

Chair of Trustees Annual Report

The past year seen its highs both technically and organisational, there are however underlying issues that cause me concern for the future. Hopefully you have seen the Autumn Newsletter where I reflect on these concerns, so ably itemised by our colleague Rob Close for the September Trustees Meeting. I will not therefore repeat these concerns here except to say that, if you want CLASP to thrive, please look at the Newsletter, understand and do whatever you can to ensure we move forward with at least the same success as we have to date.

Our attempts to find a permanent 'home' for CLASP, including an archive store for our physical artefacts, has remained as frustrating as ever. Earlier in the year we had hoped we might achieve at least an interim store in Daventry through a mix of Daventry District Council and Northamptonshire County Council. This appears however to have 'fallen on stony ground' as a result of the local government situation both economically and the proposed restructuring. The possibility of a home at Norton Church has also evaporated through various reasons, primarily the proposed closing of the church by the Diocese and the high financial cost. We are also in the situation that we are now being charged a small rent to place our existing store on land at Nether Heyford. As an eventuality we have identified a site at Barby where we could store the existing container for no charge but this would incur significant costs to physically move it between sites.

Another major issue that we have been confronted with during the past year has been the implementation of the new GDPR; we have however been in the fortunate position that we have been expertly supported by our Trustee, Salma Pervez, who, from her professional knowledge has identified and implemented exactly what we needed to do to remain within the Law.

Training is an issue that we must ensure remains in the forefront of activity during the forthcoming year, Salma and our member Neil Turner have prepared a paper on this topic, I am keen to see this actively progressed during the next year. One aspect that your Trustees wish to implement as soon as possible is a formal training and support package for new members. Another area that we do need to ensure more of our members are competent with is the preparation of maps and associated incorporation of our digital databases.

I must also thank Rob Close again for steering the Digital Archive Working Group, hopefully by the time this work is completed we will have a first class system to ensure that our digital records are protected for those that follow us. Whilst covering the areas of technology it is important that I once more give my thanks to Jeremy Cooper for his ongoing support with acting as our webmaster. Hopefully with a recent offer of help we will be able to reinvigorate our Facebook page – watch out for more information on this during the forthcoming weeks.

It is perhaps also appropriate that I give thanks to another stalwart who has supported us over the years, that is Tony Johns for his editorship of the CLASP Newsletter. Not only is he excellent at the actual editing, publishing and distribution functions his persistent expediting of recalcitrant correspondents is beyond 'the pale'.

It has given me great satisfaction to hear the regard given externally to the successful liaison and working arrangements that we have between our 'archaeologists' and metal detecting members. This has been a positive philosophy since day one of our precursor, The Whitehall Roman Villa Project, without detectorists that site would never have been identified and subsequently CLASP borne. This was ably reflected in the article, co-ordinated by Tony Kesten, published in the National Grid 'Gridline' magazine, thanks to Tony for this. Again at the time of writing I am hoping that the CLASP model for this relationship between the disciplines will be reflected in some work, both academic and informative that is being undertaken nationally.

I have endeavoured to keep the Strategy Document in the forefront and not to allow it to slip below the horizon, to this effect I have had the template for the Trustee's Agendas to be formatted on the Document. It is important that this is seen as a living document that must be reviewed and updated as an ongoing process.

On the archaeological front, whilst I will not enter into technical discussion I must highlight one project that bodes well for the future, this is the joint work with MOLA to survey and interpret the major hill-fort on Borough Hill at Daventry. Undertaking joint projects, both formal and informal, with our partners in archaeology both commercial and academic is important if community archaeology generally is to remain a strength in the archaeological world. Whilst mentioning archaeology, I must as always give my thanks to our Archaeological Director Stephen Young for his work to ensure our technical standards are to the highest; we must all however become competent to ensure that we can accept delegated functions from him to enable him to get on with his core role of research, archaeological management and reports.

Thanks must also be given to Angela Evans for the custody of our funds and preparation of accounts, both periodic and annual. Her supervision and comment have been wise. Additionally I must also thank Sandra Deacon for her work looking after the Minutes and co-ordinating our human resources. Last but not least I must also thank Marcus Lewis for his outstanding local knowledge and contacts in the Daventry and Norton areas that are of significant assistance with our work in the Bannaventa area.

All in all a busy and perhaps thought provoking year, which could perhaps be defining for the future of CLASP as your Trustees have considered and identified both the positives and hazards that face us into future, bluntly we must not outstrip our resources. On that note I will leave you with one passing thought – 'new members – new funding'.

D.F. Hayward MBE
Chair of Trustees

September 2018