

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

After two years of closure on Sundays, the Museum reopened on summer season afternoons from Easter to the end of October. In response to this and to an enhanced programme of exhibitions and events, visitor numbers increased in 2009 to 116,500 (2008: 102,000). Sales of Roald Dahl Children's Gallery tickets held up well at around 20,000 for the year.

This was another good year for the schools service with 15,000 pupils visiting both the Museum and Roald Dahl Children's Gallery in school groups. Schools workshop sessions provided in the Museum continue to account for more than half of the school visits in total. New sessions were developed to complement the exhibitions programme. For the *Scenes of Victorian Life* exhibition, students brought to life paintings in freeze-frame and acted out their interpretation of life in Victorian times as depicted by John Morgan.

Winter in the Art Gallery began with *Holograms-the first 60 years* celebrating the 60th anniversary of the first hologram with a stunning selection from the Jonathan Ross collection which recreated the excitement of the popular emergence of holograms in the 1970s and 1980s and showed us some bang up-to-date applications of the technology.

From April to July, our main loan art exhibition in the Gallery *Scenes of Victorian Life: the paintings of John and Frederick Morgan* centred on the museum's own painting of *The Jury*, 1861. With support from the Government Indemnity scheme, we borrowed a superb range of genre paintings by John 'Aylesbury Morgan' and his son Fred from national and regional collections and from members of the Morgan family. John Morgan lived and worked in St Mary's Churchyard Aylesbury in the 1860s and *The Jury* shows 12 well-known townsmen in 1861. This gave an opportunity to broaden our focus from the vivid narrative paintings of Victorian life to people and places in Victorian Aylesbury and to the earliest photographers of the town.

The Museum was delighted to be supported by

both the Friends & Patrons and The William Harding's Charity for the exhibition and also for our linked programme of twilight events and gallery talks. Collections Showcase, the HLF funded gallery in the Viney Room, complemented the Victorian theme and featured the best of our rich collections with archives also loaned by CBS. The Showcase also highlighted significant local Victorian collectors of photography, archaeology, natural history and geology, from Dr John Lee and his Hartwell House Museum to early stalwarts of the Society such as Alfred Heneage Cocks. In all, 7600 visitors enjoyed the *Victorian Life* exhibition over the 3 month run.

Every two years, the Muir Trust funds a month's artist residency linked to museum exhibitions or collections. This year, cartoonist and book illustrator Ros Asquith linked her residency to the Victorian Aylesbury exhibition, producing *The Modern Jury* to compare the town in 2009 with the 1860s.

From July until October, the Gallery was transformed by the sights, sounds and smells of *Amazing Sensory Pods*, three gigantic sculptures created by Jan Niedojadlo from recycled materials. Over the summer, the exhibition brought many first-timers to the Museum and over 13,000 visitors in all.

Our Friends & Patrons mounted a successful and exciting selling exhibition, the *Off the Wall Art Fair*, in November, a vibrant mix of contemporary and traditional work by twenty-five national and local artists, potters and sculptors. Over £5,000 was raised for Friends' funds.

Georgian Room exhibitions began by showcasing the work of local artist Paul Millichip, closely followed by Ros Asquith' residency exhibition. Over the summer, we showed again the spectacular paintings of *Hartwell House and gardens* by Balthazar Nebot, 1738, including for the first time the 'Ninth Nebot', a view of Hartwell and the town of Aylesbury in the distance, painted 20 years later in the 1750s, which had been thought to be by another artist. From late September, we worked

with Jane Muir to display her recent paintings on the theme of *Legends of the Wildwood: the Green Man and the Fool in the Forest* with woodcarvings by Mick Waterhouse. It was a pleasure to bring their work together with linked objects from the collections, from a medieval silver gilt mount to a *Foliate Heads* textile by John Piper.

From November to January, we took 50 pots from our nationally important studio ceramics collection to display at Wycombe Library. A reminder that the full collection of over 330 pots has been made available online via the museum website at www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/museum/ceramics_collection/ea_Studio_Ceramics.page?

Ros Tyrrell, our Finds Liaison Officer for Bucks and Milton Keynes had another busy year, entering finds information into the Portable Antiquities Database www.finds.org.uk. Six years' work in reporting and recording of Treasure and public archaeological finds in Bucks and Milton Keynes is really showing results, not least in the acquisition for the museum collections of a splendid range of Treasure items with funding support from the Friends and national funders.

