



# CLASP

## Community Landscape & Archæology Survey Project NEWSLETTER

Website: [www.claspweb.org.uk](http://www.claspweb.org.uk)

Charity No 1111667



March 2014, Issue 19

### **From Dave Hayward, your Organising Committee Chairman**

#### **Time for Change**

I have been with CLASP ever since it evolved from the archaeological section of Friends of the Upper Nene (FUN) back in about 2003. For all of that time I have either served as Secretary or latterly Chair of the Organising Committee. As with any organisation, I do consider both for the benefit of the individual and the organisation, it is good to have a change of office-holder after a protracted period of time.

As the triennial elections for the officeholders on the Organising Committee are due at the April meeting I have decided not to put my name forward for re-election. I would like to remain on the committee in a co-opted position overseeing the research and planning portfolio as I do at present. I will also remain as a Trustee and will hopefully be able to develop my role on that committee.

It has been satisfying to see CLASP grow both in size and stature over the years. The role of the new Chair will be very much to steer it's practical work to ensure that we are credible as a point of reference, both in the local community and in the wider professional and academic archaeological community.

There is nothing to preclude the new Chair coming from outside the current Organising Committee membership. Any properly proposed and seconded member can stand for election and if successful would be co-opted to the Committee. If there are any potential candidates out there please ask the current

*cont page 2*

Secretary, Roger Penny ([rogerjohnpenny@gmail.com](mailto:rogerjohnpenny@gmail.com)) for a nomination form. Whilst mentioning the role of Secretary, Roger has also indicated that he does not wish to stand again. The same comments regarding potential holders of this post apply as do those of Chair, non-committee members would always be welcome.

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### **From Steve Young, Archaeological Director**

The current emphasis on the research excavation of the Romano-British villa at Whitehall Farm is continuing to focus on the preparation and publication of the archaeological report and monograph that will interpret the fieldwork undertaken over the last decade. This requires not only the assimilation of the disparate elements of the archaeological record (the digitalization of site plans and sections, cross referencing the extensive photographic record and daybook accounts) but also the analytical synthesis of the artifactual assemblages retrieved during the excavation. Wherever possible volunteers are being encouraged and offered opportunities to be involved in this process to develop their expertise and experience in post excavation archaeology.

New information is becoming available on a fairly regular basis and amongst the many areas of research being currently assessed is a specialist report analysing the worked bone artefacts from several different phases of activity at Whitehall Farm, undertaken by Ashby & Scott (University of York). The worked bone report provides a variety of insights and highlights several aspects of daily life and social interaction at Whitehall Farm. In general the worked bone and antler artefacts appear to be manufactured on site although on what scale is unclear because the overall assemblage is reasonably small in number. In the assemblage are examples of lathe-turned, sawn and polished bone objects which directly inform our understanding of the techniques and manufacturing practices used at the site and presumably in the local area. It is thought that the items are most likely for direct consumption by the inhabitants of the settlement rather than for trade in the wider economy.

In addition, the bone artefacts were most likely produced using butchering waste derived from other activities associated with the daily routines of the settlement whereas the raw material for antler manufactured artefacts may have more likely been procured through trade, gathering, or hunting from the wider

*cont page 3*

area or economy. The general deposition and distribution of artefact types which are mainly bone hair pins and counters, and the disparities in manufacturing quality of material associated with the different buildings of the site provide some insight into the social world in which the villa's inhabitants lived, and hint at the nature of the activities that took place within the domestic and more public structures of the estate. In particular the spindle shaft and pins are interesting as gendered objects, and denote the use of these facilities by the women of the villa.



### **Bone Hairpin**

The Bath Houses produced items of significantly higher quality than the items from the Proto-Villa and the Main Villa Range. The latter areas were most likely host to domestic and possibly raft activities, while the former were places for socializing and the production of public display. The prominence of bone pins amongst the material assemblages indicates their ubiquitous presence in both public and private contexts, highlighting and hinting qualitative social nuances. The question of artefact status or production quality is also compounded by the wide chronological range associated with deposition and the relative economic position of the inhabitants and of the settlement during the occupation of the Roman period. A relatively unsophisticated building such as the timber proto villa is indicative of a different life style and economic reality than that one might expect to be available to the inhabitants occupying the more substantial villa we find in the later period.

