



# NASNEWS

Newsletter of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society

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

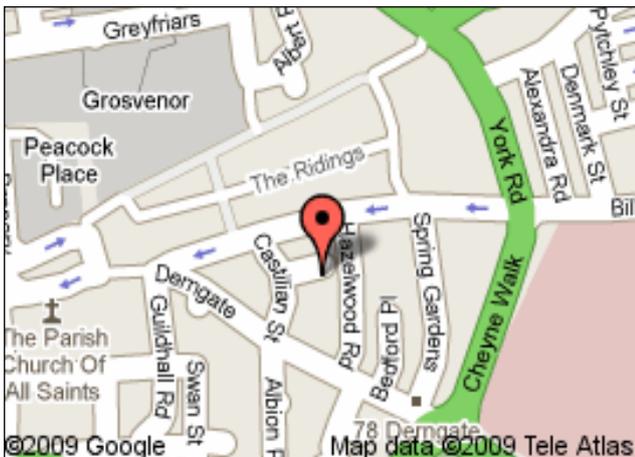


## September 2022

### NAS AGM and public lecture Monday, 17 October, 7.00pm

We make our return to a face-to-face AGM and return to our old 'home' in the Humfrey Rooms of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society:

**10 Castilian Terrace  
Northampton NN1 1LD**



There will be tea/coffee and biscuits from 6.30pm, with the NAS AGM at 7pm:

#### NAS AGM

Chair: Mike Curtis

Officers' reports

Statement of accounts

Election of Hon. Officers and other members of Council. The following are all willing to stand for re-election:

Andy Chapman: Secretary, Editor and Treasurer

Rob Atkins: Meetings Secretary

Pat Chapman: Membership Secretary

Other elected and co-opted members of council: Mike Curtis, Graham Cadman, Brian Giggins, Sarah Scott and Ben Donnelly-Symes. Anyone wishing to join the committee to help

keep the Society running, and who can bring in new energy and fresh ideas, please step forward.

New candidates should notify the Secretary in advance, together with the names of two members to nominate and second their application, or they can be nominated on the night.

#### Public Lecture

The AGM will be followed by a public lecture  
**3000 years of life and death  
at Overstone, Northampton**

by Simon Markus, Project Manager with MOLA Northampton.

The huge scale of the housing development at Overstone, taking in multiple fields, has enabled a comparably large area to be examined archaeologically, with spectacular results. There is an interesting group of early Bronze Age monuments, which have produced the largest assemblage of collared urns from a single site in the county. With the scale of the works, it was also possible to excavate both an Anglo-Saxon cemetery, with the burials accompanied by grave goods, and the nearby settlement in which they had lived.



Overstone: Bronze Age timber structure with BA round barrow in the background

## NAS Subscriptions

Dear NAS members, as with every other aspect of our lives, costs are increasing. For NAS this includes the cost of postage, packaging and the paper that the journal is printed on. On top of that, our bank has now brought in a monthly service charge of £5.00 and 40p for every cheque it has to handle.

At the last committee meeting it was agreed that we should make a small increase in our annual membership to help cover these increasing costs, but as we still have a healthy bank balance, we only need to make small increases of just £2 or £3, and the annual membership is still less than many comparable societies.

Given the bank charges, we would also ask those still paying by cheque to consider paying to the bank directly through a standing order (bank details available from Pat Chapman, Membership Secretary, [NAS196674@gmail.com](mailto:NAS196674@gmail.com)).

We would also remind those who do pay directly to update their bank payment to the new rate.

For those who still wish to pay by cheque please make sure that you make it out in full to: Northamptonshire Archaeological Society, not just NAS. We would also be grateful if you could add the extra 40p for bank charges.

**The new membership rates are:**

**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 the bonus of copy of the last journal on joining as well as the next edition.

## NAS Accounts 2021-22

The headline figures for the accounts, with our financial year running to the end of August.

Total Income: **£ 7,392.45**

Total Expenditure: **£11,451.48**

Current bank balance: **£28,637.10**

We still hold c.100 copies of the latest journal, which remains on sale, and have some monies owing on bookshop sales.

A full statement of accounts will be presented at the AGM.

## The journal

### Volume 41

We printed 400 copies of the last journal, volume 41, *The Archaeology of Medieval Northampton*, and now have a little over 100 left. Copies are, of course, still on sale from us and also at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Chester House Estate and the Heritage Hub at Jeyes, Earls Barton.

