

Northamptonshire Archaeology



Northamptonshire Archaeology 1991, 23
Volume 23, 1991

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

President

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, GCVO

Vice-Presidents

A E BROWN, MA, FSA

R HOLLOWELL

G WEBSTER, OBE, MA, PhD, FSA, AMA

C T P WOODFIELD, Dip Arch RIBA, MIFA

The Northamptonshire Archaeological Society was formed in 1974 in succession to the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies; its governing council includes representatives of local associations and institutions in addition to elected officers and members. The Society aims to promote an informed appreciation of the county's rich archaeological heritage through lectures and field-visits, and seeks to provide an effective public voice in the interest of the archaeology of the area.

The Society publishes *Northamptonshire Archaeology* which contains reports on individual sites and subjects in addition to providing details of recent finds and fieldwork in the area. The journal is distributed free to members.

Membership of the Society is open to anyone with an interest in the past. From 1st September 1991 the annual subscription rates are:

Individual	£10
Family (husband and wife jointly)	£12
Student	£8
Local Association	£15
Institution	£25 plus postage

Enquiries regarding membership should be addressed to the Secretary.

ISSN: 0305-4659

Price to non-members: £25.00

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY, 23, 1991

Contents

John Bridges 1666–1724 MARION ARNOLD	2–3
The Villa and Temple at Cosgrove, Northamptonshire HENRIETTA QUINNELL with S A BUTCHER, J BAYLEY, R BRICKSTOCK, B M DICKINSON, K F HARTLEY, W H MANNING, P MARNEY, T PEARSON, J PRICE, J M ROGERS, I F SMITH AND B WESTLEY	4–66
A Late Iron Age Decorated Object from Cosgrove HENRIETTA QUINNELL	67–68
The Priory Church of Saint Mary, Canons Ashby MICHEL AUDOUY	70–78
Notes E C MUSGRAVE AND M TINGLE	79–106
Archaeology in Northamptonshire 1990 E C MUSGRAVE AND M TINGLE	107–114



John Bridges 1666–1724

200 years ago John Bridges' 'History and antiquities of Northamptonshire' was published. It has stood the test of time and remains the only complete history of the county ever written.

John Bridges was born in 1666 in Binfield in Berkshire. His grandfather was Col. John Bridges of Alcester, Warwickshire and his father purchased the manor of Barton Seagrave 'about 1665'. He spent much time improving the estate. His mother was Elizabeth, sister of Sir William Trumbull, Secretary of State under William III.

Bridges became a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn, was appointed solicitor to the customs in 1695, a Commissioner in 1711–12 and a Cashier of Excise in 1715. He was what today would be called a civil servant. He was made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1718.

His great interest was in antiquarian research, mainly for the county of Northamptonshire. He started collecting material for his projected history in 1719 and personally made a circuit of the county. He employed several people to make drawings, collect information, etc. and in doing so spent large sums of his own money. It was his intention to make another personal survey of the county and to go over all his material again, but he died before he had done this or published any of it.

He died, unmarried, at the age of 58 on March 16th 1724 in his chambers at Lincoln's Inn and was buried at Barton Seagrave. There is a monument to him in the church erected by Brooke Bridges in 1753.

At his death he left 30 volumes of manuscripts and 5 volumes of descriptions collected for him. These are now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. He commissioned a number of drawings, some by Tillemans, others by Eayre for inclusion in his history. These drawings are now in the British Museum.

He left all his manuscripts relating to Northamptonshire to his brother William Bridges, and Dr. Samuel Jebb was engaged to edit them for publication. Two numbers of the work under Jebb's editorship were produced c.1739–40, but in 1742 Gibbons, a law bookseller and the publisher, went bankrupt and publication ceased.

In 1755 the project was revived and a new editor was appointed who was the Reverend Peter Whalley. He came from a well-known clerical family in the county. The first volume of the second edition was published in 1762 and was followed by the first part of the second volume in 1769. Further delay arose because of the death of members of the committee formed to accomplish the publication of the work, including the chairman, Sir Thomas Cave.

Eventually, the history was published in 1791. The Reverend Peter Whalley died the same year, aged 69, at Ostend. The argument as to whether Whalley made the best use of Bridges' manuscripts remains open and no doubt Bridges would have edited his own work differently. However, the history remains the basic source of information for those who wish to research the history of Northamptonshire.

Marion Arnold
Northampton Library