

COUNTY MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGICAL PUBLICATION BACKLOG

To: Buckinghamshire Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee

Date: 21st March 2000

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A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To propose a strategy for resolving the County Museum's archaeological publication backlog.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 **The Committee is invited to:**

APPROVE the strategy set out in this paper, especially the prioritisation of the "Unlocking Ayesburys Past" and "Mesolithic Hunter-Gatherers of the Colne Valley" packages.

C. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 3 No resources are available from within County Council budgets. Funding will be sought from external sources as set out in this paper.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 The closure of the County Museum's field archaeology team in April 1998 left unfinished business in the form of some 36 uncompleted projects carried out between 1963 and 1996 (information from M.Farley). These range considerably in their scale and significance. An approach was made by M.Farley to English Heritage to fund a formal assessment of the backlog but the reply indicated that no new backlog work would be supported before financial year 2002/3. In order to progress the matter more quickly a review based on "professional judgement" has been agreed by the Senior Archaeological Officer, M.Farley and the County Museum Officer for the projects from New Buckinghamshire. The aim of the review has been to identify "packages" of important projects with common themes which might appeal to external funding bodies and to winnow out less significant work for which further publication is not essential.

- 5 The review has identified two potential project packages:

“Unlocking Aylesbury’s Past”

This package envisages the publication of the Prebendal Manor (1985), Walton Lodge Lane and Walton Stores alongside the developer-funded Orchard Site at Walton. The project will also include a popular synthesis of the museum’s archaeological research into the origins of Aylesbury and related educational materials. Funding will be sought from a local educational charity.

“Mesolithic Hunter-Gatherers of the Colne Valley”

This package comprises three sites in the valleys of the Colne and its tributaries: Mansfield Farm (1981), M25 Misbourne (1983) and East Street, Chesham (1989). The Colne Valley is one of the richest areas for Mesolithic archaeology in Britain. A proposal has recently been submitted to English Heritage by Wessex Archaeology to undertake a national study of the archaeological resource for this period using Buckinghamshire as one of four pilot counties as a follow up to their highly regarded study of the Lower Palaeolithic. Informal contact has been made with Wessex Archaeology’s Project Manager who has indicated an interest in a joint project. It is therefore proposed to work with Wessex Archaeology and submit a proposal to English Heritage for a “spin off” project to their extensive Mesolithic survey. Should Wessex Archaeology’s bid be unsuccessful then the strategy will have to be reviewed.

- 6 One other project from New Bucks – Missenden Abbey (1983-8) - may warrant further publication but would need specialist assessment. It is proposed to review Missenden Abbey once progress has been made with the above packages.
- 7 For the rest of the New Buckinghamshire projects (see appendix) an entry in the Sites and Monuments Record and accessioning the archive into the museum will be sufficient, although in some cases it may be possible to find opportunities for partial publication as part of wider studies.
- 8 Separate consideration of four projects in Milton Keynes may be considered desirable (see appendix).

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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