

Time Truck gets rolling



A new initiative puts archaeology on wheels to bring benefits to communities and developers alike. Magnus Copps, MOLA's Development and Community Officer, explains how it works.

Commercial archaeology is often hidden behind construction hoardings, and for good reason. Professional archaeologists are trained to manage the risks of working on construction sites. The development of our towns and cities is also constrained by tight programmes making public access to urban excavations problematic. As a result much of the emerging heritage is excavated out of sight and reach of the public.

In recent years a new trend has been seen, with projects such as Crossrail making use of viewing platforms and Bloomberg London using hoardings and event programmes to set new standards of public engagement. MOLA is launching a new initiative, the Time Truck, a 7m long trailer, which functions as a flexible education, exhibition and event space, and will be used to engage schools and communities with the process of development-led archaeology.

The Time Truck offers opportunities to communicate both the process of archaeological discovery and the significant finds made, all supported through an innovative funding model that blends developer funding and philanthropic sources. In keeping with recent GLAAS guidance that 'engaging the public should not be seen as an onerous obligation, but as a means of education, promotion and publicity that is beneficial to both the archaeological profession and the developer', the Time Truck allows developers to capitalise on the growing emphasis on public

engagement in planning regulations and conditions, reflecting an increasing desire within the development industry to use the archaeological work that is undertaken as part of the planning process to deliver tangible public benefit.

In order to achieve this, the Time Truck delivers a programme of schools engagement, reaching over 8000 school children across five East London boroughs in its first year of operation. MOLA Community Archaeologists offer a range of sessions to Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils, including a field archaeology sessions based around 'Dig Boxes', a human osteology session on bones and diseases, and a Thames Water sponsored *Cleaning up History* programme which focusses on the history of sewers and sanitation in London.

Sessions are tailored to reflect local heritage and archaeological discoveries, and are designed to support learning outcomes in both STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and history curricula. Building on a CoLAT-funded pilot programme (completed March 2016), sessions will be offered in Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets, to up to 12 schools in each borough.

In addition, the Time Truck takes pop-up exhibitions of archaeological finds and research to public audiences around London. In some cases, these

work synergistically with strong local museum provision: at present MOLA is developing deployments to Croydon Heritage Festival and Barking & Dagenham's One Borough Festival, both of which will feature displays that show recent finds from sites in the local area alongside local museum holdings, displayed in innovative multifunctional on-board display cases.

More site-specific deployments include an exhibition in Spitalfields based on recent excavations at a local hotel, and drawing on the expertise and knowledge used to produce MOLA's recent publication *The Spitalfields Suburb 1539–c.1880*. Here, the Time Truck offers a very focused interpretation, much more immediately linked to a place than would be possible in most museum contexts.

This ability to zero in on specific places is central to the Time Truck's impact. By giving local communities an understanding of their heritage, MOLA uses the Time Truck to build strong connections between people and place. The examples cited above are just the beginning of an extensive programme of community-led talks, lectures, volunteer workshops and other activities hosted from the Time Truck that offer a way in to heritage for all, importantly even for those groups who don't have access to museums and other heritage sites, or where communities may feel that existing

ABOVE Wraparound graphics to be attached to the Time Truck trailer
OPPOSITE MOLA community archaeologist Stella Bickelmann delivering a dig box session to school children at Camberwell Library All images ©MOLA

Major landmark at LA AGM

The Annual Lecture and Annual General Meeting of the *London Archaeologist* will be held at 7pm on Thursday 12th May. Alison Telfer will present the Annual Lecture on the Crossrail Liverpool Street excavations, which revealed the Walbrook stream and an East-West Roman Road, Roman burials and 60 skulls, remains from the cemetery for Bedlam and much more.

This year sees a major landmark in the history of *London Archaeologist*. After 40 years, Clive Orton will be standing down as editor. His contribution to the magazine and to London's archaeology has been immense, and his role has become a weighty one. The committee has therefore decided to propose changes to the constitution to enable joint editors to be elected to share responsibilities. The proposed amendments to enable this are detailed below.

The publication committee has spent considerable effort in reviewing the roles and potential candidates to serve as new joint editors. Two candidates are being nominated by the committee: Jenny Hall, who was senior curator for the Roman period at the Museum of London for more than 30 years and has contributed to and edited many publications, and Diana Briscoe, who has long experience of editing

commercial publications, manages the archives of Anglo-Saxon and Roman pottery stamps, and was awarded her PhD by the Institute of Archaeology last year. Any member of LA may also nominate a candidate to be put to the AGM for election.

In addition, as usual, the AGM proceedings will include the election of officers, and the election to the publication committee of six ordinary members. There will be two vacancies to fill, and we hope to elect a new marketing manager. To discuss the positions or submit nominations, please email the secretary via the contact page on the website or write to her at 44 Tantallon Road, London SW12 8DG.

Constitutional amendments

A copy of the current constitution may be found on the LA website. The following amendments (in quotes) are proposed by the publication committee for consideration by the AGM; the words in bold are to be added to the existing constitution.

"In Section 5 b), the post of Assistant Editor should be deleted, and the text of that section of the Constitution should be amended to read:

At the Annual General Meeting of the Charity the members shall elect from among themselves the following

six (6) or seven (7) Officers – Managing Editor, Editor or two (2) Joint Editors, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Secretary, Marketing Manager.

Section 6 c) of the Constitution should be amended to read:

Five (5) members, including two (2) Officers at least one of which should be an Editor or Joint Editor, shall form a quorum and the Publication Committee shall meet at least three times a year. It shall be proper for the Treasurer to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses to members of the Publication Committee but there shall be no paid Officers or ordinary members."

We hope many of you will be able to come along on this significant occasion where we pay tribute to Clive and introduce a new era for LA. For catering purposes, please RSVP for the reception at 6.30pm, using the contact page of the website.

All welcome:

12th May 2016

6.30pm – reception

7pm – AGM followed by

Annual Lecture

Institute of Archaeology

31–34 Gordon Square

London WC1H 0PY

provision does not represent their identity or experience of a place.

The project has been supported by Thames Water, The Wates Foundation and The Wates Family Enterprise Trust, Brookfield Office Properties Europe, Oxford Properties Group, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Heritage Lottery Fund, Stanhope Plc, Northamptonshire County Council, and TP Bennett LLP. This range of funders reflects the level of enthusiasm for the Time Truck, embedded within both the archaeology and property sectors, as a new model for archaeological engagement.

The Time Truck is a vehicle conceived to take archaeology directly

from development sites to the public, complementing existing dissemination of the discipline's findings by engaging people with absorbing, interdisciplinary methods that we use to create narrative and unlock stories that help individuals understand their shared heritage and contribute to stronger more cohesive communities.

For further information email timetruck@mola.org.uk.

