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# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER NO 1

The re-birth of the societies newsletter 'The Mirror' we hope will be the beginning of a useful kind of communication between the archaeological council and its members. This first newsletter mainly deals with the societies next trip and a report on our last successful trip to Lyddington Bede House, our next trip is planned for the 6th of July and we look forward to seeing you all there. - If it proves as popular and interesting as our last trip we should be in for a good time.

Later in the year we shall be giving you more details of our lecture programme and we still have several trips lined up!

We are starting a 'meet your council' spot in the newsletter and the first profile we have is of Paul our chairman, we shall be following this up with each member of the council so that you will know that there really are people behind the addresses.

If you have anything to say please drop me a line, as we hope to turn most of the work of the newsletter over to you, please send the articles to me Wendy Parry, 59 Gordon Street Northampton.

See you on Sunday the 6th.....

Mar 1986

PAUL WOODFIELD

Your chairman since he took over from John Williams in 1985.

Paul originally came from Solihull, Warwickshire, an area always believed to be archaeologically totally barren - but that was before the discovery of aerial photography and deserted villages. His interest in archaeology first arose from geography and maps, that mysterious word 'tumulus' which no-one seemed able to explain, and an early present of Graham Clarke's book on Prehistoric England. His first taste of excavation was, although exciting at the time, an embarrassing affair, looking back, a typical amateurish weekend burrowing around on a nunnery site. However the army took him to Canterbury, and work under Sheppard Frere, John Wachter and others, and began the process of discovery of what archaeology was really about. After his return from active service in an army intelligence unit in the Malayan emergency, he settled in Canterbury and began architectural training, but still spending vacations on digs, six seasons at Verulamium with Frere, at Dinorban, in west Wales and on Hadrian's Wall. After qualifying as an architect, he worked at Coventry, where he married the field archaeologist, Charmian, and together established a reputation in local archaeology. He has subsequently held the positions of Divisional Engineer in Borneo, and Deputy County Architect in Wales before coming to this area in 1972 as historic buildings officer to Milton Keynes Development Corporation. He is now an investigator for the HBM listing survey of Wiltshire. His publications since 1960 cover a variety of interests, usually with an architectural bias, and include, Viking Stirrups, Cl6-Cl7 Yellow Wares in the Midlands, Medieval Houses in Northants, Roman Architectural Masonry, Roman Signal Station at Barcombe Hill, Houses of Knighton, The Old Work at Wroxeter, The Bishops Palace at Lyddington, The Church of Stowe - Nine - Churches and others. His first book on the Historic Buildings of Milton Keynes has just been published. As well as architectural qualifications, he is a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, the Royal Architectural Institute, the SPAB, AMS, an elected member of the Vernacular Architecture group, and is County Correspondent on buildings for the CBA. His areas of special interest include Roman architecture, Roman coins, Cl7 pottery, and buildings of all periods.

Field Trip to Lyddington, Sunday 11th May.

Some impressions by Mike Rumbold.

This Sunday morning began with the sun making one of its rare appearances this spring, and the drive to Lyddington, through hedges well covered with fresh green, promised well for the day. Travelling via Market Harborough and entering that part of Leicestershire which will, for my generation, be forever Rutland, the sight of Rockingham Castle on the skyline brought to mind thoughts of the TV serial 'By The Sword Divided'.

Promptly at the opening hour of Noon the Marquess of Exeter Hotel was invaded by a small, but determined, band of members of the Society and their friends, who spent the next two hours sampling the delights of Riddles County. By Two o'clock the company had grown to about twenty, and as we were led from the hotel by our chairman, Paul Woodfield and his wife Charmian, others joined the party, until we were some thirty strong.

Lyddington is a very attractive village, mostly built in stone, with the few brick buildings tucked discretely away on the edges. After a short walk down the High Street, during which there were some pauses to hear Paul talk about the architectural features of the village, and to hear Charmian's story of Victorian 'yobbos' wrecking the 13th century cross, we arrived at the Bedehouse.

Well! That is how it is described on the signposts, but we were soon to learn that it had a long history before it was converted to that use in about 1600.

Let Paul take up the story:-

*'When, and by whom, the palace of the Bishops of Lincoln at Lyddington was built cannot yet be told. It may well have been one of the first Norman Bishops, Robert de Bloett, or Alexander the Magnificent, both keen builders, who did much at the palace at Lincoln.'*

*Certainly the bishopric held land here before the Conquest; the appeal being the magnificent hunting in the Forest of Rockingham. Like Chaucer's Monk, Bishops seemed addicted to the sport.*

*Naturally the proximity of the Royal Palace of Rockingham was an added attraction. Whilst at Lyddington the Bishops calculated they would not miss much of the doings of Kings such as John, who were often to be found there.*

*Other great names of the Church, who must in their time have stayed here, were, St Hugh of Lincoln, builder of the Angel Choir in the Cathedral, or that formidable man of learning and science, Robert Grosseteste, who introduced the study of Arabic manuscripts for the learning they encapsulated.*

*One significant event from the earlier years is recorded in the document founding Balliol College, Oxford, which was signed by Oliver Sutton in 1284 at Lyddington.*

*Little Norman architectural evidence survives, however, and the earliest visible remains date to the time, (1320 - 40), of the young, ambitious and worldly Henry Burghersh. He seems to have rebuilt the great hall on a scale equalling, if not surpassing, that of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Bayfield. Later, as Chancellor of England, he granted himself various licences to enlarge the Deerpark and buildings.*

*The Great Hall has unfortunately gone, demolished after 1549. The standing range includes the Camera Regia (Great Chamber), or Audience Hall, of the Bishops. This was probably modified by that inveterate builder, Bishop Alnwick, whose portrait remains in the glass of the Presence Chamber.*

*Later alterations were made by Bishop John Russell, around 1490, after he had fallen foul of the Royal Court, and partially retired to Lyddington, and by his successor, William Smith. The final touch, the magnificent ceiling of the Audience Hall, was apparently made by Bishop John Longland, almost on the eve of the Reformation, when all episcopal property was finally sequestered to the Crown.'*

After our inspection of this interesting building we were conducted to the Church, which stands a few yards away, and contains the mysterious 'Acoustic Pots' high in the walls of the Chancel. This reporter is not certain whether he can believe that these were for improving the acoustics, however. They look more like nesting boxes. Can we be certain that one of those builder bishops did not try to convert the church into a dovecote?

A further short walk from the church were the Fishponds; indeed a formidable earthwork, in use they must have rivalled any modern Trout Farm.

The party then returned to their cars parked at the Hotel, and drove a mile or so to observe the evidence of the Deerpark, constructed to provide these sporting Bishops with a ready supply of game. This was rediscovered by the Woodfields, after having their attention drawn to field names on a map prepared during the second World War by the Home Guard. Dad's Army to the Aid of Archeology!

A short stop for tea on the banks of Eye Brook Reservoir, and a visit to St Andrew's Church, Stoke Dry, completed a most interesting afternoon.

If you were not at Lyddington to join this tour, you missed a good day out, and the committee hope that you will not miss our next field trip on July 6th.

HOWEVER, DO NOT DESPAIR!

The Bedehouse is open to visitors, and in the entrance hall is a display recounting much of the history, created by our guides and mentors, Paul and Charmian, to whom your reporter, on behalf of all those present on the day, wishes to express a hearty vote of thanks for the excellent preparation, organisation and instruction.

A.M.L.R.

LANDSCAPE OF FAITH: an exploration of the buildings of Sir Thomas Tresham.

A Society Trip on Sunday the 6th of July

'Grotesque in its triangularity, a curious riddle in stone with its mystical numbers and monograms'. The description could apply to nowhere other than the Triangular Lodge at Rushton, by which its builder Sir Thomas Tresham is chiefly remembered. Despite fines and imprisonment for unpopular Catholic views, Tresham's intensely personal declaration of the old religion has endured the passing of almost four centuries through the survival of buildings which were both practical and symbolic. In addition to his work at Rushton and nearby Rothwell, there remains the shell of the New Building at Lyveden which was originally bordered by elaborate grounds with the intention of forming a pleasance. It too had a didactic purpose. So, are these buildings merely follies or conceits? We shall see.....

The Arrangements

The society has booked an area at the 'Star' at Geddington for lunch at 12.00. The beer is Manns but includes Ben Trumans and Founders. Bar snacks are available from £1.95 and we have made provision for children under 16.

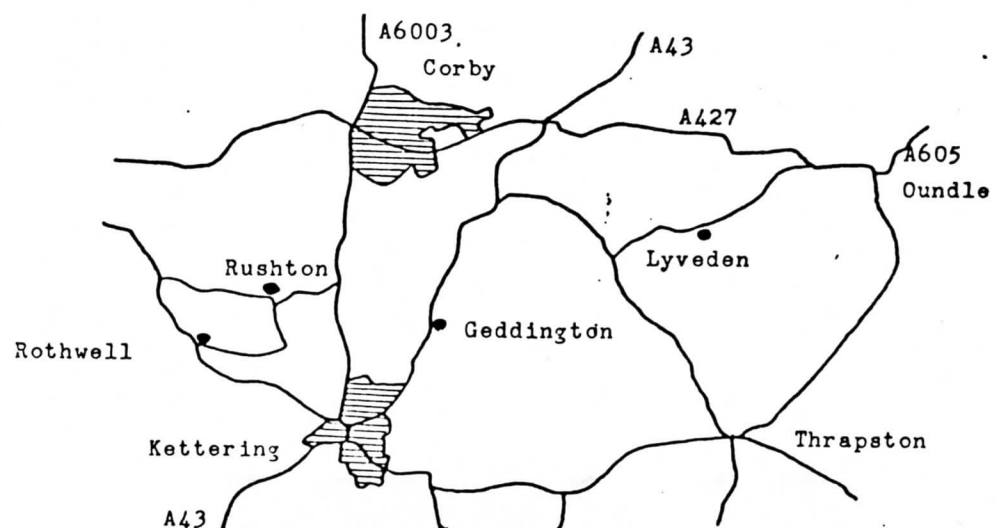
1.20. Leave pub and pause to enjoy the Eleanor Cross. Erected by Edward the first as a memorial to his wife. Originally twelve in number, only three survive., Geddington Hardingstone and Waltham Cross.

2.00 Assemble at Lyveden New Build for a guided tour by Brian Dix of the hall and gardens. Adm. is 60p and guides are available.

3.30. Rushton Triangular Lodge, the most spectacular of Thresham's buildings. (m. 75p again guides are available.

We end the trip at Rothwell with a visit to Tresham's Market Hall.

\* If you are without transport please give me a ring and we shall try to arrange something... Wendy Parry Northampton 34407. We look forward to seeing you all .



East Midlands History Fair.

Leicester Museum of Technology.

17th & 18th May, 1986.

Leicester Museum of Technology is housed in the Victorian Abbey Pumping Station, a listed building, containing four beam engines which, for over seventy years, up to the early 1960's, pumped liquid from the sewage settlement tanks to a treatment farm less than a mile away, but 170 feet higher.

When work was taken over by new plant the Pumping Station was preserved. Later it was transformed into the museum, with the beam engine house redecorated and the boiler room and coal store converted to exhibition galleries. Several times each year the beam engines are supplied with steam and set in motion, and this really is a sight to behold!

It was on one such weekend that the History Fair was organised by Leicestershire's Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service.

The Northamptonshire Archeological Society was one of several County Societies which provided a display, alongside a wide range of Local, Special Interest, and Family History Societies. In fact there were no less than 61 organisations listed in the Programme.

One enterprising exhibit was a model house demonstrating the evidence provided by an Inventory.

There were several crafts being demonstrated, including the manufacture of Bows and Arrows; and on Sunday these were demonstrated by the 'Bowmen of Bosworth', from the Longbow as used at Agincourt to the modern Competition Bow with its confusion of balance weights and precision sights.

The English Civil War Society skirmished by the river, the Charnwood Clog Dancers and the Leicester Morris Men danced and the Longslade Consort sang. A steam roller and a traction engine chuffed about, a fairground organ played. For the energetic there were guided walks of Belgrave, for the less energetic there were Slide and Lantern Slide shows, Historical Videos, and illustrated lectures.

Far too much to take in in one day, or even two!

In their own tent in front of the museum the organisers had a comprehensive display of the activities of their various departments, including the Archivists in their Tee-shirts claiming that 'Archivists Make It Last Longer'. It was clear that, as the News Sheet which they were handing out put it, 'Archeology in Leicestershire is alive and well and, if not screaming, certainly kicking healthily.'

It was also clear that there are plenty of people who find History and Archeology can be Fun!

I hope the enterprising organisers were rewarded with sufficient interest, and financial return, to repeat this most worthwhile enterprise.

A.M.L.R.

### Rescue Archaeology in Northamptonshire 1985

Throughout 1985 archaeological rescue excavation and associated post-excavation work was carried out by the Archaeology Unit.

At Raunds the Archaeology Unit, in collaboration with the Central Excavation Unit, commenced the Raunds Area Project. The Project is intended as a study of a Midland landscape from pre-historic to modern times. It has its origins in the excavations carried out by David Hall in Raunds village in 1975 when a Saxon cemetery and church were unexpectedly discovered. The Archaeology Unit of the County Council followed up Hall's work in 1977 and it was from this that the Furnell's project developed. The results of the main excavation, allied with the growing awareness of the potential of the site and its surroundings led to the realisation that Raunds offered the opportunity to study not just one site but groups of sites of the same and of successive periods.

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The Project is a joint venture between Northamptonshire County Council and HBMC with excavation being conducted by both organisations and a detailed survey to investigate and record the archaeology of the whole area.

In 1985 the individual projects undertaken included:

**The Barrow Cemetery** - evaluation of this site was carried out by Paul Garwood to test the environmental and archaeological potential of the barrows and the land around them.

**The Villa** - the first season of major excavation by David Neal concentrated on the outbuilding area to the north of the villa proper. A group of stone buildings on an alignment similar to that of the villa first exposed in 1984 included remains of circular and rectilinear structures, overlying an earlier group of timber buildings.

**Burystead** - A preliminary excavation by Michel Audouy determined the extent of the archaeology and the intensity of destruction of the site from earlier quarrying. Excavation then commenced at the Midland Road frontage; beneath the remains of recently demolished buildings was found traces of successive medieval buildings. These postholes and ditches representing middle and late Saxon activity had survived.

**Langham Road** - excavations in 1984 had indicated that a middle Saxon complex was sited <sup>on</sup> the land adjacent to the modern estate. Excavation resumed in late 1985 to attempt to define the character of the settlement, its outer limits, and its relationship to Furnell's, 100 metres to the north.

**West Cotton** - excavation on this abandoned medieval settlement, a dependency of the Raunds manors in medieval times, took place under the direction of David Windell. The site, about 1.5 kilometers to the west of Raunds, lies on the floodplain of the valley. The proposed A605/A45 New Road will pass through the site in 1986. The site is thought to comprise 4 farmsteads built around a green - 3 of the farms lie wholly or partly within the land take of the proposed road and 2 of these were comprehensively excavated in 1985. Beneath the medieval structures were ditches of Saxon date; by December it appeared that these in turn had been built into the mounds of a group of barrows.

**Fieldwalking** - the programme of survey of the area was begun by Steve Parry in November, the emphasis being on fieldwalking the line of the proposed road through the Raunds area.

The Project is funded by HBMC, the County Council and Manpower Services Commission, with support from ARC.

Amongst many smaller excavations carried out in Northamptonshire in 1985 several should be noted :



**Towcester** - trenching was carried out in the TMT yard in Towcester ahead of development. The aim was to establish whether the defences of the Roman town extended east-west across the site and if there was surviving evidence of urban occupation. There was no evidence of the defences nor was it possible to identify any coherent pattern in the various small ditches crossing the site.

**Laxton** - During road works for the straightening of the A43 an ironworking site of Roman date was uncovered. The evidence was salvaged by Dennis Jackson, with support from the County Surveyor and with the co-operation of the contractor. At least two metres of slag had accumulated along a stream bed and, set at various levels within this, were the remains of the furnaces responsible for this mass of residue. Southwards from the furnaces were the remains of buildings and beyond those lay part of a cemetery cut by the roadworks and up to 70 graves were uncovered and eventually removed.

**Post-excavation** - The preparation of reports on previous fieldwork continued, the main projects being :

Raunds, Furnell's (G Cadman and A Boddington)

Ashton Roman Town (B Dix)

Weekley (D Jackson)

Northampton, The Green and Blacklion Hill (M Shaw)

Brackley Castle Lane (R Barcham)

Together with a group of backlog sites: Weldon Villa, Ashley, Banaventa, Kettering (B Dix in liaison with D Smith and S Taylor respectively).

Northampton Castle (A Chapman)

Pottery Reports on Badby, Stoke Goldington, Bury-St-Edmunds (T Pearson)