

ESSAYS
in honour of
JIM & MURIEL TONKIN

Edited by Rosalind Lowe



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The Royal Commission's survey of the historical monuments of Herefordshire

By ROSALIND LOWE with DAVID LOVELACE

Members of the Woolhope Club are very well aware of the three printed volumes of the survey of Herefordshire, published by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England (RCHME) between 1931 and 1934. They can be disappointing if one is more interested in the humbler buildings of the county, which may merit a sentence of two if their age was recognised at the time. The printed work is, however, the tip of the iceberg of the field surveyors' reports. These are available for consultation at the National Monument Record's archives at Swindon, and a number were photographed by David Lovelace as part of his own research projects. By kind permission of the archivist the Club has been allowed to reproduce some of those photographs in this article. Two parishes have been selected for detailed examination: Wigmore, Jim and Muriel's home parish, and Llanveynoe..

INTRODUCTION

The royal pronouncement which inaugurated the process of surveying England's historical monuments was given at St James's on 27 October 1908.¹ It 'deemed it expedient that a Commission should forthwith issue to make an inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions connected with or illustrative of the contemporary culture, civilization and conditions of the life of the people in England, excluding Monmouthshire, from the earliest times to the year 1700, and to specify those which seem most worthy of preservation.' Commissioners were appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Burghclere, and given the power to 'invite' the owners of ancient monuments to assist them in accessing the monuments themselves and any supporting documents, registers and records. Naturally the commissioners changed over time but more significantly, in December 1930, Sir John Cotterell was appointed for that part of the enquiry which concerned Herefordshire. By this time the cut-off date for recording monuments had become 1714, the year of the death of Queen Anne.

From the evidence of their dated survey sheets the surveyors had been at work since 1927, so Cotterell's appointment was somewhat after the event. The *Fourteenth Interim Report* to the King, on Herefordshire, is dated 19 July 1930, though the full volume was not published until 1931. It concerned the south-west of the county, where the surveyors had recorded 851 monuments in 72 parishes, an average of 12 per parish. In this context 'monument' means any item which was recorded, from an earthwork to a decorated stone incorporated in a barn wall. A list was given of monuments 'especially worthy of preservation.'

The *Fifteenth Interim Report* covered the east of the county and was published in May 1932, the full volume being published in the same year. The surveyors found 1,629 monuments in 97 parishes, an average of 17 per parish. No interim report appears to have been made for the north-west; the final volume of three for Herefordshire being published in 1934. It includes reports of 1,635 monuments in 82 parishes, an average of 20 per parish. The low average for monuments per parish in the south-west of the county is interesting. Perhaps the surveyors became more skilled at recognising old buildings which had been faced in stone—they missed a number in Goodrich—or more persistent in gaining entry.

Each of the three *RCHME Herefordshire* volumes have an accompanying map of the

area concerned, with the monuments identified in red and the 400ft. contour marked. Volume I (South-west) has 294 pages; volume II (East) 266 pages; volume III (North-west) 264 pages. Each volume has a list of the most important monuments; a list of illustrations by parish, important as these are sometimes not easily found using the index; a summary of the different kinds of monuments found and plans of some of the earthworks; notes on prehistoric and Roman finds and on castles. This is followed by a section of example photographs on different topics, such as church architecture, timber-framed buildings, effigies, staircases, pulpits etc. After this a parish-by-parish description of monuments begins. Each volume has a section on armorials, a glossary and an index. Volume I has a 6-page section on stone masons' marks and mouldings; volume III has a list of addenda and corrigenda.

In each volume acknowledgements are made to the various people and organisations who helped in the preparation of the volume. The bishop and parish incumbents are always noted. The Woolhope Club is mentioned only in the person of its president, Lt.-Col. Symonds-Tayler in volume II, but many other familiar names occur such as George Marshall, Cyril Fox and Canon Bannister.

THE SURVEYS

As a member of Jim Tonkin's 'Old Buildings Group' I heard his stories about the surveyors' method of working when inspecting houses, gleaned when he met some of their acquaintances in the early years of the vernacular architecture movement.

The monuments were recorded parish by parish, using the current OS map to record their locations.² The working copy of the OS map (or so it seems) is included at the front of every parish survey folder.³ Each monument recorded was given a number and this is marked on the map;⁴ in towns and villages easily surveyed on foot the order of numbers seems more random, but in the countryside there is sometimes a discernible route followed. In Llanveynoe, for example, 27 monuments are noted, many of them small farmhouses along narrow roads and tracks tricky even today. The surveys took place throughout the year and it is hardly surprising that, as Jim recounted, the surveyors were sometimes less enthusiastic after lunch than before. Unless the surveyor had, literally, inside information about a house perhaps from the incumbent of the parish it could have been impossible to identify an early building from the road, and the surveyor may have driven past.

This may have given the impression that a parish was surveyed during a given period and then the surveyors would move on. In the two sample parishes chosen for more detailed study below, Llanveynoe was surveyed in March and May 1927, but Wigmore was visited sporadically from March to August 1932 and again in October 1933. It is clear from some of the photographs that are slotted into the survey sheets that the survey sometimes took place at a different season from the photography.

THE SURVEYORS

Surveyors were required to sign the survey sheet for a monument with their name and the date of the survey, the latter not always observed. In the three volumes the 'executive' staff are thanked for their work. No indication is given of their functions, nor can I find any authorship given for the elegant line drawings and plans in the printed volumes, nor for the photographs which were often initialed.⁵ Of those in the list, survey sheets were signed by the following:

Ernest A. R. Rahbula, MC, FSA (later OBE)
John W. Bloe, OBE, FSA
Percy K. Kipps
G. E. Chambers, FSA
A. T. Phillips, MC.

