

AIR RECONNAISSANCE OVER SOMERSET—SOME RECENT RESULTS

BY R. H. LEECH

INTRODUCTION

The drought which existed by early July 1975 produced exceptionally favourable conditions for observing archaeological sites as cropmarks and parchmarks. Two flights on 10 and 11 July for the regional archive of the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset were responsible both for the discovery of many new sites and for increasing our knowledge of some already known. Most of the sites discovered were on Rhaetic Clays and Lias Limestones and Clays; only two were on Gravel. Almost all the photographs referred to in this article derive from these flights and were taken by P. J. Fowler, R. H. Leech, A. J. Parker and J. White. M. Aston helped towards the compilation of the gazetteer, and the plans were drawn by L. J. Thompson. I am grateful to J. H. Hampton and W. J. Rodwell for commenting on the text in manuscript.

Most of the cropmarks are plotted on maps which accompany the following gazetteer; these were made using the Mobius network method (Schollar 1975) and should thus be regarded as carefully considered sketches. Recent discussion of the problems of air photography has emphasised the need 'to construct maps showing cropmarks and other evidence', at the same time remembering that the results so derived are interim statements 'likely to be amended by the next series of photographs' (Hampton 1975, 124). In the past very little archaeological evidence from air photographs for Somerset has been published. Existing material includes photographs in the National Monuments Record, photographs by various private flyers and series of vertical air photographs taken for departments of the central government and for Somerset County Council. Future work should include the construction of maps showing the many archaeological features recorded in these collections. Also of interest would be some assessment of the relationships between surface geology, crops grown and the incidence of cropmarks.

THE GAZETTEER

Each site is given a location by county, civil parish and Ordnance Survey grid reference; this is followed by a note on the geology, a brief description and a list of photographic references. These abbreviations are used in referring to present locations of air photographs:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| CRAAGS | Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset, The Archaeological Centre, Mark Lane, Bristol BS1 4XR. |
| CUAP | Committee for Aerial Photography (University of Cambridge), Mond Building, Free School Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RF. |
| NMR | National Monuments Record Air Photograph Unit, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB. |
| SCC | Somerset County Council (Planning Department), County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY. |
| WHITE | J. White, West Air Photography, Weston-super-Mare. (Copies of all photographs referred to are also held by CRAAGS). |

Other abbreviations used are:

OAP Oblique air photograph.
VAP Vertical air photograph.

AVON

WINSCOMBE ST 390573 (Fig. 1)

Alluvium, parchmarks of a rectangular enclosure.

CRAAGS OAP transparency ST 3857 A

WINSCOMBE Area centred ST 392568 (not illustrated)

Keuper Marl, indistinct cropmarks of enclosures and linear features, probably a settlement

CRAAGS OAP transparency ST 3856/A/B.

SOMERSET

BRIDGWATER WITHOUT ST 322403 (Fig. 2)

Alluvium, cropmarks of linear features including course of River Parrett before 1677 and drainage ditches of earlier field system (Williams 1970, 93).

CRAAGS OAP ST 3240/A.

WHITE OAP BL 1555/10/11.

BUTLEIGH ST 506317 (Fig. 3)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmarks of two sides of a rectangular enclosure at least 140 × 130 m, possibly of a Roman marching camp.

