

Chapter 1: Introduction

by Andrew Mudd, Alan Lupton and Simon Mortimer

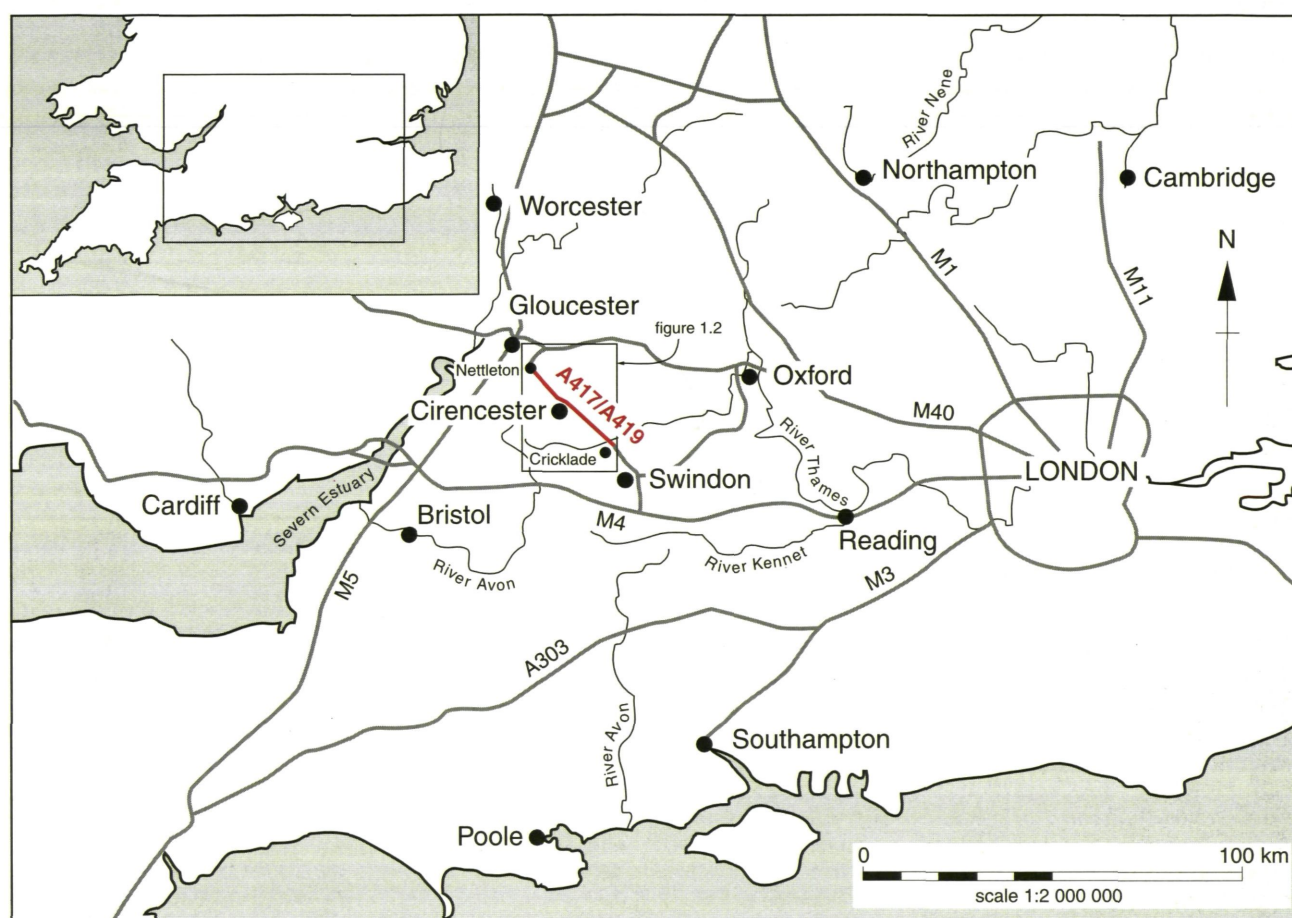


Figure 1.1 Project location

PROJECT LOCATION

The archaeological work, which is the subject of this report, was undertaken in advance of and during the construction of the A419/A417 Trunk Road Improvement between Swindon and Gloucester in south-western England (Fig. 1.1). The stretch of new road ran for approximately 25 km between Nettleton in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds (SO948136) and Cricklade (Wiltshire) on the Thames (SU102944). It closely followed the line of the existing A417 and A419, formerly Ermin Street, with the addition of bypasses around Cirencester and Stratton and the village of Latton (Fig. 1.2).

On the northern section of the route the road joined the existing A417 at a new roundabout just south of Birdlip Quarry (Fig. 1.3). The new road formed a second carriageway, added to the line of the existing road, running south-east as far as Daglingworth Quarry. From here the Cirencester and Stratton Bypass ran across Bagendon Downs south of Peewits Hill,

crossing the Churn Valley on a viaduct near Trinity Farm. The Bypass then ran across Baunton Downs, through Hare Bushes plantation and under the Burford Road (A429) before passing east of the village of Preston. It linked with the A419 south of Cirencester at Driffild Crossroads and followed the existing road to a junction with Spine Road south-east of Fosse Farm. From here the Latton section swept behind Latton Creamery and Street Farm, rejoining the A419 south of Latton village. The final section took it to a new junction with the Marston Meysey road near Weavers Bridge where it joined the existing Cricklade Bypass.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

In broad terms the area traversed by the road scheme can be divided into two topographic zones; the Cotswolds, forming a zone of upland Jurassic limestone, and the Upper Thames Valley which is a

lowland area of river gravels and alluvial pockets. The intermediate zone around Cirencester, roughly between the White Way and Driffield, has a more complex geology of limestones and clays of the Forest Marble and Cornbrash Series (Figs 1.4–5).

The northern section of the route between Birdlip Quarry and the Churn Valley crosses limestone of the Great Oolite series. The route gradually descends from about 270 m (885 ft) above sea level at Birdlip Quarry to about 150 m (490 ft) near Exhibition Barn (Fig. 1.5), although the highest section of the route is along Gloucester Beeches (280 m, 915 ft). The geology is characterised by outcrops of the underlying Fuller's Earth in many of the valleys, an impermeable clay which forms a spring line, and the upper valleys are therefore relatively well-watered.

