

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Following a review of Museum opening times and staffing to make more effective use of budgets, opening hours were reluctantly reduced this year. From April, the Museum closed to the public on Sunday afternoons and on Mondays. The staffing savings focused on front-of-house costs to secure the professional and specialist curatorial team and comply with national Museum Accreditation requirements. Visitor numbers were nonetheless only slightly down from last year at 100,812 (2010 105,900). Sales of Roald Dahl Children's Gallery tickets were also slightly down at 18,461.

2011 was an exciting year of exhibitions and events with the major spring exhibition being *Your Paintings Revealed: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes* followed by *100 Treasures from the Museum's Collections*. Both these exhibitions gave the museum the opportunity to showcase many items from the Society's museum collections in the splendid Art Gallery.

The schools service continued to attract schools from across the county as well as from the surrounding counties and London. 13,551 pupils visited both the Museum and Roald Dahl Children's Gallery; the Museum-based workshops developed around the collections on history, archaeology and science account for half this number. New hands-on craft sessions have also been introduced.

The year started with World of Toys in the Art Gallery, which has proved a popular exhibition for the festive holiday period, a chance for visitors across the generations to enjoy remembering toys and games from their childhoods, particularly in this rapidly developing technological and virtual age.

In 2009, the Public Catalogue Foundation published a catalogue of oil paintings in public ownership in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, which includes the collection at Buckinghamshire County Museum. From April to July *Your Paintings Revealed* brought together many of our finest stored paintings with loans from other Buckinghamshire galleries and collections,

including Wycombe Museum, Bletchley Park Trust, the Cowper & Newton Museum, Olney and the Milton Keynes NHS Foundation Trust. The exhibition also offered the unique opportunity to see 12 paintings on loan through The Chequers Trust, from the Prime Minister's private country residence. In return the Museum loaned paintings by Nebot and John Piper to fill the gaps left on the prime ministerial walls.

In the summer 100 objects were selected from the Museum's collections to feature in *100 Treasures from the Museum's Collections*. This was a marvellous opportunity to showcase the riches of the collections, from the rare to the beautiful, precious to the intriguing and all with a story about people and landscapes in Bucks and Milton Keynes. Selecting just 100 as the cream of the crop revealed many splendours, some of which had never before been on display. Items included a carved oak overmantel from Chesham of 1625 and the chair commemorating the betrothal of Brill couple, Mr Thomas and Miss Paviour in 1664, as well as the unfortunate Puffin which blew in on a storm in 1931 and Sir Eric Anson's cabinet of 4,500 Bucks butterflies, moths and beetles.

During the exhibition a professional storyteller and a visual artist were invited to run workshops to help visitors engage with some of the objects in different and creative ways. The two objects chosen as inspiration for storytelling and artworks were an 18th century feather cape from Madagascar and a patchwork rug made by John Hill, a Bucks infantryman, from military uniforms as he convalesced after the Siege of Lucknow in 1857. The project called *Artifacts* was funded by the regional Museum Development Service.

In November, the Friends & Patrons of the Museum ran the biannual *Off the Wall Art Market* – superb quality work for sale by 30 mainly local artists and craftsmen. Over £6,000 was raised to support the work of the Museum and grateful thanks are due to all the volunteers who contributed to this success.

Following *100 Treasures*, the quality and

research value of the Museum collections were again showcased in the exhibition *100 Pictures from the Museum's Collections* from December until March 2012. As an example of the information value of the topographical art collections, the watercolour views of Aylesbury in 1805 by Amelia Long, Lady Farnborough – the King's Head and the Market Square – provided the first evidence for the town's central buildings before both the mid-Victorian changes and the development of photography.

In the Georgian Room gallery, a small exhibition that proved a surprising hit and captured the imaginations of visitors was *Samurai – Warriors of Ancient Japan* that ran from August for 6 months. The exhibition featured armour and weapons, including beautiful examples of Samurai swords belonging to a private collector. A full programme of talks and events from drumming to fight demonstrations in full Samurai armour were well attended and provided an unusual experience for visitors.

This year's Muir Trust Artist in Residence was book artist Mandy Bonnell who after a visit to the Museum Resource Centre was fascinated by the Museum's collection of lichens. Mandy studied these and created intricate and detailed designs for a series of artist's books.

