May 2011

THE AGM

It seems a long time ago now, but on a snowy evening at the end of November we held our AGM, for the second year, at the Humfrey Rooms of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society. This was also a book launch for Dennis Jackson: A Northamptonshire Archaeologist (see below), and the latest journal, volume 36, was also available for members to collect.

Despite the weather, we had a good turnout. David Neal, as requested by Dennis, provided an excellent annual lecture, Roman Villas and Mosaics in Northamptonshire and Region, and opened with his remembrances of Dennis, which go back to the days when David Neal ran the Ancient Monuments Drawing Office, and Dennis was one of the excavators requiring illustrations while working on his reporting backlog.

THE JOURNAL

Volume 36 has been distributed to all of our members and also to all of our institutional members in Britain and abroad. If any paying member has not received a copy please email me.

Contributions to volume 37 are being collected now; either full reports or shorter notes are all welcome. Free to local societies and individuals (if not of excessive length) with the results of commercial archaeology being published at a page rate to cover printing costs.

THE NAS COMMITTEE

At the AGM the following members were standing for re-election to the committee: Secretary and journal editor – Andy Chapman, Membership secretary – Pat Chapman, Treasurer – Ian Barrie (see below). Other committee members: Steven Hollowell, David Waller, Graham Cadman, Roy Friendship-Taylor, Brian Giggins.

All were re-elected unopposed, and no one came forward to offer their services to the vacant post of Meetings secretary, which is why we are still unable to offer a programme of regular lectures as we would wish to do.

For the coming year, Steven Hollowell will continue to act at Chair: and David Waller as Vice-chair.

NAS TREASURER

As no one came forward at the AGM to offer their services, Ian Barrie is continuing to act as the Society Treasurer. But we are still hoping that someone will come forward to learn the ropes from Ian with a view to taking over as Treasurer by the end of the year. Any potential volunteers please contact the secretary, Andy Chapman.
LOCAL STUDIES BECOMES DISCOVER

The old Local Studies section of the Central Library, Northampton, which used to be at the top of the stairs, has been relocated to the basement. The new room, branded DISCOVER, has new shelving, new carpets and new furniture. Also note that the photocopier is a Multi-Functional Device (MFD) and in addition to plain photocopying you can plug in a memory card or a flash drive and scan documents and photographs as digital images or to pdf files. While it may not have the atmosphere of the old place upstairs, I was most impressed by the new setting, and have checked that the back copies of the journal are safely installed in their new home.

DENNIS JACKSON: A Northamptonshire Archaeologist

Sales of Dennis’s book to both the membership and the general public have been disappointing. We are only just approaching 100 copies sold from a print run of 500, which means we have recovered less than a quarter of the publishing cost. But the real losers are not the society but the potential readers who are missing out on such a good read.

Recently, the Chronicle and Echo gave Dennis and the book two pages of coverage, and included full details of availability, but even this failed to produce a surge in orders.

We are reoffering the members discount at £12.50 plus £2.50 p&p. Please see the attached order form for further details.

Help the society recover its costs and have an entertaining and informative read, much more interesting than reading site reports. Take it with you on holiday for your summer reading.
SUMMER EVENTS

Stanwick Lakes
Stanwick Lakes Rangers contact telephone 01933 625522
Website http://www.stanwicklakes.org.uk

A Walk Through Time
Saturday 21st May 2011, 2pm - 4pm
Discover the history of Stanwick Lakes with archaeologist Andy Chapman.
£1.00 per person, free to members
Booking recommended

Step Back into the Iron Age
Saturday 28th May 2011, 11am - 4pm
Re-enactors bring Stanwick Lakes' Iron Age Roundhouse to life, with a chance to have a go
at traditional Iron Age crafts including grinding corn on a quern!

Heritage Day
Thursday 1st September 2011, 10am - 4pm
Did you know that people have lived at Stanwick lakes for thousands of years? Find out all
about them and what they did! This event is in partnership with Northamptonshire County
Council Archivist and Heritage Services.

A Walk Through Time
Saturday 24th September 2011, 2pm - 4pm
Discover the history of Stanwick Lakes with archaeologist Andy Chapman
£1.00 per person - Free to members - Booking recommended

Portable Antiquities Find Surgery
Saturday 12th November 2011, 1pm - 3pm
If you have found any man-made objects over 300 years old, bring them to be recorded by
the Northamptonshire Finds Liaison Officer at his finds surgery

STANWICK LAKES ROUNDHOUSE
On the 17 March Stanwick Lakes issued the following News Release

Fire at Iron Age Roundhouse
"Burnt but not beaten" is how the team at Stanwick Lakes has responded to the arson
attack on the new Iron Age roundhouse at the site. The fire severely damaged the
roundhouse, completely destroying the thatched roof, but the main skeleton remains, and
it is hoped that something can be salvaged so that the community heritage project can
proceed as planned.

