CIRENCESTER: TOWN AND LANDSCAPE

by

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Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd
CIRENCESTER: TOWN AND LANDSCAPE
AN URBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD.
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FOREWORD

Back in 1989, when the project reported here was being formulated, assessing the archaeology of urban areas was a relatively undeveloped art. Cirencester, together with four other historic towns in England, was chosen by English Heritage as a test-bed for new approaches to the management of the archaeological resource in urban areas. The principal aim of these projects was to build on the foundations laid down by the various historic town studies undertaken in the 1970s and early 1980s by consolidating available data about the archaeological resource and translating that data into the kinds of information and knowledge required for the integration of archaeological resource management with strategic planning and development control. In addition, the urban assessment was seen as a means of synthesising the results of rescue work over the last two decades, and setting out a research framework which could carry forward the next phase of studies.

The publication of this volume, as with the results of pilot studies in other towns, is as much to stimulate and inform debate on the way forward for urban assessments in general as it is to mark the end of a defined stage in one particular project. Accordingly, it is anticipated that this report will be of interest to many organisations and individuals, but principally those with an interest in the management of the urban resource generally, those interested in the assessment of archaeological deposits in towns like Cirencester, those with a direct interest in the archaeology of Cirencester and its environs, and also those seeking to help shape the future growth of Cirencester through development, conservation, or some other form of change.

Urban areas are complicated phenomena not only in their present structure and appearance but also in their archaeological form as well. Continuous sequences of interlocking deposits which may start below the ground in many cases carry through time and space to reveal themselves as above-ground structures or as determinants of the topography and plan of the places in which we now live and work. Documenting, recording, and evaluating this material is complicated too, requiring as it does a certain level of understanding about the easily identifiable archaeological remains as well as the less distinctive layers and deposits that surround them.

Sites and Monuments Records have become familiar tools in the process of recording archaeological remains and can easily be accessed for a variety of purposes from planning inquiries to research. They provide the starting point for developing more detailed records of the kind really needed for ever-changing urban areas where development pressures are colossal, the scale of previous archaeological work high, and the complexity of deposits considerable. But while the need for enhanced records for urban areas and their hinterlands was clear, how they should be constructed remained less obvious.

Since the Cirencester Urban Assessment Project was itself essentially an experimental scheme it was felt appropriate that among its aims should be a reappraisal of the nature and structure of archaeological records appropriate to urban areas. Some preliminary work had already been undertaken in connection with small-scale assessments of development sites in the town and this formed the foundation of what has become the 'Cotswold' system. The fundamental difference between this system and other archaeological record systems is the separation of observations or events which generate archaeological data (called sites) and interpretations of that data either in the form of defined and recognisable monuments and urban deposits, or as sets of academic or strategic knowledge.

A full exposition of the system is given in this report, while the assessment itself is an exercise in application both within the urban area itself and in the surrounding countryside. Although not explored in the report, the wider implications of this new pattern of recording are considerable and provide the basis for harnessing the full power of the new technology of Geographical Information Systems. What is set out here is probably the single most radical rethink to date of the way in which SMRs are constructed.
As with all databases, however, the archive created for Cirencester and its hinterland will need constant updating as new data becomes available and new interpretations are made. As development pressures change it may also need expanding to take account of, for example, the archaeology of smaller urban areas represented by the market towns and large villages scattered throughout the Cotswolds. For Cirencester this will be achieved through a partnership between Cotswold Archaeological Trust and Cotswold District Council.

This report, an Urban Archaeological Assessment, attempts to build upon the Cirencester database and synthesise our current understanding of the archaeological resource as a point-in-time statement. Naturally parts of the report will be superseded by changing approaches, fresh legislation, and new data. This is inherent to the dynamic nature of archaeological resource management. Most importantly, however, the present study represents a foundation from which it will be possible to build an urban archaeological strategy which links the aims and objectives of archaeological resource management with planning policies and procedures. The development of this strategy is something for English Heritage, the Cotswold District Council and Cotswold Archaeological Trust to work on together in the coming years. Meanwhile, nationally important monuments will continue to be protected through Scheduling, but English Heritage will, over the next few years, be reviewing the arrangements for Scheduling in Cirencester with a view to rationalising designations in the light of the best and most up to date available information.

Through the combination of the urban database, the present Urban Archaeological Assessment document, and, before long, the Urban Archaeological Strategy, it is to be hoped that the continuing conservation and management of Cirencester's archaeological resource can be achieved in the context of continuing and sustainable economic prosperity for the town.

