

# SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY 1991

*Edited by C.J. WEBSTER and R.A. CROFT*  
SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Almost all professional archaeological work in the county is carried out under the guidance of the Environment Department of Somerset County Council. The steady growth in demand for archaeological information, as reported last year, has continued despite the economic recession. The total number of planning applications with an archaeological dimension has remained steady at about 500.

The conservation of the archaeological heritage is one of the aims of the County Council and new staff have been appointed to promote this. On Exmoor, the National Park Authority has appointed Veryan Heal as the Conservation Archaeologist for the Park (her first report appears below). In a contrasting area, Margaret Cox has been appointed as the conservation archaeologist for the Somerset Levels and Moors. Both appointments add considerably to the wider role of archaeology as a significant part of the planning system.

Planning applications continue to require archaeological investigation, monitoring and recording and produce a large proportion of the reports below. A substantial part of the county is now covered by Local Plans and the Environment Department has worked closely with all the District Councils to produce the archaeological and historic heritage sections in each plan. Information has been supplied for the Glastonbury and Street, Chard and Ilminster and West Deane local plans. The County Council's own Peat Local Plan, in which archaeology is identified as an issue, was subject to Examination in 1991 and was formally adopted in 1992.

English Heritage has continued to provide financial support for several excavation, survey and management projects in the county, notably the A303 improvements and the Levels and Moors Project. Detailed post-excavation work on the Roman site at Fosse Lane (Shepton Mallet) is being undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. An interim report and popular booklet appeared in 1991,<sup>1</sup> but the final report is likely to take at least two years to produce. Discussions are continuing as to the long term protection and management of the Roman town, and English Heritage are intending to schedule the most important areas.

An important seminar on Archaeology and Planning in the 1990s was held at Ilchester Town Hall with speakers from the Department of the Environment, English Heritage, local authorities, archaeological consultants and a private-sector solicitor. It was attended by more than 120 people from the South West and beyond. A summary of the conference proceedings has been produced.

Numerous proposals for golf courses continue to present problems for all those concerned with the conservation of the countryside. The construction of a golf course can have a severe effect on an archaeologically sensitive landscape, and detailed discussions have been held at Curdon Mill, Oake, Pawlett, Cloford Manor and Ham Hill. The historic and archaeological landscape is frequently neglected in applications for golf courses, and although the English Heritage document *Golf Courses in Historic Landscapes* goes some way towards addressing the situation, it only refers to the planned landscapes of parks and gardens.

As can be seen from the following reports, archaeological activity is widespread in the county and not only under the auspices of the County Council. Local groups and societies, and individuals, can and do contribute greatly to our knowledge, particularly in those situations (not subject to planning constraints) where the Council cannot act. It is to be hoped that this situation will continue, together with such initiatives as the community archaeology scheme which bring professional and amateur archaeologists together.

1. P. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *PSANHS*, 134 (1990), 47-55; P. Leach, *Shepton Mallet, Romano-Britons and Early Christians in Somerset*, (BUFAU and Showerings Ltd, 1991).

(R.A. Croft)

## SURVEY, FIELDWORK AND EXTENSIVE SITES

### *A303 Wincanton to Zeals Road Improvement Scheme*

More than 8 km of the new line of the A303, between Stoke Trister in Somerset and Zeals in Wiltshire, were fieldwalked in January 1991. The new carriageway had already been stripped, and construction, including bridgeworks, was well under way when the fieldwalking took place.

Twenty-one sites of potential archaeological significance were found during this exercise, nine in Somerset, eleven in Dorset and one in Wiltshire. These included flint and pottery scatters from the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods, and, in Somerset, the possible site of a Roman villa. Three sites were recommended for further evaluation work, two in Dorset and one, at Encie Farm, in Somerset (see below). A full report on this stage of the A303 road scheme is in preparation.

(R.A. Broomhead, C. and N. Hollinrake, P.R. McCrone)

### *A303 Horton Cross to Marsh (Devon)*

A programme of desk-based archaeological assessment and fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Lunniss for MRM Partnership as part of the environmental assessment of the proposed road improvements. Several sites were noted, including a flint scatter and a medieval site. A full report is in preparation.

(R.A. Croft)

### *Ashill, By-Pass, ST 310182-ST 343153*

Fieldwalking along the route of the Ashill by-pass in December 1991 produced few sites of archaeological interest. Occasional flints were recovered, along with isolated sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery. The paucity of archaeological material may be a result of the area having once been part of Neroche Forest and therefore sparsely populated.

One area of interest was identified at the southern end of the by-pass where

earthworks within parkland may belong to a deserted medieval settlement. Drainage cuts through this area produced some pits containing 10th to 12th century pottery sherds.

(C. and N. Hollinrake and P.R. McCrone)

### *Exmoor National Park*

After many years of anticipation, Exmoor National Park has, at last, been able to appoint a permanent archaeologist to its staff. Veryan Heal took up the post of Conservation Archaeologist in August and has begun to activate the archaeological policies of the Park Authority on a full-time basis.

In August, archaeological surveys began on the farms in the pilot Exmoor Farm Conservation Scheme, a scheme which seeks to encourage and support farming in a manner consistent with the conservation of ecology, archaeology and the landscape. The field surveys of the chosen farms were completed by Bill Horner and Richard Broomhead, jointly funded by Exmoor National Park and English Heritage. The resulting assessments of the nature and condition of archaeological features and farm buildings have allowed payments to be offered for the proper management of important sites and have produced farm plans (showing all the archaeological features), gazetteers and photographic records. With the designation of Exmoor as an Environmentally Sensitive Area, the scheme may be modified or superseded, but the preservation of the archaeological landscape should remain an aim under any new scheme.

The submerged forest and peat on Porlock Beach have been eroding for some long time, but it was noticed that the rate of erosion had accelerated recently. As a result, 'rescue' sampling of the peat and clay was arranged with Vanessa Straker of Bristol University in November. Samples for palaeo-environmental analysis and radio carbon dating were taken and are being held for inclusion in a proposed palaeo-environmental survey of Exmoor. Later in November, Paul Pattison and Robert Wilson-North of the RCHME, Exeter, undertook a survey of the exposed peat and forest trees and their relationship to the clay beneath, and they rapidly produced excellent plans and data. It is hoped that the sampling and survey will help link the Porlock peats with similar research elsewhere in the Severn Estuary.

As well as fieldwork and research, archaeology in the National Park has included restoration and interpretation at a variety of sites. Work was completed in 1991 on the access and interpretation at Burrow Farm Engine House, which can now be visited by a permissive path along the dismantled railway line. A new interpretation board has been put in place at Dunster dovecote and another is in preparation for Old Burrow Roman fortlet (Devon), which was restored recently.

Plans for 1992, which will be discussed with the Archaeology Advisory Group, include more field survey to establish a base map of Exmoor's archaeology, and further interpretation and access for suitable sites.

(S.V.E. Heal)

### *Doultong, By-Pass*

Preliminary fieldwalking along the line of the possible routes for the East Cranmore to Charlton (Shepton Mallet) by-pass took place in December 1991. Approximately 1 km each side of the proposed road corridor was walked, the routes passing through the parishes of Shepton Mallet, Doultong and Cranmore. Many sites of all periods from the Neolithic to the present were identified, and a number of ploughed fields along the by-pass corridor produced sizeable quantities of flint.

Investigation of early maps enabled the medieval open fields of the villages along the route to be identified, and land-use maps have been prepared.

Work will continue in 1992.

(C. and N. Hollinrake)

*Kingston St Mary: Pipeline Observations, ST 20802984–ST 21902679*

An intensive watching brief was carried out by Wessex Archaeology for Wessex Water during the construction of a water main from Tetton Reservoir to the outskirts of Taunton. Small quantities of post-medieval pottery and a very small number of undatable features were recorded.

(Karen Walker)

*North Curry to Stoke St Gregory: Pipeline Observations, ST 33072370–ST35102945*

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology during the construction of the North Curry to Stoke St Gregory water main (c. 9.5 km) for Wessex Water, between June and November 1991. The route crosses two low-lying areas of peat and alluvium separated by a ridge. These former wetland areas were considered to be of high archaeological potential.

In the event, only a low level of archaeological deposits and finds was recorded. Apart from modern drainage features, finds consisted of isolated, undatable features, and small quantities of unstratified medieval and post-medieval potsherds, three sherds of later Bronze Age pottery and a few worked flints.

(Simon Hulka)

*Lympsham to Brent Knoll: Pipeline Observation*

A watching brief conducted for Wessex Water plc by R.A. Broomhead on behalf of AC Archaeology recorded a substantial number of features in this area of the Somerset claylands. Significant finds included an Iron Age site at Blue Coat Farm and Romano-British features at four sites. A summary of the finds is presented in Fig. 1. A full report is in preparation.

(R.A. Broomhead)

*Priston, Farm Survey*

A selective survey of agricultural buildings on six farms in the parish of Priston was undertaken on behalf of Avon County Council and English Heritage. All the farms studied had been mixed farms in the past, and this was reflected in the range of crop storage buildings and livestock housing recorded. Although several of the farms occupied medieval sites, no very early agricultural buildings survived; the building stock reflected substantial new investment in the later 18th century, a time when many of the old copyhold tenures were being reorganised into new farm units. Most of the buildings were of white lias rubble with Bath stone dressings, and certain architectural details, including four-gabled finials, ovolo-cushioned gable copings and bead-moulded window mullions and surrounds, were repeated from farm to farm with only minor variations. Substantial barns survived at Wilmington, Priston Mill and Pressbarrow Farms. Other building features characteristic of several of the farms were arcade-fronted shelter sheds facing a foldyard and unusually deep gable-entry cart sheds. The only earlier building of note was a brick granary perched upon staddles at Church Farm, probably dating from the late 17th or early 18th century. A fuller report is in preparation.

