SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY 1996

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SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL, ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

County Archaeological Officer's Report

The task of compiling the annual report gives an opportunity to assess and review the wide range of archaeological activities which are going on in Somerset every year. The position of the archaeological team within the Environment Department continues to develop as more and more requests are made for archaeological and heritage information. During 1996 more than 800 planning applications and other consultations were made of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). Coping with this increasing demand is challenging with fewer resources available to deal with development control work across the county. Obtaining sufficient information from applicants wishing to carry out development is essential and the policy procedures to do this are well established in the county.

The only way forward for research projects is partnership funding and support from English Heritage and other agencies. Of particular merit for the county is the Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) of the historic towns funded by English Heritage which started in 1995. At the end of 1996 a total of 19 towns (out of 46) have been assessed and described. This work will provide valuable support to local planning authorities when assessing applications for development within the historic cores of our towns. The project was strengthened in 1996 with the appointment of Miranda Richardson to work with Clare Gathercole to prepare reports on the towns, each with a strategy document which will be endorsed by the local planning authorities and issued as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Somerset is in the forefront with this project and hosted an important seminar at Dillington House to assess progress and to help English Heritage and other local authorities develop the strategies. An interim report on the progress of the project has been published[1]. The towns project will be completed in 1998. As part of the EUS a considerable amount of information is being added to the SMR in a digitised format and this is helping to develop computerised maps for the archaeological heritage of the county.

During the year, Somerset County Council and a number of partners submitted an application for a Millennium grant to establish an Ecomuseum at the Morlands site on the edge of Glastonbury. This project proposed to set up a large museum with interpretation facilities and reconstructions to illustrate the archaeology, history and life of the Somerset Levels and Moors. The bid was unsuccessful but in the process of development and consultation a wide range of heritage issues were discussed with many local people. This proposal clearly showed the interest and educational value in having "living heritage" centres in the County and the importance of sites such as the Peat Moors Visitor Centre (PMVC) at Westhay.

With the failure of the Avalon 2000 bid, the educational facilities at the PMVC continue to be the principal source for information on the archaeology of the Somerset Levels and

Moors. The acquisition of the site in 1996 by the County Council secured the future of the archaeological reconstructions and activities at the centre. A programme of courses and events saw an increase in visitors in 1996. One of the highlights of the season was the National Archaeology Day in September with more than 200 visitors to the site joining in with activities and also meeting Professor Mick Aston of Bristol University and Channel 4 "Time Team". It is hoped that this will become an annual event at the centre. The main reconstruction project for 1996 was the construction of a log boat based upon the iron-age boat found at Meare. The boat was exhibited at the Bristol Festival of the Sea and was successfully launched on the South Drain in the summer. It is now moored at the Centre and in use as part of the displays. At the end of 1996, Cary Meehan left the centre as Warden and her place was taken by Guy Apter. The Centre is expanding its range of activities and functions and is working in partnership with the Willows Garden Centre and English Nature. A development plan is being prepared for the next five years.

The importance of wetland archaeology in Somerset has taken something of a back seat in recent years following the completion of the Somerset Levels Project. This situation has been remedied with the establishment of the Sweet Track assessment project, funded by English Heritage. The aim of this project is to show the importance of monitoring and assessing waterlogged sites over time (see below). This project will run until 1998 and is co-ordinated by Richard Brunning. Richard has also prepared the English Heritage *Guidance Note on Wet Wood*.[2]

During the year, staff from the group have been involved with a number of building and historic landscape projects most notably at Halswell House and Hestercombe gardens. This has involved guidance on the conservation of important buildings and the implementation of conservation works to preserve these sites. A detailed survey of the 19th- and 20th-century defensive buildings at Brean Down fort was carried out by Chris Webster and Roger Hagley as part a project to preserve this nationally important site.

In addition to the above, various enhancement projects have been implemented during the year as part of road schemes. These include the final stages of the enhancement of Glastonbury High Street, the Wells Relief Road and the Market Place and North Street in Taunton. Schemes such as the Taunton Town Centre Enhancement may at first sight appear to have limited impact upon archaeological deposits but the work involved the almost complete destruction of all the archaeological deposits in the town's market place. The issues of enhancement coupled with government guidance on the redevelopment of many of our town centres will prove to be a challenge for archaeologists and planners over the next few years.

There is a need for a local research framework for Somerset Archaeology and some thought was given to this at a meeting held in conjunction with the South West Archaeological Forum and the Centre for South Western Historical Studies at the University of Exeter in March. English Heritage published comments on the need for research frameworks at the local and regional level and this initiative should encourage the publication of an archaeological strategy for the county which links in with regional and national objectives[3]. The society is urged to consider preparing a strategy to celebrate the 150th anniversary of SANHS in 1999 and to guide archaeological research in the county into the next millennium.

1 Croft, R.A., Schofield, A.J. and Webster, C.J. 'Managing archaeology in historic towns'. *Conservation Bulletin*. November 1996.

2 *Waterlogged Wood – guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation, and curation of waterlogged wood*. English Heritage. 1996.

3 *Frameworks for our past*. English Heritage. 1996.

(R.A. Croft)

SURVEY, FIELDWORK AND EXTENSIVE SITES

Aerial Reconnaissance

The present programme of aerial reconnaissance in Somerset began in 1989 and was last reported in these Proceedings in 1990[1]. The programme is currently undertaken by Frances Griffith and Bill Horner, of Devon County Council, covering Somerset on an agency basis. In previous years funding has come from the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) and from Somerset County Council. However in 1996, with drastic cuts in RCHME's Regional Flying budget, funds were provided solely by Devon and Somerset County Councils in order to capitalise on the excellent conditions that existed for the recording of archaeological sites in the two counties.

The wisdom of this decision has been confirmed by the season's results: 158 archaeological sites were recorded in cropmark or parchmark form, of which 84, or 53%, were new discoveries. This is broadly similar to the most productive of previous years, such as 1990 and 1995, when roughly 55% of recorded sites were new. This demonstrates the continuing value of primary aerial reconnaissance in Somerset.

Sites were recorded throughout the county, but concentrations were observed in the Vale of Taunton Deane, the south-east flanks of the Quantocks between Taunton and Bridgwater, the Holford-Stringston area, the Watchet and Williton hinterland, around Chedzoy and Westonzoyland and the adjacent slopes of the Polden Ridge, and between Langport and Somerton (Fig. 1). The soil types that were most productive of cropmarks were the typical brown earths, stagnogleyic argillic brown earths and brown rendzinas.

The majority of sites were in cropmark form, but as the dry summer progressed parchmarks in grass were recorded with increasing frequency. As in previous years the majority of recorded sites were either ring ditches or simple enclosures. The ring ditches, thought to be ploughed-out barrows, continue to extend the known distribution of 2nd millennium BC ritual monuments in lowland Somerset. By analogy with Devon, where a small but increasing number of enclosure sites have been investigated through excavation, many of the simple enclosures, particularly those of rectilinear form, may prove to be farmsteads of Iron Age or Romano-British date. However earlier prehistoric or indeed, medieval dates should not be ruled out for these and other enclosure forms[2]. In some areas, notably around Chedzoy and Podimore/Yeovilton (see below), more complex systems of enclosures, field systems and trackways were recorded.

It is worth noting that many of the new discoveries in 1996 were in areas that have been fairly frequently photographed in past years, areas such as the Vale of Taunton Deane and around Chedzoy. It is clear that even these areas may still be regarded as in a 'primary' reconnaissance phase. Many more new sites were recorded on the edges of previously productive areas, moving onto higher ground that had apparently not been susceptible to cropmark formation in earlier flying seasons. In this category are a group of enclosures just east of Wiveliscombe and a further group west of Wellington, on the fringe of the Vale of Taunton Deane. Several new enclosures were recorded scattered along the northern foothills of the Brendon Hills, with a particular concentration west of Stogumber. Further new discoveries were made on the north-east side of the Quantocks, between Holford and Stringston, in an area only accessible in the past three years due to the deactivation of formerly restricted military airspace over Bridgwater Bay.

