

# Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



## BEKONSCOT Model Village & Railway

NOVEMBER 2018

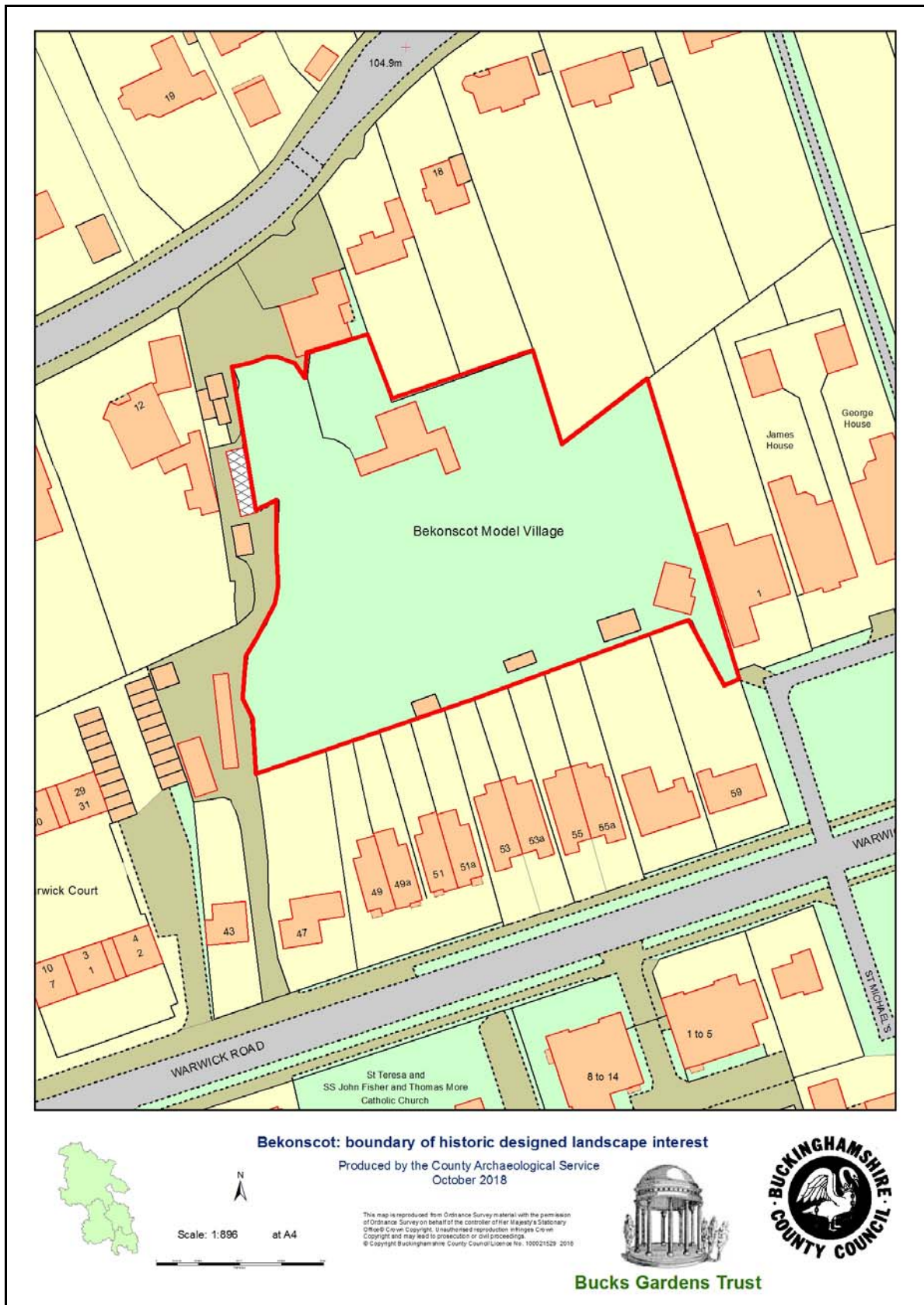


The Stanley Smith (UK)  
Horticultural Trust



Bucks Gardens Trust

# HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY





Scale: 1:896 at A4



**Bekonscot: 2008 aerial photograph**

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Produced by the County Archaeological Service  
October 2018



