

BUILDING RECORDING IN 2007

SOMERSET VERNACULAR BUILDING RESEARCH GROUP

INTRODUCTION

The publication of the Group's tenth village survey – a study of the topography and vernacular buildings of Combe St Nicholas – is planned for later this year. Alongside the drafting of chapters for the forthcoming book, recording is well under way in Stogursey, which is the next village being studied. Details of some of the buildings visited are given below and interesting themes are already emerging. Examples are the survival of buildings conforming to the medieval burghage plots fronting the former market place and the number of houses with small attached workshops. The study of a small market town will be a thought-provoking change for SVBRG from rural parishes. It is fortunate that the documentary research has already been published by the Victoria County History and it is to be hoped that recording of the historic buildings will greatly illuminate the history of the development of Stogursey. In addition to the systematic village surveys, a number of individual buildings in disparate parts of the county have been recorded, often at the request of owners. In Taunton SVBRG members have made detailed studies of two very important buildings, the Grade I listed Castle House, belonging to SANHS, and the Old Municipal Buildings, Grade II*. Both of these have been recorded in advance of major changes to Taunton Castle and its environs. As ever, the Group is indebted to the owners and occupiers of the buildings visited for their kindness in allowing access. Copies of the full SVBRG reports and survey drawings have been deposited in the County Record Office and the National Monuments Record at Swindon. The photographs of Taunton were taken by Mark McDermott and the remainder by John Rickard.

SURVEYS

Beckington, Standerwick Court Farmhouse ST813508

Originally the house was of two storeys and the plan comprised kitchen, central service room and hall with lobby entry. The quality of the details indicates that it was probably of yeoman status and dated from the late 16th century. The variation of the collars and principal joints suggests that the roof structure is of two periods, part being rebuilt in the 17th century, perhaps after a fire. A new staircase was inserted in the 18th century and the first-floor rooms rearranged and perhaps the attics adapted for use as a cheese loft or for housing servants. It appears that the house was divided in the mid-19th century to accommodate two families and much internal rearrangement took place in the 20th century. The surviving buildings indicate that the farmstead comprised a comprehensive selection including cow sheds, stables, barn, wagon house, dairy, cheese room and cheese loft.

Blagdon, Station Road, Blagdon House ST502593

The earliest surviving part of the building is the cellar, the beams dendro-dated to the period 1490–1518, and the only known example in Blagdon. There is no other surviving evidence to indicate what sort of building existed at that time. The north-east wing appears to be the remnant of a 17th-century building, but again evidence is lacking about the form of the complete structure. The main house was built in the early 18th century incorporating the earlier parts and comprised a stair hall, living room, parlour and kitchen, all with bedrooms over. The walls of the parlour and the chamber above are clad with fielded

panelling and the staircase (Fig. 1) has an elaborate handrail, turned balusters and carved tread ends. Service rooms were added in the 19th century.



Fig. 1 Blagdon House staircase

**Clevedon, Old Church Road, Nos 181 & 183,
Whiteladies Cottage ST395707**

This appears to be a pair of single-unit dwellings that have been amalgamated to form one house, but the origins of each part are unclear. The earliest element is a fireplace in one half, which appears to be the remains of a building of which nothing else survives. A second complete building was erected nearby in the 17th century, subsequently extended to incorporate the surviving earlier part and create a separate house. This would explain the uniform 17th-century walls and common roof construction.

Crowcombe, Borough Cottage ST203428

The house has a two-unit plan and is built of cob. The form of jointed-cruck truss together with smoke-blackening suggests a date of *c.* 1500 (based on dendro-dated examples elsewhere in the county). The extent of the smoke-blackening and the existence of chamfering on only one side of one truss indicate that the house comprised a two-bay open hall and an unheated inner room with a solar over. On the evidence of the ceiling beams, fireplace and staircase, the first floor was probably inserted late in the 17th century. The hipped roof at one end was rebuilt as a gable with a stack to serve the fireplace and the house then comprised the living room and an unheated service room.

