SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY 1993

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SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

County Archaeological Officer's Report

Last year's report noted that the role of the archaeological and conservation team of Somerset County Council was expanding, and this has continued to be the case in 1993. This year, one of the main themes has been increasing awareness of archaeology, historic landscapes and integrated landscape management and conservation. The issue of road schemes and supermarkets in sensitive areas, such as Wyndham Hill, Yeovil, has focused attention on development proposals which affect the wider historic environment and on the role of local public opinion.

Following the departure of Margaret Cox from the post of Conservation Archaeologist, Somerset Levels and Moors, the post has not been filled because of the need to make savings within the County Council budgets; this has obviously had a considerable effect upon the priorities for archaeological work in the Somerset Levels and Moors area. Responsibility for fieldwork has largely been assumed by Richard Brunning, working on a contract substantially funded by English Heritage. Revision of the archaeological conservation areas (the AHAPs), work on the Code of Practice for Peat Operators, and the review of general archaeological policy in the Levels and Moors, in association with the Peat Local Plan and the County Minerals Plan, will be affected by this change in staffing structure. On a more optimistic note, the Somerset Levels and Moors Project, co-ordinated by Dr Douglas Taylor, has generated a great deal of interest in the conservation and wise use of the wetlands of this part of Somerset. Many of the issues associated with the Somerset Levels and Moors Project have a direct impact upon the archaeological and cultural heritage of this area and a report was produced in 1993 following a Countryside Stewardship exchange with participants from North America and Britain.[1] The report clearly identifies a wide range of issues which need further consideration if this part of the county is to receive the attention which it deserves. Co-operation between the competing demands of archaeology, nature conservation, tourism and land-use is essential if the aspirations for this area are to be realised into the next century.

One of the main issues facing the wetlands in Somerset during the year has been the continued debate on the after-use of the worked-out peatlands as the demand for peat declines. With the departure of Fisons, their land will be transferred either to English Nature or to Somerset Wildlife Trust (formerly the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation). The worked-out areas will then be used as wetlands set aside for nature conservation purposes. In order to create these wetlands it will be necessary to modify the current land surface in some areas and to insert banks and ditches to control the water flow. Some of this work will be potentially damaging to buried archaeological deposits

and a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording will be carried out to observe the work in progress. The flooding of large parts of the peat extraction zone should be good news for the protection of waterlogged archaeological deposits as well as for nature conservation.

Before parts of the area were flooded, a very detailed survey of Shapwick and Ashcott Heaths was carried out, funded by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. This survey will form the basic record of the historic landscape as it survived in 1993 and represents the most detailed and metrically accurate survey of any peatland landscape in Somerset. Copies of the survey data are held by the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), English Nature and the Royal Commission. A wide-ranging seminar was held in Taunton in June to discuss the areas of interest and concern common to archaeologists and nature conservation groups.

As part of the Monument Protection Programme (MPP) organised by English Heritage, Somerset County Council appointed a temporary MPP fieldworker, Alan Preece, who has prepared scheduling proposals for a variety of sites ranging from Dead Woman's Ditch on the Quantock Hills to the motte and bailey castle at Neroche. The re-examination of the existing scheduling boundaries has resulted in a much more accurate definition of the areas of important archaeological remains. New and revised proposals have been received for nearly thirty sites across the county and the end result of the MPP will be that statutory protection is given to a greater number of archaeological sites. The use of scheduling to protect archaeological sites is, however, being questioned in some instances, and in towns especially scheduling is not seen by English Heritage as the best way to preserve sites. Responsibility therefore falls upon local authorities to have appropriate planning policies in place. Recent revisions of existing local plans into district-wide plans have incorporated current thinking on archaeological conservation. The use of the designation 'Area of High Archaeological Potential' (AHAP) is being reviewed and local plan policies are making increasing reference to the SMR as the main source of archaeological information for development control purposes.

Three projects started in 1992 were completed in 1993, namely the Peat Moors Visitor Centre, Taunton Almshouse and the Somerset Brick and Tile Museum in Bridgwater. Each site has made a significant contribution to the interpretation and presentation of heritage information to the public.

This has been a very busy year for the Peat Moors Visitor Centre following our success last year in the British Archaeological Awards. A second roundhouse, complete with porch, has been constructed, largely through the efforts of Keith Faxon. There were numerous activity days and one of the highlights of the season was the occupation of the site by the Prytani, a band of living history enthusiasts, who stayed for a weekend. Visitor numbers continue to be good and the site has managed to break even this year. There is plenty of opportunity for school groups to visit the site and to use it as a resource for a variety of curriculum subjects. A series of teachers' guide sheets has been prepared and is available at the Centre.

Somerset County Council has continued to support the publication of archaeological and interpretative material for the county. Two publications appeared in 1993: *Somerset from the Air: an Aerial Guide to the Heritage of the County*, by R.A. Croft and M. Aston, and *A Guide to the Peat Moors Visitor Centre*, by M. Cox.

The topic of local government reorganisation has focused attention on the importance of county-wide services such as archaeology and the SMR, and what would happen to them if the county were divided into smaller unitary authorities. It is my firm opinion that the best place for making available archaeological advice in Somerset is at the county level. Fragmentation of the existing service and the SMR would divert attention from developing and improving what already exists. It would also be very costly in staff time

and resources to rearrange a service which has been developing for twenty years. The heritage of Somerset would be less well served if smaller, isolated authorities were established. The recommendations of the Local Government Commission have not been warmly welcomed in Somerset. At the time of writing, the decision of Central Government is still awaited.

This was also the year that the doors of County Hall were opened to parish councils. Several hundred parish councillors came into the Environment Department to look at the variety of tasks which are carried out. There was considerable interest in the work of the archaeology and conservation sections and many parishes were pleased to make direct contact with staff. It is particularly important to have local contacts in the parishes to act as local correspondents and to advise the local authorities of heritage issues which are important at the parish level. The county SMR is keen to work with parish councils, and any council interested in receiving information on local sites should contact Chris Webster at County Hall.

I would like to conclude by thanking those who have contributed to this annual review of Somerset archaeology and by urging all researchers to send information on new discoveries to the SMR. It is only by recording sites in the SMR that they can be protected through the planning process.

1. C. Gingell (ed.), *A sustainable future for the Somerset Levels and Moors* (Somerset County Council, 1993).

(R.A. Croft)

SURVEY, FIELDWORK AND EXTENSIVE SITES

A303, Sparkford to Ilchester Improvement

An archaeological assessment of this proposed road improvement was carried out by Wessex Archaeology for the Department of Transport. A number of archaeological sites were identified and their future addressed in the mitigation strategy for the road. The most significant site identified by geophysical survey and trial trenching was an extensive road-side settlement of Roman date on the north side of the current A303 about 1.5 km west of the Sparkford roundabout. The remains were well preserved in this field and the Department of Transport decided that the road line should be moved slightly to secure the preservation of the site. A detailed report is held in the SMR.

(R.A. Croft)

Blackdown Hills AONB Survey

Funding from English Heritage was obtained to undertake a preliminary survey of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and subsequently to extend the area to cover the Environmentally Sensitive Area. The work was undertaken by AC Archaeology in Somerset and by Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit in Devon. Evidence was collected from studies of aerial photographs, documents and maps as well as from the SMRs of both counties. Field visits were made to selected sites. The results will be used to allow payments to be made to those farmers who participate in the ESA scheme for the protection of historic features on their land. Within Somerset the survey added 470 sites to the 127 previously recorded in the SMR. Work in Devon has located a number of iron-working sites, one of which has been shown to be of Roman date. Further survey work, extending into Somerset, is being undertaken to locate these sites by Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit in 1994.

(C.J. Webster)

Bulls Green Link Road
An Environmental Statement, including a geophysical survey, was prepared for this area. Several areas of archaeological interest were identified and further work is planned if the road proposal goes ahead.

(R.A. Croft)

Compton Dundon Parish Survey
A report on the first phase of the survey, covering the medieval parish of Dundon, is being prepared for publication. The archive and some fieldwork in the vicinity of the villa at Littleton have been prepared and analysed at the request of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in conjunction with their geophysical survey of the villa site (*see under* 'Roman' *below*).

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

Exmoor National Park
During 1993 the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England continued their survey of Exmoor National Park. At the end of the first year the surveyors have covered a considerable area of the western end of the Park and are progressing towards the Somerset border. Their work is producing a marked increase in the number of recorded sites and, where swaling has preceded them, has benefited from the resulting much-improved visibility of details and slight features. English Heritage's Monument Protection Programme has included scheduling proposals for sites on Exmoor, including Bat's Castle and thirty of the lithic monuments surveyed by the Royal Commission during their previous survey project here (*see also* County Archaeological Officer's Report *above*).

Work continued, under the aegis of the Exmoor National Park Farm Conservation Scheme, to clear and consolidate the Brendon Hill incline at Seaview Farm. The Exmoor National Park Volunteers also assisted in clearing scrub around the winding house. The Exmoor Mines Research Group, set up after the Exmoor Industrial Archaeology Symposium of 1992, flourishes and has assisted the National Park with a survey of mining sites on the Park's own land. A symposium was held, in collaboration with Devon Archaeological Society, on landscape archaeology in Devon and Somerset. This attracted a large audience, who heard papers on surveys of Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills, and post-survey work on Dartmoor, as well as on farmsteads, dwellings in the landscape, and industrial landscapes on Dartmoor and Exmoor.

As the year ends, the National Park is, with assistance from English Heritage, purchasing a recently-located hillslope enclosure near Timberscombe from the Forestry Authority. Acquisition of the site will enable it to be cleared of conifers and managed as an open area with broadleaf woodland to which the public will have access.

