



NASNEWS

Newsletter of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society

Website: www.northants-archaeology.org.uk



NAS visit to excavations at Piddington Roman Villa Saturday, 10 August 2013 2.30pm

Northamptonshire Archaeological Society is grateful to the Upper Nene Archaeological Society (UNAS) for offering NAS members the opportunity to have a guided tour by Roy Friendship-Taylor of the Piddington Roman Villa excavations. After the site tour there will be an opportunity to visit the nearby Piddington Roman Villa Museum.

The excavations (at SP7970 5400) are located in fields west of Piddington village, which is approximately 7km south of Northampton. Follow the B526 to Hackleton village and then take the turn to Piddington village. Turn right onto Church Street and head in the direction of the parish church. A track leads to the excavations from Church End/Old End (at SP8015 5450, between house numbers 2 & 4).

Either park in the vicinity of the church and walk down the 750m of track to the excavations or, if dry, carefully drive down the track to the excavations, entirely at your own risk. Please allow time whether walking or driving to arrive at the site by 2.30pm. Wear stout shoes/boots for the excavation and clean shoes for the museum please.

Piddington Roman Villa Museum (NN7 2DD) is located on the eastern edge of Piddington village at Chapel End. Please respect local residents' wishes and do not park in Chapel End, you can stay parked near the church and walk to the museum.

Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England Northamptonshire Bruce Bailey

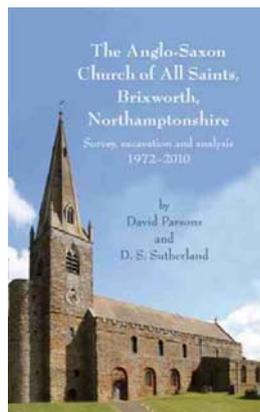
Coming soon, the first fully revised edition since the 1970s. Also contains a new, if brief, overview of the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeology of the county.



Format: Hardback
Publication date:
30 Sep 2013
ISBN: 9780300185072
800 pages: 216 x 121mm
Illustrations: 120 colour
illustrations
Price £35

The Anglo-Saxon Church of Brixworth, Northamptonshire: Survey, Excavation and Analysis, 1972-2010

David Parsons and Diana Sutherland

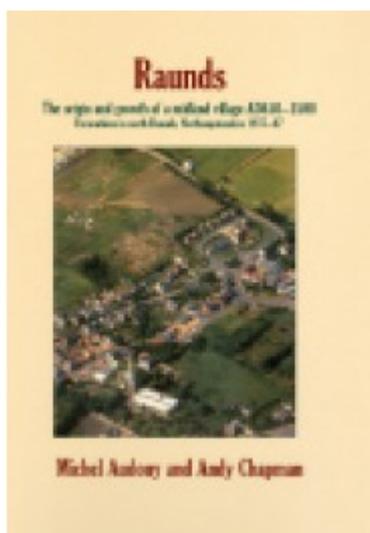


Hardcover:
420 pages
Publisher: Oxbow
Books
(31 May 2013)
ISBN-13: 978-
1842175316
**The bad news:
Price £90, but
Oxbow Books
Special Price:
£59.95**

The archaeological, geological and laboratory findings are amplified by contextual studies placing the church against its archaeological, architectural, liturgical and historical background, with detailed comparisons with standing and excavated buildings of similar age in north Europe and Italy.

More Book News: The Raunds volumes at bargain prices

The three Raunds volumes produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology are now all available at bargain prices, just over £20 for all three, from Oxbow Books: (<http://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/>)



Raunds: The Origin and Growth of a Midland Village, AD 450-1500. Excavations in North Raunds, Northamptonshire 1977-87

Michel Audouy and Andy Chapman (Editor)

Regular Price: £28.00

Special Price: £9.95

"It is a report of great significance which will repay study and careful thought."

Mark Gardiner

Landscape History 30.2 (2009)

Raunds Area Survey: An archaeological study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire 1985-94

S J Parry

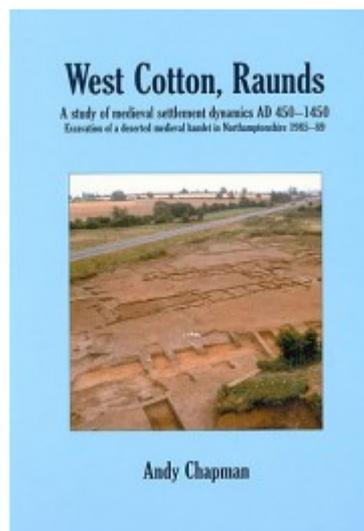
Regular Price: £30.00

Special Price: £4.95

"This is definitely a volume to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest."

