

# SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY 1998

Edited by C. J. WEBSTER

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL, ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

## COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

It is becoming a cliché to record that the work of the group continues to expand but 1998 was no exception. We continue to develop our role as archaeological planning advisors to the District Councils and a wide range of statutory undertakers across the county. During the year we gave professional archaeological advice on over a thousand applications and development requests for such things as water pipelines and forestry applications. This reactive part of our service ensures that we are involved with a wide range of developments around the county. Many new sites and finds are added to the county SMR each year as a direct result these efforts using the planning system. In addition to the reactive planning functions of the group we have provided a strategic input to the County Structure plan and the District Council local plans. Members of the team provided specialist input to a range of projects such as at Brean Down Fort where a detailed survey was carried out by Chris Webster and Roger Hagley in preparation for a Heritage Lottery bid to repair the structure. The Historic Town survey funded by English Heritage was completed and both Clare Gathercole and Miranda Richardson left the County Council. The results of their survey will be used to provide Supplementary Planning Guidance on historic towns in Somerset. The project produced a mass of new mapping information and a written description of 43 settlements. I would like to thank both Clare and Miranda for an exceptional piece of research and report writing.

The group instigated a number of field and community projects. At the Old Pound in Stogursey archaeological recording and interpretation work was carried out as part of the conservation and repaving of the site. Visits from the local school and parish ensured that local people could see the work in progress. A similar project was undertaken at the invitation of the Norton sub Hamdon local history group where a small-scale investigation in the centre of Norton village was supervised by SCC staff. This revealed evidence of medieval activity and a stone wall. The excavation was a useful community archaeology project and the site was presented to the village and the local school during work and at evening meetings. Another example of this type of project was set up in conjunction with Mendip District Council and the local history society to look at the conservation and recording of St Aldhlem's Well at Doultong.

We are fortunate in the county to have a series of archaeological research projects such as the Shapwick project (see report) organised by Chris Gerard and Nick Thorpe of King Alfred's College Winchester and Mick Aston of Bristol University; the South Cadbury environs project by Richard Tabor and Birmingham University and Carscliffe near Cheddar where Mark Horton and Bristol University run a training excavation. Each of these projects

had added a great deal to our local knowledge and shows how valuable research excavations can be to help us to understand our local and countrywide heritage. During the year a research group was set up to consider the archaeological records and potential of the Bishop's palace at Wells and reports should appear in future issues of the proceedings.

In addition to the normal range of development-led projects two unusual projects were carried out during the year. In Cheddar Gorge, the Time Team carried out an archaeological excavation in conjunction with Bristol University archaeology department. The work took place during a very wet April and the results were far from conclusive but they did show how sometimes archaeology evidence can be very elusive! At the George Inn at Norton St Philip, English Heritage approved extensive rebuilding and reordering of the interior of the pub and Tish O'Connor carried out monitoring for the developer as part of the planning conditions. This was a very full exercise and the scale of work carried out here clearly shows the need for detailed archaeological assessment and subsequent monitoring of such important historic buildings.

The dissemination and interpretation of evidence from the SMR is one of the key ways in which local people can find out more about their local heritage. Members of the group continue to provide an extensive lecture and walk programme around the county and every year several thousand people gain direct benefit from the work of the group at local village halls, guided walks or by attending courses and visiting our main outreach service at the Peat Moors Centre near Westhay. The interpretation of the archaeology and heritage of the Somerset Levels and Moors via the work at the PMC is much appreciated by residents and visitors alike. During the year Guy Apter and Lisa Howells left the County Council and Nicki Black was appointed as the temporary warden until Eddie Wills and Nancy Ashworth were appointed. A group of County Councillors from the Countryside and Heritage Board visited the site in November and gave full support for a revised strategy to expand and develop the site in partnership with other bodies. Discussions are underway with English Nature and other partners to consolidate the PMC as an important site in the visitor management strategy for the Somerset Levels and Moors and the Shapwick Heath area in particular.

The main publishing achievement of the year for the group was the launch of *Somerset Parks and Gardens* by C. J. Bond, which is a valuable contribution to the study of gardens and landscape history both for Somerset and the wider region. The interest level in archaeology and the historic environment is increasing all the time and one of the key tasks of the County Council Architectural and Historic Heritage Group is to make some of that cultural resource come to life through outreach projects, publications, educational activities and strategic guidance.

(R. A. Croft)

## SURVEY, FIELDWORK AND EXTENSIVE SITES

### *Chesterblade, ST 65754170—ST 65824047*

Archaeological monitoring produced evidence of varied, multi-period archaeological activity along the course of a new (replacement) water main constructed by Bristol Water plc within and around the village of Chesterblade, Evercreech. Additional archaeological evaluation prior to the excavation of the pipe trench further substantiated the existence of medieval occupation within prominent earthworks to the west of the Church of St. Mary, demonstrating the former extent of the now shrunken village.

(R. A. Broomhead)

### *Ditcheat, ST625363*

A watching brief on the construction of a new Transco pipeline running from the Fosse Way to the village of Ditcheat recorded a potential prehistoric site and a possible Romano-

British site, both centred around grid reference ST61733705, and earthworks and possible shrunken settlement on the western edge of the village at grid reference ST62153630.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Leigh on Mendip, ST60824795—ST68144720*

Field observations made during the construction of a new (replacement) water main by Bristol Water plc in the parish of Leigh on Mendip produced trace evidence of prehistoric activity along the pipeline route supporting in part previously recorded evidence of such activity in the area. Firm dating evidence for the establishment of field boundaries in the area was not forthcoming, although a post-medieval date would seem appropriate on the limited evidence that was available.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Rodney Stoke, ST47705025—ST48094968*

A combined review and examination of existing archaeological data together with field observations produced trace evidence of varied, multi-period archaeological activity along the course of a new water main constructed by Bristol Water plc in the Parish of Rodney Stoke between the Honeyhurst Pumping Station and Honeyhurst Lane to the east. In addition a peat filled channel, probably representing an earlier course of Stoke Brook was located.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Somerton, ST48182792 to ST49592877*

A watching brief was conducted by Cotswold Archaeological Trust on behalf of Transco during the construction of the Somerton Reinforcement Gas Main. This identified a post-medieval field boundary with associated drainage and cultivation features at the western terminus of the pipeline and, further east, remnants of ridge and furrow. At Greenhill Farm, to the south-east of Somerton, features of more interest were located. These included a medieval quarry pit, a trackway, a lynchet, a ditch, and a post-medieval field wall. Considerable quantities of residual pottery were recovered from this latter area, including four sherds of Cheddar E ware dating to c. A.D. 950–1050, and much medieval material.

(M. Brett)

*South Cadbury Environs Project*

This report summarises the results of excavations, shovel testing and geophysical surveys carried out within the project by teams from the Universities of Glasgow and Birmingham. Members of the South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society and the Yeovil Archaeology and Local History Society have provided further assistance.

The exceptional results of an 18 ha geophysical survey of a plateau at Sigwells, Charlton Horethorne (ST640235), overlooking Cadbury Castle have been supplemented by a programme of shovel testing over the same area. Analysis has revealed episodic rather than continuous use in six phases from the bronze age to the early medieval. Full publication is in preparation.

A geophysical survey of most of the narrow valley between Cadbury Castle and Littleton Hill has been undertaken. Results at Castle Farm suggest intensive activity, commensurate with the prolific Romano-British pottery in charcoal-rich spoil heaps created during the recent construction of a carpark for the hillfort. Further south the survey has revealed probable medieval and Romano-British ditches. Continuing survey in the Milsom's Corner field has revealed a probable Romano-British and possibly early-medieval farmstead.

As part of a planning condition for a new farm building, undergraduates from the

University of Glasgow excavated areas adjacent to the Cadbury Castle car park. Several postholes were found cutting into deep silts sealing the black soils of Romano-British occupation debris. Among the finds was a late eighth century Anglo-Saxon coin.

The excavations at Milsom's Corner (ST623250) continued to investigate the ditch in which a late bronze-age shield was discovered last year, and other earlier features. It is now clear that the deposition of the shield marks the end of a sequence of singular bone deposits in the ditch over a period of several centuries. The ditch itself cut through at least one early bronze-age flexed burial of a human adult, laid on the now mineralised remains of a slatted or hurdle type "coffin". It was aligned on Glastonbury Tor, a very visible landmark some 18km to the north west. The excavation of a second early-neolithic pit produced a remarkable group of artefacts. Apart from prolific fire-cracked flint, hazelnuts, daubed charcoal sticks and complete profiles of Hembury-style vessels, a Cornish-type polished axe was found. Progress was limited by the appalling weather conditions.

