



**Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society
Archaeology Field Group**

**Report of Survey of Barns at the Former Bell Farm,
Buckley Barracks, Stanton St Quinton, Wilts.**

Report No. 167.0902



Eastern Elevation of South Barn (© Brian Clarke)

Surveyed 5th April 2008 under the direction of David Hughes (WBR) by the following members of the WANHS Archaeology Field Group: Lynn Amadio, Ian Branton, Jim Gunter, Robin Holley, David Rider, Tim Robey, Christina Staff and Brian Clarke.

April 2008

Building Recording of the South and North Barns at Buckley Barracks (formerly a part of Bell Farm, Hullavington).

The government purchased Bell Farm from Mr F. J. Huntley in 1936 and some of the farm buildings survive today surrounded by the military base. Two of the barns were subject to survey by the Archaeological Field Group of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society on 5th April 2008. The group was lead by David Hughes a skilled buildings recorder.

The two barns appear on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map and are rectangular in shape. Bell Farm is at this time recorded in a courtyard form. Extant today are the two barns, a smaller rectangular building thought to have been stabling and some high surrounding walls that formed the courtyard and which appear to have been the exterior walls of other farm buildings. The local landscape is flat and would have been suited to the production of grain crops. It is therefore surmised that these barns were built to store and process these crops.

One of the barns (for the purpose of the survey called South Barn) has been subject to a huge amount of graffiti; the other less so; much of the graffiti is in the form of initials some of which are in association with year dates. The building thought to have been stabling for horses has a list of horses names pencilled on to the lime wash. Another form of graffiti found on the barns is apotropaic marks in the form of daisy wheels and double Vs; these were made to ward off evil spirits; there are also a number of tally marks. The graffiti has been recorded by digital photography.

South Barn (Barn 1) (ST 911787 811690).

The five bay barn is constructed of local limestone with fine ashlar quoin stones under a stone tiled half-hipped roof. There were pitching holes at the north and south ends although one has since been blocked with stone, the other now contains a window. There are owl holes with perches on which the owl can alight (Figure 1). This rectangular barn has a porch in the central bay with large doors which are placed opposite each other in the east and west walls. There is a side entrance to the porch which has since been blocked with stone. There are also splayed ventilation holes (Title page and Figures 2-4).

The barn roof is supported by four oak tie beams separating five bays. The roof trusses are a simple A frame with a collar, no struts or posts and with pegged joints at the apex and collar (Figure 8). There are two sets of threaded purlins on each roof face but no wind braces. There are no visible carpenter's marks in this barn.

The threshing floor is made of 5cm thick oak boards, and whilst subject to repair most of it appears to be original. A board was raised with the permission of the correct authorities to investigate the construction method and to gather a sample of soil from beneath it for analysis. The investigation

revealed that the 5cm oak planking was rested on elm joists which were raised on brick piers. The deposit below the boards, which included chaff, was approximately 27cm in depth. Analysis has shown the chaff was from oats. The raised floor served a dual purpose, firstly to provide ventilation to prevent decay caused by moisture in the stored grain, and secondly to aid rodent prevention - cats and dogs could move freely beneath the floor (Figure 5).

The graffiti in this barn is considerable and consists of names, dates and initials some of which are carved with intricacy. There are also tally marks which are a feature of grain stores and apotropaic marks carved near the doorway, these are said to ward off evil spirits. Graffiti inside the barn dated 1793 appears to be the earliest, whilst others date to as late as 1980. However, on one of the quoins on the outside of the blocked door into the porch there is a possible date of 1701 (Figure 6).

An approximate date has been suggested for the South Barn taking the following into consideration:

The half-hipped roof is a feature of the early 18th century.

Bell Farm is located on the boundary between Corston and Stanton St Quinton parishes, distant from the village and surrounded by enclosure fields. Enclosure in Corston occurred in the late 17th century and before 1720.

It is suggested the barn was built in the early 18th century

North Barn (Barn 2) (ST 911818 811945).

