

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018

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Fig 1: Caistor meadow: The flowering meadow above Caistor Roman Town, established with funding under a Higher-level Stewardship scheme.

This newsletter reports on the new ‘Onwards & Upwards’ project; the Imagined Land community and volunteer engagement project and geophysical survey at Burnham Norton Friary; and promoting interest in conservation through supporting school visits and guided tours at Caistor Roman Town.

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

The Trust is delighted to announce that its application to the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Resilient Heritage programme has been successful. This programme is aimed at organisations who want to build capacity or achieve significant strategic change, in order to improve management of heritage for the long term. Our application to the fund was made in response to the challenges and opportunities identified in the Trust’s current Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021.

Development of sustainable revenue funding for maintenance of our sites is a key challenge. Currently the main source of revenue comes from the Rural Payment Agency through the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Higher-level Stewardship Agreements (HLS), and the more recent Countryside Stewardship Schemes (CSS).

While the Trust has been successful in accessing this funding for five of its properties, there is limited revenue income available to support maintenance at our other sites. In addition, the BPS and agri-environmental schemes are funded through the European Union, and there is uncertainty about how these schemes will be replaced by the UK government, post-Brexit.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Opportunities identified in the strategy include increased engagement with volunteers, local communities and our visitors, in order to establish wider and more active support of the conservation and management of our sites.

The HLF grant of £178,500 will fund two temporary posts during the eighteen-month-long project: a Volunteer Co-ordinator & Recruitment officer; and a Rural Sites Manager. These post-holders will support the day-to-day running of the Trust, but will also review our current systems and management practices, and develop a volunteer recruitment strategy and farm plan for our sites. In addition, the funding will enable the Trust to access external consultancy services to support the research and production of a 10-year Business Plan which will include amongst other things, a governance review, an audience development plan and a fundraising review. For the Trust – founded in 1923 - the Business Plan will provide the platform for continuing conservation of Norfolk's significant archaeological sites into our second century.

Imagined Land Project

The second year of the Imagined Land project, which focuses on Burnham Norton friary, began at a well-attended public meeting at Burnham Market primary school in November. After the launch, twelve local people volunteered to sit on the local steering group which will help plan and implement all the project activities in the coming year.



Fig 2: Public meeting at Burnham Norton, with inset of the Burnham Norton friary gatehouse

Strong local interest in investigating the history of the Friary emerged at the meeting. In response, our partners at NAHRG have organised a programme of workshops which will look at the practicalities of undertaking general research into the medieval history of the site, and explore themes around the development of the landscape, local settlement patterns, and the story of the friary.

In May local volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in a programme of archaeological test-pitting in the school grounds and other selected sites. During the summer the results of the documentary research, test-pits and geophysical survey will be shared with creative writers, musicians, makers and performers to inspire the production of a village pageant in September, based around the Friary site.

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.

For more information on upcoming activities, please contact the Project Manager, Simon Floyd:
 Email: imaginedland1@gmail.com
 Tel: 07896 781574
 Project website: <https://sites.google.com/site/burnhamnortonimaginedland>



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THE NORFOLK
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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Historic England



Norfolk & Norwich
Archaeological Society



WRITERS'
CENTRE
NORWICH

National Centre for Writing

Norwich
Arts
Centre.



Caistor Roman Project



Norfolk County Council

Fig 3: Imagined Land logo, and logos of project supporters.

Burnham Norton Friary geophysical survey

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Dr David Bescoby in the first year of the Imagined Land project. The survey revealed a number of surviving sub-surface features relating to former masonry structures and possible routeways and divisions within the friary precinct. Away from the focus of building remains, the nature of the magnetic responses within the enclosed area of the precinct are indicative of multiple phases of agricultural activities.

