

The National Trust

Report for Bucks. Historic Environment Forum

10th Sept 2018

Cliveden

Museum of London Archaeology have recently completed a geophysical survey and earthwork survey of the paddocks either side of the Feathers Gate drive. This is to inform a feasibility study to look into options for long term car parking at Cliveden. The surveys have identified subtle earthworks associated with the former Taplow Common which was enclosed in the 1780s. 2018 seems to be the year that everyone has gone 'parch mark' crazy, including the National Trust! Cliveden has been showing some very strong marks on the north front for the 18th c. gardens, likewise on the southern parterre. A drone mounted camera survey has therefore been undertaken to record these marks, and also a number of other features on the estate.

Stowe

Stowe has also been showing some interesting parch marks, particularly on the south front where we can see evidence of the formal gardens laid out as part of the 1680s house – a rectangular pond always shows up each year as a perfect narrow dark green line, suggesting the walls edging the pond have been dug away leaving a moister soil in the robber trench. We undertook a drone mounted camera survey, however, the results are somewhat obscured by watering undertaken by Stowe School and also industrial scale (!) criss-cross mowing. There are hints of a rectangular feature on the old house site and we hope to investigate these further through geophysics in the near future. A recent geophysics survey which allowed the public to have a 'taster' session has produced some very clear outlines for the former locations of the two Lake Pavilions on the southern boundary of the gardens. The results confounded our expectation of the ground being so dry as not to produce any meaningful results! Current restoration projects include reintroducing several statues into the Grecian Valley – Thalia and the Grecian Urn, reintroducing the Marquess' urn to the Elysian Fields and investigating the site of the Temple of Modern Virtue with a view to reinstating this intentionally ruinous folly. Stowe School should be credited with the reinstatement of four missing statues on the south portico of the house – Minerva, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. Archaeological recording has been carried out on two structures within the garden landscape due for demolition – the 1930s rifle range in the Hawkwell Field, and the 1930s pump house on the edge of the Eleven Acre Lake. The former will require an archaeological watching brief during demolition.



Stowe Lake Pavilion geophysics showing foundation of the former pavilion locations

Claydon

Several parch marks located in the park immediately north of the house have been recorded, possibly related to the mid 18th c. Ball Room and Rotunda, although their location lies slightly east of the site suggested by contemporary plans at Claydon.

Gary Marshall, National Trust Archaeologist 13/8/2018