

SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY, 2000

EDITED BY C. J. WEBSTER, SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL, ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY
DEPARTMENT

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The turn of the millennium is a time to reflect upon what we have achieved for the protection, management and conservation of the historic environment of Somerset. This annual report summarises the projects that have been reported to the County Sites and Monuments Record and the information is then made more widely available through publication in this journal. An ever increasing range of archaeological sites, monuments, landscapes and historic buildings are investigated each year and we never cease to be amazed at the variety of work that is covered in the county. For many years we have been asking for greater understanding and consideration of the historic environment in the planning system and we are now having to face up to our success by having an increasing workload, both as part of the planning system and as part of the wider management of the countryside. Development control continues to form an essential part of the service of SCC and we continue to build on our partnership work with the five district councils. During 2000 we commented on over 1415 planning applications and 195 other requests for archaeological advice from bodies such as MAFF and Wessex Water. This work is delivered by Steven Membery (Development Control archaeologist), Jan Grove (Countryside archaeological advice), Richard Brunning (Somerset Levels and Moors and wetland/coastal archaeology), Nic Wall (Conservation advice to West Somerset District Council and Sedgemoor District Council), with additional advice from Bob Croft and Russell Lillford.

Excavations around the county added numerous new sites to the record and several finds were particularly impressive, particularly for the medieval period. Evaluation work at Spargrove manor moat revealed the remains of a timber bridge base and tree ring dating showed that the trees were felled in 1289 AD suggesting that the bridge was built shortly after this date. In Whatley parish, excavation in advance of quarry expansion revealed the remains of a small deserted farmstead with stone buildings of 16th-century date and pottery evidence from the 13th century. This is one of the first excavations that have looked at the scattered farmstead pattern common on Mendip. Several excavations on cropmark sites at Yeovilton (by Wessex Archaeology funded by the MoD) and on the southern Quantocks, by King Alfred's College, Winchester, and SCC, revealed the complex nature of such sites ranging from Bronze and Iron Age through until the Dark Ages. The discovery of the unusual 7th-century cemetery at Stoneage Barton Farm, Cothelstone, is particularly notable.

Community archaeology projects continue to form an important part of the work of the group and this year saw training excavations at Cothelstone, led by Chris Webster and Richard Brunning, Hestercombe Gardens Daisy Steps, led by Bob Croft, and at St Margaret's Almshouse, Taunton, led by Steven Membery. The archaeological work at St Margaret's Almshouse was a great

success and over 500 local school children visited the site and over 1000 people attended open days during the year. This community heritage project was coordinated by Rachel Shaw in conjunction with Somerset Building Preservation Trust and SCC, and resulted in a great deal of local support for the project. The group continues to offer help and support to other work of the SBPT and was involved in trying to secure the long-term protection of the Williton Workhouse. The decision of the Secretary of State not to confirm a Compulsory Purchase Order on this building resulted in extensive delays and this building, the best example of a workhouse in Somerset, remains at risk. During the year the group also contributed to the conservation and enhancement works funded in partnership with other bodies in Frome, Bridgwater and Langport. These projects have a lasting effect upon the conservation of buildings and public spaces in these important historic towns. A great achievement of the year was the completion of the Historic Landscape Character mapping by Oscar Aldred. This work has looked at and classified all the field patterns and boundaries in the county and mapped them out onto a GIS system that records the pattern of the landscape. The analysis covered both Somerset and Exmoor and it is hoped that the HLC survey will be used to develop landscape character policies both with the district councils and the Exmoor National Park Authority.

In July 2000 a new post was created with funding support from English Heritage to provide countryside archaeological advice. Jan Grove was appointed and the post has concentrated upon providing archaeological advice on a range of consultations, but particularly agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship Scheme applications. This advice is made directly available to farmers, tenants, agents and other bodies such as MAFF and during the year consultations on CSS affected 238 known archaeological sites. A project was also set up in conjunction with English Heritage to provide management advice and small-scale remedial works on monuments around the county.

Publication, promotion and outreach work continues to form an important part of our service to the public. The work at the Peat Moors Centre with Eddie Wills and Nancy Ashworth continues to develop, and visitor figures are averaging at around 10,000 per year. There is considerable speculation on the long-term future of the centre and proposals are being developed to expand the service for both school groups and local residents. Activities in 2000 included experimental salt-making following Roman methods. The production of an Annual Report by the Architectural and Historic Heritage Group of the County Council provides more information on the topics noted here in this report. Work this year has shown that archaeological research and a better understanding of the historic environment continues to have an important role to play in the conservation and management of the county. The archaeologists and conservation officers of the County Council continue to provide an expanded service to the people of Somerset.

(R. A. Croft)

SURVEY, FIELDWORK AND EXTENSIVE SITES

Ilminster, pipeline between Puckington, ST 378 182, and Moolham, ST 3596 1346

A watching brief, undertaken by AC Archaeology during works preparatory to the installation of a pipeline between Puckington and Moolham, took place in July and August. Three sites were identified; the first being three lynchets sited on the north side of Pretwood Hill, through which the pipeline was cut, and a second, at ST36441414, a feature comprising burnt clay which yielded quantities of Romano-British pot sherds provisionally dated to the 1st century AD. The third site, situated at Puckington on the crest and false crest of Puckington Hill, comprised a small cemetery of six individuals. Three of the inhumations were of indeterminate sex, aged between six and fifteen years, and these, together with two adult males 60 years or

over, and one female aged between 18 and 24 years, formed a small cemetery. All are likely to be Romano-British; although no direct dating evidence was recovered. A pit with early Iron-Age pot sherds was also excavated. An assessment report is currently in preparation.

(Sandi Clark)

Pawlett, Walpole Landfill Site, northern extension, ST 315 435

An archaeological evaluation on Pawlett Level comprising 22 trenches with a combined length of almost 3500m was undertaken in July and August 2000.

A large Lias stone 'island' sealed by between 1.5m and 3.5m of alluvial clay was investigated. The buried soil on the surface of this feature survives largely intact and limited investigation of this deposit recovered a few pottery sherds, mostly of Roman-British date but including a probable 12th-century coarseware sherd, prehistoric flint flakes, animal bone fragments, fired clay, quartz pebbles and imported stones.

The evaluation was carried out in concert with a programme of environmental work undertaken by the University of Bristol. Various deposits within the alluvial clays and the organic peat and sedge deposits were investigated either through the recovery of bulk samples or through column sampling. A series of radiocarbon 14 assessments from the buried soil and from the clay and peat deposits are presently being processed. A full report will follow when all the results have been collated.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

South East Quantocks Archaeological Survey

Following the end of the Shapwick Project in 1999, King Alfred's College, Winchester (KAC) decided to continue to run their training excavations in Somerset in collaboration with SCC archaeologists. A project has been established to interpret the large numbers of enclosures seen as cropmarks in the foothills of the Quantocks. KAC staff and students will carry out the majority of the work with SCC concentrating on sites that might not be available during the KAC season. Around 300 of these cropmarks were plotted onto GIS in 1999 and the first fieldwork season focussed upon two sites in the parish of Cothelstone. At Toulton (ST 190 307), both the aerial photographs and geophysical survey suggested that the enclosures were of a single phase but the excavations in June and July proved that this was not the case. The Toulton enclosures are rectangular and form three compartments on a rough north-east to south-west alignment. Four trenches were opened up in locations that could sample all three compartments, while geophysical surveys were carried out of the surrounding fields which produced evidence to suggest a pattern of shifting activity from the late Iron Age to 3rd/4th centuries AD. The southernmost compartment contained at least one Iron Age roundhouse which was surrounded by a shallow drip gully. The middle compartment was bounded by a 1.5m deep ditch, which contained pottery from the 1st/2nd centuries AD, but no interior features were found. The northernmost compartment dates to the 3rd/4th centuries on the basis of large quantities of pottery recovered from a pond-like feature that had been partially enclosed by the ditches. The geophysical surveys revealed that the last phase of enclosure extended at least 100m north and east of any crop marks revealed in the aerial photographs, suggesting a large field system. Taken together the evidence suggests that Toulton was the site of a farmstead throughout the later Iron Age and Roman period.