CRAAGS OAP ST 5031/A

WHITE OAP BK 1550/5/6

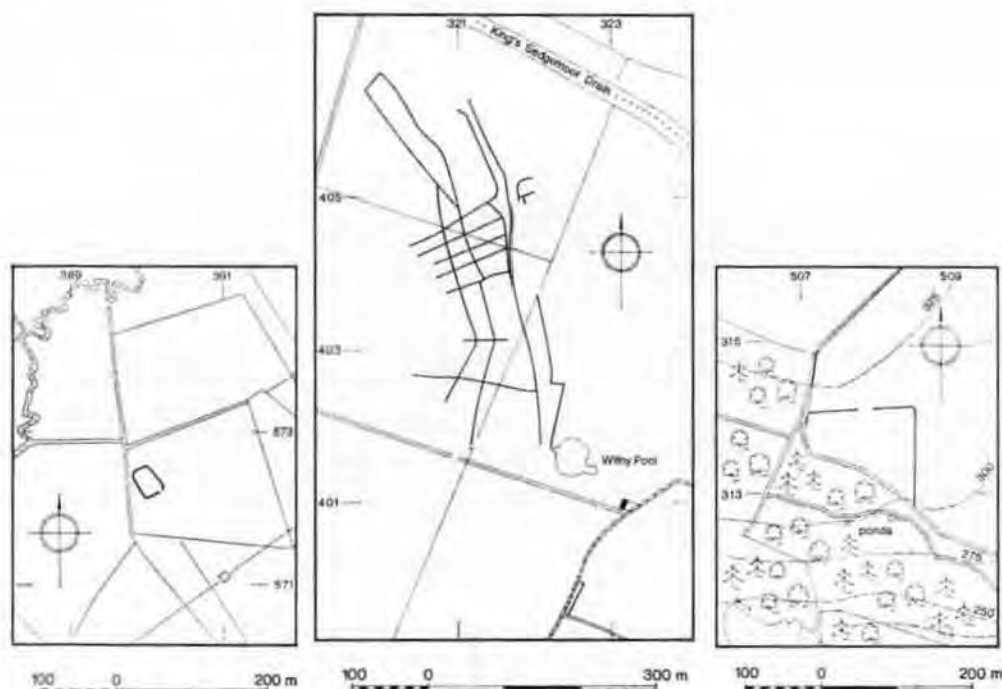


Fig. 1. Winscombe

Fig. 2. Bridgwater Without.

Fig. 3. Butleigh

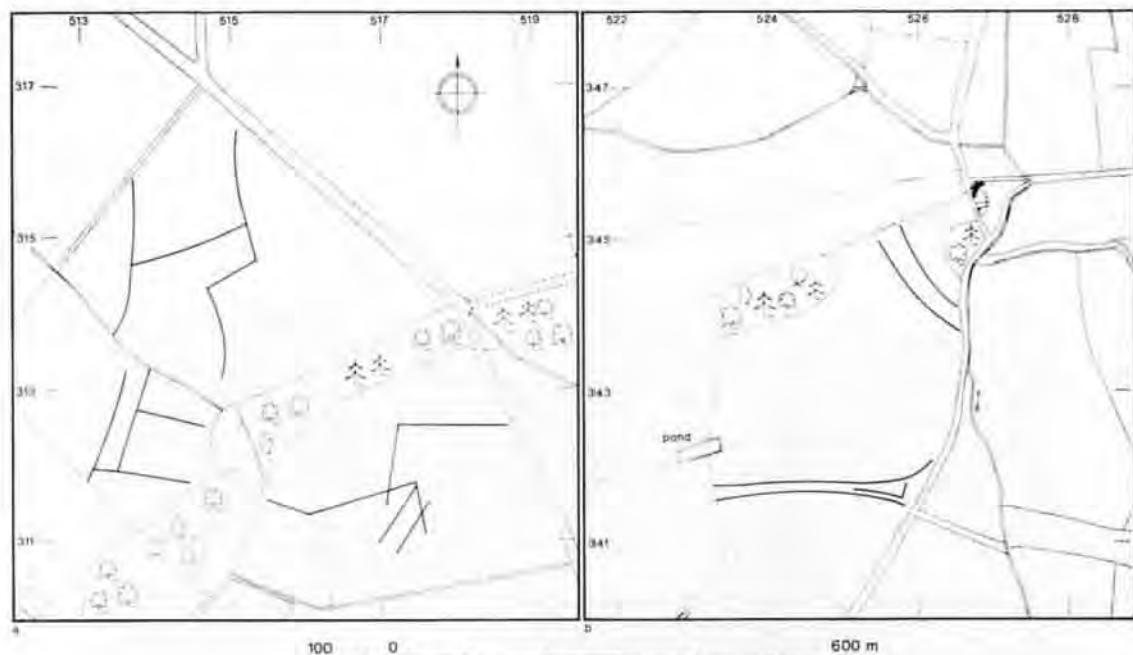


Fig. 4 a & b. Butleigh

BUTLEIGH ST 515315 (Fig. 4a)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmarks of linear features, probably post-medieval field boundaries which had disappeared by 1844 (S.R.O., Butleigh Tithe Map).

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 5131/A

WHITE OAP BK 1550/9/10

BUTLEIGH ST 526342 (Fig. 4b)

Lower Lias Clay, cropmarks of parallel ditches, probably post-medieval park avenues; parchmarks of ridge and furrow to the S.

WHITE OAP BL 1556/3

CHARLTON MACKRELL Area centred ST 523297 and ST 527292 (Pl. 1)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of parallel linear features and other linear features S of road between Butleigh and Charlton Mackrell.

CRAAGS OAP transps. ST 5229/A/B/C

WHITE OAP BL 1551/5/6

CHARLTON MACKRELL ST 525298 (Fig. 5)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure.

WHITE OAP BL 15511/5

CHARLTON MACKRELL ST 526297 (Fig. 5)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure.

WHITE OAP BL 1551/6

CHARLTON MACKRELL ST 530298 (Fig. 5)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of two sides of a possible rectangular enclosure.

WHITE OAP BL 1552/3



Plate 1. Charlton Mackrell, cropmarks of parallel linear features.