South of the White Way, about as far as Witpit Lane, the underlying geology is Forest Marble, which consists of weakly structured limestone, bedded with clays, sands and silts. The underlying Great Oolite outcrops near Burford Road have been the object of extensive quarrying. South of Witpit Lane a thin band of hard Cornbrash limestone, overlying the Forest Marble, predominates as far as Fosse Farm. Here there is a small outcrop of Oxford Clay, but in the Latton section the underlying geology is First Terrace river gravels which form a very flat topography, descending from about 84 m OD to 80 m OD. Floodplain alluvium is found closer to the rivers Churn and Thames south of Weavers Bridge.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The archaeological work carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit was the third stage of a programme of archaeological investigation along the road corridor. The eventual DBFO scheme was developed by linking together three previous road schemes; the North of Stratton to Nettleton Improvement (NOSNI), the Cirencester and Stratton Bypass and the Latton Bypass. The initial desk-based assessments (Stage 1) and field evaluations (Stage 2) for each of these sections were undertaken as separate projects and to slightly different specifications, principally by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust and Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service, with some preliminary work also undertaken by Thamesdown Archaeological Unit. From the results of these investigations a scheme-wide Outline Project Design was formulated, constituting the basis of the Stage 3 archaeological mitigation, the results of which form the subject of this report.

Stage 1 – Desk-top assessment

The initial phase of investigation in the NOSNI section comprised a desk-based survey of the Preferred Route for the new road commissioned by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission and undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GCCAS) in 1988. This was prompted by a request from Jan Wills, County

Archaeologist for Gloucestershire, for funding to undertake a preliminary study of the new road. The assessment of the Cirencester and Stratton Bypass was carried out by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) in 1990 for WSP Civils (formerly Frank Graham Consulting Engineers), agents for the Department of Transport. Though undertaken before detailed information on the proposed route was available, these surveys collated published and unpublished documentary material and aerial photographs, together with the results of fieldwalking of arable land and a walkover survey of non-arable land, to identify a number of areas of potential archaeological interest (Russett 1989a and b; CAT 1990a).

Archaeological investigation of the route of the Latton Bypass commenced with a field evaluation conducted by Thamesdown Archaeological Unit for the Department of Transport on the cropmark focus of Scheduled Ancient Monument 899 (Digby 1988), although some evaluation of the area had already been undertaken in advance of the construction of a water pipeline between Latton and Blunsdon (Digby 1977; 1987). A combination of fieldwalking, geophysical survey and limited excavation demonstrated the monument to be principally of Roman date, with a concentration of occupation debris in the north-east quarter of the scheduled area. As a result of this investigation, and following discussion with English Heritage, the route was moved 30 m to the south-west in order to protect this area.

A desk-top assessment of the Latton area was then commissioned from CAT by WSP Civils (formerly Frank Graham Consulting Engineers) on behalf of the Highways Agency (CAT 1990b). The consultation of cartographic sources, sites and monuments records and aerial photographs together with field visits led to the identification of 17 areas of archaeological potential. In the initial proposal the Latton bypass did not extend to the Marston Meysey junction. Once the decision had been made to extend the route, an additional desk-based assessment was undertaken (CAT 1991c).

Stage 2a - Field evaluation

Following the Stage 1 assessment, an intensive field survey of the preferred route for the NOSNI section was undertaken by GCCAS (GCC 1990). This survey prospected for additional sites of archaeological interest by systematic surface collection, aerial survey and the consultation of aerial photographs taken since the Stage 1 survey. Identified sites were further evaluated by geophysical survey and trial excavation. This process highlighted a number of sites which required more detailed investigation before road construction.

The desk-top assessment of the Cirencester and Stratton section identified 24 areas of archaeological potential along the preferred route (CAT 1990a). Geophysical survey of these areas was followed in 1991 by evaluation trenching and test-pitting (CAT 1991a). During the Public Inquiry into the

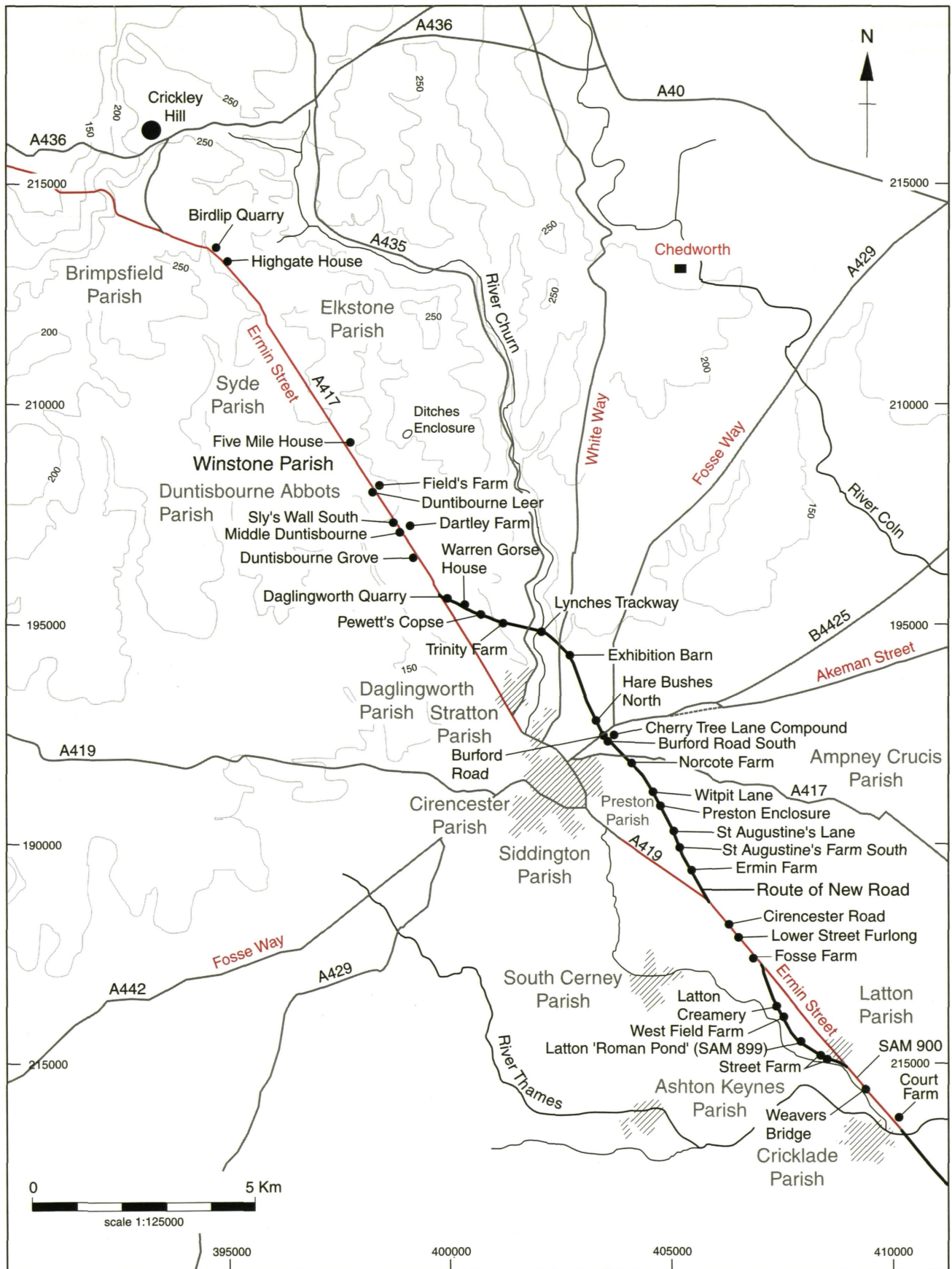


Figure 1.2 Map of the DBFO route showing the locations of the excavation sites.

