

BUILDING RECORDING IN 2014

SOMERSET VERNACULAR BUILDING RESEARCH GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Surveys in the settlements of Winscombe and Trent have been successfully completed; the former is published in our Somerset Villages series whilst the latter is pending publication in 2015. Individual houses in other parts of the county have also been surveyed.

Dates before the mid 16th century are based on their similarity to houses that have been dated by dendrochronology. SVBRG trialled another dating procedure, Radio Carbon Dating, on three Winscombe properties thanks in part to a grant from the Maltwood Fund and the enthusiasm of the late Mick Aston. The results are detailed separately in this volume.

As always the Group is indebted to the owners and occupiers of the various properties for their generosity in allowing access. Copies of the full SVBRG reports and survey drawings have been deposited at the Somerset Heritage Centre. They are also available through the continuously evolving SVBRG website, www.svbrg.org.uk where the summaries listed here can also be viewed.

All photographs by John Rickard



Fig. 1 Ashill, Southtown Farm: 16th century framed ceiling, two orders of framing

1. Ashill, Thickthorn Lane, Southtown Farm. ST 3203 1604

A two-storey property of three rooms and cross passage with an in-line, originally non-domestic, addition. It is constructed from a mix of local stone and brick, clad in render until recently. Moolham stone topped by lias is the base for the main range plinth and the complete addition dated, c. 1845. Brick, laid differently on each elevation, compounded the interpretation puzzle. It is possible that a significant storm necessitated serious repairs, perhaps undertaken in a hurry by a range of craftsmen.

In the 'Hall' a superb four-panel framed ceiling with elaborately carved and jointed beams is believed to have been imported at this time. A slightly shallower half hipped roof now over-lays the original which was set on tie-beam trusses, some apparently re-used; the addition has collar beam trusses with a distinctive curved form of dovetail.



Fig. 2 Bruton, 27 High St: iron-beamed, brick-vaulted, fire-proof ceiling

2. Bruton. 27, High St. ST 6825 3485

This town house fronts the High Street as a single room, three storey in-fill. Behind, a second range extends to a small, covered courtyard in which

is situated a first floor bridging passage. Beyond is a third full-width unit under a side sloping, single pitch roof. Further extension incorporates a narrower range that allows an outside passage against the boundary wall of the property. In the rear 'yard' there are remains of other structures.

The painted stucco clad front elevation features a six-panel front door, with geometric glazed light above, set between reeded pilasters. To the right is a bowed sash window of six over six glazings with additional marginal lights. A third pilaster encases this shallow bowed window. The upper floors have sash windows set in a wall now slightly jettied over the ground floor. The roof is slate-clad. The rear aspect is of painted brickwork under several roofs, notably a hipped roof with the ridge aligned at right-angles to the street and side-sloping single pitch roofs.

Town centres evolve all the time making the property difficult to assess, however, based on door and window features, the front range was probably a shop and dwelling in the late 18th or early 19th centuries. Small dwellings shown on the Tithe Map were removed and the roadside building extended to the rear, in brick, in the mid 19th century. Prior to the 1880 O.S. survey, a workshop was erected beyond the courtyard. This contained a brick-lined barrel vaulted ceiling supported by wrought iron beams. No other example of this appears to occur in Bruton. Research suggests that the structure was used in 19th-century textile mills to be both load bearing and create a fireproof barrier between floors which would be appropriate in this historically 'textile' town.



Fig. 3 Ditcheat, Wraxall House: House dated 1811 and portico dated 1871

3. Ditcheat. Wraxall. Wraxall House. ST 6058 3618.

The house has a square plan comprising a front range of two heated rooms, parlour and kitchen cum living room, with central stair hall and three, originally service rooms, for dairy, cheese and cider production at the rear. It rises to two stories with an attic floor lit by dormer windows. A single story lean-to is located to the north east.

