



NASNEWS

Newsletter of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society



Website: www.northants-archaeology.org.uk

May 2019

The NAS AGM 13 November 2018

It was a disappointing turn out for the AGM, which was a pity given the excellence of the speaker, Paul Stamper.

All present post holders were returned: Andy Chapman, Secretary and Editor; Carol Simmonds, Treasurer; Pat Chapman, Membership Secretary; Rob Atkins, Meetings Secretary and Mark Holmes, Newsletter Editor. Graham Cadman, David Waller, Stephen Hollowell, Mike Curtis, Brian Giggins, Roy Friendship-Taylor and Ian Barrie remain members of the NAS council.

NAS also remains financially sound, with over £32,000 in the bank and building society accounts.

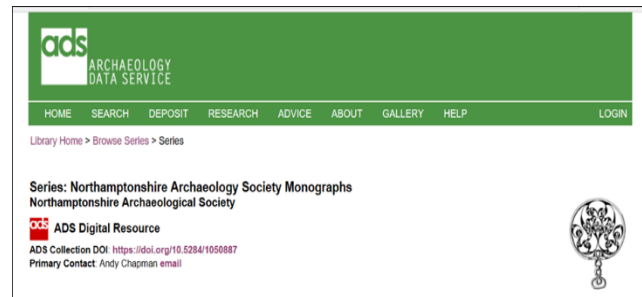
At the first committee meeting of 2019 Andy Chapman succeeded Mike Curtis as Chair, and Mike became Vice-Chair.

Northamptonshire Archaeology online

We have completed the first small step in getting our past publications online. The overview of the archaeology of the county published in 2004, *The Archaeology of Northamptonshire*, is now freely available online through ADS (Archaeology Data Service). The direct link is the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for the NAS monographs series: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1050887>

The DOI is a permanent link to this resource, which will still apply in the future even if the website hosting it was to change. Alternatively, you can search through the ADS website:

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/>, following the chain: *Library Home > Browse Series > Series > Monograph (in Series)*.



It can be downloaded chapter by chapter, including the index, colour plates and bibliography.

The next step is to finish compiling a huge database detailing the contents of the journal series, with the aim of having the entire set online by the end of the year. To achieve this economically we have to do them all in one go or there would be separate setup charges for each.

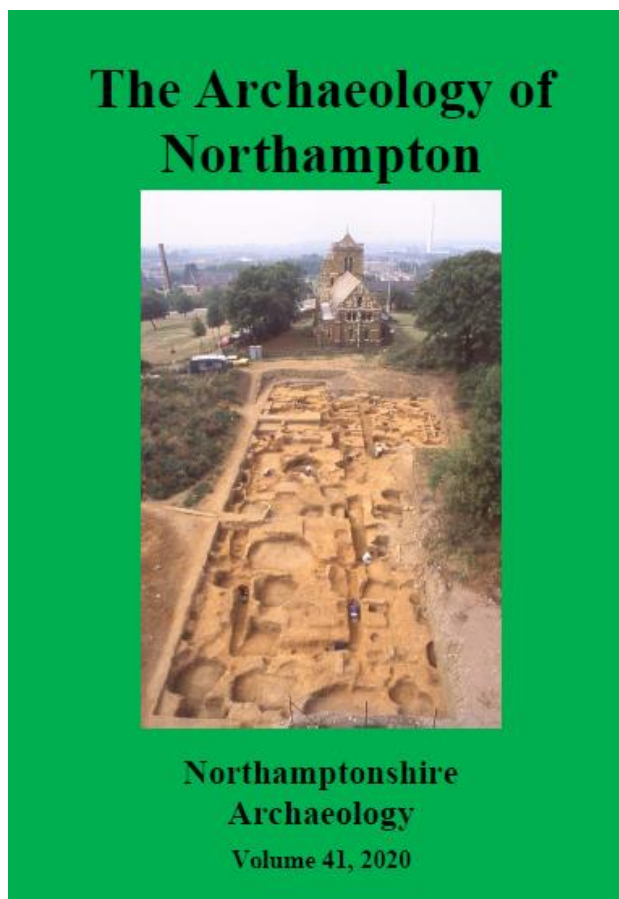
The Journal

Whilst making this foray into the world of online content, be assured that work on our more traditional publications continues. In fact, no less than two separate volumes of the Journal are currently in preparation:

Northamptonshire Archaeology, 40
Editing and formatting for the next journal is heading towards completion and it is hoped to have it ready to be sent for typesetting by mid-June. This should mean that it will be printed this summer, ready for your post-holiday reading!