A number of individual discoveries are of particular interest in that they can be linked to evidence from terrestrial field survey. For example a simple sub-rectangular enclosure was photographed on ground overlooking Somerton Moor. This was at the site of the Lugshorn or King's Sedgemoor 'villa'. Finds of Romano-British pottery and dressed stone have been made here and markings on the ground have been seen in dry summers. A building, containing an iron fibula and a bone, inscribed with the name 'Aprilis', is also reported to

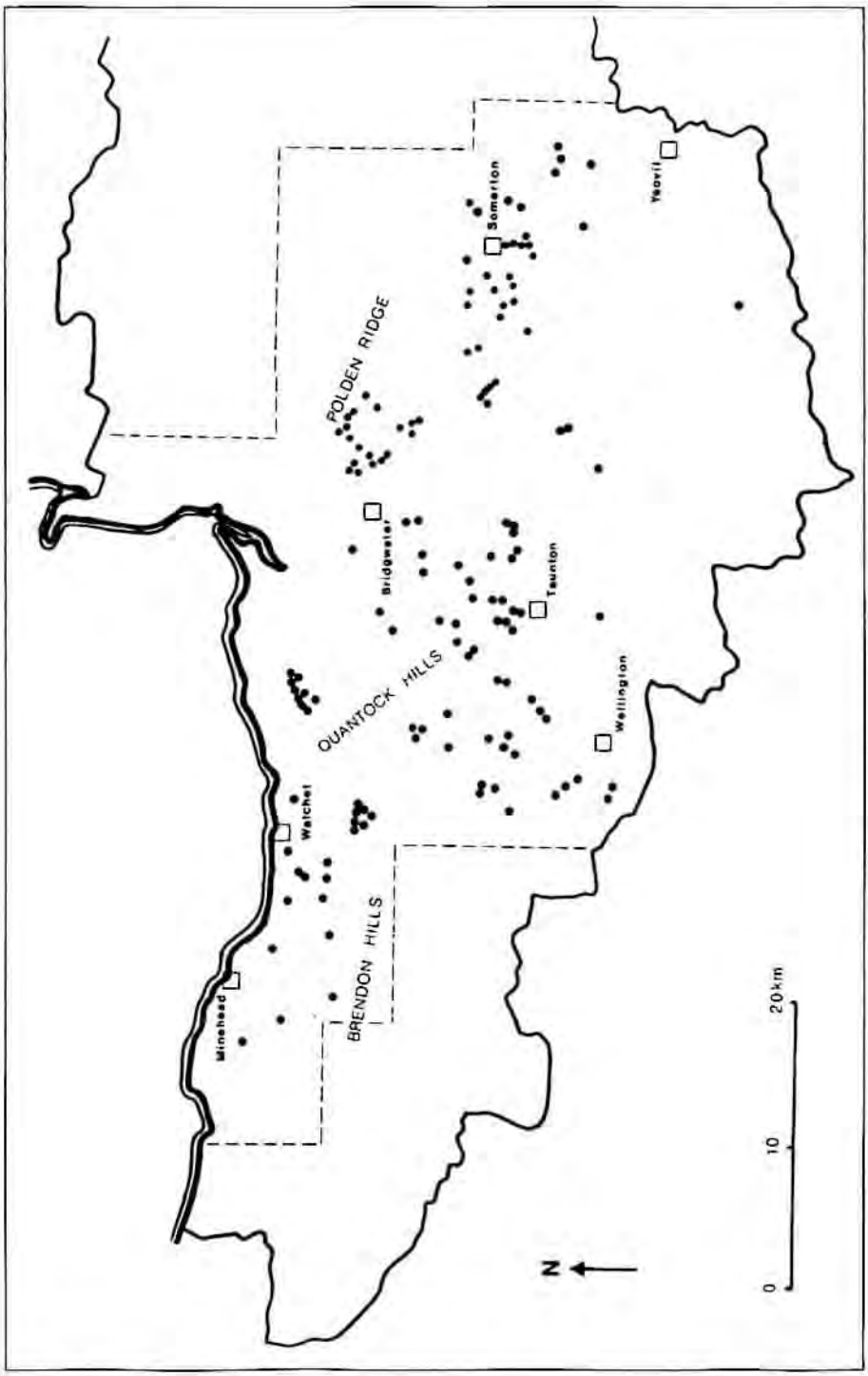

Fig. 1 Sites recorded from the air in 1996 (W.H. Horner).

have been found in this area in the early 19th century (information from Somerset SMR). The cropmark may represent an enclosure ditch around a Romano-British farmstead, or possibly indicate earlier occupation at the site.

Two similar enclosures, one rectangular and the other sub-rectangular, were recorded adjacent to the Highbrooks villa, near the Catsgore Romano-British settlement. These may be contemporaneous features, such as stock enclosures, or again could represent occupation of a different period. Further detail of the villa itself was also observed in 1996 when masonry structures appeared as parchmarks in grass. This is particularly significant as the site has never been formally excavated. Surface finds of 2nd–4th century AD material had been recorded in the 1950s and the site was surveyed in 1970 when deep ploughing had exposed walls and some areas of flooring. A geophysical survey was also undertaken in the 1970s and a composite plan of the various forms of survey was produced indicating the approximate positions of buildings and roadways[3]. The 1996 aerial photographic record corroborates and enhances this ground survey evidence.

A further known site to which significant evidence has been added is the presumed Iron Age and Roman-British settlement at Podimore/Yeovilton (Fig. 2). This complex of enclosures, fields and trackways has been recorded piecemeal over almost half a century, both through surface finds, of pottery and 'black soil', and through aerial photography[4]. The 1996 observations offer the single most complete record yet made of this extensive site.

At Leazemoor Rhyne, High Ham, a site photographed from the air in 1984, and tentatively identified in the Somerset SMR as a cursus monument, was recorded again in 1996. The interpretation of the site as a cursus may have been strengthened, although the possible presence of the other 'end' may suggest that it is another class of Neolithic monument; an oblong ditched mortuary enclosure.

The integration of the 1996 survey results with earlier work is currently in progress in the Somerset County Sites and Monuments Record, where all the photographs from the aerial reconnaissance programme since 1989 are lodged. The importance of primary reconnaissance in Somerset has again been demonstrated, both in the discovery of a high proportion of new archaeological sites and the addition of significant information to known or suspected sites. Such information plays an important part not only in expanding the academic understanding of the county's archaeology, but also in the more immediate process of protecting sites from inadvertent destruction. It is hoped that the programme will continue in future years, with funding from either the national heritage agencies or local sources.

1 Griffith F. M. 1990 'Aerial Reconnaissance' in Webster, C. J. *and* Croft, R. A. 'Somerset Archaeology 1990', *SANH* 134, 209–211.

2 Griffith, F.M. 1994 'Changing Perceptions of Prehistoric Dartmoor', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* 52, 85–99.

3 Leech, R. H. 1977 *Excavations at Catsgore 1970–73.*

4 Leech, R. H. 1975 'An Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement at Podimore', *SANH* 119, 72–76.

(W.S. Horner *and* F.M. Griffith)

Dendrochronology Project

The Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group have started a project to date a number of medieval buildings across the county. The project will continue into 1998 and has received financial support from various bodies including Somerset County Council. The first year of the project has been satisfactorily completed by Dan Miles for the SVBRG. Sixteen houses and one associated barn have been sampled, involving the taking of 150 cores. The results have generally been very successful giving dates much earlier than anticipated.

All has not however been plain sailing as some difficulty has been experienced in the selection of suitable subjects; it was found that elm was used more extensively than we had

Fig. 2 Part of the extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement between Podimore and Yeovilton. (DAP AAG/08. F.M. Griffith, Devon County Council, 18 July 1996. Copyright reserved.)

anticipated in some of the early buildings and also that some oak had rings too widely spaced to obtain satisfactory results. Four houses which had been on our provisional sampling list were not sampled for these reasons.

The following list gives details of those buildings where satisfactory felling dates were obtained.

1. Bridge Farmhouse (West Bradley) Baltonsborough CP. ST552363	1336–42
2. Bridge Farmhouse, Butleigh CP. ST523337	1305
3. 16/18 High Street, Bruton CP. ST683348	1452/3
4. 20 High Street, Bruton CP. ST683348	1462
5. 24 High Street, Bruton CP. ST683348	1430
6. 31 High Street, Bruton CP. ST682348	<1300
7. Higher Broughton Farmhouse, Stoke St. Mary CP. ST261224	<1300
8. The Court House, Long Sutton CP. ST468259	1328
9. Wigborough Manor House, South Petherton CP. ST448151	1584/5
10. Garnivals Week, Milverton CP. ST136255	1287
11. Whitestaunton Manor House, Whitestaunton CP. ST280105	1447–92
12. Stoford, Halse CP. ST144288	1608

(John Dallimore)

Exmoor RCHME Survey

The Exeter Office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) has continued its archaeological survey of the Exmoor National Park during 1996. The work has involved the recording of new sites, the re-interpretation of known sites, and the upgrading of existing records through field verification. Fieldwork in West Exmoor was completed, with large scale surveys of sites such as Badgworthy and the hillslope enclosures of Myrtleberry North and South, and area surveys of the East Pinford area. A programme of aerial photography, funded by the National Park, has been carried out.

Planning for the survey of the eastern part of the Park commenced, and fieldwork concentrated on Porlock Allotment and the Dunkery area. Large scale surveys completed included Bury Castle, the Sweetworthy hillslope enclosure, Hagley deserted settlement and the iron-working site in Horner Wood.

Completed reports and plans are available for public consultation in the NMRC, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2GZ.

(Hazel Riley *and* Robert Wilson-North)

The Shapwick Project

The multi-disciplinary project based on the parish of Shapwick which began in 1988 and is envisaged to run until 1998 or 1999, was continued in 1996.

Fieldwalking continued with a further eighteen fields being walked and another five being reworked. Work took place in the autumn as before but also in the spring with land prepared for maize sowing.

A further programme of sampling in gardens in the village was undertaken. This work which seemed inconsequential initially has proved to be very useful with analysis of the finds by Chris Gerrard suggesting scatters of 10th-century pottery all over the village area but with 12th–13th century pot only found in the centre of the village. Very little late medieval pottery is represented suggesting a change in rubbish disposal methods.