(S.V.E. Heal)

Exmoor, Dunkery Area
Field survey has revealed previously unrecorded prehistoric settlement features in the area west of Dunkery Beacon. The sites, in the form of low stony banks, include field boundaries, enclosures and hut circles, and represent an increase of *c.* 20% in the number of known sites in this area. The major site identified was a field system and settlement on Honeycombe Hill (Fig. 1), where a small number of features had been recorded previously.[1] Shallow banks and lynchets define a number of incomplete rectangular fields on this sheltered gentle slope, with the suggestion of a gateway in one place. Associated with the fields are four, perhaps five, hut circles. Two features above the settlement on the edge of the higher ground may have been stock enclosures. The orientation of the

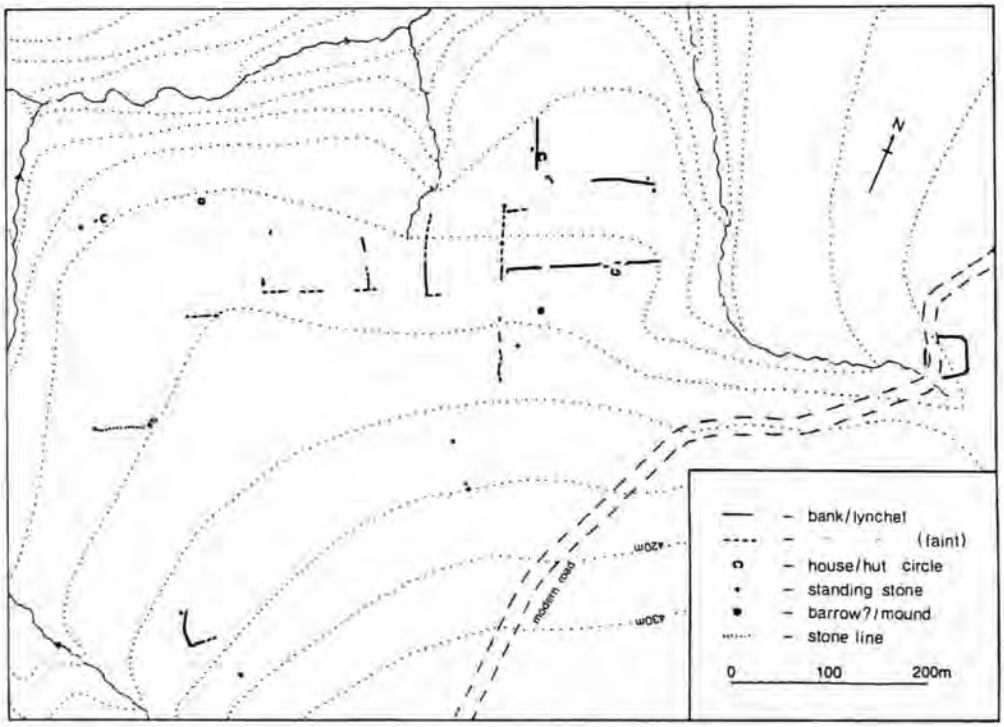


Fig. 1 Prehistoric settlement on Honeycombe Hill, Luccombe, from paced and compass survey (Alan Preece).

fields is the same as that of a stone row which lies within the area of the fields, supporting the idea that the row is part of the system rather than a ritual site. Other standing stones seem to define sub-divisions of the fields. The settlement forms a pair with that on Great Hill on the other side of Chetsford Water.[2]

More importantly, the fieldwork has demonstrated that the remaining areas of apparently undisturbed moorland are devoid of features, thus enabling inferences to be made about the distribution of prehistoric settlement in the area. It would appear that there are a number of small settlements or farmsteads located on the more sheltered, gently sloping lower land. Each settlement has a similar small acreage of tiny fields with four or five hut-circles. Isolated banks, hut circles and small stock(?) enclosures on the edge of the higher ground above suggest an important division between higher and lower ground.

The location of the sites and the incomplete nature of the visible remains suggest that they represent clearance of stone around cultivated plots, to boundaries otherwise defined (by fences or hedges); a remarkable record of land-use and economy, with regard to the acreage of arable land, thus seems to be present.

Features exhibit a common dominant axis of approximately WSW–ENE showing that they form part of a single co-axial planned landscape, the evidence for which has been strengthened by the present fieldwork. By inference, the axis would have been continued between settlements by fences and hedges.

It seems that a similar episode of large-scale land allotment to that seen on Dartmoor

also occurred here on Exmoor, though perhaps based on the individual farmstead, and indications of this can be found across much of the Exmoor area. Pollen profiles indicate a corresponding late Bronze Age date,[3] though settlement seems to have continued through Roman times and probably beyond. A more detailed account is in preparation.

1. W.J. Corney, 'Prehistoric Settlement on Honeycombe Hill', *Exmoor Review* (1968), 42–3.
2. Ian Burrow *et al.* (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1979', *SANH*, **124** (1980), 116–7.
3. P.D. Francis and D.S. Slater, 'A record of vegetational and land use change from upland peat deposits on Exmoor. Part 2: Hoar Moor', *SANH*, **134** (1990), 1–25.

(Alan Preece)

Glastonbury Relief Road

The construction of a relief road on the west side of Glastonbury largely followed the line of the old Glastonbury to Wells railway line, but in several areas the road cut through peat deposits. Engineering requirements meant that the peat was to be removed and replaced with hardcore. The area on the north side of Benedict Street, Glastonbury, was archaeologically evaluated and recorded by the Glamorgan–Gwent Archaeological Trust in advance of the road construction.[1] A sequence of peat deposits and waterlogged wood was examined but no worked pieces of timber were identified. Evidence of beaver gnawing was noted on a number of pieces of timber. Detailed analysis of the peat deposits and the waterlogged timbers is continuing and a report is being prepared for publication. The initial radiocarbon dating of the timber from this site gives a date of *c.* 900 BC, suggesting that at the end of the Bronze Age this part of Glastonbury was a wet alder fen carr with open water channels. The conclusions from this site are broadly similar to those obtained by Houseley in his study of the environmental context of Glastonbury Lake Village.[2] A detailed report is available in the SMR.

1. *Archaeological Field Evaluation: Benedict Street, Glastonbury, Somerset* (Glamorgan–Gwent Archaeological Trust, Report No. 93/052).
2. R.A. Houseley, 'The Environmental Context of the Glastonbury Lake Village' in J.M. Coles (ed.), *Somerset Levels Papers No. 14.*

(R.A. Croft and R. Brunning)

The Shapwick Project

The multi-disciplinary project based on the parish of Shapwick is now halfway through its projected ten-year life.

1. Eighteen fields were fieldwalked, with sampling taking place over more than 78 ha. A method has been devised to measure the intensity of fieldwalking in any area: the method pays considerable attention to the skill of the fieldworkers, the weather and light conditions, the condition of the soil, etc.

Christopher Gerrard and Alejandra Gutierrez are examining the finds from this year's fieldwork along with finds from 1991 and 1992 and it is premature to anticipate the distribution patterns of material of different periods in the parish.

(M. Aston, S. Everden, H. Jelley, D. Hill-Cottingham and others)

2. Geophysical surveys were carried out at a number of locations in the parish. Around the former manor house, now Shapwick House Hotel, several areas were investigated to locate the suspected medieval moat. Although this was not clearly defined, other features were located including the probable large barn and a dovecote in the former monastic curia to the south of the manor. To the north, in the area of the probable medieval and post-medieval garden, curvilinear features were observed which turned out to be of Iron

Age date (*see below*). Elsewhere in the parish the fields called Henry (a corruption of Enworthy and therefore a probable Saxon settlement site) and the field called Grasshay, which has produced 10th century pottery, both failed to produce any signals indicative of occupation.

(C. Gaffney, J. Gater and others)

3. Excavations were carried out in two areas in September 1993 by students from King Alfred's College, Winchester, under the direction of C. Gerrard and J. Crichton. In the field containing the site of the earlier church, six trenches were opened at the junctions of banks and ditches and across the church site. These produced considerable evidence – probably of Anglo-Saxon date – of the church building at the junction of the chancel and a central tower, together with numerous burials, at least one of which was covered by a medieval grave slab. Other trenches produced walls of uncertain date and hints of Roman occupation. The field was subsequently ploughed and fieldwalking produced an abundance of Roman material together with late Saxon and early medieval pottery. The Roman material suggests a high-status building, probably a villa, under the Saxon and medieval church.

Two trenches were opened to the north of the Shapwick House Hotel. The most northern of these lay in the area of the banqueting house shown on 18th century maps and in a watercolour; stone foundations were located. The second trench was laid across the area of the probable medieval garden in the area of curvilinear anomalies on the geophysical survey. Little was found of garden features but the anomalies were shown to relate to a previously unknown Iron Age settlement consisting of circular houses, postholes with large quantities of pottery, and other objects.

(C. Gerrard, J. Chrichton and others)

4. Little further geological survey was carried out. The former marl deposits, which were thought perhaps to relate to former marsh or lake deposits, now seem to be tufa deposits from former springs.

All of the hedges have now been examined (by M. Williams) and the data have been processed by multivariate analysis. Initial examination suggests that the different types of hedges do not seem to relate either to the enclosure history of the parish, as far as it is known, or to such factors as soil type.

(P. Hardy, D. Hill, M. Williams, and M. Martin)

5. Considerable progress has been made on regressive map analysis both of the village area and of the parish. A succession of maps at 1:2500 has now been compiled of the village, from the present day back to 1750. Research on the buildings enables at least outline maps to be compiled for the 17th century, for which there is good corroborative documentary evidence, and the 16th century, where the map must be more tentative but has the benefit of the great 1515 survey of the manor.

Maps of the parish at 1:10,000 have now been compiled, from the present day back to the mid-18th century, including detailed maps of the last areas of the common fields in the 1750s. Some of the holdings and their lands at that time can also be traced back to the 17th century. It is hoped that the 18th century maps will provide the means of reconstructing the field and furlong pattern of the late-medieval landscape.

(M. Aston)

6. The survey of buildings in the village and at the farmsteads is now virtually complete, with only a single refusal to enter and survey a building. The background research into the farmsteads is being continued while distributions of cottages at different

dates are already proving invaluable in sorting out the village plan. It is intended to publish the full survey of the buildings in advance of the other final reports.