Further to the west, a complex of cropmark features were revealed in the air photographs on a low promontory to the north of Stoneage Barton Farm (ST 174 312). A magnetometer survey carried out in February revealed at least two phases of activity; one associated with sub-circular enclosures and the other of sub-rectangular shape. At least one of the phases of activity appeared to be Roman judging from substantial quantities of Roman pottery that lay on the field surface.

Excavations were carried out in June and July with the purpose of dating the various enclosure ditches and establishing their function. These revealed that the rectangular enclosures were indeed of

Roman date, and were probably dug in the 3rd or 4th centuries AD. One of these enclosure ditches had been re-used as a hearth, and substantial quantities of charcoal and burnt pottery were recovered from its fill.

An unexpected find was a post-Roman burial, see under Early Medieval below.

(Chris Webster)

Stocklinch Reservoir – Ilminster Water Pipeline, ST 3913 1707 to ST 3512 1495

Archaeological observations maintained during construction of a new water pipeline between Stocklinch Reservoir and Ilminster in Somerset during the summer of 2000, augmented data held by the county Sites and Monuments Record on two areas of archaeological potential, and recorded three groups of hitherto unknown archaeological deposits; principally, linear strip boundaries within the unenclosed medieval fields south of Stocklinch, and areas of redeposited rubble north of Whitelackington containing medieval and post-medieval materials.

(Michael Heaton)

MULTI PERIOD

Cheddon Fitzpaine, Nerrols Farm, ST 239 286

Small areas were excavated during a watching brief, by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services, following the excavation of the previous year.¹ Prehistoric features included late Bronze Age and Iron Age gullies and pits with an undated oval penannular gully. This was surrounded by a drainage gully and may be the remains of a stockpen. Shallow pit and posthole or stakehole groups may have represented the remnants of further prehistoric occupation. Further evidence was recorded of the Roman site at the northern end of the development dating to the 3rd-4th centuries and including a stone-lined well. One radiocarbon date from a small pit calibrates to span the 5th to middle 7th centuries AD but the feature could not be related to any others and may be simply evidence of some agricultural activity.

¹ Webster, C.J., 1999. 'Somerset Archaeology, 1999', *SANH* 143, 165–6

(Jens Samuel)

Stoke sub Hamdon, Brocks Mount, ST 473 174

An evaluation prior to development was undertaken in June 2000 by AC Archaeology and comprised the excavation of six trenches. Archaeological features were found in three trenches and comprised ditches or gullies in Trenches 4, 5, and 6, and a pit in Trench 2. Two ditches contained medieval pottery while the pit in Trench 2 contained prehistoric pottery likely to be of later Bronze Age or early Iron Age date. The results suggest that a low density of archaeological features exists on the site and that no significant extensive archaeological deposits are likely to be affected by the development.

(Peter Cox)

PREHISTORIC

Doulting, Abbey Quarry, ST 653 438

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken when an old quarry was extended to the north. Five circular pits between 1 and 2m in diameter have been recorded of which two have been excavated. Although the surfaces have been truncated by ploughing, both pits appear to be ritual features probably dating to the later Neolithic period as one pit contained probable

Grooved ware sherds. Finds included a polished concoidal flint knife and other flint tools and flakes, animal bone and deer antlers and large quantities of assorted stones, mostly non-local, including quartz blocks. A linear ditch feature was also sectioned several times along a length of around 50m without recovering any dating evidence. The remaining pits will be investigated at a later date when further sections of the ditch will also be excavated.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

East Cranmore, ST 6860 4328 (area)

An incoherent scatter of 13 unstratified flint flakes and debitage was recovered from topsoil during a watching brief of the initial phase of construction of a reservoir. The area under observation was approximately 180m in diameter, with its centre at the above NGR. The flints included two scrapers of probable Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

(L. & R. Adkins)

East Cranmore, ST 6870 4365 (area)

An incoherent scatter of 31 unstratified flint flakes and debitage was recovered from topsoil during a watching brief of the initial phase of construction of a reservoir. The area under observation was approximately 200 by 400m, with its centre at the above NGR. The flints included three scrapers and one point of probable Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

(L. & R. Adkins)

East Lyng, Baltmoor Wall, ST 340 292

Radiocarbon analysis has indicated that buried peat deposits lying adjacent to Baltmoor Wall, and examined by Cotswold Archaeological Trust, accumulated during the later Bronze Age. See also under Medieval.

(F. Vartuca)

Yeovil, Alvington Lane, Brympton, ST 5280 1607

An evaluation by Cotswold Archaeological Trust in October 2000 identified a number of archaeological features including ditches, gullies, and a posthole, all probably associated with a farmstead of the late Iron Age or early Romano-British period. In addition, radiocarbon analysis of a possible small penannular ditch dated this feature to the Bronze Age.

(M. Brett)

Yeovil, Alvington Lane, Brympton, ST 5280 1607

Archaeological monitoring and excavation was undertaken by AC Archaeology during the construction of a new office block located in the central portion of the site (c. 50 x 30m) in late December 2000. The area monitored was generally confined to the footprint of the building and failed to reveal archaeological deposits or cut features, with a small quantity of stray finds (worked flint and pottery including sherds of Roman and medieval date) the only evidence for activity identified. However, a possible hearth was recorded outside the main area to the east, although this feature remains undated.

(Sandi Clark)

ROMAN

Bawdrip, Church Farm, ST 3413 3963

See under medieval.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Cheddar, Kings of Wessex Community School, ST 457 531

An archaeological watching brief took place in May/June 2000 when postholes were cut for a fence edging the new cycle path which runs through the scheduled area to the south of the school. Small quantities of Romano-British pottery were found plus some post-medieval and modern finds. A deposit of silty clay might mark an old river course.

The buildings and grounds of Kings of Wessex school lie within an area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Plans to erect a new permanent classroom on the southern edge of the school prompted English Heritage and Somerset County Council to request that archaeological evaluation trenches should be opened within the footprint of the proposed new building. Because of the area's scheduled status, the trenches were only opened as far as the surface of the upper archaeological horizon and no further investigations were permitted.

Three trenches with a total length of 75m were cut in September 2000. These exposed a number of ditches and gullies, occupation spreads, pits and postholes. Finds recovered from the machining and surface cleaning were mostly of the Romano-British period but also included medieval, late-Saxon and, possibly, some Iron Age pottery. Metal detecting located three copper alloy coins of the 3rd and 4th centuries, lead waste and a musket ball.

The various orientations of the ditches and gullies suggest that several occupation phases were present, not all necessarily of the Roman period.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

East Cranmore, ST 6860 4328 (area)

A possible Roman potsherd was recovered from topsoil during a watching brief of the initial phase of construction of a reservoir. The sherd was too small for certain identification. The area under observation was approximately 180m in diameter, with its centre at the above NGR.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Greinton, Coate's Barn, ST 412 363

See report in this volume, p. 214.

(Peter Leach)

Ilchester, 6 West Street, ST 5206 2254

The excavation of foundations for a small extension revealed a deep area of infill, the limits of which were beyond the limits of the trench. The deposit consisted of dark loam and rubble, and was at least 2m deep and contained a mixture of Romano-British and medieval pottery. It would appear to be the infill of the defensive ditches on this side of the Roman town.

(Alan Graham)

Shepton Mallet, Field Farm, ST 623 430

Continuing development of this large residential greenfield site on the edge of Shepton Mallet has involved a further watching brief, including an area originally investigated by excavation by the University of Birmingham in July 1996.¹ Further sections of the prehistoric, rock-cut enclosure ditch found then were exposed and recorded, along with one or two other possible contemporary features. Apart from a few flints, other material from surface collection and occasional boundary ditches was primarily of post-medieval date.

¹ Webster, C.J., and Croft R.A. (eds.), 1997. 'Somerset Archaeology 1996', *SANH* 140, 146.