Extensive areas of the former village and around the manor house of the abbots of Glastonbury were subject to resistivity survey in July 1996. This revealed in great detail former streets, crofts and houses together with carriageways in the post-medieval park and

the outline of the great medieval barn shown on the print by Bonner in 1791 but demolished by 1839 – even the buttresses of its walls were clear! Other work was carried out at the site of Sladwick, a field north of the village.

Much time was spent in taking and analysing soil samples for phosphates and their heavy metal content (Andrew Jackson and Mike Martin, University of Bristol). The results from the field with the site of the church demonstrate clearly that known archaeological features are reflected in concentrations of phosphates and certain heavy metals particularly lead, zinc and cadmium. Elsewhere over the Roman site at Abchester for example similar results have been obtained from heavy metals. This gives us the confidence to expect that other concentrations of heavy metals in the soil may indicate sites which are not clearly represented by archaeological material. This is the case with the field called Sladwick where concentrations of heavy metals can be shown to correlate with geophysical anomalies and where previously unsuspected archaeology has now been demonstrated (see below).

Excavations were carried out in July 1996 at a number of locations in and around the village of Shapwick with students from King Alfred's College, Winchester, the University of Bristol and a local community archaeology group, all under the overall direction of Chris Gerrard.

Within the village near the church, further work adjacent to the 1995 excavation produced evidence of a post-hole building of the 10th century aligned on the present street pattern. Near the manor house, excavations in the area where 10th-century features had been noted alongside the Wessex Water pipeline failed to locate early buildings but did demonstrate that again boundaries were early in that area.

(Chris Gerrard, Phil Marter *and* Richard McConnell)

An excavation over the geophysical and soil anomalies at Sladwick located three sides of a building constructed in Romano-British fashion. A limited collection of Roman pottery sherds was recovered. The relative paucity of finds at the site may indicate a non-domestic use or the disposal of rubbish elsewhere. The placename element 'wick' should indicate a habitation site recognised by the Saxons but no direct evidence was found for the site's continuing use after the Roman period.

(Chris Webster)

All of the processing of finds from the field walking and from the excavations since 1993 takes place at King Alfred's College, Winchester, under the direction of Chris Gerrard. After a great deal of analysis very interesting results are now emerging about the finds from the fieldwalking; these are reported in Report 6. Most of the material on the excavations from 1993 to 1995 will be in Report 7.

Further fieldwalking will be carried out as fields are ploughed, especially for spring sown maize. Soil sampling, shovel-pitting and test pitting in the village will continue to be carried out as opportunities arise in order to characterise any evidence for pre-Conquest settlements.

Further research will be concentrated on soil sampling and geophysical survey over likely sites especially the site at Henry (-enworthy) in the west of the parish. Further selective excavation will take place over these areas together with other work in the fields, which may prove to be based on a Romano-British system, and around the former church site, as a result of the geophysical survey carried out in early 1995 by English Heritage.

Much more research is needed on aspects of the post medieval documentation for the parish, particularly for the 17th and 18th centuries to help explain the rich archaeology of the manor area and the demise of the medieval field system.

Plans are now in hand for the writing up and publication of the ten years work in the parish. At present several volumes are envisaged including the data, the methodology, the full account of how we think people have lived and worked in the parish over ten millennia and a popular booklet.

Meanwhile Shapwick Reports 3, 5 and 6 are available at £10 each plus postage. 7 is in press and 8 is in active preparation. The full report of the buildings in the parish by members of the Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group, is also now available at £7.50 plus postage. If you would like to receive any of these or to be put on the mailing list please send a cheque and your name and address to Professor Mick Aston, Department of Continuing Education, University of Bristol, 8–10 Berkeley Square, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1FIH.

(M. Aston)

Walton by-pass, proposed northern route

Following an initial archaeological assessment of the northern route option of the proposed A39 Walton by-pass between Street and Ashcott by Somerset County Council the likely impacts on five known or potential archaeological sites were identified. A field visit to one of these potential sites showed that it had been extensively disturbed by quarrying and so limited field evaluation, using machine-excavated trenches, was undertaken by AC Archaeology at the remaining four sites.

SMR site 26014: no further finds were made at the findspot of two flint flakes.

SMR sites 12383, 25478: investigation of soil marks visible on aerial photographs demonstrated them to be insubstantial linear depressions, and part of a larger network of such features. Although undated, the features are considered likely to be of comparatively recent date and probably related to surface drainage.

SMR site 25479: soilmarks and fieldname evidence had suggested the possibility of an early (pre-conquest) medieval defended enclosure. Evaluation trenching failed to produce an explanation for the soil marks, which may be geological in origin, and nor was any density of finds indicative of settlement or other activities recovered. A single boundary ditch was located and excavated, this produced very few finds, but these did include a fiddle-headed horseshoe nail of probable early medieval date.

(John Hawkes *and* Julian Cotton)

MULTI PERIOD

Bridgwater, Penel Orlieu ST2959 3694

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief were carried out by Exeter Archaeology at Nos 1–7 Penel Orlieu on behalf of Knapp Construction Ltd. The site is located just inside the West Gate of the medieval borough and in the 18th century it comprised a single property unit with a c.30m wide frontage. Evidence for the medieval form of the plot was very sparse, mainly due to subsequent deep ground disturbance. Pottery of late 13th- or early 14th-century date was recovered from pits at the rear. There was, however, ample archaeological evidence for the subsequent sub-division of the property into four tenements in the 19th century.

(P.J. Weddell)

Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Ham Hill, ST 47811727

Archaeological monitoring of the stripping of topsoil and of removal of stone rubble backfill from an old quarry area at Richard England Quarry, Ham Hill (Hamdon Hill) was carried out on behalf of Richard England (UK) Ltd, in accordance with conditions of the scheduled monument consent granted for the quarry operations. The backfilled stone rubble was identified as waste stone from the 19th-century production of Hamstone roof tiles. Flint and chert of Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date, Iron Age and Roman pottery, and a small quantity of slingstones were recovered from topsoil.

(L. *and* R. Adkins)

Taunton Town Centre, ST227245

Archaeological monitoring of the Taunton Town Centre Enhancement Scheme was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology on behalf of Taunton Deane Borough Council. The project involved observation and recording, where appropriate, of all ground disturbance, with limited formal excavation within areas containing significant archaeological remains. The area of the Enhancement Scheme extended south from the Tone Bridge the entire length of North Street, taking in Fore Street around the Market House, and included the Parade triangle north of the Market House. The development area also extended west into Corporation Street and to the east along Fore Street. Excavation works for the Enhancement Scheme involved the reduction of ground level to a maximum depth of about 1.20m within the area defined by a new road layout and a maximum depth of 0.40m within the areas defined by a new pavement layout. The level of survival of archaeological deposits and features varied greatly within the area affected by the development. In many cases deposits were observed in section only and these consisted of external surfaces or road make-up.

In North Street, directly south of the Tone Bridge, deep excavations to the level of the new road revealed the remains of the 19th-century street frontage and a relatively small area of post-medieval cobbles. Within the remainder of North Street no structures were located and archaeological deposits were limited to the western side of the road. These consisted of successive make-up and surfaces associated with the road. They overlay a post-medieval surface which was located within a service trench at a depth of 1.30m, implying potentially good preservation of earlier deposits.

The main area of archaeological interest lay within the vicinity of the Parade triangle and Fore Street, the site of the medieval and later market place. Deeper excavations for construction works revealed the remains of a 19th-century building within Corporation Street and a post-medieval surface to the west of the Parade triangle. Several truncated medieval pits containing large pottery groups were also located north and west of the triangle. Within this area more intensive hand excavation revealed substantial remains of several post-medieval inns, together with associated cobbled surfaces and the Fore Street frontage to the west. A good level of preservation of post-medieval features was encountered, with most walls surviving above the level of foundation. To the west of the Parade triangle a series of extensive cobbled surfaces associated with the post medieval market place were located together with earlier rubbish pits and post holes. The post-medieval surfaces were also identified to the east of the Market House together with a water conduit of 17th- or 18th-century date.

The total quantity of pottery recovered from both the monitoring of construction work and formal excavation was 8.3 kg. This fell broadly into two main periods: 13/14th and 17/18th centuries. The majority of the medieval pottery was recovered from the infill of the rubbish pits and dates from the mid-13th to the mid-14th centuries. Residual material in the form of local unglazed chert and calcareous tempered cooking pot fabrics, which can be dated to the 12th century, were also retrieved. One coarseware sherd with applied clay strips analogous to material from Castle Neroche is the first known example of this fabric to be found in Taunton. The post-medieval phase produced a greater variety of artefacts broadly datable from the middle of the 17th to the mid to late 18th centuries although the majority of pottery was of typical south Somerset type. Other artefacts of this period included stamped clay tobacco pipe bowls of Taunton manufacture, (late 17th/early 18th century), vessel and bottle glass (a *façon de venise* vessel fragment and a virtually complete apothecary bottle) and fragments of a leather shoe.

