

National Trust report for BHEF meeting

November 4th 2013

Cliveden

Works are currently underway to repair the grade 1 listed South Terrace at Cliveden. This is stage 2 of up to 8 phases of work which aims to rectify serious structural problems facing the terrace, including deterioration of stonework, brickwork, ironwork and ingress of water through the terrace caused by poor drainage. The current phase of work is involved with partially dismantling and rebuilding the central staircase which is believed to have been added to the terrace c. 1720. Oxford Archaeology have been commissioned by the National Trust to complete an initial Historic Fabric Analysis and are currently maintaining a watching brief and programme of recording during the works. Removal of the cement render on the staircase – believed to date from Charles Barry's programme of work from the 1850s – has revealed high quality gauged brickwork thought to date from a slightly earlier phase of restoration dating from c. 1818. Sections of the brickwork have had to be dismantled and during this process we have recovered approx.. 50 pieces of architectural stone used in the core of the wall. Some of these pieces are highly decorative and could date from the original 1670s design of the terrace.

A report on observations arising from a watching brief over the new sewer main along the base of the terrace (2012) has been completed by Network Archaeology.

The summer spell of dry weather revealed some impressive parch marks on the north and south fronts at Cliveden.

West Wycombe Village

The Trust are currently re-roofing and refurbishing a number of the buildings in West Wycombe village and have commissioned Oxford Archaeology to record evidence exposed during the roofing works. We are also using the services of Dan Miles to undertake dendrochronology dating of the buildings and have had a number of successes – 1540s and 1550s dates for 2-9 High St, 1543/1561/1648 for the complex evolution of the Crown Court complex and 1465 for the Church Loft. Reports are being produced for the individual buildings and there will also be a synthesised report looking at the overall development of the village and styles of building construction.

Stowe Gardens

A watching brief (NT) over the rebuilding of the central culvert between the Octagon lake and Eleven Acre Lake has revealed several phases of earlier brick culvert and a stone-built culvert of probably c. 1720 date with a rockwork apron at its downstream end. Perhaps most remarkable has been the number

of crayfish recovered from under the culvert floors which have caused serious subsidence. An impressive cast bronze head of Bacchus has been recovered after unauthorised metal detecting in the gardens. We have recently deposited 140 boxes of artefacts from Stowe and other Bucks properties with the County Museums Service.

G Marshall 28/10/2013