. Even if you don't feel your computer skills are up to scratch I am sure you would soon find your way around the course website and be participating in the many debates. There was an IT Helpdesk available for anyone experiencing problems.

There are many different online archaeology courses available, running for different lengths of time and at different academic levels. Three of the major providers of distance learning archaeology courses are: Oxford University (www.ox.ac.uk), Leicester University (www.le.ac.uk) and Open University (www.open.ac.uk).

Chris Wiggins

Submissions

When submitting text, it should preferably be in MS Word format but some other formats are acceptable such as RTF, pure text files (file extension .txt) and possibly old versions of Wordperfect. Either by email to tony@tonyjohs.co.uk, on CD, or text only on floppy disk, or by post, through the door at 7 Eton Close, Weedon Bec, Northants, NN7 4PJ or via Julia.

Line drawings or photographs should be either JPEG or TIFF from choice although GIF can be used or even BMP (Windows Bit Map) as a last resort. Resolution at the reproduction size should be around 300 dpi. Actual photographic prints can be submitted by post or by hand. 35 mm slides or negatives can be scanned.

JANUARY DEADLINE

The Deadline for the next issue is Sunday night, January 13th.

Contributions to Tony Johns, 7 Eton Close, Weedon, Northants, NN7 4PJ or by email: tony@tonyjohs.co.uk.

Table of Events for CLASP Groups

Dates	Time	Event	Location	Group
Flexible dates in August & September, crop & weather dependent. Metal detecting under the direction of CLASP			Bannaventa	Norton, Northampton PAST
Meet every 2 months. See www.bugbrookelink/history or contact Alan Kent, tel: 01604 830518				Bugbrooke History Society
Aug 9	7.30 pm	Carpetbaggers at Harrington	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Aug 16	7 pm	Visit to Alderton. £1	Alderton	Harpole Heritage Group
Aug - Sept. Field walking. Contact Jennifer Smith			Flaxlands	Harpole Heritage Group
Sept 5	7.45 pm	Annual General Meeting & Quiz	Chapel Schoolroom	Flore Heritage Society
Sept 12	7.30 pm	The Piercebridge Formula	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Sept 13	7.30 pm	Family Histories & Genealogy	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Sept 17	8.00 pm	A Countryman's Tales	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Society
Sept 24	7.30 pm	The Cooper Collection of Photos	Chapel Schoolroom	Weedon Bec History Society
Oct 3	7.45 pm	Review of the year's accessions	Chapel Schoolroom	Flore Heritage Society
Oct 10	7.30 pm	The Battle of Britain	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Oct 11	7.30 pm	Monastries	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Oct 15	8.00 pm	Fotheringhay	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Group

See page 11 for a list of contacts

cont

Table of Events for CLASP Groups

Dates	Time	Event	Location	Group
Nov 7	7.45 pm	People, Birds & Beasts in Inn Signs	Chapel Schoolroom	Flore Heritage Society
Nov 8	7.30 pm	Annual Dinner & Quiz	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Nov 14	7.30 pm	Stowe House & Gardens	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Nov 19	8.00 pm	The Roman Villa at Nobottle	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Society
Nov 26	7.30 pm	The Entertaining History & Art of the Monologue	Chapel Schoolroom	Weedon Bec History Society
Dec 5	7.45 pm	Supper	Barn Restaurant Upper Stowe	Flore Heritage Society
Dec 12	7.30 pm	Seasonal Celebrations including readings, music and supper	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Jan 9	7.30 pm	Daily Life In Medieval Northampton	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Jan 10	7.30 pm	Custer's Last Stand	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Jan 21	8.00 pm	Looking Back, films of Brington Past	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Society

See page 11 for a list of contacts

List of Association Contacts

Organisation	Contact	Tel
Norton, Northampton PAST	Brian Ives	01604 719288
Weedon Bec History Society	Julia Johns	01327 341729
Flore Heritage Society	John Smith	01327 340387
Brington History Group	Andrew Shaw	01604 770668
Harpole Heritage Group	Jennifer Smith	01604 831294
Whitehall Farm Roman Villa Landscape Project	Brian Culling	01327 340504
Towcester & District Local History Society	Gina Boreham	01327 352687
Bugbrooke History Society	Alan Kent	01604 830518



Bannaventa, the late 4th century AD walled town. From a geophysical survey undertaken by Northants Archaeology.