(J. Dallimore, J. and J. Penoyre)

7. In 1994 further fieldwork will be carried out. There will be reworking of some fields and greater attention will be paid to the factors affecting rates of recovery. A garden survey will be undertaken to record finds from flower-beds and to dig test-pits within the village. Further geophysical surveying will be carried out as opportunities arise especially on the Iron Age site and it is hoped to begin soil sampling across the parish to locate concentrations of chemical traces associated with earlier occupation. Further work will be continued on the geology and other aspects of the vegetation of the parish. A further season of excavations will be undertaken in September 1994 concentrating on the manor house area and on sampling the fields which have produced pre-Conquest pottery. A fourth report has been published.[1]

1. M. Aston and M. Costen (eds), *The Shapwick Project: a Topographical and Historic Study: the Fourth Report* (Department of Continuing Education, University of Bristol, 1993).

(M. Aston)

South Cadbury Environs Project

Work as part of the preparation for the publication of Leslie Alcock's excavations at South Cadbury Castle has led to an independent project to examine the locality of the hillfort in greater depth. The first stage has focused on an area within 3 km of the hill, and techniques have included fieldwalking, geophysical survey, documentary and aerial photographic study, and limited excavation. Systematic fieldwalking has been undertaken in two fields and a further fourteen have been scanned for finds. Four areas have been geophysically surveyed. Work has concentrated on the area around Sigwells Farm, where a previously-known scatter of material of many periods has been examined with the help of the South East Somerset Archaeological Society. Roman finds and prehistoric flints have been recovered and the plan of a possible building revealed by resistivity survey. Further work, including excavation by Birmingham University, is planned for 1994.

(Richard Tabor and Paul Johnson)

West Somerset Link Road

Following the fieldwalking of the route last year, four areas were investigated by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford using a fluxgate gradiometer. No archaeological sites were known, but the route lay adjacent to a barrow cemetery and a Roman site at these locations. Few archaeological anomalies were recorded except in the area of the Roman site where possible field boundaries were located (*see also* Carhampton, under 'Medieval', *below*).

(S.M. Ovenden)

MULTI-PERIOD

Ditcheat, ST 6236

Fieldwalking located and recorded concentrations of medieval and post-medieval artefacts. Several discrete clay spreads, probably house platforms, were visible in the plough soil, coinciding with clusters of artefacts. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

Doulting, ST 643427
As part of the environmental statement for a proposed by-pass of the village of Doulting, a series of archaeological evaluations was undertaken. Following fieldwalking, an area on Doulting Hill was surveyed using a fluxgate gradiometer by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford.[1] This indicated several linear features and these were examined by excavation in January 1993. All the features appeared to be field boundaries of various dates from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. No settlement remains were located.

1. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Doulting* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report No. 92/02, 1992).

(C.J. Webster)

East Pennard, ST 5834, ST 5835, ST 5837 and ST 6238
Fieldwalking located and recorded concentrations of medieval and post-medieval sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

Frome, Torr Works, ST 68404430
An archaeological watching brief on intermittent topsoil stripping was carried out at the Norwood (Tip) Embankment Extension, on behalf of Foster Yeoman Ltd. No archaeological features were observed but a wide variety of finds was recovered which give some indication of past land use. Prehistoric flintwork provides evidence of activity during the Neolithic period and Roman pottery suggests the presence of a Roman settlement in the vicinity. The quantity of finds of post-medieval and modern date probably relates to the use of part of the area for garden allotments.

(L. and R. Adkins)

Montacute, Ham Hill, ST 48301650
The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England continued the large-scale survey of the hillfort and the extensive, multi-period, quarrying remains within the earthworks. It is anticipated that the survey, which will form part of the forthcoming monograph on Ham Hill, will be completed in the spring of 1994.

A major geophysical survey, by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, of the interior of the hillfort, revealed impressive new evidence of multi-period activity. An enclosure and the remains of a system of rectilinear ditches have been identified, together with the outline of the Roman building that was excavated in the early part of this century.

(Martin Fletcher)

South Cadbury, South Cadbury Castle, ST 62802510
The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England undertook a large-scale survey of the hillfort of South Cadbury Castle and its immediate environs at the request of English Heritage. The morphology of the three entrances was examined in detail. This showed similarities between the south-western entrances, and confirmed the authenticity of the eastern entrance. The medieval and later land use on the hill was examined; evidence for cultivation and minor settlement within parts of the area occupied by the defences of the hillfort was noted, as was the modification of possible Celtic fields on the western slopes of the hill. The survey will be published in the forthcoming English Heritage monograph on South Cadbury Castle. An archive account

of the Royal Commission's survey has been deposited in the National Monuments Record and the Somerset SMR.

(Hazel Riley)

Wedmore, The Close, ST 431475
Work continued on this site following the evaluation last year.[1] A magnetometer survey by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford was carried out and located a major ditch that may mark the western limit of the site. Several other features were located, but the site was magnetically disturbed and it proved impossible to map the archaeological features.

Excavation of a large trench measuring 10 m by 3 m produced evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British occupation within the orchard. An occupation deposit contained pottery and finds with dates ranging from prehistoric flint flakes through to the 13th–14th century. Full publication of the excavation and assessment await the outcome of a planning application affecting the site.

1. C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1992', *SANH*, **136** (1992), 176.

(N. and C. Hollinrake and J. Gater)

West Bradley, ST 5637 and ST 5735
Fieldwalking located and recorded concentrations of Roman, medieval and post-medieval sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

West Bradley, ST 5637
Fieldwalking located and recorded a concentration of prehistoric and Roman sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

West Bradley, ST 5636
Fieldwalking located and recorded a concentration of medieval and post-medieval sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

PREHISTORIC

Doulting, Ingsdon Hill, ST 63784366
A possible round barrow was located, visible as a low circular mound, *c.* 20 m in diameter and less than 1 m high. It lies within a field of permanent pasture on the west-facing crest of the hill, and is currently divided by a modern fence. The mound has probably been lowered and spread by ploughing in the past, and there are signs of a shallow depression near its centre.

(P.J. Leach)

Exmoor, Exe Plain, SS 757427
Three single standing stones were recorded along the east flank of Exe Plain overlooking Farley Water, at intervals of approximately 80 m. The north and south stones are standing (the southern badly leaning), the third is recumbent. The stones all measure *c.* 0.5 m high or long, and 0.3 m by 0.1 m in section. The location of these features is consistent with prehistoric ritual sites, but the spacing may suggest a later date.

(Alan Preece)

Exmoor, Hoaroak Hill, SS 745429
A ten-stone setting of irregular form was recorded on the north part of Hoaroak Hill, above Gammon's Corner. The stones range from 0.06 m to 0.40 m high, though two larger stones may have stood up to 0.70 m. One stone is leaning, the other displaced beside a hollow. The setting is approximately 40 m by 15 m with the long axis up/downslope. It is formed of two distinct ends, with a central large stone. The higher part on steeper ground has two arms, one curving with a hooked end, the other of a single stone. The lower part on gentler ground is more regular, with an L-shape of three stones aligned on the central stone and orientated at right-angles to the axis.

The form of the setting and its orientation are similar to the setting near Exe Head about 1 km south. Indeed, a number of stone settings nearby around this prominent valley seem to have the same or perpendicular orientation, and this may be ritually or astronomically significant.

(Alan Preece)

Holford, Dowsborough Hillfort, ST 16143909
Circular stone foundations flanking a passageway inside the eastern entrance to the hillfort were noted and sketch-planned during fieldwork forming part of the Monument Protection Programme (*see* County Archaeological Officer's Report, *above*). The foundations seem to be the remains of guard chambers.

(Alan Preece)

Shapwick, ST 42053980
An archaeological assessment was carried out following an application to plough two fields. Part of one field contains the south end of the Sweet Track (a scheduled monument). In one of the assessment trenches a dump of split oak timbers was located and samples taken for dendro-chronological dating. The dump is on a rough alignment with the Sweet Track and its position *c.* 300 mm above the marine clay suggests a similar date. It is possible that the dump formed a dry path through wet fen woodland at the edge of the hill slope. Two other trenches at ST 41874025 located mixed finds of various dates and provided evidence of the peat stratigraphy. No features were located in any of the trenches that would be affected by the ploughing.

(Richard Brunning)

Somerton, Westwood, ST 45992959
The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England commissioned Geophysical Surveys of Bradford to undertake a geophysical survey of the site of an alleged Roman barrow at ST 46062963, as part of preliminary work for a future study of the Parrett Valley. During the course of the survey, it soon became apparent that the alleged barrow lay within the defences of a plough-flattened defensive enclosure, covering some 1.2 ha. Aerial photographs taken in drought conditions in 1990 showed part of this enclosure. Some interior detail was visible, but its full extent and its relationship to the alleged barrow were unclear.[1] The geophysical survey revealed the full extent of the promontory fort, together with features in its interior and outside the defences. An account of the geophysical survey has been prepared by Geophysical Survey of Bradford,[2] copies of which have been deposited in the National Monuments Record and the Somerset SMR.

1. C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *SANH*, **134** (1990), 215–6.
2. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Westwood, Somerset* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report No 93/19, 1993).

(Hazel Riley)

ROMAN

Charterhouse on Mendip, ST 5055
Excavation and field survey were carried out by Malcolm Todd of Exeter University. Excavation concentrated on establishing the nature of a prehistoric enclosure and Roman fortlets. Further work is planned for 1994–5 to investigate the context and extent of the ancient mining remains within the Charterhouse valley and surrounding area.

(R.A. Croft)

Cheddar, Kings of Wessex Community School, ST 45655314
A watching brief was carried out during the digging of service trenches and soakaways related to the building of a new Learning Resource Centre in November 1993. A service trench within the scheduled area was hand dug to a depth of 500 mm but produced no evidence of archaeological features or material. The machine excavation of a shallow soakaway just north of the building produced evidence of a linear cut feature, probably a ditch, containing animal bone and a number of coarse pottery sherds, one bearing a distinctive wheel stamp (Cheddar Pottery Type 10a, 11th–12th century). A single abraded Romano-British pottery sherd was sealed at the base of this feature.

