



CLASP

Community Landscape &
Archæology Survey Project

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667



February 2008, Issue 7

A happy New Year to CLASP members from your Newsletter editor. At this time, there seems to be a bit of a dearth of information about associated groups and societies and their scheduled events up to mid-summer. So be it but may I encourage secretaries to let me have such information in good time for the next copy (see deadline and contact details on page 6).

From your organising Committee Acting-chairman

Welcome to the first 2008 edition of our newsletter. I trust you have weathered the rigours of the festive season well and are all set for another year of archæological activity. A focal point for the year will be the Whitehall dig where we'll see what more we can discover about the range of rooms east of the bath house; the dates are 13th June to 11th July. There will be other, smaller-scale investigations at several sites including Bannaventa, which promises to keep us busy for the foreseeable future.

A managerial priority this year is to overcome the problems of keeping you all informed of the latest arrangements when activities are imminent or in progress: the CLASP telephone information line should become an important tool in achieving this. Remember to programme the number (which is on your CLASP membership card), into your mobile and to check it frequently if you want to join in. We also intend to try to keep the CLASP website well up to date with latest plans and arrangements. Also, please note that this is the last Newsletter you will receive unless you have renewed your CLASP membership for 2008.

Here's hoping that 2008 proves to be another successful year for community archæology in Northamptonshire.

Jeremy Cooper

The view from the Archæological Director

Since the last newsletter I can tell you there have been several exciting attention-grabbing developments in the work undertaken by CLASP. Obviously the main thrust of our fieldwork focus has continued to revolve around characterising and recording the local Roman landscape associated with the Roman small towns of Bannaventa (Whilton Locks) and Lactodorum (Towcester). Suffice to say our efforts have not gone unrewarded and I will return to the substance of these findings later in this account.

However I feel it is incumbent upon me to tell you first about perhaps the most important and probably momentous event for the future of CLASP as an organisation. We have been successful in our attempt to initiate a dialogue with West Northamptonshire Development Corporation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Dave Hayward MBE, secretary to the CLASP organising committee for facilitating this process. We may well have made a crucial breakthrough in establishing an integrated collaborative approach for the future concerning our involvement in recording the archæological heritage of our locality. The WNDC is responsible for setting the strategic framework and timetable for the massive expansion programme planned for the next ten years in Daventry, Towcester and Northampton. I understand these towns will see extensive redevelopment and the total housing stock will respectively increase in size by 40%, 70% and 50% over the next decade. One can see therefore that the impact of such growth on the immediate hinterland of central Northamptonshire will be spectacular and has serious implications for any archæological features or sites located in these areas and also impact upon the nature of any future fieldwork undertaken by our organisation.

Unfortunately the potential peril to the archæological heritage involved in the expansion predicted for the area has been further exacerbated by changes in 'local government' accountability for providing a coherent overview and framework for recording and interpreting the archæological remains that currently are known to exist in the local area. In reality neither Northamptonshire County Council nor any of the relevant local district and borough councils are in a position to provide the level of support and oversight required to ensure that WNDC with its current resources is able to engage with these archæological issues from a fully informed stand point. Therefore it is essential that CLASP makes a positive contribution to help facilitate a more consistent approach for dealing with the archæology of our locality. At present our purpose has been directed at assisting the Development Corporation as far as we can by making our local knowledge available to the Corporation for its strategic deliberations. We also have been able to comment on several aspects of the planned developments, especially in connection with Daventry in relation to the archæological challenges and we have tried to highlight where possible the full implications of the 'developers proposals'.

WNDC has been very appreciative of our involvement and is keen on a community element linkage. It is becoming apparent that there will be opportunities to work together on several levels whether in helping to shape the long term development strategy, carrying out mutually useful field work or sharing the findings of fieldwork. Already WNDC has responded in a constructive manner to our assistance and provided us with relevant archaeological information and practical material assistance to help us continue our cooperation. A particular instance of support has been the provision of digitised OS mapping and licensing material for CLASP's utilisation. WNDC has also expressed a desire to take part in the annual general meeting debate about urban expansion we are planning for September. The exact nature of any future collaboration and the level of long term commitment that CLASP will eventually provide will be decided at Organising Committee and Trustee Level of the charity and will have to bear in mind the voluntary status of our organisation and the amount of time and resources available as well as the aspirations of the membership.

Returning to the fieldwork undertaken over the last few months by CLASP, a major metal detecting survey and intensive field walking investigation of yet another part of the area associated with Bannaventa was organised and completed. The area under investigation lies immediately to the south of the scheduled area of the Roman small town. Our exploration of the site dominated the late summer and early autumn field work schedule. An assemblage of 198 coins and several Roman brooches were recovered. The metal detecting survey was carried out by our colleagues from PAST in conjunction with our own surveying staff and volunteers. A simultaneous field walking investigation covered a further two and half hectares of land; bringing the overall area examined in this part of the site to three and half hectares. The total number of sherds retrieved was approximately 4,000 and their distribution closely reflects the location of the principle features identified during the geophysical survey. Unfortunately only half of the available area has been subjected to examination and it is hoped that we will have another opportunity next year to complete the fieldwork in this area..

The most notable aspect of the coin list from the survey was the identification of two coins of the emperor Claudius. He is the emperor who instigated the invasion of Britain in 43AD. These coins are of special interest because they were in circulation for only a very short period of time and their appearance in the coin assemblage is suggestive of a military presence on site at this earliest phase of the Roman conquest of Britain. This is exciting news in relation to the development of the earliest elements of the Roman small town especially as a military site of this period has never been identified in this part of Northamptonshire before. I hope that either the future geophysical surveys will identify anomalies which are characteristically military in

cont next page

form or that the analysis of the samian ware indicates an unusually early peak in forms and consumption on site to add weight to this line of enquiry.

As reported previously we have funding to commission further geophysical surveys of other important areas of the Bannaventa site but final permission to initiate such work is still awaited. I anticipate that this exciting work should be completed in time for me to report on in the next newsletter.

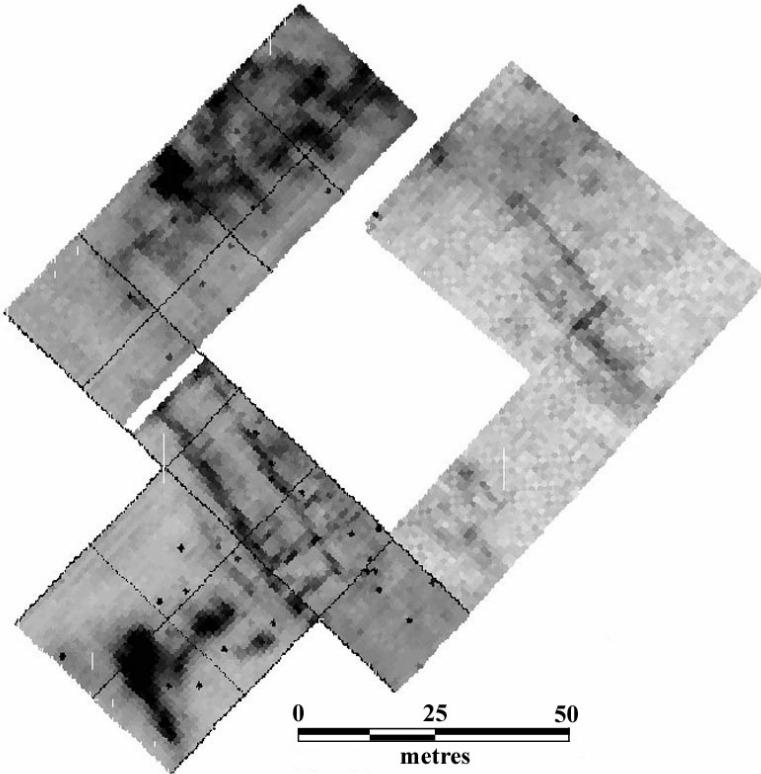
Unfortunately we were unable to field walk the large site at Easton Neston in late September but I'm sure that we shall have another opportunity in the future to examine the site in detail. Meanwhile another metal detecting survey was carried out on the Harpole 2 villa site but little was retrieved as the field had been rotovated for next year's crop but not ploughed and very few objects were brought to the surface. However the resistivity survey planned for after harvest was completed and the plan of the north eastern wing of the villa was revealed, confirming the existence of an extensive courtyard villa complex. The size and extent of the Harpole 2 villa is certainly comparable to the extremely large and well know villas at North Leigh, Oxfordshire and Chedworth, Gloucestershire.

Additional field walking was also carried out on the Harpole 1 villa complex in the field to the north of the site. The fieldwork located Roman material over an area of half a hectare, firmly establishing that the settlement had spread over a far larger area than had previously envisaged.

Finally CLASP was able to undertake two small scale trial excavations on a site in Gayton parish and at Whitehall Farm. The excavation at Gayton examined two ditches and a possible rubbish pit associated with the site we had surveyed and reported on in the previous newsletter. An initial analysis of the pottery indicated that the features were definitely of Roman date and had been filled in during the late 2nd to early 3rd century AD. The field and ditch system themselves must therefore pre-date that sequence of events. A rather nice glass flagon top and a silver denarius were recovered from one of the ditches. The earlier test pitting carried out at Whitehall Farm in July subsequent to the publication of the previous newsletter was also very successful and we were able to excavate a probable early 'pre-Roman' pit alignment whose existence had been suggested during the geophysical survey.

I expect a great deal of further information to be available after all of the material recovered from the various fieldwork initiatives has been properly analysed and interpreted. The fruits of these labours should be ready to share with you in our next newsletter. Thank you for your help and continued support.

Stephen Young



Outline of courtyard villa range Harpole 2 (Barn Close) (resistivity survey)

Report from the Organising Committee Secretary

We are pleased to announce that Daventry Local History Group has joined CLASP. This is very important with the proposed development work to be undertaken in the Daventry area as will be seen from comments later in this report.

The second half of 2007 has seen a successful metal detecting and fieldwalking operation. We have funding from the Roman Research Society for further geophysics on land to the east of Watling Street. The work that we have undertaken so far is leading to a reappraisal of the size and nature of Bannaventa. There have also been much smaller field investigations at sites in Harpole

cont next page

and also a trial trenching investigation has resulted in us being consulted on the effect on the archaeology of the area from various large scale planning proposals being received for the Daventry locality. Our input has sought to protect the archaeology and ensure that where it is affected, it is properly interpreted and if possible conserved. We have also sought to ensure that through CLASP, the local community will have an ongoing involvement working on the archaeology in the affected area.

In addition to our work in the Daventry area, we have recently been asked by WNDC to comment on similar proposals for Towcester. To assist us with this work, WNDC has intimated that it will assist CLASP by funding the purchase of a small scale digitised map for the whole area currently being investigated. This will enable us to present high quality presentations to the planners and others regarding the overall archaeological picture of the area and not look at each planning application in isolation.

CLASP has recently submitted the inter-active report on Phase One of the Local People-Local Past Project as an entry to the CBA Marsh Awards for Community Archaeology. If we win, the prize is £1000 - keep your fingers crossed! On a campaigning tack we have written to the Secretary of State at the DCMS and to the MP for Daventry Constituency regarding the perceived threat to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. It is important that this scheme is preserved and CLASP will do all it can to fight for it.

Two things you can do to help this campaign are to write to your MP and ask him/her to sign Early Day Motion 566 and secondly go on-line to <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/PAS-Funding/> and sign the online petition there.

Dave Hayward

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

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

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

CLASP joins the MKHA (from Jeremy Cooper)

CLASP has just joined the Milton Keynes Heritage Association. This brings us the benefits of being included in the Association's comprehensive website listing, of having access to its extensive advisory documentation, of meeting regularly with other groups and of occasional opportunities for training in heritage management skills. MKHA could also host the CLASP website, although there are no current plans to take advantage of that.

Milton Keynes residents are already well represented among CLASP members including myself and Ruth Downie, Secretary of the Trustees and CLASP had a stand at a recent MK Heritage event, thanks to MK resident Rick Whyte. Even though MK itself is beyond CLASP's present reach, a greater awareness of CLASP in one of the region's largest centres of population can only be of benefit.

MKHA was formed in 1994 by a number of local heritage groups and museums, with the aim of encouraging and developing co-operation and co-ordination between organisations having an interest in heritage in Milton Keynes, North Buckinghamshire and South Northamptonshire. It also has a central role in promoting heritage, by working closely with Councils and other agencies. MKHA now has about 40 member organisations. The MKHA website is at <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk>

Harpole Heritage Group (from Jennifer Smith)

This Autumn we have been busy in Harpole. On September 3rd, 11 people from Harpole Heritage Group and CLASP took part in Field walking 1 hectare of Flaxlands and found 396 sherds of Roman pottery. One Metal Detector found two very small Roman coins in the adjoining field.

Metal Detecting was arranged for 19th October in Barn Close when 3 Metal Detectorists found 24 Roman coins and 16 other finds (metal and lead). They were helped by three members of Harpole Heritage Group. The Geophysics was completed in Barn Close at the same time. On both days we had beautiful autumn weather.

We were not so lucky when Metal Detecting was arranged for The Mere on 13th October, it rained and it rained, only 3 coins, 2 pieces of lead and 1 piece of metal were found and we had to call it a day as we were all six of us were very wet by this time.

cont next page

On Wednesday 31st October 2007, I was invited to Harpole Primary School to tell Year Four about 'Archæology in Harpole'. The children had been learning about treasure and archæology in class and were very interested to hear about the two Roman Villas sites in Harpole and to see the artifacts that I had taken along. As a follow up to this, on Thursday 15th November, Mrs Cathy Briscoe and her husband Paul arranged for the class of 30 with their helpers to visit their paddock where two trial trenches had been dug to represent the two villa sites.

The 'dig' was arranged very much like a real dig, turf and top soil removed, washing area, trays etc and plastic sacks to kneel on. They all came in their wellies armed with dad's garden trowel. With coins, pottery and bones 'planted' the dig could begin. They had a brilliant time and so did the helpers. The following week the class held a 'museum' day to show off their Finds. Perhaps we have some budding archæologists in Harpole.

Daventry Local History Group

A new member of CLASP, Daventry Local History Group was formed in 2005. Its main aim is to promote interest in the local history of Daventry through meetings, exhibitions and the production of written materials. Members are encouraged to research and relate their knowledge about the town's history so that an accessible record can be developed. The Group members also co-operate with Daventry Town Council in the development of the archival, artefact and photographic collections in the Town Council's Museum.

Bugbrooke History Society

The Society has recently published another book entitled "Pictorial Bugbrooke 1860 - 1960". This is a compilation of photographs and associated information and available from the village Post Office or Cherree the Florists at a cost of £10.

Daventry Museum

The Daventry Town Council continues to gain strength and popularity with the number of visitors increasing. The policy of changing displays each six months is continuing and the present exhibition includes stands depicting a '1930 /1940 domestic washday' and one showing tools etc of shoe repair / shoe-making. There are other items of local history such as past BBC employment documents and local school records from the 1840s. The Museum is open on the first Saturday of each month from 10.00 am until 1.00 pm, admission free with refreshments available.

Whitehall Farm Roman Villa and Landscape Project

Box flue

Up to the end of the year, members have continued to examine and record the comb patterns found on the box flue material, building up enough data to be worth storing on computer.

Tegula roof tiles

The team have continued to log the features of the Tegula tiles but many of these finds were too small to provide any information. With the details to hand it has been decided to start storing this data on computer.

Plans

Members have also started scanning the drawings from the Whitehall site for computer storage and this is proving a big task.

Visit

Members have visited the village of Ashwell in Hertfordshire. This has Roman origins but was later laid out with a group of beamed cottages with decorated plasterwork. Springs are a feature of the village and a number of breweries had previously existed. A small 15th century timber-framed building, not far from a Roman road running east towards Cambridge, has been made into a folk museum with an extension to house a Roman find from a shrine.

Brian Culling

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.bugbrookelink.co.uk/history or contact Alan Kent, tel: 01604 830518				Bugbrooke History Society
Feb 6	7.30 pm	Bugbrooke's Wireless Schoolmaster	Chapel Schoolroom	Flore Heritage Society
Feb 13	7.30 pm	Alice Hawkins, the Life & Times of a Suffragette	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Feb 14	7.30 pm	Watermills & windmills of Northamptonshire	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Feb 18	8.00 pm	The City of London	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Society
Feb 20	7.30 pm	The Battle of Naseby Project & the Daventry Connection	The Town Council Offices, Bishop Crewe House, North Street	Daventry Local History Group
Mar 5	7.30 pm	C R Mackintosh	Chapel Schoolroom	Flore Heritage Society
Mar 12	7.30 pm	AGM + Social For all events, see www.mkheritage.co.uk/tlhs/TDLHS/speakers.html	Riverside Centre, Islington Rd	Towcester & District Local History Society
Mar 13	7.30 pm	Fire Marks & Fire Insurance	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Mar 17	8.00 pm	The English Village	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Society
Mar 19	7.30 pm	Presentation from the Museum Photographic Library	The Town Council Offices, Bishop Crewe House	Daventry Local History Group

Table of Events for CLASP Groups

Dates	Time	Event	Location	Group
Mar 31	7.30 pm	The Carpetbaggers	Chapel Schoolroom	Weedon Bec History Society
Apr 2	7.30 pm	Castle Dykes & Other Castles	Chapel Schoolroom	Flore Heritage Society
Apr 10	7.30 pm	Roman Military Research Association	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
Apr 16	7.30 pm	Members' Evening	The Town Council Offices, Bishop Crewe House	Daventry Local History Group
Apr 21	7.30 pm	Weedon Photo Archives	Chapel Schoolroom	Weedon Bec History Society
Apr 21	8.00 pm	Phillip Dodderidge	The Reading Room, Gt Brington	Brington History Society
May 7	7.30 pm	Visit to Dovecote Farm, Upper Heyford (Banner's Collection)	Dovecote Farm, Upper Heyford	Flore Heritage Society
May 8	7.30 pm	AGM and An American's Eye View of Northamptonshire	Methodist Chapel	Harpole Heritage Group
May 21	7.30 pm	Visit to Naseby Battlefield	Naseby Battlefield	Daventry Local History Group
June 4	7.30 pm	Visit to Wollaston Museum	Wollaston Museum	Flore Heritage Society
June 18	7.30 pm	AGM followed by Early Postal History wrt Northamptonshire	The Town Council Offices, Bishop Crewe House	Daventry Local History Group
July 16	7.30 pm	Presentation from the Museum Archives	The Town Council Offices, Bishop Crewe House	Daventry Local History Group