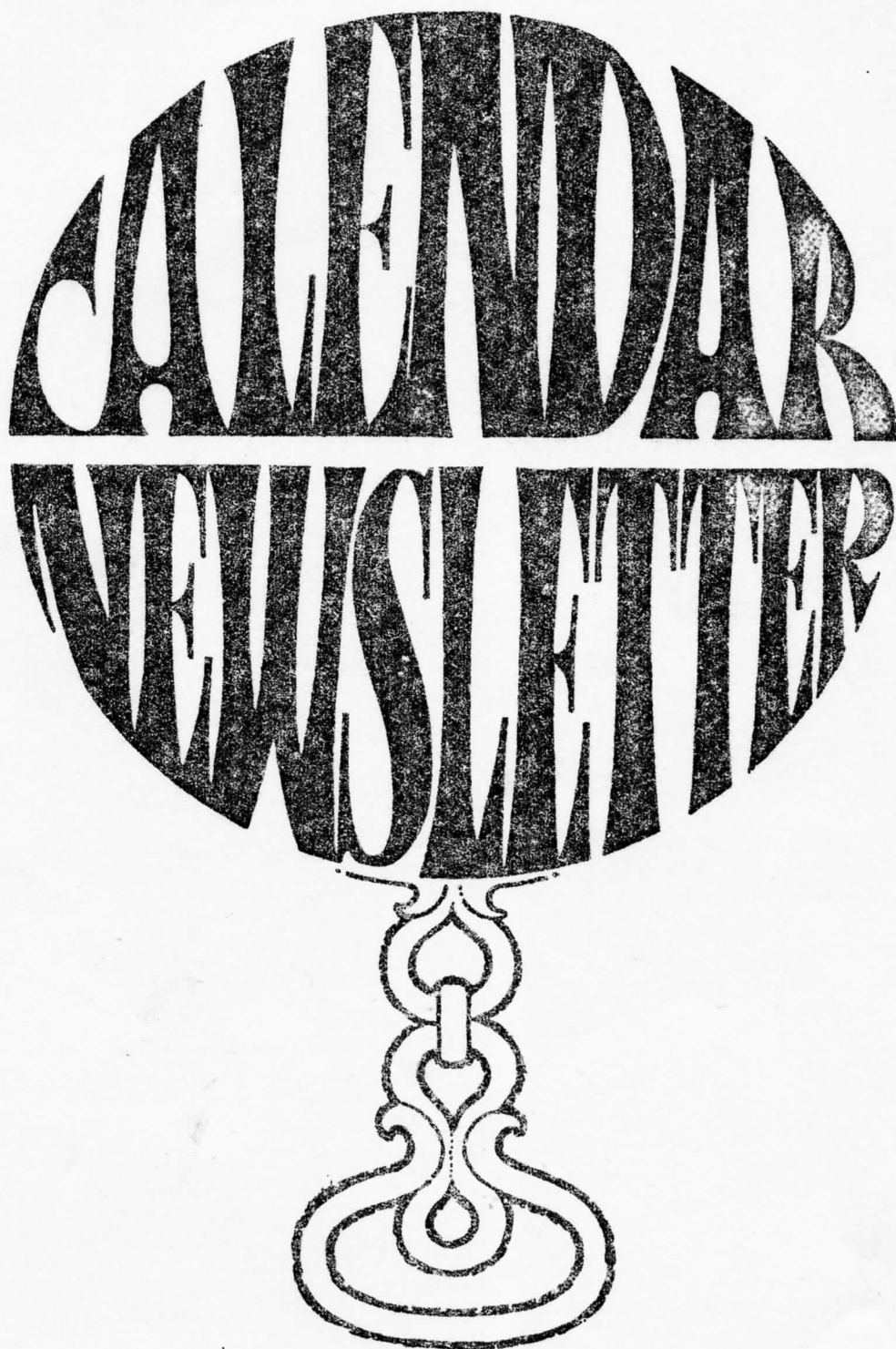


Northamptonshire Archaeological Society



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Calendar/Newsletter April - October 1978

CALENDAR/NEWSLETTER

This issue includes notes on the various archaeological projects in hand in the county. There is also an article by Brian Giggins of the Northamptonshire Buildings Research Group (a sub-group of the NAS) which reminds us that concern for our historical heritage must not stop at ground level, even for archaeologists, when so much valuable information is being lost through neglect, decay and lack of funds.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

We look forward to the last meeting of this year's programme on Saturday 6 May (2.00pm, Kettering Boys School), the annual reports meeting when members take the opportunity of telling us about their own work whether it is excavation, fieldwork, or building recording. The programme for 1978-9 is in preparation and includes well-known speakers such as Professor Sheppard Frere who will be talking about the excavations at Longthorpe, the site of a Roman legionary fortress.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Preceding the reports meeting on 6 May (2.00pm, Kettering Boys School) the Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place. The success of the Society depends on an active membership and the best way to put forward your criticisms and suggestions is to come to the AGM, or even better to stand for election to the Council of the Society (c.f. enclosed letter).

ESSAY COMPETITION

After the encouraging response to last year's essay competition for children, another competition is being organised for this summer.

COACH TRIP

This year's coach trip is to take place on 9 September and we shall be going to Colchester, where we shall have a guided tour of the museum. Thereafter, the party will split in two with the choice of seeing either the excavations or historic buildings in the town. Cost £3.00 (c.f. enclosed leaflet).

THE JOURNAL

The next volume of Northamptonshire Archaeology is in preparation and will be available in the autumn. It includes reports on excavations carried out on the site of the Northampton Greyfriars, a report on an old excavation on a villa site at Mileoak near Towcester, and on the prehistoric site at Fengate, as well as reports on survey work at Staverton churchyard and in the parish of Great Billing and an article on Roman architectural stonework from the county. The journal is a bargain at the present subscription rates, so don't forget to renew your subscription in September!

DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

Excavations, Post Excavation Work, Fieldwork

Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Unit. Excavations at Raunds on medieval and Saxon site. Volunteers needed for weekdays and weekends. Also post-excavation work on finds processing, volunteers required. Contact Mr A Hannan, County Archaeologist, County Hall, Northampton. Tel. Northampton 34833.

Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit. Volunteers needed for finds processing. Anyone interested in helping in research into the historical documents relating to Northampton should contact the Unit. Contact Mr J H Williams, Chief Archaeologist, N.D.C., Cliftonville House, Bedford Road, Northampton.

Northampton Museum. Help required in finds processing and cataloguing. Contact Mr W R G Moore, Keeper of Archaeology, Northampton Museum, Guildhall Road, Northampton.

Westfield Museum, Kettering. Help required in finds processing and cataloguing. Contact Mr F Lyall, Curator, Westfield Museum, West Street, Kettering.

Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Excavations at Quinton, most Sundays; other fieldwork on occasional Saturdays. Four-day study tour of Kent, in September, to be arranged. Contact Mr/Mrs Friendship Taylor, 8 Pinetrees Close, Hackleton, Northants.

CALENDAR

Saturday-Sunday 1-2 April. CBA Group 9 Regional Conference. The Archaeology of the South Midlands in 1977. Rewley House, Wellington Square, Oxford.

Monday 24 April. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. Mr G Osborne, 'History of Olney'. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Sunday 30 April - Monday 1 May. Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Unit Open Day.

Saturday 6 May. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY joint meeting with Kettering Boys School Archaeological Group. AGM followed by 'Archaeology in Northamptonshire 1977-8', a members reports meeting with accounts of fieldwork, excavation and building recording in the county in the past year. Kettering Boys School, 2.00pm.

Sunday 7 May. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Afternoon. Deserted village of Walton Grounds, Rainsborough Camp etc.

Tuesday 9 May. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening. Villages of Wollaston and Strixton.

Tuesday 16 May. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening. Medieval Northampton.

Saturday 20 May. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Annual Field Visit by coach to Dover, and Canterbury Cathedrals and Maison Dieu Museum at Ospringe, Faversham. Contact Mr/Mrs Friendship Taylor, 8 Pinetrees Close, Hackleton, Northants.

Monday 22 May. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society.
Mr P Woodfield, 'Vernacular Architecture'. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road,
Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Tuesday 23 May. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening.
Hunsbury Hill, Ironstone Railway Trust and Museum.

Friday 26 May. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Christopher Taylor,
'Fields'. University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.
Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk". Evening. Brixworth - Ironstone
Railway, Romano-British Villa, church.

Thursday 1 June. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening.
Medieval Daventry.

Sunday 4 June. Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit Open Day.
Briar Hill excavations, 10.00am-5.00pm (c.f. below).

Sunday 11 June. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Afternoon.
Historic buildings of Kettering.

Monday 26 June. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. Andrew
Boddington, 'Raunds Excavation'. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough.
7.30pm.

Tuesday 27 June. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening.
Villages of Wollaston and Strixton.

Wednesday 28 June. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening.
Northampton - All Saints conservation area.

Friday 30 June (date to be confirmed). Upper Nene Archaeological Society.
Marion Archibald, 'Medieval Coin Forgeries'. University Centre, Barrack Road,
Northampton. 8.00pm.

Thursday 6 July. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening.
Hunsbury Hill, Ironstone Railway Trust and Museum.

Sunday 9 July. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Afternoon.
Duston village and church.

Tuesday 11 July. Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walk*. Evening.
Preston Deanery, church and medieval earthworks.

Saturday 15 July. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Car visit to Avoncroft
Museum of Buildings. Contact Mr/Mrs Friendship Taylor (c.f. 20 May).

Saturday 9 September. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY. Coach trip to
Colchester - museum, excavations, historic buildings. Cost £3.00. Contact
Mr/Mrs Friendship Taylor (c.f. 20 May).

Monday 25 September. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society AGM.
'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Friday 29 September. Upper Nene Archaeological Society AGM. Speaker to be
announced. University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Friday 27 October. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Speaker to be announced.
University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Monday 30 October. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. Mr S Upex, 'Ashton Excavation'. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Monday 27 November. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society Open Night. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

* Northamptonshire County Council Guided Walks. Full details of these and other walks are available in a booklet from all libraries.

NEWS

Visit to Tewkesbury, Deerhurst and Hailes, October 1977

On Saturday 8 October a party of 51 members of the NAS and its affiliated societies visited Gloucestershire. The first call was at Tewkesbury Abbey where we were met by Alan Hannan, formerly the archaeologist for Tewkesbury and now with the Northamptonshire County Council and on the committee of the NAS. In some respects this first visit was a follow-up to the lecture he gave to the Northants. Natural History Society earlier in the year in which he described the growth of Tewkesbury and having heard this excellent talk it was very pleasant to be able to stand in the sun in the Abbey precincts and actually have some of the features of this unique town and its surroundings pointed out.

John Hopkins, the Master Mason of the Abbey, then took charge and for the next hour we had a fascinating tour of the Abbey with a scholarly and often humorous commentary. We were shown many details the casual visitor would miss; whether the Duke of Clarence was ever actually drowned in a butt of malmsey perhaps we shall never know but many of us descended into a tiny vault behind the high altar to see by candlelight the skulls and bones of him and his wife (I wonder whether Alfred's cakes are still preserved somewhere - perhaps in a deserted station tea-room?).

Then on to Deerhurst where again Alan Hannan took over and gave us an extremely informative account of this almost unique Saxon church which has so many parallels with Brixworth. The pouring rain and an ominous flood level post in the lane did not deter us from popping into the nearby Odda's Chapel, also Saxon.

On the way home we called at Hailes Abbey and in spite of the rain explored the ruins and found the site of the famous shrine where the phial of the "Blood of Hailes" was kept and venerated until the Dissolution. We included the small museum and also the adjoining church with its incredible wall paintings; perhaps it is unfair to say that by now the nearby farm shop with its apples and nuts was a greater attraction for some!

Altogether an excellent day and many thanks to the organisers, Diana and Roy Friendship Taylor and Alan Hannan.

J H Thornton

Northampton Museums Education and Extension Services, and Children's Museum Club

Northampton Museums have an Education Service which, like other Museums Education Services throughout the country, helps to make museum collections and ideas more readily available. Its customers are schools and colleges, pupils, teachers and parents. Part of its work involves a Loan Collection which can supply museum material for displays - not only in schools and colleges but also for ordinary public viewing where general information about museum specimens and activities is wanted; this material is meant not only to be seen but also to be handled.

Where archaeology is concerned, the Loan Collection has specimens which, though not numerous, can represent a fair range of prehistoric and Roman topics, and it is surprising to find how successful they can be in conveying, even to very young children, an idea of the look and - especially - the feel of, say, a flint axehead or an Iron Age pot. Whatever form a school's historical studies may take, they will usually include at some stage a topic that can be linked to museum collections: most younger children will spend a few weeks on a project on fossils, or early man, or what they tend to think of as The Stone Age, and once they have got over the Museum's lack of a reconstructed stegosaurus, or the absence of a single cave, even an unpainted one, from the Northamptonshire landscape, they will settle happily to a museum visit in which they can handle items, do worksheets and have a talk or a discussion, rather than just look through glass at static displays. Some get quite involved in local prehistory, whether just by spotting the flint axehead that was found in their village, or by seeing the 6 inch maps and archaeological records that will prove to them that their village, their school, sometime even their garden can be found on a map and may have yielded up some archaeological item now in the Museum.

Full-scale projects are therefore best helped by as many of the Education Service's resources as possible. The teacher can borrow, say, a display of Romano-British pottery for a few weeks and also bring a group of children in in school time to look at the specimens that cannot be lent. If arrangements are made in good time, the children can do worksheets, have a talk, draw, photograph and tape-record their own reactions and commentaries while in the Museum; they can buy postcards and other publications, and they often finish by putting on a display in the school and perhaps inviting the Keeper of Education to come out and see it. A prospectus like this is feasible even where something less substantial than the Museum's Romano-British displays are concerned; and the attraction of holding a genuine Stone Age axe or working out exactly what was used to make the patterns on a Bronze Age urn can still hold its own with the resources of a whole Schools Television series.

In these time of costly fuel and urban dispersal, not as many schools as before can organise group visits, but information can still be provided. Teachers can get in touch and discuss what the Museums can do for them, and can also make appointments for children and students to come in, in their own time, to work on topics in the Museums and see the Keeper for information while they are there.

For almost two years the Museums have also had a children's Museum Club. It meets on Wednesdays during term, and membership costs a mere 10p per term. Meetings start at 4.30; they are held in either Museum, and sometimes visits to outdoor sites can be made in the summer. Sessions are to do with museum items or topics in their widest sense, and are taken by children themselves, by Museum staff or by others who generously give up a short time to talk about and show films, slides, or specimens from their own collections. People to take new sessions are always in demand.

And of course there is the child as a person. People call at the Museums quite a lot with enquiries about objects they have seen or found or heard about, and some of these people are children. It is important that children should think of the Museums as places where their enquiries will be welcomed and treated as seriously as those of adults; quite often children find things and investigate minor sites - one Museum Club member is very interested just now in a small Victorian rubbish dump and has found a number of bottles and clay pipe fragments - and any archaeologist will recognise this kind of unaffected interest in exploration and discovery. An unthinking response from an adult can wreck a child's enthusiasm by hinting that grown-ups don't grub about in

rubbish dumps or collect miscellaneous finds; a museum is one of the places where a child can find out that after all it does have the right idea.

S L Davies
Keeper of Education and Extension Services
Northampton Museums

A Handbook of the Museums Education Service is available from the Central Museum, Guildhall Road, Northampton.

Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Unit : Raunds

The excavation is continuing to uncover the foundations and walls of a Manor House and associated dovecote, both of which were probably demolished in the late thirteenth and early fourteen century, constructed of oolite limestone. This building was 29m. long and 7m. wide and in its latest phase was divided into a possible parlour or solar at the east end, a ground floor hall in the middle, with a central hearth and a service wing at the west end. There is evidence of a triple doorway at the west end leading to the service wing. This service wing forms an L-shape and is divided into a number of rooms though these have not as yet been completely exposed: the north side butts onto the dovecote. The dovecote is 9m. in diameter and forms an impressive circular structure constructed with a wall 1.3m. thick, and a narrow entrance on the west side.

Robbing of only the outside of the hall walls and those of the earlier phases of the parlour suggests that the walls were finished in fine masonry; the service wing, however, was constructed entirely with rough-hewn stone. In its very latest phases the interior of the hall was used perhaps as an animal pen, as evidenced by a rough pitched stone surface which sealed the central hearth. However, the east end of the buildings must have been demolished before this as there is no evidence of erosion of the latest Manor floor.

Some ten graves of possible Saxon date have been revealed to date in the east part of the excavation area and these appear to be associated with a Saxon Church, the most likely location for which is beneath the east end of the Manor. It is not clear whether the earlier, and as yet undated, building shown on the plan represents the Church or an early phase of the Manor.