(A.J. Sage *and* P.J. Weddell)

PREHISTORIC

Charlton Horethorne, Sigwells ST 640235

The completion of geophysical surveys by gradiometer and (more limited in scope) resistivity meter, involving a 17 ha. field on the plateau above the Inferior Oolite scarp 2 km south east of Cadbury Castle, permits an interim interpretation of the results. The quality of data obtained by these surveys is quite exceptional and a palimpsest of human activity spanning several millennia is revealed on this hilltop[1]. The earliest features are the remains of three Early Bronze Age round barrows still visible as upstanding earthworks, although the survey has additionally revealed the positions of their infilled surrounding ditches. No other identifiable contemporary features are evident, although excavation suggests that others are present[2]. An earlier phase of Neolithic activity, indicated by prolific flint assemblages recovered in complementary fieldwalking, has no obvious reflection in the survey data. Later prehistoric activity is represented by Late Bronze Age clay weapon moulds and a loomweight from excavations[2], and what may be Iron Age structures revealed by the survey. The latter include two D-shaped enclosures, a few circular or penannular features marking potential house sites, and possibly other linear features. The most extensive and dramatic remains relate to Romano-British activity in the locality, evidence for which is supported by excavation and locally dense concentrations of artefacts recovered by fieldwalking[2,3]. Two principal phases can be recognised, the earlier defined by a set of enclosure boundaries, trackways and possible scattered building compounds, probably originating towards the end of the first century AD. A second major phase involved a more extensive and organised layout of boundaries and compounds on a different alignment, possibly during the third century. Several stone-founded buildings are associated with this phase, which may, by then, represent a somewhat dispersed village settlement with associated compounds and field systems, persisting through the fourth century. At least one irregular enclosure to the south east appears to be imposed upon the later Roman layout and could be of post-Roman date, as are occasional faint traces of ridge and furrow cultivation. Much of this interpretation is provisional, its confirmation or modification dependant upon the further contribution of stratigraphic and dating information. A sampling programme involving shovel pitting and small-scale trenching to explore key localities and relationships, will be the next objective here, as a continuing element of the South Cadbury Environs Project.

A more detailed and illustrated interim report for 1996 is available from the Field Archaeology Unit, University of Birmingham or the South East Somerset Archaeological Society[1]. For a summary of the project objectives overall and results obtained in 1995 see last year's report[2].

1 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1996 *The South Cadbury Environs Project, Fieldwork Report 1996*. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report no. 457.
2 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1994 *The South Cadbury Environs Project, Fieldwork Report 1994*. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report no. 327.
3 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1996 'The South Cadbury Environs Project.' *SANH* 139, 47–57.

(P. Leach)

Kingsdon Reservoir site, ST 511267

An archaeological evaluation of this proposed reservoir site was carried out by AC Archaeology in 1996 and comprised the excavation and recording of two machine-dug trenches and a visual inspection of the existing reservoir area. Previous finds of Roman date were reported from the area (SMR site 54113), but the exact provenance and nature of these finds are uncertain. The evaluation produced limited archaeological evidence in the form of

a rock-filled ditch without any artefactual evidence and a small pit containing burnt bone and six sherds of possible Bronze Age pottery.

(Julian Cotton)

Glastonbury, Beckery, Proposed Gateway Centre, ST 486385
Twenty-five test pits were excavated to evaluate an area proposed for a lake associated with the potential Avalon 2000 Gateway Centre. The pits revealed a sequence of naturally formed clays, peats, and detrital muds. One pit nearest to the edge of the moor revealed mollusc rich peat deposits interleaved with clay lenses. These may be deposits created by a waterbody which was the prehistoric equivalent of the medieval River Brue. No archaeological features were encountered with the exception of two recent drainage channels and an intermittent layer of bone, pottery, slag, slate and charcoal thought to represent 18th-century manuring episodes. Half a carved shale bracelet provisionally dated to the Iron Age was recovered, but no associated structures were encountered.

(Richard Brunning)

Meare Lake Village, Meare, ST 446421
A geophysical survey of Meare Village East was carried out for Somerset County Council by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford. A suite of techniques was used but resistivity proved to be the most effective method of defining the habitation areas and the position of former excavation trenches.

(Richard Brunning)

Skinners Wood Trackway, Shapwick Heath, ST 414401
Timbers forming part of this trackway that had been excavated by Colin Clements in the 1970s were resampled for tree-ring dating. One oak plank that had been reused in the structure was intact up to the bark edge and has now produced a felling date of the winter of 983 BC or early spring of 982 BC. Another oak plank is likely to have been felled a few years after this date.

(Richard Brunning)

Shapwick Heath, Sweet Track, ST 423406
An English Heritage funded project was carried out to test the performance of the water management system that is being used to preserve the 500m stretch of this Neolithic trackway in Shapwick Heath National Nature Reserve. Four small trenches were excavated and samples of the timbers and environmental remains were taken to determine their state of preservation. Subsequent analysis showed that although the wood was in a very poor state of preservation this decay had probably occurred in the Neolithic period and that the trackway was now in a stable condition due to the permanently high water table achieved by the active management system.

(Richard Brunning)

Shepton Mallet, Cannards Grave, ST 624421
See under ROMAN.

Somerset Levels – tree-ring dating (dendrochronology)
As a result of the numerous bog oak samples retrieved from the construction of Glastonbury Relief Road the tree-ring chronology for Somerset has been extended back to 4769 BC. The Glastonbury bog oaks, more recent samples from Shapwick and Westhay, and three other bog oaks previously sampled by the Somerset Levels Project have all now been dated to the later half of the fifth millennium BC. The absence of sapwood on any of the samples means that the exact dates of death can not be determined.

(Richard Brunning)

Sutton Montis, Milsoms Corner ST 623250

Investigation by means of university training excavations was continued from 1995, on the extensive prehistoric settlement site below the South West Gate of Cadbury Castle. The precise nature and relationship of this site to the neighbouring hillfort is still unclear, but further structural elements were revealed and a fuller picture of its chronology and ceramic sequence obtained. The site lies on a spur and is characterised by the presence of extensive hillwash deposits, although moderate to severe agricultural erosion affects the spur crest. On either side the deposit sequences are better preserved, although the character of the hillwash itself is frequently a hindrance to the definition of archaeological horizons or features. Little more of the earliest phase – part of an Early Bronze Age enclosure – was revealed, although some contemporary features appear to survive within it. Most of the remains thereafter demonstrate a sequence of events and structures on the site which equate closely with phases of Early, Middle and Late Iron Age activity on the hillfort, reflected in the now substantial pottery assemblage. The structural sequences now being revealed are represented by linear post hole settings or ditches, post holes and gullies for several circular and possibly rectilinear buildings, but as yet there are no storage or rubbish pits. Notable discoveries this season were several deliberate deposits, often in shallow pits or post holes, incorporating burnt stone accumulations, large portions of pottery vessels, daub, animal bone, and in one instance an infant burial – together or in different combinations; and the location of a stone rubble bank which appears to have revetted the southern boundary to the site.

At least two further seasons of excavation are planned here, but in the meantime the site's wider context is being explored by means of extensive geophysical survey, fieldwalking and test pitting; a programme which it is hoped will eventually encompass fully the immediate environs of Cadbury Castle. Over 6ha of the greater Milsoms Corner field have now been surveyed by fluxgate gradiometer, whose effectiveness in an essentially clay soil environment is now more than adequately demonstrated. Substantial linear boundaries which define enclosures pre-dating the present or recently modified field layout, and some smaller enclosures or potential structural remains, have already been identified. The results are complemented in part by previous fieldwalking data, and with the completion of the survey programme a fuller interpretation should be possible.

The geophysical survey programme was extended further east around the hillfort towards South Cadbury village to include a field known as Home Ground (ST 629255). Results here have yet to be analysed in detail and are so far unsupported by other survey data. However, small rectilinear enclosures alongside Folly Lane to the north suggest a former medieval extension of the village here, while other apparently unrelated and possibly earlier enclosures and a track are less distinctly visible further west.

A more detailed and illustrated interim report for 1966 is available from the Field Archaeology Unit, University of Birmingham or the South East Somerset Archaeological Society[1]. For a summary of the project objectives overall and results obtained in 1995 see last year's report[2].

1 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1996 *The South Cadbury Environs Project, Fieldwork Report 1996*. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report no. 457.

2 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1996 'The South Cadbury Environs Project'. *SANH* 139, 47–57.

(P. Leach)

ROMAN

Roman salt-making mounds, Huntspill River, ST 366431-345436

A survey of Roman salt-making mounds visible in the banks of the Huntspill River revealed

that of the 21 sites noted by the Bridgwater and District Archaeology Society in the 1960s only four now remained in any form. Two new large sites had become uncovered since that time. At least five metres has eroded from each bank since the cutting of the river in the 1940s. The salt mounds appear to erode faster due to their unconsolidated nature, one mound loosing 40cm to the river over a twelve month period. Work to halt the erosion and study the mounds is due to begin in early 1997.

(Richard Brunning *and* Jan Grove)

Ilchester, Waggon House, West Street, ST 52112249
Plans to build an extension to the Waggon House necessitated an evaluation prior to the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent. Two test pits were hand dug to a depth of 1m; no significant archaeological strata were revealed, all being relatively recent made ground. The full report has been placed with the SMR.

The area of the evaluation was some 20m east of the garden frontage onto West Street, which here is the course of the Fosse Way, and immediately south of the shift in the line of the street which may mark the position of the gateway through the southern defences of the Romano-British town. It is possible that the old brick garden wall which forms the northern boundary of the site is on the line of the town wall.