**Bucks Gardens Trust**

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (now Historic England) (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not definitive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

### Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage/Historic England on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the English Heritage (now Historic England) *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.
- A map showing principal views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

### Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Gardens Trust (formerly the Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society) and funded by BGT with significant grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and Bucks County Council. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>COUNTY:</b>	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	<b>BEKONSCOT</b>
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	CHILTERN	
<b>PARISH:</b>	BEACONSFIELD	<b>HER: 0789600000</b>
<b>OS REF.:</b>	SU 939 914	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Overview:** This is the oldest surviving model village in the world. It has inspired many other model villages and miniature parks in the UK and around the world. It is a rare surviving example and has influenced model villages over the years such as Bourton-on-the-Water in 1937 (now Grade II listed), Madurodam in the Netherlands in 1952 and later Legoland in Denmark in 1968. It was designed and created in the garden of Roland Callingham in the late 1920s, opened to the public in 1929 and has continued to expand over the decades since, to his vision. For him, the aim was not strict accuracy of scale, but to give pleasure. This labour of love was never meant to be taken too seriously. Bekonscot was always meant to be eccentric, fun and full of character.

**Architectural interest:** The number, design and variety of model buildings and ages accumulated since 1929 is of high significance, with the buildings being continuously constructed to a high standard of modelling, and many based on real structures. The densely scattered buildings form a key element of the landscape design, representing a large proportion of typical English types and styles. The railway is also of high significance for its extensive layout and quality, as the UK's finest outdoor Gauge 1 model railway, based on large part on the original scheme of 1929.

**Artistic interest:** Callingham's original landscape concept survives intact and in very good condition. The site is of the highest significance for its vision in dealing with such a large-scale civic scheme, uniting most successfully so many individual settlements and buildings modelled on typical English scenes. While the layout is notional and adapted to the circumstances of the site, it represents a typical region of England, reflecting a quest to evoke the nostalgia of the 'olden days' in Inter-War suburbia, tempered with modern developments that do not jar with the rural English surroundings. The detailing of the execution including model buildings, hard landscaping and choice of planting is integral to the historic design and its success. The railway is an inspired addition which unites the layout alongside the path system and adds great interest to the design for children and grown-ups alike. The horticulture is of the highest quality, using a palette of relatively common plants which softens and clothes the layout, adapted, shaped and managed to complement and reinforce the small scale of the layout. Some of the woody specimens are of considerable age.

**Historic interest:** This is the first model village, influential on many others that succeeded it worldwide. The publicity it has received in its 90 year history has been unprecedented. It has well documented associations with royalty, with royal visits from nearby Windsor, most significantly in the 1930s from Queen Elizabeth II when Princess Elizabeth. Many historic documents are available to chart the development of the site, which adds to its historic interest.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Bekonscot model village was created in his garden in Beaconsfield by Roland Robert Callingham (1879-1961). The Callinghams' home, Chiltern Lodge, had a typical spacious suburban garden with tennis courts, pergola, sunken garden, many types of flowers, etc, as shown in photograph albums during 1925-28 [Bekonscot (4/1/4)]. Callingham was a great supporter of the Church Army and this strong link has since continued.

In 1926, Mr Callingham drew up plans, with the help of his head gardener, Tom Berry, for the layout of a model railway which was initially developed inside the family home. In 1927, Callingham bought the land westward at the bottom of his garden between Warwick Road and Ledborough Lane in order to build two tennis courts, a swimming pool and a pavilion. In 1927-28, Callingham began construction on a crescent-shaped swimming pool in his garden. On the resulting mounds of soil, he built the first model houses and a model railway [Bekonscot photo archives]. It is said that sometime in 1928, Mrs Callingham had informed him that either his models must go or she would (Bekonscot website). Perhaps it was this apocryphal event that led to his decision that he was going to move his model railway to the new area at the bottom of the garden and create a more extensive model village around it. In "several interviews with Barry Newman, former director of Bekonscot, from the 1980s and 90s, he maintained that it all began as an indoor hobby and that Mrs Callingham got rather fed up with the models all around the house and garden so Mr Callingham purchased the neighbouring field and started a model village." (Charlton correspondence, 2018).