The expanded programme of events and activities continued with special fun Saturdays, including a Tudor Day, the Roald Dahl Festival, Rocks, Fossils and Archaeology Day, Wildlife Day and finishing with a Victorian Christmas. The events programme, which brought over 5,000 visitors to the Museum, was greatly assisted by the participating local archaeological and wildlife groups and societies and by the Friends & Patrons volunteers.

The Museum celebrated 10 years of the national Big Draw this year with artist and illustrator Louise Quirke. Students from two local schools came to free workshops specially funded by the Vale of Aylesbury DFAS to learn how to illustrate *A day in the life of a . . . Museum object*. Activities included object speed dating, word games and object storytelling. The public event on Saturday brought in 500 visitors of all ages to experience *A day in the life of . . . an illustrator*.

Notable accessions to the collections included:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACQUISITIONS

2009.2.1 Silver Roman ring fragment; bezel and shoulders only; bezel has 3 incised lines, with 2 crescents; 3rd century; found with metal detector at

Quarrendon and declared Treasure

2009.3.1 Silver medieval earscoop/toothpick; almost complete, tip of pick broken; bent; shaft is decoratively twisted; 14th century; found with metal detector at Aston Abbots and declared Treasure

2009.4.1 Flint hand axe; Palaeolithic; from Fulmer; found in garden; 11.5cm long, 6cm wide; complete

2009.17.1 Anglo-Saxon iron spear head; complete; found by donors grandfather whilst digging lock at Abbots Brook, Bourne End, in 1887; 2 rivet holes in shank; file marks preserved on the spear blade, apparently original

2009.51 Hoard of bronze items, Iron Age, apparently related to a possible solar cult centre at Wavendon Gate; includes 4 miniature decorated wheels, 2 wheel headed pins, a blank disc, and some scrap bronze; two of the decorated wheels were deliberately cut so possibly a scrap/founders hoard; found with metal detector near the area of the Wavendon Gate excavations that produced the wooden Taranis Wheel

2009.78.1 Copper alloy brooch, medieval; probably 14th century; unusual form of two dragons entwined at tails to create sub annular shape, pin intact; whole, but slightly bent; found at Creslow

2009.79.1 Roman brooch, copper alloy, trumpet headed, body in form of a fly, with foot knob made into the fly's head; traces of blue enamel survive on the wings of the fly, an empty cell representing the fly's body probably had red enamel, judging by similar 1st-2nd century examples; projecting loop at foot end; remains of silvering visible on much of the copper alloy; found with metal detector at Haddenham

2009.79.2 Anglo Saxon silver penny, in two pieces, and incomplete; possibly of Eadger, 959–975 AD; found at Haddenham

2009.79.3 Silver penny of Charles I, incomplete and worn, 1625–1629; found at Haddenham

2009.80.1 Copper alloy Roman brooch; plain fibula, undecorated, but intact; surface in poor condition; found with metal detector at Radnage

2009.164.1 Pot sherd, rim; late Saxon or early medieval; from Ellesborough; vegetable temper suggests Saxon date, but the form of the rim suggests medieval; possibly this sherd is evidence of vegetable tempering being used much later than was previously thought

2009.241.1-26 Hoard of 26 Iron Age coins, consisting 17 gold staters, 9 silver units, reign of

Cunobelin; 10–43 AD; from the area south of Winslow: find spot to remain confidential; found with metal detector and declared Treasure

2009.242.1 Roman silver finger ring, incomplete; terminal fragment only of spiral ring, in the form of a stylised snake head; from Hambleden found with metal detector and declared Treasure

2009.243.1 silver buckle, Medieval, 1400–1450 ; D shaped hoop, tongue missing; found with metal detector at Hambleden and declared Treasure

2009.244.1-2 Pair of identical bronze dagger scabbards or sword chapes; one side has decorative pattern, the other has arabic inscription; dug up on an allotment in Whitchurch; possibly from Caucasian Kindjal type daggers, date unknown, but probably post-medieval

ART ACQUISITIONS

2009.25.1 Stoneware pot by Derek Davis, striped chevron design, mid 1980s

2009.25.2 Bottle vase by Derek Davis in sang-de-boeuf glaze, early 1970s

2009.25.3 Stoneware bowl by Derek Davis with turquoise blue barium glaze, late 1970s-early 1980s

2009.29.1 *The Beauties of Stowe: Bacchantes dancing and lounging by the Temple of Ancient Virtue* by Thomas Rowlandson, watercolour, pen and ink, c1804–5