(Richard Tabor)

## MULTI PERIOD

### *Athelney, The Baltmoor Wall, ST340292*

Two trial trenches and several boreholes were recorded by Exeter Archaeology as part of the assessment of the Baltmoor Wall for strengthening by the Environment Agency.

One trench revealed a layer of woody peat sandwiched between layers of alluvial/colluvial clay. Boreholes showed that the peat did not reach the W edge of the field. Radiocarbon dates from the top of the peat calibrated to 1374–918 cal BC (2 sigma).

A second trench was located at the W end of the wall and located a red clay bank, which had been sealed by colluvial clay 0.9m thick. Only part of the bank could be examined but it appeared to follow the line of the present Baltmoor Wall. The bank overlay an organic layer containing charcoal, which overlay a buried soil. Part of the bank had been cut away by ditch of unknown dimensions. Radiocarbon dates were obtained of 445–644 cal AD (2 sigma) from the charcoal beneath the bank and 604–774 cal AD (2 sigma) from the ditch, suggesting a sixth-century date for the construction of the clay bank.

A borehole located near Athelney Farm recorded a layer of peat with clayey layers above containing bone, slate and charcoal. A radiocarbon date was obtained from the top of the peat of 1021–1257 cal AD (2 sigma). Another located a peat deposit but here the radiocarbon date was 2128–1751 cal BC (2 sigma).

(C. J. Webster)

### *Wedmore, The Close, ST43104755*

Following evaluation in 1993<sup>1</sup>, proposals to redevelop an old orchard for a housing estate required archaeological excavation of the new access road, house plots and mains service trenches prior to construction. These excavations were carried out in the spring and summer of 1998.

The excavations recorded evidence for late iron-age, Romano-British, late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval occupation. There may also be some slight evidence for possible middle iron-age settlement and there is a general background scatter of earlier prehistoric flint tools and waste flakes.

Settlement evidence for all periods mainly comprised boundary ditches and gullies with structural evidence comprising postholes and some possible beam slots.

Extensive environmental sampling was carried out and some selected radiocarbon determinations have also been undertaken, partly to determine whether any post-Roman and pre-10th century occupation occurred. A full report is in preparation.

I. C. J. Webster and R. A. Croft (eds), *Somerset Archaeology 1993*, *SANH* 136 (1992), 136.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

## PREHISTORIC

### *Alford, Dimmer, ST607306*

An archaeological watching brief on a machine-excavated cut for a new stream course on the southern edge of the Dimmer landfill extension site recovered evidence for prehistoric settlement. Archaeological features included pits, ditches and gullies, occupation spreads, buried ground surfaces and natural watercourses, all sealed by up to 0.5 metres of alluvial or colluvial clays within the flood plains of the River Cary. The extension area covers around 74 acres of the flood plain. The dates of the prehistoric features vary from the (?) middle bronze age through to the late iron age. No Romano-British or medieval finds or features were recovered from below the upper clay which is therefore assumed to have been deposited sometime around the 1st century AD. The late iron-age sherds are typical of Durotrigian wares. Apart from pottery, other finds included animal bone, mostly very small, cut fragments, a large triangular fired clay loom weight and a Kimmeridge Shale spindle whorl. There were no finds of flint tools, flakes or debitage.

The bronze-age finds and features were recovered in a separate area to the Durotrigian material, the latter being within silty clay deposits above a silted-up (?) water course.

Environmental samples have been taken from the fills of prehistoric features and possible natural features and a number of bone and charcoal samples have been collected for possible radiocarbon determinations.

Construction work on the landfill extension is expected to continue for several years.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

### *Athelney, bog oaks, ST346296*

Agricultural sub-soiling brought a large number of bog oaks to the surface in two fields immediately to the west of Athelney Hill. This was a rare opportunity to analyse the remains of a prehistoric wood located in what should theoretically be a wetland environment. An initial record and sampling exercise (for tree-ring dating) of the bog oaks in one field was carried out by Somerset County Council. This was followed by more sampling, for dendrochronology, by staff of the ARCOS tree-ring laboratory in Sheffield. Over 60 samples were taken making it one of the largest bog oak sampling exercises ever undertaken in the UK. Such samples have proved useful for building the prehistoric master chronologies against which timbers from other archaeological sites are matched. Students and staff from the Geography Department of Bristol University undertook some sampling of the peat deposits in the field for environmental analysis. Samples of the bog oaks are also being analysed by Prof. Nilsson of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to study the pattern of their decay.

(Richard Brunning)

### *Banwell ST41305835 to 41495838*

See under Roman.

### *Cannington, Castle Hill Quarry ST24604080*

Observations made during the stripping of topsoil within the current planning limits of active quarrying at Castle Hill, Cannington produced evidence of surviving archaeological



features comprising post-holes and pottery of Iron Age or earlier date probably associated with an enclosure noted by Rahtz in 1963<sup>1</sup>, but which has now been quarried away.

<sup>1</sup> Rahtz, P. A. Cannington Hillfort 1963, *SANH* 113 (1969), 56-68

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Coxley, Harter's Hill, ST533427*

Further<sup>1</sup> shallow trenching by Somerset County Council on the line of this late Bronze Age pile alignment showed that the alignment exceeded the field boundaries. This means that it was over 100 metres in length. The alignment was becoming progressively deeper below the present ground surface as it went away from the dry land to the north and showed no sign of stopping.

<sup>1</sup> Brunning, R. in C. J. Webster and R. A. Croft (eds) *Somerset Archaeology 1997*, *SANH* 141

(Richard Brunning)

*Douling, Douling Quarry extension, ST65154365*

Systematic archaeological fieldwalking on the site of the proposed extension to Douling Quarry produced evidence for prehistoric activity and frequentation of the area. Flint tools plus flint debitage, flint 'potboilers' and cores suggest that occupation areas might be present within the proposed extension. A small amount of late-medieval pottery was collected as well as post-medieval pottery and artefacts. No Romano-British, Saxon or early-medieval finds were recovered.

Subsequently, four 20m long evaluation trenches were positioned in areas of potential. Two of these contained undated features comprising a small gully, a probable ditch terminal and a shallow linear scoop or gully with an associated posthole. Numerous flint flakes and tools were collected from the areas around the evaluation trenches both during the evaluation and in the previous fieldwalking project and small quantities of Romano-British and medieval pottery sherds were also recovered.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*East Brent, Sycamore Lodge, ST34485185*

See under Roman.

*Meare, Lake Village, ST447422*

The Centre for Wetland Archaeology in Hull University undertook a surface survey using Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment. This technique succeeded in detecting the previously known mounds but also suggested that the eastern 'village' area may have been larger in size than previously thought. Subsequently staff of the School of Geography and Archaeology of Exeter University assisted by Somerset County Council staff carried out a coring investigation of some of the new possible 'mounds'. The results suggested that none of the sites cored were in fact Iron Age mounds. In one area charcoal and bones were recovered from a peat deposit, probably derived from a nearby habitation mound. Other earthworks visible on the surface were caused by thicker layers of floodplain clays and may relate to medieval flood defence banks. Brief environmental analysis of the cored deposits suggested that at the eastern end of Meare East shallow water oligotrophic conditions prevailed. The interpretation of raised bog growth at Meare Village West was also brought into question.

(Richard Brunning)

*Meare, West Waste, ST473412*

The installation of a new Bristol Water pipeline through the peat moors between Meare and Godney resulted in an archaeological evaluation, which recorded peat deposits but no arti-

ficial features or structures, and an excavation. The archaeological excavation entailed excavation along the line of the new pipeline across a small, low lias island within West Waste. The excavation recovered evidence for probable late-mesolithic occupation represented by flint tools and flakes and extensive charcoal spreads, some of which was collected for radio-carbon assessments.

A subsequent watching brief on the remainder of the pipeline recovered several bog oaks from which samples for dendrochronology were taken. One further small rise of lias clay was recorded within the peat moors and a small quantity of animal bone and mussel shell fragments was recovered from sandy geological deposits on the western end of Godney 'island',

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Mells, Wadbury Fort Cottage, ST3604902*

A programme of archaeological works, commissioned to accompany construction of an extension to Wadbury Fort Cottage, within the Scheduled Monument of Wadbury Camp, established that the earthworks immediately adjacent to the east end of the cottage are of 19th century date.

(Michael Heaton)

*Middlezoy, Greylake, ST393337*

Small-scale trenching was undertaken by Somerset County Council with the intention of finding the extent and alignment of the Late Bronze Age wooden structure excavated the previous year<sup>1</sup>. The trenches produced no evidence of the structure but did find items which were probably associated with it such as flint, woodchips and white pebbles. This suggests that the structure is not an alignment running north-south linking the Polden ridge to the "island" of Othery, as was first thought. It may be part of a post row heading out into the wetland at an oblique angle or it may be a site of very limited extent marking out an area of the wetland that had a special significance because of its association with the disposal of the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Brunning, R. in C. J. Webster and R. A. Croft (eds) Somerset Archaeology 1997. *SANH* 141

(Richard Brunning)

*Montacute, Ham Hill, ST48271603*

Wessex Archaeology was instructed by Dr David Jefferson, on behalf of Ham Hill Stone Quarry, to undertake the excavation of an area of c. 720 sq. m within the existing Ham Hill Stone Quarry. The archaeological excavation was undertaken prior to the proposed extension of the existing quarry as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent and planning permission.

