



CLASP

Community Landscape &
Archæology Survey Project

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667



February 2012, Issue 15

Please don't forget the Special General Meeting of CLASP on March 12th starting at 7.30 pm in the Baptist Schoolroom, Nether Heyford. If you are unable to attend and wish to have a proxy vote, please let Alan Watson know, either by email (alan@alanwatson.demon.co.uk) or by post to: A Watson, 24 Wakefield Way, Nether Heyford, Northants, NN7 3LU.

From *Jeremy Cooper*, your Organising Committee Acting-Chairman

Welcome to 2012 - the 60th year of the reign of Elizabeth II, and the year of the London Olympics. Love or loathe them, the Olympics hold a special place in the CLASP communal memory as they were so eagerly awaited by Robin Vowles, who, alongside Beryl, was to be actively involved in running them. We shall certainly miss Robin at Whitehall, where his courage in the face of adversity, and his constant good humour were always much appreciated.

This year will see the last major dig at Whitehall Villa. For many of us it all began at Whitehall at the turn of the millennium: we've come a long way since then, and when Whitehall no longer gives us a month in the country, there will surely be other opportunities to get simultaneously wet and sunburnt while exploring our past.

From *Norman Garnett*, Secretary to the Organising Committee

The period of the past 6 months has been relatively quiet however CLASP has been represented at several displays, events during these months.

cont page 2

It appears that CLASP's profile is rising within the local archaeological environment with several requests for involvement occurring. The availability of the magnetometer resource seems to be instrumental (excuse the pun) in a lot of these cases, thanks to Fred Kay & Dave Adams' involvement with providing expertise and training.

CLASP have also been asked to provide representation at other venues outside the general archaeological field (another pun?) with a request to 'appear' at an event in the Northampton Fishmarket, this was short-lived due to the plans to build a bus station and the subsequent closure of the site. However, as it is reported that there are the remains of a former synagogue under this site there may be an opportunity for exploratory work here.

There has also been a request for CLASP to provide a display at the Duston Community Centre on 17th of March.

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter our archive store now needs to be relocated, fortunately a new site and container have been found and our materials can now be moved. This is to occur on the 7th of March with the assistance of a number of volunteers.

Finally, from the recently occurring projects, Barby, Tiffield, Milton Keynes, it appears that CLASP is to be in demand over the coming year which is due in no small part to our past efforts & the enthusiasm & professionalism of our membership.

Robin Vowles 1942-2012

Robin's death has cast a large shadow over all of us in the Whitehall "work team". We remember times over the past years when our lives crossed and are grateful for happy, satisfying memories of him both on the annual digs and when we were processing the finds on Tuesday afternoons through the rest of the year.

When we were trowelling away on the surface at the Villa, conditions could be extreme – from baking hot to dealing with the effect of a sudden rainstorm. Robin's gear would match the occasion – Foreign Legion kepi and all-over waterproofs turning him into a "green being"! Nothing would stop him in the pursuit of the archaeology. He never complained about being given a particularly tough area to work and his attention to detail

cont page 3

gave the rest of us something to aspire to. He and Beryl were to be found at break times in their matching folding chairs with a vast selection of eats which we were all envious of. Beryl's sales pitches at lunchtime for Whitehall products and memorabilia are famous.

Of course, all that was dug up had to be scrubbed, numbered and archived. Beryl has kept a watchful eye on the quality of work and Robin was a willing helper filing the bits away in context trays before we sorted and recorded everything during the dark days of winter.

Shelter from the elements was needed on site and we used a variety of tents of various ages, supplied by Beryl and Robin. We were also grateful for their expertise in pitching them as otherwise we would have struggled with so many conflicting suggestions from the rest of us.

Tuesday afternoons have become more of a family occasion when we gather in the Barn, whatever the weather, to sort the artefacts. Robin's skill at separating grogged, shelly or oxidised tile was first class. He always enjoyed the tea breaks and the newsy chats.

We normally have outings twice a year to visit other archaeological projects. Robin and Beryl were always on the trips, lastly in December to see the Roman hoard at Market Harborough. He was delighted to be with us then and we remember a happy day together.

After nearly 10 years in our group, Robin will be remembered fondly by all of us.

Margaret MacIntosh

From *Steve Young*, Archaeological Director

Since the summer excavation at Whitehall Roman Villa, the focus of the work has moved towards the interpretation and archiving of the material retrieved. The worked bone assemblage, which includes the hairpins, counters and other decorated pieces is being analysed and interpreted for the final report by Dr Steven Ashby at the University of York. He will also examine the antler material from the Proto Villa to establish whether it was being used to produce artefacts on a domestic or small industrial scale. Hopefully, besides

cont page 4

identifying the individual small finds, he will also be able to outline the bone working techniques involved and the social relevance of each of the artefacts as well as the cultural meaning of the assemblage in general.

