

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2002/2003

The County Museum reopened in 1995 after a major refurbishment, the addition of a fine new Art Gallery and the completion of the 'Touch of Bucks' displays. A year later, the successful Roald Dahl Childrens' Gallery opened to the public. Six years on in 2002, the Museum felt the need to review and update public displays and services. The design consultancy Objectives was commissioned to review the layout of all public spaces and visitor navigation in the Museum. The cost of the study was generously met by the Friends of Buckinghamshire County Museum.

The Objectives report recommended new, DDA compliant signage throughout the buildings, a revamped reception area and shop, a Museum 'InfoPoint' where curatorial staff would meet the visitors, the creation of a Learning Zone for schools, events, talks and workshops, and changes of use of the Baker and Viney Rooms to display more of the stored Museum collections and to house loan material from national collections.

During the report period, the Museum consulted on the Objectives report with the Friends and Patrons and the Bucks Archaeological Society and an application was made for Listed Building consent for the necessary alterations to the building. At the same time, Robin Pemberton Associates were commissioned to review the implications for the Museum of the new Disability Discrimination Act. The architects Babcic were appointed project managers and the building works were scheduled to begin in April 2003. The new facilities are designed to make the Museum and the curatorial staff more accessible and to provide extra spaces for the display of the Museum collections and major loan items to Government Indemnity standards of security and environment.

The year saw over 9000 school children visit the museum in organised groups. The Roald Dahl Children's Gallery offers schools a ninety-minute teaching session where they are encouraged to investigate themes from history, natural history, science and technology through the characters and

stories of Roald Dahl. Schools were also attracted by two specially developed curriculum and family learning exhibitions; *Romans* explored life in Roman times and was followed by *Badgers, Beetles and Bluebells*, which looked at the biodiversity of Bucks. Both exhibitions offered schools a teaching session in the gallery led by Education staff. Another great success with schools was the *Baker's Dozen* exhibition, which celebrated the art of 13 children's book illustrators, including Quentin Blake.

Art Gallery exhibitions included *John Piper – master of diversity*, the *Jubilee Clothes Show* (fashion 1952–2002) and *Museum Treasures*, to celebrate the centenary of the National Art Collections Fund. *Museum Treasures* showcased the wide range of museum acquisitions with support from grant-aiding bodies, including the Society's generous gift of a watercolour of Iver. A linked *Treasures Trail* was completed by over 3000 children and families, tempted by a 'gold' chocolate coin reward.

Visitor numbers increased to 130,000 in 2002–03, reflecting both the enhanced 'package' of exhibitions and services and the first full year of free admission to the Museum.

Notable accessions to the collections included:

SOCIAL HISTORY

2003.185.1–19 Badges relating to County Rifle Shooting and Badminton Clubs, which belonged to the late Mrs Yarde-Frost who played badminton for the County, and worked at the Horlicks factory.

2003.191.1 Wendover medal: Civil war medal depicting the Earl of Essex, silver, declared Treasure. Purchased with the kind assistance of the Vale of Aylesbury DFAS, Chilterns DFAS and V&A Purchase Fund, in memory of Elliott Viney.

2003.192.1 Wilkes cup. Porcelain coffee cup, c1770, commemorating the trial of John Wilkes. Purchased with the kind assistance of V&A Purchase Fund and the Friends of BCM.

ART

- 2003.106.1 *A Lane in Marsworth* by Alexander Jamieson, oil painting. Purchased with the kind assistance of V&A Purchase Fund.
- 2003.152.1-8 Prints and drawings from Mrs Elliott Viney at the wishes of Elliott Viney including:
- 2003.152.3 Watercolour of Walton Street, Aylesbury by J Buckler or T Fisher.
- 2003.152.4 Drawing of Bulstrode Park, c.1800.

STUDIO CERAMICS

- 2003.107.1-4 Blue humbug pot, porcelain, and drawings by Tim Andrews.
- 2003.108.1 Raku fired ceramic form by Tim Andrews, porcelain.
- 2003.108.2 Raku fired pot by Tim Andrews, porcelain.
- All Tim Andrews' pieces made as part of Muir Trust Residency at Buckinghamshire County Museum and purchased with the assistance of the Friends of BCM.
- 2003.141.1 Tin-glazed earthenware dish by William Newland, 1953.

CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

- Selection of clothing items which appeared in Jubilee Clothes Show, 2002, including:
- 2003.113.1-2 Flowered Doc Marten boots from Mrs Jackie Plumb of Haddenham.
- 2003.115.1 Blue suede belt from Mrs Wendy Greenway of Aylesbury.
- 2003.126.1 Nike sweatshirt from James Clements.
- 2003.131.1-5 Brown Aquascutum suit from Mr John Rotheroe of Princes Risborough.

ARCHAEOLOGY

- 2003.149.1 Silver spoon, Roman, from Whitchurch; mandolin-shaped bowl, second/third century, shaft is bent, bowl is cracked; found by a metal detectorist, and declared as Treasure.

CENTRE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE STUDIES

REPORT FOR APRIL 2002–March 2003

This has been the first full year in operation of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies since it opened in February 2002, following an eight-month building project, as reported last year. Throughout the year, the Centre has been very well used and visitor numbers have considerably exceeded expectations. The archive searchroom is now open to the public six days a week (Mondays to Saturdays): this is the first time that the public have been able to consult archives on Saturdays, as the Record Office was previously open only on weekdays.

As more records are becoming available on the internet, we are beginning to notice a trend towards researchers using electronic means to access records, which they can do at home or elsewhere, including via the People's Network in libraries, instead of having to visit an archive in person or to employ an agent to do so. For example, two major sources, the 1881 and 1901 census returns, are available on the internet and the General Register Office (GRO) indexes to births, deaths and marriages is being mounted on the internet in stages.

The initial impact of these developments is likely to reduce the number of visitors to the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, as the 1881 census returns and the GRO indexes are important national sources which we hold, as well as microfiche copies of the 1901 census returns for Buckinghamshire. On the other hand, initiatives such as the Access to Archives website discussed below can only increase awareness of our holdings and thus generate many more enquiries, some of which will entail personal visits to the Centre. It may also be worth mentioning at this point that the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, in common with a number of libraries in Buckinghamshire, is one of the sale points for 1901 census vouchers, which enable researchers to make full use of the 1901 census returns on the Public Record Office website.

ACCESSIONS

A total of 159 accessions was received during the calendar year 2002, a full list of which has been

published on our website (www.buckscc.gov.uk/archives). It is also available from the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies on request.

Two firms of Aylesbury solicitors deposited large collections of records during the year – Horwood and James, and Wilkins. As always, such records contain a wealth of interesting material, particularly title deeds of numerous properties in and around the local area, some going back as far as the 17th century, and printed 19th- and 20th-century sale particulars of properties. They also include other classes of records arising from the various interests in which the separate firms were involved. The Horwood and James material includes, for example, records of the Rothschild and Grubb estates, records of Elizabeth Eman's charity, whose income derived from the Red Lion Inn in Aylesbury, and minutes of the Imperial Defence Committee for Buckinghamshire during World War I. The Wilkins material includes records of the manors of Aylesbury and Bierton and Broughton Staveley, and deeds of properties in Aston Clinton, Aylesbury, Bledlow, Dinton, Quainton, Stoke Mandeville and Wendover, as well as other counties.

As usual, there was a steady flow from various sources of single deeds or bundles of deeds relating to specific properties. One of the most striking is a lease for 31 years of a piece of land and a watercourse at Lower Marsh, Chepping Wycombe, dated 1631: as well as bearing the signature of John Hampden as one of the lessors, the deed also specifies that the annual rent payable by the lessee, John Reading, a millwright, is to be 10 shillings plus 30 'newe catcht & seasonable trouts', each at least eight inches long. Other miscellaneous deeds include the conveyance to trustees of the newly-built Church of England chapel at Loudwater, 1789 (transferred by our colleagues in High Wycombe Library), and another of land in Stewkley as the site for a Methodist chapel, 1800 (now demolished). The British Records Association transferred to us deeds relating to various properties in Sherington, 1678–1873 (including the Katherine Wheel Inn), the Broughton estate of the Praed

family of bankers, 1792–1890, and a mortgage to Lord Burnham of property in Ewell, Surrey, 1903.