Kingsbury Episcopi, Southay Farm ST432193

The development of the farmhouse is complex, but

appears to be as follows. On the evidence of jointed-cruck trusses, an early 16th-century date is suggested for the main house (based on similar dendro-dated examples). It was built totally of cob and comprised the kitchen, cross-passage, hall and end room, which may have been non-domestic, unheated and open to the roof. The partition between the hall and end room comprises posts with rod and daub infill (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Kingsbury Episcopi, Southay Farm partition

There were timber-framed fire-hoods to the fireplaces in the kitchen and hall. The house was upgraded early in the 17th century when the west front was rebuilt in stone, raised and dormers added (Fig. 3). The rebuilding may have taken place in two phases, as there are slight differences in the windows (Fig. 4). The fire-hood in the hall was replaced by a stone fireplace. An upper floor was inserted in the end room, but it could have been for storage as there is some evidence for a pitching door at first-floor level on the front elevation. There is a plaque dated 1758 on the south gable, indicating that it was rebuilt with a stack and fireplace, and the pitching door was replaced by a window at this time. Also the original stairs were replaced by a stair turret at the rear. Early in the 19th century there were additions at the rear including a dairy, cheese room and cheese lofts. The



Fig. 3 Kingsbury Episcopi, Southay Farm



Fig. 4 Kingsbury Episcopi, Southay Farm window catch

main surviving farm building dates from the 19th century and one end contains a horse-engine. The rest probably housed stock with storage lofts over. A two-storey wing next to the horse-gin may have been a mixing house. Attached to the rest of that side is a cow-shed built in the early 20th century.

Mudford, Up Mudford, Manor Farmhouse ST577189

Documentary evidence indicates that the house was built c. 1630, perhaps by Thomas Beaton, who in 1620 acquired a lease on the property from Robert Harbin of Newton Surmaville. Originally it comprised three rooms in the main range: a living room, an unheated room, which may have been divided laterally to form an entrance hall with staircase at the front and a cider cellar with access to the back yard at the rear, and a parlour. There is no evidence for a cross-passage. There were bed

chambers on the first floor and one attic room. A substantial kitchen with a large fireplace would be required and presumably this was housed in the north wing, now rebuilt. The large and impressive bay windows on the south front were a fashionable feature of some houses of the time and there are nearby examples at Ashington Manor and Sandford Orcas Manor (Dorset). In the mid-18th century the north wing was rebuilt to include a kitchen, dairy and cheese room. A two-storey west wing was added later in the 18th century and a lean-to was added to the north wing, incorporating a new kitchen and baking oven. A serious fire in 1975 resulted in the roof of the main range being rebuilt and a new staircase replacing the original.

Nailsea, Ash Hayes Road, No. 43, Merlin Cottage ST474700

The building comprises three rooms with a lean-to extension. Originally it appears to have been two 'one-up-one-down' dwellings dating from the 19th century. A further single-unit dwelling was added later with the lean-to extension and the three units were amalgamated to form one house in the 20th century.

Stogursey, Castle Street, No. 1 ST204429

The house has two storeys and two units with modern additions at the rear. Dating is difficult, but the scant evidence suggests the late 17th or early 18th century. It may then have comprised a living room with adjoining workshop or store. The walls and roof were raised and the present stairs inserted in the mid 19th century. The Tithe Map of 1841 shows a substantial detached building at the rear.

Stogursey, Castle Street, No. 9, Castle House ST204429

This double-pile, two-storey house was built c. 1800 and there are two-storey additions at the rear built in the third quarter of the 19th century.

Stogursey, Castle Street, No. 11, Withy Cottage ST204429

The house dates from the early 17th century and was then a living room with an unheated room and a rear service room. It was upgraded in the 19th century when the walls and roof were raised and the staircase inserted. An additional service room was added in the 20th century.

Stogursey, Castle Street, Zoggs ST204424

The house is now two-storey, double-pile, four rooms with later additions. It is not shown on the Tithe Map of 1841 and was built presumably in the mid-19th century as two dwellings, each with a living room, scullery and two bedrooms. It was converted into one house in the 20th century. The Tithe Map shows the adjoining plot as Zog's Meadow.

