

## Introduction

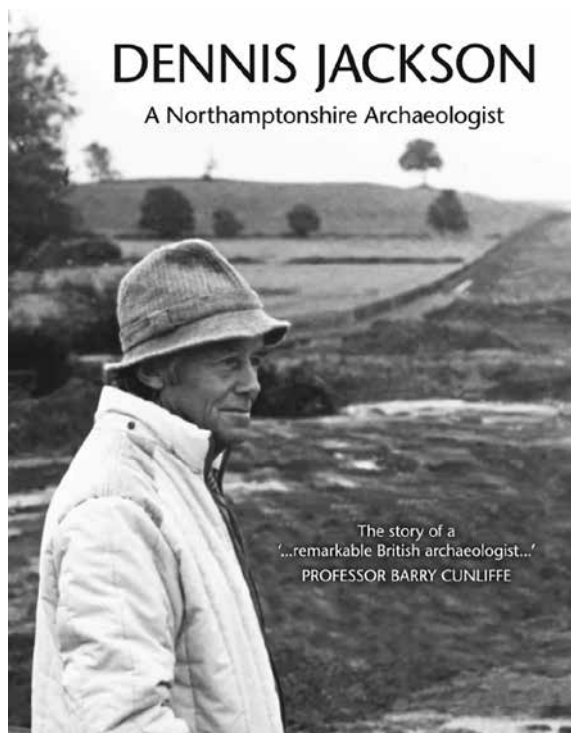
by

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In November 2015, as the last volume of *Northamptonshire Archaeology* was in press, we heard the news that Dennis Jackson had died. Dennis had been involved in the archaeology of Northamptonshire since the beginning of the 1960s, initially as a volunteer but from the mid-1960s onward he became a full time field archaeologist, a rare profession in those days, finding, excavating and publishing a series of important sites of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and early Anglo-Saxon date, mainly in advance of quarrying for either ironstone around the Corby area or for gravel along the Nene valley.

Dennis was also there at the formation of Northamptonshire Archaeological Society and was responsible for more articles and notes that have appeared in the journal, from its first edition onward, than anyone else has or is ever likely to produce. His involvement with the archaeology of the county never ceased, and there are still a few pottery reports and sites he was involved in in his later years that remain to be published.

We have not put a formal obituary in this volume, as Dennis's remarkable career has been previously summarised in a compilation of images published in volume 35, 2008, to mark his 80th birthday and also in the publication by the society and his family of his autobiography: *Dennis Jackson: A Northamptonshire Archaeologist*.



We should also congratulate Roy Friendship-Taylor on his 80th birthday, marked by a paper in the notes section of the journal dealing with a finds group from Piddington Roman villa, where Roy has been excavating since the end of the 1970s and continues to do so.

This new volume of *Northamptonshire Archaeology* is quite diverse in its coverage, ranging as it does from the radiocarbon dating of an early Neolithic Enclosure at Raunds, an interesting assemblage of late Neolithic Grooved ware from Middleton Cheney, which more often turns up in smaller quantities as in a pit at Kings Sutton; through the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age landscape at Harlestone Quarry on the western fringe of ever growing Northampton; on to the more usual fare of small Iron Age and early Roman settlement sites, mostly on the scale of family farmsteads, at Kings Sutton, Benefield, Crick, Cogenhoe and Raunds. We then move on to a fragment of Middle Saxon settlement at Raunds, some late Saxon burials that had survived 1000 years of burial at the church Little Billing, Northampton, a medieval windmill mound at Raunds, which is compared to other archaeological evidence for windmills in the county, medieval pits at St John's Hospital, Northampton, producing Northampton's first squirrel, and finally arriving in the modern world with building recording at the Anchor Brewery, Oundle.

Perhaps not the most exciting line up of sites, but very much representative of the work of commercial archaeology, and representative of the reality of buried archaeology. It is ordinary people in the small farmsteads and villages going about their daily lives who have, due to their numbers, left the greatest legacy of archaeological remains to document their otherwise lost, forgotten and largely undocumented lives.

This is the real stuff of archaeology, not the selective excavation of the small proportion of sites left by the elite groups that have always, and still today, skim the wealth off the top and put a proportion of it into luxury homes and goods.

While it is the jewellery, particularly if it is in precious metals, which will get the star treatment in finds reports, it is actually items of daily life, such as the loomweights from Harlestone Quarry and Raunds, Darsdale Farm that have equally interesting stories to tell, but items such as loomweights, querns, ceramic and stone building materials and metalworking debris have so often been glossed over in the past with little more than a passing mention, when they are really a central part of the fabric of those past lives.

This volume is inevitably dominated by the work of our local commercial archaeological company,

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), through their Northampton office, formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology within the county council, but we also include contributions from a number of other companies that work in the county: Archaeological Services and Consultancy of Milton Keynes, who are no longer in business, Albion Archaeology from Bedford and Cotswold Archaeology, through their office in Milton Keynes. In addition, we have contributions from two others who have had long involvement with the archaeology of the county: Robert Moore, formerly of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, and Graham Cadman, who led the excavations at Raunds, Furnells manor in the early 1980s and spent many years with Northamptonshire County Council in the various versions of the archaeological curatorial section, Northamptonshire Heritage.

Having mentioned Northamptonshire County Council, I cannot refrain from mentioning the issue of current debate as I write this Introduction, which is the recently announced revised opening hours, which will provide three half days and one Saturday a month with free opening to the public, while the rest of the week people will be required to pay £30.50 per hour as a consultation

fee. The public response through the online media was rapid and universal in condemning these proposals. There has been a positive response, with the opening hours being changed to three full days (minus a lunch hour) of free opening. However, this was accompanied by a thinly veiled threat that there are likely to be consequences in the next round of funding reviews. This is, of course, just one aspect of the continuing process of dismantling public services around the country. We wonder what we will have left worth having by the time it comes to an end?

As this volume heads towards publication, the next volume is already in preparation and it will be a Northampton special edition, looking at the origins of the town in the Anglo-Saxon period, in a specially commissioned article from John Williams and Mike Shaw, who both did so much for our understanding of Northampton prior to the Norman Conquest through the work of the Northampton Development Corporation Archaeological Unit through the 1970s to the mid-1980s. There will also be reports on the excavations at Northampton Castle by Dr Alexander in the 1960s and my own excavations in 2013 in the outer bailey, before the building of the new rail station.