

**National Trust report for the Buckinghamshire Historic
Environment Forum – 30th March 2005**

Stowe Gardens

The National Trust successfully completed the acquisition of New Inn Farm on the 25th January. The farm is thought to have been erected c.1717 and throughout the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century provided accommodation for visitors to the gardens at Stowe. The buildings are listed grade II* and are unfortunately in a highly dilapidated state and will require emergency repairs and shoring as a stop gap measure before a full restoration programme is implemented. The long-term aim is to use the farm as a new entry point for visitors to the park and gardens, thus restoring the historic approach on the south side of the gardens, rather than on the north side at present. The restoration programme will be guided by a conservation plan, which in turn will be based on building recording and landscape survey currently being carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology. The recording work is being supported by grants from the Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust and the Buckinghamshire Emergency Recording Fund.

Within the gardens a major length of path running along the south side of the Eleven Acre Lake has been restored based on archaeological evidence from a series of trial trenches monitored by Northamptonshire Archaeology.

Members of the forum may be interested to know that a timber extracted from the River Great Ouse at Water Stratford during dredging works in 1973 has been sent for dendrochronology dating. It is thought to be a bridge support and may be of Roman origin as the location from which it was extracted lies directly on the line of the Alchester-Towcester Roman Road. Unfortunately the results of the assessment are not currently available.

Ashridge

The results of the landscape survey project commissioned by the National Trust between 2002-3 are finally to be delivered by end of March 2005. We have had to wait for completion as the project archaeologist left in October 2003 and the project has had to be completed as a private contract. The end product of the survey will be a gazetteer of sites linked to digitised maps showing all earthworks within the survey area. There will also be a summary land use history, which may form the basis of the article for Record of Bucks which has been requested. Copies of the survey will be deposited with the Bucks County SMR.

Waddesdon Manor

Northamptonshire Archaeology recently completed the excavation of five trial trenches on the south terrace at Waddesdon Manor in advance of the restoration of a fountain. These revealed evidence for what is thought to be the remains of the elaborate rockwork grotto built

as part of the original 1880s scheme. A watching brief will be maintained during further works when the fountain and flanking urns are installed in March/April of 2005.

Hughenden Manor

Northamptonshire Archaeology were employed in December 2004 to carry out a watching brief over an extension to the Church car park at Hughenden but no features of note were recorded. Repairs to the small bridge at the entrance lodge which carries the main drive to the Church and House revealed that the sarsen blocks forming the vault of the bridge are marked with a system of painted construction marks, using Arabic numerals on one side of the bridge and Roman on the opposite side. The bridge is dated 1830 and the marks almost stem from this date.

Forthcoming works

The Trust are proposing to restore a flight of grass steps at **Bradenham Manor** on the south side of the Forecourt. As this will involve some shallow excavation we are proposing to enlarge the depth and length of the trench to assess evidence for the demolished west wing which is known about from geophysics and previous excavations.

Excavations are proposed in the car park in the former walled gardens at **Cliveden** to install a new sewage system. An archaeological watching brief will be maintained over these works during April.

Gary Marshall
Archaeologist, Thames and Solent Region 21/3/2005