



# Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society

## Historic Buildings Group

SANHS Building Research Group (West Somerset)

### Newsletter 7: Autumn/winter 2016/17



With the agreement of Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) and co-operation of members of staff, we were able to stage a small exhibition in the Porlock Visitors Centre in September, summarizing some of the work we have carried out to date in Porlock.

Older houses in the town have been used as examples to make comparisons of plan type and features. Other information on the use of buildings at the time of the Tithe Record (1841) have been detailed.

We also had the opportunity to describe some of this work at the ENPA Annual Archaeological Forum.

Another speaker there was Richard Parker who has carried out brief visits for Time Team at the Priory and other buildings in Dunster. From this, he has put together conjectural reconstruction drawings. He also commented that he had not seen any place with so many true cruck frames as Dunster.

This rang a bell with our findings, particularly from a house we have been investigating in West Street.



This picture shows part of a true cruck blade as found in the house mentioned above. There were an additional 6 jointed cruck frames there, some with heavy smoke blackening.

From past records it can be seen that there are at least another 3 properties in West Street and another in Church Street with true cruck frames still standing at time of survey.

The Somerset Dendrochronology Project found true crucks in Somerset to be dated from late 13th century to early 15th whereas jointed crucks dated from mid 14th to mid 16th centuries.

(see *McDermott, 2005, SANHS Proceedings vol.148*)



It has been suggested that parts of Dunster could have been planned in medieval times. Evidence from similar house plans in West Street supports the idea and it would be very interesting to pursue this further, particularly in view of the many true cruck frames recorded.

If anyone knows of owners there who would be willing to have buildings surveyed, please get in touch with us.



This extraordinary stove was found in a house surveyed in Milverton. The name "Paragon" for the stove and the manufacturers' name of "Smith and Wellstood" was clearly visible on the base plate.

From on-line research it was found that "Smith and Wellstood" was, an ironworks in Bonnybridge, Falkirk. This model of stove was being exported as far away as Australia in 1869.



The Somerset Record Office are running some useful courses including "How to research the History of your house" and various other relevant topics. They will also give talks at the Heritage Centre for groups. See their web-site for further information under "News and events" and "talks for groups".

A new book which we have found useful is "West Country Households 1500 - 1700" (Ed: Allan, Alcock & Dawson, 2015, Boydell Press)

Apologies for any inconvenience for incorrect details about SANHS Library in the last Newsletter. Please refer to SANHS website for further information.

# Resources

There has been a lull in survey work which should hopefully pick up again soon. Help would be appreciated particularly in drawing work. One or two people have expressed interest in this and we are thinking of running a workshop in Milverton this year. Please contact Mary Ewing if interested.  
mary\_ewing@hotmail.com

We would like to make contact with anyone who is researching local history in Porlock, Milverton or Dunster



On 18th February, there is a visit to Mark Church with lunch beforehand at the Pack Horse Inn.

Jerry Sampson will be giving a talk on Ottery St Mary Church at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall on 11th March.

Further details on SANHS website (sanhs.org) under "Calendar". Please contact the office to book.

# SANHS NEWS

A reminder that SVBRG have monthly meetings with talks related to old buildings, at Compton Dundon Hall over the winter months. An annual membership fee is chargeable.

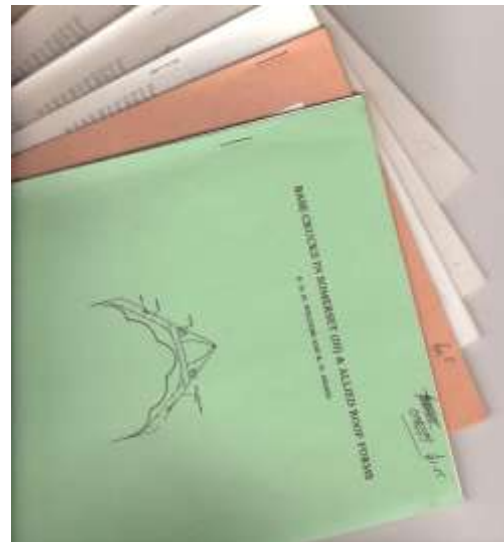
[svbrg.org.uk/events](http://svbrg.org.uk/events)

I have duplicates of offprints from SANHS Proceedings as follows:

- "Base crucks in Somerset" from vol 123 (1979)
- "Base crucks in Somerset (III) & Allied roof forms" from vol.125 (1981)
- "Vernacular Architecture 1985 -6"
- "Vernacular Architecture Notes1987"
- "Vernacular Architecture Notes1988" (2 copies)

All available for 50p

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