



# Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society

## Historic Buildings Group

*SANHS Building Research Group (Exmoor and West Somerset)*

### Newsletter

Our first training workshop was held at Bishops Lydeard. Member Vicky had suggested that we might use her old farmhouse to practice and another local had asked us to look at his house. We went back to the Village Hall to draw up our findings.

*Thanks to Vicky Lemmens and Chris McKie for letting us wander through and study their houses and to Marilyn Crothers and Nigel Pearce for their help.*



We have been involved in meetings at Porlock where a weekend dig was organised recently by Exmoor National Park. As part of their researches, we will be investigating a number of buildings in Porlock, including hopefully the old "Rose and Crown" illustrated here and other significant buildings. Anthony Bruce and Mary Ewing have been making some initial visits and are very interested by what they have seen so far.



Our second training workshop was at a house just outside North Petherton. It was (perhaps deliberately!) challenging to interpret as it has undergone periods of major alteration works although it has jointed cruck trusses and cob walls.

As an unanticipated bonus, we were able to enjoy the surroundings of Julie and John's lovely garden during our discussions!

*Many thanks to Julie Vennard and John Attwool for allowing us access to all parts of the house and to John Rickard of SVBRG and Chris Sidaway for their help.*



This picture of “taper burns” on an arch braced cruck frame was taken on a recent SANHS visit in Baltonsborough. “Taper burns” are under investigation by two members of the Vernacular Architecture Group who have concluded that they could not have been made by tapers, rush lights or candles but were done deliberately to ward off evil spirits. Their main period of use seems to be the 1600s. Further information is on their website at [www.vag.org.uk](http://www.vag.org.uk).

We found a lot of these burn marks above a fireplace in one of the houses in Porlock.



### **Puzzler**

*Any thoughts on why this hearth (and access to the bread oven) is at 35cm from floor level?*

*If you have a theory, contact Mary on [mary\\_ewing@hotmail.com](mailto:mary_ewing@hotmail.com)*



*We are hoping to start measured surveys in Porlock in August, starting with a training survey. There are 9 buildings that Anthony Bruce and Mary Ewing have looked at so far and we have another 3 preliminary visits lined up there. A number of the properties are related to the tourist industry and so their owners would like use to carry out full surveys later in the year. Before that, we will be carrying out 2 in Roadwater. Surveyors will be chosen on a first come, first served rotating basis, so please let Mary know if you are particularly keen to come.*

*We will be arranging visits to local buildings at the workshop in Porlock in November (15<sup>th</sup>). Please put the date in your diaries. Full details will be available later on in the year.*

### **What Next?**

- **The book** "Traditional Houses of Somerset" is now available at the special price of £15 .00p. It will be for sale at the SANHS stand at Dunster Fair (30<sup>th</sup> July) and also at Porlock events.
- **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August:** Talk by Chris Sidaway in Porlock Village Hall on recording old buildings
- **Castle House** in Taunton is still in need of volunteer guides. Contact Chris Sidaway on 01823 337363 or e-mail for more details [chrismsidaway@btconnect.com](mailto:chrismsidaway@btconnect.com)
- **Photographic competition:** See below for details: There is a category for Somerset Historic Buildings.
- **August 31<sup>st</sup> – September 21<sup>st</sup>(closing early on 21<sup>st</sup>):** "Recording traditional buildings" exhibition at Dunster Park Centre
- **November 15<sup>th</sup>:** Buildings in Porlock workshop

### **News and dates for your diary:**

#### **CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS!**

Entries needed for an exhibition in Taunton Public Library during October 2014.

Details and entry forms are at SANHS website – [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org)

Or

By post from: M Crothers,  
Egypt Cottage,  
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TA23 0LY  
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Contact: book events with SANHS Office: [programme@sanhs.org](mailto:programme@sanhs.org) or Tel:01823 272429 ([www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org))

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