



CLASP

Community Landscape &
Archæology Survey Project

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667



Local Heritage *initiative* August 2009, Issue 10

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15th in Weedon Village Hall, West Street, starting at 7.00 pm; see page 2 for further details and the agenda, page 3 for the public meeting to follow.

From Jeremy Cooper, your Organising Committee Acting-Chairman

Welcome to the latest CLASP Newsletter. As ever, a big thanks is due to Tony Johns for editing and producing it, and for handling the AGM notices.

Secretary, Dave Hayward provides an excellent account of what the Organising Committee has been up to but he doesn't mention that his public appearance with Alan Clark took place against the background of a noisy demonstration outside the hall where they were speaking. The demo wasn't directed personally at them, but it shows that we work at the front line of civic politics!

Our Archaeological Director provides a calming account of academic endeavour as we steadily piece together more bits of the great jigsaw in the soil that fascinates us all. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to solving the puzzle and to this Newsletter.

Report from Dave Hayward, the Secretary of the Organising Committee

Since my last report we have been pleased to welcome Blisworth Heritage Society to membership of CLASP. As with all new groups this covers an important new geographical area for CLASP that includes several known

continued page 4

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 15th September 2009

7.00 pm at Weedon Bec Village Hall, West Street, Weedon, NN7
4QU

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last AGM, September 16th 2008
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Acceptance of Annual Report*
8. Appointment of Trustees**
9. Appointment of Officers: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
10. 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 September 9th.

** 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.



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PUBLIC MEETING

Tuesday 15th September 2009, 7.30pm

Recycling our Heritage

SPEAKERS

Dr Anthony Streeten

Regional Director of English Heritage

'Heritage at Risk - reuse of old buildings is part of the solution for heritage at risk'

Mike Rumbold

Chair, Weedon Bec History Society

'The Royal Army Ordnance Depot, Weedon Bec'

Stephen Young

University of Northampton

Archaeological Director for CLASP

Update on CLASP fieldwork

Admission FREE
but donations to CLASP
will be welcome

Weedon Bec Village Hall
West Street, Weedon
Northants
NN7 4PQ

Raffle, tea/coffee, display stands

www.claspweb.org.uk

Romano-British sites, plus of course the probability of other unknown sites. These all help to inform our current Local People-Local Past research project. Individually we also welcome Alan Clark as a new co-opted member to the Organising Committee. Alan is an independent local historian and archæologist who is dedicated to the protection and conservation of our local heritage. His knowledge and enthusiasm will undoubtedly be of benefit to CLASP.

Whilst talking about the question of protecting our local heritage, the Appeals regarding the three proposed developments at Daventry still await resolution. At the time of writing our attention has recently been drawn to the latest strategic plan for Towcester; together with our colleagues from Towcester & District Local History Society we will maintain an interest in these proposals. The other major area of activity on the planning front is the proposal by the Strategic Committee of West Northants Joint Planning Unit for an emergent strategic document for the area, urban and rural, covered by Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northants Councils. Both Alan Clark and your Secretary were called to speak at the meeting, only three speakers and a questioner in total! We now intend to make a written submission to their Committee on the emergent document. A record of the Secretaries' oral submission to the Council has already been placed on the CLASP website as will the written submission in due course.

Finally congratulations to the Whitehall Roman Villa and Landscape Projects annual organisation, excavation and open day, all well organised and extremely successful. The whole concept of the site seems to change continually, some interesting thoughts as to purpose have been voiced but I will let others put these forward!

The view from Steve Young, Archæological Director

Since the last newsletter a considerable amount of fieldwork has been undertaken by CLASP. The flurry of fieldwork has centred on non-invasive approaches at sites in the parishes of Easton Neston and Tiffield, trial trenching and test pitting at Harpole and Weedon and the continued open area research excavation at Whitehall Farm, Nether Heyford. This work is important because it is helping us to build up a character profile of individual settlements and establish the extent of some of them. In particular the fieldwork in the south of our survey area in the hinterland of Towcester (Lactodorum) will help immensely in enabling us to recognise indicative criteria amongst the

continued on page 5

evidence we find to explain the nature of Romanization in that area and how it might differ from the model we have developed for the settlements around Whilton Lodge (Bannaventa) further to the north.

