



NASNEWS

Newsletter of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society

Website: www.northants-archaeology.org.uk



October 2023

NAS AGM and public lecture
Tuesday, 14 November, 6.45pm
The Threshing Barn, Chester House,
Higham Road, Little Irchester,
Wellingborough, NN29 7EZ
(use main drive, Lime Avenue,
and park behind the ARC)

There will be tea/coffee and biscuits from 6.30pm, with the NAS AGM at 6.45pm:

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 at c.7.00pm by Jeremy Taylor, Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Leicester:

**The Rutland Villa:
Beyond the Achilles Mosaic**

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).

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 2022-23

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

Total Income:	£ 2,867.14
Total Expenditure:	£ 2,106.25
Current balance:	£29,237.99
Balance 2021-22:	£28,397.10

A full statement of accounts will be presented at the AGM and will be forwarded to all members with the AGM Agenda and annual report.

The journal

Northamptonshire Archaeology 2023, volume 42

The last edition of the county journal, *The Archaeology of Medieval Northampton*, has continued to sell through 2022-23 and we now have less than 50 copies remaining from the print run of 400. It has sold well through Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, and I will be contacting them to see if they would like to take some more copies.

Northamptonshire Archaeology 2023, volume 42

The next edition is in preparation at the moment, and hopefully it will be available in early 2024. This edition returns to the more normal format and will cover sites around the county focusing largely on Iron Age settlement and, to a lesser extent, smaller Roman sites.

Northamptonshire Archaeology 2024, volume 43

Volume 43, which hopefully will appear later in 2024 or early 2025 will again focus on medieval archaeology, both in Northampton and elsewhere in the county, and will include Part 2 of the report on Northampton Castle.

Message from the Chair NAS Looking Forward

As our AGM approaches it is again time for me to stand on my soap box and bang my drum. Throughout Britain many archaeological societies face an uncertain future as membership, particularly in these economic times, dwindles and the older vanguard, get older. Our society has been quite fortunate over the years, and we have managed to keep membership rates at affordable levels and still give our members a free, quality, journal. I think we continue to offer terrific value for money.

Behind the scenes have been the managing committee, who generously give their time and support to the running of the Society and its activities. This said, we, as committee members, are aware that there is more that the society could do, but we are often stifled by our own limitations of time and other commitments.

In short, I would like you, as a member of NAS, to consider if you have the time and interest to join us on the committee and help us take the Society forward. I like to think of Northamptonshire as one of the richest archaeological and historical areas in the country. The creation of a county archaeological archive has made the two local authority's custodians of artefacts that tell the story of the entire history of human life here on these lands, as some also do from the times before, and whilst there is no public strategy, or interest, for a county museum, there are opportunities for us, as a society, to work with the county archivist to promote, talk about and to pro-actively collaborate in special exhibitions/events of this fantastic material - but it all takes time and resources.

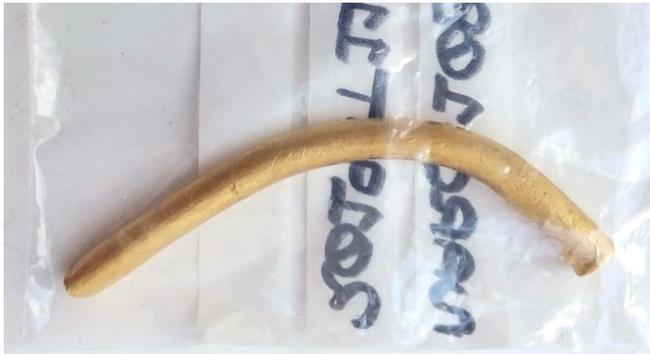
I hope that possibly this opportunity will appeal to you. With committee meetings every couple of months, and online, I promise that it is not too demanding. If it does appeal, then

please contact our Secretary, Andy Chapman, and we will be in touch. Thank you

A Bronze Age gold bracelet

In the March newsletter we reported that NAS were planning to fund a Treasure Act purchase by Northampton Museums of a gold Bronze Age bracelet terminal, and we thank those of our members who made a donation towards the cost.

The bracelet, and other Treasure Act, purchases have now arrived at the museum and Pat and I recently had the chance to have a look at the bracelet (below). It was a little larger than I had imagined and was reassuringly heavy for its size, so definitely gold! The museum is planning a travelling exhibition of Treasure Act purchases, to appear at a number of libraries around the county, possibly with accompanying lectures. We will pass on details when available.



New Archaeology Courses in Northamptonshire

As autumn arrives there are some new archaeology and ancient history courses being advertised.

Chester House Estate

As part of the programme of heritage events run by Chester House, a programme of four courses is being offered, led by the NAS Chair, Michael J Curtis, as the Course Director of My Ancient World Learning - a provider of Lifelong Learning courses in Archaeology, Ancient History and Classics.

The courses on offer in the autumn programme are:

Introducing the World of Archaeology, on Saturday 4th November.

Introducing British Prehistory, on Saturday 11th November.

Exploring Roman Britain, on Saturday 18th November.

An Introduction to Medieval Archaeology, on Saturday 2nd December.

Registration details and more information can be found on the Chester House website:

<https://chesterhouseestate.org/my-ancient-world-learning-archaeology-courses/>

Northamptonshire Adult Learning Service (NALS)

For those interested in Ancient History, NALS are running a series of 4 online evening classes from 20 November entitled 'Bite-Sized Ancient History'. Subjects covered include Emperors of Rome, Viking England, the Byzantine World and the Battle of Hastings.

More information can be found on the NALS website:

<https://courses.northantsglobal.net/CourseDetailsView.asp?CODE=AZZ1BA22&NAME=Bite+Sized+Ancient+History&ID1=2600&ID2=35947&ID3=1>

Northamptonshire Roman Roads Study Group

Roman Roads are a topic that we talk about a lot and yet, aside from investigations undertaken by commercial units, much of our knowledge and understanding is based on the original research undertaken by Ivan D Margary and the *Viatories*. In the years that have passed since their volumes that cover Northamptonshire were published, we have new information and new scientific techniques that are available as we revisit and review the

Roman roads of the county. In a new initiative, and as part of NAS, we are setting up a new study group to look again at the Roman roads in our county, recording and examining the evidence of the routes. If you are interested in joining the group, which will involve occasional field trips, then please contact Michael Curtis, mikecurtis1956@yahoo.co.uk, for more information.

Brixworth Annual Lecture

Preaching in English in Anglo-Saxon England

By Dr Helen Gittos

University of Oxford.

Saturday, 28 October 2023

Lecture at 5.00 pm

in Brixworth Church

Tickets £10.00

(including pre-Lecture

tea and cake)

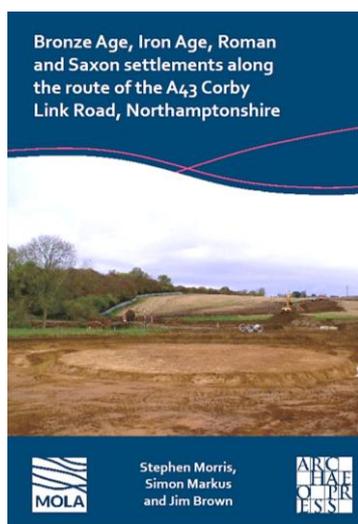
obtained by email to:

brixworthchurchfriends@gmail.com

MOLA publications

In 2023 three archaeological sites in Northamptonshire excavated by MOLA Northampton will be published as monographs by Archaeopress Archaeology.

The first two of these sites are summarised in this newsletter.



Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon settlements along the route of the A43 Corby Link Road, Northamptonshire

Stephen Morris, Simon Markus and Jim Brown
Archaeopress Archaeology

Paperback, 318 pages, 357 figures, 75 tables
ISBN: 9781803276069, Price £55

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) undertook archaeological mitigation works for the A43 Corby Link Road in 2012-13. Early Bronze Age funerary and domestic features were recorded in one location, largely on the floodplain to either side of Harper's Brook, where an undated palaeochannel, a ploughed-out round barrow and four pits were recovered. Two of the pits had possible placed animal deposits. The round barrow was respected by a Late Bronze Age cremation burial. Nearly 2km away, an isolated Early Bronze Age pit contained parts of two collared urns.

Around 0.8km from the Early Bronze round barrow there was a Middle Bronze Age flat cremation cemetery containing 30 pits, of which 25 produced varying quantities of cremated human remains, while two other pits contained pyre deposits.

At a different part of the road scheme, a small cluster of postholes and small pits may denote short term occupation in the Early Iron Age, while a pit alignment had been backfilled in the Middle Iron Age, when a settlement was established.

In the later Middle Iron Age, c.2nd century BC, there were three separate areas of occupation. A small enclosure system was in use in the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, while a small farmstead had been abandoned by the Roman Conquest. The third settlement continued into the early Roman period. In two further areas, new settlements were established in the 1st century AD, either the Late pre-Roman Iron Age or early Roman, and both were short lived. It was notable there was no middle or late Roman settlement at any locations within the A43 road scheme.

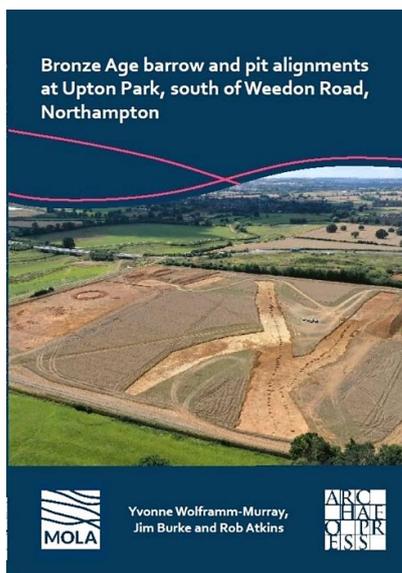
Along the valley side, parallel to a watercourse, there was an Anglo-Saxon settlement comprising both post-built halls and smaller sunken-featured buildings (SFBs). These were associated with craft and industrial production, including a weaving house and iron smelting, with slag recovered from a large SFB, while an intact furnace lay within the road corridor, with nearby ore-roasting pits and quarry extraction pits. Evidence for Middle Anglo-Saxon iron smelting is especially rare, even though the site is within the

national important Rockingham Forest ironworking area.

At another location, an Anglo-Saxon SFB next to Harper's Brook was either isolated or had been part of a dispersed settlement.

Bronze Age barrow and pit alignments at Upton Park, South of Weedon Road, Northampton

Yvonne Wolfram-Murray, Jim Burke and Rob Atkins
Archaeopress Archaeology,
Paperback 112 pages, in press



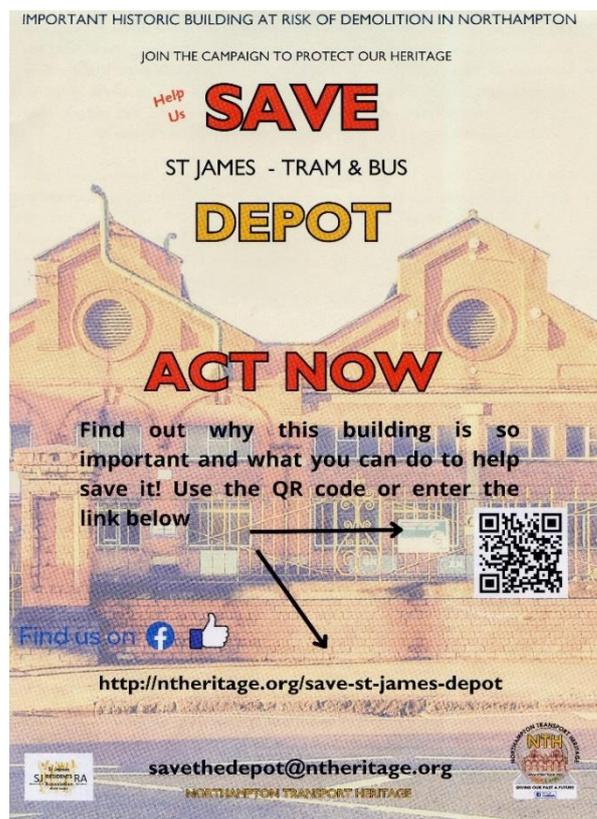
MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by RPS Group, on behalf of Morris Homes, to undertake archaeological work on land at Upton Park, south of Weedon Road, Northampton. Two adjacent palaeochannels crossing the western part of the site are likely to have dated to the Pleistocene period. The earliest evidence of human activity was a scatter of residual Neolithic worked flint. The earliest feature was an isolated round barrow ring ditch of the Early Bronze Age. A later unurned cremation burial cut into the backfill of the barrow ditch has been radiocarbon dated to the Early to Middle Bronze Age transition. An isolated Early Bronze Age pit was found in another part of the development site.

Parts of two Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pit alignments were recorded over total lengths of nearly 0.5km, with c.257 pits revealed. This is the first time since the Wollaston Quarry excavations in the 1990s that such long lengths of pit alignment have been investigated within a single planning application. The extensive work on the two pit alignments has allowed changes in

construction and recutting to be examined in detail, suggesting that different lengths may have been constructed and maintained by different gangs/communities over, perhaps, hundreds of years. A detailed discussion looks at the local, regional and national context of pit alignments, and includes recommendations for future excavation methodologies.

A Roman trackway in the western part of the development area was part of the routeway network around nearby Duston Roman town. Medieval drainage ditches and field systems relating to medieval Upton lay within the eastern part of the development area.

Save the St James Tram and Bus Depot



AND, not quite, FINALLY.....

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

Andy Chapman

NAS secretary and journal editor

NAS email: NAS196674@gmail.com

or Rob Atkins, email ratkins@mola.org.uk

News from Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER)

The HER is the primary information service providing access to a comprehensive and dynamic resource to anyone researching the archaeology and historic built environment of the county.

It is based within the Archives and Heritage Service, run by West Northamptonshire Council on behalf of both North and West Northamptonshire Councils. It was a significant achievement that the HER was retained as one countywide resource at local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire in April 2021.

It is physically located within the Record Office buildings at Wootton Hall Park in Northampton. The full database can be viewed by appointment and there is also a well-stocked library relating to the archaeology of the county. Further resources, such as aerial photographs, are also available on demand. The benefit to researchers of the library being within the Archives Service is that those using the resources can also access archive maps and related resources to complement their studies.

The HER database can be accessed online at the national Heritage Gateway resource:

www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/

This site is updated by the HER Officer on a fortnightly basis with new Northants records and she is also ensuring that photographs are added to the records, on a parish-by-parish basis. At present, these photographs are mainly of buildings or aerial views.

Currently, the HER is part-way through a major, Historic England-funded project to transfer the relevant records from the National Record for the Historic Environment (NRHE). There are over 10,000 records for Northamptonshire, so this will represent a major enhancement of the HER when the project is complete in a year's time. The aim of this national project is to transfer the responsibility for maintaining, securing and providing access to the NRHE dataset to each relevant local authority.

Significant recent news in this sector is that HERs are to be made a statutory requirement upon local authorities. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is currently making its way through Parliament - at time of writing it is with the House of Lords, but it is hoped that Royal Assent will be granted in late 2023 or early 2024. The draft bill includes provisions that **'A relevant authority must maintain an historic environment record for its area'** (Clause 220). While specific regulations and guidance are yet to be developed, this should ensure a robust future for HERs across the country.

In anticipation of the above requirements, the Archives and Heritage Service is currently in the exciting process of recruiting an HER Assistant. This appointment will create the capacity to undertake major enhancements to HER, as required by the bill, and various strategic projects into the future.

If you would like to visit the HER or would like any further information, please email her.ncc@westnorthants.gov.uk



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

WINTER PROGRAMME 2023/2024

2023

- Fri 13 Oct** **Water and Steam Mills of Northamptonshire**
(Hugh Howes)
- Fri 10 Nov** **A Brief History of Lime and Cement in the**
Rugby Area *(John Frearson)*
- Fri 1 Dec** **Any Old Iron – History of the Butlin Family**
and their Furnaces at Wellingborough
(Jon-Paul Carr)

2024

- Fri 12 Jan** **Members' Presentations**
- Fri 9 Feb** **Life and Legacy of Philip Manfield, Shoe**
Manufacturer *(Izabela Robinson)*
- Fri 8 Mar** **From Underground to Countryside – History**
of the Plessey Company *(Terry Waterfield)*

All meetings take place at 7.30pm in the **Garden Room at St Matthews Church Hall, 27a The Drive, Northampton, NN1 4RY**

Meetings are free to NIAG members. Visitors pay £3 per meeting.

For further information email: secretary@niag.org.uk

Website: www.niag.org.uk