This five bay barn is similar in construction to the South Barn but modified with the addition of rooms either side of the porch (Figures 9 & 10). However in this barn there are carpenter's marks visible in the oak constructed roof. Much less graffiti is visible and a possible reason for this is that this barn was used for storage due to its orientation. A cobbled stone ramp with the tracks of wheels is evident at one entrance to the barn (Figure 13). It is thought that it would have been less suited to threshing than the neighbouring South Barn which has east-west doors that would have favoured the prevailing south-westerly winds.

The North Barn is again of five bays with a very similar construction of walls, roof, porch and opposing doors to the South Barn. However there is no remaining evidence for a threshing floor that may have been in the barn.

The dating of this barn is similar to the South Barn but it is suggested to have been built slightly later.

Figure 1. Owl Hole & Perch in South Elevation of South Barn



Photo B Clarke 2008

Figure 2. South Barn West Elevation



Photo B Clarke 2008

Figure 3. South Barn South Elevation



Photo B Clarke 2008

Figure 4. South Barn North Elevation



Photo B Clarke 2008

Figure 5. Underneath Threshing Floor of South Barn



Photo B Clarke 2008

Figure 6. Graffiti on Quoin Outside Blocked Door into Porch

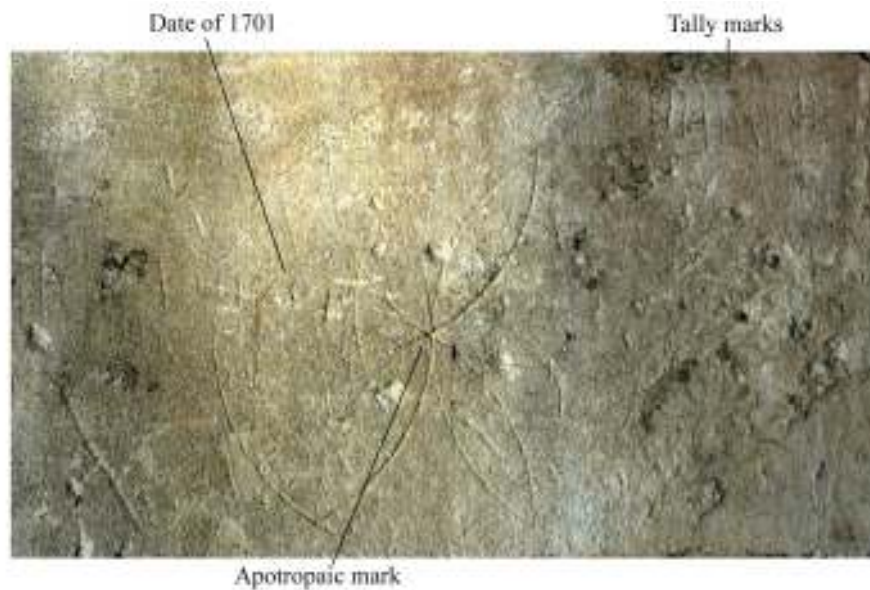


Photo B Clarke 2008

Figure 7. Plan of South Barn

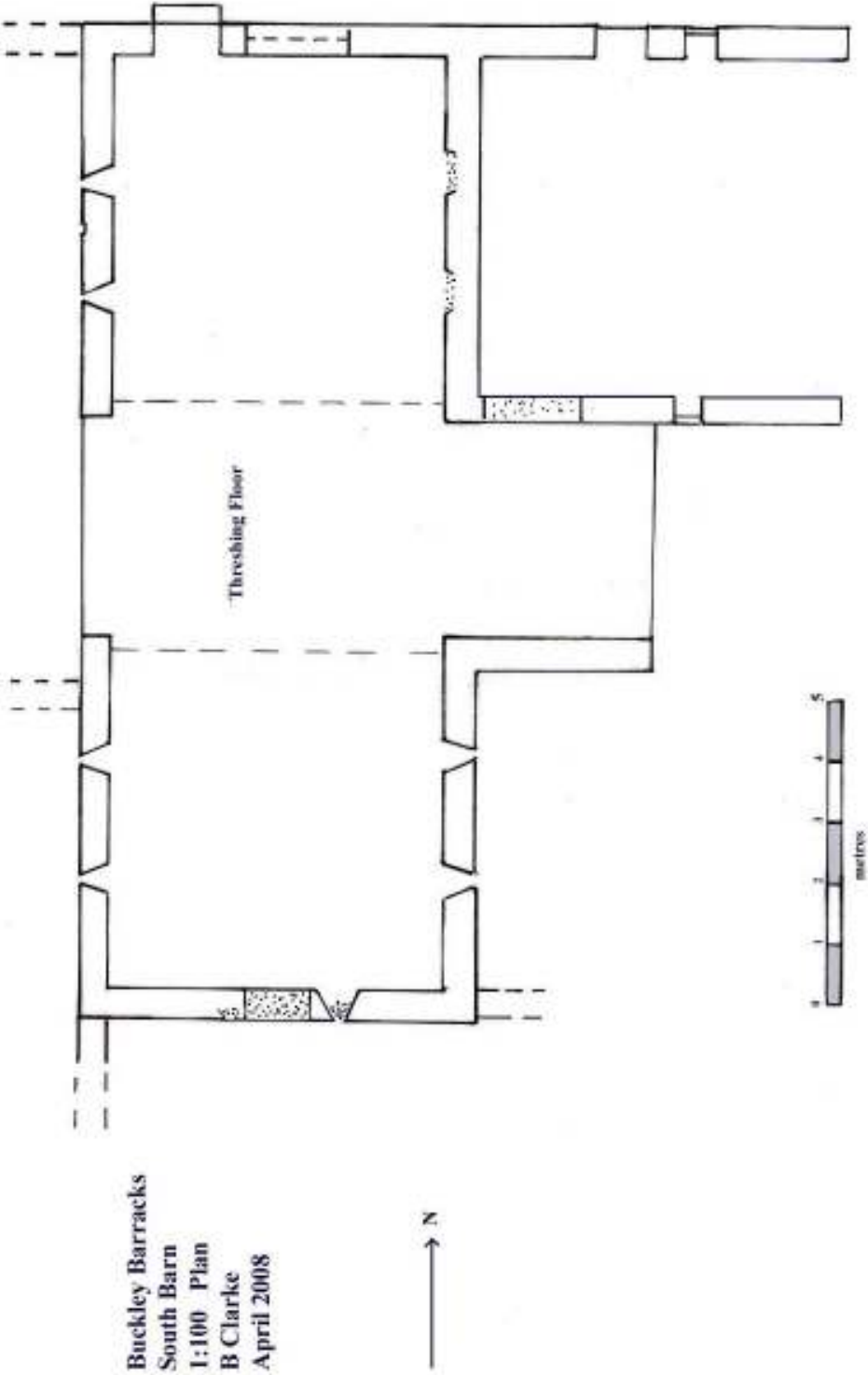


Figure 8. Cross Sections of South Barn

Buckley Barracks
South Barn
Cross sections
Scale 1:20
B Clarke
April 2008

