



CLASP

Community Landscape &
Archæology Survey Project

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667



August 2008, Issue 8

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is scheduled for Tuesday, September 16th in the Saxon Suite, Daventry Leisure Centre, Lodge Road, starting at 7.00 pm; see page 3 for further details and the agenda.

From your Organising Committee Acting-Chairman

Welcome to the latest edition of the Newsletter.

Since we set up our systems for keeping you informed of events (the notice-board on the website and the phone information line), there have been no participatory events to inform you of – such is life. This is mainly due to Steve's indisposition, but we are confident that he will be back in action this Autumn and there is certainly plenty of work to be done.

But we have by no means been completely inactive as you will see from the articles in this Newsletter. CLASP has been involved in a watching brief at a major development in Daventry - a first for us - and we have made several submissions to planning consultations concerning developments in the West Northants District. These have undoubtedly raised our profile as did our being highly commended in the first ever Marsh Archæology Awards. Dave Hayward has been central to all of these developments and we have much to thank him for.

So far Dave is the only person to have been Secretary of the Organising Committee and he has decided that the time has come to spend more time on his research and advocacy work for CLASP.

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So he wants to shed his strictly secretarial roles and we are looking for a volunteer, or volunteers to take them over. With the tasks split there is no need for any of them to be particularly onerous. All offers will be gratefully received! Here's Dave's list of tasks as Secretary to the Organising Committee:

Functions:

1. Prepare and circulate agendas for Organising Committee meetings
2. Take, type up and circulate the Organising Committee minutes
3. Follow up all issues that arise during meetings including writing and receiving letters, emails etc
4. Attend Trustees meetings in a liaison role
5. Receive publications and ensure their circulation, including details of events via the CLASP mailing group
6. Deal with all external enquires received including the CLASP website
7. Liaise with CLASP officers between meetings to ensure issues are dealt with expeditiously
8. Act as focal point for the CLASP member organisations

Requirements:

1. Knowledge of the organisation, its policies and objectives
2. Be prepared to further the interests of CLASP
3. Knowledge and access to Word and other common IT programmes; Internet and email access
4. Ability to record minutes of meetings, generate written documents and further actions highlighted during meetings. Pursue other issues between meetings, in liaison with others as required. Work with the Chair and Archaeological Director, act as a media contact point

Please let me know if you feel you can take on one or more of these functions: tel: 01908 226118; Email: jeremy@olio.demon.co.uk

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

The Deadline for the next issue is Sunday night, January 18th.

Contributions to Tony Johns, 7 Eton Close, Weedon, Northants, NN7 4PJ or by email: tony@tonyjohs.co.uk. Please supply any photographs or drawings to accompany articles as separate files. Resolution around 250 - 300 dpi.

Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday 16th September 2008, 7.00 pm at the
Saxon Suite, Daventry Leisure Centre.**

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last AGM, September 18th 2007
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Approval of Mission Statement
8. Acceptance of Annual Report*
9. Appointment of Trustees**
10. Appointment of Officers: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
11. AOB

*Printed copies of the Annual Report will be available at the meeting but members wishing to read it beforehand will find it on the CLASP website from 12th September.

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

The nomination 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 and must be signed by that person to confirm that they are willing to serve.

Annual Public Open Meeting

Please note that the Annual Public Open Meeting will be held in the Saxon Suite at Daventry Leisure Centre, Lodge Road, Daventry at 7.30 pm, 6th September 2008. The meeting will take the form of a platform debate, addressing the interaction and possibilities for co-operation between large-scale development and community archaeology groups. Mike Heyworth MBE, the National Director of the Council for British Archaeology, will chair the panel. The other members will include Paul Quinn the Regeneration Manager for West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, a representative from English Heritage and Stephen Young, our Archaeological Director.

As usual, entry will be free but all donations will be welcome, hot refreshments will be available for a small charge. Please circulate this information to all as it is open to the general public.

