

## **Appendix A: Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officers' Report**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum  
Date: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018  
Authors: Senior Archaeology Officer, Archaeology Officer, Historic Environment Record Officer, Historic Environment Record Assistant

### **A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1 To advise the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last BHEF meeting (19<sup>th</sup> September 2017).

### **Report Summary**

- HS2 Ltd: discussions and advice are ongoing with Mike Court's Team and with Fusion's (Company overseeing the archaeological field work) Director Jay Carver, over project designs and written schemes of investigation. We understand that Helen Vass has been promoted and no longer heads the historic environment team.
- East–West Rail: advice and information is being provided for their ecological mitigation sites. Due to staff changes at Atkins a number of issues have arisen and a meeting with them took place in Birmingham with their archaeologists, Eliza and Phil. This went well and we expect smoother running from now on.
- Heathrow New Runway: We have been invited to a number of meetings on this and have provided advice on a number of documents and the forthcoming environmental statement. Their proposed methodology for the historic environment chapter(s) is based on historic landscape characterisation and is currently built environment biased and does not include evaluation. These issues have been commented on.
- Oxford/Cambridge Expressway: We were invited to a meeting in December and the concerns on the historic environment were raised. We understand that BCC has been providing information and advice on this and we have tried to be proactive to support this.
- AP and LiDAR Project: proposal submitted to Historic England for a grant-funded project in north Buckinghamshire has been successful and should start in March 2019.

### **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, Eliza Alqassar is the Archaeology Officer (part-time), Julia Wise is the HER Officer, Paul Clements is the HER Assistant (part time) and Simon Newell 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 scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup> March at HS2's offices at Snow Hill. Historic England have increasingly been concerned over how the HS2 works are being undertaken, from the consultation of Schedule 17 works to fieldwork evaluation technique and following law included in the HS2 Bill. Historic England hosted a meeting on these issues at their Birmingham office on 7<sup>th</sup> February. There is a concern that if geophysical survey results are negative then no trenching will be undertaken to 'ground truth' this. Hopefully this will be fully addressed soon. Schedule 17 works have taken place at Stoke Mandeville and Doddershall, and are likely to have started at Calvert and Fleet Marston. Site monitoring has been undertaken at Stoke Mandeville and Doddershall.

The BCC HS2 team has been in discussion with HS2 Ltd over a service level agreement covering BCC and the Districts. These discussions are based on the HS2 Information paper C13: Local Authority Funding and New Burdens arising from HS2. Of the 14 activities which HS2 will provide funding for, the historic environment is included or will have an input in 6 of these. This Service Level Agreement has now been signed.

It is expected that significant archaeological works will begin in late Spring/early Summer for the line and will continue for a number of years. This is expected to lead to a shortage of available archaeological field teams for normal planning and DMRB schemes.

We understand that the location-specific written schemes of investigation will be based on the generic written scheme of investigation and on the Historic Environment Research and Delivery Strategy document. These will be written by the archaeological contractor, approved by Fusion and HS2 Ltd and provided to us for

comment. Fusion and HS2 will ensure that all fieldwork and recording is undertaken to the same standard and format. BCC will be invited to monitor the work but comments will currently go to Fusion and HS2 and not the field team. HS2 say that most of the recording will be digital and available on-line quickly to inform other investigations along the route and interested individuals. Archiving has not been agreed but Historic England appears to favour a single repository for the archive, such as the Cheshire salt mines. It is envisaged that the information produced will be in an appropriate HER format for easy data entry although this has not yet been discussed with the HER community. HS2 have recently agreed a three-year SLA for HER data and this will be supplied imminently.

