

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

## ANNUAL REPORT 2012

2012 was a year of national celebration with Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 Olympics capturing the attention of the nation. These events had a detrimental effect on visitor numbers during holiday periods at many attractions, and at the Museum visitor numbers were slightly down from last year at 90,453 (2011 95,897). However, sales of Roald Dahl Children's Gallery tickets were slightly up at 19,099 (2011 18,461).

The schools service continued to attract schools from across Buckinghamshire, as well as from the surrounding counties and London. 14,864 pupils visited both the Museum and Roald Dahl Children's Gallery (2011 13,551). The Museum-based workshops developed around the collections on history, archaeology and science and the hands-on craft sessions remain a strong attraction.

2012 was an exciting year of exhibitions and events which gave the museum the opportunity to showcase many items from the Society's museum collections.

The year started with *100 Pictures from the Museum's Collections* in the Art Gallery, which followed on from the *100 Treasures* exhibition in 2011. This was an opportunity to get out a wide range of oil paintings, watercolours, prints and drawings that related to the whole County and proved fascinating on many levels. Visitors could explore Bucks places through landscapes and buildings, or simply enjoy works by our most famous and inspiring artists.

In the Georgian Room gallery, *Samurai – Warriors of Ancient Japan* ended its successful six-month run in early February, finishing with another lively talk and demonstration on the Life of the Samurai. This magnificent private collection of historical Samurai armour and weapons proved that our visitors are interested in international as well as local themes.

This was followed by *Two Jubilee Queens, Victoria and Elizabeth II in Bucks*, which celebrated the only two British monarchs to have reigned for 60 years. The display celebrated their

visits to this County, and how local people marked these Royal occasions with a wealth of memorabilia and photographs.

In the summer, to coincide with Olympic fever sweeping the country, visitors to the Art Gallery were invited to discover the inspiring sporting heritage of the area in *Our Sporting Life – Bucks*. This included the outstanding part played by Stoke Mandeville in the development of the Paralympics. Involving a wide range of community groups and sportspeople, it was a unique opportunity to celebrate sport in local people's lives, both past and present, through personal stories and memorabilia. The subject of health and fitness was then taken in a different direction by the supporting *Tree of Life* exhibition. Inspired by the beauty of the human heart and blood supply, eleven artists produced art works for this thought-provoking exhibition which mixed both art and science.

In November, the Beds, Bucks & Herts Print Society took over the Art Gallery for a stunning show of hand-pulled prints using a wide range of techniques – woodblock, linocut, screen print, collograph, etching. All works were for sale and the artists hosted a range of supporting talks and workshops during the month. To complement this display, *A Lasting Impression* in the Georgian Room featured original prints from the museum collections to illustrate a range of traditional manual printmaking techniques.

For Heritage Open Days in September, guided tours of the museum buildings were just one of the attractions within the town. A special display on *Early Aylesbury* in the Collections Showcase enabled visitors to discover the origins of the earliest people who lived in this area in the Stone Age and followed the story of the town up to Georgian times.

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](http://www.finds.org.uk). In 2012, 1,741 objects were recorded on the PAS website database. This reporting and recording of Treasure and public

archaeological finds in Bucks and Milton Keynes has resulted in the acquisition of a splendid range of Treasure items for the museum collections with funding support from the Friends and national funders.

The Museum would like to thank all our supporters and volunteers who have helped or funded the Museum to deliver this exciting programme of events and activities, to acquire for the collections and to provide essential care for all the Bucks and Milton Keynes collections in store and on display.

Notable accessions to the collections included:

#### SOCIAL HISTORY/COSTUME & TEXTILES

**2012.9.1** Red clay floor tile made by the Brill Brick and Tile Company, c1900.

**2012.25.1-2** Two photographic studio portraits of Elizabeth (Betsy) Low of Aston Clinton, early 20th century. Betsy was a lace maker and straw plaiter. She was also a keen supporter of the suffragette movement and made speeches in Aylesbury's Market Square.