*cont page 4*

The fieldwork at Bannaventa continued to concentrate on extensive geophysical survey of the landscape to the north and west of the scheduled monument and the processing and analysis of the 43,000 shards of Roman pottery recovered from the 2013 field walking. The cleaning, counting, weighing, bagging and recording of the assemblage have taken a significant amount of time and resources but the identification and interpretation of the assemblage is underway. Key developments so far have centred on the Samian and Central Gaulish pottery shard distributions, the location of building related stone scatters and the spreads of small finds. The retrieval of metal working slag illustrates a degree of industrial activity associated with the economy of Bannaventa in its role or rationale as a Posting station and ‘small town’. The slag is suggestive of bronze smelting and smithying and may reflect the production of objects related to personal adornment like brooches or small statutory and votive pieces.

The intensive metal detecting surveys of the central area of Bannaventa have now produced a total of five Iron Age coins which include a gold quarter stater of Cunobelin (20-40 AD), a silver coin of Tasciovanus and three bronze coins of Cunobelin and Addedomaros (c.1-15 BC) which is indicative of the Catuvellaunian geo-political axis espoused for the area. A total of 1124 Roman coins have been retrieved from the same series of surveys. The 2013 fieldwork identified three 1<sup>st</sup> century coins of Vespasian and Domitian, two 2<sup>nd</sup> century coins of Antoninus Pius, a hundred 3<sup>rd</sup> century coins mainly of the Gallic Empire and 221 coins of 4<sup>th</sup> century date relating to the Houses of Constantine, Valentinian and Theodosius. A rare coin of Jovian (363-4 AD) and another of the British usurper Magnus Maximus (383-388 AD) were also identified in the assemblage.



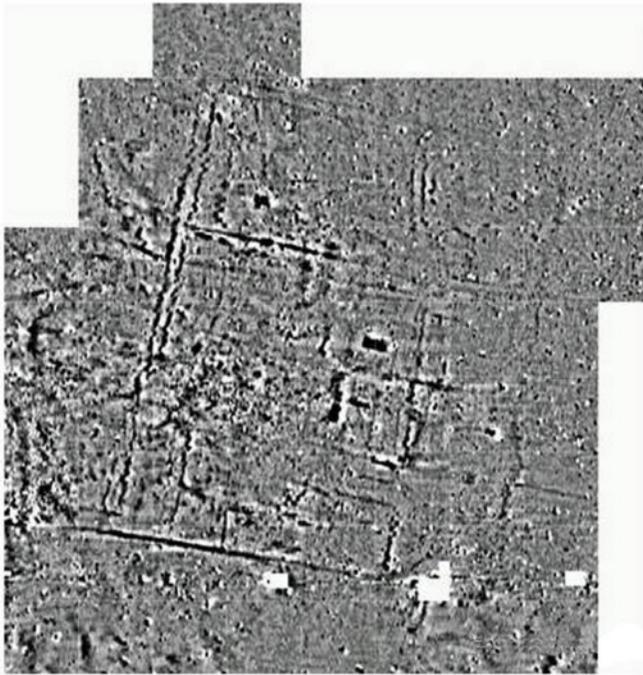
***Bannaventa  
Romano-British Coin  
distribution***

About 65 hectares of geophysical survey has been completed and many intriguing features, fields and enclosures have been revealed. Although there is no discernible organised and regularized layout the general alignment of remains follows a north west to south east axis. It is also notable that the features identified during the geophysical survey dominate the higher ground of the promontory underlying the site of Bannaventa but abruptly disappear once the slope starts to descend from the higher plateau into the surrounding lower ground. Some of the enclosures indicate occupation but very little archaeological material is readily visible in the plough soil. Nevertheless the geophysical results demonstrate that the archaeological context of Bannaventa is significantly larger than perceived by the scheduled monument.

