



CLASP

Community Landscape & Archæology Survey Project NEWSLETTER



Local Heritage initiative



ROMAN RESEARCH TRUST

Website: www.claspweb.org.uk

Spring 2020, issue 30

Charity No 1111667

From Dave Hayward, Chairman of Trustees

The new decade has commenced with a sobering warning as to the frailty of mankind with the onset of the covid-19 virus across the planet. Looking at it philosophically it is interesting to balance the threat posed by a new virus in the 21st century to those exposed to the Black Death centuries ago whose skeletons are regularly exposed by archaeologists today. Our problem is the speed and extent of travel between the continents that spreads the virus at such a speed but we have the knowledge that science will fight to mitigate the effects. Our predecessors were faced with much slower and less comprehensive spread of disease but with no saviour in science.

As a result of the seriousness of the situation, in conjunction with Rob Close and Stephen Young we have decided to suspend all CLASP group activities for the foreseeable future. This pause in our work coupled with the self-isolation that many of us are in will hopefully provide an opportunity for our members to develop skills to undertake desk top research to further Clasp's work. There is a wealth of material available today on the Internet for colleagues to utilise for research. Such tools as Lidar, National Library of Scotland Maps Database, Google Earth Historical Imagery, Google Books and other databases of thousands of old and obscure books and papers that are available for free download. For a small membership fee Academia has an extensive library including many papers relevant to our work.

Having been privy to Rob Close's report from the Organising Committee I

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can see that there is little else for me to say on our day to day activities. I will however address the problem that is of longer term concern to your Trustees than any other, the need for us to identify and recruit new trustees who can bring appropriate skills to the Trustees Board. Full details can be seen on the CLASP website as to person specification and role description but I will highlight some of the particular skills we require. These are management experience including both from the professional and voluntary sectors; financial expertise including accounting and fundraising; human resources, including training, health and safety and protection; scientific including biological, chemical, electronics and historical. If either you are interested in becoming a Trustee or you know somebody who might 'fit the bill' then please email details to: NewTrusteeEnquiries@claspweb.org.uk

From Rob Close, Chairman of the Organising Committee

The Committee has met three times from September 2019 and was due to meet again in April. Given the call for self-isolation to achieve some protection from the coronavirus this meeting is likely to be deferred. Time critical issues will be dealt with by email. The topics discussed at the meetings held were:

2019 and 2020 Projects: The Committee reviewed the success of the two 2019 digs and agreed that work should be planned for both sites in 2020. **A delay in crop planting though has resulted in excavation being planned now a different area at Manshead based on historical records, aerial data and an extensive geophysical survey.**

Financing of the digs: The digs are expensive to run because we normally need to hire a digger to create the initial trenches (to save heavy manual work on our part) and toilets for the convenience of all attending. We have been investigating the availability of grants and / or sponsorship. If these are not forthcoming the Trustees and the Organising Committee will need to agree a charge for all those attending to cover these costs. This is still likely to Sarah to be low relative to the costs charged elsewhere.

2019 and 2020 AGMs and Public Meetings: Harpole Bowls Club provided the venue for 2019 AGM and will be used again as this has excellent facilities

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including the generous help of local volunteers. In 2019 we enjoyed excellent presentations from Steve Young and Fred Kay. At the 2020 Public Meeting Steve Young will give his interpretation of the findings at the two 2020 digs but the main speaker will be Sam Leggett, a Phd. student in archaeology at Cambridge University who has been helping CLASP in the analysis of the bones from the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery.

CLASP Field Centre: The two main days for group work at the Field centre are Tuesday and Wednesday. Members are most welcome to come along to participate in this important work. Contact Sandra Deacon for Tuesdays and Jackie Pyle for Wednesdays. Once we back to working normally. The Tuesday group in particular has worked hard to do essential painting and maintenance work. Thank you to all and perhaps in particular to Fred Kay and Norman Gartnett for the extra work they have done behind the scenes.