The excavation was carried out between 1st and 17th September, 1998 and involved an area adjoining (east of) the site of the 1994 excavation.<sup>1</sup> Two iron-age pits were recorded, together with a probable tree hole, two intercut ditches and a possible third ditch. The ditches were undated.

<sup>1</sup> Webster, C. J. and Croft, R. A. Somerset Archaeology 1994. *SANH* 138 (1994), 171.

(Christine Butterworth, Roland J. C. Smith, Lorraine Mephram and Sarah F. Wyles)

*Rowberrow Treatment Works, Shipham, ST442586*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bristol Water plc to carry out an archaeological evaluation in connection with the proposed route of a new outfall drain leading from the Rowberrow Treatment Works to the Towerhead Brook, near Shipham, Somerset. Due to

the proximity of the proposed route to important archaeological remains (principally comprising Star Roman villa along with features of iron-age date and a concentration of mesolithic worked flint), an archaeological evaluation of the western part of the route was requested, with the remainder of the route subject to a watching brief during the construction of the new pipeline.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in February 1998 and comprised three elements: a preliminary topographic survey, six machine-excavated trenches and two hand-augered boreholes.

The topographic survey highlighted several features of potential interest including a possible hollow way leading towards the villa site. The trial trenches revealed features and finds of prehistoric, Romano-British and post-medieval date.

Several flint flakes of possible neolithic-bronze-age date were recovered, but possibly the earliest archaeological feature recorded was an east-facing arc-shaped arrangement of five small blocks of dolomitic conglomerate bedrock forming a 'kerb' approximately 3m across. Towards the centre of this arc were several smaller stones, possibly representing the remains of a cairn or a setting for a larger stone which has subsequently been removed. No dating evidence was found in association with these features, but it is suggested that they represented a small monument of probable late neolithic or early bronze-age date which was constructed adjacent to a spring and surrounding marshy area. A sequence of samples for pollen analysis has been taken from this marshy area.

The only Romano-British feature was a ditch dating to the 3rd–4th century AD which is likely to have formed part of an enclosure boundary or field system associated with the nearby villa. This ditch produced a substantial quantity of finds including pottery, animal bone and some burnt stone. A soil sample taken from this feature was particularly rich in charred grain and chaff indicating that crop processing took place in the immediate vicinity. A small quantity of residual Romano-British pottery was recovered from elsewhere on the site.

Several stone-filled drains were revealed at the western end of the evaluation area, towards the low-lying marshy area. None of these drains produced any clearly associated dating evidence, but it is suggested that they are most likely to have been of post-medieval date.

The project archive will eventually be located with the Somerset County Museum Service.  
(Mick Rawlings)

#### *Puriton, Knowle Hill, ST338406*

Fieldwork during the winter of 1998/99 by Nick Corcos located a mound which appeared to be a ditched bowl barrow. It lies at the western end of the Polden Hills, on the crest of the ridge, and is bisected by the southern section of the parish boundary between Woolavington to the east, and Puriton to the west. It does not appear in the relevant parts of the listings of Somerset barrows published by Grinsell<sup>1</sup>, and although Woolavington is known to have possessed two windmills by the early 13th century, their locations are unknown, and tithe field names here in the mid 19th century give no indication that there was ever a windmill on this site<sup>2</sup>. Windmills within Woolavington and Puriton parishes are depicted on the Somerset maps of both Day and Masters (1782) and Greenwood (1822), but in each case at locations well removed from the site described here<sup>3</sup>. Approaching from the north, the parish boundary takes a marked dogleg to the east as soon as it strikes the ditch, and then runs over the top of the earthwork. It seems quite clear that the boundary surveyors used the barrow in what must have been, at least in this area, a quite open and featureless landscape. However, the boundary does not cut the barrow exactly in two. Probably about two-thirds of it lies on the western, Puriton side, and this section is relatively well preserved. The remainder, on the eastern, Woolavington side, has by contrast been virtually ploughed out. The good state of preservation on the western side may have implications for the future



management and protection of the monument. Across what seems to be its widest surviving diameter, from north-west to south-east, the barrow is about 30m wide between the outer lips of the ditch.

Students from the Dept of Archaeology, University of Bristol, under the direction of Jodie Lewis and Dave Mullin, carried out a geophysical and earthwork survey. A metal gate immediately to the south and a metal cattle trough, adversely affected magnetometry. However, resistivity picked up not only the well-preserved western section, but also confirmed the course of the ditch in the now-destroyed eastern section. The low resistance readings recorded from the top of the barrow itself, very similar to those taken from the surrounding ground surface, suggest very strongly that this is an earthen barrow without a stone or rubble core.

In terms of its wider implications, the monument seems to fit well into the context of a linear barrow cemetery running east-west along the Polden ridge that has recently been suggested by Aston.<sup>4</sup>

We would like to record our grateful thanks to the following people: Heidi Dawson, a student in the Dept of Archaeology at Bristol University, for her sterling help with the survey; Mr Brian Lishman, of Goosegreen Farm, Sutton Mallet, for his work in tracing the farmer and the landowners on our behalf; the joint landowners, Mrs C K Hudson and Mrs K H Greenhill, for their support, and for permission for the survey to be carried out; the farmer Mr John House, for his helpful co-operation in the matter of access to the field; and Mr Paul Trolley, of the Bridgwater office of Greenslade, Taylor, Hunt, for his interest in the work, and his good offices as 'liaison' between ourselves and the landowners.

- 1 Grinsell, L. V. Somerset Barrows, Part I: West and South, *SANH* 113, (1969), supplement; Grinsell, L. V. Somerset Barrows, Revisions 1971-87, *SANH* 131 (1987), 13-26.
- 2 Bond, C. J. *Medieval Windmills in South-Western England*, Wind and Watermill Section, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Occasional Publication No. 3, (1995), 8, and 55-57; Coulthard, A. J. and Watts, M. *Windmills of Somerset and the Men Who Worked Them*, (1978), 58, 67-68. The title maps and awards for Puriton and Woolavington show a common field nomenclature here across the boundary. Puriton, SRO D/D/R1 384 (1842), T688, 'Great Mortland'; Woolavington, SRO D/D/R1 403 (1842), T73 & 74, 'Maitland'. See also Paul Ashbee, 'Barrows, cairns, and a few impostors', *British Archaeology* (March 1998).
- 3 Harley, J. B. and Dunning, R. W. (eds), *Somerset Maps*, Somerset Record Society 76, (1981).
- 4 Aston, M. A. 'Mounds, Barrows, Watermills, Windmills and Limekilns', in Aston, M. A. and Costen, M. D. (eds), *The Shapwick Project: The Fourth Report*, (1993), 12-13.

(Nick Corcos and Jodie Lewis)

## ROMAN

### *Banwell ST41305835 to 41495838*

A total of 430 sherds dating from the late Iron Age to the 4th century AD was retrieved between December 1998 and January 1999 from a ditch on Banwell/Winscombe boundary. A small earlier find was made in the vicinity in about 1992. A geophysical survey of the adjacent field is planned in early February 1999.

(John Matthews)

### *Cheddar, Kings of Wessex School, ST45705305*

A small-scale site evaluation was undertaken to provide an initial assessment of the likely archaeological implications of plans to erect a new classroom block on land immediately south of the existing school buildings at the Kings of Wessex Community School, Cheddar. The evaluation demonstrated the presence of widespread Romano-British activity in the area

under consideration with well preserved archaeological remains in-situ. The evaluation also demonstrated that such remains survive at a very shallow depth and were likely to be subject to substantial disturbance should development proceed. See also under Medieval.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Chilton Trinity, ST29703928*

A small-scale evaluation was undertaken to assess the likely archaeological implications of proposals to develop land to the east of Holy Trinity Church in the village of Chilton Trinity. The evaluation identified two ditches of Romano-British date on the western margins of the site but in general demonstrated that the primary archaeological features within the application area were limited to former medieval or post-medieval boundaries depicted on existing maps and also to post-medieval pits and gullies almost certainly related to the adjacent Marsh Farm.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*East Brent, Sycamore Lodge, ST34485185*

A small-scale evaluation was undertaken to provide an assessment of the likely archaeological implications of proposals to develop land to the rear of Sycamore Lodge in the village of East Brent. The field evaluation indicated that substantial archaeological features survive within the assessment area comprising elements of a probable Romano-British building, or other structure, underlain by extensive iron-age occupational remains.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Ilchester, sports field, ST51902225*

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during construction of a new sports pavilion, access road and mains service trench within Townsend Close, south of the Ilchester by-pass. Romano-British pottery and coins were recovered as well as late iron-age pottery. The work will carry on into 1999.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Rowberrow Treatment Works, Shipham, ST442586*

See under Prehistoric.