Carenza Lewis

Agricultural History Review (2008)



West Cotton, Raunds: A Study of Medieval Settlement Dynamics AD 450-1450. Excavation of a deserted medieval hamlet in Northamptonshire, 1985-89

Andy Chapman

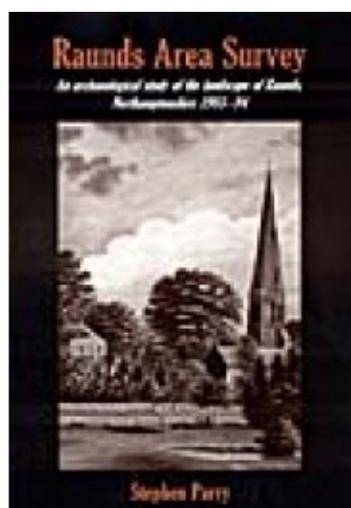
Regular Price: £48.00

Special Price: £6.95

"The changing character of the settlement is charted meticulously, integrating material culture and environmental evidence with structural narrative, and with due regard to existing documentary evidence. This is a successful and important publication whose significance is enhanced by, and enhances, the other studies already published under the Raunds Area Project."

Chris Scull

British Archaeology (March/April 2011)



An Atlas of Hillforts in Britain and Ireland

Hillforts are one of the most prominent types of prehistoric monument across many parts the British Isles and Ireland. However, these iconic sites are still poorly understood in terms of documenting variations in characteristics and form across regional and national boundaries. The Atlas of Hillforts Project has been awarded £950,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to try and remedy this situation. The Project will collect, collate and present data on hillforts across the UK and Ireland providing, for the first time, an integrated resource to serve research into this important monument type.

Contributions are welcomed from members of the public either as individuals or as part of local field groups.

Gary Lock, University of Oxford
Ian Ralston, University of Edinburgh

See the website for more details:
<http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/hillforts-atlas.html>

Northamptonshire Archaeology to merge with MOLA

Some of you may have seen in the local press or through the BBC local news service that the County Council have approved the sale of Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA), who have been offering fieldwork services on a commercial basis since the early 1990s, to MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), who were themselves separated from their parent organisation, The Museum of London, some two years ago, and now operate as an independent charitable company.

As the county council heads towards becoming purely an enabling body, a hands-on organisation like NA clearly does not fit within the current political ethos, and joining one of the largest archaeological contractors is now the preferable business option for N.A.

Whether the county may live to regret the ending of 40 years of public service fieldwork, time will tell. There will be a retrospective of the achievements of the 40 years of public service fieldwork in the next journal.

For many years NA has paid for its council services and business profits have gone to the county council. Staff at NA are therefore curious to know what form of creative accounting was used to calculate the figure quoted in the press release, that the sale of NA will save the taxpayer £275,000 a year.

See press coverage as follows, accompanied by images of work in progress on the excavations at Northampton Station:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-northamptonshire-23240407>

<http://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/county-hall-to-sell-off-its-archaeology-division-1-5264967>

The Historic Environment Service and the Archaeological Planning Advisors will remain with NCC.

Northampton Castle Station

Excavation by NA within the outer bailey of Northampton Castle uncovered a small stone building dating to the 12th century. It was set against the inner face of the outer bailey bank, and contained a sequence of stone-laid hearths. Underlying late Saxon pits and ditches of the earlier town have produced a large assemblage of animal bone comprising butchery waste (see attached summaries).

<http://www.northamptonstation.co.uk/northampton-station-dig-comes-to-an-end/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-northamptonshire-22857173>

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Focus on new discrete pieces of research.

There will be no continuous funding, although if the same applicant wants to apply for funding for work on the same site but a different piece of research, they may.

Each project should be for an achievable specific result that will help advance the understanding of the studies of castles.

Key types of work the Castle Studies Trust would fund:

- Site-based survey work (e.g. geophysical, architectural, topographical, -LiDAR)
- Scientific tests on objects/materials from a castle site (e.g. radiocarbon dating)
- Review of historical sources (as part of a project)
- Pieces of work, such as reconstruction drawings, which would help the public understanding of a castle site.

Focus will be on sites not managed by statutory bodies. Exceptions can be made for exceptionally interesting projects on statutory protected sites.

Project funding of up to £5,000 can be considered.

Funding is open to both individuals and groups/organisations. Individuals will have to provide details of a non-personal bank account to transfer funds (e.g. a sponsoring organisation).