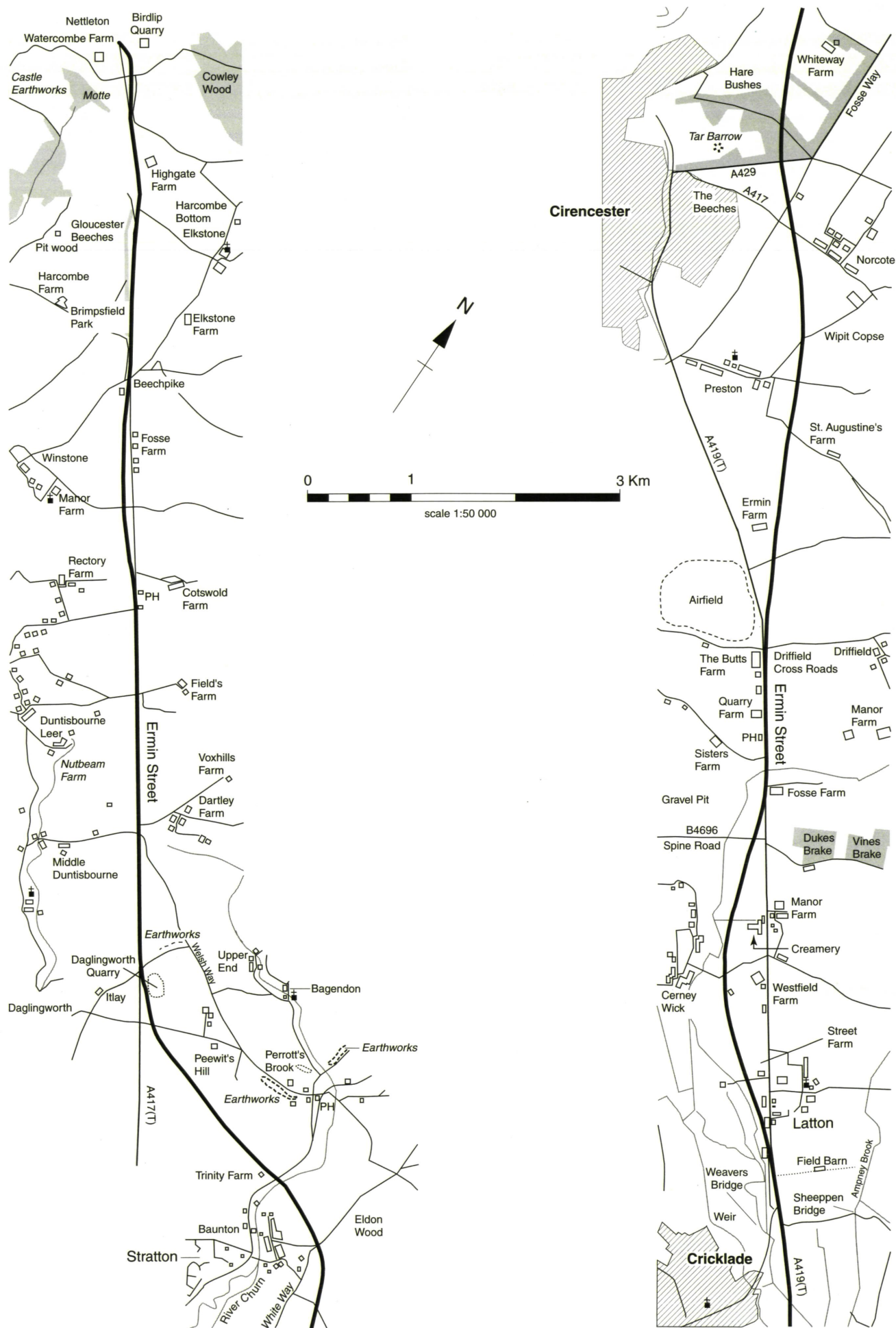


Figure 1.3 Detailed map of DBFO route.

Preferred Route, additional geophysical survey was undertaken in two areas of archaeological potential where access had been previously denied. Owing to access restrictions, only one of these areas was subsequently investigated by evaluation trenching (CAT 1993).

Stage 2 in the Latton area comprised 17 evaluation trenches, targeted on the areas of potential identified in the desk-top assessment, together with monitoring 42 ground investigation trial pits (CAT 1991b). An evaluation of the section to the Marston Meysey junction was completed later (CAT 1994a).

Stage 2b - Project brief

Following the production of the three separate Stage 2 assessment reports, both GCCAS and CAT were commissioned by WSP Civils (formerly Frank Graham Consulting Engineers) on behalf of the Highways Agency to produce Outline Project Designs for all three schemes. The project design for the NOSNI section was produced by GCCAS (GCC 1994) while CAT produced the project designs for the Cirencester and Stratton and Latton sections (1994b and c). These were combined into one document referred to as DBFO Invitation to Tender - Volume 6 Construction Requirements.

The Outline Project Designs summarised the sites of archaeological interest and defined a programme of archaeological works to mitigate the effects of the road construction, justified where necessary with reference to current archaeological guidelines. In addition to defining the requirements of the Stage 3 mitigation on a site-specific basis, the Outline Project Designs included a more general Archaeological Requirements section defining the non-site specific requirements of the archaeological work.

The Outline Project Designs formed the 'Brief' in response to which tenders were prepared. It was also incumbent upon the successful tenderer to produce a more detailed specification, otherwise known to the Oxford Archaeological Unit as a 'Written Scheme of Investigation' (WSI), explaining how the requirements of each site's project design would be discharged in the field (OAU 1996). This process was subjected to a certification procedure which required the work to be undertaken and completed according to the terms of the contract. The archaeology was therefore integrated into the development not only in terms of its time scale, but also as a contractually bound core construction requirement. The process was monitored by the Archaeological Agent appointed by the Highways Agency.

Stage 3 - Archaeological mitigation

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was awarded the third stage of archaeological works, under contract to the Road Management Group (RMG) consortium through Chris Blandford Associates (CBA), their environmental consultants.

Whereas the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments had treated the three component sections of the overall scheme as separate entities, the Stage 3 mitigation dealt with the archaeological aspects of the development as a scheme-wide project.

A scheme of works was devised that provided the best correlation between the archaeological and construction requirements of the road. A total of 35 sites were the subject of further archaeological investigation. The mitigation strategies for these sites ranged from preservation *in situ* to full excavation and included several levels of sampling defined by the terms sample excavation, selective sample excavation, strip and record and targeted watching brief. There was also the provision for further evaluation of areas of potential not covered by the Stage 2 assessments. The individual strategies applied to each site are summarised in Table 1.1. In addition, OAU was to carry out a scheme-wide watching brief on all the remaining areas.