(Alan Graham)

Ilchester, Former Cheese Factory Site, Free Street, ST 52302265
Following an evaluation in 1995 and the identification of *in situ* archaeological remains on the site, an agreement was reached between the site developer and the local planning authority to modify the design of building foundations to minimise disturbance to medieval and Romano-British deposits. A watching brief was conducted by AC Archaeology throughout the development of this site and provided evidence that no disturbance to archaeological remains had occurred.

(Peter Cox)

Shepton Mallet, Field Farm ST 623430
An excavation and watching brief in July by the University of Birmingham, in advance of a major housing development, involved part of a prehistoric settlement identified in a previous archaeological evaluation. Clearance of almost 350 sq. m in a pasture field immediately north of the farm revealed part of a late prehistoric, sub-circular enclosure at least 60m across, defined by a rock-cut ditch and with an entrance to the west. Internally, only a few post-hole features and pits had survived more recent medieval and later agricultural activity in the area examined. Some of these were cut through by the enclosure and contained pottery of Late Bronze/Early Iron Age character, suggesting an earlier phase of occupation. One isolated feature of Roman date was a small, circular rock-cut oven.

(P. Leach)

Shepton Mallet, Fosse Lane ST 631427
A further major programme of area excavation involving parts of the Romano-British roadside settlement beside the Fosse Way at Charlton, was undertaken by the University of Birmingham in Autumn 1996. Areas totalling almost 0.8 of a hectare were examined in advance of a Tesco supermarket development on the east side of Fosse Lane and immediately to the north of the area excavated in 1990[1]. Information obtained through previous site evaluation surveys contributed to a building design which has otherwise enabled up to 50% of the area's known archaeology to be preserved within the development as a whole.

Mechanical removal of topsoil from areas directly affected by development was followed by manual cleaning and the definition of a wide range of archaeological features. These were

recorded primarily by complete vertical photographic coverage of the cleared areas, followed by selective sampling excavation and recording of as wide a range of structures and deposits as could be accomplished in the programmed timetable available. As was the case in 1990, the area investigated lay to the rear of the Fosse Way road frontage, which was not seen (Fig. 3). The principal elements identified included at least six stone-founded buildings and a similar number of suspected timber-framed structures, the majority oriented approximately north-south and founded at various dates between the second and fourth centuries. In the northern half of the site a long established street sequence spanning a similar period extended east from the Fosse Way, persisting as a major feature within this part of the settlement. On a similar alignment, a series of boundaries defined elongated compounds laid out at roughly 90 degrees to the Fosse Way and which were themselves sub-divided in places by cross boundaries. Most of these boundaries appear to have originated as ditches with a low bank, though many were later redefined by stone walls. The largest north-south boundary ditch may have defined the eastern limit of the settlement before its third and fourth-century expansion, and probably acted for a time as a watercourse. Along with the remains of rectilinear buildings, other structures contained within the compounds included hearths and ovens, drains, wells or cisterns, pits, and occasional burials. Most of the latter were introduced late in the history of the settlement, probably in the fifth or sixth centuries. Accompanying these remains were numerous finds, including large quantities of pottery, animal bone, coins, glass, metalwork, stone and bone implements, etc.

Overall, these discoveries compare closely in character with those made in 1990, and elsewhere within the environs of this settlement subsequently. The picture of a small Romano-British roadside town which flourished alongside the Fosse Way between the end of the first century AD through into the 5th century and probably beyond, is confirmed by these excavations. Many of the questions posed by results obtained in 1990 and since have been addressed by this latest work, and fuller analysis of the results should considerably enhance our understanding of the origin, functions and history of the Fosse Lane settlement.

1 Leach, P. 1991 'The Roman site at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet', *SANH* 134, 47–55.

(P. Leach)

South Cadbury, Castle Farm ST 632254

An excavation and watching brief was the requirement of a PPG 16 planning condition authorising the erection of an agricultural building in the farm yard. This necessitated the excavation and recording of a series of pits for stanchion supports and some intervening floor areas to be affected by levelling, and was undertaken as an adjunct to the South Cadbury Environs Project under the auspices of the University of Birmingham, with the assistance of students from the Universities of Glasgow and Liverpool and members of the South East Somerset Archaeological Society. The farm lies at the foot of Cadbury Castle, opposite the access to its North East Gate and the site of a Romano-British settlement, discovered and partly investigated in 1966–7 (Saxon's Hill) adjacent to South Cadbury parish church.

The monitoring and excavation carried out in September/October 1996 revealed Romano-British deposits of considerable depth surviving over much of the development site. At the lowest levels portions of several ditches, some pits and postholes were recorded, probably of late first or early second century AD date. These features were sealed by deposits up to one metre deep, comprising dumps of occupation soil, burnt material, stone rubble and silts. Finds of pottery and animal bone were prolific and suggest that much of this sequence accumulated as a midden during the second and third centuries. In the fourth century at least two stone-built domestic ovens were set into the top of the midden deposits, associated with

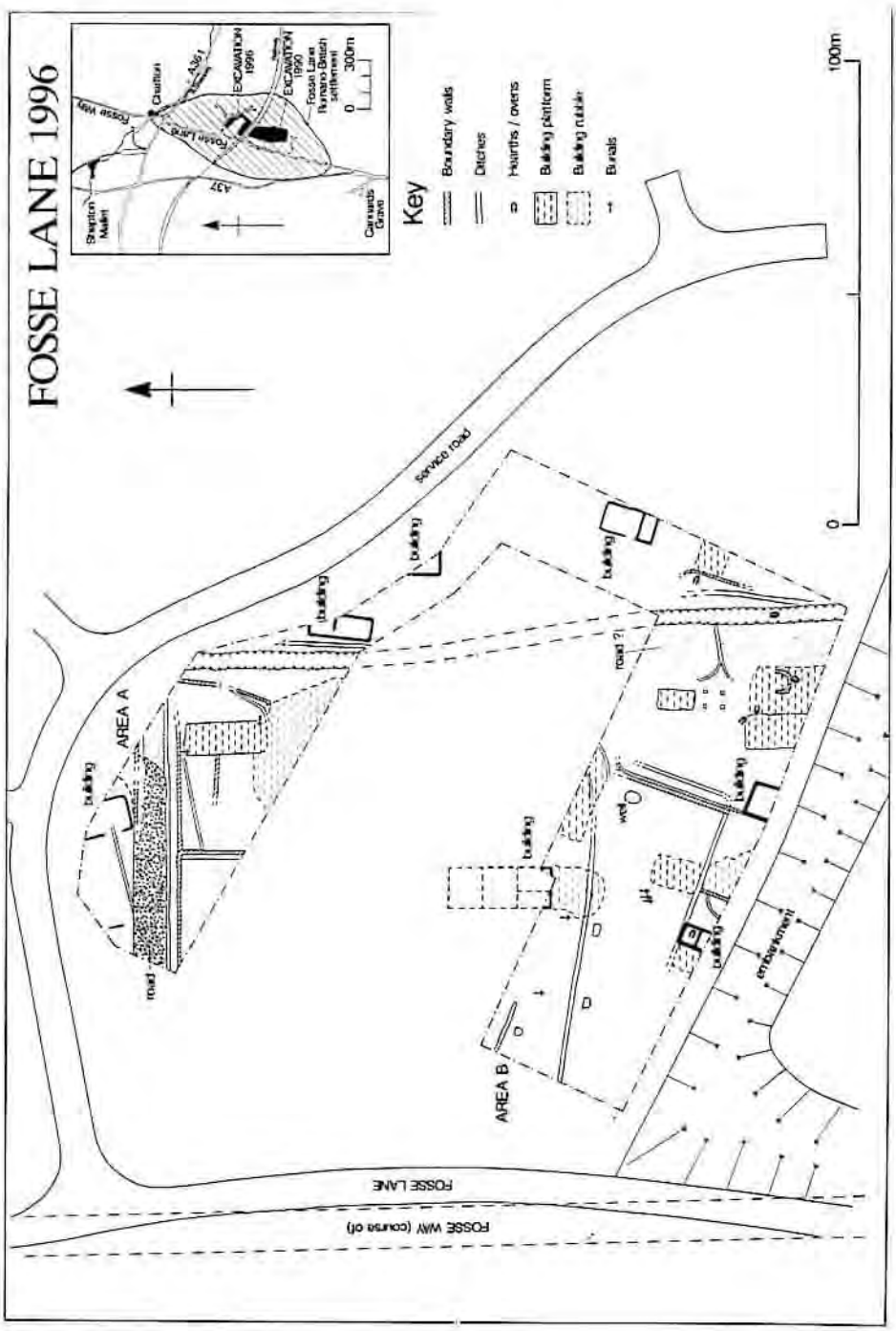

Fig. 3 Excavations at Fosse Lane 1996 (Peter Leach, BUFAU).

a cobbled surface. Later fourth century deposits including further pottery, animal bone, metalwork and a few coins, continued to accumulate here but were disturbed and somewhat truncated by more recent use of the farmyard. Surface features within an adjacent paddock suggest that the midden and other remains could extend up to 100m further south. The range and quality of pottery and other finds recovered indicate Romano-British occupation of some status in the locality. These discoveries presumably represent a continuation of the site recorded nearby at Saxon's Hill, part of a larger settlement beneath this end of the later medieval village and its church.