Stogursey, Fairfield, Water Farm ST194432

Historically the farm was part of the manor of Fairfield (recorded in the *Victoria History of Somerset*, volume V, 1985). The core of the house dates from the early 16th century and comprised three rooms and cross-passage of one-and-a-half storey, possibly with a cross-wing. The roof is of jointed cruck construction with no evidence of smoke-blackening. The plan-form is untypical of farmhouses of this period elsewhere in the county. In the late 17th century the cross-wing was built (or rebuilt) with a presumed turret stair. A new stair replacing the turret was inserted in the 18th century, together with the addition of a two-storey dairy wing. The size of the farm has varied, but stabilised at about 250 acres by the 19th century and concentrated on dairying with associated arable cultivation. The Tithe Map of 1841 shows some farm buildings, but the present farmstead was established by the 1887 OS map and included a cider house, implement/cart shed, threshing barn, cart-horse stables, trap house and hack stables, and cow sheds.

Stogursey, Church Street, Nos 5 & 7 ST205429

Together there are three rooms in line, originally kitchen, service room (probably unheated) and parlour, with a stair turret at the rear. The house has been much altered, but is tentatively dated to the early 17th century. In the 18th century, the front wall was rebuilt and a cellar excavated under the parlour. It had been divided into two by the time of the 1841 census when it was occupied by two families.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 5 ST203431

The ground floor comprises a living room and a kitchen in a lean-to at the rear. Based on limited evidence, the house appears to date from the mid-17th century. The Tithe Apportionment of 1841 describes it as house, bake-house and garden and the associated Map shows a detached building in

the plot behind which was presumably the bake-house. The 1887 OS map shows a substantial yard at the rear containing a water-pump, stable, cart shed and pig-sties with access on to Back Street (now St Andrew's Road).

Stogursey, High Street, No. 6 ST202429

The original building appears to date from the late 16th or early 17th century, largely reconstructed in the late 18th or early 19th century and is now two storeys with three rooms at the front with a central door to the street. There are two rooms at the rear, single storey under a cat-slide roof. A detached building in the yard at the rear was a commercial bake-house, dating from the second phase of construction.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 14 ST203427

The house adjoins others to form a terrace and has a complex, L-shaped plan. It has two units at the front and a rear wing with single-storey additions. There are blocked doors at ground and first floor levels indicating that there was access into adjoining properties at some time. Although the evidence is limited, the plan-form and roof structure of the front range suggest a late 16th-century date. Comparisons with other houses in High Street (formerly Fore Street) indicate that there was probably a living room and a work-shop/store. The angle of the rear wing follows the alignment of the ancient burgrave plots shown on early estate maps. A two-storey addition was built in the early 17th century and the house was upgraded in the late 18th century with the installation of wall panelling and panelled doors. Possibly at this time the walls and roof were raised and new windows inserted.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 19 ST202428

The present two-storey house has a rectangular plan, but was formerly part of a complex including the adjacent house (No. 21). A photograph taken c. 1930 shows the building as three storeys with a particularly tall first floor. It is suggested that it might have been built as a spinning/weaving factory, although there is no history of the trade in the town. Probably it dates from the mid-18th century. The rear part of the building was originally a lean-to addition built soon after the front range. The Tithe Map and Apportionment of 1841 describes the building as a brew-house, but there is no surviving evidence of

this use. The gables and front wall were lowered, the tall windows reduced in height and a low-pitched roof constructed in the mid-20th century.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 20, The Old Bakery ST202429

The house has a narrow frontage to the street (historically Fore Street) with a passage at the side giving access to an extensive range of buildings at the rear (not recorded). The limited evidence of a fireplace and collar-truss roof at the rear suggests that the house may date from the late 17th century. It is likely to have had the same plan form of a shop at the front and two rooms comprising kitchen and living room. The Tithe Map and Apportionment of 1841 show the house occupied by a blacksmith and subsequent censuses and directories give a blacksmith there until at least 1910. Thereafter, the property was conveyed to a baker and confectioner. The shop continued in use until 1989, when it was incorporated into the house, but the commercial bakery only ceased in 1999.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 22, Diligence Cottage ST202409