CHARLTON MACKRELL ST 535294 (Pl. 2)
Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of parallel linear features (see ST 523297 above).
WHITE OAP BL 1551/9/10; BL 1552/1

CHARLTON MACKRELL ST 536297 (Fig. 6a)
Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure with entrance on the NE; no datable material was found when the site was fieldwalked after ploughing.
WHITE OAP BL 1551/7; BL 1552/2

CHARLTON MACKRELL ST 545281 (Fig. 6b)
Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of three sides of a probable rectangular enclosure.
WHITE OAP BL 1552/5



Fig. 5. Charlton Mackrell



Fig. 6a & 6b. Charlton Mackrell



Plate 2. Charlton Mackrell, cropmarks of parallel linear features.

CHEDDAR ST 45845296 (not illustrated)

Pleistocene Head, parchmarks of a rectangular building to the W of Cheddar Vicarage; there are also parchmarks of past archaeological excavations and possible walls immediately to the S of the vicarage; the parchmarks are possibly associated with the Roman settlement partly examined by P. A. Rahtz.

WHITE OAP BK 1549/5

CHEWTON MENDIP ST 587512 (Fig. 7a)

Carboniferous Limestone, cropmarks of two sides of a rectangular enclosure with an entrance on the N and linear features and pits.

WHITE OAP BL 1560/3

CHEWTON MENDIP ST 580514 (not illustrated)

Carboniferous Limestone, indistinct cropmarks of linear features.

WHITE OAP BL 1560/5

EAST COKER ST 551142 (Fig. 7b)

Yeovil Sands, cropmark of a ring ditch.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 5414/A

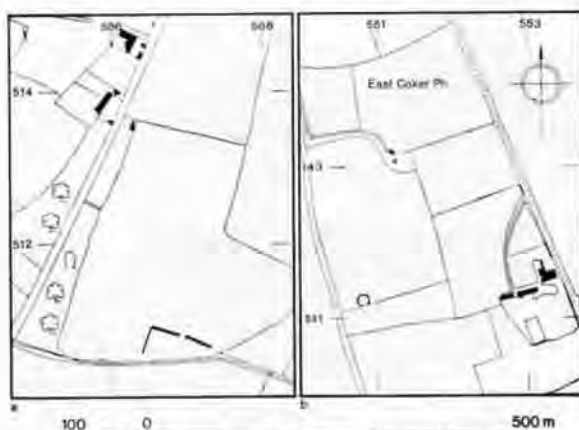


Fig. 7a. Chewton Mendip b. East Coker

HIGH HAM ST 421305 (Fig. 8a)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure; the site is on a slight slope facing SSE.

CRAAGS OAP ST 4230/A

WHITE OAP BL 1554/1

HIGH HAM Area centred ST 433290 (Fig. 9; Pl. 3)

Rhaetic Clay—Low Ham or Netherham, earthworks of a water supply system and post-medieval formal gardens, with walls of a later rabbit and hare warren; parchmarks in grass of garden walls, a wall inside rabbit and hare warren, the demolished Netherham Manor and other buildings and a former road to SE. The spring used for the water supply system was also probably utilised by the Roman villa (see below). A map of 1779 (S.R.O., DD/MKG Box 4) shows the manor house and rabbit warren but not the gardens and water supply system or a building E of the manor (where parchmarks were visible in 1975). A map of 1823 (S.R.O., DD/SAS C/212, High



Plate 3. Low Ham, Romano-British villa (centre left) and post-medieval garden earthworks (centre right).



Plate 4. Low Ham, Romano-British villa.

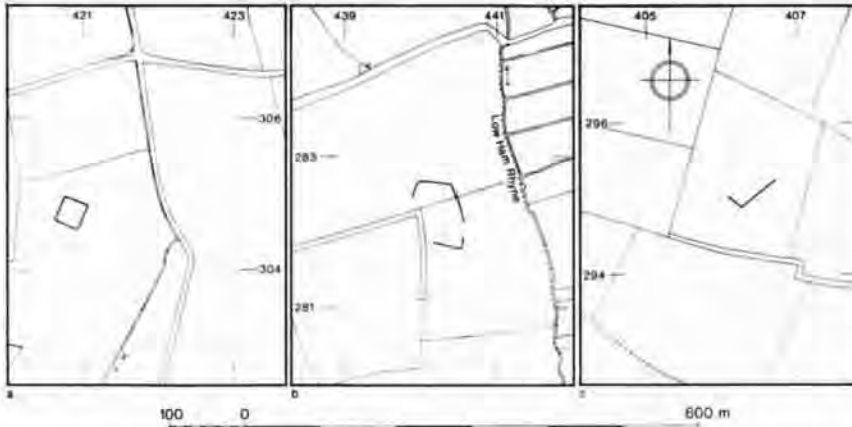


Fig. 8 a. & b. High Ham

Fig. 8 c. Huish Episcopi

Ham) shows the manor house as in ruins. The earthworks shown on Fig. 9 are partly sketched from air photographs and partly based on the 2nd edition O.S. 1 : 2500 map 1904; the resulting plan has been checked on the ground but there is still a need for a detailed field survey.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4329/A