Professor Michael Fulford
March 1994
This report was first prepared during 1991 as part of the Cirencester Urban Assessment Project funded jointly by English Heritage and Cotswold District Council, and revised in 1994. During the course of the Project many individuals and organisations have given a great deal of valuable help and assistance. From the beginning the staff of the Cotswold District Council assisted greatly by putting at our disposal their map bases, their intimate knowledge of Cirencester and its hinterland, and their technical skills, especially in our work on Geographical Information Systems. In particular we would like to mention Mary Fell and Mike Wier.

The Project was monitored throughout by a team of advisers representing the funding bodies, English Heritage and the Cotswold District Council, together with representatives of the Cotswold Archaeological Trust and Gloucestershire County Council Planning Department. For their advice, support, and constructive discussion we would like to thank: Tony Fleming, Dai Morgan Evans and Roger Thomas (English Heritage); Tony Jones, David Viner and Sheila King (Cotswold District Council); Ian Wills (Gloucestershire County Council); Mick Aston (University of Bristol); Mike Fulford (University of Reading); and Richard Reece (University College London).

In the course of preparing a report of this kind the authors have depended a good deal upon national and local archives. For helping to track down obscure sources while still keeping their patience we would like to thank the staff of the following institutions: the Corinium Museum; the Gloucestershire County Council Sites and Monuments Record; the National Air Photo Library at the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, Swindon; the Cambridge University Aerial Photographic Collection; the Gloucestershire County Library, Arts and Museums Service; the Bingham Library, Cirencester; the Gloucester City Library Local History Collection; the Bodleian Library; the Royal Commission’s National Archive Register; the Ashmolean Museum; and numerous record offices all over Great Britain. In particular we would like to mention Clare King, John Paddock, Danny Darwish, and Jane Isaac who took the time to make searches and assist our work so that nothing was missed and that everything was seen in the least possible time.

For helping us to pick our the vectors from the rasters we would like to say thank you to Adrian Exton and Russell Tinian of Intergraph. For getting on his bike and coming and helping out when the tags got confused a thank you to Steve Stead of English Heritage. Above all though, for their prodigious assistance in times of trouble, we would like to thank Bill Startin and Tony Fleming.

We could go on to record many other acts of kindness but our greatest obligation must be to the people of Cirencester who allowed us into their cellars and gardens and secured their photograph collections and memories in the name of urban assessment.

The Cirencester Urban Assessment Project was carried out by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust which is based in Cirencester [Job Number 017/Typescript Report 9154]. The day-to-day management was undertaken by Christopher Gerrard and Linda Viner. A number of individuals took part in various phases of the work. They were: Cliff Bateman, Neil Lambert, Anneke de Winter, Sheryle Hobday, Michael Ings, Casper Johnson, Martin Wilson, Anna Cuss, and Alejandra Gutierrez.

Following the completion of the initial project in December 1991, a lengthy period of revision and enhancement occurred to produce this current document. At this later stage Neil Holbrook was commissioned to produce the sections relating to aspects of Roman Cirencester. He would like to thank the following people for their helpful comments and criticisms during this period: Paul Bidwell, Tom Blagg, Alan McWhirr, Richard Reece, and above all John Wacher for generously discussing the text in detail.

The main text of this report was drafted and edited by the principal authors, specific sections being contributed by Linda Viner and Neil Holbrook. Cliff Bateman assisted with the preparation of data for the initial text and drawings. Illustrations were prepared...
for publication by Alejandra Gutierrez, and Casper Johnson provided reconstruction drawings for the Roman and medieval townscapes. Photography and copying of original prints and drawings was undertaken by Abbey Studios, Cirencester, and Paul Stonell of King Alfred’s College, Winchester. Thanks are due to our employing institutions, the University of Bournemouth and King Alfred’s College, Winchester, for their help during later revisions of this report. We are grateful to the following people for reading and commenting on the text: Mick Aston, Carolyn Heighway, Alan McWhirr, Richard Reece, Bill Starlin, Roger Thomas, Alf Plumb (Bovis Homes Technical Services), Barbara Yorke (King Alfred’s College, Winchester), and Tom James (King Alfred’s College, Winchester).

This volume is not intended to be a prescription for the study of urban areas. Since 1991, when this work was completed, there have been a number of important new publications which have contributed meaningfully to the debate on how best to investigate our urban areas. Any new study would need to take account of recent discussions held by the Urban Research Committee of the CBA, papers on urbanism circulated at the Conference on Medieval Archaeology in Europe held at York in September 1992, the fruits of new partnerships between the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and local Sites and Monuments Records (RCHME/EH 1992; RCHME 1993b), developments within the Monuments Protection Programme at English Heritage (English Heritage 1992a, 1992b, 1992c), as well as other published urban assessments (University of Durham 1992; Hereford and Worcestershire County Archaeological Service 1993).