(James Bond and Mike Chapman)

WESSEX WATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
 Lympsham STW Elimination  
 SUMMARY OF SITES, FINDS AND SURFACE FEATURES

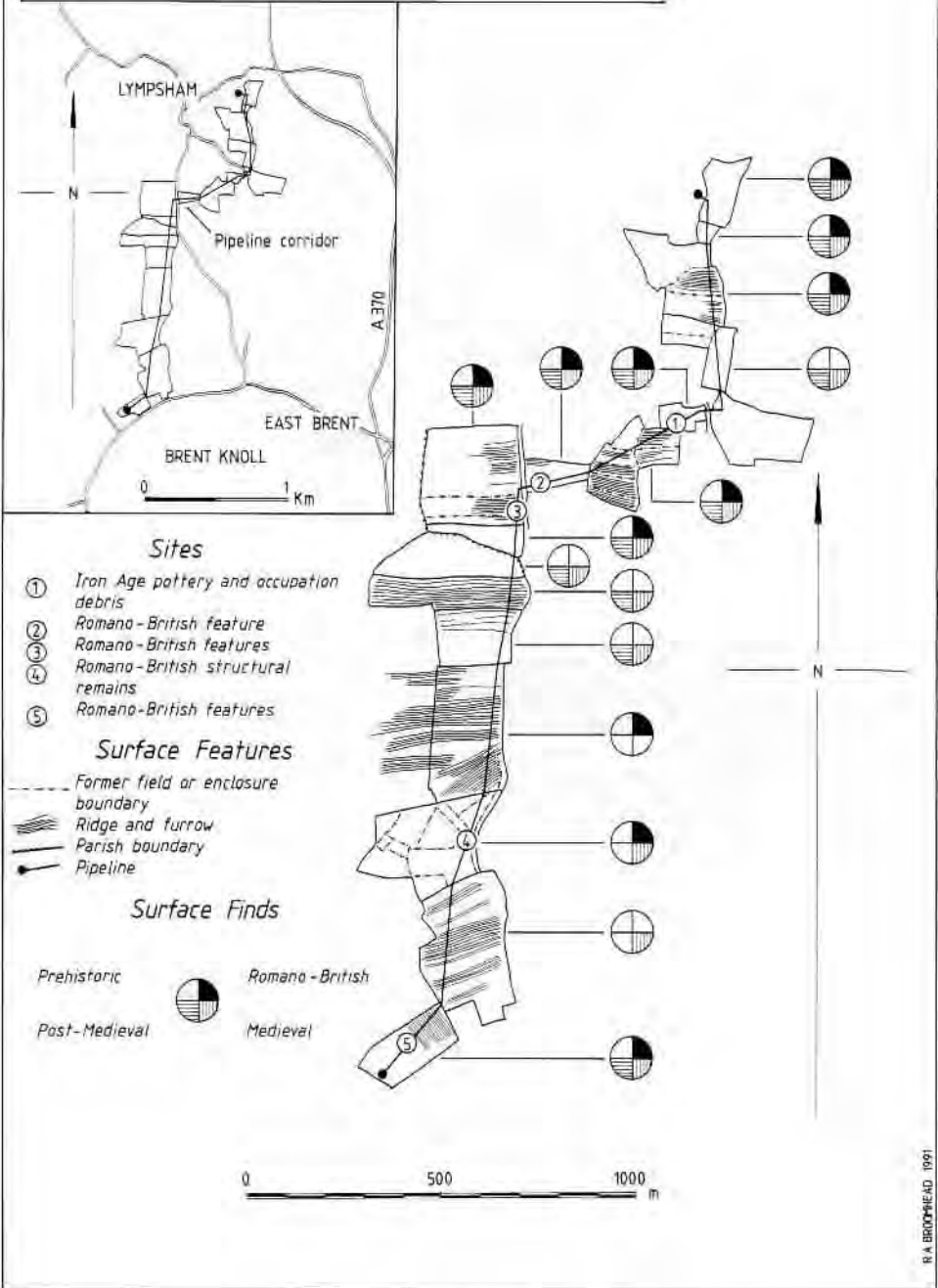


Fig. 1 Lympsham to Brent Knoll Pipeline.

*The Shapwick Project*

The multi-disciplinary project based on the parish of Shapwick, which began in October 1988, was continued in 1991. The following is a very brief summary of the work.

1. Large parts of the western area of the parish, which had not been examined in previous years, were fieldwalked this year, on the land attached to Kent Farm, Manor Farm and Bowerings Farm. During the autumn, an intensive prolonged campaign of fieldwalking was carried out all over the parish as land was ploughed and prepared for planting. Some 21 fields totalling 87 ha (216 a) were examined. Most were divided into 25 m wide lines and then 25 m lengths and a collecting time of 10 minutes was assigned to each length. As in previous years, the aim was a total retrieval of all finds; as the area examined on each length is approximately 2 m wide this method samples roughly ten per cent of the area. Analysis of the mass of finds from this campaign will only begin in 1992 and will be reported in due course, but it is already clear that earlier settlement and manuring activity only occurs in certain topographical zones of the parish. Although there is a little evidence of prehistoric evidence from the Nidons, there is no early medieval evidence. The same is true for the low-lying area in the centre of the parish and the higher ground of the ridge to the south. Roman and early medieval finds seem to concentrate in the centre of the parish where the medieval village and the present day farms lie.

(M. Aston, N. Corcos, M. Costen, S. Everden, H. Jelley and many others)

The material from the 1990 season has now been fully analyzed and is published in the third report (*see below*).

(C. Gerrard)

2. A magnetometer survey of the area of the early church site was carried out in early 1991 together with a resistivity survey of the church itself. This provided considerably more detail of the features which had been seen on the 1989 air photographs. The early church, which was probably a minster of 8th century origin and which was replaced in 1331 by the present church in the village, seems to have been about 37 m long and composed of a nave, chancel and 'waist' – probably a tower. There was another building to the west and both stood in an enclosure bounded by a bank with external ditch together with a stone mound; the church appears to stand on another stone mound and there is a spring to the north-east. Ditches of former ridge and furrow cross the site from south to north.

In the spring, a magnetometer survey was carried out in a pasture field adjacent to an area which had produced Roman pottery (Fig. 2). This survey located a series of linear enclosures with occupation within them, which may represent a line of farmsteads along the ridge above the Levels.

(C. Gaffney)

In the autumn, a preliminary study was made to investigate the possibilities of relating geochemical, particularly soil phosphate, data, to magnetometer survey using a field which had produced flints and early medieval pottery. It is hoped to follow up this work in 1992.

(J. Gale and others at Bournemouth Polytechnic)

3. The geological survey continued as more fields became available after ploughing. Further examination of the hedge species was undertaken and the methodology investigated further. It has been decided to examine the hedges for their

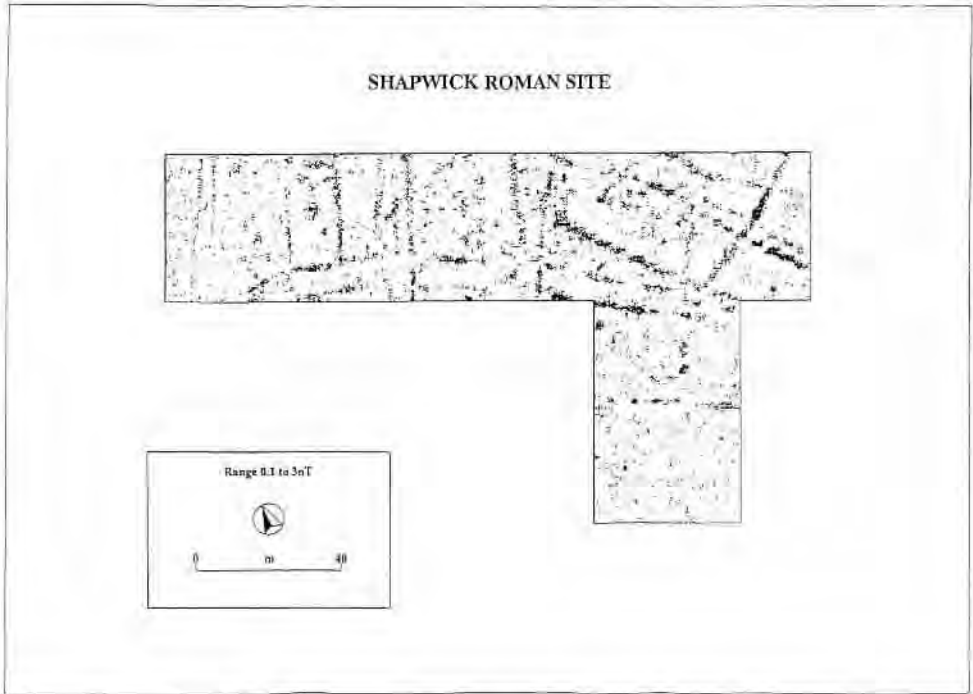


Fig. 2 Shapwick Roman Site: Magnetometer Survey.

botanical composition independently of the enclosure history of the parish. It will then be possible to compare the two sets of data to see if hedge species composition and number is significant for date of the hedge.

