Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording at Church Living Cottage, Branscombe, Devon, 2012–13

by

Stuart Blaylock

April 2013

Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording at Church Living Cottage, Branscombe, Devon, 2012–13

By

Stuart Blaylock

April 2013

S.R. Blaylock, B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.
Independent Scholar and Archaeologist
1 Colebrooke Lane,
Cullompton,
Devon,
EX15 1EB
U.K.

Tel: +44 (0)1884 33966
E-mail: stuart.blaylock@btinternet.com

Cover Illustration: The four-light medieval window in the west wall of Church Living Cottage, exposed by excavation on 18th December 2012, just before it was concealed again by the lining of the drain.

Contents

List of illustrations

Introduction

Church Living Cottage (NGR SY 19562 88510) together with the adjoining Church Living forms one of Branscombe's distinctive collection of later medieval and early post-medieval houses (Edge Barton, Hole, Margells, etc.). To anyone visiting the Church of St Winifred the house is a conspicuous part of the village scene, with the distinctive and unusual paired lancet windows in its southern gable (Fig. 18) immediately indicating the medieval origins of the house. Church Living Cottage formed the cross wing of the original medieval house, with Church Living occupying the long main range, but there are grounds for thinking that the cross range is an earlier, and therefore independent, structure. There is some cartographic evidence that the cross range was originally longer, and a recurring suggestion that the house was somehow related to canons of Exeter Cathedral, perhaps as a summer residence (see, for example, Butters 1949, 10; Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 205 [below]). All of this is conveniently summarised by the description of the house in *The Buildings of England: Devon*:

> 'Many other good houses: CHURCH LIVING and CHURCH LIVING COTTAGE are a substantial L-shaped medieval house, possibly a summer residence for Exeter canons. Main block with wind-braced, smoke-blackened roof and timber partitions. The cross-wing, built partly of ashlar, also has a late medieval roof but is probably older in origin – see the paired lancets in the front gable, perhaps for a first-floor hall.'
>
> (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 205)

Church Living Cottage is a Designated Heritage Asset (DCLG 2010a, 13) by virtue of being listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II*. Listing is the form of protection given to standing buildings of significance under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, along with a variety of other regulations and guidance notes (DCLG 2010b, 9; see also DoE/DNH 1994 for a summary). Grade II* is the second highest grade of listing, placing Church Living Cottage in the top 6% of all listed buildings, many of which are churches, so this status accurately reflects the building's importance and significance in national terms.

The context of the work

This report describes observations made at Church Living Cottage, during repairs and refurbishment in 2012–13. The work to the building included the rebuilding of the present cabin to the north-west of the house, the installation of new French drains in key positions along walls, and of alterations to landscaping, steps and access arrangements. A 'programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation' was a condition of Listed Building Consent (LBC) granted by East Devon District Council under the *Town and Country Planning Act, 1990* (application no: 11/2765/FUL, dated 23rd February 2012, 'Replacement of existing cabin with building for ancillary accommodation, landscaping works including drainage works, and alterations to parking and access'). This follows current government planning policy as now laid out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010a, especially policy HE12) and the associated *Practice Guide* (DCLG 2010b, e.g. paragraphs 126–140). A method statement constituting the 'Written Scheme of Investigation' (WSI) required by the planning condition (Blaylock 2012a); was written in accordance with the requirements of a brief issued by Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (DCC 2012) and was informed by discussions with the project architect (Louise Crossman Architects), inspection of the proposal drawings and the design and access statement (LCA 2011) and by conversations on the nature and scope of the

proposed work with the owner of the property, Richard Chadwick. In addition a rapid appraisal of readily available printed and manuscript map, pictorial and written sources that depict or mention Church Living and Church Living Cottage (Blaylock 2012b; for this purpose no distinction was made between the two). The purpose of the appraisal was to provide a background understanding of the historical and archaeological context of the site, and to inform the recording works proposed during alterations and landscaping already discussed in the WSI; the two documents were intended to complement each other and to be read together.

The scope of the work

After the production of the preliminary documents in April-May 2012, observation and recording work took place on site during the preliminary ground-works in December 2012. An initial test hole was excavated on 3rd December 2012 to test the ground conditions in the position of the proposed French drain (primarily for inspection by a structural engineer). In the main programme of works thereafter all ground-works affecting archaeological deposits were monitored on site. These comprised principally the excavation of trenches for a French drain along the west wall of the main cottage, which took place between 4th and 18th December 2012 (Fig. 19), and monitoring of the excavation of footings for the rebuilding of the cabin, which took place on 16th January 2013 (Figs 27–28). One final area of proposed monitoring work, on the reduction of ground levels in the garden and entry slope, immediately west and south-west of the cottage did not, in the end take place, as ground-reduction was judged to be wholly within very recent (later 20th century) ground make-up.

Methodology for the recording of any archaeological features revealed was outlined in the WSI (Blaylock 2012a, section 4.3). In the event of medieval fabric or other significant features being exposed then some more-detailed recording in scale drawings was proposed. In fact several architectural features were exposed in the trench for the French drain, and these were recording by means of an outline elevation drawing, showing the position of buttress, offset, blocked medieval window, and the like (Fig. 16, and below, pp. 11–17 for full description).

The principal aim of the investigation was to ensure that an accurate record of parts of the site and standing building affected by the works was made, and that any hidden archaeological features that came to light during the works could be observed and recorded.

Historical Background

The manor of Branscombe was held by the Bishop of Exeter at the time of Domesday Book in 1086 (Thorn and Thorn 1985, 102; and notes in vol. 2, s.n. section 2.22). The manor had been one of those bequeathed by King Alfred to his successors, and was then, in turn bequeathed in A.D. 925 by King Athelstan to the Benedictine monastery of St Peter in Exeter. The Domesday entry contains the phrase ‘It is for the canons’ supplies’, suggesting that the role of the manor in directly providing for the canons of Exeter (below) may already have been established in some way by 1086 (Higham 2008, 125). The ecclesiastical association with Exeter, therefore reaches back to the early 10th century, before the transfer of the see from Crediton to Exeter in 1050, and The Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral, who still owned the manor in the mid-19th century, came to hold it by this descent from the pre-Cathedral monastery and the estate of the Bishop of Exeter. The manor was formally granted to the Canons of Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Robert Chichester in 1148 ‘towards their better

support' (Oliver 1861, 17; Prideaux 1912, 4), and the canons were patrons of the living and rectors of the parish thereafter (King 1910, 20–1).

Church Living and Church Living Cottage (for present purposes the two must be considered together) have been shown convincingly by John Torrance to be the 'manor house next to the church' of several early 14th century documents, distinct from 'the barton of the manor' at 'La Biry', or Berry Barton (Torrance forthcoming). A report of a visitation (inspection) in 1307 describes a 'Camera' opposite the church among more ambiguously-worded buildings which may or may not have been in the same place 'a hall called Hinenehalle [...] a long ruinous house [...] and a new house built by the said Master Henry [de Somerset]' (Hingeston-Randolph 1892, 195). More clearly, another visitation in March 1318 describes the following: 'there is a hall in the chief manor here (*aula in principali manso*) next the church with three adequate *gunos* (gables?) but in places in poor repair. The stable is in ruins and needs replacement: estimated costs 60s. There is also a kitchen, newly made, and a dilapidated bakery out of which a single building could be made sufficient for both uses: estimated cost 60s.' (ECA DC 2850, translation by Richard Bass). An earlier visitation in 1281, while giving no details mentions that 'the present renter has greatly improved the other buildings.' (Torrance forthcoming, 2). In July 1330 a hall with two chambers and garderobes and a new kitchen are mentioned (Hingeston-Randolph 1894, 574). These descriptions of a well-appointed dwelling have been widely interpreted as a lodging for the Exeter Canons' use when visiting Branscombe, in addition, presumably, to accommodation for their stewards, some of whose names are known in this period: for instance (*inter alia*) Henry de Somerset, who was Dean of Exeter 1302–07 (Oliver 1861, 274) and Richard de Clare. A glimpse of the way in which the house may have been used is provided by a later 15th century lease by the Dean and Chapter in 1463 to Richard Eston and Joan his wife:

> ' of the hall of the court of the manor of Branscombe, and kitchen with chamber over it, with garden and the land called Wynard [the field still called Winnard in the 19th century: below] of the barton there. [...] Saving to servants of the Dean and Chapter [D&C] all easements with free ingress and egress thought hall, chamber and cellars on west side of hall; the little chamber with solar above on west of hall may be used in absence of ministers and servants of D&C. Ale may not be brewed there without permission of Richard and Joan, except by those permitted by D&C, and then only once a year.'
>
> (ECA DC 6017/2, Cathedral archives transcript/translation).

What can be gleaned from these descriptions? The 'little chamber with solar above to the west of the hall' of 1463 certainly answers closely to the Church Living Cottage of the present (in relation to the adjacent Church Living, which certainly could have accommodated hall, kitchen and other chambers in its late-medieval form, and which is likely to have been extant by this time), as does the hall and chambers of 1330. The ?detached kitchen, cellars, and garderobes all contribute to the picture of a typical medieval domestic establishment but one with unusual aspects, whether simply the additional accommodation, the separate nature of parts of the building, and the requirement for multiple uses according to need. This is all consistent with a building whose purpose was for sustaining the canons of Exeter, and providing housing for them or their representatives when needed, either in the course of administering their property or, as many have suggested, a sort of country retreat (from Dean Milles, through Peter Orlando Hutchinson via Elijah Chick to the Listing description and *Pevsner* entry, below).

Note: Detailed historical research has been beyond the scope of this project (the brief required only a rapid appraisal of sources: above). In the unusual circumstances of Branscombe's ownership by the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, and the existence of medieval documentary evidence for the house, more information could undoubtedly be marshalled. Such investigations as have been made have concentrated on published accounts and pictorial material relevant to the fabric of the building. In these circumstances I am particularly grateful to John Torrance for generously making his own research notes and transcripts of documents relevant to the house available for me to use in this account.

In the Tithe Apportionment in 1840 Church Living was described as 'barton land', the term used for property that had been part of the demesne farm before the 15th century (incidentally the only portion so described to fall north of the road, which otherwise forms the boundary of the barton land). The house and associated land were leased and occupied by John Ford at this time. The Ford family were major landowners in the parish, and when the estate was sold by the Church Commissioners in 1868 Henry Ford purchased much of it, including Church Living (King 1910, 20), which was then a farm. In 1949 the Fords gave some property in the parish to The National Trust, including Church Living itself (though not Church Living Cottage), the Forge, Bakery, Mill, etc. Church Living Cottage was bought by its sitting tenant, Alfred Perryman, who used it and earlier sheds on the site for his poultry business. The Perrymans bought poultry and rabbits from the local farmers and sold them to restaurants and at market. The sheds were expanded across the site now occupied by the two adjacent cottages, and became an egg processing unit which was the largest employer in the village (except for the factory) during World War II. It remained in Perryman ownership until 1961 when it was sold to Devon and Somerset Egg Packers. They subsequently sold it in 1969 to Ronald Kirby who owned the house until 1974 (thus providing the dating bracket of 1969–74 for the 1970s refurbishment of the house, when it was converted back to residential use: below), and used the shed to manufacture and sell soft furnishings (they have since moved to Newton Poppleford); a further sale to Ron and Jo Wyatt followed in 1974, from whom the present owners acquired the house in 2009. (I am grateful to Richard Chadwick for providing information on the recent ownership of the property).

Antiquarian accounts from the 18th to the 20th century provide insights into the surviving fabric of the house, and much speculation as to its origin and function. The earliest antiquarian description of the house so far identified comes from the papers of Dean Jeremiah Milles in the mid-late 18th century. Milles was successively Precentor and Dean of Exeter Cathedral (1747-62 and 1762-84 respectively), and worked for many years gathering material towards a projected history of Devon that he never managed to write. Milles' papers are now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, but microfilm copies are accessible in the Westcountry Studies Library at Exeter.

> 'A little above the church there is an old church house which is called the Deans, they have a tradition that the Dean of Exeter used to live here and probably so he might in former times when it was the custom of the church in Exeter to divide the manners [manors] belonging to them each taking one or more to his use. I rather believe that the name is given to this house from the fields which belong to it and one called the Dene or valley, a name very commonly given to places in this situation and the cottages in this valley are called in the Court Rolls Cottages in the Dene.'
>
> (Bodleian Ms Top Devon C8, Milles Parochial Collections, vol. 8)

One of the most vivid and picturesque descriptions is that of the Sidmouth antiquary Peter Orlando Hutchinson, who commented in some detail on the house called by him 'The

Clergy' in his travel diaries for 1855. Much of this concerns Church Living (especially much detail about a porch with a chamber above accessed only through a trapdoor), and is omitted in the following quotation:

> 'Leaving the churchyard we went to look at an old house called 'The Clergy'. It lies about fifty yards north-east of the church across the road. There is a tradition, or a superstition, that some of the priests or other clergy connected with the church before the period of the Reformation occupied this building, *and* Mrs Somers, the chatty landlady, showed us all over it. [...] The walls in some places, especially in the lower apartments, are three feet thick. A belief exists that there is another house under this one, and in support of this opinion Mrs Somers stamped on the stone floor in several places to let us hear how hollow the sound was. She also added that her husband had dreamt 'a hundred times' that the entrance to this underground house is by a flight of steps still existing beneath the soil immediately outside the dairy window. Perhaps there may be some cellars still undiscovered.'
>
> (Butler 2000, 106–7)

Hutchinson elaborated on this in his manuscript and drew a sketch of the 'Doorway and loophole at The Clergy' (reproduced by Butler 2000, 107). Again he stressed the hollow floors, and the possibility of voids underneath the present rooms 'There is a belief that some chamber exists under the dairy floor, as it sounds hollow. In one of the upper chambers towards the west part of the building there is a small hole in the wall down which, if a pebble is dropped, it is heard to descend a great way.' (Society of Antiquaries Ms. 250, p. 26; 55/6/22-5).]'

