



CLASP

Community Landscape & Archæology Survey Project NEWSLETTER



ROMAN RESEARCH TRUST

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Charity No 1111667

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**The CLASP Annual General Meeting will be held on October 5th, 7 pm
at the Harpole Bowls Club, Larkhall Lane, Harpole, NN74DP**

Agenda

1. Attendance and Apologies
2. Adoption of Minutes for AGM 2015
3. Matters Arising
4. Welcome by Chair
5. Chairman's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Acceptance of amendments to the Constitution
8. Acceptance of the Annual Report
9. Any Other Business – to be advised to the secretary in advance

**Also note that subscriptions (£10) to CLASP are due on September 1st
but may be paid at the AGM or sent to Julia Johns, Membership Secretary,
7 Eton Close, Weedon, Northants, NN7 4PJ.**

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Community
Landscape
Archaeology
Survey
Project

PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 5th October 2016, 7.30pm
(following the AGM at 7pm)

Update on CLASP fieldwork and on a permanent home for CLASP

Stephen Young
Archaeological Director, CLASP

Identifying early communication routes

Alan Standish
Chair, Northampton Artefact Recovery Group

Admission FREE
but donations to CLASP
will be welcome

Harpole Bowls Club
Larkhall Lane
Harpole
NN7 4DP

Raffle, tea/coffee, display stands

www.claspweb.org.uk

CLASP Public Open Meeting

The Open Meeting this year will have a contribution from our Archaeological Director, Stephen Young who will update us on CLASP fieldwork during the past year. He will also talk on the proposal to create a CLASP 'home' in Norton Parish Church. This is an important project to enable CLASP to have its own home consisting of an archive, working area and meeting room. If we are to become increasingly recognised it will be of major significance to have our own base.

The second speaker will be Alan Standish from NARC who will talk on his group's work and how this has helped them research and identify potential ancient communication routes.

There will be the usual raffle and light refreshments. Everybody welcome including your friends and relatives!

From Dave Hayward, Chairman of Trustees

Another busy six months with fieldwork at Whitehall and Thrupp. Unfortunately the farmer's agricultural cycle prevented us getting onto land at Barn Close, Harpole and south of Towcester. The fieldwork we have managed to undertake has been really successful with another grave located, thanks to NARC, with a skeleton complete with shield boss and spear at Nether Heyford. This has been excavated and will be conserved.

At Thrupp we have found several well constructed medieval buildings, probably houses but also a possible chapel. The houses were forcibly evacuated by the Prior of Daventry in very late 15th Century forcing the occupants into abject poverty so that the Priory could benefit from enclosing the fields for sheep. Next to the houses we have also uncovered a surface that may well be a road or trackway. Hopefully CLASP will be able to carry out more investigations here next year to fully establish the purpose and size of these buildings and the layout of the settlement of Thrupp.

During the next few weeks we are also hoping to revisit Thrupp to carry out a short excavation on the moat in the spinney to establish its age and purpose- get your 'wellies' ready.

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Perhaps the most motivating factor about archaeology to me is the human factor. I do not mean ours but of those who lived and worked in the buildings we find and how they fitted into the wider landscape that CLASP is studying. Some of the sites indicate relative prosperity whilst others have indicated a life, that to us, would have been squalid. I do wonder though whether my vision of life in a pre-Roman roundhouse of relative order and close bonding is correct. These people must have had far more superstition and fear in their lives emanating from the unknown than whatever we do. How did they account to themselves the omens of thunder and lightning, disease and failed harvests other than some form of mystical intervention. To an extent we can perhaps see this manifest itself in place-names that allude to the importance of the unexplained and mythical.

Our area of study has several examples of names that indicate early pre-Christian worship. At Nobottle we have Harrow Hill that means 'the early pagan place of worship on the hill'. Interestingly this site has very early finds from the Neolithic and is also the meeting site for Nobottle Grove Hundred. Those of you who were at our Archaeology Day in July would have heard Jim Brown from MOLA state when he was discussing the two Neolithic long barrows situated just a few hundred metres south of Nobottle as part of a significant Neolithic landscape. These barrows would have been overlooked by Harrow Hill. This is something I would concur with considering the under researched, very early landscape at Stowe and the evidentially very early communication routes across the area.

