



Annual Report for 2005



www.claspweb.org.uk

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Introduction from the Chair of the Executive Committee

We are an umbrella organisation seeking to identify the historical landscape of Northamptonshire to the west of Northampton with an area centred on the axes of the River Nene and Watling Street. Our initial work is targeted towards the Romano-British era through the Local People - Local Past, Heritage Lottery funded Project. However we will evolve into other historical periods as the capacity of the organisation grows. Initially a natural process of evolution will tend to focus other work into the eras abutting the Romano-British period. We already have evidence of Bronze, Iron and Dark Age activity in locations co-terminal with the Roman sites. This therefore indicates that there was continual occupation for periods in excess of a thousand years on some of our sites.

The Trustees of CLASP, otherwise known as the Executive Committee, are currently waiting to hear the result of their application to the Charity Commission for Charitable status. The CLASP trustees have the responsibility to agree and oversee the operational policy and projects as advised by the Co-ordinating Committee and Archaeological Director. In parallel with this they have responsibility for raising and distribution of funds to support the agreed policies and projects. This includes raising the profile of CLASP with elected bodies, other archaeological and heritage groups and relevant professionals.

CLASP - aims and objectives.

- To raise the awareness of local peoples in archaeological and heritage issues utilising the media, our website - www.claspweb.org.uk , responding to consultation documents and invitations from external organisations including local authorities. This will include day to day liaison with professionals and administrators from a variety of relevant bodies.
- To enable local people to be stakeholders in CLASP projects by recruiting relevant societies to become participating organisations together with a creating a wide base of individual members. It is important for the future that organisations and individuals become proactive in identifying and executing research projects both relevant to existing work and possible future CLASP projects. This work could be done either by individuals or single societies or combinations of individuals and/ or societies interacting with each other. These projects will increase senses of identity and purpose for CLASP by recognising the important work of local groups & societies and the contributions they make to Archaeology and Heritage in their areas. The results of this work will not only be utilised within CLASP but could be fed to a wider audience e.g. The Sites and Monuments Record, Northants Archaeological Society.

CLASP will empower its members by providing or identifying training needs for its members to develop their skills in archaeological and heritage matters. Training can take place in a variety of ways e.g. on site, local courses, or working to improve formal academic qualifications. This training will enhance field and post excavation

work together with the ability to undertake effective archival and library research.

It is the intention of the Trustees to develop a safe repository for the artefacts held by CLASP both on their own behalf and that of others. Such a centre, which will become an important focal point within the community, will hopefully become a significant resource not only for storage but also for academic research and learning to a wider audience.

The Trustees will enhance existing educational links between CLASP and a wide range of schools, colleges and universities. This will enhance the credibility and purpose of CLASP. Involvement with Universities will also assist with validation of CLASP activities. We will also enhance our links with other local societies, e.g. the WI, Probus, Rotary and Vervidian.

Our work will assist in developing the conservation policy of local councils on issues relating to the local historical heritage. Hopefully we will, when need arises, be able to exert direct pressure when proposed development threatens this local heritage.

Probably the most important duty of the Trustees during the forthcoming year will be to establish a firm base to seek out appropriate funding streams to support these aims and the execution of technical projects identified by the Co-ordinating Committee.

Alan Standish
Chair of Executive Committee
July 2005

Membership of Executive Committee

Jeremy Calderwood (Secretary), David Banner, Angela Evans (Treasurer), Alan Priestley, Alan Standish (Chair), Alan Watson, Stephen Young (Archaeological Director).

Trustees - Executive Committee

They have overall responsibility for all CLASP activities, ensuring that they are directed towards achieving the strategic aims of CLASP. This includes responsibility for financial control and audit, and for establishing funding streams.

This Committee is made up of trustees elected by the individual membership together with appropriate co-opted trustees.

Organising Committee

Have responsibility for identifying and co-ordinating the execution of relevant projects.

This includes seeking appropriate funding from the Trustees. Also facilitate training of members, visits to external bodies and other similar activities.

Participating Organisations

These are local Archaeology, Heritage and History groups.

Each has a representative on the Organising Committee. They support the work of CLASP by providing suggestions for and supporting archaeological projects and other activities.

Individual Members

Fee paying persons who join CLASP independently of participating organisations. They elect the Trustees, and also representatives on the Organising Committee.

They are encouraged to support the work of major projects and also to proactively identify future minor projects and become involved in their execution.

Treasurers Report

This report covers from the beginning of 2002 until 31st March 2005. Over this period we are fortunate to have been given money from the Countryside Agency, a total of £11,350. Harpole Parish Council has given an allowance of £3000, this money for use within Harpole Parish for their archaeological history. Local history societies also have played their part in giving donations towards the work of CLASP. Individual membership for this period was £360 and other donations £527.

Our biggest expenditure is geophysical survey; finds processing can also be expensive.

Shown below is a shortened balance sheet for this period.

To join CLASP costs £5 per annum, new members are always welcome.

A. Evans
Treasurer

**Receipts and Payments from 1st January 2002 to 31st
March 2005**

Receipts

Countryside Agency	11,350.00
Harpole Parish Council	3000.00
History Societies	425.00
Other Donations	527.00
Membership Fees	360.00
SNC	500.00
Building Society Interest	34.29
Bank Interest	9.45
Bank Refund	35.00
Other	80.00
<u>Total:</u>	<u>16,320.74</u>

Payments

Archive Materials	661.29
Field Centre	1291.15
Finds Processing	1352.57
LP/LP Geophys Survey	9259.00
Website Leaflets	1,249.92
Travel Expenses	14.86
Office Costs	76.22
Committee Room Hire	10.00
Bank Costs	105.00
Other	734.72

Sub Total 14,754.73

Petty Cash 29.41

Cash in Hand 45.00

Bank Statement 1491.60

Total 16,320.74

Invoices Outstanding Total 12.50

Harpole PC Project Balance

2176.29

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2005

One of the most important aspects of CLASP is its coherent fieldwork strategy and rationale for the archaeological survey work that it is trying to promote. We should always remember that the context within which fieldwork will be undertaken is one of restricted resources against increasing need, for which new solutions must be sought to meet the range of challenges confronting today's archaeological world. In this initial period of development it has been very important to establish the amount of interest in and awareness of the heritage potential of the local area. This has required us to provide an appropriate inclusive working framework within which volunteers are able to become proactive in acquiring archaeological recording and post excavation skills.

The focus for the first phase of fieldwork is the investigation of the nature of Roman settlement in the area. CLASP has been able to utilise a research led excavation of the Roman Villa and Landscape at Whitehall Farm, Nether Heyford; to develop another project centred on an intensive non-invasive field study characterising other settlement sites of the same period across five neighbouring parishes funded by the Local Heritage Initiative. The success of these two projects has enabled CLASP to extend the area under investigation to look at other settlement of the Roman period along Watling Street including the important small town of Bannaventa at Whilton Locks. Both the quality of the fieldwork and the recording methodologies employed place our findings in the front rank of research into Romano-British studies and we should continue to strive to maintain this very high standard.

A high profile series of initiatives such as these currently being undertaken provide several advantages for the establishment of the principles espoused by CLASP. First and foremost it demonstrates the archaeological richness of the area and the possibility that past landscapes can be explored and interpreted in new and meaningful ways and that local amateur volunteers can be instrumental in this process. The abundance of material culture from the Roman period also provides us with an excellent opportunity to work on a wide range of artefacts that inform our understanding of the structures and features of the past. Finally a specific period based approach also enables CLASP to apply for the necessary funding to achieve professional standard results as well as to develop professional and academic links. In the future CLASP should be able to develop a project profile that reflects the emerging

archaeological priorities as perceived by local people in collaboration with professional providers. This could encompass sites and landscapes of other periods from pre-historic to post-industrial eras.

S. Young
Archaeological Director

The Organising Committee

Report from Chairman

Since our last AGM in March 2004, I am very pleased to report that CLASP has gone from strength to strength. On the organisational side, we have produced an informative leaflet giving details of what CLASP is all about and a membership application form - as a direct result of this leaflet we now have a healthy individual and society membership. Our thanks go to Jeremy Cooper for producing this leaflet.

On the practical front we have co-ordinated volunteers from across our area to help with trial trenching on a Saxon Cemetery, followed by the excavation of the burials. Next up was the Whitehall 2004 dig and in August 2004 we were fortunate to have permission to dig at Harpit, Harpole. Here CLASP volunteers including many from the Harpole Heritage Group excavated part of a Roman Villa last exposed when the A45 was built. In December 2004 and January 2005 we co-ordinated a metal detecting survey at the Roman small town of Bannaventa. This was the first project where metal detectorists (in this instance from PAST) and volunteers from other societies joined forces to detect and record the metal finds. Despite the chilly winter weather, we also had enough volunteers to also conduct a small field walking exercise on part of the site.

We have just finished the Whitehall 2005 summer excavation and I am pleased to report that 98% of volunteers were CLASP members - naturally those who were not members went home clutching an application form! Over the past year volunteers have contributed over 4000 hours on a variety of projects in addition to excavations and I believe this is testimony to the success of CLASP as a project that enables and encourages local communities to join in archaeological activities across our area. January also saw the launch of the CLASP newsletter and the second edition was produced in June, thus achieving our aim of 2 newsletters per year and our thanks go to the editor, Jane McCarthy for this success.

Finally, this Committee considered it appropriate to move towards obtaining Registered Charity status. To achieve this Trustees were appointed at a General Meeting and they now form the Executive Committee. We hope to hear shortly that our application for charitable

status has been successful. Our thanks to Jeremy Cooper for all the work he has undertaken with this application. As a registered Charity we hope to have access to additional funding that will ensure further opportunities for our local communities to learn more archaeological skills and in doing so learn more about the history of our area.

Kate Weaver
Chairman

Report from the Secretary

From the Secretarial perspective the last year has been a busy time overseeing the enlargement of CLASP by bringing three new participating organisations on board. To enable our wider membership and those from outside the organisation to appreciate the breadth of work undertaken by CLASP a matrix of Work in Progress has been prepared and placed onto the website. This will be updated as additional work is programmed or completed together with any outcomes. With the establishment of the Executive Committee, (Trustees), the delineation in the responsibilities of the two committees is becoming clearer and will enable us to focus on 'operational' issues.

It is essential that we have proactivity from both participating organisations and individual members in suggesting compatible minor projects to complement the principal work CLASP has underway. These projects would be carried out by those proposing it with advice and guidance from this Committee and would involve both archival researches together with investigative work on the ground. If you have a suggestion please bring it to either the attention of your organisations representative on this Committee or either of the Individual Members representatives, Gillian Biddle or myself. Your proposal will then be considered at the next Committee meeting. At the time of writing this Committee has also identified the need for a programme of training for its members support them identifying and successfully complete minor research projects in their own areas. This training will not only call upon our own resources but also introduce members to outside agencies able to support them with their projects.

Dave Hayward
Secretary

Membership of Organising Committee

Gillian Biddle (Individual Members), Jeremy Cooper (Information Technology and Publicity), Angela Evans (Treasurer), David Hayward (Individual Members - Secretary), Brian Ives, (Norton Northampton Portable Antiquities Search Team), Julia Johns (Weedon Bec History Society), Alan Kent (Bugbrooke History Society), Alan Priestley (Flore Heritage Society), Andrew Shaw (Brington History Society), Jennifer Smith (Harpole Heritage Group), Kate Weaver (Whitehall Villa and Landscape Project - Chair), Martin Winterton (Towcester and District Local History Society), Stephen Young (Archaeological Director)

Reports from Participating Organisations

Brington History Society

We have over 60 members with an active programme of monthly meetings covering a wide range of topics. Several meetings have involved discussions and presentations about the local Romano-British landscape.

During autumn 2004 some 30 members under the leadership of Steve Young undertook a fieldwalking survey of three sites in Harlestone. Analysis of 2300 sherds found suggested two of these to be occupied throughout the Roman period.

The 2005/6 winter programme of meetings is scheduled to include presentations about post war local recollections, the growth of Weedon and it's depot and the Tresham family. This autumn it is planned to have a further fieldwalking survey on a known roman site in Nobottle.

Andrew Shaw 01604 770668

Bugbrooke History Group

Of late little work has been undertaken on the Romano-British sites in Bugbrooke. A number of artefacts from the earlier work remain to be identified and classified.

Meetings of the Society continue to take place every 2 months with speakers covering topics of local interest. The next meeting on September 28th will launch a new project. People are invited to bring

their photographs of Bugbrooke, with a view to compiling and publishing a pictorial history of the village.

Alan Kent

Flore Heritage Society

In 1980 Hall and Martin carried out a survey in Flore of known sites where there had been indications of Roman or Saxon occupation. They recorded four sites where pottery sherds had been found or that were indicated by crop marks. Only two of the sites lent themselves to field walking, the others being under grass or covered by a plantation. The two that were field walked being Corner Close on Lady Morton's land off the Brockhall Road and Hadland House Farm off Cutthroat lane.

Hadland House Farm

Here field walking produced only forty-six sherds or pottery, mainly first and second century grey and grogged ware. There was one piece of Samian ware. Given the paucity of material a full-scale exercise was not considered worthwhile.

Corner Close

Some 4200 sherds were found in 2 Hectares, there was a considerable variety of pottery including grey ware, Nene Valley colour coated, Samian ware and a piece of 1stC grogged ware. There was also a fair number of tesserae, three 4th century coins but very little in the way of building material; this included some small pieces of limestone, a little roof tile and very little box tile. A geophysical survey confirmed what the pottery scatter had indicated; the main area of occupation was to the east of the existing farm buildings. A subsequent resistivity survey failed to add to our information. Overall there would appear to have been a fair sized settlement with mainly thatched buildings throughout the Roman period and beyond as some sherds of early Saxon pottery were also found. The site presents similar characteristics to those of other local villas and would merit further investigation.

Alan Priestley

Harpole Heritage Group

We have almost completed processing the finds from the 2003 trial trench excavations at the 'Harpole Two' sites known as Barn Close and

the Mere. Three members of the Group have spent many hours sorting, weighing, bagging, boxing and labelling the many 'finds' from both this site and Harpit, referred to below. The CLASP Archaeological Director Stephen Young has been in attendance when time permitted. These finds are all stored in the repository at Whitehall FarmHouse, Watling Street.

At the end of August 2004, fifteen members of Harpole Heritage Group and twenty-eight other CLASP members took part in a three-day excavation of a trial trench at Harpole One - Harpit by kind permission of Mr. George Briscoe. A twenty-metre trench and six test pits were dug. Evidence was found of a Romano-British Villa and Iron Age occupation. Part of the site had been excavated in 1966 prior to the A45 dual carriageway being constructed. A variety of useful finds were found during the excavation including mortar, painted plaster, pottery, oystershell, glass, tesserae, roof and floor tiles and metal. Small finds included a bronze brooch together with a number of coins during metal detecting across the field.

Jennifer Smith

Norton Northamptonshire Portable Antiquities Search Team. (PAST)

Formed in January 2004, the Team has steadily grown in membership and in September last year our members held an exhibition in Norton Village Hall when small archaeological finds, mainly recovered locally, were displayed to a large, interested and enthusiastic public. As a result of considerable interest from village residents in local history generally, the scope of NN PAST has now widened its remit to include other aspects of historical research outside that of metal detecting. As a consequence this has further increased our membership and the ability for Norton to create an excellent archive of it's unique past.

During December 2004 and January 2005 our Team members worked with others from CLASP on a 12 days' metal detecting survey of the Bannaventa site during which 270 Roman coins and artefacts were recovered.

All our metal detecting members, in accordance with our constitution, are members of the National Council for Metal Detecting and in the year ending January 2005, over 250 finds were submitted to the County's Finds Liaison Officer for assessment and recording on the National database.

Mike Goodman

Towcester & District Local History Society

In May 2005 David Wilcock handed over to Martin Winterton as TDLHS representative at CLASP. Though the Society's activities are centred on its monthly historical lectures, there is considerable interest in practical history, particularly the finds at Whitehall Villa. An attempt to involve the membership in the summer dig at Whitehall failed, probably for the reason that a high proportion of our members has elderly knees! However, there has been considerable support for our trips to places like Rockingham Castle and to Alderton. Also for walking the site with Martin Marix-Evans of Boudicca's battle against the Romans. This leads us to hope, when the autumn programme of CLASP fieldwalking is announced, there will be a significant number of volunteers from the Society to participate.