(P. Hardy, D. Hill and M. Williams)

4. No air survey of any significance was carried out in 1991.

5. The extremely detailed survey of 1515, Abbot Bere's terrier, was translated and transcribed. This has a wealth of evidence for field and furlong names, some but not all of which can be identified from later maps. A start was made on locating these names on the modern map; this should be possible as the holdings of each tenant are recorded in a clockwise direction around the parish starting with pasture, followed by the North Brook area of Eastfield, the South Brook area of Eastfield and then the Westfield, and furlong by furlong within these. As some names are located, the rough position of the others can be guessed.

(M. Costen and M. Aston)

6. Recording of the domestic buildings in the village continued with a second possible 16th century house being discovered.

(J. Dallimore and J. and J. Penoyre)

7. It is hoped in 1992 to carry out more geophysical and geochemical studies on the areas which have produced early medieval pottery. Further analysis of the material contained in the detailed surveys of 1327 and 1515 will be undertaken to

locate the early habitative-type field names. Surveys of the earthworks so far located will be continued. Detailed analysis of the vast number and range of finds from fieldwalking will continue under the direction of C. Gerrard.

The third report is now available:

M. Aston and M. Costen (eds.), *The Shapwick Report: a Topographical and Historical Study, 1990 (Third) Report* (University of Bristol, Department for Continuing Education, February 1992); £7, post free. Copies of the second report for 1989 are available at £5, post free.

(M. Aston)

### *Somerset Levels Project*

The Somerset Levels Project has terminated its fieldwork activities, but its 'staff', John and Bryony Coles, continued to have an interest in the archaeology of the Levels throughout 1991. Most of this was directed towards the development of museum and display in the immediate area of peat-cutting and drainage. Preparations for the centenary of the Glastonbury Lake Village discovery (1892) commenced, in consultation with Stephen Minnitt of the County Museum, Bob Croft of the County Council and others. The archive of the Somerset Levels Project is now fully transferred to the County Museum, and consists of field notes, site reports, field and publication artwork, and other records. Somerset Levels Papers 1-5 are now completely sold out, and a few of the later Papers are in short supply. The booklet *Prehistory of the Somerset Levels* is in its third printing. The Project welcomes the new appointment of a field officer for the Levels and Moors, based at Somerset County Council.

(J. Coles)

### *Weston Zoyland: SWEB Power Line*

Between October and December 1991, an archaeological watching brief took place when a new power line to Weston Zoyland was constructed between ST 333360 and ST 353353. Over 30 new telegraph poles were erected and sections of each hole were recorded. The new line crossed an area of peat moor below the 5 m contour and, on this stretch of about 1.5 km, samples of the various peat and alluvial clay deposits were taken and meter readings of the moisture content of the black peat deposit were recorded.

A series of probable medieval enclosures into the moors on the north and north-western margins of Weston Zoyland island were noted and a ploughed field at ST 352352, above the 5 m contour, contained much worked flint and prehistoric and Roman pottery sherds.

This was an important exercise in cooperation between archaeologists and SWEB, and the helpfulness of SWEB is gratefully acknowledged. A full report has been deposited with the County Council's Sites and Monuments Record and the finds have been deposited in the County Museum.

(C. Hollinrake)

## MULTI-PERIOD

### *Cheddar, Kings of Wessex School, ST 456531*

In June 1991 an evaluation in advance of determination of a planning application for the construction of a new sports centre at the school was undertaken by AC Archaeology to a brief supplied by Somerset County Council.



A combination of hand-dug test pits and machine-excavated trenches was employed to examine seven areas currently occupied by temporary classrooms and the school sports field. Known archaeology in the vicinity includes the site of the Saxon palace complex and medieval chapel some 150 m to the east, and a presumed Roman villa, evidenced by cropmarks immediately south of St Andrew's Church, within 350 m of the present evaluation. In addition to excavation of the palace site,<sup>1</sup> evaluations and watching briefs have been carried out before and during the development of the present west wing of the school. Extensive geophysical surveys to the west and south of the school buildings have included much of the area of the proposed leisure complex development which has prompted these investigations.

Two of the evaluation trenches in the sports field west of the disused railway embankment located archaeological features. These comprised a two-phase ditch and a well-preserved cobbled surface, both of probable later Roman date but with some evidence of earlier Roman activity. Previous geophysical survey would suggest that further cobbled surfaces and ditches, together with pits, might be expected in the immediate area.

It is intended that a fuller report should be prepared for publication.

1. P.A. Rahtz, *The Saxon and Medieval Palaces at Cheddar: Excavations 1960-62*, (Brit. Archaeol. Rep. 65, 1979).

(John Hawkes)

#### *Ilchester, adjacent to A37, ST 525218*

The water pipeline from Wiltshire to Ilchester which was dug in 1990<sup>1</sup> was extended to the south of Ilchester in 1991. An area to the east of the Ilchester–Yeovil road, disturbed by this activity, proved particularly rich in surface finds of many periods from Roman to post-medieval, possibly indicating the presence of some small roadside settlement, outside the main town of Ilchester. Of the more than 250 potsherds recovered from this area, more than half were post-medieval, the great majority probably dating from the 17th century. This was consistent with the clay pipe finds which also appeared to be of the 17th century. Of 20 bases, 5 were blank or had illegible stamps, one bore the initials 'HC' and the remaining 15 'ID'. The 'ID' cipher is by far the most common stamp found on 17th century pipes from the district around Yeovil, but this high concentration near Ilchester may demonstrate proximity to the site of manufacture. Less than 10% of the sherds were definitely Roman and there was a single tessera. A small copper alloy ring had been cut from thin plate and then roughly filed to produce a rounded cross-section. It was probably medieval but its purpose was unclear. A small medieval horse shoe, probably dating from the 13th century, has been illustrated elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

1. M. Rawlings, in C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds.), 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *PSANHS*, 134 (1990), 134 and 223.
2. L.E.J. Brooke, *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5(3), 92.

(B. and M. Gittos)

## PREHISTORIC

#### *Brean Down, Sand Cliff, ST 296587*

As part of a planning application, an assessment of buried deposits on the southern edge of the sandcliff was undertaken by Dr Martin Bell for the landowners. The

evaluation revealed evidence of medieval and Bronze Age activity at varying depths across the site. The archaeological deposits lay at least 0.5 m below the modern surface and the development will be designed to preserve these.

(R. A. Croft)

*Ditcheat, ST 60803690*

125 worked flints were recovered from ploughed ground high on Ditcheat Hill. The flints were widely dispersed across the field, with the exception of a small concentration of Mesolithic flints, which lay in a relatively sheltered hollow. A 10% sample of archaeological material was taken from a total area of 4.5 ha.

(Penny Stokes)

*East Pennard, ST 57803810*

59 worked flints were recovered from ploughed ground on top of Pennard Hill. The flints were concentrated in the south and west of the field. A 10% sample of archaeological material was taken from a total area of 3.08 ha.

(Penny Stokes)

*Montacute, Ham Hill: Montacute Estate Quarry, ST 482161*

During removal of overburden, the quarry operators noticed the remains of three Iron Age pits and contacted Somerset County Council. Excavation and sampling of the fills produced Iron Age pottery, some daub fragments, animal bone and quantities of carbonized plant remains. The pits lay adjacent to the area excavated by the Central Excavation Unit in 1983. Study of the finds and environmental material from Somerset County Council's excavation is continuing. The quarry operators also recovered fragments of two quernstones, pottery and four links of iron chain from the spoil stripped from the area.

1. G. Smith. 'Excavations at Ham Hill, 1983', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 27-55.

(P.R. McCrone)

*Norton Fitzwarren, Hillfort, ST 196262*

Under the auspices of the Community Archaeology Programme, approximately half of the interior of Norton Hillfort was fieldwalked on 30 October, 1991. Quantities of post-medieval and Roman material were collected, along with a possible Palaeolithic hand axe. Plans to fieldwalk the whole interior of the monument this year were thwarted by wet weather. Study of the finds is continuing.

We are grateful to Mr J. Coles, the owner of the monument, for his permission to carry out this exercise.

(P.R. McCrone)

*Penselwood, Encie Farm, ST 749299*

At Encie Farm, the initial fieldwalking survey of the new line of the A303 (see above) produced a large flint scatter which was further investigated under difficult weather conditions. The flints were largely of Neolithic or Bronze Age types, although some microliths may indicate Mesolithic activity in the area.

A major feature of the site was a large (7 m wide × 3 m deep) ditch which cut across the roadline with a complex of postholes, animal burials and possible structural remains on the eastern side. Bronze Age pottery was found in the lower fills of the ditch.

A full report on the site is in preparation.

(P.R. McCrone)

## ROMAN

*Cheddon Fitzpaine, Nerrols Farm, ST 240269*

A scatter of rim and body sherds of black-burnished ware in a fresh, unabraded condition was collected<sup>1</sup> on a gridded survey by the Cheddon Field Group. The site was at the highest part of a field where the plough had probably, quite recently, disturbed a buried feature.

1. Somerset County Museum, acc. no. 21/1991.

(C.F. Clements)

*Ditcheat, ST 60353538*

67 sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from a ploughed field at Kilkenny Green. The pottery was predominantly black-burnished ware, some of it burnt, with some grey ware, and a single sherd of plain Samian; also recovered were six possibly Romano-British nails, and a broken pennant sandstone roof tile. Four worked flints lay within the area of greatest pottery concentration and four medieval sherds were recovered from the same area. A 10% sample of archaeological material was collected from a total area of 1.5 ha.

