

SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY 1989

EDITED BY J. BRADBURY AND R.A. CROFT
SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

GENERAL

There is little doubt that the pace of archaeological discovery in the county continues to increase as more development takes place in archaeologically sensitive areas. There have been a number of changes in the County Planning Department in the last year; the most significant as far as this annual report is concerned has been the movement of Ed Dennison to Humberside County Council. We wish him well in his career and thank him for his help in compiling this report for three years. He has been replaced by Jenny Bradbury who has worked in Hampshire for two years prior to coming to Somerset. The Sites and Monuments Record continues to expand and anyone wishing to use it should make an appointment, Tel: 0823 - 255426.

The County Council continues to receive grant aid from a number of bodies, notably English Heritage, who have supported surveys, recording and assessment projects. The increasing use of consultant archaeologists has resulted in several projects being coordinated by the County Council. One of the longest running projects in the county is the Somerset Levels Project which is now supervised by the Planning Department in conjunction with Dr. John Coles. The Field Officer is Bill Horner, who has been assisted this season by Alyson Rogers and details of his important work are reported below.

Somerset County Council was invited to assist English Heritage with its Monument Protection Programme and two exercises were undertaken in 1989. James Bond was commissioned to examine all the urban areas in both Somerset and Avon in line with the MPP definitions for the different towns. The main aim of this exercise was to establish the relative importance of the urban areas and to help determine which areas are of national importance and should therefore be statutorily protected. The report has now been submitted to English Heritage and the recommendations indicate that a number of sites should receive some form of scheduling. It is hoped that English Heritage will soon be making their own recommendations to the Department of the Environment. This is the first time that urban areas have been looked at on a large scale since the publication of Aston and Leach in 1977.¹

Another important MPP project has been undertaken by Jenny Bradbury, assisted by Bill Horner and Richard Lunniss, in assessing the wide variety of single monument types in the county. Around 2000 individual archaeological sites such as barrows and Roman villas have been evaluated in a desk based survey. There are still a large number of sites to score using MPP definitions but further work is likely to continue in 1990.

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments has provided funding for aerial reconnaissance and in the particularly dry conditions of 1989 a large number of new sites have been identified. The photography was carried out by Frances Griffith of Devon County Council and a similar project is planned for 1990. Back firmly on the ground, the field surveyors of the Exeter Office have been recording a number of sites around the county. Their main project has been the recording of all the stone rows and stone settings on Exmoor. This has now been completed and a copy of a final report should be available in 1990. At the request of SCC, RCHME have surveyed the recently acquired ancient monument sites at Marston Magna moat and at Deer Leap, on Mendip. These surveys at 1:1000 scale will form the basis for the management plans and interpretation of the sites.

Of all the archaeological excavations carried out in Somerset in the past twenty years or so, the excavations at Wells Cathedral by Dr. Warwick Rodwell must surely rank as being some of the most extensive and informative in helping to understand the development of a particular building. A two year post-excavation programme is currently underway to write up and publish the results of the excavations which were carried out between 1978 and 1981. This project, funded by English Heritage, is being directed by Dr. Rodwell and administered through the County Planning Department.

In April 1989 the Hill Fort Study Group travelled to Exmoor and visited more than ten different sites. The visits encouraged lively discussion and added some useful observations on the structure and function of such sites as Black Ball Camp (SS984426) and Bat's Castle (SS988422) on the southern side of Dunster. A short report and field guide was edited by Somerset County Council. The designation of parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors as an Environmentally Sensitive Area has resulted in further discussions with MAFF to ensure that important archaeological and historical sites are assessed as part of the overall monitoring programme for the whole ESA. This monitoring will continue into 1990.

Other than scheduling a site as an ancient monument the identification of an archaeological site or area on a District Council Local Plan is perhaps the most effective way of ensuring that some form of protection is given to important sites. The Structure Plan policies which relate to the historic environment have been revised during 1989 and these ideas have been passed on to several District Council Local Plans. The recent *Burnham on Sea Local Plan* and the *Cheddar Area Local Plan* have been published, each of which contains the policies requesting archaeological evaluations and assessments in certain circumstances. This is a major change in direction for local planning authorities, which can now ask the applicant to provide the planning authority with further information. Such requests may be made for applications in Areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP's), a concept which was originally developed for the Levels and Moors but has recently been used to include the historic settlement cores of villages. The introduction of such policies and area designations will undoubtedly increase the number of archaeological finds made in the future.

There has been a steady growth in the number of planning applications and faculty petitions in Somerset which require some form of archaeological monitoring. The Field Archaeologist continued to advise the Bath and Wells Diocesan Advisory Committee on the archaeological implications of faculty petitions. One of the most controversial proposals has been extensions in churchyards either as free standing structures or more commonly with a linked way. Such proposals have posed several difficult questions on both the visual and aesthetic impact and on the archaeological damage which might be caused. The concept of 'developer funding' in churches is one which will no doubt continue to be contentious well into the 1990s.

The Planning Department has produced a draft record sheet which will be issued by the Diocese to all church architects. This form will provide the SMR with a brief 'archaeological profile' of each medieval church. This information can then be used to help monitor repairs or alterations which may disturb archaeological deposits.

In addition to monitoring the weekly lists of planning applications, the archaeological staff of SCC Planning Department made a detailed response to more than 400 planning applications in 1989. Largely due to its extensive Local Plan coverage, South Somerset District Council received comments on more than 250 applications whereas the figures for the other districts were Taunton Deane 30, Mendip 49, Sedgemoor 33 and West Somerset with approximately 20 applications. The Forestry Commission now submits all Farm Woodland Schemes and Woodland Grant Schemes to the SMR for comment and 70 were dealt with in 1989. In order to cope with this increasing workload the County Council has asked the District Councils and English Heritage to support financially an additional post of Field Officer from 1990 onwards.

The County and District Councils jointly published a booklet *Protecting The Historic and Architectural Heritage of Somerset* by R.A. Croft and R.C. Lillford which gives details of the importance of Archaeology, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Parks and Gardens.

1 Aston M. & Leech R. 1977 *Historic Towns in Somerset*.

(R.A. Croft)

Beckington By-pass

The length of Beckington by-pass was examined in detail during the period March to July 1989 on behalf of Somerset County Council. During this period the topsoil and the top of the subsoil were removed by the contractors, sometimes to a depth of several metres, while in a few areas the topsoil was removed and the subsoil was buried beneath material dumped to raise the level of the new road. The topsoil was observed to be generally very thin: as little as 0.10–1.15m in depth in some places. No archaeological features were observed, even in areas where earthworks were plainly visible adjacent to the construction area. Unstratified finds were recovered from nineteen findspots, largely comprising post-medieval pottery and worked flints. The finds have been deposited in the County Museum and a full report is held with the County SMR. Thanks are due to Vervard and Partners of Cardiff (Consulting Engineers).

(L. & R. Adkins)

Brean Down Sandcliff, ST 29565871

Following excavations in 1985 which concentrated on five Bronze Age layers separated by blown sand and colluvium (Bell 1986), a coastal protection barrier of large limestone blocks was created early in 1987 by the National Trust with financial help from English Heritage, in order to prevent further erosion of the Bronze Age site. It was not, however, possible to give adequate protection to the sub-Roman cemetery which lies upslope of most of the Bronze Age deposits. Burials have been weathering from the cliff face throughout this century, two were excavated in 1985, and four in 1986. In view of continuing erosion a larger trench was opened up in the most threatened area in 1989. Four graves were found, containing six bodies. Two

contained adults aged c. 25–35 buried with children aged c. 6–7. One contained an adolescent and another an adult aged c. 30. All the Brean burials have been east–west with the head to the west and without grave goods. They may well be Christian. Some have small limestone blocks placed rather irregularly along the grave edges. From the small number of burials found in the 1989 trench it appears that the edge of the cemetery may have been reached in the area most threatened by erosion. It seems to extend a little further inland downslope where human bone has been found by augering, but fortunately this area is better protected.

Considerable progress was made in understanding the landscape and stratigraphic context of the cemetery. It had been established on an abandoned field system of probable Romano-British date. The soil which formed these fields was derived from erosion of the Down slopes above during the Iron Age or Romano-British period. The soil surface had cultivation marks running along the slope. It was then inundated by blown sand and after a few centimetres had accumulated, a stone boundary wall was made. This may be part of a totally buried field system like the two systems that are still visible on top of Brean Down. Then, following further sand deposition, the cemetery was made.

The stratigraphic relationship between the Bronze Age sandcliff sequence and the Somerset Levels clay flats to the south was also investigated by means of a transect of soil pits and auger holes. These revealed that the occupation horizons extend well to the south under holiday cottages and the Bird Garden. This has roughly doubled the surviving area of the middle and late Bronze Age settlements. Furthermore, here at the base of the slope the earlier layers, particularly the Beaker layers and middle Bronze Age settlement horizons, are thicker and better preserved. The presence of much stone and hearth debris in the middle and late Bronze Age horizons suggests the existence of further stone buildings like those found in 1985.¹ The blown sands were shown to be interleaved with clay deposits of marine/saltmarsh origin. A pit was opened up to study these clays in detail and to obtain samples for archaeomagnetic and optical dating and environmental analysis.

The final report on the 1983–87 work at Brean is to be published as an English Heritage Archaeological Monograph in Spring 1990.