The "New Garden" is shown in a 1929 photograph in a Bekonscot archive album, with this being the site of the start of the village in 1930. This is confirmed by another album (Bekonscot 4/1/1) which begins with a photograph of excavation work carried out in 1929. The hills were planted with conifers and dwarf Japanese trees and the valleys were filled with alpine flowers. Initially, this was not a landscape, railway and village intended for public view. Rather it was for the private entertainment of Callingham and his family and friends, not a community visitor attraction. By 1930, Mr & Mrs Callingham enjoyed entertaining and holding house and garden parties for the rich and famous, especially during the long summer evenings.

Callingham lived in Beaconsfield and his friend, James Shilcock was from Ascot. From these town names they developed the portmanteau of *Bekonscot*. Shilcock soon outlined a design for a Gauge 1 model railway (1:32 scale), with track parts and rolling stock supplied by the world renowned Bassett-Lowke Model Railway Company. Messrs Tommy Hammond, a Beaconsfield firm installed the electrics. It opened for a charity day on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1929. By the end of the year, the 1,200 feet of railway track and powerhouse were completed. The Bassett-Lowke experts worked with Mr Callingham to design the original layout and they built most of the early trains (*Bekonscot*, 2014).

As soon as it opened in 1929, Bekonscot was famous. Pictures were seen in newspapers, newsreels and magazines across the world. The creation of the model village caused great interest with the locals and they would call in and see how the work was progressing. Mr Callingham was pleased if 50 visitors came at the weekends and he put out a charity box for donations.

Work continued throughout 1929 and by August the rockery was in position. By now, the village, west of the house, cascaded over the rockery that enclosed the swimming pool on three sides. The

village itself was broadly 1:12 in scale. However, by his own admission, Callingham said he was 'prepared to sacrifice exact scale for the right effect.' (Dunn, 2017) Callingham involved his household staff, friends, local school children as well as local contractors to assist with the construction. There were plenty of suggestions as to what buildings to include. Some were local to Beaconsfield but others were models of buildings further afield, for example Clark College is based on Eton College, Greenhaily Station is a copy of Beaconsfield railway station and Amersham Hospital was the template for Splashing Hospital.

According to an article in the *Daily Sketch* in 1931, Callingham had previously set out areas including a formal rose garden, Japanese pagoda-style lanterns and a few small buildings that had been laid out in what was called a 'Swiss Garden.' By his own admission, he had no overall plan at the time.

The railway was the centrepiece of the village, with automatic signalling and a large collection of electrically powered engines. The main terminus, Maryloo station, was another portmanteau - this time from the names of the two London train stations to which Callingham and Shilcock respectively commuted: Marylebone and Waterloo.

Construction of the village continued over the next four years. In 1930 a Post Office, a new bigger Minster (the old church was moved to another part of the village) and various railway stations were added. In 1931 the gardens were extended and improved and for the first time charges were introduced (adults 1s/-, children 6d), the proceeds of which went to a variety of charities.

The caption for the earliest photograph of the model village reads "Birth of Bekonscot 1929; Excavation Work commenced on Model Village and Railway 1929", ***Bekonscot (4/1/1/1)***. In 1932, Bekonscot was so popular that regular open days were held with proceeds going to charity. A major work phase was completed in 1933 and in 1934 the Bekonscot Model Railway & General Charitable Association was set up to administer the village and distribute surplus money to charity for good causes.

