

Archaeology in Northamptonshire 2006

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with additional contributions from Archaeological Project Services and Richard Ivens

PREHISTORIC

CORBY, PRIORS HALL

NGR SP 928 902

Evaluation

Archaeological Project Services

Following geophysical survey that identified potential archaeological features, an evaluation carried out by Rachael Hall in an area of iron smelting activity and near to Roman remains. Iron Age pits and a possible well were revealed.

NORTHAMPTON, HARLESTONE QUARRY

NGR SP 705 645

Excavation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An area of approximately 1.2ha was stripped and excavated. Radiocarbon dating indicates that residual charcoal of early Bronze Age date had been deposited in a pit alignment, while a single small pit containing burnt debris was also radiocarbon dated to the early Bronze Age. Major features included part of a pit alignment of probable late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date, comprising a line of regular rectangular pits, with offsets in the alignment associated with changes in pits spacing which have been interpreted as indicating the infilling of a gap in the original alignment. A linear boundary ditch and a scatter of postholes and pits define an area of open settlement that included remnants of two possible roundhouses and perhaps two four-post structures. A small pottery assemblage may be of early-middle Iron Age date. Furrows of a medieval ridge and furrow field system were also recorded. Excavation by Leon Field

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, PINEHAM

NORTH: SITE 2

NGR SP 713 584

Excavation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological excavations, commissioned by Pro-

Logis Developments Ltd via Under Construction Archaeology, were carried out on land immediately adjacent to the M1 motorway in advance of the first two stages of a major residential and business/industrial development. The sites had previously been identified from fieldwalking, geophysical investigation and trial trenching (See Roman section for Site 1).

Material of early to mid-Bronze Age date comprised pottery and worked flint from pits on the hilltop. Funerary remains comprised the ring ditch of a possible barrow and a Bronze Age cremation cemetery associated with a post alignment. An early phase of linear ditches may have formed a field system of late Bronze Age date (Fig 1).

In the latter part of the middle Iron Age the hilltop was occupied for a relatively short period, perhaps 100 years. The settlement comprised at least two phases of roundhouse construction, with five roundhouses set within a square ditched enclosure, which was associated with outlying ditch systems and enclosures.

A further area of Iron Age settlement lies to the north, and will be investigated at a later stage in the development programme, while a small area of Iron Age settlement to the south lay beneath a Roman settlement, Site 1, see below.

Excavation led by Jim Brown.

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, CROSS VALLEY LINK ROAD

NGR SP 708 602 to SP 710 587

Geophysical survey and evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical survey by Ian Fisher, and an archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising eleven trenches, by Anne Foard-Colby, was carried out on land proposed for the Cross Valley Link Road, Upton. The works were commissioned by the Halcrow Group Ltd acting on behalf of their clients English Partnerships and Northamptonshire County Council. A length of a pit alignment was located by the geophysical survey and confirmed in the

