

Appendix A: Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officers' Report

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum
Date: 10th March 2021
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A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To advise the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service (BCAS) since the last BHEF meeting (10th September 2020).

Report Summary

- The Team has been working hard to continue to deliver an excellent service to our customers throughout the pandemic. Planning consultations have significantly increased this year and the major infrastructure schemes are progressing.
- HS2/Fusion – Field work is continuing and is largely expected to be completed by the end of the year.
- East-West Rail – The Written Schemes of Investigation have been approved and field work is being undertaken.
- Heathrow – In December the Supreme Court ruled the proposal was legitimately based on previous, less stringent, climate targets at the time it was agreed. This enables Heathrow to now seek planning permission for the runway. We expect to be consulted in the near future.
- Western Rail link to Heathrow - Network Rail anticipate that they will ask the Council to recommence work on the Environmental Assessment and public consultation after May this year.
- Service Review & Restructuring – this is being undertaken
- Outreach & Publicity Update
- HER Report
- Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal

B. PROPOSED ACTION

The Forum is particularly invited to NOTE:

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

C. RESOURCES

The Council's Archaeology Service forms part of the Planning, Growth and Sustainability Directorate. 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 Historic and Built Environment Manager.

Service Review & Restructuring

Since becoming a unitary authority last April, the Planning and Environment Service has had a service review and is undergoing a restructure. A new Heritage Team will combine the Archaeology Team and the Conservation Officers under a Team Leader. This post is yet to be filled at the time of writing. This Team Leader will be managed by Eliza as Historic and Built Environment Manager, managing Heritage & Archaeology and the Ecology Team. Rebecca Hart will be managing the other specialist teams which includes Aborigiculture, BMERC (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Record Centre), Urban Design and Landscape.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Strategic Issues/Projects

High Speed 2:

It has been a busy period with HS2/EKFB Teams meetings on written schemes of investigation, virtual site tours and landscape design issues. To date, there have been 254 HS2-related fieldwork events completed and ongoing in Bucks, with this number certain to rise as new sites come on-line. These events include:

- Archaeological Recording 69
- Archaeological Monitoring 11
- Building Recording 7
- Construction Integrated Recording 9
- Trial Trenching 53
- Magnetometry Survey 68
- Test Pitting 22
- Borehole Survey 7
- Systematic Field Walking 1
- Detailed Desk Based Assessments 2
- Historic Landscape Characterisation 5

HS2/Fusion has been busy on site despite the weather and a brief update on their sites was thought to be a good idea.

St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville – Several phases of evaluation have taken place at the site of the church and in the vicinity. The next phase of work is now due to start this spring and L-P Archaeology is likely to be on site for at least five months.

Hunts Green Farm, Great Missenden – tree felling has taken place on the Grim's Ditch Scheduled Monument so that a full ground-based survey and drone survey can take place prior to evaluation taking place. Evaluation is also taking place in the vicinity of the monument and excavation is likely to take place in at least two areas. Historic England and ourselves are being kept up to date by HS2/Fusion on this significant site and on design proposals by EKFB.

Bishopstone – This is a densely packed Roman site with a couple of possible trackways, a corndryer, numerous pits and linears, and of particular interest are several complete or near complete vessels in the upper fills of the linears.

Doddershall – The railway cottages site is being described as a high-status Roman farmstead, but several very large ponds/quarries and some evidence of metalworking now may suggest an industrial function. Excavations here are now complete and we are waiting for the report.

Doddershall Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) – the whole area has been stripped and excavation has followed drone surveys and geophysics. In the northern area the house platforms are well defined and evidence of ditches forming plot divisions can be seen. There are numerous layers covering earlier phases which means excavation has been slow and tricky.

Calvert – No further works after relatively blank evaluation

Waddesdon – Two sparse areas of Romano-British activity and an area of medieval activity to be included within an agreed mitigation strategy.

Chetwode – The evaluation has revealed a substantial amount of Romano-British activity including buildings and possibly palisaded ditches. Also, some prehistoric and medieval remains showing good continuity of the site. A large area excavation is due to start in March 2021.

Three Bridge Mill (Twyford) – The mitigation has been agreed to focus on the Romano-British activity. The evaluation suggests this area is on the very edge of a decent sized settlement.

