

## THE WINSCOMBE PROJECT 2011

Research in the Winscombe Project in 2011 (Aston *et al.* 2010, 2011) again concentrated on documentary research, map regression analysis, test pit digging and vernacular building surveys. A study of the medieval woodland (Aston *et al.* 2011a) demonstrated that a lot of the parish was woodland and wood-pasture in the Middle Ages and that there had been a long campaign of clearance ('assarting') and woodland management with much less attention paid to arable farming which is the subject of the paper in this volume (pp 79–145). A hypothetical map of what the parish might have looked like in around 1300 has been produced to show the present ideas about the distribution of settlement and land uses. Further geophysical

survey was carried out with ground penetrating radar surveys of Wyke, the site of a deserted medieval hamlet, and over the shrunken settlement earthworks at the hamlet of Barton (Fig. 1). James Bond has produced a topographical survey of the earthworks at Wyke.

The Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group, under the direction of John Rickard, have continued their survey of buildings in the parish which were in existence by the time of the tithe map (1840) (see pp. 218–24). Forty-one buildings in the parish have been surveyed so far. In 2011 these included the late-medieval buildings of Orchard Cottage and Wellage Cottage in Sandford, the squatter cottage, 'Paddock Rise', built on the former

## BARTON in Winscombe Somerset

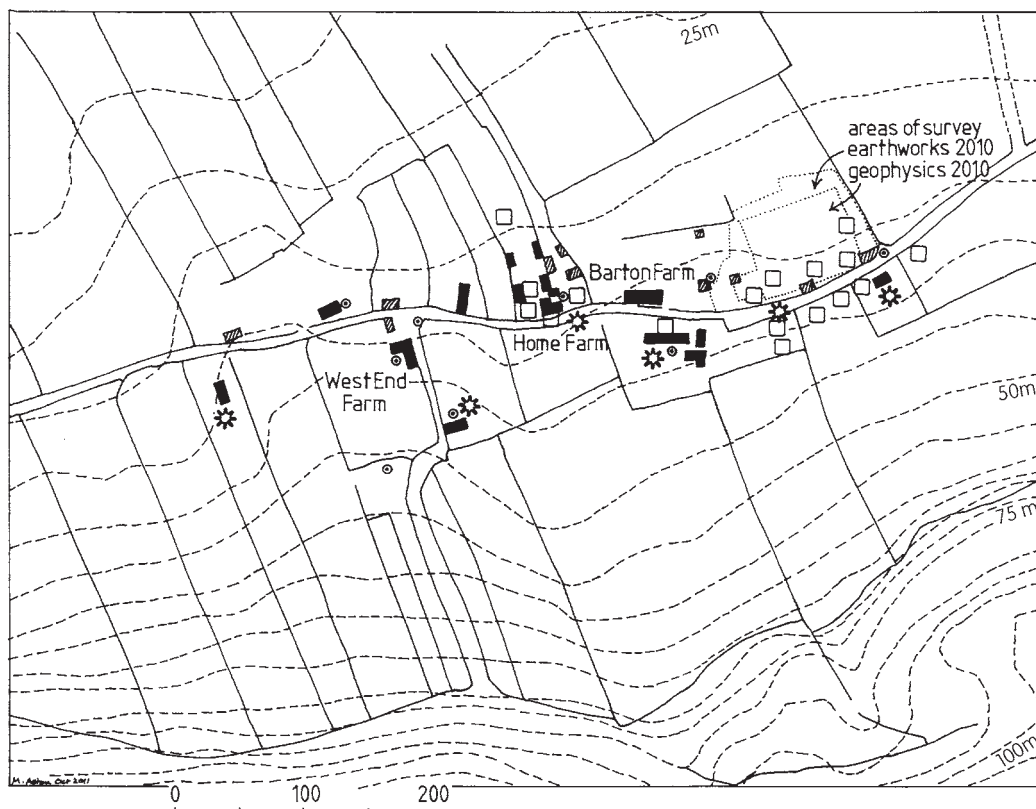


Fig. 1 Barton fieldwork in 2011, buildings survey and test pits (for key see SANH 154, 194–5, figs 1 and 2); scale in metres



*Fig. 2 Air photo of Barton from the north-east (M. Aston slide 71683, 23 March 2011)*

green at Sandford Batch and several small cottages on the former Woodborough Green.

Sarah Whittingham's long awaited study of Sir George Oatley, the architect of Bristol University, appeared in 2011 and numerous 'villas', which he built in Winscombe from around 1900 to about 1930, are referred to in it (Whittingham 2011). He had a summer and weekend house at Barton in Winscombe parish, called Barton Rocks which he built 1900–2, and later in life he lived in a cottage which he had converted in Barton, White Thorn Cottage, until his death in 1950. As further evidence of the role of architects who built villas in the parish, an aspect of the project under investigation by Ann Brooks and Maria Forbes, the architects of Winscombe Hall were examined. This, the home of the Yatman family, is said to have been built by the little known Victorian architect William Railton (1801–77). Most of his buildings were in Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire (including the first post-Reformation monastery at Mount St Bernard, the ruins of which are near to the more famous later monastery built by Pugin which is still in use) but he is best known for designing

Nelson's column in London. English Heritage, in their listing of the Hall, give no authority for saying he was the architect but he was one of the group in the 1830s and 1840s, which included John Augustus Yatman (1817–1900) (Forbes 2005), that was interested in the revival of Gothic architectural styles, along with Pugin and Burges (1827–81). William Burges followed Railton at the Hall designing two additional wings and providing furniture in his distinctive gothic style (one of these pieces – the Yatman cabinet – is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).

Most of the fieldwork in 2011 concentrated on digging a further 42 1m square test pits in the parish, making a total of 75 so far. Most of these were dug in Sandford, Winscombe and Barton (Fig. 1). Seven were dug on the Lynch in Woodborough, a prominent dolomitic conglomerate ridge where, in 1993, skeletons were found. These may have been from a small early medieval (450–650 AD) cemetery, such as have been found elsewhere in Somerset (Aston *et al.* 2011b) but the bones were subsequently lost and the test pits failed to locate any more from which radiocarbon dates could have been obtained.

At Barton several test pits were dug at the eastern end of the hamlet (Fig. 1). Some of these produced Romano-British pottery while others yielded coarse unglazed medieval sherds. One pit produced many large pieces of fine glazed jugs of probable 13th-century date, together with a piece of French Saintonge pottery.

Further test pits will be dug in 2012 in Sandford, Barton, Winscombe and Sidcot.

### References

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