

# NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST SPRING NEWSLETTER 2019

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Fig 1: The Trust's Council members and staff at the Onwards & Upwards workshop in October. The event was held at The Lady Elizabeth Wing at Holkham Hall by kind invitation of Lord Leicester.

**This newsletter reports on progress of the 'Onwards & Upwards' project; the Imagined Land project at Burnham Norton; and promoting interest in conservation through supporting guided tours and special events at St Benet's Abbey, Burgh Castle and Caistor Roman Town.**

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

The first year of the Onwards and Upwards project has seen our consultants, Architrave, undertake extensive research and consultation on the work of the Trust and its aspirations for the future.

In October Council members and Trust staff took part in a day-long workshop organised by Architrave to develop a clear vision for the future of the organisation, and the structures and roles that support it. Activities included group-work on developing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of the Trust's current situation; exploring ideas about the Trust's public-facing image and how this might influence our future branding and digital presence, and gauging the Trust's appetite for change. It was a stimulating day and provided a strong basis for members of the Architrave team to develop their recommendations.



Fig 2: Holkham workshop: interior

Also in October we held a special workshop after the AGM, to provide an opportunity for Trust members and volunteers to contribute to the consultation process. Dr Simon Thurley's wide-ranging talk on 'The Future of Norfolk's Past' was followed by a summary of the results of the visitor surveys which Trust volunteers, Council Members and staff carried out over the summer at Burgh Castle Fort, Caistor Roman Town and St Benet's Abbey.



Fig 3: AGM workshop

Consultant Ann Sumner reported on her preliminary analysis of the responses at each of the sites. She found that many visitors appreciated the ‘unique peacefulness and connection with history’ at Trust sites, with overall perceptions of the sites being positive. One of the stand-out results was the confusion many visitors felt about who was responsible for sites and lack of awareness of the Trust’s role, where management is shared with other organisations such as English Heritage and South Norfolk Council. The data also provided interesting insight into the types of people who currently visit the sites, using a method called ‘segmentation’. This is a market research method in which a given market is broken down into distinct groups that behave in similar ways or have similar needs. Segmentation can help organisations to understand their markets, identify groups of visitors they would like to target, and to communicate with them and anticipate their needs.

Using this method Ann identified that 30% of visitors who completed the survey were ‘Dormitory Dependables’: people from suburban and small towns with an interest in heritage activities and mainstream arts. The other two main groups, making up 22% and 21% respectively were ‘Home and Heritage’ (from rural areas and small towns, engaging in daytime activities and historic events) and ‘Trips & Treats’ (people who enjoy mainstream arts and popular culture influenced by children, family and friends). This kind of information will feed into Architrave’s recommendations for future events and activity planning at our sites.

Architrave also commissioned reports on the Trust’s branding and digital presence from a specialist, Connecting Culture. Their reports found that the Trust currently has a weak brand, both in terms of its manifestation and level of recognition (as identified in the visitor survey); and that addressing this issue should be a priority. As a result we have commissioned a local designer to develop a new brand and website for the Trust, funded from the Onwards & Upwards budget – more details on this exciting development will be available soon!

Architrave consultants have drafted key reports and recommendations on Trust governance, and acquisitions and disposals, which will be examined by Council in April. More detail on this and the development of the 10 year Business Plan will be reported in the Annual newsletter later this year.

The Onwards and Upwards project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Resilient Heritage programme.



**LOTTERY FUNDED**



# Imagined Land Project

The two-year long Imagined Land project ended in December with the production of six new 'pop-up' banners telling the story of Burnham Norton Friary. These will be on show in the Gatehouse on open days in the future, and at other venues such as the school and the church. We also published an anthology of creative writing produced during the project, including the script of the pageant. The anthology was edited by the project manager Simon Floyd, and Kevin Crossley-Holland, who writes:

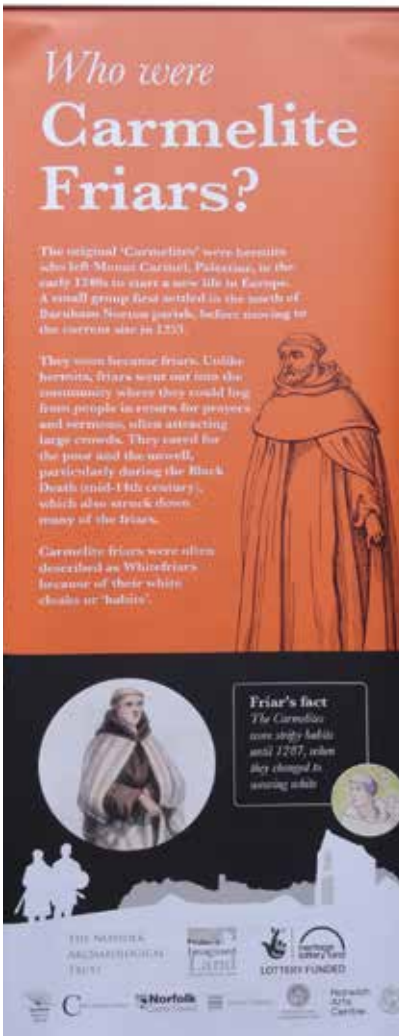
*A sense of anticipation and opportunity... a sense of purpose and enjoyment... All this is true of the primary school and community workshops that Mags Chalcraft and I led during June and July. What was especially pleasing was the way in which so many participants tried to imagine the daily lives and thoughts and emotions of the Carmelite Friars, and the time and care they devoted to developing and spit-and-polishing their first drafts. Look and see! It's as if each of the children and adults chosen here have sipped a drop of clear water from the Friary's wellspring.*

The anthology can be downloaded from the project website: <https://sites.google.com/site/burnhamnortonimaginedland>

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.



THE NORFOLK  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
TRUST



Historic England



WRITERS'  
CENTRE  
NORWICH

National Centre for Writing

Norwich  
Arts  
Centre.



Caistor Roman Project



Norfolk & Norwich  
Archaeological Society



LOTTERY FUNDED

Fig 4: Example of one of the pop-ups

As part of the Imagined Land project, the local community and the school excavated a number of archaeological ‘test-pits’ around the village. The following summary is taken from Giles Emery’s report on the test-pits.

The project was highly successful in engaging with the community in Burnham Norton, where volunteers included local residents, family groups and all the year groups of the Burnham Market Primary School. The test-pitting project excavated an impressive 8 test-pits over the course of eight days, which have served to both enhance the local Historic Environment Record for the area of the school and St Margaret’s Church and increase our understanding of the archaeological potential of the setting of the Scheduled Monument. A total of 870 individual finds of a wide range of material types were collected; including artefacts such as worked prehistoric flints, pottery sherds, butchered animal bone, marine shells, clay tobacco pipe, coins, buttons, ceramic building materials and iron smelting slag.

The pottery assemblage from the test-pits amounts to 105 individual sherds and includes fabrics from vessels of Prehistoric, Iron Age, Roman, Early Saxon, Late Saxon, Early Medieval, Medieval, Post-medieval and modern periods. The most frequent finds were of Late Saxon and high medieval date, and the majority of these were recovered from test-pits located closest to the friary and on the Friar’s Lane street frontage. Most pottery groups were from mixed layers, almost every sherd was highly abraded, and the assemblages may simply represent redeposited material spread across open fields. However, they do provide some evidence for localised activity of each of the periods represented.



Fig 5 Nuremberg token (jetton) recovered from the Church car park: This Rose/Orb type jetton was produced in large quantities between 1586-1635 for use as ‘counting money’ implying that they were used in place of coins to assist in accounting. (Giles Emery)

The Late Saxon pottery in particular is suggestive of minor localised settlement activity which pre-dates the establishment of the 13th century Friary site.

The worked flint has provided a valuable sample of excavated flint, collected from all 8 test-pits in varying small quantities. Several flakes, shatter pieces, expedient scrapers and multi-purpose tools were found indicative mainly of Late Bronze Age activity. Overall the assemblage points to a late prehistoric spread of lithic material across the landscape, the test-pitting indicating a relatively high incidence of background prehistoric activity.

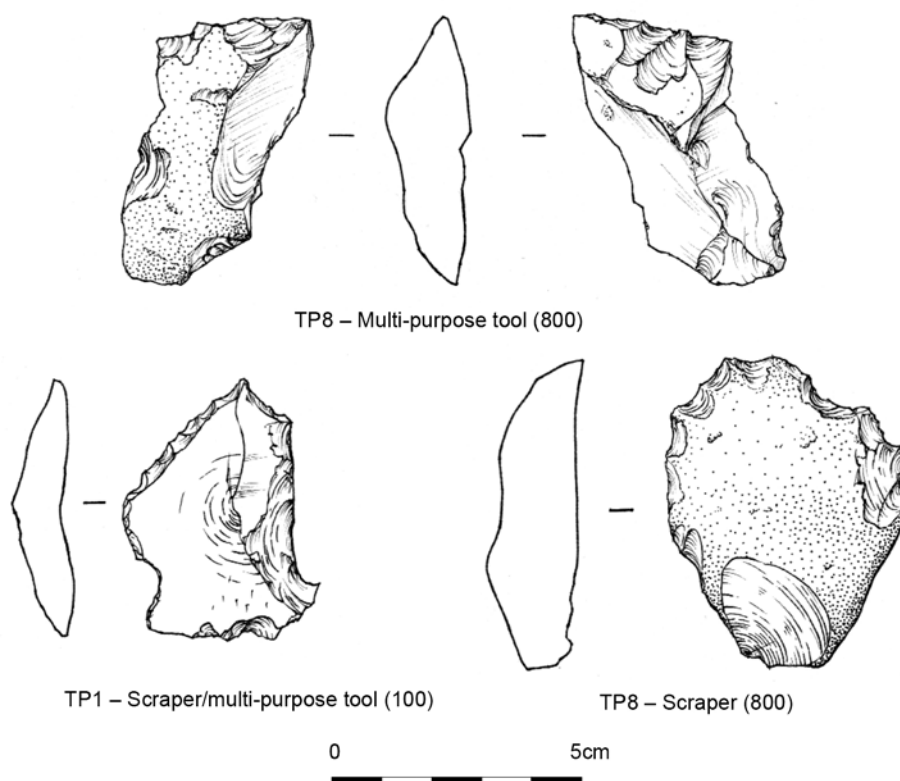


Fig 6: Illustrated worked flint: Giles Emery





Fig 7: Anglo-Saxon clasp after conservation: NCC report

Two dress objects of Anglo-Saxon date were discovered within the grounds of the school, currently presumed to represent casual losses from differing periods. One is a fragmentary iron wrist-clasp of 6th century date, commonly used for fastening sleeves. The other is the remarkable Anglo-Saxon belt fitting mentioned in the last newsletter. The HLF agreed to fund the x-ray, cleaning and conservation of the belt-fitting as part of the project. This fitting is most likely a counter-plate from a buckle, and would have been part of an ornate set with a corresponding buckle and plate. The counter-plate is intricately decorated, tapering to a wolf's face. The eyes of the face are picked out in silver rivets and the design across the whole piece

is augmented with gilding. The counter-plate would have been attached to a strap with three rivets, one at the end of the wolf's nose, and the other two running through the centre of the piece. The decoration on this piece is quite unusual. However, the zoomorphic terminal suggests it was probably made sometime in the 9th century AD, pre-dating the founding of the priory by several hundred years. We are currently in the process of organising a permanent home for the piece, where it can be viewed by the public. Giles Emery's full report is available to download from the project website – visit the Burnham Norton page on the Trust's website for a link: [www.norfarchtrust.org.uk](http://www.norfarchtrust.org.uk)

## St Benet's Abbey: 1000 years!



Fig 8: 1000 years gold logo

In 1019, King Cnut granted the manors of Neatishead, Ludham and Horning to a group of monks in order that they could establish an Abbey. 1000 years later St Benet's Abbey is still an iconic site on the Norfolk Broads. To celebrate its 1000 year anniversary, the Friends of St Benet's Abbey (TFoSBA), and the Trust are marking the occasion in a number of different ways.

TFoSBA have received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for their 1000 years! project. Celebrations kick off on the 6th April at Ludham Village hall where there will be a St Benet's Discovery Day. The first part of the day will include talks from a number of specialists on the Abbey, its landscape, architectural history, later use as a mill and current place in the Broads. This will be followed by a walk to the Abbey and tour of the site. As the summer unfolds, local communities around the Abbey will be working with Theatre Company, Parrabolla, and putting on a new play that draws on the history and stories of the Abbey. The first performance will take place at the Abbey itself on 9th June, with the audience arriving by boat. Additional performances will be put on at other locations on the 12th, 14th and 15th June to make sure that everyone gets a chance to see the play.

During August, the area around the gatehouse will be adorned with giant willow monks, and there will be the chance to help create these at the site on 31st July. There will also be an exhibition in St Catherine's church, Ludham from 3rd – 11th August. This exhibition will include photographs from the 26 parishes that were previously under the patronage of the Abbey.

Information on how to book events or get involved in the project will be advertised through the Trust's monthly update.

The Norfolk Archaeological Trust will be complementing these events by producing a new image-rich guidebook of the site, which will be launched at an exhibition of images of the Abbey, to be held in Norwich Cathedral Library in September. More information on this will follow.

## Guided walks and Heritage Open Days in 2019

There will be regular guided tours at Burgh Castle Fort, St Benet's Abbey and Caistor Roman Town this summer. We will keep you updated via our monthly blog, or you can check the website for updated news.



Fig 9: Guided tour at St Benet's. Credit: TFoSBA

## 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!

Email: [info@norfarchtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@norfarchtrust.org.uk)

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).

*Text and photographs by Caroline Davison and Natasha Hutcheson unless otherwise stated. Design by Sue Walker White*