Also mentioned were Miss V. M. Dallas, F. T. A. Power, MC and A. W. Clapham, OBE, FSA. The first three surveyors were in their 40s in 1930.⁶ G. E. Chambers was responsible for the line drawings and plans in many cases.⁷ A number of the photographs have what may be initials followed by a number. In Wigmore the initials are VJH, in Llanveynoe CJPor CJB.⁸

THE SURVEY DOCUMENTS

Two parishes have been chosen to illustrate this article: Llanveynoe and Wigmore, in honour of Jim and Muriel. Jim had an especial fondness for Llanveynoe, as many of the farmhouses there had remained relatively untouched in the years since the current building had been erected, probably because of the relative poverty of the occupants. The two parishes are quite different. Wigmore has many buildings recorded which lie close to the main settlement; Llanveynoe is typical of a Welsh upland farming parish though with a presumed early ecclesiastical centre at the church. There is a Bronze age burial cairn in the field next to Olchon Court, unrecorded by the surveyors but now confirmed by excavation as having a long history of ritual activity.⁹ This paper will focus on the vernacular buildings of these two parishes.

The final section is made up from a selection of photographs from the notebooks which illustrate Herefordshire life in different ways.

WIGMORE

Unsurprisingly, the surveyors' reports for Wigmore concentrate on the castle, the church and the most interesting dwelling, Chapel Farm. As the latter has been extensively documented recently in the Club's *Transactions*, examples have been chosen from the other monuments.¹⁰

It is impossible to reproduce the whole of the OS map for Wigmore parish which the surveyors annotated and which precedes the description of the monuments in their parish notebook. Plate 2.16 shows that part around the village of Wigmore and Figure 3 the elegant version of it which appears in the printed RCHME volume. These are typical maps and the style is repeated in many other parishes. The full map of the parish is essential in identifying which monument is which in the printed version, as the description of the location of a house may be '1.6 miles S.S.W. of the church' - not that easy to pinpoint.

Although this account has been written from the selected photographs taken of the Wigmore notebooks, i.e. not the entirety, it is still possible to say something about the survey. G. E. Chambers surveyed most of the houses in several visits: 9 March 1932; 13 April 1932; 7 July 1932 and 3-4 October 1933. A. T. Phillips wrote notes on the castle in July 1932, but there are a number of pages on the same subject in Chambers's handwriting though unsigned. The notebook's pages relating to the church were not photographed.

The photographs with 'VJH' references are undated, but were clearly taken when the trees were leafless. Many do not have a reference number, but there is no steady progression around the sites; the castle numbers are VJH561 and VJH609, but two outlying farms are 599 and 601.

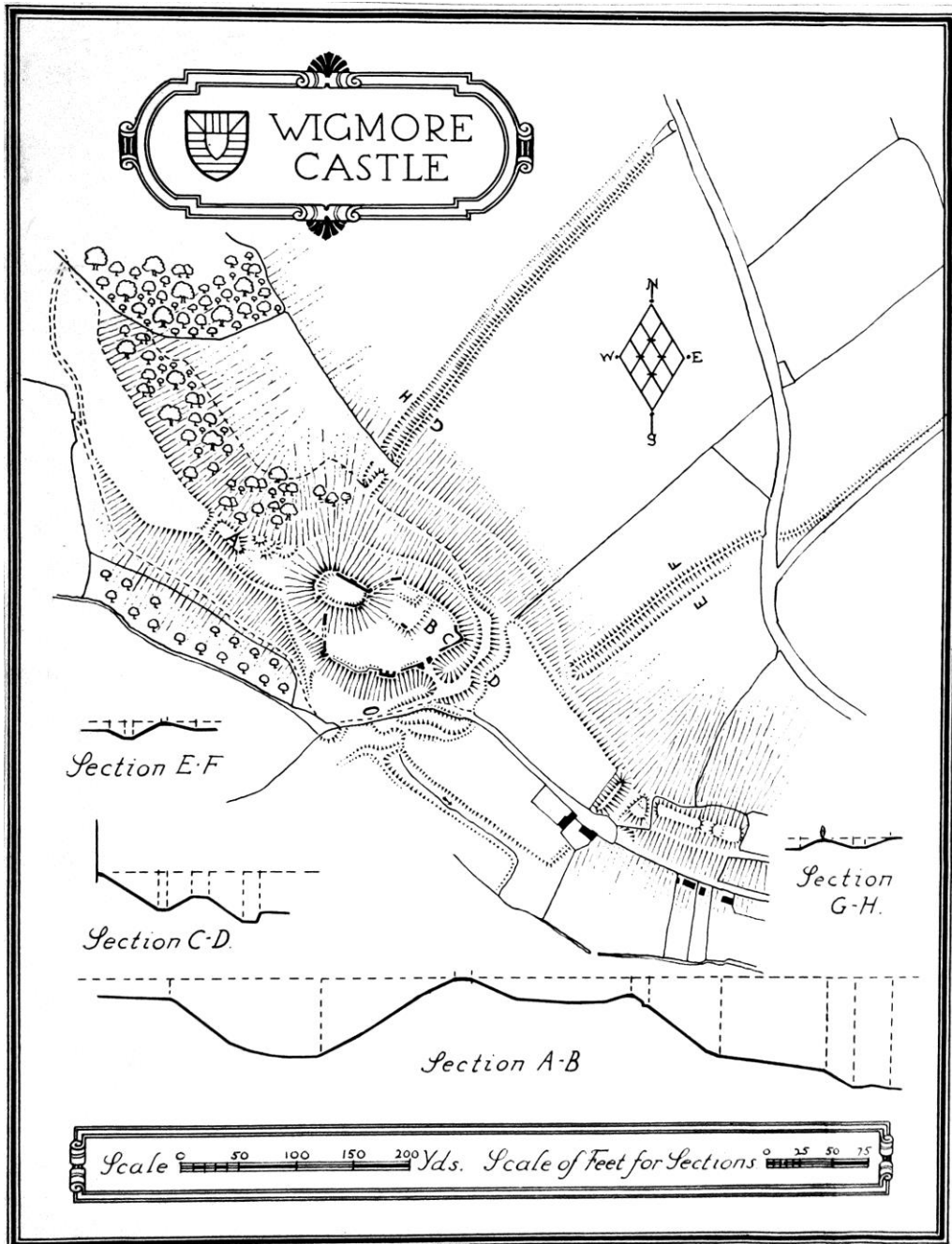


Figure 1. The elegant plan of Wigmore castle, showing Castle Lane leading from the south-east of the fortifications towards the church and village (RCHME Herefordshire Vol. III, p.206)



