

National Trust Report to the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

16th March 2011

Stowe New Inn – archaeological recording has continued as a collaborative project between the National Trust and Northamptonshire Archaeology throughout 2010 and the first couple of months of 2011. We have carried out additional dendrochronology dating and have identified that a number of roof timbers over the Dairy building come from an earlier building dating from c. 1550, though not necessarily a building on this site. Works to the interior have also identified re-used moulded floor joists and principal beams of this period. The archaeological recording has given us an important insight into how the buildings evolved over their 300 year history, for example how the parlours to the inn were originally open spaces around the central inglenook fireplaces and were only divided into separate rooms c. 1780. We have been able to trace the original configuration of the winding stair towers and using this evidence we will be able to put back the original south stair to its near original form. The most significant discovery has perhaps been evidence for how the rooms were fitted out and decorated, initially with distemper paints, changing in the late 18th century to wallpapers running up to dado rails and skirtings. So far we have 64 different wallpaper types, some of these applied on backing papers created using newspapers from the 1820s such as the Morning Herald. We also have a growing artefact collection, including a number of coins recovered from under the floor of a small parlour referred to as the 'Tap Room'. Hopefully by the time of next forum New Inn will be open to the public and we shall have some of the key rooms including the parlours, tap room, kitchen, dairy and brewhouse available to visit.

Stowe Gardens – excavations for recreating the so called 'Chinese Bridge' across the north arm of the Octagon lake will be monitored during March 2011.

Claydon House – excavations have recently been completed for installing a new oil pipe line on the south front of the house. An archaeological watching brief maintained by Northamptonshire Archaeology led to the discovery of a culvert and brick foundations relating to the c. 1770 south front which we think was removed between 1858 and 1860 when the south front was brought back to its present outline.

Cliveden – a watching brief has been maintained by Northamptonshire Archaeology over a series of test pits carried out as a geotechnical evaluation prior to installing a new sewer system throughout the estate. These revealed little of interest but did confirm that the gravel walk below the south terrace has been built up with up to 0.9 m of dumped clay, sand and rubble.

Long Crendon Court House – the Trust has commissioned documentary research and an appraisal of the building to provide evidence as to sensitivity

prior to minor works being carried out. At the time of preparing this report the survey is still underway.

Boarstall Tower – the report on the excavations carried out in July 2008 was finally published in January and copies have been distributed to various repositories.

Ashridge – the land use history for this property covering Bucks and Herts has recently been completed as part of the Trust's overall archaeological survey. There will be eleven survey volumes, six of which have now been completed, including a recent study of Ivinghoe, Pitstone and Aldbury Commons.

Gary Marshall 9th March 2011