

Report and Documentary History for  
**High Beams, 8-9 Vicarage Road, Stoneleigh,  
Warwickshire**

*Site Code: STO-C*

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View of the house from the west.

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***Oxbow Books***

STO-C: HIGH BEAMS, 8-9 VICARAGE ROAD, STONELEIGH, WARWICKSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 3286 7258

Survey Date: 1967-1990

By: N W Alcock

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References: Alcock, N. W., Braithwaite, J. G. and Jeffs, M. W. (1971-1973) 'Timber-framed buildings in Warwickshire: Stoneleigh village', *Trans Birmingham Archaeol. Soc.* **85**, 178-202; Alcock, N. W. (1993)

*People at home: Living in a Warwickshire village, 1500-1800*, Chichester: Phillimore.

For documentary source references, see the bibliography of primary sources.

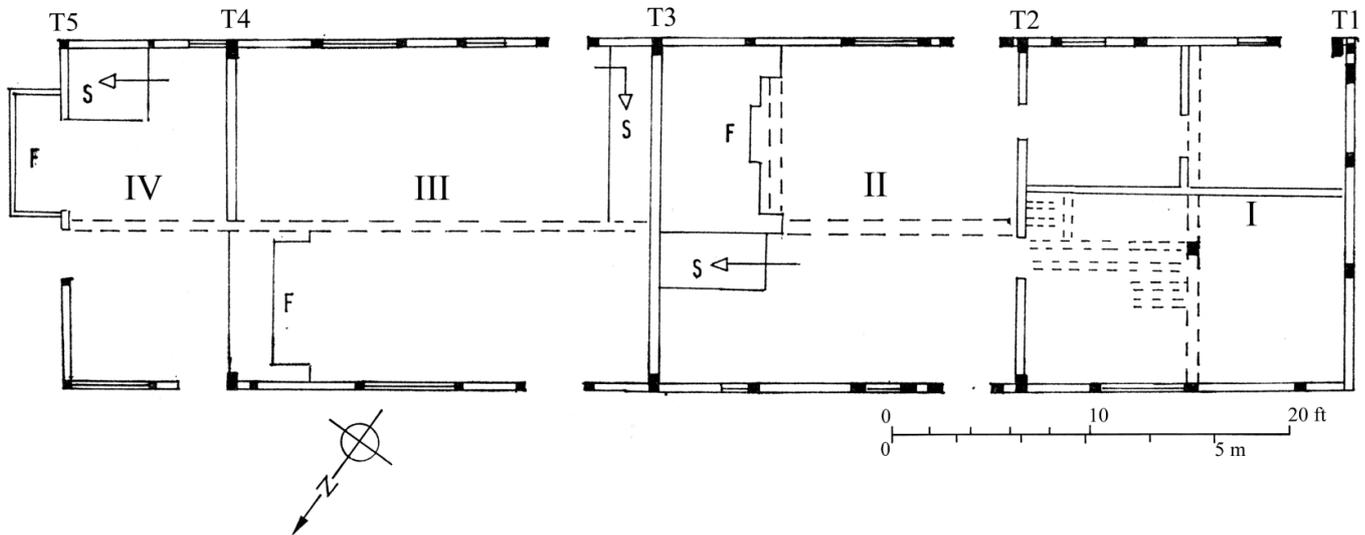


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering (from Alcock *et al* (1971-3), 186).

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

### SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

This three-bay cruck house is well-preserved internally, providing good evidence for its original plan, although the wall-framing has been replaced. The description refers to the house before recent renovation, in which almost all the internal evidence was destroyed. The three bays comprise a floored and divided inner room, a hall, and an entry and service/kitchen. Tree-ring dating was unsuccessful, but from the architectural parallels to other Stoneleigh cruck houses (STO-D; STO-F), a late fifteenth to early sixteenth century date is suggested.

LATER PHASES: From 1600 onwards, the hall and service kitchen were floored and a narrow bay was added at the east end. In the nineteenth century, it was divided into cottages.

### STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Three of the four original closed cruck trusses remain, defining the three original bays. The trusses have a pronounced lean towards the west, and in 1910 the fourth truss fell and was replaced. The blades are boxed heart with relatively regular profiles; the trusses have very large saddles carrying a square-set ridge (type 'C' apex). The collars and tiebeams are halved, and the tiebeams function as spurs, none of the trusses have any decorative features, but windbraces are used over bays I and II. The sill beams are carried on low sandstone walls. Of the original wall-framing, only the cruck studs survive, carried in V-cuts on the outer sides of the cruck blades.

The original floor in bay I survived to be recorded. A transverse ceiling beam carried heavy axial square joists, and a trimmer defined the original stair position. The mortice for a post indicated the position of an axial division, and the ceiling beam is chamfered up to the post on both sides.

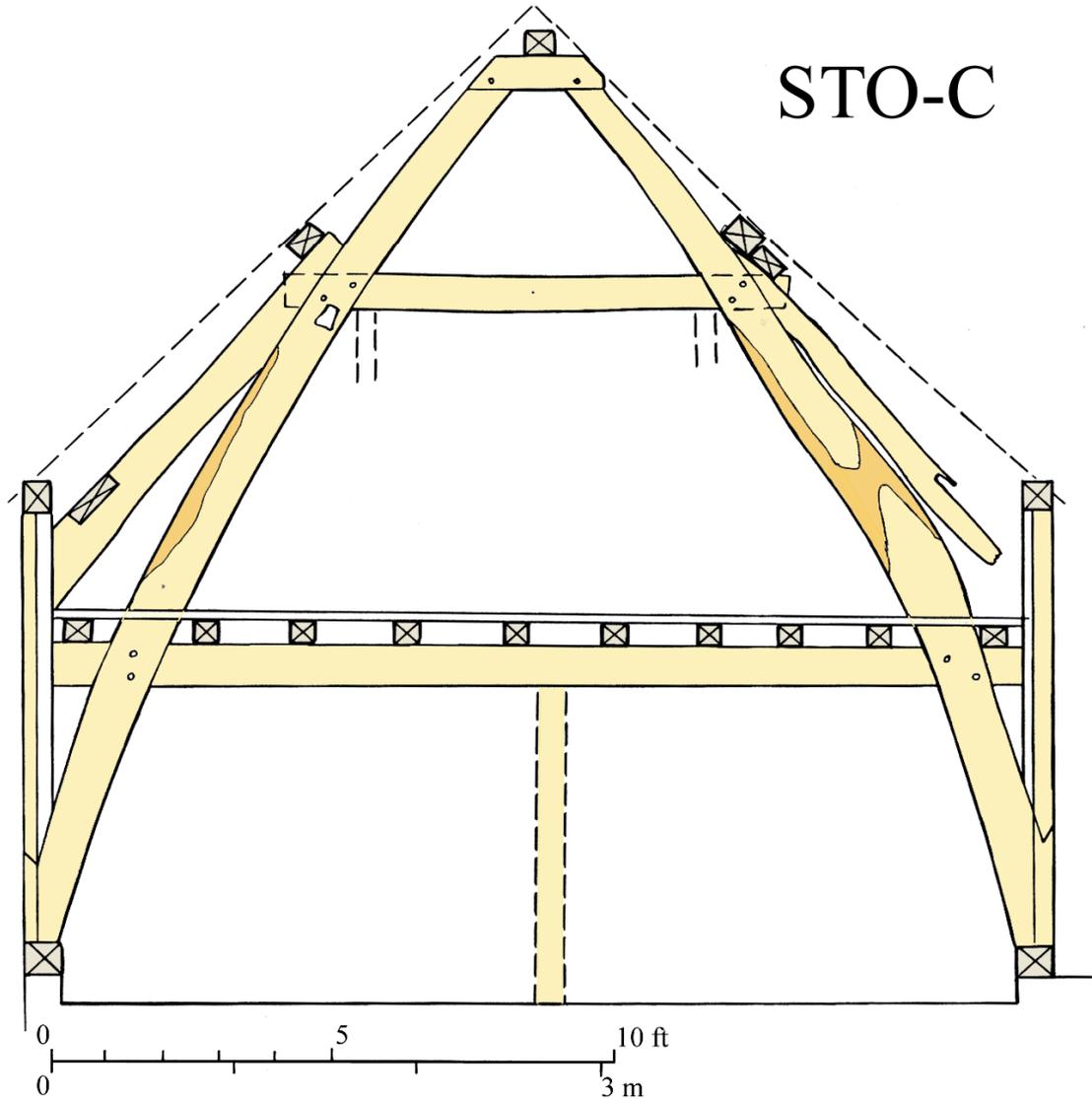


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2.