In the subsequent years, the model village and gardens became a popular destination, assisted by patronage of the Royal Family and other dignitaries. In 1936 Princess Elizabeth visited with Queen Mary, King George VI, Queen Elizabeth, her sister Margaret and the Duke and Duchess of Kent. Princess Elizabeth launched a ship named after her and on a later visit in 1939 she and Princess Margaret launched a flying boat on the lake. During World War II firewatchers patrolled the Village and there was little damage done. Pathé newsreels and press coverage added to its widespread popularity. In 1942 Miss Kallman, housekeeper to Mr & Mrs Callingham took over the day-to-day running of the Village.

In the second half of the C20 there were continual problems with extending the lease, with neighbours complaining about the noise and street parking. However, in 1966 Church Field became available for parking and the lease was extended. Changes were made to the village over the years. The lawn stretches the whole length of the village and that is all that remains of the original meadow. In 1986 Martin Adeney, BBC industrial correspondent opened the village's first coal mine. In 1991 a new railway was installed.

In 1992 a significant strategy and policy decision was reached, to revert the village to its 1930s roots, with emphasis on depicting aspects of the now gone rural England instead of attempting to keep up

with modern and contemporary changes in village life since then. In 1993 a maze was introduced using the honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida* 'Baggesen's Gold'. The curator at Hampton Court sent an outline of their maze, and this was used to create a copy in miniature for Bekonscot, near the small village of Hanton, which was called 'Hanton Court Maze'. By 1996 there were three full-time gardeners and two part-timers. The shrubs and conifers numbered over 3,000, varying from the very tall *Cedrus atlantica* on the picnic area to the minute cypress trees around the village that blend with the scale of the buildings. The colours and shapes of the Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum* 'Dissectum Atropurpureum') were much admired during this period. Bekonscot also introduced more miniature varieties of plants, including willow, lilac and roses. The majority of trees are in scale with the models.

In addition, three electrical engineers kept the railway running and maintained all the electrical and mechanical equipment. Two full-time model makers built and maintained all the other models and ancillary buildings, supplemented by voluntary helpers. The railway total track length was 400 metres (438 yards). Seven stations are served by the trains, which are controlled and supervised in the same way as a full-size railway. During the season the trains travel over 25,000 kilometres (16,000 miles).

Today [2018], the village is continually in a process of repair and renewal. However, the landscape framework remains constant, with its ponds/lakes and waterways, rockeries which help to create the topography. Many of the trees and shrubs are over 50 years old and require ongoing pruning to maintain their scale. Two full time gardeners look after the gardens. The village rail network has more than 10 locomotives, runs on 8.5 scale miles (450 real metres) of track and is considered to be the UK's finest public outdoor Gauge 1 railway.

The architecture of the village continues to feature a wide range of architectural styles that were used in the 1930s. A fairly recent addition is a model of the iconic art deco Hoover building (on the Western Avenue, west London).

The site is operated by The Roland Callingham Foundation and is closely linked to the Church Army. Profits from Bekonscot's operation are distributed to local and national charities each year via the Roland Callingham Foundation and the Church Army which have donated more than £5.5 million.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM SETTING AND ENTRANCES**

Bekonscot is situated in the town of Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire, 26 miles northwest of London, 6 miles southeast of High Wycombe and 21 miles southeast of Aylesbury. The 0.5 ha. site is located in a residential neighbourhood of Beaconsfield and less than 300m NW from a parade of local shops.

The entrance to Bekonscot is north from Warwick Road, through a gate, along a footpath, to a set of ticket booths, which is a converted MK 1 railway carriage and contains a souvenir shop. Beyond this is the main site. The site is largely level, with the exception of elevated pathways designed to enhance the views over the entire village. Much of the surrounding land was sold during Callingham's lifetime. The site is surrounded by suburban residential development and constantly bombarded by planning applications by its neighbours.



