



# NASNEWS

Newsletter of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society

Website: [www.northants-archaeology.org.uk](http://www.northants-archaeology.org.uk)



## March 2023

### NAS visit to Chester House Estate

NAS have been invited to visit the Chester House Estate on Tuesday, 4th July at 2.30pm.

We will be shown the ongoing excavations in the Orchard Garden, run by Chester House Estate in partnership with The University of Leicester. The excavations will take place from the middle/end June to early July and will involve local volunteers and students. If you want to volunteer you will need to visit the Chester House Estate website for details of how to apply.

There will also be a visit to the Archaeological Resource Centre (The ARC). NAS visited two years ago when it was just established - but a lot has changed since then! A notable quantity of archives from excavations undertaken from the 1960s to recent work have now been deposited, and are being catalogued and re-bagged and re-boxed

The Chester Farm venture itself is proving very popular. There are shops, a café, visitor centre and museum to look around, as well as walks around the Roman town and along the river Nene.

There is also ample free car parking.

To reserve a place on the visit, please email Rob Atkins at: [ratkins@mola.org.uk](mailto:ratkins@mola.org.uk) or phone 01604 264549

### NAS Subscriptions

A reminder of our new membership rates, as they slightly increased last year:

Individual:	£15.00
Family membership:	£18.00
Student or retired:	£12.00
Local Societies:	£18.00

This entitles the member/society to a single copy of the journal and copies of our newsletter, as well as supporting the existence of the society and the journal. New members get a bonus copy of the last journal on joining, as well as the next edition.

### The journal:

#### Northamptonshire Archaeology Volume 41, 2021

We printed 400 copies of the last journal, volume 41, *The Archaeology of Medieval Northampton*, and now have less than 100 left. Copies are, of course, still on sale either from us, order form on our website, and also at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

#### Volume 42, 2023

Editing of the next issue of the journal is progressing well but, as always, never as fast as you would like.

The realistic target is to have it published for the autumn season, and available by the NAS AGM at the latest.

## Sale of older journals

Once upon a time we had sold most of our backlog of older journals, leaving them only available in digital form, either from us or online with ADS (Archaeology Data Service), or from second-hand booksellers.

But over the past few years a couple of collections of back copies have been donated to the society, so we are now in the position to once again offer some of our back issues for sale.

There is a list of available copies below, and they will be sold on a first-come basis. To find out what they contain, so you can target particular articles of interest, a full index to the journal series is attached to the email along with this NASNEWS.

The old quarto format is available for £3.00 a copy, while the colour A4 issues from 2002 to 2019, are priced at £5.00, plus £2.99 p&p, although you can collect or, where possible within the county, we will try to deliver, especially any orders of multiple copies.

**All money brought in through the sale of older journals will go towards the purchase of the Bronze Age gold bracelet terminal for Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, see below.**

### Northamptonshire Archaeology: Available Issues

#### Year vol. number cost available

1973, <b>8</b> :	1 copy	£1.00
1974, <b>9</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
1975, <b>12</b> :	1 copy	£3.00
1978, <b>13</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
1979, <b>14</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
1980, <b>15</b> :	1 copy	£3.00
1982, <b>17</b> :	1 copy	£3.00
1983, <b>18</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
1984, <b>19</b> :	2 copies	£3.00

1989, <b>22</b> :	1 copy	£3.00
1991, <b>23</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
1994, <b>25</b> :	1 copy	£3.00
1995, <b>26</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
1997, <b>27</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2001, <b>29</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2002, <b>30</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2003, <b>31</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2004, <b>32</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2005, <b>33</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2006, <b>34</b> :	2 copies	£3.00
2008, <b>35</b> :	1 copy	£5.00
2010, <b>36</b> :	3 copies	£5.00
2012, <b>37</b> :	2 copies	£5.00
2015, <b>38</b> :	1 copy	£5.00
2017, <b>39</b> :	1 copy	£5.00
2019, <b>40</b> :	lots	£5.00
2021, <b>41</b> :	lots	£5.00

### Dennis Jackson:

**A Northamptonshire Archaeologist**  
3 copies £5.00

**Archaeology of Northamptonshire**  
1 copy £5.00

### Postage & packing

Journal 1973, 8	£1.50
Quarto & A4	£2.99

## Fundraising for Northampton Museum and Art Gallery Treasure Act Purchase

We were recently approached by Northampton Museum & Art Gallery to see if the society might be willing to underwrite the purchase of a **Bronze Age gold bracelet terminal**, recovered through metal detecting, which is due to go on sale following a Treasure Act valuation.