**2012.26.1** Photograph of Hazell, Watson and Viney football team, 1931–32

**2012.27.1** Photograph of Hazell, Watson and Viney hockey team, early 1930s

#### **2012.27.6**

Photograph of tornado over Aylesbury, taken by donor's husband on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1950

**2012.33.1-8** Domestic linen with embroidery and drawn threadwork by Mrs A. Clark of Thornborough, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

**2012.56.1** Bucks pillow lace made by Mrs Barefoot who lived in a cottage on West Wycombe estate, 1940s–50s

**2012.58-59** Objects associated with Olympic Torch Relay in Waddesdon on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012, including steward's waistcoat and identity badge and a selection of free gifts for spectators. The donor was a torch relay steward stationed at Winslow.

**2012.85.1** Commemorative pottery beaker made for Stone Bishopstone and Hartwell Parish Council who gave one to all the children in the parish to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012

**2012.106.1** Punishment Book from Queen's Park Infants School, Aylesbury, 1909–1931

**2012.108.1** Poster of Showbiz XI celebrity football

team, which included Sean Connery, David Frost, Des O'Connor, Jimmy Tarbuck and Ray Davis. Bought by donor when Showbiz XI played Stoke Mandeville Hospital XI at Stoke Mandeville Sports Ground on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1967.

**2012.113.1-4** Storage tank float valve – 'Keraflo Delayed Action Float Valve also known as 'The Aylesbury'. Designed by Lawrence Burns of Keraflo, Griffin Lane, Aylesbury. Manufactured in early 2000s. Mr Burns sold company in 2006.

#### ART & STUDIO CERAMICS

**2012.6.1** 'Wombwell Farm, Long Crendon' by Laura Boswell, 2012, Japanese woodblock print, edition 1/8

**2012.7.1** 'Cottage at Dorney, near Windsor' by Edward Duncan, 19<sup>th</sup>C, pen, ink and pencil drawing, Long Term Loan from BAS

**2012.8.1** 'St Peter's, Gayhurst' by John Piper, litho-reproduction print of original watercolour from 1940

**2012.40.1** 'Bounce & Rhyme' by Ros Asquith, 2009, mixed media collage created during Muir Trust Residency 2009

**2012.67.1** 'Great Missenden Abbey' by Charles Patrickson, 1986, watercolour

**2012.69.1** 'Gothick Temple, Stowe' by Leonard Rosoman, 1971, lithograph, no 43/70

**2012.88.1** 'Garden Front, Dropmore' by J Gendall, about 1824, coloured engraving

**2012.109.1-4** Jug and three mugs, stoneware, by Bill Read, Winslow Pottery, 1979

**2012.110.1** Head form, raku fired vessel by Crabby Taylor, 2012

**2012.110.2** Open form, smoke fired porcelain by Crabby Taylor, 2012

**2012.111.1** 'Beech Trees' by Caroline Meynell, 2012, acrylic on canvas

**2012.112.1** Foliate heads silk square headscarf designed by John Piper

**2012.135.1-19** Nine watercolour and ten pen & ink drawings by Thomas Rayson of Bucks village scenes, 1949–1967

**2012.147.1-3** Three colour half-tone printing blocks of St Mary's Church, Aylesbury

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

**2012.28.1** Medieval silver gilt crucifix pendant; 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century. Found with metal detector at

Princes Risborough and declared Treasure

**2012.29.1** Anglo-Saxon silver hooked tag, incomplete; 9th or early 10th century AD. Debased Trewiddle style decoration with signs of keying in recesses indicates it possibly originally had niello inlay. Found with metal detector at Edlesborough and declared Treasure

**2012.30.1** Anglo-Saxon silver strap end, complete but bent; 9th century AD. Decorated in Trewiddle style. Found with metal detector at Edlesborough and declared Treasure

**2012.31.1** Medieval silver annular brooch, 13th century. Decorated with zoomorphic beast heads, and pink/purple glass or stone gems. Found with metal detector at Ivinghoe and declared Treasure

**2012.32.1** Post medieval cufflink. 17th century.

Silver disc stamped with circular border. The design shows two cherubs lifting a crown and between them is a flaming heart. Found with metal detector at Buckingham and declared Treasure.

