

## Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum – September 2010

### County Museum Report

Since the last meeting of the forum, the intention to deposit 42 site archives has been notified to the County Museum, 10 of which are from the Milton Keynes Council area. This is more than twice the amount in the previous six months, and is equivalent to levels before the slowdown in construction began in 2008/9.

A large part of the focus of the museum's archaeological work this year has been around the *HUMAN : half a million years of life in Bucks* exhibition. This was very well received, and we are awaiting the publication of a critical review in the Papers of the Institute of Archaeology. The school's learning team have created new education sessions, based around the exhibition, but which continue to be delivered, using resources developed during the exhibition. It is very encouraging to see that some teachers are interested enough in archaeology to find a way to fit it into the national curriculum. The exhibition also saw a series of twilight lectures, which were very well attended, given by guest speakers, including the Forum member Mike Farley, along with speakers from the Natural History and British Museums, and historical television presenter Ruth Goodman, who spoke on a "a practical guide to Tudor witchcraft". Other events associated with the exhibition were an evening of medieval music, and an historic crafts day, "Making the Past" featuring demonstrations of flint knapping, bronze casting, Roman weaving, and Tudor lacemaking.

The museum continues to be involved with the "Romans in the Hambleden Valley" community archaeology project, which is re-examining the finds from Yewden Roman villa, excavated almost 100 years ago. As part of this, we were featured in the first episode of BBC2's new flagship archaeology programme.

Further community activity has involved working with volunteers from the Milton Keynes "arts for Health" scheme, which has resulted in a new display in Milton Keynes hospital, focusing on the archaeology and history of the two areas on the edge of Milton Keynes proposed for the expansion of the city.

There is an ongoing trickle of treasure finds, reported via the PAS scheme, and in almost every case, the museum has been able to secure grant funding to acquire the items. A further, and very welcome development in the last few months has been some donations. A small hoard of 19 medieval silver pennies was discovered at Wendover, and both the finders, and the landowner, very generously waived their rewards and effectively donated the find to the museum. Even more recently, a pair of Bronze Age gold ribbon torcs was found at Ellesborough, and in this case, the landowner has waived their considerable reward, meaning that the museum only has to raise £2000, rather than £4000 in grant funding. At the time of writing, £1000 of this has already been secured from the MLAV&A purchase grant fund.

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Keeper of Archaeology