



CLASP

Community Landscape &
Archæology Survey Project

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667



February 2011, Issue 13

From Jeremy Cooper, your Organising Committee Acting-Chairman

I'd like to say that Spring is in the air, but I'm not convinced. As usual, all the news is within, but I'll take this opportunity to welcome Spratton Local History Society to CLASP, to welcome the magnetometer - a big thanks to all concerned in enabling us to buy it - and to welcome the completion of the second stage of Local People Local Past. The final, and crucial, stage of the research process (which is what we are all engaged in) is the interpretation, analysis and publication of the data, and that is what the LPLP website embodies; it represents a huge amount of work by us all and we should all be proud of what we have achieved. In particular, Stephen Young laboured heroically (I know - I was there some of the time) to complete the final laps in time to satisfy the Heritage Lottery Fund which pays for much of what CLASP undertakes. Thanks Steve. Now on to stage three...

Report from Dave Hayward, the Secretary of the Organising Committee

As you will see from elsewhere in this newsletter we have at last taken delivery of our magnetometer. The other good news is that we anticipate we will have access to a resistivity meter. As we get more of our membership trained both in operation of the machines and in the subsequent interpretation of data, we should become not just self-sufficient in our geophysical needs but also be able to take on board more proactive work. A training plan and administration arrangements will hopefully be resolved by early March.

We are pleased to welcome another new member society to our folds, Spratton Local History Society. Their website <http://www.sprattonhistory.org/> is well worth a visit and shows details of their activities.

I am pleased to say that the individual members of CLASP now have a new representative on the Organising Committee, Tony Kesten. His details and contact points are shown on page 4.

We have recently learnt that the Churchfields and Tove Valley developments at Daventry and Towcester respectively are being resurrected. Whilst CLASP takes no view as to the merits of a development, we are interested in, and will campaign on relevant archaeological matters.

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We are also currently considering other planning issues at Daventry including the Waterspace and Primrose Hill. Our colleague Derek Batten from FOAM has also advised us of proposals in the Alderton area for a large wind-farm and biomass incinerator.

CLASP will only be as worthwhile and effective as its members, both individual and society let it be. I do therefore once more urge that you, the membership, come forward with research proposals that you are prepared to take forward yourself but hopefully involving other members. An excellent example of this is the work currently being undertaken by TDLH with their Towcester Hinterland project. They are driving forward studies into the Romano-British history not just of Towcester but the wide hinterland that borders the town. This will be of great value to informing our Local People-Local Past project that is now entering its third phase. So if you have a research proposal, ask your society representative or Tony Kesten as the Individual Members representative to bring it to the Organising Committee for discussion.

Don't forget that our colleagues at the Whitehall Villa Project will be holding their annual open meeting at Nether Heyford Village Hall on the 16th May – further details will be circulated in due course.

Dave Hayward

The view from Steve Young, Archæological Director

At last and as previously trailed I can now confirm that CLASP has successfully concluded Phase 2 of the Heritage Lottery Funded project Local People: Local Past. This has been no small feat as pressure to complete was unrelenting towards the end and resulted in many sleepless nights. However just before Christmas I was able to deliver the CD ROM which included additional fieldwork and an interpretative report to the funding agency. Thanks to all those who supported me in this endeavour and particularly Jeremy Cooper who has master-minded the website and produced the interactive elements of the final report. I also took, while I was in Nottingham with the Heritage Lottery people, the opportunity to discuss with a senior official of the agency the positive outcomes of our initiative and the possibility of a further approach by us for a new project in the near future. By the way the report on the website is recommended viewing to any CLASP volunteer who wants to know what we have learned so far about Roman settlement characterisation and the emerging concept of Romanisation and locality.

The completion of our first funded project is a significant milestone in the work of CLASP as it demonstrates unequivocally both the ability as well as the capacity of community archaeologists to deliver professional standard research in an accessible manner. The project may have taken more time than originally envisaged and raised difficult management issues but it has also provided CLASP with a great deal of useful experience as well as establishing a successful profile for the organisation with which we can go forward to bigger and more exciting possibilities. The fact that we are building a positive record of achievement proves just how

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effective and innovative the charity can be and will be priceless in our future endeavours to secure adequate funding.