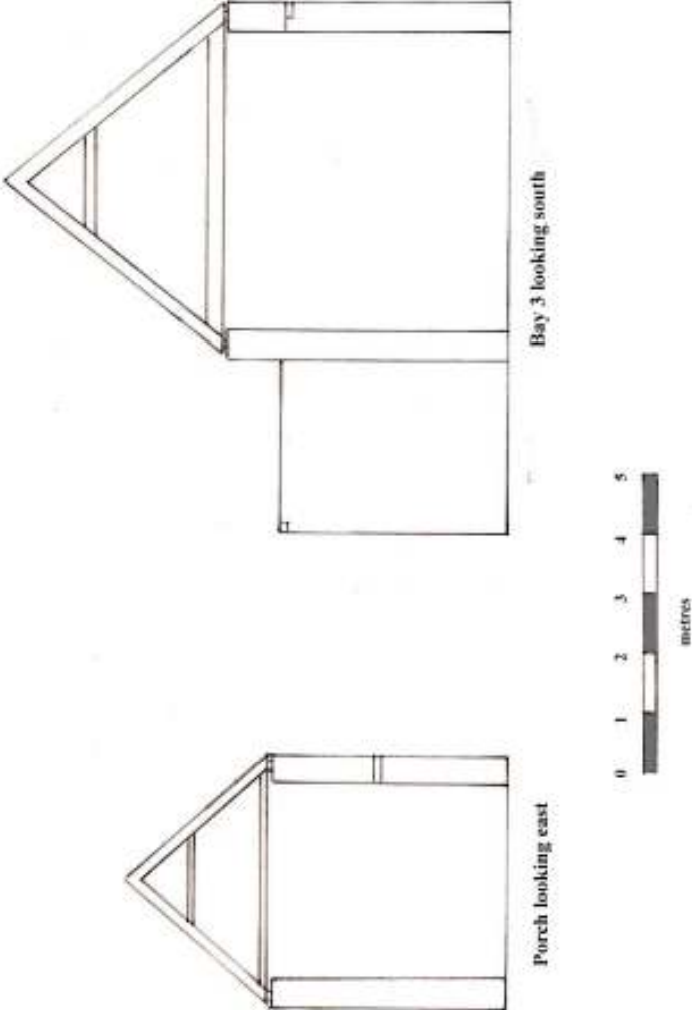


Figure 9. Plan of North Barn

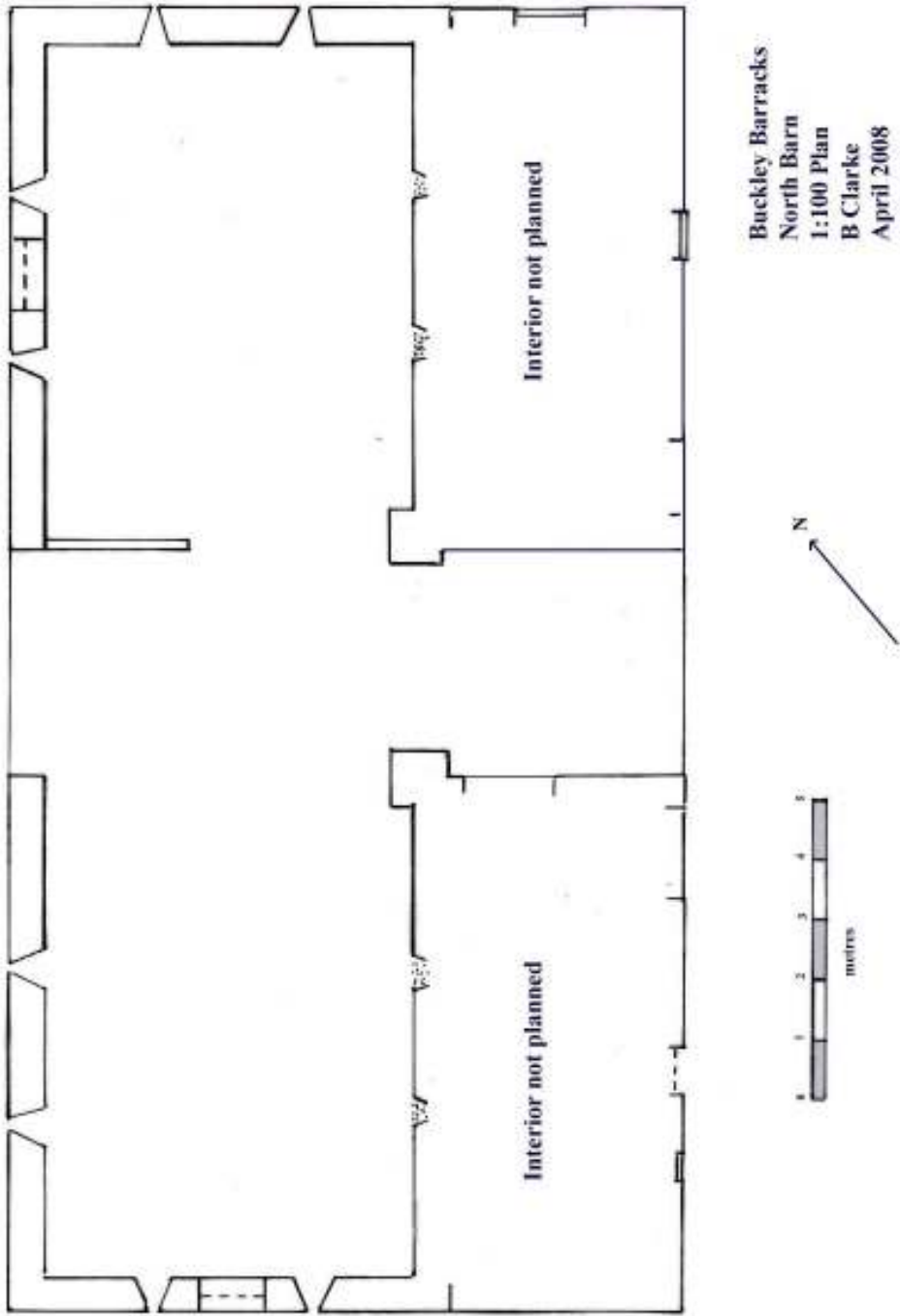


Figure 10. South Elevation of North Barn



Photo L Amadio 2008

Figure 11 North Elevation of North Barn



Photo L Amadio 2008

Figure 12. West Elevation of North Barn



Photo L Amadio 2008

Figure 13. South Door and Ramp North Barn



Photo L Amadio 2008

Figure 14. Graffiti Inside South Barn

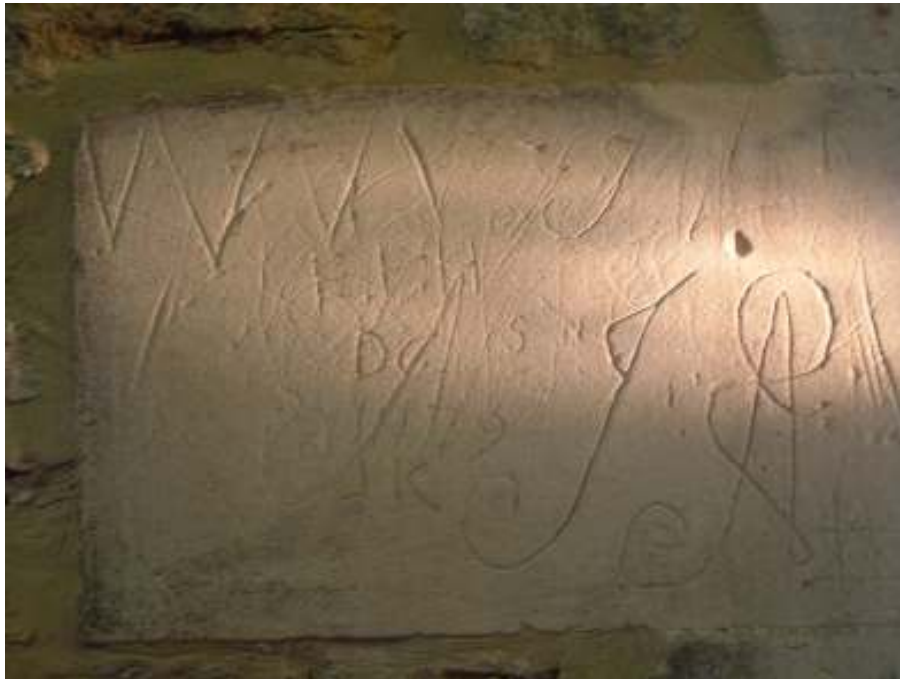


Photo T Robey 2008

Figure 15 Graffiti Inside South Barn



Photo T Robey 2008