

# **The National Trust**

## **Report to Bucks Historic Environment Forum**

**10<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

### **Stowe New Inn**

Works to secure the restoration of this historic grade II\* listed inn are due to commence in early March, with a completion date for the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011. Northamptonshire Archaeology will be acting as our archaeological contractors for the project and will be maintaining watching briefs over all excavations and excavations to increase the capacity of the car park, plus all internal interventions to the buildings. Until now volunteers have played a key part in the investigation and preparation of the site, with the Bucks Archaeological Society's Buildings Recording Group assisting with the recording of a number of elevations. A second group of volunteers have undertaken a huge amount of work to clear the courtyard surfaces of debris and soil, thus allowing for recording.

### **Stowe Gardens**

There have been a number of minor 'interventions' into the gardens at Stowe, including digging of about 40 tree pits between the Palladian Bridge and the Gothic Temple and the excavation of a series of drainage trenches between the Palladian Bridge and the Temple of Friendship. Watching briefs are maintained over all such excavations as they can reveal valuable information about the development of the gardens. The trenches on the south side of the Palladian Bridge have revealed the correct location for the original 18<sup>th</sup> century path leading up to the bridge (it has migrated eastwards due to the encroachment of trees and shrubs). Where possible the paths are restored to their original alignment but in this case the path will have to retain its existing alignment as this would otherwise necessitate the removal of mature trees.

### **Boarstall Tower excavations**

The archaeological report on the excavations undertaken in July 2008 is due for publication in March 2010.

### **25 High Street, West Wycombe**

As with many of the Trust's stock of tenanted historic buildings this building on the High Street requires some improvements to bring it up to standards for a 21<sup>st</sup> century commercial tenancy. Improvements are required not only to the provision of services – water, electric, drainage - but also to ensure that the building achieves the best possible environmental standards. The Trust maintains usually maintains a watching brief over such works, and in this case the work has revealed changes to fireplaces and window openings. The building retains a fine braced roof of probable early 16<sup>th</sup> century date which abuts the adjacent tenancy, thought to be late 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Trust would normally carry out dendrochronology dating but in this case many of the

timbers appear to be re-used and there is also an issue over the flimsy nature of the ceiling over which access would be required.

### **Buckingham Chantry Chapel**

Works have recently been carried out to allow for the installation of a toilet in the building. The building has been taken back in hand by the Trust and is now run as a second-hand bookshop and café. These works had a minor impact on the fabric of the building but did reveal a blocked doorway in the north wall. The door would have led to the adjacent house which historically served as the schoolmaster's house when this building served as the precursor to the Royal Latin School.

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28<sup>th</sup> February 2010