

MORE DOVECOTES IN HISTORICAL SOMERSET, WITH OTHER EVIDENCE OF EARLY PIGEON-KEEPING

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INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of *The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset* in 2004 three more dovecotes have been identified, and another has become accessible.¹ Nest-holes for pigeons have been found in three historic houses and three farm buildings. The opportunity has been taken to present more evidence that has emerged of dovecotes in the past. The structural measurements are stated here in the traditional units in which these buildings were built (1 inch = 25.4mm, 1 foot = 12in = 0.305m), and often these work out to be in exact units or half-units.

THE SITES

The dovecote of The Grange, Woolavington (ST 346 416)

This building was examined in October 2005 by courtesy of Stephen Wheeler. In 1965 it was wrongly listed as a cockpit. In a report of August 1983 the late Desmond Williams repeated this interpretation.² It is a round stone building 25m south-west of The Grange, 14ft in internal diameter and 14ft high to the eaves, with four stepped buttresses irregularly disposed and a thatched conical roof (Fig. 1). Together with The Grange it is listed as on the south side of Lower Road, but division of the property has left it isolated on a small plot now approached from Puriton Lane.

The wall thickness of 3ft 2in, the four buttresses, and the association with a manor house which has



Fig. 1 The dovecote of The Grange, Woolavington, from the south (photo John McCann)

an early 16th-century core all suggest that it was built as a dovecote. A partial collapse has confirmed this by revealing original nest-holes (Fig. 2).

The fabric

The original fabric is of blue lias rubble with clay mortar. A large part of the south side has been



Fig. 2 The dovecote of The Grange, Woolavington. The collapsed west section in October 2005 (photo John McCann)

repaired with squared chert in lime mortar, and elsewhere there are smaller repairs with these materials. On the north-east side a gap in the structure 4ft wide which is closed with timber includes a modern doorway. As this is the only aperture in the fabric this indicates the position of the original doorway.

The nest-holes

A partial collapse of the outer masonry on the west side has exposed nest-holes in chequer pattern, some still containing nesting material. They are bridged by large slabs of lias. The only nest-hole which could be examined is 6in high and 7¾in wide, and has been blocked with lias rubble on the inside. As that part of the building was in a dangerously unstable condition no other nest-holes were measured.

The ring-beams and roof structure

Inner and outer ring-beams on the wall-head are each composed of six curved sections of hardwood grown to shape, 11in wide by 4in deep. The sections are joined by long tenons, each fitting in a mortise in the next section and secured by two vertical pegs. Some pegs have failed, allowing the joints to pull apart owing to the expanding force of the conical roof. Nine original rafters are present, with an upper ring-beam 2ft in internal diameter on which the louver was formerly mounted. A tie-beam and four radial arms have been inserted to restrain it against collapse.

The interior

The lower half is of bare rubble. The nest-holes have been blocked with similar rubble so neatly as to be barely noticeable. The upper half is plastered to within 1ft of the top, leaving one tier of nest-holes exposed. The floor is of stone flags.

Dating

This dovecote is of a type which could have been built at any time from the 14th to the 16th century. There is documentary evidence of a dovecote in 1491 and 1784 which probably refers to the same building.³

Discussion

In a building of this status the original roof cladding would have been of stone tiles, but it has been replaced with thatch. The only way to obtain a convincing date of origin is by tree-ring dating of the rafters and ring-beams. We do not believe that this building has ever been used as a cockpit. That theory was based mainly on a single tier of exposed nest-holes inside which were misinterpreted as for the timbers supporting a gallery. Williams reported holes on the outside left by the horizontal supports of an external stair to the upper part – as sketched in his ‘artist’s restoration’.⁴ However, a common development of older dovecotes in the early 19th century was to construct a floor at mid-height, inserting the joists in the nest-holes, and to use the lower part as a stable or other animal housing while retaining the upper part as a pigeon-loft. Some of these pigeon lofts later became granaries, and were plastered internally to preserve the grain from damp.⁵ Williams failed to notice the blocked nest-holes in the lower half of the interior. The stone-flagged floor dates only from the secondary use. (A crown ordinance of 1625 forbade the owners of dovecotes from paving their floors; nothing but ‘good and mellow earth’ was to be used, to facilitate the collection of saltpetre-rich earth for making gunpowder.)⁶

At present the dovecote is still listed as a cockpit, Grade II.