Further investigation of the large and diverse animal bone assemblage is also being undertaken by Dr Naomi Sykes of Nottingham University. In particular she and her students will look at material obtained from the 2009 to 2011 excavations. In addition specialist scientific work will also be undertaken on attempting to identify whether the late 3rd/early 4th century AD wolf jaw bone and the skeletal remains of the 5th century human burials are of continental or local origin. The approach will centre on the examination of the teeth enamel and the origin of the water content.

It is believed that the wolf was quite common in Roman Britain and yet very little physical evidence has been found to confirm this assumption. We also know that this part of Northamptonshire was intensively occupied and farmed throughout the Roman period, possibly making the area much less conducive to the widespread existence of native wolf packs. Therefore, the origin of the Whitehall example and the possibility that the remains are of a 'pet' imported from the Rhineland/or north western provinces would have quite interesting ramifications for our understanding. Similarly a continental origin for the Post Roman burials from the Anglo Saxon cemetery would be helpful in proving the existence of *'foderati'* or hired mercenaries in the area at this important transitional time of our history. This type of evidence is reasonably rare and of crucial importance in the interpretation of the Post Roman Hall and possible squatter occupation of the bath house ruin during the latter part of the 6th century. It will also allow us to finally re-enter the human material excavated over the years. Volunteers are keen to see this happen and we are required to do it as part of our licence.

Unfortunately the tree ring dating of the structural timbers recovered from the second bath house, currently under excavation, was inconclusive as not enough growth rings were present to provide a profile against which an interpretative dating could have been made. However the '*best*' sections of the timbers are now undergoing conservation at the York Archaeological Trust, a process that could take between one and two years. The report on the timber

cont page 5

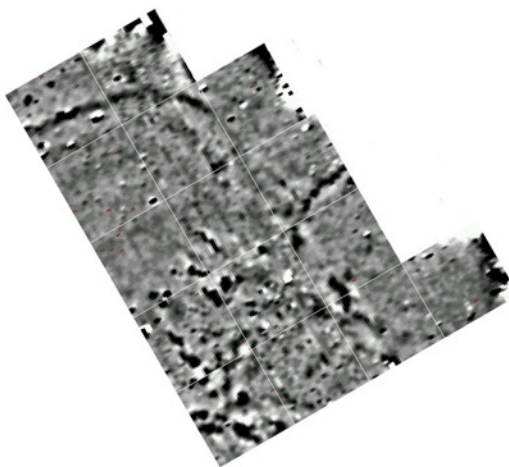
by Dr Damian Goodburn has confirmed many of the points made during the initial assessment and exploration. Interestingly, the timbers were taken from fast growing open woodland which suggests a coppiced and managed resource, designed to meet the needs of the estate, supplying fuel, fencing and some construction timber. Neither timber is older than between forty or fifty years, the one timber having been stockpiled before use whilst the other was re-used and, most likely had an origin in some kind of machinery. Evidence excavated from the later bath house confirms the managed woodland interpretation as sawn offcuts from other woodworking waste and, the remains of a sheep hurdle were also recovered. It also indicates an area of woodland that could have been used as a place for hunting, as has been suggested through the analysis of the evidence contained within the bone assemblage.

Further work is also being planned for the environmental aspects of the assemblage and the associated samples derived from the excavation - a vindication of our laborious sampling process - I know some have wondered why we bothered to take and keep such material and, what we were going to do it. This will build on the work already done by Tony Harrison on the identification of seeds, pips and grains. Hopefully this will provide a better understanding of the ecology associated with the villa compound and the immediately surrounding hinterland, providing a base-line understanding that can be developed in greater depth as we explore the wider Roman landscape and settlement distribution. Finally a small scale exploratory metal detecting survey was undertaken in a field to the west of the site along the alignment of the trackway that connected Whitehall Farm to Watling Street to ascertain whether there was any other material debris associated with the Roman settlement. Nothing of consequence was discovered except for the odd coin.

The reconnaissance work of Roman sites has continued in the parishes around Towcester and an extensive field-walking and geophysical survey was undertaken at Descote, Pattishall. Most of the material recovered is medieval in date and can probably be associated with the deserted medieval village, but a significant number of the sherds from the Roman period demonstrate earlier activity on the site which might be connected with a large enclosure detected during the geophysical survey. It also provided an excellent initial opportunity to use CLASP's Bartington magnetometer in earnest with some interesting

cont page 6

results. The instrument was and will also be used at Barby Hill to assist in the identification of the Iron Age landscape in that area. However since December, most geophysical activity has focused on developing our ability and capacity to obtain reliable field data for interpretation and to train a growing number of proficient field operators. Fieldwork has focused on identifying the remains of part of the defences at Bannaventa which had been believed destroyed in the 1970s, and the survey of the largest Roman settlement, previously partially field walked in Tiffield parish. Both sites have produced exciting results that demonstrate CLASP is capable of producing first class field data ready for interpretation. The next step is to train a comparable group of practitioners on the report writing side to enable us to make far more use of the equipment we have available to us.