Figure 2. 'VJH610' just showing the castle from the south. Wigmore church is visible on the right (©DL&EH)



Figure 3. Inside the castle with perhaps the same figure for scale. (©DL&EH)

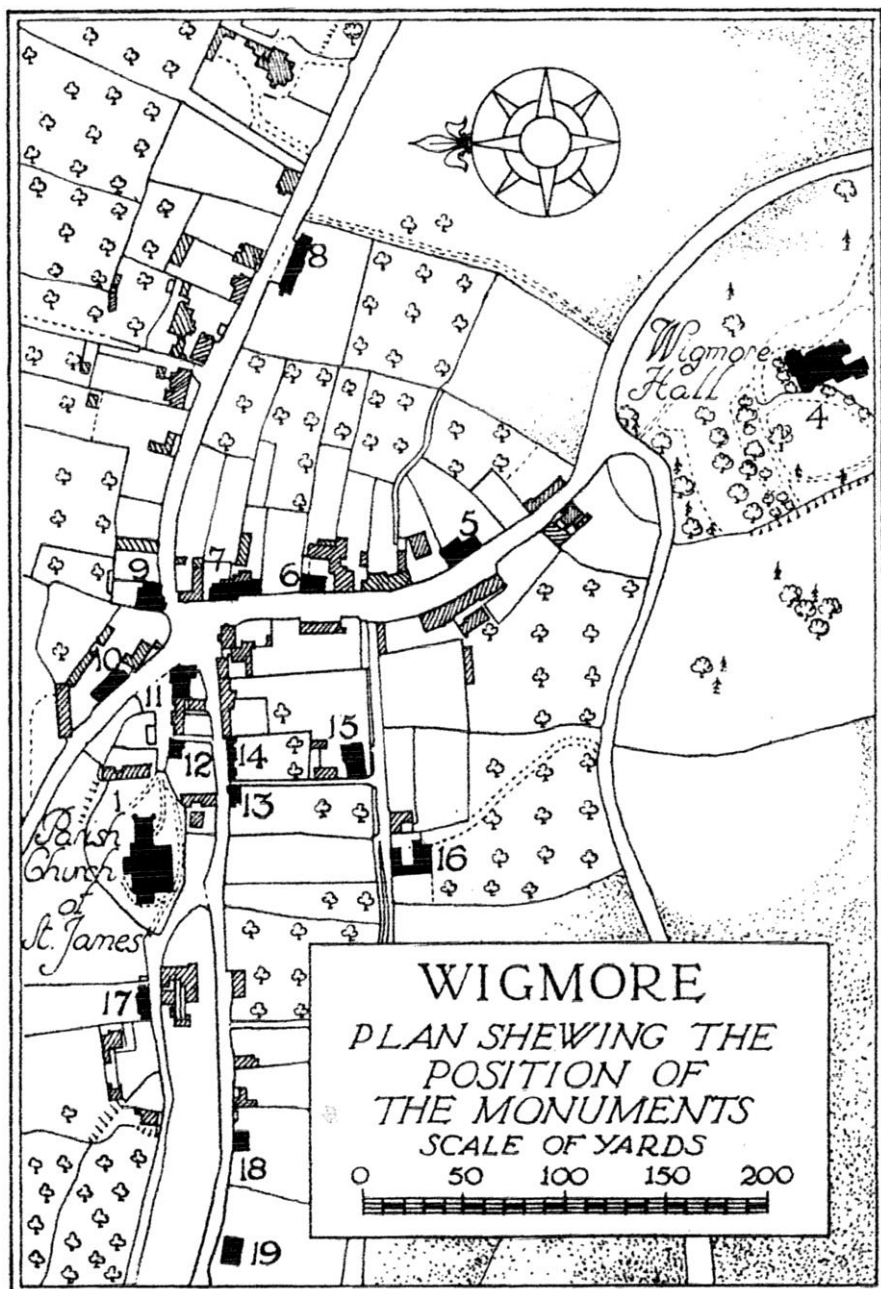


Figure 4. The printed plan of Wigmore village. Confusingly, in Plate 2.16 and Fig. 1, north is to the top of the map. The numbers correspond to the monument numbers given in the text. (RCHME Herefordshire, Vol. III p.210)

B.

(21)

RECORD CARD FOR SECULAR MONUMENTS.

(N.B.—Detail of special interest is to be entered here, but described fully on a separate card.)

1. Name and situation of Monument (with owner's Name and Address). *Upper Limebrook Farm*
2 3/4 miles SW. of the Church

2. General appearance: (a) No. of storeys. *Two storeys.*
 (b) Building materials. *Plastered timber framing on rubble plinth, rubble*
 (c) Roofs. *Stone slates.*

3. Historical development (with dates and small sketch plan).
E. of the main chimney stack are two uneven bays of a
medieval house, incorporated in a 16th
century rebuild. When the chimney stack was
inserted, a first floor built into that part
portion of the early building which was
preserved, and the existing western end of
the house either added or rebuilt. The S.E.
chimney stack, and the ^{western} end of the house

4. Special features (if any) *are modern additions.*

5. Elevations: (Beginning with the main front, and mentioning, in the following order:—(a) Walls; (b) Gables; (c) Doors; (d) Windows; (e) Chimneys; (f) Rainwater heads and pipes.)
The N^W fronts have been covered with rough-cast. The S. wall has been
refaced partly with rubble, partly rough cast.

6. Grounds: (a) Gardens; (b) Outbuildings; (c) Statuary, sundials, etc.

County. *Hereford III*

Parish. *Lymington*

Sub-Commission.




Figure 5. A typical reference sheet, in this case for an outlying building, monument no. 21, Upper Limebrook Farm. Surveyed by G. E. Chambers on 20 March 1932. (©DL&EH)

As Jim and Muriel's house lies on the road leading from the church to the castle, there are fourteen buildings listed by the surveyors within 250 metres of it, not including the church.

Approaching Wigmore on the Hereford road, Wigmore Hall (monument no. 4) lies a little way outside this limit, surprisingly not illustrated in the printed volume although considered to have 16th-century origins. There is a photograph and a plan on the sheet. It is now a hotel.