It is constructed of 53 cm thick local lias-stone walls with dressed Doulling stone quoins to the south elevation. Most window heads are shallow arched with a projecting keystone. The oak tie-and-collar beam truss roof is hipped on all elevations and clad with plain clay tiles. The entrance door is set in a pedimented masonry frame of Doulling stone, the tympanum has the initials G above a J and M (Jacob and Mary Golledge) and a date of 1811. A portico, dated 1871, is incised with JCG (John Cary Golledge born 1842).

A map of 1809 shows an L shaped building known as "Old Farmhouse". The 1838 Tithe Map shows the present square building. The 1886 OS map shows the added portico, lean-to and the expansion of the farmstead. These maps confirm a replacement building, c. 1811, incorporating some recycled material e.g. 34 cm wide beams with 12 cm chamfers and step and run-out stops. The plot shape remains of interest; it is shown as curvilinear on the 1809 map, adjacent to the common land of the Green suggesting an ancient site with possible early medieval origins.



Fig. 4 Marston Magna, Wick Farmhouse: ceiling border and cornice

4. Marston Magna. Wick Farmhouse. ST 5920 2243

The main range, two rooms with a central entry hall, plus an in-line extension is of two-storeys under a pitched, slate clad roof with brick stacks rising from each stepped and coped gable. A rear, two-storey extension currently has raised walls and a flat roof and two single storey, clay tiled units attached.

The farmhouse is constructed of local lias stone with Ham stone dressings. Hollow chamfered mullions to two ground floor windows and the entrance door on the front elevation have drip moulds. The upper floor and other windows have Ham stone 'soldier arch' heads. The walls of the main range are 65cm thick; those of the rear extension are from 50 – 54cm thick.

The original part of the dwelling was symmetrical and constructed in the late 18th century, as kitchen and parlour, using earlier style windows and doorway on the front elevation. The ceiling of the parlour has a broad border and cornice of decorative plaster. Two of the three first floor rooms were heated. An adjacent barn has a date-stone of 1820 and the initials WPW – Rev. William Provis Wickham, after whom the property is named.

Before 1838, Tithe Map, a rear lean-to with storage/accommodation above was added perhaps to provide laundry facilities. A second, similar, lean-to quickly followed perhaps providing a separate kitchen. By 1884, O.S. Map, a single storey unit was added to the north and an in-line two-storey extension to the east, both probably the focus of dairying and cheese making at the farm.

5. Martock. 98, Bower Hinton. ST 4566 1785

This is part of a terrace of continuous housing. Its frontage is constructed of cut and squared local Ham stone set on blocks of very high quality ashlar. The 80cm thick walls have been raised slightly creating two storeys. The 16-pane sash windows do not fit the coursing of the stone work.

The smoke blackened roof, formerly thatched, is carried on two side pegged, axe-hewn, elm jointed-cruck trusses; three rows of trenched purlins with evidence of windbraces and a slightly cambered collar. The smoke blackened roof structure and wall thickness suggest a late 14th- or early 15th-century origin for this truncated building, now comprising two rooms (Hall and Service Room) and a wide cross passage, originally running further east as



Fig. 5 Martock, 98 Bower Hinton

evidenced by truss numbering and carpenter's marks. In the 16th century up-grading occurred with the installation of a fire-hood in the Hall and a first floor using existing room partitions, and supported throughout on 125mm chamfered and cyma stopped beams.

In the late 18th or early 19th century a stone partition on the ground floor split the house lengthways. Shop facilities, with a shopkeeper recorded on the 1841 census, may be the reason for this wall and for a blocked doorway at the front. In the late 19th or early 20th century sash windows were inserted and a rear barn built re-using a door of *c.* 1600. The house belonged to Sparrows engineering works by this time.

6. Milborne Port, Lower Kingsbury. Manor Farm. ST 6753 1930

The main N-S range, constructed from golden coloured rubble of roughly-squared inferior oolite, is two-storey with attic under a half-hipped roof of graded stone tiles. A two-storey NW wing has a lower ridge and incorporates two bands of decorative tiles amongst plain ones. A single storey lean-to is slate clad. The wall thicknesses range from 90 cm on a mud mortared, battered wall at the south gable through 65-70cm on the long sides to 55cm in the wing and 47cm in a lean-to.

The 16th-century original build comprised a three-unit cross-passage house. A beam profile, 16cm chamfer with a morticed soffit to accept posts: a battered wall and possibly the unheated Inner Room are remnants of this dwelling. Most of the rest of the range dates from a significant rebuild in the late 17th century with a lateral fireplace stack in the Hall and cross passage, now stair hall. The main roof was constructed in a single phase and covers the in-line extension, a later kitchen with possible baking oven. The roof structure is characteristic of the end of the 18th century, and is carried on 6 tie-beam trusses meeting in a notched apex joint with a fixed yolk plate. Collars were added to the roof structure in the 19th century both to reinforce it and to allow the creation of rooms with ceilings. The NW wing roof is supported on two braced king-post trusses.

A major up-grade took place in the second half of the 18th century featuring six-panel integrally-moulded framed internal doors, windows and fireplace with oven. The mid 19th century saw the addition of the NW wing, with an upper floor intended for agricultural use, followed by the lean-to.

7. Misterton, Newberry Lane, Dry Close. ST 4586 0829

The main range is two-storey and attic under a pitched roof with a central wing and a single-storey lean-to at the rear. It is built of local Ham stone with dressed window openings. A continuous hood mould extends over the ground floor windows and



Fig. 6 Misterton, Newberry Lane, Dry Close: carpenter's mark for 1 on partition post



Fig. 7 Misterton, Newberry Lane, Dry Close: carpenter's mark for 2 on partition post

entrance door. The 70cm thick gables are raised and coped, a brick stack rising from each. The walls of the front elevation are 63cm thick and bear a date stone of 1721.

Internal features comprise several substantial hollow-chamfer beams, evidence of a slightly cambered bressummer to F1, a curved wall indicating an earlier stair beside F2, stone hollow-chamfered mullions to some windows and two internal walls of post and panel construction. The latter were probably original to the site but perhaps have been re-set. They rest on sill beams some 30cm from the floor with the former location of a bench indicated by step and run-out chamfers, set 70cm above the floor, and associated 'witness marks'. The posts are individually and sequentially 'carpenter marked', the first panel is inscribed with the date 1654, and a common apotropaic mark is set a little lower.

We conjecture that a yeoman status house occupied the site in the late 16th century. This was replaced in the mid 17th century with a lot of re-use of existing timber. A further remodelling occurred in the early 18th century (date stone 1721 over the present front entrance door). A two-storey rear wing was built in the late 19th century with the complete roof being replaced at the same time.



Fig. 8 Queen Camel, Banksia; front elevation



Fig. 9 Queen Camel, Banksia; "stewing stove" in window bay

8. Queen Camel. High St. Banksia. ST 5958 2493

This probably originated as a thatched barn in the 17th century on the manorial Mildmay estate. The walls of local lias stone were 65 cm thick with raised windows in the east gable giving light into a working area. Numerous doors and windows fittings within the present building date from this period.

The original barn was converted to a dwelling comprising two principal rooms either side of the stair hall divided by brick internal walls. The "front" wall was rebuilt, narrowing the barn and raising the eaves under a retained but modified roof. Brick chimney-stacks were built against the unaligned gables to square the rooms. A north wing with 50cm walls might have preceded the

conversion of the main range or have been part of the process.

A late 18th-century map shows the addition of two lean-tos. Another addition under a catslide roof may also have occurred at this time. A two-storey canted bay built over a stone gully confirms that the bay was a late addition to the north wing. A 'stewing stove' in the bay suggests that it was added at the time of the conversion.

Remodelling of the house, c. 1900, is indicated by replacements stairs, front windows and cast iron fireplaces. Further refurbishing including internal lining with batten and plaster-board took place in 1958. A replacement roof over-sails the earlier all-elm structure supported on four tie beam trusses in the main range with a pitch suitable for thatch. The wing roof has three tie-beam trusses with notched and pegged tenon apices.



Fig. 10 Rimpton, Clarkes Cottage: early 15th-century door frame

9. Rimpton. Clarkes Cottage. ST 6088 2179

The main range is three rooms in line with cross passage, one-and-a-half storeys under a combed wheat reed thatch. A tiled lean-to in-line extension at the north end post-dates a 1903 photograph. The

external walls, constructed of random rubble stone and some cob with thicknesses of about 70cm are whitewashed and part rendered.

The original build was an early to mid 15th-century three-room cross-passage house with a solar over the inner room. The smoke-blackened roof, an arch-braced truss with, now missing, windbraces and a weathered oak two-centred arched door-frame testify to this. The roof is supported on 5 collar trusses. At least two are jointed crucks, one has holes for a rod and daub partition (the Solar wall) now gone. The purlins are trenced into the principals, the windbraces were halved into the back of them.

A major up-grade occurred in the 16th century: a fireplace with smoke hood (still visible in the roof space) replaced the central hearth in the hall, a 6 panel framed ceiling with 15cm chamfers enclosed the hall and the service room was probably also ceiled.

By the early 19th century down-grading of the property resulted in its division into three separate dwellings with a wooden lean-to against the north gable (Tithe Map). It was returned to a single unit early in the 20th century and further changes were made: the main front doorway was inserted; a small lounge was 'gentrified' with the addition of an arched brick fireplace and decorated with re-used 17th-century panelling in different styles; a brick structure replaced the earlier lean-to and a straight flight of stairs replaced earlier newel ones.



Fig 11 South Petherton, The Old Granary: 17th-century ovolo-moulded stone window with shutter pintles and security bar brackets

10. South Petherton. Cole's Lane. The Old Granary. ST 4358 1639

The building is two-storey under a pitched clay double-roman tiled roof. The plan is L-shaped with a cross wing at the southern end. It is constructed of local marlstone rubble with dressed quoins; the north and west walls have Ham stone ashlar facings. The long west wall of the main building is 64 cm thick, all the other walls are between 56 and 58 cm.

The roof is of two separate constructions. The main roof is a common rafter roof; the rafters meet at the apex in a halved joint; the trusses are closely spaced, each truss has a nailed collar, usually of an irregular segmental section from the outermost part of a tree. Some of the trusses have an additional tie and a king post. Use of nails puts this roof post 1800. The elm roof of the cross wing is a substantial and more traditional 18th-century roof; hipped at the south west corner with a valley between this and the main roof; of collar and tie-beam construction with tapered principal rafters linked by a tenoned collar. The slightly offset purlins are scarfed and trenced into the back of the principals. The ridge is set diagonally into a v-notch at the apex.

The main range appears to have been built as a dwelling house in the mid-17th century with ashlar walls facing the road reflecting status. A cross wing was added as workshop space or storage in the late 18th century. A large part of the property was downgraded to barn/stable use in the second half of the 19th century leaving part in habitation, known as 'The Old Groom's Cottage'. In the late 19th century the main range roof was replaced with the present common rafter roof. In 1976 the building was reconverted to full domestic use.



Fig. 12 South Petherton, North Cottage, formerly a store or workshop

**11. South Petherton, 2 St. Elizabeth's Way,
North Cottage. ST 4345 1684**

The house is two-storey and attic under a pitched, clay tiled roof with raised gables and stepped coping rising to gabled finials. Built of local Ham stone with dressed quoins and a wall thickness of 63cm it was unheated but now comprises two rooms with a central entrance hall.

Evidence of large openings high in the gable walls indicate that it was built as a store or workplace rather than a dwelling. Wall thickness and roof structure, four elm tie and collar trusses, two tiers of staggered purlins and a ridge piece threaded into the notched-tenon apex, suggest that it was built in the mid 18th century. It was owned by John Horsey, a linman, in 1841 so was perhaps used for the flax/linen trade. Several alterations were made over the years and it eventually became a dwelling around the mid 20th century.



Fig. 13 South Petherton, West Hayes: elegant front elevation of house

**12. South Petherton. South St. West Hayes.
ST 4361 1668**

This town house is of two-storey and attic under a pitched roof. The roadside range comprises two rooms with central stair hall. A rear, single storey enclosed porch connects this range to an abutting two-storey east wing with its ground floor at three levels. Two more single storey outbuildings extend this wing.



Fig. 14 South Petherton, West Hayes: Georgian period door and Victorian geometric tiles

The dwelling is constructed of local dressed Ham stone with ashlar on the front elevation. The latter is embellished with a string-course, a parapet and a classical portico graces the front door; the windows are 8-over-8 sash lights, those by the roadside set in flat-roofed canted-bays. The gables have raised and coped verges, surmounted by brick-built chimney-stacks. The slate clad roof incorporates two coach-roofed dormer windows. The north gable has a date stone of 1743, initialled J&E surmounted by an E (John and Elizabeth Edmonds). Gable wall thicknesses were not measured as the house abutted its neighbours but the front elevation is 66cm and the north wall of the rear wing 50cm; cob was to be found in the most easterly outbuilding.

The building to the north has a date stone of 1672 and documents, maps and the structural evidence of blocked doorways etc. suggest that West Hayes was a part of that house, either as a dwelling or outbuilding that was subsequently gentrified in the mid 18th century. The height of the front rooms, decorative ceilings with plaster work, enlarging and installing sash windows, replacing the stairs and the internal doors testify to the improvements.

The O.S. map of 1887 shows the rear wing much as it is today, enabling West Hayes to theoretically function as a self-contained house with its own rear kitchen etc. (In practice the properties remained interconnected until 1975). The rear wing was built during the last half of the 19th century as were the canted-bay front windows. Internally modifications

were made to the ground floor stairs and geometric tiles laid on the hall floor at this time.



Fig. 15 South Petherton, 6 Whitehall: a simple bead moulding to the fireplace surround

13. South Petherton. 6, Whitehall. ST 4354 1681.

The two-storey, double-pile house has four rooms on each floor and a single-storey extension on the NW. It is built of local marlstone rubble, wall thicknesses of maximum 52cm, with Ham stone ashlar facings to the east and north walls. It has a relatively shallow pitched roof, slate clad with raised and coped verges. Brick stacks rise from each gable. The roof is supported on two elm, tie and collar trusses with two tiers of staggered purlins fixed by pegs. The ridge piece is threaded in to the notched-tenon apex. The single storey wing has pantiles on each flank. Bead moulding adorns, and dates, the original entrance door and the fireplaces.

The Tithe Apportionment enabled the date of construction to be pin-pointed from documents as this describes a 'cottage' on site. Deeds note the demolition of the cottage and its replacement by a house built between 1841 & 1850. The O.S. 1887 map shows the current plan shape indicating that the extension was in place by then although it was not part of the initial construction. There have been numerous alterations since the end of the 19th century.

14. Tintinhull, 19 Vicarage St. ST 500 196

This gable-end-to-the-road property is on an extremely ancient site with 14th-century deeds; one of two Tintinhull properties formerly endowing Exeter College, Oxford.

It is of one and half storeys, two-unit with central entry plan, a continuous lean-to on the north gable and a single storey extension to the east.

It is constructed of Ham stone ashlar and brick, but was previously of cob, under a thatched roof supported on side-pegged, long-tenon jointed cruck trusses descending to floor level with a cambered collar, mortice and tenon jointed and pegged to the principal.

Dating and determination of the original plan form is subject to conjecture but the house was probably built in the 15th century, single storey with smoke bay. The upper floor was probably inserted c. 1600 as indicated by 11cm chamfers and step and run-out stops to the beams, the post and panel partition with evidence of a bench. This was additionally supported by a new stone stack with newel stairs inserted in a former smoke bay.

Late 18th century, in a poor state of repair, it passed out of Exeter College hands and up-grading occurred; the west gable was extended towards the road, the rear addition was built against the remaining cob wall and integrated into the roof structure. Elsewhere cob was replaced by stone or brick. The entrance door was relocated, and the stair hall, ground and upper floor fireplaces and some sash windows inserted.

In 1910 the property was purchased by a butcher and further on-site building included a slaughterhouse.