Additional records were received of the Baker family of Penn, a valuable source for commercial and social history in the 18th century. The new deposit includes account books and other items relating to the family's London properties from 1667 onwards. Records of other families received include deeds of the Lucas family, 1578–1919, mainly relating to Hulcott and Abbots Broughton, and records belonging to the Raffety family (valuers and estate agents), particularly relating to High Wycombe (including deeds of property in Easton Street, 1695–1885) and the Hampden estate, 1895–1939. The Raffety collection also includes *Beaconsfield Cartoons*, a volume of over 100 *Punch* cartoons of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, between 1843 and the volume's publication in 1878; an example of one will appear on our website in 2004.

We purchased from a dealer a draft court roll of the manor of Amersham, 1586, together with a draft list of presentments for an unnamed manor in the same area, 1595. These came from a large collection of records relating to Amersham and elsewhere, sold at Sotheby's in 2001.

The Public Record Office (now The National Archives) transferred about 80 plans relating to the 1910 valuation of land. This national survey, which was undertaken for implementation of the duties on land values introduced by David Lloyd George in the 1910 Finance Act, is a valuable record of land ownership at that date. Indeed it is the first complete record of land ownership in England since the Domesday Book, hence its informal designation as the modern Domesday survey, and is an essential starting-point for almost anyone tracing the history of a particular property. The complete set of valuation books for Buckinghamshire was transferred to the then Buckinghamshire Record Office in 1979, together with several hundred accompanying maps, but there were large gaps in the series of maps, particularly for the south of the county. This recent cache will fill in many of the gaps, but even so, some are still missing. A complete set of the maps, together with the surveyors' field books, which often contain quite detailed information on individual properties, are held at The National Archives at Kew.

Cheddington History Society donated to us the results of their ambitious and imaginative Millenn-

ium Project: a complete photographic record of all the residents of the parish in 2000. Because of confidentiality undertakings, the photographs will not be available for consultation for 100 years, but when they are open to the public, future researchers should be able to use them in conjunction with the 2001 census returns.

Weston Turville Historical Society deposited a file of biographical studies of Weston Turville servicemen killed in World War I, the research for which brought to light a number of men not included on the parish War Memorial. Papers were also deposited relating to men named on the Aylesbury Town War Memorial, together with a photocopy of the printed Roll of Honour of Hazell, Watson and Viney employees serving or killed in the War.

English Partnerships deposited the collection of photographs, films, videos and audiotapes belonging to the former Milton Keynes Development Corporation, preparatory to the planned deposit of MKDC files in 2003/04.

From Allied Breweries we received, through the good offices of the Brewery History Society, 19th- and 20th-century records of the Aylesbury Brewery Company, Chesham Brewery, and Wellers' Brewery, Amersham. Since 1999, the impending closure of the British Railways Record Centre (which has now taken place) has led to the deposit of miscellaneous railway records relating Buckinghamshire, mainly files and agreements. With the closure of the Nestle factory in Aylesbury, we were invited to collect records and photographs from the factory dating from 1871 onwards (when it was the Aylesbury Condensed Milk Company, later acquired by the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company) to add to the records of the company which we had previously acquired in 1981.

Other items of interest include the notice for a speed trial for the 2nd Regiment of the Royal Bucks Hussars at Stowe, 1827; a letter from T. Wethered of Marlow, serving with the army of occupation in France at Cambrai (though relating to estate matters at home), 1816; nos. 1 and 3 of the *Colnbrook Bulletin, or Strike News*, issued daily during the General Strike of May 1926; and a photograph (laser copy) of the workforce of the builders Webster and Cannon, of Aylesbury, c. 1900, whose business records for 1885–1945 were deposited with us in 1987.