At Easton Neston, work has begun on a fieldwalking and a metal detecting survey of a large concentration of Roman material known to exist in the area. A previous reconnaissance by CLASP on the site had produced a significant amount of pottery over a fairly wide area. Unfortunately in the time available we were only able to survey about two thirds of a hectare out of a potential area of about 5 hectares, although a total of 4,000 sherds were recovered and 129 Roman coins. Aerial photographic evidence suggests the possibility of there being two villas in the field but whether these represent early and late, or contemporary buildings, is still to be established. Most of the coin assemblage is of 4th century date with only about 10% of the coins belonging to 3rd century AD rulers. A significant number of coins are of the House of Theodosius and these probably suggest economic and commercial activity continuing into the early 5th century AD as found at Whitehall Farm. Members of the Towcester Historical Society are taking a particular lead in the processing and analysis of the material and it is hoped further work will be possible in future.

An initial exploratory fieldwalking survey covering half a hectare was carried out on a Roman settlement site in the parish of Tiffield. The aim was to establish the archæological potential of the site before initiating a more extensive and intensive survey planned for the future. A total of over 1,000 sherds and 27 coins were recovered from the sample area and these are now being processed and analysed. This brings the known total of coins in the assemblage for the site to 80 coins. About 75% of those coins that are identifiable were minted in the 4th century with the remaining 25% of 3rd century date which reflects in part the evidence at Easton Neston. There are no coins of the very late Roman period and this might indicate a substantial decline in economic activity towards the end of the Roman period. It will be interesting to reflect on this imbalance when the date range of the pottery has been determined. Unfortunately approximately a quarter of all the coin assemblage is illegible and was found to be much corroded and probably indicative of poor soil conditions associated with the preservation of the material. The site appears to be

continued on page 6

the largest of the settlements currently under investigation in the immediate area although the potential hierarchical and social relationship between them cannot as yet be determined.

At Weedon we were able to excavate a series of test pits in the old rectory garden to the west of the London/Birmingham main line railway and the Grand Union Canal. The purpose was to try and ascertain whether the Roman settlement that appears to partially lie under the village cemetery actually extended as far west as the parish church. No structural material or evidence was located although two of the test pits contained un-abraded sherds of Roman pottery indicating occupational activity in the general area. Only half a dozen sherds were recovered but because of their condition I don't think we are looking at a manuring scatter. Hopefully future work on other potential surviving areas will help us to define the extent and the western boundary of the Roman settlement that once existed at Weedon.



The Cellar at Barn Close, Harpole

On the site at Barn Close, Harpole we examined a feature partly excavated last year to determine its function and degree of archaeological survival. We were also able to undertake a further metal detecting survey of the site that produced another 62 coins and a very fine Roman fibula brooch as well as another 40 odd fragments of lead and other finds. Harpole 2 now has a coin list of over 300 coins and will be very useful in the comparative study we are doing

between the rural settlements and the small town of Bannaventa. It will also provide an interesting contrast with the coin assemblage from the smaller villa at Whitehall Farm. The stone lined sunken feature appears to be a cellar associated with the western range of the main villa building. Two coins found amongst the rubble may suggest a late 4th century deposition and end for the building but this cannot be said for certain at this time. The rubble infill of the cellar appears to be the fallen superstructure of the room above and this may well account for the stone finial found last year. Currently we only have the western half of the feature exposed but the cellar is about two metres wide

continued on page 7

and at least four metres long. Some six courses of stone have been observed in the walls of the cellar but the actual depth remains to be determined although we should expect it to continue downwards. Once the remains of the wall and superstructure have been removed the cellar might reveal some interesting and significant finds. However this will have to wait until next year when the excavation is resumed.