The dovecote of Halswell House, Goathurst (ST 253 329)

The previous owners would not permit us to see this dovecote, so all we could do was to reproduce

an existing photograph taken from the south (*Dovecotes*, p. 122). In August 2005 we examined it by courtesy of the new owner, Grahame Bond. It is 60m south of Halswell House, behind the façade of an unfinished riding house which faces north-west towards a large stable yard (Fig. 3). This has a blocked central entrance, blind arcading and rusticated quoins, and has been attributed to John Johnson.⁷ Behind the façade is a narrow range of buildings, the southern half forming part of a cottage, the northern half forming a lean-to workshop. Other riding houses are square, so evidently this one was intended to extend far to the rear, occupying the site where the dovecote still stands. As it is, the round dovecote cuts into the lean-to workshop (Fig. 4). The ground declines to the north-east. The dovecote is listed Grade II.



Fig. 3 The dovecote of Halswell House, Goathurst, from the south-east (photo John McCann)

The fabric

The dovecote is 23ft in internal diameter, and 22ft high to the eaves. The wall batters slightly, and is 3½ft thick at the doorway. Originally it was built of stone rubble but at various times there have been major structural failures which have been repaired with cob and brickwork. A plinth 4ft high and the eastern part, including the doorway, survive from the original construction in stone. Sections to the south and west, amounting to one-third of the whole have been rebuilt above the plinth with brickwork.

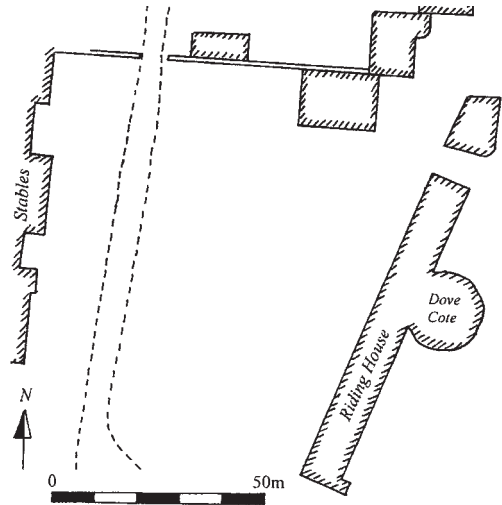


Fig. 4 Halswell House, Goathurst. Plan showing the dovecote occupying the site of the unfinished riding house (courtesy James Brigers Prospect Archaeology)

A shorter section to the north-east has been rebuilt with cob, much of it new, in which diagonal shrinkage cracks are visible outside. Within the lean-to workshop the brickwork is exposed, but the remainder of the exterior has been newly rendered with lime plaster. In August 2005 old scaffolding was present on the north-eastern part, the inside and across the position of the missing cupola, indicating that repair work had been interrupted.

The doorway and windows

The doorway facing east retains a jointed and pegged oak frame 4ft high by 2½ft wide with a deeply worn oak sill, and is fitted with a modern slatted door. The earth floor is level with the mid-point of the natural gradient. The four unglazed windows high in the wall face the points of the compass. The east window retains a charred frame and lintel, and is estimated to be 2½ft square. The north window has been restored. The west and south windows are similar apertures without frames.