(R.A. Broomhead)

Cheddon Fitzpaine, Nerrols Farm, ST 23982690
Two compacted stone spreads were excavated in an area where a Romano-British pottery scatter had been located.[1] Area A comprised a 7 m by 2 m stone spread. No other features were associated with this. Area B contained an 8 m by 5 m stone spread, with numerous Romano-British sherds, which was bounded on its eastern side by a V-shaped ditch, running N–S, containing similar sherds. A shallow, flat-bottomed gully running N–S about 3 m south of Area B also contained Romano-British sherds. All the Romano-British pottery excavated (approximately 900 sherds) was of 3rd–4th century date and included black-burnished and red and grey coarse wares. The finds and features suggest that the site is on the fringe of a small settlement.

1. C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds) 'Somerset Archaeology 1992', *SANH*, **136** (1992), 168.

(J. Luckett)

Compton Dundon, Littleton, ST 49173105
The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England commissioned Geophysical Surveys of Bradford to undertake a geophysical survey on the site of Littleton Roman villa, as part of preliminary work for a future study of the Parrett Valley. The geophysical survey recovered part of the villa plan, uncovered by Hasell in 1827,[1] and the possible extent of the underlying settlements noted in the excavations of the 1950s.[2, 3] A report on the geophysical survey has been prepared, copies of which have been deposited in the National Monuments Record and the Somerset SMR.[4]

1. R. Colt Hoare, 'Roman Villa at Littleton, Somersetshire', *Gentleman's Magazine*, **97**(2) (1827), 113.
2. 'Roman Britain in 1951', *Journal of Roman Studies*, **42** (1952), 98.
3. 'Roman Britain in 1952', *Journal of Roman Studies*, **43** (1953), 12.
4. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Littleton, Somerset* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report No. 93/20, 1993).

(Hazel Riley)

Ditcheat, ST 6136 and ST 6137
Fieldwalking has located and recorded three concentrations of Romano-British artefacts. Details have been deposited in the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

Doulting, Beacon Hill, ST 638459
Roman and prehistoric quarries have been identified during the post-excavation work for the excavations at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet, undertaken by the University of Birmingham.[1] Evidence of ancient quarrying is still visible today – mainly within the planted woodland to the west and south-west of the highest point of Beacon Hill – and comprises shallow bell-shaped depressions and some overgrown vertical faces associated with mounds of spoil and waste. A few sherds of Romano-British pottery have been collected from recent animal disturbances in these areas. Although of more limited extent, the character of this site resembles the better known Pen Pits quarry site at Penselwood, on the Somerset–Wiltshire border.

Analysis by Fiona Roe indicates that Beacon Hill was the source of the Devonian Old Red Sandstone conglomerate used for querns and millstones found at the nearby Fosse Lane Roman settlement. Similar material at Camerton and Ilchester suggests the same origin and thus the possibility of a small Romano-British industrial site, strategically located at an important crossroads and serving quite an extensive local area. Recent research by Fiona Roe into stone sources for such items from Iron Age contexts at South Cadbury and the Glastonbury Lake Villages suggests that, once again, Beacon Hill was probably their origin. Furthermore, pottery from Glastonbury has been identified as containing a filler derived in all probability from this source (Peacock Type 22).[2] Recognition of Beacon Hill as a source of stone artefacts supplying successive local Iron Age and Romano-British communities, where physical upstanding remains of extraction, and perhaps processing, still survive, makes it yet more imperative that this important site should be conserved.

1. P.J. Leach, 'The Roman Site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *SANH*, **134** (1990), 47–55.
2. D.P.S. Peacock, 'A Contribution to the Study of Glastonbury Ware from South-Western Britain', *Antiquaries Journal*, **49** (1969), 41–61.

(P.J. Leach)

East Pennard, ST 5835 and ST 6238
Fieldwalking has located two concentrations of Romano-British artefacts. At one the presence of building material, including tesserae, may indicate a higher status site. Details have been deposited in the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

Ilchester, Free Street, ST 52312260
The development of residential units within a builder's yard belonging to G. Masters and Sons, immediately to the east of Free Street and on the projected line of the early Roman town defences, required the excavation, by hand, of 15 1 m² foundations dug to a firm natural base for each of two buildings.

The work necessitated the removal of all archaeological deposits, in some cases to an eventual depth of as much as 6 m. Several Romano-British features were recorded: these included probable floor levels, building remains, and a possible continuation of the early military ditch, BF88, noted at Kingshams, just to the north.[1] This last feature, though not traceable throughout the site, contained a similar thick deposit of straw and chaff as well as considerable quantities of carbonized material mixed with clay, samples of which were removed for examination.

Romano-British occupation debris was well dispersed within each of the foundations, having been heavily disturbed by the cutting of a large number of medieval pits and post-medieval drainage features, including two substantial wells. Two probable Iron Age pottery sherds were also recovered from the relatively undisturbed natural deposits at the base of one of the shallower foundations.

1. P. Leach, *Ilchester Excavations 1974–75* (Western Archaeological Trust, 1982).

(R.A. Broomhead)

Ilchester, 'The Paddocks', West Street, ST 520224

A watching brief on new drain and service trenches and on the building-raft area excavated prior to the construction of house 4 within 'The Paddocks', West Street, Ilchester, resulted in the recording of a number of ditches and pits dating to the Romano-British period.

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

Somerton, Bancombe Hill, ST 474296

The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England commissioned Geophysical Surveys of Bradford to undertake a geophysical survey on Bancombe Hill, as part of preliminary work for a future study of the Parrett Valley. A villa was recorded on Bancombe Hill by Hasell in the 19th century.[1] The geophysical survey confirmed the presence of plough-flattened buildings on Bancombe Hill, previously hinted at by concentrations of dressed stone on the ground surface[2] and trial excavations.[3] A concentration of archaeological features was located and the site of the villa building confirmed. An account of the geophysical survey has been prepared,[4] copies of which have been deposited in the National Monuments Record and the Somerset SMR.

1. R. Colt Hoare, 'Villa No. 15', *The Pitney Pavement*', (1832).
2. H.S. Dewar, in C.A.R. Radford, 'The Roman Site at Catsgore, Somerton', *SANH*, **96** (1951), 46–7.
3. R.H. Leech, 'Samuel Hassel's Villa No. 15', *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, **29** (1969), 87–8.
4. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Bancombe Hill, Somerset* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report No 93/21, 1993).

(Hazel Riley)

Somerton, Higher Hurcot Farm, ST 51152975

The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England commissioned Geophysical Surveys of Bradford to undertake a geophysical survey at Higher Hurcot Farm, as part of preliminary work for a future study of the Parrett Valley. A villa was excavated here by Hasell in the 19th century.[1] The geophysical survey resolved the conflicting accounts of the location of the villa,[2, 3] and revealed the extent of the building complex. An account of the geophysical survey has been prepared,[4] copies of which have been deposited in the National Monuments Record and the Somerset SMR.

1. R. Colt Hoare, 'Villa No. 5', *The Pitney Pavement*, (1832).
2. H.S. Dewar, in C.A.R. Radford, 'The Roman Site at Catsgore, Somerton', *SANH*, **96** (1951), 47.
3. R.H. Leech, 'Romano-British Rural Settlement in South Somerset and North Dorset' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1977).
4. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Hurcot* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report No. 93/133, 1994).

(Hazel Riley)

Stogursey, Hinkley Point, ST199456
A field evaluation of the proposed 10 ha site for accommodation facilities at the Hinkley 'C' Power Station was carried out by AC Archaeology. Four trenches, amounting to a 1.5% sample of the area, were excavated. Archaeological features were found in two trenches, confirming the areas of high potential extending across some 2.5 ha defined on the basis of earlier fieldwalking and geophysical surveys. The deposits encountered represent the remains of a Romano-British settlement site, probably a small farmstead, occupied in the later 3rd or 4th century AD. Evidence for prehistoric activity is limited to the occasional flint artefact and two subsoil features which may be of late Iron Age date. The upper levels of the Romano-British site have been affected by ploughing, but generally well-preserved deposits are present beneath an overburden of plough soil and subsoil ranging in depth between 360 mm and 620 mm. Measures are being taken to preserve this site *in situ*.

(Peter W. Cox and R.A. Broomhead)

Stratton on the Fosse, Downside Abbey, ST 659512
Rescue excavation work led by Richard Maggs and pupils of Downside Abbey School located a substantial stone-founded building on the west side of the Fosse Way. The walls of the building survived several courses high and numerous pieces of pottery and other artefacts were found. Further work is planned for 1994.

(R.A. Croft)

Wedmore, Court Garden, Mudgley, ST 442455
Finds of Roman material have been made over the past few years from sites to the east of Court Garden[1] where, in 1878, the Rev S.H.A. Hervey carried out excavations in search of the reputed 'King Alfred's Palace' and found instead the country house of the early medieval deans of Wells. No Roman finds were reported from these excavations, and it has been assumed that none were found, since Prebendary H.M. Scarth, who inspected the site for the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, and who was notably interested in the Roman period, would have recognised them even if Hervey had not.[2] It now appears that interest in the Saxon and medieval potential of the site may have led to Roman material, unusually, being disregarded.

The *Weston super Mare Gazette*, reporting the excavations at Mudgley on 30 November 1878, noted that pottery had been found 'very similar to the pottery found in Mr Robert Barrow's quarries not long since'. This refers to the undoubtedly Roman site at Shortland, found in 1878 and rediscovered in 1992.[3] On 25 January 1879, the same newspaper reported that 'fine specimens of Roman pottery have been brought to light.' A journalist might well have confused medieval and Roman pottery; but Hervey himself, in his preliminary report, kept an open mind. He remarked that finds consisted of 'a great quantity of coarse black or brown unglazed pottery, either Romano-British or Saxon' as well as much else which, together with the building remains, he correctly recognised as medieval.[4] In his full report he refers several times to black and brown pottery being discovered and in a discussion of 'The Relics' he comments again on the quantity of black and brown potsherds, which he had shown to several authorities. 'Some called it Romano-British and some called it Saxon.' The British Museum pronounced it Norman and Hervey, professing ignorance of pottery dating, accepted this as authoritative for all the pottery found.[5] Interest in the medieval occupation of the site overrode and eclipsed ideas about previous Roman occupation.