Other standard historical reference sources fail to mention the houses. These include the county histories of Polwhele (1797) and the Lysons brothers (1811) and (specifically on churches) the manuscript notes of James Davidson (1820s–1840s, in the case of his notes on Branscombe, September 1829) and Beatrix F. Cresswell (1919), both of which sometimes include observations on the environs of churches and churchyards.

Branscombe has a number of parish histories, some in manuscript, some published, and the enduring series of church guides written by parish incumbents must represent one of the longest-lived guidebooks to any Devon parish church (King 1910; Butters 1949 and onwards, with ten further editions between 1950 and 1985; now Branscombe 1996; 2004; etc.). Entries about Church Living in these sources tend to be broadly repetitive and thus probably derivative (often echoing Hutchinson's description from 1855, above), but they remain worth quoting for the insight they give on the developing awareness of the house.

Elijah Chick's parish history is fuller than most, referring to the house throughout as 'The Clergy'; a similar account is to be found in his manuscript history in the Westcountry Studies Library (Chick n.d., 25):

> '[...] the "Clergy", a house on the opposite side of the road to the church. Some of the "cloth" from Exeter would likely enough use this as a country house in the old days. This was probably the homestead of Doomsday Book* "The canons have one hide (about 60 to 100 acres) in demesne and one plough." The south window seems decidedly ecclesiastical. It may be the window of the chamber which in A.D. 1307 was said to need "60s" worth of repairs, say £50 of our money. The stable likewise was said to be ruinous. Tradition says a passage exists underground between this and the church.'
>
> (Chick 1906, 28)

*John Torrance comments that this is likely to refer to 'La Biry', the barton farm (see also the extract from Butters, quoted below).

Arthur Steele King (Vicar 1910–24) published a parish history in 1910 which went through a number of subsequent editions; he says the following:

> 'The building which stands on the north side of the road almost opposite the Church and which was at one time the rectory or canonical residence is still known as "Church Living". It is said that an old underground passage exists between this house and the Church, a distance of some fifty or sixty yards. In one of the bedrooms are two bas reliefs of a coat of arms; a third, formerly in the ceiling, has been destroyed.'
>
> (King 1910, 22–23)

Frederic Butters (Vicar 1949–55) wrote the successor to King's guide, first published in 1949, and going through many subsequent editions (above):

> 'Across the road from the church stands *Church Living*. This is probably the homestead mentioned in Domesday Book. It still contains features of the 13th century. Here the canons of Exeter occasionally resided in medieval days and there is reason to believe that the house may have been rebuilt by Bishop Branscombe. It was never the vicarage.'
>
> (Butters 1949, 10)

Bruce W. Oliver made a brief mention of the house in his presidential address to the Devonshire Association in 1949 on 'The Devonshire Cottage' (a fascinating publication full of evocative photographs of houses in the 1940s and earlier). Oliver mentioned Church Living briefly under the name of 'Branscombe Priest's House', and published a photograph of the gable with lancet windows (Fig. 13): 'At Branscombe there are mullions and also the remains of a medieval window in the so-called 'Priests House', a single-storey tenement opposite the church.' (Oliver 1949, 40 and pl. 13, fig. 1). The mention of 'mullions' may be a reference to the blocked window recorded in 2012, the upper part of which may have been visible until the ground level was raised in the 1970s.

Perhaps surprisingly, in view of its prominent location and visibly-early fabric and distinctive features, the house has received little attention from architectural historians. The general context of medieval small houses in the West Country in general and East Devon in particular has been examined in a number of specialised articles (for example Alcock and Hulland 1972; Alcock and Laithwaite 1973), but by-and-large it seems that Church Living has escaped the notice of architectural historians writing on medieval domestic architecture. Standard works that might have been expected to consider the house, such as Margaret Wood's *The English Medieval House* (Wood 1965), or W.A. Pantin's 'Medieval Priests' Houses in South-West England' (Pantin 1957) fail to notice the house. Other than the listing description and the brief entry in Pevsner's *The Buildings of England: Devon* (quoted above, and in the appendix, qq.v.), the only appearance of the house in the literature of architectural history and vernacular architecture is a one-line report of its roof in a survey and catalogue of cruck construction nationally by Nat Alcock published in the early 1970s and then revised in 1981 (Alcock 1981, 109).

Cartographic sources

This section describes the information available from map sources charting the development of the house from the late 18th century to the present. Extracts (Figs 2–7) are scaled for clarity rather than direct comparability.

Two early maps show the footprint of the house in the period 1793–1840. The first, Alexander Law's map of 1793 (Fig. 2) indicates that in the late 18th century the cross range now forming Church Living Cottage extended further north, so that the combined houses formed a T-shaped plan with Church Living Cottage forming the short arm of the 'T'. The apportionment records plot V.1 as 'Farm Houses, Garden, Courtlege and Mowhay', V.2 as 'Orchard', and V.3 as 'Great Winard'. The same basic T-shaped footprint is recorded in the depiction of the house on the Branscombe Tithe map some 50 years later (Fig. 3). The fragment of medieval masonry recorded at the north end of the west elevation of the house presumably represents part of the west wall of this northern extension, and the rather jumbled nature of the masonry of the northern gable is perhaps due to its origin as an internal wall. The nature and preservation of this extension remains uncertain however, since the one other illustration of the house within this period, the anonymous drawing of 1807 (Fig. 8) appears to show the roof line of Church Living Cottage in a similar way to the surviving house, with a gable chimney stack at its northern end. Perhaps the northern extension only survived as a single storey by this time? Neither Law's map nor the Tithe map show any structures to the west of the house at this time. The apportionment accompanying the Tithe map describes plot 600 as 'Farm House and Garden' and 'Great Winnard' as pasture, with no mention of quarry or quarrying, although the approximate extent of the quarry shown by the Ordnance Survey 50 years later is indicated by a dashed line on the map (broadly the same as V.2 'Orchard' on Law's map).

In theory the original survey drawing for the Ordnance Survey 1" map, at scale of 3" to the mile, surveyed in 1806–07) should also provide an early map source for the building, but in the steep valleys of this part of the East Devon coast the cartographic convention of shading the slopes obscures all detail of individual buildings and precludes any meaningful interpretation (and illustration) of what is shown, at least in the photographic copy available locally (WSL monochrome photograph of OS Three Inch Drawing no. 45, part 3).

The first large-scale Ordnance Survey map, the 1:2500 map of 1889 (Fig. 4) shows three developments: first the northern extension of the cross range had been modified into a narrower building, with a wider (i.e. full width) section at the north end. This looks very much as if the older building had perhaps become derelict and been converted into sheds or outbuildings. Something of the sort in fact is suggested by the evidence surviving in the north gable of the present house, which contains a roof line and the stumps of timbers for a single-storey lean-to roof over the western half of this area. The second addition by 1889 is the porch towards the north end of the west elevation, enabling the construction of this feature to be dated between 1840 and 1889. The third addition is a small building attached to the west wall of the northern building, just to the north of the present house. This is presumably the outbuilding whose wall footings were observed and recorded in 2013 (below). The 1889 map also marks the area west of the house as 'Old Quarry' (compare the near-contemporary photograph view in Fig. 9). The second edition of the OS 1:2500 map of 1904 (Fig. 5) repeats all of these details; for the house itself, in fact there is no change between 1889 and 1904, although the Church House, across the road, present in 1889, was

gone by 1904 (it was, in fact, demolished in 1890: Barbara Farquharson, personal communication).

There is then a gap until the next large-scale Ordnance Survey map (only partially bridged by 1930s revisions of smaller-scale, six-inch maps, which tend to be based on earlier large-scale surveys), the 1:2500 revision of 1958 (Fig. 6). This shows the long, staggered range of egg-processing sheds built within the area of the old quarry. These are believed to have been erected during World War II, and the cabin as surviving in 2012, was the last remnant of these structures (see also the 1960s postcard view, Fig. 14). A door in the north wall (in fact part of the cider house of Church Living) bears the date 1949, and may represent a phase of alterations to the area north of the house at this time. Later editions of the six-inch map (Sheet SY 19NE, 1963: not illustrated), show a similar footprint, although in significantly less detail. By 1958 the full-width building at the north end of the cross range (shown as roofed on the 1889 and 1904 maps, above) is shown as unroofed, presumably reflecting the decay of this structure.

Later developments can be charted through smaller-scale maps and other sources; it appears that Church Living Cottage underwent a major refurbishment *c.*1969–74, including the blocking of the 19th century doorway towards the north end of the west elevation and the creation of the present doorway from what was until then a window (Richard Chadwick, personal communication; just visible in Fig. 13). The extended sheds had been in decline and seem to have been largely demolished sometime in the 1970s or 80s, and the 1990 OS map shows the cabin in the truncated form in which it survived until 2012 (LCA 2011, 2). Following a period in which it was used for commercial purposes, the truncated cabin was converted to domestic use in *c.*1990. The site of the sheds to the west was developed with the present houses in the late 1980s.

The geological mapping should also be mentioned. Although details of mapping are unclear at 1" to the mile scale (Geological Survey 1898), Church Living Cottage appears to lie on the transition from the Keuper marls to the upper Greensand as mapped by the Geological Survey of England and Wales. The topography might suggest that it is on the Keuper marl since the very steep gradients typical of the Greensand appear only on the upper slopes behind the house. Elsewhere (e.g. in Salcombe Regis) one sees marl pits along the contour immediately below the break in slope that marks the transition from upper Greensand to Keuper marl, so the 'old quarry' of the Ordnance Survey maps (above) could equally be an 'old marl pit'. But the subsoil observed during the watching brief did seem to be typical upper Greensand, yellowish brown in colour, and was certainly not the distinctive strong red of the marls; this therefore clearly favours locating the site within the upper Greensand. The actual transition may lie on the road; or, since there is a spring in the north-west corner of the churchyard, slightly lower still (John Torrance, personal communication).

Pictorial Sources

As might be expected, the position of Church Living adjacent to the church means that it appears in the background of many illustrations of the church. The earliest examples seen to date are two anonymous pencil and wash drawings of Branscombe church from the Brooking Rowe Bequest to Exeter City Library, now in the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter (one illustrated here as Fig. 8). These are dated August 1807 and take slightly varying viewpoints from the south-west. In the first (WSL ref. P&D 08717) the L-shaped roof line of Church

Living is clearly visible above the west gable of the nave; in the second (WSL ref. P&D 08716) the viewpoint is slightly further south, and here only the roof of the cross range is visible. Other than the roofs no details of the architecture of the house are visible in these drawings.

As a popular and picturesque 'visitor attraction' for more than a century Branscombe is relatively well-served for pictorial sources, many historic photographs and picture postcards survive for the village, and a very useful collection has been made publically available by the dynamic local history society known as the 'Branscombe Project' via the website: http://www.branscombeproject.org.uk/index.html. Figure 9 (Branscombe Project image no. 48) shows a view looking directly north over the church, before the demolition of the houses on the north side of the churchyard, whose roofs are visible above that of the church. These were demolished in 1886, so dating the image to that year or before. The view shows the 19th century building at the north-west corner of Church Living Cottage, and is also notable for showing the Church House, which stood at the north-east corner of the churchyard, itself demolished in 1890, and Church Living retaining its thatched roof (which has a slate roof in all later views). Figure 10 (image no. 9) is a general view of the church and village, probably soon after 1890, when the Church House was demolished, and shows the west elevation of the house, with a glimpse of the slope approaching it on the west side. Figure 11 (image no. 15), again a view across the church, shows the house *c.*1900, by which time the thatched roof of Church Living had been replaced; this view also shows the small 19th century building and the quarry to the west. Figure 12 (image no. 22) is a similar view, rather later, probably just after 1911, when the church was restored (possibly showing spoil heaps from this operation on the south side of the churchyard?); although Church Living Cottage is obscured in this view, it shows the quarry very clearly. Finally a coloured picture postcard of the 1960s or early 1970s (Fig. 14, image no. 37) is the only image to give a view of the full extent of the egg-processing sheds to the west of the house.

The only published photograph specifically of the house that has some to light so far is that published by Bruce W. Oliver (Oliver 1949, 40 and pl. 13, fig. 1), already discussed (above). No other early photographs specifically of the house have been traced, although it will be worth continuing a search of likely repositories for depictions of the building.

Architectural-Historical Background: The Structural History of the House

The listing description for the two buildings (Church Living and Church Living Cottage) together is an unusually full one, and (along with the Pevsner entry quoted above) forms the basis of the understanding of the house as it stands at present (accessible online via http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england; also via http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk). The listing dates back to 1955, but this full description will have been compiled during the revision of the listing for most rural areas that took place in the late 1980s. The following description is culled out of the lengthy listing description with an emphasis on the cross range, now forming Church Living Cottage; quotations are from the listing description unless otherwise identified.

The house is dated 'essentially late C15-early C16 but parts are earlier, maybe as early as the C13, major later C16 and C17 improvements; the main block was refurbished [...] in the late C19, and the crosswing was refurbished circa 1970.' 'The whole building has a long and complex structural history.' The listing description noted building materials of

Salcombe and Beer stone, with the notable survival of coursed ashlar masonry and chamfered plinth (unusual in small-domestic contexts, as opposed to castles, manor houses and churches), especially in the gable end of the crosswing which also accommodates the rare survival of a 'Beerstone double lancet window with relieving arch over'. A large 'full height arch-headed window' blocked with a late C16-early C17 timber window, and an original lancet window are mentioned in the north wall of the main range, reflecting the original open hall. The crosswing formed the short arm of an L-shaped plan, perhaps originating as a 'first floor hall house'. In the later medieval rebuilding the main range became the main dwelling area, with a '3-room-and-cross-passage plan. This was mainly open to the roof with heating from open hearths, but one room at the west end may have been floored at this time. 'The crosswing now became the parlour wing with principal bedchamber (the solar) and maybe included a chapel. [...] There is evidence that there was a newel stair in the angle of the 2 wings from the ground floor of the crosswing (the parlour) to the first floor chamber.' A blocked ground floor 'slit window', perhaps another lancet, is mentioned in the west wall of the parlour: this is the embrasure blocked from the outside now to be seen in the northern ground-floor room. The roof of this range is 'probably late C15 – early C16 except for the front truss which was replaced circa 1970. The other 2 are arch-braced trusses with a very complete set of carpenters assembly marks. This roof is clean [i.e. not smoke blackened by open hearths].'