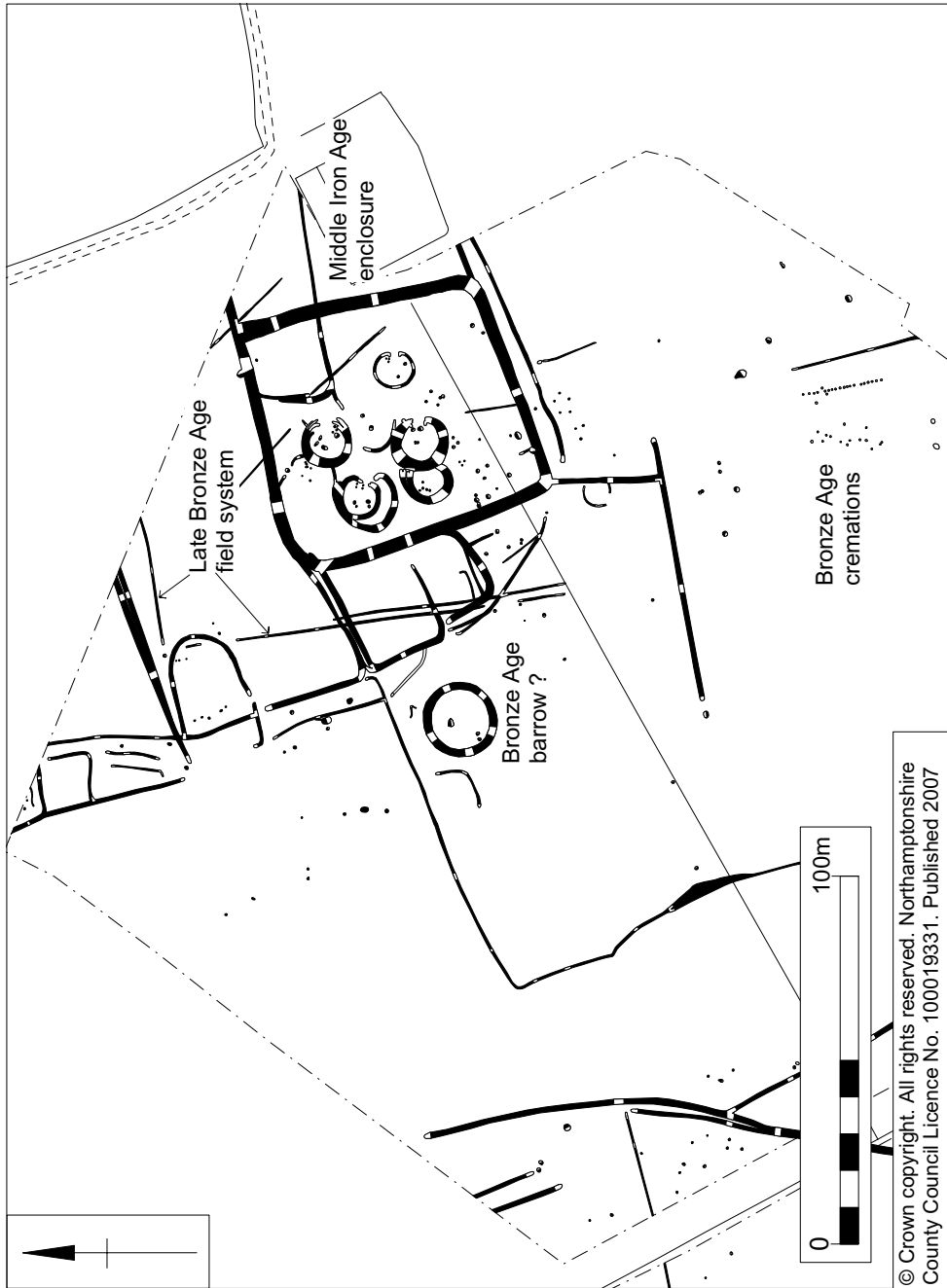


Fig 1 The Bronze Age barrow and Iron Age settlement at Pineham North: Site 2

evaluation, but no dating evidence was recovered to confirm the expected early Iron Age date. There were also a series of ditches possibly of Roman or medieval date underlying a ridge and furrow landscape identified from geophysical survey and aerial photographs.

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, SANDY LANE

NGR SP 708 602 to SP 705 618

Geophysical survey and evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical survey, by Ian Fisher, and archaeological trial trench evaluation, by Anne Foard-Colby, both commissioned by the Halcrow Group Ltd acting on behalf of their clients English Partnerships and Northamptonshire County Council, was carried out on land proposed for the Sandy Lane Relief Road at Upton. There were a series of isolated ditches possibly of Iron Age or Roman date. A single sherd of probable late Iron Age pottery was recovered from a ditch. Considerable variation in the natural geology was noted over the entire route of the road corridor, including the presence of a possible palaeochannel.

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL

NGR SP7189 6018

Geophysical survey and evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical survey and archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Adrian Butler and Anne Foard-Colby on 0.2ha of land proposed for a sports hall at Quinton House School. A single pit within a known pit alignment was found. An Iron Age enclosure contained a number of internal features, and a series of ditches lay beyond the enclosure. This activity all lay to the west of a previous open-area excavation that examined a further length of the same pit alignment and further Iron Age enclosures. The whole complex forms an extensive area of Iron Age settlement, with Roman settlement to the immediate east at the western margin of Duston Roman town.