Several finds from Hervey's work are in Wells Museum and it remains possible that the rest of the Mudgley finds might also be there. It certainly seems that the Roman settlement at Mudgley, from Fernhall to Court Farm, may in fact be considerably more extensive than has hitherto been realised.

1. C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1991', *SANH*, **135** (1991), 154; C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *SANH*, **134** (1990), 214; E. Dennison (ed.), 'Somerset Archaeology 1988', *SANH*, **132** (1988), 212–3.
2. S.H.A. Hervey, *Wedmore Chronicles*, **1** (1887), 17–33.
3. C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1992', *SANH*, **136** (1992), 169–170.
4. S.H.A. Hervey, 'King Alfred's Palace at Wedmore', *SANH*, **24** (1878), 64.
5. S.H.A. Hervey, *Wedmore Chronicles*, **1** (1887), 23–5, 27.

(H. Hudson and F. Neale)

West Pennard, Middle East Street Farm, ST 535389
Fieldwalking near the eastern boundary of Norwood Park has revealed earthworks in permanent pasture resembling a possible Roman road. Air photographs taken by Penny and David Stokes revealed the ploughed-out road running towards Middle East Street Farm. A series of square enclosures around the farm together with other cropmarks were also noted.

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

MEDIEVAL

Ashbrittle, ST 055231
Fieldwork has identified a number of earthworks in the parish of Ashbrittle. Traces of small-scale ridged fields were noted on the west side of the River Tone and it is thought that these are medieval in date.

(B. Ridgley)

Athelney, ST 346293
The opportunity provided by the Channel Four television series 'Time Team' was used to conduct research at this site. Previous work has been sporadic and only a small trench, dug by Ian Burrow in 1985, has been well recorded.[1] The recent re-examination of the documentary evidence of Athelney Abbey by Simon Keynes has revealed references to the extent and destruction of the stone foundations which existed here.[2] The precise position of the foundations was, however, unknown. As part of the 'Time Team' project, geophysical surveys were undertaken by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, namely a resistivity survey covering the area of the abbey around the monument, and a fluxgate gradiometer survey at the west end of the island where aerial photography had suggested a circular enclosure.[3]

The survey of the abbey (Fig. 2) shows clearly the outline of the medieval church and allows some interpretation to be made of other features. To the west, the gradiometer survey located several ditches which appear to be filled with ferrous material. Taken together with the finding of a piece of slag during fieldwalking, this may indicate an industrial area of possibly earlier date.[4] A full report on the work is in preparation.

1. E. Dennison (ed.), 'Somerset Archaeology, 1984–5' *SANH*, **129** (1985), 19–20.
2. Simon Keynes, 'George Harbin's Transcript of the Lost Cartulary of Athelney Abbey', *SANH*, **136** (1992), 149–159.
3. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Athelney* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report No. 93/55 1993).
4. G. McDonnell, pers comm.

(R.A. Croft, C.F. Gaffney and J.A. Gater)

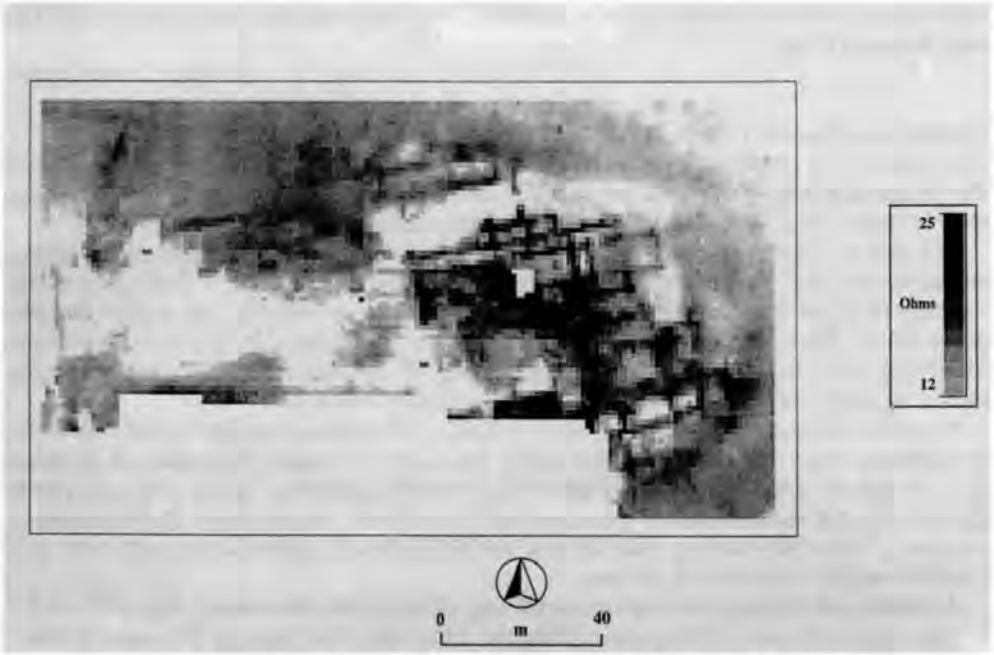


Fig. 2 Resistivity survey at Athelney Abbey (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford).

Beckington, Beckington Castle, ST 800514
An archaeological evaluation near the south boundary of the grounds of Beckington Castle recorded evidence of medieval occupation. A large bank which defines the southern boundary of the property was sectioned but no dating evidence was recovered. This bank was formerly thought to be a defensive feature but fieldwork suggests that it divided the village infield from the open fields beyond.

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

Bishop's Hull, Church of St Peter and St Paul, ST 20472475
During repairs it was discovered that the floor joists in the nave were largely re-used roof timbers. The nave was rebuilt in 1827–8 and it is possible that the earlier nave roof was the source of the timbers. Below the floor were a brick-built vault, cut by an inserted heating boiler, a number of burial vaults with inscribed slab covers and what seems to have been an unfinished, double-sized grave pit left without the usual brick lining and with no cover. The bottom part of this was partly filled with soil and rubble and it was not investigated. The early 19th century pews in the church that were dismantled to allow the floor to be repaired proved to have been constructed from a collection of re-used wood panels and were in marked contrast to the fine early 16th century bench pews in the remainder of the church.

(Peter McCrone)

Butleigh, 'Courtlands', ST 519338
A small archaeological evaluation recorded features dating from the 12th to 14th centuries including a possible road or trackway. These features were partially cut by an

18th century rubbish pit and all were sealed by two 19th century estate roads connected with Butleigh Court.

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

Carhampton, Eastbury Farm, ST 011427

The route of the proposed by-pass road for Carhampton leaves the existing A39 east of the village and runs north-west between Eastbury Farm and the village before swinging west to rejoin the A39 at Keeper's Cottage, to the west of Carhampton.

The area of Eastbury Farm was recorded by Savage in 1830 as having produced 'many human bones' and 'stones and cement' mainly in orchards and gardens belonging to the vicarage and the farm. A series of trenches excavated to evaluate the archaeological potential of the road line produced evidence for 18th–19th century farm buildings overlying 16th–17th century surfaces, extensive cemetery deposits and features indicating early occupation beyond the existing village boundaries.

Nineteen complete human inhumations ranging from neonate to adult were identified. In addition, large amounts of disarticulated bone and articulated fragments of skeleton (e.g. an almost complete spinal column) were found, suggesting that a well-used burial ground existed some distance from the present church. Radiocarbon determinations suggest a 12th–16th century date for the burials, although potentially many more and possibly earlier burials lie on the site.

A number of features and finds of metal slag and charcoal in trenches dug north of the village suggest industrial occupation. Charcoal from a ditch fill gave an 8th century date.

(Peter McCrone)

Charlton Musgrove, Stavordale Priory, ST 736320

Following modifications to the development proposals, a further stage of archaeological evaluation was undertaken by AC Archaeology.[1] Trenching in the fields some 30 m west of the priory buildings located a ditch of late 13th or 14th century date. This ditch is probably part of an otherwise undated system of drainage features, previously surveyed by Somerset County Council and still discernible as shallow hollows. A second ditch of similar date has been recorded during development; archaeological observations are continuing during building and refurbishment works.

1. C.J. Webster and R.A. Croft (eds), 'Somerset Archaeology 1992', *SANH*, **136** (1992), 172.

(John Hawkes)

East Pennard, Church of All Saints, ST 59703745

Repairs to the south wall of the churchyard during 1993 enabled the recovery of several fragments of architectural detail in Doulting oolite including a well-preserved section of tracery comprising, from external view, the top left-hand corner of a square-headed window.

The fragment represents a near complete ogee head of one side of one main light with two cusps, part of the spandrel containing a complete blind eyelet and also the lower half of a small quatrefoil light, all having internal and external chamfers. The external surfaces, apart from impact damage, are crisp and unweathered, while the internal surfaces retain a coating of white lime wash, in places flaking to reveal three distinct layers. The tracery form, though similar to the tracery of the present church, is of slightly simpler design, and probably derives from the Decorated style. The present church has a nave and chancel entirely of the period *c.* 1420,[1] the tower being slightly earlier, and the fragments in the south wall of the churchyard may derive from the former church demolished and rebuilt at this time. Unlike the east, west and north walls of the

Fig. 3 Masons' marks on the underside of Haselbury Old Bridge (Peter McCrone).

churchyard, which are of 18th century date, the south wall retains the churchyard which ranges in height from 0.5 m to 2 m above the level of the area to the south, and although re-built at various times, contains much re-used masonry.

1. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset*, (1958), 163–4.

(A.V. Pearse)

Glastonbury, Dod Lane, ST 503388

An evaluation of a site on the corner of Dod Lane and Chilkwell Street was carried out by N. and C. Hollinrake before the development of the site as a residential home. This led to the excavation of a larger area along the Chilkwell Street frontage by Wessex Archaeology. The work revealed a number of medieval features including ditches, pits and a stone-capped drain probably associated with the abbey. During a watching brief on the construction of the building, a large ditch was observed going north–south. The ditch, roughly 30 m to the east of Chilkwell Street, had 12th century pottery in the fill.