Based on the success of these initiatives it is highly probable that we will be applying, in a new initiative, for double the amount sought for Local People: Local Past and that this could result in a further award of up to £50,000. The grant will be used to underpin and build on the fieldwork centred on and planned for the Roman roadside station of Bannaventa at Whilton Lodge. This project will include extensive fieldwork, metal detecting and geophysical survey - hopefully utilising the new Bartington magnetometer and Geoscan Resistivity meter that we have on loan from the University of Northampton. A significant element of the project will be the opportunity for individual members and associated societies to develop their skills and train in a range of archaeological methodologies and post excavation work. Should our application be approved the project should take between two or three years to complete. It will complement the landscape characterisation already undertaken and provide the necessary detailed information for understanding the link between 'urban' and 'rural' settlement in the Roman period.

In early September we returned to the Barn Close Villa site to continue the exploratory excavation from last year of the sunken stone lined feature located at the southern end of the western wing of the main residential complex. The structure, about 2 metres square, was too shallow to be interpreted as a cellar but could have been part of a semi-basement storage area or cistern attached to the end suite of rooms of the villa wing. These un-mortared coursed rubble stone walls surviving to 5 or 6 courses in height were laid in and supported by a thick shield of clay, the clay providing an excellent barrier for keeping moisture out or liquids in, although the latter is probably less likely as the walls were not rendered or sealed in any way. It is more likely that the feature was part of a larger storage area and judging by the fragments of pottery vessels retrieved, used for housing bulk items like amphora holding olive oil.

Elsewhere in another trial trench we located and excavated a field boundary identified during an earlier geophysical survey. Associated with this feature and cut by it was a large levelled limestone and mortar area of which we have recorded other elements lying further to the west of the villa. Insufficient evidence survived to confirm the possibility of it being a possible floor layer to a timber framed building. A further 70 coins were recovered during the associated metal detecting survey bringing the total coin list for the site to 374. The earliest coin was an As of Domitian (81-96 AD) and the latest from the House of Theodosius (388 + AD) with the rest relating to the late 3rd to mid 4th century. Unfortunately we were unable to undertake the ground penetrating radar survey planned for the west wing and this has been rearranged for next year.



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In the autumn we excavated the Roman roof timbers from the bath house at Whitehall Farm and they were stored initially in specially designed water filled plastic pipes on site. However

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the heavy frosts of November have necessitated their removal indoors whilst we await an assessment of their archaeological worth. Almost everybody I've come across is excited by the survival and completeness of the roof trusses, even English Heritage whose inspectors have tried hard to help us develop a strategy for recording these finds. Unfortunately the money needed to help record and preserve them is less easy to acquire. At the moment we are waiting for a definitive appraisal of their importance and whether they are of national significance. This will inform the level of recording to be undertaken and whether or not the timbers will be preserved for posterity. All I can say at present is that both timbers display extensive evidence of being worked and reflect a good command of carpentry skill.

Other fieldwork by Gina Boreham and Rod Conlon from Towcester Archaeological Society has undertaken a reconnaissance of a series of Roman settlements in the hinterland of Lactodurum and they have produced an initial report of their findings. These suggest a dense distribution of settlement the investigation of which will add immensely to our current understanding of Roman landscape development in the locality. Finally the recent purchase of the Bartington magnetometer has also opened up a range of new opportunities for CLASP members and it was great to see the enthusiasm engendered at the initial training event. For those in attendance it also appeared to coincide with the coldest day in living memory.



Lifting the roof trusses

Don't forget folks that Whitehall Farm will be holding its traditional May Talk again this year. Details are available on the website and I look forward to seeing you on the night.

Tony Kesten

Tony Kesten, who for some years has worked with Dave Hayward as part of the 'Context Team' at the Whitehall dig, has been elected to the CLASP Organising Committee. Tony, who will have retired after 37 + years as a Whitehall civil servant by the time you read this (he is also CLASP Trustee), would like to hear from any member organisation that has opinions about CLASP of which they think he should be aware.. He will be making contact himself but if you want to take the initiative his email is Tony.tk@live.co.uk and his mobile (from 25 Feb) 07983522201.

New instrument acquired by CLASP

Training sessions recently took place at the Whitehall Farm Roman Villa archaeological site in the use of a magnetometer for non-destructive imaging of what might lie under the ground.

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This instrument was handed over to Stephen Young, Archaeological Director of CLASP and training in its use was given to both CLASP members and those of Towcester and District Local History Society. The instrument was a Grad 6012 and the instructor Ludovic Letourneur, Technical Sales Executive of the manufacturer, Bartington Instruments Ltd.