- **East–West Rail:** This has been ongoing for a number of years and consultants have been in touch with us over the environmental statement and for providing advice on approximately two dozen ecological mitigation sites. These sites are now beginning to appear on the district council's planning weekly lists. Where agreed these sites will usually have a geophysical survey and trial trenching, on smaller sites a strip, map and sample excavation will take place. A service level agreement has been agreed for our input into this proposal. The HER has provided data for an updated environmental statement. Following Government intervention to reduce costs we were consulted on revised plans and documents, approximately 125 revised plans were supplied and commented on. We are expecting a stand-alone historic environment document providing more detail than the base line environmental statement currently being consulted on.
- **Heathrow New Runway:** We have been invited to a number of meetings on this and have provided advice on a number of documents and the forthcoming environmental statement. A service level agreement has been agreed for our input into this proposal. The HER has supplied data for the environmental statement. Their proposed methodology for the historic environment chapter(s) is based on historic landscape characterisation and is currently built environment biased and does not include evaluation. These issues have been commented on.
- **Aerial photo and LiDAR interpretation and mapping project:** In early December Historic England announced that it would be commissioning a limited number of AP/LiDAR projects (also known as National Mapping Projects) in 2018-19 and inviting project bids to be submitted. The following day Julia was contacted by two specialist contractors currently working on a similar project for Bedford Borough's archaeology service, to ask if we would be interested in submitting a bid for a project in Buckinghamshire. In view of the major development pressures and strategic infrastructure proposals, it was agreed to submit two bids, one centred around Buckingham and a second centred around Aylesbury. Julia worked with the consultants (Skylarkeology) to prepare the bids which were submitted to Historic

England in early January. We have just heard that Historic England has decided to commission the Buckingham project, with an expected start date in March 2019. In partnership with the consultants, we will work up a detailed project design for submission to Historic England this December. Historic England have said that they would still like to commission the larger (and costlier) Aylesbury project if their future budgets allow and will review the situation in a year's time.

The project will involve the consultants using the HER's and Historic England's AP collections and the Environment Agency's LiDAR data to identify new archaeological sites, to define and characterise the nature and extent of the archaeology and to map the sites in GIS. It is hoped that the consultants will be based at Historic England's Swindon office (where they have access to specialist software and Historic England's AP collections) but with remote access to the live HER database, our digital AP collections and the County Council's GIS. This would allow them to input directly into the HER database and mapping, avoiding double-handling of records or creating HER backlogs and making new information immediately available to the archaeology team for planning and land management advice and for HER enquiries.

- **Chalk, Cherries, Chairs** – Eliza has been developing a project called *The Mystery of Grim's Ditch* as part of the Chiltern's Conservation Board's Chalk Cherries Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS), which will be applying for HLF funding in summer 2018. The project will involve surveying gaps in the linear monument as part of the five-year LPS.
- **New National Designations** – DCMS added 6 buildings to the List between July and December 2017, all at Grade II: all are war memorials (Buckingham, Gawcott, Hitcham, Little Kingshill, Stokenchurch and Wexham). The garden at Turn End in Haddenham was added to the Register at Grade II (the buildings are already listed at Grade II\*). The scheduling description for the fortified medieval manor at Grove Farm in Ashley Green has been updated and the scheduled area expanded.

## 5 Planning related archaeological work

Volume measures	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017
Total number of consultations handled	205	130
Number of planning applications handled	97	117
Planning applications responded to within 21 days (target 90%)	Target Achieved	Target Achieved
Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects	12	22
Success rate at appeal (target 50%)	N/A	N/A

annual success rate)		
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A full list of development-related fieldwork is provided as Appendix B.

### **Significant archaeological investigations include:**

A previously unknown Roman settlement at Doddershall has been uncovered by HS2, currently thought to be a farmstead. Similar Roman remains have been unearthed at Cheddington by Cotswold Archaeology and some well-preserved medieval settlement remains, including stone structures, have been evaluated by KDK Archaeology at Westcott.