A more detailed and illustrated interim report for 1996 is available from the Field Archaeology Unit, University of Birmingham or the South East Somerset Archaeological Society[1]. For a summary of the project objectives overall and results obtained in 1995 see last year's report[2].

1 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1996 *The South Cadbury Environs Project, Fieldwork Report 1996*. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report no. 457.
2 Leach, P. and Tabor, R. 1996 'The South Cadbury Environs Project', *SANH* 139, 47–57.

(P. Leach)

Sutton Mallet, Little Bucket, ST 372369
A watching brief during the construction of a garage at Sutton Mallet revealed a small gully running roughly North-South c. 40cm wide and at least 20cm deep. It was filled with dark grey clay and probably represents an extension of a Roman drainage gully seen on the site in a prior evaluation.

(Richard Brunning)

Stratton on the Fosse, Downside Abbey, ST 659512
Work continued on the excavation of a Roman building on the west side of the Fosse Way, directed by Jane Lawes for the Camerton Archaeological Society. A final season is planned for 1997.

(R. A. Croft)

MEDIEVAL

Bawdrip, Grange Cottage ST34053962
An archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the garden and adjacent orchard of Grange Cottage near the centre of the village of Bawdrip. Archaeological deposits in the garden suggested that the earliest phase of settlement was of the 12th/13th century. Two evaluation trenches in the orchard immediately west of Grange Cottage revealed occupation deposits and features of the 10th/11th century through to the 13th/14th century. Features included boundary or drainage ditches and beam slots for wooden buildings.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Carhampton, Eastbury Farm, ST011427
The full report on the archaeological evaluations around Eastbury Farm will be completed in early 1997. It has now been confirmed that 5 sherds of 6th-century imported Mediterranean wares of amphora groups Bi and Bii were recovered from the site plus 1 sherd of 6th/7th century Gaulish 'E' ware; the latter is the only sherd of this group found so far in Somerset.

Analysis of the iron slag is nearing completion. This confirms that local ores were being smelted and worked into billets. Carhampton appears to be the only known iron working site of the post Roman/early medieval period west of the River Parrett.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Chard, Silver Street, ST32400854

Evaluation by Wessex Archaeology adjacent to the Old White Horse Public House located a sequence of walls. The earliest appeared to be late medieval and represent the line of the rear of the 'borough'. The later walls appeared to belong to structures along Silver Street. Two further trenches in the car park to the rear of the pub showed deep, recent deposits relating to the use of the site as a cattle market.

(C.J. Webster)

East Lyng, Baltmoor Wall, ST336291

A watching brief was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology during investigative excavations by the Environment Agency on the alignment of the stone-faced earthwork known as Baltmoor Wall. The wall is described in the Somerset Sites and Monuments Record as 'a bridge or causeway connecting Athelney and the burh of Lyng'. This feature acted as a dam, preventing the flooding of the countryside to the south during the winter. Both faces of the wall had been reinforced with stone revetting. Documentary sources suggest that this took place in two episodes, undertaken in the 17th and 19th centuries. The southern face of the wall was beneath later dumps of soil, which reinforced the earthwork.

Excavations through the wall revealed the presence of an early earth bank, some 1.75m high and just under 5m wide at its base. A buried soil was sealed beneath the bank. Sherds of pottery recovered from just above the buried soil were dated to the 14/15th centuries and indicated a possible medieval date for the construction of the bank. In order to confirm this date, samples from an underlying peat deposit were taken for the purposes of radiocarbon dating.

(S.J. Reed)

East Pennard, All Saints Church, ST 59653745

The present church dates largely to the earlier 15th century, but the existing nave and aisles are known to have been a rebuilding and expansion of an earlier church, probably Norman. The proposed renewal of the floor throughout the church therefore necessitated archaeological investigations prior to any potentially destructive building work.

Three sub-floor areas in the church were exposed; the north-west quarter of the nave, up to the base of the tower; the north-east quarter of the nave/east end of the north aisle/north side of the chancel; and the south-east quarter of the nave, extending into the south side of the chancel. The archaeological work consisted of the removal of the layer of timber debris and accumulated dust in the subfloor voids, followed by the careful cleaning, using trowel and fine brush, of the revealed structures and archaeological deposits. No deposits were excavated; the investigative cleaning alone revealed the nature and sequence of the extant layers.

Significant archaeological deposits were revealed in all areas. The remains included parts of the foundations of the earlier medieval church, probably Norman; the sequence of floor deposits within the nave and chancel of that Church; the foundations of the 15th-century chancel arch and arcades; and the post-medieval vaults of the Martin and Napier families. Generally, the archaeological deposits revealed were complex and well preserved.

A full report on the work so far has been placed with the SMR. Further archaeological work will probably be undertaken during the replacement of the floors, though every attempt is to be made to minimise the disturbance of these well preserved strata. Once the

reflooring is completed, a fuller account of the discoveries will be submitted for publication in the Proceedings.

(Alan Graham)

Glastonbury, 2 Church Lane ST49953905

An archaeological watching brief took place when 2, Church Lane was extended and partly rebuilt to provide a new church hall for St. John's church. The earliest feature was a burial which was sealed by 12th-century occupation deposits. The burial must have originally been within the graveyard of the parish church which lies immediately east of the site. A few loose bones recovered from ground works during the watching brief also proved to be human, thus supporting the belief that the original extent of the churchyard extended further west than is shown on the earliest 19th-century maps of the town. A ditch examined in the southwest portion of the construction site and with a different orientation from the present, and presumably medieval, plot boundaries, contained pottery dating from the 11th–12th century. This ditch may represent an early property boundary or it might be the original western boundary of the churchyard. The ditch was not totally excavated and its original construction date is not certain but is likely to be late-11th century at the latest. Deposits within the development site suggested that occupation was established in the early to mid-12th century, a date which accords with previous archaeological investigations in the centre of Glastonbury.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, 12 Bove Town ST50183902

During the construction of a new boundary wall between numbers 10 and 12 Bove Town a ditch sealed by post-medieval garden deposits was noted towards the rear of the back garden. The ditch was running east-west down the slope of the hill and pottery recovered from the grey silts filling the feature dates to the 12th and 13th centuries. The ditch may be a medieval property boundary and drainage ditch.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Hardington Mandeville, Plot Orchard, ST51091177

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Southern Archaeological Services Ltd between 18 March and 6 April 1996. The site consisted of a pasture field, sloping downwards to the north and surrounded on three sides by a stream.

Two trenches were excavated, natural clay and brash were encountered at between 0.52m and 0.68m below the top of the topsoil.

A rectangular structure 3.5m × 2.4 and 0.48m deep with several post-pads and stakeholes, over a pit was observed. This was connected by a channel to two pits, averaging 1–1.5m in size. Other pit and channel complexes were distributed across Trench 2, and several of the pits had stone-lined bottoms. This seems to be consistent with the theory that they are concerned with an industrial or craft process that required both running and still water, and it may be that the structure was associated with the regulation of the water supply. The nature of this craft or industry is not certain, though it seems probable that it may be flax or hemp processing, as flax stems were found in an old pond in the garden of the bungalow north of the site, and there is a history of flax and hemp processing in the region. However, the exact function of these pits remains unclear. The possibility that they are associated with other crafts or industries cannot be ruled out, as the environmental evidence is inconclusive.

From the initial pottery scan the area appears to have been abandoned as an industrial site some time after AD 1270 but before AD 1450. A large assemblage of pottery from this date, along with other domestic/industrial rubbish, was recovered from many of the features. It also seems likely that new rubbish pits were specially dug at this period.

A pattern of stakeholes, some containing Mediaeval coarsewares, and a ring feature of uncertain date were also observed.

Early results from the environmental sampling indicate significant re-use of many of the features. This is borne out by the evidence from bone analysis, which confirms re-use for the disposal of butchery debris, kitchen and plate waste. The distribution of cereal grains across the site is markedly uneven. Further analysis may reveal whether this is due to spatial factors (e.g. clustering near a structure), or temporal factors (e.g. changing use over time) or a combination of both.

It may be that the activities carried out on the site are related to the nearby Manor Farm but further analysis is necessary before final conclusions can be reached.

(Ron Brading *and* Pete Higgins)

Langport, Hanging Chapel, ST 42332678

The Hanging Chapel is located on the eastern edge of the medieval town, astride the road to Huish Episcopi. The excavations took place along the line of a proposed footpath around the north side of the late medieval arched gateway upon which the Hanging Chapel stands. The trench revealed the presence of a natural scarp sloping down to the east on the crest of which the base of a denuded clay bank was found, probably the late 9th- or early 10th-century defensive bank around the east side of the town. East of the bank there was no clear evidence of a ditch: rather the natural scarp seemed to have been cut back and steepened, thus providing clay for the bank. The medieval gateway had been built across the line of the extant bank, which had been dug away for this purpose. At least two periods of repair and underpinning of the gateway wall were apparent. A quarry pit dug into the east slope of the scarp, and a cess pit dug into the bank dated to the early 19th century. The cess pit was sealed beneath the floor of the Fire-engine house which was built against the north side of the gateway structure towards the middle of the 19th century, removing yet more of the earlier, defensive bank.