The Society continues to keep a watching brief on proposals for development of Bury Mount in Towcester. The latest announced in late July proposes the clear felling of all the trees on the Mount.

At the recent Easton Neston Sale the Society was fortunate to bid for and acquire an 1855 Ratings Map of Towcester. It is a survey drawn in meticulous detail. All the plots are numbered and it has been found that the owners and tenants that these numbers relate to are already on the TDLHS website (www.mkheritage.co.uk/tdslhs). This map will enable the Society to produce a snapshot of Towcester and its people in the mid-1800s. The original is approximately 6 feet by 9 feet and will be placed in the Northamptonshire County Records Office (NRO). The Society will make a digital master copy of the map and from this two reduced size prints some 50 inches wide will be produced. One will be placed in the NRO for reference by researchers, and the other will be retained by TDLHS for members' research.

Martin Winterton

Weedon Bec History Society

According to local tradition the remains of large buildings and numerous Roman coins have been found just south of the church. Over the years

fieldwalking around Weedon Bec Cemetery has produced Iron-age pottery, a few coins and some pieces of box-flue.

In October 2004 Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of CLASP conducted a geophysical survey on an area of land of approximately 1.08 ha adjoining the eastern side of the cemetery. The survey result was a complex network of positive linear and curving anomalies throughout the survey area. Most striking was a wide, generally east west ditch in the north of the area, possibly an important boundary. Three sub-circular (probably) ditched enclosures amidst other small curving and discrete anomalies bounded by a gently curving ditch were identified in the east. These are possibly the remains of a prehistoric settlement. The western half was dominated by a series of linear ditches. The magnetic intensity of these ditches increased the further to the west that they were detected, suggesting perhaps that settlement activity may be found in the cemetery.

Julia Johns

Whitehall Farm Roman Villa and Landscape Project

During the last 12 months we have been very busy at Whitehall. We have made excellent progress with the finds from the annual digs. All finds up to and including 2004 have been washed, written on, sorted, counted, weighed and the resultant data entered onto a database - all work undertaken by volunteers who give up their Tuesday afternoons and, indeed, many additional hours to help with the processing. We also have a volunteer studying our wall plaster which we hope will give us greater insight into the status of our villa. Our 'off season' sieving team has produced more glass beads, pieces of our gladiator glass, assorted bones, nuts, seeds, another leather cloverleaf, fragments of wood, eggshell, painted plaster, fragments of pottery and metal fragments. Overall our volunteers have contributed an average of 50 hours per week to the Whitehall project, excluding the excavation.

The animal remains (bone), from the bathhouse area have been studied at Southampton University by Dr Naomi Sykes. We have also prepared all the remaining bones ready to go for analysis and report. In October 2004, thanks to Jeremy Cooper, Webmaster, our Whitehall Villa website won a Channel 4/CBA award. (www.whitehallvilla.co.uk). Thanks to the skills of two of our volunteers we have also had some of our pots reconstructed. Dr Martin Weaver has conserved some of our metal, wood

and leather finds. He has also produced a facial reconstruction from the skull of the body found under the Villa courtyard in 2003 - this has given us the remarkably lifelike face of a man who was last seen at Whitehall nearly 2000 years ago. All of these finds can be seen on our award winning website.

The results of the analysis of the bones found in the Anglo Saxon Cemetery elsewhere of Whitehall Farm has also now been completed and is published on the Whitehall Web Site.

At the time of writing we are in the middle of our 2005 excavation and, Time Team notwithstanding, we have made significant progress with plenty of finds for further processing throughout the year.

It has not been all work at Whitehall Roman Villa: we had a trip to Oxford at Christmas where we visited the Ashmolean and the Pitt Rivers Museums and in true Whitehall volunteer style had a very good lunch. In spring we also had a trip, this time to Lincoln where we saw some very interesting Roman walls, arches and, of course, had a very good lunch. In conclusion a very busy but rewarding and enjoyable year!

Kate Weaver