

## AGENDA ITEM 8

### **National Trust report for the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003**

The Trust have recently held interviews and will be appointing two new archaeological posts to be based in Buckinghamshire. One is for a part time Project Archaeologist for Stowe Gardens. The second is a one year post for a Sites and Monuments Assistant who will update the SMR for Stowe and compile a new SMR for West Wycombe. The SMR for West Wycombe has not so far been created so this will fill the gap and provide the opportunity to bring together evidence from various surveys, excavations and recording projects on the village buildings.

Waddesdon Manor – excavations are taking place to provide evidence for the restoration of the 1880s Aviary Garden. This was swept away in the 1950s. This has proved to be a rewarding exercise since the outlines of the original geometric flower beds can be traced beneath the gravel paths and hedges created in the 1950s. The archaeological evidence will therefore provide clarity to the rather hazy evidence available from Edwardian photographs and OS maps.

Bradenham Manor – Northamptonshire Archaeology will be monitoring excavations through the gardens in late March and April for installing an irrigation system. The excavations have been routed to minimise disruption to the archaeology beneath the main lawn. However, some disturbance is necessary. The evidence will be important to the Trust since it will section the garden terraces and hopefully provide dating evidence for their construction. It will also tell us much more about a series of high resistance features found by geophysics on the main lawn, thought to be the remains of the Elizabethan House.

Ashridge – Northamptonshire Archaeology are currently surveying the Iron Age and later earthworks on Pitstone Hill and Aldbury Nowers. The survey will then be incorporated into the overall Ashridge archaeological survey, which is being compiled by our Project Archaeologist, Melanie Solik.

Stowe Gardens – Oxford Archaeology have completed a watching brief over dredging work to restore the millpond at Home Farm, and the Haymanger Pond in the Park. Dendrochronology samples have been taken from timbers forming part of the sluice in the Haymanger Dam, providing an early 18<sup>th</sup> century date for its construction. Samples taken from planks found in the millpond have returned a c.1900 date. The planks are thought to have been placed in the pond to remove the sapwood. They are hand-sawn and the date suggests that the sawmill at Home Farm was installed after this date. Oxford Archaeology are also monitoring a series of trenches around the North Front and the School buildings for a new water main. Northamptonshire Archaeology have recently carried out excavations on the site of the Temple of Modern Virtue, and around the Doric Arch to locate foundations for up to 10 missing statues. So far two statue bases have been uncovered.