remains. Besides the contrast of carpentry, there were details, in particular the careful treatment of the outside of the fully visible cruck blade and the reversed apex joints of the jointed cruck truss and north gable, which led us to suppose an original three-bay hall. The previous southern bay had been proved to exist by the present south-eastern purlin joint, and we imagined a similar one at the north, a service area being provided by a screen, not fixed. This bay being sacrificed in the plan for inserting a chimney stack, stair and formal cross-passage, an extension was made, using a jointed cruck truss. And the new service area was ceiled also, to provide the route from stair to chamber on one hand and, on the other, servants' sleeping quarters or storage loft.

This solution presented difficulties. Why, at so late a time should the jointed cruck truss have had full length uprights? Though we do not reject this solution, for lack of sufficient comparative work on small medieval and sub-medieval houses in Somerset, we now substitute the easier answer of a fifteenth century four-bay building, all erected at the same time. There is now sufficient evidence of mixed carpentry to justify such a conclusion, though in a situation where examination of every fresh house has led us to modify our ideas about others, we emphasise that the conclusion is provisional.

By whatever means, then, the house was modernised in the sixteenth century, to a standard rather higher than one thinks of as appropriate to a yeoman's house. A further improvement in accommodation was required in the seventeenth century, and this was made by replacing the southern bay with a wing. The planning of this provided a new passage into the living-room, as well as a new parlour and the additional space across the passage. As a result, the old stone framed front entrance became irrelevant. Possibly part of the wing is earlier, but it is very noticeable that the stonework is of a higher standard than elsewhere, particularly at the quoins. A final comment is that the external chimney stack appears to be an insertion. The rubble stonework is slightly different, and the string course above the plinth is not continuous with that of the rest of the wing, besides being in a distinct style. It may appear naive to suggest that the wing was first built with a stack flush with the wall, involving a fireplace projecting inconveniently into a room already long and narrow; and that soon afterwards — for there are similarities as well as differences in the masonry — a decision was taken to rebuild so as to get more space. Or was the chimney built first and the walls later?

AN EARLY JOINTED CRUCK BUILDING AT SOUTH BRADON, LANGPORT RURAL DISTRICT

BY LIONEL F. J. WALROND, A.M.A.

This building, a low-roofed derelict thatched cottage, was measured in June 1952 (Fig. 1), but permission to remove decayed wall plaster was not forthcoming, owing to a dispute over ownership. Lying to the south of the road (ST366186), the building itself was bounded on the south and west by the R. Isle, with an extensive garden between the house and the road. It was here that excavations produced three skeletons and the footings of a wall believed to be that of the lost church of South Bradon. If it were so, this cottage may have been the priest's house, which existed in 1571, being mentioned in a glebe terrier.