The reason why the museum approached NAS is that a backlog of finds falling under the Treasure Act developed during the Covid years. This year they are catching up with this backlog, so an unusually large number of finds from the county will be coming out of the system

this year; more than the museum purchase budget, and available external grants, can cope with.



This particular object is incomplete and undecorated, and is not likely to attract grant support from other bodies the museum can approach for grants, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum. But it will form an important addition to the museums limited Bronze Age collection. Otherwise, it is likely to be bought by a private collector and be lost to the public. It is likely to feature in a future display of the Bronze Age collection.

NAS has therefore decided that underwriting this purchase is something that we can afford to do to help the museum in its long-term strategy of acquiring relevant objects for its collections.

The £900.00 required will come from the society reserves, as we do hold a total of a little over £30,000.00 in the NAS accounts

**We would also like to open this up to our members. If any of our members would like to donate towards this purchase, it will leave more money in our reserves. Any donations are welcome, with cheques**

**made out to Northants Archaeological Society to be sent to NAS, c/o Andy Chapman, 4 Oat Hill Drive, Northampton, NN3 5AL. Please attach a note to make it clear that you are donating to this find purchase. In addition, as already noted above, all monies coming from the sale of old issues of the journal will also help towards the purchase.**

### **NASNEWS Digital archive**

For some time, we have working towards scanning all of the available past copies of NAS newsletters to pdf format, to create as near a complete digital archive as possible, although there are probably a few missing issues from the earlier years.

The earliest issue we have was issued in April 1978, and we have a total of 112 issues up to the end of 2022.

If anyone is interested in browsing through the past of both the society and archaeology in Northamptonshire, as recorded in the pages of our newsletters, please email me and I can WeTransfer you a copy of the digital archive.

Email Andy Chapman  
(NAS196674@gmail.com)

### **NAS Chair celebrates a new book**

After many months of anticipation, the beginning of March saw the publication of a new book on Hellenistic and Roman Crete for which our Chair, Michael J Curtis, was one of the joint editors. *Change and Transition on Crete. Interpreting the Evidence from the Hellenistic through to the Early Byzantine Period. Papers Presented in Honour of G.W.M. Harrison*, is published by Archaeopress.





It follows on from the First International Conference of the Colloquium on Roman Crete, that was held at the University of Nottingham in 2016, and which was also founded by Michael. In his research capacity, Michael has been active in promoting the study of Hellenistic and Roman Crete since the mid-1990s. and is field director of a Greek-led international project that has been investigating the Greek and Roman harbours at Ierapetra in Eastern Crete.

The news of this publication was quickly followed by the announcement that Michael and his joint editor, Jane E. Francis, from Concordia University, Montreal, are to be the editors of a new book series to be published by Oxbow Books, entitled *Cretan Studies: New Approaches and Perspectives in the Study of Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Crete*. The first volume in this new series is expected to be published in spring 2024.

## Adult Learning Course on Monasteries in the Landscape

The summer programme for Northants Adult Learning Services has a new course that may of interest to NAS members. Entitled 'Monasteries in the Landscape', the course discusses monasteries from the perspective of their influence on the landscape, beginning with early medieval monasteries and moving on to consider the abbeys and priories of later medieval Britain, looking into their locations and the estate lands that they acquired and managed. The course will consider the Dissolution and the dismantlement of the monastic landholdings as these were acquired by private owners and adapted for other uses over time.

The course, tutored by the NAS Chair, Michael J Curtis, is made up of four evening online zoom sessions on Wednesday evenings, commencing on the 19th April. More information can be found on the Northants Adult Learning website:

<https://courses.northantsglobal.net/CourseDetailsView.asp?CODE=UZZ3BA57&NAME=Monasteries+in+the+Landscape&ID1=2600&ID2=35265&ID3=1>

## Andy Chapman lecture tour

I have just finished my spring lecture season visiting local societies around the county to deliver a range of presentations, and meeting many interesting and friendly people on the way. And I've also managed to sell quite a few journals as well.