2009.52.1 *Chiltern Barley*, by Paul Millichip, mixed media, watercolour, pencil and collage, 1998

2009.52.2 *Four Trees*, by Paul Millichip, mixed media, watercolour, crayon and collage, 2002

2009.52.3 Preparatory study for *Four Trees* by Paul Millichip, mixed media, watercolour, crayon and collage, 2002

2009.77.1 *Brick-wall* pot by Jane Waller, stoneware and millefiori technique, 1970s

2009.77.2 *Fossil Egg* pot by Jane Waller, white earthenware and millefiori technique, 2003

2009.77.3 *Incremental* pot by Jane Waller, raku clay and molochite, c1995

2009.92.1 *The Modern Jury*, by Ros Asquith, mixed media, 2009

2009.92.2 *Children's Justice*, by Ros Asquith, mixed media, 2009

2009.92.3 *The Prodigal Father*, by Ros Asquith, mixed media, 2009

2009.233.1 *Theatre District, Aylesbury*, by Shirley Bradford, watercolour, 2009

CLOTHING AND TEXTILE ACQUISITIONS

2009.174 RAF uniform of Denis Putnam of Aylesbury. Denis was the nephew of Jimmy Putnam, whose Bicester Road factory was leased to the Cubitt Engineering Co. Ltd. for the manufacture of Cubitt cars in the 1920s.

NATURAL HISTORY ACQUISITIONS

2009.99 Collection of unmounted plants sent to Roy Maycock, County Botanical Recorder for identification

2009.165.1-49 Collection of mounted herbarium specimens found to be unaccessioned during herbarium merger project

2009.196.1 Mounted specimen of Fringed Gentian, *Gentianella ciliata*, collected by Graham Giles

2009. 213.1 Pressed specimen of Sea Club-rush, *Bolboschoenus maritimus*, collected by Keith Spurgin

2009.214.1 Pressed specimen of Catmint, *Nepeta cataria*, collected by Dennis and Fred Burnham

2009.215.1-3 Fresh specimens of Niger-seed plant, *Guizitia abyssinica*, collected by Laura Fennel. Pressed and mounted

2009.239.1 Picture-wing Fly, *Merzomyis wesermanni*, collected by Ken Merrifield

2009.240.1 Crane-fly, *Ctenophora ornata*, collected by Martin Albertini

GEOLOGY ACQUISITIONS

None

SOCIAL HISTORY ACQUISITIONS

2009.1 17th-century silver medal depicting Charles I and his consort Henrietta Maria; found by a metal detectorist at Medmenham and purchased as treasure.

2009.12-13 Commemorative Civic Crown plate and book titled 'New Direction for County Government', presented to George Conchie, Bucks County Councillor 1981–89 on the occasion of the centenary of County Governments in 1989.

2009.86 Turfing iron used by James Atkins who lived at Chenies in the early 1900s. Mr Atkins worked for the Chenies Estate Gang which kept all the boundary hedges and ditches cut and cleared.

2009.87 Trombone used by Charlie Lovett in the

1930s. Charlie worked at the Goodearl furniture factory in Princes Risborough. He was also a talented musician and played this trombone in the Ellesborough Silver Band during the 1930s, and throughout the 1939–45 war played clarinet and saxophone in a group for dances at local village halls.

2009.97 17th-century silver button or cufflink; found by a metal detectorist at Sherington, MK and purchased as treasure. It is decorated with a flaming heart motif bisected by two arrows with drops of blood dripping from the heart.

2009.98 17th-century silver dress pin with earscoop at one end; found by a metal detectorist at Sherington, MK and purchased as treasure.

2009.175-176 Photographs and personal wartime letters of Denis Putnam of Aylesbury. Denis served in the RAF during the war. He was the nephew of Jimmy Putnam, whose Bicester Road factory was leased to the Cubitt Engineering Co. Ltd. for the manufacture of Cubitt cars in the 1920s.

2009.217 Bottle of Chairman's Ale brewed by the

Chiltern Brewery Company and supplied as refreshment at receptions during the donor's year as Chairman of Bucks County Council from June 2009–May 2010.

2009.218 16th-century silver dress pin with gilt acorn terminal similar to acorn knobs found on spoons of the period; found by a metal detectorist at Hambleton and purchased as treasure.

2009.221 17th-century silver seal die found by a metal detectorist at Brill and purchased as treasure. Seal-dies were used for impressing a design onto hot wax when sealing documents. This example is engraved with a bleeding heart pierced by two arrows beneath a stylised eye.

