

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



STOWE BURIAL GROUND, DADFORD

January 2017



The Finnis Scott
Foundation



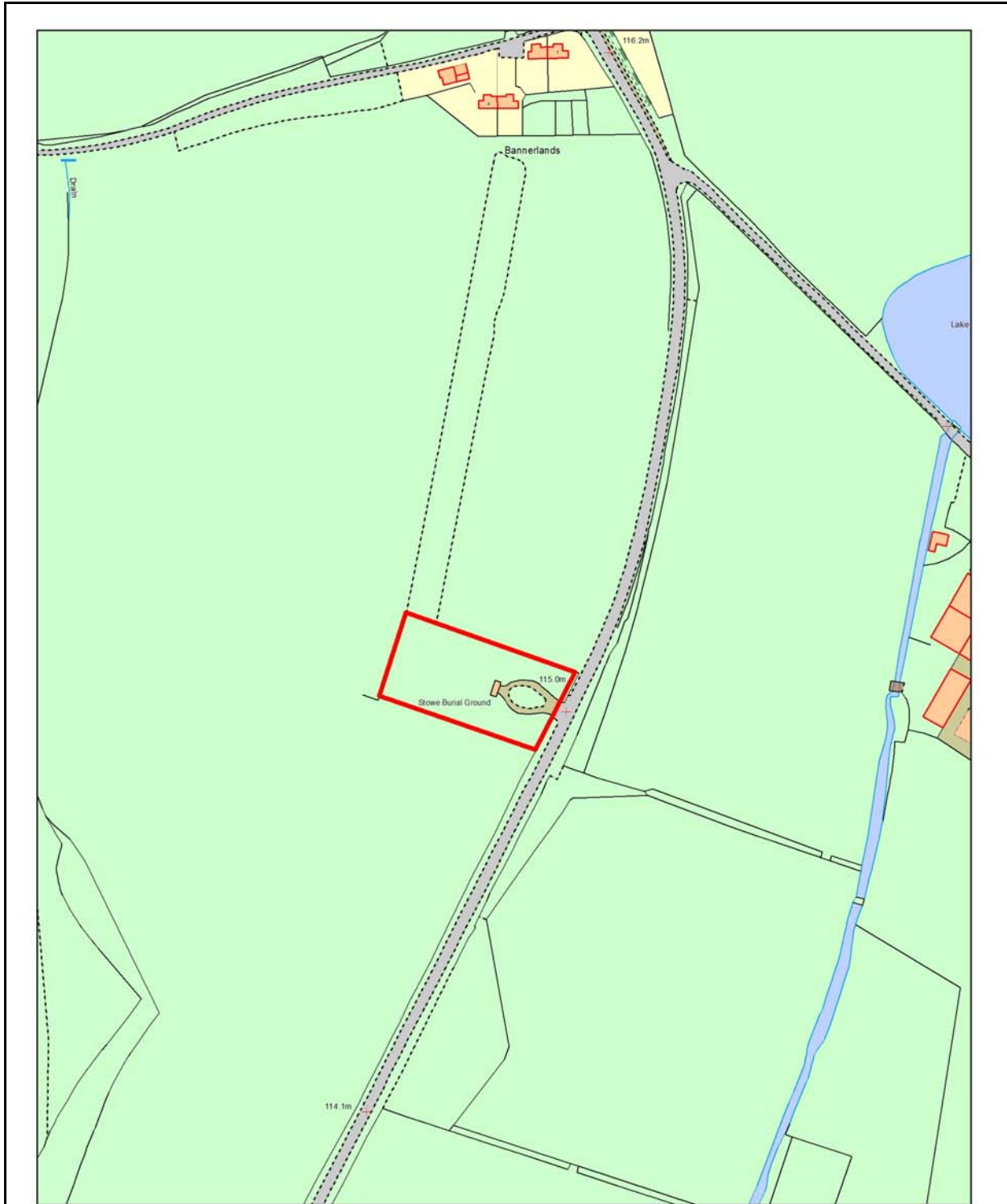
Bucks Gardens Trust

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Horticultural Trust

HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



Stowe Burial Ground (Dadford Cemetery): boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the County Archaeological Service
December 2016



Scale: 1:2,362 at A4



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Scale: 1:2,362 at A4



Stowe Burial Ground (Dadford Cemetery): 2006 aerial photograph

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INTRODUCTION

Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (now Historic England) (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not definitive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage/Historic England on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the English Heritage (now Historic England) *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest 2nd edn.*
- A map showing principal views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Gardens Trust (formerly the Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society) and funded by BGT with significant grants from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and the Finnis Scott Foundation. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