SCC VAP 2236

WHITE OAP BL 1553/10/11

HIGH HAM ST 436288 (Figs. 9, 10; Pl. 4)

Rhaetic Clay, parchmarks in grass of the Romano-British courtyard villa at Low Ham excavated by H. S. L. Dewar and C. A. R. Radford from 1946 to 1948 (Radford 1947, 1948a and b). The plan of the west wing of the villa on Fig. 10 is a reduction of an unpublished plan (Taunton Castle library) showing the actual areas and structures excavated in 1946-8; the position of the buildings is located from the air photographs. The east wing of the villa was noted as parchmarks from the ground in 1955 (Dewar 1955, 1966); evidence from the air photographs now enables this to be plotted and indicates that the whole complex was a large villa with buildings grouped irregularly around three sides of a large courtyard c 70 × 40 m.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4328/B/C/D

WHITE OAP BL 1554/2/3

HIGH HAM ST 440283 (Fig. 8b)

Rhaetic Clay, indistinct cropmarks, possibly of a rectangular enclosure; the site is on a gentle slope facing SSE.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4328/A

HUISH EPISCOPI ST 406295 (Fig. 8c)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmark in grass of two sides of a rectangular enclosure; the ditch in the SE was later observed (1/76) in the sides of a pipe trench cutting across the field.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4029/A

HUISH EPISCOPI ST 442273 (Fig. 11)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmarks of two ring ditches.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4427/A