Of the larger schemes, significant discoveries have been made at the Richings Park mineral site in Langley, which is also part of the future line of the Heathrow western rail link. Stripping is being undertaken by Wessex Archaeology and so far a medieval trackway has overlain an Iron Age ditch leading towards a proposed area of settlement. Over sixty pits have so far been recorded and the edge of a probable round house has been plotted. Geophysics suggests that a future area of stripping is a site of major activity. There is a suggestion that the currently recorded features overlie a Bronze Age field system. A written scheme of investigation for the geoarchaeological mitigation of the site has also been agreed.

## **6 Publication update (Appendix C)**

## **7 Outreach and Publicity**

Four public outreach events took place from July to December 2017. In July Eliza represented the Archaeology team in a 'market place' event for newly-elected County Councillors, introducing them to the wide range of services provided to residents by the Planning and Environment Service.

Julia and Eliza laid on a display about Saxon and Viking Buckinghamshire with childrens' activities for the County Museum's Festival of Archaeology fun day in July and a poster display on the Medieval and Tudor earthworks at Quarrendon for the Bucks Conservation Trust's public open day. Eliza, Julia and Phil also helped with stewarding the open day, acting as expert guides on site.

Eliza attended the Marlow Flood Alleviation Scheme excavation open day in September 2017. Displays were provided by Marlow Archaeological Society and Trent and Peak Archaeology, who also ran tours of the site.

The Archaeology Service also hosted a work shadowing student from John Colet School in Wendover for a week in July. The student is a member of the Aylesbury Young Archaeologists' Club and intends to

study Archaeology at university in due course. As the final part of her placement she wrote about her week with us on the team's Facebook page.

## 8 Historic Environment Record (HER) report

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

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017</b>
Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2018)	Reports = 13 <u>Collect = 517</u> Total = 530	Reports = 15 <u>Collect = 517</u> Total = 532

<b>Volume measures</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017</b>
Number of Countryside Stewardship applications handled	87	0
Number of reports received by the HER	28	41
Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled: commercial	18	29
non-commercial	11	5

### **Countryside Stewardship Consultations**

In 2017 the HER was consulted on 148 Countryside Stewardship applications covering 16,847 hectares within Buckinghamshire. Of these, 16 (11%) were for Higher Tier schemes and 132 (89%) were for Mid-tier schemes. The HER was able to provide added value to 60% of the applications and we responded to all the consultations within the 20-day period required by Natural England.

The Secretary of State for the Environment has made significant changes to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme for 2018, with a faster more-streamlined process for some Mid-tier schemes by removing the requirement to consult the HER. We are not sure what impact this will have on our workload as Natural England have estimated that it might involve 30%-70% of Mid-tier applications. There will also be new Higher Tier management options for arable, grassland, orchards and parkland and the timescale for submission of applications has been brought forward this year: we have already received our first consultations.

### **Staffing**

Paul's contract has been extended to the end of the 2018/19 financial year and he continues to be a great asset to the team.

### **HER enhancement and volunteer projects**

As reported at the last meeting Paul is continuing with geo-rectifying contractors' geophysical surveys and loading them into GIS. He has completed geo-rectifying the AP plots.

The HER volunteer working on the milestones project has now completed data entry of new and enhanced records and is making some small final edits in GIS. If she wishes to continue volunteering for us, we may ask her to tackle the turnpike tollhouses. The other regular volunteer has ceased working for the HER due to health problems.

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research and Recording Project is continuing to make good progress with 48 reports completed, 4 reports in draft and work underway on a further 10 gardens. In 2017 and 2018 the volunteers have also been researching the 16 parks and gardens where Humphrey Repton was involved, as part of the national Repton 200 festival, which will culminate in a publication on Repton's work in Buckinghamshire and a special conference at Ashridge in August.

#### E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the Buckinghamshire HER

**CONTACT OFFICERS: PHILIP MARKHAM 01296 382705,  
ELIZA ALQASSAR 01296 383798, JULIA WISE 01296 382072  
AND PAUL CLEMENTS 01296 382624**