

Appendix A: Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officers' Report

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum
Date: 12th September 2019
Authors: Senior Archaeology Officer (Phil Markham), Archaeology Officer (Lucy Lawrence), Historic Environment Record Officer (Julia Wise), Historic Environment Record Assistant (Paul Clements)

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To advise the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last BHEF meeting (4th March 2019).

Report Summary

- HS2 Ltd: Phil attended the Heritage sub Group meeting in Birmingham during June and we have been kept up to date by Fusion over the last few months. Evaluation works are being undertaken in a number of places including Doddershall and Sedrup. There have been discussions over the draft Project Plan for St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville and we hope to see an updated version soon.
- East–West Rail: Phil is continuing to have discussions over the documents and conditions which should be included in the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAo). To address the archaeological evaluation and mitigation issues in the Environmental Statement another document is going to be produced; the Heritage Delivery Strategy. Evaluation for the proposed ecological mitigation sites and compounds is continuing.
- Western Rail Link to Heathrow: We have agreed a project specification for archaeological evaluation and field work has been undertaken. We have responded to the DCO consultation.
- Heathrow New Runway: A number of meetings have taken place over the heritage strategy and the PEIR.
- Oxford/Cambridge Expressway: There was one meeting in April but we have heard nothing from the consultants even though Lucy and I have emailed them a couple of times for an update.
- The team have worked hard to promote the archaeology service through recent talks, events and interviews. We are also improving our presence online through changes to our website and the production of a blog.
- We are one step closer to commissioning a new model of HBSMR (Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record) to provide better public access to the HER

B. PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 The Forum is particularly invited to NOTE:

- resources
- strategic issues and projects
- recent planning-related archaeological work

C. RESOURCES

3 The County's archaeological service forms part of the Transport Economy Environment Service's Environment Team within Environment Services. Philip Markham is the Senior Archaeology Officer, Lucy Lawrence is the Archaeology Officer, Julia Wise is the HER Officer (part time), Paul Clements is the HER Assistant and Eliza Alqassar is the Environment Team Leader.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