(Penny Stokes)

*Hemington, The Faulkland Inn, ST 73755444*

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in the car park of the Faulkland Inn in advance of development. Roman burials were known from the area immediately east of the site and it was thought possible that these might extend into the development area.

In the four trenches that were opened, the vast majority of features were of 18th and 19th century date, associated with a farm on the site. No Roman features were seen, but Roman pottery was recovered in sufficient quantity to suggest an occupation site in the immediate vicinity. A small quantity of worked flint was also found.

A full report was lodged with the County Council's Sites and Monuments Record and the finds deposited in the County Museum.

(C. and N. Hollinrake)

*Ilchester, Great Yard, ST 518229*

An earthwork and contour survey of the field called Great Yard was commissioned by the Ilchester Town Trust from Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit as a preliminary to proposals to create playing fields and a public open space. Great Yard lies immediately adjacent to the western fringe of Ilchester within a bend of the River Ye0 (Fig. 3). Its earthworks have been known for many years and are recorded in part by the Ordnance Survey, but no detailed interpretative survey had previously been undertaken.<sup>1</sup> A zone up to 100 m wide along the eastern perimeter of the field is scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

The scheduled area covers part of an area of suburban development of the Roman town, which extends further outwards to the south bank of the river. Many of these remains have been disturbed or destroyed by modern housing development on the east, but little of their presence appears to be reflected now in the earthworks of Great Yard. The most prominent feature visible today is a large dry 'oxbow' river meander, which has been linked with other former artificial waterway cuts and channels. These features are undated, but a post-Roman origin is suspected, since other Romano-British and earlier features are invariably sealed by



more recent river alluvium in localities such as this in the valley of the River Yeo and thus barely visible now as coherent surface earthwork features. The most likely explanation of these earthworks is as a series of medieval fishponds, utilising an earlier feature (the 'oxbow' meander), and perhaps to be associated with one of medieval Ilchester's religious houses (e.g. the Dominican Friary). Other features within Great Yard include river levee banks of various dates and traces of ridge-and-furrow cultivation earthworks, probably also medieval since this area was originally almost certainly part of 'Ilchester Field', the great open field west of Ilchester.<sup>2</sup>

1. P.J. Leach, *Great Yard, Ilchester, Somerset: an Archaeological Survey 1991*. (BUFAU Report 179, 1991).
2. *VCH Somerset*, 3 (1974), 180.

(P.J. Leach)

*Ilchester, Limington Road, ST 52592247*

At the invitation of the owner, the Archaeological Unit of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society carried out a preliminary survey of a small field on the south side of Limington Road, Ilchester, in July 1991.<sup>1</sup> Surface finds collected by systematic fieldwalking included Roman material and are being studied with a view to carrying out a small exploratory excavation.

1. B. and M. Gittos, 'Archaeological Unit Report', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5(3), 92.

(B. and M. Gittos)

*Ilchester, Northover House, ST 522228*

Proposals for the development of land at Northover, Ilchester, between Northover House and the River Yeo, required an archaeological assessment of the site's potential in support of a planning application. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by the owners, Hanneford Finance Co., in October 1991.<sup>1</sup>

The site is contained wholly within the bounds of the former Somerset County Gaol (demolished c. 1843) and abuts the site of an extensive late Roman urban cemetery in the grounds of Northover House to the north, and now scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Somerset 510). Detailed plans of the gaol made early in the 19th century give a clear idea of its layout, although the extent of its survival below ground and the survival of any pre-gaol remains was quite unknown. A series of seven mechanically-excavated trial trenches was cut through modern overburden to test the potential of the street frontage and then at intervals westwards towards the rear of the site.

In every trench, substantial remains or deposits belonging to the former gaol were encountered, up to 1.5 m thick in places, the overburden largely comprising demolition debris from the former buildings beneath more recent makeup deposits. Gravelled surfaces, drains, stone building foundations and other robbed-out features were recorded in the lowest levels of the trenches, but the natural sub-surface could rarely be widely exposed. The features encountered corresponded for the most part quite well with the early 19th century gaol plans.

Earlier Romano-British or medieval remains were recorded *in situ* in only two trenches. Of these, the most significant lay at the western extremity of the site, where a series of linear boundary ditches and an east-west aligned inhumation burial contained Romano-British pottery and artifacts, with occasional sherds of

Iron Age pottery. These features were similar in character and occurrence to those recorded in an evaluation made in 1982 a few metres away in the grounds of Northover House.<sup>2</sup> That site is identified as part of a major late Roman cemetery belonging to the former Roman town, superimposed upon earlier remains, and the evidence recovered in 1991 undoubtedly belongs to that complex.<sup>3</sup>

1. A.E. Jones, *Northover, Ilchester: an Archaeological Evaluation 1991*, (BUFAU Report 184, 1991).
2. P.J. Leach *Northover: the late Roman Cemetery at Ilchester Somerset: an Interim Assessment*, (Western Archaeological Trust, Bristol, 1982).
3. P.J. Leach, *Ilchester Volume 2: Archaeology Excavations and Fieldwork to 1984*, (Sheffield, forthcoming).

(P.J. Leach)

*Ilchester, West Street, ST 520244*

Monitoring of a new housing development on West Street continued as service trenches and house foundations were excavated. This adds to the information gathered in previous evaluations on this site.<sup>1</sup> No Roman buildings were found, but the site contained numerous boundary ditches and pits of 2nd and 4th century date, with some medieval and post-medieval features.

A service trench across West Street cut through the Roman Fosse Way and the post-medieval turnpike road and these sections were recorded. A full report will be prepared when development is completed in 1992.

1. P.J. Leach, in C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 217-8.

(C. and N. Hollinrake)

*Shepton Mallet, Mendip Business Park, Fosse Lane, ST 632427*

As a direct result of discoveries made in the course of excavations at the Showers warehouse construction site on Fosse Lane and reported last year,<sup>1</sup> an assessment of the archaeological potential of fields lying immediately to the north (MB on Fig. 4) was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Wayopen Estates Ltd in the autumn of 1990. This area, intended for industrial development within a business park, formed part of the development complex at Fosse Lane, which extends south for over 1 km along its east side from the junction with the A361 road.

The site assessment involved a two-phase approach, initially through geophysical survey (resistivity and magnetometry by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford) followed by trial trenching. Prior to the evaluation, the provision of service roads across the site, service trenches and the realignment of Fosse Lane had substantially damaged or destroyed archaeological remains in some areas.

Within the two zones archaeologically assessed a pattern of Romano-British settlement remains and related activities was discerned, based upon a series of generally rectilinear enclosures extending back eastwards from the Fosse Way (Fosse Lane). Within these enclosures, the overall layout of which was outlined by the geophysical survey, trial trenching established the existence of several stone-founded buildings, boundary walls and ditches, human burials, industrial features, yards and cobbled surfaces, at least one east-west street and general spreads of occupation debris.

No attempt was made to carry out detailed excavation of these features, the purpose of the evaluation being to prove their existence, general character and extent. It was apparent that the most intensive and extensive settlement remains



occupy the southern half of the site, adjacent to the Showerings warehouse excavation site. To the north, the density of surviving remains decreases, although evidence is still widespread. The eastern limits of Roman settlement remains were not reached in this evaluation.

It is clear from this evaluation that a further substantial portion of the Roman town, whose character and existence was proven by the excavations in 1990 on the adjacent site to the south, survives here, continuing northwards alongside the eastern side of the Fosse Way. No boundaries to Romano-British settlement evidence were established in this evaluation, although some decrease in the density of remains was apparent to the north and possibly to the east. Along with copious quantities of Roman finds recorded and recovered, an assemblage of flint artifacts and worked material testifies to a much earlier prehistoric phase of human occupation. Small quantities of Iron Age pottery suggest another dimension to this site, possibly indicating a native pre-Roman forerunner to the urban settlement.<sup>2</sup>

1. P. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 47-55.
2. P. Leach, *An Archaeological Assessment of the Mendip Business Park, Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet*, (BUFAU Report 132, 1990).

(P.J. Leach)

*Shepton Mallet, Persimmon Homes Site, Fosse Lane, ST 631429*

In October 1991, five areas of varying size were opened up in the north-east corner of the Persimmon Homes development site (Fig. 4) in order to determine the archaeological potential of the area. Previous excavations to the south and south-west of the site, in 1990 and 1991, had established that a large dispersed settlement of the 1st to 5th centuries lay either side of the Fosse Way,<sup>1</sup> and the settlement was assumed to extend into this area.

No building foundations were uncovered, but a number of important features were recorded. At the northern edge of the development site, bordering on to Frog Lane, a Roman stone quarry was revealed which extended both north and west of the opened areas. This quarry must have provided much of the building stone utilised in the Roman settlement. Cut through the top of the quarry fill were a number of features, including two small smelting ovens.

Immediately south of the quarry, the base of a large boundary wall ran along the crest of a gentle slope; this may denote the northern boundary of the Roman settlement. Other features recorded included several pits and cobbled spreads of the Roman period and an early medieval pit.

A large amount of flint, including cores, tools and two barbed and tanged arrowheads, was recovered, together with some prehistoric pottery, suggesting that this area must have been a favoured location for settlement throughout the prehistoric period.

It is hoped that further archaeological work on this site will continue in 1992. The full archive and finds have been deposited with the County Council's Sites and Monuments Record. Thanks are due to Persimmon Homes for providing the opportunity to investigate the site, and to Strode Archaeological Society members who assisted in the excavation.