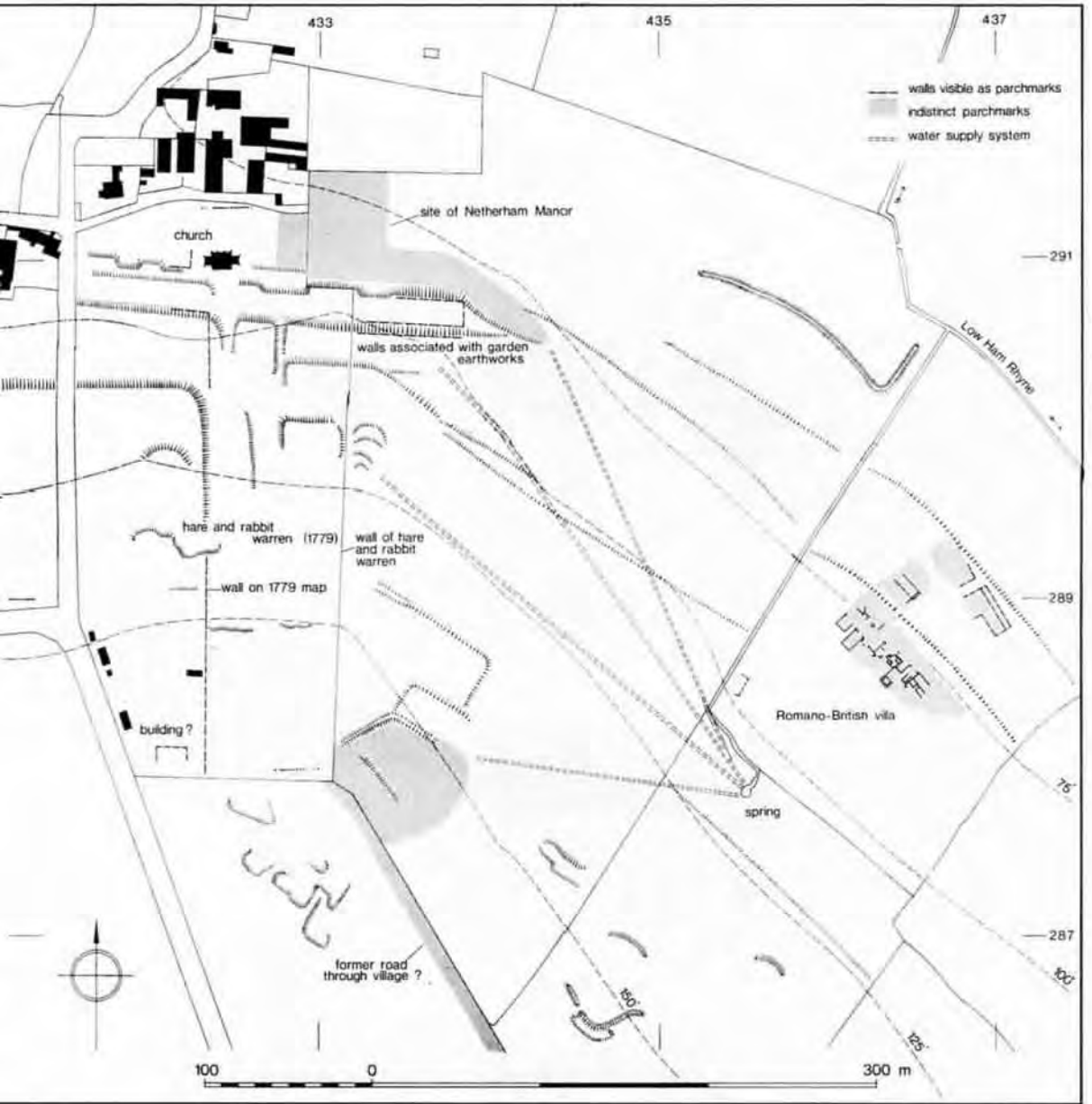


Fig. 9

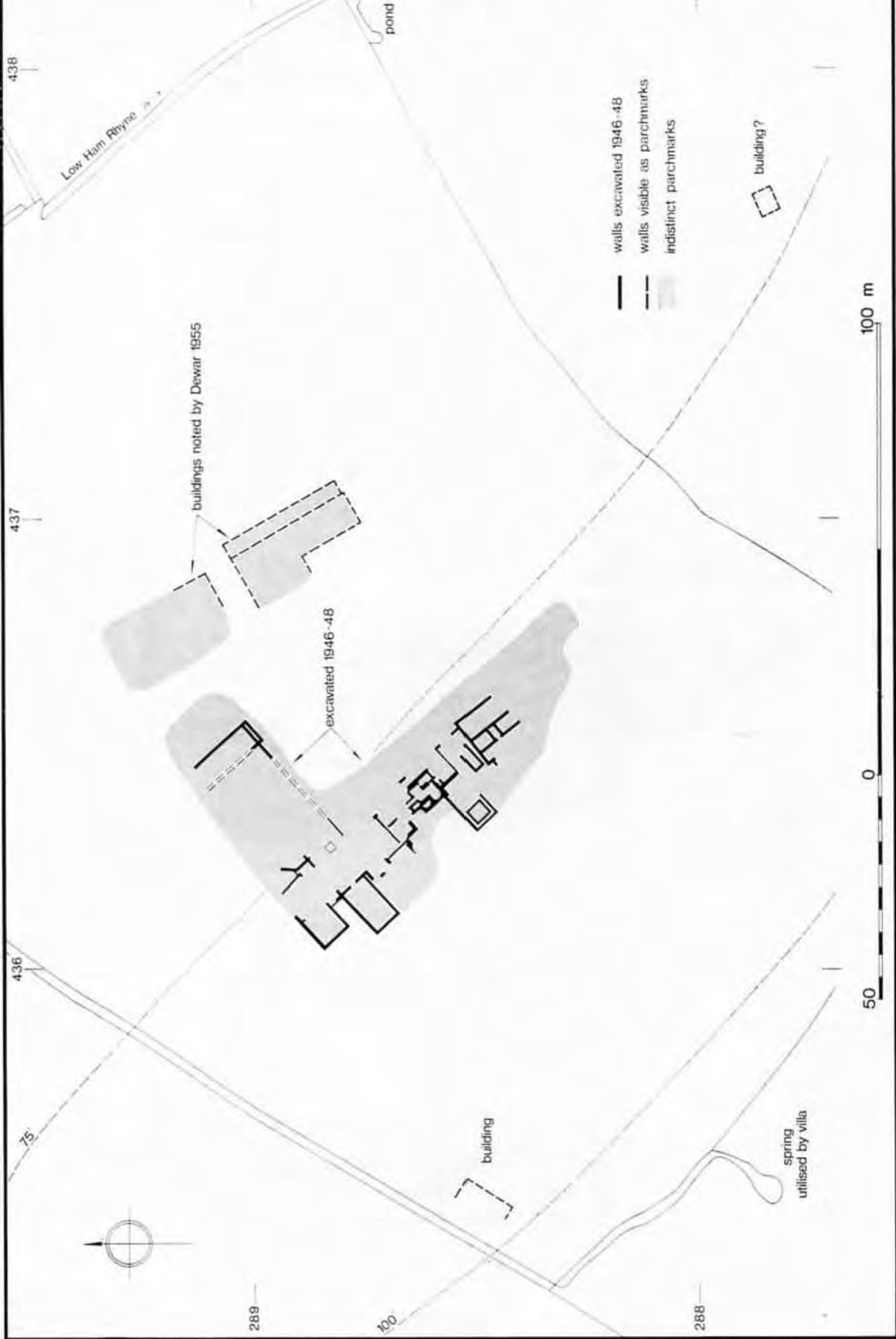


Fig. 10



Fig. 11. Huish Episcopi



Fig. 12. Kingsdon

KINGSDON ST 508272 (not illustrated)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of road ditches; the road is shown on the O.S. map of 1811.