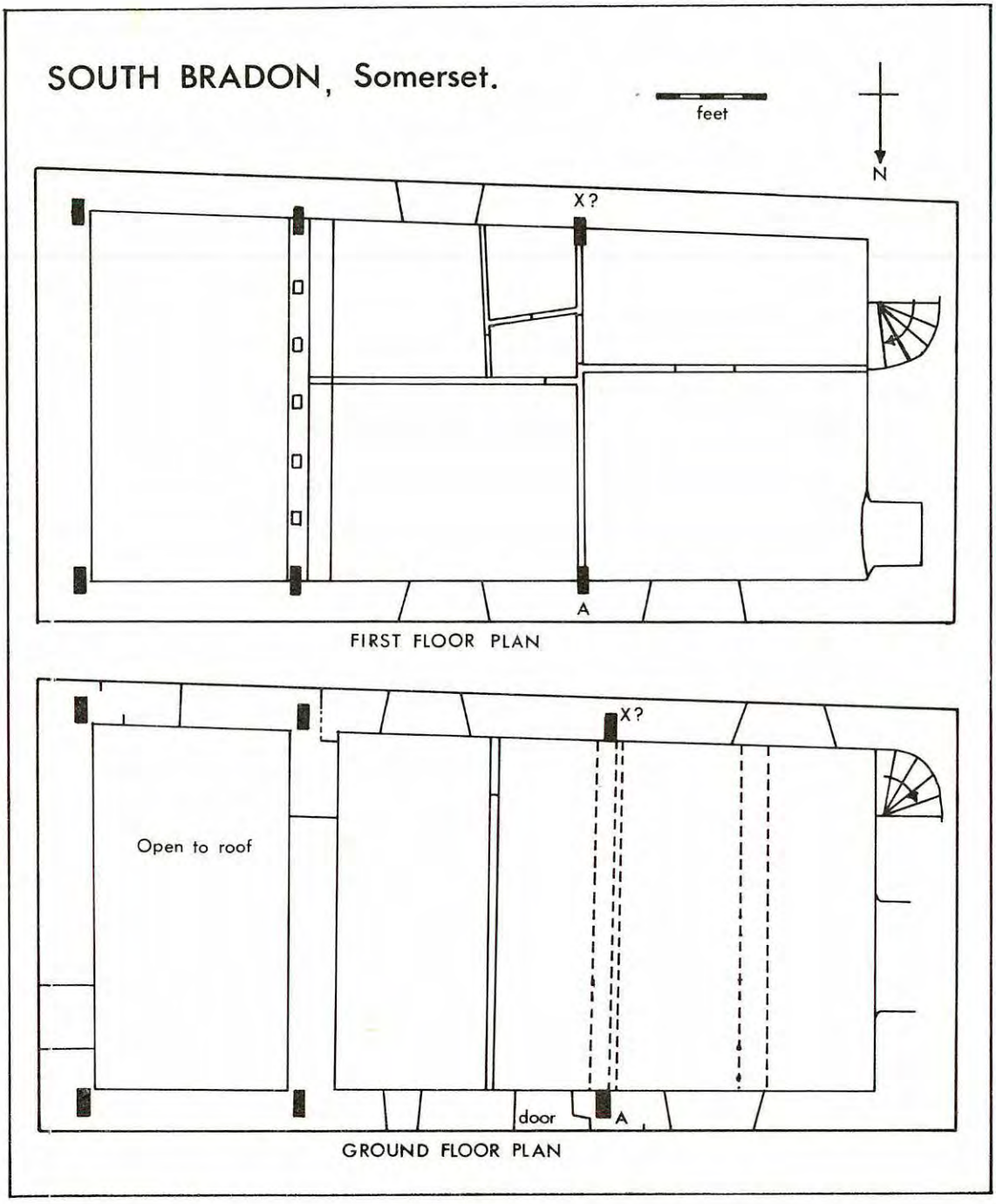
SOUTH BRADON, Somerset.
feet
N
X?
A
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
X?
Open to roof
door
A
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FIG. 1