**2012.41** Archive from excavation in County Museum garden, Aylesbury, carried out subsequent to finding human remains during landscape gardening work; included 5 inhumations, one of which was radiocarbon dated to the 7th century.

**2012.104** Archive from watching brief at Stowe gardens includes Roman tegula fragments and wasters, possible Roman tile kiln.

*Collection Team  
Buckinghamshire County Museum*

# CENTRE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012–13

The Fremantle MSS have long been one of the major collections in the county record office and we were therefore delighted to receive a significant addition to their family archive in 2012. The new accession includes the diaries of Betsey Wynne, who married Captain Thomas Francis Fremantle (later to become Admiral Sir Thomas) in 1797. There are 41 volumes, which constitute an almost unbroken run from 1789 (when Betsey was eleven) until a month before her death in 1857: the only gap is for September–December 1796, as this journal was lost on board ship, the *Inconstant*. This was the ship on which Betsey and Tom had first met a few months before, when the Wynnes were evacuated from Livorno ahead of the French army. Extracts from the diaries, particularly before 1820, have already appeared in print. The new deposit includes other family diaries, such as those of Betsey's sister Harriet, 1803–06, and of her daughter-in-law Louisa, Lady Cottesloe, which comprise 48 volumes between 1826 and her death in 1875. There are also Tom's letters to Betsey written at sea, while she was raising their family at home in Swanbourne.

The family's naval achievements are also represented by records of Betsey's second son, Admiral Sir Charles Howe Fremantle, including letter-books from the Crimean War, where he superintended transports at Balaclava Harbour from 1855, and the Channel Squadron, which he commanded 1858–60, and by the private journals of her great-grandson Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle. Away from the sea, the diary of the 1st Lord Cottesloe for 1889 includes a note that the budget night of 1889 was his 63<sup>rd</sup>, presumably in his successive capacities of MP, civil servant and peer, a record that few, if any, can ever have equalled.

Coincidentally, the office of the Buckinghamshire Lieutenancy transferred two boxes of files of the 3rd Lord Cottesloe, who served as Lord Lieutenant of the county for 1923–54. They include files on the Buckinghamshire tornado of 1950 and on the Viscount Grey of Falloden Memorial Appeal, Lord Cottesloe having served as Chairman

of their Executive Committee. Viscount Grey, formerly Sir Edward Grey, was Foreign Secretary when Britain entered the First World War. The files include letters from Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who unveiled the memorial plaque on the Foreign Office wall in Downing Street in 1937.

The Paralympic Games of 2012, although held in London, were a big event for this county, with Stoke Mandeville being honoured as the birthplace of the Paralympics. As reported in *Records* last year (53, 327–8), it was the culmination of several years' work by us on the archives held by the disability sport organizations WheelPower and IWAS, many of which we were able to display in a major exhibition at Stoke Mandeville Stadium in August 2012 to coincide with the London Games. During the year, we received various records relating to Stoke Mandeville and disability sport, including digitised copies of films belonging to WheelPower of past Stoke Mandeville Games, records of the Stoke Mandeville Stadium Lifeguard Club, and a programme for the Paralympics opening ceremony in 2012. For a time, we also held the distinguished visitors' book for the London Olympics of 1948. More unusual memorabilia of the Paralympics that were given to us are a Geisha figurine from the Tokyo Games of 1964, a commemorative medal of the Beijing Games of 2008 and tracksuits from the opening ceremony of 2012.