A report has been deposited with the SMR and the site archive and artefacts at Taunton Castle Museum, accession No. TTNCM 118/1996.

(Alan Graham)

Milborne Port, St John's Church, ST 676185

Observation during the replacement of floor slabs beneath the central tower recorded elements of the foundations of the south-west pier of the crossing and contemporary levelling deposits. The record has been placed with the records of the Parish and Diocese and a report in the SMR.

(Alan Graham)

Muchelney, Almonry Farm, ST 42752495

Observation of a drain trench at the north east corner of the late medieval almonry of Muchelney Abbey recorded a substantial stone footing on the line of the building's east wall. This showed that the building had originally extended further to the north, its present north gable wall being a rebuild following a partial demolition. The observation of trenches further to the north and east revealed no archaeological remains, though an area of riverine clay was exposed, presumably filling a hollow in the underlying Lias clay strata on this, the western edge of the isle of Muchelney. A report has been deposited with the SMR.

(Alan Graham)

Nether Stowey, Castle Hill, ST188396

A watching brief, undertaken by RA Broomhead, during the construction of a house close to Stowey Castle located a roadside ditch containing medieval and post-medieval pottery. No other features were noticed on the site.

(C.J. Webster)

Shapwick, Lawn Farm, ST417380

An archaeological watching brief on a paddock immediately west of Lawn Farm within the village of Shapwick produced large quantities of medieval pottery and a few features of the medieval and post-medieval period. Controlled field walking identified areas of late-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval occupation, the latter including the site of the 17th–18th century village poor house. The ratio of late-Saxon to medieval pottery sherds was similar to recent excavations in the northern part of the village directed by Dr Chris Gerrard suggesting that there was little difference in the date in which the various parts of this planned settlement were first occupied.

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site of Lawn Farm after the farm buildings were demolished prior to redevelopment. The archaeological horizons suggested that the ground had been severely truncated when the farm was built in the first half of the 19th century. One archaeological feature investigated was an artificial water channel containing three narrow leats which was probably constructed in the 10th/11th century. This feature will be fully excavated prior to building works in early-1997.

The archaeological works within the Lawn Farm area will be published in greater detail in The seventh report of the Shapwick project (see above).

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

South Petherton, Infants School, ST43261675

A watching brief was undertaken when building works connected with an extension to South Petherton infant school, off Hele Lane, disturbed human burials. The site lies immediately east of the eastern boundary of the churchyard of the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. One burial was removed by the contractors as was part of a second burial. Pottery within one of the grave fills suggested that both inhumations dated to the medieval period. The foundation trenches of the new building cut through a number of medieval ditches and pits from which pottery dating from the 11th/12th century through to the 14th century was recovered. More work is expected in early 1997.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Templecombe, ST709222

Members of the South East Somerset Archaeological and Historical Society (SESAS) took part in an excavation in the village of Templecombe. This involved house-building, with planning permission granted some time previously, within what is now considered an archaeologically sensitive area. A limited rescue dig had to be mounted by the County Archaeologist in which AC Archaeology were asked to do what it could within the financial constraints applying. In these circumstances SEAS members were gratefully accepted as volunteers to conduct the dig in whatever time remained before houses were built on the site. Hillside Developments, the builders, were extremely cooperative and indeed helped with some investigation trenches in the later stages. However, the results have to reflect relative inexperience and limited time.

The area had already been cleared of most of the top-soil to a depth of 30–40cm revealing irregular patches of rubble and some thoroughly disturbed areas where geotechnical pits had been dug. Down one side of the site the top soil was undisturbed beside an electricity pylon and this area reflected the previous use of the site as an engineering works. This side of the site was bounded by a well-built dry stone wall, low on the side of the dig but up to 2m high towards the pasture land beyond. This seems excessive for a simple agricultural boundary and may possibly be a surviving monastic structure.

Examination of the cleaned area produced an encouraging quantity of potsherds, many of which could be recognised as of the period of occupancy of Templecombe by the Knights Templar and later by the Hospitallers' Order of St John. All the potsherds have now been washed, marked and passed to Chris Gerrard at Winchester for identification.

Cleaning of the site produced some concentrations of tumbled rubble and a few areas where stone appeared to be laid in some order suggesting walls or the edges of paths. Some areas of not very robust slabs suggested floors but no coherent pattern could be demonstrated and pursuing the "walls" down to lower strata always showed that the lines of stones were laid on disturbed organic looking soil mixed with rubble or tumbled building stone.

Two test pits did reveal more deeply placed lines of stones. Extension of these pits and further pits in line with the stones showed them to have been laid edge to edge along a length of about 20m. Only a single course of stones was found over most of this length and part of the length was over cultivated soil. However, part of this line of possible wall footings was directly on the original natural subsoil and consisted of three courses of stones with sherds within and beneath which should provide a date.

These "wall footings" mainly lay beneath a linear area of loose rubble which could have constituted the rubble core of a wall from which the better building stone had been robbed. More interestingly, they are in line with a wall located by resistivity and trail trenching during the investigation by "The Time Team" in 1995.

(M. Pallister)

Wedmore, St Mary's Church, ST 43454793

A fresh examination of the architectural history of the parish church for a new church guide brought out the close architectural connections between Wedmore and Wells. The dean of Wells owned Wedmore and was patron of the parish church, and it would seem that much of the workmanship of the sophisticated 13th-century church which preceded the present 15th-century building was probably carried out by Wells masons.

The well-known south doorway at Wedmore church – reset in a 15th-century wall – is flanked by compound shafts with stiff-leaf capitals exactly like those in the part of Wells Cathedral nave that was built in the early 1200s. The present nave and aisles at Wedmore were built in the 1400s; but among the varied stone corbels supporting the roof are two at the west end of the south aisle which, unlike all the rest, are of blue Lias carved with naturalistic foliage. One has long, oak-type leaves and the other has ivy leaves with conspicuous long stems. Both, on examination, prove to be former pillar capitals later reused as corbels. The collar around the pillar top is still visible, and surplus carving has been crudely hacked away where the stone has been reset as a corbel. Both foliage carvings can be very closely matched with the blue Lias capitals on the upper part of the Chapter House stairs and in the Chapter House entry at Wells, which were built c.1270–1290. Not only do these reused fragments of the previous Wedmore church reinforce the close connection between Wedmore and Wells in the 13th century, but they also serve to suggest definite dates at both the beginning and the end of the 1200s when Wedmore church was being improved to the highest standards.

(H. Hudson *and* F. Neale)

Wedmore, Mudgley, ST 45164569

The medieval country estate of the Dean of Wells at Mudgley, centred around his great house there, with its documented park, garden and fishponds, would seem to have included a vineyard. While the vines may have disappeared by the Reformation, the name survived to appear in a 1558 survey as The Wynnardes: an orchard and backside of one acre of pasture, on the north side of a house and with a piece of ground called The Scrobette lying to the east.[1]

The houses of Mudgley lie along the hillside on the south side of the lane through the hamlet. The parish map and survey of 1791 and 1820[2] pinpoint the site, on the north side of the lane above the houses west of Mudgley House Farm. It was then divided into two small fields called Winniards Orchard and Upper Orchard, with Scrubbett on its eastern side. Now one field again, it is still an orchard. The hillside is extremely steep at this point, and the

broken ground might, in part, be the remains of badly eroded terraces. This seems to be the only known written reference to a Deanery vineyard at Wedmore.

1 SRO. D/D.SAS PR4632.
2 SRO. D/P/wed 13/10/3/ and 13/10/17.

(H. Hudson)

POST-MEDIEVAL

Langport, Low Ham, ST 43252910
The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) has recently completed its survey of Low Ham. A 1:1000 scale survey of the garden earthworks south of the church has been complemented by an air photographic transcription of an area of quarrying and ridge and furrow. A photographic record of the buildings has been made, as well as a brief architectural report.

A full report and archive are available for public consultation at the NMRC, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2GZ.

(R. Wilson-North)

Shepton Mallet, Darshill ST60734390 – 60954389
An archaeological recording exercise was undertaken at the site of Middle Mill, Darshill, southwest of Shepton Mallet, as a condition of a planning proposal to redevelop the mill and adjacent areas within the valley of the River Sheppey.

Middle Mill was the last survivor of at least four woollen mills established at Darshill in the 17th/18th century. It became a silk mill in the 19th century and an apple mill in the 20th century. The mill buildings were demolished in the 1970s immediately before they were due to be listed as historic buildings.

The earliest reference to a mill at Darshill (known then as Durkeshale) is from 1259. Two mills were recorded in the manor in Domesday Book although their locations were not specified.

The surviving mill features comprise the shell of the main mill building with housing for one (and possibly two) mill wheel(s), a large mill pond, a system of leats and sluices and a 19th-century pumping engine. The area was recorded photographically with written and measured descriptions of all relevant features within the development zone including two ruinous 17th-century cottages. A possible earlier mill pond was also recorded east of the present pond: this might well be a relic of the medieval mill.

