

Excavations at Old Windsor, Berkshire, in the 1950s

A project to quantify the finds archive in Reading Museum

What is the Project?

In the 1950s the late Dr Brian Hope Taylor undertook a dig at Old Windsor that found Saxon, early Norman and medieval remains, including part of a late Saxon and early Norman royal complex. The site was a precursor to New Windsor, the seat of English and British monarchy over most of the last millennium, making it a site of great importance. It is now protected as a Scheduled Monument.

However, the details of what Hope Taylor found in the 1950s have never been fully explored. His archive (the documents, drawings, photographs and finds that were created during his excavations) is therefore extremely important and one of the most significant archaeological archives held by Reading Museum.

Remarkably, we do not know precisely how many finds (pottery, metalwork, stone objects, animal bones etc.) were recovered during Hope Taylor's dig. Berkshire Archaeology and Reading Museum are therefore undertaking a project, funded by Historic England, to count, weigh and record all the finds from the 1950s dig held by Reading Museum.



Finds work in progress at Wessex Archaeology ©Wessex Archaeology

Why do we want volunteers?

We are therefore looking for volunteers to help us count, weight and record on a database all the finds from the 1950s dig.

What will volunteers be asked to do?

Volunteers will be based at Reading Museum's store in south Reading. The task will involve removing the finds from their bags and counting, weighing and recording them on a digital database by the numerical identifier given to them in the 1950s. Some of the boxes and the finds within them may not have been opened since the 1950s! The work will be supervised by professionals from Wessex Archaeology, who will be on hand to help volunteers, give encouragement and to provide information about the different types of finds and their significance.

Who will suit the role?

We are looking for volunteers who are:

- Over 18
- Enthusiastic, proactive and curious
- Interested in history and our past
- Numerate, methodical and with good attention to detail
- Not afraid of getting a bit dusty!

What will you get out of it?

If you volunteer, we hope you will have:

- Learnt about and be able to identify different types of archaeological finds
- Participated in 'workshops' on pottery and animal bone, run as part of the project
- Contributed to the record of one of the Museum's most important archives
- Gained a greater appreciation of Berkshire's archaeological heritage
- Undertaken a very different experience to add to your CV!

When will it take place?

The project will take place in late September/October 2018. Please note that the project will take place on week days during normal office hours. Details will be available shortly.

What next?

If you are interested in volunteering for this project, please express your interest by emailing Roland Smith at Berkshire Archaeology at roland.smith@reading.gov.uk. Please include your name, address and contact details, especially your email address, and tell us a little about yourself and why you would like to be involved in this project in no more than 400 words.

Your details will be held securely by Berkshire Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology. They will not be shared with third parties and will not be retained beyond the end of the project.

We look forward to hearing from you!