ROMAN

CORBY, PRIORS HALL

NGR SP 928 902

Evaluation

Archaeological Project Services

Following geophysical survey that identified pot-

ential archaeological features, an evaluation carried out by Rachael Hall in an area of iron smelting activity and near to Roman remains. An iron smelting furnace, thought perhaps to be Roman in date, was identified, and other Roman features were also revealed.

IRCHESTER ROMAN TOWN

NGR SP 94244 67793

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Evaluation by Paul Mason comprising three test pits, took place on land to the north-west of Irchester Roman town in advance of the construction of an access road and car park. The subsoil contained sherds of 1st to 4th-century pottery. This was followed by a watching brief whilst the ground was prepared for the construction of the car park and access road. Ten human skeletons, dated to the early-mid 4th century date by pottery within the grave fills, were exposed and excavated. Anomalous bone growth inside the skull of one of the skeletons may be the result of meningitis.

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, PINEHAM

NORTH: SITE 1

NGR SP 712 582

Excavation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An area of late Iron Age settlement was succeeded in the 1st century AD by a small farming settlement that continued in occupation throughout the Roman period until the late 4th century, although there may have been a brief hiatus in occupation in the 3rd century (Fig 2). Associated with the early Roman settlement were three cremation burials. Two were accompanied by a range of luxury items, including a small range of Roman finewares and conical glass jugs, dating to the late 1st to early 2nd century AD (Plate 1), while the third cremation was in an earthenware urn. Also dating to the late 1st/early 2nd century were a circular stone and timber building and a T-shaped malting oven.

The settlement underwent significant changes during its history, with much recutting and realignment of the ditch systems, and at least four main phases have been identified through to the late 4th century. Excavation led by Simon Carlyle.



Fig 2 The Iron Age to late Roman settlement at Pineham North: Site 1



Plate 1 Roman finewares and glass jugs, accompanying two cremations at Pineham North, Northampton

TOWCESTER, 147 WATLING STREET

NGR SP 693 487

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Anne Foard-Colby on land proposed for an extension at 147 Watling Street. Parts of three stone walls with an associated floor indicated the presence of a Roman building, while later postholes suggest that it was replaced by a timber structure. A considerable quantity of pottery was recovered, ranging in date from the late 1st to 3rd centuries AD, along with two Roman coins and a quantity of metal objects including a lead weight, a spoon and iron nails. Post-medieval and modern rubbish pits cut the later garden layers and contained pottery spanning the 15th to 20th centuries.

ANGLO-SAXON

CORBY, PRIORS HALL

NGR SP 928 902

Evaluation

Archaeological Project Services

Following geophysical survey that identified potential archaeological features, an evaluation car-

ried out by Rachael Hall. Small pits containing charcoal were recorded and one of these provided a radiocarbon date of 550-660 calAD (95% confidence). Remnants of medieval ridge and furrow were also noted.

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, PINEHAM

NORTH:SITE 1

NGR SP 712 582

Excavation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

The recovery from the plough soil of part of a shield boss and an iron spearhead, dating to the late 5th/6th century, suggests that one or more early Saxon graves had lain on or near the abandoned Roman settlement. Excavation led by Simon Carlyle.

MEDIEVAL

**BRACKLEY, COLLEGE PLACE AND
MARKET HOUSE COURTYARD**

NGR SP 5854 3684

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An evaluation by Simon Carlyle was carried out in College Place and Market House Courtyard to

the rear of the frontage. The earliest feature was a medieval ditch with a possible bank, which probably predates the expansion of the planned medieval town in the late 12th/early 13th centuries. There were a number of pits, probably cess pits, which broadly date to the 13th century and are probably related to the burgage plots associated with the expansion of the new town. The ground level in College Place appears to have been raised by at least half a metre in the late 15th century. Until the mid 20th century the area was occupied by gardens and orchards, before being cleared for industrial and agricultural buildings and yards.

DUDDINGTON, COLLYWESTON QUARRY

NGR SK 9970 0045

Evaluation

Archaeological Project Services

On behalf of Bullimores Sand and Gravel Ltd, an evaluation, in an area where prehistoric, Roman and Saxon remains, including evidence of iron smelting, had previously been identified, was carried out by Victoria Mellor. Anomalies interpreted as representing localised industrial activity at the site were recorded in an earlier geophysical survey. Evaluation trenches revealed probable clay extraction pits, from which industrial waste, particularly roasted iron ore, was recovered. Small quantities of iron smelting slag were also retrieved. It seems likely that ore preparation was the primary activity at the site. No dating evidence was obtained but the industrial activity is likely to be no later than the medieval period.