1 Bell, M. 1986 'Brean Down', *Current Archaeology* 102, 218–221.

(Martin Bell)

Compton Dundon Parish Survey, ST4832

The Compton Dundon parish survey project initiated by Strode College continues. The survey of Dundon Manor has been completed and the manorial boundary between Dundon and the Manors of Littleton and Compton traced and recorded. A small research excavation took place in Dundon village (this volume) and the church and graveyard have been totally recorded. Documentary research into the parish continues and a sizeable archive is being established. The students will be giving public lectures on their work in the parish in 1990.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury Abbey Parchmark Survey, ST502388

The extensive drought in the summer of 1989 prompted a survey of parchmarks which appeared in July to September within the precincts of Glastonbury Abbey. Many new buildings, walls and drains were surveyed plus previously unrecorded earthworks. Previous earthwork surveys carried out in 1980 and 1982 were incorporated into the project and all excavations carried out within the precinct this

century were re-evaluated. It is hoped that the survey will be published in the near future. The authors are grateful to the Glastonbury Abbey Trustees and English Heritage who funded the project.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, Higher Wick Farm, ST518394

After notification in 1988 that pasture land containing earthworks was to be ploughed on land belonging to Maidencroft Farm, previously known as Higher Wick Farm, a survey of the earthworks was initiated prior to a small rescue excavation. The earthworks comprised a holloway, a prominent house platform and a series of enclosure banks and ditches plus an area of ridge and furrow. The earliest map of the area, the Glastonbury rates map of 1821, showed a farmhouse occupying the platform and the building was still extant on the tithe map of 1844, but had disappeared by the time the Ordnance Survey map of 1885 was published. Two separate excavation areas were opened, a small keyhole over the house platform and a larger trench over a prominent enclosure bank. The excavation proved the house to have been built in the late C16 or C17, probably after the dissolution of Glastonbury Abbey, for this was once demesne land. The bank and ditch had been recut many times from that period onwards; the silts contained not only post-medieval finds but medieval sherds and a group of pottery from the Romano-British period. A number of flint flakes and implements were also recovered including a Neolithic arrowhead. The writers would like to thank Paddington Farm Trust who run Maidencroft Farm for their help and co-operation during the excavation and survey.

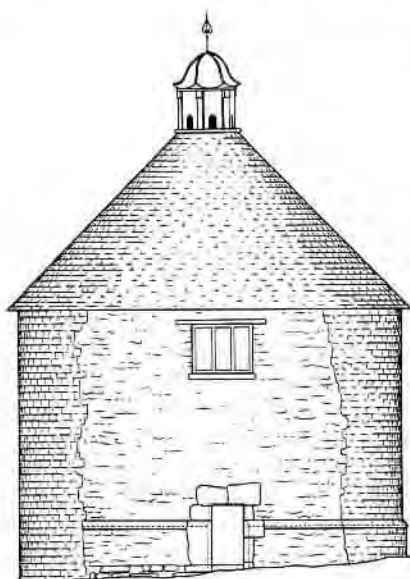
(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Shapwick Manor Dovecote, ST41773839

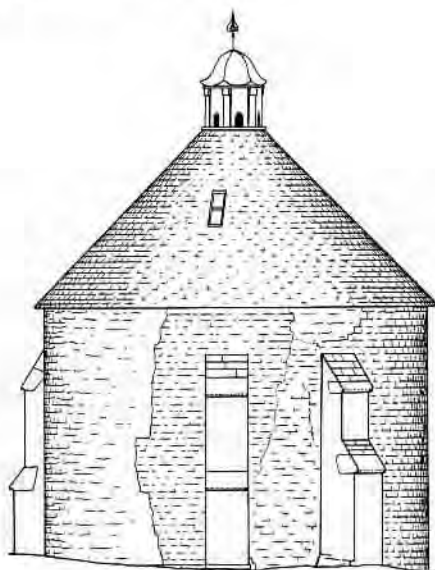
A round medieval dovecote stands in the grounds of the Manor House at Shapwick (now Shapwick Manor School), a little over 30m south east of the house itself. A measured sketch-plan and interior and exterior elevations of this building were prepared in October 1989, as part of the building recording programme within the Shapwick Landscape Project (Fig. 1). The drawings were intended also to provide a basic record of the present appearance of the building in anticipation of future repairs which may be necessitated by the cracking and bulging of the east wall.

In plan the dovecote is not quite perfectly circular, with an east-west internal diameter of 4.65m and a north-south internal diameter of 4.78m. The walls are 1.12m thick and generally 4.6m to 5m in height from external ground level to eaves. The internal ground level is difficult to ascertain because of the accumulation of guano, but is at least 0.3m lower than the exterior. The nature of the original floor could not be discovered. The ground falls away slightly towards the east and south, and there are three external buttresses each of two stages.

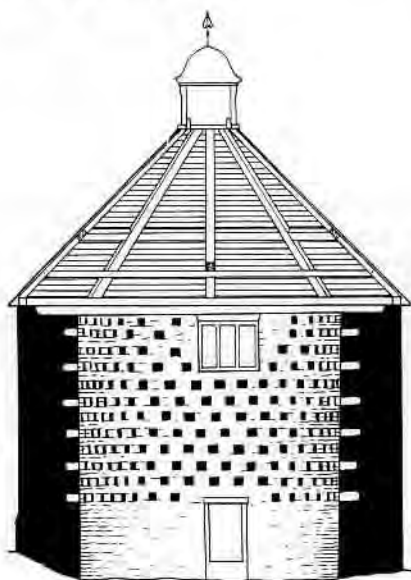
In the facing of the exterior walls at least three phases of masonry can be detected. The earliest surviving walling appears to be on the west, of roughly coursed blue lias rubble. This face of the building includes a low chamfered doorway, 1.09m × 0.59m, framed by substantial blocks of dressed Douling stone, which appears to be original; a plinth 0.7m high projecting 0.88m, with a chamfered capping of Douling stone, also original; and an inserted rectangular window just below the eaves, slightly off-centre from the doorway below. The plinth is neatly squared off 2.35m north of the doorway, where it abuts against a rebuilt section of wall; to the south the original plinth is extant for nearly 2m, but here its line is continued in the rebuilt walling as far as the south-eastern buttress. Comparatively



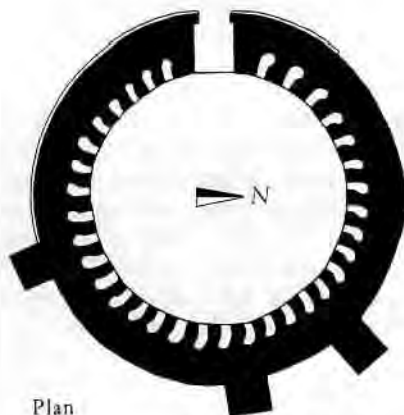
West Elevation



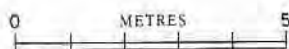
East Elevation



Interior Elevation



Plan



Shapwick Manor Dovecote
Somerset

early lias masonry also appears in the south-eastern sector of the building, but this is slightly more evenly coursed with a higher proportion of dressed blocks and fewer thin slabs. This sector has no plinth. A fragment of early walling may also survive above the north-eastern buttress. The continuity of the internal pattern of nestholes shows that past rebuilding has been necessitated not by wholesale collapse, but rather by the falling away of parts of the outer facing of the walls, a common point of weakness in circular stone dovecotes. The subsequent refacing has employed regularly coursed, roughly squared blue lias blocks varying from 0.1–0.13m $\times$ 0.24–0.66m in size. Slight variations in the character of the new stonework of the northern, eastern and south-western sectors suggest the possibility that the rebuilding itself may have taken place in several stages, but the differences are not sufficiently distinctive for there to be any certainty on this matter; if more than one phase of rebuilding did occur, they were probably not separated by any very wide intervals of time. Irregular footings are exposed beneath the original plinth on the north side of the doorway and beneath the rebuilt walling south of the eastern buttress.

The buttresses appear to be a mixture of original and rebuilt masonry. The lowest inner part of the north face of the east buttress looks original, with remains of a basal step which may have been moulded. Remains of a similar step survive on the inner south face of the north-eastern buttress. In both cases this work clearly antedates the regular masonry of the intervening wall. The lower stage of the southern buttress also clearly antedates the rebuilt plinth abutting against its western side. The remainder of the buttresses are of regular coursed stonework, and belong to the period of recent repairs, though the substantial Douling stone blocks making up the lower part of the set-offs of each stage all have dripstone mouldings and appear to be reused.

The interior facing of the wall is of roughly squared blocks, and is featureless apart from the nestholes, which begin at a height of c.1.4m from interior ground level and continue through twelve tiers to the level of the roof-eaves. The nestholes are comparatively shallow, rarely penetrating more than 0.55m into the thickness of the wall, and sometimes as little as 0.25m deep. Most of them are simple recesses, broadening out a little internally, but without the sharply-angled elbow commonly found elsewhere. The building technique is not especially accomplished: there is no significant concave curvature in the faces of the intervening stones, and the shape and size of the nestholes is not particularly regular. There are no intervening perching-ledges. There were 37 nestholes in one complete circuit, and, allowing for interruptions by the door lintel and the inserted window, the total number of nestholes is around 426. The pattern of nesthole apertures is regularly staggered diagonally throughout most of the interior, so that those in one tier are positioned above the intervals between the nestholes in the tiers immediately above and below. However, this pattern does break down a little in the top three tiers just east of the window, where a short series of nestholes lie almost vertically one above the other. The diagonal spacing is a device commonly used to avoid weakening the wall more than necessary, though it was by no means universal: at least one Somerset dovecote, the now collapsed cob example in Durleigh, had its nestholes all placed exactly vertically one above the other.¹

The conical roof has been entirely rebuilt in comparatively recent times, with eight rafters supporting a circular wooden frame around the opening at the top, a single set of curved purlins canted to the pitch of the roof, and a pair of tie-beams at right-angles to each other just above the wall-plate. There is no evidence to indicate whether or not this represents a copy of the earlier roof structure. The exterior is covered by slates, probably from north Devon. There is a small inserted plain

double light roughly half way up on the eastern side. At the apex of the roof is an octagonal wooden-framed lantern, with an opening for the birds at each face, capped by a dome lead-covered roof with an iron vane.

No internal fittings survive. Access to the nestholes would presumably have been by a potence or revolving stairway, such as still remains at Dunster, but this has disappeared beyond living memory at Shapwick.

No attempt has been made at this stage to pursue original documentary references for the building, as it is anticipated that these may emerge within the wider documentary survey being carried out for the Shapwick project. However, some details of the building were given by Abbot Horne in his valuable unpublished survey of Somerset dovecotes.² He visited the Shapwick dovecote, photographed it and took some basic measurements on 8 September 1920. He noted that a considerable portion of the building had fallen down 'some years ago' and had been carefully replaced. According to Horne the roof had originally been of thatch, though no evidence for this was cited. He also stated that the three buttresses were built when the repair was made as a fuller protection to the walls, though the evidence described above implies that there may have been earlier buttresses in the same positions. The dovecote in Horne's time was still occupied by Blue Rock pigeons, said to be direct descendants of the original birds.