Figure 6. Wigmore Hall, monument no. 4, surveyed by G. E. Chambers, 12 April 1932, photograph VJH 591. (©DL&EH)

In the printed volume the lesser monuments, nos. 5 to 22, are described as 'of the 17th century and of two storeys, timber-framed, and with stone, slate or tile-covered roofs. Most of the buildings have exposed external timber-framing and internal ceiling-beams. Condition—Good' unless otherwise described. Only one of these, no. 8, is illustrated by a plate in the printed volume. Most of these monument sheets have a plan, but only nos. 5, 9, 11, 16, 18, 20, 21 and 22 have photographs, and those of the outside only. However, there are spaces and slots on some sheets with the photograph reference number given, e.g. no. 7, VJH 1090, so they may exist somewhere.

Entering Wigmore, still on the Hereford road, monument no. 5 (Fig. 7) is a good example of the need to assess a house from the back and inside as well as the front, as in this case the front has been re-faced. Numbers 6 and 7 have plans only, but nos. 9 and 11 have photographs, with no. 10 just visible behind no. 11.¹¹ These houses were familiar landmarks to visitors to Jim and Muriel.



Figure 7. Monument no. 5 on the side of the main road. The building to the left is 16th-century in origin. (©DL&EH)



Figure 8. Monument no. 9 from the east, so this view is not seen on the approach from Hereford. (©DL&EH)



Figure 9. Monument no. 11, the house on the corner, with no. 10 immediately to the right of the telegraph pole. (©DL&EH)

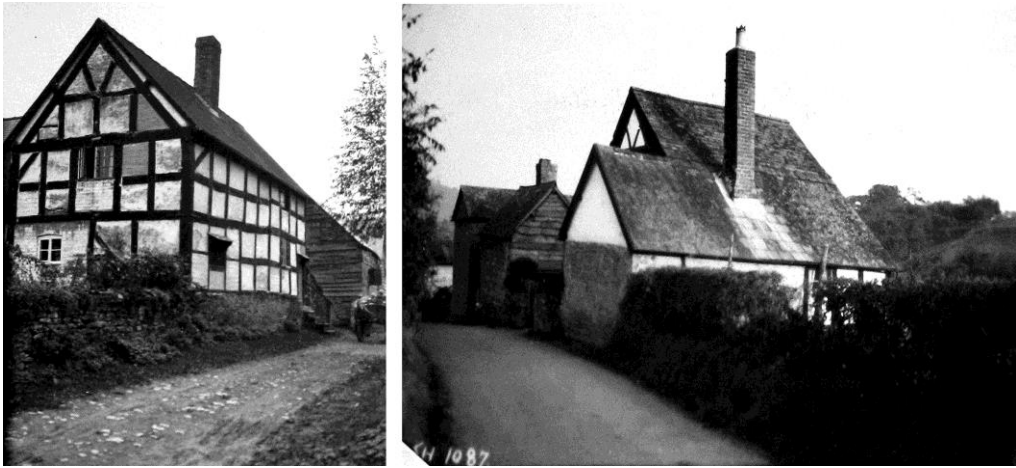


Figure 10. Two monuments (unnamed) which lie close to Jim and Muriel's house in Wigmore. (©DL&EH)

Unfortunately, not all the surveyors' sheets for Wigmore were photographed, so the precise details of a number of buildings in Church Lane and Castle Lane cannot be furnished.

Another house, Lodge Farm, lies on the road between Wigmore and Hereford and here there is a plan to accompany the photograph.

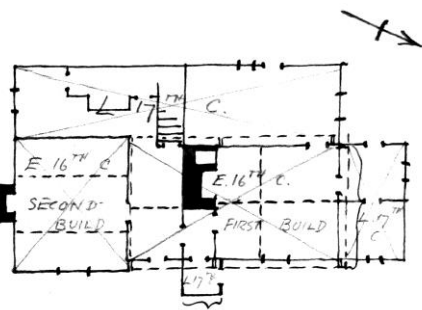


Figure 11. Lodge Farm, Wigmore (no. 20) with Chambers's annotations, surveyed 20 April 1932. (©DL&EH)

There are now forty-one listed monuments in Wigmore parish listed on English Heritage's online register,¹² as opposed to the twenty-one recorded by the RCHME surveyors. Included in this list are monuments from the 18th to the 20th centuries, the last a telephone box. Nowadays the details of the individual monuments are given, with accurate grid references and the modern name of the houses. Most additional monuments are barns or outbuildings.

LLANVEYNOE

Llanveynoe is a typical upland parish of the Welsh marches with isolated farmsteads dotted about the landscape. The church is located in a flat field on a windy ridge with few dwellings nearby. From this ridge the ground drops rapidly into the valley of the Olchon on the west.