Bartington Instruments write:

'Sites of human occupation can be discovered and mapped magnetically where the right soil magnetic conditions are present. For example, where soils are disturbed or burnt, the area affected can have a localised magnetic susceptibility value which is in contrast to the ambient value. Biological processes can also bring about magnetic alterations. Fired clays containing iron can acquire a high value of magnetic susceptibility and a thermoremanent magnetisation.

The magnetic gradiometer Grad 601 is a survey instrument that detects disturbances in the geomagnetic field caused by the contrasts in magnetic susceptibility. It will also detect thermoremanance in kilns and bricks. The depth of survey for the gradiometer can be typically 2 metres with a surface spatial resolution of down to 0.25 metres. Area coverage can be up to 3 to 4 hectares per day.'

David Wilcock



Ludovic Letourneur discusses the display readings with Brian Giggins from TDLHS



Brian Giggins, Colin Evans, Stephen Young (with the magnetometer), Fred Kay, Ludovic Letourneur.

Harpole Heritage Group

A three day excavation was held at Barn Close, Harpole at the beginning of September 2010 with 20 people taking part. We did not find the cellar, as expected, but it is more likely to have been a cistern. We all got very muddy and wet and there was water in the hole which had to be siphoned out.

Metal detectors from NNPast and NARC found 237 small finds of which 70 were Roman coins and three brooches. Thanks to all those who helped out and we hope to see you in 2011.
Jennifer Smith
Secretary

Bugbrooke History Society

The Society has completed its second book of historic photographs of people and places in the village. The first book, going up to the 1950s, was published and sold out a year ago and the new book was published before Christmas. It covers the period 1940 to 1980 and copies are on sale at Bugbrooke Post Office and the Florist Shop price £12.

The 100th anniversary of Frank Wright, a headmaster of Bugbrooke School, gaining his licence from the Post Master General to operate a Wireless Transmitter was commemorated in December at the Primary School. The Northampton Radio Club supported this event with activities for the children and the History Society initiated the event and provided a memorial plaque to hang in the school.

The Society meets every two months and details of the programme are put on the village website as arrangements are made. See www.bugbrookelink/history or contact Alan Kent 01604830518.

Daventry Local History Group

A very successful exhibition about the shops in the High Street was mounted in February at the Daventry Town Council Museum. It consisted of photographs and ephemera from the Museum collection and other contributors, with the exhibition attracting nearly 200 visitors. There was a raffle of prizes donated by the businesses in the High street. Apart from awakening many memories, it also produced a plethora of more information about the street.

Friends of Daventry Museums

The Friends presented the 'Ave Maria' brooch funded by them to the Mayor of Daventry in January. The brooch, discovered at Ashby St Ledgers in 2009 is a small gold annular brooch inscribed in Lombardic script 'Ave Maria Gratia' and dates from the 13th or 14th century, probably belonging to the Cranford family who owned the manor until 1351 when the estate passed by marriage to the Catesby family.

Friends of Alderton Monuments

Another very successful dig at The Mount, Alderton was carried out over three weeks in July and August, mainly by volunteers acting under the supervision of Northamptonshire Archaeology. The result exposed massive stone walls, foundations and many artefacts particularly Medieval painted glass, an indication that the original buildings were of high status. Attempts are now being made to find financing for further major digs probably in 2012 and 2013.

Towcester & District Local History Society

Recently the Society has submitted an Interim Report to the CLASP Archaeological Director and the Organising Committee; this is a brief summary of the report:

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Lactodorum Hinterland Survey (2009-2010)

The report describes research undertaken by Georgina Boreham and Rod Conlon to identify and characterise the Romano-British (RB) rural settlements in the area around Towcester – the Lactodorum hinterland. It was carried out under the auspices of CLASP, specifically with the supervision of Stephen Young of the University of Northampton and covers a period of about 18 months.

Since the nineteenth century, much has been published on the discovery of RB material through casual finds, field walking and excavation in and around the small Roman town of Towcester. The extent of the town and its suburbs has been fairly well established but to date less is known about the discoveries from surrounding parishes. It is known that there were several villa-farms with substantial buildings and there is strong evidence for the existence of others. The report outlines the study of this evidence and details further work carried out to verify this, where appropriate, by field walking together with examination of newly identified sites. A total of 34 individual sites have been visited and reported on.