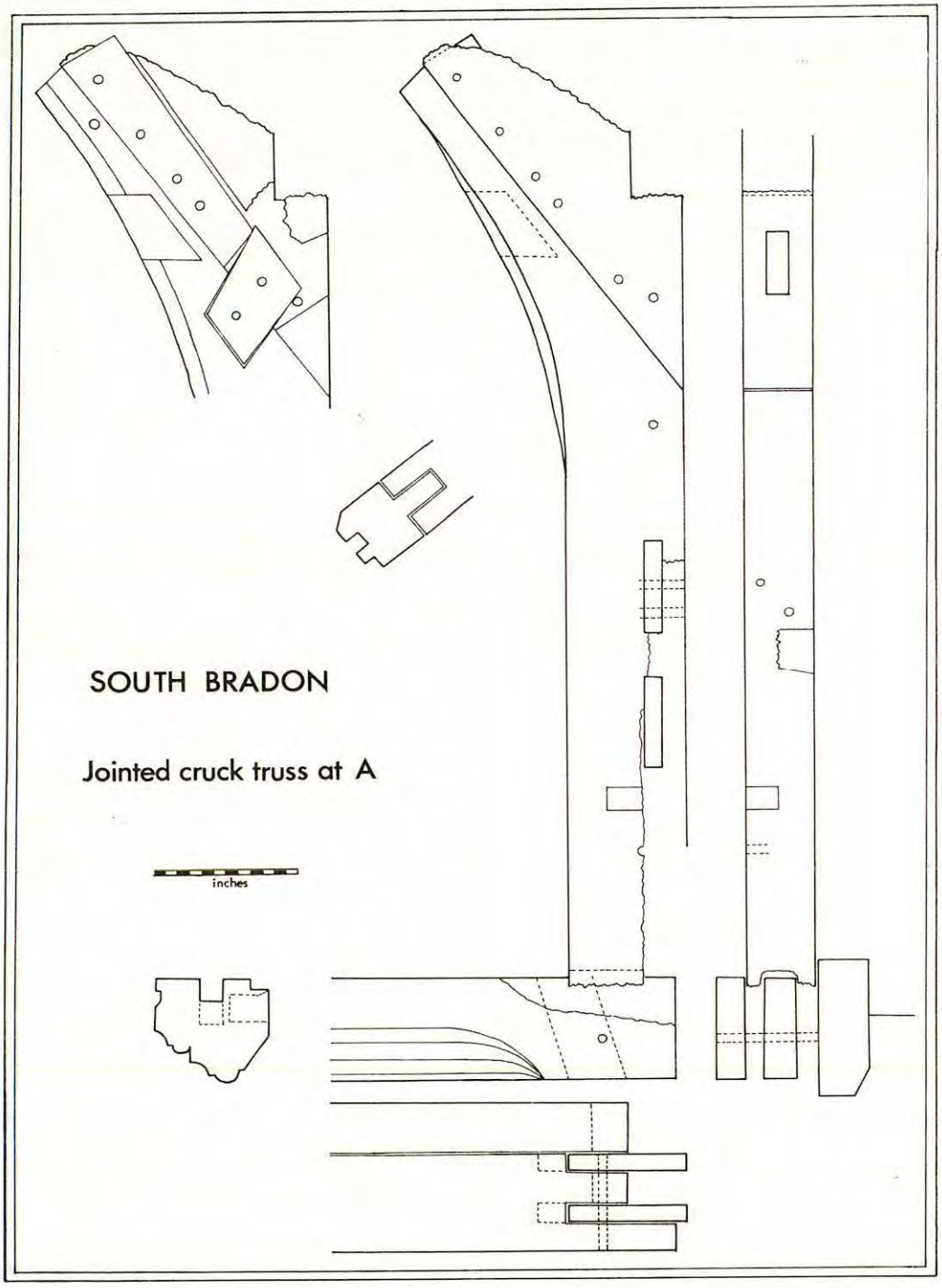

FIG. 2
Elevations, plan and sections of truss A, with cut-away section (top left) to show details of the scarf joint and slip-tenon.

Demolition during the following winter was carried out using tractors and hawsers. In this way, many timbers were saved for examination, but all were burst and distorted. The elevations are based on measurements of dozens of fragments, and it is uncertain whether truss X was the opposite half of truss A, or if it came from the eastern end of the open hall where access to record detail had been limited by lack of light, cobwebs and the use of that portion of the building used as a piggery.

Mortises in the vertical members of both jointed cruck trusses A (Fig. 2) and X (Fig. 3) indicate the original house to have been timber-framed, probably with large downward

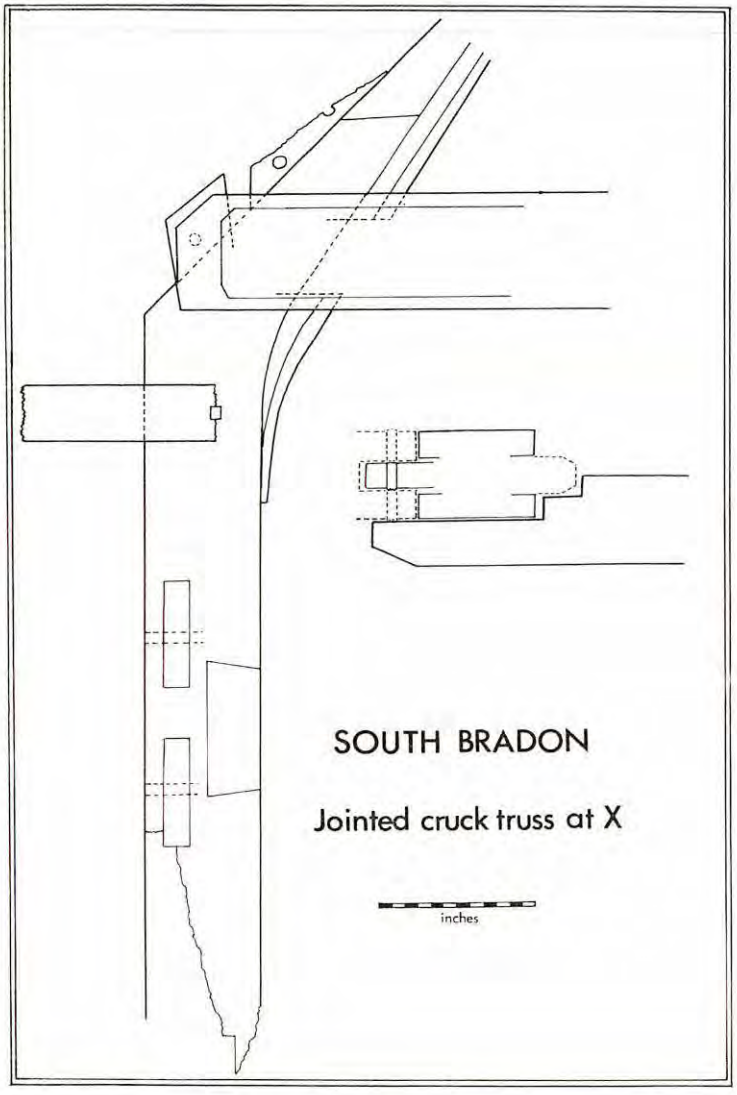

FIG. 3
Elevation and section of truss at X, at tie-beam level.

braces as in the George Hotel, Yeovil[1], St. James's Almshouses, Taunton[2], The George Inn, Norton St. Philip, and the Blake Museum, Bridgwater. These walls were later partially replaced by local oolite stone topped with cob on the south side, and subsequently by a mixture of oolite and lias stone on the north and east sides. The west end and part of the north wall were rebuilt *c.*1600 when a newel stair and fireplaces with herringbone slate backs were added, the latter on both floors. At least one jointed cruck truss was torn out, a fragment of which was used as a lintel in the stair window. Ceiling beams with scroll stops suggest drastic internal changes at this date, including the insertion of a floor into the western half of the open hall, and the raising of the original first floor at that end. The piggery occupied the eastern half of the open hall, and no ceiling was ever inserted there. Whilst it is tempting to suggest the presence of a further parlour bay at this point, thus conforming to a common four bay house plan, there was no evidence to support this either in the structure, nor by the presence of early foundations in a trench section studied beyond the south-east corner of the house.

The central truss of the open hall had rafters with a tie-beam resting upon wall-posts. Five studs rose from the tie-beam, three of them mortised into the collar, above which were two studs only. A mixture of contemporary truss types in any building is unusual, but the writer has seen framed trusses associated with jointed crucks in the roof of the Blake Museum, Bridgwater, and in a house at Sellick's Green, Pitminster.

At the west end of the hall was a richly moulded ceiling beam with a two inch camber. Mortises in this beam show that the room to the west of it was originally ceiled, although a further beam was applied to this face *c.* 1600 when that end of the house was altered. There was also a groove on its upper surface to take a stud and panel partition, each stud measuring 10″ by 4″ alternating with panels 14″ by 1″. There was no indication of a partition under the beam to separate the hall from the room beyond. Probably the cross passage lay at this point within the ceiled room, in which case the division between hall and passage could have consisted of free standing seats or settles resting on the floor with no attachment above. Alternatively there could have been a recessed partition fixed to the ceiling joists removed *c.* 1600, as at the George Hotel, Yeovil.[2]

The two jointed cruck trusses at either end of the hall were contemporary with the moulded beam and the central framed truss. The lower ends of their vertical members were embedded in the masonry and never located. They extended below the moulded beam, and an internal crack suggested that they reached floor level, probably resting on a low stone plinth as at Beecham's Cottage, Pitney.[3] At the upper end the vertical members carried chamfered ribs, damaged by the insertion of later tie beams. Each principal rafter rested upon the scarfed upper surface in what might have been described as the typical Somerset manner (*cf.* Beecham's Cottage, Pitney[3], Lower Burrow Farm, Wootton Courtney,[4] and 16 Fore Street, Taunton[5]) but for three abnormal features revealed during demolition. Firstly, the scarfed tenon did not extend more than two-thirds of the possible length. Beyond it was a hole to take a slip tenon, a separate piece of wood pegged across the inside of the joint where it would not normally be seen. Such a compli-

1 Hayward, L. C. and McDowell, R. W., **109**, 1966, 84-97.
2 McDowell, R. W. and Jeffries, I. I., **106**, 1962, 81-7.
3 Walrond, L. F. J., **97**, 1952, 79-91.
4 Fox, Sir Cyril, **95**, 1950, at p. 59.
5 Taylor, R. F., **110**, 1967, 108-10.

cation in its construction would not have produced a stronger joint, but might have made for easier erection. Secondly, there was an abnormal number and pattern of peg-holes, the purpose of which becomes clear when the joint is seen in section. Thirdly, there was a large mortise in the lower end of the principal rafter, which linked up with a hole in the bottom of the wall plate notch. This could not possibly be for the insertion of the slip tenon, but might have been for its adjustment from time to time during the erection of the truss.

The wall plate, terribly decayed but studied *in situ*, was not set horizontally in the normal manner, but took the form of a vertically set rail laid in a deep, narrow notch at the base of the principal rafter. It was in fact in the same order as the rails formerly in the original wall construction, and so should be considered as an upper wall member hung upon the base of the truss. In this position it did not carry any of the weight or stress of the truss, and the lower ends of the common rafters passed over the upper outer edge with no apparent fixture. It was not possible to examine the wall plate notch on the central truss over the hall.

Features described may be attributed to the late 15th or early 16th centuries, and in the absence of more specific evidence an original date of *c.* 1500 is suggested.

References are all to Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society *Proceedings.*