The interior and nest-holes

The whole interior is newly lime-washed. There are two tiers of nest-holes in the stone plinth and nine tiers above arranged in grid pattern (Fig. 5). They are simple rectangular recesses 19–20in deep from



Fig. 5 Halswell House, Goathurst. The interior, facing east. The plinth and doorway are original. The east window has a charred frame and lintel (photo John McCann)

front to back; those formed in stone rubble and cob are 8in square, those in brickwork are 6in square. A total of 320 nest-holes are present and in good order. About three times that number have been blocked and concealed by plaster and lime-wash. There are no alighting ledges.

The roof

The roof structure has a ring-beam mounted on the wall-head, another a few inches above it mounted on short spurs, a third ring-beam at mid-height, and at the apex a fourth ring-beam 2½ft in internal diameter on which the missing cupola was mounted. Fifty eight common rafters of small scantling support profiled boards which form a bell-shaped roof of elegant curvature. To these are nailed tiling laths on which green slates are laid. Crossed tie-beams are strengthened at the junction with four right-angled iron brackets and an iron plate below, bolted through. From one tie-beam four inclined struts support the ring-beam at mid-height.

Dating and development

The low doorway, the plain rectangular shape of the nest-holes, and the bell-shaped roof indicate that this dovecote was built in the late 17th century or early in the 18th century. Some of the windows were inserted later in the 18th century, when contemporary writers were advocating that dovecotes would be improved by introducing more light and air.⁸ The building may have been already in deteriorating condition when Sir Charles Kemeys-Tynte acquired the estate in 1753.⁹ The riding house was started shortly before his death in 1785, but this brought work to a halt. The normal management of pigeons required that a replacement dovecote had to be completed and ready for occupation before the old one was demolished, or the carefully-accumulated flock of pigeons would disperse.¹⁰ The façade of the riding house was built first, and the remainder was left incomplete until a (hypothetical) new dovecote elsewhere was ready for occupation. When construction of the riding house was abandoned the dovecote was repaired to retain it in use.

Much of the cob is recent work. In 1998 J.C. Bond reported that a large section of cob walling had collapsed, but by August 2005 this had been rebuilt.¹¹ The present handsome roof was built by the government of the United States to replace one which was set on fire by an American soldier when Halswell House was occupied by US troops during the second World War.¹² A small flock of white fantail doves is in occupation.

Discussion

This is an exceptionally large dovecote which originally had 1200–1300 nest-holes. It is unusual to find nest-holes in grid pattern in a stone dovecote because chequer pattern is believed to be stronger; here it probably contributed to the structural failures. Many nest-holes are blocked because by the early 19th century owners of dovecotes were under pressure to reduce their flocks to the number of pigeons they could feed on their own land, to avoid nuisance to their neighbours. Some owners achieved the required reduction by inserting a floor at or above mid-height, others by blocking or removing nesting places, as here.¹³ Any surplus nest-holes left open would attract feral pigeons and domestic pigeons turned away from other dovecotes.

Most of the nest-holes formed in stone and cob are 8in square, the commonest size adopted in English dovecotes from the earliest times. Those formed in brickwork are two inches smaller.

Hestercombe Gardens, Cheddon Fitzpaine (ST 240 289)

This building was brought to our attention by Russell Lilford, and was examined in October 2005 by courtesy of Philip White, Chief Executive of Hestercombe Gardens. It is 200m west of Hestercombe House, situated on ground rising steeply to the north (Fig. 6). The dovecote forms the upper storey of a tall square building of which the lower storey is now the entrance kiosk of Hestercombe Gardens. Later single-storey ancillary buildings extend 50ft to the east and 41ft to the west so that it is now part of a long service range. The doorway of the dovecote is to the north. There is a small window high in the south wall, and below it is a large modern aperture which connects with a modern single-storey link. The roof is pyramidal, clad with plain clay tiles.



Fig. 6 The dovecote in Hestercombe Gardens, Cheddon Fitzpaine, from the south-south-west (photo John McCann)

The structure

Externally the dovecote is 15½ft square; from present ground level at the north doorway it is 13½ft high to the eaves. The outside is of coursed stone

rubble with lime mortar, but the inside is of hand-made bricks of fine quality 9 x 4¼ x 2¾in.

The doorway

This is original, with a jointed and pegged oak frame 6ft 1in high by 2ft 7in wide, chamfered with plain stops, rebated to open outwards, with a deeply worn oak threshold, and a limestone threshold 6in below that. The door is modern. The wall thickness at the doorway is 1ft 11in.

The nest-holes

Nearly all the nest-holes are blocked with bricks similar to the adjacent fabric. Their floors and roofs are formed of slabs of slate 1¼in thick. The entrances are arranged in chequer pattern, 6in high by 4½in wide. Inside, the few nest-holes still unblocked are L-shaped in plan, 13½in wide at the back, 12½in deep from front to back. The lowest tier is 3ft 10in above the present concrete floor; below that the brickwork is plastered. There are twelve tiers of nest-holes, with 28 in a complete tier. Allowing for those omitted for the doorway and the high south window this indicates an original total of about 320 nest-holes. There are no alighting ledges. No evidence of the louver survives because the roof has been rebuilt.

The lower storey

This has been much altered for modern use; except for brick dressings it is wholly of stone rubble. The doorway is to the south. On the north side two original windows are symmetrically arranged, each 3ft high by 2ft 9in wide, with deep splays below, under segmental arches of brick. They have been blocked. There is no indication of the first use.

Dating and development

The brickwork is typical of the early 19th century, which suggests that it was built by John Tyndale-Warre, who died in 1819.¹⁴ The number of nest-holes is also typical of that period, when changes in the economics of agriculture were restricting the size of flock which could be kept. Before the French Revolutionary Wars a house of the status of Hestercombe would have had a dovecote of much larger capacity. One shown distantly in a portrait of C.W. Bampfylde by John Wooton, c. 1740, has gone.¹⁵ The high position of the nest-holes in the

walls was for protection from brown rats (*Rattus norvegicus*).¹⁶ At some date within the 19th century the building ceased to be used as a dovecote, and the nest-holes were blocked with bricks. It became a store, as it remains today.

The dovecote of Church Farm, Trent (ST 589 185)

This dovecote was examined by courtesy of Edward Horler in April 2012. It is a plain rectangular building in the middle of a large farmyard to the north of Church Farmhouse, aligned approximately north–south, on ground declining gently to the south (Fig. 7). It is 26ft 3in long by 23ft 5in wide externally and 10ft 7in high to the eaves, and is built of cob on a plinth of roughly squared limestone blocks 16in high (above present ground level). There has been some patching with stone at the south end. The exterior has been lime-rendered in recent years. The hipped roof is thatched. A lean-to shed abuts at the north end. The dovecote is listed as 17th century, Grade II.



Fig. 7 The dovecote of Church Farm, Trent, from the south-west (photo John McCann)

The doorway

The original entrance was evidently in the middle of the long side facing west, but it has been enlarged with brickwork to form an aperture 6ft high by 5½ft wide, and is fitted with two re-used iron-studded oak doors. At the doorway the wall is 3ft 3in thick.

The window

The only other aperture is a former window in the middle of the south, end wall, 1ft 9in high by 2ft 6in wide, immediately below the eaves. It has been

blocked with wood, leaving one entrance hole of inverted U-shape for the pigeons.

The interior

Nest-holes in chequer pattern occupy all four walls from 2ft 3in above the stone-flagged floor to the eaves (Fig. 8). They are formed in the solid cob, 7in square and 15in deep from front to back, widening slightly at the inner ends. There are eleven tiers, with 14 nest-holes in each tier in the long rear wall and eleven in each end wall. Above the altered doorway five complete tiers survive. Originally there would have been about 550 nest-holes less those omitted for a small doorway. The alterations to the long front wall have left only four nest-holes in each tier to each side of the doorway. Some nest-holes beside and below the window aperture have been damaged, leaving 520 nest-holes in good order. Most of the interior has been whitewashed.



Fig. 8 Inside the dovecote of Church Farm, Trent, from the south (photo John McCann)

The roof

The roof has been rebuilt, retaining much of the original structure – two pairs of principals each joined at the apex with a mortise and tenon, a collar tenoned to the principals, and a tie-beam. The ridge-piece is notched, and there is a pair of trencled purlins in each pitch. It is now supported on posts rising from the floor. Evidently it was thought that the cob was not strong enough to carry it. The original entrance for the pigeons would have been a louver in the middle of the ridge.

Discussion

This dovecote was omitted from *The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset* because it is in Dorset, but until a boundary change of 1896 it was just inside

Somerset. It is the only cob dovecote which has survived in the historic county. A round dovecote of cob at Durleigh was demolished in 1967 (*Dovecotes*, pp. 214–15).

Nest-holes at Birdcombe Court, Wraxall
(ST 479 718)

This building was examined in July 2005 by courtesy of Peter Sapsed. The relevant part of this complex house is a hall aligned north–south, probably built in the 14th century. A highly decorated cross-wing has been built against the south end, dated c. 1441 by dendrochronology.¹⁷ A short pitched roof bridges the space between the two roofs, with a diagonally-mounted ridge-piece and one purlin in each pitch, boarded under stone tiles. Above the moulded and brattished north wall-plate of the cross-wing the south gable enclosed by this short roof is 10ft 8in high by 13ft 4in wide. High in it is a triangular group of nest-holes arranged in nine tiers, with eight in the lowest tier, and diminishing tiers rising to the apex, making a total of 31 (Fig. 9). They are formed in the original stone rubble, irregular in size and shape, but most of the entrances are 6–6½in high by 5–7½in wide. In depth from front to back they vary from 12½ to 14in. They have been out of use since the bridging roof was built.



Fig. 9 Nest-holes in the south gable of the medieval hall, Birdcombe Court, Wraxall (photo John McCann)

Nest-holes at Steyning Manor, Stogursey (ST 219 428)

This building was examined in November 2009 by courtesy of Mr and Mrs A.B. Dodgson. The earliest part of this complex house is a 14th-century range aligned east-north-east – west-south-west. Six metres to the south an approximately square house was built c. 1670.¹⁸ The two are now linked by later wings, enclosing a small court. The nest-holes are in the south elevation of the medieval range, facing into the court. Between two originally unglazed first-floor windows are two groups of 16 nest-holes immediately below the eaves, each in three tiers (Fig. 10). The lowest tiers are 11½–12½ft above the sloping ground of the court. They would have been accessed by ladder.



Fig. 10 Nest-holes in the south elevation of the medieval range of Steyning Manor, Stogursey (photo John McCann)

The entrance of each nest-hole is 7in high by 6in wide. The depths front to back vary around 16in. Each side of each nest-hole is formed by a thin piece of slate cut to size. The nest-holes widen out slightly at the inner ends to form reversed-wedge shapes in plan, and the inner ends are closed with thin vertical slates which sound hollow when tapped. The wall is 18in thick, composed of stone rubble. The nest-holes do not appear inside the house.

Discussion

The last two buildings show that external nest-holes for pigeons were incorporated in houses of early date. The entrances were smaller than nest-holes inside dovecotes because they constituted the only protection against birds of prey. At

Birdcombe Court one problem is how the nest-holes were accessed by humans. They would have been *searched* (the contemporary term) for pigeon squabs at frequent intervals, but a ladder long enough to reach the topmost nest-holes from the ground would have had to be 26ft long, equivalent to a modern triple-extension ladder, impossible to erect single-handed. It seems that when these nest-holes were in use there was another roof below on which a ladder could be mounted, but there is no other evidence of a building earlier than the present cross-wing of c. 1441.

At Steyning Manor we believe the nest-holes were originally formed as irregular bulb-shaped cavities in the stone rubble, as was common in the medieval period, but that in the 18th century thin pieces of slate were inserted at the sides and back to make them easier to clean. A new emphasis on the desirability of regular cleaning of dovecotes and nest-holes first emerges in 18th-century farming literature. Earlier it had been normal practice to clean out dovecotes only once a year, always in winter to avoid disturbing breeding birds. In 1577 Thomas Tusser, in a calendar of the monthly tasks of the farmer, described this as a job for January:

Feed doue (no more killing), old Doue house reaire,
Save doue dong for hopyard, when house ye make faire.

He repeated the advice in another form:

Feed doues, but kill not,
if loose them ye will not.
Doue house reaire,
make douehole faire.¹⁹

A former pigeon loft at The Manor House, Marston Magna (ST 593 223)

This stone house was examined in October 2005 by courtesy of Mr and Mrs H.C. Privett. The main range was built in the 16th century, and is aligned east–west. A short rear wing extends to the south, which is dated by a sundial built into the gable end inscribed ‘Shadowe so mans life doth goe 1613’.

In the gable a few feet above the first-floor window a drip-mould indicates that a second-floor window has been blocked with stone. It is slightly narrower than the six-light window below, so it was of five lights. Inside the resulting recess nest-boxes for pigeons have been constructed.²⁰ The original whitewashed splays are visible to each side, and

a whitewashed surface extends behind the nest-boxes (Fig. 11). Twelve nest-boxes in two tiers were formed with hand-made bricks $9\frac{1}{4} \times 4 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ in laid on edge. They are simple rectangular recesses 9in high x 11in wide x 13in from front to back, arranged in two groups of six with a stone pier between. The two floors are of hardwood $1\frac{1}{2}$ in thick; the lower one is the original window-sill. The gable is 9ft high by 18ft wide. High in it is an original window 19in high by 13in wide with a deep splay below extending 2ft 4in down the wall, by which the pigeons must have entered. Nine feet to the north there are remnants of a wattle-and-daub partition which evidently formed the opposite wall of the pigeon loft. The east and west walls would have been attached to the purlins, but the roof has been rebuilt so no evidence of them remains. Human access to the pigeon loft would have been by a trap-door above a first-floor room.



Fig. 11 The Manor House, Marston Magna. The nest-boxes formed in a blocked window on the second floor of the rear range (photo John McCann)

Discussion

It is likely that the second-floor window was blocked for economy when the window tax was introduced in 1695, or when it was increased. The whitewash behind the nest-boxes shows that they were not constructed until some time after the window was blocked. When in use for pigeons the window high in the gable would have been protected with inclined slats six inches apart to prevent the larger birds of prey from entering, while allowing pigeons to pass through. Other nest-boxes made of wood, wattle-and-daub or lath-and-plaster would have been provided against the east, north and west walls of the loft, but no evidence of them survives.

Troyte's Farm, Tivington in Selworthy (SS 933 451)

J.C. Bond reports four nest-holes high in the north wall of an ancillary building, now converted to a dwelling (Fig. 12). Each has a small perching step. They were accessed by ladder.



Fig. 12 Nest-holes in an ancillary building of Troyte's Farm, Tivington in Selworthy (photo J.C. Bond)

Tirelands Farm, Enmore (ST 241 345)

In the east gable of an early 19th-century stone barn there are nine pairs of nest-holes formed in brick (Fig. 13). Each has (or had) a stone perching step. They were accessed by ladder.



Fig. 13 Pairs of brick nest-holes in the gable end of a stone barn at Tirelands Farm, Enmore (photo Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group)

(Fig. 14). At the base are three tiers of eight nest-holes, above that single tiers of six, four and two, making 36 nest-holes in all, and above that is an oval oculus. Below each tier of nest-holes and below the oculus are perching ledges which extend across the full width of the gable. The nest-holes are square, too inaccessible to measure. The whole assembly is constructed of limestone ashlar on a cranked tie-beam supported on the side walls of the wagon porch.²¹ The original building is of Doulling limestone rubble with ashlar quoins.