Notes from David Hayward, Organising Committee Secretary

Another six months have passed and once more I am rushing to meet the editor's deadline. Since I last wrote, CLASP has moved forward in several areas, not least by being awarded a 'highly commended' certificate in the national Marsh Awards for Community Archaeology competition organised by the CBA and for our Local People-Local Past project. Well done to everybody who has done his or her bit for this project.

We now have new display boards for use at various events in which CLASP is invited to participate. Our Chair Jeremy Cooper, has prepared these to a very high standard – thanks Jeremy. If any member is involved in an event where they could be usefully displayed and you are prepared to organise the display for the Committee, then please contact either your society representative or Alan Dent, the individual members' representative on this Committee.

Talking about the CBA, we have secured the services of the National Director, Mike Heyworth to chair our Annual Public Open Meeting. The CBA is also proactively consulting CLASP on continuing education within community archaeology.

So you can see it is all happening, the profile of CLASP is being raised not only with the above items but also by our work with planning issues and

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others. Keep your eyes and ears open to hear details of some archaeological field work that will be taking place during the next few months – it will be publicised in the usual places.

Washing of Finds on Tuesdays

Please note that the Tuesday afternoon sessions, washing Finds etc will recommence on Tuesday, September 30th.

The view from the Archaeological Director.

Unfortunately illness earlier this year has restricted my involvement in fieldwork and consequently we were unable to complete some of the planned fieldwalking surveys on two Roman rural sites in the parish of Tiffield. I hope that we shall be able to revisit these surveys and another at Easton Neston as well as further work on the magnificent villa complex at Barn Close, Harpole and trial trenching in Weedon during the autumn fieldwork season. The continuing geophysical and fieldwalking survey of the Roadside station of Bannaventa will also need to be maintained and further sources of funding are being sought. The exact timetable for this fieldwork is still under deliberation but volunteers can keep an eye on these activities from late August by contacting the CLASP telephone help-line and also as and when dates are confirmed on the dedicated website.

It has been possible however, to continue the necessary and time consuming archiving and recording of the extensive coin assemblages. The identification, conservation and photographic recording of an ever increasing database are not inconsiderable activities in their own right as well as financially challenging although thanks to Mark Curteis and Jeremy Cooper these pressures have been considerably relieved. We are continuing to work with West Northamptonshire Development Corporation over the planned urban developments within our locality and its effect on the archaeology of the area. In fact it was good to have Paul Quinn from WNDC visit the Whitehall Farm Excavation during the ‘dig’ in July to see and be able to appreciate the intensity of some of our work. Hopefully by the next newsletter we will have something more significant and concrete to report back to you on these developing links.

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Obviously the main fieldwork undertaken so far this year has been a further season of excavation on the Whitehall Villa complex and in particular the second bath house located two years ago. In addition some excellent work was also completed on the paved area and some associated features immediately to the south of the main entrance to Bath house 1.

Acceptance on the high level scheme by Natural England means a level of protection and maintenance support applies to the entire farm. This has helped Nick Adams to secure the future for the archaeological remains which will not be subject to excavation under the current research agenda at least for the foreseeable future. Funding from Natural England has also enabled us to develop two information boards to explain the archaeological remains of the site to visitors. Perhaps the most exciting element of this has been the creation of a reconstructed view of the villa in the mid 4th century AD by the professional artist and illustrator John Hodgson which provides an exhilarating and accurate portrayal of the site during this highly active phase of its occupation. The Whitehall project was further honoured by the award of a grant from the County Council of £1,700 towards the costs of specialist reports which are required to enhance our chronological understanding of certain features associated with the structural elements of the villa complex. I would like in particular to thank the local councillor Joan Kirkbride for facilitating this development as any financial support is always extremely helpful.

