

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum – 17 March 2004

County Museum Report

Since the last meeting of the forum, the intention to deposit 57 site archives has been notified to the museum, by archaeological contracting units. This compares to 28 sites over the same period last year.

We can also report that the Finds Liaison Officer, Ros Tyrrell, has identified and recorded 275 finds onto the national portable antiquities scheme database, since she started in April last year, and the number being reported to her is on the increase. These records are viewable online at www.finds.org.uk. Most of these finds are coming from metal detectorists, and Ros is making good progress in gaining the trust and respect of the metal detecting community in the county.

We have also had 8 items of treasure reported, mostly through the finds liaison officer, and the museum has already acquired 6 of these, several with help from the V&A purchase grant fund, and the new Headley Trust for Treasure scheme.

Unfortunately, we have to announce the failure of the bid to the Heritage lottery fund to fund the Unlocking Aylesbury's Past project. Further approaches to the Harding Trust, an Aylesbury based educational charity, whom we approached originally, have revealed that for the foreseeable future, they would not reconsider their decision not to fund the project, due to their own financial situation. The museum management has therefore decided not to pursue further funding possibilities in the forthcoming year for this project.

This means that the position of the county museum, with a significant number of unpublished archaeological excavation archives, remains unchanged, and there is no real likelihood of this being addressed in the next financial year, given current constraints of budget and staff time. Equally, it has not been possible to make financial allowance next year for the commissioning of an external archaeologist to assess the potential costs for the writing up of these site archives.

On a more positive note, the museum has had a success story with a major loan from the British Museum of the Bronze Age gold torcs found in Milton Keynes in 2000. This is our first major archaeological loan from a National Museum. The torcs are currently on display, in the newly refurbished Georgian room, as the centrepiece of a small exhibition about the Bronze Age. They will be returning to the British Museum on the week of the 11th of April.