

SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGY, 2009

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SOMERSET COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 2009

The expected changes to heritage legislation and the long awaited revision of planning guidance for heritage did not appear in 2009 so it was business as usual for the Somerset County Council (SCC) Historic Environment Service (HES). Over the course of the year more than 1200 planning and Listed Building applications were assessed and a wide range of archaeological sites, historic buildings and other heritage assets were examined, recorded and, where possible, protected for future generations. This resulted in over 90 pieces of fieldwork, the results of most of which were added to the Historic Environment Record (HER) but reports on some sites may take months or occasionally years to be completed. Naomi Payne is reviewing the backlog of sites around the county in conjunction with the County Museums Service and the Archive Service to ensure that archaeological archives are correctly recorded on the HER.

In spite of Somerset's largely rural nature, three large infrastructure construction projects are under consideration, including a tidal barrage in the Severn Estuary, a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point and the associated power lines. Detailed archaeological assessments are needed on all projects of this scale and the first phase of this work is well underway. An application for the development of a new nuclear power station is expected to be submitted in 2010.

Other planning proposals required major excavations. One of the most extensive took place

at Cambria Farm on the edge of Taunton, the site of the new park and ride car park adjacent to Junction 25 of the M5 motorway. Steve Membery coordinated the archaeological programme of works in conjunction with Somerset County Council highway engineers (notably Richard Needs) and the archaeological contractors, Context One Archaeological Services. The work at Cambria Farm has been the largest and most expensive excavation ever undertaken by Somerset County Council (details below).

In September 2009 Russell Lillford retired as manager of the HES after 30 years in post. Russell was involved with a wide range of conservation projects in the county, from minor works in conservation areas through to the design and implementation of the enhancement scheme for Wells Cathedral Green. Russell also managed SCC's part of Hestercombe Gardens for several years and was responsible for helping to secure the management of the gardens with the Hestercombe Gardens Trust. In 1988 he was instrumental in setting up the Somerset Building Preservation Trust and continues to provide specialist advice to the Trust in his retirement.

The work of the conservation team within the HES continues to have a positive impact upon the built environment. Nic Wall supervised a number of projects around the county that have conserved and repaired archaeological sites, structures and historic buildings. One of the most challenging projects was the research and design for a set of new barn doors for the Abbey Barn at the Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury. The proposed new doors have now been

agreed by English Heritage and are planned for fitting in 2010. Andy Stephens and Ian Lewis carried out a range of projects including the repair to the steps and footpath that follows the Via Crucis in the churchyard of St John's church in Frome. Roger Hagley continued to provide advice on all repair and construction schemes that affect the public highway in Conservation Areas. Patrick Stow has supplied professional advice as a structural engineer and this work enables a wide range of owners of historic buildings to ensure that their conservation work is helping to protect and support the listed buildings around the county. One of the key sites receiving attention in 2009 was the one of the last surviving rope works in England: Dawes Twine Works at West Coker. Further work is expected in 2010 in conjunction with a range of partners to protect and conserve this very important building.

For many years the English Heritage South West field survey team have coordinated archaeological surveys in Somerset working on Exmoor and the Quantock Hills and more recently on a detailed archaeological and buildings survey of the Mendip AONB due for publication in 2011. Sadly, the field survey team was disbanded in 2009 and English Heritage staff members were either made redundant or transferred to other offices around the country, resulting in a loss of professional skills in the region.

Most of the county's archaeological sites are in private hands and one of the tasks of the HES is to ensure that wherever possible these sites are protected from damaging development or agricultural management practices. Jan Grove continues to provide archaeological advice to Natural England and to a range of landowners seeking to enter into agri-environment schemes. The better management of archaeological monuments is one of the priorities of the HES and each year SCC and English Heritage support a programme of monument management schemes. Archaeological conservation work was carried out at a range of sites in 2009. At Castle Cary castle for example, large areas of scrub were cleared from the earthworks and the ground was reseeded to help to protect the earthwork remains of the motte and bailey castle.

The Somerset HER is still one of the most user-friendly HERs in England and in 2009 nearly 230,000 pages of information were read by visitors to the website www.somerset.gov.uk/heritage. New sites are added to the HER on a daily basis. At the end of 2009 the database contained 19,031 archaeological sites, 2429 archaeological fieldwork

events and 11,607 Listed Buildings. This was an increase of 450 sites, 262 events and 9 Listed Buildings over the course of 2009. The HES would like to thank all researchers for their contributions, as it is this input that continues to keep the HER up to date with new information. A programme of student placements from Exeter University Archaeology Department provided an opportunity for Marc Cox and Kayleigh Sweet to work with the HER and to process part of the backlog into new accessible information available online.

Throughout 2009 Chris Webster has monitored the conservation and repairs to Taunton Castle that form part of the creation of the new Museum of Somerset. A full report on the recent research into the history and archaeology of the castle will be compiled and a new guide will be written following this major phase of investment and modernisation.

Work has continued at a good pace on the construction of a new Somerset Heritage Centre near Norton Fitzwarren. The two new buildings will house a new Record Office, the Somerset Studies Library and a new museum store building, with office accommodation that will house the HES and the HER. The building is set to open in 2010.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme continues to provide information on new sites around the county. The discovery of a Roman villa in Queen Camel parish by local metal detectorists is just such an example of how chance finds can lead on to detailed archaeological research and assessment. I sit on the PAS national advisory board and one of the key issues that has yet to be resolved is the issue of metal detecting rallies and how they are organised and reported on, particularly where rallies are planned on land in agri-environment schemes. Natural England, the responsible body for dealing with countryside stewardship schemes, will shortly issue new guidance on metal detecting rallies in England.

One of the saddest but most memorable events of the year was the closure of the Peat Moors Centre near Westhay. After 14 years Eddie Wills was made redundant as the Centre's manager and the site was closed to meet further savings targets. Eddie is a huge loss to the team, as are seasonal staff members Alison Palmer and Emma Lusby, who had worked at the site for several years. The final season at the Centre was one of the best ever. Over 500 people turned up to see Roman soldiers from Legio II Augusta take control of the site and evict the last 'iron age chieftain' at the end of October. The future options for the site are now under debate and HES is working

with Natural England to secure funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish a Landscape Partnership scheme for the Avalon Marshes area of central Somerset. This project could run for five years and the project is linked with Natural England's proposals for a new Avalon Marshes Centre to be based on the old Peat Moors Centre site.

Future management and conservation options for the Somerset Levels and Moors are making slow progress through a range of partnership programmes. The HES, mainly through Richard Brunning, continues to gather evidence together to make the case for the Somerset Levels and Moors to be considered on the UK Tentative List for inscription by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The Department for Culture Media and Sport are expected to ask for nominations for the list in 2010 and they will then decide on a revised list in 2011.

Richard Brunning has coordinated a project to examine the 'lost islands' of Somerset, looking at archaeological remains on slightly higher ground. Work in 2009 concentrated on the area around Muchelney. Geophysical Surveys of Bradford carried out a magnetometer survey that located a Romano-British field system and associated settlement activity. Following this, a small community training excavation was carried out with over 200 people visiting the site to see progress.

Progress on the production of a Research Strategy for the South West Region was delayed in 2009 and it is now planned for 2010. The working documents and Research Frameworks report continue to present a very valuable overview of the current state of knowledge in the region and can be viewed on line at www.somerset.gov.uk/swarf.

The HES continues to work with a wide range of local groups and communities to promote and explain the importance of local archaeology. One of the success stories of recent years is the community archaeology project running at Fairfield House, Stogursey, courtesy of Lady Gass and the Fairfield Estate. This has now reached its fifth year. The Fairfield Project Group was awarded a grant of £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to develop its outreach programme and to provide an opportunity for a wide range of local people to visit or join in the archaeological work. The project is planned to finish in 2010 with the production of a detailed report and a more accessible booklet. Rachel Shaw, Richard Broomhead and Alan Graham supervised the work with support from Kilve Outdoor Education Centre, SCC, the CBA and the SANHS. Over 60 young

archaeology students were involved with training on the site this year revealed the remains of a substantial wall. This structure has been interpreted as the remains of a circular tower that may well date from c.1473, when a Licence to Crenellate was granted (see report p. 163). Lewis Brown and Partners surveyors carried out a measured survey of the house and grounds alongside a detailed survey of the roof trusses in the medieval hall. Further analysis of this survey data is planned with the intention of obtaining a dendrochronological survey of the roof timbers. The Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group continued to survey a range of buildings in the parish of Stogursey (see the reports in Building Recording in 2009, pp. 176–86).

The HES continues to be an active supporter of the Neroche Project coordinated by the Forestry Commission and has worked closely with Tanya James, the community heritage officer, to help to produce a book about the heritage of the Neroche area. This is due for publication in 2010.

A number of public events were organised by HES and it is estimated that over 1000 people attended archaeological open days, walks and talks around the county. One of the main outreach events for archaeology was a project at Ilchester, which involved the production of a leaflet, sent to every household in the town, explaining the importance of the archaeological heritage of Ilchester and how it is conserved as part of the planning system. In addition Rachel Shaw worked with the local schools in the town, coordinating a programme of practical archaeological activities. The highlight was the excavation of part of the town sports field that sits on the site of a Late Iron Age enclosure. The excavations confirmed that well-preserved archaeological remains survive in this area and are only a few centimetres below the grass. Over 300 people visited the open day in July.

The overarching observation from another very busy year for the HES is that field archaeology is still providing a huge range of new archaeological discoveries to add the map of Somerset.

(R.A. Croft)

SURVEY AND FIELDWORK

Brockley, Chelvey Batch, ST 4763 6709

An earthwork was observed by the County Archaeologist in woodland adjacent to Chelvey Batch. It was surveyed by members of the Yatton,

Congresbury, Claverham and Cleve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) in 2007, and was found to consist of a roughly D-shaped bank up to 0.6m high, with an external ditch on the northern and eastern sides. On the west side, the slight remnants of a bank were seen at the top of a steep, possibly natural, drop to the side of the road. Overall the earthwork measured c. 40 x 50m. No entrance could be recognised. No internal features were seen and no dating evidence was found. This earthwork appears to be broadly similar to a number of others that have been recorded on the northern flanks of Broadfield Down (Russett 2006).

Reference

Russett, V., 2006. 'Four North Somerset enclosures', *CBA South-West Journal*, 18, 24–34. (Shirley Everden)

Cleve, Bickley, ST 452 651

An earthwork was observed in woodland, and was manually surveyed by YCCCART. It consisted of a roughly pear-shaped earth and stone bank, which measured approximately 40m x 30m. Later, a trackway had been cut through the bank on the western side, and a second track appeared to have partly curtailed the width of the bank on the north-west. There was a possible entrance at the south, and a slight external ditch was seen on both sides of the entrance. This enclosure appears to be broadly similar to others found on the northern slopes of Broadfield Down, and described by Vince Russett (2006).

Reference

Russett, V., 2006. 'Four North Somerset enclosures', *CBA South-West Journal*, 18, 24–34. (Shirley Everden)

Congresbury, Taylors Wood, Wrington Lane, ST 4484 6423

In the course of observations in Taylors Wood, an earthwork was found by members of YCCCART in an area known as The Woodlands, to the north of Wrington Lane. It was surveyed and drawn in 2007. The earthwork had been partly destroyed by the installation of a hard surface for a tennis court during the modern period. The bank that remained consisted of two adjacent lengths approximately at right angles, which had been cut through by a path on the western side. To the east an area of quarrying cutting into the slope of the hill formed a flat platform c. 25m x

8m immediately adjacent to the eastern corner of the earthwork, beyond which it had been destroyed. It is possible that this feature could be a further example of a type of earthwork that has been recorded in the area in some numbers (Russett 2006).

Reference

Russett, V., 2006. 'Four North Somerset enclosures', *CBA South-West Journal*, 18, 24–34. (Shirley Everden)

Laverton, churchyard, ST 778 530, Somerset HER 29684

Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society carried out a ground-penetrating radar survey in Laverton churchyard in 2009. This followed a 2006 twin-probe resistance survey, which indicated the possible presence of a building in the southern portion of the churchyard and possibly some structure appearing from under the west end of the church. In 2008, twin-probe resistance with both 0.5m and 1.0m probe spacings on a new grid suggested that any structure was shallow and did not form a complete building. This was also confirmed by use of vertical pseudosection resistivity profiles. The same area of the churchyard was surveyed with ground-penetrating radar in May 2009. This indicated a small structure at about 0.5m depth, also seen by all forms of resistance measurement, but showed little signs of the walls of a building.

(John Oswin)

South Cadbury, Sutton Montis, ST 6225 2415, ST 6250 2430, ST 6250 2417, Somerset HER 28469, 28470

The South Somerset Archaeological Research Group (SSARG) was formed in May 2009 from the South Cadbury Environs Project (SCEP) Volunteers Association and the South East Somerset Archaeological Society (SESAS). During 2009, geophysical survey within the SCEP study area around Cadbury Castle continued with surveys of three fields at Sutton Montis. Plantation (ST 6225 2415) produced negative anomalies in a rectilinear pattern that might relate to lynchets (HER 28469). Pease Hill North (ST 6250 2430) and Pease Hill South (ST 6250 2417) only gave slight indication of possible small archaeological features, but were dominated by geological features and dipolar responses, apparently from modern metallic debris (HER 28470). For other SSARG projects at Lufton

Villa, Castle Farm, South Cadbury and Lytes Cary Manor, see Roman and medieval sections.

(Clare Randall)

Stogursey, Hinkley Point, ST 201 447, Somerset HER 28449

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan over approximately 58ha of agricultural land south-west of Hinkley Point. This followed a 2008 geophysical survey to the north (HER 28444). Anomalies of archaeological origin were recorded, including a possible water meadow (HER 22976), two enclosures (HER 28281 and 28451), the deserted site of Corner (HER 35091) and a series of probable field boundaries (HER 35504).