It is hoped that a more detailed publication of the survey can be arranged with the Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Stogumber, Hall Farm Tithe Barn ST09823720
An archaeological watching brief was carried out when an electricity cable trench was routed through a 17th-century barn attached to Hall Farm in the centre of the village of Stogumber. Hall Farm stands on what was once the caput of the rectorial manor of Stogumber. The Victoria County History has suggested that Stogumber church is the successor to an Anglo-Saxon minster foundation serving a large area of the southern Brendons and western Quantock Hills and that the medieval parish of Stogumber was formerly a part of an earlier and much larger estate. The documentary study carried out as part of the watching brief suggests that this earlier estate may have consisted of approximately 30 hides.

The medieval rectorial estate is believed to contain the nucleus of the original minster endowment. The lands which were free of the greater tithes were traced on the 1840 tithe map. This showed that the various parcels were scattered evenly across the parish with groupings around each of the centres of the nine Domesday estates which comprised the 19th-century parish. There were no signs of medieval open fields or planned settlements within Stogumber.

The watching brief recorded a number of post-medieval features and foundations associated with the barn.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Taunton, The Mount, Jellalabad Barracks, ST 22822417

Observation of foundation trenches on the western part of the site, revealed the line of a large ditch, part of the medieval town defences. It had a steep 'V'-shaped profile and was 3.5m wide and 2.3m deep. It appeared to have been deliberately backfilled in the 18th century with finds being of late 17th- to mid 18th-century date. Of some significance was the recovery, from the upper ditch fills, of debris from clay tobacco pipe manufacture, apparently saggers in which the pipes were fired. The clay pipes recovered were all West Country types dating to the late 17th century. Of twenty bowl fragments recovered, nineteen were stamped, identifying the maker as William Hunt, who produced pipes in the Taunton area from c.1670–1690[1]. The discovery of this debris could indicate that his clay pipe manufactory was nearby.

A full report on the observations has been deposited with the SMR and the artefacts and archive at Taunton Castle Museum, accession No. TTNCM 68/1996.

1 Atkinson, D.R. 'Jeffry Hunt pipes', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 66 (1971), 156–61.

(Peter Bellamy *and* Alan Graham)

West Buckland, Gerbestone Manor Mill, ST 173194

During February 1996 SIAS undertook a survey and photographic record of the mill houses within a 16th-century barn, the subject of a planning application for conversion[1]. Subsequently the gearing shafting and pulleys together with the associated machinery which includes a free-standing grist mill, an oat crusher/kibbler and a combined bench saw, planer and router have been removed for eventual display at Hestercombe. The external waterwheel of 1898, cast by Ford Brothers & Company of Wellington, remains in situ.

1 Murless, B.J. Gerbestone Manor Mill, *Bul. SIAS*, No. 71 (April 1996) 14–17.

(Brian J. Murless)

Whitelackington, St Mary's Church, ST 379153

Removal of the 19th-century pew platform in the south part of the nave and the south aisle revealed two areas of earlier floors. One comprised finely wrought hamstone slabs, paving the narrow passageway between what were probably box pews along the south side of the aisle and west end of the aisle and nave, and the bench pews in the main body of the nave. The other was a wider floor of Lias slabs laid across the aisle, leading into the nave from the (now blocked) south door. A stone base in this floor, adjacent to one of the arcade pillars, marked an earlier position of the font, now in the north transept. A grave slab forming part of one of the floors, recorded the death of John Maning in 1628. It is possible that the floors revealed were the original floors of the 16th-century aisle and nave. The records have been deposited with the Parish with a copy in the SMR.

(Alan Graham)

INDUSTRIAL

Burnham-on-Sea, 3 High Street, ST 305488
Prior to alterations at this former baker, the Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society received permission to record and remove a hand winch bearing the foundry mark E. MALLARD ENGINEER BRIDGWATER. It is, at present, the only known survival of a product of this works, once located at Bath Road, Bridgwater (ST 308376) and probably dates from c.1900.

(Brian J. Murless)

Grand Western Canal
The Somerset section of the Grand Western Canal, closed since 1865, remains as a pioneering example of canal engineering in this country, using lifts and inclines instead of the more conventional lock system.

A Somerset Steering Committee of the GWC Trust was set up in 1994 with the following objectives.
(a) To conserve and where possible restore the most significant archaeological sites along the canal and to improve public access to these site.
(b) To re-water sections of the canal where appropriate.
During 1996 the overgrown aqueducts over drive to Nynehead Court and the River Tone were cleared of vegetation to allow measures surveys of the structures to be carried out. Discussions have taken place with sympathetic landowners to allow clearance and possible re-watering of suitable sections.

The owner of the Wellisford incline site has carried out his own excavation of the lower pound of the incline and exposed the drainage adit of the 'bucket in the well' haulage system. Excavations at the Nynehead road bridge determined the line of the canal at this point and revealed other bridge and canal features including a large culvert approximately 1m in diameter built under the bridge when the canal was filled in.

A possible site for a demonstration/interpretation centre is being investigated close to a section of the canal at present in water.

Further plans include surveys of the buildings complex at Nynehead wharf and clearance of the adjacent Nynehead lift, the only one of the seven built to retain any of its stone and ironwork.

(Stan Farrer)

OTHER REPORTS

Baltonsborough, Church Lane, ST54153495
An archaeological watching brief was carried out on a paddock near to the centre of the village of Baltonsborough. One prehistoric flint flake and two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered plus various sherds of post-medieval pottery and tile. No archaeological features were seen and the paddock appears never to have been contained settlement.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Bratton Seymour water main improvement, ST 676293 area
Archaeological monitoring was carried out in 1996 by AC Archaeology during the laying of new water mains by Wessex Water around Bratton Seymour. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

(John Hawkes)

Castle Cary, Dimmer Landfill site, ST613308
An archaeological watching brief was carried out when a small field south of the present landfill site was stripped of its topsoil prior to being incorporated into the landfill area. No

archaeological features or finds were recovered from the field which appears always to have been pasture land.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

East Harptree to Chewton Mendip water main, ST 584556–588526
A review of existing archaeological data, together with field observations, was carried out by AC Archaeology during the laying of this water main by Bristol Water, and produced no evidence of significant archaeological finds. Small quantities of post-medieval and recent finds were recovered along with previously unrecorded boundary walls, a lynchet and other indistinct earthworks. A full report has been lodged with the SMR.

Exebridge, Devon to Wimbleball Lake, SS 93502493 to SS 97452901
An archaeological watching brief was carried out on behalf of South West Water on a water pipeline between Exebridge in Devon and Wimbleball Lake in Somerset. A few unstratified finds of post-medieval date and some prehistoric flints were recovered.

(L. *and* R. Adkins)

Exford water main, SS 85253835-85653845
Archaeological monitoring was carried out in 1996 by AC Archaeology during the laying of a new water main between Church Hill and the west side of Exford Bridge, Exford. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

(Julian Cotton)

Kingston St Mary to Thurloxton water main, ST 22802990-27603000
A review of existing archaeological data, together with field observations, was carried out by AC Archaeology during the laying of this water main. Limited evidence of prehistoric activity, in the form of worked flint flakes, was found across much of the area, but no subsoil features could be identified related to a possible prehistoric enclosure recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record (PRN 43157). The site of a WW2 crashed Hurricane fighter was identified on the edge of the pipeline working width, but not further investigated. A full report has been lodged with the SMR.

(R.A. Broomhead)

Pawlett, Down End ST33854145
An archaeological watching brief was carried out when an old orchard fronting onto Down End Lane, immediately north of Down End motte and bailey castle, was stripped of its topsoil prior to development for building construction. No pottery or artefacts earlier than the 19th century were recovered and there were no archaeological features cut into the underlying clays.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Redlynch to Bruton water main, ST 737322-747314
A review of existing archaeological data, together with field observations, was carried out by AC Archaeology during the laying of this water main in 1996, and produced no evidence of significant archaeological finds. Small quantities of prehistoric flint flakes, post-medieval pottery and tile were recovered. A full report has been lodged with the Somerset County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

(Steven Robinson)

Taunton, Horts Farm, ST 20672329
An archaeological evaluation of an area of land at Horts Farm, Comeytrowe Road, Taunton, was carried out on behalf of Crest Homes (South West) Ltd. Three trenches, with a

total area of 107 square metres, were excavated. No archaeological features were discovered, but a quantity of modern building debris was uncovered. This appears to have been used to fill a depression in the field within living memory, probably in the late 1960s.

(L. *and* R Adkins)

Wellington, Swains Lane ST135196

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during topsoil stripping prior to the construction of access roads off Swains Lane. The access was for a new housing development comprising approximately 10 hectares between Oldway and Swains on the southern boundary of the parish of Wellington.

The watching brief recovered a number of flint flakes near to Swains Lane whilst transects of the surrounding fields recovered a number of abraded medieval sherds. All areas produced quantities of post-medieval pottery and building debris. The flints were concentrated near to a stream which may have provided a focus for settlement in the prehistoric period. The medieval pottery was heavily abraded and is probably connected with manuring of medieval open fields.

(C. *and* N. Hollinrake)

Wells, Chamberlain Street, ST 546457

A watching brief carried out on the construction of a Department of Employment building in Chamberlain Street revealed no archaeological features except two short stretches of post-medieval walling butting up against the existing boundary wall on the North side of the site.

(Richard Brunning)