2009.222 17th century silver button; found by a metal detectorist at Little Hampden and purchased as treasure. It is decorated with a design showing a flaming heart pierced by two arrows.

*Sarah Gray MA AMA
County Museum Curator*

CENTRE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009

A new database has been added to our website, named 'Bombs Over Bucks'. This is a record of war damage in Buckinghamshire in 1940–45, compiled from the reports submitted to the District Valuer by the County ARP Department, using information received from air raid wardens. It contains about 750 cases, most of which were caused by air raids and flying bombs, though some were the consequence of 'non-enemy action', *i.e.* British and American plane crashes and practice bombs. The database includes a map created with the aid of GIS technology that shows the distribution of incidents around the county.

We are grateful to the County Council's Information and Communications Technology Unit for their invaluable assistance in creating the database, which can be seen at www.buckscc.gov.uk/archives under Online Resources.

In September 2010, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the start of the blitz, the database was launched at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS) by County Councillor Tricia Birchley, followed by a lecture on 'Buckinghamshire in the Second World War' by Professor Ian Beckett. The launch was attended by about 50 invited guests and members of the general public, many of whom had personal or family memories of wartime bombing in the county.

Since then, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has kindly supplied us with a copy of the Buckinghamshire entries in the Roll of Civilian War Dead, which is on permanent display at Westminster Abbey.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

We have worked with the County Council's Schools Improvement team to develop the 'Virtual Classroom', a means of providing interactive sessions with school classes over the internet. The Virtual Classroom enables staff at CBS to display and discuss a variety of archives on a given topic. The pupils can communicate with us via a chat box, asking and answering questions about the doc-

uments under scrutiny, while we can bring in enlarged images, video clips and links to other websites which may give added insight. The sessions can enhance the teaching of history, geography, English and citizenship and provide practice in the use of historical sources without leaving the classroom.

The project has been developed in partnership with John Colet Secondary School, Wendover, with the aid of a grant of £1,500 from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) that enabled us to purchase the necessary equipment and time for staff training. A number of successful pilot sessions were held with John Colet School and the service is now offered to all schools within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for a fee. The sessions can be used with children at all Key Stages but are particularly aimed at KS3, KS4 and sixth-form pupils. Current topics include crime and punishment in Victorian Buckinghamshire, the Swing Riots of 1830, letters from a transported convict (George Church of Olney), 1846–57, and the Great Train Robbery of 1963. A video clip of part of a session can be found on the Bucks Grid for Learning website at www.bucksgfl.org.uk.

EXHIBITIONS AND OUTREACH

The Boarstall Cartulary and Horn were displayed in the County Museum's *Human* exhibition. The Cartulary's map of Boarstall, 1444x46, also appeared in the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (BAS) book, *An Illustrated History of Early Buckinghamshire*, along with a Chesham Higham manor court roll of 1530, the heading of which was embellished by the scribe with a profile of a face inside the capital C and other decorations.

Records relating to the evacuation of children to Aylesbury at the start of the Second World War were featured in the ITV regional news programme *Meridian Reports* in September 2009, the 70th anniversary of both the declaration of war and the launch of the evacuation plans.

Letters and a diary of Lieutenant Charles Phipps

were used in a Channel Four documentary, *Finding The Lost Battalions*, that was broadcast in July 2010, marking the dedication of the new war cemetery at Fromelles in northern France. Lieutenant Phipps, who was killed at the Battle of Fromelles in 1916, was a member of the Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry and one of the sons of the Reverend Constantine O. Phipps, Vicar of The Lee and previously of Aylesbury.

Following the success of the Medieval Fun Day at the County Museum in 2008, we were asked to repeat it at both Wycombe and Milton Keynes Museums in 2009 and these were followed by a Tudor Day at the latter venue in 2010. We hope that our day at Milton Keynes Museum will become an annual event, focussing each time on a different period of history.

We also took the opportunity of digitising the BAS's magnificent collection of about eighty World War I posters, most of which are recruitment posters, though the collection also contains a number of advertisements for the war loan.

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPICS GAMES

Buckinghamshire has close links with the two previous London Olympic Games. Lord Desborough of Taplow Court was President of the British Olympic Council that organized the first London Olympics in 1908 and Stoke Mandeville was the birthplace of the Disabled Games, now the Paralympics, in 1948. The third London Olympics in 2012 is therefore an opportunity for us to promote the county's historical Olympic connections.