(Peter Leach)

Shepton Mallet, Mendip Business Park (Framptons), ST 632 247

A watching brief monitored the excavation of pad foundation pits for a warehouse development within the Business Park, and overlying part of the Romano-British settlement site at Fosse Lane. This area was the subject of an evaluation by the University of Birmingham in 1992, which revealed sparsely surviving remains near the eastern perimeter of the settlement.¹ The excavation of 42 pits was monitored and occasional shallow archaeological features or surface deposits sealing the Lias bedrock were observed, although in the majority of pits seen such horizons had already been heavily disturbed or truncated during initial development of the Mendip Business Park in 1990. Recording was further hampered by the depth of dumped overburden, up to 1m thick in places, and a high water-table, both of which restricted access to the excavations.

¹ Webster, C. J., and Croft, R. A. (eds.), 1993. 'Somerset Archaeology, 1992', *SANH* 136, 170-1.

(Peter Leach)

Wells, Becket Place, ST 547 454

An evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken in a garden plot at the rear of 7 Priory Road, lying formerly within the precinct of St John's Priory, Wells. Two stone-packed postholes and a shallow gully cutting the underlying natural river gravels were associated with a small quantity of Romano-British pottery, and suggest the possibility of contemporary settlement remains surviving in this locality. A more deeply cut ditch containing some animal bone and one sherd of medieval pottery may have been part of an enclosure boundary within the later Priory precinct. Elsewhere, there were extensive disturbances of late 19th-century date, some garden features, and a substantial accumulation of garden soil.

(Peter Leach)

EARLY MEDIEVAL

Bishop's Lydeard, Stoneage Barton, ST 174 312

During the excavation of a sub-circular enclosure as part of the South East Quantock Archaeological Survey (see above) a single grave-shaped feature was located. The orientation and presence of stone lining suggested that it might form part of a sub-Roman cemetery. Poor weather meant that this was discovered right at the end of the excavation season and it was reburied without further recording.

The closest parallels to this form of burial, known from only a handful of sites in south west England and central Wales, date to the early medieval period and in view of the rarity of evidence of this period it was decided that Chris Webster and Richard Brunning should carry out further excavations with the intention of uncovering the burials. Local volunteers were recruited and despite some extremely wet weather and the 'fuel-crisis' a successful training excavation was run. Further Roman and Bronze Age material was recovered from the oval enclosure ditch and the area of the burials uncovered. The grave recorded by King Alfred's College was seen to be one of a pair in the centre of a square enclosure, another enclosure lay to the north with a single grave, and the corner of a third enclosure was recorded to the south. A small pit, not surrounded by an enclosure, may have been an infant's grave and examination of the earlier excavation records suggests that a feature seen to the north may have been an unenclosed adult grave. The square enclosures were clearly later than the large oval enclosure, which would probably not have been visible when they were constructed.

The single enclosed grave was excavated; all trace of bone had been destroyed by the acid soil but a stain suggested that the grave had been lined with planks, held in place by stones. The

original burial was also excavated and here small quantities of bone were preserved but only where fallen packing stones had covered them. The bones have been identified as probably female and a calibrated radiocarbon date indicates that she died in the 7th century, probably around 650 AD.

(Chris Webster)

MEDIEVAL

Bawdrip, Church Farm, ST 341 396

A series of evaluation trenches within Church Farm, in the centre of the village of Bawdrip, recorded settlement evidence from the Romano-British, Late-Saxon and early-Norman periods including possible structural evidence in the form of beam slots and postholes. Evidence for medieval occupation was also recorded and what is assumed to be the original northern boundary of the parish churchyard, now within the confines of Church Farm, was also investigated with a suggested dating of the boundary ditch to the 11th/12th century. See also p. 213.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Batcombe, Spargrove Moat, ST 671 397

An evaluation by trial trenching and augering was undertaken of the east arm of the moat at Spargrove Manor (Scheduled Ancient Monument: Somerset 438). At its southern extremity, up to 2m of silts and other deposits were recorded, the majority semi or wholly waterlogged, adjacent to an 18th-century grotto. At the north end, adjacent to the existing crossing, the sequence commenced with the remains of a jointed oak timber base plate for the earliest bridge, subsequently dated by dendrochronology to 1289/90. This was succeeded by a later medieval causeway that incorporated timbers from the upper superstructure of the first bridge. Another stone bridge may have succeeded the causeway early in the 17th century, before the existing stone bridge and associated landscaping of the moat took place sometime during the 18th century.

Many of the lower moat deposits were waterlogged, and environmental sampling and assessment was undertaken as part of the evaluation, co-ordinated by Vanessa Straker, University of Bristol. This provided the dendrochronology dates (courtesy of the AM Laboratory, English Heritage), as well as assessments of the plant macrofossils, pollen and molluscan content of the deposits. The results will inform a programme of partial clearance and rewatering of the moat to be undertaken in 2001, when further recording will take place.

(Peter Leach)

Blackford, Hill House, ST 4120 4781

Two trenches were excavated in a plot in Blackford to the south-east of the Scheduled moated site. Trench 1 was excavated parallel to the High Street frontage and located one truncated medieval feature which appeared to be a rubbish pit which extended beyond the evaluation. The second trench was excavated towards the rear of the plot and revealed two drains (the earliest appeared to be 19th century) together with evidence of modern dumping and ground raising.

(R.A. Broomhead)

Blackford, Manor Farm, ST 6550 2520

A watching brief was conducted by AC Archaeology between June and August 2000 during ground works for various improvements to the property. This comprised the monitoring of the machine excavation of three trenches. Trench 1, to the rear of the property, revealed considerable disturbance and intrusion from the demolition of a Georgian barn. A possible wall footing of

unknown date consisting of limestone blocks was recorded on a north-south alignment. Trench 2, respecting the western boundary, revealed a possible occupation horizon beneath demolition debris. More recent material included animal bone with butchering marks. The third trench also revealed a possible occupation horizon for which no dating evidence was found.

(Sandi Clark)

Bradford-on-Tone Bridge, ST 1719 2305

Following traffic damage in July 2000, a section of the north-west bridge parapet collapsed at the junction of the causeway and the narrower bridge itself. In the revealed section, an old road surface was visible comprising stone cobbling at a depth of 0.4m below the present road. The cobbles had been set onto clayey earth, which lay directly above the mortared rubble core of the causeway. The date of this surface is unknown.

(Alan Graham)

Brent Knoll, St Michael's House, South Brent, ST 334 507

Evidence recovered from five small archaeological evaluation trenches in a paddock south of St Michael's House, South Brent, recorded settlement evidence from the 10th century through to the 12th–14th century plus a series of occupation spreads which contained large quantities of 10th–14th century coarseware pottery fragments. There were also a few residual middle to late Iron Age and Romano-British pottery sherds.

Archaeological features included ditches, gullies, postholes and pits. The stratigraphy of the site was complicated and many features, including two substantial ditches, contained no dateable finds. Two of these undated contexts were selected for radiocarbon assessments, which provided the following results: cal AD 692–942 and cal AD 778–981 (at 2 sigma).

Both of these dates demonstrate the complexity of the archaeology on this site, which is situated just south of the parish church and adjacent to the alluvial moors. As well as residual Iron Age and Roman pottery which suggests occupation of those periods on the site, the radiocarbon dates, when taken in conjunction with the other finds, appear to indicate continuous occupation throughout the Saxon period, possibly from the 7th or 8th century, continuing at least into the 13th century. Because of this, the possibility of sub-Roman or pre-Saxon occupation on this site might also be considered to be a distinct possibility.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

East Lyng, Baltmoor Wall, ST 340 292

A watching brief by Cotswold Archaeological Trust, commenced in 1999 during strengthening works, continued in September 2000. Previously, sections of the north-east face of the wall (repaired and encased in masonry in 1883) were exposed and recorded. No features of archaeological significance were identified during the removal of old badger setts in 1999 and 2000. Work continues.

(F. Vartuca)

Fiddington, Manor Farm, ST 217 406

A watching brief was maintained by Wessex Archaeology on the construction of three houses following an evaluation in 1999. This located only one medieval feature, a ditch at the W similar to those identified in the evaluation.