(N. and C. Hollinrake and Carrie Hearne)

Haslebury Plucknett, Haslebury Old Bridge, ST 458109

During repairs to the stonework an opportunity was taken to examine the structure of the bridge in some detail. The bridge is thought to date from the 14th century and is built of Ham stone ashlar with two segmental arches separated by an angled cutwater on both upstream and downstream sides. The bridge has four soffit ribs under each arch. The river bed below the bridge has been paved to prevent scouring. During the examination a number of masons' marks were recorded (Fig. 3). The Old Bridge was by-passed when Eastham's bridge was built by the Yeovil Turnpike Trust in 1831.

(Peter McCrone)

Meare, Meare Hospital, ST 452417

An archaeological evaluation within the garden of 'The Laurels' revealed a number of features dating from the period between the 11th and 14th centuries. The features comprised ditches, pits and postholes and were cut into the natural clay. Occupation between the 17th and 19th centuries was also represented by drainage ditches, building foundations and drains.

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

Merriot, Glebe Lands, ST 44261274

An archaeological evaluation in the centre of the village located evidence for the primary settlement core in the late Saxon or early Norman period. The focus of settlement appears to have moved to the area around Church Street in the 12th century. A rectory house, tithe barn and outbuildings may have been built in the late 13th century. Evidence for the substantial house, about 30 m in length, was recovered. Scanty traces of prehistoric activity were noted.

(M. Horton)

Milverton, Screedy, ST 094256
Fieldwork and metal detecting of ploughed fields near Screedy Farm by Lee Garner revealed evidence of early medieval activity in the form of coins and pottery.

(R.A. Croft)

Muchelney, Muchelney Abbey, ST 42902488
Investigation of three sub-surface, stone-lined features at Muchelney Abbey was carried out on behalf of English Heritage, in advance of consolidation work. One of the features appears to have been a drainage channel which had been deliberately blocked with masonry. The other two features could not be interpreted precisely, but may also be sections of blocked drainage channels. No finds or other evidence of date were recovered.

(L. and R. Adkins)

Norton St Philip, ST 75715550
The medieval hamlet of Yatwich in Norton St Philip appears in various documents relating to Hinton Priory.[1] Fieldwork and map studies have identified the probable site of the settlement (now deserted). The well-preserved earthworks of a small settlement stand in a tithe-free field surrounded by tithable land;[2] two of the adjacent fields are named Etwicks and Etwicks Paddock.

1. E. Margaret Thompson, *A History of the Somerset Carthusians* (London, 1895), 242, 257.
2. SRO, D/D/Rt 62 (Norton St Philip tithe map and apportionment).

(Penny Stokes)

Taunton, Corfield Hall and Co-Op Garage, ST 22952462
An archaeological evaluation located the medieval town ditch and retrieved samples for environmental assessment. Medieval and post-medieval deposits were identified to the east of the ditch. There are reports of human burials on the site, although none were encountered during the evaluation.

(N. and C. Hollinrake)

Thurlbear, Church of St Thomas, ST 265211
The restoration of this church by the Redundant Churches Fund has provided an opportunity to examine and record the fabric of the building prior to its repair and conservation. A detailed photographic record of the exterior of the church wall elevations was made by Somerset County Council. The external photographic recording used a Leica Elcovision camera which can be combined with computerised survey data to produce an accurate digitised record of the wall elevations. In addition to photographic recording, hundreds of control points were located using an EDM machine and this resulted in the production of an accurate survey at 1:50 scale of the exterior of the nave and chancel.

Evidence of several phases of church building was noted, particularly on the north side of the chancel wall where evidence of blocking and infilling was clearly visible after the external render was removed. Rendering was also removed from all the walls in the interior of the church and a photographic record made. Two early clerestory windows were noted on the north and south walls of the nave.

The photographic record of the interior of the church was undertaken by Somerset County Council and further recording was done by John Schofield (architect) and David Dawson of Somerset County Museums Service. The project was sponsored by the Redundant Churches Fund and Somerset County Council. Copies of the survey and the photographs are available for reference in the SMR and with the Fund.

(R.A. Croft)

Wedmore, The Borough, ST 43614788
The Borough has long been accepted as a planned development of the 12th or early 13th century, an addendum to the older village comparable to the street of the same name at Montacute. A regular pattern of plot layouts, about 40 in all, each measuring 3 ropes by 15 ropes (60 ft by 300 ft) can be identified. Later amalgamation and subdivisions can be demonstrated. There is some documentary evidence of 'urban aspirations' (burgages, burgesses, portreeves) which never seem to have come to anything. While it had been known that the original Borough was considerably more extensive than the modern street, the discovery of a Borough Court Leet rental of 1717 has now provided a clue to the layout of the burgages, and to their occupants, along the full length of the west side of the Borough. This 1717 manorial court record survives in the form of a lantern slide of the first part of a parchment roll, made by the local GP, Dr William Bracey, in the early 1900s. Tantalisingly, the foot of the document is still rolled up in the photograph, so that the rest of the Borough entries are not visible. The whereabouts of the original document, if it survives, are unknown.

The part of the rental that can be seen on the lantern slide lists tenants in order along one side of the Borough. Names and premises can be tied up, using 17th and 18th century documentary evidence, with earlier old auster holdings, in some cases back to the 16th century; and carried forward to an 1879 manorial rental and thus to modern Ordnance Survey maps. Rents help to identify an original burgage unit as having an annual rent of about 1s; the multiples or fractions of this confirm the physical evidence for burgages being amalgamated or subdivided over the centuries. A preliminary publication of these results has appeared in *The Isle of Wedmore News*.

(H. Hudson)

Wellington, Church of St John, ST 141209
Permission was granted for a large extension on the north side of St John's Church, Wellington. An archaeological excavation of the area of the new building was carried out by Mark Horton of Bristol University as part of the work. An area of the 19th century cemetery was found along with an earlier ?18th century churchyard wall. Beneath the later churchyard wall and running in a north to south direction were two V-shaped ditches approximately 2 m across and almost 1.5 m deep. One of the ditches contained several early medieval pottery sherds. A copy of the excavation report is deposited in the SMR. Thanks are due to Prebendary T. Stokes for his help with this project.

(R.A. Croft)

Wells Market Place, ST 55054580
An extensive programme of repaving and enhancement work was carried out in the Market Place at Wells. This project was designed and funded by Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council and English Heritage. As part of the enhancement scheme, an archaeological watching brief was carried out by Somerset County Council to examine the changes in level which had occurred across the square. There had been substantial deposition of 19th century layers particularly on the southern side in front of the Town Hall which had formerly been the garden of a substantial town house. The only archaeological features noted in the centre of the Market Place were stone-lined drains and conduits of late-medieval date. In the north-east corner of the Market Place, towards Penniless Porch, a drain was seen running eastward towards the cathedral for at least 40 m. It was not fully investigated but remains accessible following the repaving scheme.

(R.A. Croft)

Wiveliscombe, ST 102722
Fieldwork by Mr Ridgley, in association with minor landscaping works at Stone's Tenement on the east side of Wiveliscombe, produced evidence of early medieval pottery of 12th–13th century date.

(R.A. Croft)

Yeovilton, Church of St Bartholomew, ST 54682301
During repairs to the floor of St Bartholomew's Church, Yeovilton, a large stone slab was uncovered. This was positioned against the east end wall of the church and had five small equal-armed crosses incised into the surface.

(Peter McCrone)

POST-MEDIEVAL

Bridgwater, York Buildings, ST 29843711
An anonymous telephone call led to a visit to a dental surgery at Maldon House where works to strengthen the building included excavating a pit 1 m deep through the basement floor. This revealed dark grey ashy material containing post-medieval pottery. There were reports that bone had been found. This may be the fill of a rubbish pit, cut by the construction of the Georgian buildings.

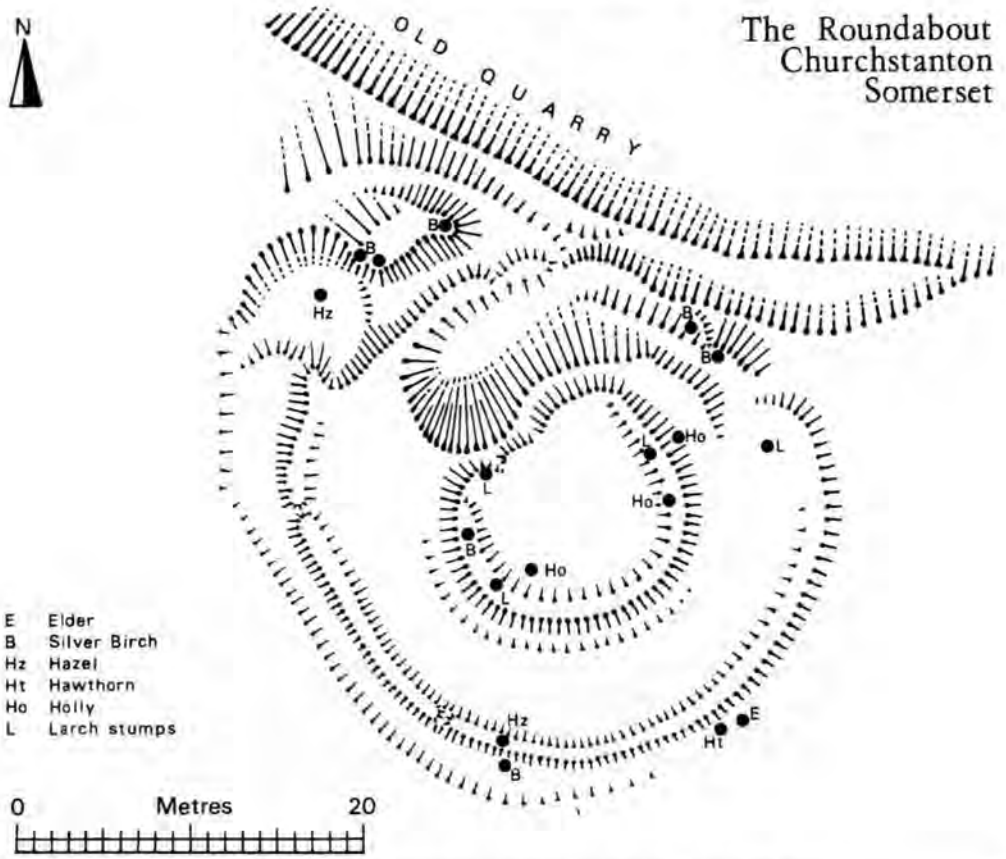
(Peter McCrone)

Cannington, Mill Lane, ST 25653945
An archaeological evaluation was carried out by AC Archaeology to determine the nature and survival of potential archaeological deposits on land adjacent to Mill Lane. Four trenches totalling a little under 150 m^2 were machine-excavated. A number of shallow pits and ditches of late medieval (15th century or later) and post-medieval date were located, together with the remains of a stone wall, also probably post-medieval. Sparse quantities of finds indicated a low-level of activity, and on the basis of the sample excavated, it was not possible to draw any firm conclusions about the function of the features recorded.