Soot-blackening is present in both bays II and III. This leads to the identification of room use as: bay I, divided inner chamber with solar above; bay II, open hall; bay III, entry (presumed) and kitchen/service. By 1610, bay 3 had become the milkhouse, and the small added bay (below) was 'the house beneath the entry' (Alcock (1993) 43; 107f).

LATER PHASES: A narrow bay was added at the east end in about 1600 (before 1610, from the evidence of the probate inventory of that date), and at a similar date a chimney was inserted in bay II. The ceiling beam for the upper floor in bay III has chamfers with straight-cut stops, but that in the hall is very rough, suggesting a much later date, probably well after the insertion of the fireplace; a fragment only of the latter's lintel survived, considerably better finished than the ceiling beam. It had upwards and downwards facing mortices for posts, another mortice for a rail running back, and a groove along its upper surface. These features indicate that the original chimney took the form of a timber-framed firehood.

## DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

*Sampling comments:* 5 samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 11 Oct 1988, and one slice was obtained from timber removed during renovation (STO-C06).

### TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
STO-C01	Cruck blade truss 2 rear	Not oak	—	—	—	—	—
STO-C02	Cruck blade truss 2 front	Not oak	—	—	—	—	—
STO-C03	Cruck blade truss 3 front	19 NM	—	—	—	—	—
STO-C04	Cruck blade truss 4 front	23 NM	—	—	—	—	—
STO-C05	Cruck blade truss 4 rear	17 NM	1	—	—	—	—
STO-C06	Cruck blade truss 3 rear	58	12	—	—	—	—
Not dated							

## DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

The house can be traced continuously from Roger Hudson, the tenant shown on the 1597 map (Fig. 4), through estate rentals and surveys back to the mid-fifteenth century (Table 1). Throughout, it was held with only a 2 acre field and was occupied by people of fairly low status, although a tanner was tenant in 1610. Probate inventories of 1610 and 1756 allow the room uses to be identified at these dates (Alcock, 1993, p. 107).

### STO-C



Fig. 4. Section of the 1597 map of Stoneleigh (SCLA, DR671/3, reproduced with permission).

Probate inventories of 1610 and 1756 relate to its tenants (Alcock (1993), 107-9). The former, that of Roger Hudson, tanner (the tenant from 1580) lists the following rooms:

Hall, Little Chamber next the Yarde, Street Chamber, Upper Chamber, Mylk House, House beneath the Entry; Barne, Tan House.

The particularly significant feature of this inventory is the identification of the divided inner room as containing two small chambers, which contained respectively one and two bedsteads. The upper chamber above them held odd linens but no beds, but was mainly used to store the apples and wool and yarn. The service room (bay III) was used as a dairy, presumably also including the entrance, while the small added room contained a ladder, some brushwood and various oddments. The second building shown on the 1597 map must have been either the barn or the tan house (or perhaps both of these together).

*Table 1. Tenants of the holding*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1468	6s	Richard Purdon	
c. 1484	6s	Richard Purdon	
1488	6s	Richard Pruddon	
1490	6s	Richard Purdon	
1497-1501	6s	Richard Pruddon	<i>Identified from sequence and rent paid</i>
1533	6s	Thomas Norryys	
1536	6s	Henry Price	
1550	6s	wife of Henry Price	
1551-79	6s	William Seriaunt	(1570) cottage and 2 little closes between his house and the river
1580	16s	Roger Hudson	
1582	16s	Roger Hudson	By lease
1583	20s	Roger Hudson	(rent increased)
1597	20s	Roger Hudson	