We were allowed by the Hanslope PCC to

borrow their parish registers in order to get them microfilmed. Hanslope is one of the few parishes in the county not to have deposited their original parish registers in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies and the microfilms will thus greatly increase access for researchers. Copies of the films were made for the Local Studies Library at Milton Keynes Reference Library and for the parish itself, as well as for our own reading room.

ACCESS TO ARCHIVES (A2A) WEBSITE

The completion of the 'From Landlord to Labourer' project, as reported last year, was marked by a county launch at High Wycombe Library and a regional launch at Hampshire Record Office. Encouraged by the success of this project and indeed of the A2A website generally, we have been taking part in three separate regional projects for Phase II of A2A which will add more of our archive catalogues to the website. The projects are 'Local Governance and Communities' (catalogues of our pre-1974 urban and rural districts and borough councils, the county lieutenancy and the shrievalty), 'Aladdin's Cave' (for miscellaneous, often small accessions – in particular our 'D/X' series) and 'The Works' (records of businesses and professional firms). Altogether, we are supplying a further 3,000 catalogue pages with the intention that they will start appearing on the A2A website in late 2003.

As well as bringing to light records relating to Buckinghamshire that are held in other record repositories throughout England, A2A is also useful for locating records held in our own archives in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, since the ability to search the whole site for keywords or key phrases produces many more references than traditional indexing procedures made possible. For example, we used A2A to locate our copy of the 1786 sale catalogue of the Duchess of Portland's collection, the frontispiece of which was reproduced in last year's *Records*. However, readers can be assured that we continue to recognize the vital importance of our many card indexes, though they will not be systematically added to.

WEBSITE

We have also continued to develop our own website. New features include a list of nonconformist

registers deposited in the archives and a number of our publications, including our *House History* booklet, a leaflet on tracing the history of a public house and a guide to the various kinds of historic maps available. Existing features on the website continue to be updated, such as the list of parish registers and lists of accessions.

A major new feature of the website is 'Object of the Month', which features an item from each of the collections of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, the County Museum and the Library Service relating to a different theme each month. The 'Objects' from previous months remain on the website, thus building up a permanent virtual exhibition. Examples of items contributed by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies during the year are the Boarstall Horn, a pattern book of the furniture-makers E. Gomme Ltd of High Wycombe, an extract from the Little Brickhill Inclosure Map of 1797 and letters of Sir Joseph Banks, Charles Babbage and John Piper, as well as a photograph of the M1 shortly after opening in 1959.

The Centre participated in writing the Libraries and Heritage Service section of the County Council's Publication Scheme required under the Freedom of Information Act, 2000, and this can be found on the Council's website.

EVENTS

A camera team from the BBC visited the Centre in January 2003 to film the notebooks of the Rev. John Newton of Olney, which are deposited by the Cowper and Newton Museum, for an Open University programme.

'Meet the Archivist' sessions have been held in a number of libraries, including Central Milton Keynes, Princes Risborough and Amersham. Two palaeography workshops were held for the Buckinghamshire Family History Society, and the Centre was represented at a number of family and local history fairs – the Buckinghamshire Genealogical Society Family History Feast, the Buckinghamshire Family History Society Open Day, Stone and Marlow Local History Fairs, and the Buckinghamshire Local History Network Conference in Aylesbury.

Roger Bettridge
County Archivist

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

REPORT FOR 2001

The main achievements for 2002 were the commencement of the Buckinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) and Whiteleaf Hill Projects, and the submission of the 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past' and 'Getting to Know Bernwood' Heritage Lottery bids. Two new members of staff, David Green and David Radford, were appointed to undertake the HLC project and to handle planning and conservation casework respectively. Planning and conservation advice casework remained at a high level with 553 consultations received, of which 172 required some positive follow up, representing a slight reduction on the figures for 2001. The Sites and Monuments Record handled 135 consultations, continuing the upward trend of the previous couple of years.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Service completed a report for the County Council's Strategic Planning Team on options and constraints for possible long-term growth on the north-west side of Aylesbury. The study documented a rich heritage of historic parks and gardens, medieval settlements and a Roman small town which would need to be safeguarded. The report will inform the continuing debate over sustainable urban growth at Aylesbury and provides a model for other potential growth areas.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The year saw many small-scale evaluations and watching briefs. The most significant results were obtained at the former Sanderson Factory (Denham) where trial trenching by the Museum of London, within the derelict factory, demonstrated the survival of peat deposits and a buried land surface dating to the end of the last glaciation and the early post-glacial period associated with burnt and worked flints. The Sanderson site lies only a few hundred meters from a rare, nationally important, Upper Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic hunting camp site excavated in Uxbridge in the late