This document therefore represents the stage our thinking had reached two years ago and we have not updated the text to incorporate recent advances in thinking. It is clear, however, that few towns or cities would be suited to the approach outlined here, if only because less work has been undertaken there. Towns and cities are very particular phenomena and the urban archaeologist will need to devise various approaches to their analysis and protection.

Timothy Darvill and Christopher Gerrard
The Old Railway Station
Cirencester
1994
 SUMMARY

An archaeological assessment of Cirencester and its surrounding countryside was commissioned by English Heritage and the Cotswold District Council in 1990 and undertaken between June 1990 and September 1991. The study area comprises the town of Cirencester and the adjoining civil parishes of Siddington, Baunton and Preston, a total area of 46 square kilometres.

The procedures used for data collection and interpretation are innovative to the assessment of urban areas. Data relating to almost 4000 sites was collected from a variety of sources including aerial photographs, personal recollections, past excavation and fieldwalking programmes, recorded finds, place-names, documents, photographs, illustrations, and maps. A cellar survey, field-checking of monuments, a door-to-door questionnaire, and an archaeological roadshow were undertaken specially for the assessment during the year. These observations have been plotted onto 1:500 scale maps for the town centre and 1:2500 for the rural areas. A series of maps covering the geology, topography, land-use, and land classification within the study area have been prepared to provide essential background data.

On the basis of the archaeological data in the form of identified sites, more than 400 separate single monuments were recognised. These represent all chronological periods from early prehistoric times through to the modern era and reflect the archaeological resource in the rural as well as urban environments. The position and extent of all the identified monuments have been plotted onto map overlays.

Within the urban area of Cirencester, four superimposed urban forms can be recognised: the Roman Civitas Capital of Corinium Dobunnorum, the Roman Provincial Capital of Corinium, the early medieval Royal/Ecclesiastical Centre of Cyncestre, and the medieval Medium-Sized Market Town of Cirencester (with a sub-division for the post-medieval extent of the Medium-Sized Market Town).

Using the criteria developed for use by the Monuments Protection Programme to appraise monument importance the single monuments of medieval and earlier date within the town and in the surrounding countryside were appraised and important examples identified. The urban deposits within Cirencester were assessed to determine zones of greatest archaeological interest. As a result an approach to the management of the archaeological resource for the town is proposed. Ten areas of high archaeological interest are defined and these are described and mapped. Appropriate responses to development proposals in all areas are considered. To assist in the selection of future projects and the deployment of resources a series of research objectives are set out.
PART I
INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY
1. INTRODUCTION

'It is much to be regretted that the histories of so many of our ancient cities and towns remain unwritten... that such delightful and pregnant sources of instruction, and illustration, of general as well as local history, should be neglected; whilst records are continually decaying, and monuments crumbling into dust.'

From an anonymous review of Baily’s pamphlet 'Handbook for Cirencester, containing a history of the town and its antiquities... with illustrations', printed in the Gentleman’s Magazine (1842)

'Cirencester very closely resembles some barely recoverable palimpsest, in which a precious underlying original text is seen to have been several times over-scratched with other writings, penned, or merely scribbled, at far less careful periods.'

Welbore St Clair Baddeley, A history of Cirencester (1924)

Background

For over five hundred years the town of Cirencester on the south-eastern edge of the Gloucestershire Cotswolds has been recognised as a place rich in the archaeological remains of its Roman and medieval predecessors. The archaeology of the town is perhaps best known through the large-scale excavations of the 1960s and 1970s, mainly undertaken by the Cirencester Excavation Committee; but this is only the most recent chapter in a long history of endeavour and research. From the fifteenth to the late twentieth century there has accumulated a mass of unsorted documents, cartographic information, museum archive material, published and unpublished manuscripts, and oral history which has never before been collated into a single comprehensive archaeological survey. Neither have the specific implications of the undoubtedly rich archaeological remains within and around Cirencester been integrated into strategic development plans for the local area or made known to the wider public through archeological publication rather than planning documentation.

Prior to 1990 two main archives of archaeological records existed for the town of Cirencester and its surrounding area. The first comprised a number of gazetteers, lists, and abstracts compiled by the staff of Cirencester Excavation Committee during research for the implementation and subsequent publication of excavations between 1960 and 1980. The second was the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by Gloucestershire County Council and based at Shire Hall in Gloucester. With some additions, this second archive was largely a computerised copy of the first and provides the backbone of national archives for the county such as the National Archaeological Record. Throughout the late 1980s it was recognised that neither record was comprehensive, nor was their structure and content geared to respond to the demands of modern archaeological resource management. In particular, neither record could sensibly be used as a basis to establish priorities for conservation, preservation, display, or research.