It is always very satisfying when a missing item from a record series turns up after being presumed lost for ever. In this case, a missing minute book (1893–96) and a missing ledger (1840–43) for Amersham Board of Guardians were kindly donated to us. The volumes had been purchased at a car boot sale about twenty years earlier. Similarly, an original letter of Colonel Benjamin Way of Denham Place, dated 1831, was purchased and donated to the archives by another public-spirited benefactor. This letter is one of a group of Way family MSS which were sold at auction in the 1970s and of which we hold only photocopies.

The final deposit after closure from the solicitors Francis and How of Chesham brought in what

is undoubtedly our longest rolled map, measuring almost 15 feet. It appears to be the Chesham tithe map (presumably the parish copy), although it is slightly earlier in date and considerably larger in size and scale than the diocesan copy already deposited here. Coincidentally, we received the parish copy of the Great Marlow tithe map, together with a grant of £1,200 for its conservation from the Marlow Society, which they had obtained from the Skinners' Company Lady Neville Charity.

The British Railways Board (Residuary) deposited 16 boxes of staff records of the Wolverton Railway Works from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. For data protection reasons, these are at present mainly unavailable for public inspection. They were deposited with us under the Public Records Acts. Papers of John Scott of Stoke Hammond that were deposited include records of Bletchley Trades Council, 1965–68, and minute books of the Bletchley branches of the trade unions C&AWU (apparently operating at the London Brick Company), 1957–61, and Apex, 1975–81.

Dating from the Second World War is a small donation of papers and photographs relating to 'Victory Bells', which were handbells cast by The Bucks Die Casting Company of Burnham, formerly Wood and Stannard. Each bell bears the profile of Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin and a capital V on the handle. They were made of metal salvaged from German aircraft shot down in the war and were sold in aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund.

We continue to transfer selected items from the Local Studies Library to the archive strongrooms. This year they have included the unpublished First World War memoirs of Lieutenant-Colonel G. Christie-Miller of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Buckinghamshire Battalion, a transcript of the High Wycombe Natural History Society minute book, 1865–88, minutes of Burnham Liberal Party, 1906–11, and the manuscript of 'Old Westbury Songs' taken down from Edward Franklin by the Reverend Richard Ussher in 1907.

Some further noteworthy items from the 119 accessions received in 2012 are: deeds of lands in Great Horwood, property of the Williatt family, 1648–1891, including the marriage settlement of George Williatt and Jane Pursill, 1648; a bargain and sale of a close called Millfield in Leckhampstead, 1624; posters produced by the Berton Association for the Protection of Property, offering rewards for information about crimes,

mostly sheep stealing, 1837–82; High Wycombe Repertory Company programmes, 1947–52; an invoice for port from Charles Bennett of New Inn, Stowe, 1849, with a few other Bennett family documents; and the contents of a time capsule from 1886, buried when Booker Methodist Church was built and discovered in 2001 during work to convert it into a house.

We were able to digitise many of the very fragile Chesham manor court rolls which form part of the Archaeological Society's collection of manorial records, all deposited in the Record Office in 1987. The work was made possible with the assistance of a grant of £1,000 from the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society. Altogether about 100 rolls in the most fragile condition were selected for copying, ranging in date from 1315 to 1695. These important documents can now be properly consulted and studied for the first time.

For Heritage Open Days in September 2012 the County Archivist and County Museum Curator led tours of the Judges Lodgings, Aylesbury. In addition, a facsimile of William Rutt's eye-draught plan of Aylesbury of 1809 was provided for exhibition at St Mary's Church, Aylesbury, together with the text of a lecture on 'Old Aylesbury', based on the plan, that was given in 1944 by Colonel Guy Crouch, Clerk of the Peace. Copies of the eye-draught and of the lecture are available for purchase from CBS.

We continue to work with volunteers across a number of projects. BAS members may be particularly interested to know that we have now concluded the initial phase of the BAS deeds project, which involved going through the whole series of deeds and recording the salient information, *i.e.* parish, date of document and names of parties, as well as condition of the item and language. Where possible, these lists have been checked against the Museum accession registers to ascertain provenance. Altogether 11,765 documents have been recorded in this project.