The later 16th/early 17th century phase concentrated on the refurbishment of the main range: conversion of the house to two stories throughout, along with the installation of fireplaces, and the addition of many fine contemporary features. 'The crosswing was modernised circa 1970 and no carpentry detail is exposed on the ground floor. A fireplace of 'indeterminate date' and a blocked oak shoulder-headed doorway' to the main block are the main first-floor features mentioned.

The description concludes with a useful assessment of the building's significance: 'Church Living and Church Living Cottage make up one of the most interesting medieval houses in the area. The historic fabric of the building is remarkably well-preserved and other features certainly survive under C19 and C20 plaster. Moreover it is a most attractive building and forms part of a group with the nearby Church of St Winifred and other thatch-roofed cottages close by.'

One further source of architectural-historical analysis deserves mention. Church Living (though not Church Living Cottage) is owned by The National Trust, and is the subject of a Vernacular Building Survey (National Trust 1989). This is an internal report containing tabulated information on the property, and a full room-by-room description of its historic fabric, measured plans and a full black-and-white photographic coverage of the buildings. While it naturally concentrates on the property in NT ownership, it does offer brief description of Church Living Cottage, as an integral component of the medieval house, and includes several photographs of the latter house. The analysis offers a useful discussion of the building's overall development, with emphasis on the inter-relationship of main and solar ranges, otherwise somewhat overlooked because of the separate ownership trajectories of the two properties. There is also a photograph of the surviving plaster heraldic panel in Church Living (arms unidentified) that is mentioned by many of the 19th and 20th century observers (National Trust 1989, 40).

Archaeological Background and Context

The Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) records a number of sites in the immediate vicinity of the house (radius of *c.*250m; Fig. 7), principally standing buildings and monuments in the churchyard (plus the vanished church house that formerly stood at the north-east corner of the churchyard). One significant factor in the archaeological development of the site is probably quarrying, which in the Branscombe-Salcombe Regis-Beer area is ever-present in assessing the historic environment, because of the underlying geology that provides two of the best building stones of East Devon. These are Greensand sandstone, generically known as Salcombe stone, although quarried from numerous sources on the coast and inland, and here probably better termed Branscombe stone, and the cretaceous limestone of Beer. As a result stone quarries are everywhere a possibility, and many are shown on early maps. A quarry is shown immediately west of the house in some early Ordnance Survey maps and the land immediately west of the house is said to be landslip deposit of relatively recent date, perhaps originating as quarry infil and/or material slipped from the sharply-rising ground behind the house to the north. Thus the associated phenomena of quarry fill and landslip may well be factors in seeking to explain the apparent burial of the ground floor of the west wall of Church Living Cottage (see further discussion, below).

The Watching Brief

The main below-ground component of the works carried out in 2012–13 was the excavation of a French drain along the west wall of the house. This was an attempt to alleviate internal damp and associated problems caused by the burial of the ground-floor stage of the elevation by the build-up of soil. According to the proposals this was to consist of a trench some 500mm wide excavated along the west wall of the house to a depth below interior floor level (therefore potentially as much as 3–4m deep), to be lined with a membrane and back-filled with permeable fill to allow the passage, but not the retention, of surface drainage and ground water. The simple trench parallel to the wall that was proposed, however, encountered immediate practical difficulties, both in simple physical excavation (which was hampered by restricted access) and by obstacles presented by the addition of the two projecting porches (19th century porch to the north; 20th century porch in the centre of the elevation). Both structures had, of course been constructed after the build-up of exterior ground levels to the west, and thus were seated on top of this backfill, meaning that to excavate the trench as proposed would have entailed undermining the projecting porches. In the case of the late 20th century porch this was managed by temporarily removing the timber supports of the porch, and propping the roof (Fig. 19), but in the case of the masonry structure of the 19th-century porch to the north, whose footings penetrated only some 750mm of the accumulated earth fill, the drain trench ended up having to be dug around the projection, leaving it on a plinth of earth (which was suitably under-pinned) rather than running along the main elevation of the wall (Figs 15; 20). The result of this was that the excavation of the trench was a far-from-straightforward matter, was considerably wider than proposed, and had to be done in stages according to practical considerations, rather than in one continuous excavation. The archaeological recording dimension fitted around this process and resulted in the record elevation drawing presented here (Fig. 16), but in piecemeal recording of the stratification within the trench. A further result of having to leave an earth plinth beneath the projecting porch was that the position of the narrow window, a possible lancet, that is visible on the interior, did not become accessible as expected. Measurement of its position from the inside

shows that its splayed embrasure is 3.97–4.72m north of the north jamb of the front door, and therefore lies more-or-less directly beneath the porch.

Stratification in the trench for the French drain
The main length of the trench was dug to an average depth of 2.5–2.6m below present ground level (with a base level of 49.90m above OD at the north end and 49.62m at the south, falling further to 49.01m where it entered a manhole to the south of the south gable). At the north end the trench was stepped up with a base at *c.*50.60–50.80m). At the base the trench was *c.* 800mm wide, widening to *c.*900mm at the top in the south section; *c.*11–1200mm to the north, and stepping out to as much as 1800mm in the area of the porch.

The deposits revealed consisted mainly of dark clayey earth, containing much domestic debris and building materials of very mixed character, consistent with interpretation as material of recent deposition; little stratification as such was observed, although there was a broad tendency for this uniform deposit to deepen towards the south. At the north end of the trench, beneath the projecting former porch, excavation penetrated apparently undisturbed natural subsoil, consisting of yellow-brown sandy clay at a depth of *c.*50.60m. This appeared very similar to the material seen at a higher level on the site of the cabin further north and west (below), and this uniformity, and typical composition of weathered Greensand geology, supports its interpretation as undisturbed subsoil, although its origin still perhaps could be from some episode of collapse or landslip from the higher ground to the north antedating the building. No cut was observed, but this observation suggests that the very north end of the house was cut into the slope and that internal floor levels (at *c.*50.05m) were some 0.6m or more below exterior ground level. At the mid-point of the trench, near the base of the buttress, a glimpse of the same yellow-ish brown clay of natural subsoil was seen at about 49.70m, the lowest point reached in this part of the trench. This must represent the level at which the house was constructed, although it lay slightly below the ambient base of the trench, and so was not seen over a wide area.

Just to the south of the buttress in the west wall, a crude dry-stone terrace wall was constructed against the wall and running west beyond the limits of the trench (described in detail below). This was interpreted as a revetment wall or terrace in the garden or yard to the west of the house. It did seem to mark a slight change in the soil deposits: to the south of the wall, i.e. later than it, the soil backfill was loose, very dark clay with building rubble, late sherds plus fragments of 19th century ceramic drain pipes from field drains. To the north the soil fill was a little more solid and compact, although still containing late material, and a sherd of 19th century transfer-printed china was recovered from behind the wall during its removal, conclusively demonstrating its late date.

In places there were traces of more concentrated stratification; a layer of fallen and smashed roofing slate was observed just below and to the left of the blocked medieval window from *c.*1.5m below the datum line (thus *c.*51.17m OD), and stretching 250–300mm out from the wall, perhaps remaining *in situ* from the removal of a slate roof. A further deposit of smashed slate and mortar was noted in the west side of the trench, thus *c.*1m out from the wall, adjacent to the south-west corner of the porch at *c.*50.57–75m, also representing a lens of roof removal deposit some 150–250mm thick from west to east, i.e. thinning out to the west, as might be expected if the slates had fallen directly from the roof of the house. Although no surface was detected at this level, this may indicate the approximate exterior ground level at the time the roof was removed, and re-inforces the general

impression that the build-up against the west wall of the house is mainly of very recent (late 18th-19th century) origin.

At the top of the trench there was evidence for the sequence of later 20th century yard surfaces, represented by cement-lined drainage gullies along the base of the west wall. The lower surface lapped up slightly against the wall face, and was generally about 550mm beneath the present (2012) yard surface. This tallies with surfaces observed elsewhere (to the north and north west) as the 19th and early-mid. 20th century exterior surface of the yard, and with the threshold level of the blocked doorway in the northern porch (below). On top of this was a deposit of dark soil containing much modern building debris, slate, mortar, rubble, etc., capped off with the cement drainage gully, tarmac, and paving of the present (2012) yard surface. This was presumably deposited at the time of the refurbishment of the building in the 1970s.

The west wall of the house: medieval architectural features

The newly-exposed fabric of the west wall (Figs 19, 22) was of coursed rubble, incorporating some squared blocks and with ashlar quoins of good quality. As far as could be seen all of the masonry was of Greensand, i.e. Salcombe, or presumably here 'Branscombe', stone, although it must be admitted that it was hard to absolutely certain of all the stone types because of the mud adhering to the masonry. Beer stone, however appears only in the lancet window (and in later windows and ashlar facework in Church Living), and the presumption must be that the majority of earlier work was of immediately-local stone. Traces of mortar surface rendering survived in places on the rubble facework (Fig. 16), showing that the elevation had been rendered at some point, if not originally.

The southern quoin had been completely obscured before excavation, although the adjacent facework of the south elevation, including the chamfered plinth, was of course visible. This was a very well-finished quoin consisting of five courses of neatly cut ashlar blocks (Fig. 21), more or less flush with the south elevation (below the plinth course) but projecting 260–280mm from the west elevation at the south-west quoin; the adjacent facework continues this offset wall line, gradually converging to the north (indicating that this early-phase masonry was built on a slightly different alignment to the later rebuild). The five courses of the quoin, plus the adjacent facework thus look as though they belong to an earlier phase of masonry, which was subsequently rebuilt above, along with the adjacent gable elevation, including the plinth. The top of the rebuild is marked by a projecting course in the rubble facework, that steps up towards the north (Fig. 16).

At the base of the quoin, the lowermost ashlar block is supported by a single course of rubble blocks, perhaps representing a below-ground footing, and below this, at a level of *c.*49.55m a fragment of stony surface was observed, perhaps representing the construction surface from which the house was built. This was seen only in a very small area and could not be traced further.

In the northern half of the elevation a stone-framed window of neatly dressed Greensand ashlar blocks was exposed (Fig. 16, drawing; Figs 22–24, photographs). This was of four narrow lights, with plain chamfered reveals, mullions, sill and lintel; there was no hood mould and the window was clearly unglazed, having no rebates for glazing or even shutters. The upper part of the window was obscured by blocking of mortared rubble on the exterior (below), which was not removed, and so the question of the form of the heads of the lights remained unresolved. It seems likely that the lights may have had either pointed

arched, or foiled heads (probably of trefoil, rather than cinquefoil, form, given the extreme narrowness of the lights). The individual lights were 120mm wide, the mullions 110mm wide; each light measured *c.*230mm centre to centre on average; overall dimensions were 920mm wide by 870mm tall. The chamfers were 75mm wide and deep, the reveals of the mullions were plain, 90mm deep finishing in reverse chamfers of the same dimensions. The central mullion was a king mullion, of the same width but with deeper central section, at least 200mm deep; the reverse chamfer could not be seen (or felt) beyond the blocking.

The window had been blocked from the inside; at the bottom the tails of mortar-bonded blocks could be seen within the embrasure. Further up blocking had been applied from the exterior as well, first unmortared rubble below, then mortared rubble at the top (Fig. 23). The upper portion of the central (king) mullion was missing and its position filled with a large square block (Fig. 16, detail). The central section of all three mullions displayed substantial weathering of the stone, possibly reflecting the stress point from exposure at or around a former ground level, but the upper parts of the first and third mullions survived intact. In addition to better-mortared rubble filling, which showed that this part of the window stood above ground level at the time it was blocked, the uppermost 400mm or so retained traces of bituminous coating from the splashback at the former ground level (visible as dark discolouration in Fig. 23), presumably the lower yard surface already referred to (discussed above under the stratification of the trench, q.v.),

The remains of a buttress were exposed south of the window, below and slightly to the north of the present front door at first floor level (Figs 16; 25–26). This was *c.*800mm wide and projected *c.*450–70mm from the wall face; four courses of deep quoin stones survived on the outer face, to a height of *c.*1.17m, and the total surviving height of the buttress was *c.*1.35m at the wall face. The fabric appeared solid, i.e. it did not accommodate the chute for a garderobe (as was sometimes the case), and it appears too small to have served such a function.

Beyond the buttress four rubble blocks stood on top of each other, apparently keyed into the wall face, *c.*750mm south of the south face (Figs 16; 26), and with early rubble facework of phase 1 abutting them to the south in a straight join. Their function remains obscure, but they clearly relate to a masonry feature within the west wall of the house. This might be interpreted as evidence for the corbelled base of a garderobe. Such features were often sited in the angle of two walls or of a wall and a buttress (which provided additional depth and projection beyond the outside face of a wall, in order effectively to void the contents outside the wall). There is an example at Exeter Castle, where a corbelled garderobe chute can be seen high up in the angle of the Norman gatehouse and the adjoining curtain wall; the projecting corbelled garderobes at Compton Castle provide another comparable example. The wall face beneath the corbelled stones, up to the angle of the buttress retained its rendering, which also might support the interpretation as a garderobe chute.

