

Bucks Historic Environment Forum 5th March 2018

National Trust Report

Cliveden

Works are drawing to a close on the restoration of the South Terrace at Cliveden which has seen 5 years of painstaking restoration work. The final task for completion is the re-application of the render to the central staircase of the grade I listed terrace. Throughout the work we have employed the services of Oxford Archaeology to maintain an architectural and archaeological recording brief over the works and they have now submitted their draft report for these works. This amounts to a substantial 330 pages (!) but reflects the depth of recording and level of understanding that has been achieved. As a consequence of the recording we now have a better understanding of the phased development of the terrace which illustrates that though the terrace may have been built in the 1670s its current appearance reflects changes and alterations made by successive owners as a response to changing tastes and sometimes drastic circumstances i.e. fire! A condensed version of the report will appear in Records of Bucks (2018).

A further piece of work that Oxford Archaeology have reported on is their research and investigation of the 1890s generator house. Again a condensed version of their report will appear in records of Bucks (2017). Visitors to Cliveden in 2018 will be able to see the generator house and read about its history from a strategically placed viewing platform overlooking the building. Unfortunately proposed conservation works to reinstate the roof are currently on hold as tenders received for these have exceeded the Trust's original budget for the works, however, it is hoped that these will be able to progress in the next 12-18 months.

As I write excavations are taking place for cabling across the southern end of the Grand Drive and these have revealed foundations and brick flooring for a late 17th or early 18th c. building close to NW corner of the North Forecourt. Again these are being recorded by Oxford Archaeology.

Hughenden

We currently have a watching brief being maintained over a new sewer main at Cliveden, running from the stables to the NW corner of the mansion and then across arable fields to a mains about 1km way. A watching brief is being maintained by Oxford Archaeology but has failed to reveal anything of archaeological interest as the ground is made up and the chalk lies at a shallow depth below the ground surface.

West Wycombe Park

An archaeological watching brief maintained by the National trust over excavations into the stream banks below the cascade for retaining walls (Jan 2018) has revealed evidence of an infilled bypass channel of possible 18th c. date. This may relate to works carried out in the mid 18th century when the appearance of the cascade was altered and the stream channel needed to be temporarily diverted.

Bradenham

We are currently working with the Princes Risborough Countryside Group to record and monitor the condition of a number of earthworks in Park Wood. This has led to the discovery of a metal gun mounting close to the RAF base and advice from Historic England suggests this is a mounting for a 20mm anti-aircraft gun, of which only several examples are known to survive in-situ. So what was thought to be rusty old scrap metal has now become an item of national significance (!) relating to WWII activities when the base housed RAF Bomber Command. We hope to work with the RAF to record and uncover several former hut bases from the former camp that the Trust owns. Other news from Bradenham is that in March we will be working with the Risborough Group to take samples of charcoal for radio-carbon dating from a suspected medieval charcoal burner's platform at the Homestead site in Park Wood.

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