

# The publication of Northamptonshire Archaeology

by

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## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO 2007?

Observant readers will have noticed that we have gone from volume 34, 2006 to volume 35, 2008, with 2007 banished from existence. There is a good reason for this. While we have managed to produce six consecutive journals annually from the 2000-01 issue to 2006, from the mid-1980s to the beginning of the 2000s several journals appeared as biennial issues, dated to two-year spans. The years also slipped one behind in this period, so that last year we published at the end of 2007, with distribution continuing into early 2008, the journal for 2006. This has not caused our ordinary members any evident concern, but over the years it has confused some of our institutional members, and each year we receive a few letters from institutional libraries enquiring as to why they have still not received the previous year's journal. (No doubt next year we will receive similar letters asking, "Where is the journal for 2007?")

It has also meant that for bibliographic referencing the publication year as indicated by the date on the volume, has been a year behind the actual date of publication. Whilst unlikely, given how long it usually takes most of us to get our reports written, under the old formula it would have been possible to carry out some fieldwork in the early months of, say, 2007, to write a quick report and get it in the journal for 2006, which really would make the author prompt with his publication! Regrettably, the possibility of having a publication date in advance of the fieldwork date is now lost.

We could have double-dated this issue to 2007-08, but my personal feeling is that this looks ugly in bibliographies (can those people not make their minds up which year they are publishing in?), and it might be taken to imply that we were again producing a biennial issue. We have therefore chosen the simple option of jumping a year so that the journal appearing at the end of 2008 to early 2009 will be the journal for 2008, which seems most logical.

## THE CHANGE OF FORMAT

Of course, we have changed rather more than just the publication year, the whole format of the journal has been revamped with the move to A4 and digital printing, to bring in lots of colour, and a change of font for the headings to give the presentation of the text a new look as well.

As this editorial is being written I can only hope that the published journal lives up to my own expectations, and I hope that at least a majority of our readers enjoy the introduction of both colour illustrations and photographs.

This volume does of course show the submitted material in transition, with some articles prepared for traditional printing and others prepared for full colour throughout, while others are somewhere between.

As discussed in the editorial last year, this volume also includes some extreme contrasts of style from lengthy traditional reports accompanied by lengthy specialist reports and much tabulated data, while others present briefer syntheses of the results and direct the interested reader to the archive reports, while others have replaced the finds drawings with colour photographs.

## PRODUCTION COSTS

In looking at the need for change in the style and format of the journal one aspect considered was the cost of publication. To do this I have tracked back through the annual accounts to look at the costs of production and printing over the years, for which I have found figures back to 1983 (Table 1). (If anyone can provide details of the costs of earlier issues I would be pleased to hear from them.) As the cost per page is the most accurate measure of changing costs (Table 2), the total costs have been set against the length of the journals (Table 3) to establish this.

As can be seen, the total cost of producing the journal by traditional typesetting and offset litho production rose steadily through the 1980s, no doubt reflecting steadily rising costs in a period of high inflation. A peak was reached in 1989, volume 22, when the society spent £10,770 on printing the journal at a cost of nearly £60 per page. Fortunately for the society's bank account, £7,087 of that was covered by publication grants from the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (HBMCE), now English Heritage, who in those days funded much of the "Rescue" archaeology in advance of development works.

From the peak of 1989 there was an equally dramatic fall in production costs through to the mid-1990s, which I assume is due to the introduction of digital typesetting leading to a substantial saving compared to traditional typesetting costs. A reduction in the use of microfiche in the early 1990s, and coming to an end in 1995, would also have given some savings.

The overall costs show a slow rise through the later 1990s, but this was a result of a general increase in the length of the volumes at this time, reaching an all-time high of 240 pages in 2001, volume 29 (Table 3). As can be seen from the cost per page, costs have actually remained pretty static from the mid-1990s to the present day, a period of very low inflation, oscillating between £25 and £30 per page, about the same as in the early 1980s.