As is usual with such buildings, there is little architectural detail or other evidence to provide close dating. Circular dovecotes in general seem to appear around the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the medieval form continues well into the seventeenth century, though square and rectangular forms were already beginning to replace them by the fifteenth century.³ The small size of the doorway at Shapwick suggests a comparatively early date. However, final judgement will have to be reserved pending a study of the documentary evidence.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the headmasters and staff of Shapwick Manor School for permission for access and the loan of a ladder; Michael Aston for inviting me to undertake the recording; John Dallimore and Michael Costen for assistance with measuring; Dr Peter Hardy for identification of the building materials; Bob Croft for drawing my attention to Abbot Horne's notes; and David Bromwich for locating them for me.

1 Taylor, R.F. 1968 'A Cob Dovecote at Durleigh', *SANHS* 112, 101-3.

2 Horne, E. 1940 *The Dovecotes of Somerset* (Downside Abbey, 1940), bound MS in SANHS Library, p. 14.

3 For a general background see Cooke, A.O. 1920 *A Book of Dovecotes* T.N. Foulis, London; and Hansell, P. & J. 1988 *Doves and Dovecotes* Millstream Books, Bath.

(James Bond)

The Shapwick Project

The multi-disciplinary project based on the parish of Shapwick begun in October 1988 was continued in 1989. Several new aspects were begun; the following is a very brief report of these.

1. Fieldwork was extended to the areas attached to Coppice Gate Farm and Northbrook Farm in the north east of the parish (Fig. 2). Much of the land is pasture and very rarely ploughed. Earthworks of probable lynchetts and vague ridge and furrow were noted at ST42983922 and other vague indeterminate earthworks at ST43153935. Retrogressive map analysis based on the fine series of maps for the parish was carried out, as for Beerway and Church Farms in 1988, on the land attached to Coppice Gate and Northbrook Farms. This involves 1:5000 maps for

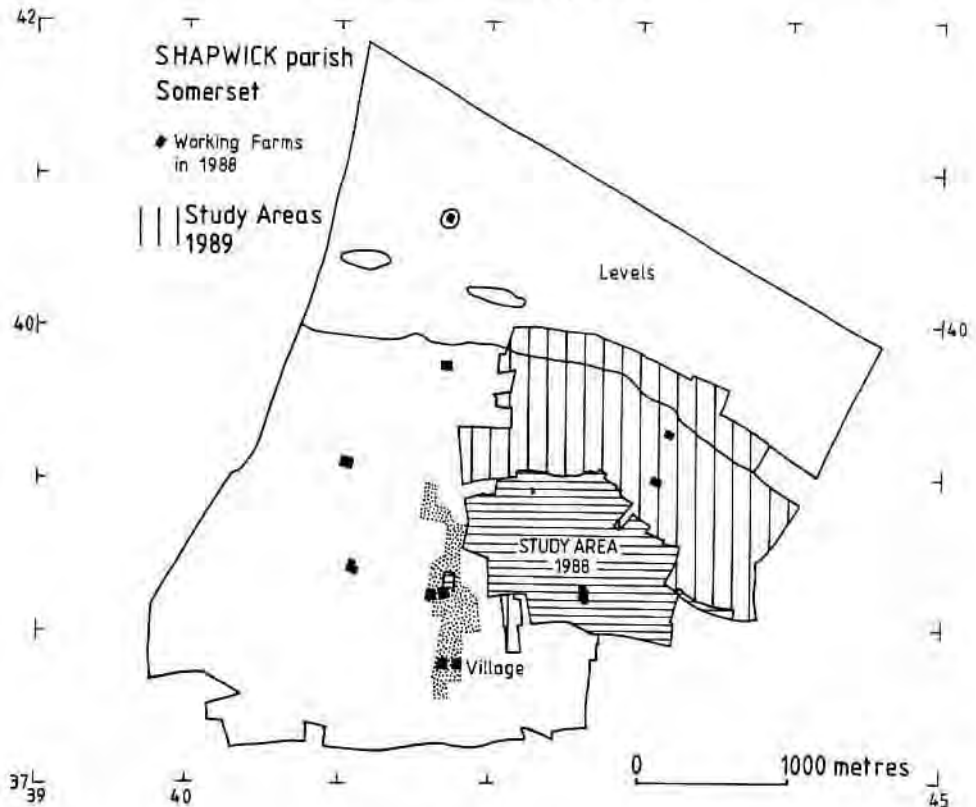


Fig. 2 Shapwick Parish Survey: study areas

1989, 1971, 1904, the 1880s, the 1839 tithe map and the enclosure map of c.1750 (M. Aston).

2. Fieldwalking was begun, mainly on the land attached to Beerway Farm (Fig. 3). Because of restrictions on time, labour, weather and farming operations a rather pragmatic approach has had to be developed. This involves laying out 10 × 10 metre grid squares related to modern field boundaries and employing collecting times of 20 minutes in each. The areas examined have been limited by the time and number of helpers available at any one time. Everything is being collected and analysed at this stage taking into consideration weather, field conditions and expertise of the fieldwalkers. Preliminary analysis suggests very variable amounts of post-medieval and modern debris in the fields examined so far; in some there is a lot of Welsh slate, in others a lot of clay pipe fragments while the quantity, quality and types of post-medieval ceramic seems to vary enormously. There seems to be a general 'background noise' of one medieval sherd and one piece of flint to each grid square on average. The most notable find has been a Romano-British site at ST43753867 which produced a coin, Samian pottery and a lot of coarse ware sherds. A broken Bronze Age flint arrowhead was found at ST42823880. (M. Aston, C. Gerrard, M. Costen, W. Horner and many others).

3. A start has been made on the botanical aspects of the parish. The post-medieval woodlands in the east of the parish were examined briefly and found to be very different. Fifteen Acre Copse has woodbanks, Beggars Bush Copse has ridge

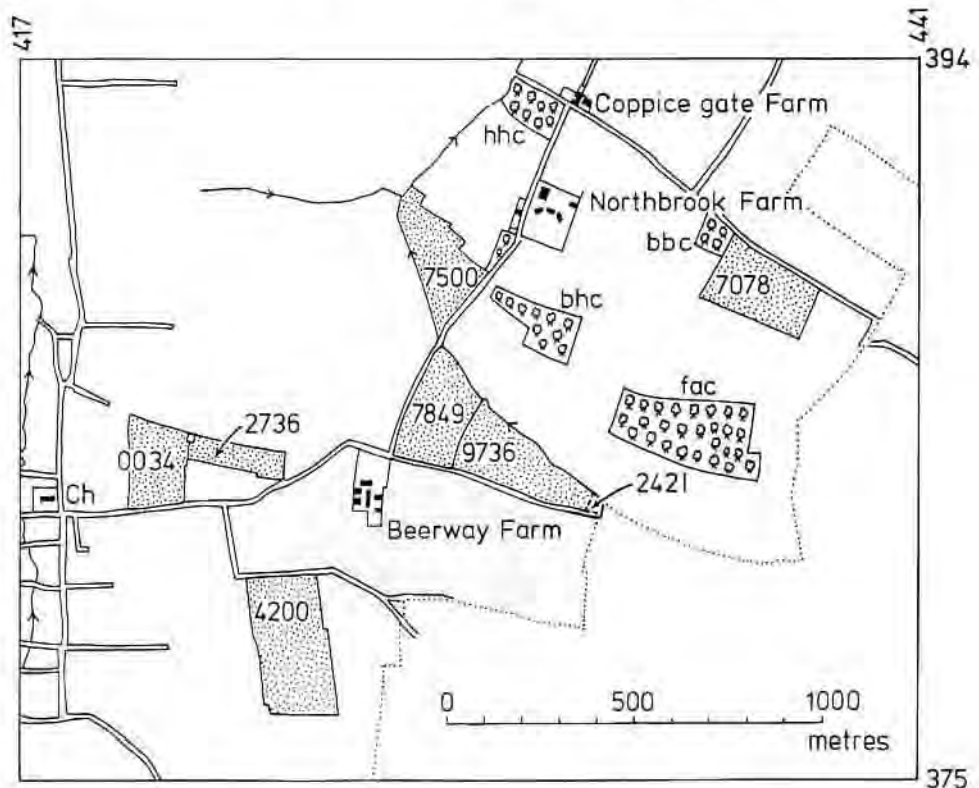


Fig. 3 Shapwick Parish Survey

and furrow, the only area noted in the parish so far, overlain with oak standards and hazel coppice, while Henhills Copse has a large rectangular fishpond, mainly dry, with several large terraces (gardens?) in it. (D. Hill).

4. A geological survey has begun with all surface scatters of rock in ploughed fields being examined as well as exposures in trenches and cuttings. Far from being simple 'lias' as shown on the geology maps the parish has a complex of limestone and clay bands of rock, intricately faulted and with a rich variety of fossils. In the area between the Nidons, the low hills on the edge of the Levels, and the Poldens, marl deposits suggest a former lake or marsh. (P. Hardy and C. Harris).

5. Aerial reconnaissance was carried out in June to see if cropmarks had been produced by the exceedingly dry weather. The best results obtained were geological, parchmarks in grass showing the underlying geological strata particularly clearly. The best archaeological results came from the field known to contain the earlier church site near Beerway Farm. Here, not only were the churchyard boundary (?) and many other linear boundaries revealed, but also parchmarks of the church and at least one other rectangular building. This is the first time anything has been known of the form of this church, which was abandoned in the 1330s and which may have been the minster for the estate in pre-Conquest times. (M. Aston).

6. Documentary research has concentrated on Abbot Sodbury's survey of 1327 (British Library Egerton manuscript 3321) and elucidating the origin and development of the two manors in the parish. The former has been transcribed and translated – detailed analysis will follow later. (M. Costen).