The need for an accurate database of recorded sites and monuments for the Cirencester area was stimulated by a number of new initiatives. First, in the local context, the Cotswold District Council was preparing a Cotswold Local Plan which required appropriate policies for planning and archaeology in the Cotswold area. Second, the thrust of national priorities encouraged by English Heritage through the Monuments Protection Programme has widened the focus of interest from the protection of single monuments towards the protection and future management of both the urban archaeological resource and relict cultural landscapes (Darvill et al 1987). More than ever before, the careful stewardship of archaeological remains as a finite resource requires a flexible database upon which sound decisions can be based. Third, the tide of local planning applications in the late 1980s, particularly those of large-scale schemes, brought the existing archaeological record under greater scrutiny than ever before and found it lacking in many respects. Fourth, the demise of the university-based, government grant-fed and amateur-supplied Cirencester
Excavation Committee led to the foundation in 1989 of the Cotswold Archaeological Trust, a commercial archaeological unit with charitable objectives which provided, for the first time in the town's history, a permanent and professional archaeological presence in the local area. All the new data generated by the Trust's current work needs to be consolidated and accessed into a suitable database, and a robust framework established for the ongoing assimilation of new data.

The task of the Cirencester Urban Assessment Project was therefore to establish a new and reliable database which would adequately satisfy a range of immediate and future archaeological needs, both strategic and academic.

The Cirencester Urban Assessment Project

The Cirencester Urban Assessment Project was commissioned jointly by English Heritage and the Cotswold District Council in the early summer of 1990, following agreement between interested parties on a detailed Research Design (Darvill 1989). The project was executed by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust between June 1990 and September 1991. There were four main objectives:

a. to create and verify a definitive database of recorded sites and monuments within the Study Area;

b. to survey and assess the survival of archaeological deposits and upstanding remains, providing information on thickness, volume, nature, content, preservation, etc;

c. to develop an archaeological and historical framework for the town and its environs;

d. to formulate policies for the future management of the resource including conservation, preservation, protection, presentation, display, research and contingency options.

The Study Area defined

Figure 1 shows the position and extent of the Study Area in its regional and local setting. The focus is the modern town of Cirencester, but also included are the adjoining civil parishes of Siddington, Baunton, and Preston. The total extent of the Study Area amounts to 46 sq km. Other than Cirencester, the main nucleated settlements are Siddington, Baunton, Preston and Stratton. Outside these built-up areas the countryside lies under arable cultivation, pasture, woodland, and parkland. Summaries of the modern and recent land-use are given in Chapter 4.

Records, reports and project archive

The Cirencester Urban Assessment Project was designed with the aim of creating a number of specific products. First and foremost, was a comprehensive, up-to-date, and easily maintained Archaeological Record for the Study Area: the urban database. This record comprises a series of three interrelated computerised databases and an accompanying set of map overlays. APPENDIX A introduces the records and maps, and summarises the main fields of data used in each record. The original version of the record is housed at the Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester, and is currently maintained and curated by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust as part of its management agreement with Cotswold District Council. Associated with the database is a comprehensive archive containing copies of documents and material assembled and collected during the life of the Project. This has also been deposited at the Corinium Museum.

This report, the urban assessment, is intended as a summary of the Project and its scope, an analysis of the data currently held in the urban database, and a synthesis of the findings and implications. It is anticipated that both the database and this report will together underpin the third product, namely a series of policies relating to the archaeology of the area in the new Local Plan.

Report structure and content

This report is divided into four parts. The first serves as an introduction and includes the present Chapter plus Chapter 2 which sets out the philosophical and methodological basis of the assessment programme and urban database developed for Cirencester. Subsequent Parts unfold the approaches explained in Chapter 2.

Part II is concerned with data collection. Chapter 3 reviews the history of archaeological endeavour in and around Cirencester and considers the principal sources of available data. Chapter 4 summarises background information such as the topographical and physical setting of Cirencester, while Chapter 5 reports upon the strengths and weaknesses of the archaeological record as it has accumulated over the past five hundred years.

