

## Synopsis Wallingford Bypass Watching brief

All topsoil stripping was monitored and the exposed areas were fieldwalked on four transects along the route of the road. Finds were located with reference to the Chainage Points on the posts marking out the route of the road. The stripping was generally to a depth of 0.10-0.15 m and much overburden was left which meant that archaeological features were obscured if they were present.

A scatter of struck flints was located at the foot of Ice Hill but they were lying on colluvial deposits which were observed in trenches and the augered postholes cut by the contractors. The flints were in a deep deposit of old ploughsoil containing modern finds and presumably is hillwash. The finds from the rest of the route suggest that the soils revealed by the stripping are old ploughsoils with medieval and more recent sherds. Fieldwalking in 5 m grid squares where flints had been located did not reveal any flint concentrations. An area 50 m long and 20 m wide was walked where 3 flints were found only 2 extra pieces were recovered.

The Roman and Bronze Age sites on Bradfords Brook hill were located by fieldwalking. Approximately 25 sherds of pottery were recovered. The contractors' topsoil stripping had left 0.05 m of overburden on the area. Hand cleaning did not reveal any features. A 2.5 m strip along the N side of the carriageway was cleaned by JCB to locate the features. Where features were observed approximately half the carriageway was stripped to enable archaeological examination. Ten postholes, two parallel gullies and a pit cluster were in the Bronze Age area. The Roman site consisted of two ditches forming an enclosure but no discrete features were found. The fill of one of the ditches, the larger of the two, had a charcoal rich fill and many sherds of pottery. The features were sampled by hand, planned recorded and their sections were drawn. Environmental samples were taken. Bradfords Brook was diverted in order to construct a bridge the earthmoving was monitored but no archaeological deposits were observed in the gravel to the N of the chalk hill. Both the cut through the hill near Bradfords Brook and the cut to the S of Britwell were monitored but no archaeological deposits were seen.

The type of piles used to construct the bridge are compacted piles rather than augered piles; no archaeological material is brought to the surface. The bridge abutments on either bank are 10 m x 3 m and 1 m deep. These cut into the river bank. This work was observed but no archaeological material was noted.

The bank at right angles to Grims Ditch was cut through by the contractors. The section was recorded and finds recovered which date the bank to the late 19th-century.

The drainage channels along the road are deep drains approximately 2 m deep and 1 m wide. The pipes are inserted

while sheet piles hold the trench sides. The trench is almost immediately back filled. The potential for archaeological examination is limited. The sections are examined when possible and the excavated spoil monitored for finds.

The trench dug for the underpass was monitored during excavation, to an initial depth of 1.5 m, and the sections cleaned. No archaeological material or features were seen (apart from the 19th century ditch). The buried soils beneath the 19th century bank were apparently sterile. The E part of this trench was covered by 1992 evaluation trench 1.