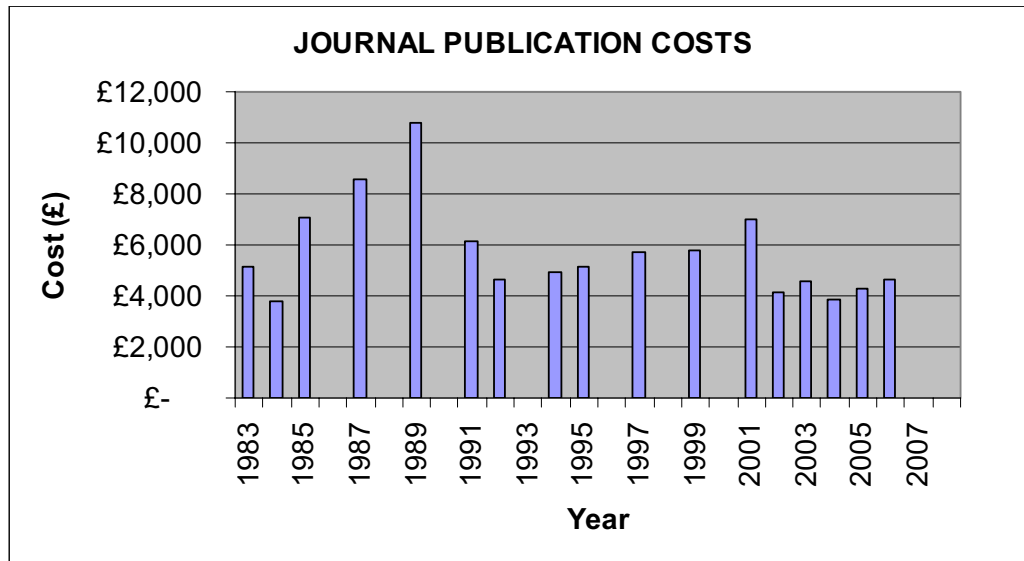


Table 1: Journal publication costs 1983-2006

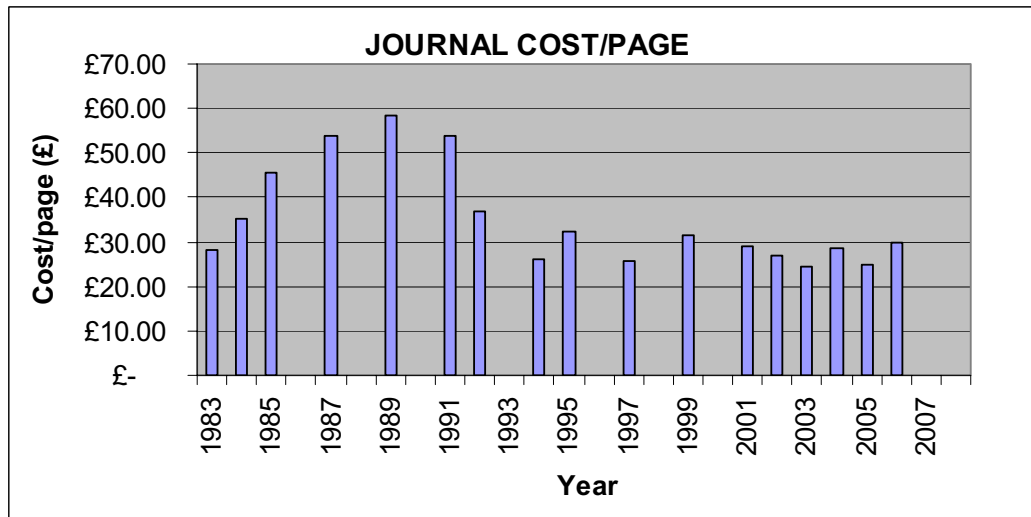


Table 2: The journal cost/page 1983-2006

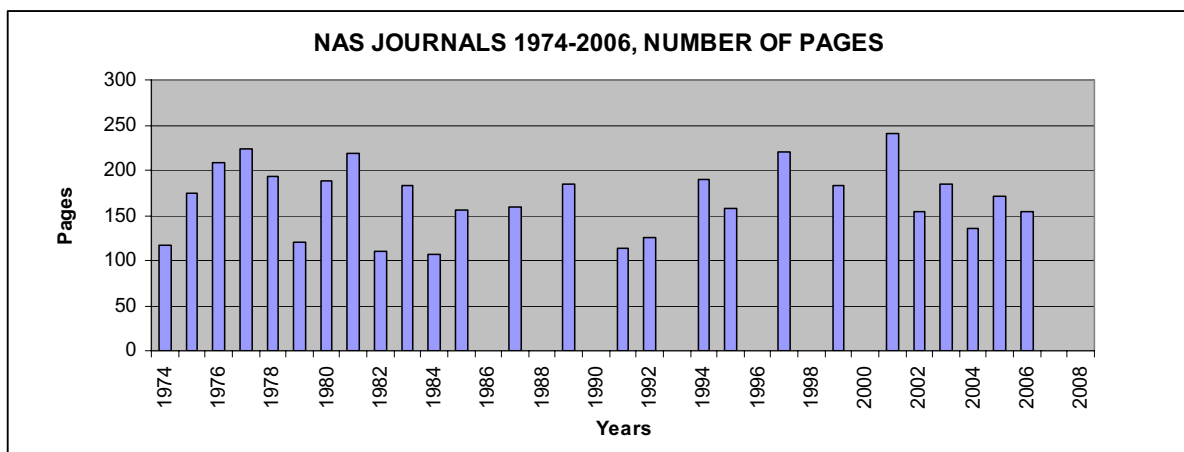


Table 3: Variations in the length of the journal 1983-2006

It should also be noted that from the early 1990s onward the funding of the journal has changed dramatically. Up to 1990 the HBMCE provided publication grants for much of the work reported in the journal carried out as "Rescue" projects. With the advent of developer funding, the majority of the grant support now comes from the archaeological contractors as part of the costs charged to their clients, the developers themselves.

This analysis of past costs will allow us to look at the cost of the change to A4 and digital printing to see how it compares in terms of value for money in comparison to past journals. The aim is to bring in the colour content by using digital printing but without this significantly increasing our costs.

A few more statistics to finish with:

From 1983 to 2006 the society spent £96,000 pounds on the publication of the journal, at an average cost of £5650 per journal. From 1974 to 2006 we published some 2800 pages of text and illustrations, an average of 176 pages per journal, with around 153 main articles and 120 notes; 273 separate pieces of work. Of course, these totals do not include the hundreds of pages of microfiche text published between 1979 and 1995 and the numerous pieces of work that have appeared in the annual notes, which have not been counted!

### THE DIGITAL JOURNAL

The digitising of all past copies of the journal has cost the society just under £1,000. In addition, we have paid a £500 grant to the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) to be a partner in their online Archaeology Library of county and national journals (ArchLib). Under this scheme individual articles can be tracked down and viewed or copied either for free or on payment of a fee. In particular, the site has a search capacity so that researchers can gather relevant material by period or specific themes or geographical areas, and so on. Go to the CBA website ([www.britarch.co.uk](http://www.britarch.co.uk)) and follow the links to Online Publications and ArchLib.

Hopefully more counties and national journals will join this scheme so that it will become a major tool for archaeological research, with Northamptonshire taking its place as part of national and international research. At the moment we have some 50 institutional members in Britain and abroad, but this means that a majority of archaeological departments in Britain do not take the journal and are therefore less likely to include Northamptonshire material in their research.

We will be making articles from all earlier copies of the journal freely available, on the basis that one of our main purposes is the dissemination of information and the promotion of archaeology in Northamptonshire. However, there will be a small charge per article for material published within the past five years, and the latest online journal will always be a year behind. These

safeguards are to encourage everyone to maintain their membership and support of NAS, so that we can go on publishing the journal.

In addition, we continue making digital copies of the journal directly available to our members. Last year's journal included a CD containing the eight bulletins of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies. This year we extend the sequence by providing a CD containing volumes 9-19 of the journal, covering the years 1974-1984, the final year in which Tony Brown was editor. Next year there will be a further 10 or so journals to take the sequence to the early 2000s.

### THE JOURNAL INDEX

To help readers of both the paper and digital copies find the material they are looking for, we are also publishing a full contents index and a place-name index to Volumes 1-34. This has been added to the CD and will also be available on the society website. The pdf has been formatted to print as back-to-back pages.

If there is anyone who wishes to have a paper copy who does not have access to a computer so they can print their own, please get in touch and we will arrange to provide a copy.

### JOHN WILLIAMS

On behalf of the society, we pass our congratulations to Dr John Williams, who has recently retired from the position of Head of Heritage Conservation, Kent County Council, for the award of an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

John was head of the Northampton Development Corporation (NDC) Archaeological Unit from the early 1970s through to its demise in the mid-1980s. He was responsible for the excavation, and prompt publication, of a series of excavations around St Peter's church, Northampton that led to the discovery of the Saxon "Palaces" site, now generally considered to have been a timber, and later stone, hall at the centre of a middle Saxon minster complex that included the churches of St Peter and St Gregory.

John was also one of those involved in establishing *Northamptonshire Archaeology* as the county journal, and supported its publication by the contribution of numerous grant-funded articles accounting for the smaller projects carried out by the NDC.

He was also involved in setting up a county archive under the management of Northampton Borough Council through the Central Museum and Art Gallery. Alas, while *Northamptonshire Archaeology* survives, the Borough withdrew from its role as the county archive curator some years ago, a decision that has left so much of our excavated heritage homeless and inaccessible.

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