During the excavation of Bath house 2 we were able to investigate and record the internal arrangements of the hypocaust system which appears to be twice as large as that located in Bath house 1. The removal of the encasing 4th century AD debris and demolition layers revealed uncontaminated sealed contexts with good chronological dating which has enabled the initial construction of the building to be dated to somewhere between the mid to late 3rd century AD. This Bath house had evidently been robbed during the Roman period, during the early 4th century AD and much of the structural debris re-used elsewhere. In a newly identified Room to the south a complete 'rotten limestone' voussoir or lightweight Roman brick from a vaulted roof was recovered. Destroyed elements of a finely made mosaic indicate a building of some quality which apparently was constructed to a higher standard than the later phases of Bath house 1 that ultimately replaced it. A large drain cut

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through the *opus signinum* base of the hypocaust probably demonstrates the reason for the destruction of the initial bath house building. Flooding from the spring line made the use of the under-floor heating system untenable and promoted the rebuilding of the Bath house into the slope as opposed to along the contour where an adequate degree of drainage could not be achieved.

The retrieval of more imported Southern Gaulish black slipped fine-ware pottery highlighted the continental links and sophisticated consumption regime available to those inhabiting the villa at Whitehall Farm. Nearly a thousand sherds of all types of fabric were recovered during the excavation and it might be possible to reconstruct several pottery vessels from the different wares comprising the sites assemblage. Another twenty coins were located although most of them were extensively worn or badly corroded although a bronze coin of Gordian III (238-244) driving a four horsed chariot is in particularly good condition. However, probably the star find for most people was a bronze 'silvered' ring with a figured intaglio possibly of the god Mercury that was excavated from under the paved area outside the entrance to the later Bath house 1. It is thought to be of 3rd century AD date.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Steven Ashby, the Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Northamptonshire, for his help and support in the collaborative coordinating and sharing of information about Roman finds in the Norton area with CLASP and its participating groups. Although Steven is about to take up a new position as a lecturer at the University of York he will retain his links with us and has agreed to identify and research the brooches found during the fieldwork at Bannaventa and to examine the worked bone assemblage from Whitehall Farm which is his specialist area of interest. Thanks to Dave Hayward our organising committee secretary and general context man we were also able to meet up with Dan Winwood who represents Northamptonshire County Council's archæological interests as the '*de facto*' new county archæologist. We wish them both well and look forward to working with them in the future.

I hope that in the next addition, the fruits of these and past labours will be ready to share in more detail with you and again I would like to thank you all for your help and continued support which is so essential to providing a context for the future of our archæological heritage in our locality.

Steve Young (See picture on page 14)

Marsh Archaeology Award Success

CLASP was highly commended in the inaugural year of The Marsh Archaeology Award, which recognises and promotes high quality archaeological work being carried out by the community archaeology sector. The following is an edited version of the CBA website announcement which is at:

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/communityarchaeology/wikka.php?wakka=CBAMarshAward2007Winners>

The judges for the Award were unable to separate the four short-listed entries and with the full support of the award's sponsor all four projects were declared joint winners and each given a cheque for £500 to support their work!

The winning projects were:

The [North of Scotland Archaeological Society](#) – Glen Feshie

The [Badsey Society](#) – the Enclosure Map project

The [Mellor Archaeological Trust](#) – Mellor Hilltop

[Royton Local History Society](#) – Royton Lives Through the Ages

Such was the quality of the field in this, the inaugural year of the Marsh Archaeology Award, that a further seven entries were highly commended, including: Westbury Society in Somerset, Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society in Buckinghamshire, Community Landscape and Archaeology Survey Project in Northamptonshire, the 'Local People - Local Past' project, seeking to define the Romano-British landscape of an area of West Northamptonshire, Ingleborough Archaeology Group in North Yorkshire, Solihull Archaeological Group in Warwickshire and the Unst Archaeology Group working at Sandwick in Shetland.

Dr Mike Heyworth MBE, Director of the CBA, explained that the purpose of the award is 'to encourage local communities to research the past around them, and to convey a passion for our cultural heritage to future generations. Community archaeology groups are often home-grown and, are very effective in drawing in new people with an interest in their local heritage. Getting involved in such research gives a real boost both to the communities themselves and to the body of archaeological knowledge available.'

A picture of the Award is shown on page 14 - Ed

Interpretation Boards at Whitehall Farm

Nick Adams has entered into a Higher Level Environmental Stewardship agreement with Natural England. Environmental Stewardship helps the owners of historic sites to enhance and protect the natural and historic environment and provide public access.