Ros Tyrrell, our Finds Liaison Officer for Bucks and Milton Keynes had another busy year, entering finds information into the Portable Antiquities Database www.finds.org.uk. By 2011, after 8 years' work, over 6,000 Bucks finds have been recorded on the PAS website database. This reporting and recording of Treasure and public archaeological finds in Bucks and Milton Keynes is really showing results, not least in the acquisition for the museum collections of a splendid range of Treasure items with funding support from the Friends and national funders. See the accessions list below for some outstanding examples.

The Museum would like to thank all our supporters and volunteers who have helped or funded the Museum to deliver this exciting and expanded programme of events and activities, to acquire for the collections and, less prominently, to provide essential care for all the Bucks and Milton Keynes collections in store and on display.

Notable accessions to the collections included:

SOCIAL HISTORY/COSTUME & TEXTILES

2011.1.1-2 Strawplait; two lengths, each about 40ft long, made as harvest decoration for chapel in Ivinghoe.

2011.2.1 Wedding veil worn by Ruth Brown at Great Missenden Baptist Church in 1893. Worn by later members of same family until 1920s.

2011.5.1 Posy ring; late 16th/early 17th century, silver gilt, found at Chilton, Bucks; inscribed on inside 'KEEP ME IN MINDE'.

2011.59.1 'School piece' document demonstrating penmanship on pre-printed sheet; signed and dated Richard Durley 1807, from Mr W. Wheeler's school, Aylesbury.

2011.164.1 Aylesbury & District Chamber of Commerce President's badge, in presentation box.

2011.165.1 Honours board; 'Rivet Works Sports Club, Bowls Section Championships', 1946–1966, hand painted.

2011.166.1 Flag; 'Aylesbury Rivets Bowls Club', made by George Tutill Ltd of Chesham.

2011.175.1 Rocking horse; made by Triang, bought by donor for his children c1966–67 from Baker's toy shop, Buckingham Street, Aylesbury.

2011.179.1.1-13 Photographic prints; showing Samuels Printers in Aylesbury and the Antiference factory in Aylesbury, 1960s.

2011.189-194 Photographs, mounted; showing Bucks County Tennis teams, 1925–1939

2011.209.1 Wall plaque; commemorating Crouch Ward, from St John's Hospital when it was demolished.

2011.211.1 Booklet; football programme for Aylesbury Utd vs England, 1988

2011.212.1 Firemark; Royal Exchange Company, from Ardenham House, Aylesbury.

2011.213.1 Firemark; 'County' Insurance Company, from 26 Temple Street, Aylesbury.

2011.215.1 Miniskirt and waistcoat, green leather; worn in Aylesbury in late 1960s and 1970s, including to music gigs at Friars Club.

2011.217.1 Five tablecloths; hand-embroidered and crocheted by donor's great grandmother from Princes Risborough, late 19th century.

2011.235.1 Sewing needles; manufactured by Kirby Beard & Co. which opened needle factory at Long Crendon in 1849.

2011.243.1 Silver whistle; possibly 17th century; possibly hawking or hunting whistle; found by

metal detectorist in Wendover; declared treasure and purchased with grant from Friends of Museum.

2011.244.1 Silver book clasp, late 17th/early 18th century; found by metal detectorist in Dunton, declared treasure and purchased with grant from Friends of Museum.

2011.253.1 Pair of Heely's shoes, bought for donor's daughter in 2007 and worn in Aylesbury.

2011.255.1 Silver goblet awarded to John Weston in 1857 for his prize-winning Aylesbury ducks; on long-term loan from The Aylesbury Club.

2011.260.1 Honours Board; Bledlow Parochial School

2011.261.1 Commemorative trowel; used at start of building Oakdene School in Beaconsfield.

2011.263.1 Cotton dress with bustle, worn by Sarah Kingham of Bledlow, late 19th century

2011.271.1 Utility mark blanket; belonged to donor's mother from Edgcott.

2011.276.1-22 Hunting clothes and accessories; belonged to member of Whaddon Chase Hunt in 1970s–1980s

ART & STUDIO CERAMICS

2011.162.1-4 Set of four Post Office Picture Cards of stamps commemorating studio pottery featuring pots by Bernard Leach, Elizabeth Fritsch, Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. Issued 13 October 1987.

2011.163.1 Presentation pack of four stamps featuring classic British textile designs by William Morris, F. Steiner, Paul Nash and Andrew Foster. Issued 23 July 1982.

2011.188.1 'Onion' sculpture by Catherine Yarrow, hand built, ash glazed stoneware, mid 1960s, height 110mm.

2011.188.2 Bowl by Catherine Yarrow, hand built, incised, apple ash glazed red clay, 1977, height 60mm.

2011.203.1 Watercolour of the County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury by D Rees Howells, 1987. Presented to and donated by Sir Timothy Raison MP.

2011.206.1 Watercolour of Market Square, Aylesbury by Amelia Long, Lady Farnborough, early 19th century.

2011.245.1-19 19 watercolours of places around High Wycombe by Francis Colmer, 1940s–50s; bequeathed by Tony Colmer.

2011.273.1-2 2 Artists' books by Mandy Bonnell,

2011, concertina form. Created during 2011 Muir Trust residency.

NATURAL HISTORY

2011.134.1-4 Four pressed plants collected by Roy Maycock *et al*

2011.135 -138 Eight moss and fungus specimens

2011.143.1-3 Three fungus specimens collected by Andrew McVeigh

2011.150.1 One Swan Mussel collected by Val Atkins

2011.151 One ten-drawer cabinet of Micro-Lepidoptera collected by W.A.C. (Sam) Carter (see also AYBCM 2003.57)

2011.187.1-5 Five pressed plants collected by Andrew McVeigh, Julia Carey *et al*

2011.204.1-172 Collection of pressed plants, bryophytes and lichens collected at Fawley, 1978–1992 by Jack Spittle

2011.205, 207, 216, 233 Twenty pressed plants collected by Roy Maycock *et al*

GEOLOGY

2011.264.1-2 Two pieces of fossilised wood collected by Tom Clark

ARCHAEOLOGY

2011.159.1 Group of 25 copper alloy coin blanks, one is pierced; Roman probably late 3rd or 4th century; part of group of material for unofficial coin production; from same site as iron coin die AYBCM: 2010.135; found with metal detector at Wing.

2011.160.1 Bronze Roman coin; radiate; Gallienus, 253–268 AD; from Haddenham.

2011.198.1 Gold pennanular ring or lock ring, Late Bronze Age, 1000–750 BC; hollow triangular section, crumpled but intact; face plates made from gold wire; found with metal detector at Edlesborough and declared Treasure.

2011.199.1 Silver finger ring, medieval, 15th century; iconographic type, bezel has only incised line decoration; found with metal detector at Princes Risborough and declared Treasure.

2011.200.1 Silver gilt annular brooch; medieval; 13th–14th century; 4 decorative knobs; found with metal detector at Brill and declared Treasure.

2011.201.1 Roman silver finger ring; stone

missing, hoop broken; 2nd-3rd Century AD; found with metal detector at Cold Brayfield and declared Treasure.

2011.202.1 Roman silver spoon bowl; handle missing; 2nd-3rd Century AD; found with metal detector at Cold Brayfield and declared Treasure.

2011.229.CLD Group of items found during restoration of Corinthian Arch at Stowe House, under the floor in the attic room; includes iron sword, iron bradawl with wooden handle, iron knife; 5 pieces of textile, possibly 18th century, possibly deliberately hidden a concealed clothing group; also Anglo Saxon iron spear head, found

just outside the arch during gardening work.

2011.236.1 Silver medieval decorative mount, possibly from box/book or costume; 15th or early 16th century; rectangular with open work decoration; found with metal detector near Princes Risborough and declared Treasure.

2011.272.1 Iron sword or dagger blade; possibly a plug bayonet; heavily corroded, tip bent; late medieval or early post medieval; found in garden in Burnham.

*Sarah Gray MA AMA
County Museum Curator*

CENTRE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011–12

In 2011 138 accessions were received in Archives and some of the highlights are given here. A full list is available on request. Annual lists of accessions are also available on The National Archives website and can be accessed via the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies page on the ARCHON directory.

As usual, a number of parish registers and other parish records were deposited this year under the Church of England's Parochial Registers and Records Measure. One deposit worthy of particular note is of records of Thornton parish, which were found in a locked chest at St Michael and All Angels Church and had not been recorded in the diocesan inspection of 1980. They include three parish registers, 1755–1832, two overseers' account books, 1786–1835, a vestry minute book, removal orders and three apprenticeship indentures. The Church was closed in 1993 and is now in the hands of the Churches Conservation Trust.

Another interesting parish deposit, this time relating to Whaddon, is a churchwardens' account book, 1831–1896, that includes subscription lists for the purchase of a harmonium in 1861 and for a testimonial for the harmonium player, Samuel King, in 1865. This volume had evidently passed out of the custody of the parish at some stage and is consecutive to two earlier account books already deposited with us.

With the generous assistance of a grant of £500 from the Buckinghamshire Record Society we purchased a cache of about 65 letters of the Lee family of Hartwell House and Totteridge Park, including over 40 letters to Dr John Lee (d. 1866). The subjects of the latter include building work on the observatory at Hartwell and the emigration of local agricultural labourers to Honduras. Although the main collection of Hartwell House archives was purchased by BAS when the estate was sold in 1939 and later deposited in the Record Office, groups of papers still appear for sale from time to time and we have been able to acquire several of these.

Additions to the Buckinghamshire County

Council (BCC) archives include the set of Parish Survey Maps showing rights of way as submitted by parish councils in the 1950s under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). The base maps are Ordnance Survey plans (scale: 6 inches to 1 mile). These maps were then used for compiling the Draft Definitive Map of rights of way, which in turn was the precursor of the Provisional Definitive Map. Readers should note that the set does not generally include those parishes which have since been removed from the administrative county of Buckinghamshire in the various local government re-organizations over the last half-century. We were also given albums of photographs taken and compiled by the 35 or so parishes in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire that were covered by the Bemwood Jigsaw Project in 2005.

Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) transferred further items arising from their office moves, including deeds relating to various places in Aylesbury (e.g. Cobblers Row, Green End, Kingsbury, Market Square and the White Hart), part of the site of the town hall in Buckingham, and other properties in Marsworth, Oving and Walton in Aylesbury. AVDC also deposited records relating to slum clearance in Aylesbury in the inter-war years and to the area around Friars Square in Aylesbury prior to re-building in the 1960s (including photographs of a house in Silver Street).

Other deeds received from various sources over the year include those for the Old Crown, Market Square, Winslow, along with the Sow and Pigs, Cross Lane Close, and other copyhold property, also in Winslow, 1730–1896; 89 Walton Road, Aylesbury, 1790–1843; 15 Ship Road in Linslade, 1862–1929; and a mortgage of a cottage, barns, garden, etc, on Farnham Heath, or Cutt Heath, in Farnham Royal, 1727. The solicitors Francis and How deposited their last major tranche of deeds prior to the closure of their office in Chesham.

We received via the County Archaeological Service the late Stanley Freese's original research notes on windmills and watermills, the latter of

which form the basis of *The Watermills of Buckinghamshire*, published by BAS in 2007. Freese's photographs of mills had already been deposited in CBS in 1997 and are contained within the County Museum and BAS photograph collection. Another deposit of research notes and papers relates to Wendover, 1600–1800. It includes copies of maps, manorial court rolls, wills, lists of 18th-century inhabitants, and notes on local families and essays. They were compiled by members of a local history evening class in 1982, who subsequently wrote *The Book of Wendover* (1989).

The main accession of business records was of a large number of ledgers of Thomas Wright and Son of Newtown Mills, Chesham, woodware manufacturers, covering 1896–1901, 1907–1914 and 1940–1970. The company made cricket bats for Woolworths, numerous household items and (for the government) boxes for bombs. During the reign of George VI they purchased trees from the Long Walk at Windsor Castle, the felling of which was supervised by the managing director William Darvell. The accession also includes the minute book of the Chesham and District Woodware Manufacturers Association, 1917–1929. Other business records received include wages books of Iris Cars Ltd of Aylesbury, 1925–1927, and of the Bifurcated Rivet Company, 1899–1902 (at that time at Warrington, Cheshire, but later of Aylesbury), and photographs of staff at two other Aylesbury firms: Frederick Samuels, printers, and Antiference, aerials manufacturers.

For the trade union side, we received minute books of the Chapel of the Readers' Department at Hazell, Watson and Viney, Aylesbury, 1922–1953. Via Berkshire Record Office, the Unite union deposited two minute books of the NUPB&PW (National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers), one for its Slough Branch, 1947–1966, and the other for Aylesbury (possibly Hazell's), 1957–1968. Industrial harmony was evidenced by a copy of an illuminated testimonial to the directors of Thomas and Green Ltd of Soho Mill, Wooburn, from about 250 named employees, thanking them for financial assistance during World War I.

The Chiltern Group of NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) deposited their records, beginning in 1965. It is particularly fitting for us to take these records, because a group of NADFAS volunteers have been

providing assistance to the archive conservator for a number of years. NADFAS regularly deposits its surveys of church furnishings, and those received this year are for the parish churches of Fulmer, Bledlow, Hawridge and Radclive.

Additional records were received from the Barker Bridge House Trust, Datchet, including minutes, accounts and deeds. This deposit followed the publication of *The Royal Stag at Datchet and the Barker Bridge House Trust* by Janet Kennish, in which the Trust records were used, as were the Datchet inclosure map and award, which we also hold. The surviving records date back only to a Chancery decree of 1726, but the Trust is much older. Traditionally, it was thought to have been established in 1644 by Robert Barker to build and maintain a bridge over the river, but the new book shows that it dates back to the 16th century and has always had a wider remit within the parish than simply the bridge. Barker himself was printer to the king and had a monopoly on printing the King James Bible, first published in 1611; his downfall came with the 'Wicked Bible' of 1631, when he unwittingly omitted the word 'not' from the seventh commandment.

As part of our stocktaking processes, within CBS a number of items were transferred from the Local Studies Library to Archives. With the recent opening of the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury, it is interesting to note a 19th-century playbill for performances at Aylesbury (for the Benefit Society at the Cock Inn). Each programme, performed on several nights over a week, was comprised of *Macbeth*, followed by a 'musical piece' *Quarter Day, or a New Way to Pay your Rent*, two comic songs sandwiching 'a favourite song' and concluding with 'the popular musical farce' *Illustrious Stranger, or Married and Buried*. Even though *Macbeth* is reckoned as Shakespeare's shortest play and was presumably cut, it says something for the stamina and probably emotional resilience of audiences of the time. The playbill was in two pieces, with part missing, but has now been repaired in our conservation studio. There is no date on it but it has been estimated from internal evidence as c.1838 or 1839. Another Local Studies item moved into Archives is a reprint of 'Burnham Abbey' by William Loftie Rutton (*Records of Bucks*, 5, c.1879) which has, pasted inside, additional items of the period, including photographs, news-cuttings, and part of an Ordnance Survey plan.

A sign of the times is that we are beginning to receive items in digital format only. Those received this year include copies of: a map of Forty Green Farm, Bledlow, 1795; photographs of the Palma family on holiday at Skindles Hotel in Taplow, 1905 (received from Argentina); a tankard from the King's Head Inn, Beaconsfield, inscribed 'Matthew Davis, Beaconsfield, 1766'; and photographs, diagrams and drawings relating to signal boxes on the Metropolitan and Great Central Railway, between Great Missenden and Grendon Underwood. Mr Dennis Mynard kindly supplied an electronic copy of his catalogue of Newport Pagnell title deeds, containing those in the Bull collection at CBS as well as others in private hands.

The world of domestic service of the early 20th century is evoked by digital copies of photographs of John Robert Ellerker and his wife Elizabeth Anne (nee Gill), in service in Iver Heath at Fernleigh (with the Leaver family) and later at Round Coppice. The photographs include their wedding in 1911, staff and owners at the properties where they worked, and peace celebrations in 1919. In pre-war photographs John Robert is shown as both coachman, with horses, and as chauffeur, though without car.

We took in records of the distinguished entomologist Dr Patrick Buxton FRS (1892–1955) of Gerrards Cross. They are primarily family records and photographs, his professional papers having been deposited at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. We were also given a small cache of letters, 1989–1992, from Christopher Hohler (1917–1997) in retirement in Oslo, concerning buildings in Long Crendon and other local history topics, including St Rumwold. Hohler had been an art historian at the Courtauld Institute and was a contributor to *Records of Bucks* (obituary in **38**, 270). A bon viveur, according to one biographical dictionary his reputed last words were, 'I think it's about time for a whisky'.

Mr Paul M. Wood donated an unusual set of plans made by him and his father Alan Muir Wood in 1963. These are cross-sections showing surface features in woods between Beaconsfield and Coleshill (the area includes Brown's Wood, Netherlands Wood, Sandels Wood, Great Beard's Wood and Owlsears Wood).

Finally, other miscellaneous items of interest include: the appointment of Richard, Earl Temple,

as *custos rotulorum* (keeper of the rolls) for Buckinghamshire, 1760; the specification, bill of quantities and form of tender for water works at Buckingham, by Baldwin Latham, engineer, 1892 (part of a donation of mainly mid-20th-century plans of drainage and sewerage); a letter from the Right Hon. Aneurin Bevan MP, albeit a brief one, declining an invitation to the Aylesbury Welsh Society in 1956 (part of a small deposit of the papers of Councillor Glynn Davies, a former Mayor of Aylesbury); a volume of programmes and press cuttings of the Wycombe Orpheus Male Voice Choir, 1923–1973; and a letter from C. S. Hawtreay, warning of the evils likely to befall the country if the bill for Catholic Emancipation was given the Royal Assent (as it was) in 1829, e.g. failing harvests, declining commerce, falling stocks, unsuccessful wars, pestilential air, reviving superstition, spreading infidelity and rampant wickedness.

LONDON 2012

Buckinghamshire has become widely known as the 'Birthplace of the Paralympics', which has grown from the small but significant wheelchair games organized at Stoke Mandeville Hospital by Dr Ludwig Guttmann to parallel the London Olympic Games in 1948. 2012 was therefore a very busy year for us and the culmination of four years' work on the archives of disabled sports organizations, namely WheelPower and the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (previously the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation) at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, as well as those of the pioneering National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Our headline event, undertaken as part of the 'Mandeville Legacy' project funded by Legacy Trust UK, was an exhibition at the Stadium to coincide with the Paralympic Games in London.

This showed the history of the Paralympic movement from 1948 to the Games in London in 2012, with particular emphasis on the role of Stoke Mandeville, including the last Games to be held in this country prior to 2012 (at Stoke Mandeville in 1984). The exhibition was attended by over 1,000 people from all over the world during the month it was open. In addition, an oral history project is underway, interviewing past and present Paralympians. The project has included the listing of the

organisational archives, the digitisation of photographs, and the establishment of the ‘Mandeville Legacy’ website (www.mandevillelegacy.org.uk). The archives are currently still held by the respective organisations to which they belong, but we are working with the partner organisations to secure their long-term future.

We also celebrated in a much smaller way the contribution to the first London Olympic Games in 1908 of Lord Desborough of Taplow Court, some of whose archives we own. Items from the collection were loaned to the County Museum for their ‘Our Sporting Life’ exhibition. Desborough, as founder president of the British Olympic Association, was the driving force behind bringing the Games to London and promoting and fundraising for them. Although there is little material in the archive directly relating to the 1908 Olympic Games except his copy of the official handbook, the collection includes items relating to the intercalated Games at Athens in 1906, when he was on the fencing team which won a silver medal. There are also his travel diaries, including an account of his swim across the pool at the bottom of Niagara Falls in 1888 (the second time he had accomplished this feat, undertaken on the spur of the moment during a sightseeing trip to convince a sceptical companion that it could be done), a letter from Baron Pierre de Coubertin thanking him for his service to the Olympic movement, and photographs from various phases of his long and varied life (1855–1945).