At a different location, very recent geophysical fieldwork undertaken by CLASP has revealed an intriguing possibility of an early military site within our survey area. The existence of such a site and its significance to Roman studies in our locality could be quite contentious and probably controversial because of the wider academic and public interest in the debate about the Boudican revolt and the possible connection with this area of the Midlands in its latter stages. Further work needs to be undertaken to prove the accuracy of this identification before more detailed disclosure of the location can be provided. The 'fort' itself is potentially a marching or temporary camp of about 4.5 hectares and may represent an immediate post-conquest site in the military dispositions of the Claudian/Neronian period of the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

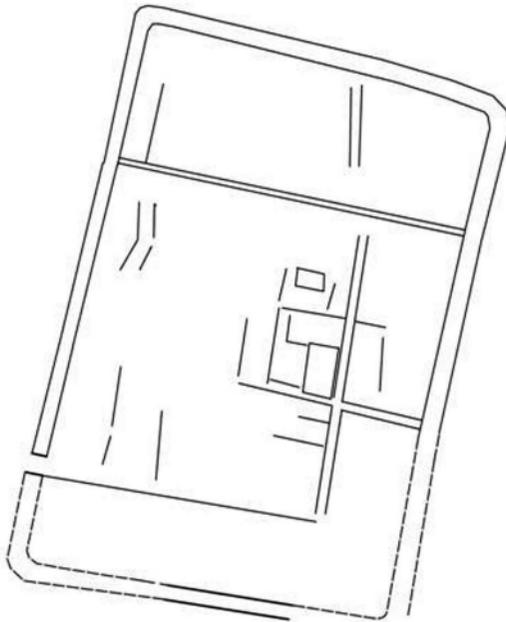
The geophysical survey indicates a double ditched and banked playing card shaped enclosure with a systematic and structured interior layout that might include the geophysical foot print of a '*Principia*' or headquarters building. The possible association with early frontier zones and forts such as the Lunt, near Coventry, Metchley, near Birmingham and Greensforge, near Wolverhampton or larger Vexillation Fortresses like Longthorpe, Cambridge will have to wait until sufficient dating material becomes available. Pottery and coins found at the location suggest a continued occupation of the area into the fourth century resulting ultimately in the construction of a farmstead or villa settlement across the southern elements of the site.

*cont page 6*



Geophysical survey data of the 'fort' ←→ approx 30 metres CLASP COPYRIGHT 2014

*Above: Geophysical survey data and interpretation of possible early Roman military site and below an interpretation of the geophysical survey of the 'fort'*



cont page 7

Future fieldwork will include a resistivity survey to compliment the initial fluxgate magnetometer data in order to try and obtain a clearer understanding of the interior of the 'fort', extensive field walking and possible trial trenching to determine the chronological profile of the site and presence of Roman military features and structures.

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## **From Gren Hatton, 'Anglican Water': Archaeology at Kilsby Church**

A project was carried out during the summer at St Faith's Church Kilsby to modify the vestry area, adding a WC and an area for preparing and serving refreshments, involving connections to mains water and drains. Inevitably, one village wag dubbed the project 'Anglican Water' ...

The church is a scheduled monument, so county and church authorities insisted on archaeological supervision of the work ... and being in the right place at the right time, I was fortunate to be offered the job. I was therefore permitted to delve around under the church floor, monitor the digging, examine holes and trenches, sift through spoil heaps, and collect finds for cleaning and analysis. The aim was to use the opportunity to discover whatever possible about the church's construction, the extent of the graveyard (not necessarily limited in the past by its present borders) and anything else of interest.

I sifted through the documents that I have collected over the years relating to Kilsby church's history – and found hints in old records that focused my attention on specific areas of the site. Finally, I took a fresh look at the churchyard and Church Walk – and on combining the workmen's excavations with this new examination, some humps and bumps that I had 'looked at without seeing' for 40 years started to take on new meaning.