7. A detailed survey of the buildings in the parish was started by members of the Somerset and South Avon Vernacular Buildings Research Group. The farmsteads at Beerway, Church Farm, Northbrook and the now defunct Home Farm were examined as well as one of the manors – Shapwick House Hotel. This was shown to have a late-15th-century roof and therefore to be definitely the house of the abbots of Glastonbury. Shapwick Manor (school) had already been surveyed prior to the beginning of the Shapwick Project. A full survey of the dovecote at Shapwick Manor School was carried out before repair works were begun. (J. Dallimore, J. and J. Penoyre and C.J. Bond).

In future, work will begin on more detailed botanical analysis including a survey of the hedges to be compared with the known enclosure history. A lot more fieldwalking will be carried out in ploughed fields in the autumn, for which volunteers will be required. It is however, already apparent that to understand fully the earlier settlement history of the parish a number of remote sensing geophysical exercises will need to be carried out using such equipment as ground radar, scanners and magnetometers. It remains to be seen whether the financial and technical resources for this can be made available.

(M. Aston)

The Somerset Levels 1989

During 1989, field survey continued in the peat-cutting areas of the Brue valley and in the adjacent pasture and ploughlands. Contacts were maintained with the peat industry, with many farmers, conservation agencies, other local archaeological projects and with wetland archaeological groups elsewhere in the country and abroad. Watching briefs for Somerset County Council were undertaken as required. A watch was kept on peat skimming on the Neolithic Honeygore Tracks Scheduled Ancient Monument, surface rotovation on the Bronze Age Meare Heath Track SAM, on the effects of the hot summer on the Abbot's Way SAM, where some remedial work had to be done, and salvage recording was made following surface damage to the Iron Age Meare East SAM. Further damage to this last site was prevented following discussions with the farmer.

The Somerset Levels Museum at the Willows Garden Centre was maintained and developed, as were a number of reconstructed trackways around the Levels. The museum attracted many visitors over the year and provided a base for a number of guided-tours and lectures given by the project. There were visits by related archaeological projects from the United States, Eire, Scotland and East Anglia. The project's work was also featured in the local and national media.

Despite the dry summer, satisfactory water levels were maintained in the Shapwick Heath National Nature Reserve with its buried stretch of Sweet Track. The Project collaborated with the N.C.C. on matters relating to the reserve. Problems only occurred late in the year due to mechanical difficulties with the pump supplying water to the reserve.

No major excavations were undertaken during 1989. A small test dig however, was undertaken on a 2-metre stretch of the Honeygot Track, 3474–3378 cal BC (HAR-6698), which was exposed along a ditch section at c.ST41614286 on Westhay Level and had previously been investigated in 1985. The track was found to be extremely dessicated, but birch brushwood was discernible to a width of 0.67 metres. One peg was retrieved, possibly of hazel wood and exhibiting two pressure bends and a malleted head. Other than this, exposures were recorded of the Neolithic Sweet Track, the Neolithic Fosters brushwood track, the later Neolithic Abbot's Way and an assemblage of prehistoric wood, including an oak stake of

probable Neolithic date, was retrieved from ditching on the western slopes of Brickyard Farm, Burtle. A chert blade was also found up-ditch from this site (c.ST41054045). Ploughed fields on the Polden slopes in Sharpham and Ashcott parishes continued to produce prehistoric flints, Romano-British and medieval pottery.

The site of post-medieval Dyeworks was also reported by N.C.C. Warden, Robin Prowse. The site is centred on ST42374095 and is known to have been in use during the 1914-18 war. Research continues on this site. Perhaps the most unusual find of the year was of a Neolithic flint arrowhead, found not on the Levels but in a Fisons Growbag purchased in Hexham, Northumberland, but undoubtedly originating from Somerset!

The Somerset Levels Project as originally constituted in 1973 was officially terminated in March 1989 after 15 years of work. The Project's passing was marked by the publication of the final *Somerset Levels Papers*, Papers 15, 1989, edited by John Coles. Fieldwork from January to April was undertaken on a part-time basis directed by Professor Coles for the Somerset Levels Project, and work from April continued full-time directed by Somerset County Council with advice from Professor Coles and support from English Heritage, with particular thanks to Paul Gosling. A Field Assistant, Alyson Rogers, was employed during July and August. Specialist archaeological support came from John and Bryony Coles, Stephen Minnitt of the County Museum, Caroline Earwood of Exeter University (Wood ID); and Ruth Morgan and Jennifer Hillam of Sheffield University continued to work on the Levels tree-ring evidence. Notification of finds and other support came from many local individuals and companies, particularly Fisons PLC, who generously continued to provide office accommodation, the Willows Garden Centre and E.J. Godwin (Peat Industries) Ltd.

(B. Horner)

MULTI-PERIOD

Compton Bishop, Prospect Cottage

A number of Roman pottery sherds found on the north side of Prospect Cottage were accessioned by Woodspring Museum. Ref 1989.445.

(V. Pirie)

Frome, Torr Works, ST691451 (centre)

Fourteen trial trenches, each 20m × 1.5m, and one trial trench 50m × 1.5m were excavated in the Phase 1 quarry area (approximately 240 acres) at Torr Works, Merehead, near Frome. This work was carried out prior to the commencement of quarrying. Seven trenches produced no archaeological features but four of these trenches yielded a small quantity of unstratified finds ranging from Bronze Age to post-medieval in date. Eight trenches were cut through field boundaries which produced slight traces of a bank and ditch marking each boundary. No dating evidence for these features was recovered. One trench produced evidence of three shallow ditches running parallel and close to the boundary between Cranmore and Downhead parishes, but again no dating evidence was available. The finds and full archive report have been deposited in the County Museum. The work was carried out on behalf of Foster Yeoman Ltd., to whom thanks are due. In particular we would like to acknowledge the assistance of J. Brown, H.S. Lucas and S.J. Nice.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Glastonbury

A number of coins and tokens were found in Glastonbury parish and handed to N. & C. Hollinrake for identification.

Roman

1. Sestertius of Antoninus Pius (138–161).
2. Very worn bronze coin, Antoninianus, later 3rd century.

Medieval

1. 14th- or 15th-century double-struck silver penny, possibly 1413–1422.
2. Henry shortcross penny of Richard I class 3, 1196–99.
3. Henry shortcross penny class 6, moneyer Walter of London, King John.
4. Cut silver halfpenny of Stephen, Axbridge type (BMC cat vii).

Post-medieval

1. Very worn shilling of Charles I, prob. Tower mint, 1628–39.
2. Silver 3d hammered coin of Elizabeth I of 1578.

Tokens

1. Lead token with ship on one side, unknown issuer but probably 16th century.
2. Copper farthing trade token issued by Mary Day of Glastonbury about 1668.

The above were all handed in by Mr Rex Davis of Glastonbury.

Thanks to Somerset County Museum for help in the identification of these coins.
(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Wedmore, Yew Tree Cottage, Mudgley, ST44624561

Yew Tree Cottage is opposite Fernhall Farm, Mudgley, where finds were reported in 1988.¹ During the excavation of a new driveway into this cottage, many potsherds have been found. These range from Romano-British to modern and include grey Romano-British ware; two possibly 11th-century Saxon sherds; 13th-century unidentified ware; sherds of a late-16th–early 17th-century Donyatt pitcher and a large 17th-century Nether Stowey pot with decorated rim, with other Nether Stowey and possible Donyatt sherds of the same period; an early-17th-century Wanstrow bowl and jug fragments; early-18th-century dripping-pan base and bowl rims; other unidentified 16th–17th-century potsherds; a clay pipe bowl c.1630–60, with pipe stems; 19th–early-20th-century pottery including clay pot fragments from Wedmore Brickyard.² A lead ball of rough finish and slightly flattened, 4cm diameter, 3.5cm high and weighing exactly 12 oz (a weight?) and a perfectly formed small stone ball, 3cm diameter (large shot?) were also found in the vicinity.

The site of this cottage was a roofless tenement called Mowdy's Coote or Lykers Haye in 1558.³ It was probably the end tenement of a row of early medieval cottages edging a road now vanished and, like Fernhall Farm, lay just downhill from possible Celtic fields. The present cottage dates from the 19th century.

1 Hudson, H. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1989 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANHS* 132, 212.

2 Hudson, H. & Murless, B.J. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1989 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANHS* 132, 243.

3 SRO DD/SAS/PR 462.

(H. Hudson)

Wedmore, Sewage Works, ST43884815

Samples have been obtained from two layers of wood enclosed in silt, interleaved in a sequence of flood layers, revealed during deep excavation for a new tank. These could, if dated, provide valuable evidence of silting, and contribute to the study of

flooding and/or marine transgression in this part of the Axe valley. It is hoped to obtain radiocarbon dates and an environmental archaeological report for the wood samples.

(H. Hudson & M. Aston)

ROMAN

Rodney Stoke, ST48275010

Over 1000 sherds of freshly broken Romano-British pottery, primarily Grey Wares (Congresbury types) and Black-Burnished Wares, were recovered from a newly ploughed field adjacent to Butts Lane. Two highly abraded sherds of Samian and several unidentifiable bronze fragments were also recorded. A conspicuous quantity of fragmentary pennant tile would suggest an occupation site at the above location. Lesser quantities of abraded Romano-British pottery occurred in adjacent fields at a radius of up to 500m. The appearance of several large Iron Age pottery sherds at the same location may indicate a preferred settlement site of some continuity.

ST478497

A small but varied quantity of Romano-British pottery, including Samian, Oxford, Shepton Mallet and Congresbury forms, was recovered from a ploughed field centred at the above reference. Its distribution would suggest manuring dispersal.

ST47695096

Garden surveys throughout the village of Draycott produced a small number of Romano-British pot sherds with increasing frequency towards the northern end of The Street at the above reference.

ST45934930

Ditch and channel cleaning of Draycott Brook yielded a small but significant concentration of 50 Romano-British pot sherds and a small quantity of knife-cut bone at this location. No features were visible in the newly exposed ditch section and the pottery appears to have been derived from the lowest sediments of the brook.

ST46504870

10 sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from peat deposits when this field on Stoke Moor was ploughed for cultivation.