Nest-holes at Rowley Grange, Norton St Philip (ST 803 578)

Near the north-east boundary of the county is a former barn which was converted to a house *c.* 1920, which displays a conspicuous assembly of nest-holes and perching ledges in a gable over what was formerly the central wagon entrance



Fig. 14 Nest-holes at Rowley Grange, Norton St Philip (photo by permission of the NMR, © English Heritage)

Discussion

Conspicuous patterns of external nest-holes and perching ledges are present on many houses and barns in Wiltshire, as reported in our recent book *The*

Dovecotes and Pigeon Lofts of Wiltshire,²² but they are rare in Somerset. Rowley Grange is within three miles of Wiltshire, and in this respect has adopted a style which is more typical of Wiltshire. Display and social assertiveness are the most obvious explanations of them, because traditionally pigeon-keeping was associated with high social status.²³ No explanation of the difference between their distribution in Wiltshire and Somerset is apparent.

It is likely that other, less conspicuous patterns of external nest-holes in buildings will be found in Somerset later.

Others have kindly added to our information about former dovecotes. John Dallimore has drawn attention to a round building shown in the 1885 edition of the Ordnance Survey map, half-way between Blagdon church and the nearest house, which was probably the parsonage. This may be the 'pigeon house' recorded in glebe terriers of 1613 and 1636 which was mentioned in *Dovecotes* p. 221, still in situ in 1885 but missing now.

J.C. Bond reports the base of a round stone dovecote at Burtle Farm, Edington, which appears as a ring of stone masonry level with the surface of the farmyard (ST 391 434). He has recorded the foundations of a round stone building which was probably a dovecote at the deserted hamlet of Ludwell in Hutton parish (ST 360 593).²⁴ He reports residual evidence of a round stone dovecote at Barlinch Priory.²⁵ 'A close of one acre called Culverhey with a culverhouse on it' is mentioned in a survey dated 1577 of the buildings and precinct of the former palace of the Bishops of Bath and Wells (now Court Farm),²⁶ and a medieval dovecote is recorded in the Outer Ward of Taunton Castle.²⁷ He also draws our attention to the many dovecotes mentioned in the indexes to volumes VIII onwards of the Victoria County History, which have come out since our book was published.

Stephen Croad reports that in the National Monuments Record Centre at Swindon there is a photographic negative of another version of the Buckler drawing reproduced in *Dovecotes* p. 182, of a small pigeon loft formed on a discarded cart-wheel at Banwell. Apparently this was Buckler's first sketch made on site, of which the one we published is the finished version.²⁸ Also, in Charles Chadwyck Healey's *The History of Part of West Somerset* (1901) three dovecotes in West Luccombe are mentioned: Burrowhayes (formerly Horner Farm) at Brune's Horner; Horner House where a

dovecote was mentioned in a law suit of 1615; and at Luccombe Glebe where he notes the field name 'Culver Orchard'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the owners named for providing full access to buildings, to James Brigers of Prospect Archaeology for providing a plan of Halswell House, and to James Bond, Stephen Croad, John Dallimore and Russell Lilford for providing information.

Endnotes

- ¹ McCann, J., and McCann, P., 2003. *The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset*, Somerset Vernacular Building Recording Group, Taunton.
- ² SRO, DD/V/Bwr 37.6. The measured drawings of the plan and vertical section, and an 'artist's restoration' are unsuitable for reproduction.
- ³ The name 'The Grange' is misleading, for there is no evidence that this house was ever associated with a monastery. It was the capital messuage of the lay manor of Woolavington Pym. Later it became known as Morses or Morris's Farm. The present name was adopted only in the 20th century (*Victoria County History of Somerset* VIII, 214).
- ⁴ As note 2.
- ⁵ Some dovecotes described in *The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset* have passed through comparable developments. The upper parts of those at Witham Friary and Whitestaunton Manor have been granaries; the upper part of the dovecote at Manor Farm, Wellow, became a game larder or cool store (pp. 38, 157 and 48).
- ⁶ *The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset*, 25–6.
- ⁷ *Victoria County History of Somerset* VI (1992), 49. See Worsley, G., 2003. 'A history and catalogue of the British riding house', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* 47, 47–88. The façade was illustrated in *Country Life*, 9 January 1989, 87.
- ⁸ For example in 1746 a letter in *The Gentleman's Magazine* reported that the correspondent had inserted four oval windows protected against flying predators by wire grills in a dovecote which had been under-occupied, since which the flock of pigeons had thrived and increased (first series, 16, 478).

- ⁹ *Victoria County History of Somerset VI* (1992), 48.
- ¹⁰ The distinguished naturalist Charles Waterton described the process of replacing a dovecote. In March 1846 he closed an isolated dovecote in his park at Walton Hall, Yorkshire, and opened a tall pigeon-tower within the farmstead. The pigeons occupied the new one the same day, and by November of that year had produced 73 dozen squabs (Irwin, R.A., 1955. *Letters of Charles Waterton of Walton Hall, near Wakefield*, London, 50–2).
- ¹¹ Bond, J.C., 1998. *Somerset Parks and Gardens*, Tiverton, 155.
- ¹² Information from the owner, Grahame Bond.
- ¹³ For comparison, at an octagonal dovecote at Kirkstead House, Kirkstead, Norfolk, all the nest-boxes on five sides were removed in the early 19th century, reducing the number from 672 to 224. At another octagonal dovecote at Hedingham Castle, Essex, the nest-boxes were rebuilt, reducing the total from 1213 to 462. McCann, J., 1997. 'The dovecote of Hedingham Castle', *Essex Archaeology and History* 28, 296–7.
- ¹⁴ Information from Philip White.
- ¹⁵ As note 14.
- ¹⁶ McCann, J., 1996. 'The influence of rodents on the design and construction of farm buildings in Britain, to the mid-nineteenth century', *Journal of the Historic Farm Buildings Group* 10, 10–11.
- ¹⁷ A copy of the report is deposited in Somerset Record Office.
- ¹⁸ The house is fully described and illustrated in *Traditional Buildings in the Parish of Stogursey*, Somerset Vernacular Building Recording Group, 2010, 133–5.
- ¹⁹ Tusser, T., 1878. *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie*, English Dialect Society edition, London, 72, 77.
- ²⁰ To distinguish nest-holes from nest-boxes, the former are cavities for nesting sunk in the original fabric, the latter are nesting places constructed separately, often of other materials. (McCann, J., 1991. 'A suggested terminology for dovecote studies', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* 35, 153).
- ²¹ It is illustrated from the front in Hansell, P., and Hansell, J., 1988. *Doves and Dovecotes*, Bath, 170.
- ²² Wiltshire Buildings Record, Chippenham, 2011, 163–87.
- ²³ The restriction of pigeon-keeping to lords of manors and some priests was ended by a legal decision of 1619. From then any freeholder could keep pigeons. It seems that pigeon-keeping continued to be associated with high social status (McCann, J., 2000. 'Dovecotes and pigeons in English law', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* 44, 35–7).
- ²⁴ Published in the annual summary by R. Iles and A. Kidd, 'Avon Archaeology', in *Bristol and Avon Archaeology* 6 (1986–7), 49–50.
- ²⁵ Described in Riley, H., and Wilson-North, R., 2001. *The Field Archaeology of Exmoor*, English Heritage, 111.
- ²⁶ Devon Record Office, 96M, box 4/5.
- ²⁷ In the section by Robin Bush and Marion Meek of Peter Leach's *The Archaeology of Taunton* (Western Archaeological Trust, Excavation Monograph no. 8, 1984).
- ²⁸ In the Batsford Collection, c.1942.