We are very grateful to both the Marlow Society and the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society for their generous financial donations during the year, to our volunteers for their time and hard work, and to all those who have donated or deposited documents to the county archives and publications to the Local Studies Library.

*Roger Bettridge*  
County Archivist

# MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

REPORT FOR 2012

## FIELDWORK PROJECTS

Twenty six development-related fieldwork projects were undertaken in the Milton Keynes area in 2012. A particular highlight was the recovery of 2 complete Iron Age notched log ladders from continuing excavations on the Western Expansion Area in Calverton. These substantial (>2m long) worked timbers are believed to be the largest recovered examples in the UK and consequently of national significance.

Another find of great significance was the chance discovery of human remains during construction work at Stantonbury Park to the north of the New Town in January. With initial involvement from Thames Valley Police and Prof. John Hunter of Manlove Forensics it was quickly realised that the find was of archaeological rather than forensic interest and Albion Archaeology were appointed by Taylor Wimpey to conclude investigations with funding for post-excavation work being granted by the Emergency Archaeological Recording Fund.

The investigations revealed the partially disarticulated remains of multiple individuals in addition to a number of placed stones. It is thought that the site represents a truncated burial monument with the apparently communal nature of the burials suggesting an early Neolithic date. This date is supported by two radiocarbon dates placing the remains in the middle of the fourth millennium BC and six struck flints of the same date range. As such, although quite truncated and disturbed by agricultural activity the site represents the earliest funerary monument discovered in north Buckinghamshire.

## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

The Senior Archaeological Officer completed an action plan for the development of the HER over the next 3 years and this was approved by English Heritage in August. A key component of the action plan is the procurement of replacement database software to achieve better compliance with the

appropriate national heritage data standards and to provide a more sustainable and accessible platform for the future. It is hoped that this will be achieved in early 2013. Additionally, it is hoped to develop and train volunteers over the next 2 years to assist with work on the HER backlog and enhancement projects.

## OUTREACH

In May 2012 a team of archaeologists including members of CLASP and local archaeological contractors Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd and Cotswold Archaeology carried out a magnetometry and contour survey of an area of Bury Field Common, Newport Pagnell. The survey, coordinated by the Council's Senior Archaeological Officer, targeted the site of a formerly scheduled barrow destroyed in World War II and also a recent find spot indicating Iron Age and Roman settlement on the common. The results of the survey demonstrated the presence of a previously unknown Iron Age and Romano-British rural settlement. It is hoped that further phases of survey will be undertaken in order to better characterise and define the extent of the settlement.

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November over 400 people of all ages came through the doors of the Central Library to enjoy a range of activities and talks at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Milton Keynes Archaeology Day.

New this year was a hands-on archaeology workshop hosted by Albion Archaeology. This free activity for young people gave a practical insight into the varied methods and skills used by modern archaeologists, including use of microscopes and photography.

There were also displays throughout the library on the borough's heritage plus stands from active local organisations such as the City Discovery Centre and Northamptonshire's Community Landscape and Archaeology Survey Project. Event regulars Magiovinium Metal Detecting club also proved popular with their wide-ranging collections of artefacts.

In the morning local archaeologist and excavator of Bancroft Roman villa Bob Zeevat presented a fascinating talk to a packed room, reflecting on the development of the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit (MKAU) from its beginnings in 1971 to the completion of its publication programme in 1994. MKAU were originally set up by the Development Corporation and coordinated and carried out all the archaeological work within the designated area during the 1970s and 80s.

A particular highlight of the day was provided by very special guest and nationally respected

archaeologist Professor Tim Darvill of Bournemouth University. Joint leader of the first team to excavate within Stonehenge for over 50 years, Prof. Darvill presented his ground-breaking research on the origin and meaning of this world renowned site under the enigmatic title: 'Merlin's Magic Circles: Stonehenge and the Use of the Preseli Bluestones'.

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