As one walks around the first corner to enter Bekonscot, the whole village lies spread out before you – meadows and village greens, a windmill on top of a hill, a church in the valley, farmyards, an airfield, a castle, cottages, a fairground and a colliery and so much more. It is a world in miniature. Not only are there more than 200 buildings, but 3,000 people/residents, 1,000 animals and many vehicles

## **THE GARDENS**

The landscape of Bekonscot is famous in its own right. It is indeed a 'green and pleasant land' for the residents of the seven towns and villages here. Careful attention to the many shrubs and trees help to bring them into scale with the models. These are not bonsai trees, but are regular garden plants that are skilfully trimmed and shaped to match their miniature environment. In fact, some are the original shrubs planted in Callingham's Alpine garden. Among the most striking are Japanese maples, miniature willows, cypress, Japanese elms, lilacs and ficus. Summer colour is provided by thousands of bedding and herbaceous plants. A stretch of well-manicured lawn that runs the length of the village was originally part of the meadow from which Bekonscot was created. When Callingham first built the village, he would walk along it twice daily on his way to and from the railway station for his commute to London.

The lakes and waterways are a popular feature along with the railways threading across the site.

## **A WALKING TOUR OF BEKONSCOT**

The path begins from the ticket booths, as the route takes you anticlockwise from the north-west corner around the site.

### **The Zoo**

Chessnade (a combination of the zoo names Chessington and Whipsnade) is a 1930s style zoo, reflecting a time when animals were kept in cages, unlike the spacious wildlife parks of today. Here there are elephants and giraffes, penguins, flamingos, tigers, polar bears. There are even chimps at a tea party. Some of these animals are more than 80 years old, carved from limewood by school children in the New Forest.

### **Greenhaily**

The little hamlet of Greenhaily lies just up the hill from the zoo. A local inn, The Grantley Arms, looks like a popular place to enjoy a pint in the sunshine while watching the cricket match on the green opposite, where the locals are winning. At the heart of this rural community is plenty of work for the local smithy as much of the heavy farm work still relies on horses. The blacksmith is in constant demand to replace horseshoes or to mend equipment. This quiet hamlet is able to keep in touch with other parts of Bekonscot through its railway station. Greenhaily station is based on nearby Beaconsfield station. One can stop awhile on the little footbridge that passes over the railway line to watch the trains run through and to hear the stationmaster announcing arrivals and departures. As one might expect, local trains stop at the platforms, while express trains speed through using the passing loops.

The lower path over the railway line takes you to Bekonscot Town. Alternatively, one can decide to take the higher path. This route leads past Bekonbury Castle, a stately home for a local grandee. On this path you can also pause to crouch down and peek into Greenhaily's shop windows. These buildings are based on a row in the nearby town of High Wycombe.



### Plan of Bekonscot, north at bottom (Bekonscot Model Village).

Entrance to the walking tour at bottom right.

#### Bekonscot Town

This market town is the heart of the district and is the oldest part of the model village. It is an idyllic place for residents, with every amenity. Shops line the High Street, with plumbing supplies, chic hats and possibly the world's tiniest Marks & Spencer. In the town square, the fire station is prepared for emergencies, visitors alight at its two railway stations, the Mayor and Town Crier address a crowd and the cinema is showing *Snow White*. A game of rugby is in full swing and there are two pubs. One is based on the Saracen's Head in Beaconsfield. The other is a replica of the Earl of Beaconsfield pub

which was demolished in 1981, but lives on here in miniature. The market town is overlooked by the public school Clark College, named after Jack Clark who was a former Bekonscot engineer. We can also see a windmill and a water mill. As we leave the town we can hear the sounds coming from the choir at the handsome Minster (built 1932-3) and see the almshouses, which are based on those in nearby Amersham.

### **Southpool Fishing Village**

This charming coastal fishing village is also a bustling seaside resort. There are visitors arriving to enjoy the sheltered cove as trawlers are unloading the latest catch on to the quayside beside the fish market, and much activity at the shipbuilding yard with men hard at work building and mending boats beneath the railway bridge. It was back in 1936 that a young Princess Elizabeth helped to launch an ocean liner – early practice for her future role as Queen. The street that leads through the village leads steeply uphill and is lined with shops and cottages. Rock-climbers look down on the village from the cliff face.