Initially, each site was referred to by the paragraph number used in the original brief. It soon became clear, however, that this system was too clumsy for everyday use and an eponymous system of site names and codes was adopted. The complete list of sites is shown in Table 1.1. The name of the parish precedes the name of the site in the overall site code.

A number of significant discoveries were made during the watching brief. Two of the sites, Preston Enclosure and Ermin Farm, were of sufficient importance to merit the designation of a site name and code (PRENC 96 and PREM 96). Off-site works, most notably the construction of the main compound at Cherry Tree Lane, were also monitored and, in this instance, resulted in the discovery of sufficient archaeology to merit a site name and code (CIRCL 96).

Two additional evaluations were undertaken (Dartley Farm and Daglingworth Quarry). Only the latter discovered any significant archaeology in the form of a stone-lined dewpond. Following the submission of a specification for its further investigation, the part within the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) boundary was excavated.

In most cases the archaeological mitigation was undertaken to the programme defined in the Brief. However, in some instances, most notably at Birdlip Quarry, the archaeological programme was extended to cover additional work which was not originally anticipated.

Fieldwork on the project started in February 1996 and was almost completed by February 1997 (Fig. 1.6), leaving a number of sections through Ermin Street to be completed later in 1997.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological background to the project was researched from primary and secondary sources in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments (Russett 1989a and b; GCC 1990; CAT 1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b). Countywide archaeological syntheses are also

Table 1.1 Individual site mitigation strategies

OAU Site Name	OAU Code	Mitigation Strategy	Date
NOSNI			
Birdlip Quarry	COWBQ 96	Preservation <i>in situ</i> /Excavation	Early-middle Neolithic, Roman
Highgate House	COHH 96	Preservation <i>in situ</i> /Excavation	Middle Iron Age
Five Mile House	DAFMH 96	Excavation	Post-medieval
Duntisbourne Leer	DADL 96	Excavation	Early prehistoric
Field's Farm	DAFF 96	Excavation	Roman
Sly's Wall South	DRSWS 96	Excavation	Roman, post-medieval
Middle Duntisbourne	DAMD 96	Excavation	Early Neolithic, late Iron Age
Dartley Farm	DRDFM 96	Excavation	No archaeological features
Duntisbourne Grove	DRDG 96	Excavation	Early-middle Neolithic, late Iron Age
Daglingworth Quarry	DAGQ 96	Evaluation/Excavation	Post-medieval
Ermin Street Sections	ERMIN 96	Excavation of 15 Transects	Roman, medieval, post-medieval
Cirencester and Stratton Bypass			
Warren Gorse House	DAGWGH 96	Strip and record	Undated walls
Pewet's Copse	BAPC 96	Strip and record	Putative trackway, undated
Trinity Farm	BAGTF 96	Strip and record	?Mesolithic, late Neolithic, early Bronze age
Lynches Trackway	BAULT 96	Excavation	Middle Iron Age
Exhibition Barn	BAUEXB 96	Strip and record	Roman
Hare Bushes North	BAUHBN 96	Strip and record	Early-middle Neolithic
Burford Road	CIBFRD 96	Excavation	Later prehistoric
Cherry Tree Lane Compound	CIRCL 96	Off-Site work - Strip and record	Mesolithic, later prehistoric
Burford Road South	CIBRS 96	Strip and record	Later prehistoric
Norcote Farm	PRNOF 96	Excavation	Neolithic, later prehistoric, Roman
Witpit Lane	PRWPL 96	Strip and record	Medieval
Preston Enclosure	PRENC 96	Excavation	Middle Iron Age
St. Augustine's Lane	PRSAL 96	Excavation	Middle Iron Age
St. Augustine's Farm South	PRSTAS 96	Excavation/Strip and record	Neolithic, late Neolithic-early Bronze Age
Ermin Farm	PREM 96	WB discovery - Strip and record	Middle Iron Age
Latton Bypass			
Cirencester Road	LADRCI 96	Sample Excavation and WB	Roman ?road surface, medieval plough furrow, post-medieval quarry pit
Lower Street Furlong	DRLF 96	Excavation	Later prehistoric
Fosse Farm	LAFOS 96	Sample Excavation	Plough furrows, undated
Latton Creamery	LAC 96	Sample Excavation	Ditch, undated
Westfield Farm	LAWF 96	Sample Excavation	Roman
Latton 'Roman Pond'	LARP 96	Excavation	Prehistoric, late Bronze Age, medieval
Street Farm	LATST 96	Sample Excavation/ Selective Sample Excavation	Medieval, post-medieval
Court Farm	LACFM 96	Sample Excavation	Roman
Weavers Bridge	LAWBR 96	Excavation	Roman

available, in particular *Iron Age and Romano-British Monuments in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds* (RCHME 1976) *Archaeology in Gloucestershire* (Saville 1984c), *Prehistoric Gloucestershire* (Darvill 1987) and *Roman Gloucestershire* (McWhirr 1986b). More locally, the archaeology of the environs of Cirencester has been assessed in *Cirencester: Town and Landscape* (Darvill and Gerrard 1994). These published and unpublished sources form the basis of the following brief summary.

Mesolithic

Over 40 Mesolithic sites are known in Gloucestershire, mostly concentrated in the Cotswolds on the higher ground overlooking the Severn Vale (CAT 1991a, 119–120). These are known exclusively from flint scatters. Mesolithic flint artefacts have been recorded in the parishes of Cowley, Elkstone, Brimpsfield, Syde, Duntisbourne Abbots and Bagendon in the vicinity of

the road corridor (GCC 1990, 2). Within the study area, flints of probable late Mesolithic date were the earliest remains discovered, and covered an area of about 100 m² on land just south of the London Road near Norcote Farm, Preston (SP 041021). Surface collection in this field augmented an earlier assemblage recovered by Mr S F Coombs from the same area (CAT 1990a, 19–20). This site is unusual in its relatively low-lying location on the Cotswold dipslope but plough-zone material generally offers limited potential for understanding the nature of the occupation and the economic exploitation of the landscape. Very little Mesolithic archaeology is known from the southern part of the route. A few, possibly Mesolithic, flints were recovered from evaluation in the Creamery Field, north-east of Cerney Wick, and Beggars Field, east of Cerney Wick (CAT 1991b, 69).