GREENS NORTON, ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

NGR SP 669 499

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A single trench was hand excavated by Chris Jones adjacent to St. Bartholomew's Church, prior to a proposed extension. Down to 1.20m no burials were recorded, only fragmented pieces of bone scattered within the subsoil. Below 1.20m a small slot was excavated down to 1.70m to the natural sand and this produced more human bone. This could be evidence of late medieval or early post-medieval burials at that depth. No grave cuts were apparent. No architectural remains were recorded.

HIGHAM FERRERS, SAFFRON ROAD

NGR SP 9598 6856

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Steve Morris on the site of the Saffron Road car park prior to the development of a new doctor's surgery. The remnant of a single possible medieval pit, which contained four sherds of 12th-century pottery, was discovered towards the Saffron Road frontage. The construction of a coal yard in the 19th century and later clearance for the current car park appeared to have removed earlier archaeology.

NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL

NGR SP 7189 6018

Geophysical survey and evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical survey and archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Adrian Butler and Anne Foard-Colby, respectively, on 0.2ha of land proposed for a sports hall at Quinton House School. A medieval enclosure ditch, which may be part of the northern end of the deserted medieval village of Upton was found.

SILVERSTONE, THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

NGR SP 66800 44200

Evaluation

Richard Ivens

Two Test Pits (each 1.5 x 1.5m) were hand-excavated at locations within the footprint of a proposed extension of the church rooms into the existing churchyard. The upper 250-350mm of both test pits proved to be of recent date. Evidence of burials of uncertain date was recognised in both test pits. A stone yard, drive or floor was identified occupying most of the area of Test Pit 1. The remains of badly robbed wall/s were revealed in Test Pit 2. This feature had also been disturbed by several graves but still occupied a substantial portion of the Test Pit. Neither the function nor the date of the stone features could be determined within the confines of the Test Pits. Work was therefore suspended, with the agreement of the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, without disturbing the remains any further. The artefacts are mainly of quite modern date but several medieval

and late 17th to 18th-century potsherds were also recovered.

STANION, 3 CORBY ROAD

NGR SP 9142 8697

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial excavation was carried out by Anne Foard-Colby on 0.03ha of land at 3 Corby Road, Stanion. The trenches revealed evidence of medieval occupation in the form of shallow pits, gullies and postholes. Pottery from the site suggests a 13th century date for the majority of features. There was no evidence that this area had been involved with the medieval pottery manufacturing industry of Stanion.

SULBY, FORMER SULBY HALL

NGR SP 6597 8167

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A human skull was cast up from a badger sett in a copse at Sulby that covers the site of Sulby Hall, demolished in 1948. The police forensic team visited the site and recorded and collected further human remains, which were scattered on the ground in the vicinity of a large badger sett, and brought them to Northamptonshire Archaeology for identification. Scattered stone in the same area is presumably rubble from the levelled hall. However, it is possible that the bones may have come from a chapel and cemetery contemporary with the medieval village that lies only some 200m to the west. There is a documented parish church at Sulby, dedicated to St. Botolph, and it is recorded that the nave had fallen down long before 1451, but the location of the church is unknown.

THORPE WATERVILLE, THORPE CASTLE HOUSE

NGR TL 0220 8141

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Anne Foard-Colby during the digging of a hole for a new septic tank. A series of layers were observed which were probably within the southern arm of the moat. These and the location suggest the silting up and infilling of part of the southern arm of the moat.

Artefacts recovered from the layers include a sherd of medieval pottery, a glazed medieval roof tile and floor tile and a fragment of worked stone. Post-medieval window glass and stone roof tiles were also recovered. A 16th-century copper alloy jetton was recovered from the topsoil.