As part of the work on our Accentuate: Paralympic Region project, we have been granted the Inspire mark for 'The Guttman Legacy', which will list and interpret archive collections relating to Sir Ludwig Guttman and the development of the Paralympic movement. The Inspire mark is the badge of the London 2012 Inspire programme, which recognizes projects, such as ours, that are inspired by the 2012 Games. Inspire gives people from all over the United Kingdom the chance to get involved in London 2012 in a direct way and we are looking for more stories and memorabilia relating to Guttman and Stoke Mandeville to add to the ever-growing collection. We hope to have a website available for this material shortly.

A number of documents relating to Buckinghamshire's role in the history of the Games

have been digitised by the London Metropolitan Archives for their Olympics website, *Winning Endeavours*.

VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

In the Conservation Studio, a team of volunteers from NADFAS has been engaged in cleaning a collection of estate deeds. Other volunteers have assisted with cleaning and boxing the valuation books of the 1910 'Domesday' survey, which contain information on land ownership for the whole county and are often a useful starting-point for house history.

A project is also underway for transcribing information from the county's tithe apportionments from the 1840s. When completed, this will provide us with a database of landowners and occupiers for the 130 or so parishes for which these valuable and much-used documents exist.

ACCESSIONS

The archives received 139 accessions in 2009, some of which are noted here.

A significant document relating to John Mason (d. 1694), rector of Water Stratford and millenarian preacher (see *Records*, 7, 9–42, and 41, 191–202), has come to light in a deposit of Great and Little Kimble parish records. This is an official copy of the order of the Commissary and Official of the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, absolving Mason from the sentence of suspension from his duties. The order was dated 28 May 1691 and it is endorsed with a note that the absolution was declared in Great Kimble parish church the following Sunday. The reason for the suspension is not stated, but it must have been Mason's controversial sermon earlier that year in which he proclaimed that Christ's return was imminent, which was widely circulated under the title *The Midnight Cry*. It seems likely that similar copies of the order would have been sent to other parishes in the county, although no other survivals are known. This discovery is therefore a crucial piece of additional evidence for this episode in Mason's life. The Great Kimble deposit is also of special interest for a number of late 17th-century marriage licences, notices of banns and affidavits of burials in woollen which pre-date the earliest surviving parish register, beginning in 1701, and therefore provide evidence

for marriages and burials that would otherwise have been lost.

In addition to the usual deposits of parish records, we received records of the Ivinghoe and Mursley Rural Deaneries dating back to 1887, while a deposit of Olney parish records included minutes of the Stony Stratford Clerical Society, 1861–1905, and of the North Bucks Clerical Society, 1958–79.

Other societies for which records were received include the Studholme Brownrigg Chapter of Freemasons from its foundation in 1896, Unity Halls (Aylesbury), the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group from its formation in 1908, the Aylesbury Festival Choir, formerly the December Festival Choir, the Aylesbury Branch of the Old Contemptibles Association and the Gerrards Cross and The Chalfonts Round Table.

In the saleroom we were successful in acquiring a deed of 1402 by which Sir Baldwin Bereford and others entailed the manor of Oakley on members of the Fitz Elys family, adding to our knowledge of the descent of this manor as recorded in the *Victoria County History*. We also purchased privately a bargain and sale of 1615 of property of Thomas Potts, deceased, comprising the ‘new house’, six cottages and lands in Cuddington and ‘the Moore’ in Haddenham.

A small deposit of five documents includes a Latin feoffment involving members of the ‘Funteyne’ family of Wing and Cheddington, 1500, another Latin feoffment from Edward Durrant, baker, to Edward Woodbridge, tailor, of a message in Aylesbury, 1619, and an agreement between the parishioners of Bierton for the prosecution of thieves, 1790, containing around 26 signatures.

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) transferred a quantity of deeds from Turner and Debenham of St Albans, solicitors, dating from 1598 onwards. They particularly relate to the Pitcher, Coles, Delamaine and West families in Turville, but also include, *inter alia*, property of the Freemans of Fawley Court, 1741–52, and two houses on St Mary’s Street, Chepping Wycombe, 1767.

A donation of deeds of Girdlers Farm, Broughton in Bierton, beginning in 1792, complements the estate plan of the Worshipful Company of Girdlers of that date which was received from HALS in 1999.