Neolithic

Neolithic sites and findspots are not uncommon in the Cotswold uplands of Gloucestershire. Causewayed enclosures are known at Crickley Hill and Peak Camp, both on the Cotswold scarp edge, not far from Birdlip. Funerary monuments are more widespread but are confined to the uplands, generally above 120 m (Darvill 1987, fig. on page 41 and 49–62) and include chambered long barrows in Brimpsfield, Duntisbourne Abbots and Duntisbourne Rouse, close to the road corridor (GCC 1990, 2). In this region, as elsewhere, there is a problem identifying non-monumental sites. Evidence of settlement in the form of scatters of flint artefacts is also concentrated in the uplands with only rare finds on the lower ground and in the valleys, at least until the late Neolithic (Darvill 1987, 46). There is, however, some evidence for Neolithic activity on the lower ground within the road corridor. A scatter of Neolithic/Bronze Age flint came from the field north of Hare Bushes, Baunton, (SP 03400325), which appears to be part of a wider spread of flint to the west (CAT 1991a, 55–6). Surface finds of flint also came from land east of the White Way in the same parish (CAT 1991a, 53–4). In the Thames Valley an oval enclosure south-west of Westfield Farm, Latton, (Wilts. SMR SU09NE621) was provisionally dated to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (CAT 1991b, 44–5). There is a similar enclosure south-east of Latton (Wilts. SMR SU09NE600) which lies within Scheduled Ancient Monument 900. A Neolithic pit (Wilts. SMR SU09NE100) was found in the same field.

Bronze Age

As with the preceding period, settlements are rare in Gloucestershire, although the widespread distribution of round barrows and ring ditches suggests that occupation was extensive both in the Cotswolds and in the Thames Valley (Darvill 1987, 95–114). Barrows and ring ditches occur mostly in a dispersed pattern, and more rarely in clusters. A group of ring ditches lies east of the village of Preston, where an

adjoining pair (Glos. SMR 3072) fell within the road corridor at St Augustine's Farm South. Two larger ones lie nearby (Glos. SMR 3068 and 3069), possibly aligned on an ill-defined feature which has been interpreted (somewhat dubiously) as a polygonal enclosure (Glos. SMR 3067; RCHME 1976, 95). Further south, two cropmark ring ditches either side of Harnhill Lane (Glos. SMR 2388a and 2390) were evaluated and later taken out of the development corridor. There are many other ring ditches close to the road corridor, but not forming such close groups. A Bronze Age flint scatter was also identified within the road corridor south of Norcote Farm, Preston, but appeared to lack associated features (CAT 1991a, 73–4).

Iron Age

The Iron Age in Gloucestershire is identified mainly by its hillforts which tend to lie on the high ground of the Cotswolds. Other settlements are known, but except in the east of the county in the Thames Valley, they are relatively scarce compared with other regions of the country such as Wessex and the Upper Thames in Oxfordshire. Excavations have also been on a small scale and the sites are not generally well-defined. At the evaluation stage of the current project only one early to middle Iron Age site (Highgate House, Cowley) was identified in the northern section of the route, and none was found in the Cirencester area (CAT 1991a, 127). In the Thames Valley a sub-rectangular enclosure within the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Latton (Wilts. SMR SU09NE201) was found to be Iron Age and Iron Age pottery came from other evaluation trenches in this area (CAT 1991b, 74–75). The late Iron Age in the region is particularly notable for the high-status dyke complex at Bagendon. This is widely regarded as the centre of the Dobunnian tribal polity, although its precise nature and date are controversial and it appears to have had importance in the Roman period. The evaluation discovered no material associated with this complex north or east of Cirencester, but to the north-west two late Iron Age/early Roman enclosures were identified at Middle Duntisbourne and Duntisbourne Grove. South of Cirencester, the relationship between the Iron Age and Roman cropmark settlements at Latton (Scheduled Ancient Monument 899) is unclear, but in the Upper Thames region settlements (such as Claydon Pike, Fairford and those in the Ashton Keynes area) often show a continuity of location from the late Iron Age through to the early Roman period (CAT 1991b, 76–77).

Roman

Roman activity in the Cirencester region was intense and widespread. Cirencester was the site of a military fort and later a *civitas* capital, *Corinium Dobunorum*, and there is some evidence that it became a provincial capital in the 4th century (Holbrook 1994). Settlements of high and low status are known within the immediate environs of the town and further afield. Ermin Street (now largely followed by the A417 to the