**If any member would like to purchase a further copy(ies) as Christmas/birthday presents etc, we can offer a discount of £5 (to £15.00/copy), you can either collect from us or we can deliver to local addresses, otherwise we would still have to charge postage at £4.00 per copy.**

### Volume 42

The next edition is in preparation at the moment, and hopefully it will be available by around Easter 2023. This edition returns to the more normal format and will cover sites around the county ranging in date from Neolithic to medieval, with a core of Iron Age and Roman sites in the middle.

I am afraid Part 2 of Northampton Castle will not be in this edition, but it will appear in the following edition, volume 43, which hopefully will appear in 2024.

## Message from the Chair

As we approach the AGM I wanted to take some time to reflect on some of the highlights of this past year. After coming out of lockdown it has been a pleasure to travel around the county this summer, visiting some of the community excavations that have been taking place, meeting and chatting with members and prospective members. Away from the media focus on Chester House, it has clearly been an exciting year for community archaeology with unexpected and interesting discoveries resulting from the enthusiastic and diligent work of the volunteers. Again, we can see that there is still a lot to learn about past times in the county and I am pleased that NAS plays a part in this. Back at Chester House the continued work by Ben Donnelly-Symes and his team of volunteers has seen many finds returned to county and stored in the archive. Already it is evident that the archaeological record of Northamptonshire has been vastly under sold in the past and we look forward to new opportunities to see some of this material on display within the county.

Indoors it has also been a busy year for NAS, spearheaded by the publication of the volume on **The Archaeology of Medieval Northampton**. We remain indebted to our editor, Andy Chapman, for all his work on this and previous NAS journals. As an editor myself, I know that this work can be very demanding, with its occasional frustrating moments, and I am sure that you will join with me in thanking him for his dedication in getting this volume through to publication.

It has also been a busy year for the committee too as we, like other archaeological societies in the country, look to the future not only in the context of sustaining the society, but also how, within our own limitations, we can initiate new activities that can help in the promotion and profile of the archaeology of the county along

with the research and investigations that have and continue to take place. For this I remain grateful to the committee members who give their own time to help make this happen.

However, the challenges that I have mentioned in previous newsletters with rapid pace of development within the county are still with us and this has seen us engaging with Planning Officers and documenting our concern for the archaeology under threat in planning applications. Northampton and other historic towns and villages within the county remain under threat from potential housing and commercial development, and whilst much of this ends up being dealt with through commercial archaeology, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done by individual and local groups who are keen enough to turn their interest in finding out about the history and archaeology of their area into practical projects. Whether it is down in the ground or up in the lofts of old buildings, there is much still to be discovered by projects such as these and much that will, I am sure, fill the pages of our journal for years to come.

Michael J Curtis, Chair

## NAS visit to Warkton Roman villa Sunday, 3 July

NAS was invited to an open day at Warkton Roman villa, near Kettering on land owned by the Duke of Buccleuch. This estate has been supportive of the excavations including providing the mechanical excavator. The site geophysical survey was by Peter Masters of Cranfield University (formerly with Northamptonshire Archaeology), and the excavations were targeted over these results.

They have found a previously unknown wealthy Roman villa, which sits in a multi-period landscape from the Iron Age through to early Anglo-Saxon (at least).

The site has been run by Cranfield University as its "summer School" for the last two years. Students and local volunteers have this year excavated two areas, with the site directed by Dr David Errickson, Senior Lecturer in Forensic Archaeology/Anthropology. There was relatively good survival of remains with wall foundations and other features uncovered. Probably of most interest was part of a possible bath house, where an area of mosaic floor had collapsed between the pilae stacks of a hypocaust (below).



A tessellated floor in another room only survived as a range of tesserae, but wall plaster was recovered in large pieces showing there had been a range of elaborately decorated panels.



### NAS visit to Fotheringhay castle and church on Sunday, 29 May

A very successful NAS visit took place to Fotheringhay, with 20 people attending. The tour met at the castle entrance with Steve Parry, who supplied in depth handouts, guiding the group around the castle. Steve had recently led a project examining the castle using both an aerial survey and geophysical survey. These surveys have uncovered a series of wall and surfaces within the castle. An article on this examination will be published in the journal.



*Fotheringhay: first view of the castle motte*



*Within the inner bailey looking towards the motte, with the church tower in the distance*

After the tour of the castle the group made its way to the church, where this part of the tour was organised by Gill Johnston. Tea and homemade cake were provided and there was a showing of a short film by Mike Lee, featuring a reconstruction of the spectacular funeral (with 7,000 mourners) of Richard Third Duke of York, which was held at Fotheringhay Church in July 1476.

## Irchester Field School 2022 & Nene Valley Communities

The Irchester Field School took place in June and July and involved students and staff from the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester, University of Leicester Archaeological Services, Chester House Estate staff and volunteers, and students from the Creating Tomorrow College; the College is located at the Chester House Estate and prepares young adults with cognition and learning difficulties for independent living and employment as they transition into adulthood.



The excavation took place in the area of the eastern suburb of the well-preserved walled small Roman town (*vicus*) that lies within the Chester House Estate. The area of the suburbs extends to the west, east and south of the walled area and contains multiple buildings as well as cemeteries. The team cleaned an area with buildings and a north-south side road close to the main east-west road leading to the east gate of the town.

Continued work in this area will hopefully enable us to work out when these buildings were in use, when the side road went out of use, and whether there is any evidence for very late and/or post-Roman activity. To the west of this area, at the northern end of the site, the team excavated pits and ditches in the back yards of buildings fronting the north-south road.



The western edge of the excavation covers part of a late Roman cemetery, densely packed with cist burials; nearly 90 have been excavated over the past few years. Those excavated this year were recorded using photogrammetry, and the plan is to carry out a range of analyses to provide insights into the lives of the townsfolk, including information about their diet, diseases and lifestyles. Stable isotope analysis will provide additional insights, such as where an individual lived when they were a child, based on the chemistry of a bone sample.



In the northern area of the excavation, we focussed on a north-south side road and associated Roman and post-medieval structures. As we have dug through the late Roman buildings, there is evidence for activity dating to the early Roman period when this part of the settlement was first laid out and occupied. We have also discovered two additional burials here. One burial was partially destroyed when a post-medieval drain was constructed. Another

burial was disturbed by post-medieval buildings associated with the later Chester House Farm.



Alongside the excavation we ran site tours, talked to school groups and welcomed visitors.

## **Past and Present: Festival of History, Archaeology & Heritage**

On Saturday and Sunday, 25-26 June we launched a festival of history, archaeology and heritage in partnership with Stanwick Lakes, with Roman-themed activities at Chester House and traditional crafts at Stanwick Lakes.



Teams of volunteers and staff from Chester House and the University of Leicester coordinated a wide range of activities for all

ages, which included mini talks and Q&A sessions with academics and the Ermine Street Guard's living history camp. The activities were supported by local businesses, including Saxby's Cider (offering Roman beer tasting), and the florist Eden Wild making laurel crowns. Students from Creating Tomorrow College researched and stocked the farm shop with foods brought to or cultivated in Britain for the first time in the Roman period. There were tours of the archaeological excavations, the Museum and Learning Centre and the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre throughout the day.



The launch events continued on Sunday with a celebration of 'Traditional Crafts Past and Present' at Stanwick Lakes. Demonstrations and hands-on activities included spinning and weaving, chain-saw carving, blacksmithing, and woodcarving. There were make and take away activities for all, and the Bifrost Guard re-enactment group was on site throughout the day.

The newly refurbished heritage display in the Stanwick Lakes visitor centre was open to visitors, providing an introduction to more than 5,000 years of human activity at Stanwick Lakes. The event also provided an opportunity to find out about future projects; Rockingham Forest Trust has been awarded a £250,000 grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to implement an exciting three-year heritage project looking at the lifestyles and activities of the Bronze

and Iron Age people who settled there.

The Festival ran throughout July, and included an archaeology taster and careers drop-in for young people on 2 July, talks on local history, archaeology and heritage at both Chester House and Stanwick Lakes, and an archaeology open day at Chester House on 16 July to coincide with the launch of the CBA Festival of Archaeology. The Leather Conservation Centre ran creative workshops at Chester House and Stanwick Lakes, including making iron-age shoes and gilded leather activities. A very well attended series of talks on local archaeological discoveries was launched by the Chester House Estate, including Michael Curtis (NAS) on the Catuvellauni, Paddy Lambert (Oxford Archaeology East) on the Priors Hall excavations (Corby) and Chris Chinnock (MOLA) on the excavations of the Lime Avenue cemetery at the Chester House Estate. Neil Busby and Andy Chapman engaged audiences at Stanwick Lakes with an introduction to the heritage at Stanwick Lakes and bronze age round barrows respectively.

The festival was the culmination of more than eighteen months of collaborative working between the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, the Chester House Estate, local heritage organisations and interest groups and many other stakeholders. The activities have demonstrated the potential for collaboration between researchers, heritage organisations, local interest groups, and the public in making archaeological research, heritage and archives accessible, and engaging.

These initiatives would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and support of Jack Pishhorn (Chester House Estate Business Manager) and Ben Donnelly-Symes (Northamptonshire Archaeological Archives Curator) and their teams, including many volunteers. We are grateful to Ian Meadows

for guidance in the planning of the field school. The University of Leicester team includes Prof Sarah Scott and Dr Jeremy Taylor (School of Archaeology and Ancient History), Donald Clark and Chris Naisbitt (ULAS), and many current and former students.

Many individuals and organisations (in no particular order) supported and championed the festival including, North Northamptonshire Council, Stanwick Lakes (Rockingham Forest Trust), Nenescape, the Creating Tomorrow College, Rushden Lakes, MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), the Leather Conservation Centre and Museum, Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Northamptonshire Heritage Forum, the Enabled Archaeology Foundation, Northamptonshire Archaeological Society, the University of Northampton, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, Saxby's Cider, Eden Wild, the Council for British Archaeology, the Council for British Archaeology East Midlands, the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group, the Council for British Archaeology South Midlands, Classics for All, the ESRC and AHRC.

<https://chesterhouseestate.org/>

<https://chesterhouseestate.org/learning/uol-partnership/>

<https://www.creatingtomorrowcollege.co.uk/>

<https://www.stanwicklakes.org.uk/>

For a more detailed overview of the festival see our article in *British Archaeology Magazine* for September/October:

<https://www.archaeologyuk.org/what-we-do/british-archaeology-magazine.html>

### Funding

ESRC Impact Acceleration Account 2019:  
Leicester (ES/T501967/1)

AHRC CapCo Impact Grant (AH/X000729/1)

Sarah Scott, University of Leicester

## Archaeology and Ancient History with Northamptonshire Adult Learning Services (NALS)

Many of you will have seen the new autumn programme for Northamptonshire Adult Learning Services.

I am delighted to say that due to the popularity of archaeology and ancient history courses over the past year we have been able to engage another specialist tutor and so broaden the scope of the courses that we are able to offer residents of Northamptonshire.

Joanna O'Neill is a graduate of the University of Leicester and has a specialism in the representation of women in the ancient world and its ongoing impact on modern gender discourse, along with an interest in ancient Egypt.

Joanna and I will also be offering some joint courses. Northamptonshire is one of the few counties in the country providing non-academic based tuition in archaeology and ancient history for Adult Learners, something which is quite an achievement.

Most of the autumn course programme for **Archaeology and Ancient History** is online this year as the programme had to be determined around Easter time and we were all uncertain as to where we would be with COVID. More classroom teaching will take place in the Spring. For more information on NALS courses please visit the website:

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/council/services/children-families-education/adult-learning/Pages/default.aspx>

Here is a summary of the courses that are currently on offer:

**Roman Art & Archaeology** (jointly with Art tutor Caroline Hawkins)

6 sessions. Tuesday evenings from 18 Oct

**Ancient World's Myths, Magic & Religion**

4 sessions, Wednesday evenings from 19 Oct

**The Vikings in Britain**

4 sessions, Thursday evenings from 20 Oct

**Sparta - Myths and Realities**

4 sessions, Monday evenings from 21 Nov

**Prehistoric Monuments in our Landscape**

4 sessions, Thursday evenings from 24 Nov

**Footsteps of the Pharaohs**

6 sessions, Monday evenings from 20 Feb, 2023

**The Ancient World - Iconic Women**

4 sessions, Wednesday evenings from 22 Feb, 2023

With my business hat on I will also be teaching a course entitled **Let's Talk About Marketing** at Chester House. The course comprises four sessions on Tuesday afternoons, starting on 1 November, and is aimed at individuals and start-up small businesses and will provide a foundation in the theoretical and practical approach to marketing.

Michael J Curtis, Chair NAS

## **CBA South Midlands Autumn Conference**

After 3 years, CBA South Midlands will be holding their autumn conference in person this year, on **Sunday, 23 October** at **Bugbrooke Community Centre**, near Northampton. The programme is still being finalised, but it will provide a round-up of recent work in the county.

## **AND FINALLY.....**

If you have any items you would like included in either the next NAS NEWS or our Facebook page contact:

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