Part III develops the data into a series of interpretations, beginning with an introduction to the process in Chapter 6. Each of the following three chapters aims to synthesise and summarise our current knowledge by chronological period. Chapter 7 focuses upon the prehistoric and early Roman archaeology under and around Cirencester. The first town was established at Cirencester in the later first
Figure 1
Location of the Study Area, showing the principal roads and surrounding parishes
century AD and this is the subject of Chapter 8 which covers two phases of the Roman town, *Corinium Dobunorum*, as a Civitas Capital and as a Provincial Capital, as well as its extra-mural monuments for both phases. Chapters 9 through to 11 are concerned with successive later forms: *Cirencester* (the early medieval Royal / Ecclesiastical Centre), *Cirencester* (the medieval Medium-sized Market Town), and *Cirencester* (the post-medieval phase of the latter form). The name and variations in the spelling of the name reflect the main stages in the evolution of what we now know as Cirencester. Chapter 12 takes a rather different view of the archaeology of the town, one based on the long-term accumulation of monuments and deposits to bring about the characteristics of the place that can be seen and experienced today.

Part IV looks to the future and considers how archaeology and development might be harmonised. Chapter 13 explores the question of how archaeological resource management works in the context of Cirencester and its environs. Consideration is given to existing legislation and policy, available management options, and procedures for balancing the needs of on-going development with archaeological conservation.

Three supporting Appendices are provided. Appendix A lists the data fields used in the compilation of records established in the course of the Project: the Site and Monument Records, Sources, and mapped elements. Appendix B tabulates the monuments defined in the Study Area by period. Appendix C is a statement of future research objectives. Since some of the terms used are given specific and perhaps unfamiliar meanings in this report a Glossary has also been included. The Bibliography incorporates those references having a specific application to this volume with the published and unpublished sources consulted during the course of the Project. A list of Cartographic References completes the volume.
2. PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY

"I have seen Mr Beecham and from what I can gather his information is quite reliable and at any rate the best available at present. He is not conceited and quite ready to modify his views if any fresh discoveries are made."

Mrs Helena Cripps in a letter to F W Haverfield, 19th November 1911

Obtaining reliable information is crucial for any study in which justifiable conclusions have to be drawn from baseline data. For archaeological purposes reliable information is often difficult to obtain because of the variable quality of the sources available. The sources themselves are reviewed in a later chapter, but as a preliminary to this attention is here directed towards the philosophy and methods of the system developed for the recording and analysis of archaeological information in the Cirencester Urban Assessment.

Existing records and system needs

At the start of the project the existing sites and monuments record (SMR) for Cirencester was largely based on the Ordnance Survey's Archaeological Record Cards and a disparate collection of papers, notes, and summaries assembled by the staff working for Cirencester Excavation Committee (CEC). The categorisation, constitution, and classification of the items recorded was inconsistent and insensitive to the nature of the archaeological resource itself, and had been assembled in the first instance as a ready-reference to excavations and observations carried out by CEC. Moreover, it was widely recognised that such a record could not be depended upon to substantiate professional judgements for archaeological resource management because the information it contained was unstructured in terms of the thought processes that produce different levels of interpretation and understanding from otherwise separate items. For example, the database treated investigative procedures such as excavations, and monuments such as the Roman basilica, in the same way as negative features such as pit groups. This made sorting and selecting information rather difficult. Recognising the deficiencies of what was already available led to the definition of a series of desirable characteristics which would provide the basis of a structured re-arrangement. It was argued that the new arrangement needed to:

(i) systematically assimilate the many different kinds of data from a wide range of sources, some of uncertain quality, that had accumulated in the course of several centuries of endeavour;

(ii) reflect the essential characteristics of the archaeological resource in and around the urban area, and the ways in which it is recorded and understood;

(iii) provide information that could be used for planning purposes and academic research;

(iv) expound a sufficiently robust structure and logic to the categorisation of the items recorded and the definition of levels of interpretation that it could fully support professional judgements based on it;

(v) assimilate a continuing flow of new data and revised interpretations; and

(vi) be adaptable to changing technologies for the storage, manipulation and analysis of data-sets, especially GIS technology.

Fundamental to the fulfilment of these needs was the construction of a new kind of record system which adequately reflected the complexity of the resource, the integrity of the sources of information about that resource, and the ways in which the resource is perceived and interpreted. The approach adopted drew upon two main sources. First was a methodology used for the characterisation and description of the archaeological resource for a study
of a central area of Cirencester which had been identified for redevelopment (EH 1992c). Second was the research and development being undertaken concurrently by English Heritage with specific reference to the needs of the Monuments Protection Programme (Darvill 1991). By bringing together this combination of practical experience and theoretical understanding a methodology for dealing with the complicated archaeological resource of an urban area and its essentially rural environs was developed and tested. In the following sections both the background and the principal features of the 'Cotswold system' are described. Later Chapters document the application of the proposals set out here. