

ARCHAEOLOGY

in Milton Keynes

Kickles Farm, Newport Pagnell Iron Age farmstead and Saxon settlement



View along the Iron Age trackway as it curves upslope, away from the river



Iron Age roundhouse under excavation



Saxon posthole building under excavation

Located at the NE margin of Newport Pagnell, the site occupies a low promontory south of the River Great Ouse.

Geophysical survey and trial trenching revealed part of a rectilinear enclosure, a trackway defined by flanking ditches and a small number of Iron Age pits. Albion Archaeology subsequently carried out an excavation of the part of the site that would be impacted by the proposed development.

The earliest activity dated to the Neolithic period and low intensity, dispersed activity (mostly pitting) continued into the early Iron Age. In the Iron Age the landscape was partitioned by the creation of a large enclosure with an associated trackway leading down to the river. Within the enclosure were the remains of a farmstead comprising a roundhouse and associated pitting.

The investigation also revealed an early to middle Saxon settlement. Both sunken-featured (Grubenhäuser-type) and rectangular posthole buildings were identified; associated activity included pits and water holes. Initially, the settlement was unenclosed but was associated with a trackway defined by flanking ditches. Subsequently, a series of irregular enclosures were established. The site of the former settlement was ultimately incorporated into a medieval arable field.



One of the large Saxon sunken-featured buildings, fully excavated

Below: Fragment of Saxon pottery vessel with perforated upright lug



Fragment of a silver coin of King Offa of Mercia



Photos: Albion Archaeology

Wolverton

The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery



Site location

In 2007-2008 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd excavated two sites on the Radcliffe School campus in Wolverton prior to redevelopment. The project was commissioned and funded by Milton Keynes Council. A detailed report completed by Bancroft Heritage Services will be published early next year.

On the first site, in the north-west of the development area, late Iron Age and early Romano-British enclosures were found, along with some Anglo-Saxon pits. The second site, to the south-east, contained an extensive mid Anglo-Saxon (7th to early 8th century AD) cemetery. The cemetery comprised a total of eighty-one inhumation burials. Two cremation burials were also recorded.

Over half the burials were accompanied by grave goods, the most common (to both sexes) being an iron knife. Female burials tended to contain jewellery and household items while weapons



Female SK2359 under excavation



Silver necklace with glass, amethyst and shell beads from female burial SK2359



Silver workbox with Runic inscription 'BUGI', possibly the owner's name



Fighting knife or seax

were mostly found with male burials, though there were exceptions. The most richly furnished burial (SK2359) was that of a middle-aged female who wore a necklace of silver wire rings, glass, amethyst and shell beads. A leather bag containing miniature tweezers was placed under her right elbow and a padlocked leather-bound wooden box was located above her head. A small spearhead had been placed on the box.

Samples were taken from six burials for radiocarbon dating, and for DNA analysis. The C14 dates fell within the range AD550-720. The DNA analysis, which is still under way, has so far revealed that one individual originated from the Baltic.

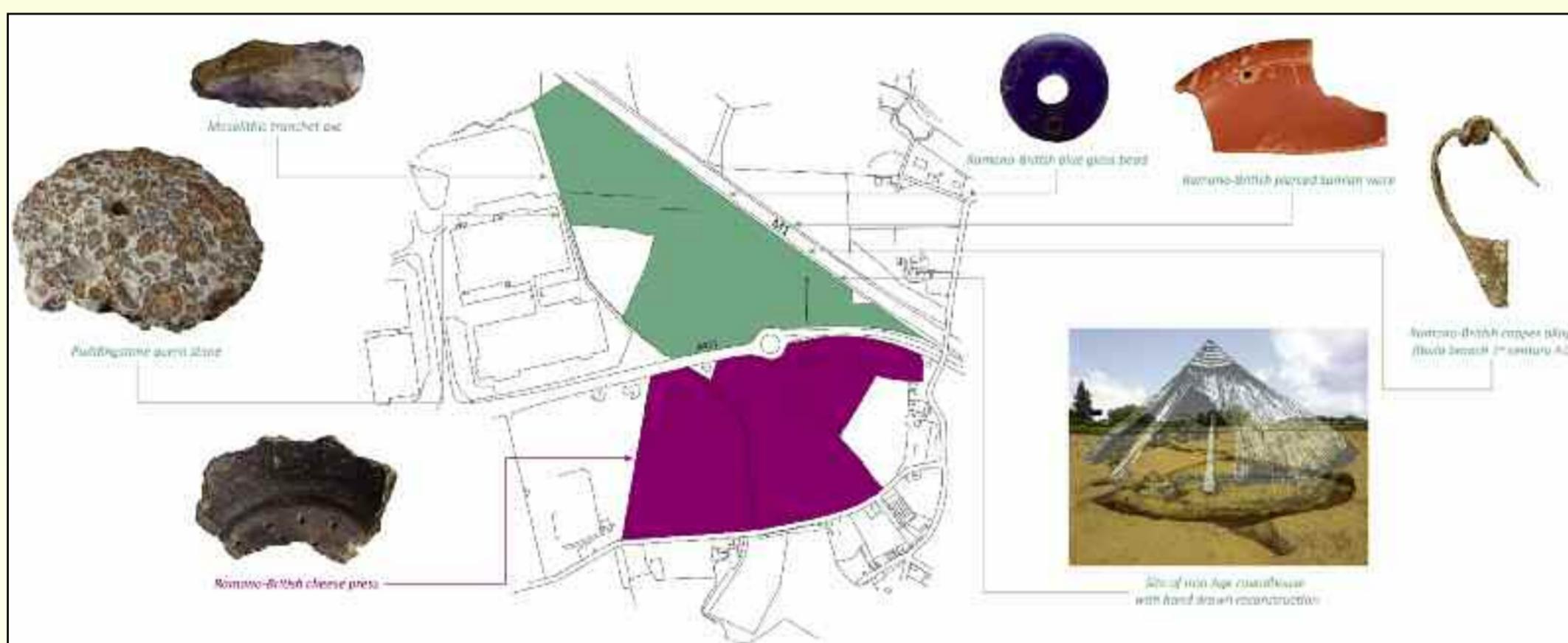
The Wolverton cemetery is the largest mid-Saxon cemetery excavated in Buckinghamshire to date. It probably served the contemporary settlement at Wolverton Turn, itself a forerunner to the medieval village and Victorian town of Wolverton.

ARCHAEOLOGY

in Milton Keynes

Eastern Expansion Area

A421, near J13 of the M1



Imported Roman Samian pottery



Iron Age and Roman settlement north of the A421



Excavating a droveway ditch



South of A421 (east)



Producing a detailed plan of the archaeology

Border Archaeology Ltd. have so far excavated two large sites prior to the development of warehousing and residential estates close to J13 of the M1. This work straddles the A421 and has been conducted from 2013 onwards.

North of the A421

An Iron Age to Romano-British landscape has been revealed, showing droveways traversing tracts of agricultural land which were dotted with small farmsteads and livestock enclosures of a mixed arable and pastoral economy. A settlement which included roundhouses was identified in the northern part of the site and it is likely that the homes here were continually rebuilt over the lifespan of the community. Domestic pottery suggests a simple rural existence for the inhabitants.

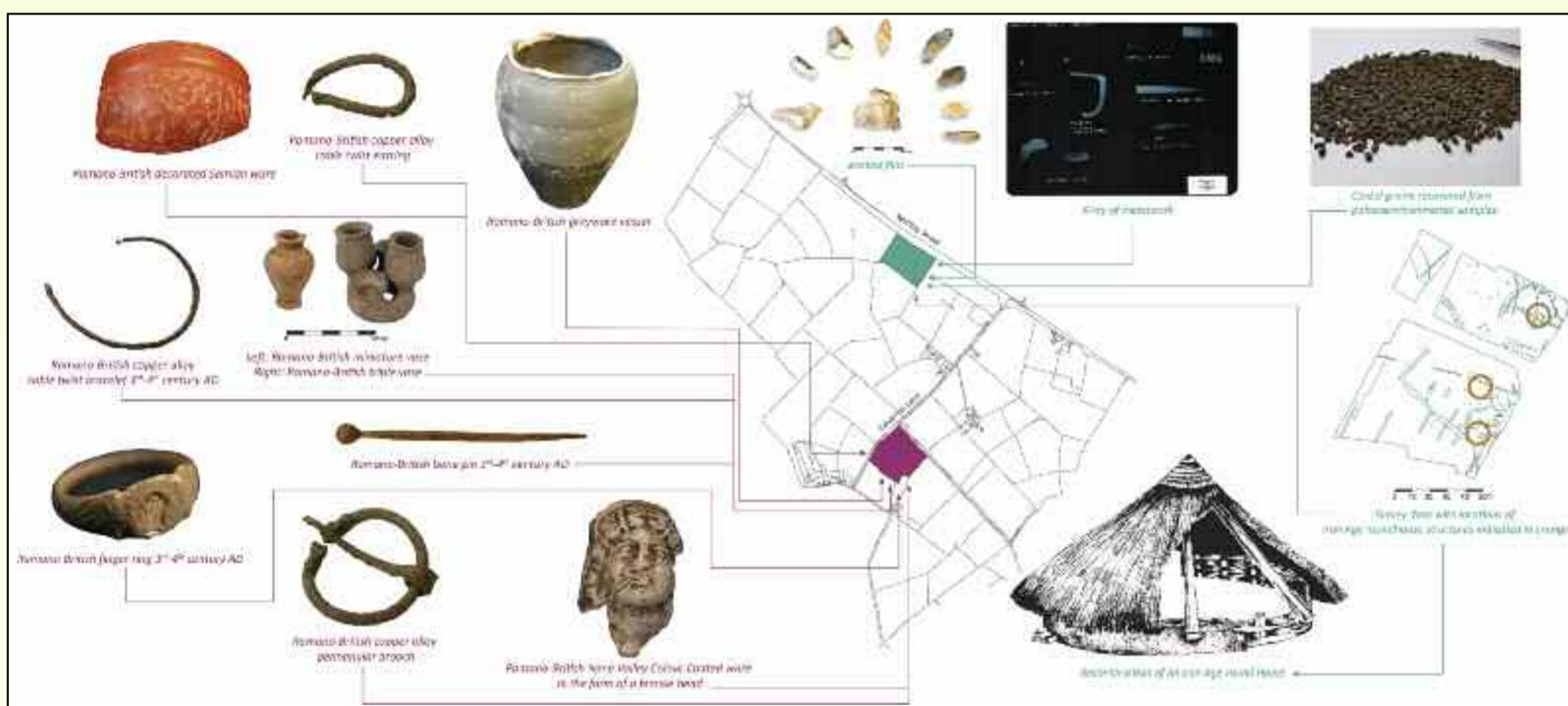
South of the A421

The Iron Age and Romano-British droveways from the northern site continue across this area where they intersect with a number of livestock and settlement enclosures. Small areas of metalworking activity have also been identified possibly left by an itinerant smith visited this settlement to fix tools and cookware. Pottery reveals a little more surplus wealth to splash out on the more fashionable items being traded from Gaul and the Mediterranean and some ditches may have had a more defensive or ostentatious purpose than being purely agricultural. Excavations are ongoing and likely to continue into 2017.

ARCHAEOLOGY

in Milton Keynes

Western Expansion Area Fairfield and Whitehouse Estates



Carefully cleaning stone surfaces



Hearth in Iron Age roundhouse



Carefully lifting a wooden pulley block from Roman well



Drawing a plan of a cow skeleton

Border Archaeology Ltd. have excavated 11 sites prior to the development of the western estates of Fairfield and Whitehouse.

In the past two years work has concentrated on two sites: An enclosure surrounding several roundhouses of probable Iron Age to early Romano-British date adjacent to Watling Street and a Romano-British farmstead adjacent to Calverton Lane.

Enclosed Iron Age settlement

A settlement was established during the Iron Age around the course of a small stream, with the community well-protected by deep ditches making a square enclosure around the roundhouses; these were likely to have been rebuilt every few years as the wood

and thatch deteriorated. Radiocarbon dating tells us that, around 260BC, a batch of that autumn's grain crop caught fire while being dried prior to storage for the hungry winter and spring months.

Romano-British farmstead

A fairly prosperous farming community, likely based around an extended family, lived here from the Iron Age into the Romano-British era when they adopted the recent fashions and moved from their roundhouses into stone built houses. They lived close to a large cobbled yard where butchery and crop processing was carried out. A series of wells supplied their water and has provided our best insight into their lives, as the waterlogged conditions have preserved the organic waste they disposed of.

Conservation & Archaeology in Milton Keynes

Archaeology and Development



For more information visit: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology>

The area of the New Town and the surrounding countryside are rich in archaeological remains, the borough contains 50 nationally important scheduled monuments ranging in date and character from Bronze Age burial mounds to a small Roman town, medieval castles and villages, and the cast-iron Tickford Bridge of 1810 in Newport Pagnell. In addition to these nationally significant sites the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record contains information on over 7000 sites and finds and many new discoveries are made each year.

All planning applications are monitored by the Conservation and Archaeology Team to ensure that significant remains are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed and that appropriate assessments are carried out prior to development. Early assessment and

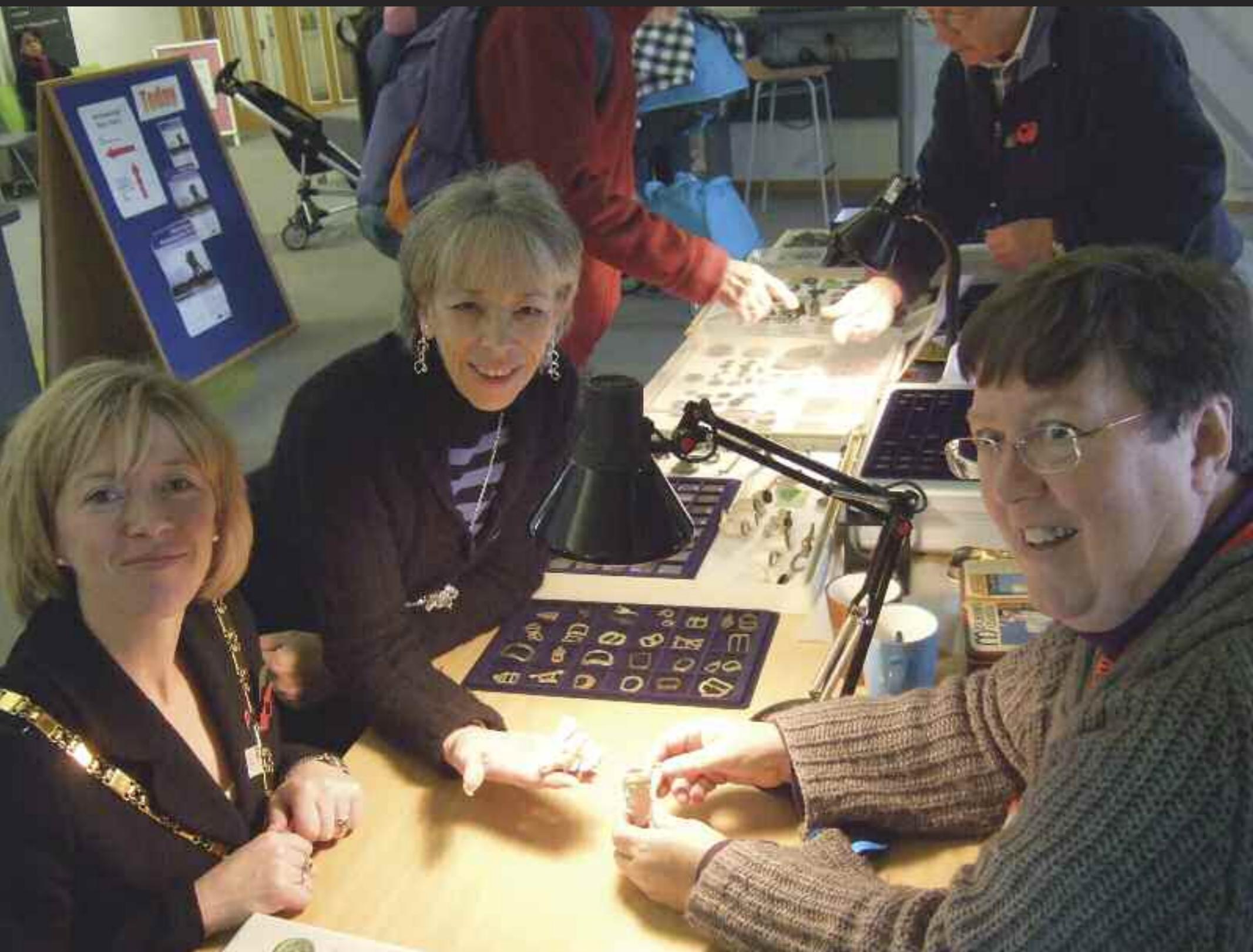
investigation or 'evaluation' of proposed development sites is crucial and can avoid delays to construction programmes caused by unexpected discoveries as well as allowing for significant remains to be protected from disturbance or properly excavated and recorded. Copies of all reports from fieldwork are deposited with the Historic Environment Record for wider access to the community. The results from larger more significant archaeological excavations are published either in the journal Records of Buckinghamshire or as stand-alone publications.



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Conservation & Archaeology in Milton Keynes

Outreach and Community



For more information visit: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology>

The Conservation & Archaeology Team regularly undertake outreach activity including guided walks, public talks and exhibitions. Since 2007 the team have held an annual archaeology open day known as Milton Keynes Archaeology Day on the second Saturday in November.

MK Archaeology Day began in a single library meeting room in 2007. Subsequently the event has grown in scope and appeal and is now held across the Central Library with talks in the Exhibition Space and interactive displays, activities and workshops from the library foyer and upstairs to the Children's Library.

Since inception the aim of Archaeology Day has been to promote the understanding of archaeology and the work of archaeologists both in Milton Keynes and further afield to the widest possible audience.

Previously the team has successfully partnered with external groups such as The Parks Trust, Bucks County Museum and MK Arts for Health to help deliver community heritage projects. The team continues to work with external partners on a number of projects with a view to increasing the understanding and enjoyment of heritage in Milton Keynes.



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Conservation & Archaeology in Milton Keynes

Conservation and Archaeology Team



For more information visit: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology>

This multidisciplinary team provide specialist advice for the planning department and other Council departments on conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeology. It also acts as the link between the Council and national bodies such as Historic England and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on these issues. Part of its role is to maintain the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record (HER), the definitive record of archaeological sites, finds, historic landscapes and buildings for the borough. The team also work with internal and external partners including Town and Parish Councils, The Parks Trust and local Heritage Groups on projects including:

- Heritage at Risk Register
- New Town Heritage Register
- Conservation Area Reviews
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Plan MK
- MK Archaeology Day
- Heritage Open Days
- Milton Keynes Heritage Strategy



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Conservation & Archaeology in Milton Keynes

Conservation Area Reviews



For more information visit: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology>

Milton Keynes has 27 designated conservation areas that recognise the special quality of a broad range of locations around the borough including rural villages and urban landscapes. The Council has a duty to review each conservation area from time to time. The Conservation and Archaeology Team are currently undertaking a review of each area, a consultative process resulting in a document defining the areas special interest and which may lead to adjustments to its boundary.

Conservation areas protect places of special character from the loss of key buildings and features and seek to encourage complementary design in new development. By doing so the unique 'sense of place' that distinguishes settlements from each other is preserved. In conservation areas trees are also protected from uncontrolled loss.

Within the New Town's boundary there are conservation areas protecting once isolated villages such as Woughton-on-the-Green, Loughton and the Shenleys. There are larger areas protecting small towns such as Olney, Newport Pagnell and Stony Stratford. The biggest conservation area is in Wolverton where the historic railway works and housing are covered by an enhanced designation which also seeks to protect changes to doors, windows and roof materials amongst other things cannot be altered without first applying for planning permission.



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Conservation & Archaeology in Milton Keynes

Heritage at Risk



For more information visit: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology>

The Conservation and Archaeology Team maintain the Heritage at Risk register for the borough. This list seeks to not only identify but monitor the condition of heritage assets (sites and buildings) at risk so that the team may ensure that action is taken to safeguard the significant heritage of the borough.

Heritage Assets at Risk are prioritised so that action is taken on those buildings at the greatest risk of loss.

Where a heritage asset is identified as requiring remedial works the Conservation and Archaeology Team will contact the owners to agree a course of action to safeguard the asset. The Council's Conservation Officers provide advice and assistance in order to achieve the best possible outcome for the building.

Milton Keynes Council is able to undertake enforcement action where unauthorised work or neglect have led to loss of or damage to historic buildings or other assets.

The team regularly review and update the Heritage at Risk Register with the aim of ensuring that no building or other heritage asset is allowed to fall into disuse, disrepair or disregard.



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Conservation & Archaeology in Milton Keynes

New Town Heritage Register



For more information visit: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology>

Milton Keynes is the last, largest and most ambitious of the all the New Towns, it is unlikely that its scale and layout will ever be repeated in this country. Its architecture, art, planning, landscapes, public spaces and infrastructure all contribute to its unique character and its local, national and international significance.

Some individual assets have already been recognised at a national level, for example the Shopping Building, Central Library, Former Bus Station and Octo sculpture in CMK are amongst those that have been designated by Historic England as grade II listed buildings.

However, beyond those assets are many buildings, structures, landscapes, artworks and places of local significance that are valued because they contribute to the distinctive identity of Milton Keynes. The New Town Heritage Register project seeks to identify and celebrate those assets, in turn ensuring that their value is taken into

account when decisions about their future, and the future of Milton Keynes, are made.

The project will use the considerable knowledge of local stakeholders to establish the importance of Milton Keynes and develop selection criteria that the assets will be assessed against. Following this, the wider public will be asked to nominate those assets that they feel meet those criteria and form part of the distinct, unique local character of Milton Keynes.

The project will be of use beyond the planning system, setting out and reinforcing the cultural value of the new-town, to aid investment and the enjoyment of Milton Keynes' new-town heritage by residents and visitors alike.



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