Looking at these early names we have that of Weedon which is again interpreted as being the 'pagan temple on the hill'. What hill? Undoubtedly the hill on which Stowe itself lays, as mentioned above a hill that appears to be steeped with pre-Roman features, at least some of which are probably funerary. On Stowe itself, leading to Nether Heyford we have the Luddle Brook. the early English name for this watercourse, as recorded in the Anglo-Saxon charter for Stowe was '*hluddan wyles*'. This name translates as 'the noisy brook'. Having lived next to this brook in Nether Heyford I know it can flow quite fiercely at times of heavy rain, I would expect therefore it would have made significant noise as it 'tumbled' from the higher land at Stowe down in the valley of the Nene. Water was something that was worshipped in prehistoric times, did these people see this noise as that of the Gods?

We may begin to have significant understanding of 'hard' archaeology but our

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understanding of people, their thoughts and emotions is much harder to formulate. Perhaps with greater study and collation of all our evidence, things will coalesce into a greater understanding of the archaeology of the mind.

Enough of my thoughts! I must now turn to thank RPS Consultants, MOLA(N) and Cotswold Archaeology for the support and interest they provided for our Archaeology Day, together with others; their technical input made this a knowledgeable and resourceful day. We hope to launch a series of DVDs of the day's proceedings at our AGM/Open Meetings on the 5th October at Harpole Bowls Club. The DVD has been supported by Daventry District Council. These will be followed by a written record of the days proceedings, supported by Mott Macdonald.

I must also thank Cotswold Archaeology and ULAS (University of Leicester Archaeology Services) for inviting CLASP members to visit their commercial excavations at Brixworth and Kilsby respectively. These visits again help CLASP become known to a wider professional audience but also expose us to a wider archaeological experience.

First mentioning Kilsby, this was a 13th/14th century site on the south side of the village that probably illustrated two longhouses situated on definable sloping building platforms. These buildings combined human accommodation at the higher end with animal accommodation at the other. This provided drainage to keep the animal slurry away from the human end! What was particularly noticeable to me about this site compared to Thrupp just a few miles to the south, was the significant difference in building style and materials used. This in itself could perhaps begin to tell us a lot about quality and difference in life style between the two sites.

Brixworth was a late Iron Age site that evolved into the Romano-British period although there was evidence of earlier, possibly Bronze Age activity in the form of a typical pit alignment that we seem to increasingly be seeing across this area. The site itself seemed to be the centre of an arable farm although there may have been a more significant Romano-British feature to the east of the current excavation. The farm was bounded in the Iron Age by a significant boundary ditch that by the time of the Romano-British period had been filled in and a wall built on it. This feature was situated between a rock based sub-strata internally to a more clay based external soil. Within the

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feature there were multi-phased corn dryers and well built, stone lined, storage pits. This was a totally contrasted site to that outlined to us by Rob Masefield, RPS Consultants, at our Archaeology Day of the probable cattle ranching settlement at DIRFT. I have included below a couple of photographs of the Brixworth site.



A stone lined storage pit. A clay layer is set behind the stones to improve the damp-proofing of the feature



Part of corn dryer at Brixworth

Thanks to the 'older' members for your continued membership of CLASP and a welcome to those for which this is their first Newsletter.

From Rob Close, Chairman of the Organising Committee

CLASP is seeking volunteers to help write-up reports of our archaeological work.

My summary for the past year is contained in the Annual Report circulated for the AGM on 5th October. This note concentrates on the September 2016 meeting of the Committee

July 2016 Archaeology Day: the Committee viewed this as being a very successful day and Dave Hayward was thanked for driving this. We reviewed lessons learnt in anticipation of a possible Archaeology Day in 2017. We would welcome comments from anyone who attended.

Excavation projects: with projects recently completed at Whitehall and Thrupp, the Committee decided to have a fundamental review of its policies and operational arrangements in advance of the summer 2017 projects commencing.

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New project opportunities: CLASP has the potential opportunity in the next few months to undertake two archaeological projects for other organisations. These would further CLASP's profile, provide interesting assignments for members and even bring in some welcome revenue. The main concern about doing them is the potential bottleneck in writing-up the projects at the end as we have a reliance on a few very key individuals and there is already a backlog of reports to write up.

Report writing: If any of you have an interest in being trained to assist in the writing of the reports please do let me know. You would not be expected to be an expert in the archaeology itself. Instead, you would work with the main author, perhaps initially writing sections of the report under guidance. Finding a few volunteers would be of considerable value to CLASP. I have already volunteered.