Dry-stone retaining wall

At a later date these few blocks had been used as the key for a dry-stone retaining wall built against the west wall of the house, presumably as a garden terrace (Fig. 25). Approximately six courses of stone, including some very large (though unworked) blocks, laid in a single thickness and on a pronounced batter, were traced over the width of the trench, at 90º to the building; constructed from a base of *c.*50.03m OD, in a maximum of six courses/height of *c.*1m. The high stratigraphic position, the dry-stone, unmortared construction, the generally crude character, the single face to the south (i.e. the wall is unfaced to the north), and the

finds of late 18th century and later ceramics on both sides of this wall all contributed to its interpretation as a late post-medieval garden terrace representing a drop-off from north to south in the garden or yard to the west of the house. The portion of the wall within the trench was removed on 17.xii.12 in order to effect the construction of the French drain; it continued as far as the west section (almost 2m), but was not visible in the west section; it may have continued further beyond the limits of the trench, although it appeared to be getting shallower, perhaps because the ground was rising slightly in that direction.

The north porch

The trench exposed the footings and some earlier surfaces of the projecting porch at the north end of the building (Fig. 20). Until the alterations of the early 1970s this formed the main door of the building, and a structural and stratigraphic sequence was observed to confirm this. The porch was constructed with masonry reveals (which also contained some 19th-century brick), splayed out slightly to north and south, and surfaces with flagstones laid on a rubble base. Laid up to this was a cobbled surface which formed the late 19th century yard surface in this area, and was continuous with the cobbled surface inside the small building to the north. Above the cobbles was a further surface continuous with the mid- 20th century yard surface and the lower drainage gully along the wall, composed variously of gravel, and tarmac (and, elsewhere, concrete). The remaining depth of 420–450mm beneath the present surface was composed of very modern rubble and make-up material, capped off with the tarmac surface as existing in 2012. This was attributed to the refurbishment phase of the early 1970s (1969–74 according to Richard Chadwick). The doorway/porch appears to be glazed to its full height in the 1989 photograph of this elevation illustrating the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey (National Trust 1989, 21b), so there may have been a further stage of blocking subsequently.

Wall to the north

To the north the base of the rubble masonry boundary wall (with an occasional squared block) appeared to be of an integral build with that of the west wall of the house, and therefore to be medieval in date. This had been rebuilt above, again in rubble masonry, perhaps at the time of the construction of the 19th century building adjoining to the west, or slightly earlier, since the north wall of the building appeared to abut it. On the north gable of the house the scar of a single-pitch (i.e. lean-to) roof line can be seen to about half the width of the building, this appears to represent the half-width building shown on the 19th- and 20th-century OS maps (above, and Figs 4–6).

The foundation trenches for the new cabin

The footing trenches for the foundations of the new cabin were at their maximum exposure on the afternoon of 16th January 2013 (Figs 27–28), when I made a brief site visit to observe and record them, just before they were fitted with steel armatures to support the concrete footings, which was delivered the following morning.

Four trenches were excavated (Fig. 15): (i) an east-west foundation trench on the northern limit of the new building; (ii) a north-south trench on the western limit of the site; (iii) an east-west trench at the mid-point of the new building; (iv) a short north-south trench along the eastern boundary wall to the north-west corner of the house, connection the end of trench (ii) to the northern end of the trench for the French drain. The footings were nominally 600mm wide and 300mm deep, although the trenches tended to be considerably wider than this, and were excavated to a base level of *c.*52.32m.

Natural subsoil was exposed along the full length of the northern trench (i), and half way south in the trench on the western edge (ii), at which point it could be seen to be cut, or fall away very steeply, presumably representing the line of the quarry face at this level (Fig. 27, left). The subsoil was of similar yellowish sandy clay with chert and Greensand inclusions that was seen previously in the base of the French drain trench. This material is described as natural subsoil, but as discussed before, could equally be interpreted as 'natural' quarry fill of landslip product, the sandy clay soil and unusable stone fragments could bear interpretation as quarry infill of this sort.

Trench (iii) ran parallel to an older wall footing extending about half way across the site from the east boundary wall (Fig. 15), which abutted the upper-phase rebuild of that wall (above). At the west end the footing turned south to connect with the south footing wall of the existing cabin and was cut through by trench (iii). Both east-west and north-south walls cut into the natural subsoil, and were faced only on their inside faces, i.e. at this level the walls represented below-ground revetments/footing walls.

The wall footings (Fig 28) represent a small building adjacent to the north-west corner of the house, and contained a cobbled floor covered in a mortar screed (already mentioned in the context of the French drain trench, as it extended towards the northern porch of the house, above). The walls appear to abut the eastern boundary wall, and although the relationship with the southern footing wall of the cabin was unclear, it is likely to have bonded to the eastern half of this wall and formed a front wall to the building. The internal dimensions of the building were *c.*3m by 3m. No significant finds were made in this area, although as before 19th and 20th century china sherds were plentiful. A building on this footprint appears on the 1889 1:2500 OS map (above and Fig. 4), with the boundary of the 'old quarry' very close to this to the west. It therefore seems possible to date this structure to the second half of the 19th century (after 1840, before 1889), and suggest that it lasted until the construction of the egg-processing sheds in the 1940s. The floor survived in the floor void of the surviving cabin, and explains what seemed to be a very low floor level in that area that was visible to us at the start of work: i.e. this was the surviving remnant of an earlier building succeeded by the egg-processing shed/cabin, not a component of it.

At the same time some ground reduction had taken place on the yard surface to the south of the cabin and west of the house. This involved removal of about 200mm from the 2012 yard surface and revealed a very recent fill of mixed rubble onto an earlier surface partly of concrete and partly of tarmac (the extension of the lower yard surface observed in the French drain trench to the east: above). This deposit of rubble seems likely to have derived from the demolition or removal of the egg-processing sheds (and rebuilding/conversion of the cabin) in the early 1970s (presumably at a similar phase to the refurbishment of the main house at this time).

The finds

The fragments of ceramic ridge tiles are the main finds of interest; these are effectively unstratified, but provide a useful range reflecting three phases of work on the roof of differing dates. Coupled with the evidence of slate fragments from the fill levels it seems likely that the house retained a slated roof with ceramic crests, at least in part, until the late 17th or 18th century, and has only been thatched in the relatively recent past, i.e. perhaps in the later 18th century. I am grateful to John Allan for inspecting these finds and commenting on their possible provenances.

The earliest tile is an example of Allan's 'Type A' (Allan 2004, 208), a ridge tile with sharp pointed knife-cut peaks, with two or three stabbed incisions per peak and a wavy incised line below (Figs 29; 30, upper left). The tile is highly fired with patchy purplish glaze, perhaps the result of over-firing of a green glaze. Visual inspection of the fabric shows large white quartz inclusions typical of the upper Greensand, although the place of manufacture remains unknown. This type is thought to date to the late 13th or 14th centuries, although no stratified examples are known from pre-1300 contexts, but the infrequency of this type must mean that they are earlier than the other types with moulded peaks and with lower, more concave peaks (Allan 2004, 208–9, Types 'B' and 'C'; Allan and Perry 1982, 101); and they had certainly passed out of use by the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Thus a general dating of this type to the late 13th or 14th centuries is not inconsistent with known examples (Allan 2004, 208) and this ridge tile therefore could belong to the earliest phase of roofing of the house. The tile was found in mixed fill at the north end of the trench on 4.xii.12.

A second fragment consists of just one side of the tile, with wavy line and the remains of stabbed decoration, although no peaks survive (Fig. 30, lower left). This has a continuous dark green glaze and is less highly fired than the first, although probably of the same type.

Two joining fragments of the side of a ridge tile with a pale gritty fabric, stabbed decoration, and traces of thin mid.-green glaze (Fig. 30, upper right). This is probably a 14th/15th century type. Again the place of manufacture is unknown, although it is certainly not Hemyock (where a substantial ceramic industry has come to light in recent years). The fragments were found in the central section of the trench on 16.xii.12.

Fragment of a glazed ridge tile with thumb impressions along the crest and an all-over rich green glaze (Fig. 30, lower right). Post-medieval, could be of late 17th or even early 18th century date; Its fabric is not typical of Donyatt (South Somerset), but could be from Honiton or something that we know nothing about (John Allan, personal communication).

Other than the ridge tile fragments few other finds of note were made: various sherds of 18th and 19th century pottery; a few pieces of modern iron, a holdfast, some iron nails, a fossil ammonite, and fragments of animal bone. Given the effectively unstratified nature of their contexts, these were not retained.

Conclusions

The most important results of this project are undoubtedly those that add to our knowledge of the phasing and features of the medieval phases of Church Living Cottage. We are now able to propose an early phase of construction, apparently antedating the fabric of the south gable wall with its double lancet window, which includes a buttress and window, and some more vestigial evidence that may be interpreted as the remains of a garderobe. The evidence recorded in the drain trench points strongly towards this as a primary phase of the building, which was subsequently modified once by rebuilding above (presumably because it had become dilapidated), and subsequently with a new roof in the later medieval period, since the jointed-cruck roof of the building should date to the late 15th or early 16th century, perhaps at the same time as the construction of the long range of Church Living to the east (listing description: Appendix, below). Although there is room for alternative interpretations

(discussed further below), these require arguments of re-use of early architectural features in a later phase, and seem over-complicated.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn here is that the lowest part of the masonry, including the quoin represents an earlier phase of construction to the phase visible in the south elevation, including the lancet windows and the chamfered plinth. Since these are the features which conventionally have led to a dating of the building to the late 13th or 14th century (above), it follows that this masonry must represent a still-earlier phase of work. If this seems improbable, the only possible alternative seems to be to suggest that the work in the gable belongs to the same phase as the re-roofing of the house, perhaps in the 15th century, but for this to be the case it would have to be argued that the lancet windows were re-used in this gable from its predecessor (or from elsewhere), since they seem inconceivable as a later-medieval architectural feature.

If the lowermost masonry, buttress and quoin together represent an earlier phase of the building, then what date can it be, given that the plinth and double lancet of the south elevation appear to belong to a later phase, and these features are traditionally used to ascribe a date of late 13th or early 14th century to the (erstwhile) first phase of the house? There are few clues as to an absolute date, other than the fact that this presumably must be significantly earlier than the next phase, in order for the building to have become sufficiently dilapidated for substantial demolition and rebuilding, rather than repair, to have been necessary. The buttress cut down to a low level, shows this. The variant alignment in lower and upper builds of the west wall also argues for a different phase. The form of the buttress also gives some clues of the most general nature: it is relatively deep, and not of the shallow pilaster buttress type that usually occurs in Norman and Transitional domestic architecture, insofar as it is known at this level of society (an example might be quoted in the shallow clasping buttresses of the early 13th century great hall of the Deanery in Exeter, thought to have been begun as soon as the office of Dean was created in 1225: Allan and Thorp 1990, 45; Blaylock 2001). As such the most probable date might be sought in the mid-13th century, or exceptionally a little earlier, for the origins of the early phase of the house. This would mean that there was some flexibility to move the second phase into the early 14th century, and thus leave sufficient time for necessary decay and delapidation prior to this, and incidentally also perhaps to tally with the documentary evidence of a building in a poor state of repair by 1307. The apparent absence of Beer stone in the earliest masonry may also be a factor: although Beer stone was in use from the 12th century onwards, its use and distribution (and, by implication, the scale of quarrying) increased greatly in the early 14th century.

If the building dates from the mid-13th century this would be consistent with a general upgrading of ecclesiastical buildings in Branscombe at the time (I am grateful to John Torrance for this suggestion). The first recorded vicar was appointed in 1269 and given a vicarage and glebe. Transepts were added to the church, and the nave extended at about this time (Prideaux 1912, 7–12; Branscombe 2004, 14–17; 20–21). This is usually associated with the episcopacy of Walter Bronescombe (1258–80) who, although apparently an Exeter man (Oliver 1861, 39), may have had Branscombe ancestry and relations still resident in the parish (Chick 1906, 24–5).

The question of whether the blocked window in the west elevation belongs with this early phase is not easy to answer. No clear seam or masonry break was detected in the 1.2m or so of masonry between the buttress and the window, and so it would seem that the two features must be seen as a part of the same phase of work. While there is nothing to rule out

this conclusion, a multiple light window would not necessarily be expected at such an early date; on the other hand so few examples of domestic architectural features of this date are known, especially locally, that there are very few precedents for what to expect. The window in other ways is very basic and simple: it has no provision for glazing, or apparently for shutters (although the possibility remains that it might have been shuttered further within, in the area obscured by the blocking); it has no hood mould or label; relatively narrow lights; and a simple chamfered frame. The nature of the heads of the lights (above) assumes an importance here, although this must remain unknown. As it stands if the window were viewed out of context it might be dated as late as the first half of the sixteenth century rather than any earlier. But again, there is no reason to think it had been inserted in this masonry, and little reason to doubt its association with the buttress and thereby the rest of the early masonry. The sill level lies level with the surviving top of the buttress, and it was not possible to trace any continuation of the offset/break in build to the north of the buttress, so it might also be argued that the window belongs with the later (?14th century?) phase of the rebuilt west wall. Whichever is the case, the window is unusual, if only because so little is known of the smaller domestic features and fittings of this period. Comparable windows in timber are not uncommon in mid and north Devon in the 15th century; the fact that it is stone here perhaps reflects (a) its relatively early date; (b) the ready availability of stone in this area; (c) (related to (b)) a possible early tradition of stone windows in the Branscombe area? The conclusion must be that the window belongs with one or other of the two early phases, and is hard to interpret because of the utter absence of comparative material, i.e. it stands alone in East Devon as an example of early domestic fenestration at this social level.