The semi-circular hypocaust

The research excavation at Whitehall Farm has continued a pace and the secrets of the second Bath house have started to reveal themselves. A semi-circular heated extension to the main hypocaust was excavated as was another room in the range further to the east which also contained yet another hypocaust. The Bath house 2 is far larger than the one that replaced it and we now need to consider the rationale behind the differ-

ent sized buildings. It could have something to do with the financial resources available to the estate or with the function and farming regime of the settlement. A further 1194 sherds and 13 coins have been retrieved and we now have an assemblage of 541 Roman coins. It will be sad to see Bath house 1 covered over but the long term preservation of the building has to be assured and we have recovered as much archaeological information as we can from our excavation of the remains. We were also able to hold another open day which was very well attended and attracted over 1100 people although a significant proportion of them were children. The day went very well and a substantial profit was made to help pay for all of the things we shall need for the academic report.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

The Deadline for the next issue is Sunday night, February 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

Whitehall Farm Roman Villa & Landscape Project, 2009

Whitehall group throughout the winter of 2008 and into 2009 completed the processing of the finds from the 2008 dig into their fabrics types, and returning these to storage. Scanning all the drawings into the computer system has involved checking these and aligning them with true North and the National Grid. This work is ongoing.

Steve Young has been encouraging the Group to reward volunteers by engaging in a Post Graduate Module in Community Archaeology set up by the University of Northampton. A potential module of projects was produced covering a range of Whitehall finds and materials, with a number of the group looking at Roman brooches, box flues, pottery, seed identification, wall plaster and also small finds of metal etc.

Over the year the Group made two visits, one to St Albans Museum where we meet with the team of conservators. The second visit was to Flag Fen and Peterborough Museum with a special interest in the Nene pottery and indented beakers.

The Group began to plan for this year's dig to start on June 15th and run for four weeks ending with an open day on the 12th July. This year we had students from Nottingham & Newcastle to increase our number.

Work started by opening up the South end of Bath House 2. This revealed the extended hypocaust with more pelae plinths and curved end wall with a wood lined drain outlet. Ingress of water from the spring line continued to give a problem and a pump was required. Finds from this area included pottery; two parts of one pot did match and they were embellished with a white paste applied to the surface; also glass, bronze and a bone hairpin.

The area around Bath House 1 had a section of back-filled material removed down to the stone foundations and also the drain was opened up. The area near the stoke hole was explored in more detail along with the courtyard and old cross yard drain.

The small finds from the whole area were as follows: 10 items of lead, 14 coins many of which were from the surrounding area with one coin having an image of Romulus & Remus; 5 items of bronze plus a ring. Most of the glass finds were small totalling 11 in all; a quantity of iron, 25 in all, of which 13 were nails and 1 ring. Flints 3 in number also 2 buttons as well as 2 hair pins.

Brian Culling

A Century of Fatherhood

Bristol based TV company Testimony Films www.testimonyfilms.com is proposing to make a film outlining a history of 'fatherhood' over the past one hundred years. They are currently looking for men who were fathers from the 1970s and earlier to relate their stories and experiences as fathers during those years. Of special interest are those who left their families to fight in the Second World War.

If you or your fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers are interested in taking part in this research please contact Janet Mills at Testimony Films directly. She can be contacted at Research1@testimonyfilms.com by telephone at 01179258589 or post at 12 Great George Street, Bristol, BS1 5RS. This is a great opportunity for CLASP members to ensure the recording of our recent history for posterity.

Dave Hayward

From Jennifer Smith, Harpole Heritage Group

The Group and Steve Young are preparing a display of Roman artefacts for Harpole Primary School. The Group has also carried out another excavation on 19 - 21st August at its Barn Close site. A metal detecting survey by members of NN Past will also have taken place in Barn Close and the Mere.