For those of our members who also belong to local societies, there is a list below of the presentations I have on offer. I'm open for bookings for this autumn and next

year. Please pass my details on to your local society meetings secretary. I also appear on the Heritage Forum list of speakers.

Fifty years of Archaeology (largely) in Northamptonshire (an overview of my 50 years as an archaeologist)

Prehistoric Northamptonshire  
(Neolithic & Bronze Age monuments)

Iron Age Northamptonshire  
(Iron Age settlements and crafts)

Northampton before the Castle (Anglo-Saxon Northampton)

In Search of Northampton Castle  
(what we know of the lost Royal castle)

St James' Abbey, N'pton, and its cemetery (The Express Lifts site 1999-2001)

The late Saxon origins of the medieval village (the excavations of the late Saxon and medieval sites at Raunds, Furnells and West Cotton)

In Search of T-rex in the Badlands of Montana (an excursion to Montana, USA to prospect for and dig up some dinosaur bones)

Late Saxon and medieval Northampton: a walking tour of the sites of the Late Anglo-Saxon 'Palaces', the medieval town defences, and the site of Northampton Castle

### **Reviewing the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age in the East Midlands Saturday, 13th May 2023**

**Ashby School, Nottingham Road,  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire  
LE65 1DT**

The spring conference of CBA South Midlands is a joint meeting with CBA East Midlands. The programme for **Reviewing the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age of the East Midlands**, is available on the CBA East Midlands website:

<https://cbaem.archaeologyuk.org/cba-em%20events.htm>).

There's a great line-up of speakers, who will be discussing some of the key pieces of research over the last 15 years into the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age of the East Midlands.

Tickets are £20, including lunch - and only £10 for anyone in full-time education. Bookings close on Monday 8th May 2023. There are two ways to book: either following the Eventbrite link from CBA South Midlands page to book or fill in the online booking slip.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/reviewing-the-late-bronze-and-iron-age-in-the-east-midlands-tickets-564692700067>

### **Roman Finds Group conference**

The Spring 2023 Roman Finds Group conference is focussing on New Research and Finds from the Roman Midlands and Beyond. It will take place at the University of Nottingham and its Museum on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd April. It will also be accessible by Zoom to those who register.

Details for registration, including the programme of talks, are on Roman Finds Group website:

<https://www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk/events/59/2023+RFG+Spring+Meeting%3A++New+Research+on+Finds+from+the+Roman+Midlands+and+Beyond>



## Stanwick Lakes round barrow, Iron Age 'village' and log boat projects

As I was assembling this NASNEWS on Monday, I came across coverage of Stanwick Lakes on the BBC online local news, which some of you may have seen (below).

### Stanwick Lakes: Bronze Age barrow freed from decades of brambles

5 hours ago



Unfortunately, as I have written on the NAS Facebook page, *'this article is a complete dog's breakfast of misinformation and errors. The marker stone, as it appears in the photo [above], has been there for some 10 years, so anyone who could read has been aware of the presence of the round barrow, and there is also a leaflet associated with the heritage walks that I have been doing there for the past 20 years. It has also been under grass, sometimes a little long, and not hidden by brambles. The article also manages to leave the impression that it is simultaneously intact, but has also produced grave goods from burials, which are, of course, actually from other barrows in the area that were excavated in the 1980s. It is also not the only barrow in Northants accessible by footpath, as there are the Woodford [three hills] barrows just a few miles up the road. Apart from that, it's a great article!!!!'*

At least the confusion over where the finds came from has since been corrected.

What has actually happened at Stanwick Lakes is that the protective bund that had encircled the round barrow since the mid-1980s, when it was an active gravel quarry, has been removed. Much of the undergrowth and tree canopy alongside the adjacent old railway embankment and the drainage ditch was removed last year, below. So now the barrow can be more readily appreciated, and there will be an encircling footpath and public information boards, to highlight the barrow and the Bronze Age in general.