COUNTY:	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	STOWE BURIAL GROUND, DADFORD
DISTRICT:	AYLESBURY VALE	
PARISH:	STOWE	BCC HER 0764300000
OS REF.:	SP 667 377	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview: A late C19 rural Anglican parish burial ground, well preserved, with strong links to the adjacent Stowe park and its late C19 and early C20 owners. It is focussed on a central polychrome brick chapel by the Clerk of Works to the Stowe landowner, the 3rd Duke of Buckingham. The layout was designed by the Duke's Steward and was closely overseen by the Duke. Planting includes mature specimen trees typical of late C19 cemeteries including yews lining the drive and main path, and limes at the boundaries. The unconsecrated oval forecourt is an unusual feature for such a modest site, as it takes up a considerable proportion of the area.

Archaeological interest: There is not believed to be any archaeological interest in the site other than the intrinsic interest of the cemetery and its burials.

Architectural interest: The mortuary chapel and much of the iron boundary and forecourt fences survive, but the two original roadside gateways do not. The polychrome chapel with a Portland stone bell turret was designed by the 3rd Duke's Clerk of Works, Mr Savage. It does not conform to liturgical orientation, having the 'west' end to the south, and 'east' end to the north. A range of late C19/C20 headstone designs is found amongst the memorials and a mid-C20 obelisk commemorating the war dead (HER 0764301000) dominates the forecourt and chapel approach.

Artistic interest: The layout survives largely intact including memorials and planting with mature yews and boundary lime trees. The 3rd Duke of Buckingham was closely involved with the 1883 layout, executed by his Steward Mr Oxley. It has an unusual combination of an oval forecourt, occupying a considerable proportion of the whole site and overlooking Stowe park to the east, divided by the chapel from the burial ground which is laid out in a standard grid pattern. Long views on the other three sides beyond the iron boundary fencing overlook the surrounding farmland.

Historic interest: The cemetery contains the graves of a range of Stowe and Dadford residents. The documentation relating to its design increases the understanding of its significance. A John Oxley is buried there, possibly the designer, also two Morgan Grenvilles.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Dadford was manor within the parish of Stowe. By 1850 the 24 acre field (plot 149) called Bannerlands, including the site of the future Stowe Burial Ground, was owned by the Marquess of Buckingham (later 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos) and laid to pasture (Stowe Tithe Apportionment). Stowe Tithe Map (1845) shows the outline of the field west of the Dadford road, set in further agricultural land.

By 1883 the churchyard of St Mary's Church at Stowe was considered to be inadequate for future needs (ref.??). The 3rd Duke donated a one-acre plot of land in Dadford by the village street and just beyond Stowe park for a new parish burial ground. The Duke supervised the work himself and it is said he paced out the boundary of the site (pers. comm. Ivy Cakebread). He was assisted by his Land Steward Mr Oxley in setting out the ground and his Clerk of

Works Mr Savage took charge of designing and building a small chapel. Small yew and fir trees were planted, and the forecourt and boundary were enclosed with iron fencing (*Bucks Advertiser* 10 Nov. 1883). Kelly's directory (1883) confirms that John Thomas Oxley was Land Agent and James Webb Savage was Clerk of Works at Stowe, and that Webb was a prominent Freemason.

After two postponements of the ceremony the Bishop of Oxford consecrated the new burial ground on a fine day on 8 November 1883. The large assemblage of interested spectators included the Ladies Grenville (of Stowe House), Mr Higgins (of nearby Boycott Manor) and a number of the tenantry and their wives who with the clergy were invited to luncheon at Stowe House. The Bishop commented upon the 'neatly-ordered' burial ground and its 'good design' (*Bucks Advertiser & Bucks Herald*). By Christmas 1883 Dinah Harris was the first person to be buried in the new cemetery (Atkinson 2014).

The 1899 25" OS is the first map to show the burial ground layout in detail including the Chapel positioned north/south towards the centre of the plot, the simple path layout, and to the east of the Chapel a double gateway from the road and an oval approach drive. The oval lawn enclosed by the drive was planted with shrubs.