WHITE OAP BL 1553/1

KINGSDON Area centred ST 514268 (Fig. 12)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of two rectangular enclosures, hut circle and indistinct features.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 5126/A

CUAP OAP AGR 31

WHITE OAP BL 1552/9

KINGSDON ST 518281 (Fig. 13)

Gravel, cropmarks of a circular enclosure with oval enclosure adjoining (in field 0055); no datable material was found when the site was fieldwalked after ploughing.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 5128/A/B/C

WHITE OAP BL 1552/6



Fig. 13. Kingsdon and Somerton



Fig. 14. Kingsdon

KINGSDON Area centred ST 524268 (Fig. 14)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of rectangular enclosures and some indistinct features, probably associated with the Roman villa site (Dewar 1951, 50). One field is named 'Crockland' on a map of 1827 (S.R.O., DD/SAS C/212).

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 5226/A

WHITE OAP BL 1552/10/11

KINGWESTON ST 523304 (Fig. 15-'a')

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a subrectangular enclosure.

WHITE OAP BL 1551/2

KINGWESTON Area centred ST 523310 (Fig. 15; Pl. 5)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, parchmarks in grass of roads (and cricket pitches) and cropmarks of linear features, probably roads and field boundaries. Most of the roads are shown on Day and Masters' map of 1782 or on the O.S. 1811 plan. The disappearance of most of these roads was the result of the enlarging of Kingweston Park. A pond is sited across the former turnpike road where it enters the park. By 1838 (S.R.O., Kingweston Tithe Map) the road pattern was as today.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 5231/A/B/C/D

WHITE OAP BK 1550/9/10; 1551/1

LONG SUTTON ST 494250 (not illustrated)

Lower Lias Clay, indistinct parchmarks of building foundations at Bineham.

CRAAGS OAP ST 4924/1

LONG SUTTON Area centred ST 500250 (Fig. 16; Pl. 6)

Lower Lias Clay, parchmarks and earthworks of the deserted medieval settlement at Bineham City which was noted and trial trenched by H. S. L. Dewar in 1951 (Anon 1951). The outlines of at least ten buildings are visible as parchmarks; one on the east side is apparently more complex than the rest. The site was still occupied in 1720 (Dunning 1974) and in 1844 part of the field was called 'Chapel Hays' (S.R.O.,



Plate 5. Kingweston, parchmarks in grass of roads and cropmarks of linear features.



Plate 6. Long Sutton, parchmarks and earthworks of deserted medieval settlement at Bineham City.

Long Sutton Tithe Award). The earthworks and floodable land on the plan are sketched partly from a 1947 RAF air photograph (CPE/UK 1924Jan16'47/3197) and although checked on the ground should be regarded only as an interim statement; there is still an urgent need for a detailed ground survey.
CRAAGS OAP ST 5025/A/B/C
WHITE OAP BL 1556/7/9/10; BL 1557/6



Fig. 15. Kingweston

MONTACUTE Area centred ST 485165 (Fig. 17)
Ham Hill Stone, cropmarks of parts of three rectangular enclosures within the Iron Age hillfort of Ham Hill.
WHITE OAP BL 1554/5/6/7

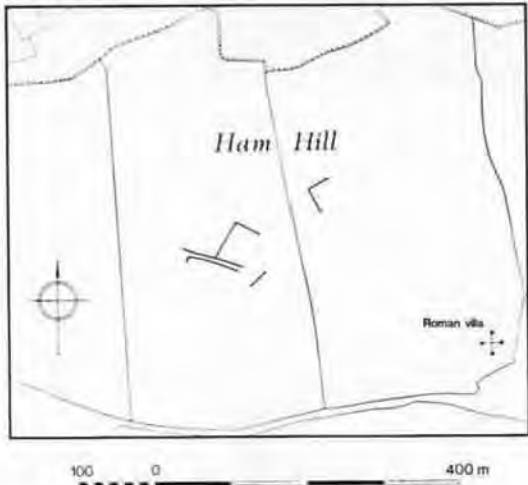


Fig. 17. Montacute



Plate 7. Montacute, cropmarks of enclosure.