The house had a slate roof with ceramic ridge tiles until quite a late date (perhaps sometime in the 18th century?), and the finds included a good range of ridge tile fragments. Slate in this context is a 'prestige' material, since it needed to be imported from a distance (the nearest sources of suitable roofing slate being in the Newton Abbot area), so this adds to the picture of a quality building already offered by other classes of evidence (above). The early date of the two type-'A' tile fragments supports the suggestion that Church Living Cottage was slated from the first. We know that such roofs needed regular replacements of both slates and ceramic crests as they were damaged by the weather, and that the ridge tiles, or 'crests', were often replaced individually resulting in ridges composed of tiles of very mixed dates (Allan 2004, 207). Where medieval building accounts survive they show that scantle pegged-slate roofs needed maintenance and repair pretty much every year, as slates were loosened or dislodged by the weather. The thatch roof is therefore a relatively late addition to the house.

The evidence for a garderobe projecting at first-floor level from the west elevation adjacent to the buttress is slight, but fairly compelling. According to the interpretation proposed here this evidence belongs to the earliest phase of masonry, and thus may have been removed at the time of the reconstruction of the upper part of the west wall (which, in turn, seems to go with the south gable). But it should be noted that the area above the corbelled stones was very disturbed, by work related to the insertion of the present front door, as well as obscured by remains of the surface treatments of the two 20th-century ground levels, so it is possible that evidence had failed to survive at this point. In view of the reference to two chambers with garderobes in the visitation of 1330 (above), we might expect that this fabric was still standing at that time.

The early map depictions are consistent in showing the main house as a T-shaped plan (Alexander Law, 1793; Tithe Map, 1840; Figs 2 and 3), and the later maps chart the decline

and disappearance of this element (Figs 4–6). This suggests that the original cross range extended further to the north (and thus perhaps that the second chamber lay in the vanished portion of the range?). The limited evidence in the fabric can only tell us that there was some medieval masonry in the base of the wall to the north, and that the very jumbled nature of the fabric of the north gable wall (which was really beyond the brief of the present work) could indicate later patching and alteration, perhaps to what was originally an internal party wall rather than an external gable. Detailed analysis of this elevation would undoubtedly repay the effort in terms of advancing out understanding of the structural history of the house.

The observation that nearly all of the built-up ground obscuring the west wall of the house probably post-dates *c.*1780, confirms anecdotal evidence of a relatively recent origin for the raised ground level here. This phenomenon may also go some way towards explaining the persistent description of what is clearly a two-storey building as a single storey, and perhaps to provide background to the various reports of landslip and/or quarry fill, of 'houses beneath', 'hollow-sounding floors' and the like (not to mention underground passages: accounts of which are a recurrent and persistent element of historic buildings lore, albeit rarely substantiated by factual investigation).

The nature of the subsoil observed during the watching brief was everywhere typical of the upper Greensand rather than the Keuper marls, and permits a small refinement to the geological mapping in the locality.

In addition to the possible medieval name of Hinenehalle of the 1307 visitation (above), the house has passed under a number of different names in the last two hundred years: 'The Deans', 'The Clergy', a 'Priests' House', and 'Church Living'. The Deans sounds suspiciously close to 'La Dene' which is the name by which the settlement of Street, further up the valley in the vicinity of Margells and The Fountain Head pub, was known in the Middle Ages (Torrance 2012, 40), so this may represent a confusion of names. However, since Henry de Somerset actually was Dean of Exeter (above), this name could also represent a lingering memory of his stewardship.

Acknowledgements

This work was commissioned by Richard Chadwick, the owner of Church Living Cottage, through the good offices of Justin Chapman of Louise Crossman Architects. I am grateful to Bill Horner and Marrina Neophytou of the Devon County Historic Environment Service for providing information held in the Historic Environment Record, and Tony Rouse of the Westcountry Studies Library for help with maps and other sources held in the local studies library. Jonathan Hague of Woofenden Construction, the main contractors, and the on-site team of Kevin McCarren; John Veal; Marcus Orchard, Ian Budden, and (other members: Ivor, Bob, and Richard), were unfailingly helpful and a pleasure to work with. I am very grateful to Barbara Farquharson and John Torrance of The Branscombe Project for much assistance with Branscombe matters and permission to use images from the website in this report. I am additionally extremely thankful to John Torrance for generously making aspects of his own researches on medieval Branscombe available to me in advance of publication, and for much useful discussion. Barbara Wood and Angela Wood of The National Trust's Regional Office at Killerton provided assistance and a copy of the NT vernacular building survey of Church Living. John Allan gave helpful advice and comments on the ridge tile fragments. Tony Ives produced the plan and elevations (Figs 15–16) from my original field

drawings. John Torrance and Richard Chadwick have provided very useful comments on a draft of this report.

Bibliography

Alcock, N.W. 1981 *Cruck Construction: An Introduction and Catalogue* (CBA Research Report **42**), London: Council for British Archaeology.

Alcock, N.W. and Hulland, C. 1972 'Devonshire Farm Houses, Part IV: Some Medieval Houses in East and North Devon' *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* **104**, 35–56.

Alcock, N.W. and Laithwaite, M. 1973 'Medieval Houses in Devon and Their Modernization' *Medieval Archaeology* **17**, 100–25.

Allan, J.P. 2004 'The Ridge Tiles' in Blaylock 2004, 306–10.

Allan, J.P. and Perry, I. 1982 'Pottery and Tiles' in Higham *et al*. 1982, 86-101.

Allan, J.P. and Thorp, J.R.L. 1990 'The Deanery' in Cooper (ed.) 1990, 45-7.

Blaylock, S.R. 2001 '***11055*** The Deanery, Cathedral Close' monument description for period MD3 in Exeter Urban Archaeological Database (EUAD), now the Exeter Historic Environment Record, Exeter City Council.

Blaylock, S.R. 2004 *Bowhill: The archaeological study of a building under repair in Exeter, Devon, 1977-1995*, English Heritage Archaeological Monograph/Exeter Archaeological Reports **5**, Swindon: English Heritage.

Blaylock, S.R. 2012a 'Method Statement for Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording at Church Living Cottage, Branscombe, Devon, April 2012', typescript.

Blaylock, S. R. 2012b 'Desk-Based Appraisal for Church Living Cottage, Branscombe (NGR SY 19562 88510)', typescript.

Bliss, J., Jago, C. and Maycock, E. (eds) 2012 *Aspects of Devon History: People, Places and Landscapes*, Exeter: The Devon History Society.

Branscombe, R. 2004 *A Guide to The Church if Saint Winifred, Branscombe*, Branscombe: Branscombe Parochial Church Council.

Butler, J. (ed.) 2000 *Travels in Victorian Devon, Peter Orlando Hutchinson's Illustrated Journals and Sketchbooks 1846–1870, Volume I*, Tiverton: Devon Books.

Butters, F.C. 1949 *Branscombe: The Church and The Parish* (1985 reprint), Branscombe: The Parish.

Cherry, B. and Pevsner, N. 1989 *The Buildings of England: Devon*. Revised ed'n, London: Penguin Books.

Chick, Elijah n.d. [*c.*1905?] 'A short sketch of the History of the Parish and Church of Branscombe, Devon', bound ms. in exercise book of 54pp plus many inserts loose and bound in, in WSL, Exeter. [WSL pB/BRA 6/0001/CHI]

Chick, Elijah 1906 *A Short Sketch of the History of the Parish and Church of Branscombe, Devon*, Exeter: W.J. Southwood & Co.

Cooper, N.H. (ed.) 1990 *The Exeter Area: Proceedings of the 136th Summer Meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute, 1990* (supplement to the Archaeological Journal Volume **147** for 1990) , London: Royal Archaeological Institute.

Cresswell, B.F. 1919 *Notes on Devon Churches: The Fabric and Features of Interest in the Churches of the Deanery of Ottery Saint Mary (from original notes 1905-1918, with revisions and additions)*, typescript notes in WSL, Exeter.

Davidson, James n.d. [1820s-40s] 'Church Notes, East of Devon' bound ms. in Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter [WSL W 726.5/DEV/DAV].

DCC 2012 'Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording' Devon County Council Historic Environment Service, 8th March 2012.

DCLG 2010a *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, Department for Communities and Local Government. London: The Stationery Office. (Accessible online at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5).

DCLG 2010b *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, Department for Communities and Local Government, English heritage and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, London: English Heritage. (Accessible online at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/publications/docs/pps5practiceguide.pdf).

DoE/DNH 1994 *Planning and the Historic Environment*, Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage: Planning Policy Guidance note no. **15**.

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*, Swindon: English Heritage.

Geological Survey 1898 *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sidmouth: Sheets 326/340*, , Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Higham, R.A. 2008 *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon*, Exeter: The Mint Press.

Higham, R.A., Allan, J.P. and Blaylock, S.R. 1982 'Excavations at Okehampton Castle, Devon: Part 2: the Bailey' *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* **40**, 19-151.

Hingeston-Randolph, F.C. 1892 *The Register of Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1307-1326)*, London: George Bell and Exeter: Henry Eland.

Hingeston-Randolph, F.C. 1894 *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1327-1369): Part 1, 1327-1330*, London: George Bell and Exeter, Henry Eland.

IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Reading: The Institute for Archaeologists (accessible online at: http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/ifa_standards_watching.pdf).

King, Arthur Steele 1910 *Branscombe Its Church and Parish*, Exeter: W.J.Southwood & Co. [WSL 726.5/BRA/KIN]

LCA 2011 'Design and Access Statement and Assessment of Significance, including Heritage Statement in support of Planning and Listed Building Consent Application PP-01707137 [...]: Church Living Cottage, Branscombe, Seaton, Devon, EX12 3AX' Louise Crossman Architects: Withycombe, Minehead, Somerset.

Lysons, D. and Lysons, S. 1822 *Magna Britannia, VI: Devonshire*, 2 vols, London: Cadell.

National Trust 1989 'Church Living' Unpublished Vernacular Buildings Survey, Killerton: The National Trust Devon Regional Office files.

Oliver, B.W. 1949 'Address of the President: The Devonshire Cottage' *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* **81**, 27–45.

Oliver, G. 1861 *Lives of the Bishops of Exeter and A History of the Cathedral*, Exeter: William Roberts, Broadgate.

Pantin, W.A. 1957 'Medieval Priests' Houses in South-West England' *Medieval Archaeology* **1**, 118–46.

Polwhele, R. 1797 *The History of Devonshire*, 3 vols, Reprinted 1977, Dorking; original editions 1793-1797, Exeter: Trewman and Son.

Prideaux, E.K. 1912 'Branscombe Church, Devon; *Devon Notes and Queries* **7/1**, 1–19.

Thorn, C. and Thorn, F. (eds) 1985 *Domesday Book 9: Devon*, Chichester: Phillimore.

Torrance, J. 2011 'Branscombe in the Middle Ages' talk to the Branscombe Project AGM, November 2011, pdf file accessible via the project website:

http://www.branscombeproject.org.uk/Branscombe%20in%20the%20Middle%20Ages%20website%20version.pdf

Torrance, J. 2012 'Branscombe 1280–1340: An East Devon Manor before the Black Death' *The Devon Historian* **81**, 67–80.

Torrance, J. 2012 'The Landscape of Branscombe in the Early Fourteenth Century: Historic landscape characterisation in the light of archival evidence' in Bliss *et al.* (eds) 2012, 37–50.

Torrance, J. forthcoming (2013) 'Branscombe 1280–1340: A Medieval Landscape' *The Devon Historian* **82**.

Wood, M.E. 1965 *The English Mediaeval House*, London.

Appendix: Full text of the Listed Building description for Church Living and Church Living Cottage

Accessible online via http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england; also via http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk.

SY 18 NE BRANSCOMBE BRANSCOMBE 7/38 Church Living and Church - Living Cottage 22.2.55 GV II*

House and cottage in a former farmhouse. Traditionally the place has been associated with the nearby Church of St Winifred (q.v.) but it was never a vicarage. It has been suggested that it was a summer residence of the Canons of Exeter Cathedral. It is essentially late C15-early C16 but parts are earlier, maybe as early as the C13; major later C16 and C17 improvements; the main block was refurbished with a stable block extension in the late C19, and the crosswing was refurbished circa 1970. Mostly local Salcombe stone rubble but there are sections, particularly in the crosswing of coursed blocks of ashlar; stone rubble stacks, one with its original (late C16 - early C17) Beerstone ashlar chimneyshaft, the others are topped with C20 brick; thatch roof to the crosswing, but the thatch has been replaced with slate over the main block.

Plan and development: house and cottage occupying an L-plan building. The long main block faces south-south-east, say south, and it is built across the hillslope. This is now Church Living. At the right (east) end there is a 2-room plan former stable block which was added in the late C19. The rest of this house has a 4-room plan adapted from a late medieval layout. At the right (east) end is the service end kitchen which has a large axial (former gable-end) stack backing onto the stable extension. Between this kitchen and a small unheated room there is the present entrance hall containing the main staircase. Left of the unheated room is a hall/parlour with an axial stack backing onto the unheated room. At the left (west) end of the main block is another small unheated room, formerly the inner room, but in the C19 it was converted to a cider house with apple loft over. At the left end is a basically 2-room plan crosswing projecting forward, and this has been divided off from the main block and is Church Living Cottage. The whole building has a long and complex structural history. Although the evidence is slight it seems likely that the C13 or C14 house occupied the crosswing. If so it was probably a first floor hall house. Also it was extensively refurbished when the main block was built in the late C15-early C16. This new main block was built with a 3-room-and-cross-passage plan. The original service end room was larger than the present kitchen since the C19 entrance hall and staircase was inserted into it. The unheated room between it and the hall was the original passage. It is not clear whether this passage went through the rear since the ground rises steeply behind. The small unheated inner room was the only section that was floored at this time. Hall, passage and service end were open to the roof, divided by low partitions and was heated by an open hearth fire. The crosswing now became the parlour wing with principal bedchamber (the solar) and maybe included a chapel. The rear gable-end stack might date from this time although it has since been much altered. There is evidence that there was a newel stair in the angle of the 2 wings from the ground floor of the crosswing (the parlour) to the first floor chamber. The later C16 and C17 improvements are concentrated in the main block. The service end was probably floored over in the mid C16 and the lower passage partition was built up to full height. The kitchen stack is probably late C16-early C17 and inserted at the same time as the hall fireplace was inserted and the hall and passage floored over. The house was then, as now, 2 storeys throughout.