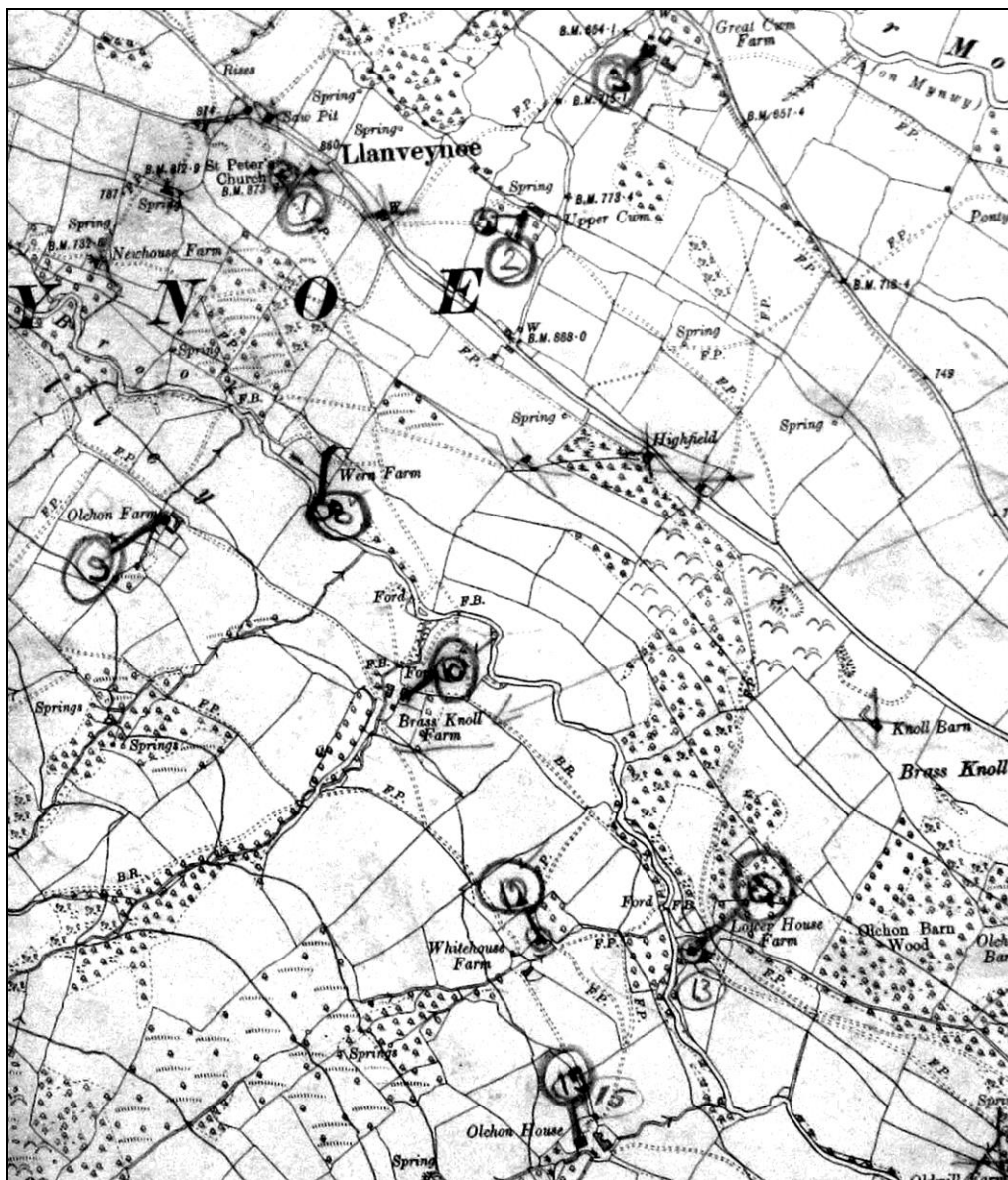


Figure 12. Part of the surveyors' OS map. Those ringed are some of the monuments recorded. (©DL&EH)

In all, 27 buildings were recorded; all except the church were farmhouses or barns. In the printed version there are three plates of farmhouses or barns, and two half-plates of farmhouse doors. In the surveyors' notebooks there are 31 photographs not including the church. There are only 19 monuments listed on the English Heritage website; a number of the buildings described as 'poor' or 'derelict' have gone, but not all.¹³

The church and one farmhouse (Upper Turnant, monument no. 20) were visited by Phillips and Bloe on 24 March 1927, apparently accompanied by the photographer CJB. All the other buildings were surveyed by Phillips in May 1927, no individual dates being given. The photographs for these are all (confusingly) by CJP, and were taken at two different times of the year, judging by the vegetation. They seem to have been taken from easily accessible viewpoints, e.g. the road or from a dungheap in a field adjacent to the garden, as parts of the buildings are sometimes obscured. Phillips's written surveys have abundant details on features inside and must have taken a week or two to compile, so it would seem that the photographer did not accompany him.

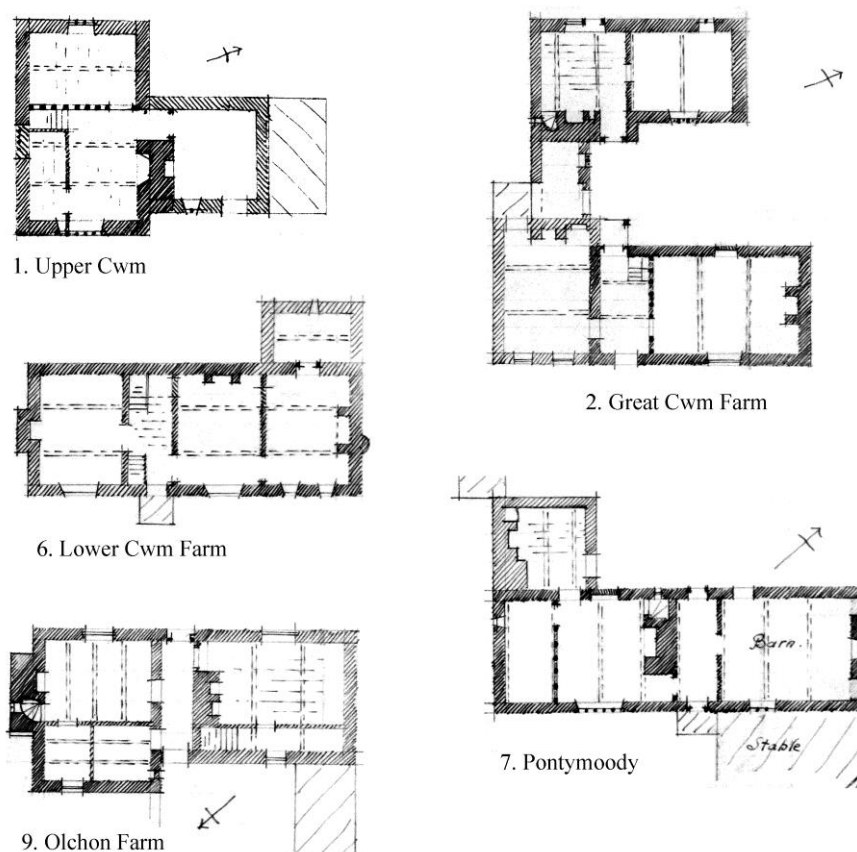
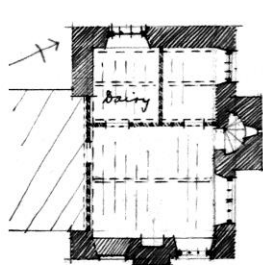
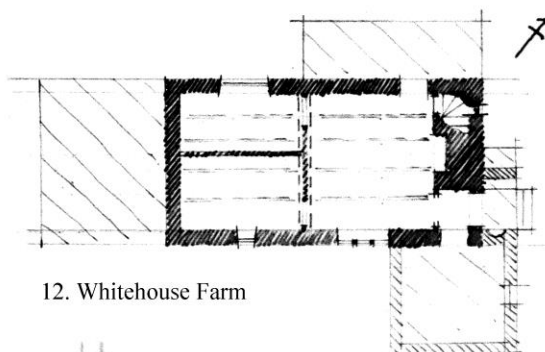


