



**Northamptonshire  
County Council**

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## Northamptonshire Archaeology

Building recording at  
Glebe House,  
Easton-on-the-Hill,  
Northamptonshire



Joe Prentice

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**Northamptonshire Archaeology**

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE

w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)

t. 01604 700493/4

f. 01604 702822

e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



**BUILDING RECORDING AT GLEBE HOUSE,  
EASTON-ON-THE-HILL,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

*Abstract*

*A small stone outbuilding in the grounds of Glebe House, Easton-on-the-Hill appears to have been constructed to serve as a bakehouse. It does not appear to be contemporary with the main house but has been added later, probably in the second half of the eighteenth century. Currently roofless, the walls remain in reasonable condition and retain three original windows, and a single doorway in the south wall. Inside are the remains of a small contemporary bread oven, fireplace and chimney to which has been added a nineteenth century "copper" or water heater built of red brick.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The owners of Glebe House, Mr and Mrs A Vrona, have obtained planning permission to re-roof and repair a currently roofless outbuilding to the north-east of the main house (Fig 1, NGR TF 00950459). Glebe House is listed Grade II\* and the outbuilding therefore falls within the curtilage of the house (Fig 2). East Northamptonshire District Council have granted Listed Building Consent to re-build and re-roof the building with the condition that archaeological building recording takes place before any works take place (EN/04/02356/LBC).
- 1.2 Ross Thain, on behalf of the owners, commissioned Northamptonshire Archaeology to undertake the necessary building recording in response to a brief issued by the Conservation Officer of the Historic Environment Team of Northamptonshire County Council (Ballinger 2005).
- 1.3 The field survey was undertaken on 24 March 2005. No desk-based assessment was required in the brief which otherwise stipulated that the survey should;  
provide a written, drawn and photographic record of the outbuilding prior to its re-building and re-roofing  
  
ascertain, from the surviving features on the site, the function of the building  
  
provide sufficient information about the construction of the building to inform the re-building of the structure

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Glebe House was formerly known as the Rectory, the name Glebe appears simply to indicate that the land on which it was built belonged to the church. The current listing refers to the house as being early eighteenth century, though the house displays all of the characteristics of a late seventeenth

century building, particularly the fact that the semi-basement retains mullioned windows. Pevsner, curiously succinctly, simply calls the house Georgian (Pevsner and Cherry 1985, 206). The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments states that the house was built during the first half of the eighteenth century (RCHME 1984, 59). It refers to the outbuilding as “a single storey bakehouse with a projecting oven, probably of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century”.

- 2.2 In his book on the village, JM Goodwin states that Glebe House was once called Lutine House and was built circa 1690 as a rectory (Goodwin 1991). The Rev. John Skynner (1724-1805) was an incumbent of the rectory (1764-1805) who was a fellow of St John’s College, Cambridge and who set up a private school for the pupils of the nobility. He is said to have used the house for boarding accommodation and the nearby Priest’s House as a classroom. His second son, Lancelot, was captain of the ill-fated HMS Lutine which sank off the coast of Holland on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1799 with the loss of all except two lives. From the ship came the Lutine Bell which now hangs at Lloyds in the City of London and who were insurers for the ship which was carrying a cargo of gold valued at £1,400,000. It appears to be this incident which was formerly commemorated in the naming of the house.
- 2.3 The house remains largely un-altered apart from the south front being apparently re-faced, probably during the nineteenth century.

### **3. BUILDING SURVEY**

- 3.1 The outbuilding lies to the north-east of the main house and is visually linked to it by a stone wall which divides the garden to the north of the house from a court-yard area to the east of the two eastern gables walls of the building (Figs 2 and 3, Plate 1). Currently in a roofless condition, the outbuilding is constructed of coursed limestone rubble bonded in a creamy white lime mortar. The four external corners are reinforced with dressed quoins. The south gable wall contains the only entrance, a single width centrally placed door which retains oak jambs, lintel and remains of the threshold. To the west of this door is a roughly semi-circular external, and contemporary, swelling in the wall which contains the bread oven, accessed from the interior of the building (Fig 3, Plate 4). This external thickening of the wall was until recently capped with Collyweston slates (Mr A Vrona pers.comm). Above the doorway, but slightly offset to the eastern side is a window opening fitted with a wooden frame and four light window, now unglazed (Plate 1). The door was at one stage fitted with a stable door, i.e. two half-doors separated horizontally, as evidenced by four sets of hinges, though no doors now remain.
- 3.2 The eastern façade contains a single window beneath an oak lintel (Fig 3, Plate 2). The present opening has been reduced in width and height at some stage, vertical scars remain beneath the southern edge of the window and to the north of the present window jamb.

- 3.3 The northern façade is plain apart from a small window close to the present ground level beneath an oak lintel and with similar jambs and sill (Fig 3). The opening retains a single, vertical iron bar, presumably fitted for security, and is also fitted with a wooden single panel shutter, hinged on the inside.
- 3.4 The western façade is completely plain with no window openings (Fig 3, Plate 3).
- 3.5 The interior of the building retains no fixtures and fittings apart from the chimney breast in the south-west corner and the remains of the bread oven between it and the door (Fig 3, Plate 4). The chimney and bread oven appear to be original to the building. The oven is rather small and it is difficult to imagine why it was built here in a separate building. At such a small size it could easily have been incorporated into the kitchen fireplace of the main house. To the north of the chimney breast is a red-brick water heater comprising a floor level stoke hole with, above, a cast iron “copper” in which to heat water. A flue has been knocked through the north side of the chimney breast to allow the smoke to vent. This water heater seems to be mid to late nineteenth century in date. The floor of the building is of blue engineering brick throughout. The walls retain lime plaster over much of its surface, though in places this has been lost due to weathering following the loss of the roof, of which no timbers or sockets remain, the upper levels of the side walls and gable ends both being rather degraded. It is likely that the roof would have been a simple construction on such a small building, and almost certainly covered in Collyweston slates. The gables are curious in that they are asymmetrical, the reason for this is not apparent, though as both are reduced it may be no more than a result of uneven removal of coping stones.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The small detached bakehouse at Glebe House retains its original fireplace and chimney with a very small bread oven to one side. Why it was built here is unclear unless it served detached servants quarters or other out-door accommodation, now lost. It could even have been a self contained building to provide accommodation for an ‘outside’ member of staff, such as a gardener, with the fireplace and oven providing the cooking facilities. Another possible use could have been during the time when the Rev. Skynner educated children in the nearby Priest’s House, perhaps at this period more bread was needed for the children. Though it is notoriously difficult to date such small and architecturally undistinguished buildings, a mid to late eighteenth century date seems most likely. The building is butt jointed against, and therefore later than the garden wall to the west, which is in turn built against and is later than the main house.
- 4.2 There are no surviving fixtures or fittings to indicate whether the building originally served other purposes, though at a later date it was also used to heat water, perhaps serving from that date as a wash house too.

- 4.3 Though none of the roof structure survives and the wall line has been partially reduced, it was most likely covered with stone slates, not only because of the locality, but also to reduce the risk of fire.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Plan and elevation drawings of the outbuilding are used by courtesy of Ross Thain.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig 1 Site location  
Fig 2 Location of outbuilding  
Fig 3 Plan and elevations of the outbuilding

## PLATES

- Plate 1 South elevation with adjoining garden wall and east façade of house  
Plate 2 East elevation of outbuilding  
Plate 3 West and part of north elevations of outbuilding  
Plate 4 Bread oven and fireplace in south-west corner of outbuilding

Project manager: Steve Parry MA, MIFA  
Field survey: Joe Prentice  
Text: Joe Prentice  
Illustration: Jacqueline Harding BA, HND