Other deeds and related papers acquired during

the year include records of the former Stratford-upon-Avon solicitors, Slatter Son and More, relating to a house and land at Adstock (Hogg and Flower families), 1659–1790, and to Aston Clinton Park, 1935–1972; deeds of 7 and 11 St John Street, Newport Pagnell, 1740–1920, deposited by Milton Keynes Council, along with documents relating to Bury field, including a printed declaration about customs, 1712, and a petition against enclosure, 1851; and a mortgage of part of Thorne House, Chesham, 1663, and the marriage settlement of Mary Hodskin of Aylesbury and Adolphus Meetkerke, 1740, both of which are among a small miscellaneous group of deeds that we purchased.

The Buckinghamshire Family History Society generously purchased and donated to us two Acts of Parliament, one allowing the Trustees of the Chandos Estates to use money from the sale of parts of those estates to purchase the Buckingham Estates of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 1850, the other allowing leases, sales and exchanges to be made of the estates of the late Philip Duncombe Pauncefort Duncombe, 1853.

The Buckinghamshire Military Museum Trust deposited additional 19th- and 20th-century records, including a typed extract from the reminiscences of Colonel Oscar Viney concerning his service with the 1/1st Bucks Battalion 1914–21, written around 1960, photographs taken by Elliott Viney, mostly at summer camps of the 1st Bucks Battalion, 1936–39, and memoirs of Norman Dubber, with photographs, concerning his service with 99th (Royal Bucks Yeomanry) Field Regiment, 1935–43.

Charity archives received include those of Robert Webb’s Charity in Upton-cum-Chalvey for apprenticing, established under the will of Robert Webb in 1729, and the Wingrave United Charities and their constituent charities.

A volume of original photographs from 1862 by Charles May and E. Rolls entitled ‘Photographic Views of the Churches, Mansions and Country Seats in the Diocese of Oxford: Buckinghamshire’ was transferred from Oxfordshire Record Office on the grounds that all 127 photographs relate to Buckinghamshire. Although many of the photographs are of churches, a number of houses are shown, among them Dinton Hall, Lilies, Hartwell House, Mentmore, Winchendon Priory, Chilton House, Horsenden House, Doddershall, Ashridge, Dorton House, Hampden House, Creslow House,

Oving House, Wendover House, Lillingstone Dayrell House and Addington Manor.

Business records received include four day books of G. Darlington Ltd of Amersham, builders, for 1897–1900, 1924–25 and 1931–37. Among their customers were the Duchess of Bedford, Earl Howe, the Lowndes Estate, the Shardeloes Estate, Buckinghamshire County Council and Mr Weller, brewer. The books also include details of funerals which the firm arranged.

We purchased a letter from Sir William Lee of Hartwell, 4th baronet, to his son Lieutenant-Colonel William Lee at Windsor, dated 17 October 1798, mainly concerning the purchase of a Huntingdon willow tree. Other correspondence acquired includes two letters from a Miss Brookes to Miss Seamans of Cold Harbour, Hartwell, 1824–25, one assuring her friend that the gentleman who is courting her (Miss Seamans) is steady and sincerely attached, while complaining that her own admirer in Oxford only writes and never comes to see her.

Other notable accessions include the sale particulars for Airfield Farm, Little Horwood, formerly an RAF Station, 1963; a digital copy, with transcript, of the household account book for 1767–75 of Charles William Tonym, rector of Radnage; a book of individual pledges to abstain from alcohol, 1862–66, the signatories all being from Newport Pagnell; a photograph of a car accident on the road from Marlow to Lane End in 1915; and a photograph album of events in Aylesbury to promote War Weapons Week in April 1941, with signed photographs of celebrities taking part, including the Prime Minister's daughter Sarah Churchill, her husband Vic Oliver, the comedian and bandleader, and the radio star Bebe Daniels.

To keep up-to-date with news from CBS, you can subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, *Off The Record*, which is free by e-mail or can be supplied by post for a small fee.

*Roger Bettridge FHA RMARA
County Archivist*

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

REPORT FOR 2009–2010

This year saw further progress on the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Historic Towns Project and access and conservation works at Quarrendon Leas, Aylesbury. The publication of the Society's 'Illustrated History of Early Buckinghamshire' was a particular highlight as it draws heavily upon the work of this service over the past forty years, without which many of the investigations, which have transformed our knowledge of the county, would never have happened.

Throughout the year core activities in planning, conservation and the Historic Environment Record were maintained, the former by Ruth Beckley providing maternity cover for Eliza Alqassar. A departmental review saw the Countryside and Heritage Group merged with Rights of Way and Sustainability to form a broadly-based Environment Group.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The service contributed to the public hearing into the proposed new Local Development Frameworks (LDF) for Aylesbury Vale District with discussion of heritage issues focussing on possible new 'strategic development areas' around Aylesbury. Objectors to the proposed allocation of sites to the east and south-east of the town argued that development could be accommodated at sites to the north and north-west despite heritage constraints. After the general election the Coalition Government revoked the regional strategy that required such large new housing areas leading the District Council to withdraw its Plan for reconsideration.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Planning and conservation advice casework involved 652 consultations, of which 228 required positive follow up. The year saw many small-scale evaluations and watching briefs, which are reported in Archaeological Notes, and a few more substantial investigations worthy of particular note:

Large-scale geophysical surveys have been con-

ducted at Fleet Marston and 'Quarrendon Fields' to inform major development proposals to the north of Aylesbury. At Fleet Marston the western end of a large Roman roadside settlement has been surveyed, several small areas of prehistoric/Roman activity identified and the extent of the deserted medieval village of Fleet Marston clarified. The development proposal, which is not on an allocated site, offers some positive benefits in taking part of the Roman settlement out of cultivation and returning the redundant parish church to use. However, its effect on the setting of the grade II* listed church is not considered acceptable. At 'Quarrendon Fields' the evaluation showed that the scheme would affect a group of early Roman settlements and also the setting of the Quarrendon scheduled ancient monument. Objections were lodged to both planning applications.

At Newton Longville, five probable later prehistoric/Roman settlements have been discovered by geophysical survey within the 297 hectare Salden Chase major development site. This appears to mirror evidence from Milton Keynes itself for a dense concentration of farmsteads of this period. Further evaluation was requested to clarify these results but the scheme is no longer supported by the local planning authority following withdrawal of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The Environment Agency applied for planning permission for a flood alleviation scheme in the floodplain below Marlow. The scheme lies on the site of a prehistoric barrow cemetery and Neolithic settlement of regional/national importance which has been investigated over the past decade by the Marlow Archaeological Society. Evaluation was undertaken and mitigation measures agreed including burying the principal monuments beneath spoil from the excavation of the adjacent flood storage area with an opportunity in advance for the local society to complete their work. However, the scheme has since been mothballed due to funding cutbacks.

Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements were found during the construction of compounds for

the M25 widening. One of the three sites was re-buried and preserved in-situ.

An Iron Age ring ditch (apparently a structural wall trench for a roundhouse) was found in an Anglian Water Buckingham – Brackley pipeline construction corridor southwest of Stowe Park. It is presumably part of larger settlement as a cropmark enclosure is recorded in the field. The corridor was otherwise surprisingly lacking in other finds with no trace of the Alchester to Towcester Roman road.

CONSERVATION AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

As reported in previous years, the ancient monument at Quarrendon Leas is planned to provide a new 100 hectare public green space on the north side of Aylesbury between the major new housing development sites at Berryfields and Weedon Hill. The County Council established the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust with the aim of taking ownership of Quarrendon Leas by agreement between the District Council and the Berryfields development consortium. So far the main focus has been on the construction of a new hard-surfaced footpath which will link the monument to the Berryfields development and identifying funding for urgent conservation work on the ruined church. Transfer of the land to the trust has been put back by delays to the start of development caused by the recession but with building expected to begin in 2010 it is hoped that the project will move forward once more.

Advice has been given on 23 Higher Tier Environmental Stewardship Schemes, through which Natural England pays farmers to look after the countryside's natural and historic environment.

Draft proposals have been received from English Heritage for listing Cold War rocket research structures at the former Westcott Royal Ordnance Factory.

Emergency works at Dinton Castle allowed a record of the structure to be made by Northamptonshire Archaeology, funded by the Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust. It is hoped the record will assist in future decisions regarding the ruin.

Advice given to Aylesbury Vale District Council on the review of Hulcott Conservation Area supported a major extension to include medieval fishponds, the site of a mill and historic meadows.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

The HER experienced very similar levels of use as the previous year with 114 direct enquiries and 3132 users of the “Unlocking Buckinghamshire’s Past” web site. There were a number of enhancements during the year, most notably the inclusion of our data on the national Heritage Gateway website and the completion of recording local and national heritage designations.