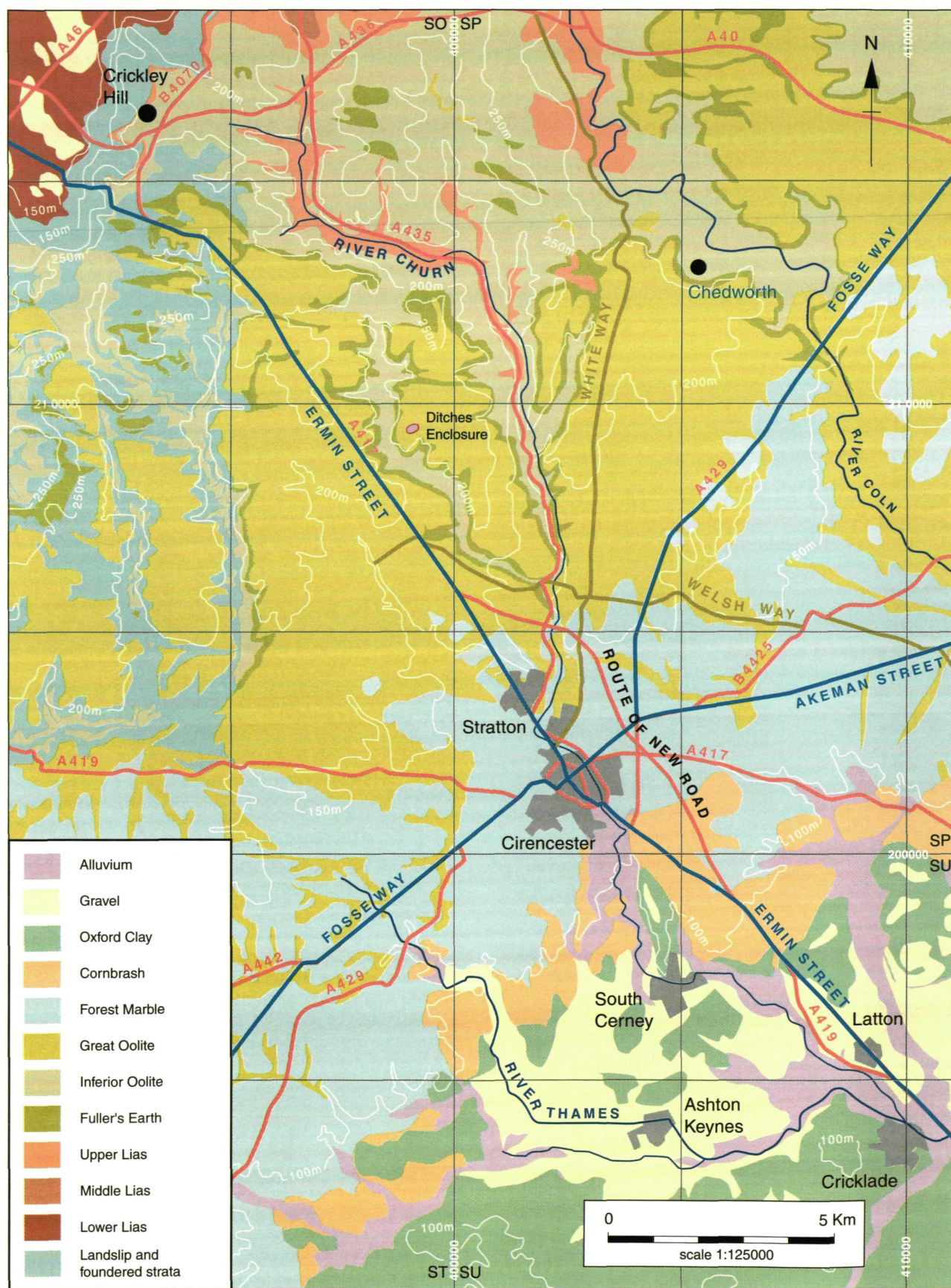


Figure 1.4 Geology. (Source: Geological Survey of England and Wales sheets 235 and 252).

north of Cirencester and the A419 to the south) was constructed shortly after the conquest, linking the forts at Kingsholm (Gloucester) and Leaholme (Cirencester) with the conquered territory to the east. The Fosse Way and Akeman Street also converge on the town, and there is a case to be made for the White Way, which runs towards the villa at Chedworth, being of Roman or earlier origin (Darvill and Holbrook 1994, 51–3).

The desk-top assessment and field survey produced surprisingly little evidence for Romano-British activity within the survey area. A settlement was identified at Birdlip Quarry, Cowley, at the northern end of the route, and a site of less certain status was found at Weavers Bridge near Cricklade at the southern end of the route. A roadside funerary monument, several trackways and quarry pits were also recognised at Field's Farm, Duntisbourne Abbots. Settlements in the vicinity of the road scheme, but lying outside the development corridor include those at Birdlip Bypass (Darvill 1984b), Pit Wood, Syde (RCHME 1976, 116), Field's Farm (op. cit., 48), Duntisbourne Leer (ibid.), Stancombe, Duntisbourne Rouse (op. cit., 49), Cave Close, Daglingworth (op. cit., 41), Baunton Downs (op. cit., 13), Witpit Copse, Preston (Glos. SMR 3176), Worms Farm, Siddington (RCHME 1976, 102), and Field Barn, Latton (Wilts SMR SU09NE303). The extensive settlement west of Latton (Scheduled Ancient Monument 899) lay directly on the proposed line of the new road but was largely avoided by design modifications to the route.

Early medieval

Little is known about the area in the early medieval period. In rural areas a model of continuity from Roman to medieval estates has been longstanding (Gerrard 1994a, 95) and it is possible that the Saxon invasion may have had little impact on rural settlements in Gloucestershire (GCC 1990, 4). The evidence for the status of Cirencester as a royal, ecclesiastical and commercial centre has also been assessed (Gerrard 1994, 90), however, little archaeological evidence can be brought to bear on these questions. The only hint of early Saxon settlement in the road scheme region comes from a few sherds of pottery found north-west of Latton (Wilts. SMR SU09NE400). Elsewhere, the known pattern of pre-Conquest churches and later villages provides a picture of later Saxon settlement in the region. Trinity Mill, Bagendon is known to have had pre-Conquest origins.

Medieval and post-medieval

The later medieval settlement pattern appears to have been very similar to that today, with villages located in the valleys of the Cotswolds and on the gravel terrace. Deserted and shrunken medieval settlements are, however, known at Stockwell Farm, Birdlip and from the parishes of Brimpsfield, Winstone and Elkstone (GCC 1990, 4). There is some indication that most deserted settlements are subsidiary hamlets rather than main villages with a church (Aston and

Viner 1984, 282). Farms deserted as a consequence of enclosure are to be expected in the region although few have been securely identified (Gerrard and Viner 1994, 135).

The possible site of a deserted settlement was found between Preston and Witpit Copse, where spreads of 11th–13th century pottery were found on either side of Witpit Lane (CAT 1991a, 136). At Latton, there is early cartographic evidence of houses lying to the west of Ermin Street and plots running back to the river Churn. Pottery of 12th–15th century date came from this area in the evaluation, although no structures were identified (CAT 1991b, 78–9). Pottery from close to Fosse Farm, Driffild, also suggested medieval/post-medieval occupation, probably under the present farm buildings (ibid.).

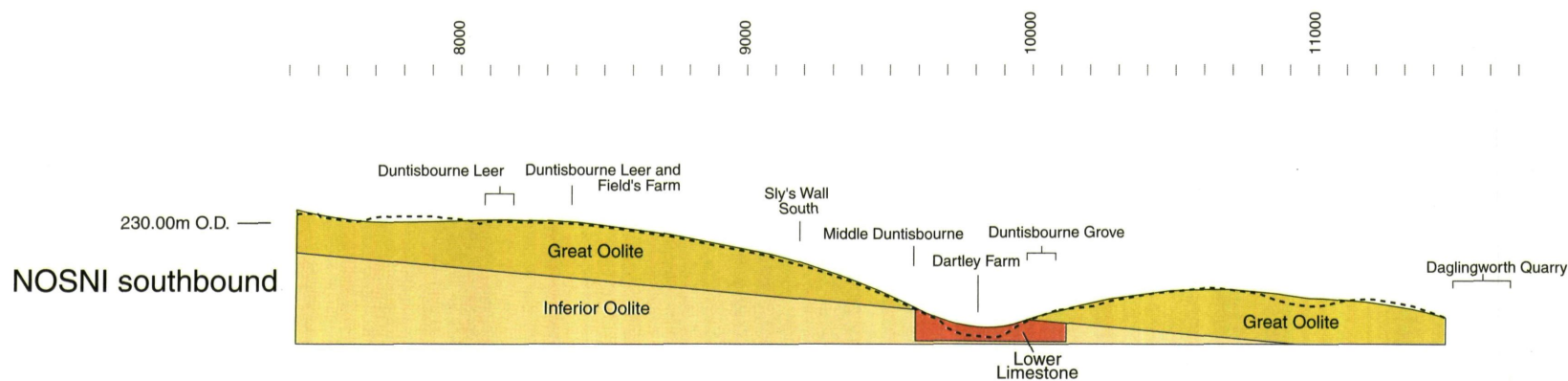
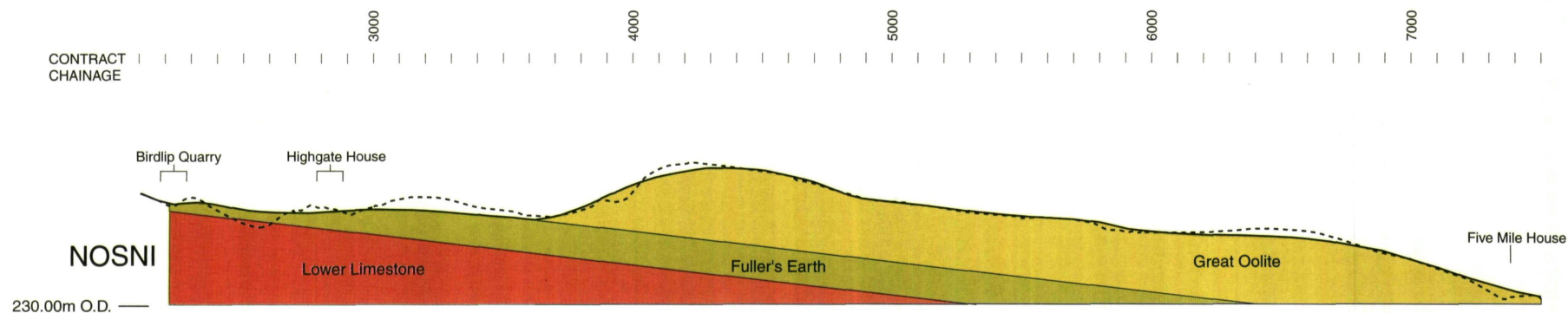
One of the chief post-medieval agricultural features within the road corridor is the water-meadow system in the Churn valley at Trinity Mill which, while not unique, has value in that it displays a coherent group of historic landscape features - the drainage channels, leat and the mill itself (CAT 1991a, 138). Traces of ridge-and-furrow cultivation also survive in the region but generally lack value as interpretative units (CAT 1991a, 137). The most common post-medieval/early modern type of monument affected by the new road were the turnpike roads, whose main archaeological interest lies in their method of construction and their importance as an element of the archaeological continuum (CAT 1991a, 142). Parts of the infilled Thames and Severn canal also lay within the road corridor, but this had little value as an archaeological feature.