1980s. The results reinforce impressions from observations made in the early twentieth-century suggesting the Lower Colne Valley is unusually rich in well-preserved hunter-gatherer sites. Further north in the county, two larger excavations were conducted on an Iron Age settlement on the Stoke Hammond Bypass (Northern Link) and on a dispersed early-Saxon settlement at the former Pitstone Cement Works.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION (HLC)

English Heritage is supporting the Buckinghamshire HLC Project as part of their national programme of historic landscape characterisation projects. HLC aims to map the historic dimension of the modern landscape across the whole county (including Milton Keynes), distinguishing ancient woodlands from modern plantations, parliamentary enclosures from older fields, etc. It provides a tool for planning, land management and raising public awareness of aspects of the historic environment which have not always generated much professional interest and yet are fundamental to understanding our modern countryside. The project is due to be completed in 2004 when it is intended that the results will be made available over the web as part of the 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Project' (see below).

WHITELEAF HILL

In 2001, Buckinghamshire County Council was awarded a substantial grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore and reinterpret its Whiteleaf Hill Local Nature Reserve on the Chiltern Scarp at Monks Risborough. Work commenced in 2002 with a team led by Gill Hey of Oxford Archaeology carrying out earthwork and geophysical surveys and trial excavations on two scheduled 'barrows' and a prehistoric cross-ridge dyke. The geophysics detected relatively few features beyond the known monuments, while the trial trenching called into

question the conventional interpretations of two of the three monuments investigated. One of the so-called 'barrows' was found to be a natural clay-capped knoll, although it had been used as a flint knapping site in the Neolithic or Bronze Age. The primary feature of the other 'barrow' proved to be a massive chalk-cut cross trench, which produced only a few pieces of Roman pottery but is provisionally interpreted as the foundation for a medieval post-mill that appears to have been deliberately dismantled, probably after only a short period of use. The substantial ditch of the cross-ridge dyke conformed to expectations but unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered. Local people were kept informed of progress through information boards, an open weekend and schools events. The main works, involving re-excavation and restoration of the Neolithic Barrow and restoration of Whiteleaf Cross, will take place in 2003.

SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

Continued investment in the Sites and Monuments Record has been secured through the appointment of a full-time SMR Officer, a role taken by Julia Wise who hitherto had to combine this responsibility with planning casework. The main achievements have been progressing the SMR Disaster Recovery Plan, reducing the backlog of reports requiring inputting and submitting the 'Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past' Heritage Lottery Bid. The HLF bid will enable us to provide a web-searchable version of the SMR, with added modules aimed at schools, local community groups and the recreation sector. The County Council is grateful for the

invaluable support of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and its members in preparing this bid. A decision is expected from the HLF in autumn 2003 for a start early in 2004.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The successful expansion of the Archaeology Service will enable us to provide a better and wider range of services than previously. The public dimension of archaeology will be improved both through web-based resources and more 'hands-on' opportunities, such as the Bernwood and Whiteleaf Projects. We will be working to improve advice and resources available to help landowners manage monuments in a sensitive and sustainable way. The Service will use HLC to help protect and enhance the best of our historic countryside and ensure that future development is sustainable. Increasingly, we wish to work with our key partners to promote an holistic view of the historic environment encompassing archaeology, historic buildings and landscape within a single management framework, and relating to wider countryside management and urban renewal agendas. To move towards realising such an ambition, the Archaeology Service is to be transferred into a new Countryside and Heritage Service from April 2003 whilst the County Council is also supporting the creation of a Bucks Historic Environment Forum engaging a wide range of organisations responsible for managing our historic environment.

*Alexander (Sandy) Kidd
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Bucks County Council*