The house has an L-shaped plan with the main range fronting the street and it has been extended at first-floor level over the carriage entrance (Fig. 5). At the rear are former workshops/stables. The evidence from the wall thickness of the front range suggests a late-medieval date. The collar-truss roof indicates a second phase of building in the mid-17th century. A spice cupboard with moulded frame doors (Fig. 6) in the chamber over the main room is also datable to the middle of the 17th century. Access to the house



Fig. 6 Stogursey, Diligence Cottage spice cupboard

at that time appears to have been from the carriage entrance next to the chimney stack. A north wing was added to enlarge the accommodation in the first half of the 18th century.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 24 ST202429

The property occupies one of the regular, long, narrow burgage plots fronting what had been the Market Place. The present house is two storeys with attics, double-fronted with separate access to each half. The arrangement of rooms is probably a relic of the time when it was a Post Office at the end of the 19th century. The surviving evidence suggests a mid to late 18th-century date and the plan form indicates that the eastern part was always domestic and the other half a work-room or shop.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 25, Cobbles ST202429

The house takes its name from a cobbled forecourt and is attached to another house to one side and a former smithy on the other. The very limited evidence suggests that it dates from the late 18th century. The Tithe Map and Apportionment of 1841 show a blacksmith's shop and garden. The two-storey house now comprises one room at the front with the former smithy assimilated and converted to domestic use, and modern additions at the rear.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 26, Stoke House ST202429

The house is of two storeys and has a central entrance with one room each side and a central staircase. A



Fig. 5 Stogursey, Diligence Cottage

two-storey coach house is attached and there are service rooms in a rear wing. It appears to be of one build in the late 18th century and if there had been earlier buildings on the site, no evidence now remains.

Stogursey, High Street, Nos 30 & 32 ST202431

The plan-form of the two houses together is three rooms in line with a cross-passage and additions at the rear. The evidence of the open-truss roof, wall thickness and details of the beams and fireplace suggest that it was built c. 1500 and it is likely that what is now No. 30 comprised a two-unit house with a living room/kitchen and unheated store or work-room – No. 32 being an attached cart-shed or work-room with a loft over. The map evidence shows that it remained one property until the middle of the 19th century when it was divided into two houses.

Stogursey, High Street, No. 34 ST202429

The house comprises two principal rooms with a stair turret at the rear, now incorporated into a lean-to extension. Discrepancies between the two halves suggest different phases of development. Originally the western half, dating from the 17th century, may have been a single-unit, one-and-half storey house with access at the front and a stair turret at the rear. The roof structure is of 18th-century form replacing the earlier, lower roof. The eastern half may have been an unheated workshop, brought into domestic use later when the fireplace was inserted. The existence of pigsties, stables and privies along the northern boundary of a number of houses in this part of High Street make it likely that there would have been access along the back curtilage.

Stogursey, High Street, Nos 40/42 & 44 ST202429

The plan-form of the two houses is a basic rectangle of three rooms and a hall under a single roof. There is a single-storey extension at the front, which for many years has been used as a shop. At the rear, there is further accommodation under a pitched roof and an outshut. Originally it was a single dwelling with a projecting wing dating from the late 16th or early 17th century and comprised a living room/kitchen, an inner room, which uncommonly was heated, and a store room. The adjoining room may have been an unheated workshop area, possibly open to the roof. The discovery of cob walling at first-

floor level and the brick east upper gable raises the possibility that the upper section of the gable may also have been built of cob. At some time in the 17th century the house was divided with the creation of a new entrance and the transformation of the workshop to domestic use. Further additions occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Stogursey, High Street, Old Cross House ST203429

The house fronts High Street with a small forecourt and at the rear was a range of buildings entered from St Andrew's Street (formerly Back Street). Little datable evidence remains, but the house probably dates from the 18th century and was then one-and-half storeys, comprising a parlour, cross-passage, living room/kitchen, an unheated service room with perhaps an integral trap house with loft over. In the mid-19th century the walls and roof were raised and the sash windows with hood moulds inserted. Late in the 19th century the service room became a shop, now used as a garage.