Exterior: the front gable-end of the crosswing includes a good deal of stone ashlar including a chamfered plinth. The ground floor window here is C20 with no glazing bars but the first floor one is a Beerstone double lancet with relieving arch over; it is this window which provides the evidence of the C13 or C14 origins of the building. The outer (west) side of the crosswing has a C20 first floor doorway and windows. A landslip has built up the ground level to first floor level here although a buried ground floor slit window is exposed inside. The inner (east) side of the crosswall shows the blocked doorway to the original newel staircase and alongside projecting into the front wall of the main block is a section of an ashlar rebate which is thought to be the remains of the newel stair. The front of the main block has an overall irregular 8-window front of mostly C20 casements and most have glazing bars. The 3-window section at the right end is to the C19 stable block and a straight join of well-dressed quoins marks the end of the old house. The inner room windows (at the left end) were converted to a doorway with loading hatch over in the C19 when it became the cider house. The hall has a late C16-early C17 Beerstone 4-light window with a hoodmould; the mullions have external hollow chamfers and internal ovolo mouldings. Although the kitchen has a C20 window there is a late C16 - early C17 hoodmould over. Immediately left of this is the front doorway; a C19 segmental-headed arch containing a plank door and overlight. There is a small gabled service porch further right. In fact there are a number of blocked features on

both sides of the main block. On the front there are the ashlar jambs of what appears to have been a massive passage front doorway and others no doubt represent windows. There is a slit window in front of the kitchen stack and to rear of the hall the complete surround of a full height arch- headed window; this is blocked by a late C16 - early C17 oak 3-light window, the mullions have external chamfers and internal ovolo mouldings. Also in the rear wall the inner room chamber has an original small Beerstone arch-headed window. A doorway to right (used as an apple loft loading hatch) is thought to be secondary although it contains the remains of a late C15 - early C16 shoulder-headed door Also at the back there is an external flight of stone steps to the C19 stable hayloft loading hatch.

Good interior: the large kitchen fireplace has a plain chamfered oak lintel and includes a large side oven. The ceiling was 3 bays (including the entrance hall and stair) carried on large crossbeams, chamfered with straight cut stops. The unheated room between stairs and hall/parlour is the original passage. The lower side includes an original low partition; a plaster panelled oak-framed screen which includes a 2-centred arch doorway. Above it the bottom of a secondary oak-framed crosswall is exposed, built on top of the original low partition. It is plastered over on the first floor. The hall/parlour has mostly late C16 - early C17 features but the upper crosswall is original; a full height oak-framed, small panel frame which includes a blocked shoulder-headed arch at ground floor level. The parlour fireplace is Beerstone ashlar with an oak lintel with sunken chamfer. The chamber above has a contemporary Beerstone ashlar fireplace with Tudor arch head. The hall ceiling is carried by an axial beam with broad ovolo mouldings and exagerated scroll stops. The inner room has not been modernised since it was converted to a cider house and it still contains the cider press. It was originally floored and some of the original plain joists of large scantling still remain in situ. The original late C15-early C16 roof of the main block is intact from end to end. It is 6 bays, and carried on side-pegged jointed cruck trusses with cambered collars, threaded purlins and had single sets of curving windbraces, several of which still survive. The hall/inner room was a closed truss from the beginning and the bay over the inner room is clean. The rest was open to the roof is is heavily smoke-blackened from the original open hearth fire. The crosswing was modernised circa 1970 and no carpentry detail is exposed on the ground floor. Any fireplace here is blocked. The first floor fireplace is stone rubble with plain-chamfered oak lintel; it is of indeterminate date. There is a blocked oak shoulder-headed doorway at first floor level to the main block. The roof here is probably late C15 - early C16 except for the front truss which was replaced circa 1970. The other 2 are arch-braced trusses with a very complete set of carpenters' assembly marks. This roof is clean. There is a stone wall between the main block and crosswing with an oak frame on top, a closed tie beam truss, to take the main roof. This seems to support the theory that the crosswing is earlier than the main block. The carpentry detail of the stable block is late C19 including the king post truss roof. The joinery detail throughout the building is late C19 and C20. At first floor level over the late C19 stair in Church Living, there is an ornamental plaster coat of arms. It is heavily painted over and therefore cannot be made out. It could be C17 but there are in this area a number of C19 plaster plaques bearing the arms of the Russian Tsars and were erected to commemorate a visit to the area by the Grand Duchess Helene of Russia in 1831.

Church Living and Church Living Cottage make up one of the most interesting medieval houses in the area. The historic fabric of the building is remarkably well- preserved and other features certainly survive under C19 and C20 plaster. Moreover it is a most attractive building and forms part of a group with the nearby Church of St Winifred and other thatch-roofed cottages close by.

Source: F C Butters Branscombe, The Parish and the Church (1949) p 10.

Listing NGR: SY1955688521.

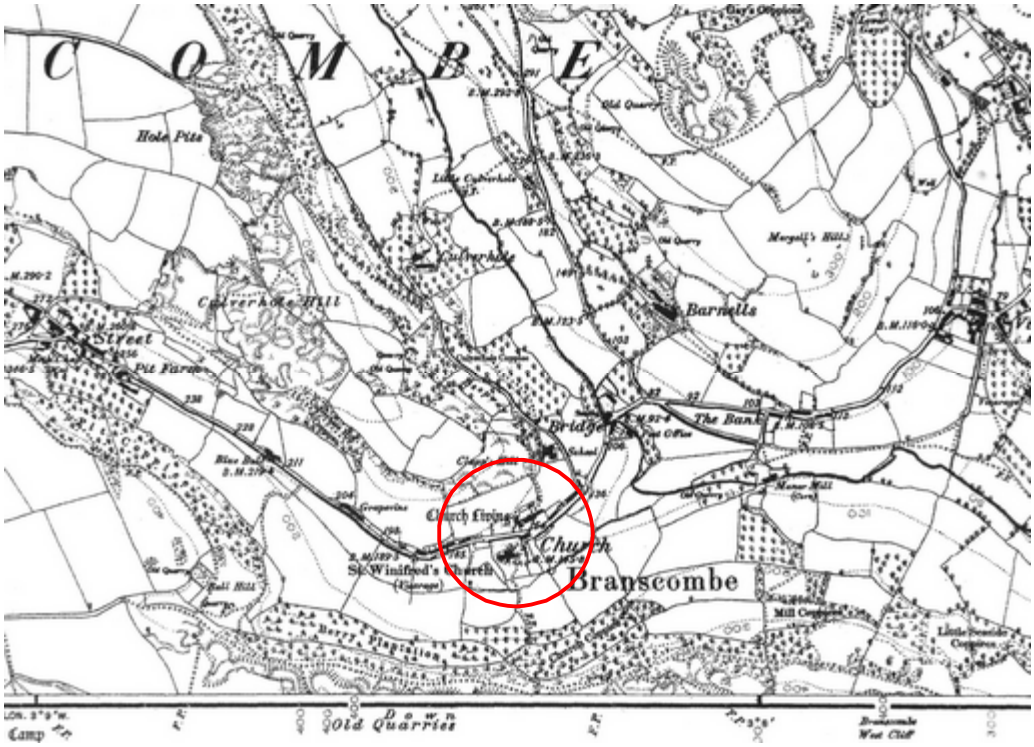

Fig. 1 Location of Church Living Cottage: Extract from the first edition Ordnance Survey six inch map, Sheet 83 SW, 1890, showing the general setting of the Church and Church Living Cottage (approximately half original scale of 1:10,560).

Fig. 2 Detail from Alexander Law's map of Branscombe of 1793 showing the Church and Church Living Cottage (Exeter Dean and Chapter ms. Ch Comm/98/8785).

Fig. 3 Detail of the environs of the Church from the Tithe map of 1840.

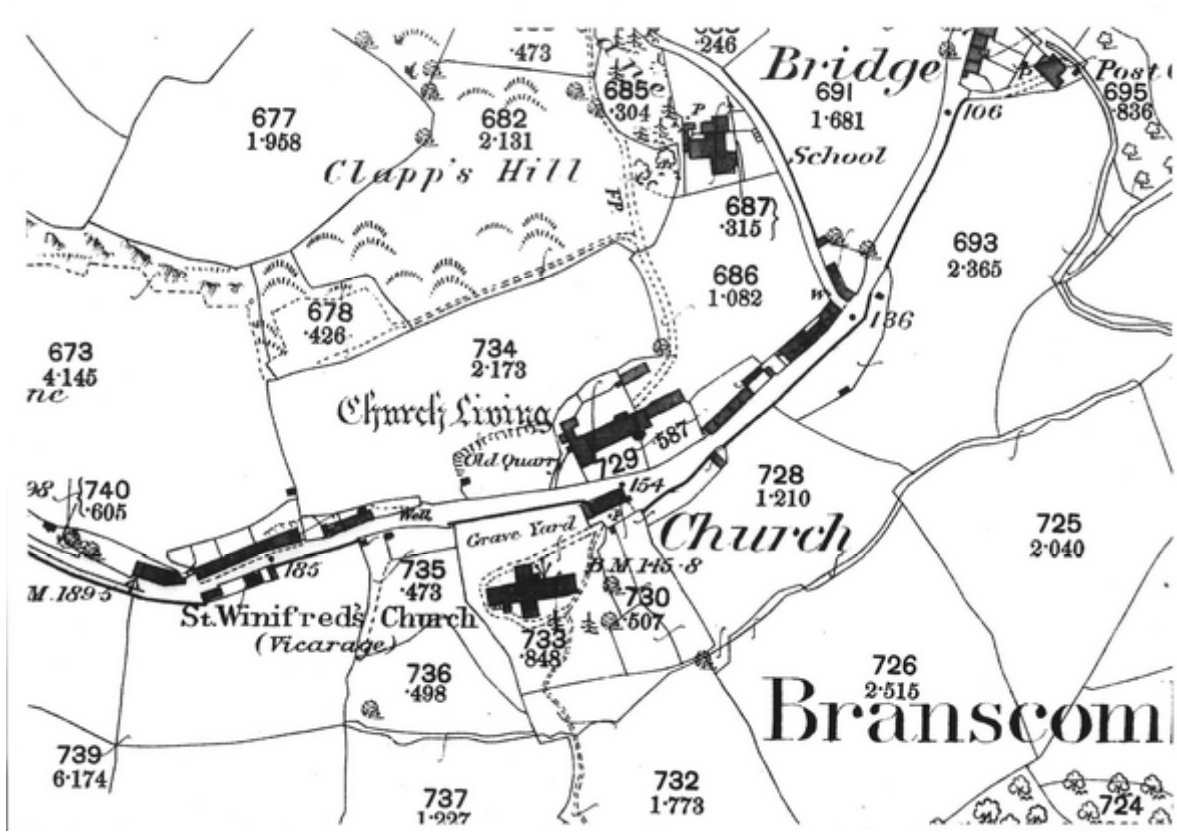

Fig. 4 1st edition 1:2500 OS map of 1889, extract from Sheet 83.13.

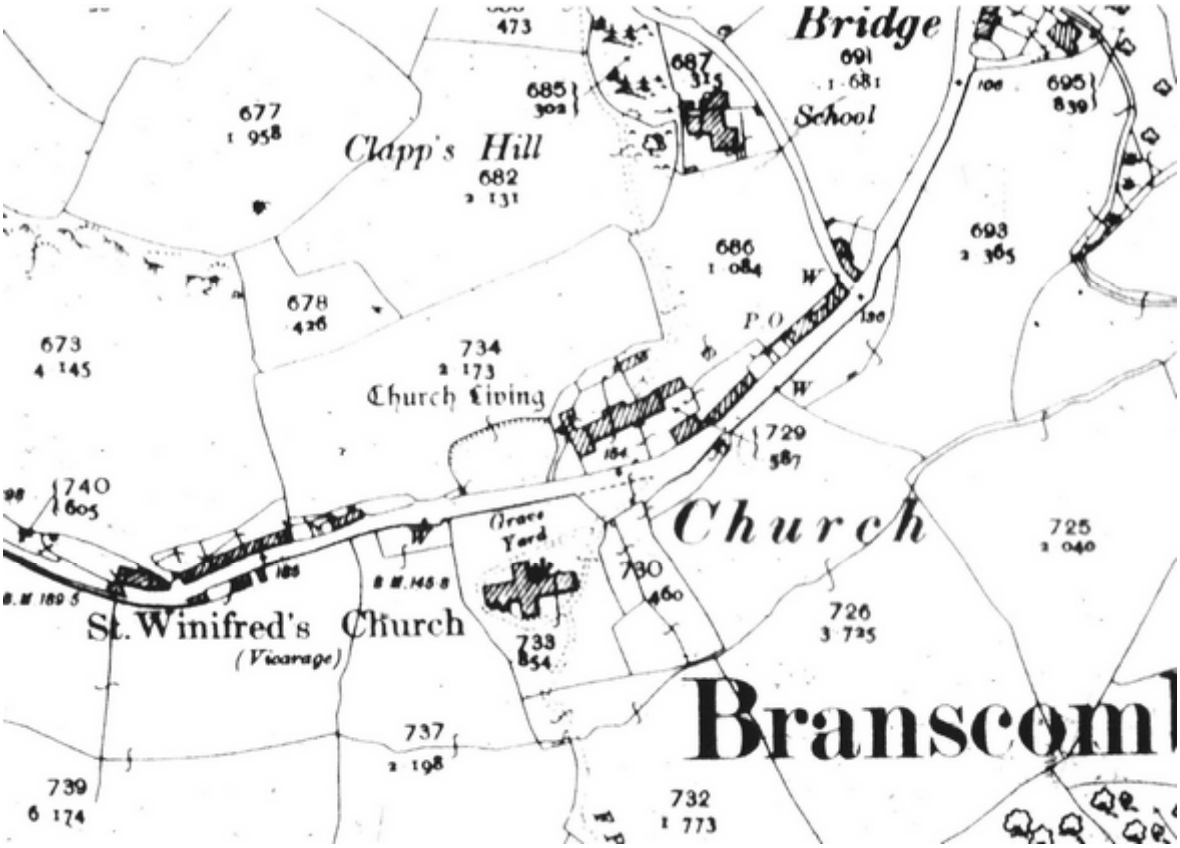

Fig. 5 2nd edition 1:2500 OS map of 1904, extract from Sheet 83.13.