(R. Broomhead)

Yeovil, Westfield Avenue, ST545169

A quantity of Roman pottery had been discovered by Mr Canterbury, the tenant of No.12 Westfield Avenue in the summer of 1987, whilst preparing ground at the front of the house for concreting. After a period of uncertainty, the material was transferred to the Museum of South Somerset in January 1989. It comprised the largest quantity of Roman pottery and animal bone which had been discovered in Yeovil since the excavations at the Westland Villa in the 1920s. The material was coherent and appeared to be from a single pit group rather than random scatter, pointing to Roman occupation in the immediate vicinity. More details of the discovery are published elsewhere.¹

1. *Chronicle - J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(4), 124.

(B. & M. Gittos)

MIGRATION & EARLY MEDIEVAL

Bridgwater, Wembdon Hill, ST279378

A watching brief was undertaken in March 1989 on behalf of Somerset County Council at 98 Wembdon Hill during the construction of a new house on a garden plot. Previous work on the adjacent property, 100 Wembdon Hill had established that an early medieval (Dark Age) cemetery existed here.¹ During the building operations human bone was recovered from all of the house foundation trenches but all remains were scattered and no intact skeletons were evident, neither were any grave cuts observed. It was obvious that the site had been disturbed previously, possibly during the medieval period, by stone quarrying on the hill. The intact skeleton of a dog was recovered from a shallow scoop in the bedrock. The date of this burial? is not known but the bones were heavily stained, as were the human bones. The material will be deposited at Somerset County Museum.

1. Croft, R.A. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1989 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANHS* 132, 221. (C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury

A small cast copper-alloy censer was recovered from the immediate neighbourhood of Glastonbury Abbey. The exact find spot is uncertain but it is thought to have been in Silver Street within the northern precinct of the Abbey.¹ This casual find is an import from the eastern Mediterranean and is thought to be of 7th-century date.²

The censer is an intriguing westerly outlier of east Mediterranean workshop products, which appeared in England mainly concentrated in the wealthy cemeteries of Kent and East Anglia. The Glastonbury censer may well have Christian connections. It is understood that a detailed report is being prepared by the British Museum.

1. Leach, P. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1989 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANHS* 132, 230-1.
2. Mango, M.M., Mango, C., Care Evans, A. & Hughes, M. 1989 'A 6th century Mediterranean bucket from Bromeswell Parish, Suffolk', *Antiquity* 63, 295-311.

(J. Bradbury)

Glastonbury, Fairfield, ST33532906

Radiocarbon assessments of wood samples taken from the assumed water course or canal feature recorded during the development of the Fairfield, Glastonbury¹ have provided the following information: a sharpened timber revetment stake from the canal provides a date range of (HAR 9207) 68% AD830-AD990, 95% AD690 to AD1030; another stake from the primary fill of a ditch sealed by the bank of the canal provides a date range of (HAR 9208) 68% AD600 to AD780, 95% AD540 to AD890. The conclusion from these samples are somewhat tentative but it is suggested that the canal is of pre-Conquest date (probably 10th century). The samples were analysed at Harwell Laboratory. A detailed report is in preparation.

1. Croft, R.A., C. & N. Hollinrake in Dennison, E. (ed.) 'Somerset Archaeology 1987', *SANHS* 131, 217-8.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Langford Budville, ST11152290

The digging of the foundation trenches for a new house on the southern side of St Peter's Church, Langford Budville revealed the distributed remains of a number of inhumations. These were reported to the local police and a rescue watching brief was undertaken by Somerset County Council. The exact number of burials could not be ascertained, but at least ten individuals were noted across the site. Fragments of long bones and skulls were noted at an average depth of approximately 1m below the existing ground surface. No artefacts were found in association with these burials. The nature of the recovery meant that it was very difficult to ascertain the direction of the burial alignment but it was generally assumed to have been approximately E to W.

The location of this site is typical of a hill top cemetery. Most of the hill is dominated by the present church and churchyard and a road separates the church from the southern side of the hilltop. There are several options open regarding the interpretation of the site. It is suggested that the site is likely to be of Saxon date. The churchyard of the present church could have extended across the road but there is no cartographic or historical evidence to substantiate this.

Thanks are due to the owner Mrs Fox for permission to record the site.

(R.A. Croft)

Wedmore, Clewer, ST42935117-ST43135139

A parish/estate boundary bank survives, running across moor-edge meadows from south west to north east, between the foot of the hill and the old river Axe. It divides Clewer, in Wedmore parish, from Brinscombe, in Weare parish. The bank is similar in shape and situation to those previously reported at Bitham in Blackford and at Whore Mear in Wedmore.¹ It is a low, very spread bank about 5m wide. A later drainage gripe has been cut along its southern side. The adjoining enclosure-era field boundaries on the Wedmore side are aligned on this (presumably earlier) bank. At the south-west end of the bank, the parish boundary was marked by an elm tree, shown on O.S. maps up to the 1:10000 O.S. of 1981, although now only the stump remains. The boundary continues up the steep hill past Pigs Ground and orchards, marked by a substantial double hedge-bank with ditch. The hedge contains a great variety of trees including wayfaring tree.

1. Hudson, H. & Neale, F. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1986 'Somerset Archaeology 1984-5', *SANHS* 129, 11.

(H. Hudson & F. Neale)

MEDIEVAL

Compton Dundon, Court Orchard, ST479323

A research and training excavation was undertaken by C. & N. Hollinrake in conjunction with Strode College at Court Orchard, Compton Dundon. A 6m x 2m trench was cut across a boundary bank and a large number (600+) of pottery sherds was recovered. The pottery ranged in date from the late-C10 to early-C11 through to the C20. No prehistoric or Roman sherds were identified; 21 flints were recovered of which 5 were worked tools. The majority of the pottery dated from the late-C12 to C14. The excavated evidence suggests that there was a substantial medieval site, perhaps manorial, in close proximity to Court Orchard.

Thanks are due to Mr F. Vining, Mr D. Taylor, Mr T. Longman, Mr P. Smith

and the students of the Strode College course. The excavation archive has been deposited in the County SMR and a full report will be forthcoming in a future *Proceedings* volume.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

East Coker, Moor Lane, ST541123

Just prior to Easter 1989 some stone walls were discovered whilst a soak-away was being dug in the paddock adjacent to St. Roche Cottage, Moor Lane, East Coker. The Archaeological Unit of the YALHS was requested to investigate the discovery by Mr and Mrs Holt, the owners of the cottage. The paddock had formerly been part of the cottage garden. Examination revealed that the walls were part of the structure of two rectangular chambers below and behind a 19th-century privy which had once occupied the site.¹ The chambers mostly contained débris from the demolition of the building and rubbish from subsequent dumping.

1 *Chronicle – J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(5), 152.

(B. & M. Gittos)

Glastonbury, Glastonbury Abbey, ST499388

Recording of contractors' trenches and bore holes was carried out by H.M. Woods and W. Horner for the Oxford Archaeological Unit and the Glastonbury Abbey Trustees in advance of the building of the new visitor complex.¹

To the north east of St Patrick's Chapel a robber trench 1.50m wide and the bottom course of a stone pentice wall 40cm wide were encountered. The alley between the robbed wall and the pentice wall was 1.70m wide. Both features were parallel to what has been referred to as the 'precinct wall' of the abbey. A close study of the upstanding fabric of this wall shows that it is in fact the back wall of a range of buildings of which the robbed wall and the pentice are other elements. The precinct boundary must therefore have been further to the north.²

To the west of St Patrick's Chapel the excavation of 25 bore holes each 8m deep and a trench 75cm deep for the main services to the new building yielded considerable further information about the water course found during the 1987 evaluation excavation. It was shown to be in excess of 17.50m wide and 3.50m deep. Its westward limit was beyond the area investigated, which was defined by the medieval gate fronting upon Magdalene Street.

Of this gate as it now stands it was found that the rear arch is a 19th-century composition. The footing of the northern pier of the arch fronting upon Magdalene Street was supported upon a foundation which was sunk 30cm into the stiff olive clay which is the uppermost layer of backfill in the water course. A piece of daub with the impression of a wattle was recovered from this layer.

A full report is in preparation.

1 Woods, H. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1988 'Somerset Archaeology 1987', *SANHS*, 131, 218.

2 Leach, P. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANHS* 132, 230-1.

(H. Woods)

Glastonbury, St. John the Baptist Church, ST50013902

The installation of new gas heating pipes in St John's Church in November 1989 allowed observation of the foundations of an earlier central tower, first noted during renovation work in 1856,¹ and permitted the excavation of a small trench at the junction of the north transept and the nave.

Previous excavations in 1987 in the chancel and north chapel resulted in the

discovery of early chancel foundations, possibly dating to the Norman period,² and excavations in the north nave aisle in 1980 revealed an early wall foundation of unknown date.³

The north half of the 1989 excavation trench (trench 7) contained undisturbed archaeological layers. The trench was excavated only to the depth required for the new gas pipes and revealed a column base with a chamfered plinth probably of C12 date. This was associated with two or three floor levels in the nave. The discovery of this column base suggests that the assumed early medieval cruciform plan of the church⁴ may have additional phases with a chapel or chapels to the west of the present north transept. There are no obvious indications of this in the standing fabric but further work may substantiate this.

A detailed discussion with drawings has been deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record. Thanks are due to Mr N. Bonham, Mr G. Beech, MBH Industrial Services of Taunton and Somerset County Council.

1 Dickenson, 1857 'Notice of the Indications of the Original plan of the Church of St John The Baptist, Glastonbury', in Report of Ninth Annual Meeting, *SANHS* 7, 13-16.

2 Croft, R.A., Hollinrake, C. & N. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1988 'Somerset Archaeology 1987', *SANHS* 131, 218-9.

3 Ellis, P. 1982 'Excavations in Glastonbury 1978 and 1979', *SANHS* 126, 33-38.

4 See SMR Archive.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, Victoria Buildings and the North Precinct Wall

In September 1988 a watching brief on new building at the rear of 4 Victoria Buildings, Glastonbury, noted a ditch sealed beneath the rear wall of the property. The ditch was slightly over 1m deep and was filled with dark grey silts capped with yellow clay over which the present boundary wall had been erected. Near the base of the ditch a coin of Richard I, a short-cross penny class 3, c.1196-1199, was found, presumably lost in the early-C13. A sherd of typical C13 dark-grey coarse pot, Ilchester B/B type (Pearson 1982, 172), was also found at a slightly higher level within the ditch silts.