WARKTON, 5-6 PIPE LANE

NGR SP 891 799

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by David Leigh on behalf of Simons Development Ltd through Under Construction Archaeology, during the construction of a new driveway and parking bays on land at 5-6 Pipe Lane. Walls and floor surfaces belonging to a former medieval house fronting onto the lane were revealed. The pottery assemblage indicates that occupation in this area dates back to the 12th century, and the cottage would have been occupied in the 13th and 14th centuries, before being abandoned and levelled. This particular plot has never subsequently been reoccupied.

POST-MEDIEVAL

BLAKESLEY, 7 HIGH STREET

NGR SP 6248 5013

Building recording

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A buildings recording was undertaken by Iain Soden at Kendall House, 7 High Street, ahead of a like-for-like replacement for the floor of the property's dining room/ceiling of the cellar below. The vaulted cellar may be as early as late-medieval, but nothing apparently remains of the structure which originally surmounted it.

The structure of the floor from within the front cellar was secondary to the building. If the frontage building is 18th century, then the floor cannot be very much later in date, perhaps early 19th century, based upon the bricks upon which the frame rests and without which the floor could not function. Nothing survives of the original floor, nor is it clear how it might have related to the surrounding walls. One third of the floor had been replaced once more, the frame of this section employing a variety of re-used timbers of unknown dates and sources.

BRACKLEY, 27 MARKET PLACE

NGR SP 5850 3686

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A watching brief was carried out by Joe Prentice in this Grade II listed building, before a new concrete floor was installed in place of the current suspended wooden floor which had partially collapsed. The floor had been laid on pine joists supported by dwarf walls constructed of Fletton brick suggesting a mid to late-20th century date for its construction. The depth of the clay beneath the void and rubble layer below the present floor was essentially at the level required for the insertion of the new concrete floor so there was no need or opportunity to investigate further and no indications were uncovered of any earlier occupation on the site.

BRAFIELD-ON-THE-GREEN, 62 BILLING ROAD

NGR SP 819 591

Building recording

Northamptonshire Archaeology

As part of the restoration of the Grade II listed cottage at 62 Billing Road it was necessary to remove the existing thatch covering which exposed the underlying roof timbers. The cottage, built of coursed limestone and ironstone rubble with brick end stacks, is an interesting survival of a largely unaltered low status building, probably of 18th-century date. It has undergone some alterations internally which have changed the way in which it was used, but very little modernisation had been carried out. The top coat of the thatch was approximately 30 years old, though beneath it survived small remnants of earlier material in a very degraded state. The roof timbers were in a very poor condition and had undergone many repairs and the poor quality of the wood indicated that the cottage was made from cheap materials; most of the timbers were only roughly trimmed and many retained bark. All were heavily infested with wood boring insects. The building recording was carried out by Joe Prentice.

NORTHAMPTON, BUCKTON FIELDS,

NGR SP 7468 6514

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation by Chris Jones, com-

prising 24 trenches across c 12ha of land, was undertaken at Buckton Fields, on behalf of the Environment Dimension Partnership (EDP) for their clients Ensign Group Ltd. A Mesolithic flint flake was found at the interface between the subsoil and one of the natural striations. The remnants of the surviving anti-aircraft battery structures dating from World War II, confirmed by the presence of two linear ditches, were also recovered.

NORTHAMPTON, 82 DERNGATE

NGR SP 75 60

Building recording

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Initial work has been carried out by Tim Upson-Smith prior to the demolition of part of the rear of the building and its conversion into a visitor centre for 78 Derngate, which has been restored to its 1917 appearance, when it was remodelled by the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh for Northampton businessman Joseph Bassett-Lowke.

Number 82 first appears on the Northampton map of 1847 (Wood and Law) and is Regency/early 19th century in style. The original interior fittings, where they survive, reflect this date. The rear of the building appears to have been remodelled at the beginning of the 20th century with a new kitchen and service area being built on the original footings. Recently the building has had an attack of dry rot which necessitated the removal of a high proportion of woodwork and plaster from the inner face of the exterior walls. At this time the servants' room on the first floor was re-roofed and the walls partially rebuilt in blockwork breeze block. The chimney for this room and the kitchen were also removed. Although these works have removed historic fabric from the building, the proposed demolition of part of the rear of the building has allowed a further detailed look at the construction and development of the building.