Natural England has agreed to pay for two A0 size interpretation boards, one at the top of the site right by the fence, and one to the North of the bath house. The top board provides a guide to the ancient landscape, showing a map of Roman and other ancient settlements in the vicinity, from Borough Hill to Bannaventa, to Hunsbury Hill, to Towcester. There is a panoramic photograph taken from where the board is sited to help orientate visitors. This board also has a large annotated geophysical survey map of the villa site.

The board by the villa features a specially commissioned illustration of the villa, the bath house and their immediate surroundings as they might have appeared when occupied in the 4th century AD. This has been created by Dr John Hodgson, one of Britain's most eminent archaeological illustrators. It has been a great privilege to work with him. Every detail of his illustration is based on evidence from the Whitehall site and from similar sites elsewhere. The illustration is accompanied by photographs of the excavation and of artefacts found at Whitehall.

Both boards will feature on the Whitehall website after they have been unveiled during this year's dig.

The boards have been designed by Jeremy Cooper and will add great value to any visitors to the site. Anyone guiding a group to the site will be able to use them to help explain what was there – and for those who wish to read for themselves, there are brief explanations on the boards. There is also a page about them, with images, on the Whitehall website.

Bugbrooke History Group

The pictorial history book of Bugbrooke which the Group published this year is now sold out. A further volume will be prepared for publication next year. The group meets every two months and further information can be found at www.bugbrookelink.co.uk/history

We only have one meeting arranged so far for the History Group. This will be on Sept 10th at Bugbrooke Community Centre and the presenter is John Brown who will talk about Early Northampton 3000BC to the Great Fire. Other meetings have yet to be confirmed.

Harpole Heritage Group

The Harpole Heritage Group has not been carrying out any archæology in the area since the last issue. As a result of Jennifer Smith's talk last year to the Harpole Primary School, Jennifer was asked to talk to the Harpole Mothers' Union about 'Archæology in Harpole'. This small group was very interested in what happens at the two sites and enjoyed looking at the 'finds' and photographs that she had taken over the years. CLASP also look forward to receiving a further £1,000 grant from Harpole Parish Council for 'Archæology in Harpole' which the group much appreciates.

Harpole Group Project

The group is arranging a small excavation on its Barn Close site on Tuesday, September 2nd, Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th from 9.00 am to 5 pm. A small number of volunteers are needed on a 'first come first served' basis. Please note there are no facilities! You will need to bring food and drink for the day and please wear suitable clothing; a chair would also be useful. Contact Jennifer Smith for further info.

Bury Mount Castle, Towcester

South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) is making plans for the future of that area of Towcester which includes the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bury Mount. The Mount is all that remains visible of a 12th century motte and bailey castle built to control the junction of Watling Street and the route from the ports on the South coast to the Midlands.

Being aware of the development plans, the Towcester and District Local History Society produced a booklet in 2006 to highlight its history ("Bury Mount Castle - Discovering Towcester Leaflet No 2" by Brian Giggins). The people of Towcester too were rather interested in its history as several hundred came to view the archæological dig there in September 2007 during the Heritage Open Days. The report on this dig by Northamptonshire Archæology was completed at the end of last year.

The mount has been remodelled several times in its 800 year history. It was used as a gun platform by Prince Rupert during the Civil War in the winter of 1643. It was quarried for building materials, probably in the 18th century and is now about half its former size. It was landscaped in the middle of the

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19th century by the Earl of Pomfret, who planted trees on top of the mount and dug a decorative moat, the earliest defensive moat now partly lying under a building.

SNC recently organised a competition for landscaping and preserving Bury Mount. The winner was Camlin Lonsdale, and they presented their proposals to the public at Towcester Town Hall on 9th-10th May. Their proposal is to add material to reduce the slope of the sides and thus prevent slump of the existing steep sides. The reduced slope will allow the creation of a hard surfaced spiral path to the top with a slope that meets the Health and Safety requirements for wheelchairs. There will also be steps to the top. The marshy areas around the base of the mount will be paved or covered in concrete to provide a "performance area". The proposal replaced the moat with blue coloured mosaic or paving to hint at the former moat.