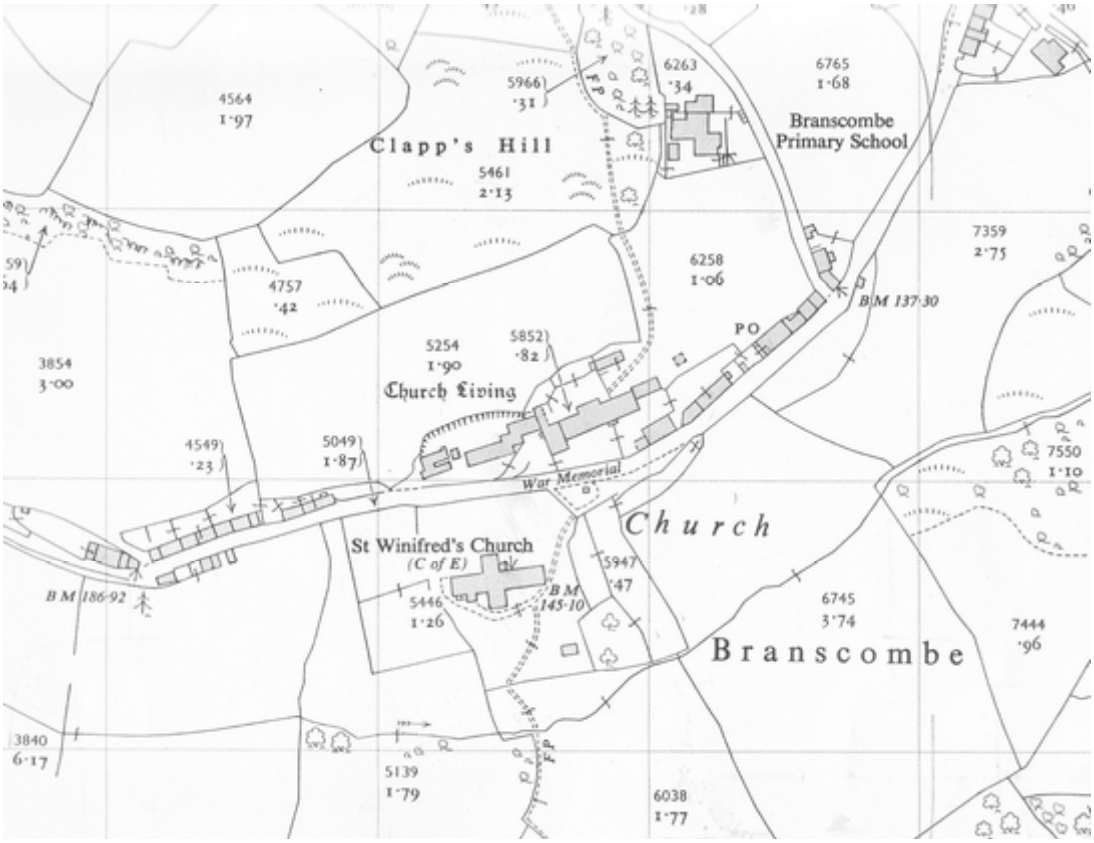

Fig. 6 Extract from the first large-scale OS map to show the National Grid, 1:2500 map, Sheet SY1988 (Revised June 1958).

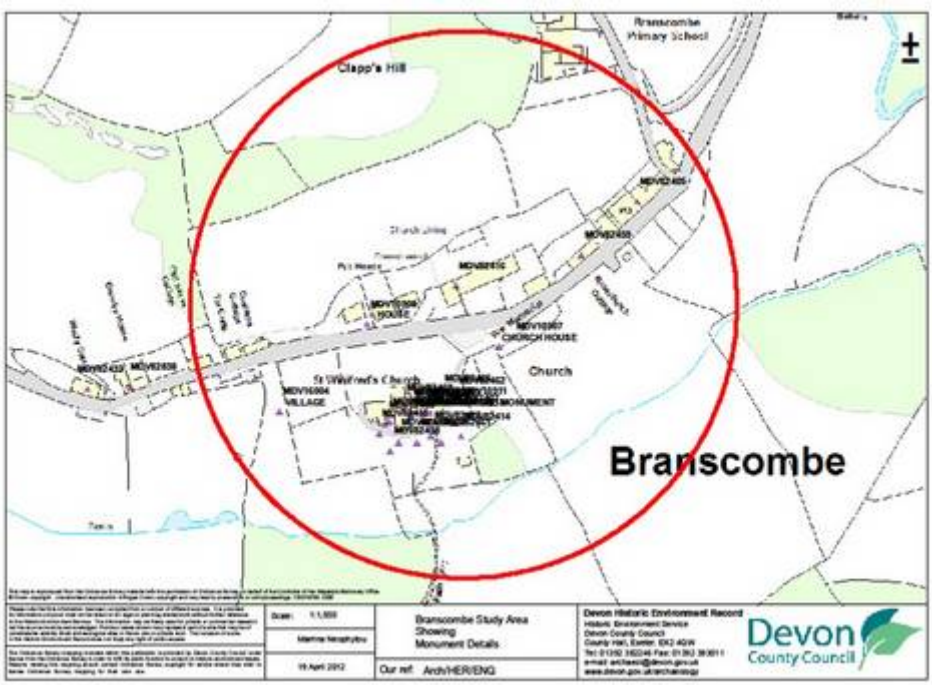

Fig. 7 Extract from the modern digital mapping overlaid with DCC HER data, 2012.

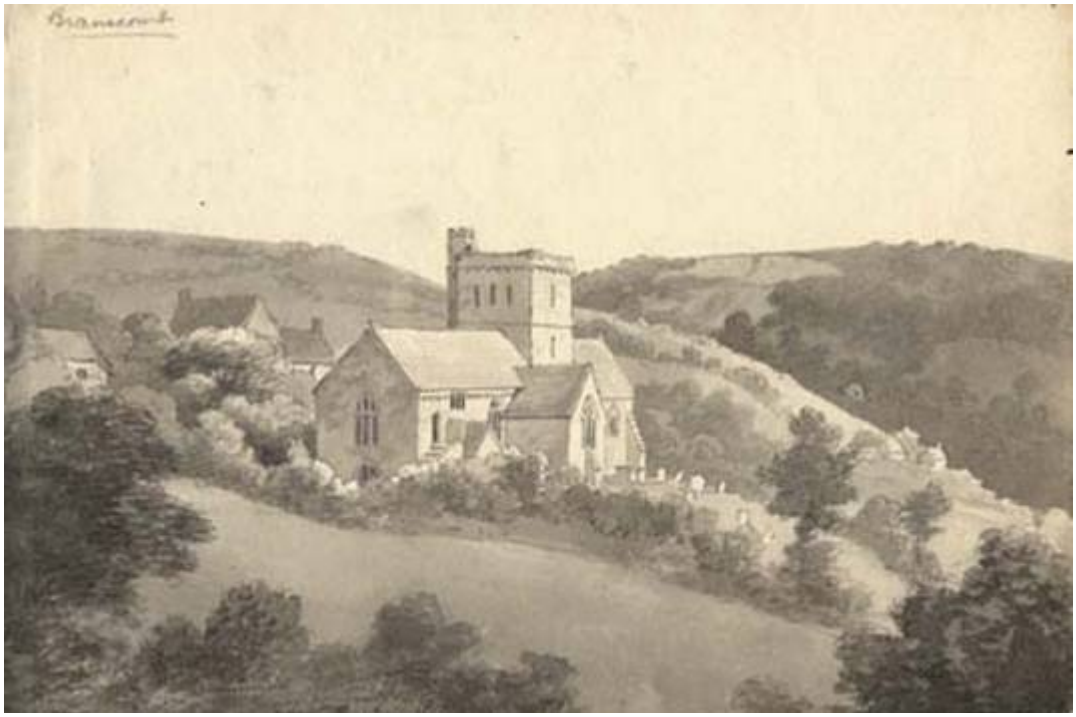

Fig. 8 Anonymous pencil and wash drawing, dated August 1807, of the church from the south-west, showing the roof lines of Church Living behind the church (WSL P&D 08717).

Fig. 9 Photograph of the church and church house, with Church Living and Church Living Cottage to the rear, dating to 1886 or before (the date at which the cottages on the north side of the churchyard were demolished; note also that Church Living was still thatched at this date). Photograph courtesy of The Branscombe Project.

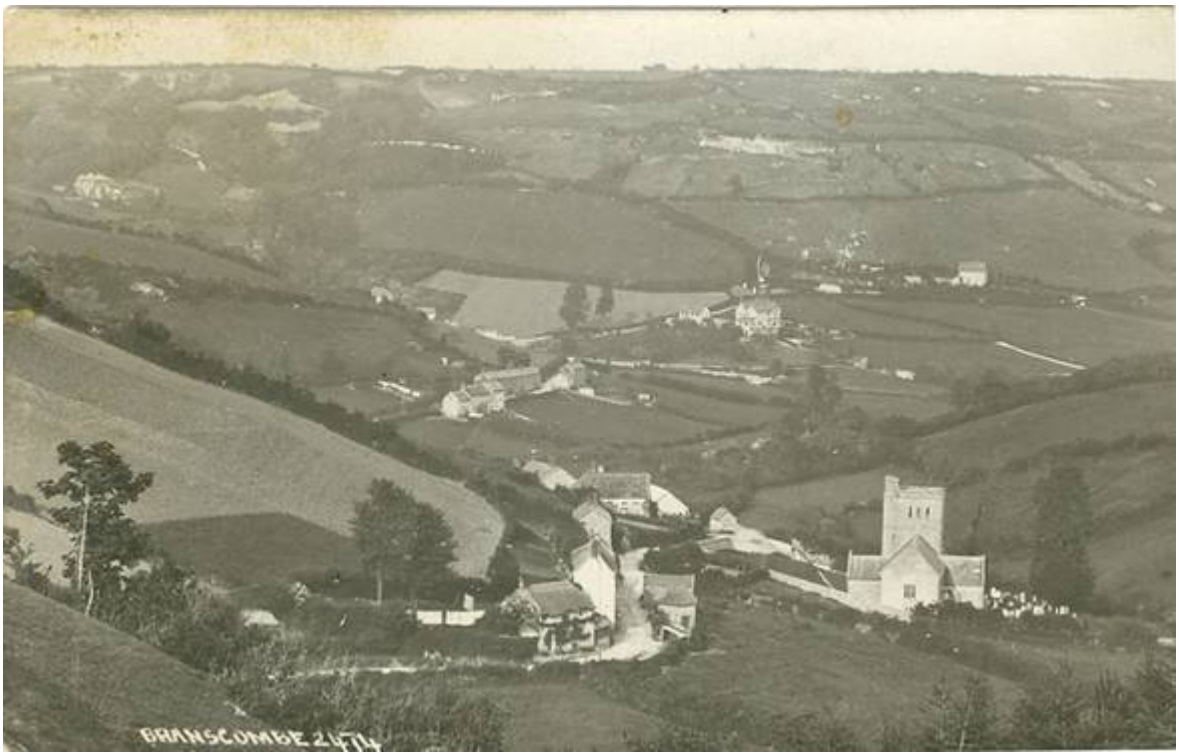

Fig. 10 General view of the church and village, with the west elevation of Church Living Cottage visible in the centre, the slope in front of the house can also be glimpsed, photograph *c.*1890, courtesy of The Branscombe Project.

Fig. 11 Postcard view of the church with Church Living Cottage to the rear, the small 19th century shed structure visible to the north-west of the house), perhaps *c.*1900, certainly before the 1911 restoration of the church. Postcard courtesy of The Branscombe Project.

Fig. 12 Postcard view of the church with Church Living partly obscured to the rear, but showing clearly the extent and condition of the quarry to the west of Church Living Cottage, after 1911. Postcard courtesy of The Branscombe Project.