Figure 13. Llanveynoe, plans of farmhouses which were in good or fair condition. The numbers given with the plans are the monument numbers. (©DL&EH)

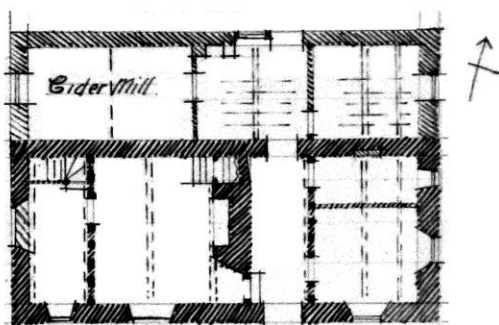
As some of the photographs of the farmhouses are poor, plans only have been included for those in fair to good condition, except for monument no. 13, Lower House Farm shown overleaf.



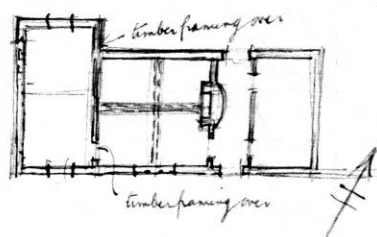
10. Brass Knoll Farm



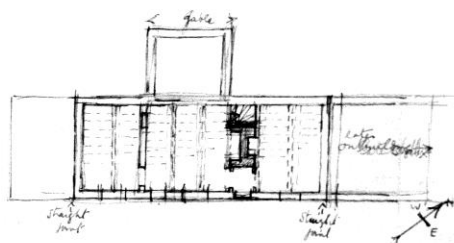
12. Whitehouse Farm



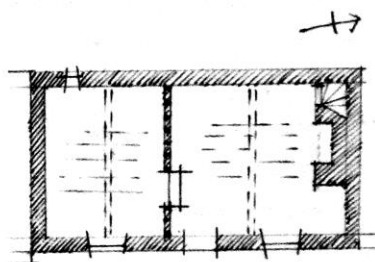
15. Olchon House



18. Lower Turnant Farm



20. Upper Turnant Farm



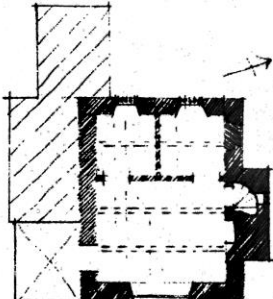
22. Charity Farm

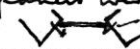
Figure 14. Llanveynoe, plans of farmhouses which were in good or fair condition. The numbers against the farm names are the monument numbers. (©DL&EH)

1. **Name and situation of Monument** (with owner's Name and Address). Lower House Farm
in Okeham Valley just over 3/4 mile S.S.E of Church.

2. **General appearance:** (a) No. of storeys. 2 attic
(b) Building materials. Rubble stone.
(c) Roofs. Stone slates.

3. **Historical development** (with dates and small sketch plan).
A 16th c. house. In modern times
additions have been built on against
S. side.



4. **Special features** (if any) Nearly all windows have
diamond mullions & during latter part of 17th c. small
glazed panels were inserted in some lights by pinning
in →  Nail pinning in light. with leads.

5. **Elevations:** (Beginning with the main front, and mentioning, in the following order:—(a) Walls;
(b) Gables; (c) Doors; (d) Windows; (e) Chimneys; (f) Rainwater heads and pipes.)

East Elev. Gabled. Attic window has square wood frame
(3 light) formerly had diamond mullions now missing

West Elev. Gabled. Exposed timbers. on ground floor a
two 5 light windows with square deep
wood frames & diamond mullions.
In several lights narrow glass
leaded panels (17th c) have been
inserted & 'corked' in. Above
windows on flagstone labels.

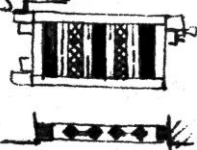


Figure 15. Llanvynoe, Lower House Farm (monument 13), survey by A. T. Phillips in May 1927. (©DL&EH)



Figure 16. View of Lower House Farm. (©DL&EH)

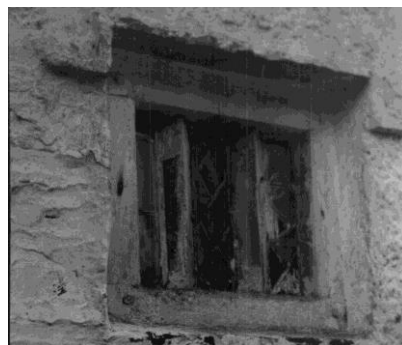


Figure 17. Early window. (©DL&EH)