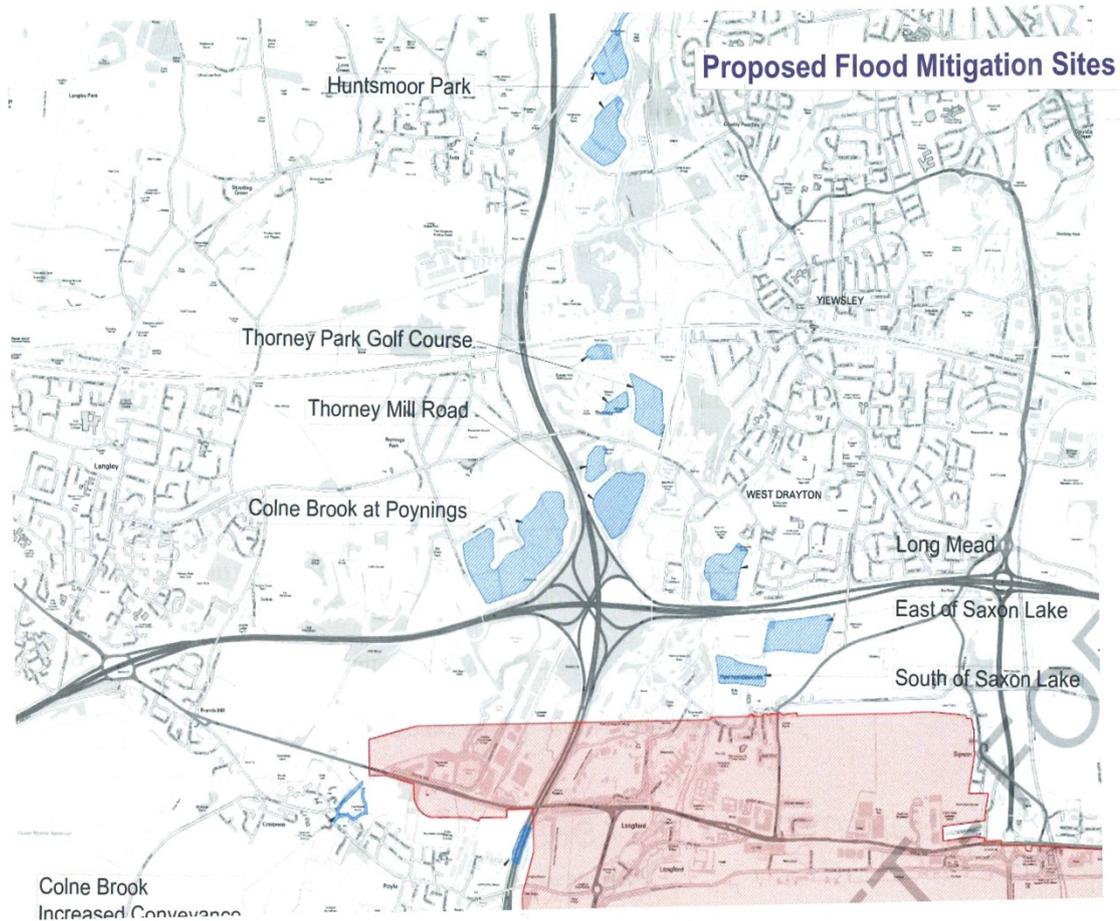
4 Strategic Issues/Projects

- **High Speed 2:** We continue to provide advice through the HS2 Ltd Heritage Sub-Group and the next meeting is in September. The Schedule 17 works consultations usually come through the district council planning departments and we are usually consulted when the applications come in; although this has been known to fall through the gaps on occasion. This is likely to be addressed by Historic England. A Schedule 17 meeting at Amersham which included HS2, Fusion, Planning, BCC Highways was productive and additional archaeological works were considered sensible for some of the road schemes in the Chilterns.

Field work has and is taking place in a number of areas and Fusion and/or their archaeological contractors supply us with draft project specifications for comment and we sometimes request minor amendments. The evaluation field work around St Mary's Stoke Mandeville has been completed for the time being while a mitigation strategy is drawn up. Lucy and I have provided comments on a draft Project Plan and we expect to see a revised version in the near future. Works are expected to re-start spring/summer 2020 once the route of the access road has been agreed.

Our two Historic Environment Research and Delivery Strategy (HERDS) Managers, Rachel Wood and Dan Hounsell, employed by Fusion, keep us informed on works. They ensure that all field work and recording is undertaken to the same standard and format. We are being invited to monitor the work and make comments, which appears to be working well. It is envisaged that the information produced will be in an appropriate HER format for easy data entry although this has not yet been agreed with the HER community. HS2 has agreed a three year service level agreement for our HER data. We are, however, aware that reports have been produced but not currently supplied and this issue is being addressed and will be escalated if required.

the consultants and the Air Photography report says that over 200 new sites have been recorded within the Heathrow study area some of these are within Bucks. A service level agreement to pay for our time spent on this scheme has been agreed. For Bucks the largest impact is likely to be from the proposed flood mitigation sites.



Plan showing proposed flood mitigation sites north of Heathrow

- **Western Rail Link to Heathrow:** Archaeological evaluation and field work has been undertaken and a report supplied. Due to access and ownership issues further evaluation will be required following consent. We have responded to the Development Consent Order consultation and 'issues and asks' meetings are continuing. Part of the route is currently a mineral extraction site and excavation has been undertaken prior to each phase. An Iron Age settlement is likely to be in the next phase; although mineral companies regularly amend their plans.
- **Oxford/Cambridge Expressway:** We attended a meeting in April and little has been forthcoming since for the historic environment. The consultants Jacobs said that there would be an update meeting in the

spring. Lucy and I have contacted Jacobs over this but have not had a response.

- **Chalk, Cherries, Chairs and the Chilterns Hillforts Project:** These are two projects being run by the Chilterns Conservation Board. Members of the Environment Team attend steering group meetings and provide advice and we have provided financial support to both projects. Wendy Morrison has agreed to give an update on the hillforts project.
- **New National Designations:** DCMS added 2 buildings to the List between January and June 2019, both at Grade II: the Friends meeting house in Aylesbury and 'Westover' a local architect-designed Arts and Crafts style house in Station Road, Amersham.
- **ICT Digital Data Recovery**
The team (in partnership with ICT) has made considerable progress on recovering deleted reports and planning casework files following the accidental deletion of digital data in April 2018, which was reported at the last Forum meeting. This will continue to be a major focus of work.

5 Planning related archaeological work

Volume measures	1st Quarter 2019	2nd Quarter 2019
Total number of consultations handled	129	143
Number of planning applications handled	100	86
Planning applications responded to within 21 days (target 90%)	99/ 99%	83 / 97%
Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects	22	13
Success rate at appeal (target 50% annual success rate)	N/A	N/A

A full list of development-related fieldwork is provided as Appendix B.

Significant archaeological investigations include:

Lucy undertook a site monitoring visit to a John Moore Heritage Services site near Longwick recently. One of the field team who had only been working for 8 months recovered this Neolithic axe head from the plough soil. An envious Lucy said that he was not likely to top that for a while if ever!