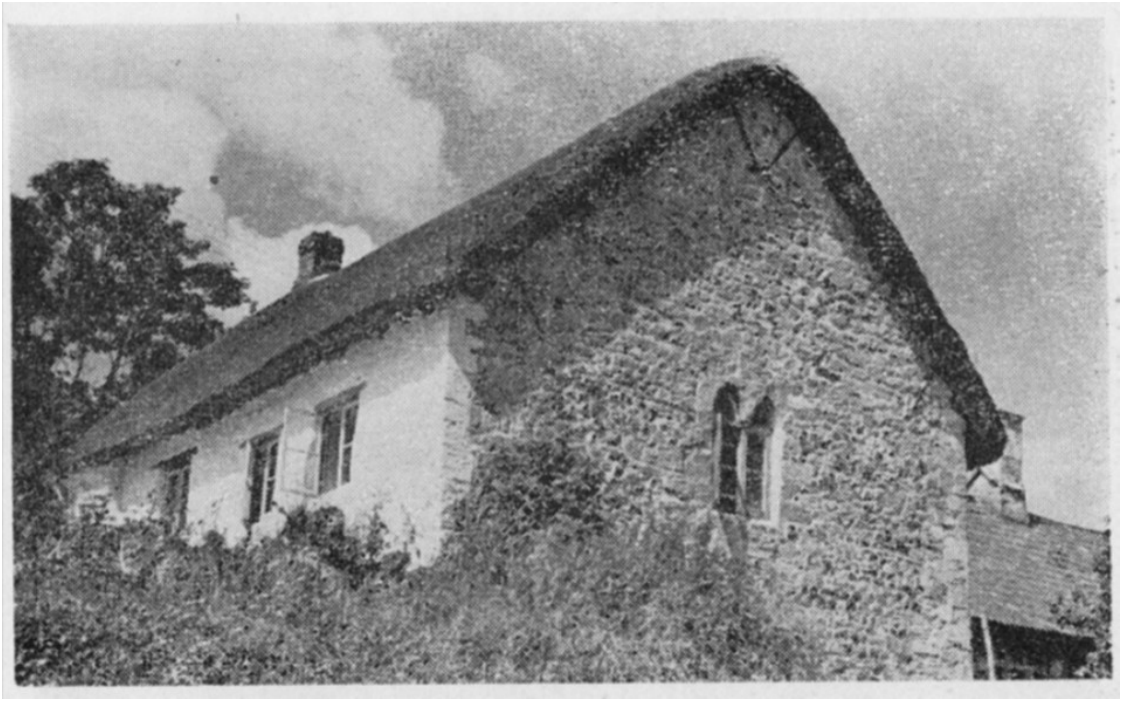

Fig. 13 The one previously published photograph of Church Living Cottage: Bruce W. Oliver's photograph of 1949 showing the south gable of the house (after Oliver 1949, pl. 13/fig. 1).

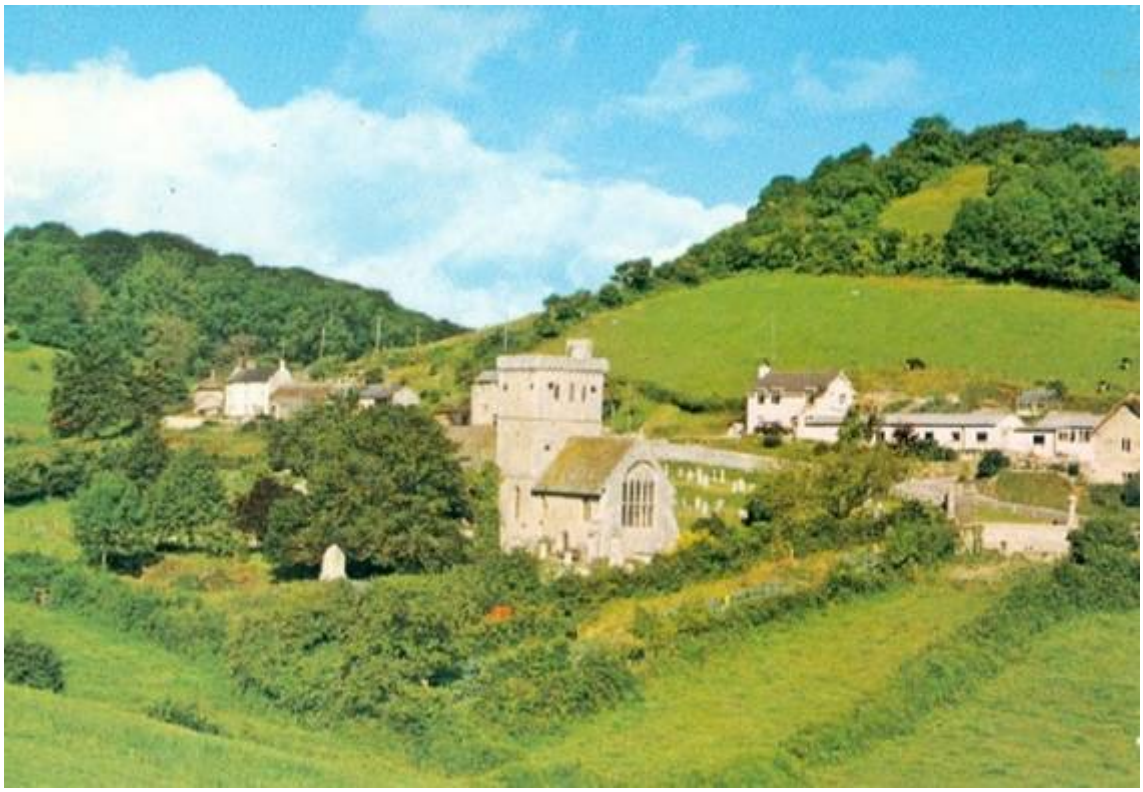

Fig. 14 Picture postcard view of the church of the 1960s or early 70s, showing the gable of Church Living Cottage (extreme right) and the egg-processing sheds still at their full extent running west from the cottage. Postcard courtesy of The Branscombe Project.

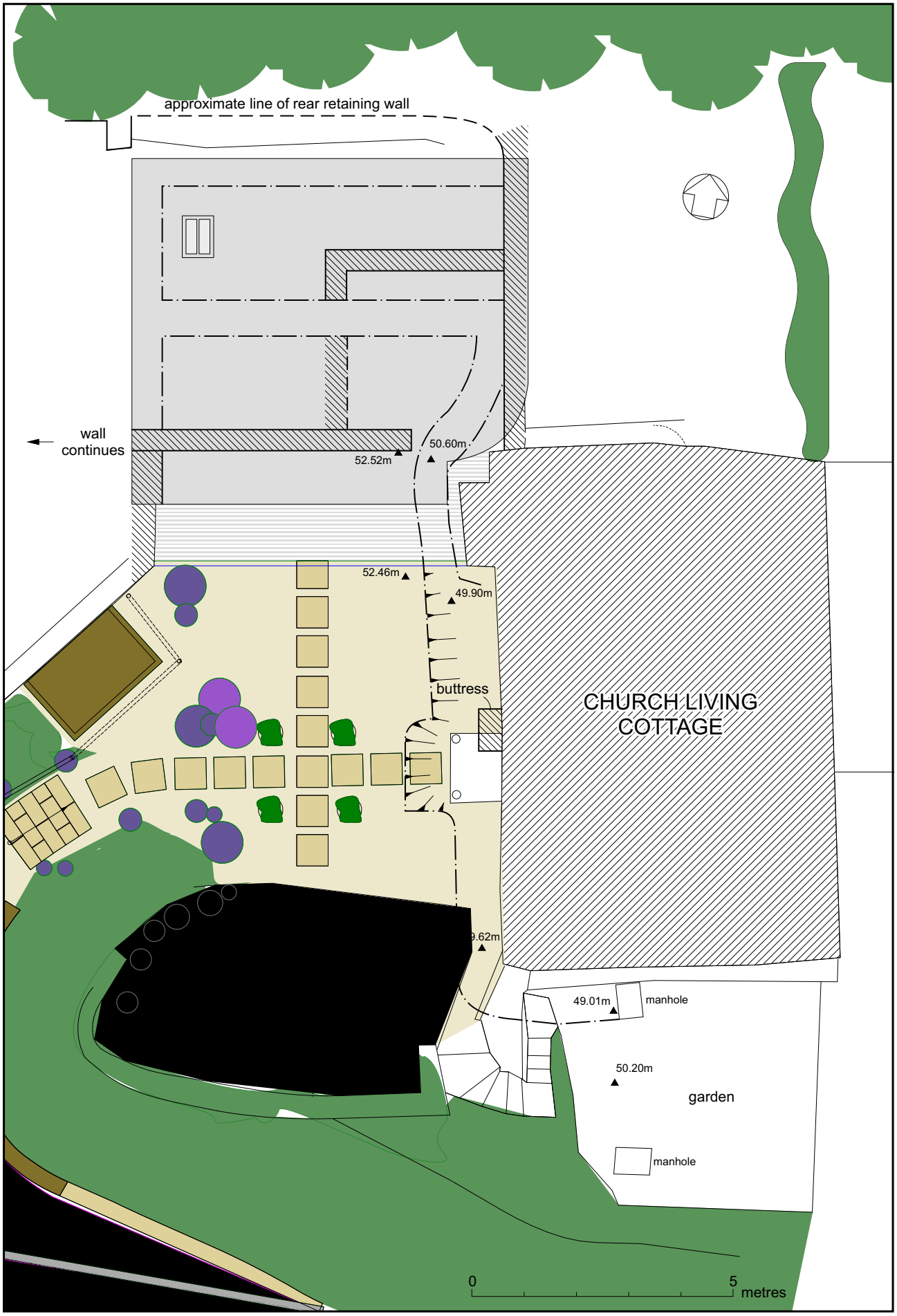

Fig. 15 Site plan, showing the location of the trench for the French drain along the west wall of the house and foundation trenches for the new building. Based on Louise Crossman Architects' drawing 1626-302C, with additions.

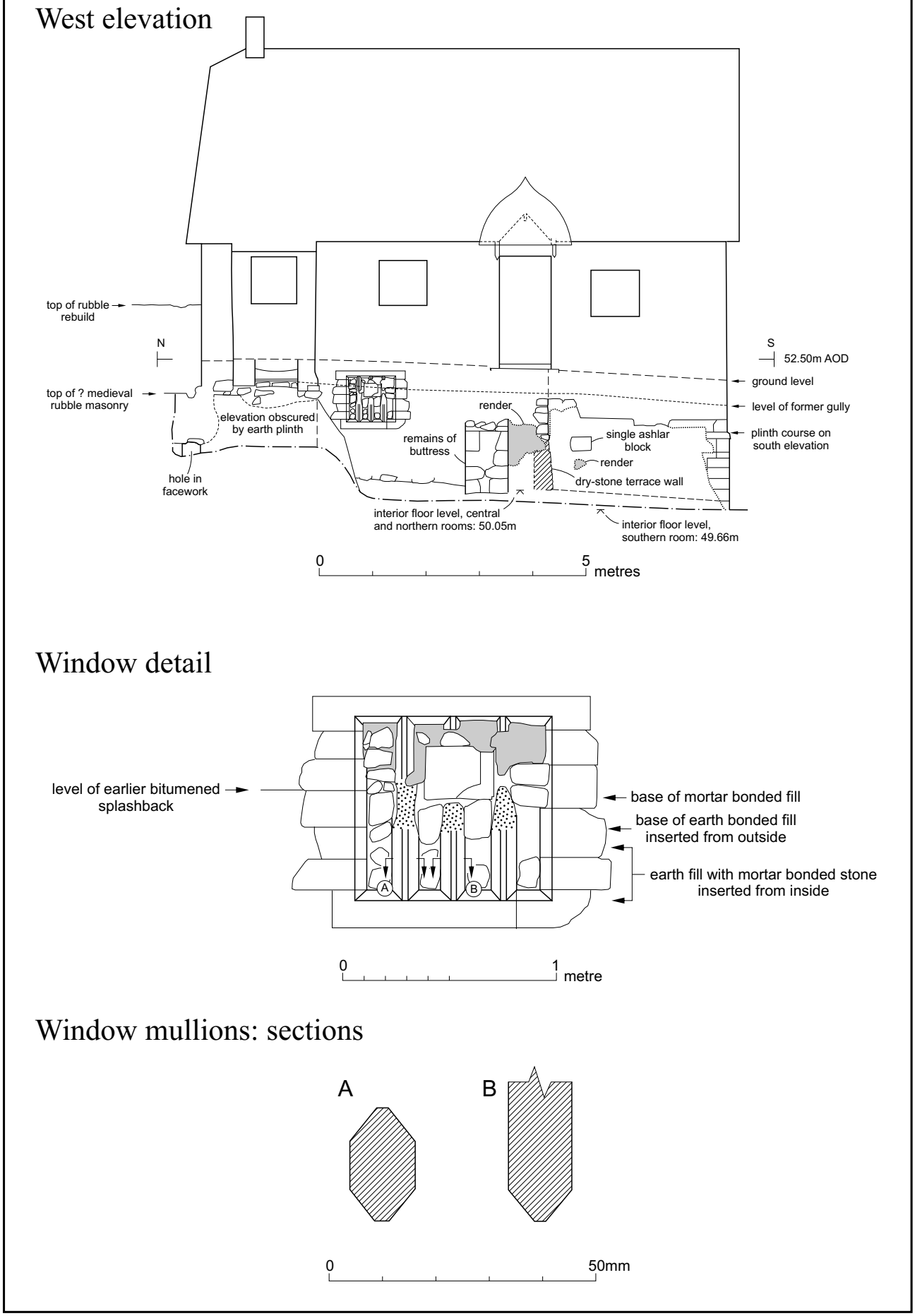

Fig. 16 Elevation drawing of the west wall of the house showing medieval fabric exposed by the trench for the French drain (top) with details of the medieval window (elevation: centre and sections of normal [A] and king [B] mullions: bottom).

Fig. 17 Church Living Cottage at the start of work, looking NE.

Fig. 18 Church Living Cottage, looking NW.

Fig. 19 Work in progress, excavating the French drain, looking SE.

Fig. 20 The threshold of the former porch, showing footings, flagstones and masonry reveals, looking E.

Fig. 21 The ashlar SW quoin of the building, looking NW.

Fig. 22 W elevation: the window and buttress in context, looking NE.

Fig. 23 The window fully exposed, looking E.

Fig. 24 Detail of the sill and mullions of the window.

Fig. 25 Buttress with dry-stone terrace wall in front, looking NE.

Fig. 26 Buttress fully exposed, with corbel/straight joint to S, looking E.

Fig. 27 Footing trenches for the new cabin, looking NW.

Fig. 28 Footings of the 19th-century outbuilding, looking NE.

Fig. 29 The large fragment of a Type 'A' ridge tile with triangular, knife-cut peaks.

Fig. 30 The four ridge tile fragments: C13th/14th (upper and lower left); C14th/15th (upper right); and post-medieval (bottom right).