Stogursey, Lime Street, Greyhound Inn ST204429

The evidence afforded by wall thickness, beams and roof structures suggest that this house had earlier been two properties. The northern half probably dates from the 16th century and the other half from the early 17th century. The proportions and comparisons with houses of the same period in the village indicate that each comprised two ground-floor units, one being the living room with a fireplace and the other, probably unheated, served as a work-room/store. The Tithe Apportionment of 1841 describes each of them as house, office and garden, but by the time of the 1887 OS map they were amalgamated as the Greyhound Inn.

Stogursey, Little Water Farm, ST194434

The house was part of a farmstead, including a malthouse, and comprised three rooms in line: service room, cross-passage, hall and inner room. Two jointed-cruck trusses are smoke-blackened indicating that originally the hall was open to the roof. A closed truss, blackened on the hall side only, shows that the inner room had a solar chamber over. The form of the jointed crucks suggests an early 15th-century date (Fig. 7), based on similar dendro-dated examples from elsewhere in the county. Fireplaces, stacks and upper floors were inserted in the second



Fig. 7 Stogursey, Little Water Farm crucks

half of the 16th century and the low end became a kitchen, possibly with a baking oven and curing chamber. In the mid-19th century the kitchen end was largely rebuilt and extended to include a new staircase. The original turret stair at the rear was removed and a dairy and service room added. It is possible that there had been a malthouse on the site of the kitchen extension, with the result that this was relocated to its present site. The malthouse and malt-drying kiln (Fig. 8) occupy the northern half of a terrace of former cottages, probably dating from the 17th century. The Tithe Apportionment, 1841, shows that it was occupied as four cottages, but by the 1881 census there were two cottages and the other half had been converted, becoming part of Water House, occupied by William Williams, maltster and farmer.

Stogursey, St Andrew's Road, No. 1, Corner Cottage ST201431

The house is of two storeys, comprising two rooms, but there is insufficient evidence to establish a precise date, although the 18th century is tentatively suggested. It stands at the junction of St Andrew's Road and High Street and by the mid-19th century had become integral with No. 15 High Street.



Fig. 8 Stogursey, Little Water Farm kiln

Stogursey, St Andrew's Road, No. 5, Three Springs ST 203409

The house comprises a two-storey, single room range fronting the street with a one-and-half storey rear wing. On the scant evidence available it is conjectured that the front range is 17th century with the rear wing added later in the century.

Stogursey, St Andrew's Road, No. 7 ST203427

At present this is a two-storey, single unit with additions at the rear. The details of beams, joists and roof-line indicate a 16th-century date, and the size of the fireplace relative to the size of the ground-floor room makes it likely that originally it was part of a larger house, which included No. 8. The plan as outlined on the Tithe Map of 1841 and the number of occupants in the 1841 census tend to confirm this. The 1887 OS map indicates that the house had been divided by then. A small timber lantern-style stair window (now blocked) survives on the front elevation.

Stogursey, St Andrew's Road, No. 12 ST203428

The double-fronted, one-and-half storey house with



Fig. 9 Stogursey, Myrtle Farm beam-stop

lean-to additions appears to be of one build. It comprises a living room/kitchen, a work-shop/store and a service room, and probably dates from the late 17th century.

Stogursey, St Andrew's Road, No. 15, Back Street Cottage ST203426

The double-pile plan is two-storeys, double-fronted with a single-storey addition at the rear. The details suggest an early 18th-century date when the house comprised a living room, kitchen and service and work rooms. The addition at the back – perhaps a scullery-cum-wash-house – took place in the mid-19th century.

Stogursey, Shurton, Myrtle Farmhouse ST203443

The two-storey front range comprises two units, one with a gable stack and the other with the stack backing onto the cross-passage, which gives access to turret stairs. A one-and-half-storey rear wing is not aligned at right-angles. The plan-form is relatively rare in Somerset. Study of the beams suggests a mid 16th-century date (Fig. 9) and that originally the western half was a one-and-half storey hall with a room over. The other half with the cross-passage may have been non-domestic and open to the roof. This part became domestic – probably the parlour – when an upper floor was inserted late in the 16th century. The turret stair would have been added at this time. The north service wing was added in the early 17th century, perhaps including a dairy and cheese loft. There is also some surviving plaster decoration in this wing (Fig. 10).