By 1960 the trees had been removed from the oval forecourt lawn east of the Chapel (pers. comm. Ivy Cakebread). The burial ground continues in regular use for burials. It is owned by Stowe Parish Church and managed by Stowe Parish Council.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM SETTING

Stowe Burial Ground is situated west of the Buckingham to Dadford road 3.5 miles north of Buckingham and 0.5 miles south of Dadford. It lies 0.5 mile west-north-west of the medieval Stowe parish church, which it serves, adjacent to the west edge of Stowe park. The 0.5 ha. (1 acre) site is level in the east half, rising gently westwards beyond the chapel. It is set in an agricultural landscape on the east, road side of a large field, being a rectangle measuring 85m x 45m (100yds x 50yds). The north, south and west boundaries are enclosed by the original cast iron railing fence (*Bucks Advertiser* 10 Nov. 1883), with a line of mature lime trees regularly spaced around the north and west sides, also probably part of the original planting. The east side is enclosed against the road by a C20 wooden paling fence interrupted by central wooden vehicle gates. The situation of the site was noted at its opening as being 'most pleasantly situate to the right of the road leading from the Avenue to the village of Dadford, and being on rising ground commands a picturesque view' (*Bucks Herald*, 1883).

Views extend over farmland, north to Dadford, south and south-west towards Boycott Manor, and west; also east over the road into Stowe park over the Home Farm valley, this last being partly screened by a belt of mature park trees that predate the burial ground.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The unconsecrated forecourt between the entrance gates and the Chapel comprises an oval lawn surrounded by a gravel drive leading to the main doorway. A 2m high obelisk in the centre of the lawn commemorates the war dead of Stowe parish in both World Wars. The oval drive is enclosed with an iron fence and 7 mature specimen yew trees. Between the iron fence and the boundaries to north and south are boundary lime trees and a holly bush. The remains of an iron gate by the north-east corner of the chapel marks a pedestrian gateway to the burial ground beyond. The *Bucks Herald* (1883) noted 'a double entrance with carriage drives, the oval centre being filled with shrubs, enclosed with iron palisading.' The two former gateways of this double entrance were separated by a small triangle of land and were probably of iron. They have been replaced by the present gateway.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The small mortuary chapel stands c.30 west of the entrance gates and bisects the site on a north-south axis into

unequal east and west halves, respectively the forecourt and burial ground. Measuring 8m by 4m, it is built of red brick with blue dressings, and a Portland stone bell turret at the south (liturgical west) end, as are the gables and dressings, under a tiled roof. The white-painted timber entrance doors fill the central of the three bays on the east side, reached from the forecourt via 3 stone steps. On the west elevation a further pair of white-painted doors, with windows in the upper half, gives direct access to the burial ground via two stone steps. Gothicised windows flank both doorways. Inside the Chapel is floored in red and blue chequered tile, with a fragment of the original oak doors and iron strap hinge mounted on the south wall. A plaque on the east wall dedicated to Lady Kinloss (daughter of the 3rd Duke and his heir who succeeded to the Stowe estate) states that the chapel was renovated in 1947 in her memory by her 4 children. It was designed by Mr Savage, clerk of works to the 3rd Duke of Buckingham at Stowe (*Bucks Herald* 1883).

OTHER LAND

The consecrated burial ground extends west from the chapel to the west boundary and to the south and north boundaries. An avenue of six mature Irish Yew (possibly dating from the original planting of 1883, *Bucks Advertiser* Nov. 10th 1883), extends west along the axial path from the chapel. The path is now grass but probably was originally gravelled. There are approximately 140 souls buried here (2016). The headstones are largely confined to the area north of the path and are in various states of repair. Formerly two small paths extended the axis of the chapel to north and south (OS), but these have gone.

The *Bucks Herald* (1883) noted that the grounds were 'dotted with small yew and fir trees, and altogether they are well arranged and have a pleasing appearance. The ground from the chapel steps [west of the chapel] is set apart for the Church, whilst the portion in front is left unconsecrated.' A number of mature yew survive but none of the 'fir trees' mentioned.

REFERENCES

Atkinson, Philippa, *The Lives Beneath our Feet* (2014).
Bucks Advertiser (08 November 1883).
Bucks Herald (08 November 1883).
Kelly's Directory for Bucks (1883).

Maps

Stowe Tithe Map, 1845 (CBS 367).