This is a general volume with a mix of articles ranging from Neolithic long barrows, through Iron Age and Roman settlement and ending up with medieval settlements and a study of moated enclosures.

Northamptonshire Archaeology, 41
The Archaeology of Northampton
This will be a special edition dedicated solely to the archaeology of Northampton, with both overviews and specific site reports.



John Williams and Mike Shaw have their article on Anglo-Saxon Northampton almost finalised. John Williams has also provided an article on the Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit, which he led in the 1970s and 80s, carrying out much of the most important work on the pre-Conquest town.

Work to produce the series of reports on Northampton Castle will begin in July/August, and the aim is to have this volume completed and ready for typesetting in early 2020, to be published in time for a spring launch. We will be printing additional copies of this volume for general sale to the public.

West Cotton, Raunds and the diet of medieval peasants

In the 1990s Dr Richard Evershed and his students were doing pioneering work on the analysis of food residues within pottery, and sherds from numerous medieval pots from the excavations at West Cotton, Raunds were provided to this project. Although they published several papers in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* on individual analyses, no single overview was available for inclusion in the published report on West Cotton (Chapman, A, 2010 *West Cotton, Raunds: a study of medieval settlement dynamics AD 450-1450. Excavation of a deserted medieval hamlet in Northamptonshire 1985-89*, Oxford: Oxbow Books).

Julie Dunne has now returned to the original data as part of her work at the University of Bristol, and she has produced a couple of papers on the

implications of the results of the residue analysis for the study of medieval diet. The first of these has just been published: Dunne, J, Chapman, A, Blinkhorn, P, and Evershed, R, 2019 Reconciling organic residue analysis, faunal, archaeobotanical and historical records: diet and the medieval peasant at West Cotton, Raunds, Northamptonshire, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 107, 58-70.

Chemical and isotopic techniques were used to identify lipids, the fats, oils and natural waxes of the natural world, which had survived within the ceramics. The findings demonstrate that stews (or pottages) of meat (beef and mutton) and vegetables, such as cabbage and leek, were the mainstay of the medieval peasant diet. The research also showed that dairy products, likely the 'green cheeses' known to be eaten by the peasantry, also played an important role in their diet.



Medieval cooking pots (actually from Northampton Castle and not West Cotton, but in the same shelly coarseware fabric)

If really interested, you can go to the original report (or email Andy Chapman at NAS196674@gmail.com), but for a broad overview you can have a look at either

the original press release from the University of Bristol or some of the press coverage by, among others, *New Scientist* and *The Metro* through the links below:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2019/may/medieval-peasant-diet.html>

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2203574-peasants-in-medieval-england-ate-a-diet-of-meat-stew-and-cheese/>

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/05/17/scientists-uncovered-diet-medieval-peasants-analysing-pots-9583533/>

Concurrently, some of the charred seeds from West Cotton are also under re-analysis as part of the *Feeding Anglo-Saxon England: The Bioarchaeology of an Agricultural Revolution* project. This project is led by Helena Hamerow and is based at the Universities of Oxford and Leicester.

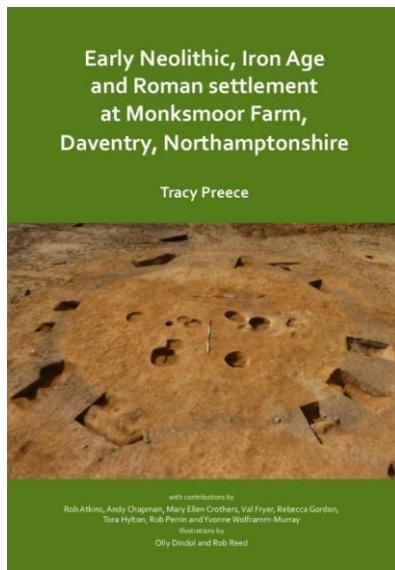
So, West Cotton continues to contribute to medieval studies some 30 years after the end of the excavations, showing the value of archaeological archives.

