

The National Trust

Report to the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

25 March 2009

Conservation Management Plans

The Trust are currently in the process of preparing Conservation Management Plans for two Bucks properties – Claydon House and Cliveden. Similar plans have also recently been completed for Stowe New Inn and for West Wycombe Hill. For the Cliveden plan archaeological surveys of the garden landscape have been commissioned from Wessex Archaeology and from Northamptonshire Archaeology. These have revealed that elements of the designed landscape survive from the 1740s when the garden landscape was mapped in superb detail by Thomas Richardson.

Ashridge

A landscape survey has recently been completed for the Ivinghoe Beacon area of the estate, bringing together evidence recorded more than 20 years ago by our former project archaeologist Angus Wainwright. Reports are also in preparation for the Ivinghoe, Pitstone and Aldbury Commons, and for Pitstone Green Farm, which finally came into the hands of the Trust in 2008. The Pitstone Museum Trust will continue to occupy and run the site. Due to its size the Ashridge estate has been broken down in to 10 character areas and there will eventually be reports for each of these areas.

Stowe New Inn

A brief has been issued for phase II archaeological recording of the buildings at New Inn, which will record the fabric of the various structures through plan, section and elevation drawings, and photography. This is to be carried out in advance of the main phase of restoration works to be carried out in 2010. The site is to be opened to the public in 2011. Watching briefs will also be maintained over groundworks, including the extension to the quarry car park. This may answer the question of whether or not there really is a Roman cemetery on the site! The process of building recording is to be assisted with input from the recently established Buckinghamshire Buildings Group (Bucks Archaeological Society).

Stowe Gardens

Northamptonshire Archaeology have recently been employed to carry out recording of key elements of the Grotto at Stowe in advance of restoration works. These have included the outlines of the surviving pebble floor, which is thought to be original to William Kent's 1740s design, and elements of the hydrological system which brought water to the two marble basins, and then subsequently carried this water away as a mini cascade at the front of the Grotto.

Elsewhere in the gardens a series of drainage trenches along Pegg's Terrace on the south side of the gardens have been monitored by the Trust. Minor spreads of gravel

in the sections of these trenches suggest that the gravelled terrace was much wider in the 1760s, therefore based on this evidence the Trust will be reinstating the original width.

Timbers extracted from the core of the mill dam at Home Farm have been dendro dated to between 1819 and 1836, giving us a fairly close date range for when the pond and mill at the farm were created.

Bradenham Woods

Recording of earthworks in the woods at Bradenham is continuing as a once a month Sunday project, assisted by a small but dedicated group of volunteers. This is our fourth season of winter survey and we are now making use of a Trimble GPS kit which allows us to map to sub-metre accuracy (provided there are enough satellites available!)

Buckingham Chantry Chapel

Northamptonshire Archaeology have recently completed an assessment of the chapel, which has involved a review of existing documentary evidence and analysis of the fabric of the building. The latter element has revealed the outlines of blocked window openings and has also suggested that the fine Norman doorway is in its original location.

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