PROJECT AIMS

The first part of this section outlines the overall archaeological objectives of the road project. The second part summarises some of the project's principal research themes identified in the Stage 1 and 2 assessments, and restated in the Archaeological Project Design, General Strategy and Methodology Document (OAU 1996). The third part offers an amplification of these academic themes undertaken upon the completion of the fieldwork. These were presented in full in the post-excavation assessment and publication proposal (Lupton and Williams 1997).

Scheme-wide objectives

The ultimate objective of the project as defined in the Outline Project Design was the preservation, either *in situ*, or by record, of all identified deposits of archaeological significance within the proposed route. For those sites which were to be preserved by record, the purpose was to undertake an appropriate level of archaeological recording and sampling of all significant deposits. An appropriate level of recording for each site was defined in terms of its perceived significance with regard to nationally defined research priorities (English Heritage 1991b). A further stated objective was to ensure the long term curation of the

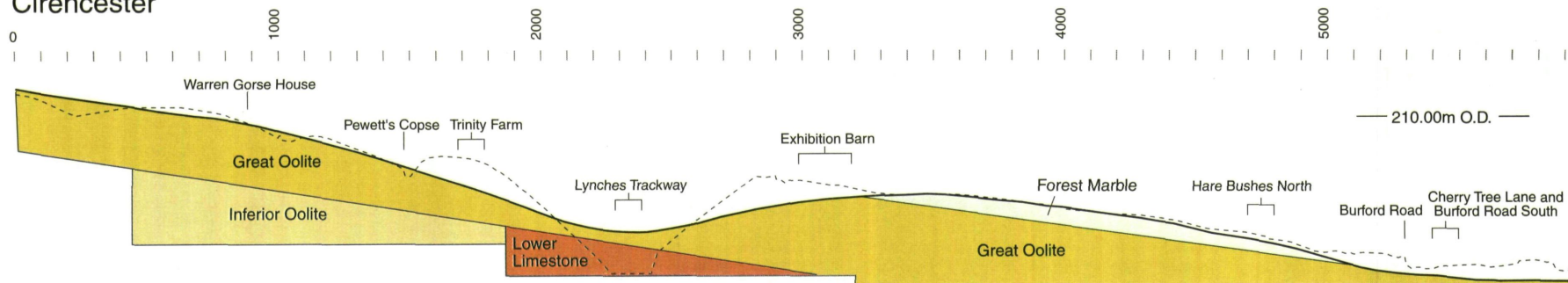


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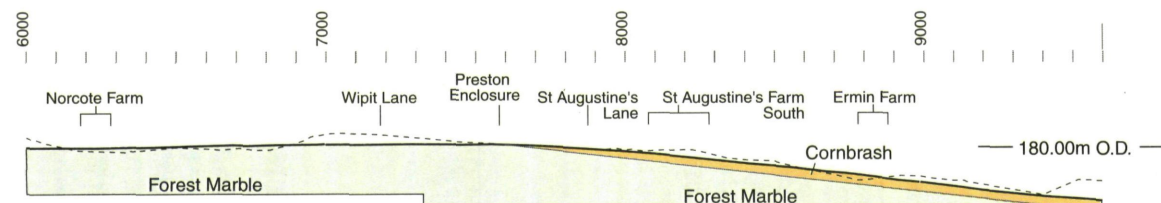
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Cirencester



Cirencester continued



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Chapter One

Latton

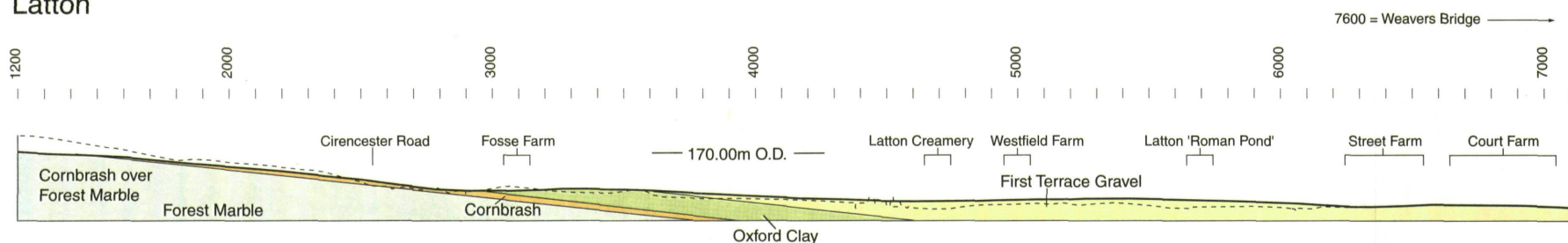


Figure 1.5 Geological profile. (Based on RMG engineer's drawing).