1. P. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 47-55.

(C. and N. Hollinrake)



*Shepton Mallet, Wolff Construction Site, Fosse Lane, ST 629429*

As a requirement for planning permission in respect of a proposed industrial development on the west side of Fosse Lane, an archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Wolff Construction Ltd to assess the potential of a site located within the suspected zone of the Romano-British roadside settlement (Fig. 4).

An initial exploration utilizing geophysical prospection techniques (by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford), led to an evaluation early in 1991 directed by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, to verify and expand the scope of the geophysical survey results by trial trenching.<sup>1</sup> The site, fronting on to the west side of Fosse Lane, formerly the Fosse Way, revealed evidence of Romano-British road frontage occupation in a continuous zone. A relatively high density of remains and deposits in this zone (c. 20 m wide) rapidly decreased westwards to the rear, where a series of lateral dividing boundary ditches appear to define properties extending back at approximately 90° to the Fosse Way. Closer to the frontage, the remains of stone wall foundations, cobbled yards and cobble spreads associated with predominantly 3rd and 4th century material were exposed and recorded in the trench transects.

With the exception of an evaluation in 1990 towards the southern boundary of the Roman settlement (Fosse Lane West/Cannards Grave),<sup>2</sup> no other opportunity has arisen for an assessment of the character or extent of the roadside settlement to the west of the Fosse Way. Although the general character of the remains on this site is in accordance with evidence recorded elsewhere within the settlement, its almost exclusive focus close to the road frontage was notable here, in contrast to a more extensive spread away from the road demonstrated on sites to the east (e.g. at Bullimore Farm).

1. P. Leach, L. Jones, and J. McKelvey, *An Archaeological Evaluation at Fosse Lane (Wolff Construction), Shepton Mallet, Somerset 1991*, (BUFAU Report 139, 1991).
2. P. Leach, *An Archaeological Evaluation at Cannards Grave (Fosse Lane West), Shepton Mallet 1990*, (BUFAU Report 129, 1990); P. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet' *PSANHS*, 134 (1990), 47-55.

(P.J. Leach)

*Shepton Mallet, Bullimore Farm, ST 631424*

Proposals to construct a section of new road linking the A361 east of Charlton with the A37 at Cannards Grave, prompted a series of archaeological evaluations in a zone to the south and east of the Fosse Lane Roman settlement.<sup>1</sup> The most extensive investigations, funded by Somerset County Council, involved geophysical prospection late in 1990 on land belonging to Bullimore Farm by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford. Subsequently, Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit were commissioned early in 1991 to further explore the potential of a concentration of geophysical anomalies identified just to the west of the farm, by means of trial excavation trenches (Fig. 4).

Within the area so assessed an abundance of Romano-British settlement remains came to light, comprising stone building foundations, cobbled yards, boundary ditches, post-holes, and rubble and occupation spreads. The remains were concentrated particularly to the west, thinning out markedly to the south and east. No detailed excavation was undertaken here, but it is apparent from the character and abundance of the finds and other remains, coupled with their proximity to the 1990 excavation site now beneath the warehouse complex just to the west,<sup>2</sup> that this site at Bullimore Farm belongs to the Romano-British settlement on Fosse Lane. Apart from the remains themselves, the particular interest of the site is its distance from

Fosse Lane and the apparent focus of the settlement on the Roman road over 300 m to the west. The Bullimore Farm site, bounded to the east by a small stream, appears to represent an outer limit of settlement on the eastern boundaries of the Roman town.<sup>3</sup>

1. P. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 47–55.
2. P. Leach, *Shepton Mallet, Romano-Britons and Early Christians in Somerset*, (BUFAU and Showerings Ltd, 1991).
3. P. Leach, L. Jones, and J. McKelvey, *An Archaeological Evaluation at Bullimore Farm, Shepton Mallet, Somerset 1991*, (BUFAU Report 146, 1991).

(P.J. Leach)

#### *Shepton Mallet, Field Farm, ST 625428*

A two-phase archaeological evaluation of farmland at Field Farm on the southern outskirts of Shepton Mallet was commissioned by Field Farm Joint Venture in advance of proposals for a large residential development there. An extensive programme of geophysical prospection by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford suggested a low level of archaeological potential for the area overall. In two adjacent areas, lying between the farm and a disused railway line (Fig. 4, C1 and C2), more promising results were obtained, and a further phase of investigation employing trial trench excavations was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in April 1991.<sup>1</sup>

The most significant remains encountered here were several rock-cut linear features thought to be elements of an Iron Age settlement, possibly an enclosed farmstead. Prehistoric flint flakes and tools, some in association with rock-cut pits of cobbled areas elsewhere, hint at the possibility of earlier occupation. Later land use was represented by medieval and post-medieval boundary walls, ditches and tracks, but there was no suggestion of Romano-British settlement in the areas evaluated. This is useful confirmation of the impression that there was no westward extension of the Fosse Lane Roman town<sup>2</sup> beyond Whitstone Road, although the possibility of evidence for outlying Romano-British settlement or other land use should not be ruled out elsewhere within the Field Farm development area.

1. P. Leach and L. Dingwall, *Field Farm, Shepton Mallet, Somerset: an Archaeological Evaluation*, (BUFAU Report 162, 1991).
2. P. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 47–55.

(P.J. Leach)

#### *Shepton Mallet, Woodlands Farm, Charlton, ST 632435*

Once again, the pattern of geophysical survey preceding selective trial trenching was the procedure adopted for an archaeological evaluation of farmland at Woodlands Farm, immediately to the north of Charlton (Fig. 4). Long-term proposals for another extensive residential development on this land prompted the evaluation programme undertaken by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford and the University of Birmingham, sponsored by Hiram Walker Ltd (Shepton Mallet). The initial geophysical prospection sampled over 20% of the 22 ha site, a group of pasture fields (some periodically ploughed) on the lower southern slopes of the Mendip Hills. Several potential archaeological anomalies were identified which, together with the route of the Roman Fosse Way cutting the area from north to south, justified the follow-up programme of test transect trenching in October 1991.<sup>1</sup>

Significant archaeological remains were nowhere extensive or of great complexity, but three areas of interest were picked out, all to the east of the Fosse Way. A narrow sunken lane now marks the course of the former Roman road, although fragments of its original metalling and kerb survive in places along its eastern margin at a higher level. Other associated features and deposits of Roman and later date appear to survive in places along this road margin, and possibly to the west also. Traces of medieval occupation were recorded at two localities; one, to the north, comprising pits/post-holes and cobbled areas within a shallow dry valley, may mark an isolated farmstead.

Medieval and early post-medieval occupation and structural remains were encountered on a plateau overlooking The Maltings and the valley of the River Sheppey, and the adjacent settlement of Charlton. Rock-cut boundary features and pottery of Iron Age and Romano-British date also in this area suggest earlier phases of use, although no very coherent pattern could be discerned within the restricted limits of the excavation trenches or from geophysical survey results.

This second locality, a platform overlooking the river valley to the south, suggests a favoured site, intermittently utilised from pre-Roman times onwards. Except on this site, and the Fosse Way itself, a virtual absence of Romano-British remains from within the area assessed is noteworthy. Given the proximity of the extensive Romano-British roadside settlement on Fosse Lane just to the south, this scarcity almost certainly confirms the northern boundary of that settlement to have been the River Sheppey.<sup>2</sup>

1. P. Leach, A. Jones, and A. Henry, *Woodlands Farm, Shepton Mallet: an Archaeological Evaluation 1991*, (BUFAU Report 186, 1991).
2. P. Leach, *Shepton Mallet: Romano-Britons and Early Christians in Somerset*, (BUFAU and Showerings Ltd, 1991).

(P.J. Leach)

#### *South Cheriton, Manor Farm, ST 69502485*

Two Roman coins were discovered, which date from the late 3rd and mid 4th century. The better preserved of the two is a half cententionalis of the Emperor Constans.<sup>1</sup>

1. B. and M. Gittos, 'Archaeological Unit Report', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5(93), 92.

(B. and M. Gittos)

#### *Sutton Mallet, ST 373369*

A trial trench in advance of a planning application was excavated, by H. Woods, in the area of the former village green. A length of Roman ditch was discovered and numerous sherds of Roman-British pottery recovered.

(R.A. Croft)

#### *Wedmore, Bagley, Martins Close, ST 45904597*

Romano-British and later potsherds, up to 17th-18th century date, have been found after ploughing in Martins Close, a triangular field at the junction of the Bagley Road and Dags Lane. The pottery occurred in the north-west corner and along the western edge of the field. A house is shown in the north-west corner of this field on the 1791 Wedmore parish map.<sup>1</sup> It had gone by the time of the 1885 25 inch OS map. Martins Close was an old auster tenement, implying that the house site was of medieval origin. This new discovery of Romano-British sherds shows there was much earlier occupation of the site.

Martins Close was once a clearing in the now vanished Bagley Wood. It lies close by the clearing of Oslakesleage mentioned in the Panborough Saxon charter of AD 956,<sup>2</sup> and could be of comparable date. The Martin family lived in the parish in the 1300s. A massive bank separates the western side of Martins Close from Deans Cottage, one of a group of cottages built within Bagley Wood during the 16th and 17th centuries. This bank could be a medieval wood bank. In the north-eastern corner there are traces, now much ploughed out, of a former quarry for Wedmore stone, probably dating from the mid-1890s when stone was required to build Bagley School opposite.