KEDERMINSTER LIBRARY RESTORATION

BCC has recently undertaken a major restoration project at the Kederminster Library at St Mary’s Church, Langley Marish, Slough. Although Slough has been part of Berkshire since 1974, Buckinghamshire still owns the Library, which it acquired as part of the Langley Park estate in 1945. The fine 17th-century painted wooden panelling, one of the great attractions to the Library, was beginning to deteriorate. All the panelling round the room was carefully removed by a specialist

company, Beechfield Restorations, which undertook all the necessary repairs. The backing of many of the panels was found to be disintegrating and much of the oak framework was rotting, all of which had to be sympathetically re-built. Fortunately the faces of the panels were largely intact, though in places there were cracks which had to be closed up and holes caused by insects and even nails. All re-touching was kept to a minimum and, though not obvious to the viewer, can if necessary be identified by future restorers and researchers. Prior to being returned, all the panels were treated to remove insect infestation.

While the panels were being worked on, the opportunity was also taken to inspect and make repairs to the building fabric behind the panelling; this was undertaken by Cliveden Conservation. For the most part, the work involved filling in cracks in the walls that were not structural but which might have let in water. A crack in the fireplace was also restored and a new joist was installed at the top of the east wall, where the panelling was found to have been insecurely attached.

After a project lasting some ten months, the official re-opening ceremony was held on 23 May 2012, addressed by County Councillor Richard Pushman, a Past Chairman of BCC, and the Lord Lieutenant, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, as well as the Chairman of the Kederminster Library Trustees (and BAS representative), Mr David Jefferson.

Previous conservation projects have been reported in *Records of Bucks* in 1948 (*Records*, 15, 221) and the early 1970s (19, 226). Beechfield Restorations were intrigued to find on one of the backing boards evidence of the earlier project in the form of the signatures of two teenaged workmen, dated 1948. A set of seven short videos, ‘Kederminster Library Restoration’, charting the progress of the project, was made by the BCC Communications Team and can be viewed on YouTube.

Roger Bettridge
County Archivist

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

REPORT FOR 2011–2012

The year saw by far the greatest change for the County Council's archaeology service since its transfer from the museum to planning in 1998, as the full enormity of the financial pressures facing the County Council became apparent. As part of a comprehensive review of the Council's planning, transportation and environmental services the natural and historic environment teams were merged, with the rights of way definitive map under the writer's management within a new Planning, Advisory and Compliance business area. The focus of this new team is to be planning-related environmental advice and information, increasingly provided on a cost recovery basis.

The year also saw further change in the planning system, as the Coalition Government replaced most of the extensive library of planning policies with a single document – the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A national consultation on the draft NPPF drew widespread publicity and objections from across the environmental sector that essential safeguards could be weakened. The final version, published in March 2012, fortunately still recognised the well-established and successful principles of heritage management in fewer words but without obvious loss of protection. It remains to be seen how the Government, local authorities, communities and the planning inspectorate will square the NPPF with the potentially conflicting demands of the need to stimulate economic growth and to embrace 'localism'. Archaeology is at best a small voice in such debates, but their outcome will have a lasting effect the county's heritage. In difficult times it is perhaps more important than ever that councillors and MPs hear their constituents' concerns on such matters.

In the midst of all these upheavals the day job has carried on.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning and conservation advice casework involved 598 consultations, of which 184 required positive follow up. As usual they were mainly

small-scale evaluations and watching briefs, which are reported in Archaeological Notes.

The most significant planning-related outcome was the rejection of an appeal at Quarrendon Fields, Aylesbury, for a major green field development affecting the setting of Quarrendon scheduled monument and undesignated buried archaeological remains of early Roman native-style settlements.

Significant archaeological investigations include the periphery of a large Roman roadside settlement at Berryfields, to the north west of Aylesbury, and a small Roman settlement on the Arla Dairy site near Aston Clinton. Together with several extensive evaluation surveys of prospective green field development sites around Aylesbury, these investigations promise to transform our understanding of the town's hinterland; particularly what appears to be a period of rapid growth in the early Roman period.

A watching brief at Princes Risborough church has greatly increased our understanding of this building's complex development, including identifying the presence of a large late Saxon church.

A rather different case was RAF Daws Hill, High Wycombe, where trial trenching proved negative but the World War 2 and Cold War Strategic Air Command Bunker has been proposed for listing, along with an associated generator building.