(R.J.C. Smith)

Glastonbury, Archers Way, New Glastonbury Library, ST 5005 3907

An archaeological watching brief undertaken in October/November 1999 when foundations for the new library were cut through the Archers Way car park recorded an undated east–west

ditch running through the south end of the site at a different orientation to known field boundaries. This feature contained many fragments of fired clay and some animal bone. Because of the potential importance of this feature, Somerset County Council agreed to fund a radiocarbon assessment of a fragment of animal bone recovered from near to the base of the ditch. The bone produced a date of cal AD 684-956 (at 2 sigma).

The early date places this feature securely in an early medieval context and probably relates to other features within the town which are suspected of being part of a settlement plan which preceded the planned 12th century and medieval street system evident today. It is hoped that a further radiocarbon assessment might be taken at a later date to provide confirmation of the above date. A more detailed report is forthcoming.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, Glastonbury Abbey, ST 501 388

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken between January and March 2000 when approximately 700m of new electric cable trenches were excavated within the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey. Although the trenches were only around 0.5m wide and 0.5m deep, many archaeological features and deposits including destruction spreads, walls, floors, culverts and old excavation trenches were recorded. The cable trenches passed through areas where parchmarks of walls, structures and spreads had been recorded by the authors in the drought of 1986 and the features or deposits recorded in the cable trenches tended to confirm that the 1986 parchmarks did indeed reflect buried archaeological features or spreads of destruction debris. Some of the more significant discoveries are listed.

- 1 A separate building due east of the Edgar Chapel at the east end of the abbey church was recorded. This structure shares the same alignment and has a similar width to the Edgar Chapel and extends into the grounds of Abbey House. Because of its orientation and situation it is assumed to be an unrecorded chapel which appears to have been robbed in the 16th or 17th century.
- 2 Floors and stratigraphy survive intact below the north cloister walk, the contexts probably dating to the 12th–13th century. The foundations of the west cloister wall were also revealed.
- 3 Old excavation trenches were recorded in a number of areas. Many of these are fairly narrow features only c. 1m wide and although there have been many excavations north and south of the abbey church it would appear that more areas adjacent to the church remain undisturbed than had previously been thought.
- 4 South and west of the Abbot's Kitchen the trenches revealed that archaeological walls, floors, culverts and destruction spreads survive intact immediately below the surface. Most of these areas have not been previously investigated.
- 5 North of the abbey church, in an area where the parchmark survey had indicated a large building and rubble spreads, the trenches exposed medieval and post-medieval walls and large clay and mortar spreads, presumably associated with post-Dissolution destruction.
- 6 West of the St Dunstan chapel (west of the Lady Chapel), despite extensive early 20th-century excavations, large areas appear to remain largely undisturbed with contexts containing 12th–13th-century pottery sherds.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, Glastonbury Abbey, ST 501 388

A permanently boggy area of ground situated east of the south-east corner of the cloister and south of the chapter house prompted the Trustees of Glastonbury Abbey to request an archaeological investigation of the area to determine the problem.

A small 4 x 1m trench was opened over the boggy area to reveal an open 20th-century drainage pipe within a possible early excavation trench. Other features included a substantial wall footing,

possibly the north wall of the dormitory, and a stone well or water tank. Most of these features had been depicted on a 1910 excavation plan by Bligh Bond but without any text or explanation.
(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, Northload Hall, Northload Street, ST 4975 3915

An archaeological evaluation to the rear of Northload Hall recovered sherds of medieval pottery within the disturbed natural clay suggest that this site had been occupied since at least the 13th century.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Hinton St. George, St. George's Church, ST 4185 1270

See report in this volume, p. 219.

(Alan Graham)

Ilchester, 6 West Street, ST 5206 2254

See under Roman.

(Alan Graham)

Luccombe, Ley Hill, SS 892 450

Following the excavations in 1999¹ it was noticed that deer were causing further damage to building 2, particularly the rear bank. In 2000 therefore a 17 x 3m trench was cut from the top of the bank across the building and the yard; it was set 0.5m south of and parallel to the 1999 excavation. It was hoped that this second trench would add to and help explain the previous year's findings – the stratigraphy then was so thin that interpretation had been difficult.

At least two phases of build were found; the first was represented by a remnant earth bank (the front wall, probably cob), and a rammed earth floor. A rubble stone transverse wall was set on the floor and curved round to form a second phase rear wall. Two small extensions were opened up on the south side and these revealed a wall, probably the original end wall of the building. The yard surface was similar to that of the 1999 excavations, hard-packed rubble stone with three postholes and nine stakeholes, a further five postholes were found across the site. A good deal of pot was again found with a large base, half a bowl and the lip and part rim of a jug. Several flints were also found, a worn black pebble possibly used for burnishing and a small but complete whetstone. Thanks are again due to our team of volunteer diggers.

¹ Webster, C.J. (ed.), 1999. 'Somerset Archaeology, 1999', *SANH* 143, 172–3

(Isabel Richardson and Nancy Grace)

Marston Magna moat, ST 594 222

Geophysical survey, comprising twin-probe resistance survey and fluxgate gradiometry, was carried out on behalf of Somerset County Council. Most of the anomalies recorded by the resistance survey coincide with earthworks or topographic features. However, the results tentatively suggest that building remains extend along the outer northern bank of the moat.

The gradiometer survey recorded a few responses of potential archaeological interest: ditch lengths, pits and possible hearths or burnt features. These also suggest a core of activity north of the moat. A full report has been lodged with the Somerset Sites and Monuments Record.

(Dan Shiel)

Meare, St Mary's Road, ST 4487 4160

An evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken within a garden plot at the western end of the village, adjacent to Oxenpill. One shallow linear gully containing a few sherds of 12th–13th-

century pottery had survived *in situ*, cut into the underlying natural weathered Lias. Elsewhere, further residual material of similar date was recovered from extensive disturbances and structural deposits of later 19th and 20th-century date, relating primarily to the former use of this area as a farmyard.

(Peter Leach)

Middlezoy, Perhams Cottage, ST 3768 3272

An evaluation by Exeter Archaeology located substantial boundary ditches containing late Saxon pottery but the area appears to have been cultivated subsequently.

(Chris Webster)

Montacute, St Michaels Hill, ST 493 170

St Michael's hill and its castle were surveyed by English Heritage in April 2000 at the request of the National Trust. The motte stands 21.5m high with precipitously steep sides. The south-east has been disturbed by burrowing animals and the construction of a platform, paths and ramps which probably relate to the ornamental use of the site in the 18th century. The top measures 52 x 26m. There is no sign of a perimeter bank or wall. The tower, dated to 1760, stands on a slight mound, which may be the remains of the chapel. Around the western side of the motte is a strong ditch (2.5m deep) and rampart (3.5m high). Below this is a broad terrace which runs about 3/4 of the way around the site, the bailey occupying the remaining segment. The terrace is 20–30m wide with a low bank on its outer lip. Below the terrace the slopes fall away steeply.

The bailey lies to the south-east on a steep slope and contains a complex sequence of narrow terraces. A hollow may mark the site of a robbed gatehouse. A slight bank runs around the entire site, which is probably a later boundary bank. Several linear features representing former road lines, lynchets etc are visible to the S.

(Martin Fletcher)

North Curry, Church of St Peter and St Paul, ST 3190 2555

A narrow trench between the west wall of the south aisle and the existing western boundary wall of the graveyard revealed parts of numerous graves, all probably predating the marked graves in this area which date to the 18th and 19th century. The exposed graves were at depths of between 1m and 1.6m and were not found closer than 5m to the present boundary wall though the 19th-century graves lay up to it. Clearly the graves respected an earlier boundary and the trench revealed this to be a ditch, 2.5m wide and 1.5m deep, with an internal bank up to which the graves had extended. No evidence of the date of the ditch was found, but there was no reason why it could not have been medieval in its origins. A continuation of the trench across the Glebe Field to the west revealed a second ditch, about 12m west of the churchyard wall. This lay along a break in the slope, but there was no evidence of its date. It may have been medieval in its origins. A full descriptive report has been deposited in the Somerset Record Office.

(Alan Graham)

Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Castle Primary School, ST 4752 1760

An archaeological watching brief undertaken by Stuart Prior during excavations of footings for a school extension recovered a sherd of 12th–14th century pottery and recorded the position of two medieval culverts or drains and a wooden drain or water pipe.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Street, Street Causeway, ST 4860 3738

Maintenance work and the installation of new service pipes and equipment adjacent to a Transco building at the southern end of the medieval Street causeway exposed a section through old

roads including the possible surface of the medieval structure. A partial profile of the existing causeway was recorded in conjunction with the surface of the adjacent alluvial moors.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Taunton, St Margaret's Almshouses, ST 2384 2481

In June 2000 Somerset County Council Archaeology undertook archaeological excavations at St Margaret's Almshouse, Taunton on behalf of Somerset Building Preservation Trust and West Somerset Housing Association. The work was carried out by SCC staff and students from Somerset College of Arts and Technology and Richard Huish College. Evidence of 12th-century occupation was recorded associated with the use of the site as a leper hospital from c. 1174 founded by the Bishop of Winchester. A large cobbled foundation was investigated probably belonging to a chapel constructed in the mid 12th century. The standing building was investigated and shown to date from c. 1510 when the site was redeveloped under Abbot Bere of Glastonbury. Also excavated were the demolished remains of a Victorian building which had served as a butchers and cycle shop.

(Steven Membery)

Wedmore, Combe Batch, ST 4388 4775

Work on the cottage and garden at the top of Combe Batch, on the north side of the Wells road at its junction with Combe Lane, has exposed two extremely large blocks of Wedmore stone, both approximately 0.3m thick and lying horizontally. One slab was lying, apparently loose, in the garden, where it was found. The other was discovered immediately under the extension, probably post-1914 in date, at the back of the east end of the cottage; it is unclear whether this second huge stone was used as a foundation because it was there, or was moved into position, which would have been a considerable undertaking.

The two stones would seem to be examples of the very large stones said to have been unearthed when the houses on the Combe Batch Rise estate, immediately north of the cottage, were being built in the late 1960s.¹ The Combe Batch Rise stones were reported as being like a great wall or steps, which suggests that they appeared to be deliberately laid, to the north of the two present stones; but they were reburied before they were reported or seen by any archaeologist, so that any consideration of them has hitherto been dependent on hearsay. Most of the people who actually saw the stones in the 1960s are now dead.

The blocks are of Wedmore stone,² the nearest outcrop being about 400m away, at the top of Mutton Lane, opposite the site. Getting them to the site would involve shifting them downhill, steeply. Wedmore stone occurs in shallow horizontal layers; and these slabs would represent something like a complete layer in thickness; normally the layers are quarried to be broken up into stones of more usual size for building. Only part of the stone still under the cottage extension is visible, but it would seem to be much the same size and thickness as the one lying loose in the garden. This is approximately 1.37 x 1 x 0.3m thick, and roughly dressed to a straight edge on two sides.

The two stones are not now in any ancient constructional context; one is lying loose, and the other underlies a later extension of the cottage, which was a wayside cottage constructed on the roadside verge after 1791 and before 1805.³ We are thus no nearer identifying their age or purpose; except that in view of their massive size and thickness it now seems very unlikely that they were anything to do with the medieval dovecot implied by the fieldname Culvercroft or Culverhays, the old name of the field where the Combe Batch Rise estate was built. It also seems unlikely that they were cut solely for building work on a wayside cottage c. 1791–1803. This therefore leaves the possibility that they might be considerably older, and perhaps even associated with the Roman potsherds that have been found on the site from time to time.

On the eastern, uphill side of the cottage is a well, now restored and in the entrance hall inside the extended cottage. It was formerly in the open on the roadside verge just outside the cottage, where it was available for communal use.⁴ This public well was in use in living memory. The late Fred Cook recalled that twelve nearby households used to use it in his father's time, around 1900. It is 80 feet (24.4m) deep. The water is very pure and flows strongly. It was never known to run dry. The size and depth of this well, combined with its hilltop situation, suggest it is of considerable age; the bottom might merit archaeological investigation.

¹ Dennison, E., 1988. 'Somerset Archaeology, 1988', *SANH* 132, 213.

² Dr R. Bradshaw, University of Bristol Department of Geology, retired, kindly examined the stones.

³ SRO: DD/THG box 8.

⁴ Hudson, H., 1993. *Wedmore Past*, 26, showing the well outside the cottage.

(Hazel Hudson and Frances Neale)

Wells, 52–54 High Street, ST 548 456

Three evaluation trenches were excavated in December 2000 prior to redevelopment of the back gardens of numbers 52 and 54 High Street, formerly occupied by 18th and 19th-century buildings and modern store rooms. No medieval archaeological features were recorded but medieval pottery sherds were recovered from a buried cultivated soil or subsoil deposit, the sherds ranging in date from the 12th through to the 17th century.

All of the medieval finds were recovered from the northern half of the development area, none from the southern half. This is probably due to significant encroachment of properties into the area of the medieval High Street and a fuller report will provide more details of this occurrence.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

West Camel, Church Path, ST 580 245

An evaluation, in advance of a proposed development was undertaken by AC Archaeology in March 2000, on land behind the village church. Two machine-dug trenches were excavated representing a 10% sample of the site. One of the trenches revealed a large ditch from which a single sherd of early medieval pottery was recovered. An undated gully and stakehole lay nearby. Within the other trench a sub-circular pit partially truncated a large shallow ditch. Both produced single sherds of pottery, at least one of which is likely to date to the 12th or 13th century. The small quantity of finds does not suggest a high level of archaeological activity in the immediate area.

(Phil McMahon)

Westhay, Meare, ST 4375 4125

A watching brief undertaken during excavation of foundation trenches for a new building in the hamlet of Westhay recovered pottery sherds dating from the medieval period through to the present day suggesting settlement on the site from at least the 12th century. A late-medieval pit contained a 16th–17th century jug lacking only its handle.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Whatley, Pool Farm, ST 730 479

Archaeological excavations were undertaken by the Avon Archaeological Unit in advance of the Whatley Quarry extension located to the west of the present quarry in the Parish of Mells, Somerset. The project was undertaken to locate and record archaeological deposits preserved to the east of Finger Farm (ST 7121 4765), where the existence of a number of former farms

and cottages are recorded on early estate maps held in the Horner Archive of Mells and on the Tithe map of 1836. The earliest known map is dated 1682 and shows a number of farms and cottages, situated within the footprint of the quarry development. Initially the site of Poole House Farm (ST 7162 4751) was evaluated by trial excavation. This was followed by a more intensive study of the site of a farmstead in the field known as 'East Close' (ST 7171 4739), to the north of Poole House Farm.

The precise position of Poole House Farm was located by an evaluation trench opened to the south of a derelict barn. The trench revealed building debris and a cobbled access road into the farmyard. In accordance with evaluation procedure the topsoil only was stripped and the most recent archaeological deposits were revealed and recorded, no extensive excavation took place.

The area of the suggested buildings in East Close was first evaluated by stripping an area of 30 x 40m and cleaning six randomly selected 5m square evaluation trenches. On the basis of positive results from this evaluation the study area was extended to the west by a further 20 x 20m and the whole area subsequently investigated in detail. Other work involved a detailed topographical survey of earthworks located between the two former farm sites.

The excavation stage located and recorded the two buildings shown in East Close on the 1682 survey. These consisted of a substantial farmhouse and attached byre or barn, both of which appear to have been built around 1600. Evidence in the form of postholes and cut features elsewhere on the site indicated that these buildings were laid out after a period of abandonment following an earlier phase of medieval settlement on the site. Unfortunately the medieval features were limited and the precise nature of this earlier occupation was unclear.

The two 16th to 17th-century buildings located in East Close were investigated in detail with an associated third structure also recorded on the southern edge of the excavation. The main buildings consisted of narrow rectangular structures probably originally formed using a mixture of stone, cob and timber. The largest (Building 2) measured 6 x 20m and was divided into two main bays, with a central cross passage. This building also contained a developed hearth and oven arrangement at its western end. The smaller building measured 6 x 13m and appeared to have been a simpler structure of one or two bays, possibly converted from a dwelling into a stock building early in its history. The collection of ceramics and other finds date the origin of both buildings to the late 16th century, when they were surrounded by yards and associated agricultural features. The collection of very standard and rather restricted ceramics and domestic objects indicate that the farmstead was of fairly low status. Overall the archaeological evidence indicates that the domestic use of the buildings ceased in the early 18th century, although they may have continued to be used as agricultural/store buildings for some time afterwards as both appear as structures on the Tithe map of 1836.

The fieldwork in East Close has recovered evidence of a previously unknown medieval settlement and has identified and recorded a rare example of a low status rural farmstead including domestic and agricultural buildings dating to the 16th and 17th centuries.

(Jane Lawes)

Wookey, Court Farm, ST 518 456

Permission was obtained for two trenches to be cut across the suspected course of the moat to the east of Court Farm, Wookey, the location of the medieval palace of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, a scheduled Ancient Monument (AM 27961). Excavation and recording was undertaken by Strode College Archaeological Society, under the direction of the author. Both trenches revealed the edges of a broad ditch, approximately 9m wide and some 2m deep (established by auger). A gravel track or platform was located along the inside edge of the ditch, probably created at the time of the moat excavation. Only the upper edge and deposits within the top of the moat were excavated (in accordance with the SAM consent), the latter accumulating almost exclusively during the later 19th and 20th centuries. Augering established not only the depth of

the moat, but also the presence of waterlogged silts containing some organic remains. No good evidence to date the moat was recovered, although a handful of medieval tile and pottery sherds and a 15th-century coin were recovered from secondary contexts. A few sherds of Roman pottery also suggest the possibility of a settlement of that period in the locality. The course and nature of the palace moat was established by this investigation and the information gained will contribute to conservation management and landscaping proposals for the grounds of Court Farm and the Palace site. The results conform closely with those obtained through a geophysical survey of the site by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory in 1998 (AML Report 51/98).

(Peter Leach)

POST-MEDIEVAL

Ashcott, 2–6 High Street, ST 4358 3705

An archaeological watching brief undertaken by Keith Faxon during the construction of new houses within an empty plot in the centre of Ashcott recovered post-medieval pottery and artefacts. Although there used to be a smithy on the site the new construction works did not disturb the road frontage where the earlier buildings were situated.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Bath, 21–22 High Street, ST 7509 6488

Investigative inspection of the fabric of 21–22 High Street in Bath, augmented by background historic assessment and consultation with Bath Archaeological Trust, indicates that the present structure is the amalgam of at least three separate building plans and that, in addition to evidence of change throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, it encompasses interpretable *in situ* timber framing of late medieval date. The medieval material comprises at least one storey of a jettied wattle-and-daub wall panel and two collar and tie-beam roof trusses of 16th-century form.

The remains represent a substantial house in a prime commercial setting in Bath. It was almost certainly the house and business premises of a successful burgess. The land on which it stands was part of a large freehold property held by Sir James Husee in 1354. By 1446 it was part of the extensive regional landholdings of William Blount (probably by inheritance from the Husees). A grant of that year of a lease to John Fayrechild is at a rent of 4s a year for the first five years, rising to 8s for the rest of the term. Such a relief in the first years is sometimes given for building a house on the plot; just possibly that could be the existing timber frame, which *could* certainly date from that time. This is far from certain, however. The property was sold to William Button in 1530.

To the authors' knowledge, the timber frame is the only example identified so far within the historic core of Bath and is, therefore, of considerable archaeological and historic significance at local and national level in as much as it relates to the architectural development of a World Heritage Site and Britain's principal 18th-century spa resort.

(Michael Heaton and Peter Davenport)

Chard, Nimmer Mill, ST 3222 1085

The earliest specific reference to Nimmer Mill appears to be in a lease of 1683¹ and again in 1700 between a miller John Hicks and his landlord John Henly, though it is highly likely that the building, or at least a building, existed for at least a generation prior to that date. The extent of the structure, referred to then as a 'watergrist' and tucking mill, is not recorded, but by the time of the Tithe Commutation survey of 1842 the building was of an elongated form compatible in proportion to the main block of the present structure. At that time, it was owned by a Susannah Philips of Chard, lace manufacturer, whilst twelve years earlier a William Wellington, also of Chard High Street and similarly engaged in the fine cloths trade, had owned it.

The 1884 1st edn. OS map shows the building spanning the mill stream and extending to the River Isle, as it does today, with a single outshot on its west side over the mill stream. It was annotated at that time as a toothbrush factory. By the time of the 1902 OS map, an outshot on the east side had been added, partially overlapping the mill race exit, and was making toilet brushes. The orchard that extended southwards along the lane was now partially occupied by dwellings. By the 1930 edition the western outshot had been extended southwards to its present extent, and the southern end of the east side abutted by a separate building corresponding in size and form to the brick-built outshot presently lying against the east side. The existing structure displays much evidence of extension and alteration around a late 16th-century dwelling. The breast-shot wheel and much of the transfer mechanisms survive, all in iron/steel, together with a standby/replacement steam engine housed externally. However there is no evidence for hurstings sufficient to support millstones, so it is unlikely that this structure ever processed grain.

¹ SRO DD/TOR

(Michael Heaton)

East Cranmore, ST 6860 4328

Two potsherds were recovered from topsoil during a watching brief of the initial phase of construction of a reservoir. The area under observation was approximately 180m in diameter, with its centre at the above NGR.

(L. & R. Adkins)

East Cranmore, ST 6870 4365

An incoherent scatter of eleven potsherds, two clay pipe stem fragments and a possible gun flint were recovered from topsoil during a watching brief of the initial phase of construction of a reservoir. The area under observation was approximately 200 x 400m, with its centre at the above NGR.

(L. & R. Adkins)

Frome, 16–17 Stony Street, ST 7050 8015

Archaeological recording of the structure and fabric of 16–17 Stony Street in Frome, particularly of a rear stair turret, commissioned by the Frome Townscape Heritage Initiative, suggests that the building is likely to be considerably older than the 17th-century date ascribed on the basis of dated rainwater goods, and that the external stair turret and open-well newel stair may not have been the earliest form of this structure on the site.

Of particular interest is a broad inserted opening in the rear wall over the mid 19th-century through-passage, now occupied by a shallow timber bay. Its position suggests it may have been formerly occupied by a newel stair, itself an insertion into an earlier building, later repositioned to the side of the through-passage within the existing masonry turret.

(Michael Heaton)

Nunney, All Saints' Church, ST 7375 4570

Archaeological observations maintained during rebuilding and refurbishment works at All Saints' Church at Nunney in Somerset, during the summer of 1999, recorded apparently undisturbed soil horizons beneath the floor of the north aisle, and fragmentary painted textual designs on the north wall of the north aisle, probably of 18th-century date. Above the dado, removal of surface limewash revealed, between the two windows of the north aisle, fragmentary remains of a painted design applied in a predominantly greenish-blue pigment, over at least six previous limewash schemes that also sealed the blocked north door opening, over a coarse beige render.

The design appeared to comprise one side (east) and the base of an arching floral border, ruled

about the base, of simple daisy-like flowers enclosing illegible fragments of text in an apparently Gothic style, beneath a broad grey cornice at 2.6m above floor level, coincident with the redundant roof corbels. Whilst the cornice extended across the full width between the two windows, if very pale towards the west end, the floral border extended for a maximum of 1.59m from the inner reveal of the easternmost window, to a vertical band of reeding apparently coincident with the reveal of the blocked north door. The text elements were too fragmentary to be legible.

The designs revealed are too fragmentary to allow of anything but the most broad of analyses: The widespread addition of aisles to churches during the 14th century¹ suggests a 14th-century *terminus post quem* for the design, whilst the use of greenish blue pigments also supports a later rather than earlier date. In terms of composition, furthermore, the design appears to be of a floral border partially overlapping, and therefore perhaps not contemporaneous with, ruled geometric components, enclosing texts. As a textual design it is likely to be 17th century or later, whilst the apparently gothic script and light-hearted floral border suggests an 18th or early 19th-century date.

The small length of reeding, to the right of the main design, is clearly associated with the now-blocked door and may not be part of the floral design, whilst similarly there is no necessary connection between the main design and the cornice band, the latter apparently sealed beneath the 18th-century wall monument. Both the reeding and the cornice are executed in a grey pigment distinguishable from the greenish blue of the main design. The relationship of the main design to the blocked door is less easily established, as there is no overlap between them. However, that the design does not extend over the blocked door does not necessarily imply that it must be the earlier of the two; the door blocking is slightly proud of the wall face and any design on it would be more susceptible to erosion than elements elsewhere on the elevation. However, the position of the surviving design between the door and the flanking window would lend itself to a symmetrical composition of a panel either side of the door, confronting the congregation as they left through the north door. In summary, an 18th-century date is the most likely for origination of the design, based on evidence available, and that it was probably part of a decorative scheme covering the central portion of the north wall either side of the door.

¹ Parsons, D., 1988. *Churches and Chapels: Investigating Places of Worship*, CBA.

(Michael Heaton)

Shepton Mallet, Lower Silk Mill, Darshill, ST 6062 4395

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Keith Faxon when the remains of an 18th–19th-century silk mill building and the contemporary mill master's house were converted into compartments. The buildings were sub-divided by the excavation of new foundation trenches within the structure; five new houses were constructed to the rear of the old mill. Some 18th–19th century stone features were recorded within the foundation trenches inside the building whilst the works to the rear only exposed made-up ground and natural deposits.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Taunton, 16 East Street, ST 229 245

An archaeological evaluation trench was excavated by Keith Faxon and Stuart Prior to the rear of 16 East Street in June 1999 in advance of the construction of a northern extension to the property. Medieval occupation from the 10th–11th century onwards was recorded, sealed by deep deposits of 18th and 19th-century date. The evaluation results allowed the developers to design footings shallow enough so that no disturbance would occur to medieval deposits or features and an archaeological watching brief carried out in August 2000 confirmed that the new foundation trench was not deep enough to penetrate into medieval deposits and only post-medieval layers were disturbed. The cellar of the property was also examined although no early features were seen, and two wells were recorded – both were assumed to be post-medieval in date.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Taunton, 18A–19 East Street, ST 2300 2450

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a watching brief at 18A–19 East Street in Taunton, during August 1999. The work was commissioned by the Maslen Brennan Henshaw Partnership who were redeveloping the property. The watching brief revealed the remains of a wattle and daub wall and of a stone-lined well. A separate building survey was undertaken to record the wall. From the regularity of the timbers and their relatively well-preserved nature it appears likely that they dated from the 16th or 17th century. The exposed wall contained evidence from several other phases, including one of lath and plaster and two phases of brickwork probably from the 19th and 20th century. The building would appear to have been a moderate-sized single-storey structure.

The well was cut into the natural red clay and was located within the back yard of 19 East Street. This location did not conform with the 1890 1st edn. 1:500 OS map, which shows a well in 18A East Street. The well shown on this map was not identified during the watching brief.

The site (especially the western edge) had been heavily truncated during the Victorian period by cellars. Behind the brick wall of one of these cellars was an earlier stone wall which has not been dated beyond its relationship with the cellars.

(Oxford Archaeological Unit)

Taunton, The Old Telephone Exchange, ST 2277 2468

A watching brief and limited excavation was carried out by Exeter Archaeology following ground reduction by the developer. Much of the site was severely truncated by this activity but it was clear that several medieval and post-medieval pits and post-medieval metalworking had been disturbed. The medieval pits were found towards the rear of the site and all but one were located in the one area that had not been truncated. All the features appear to represent rubbish pits and one contained a collection of cattle horn cores, which may indicate horn working.

The post-medieval pits appeared to have been for the extraction of clay for casting moulds and once used these were discarded in the pits. One pit contained evidence for a wooden construction within it. This comprised slots indicating two pieces of timber (0.3m wide x 0.2m thick) pegged to form a cross and packed around with stone. In each of the quadrants a shallow depression indicated that a post had been set on the base of the pit and again packed around with stones. These were substantial posts and appeared to have been oval in section rather than circular (c. 0.65 x 0.35m). The posts had been removed before the pit was backfilled with foundry debris including mould fragments. It then appears that the presumed post, which was supported by the cross-shaped base, was dug out. The backfill of this contained the only dating evidence, post-medieval Donyatt type wares.

(P.M. Stead)

INDUSTRIAL

Brean, Brean Down, ST 280 593

A small evaluation trench was opened on the south side of the main magazine of the Victorian battery to locate the position of the original retaining wall and to attempt to identify a low stone wall seen on early photographs. The retaining wall was recorded and appeared to have been removed as part of the Second World War alterations. The excavation confirmed that the low wall was not the entrance to an unknown magazine but failed to produce any other indication of its function.

This was followed by fabric stabilisation works which were accompanied by building recording. Detailed 'stone by stone' drawings of the internal and external elevations of the barracks, officers quarters and one of the magazines have been completed, together with an

exhaustive photographic record. Preliminary results augment the documentary-based histories of the site with evidence of major changes in material procurement and building methods not represented in documentary sources. Work will continue throughout 2001.

(Michael Heaton and Chris Webster)

Nettlecombe, Colton Pits, ST 052 350

A survey of an extensive area of iron ore extraction pits, locally known as Colton Pits, was carried out by the Exeter office of English Heritage at the request of the Exmoor National Park Authority. The pits are currently in commercially managed coniferous woodland. Current work suggests that the extraction pits could date from the medieval period, perhaps very early in this time period. The survey, combined with air photographic transcription, also recorded features concerned with the 19th and 20th-century working of the site. The site contains features which relate to some of the earliest and some of the latest iron ore mining operations on the Brendon Hills. A copy of the report and a plan of the area are available from the archive of English Heritage at the National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon.

(Hazel Riley)

Frome, Rook Lane Car Park, ST 7753 4793

Machine-excavated trenches, located across the northern areas of the Rook Lane car park in Frome, revealed substantial structural remains along the downslope margins of the site, principally of rubble construction, retaining cavernous excavations in excess of 4m deep. Shallow thicknesses of argillaceous soils and made-ground deposits survived between these structures, principally along the upslope (west) margins of the site, together with heavily burnt brickwork cavities. Compared with a measured profile across the site, these results suggest that the site has been extensively terraced. Whilst the structural remains in the south-east quarter of the site do, in all likelihood, relate to iron works established on the site in the early–mid 19th century, they appear to be limited in spatial and chronological extent and range.

(Michael Heaton and Bill Moffatt)

Stogursey, Priory Barn, ST 2045 4275

The Priory, from which Priory Farm and Barn take their names, was established in the early 12th century as an alien Priory of St Mary Lonlay in Normandy, i.e. it was administered from, and all moneys went to, the main house in Normandy. It was confiscated, in common with all alien establishments, in the 14th century, asset stripped and then formally dissolved in 1442. Its remaining assets passed to Eton College who sold it in 1921. The Priory buildings, only ever large enough to accommodate 2–3 monks plus lay brethren, are reputed to have been situated to the south of the church and comprised, in 1314, a hall, chamber, storeroom, kitchen, brewhouse, bakehouse and barn. By 1415 the complex was under one roof except, presumably, the barn known by 1599 as Priory House. This was still standing in 1775 but was demolished in 1810.

Previous archaeological work at the site has recorded monastic drains running from the church southwards under the barn,¹ whilst medieval pottery and other artefacts have been recovered from the immediate vicinity of the site. However, neither the extent or nature of the medieval priory are known, nor is the extent to which earlier fabric survives within the existing barn known.

Ostensibly a tithe barn, the north-facing windows, which appear original to the building, are superfluous for a barn of any sort and are certainly over-sized in this structure, lending it the proportions of a highland-zone cottage when viewed without the benefit of scale. There is no evidence of cart shelters over the entrances, nor of the storage bays within the interior that are typical of tithe barns. Similarly at odds with the characteristics of medieval or even 18th-century agricultural structures, is the shortened plan form. The proportions of medieval and pre-industrial

barns and other farm buildings are typically of 3:2; Priory Barn is closer to 3:1. The roof structure, though possibly a replacement, is of 19th-century design and it would seem most probably that this is the construction date for the entire building, constructed as a cart or engine shed after the demolition of the last of the genuine priory buildings in the early 19th century.