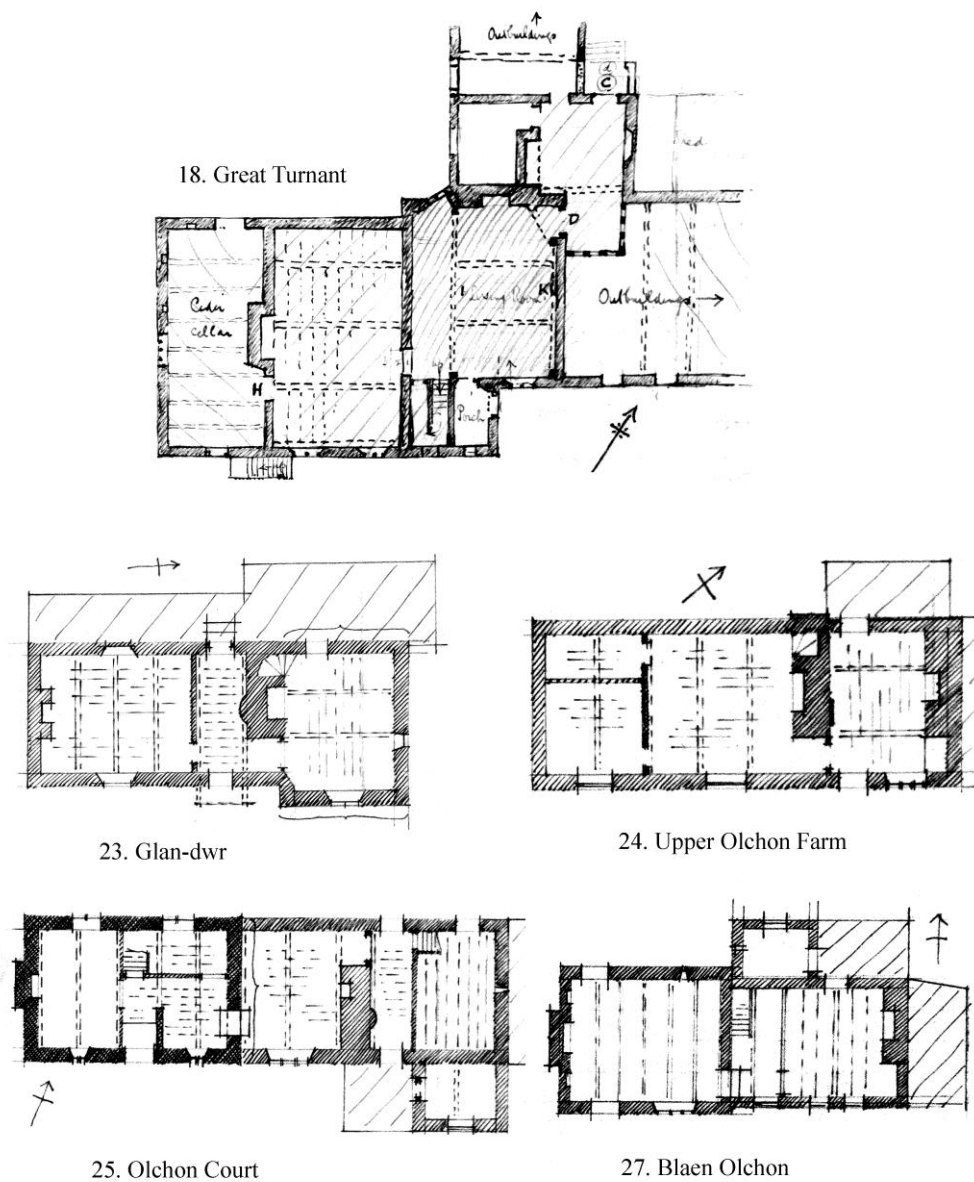
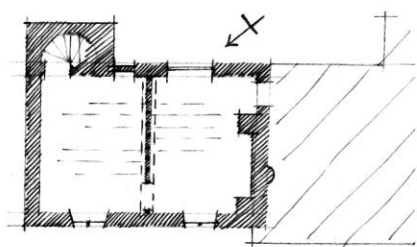
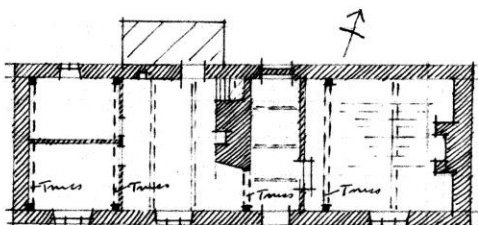


Figure 18. Llanveynoe, plans of farmhouses in good or fair condition. The numbers against each farmhouse name are the monument numbers. (©DL&EH)



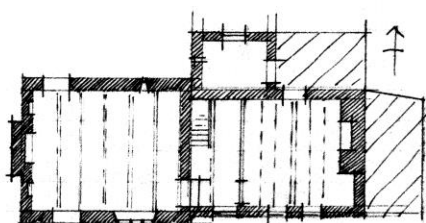
8. Wern Farm



11. Black Daren Farm



16. Derelict house near Daren Farm barn, possibly 15th century



26. Firs Farm



Figure 19. Llanveynoe, 'poor' or 'derelict' buildings. The numbers are monument numbers. (©DL&EH)

Barns have been omitted from this article generally; the most important is monument no. 16, Daren Farm barn, Plate 12 in *RCHME Herefordshire* Vol. I. This monument report includes the photo shown as no. 16 in Fig. 19 above.

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS FROM OTHER PARISHES**Difficulties of the surveyors**

Rahbula, Kipps and 'CJK' visited Mathon in the snow of early December 1930 and Rahbula and 'CJR' returned in early January 1931.



Figure 20. Barton Cottages, Mathon, surveyed by Rahbula on 9 December 1930. (©DL&EH)



Figure 21. Mathon, Cliffe's Arms Inn, surveyed by Rahbula on 7 January 1931. The car (VC2009) appears in another Mathon photograph, CJR 615. (©DL&EH)

Thatched houses

Of the sample, thatched buildings were photographed by the surveyors in the following parishes: Abbey Dore, Almeley, Bosbury, Brampton Bryan, Burrington, Byford, Canon Pyon, Coddington, Colwall, Cradley, Fownhope, Holme Lacy, Kings Caple, Letton, Lyonshall, Mathon, Sellack, Winforton and Yatton i.e. nineteen parishes. There may be others without photographs, but although this is noted on the survey documents, they are not so easily identified among hundreds of images. Of the 93 parishes for which we have photographs, many are far from complete, but even so it would seem that at least 25% of parishes have thatch.