Site name	Site code	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
		12 19 26	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16	6 13 20
Pewett's Copse	BAPC 96	■											
Daglingworth Quarry	DAGQ 96	■				■	■						
Warren Gorse House	DAGWGH 96	■											
Trinity Farm	BAGTF 96	■											
Birdlip Quarry	COWBQ 96	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
Sly's Wall South	DRSWS 96	■	■										
Street Farm	LATST 96		■	■	■					■	■		
Cherry Tree Lane	CIRCL 96		■	■									
Duntisbourne Leer	DADL 96		■	■									
Highgate House	COHH 96		■	■									
Lower Street Furlong	DRLF 96		■	■									
Exhibition Barn	BAUEXB 96		■	■									
Latton 'Roman Pond'	LARP 96		■	■	■	■							
Middle Duntisbourne	DAMD 96		■	■	■	■							
St Augustine's Farm South	PRSTAS 96		■	■	■	■							
St Augustine's Lane	PRSAL 96		■	■	■	■							
Latton Creamery	LAC 96			■									
Fosse Farm	LAFOS 96			■									
Lynches Trackway	BAULT 96			■									
Duntisbourne Grove	DRDG 96			■	■	■							
Westfield Farm	LAWF 96												
Burford Road South	CIBRS 96			■	■								
Witpit Lane	PRWPL 96			■	■								
Court Farm	LACFM 96				■	■							
Burford Road	CIBFRD 96				■	■		■					
Hare Bushes North	BAUHBN 96				■	■							
Norcote Farm	PRNOF 96				■	■	■						
Dartley Farm	DRDFM 96					■							
Cirencester Road	LADRCI 96					■							
Weavers Bridge	LAWBR 96					■	■						
Field's Farm	DAFF 96					■	■						
Ermin Farm	PREM 96						■						
Preston Enclosure	PRENC 96					■	■						
Ermin Street Sections	ERMIN 96						■		■	■			
Five Mile House	DAFMH 96								■				

Figure 1.6 Programme of works.

data recovered, and its dissemination in a form appropriate to its academic value in line with nationally defined guidelines (English Heritage 1991a).

Research themes

Encompassed within these broad objectives, a number of key overall research themes were recognised and were summarised as follows:

- 1 The environmental development of the Upper Thames Valley and Cotswold dipslope in relation to past human exploitation.
- 2 The earlier prehistoric to later prehistoric transition in domestic occupation and land-use.
- 3 Later prehistoric predecessors to the Roman settlement pattern.
- 4 Roman settlement and land-use patterns in the vicinity of Cirencester.
- 5 The origins and development of Ermin Street, its relationship to local road networks, and its later development and use up to the turnpike era.

Other themes were also recognised in the Outline Project Design, but these were either less significant or less likely to be readily addressed than the key themes defined above. However, the fact that the road scheme represented a transect through different geographical zones close to a major Roman city, Cirencester, whose hinterland it traversed, together with the specific unifying factor of Ermin Street, gave the project a strong degree of overall coherence. In this light, it was realised that some discoveries of relatively minor intrinsic interest could take on a greater value when seen within this wider context. It was also recognised that further themes could emerge from unexpected discoveries during fieldwork and in the post-excavation analysis.

Amplification of research themes

Following the results of the post-excavation assessment it was clear that all five major themes outlined above continued to be broadly relevant and could be addressed more specifically.

A) With regard to theme 1, the road scheme offered the opportunity of examining a transect through the landscape, from the edge of the Cotswold escarpment in the north-west to the Upper Thames Valley in the south-east, and comparing the development of settlement and land-use between these two broad zones. These topics could be addressed through considerations of the character of the sites and their environmental indicators. Palaeo-ecological information is rare in this region and the environmental sequences from waterlogged deposits at Latton 'Roman Pond' (Scheduled Ancient Monument 899) and those from sediments in the Churn Valley at Lynch's Trackway, were seen to be of exceptional significance.

B) Theme 2 was explored through the examination of a small number of earlier prehistoric pits at

Duntisbourne Grove (Duntisbourne Abbots) and Trinity Farm (Bagendon). These sites added to the limited corpus of material of this period from the region, but the extent and nature of earlier prehistoric settlement remained unclear. The later prehistoric sites provided a great deal more information about settlement and land-use, particularly from the boundaries and settlements near Preston, at St Augustine's Farm South, Preston Enclosure and Ermin Farm. These sites offered some basis for comparing the evidence for earlier and later prehistoric settlement patterns and economic strategies between the Cotswolds and the Thames Valley.

C) The results of the excavations at Middle Duntisbourne and Duntisbourne Grove, were particularly relevant to theme 3; the pre-Roman settlement pattern. In their date and assemblages of material these sites showed affinities with the high-status settlements at Bagendon and Ditches hillfort, but were clearly crossed by Roman Ermin Street. They offered some potential for contributing to the debate about the nature of settlement here around the time of the Roman conquest.

D) The settlement at Birdlip Quarry, Cowley was of direct relevance to research theme 4, providing some insight into the nature of Roman roadside settlement. The settlement formed part of a distinctly Roman pattern, probably determined by the presence of Ermin Street, rather than by any Iron Age predecessor, but its markedly 'native' form offered a contrast to most of the evidence of Roman occupation in the Cotswolds.

E) The excavations through Ermin Street and those at Birdlip Quarry were especially relevant to theme 5. While there was little artefactual dating evidence for the origins and development of Ermin Street, there was information on road construction and use from the Roman period through to the turnpike era. In addition, the relationship between the major Roman roads and adjacent trackways could be addressed at sites such as Field's Farm, Duntisbourne Abbots and Court Farm, Latton.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

With these revised aims in mind, the approach taken was to produce a thematic, chronologically structured report on the discoveries of the study, rather than a series of individual site reports. It was felt that this most effectively gave due weight to the individual findings within the overall picture, thus neither giving too much weight to minor discoveries nor underplaying their cumulative value, as might occur if they were dealt with separately. Some site elements have, however, been treated out of a strict chronological framework, particularly where the division of a site between periods was unclear and required justification, or where the site elements for a particular period were so minor as to make separate treatment overly fastidious.

Chapter 2 incorporates all the discoveries pertaining to the early prehistoric period. For the purposes of this report the early prehistoric period is defined as everything pre-dating the end of the Bronze Age

(c. 700 BC). Chapter 3 deals with material relating to the later prehistoric or Iron Age period (c. 700 BC – 43 AD), Chapter 4 with the Roman period, Chapter 5 with Roman roads and their later developments, and Chapter 6 with the medieval and post-medieval periods. Chapter 6 appears in volume 2. The second volume of the report also contains the artefactual and environmental reports (Chapters 7 and 8) and a discussion chapter (Chapter 9). The appendices contain technical detail relating to the animal bone and pollen analysis as well as the radiocarbon dates. A running sequence of catalogue numbers has been

applied to the artefacts in chapter 7. These are referred to throughout the volume and appear on the relevant illustrations.

LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

The paper archive of the Stage 3 archaeological works has been security copied and a copy deposited with the National Monuments Record. The finds and archive from the sites in Gloucestershire have been deposited with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester and that from the sites in Wiltshire with Swindon Museum.