¹ Leighton, O.T., 1942. 'Excavations at Priory Farm, Stogursey, Somerset, May-Sept 1941'. *SANH* 88, 82-5

(Michael Heaton)

OTHER REPORTS

Bawdrip, 25 Church Road, ST 3405 3955

An archaeological evaluation trench was excavated by Bruce Eaton within the footprint of a proposed new residential building in a grass paddock west of the house at 25 Church Road, on the south-western edge of the village. Deposits consisted of mottled silty clays. No archaeological features were present and occasional pottery finds ranged from the medieval period through to the present day.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Bradford on Tone, Village Hall, ST 173 230

An extension of the Village Hall, adjacent to the south-west wall of the churchyard, involved the demolition of a 19th-century stone cottage and the excavation of foundation trenches upon its site. Disturbed deposits of natural terrace gravel sealed formations of the Mercian Mudstone. There was no evidence for occupation that pre-dated the late 18th century (or effectively the cottage), or for earlier churchyard burials on this site.

(Peter Leach)

Bruton, Mill Street, ST 680 346

A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of foundation and service trenches for a single-dwelling development in Mill Lane, at the west end of the High Street. Parts of two large disturbances (quarries?) of 19th-century date were encountered, cut into the natural sand, as well as a smaller pit containing some 18th-century material. The upper levels of the site were extensively disturbed, and there was no sign of any earlier occupation. This evidence may accord with the suggestion that the medieval town development did not extend as far as Mill Street.

(Peter Leach)

Castle Cary, Dimmer Landfill Site, ST 612 307

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Keith Faxon when a new access road into the southern extension to the Dimmer Landfill Site was excavated. The excavations only removed the turf and topsoil from the road line and did not cut deep enough to expose any archaeological deposits or features.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Castle Cary, Millbrook Gardens, ST 639 321

An evaluation was undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in November 2000 comprising the excavation and recording of two 20m trenches. Both contained evidence of successive dumping of building debris and industrial waste, with obvious tiplines. All the layers contained modern brick inclusions. Trench 1 contained a Victorian bottle pit and a modern brick wall foundation. No archaeological evidence was present in trench 2.

(Tracy Michaels)

Cheddar, Draycott Road, ST 460 529

A watching brief was maintained during groundworks along the route of a new water main during December 1999 and January 2000. No evidence was found of any archaeological deposits or features along the length of the trench monitored, and no pre-modern artefacts were recovered. However, the opportunities for observing archaeological deposits or finds were largely confined to the sides of the pipe trench itself and the excavated spoil; there was no stripped easement, and the area had already been extensively affected by modern disturbance.

(Stephen Leach)

Combswich, The Anchor Inn, ST 259 424

An evaluation by means of trial trenches was undertaken within the garden at the rear of the Anchor Inn. Only three shallow cut features were located beneath a considerable depth of silt and topsoil accumulation, mainly of 18th–20th-century origin.

Occasional sherds of prehistoric, Roman and medieval pottery were recovered from the lowest horizon of this overburden, which also sealed the cut features. Of these, one was a shallow ditch of suspected Romano-British date, the others a shallow posthole and a gully of medieval origin. There was little evidence here of the extensive Romano-British settlement remains previously located less than 200m to the east along the banks of the Parrett estuary.

(Peter Leach)

Great Elm, Church House, ST 7475 4930

An archaeological watching brief undertaken by Bruce Eaton during building works at Church House, Great Elm, immediately south of the parish church, recovered only 19th and 20th-century finds.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Highbridge, Isleport Business Park, ST 3275 4795

An evaluation on the site of a proposed development was carried out by AC Archaeology during March 2000. The site comprises a single land plot of *c.* 5ha and is positioned close to a number of previous archaeological discoveries, including finds of Romano-British and medieval date and a Romano-British building. Isleport Farm is believed to have late-medieval origins and the land surrounding the farm contains earthworks of probable medieval date. The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of eleven trenches. Largely negative results were recorded. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery and a sherd of 18th-century date were the only artefacts recovered, both present in topsoil contexts. It cannot be demonstrated conclusively that significant archaeological activity is absent from the proposed development area, but the general absence of deposits, coupled with the overall paucity of artefacts makes this assumption likely.

(Stephen Robinson)

Ilchester, St Andrew's Church, Northover, ST 5235 2315

Recording of the floor exposed following the removal of the pews for repair was carried out. The floor was mainly of lias slabs with some re-use of Doulling slabs from an earlier floor. The position of at least two vaults was recorded, but apart from these there appears to be little disturbance of the ground beneath the present floor. A descriptive account with drawing has been deposited with the County Record Office.

(Alan Graham)

Kilve, The Church of St Mary the Virgin, ST 1465 4390

Excavations to lower the ground level to the west of the tower revealed that the material banked up against the masonry was derived from the repair of the tower in the 1920s, being largely lime render stripped off at that time.

(Alan Graham)

Mark, Mark First School, ST 3604 4762

An archaeological watching brief undertaken by Keith Faxon during excavation of new footings for an extension to the school recorded no archaeological finds or features apart from a few post-medieval pottery sherds.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Martock, North Street, ST 4630 1975

An evaluation in the supposed area of the medieval hamlet of Limbury located only modern deposits and two abraded medieval sherds.

(Alan Graham)

Shapwick, Church Farm, ST 418 382

An evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken on a plot adjacent to Church Farm, Church Lane, formerly occupied by agricultural buildings. Residual finds of medieval ceramics and occasional Roman pottery were present within the overburden deposits and occasional post holes, ditches and other features of relatively recent date. There was also evidence for an earlier phase of post-medieval cultivation trenches. No direct evidence of medieval, or earlier phases of occupation was recovered.

(Peter Leach)

South Petherton, Church of St Peter and St Paul, ST 4355 1680

Shallow trenching in the north-east part of the graveyard revealed made ground, probably the top infill of graves, in all areas except close to the chancel wall, where natural clay was revealed beneath the topsoil.

(Alan Graham)

Taunton, 108–111 East Reach, ST 2352 2458

An archaeological watching brief undertaken by Keith Faxon and Bruce Eaton during excavations of new foundation trenches adjacent to the former Nurses Home on East Reach recorded only modern rubble and service trenches and natural clays.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Walton, The Old Parsonage, ST 4615 3628

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Keith Faxon during the construction works for new garages in a paddock to the south of The Old Parsonage, a 15th-century domestic house, and minor alterations to the ground adjacent to the building. This recorded wells immediately south and west of the house and minor earthworks and a small gully in the paddock. No medieval or other archaeological pottery or artefacts were recovered.

(C. & N. Hollinrake)

Wells, Priory Mills, ST 544 454

An archaeological field evaluation on the site of a proposed residential development at the former animal feeds factory was carried out by AC Archaeology during November 2000. The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches positioned in areas likely to be affected by the development. No evidence for archaeological deposits was identified in any trench and the only finds recovered are likely to date to the 19th century. These finds came from a made-up layer discovered beneath present day ground level and are thought to be associated with the construction of the nearby railway. General levelling of the site for this purpose, and more recently for the feed mill means that any evidence for archaeological activity which may have been present would have been destroyed.

(Stephen Robinson)

West Lydford, St Peter's Church, ST 5650 3188

During floor repairs and the relocation of the font to the north aisle, the subfloor void of the suspended timber floor in the middle of the north aisle was examined. No elements of the church that predated the present church (built 1844) were revealed.

(Alan Graham)

West Monkton, Church of St Augustine, ST 2630 2844.

During the clearance and repair of an existing stone culvert to the south-west of the church nothing of archaeological significance could be seen. The culvert itself appeared unlikely to be earlier than the 19th century.

(Alan Graham)

Wincanton, Southgate Street and Moor Lane, ST 7126 2822

A watching brief was carried out in December 2000 by AC Archaeology during the installation of two drainage trenches for a house. Monitoring of the ground works resulted in no archaeological features or finds being observed in either of the trenches. This was predominately due to the disturbance of soils by earlier building works.

(Sandi Clark)

Yeovil, East Coker Road, ST 548 144

A small evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeological Trust in December 2000 prior to the construction of St Margaret's Somerset Hospice. No features of archaeological significance were identified.

(A. Barber)