On Saturday, October 10th, an exhibition will be held to celebrate 10 years of the Harpole Heritage Group. This will be held at the Methodist Chapel, School Lane from 10.30 am until 4 pm. The Group hopes to see you there.

List of Associations for Events in the CLASP Newsletter

| Organisation | Contact | Tel |
|--|-----------------|--------------|
| Norton, Northampton PAST | Alan Standish | 01327 872209 |
| 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 | Colin Davenport | 01327 702055 |
| Blisworth Heritage Society | Dr Sarah Sykes | 01604 859373 |

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 |
| Sat Sept 5 | 2 - 4 pm | Blisworth Heritage Day 'Past Present & Future' | Village Hall | Blisworth Heritage Society |
| Sept 9 | 7.30 pm | The World's Finest Bells | Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| Sept 10 | 7.30 pm | Roman Military | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| Sept 16 | 7.30 pm | TBA | Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| Sept 21 | 7.30 pm | Going for a Spin | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street | Weedon Bec History Society |
| Sept 21 | 8.00 pm | The History of the English Longbow | The Reading Room, Great Brington | Brington History Society |
| Sept 25 | 7.30 pm | Sun Moon & Stars | Village Hall | Blisworth Heritage Society |
| Oct 7 | 7.45 pm | Vikings in Northamptonshire | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| Oct 8 | 7.30 pm | Spires, Saints & Martyrs | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| Sat, Oct 10 or 17 | Not spec- ified | A Group Exhibition on the Poor Law & non- conformity in the Town | Not specified | Daventry Local History Group |
| Sat, Oct 10 | 10.30 to 4 pm | Celebrating 10 years of the Harpole Heritage Group | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| Oct 14 | 7.30 pm | The Archaeological Work of the National Trust | Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| Oct 19 | 8.00 pm | 600 Years of the Throckmorton Family | The Reading Room, Great Brington | Brington History Society |
| Oct 21 | 7.30 pm | Oral History: members' Reminiscences of Daventry | Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street | Daventry Local History Group |

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| Oct 26 | 7.30 pm | Fawsley and the Knightley Family Revisited | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street | Weedon Bec History Society |
| Oct 30 | 7.30 pm | Memories of School-days | Village Hall | Blisworth Heritage Society |
| Nov 4 | 7.45 pm | Fawsley and the Knightleys Revisited | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| Nov 8 | 7.30 pm | Annual Dinner & Quiz | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| Nov 11 | 7.30 pm | The Historic Deer Parks of Northamptonshire | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| Nov 16 | 8.00 pm | Book Launch: 'Aspects of Brington' | The Reading Room, Great Brington | Brington History Society |
| Nov 18 | 7.30 pm | Turnpikes & Milestones | Daventry Town Council Offices, North Street | Daventry Local History Group |
| Nov 27 | 7.30 pm | Dig for Victory (DVD of agriculture in WWII) | Village Hall | Blisworth Heritage Society |
| Nov 30 | 7.30 pm | Northampton Castle Rediscovered | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street | Weedon Bec History Society |
| Dec 2 | 7.45 pm | Annual Supper | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| Dec 9 | 7.30 pm | Social Evening inc Readings & Music followed by supper | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| Sat Dec 12 | 2 - 4 pm | Christmas Event with mulled wine and mince pies | Village Hall | Blisworth Heritage Society |
| Jan 13 | 7.30 pm | Archæological Facial Reconstruction | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| Jan 14 | 7.30 pm | Women of the Wild West | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| Feb 3 | 7.45 pm | Plessey at Caswell | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |

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|--------------|-------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Feb 10 | 7.30 pm | Ancient Woodlands - the Work of the National Trust | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| Feb 11 | 7.30 pm | Smothered in the Boghouse | Methodist Chapel, School Lane | Harpole Heritage Group |
| Mar 3 | 7.45 pm | Postcards round Daventry | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane | Flore Heritage Society |
| Mar 10 | 7.30 pm | Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk | The Riverside Centre, Islington Road | Towcester & District Local History Society |