Victoria Buildings is a street built in the late-C19, the houses and road occupying the space of two burgage plots. The coin and pot within the ditch suggest that the burgage plots in the area between the east end of the High Street and the present east end of Silver Street were being laid out c.1200. This hypothesis is strengthened by documentary evidence of plots being exchanged in Cart Lane, the medieval name for Silver Street, in 1240 (Watkin 1948).

In 1978 a rescue excavation near the west end of Silver Street proved that the present north wall of the abbey, which originally ran along the length of the south side of Silver Street, was post-medieval (Ellis 1982, 17-31 and Leach 1988 a & b). In 1988 a rescue excavation on burgage plots north of Silver Street found a robbed-out medieval wall of substantial proportions overlying an earlier ditch. It was originally assumed that the burgage plots here were medieval but no medieval occupation was evident south of the wall/ditch, suggesting that use here was restricted to a band fronting the south side of the High Street (Leach 1988b, 5). The ditch was pre-C13, dated by C13 pot sherd in its upper fill, and the excavator suggested that the wall may have been built in the early-C15, although a C13 or C14 date must also be possible. The line of the 1988 ditch, if projected westwards, would appear to head for the medieval north gate of the abbey, thereafter following the line of the present wall. A culvert, seen on the southern boundary of the 1988 excavation and proved to be of the C16, was built over a ditch/stream, on the line of Silver Street.

If the ditch below No 4 Victoria Buildings is indeed a burgrave plot of c.1200 or earlier, as seems likely, this means that the ditch/wall found in 1988 cannot extend east to this point and must return south at some point between the 1988 excavation and Victoria Buildings, the most likely spot being possibly just west of Victoria Buildings where Silver Street begins to curve towards the north west.

A discussion with drawings has been deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the County Museum, Taunton, for identifying the coin; Miss Lynn Marston of the Local History Department, University of Leicester, for her help with this paper; and Mr Andy Brown, owner of 4 Victoria Buildings, for his help and cooperation.

- 1 Ellis, P. 1982 'Excavations at Silver Street, Glastonbury 1978', *SANHS* 126, 17-31.
- 2 Leach, P. 1982a *Ilchester 1 Excavations 1974-5*, Western Archaeological Trust.
- 3 Leach, P. 1988b, 'Silver Street, Glastonbury: an archaeological evaluation 1988', BUFAU (Copy held in County SMR).
- 4 Marston, L. Ph.D thesis in prep. for University of Leicester on the development of the town of Glastonbury.
- 5 Pearson, T. 1982 'The medieval pottery series' in Leach, P. *Ilchester 1 Excavations 1974-5*, Western Archaeological Trust.
- 6 Watkin, 1948 *The Great Chantry of Glastonbury* vol. II, p. 265, entry 428.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, Wirral Park, ST494384

A watching brief on behalf of Somerset County Council was undertaken when the Wirral Park area was extensively redeveloped for new factories and housing estates. During these operations the main A39 road had to be widened to accommodate a new roundabout. The present road was constructed in 1821 and was believed to have utilized the bank of a medieval canal or watercourse for its stretch below Wearyall Hill. This canal was sectioned some 600m to the north east in 1986-7.¹ Construction of a new roundabout showed that the ground had reversed stratigraphy with gleyed clay lying above mixed clay and clay and loam layers. The 1821 road surface was also seen below later road levels. It is suggested that this feature is indeed the bank of the medieval watercourse.

No early features or finds were observed within the Wirral Park fields when the area was stripped of topsoil. The geology of the site was noted: bottom clay was within 1m of the surface adjacent to the road and then dived steeply towards the centre of the Park before rising towards the surface again in the area of Beckery Road ST490386. The effect of this is that a partial basin was formed which caused deep accumulations of peat deposits which, in the centre of the park, were several metres deep. These peats contained several fallen trees but no evidence of human activity was seen. On the northern edge of the park an eastern extension of the natural clay rise which formed The Mound, excavated in 1971,² was noted at ST490386. Between this rise and The Mound an old watercourse sealed by the peat layers was recorded. This watercourse once presumably drained the park area into the moors to the north and north west. The watching brief corroborates the results of the evaluation work undertaken in 1988.³

- 1 Croft, R. and Hollinrake, C. & N. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1988 'Somerset Archaeology 1987', *SANHS* 131, 217-218.
- 2 Carr, J. 1987 'Excavations on The Mound, Glastonbury, Somerset 1971', *SANHS* 120, 37-62.
- 3 Leach, P. 1988 'Wirral Park, Glastonbury: an archaeological evaluation, November 1988', BUFAU (Copy held in County SMR).

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Holcombe, Old St Andrew's Church, ST668507

A watching brief on behalf of Somerset County Council and the Redundant Churches Fund was undertaken in the churchyard of St Andrew's Church, Holcombe, in advance of and during the digging of three soakaway pits and associated trenches during May 1989. One of the pits, 6m south of the south-west corner of the south porch, was excavated by hand when skeletons were uncovered. Two late-medieval inhumations were recorded and removed and below them were two abnormal burials. Both had been interred, in iron nailed coffins, in one single grave cut, one above the other and both were extended north-south with heads to the north. These interments lay above a layer of silts and stone rubble containing C12-C13 pottery sherds. The silts may have been the fill of a possible ditch. To the east of the church a burial was noted aligned east-west but with head to the east, presumably a priest burial and of C17 or C18 date. Four possible stretches of earlier foundation walls were noted in the trenches, north and south of the church; some of these foundations contained fragments of carved and worked stone from an earlier structure. Relatively large quantities of C11 to C13 pottery were found considering the small areas of ground opened. In all 67 sherds of early-medieval pottery were recovered, more than 50% from one trench north of the church, plus sherds of later medieval pottery and tile. Two pieces of worked bone were also recovered and two small notched flint scrapers from the trenches to the south of the church.

This watching brief illustrates the variety of important information which can be revealed from relatively minor drainage work on a sensitive site. Thanks to C. Cullis of the RCF for financially supporting this recording exercise. Finds are deposited in Somerset County Museum.

(R.A. Croft & C. & N. Hollinrake)

Ilchester, ST510226

The enhancement of the green outside Ilchester Town Hall resulted in the digging of a foundation trench which disturbed archaeological deposits of Roman and early-medieval date. Several layers of Roman activity were noted which had been cut into by a 0.7m wide and 2.8m deep trench containing a virtually complete C2 cooking pot. The trench may well be interpreted as some form of robber trench or wall trench. The pottery and other finds are stored at Somerset County Museum. Thanks are due to Sibley Brothers, builders.

(R.A. Croft)

Lamyatt, Church Farm, ST662363

A watching brief on behalf of Somerset County Council was undertaken during building work on the site of Church Farm and the redevelopment of the large medieval barn on the site. Church Farm lies immediately to the east of the church of St. Mary and St. John with which the barn, possibly a tithe barn, is aligned. The barn was mainly of rubble construction with occasional ashlar blocks and medieval stone slit windows and was in a state of considerable dilapidation. It had been badly extended on the west end, weakening the structure, and the south wall had been prevented from collapsing only by erecting a farm building against it. The site had recently been used as an intensive pig rearing unit and the resultant deep slurry pits had destroyed any archaeology in those areas. This area was being redeveloped. Part of the churchyard enclosure wall was removed during the work and this proved to have been bonded by yellow lime mortar of the medieval period. One sherd of C13 coarse pot was found behind the original wall. Earthworks south of the church and barn were noted including two holloways.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Milborne Port, ST675188

In response to a planning application to develop a sheltered housing scheme in the centre of Milborne Port, an evaluation of part of the site was undertaken by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology funded by the developer Beechcroft Developments Limited with the permission of the landowner, Mr T. Coombes. The trial trenches examined approximately 2.6% of the site and demonstrated that extensive archaeological deposits existed on the site ranging in date from late Saxon through to the C14. As a result of this evaluation the archaeological remains were judged by Somerset County Council to be of sufficient archaeological importance to merit in-situ preservation. The proposed development would substantially remove a large part of the site and the site would be destroyed. The developer offered to finance an excavation of the site if planning permission was approved. The District Council decided not to give planning permission and the site has now been recommended to the DOE for scheduling. A detailed copy of the evaluation report is deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record. This particular planning application has touched on a number of complex issues regarding the desirability of development within historic cores without having details of the archaeological significance of the site.

(R.A. Croft)

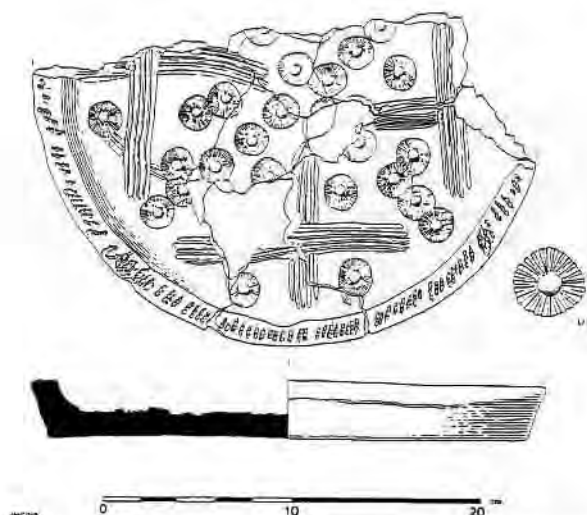


Fig. 4 11th-century decorated pottery dish from Milborne Port

Montacute, St Michael's Hill, ST49351699

A trial excavation on behalf of the National Trust was carried out on the summit of St Michael's Hill, Montacute, in advance of the installation of a lightning conductor for the 18th-century tower. The excavation revealed part of a masonry wall, a layer of rubble, and other features. Medieval and post-medieval finds were recovered. A more detailed account is given elsewhere in this volume.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Priddy, Boultings Cross, Cross Base/Boundary Stone, ST52445482

A boundary point of the Compton Martin hill-commons is 'Boultings Crosse' drawn as a true cross at a track junction on a 16th-century map of Mendip.¹ This point is recorded as 'The Vaut (*sic*) Stone or a stone with a hole in it' in a

perambulation of 20 June 1760² and is marked as 'A Meerstone where a cross used to stand now called the Font Stone' on a boundary map c.1777-91.³ The 'Font' is accurately located on the Compton Martin enclosure map, 1791⁴ as being at a wall junction where a large limestone rock is extant. It is partly covered by the enclosure wall but juts out 1m on the northern side where it is 0.8m wide and 0.7m above ground level. A socket hole for a cross post in the part of the rock covered by the wall would give it the resemblance of a font. The 17th-century Hobhouse map of Mendip shows a number of true crosses at road junctions, some having pedestals.⁵ Wooden crosses are suggested by the name 'Treen Cross' given to two boundary points in the Cheddar perambulations, 1620-30.⁶

1 SRO DD/X/NW.

2 Huntington Library, San Marino USA, ST manorial papers, Box 49(5).

3 Huntington, ST Map 105.

4 SRO CR, 71.

5 SANHS 41 1895, 69-72.

6 SRO DD/X/RBN.

(R.G.J. Williams)

Rodney Stoke, ST488517

A detailed plan of the well-preserved remains of the deserted medieval hamlet of Draycott SAM 492 has been recorded. See Fig. 5.