*Taunton, Upper Holway, Hillyfields, ST241238*

Following two phases of evaluation, three areas were excavated by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. Area A was sited to examine the series of Roman ditches located in the evaluation. Three periods were identified: late iron age/early Roman, later Roman and late-18th to 20th century. The earliest features were plots or compounds defined by shallow ditches and gullies aligned along a boundary ditch. Very few finds were recorded. Period 2 saw the replacement of these compounds with others on a different alignment, which were probably more settlement related than before. These were developed and possibly contained some settlement features although truncation made these unclear and many were undated. Period three comprised 18th-century and later ditches and a large quarry pit.

Trench B located far fewer Roman features than the evaluations suggested would be present but a large ditch was recorded. The ditch terminal contained a large amount of pottery (50% of the site total) as well as roof slate, iron nails etc of later fourth-century date. All the remaining activity could be related to post 18th-century activity.

Trench C was largely negative and those possible features located were undated.

(C. J. Webster)

## MEDIEVAL

*Blackford, The Grove, ST41344784*

Trenches revealed stratified archaeological deposits, possibly structural, containing pottery of 13th/14th century date and other, complementary, materials within an otherwise undisturbed natural soil sequence.

(David Murdie, Michael Heaton)

*Bridgwater, Eastover, former Vincents Garage, ST30243708*

An evaluation excavation was carried out by Peter Bellamy in this area which may have formed part of the medieval hospital. This showed that intact medieval stratigraphy survived along the street frontage and dated to the 14th century.

Following this an area on the frontage of Eastover was excavated by Context One Archaeology in advance of the construction of a supermarket. A watching brief was maintained over the rest of the development area.

The excavation recovered 4 main phases of occupation: *Phase 1* (late C13–C14). The earliest deposits were a sequence of laminated clays containing a hearth and bordered by a shallow ditch parallel to the road. These appear to represent internal floor levels of a building along the street. Several large pits cut these layers. Behind this area was a build-up of garden soil, also seen in the evaluation trenches in this area, containing various ephemeral post-holes and hollows. *Phase 2* (C16–C17). A stone building was constructed along the frontage. A robber trench suggests that this may have replaced an earlier stone structure of which no other evidence remains. A well was dug and stone-lined and two post-holes may represent a well-head structure. *Phase 3* (C18–C19). The top of the well was reconstructed in brick and a brick wall built along the line of an earlier stone one. A large brick pier, two stone settings and a posthole suggest an entrance way line with fencing which is supported by early map evidence. The well was filled with rubbish. *Phase 4* (C20). The brick building is likely to have survived in the early use of the site by the garage (from 1903) but was later replaced by steel framed buildings on the same alignment. The concrete floors were made up on debris from this structure and other rubbish.

Much of the southern area of the site had been covered by stone chippings before monitoring began but service trenches etc over the rest of the site were observed. Most of the features recorded related to C19 and later use of the site, including property boundaries along the former Barclay Street to the S. No medieval buildings were identified but several fragments of Hamstone mouldings were recovered.

Glazed medieval pottery from the site was composed of jugs from (principally) Donyatt, Ham Green etc but the coarsewares were dominated (75% of all medieval sherds) by a fabric otherwise only known from Shapwick, suggesting a local source. Donyatt types dominated the post-medieval sherds but there were also imports from Iberia and Germany. Fragments of floor tiles are more likely to have come from the medieval hospital than a domestic building.

(C. J. Webster)

*Bruton, Spargrove, ST672380*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Southern Electric plc to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the refurbishment of a section of 11kV electricity cable at Spargrove where it crossed a possible deserted medieval village immediately to the east of the moated manor house. The only identified archaeological feature was a substantial ditch, visible on the current ground surface as a shallow channel. This may once have formed the boundary of the deserted medieval settlement, but it is also possible that the ditch was

connected with the drainage system attached to the moated manor. No dateable artefacts were recovered from this feature.

(Jim Stedman)

*Cannington, Church of St Mary, ST275395*

The nave of the church was monitored during reflooring but no archaeological deposits were disturbed by the work.

(Alan Graham)

*Castle Cary, Manor Farm (ST642232)*

A site evaluation by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit examined an area zoned for housing development on the site of farmyards and buildings between Fore Street and the surviving castle earthworks. This revealed the line of the western defences of the castle, surviving almost intact as massive ditches over 12m wide and possibly 7m deep, marking the perimeters of the early 12th-century inner bailey/keep and outer bailey areas. A contemporary or slightly later limekiln, and an adjacent building were located just inside the keep ditch, but there was no trace of outer banks. A third massive ditch, similar in scale, extends west from this perimeter towards the town, part of its course apparently now represented by the Horse Pond at the end of Fore Street. This feature may be slightly later than the main castle defences, representing a western annex which was probably created when the Manor House was built in the later 12th or 13th century. This evidently connected with the Park Pond (source of the River Cary) south of the Manor House site, to form a moated enclosure around it. Some later medieval and post-medieval features and deposits still survive in places within that enclosure, despite extensive later disturbances from the more recent farm activities.

(Peter Leech)

*Cheddar, Kings of Wessex School, ST45705316*

An archaeological watching brief was conducted during the construction of an extension to the existing science department at the Kings of Wessex Community School, Cheddar in compliance with scheduled monument consent granted in December 1997. A small amount of archaeological material was recovered although most is assumed to have been derived from the spoil of prior excavations, the general location of which were determinable during groundwork. There was no evidence of any additional disturbance to surviving archaeological features during these works or in the excavation of a trench for the laying of a new power cable across the site. (See also under Roman).

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Chew Magna, The Preaching Cross, St Andrews Church ST57766268*

An archaeological survey and watching brief by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services was conducted on the medieval preaching cross (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) located in the graveyard of St Andrews Church, Chew Magna during its conservation. The watching brief during the reduced excavation around the base of the cross revealed the remains of a seventh bottom step overlaying a chamfered plinth base. All the finds recovered were post-medieval in date.

(Jayne Pilkington)

*Cheddar, the Old Showground, ST45635325*

A second series of evaluations was undertaken within The Old Showground following on from the first series in 1997 and a subsequent geophysical survey of the site, which was carried out by Stratascan Ltd in early March 1998. The results were complicated by metal

debris in the soil, possibly resulting from use as a fair and showground, and by the existing tracks and mounds of rubble on the site. However, a number of features were interpreted as being of possible archaeological significance these including ditches, pits and possible tracks.

These results suggested that other areas of the paddock would benefit from archaeological investigation before decisions could be made regarding the planning application. Three further evaluation trenches were cut with trench 3 investigating possible features in the northeast corner of the site, trench 4 investigating various pit/hearth type anomalies in the northern part of the site and trench 5 investigating features on the western boundary adjacent to the road.

The trenches recorded further evidence for medieval occupation on the site together with medieval and (?) late-Saxon boundary features. The results of both series of evaluations enable a reasonably accurate assessment of the archaeological and historic background to the site to be presented.

Very little flint was recovered suggesting that prehistoric occupation was not concentrated in the area. Some Romano-British pottery was recovered but in such small quantities it presumably came from the known sites to the south.

A radiocarbon assessment on a fragment of horse bone from deep within a large and undated ditch at the eastern end of trench 1 in 1997 produced calibrated dates of: 407–533 cal AD (at 1 sigma), 346–557 cal AD (at 2 sigma) suggesting a date in the second half of the 5th century AD.