The report outlined the following conclusions:

- The survey identified evidence for the survival of sub-surface masonry wall structures extending some 15 m to the south of the friary church, along with the eastern wall of a possible building running southwards from the gatehouse, abutting Friar's Lane. [Fig 4]

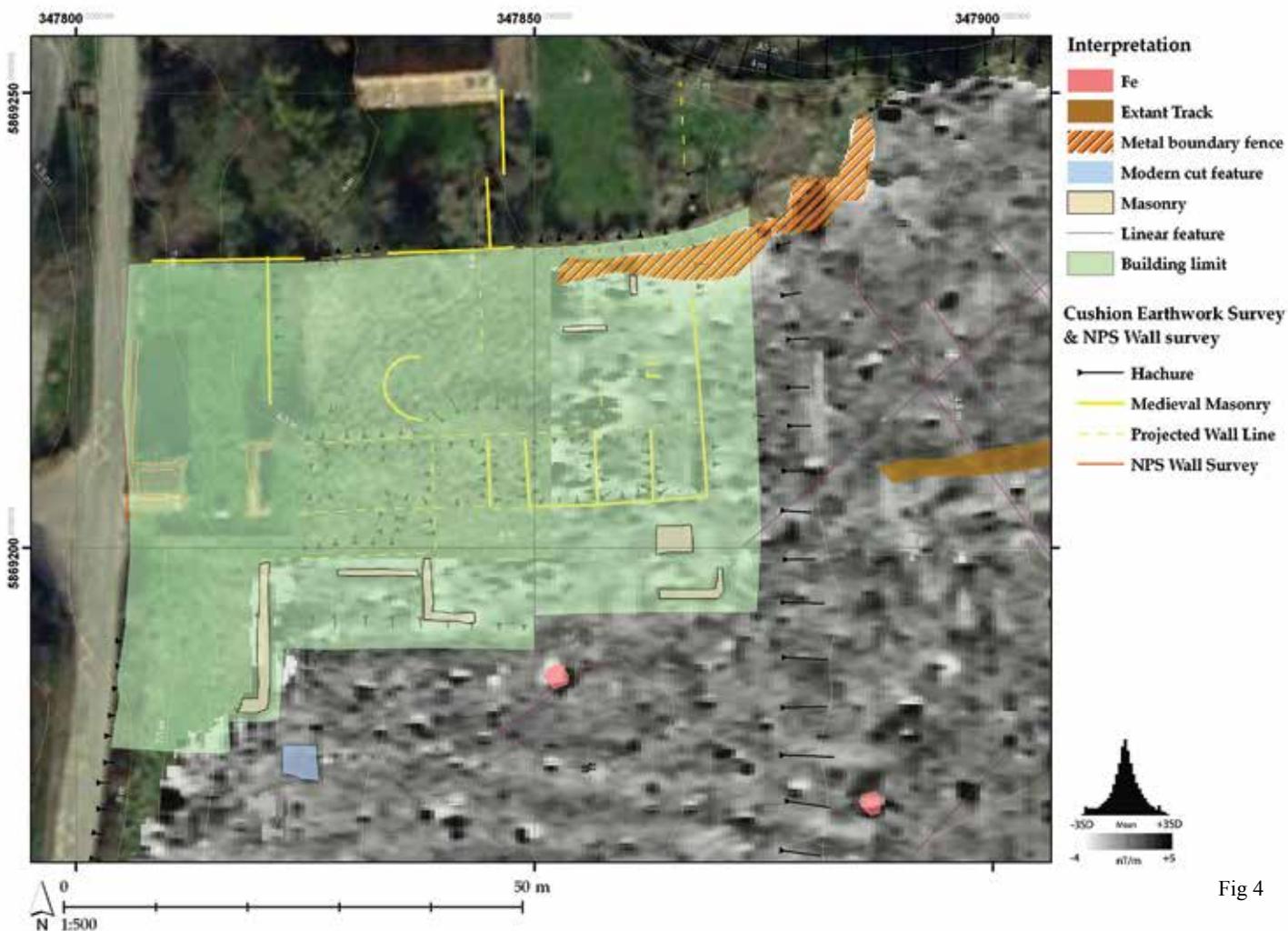


Fig 4

- Remains of a further building c. 50 m to the east of the Friary church, but aligned with it, were also detected. This sizeable structure might have measured as much as 40m along its E-W axis and appears to be associated with the E-W line of a track or thoroughfare linking the friary church and a possible gateway in the extant eastern section of the precinct wall. [Fig 5 on opposite page]

- Further features detected within the precinct likely to be contemporary with the friary include evidence for the presence of a second E-W routeway, connecting gates in more northerly surviving sections of the western and eastern precinct walls, as hypothesised during recent recording of the surviving precinct walls by NPS Archaeology.

- Within the southern portion of surveyed area the remains of a possible masonry wall were detected running for 73 m along the top of a low earthwork bank. Projecting the alignment of this wall to the east connects it with the south-easterly corner of the extant precinct wall, and it is conceivable that this represents the remains of the southern return of the outer wall or alternatively a walled sub-division within the precinct. Faint traces of a parallel internal division 30 m to the north was also detected. [Fig 6 on opposite page]

The full report can be downloaded – go to the Burnham Norton Friary page on the Trust's website and click on the Imagined Land link.



Fig 5

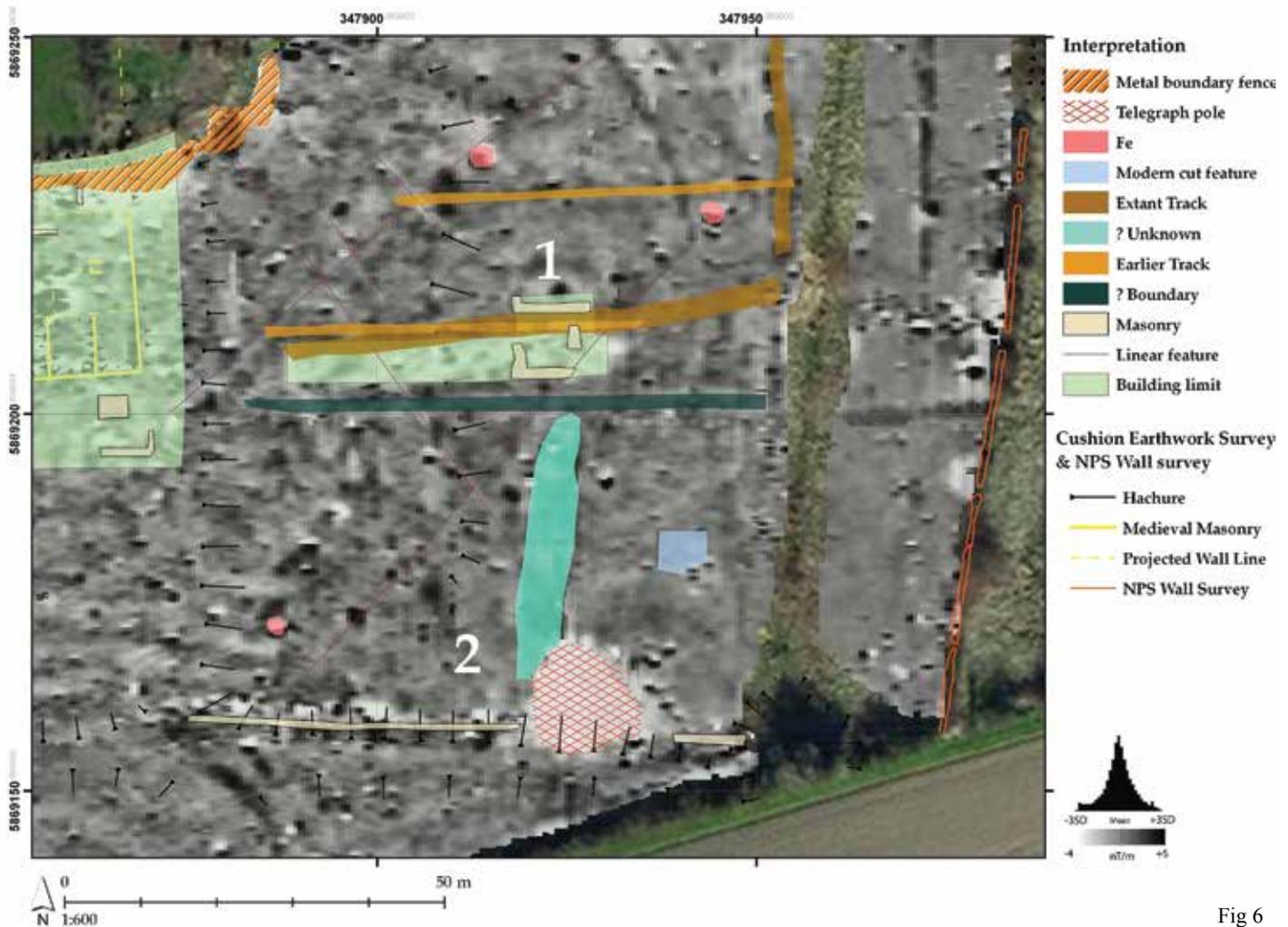


Fig 6

Working with Caistor Roman Project

Many members will know that Caistor Roman Project (CRP) is in the midst of its own Heritage Lottery-funded project; 'From Roman town to Medieval manor: Community research and capability development at Caistor St Edmund'. The Trust is partnering with CRP in delivering the education strand of this project through the organisation of training to support volunteers in leading school visits and guided tours at the Roman Town.

Exciting visits to interesting heritage sites are often the events that children most remember about their school experience. Volunteers will help schools participate in stimulating and well-organised visits which can inspire life-long interests in history, archaeology and conservation. The Roman period is currently a core area of study in the History curriculum for primary schools, and local schools are keen to visit the Roman Town. Similarly, Visitor Guides can really help to bring a site to life, through sharing engaging stories which provide deeper insights into the lives and times of people who occupied the site in the distant past.



Fig 7: Volunteers practising the in-school activities during the February workshops

Once the training programme is complete the volunteer team will have increased capacity for helping schools, and it is intended to set up a more regular timetable of guided tours.

Guided tours

As well as the new guided tours at Caistor Roman Town, the Trust's Burgh Castle Fort volunteers and The Friends of St Benet's Abbey will re-start their tours in May – full details of this year's dates and times will be available on the Trust's website.

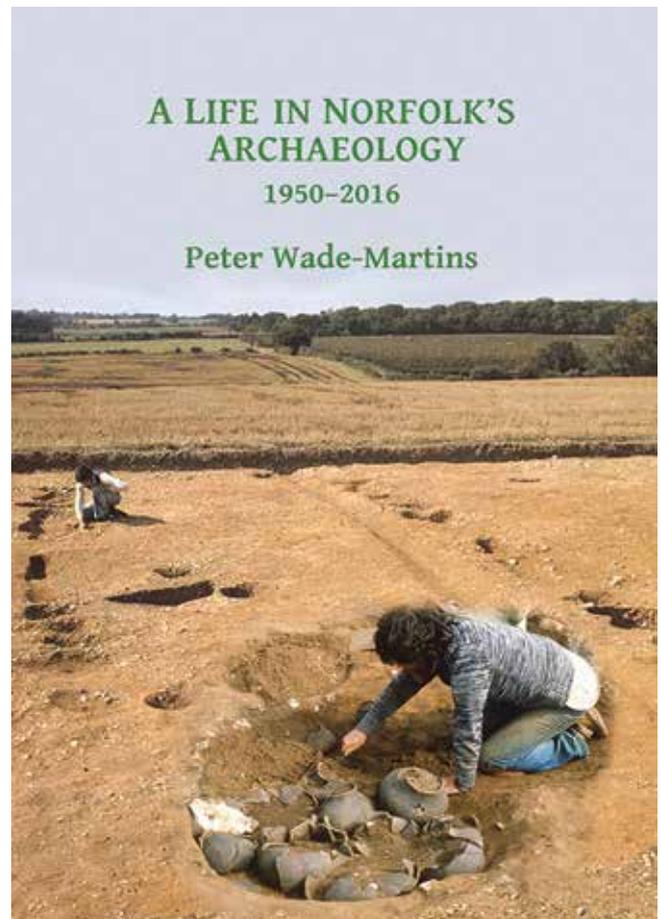


Fig 8: Dr Peter Wade-Martins book cover

A Life in Norfolk's Archaeology: 1950-2016 by Dr Peter Wade-Martins

Archaeological Lives www.archaeopress.com
ISBN 978-1-78491-657-2

As we move forward with the 'Onwards & Upwards' project it is good to reflect on how far the Trust has already come. Dr Wade-Martins sets out in his recently published memoir the story of a long career in archaeology, culminating in his directorship of the Trust from 1999 to 2014, when he oversaw acquisition of some of Norfolk's most iconic archaeological sites, including Burgh Castle Roman Fort, and St Benet's Abbey.

'An absolute must-read.' Edward Biddulph *Current Archaeology* Issue 336

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: 01603462987

You can also follow us on Twitter @NorfArchTrust and we regularly update the news page of the website www.norfarchtrust.org.uk.

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