(Naomi Payne)

MULTI-PERIOD SITES

Axbridge, The Court House, ST 4310 5458, Somerset HER 28380

Dick Broomhead carried out a watching brief and a small-scale excavation during groundworks relating to the construction of a swimming pool to the rear of The Court House, Axbridge. Evidence of multi-period activity was recovered, including Romano-British pottery, medieval and post-medieval features. The Romano-British pottery sherds were all recovered during the initial, supervised, machining. There were further isolated Roman sherds within several small smears of material within the natural head. Medieval features included a small circular stone and charcoal-filled pit, possibly a post-pit and a larger pit that contained 13th-century pottery. There was also a number of substantial post-medieval pits.

(Naomi Payne)

Cannington to Spaxton, water main replacement, ST 23770 37546 to ST 26876 39180, ST 26758 38792, Somerset HER 28161, 28286, 28440

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological programme of works in advance of the construction of a water main replacement from Cannington to Spaxton. The initial geophysical survey (HER 28286) and subsequent evaluation (HER 28161) located a range of predominantly linear features of low archaeological significance. However, the evaluation and excavation of an area to the south of Cannington located evidence of

Middle Bronze Age activity (HER 28287).

Evidence of at least two phases of Middle Bronze Age activity was recorded. The earliest phase comprised a curvilinear ditch that extended beyond the limits of excavation. This was cut by one of two parallel ditches that probably defined a north to south aligned trackway. A single sub-circular pit was also recorded that produced a moderately large quantity of Middle Bronze Age pottery and a number of worked flints dated to the Early Neolithic. Charred plant remains recovered from the fill of this pit were identified as barley, wheat and grass seeds. A posthole containing an abraded Romano-British pot sherd and a small ditch containing a sherd of Late Iron Age pottery provide some tentative evidence of later activity on the site. Several undated pits, postholes and a substantial ditch were also recorded. Although large unabraded sherds of Bronze Age pottery were recovered from a pit on the site, the quantity of finds and the nature of the features (ditches with a few scattered pits and postholes) suggest that, while a Middle Bronze Age occupation site probably exists in the immediate environs, it is likely that the features recorded in this excavation were peripheral to it.

(Cai Mason)

Cheddar, Piney Sleight Farm, ST475 552, Somerset HER 28764

A resistivity survey by Barry Lane and Colin Budge of CHERT covered the southern part of a field containing a barrow and an alleged medieval settlement. The results showed clear evidence of the former and only shallowly buried limestone bedrock in the area of the latter. A possible trackway was identified by earthwork survey.

(Chris Webster)

Congresbury, Old Refectory, ST 4355 6375

A proposal to erect a healing chapel within the orchard to the east of the Refectory prompted three geophysical surveys, all undertaken by YCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team).

The first survey revealed the walls of a building in the orchard beside the Refectory. An evaluation trench, dug subsequently by Richard Broomhead (Broomhead 2008), uncovered two early medieval walls believed to predate the present Old Refectory (c. 1446). Pottery sherds, including fragments of 14th-century Redcliffe ware, roof tile and a 17th-century Wanstrow dish, were found whilst walking

the orchard, as well as nine pieces of medieval Pennant stone roof tile. The walls surrounding the orchard were also examined. The northern, red brick wall appears to be of 19th-century origin but rests upon an earlier stone structure. This may possibly relate to the walls mentioned above. Reused stone was evident in the eastern wall where a scratch dial was identified. The southern wall was found to contain a possible fire recess as well as an arch. The survey coincided with the repair/repainting of the exterior walls of the Old Refectory. A photographic record was made of two previously unknown windows on the east wall of this building, which were subsequently covered over.

The second survey was undertaken in the paddock to the south of the Old Rectory. No archaeological features were identified.

The third survey led to the identification of part of a possible enclosure in the eastern area within the new churchyard, to the west of the current burial plots. On an earth mound on the west perimeter of the new churchyard, presumed to be from newly dug graves, human bones and a sherd of Saxon pottery were found. In addition, the wall between the vicarage garden and the orchard was cleared of vegetation on the west side and the garden examined for pottery sherds and worked stones. Two large worked stones were found, one of which might be from a church window. In conjunction with a request to review the Pevsner entries for St Andrew's church, the opportunity was taken to examine and photograph all the stone corbel heads within the church. This included early corbel heads in the organ chapel which were previously unrecorded. A photographic record was also made of the exterior stonework of the church and graffiti or markings on inside and outside walls. This identified a variety of previously unrecorded markings, including scratch dials on the southern porch.

Reference

Broomhead, R., 2008. 'Congresbury, Refectory orchard', in C.J. Webster, 'Somerset Archaeology 2008', *SANH* 152, 270.

(Chris Short)

Ilminster, Hort Bridge, ST 3469 1506, Somerset HER 28315

An evaluation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology comprising 30 machine-excavated trenches targeting, where appropriate, geophysical anomalies identified in an earlier geophysical survey.

The evaluation established the presence of archaeological features comprising pits, gullies and ditches across the majority of the site. Late Bronze Age occupation was attested by spreads of burnt flint deposits, indicative of activities associated with 'burnt mounds'. These occupation layers, concentrated on a diagonal north-east to south-west axis through the centre of the northern area of site, and continuing into the southern area of site, comprise compacted deposits of heat-affected flint, recorded as spreads of material which both sealed and filled underlying archaeological and natural features, such as pits and possible ditches.

During the Romano-British and post-medieval periods, the main activity on the site was of an agricultural nature, indicated by boundary ditches forming a succession of field systems and land divisions.

(Julie Gardiner)

Keinton Mandeville, Lakeview Quarry, ST 545 304, Somerset HER 28319

An archaeological evaluation of a proposed 2.25ha quarry extension was undertaken by AC Archaeology in 2009. Early Iron Age and Romano-British features and finds were recorded (HER 28510), including at least one hut, evidence for other post-built structures, a stone trackway and several inhumation burials. Pottery, animal bone and other domestic waste was recovered.

(S. Robinson)

Priddy, north-east of the church, ST529 513, Somerset HER 29707

An area of 4.6ha was surveyed by Albert Thompson and the ALERT geophysics team during 2008 and 2009 using magnetic gradiometry for most of the area and resistivity in the woodland. The magnetometry identified a number of linear features around the known Roman building (HER 23946) apparently indicating several phases of activity in the surrounding area, including a double-ditched enclosure. In the north-east corner of the church enclosure a circular feature probably indicates a previously unknown barrow (HER 29708).

(Chris Webster)

Puriton to Edington water pipeline, ST 315 410 – ST 387 384, Somerset HER 28191

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken by AC Archaeology between September 2008 and March 2009 during construction of a water

pipeline, which extended from Puriton to Edington. Archaeological work comprised an initial desk-based assessment and geophysical survey, followed by targeted trench evaluation. The results of this work identified three archaeological sites, which were excavated ahead of construction: Knowle Hill, Crandon Bridge and Puriton Hill.

At Crandon Bridge the excavations (HER 28483) were located adjacent to the Roman settlement (HER 10039) recorded during construction in 1971 of the M5 link road. Bronze Age activity on the site comprised a single crouched burial (HER 28484) associated with a Beaker vessel. Evidence for extensive Romano-British settlement was recorded, including metalled road and yard surfaces, buildings and enclosure and boundary ditches. Large quantities of finds were recovered, including native and imported pottery, coins, brooches, rings, a spoon and bone pins. Medieval activity (HER 28485) principally comprised a series of intercutting boundary ditches of two phases, with the first early medieval and the second later medieval.

Excavations at Knowle Hill (HER 28487) exposed a series of substantial ditches dating from the later Iron Age through to the Romano-British period (HER 28486). The ditches recorded were up to 5.15m wide and 2m deep and comprised part of a settlement enclosure. Pottery recovered dates from the later Iron Age and Romano-British periods and includes Black Burnished and samian wares. Roman coins, brooches, a spindle whorl and a ceramic bead were among the other finds.

Excavations on Puriton Hill (HER 28481) comprised the excavation and recording of a single substantial ditch (HER 28482), which was 3.65m wide and 1.1m deep. The ditch was aligned north-east to south-west and extended across the gradient at the break of slope. A total of seven sherds of probable Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered.

Elsewhere along the pipeline route, trial trenches and an archaeological watching brief recorded a low density of drainage ditches and agricultural boundaries of Romano-British to modern date.

(Simon Hughes)

Ruishton, Cambria Farm Park and Ride, ST 2592 2461, Somerset HER 28214

In 2008–9, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological excavation in advance of work on a new park and ride at Cambria Farm, near Taunton.

The excavation uncovered evidence of activity on

the site spanning the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, early medieval, post-medieval and modern periods. However, the main focus of activity occurred in the later prehistoric and Roman periods. The excavation uncovered the remains of a prehistoric settlement that contained at least five large roundhouses, measuring up to 17m in diameter, and three possible rectilinear post-built structures. These ranged in date from the Late Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age and were associated with a number of pits, gullies, postholes and an extensive spread of burnt stone.

A substantial Romano-British field system was also recorded and although there were no structural remains associated with this period, the large quantities of Romano-British finds indicate that occupation was occurring on or very near to the site. A small Romano-British inhumation cemetery containing 30 burials was also uncovered on the site. This cemetery was probably established in the 2nd century AD or later and at least two of the burials could be demonstrated to postdate c. 330 AD. Three possible cremation burials, all undated, were also recorded.

(Cai Mason)

Wellington, Cades Farm, ST 1440 2123, Somerset HER 28197

AC Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological excavation between December 2008 and January 2009 ahead of residential development. The work revealed a large number of ditches representing part of an early field system, as well as pits and postholes relating to settlement. The finds recovered date from the later Iron Age into the early Romano-British period.

(Kerry Dean)

Weston-super-Mare, St. Georges, Pastures Avenue, ST 3719 6280

An archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services. Six trenches, totalling c. 159m in length, were excavated to the highest archaeological horizon. A series of alluvial deposits were excavated; the earliest was thought to cover a Roman land surface that displayed evidence for a local salt-making industry. Numerous shallow gullies were seen as well as areas of burning and deep pits containing burnt material. Deposits of briquetage were noted within this layer. Possible medieval ditches were encountered at a higher level within

the alluvial sequence and may represent agricultural activity. Such post-Roman alluvial deposits with later re-colonisation are seen in the region at Northmarsh.

(David Gilbert)

Wiveliscombe, Maundown Water Treatment Works, ST 0627 2921, Somerset HER 28436

In 2006, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief and limited excavation at Maundown, during construction of a new water treatment works.

The earliest stratified remains from the site comprise a small cluster of early Bronze Age pits including a single cremation and several associated features, perhaps representing truncated cremation pits (HER 28437). Two further intercutting pits, also probably of this date, were located 150m to the north-east of this group.

Following a lengthy hiatus, activity recommenced in the late Iron Age and continued into the late Roman period with a major reorganisation of the site at some time in the late Iron Age/early Roman period (HER 28438). The nature of the earlier phase of activity lacks resolution but may include the remains of two roundhouses and several north-west to south-east aligned ditches; there is also some evidence to indicate that iron smithing may have been undertaken during this phase.

Reorganisation of the site during the Roman period saw the establishment of a possible rectangular building located over the former roundhouse and set within a new coaxial enclosure system. A probable iron smithing hearth was located within the site and separated from the later building by a possible trackway. Numerous small pits were located to the south-west of the building, with many containing residues from ironworking, including smithing slag, hearth bottoms, hammerscale, fragments of hearth lining and charcoal. There is no clear indication that the rectangular structure was an industrial building and it is more tempting to see the site as a rural farmstead where small-scale smithing was also taking place. A late-Roman hoard (HER 28439) containing over 2000 copper-alloy coins was recovered from within the footprint of the building.

Remains of a post-medieval farmstead known as 'Hurleys' was also recorded. This was in existence from at least 1841 but had been abandoned and demolished by the late 19th century.

(Chris Place)

Yeovil, Lyde Road, ST 57553 17828, Somerset HER 28247, 28305

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Barratt Homes of Exeter to carry out a programme of archaeological mitigation on land off Lyde Road, Yeovil. The initial phase of archaeological excavation, following geophysical survey and evaluation, was undertaken between September 2009 and January 2010 and covered an area of 4.29ha on the upper south-facing and south-easterly slopes of the hillside to the west of the River Yeo.

The site, which encompasses a small area of the total development (32ha), was densely occupied by archaeological remains dating from the Mesolithic to post-medieval periods and in particular Iron Age and Romano-British activity. The concentration and continuous nature of occupation during these periods is of regional significance and provides an exciting opportunity to examine a substantial area which will reveal evidence for the rural life and development of Somerset at this time.

The archaeological fieldwork produced limited evidence for the transient Mesolithic and Neolithic. By the Middle Bronze Age the hillside was being more systematically exploited, probably for a range of seasonal activities, and saw the first small-scale enclosure of some areas for fields. In the Iron Age, enclosures became more developed and boundaries demarcating areas became more important. This demarcation continued to be significant throughout later phases of the site. The presence of what appears to be a trackway is an indication of increased pastoral agriculture and the movement of animals.

The Middle-Late Iron Age is the first phase with evidence for continuous and sustained settlement in the form of at least six roundhouses. The entrances predominately faced south-east, which is typical for structures during this period. Associated with this were a number of refuse pits and postholes, indicating fencing or screening of certain areas. However the lack of occupational debris suggests that the use of the roundhouses may have been seasonal. Interestingly no in situ hearths were found, though rake-out debris was found in situ in pits and ditches. Clamp or bonfire kilns may have been employed for any cooking or processing undertaken, resulting in this type of more ephemeral remains. Artefacts indicate that a number of activities including metalworking were being undertaken on the site. The period also saw a more intense use of the fields on the lower slopes of the hill.