A large shallow feature which may represent a road line, or define a boundary, in the Saxon period suggests that settlement of this period did occur within the site although 10th-century pottery was rare. Most of the evidence recovered, both finds and features, relates to the medieval period particularly between the 12th and 14th centuries. There was certainly occupation during this time fronting onto modern Station Road and pot sherds elsewhere within the paddock do indicate full use of the site, although some areas probably contained outbuildings and paddocks rather than domestic houses. Ploughing, which has truncated archaeological features and deposits, probably did not occur until some time after 1700.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

#### *East Coker, Slades Farm, ST54251225*

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in a paddock immediately adjacent to Slades Farm in East Coker during topsoil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches for a new house and detached garage. The works proceeded to cut through and expose several archaeological features, mainly ditches and pits and all probably of medieval date. The pottery ranged from the 12th–13th century to the 17th century and included some residual Romano-British sherds. The medieval occupation may be linked to a high status medieval house situated some 30m south-east of the watching brief area which was investigated by Brian and Moira Gittos in the late 1980s<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Gittos, B & M. A medieval site in East Coker, *Chronicle* (J. Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society) 5:2 (1991), 60–63; Webster, C. J. and Croft, R. A. *Somerset Archaeology* 1990, *SANH* 134 (1990), 222–3.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

#### *Edington, Sunnyside Cottage, ST38653985*

Archaeological excavation of a drainage trench in a building plot west of Edington Church found evidence for medieval settlement. Boundary ditches and gullies contained pottery sherds dating from the 13th century and relic subsoils contained pottery ranging in date



from the 10th to the 14th century. Apart from a few flint flakes there was no evidence for prehistoric activity.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Fiddington, Manor Farm, ST21654062*

In May 1998 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Stilings Associates, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Leppard, to undertake an archaeological field evaluation in advance of proposed building developments. The site lies within the historic core of the village to the east of the parish Church of St. Martin, which has a 14th-century cross within its grounds. The evaluation site comprises the grounds and outbuildings to the north and east of Manor Farm including part of an adjacent arable field to the east.

The area within the arable field was investigated by six machine-dug trenches totalling approximately 96 sq. m and, within the grounds of the present buildings; three 1.5m by 1.5m hand-dug test pits were excavated.

Five archaeological features were identified comprising three ditches and two pits. Of these features, two were of medieval date, one was of post-medieval date and two were undated. The medieval features produced a small assemblage of late 12th- to early 14th-century pottery.

The evaluation has, therefore, produced the first excavated evidence for medieval Fiddington. The function of the two medieval ditches is unknown although they may have served as field or property boundaries. The absence of structural features and of greater quantities of artefacts from the pits and ditches may suggest that these features lay on the fringes of the early settlement.

The project archive will be deposited with the Somerset County Museum Service, Taunton.

(Isea J. Howell and Roland J. C. Smith)

*Glastonbury, Archers Way, ST50053907*

An archaeological evaluation within a public car park at Archers Way, Glastonbury, recorded and partially investigated a late-medieval property boundary and an early post-medieval gully. Medieval pottery sherds and settlement debris were recovered from a relic sub-soil and the position of a post-medieval pond was recorded. The car park has been proposed as the site of the new town library.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Glastonbury, Crown Arcade, ST49833898*

A small-scale site evaluation was undertaken to provide an initial assessment of the likely archaeological implications of plans to erect four two-storey dwellings on land to the rear of the Crown Hotel in the town of Glastonbury. The evaluation demonstrated the presence of medieval stratigraphy and a limited number of medieval features within the assessment area associated with long-term occupation and rubbish disposal, but found no evidence to indicate the presence of medieval structures with the possible exception of a demolished boundary wall. The evaluation also found evidence of post-medieval features and noted damage to the surviving archaeology caused by the erection and demolition of recent structures and by the current usage of the area.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Haselbury Plucknett, Church of St Michael, ST471109*

Excavations for a drain in the north-west corner of the present nave (a 19th-century reconstruction) revealed the external face of the north wall of the medieval church. This

was solidly constructed of mortared Hamstone blocks, of which two courses survived above a wider foundation. This had been placed in a foundation trench dug into the natural clay. The medieval wall face ran parallel to, and 2.3m south of the external face of the present nave wall indicating that the medieval nave was at least 4.5m narrower than the present one. Pevsner<sup>1</sup> records that arcades were taken out in 1920 and it seems likely that these were 19th-century embellishments of the wider nave as the width of the medieval nave would not require arcades.

A single burial of an adult was partly exposed 0.7m north of the medieval wall. No dating evidence was recovered but it clearly predated the nave extension. Two flat stones recorded to the east may indicate the position of another grave, both of which would originally have lain outside the church.

1 Pevsner, N. 1958. *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset*.

(Alan Graham)

*Keinton Mandeville, Church of St Mary Magdalene, ST548301*

Excavations for a new building in the angle between the north side of the tower and the north-west corner of the nave were monitored. They revealed a considerable depth of foundations which demonstrated that the tower and stair turret are contemporary, and that both had been built up against the west end of the aisle prior to its extension northwards. Service trenches to the north and east of the church revealed the tops of graves and the rubble bank that had formed the eastern limit of the graveyard; this is still visible as an earthwork. On the outside of the bank a probable enclosing ditch was revealed but no evidence of the date of these features was recovered.

(Alan Graham)

*Kilmersdon, Babington House, ST704511*

An archaeological watching brief was carried out September 1997 when renovation works at Babington house required the construction of new mains services and drainage trenches. Archaeological finds and features appeared to indicate that the medieval manor house probably lies below the site of the present house and that the (lost) medieval village was probably situated immediately to the south of the house. Pottery suggests that the settlement commenced during the 12th century.

A subsequent evaluation in February 1998 prior to the construction of a new cricket pavilion south-east of the church recovered only 18th- and 19th-century finds and features and these results, plus those from the earlier watching brief, suggest that settlement never extended east of the church.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Langport, Cockle Moor, ST41922669*

In October 1998 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Charter Properties Ltd to undertake the excavation of two 2m by 2m test pits within the site of a proposed supermarket development at the rear of Ensor House, Bow Street. The evaluation was situated within an area thought to contain either features relating to the medieval burgage plots, or the possible remains of medieval and post-medieval wharves associated with the Back River which flows along the south of the site.

The test pits identified deep deposits of made ground, of about 2m in depth, dating from the 18th century and which directly overlaid 'natural' (geological) deposits of alluvial clay

and peat. The only feature located consisted of a single 18th- or 19th-century drain. No medieval features, structures, surfaces or finds were identified.

(Andrew Manning)

*Luccombe, Ley Hill, Horner, SS892450*

In 1994 a deserted settlement with field systems was found on the Holnicote Estate in West Somerset, during an archaeological survey by Richard McDonnell for the National Trust. The site lies on the eastern slope of Ley Hill, above Horner Water, on the present woodland margin of Horner Wood, which is ancient woodland and a National Nature Reserve. Map evidence (1889) shows an area named Higher Wells above the site<sup>1</sup>, but documentary research by Su Jarwood has not yet produced any information about this place-name nor any that can be definitely linked to the settlement.

In 1997, as part of the Royal Commission survey of Exmoor, an earthwork survey<sup>2</sup> of the settlement was done which confirmed seven rectilinear features, apparently buildings. The report highlighted the vulnerability of two of the buildings crossed by footpaths and a permissive bridleway, Granny's Ride. Building 7, the lowest and most easterly, was being heavily eroded with the stone of possible walls exposed. The opportunity was taken to excavate in advance of conservation work, and a resistivity survey of the settlement was carried out at the same time<sup>3</sup>.

Excavation of the eastern two-thirds of the building was undertaken, with the constraints of tree growth and nature conservation in mind. Earth-bonded, rubble-stone walls were revealed ranging in height from 16 to 67cm with an average width of 62cm. The stone was mainly the local purple and grey sandstones, with some pieces of slate and old red sandstone. The doorway was in the north (long) wall and had been part-blocked. The floor was a distinctive bright orange, set on a pinkish-red natural, with possible leaching from the floor. There was only time to excavate a small area outside the walls to establish the contemporary external ground surface.

The lack of a hearth or drain indicates that the building was not used as housing for people or animals. The clean nature of the floor suggests that the surface had been cleaned or swept during the use of the building. The site produced fourteen pottery sherds (including two rims), dating from prehistoric to the 15th century. The few sherds of pot found which were found on the floor surface were 13th/14th century, the later pot was found outside the building. The only other finds were a piece of 18th-century glass and two flints, one a discoidal core. The building therefore seems to have been an outbuilding, possibly a barn, and to have gone out of use in the 13th/14th centuries. A radiocarbon date from oats retrieved by flotation from part of the floor surface has given a calibrated date range of cal AD 1284–1385 (at 1 sigma).

The small amount of prehistoric pot found was not abraded, and suggests iron-age settlement very close to the site.

Further work is needed to understand the area, and the National Trust hope to investigate further over the next two years with evaluation excavation, environmental sampling, further earthwork survey and documentary research.

*Funding was very generously provided by Exmoor National Park, West Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, the Leonard Laity Stoa Charitable Trust, Dr and Mrs Nicholson and the National Trust. A donation towards equipment was given by Homebase. We are grateful to David Dawson (Taunton Museum); John Allen (Exeter Museum) and Charles Hollinrake who have looked at the pottery, Roger Jacobi who kindly looked at the flint, and to the volunteer diggers and estate staff.*

1 Wilson-North, R. 1997. *A medieval settlement and prehistoric enclosure at Ley Hill, Luccombe, Somerset*. Unpublished RCHME survey report in National Monuments Record and Somerset Sites and Monuments Record.

