

FAIRFIELD HOUSE, STOGURSEY: EXCAVATIONS, 2009

Late Autumn 2009 saw the final season of fieldwork on this five-year project to investigate the archaeology and landscape history of the grounds of Fairfield House, near Stogursey. The project began in 2005 as a means of providing an archaeological field experience for young people, based at the county's residential education centre at nearby Kilve Court. This final season was the longest to date, spanning four weeks and giving the experience of archaeology to A level students from local colleges, young students on a residential course at Kilve Court, and local adult volunteers and other community groups.

From the beginning, excavation had been concentrated on two documented structures of Fairfield House, now vanished; the west wing of the house, shown on 18th-century paintings and a 'fortifying wall and towers' for which a licence was granted in 1473 (SRO DD/AH60/10). Both structures are shown on a plan of Stogursey (Fig. 1) dated to the mid 18th century (DP Stogs 23/4).

Excavations on the site of the west wing (in 2005 and 2008) revealed no trace of the foundations or floors of that structure and it seemed clear that all physical remains had been removed to facilitate later landscaping and gardening. The line of the south side of the late 15th-century fortification was, however, revealed in excavations (2005, 2006 and 2009) consisting of a foundation trench 0.8m wide from which all masonry had been removed. The stone from the wall had evidently been re-used in a nearby substantial culvert that was part of a late 18th-century

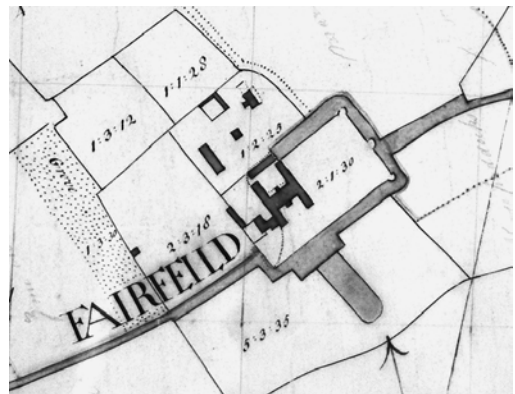


Fig. 1 Mid 18th-century map of Fairfield House

landscaping of the grounds of Fairfield House that created the open, flat parkland of today. To the north-east, however, demolition of the late medieval structure had been less thorough, and in a trench excavated in the last week of the project, the foundations of the north-east corner of the fortification were revealed, complete with circular tower (Fig. 2). The excavations also revealed parts of the external cobbling and sunken roadway that skirted the enclosed area.

The Fairfield Project included extensive geophysical survey, as well as standing wall surveys and field walking. A full report is in preparation and



Fig. 2 Fairfield House: north-east corner of fortifications and circular tower; view east

will appear in a future volume of *SANH*. Support for both research and community education has been provided by the Big Lottery Fund, the Gray Fund of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, Somerset County Council, the CBA

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