The discovery of this new evidence helps the tentative establishment of a possible distribution pattern of Roman settlement over upland Wedmore. The distance from Martins Close to the sites at Fernhall and Lousy Bush<sup>3</sup> is roughly the same as that from Lousy Bush to the Wedmore sites,<sup>4</sup> from the Wedmore sites to the Roman site at Castle, Heath House,<sup>5</sup> and from Castle to Blackford.<sup>6</sup> The distance from Lousy Bush to Fernhall to Castle is approximately twice as great, suggesting that there may be an undiscovered site at Sand.

1. SRO, D/P/wed 13/10/17.
2. H. Hudson and F. Neale, 'The Panborough Saxon Charter, AD 956', *PSANHS*, **127** (1983), 55–60.
3. H. Hudson, in C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *PSANHS*, **134** (1990), 214 and 220.
4. H. Hudson, in E. Dennison (ed.), 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *PSANHS*, **132** (1988), 213; SCC Sites and Monuments Record; PRN 10146 and 10882.
5. SCC Sites and Monuments Record; PRN 10885 and 10892.
6. SCC Sites and Monuments Record; PRN 10879; I.M. Rendell, 'Blackford (Wedmore), The Bishop's Palace', *PSANHS*, **107** (1963), 74–75, and 78.

(H. Hudson and F. Neale)

#### *West Coker, ST 528138*

Notes on Mr G.N. Aitken's excavation at the West Coker Roman villa site in 1958 were published in 1991.<sup>1</sup> Several remarkable finds were recovered from this site in the 19th century,<sup>2</sup> including a bronze statuette of Mars Rigisamus and an associated bronze plaque with a pricked inscription in Latin.<sup>3</sup> Some interesting background information to the 1958 excavation has been gleaned from the records of the Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society.<sup>4</sup> Mr Aitken's notes include plans and sections and a description of the finds, including 12 coins dating from the late 3rd to the late 4th centuries.

1. G.N. Aitken, 'Excavations at West Coker Villa Site in the Parish of West Coker, Somerset', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, **5**(3), 82–7.
2. *VCH Somerset*, **1** (1906), 331.
3. R.G. Collingwood, 'Mars Rigisamus', *PSANHS*, **77** (1930), 112–14.
4. B.C. Gittos (ed.), 'Excavations at West Coker Roman Site in 1958', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, **5**(3), 81.

(B. and M. Gittos)

## MIGRATION &amp; EARLY MEDIEVAL

*East Coker, St Michael's Church, ST 539122*

A reassessment of the fabric of St Michael's Church, East Coker, has suggested that there is a likelihood that it contains Anglo-Saxon work. A description of the relevant features appears elsewhere in this volume.

(B. and M. Gittos)

## MEDIEVAL

*Alford, Cary Moor, ST 60853042*

Plans to extend the landfill site at Dimmer led to evaluation of a small earthwork located from aerial photographs. The site consisted of a small rectangular feature located on a low ridge on Cary Moor. Trenches excavated across the site suggested that it had been a rectangular platform surrounded by a ditch. The function and date of this is unknown, although the enclosure field boundaries cut through it. The platform may have been formed for storing hay or as a refuge for livestock on the moor in times of flood.

(P.R. McCrone)

*Burtle, Burtle Farm, ST 390434*

The buildings and earthworks of Burtle Farm, which occupy the site of the medieval hermitage and priory of Burtle, have been surveyed by kind permission of the farmer, Mr D. Whitcombe, on behalf of Somerset County Council. The farmhouse itself is a rectangular two-storey block of early 19th century date, but there are older buildings to the north, comprising two ranges of rooms on either side of a long corridor. The western range includes a former dairy, cheeseroom, pighouse and a two-seater privy. The eastern range, which appears to be earlier, is punctuated by a chamfered doorway with a four-centred arch fronting a flagstone-paved cross-passage and a larger segmental-headed cart entry; it includes a former kitchen with a massive fireplace, a two-horse stable with hayloft above, a lean-to store and outdoor pigsty and a cider-press house. With the possible exception of the cross-passage, no certain features of medieval date which might relate to the priory could be identified within the existing buildings. A detached group of farm buildings a short distance to the south-west includes a barn and cattle-sheds with the foundations of a circular dovecote in the yard. The farmhouse and its paddocks and outbuildings are surrounded by a quadrilateral ditch, possibly identical with the ditch enclosing ten acres in Sprawlesmede which formed part of the endowment of the priory in 1199.<sup>1</sup> A full report is in preparation.

1. R.W. Dunning (ed.), *The Hylle Cartulary* (SRS, 68, 1968), entry 138.

(James Bond and Bill Horner)

*Chilcompton, Church of St John the Baptist, ST 647524*

The construction of a new church hall on the south side of the church prompted an archaeological watching brief in March 1991.

The parish church was completely rebuilt during the 19th century, but a series of drawings executed in the 18th century shows the church before this event. It is possible to deduce the broad outlines of the various phases of the church from the 12th to the 18th century from these drawings.

Contractors had already cut a mains service trench immediately south of the

south wall of the church, destroying all features along its length. Sondages dug within this trench provided sections of the original medieval south wall. The entrance slab of the medieval church, part of a massive block of local conglomerate which also formed the footings for the medieval south porch, was also uncovered. This feature has been preserved beneath the modern works.

The full archive has been deposited with the County Council's Sites and Monuments Record and the finds have been deposited in the County Museum.

(C. and N. Hollinrake)

*East Pennard, ST 57683750*

A medieval windmill mound in excellent condition has been identified at the above location. An aerial photograph<sup>1</sup> shows that the mound overlies an earlier pattern of ridge and furrow, some of the furrows of which have later been incorporated into a system of drainage leats.

The tithe map field name is Windmill Field. There are various documentary references to the windmill site, including an entry in the accounts of John Launtenal, granger of Glastonbury Abbey.<sup>2</sup>

1. Stokes 91A421.

2. Ian Keil, 'The Granger of Glastonbury Abbey 1361-2', *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, 28 (1963), 86-90.

(A.V. Pearse and Penny Stokes)

*East Pennard, Gallows, ST 57903685*

A gallows stood at a site between the place known as Forge Well, and Hill Farm, in East Pennard parish, adjoining the former Pennard Hill ridge or 'Upper Way' closed in 1819,<sup>1</sup> in a field named Elm Close on the 1842 tithe map for East Pennard. The site was an area of rough ground, marked by a ring of five oak trees, shown on the 1885 OS 1:2500 map, sheet LIII.10. These trees were felled in 1949, the stumps remaining. To facilitate the passage of agricultural machinery, the site was covered with a layer of clay in 1987, and only one stump is now visible at surface level. (The site was not that of a former pond, as this purpose was contrived by use of a small stream nearby.)

Examination of various documentary sources has established this as the location of the gallows. In 1533 there is an entry in the account roll of Thomas Whyting, provost of West Pennard, 'et allocatur ei il sol. pro factura furcarum totaliter de novo apud Withell hyll'.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, East and West Pennard shared the gallows, on the boundary of the XII Hides between them. The gallows is referred to in Abbot Bere's perambulation of 1503 as 'la Galhouse'. The associated boundary description enables the above location to be substantiated.<sup>3</sup>

In addition the name 'Forge Well' clearly derived from the old word for gallows, 'forches', the well being an ancient one at the crossroads of the 'Upper Way' and a north-south route over Pennard Hill. It is at the angle in the boundary between East and West Pennard, and first appears named as such on a map of c. 1794<sup>4</sup> of which there is a later tracing at the Somerset Record Office.

1. SRO, Q/SR 1819 (midsummer).

2. *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, 1 (1890), entry 156.

3. Thomas Hearne (ed.), *Johannis Glastoniensis Chronica*, 2 (1726).

4. Crocker's map of the Pennard estate.

(A.V. Pearse)

*Glastonbury, ST 50253900*

In January 1991, a watching brief was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology during the repair and replacement of part of the sewerage system of Glastonbury along Silver Street and Chilkwell Street, which run alongside the north and east sides of the Abbey precinct walls respectively. Four small inspection trenches were excavated along Silver Street, together with an L-shaped trench on the corner of Silver Street and Chilkwell Street. Along Chilkwell Street, a 360 m long trench was excavated for the purpose of laying a new sewer pipe.

Very little archaeological evidence was recovered, though the area clearly has a long and complex building history. No evidence was forthcoming for intensive medieval occupation along Chilkwell Street nor for the existence of an earlier road. Occupation immediately outside the abbey precinct, against the wall, now seems unlikely.

This project was commissioned and financed by Wessex Water plc, and Wessex Archaeology gratefully acknowledge their co-operation and support.

(Vince Jenkins and Caron Newman)

*Langport, St Gildas Convent, ST 42182690*

An evaluation for a local plan inquiry was undertaken by AC Archaeology within a 0.75 ha site in an area previously identified as the northern part of the Saxon burgh. A geophysical survey (magnetometer and resistivity) was carried out and thirteen hand-dug test pits were dug in allotments and playing fields immediately inside the presumed burghal defensive circuit.

Geophysical survey provided no evidence for features other than those likely to have been of geological origin or those associated with modern landscaping. The hand-excavated test pits demonstrated that deep deposits of an orangey-brown clay containing substantial quantities of late Saxon and medieval (10th to 13th century) pottery were present over large parts of the site. No features were present. Elsewhere only shallow topsoil overlay apparently natural sands and clays.

The scale of the investigations was not sufficient to clarify the true nature of the archaeology on the site. No further work is planned.

