

ARCHAEOLOGY IN MILTON KEYNES

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: March 2015

Author: Senior Archaeological Officer, Conservation and Archaeology, Milton Keynes Council

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform the Forum of recent archaeological matters in Milton Keynes.

B. FIELDWORK PROJECTS

1. Attached is a list of fieldwork projects (Events) undertaken in the Milton Keynes area between July and December 2014.
2. A particular highlight was the resistivity survey and trial trenching commissioned by the council and carried out in Stantonbury parish by Headland Archaeology to inform proposals for a new country park at Stanton Low. The initial resistivity survey was partly conducted at twice the 'normal' resolution and produced a very detailed plan of the late 17th century manor and gardens constructed by Sir John Wittewronge. Subsequent targeted trial trenching revealed the well-preserved foundations of the manor house, an ornamental pond and various pathways. A management plan including designation proposals will be produced in coming months.

C. PLANNING

1. Between 1st July and 31st December 2014 there were 177 consultations in respect of archaeological matters as a direct result of planning applications, pre-application enquiries, and schemes by statutory undertakers and other agencies.

D. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

1. A business case for the appointment of an HER assistant is currently in preparation.

E. OUTREACH

1. In September the Senior Archaeological Officer conducted a group guided walk of historic and archaeological sites in the Ouzel valley as part of Heritage Open Days.

2. Milton Keynes Archaeology Day – see **Appendix 1** for full report.

F. CONSERVATION MATTERS

1. Loughton and Great Holm Parish Council have undertaken a review of the Loughton Conservation Area with the assistance of the Council's Conservation and Archaeology Team. The review proposes a revised boundary plus management proposals. These include a number of small scale boundary alterations to reflect altered property boundaries since the original designation or revisions to areas that are felt to now warrant, or conversely, not warrant designation. The principal boundary change is the inclusion of the Equestrian Centre within the conservation area. The review document also sets out the management proposals for the conservation area as required by The Act. It is expected that the changes outlined will be approved as a delegated decision on 10th March 2015.

G. PROPOSED ACTION

1. The Forum is asked to note this report.

Appendix 1:

Milton Keynes Archaeology Day 2014

Post-Event Report

Introduction

On Saturday 8th November 2014 hundreds of people of all ages came through the doors of the Central Library to enjoy a range of activities and talks at the 8th annual Milton Keynes Archaeology Day.

Organised by the Conservation & Archaeology Team, the event began in a single library meeting room in 2007. Subsequently the event has grown in scope and appeal and is now held across the Central Library with talks in the Exhibition Space and interactive displays, activities and workshops from the library foyer and upstairs to the Children's Library.

Despite this expansion the budget for the event remains extremely modest, with expenditure principally covering just the printing of posters, refreshments for the contributors and travel expenses for the speakers.

Since inception the aim of Archaeology Day has been to promote the understanding of archaeology and the work of archaeologists both in Milton Keynes and further afield to the widest possible audience. The fact that the event has always been free is fundamental to this inclusiveness and popularity.



Talks, Displays and Activities

For the third year tables in the IT area next to the Children's Library were taken over by a hands-on archaeology workshop. Hosted by Border Archaeology who are undertaking archaeological work in the Western Expansion Area and Strategic Reserve Sites, these activities for young people gave a

practical insight into the varied methods and skills used by modern archaeologists to over 40 young people. Many of the participants in the workshop stopped by after attending an archaeology themed 'Story Time' in the Children's Library.

Another very popular aspect of the event is the displays in the foyer and on the half-landing from active local fieldwork groups and societies.



the half-landing from active local fieldwork groups and societies. This year participants included Wing Heritage Project, Northamptonshire's Community Landscape and Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP) and the Upper Nene Archaeological Society (UNAS) plus Archaeology Day regulars Magiovinium Metal Detecting club whose wide-ranging

collections of artefacts proved as popular as ever. Also present in the foyer was Ros Tyrrell, Finds Liaison Officer from the Portable Antiquities Scheme for Bucks and MK who was on hand to identify any treasures brought in by the public.

As in previous years the biggest draws of the day were the two talks held in the Exhibition Space (former Local Studies Library). In the morning Sadie Watson from Museum of London Archaeology gave an assured lecture on the recent British Archaeological Award winning excavations at the Bloomberg site. Detailing both the amazing preservation of Roman buildings and artefacts encountered prior to the recent redevelopment of the site in addition to the post-WWII discovery of the Temple of Mithras and the subsequent controversy regarding its preservation.



The afternoon talk was by Dr John Gater (GSB Prospection Ltd), well known as Time Team's resident geophysical survey (Geofizz!) expert. John's talk

was an entertaining romp through the history of Time Team as well as a clear exposition of the various survey techniques, how they work and why they sometimes don't! John's celebrity status was underlined by his reception and a record audience for an Archaeology Day lecture of 73.

Statistics and Audience Feedback

Figures from the automatic door count for the day were unavailable as the system experienced a fault. However, on the basis of previous years and the high head count for the talks and activities the total audience estimate is around 400. Helpers, those running workshops, speaking or manning stands and displays on the day numbered 24, not including library staff and volunteers.

Feedback was collected on the day by 3 library volunteers from 56 respondents who gave an overwhelmingly positive rating for the event (51% Very Good / 49% Good). A 'tag cloud' constructed from responses to the question: 'Which 3 words would you use to describe your experience of today's visit?' forms the cover to this report.

The feedback also showed a broad age distribution, with over 50% of respondents aged under 45. The postcodes collected show attendees from all the surrounding counties and also London, Reading and Gloucester.

Future Events

Next year's event will be held on Saturday 14th November. The venue is likely to be the Central Library as in previous years, however this has not yet been confirmed and alternative venues will be evaluated. Updates to the programme will appear throughout the year.

Contact:

Nick Crank, Senior Archaeological Officer
Conservation & Archaeology, Development Management

External Links

Border Archaeology <http://www.borderarchaeology.com/>

CLASP - Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project <http://claspweb.org.uk/>

GSB Prospection Ltd <http://www.gsbprospection.com/>

MOLA – Museum of London Archaeology <http://www.mola.org.uk/>

UNAS – Upper Nene Archaeological Society <http://unas.org.uk/>

Wing Heritage Group <http://wingheritage.org/>