Bannaventa NE Area 2012

The findings at Bannaventa have enabled us to reconstruct the position of the defences in the NE quadrant of the 4th century AD defended area and to identify the alignment of a roadway with its associated buildings leading to the position of a possible east gate. Meanwhile, on the Tiffield site a large central building has been located surrounded by enclosures as well as evidence for two different field systems. I'm increasingly confident that given the manpower and organisation CLASP will be able to make a significant contribution to the geophysical survey of local sites.

The findings at Bannaventa have enabled us to reconstruct the position of the defences in the NE quadrant of the 4th century AD defended area and to identify the alignment of a roadway with its associated buildings leading to the position of a possible east gate. Meanwhile, on the Tiffield site a large central building has been located surrounded by enclosures as well as evidence for two different field systems. I'm increasingly confident that given the manpower and organisation CLASP will be able to make a significant contribution to the geophysical survey of local sites.

of a possible east gate. Meanwhile, on the Tiffield site a large central building has been located surrounded by enclosures as well as evidence for two different field systems. I'm increasingly confident that given the manpower and organisation CLASP will be able to make a significant contribution to the geophysical survey of local sites.

From *David Hayward, Research and Project Management*

Since the last newsletter I have become far more involved in my new role with research and to a lesser extent project management. Regarding the latter, CLASP continues to be involved with the Barby Hill Project that is investigating the probable Iron Age site at Barby Hill. This is not a CLASP

cont page 7

project but one that we are involved with as a participating group. Some field-walking, metal detecting and a magnetometry survey have already been undertaken, which together with what is already known about the site, indicates a hill top Iron Age site, with, as yet, no evidence of fortification. There is also evidence of some Romano-British activity, as yet undefined, on the site.

CLASP was invited by Boddington Parish Council to assist them with a preliminary archaeological investigation into an extension to their parish graveyard. The Archaeological Director and myself visited Boddington and whilst we would very much like to have CLASP involved with the project we had to reject their invitation because of the resource implications, not so much with the actual fieldwork but the subsequent post excavation investigations and reports that would have had to have been completed. This would have put an unacceptable work load onto the Archaeological Director. It is good though that CLASP was considered for this work.

Other CLASP project activities will be reported by the Archaeological Director elsewhere in this newsletter as will, I am sure, the work being undertaken in the Towcester area by TDLH. The majority of my research has centred on the Landscapes of Governance Project looking at the early hundreds. Locally I have been looking at about ten hundreds in west Northamptonshire extant at the time of Domesday. The research has taken me further back into time than ever I originally envisaged and it does appear that there is evidence in some areas of the administrative areas having origins as early as the Iron, if not the Bronze Ages. I make no excuse for saying 'about' ten hundreds as there is conflicting evidence as to the early structures in one or two areas.

This research has led me into considering the early phases of the Anglo-Saxon era, it is surprising how much evidence there is of the earlier phases of this time. Trying to identify whether the Anglo-Saxon peoples assimilated the existing population or whether they drove them to the west or slaughtered them is I think currently taxing the best academic brains! This era is important in deciding what happened in the period with the demise of the Romano-British phase. This work will be reported on and made available to all hopefully before the time of the next newsletter.

cont page 8

Lastly I would like to draw the attention of members to the wide availability of some significant early books on the internet in electronic format. Some of these are available for free download, others for payment. I do advise that before anybody purchases a book, check the internet for free downloads first. I also suggest that all members visit the site of the English Heritage National Mapping Project (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/national-mapping-programme/>) . Once on the site, in the left hand column all of the sub-projects are listed including Northamptonshire. Visit that and you can download the whole publication for Northamptonshire foc by visiting the 'Related Publications' icon on the right of the page. There are a lot more facilities available with this unique project.

davensal@hywd1.fsnet.co.uk

From Alan Kent, Bugbrooke History Society

The society held its traditional New Year's walk around the Parish and the significance of many features was described ensuring that the past history remains in peoples' memory. The programme has included an important recognition of the life of a local suffragette and we look forward to hearing about the life of a Roman Lady. Other History groups continue to invite the members of the Group to present the talk on Frank Wright, the Bugbrooke 'wireless' Head Master. The Queen's Jubilee will be celebrated by the village working together for a day of events and entertainment and the History Society is planning an exhibition centred on the Coronation and events and life styles of the Queen's reign.