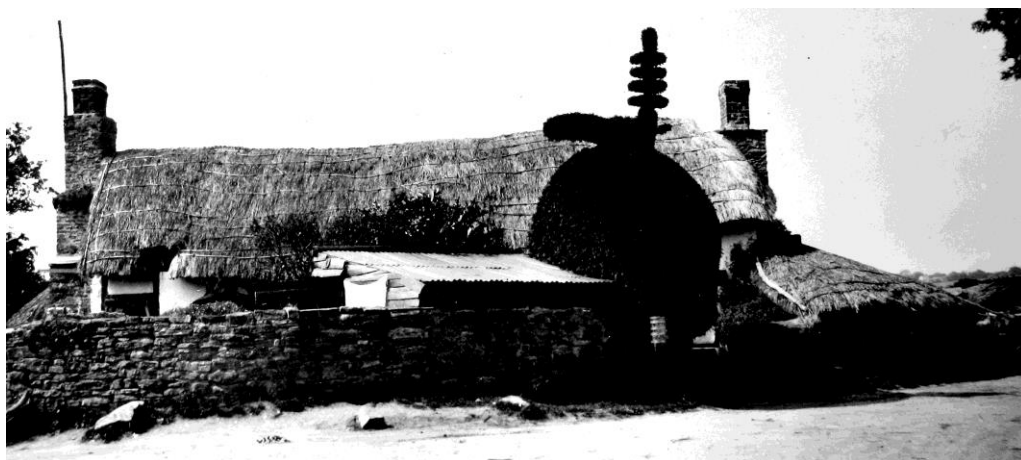


Figure 22. Yatton, The Post Office, surveyed by G. E. Chambers on 16 July 1929, photograph CJH 833. (©DL&EH)



Figure 23. Almeley, Upper Logaston, cottage surveyed by Rahbula on 8 November 1932. (©DL&EH)

Within the parishes with thatched buildings there is considerable variation in numbers; some parishes, particularly those in the east such as Bosbury, Cradley and Colwall, have a number of thatched houses. In some, the thatch seems to have been renewed relatively recently—possibly they belonged to large estates. The binding style varies little—an exception is that in Fig. 27.



Figure 24. Cradley, cottage surveyed by Rahbula, 18 January 1931, 320 yds N of the church. (©DL&EH)



Figure 25. Cradley, Lower Tanhouse, surveyed by Rahbula 29 January 1931, 'condemned, tenant evacuating.' (©DL&EH)



Figure 26. Coddington, cottage at Coddington Cross, surveyed by Rahbula 19 November 1930. (©DL&EH)



Figure 27. Bosbury, cottage near Dodd's Mill, surveyed by Kipps 21 October 1930, CJK 430. (©DL&EH)

People and Places



Figure 28. Bosbury, Hill Farm hearth and bread oven. Surveyed 23 October 1930 by Kipps. (©DL&EH)



Figure 29. Kington Rural, Hergest Croft kitchen. Surveyed by Rahbula 16 June 1933. (©DL&EH)



Figure 30. Lyonsall, house with shop near Maidenhood Inn, surveyed by Phillips in July 1933. (©DL&EH)



Figure 31. Fownhope, village shop (as now) and petrol station, surveyed by Bloe 2 October 1929. (©DL&EH)

Interested onlookers and a Ledbury traffic policeman with no traffic...

Figure 32. Cradley, Coomb Farm, surveyed by Kipps and Rahbula 19 February 1931. (©DL&EH)



Figure 33. Ledbury, in front of nos. 64 & 65, Bye St., survey date probably April 1930. (©DL&EH)



Figure 34. Brampton Bryan, cottage near church, survey date not photographed. (©DL&EH)



Figure 35. Ledbury, looking towards the Talbot Arms, survey date unknown. (©DL&EH)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article could not have been written without the generosity of English Heritage in allowing the reproduction of these photographs of the surveyors' notes, nor without the hours spent by David Lovelace in photographing them. The photographs (indicated by '©DL&EH') are his copyright, but cannot be reproduced elsewhere unless permission is given by English Heritage.

REFERENCES

¹ The full text can be found in the Royal Commission on Historical Monument's volume *Herefordshire South-west* (1931), hereafter *Herefordshire SW*. The Commissions for Scotland and Wales & Monmouthshire were set up at much the same time. Herefordshire was one of the earlier counties to be surveyed. The Survey for Hertfordshire was published in 1910; Buckinghamshire in 1912-3; Essex in 1916-23; London in 1924-30; Huntingdonshire in 1926;

² The photographs of the survey sheets taken so far are from 93 parishes widely spread throughout the county. They give a good geographical sample, but in many of these parishes survey sheets have been omitted so a complete picture is impossible.

³ Colour Plate 2.16 in this volume shows that for the centre of Wigmore parish.

⁴ The individual sheets for a monument in the surveyors' notes are not always numbered, though in this event the property usually has a name. There is sometimes a problem in towns identifying which property is shown in a given photograph.

⁵ This information is probably available in the RCHME archives, but is outside the scope of this article. The elegant plans from the printed volumes are sometimes stuck on sheets in the folders of the surveyors' reports. When this was done is a mystery, as they are attached to the hand-written sheets, though usually where there seems to be a convenient space at the end of the page.

⁶ From the 1901 census. The others are more difficult to trace.

⁷ He collaborated with M. R. James, who was one of the commissioners, in a volume on the buildings of Norfolk and Suffolk.

⁸ Some of the photographs may have been cropped or enhanced so that details can be made out. Where a survey date is given as 'unknown' it is because there are no photographs from the folder which gives the survey date(s).

⁹ The cairn was not identified by the RCHME surveyors. Reports on the excavations can be found in *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club (TWNFC)* (2009), pp. 161-2; *TWNFC* (2010) forthcoming.

¹⁰ *TWNFC* (2008), pp.73-98; *TWNFC* (2009), pp.65-88.

¹¹ The photograph of no. 6 is too blurred to use, but there is a plan.

¹² <http://bonline.english-heritage.org.uk/SearchForm.aspx> is the address of the search form where just the parish name can be entered.

¹³ The Herefordshire Council's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) records all the sites in the RCHME volumes, and notes where the building does not appear on more modern maps. The Commission's photographs and plans are therefore uniquely important. The old and current farm names do not tie up in all instances. There may have been parish boundary changes as well.