Fig. 16. Long Sutton, Deserted Medieval Settlement at 'Bineham City'

MONTACUTE ST 495166 (Fig. 18; Pl. 7)

Yeovil Sands, cropmarks of ditched rectangular enclosure within former precinct of Cluniac priory; immediately south of the parish church are indistinct parchmarks, possibly of priory buildings; other linear features showing as cropmarks are field boundaries removed since 1903.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4916/A/B

WHITE OAP BL 1554/10



Fig. 18. Montacute



Fig. 19. Pitney

PITNEY ST 447289 (Fig. 19)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, indistinct cropmarks possibly of two enclosures.
NMR OAP ST 4428/1 (taken June 1970)

SHEPTON MALLET ST 633430 (not illustrated)

Lower Lias Limestone, indistinct parchmarks of possible buildings at Charlton.
WHITE OAP BL 1560/1

SOMERTON ST 464290 to ST 463285 (Fig. 20)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmarks of parallel road ditches.
CRAAGS OAP 4628/A/B



Fig. 20. Somerton

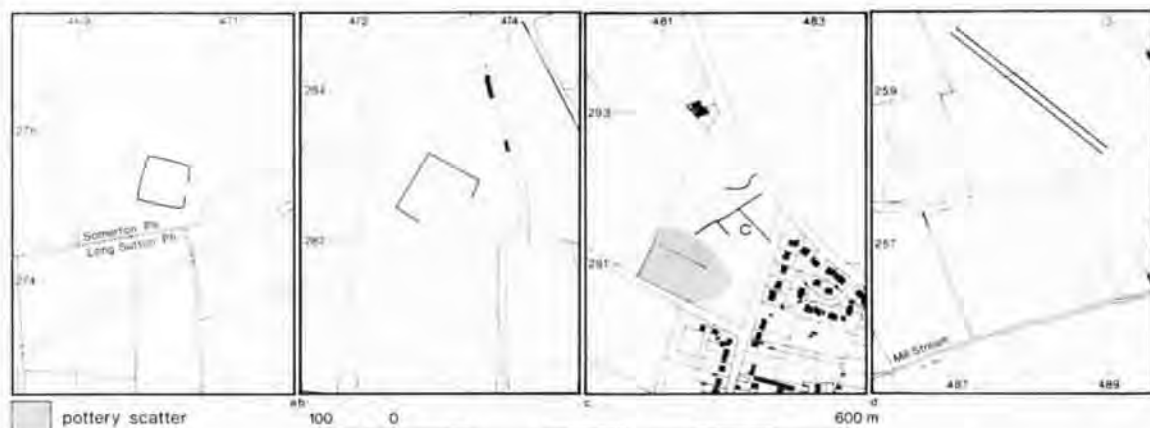


Fig. 21 a, b, c & d. Somerton

SOMERTON Area centred ST 465285 (Fig. 20)

Rhaetic Clay, cropmarks of subrectangular and other enclosures, linear features and possible road ditches. The site was field walked after ploughing (1/76) and Romano-British pottery was found within the banjo-shaped enclosure. The site is on an E/SE facing slope.

WHITE OAP BL 1553/9

NMR OAP ST 4628/1

SOMERTON ST 470276 (Fig. 21a)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a subrectangular enclosure with entrance on the E; no datable material was found when the site was fieldwalked after ploughing; the site is on an E/SE facing slope.

CRAAGS OAP ST 4727/A/B

NMR OAP ST 4727/1

SOMERTON ST 473283 (Fig. 21b)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure. The enclosure is presumably earlier than the ridge and furrow which is still visible in the field (1/76).

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4728/A

SOMERTON ST 482292 (Fig. 21c)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of two sides of a rectangular enclosure with a hut circle and other linear features; Romano-British pottery was found when the site was fieldwalked after ploughing.

WHITE OAP BL 1556/11; BL 1557/1/2/3

SOMERTON Area centred ST 488258 (Fig. 21d)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of parallel road ditches.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4825/A

SOMERTON ST 494268 (Fig. 22)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure; no datable material was found when the site was fieldwalked after ploughing.

WHITE OAP BL 1553/6

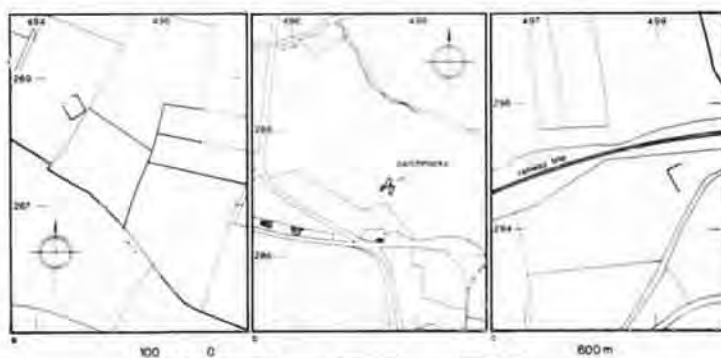


Fig. 22 a, b & c. Somerton

SOMERTON Area centred ST 495268 (Fig. 22a)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of linear features, probably medieval field and lane boundaries.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4926/A/B

WHITE OAP BL 1553/3/5/6/7

SOMERTON ST497287 (Fig. 22b)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, parchmarks of at least three rectangular buildings.

