

So, new bids are being prepared for the HLF and for other bodies which will take these comments into account. We have also commissioned a retired teacher, Philip Butcher, to contact all the relevant schools in east Norfolk and north east Suffolk to find out how much they would like to make use of the site once the new facilities are in place. He has also gathered the views of the education officers at West Stow, Sutton Hoo and Great Yarmouth museums. The results are most encouraging, with many schools saying they would use the site more if facilities were better. We can now feed all this information into our revised proposals.

### New ferry service

The Trust has recently been approached by Steve Wilson of the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Steam Packet Company with the idea of starting a new ferry service from Great Yarmouth to Burgh Castle calling at the Berney Arms windmill and running up the Waveney to Reedham. He has acquired the old *Southern Belle* river ferry, which he has brought around the coast from Devon, and has just completed a refit on the boat in time for the 2005 tourist season. The Trust has welcomed the proposal and is currently exploring with the Broads Authority and the Great Yarmouth port authorities the possibility of building a ferry landing on Trust property.

Perhaps next year the Trust's joint annual Field Visit with the Archaeological Society could be by river to Burgh Castle and the Berney Arms windmill via Breydon Water?



Steve Wilson at work on board the *Southern Belle* in December 2004  
Photo Peter Wade-Martins



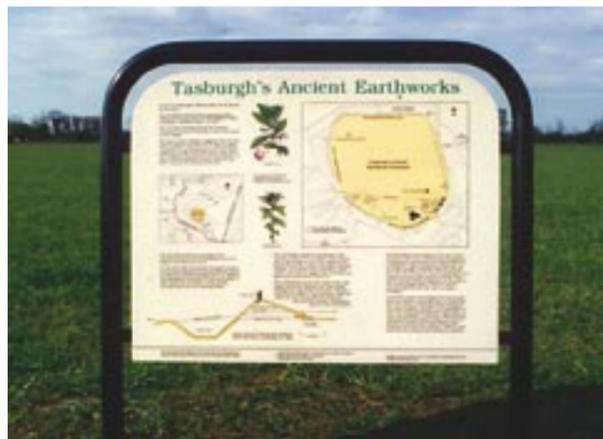
The *Southern Belle* before its recent refit. Photo Steve Wilson

### Tasburgh hillfort

With so much going on at our other properties, it is easy to forget Tasburgh where all necessary facilities are already in place, and the site is being quietly and effectively managed for us by Tasburgh Parish Council. The defensive banks are in part better preserved than at South Creake and are well worth a visit.



Tasburgh hillfort from the air. Photo Derek Edwards



On-site interpretation panel at Tasburgh. Photo Sue White

### More information on the website

Before visiting any of the Trust's properties, it is worth downloading the information we have on line about each of them first. Look for us at [WWW.norfarchtrust.org](http://WWW.norfarchtrust.org). If you are not a member yet, you will find an application form there under "Join us".

Text by Peter Wade-Martins Design by Sue White

## NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST SPRING NEWSLETTER 2005



Members of the Archaeological Trust, the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society and the Binham History Society visiting Binham Priory on 19th May 2005. Photo Peter Wade-Martins

**This spring sees some significant achievements by the Trust. The final preparations are in hand for the formal opening of Bloodgate Hill, South Creake by the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk. The riverbank repairs at St Benets Abbey have been completed, and a start has been made on a major conservation programme on the Roman town walls at Caistor. We have also signed an agreement to manage the site of the Unitarian chapel at Filby.**

### Bloodgate Hill, South Creake Project completed

Members who were on the 2003 Field Visit to Bloodgate Hill will remember seeing excavations under way which were designed to determine the date and nature of the hillfort remains before they were put down to grass to prevent further plough damage. All tasks have been completed, and the ramparts are now grazed by sheep. A small car park has been constructed, and on 24th June Richard Jewson, the Lord Lieutenant, will perform an opening ceremony when the new site interpretation panels will be unveiled.

It is not easy to make a heavily eroded archaeological monument interesting for the non-specialist, but there is no doubt that Trevor Ashwin and Sue White between them have done an excellent job on the two panels they have created. The excavation report by Ken Penn of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit has also been completed and this has been submitted to *Norfolk Archaeology* for publication.

Members who visit the site will notice some seats made of a rather strange material. This is actually recycled polythene bottles. The Trust tries in every way to be environmentally sustainable!



The erection of the first interpretation panel on-site at South Creake. Photo Sue White



All the riverbank repairs at St Benets Abbey have been carried out from the river with great care being taken to protect the monument. All materials have been brought in by barge to ensure that there has been no damage to the earthworks.

*Photo Peter Wade Martins*

### St Benets Abbey Riverbank repairs

The photograph on the front of the 2004 Annual Report showed just how much damage the endless wash from river cruisers had been causing to the archaeology along the river's edge. Happily, that is all over now, thanks to the generous support of the Environment Agency and English Heritage who between them have put up most of the money for the riverbank repairs.

A new river bank has been constructed consisting of a row of wire baskets filled with stones, called gabions. On top of these has been fixed a line or reed rolls to give the bank a soft edge, and the space between the two has been filled with clay imported from a flood alleviation scheme nearby. The final result is quite attractive, and we have been assured that it will last for a long time.

As a separate project, the area between the gatehouse and the river which regularly flooded has been filled with river dredgings pumped in by the Broads Authority to stop the constant flooding which will sooner or later undermine the foundations of the gatehouse. This area looks unsightly at the moment, but once the new grass is established it is planned to make this into an amenity area where visitors can absorb the information on the proposed interpretation panels and where families can just sit and enjoy the river's edge in a cattle-free zone.



After the new riverbank was complete, the old bank line was covered with a permeable membrane and the space behind the new bank was filled with clay. All this should give lasting protection to the archaeological deposits.

*Photo Peter Wade-Martins*

### Future of adjacent moorings secured

One of the consequences of new riverbank heightening nearby was that the moorings used for many years by most visitors to the monument would become redundant and were due to be removed as they were no longer necessary for flood defence purposes. However, the Broads Authority have stepped in, recognising the importance of the moorings for visitors to the monument, and have agreed to take responsibility for them as 24-hour moorings. So, long-term access to the site by river has been secured.



Nuttalls, the contractors at St Benets Abbey, lowering stone-filled wire gabions into the water to create the new riverbank.

*Photo Peter Wade-Martins*

### Improved visitor facilities

The next stage of the Trust's work at St Benets is to improve visitor provision with a small car park and some site interpretation, linked to the new guidebook by Tim Pestell. This has been delayed, but we still hope it can be published by late summer.

### Caistor Roman Town Wall repairs



The contractors, W.S.Lusher & Son, cleaning down the town walls prior to conservation work.

*Photo Peter Wade-Martins*

In the 2004 Annual Report we were able to announce that DEFRA had offered the Trust very generous funding towards the cost of wall repairs. That work was due to start in the spring. These repairs are now well under way. This first stage, which will cover all of the north side of the town and a part of the south wall, will continue until the end of August. There has been much discussion about what sort of mortar to use and how to ensure that the repairs blend in with the Roman work. The walls need to be weather-proofed but still retain their character. Members are encouraged to visit the site during the summer and to see the wall consolidation in progress for themselves.



David Watt, the Trust's building surveyor, looking at a trial panel of wall repairs.

*Photo Peter Wade-Martins*

### Filby Unitarian Chapel Site Trust takes on care and management

Hidden in a small meadow in Filby village are the foundations and associated grave slabs of a Unitarian chapel which was pulled down during the war after suffering severe bomb damage. It is a very attractive and peaceful spot on the site of one of the earliest non-conformist chapels in Norfolk.

The Trust has signed a management agreement with the chapel trustees to look after the place for them. The site has been tidied up and a new interpretation panel erected. It is not over-tidied though, and there is a variety of wild flowers to be seen in the adjacent hay meadow. With the daffodils this spring the place was a pleasure to visit. The Unitarians hold an annual service at Filby, and this year it will be on 21st August at 3.00pm.



The site of the Unitarian chapel at Filby which the Trust now manages. The foundations of the latest chapel and some of the eighteenth-century grave slabs are visible in the picture.

*Photo Peter Wade Martins*

### Binham Priory Excavation needed



Binham Priory in the evening light. The new toilets are due to be put within the foundations of the north aisle to the left, provided a satisfactory design solution can be found

*Photo Sue White*

While it has been agreed that the new toilets should be located within the ruined north aisle, it has been decided that it is not possible to progress the design of the new building until the surviving medieval remains of the aisle have been fully examined. So an excavation is due to take place this summer, provided funds are forthcoming from English Heritage. The two key issues are (a) whether the facilities can be fitted into the restricted width of the aisle and (b) whether the medieval foundations will prove to be load-bearing and will conform with modern building regulations. The situation can be re-assessed when the north aisle is fully exposed.

### Burgh Castle New grant applications



Burgh Castle south east bastion.

*Photo Peter Wade-Martins*

Although the Trust's application for improved visitor facilities was turned down by the Heritage Lottery Fund last autumn, we remain convinced that the Trust's proposals for the site are still basically sound. The problem is that the HLF are reluctant to see their funds spent on the access road, car park and visitor building. They like to see their support going directly into site conservation and into schemes like disabled access pathways around the monument. They would prefer to see "new build" elements of the project funded from elsewhere. They have also asked for better evidence for the educational benefit which the project will provide.