The methodology employed was:

- a) Documentary research using maps, books, archaeological journals, excavation reports including grey literature, aerial photographs, reports and mapping from the Northamptonshire County Council SMR (HER) and Northamptonshire Record Office.
- b) The collection of oral/word-of-mouth information from various individuals such as landowners, farmers and Stephen Young.
- c) Fieldwalking surveys to validate and enhance existing evidence either by using public footpaths or having gained permission from landowners.
- d) The collection of pottery (all periods), building materials (primarily RB) and worked flint, all washed, bagged and identified by location.
- e) Initial pottery analysis by period (RB, medieval, post-medieval) and for RB pottery identification by ware type. A 'quality check' on the majority of RB pottery and identification of difficult sherds carried out by Steve.

The report includes:

A table summarising information on all sites initially identified including parish, site name, documentary sources, condition (arable, pasture), etc. A short fieldwalking survey for each site visited and a preliminary analysis of all pottery recovered. GIS mapping showing Scheduled Roman Monuments and National Mapping Programme Data (SMR). Geophysical survey data from published reports.

Finally, we would like to thank Steve for his continuing support.
Georgina Boreham

Northampton Artefact Recovery Club

Since the last CLASP newsletter, the Club has continued to grow in strength, expertise and numbers. The club now has 20 paid up members, has closed its membership list for the foreseeable future and continues to make a significant contribution in support of the work of CLASP members.

Last September, we supported our colleagues at Harpole, by providing four days of detecting, ensuring that there were detectorists on site from start to end. This resulted in the NARC team recording 240 items over that period. With the 70 coins recovered, this meant that the assemblage number of 300 + easily identifiable coins had been surpassed. [A full report of our input can be read on the website www.narc.org.uk in the Reports section].

Another successful feature of the club's activities is the visits to clubs and societies delivering talks about its work and for the recipients to see the finds on display. Since July, the club will have delivered nine events, to the following groups: Parkinsons Society, Cynthia Spencer Hospice [twice], Chipping Warden WI, Duston Over 50s Group, The Stockmans Association, History of Tiffield Society, Braunston WI and Weedon WI. The Club has just been awarded a grant from the Northamptonshire Community Foundation, to assist in this work.

The Club is actively engaged in an in-depth study of fields in the East Farndon area. The landowner was highly delighted with the information about the finds recovered, their location and pictures. The Club is now engaged in researching other fields in the area, and will be delivering a report of its findings to the community in 2012. A copy of the work has been logged with the Sites and Monuments records team at County hall.

Another project involves the mapping of fields in the West of the county. The landowner and their family are very supportive of this work with their grandchildren participating in the weekly searches. A full report of finds recovered are sent to the family after each detecting session. Needless to say, all the finds are logged with Julie Cassidy of the Portable Antiquity Scheme and can be viewed on the National database www.finds.org.uk.

As a relatively new club, two guest speakers have visited the club to date. Cllr Andrew Harris of Daventry District Council with portfolio for Heritage came and spoke to the club in October about his role and we were able to demonstrate how the club could support ongoing projects in the area, if requested.

The January meeting was an extremely interesting one with a superb talk given by Julie Cassidy about her involvement in an amazing archaeological Neolithic project in Turkey. The website <http://www.catalhoyuk.com/> is well worth a visit.

There are three more guest speakers lined up for 2011: March 18th - Ian Gander – Underwater Archaeology, June 17th – Portable Antiquity Scheme, guest speaker. Invited guests are welcome.

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October 21st, Mr T. Bartlett – the Milestone Society.

Finally 1963, The Great Train Robbery – If you want to know the connection between this event and NARC, visit the club website and read the story in the Tales of the NARC 'Once upon a time' thread..... or talk to Mr Derby!

Alan Standish
Chairman

Norton PAST

Norton Past (NNPAST) has now added a searchable database to the Norton Village website. This can be accessed at <http://www.nortonvillage.org/>. On the Norton Village homepage, a drop-down menu will appear when hovering over '**Norton Past**'. The item at the top of the menu, '**finds search**' will take you to a fully searchable database containing images and descriptions of metallic and other items recovered from land within Norton parish. Finds on the database include coins, brooches, buckles, mounts, pendants and many other artefacts from pre-Roman to the present day.

Due to the Bannaventa site being largely within Norton Parish, a large proportion of our finds included in the database are from the Roman period. Each item listed has a thumbnail image and brief description. Further information and larger images are then available by clicking on the thumbnail image. There are facilities to search the database by various criteria including period, emperor or monarch, item type or description, coin denomination, Portable Antiquities Scheme reference number etc. From the Norton website, there are links to both CLASP and the PAS websites.