Book News

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) has just published two new books on excavations in the county:

Early Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman settlement at Monksmoor Farm, Daventry Northamptonshire by Tracy Preece, Archaeopress Archaeology, ISBN 978-1-78969-210-5, priced £30. It is also available as an e-publication at £16, ISBN 978-1-78969-211-2

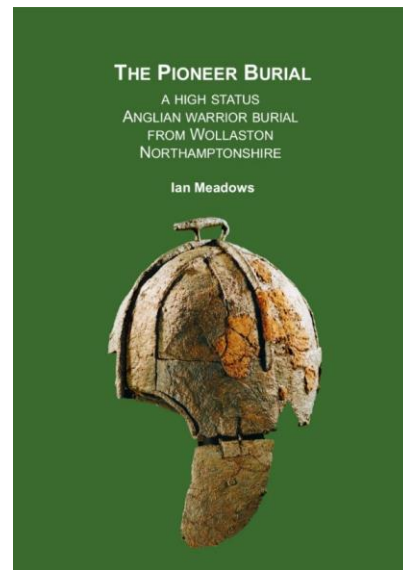
www.archaeopress.com



This volume deals with excavations at Monksmoor Farm on the north-eastern edge of Daventry, undertaken in advance of housing development. A settlement was established in the middle Iron Age, and in the late Iron Age there two separate areas of occupation. One contained a cluster of eight roundhouses whilst the other was a large ditched enclosure of the 'Wootton Hill' type, distinctive defended enclosures whose function and place in the Iron Age social hierarchy are still debated. Settlement continued through the later 1st to 2nd centuries AD with the establishment of large rectangular enclosures and paddocks on either side of a routeway, indicating that movement of livestock was an important element in the early Roman period.

The Pioneer burial: A high status Anglian warrior burial from Wollaston, Northamptonshire by Ian Meadows, Archaeopress Archaeology, ISBN 978-1-78491-766-1, priced £24.

www.archaeopress.com



A high-status Anglian burial was found in 1997 during archaeological work by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Pioneer Aggregates UK (now part of Hanson UK) in advance of gravel extraction at Wollaston.

It was a remarkable late 7th century 'warrior' burial featuring the best preserved Anglo-Saxon helmet ever found in a burial context. This is only the fourth burial excavated in this country containing a helmet from this period and the boar crest remains only the second ever seen. It evokes scenes recorded in Saxon poems such as Beowulf where boar-adorned helmets are mentioned six times including a description of a funeral pyre "heaped with boar-shaped helmets forged in gold". Other burial goods included a pattern welded sword and a bronze hanging bowl.

This elite individual was buried close to the River Nene, adjacent to a Roman road and at a possible important land division, close to the south-western corner of the Late Saxon Higham Hundred boundary where it met the River Nene.

The Pioneer burial artefacts are on long term display at the Royal Armouries museum in Leeds.

A 7th-century necklace from Hardingstone

This is the title of a fascinating paper by Katie Haworth, Dept. of Archaeology, Durham University, published in the most recent *Medieval Archaeology*, the journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology (Volume 62/2 2018, 237-261).

The accompanying abstract reads: 'A necklace assemblage from a small Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Hardingstone, was discovered during excavations' (at Martin's Lane in advance of construction of a primary school) 'in the 1960s... It is an example of a type commonly found in distinctive well-furnished female graves of the later 7th century in England ... As a case study, the Hardingstone necklace provides an opportunity to explore the meaning of these kinds of jewellery item and to better understand the prominent role of the women who wore them in 7th-century Anglo-Saxon society.'

Upcoming Events

NAS tour of Chester Farm

Sarah Bridges of Northamptonshire County Council has kindly invited members of NAS to an evening visit to the summer excavation at Chester Farm, Irchester, on Tuesday, 18 June assembling at 7pm prompt in the Claudius Way car park.

The County Council is running the excavation in partnership with the

University of Leicester, providing training and digging experience for 2nd year archaeology students. The project will also be offering spaces to community volunteers (see below). The excavation and associated activities are delivered at no cost to the County Council.

The area to be excavated is in the former orchard, near the main farm buildings. The main feature expected to be uncovered is part of what is currently thought to be a late Roman cemetery.

There will be a small charge of £2.50 per head for the members' only visit. The open day can accommodate up to 25 people - please contact Rob Atkins on 01604 809815 to book a place or email Rob at ratkins@mola.org.uk

Volunteering at Chester Farm

If you want to be more actively involved, you can volunteer on the Chester Farm excavations on the following dates: Monday, 3 June to Friday, 21 June, 9:00am to 4:30pm and Saturday, 8 June and Sunday, 9 June, 9:30 am to 4:00pm.

