

National Trust Report for Bucks Historic Environment Forum

26th September 2012

West Wycombe Village

Over the next three years we shall be undertaking a major project to refurbish many of the tenanted buildings that the National Trust owns in West Wycombe. The aim of the project is to bring them up to modern living standards and to ensure that they meet high environmental standards for insulation etc. The works will affect many of the 23 listed buildings that the Trust owns and as many will involve re-roofing the Trust is taking the opportunity to carry out a programme of research and investigation into the buildings. The project will involve re-assessing existing evidence presented in the National Trust's vernacular buildings surveys – undertaken in the early 1990s – and compiling new evidence based on examination of the buildings. An extensive programme of sampling for dendrochronology dating will also be undertaken, involving up to 20 buildings. The end product from the research will be a series of assessment reports of the individual buildings and a summary report which will aim to chart the evolution and phasing of the development of the village from pre-historic to modern times. The Trust will be looking for public engagement opportunities during the project and will be running workshops and site tours. We also hope that external partners will assist with the recording of non-National Trust buildings to make the project as comprehensive as possible.

On a different note we recently re-interred in the parish burial ground the four Romano-British skeletons excavated from Church Lane. They were placed in the non-Christian section of the burial ground. The grave will need a headstone and we are considering placing some lines by the Roman poet Catullus on the headstone.

Bradenham

We have been working with Princes Risborough Countryside Group to undertake geophysics surveys of a ploughed-out but scheduled Bronze Age barrow at Saunderton on the Bradenham estate. The results suggest that though badly damaged by ploughing (it is now taken out of cultivation) the barrow still survives in reasonable condition below plough soil depth. The geophysics has also targeted what appear on aerial photographs to be ring ditches and we have now found a number of these in same field as the barrow. These could be ploughed-out barrows but they are more likely to be drip gullies associated with Iron Age roundhouses. We shall be repeating the surveys on a larger scale at the end of September to try and gain a clearer picture.