- 2 McDonnell, R. 1994. *Horner Wood. Report on the Preliminary Archaeological Field Assessment of two sample areas.* Unpublished report prepared for the National Trust.
- 3 Papworth, M. 1998. *Geophysical survey of the medieval settlement at Ley Hill, Luccombe, Somerset.* Unpublished National Trust report.

(Nancy Grace and Isabel Richardson)

*Middlezoy, Main Road, ST37683277*

A second site evaluation was undertaken to provide an additional assessment of the likely archaeological implications of proposals to develop for housing land adjacent to Main Road Middlezoy. This confirmed the presence of medieval features extending throughout the application area but failed to clarify their nature.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Norton-sub-Hamdon*

A small-scale research excavation was directed by R. A. Croft for Somerset County Council and the Norton-sub-Hamdon Local History Group. The main objective of the project was to locate a large building shown on the Tithe map of c1839 on the western side of the parish church which local tradition identified as a possible site for an earlier manor house. The fields to the north were subject to archaeological evaluation in 1994 in advance of the construction of a new school building and playing fields. These had located traces of a medieval ditch and recovered a sherd of 13th-century Saintonge pottery.

A detailed map regression exercise, carried out by the Norton-sub-Hamdon Society (particularly Mike Cudmore), identified the likely position of the building shown on the Tithe map. A trial trench 7m by 1m was positioned to pick up the building and was excavated intermittently from March through until October 1998. The work was carried out by students from The Somerset College of Arts & Technology, volunteers from the Norton-sub-Hamdon Society and Somerset County Council.

(R. A. Croft)

*Over Stowey, Church of St Peter and St Paul, ST185385*

Monitoring of a service trench to the south of the church revealed no features of archaeological interest.

(Alan Graham)

*Preston Plucknett, Yeovil, The Abbey, ST536164*

Proposals to construct housing to the rear of the barn at Abbey Farm led to the excavation of 9 trenches by AC Archaeology. These recorded only an early boundary ditch (undated) and a large pit or ditch of probably recent date. No pre-modern finds were recorded. Much of the area appeared to have been disturbed by tipping and other activities associated with the buildings to the east but there was no evidence that this part of the site had been occupied during the medieval period.

(C. J. Webster)

*Staplegrove, St John's Church, ST212264*

Monitoring of an intermittent service trench to the west of the church revealed no features of archaeological interest.

(Alan Graham)

*Stoke-sub-Hamdon, The Old Glove Factory, West Street, ST47301738*

Six trenches were excavated in open ground to the west of the former glove factory. The site is on the edge of the medieval village, just south of the Priory. Two ditches were

revealed, one parallel to West Street, the other parallel to North Street. Though no evidence of their date of origin was revealed, they are likely to have been medieval boundaries, reflecting the lines of the medieval village streets. Hollows along the top of both ditches contained pottery dateable to the later 17th or early 18th century (a clay pipe made by George Webb, of Chard, c. 1700 was also recovered), indicating that the ditches were still visible as shallow earthworks within a larger field at about this time. They were finally obscured by dumps of clay and stone, probably from the construction in the 1920s of the Stoke Memorial Hall.

(Alan Graham)

*Taunton, Billetfield, ST22982425*

A small-scale site evaluation was undertaken to provide an initial assessment of the likely archaeological implications of plans to erect a house and garage on land to the rear of No. 8 Billetfield, Taunton. The evaluation demonstrated that an embankment which probably formed part of the medieval town defences survived within the proposed development area and that other medieval and post-medieval deposits also exist. These other deposits comprised a late medieval soil horizon cut by post-medieval pitting and post holes, the latter features appearing to predate the available cartographic evidence relating to the development of the site.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Washford, Cleeve Abbey, ST507406*

An archaeological watching brief on a Wessex Water main, which followed the eastern precinct boundary of Cleeve Abbey, recovered environmental samples from the top fill of the medieval moat. No dateable finds were recovered from the moat or elsewhere along the pipeline.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Wedmore, Mudgley, ST45434578*

Set in the hedge on the west side of White Horse Lane is a boundary stone which does not appear on any map. It is a substantial, rectangular slab of coarse, grey and very fossiliferous Wedmore stone, the top of which has been broken off at an angle. There is no sign of anything carved on the visible western face of the stone. Its eastern face is tightly wedged against the leaning trunk of a massive, half-uprooted wych elm which overhangs the lane.

The stone stands near the southern corner of the east end of the block of strips called Wood Breach Furlong or The East Breach Furlong in 1558<sup>1</sup>, part of the medieval open field system of the Manor of Mudgley. It could have marked the limit of this arable furlong, suggesting a date of 16th century or earlier. Alternatively, it could have marked the eastern limit of the ancient Mudgley woodland which preceded the fields, and which is implied by the fieldname 'Breach' and by the fact that the fields were manorial 'overland'; this would suggest a considerably earlier date for the stone: possibly 13th or 14th century. On the opposite side of the lane is a surviving stretch of the woodbank around 13th-century Bagley Wood, the eastern continuation of the same woodland lying in the adjacent estate of Northload. Immediately to the south, lies the steep uncultivated hillslope called Scrobbefts in 1558 and Scrubbett in 1791 and 1820<sup>2</sup>.

In the Survey of Mudgley Manor in 1558, John Bayllie holds half an acre of arable 'at the Leppinge Stooone' in the East Field. The evidence is not adequate to prove this stone is the Leaping Stone, but it is in the right area. Of all the many references to marker-stones in and around Wedmore parish, from 13th century Forest bounds to 19th century Ordnance Survey maps, this is the only surviving example found in the course of several decades of fieldwork on Wedmore. The name suggests the rituals of Rogation Day and other boundary



perambulations, when small boys were set to jump over a stone to impress the spot on their memories; or a marker comparable to Deerleap at Ebbor, to indicate the boundary between woodland and cultivated land.

- 1 Survey of Mudgley Manor 1558 SRO, DD/SAS PR 462
- 2 SRO, DD/SAS PR 462; D/P/Wed 13/10/17 and 13/10/3

(Hazel Hudson and Frances Neale)

## POST-MEDIEVAL

### *Ashill, Rowland's Mill, ST344162*

Archaeological work of a limited nature was carried out in 1995 during the early stages of an extensive repair and restoration programme at the mill. This programme continued until 1998, but no further archaeological work was needed or carried out. Though limited in scope, the work provided evidence of the original form of the building.

In its original form, possibly built as early as 1600, the building, with its impressive and decorative southern façade, was a rectangular block measuring externally 40ft by 21ft (12.3m by 6.5m); essentially twice as long as wide. It appears to have been a purpose-built mill and dwelling of elegant simplicity. A central doorway on the ground floor split the building in half; to the west the meal floor and machinery; to the east a single large room with fire place and bread oven. Though now opening into a passage, the door probably opened originally into the large ground floor room. The substantial post and muntin wall that divides the present passage from the meal floor is continued on the first floor dividing the stone floor from a domestic room, and is probably the only internal wall original to the building.

The building was later extended to the north, its original north wall being demolished and replaced by a timber frame with daub infill. The materials of the present north wall are almost certainly re-used from the original. The west wall of the building has also been rebuilt and the original form and position of the water wheel (now on the outside of the west wall) is unknown. Beneath the meal floor is a large chamber of unknown function, and it is possible that originally, both water wheel and machinery were housed within the west end of the building.

(Alan Graham)

### *Bleadon, Stroud Pill, ST313570*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wessex Water to undertake a drawn record and a photographic survey of the sluice at Stroud Pill, Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare. The purpose of the survey was to provide a record of the surviving remains prior to their burial by a new sea wall set back from the old one in order to create a larger area of salt marsh along the eastern side of the tidal part of the River Axe. This 'managed retreat' will provide a habitat for wildlife.

The sluice is situated within the old sea wall at the east end of Stroud Pill, an ancient channel or stream, which flows into the River Axe. In the past, drains or rhynes fed into Stroud Pill from the Bleadon Level through the sluice, which is now blocked. Map evidence suggests that the old sea wall was constructed in the late 18th century or earlier. The extant sluice may have been built at this time.

Stroud Pill sluice is the only tidal door in the old sea wall from Walborough to the 20th-century sluice at Brean Cross Pill. Only the seaward (west) face of Stroud Pill sluice survived at the time of the on-site recording but this face was blocked and no mechanism was visible. The landward (east) face and channel were no longer visible. The seaward

elevation was constructed mainly of granite with some limestone and brick. Modern repairs in granite, brick and concrete were also recorded.