Ordnance Survey

2" to 1 mile Ordnance Surveyor's Draft surveyed 1814 (British Library)
25" to 1 mile
1st edition surveyed 1880
2nd edition surveyed 1899
3rd edition surveyed 1920

Archival Material

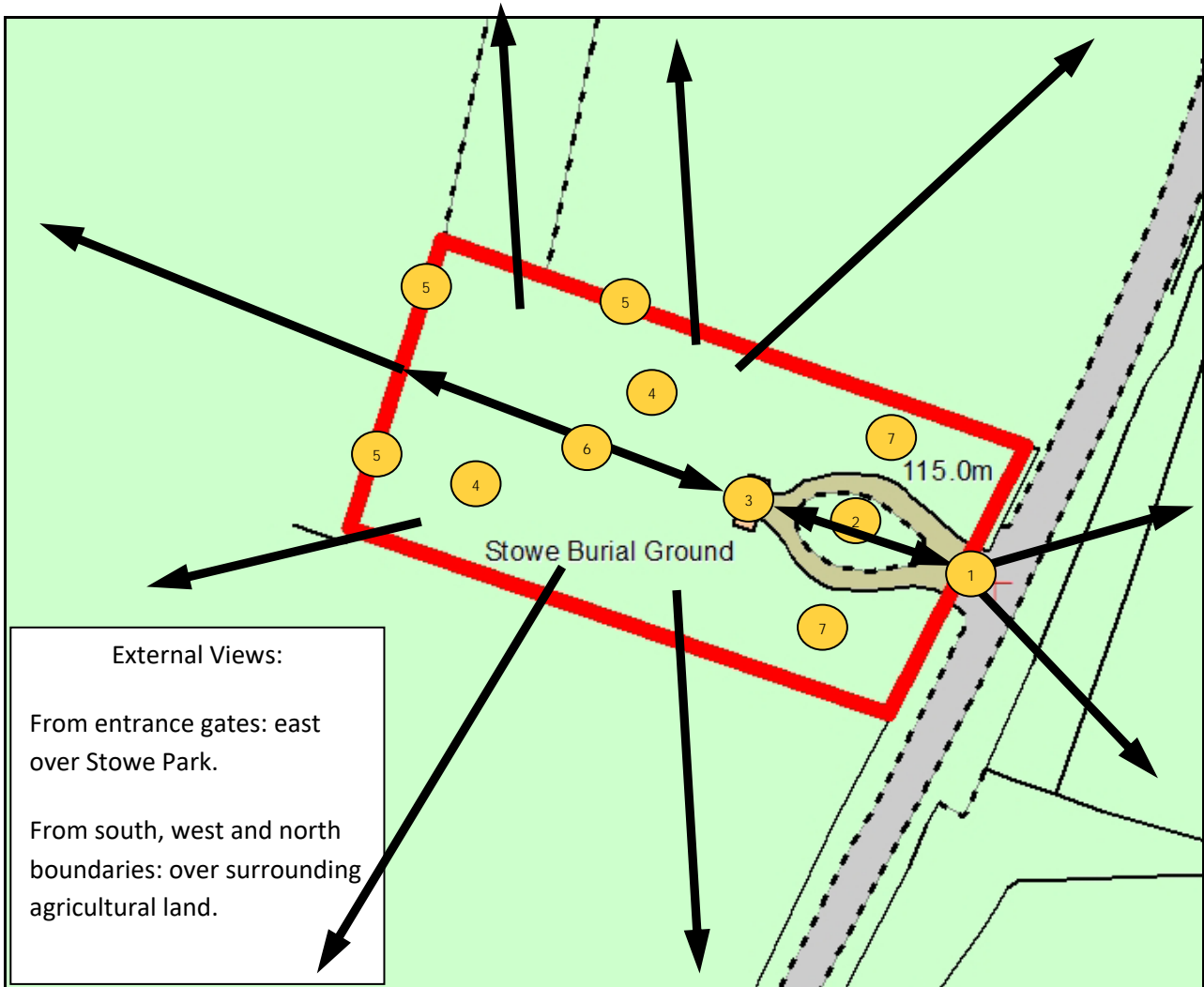
Stowe Tithe apportionment, 1850-51 (CBS 367).
Consecration in 1883 with trust deed (Oxford Diocesan Records at Oxfordshire Record Office DIOC/1/C/5/1621).

Aerial Photographs

Dr Sarah Rutherford & Ken Edwards November 2016

SR edited 09 December 2016

KEY HISTORIC VIEWS AND FEATURES



1. Entrance gateway	2. Turning circle enclosed by iron fence and mature yew
3. Mortuary chapel	4. Burial Ground
5. Mature lime on north and west boundaries	6. Axial path running west from chapel lined by Irish yew
7. Unconsecrated area flanking turning circle	

CURRENT IMAGES



Chapel, east, entrance front (left); forecourt, turning circle and gateway (right).



Chapel: north and west elevations (left); south and west elevations (right).



Chapel interior, south end (left); gateway from forecourt to burial ground (right).



Chapel and main path to west door (left); north-west quarter of site, view east (right).



Main path, view west (left); main path view north (right).



West boundary (left); south boundary (right).