(R.A. Broomhead)

Taunton, St Paul's House, ST255244

The excavation of a service trench on the eastern side of St Paul's House, Taunton disturbed the remains of three inhumations, two identified as adults and one probably a child. The burials were at a depth of 0.5m below the existing ground surface and were aligned approximately W to E with the head to the W. Other burials have been recorded in this part of Taunton and have been tentatively dated to the late Saxon period.¹ It is likely that these burials are of a similar date. The bones are deposited at Somerset County Museum.

1 Leach, P. 1984 *The Archaeology of Taunton*, Western Archaeological Trust Excavation, paragraph 8, 200.

(R.A. Croft)

Wells, Cathedral West Front, ST552458

The programme of enhancement works to the West Front resulted in a small excavation in April 1989 outside the north-west entrance to the cloister. The existing ground level had to be lowered by 0.4m when the existing step was removed. The earliest feature noted was a stepped foundation plinth below the foundations of the west porch. It was on a different and earlier alignment from the porch and appeared to be at a right angle to, and earlier than, the north wall of the Mary Mitchell Memorial garden which is apparently a C13 structure echoing the alignment of the Saxon cathedral.¹ This wall and the plinth were both earlier than a thick layer of stone dust which covered the whole of the excavation trench and which is probably connected to C14 building work on the south-west tower. Above this layer were several superimposed late medieval and post-medieval layers which were cut by modern service trenches. The archives are deposited with the County SMR.

1 J. Sampson, pers comm.

(R.A. Croft and C. & N. Hollinrake)

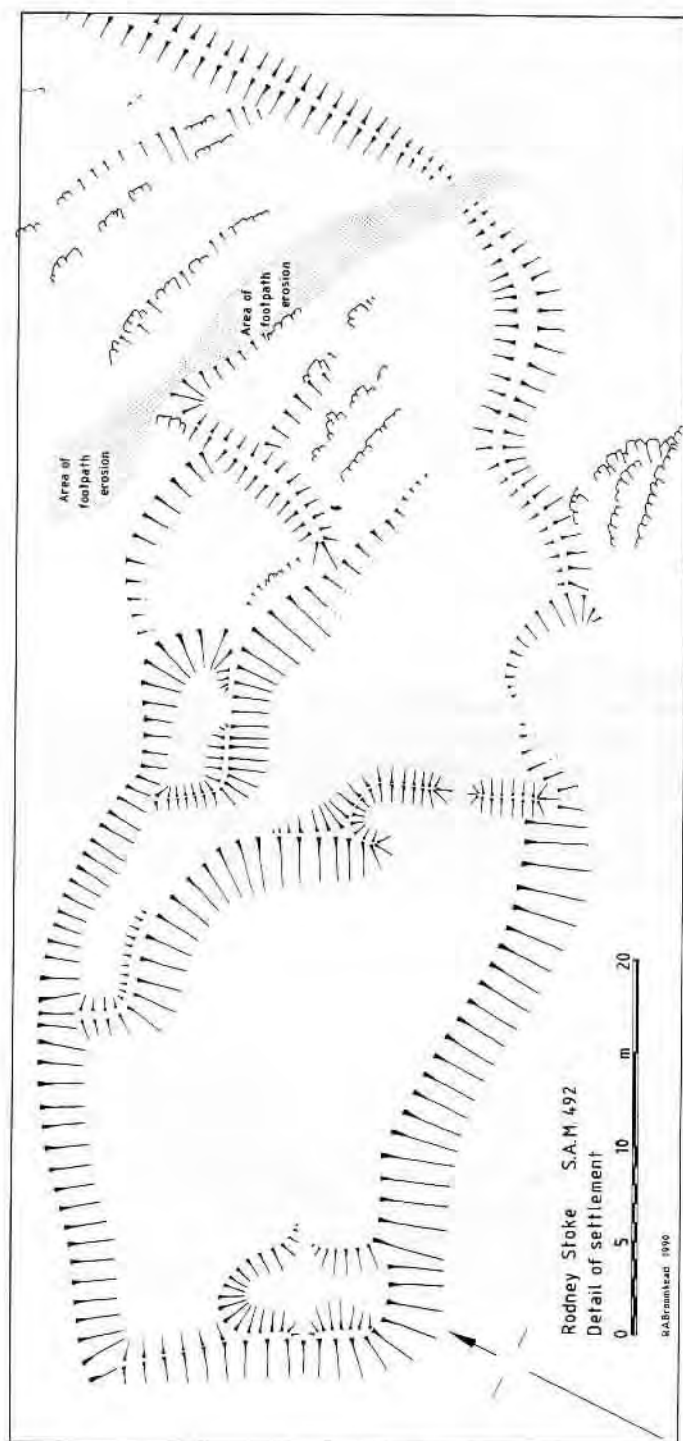


Fig. 5 Rodney Stoke S.A.M. 492
Detail of Settlement

Whitelackington, St Mary's Church, ST37951526

A small excavation in the crossing of St Mary's Church was carried out in July 1989 to examine an area of subsidence and the discovery of human bones. The subsidence and bones had been discovered by contractors engaged to re-lay paving slabs before advice on the archaeological implications of the work had been sought. The purpose of the excavation was to remove loose and subsiding material in order to establish a firm base for the consolidation of the floor.

The loose material proved to be backfill containing disarticulated human bones, remains of coffin handles and fittings, fragments of medieval roofing tile, fragments of window glass, and clay pipe stems. The numbers of disarticulated bones indicated a minimum of eight individual burials which had presumably been disturbed at a later date, possibly by the deposition of the burials discovered beneath.

Below the loose backfilled material there were traces of at least four burials in wooden coffins. They were probably of post-medieval date to judge by the date of the finds present in the backfilled material above. These burials were left undisturbed.

The human bones were reburied in the church and other finds have been deposited in the County Museum. A full report is held with the County SMR. Thanks are due to J. Bradbury, W. Horner and to the contractors, Fenwick Bros., for their assistance in the excavation.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Yeovil, Hundredstone, ST556177

During preparatory work for commenting on the Draft *Yeovil Area Local Plan* by the YALHS it was discovered that the site of the Hundred Stone at the junction of Mudford Road, Stone Lane and Combe Street Lane was not scheduled. It was the meeting place of the Hundred of Stone and stands on a prominent location at the highest point in the area which would be visible for many miles. The stone itself is not of local origin being of a creamy-white oolitic limestone and now only a stump. It stands on a slight mound. The stone is being considered for scheduling.

(B. & M. Gittos)

POST-MEDIEVAL

Dunster Dovecote, ST990437

The restoration and repairs to the roof of the medieval dovecote at Dunster provided the opportunity for the examination of the base of the potence. Small scale excavation revealed that the potence was fixed upon an iron pin which was set into an oak ground beam 0.24m x 0.25m by 2.20m long. The construction trench for the beam was partly emptied and artefact evidence suggests that the beam had been inserted (replaced or repaired) at the end of the C19. A report detailing the repairs and the excavation was prepared by the County Planning Department and made available to the parish. An interpretation panel has been prepared for erection in Priory Green. Thanks to the Rev. R. Dore and to St. Cuthbert's Builders for their help.

(R.A. Croft)

East Lyng, 'Fairburn', ST33532906

A watching brief was carried out in August 1989 during the excavation of construction trenches at the rear of 'Fairburn', East Lyng, on behalf of Somerset County Council, because of the possibility of finding evidence for the burh.¹ No

archaeological features were observed, but two unstratified sherds of early post-medieval pottery were recovered. The finds have been deposited in the County Museum and a report is held with the County SMR. Thanks are due to the owner, Mr Holden, and the contractor, Mr J. Taylor, for their assistance.

- 1 Croft, R.A. & Adkins, R. in Dennison, E. (ed.) 1989 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANHS* 132, 222-4.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Frome

A trial excavation followed by a watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at the site of the new library, Justice Lane, Frome. The impetus for this work was provided by the detail clear on Cruse's 1813 map of Frome, possibly indicating medieval riverside activity.¹ In the event the work showed that this area was not built on before the 18th century. The remains of 19th-century buildings were found which would have been associated with the wool store on Justice Lane and with yards and gardens to the rear of Bridge Street properties.

- 1 Aston, M. and Leach, R.H. 1977 *Historic towns in Somerset*, 50. Bristol.