(Julian Cotton and Peter W. Cox)

Churchstanton, The Roundabout, ST 198145
Attention was first called to this site by a well-known topographical volume first published in 1941, which mentions that 'in a field behind the rectory – something of the history not written in books, but cut into the earth itself – a ditch within a ditch, forming a perfect circle with the ramparts still raised. It guards one of the loveliest stretches of the Blackdown Hills.'[1] Subsequently the site seems to have slipped out of the literature, receiving no mention in any later archaeological surveys of the region.

The earthworks still survive (Fig. 4), some 1400 m due east of the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. In April 1993 a survey was undertaken by members of the Taunton Deane Community Archaeology Project in order to provide a basic record of the site and in the hope of deriving some understanding of its date and function. The two concentric enclosures are each defined by a bank standing about 1 m high. In the outer face of the inner bank (to the north-east) some stonework is exposed, mostly Blackdown chert with some sandstone. Traces of outer ditches to both banks survive on the southern and western sides, but cannot be seen on the east. The northern flank overlooks the face of a large abandoned quarry, and has been affected by slumping and old dumps of spoil. The outer circle has a diameter of about 30 m, the inner circle 12 m.



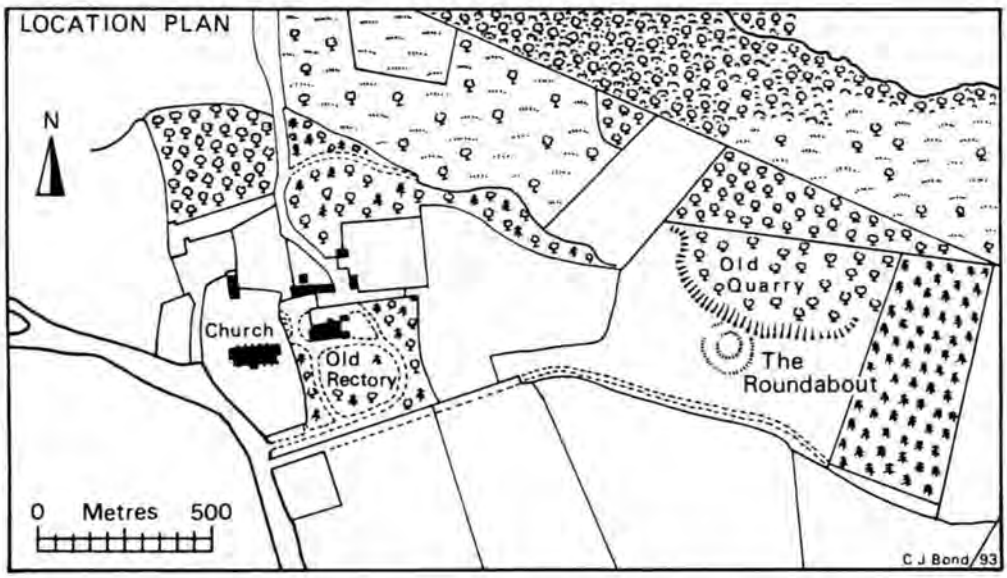


Fig. 4 The Roundabout. Churchstanton (James Bond).

The survey provided few positive clues as to the date or purpose of the earthworks. The name 'Roundabout' occurs elsewhere in relation to archaeological sites, referring, for example, to an Iron Age hill-fort at Lyneham in Oxfordshire; but it is widespread as a field name throughout southern and midland England (particularly in Cheshire, where fifteen occurrences have been noted) and, in this context, has been taken to imply little more than 'piece of land surrounded by streams, trees or roads', or occasionally 'piece of land with an isolated clump of trees within its boundaries.'[2]

Although superficially similar to a prehistoric defended enclosure, the relatively slight nature of the banks and ditches would seem to rule out a defensive function. Double concentric circular enclosures are also characteristic of several other classes of prehistoric site. Some, such as the 'henge' monuments at Nafford in Worcestershire and the Big Rings at Dorchester on Thames, are significantly larger than the Churchstanton site. The same can be said of the recently-excavated Iron Age settlement at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick, in Oxfordshire, which is also of less regular shape.[3] Closer parallels in terms of size are provided by a number of excavated double-ditched Bronze Age round barrows; the lack of a central mound, however, and the position of the Churchstanton site on sloping ground in a slightly concave hollow, argues against this interpretation.

The sharply-defined form of the banks casts doubt upon a prehistoric origin for the site and points to a more recent date. In the 18th and 19th centuries ornamental tree clumps were sometimes surrounded by a bank and ditch at the time of their planting to protect them from damage by grazing livestock, and examples are known elsewhere in Somerset, for example at Cothelstone Beacon on the Quantocks. It is more difficult to find parallels for a concentric pair of tree-rings, but on a bleak and exposed site there night be some value in planting a sheltering nursery ring of conifers in the outer enclosure to protect a deciduous clump growing up in the inner enclosure. Today the Churchstanton Roundabout contains no trees of particular amenity value, but three larch stumps survive on the inner bank and one in the outer enclosure. While the precise historical context of the site has yet to be identified, its setting, with the former rectory and its landscaped grounds to the west and some minor parkland planting to the south, suggests that it is most likely to be a post-medieval landscaping feature. It would not be the only earthwork of this period to have been misinterpreted in the past as something much more ancient; a discussion of a similar problem earthwork in Sutton Park, Warwickshire, has recently been published.[4]

Thanks are due to Mr W. Stowell of Glebe Farm, Churchstanton, who kindly permitted access for the survey, to Colin Clements who undertook the organisation, and to all others who contributed to the survey.

1. Arthur Mee (ed.), *The King's England: Somerset* (London, 1941), 125.
2. John Field, *English Field-Names: a Dictionary* (Newton Abbot, 1972), 186.
3. T.G. Allen and M.A. Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron Age Enclosed Settlement at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick-with-Yelford, Oxon* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1993).
4. M.A. Hodder, 'The "Ancient Encampment", Sutton Park', *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, **97** (1991–2), 92–95.

(James Bond)

Cutcombe, Deserted Farm above Mansley Combe, ST 90294058

A deserted farm site was discovered within an area of enclosed land named 'Ham' on the southern slopes of Dunkery and is thought to equate with the unlocated site of Mansley in Aston's list.[1] The site lies in a sheltered, south-facing, wooded hollow and consists of earthworks of three to four ruined buildings set around a small yard. Nearby is a further

square building footing situated within a well-preserved contemporary field system. Elements of the fields survive across much of the present enclosed area, and include a series of small narrow plots defined by stone rubble, having a prehistoric appearance but overlying a probably post-medieval boundary lynchet. There is a suggestion of later emparkment around the farm site, with a 'deer fence' type boundary. The rhododendron and Scots pine in the valley were planted in the middle of the last century to provide cover for red deer.[2]

Local memories suggest that the farm was occupied until the mid/late 19th century and the ascription of the site to Mansley is based firstly on the association in 1772 records with 'Langham', which lies across the valley, and secondly on the name of 'Mansley Combe' below the site.

1. M. Aston, 'Deserted Farmsteads on Exmoor', *SANH*, **127** (1983), 71–104.
2. Pers comm., J. Carslake, National Trust, 1992.

(Alan Preece)

Ditcheat, ST 6236
Fieldwalking located and recorded a concentration of post-medieval sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

East Pennard, ST 6238
Fieldwalking located and recorded a concentration of post-medieval sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

Exmoor, 'The Linton Road' and Gateway, Exe Plain, SS75004190–SS75054295
The course of a pre-enclosure road within Exmoor Forest was located and recorded in the form of a poorly-defined hollow way along the west flank of Exe Plain. The 1815 enclosure map of the Forest marks this as 'The Linton Road'. On the ground, however, the north end of its course differs from that mapped, fading out in the direction of a pair of slate-stone gateposts *c.* 1.5 m high defining a gateway in the forest boundary wall against Cheriton Ridge. This gap appears to be original and the road would thus seem to be one of those required to be let through the enclosure wall as a condition of its construction. A gully, now some 3 m deep, inside the gateway must, however, have rendered it obsolete long ago. The fine gateposts are in some danger of falling into this gully.

The 19th century road which replaced this route lies along the western side of the Hoaroak Valley, whilst the present road, completed in the 1930s, lies some way to the east, leading on to Brendon Common.

(Alan Preece)

Exmoor, Hoaroak Valley, SS 74744265
The earthwork remains of a rectangular building and small boulder-walled enclosures beside Hoaroak Water were located and recorded. The earthworks are approximately 20 m by 8 m, set against the valley side, with an opening to the flat ground by the stream. There are two fallen drilled stone gateposts, 1.6 m long, forming part of associated enclosures.

