**Community Archaeology 2024: Coast Climate and Community Conference**

**6 April 2024 at the University of East Anglia**

[**www.nnas.info**](http://www.nnas.info)

Norfolk is a coastal county with a vast array of heritage found on its coastal fringe. From tools and footprints, found at Happisburgh, dating from around 900,000 years ago, through to 20th century military installations placed to protect against invasion, much of this heritage is vulnerable to erosion. With climate change, rates of erosion are set to rise through increased sea level height and stronger storms resulting more energy in weather systems. Storm and surge events, such as those experienced on the coast in the 1953 floods and 2013 Christmas storms are likely to become more common and their destructive potential will result in loss of archaeological sites and structures. River systems will also change with a likelihood of more volatile events creating more inland floods and in some parts of the county, such as the Fens and the Broads, the salination of underlying freshwater conditions which are currently preserving archaeological and paleoenvironmental deposits. This conference will set the challenge: How can communities deal with these losses?

**Programme:**

10AM Welcome and introduction. Dr Annie Grant, President of NNAS

10:10 ‘Coast Climate and Community - reengagement with landscapes.’ Andy Hutcheson, Research Fellow in the Centre for Archaeology and Heritage at SISJAC, UEA.

10:30 ‘The NNAS Overview’ Alan Pask, NNAS Trustee.

10.35 ‘The CRP approach to community archaeology’ Mike Pinner, Chair of Caistor Roman Project

10:55 ‘The Norfolk Community Archaeology Forum - Introduction and Discussion’

11:10 Coffee

11:30 ‘Discussing Coastal Archaeology’ chaired by Mike Curtis (NAS) with panel discussion.

12:15 ‘Navigating the Tides of Change: Climate impacts on the Archaeology and Built Heritage of the Broads National Park’ Andrew Farrell Project Director, Broads Authority.

12:35 ‘Latent activism in changing landscapes’. Laura Drysdale, Director of the Restoration Trust.

12:55 ‘CITiZAN Coasts in Mind: using community archive building methodologies to map coastal change, empower communities and develop climate change resilience.’ Lawrence Northall, Coasts in Mind, Community Partnerships Project Officer, CITiZAN (MOLA) .

13:15 Discussion

13:30 Lunch break & marketplace (Plus film screenings in the room)

14.30 ‘The Edge of Archaeology: exploring our relationship with the edge of land and the start of the sea.’ A recorded message from Neil Redfern, Director of the CBA.

14:40 ‘Deep History Detectives Re-mixed and Pathways to Ancient Britain’ Claire Harris, MOLA Project Officer, Deep History Detectives

15:00 ‘Coast to coast: aerial archaeology volunteering projects in Norfolk’ Sophie Tremlett, Senior Air Photo Interpreter, Norfolk County Council.

15:20 ‘Foreshore community archaeology projects from around the UK to inspire the possibilities on the Norfolk coast.’ Peta Knott, Nautical Archaeology Society Education Manager.

15:40 ‘Integrating Climate Data into Archaeology and Heritage Research.’ Joanne Clarke, Hon Professor of Archaeology at UEA and contributor to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

16:00 Discussion

16:30 Close.

**Abstracts received:**

**Neil Redfern** Executive Director of the Council for British Archaeology

**The Edge of Archaeology: exploring our relationship with the edge of land and the start of the sea**

The CBA has had a long relationship with our coastline and the sea. In 1964 we were instrumental in setting up the Nautical Archaeology Committee, which would go on to become the Nautical Archaeological Society. In 1995 we established the Defence of Britain Project, the first public mass recording project of archaeological remains and features in the UK and which would be repeated between 2014 and 2018 by the Home Front Legacy Project. Both projects had a strong coastal element by the very nature in part at how we defended these islands in time of conflict. Their approach to public participation are the bedrock on which the more recent CITiZAN and Thames Discovery projects run. So in the 80th Year of the CBA my short paper will explore how our relationship with our coasts has changed over time and consider how we might use archaeology and public participation to reframe our relationship with the edge of land and the start of the sea. [neilredfern@archaeologyuk.org](mailto:neilredfern@archaeologyuk.org)

**Andrew Farrell** Project Director, Broads Authority

**Navigating the Tides of Change: Climate impacts on the Archaeology and Built Heritage of the Broads National Park**

The Broads National Park is at this moment facing threats from the climate crisis. These threats pose intricate challenges to the archaeology and built heritage of the Broads, especially in the areas around the Halvergate Marshes. As climate dynamics accelerate, the Broads, renowned for its waterways, drainage mills and natural heritage, is grappling with shifting weather patterns, rising sea levels and coastal erosion. First, we will examine our evolving weather patterns, exploring their impact on the preservation of archaeological sites and the structural integrity of the drainage mills. Then we will address the imminent threat of rising sea levels, emphasising the vulnerability of the estuary, Breydon Water, and examining potential mitigation approaches. Integral to this discussion is the exploration of how local community archaeology groups can leverage modern digital tools to record the changing landscape. Incorporating LiDAR scanning, photogrammetry and other cutting-edge technologies, these groups can significantly contribute to the documentation and understanding of the archaeological and built heritage features of the Broads National Park. We will look at examples of successful applications of these tools, highlighting the potential for collaborative efforts between community groups, academics and experts on the ground. The discussion will then zoom in on one small section of the Halvergate Marshes, emphasizing the specific challenges faced by this unique landscape and showcasing how digital tools can enhance recording and monitoring efforts. Through case studies and on-the-ground observations, this exploration of this wet landscape not only underscores the urgency of addressing climate-related challenge but also delves into how local communities can actively engage in preserving their cultural heritage. By acknowledging the unique vulnerabilities of this region and promoting the use of modern digital tools, the aim is to contribute to the broader discourse on climate resilience in archaeology, fostering a collective commitment to safeguarding the rich cultural heritage of the Broads National Park.

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**Laura Drysdale** Director of the Restoration Trust

**Latent activism in changing landscapes**

Drawing on experiences of participating in archaeology and creative projects in Norfolk, our presentation will explore how the voices of people who are especially exposed to landscape change can be heard in and beyond their communities.

Laura Drysdale is Director of the Restoration Trust, a charity that involves people who live with mental health challenges with heritage and creativity. Ian Brownlie is an artist and musician who often works with the Restoration Trust. Christopher Smith is a writer and Restoration Trust volunteer. [laura@restorationtrust.org.uk](mailto:laura@restorationtrust.org.uk)

**Andy Hutcheson** Research Fellow in the Centre for Archaeology and Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Culture, UEA

**Coast Climate and Community - reengagement with landscapes**

We are in a mental health crisis in the UK and there is a need to create programmes that help people to engage with the historic environment. Community archaeology is a collaborative way for people from potentially diverse backgrounds, to explore and produce narratives related to the past and its relationship to the present. Recent research in this area shows a strong potential for engagement with heritage helping with maintaining and improving well-being. The practice of archaeology can make a difference to people’s mental health. Better engagement with landscapes can also increase feelings of stewardship. This will be important in the future with potential large-scale loss of heritage sites through climate change.

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**Alan Pask** NNAS Trustee

**The Norfolk Community Archaeology Forum – The NNAS Overview, Introduction and Discussion**

Focussing on what the Forum might do for projects around the county, Alan was Chairman of the Caistor Roman Project for 11 years, and is currently a trustee of the NNAS

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**Mike Pinner** Chair of Caistor Roman Project

**The CRP Approach to Community Archaeology**

Abstract to follow

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**Joanne Clarke** Hon. Professor of Archaeology at UEA and contributor to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

**Integrating Climate Data into Archaeology and Heritage Research.**

Data and information visualization is the practice of designing and creating easy-to-communicate and easy-to-understand graphic or visual representations of a large amount of complex quantitative and qualitative data and information. Archaeology has, for some time now, been using ‘big data sets’ to assess, analyse and interpret human and non-human behaviour temporally and spatially, so that the Archaeology Data Service now has its own project, Big Data: Preservation and Management Strategies for Exceptionally Large Data Formats. The next step is for archaeologists to show big data in ways that can be understood beyond archaeology. In this talk I will use data and information visualization in the field of climate change and adaptation to demonstrate how big data in archaeology can become more accessible and therefore more relevant to sectors beyond archaeology.

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**Claire Harris** MOLA Project Officer, Deep History Detectives

**Deep History Detectives: Community Archaeology on a Rapidly Changing Coastline**

The coastline of Happisburgh and surrounding villages is well known (outside of Norfolk) for two main things: the incredibly rapid rate of coastal erosion and the internationally significant Palaeolithic archaeology that this has revealed along the foreshore. Despite the fragility of this land/seascape, and the potentially negative association of the archaeology with immense loss of place, the local community has played an integral role in recording the archaeology that is found on the foreshore.

This presentation will highlight two projects: Palaeolithic Artefact Discoveries from the Sandscaping area (PADS) and Deep History Detectives: Tracking artefacts on the North Norfolk Coast. The case studies cover work undertaken since 2020 and funded through a variety of small grants. As well as reporting the successes of the projects this paper will also reflect upon difficulties faced when working without access to long-term stable funding.

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**Lawrence Northall**  Coasts in Mind, Community Partnerships Project Officer, CITiZAN (MOLA) **CITiZAN Coasts in Mind: using community archive building methodologies to map coastal change, empower communities and develop climate change resilience.**

Over the last year the NLHF funded project Coasts in Mind has been developed by the Museum of London Archaeology. Its aim has been to build on methodologies that map local knowledge and locally held archival records in order to measure coastal change over 100 years. By delivering a programme of community engagement events in four distinct English coastal zones, Coasts in Mind has been empowering communities to record their own tangible and intangible heritage in ways that can influence policymakers and contribute to local understandings of coastal change, including the driving factors behind it and the processes by which it is taking place.

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**Peta Knott**, Archaeologist and Education Manager for the Nautical Archaeology Society

**Foreshore community archaeology projects from around the UK to inspire the possibilities on the Norfolk coast**

For the last 50 years the Nautical Archaeology Society have been working with a diverse audience to preserve and promote cultural heritage in a wet environment either underwater or on the foreshore. Our origins are in the Mary Rose shipwreck excavation, but over the years our area of expertise has spread to the intertidal zone and even to inland waterways. This presentation will highlight three examples of our work in the coastal environment with an emphasis on the training component and community involvement in each project. Starting with our most geographically relevant case study of a single wreck at Hunstanton, the presentation will then move on to a ship graveyard at Forton Lake in Portsmouth. The final case study will be on our current community archaeology fieldwork at Sandwich Bay in Kent. In each example, we will show how training and community involvement has been foremost in the project methodology.

The aim of this presentation is to highlight some of the coastal archaeology that we have done around the coast of the UK and inspire ideas of community heritage projects that could be completed around the coast of Norfolk. The NAS is expertly placed to encourage these projects, help develop local capacity and empower local organisations to record and promote their own coastal heritage.

Peta is a maritime archaeologist who runs the internationally accredited Education Programme for the Nautical Archaeology Society. She develops the diverse curriculum and also delivers some of the training courses. For the last six years Peta has run the community archaeology project on the beach at Sandwich Bay in Kent.

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**Sophie Tremlett** Senior Air Photo Interpreter, Norfolk County Council.

**Coast to coast: aerial archaeology volunteering projects in Norfolk**

In recent years, thanks to funding from Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Norfolk County Council has been running aerial archaeology projects utilising volunteers. Provided with training, source material, support and feedback, participants have used digital aerial photographs (Google Earth) and visualised airborne laser scanning data (lidar) to identify and record archaeological sites and features in the Norfolk landscape. Stretching from the Broads to the west Norfolk coast, this paper will outline the methodology developed for the projects and the lessons learnt during their delivery. It will look at highlights from the results, and look forward to the discoveries we hope to make with our newest project.

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