### **Maryloo Signal Box**

On the periphery of the village, south of Southpool, is a complex control system that is the hub of Bekonscot's model railway network. It is one of the most advanced in the world. While it is based on the fundamentals of 1930s railway practice and equipment, it combines C21 digital technology as part of the electronic infrastructure. In the Signal Box, the (human) signalman can see the position of every train on an illuminated track diagram and on a computer monitor. Thus, signals and points can be controlled with the lever frame to direct train movements. Each locomotive has a tiny radio beacon that transmits its identity when passing through the Signal Box. The unique identity is programmed to set the route ahead of the train. All the other moving models in the village are controlled from here as well, including the pulleys, belts and oil-burning smoke machines.

### **Hanton**

As we approach this next hamlet, we walk past a model of Enid Blyton's house. She was a back garden neighbour of the Callingham's and several of her stories and books were inspired and written while living in this neighbourhood. The fleet of planes at the Hanton Aerodrome is always busy with fanciful arrivals and departures from the closely-cropped landing field. There is a branch railway line here for residents, as well as a cliff-top tramway. While a steamroller is hard at work, roadworks block Evenlode Hill. There is also a farmyard and nearby a pretty thatched Rose Cottage is on fire. The Bekonscot Fire Brigade are at the scene and dousing the blaze. Over at the Country Club, tennis, croquet and bowls are leisurely pursuits while there is a white wedding taking place at the picturesque church on the hill.

### **Splashyng**

This vibrant community has a real mix of people, from humble workmen in terraced cottages with productive vegetable patches in their back gardens to soldiers guarding Wychwood Castle, to aristocrats in the grand house. There is a variety of terrain, as tourists arrive here by cliff-top tramway or by train to enjoy sunbathing on the beach, sailing or watching the Morris dancers in the town square or kids having fun watching a Punch & Judy Show and going on donkey rides.

In these pre-war days, the great houses exude magnificent luxury, some of which we can glimpse by peeking through the transparent walls of the Tudor Manor House to view the upstairs-downstairs world of gentry in period clothes and beautifully crafted household furnishings. There are also maids, a cook and a butler hard at work. By climbing the steps to the viewing gallery, one has the best view of the full panorama of Bekonscot. Whether hikers looking out from the cliffs above or bathers from the beach below, all will have a good view of Alexandra Bridge which was completed in 1945. It is a scale model of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The raised viewing platform and the visitor facilities, constructed on the north side of the garden in 1995, are adjacent to this section of the village.

### **Bekonscot Lake**

Agriculture was important in rural Bucks in the 1930s (as was the case in all rural areas then). Here we see a busy, productive farm. It is based on the famous Oultine Farm in Hertfordshire. Behind the farm is a cattle market where local farmers buy and sell their livestock. There is also an oil refinery, reflecting the needs of rural industries. This lake is fed by mini rivers and must lead out to the sea, even though that is out of view. This is a busy place for leisure and for commerce. There is boat hire, smart yachts, fishing, a daytrippers' steamship, a lighthouse, waterworks and a pier, complete with a theatre pavilion and a tuneful brass band that makes this a holiday destination. Here too, trains rumble past, staying in touch with the rest of the Bekonscot district. Bekonscot Lake was once the Callingham family's swimming pool. The excavated spoil was used to help create the rockeries and hills nearby.

### **Evenlode**

On the way to Evenlode, we pass the Manor House Hotel. Here guests come for a luxurious holiday and Bekonscot residents can enjoy fine dining in a lovely setting. There is a racecourse nearby, with crowds (including some punters in top hats) cheering on the horses, while a bobby gives chase to a robber. This village green is an idyllic microcosm of a 1930s lifestyle: mothers chat in front of pretty cottages, children play on the swings, the milkmen and coalmen deliver their goods by horse and cart. Down the hill, past the hospital, work also goes on in the village as narrowboats on the canal negotiate their way through the lock to the quayside warehouse and horses drag barges along the towpath. At the Canoe Club, sportsmen practice, while cablecars take daytrippers up the rockface. Swiss chalet terminals here harken back to an early nickname given to Bekonscot when it was little more than a pretty alpine garden – 'Little Switzerland.'