From Steve Young, Archaeological Director

CLASP continued to be active on the field work front over the summer and has undertaken exploratory excavations at two sites. Our first excavation was on the site of the Post Roman and early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Whitehall Farm and the second on the deserted medieval village of Thrupp near Norton. The field work was well attended and supported by volunteers with about two dozen people taking part in one or other of the events. Overall the field work successfully achieved its aims and proved to be of significant archaeological interest in our understanding of the two sites involved. In addition we continue to develop our outreach and networking options as the field work with the Museum of London Archaeology Unit at Upper Heyford and the successful day conference on promoting archaeology in your community organized by Chair of Trustees Dave Hayward demonstrated very well. For those of you interested in reading more about previous field work several reports including the geophysical survey at Barn Close, the watching brief on the Cable Trench Excavation at Thrupp and the geophysical survey at Upper Heyford have now been made available on our website.

As a consequence of last year's excavation of the two plough damaged inhumations it had become necessary in order to minimise the agricultural depre-
dation of any further possible remains to initiate some exploratory fieldwork

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in an attempt to establish whether previously undetected burials still survived. This left us with an archaeological dilemma concerning the methodological approach to adopt to achieve our desired outcome. Large scale clearance of the plough horizon over an extended area would have been more generally informative but would have undoubtedly contributed to further destruction of the remaining features because the surviving graves are already so shallow and partly in plough soil. Unfortunately trial trenching although less destructive can inhibit the detection of new inhumations because they are dependent on finding the right position and relationship to the buried features. In this particular case we were assisted by our metal detecting colleague Bill Wiggins (NNPAST) who identified the location of more ferrous grave goods. Again this demonstrates how the two disciplines of archaeology and detecting can work successfully together to produce meaningful results.

Therefore the focus of the trial trenching centred round these discoveries and as a result the location of a further burial was observed and identified. This justified our decision for exploratory field work as it demonstrated that other unrecorded burials existed and would be subject to disturbance by the plough. The excavated grave revealed a further complete grave of the late 6th to early 7th century. The skull had been crushed by modern cultivation but otherwise the grave was undisturbed. This individual was a male whose grave goods included a spear and shield boss both of which were recovered and will be conserved. Undoubtedly, this demonstrated that potentially there could be several other internments surviving in the general area which are under threat and we will return to the site next year to continue our search and minimise any further destruction of the surviving archaeology.

The individual burial was another extended inhumation exhibiting the same material and ritual characteristics of two other warrior burials with a north south grave alignment. The grave goods being strongly gendered, the body buried supine with the individuals on their backs with legs extended



Warrior burial showing spear and shield boss

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ed. This provides further evidence that we have two separate cemeteries utilising the same site at two distinct time periods separated by something like a hundred years. The evidence we have raises some interesting questions about the people living in the Whitehall Farm area and their social and political motivations. The iron shield boss and spear will be conserved by Dr Graham Morgan and he will also look at a series of disc rivets probably forming part of the shield although one enigmatically is positioned on the right side of the skeleton's skull with an outside suggestion of a fixing on the head band of a leather cap.

The fieldwork on the Deserted Medieval Village of Thrupp was initiated in response to our need to achieve a greater understanding of the numerous anomalies located in our extensive geophysical survey of the area. We need to remember that Thrupp is of particular interest because of its proximity to Bannaventa and for the potential connection between the settlements in relation to continuity and mobility of occupation during the Dark Age and Early Medieval period. However such are the vagaries of archaeology that the original rationale underpinning the field work had to be changed once the nature of the remains uncovered became evident. A single 69m trial trench revealed the remains of several medieval tenements aligned obliquely to the modern B4036 and a significant track way bisecting the site adjacent to the remains of tenements. These structures probably belong to the demolition and clearance of the township in 1489 by Daventry Priory in its pursuance of large scale sheep farming. It is rare to be able to excavate the remains of a medieval street and these tenements based on the pottery indicate a 13th to 15th century



date in association with a possible chapel should prove to be extremely illuminating in the future.

An interesting aside to the work at Thrupp is the emergence of the historical record as a major contributor to the interpretation and understanding of the existing

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Medieval Tenement at Thrupp

archaeology. This is the first time we have needed to work extensively in this related discipline and we should learn a great deal about the process for inclusion with future reports that impinge into the historical record. Several people are helping to gather the information and Gren Hatton is coordinating, collating and taking the lead in the collection of available source information. Some interesting gems which have already appeared are the dimensions and inventory of the chapel associated with the township and recorded as desolate in the early 16th century part of which was uncovered last year. The origin of the name of Thrupp and an account of the village clearance held amongst the Daventry Priory records held at Christ Church may also have further light cast them and will be reported on in due course.