To date there are well in excess of 400 individual items listed which are being added to each week. It is hoped that over the coming months this database will become an increasingly useful resource for anyone wishing to research the history and archaeology of Norton parish.

Mike Goodman
Chairman

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

The Deadline for the next issue is Sunday night, August 21st.

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. Tel contact: 01327 341729

Friends of Daventry Museums

The Friends of Daventry Museums started 2011 as usual, with their late Christmas party. This took the form of a quiz night entitled 'Bits & Bobs' like last year. However, this year Mr & Mrs Bob Neil were with us to run the evening. As previously, we were perplexed by many of the objects that they presented for us to identify and were amazed to discover what they were. The winners were Mr & Mrs Morgan, last year's winners, but accompanied this time by Alan Bale and Rita Ashton. We can highly recommend this entertainment as a fun and fund raiser.

Our second meeting of the year was Mr John Whiting talking about making walking sticks. This proved to be fascinating and made several of us keen to get out and cut our sticks. Programme available from Angela Adams, 01327 704 928: email: dxadams@mac.com

List of Contacts for CLASP Associations

| Organisation | Contact | Tel |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| Norton, Northampton PAST | Francis Rodrigues-Veglio | 01327 872030 |
| Weedon Bec History Society | Julia Johns | 01327 341729 |
| Flore Heritage Society | John Smith | 01327 340387 |
| Brington History Society | 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 | Angela Adams | 01327 704928 |
| Blisworth Heritage Society | Diana Burgoine | 01604 858406 |
| Friends of Alderton Monuments | Derek Batten | 01327 811304 |
| History of Tiffield Society | Steve Jowers | 01327 350292 |
| Northampton Artefact Recovery Club | Alan Standish | Not available |

Table of Events for CLASP Groups

| Date | Time | Event | Location | Group |
|---|---------|--|---|--|
| Meet every 2 months. See www.bugbrookelink.co.uk/history or contact Alan Kent, tel: 01604 830518 | | | | Bugbrooke History Society |
| March 2 | 7.45 pm | NNPAST: 'What's under your Fields' | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| March 2 | 7.30 pm | Research: October Exhibition | Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| March 8 | 8.00 pm | 'Alderton Mount and its Context' | 'The George', Tiffield | History of Tiffield Society |
| March 10 | 7.30 pm | 'Bells of Loughborough' | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| March 21 | 8.00 pm | 'The History of Brewing' | The Reading Room, Great Brington | Brington History Society |
| March 25 | 7.30 pm | 'Walter Tull and the Black History' | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth History Society |
| March 28 | 7.30 pm | 'Werburgh and Weedon' | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street | Weedon Bec History Society |
| April 6 | 7.45 pm | 'Carolyn Chisholm' | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| April 6 | 7.30 pm | 'Smothered in the Boghouse' | Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| April 13 | 7.30 pm | 'Archaeological Facial Reconstruction' | Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| April 14 | 7.30 pm | 'Victoria Cross' | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| April 18 | 7.30 pm | 'Not Such Idle Women' | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street | Weedon Bec History Society |
| April 18 | 8.00 pm | 'A Saviour of Living Cargoes' | The Reading Room, Great Brington | Brington History Society |
| April 22 | 7.30 pm | 'The Vikings in Northamptonshire' | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth History Society |

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Table of Events for CLASP Groups

| Date | Time | Event | Location | Group |
|------------|-----------------|--|---|--|
| May 4 | 7.45 pm | 'The Development of Towcester' | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| May 4 | 7.30 pm | Annual General Meeting | Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| May 11 | 7.30 pm | 'Carolyne Chisholm - a Remarkable Victorian Woman' | Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| May 12 | 7.30 pm | AGM followed by 'Gunpowder Plot' | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| May 27 | 7.30 pm | 'Those Coaching Days' | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth History Society |
| June 1 | 7.30 pm | Visit to Towcester | Towcester, details to be advised | Flore Heritage Society |
| June 1 | 7.30 pm | 'Updating Pevsner' | Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| June 8 | 7.30 pm | 'Who were the Victorians' | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| June 24 | 7.30 pm | Outing to be arranged | TBA | Blisworth History Society |
| June 24-26 | Watch the Press | Daventry Cultural Olympiad | Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| July 6 | TBA | Summer Outing | TBA | Daventry Local History Group |
| July 13 | 7.30 pm | Summer Meeting | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |