

Open Day at Quarrendon Sunday 9th July

This event was organised by the society in conjunction with the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust. Many members will have visited the site of this important 'deserted medieval village' (which also contains the site of a house belonging to Sir Henry Lee, a Tudor courtier), is a scheduled ancient monument on the outskirts of Aylesbury on the west side of the River Thames. More than ten years ago, after much lobbying by the Society and with the active support of Sandy Kidd (at that time County Archaeologist), Buckinghamshire County Council undertook the work of creating a trust to take on the site's ownership. The land had formerly belonged to the diocese of Oxford which had sold a large area of farmland here for development. Whilst negotiations were proceeding a new ring-road was being constructed nearby and the large housing estate of Berryfields was being built. Once the land had been transferred, the trust, under the direction of Michael Woods, commenced the long task of turning a rather neglected piece of farmland into an area where the monument could be permanently protected and biodiversity encouraged.

Public understanding of the site and access to it is an important objective of the trust, but there is of necessity a fine balance to be struck between this aim and the need to graze livestock on the grassland here. Unleashed dogs and sheep, for instance, don't mix, nor motorbikes and earthworks! Lacking parking, at present the monument can only be reached by an energetic twenty-minute walk from a road. Although some of the trust's land is familiar to local dog walkers, most of those who live in the surrounding estates are completely unaware of the site's existence and significance, so the open day was aimed specifically at informing local residents, and also recruiting voluntary wardens to assist with the site's management.

A leafletting firm delivered over 4500 leaflets to local homes and it has been estimated that nearly 500 people turned up on the Sunday. Fortunately it was a sunny day. Visitors were entertained by displays and activities provided by the Trust, the County Archaeological and Environmental Services, 'Tudors' in costume, a hedgelay and of course BAS which provided a popular 'Muddled Museum' display and a bookstall (which sold among other publications a new booklet about the site). Stationed at strategic points across the monument were pairs of informed 'Ask Me's, provided by the County and BAS, who chatted about the site to the many interested visitors. The organising committee is most grateful to the many individuals who helped to make this a most successful occasion.

Michael Farley