



Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society

Historic Buildings Group

SANHS Building Research Group (West Somerset)

Newsletter 5: December 2015

Milverton Heritage Day on 19th September was staged by the Milverton History Group. It covered many aspects of with amongst other things, an archaeology exhibit, a section on family history, a display on wartime evacuees and a look at the tithe map and other old maps. The day was well attended and gave rise to many discussions on old houses and whether any of the many 17th century probate inventories could be linked to particular properties.



Our work at Milverton is well underway with Mark McDermott having transcribed a number of the probate inventories, which make for very interesting reading. Paddy Thompson has looked at these in more detail and produced some information which we were able to put together for our display at the Heritage Day.

So far we have two houses surveyed with initial visits on another two and two others to be looked at.

In the Milk house

- 6 brass pans
- 1 trendle
- Salted meat
- 1 salter
- 2 planks and 4 shelves
- 2 pewter dishes
- Some earthenware



For full text of inventory and definitions, see below

Wooden trencher with hollow in the corner for salt and a pewter dish and spoon.

From John Bennet's probate inventory

Recently there was a day course at the Somerset Heritage Centre on learning to read the writing in old documents. It was very useful running through different styles of writing from the mid 1500s to the mid1700s.

The Heritage Centre may be running this again so it is worth checking now and then.

Another session with them looked at the " Know your Place" initiative. This will be a tremendously useful resource when it is up and running for the whole of Somerset. You should be able, already, to check out the web-site for Bristol which allows you to overlay historic maps to trace changes over time.

The link is:
www.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace



For those who attended the Dunster workshop in 2013 and wondered what happened to Time Team who were also in Dunster that day there are a number of videos on YouTube.

A couple of video clips have the late, great Mick Aston talking about the layout of Dunster and about the Priory.

The link is https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zaRUockPgFU&list=PLqMgNiv2pek72xGo9G3HEgU4AEc_V1tO3

These two should lead you into the other Time Team clips or alternatively they should come up on a YouTube search for "Time Team Dunster".



There is a lot of historical information on the ENPA Heritage website. The link is at right for more information on your local area.
Further historical details about the history of Dunster can be found on the Internet in draft form. The link is at right.

Exmoor's Past: <http://www.exmoorher.co.uk>

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/somerset/work-in-progress/dunster>

We have been looking at 2 very old properties, one in Dunster and one in Bradford on Tone. Both of these have Smoke blackened timbers with wattle and daub infill which indicates an early Hall house open to the roof.

The smoke in this particular case had penetrated through nearly to the other side of the wall.

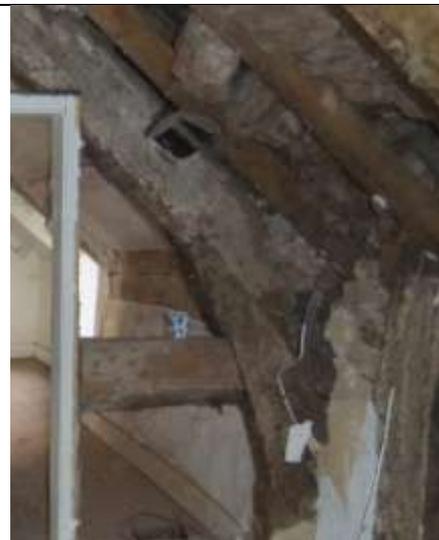
Both properties are currently undergoing major building works which is an excellent time to discover such features.



In this property there are two jointed cruck frames at right angles to each other, the one to the right being smoke blackened. They are slightly different in style and both trusses have wattle and daub infill.

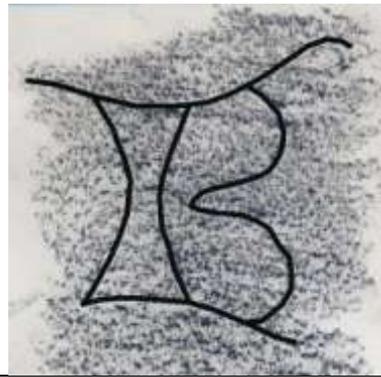
Jointed cruck frames in Somerset have been dendro-dated with results ranging from 1391 to 1632 but mostly to the 15th century.

At the Dunster property there is a true cruck frame and these are dated roughly a century earlier. Unusually there are a few of these in Dunster which may bear out the possibility of remains of medieval planning/settlement close to the Castle.



Jerry Sampson has started his series of talks on Somerset Churches and these will be running once a month at Wells Museum from "How to build a church" on Saturday 16th January at 2.30pm. Early booking (and payment in advance) is advised as the first talk in November was very popular.

Further information from www.sanhs.org or book with the office Tuesday to Thursdays 01823 272429 or office@sanhs.org



At Porlock we have 5 properties surveyed, another one lined up for survey and another 4 to be surveyed. If you would like to help with these and have not heard about any as yet, please remind me, with times when you would be usually available. At mary_ewing@hotmail.com

In the New Year we hope to survey alternately in Porlock and Milverton.

Puzzler:

Two stone built alcoves are built into a bank behind a property in Milverton. Any thoughts on their purpose? This one has what may have been a flue in the corner. The property was a shop at the time of the tithe apportionments (1840).



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