HISTORIC TOWNS PROJECT

To better understand the evolution of Buckinghamshire's towns and with a view to contributing towards their future management, the County Archaeological Service, with Milton Keynes Design and Conservation team, is undertaking a survey of 30 historic towns in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. These towns range from places which are still recognisably towns today such as Amersham, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Newport Pagnell to villages that once aspired to urban status, such as Denham and Hanslope. The project includes places like Gerrards Cross which only grew up in the early twentieth century, but excludes the modern city of Milton Keynes. The year saw production of reports on Princes Risborough, Bletchley & Fenny Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Wendover, Denham and Burnham (available on the County Council website). The Chiltern and South Bucks reports are being used by the District Councils to inform townscape character assessments for their Local Development Frameworks. The data and reports will be held by the Historic Environment Records for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes respectively.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Two announcements in March in the closing weeks of the Labour Government have set the agenda for the following year. These were the long-awaited replacement of Planning Policy Guidance 15 and 16 with a single integrated historic environment policy, Planning Policy Statement 5, and the publication of a preferred route for a new High Speed Railway between London and Birmingham which runs diagonally across the county from Denham to Turweston. Implementing a new planning policy and responding to a major national infrastructure

project would be a challenge at any time but will be doubly so when the county council faces financial challenges of exceptional magnitude.

*Alexander (Sandy) Kidd
County Archaeologist
Buckinghamshire County Council*

For further information on the County Archaeological Service, visit our web site: <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/archaeology/index.htm>

MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

REPORT FOR 2009

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The total number of planning applications received during 2009 was 1780, of which 127 were considered in more detail and 36 had archaeological or historic building recording planning conditions imposed.

During 2009 there were 22 sites that had archaeological or historic building recording works commencing, comprising 5 excavations, 6 trial trench evaluations, 10 watching briefs and 1 historic building survey. Highlights included:

- At Manor Farm, Wolverton a probable cursus was revealed during Phase 3 of the quarry. Two parallel ditches were exposed; c.260m of the southern ditch and c.300m of the northern ditch. There were two staggered causeways, one across each ditch. Material culture recovered from the ditches was limited; but included a refitting sequence of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint and fragments of Beaker pottery recovered from the upper ditch fills. Traces of internal banks were identified in the sections above the ditches and in the backfill of the features in addition to a buried soil underlying the banks.
- At the Calverton extension to Passenham quarry, excavation focussed on the continuation of an Iron Age pit alignment in addition to the investigation of a substantial stone-built Romano-British 2nd C AD mortuary structure.
- In Broughton parish, excavation of five areas as part of the Brooklands expansion area revealed early Iron Age to late Romano-British occupation. An early to middle Iron Age settlement comprising 13 huts and enclosure ditches was of particular interest.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

The Historic Environment Record was consulted by external researchers 33 times in 2009.

An English Heritage grant was awarded to the

Council to enable over 8000 Milton Keynes HER records to be published alongside more than 1.5 million national and local entries on the Heritage Gateway web portal before March 2010: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

In November a Heritage Theme was launched on the MKi Observatory website. This digital mapping resource complements the data on the Heritage Gateway and includes Historic Landscape Characterisation, historic routes, historic fields and woodlands alongside building, monument and event data: <http://www.mkobservatory.org.uk>

OTHER INITIATIVES

On Saturday 12th September the Archaeological Officer gave a guided walk around the archaeology of the Ouzel valley to a group of 20 as part of Heritage Open Days.

On November 14th the Archaeological Officer organised the third MK Council Archaeology Day. This event, held across the Central Library was well attended as usual and attracted press and radio coverage. The day centred around a series of presentations by professional archaeologists on recent work in the borough in addition to lively talks by Brian Giggins on historic buildings and Paul Blinkhorn of Time Team fame on Saxon Pottery. Ros Tyrrell of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the metal detectorists and stands from Milton Keynes Museum and the Tickford Bridge Bi-centenary Committee also proved popular. Also new to the event was involvement from the Children's Library who organised an archaeological themed story time for the under fives.

An article detailing recent archaeological projects and the MKi Heritage Theme was published in the Council's Parish Newsletter in November.

Senior Archaeological Officer Brian Giggins retired at the end of March after working for 12 years in the role. Brian's association with the heritage of Milton Keynes began over 30 years ago when he was employed by MK Development Corporation as an Architectural Historian and

Surveyor in 1979, moving to the Borough Council Estates Office in 1989 and becoming Archaeological Officer with the new unitary authority in 1997. Brian remains active in local history and archaeology, and has recently published an appreciation of the life of William Sponne, the 15th cen-

ture Archdeacon of Norfolk and Rector of Towcester.

*Nick Crank, Senior Archaeological Officer
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