(John Hawkes)

*Muchelney, Almonry Barn, Abbey Farm, ST 427249*

Measured plans and elevations have been made of the Almonry Barn at Muchelney by kind permission of the farmer, Mr B. Pegram, on behalf of Somerset County Council and English Heritage. The building, which has been curtailed at the southern end, incorporates a number of medieval features, including two arched doorways and a series of six windows in the ground floor of the east wall; the northernmost roof-truss may also be medieval in part. The original form of the building does not resemble a barn, and the possibility that it may represent the remains of the abbey guest-house is currently under consideration. It has subsequently undergone many alterations, including the replacement of eight of the original roof trusses, the insertion and then partial removal of a first floor, the insertion of two brick internal partitions, the paving of the floor in lias flags and the conversion of the northernmost ground-floor compartment to a four-horse stable. Examination of a second barn on the farm has just commenced, and a full report will be prepared when this is completed.

(James Bond)

*Muchelney, Priory Barn, ST 429250*

A watching brief during the removal of modern farm buildings and concrete yard

surfaces recorded lengths of wall foundation, a drain and a well south of the reredorter. None of these were dateable and could relate to the abbey or to the post-dissolution use of the site.

(P.R. McCrone)

*Poundisford Park Pale*, ST 21762035

Proposals by Wessex Water for new facilities and associated pipelines at Fulwood Water Treatment Works, Pitminster, near Taunton, involved crossing the boundary bank of Poundisford Park by three pipe trenches and a temporary access road.

The park pale varies in width between 6 and 8 m, and survives to a height of between 0.8 m and 1.2 m in the area of the proposed works. As part of the scheduled monument consent conditions, a hand-excavated section was dug across the earth work by AC Archaeology in advance of trenching operations. This established that the top of the bank had been severely truncated and that the original profile had been modified in recent times, but produced no dating evidence nor any confirmation of the presence of associated ditches.

A watching brief will be maintained during pipelaying operations.

(John Hawkes)

*Taunton, Almshouses from St James's Street*, ST 226246

The remains of the medieval almshouses from St James's Street, Taunton, currently standing within the castle moat, were recorded by means of a measured plan and interior and exterior elevations, on behalf of Somerset County Council. The timber frame of two of the original range of eight tenements was salvaged when their original site was sold for redevelopment, and this was re-erected in the castle grounds in March 1899. A report on the building, including a summary of its history, was published in 1962.<sup>1</sup> By that time the condition of the structure had deteriorated, and it was decided to take down half of it in order to preserve the other half intact. The two successive dismantlings and re-erectments have resulted in significant changes to the framing, with some components re-used from other parts of the building to replace rotted timbers and other members now incorrectly placed. Features of particular interest include an original smoke vent immediately below the front wall-plate, and three distinct styles of carpenters' marks. Further deterioration has now necessitated a third attempt at salvage, and it is intended to re-erect the building elsewhere on the premises where it might be put to better use. A full report will be compiled when observations on the dismantling have been completed.

1. R.W. McDowall and I.I. Jeffries, 'The Old Almshouses, St James's Street, Taunton', *PSANHS*, **106** (1962), 81-7.

(James Bond and Tim Longman)

*Taunton, Hankridge Farm*, ST 255253

An evaluation of a substantial (c. 25 ha) development site next to the M5 at Taunton produced evidence for a 12th century farm. The evaluation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology for DCM Partnership and managed by Ian Barnes. Most of the area proved devoid of archaeological features but in the area to the south of the present farm (itself a listed building of about 1600) medieval land divisions and possible buildings were noted. Unfortunately, the site was accidentally destroyed while plans for detailed excavations were being agreed.

(C.J. Webster)



*Wedmore, Bagley*, ST 45534595 to ST 45644602

A substantial bank parallel to and c. 20 m south of the Bagley road marks the former edge of Bagley Green and the northern boundary of Bagley Wood. It stands about 0.50 m high. This is comparable with the 1309 wood bank discovered behind Bagley School.<sup>1</sup>

1. H. Hudson, in I. Burrow *et al.* (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1983', *PSANHS*, 128 (1985), 17–18.

(Hazel Hudson)

*Wedmore, Oldwood*, ST 43734642–ST 43764624

A much eroded but substantial bank with a few standing trees along its length runs diagonally across a large field to the edge of the hill, where it disappears. The bank is thought to be part of the boundary of Old Park, the park of the manor of Mudgley, which existed and was enclosed by 1220.<sup>1</sup> In 1378 the sum of £40 was needed for repairs to the 'enclosure etc. of Modesligh park'.<sup>2</sup> A feature called Kills Wall near land at Barley, mentioned in 1711, may well refer to this bank;<sup>3</sup> while a close of meadow adjoining Cowslip Park is called Kill(s) Wall in 1753, 1755 and 1782.<sup>4</sup> The bank is shown on the Wedmore parish map of 1791<sup>5</sup> as forming the boundary between the two fields of Barley Sherd Tining on the east, and Cowslip Park on the west, marking the much older division between the open field and the park.

1. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, 1 (HMC, 1907), 50; SCC Sites and Monuments Record: PRN 10899
2. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, 1 (HMC, 1907), 285.
3. SRO, DD/BV.
4. SRO, DD/FS box 21; DD/HB 20.
5. SRO, D/P/wed 13/10/17.

(Hazel Hudson)

*Wedmore, Sand Park*, centred around ST 430468

Sand Park or New Park consists of a group of fields forming a rectangular block of about 70–75 acres, conspicuously different from the surrounding open field pattern. It lies on a flat hilltop in the south-west corner of what was the manor of Wedmore, in an angle of the boundary with the adjoining manor of Mudgley. The block is bounded on three sides by ancient lanes, and references from the 1558 Mudgley perambulation,<sup>1</sup> field names and deeds of adjoining properties further define the limit of the park and match it to this distinctive field block.

It appears to have had a brief existence, first documented in 1539,<sup>2</sup> as Wedmore Park, New Park or Sand Park. It is distinct from Old Park or Mudgley Park in the adjoining manor which is documented from 1220 onwards.<sup>3</sup> It was, however, apparently a genuine deer park, and not merely Tudor 'park' enclosures, because it had a keeper and deer from 'the park at Wedmore' were granted in 1545.<sup>4</sup> By 1553 'Wodmore [sic] Park' was 'lately disparked' and in Crown hands. It was purchased that year by William Arundell, gentleman, who was 'to clean and maintain all fences, ditches and enclosure of the aforesaid park'.<sup>5</sup> These were proper park boundaries, and not mere field boundaries, because there are references to 'Newe parke Wall' on the west side of the block in 1558,<sup>6</sup> fields called Park Wall adjoining the east side in 1791,<sup>7</sup> and a fieldname Pilestyles in 1722 (Pile Stiles, Pile Stills in 1818).<sup>8</sup> Pilestyles, the stile over the park pale, has been located at the north-east corner, where a sunken lane runs down to Sand Park Farm in Plud Street. Opposite Pilestyles is Lytheats Orchard, which could perhaps take its name from a leapgate

at this point, if it is not called after the Lytheat family known to have lived in the parish.

By 1558, four years after it had been disparked, part of the block at least was being used as arable. Today the whole field block is permanent pasture. This prompt conversion to arable might imply a thorough demolition of the park enclosure, despite Arundell's undertaking on maintenance. No physical trace has been found on the ground of any park pale, wall or bank: until now when one short stretch of possible bank has been located in field called Whatley (the pre-park name for the area), on the eastern boundary of the park (ST 43284682). It lies just inside, but is distinct from, the roadside hedgebank; it is a short length of flat-topped bank, about 1.5 m wide and now only 0.3–0.4 m high, which has survived flattening because it happens to lie in a slight kink in the boundary. This, it is suggested, may be one remaining trace of the 16th century New Park Wall.

1. SRO, DD/SAS PR 462.
2. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, 2 (HMC, 1914), 251.
3. *Ibid.*, 1. (HMC, 1907), 50.
4. *Ibid.*, 2 (HMC, 1914), 251 and 260.
5. PRO, E 315/225, f.188.
6. SRO, DD/SAS PR 462.
7. SRO, D/P/wed 13/10/3 and 13/10/17.
8. SRO, DD/BV 12 (1722); SRO, D/P/wed, accounts of the surveyors of the highways (1818).

(H. Hudson and F. Neale)

#### *Wedmore, Sand*, ST 42954654

Sand Pound is mentioned in 1558, when the perambulation of the manor of Mudgley passed 'directlie estward throughe Sande Towne where the Lordes pound for his pray is scituated'.<sup>1</sup> It is clearly marked on the 1791 Wedmore parish map on the north side of the road,<sup>2</sup> and lies on the south boundary of Sand Park (*see above*). There is very little to see on the site now except for an indentation in the roadside bank. However, fieldwork has now identified a dried-up pond in the field to the north of the pound (at ST 42964670), with a gully running between banks which leads directly to the pond. Presumably this supplied water to animals in the pond. There is a mound just east of this former pond which might perhaps be the remains of some slight structure.

1. SRO, DD/SAS PR 462.
2. SRO, D/P/wed 13/10/17.

(H. Hudson and F. Neale)

#### *West Lydford, Churchyard*, ST 564319

A previously unrecorded medieval effigy has been discovered in the churchyard of St Peter's Church.<sup>1</sup> The figure, which is badly weathered, is of a civilian dating from c. 1330 and is carved from a block of oolitic limestone. It was probably removed from the church when it was rebuilt in the 19th century. A sketch of the figure has been published elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

1. B. and M. Gittos, in M. Gittos (ed.), 'News of Monuments', *Church Monuments Society Newsletter*, 7(2), 32.
2. B. and M. Gittos, 'An Unrecorded Medieval Effigy at West Lydford, Somerset', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5(3), 93.