Key CLASP roles: There are many persons in CLASP who carry out essential roles and have been doing so for a long time. To all of these thank you. The Committee continues to discuss areas where new volunteers are necessary and to identify potential persons to take the responsibility on. Key roles recently filled include:

- **Communication:** Tim Kay has replaced the long serving Jeremy Cooper as Webmaster. Gina Brown remains active in developing our Face Book presence. David Morgan has agreed to act as Press Officer. Geoff

Bovingdon has agreed to be our Liaison officer with Volunteer Community Bodies. His first focus is on finding new Trustees. Norman Garnett and Jim Aveling are jointly managing the placement of the display units. Lisa Wildgoose has offered to help with publicity and display.

- **Field Centre management:** Sandra Deacon has agreed to be overall management of the Field centre. Jackie Pyle has taken on leadership of the Archive group on a Wednesday.
- **Fund Raising:** Norman Garnett has volunteered to help Dave Hayward in finding sources of grants. He is also looking at a JustGiving page. I have

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organised the setting up of the Field Centre Club, which will be run by Angela Evans and Gina Boreham.

Systems: Don Atwell has done excellent work in setting up the computer system at the Field Centre and has even donated computers and printers. Don Atwell has also unbelievable 3D images of the 2019 excavations.

Also from Rob Close, Chairman of the Organising Committee CLASP Field Centre Club

Having a Field centre is essential if we are to fulfil our responsibility of accurately creating a record of all our artefacts and ensuring safe storage (both physically and electronically).

The cost of running the Centre (rent and heating etc) is about £2,500 pa. The Field Centre Club is seen as being potentially a valuable source towards financing the cost. As a result, the Field Centre Club has been launched, with approximately half of our members agreeing to participate. The Club will be run by Angela Evans and Gina Boreham. Those of you who have agreed to join are asked to get your subscription form and money to Angela/Gina **by the end of March**; additional members will be very welcome.

Given the coronavirus situation it may well be that the first public draw will not take place at the end of April as was planned. More likely we will delay the draws until we can all meet again. Perhaps four draws in July!

For details of the Club including how to join and the Rules, please visit the Website.

PROVISIONAL Deadline for the Autumn 2020 Newsletter will be Sunday, 13 September, 2020. All photos please at approx 300 dpi and separate from the text with indications of their positions.

Editor: Tony Johns T: 01327 341729,

E: tony@tonyjohns.co.uk

From Steve Young, Archaeological Director

Forgive me for starting in a slightly biblical frame of mind but the floods and pestilence endured across England since the beginning of last Autumn have not only overshadowed and shaped but also continue to impact on the nature and extent of the fieldwork undertaken by CLASP. The last six months and moving forward into the coming spring and early summer have been and will be unusual to say the least. The constant rain before and after Christmas has seriously affected the farming community's ability to cultivate their fields and sow crops. Indeed, in many places where planting has taken place germination and growth has been poor or failed completely. However, whilst we would commiserate with our farmers predicament these events have offered us unexpected opportunities that in the case of normal practice would not have been afforded us. On the flip side as a consequence of these on-going challenges it might curtail or restrict future work. Let us hope not!

Principally CLASP and colleagues from associated societies have been able to engage in several fieldwork initiatives in our area. These include geophysical investigation near Stowe Nine Church, further archaeological exploration of the southern half of Manshead field on the edge of the extra mural settlement of the Posting Station at Bannaventa and finally, with the assistance of individual NARC detectorists, the discovery of a new area of activity at the Whitehall Farm Roman villa site. The initial two projects were facilitated by Julia Johns and Marcus Lewis working with local farmers to whom I would like to extend thanks and acknowledge a CLASP debt of gratitude, whilst the metal detecting fieldwork was undertaken mainly by Dave Derby and Alan Standish to whom our thanks should also be extended for their dedication and enthusiasm.

The geophysical survey in a field near Stowe Nine Church had been pre planned but access to the area was not initially secured until the farming challenges became abundantly clear and a window of opportunity presented itself. The intended fieldwork was associated with an investigative geophysical survey of potential archaeological anomalies previously spotted on goggle earth photographs. Those aerial photographs appear to suggest the existence of an unrecorded and unknown field system and rectangular embanked enclosure containing a smaller structure, possibly of Roman date, situated to the west of Watling Street. Those with a more open mind might, which I must admit included myself amongst its number, choose to speculate on interpreting these

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visual anomalies in a highly positive manner as potentially a temple site with a surrounding sacred '*temenos*' area and adjacent field system undoubtedly worthy of initial archaeological investigation if only to prove or disprove their existence.