Stogursey, Wick, Wick House ST215445

The house is set back from the road with a number of detached buildings, formerly part of a farmstead and known as Wick Farm until the mid-19th century. The original house probably comprised three rooms in line: kitchen, cross-passage (now gone), hall and unheated inner room. This plan-form suggests a mid-17th century date. Documentary evidence from 1707 mentions a bake-house or brew-house and it is



Fig. 10 Stogursey, Myrtle Farm plasterwork

conjectured that the inner room had been adapted to this use by the addition of a large fireplace and stack at the south gable end. The service rooms at the rear were presumably added to include a dairy with cheese loft above. The house was divided into two dwellings in the late 20th century.

Stogursey, Zine Farm ST219446

The plan-form was three rooms in line – kitchen, cross-passage, hall and inner room – and there are indications that there was formerly a lower roof, most likely of jointed-cruck construction. If so, then the house dates from the 15th century and may have included a single-storey open hall. It was upgraded by the insertion of a first floor, fireplaces and stacks, possibly including an oven and curing chamber. An interesting survival is a small two-light wooden window (now blocked) (Fig. 11) to the stairs added at this time. In the 18th century, the house was again upgraded when the walls were raised and the original roof trusses removed, and the south front was refenestrated and the sash-windows installed. At the same time a turret stair and fireplace was inserted in the inner room, and a rear lean-to added as a cider cellar. Further modifications and additions took place in the 19th century, including a dairy. The Tithe Map



Fig. 12 Stogursey, Zine Farm barn



Fig. 11 Stogursey, Zine Farm window

of 1841 shows the large threshing barn, which also had jointed-cruck trusses (Fig. 12). The stub ends survive and indicate that it was probably contemporary with the house. The barn was enlarged and reroofed in the 19th century. By the time of the 1887 OS map the farmstead had expanded to include an implement/cart shed, stables with loft over, a pig sty and calf house. Two other buildings associated with two ponds may have housed ducks and geese. The name Zine is unusual and probably derives from the Old English, *sende*, meaning a sandy place, and a soil survey shows that the farm has two soil types, which have fine silt-like characteristics.

Taunton, Castle House ST226246

The building occupies the south-east corner of the inner bailey of Taunton Castle and is L-shaped in plan (Fig. 13). The two-storey west range is built against the 13th-century curtain wall of the castle. The stonework and moulded plinth is similar to the adjacent gatehouse, rebuilt in 1496, suggesting a similar date or even a single build (the junction between the two is obscured by a stair turret rebuilt in 1883). At the east end of the west wing is a three-storey east wing, aligned at slightly less than a right



Fig. 13 Taunton, Castle House

angle, presumably determined by the return wall of the earlier curtain, the foundations of which were discovered in 1911. The west range probably extended as far as this wall before the east wing was built. Later the east wing was extended to the north-east. The west range has an arch-braced roof (Fig. 14) similar to that in the Old Municipal Buildings, also within the Castle precinct (see below). The original function of this range is uncertain, but was evidently of high status, perhaps a range of lodgings, possibly consisting of two pairs of rooms on each floor, with an impressive exposed roof and at least one wall painting at first-floor level. It is not clear how the building was then heated, but there is no evidence of smoke blackening on the roof. The later east wing probably dates from the 17th century, based on the cyma-stopped beams and the form of the roof. Also it incorporates an earlier corbelled north wall, the remnant of a demolished jettied building. The east end of the west range was demolished, either to accommodate the wing or conceivably as part of the slighting of the castle (including the demolition of the nearby keep) after the Restoration. The open-well stairway probably dates from the late 17th or early 18th century and the bolelection mouldings, cross-windows and shell hood of the west range appear to be of a similar date. It is possible that either the west range was updated when the east wing was built or that both were subsequently remodelled. The construction of the wing and the updating of the west range, whether carried out together or in phases, created a house with high-status features and it has been suggested that this was undertaken in

preparation for the judges, including Jeffreys, for the trial of the Monmouth rebels in the great hall of the castle in 1685. However, although the features are compatible with such a date, it would have been necessary for the work to be carried out in the months between the issuing of a commission in July and the opening of the assize in September. The north-east extension was built much later, either in the late 18th or early 19th century. SANHS acquired Taunton Castle in 1873, prior to which Castle House had been used as a school. Various alterations took place at this time, including the rebuilding of the stair turret in 1883, and in 1908 Castle House was 'repaired, improved and occupied by the Curator' (of SANHS museum). SVBRG undertook a detailed survey and assessment in advance of the extensive works planned for the whole of the Castle site.