From Alan Standish, Northamptonshire Artefact Recovery Club

One of the joys of the hobby of metal detecting, is that you never know what you are going to find. At the end of August in 2016, Dave Derby was searching in his local field when he found a beautiful white gold wedding ring, about 25 yards in from the gateway.

After he had finished for the day, he went to the farmhouse and saw one of the site workers moving oats. Dave approached the tractor, and engaged in a conversation with him. The site worker recalled losing a wedding ring in the field and was able to describe the markings on it perfectly.

He then mentioned that he had lost it when the combine had broken down and that he had to reach into the machine and pull out the stalks that had jammed it. It was then that he had lost his wedding ring, much to his wife's annoyance as they had only been married a couple of months beforehand.

After this chat, Dave reached into his pocket and pulled out the recently found wedding ring, and the joy on the site workers face was a sight to behold. He shook Dave's hand, then phoned his wife and the farmer to say what had just happened, and then shook Dave's hand again!

It turned out that it had been lost 7 years ago and it was no more than a couple of yards from where the combine had broken down all them years ago.

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Dave was so pleased to have made someone's day, and a day to remember at that! Well done Dave Derby.

We are very pleased to welcome to the county Ellie Cox, our new Finds Liaison Officer. I am sure that she will be making herself known to the group and CLASP in due course.

From Norman Garnett, the Whitehall Group

There has been limited field time during this year due to crops in the various field locations, however this has improved recently with Whitehall members involvement in CLASP projects at Thrupp Farm, with the excavation work on the site of the former medieval settlement and also at the Anglo- Saxon burial site near Whitehall, with the excavation of the remains of an Anglo-Saxon 'warrior' buried with shield & spear.

Earlier in the year there was a visit to Cumbria, expertly arranged by Helen & Steve Young for a group from Whitehall. The basis for the visit was to understand the history of the Roman influence in the North West with this involving visits to various locations including Ribchester, Ravenglass, Maryport, Ambleside, Hardknott Pass and Tullie House Museum, Carlisle. Steve also made available (for a fee) copies of 'Romans and Britons in North-West England' by David Shotter which provided relevant reference material for the visit

Work at the barn at Whitehall includes the continuing digitisation of plans of the Whitehall Villa site and the review of the photographic record of the Whitehall Villa excavations over the years and the correlation of this with the contexts and the plan numbers which relate to the same areas.

The catalogue of the Whitehall villa glass finds has now been completed, to the relief of all involved.

Whitehall members were also involved in the recent Archaeology Day event at the Icon Centre Daventry on the 23rd of July.

From Jennifer Smith, Harpole Heritage Group

We have had a number of good speakers, Chris Rowe told us about her job when she worked at Sulgrave Manor, Alan Standish gave an informative talk about 'Metal Detecting', Derek Blunt showed us pictures about 'Spires and Squires in the County', Malcolm Deacon took us back down memory lane telling us about 'Boot and Shoe' making in village workshops, Dr Stephen Hollowell spoke about his interesting project 'Northants Heritage in a Shoe-box' Colin Pendrill talked about 'The Truth about Richard III' and we shall be having a talk from Tom Briggs about 'Bletchley Park'.

I have attended Harpole Parish Meeting to report on Clasp activities and to thank them for their support and taken members and friends around Harpole to look at industrial buildings. I also helped at the Archaeology Day. Members have visited Blisworth Baptist Chapel to see the excellent tapestries and our Catering Ladies have provided a Summer Lunch for 41 people.

We have recently had erected a Harpole Leisure Information Board which tells viewers of the activities in the village. This was partly funded by the Harpole Scarecrow Festival which takes place this year on 10th and 11th September.

From James Aveling, Blisworth Heritage Society

In the past year we have enjoyed a Victorian magic show at our AGM. This was followed by a local view of how the coming of the railway in 1838 changed the life of Blisworth for ever. Yet another railway topic followed when the Blisworth to Peterborough line was discussed at such length that we adjourned the meeting with our metaphorical carriage halted around the Barnwell Station area. Spirits were raised by an elderly visitor discovering a relative in railway employ on one of the ancient photographs!

Alan Standish gave a very well received exposition of the wonderful world of metal detecting and he brought a selection of his discoveries to show us. Northampton Castle was discussed by Ruth Thomas and our summer visit to St Peter's Church in Northampton and a visit to all the extant remains of the castle was conducted by Ruth. The first half of the year closed with an evening of medieval music in Blisworth parish church. This was both informative and entertaining. For the annual Blisworth Canal Festival the Society was able to display its new display cabinet in the church.