Turweston – An Iron Age pit alignment was spotted in geophysical survey and identified in the evaluation. This boundary feature has two interesting 90 degree turns.

Fleet Marston – Four areas to be excavated, Akeman Street, the burial ground and two side roads. Priority areas have started to be stripped, but adverse weather has delayed the programme.

East–West Rail

The Written Schemes of Investigation have been approved and field work is being undertaken.

Heathrow New Runway

In December the Supreme Court ruled the proposal was legitimately based on previous, less stringent, climate targets at the time it was agreed. This enables Heathrow to now seek planning permission for the runway. We expect to be consulted in the near future.

Western Rail Link to Heathrow

Network Rail anticipate that they will ask the Council to recommence work on the Environmental Assessment and public consultation after May this year.

Chalk, Cherries, Chairs and the Chilterns Hillforts Project: These two projects are run by the Chilterns Conservation Board. Members of the Environment Team attend steering group meetings and provide advice and we have provided financial support and HER information to both projects. The Beacons of the Past, Chilterns Hillforts Project has been running for the last few years and has recorded hundreds of new archaeological sites from the lidar data. The HER will receive detailed information on the fifty or so most significant sites and point data for the less significant sites during the summer. This has been a very successful partnership with the CCB.

New National Designations: DCMS added 4 buildings to the List between July and December 2020, all at Grade II: Rayners House in Penn - a country house built in about 1847 for Sir Philip Rose, and associated buildings within the grounds - Rayners Lodge, Gardeners' Bothy and an obelisk commemorating Benjamin Disraeli and the visit of Queen Victoria in 1881. The listing descriptions for the Grade II Friends meeting houses in Chesham and High Wycombe were also updated. Broadwater Park in Denham was added to the Register of Parks and Gardens at Grade II: designed in 1982-4 by Preben Jakobsen, it's both a rare survival of his work and of a 1980s commercial landscape associated with a contemporary office building.

Planning related archaeological work

Volume measures	3rd Quarter 2020	4th Quarter 2020
Total number of consultations handled	163	182
Number of planning applications handled	121	135
Planning applications responded to within 21 days (target 90%)	115 (95%)	129 (96%)
Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects	37	47
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:

There has continued to be local and media interest over a site near Buckingham (reported to BHEF in March 2019). This excavation took place in 2018/19 and since then post-excavation cleaning and conservation of the skeletons has been underway. We understand that Network Archaeology have provided the developer with updated costings to cover the rest of the post-excavation works, to include DNA analysis and carbon 14 dating, together with the publication and archiving of this

significant site. We contact Network on a regular basis to see if we can help expedite these works.

St Rumbold's Well Buckingham; Unfortunately, a planning condition was not attached to the consent of the adjacent development (the developer also owns this area) despite advice from us and Historic England. The conservation and interpretation of the monument has been included in the S106 as part of a sports and leisure contribution. We are in discussion with the Town Clerk for Buckingham Town Council and Council colleagues on ways to address this issue.

Publication update (Appendix C)

Outreach and Publicity

A number of planned public outreach events have been moved online following the Covid-19 lockdowns and subsequent restrictions on activities this year and the team continues using social media, online displays and presentations for public outreach.

In August 2020 the team launched the Heritage Portal with press releases and a radio interview by Eliza on Mix96. In September Eliza and Julia gave a live demo of the new website at the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society's online AGM.

In October Julia prepared a themed poster display on Buckinghamshire breweries and public houses as part of a virtual 'market stall' for the online Bucks Local History Network Conference. The Heritage Portal was publicised throughout the 2-week national online Festival of Archaeology in October and probably caused the massive spike in numbers of page views the website experienced that month.

In November Lucy and Julia gave a live demo of the website to members of Marlow Archaeological Society and Archaeology in Marlow. Lucy has continued to give talks to local societies when invited. A recent talk to Amersham U3A attracted over 170 participants.

Paul has maintained the team's profile on social media by adding new posts on the two Blogs, initiating 'Random Record Wednesdays' and running a Buckinghamshire twist on the 12 Days of Christmas on Facebook and Twitter.

In February 2021 the team launched a new project, Knowing Your Place – Discovering Buckinghamshire's Historic Parishes. This project aims to utilise local expertise to update the parish summaries on the Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal. There has been a very good response from the public already.