A track respecting the back of the building appears perhaps to underlie the 19th century forest boundary wall just northwards from here, raising the possibility that the site predates this feature. However, it is unlikely that a pre-enclosure building would

have been present within the forest here and the ruins more probably date from the early Knight period. The forest was at this time divided into herdings, supervised by a shepherd living either in a nearby farm or in specially built accommodation.[1] The 'Hoaroak herding' is referred to several times. MacDermot[2] records the construction of 'a few cottages for the labourers and shepherds – the ruins of three are to be seen at the Warren, *in Long Chains Combe near Hoaroak*, and between Winstitchen and Picked Stones' (my emphasis). The valley is the logical base for the Hoaroak herding, and the remains of a sheepfold and a stell can be seen near what was then the Simonsbath to Lynton road. There is also a reference to the location as 'Old Cott'[3] and the building remains by Hoaroak Water may well have been the shepherd's cottage.

1. C.S. Orwin and R.J. Sellick, *The Reclamation of Exmoor* (1970).
2. Edward. T. MacDermot, *The History of the Forest of Exmoor* (1911, reprinted 1973), 436.
3. Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division record card SS74SW9.

(Alan Preece)

Frome, Rook Lane Chapel, ST 77534787

Restoration of the Grade I listed 18th century Rook Lane Chapel in Frome has finally been completed by the Somerset Building Preservation Trust (SBPT) and the Chapel has been formally handed over to Mendip District Council for use as a public building. The restoration work was undertaken under the supervision of Plinke, Leaman & Browning, architects, in co-operation with English Heritage. Archaeological recording and monitoring was undertaken by Somerset County Council to record burials and the details of the former ceilings which were to be removed or re-covered. The restoration of this building represents a major achievement for the SBPT and for building conservation in Somerset. A short history of the chapel and a record of the restoration work has been produced.[1]

1. H. Stafford, *Rook Lane Chapel, Frome* (Somerset Building Preservation Trust, 1993).

(R.A. Croft)

Horton, Whitney Farm, ST 32341379

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken for a proposed slurry store and proposed stock housing at this farm. The site is recorded as a pottery on maps of 1760–80 and formed part of the Donyatt pottery industry. A previous evaluation, including a geophysical survey in a paddock immediately to the west,[1] had indicated kiln sites and building platforms that resulted in the relocation of the proposals to the present site. The evaluation trenches in the farmyard revealed no archaeological features and the small quantity of kiln waste recovered suggests that no kilns lay in the vicinity.

1. *Report on Geophysical Survey: Whitney Farm* (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report 92/58 1992).

(C.J. Webster)

Leigh on Mendip, Halecombe Quarry, ST 69924708

An archaeological survey of the site of post-medieval farm buildings was undertaken on behalf of Wimpey Hobbs Ltd. The survey revealed that three short lengths of mortared masonry wall, drystone field boundary walls and scattered stones and rubble comprise the only surviving surface remains of the farm buildings. Any other remains of this site must lie below the ground.

A watching brief on a drainage trench 30 m to the north revealed medieval deposits and post-medieval yard surfaces.

(L. and R. Adkins and R.A. Broomhead)

Taunton, Canon Street, ST 22962475
During construction of a new building at the rear of Canon Street a watching brief revealed traces of post-medieval occupation in the form of rubbish pits and a brick-lined well which had been capped by corbelled brickwork but which had a lead pipe running down inside. The culverted course of a stream ran across the site and during excavations to replace the old brick culvert with concrete pipes a number of wooden stakes were pulled out by the mechanical excavator. These may have been part of revetting of the stream before the culvert was built, or the remains of an old boundary fence.

(Peter McCrone)

Wells Museum, ST 550459
Rescue recording work in advance of the construction of a new gallery was undertaken by Chris Hawkes and Simon Almay funded by the Wells Museum. Several medieval features and stratified layers were noted on the north side of the museum buildings. Further excavation revealed several structures including stone-lined cisterns and cess pits which contained some very fine groups of 17th and 18th century pottery and glass vessels. Grants were made available from Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council to ensure that this material is professionally recorded and the results prepared for publication.

(R.A. Croft)

West Bagborough, ST 16013301–ST 17003330
An archaeological watching brief was carried out on behalf of Wessex Water on a Sewerage Scheme at West Bagborough. A few unstratified finds of post-medieval date were recovered, but there was no evidence of any archaeological features.

(L. and R. Adkins)

West Bradley, ST 5735
Fieldwalking located and recorded a concentration of post-medieval sherds. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Penny Stokes)

INDUSTRIAL

Old Cleeve, The Foundry, ST 03753902
This business was established in 1866 as a small brass foundry and agricultural engineering works which eventually concentrated on contracting for threshing and saw milling. Prior to its closure and sale, the Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society undertook a photographic and measured survey of the premises. Works papers of the owners and operators, the Nethercott family, which date from 1890, have been lodged with the Somerset Record Office.

(Brian J. Murless)

Puriton, Limekiln Complex, ST 314413
Clearance of dense vegetation adjacent to the Bristol–Exeter railway revealed six limekilns, served by five draw arches, and an unexplained structure with vaulted chambers. All formed part of a cement works,[1] set up by John Board[2] in about 1844, which went out of production in the 1890s. As a bank of industrial kilns they are a rare survival in Somerset, the vast majority of limekilns having a direct relationship with the agricultural economy.

1. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st Edition (1887), sheet 50.3.
2. B.J. Murless, 'John Board, a Sedgemoor Man and Company', *Journal of the Burnham on Sea Archaeological and Natural History Society* (1992), 6–8

(Brian J. Murless)

Watchet, West Somerset Mineral Line
A feasibility study was prepared by Mike Jones to look at the current state of the Mineral Line and to assess the potential for conservation and interpretation work at the site. A copy of the survey is available for reference in the SMR. Further work is planned in the coming year in conjunction with Exmoor National Park and West Somerset District Council and it has generally been agreed that Watchet should be seen as the main focus for the interpretation of the story of the West Somerset Mineral Line. A trail guide leaflet for part of the route of the railway around Watchet has been produced by West Somerset District Council.

(R.A. Croft)

OTHER REPORTS

This sections contains reports of assessments, evaluations and watching briefs, mostly required as a condition of planning consent, which produced little or no evidence of archaeological deposits.

Aller, Aller Court Farm, ST 395288
The foundation pits for a new storage barn at Aller Court Farm were examined. The site lies on the edge of the area of the deserted medieval village (SMR 53488), but only natural deposits were observed.

(Peter McCrone)

Bishop's Lydeard, Knowle Hill, ST 185275
A preliminary desk-based appraisal followed by a field evaluation was undertaken by AC Archaeology on a proposed landfill site extending to some 8 ha. The general area contains a diverse range of important monument types and findspots, including a possible henge monument, ring ditches and trackway, field system and settlement remains of likely late prehistoric or Roman date. A series of machine-excavated trenches was dug to examine a sample of some 1.5% of the proposed development. Despite the evidence for activity in the vicinity, the field evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.

(Julian Cotton and John Hawkes)

Dunball Feed Mill, ST 307412
A field evaluation by means of machine-excavated trenching supported by a limited desk-top study was carried out by AC Archaeology on the site of a proposed 3 ha development at Dunball. Despite the proximity of significant medieval settlement remains and findspots of Roman to post-Medieval date, the excavations produced no evidence of archaeological activity in the form of either subsoil features or finds. Ridge-and-furrow earthworks, almost certainly of post-medieval date, were recorded across the whole site area.

(John Valentin and John Hawkes)

Highbridge, Newton Road, ST 316473
Development of a site overlying part of the old bed of the River Brue allowed observations to be made during excavations for sewerage and drainage systems. The

trenches, 3–4 m deep, cut into grey clay and a number of iron shed piles were pulled up by excavation machinery. Roman pottery has been recorded from the area in the past but no further finds were made. To the west of the site the clay gave way to sand.

(Peter McCrone)

Langport, Whatley, ST 419267
An evaluation of the archaeological potential of an area proposed for the new library building in Langport indicated that the area had been subject to flooding in the past and not occupied.

(C.J. Webster)

Leigh on Mendip, Halecombe Quarry, ST 69004715
An archaeological watching brief on intermittent topsoil stripping was carried out on behalf of Wimpey Hobbs Ltd. A pattern of 19th and 20th century tile land-drains, and two land-drains made of channels filled with stone rubble, were recorded. Unstratified finds of post-medieval date and one prehistoric worked flint were recovered.

(L. and R. Adkins)

Marston Magna, Moat Field, ST 59342225
A small trench (2 m by 0.5 m) was dug beside the electricity pole on the western edge of the site during work to place power cables underground. The ground disturbed was largely the fill of a previous cable trench. No archaeological features were seen in the sections and no finds were made.

(Peter McCrone)

Martock, 31 Water Street, ST 45951895
The foundation trenches being dug for a house were examined. No archaeological features were found although post-medieval pottery was noted in the topsoil.

(Peter McCrone)

Meare Heath, ST 430408
An archaeological evaluation in advance of an application to cut peat revealed no features or finds.

(C.M. Gerrard)

Queen Camel, Hazelgrove House, ST 597268
A watching brief during construction of a new accommodation block south- west of the house revealed only natural deposits.

(Peter McCrone)

Stoke sub Hamdon, Ham Hill War Memorial, ST 47701730
A watching brief was carried out during repair and replacement of steps leading to the war memorial at the north end of Ham Hill. Minimal disturbance to turf and topsoil took place and no archaeological features were noted.

(Peter McCrone)

Yeovil, Abbey Manor Park, ST 53701672
A watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Westbury Homes in an area where pottery had previously been found. One undated feature was located; no artefacts were recovered.

(R.A. Broomhead)

Yeovil, King Street, ST 561164
Observations were made during ground clearance for development of old allotment gardens. Only modern material was found in the surface deposits. The development was built on piled foundations, thus greatly reducing the opportunity to examine soil sections.
(Peter McCrone)

Yeovilton, Podimore, ST 547250
Observations were made of the foundation trenches on a plot at the north end of the village, adjacent to the old A303. These revealed only natural deposits below ploughsoil.
(Peter McCrone)

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