Chester Farm are keen that as many people as possible are given a chance to 'have a go', however, the total number of places for volunteers will be limited and will be allocated according to demand. You may, therefore, not be allocated all the days for which you apply. Minimum attendance is a full day at a time. But for example, you might ask to work three full days in three separate weeks. Sorry, the site cannot supervise anyone under 17, and all volunteers need to be reasonably fit and prepared to get a bit muddy!

To express interest, please email chesterfarm@northamptonshire.gov.uk, stating your level of experience and the dates on which you would be available to join the excavation. You will be sent confirmation of the dates you have been allocated and some further information a week before the start of the dig.

Hands on History: Exploring Aspects of Research

On Saturday 15 June 2019 the University of Northampton in conjunction with the Student Union will be hosting a Research Study Day 'Hands on History: Exploring Aspects of Research'.

The event will be held from 10am-4pm in the historic restored 1870s Midland Railway engine shed that is now the Student Union building on the University of Northampton Waterside Campus, on Bedford Road, Northampton.

Led by academics from the University along with other heritage professionals the day will consist of presentations and workshops and will provide a great opportunity for networking. You will have the opportunity to share knowledge and skills in historical research, particularly within Northamptonshire.

The cost will be £10 and details can be found at:

<https://northamptonunion.com/events>

W G Hoskins Lecture

The Friends of the Centre for English Local History (FCELH) will be hosting the annual W G Hoskins Lecture in

Leicester, on Saturday, 15 June. The lecturer will be Professor Stephen Rippon from Exeter University who is a past president of the Medieval Research Group. Details can be found at:

http://friends.englishlocalhistory.org/html/03.05.hoskins_lecture.htm

Grafton Regis: 1,000 years of history in 100 minutes

The 2019 programme of historical walks at Grafton Regis continues on 22 June and 14 September. The event is enticingly described thus:

'Take a leisurely Saturday afternoon walk through our picturesque village and meet some of the people linked with our amazing history. They range from Plantagenet and Tudor kings and queens to commoners, and from Norman times to the present day.

We start at 2.30pm in our uniquely decorated Village Hall, visit the beautiful Church of St Mary the Virgin, and return to the Hall for tea and cakes.'

The cost is £9.50 for adults, £1.00 for under 16s, and under 5s free. All profits are equally divided between the funds for the maintenance of the Church and of the Village Hall. Booking is essential. For further information and to book, please ring Kathy on 0791 009 2132 or email

keith.harry@btinternet.com

For more information about the history of Grafton Regis and upcoming events can be found at www.grafton-regis.co.uk

Edgecote 1469: Study Day

Abington Park Museum along with the Northamptonshire Battlefields Society will be holding a study day on the subject of the Battle of Edgecote, to mark its 550th anniversary.

The study day will be on Saturday 27 July at Abington Park Museum and will run from 10am to 4.15pm. Cost will be £35 (£30 for members of the Northamptonshire Battlefields Society or the Battlefields Trust). Full details can be found at:

www.Northantsbattles.com

Hunsbury Hill:

Friends of West Hunsbury Park

Sunday, 15 September

The Vikings (& Normans) will be back for the Heritage Open Days. Date and time to be confirmed.

Stanwick Lakes:

Settlers of the Nene Valley

Sunday, 22 September

Archaeological displays, activities for children and yet more Viking re-enactors. Details to be announced; see the Stanwick Lakes facebook or web pages.

MidNAG

Excavations at Nassington

The Middle Nene Archaeological Group (MidNAG) are continuing their excavations at Nassington, with a fourth season over summer 2019.

There will be a public open day on Sunday, 25 August, 11am to 4pm.

Parking is off the Apethorpe Road, in a field on the left just after you leave the village.

There is also a small exhibition about the excavations at Oundle Museum, which runs from 1 March to 30 October 2019. It includes some of the artefacts found during 2016-2018, Head upstairs to see the exhibition, opposite the Remand Cell.

The Museum also has plenty of other archaeological exhibits, especially from Ashton Roman town, just outside Oundle itself.

There will be a short summary of the results from previous seasons in the forthcoming journal.

Collyweston Historical and Preservation Society

NAS is providing a grant of £250 towards the project to find The Royal Palace of Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII and grandmother to Henry VIII. They will be holding a Palace Weekend in August, see web site for details.

And finally.....

News items of interest are also posted on the NAS Facebook page. If you have any news items contact Andy Chapman: NAS196674@gmail.com

If you have any news or information that you would like included in the next NAS newsletter then please contact:

Mark Holmes: NASNEWS editor
mholmes@MOLA.org.uk