Neolithic axe-head from Longwick (Photo: Lucy Lawrence)

During April two hoards comprising a silver hoard and a gold hoard were discovered during a metal detecting rally. Lucy and Paul went out with the Oxfordshire Finds Liaison Officer Anni Byard and excavated a small area. The hoards appeared to have been within a wall of a structure and spread through ploughing. The subsequent excavation by Cotswold Archaeology recovered approximately 200 coins in addition to the 400 silver and 12 gold coins already excavated. All were 13th – 14th century. This discovery led to the metal detecting policy discussed today.



Paul Clements helping to excavate the hoard



Silver coin (left) and gold coin (right) from Edward I - III

6 Publication update (Appendix C)

7 Outreach and Publicity

Lucy has been working hard to improve and update the archaeology service web pages and together with Paul has produced the BCAS Blog which will be updated monthly

In May Lucy gave a talk on recent work in the county to the AGM of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society. Lucy and Eliza have given a talk to the Amersham U3A, Eliza has given a talk to the Haddenham U3A and Lucy and Phil gave a talk to the Bucks County Council Property Projects Team. Eliza has been interviewed by Wycombe Sound and attended the Bucks County Show to promote the work of the team. Further talks and events are planned for this Autumn.

8 Historic Environment Record (HER) report

The HER performance indicator statistics are shown in the tables below:

Performance Indicator	1st Quarter 2019	2nd Quarter 2019
Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2019)	Reports = 7 Collect = 517 Total = 524	Reports = 7 Collect = 517 Total = 524

Volume measures	1st Quarter 2019	2nd Quarter 2019
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Number of Countryside Stewardship applications handled	12	15
Number of reports received by the HER	60	21
Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled:		
commercial	24	258
non-commercial	11	

Countryside Stewardship Consultations

In 2019 the HER was consulted on 27 Countryside Stewardship applications covering 7,916 hectares within Buckinghamshire. Of these, 15 (55%) were for Higher Tier schemes and 12 (44%) were for Mid-tier schemes. The HER was able to provide added value to 41% of the applications and we responded to all the consultations within the 20-day period required by Natural England. The numbers of Stewardship consultations have dropped considerably this year as a direct result of the Rural Payments Agency making significant changes to the consultation process in an attempt to cut costs. The bulk of Mid-tier applications were processed without any input from the HER; we are hopeful that there aren't significant detrimental impacts on heritage in the county as a consequence of these changes and are yet to hear whether the scheme is expected to continue in future years.

HER enhancement and volunteer projects

A business case for HBSMRWEB (a new web-based version of the HER) has been through three Technology Boards to assess its viability and value for money. It is hoped that we will be in a position to commission the move to HBSMRWEB this Autumn, which ultimately will provide better public access to the HER online.

The HER volunteer working on the milestones project is still making final edits to the existing entries. The new HER volunteer who had been creating and enhancing records of schools was offered a full-time job with the Natural history Museum in London and left in May.

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research and Recording Project is continuing to make good progress with 63 reports completed, 3 report in draft and work underway on a further 11 gardens. In addition the volunteers are also researching artists' gardens in Buckinghamshire, which will probably be published as a short article.

9. Emergency Recording Fund

The Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum (BHEF) manages the Emergency Recording Fund. The Emergency Recording Fund was established in September 2000 by BHEF. The purpose of the fund is to enable the emergency recording of important archaeological remains

which are unavoidably under imminent threat of significant damage or destruction without adequate provision for their recording. The fund covers the administrative areas of Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, Milton Keynes Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council.

Since 2000 the fund has been called upon five times. The most recent uses of the fund include the excavation of a high-status Roman casket burial discovered by metal detectorists near Whitchurch (cost c. £6k), and the excavation of Neolithic human remains in Milton Keynes (cost c.£2k). In both cases the recovery of these significant remains would not have been possible without the Emergency Recording Fund.

In 2001 it was agreed that contributions should be weighted depending on the size of each local authority (doubled in the case of Milton Keynes Council to reflect its unitary status). The table below shows the current contribution made by each local authority. Income is typically £1000 per annum, although occasionally the contributors have had a “holiday” when the fund has not been called upon.

Table: Size and contribution of each authority (as agreed in 2001)

	Area (km ²)	% Contribution	£ Contribution (2019/20)
Aylesbury Vale District Council	903	20%	
Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society	n/a	5%	
Buckinghamshire County Council	1564	40%	
Chiltern District Council	196	5%	
Milton Keynes Council	309	15%	
South Bucks District Council	141	5%	
Wycombe District Council	325	10%	

These contributions will need to be reviewed as we transform into a Unitary authority. The current balance of the fund currently stands at c. £7K and is managed by the Environment Team.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the Buckinghamshire HER

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