

# NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2018

[www.norfarchtrust.org.uk](http://www.norfarchtrust.org.uk)



Image 1: 9th century metalwork found during the Imagined Land project at Burnham Norton – see report on p3 Credit: Giles Emery, Norvic Archaeology.

**This newsletter reports on progress of the ‘Onwards & Upwards’ project; the community and volunteer engagement projects at Burnham Norton Friary, Tasburgh and Burgh Castle Fort; and promoting interest in conservation through supporting guided tours and special events at Caistor Roman Town, Burgh Castle Fort and St Benet’s Abbey**

## **Onwards & Upwards: Creating a sustainable future for the Norfolk Archaeological Trust**

We announced in the Spring newsletter that our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Resilient Heritage programme for a grant of £178,500 had been successful. Since then we have been busy implementing the Onwards & Upwards project.

In May we appointed external consultancy Architrave to support the research and production of a 10-year Business Plan, which will provide the platform for the Trust’s continuing conservation of Norfolk’s significant archaeological sites.

Architrave is the history and heritage consultancy run by Simon Thurley, previously chief executive of English Heritage (2003-2015), director of the Museum of London (1996-2003) and curator and



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surveyor of the fabric at Historic Royal Palaces (1988-1996). Simon and his team bring expertise in charity governance, fundraising, running heritage attractions, audience development, digital communication, and branding. Over the past six months they have been reviewing the operation of the Trust including governance, finance, organisational performance, a review of the existing sites, current audiences and activities, and research on potential new sites. This first stage will culminate in early October with a day-long workshop when the Trust's Council will develop a clear vision for the future of the organisation, and the structures and roles that support it. A full report on this will be included in the Spring newsletter.

We have also appointed Katie Phillips as Volunteer Co-ordinator and Neil Featherstone as Rural Sites Manager for the 18 month period of the project.



Image 2: Katie Phillips.

Katie's post is full time and combines day to day support of Trust volunteers with a strategic role, reviewing the Trust's current practices and developing a volunteer strategy. She has also been working with the Architrave team and volunteers to organise visitor surveys at some of our sites in order to collect data on who visits them and why. This information will be analysed by Architrave as part of their future planning work.



Image 3: Neil Featherstone

Neil provides support one day a week in the day to day management of our sites, including overseeing the resurfacing of the track at St Benet's Abbey earlier this year. He is also looking at how improvements in efficiency and effectiveness might be achieved through a 5- year Farm Plan, and working with Architrave on other ideas for potentially generating farm-based revenue to support the Trust's work.

**Trust members will be able to hear Simon Thurley talk about 'The Future of Norfolk's Past' at the AGM at the Assembly House on October 23. There will also be opportunities at the meeting for members to contribute towards discussions on the future of the Trust.**

## Imagined Land Project

The second year of the Imagined Land project focused on Burnham Norton friary, and was largely shaped by the steering group of local people who worked with the Project Manager, Simon Floyd, to plan and implement all the activities throughout the spring and summer.

In April our project partner, NAHRG (Norfolk Archaeological & Historical Research Group), organised two very well-attended workshops on the 'Landscape and Settlement Context of the Carmelite Friary, Burnham' which aimed to bring together current research on landscape and coastal changes; Saxon settlement patterns; the early history of the Carmelites; lessons to be learnt from the Norwich Whitefriars; the development of Burnham friary in the fourteenth century; the geophysical survey of the site and archaeological perspective; and the architecture of the upstanding remains and Friary Cottage. The events included contributions from Dr Andrew Rogerson, Jonathon Hooton, Dr Brendan Chester-Kadwell, Dr Sally Francis, Dr Helen Clarke, Dr Rachel Clarke and Stephen Heywood and included field trips to the Friary site, and to the area of Bradmer in the parish where it is thought the friary was originally founded. Both workshops were popular, with 70 people attending the first event, and 65 attending the second..



Image 4: Andrew Rogerson giving his talk at one of the workshops

NAHRG is currently considering publishing the report based on the papers delivered at the event and hopes to give more details in due course.



Image 5: School assembly celebrating Burnham Norton Friary.

At the end of May Giles Emery of Norvic Archaeology; Caistor Roman Project volunteers; and other local participants dug 8 test-pits at the school and at two other sites in the village. All the children in the primary school took part, and a significant find was uncovered by one of the pupils using a metal detector– a piece of Middle to Late Anglo-Saxon metalwork which Tim Pestell, Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum, describes as an extremely interesting object worthy of further academic study and public display (see Image 1). In a preliminary note on the object he says it is clearly of ninth-century date but that its purpose is as yet unclear. The sheer size makes a large strap-end an unlikely interpretation, while a clasp or hinge – perhaps for a casket or book – is a possibility but something currently with no obvious parallel. Cleaning and further analysis is required – any developments will be reported in future newsletters.

These events were followed by the Bring & Share day on June 9th. This was an open event which invited local people to meet the archaeologists and historians involved in the research part of the project, to share stories and photos, handle finds, and see some of the children’s work in school displays. This was a great success with over 100 people dropping in throughout the day.

During June the local steering group organised a varied programme of creative workshops in the school and at public events, delivered by local artists, including Kevin Crossley-Holland and Polly Ionides, based around the theme of the friary. This included creative writing, singing, pottery, designing and carving a mason’s mark and making village banners and lanterns for the pageant. The pupils were able to showcase their work at a packed school assembly at the end of the month.



Image 6: Stone carving - Designing and carving a mason’s mark



Image 7: A Carmelite friar begins the pageant. Credit: Harry Cory Wright

After the school holidays the project entered an intense two week period of preparation for the pageant. This included a Creative History Camp with workshops and rehearsals programmed for every day running up to the performance at the friary site on September 22nd. The pageant was written in response to research carried

out during the project and included references to the layout of the friary, the fate of Friar John Pecock who was executed at the time of the Dissolution; the draining of the marshes, and the WW1 prisoner of war camp. Over 150 people enjoyed the pageant, including many local school children, either through participating or coming to watch.



Image 8: A scene about the sea and the marshes. Credit: Harry Cory Wright

On the anniversary of the Tasburgh pageant, the Friends of Imagined Land (FOIL), held an unveiling ceremony in September for the new interpretation panel at the earthworks, which was funded by the project; and launched the anthology of writing which was produced last year and brought together by FOIL, entitled *One Summer in Tasburgh: An Imagined Land*. Copies will be delivered to every household in the village. The pageant songs were performed by the FOIL choir, followed by a picnic at the Village Hall.



Image 9: New interpretation panel at Tasburgh, installed as part of the Imagined Land project, being inspected by a costumed member of the FOIL choir.

The Trust received a grant of £74,700 from the HLF to support the 2-year project, with additional contributions from Historic England (Heritage Schools) and Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society (NNAS), Writers Centre Norwich and Norwich Arts Centre, as well as vital in-kind support from Caistor Roman Project (CRP), Norfolk Historical and Historical Research group (NAHRG) and local volunteers.



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Historic England



THE NORFOLK  
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Norfolk & Norwich  
Archaeological Society



WRITERS'  
CENTRE  
NORWICH

National Centre for Writing

Norwich  
Arts  
Centre.



Caistor Roman Project



**Norfolk** County Council

Image 10: Logos of all supporting organisations

## Burgh Castle Almanac

This project is based on the idea of ‘culture therapy’ where people engage with heritage, art and culture so that their mental health improves. It is being managed by The Restoration Trust who deliver projects in partnership with heritage/arts and health/social care bodies using resources and expertise from archives, archaeology, the historic environment, museums, visual art, music, creative writing and digital arts. Participants are referred to the project by local mental-health organisations based in the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft area.

Since April participants have been taking part in on-site activities at the site which include a regular photographic record of the Fort. So far participants have found out about basic photographic survey and how to record archaeological finds, as well as learning about wildflowers and butterflies, and they have made some impressive art and sound recordings. Two weeks after each visit there is a follow-up session hosted at Time & Tide Museum in Great Yarmouth, where participants develop the work produced on site, for example, through editing photographs, writing and soundscapes. These will form an exhibition at the end of the two year project.

The positive feedback from participants illustrates the potential of heritage and archaeological sites to

provide a therapeutic context for assisting recovery. Feedback comments so far have included ‘I just want to take time now to say a big thank you to everyone involved in this because at first I didn’t feel like it was going to be my thing but I love it.’

This Trust-led project is part of the Broads Authority’s Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund [watermillsandmarshes.org.uk](http://watermillsandmarshes.org.uk).

## Guided walks and Heritage Open Days

Our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Katie, has been working with local volunteer groups to organise regular guided walks at Burgh Castle Fort, St Benet’s Abbey and, for the first time this year, Caistor Roman Town. Training of the new Roman Town guides was funded under the Caistor Roman Project’s own HLF project, but organised in partnership with the Trust. Special guided walks featured in the Heritage Open Day events at all three sites this year. At the Roman Town the Trust and CRP also brought together a Roman-themed Family Fun Day, attended by nearly 200 people, which included opportunities to clean archaeological finds, carry out a mock-dig, and meet a Roman soldier.



Image 11: Image of Burgh Fort by Richard Godfrey, John Durrant (Living with mental health <https://livingwithmentalhealth436315807.com/>).



Image 12: Caistor Roman Fun-day

### Peter Wade-Martins Ceremony

In May we organised a ceremony to celebrate the Directorship of Dr Peter Wade-Martins which included the unveiling of a new plaque on the bench at the top of Dunston Field at Caistor Roman Town. A group of Council members past and present gathered to watch Peter unveil the new plaque. Peter devoted 25 years of his working life to the Norfolk Archaeological Trust which he described as being his 'dream job'. As Peter Griffiths, Chairman of the Trust, said in his speech, Peter helped transform the Trust into the organisation it is today.

Through skilful negotiation, he acquired a long list of sites now under the Trust's wing: Burgh Castle Fort, St Benet's Abbey, Middleton Mount, Fiddlers Hill, Burnham Norton Gatehouse, Bloodgate Hill, Binham Priory Gatehouse and Caistor Roman Town. But his proudest moment was buying Dunston Field, site of an Anglo-Saxon trading centre and the halfway step between Roman Caistor and Medieval Norwich. It is therefore fitting that the plaque recording his achievements can be found there.



Image 13: Dr Peter Wade-Martins after unveiling the new plaque

## Director Job Share

In September the current Director, Caroline Davison, began a part-time MA at the UEA in Biography and Non-fiction. In preparation for this a job-share post was advertised for two days a week, initially for one year, and we're very happy to announce that Dr Natasha Hutcheson has been appointed, starting on October 1. Natasha has a background in archaeology, with a PhD on the Iron Age in Norfolk, and has taught the subject at undergraduate and post graduate levels as well as in schools. She has wide experience of project and financial management and was the Regional Museums Development Manager for Norfolk Museums Service for five years where she developed managed and delivered the Regional Museums Development programme. As a freelance consultant she has been successful in supporting and developing grant applications for other organisations and has worked with several volunteer organisations in developing strategies for recruitment and in direct management of volunteers.



Image 14: Dr Natasha Hutcheson.

## St Benet's Abbey: 1000 years!

The Friends of St Benet's Abbey have been awarded a Heritage Lottery grant towards a project endorsed by the Trust which will celebrate the 1000th year of the foundation of the Abbey in 2019. The project will engage residents, school children and visitors in activities highlighting the history of St Benet's Abbey, its importance in creating the Broads landscape and the legends and stories associated with this iconic feature of the Broads. There will be a community play about the Abbey, some larger-than-life willow sculptures, an exhibition in Ludham Church and a History Discovery Day. If you would like to get involved please email [tfosba@gmail.com](mailto:tfosba@gmail.com)

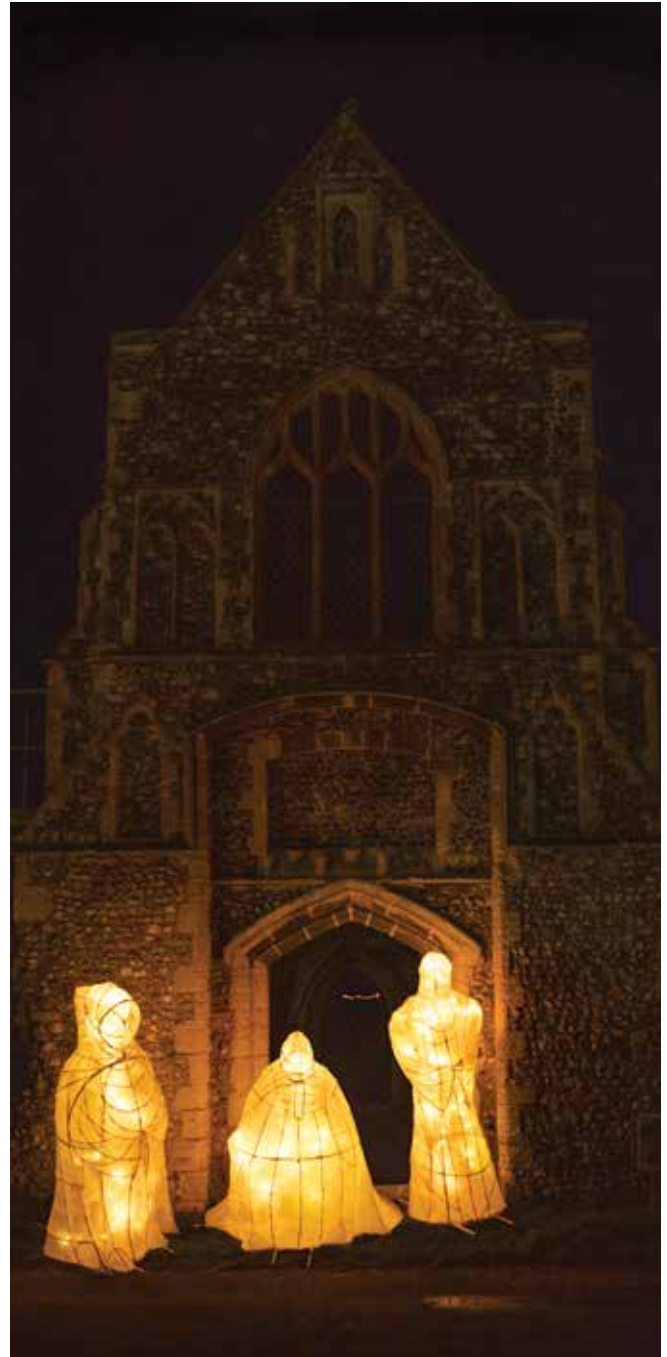


Image 15: The illuminated monks made as part of the pageant at Burnham Norton Friary.  
Credit: Harry Cory Wright

## Keeping in touch

We will always be pleased to hear from members about any aspect of the Trust's work, especially if you are interested in volunteering at one of our sites!

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Tel: 01603 462987

You can also follow us on Twitter @NorfArchTrust and we regularly update the news page of the website [www.norfarchtrust.org.uk](http://www.norfarchtrust.org.uk).

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