The general thrust of the landscape design is to replace vegetation with concrete, although a token 'ecological' area was included. Initially there will be a view over the rooftops from the top of the mount but the view north will soon be obscured by a new "Civic Building".

Unfortunately the current proposal lacked any historic information so unless the proposal is modified the future citizens of Towcester will not know when Bury Mount was built, what it looked like or what it was used for.

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
Daventry Local History Group	Colin Davenport	01327 702055

Table of Events for CLASP Groups

Dates	Time	Event	Location	Group
Meet every 2 months. See www.bugbrookealink.co.uk/history or contact Alan Kent, tel: 01604 830518				Bugbrooke History Society
Sept 3	7.45 pm	AGM & Review of Accessions	Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Sept 10	7.30 pm	'Restoration of 78 Derngate'	The Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Sept 10	7.30 pm	'Early Northampton, 3000BC to the Great Fire'	Community Centre	Bugbrooke History Society
Sept 11	7.30 pm	'Northants Posts in the First World War'	Methodist Chapel, School Lane	Harople Heritage Group
Sept 17	7.30 pm	Members' Presentations ('How a street has changed in 50 years' & 'The Borough Corporation's 1607 Constitutions')	Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street	Daventry Local History Group
Sept 22	7.30 pm	'I read it in the Chron'	Chapel Schoolroom, New Street	Weedon Bec History Society
Oct 1	7.45 pm	'Creating Modern Stained Glass'	Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Oct 8	7.30 pm	'Celebrating the Traditions & Superstitions of Halloween'	The Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Oct 9	7.30 pm	'People, Birds & Beasts' (pub signs)	Methodist Chapel, School Lane	Harople Heritage Group
Oct 11	7.30 pm	Public Exhibition: 'Prominent Townspeople & Characters of Daventry'	Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street	Daventry Local History Group
Oct 15	7.30 pm	Oral Histories of Daventry, recordings of peoples' memories	Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street	Daventry Local History Group
Oct 20	8.00 pm	'County Families of Northamptonshire'	The Reading Room	Brington History Society

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Table of Events for CLASP Groups

Dates	Time	Event	Location	Group
Oct 27	7.30 pm	'Eleanor of Castile & her Crosses'	Chapel Schoolroom, New Street	Weedon Bec History Society
Nov 5	7.45 pm	'Turnpike & Milestones'	Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Nov 12	7.30 pm	'Historic Haut Cuisine' (Napoleonic Cookery)	The Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Nov 13	7.30 pm	'Annual Dinner'	Methodist Chapel, School Lane	Harople Heritage Group
Nov 17	7.30 pm	'A Museum of Mystery Objects'	The Reading Room	Brington History Society
Nov 19	7.30 pm	'CLASP - archaeological opportunities & dangers during Daventry expansion'	Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street	Daventry Local History Group
Nov 24	7.30 pm	'Tudor Christmas Customs'	Chapel Schoolroom, New Street	Weedon Bec History Society
Dec 3	7.45 pm	Supper at the Barn Restaurant, Upper Stowe	The Barn Restaurant, Upper Stowe	Flore Heritage Society
Dec 10	7.30 pm	Christmas Social Evening	The Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Jan 8	7.30 pm	'Stick Making'	Methodist Chapel, School Lane	Harople Heritage Group
Jan 14	7.30 pm	'Towcester Castle & Other Mottes'	The Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Jan 19	7.30 pm	'Augustus Pugin'	The Reading Room	Brington History Society
Feb 4	7.45 pm	'Firemarks'	Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane, Flore	Flore Heritage Society
Feb 11	7.30 pm	'Black Boots & Short Trousers'	The Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Feb 12	7.30 pm	'Old Cures & Remedies'	Methodist Chapel, School Lane	Harople Heritage Group
Feb 16	7.30 pm	'The British Antarctic Survey'	The Reading Room	Brington History Society



Joan Kirkbride, Graham Smith, Dave Hayward, two representatives from Natural England, Nick Adams and Stephen Young.