The excavation will now continue until the end of September and volunteers are welcome during the week and at weekends. The site will normally work all weekends, though it may not be possible to work the occasional Saturday. Further information from Archaeological Unit, County Hall, Northampton. Tel. Northampton 34833 Ext.5235/6, or from Andy Boddington on site.

Visitors are welcome and guided tours are being arranged on two open days to be held on 30 April and 1 May. First tours begin at 10.00am, last tour 4.30pm.

A Boddington

Staverton, St Mary's Church

In August 1977 the County Archaeological Unit, at the request of the Archdeacon of Northampton, carried out a survey of the graveyard at Staverton.

The survey by the Unit commenced after approximately 20 stones had been moved to the north-east corner of the graveyard. The aim of the survey was:

- (i) to prepare a detailed and accurate plan of the graveyard at scale 1:100, recording the position of those stones which were in-situ.

- (ii) to prepare an inventory of all the grave stones in the yard whether in-situ or otherwise.

This inventory includes a record of the inscription, detailed measurement and photographs. A serial number has been allocated to each stone to aid in cross referencing to the plan. The results, and implications, of the survey will be published in Northamptonshire Archaeology 1978.

A Hannan

Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit

The Town

Excavation has been continuing on the Chalk Lane site and should be complete by the end of June. The Late Saxon features include timber post-built structures, Grubenhauser, pits, a yard area and cultivated ground. Below there has been a substantial build-up of Early/Middle Saxon levels in places c. 1m. deep with quite considerable quantities of pottery but structures have been very difficult to identify. Cutting the "natural" was a series of gullies apparently of Neolithic date and there has been a large flint scatter over the whole of the site. Further excavation in Northampton is expected to start in October.

Recently we have been trying to do more work on the documentary sources in the hope of a closer tie-up between the archaeological remains and historical records. Results have been most promising and any offers of assistance would be gratefully received.

J H Williams

Briar Hill, Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure, March 1976 - March 1977

During the past year the excavation of the western half of the inner enclosure has been completed. The spiral arm of the inner ditch which bounds this proved along most of its length to consist of short relatively shallow segments, and a possible entrance on the NW side was flanked by shallow pits rich in finds of Neolithic pottery and flints. Within the enclosure the most remarkable discovery was that of the foundation slots of a small but substantial rectangular timber structure which is probably late Neolithic in date.

We have just received the first C¹⁴ determinations from the site. A sample from the lower fill of one of the outer ditch segments has given a radiocarbon date (uncorrected) of 3480 ± 110bc, the earliest so far obtained for any Neolithic causewayed enclosure.

The excavation will be completed in June of this year and there will be an Open Day on Sunday 4 June (10.00am-5.00pm) with guided tours and a display demonstrating the overall results of the five year project.

H M Bamford

Hazelrigg House and Welsh House, Northampton

After several years of decay the area to the east of St Peter's Church in Marefair recently received the last rites and, apart from Hazelrigg House and the buildings adjacent, has been bulldozed into obscurity. Although of no great loss architecturally the demolition has left Hazelrigg and the adjoining buildings as a small island on a building site for which no scheme has yet been finalised.

During the same period Hazelrigg was being restored with the assistance of grants from both Borough Council and the County Council. Unfortunately since then the architects who own the property have moved from the building and put it on the market. If an occupier is not found shortly vandalism will probably occur and the building will undoubtedly deteriorate.

Shortly before the historian Baker acquired the property in the early nineteenth century, the building was similarly empty for a few years and much damage was done by the light fingered members of the community. It was probably this damage that necessitated the end section of the building to be partly demolished and converted into two separate houses.

The length of this demolished section has in the past raised questions as to the original building's precise length and appearance, even though Sir Henry Dryden nearly a century ago accurately stated how much further it extended. The demolition of nos. 27 and 29 Marefair confirmed his statements as the party wall between these buildings was found to be the original gable wall of Hazelrigg. In its original form the building was approximately 90 ft. long, a considerable length for a town house of any period.

One very interesting fragment of the original building was noticed in no. 31 Marefair which is adjacent to Hazelrigg on the east side and originally formed part of it. This building is rendered and apart from the thickness of the front wall appears definitely Victorian. However, the ground floor ceiling plasterwork masks an in-situ early sixteenth century ceiling with heavily moulded beams and common rafters with chamfers and chamfer stops. A drawing of this in its original appearance accompanies this article.

Although this ceiling is under no threat from demolition it is doubtful whether it will survive as this building has been unoccupied for some time and severe roof leaks are causing considerable damage. The structure is very dangerous and nobody is advised to enter the building.

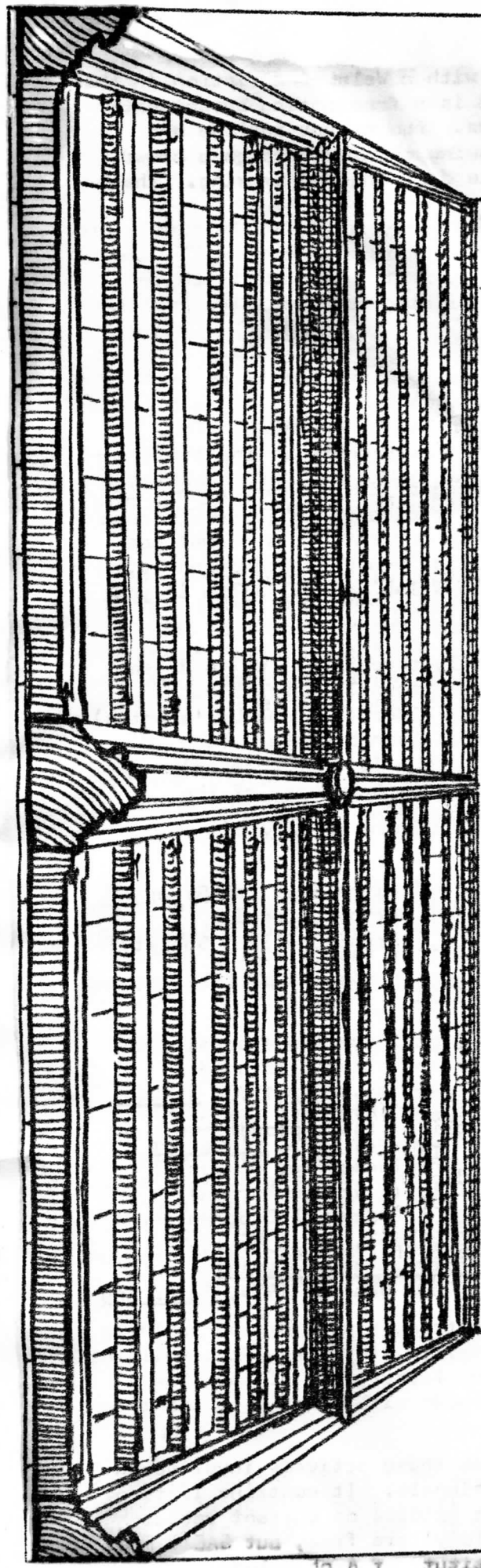
The roof trusses of Hazelrigg are of a similar date to the ceiling mentioned and so it can be confidently stated that Hazelrigg was first built during the reign of Henry VIII. The present gables and windows date from the following century but the stonework of these is not original having been almost completely renewed over the last hundred years.

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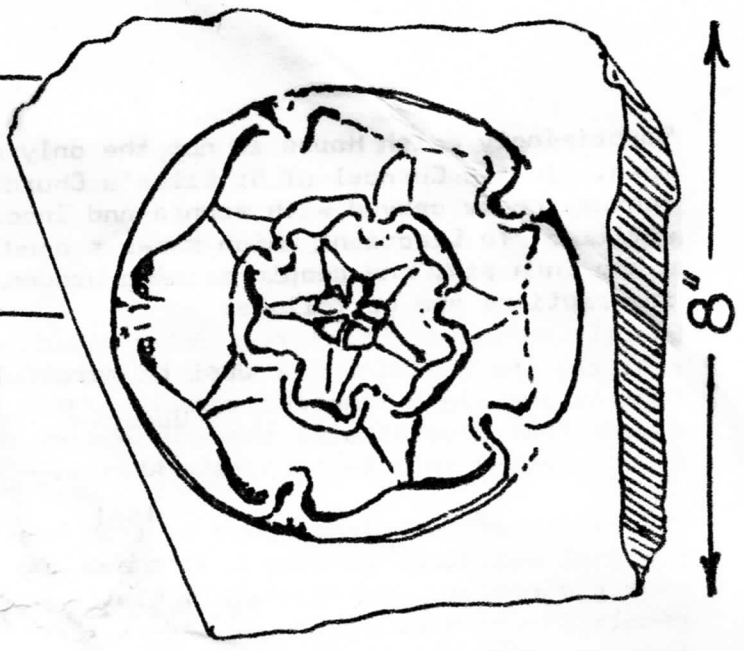
No building in the County over recent years has been discussed or argued over quite as much as Welsh House, Northampton. The replica stands proudly in the corner of the Market square reflecting its former, although not quite accurate, appearance. Of the original there are a few heraldic shields, one dubious wyvern (dragon) and several balusters of a fine staircase left. It would have been hoped that the architects, the Royal Commission or a local body would have prepared a plan of its final delapidated state. Regretfully nobody did. The only plan now known to be in existence is one of the ground floor made in 1922.

Although late in the day, I am attempting to reconstruct a plan of the building from photographs and such information as I can obtain. If you knew the building and could supply me with even rough sketches of the layout, or, if you took photographs during the demolition, please get in touch with me as your knowledge would be of great assistance.

Another plea for assistance concerns the whereabouts of a stone carved with a Tudor rose which was found during the demolition. It is shown on the accompanying drawing and was probably the ornamental carving in the spandrel of a stone doorway.



16th century ceiling 31 Marefair
Northampton.



Stone found during the demolition
of Welsh House

Surprisingly Welsh House is not the only object with a Welsh inscription in the town. In the Chancel of St Giles's Church there is a fascinating seventeenth century chair carved with scenes and inscriptions. The scenes include one entitled "Ye Election" which shows a candidate being chaired through a crowd, a hog in a sty, and people sitting around a table drinking and smoking. The inscriptions are as follows:

Just be merciful
Quiscam^R
J
1641
Ye gifte JR
RW. PLAS MAWR. YN.

Initial research into the chair has revealed nothing of its history or how it came to be in the church. The only reference so far discovered is in a modern guide to the County where it is described (probably correctly) as a Justices Chair; the Welsh Inscription (referring to the 'large house') automatically, but not conclusively, suggests an association with Welsh House. Again if you know anything about the chair please get in touch.

I am pleased to say that I am not alone in currently researching Welsh House. The Development Corporation Archaeological Unit has recently carried out documentary research and (with the help of the late Alderman Frank Lee's notes) have traced the ownership of the site back to the fifteenth century (see Excavations on Greyfriars, Northamptonshire Archaeology 13, forthcoming). Further work on this source will certainly increase our knowledge of the building and make the production of a plan of the building essential.

B L Giggins
Northamptonshire Buildings Research Group
(a sub-group of the Northamptonshire
Archaeological Society)

Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester

The following courses are being planned for Knuston Hall for the academic year 1978-79, but since the details are not finalised do not attempt to send enquiries to, or to book with, Knuston Hall yet. 24-26 November 1978, Drawing for Archaeologists (Tutor: David Neal); 15-17 December 1978, The Art and Archaeology of SE Asia (Tutor: A H Christy); 26-28 January 1979, Glass for Archaeologists (Tutors: inter alia Jenny Price and Professor Roy Newton); 30 March - 1 April 1979, Wood for Archaeologists (Tutor: Graham Morgan); 6-12 April 1979, Field Archaeology and the Landscape (Tutors: A E Brown and C C Taylor); 4-6 May 1979, Castles (Tutors: Brian Davidson, Beric Morley, Derek Renn, C C Taylor); 9-11 March 1979, The Interpretation of Aerial Photographs (Tutors: John Hampton and Dr R Evans); 5-7 October 1979, Roads and Trackways (Tutors: A E Brown and C C Taylor).

CURRENT RESEARCH IN ARCHAEOLOGY

A newsletter has been launched recently directed at those actively involved in archaeological research, both amateurs and professionals. It contains lists of theses completed at various universities and short article on current research projects. Copies of 'Current Research in Archaeology' are free, but SAE's must be sent (four at a time saves postage) to the Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT CALENDAR

Should be sent to: Frances Williams
General Secretary
41 Stannard Way
Brixworth
Northampton

Anyone interested in doing any secretarial work for the Society please contact the General Secretary.