Two areas associated with these features were explored but extensive use of magnetometry failed to reveal any anomalies consistent with the effects seen on the images. This did not negate the approach adopted but demonstrated how important it is to check out potentially credible information of possible sites on the ground. Interestingly, although unsuccessful in locating the embanked enclosure, internal structure or attendant field system, impromptu un-systematic and limited fieldwalking produced over two dozen sherds mainly of Roman date but some from the medieval period over an area adjacent to those surveyed. Enough sherds were recovered to imply that there may have been settlement activity on the lower slopes of the field in areas we weren't expecting and hopefully we shall return next year not only to field walk but also to undertake further geophysical survey. We know from the extensive Roman landscape to the east of Watling Street focused on Whitehall Farm, that it might not really be too far-fetched to expect similar developments on the western side of the road way.

The new fieldwork at Bannaventa was completely fortuitous and came about as a consequence of heavy and continuous rainfall preventing the sowing of crops after preliminary cultivation of the field. The opportunity presented itself to carry out extensive magnetometry and resistivity geophysical survey over an area of the field as yet not subjected to a structured field work approach. Unexpectedly this opportunity was enhanced by an impromptu and relatively systematic field walking survey of most of the southern half of Manshead. We were not able to work with the preferred 5m grid but collected material from the 30m and 20m squares laid out for the geophysical survey. Further initial magnetometry was also commenced on high ground in the field immediately to the west of Manshead and Lovers Lane as Roman features and material have been recorded there. Unfortunately however, the hectare surveyed only revealed evidence of medieval ridge and furrow, producing nothing of note to support previous supposed artefactual material of Roman date.

The magnetometry survey of Manshead field covered an area of three hectares and occupied thirty-three 30m grids. It is an area situated to the south of

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the flood plain of the now canalised head water stream of the River Nene. Our survey unexpectedly revealed a more complex archaeological sequence than expected; composed of extensive geophysical anomalies consistent with an organised and well laid out extra mural suburban development. Analysis and interpretation of the geophysical data shows a series of five irregularly elongated and differently sized enclosures or tenements aligned roughly west to east but facing onto the eastern edge of the original Watling Street frontage. The Roman carriageway itself is not visible within the surveyed field and apparently appears to be underlying the current line of Lovers Lane.

Our survey uncovered an area that comprises a new and as yet unobserved extensive extension of the southern extra mural ‘urban sprawl’ of Bannaventa. It confirms, as demonstrated with the layout of the geophysical anomalies known to be to the north of the town, there is a substantial ribbon development outside the walled area throughout the Roman period. It is now possible to see that in scale the entire settlement of Bannaventa is far larger than previously considered and perhaps could be compared in size to the Posting Station at *Letocetum* (Wall, Staffordshire). This was a Posting Station located further to the north along Watling Street and was considered to be the twenty eighth largest city in Roman Britain according to the 6th century scholar *Gildas*. Our limited understanding of Posting Stations and their role



within the wider landscape is perhaps open to re-evaluation and re-interpretation. I should also mention at this point a range of earthworks observable in the field immediately to the west of Lovers Lane which as yet have not been explored. These could indi-

cate a similar matching extra mural development may have occupied the frontage of the original Roman Watling Street to the west of the modern lane with the potential of doubling the area occupied by this suburb. It also means

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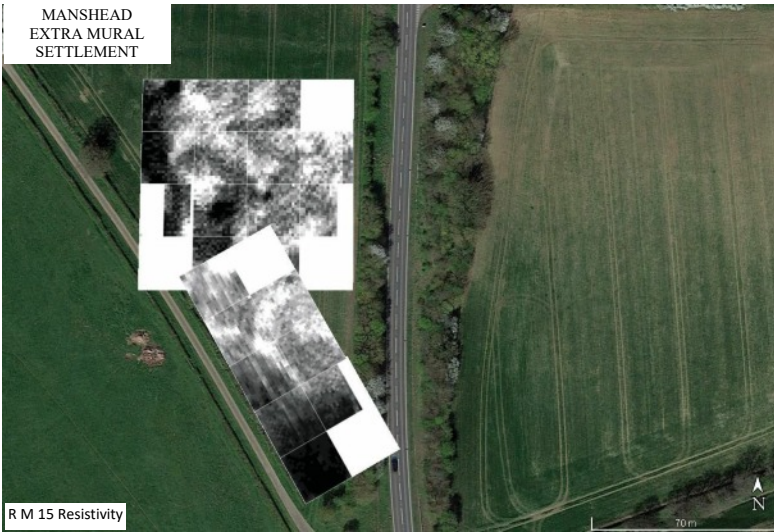
we must try to examine the field immediately opposite Manshead on the other side of the modern alignment of the A5.

The anomalies observed in the magnetometry survey are bounded on the northern side by the drainage ditches and causeway of another major carriageway of the same dimensions as the Roman Watling Street. This major road, in general travels eastward, although the portion we can observe from the survey has a gently curving arc running on a north-western to south-eastern alignment. The scale and structure of the carriageway which was not found anywhere else in our geophysical examination of the site may represent the terminus of the postulated Roman road between Whilton Lodge and Duston. This road has previously been envisaged as being located further north and nearer to the centre of the walled settlement. Should this interpretation prove correct it poses a conundrum in the overall development and evolution of Bannaventa as a settlement, which is mainly as to why such an important road junction should be this far south of the focal point of the small town and Posting Station.

Unfortunately, the geophysical anomalies imply considerable damage from agricultural activity over the past fifty years with the high spots in the middle of the field looking to have been significantly levelled or at the least badly eroded. Only in the most southerly margin of the field are the features clearly displayed. One can see within the enclosures there appear to be structures and buildings but their exact meaning and function are difficult to interpret from any analysis of the magnetometry without further archaeological investigation.

The weather conditions not being conducive to scarifying and sowing, we were enabled to undertake a second series of geophysical survey using the RM15 resistivity machine. Stone scatters containing roughly squared rubble stone were evident across the surface of the central and western sectors of the Manshead field and I hoped that by availing ourselves of the RM15 we might be able to detect the layout and distribution of any stone buildings. An area of approximately 1.8 hectares was surveyed using two different grid layouts. The first RM15 survey utilized the corner posts left in position from the magnetometry grid and fourteen 20m grids were investigated, whilst a second survey occupied eight 20m grid squares situated along the western field boundary of Manshead field (see next page).

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Again, analysis of the data, although showing an overall consistency in demonstrating the presence of masonry scatters across the survey grid, lacked the necessary lucidity to identify with any great precision the layout of any individual building

except for a potential circular structure (Rest 1 grid square 4.4). However, neither did it discount the existence of other buildings across the field or the possibility of wall foundations being associated with the borders of individual plots as the extensive scatters of rubble testify in the analysed images. This was evident during excavation across the broader landscape features surrounding the Stanwick villa along the middle Nene.

At the same time as the geophysical surveys, we were also able to carry out an impromptu and relatively systematic field walking survey over most of the southern half of Manshead field. Amongst the material retrieved from the field was building material which supports the existence of at least one substantial structure in the area. A collection of *oxidised, calcite gritted* and *grogged tegula* roofing tile was recovered, suggestive of a fairly large roofed building analogous to either a well-appointed semi urban villa or civic building such as a bath house. On personal reflection I have never seen such a density of roofing tile fragments anywhere else from Bannaventa and that includes the walled area of the Posting Station.

In addition, we found a few fragments of boxflue tile indicating the existence of an underground hypocaust system in the same area. The retrieval of several lumps of rotten limestone which is not natural to the site and which on other Roman sites in the locality is usually uniquely associated with *vousoir* block vaulting found in bath houses is extremely exciting.

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such a block was excavated from the earliest bath house on the Whitehall Roman villa. Taken together these finds provide a strong circumstantial basis in support of the geophysical evidence and point to a substantial stone building stood in this area. Speculating quite wildly it is possible that we are seeing the first evidence for a public bath house on the site to the south of the later Posting Station as is the case with these type of structures at Tripontium (near Rugby) and Letocetum (Wall, Staffordshire).

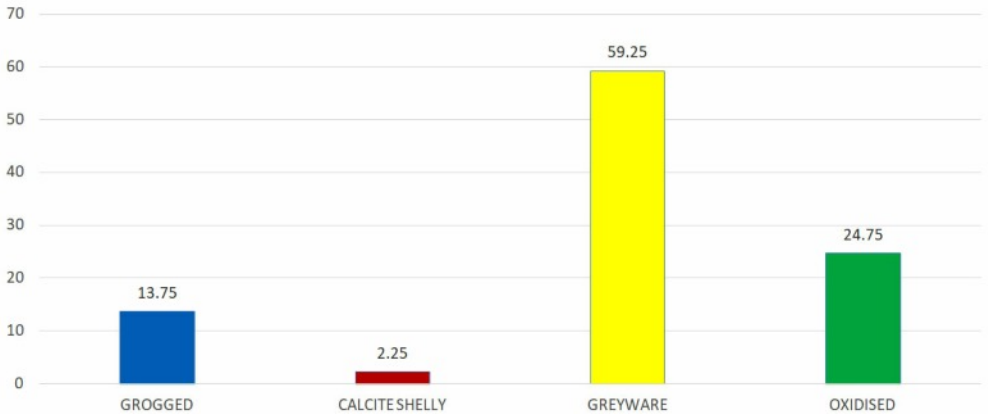
The significant amount of pottery recovered from the field walking survey provides a fascinating backdrop against which we can begin to understand the chronological and to a lesser extent economic development of the suburb itself. This data will also assist us in the broader analysis of Bannaventa by helping us to understand the spatial and functional relationship of the different zones of the wider settlement.

Our assemblage from South Manshead amounted to a total of 1686 (14,065.25 kg) sherds. In terms of period bias one sherd was from the Late Iron Age, whilst the largest group of 1515 (13252.25 kg) were Roman in date, fourteen were from the migration or Saxon period with the last group of 169 belonging to the medieval period. This Roman assemblage can be broken down into fine and coarse ware constituents with quality table ware comprising 23% (345 sherds) and utilitarian storage and preparation vessels 77% (1170 sherds) of the collection. The Roman sherds reflect a wide-ranging system of kiln-based manufacture with consumption of material from 41 different fabric sources. This is a procurement range above the average for pottery assemblages from any of the surrounding rural Roman settlements examined across the River Nene watershed where the average level of fabric consumed is 38 but often in reality less. One probably should expect this outcome as the Post Station at Bannaventa was the economic hub for the wider locality and the most likely conduit for marketing the ceramic material.

A point to note is that statistical analysis of the assemblage emphasizes a relatively local production and manufacture, particularly of the coarse ware vessels, most likely the majority of which were obtained from within a 5 – 10 km radius of the site, whilst the fine wares have a more regional or continental bias associated with the major production centres. The usual mass-produced wares such as *Nene Valley colour coats*, *Oxfordshire Colour coats* and *Black burnished ware* are much in evidence as is *Samian* from Central Gaul.

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South Manshead: Generic Fabric Profile



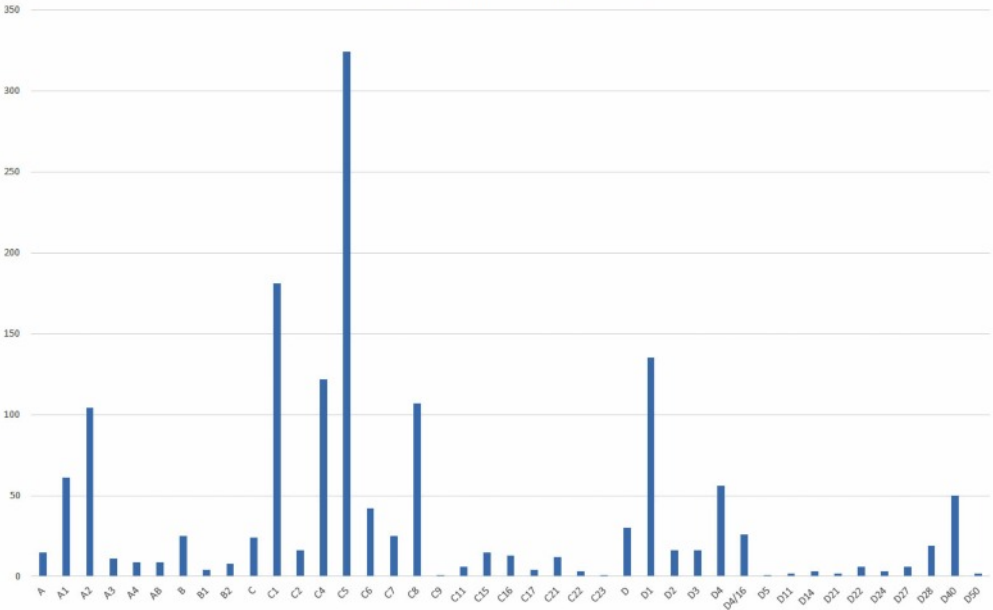
There are also some sherds of more exotic origin with two amphora sherds probably of Spanish provenance and sherds of *Central Gaulish colour coated* and ‘*Rhenish*’ ware known as *moselkeramik* have been identified.

Overall, the largest generic fabric present in the assemblage is the reduced or grey wares sherds. These make up nearly two thirds of the Roman assemblage which is typical amongst the pottery collections of many settlements of this period in this area. The oxidised collection because it contains most of the fine ware vessels, reflects the fine/coarse ware mix found elsewhere but is substantially higher than the majority of neighbouring rural sites, possibly because it is the central marketing and economic focus in the area. Interestingly, the limited amount of calcite shelly derived wares present in the group, mirrors similar evidence found elsewhere on neighbouring sites suggesting limited market penetration for these products and that Bannaventa may mark the border of that industry’s economic sphere of interest.

Nearly three quarters (73.5%) of the Roman assemblage is diagnostically datable to a given time span within the period. An initial analysis of the site chronology is best done by splitting the Roman era into three broadly definable time spans Early, middle and Late. Although not absolute as a dating aid to any overall chronology for the area under investigation because specific fabrics have a certain amount of undefinable cross over between these time barriers, it does provide a basic generalised timeline to work on concerning the development of the Roman features at South Manshead (see next page).

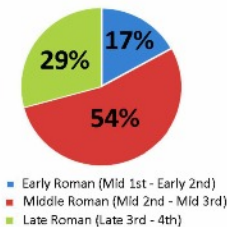
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South Manshead: Roman Pottery Fabric Profile



The assortment of early sherds indicates widespread activity in this area of the settlement getting underway by the late 1st to mid 2nd century AD. Expansion probably reached a crescendo during the mid 2nd / mid 3rd century AD but continued extensively into the late 3rd / 4th century AD. This late Roman pottery supports what had previously been implied by analysis of the coin loss graph from the metal detecting survey for Manshead field, where twice as many 4th century coins were identified than those of the 3rd century AD. Therefore, both the pottery and coin evidence demonstrate an escalation in activity across the southern extra mural area at a time when current academic thinking suggests an extended period of decline. This is an extremely interesting turn of events and an aspect of the site which needs to be pursued. A comparison of the findings from the southern end of Manshead field with those obtained from the northern half of the same field and the scheduled area north of that should be very elucidating as we bring all the data for the site together in the future.

South Manshead: Diagnostically Datable Roman Pottery



Looking at the more chronologically explicit fabric dating profile, it is easier to see the larger diagnostic groupings that provide the framework for the basic and somewhat simplistic three-part time-

line being considered for interpreting the artefactual and geophysical evidence for the era. Although the data obtained has its limitations it does point the way head to some conclusions as to the meaning of this evidence.

Obviously, the Early Roman period is dominated by ‘*Grogged*’ wares and particularly the A1 Fabric (Late 1st / mid 2nd) which contains three times as many sherds in the assemblage than the main earlier indicator the A fabric (1st / Early 2nd). This does not mean there wasn’t any activity in this area of the site from the very outset of Roman Britain but as with the single Late Iron sherd it was at best very low key and really only started to blossom into a structured extra mural development most likely in the governorship of Agricola in the last quarter of the 1st century AD or the first quarter of the reign of Trajan.

The middle Roman range of fabrics demonstrates the consumer focus and importance of the reduced coarse wares of the Upper Nene Valley pottery industry and its rise as a major market supply in the 2nd century AD. This represents a commercial industrial scale kiln production centred at Ecton and Little Houghton along the Nene Valley to the east of Northampton. For fine wares the assemblage demonstrates the arrival and consumption of *samian* ware at the site which although available in the *Trajanic* era focuses on the *Hadrianic* and *Antonine* periods of occupation.

	CHRONOLOGY	SHERD	FABRIC	%
	1st	22	AB, B1, B2	2
	Mid / late 1st	9	A4	0.75
Early Roman	1st / Early 2nd	15	A	1.5
	Mid 1st / 2nd	11	A3	1
	Later 1st / Early 2nd	61	A1	5.5
	Later 1st / 2nd	44	C6, D40	4
	Late 1st / Late 2nd	41	D40	3.75
	Mainly 2nd	71	C7, D, D2	6.25
Middle Roman	Mid 2nd / late 3rd	16	C2	1.5
	Late 2nd / mid 3rd	5	D40	0.5
	2nd / 3rd	341	C1, C4, C11, C15, C16, C17	30.5
	Mainly 3rd	12	C21	1
	Mid 2nd / 4th	154	D1, D28	14
	Late 2nd / 4th	104	A2	9
Late Roman	Later 2nd / 4th	55	D4	5
	Mainly mid 3rd / 4th	5	D22	0.5
	Mainly 3rd / 4th	8	D27, D24	0.75
	3rd / 4th	107	C8	9.5
Post Roman	5th	8		0.75
Singular date		24		2.25
	TOTAL	1113		100

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Later Roman pottery is characterised by the oxidised fine wares, particularly the *Nene Valley* and *Oxfordshire* colour coats and the *Black Burnished* table ware. Again, as reflected in neighbouring sites, the *Oxfordshire colour coats* appear to replace the early *samian* pottery which had completely disappeared by the early 3rd century. The number of sherds identified in both fabrics is remarkably similar as is their percentage figure in the overall pottery assemblage. However, *Nene Valley* colour coated sherds outstrip both of the other main fine ware providers by a factor of three to one reflecting a significant market for these vessels and the focus of late Roman fine ware provision.

The *soft pink grog* is also of interest because the forms identified here reflect a more long-distance trade probably in dairy products from the hinterland of Lactodurum (Towcester) at Bannaventa rather than their purchase for aesthetic reasons of individual vessels. Virtually all of the *mortaria* sherds are of *Mancetter -Hartshill* origin with only two sherd examples a piece of *Oxfordshire* and *Lower Nene Valley mortaria* identified in the assemblage. Overall, the fabric range of the collection from this extra mural zone implies a robust and multi-faceted range of ceramic consumption that will help us to understand not only the status and role of this area of extra mural habitation but its position in the greater community that was Bannaventa.

One final thing to note which was identified in the pottery assemblage, are several sherds of a fabric we have observed at every Roman settlement we have ever investigated. These, although dated between 450/850 AD by pottery expert Paul Blinkhorn, appear to typify the final phases of activity on sites in our area in the Post Roman period and proclaim the demise of these settlements as functioning entities.

Amongst the other artefacts collected from fieldwalking are five fragments of dressed Derbyshire millstone grit quern stones, several pieces of metal working slag, an iron bloom and an engraved and painted fragment from a glass goblet. All these materials again indicate a range of activities and possible industrial processes associated with the area.

Elsewhere, the situation also favoured detailed fieldwork, with further metal detecting on relatively unexplored areas of Whitehall Farm adjacent to the site of the Roman villa. The metal detecting carried out under the auspices of Dave Derby and Alan Standish at Whitehall Farm across the winter has produced in excess of 75 Roman coins, mainly of 3rd and 4th century date

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across a field adjacent to the research excavation site. These coins were located in an area which had previously produced very little archaeological material but imply that there is something of significance to be investigated. Amongst these coins the most unusual was a late Republican silver denarius of Augustus dating between 29-27 BC. This is not the sort of coin one would expect to find in a Whitehall context and to speculate, it probably represents retention of earlier coinage before deposition in the Roman period for reasons we may never fathom. Our intention is to undertake further geophysical survey work at Whitehall Farm after the coronavirus has dissipated and we have repaired our magnetometer. Are we about to come face to face with the Roman cemetery at last?

In closing I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you again for all your hard work, commitment and support with our activities and hope that you are all currently keeping well in trying times. It might be some time, thanks to Covid 19, before we can venture forward again into discovering more about our archaeological landscape but I hope this extended article in the CLASP newsletter will act as a stimulus to future involvement.



Denarius of Augustus

From Jennifer Smith, Harpole Heritage Group

Harpole Heritage Group have heard about the 'History of Abington Park' There was a problem with the projector when we should have had a presentation and ended up with a talk on an 'Update of the LMS Patriot Project'. The talk '30 Years in Northamptonshire Police Force' was very interesting and we heard about the mysteries of "Folk and Folklore".

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For our Annual Dinner, members and friends enjoyed a Fish and Chip Supper, with delicious puddings which gave our catering ladies a well earned rest. The speaker for January was ill and unable to come, so two of our members were able to read out memories of Stan Clark, who lives in Harpole, of when he was young, life is very different today.

We are to take part in VE Day celebrations in the village on the 8th May 2020.

From Jim Aveling, Blisworth Heritage Society

The Grange at Thrupp

Nowadays the word 'grange' along with the term 'manor', is beloved of estate agents as it has connotations of historical prestige and social superiority. Historical truth is that granges were outlying farming units developed, firstly, by the Cistercian monasteries on estates which were too far away from the mother house to be farmed conveniently by lay brothers and hired labourers. Other orders were not slow in following suit and Daventry Priory had several granges which are mentioned in 'The cartulary of Daventry Priory'. However there is no mention in its pages of the construction of these granges and we are fortunate to have a few entries which refer to the making of Thrupp's grange.

We discover that in 1283 the Prior of Daventry Priory, William de Lemington, made an agreement with Simon de Throp, the leading landholder in Thrupp and the other free men of the vill concerning a plea about a field in Thrupp held in the county court. The prior was to repair the wall around the grange without cost to Simon. The inference from this passage is that the construction of the grange had begun some time earlier and that disputes had arisen from this and had occasioned the matter going to law. The other thought is why should Simon be involved in the repair of a wall which he hadn't built? It seems that the Prior was 'trying it on'. Two days after this agreement, on 25th April, Adam de Capes of Thrupp and the Prior made an agreement about rights around the new grange in return for free right of entry and repair of walls.

The matter did not end there as the splendidly named Thomas le Eschirmisur quit claimed his rights on the site of the new grange in Thrupp in about 1290 and 1291, John de Braunfeld followed suit. Obviously the matter of the

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grange dragged on and the Priory and the leading men of Thrupp did not reach an amicable agreement very easily. This leads to the thought that the Priory tried to push through its changes without expecting resistance from those who were affected, the greater part of the inhabitants having no say in the matter. Another thought is the length of time taken to construct the grange. It would have consisted of a walled enclosure and would have needed a barn, or barns, for storage, perhaps a yard, or yards, and stock pens and sheds, and probably a house for a foreman. Perhaps the Priory could call upon a small workforce and, most probably, lacked the financial wherewithal to expedite matters quickly. We have to remind ourselves that we only know of this story from the Priory's records. The views of the freemen and the inhabitants of medieval Thrupp can never be known as they left no written record.

Did the grange survive until 1489 when Thrupp ceased to exist? The short answer is that we do not know, but it would have been an extremely useful feature for the sheep masters who succeeded to the Thrupp landscape.

List of Contacts for CLASP Associations

Organisation	Contact	Tel
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