(Peter Ellis)

Muchelney, Muchelney Abbey, ST42982482

A watching brief was carried out on behalf of English Heritage during the construction of a new entrance for car parking on the eastern boundary of the site of Muchelney Abbey, in June 1989. Disturbance of the ground was kept to a minimum during the construction work and no archaeological features were observed. A small quantity of unstratified finds, mainly post-medieval pottery, was recovered. The finds have been deposited in the County Museum and a full report is held with the County SMR. Thanks are due to F. Kelly and R.P. Scobie (English Heritage) for their assistance.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Taunton, Gyffarde Street, ST23102484

An investigation of an area of land on the corner of Gyffarde Street and Stephen Street was carried out in March 1989 on behalf of Persimmon Homes (South West) Ltd., due to the possibility of the survival of remains belonging to Taunton Priory. An L-shaped trial trench was dug with arms 11m and 9m long, and 1.5m wide, to an average depth of 1.5m. The trench revealed the remains of a building on the site, probably of 19th-century date. No indications of earlier occupation of the site were observed. Thanks are due to Persimmon Homes for their assistance.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Wedmore, Gooseham, ST44604775

Remains of the tiny lost settlement of Gooseham have been traced in a field near Latcham. Fieldwork suggests that four plots were originally laid out. Three cottages and gardens are shown on the 1838 tithe map. The 1851 census records three households, totalling 14 adults and 9 children. Two cottages are shown on the 1886 O.S. 25" map, but were abandoned soon after. One cottage can still be clearly

defined, with part of a gable end and remains of collapsed walls. The fine stone-lined well with paved surround which served the community is still used for watering cattle.

(H. Hudson & F. Neale)

Wedmore, Sand Drove Farm, ST42424515

The site of another lost hamlet has been located in Tadham Moor alongside Sand Drove. The hamlet was part of the post-enclosure settlement built on the peat moors, and was in existence by 1841. It appears that about ten plots were originally planned, although only four buildings are shown on the 1886 25" O.S. map. The main house of the group became the local public house, occupied by Joseph Roper, cider seller, and his family.¹ By 1886 the main house is called Sand Drove Farm, with three cottages nearby. The settlement was abandoned at the beginning of this century. Of the four houses, traces of the farm alone survive. The house platform with collapsed walls of brick and rubble, two yards enclosed with a bank and ditch, and a circular stone paved platform (probably a haystack base) remain.

1 SRO Census Returns 1841, 1851.

(H. Hudson & F. Neale)

Wells, Western Edge of Cathedral Green

A watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Somerset County Council in June 1989 at the western edge of Wells Cathedral Green, during pipe laying operations for a new gas pipe. The depth of the pits dug was not great enough to disturb any medieval layers and all finds/features recovered were of post-medieval date.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

West Horrington, Buddle House, ST571481

The existence of the so called 'Buddle House' near the village of West Horrington has been known for some time.¹ At the request of Mr and Mrs Bishop, on behalf of the Wells Ramblers Group, the site was examined by Somerset County Council, English Heritage and R.J. Williams. The structure is approximately circular in shape with a diameter of c.6m and a height of c.2m. There is a low doorway on the N downslope side. The building is no longer roofed and the walls are generally in a stable condition, although some remedial conservation is required to prevent further deterioration of the structure. In spite of considerable local research, notably by R. Williams and Mrs Bishop the exact function of this building has not been ascertained. It is thought that it may have functioned as some form of storage building, a lock-up of some description presumably associated with the extraction of lead ore from the surrounding area. The site is being put forward for protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the hope that English Heritage might be able to come up with an interpretation of its function. It is clearly a most unusual structure and no other examples are recorded in Somerset.

1 Williams, R.A.G. 1989 'Mendip Round Houses'. *'Retrospect' - Archaeological Notes and News From North Somerset and South Avon*, No. 121, October, 4-6.

(R.A. Croft)

West Quantoxhead, St Audrie's Farm, ST40804255

Following a request from Mr. Stafford of Home Farm, West Quantoxhead, to investigate a series of walls which he had discovered on his land through machine trenching, a small scale recording exercise was undertaken by Somerset County

St Audrie's Farm

Evaluation Trenching

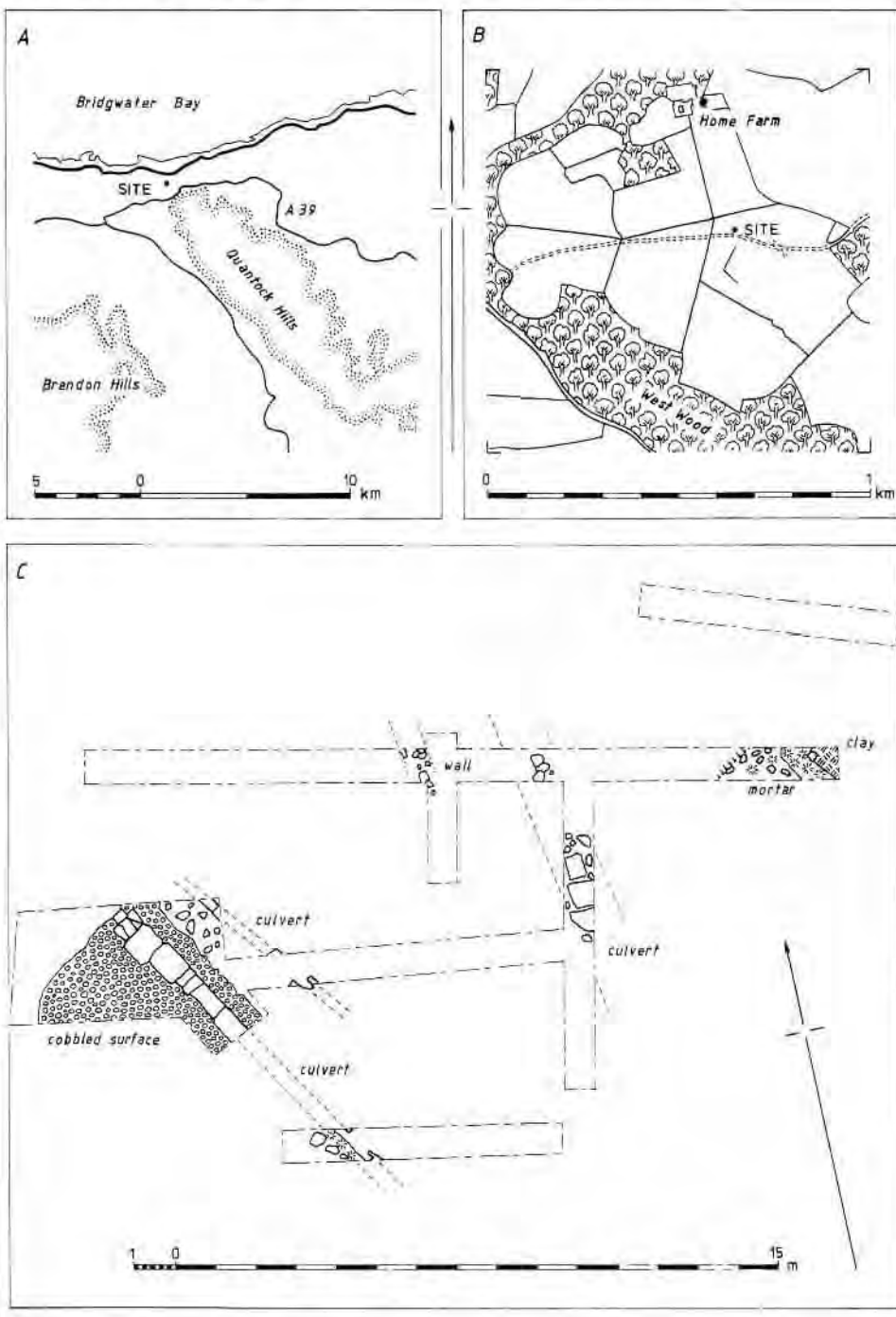


Fig. 6 St Audrie's Farm, West Quantoxhead

Council. The investigation recorded the positions of possible robbed-out wall trenches of c.post-medieval date along with associated stone-capped drains. Examination of the cartographic information has shown that the building discovered here is likely to have been one of the outbuildings associated with St. Audrie's Farm which are clearly shown on maps dated 1761, 1817 and the 1840 Tithe Map. The site has been identified by M. Aston as being a good example of post-medieval desertion brought about by the development of a parkland estate.

1 Aston, M.A. 1985 *Interpreting the Landscape*, 56.

(R.A. Croft)

Yeovil, Lloyd's Bank, ST556160

A watching brief was carried out in early 1989 by the Archaeological Unit of YALHS on the redevelopment of Lloyd's Bank (No. 9 High Street), which was being totally rebuilt except for the façade. Although observation was difficult on such a confined site, four pit features were identified at the western end furthest from the High Street, and the location of two wells was indicated by the site foreman. The pits contained mostly post-medieval material including early-18th-century clay pipes, but one pit contained pottery which was possibly late-medieval. The north boundary wall comprised work of many periods and when the old building had been demolished it was possible to appreciate the sharp change in level which it delineated. It has recently been proposed that this alignment marks the southern boundary of the precinct of the Saxon Minster Church of Yeovil.¹ A fuller report and plan is available elsewhere.²

1 *Chronicle - J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(4), 95.

2 *Chronicle - J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(4), 122.

(B. & M. Gittos)

Yeovil, Old Police Station, ST557159

The old police station (19 Union Street) was converted for use by Yeovil Town Council during 1989. It was built by the Town Commissioners in 1849 and its history has recently been published.¹ In January 1989, a photographic survey of the building was carried out by the YALHS Archaeological Unit prior to the new building work. An old notice referring to the stables which once stood on the opposite side of Union Street was recorded. It had been painted on the jamb of a disused doorway and was removed by the subsequent stone cleaning.²

1 *Chronicle - J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(5), 139.

2 *Chronicle - J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(4), 127.

(B. & M. Gittos)

Yeovil, Leisure Pool Site, ST553154

In the summer of 1989, deep excavations and other preparatory works were carried out on the north-western corner of the Ninesprings, on the site which had been selected for Yeovil's new leisure pool complex. The area had been used for dumping debris generated by the building of the Queen's Way by-pass road in the mid-1970s and the resulting layer of disturbance covered the whole site. No archaeological evidence was apparent beneath this.¹

1 *Chronicle - J. Yeovil Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.* 4(5), 152.

(B. & M. Gittos)

INDUSTRIAL

Roadside Survey

Since the last published record on roadside features in Somerset (cf. 'Somerset Archaeology 1986') minor changes have arisen, largely as the result of damage caused to the smaller objects, in some cases necessitating their removal. However, further features not previously mentioned have been suggested for inclusion and the whole body of information has been published as addenda to the *Somerset Roads Gazetteer*. Further information in *SIAS Bulletin*, No. 50, April 1989.

(Brian Murless)