### **Church Construction**

I had done some previous excavation when the nave pews were refurbished in 2006 – and had found traces of a rare late-1300s Penn tiled floor, with a C17 tiled floor above it, both lying below the present flagstone floor. Records from 1932 also state that an even earlier stone-flagged floor had been found in the nave, 48cms below present floor level – so I was thrilled to find evidence of a

*cont page 8*

very early tiled floor under the north aisle at exactly the same depth, 48cms. I also found a fragment of a 12th/13th-century roof-tile (see photograph) embedded in the middle of the north aisle wall, down near its foundations. Piecing together all this evidence, shows that the north aisle was added to the 12th-century nave in the 1200s, with a tiled aisle floor extending the stone floor of the nave – and the roof-tile fragment suggests that both nave and north aisle were tiled originally, before being leaded later.



I found another curiosity in the north aisle foundations – bones from the skeleton and skull of a cat (confirmed by an experienced small-animal vet). This casts a fascinating light on Kilsby's history in the 1200s, as it is indisputable evidence of a common medieval practice – burial of the body of a cat (already dead, one hopes!) in the wall of a building as protection against witchcraft.



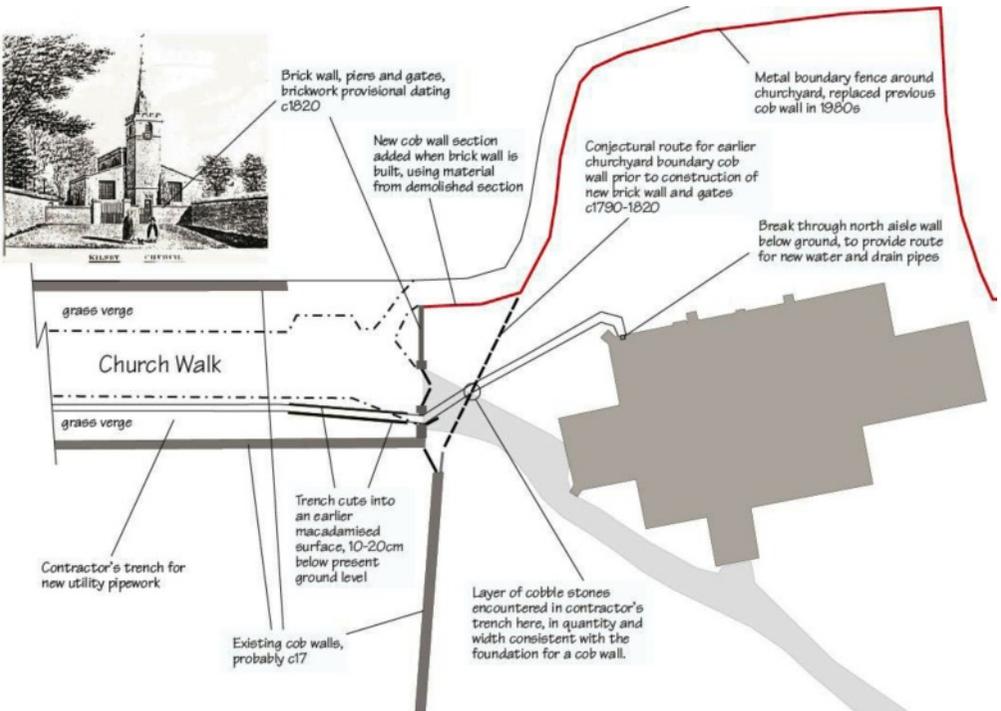
Combining the various elements of documentary research, previous and current archaeology, I was able to construct detailed section drawings of the walls and sub-floor levels right down to the foundations.

## Graveyard and Church Walk

Outside the church too, further new discoveries were made. Using a combination of aerial and ground-level photographs, old paintings and sketches, observation of the humps left by collapsed former cob walls, and underground details revealed by the pipeline trench, it was possible to demonstrate that:

- The original churchyard boundary was a cob wall crossing the churchyard path several metres closer to the church than the present brick wall.
- The brick wall and gates were probably erected in the 1820s (possibly to commemorate the end of the Napoleonic Wars). The former section of cob wall was demolished (see sketch), and the materials were re-used to join the new brick wall to the retained cob sections.
- Outside the new brick wall and gates, the top of Church Walk was

*cont page 9*



squared off and covered in a smart layer of stone chippings (the new process of ‘macadamising’ with compacted chippings was introduced in 1816 by John MacAdam), providing a firm wide surface to allow horse-drawn carriages to turn at the church gates.