(Paul Gajos and Charlotte Matthews)

*Shepton Mallet, Collet Park, ST62174350*

An archaeological watching brief in Collet Park, undertaken during construction of a new Wessex Water sewage pipeline, recovered settlement evidence dating to between the 16th and 18th centuries towards the southern edge of the park. No Romano-British material was recovered and only a few sherds of medieval pottery were found.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Shepton Mallet, Darshill, Lower Silk Mill, ST60624391*

A desk-based study and photographic survey of the remains of Lower Silk Mill, Darshill, west of the town of Shepton Mallet, were carried out as part of a planning agreement concerning the redevelopment of the mill complex. This project is the third in a series of archaeological reports commissioned during the ongoing redevelopment of the Darshill mill sites.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Wells, 54 and 56 High Street, ST54834565*

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken when part of the internal ground floor of a previously divided shop front was removed. The shop is situated at the extreme western end of Wells High Street. Only post-medieval finds were recovered when deep make-up layers were removed, the earliest pottery probably dating to the 16th/17th century.

A new foundation trench was also cut through the centre of a storeroom to the rear of number 56 High Street. Similar make-up deposits were noted in this building. A deposit of loose clay below the make-up layer contained a pottery sherd of probable 15th/16th century date.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

## INDUSTRIAL

*Luxborough, Langham Hill engine house, SS977356*

It is known that the engine house was built in 1866 to wind ore and pump water from a new shaft sunk to unite workings in Chargot Wood and Smallcombe Bottom. The removal of a former waste heap close to the site of this building exposed a corner of the stone structure and gave rise to concern that if nothing were done any remains of this building would be removed without being recorded.

The landowners, Forest Enterprise, gave permission and excavation of the site by members of the Exmoor Mines Research Group and Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society commenced in June 1995 (Fig. 1). It was soon realised that the remaining structures comprised the lowest courses only of the stone building, together with crawl tunnels which gave access to the lower end of the numerous anchor bolts which secured the parts of the beam engine, pump rods and winding drums to massive masonry bases, parts of which still remained. It was also clear that the whole site had been deliberately entombed in waste rock from the mine. Thus there was no stratification and very few artefacts other than small broken iron fragments of wheels, mine skips, etc.

After three years work the whole of the building and its reservoir has been uncovered. In September 1995 a massive cast iron crank was uncovered and a chance rainstorm revealed the presence of a hairline crack across part of one end: while it was still in use this had been repaired by shrinking a wrought iron ring round that end of the crank. Another signifi-

cant find was a coil of iron wire rope, about 200 metres long, which was probably one of the two winding ropes from the 212m deep shaft. A study of original documents discovered some years ago revealed that Langham Hill engine house had been dismantled in 1878/9 and both the building and the beam engine transported to Burrow Farm mine and re-erected there, so accounting for the abandonment at Langham Hill of the defective crank. Exmoor National Park Authority conserved the standing remains of Burrow Farm engine house about twelve years ago. The documents also showed that after the mines closed in 1883 the site of Langham Hill engine house was deliberately buried in waste rock as part of a landscape reclamation project carried out by the mining company at the landowner's behest.

Thanks are due to Forest Enterprise for facilitating the excavation and to Exmoor National Park Authority for funding the cost of a small excavator for bulk removal of waste rock.

(M. H. Jones)

*Luxborough, Sir Thomas Lethbridge's Iron Works, Charget Wood, SS974359*

Members of The Exmoor Mines Research Group and Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society were given permission by the landowners, Forest Enterprise, to attempt to uncover the remains of a small building, whose location, about 250m from Sir Thomas's iron mine, and proximity to a fast flowing stream suggested may have been an assaying furnace.

The issue of the *Taunton Courier* dated 25 November 1840 carried a lengthy article, probably written by Sir Thomas Lethbridge himself, about 'the Iron Works at Luxborough'. The article referred to 'extensive mills, ponderous tilting hammers and vast smelting furnaces . . . which are now nearly completed.' An advertisement in the *Mining Journal* of 17 April 1841 seeking a lessee for the mine and iron works, referred to the 'iron mill and forge, with Vaughan's blast engine'. As this 'blast engine' was small enough to have been hand operated, it is very probable that what Sir Thomas actually constructed was an assaying furnace and small forge to prove the quality of the ore that was being brought out of his mine in Charget Wood.

Work began in February 1995 at the east side of the stone-built structure, parts of which stood about 30cm above ground level. The excavation was hampered by the fact that during the last fifty years the stream has been diverted from the east to the west side of the building, and that in the 19th century any other buildings which may have lain to the west of the present course of the stream had been deliberately buried in waste rock from Bearland Wood no. 1 adit.

The building which was uncovered was about 12m long and 4m wide with a small extension in the middle of its eastern side about 3.5m by 1.5m in size. The 40cm thick external walls gave every indication of being cheaply and hastily constructed. No openings in the walls were found, nor any kind of floor within the building, but a few pieces of slate found suggested that it may have had a slated roof. Small finds from the site included fragments of coal, slag and cinder lumps together with small pieces of wrought iron apparently cut by a guillotine. There was evidence of an area of lime ash flooring to the west of the stream, but because of the presence of large amounts of waste rock, excavation was not carried farther in this direction before being abandoned in July 1995.

The evidence, although inconclusive, given that the excavated artefacts could have formed part of the later waste heap, suggested that this structure might have been the iron works referred to in the *Taunton Courier*.

(M. H. Jones)

## OTHER REPORTS

*Bawdrip, Crandon Bridge/Puriton Hill, ST328402*

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during a water main renewal project on the A39 on the south side of Puriton Hill at Crandon Bridge adjacent to the Roman site

# LANGHAM HILL ENGINE HOUSE EXCAVATION

## 1995 - 1998

BRENDON HILLS INDUSTRIAL SURVEY  
LANGHAM HILL ENGINE HOUSE  
SS 9774 3561

PLAN OF EXCAVATION  
AT LEVEL OS 351.00

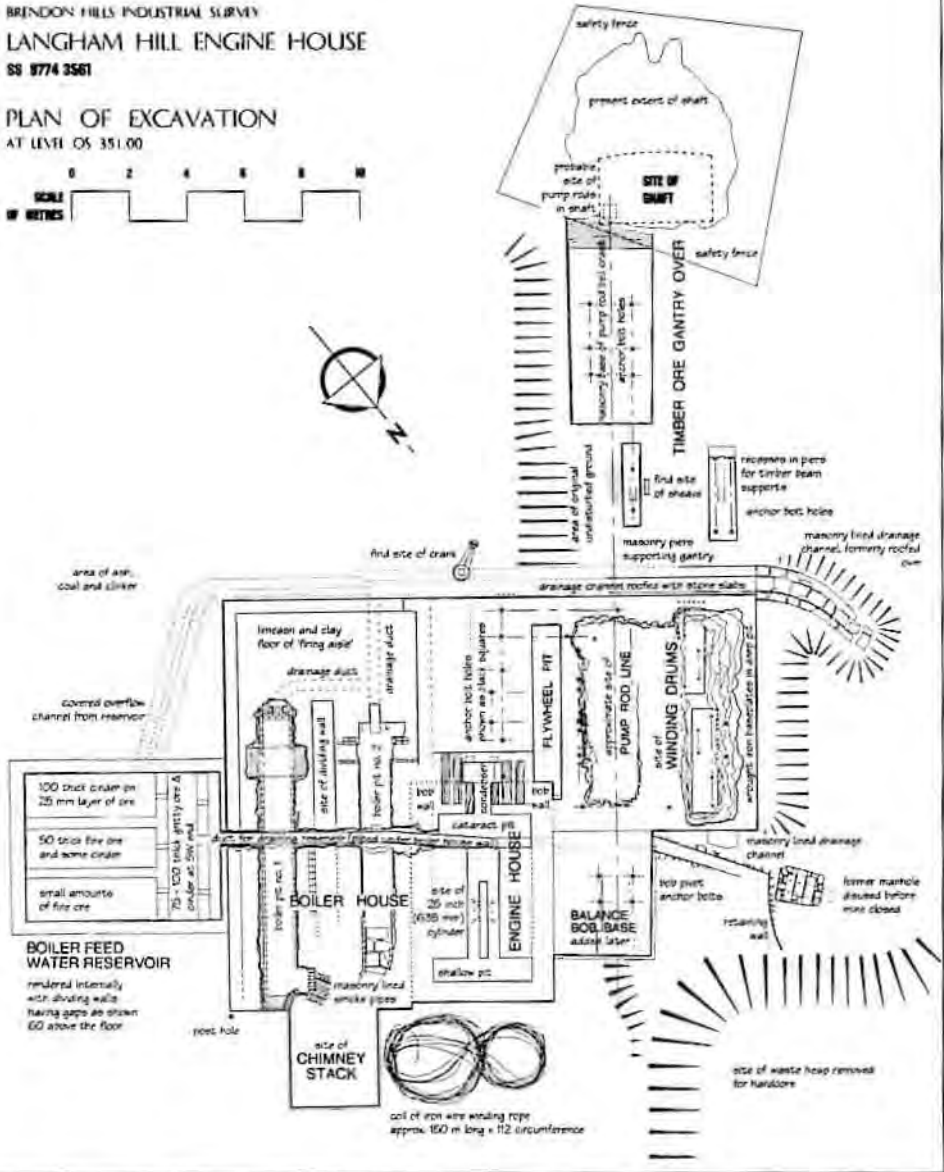


Fig. 1 Langham Hill Engine House excavations (M. H. Jones).

excavated when the road was built<sup>1</sup>. No archaeological features or finds were seen within the new pipe trench.