(B. and M. Gittos)

## POST-MEDIEVAL

*East Pennard, ST 58753615*

A small deserted settlement site at Huxham was briefly available for fieldwalking when the pasture was ploughed and reseeded. The tithe map records a cottage on the site, which still stood, although in a ruinous state, in the 1950s. A 10% sample of archaeological material was taken from a total area of 2.4 ha. 132 sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered, the sequence ending in the 19th century. 7 sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the area which yielded the highest concentration of post-medieval material. Although the medieval finds were few, there may have been continuity of settlement on this site, bearing in mind the method of artefact recovery employed. Fieldwalking on a grid system will be undertaken when the site next becomes available.

In a different part of the same field was a small concentration of post-medieval pottery, some of it burnt, with one perforated sherd. The tithe map name for this area (ST 58853605) was Bakehouse, and the finds are consistent with this use.

(Penny Stokes)

*Milborne Port, Blythe Cottage, ST 678187*

During alterations at Blythe Cottage, Milborne Port, in 1990,<sup>1</sup> 49 clay pipe bowls and part of a wig-curler were discovered. The pipe bowls, which have been examined by Steve Minnitt, of Somerset County Museum, ranged in date from the mid 17th to the early 19th century. The wig-curler and 18 of the pipe bowls had legible makers' stamps, many of which do not seem to have been previously recorded, possibly suggesting local manufacture. A brief description of the pipes, together with illustrations, has been published elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

1. B. and M. Gittos, in C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *PSANHS*, 134 (1990), 223.
2. Mr and Mrs Baines, 'Clay Pipe Bowls found at Blythe Cottage, Milborne Port', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5(3), 88-9.

(B. and M. Gittos)

*Stoford, 'The Rock', ST 56651340*

Modernisation of the rear portion of a property on The Green at Stoford in March 1991 necessitated the laying of a new floor. At the invitation of the owner (Mr Derek Gane), the Archaeological Unit of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society carried out a brief examination. Some post-medieval pottery, a clay floor, hearth and the footings of a partition wall were discovered. Stub walls protruded from the partition wall to the east, effectually dividing the area into 5 narrow bays, each approximately 1 m wide. Their purpose was unclear, but it seemed likely that they were concerned with storage, being rather too narrow for animal pens. A brief report and plan has already been published.<sup>1</sup>

1. B. and M. Gittos, 'Archaeological Unit Report', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5 (3), 91.

(B. and M. Gittos)

*Yeovil, Huish School, ST 553160*

Re-development of the area centred upon Yeovil's erstwhile football ground by Tesco Stores Ltd included the former burial ground of the Calvinist Tabernacle, known as 'Paradise'.<sup>1</sup> The burial ground had been closed in the late 19th century

and subsequently became incorporated into the playground of Huish Infants School. Unfortunately it did not prove possible for the Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society to record the exhumation of the burials (carried out by a local firm of undertakers). However, it is understood that some 70 skeletons were recovered and two brick-lined graves were found. A brief visit to the site after the event revealed numerous pieces of wooden coffins, some with decayed coffin furniture.

1. B. and M. Gittos, 'Archaeological Unit Report', *Chronicle: Journal of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society*, 5(2), 64.

(B. and M. Gittos)

## POST-MEDIEVAL

### *Taunton, Castle, ST 226247*

As part of the conditions attached to the grant of Scheduled Monument Consent, the foundation trenches for the base of a statue of Field Marshall Lord Harding were excavated by Somerset County Council archaeological staff. A sequence of modern and post medieval surfaces was revealed in the 0.3 m deep trench.

(P.R. McCrone)

### *Wedmore, Bagley Wood, ST 4545*

Four houses at Bagley, Wedmore, have been identified as the survivors of a planned settlement created in Bagley Wood in the late 1500s and early 1600s. The wood had been part of the medieval estates of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, and was purchased by William Clyfton of Barrington, a London merchant. The planned hamlet seems to have been the work of William Clyfton (d. 1564) and his son, Sir John Clyfton (d. 1593), since the earliest surviving deed of a cottage is dated 1581. In 1615 this new estate development passed to the trustees of Wells Old Almshouse. By 1615 there were seven houses. Other plots were taken up and built on subsequently, before the little community declined in the 18th century. Extensive documentation complements the house sites identified on the ground.<sup>1</sup>

The four surviving houses are Deans Cottage, Honeycombe on the north-eastern corner of the former wood (ST 45864602), Batch Farm on the east side (ST 45964584) and Bagley Farm in the north-west corner (ST 45504594). Another cottage shown on the 1791<sup>2</sup> and 1885 maps is now lost under new farm building west of Batch Farm (ST 45864581). One house platform survives from a former row of houses along the southern boundary of the estate, part of the same development. This site (ST 45544563) is marked as a house on the 1791 Wedmore parish map,<sup>2</sup> but has since disappeared. At least three other cottages in this southern row can be identified from documentary evidence, but have left no recognisable traces in the permanent pasture.

1. Wells Cathedral Library, archives of the Dean and Chapter: Wells Old Almshouse: SRO, DD/SAS PR 462.
2. SRO, D/P/wed 13/10/17.

(Hazel Hudson)

### *Wedmore, Oldwood, ST 4346*

Oldwood was the corresponding but larger planned settlement laid out in the 1500s–1600s in the former Old Park of the manor of Mudgley. Its ownership,

development and decline are identical to those of Bagley Wood; the earliest surviving deed of a cottage is dated 1587.<sup>1</sup> Of the ten known house plots, all round the edges of the former wood, two houses are still standing: Old Wood Farm in the north-west corner (ST 43364663) and Old Wood Cottage half way down Oldwood Lane on the east side of the wood (ST 43664622). Four others have been identified along the main road east of Old Wood Farm:

- (a) One possible house platform (ST 43454662);
- (b) A plot marked in a plan on a deed is now barely visible (ST 43644652);
- (c) A length of the front wall of a house survives buried in the roadside hedge (ST 43664650);
- (d) A corner plot, the boundaries of which stand out very clearly (ST 43714644). Of the row of cottages along the southern edge of the estate, four have been identified:
  - (e) A building platform on the corner of Oldwood Lane (ST 43564610);
  - (f) Still survives as a substantial but ruinous stone cottage (ST 43534608);
  - (g) Still survives as a substantial but ruinous stone cottage, known as Bunn's Cottage (ST 43504611).
 One of these two cottages (f and g) was certainly extant in 1587, and both were still inhabited in the early 20th century, but were derelict by World War II.
- (h) A site on which the cottage had gone by 1770, now completely overgrown (ST 43484612).

1. Wells Cathedral Library, archives of the Dean and Chapter; Wells Old Almshouse; SRO, DD/SAS PR 462.

(Hazel Hudson)

## INDUSTRIAL

### *Bawdrip, Dunball Saltworks, ST 319409*

Somerset's only commercially exploited rock salt deposit was the accidental result of an unsuccessful trial boring for coal in 1910 which has been well documented.<sup>1,2</sup> The purpose of the Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society survey is to determine the extent and layout of the works, which closed in 1922, from the surviving remains adjacent to the King's Sedgemoor Drain. At a higher level a concrete tank (56 m in length and 6 m wide) used as a brine reservoir has been recorded but work continues on other features in the dense undergrowth. The possible footings of three salt evaporating pans have been traced at a location indicated on contemporary photographs.<sup>3</sup>

- 1. J. McMurtrie, 'On a boring near Puriton, near Bridgwater, in Search of Coal south of the Mendip Hills', *PSANHS*, 57 (1911), pt 2.
- 2. A Whittaker, 'The Salt Industry at Puriton, Somerset', *PSANHS*, 114 (1970), 96-9.
- 3. SIAS archive, copy of photographs taken c. 1912.

(Brian J. Murless)

### *Bridgwater, Taunton Road, ST 298368*

An evaluation was undertaken by AC Archaeology in connection with the proposed development of land to the rear of Taunton Road. The site, adjacent to Durleigh Brook, was thought to include the probable line of the medieval town ditch.

Four machine-excavated trenches did produce evidence for the presence of a discontinuous post-medieval (18th century) ditch less than 1.5 m deep aligned east-west, but there were no indications of any substantial medieval boundary. No other archaeological features were found.

(Peter W. Cox)

*Holford, Holford Glen, ST 155410*

In June, Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society investigated a cleared area of woodland once reputedly associated with the textile industry, being the location for a silk factory and later a woollen blanket manufactory.<sup>1</sup> Ruinous buildings were surveyed to the west of a stream which bisects the site, but masonry in the east bank suggested inlets for servicing two waterwheels, the mill itself having been levelled probably following a fire in 1830.

1. J.J.A. Hayman, *A Brief History of Holford* (1973), 10–11.

(Brian J. Murless)

*Leigh on Mendip, Vobster Breach Colliery, ST 698488*

Recent fieldwork at Vobster Breach Colliery has confirmed the significance of a surviving series of rare, mid-19th century coking ovens. Seventy-seven 'long' ovens once stood to the east of the pit-head, arranged in two banks, namely a single linear range and a double back-to-back range. Unfortunately, only twelve remain substantially intact, although they all seem to have been built to a common plan.

Small or lump coal was fed into the mouth of each open oven which was then sealed, presumably by a sliding cast iron door, although no evidence of these remains. Once this charge had been ignited it was allowed to burn for two or three days before being drawn, cooled and loaded into waiting waggons, probably destined for the Westbury or Seend ironworks.

(Shane Gould)