Fig. 14 Taunton, Castle House roof

Taunton, Corporation Street, Old Municipal Buildings ST226245

The former Grammar School stood on the southern boundary of the outer bailey of Taunton Castle overlooking the moat (now Corporation Street, created in 1894) (Fig. 15). Built in 1521–2 by Bishop Fox, lord of the manor of Taunton Deane and Bishop of Winchester, it consisted originally of a full-height school room at the east end and two-storeyed accommodation for the schoolmaster to the west. The open school room with its arch-braced collar-beam



Fig. 15 Taunton, Old Municipal Buildings

roof (Fig. 16) and the master's house (Fig. 17) are remarkable survivals. However, it is not clear how the presumed four-room ground plan of the house functioned. Probably it was more than just the private home of the master and his family, as it may have included accommodation for an assistant master, boarders and domestic staff. Taunton suffered much damage during the sieges of the Civil War in the 1640s and in 1655 the school was described as 'a ruinous heap, both dwelling-house, school, and outlet'. Although this appears to have been an exaggeration, it suggests that extensive repairs were necessary. There is no clear evidence, however, that the design of the building was substantially altered. The school's most successful period was in the early 18th century, but by the 19th century it suffered from competition from other schools and after a long period of decline finally closed in 1885. Thus it is unlikely that any major alterations were undertaken before it was acquired in 1887 by Taunton Borough Council. The corporation undertook a major programme of renovation and extended the building to the west. The north-west corner of the building was demolished and enlarged to include a grand staircase. The roof of the school



Fig. 16 Taunton, Old Municipal Buildings school room



Fig. 17 Taunton, Old Municipal Buildings roof
room was re-exposed (having been ceiled at some time in its history), the roof trusses at the west end were mutilated to form attic spaces and a boiler-room was excavated beneath the former master's house. Wall panelling and other features were installed in a sympathetic style. From 1987, when the Borough Council moved to new premises, the Old Municipal Buildings were occupied by various voluntary bodies and the school room was used for public meetings. The survey by SVBRG was undertaken prior to its use by the County Council as a registry office.

Winsham, Holvert Lane, Hey Farmhouse ST388065

The house and farmstead are in an isolated position to the east of the village. Originally the house was a two-storey, L-shaped plan with two units in the front range and a single unit to the rear. The diagonal buttresses, the cinquefoil-headed windows and the



Fig. 18 Wraxall, Old Rectory

arch-braced roof (typically dated 15th century by dendrochronology), further supported by documentary sources, indicate that the house dates from the early 15th century. Substantial alterations took place in the late 16th century to upgrade the house, including the rebuilding of the east gable and the upper part of the south front. The cellar was created and the main staircase was built and the stair turret removed. In the second half of the 19th century



Fig. 20 Wraxall, Old Rectory staircase

the property was acquired by the Bridport estate and a new farmstead created.

Wraxall, Wraxall Hill, The Old Rectory ST491720

The main range of the house is of three storeys and comprised four rooms in line, but the earliest origins are obscure (Fig. 18). The generous proportions and unusually thick walls are suggestive of medieval origins, but the oldest datable features are from the 17th century (Fig. 19). On the available evidence, it appears that the house was constructed in the early 17th century and that the main range is substantially unchanged. An unexpected feature is the status of the second-floor east room, which has decorative stops on both the door frame and the former fireplace. There is also a four-light 17th-century window at second-floor level, which implies some importance to this end of the house. Around 1800 an elegant staircase was added in a new wing on the north side (Fig. 20) together with additional rooms on each floor. A high-ceilinged room was added to this wing to provide a community or school room. Further rooms were added in a north-east wing built in the 19th century.



Fig. 19 Wraxall, Old Rectory partition