<sup>1</sup> Langdon, M. and Fowler, P. Excavations near Crandon Bridge, Puriton, 1971. *SAMH* 115 (1971), 53–54.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Berrow, ST29475249–ST29665236*

Observations made during the construction of a sewerage rising main diversion at Coast Road and Parsonage Road. Berrow failed to produce any substantial evidence of early archaeological activity in this area of assumed medieval occupation adjacent to the church of St Mary. A discontinuous horizon containing a little medieval material was noted but primary disturbance within the pipe trench was due to the presence of post-medieval structures, modern services and dumping.

(R. A. Broomhead)

*Bishops Lydeard, Sandhill Park, ST159299*

An archaeological watching brief carried out during redevelopment of the eastern portion of Sandhill Park for residential development found no evidence for previous settlement of any period, the reason probably relating to the construction and subsequent demolition of hospital buildings on the site and the grading down and levelling of the natural ground. An archaeological evaluation at the extreme eastern corner of the park found no features earlier than the 20th century. A few sherds of medieval pottery testify to activity in that period but modern truncation of the area has destroyed any early features that may once have existed. Possible earthworks immediately outside the Sandhill Park boundary wall were noted; these may be connected to the site of the medieval chantry chapel of St. Mary.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Butleigh, Court Gardens, ST52203385*

An archaeological watching brief, undertaken during the construction of new residential homes within a modern domestic garden at Court Gardens, Butleigh, found no evidence for medieval or earlier occupation. The only archaeological remains, features or artefacts were of 19th-century date and related to the construction of boundary walls and drains connected with the adjacent Butleigh Court and with 20th century market gardening.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Chard, rear of RS Cars Ltd, ST32540860*

The observation of foundation trenches revealed no trace of archaeological features or deposits. The area appears to have until recently been low lying and wet. A detailed report has been deposited with the Somerset Sites and Monuments Record.

(Alan Graham)

*Cheddar, land off Draycott Road, ST346153*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Prowting Homes to carry out an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposed residential development on land off Draycott Road, Cheddar, following a geophysical survey. The geophysical survey had located anomalies, running parallel and to the south of the River Yeo, which were interpreted as possible Roman stone lined drainage ditches or walls associated with the canalisation of the river. Other geophysical features were identified as possible pits or ditches.

The evaluation comprised eight machine-dug trenches targeted on the geophysical anomalies. The trenching revealed that the possible stone canal features were in fact a modern



sewage pipe and that the other geophysical anomalies were mainly caused by geophysical variations or modern field drains. A north east to south west palaeochannel, possibly an earlier tributary of the River Yeo, was excavated in Trench D. A linear feature, excavated in Trench J, contained probable prehistoric pottery (?early Bronze Age). Although this feature was interpreted in the field as a modern drainage ditch, it is possible that it was prehistoric. No other deposits or finds of archaeological interest were found.

(Angela Batt and Charlotte Matthews)

*Crewkerne, Oscar's Wine Bar, ST44100985*

The digging of a hole for the construction of a spiral staircase was observed. The 2m-square hole lay 1m west of the medieval cellar and house on the street frontage, within a 19th-century extension to the building. At some stage, this extension had been refloored with a suspended timber floor, the construction of which had involved the removal of any archaeological deposits that may have lain above the natural Yeovil Sand.

(Alan Graham)

*Emborough, Coalpit Lane, ST63245071*

An evaluation by AC Archaeology, to the south of the known barrow cemetery, failed to locate any features of archaeological interest.

(C. J. Webster)

*Glastonbury, Wells Road, ST505404*

Eight fields on the N side of Glastonbury were evaluated by auger transects and trial trenches. 51 auger samples and 5 trenches were excavated. These recorded a sequence of peats running onto the island of Glastonbury together with two undated (but possibly medieval) enclosures. No evidence was found for prehistoric activity, which had been suggested in the area.

The assessment of a limited number of environmental samples showed broad environmental changes from 4940–4621 cal BC (2 sigma) at the base of the peat. Following a reduced marine influence and initial development of a reedbed community, alder carr dominated the area, with areas of freshwater reedbed and marsh fringing areas of open water. It is suggested that at times the development of larger lakes occurred, perhaps associated with increased run-off from the high ground at Glastonbury Island, resulting in the preservation of bands of aquatic molluscs. In the upper levels of peat, alder levels fluctuate, with possible indicators of agricultural activity in the pollen record. At the top of the peat sequence the regional pollen is only represented by a few grains of oak and Coryloid type associated with a high concentration of charcoal particles perhaps associated with human activity. Radiocarbon dating at this level (600–790 cal AD at 2 sigma) has given the latest date for peat growth in the Glastonbury area.

(C. J. Webster)

*Isle Brewers, North Bradon Farm, ST364202*

Observation of the mechanical excavation of a circular area up to 35m in diameter for the base of a storage tank was carried out on 2nd September 1998. This was located towards the north-east corner of the field which lies to the north of the existing dairy produce complex at ST36412018. Neither the topsoil strip nor the removal of up to 0.3m of the clayey subsoil revealed any archaeological features or deposits. The only artefacts recorded were fragments of 19th–20th century china.

(Alan Graham)

*Lamyatt, ST661358*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Southern Electric plc to carry out an archaeological watching brief during works to replace overhead support poles for an 11kV cable. One

section of the proposed works was close to a site of possible medieval settlement but no features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed.

(Angela Batt)

*Lopen, Church Lane, ST42661445*

During site clearance and trench digging for the footings of new houses, three broadly north-south ditches were revealed and recorded. No evidence of their date was recovered, but their alignment tallies with that of the medieval burgage plots known to have been along the north side of Church Street.

(Alan Graham)

*Milton Clevedon, ST664372*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to Bristol Water plc to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring during the installation of a replacement water main in the vicinity of Milton Farm where the line crossed the site of a medieval village. Observations of the deposits encountered during the works recorded no evidence of archaeological features, despite the recovery of several sherds of post-medieval pottery.

(Isca J. Howell)

*North Petherton, Moorland, Church Farm*

An archaeological watching brief during construction of footings for new houses on the site of demolished agricultural buildings found no evidence for pre-modern occupation. The depth of underlying geological clay deposits was recorded.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

*Queen Camel, Camel Hill, ST593254*

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Southern Electric plc to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the replacement of cable support poles in an area between Sparkford and Queen Camel where an Anglo-Saxon cemetery and other sites were known. However, no archaeological features or artefacts were recorded during the work.

(Jim Stedman)

*Somerton, Stationery House, ST49002851*

Observation of a foundation trench immediately south of Stationery House revealed the northern wall of the cellars of the building that was demolished when West Street was widened this century, and whose infilled cellars now lie beneath the street. Substantially built of mortared lias slabs, no evidence of the construction date of the building was found. No other archaeological deposits were exposed.

(Alan Graham)

*Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Ham Hill, ST47801685*

The excavation of a telephone cable trench revealed only spoil and infill from the quarrying of stone from the interior of the hillfort.

(Alan Graham)

*Taunton, Priorswood, Nerrols Farm, ST241264*

In May 1998 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Simmons Building Design on behalf of a consortium comprising Persimmon Homes, Wimpey Homes, Beazer Homes and Westbury Homes to undertake an archaeological watching brief during residential development of land at Nerrols Farm. The principal groundworks at this stage involved topsoil stripping of the proposed road line followed by the excavation of service trenches. Topsoil was up to 0.4m thick and comprised a dark yellowish/reddish brown silty clay loam above

natural subsoil. Three flint flakes, probably of prehistoric origin, were recovered from the topsoil. Otherwise no archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

(Roland J. C. Smith)

*Wellington, Trinity Farm, ST13342024*

An archaeological watching brief was conducted during groundworks prior to the construction of 30 houses on the site of Trinity Farm, Mantle Street, Wellington as a requirement of the planning consent for the development. Documentary research suggested the site to have been undeveloped prior to the construction of Trinity Farm in the early 19th century. The watching brief failed to identify any archaeological features within the area of the development with the exception of an 18th century well adjacent to the site of the former Trinity Farm Building.

(R. A. Broomhead & H. M. Woods)