From Derek Batten, Friends of Alderton Monumnets

We have been planning for some time to have a professional examination of The Mount using Ground Penetrating Radar. A date had been fixed during last November but the equipment had broken down. The work should now be done on March 20th and it is OK for anyone to come and have a look-see but first do check with me to confirm that date is still on. Please ring me on 01327 811472

From *David Adams, Friends of Daventry Museums*

The Friends have found a new treasurer who will take over in April, consequently we will continue to operate. Two projects we are underwriting are 1) May 5th in the ICON, a showing of a cine film of Daventry from the early 1960s. The transfer of these films to DVD and there future storage is being done by MACE (Media Archive for Central England). This transfer is being funded by FODM.

As part of the Daventry Festival in July a projected showing of 'Running Scared' again in the ICON. Final details to be confirmed. Also we are funding the purchase of two mannequins for Daventry Town Council Museum. A further funding has been agreed to help CLASP purchase GPS units for field surveys (Manual & Electronic).

Note from the programme list that a visit to the record office will be a joint visit of DHLG & FODM. Other than that please note that Daventry TC Museum events for the 1st

Saturdays in March, April & May will be about the BBC and commemorating the 80 years of BBC World Service which started from Daventry on 3rd December 1932 and closed there 20 years ago in March 1992.

David Adams

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	Jim Aveling	01604 859109
Friends of Alderton Monuments	Derek Batten	01327 811304
History of Tiffield Society	Steve Jowers	01327 350292
Northampton Artefact Recovery Club	Alan Standish	Not available

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

The Deadline for the next issue is Sunday night, August 19th.

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

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 7	7.45 pm	'Medieval Masons'	Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane	Flore Heritage Society
March 7	7.30 pm	'Exhibition Planning - Flowers'	Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street	Daventry Local History Group
March 8	7.30 pm	'Northampton Industrial Archaeology Group'	Methodist Chapel, School Lane	Harpole Heritage Group
March 9	7.30 pm	'Borough Hill'	The Abbey, Abbey Street	Friends of Daventry Museums
March 13	8.00 pm	'Family Trees in Tiffield'	'The George' Tiffield	History of Tiffield Society
March 26	7.30 pm	'Drove Roads'	Chapel Schoolroom, New Street	Weedon Bec History Society
March 30	7.30 pm	'Blisworth and its People 1841-1911'	Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road	Blisworth Heritage Society
April 4	7.45 pm	'Rockingham Castle'	Chapel Schoolroom, School Lane	Flore Heritage Society
April 4	7.30 pm	'Births in the Locality'	Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street	Daventry Local History Group
April 10	8.00 pm	'A Mariner's View of History'	'The George' Tiffield	History of Tiffield Society
April 11	7.30 pm	'The Pilgrim Fathers'	Riverside Centre, Islington Road	Towcester & District Local History Society
April 12	7.30 pm	'TBA'	Methodist Chapel School Lane	Harpole Heritage Group
April 13	7.30 pm	'Wallpaper'	The Abbey, Abbey Street	Friends of Daventry Museums
April 27	7.30 pm	'Thatching Past & Present'	Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road	Blisworth Heritage Society
April 30	7.30 pm	'Early Northampton from Iron to Fire'	Chapel Schoolroom, School Lane	Weedon Bec History Society

cont page 13

Table of Events for CLASP Groups

Date	Time	Event	Location	Group
May 2	TBA	A Visit to the Northamptonshire Record Office	Northamptonshire Record Office	Friends of Daventry Museums
May 2	TBA	A Visit to the Northamptonshire Record Office	Northamptonshire Record Office	Daventry Local History Group
May 2	7.45 pm	'The Hallaton Treasure'	Chapel Schoolroom, School Lane	Flore Heritage Society
May 8	TBA	A Tour of 78 Derngate	78 Derngate, Northampton	History of Tiffield Society
May 9	7.30 pm	'Roman Gold Mining'	Riverside Centre Islington Road	Towcester & District Local History Society
May 10	7.30 pm	AGM + 'Lyveden New Build'	Methodist Chapel School Lane	Harpole Heritage Group
May 11	7.30 pm	'From Austerity to Affluence'	The Abbey, Abbey Street	Friends of Daventry Museums
June 1	7.30 pm	'West Northants Navigation before the Railways'	Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road	Blisworth Heritage Society
June 6	TBA	A Visit to Market Harborough	Market Harborough	Flore Heritage Society
June 6	7.30 pm	'History of the Chron'	Daventry Town Council Offices, 3 New Street	Daventry Local History Group
June 8	7.30 pm	'The Wenlock Olympics'	The Abbey, Abbey Street	Friends of Daventry Museums
June 12	8.00 pm	'Feegans Boy - Black Boots & Short Trousers'	'The George' Tiffield	History of Tiffield Society
June 13	7.30 pm	'Unarmed - The Christmas Truce 1914'	Riverside Centre, Islington Road	Towcester & District Local History Society
June 29	TBA	Visit to Piddington Museum	Piddington	Blisworth Heritage Society