Historic Environment Record (HER) report

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

Performance Indicator	3rd Quarter 2020	4th Quarter 2020
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Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2021)	Reports =24 <u>Collect = 512</u> Total = 536	Reports = 24 <u>Collect = 511</u> Total = 535
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Volume measures	3rd Quarter 2020	4th Quarter 2020
Number of Countryside Stewardship applications handled	2	0
Number of reports received by the HER	38	48
Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled: commercial	16	16
non-commercial	4	5

Countryside Stewardship Scheme in 2021

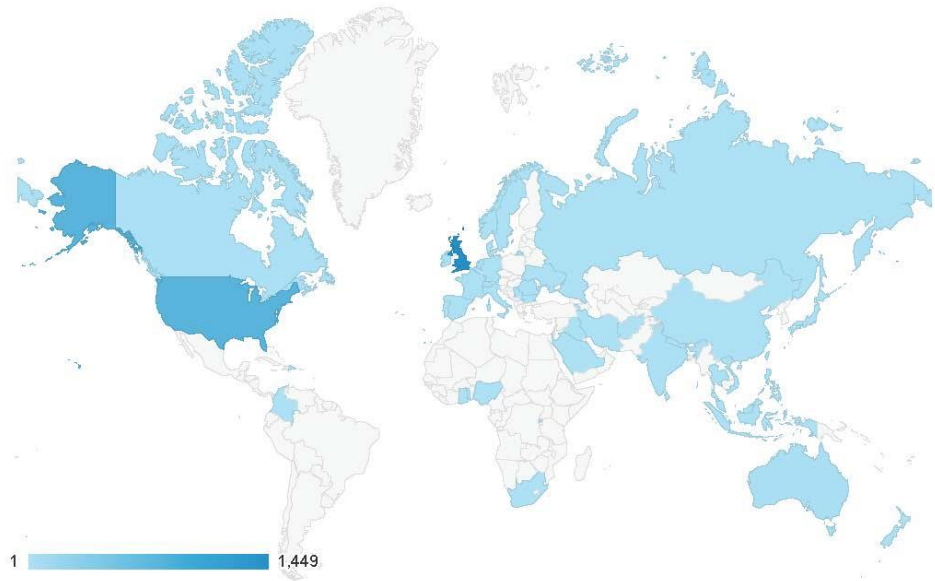
HER consultations to support Countryside Stewardship funding applications are expected to continue in the same format as 2020 while the transition to the proposed new Environmental Land Management Scheme is still in the pipeline (expected to go live in 2024). The application window for 2021 is due to open on 9th February, subject to government approval.

Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal

Analytical tools were applied to the website at the end of August and statistics on user numbers and page views have been collected monthly from September onwards.

	Users	Page views	% new users	% regular users
September	1,177	7,188	87%	13%
October	1,994	17,444	83%	17%
November	1,952	10,159	86%	14%
December	2,403	6,918	89%	11%

Initially 85-89% of Heritage Portal users were based in the UK, but it has been gratifying to see the geographic spread of users widening and we now have users in every continent and sub-continent, possible including Antarctica!



Above: Geographic location of Bucks Heritage Portal users in December 2020

HER enhancement and volunteer projects

In September Paul updated the HER with the new information from the Pillbox Study Group that we reported to the last committee meeting.

In October HS2 Ltd released 114 fieldwork reports to the HER for sites in Buckinghamshire investigated between 2017-2019. We have been working through these adding the information to the HER.

The HER volunteer working on the milestones project has been concentrating on other activities this year but we are hoping she will be able to continue supporting the HER when it is safe to do so.

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research and Recording Project is continuing to make good progress with 80 reports completed, 7 reports in draft and work underway on a further 5 gardens. The volunteers are also currently researching public parks as a contribution to a national Gardens Trust project.

Emergency Recording Fund

At the previous BHEF committee meeting (Sept 2020) it was agreed that following the transition to a Unitary authority, that Buckinghamshire Council would contribute 80% (£800) of the annual contributions to cover the total previously contributed by the legacy district and county councils. As per previous agreements, Milton Keynes Council would contribute 15% (£150) and the Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society would contribute 5% (£50).

Contributions have not yet been collected, and as such the current fund remains at approximately £6000.

No funds have been spent since 2013, when the it was used to excavate a Roman casket burial.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the Buckinghamshire HER

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