PERIOD UNKNOWN

COGENHOE, ST. PETER'S WAY

NGR SP 8283 6066

Evaluation

Archaeological Project Services

An evaluation was carried out by Katie Murphy close to previous discoveries of Iron Age and Roman remains for Francis Jackson Homes Ltd. However,

only a modern demolition layer was identified. It is possible that the site was lowered previously, during the creation of gardens and allotments.

DAVENTRY, MIDDLEMORE FARM

NGR SP 4565, 2651

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief by David Leigh was undertaken during 2005 and 2006 during infrastructure works on land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry. An undisturbed stratigraphy was noted across all of the development area. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

EDGCOTE HOUSE

NGR SP 505 479

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A watching brief was undertaken by Pat Chapman at Egdcote House, during the digging of a pit in the basement to install a replacement lift, commissioned by Johnston Cave Associates, Architects on behalf of Mr and Mrs D Allen. No archaeological features or artefacts were found within the re-excavated lift pit.

EMPINGHAM TO HANNINGTON PIPELINE

NGR SK 9460 0800 – SP 8250 7110

Geophysical survey

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical prospection by Ian Fisher and Steve Morris was conducted as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed pipeline route from Empingham in Rutland to Hannington in Northamptonshire on behalf of Anglia Water Services. A total area of *c* 12ha, spread across 27 fields, was surveyed by fluxgate gradiometer. Major archaeological features were found in four fields and lesser archaeological features, including remnant ridge and furrow field cultivation and isolated lengths of ditch, in a further fourteen.

ISLIP, HARPERS BROOK

NGR SP 995 802

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A watching brief by Danny McAree was carried out during the excavation of a trench for electric cabling

on land beside Harpers Brook, Islip. There was evidence that the land surface had been extensively modified during gravel extraction in the 1960s and 1970s. No archaeological remains were present.

NORTHAMPTON, BARNES MEADOW

NGR SP 768 595

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A mitigation strategy and a watching brief by Karen Deighton, Carol Simmonds and David Leigh was carried out during ground works for the creation of a wetland habitat within the area of the Battle of Northampton of 1460, as defined on English Heritage's Battlefields Register. There were no features or artefacts present.

NORTHAMPTON, BERRYWOOD ROAD

NGR SP 7058 6114

Watching brief

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A watching brief was carried out by Anthony Maull, on behalf of Halcrow Group for English Partnerships under advice from Northamptonshire County Council, during the excavation of a series of geotechnical testpits between Berrywood Road and Sandy Lane ahead of road improvements. No archaeological features or artefacts were found.

NORTHAMPTON, GEORGE ROW

NGR SP 7544 6041

Simon Carlyle

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A watching brief was carried out by Simon Carlyle at County Hall, George Row during the excavation of two postholes in the paved area in front of County Hall, to receive the sockets for two flagpoles. Due to the small size of the excavations, no archaeological features could be identified, although deposits beneath the pavement sub-base may be of archaeological interest.

NORTHAMPTON, SIXFIELDS

NGR SP 7189 6018

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation by Anne Foard-Colby comprising six trenches, commissioned by Halcrow

Group Ltd on behalf of English Partnerships, was carried out on 0.79ha of land proposed for an access road situated to the east of the A45 and south of the Sixfields Football Stadium. No archaeological features were present.

**NORTHAMPTON, UPTON WAY FLOOD
ATTENUATION**

NGR SP 72085924

Geophysical survey, evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical survey, archaeological evaluation and a watching brief, commissioned by Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of English Partnerships, was carried out by Ian Fisher and Anne Foard-Colby on c 2ha of land proposed for the Upton Way Flood Attenuation Scheme. Geophysical survey detected possible anomalies that might have been archaeological features. However, trial trenching demonstrated the presence of alluvium over the natural ground to a depth of 0.2 – 0.9m and no archaeological features were present. During the watching brief for the installation of the haul road, two post-medieval features, a corner of an enclosure ditch and a shallow gully, were observed below the topsoil and cut into the subsoil. An earlier arm of the River Nene, before the river was straightened was also observed and its fill yielded a small number of Roman pottery sherds and residual flint flakes.

**NORTHAMPTON, UPTON, SANDY LANE
NORTH**

NGR SP 707 626

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation by Ian Fisher and Ed Taylor was carried out on land at Sandy Lane, on behalf of Atkins Heritage, prior to the proposed Sandy Lane Improvement Scheme. The few archaeological remains comprised undated ditches and gullies, most of which corresponded with

geophysical anomalies. Other features identified by the geophysical survey were found to be attributable to modern disturbance or to be of probable geological origin.

ROTHWELL, JUBILEE STREET

NGR SP 817 808

Evaluation

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation by Anne Foard-Colby comprising 23 trial trenches, commissioned by Entec on behalf of Bovis Homes Ltd, was carried out on 8.2ha of land proposed for housing in Rothwell. Three intercutting ditches and a gully were found. No dateable evidence was recovered from any of the features.

ROTHWELL, NORTH

NGR SP 807 816

Geophysical survey

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Geophysical prospection by Ian Fisher, commissioned by CgMs Consulting, took place on a 40ha proposed development site to the north of Rothwell. The whole area was investigated by magnetometer scanning and a sample area of c 12.5ha was surveyed in detail. An extensive settlement complex of presumed Iron Age date was found. This was overlain by post-medieval agricultural remains, including a barn, trackway and several field boundaries. Remnant medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation was also found.

**THURNING, CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE
GREAT**

NGR TL 08575 82600

Watching brief

Richard Ivens

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of drainage trenches and a soakaway. No pre-19th-century deposits were observed.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME 2006

The last year has been an exciting and challenging time for the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Northamptonshire, with the scheme seeing important developments both nationally and in the county. Since April 2006 the P.A.S. has been funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's *Renaissance* scheme, and the scheme is moving into the closing stages of this round of funding, prior to 2008's parliamentary spending review.

On a local level, with the reorganisation of the County Council's heritage team, the Portable Antiquities Scheme is now based with the Archives Service. The new situation provides both challenges and exciting opportunities for collaborative work in the future. Furthermore, Tom Brindle, who had acted as Finds Liaison Officer in the county for the past three years, has recently moved on to further study in archaeology. Since December 2006, Steve Ashby has been in post, and it has been his aim to maintain, and where possible, extend the strong community links forged by Tom.

Thus, contact has been re-established with local metal detecting clubs, local history societies, and other community groups, as well as independent finders and members of the professional archaeological community. Steve has found that many of the finders that were familiar with Tom have been very forthcoming, and the PAS's return has been greeted with keenness and optimism, while Steve has also made contact with a number of new finders, who had previously had little contact with, or no knowledge of, the scheme. This success is doubtless related to the emphasis put on promotion of the Scheme upon Steve's arrival, which has included numerous press events, using articles in local newspapers, TV and radio, and which coincided with the national launch of the PAS's annual finds and treasure reports (copies of which can be requested from Steve at the address below).

We have aimed to maintain close contact with the public; both those who have found items of archaeological interest, and other potential finders. Thus, we maintain a visible presence at the county's various metal detecting clubs, and hold a series of regular, open access 'finds surgeries' at regular intervals across the county. These currently take place at Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton,

Oundle, Towcester, and Wellingborough, with key support from the district councils, as well as at Piddington Roman Villa Museum, in collaboration with the Upper Nene Archaeological Society.

Both Tom and Steve have attempted to publicise the scheme as widely as possible in the county. For example, in August 2006, a small team of members of staff from the PAS, Tom included, participated in the English Heritage Festival of History at Kelmars Hall, which provided an excellent opportunity to promote the scheme to hundreds of potential finders and interested parties. Since he took up post, Steve has been promoting the scheme through attendance and presentation at a number of conferences, has liaised closely with members of the CLASP community archaeology 'umbrella' group, and has attended a number of events at local museums.

Steve would like to extend opportunities for community engagement with the scheme, by encouraging more finders to come forward and introduce themselves, and by creating opportunities for those already participating to become even more involved. Steve hopes that finders might be interested in keeping their own detailed records, recording on the PAS database themselves, or producing short notes and reports for publication in local journals and magazines (such as *Northamptonshire Archaeology*), and is happy to assist with this where he can.

