

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum – 21 September 2005

County Museum Report

Since the last meeting of the forum, the intention to deposit 35 site archives has been notified to the museum, by archaeological contracting units.

The archive of the extensive excavations at Eton Rowing Lake is still being deposited in phases at the museum. Whilst we were expecting to have the whole archive acquired by now, there has been a disruption in the deposit schedule, but this has now been resolved, and the process has resumed.

We can also report that the Finds Liaison Officer, Ros Tyrrell, is continuing her work recording and identifying finds from Bucks and Milton Keynes. The records, along with their images, are viewable online at www.finds.org.uk. Ros continues to visit metal detecting clubs, and attend weekend rallies, on a regular basis, where she gets most of her reports of objects. She also facilitates the reporting of treasure items, and the number of these coming into the museum is on the increase. We are currently applying for grants to acquire a gold and garnet medieval finger ring, which was reported via Ros, and has been declared treasure.

The museum is currently preparing for an exhibition in November, Bucks Finest, celebrating 100 years of collecting, and as part of it, a consultation with the public, via various community groups, will ask what people the people of the county what they would like from their museum for the next 100 years. If any of the groups represented on the BHEF are interested in possibly taking part, please contact the Keeper of Archaeology (Brett Thorn).

We are also preparing for an exhibition celebrating the achievements of the “Getting to Know Bernwood” project, run by the County Archaeology Service. The exhibition will feature reports on the results and discoveries of the project. It will include the Saxon-style pottery made by local schoolchildren, alongside archaeological material from the area from the museum collections. We are also hoping to get permission to display the Boarstall Cartulary, a 14th Century map of the area.

A final item to report; as part of our ongoing cataloguing and research of the collections, a group of 21 carved Mesopotamian cylinder seals belonging to the museum has been photographed and recorded, and the British Museum has agreed to provide detailed specialist identification of them. Since these came to the county museum in the early 20th century, from the private museum of Dr John Lee of Hartwell, they are one of the earliest known collections of such items, and the expert from the British Museum, Dr Dominique Collon, has proposed publishing them as an important early collection. There is a growing trend in collaboration between regional and national museums, and this sort of project is helping make a small, but important part of our collections much more accessible than they would otherwise be.