- This area was then surfaced with a layer of hot tar, to provide a watertight seal (the process – ‘tar-macadamising’ – we now abbreviate simply as ‘tarmac’).

All this new information was combined with the findings from the previous work in the nave in 2006, to produce a 24-page illustrated archaeological report, copies of which were deposited with the county Heritage Environment Record and Peterborough diocesan authorities. The diocesan secretary commented “Many thanks ... the report adds significant information on the history of the building of the church, which will be valuable to add to the known history”.

## From Norman Garnett, Activies at Whitehall

Activities at Whitehall over Autumn and Winter have been predominantly of the indoor variety, mainly confined to the cleaning & recording of finds. Steve has indicated that there is now a need for some of the 'hand-written' planning details recorded at Whitehall to be transposed to electronic data. Welcome to the wonderful world of MapInfo!! (...and CorelDraw apparently).

It is envisaged that initially the section records will be transferred and later, (when the Force is with us) we shall tackle the more complex, dark-side stuff!

From a social point of view there was, on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the Whitehall 'chara' trip/outing to Stamford, with an included visit to the Priest's House at Easton on the Hill.



The curator, Paul Way, was to be con-



gratulated on his knowledge, and his fortitude as the visit was made in near freezing conditions.

The Priest's House is a '...small 15th century building, with fascinating local architecture and a museum exploring Easton's industrial past. The house contains a collection of local bygones and memorabilia associated with the local Collyweston slate mining industry, which hasn't been in operation since the 1950s. To those who have never been there, a visit is strongly recommended!

Following this, Steve's subsequent conducted tour of Stamford, with it's wide-ranging insight of the history and architecture of the Town, was conducted in the same Arctic conditions but at least there was a warm meal and drinks at the end of it.

*cont page 11*

Other activities over the latter part of 2013 and early 2014 have included an in-house, film presentation detailing 'Whitehall Over The Years' which will eventually be made available on the CLASP web-site. Steve has also conducted a review and assessment of the information which has been gained from the site over the years relative to the pre-Roman and Romano-British periods.

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### **From Jennifer Smith, Harpole Heritage Group**

Harpole Heritage Group has had talks about Harpole Silver Band and Band Institute, Stowe Gardens, West Northants Navigations before the Railways and Antiques. We have enjoyed an excellent Dinner provided by some of our members.

After the publication of our book 'Flight LP826' by Patricia Betts, we have had made a plaque with the names of the 7 men who lost their lives in the Wellington bomber which crashed onto Glassthorpe Hill in 1944, placed onto the War Memorial, by kind permission of Harpole Parish Council.

There is also a 'picture' in the church giving details of the men and what happened at that time.

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**Deadline for the August 2014 Newsletter will be Sunday, August 17. All photos please at approx 300 dpi and **separate from the text** with indications of their positions.**

## List of Contacts for CLASP Associations

| Organisation                                 | Contact        | Tel           |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Norton, Northampton PAST                     | Bill Wiggins   | 01327 843469  |
| Weedon Bec History Society                   | Julia Johns    | 01327 341729  |
| Flore Heritage Society                       | John Smith     | 01327 340387  |
| Brington History Society                     | Ian Dexter     | 01604 771353  |
| 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  |
| Friends of Daventry Museums                  | David 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 |