CRAAGS OAP ST 4928/A/B

SOMERTON ST 499295 (Fig. 22c)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of two sides of a rectangular enclosure; no datable material was found when the site was fieldwalked after ploughing (1/76).

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4929/A

SOMERTON ST 512281 (Fig. 13)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, parchmarks in grass of a rectangular enclosure; the enclosure is visible as an earthwork at ground level.

WHITE OAP BL 1552/6

SOMERTON ST 513281 (Fig. 13)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, parchmarks in grass of six or seven rectangular buildings and other features; in 1843 the field was called 'At Huish' (S.R.O., Somerton Tith Award).

WHITE OAP BL 1552/6

STAWELL ST 367387 (Fig. 23)

Keuper Marl, cropmarks of a subrectangular enclosure.

CRAAGS OAP ST 3638/A

WHITE OAP BL 1556/1

WALTON ST 472357 to ST 473357 (Fig. 24a)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of linear features, possibly the corners of two rectangular enclosures.

CRAAGS OAP ST 4735/A/B

WHITE OAP BK 1550/1



Fig. 23. Stawell

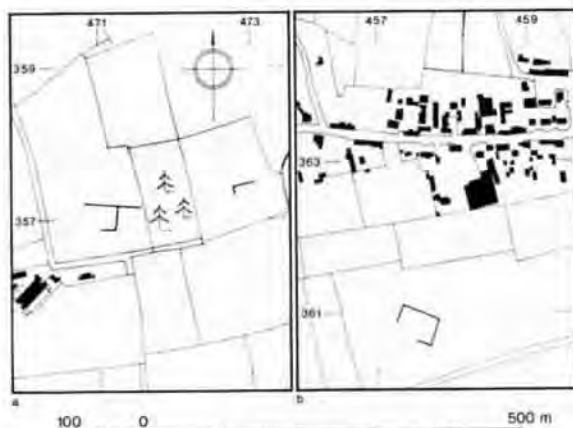


Fig. 24 a & b. Walton

WALTON ST 457361 (Fig. 24b)

Lower Lias Clay and Limestone, cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure.

CRAAGS OAP transp. ST 4536/A/B

WHITE OAP BK 1550/2/3

WOOKEY ST 502448 (Fig. 25)

Lower Lias Limestone, cropmarks probably of medieval field boundaries which had disappeared by 1839 (S.R.O., Wookey Tithe Map).

WHITE OAP BK 1549/11



Fig. 25. Wookey

YEOVILTON Area centred ST 563244 (not illustrated)

Gravel, indistinct cropmarks, some of linear features.

CRAAGS OAP ST 5624/A

ADDENDA

Flights by J. White in June 1976 enabled the identification of a further three sites:

SOMERTON ST 491263 (Fig. 26)

Lower Lias Limestone, cropmarks of enclosure; in 1843 the field was called Chessills (S.R.O., Somerton Tithe Award).

WHITE OAP 20116/8

SOMERTON ST 493281 (Fig. 27)

Lower Lias Limestone, cropmarks of double enclosure with entrance to SW.
WHITE OAP 20119/20

SOMERTON ST 494261 (Fig. 26)

Lower Lias Limestone, cropmarks of enclosure; field called Chessills in 1843.
WHITE OAP 20117.

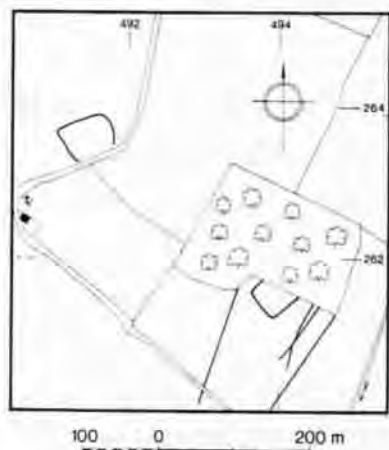


Fig. 26. Somerton

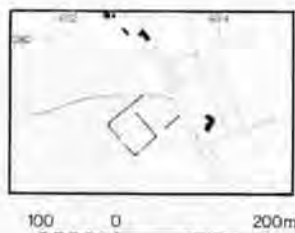


Fig. 27. Somerton

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