Since the last note in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, the Northants PAS have recorded a total of over 1200 finds onto the national database, bringing the total figure for Northamptonshire to over 6350. The quality of this data is excellent, with finds precision amongst the best in the country. The majority of finds have been metal artefacts and coins, but pottery, lithics, and bone have also been recorded, and though a large number of finds can be dated to the Roman and medieval periods, the prehistoric and post-medieval periods are well represented. Interestingly, though metal detectorists provided a significant proportion of the finds recorded over this period, a large number of members of the local community brought forward finds recovered during other activities, such as gardening, digging, or dog-walking. This really demonstrates that the role of the Portable Antiquities Scheme is starting to reach public consciousness, but there is of course much more work to be done.

Amongst the finds recorded over this period, exceptional examples include a rare anthropomorphic Roman nail cleaner (NARC-733D28), found by

Michael Goodman in the Norton area (Plate 1), and an unusual post-medieval vessel (NARC-0ACAB1), possibly associated with witchcraft, found in a stream near Harlestone (Plate 2). These unusual finds are of great typological and social interest (see catalogue descriptions below), but in many ways the real value of the scheme lies in the recording of large numbers of well provenanced artefacts, no matter how ordinary or unimportant they may appear on first viewing.

Steve continues to act as the official Treasure advisor for the county, and is often the first point of contact for finders of potential Treasure. Rates of reporting of treasure finds continue to increase in line with the trends for other artefacts; a notable achievement that is surely related to the continued publicity and exposure that the scheme enjoys, but is also due in no small part to the goodwill of the county's finders and landowners. This can only bode well for the future of the county's heritage.

In closing, Steve would like to point out that the successes of the scheme would not be possible without the cooperation, support, and assistance of Northamptonshire County Council and the various district councils, and of course the finders themselves. Particular thanks are due to Norton Northamptonshire Portable Antiquities Search Team (NNPAST), Northampton Detecting Association (NDA), the Nene Valley Detecting Group (NVDG), and the Upper Nene Archaeological Society. All finders, whether detectorists, gardeners, fieldwalkers or dogwalkers, have played an enormous role in the schemes successes. With their help, Steve aims to build upon the achievements of the previous eight years, and to encourage even more people to record their finds with the scheme, whilst also expanding educational output.

The PAS website can be visited at: www.finds.org.uk, and you can search for finds from Northamptonshire at www.findsdatabase.org.uk (linked from the main site). Steve is based at County Hall in Northampton, where he can be contacted care of the Archives Service.

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CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED FINDS

PLATE 1

A cast copper-alloy Roman nail cleaner, 55mm long. The head of the object is designed as a female head with tied back hair, and there is a suspension loop on the back at a right angle to the blade. A slight trace of probable gilding is evident at the top left of the head. A thin neck expands to a rectangular plate with two forward projecting protrusions representing breasts, probably the latter. The plate is inscribed with an X on its side and rear plates. This unusual example is difficult to date, but is most similar to those from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The figure depicted is probably a female deity.



Plate 1 A cast copper-alloy Roman nail cleaner

PLATE 2

A large iron bowl, 300mm in diameter with walls 50mm high. Within the bowl there were 11 small copper-alloy pins and pin fragments, along with an iron stud, pin, tack and possible nail. An X-ray has shown at least 10 other pins hidden within the corrosion. A bone handle juts out of the vessel wall and the X-ray shows that this is attached to the tanged blade of a knife, and more small artefacts may also be concealed within the corrosion layer.

The pins all have wound-wire heads, and range from 17.8-28.5mm long and 0.5-0.7mm thick, and are of post-medieval date, spanning the 16th to 19th centuries. Eight of the complete copper



Plate 2 A large iron bowl, possibly a “witch bottle”

alloy pins, the iron nail and the iron pin are bent. The use of bent pins (often alongside human hair and bodily fluids) placed within ceramic ‘witch bottles’ in the post-medieval period is well attested. They are normally found hidden within houses, usually within walls, under thresholds or behind hearths, whereas this bowl was found in a shallow stream. Perhaps it was intended to prevent curses or spells from crossing to the other side of the stream in which it was found. While witch bottles were generally of pottery or glass, rather than metal, it is possible that a wider variety of containers were used, with the contents rather than the material of the container, being of importance in warding off malign magic. With such an artefact these theories can only be tentative, and there is also the possibility that the bowl was simply used as a scrap box for odds and ends, and was later discarded in the river.

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