The Castle Studies Trust is willing to fund and co-fund projects.

Funding for a project is for the set piece of work as laid out in the application form and signed contract, regardless of the number of hours/length of time it takes within a maximum time period (see below). No extra funds will be provided for completion of work.

All projects funded by the Castle Studies Trust to start within 10 weeks of the first tranche of funding being received.

Any permissions required to carry out the work (eg from the landowner) must have been obtained within the 10 week time frame.

The first tranche of funding is up to a maximum of 75% of grant awarded, with rest being paid on the delivery of the results of the research to a satisfactory standard (as deemed by expert assessor) i.e. ready for publication for publications such as peer reviewed journals.

Projects awarded grants will be monitored by one of the expert assessors in a form to be agreed.

All projects should be finished and written up to satisfactory standard ready for publication within nine months of first tranche of funds received. This can be extended in exceptional circumstances.

All results/reports on research to be freely available on the CST website. All applicants must be in a position to give permission to the Castle Studies Trust to be able to use the results of the research in any format.

All applicants must complete the application form (available at www.castlestudiestrust.org) and return it to the CST with two references.

Costs only specific to the carrying out the specific task can be included in the grant (e.g. travelling to and from site in question).

All successful applications will be required to account for the expenditure of the grant. Receipts and invoices to be provided as requested.

Deadline for applications is 15 December each year (or Friday before if date is on a weekend).



Northampton, Castle Station October 2012

A trial trench was excavated within the station forecourt car park to determine whether any remains of Northampton Castle still survived in this area, where the new station was to be built.

The station forecourt lay at the western end of the outer bailey of Northampton Castle, but most of the visible walls and earthworks were levelled in the late 19th century to make way for the railway station and goods yard.

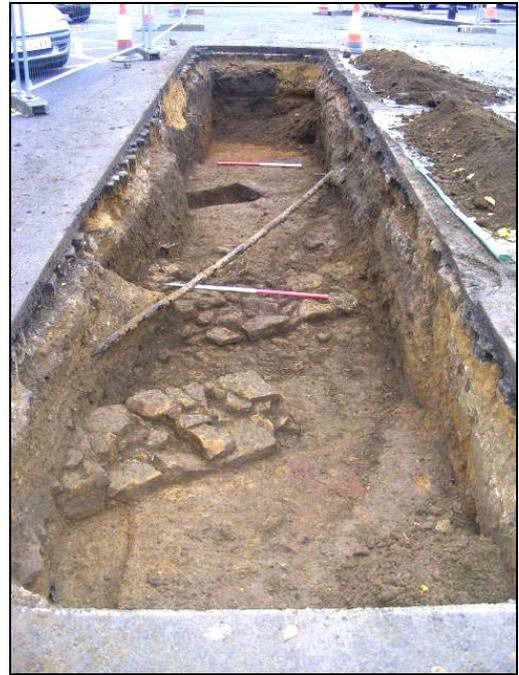


Under the modern tarmac we found the granite setts of the old station yard, which had been covered over in the 1960s (above).

The setts sat on undisturbed soil that had accumulated during recent centuries, when the interior of the ruined castle was an orchard.

Beneath the soils we found a length of ironstone wall (top right), and the pottery found beside it

dates to the 12th century, the first 100 years of the life of the castle.



Beneath the castle remains there was also a small pit. This was within the late Saxon town; part of which was cleared by the Normans for the building of the castle.

The evaluation attracted much media and local political attention (below) due to its location and the public interest in both the castle and the development of the new station.



A short history of Northampton Castle

It may have been at around 1100AD that Simon de Senlis, Earl of Northampton, had part of the Saxon town cleared to provide space for the building of an imposing castle to mark the dominant presence of the new Norman rulers.

The final form of the castle was the work of Henry I, in the early 12th century, and for most of its working life the castle was a royal possession. In 1164, in the reign of Henry II, it was the setting for the trial of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. For 200 years the castle was one of the seats of parliament, as the king moved around his kingdom. It also saw some action during the civil war in the 13th century, when the castle changed hands three times.

By the end of the 14th century royal visits were infrequent, and the main function of the castle was to provide a house for the court and a jail. By then parts of the castle were already in a poor state of repair, and with the restoration of the monarchy in 1662, the town and the castle walls were slighted as part of the punishment of the town for supporting Parliament during the Civil War against Charles I.

