



CLASP

Community Landscape & Archæology Survey Project NEWSLETTER



Local Heritage initiative



ROMAN RESEARCH TRUST

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

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Charity No 1111667

From Dave Hayward, Chairman of Trustees

The way our involvement with commercial archaeology has grown has been a positive outcome of the 2016 Archaeology Day. This co-operation has included pottery analysis, report production and joint working on major projects like Borough Hill. We have now discussed the possibility of holding a similar event later this year. Having driven the previous event forward single-handed, I intend, that if we hold a further event, there must be a small team, under my overall guidance, to plan and manage the event.

The type of areas to be taken forward include, venue, funding, publicity, format, speakers, final report etc! If anybody is interested in working on this project would you please drop a short email to the Organising Committee Secretary, Jim Aveling (marionaveling47@gmail.com) mentioning your preferred role, experience etc.

It has been very encouraging to see new names and faces becoming actively involved with all areas of our work. If CLASP is to succeed it is important that we have younger, new members coming on board, if not we will 'wither on the branch'. My usual appeal therefore is for all of you to encourage new members.

To make CLASP more attractive to working people, the Organising Committee is endeavouring to organise some weekend working for those members who work during the week. Watch for further information on this.

The 'digging season' will be with us sooner rather than later, get your trowels

From Rob Close, Chairman of the Organising Committee

In the last six months the Committee has met twice, a meeting in December having been cancelled because of the snow! The prime focus of the Committee remains on the oversight and completion of projects; trying to ensure that there we have sufficient persons available to carry out our diverse activities and ensuring good communication from and to members.

Completion of Projects: Project reports have been completed relating to Norton Lodge geophysics, and Branson's Lane excavation report is almost finished. The Barn Close [Harpole] report is almost complete. The Bannaventa report will follow that of Barn Close while the Whitehall report is still targeted to be completed by the end of 2018.

Geophysics: Fred Kay briefed the Committee on the extensive work carried out by Fred's team at Bannaventa and its environs and on Borough Hill, under the auspices of MOLA.

2018 projects: Steve Young has proposed excavations at Thrupp and the Anglo-Saxon cemetery this summer and some test pits in Norton, subject to permission.

Weekend Project: We are considering carrying out at least one of the projects over a weekend excavation to allow working members to take part. **If you are interested in principle in participating over a weekend please do let me know.**

AGM and subsequent Public Meeting: The Committee felt that the 2017 meeting was a success in terms of the presentations, displays and attendance. Given the quality of the venue at Harpole and the support provided we have decided to hold the 2018 meeting at Harpole again.

Publicity: It was agreed that we needed to maximise our communication over the CLASP website. Further, we should take all opportunities to provide reports and articles for external publications. **If any member is interested in helping with this please let me know.**

(Contact details: E: rob.close1@gmail.com; T: 01788 522865)

Also from Rob Close, Chairman of the Organising Committee

New Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

New regulations are coming into force on the 25th May 2018 which requires all types of organisations to meet prescribed guidelines on data relating to Members. CLASP has contact information for Members provided to it annually on membership renewal. This is used by specific Officers to communicate to Members. The Organising Committee will review its Data Protection Policies at its April meeting and decide whether to safeguard data it needs to change any current practice. If this is the case there will be further communication to the full membership. Further information about GDPR can be found at the following website

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

From Stephen Young, Archaeological Director

Since the last newsletter CLASP volunteers have had the opportunity to be involved in several field work opportunities. These activities have entailed further excavation and geophysical survey of two sites already under research and fieldwork on another new site to us as part of a collaborative project with MOLA, Northampton. During the early autumn we continued our archaeological exploration and excavation of the Post Roman 5th century and Anglo-Saxon late 6th/early 7th century AD inhumation cemeteries at Whitehall Farm, Nether Heyford. Meanwhile throughout the last six months we have also undertaken two pieces of work of a geophysical nature. The first based on further extensive survey of the fields to the east of the A5 associated with the Posting Station of Bannaventa at Whilton Lodge, Northamptonshire, whilst the second project is an investigation and archaeological assessment of the Iron Age Hillfort at Borough Hill, Daventry.

Further success has also been achieved on the Post-Excavation front with the near completion of the digital translation of the Whitehall Farm excavation plans/sections and the progress made in applying Meta data to the photographic archive for recording and interpretation purposes. The Branson's Lane Report has been positively reviewed and is undergoing final last minute

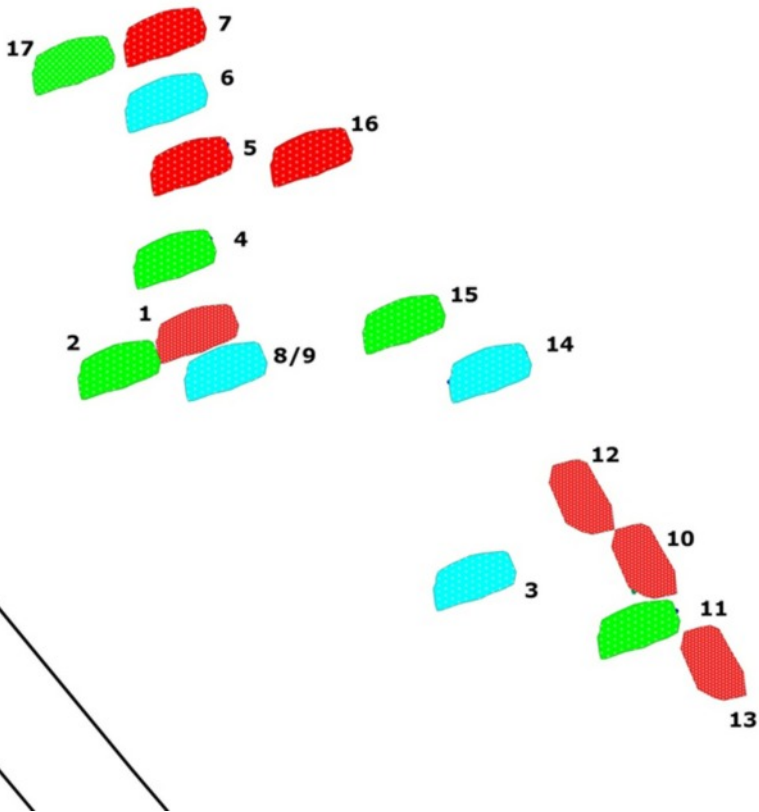
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revision before despatch to our commissioning client the Youth Coffee House Charity at Towcester and the appropriate local and national grey literature repositories.

Again this September we returned to the known cemetery site at Whitehall Farm in the hope of finally establishing the extent and overall layout of the site. The chosen methodological approach was trial trenching in areas previously only partially explored. Hopefully discovering further burials which would enable us to excavate them before future ploughing eroded and disturb them. Making use of a mechanical digger we were able to open a sizable trench at the north end of the cemetery aligned in between the lines of earlier test pits. The trench did not look promising at first sight but thanks to our metal detecting colleagues another shield boss burial was located adjacent to two similar inhumations excavated over the last two years. This existence and depth of the internment demonstrated two important things other burials potentially could still be found and that the level of deposition into the natural geology between graves varied. The latter point lead us to the realization that there may be more graves to discover lower down in the sub soil than we had previously excavated. Therefore a deeper small hand dug trial trench was excavated along the alignment of the initial trial trench across the site and a further three individuals were almost instantaneously discovered.

A total of four extended inhumations were excavated or observed relating to both known periods of burial at the site in the 5th and late 6th/early 7th century AD. Amongst the internments other than the male with the shield boss were a stone capped/lined grave of a man and another skeleton of a woman and adolescent. This brings the number of complete and partial skeletons recovered from the cemetery to a total of seventeen individuals. So far the entire assemblage appears to constitute thirteen burials associated with the 5th century (420-480AD) and a further four internments of late 6th/early 7th century (580-650 AD) date. This year's fieldwork implying that the current known graves are only a fraction of the original number of burials included in the cemetery. However we have recorded enough burials to be able to begin to construct an archaeological profile of the cemetery internments to assist with interpretation of the site. Individual observable elements displayed by each grave leave us with a discernible archaeological profile to underpin quantitative and

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Burials by gender
 Red - male, green - female and blue - children

qualitative assessments of the data. The findings of those graves associated with the 5th century phase of the cemetery display and share the following characteristics. Namely all of the burials are extended inhumations which appear from other sites around the country to be a typical trait of internments for this period. All the graves are roughly aligned east/west and these can be divided into two different groups. One group of skeletons lie with the skulls at the west end of the grave and are buried without grave goods. The other set with their skulls at the east end of the grave contain grave goods. This is a very interesting distinction and highlights the complexity of burial practice at that time.

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The E - W burials

The adult males are exclusively interred in stone lined and capped graves uniformly with the head at the east end. However the female burials are less elaborately buried although carefully placed, lying on their sides within the grave possibly rapped in close fitting shrouds. Remains of linen textile associated with a brooch might support this hypothesis but equally could imply access to a range of material other than wool thought to be the staple for clothing of the period. The care and attention afforded the process no less evident than in the male burials with the female internments just being executed in a different way and according to another set of values or rituals. Interestingly the female burials have a mixed depositional distribution with the heads at both the west and east end of the grave with the usual mix-

ture of grave and non grave goods. Overall interment appears to be in family groupings as the distribution of men, woman, adolescents and infants displays a reasonably consistent pattern across the cemetery ruling out gender specific selection within the burial area during this period. Those burials that contain grave goods reflect the inclusion of gender specific objects. This is most apparent in the distribution of weapons and brooches but is highlighted even more with the occasional inclusion of glass bead jewellery and in one case a two pronged roasting fork.

The general distribution of graves implies the placing of burials in ordered ranks within the cemetery space with the range of ritual approaches evident in the material recovered indicating keen distinctions in burial practice at the site based on gender, age & belief. Head position and the inclusion or not of

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grave goods is very significant and could be interpreted as reflecting a diverse religious world view. The east/west alignment of internment mirroring the amalgamation of a local possibly Late Roman Christian tradition with incoming religious affectations indicative of the *'foderati'* or treaty troops brought into the area in the Post Roman era. Planned scientific work centered on Isotopic analysis of ribs and teeth should give some indication of racial mobility and origin as well as diet to help clarify these particular issues.



6th - 7th burial

Amongst those individuals associated with the late 6th/early 7th century AD element of the cemetery two different modes of burial practice are evident. A crouch burial, unique to the site, on dating evidence is associated with three extended inhumations. These extend-

ed inhumations are aligned roughly north/south in complete opposition to the earlier burials. The burials contain only adult males with grave goods and are laid on their back with their heads at the southern end of the internment. Interestingly the grave cuts lack any stone lining or capping as observed in the 5th century burials. In fact there is no evidence of wooden coffins or even shrouds. The grave goods are exclusively weapon related with a sword, spears and shield bosses being retrieved. These extended inhumations are also aligned in a head to toe formation pointing towards the crouch burial which because of its individualistic alignment and the internment of a sword probably occupies a position of status within the burial ground. The characteristic features of these graves suggest that they are pagan and probably represent the earliest penetration of Mercian immigrants following the demise of the last British lowland kingdom after the battle of Bedford in 571AD.

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The differences in burial practice between the 5th and 6th/7th century cemeteries also highlight the diverse religious beliefs circulating around society as well as pointing out changes in fashion in the deposition of the dead during the Dark Ages. Our extended 6th/7th century AD inhumations respect the position of earlier burials and do not impinge on any of these graves. This is significant for two reasons first it implies that the earlier cemetery was still visible or marked out in some way meriting deference from those interring these later individuals. Quite a mind blowing thought when one realizes that potentially this happened nearly a hundred years after the earlier cemetery ceased to be used. Secondly the orderly deposition of those bodies already excavated could mean that other burials of the same date exist on the site at lower levels in areas not yet excavated between the lines of initial test pits.

The continuation of the geophysical survey at Bannaventa has demonstrated and reinforced our general understanding that the core of the settlement lying outside of the walled or bank and ditched area of the site reflects ribbon development aligned along Watling Street which keeps to the higher contours of the promontory. Outside of the inland field systems little is discernible in the wider landscape. The alignment of the road between Bannaventa and Roman Duston is evident as are the locations of probable stone quarries utilised during that period. Unfortunately expansion of the geophysical survey further east is curtailed by the main line railway between London and Birmingham and the carriageway of the M1 motorway.

The geophysics team under the supervision of Fred Kay have also been involved in surveying the golf course element of the very large Iron Age Hillfort at Borough Hill, Daventry. In particular the area containing a building dating back to the Roman period initially partially excavated by Baker in 1823 and more fully recorded by Bot-



Geophysical survey of Borough Hill

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field in 1854. Clasp's exploration of this northern end of the multivale hill fort has enabled us to relocate the remains of the building excavated in the 19th century and to identify a series of enclosures the largest of which could be a 'Temnos' or sacred area and a possible 'ceremonial' tract way across the top of the summit to an opening in the banks and ditches in the NE of the hill fort. In the past the Roman building has been interpreted as part of a 'villa' complex but the geophysical survey might indicate a more religious rationale for its positioning on the top of a hill fort. There are example elsewhere in Roman Britain namely at Lydney in South Wales and Maiden Castle, Dorset where this is exactly the case. This is reinforced by the fact that a series of tumuli of the Roman period are known from elsewhere in the hill fort which are unusual features to be associated with villa farmhouses and might more realistically be seen as part of the ritual use of the site.

Thanks again for your interest and I hope you will continue to support all our initiatives as we continue with a programme of fieldwork and I look forward to more interesting developments in the future.

Deadline for the March 2018 Newsletter will be Sunday, September 16, 2018. All photos please at approx 300 dpi and separate from the text with indications of their positions.

From Jennifer Smith, Harpole Heritage Group

Harpole Heritage Group have heard some more excellent speakers over the last months. Jim Brown gave a presentation on the 'Flore/Weedon Bypass', Keith Harry spoke about the history of '1,000 years of Grafton Regis'.

We all learned about the 'Battle of Northampton 1460' from Mike Ingram then Gail Stuart told us many stories about her father, Eric Morecombe, and we were joined by members of Kislingbury Friendship Club and Blisworth History Society.

Steve Young came at short notice when the speaker who was booked could not come due to having had an operation. Steve spoke about 'Archaeology in the Area.

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Our catering ladies also provided a delicious meal for our Annual Dinner. In October we hosted the Clasp AGM and everyone enjoyed the cakes.

A Roman Display of finds found in Harpole, which has been at Harpole Primary School for some years, is being up-dated and will soon be back on site. This is being arranged by Don Martin, a member of CLASP.

From Don Martin 'Roman Harpole'

Harpole Primary School's small display of Roman objects, found at archaeological excavations in the village, was in need of refurbishment, so I was asked to undertake the job. Although removal of the case from the school was not initially allowed I needed something to work on. This meant finding cardboard boxes large enough to create a dummy case to play with.

A few trial arrangements and consultations with Steve Young were required to decide on the general look of the display and to gather some items that were in storage. Some research on the Internet by Adriana Caruso came up with a good idea but the big question was what to use for the supports. Card was probably no good as it could sag with time; wood would probably be too expensive and time-consuming to have made, but again some Internet research found a possibility. A trip to High Wycombe for advice settled the matter: I would use foam. Ordering the various shapes was done on the website form and they were delivered the following day. Fitting the case was going to be tricky if it had to be done at the school so the case was brought home over half term.

Luckily the measurements were perfect and the foam shapes were built into the paper-lined case, made slightly awkward as the sliding doors could not be removed without completely dismantling the whole thing. Some of the objects were to be free standing but the coins, brooches and other small finds had to be secured in some way without damage and hopefully without visible means of support. A quick visit to the Nether Heyford angling shop solved that problem. Fine fishing line, card washers and a long needle were used to sew the objects on to the foam. It was a very fiddly and frustrating job as the line was so fine, slippery and nearly invisible. The coins were left in their

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protective card surrounds and pinned into place as were the identifying number tags.

A corresponding identification sheet of the item names was made and laminated to stick on the side of the case and all was done. After half term a call was made to the school to expect Ian Nicolson (who was volunteered by me before he knew it) and myself with the finished display. Arriving safely, the case was replaced by the office door and instantly attracted the attention of a couple of small inquisitive pupils. Job done!



From Tony Kesten

CLASP TO ENTER 'GRIDLINE'

We've all seen the lines of electricity pylons that march across our land carrying electric power from power stations to consumers. They're owned by National Grid which also carries power underground. To do this, National Grid ('the GRID') pays landowners, the 'grantors' for their permission. CLASP has two 'grantors' – Nick Adams who owns the Whitehall Farm and the CLASP Chair, Dave Hayward across whose land a pylon route runs. The GRID produces a magazine 'Gridline' that it provides to its 'grantors' every few months. CLASP hopes to appear in the next edition and a number of us have met the GRID's journalist and photographer and talked with them about how the Whitehall Roman Villa was found and excavated. Those involved hope that the article will encourage other landowners to welcome archaeologists – especially Community Archaeologists, such as CLASP – to explore and, where appropriate, excavate their land. Nick Adams has been

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especially positive about his experiences.

We expect the article to appear in some two to three months and, once it does, we will let you know. We expect to have some copies available at Whitehall for people to see, especially those in the Whitehall Tuesday Group.

List of Contacts for CLASP Associations

Organisation	Contact	Tel
Phoenix Artefact Search Team	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
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 Project	Rob Close	07740 039467