"Hundreds of school children, people from the local community, and our own dedicated
volunteers have all worked hard to build the Roundhouse, so it's very upsetting that this
has happened," said Project Co-ordinator, Liz Williams, "but we are determined not to let
the few spoil things for so many. We will re-build what we can, and still plan to hold our
Iron Age community events later this year."

Note to editors:
The Iron Age Roundhouse was built by volunteers at Stanwick Lakes over the winter on the
site of the original Iron Age settlement, using natural materials all gathered at the lakes.
On the night of Wednesday 16 March the Fire Brigade was called to attend a blaze caused
when persons unknown set light to the newly-thatched roof.
Local school groups had helped with the daubing.

Pat and Andy Chapman went along to help the Friends of Stanwick Lakes with the thatching on the Tuesday.

By the end of Wednesday the thatching was nearly complete.
On Wednesday night, the day before the house would have been completed, it was set on fire by vandals – all the thatch was lost and the timber frame was damaged.

Having shared a little of the experience of building this roundhouse, I have no repeatable words to express my contempt for the sad individuals who did this. However, the frame still stands and will be given a temporary cover for the open day at the end of May. Northamptonshire Archaeology will be putting a Raunds display in the Visitor Centre.

THE PREBENDAL MANOR, NASSINGTON
http://www.prebendal-manor.demon.co.uk/

Monday, 30th May 1-5pm
Adult £7.00 Child £4.50 Family Ticket £21.00 Concession £19.00
A monk herbalist and apothecary with medicinal cures, medieval beauty treatments, and vermin control.

Tithe Barn Museum Talks
Saturday, 11th June 10am
King Cnut
Dr Sam Newton has published many books on Anglo-Saxon England. He is currently a director of Wuffing education at Sutton Hoo, a NADFAS speaker, and a Time Team historian. King Cnut visited Nassington, which was one of his royal vills. Sam will be giving a lively lecture on this great Scandinavian king. Pre-booking essential. Tickets £28.00 which includes morning coffee, lunch and an afternoon lecture. Contact 01780 782575

After lunch the day will continue with Forgery, Fact, Fiction and Archaeology.

The Reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon Peterborough
Dr Avril Lumley Prior attained an MA in 1999 followed by a PhD on the ‘Forged Charters of Peterborough Abbey’ in 2006. She has published numerous papers on local history. She is currently conducting research on pre-Conquest Peakirk, Cambridgshire.

Saturday, 2nd July 2pm
Death in the Garden
Michael Brown MA Is a garden historian, who has a great deal of knowledge about the history and plant uses in the Medieval and Tudor periods. He will be giving an illustrated lecture in the Tithe Barn Museum on deadly and dangerous plants, with tales of murder, myths and magic.
Cost per person £10.00, which includes tea. Pre-booking is essential. Tickets can be obtained by contacting the Prebendal manor. 01780 782575
The Prebendal Manor, Nassington continued

An Archaeological Trail
Sunday 17th July 1 - 5 pm
Adult £5.00 Child £2.00, Family ticket £11.00
The National Archaeology Festival. The Prebendal Manor and Tithe Barn Museum will be holding an exciting family archaeological trail around the site, with lots of artefacts to find and name, games to play and prizes to win.

The End of Heritage at Northamptonshire County Council?
With the latest reorganisation within the County Council the successful combination of the Historic Environment Record, the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), Northamptonshire Archaeology and the Record Office under the management of Sarah Bridges, who actually cares about the services and the staff, has been broken up by relocating Northamptonshire Archaeology to a new department.

The bringing together of these services under a single sympathetic manager had been a great success, and was a further move away from the days when the county council had made itself a national disgrace in the archaeological world by opting out of providing planning advice as well as winding down Northamptonshire Heritage to a bare minimum of staff.

This break up is just another small sign of the times nationally, and the prevalent view that heritage and culture are luxuries that we can only afford in times of prosperity is sad and misguided. Much damage is being done across the country to already hard-pressed services, and things will get far worse before the cuts come to an end. It is just a matter of how terminal some of that damage may be. It is easy to cut but far more difficult to rebuild services that had evolved over several decades.

Future NAS Meetings
Despite not having a Meetings secretary we are currently planning or planning to be involved, in a number of events.

We hope to have a table at the Heritage Fair to be held 10th September, at the Holy Sepulchre Church, Northampton (St Sep’s).

We will be having a joint meeting with the Northamptonshire Branch of the Historical Association in February 2012. The speaker will be Professor Chris Dyer of Leicester University on the subject of ‘The origins of the English village (700-1200) revisited’. This talk will have many links with Northamptonshire through the work of both the Raunds Area Project and the Whittlewood Project, both of which have contributed greatly to the understanding of village origins.

We are also hoping to repeat our Archaeology Day, as held in the spring of 2008, as a gathering of local archaeological/historical societies. This is provisionally pencilled in for spring 2012, probably at a location at the other end of the county, perhaps Oundle.

Of course, our AGM will be in November as usual, hopefully with another journal to collect on the day.

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