HIGH SPEED 2

Consultation on a preferred route for a new high speed railway between London and Birmingham running diagonally across the county from Denham to Turweston precipitated strong resistance from many interest groups and the County Council. The promoter's assessment identified only a handful of heritage impacts in Buckinghamshire, but in contrast an historic environment assessment by the County Council using the Historic Environment Record identified numerous archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes which could be destroyed or seriously harmed either by construction or operation of the railway. This evidence was

used to inform responses to the consultation, which stressed that the promoter's environmental statement was wholly inadequate and that much more work would be required for a complete assessment. The County Council considers that the business case for HS2 has not been substantiated, and that the environmental harm of the scheme has not been given appropriate consideration.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

The HER continued to experience a reduction in use compared to previous years, with 74 direct enquiries. We suspect that this is in part due to the prolonged financial recession having an impact on the number and size of commercial developments, and in part due to general enquiries being dealt with by people using Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past and the Heritage Gateway web sites. There were a number of HER enhancements during the year, including the recording of unlisted historic buildings in Wycombe District and major improvements to generate planning consultation response letters. The HER also completed the digital scanning of the collections. In May 2011 the service moved to new open-plan offices in County Hall. The move resulted in the loss of the dedicated HER search room: however, HER visitors have been able to use a room in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies and the HER is increasingly conducting searches entirely digitally without the need to visit.

HISTORIC TOWNS PROJECT

The Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project has been running for several years, funded principally by English Heritage and supported by Buckinghamshire's County and District Councils and Milton Keynes Council. Individual town studies are available on the project web site and presentations of the results have been made. An introductory summary report is in preparation.

FUTURE

In such challenging times for local authorities it is difficult to be sure what the future will bring. Archaeology is working increasingly closely with other environmental disciplines – ecology, landscape and rights of way – a positive move enabling us to spot common causes and opportunities. Unfortunately there are great pressures on resources and the Council has many other priorities.

*Alexander (Sandy) Kidd
County Archaeologist
Planning Advisory & Compliance Lead Officer
(Environment)
Buckinghamshire County Council*

For further information on the County Council's archaeology service, visit our web site: <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/archaeology/index.htm>

MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

FIELDWORK PROJECTS

Twenty development-related fieldwork projects were undertaken in the Milton Keynes area between April 2011 and March 2012. A particular highlight was the recovery of two complete Iron Age notched log ladders from continuing excavations on the Western Expansion Area. These substantial (>2m long) worked timbers are believed to be the largest recovered examples in the UK and consequently of national significance.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

The Senior Archaeological Officer completed a review of the 2006 HER audit in May 2011 prior to preparing an action plan for the development of the HER over the next 3 years. A key component of the action plan is the procurement of replacement database software to achieve better compliance with the appropriate national heritage data standards and to provide a more sustainable and accessible platform for the future.

OUTREACH

The Senior Archaeological Officer gave talks on recent archaeological work in Milton Keynes to the members of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and Olney Archaeological Society in May and September 2011. During August a guided walk to Danesborough Iron Age hill fort was given to members of the Bow Brickhill Society.

In June a well-attended open day was held with

the cooperation of the developer and contracting archaeologists on excavations in Shenley Church End parish in advance of the Western Expansion Area.

On November 12th 2011 Cllr Alan Richards, Mayor of Milton Keynes, opened the fifth Milton Keynes Council Archaeology Day. This event, held across the Central Library was attended by over 400 people of all ages from across the borough and beyond. The day included a fascinating talk by Helen Geake from TV's Time Team on the Staffordshire Hoard and stands from CLASP and the City Discovery Centre also proved popular. The themed story time for under-fives in the Children's Library was complemented on this occasion by an extremely popular mosaic-making workshop led by Melanie Watts which created a piece of permanent art now on display in the children's library.

STAFFING

Senior Conservation Officer, Paul Affleck retired at the end of May after working for 13 years in the role. Paul's association with the architectural heritage of Milton Keynes began 25 years ago when he was employed by the Development Corporation as an Architect Planner in 1987. After a period with the Commission for New Towns, Paul joined the newly unitary Milton Keynes Council in 1998.

*Nick Crank, Senior Archaeological Officer
Conservation & Archaeology Team,
Development Management
Milton Keynes Council*