A significant and concentrated investment in the

landscape is seen in the early Romano-British period, establishing permanent ownership and occupation of the hillside. The large size of the boundary ditches suggests that they were dug by a community, yet the settlement evidence indicates the presence of a smaller, perhaps family-sized, farmstead. This may suggest that the focus of settlement lay elsewhere at this time. The recutting of several ditches suggests a continuation of occupation by the same community. During this phase, occupation is centred on two adjacent structural features, a probable roundhouse represented by a ring-gully and a subrectangular ditched enclosure. A second offset ring-gully may represent a subsidiary building. There are defined areas of activity indicative of stock control and evidence that fields were used as paddocks. Finds of fired clay, pottery, charcoal, slag, loomweights and quernstone are typical of traditional occupational and subsistence activities.

The Romano-British period represents a substantial episode within the landscape development of the site and is predominately characterised by widespread subdivision of the land for agricultural purposes. A transition from a predominately pastoral to a predominately arable environment is implied with settlement moving beyond the limits of the current excavation boundaries. However, the recovery of occupational debris from the field ditches does suggest this settlement did not move far. On the periphery of the settlement were small-scale industrial (metalworking) foci and the lower slopes of the hillside appear to have reverted to unenclosed grazing land. The field ditches were maintained and gradually embellished.

In the late 3rd century there is evidence that coin forging was being carried out on the site, in the form of moulds for coins of Carausius. Subsequent activity on the site was very limited; few artefacts dating to the 4th century were found and no new features were excavated. The site seems to have been largely abandoned by the mid 4th century.

During the post-medieval period activity resumed on the site. A field system, on a different alignment to the much earlier Romano-British one, was established.

The excavations have revealed an extremely dense complex of archaeological remains that have provided the opportunity to examine a large area of the landscape and trace its development from early prehistory through to the post-medieval period. The

size of the excavation has enabled ephemeral traces of Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age activity to be revealed. The development of later Bronze Age and Iron Age field systems and associated settlement has provided evidence for both continuity of boundaries and changes within the economy. The Romano-British occupation of the site brought further developments to the agricultural landscape. The late Romano-British activity is not clearly understood but the coin forging remains are of great significance and will enable coin production and supply at this time to be re-evaluated.

(Caroline Budd)

PREHISTORIC

Alford, Dimmer Landfill Site, ST 608 308, Somerset HER 28467

An archaeological excavation was undertaken in advance of cell construction within the vicinity of a possible prehistoric enclosure (HER 11298) located during an earlier geophysical survey (HER 16157). Features included field or property boundary ditches, shallow pits and gullies and occasional postholes. Finds within these features were sparse and ranged from the later Iron Age through to the Roman period. These features appeared to be connected with agricultural activities rather than with settlement or occupation and were sealed by late or post-Roman, colluvial and alluvial clays.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Burrowbridge, Southlake Moor, ST 365 306, ST 378 303, Somerset HER 28465

A geoarchaeological borehole survey, commissioned by Somerset County Council, was undertaken by ARCA (the consultancy arm of the Department of Archaeology, University of Winchester) of Southlake Moor in November/December 2008. Laboratory investigation of the stratigraphy and biostratigraphic assessment of plant microfossils was subsequently carried out between February and May 2009 in order to better characterise depositional environments represented by the stratigraphy. The project was undertaken to investigate the buried palaeoenvironmental resource as part of a scoping exercise prior to re-flooding the Moor.

Ten boreholes were drilled in two separate locations on the north and eastern sides of the Moor. Two of the boreholes were drilled through presumed medieval floodbanks, while the remaining eight

formed two separate transects across a buried palaeochannel. Core samples for laboratory study were collected from three of the boreholes.

The earliest Quaternary deposits encountered in the borehole survey were Late Pleistocene head derived from Barrow Mump and fluvial sands and gravels of Late Glacial/Early Holocene age. The palaeochannel had cut through both these units suggesting that it is a Holocene feature. The fills of the palaeochannel and the intertidal/alluvial deposits that seal it are 10m thick. The earliest channel sediments were radiocarbon-dated to the Late Mesolithic period and formed in intertidal conditions, while sedimentological evidence from the upper palaeochannel fills suggests burning activity causing the spread of ash across the wider catchment at this time. A peat dating from the Early Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age caps the palaeochannel. The peat formed in an alder carr environment, although palynological data demonstrate that the adjacent drylands were occupied by oak, birch and hazel forest. Magnetic susceptibility data suggest human activity on the site during the time that the peat formed. The floodbanks were constructed on the peat surface in the medieval period and were built of sediment scraped from the surrounding moor.

(Keith Wilkinson)

Ilchester, Sports Field, ST 5211 2228, Somerset HER 28419, 28721

The presence of a large, late-prehistoric enclosure (HER 53089) in the meadows south of Ilchester was first suspected in the early 1980s following an episode of extensive flooding in the River Yeo valley. Covering an area almost equivalent to that of Roman Ilchester, the site seems to lie alongside an abandoned earlier channel of the river, and was built towards the end of the Iron Age (Leach 1994). Subsequent opportunities to determine more about its date, character or purpose have been limited, prompting an initiative by the Heritage Service of Somerset County Council to find out more. This provided an opportunity for local community and volunteer participation on site and subsequently in some of the finds processing. The field project commenced with a gradiometer survey of over half the field by GSB Prospection, early in 2009 (HER 28721), with follow-up excavations in July–August directed by Peter Leach and Lorrain Higbee (HER 28419).

Three trenches were opened along the eastern edge

of the field with the objective of obtaining a section across the outer earthworks of the enclosure and examining some areas of its interior. In the event these objectives were somewhat curtailed by poor weather conditions through much of July and higher than normal ground water levels. These problems were compounded by the relatively intractable nature of the natural alluvium that underlies the site. Previous work around Ilchester has established that this deposit had been accumulating in the valley bottom since at least the Early Bronze Age and that it formed episodically through the later prehistoric, Roman and earlier medieval periods. This process has resulted in the virtual obliteration of the site as visible earthworks and problems with definition of some archaeological horizons, although these are often well preserved and have been protected from more recent land use regimes.

Resources were thus focused upon the main trench, a 50m long transect across the northern perimeter of the enclosure, which also provided a glimpse of its immediate interior. The primary feature defining the enclosure was a broad, 10–12m wide curving ditch cut with steep sides to *c.* 1.6m into the earlier alluvium. This partly waterlogged feature could only be investigated by a rapidly excavated machine section, from which a series of deposit samples were nevertheless obtained with the assistance of Vanessa Straker (English Heritage). This ditch provided material for an inner bank of alluvial clay, over 10m wide at its base but surviving to a height not exceeding 0.6–0.7m. This was separated by a *c.* 5m wide berm from the ditch and had been fronted by a low drystone revetment wall of Lias limestone, the remains of which had survived almost entirely as collapsed and fragmented rubble across the berm area. No other structure was visible in a section cut through the remains of the dumped clay rampart, which had been degraded by later agriculture. The ditch was evidently subject to rapid early infill, although molluscan evidence suggests episodic water flow or standing water before its final obliteration by silts. Some of the latter derived from erosion of the rampart and portions of its stone revetment. This structural and deposit sequence has been seen elsewhere around the enclosure where service trenches intersected it. In one section along its west side the stone revetment was found to be built of well-weathered Ham Hill stone.

Little intrinsically datable evidence was associated with these remains but behind the rampart and abutting its tail was a well-defined occupation

horizon. Poor weather and ground conditions limited its exposure and sampling, but the most coherent structure was a semicircular hollow edged with stone, with further stone rubble scatters (some burnt), much ash and charcoal, some slag, numerous fragments of animal bone (some with evidence of butchery), and a good assemblage of Late Iron Age pottery. Much of this was of coarse shell or limestone and grog-tempered fabrics, but included quantities of finer Durotrigan sandy fabrics and occasional sherds with Glastonbury-style decoration. The remains suggest part of a floor and occupation deposits belonging to a circular structure/building(?) set against the back of the enclosure bank. A substantial ditch nearby contained similar material but could not be investigated further. The high water table prevented sampling of what may be a continuation of this horizon seen in the other two nearby trenches, while the geophysical survey results hint at possibly similar evidence occurring much more widely just behind the enclosure bank in this field.

All of this evidence was sealed by a thin deposit of cleaner alluvium, above which were more mixed claysoil deposits that incorporated scattered finds of Roman and later date. These deposits probably represent later phases of cultivation and agriculture following abandonment of the enclosure, and the effects of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation could be seen on the site and are still partly visible on the surface of this and adjacent fields.

It is hoped that the results from this and some earlier investigations can be combined to obtain a clearer understanding of this site. Indications so far suggest that the enclosure was created and in use within perhaps little more than a century preceding the Claudian conquest of AD 43. Its location beside a now silted-up river channel and connections with neighbouring Iron Age communities, next to a place that was become a local administrative centre in Roman times, is undoubtedly significant. Was this perhaps a seasonally operating regional centre with social, political, production and exchange functions in that period of instability just prior to the Roman colonisation?

Reference

Leach, P., 1994. 'A prehistoric enclosure in the South Meadows, Ilchester', in P. Leach (ed), *Ilchester Volume 2: Archaeology, Excavations and Fieldwork to 1984*.

(Peter Leach)

Montacute, Hamdon Hill hillfort, ST 48402 16085, Somerset HER 28496

Commissioned by Ham Hill Stone Quarry anticipating an expansion to their quarry, the Cambridge Archaeological Unit of the University of Cambridge undertook evaluation fieldwork within the south-western defences of Hamdon Hill (HER 55103) in February 2009. Ten evaluation trenches, 200m in total length, were excavated and exposed features of largely later prehistoric date. As the area had been subject to geophysical survey beforehand (HER 15575), the trenching was targeted towards specific features. A digital contour survey conducted across the area demonstrated a bowl-like hollow almost completely enclosed by upstanding ridges, and it was within this depression that the majority of the archaeology lay. Three sides of a major sub-rectilinear enclosure fell within the areas; an inhumation was recovered from the ditch fills. A substantial Iron Age curvilinear enclosure, with a deep boundary ditch displaying several phases of recutting, was investigated within the main rectilinear enclosure. Also excavated was an undated circular bank, which lay within the lowest ground of the geological depression. The high level of groundwater noted during its digging could suggest its usage as either a watering-hole and/or dew-pond for stock.

A pit cluster of probable Iron Age date was exposed beyond the enclosure, with one of its features containing another inhumation.

Unexpectedly deep subsoil deposits were found sealing the archaeology which suggests the presence of a highly turbated 'buried-soil' horizon across the area. Quantities of residual Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ceramics indicate an earlier prehistoric presence not identified elsewhere.

(Adam Slater)

Pawlett, Walpole Landfill Site, ST 3114 4376 and ST 3125 4326, Somerset HER 28312, 28313

During 2009, the ongoing watching brief (HER 28312) undertaken during the excavation of new landfill cells within deep deposits of Holocene alluvium was continued. Fragmentary remains of wooden structures 13 to 17 (HER 28495) were recorded, all within or adjacent to palaeochannels. Radiocarbon dates have now been obtained for archaeological Structures 1 through to 8: the oldest is Structure 8 constructed in c. 4200 cal BC, Structures 2 and 3 were constructed c. 3800 cal BC, Structures 4, 6 and 7 c. 3600 cal BC and Structures

1 and 5 were built c. 3200 cal BC. Various peat bands have also been radiocarbon-dated. The wooden stakes, including their worked ends, are being processed and recorded at the Newport Ship facility in South Wales. Sieving of environmental samples from palaeochannels and peat layers continues and has produced some fish bones and scales including perch, a freshwater species, and eels. An environmental report is presently being produced and full details of the radiocarbon dates and environmental data will be published in future volumes of *Archaeology in the Severn Estuary*.

An archaeological excavation (HER 28313) on the south-west edge of the adjacent Lias island examined the buried soil that has been preserved below post-Roman alluvium, recovering prehistoric flint flakes and small fragments of animal bone.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Priddy, Leatherbarrow, south-east of Bleak House, ST 5079 5539, Somerset HER 28472

As part of a programme of work in the Charterhouse area, members of the Charterhouse Environs Research Team (CHERT) completed a survey of the barrow known as Leatherbarrow (HER 24217) in 2006. The barrow was bisected by a mining rake, and the wall of the rake was found to be obscured by shrubs and small tree growth. The remains of the barrow are in reasonable repair, with some evidence of quarrying in the form of scoops around the edges of the mound, presumably where small amounts of loose stone had been taken. On the edge of the rake were two larger pits, again presumed to be the results of quarrying on a small scale. The rake at this point is about 3–5m. deep, and it is possible that a good section of the mound might be seen in the face of the rake, if it was possible to remove the obscuring vegetation.

(Shirley Everden)

Stanton Drew, Stone Close, ST 600 633

Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society carried out geophysical surveys at Stone Close, Stanton Drew, in July 2009, in collaboration with B&NES, and under licence from English Heritage. Stone Close comprises the south-west circle and the Cove. Twin-probe resistance, vertical pseudosection resistivity profiling, magnetic susceptibility and fluxgate gradiometry were used.

High density survey (0.125m spacing, 0.5m lines) of the south-east quadrant of the main circle demonstrated that the internal timber circles could be detected as clearly with modern fluxgate

technology as with the caesium vapour technology previously used by English Heritage. The ditch was also clearly visible. There were also faint (negative) marks around the stone perimeter. Continuation of the survey to the south-west, in the direction of the south-west circle, showed no further features.

Twin-probe resistance survey in Stone Close included the north-east circle, both avenues and the perimeter of the main circle, which gave a view of the underlying geometry and indicated possible buried stones and empty stone sockets. Vertical profiles at selected points also showed how buried stones and stone sockets could be detected.

Profiling in the south-west circle showed the presence of much stone beneath the surface inside the south-west circle, but no sign of an outer ditch in the two transects (north and north-west) taken.

Twin-probe resistance survey in the garden of the Druids Arms Inn revealed stone structures immediately north-west of the stones of the Cove, and the outline of a possible long barrow aligned approximately north–south along the garden. Profiling confirmed the presence of stonework c. 1m thick immediately close to the standing stones. Further survey work is planned for 2010.

(John Oswin)

Wambrook, Cotley Hillfort, ST 310 074, Somerset HER 28665

GSB Prospection carried out a magnetometer survey at Cotley Hillfort. Although conditions were good, the results were largely negative. The defences on the northern side were seen but those presumed on the south were much less clear. Only a few internal features were recorded, probably representing pits. This suggests that the interior of the hillfort has been severely plough damaged.

(Jan Grove)

Yeovilton, RNAS Yeovilton, ST 5511 2279, Somerset HER 28318

Two phases of archaeological watching brief were carried out by Terrain Archaeology between July 2008 and April 2009, during the installation of an emergency water supply (EWS). The first phase comprised the observation of 18 small trial holes, mainly dug over pre-existing water pipe trenches. The second phase of works included observation of soil stripping for six EWS tanks in both the northern and southern parts of the base.

The watching brief produced mainly negative results, largely because most of the trial holes were in previously disturbed areas. A single archaeological

feature was recorded near the southern edge of the site. This comprised a small pit (HER 28382) containing Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, animal bone and charcoal, possibly indicating the presence of a more extensive Late Bronze Age site in this area. Although widespread later Iron Age and Roman activity is recorded locally, there has generally been a paucity of evidence for Bronze Age and earlier activity in the Yeovil valley.

(Steven Tatler, Mike Trevarthen and Peter S. Bellamy)

ROMAN

Bath, Gainsborough Building, Beau Street, ST 7496 6460

An excavation by Cotswold Archaeology was undertaken on the site of Roman hot baths partially recorded by J.T. Irving between 1864 and 1896. To judge from his plan there were at least two successive buildings, the earlier of unknown function, the later clearly a bath utilising water from the nearby Hot Bath spring (Cunliffe 1969, 151–4).

A series of large, flat, stone blocks was exposed immediately to the east of an apsidal bath recorded by Irving. They appeared to form three steps leading down, but from their finish and size seem fairly clearly to be the result of the robbing of very large blocks from a massive masonry structure not unlike the large solid ashlar buttresses in the Temple Precinct of Sulis Minerva. Overlying the 'steps' was clay levelling into which was cut a stone culvert and two walls. The culvert ran north-west to south-east and utilised the lowest course of the 'steps' as its base. The walls of the culvert did not display any staining, which would be expected if it had transported hot spa water. It may have supplied or drained cold water from the apsidal bath. The culvert was cut through by an east–west wall which can probably be correlated with one recorded by Irving. A fragment of floor surface survived to the south of this wall. A wall parallel to, but immediately south of the former, cut through this floor level and so is presumably a replacement. Two north–south walls, 3m apart, defined a probable corridor. Immediately to the east of this room was a large room, with a smaller room added to the west.

A succession of floors was found within the large room. Cut through the top of the latest of these floors was a stone-lined, rectangular pit that contained a coin hoard. The hoard was lifted as a block and probably contains in the order of 30,000 coins. It is

currently going through the process set out in the Treasure Act. Preliminary examination of about 260 coins, which became detached from the block, suggests that the hoard was closed in the AD 260s. The large room was subdivided at some date by the insertion of at least two partition walls, while a north–south wall associated with a stone-flagged floor is even later still.

A thick deposit of demolition debris overlies the clay levelling in a second area. Cut into this was a north-east to south-west aligned stone culvert, which, in turn, was truncated by a later wall. Another culvert ran alongside this wall, the red mineral staining indicating that it transported hot spa water.

Overlying most areas was a demolition deposit of brick/tile, stone rubble and clay overlain by 12th to 15th-century garden soils. A stone wall running north-east to south-west and a possible surface suggest the presence of a medieval building. Medieval pits, in some cases dug to extract Roman walling stone and used for rubbish disposal thereafter, were also found. Stone culverts and a wall were associated with properties that fronted onto Lower Borough Walls; these may date to the post-medieval period. Further pits were dug to rob Roman stonework, most likely associated with the construction of buildings in the 1860s. Other walls relating to 19th-century buildings were found.

Reference

Cunliffe, B., 1969. *Roman Bath*, Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries report 24.

(Neil Wright and Mark Collard)

Bathampton, Down Lane allotments, ST 777 663

Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society carried out a twin-probe resistance survey in the allotments by Down Lane, Bathampton. This indicated that there is possibly a Roman villa in the north-west corner. The survey could only be conducted on pathways and baulks between gardens. It is hoped that vertical pseudosection profiling may provide a clearer picture of the structures indicated by twin-probe resistance.

(John Oswin)

Brympton, Lufton Villa, ST 5151 1784, Somerset HER 26101

A gradiometer survey was undertaken at Lufton Roman villa by the South Somerset Archaeological Research Group, in conjunction with the Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society, under the

direction of Dr James Gerrard. This confirmed the area previously excavated as being the core of the building but also indicated additional structures around its periphery and other structures and land division in the surrounding area.

(Clare Randall)

Butleigh, Beggar's Field, ST 515 342, Somerset HER 28184

Over a period of several weeks between August and September 2009, Absolute Archaeology carried out a training excavation on a Romano-British villa (HER 28497). The investigation revealed the well-preserved remains of a significant building, including a hearth, substantial wall foundations and floor surfaces. A large area of flagstone flooring and a mosaic pavement were partially revealed. Several phases of development were noted, potentially dating from the 2nd century AD to the late 4th/early 5th century AD. A large collection of ceramic sherds and broken lias roof tile was recovered from the site, along with one shale spindle whorl and another, carved from the ball joint of a cattle femur. Investigations will continue to the west of the structure in August 2010.

(Sam Driscoll and Paul Martin)

Cleeve, ST 45 65

Findings of Roman pottery and coins, including many pottery sherds from mole hills, prompted the owner to contact the North Somerset County Archaeologist, who with the help of YCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team) carried out a geophysical survey in 2006, using a resistivity meter. The results showed evidence of a rectangular building possibly used for agricultural purposes. The pottery ranged from the 2nd and 3rd century AD to the 18th century. Sources were Hamworthy in Dorset, Oxfordshire, North Devon and there was a considerable amount of Congresbury ware.

(Chris Lufflum)

Congresbury, Venus Street, ST 443 629

YCCART agreed a two-year project with the Heritage Lottery Fund commencing in May 2009 to establish, through survey, the extent of the operation of Romano-British pottery kiln sites in the parish of Congresbury. Earlier studies (Usher and Lilly 1964; Scammell not dated; Broomhead 1986) suggested that using gradiometer surveys might start in the area around Venus Street.

Five fields comprising 9ha have been surveyed and a number of potential kilns have been identified (individual site reports are available on the YCCART web site). The magnetometry survey work will continue on further sites, coupled with resistivity pseudosectioning investigation on potential kiln sites indicated by the magnetometer surveys. Consideration will also be given to full excavation of one or more potential kiln sites.

References

- Broomhead, R., 1986. *Congresbury Parish Survey*, unpub paper.
 Scammell, A.J., *Congresbury Excavations 1969-70*, unpub report, North Somerset Museum.
 Usher, G., and Lilly, D., 1964. 'A Romano-British pottery kiln site at Venus Street, Congresbury', *SANH* 108, 172-4.

(Ian Morton)

Hemington, Chickwell Farm, ST 751 541, Somerset HER 28453

Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society carried out geophysical surveys at Chickwell Farm, Hemington. The farm (HER 23668) is approximately 1km west of the Society's excavations site at Blacklands, on the north side of the Wheel Brook valley. Lynchets of a system of rectangular fields, probably of Romano-British date can be seen immediately to the south of the farmhouse and adjacent fields. Magnetometer and twin-probe resistance found no trace of settlement, but indicated a possible small rectangular temple within these fields. Investigation into a field on the western extremity of the farm is ongoing.

(John Oswin)

Muchelney, Eastmoor Lane, ST430 247, Somerset HER 28200

A fluxgate magnetometer survey (HER 28674) was carried out in 2008 in a field to the east of Muchelney Abbey. This revealed good evidence for probable archaeological features in the form of potential pits and ditches with the appearance of a small ladder-like settlement and associated droveway. A community training excavation was carried out in September and October 2009 by Somerset County Council to test the geophysical results and to date and characterise any activity present.

Three narrow trenches were excavated. These revealed the presence of shallow pits, several ditches and a droveway with a thin stone surface. Several

phases of activity were recorded, as ditches were recut and later ditches cut through the driveway. A comparatively large quantity of Romano-British pottery was recovered, including some semi-complete vessels, suggesting that a settlement was probably located in the field indicated by the geophysics. Some pits may represent prehistoric activity in the field. Radiocarbon dating is planned to establish if this is the case.

(Richard Brunning)

Priddy, E of St Cuthberts leadworks, ST 541 507, Somerset HER 29710

An extensive area of magnetometer surveying was undertaken in 2008–9 by Albert Thompson and the ALERT geophysics team to the north-west of St Cuthberts leadworks. A smaller area was surveyed by resistivity meter. These mapped the extensive remains of a settlement, which on the basis of earlier finds and similarities to Charterhouse, is likely to be Roman in date.

(Chris Webster)

Queen Camel, Somerset HER 28372

See report by Alan Graham on p. 158.

Shepton Mallet, Mendip Avenue, ST 6300 4263, Somerset HER 28160

Excavation by Cotswold Archaeology during work associated with redevelopment of the Tesco site re-examined an area previously investigated prior to the construction of the store. The site lies within the bounds of the Roman small town, but due to the shallow depth of groundworks only a Roman bank, pit and ditch were revealed.

(Jonathan Hart)

South Cadbury, Castle Farm, ST 6321 2536, Somerset HER 28272

Excavation was carried out at Castle Farm, South Cadbury, by the South Somerset Archaeological Research Group, in advance of the development of a new dairy. Boundary ditches were overlain by a terraced area containing a number of post-built buildings, and the area included a corn drier, a number of kilns/furnaces, a probably natural pond that had accumulated refuse, a midden and a small cemetery. These ranged in date throughout the Romano-British period, with the terrace and buildings late in the sequence. Post-excavation analysis is currently being undertaken. A full report is in preparation.

(Clare Randall)

MEDIEVAL

Ash Priors, land to the east of Park Gate House, ST 1495 2946, Somerset HER 28204

A watching brief was conducted during large-scale ground reduction to form the platform for a new house. Beneath recent topsoil the entire site was found to be covered by a deep layer of colluvium that contained abraded medieval pottery and occasional flint flakes. Towards the south-eastern corner of the site, and adjacent to the modern road, this material was found to overlie stone rubble associated with dumps of soil containing large sherds of late 13th and early 14th-century pottery, bone and roof tiles of Morte Slate. Much of the stone was arranged in clear east–west and north–south lines and to the east was packed into gullies. The remains probably represent the northern and eastern foundations of a short-lived medieval timber structure (PRN 28517) and defined an area that contained a remnant of hard-packed clay floor, a possible hearth and a large pit which contained stone, ash and further pottery. Following a prolonged period during which the site remained unoccupied the remains were cut by a 17th-century boundary ditch on the line of the modern eastern boundary of the site.

(James Brigers)

Badgworth, land to the north of Nut Tree House, ST 3937 5247, Somerset HER 28134, 28217

An evaluation in August 2008 on land immediately to the north of the location of a discovery of medieval settlement remains in 2002 (HER 28322) revealed the remains of three large ditches representing drainage and boundary features dating from the 13th to the 18th centuries. The earliest of these, in the centre of the site, contained the foundation of a drystone wall that appeared to retain its southern edge; the ditch and demolition rubble derived from the collapse of the wall were both found to contain pottery of the mid to late 13th century. Prior to the development of the site in February 2009 a more extensive area of the remains was examined during a targeted excavation. Evidence of four phases of activity was produced commencing with a large 13th-century ditch into which a short length of drystone wall was later inserted. The wall appeared to be contemporary with a well-built stone pier base to the north that lay at the eastern terminus of the ditch. Later the eastern extent of the wall was cut by the construction of a localised area of lias rubble hard

standing, which filled the area between the remains of the wall and the pier. Following the infilling of the ditch and the collapse of the wall, an extensive surface of lias rubble was laid in the area to the north and east and a further east–west aligned ditch was cut to the south. These events appear to have occurred during the 17th century although the surface and the ditch may have survived in some form until the 18th. Finally, further east–west and north–south ditches were created to facilitate drainage of the site and a second extensive stone spread was laid to the south, probably during the 18th century.

(James Brigers)

Berrow, Burnham and Berrow Golf Club, Coast Road, ST 2930 5250, Somerset HER 28208

A watching brief was conducted during the excavation of a reservoir and associated service trenches in the dunes to the north-west of the parish church of St Mary, in an area where stray medieval and Romano-British finds have been recorded in the past. Approximately 20,000 cubic metres of sand were removed, which for the most part contained little of archaeological significance, with the exception of undated animal bone, modern ceramics and glass. However, at the lowest limit of the excavation, a deposit of dark soil was encountered, which contained exclusively 12th or 13th-century pottery, animal bone and other domestic debris. The material probably represents a midden (HER 28499).

(James Brigers)

Bridgwater, Castle Street, ST 2999 3719, Somerset HER 28154

In 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a replacement sewer pipe in Castle Street, Bridgwater. The watching brief uncovered an ashlar faced, 2.6m high section of the riverside curtain wall of Bridgwater Castle, buried beneath Castle Street. A small, probably contemporary, tunnel within and parallel to the wall was also recorded. In addition, a predominantly brick-built post-medieval culvert was located running along most of the length of Castle Street. This culvert had numerous side branches leading to the houses on either side of the street and was probably contemporary with the initial setting out of Castle Street by the first Duke of Chandos in the early 18th century. Monitoring of the works to the east side of the castle wall revealed

only deep deposits of post-medieval alluvium and made ground.

(Chris Place)

Burnham-on-Sea, St Andrews Church, ST 3043 4941, Somerset HER 28173

Trial pits excavated in 2008 at the western end of the nave were extended to the south and east in the latter part of 2009. In general this confirmed the findings of the 2008 excavation in revealing the continuation of the sequence of alternating medieval floor surfaces and dumps in both areas. In the southern trench the full extent of the elevation of the southern wall of the nave was revealed, the construction level of which appeared to be associated with a thick dump of mortar, possibly deposited during the construction process. In the northern trench the continuation of a north-east–south-west aligned feature was identified. During the 2008 investigation this was interpreted as a foundation for an earlier wall, however the continuation appeared to be more of a shallow gully cutting into the underlying sand and remains undated. Exploration of further portions of one of the earlier mortar floor surfaces revealed the presence of a further small post hole in this area.

(James Brigers)

Charlton Mackrell, Lytes Cary, ST 5310 2650, Somerset HER 28468

The South Somerset Archaeological Research Group carried out a gradiometer survey, in conjunction with National Trust volunteers, of the deserted medieval settlement adjacent to Lytes Cary Manor (HER 53683). This confirmed and elucidated the features recognised on the surface as earthworks.

(Clare Randall)

Chedzoy, Doltons Farm, ST 3375 3730, Somerset HER 28327

An archaeological evaluation in a pasture field immediately south-west of Doltons Farm recorded a group of intercutting, medieval pits. Other linear features also appeared to begin in the later medieval period. Some medieval pottery was found within a deep ploughsoil. Several post-medieval ditches and pits were also recorded. Most finds from these features were dated to between the 17th and 19th centuries, with the exception of a small amount of residual medieval pottery.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Durston, St John's church, ST 291 281, Somerset HER 28183

A watching brief was undertaken for drainage works around the exterior of the building and within the churchyard (HER 43228). The remains of two articulated inhumation burials on the north side of the church were disturbed, and parts of two other stone and brick grave vaults were exposed. All predated a building debris horizon that may represent the 1853 rebuild of the church. Other disarticulated human remains, together with 18th-century and later finds were recorded within the 0.5m maximum depth of deposits encountered. All of this material was reincorporated within the backfill of the trenches and the articulated human remains were returned to the Parochial Parish Council for reburial.

(Peter Leach)

Edithmead, motte, ST 3293 4929, Somerset HER 28664

A Bristol University MA student, David Roberts, carried out earthwork and magnetometer surveys over two areas east and west of the motte at Edithmead (HER 11121). No evidence for the existence of a bailey was identified by either survey. The earthwork survey confirmed previous interpretations of the shape of the motte.

(Naomi Payne)

Evercreech, St Peter's church, ST 6493 3867, Somerset HER 28207

A few medieval pottery sherds dating from the 12th century onwards were recovered when the excavations for a new service trench through the eastern end of the graveyard were monitored. A relatively large amount of post-medieval pottery, from the 17th century onwards, was also recovered.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Glastonbury, St Dunstan's car park, Magdalene Street, ST 4995 3885, Somerset HER 28304

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor the removal and rebuilding of the unsafe, modern boundary wall at the east end of St Dunstan's House, in the north-east corner of St Dunstan's car park, and to repair and partly rebuild a shed in the north-east corner of the property. The car park lies above extensive, post-medieval and modern make-up deposits. No medieval features were recorded within the new foundation trenches, which were up to 1m deep. However, some medieval pottery sherds were recovered and the make-up deposits included

building rubble that is likely to have originated from the demolition of the abbey.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Henstridge, Church Farm, ST 7228 1972, Somerset HER 28158, 28159, 28182

Three stages of archaeological investigations were undertaken at Church Farm, Henstridge, Somerset, during the winter of 2008/2009. The work initially comprised five evaluation trenches, four of these revealing a limited amount of archaeological deposits including some structural activity. Based on the results of the evaluation, an area situated in the southern half of the proposed development and covering approximately 136 square metres was further investigated. A depth of up to 0.6m of topsoil/subsoil had recently been removed from across this area onto natural Cornbrash. A limited number of archaeological features, including some structures, were present at the eastern extent of the site only. These included a substantial wall foundation and part of a large, probably associated, ditch. The full width of both these features was not exposed within the excavated area. A large quantity of pottery evidence recovered from investigations in this area suggests that this activity occurred in the 12th/13th century. A third stage of work comprised a series of short trenches within the confines of the existing former farmhouse building that is situated adjacent to the present churchyard. No burials or other activity was present within any of the trenches.

(S. Robinson)

Henstridge, The Fountain Inn, High Street, ST 72455 19763, Somerset HER 28149

In 2007 and 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Fountain Inn, High Street, Henstridge. The watching brief recorded a small number of features ranging from Saxo-Norman to post-medieval in date. A large Saxo-Norman ditch near the centre of the site probably represented a property boundary. A total of four medieval ditches were recorded elsewhere on the site, the majority of which probably represent former property boundaries. One of these contained a substantial amount of stone rubble that may have originated from a demolished stone building in close proximity to the ditch. A medieval pit, a post-medieval pit and foundations associated with the former public house were also recorded.

(Cheryl Allum)

Lopen, Manor Farm, ST 4240 1407, Somerset HER 28215

In 2007 and 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at Manor Farm, Lopen. Four medieval ditches were uncovered, the earliest of which contained pottery dated to the 11th or 12th century. It is likely that these ditches represent repeated attempts to drain a low-lying and boggy area.

(Cheryl Allum and Fay Pegg)

Milverton, Fore St, former White Hart Hotel, ST 1209 2579, Somerset HER 28185

A watching brief was conducted during the conversion of the property to a private house during the summer of 2009. During the development the interior of the building was stripped revealing that the present structure of c. 1750 had been inserted into a former row of houses of late-medieval date as evidenced by a fragment of jointed cruck surviving in the eastern elevation which also indicated that the roof line of the surviving cottages to the east was raised at this time. Evidence of a ground-floor plank and stud screen of similar date was also noted in the same elevation. The lower part of the western elevation consisted of a sandstone wall that also predated the 18th-century structure and possibly formed the western limit of the medieval buildings on the site. This wall was also extended to the north by a panel of box-framed brickwork suggesting that the frontage was moved forward, encroaching into Fore Street, at the time of the construction of the hotel building. Excavation within the building and in the passage to the west revealed the presence of an extensive layer of worn sandstone rubble that clearly predated the structures on the site and possibly represented the remains of an undated but possibly early external surface. During further limited excavation in the courtyard to the rear a brick-lined well was recorded which appeared to be associated with a cobbled yard surface. This sealed dumps of post-medieval material and a pit and a stakehole of uncertain, but possibly medieval, date.

(James Brigers)

Old Cleeve, Cleeve Abbey, ST 047 407, Somerset HER 28180

A small evaluation was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology prior to groundworks for new drainage at Cleeve Abbey (HER 33918). This exposed the foundations of the eastern range of buildings, and revealed the remains of a field boundary. This

appears to precede the layout of the eastern ranges of the Abbey in the 13th century. The environmental sample taken from the primary fill of the ditch showed that the identified taxa indicate scrubland or hedge-bank environment.

(Mark Steinmetzer)

Old Cleeve, Cleeve Abbey, ST 047 407, Somerset HER 28507

In 2008, a watching brief and test-pit evaluation were undertaken by Exeter Archaeology during groundworks preceding the provision of new services at Cleeve Abbey (HER 33918). This revealed the presence of a substantial building represented by an extensive spread of building debris including medieval ridge tiles and a pair of broad rubble wall foundations associated with the remnants of a cobbled surface. These remains indicate the former presence of a substantial building in the Outer Court of the abbey, perhaps a tithe barn. A small assemblage of finds was recovered, including quantities of medieval floor tiles and glazed roof tiles, pottery, and a bone tuning peg from a musical instrument.

(Paul Pearce)

Selwood, Marston deserted medieval village, ST 7685 4475, Somerset HER 28242

Five trial trenches were excavated along the line of an unconsented farm track constructed across the south end of the Scheduled Monument (Somerset HER 24559) and the adjoining pasture. Two, at the eastern end within the Scheduled Monument, revealed highly disturbed ditches and masonry structures of post-medieval construction, filled with soils containing large amounts of abraded *ex situ* medieval pottery mixed with a wide range of material of post-medieval and relatively modern date. All deposits displayed evidence of 20th-century disturbance that, in some cases, had penetrated the depth of the entire soil profile. Three classes of deposit were represented: relics of the medieval village of Marston, 18th and 19th-century drainage and landscaping works, and disturbances caused by wheeled traffic since the 1970s. Three other trenches, located outside the Scheduled Monument, revealed wholly natural soil sequences and a single drainage ditch comparable to those revealed within.

Whilst there clearly were high-quality medieval and post-medieval deposits within and adjacent to the east end of the Scheduled Monument, the archaeological potential of those deposits has been

severely compromised by disturbances caused by 18th and 19th-century works and 20th-century disturbances, to the extent that some of the larger 'medieval' features have been completely emptied of their medieval fills and replaced by stone-lined drains. This has compromised the stratigraphic and artefactual assemblages within them and destroyed their palaeoenvironmental assemblages.

These disturbances had occurred before the recent construction of the farm track that, ironically, has stopped the deeper disturbances and afforded a measure of protection to all surviving deposits. Construction of the track has not caused additional disturbance.

(Michael Heaton)

Shepton Beauchamp, Buttle Lane, ST 405 169, Somerset HER 28458

An assessment trench revealed a pit and a sequence of ditches containing medieval pottery of 11th to 13th-century date. The features also contained a number of hearth bottoms, being refuse from iron smithing. The assessment is to be followed by an archaeological watching brief during the proposed building works, and a full report on the site will follow the completion of that work.

(Alan Graham)

Stogursey, Fairfield Project, Fairfield House, ST 187 430, Somerset HER 28466

See report by R.A. Broomhead *et al.* on p.163.

Taunton, 46 St James's Street/15 Middle Street, ST 2282 2477, Somerset HER 28205

Two linked properties proposed for a residential development close to the centre of Taunton were subject to an evaluation by trial trenching. Both lie within a former late-medieval suburb that was developed between the west gate of the Priory of SS Peter and Paul and the north-east side of the medieval town defences. A 26m x 2.2m trench along the St James's Street plot exposed part of the foundations of 18th and 19th-century houses that had occupied it until their mid 20th-century demolition. Beneath and to their rear were groups of rubbish pits containing scatters of animal bone, ash, slag, charcoal and some medieval glazed jug and, most commonly, unglazed cookpot wares. The latter suggested two phases of occupation in the late 12th to 13th century and in the 14th to 15th centuries. There was a hint of associated structural remains at the northern extremity of the trench but most of the

road frontage zone lay outside the site beneath a modern forecourt and the public pavement. Up to 1m depth of debris, midden deposits, shallow pits and occasional outhouse structures associated with the subsequent occupation of the site from the later 17th century to the present, occupied the zone to the rear.

The 9m x 2.2m Middle Street trench encountered up to 1.5m of midden-type deposits and some layers of building debris, which incorporated quantities of animal bone, ash and charcoal, glassware, and ceramics, including clay pipes, tile, glazed earthenwares, occasional stoneware and finer ware pottery. The bulk of this was of late 17th to 18th-century date and sealed an undated, sloping stony claysoil horizon, whose full depth was not exposed. These deposits were sealed by a deep cultivation soil beneath a cobbled yard, containing 18th to early 20th-century material.

(Peter Leach)

Taunton, Somerset County Cricket Ground, ST 22862 24897, ST 2279 2494 and ST 22622 25075, Somerset HER 28383, 28386, 28387

In 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological programme of works in mitigation of a multiphased redevelopment of the Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton. The work was undertaken on three separate sites around the perimeter of the Cricket Ground. These comprised Gimblett's Hill, located in the south-west corner of the ground, formerly occupied by the Ridley Stand and part of St James's churchyard; the Pegasus Court Development, a large development of luxury flats and new terraced seating on land formerly occupied by a cricket stand at the western end of the cricket ground and Coal Orchard car park; and the Club Hub – a small block of land at the eastern end of the Cricket Ground formerly occupied by a 20th-century building used as a store by the cricket club.

The earliest evidence of activity was represented by a moderate assemblage of worked flint that ranged in date from the Neolithic through to the Late Bronze Age. However, the majority of these were recovered as residual finds in later features and although this does suggest some form of episodic human activity in the area from the Neolithic onwards, it is not known if this comprised occasional temporary camps or a more permanent settlement somewhere in the vicinity. A small shallow pit uncovered on the Club Hub site could potentially date from the Late Bronze Age.

The earliest securely dated features all contained pottery dated to the 11th or 12th century AD. One of these was a substantial east–west aligned ditch, located in the south-west corner of the cricket ground, with a contemporary metalled surface running parallel to it. This ditch had clearly held water originally and it is likely that its primary function was water management. The ditch had very steep sides that were probably once retained by some form of revetment. Construction was clearly a major undertaking and one plausible interpretation is that it functioned as a leat to channel water towards fishponds associated with the Priory. Indeed, the ditch was roughly in alignment with the modern boundary wall of St James’s Church, and if this line were extrapolated to the east it would lead towards a 12th-century fishpond identified beneath the later Priory Barn during excavations undertaken in 1977. However, two other interpretations should also be considered; the ditch could have defined either the outer precinct of the early Priory or the rear of burgage plots that fronted onto St James’s Street. Indeed, it is entirely possible that this ditch could have served both as a boundary and water channel. Interestingly, early 19th-century maps appear to show a number of property boundaries to the west of the site that appear to align with this ditch; perhaps suggesting that after it went out of use, this boundary continued to be respected.

On the Club Hub site, the earliest securely dated feature was a very unusual large ditch that probably defined a small rectangular area. No parallels for this feature could be identified, and apart from suggesting that it may be related to water management associated with an early phase of the Priory, no conclusive interpretations can be formed as to its nature or function. Both this feature and the possible leat were deliberately backfilled with natural gravel suggesting that a major reorganisation of the landscape surrounding the Priory may have occurred fairly early in its development.

A number of pits and ditches indicative of domestic occupation were recorded in the south-west corner of the cricket ground; these were dated to the 11th or 12th century. This date range coincides with the establishment of the Priory and the St James’s suburb after 1158. Whilst it is likely that the features on this site are directly related to these events, it should be borne in mind that the date range ascribed to the pottery does not preclude these features predating the relocation of the Priory to this area.

A possible Civil War fortification ditch was also

uncovered on the Club Hub site. The ditch aligned with a parch mark that crosses the cricket pitch and this bore a remarkable similarity to a possible Civil War ditch uncovered on Canon Street in 1977.

A large number of architectural stone fragments were recovered from the 19th-century foundations of St James’s churchyard wall. These are clearly derived from an ecclesiastical building, the majority of which could be dated to the 12th to 14th centuries. The origin of this stonework could not be determined with certainty; however, given that St James’s church underwent a number of major phases of partial demolition and rebuilding in the 19th century, this does seem to be a likely source of the stone.

A north–south aligned brick boundary wall associated with a row of buildings formerly known as Denmark Place was also recorded in the centre of the site. This range contained houses and stores that were probably constructed in the early 1820s and demolished in the 1960s.

(Cai Mason)

Taunton, Taunton Castle, ST 2259 2463, Somerset HER 28735, 28737, 28741

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the works to form the Museum of Somerset in Taunton Castle. Previous work in the Great Hall by Raleigh Radford (Radford and Hallam 1953) in the early 1950s had suggested that few archaeological deposits survived and that those that did were now deep beneath a concrete floor. Neither of these proved to be true and the planned insertion of foundation beams, heating ducts and communications led to a four-week excavation within the Great Hall by Chris Webster and James Brigers assisted by Lorraine Higbee and Dick Broomhead. Radford’s results were reassessed and further discoveries made, particularly at the east end, which probably lay outside the hall until after the Civil War. Hints of earlier phases were also encountered including what appeared to be a massive ditch running north–south across the site. Radford’s ‘marl bank’, believed by him to form the Saxon defences, was reinterpreted as a clay floor for the earliest hall. In other monitoring work, the line of the north curtain was found in the base of a lift pit in the Wyndham Gallery and the very extensive nature of the 1780s restoration by Sir Benjamin Hammet in the west and south ranges was revealed. The medieval roof above the Adam Library was recorded in detail by Stuart Blaylock; its design reinforces the suggestion that this was formerly the chapel.

Excavations by Western Power Distribution (without Scheduled Monument Consent in one case) were also recorded in Castle Green. The ground had mostly been disturbed by previous service trenches but two burials from the late Anglo-Saxon cemetery were recorded as was the edge of the castle ditch.

Reference

Radford, C.A.R., and Hallam, A.D., 1953. 'The history of Taunton Castle in the light of recent excavations', *SANH* 98, 55–96.

(Chris Webster)

Wells Cathedral, West Cloister Walk, ST 551 458, Somerset HER 28240

A plan to install spotlights within the cloisters required trenches along the inside of the outer walls for the installation of electric cables. The trenches were generally *c.* 0.5m wide, sometimes less, and up to 0.3m deep. All trenches were cut by cathedral staff and were monitored continually. Features within the West Cloister trench included medieval and post-medieval grave cuts and buried grave slabs. Flint flakes were found within the redeposited clay and gravels below the Cloisters.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, Calves Plot Wood, ST 498 504, Somerset HER 28651

An earthwork survey by members of the Westbury Society within Calves Plot Wood revealed a complex sequence of features and different land uses, from a medieval arable field clearance or boundary bank to post-medieval ridge and furrow in the upper part of the wood. This raises questions about its status as 'Ancient Woodland' although several of the indicator species used by Natural England to identify this were present.

(Barry Lane)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, deer park boundary, ST 488 481, Somerset HER 28756

Members of the Westbury Society and others undertook a small excavation in July 2009 as part of the CBA Festival of British Archaeology. The site chosen was part of the south-west boundary of the medieval deer park (Somerset HER 24861). A stone-faced bank was revealed up to 0.7m high with a stone cobbled track adjacent on the edge of the Moor. The bank and facing were probably medieval in date whereas the track was almost certainly constructed after the enclosure and drainage of the Moor in the

1790s. All the artefacts found were of post-medieval date.

(Barry Lane)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, Lodge Hill, ST 4925 4810, Somerset HER 28654

Charcoal samples from the base of the Q-pit or whitecoal hearth reported last year as probably 16th century were dated by the University of Waikato with a grant from the CBA Challenge Fund. The dates of cal AD 970–1160 and cal AD 1030–1210 at 95.4% probability suggest that the whitecoal fuel used for smelting of lead was in use in the 12th century, some 400 years before any documentary record.

(Barry Lane)

Weston Bampfylde, shrunken village, ST 610 248, Somerset HER 29711

A magnetometer survey was carried out by GeoFlo, on behalf of the Victoria County History, to investigate earthworks in a field at the centre of the village. The results were confusing as would be expected in an area of multiphase occupation but it did seem clear that features suggesting settlement, including ditches, pits and hearths, were present. Three phases of anomaly were identified: two sets of east–west linears, one of which may be recent field drainage, and a set of anomalies trending north–east–south–west.

(Liz Caldwell)

Woolavington, St Mary's church, ST 3478 4164, Somerset HER 29531

Works to replace the floor in the nave were monitored by Dick Broomhead. Beneath the timber floor was a partly intact floor of laid lias slabs resting on a 0.25m thick deposit of mortar and earth overlying compacted stone and rubble. In the south-west part of the nave this exposed two vertically set stones that may have related to an underlying vault and in the north part a worn lias slab was recorded that may have been an early threshold, before the construction of the tower in the 13th century.

(Chris Webster)

POST-MEDIEVAL

Bath, Octagon Chapel, Broad Street, ST 750 650

In 2008, Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief at the Octagon Chapel, Broad Street, Bath. The watching brief recorded deep deposits of post-

medieval made ground and 18th and 19th-century structures. It also revealed that former soil formation, possibly dating from the medieval period, survived below the Moon and Sixpence yard. The eastern part of the yard was probably developed by the early 18th century and this would appear to be confirmed by the identification of a well and another structure, which have characteristics of this date, for example coursing and narrow bedding bonds. There is evidence for drains and culverts in this period as well. One culvert located on the southern extent of the Moon and Sixpence Yard is typical of the early structures associated with the Bath Sewer system, which was developed from the 1720s onwards.

(Neville Higgins)

Bridgwater, YMCA, Friarn Avenue, ST 2961 3665, Somerset HER 28174

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Marc Cox for Prospect Archaeology to monitor the deposits disturbed by geotechnical test pitting conducted in advance of redevelopment in the grounds of the YMCA, Bridgwater, March 2009. The ground was excavated, on average, to a depth of 4m, revealing the natural blue clay as well as, in most instances, peat. Above this lay several layers of late post-medieval dump deposits, probably associated with the construction and dredging of the close-by Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, located immediately to the south. No occupation debris or earlier evidence was located, even though the Franciscan friary lay in the vicinity, suggesting either very limited land use in the past or substantial disturbance from the excavation of the canal.

(James Brigers)

Broomfield, Fyne Court Stock House, ST 2226 3217, Somerset HER 29712

A watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in April 2009, during groundworks for the substantive rebuilding of a former stock house, forming part of a complex of probably late 18th-century agricultural outbuildings associated with the 17th-century Fyne Court, Broomfield. An original brick floor was revealed in the eastern room of the building, and observations were made regarding aspects of the building's construction. No other archaeologically significant remains were found.

(Mike Trevarthen)

Castle Cary, Bailey Hill, The Ropewalk, ST 6399 3238, Somerset HER 28225

Dick Broomhead carried out a watching brief during the digging of foundations for the construction of an extension on a building to the rear of The Ropewalk. Evidence to date the construction of the southern boundary wall to the 19th century was recovered and a single post-medieval pit was noted. There was no evidence to suggest any pre-medieval activity in the vicinity apart from a single flint flake.

(Naomi Payne)

Cheddon Fitzpaine, Hestercombe Gardens, ST 242 288, Somerset HER 28474, 28476

Archaeological investigations continued in Hestercombe during 2009 in conjunction with the ongoing restoration of the Georgian landscape garden and mill complex.

At ST 2429 2898 to the north of the Great Cascade, trial trenching (HER 28474) revealed the presence of a stone culvert hinted at by early maps and first searched for in 2007. The full extent of this was later exposed and found to consist of a structure with slate rubble side walls and a capping of substantial slate slabs that carried the stream underground for a distance of 21m to emerge close to the base of the cascade. Although the structure was found to be remarkably intact throughout much of its length, partial collapses had caused the northern opening to choke with silt forcing the stream to assume a surface route to the east.

At ST 2424 2876 a mound to the west of the Mill Pond was investigated (HER 28476) prior to landscaping of the area. This was revealed to be a dump of redeposited natural clay and rubble possibly derived from the excavation of the Mill Pond.

Observations (HER 28477) were made at the Mill Barn at ST 2427 2867 following internal alterations and the reduction of the floor level. The original floor level of the barn was identified in section and several past alterations to the structure were noted in the east internal elevation of the building, all of which appeared to be of 19th-century or later date; the main structure of the existing building probably dated to the 18th century. A service trench to the west of, and parallel to, the west wall of the Mill Barn was also examined. Here several dumps of material were observed in section and possible features were also identified, all of which were probably the result of 18th and 19th-century activity curtailed when the area was landscaped in the early

20th century as part of the scheme designed by Edwin Lutyns.

(James Brigers)

Cleeve, Goblin Combe, ST 4625 6549

The remains of a cottage, at the south side of the track leading through Goblin Combe, were surveyed by members of YCCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team) in 2006. The cottage had been largely demolished but there was evidence of three piles of earth and stones at right angles to the path, which appeared to be the remains of the cottage walls. To the east of the cottage was evidence of a garden defined by slight remains of a garden wall. The garden extended for approximately 40m adjacent to the track.

(Chris Lufflum)

Dunster, Dunster Castle roof, SS 992 435, Exmoor HER EEM13982

A watching brief and building recording took place during the removal of lead sheeting and two phases of counterboarding in the roof of Dunster Castle (HER MSO9412), during the autumn and winter of 2006, prior to repairs undertaken in 2008. This revealed a minimum of six separate roof structures representing *c.* five phases of roof construction between the 17th and 20th centuries. The most significant of these is a flat roof, possibly of three sub-phases, dated to *c.* 1611. This was converted into king post trusses in *c.* 1728. Wrought iron 'I' beams were inserted in *c.* 1865–72, probably under the supervision of the architect Anthony Salvin.

(Michael Heaton)

Mark, rear of Oak Tree House, Blackford Road, ST 3826 4779, Somerset HER 28201

An archaeological watching brief undertaken during soil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches for a new house recovered a relatively large quantity of post-medieval and modern pottery sherds and other ephemera, all recovered from the topsoil. No archaeological features were observed.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Priddy, field adjacent to Blackmoor, ST 5071 5680, Somerset HER 28473

In the course of observations in the Charterhouse area, members of the Charterhouse Environs Research Team (CHERT) noticed an area of

earthworks in the field immediately to the north-west of the Blackmoor area, next to the fence. The area was surveyed by members of the team in 2006, and found to consist of an area of quarrying on the east side, with a low platform continuing for about 90m to the north-west. There were two pronounced mounds at the north of the site, but there was no evidence that these were barrow mounds. Several long, shallow grooves and banks were found in the southern and eastern side of the site, extending right up to the eastern boundary with Blackmoor.

(Shirley Everden)

Priddy, Ubley Rake, ST 5095 5527

As part of a programme of observation and recording in the Charterhouse area, members of the Charterhouse Environs Research Team (CHERT) completed a survey of part of Ubley Rake (HER 28980). This area was described by Burgess (1982) when he found and cleared the remains of a small miners' shelter close to two horse whims and a shaft. Burgess had found evidence of burning and a small heap of coal inside the shelter, but these were no longer obvious. The two horse whims, one partly overlying the other, still remain in good condition. A flat stone with a round hole drilled in the top is still in position, in the centre of the upper horse whim. Burgess suggested that this might have been the bearing stone for the winding gear at the mine shaft. In the shelter, Burgess found evidence of a fireplace, and five large stones arranged along one wall. It was noted that the stones are still in place, but the fireplace was not seen.

Reference

Burgess, R.L., 1982. 'A mining site on Ubley Warren', *Axbridge Archaeological and Local History Society Journal*, 7–10.

(Shirley Everden)

Somerton, Linhayes, West Street, ST 4868 2860, Somerset HER 28167

An archaeological watching brief undertaken during soil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches prior to the construction of a new house within the back garden of Linhayes, resulted in the recovery of a relatively large quantity of post-medieval pottery sherds, only a small number of medieval sherds and one possible Romano-British sherd. No archaeological features were present.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Stoke St Mary, St Mary's church, ST 265 223, Somerset HER 28206

A watching brief for wastewater drainage was undertaken within the churchyard. At depths rarely exceeding 0.3m, most of the excavation was through disturbed ground, which incorporated occasional 18th to 20th-century artefacts and fragments of disarticulated human and animal bone. A continuation across the northern boundary wall of the churchyard demonstrated this to be of 19th-century construction with no sign of an earlier boundary or of articulated burials.

(Peter Leach)

Trudoxhill, ST 744 438

Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society carried out a magnetometer survey of a possible post-medieval pottery kiln site (HER 28268) east of Trudoxhill. The survey's results were affected by the presence of iron farm machinery. This has now been removed and the survey will be repeated in due course.

(John Oswin)

West Monkton, Parish Church of St Augustine, ST 2629 2846, Somerset HER 28316

During November 2009 a length of trench was excavated in the churchyard to the north-west of the church to accommodate upgraded drainage and water supply. This revealed the presence of the remains of a mortared stone wall running north-east from the corner of the tower and butting a second wall of similar construction that projected towards the south. The date and function of these features could not be determined but it seems probable that they represent the remains of boundary walls of post-medieval date possibly associated with Court House, which was demolished in the early 19th century. Elsewhere, the ground level was found to have been raised by a series of dumps that sealed a possible buried soil. One of the dump layers produced a single fragment of decorated medieval floor tile. Within the church a small area of the 19th-century timber floor was removed in the north corner of the north aisle, which exposed a large void caused by the collapse of an 18th-century brick-lined vault; it may be assumed that no deposits of earlier date survive in this area.

(James Brigers)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, lime kiln survey

Fieldwork by members of the Westbury Society was undertaken within the parish at eleven known or

possible lime kiln sites. It was concluded that one site was almost certainly not a lime kiln and no evidence was found in the field for two others. Eight kilns survived in one form or another. All appeared to be small agricultural kilns of Taylor's Type 'A' (Taylor 1989). Map and documentary evidence suggests that all were built as part of the agricultural improvements following the Parliamentary Enclosure Act of 1791 for Westbury.

Reference

Taylor, E., 1989. 'Three regional styles of limekiln', *Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society Journal* 21, 19–22.

(Barry Lane)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, New Close field, ST 5005 4965, Somerset HER 28454

Members of the Westbury Society undertook fieldwalking in this 1.9ha field in April 2009. All the pottery was of post-medieval date. Five prehistoric flints were also recovered. These artefacts suggest that the area was probably woodland or woody pasture in the prehistoric period and probably remained that way until enclosed in the late or post-medieval period.

(Barry Lane)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, Waterslade field, ST 5035 4960, Somerset HER 28456

Members of the Westbury Society undertook fieldwalking of part of a 1.9ha field called Waterslade in June 2009. All the pottery was of post-medieval date. Three small undiagnostic waste flint flakes were also found. These artefacts suggest that the area was probably woodland or woody pasture in the prehistoric period and probably remained that way until enclosed in the late or post-medieval period.

(Barry Lane)

Yatton, Claverham Court Farm, ST 4446 6718

During the course of observations at Claverham Court Farm in 2005, members of YCCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team) examined the remains of an ox house and surveyed surrounding earthworks. The ox house consisted of two parallel roofed areas with a paved floor between them, which has a drainage channel formed in the paving. The floor was of high quality, with some slabs being more than 2m long. The ox house was built adjacent to a water

course, with a leat to distribute water past the building, controlled by a dam and sluice, and a stone-covered drain. There were other earthworks close to the ox house, but their function could not be identified.

(Brian Bradbury)

Yatton, Claverham Court Farm, Claverham Moor, ST4355 6775

The site of a duck decoy was manually surveyed by YCCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team) in 2007. The slight remains of two pipes and the south-east edge of the pond were found, but no inlet could be identified.

Documents showed that the decoy had been dug between 1750 and 1801, but infilled by 1841 (Barraclough 1989).

Reference

Barraclough, M., 1989. 'Decoy pools at Kenn Moor and Claverham Common', *Yatton Yesterdays* 8, 30–4.

(M.A. Pitman)

INDUSTRIAL

Cleeve, Bickley, ST4490 6500

An area of industrial activity was reported to YCCCART by the landowner, and surveyed by members of the team in 2007–8. It is located in woodland with the parish boundary on the west side, and extends for about 75m west–east, and c. 60m north–south. The survey showed that there were at least two quarry faces running across the hillside, with what appeared to be a working floor in front of the upper face. A short length of cleared trackway led down from the working floor to a lower track running from the gate on the A370 along the edge of the woodland. Five boundary stones were found around the site, four of which were on the line of the parish boundary.

A slit trench was found on a slope overlooking the road; it measured c. 2.5m x 0.8m x 0.6m deep, and the spoil was thrown up on the lower side, making a low parapet. Mr Ben Crossman, a member of the Home Guard during the Second World War, confirmed that it was used for guard duties and training exercises, and had been dug for that purpose.

(Shirley Everden)

Kingsdon, Park Farm, Lower Road, ST 51890 26191, Somerset HER 28297

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at Park Farm, Lower Road, Kingsdon during the initial site clearance work associated with a new housing development. A stone-lined cistern backfilled in the late 18th or early 19th century and a stone-lined drain were recorded during the watching brief. Some residual medieval pottery was also recovered from the topsoil.

(Teresa Hawtin)

Knowles St Giles to Cuttiford's Door, ST 33295 10598 to ST 34426 11361, Somerset HER 28216

In 2007 and 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief on a water supply main replacement between Knowles St Giles Booster and Cuttiford's Door. A single undated ditch was recorded along the route of the pipeline. In addition, a very small assemblage of struck flint was recovered from the topsoil. Some structural remains associated with the mid 19th-century Chard Canal were also observed adjacent to the pipeline route and these comprised a brick arched culvert, drain and retaining wall.

(Cheryl Allum)

Nynehead, Nynehead Court, ST 1373 2273, Somerset HER 28199

AC Archaeology carried out a first phase archaeological watching brief and historic building recording in October 2009 as part of a phased development at Nynehead Court (HER 44088). A concentration of 18th to 19th-century pottery, glass and animal bone was recorded on the site.

(Simon Hughes)

Priddy, Blackmoor, ST 505 557, Somerset HER 28475

Continuing their programme (Russett 2004a) of recording sites in the Charterhouse area, members of CHERT (Charterhouse Environs Research Team) surveyed the remains of the Pattinson Plant (HER 23032) and the adjacent stable (HER 28783), together with an area of hillside extending about 160m to the east of the plant. It was found that the base of the chimney and the flue running down the hillside to the smelter survive in reasonable condition, as does the stable. However, little remains of the smelter buildings that were bulldozed in 1968 to provide material to rebuild the road across Velvet

Bottom, destroyed by a flood (Russett 2004b). A short length of walling, 0.2m–0.3m high, might be part of the dividing wall between rooms 1 and 2 as described by Hawtin (1970) and the remains of two other buildings were found, the first about 15m to the east of the line of the flue, and the second about 50m east of the same line. To the east of these features, evidence of quarrying or mining and possible platforms survives, continuing along the hillslope as far as the wall of the next field.

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(Shirley Everden)

Shepton Mallet, Lower Lane/Garston Street, ST 6216 4373, Somerset HER 28198

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in July 2009, during the excavation and drilling of boreholes and the digging of trial pits associated with the construction of a new culvert. A stone slab floor alongside Lower Lane and three parallel walls, located close to Leg Square, were present in the trial pits, with these likely to relate to buildings shown on the parish tithe map of 1841. Also in Lower Lane, a deep humic deposit was recorded which may represent the location of an early watercourse.

(Simon Hughes)

Taunton, St James' Churchyard, ST 2287 2489, Somerset HER 28265

In 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological excavation in the north-east corner of the churchyard. The archaeological work was undertaken in order to mitigate the impact of a new seating stand (Gimblett's Hill) to be constructed as part of a multi-phased redevelopment of the adjacent Somerset county cricket ground (see also above, p. 217).

The excavations within St James's Churchyard offered an insight into late 19th-century burial practice. The burials all took place between c. 1858 and c. 1888, when the graveyard was superseded by the new cemetery at Staplegrove on the north-eastern

side of the town. Twenty graves containing a total of 21 skeletons including six non-adults and two disarticulated adults were excavated; a further 51 graves, arranged in nine rows, were identified but not excavated as they lay below the depth of construction impact. Disarticulated bone from other burials was common in grave fills; in one example the remains of two individuals appeared to have been moved to one side to make room for a new burial.

Although the sample population was too small to produce demographic profiles, the results of the macroscopic analysis demonstrated that the adults were slightly below expected average height, the age at death ranges were in keeping with the life expectancy of British society in 1841 and most of the individuals had evidence of bone disease. Two cases were notable: the analysis of a fibroid cyst found in the pelvic area of one individual showed that it may have ruptured and caused death, and an elderly female with crippling bone disease so severe that she would have required full-time care.

The excavations also revealed aspects of Victorian burial practice. The majority of the burials followed the alignment of the graveyard boundary walls, which was found to be just slightly off the east–west alignment common for Christian burials. All of the burials were extended in the supine position with heads to the west. The most frequent arrangement for the arms was extended beside the body, although several had the arms either folded across the abdomen or pelvis. There were seven examples of stacked graves indicative of family groups and five examples of intercutting graves. Artefacts recovered from the graves mostly comprised coffin furniture, funerary attire and deliberately placed funerary items, all of which were entirely consistent with the dating of the burials to the latter half of the 19th century.

Only one set of graves could be identified and this belonged to the Douch family. Located beneath a tombstone erected in memory of the family in 1896, the remains of Edwin Douch and his son John Douch were excavated. Subsequent research has shown that Edwin Douch was the proprietor of the Railway Inn, just a short distance away, from around 1863 until his death in 1875.

(Cheryl Allum)

Westbury-sub-Mendip, Thomas Tiley's cottage, ST 5054 4966, Somerset HER 28455

Tiley's cottage, now a field barn, stands beside Stancombe Lane running north-north-east from the centre of the village of Westbury-sub-Mendip.

Members of the Westbury Society undertook a building and earthwork survey of the site in June 2009 and also researched documentary sources. These suggest that the cottage was built on a narrow strip of roadside waste between 1815 and 1838, and was probably rebuilt as a field barn in the second half of the 19th century.

(Barry Lane)

MODERN

Bath, Abbey Green, ST 75130 64655

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at Abbey Green, Bath during repairs to a sewer. The archaeological work uncovered the northern side of a backfilled post-medieval or modern vaulted cellar. This probably originally formed part of the existing cellar of No. 4 Abbey Green, a Georgian Grade II listed building. Finds observed in the fill of this feature suggest that this part of the cellar was probably blocked off and backfilled in the late 19th century.

(Cheryl Allum)

Bath, Hayesfield School, Upper Oldfield Park, ST 7422 6427

Evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology revealed a curving cut, most probably a pond depicted on the 1888 OS map within the landscaped gardens of Oakfield Park, a large house constructed in the 19th century.

(Sian Reynish)

Bath, St Gregory's Catholic College, Odd Down, ST 7343 6169

Three evaluation trenches excavated by Cotswold Archaeology found evidence of extensive quarrying across the site. The presence of a buried topsoil within two of the trenches suggests the areas of extraction remained open for a significant period of time before being covered by dumped clay and limestone fragments. Although the date the extraction commenced could not be determined, modern artefacts were recovered from the dumped layers.

(Stuart Joyce)

Curland, Castle Neroche, ST 2724 1573, Somerset HER 28026, 44544

The location of a Second World War underground wireless control station of the 'Special Duties Branch of the GHQ Home Forces Auxiliary Units' has been established within the earthworks of Castle Neroche.

The organisation, whose title was deliberately made confusing for reasons of security and is now sometimes referred to as the British Resistance Organisation, operated a network of over 3000 trained civilians to spy on the Germans should any areas of Britain be occupied. Spies would leave reports in 'dead letter boxes' and a chain of runners would deliver them to concealed wireless stations. These stations then transmitted the reports to control stations that would forward them to the appropriate military headquarters. The station was built in 1942, manned by Royal Signals, and allowed three men to work and live underground for several weeks. Wireless aerials were concealed in adjacent trees. In July 1944 the station had wireless links with at least eight locations including concealed outstations at Wilmington, Hawkchurch and Membury in Devon together with Dunball, Puckington and Glastonbury in Somerset. It was also linked to four similar control stations in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire. After the war, the facility was destroyed and nothing visible remains. A nearby hut used by the crew survived until the late 1950s.

(David Hunt)

Glastonbury Abbey, oval fish pond, ST 5005 3865, Somerset HER 28390

An archaeological watching was undertaken during repairs to the retaining bank of the oval fish pond in the south-west corner of the precinct. The bank was formed from redeposited, natural Lias clays and contained 19th-century pottery and brick and roof tile fragments. No pre-modern finds or features were seen.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Ilminster, Dillington, ST 3664 1495, Somerset HER 16257

A Second World War anti-tank road block on the disused drive to the south of Dillington House was surveyed. This was built in 1941 as part of the all round defences of the Ilminster 'anti-tank island'. Bent rails or rolled steel joists (RSJ) formed into a 'V' could be inserted into 3-ft deep concrete sockets set into the road way (Fig. 1). The extensive and well-preserved block is a rare survivor of many similar blocks across the country.

(David Hunt and Chris Webster)

Kilve, Kilve Court, ST 1483 4276, Somerset HER 28181

A group of year 5–7 schoolchildren on a weekend residential course at Kilve Court excavated two 1m x 1m test pits in the north end of the walled archery



Fig. 1 Part of the Second World War road block exposed at Dillington Drive with a replica bent rail (made by Brian and Chris Perry) showing how the sockets would have been used. One of a line of concrete blocks preventing access around the site, the roadblock is visible in the rear (Photo Somerset County Council)

garden. The RAF 1946 air photo seems to show the garden divided into vegetable plots. This area was chosen because the 1886 OS map and a plan of 1963 shows a room (room 8) projecting into the north-east corner of the garden. Another (undated, but post-1963) shows another structure in the north-west corner of the walled garden. Neither of these features have survived. In the time available the children managed to remove about 0.12m, which was enough to expose (in Trench 2) the brick footings of one of the walls in the corner of the feature in the north-west corner, loose stone (possibly part of the other wall) and cinder (ground surface/path?). No discernible features were found in Trench 1, but a variety of finds and scraps of building material were recovered from dark garden soil, overlying red clay. (Rachel Shaw)

Nether Stowey, The Cross, ST 1920 3971, Somerset HER 29533

A well that had been partly uncovered during repaving was recorded by Dick Broomhead. It was stone built with a curved brick top, 1.5m in diameter and 4.5m deep to a deposit of dry rubble. There was no dating evidence but a pump is shown at the location on the OS map of 1886 surrounded by a fence. It had gone by 1920.

(Chris Webster)

Norton Fitzwarren, Norton Manor Camp, ST 191 272, Somerset HER 28622

In December 2008, Exeter Archaeology prepared a photographic record of three 1960s Motor Transport sheds, prior to their demolition.

(A.J. Passmore)

Old Cleeve, Blue Anchor Bay, ST 0402 4351, Somerset HER 28017

Documentary evidence in The National Archives led to the discovery of the gun house for a Second World War beach defence gun in overgrown woodland to the east of Blue Anchor. On 7 January 1941 a 4-in naval gun was emplaced and manned by ten men from 952 (Static) Battery of 11 Defence Regiment Royal Artillery. The gun was removed on 2 January 1942. This was the only beach defence gun in Somerset and one of twelve in the South West. These guns were sited on likely landing beaches to engage enemy transport vessels, landing craft or other targets.

(David Dawson and David Hunt)

Stearth Marsh, ST 257 446, Somerset HER 27744, 27745

RAF post-war aerial photographs show two small 'telecommunications sites' on Stearth Marsh. Documentary evidence identifies these as Radio Security Service (RSS) radio direction finding (DF) stations. The RSS was established before the Second World War by the GPO on behalf of MI5 to monitor and locate illicit transmissions from spies or enemy agents within Britain. As the Germans never managed to establish a spy network in Britain, most RSS stations were taken over by MI6 to monitor German Secret Service traffic in occupied Europe.

The Stearth Marsh site consisted of two DF stations. One (Stockland SL) worked with RSS DF stations in North Yorkshire (Weatherthorpe SL), Norfolk (Wymondham SL) and Cornwall (St Erth SL). The other site (Stockland A) worked with DF stations in Hertfordshire (Sandridge A) and Cornwall (St Erth A).

(David Hunt)

Tatworth and Forton, north of Cranway Farm, ST 3384 0813, Somerset HER 16895

A Second World War anti-tank railway block to the south of Chard was researched and surveyed. This is a 'bent-rail block', where rails bent into a V-shape were inserted into sockets between the railway

sleepers to form a barrier. The 3-ft deep sockets are in massive precast concrete beams laid in the track bed. This is the sole survivor of up to ten similar blocks in Somerset; only one other surviving block of this type has been reported in the UK.

(David Hunt and Chris Webster)

Watchet, West Quay, ST 0708 4353, Somerset HER 28168

In January 2009 two trenches were excavated through modern surfaces on the western pier of Watchet harbour in order to establish the presence and location of remains of the track belonging to the terminus of the West Somerset Mineral Railway.

A pair of rails set into a well-made cobble surface was revealed in the northern trench, the position of which matched favourably with those visible on an early 20th-century photograph of the mineral line in use. The continuation of the cobble surface was exposed in the southern trench, here cut by parallel gullies the width between which compared with that between the extant rails indicating that the tracks had been removed from this location. One of the gullies contained an intact iron 'shoe' track fixing, although it was not possible to determine whether this was in situ. It is probable that the excavated remains are those of the mineral line following its brief reopening in the 1900s.

A subsequent geophysical and metal detector survey revealed magnetic and metallic anomalies that probably betray the presence of further track remains in the central area of the quay, to the east, west and north of those revealed within the eastern excavation trench.

A length of the surviving track has now been exposed for public display.

(James Brigers)

West Huntspill, Alstone, ST 305 471, Somerset HER 17888

RAF vertical air photos from 1946 to 1948 show three small square enclosures on the flat land to the west of Alston. Papers in The National Archives list RAF radio direction finding (DF) station Highbridge at this site, which was 'not yet operational' in September 1944.

The site appears to have been used into the Cold War and masts are still visible on 1958 air photos but had been removed by 1960. Further research is ongoing.

(David Hunt and Chris Webster)

OTHER REPORTS

Bridgwater, Little Sydenham Farm, ST 313 389, Somerset HER 28324

Oxford Archaeology South carried out an evaluation on land to the north-east of Bridgwater. The evaluation consisted of the machine excavation of 48 trenches measuring 50m by 1.9m, with a maximum depth of 1m. No archaeological features or artefacts were identified.

(Gerry Thacker)

Cannington, Castle Hill Quarry, ST 2440 4050, Somerset HER 28246

Four test pits were excavated by Cotswold Archaeology prior to the extension of the quarry, which lies adjacent to Cannington Camp hillfort. Two trackways and a rubble bank, all of modern date, were identified.

(Ray Holt)

Chard, 38–40 Holyrood Street, ST 32151 08406, Somerset HER 28289

In 2007, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at 38–40 Holyrood Street, in Chard, South Somerset, during groundworks for two new houses. The archaeological investigation revealed a small 19th-century refuse pit.

(Cai Mason)

Chewton Mendip, Marla House, ST 5979 5312, Somerset HER 28224

Dick Broomhead carried out a watching brief during groundworks adjacent to Marla House in March 2009. Initial excavations indicated an absence of any archaeology on the site, with minimal topsoil and subsoil sealing horizontally bedded limestone.

(Naomi Payne)

Chilton Polden, Pumping Station, ST 37744 40482, Somerset HER 28219

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief for the installation of Nutriox dosing equipment. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were recovered.

(Tara Fairclough)

Cranmore, Moons Hill Quarry, ST 6669 4568, Somerset HER 28262

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during soil stripping to the north-west of Mill Marsh

Farm. No pre-modern finds were recovered.
(Charles Hollinrake)

Creech St Michael, Brickyard Farm, ST 281 253, Somerset HER 28683

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological trench evaluation in February 2009 on the site of a proposed borrow pit. A total of three trenches was excavated, with one trench positioned across the line of an undated shallow water meadow ditch. No further archaeological features or deposits were exposed.
(Simon Hughes)

Creech St Michael, Mill Lane, ST 2712 2538, Somerset HER 28194

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in June and July 2009 during groundworks associated with the construction of a millstream diversion. The watching brief recorded undated alluvial layers, overlain by a redeposited clay subsoil and modern infilling layers.
(Simon Hughes)

Curland, Castle Neroche, ST 2713 1584, Somerset HER 28765

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks to improve visitor access and drainage in and around Castle Neroche. Four pieces of prehistoric struck flint were recovered from the topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

(Fay Pegg)

East Huntspill, Gold Corner Bridge and Burtle/Chilton Polden, Chilton Moor Bridge, ST 3669 4318 and ST 3856 4274, Somerset HER 28488 and 28489

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in September 2009 during geotechnical trial pit excavations adjacent to the Huntspill River, at Gold Corner Bridge and Chilton Moor Bridge. A total of three 0.9m deep trial pits was excavated and, in two of these, undated peat layers were present at a depth of between 0.35m and 0.65m below alluvial clays and modern deposits. The third trench was excavated into modern made ground.

(Simon Hughes)

Evercreech, Evercreech Junction, ST 634 369, Somerset HER 28190

An archaeological 'strip, map and sample' excavation was undertaken by AC Archaeology on

land adjacent to the Waste Transfer Station. No archaeological features were revealed.

(J. Whelan)

Exmoor, Hartford, Bury Hill to Haddon Hill water main replacement, SS 94113 27765 to SS 96503 29368, Exmoor HER EEM13967

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a replacement water main. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

(Stuart Milby)

Frome, Slipps Nursery Site, ST 774 476, Somerset HER 28157

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AC Archaeology during the excavations for the new roadway and building foundations associated with residential development. No archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed.

(Mark Corney)

Huish Episcopi, Bowden's Lane Quarry, ST 4170 2845, Somerset HER 28713

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during topsoil and subsoil stripping prior to an extension of a White Lias stone quarry at Bowden's Lane. No archaeological finds or features were observed during machine stripping and only a few post-medieval finds were recovered from the spoil heap bunds that define the north-west corner of the quarry.

(Charles Hollinrake)

Ilminster, Hort Bridge, ST 34363 15230, Somerset HER 28193

In May 2009, Wessex Archaeology maintained an archaeological watching brief during ground investigation works adjacent to the A303 trunk road at Southfields, Ilminster, Somerset. The ground investigations were undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new Highways Agency depot on the site and comprised the excavation of 13 test pits. No archaeological features or deposits were observed in any of the test pits.

(Stephen Beach)

Kingston Seymour, River Yeo Estuary, ST 377 662

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in August 2009 during groundworks associated with the excavation of a borrow pit and construction of a new embankment on the northern

bank of the Yeo estuary. The watching brief established the presence of a deep sequence of alluvial clays, overlying an organic deposit present at a depth of 3m. Several sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil.

(Simon Hughes)

Long Ashton, land at Ashton Park, SP 5530 6900
Cotswold Archaeology excavated 22 evaluation trenches targeted on areas of potential archaeological significance. No archaeological features that predated the modern period were found, anomalies detected in geophysical and lidar survey proving to relate to changes in the underlying geology or natural undulations in the landform.

(Steven Sheldon)

Luccombe, Holt Ball Farm, SS 9180 4397, Somerset HER 2

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial pit excavation and watching brief in August and October 2009 during groundworks associated with the construction of a new farm building. A number of undated tree throws was recorded.

(Simon Hughes)

Meare, Westhay Level, ST 41600 43124 to ST 41685 43239, Somerset HER 28670

Dick Broomhead monitored a peat-cut exhibiting a wood-free peat face about 1.5m high. No features of archaeological interest were recorded.

(Naomi Payne)

Middlezoy, Langacres, ST 3947 3356, Somerset HER 28490

AC Archaeology carried out a watching brief in September 2009 during the excavation of six bridge abutment pits at Langacres. Modern infilling layers were recorded and no archaeological features were exposed.

(Simon Hughes)

North Petherton, Stockmoor Village scheme and Bridgwater Regional Business Centre, ST 2746 3340 to ST 2985 3384, Somerset HER 28279

In 2007 and 2008, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief at Stockmoor Village, North Petherton, during groundwork on a new supply main. A post-medieval or modern field boundary and a small 19th-century refuse dump were recorded.

(Cai Mason)

Oake, Oake and Bradford CP School, ST 15297 25608, Somerset HER 28326

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological field evaluation prior to construction of a new school building. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.

(Fay Pegg and Stuart Milby)

Penselwood, Main Supply Repair, ST 75043 30495, Somerset HER 28317

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during emergency repairs to a water supply main. Four pieces of struck flint and chert were recovered from the topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

(Stuart Milby)

Radstock, Land at Radstock Business Park, Wells Road, ST 6734 5400

Evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology revealed a probable post-medieval ditch and four other undated ditches.

(David Cudlip)

Stathe, Beazley's Spillway, ST 3767 2862, Somerset HER 28192

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological trench evaluation during May 2009 on the site of two proposed borrow pits adjacent to the River Parrett, Beazley's Spillway. The work comprised the excavation of four trenches, in which a single undated posthole was recorded. A series of alluvial silts and clay layers was present, extending to a depth exceeding 2.4m below ground level.

(Simon Hughes)

Stear Peninsula, ST 2664 4477, Somerset HER 28202

A watching brief was carried out on 22 geotechnical test pits on the Stear peninsula. No archaeological features or deposits were observed within any of the test pits although five contained a small number of late-medieval and modern finds. These were typical of materials deposited as the result of manuring of fields or similar activity.

Three test pits on the line of the northern shore contained sandy deposits, likely to have been deposited, either by tidal or wind deposition, before the modern coastal defences had been established.

(Julie Gardiner)

Stogumber, Zinch Cottage, ST 1002 3710, Somerset HER 28397

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land to the south of Zinch Cottage. No archaeological deposits were encountered and only a very small quantity of residual finds was recorded. The site is therefore thought to have been in agricultural use since the medieval period.

(Naomi Payne)

Taunton, ROAB Club, Priory Bridge Road, ST 2315 2506, Somerset HER 28186

A watching brief was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology during redevelopment for housing. The work revealed a sequence of deep alluvial deposits extending across the northern half of the site, but produced no evidence of any archaeological activity associated with the medieval Augustinian priory of St Peter and St Paul.

(Mark Steinmetzer)

Taunton, The Colin Atkinson Pavilion, Somerset County Cricket Ground, ST 22892 25052, Somerset HER 28294

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out a watching brief during groundwork on a new pavilion at Somerset County Cricket Ground, Taunton. Deep deposits of modern made ground up to 2m deep overlying alluvial clay were identified in the centre of the site, which suggests that it formerly lay within the extent of the River Tone. The presence of late 19th to early 20th-century glass bottles within the made ground, provided some dating evidence for an episode of land reclamation and suggests that the dump material probably included domestic refuse.

(Cai Mason and Fay Pegg)

Wellington, Bulford, The Yard, ST 1381 2037, Somerset HER 28189

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in August 2009 during groundworks associated with a residential development. A 19th-

century brick culvert was recorded within the footings trenches.

(Simon Hughes)

Wick St Lawrence and Congresbury, Pilhay Bridge, ST 416 647

AC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in December 2009 during the excavation of pits for a new bridge. Excavations revealed alluvial clays and modern layers, with no archaeological features or deposits exposed.

(Simon Hughes)

Wiveliscombe, Hillsmoor, ST 08685 27479, Somerset HER 28153 and 28278

In 2008 and 2009, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out archaeological watching briefs during groundworks for the refurbishment of a sewage treatment works and two new industrial units. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

(Cai Mason)

Yatton, ST 431 654

The 'YARD' project was conceived by YCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team) in 2007 to investigate the early history of Yatton village. To date, 13 gardens and open areas in the Conservation Area, and other areas of interest, have been investigated by trenches and garden bed searches. These investigations have produced little of archaeological interest to date, but the project is still ongoing.

(Brian Bradbury)

Yeovil, Balls Hill, ST 50822 17508, Somerset HER 28277

In 2008 and 2009, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the refurbishment of a water supply main pumping station. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

(Fay Pegg)