The barrow from the old railway embankment, when work on removing the surrounding quarry bund had just started



Looking south, with the surrounding quarry bund removed, to provide a clearer view of the round barrow mound

Work on a second and larger replica roundhouse is also underway, with the aim of creating a small Iron Age settlement as a focus for activities, below.



The new replica Iron Age roundhouse in its early stages of construction

They are also in the planning stage for the creation of a log boat, aided by the well-known reenactor and flintknapper, James Dilley.

### **A Heritage Gateway for Northampton**

A few weeks ago, I circulated information to members by email and through the Facebook page, and also circulated by the Friends of St Peter's Church, about the pdf copies of a set of Information Boards issued by West Northamptonshire Council. These were to inform the public consultation about the proposed Heritage Gateway, which basically entails turning the Chalk Lane car park and the adjacent grassed area of Northampton Castles inner bailey into a heritage-themed park and playground.

My point of interest was that on two of these boards there was an outline plan of the castle that was correct in detail but, unfortunately, had been overlaid onto the modern street plan at the wrong scale, so they had managed to shrink the castle considerably.

The eastern defences ran up to Chalk Lane, as they should, but to both the north and south the castle stopped well short of

where it should be. To the west there would have been a marked mismatch with St Andrew's Road and the station, but these had all been omitted from the figures, so it didn't show.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to make a meeting with the planning team on the Wednesday, having only received a belated invitation on the Monday. But hopefully, they will check their information in future, and hopefully they will also abandon the idea of installing playground equipment on the surviving length of the bailey bank. But who knows what they might actually do?

### **Something out of county: The other Colchester**

Pat and I spent a very enjoyable week exploring Colchester in early March, and we wish to draw attention to some of its lesser-known heritage assets. It is, of course, most well-known for its Roman heritage, with long lengths of the town walls still standing, including the famous Balcerne Gate. Then there is the Castle Museum, within the Norman keep which sits on the Roman Vaults, the foundations of the Temple of Claudius, as besieged and stormed by Boudica and Co in the, almost successful, rebellion of 60-61AD. The museum is worth a visit, despite the steep fee of £11.95, with no pensioner discount and, even worse, no café! Although there is no shortage of places to eat around the town.

Perhaps less well known, and less visited, is the site of the Roman Circus, which lies outside the town, partly under the former modern Garrison, now converted to housing. There is a visitor centre on the ground floor of the old NAAFI building, while upstairs is the headquarters of

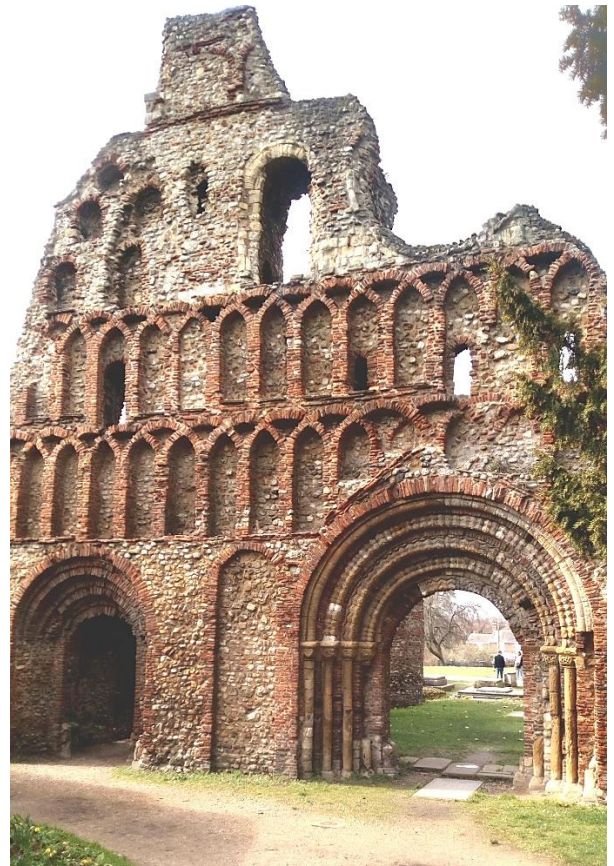


Colchester Archaeological Trust. The museum is run by a friendly team of CAT volunteers, and there is a café that includes home-baked cakes and scones, and all for an entry fee of £3.00 (£6.00 including a guided tour).



*The late Saxon tower of Holy Trinity church, with blind arcading on the upper storey in Roman tile, similar to the Earls Barton tower*

Within the town itself there is a wealth of medieval buildings: the late Saxon tower of Holy Trinity church, with its triangular-headed west door; St Botolph's Augustinian Priory ruins, including the stunning west front; and numerous timber-framed houses, particularly in the Dutch Quarter, adjacent to the castle and its park, with many flaunting their timberwork and others hiding it behind later frontages.



*The west front of St Botolph's Priory church, with blind arcading in re-used Roman tiles*



*The Landmark Trust, Peake's House, where we were staying for the week*



And make sure you have a meal in Timperley's café and restaurant, the largest and most spectacular of the timber-framed buildings, named after John Timperley, the steward for the Duke of Norfolk's local properties in the 1500s, and later residence of William Gilbert, physician to Elizabeth I and the scientist who coined the term 'electricity'.

There is even a striking modern art gallery and studio cinema.

### Greensted, Essex: the only Saxon timber church

Ever since the excavation of the late Saxon church and cemetery at Raunds, Furnells in the 1970s, Greensted church, the only surviving pre-Conquest timber-walled church, has been on the visiting wish-list. A week at Colchester provided the perfect opportunity to drop in at Greensted on the way home, unfortunately in the rain. It is a delightful small church, with a brick-built Tudor chancel and a modern weatherboarded tower.



Between them, the nave still retains its late Saxon stave-built walls, with massive split oak trunks set vertically edge-to-edge, with the rounded surfaces on the outside and the flat surfaces on the inside. Dendrochronology has indicated a date no earlier than 1060AD, the date of the latest surviving tree ring, while excavation

has shown the presence of two earlier timber churches.

Originally the uprights were morticed into a timber sill, but in the 19th century the walls were reset onto a modern timber sill and a brick plinth, and the roof timbers and tiled roof all date to this restoration. While they are impressive to see, the dark brown-black uprights are quite difficult to photograph due to the extreme contrast with the surrounding parts of the building



The low roof creates quite a different atmosphere inside to the normal cavernous church roof spaces, and it is all beautifully looked after. They are also well equipped to cater for visitors, with a guide book, postcards, fridge magnets, key rings, tea-towels, pens and pencils, rubbers, etc, and a range of jams and chutneys. And there is even a card reader to take your payment. Greensted is a little off the A414, Chelmsford Road, take the Chipping Ongar turn. For an historic contrast, Greensted could be combined with a visit to the nearby Kelvedon Hatch Nuclear bunker.

### AND FINALLY.....

Any items for the next NAS NEWS or our Facebook page contact: Andy Chapman

NAS Secretary and Journal editor

NAS email: [NAS196674@gmail.com](mailto:NAS196674@gmail.com) or

Rob Atkins, email [ratkins@mola.org.uk](mailto:ratkins@mola.org.uk)

Friends of All Saints' Brixworth—Charity Number 1168452

Presents a talk given by

**Michael J Curtis BA (Hons), MA.**  
**'Chair of Northamptonshire Archaeological Society'**

**“A Transitioning Landscape:  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE IN THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY  
OF THE  
CATUVELLAUNI TRIBE”**

**Saturday 3rd June  
at 11.30am**

**Brixworth Church NN6 9BZ**



*In the aftermath of the Roman conquest of Britain, the Catuvellauni, a tribe that had originally established its heartland in Hertfordshire and Essex, became more prominent and expanded its territory to encompass most of Northamptonshire. The expansion was linked to the establishment of an administrative region, with its centre at Verulamium. This talk explores the impact of this in this northern part of the region and the changes that took place in the tribal landscape of the late Iron Age as the impact of Roman governance began to take hold.*

**By Ticket only: £10.00 - buffet lunch included**

**Contact: 01604 880941**

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