Further along the path and the air is filled with the jolly sounds of the fairground, with its big wheel, chair-o-plane and endlessly twirling carousel. There is also foxhunting in Evenlode as the hunt was a clear reflection of those times. However, for more than 80 years the little fox has always outrun the huntsmen and their hounds.

### **Evenlode Town & Mining Village**

Coming along the lane toward Evenlode new-town, we pass the famous Bekonscot windmill at Greenhailey which has become a landmark for milling the corn from surrounding fields. We also walk past the circus where the acrobats and trapeze artists wow the crowds. Opposite the circus we

hear the sounds of the congregation singing at St Teresa's (which is a copy of the church beside Bekonscot's car park). A colliery recalls the time in the early C20 when more than one million people worked in more than 500 UK mines to supply industries, railways and homes with coal. Nearby are the miners' simple terraced homes, built by the Bekonscot Coal Board, and we come upon a polo match in progress. Beyond we hear the sound of the congregation singing at Beaconsfield Baptist Church which is a copy of the church in Beaconsfield. Nearby, archaeologists are excavating a Roman mosaic floor.

### **Epwood**

While Epwood Castle was once the home of local grandees, workmen toil to make a living from furniture making. This was once a key industry in Buckinghamshire. In a clearing, 'bodgers' are turning rough-hewn branches into chair legs, while others labour in the timber yard.

### **The Workshops**

Thousands of little people have been 'born' in the Bekonscot workshops. These are in addition to the railway stock, tractors, castles, tents, cottages, Rolls Royces, tractors, planes, cows, horses, etc. There are five specialist workshops: Engineering, Modelmaking, Figure Studio, Maintenance and Gardening – each with its own team. On an ongoing basis, they experiment with new designs, as well as new materials so that quality, detail and durability continue to improve. The engineers and modelmakers who design, build and maintain the models are dedicated to ensuring the historic features of Bekonscot are preserved while devising new exhibits each year. The team also help with research into 1930s style, for example, the fashions worn at Ascot Racecourse, or the authentic machinery design for the cider press. Some of the more elderly models, such as some zoo animals, were carved from wood in the 1930s. Today animals and people are made from durable resin. Most of the new buildings are made with a wood frame and a layer of carved dense foam board, such as airex. Smaller features are brought indoors during winter for care and refurbishment.

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*Bekonscot Model Village, Beaconsfield, 1996.*

*Bekonscot Model Village & Railway, 2014*

## Archives, Correspondence, Magazine and Newspaper articles

*Bekonscot, England's Toy-Size Town*, by Andrew H. Brown and B. Anthony Stewart, National Geographic Magazine, May 1937, Vol LXXI, No. 5, pp 649-661.

*Bekonscot Model Village*, The Daily Sketch, 1931

*Bekonscot Photo Archives, 1927-28*, showing mounds of soil, upon which Callingham built the first model houses and installed a Gauge 1 model railway.

Correspondence on the Historical Development of Bekonscot, Sarah Charlton to Wallace Wormley, 21 August 2018.

Photograph albums at *Bekonscot (4/1/4)* showing the Callingham garden in the 1925-1928 period. Latter part of the album shows the "New Garden" in 1929 and then the beginnings of Bekonscot Village in 1930.

Photograph album *Bekonscot (4/1/1)* includes a photograph of excavation work in 1929.

The earliest photographs showing the railway are dated 1931. The caption for the earliest photograph of the model village reads "Birth of Bekonscot 1929; Excavation Work commenced on Model Village and Railway 1929", *Bekonscot (4/1/1/1)*.

CB holds many magazine and newspaper cuttings, as well as leaflets pertaining to Bekonscot.

## Websites and Links

[www.bekonscot.co.uk](http://www.bekonscot.co.uk)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bekonscot>

Wallace Wormley

August 2018

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The Trust is very grateful for a grant of £1,000 awarded by the **Roland Callingham Foundation** in September 2018 towards the funding of our continuing Research and Recording Project to record the historic designed landscapes of historic Bucks.