From Gren Hatton, Thrupp Grounds, Summer 2016

The dig shows how the eviction of a whole village near Daventry created ‘refugees’ in their own land.

Text and images by courtesy of Daventry Express, Saturday 10 September 2016



Evidence of the eviction and destitution of dozens of medieval villagers has been unearthed near Daventry. Archaeologists from CLASP have been working in fields off the B4036 between Daventry and the Long Buckby crossroads on the A5, in an area still known today as Thrupp.



Left: The main trench, showing the road surface running through at the bottom of this image

Last week they unearthed walls of cottages, a stone building with an apse believed to be the chapel, and a road surface in the original village of Thrupp. The settlement of around 20 well made stone and thatch cottages was emptied by the Prior of Daventry in the late 15th century to make way for sheep farming. Each of the small cottages had a patch of land, and probably had access to communal land and fields as well.

Archaeological evidence shows the cottages were not medieval long houses, which usually housed both the family and their animals. At Thrupp the houses were well made and the animals lived elsewhere.

Those residents evicted would have been left with no land to grow food on, and no real social security safety net.

Historian and archaeologist Gren Hatton said: “Thrupp lies very close to the A5 – Watling Street – which was the border between the Danish-ruled part of

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England on the Northampton side, and the Anglo-Saxon-ruled part on the Daventry side. There's evidence elsewhere that the border over time became porous and people from the Danish side saw land going untended on the Anglo-Saxon side and, with permission, moved over to start farming it. It's likely that Thrupp was founded in a similar way when Danish people got permission to live here from the person in charge at Norton."



Left: The walls of one of the stone cottages unearthed

"We know a chapel, dedicated to St John the Baptist was founded here in 1257, and in about the mid-1280s a grange was built to store the produce taken in tax and tithes. By the late 1400s there were around 100 people living in Thrupp."

"We had the black death which killed up to half the population. That meant land that had been cultivated was now lying fallow – not making money for the landlord. In 1489 the Prior of Daventry, which by then owned the land, decided they could make more money from sheep than people. So everyone was evicted."

Archaeological evidence uncovered shows the stone-walled cottages were pulled down soon after to level the site and turn it into fields. Back in the period a settlement of 100 people was a standard size village – it is the equivalent of evicting everyone in Norton or Braunston today. At the time the only social safety net for people was the Church which had limited funds to help those in desperate need.

Mr Hatton said: "You have to think of the images we've seen recently of refugees from Bosnia or Syria. These evicted people had nothing. They didn't have land so they would have been forced to try and make a living any way they could – soap boiling, basket making, weaving.

"No doubt some would have died, others might have had relatives in Norton they could live with. Interestingly the eviction didn't do the Priory at

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Daventry much good because a few decades later along came Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell and closed them down and seized their assets.”

CLASP is a group of local, mostly volunteer, archaeologists investigating the Roman and post-Roman world along Watling Street in the Daventry area. They have been charting the movement of settlements and people around the area after the Roman town of Bannaventa at the Norton/Whilton locks cross-road area was abandoned. The recent work at Thrupp was carried out after a geophysics survey showed ditches on the site which may date to the Dark Ages after the Roman armies left England. But work to date the ditches was thwarted after the diggers came down on the rubble and ruins of Thrupp.



Thrupp itself is important to investigate as the fields off the B4036 are earmarked for part of Daventry’s expansion in the coming years.

To underline the point, the leader of Daventry District Council Cllr Chris Millar was invited to see the excavations himself.

Deadline for the February 2017 Newsletter will be Sunday, 16, 2017. 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 7 843469
Weedon Bec History Society	Julia Johns	01327 341729
Flore Heritage Society	Jay Phelps	01327 340282
Brington History Society	Ian Dexter	01604 771353
Harpole Heritage Group	Jennifer Smith	01604 831294
Whitehall Farm Roman Villa Landscape Project	Norman Garnett	01604 755479
Towcester & District Local History Society	Gina Boreham	01327 352687
Bugbrooke History Society	Alan Kent	01604 830518
Friends of Daventry Museums	David Adams	01327 605372
Blisworth Heritage Society	Jim Aveling	01604 859109
History of Tiffield Society	Steve Jowers	01327 350292
Northampton Artefact Recovery Club	Alan Standish	Not available
Barby Hill Archaeological Project	Gren Hatton	01788 822411