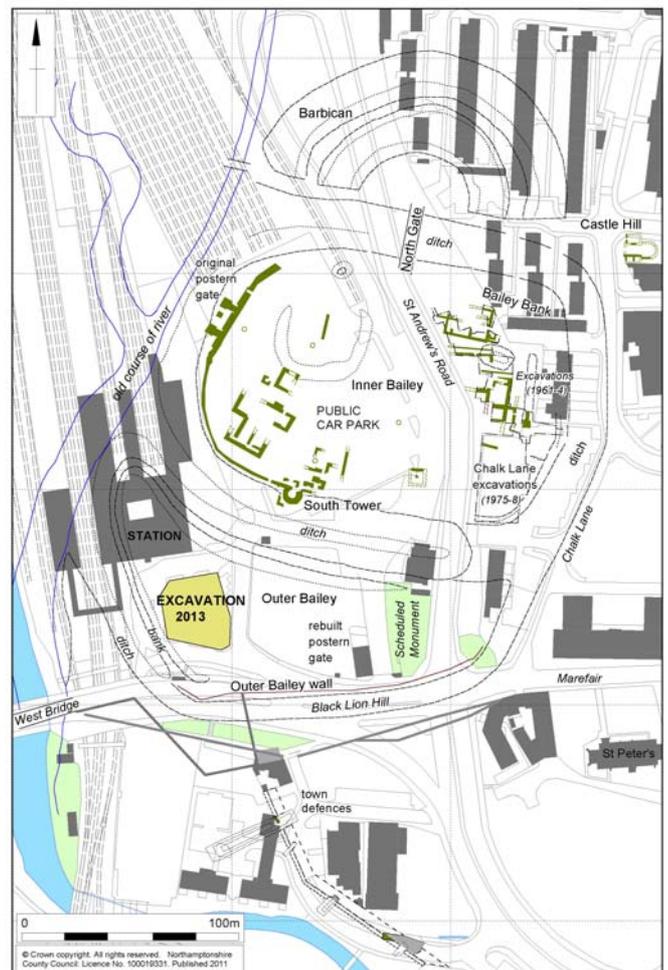
By the 19th century (below), the castle was a grassy ruin, with orchards within the interior, suitable for family picnics on a Sunday afternoon.



In 1879 virtually everything above ground was cleared, and the adjacent river diverted, to enable the building of a new station and goods yard (top right). The postern gate, seen in both photographs, was dismantled and rebuilt on the approach to the new station, where it still stands.



Fortunately, before the walls were levelled local historians made a basic record of the castle (below). We know that the main gate lay to the north protected by semi-circular ramparts, with all of the major buildings sited within the large inner bailey. To the south there was a small outer bailey, which stood above the approach to the west bridge. Excavations in the 1960s found the remains of the royal apartments of Henry III to the east of St Andrews Road.





Excavation at Northampton, Castle Station, March-June 2013



The trial trench had shown that remains of the castle survived beneath the forecourt car park. At the end of March, as the snow was clearing and before building work began, a larger area was opened so that the stone building could be fully explored (above).

Parts of all four walls had survived, with deep foundations to the west (below left) where the building was set against the clay rampart of the outer bailey bank. It was a small building, with narrow walls in rough ironstone. The sequence of three stone settings for hearths (top right), with much charcoal scattered across the clay floor, may suggest that it was a workshop.



Outside the building there were remnants of cobbled surfaces and fragmentary walls from a second building, close to a well pit.



Beneath the remains of the castle, there was a much reused boundary ditch of late Saxon date, perhaps separating properties in the Saxon town (below). There were also clusters of pits of various sizes.



The fills of the late Saxon pits and ditches all produced large quantities of animal bone, including cow, sheep, horse and dog. The bones are all from the extremities of the animals, including the head and feet, with examples of horn cores, foot bones and hooves quite common. The bones also have numerous cut marks on them. This will be an interesting group for study, as the bone appears to derive from a local butchery, where animal carcasses were being cut up and the waste dumped nearby.

However, there were some nicer objects, such as these pottery cresset lamps, with a shallow bowl to hold the oil and the wick, on top of a long stem (below).



And a small copper alloy brooch, only 23mm in diameter, with a carved geometric design (top right), that was found in the trial trench.

Much pottery was found among the demolition rubble of the stone building, along with a complete hone or sharpening stone, 125 mm long,



which was imported from Norway, and is perforated at one end so that it could be hung from a belt ready to sharpen the iron knife that most people then carried with them (below).



There is also a single medieval coin, a silver penny (below). This is in poor condition, but it dates to around the mid-12th century, the reign of either Stephen or Henry II, when the excavated building was in use. The edges have been illegally clipped to remove small amounts of silver.



The excavations in progress (below)