## PHOTO GALLERY



Entrance from south side; Zoo



Hamlet of Greenhaily; Bekonbury Castle in Greenhaily



Miniature Acer in Bekonscot Town; A View of Bekonscot Town



Bekonscot Town; Southpool Fishing Village



Maryloo Signal Box



Hanton Airfield Opened in 1936; Hanton Aerodrome, 2018





View Looking West across Bekonscot from Raised Walkway; Wychwood Castle in Splashyng



Overview of the Lake at Splashyng including Alexandra Bridge; The Manor House Hotel at Evenlode



The Village Green at Evenlode; Quayside at Evenlode



Canoe Club at Evenlode; Fairground at Evenlode



Bekonscot Windmill and farms near Evenlode new-town; Colliery near Evenlode Mining Village



Archaeologists Excavating a Roman Villa near Evenlode Mining Village; Bodgers Hauling Logs for Chair Making near Epwood



Model Making with Airex Foam Board; Wooden and resin figures

## APPENDIX

### Research Questions Regarding the Historical Development of Bekonscot

*Answers to W Wormley from archivist, Sarah Charlton, received 21Aug2018, in red below.*

1. We are interested in the types of plants, flowers and trees that have historically been used and the rationale behind the designs.
2. Who has done the landscape designs? *The gardeners employed originally by Mr Callingham and the landscaping was carried out around the various scenes.*
3. To what extent is the bonsai technique used? *Not at all.*
4. We would like to understand and look at any historical commentary about the characteristic plantings. *I do not know any of the rationale behind the planting of the gardens, but I do know there are many photographs throughout the period 1930-2016 which specifically show the borders and gardens and plants in the greenhouses.*
5. How old are the Minster and the almshouses? *The Minster was one of the first models to be built. There are photos of Mr Berry building it: the precise date is uncertain but seems to be 1932-3. The almshouses are based on the almshouses at Amersham and were put in in 2013.*
6. When were the viewing platform installed and the adjacent visitor facilities constructed? *1995?*
7. Can we find out exactly whether the plan of the village occurred 1926 or 1927? According to the CBS records, a plan of the village was made before the purchase of the land and the creation of the tennis courts. *The Callingham's home, Chiltern Lodge, had a nice garden with tennis courts, pergola, sunken garden etc. One of the photograph albums at Bekonscot (4/1/4) shows this garden in the 1925-1928 period. The latter part of the album shows the "New Garden" in 1929 and then the start of Bekonscot village in 1930. This is confirmed by another photograph album (4/1/1) which begin with a photograph of excavation work being carried out in 1929.*
8. When did Prince Charles and Princess Anne visit? *They never visited.*
9. When was the railway replaced or rebuilt? *The new railway opened in 2001.*
10. In 1991, the Beaconsfield town council supported a move to grant a permanent licence. What was the outcome? Was the pavilion ever built? *Permanent licence was granted. Pavilion was never built.*
11. Is the GK Chesterton memorial church a copy of St Teresa's in Warwick Road? *Yes*
12. When was the fairground re-installed? *During the 1980s.*
13. Was the model railway planned first or were the railway and the model village planned together as an integrated whole and at the same time? *The earliest photographs showing the railway are dated 1931. The caption for the earliest photograph of the model village reads "Birth of Bekonscot 1929; Excavation Work commenced on Model Village and Railway 1929" (4/1/1/1).*
14. Was this really an indoor hobby that got booted out to the garden for lack of interior space? *There are several interviews with Barry Newman, former director of Bekonscot, from the 1980s and 90s, and he maintained that it all began as an indoor hobby and that Mrs Callingham got rather fed up with the models all around the house and garden so Mr Callingham purchased the neighbouring field and started a model village.*
15. What was the name of the Callingham's original house? What happened to it? *Chiltern Lodge. It was pulled down and a new building put in its place called Callingham Place.*