## Table of Events for CLASP Groups

| Date  | Time    | Event  | Location                           | Group                                      |
|---|---------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Meet every 2 months. See <a href="http://www.bugbrookelink.co.uk/history">www.bugbrookelink.co.uk/history</a> or contact Alan Kent, tel: 01604 830518 |         |  |                                    | Bugbrooke History Society                  |
| March 6   | 7.45 pm | 'Northampton General Infirmary, 1744'                      | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane     | Flore Heritage Society                     |
| March 11  | 8.00 pm | 'The Killing of Constable Linnell'                         | Top Room, The George Inn           | History of Tiffield Society                |
| March 12  | 7.30 pm | Annual General Meeting                                     | Riverside Centre, Islington Road   | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| March 13  | 7.30 pm | 'Spencer Perceval, Prime Minister'                         | Methodist Chapel, School Lane      | Harpole Heritage Group                     |
| March 14  | 7.30 pm | 'Wonderful Wellingborough Women'                           | The Abbey Market Square            | Friends of Daventry Museums                |
| March 17  | 8.00 pm | 'The Hidden Treasures of Northampton Museum & Art Gallery' | The Reading Room, Great Brington   | Brington History Society                   |
| March 28  | 7.30 pm | 'The Parish Records'                                       | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth Heritage Society                 |
| March 31  | 7.30 pm | 'American Northamptonshire'                                | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street      | Weedon Bec History Society                 |
| April 2   | 7.45 pm | 'Crime in Northamptonshire'                                | Chapel Schoolroom, School Lane     | Flore Heritage Society                     |
| April 8   | 8.00 pm | 'Pattishall Prisoners of War'                              | Top Room, The George Inn           | History of Tiffield Society                |
| April 9   | 7.30 pm | 'Churchyards, Cemeteries & the Victorians'                 | Riverside Centre, Islington Road   | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| April 10  | 7.30 pm | 'Fotheringhay & Mary Queen of Scots'                       | Methodist Chapel, School Lane      | Harpole Heritage Group                     |
| April 11  | 7.30 pm | 'Culworth Diamond Jubilee Clock'                           | The Abbey Market Square            | Friends of Daventry Museums                |
| April 25  | 7.30 pm | 'The Old Cemetery'   | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth Heritage Society                 |
| April 28  | 8.00 pm | 'Updating Pevsner Northampton'                             | The Reading Room, Great Brington   | Brington History Society                   |
| April 28  | 7.30 pm | 'Murder Most Royal'  | Chapel Schoolroom, New Street      | Weedon Bec History Society                 |

## Table of Events for CLASP Groups

| Date    | Time    | Event                                   | Location                           | Group                                      |
|---------|---------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| May 5   | 7.45 pm | 'Chester House Farm, Irchester'         | Chapel Schoolroom, Chapel Lane     | Flore Heritage Society                     |
| May 8   | 7.30 pm | AGM and 'Antiques Bottle Bank'          | Methodist Chapel, School Lane      | Harpole Heritage Group                     |
| May 9   | 2.30 pm | 'History of Racing & Homing Pigeons'    | The Abbey, Market Square           | Friends of Daventry Museums                |
| May 13  | 8.00 pm | 'Grafton Regis History'                 | Top Room, the George Inn           | History of Tiffield Society                |
| May 14  | 7.30 pm | 'The Story of Eydon'                    | Riverside Centre, Islington Road   | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| May 30  | 7.30 pm | 'Walter Alexander'                      | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth Heritage Society                 |
| June 6  | TBA     | Visit to Chester House Farm, Irchester  | Chester House Farm, Irchester      | Flore Heritage Society                     |
| June 6  | 7.30 pm | 'The Shaping of Southam'                | The Abbey, Market Square           | Friends of Daventry Museums                |
| June 10 | TBA     | National Trust Visit<br>TBA             | TBA                                | History of Tiffield Society                |
| June 11 | 7.30 pm | 'Elizabeth Tudor Housewife'             | Riverside Centre, Islington Road   | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| June 27 | 7.30 pm | 'Towcester Museum'                      | Blisworth Village Hall, Stoke Road | Blisworth Heritage Society                 |
| July 4  | 2.30 pm | 'USA Connections with Northamptonshire' | The Abbey, Market Square           | Friends of Daventry Museums                |
| July 9  | TBA     | Summer Meeting                          | TBA                                | Towcester & District Local History Society |
| July 25 | TBA     | Outing to Towcester Museum              | Towcester Museum                   | Blisworth Heritage Society                 |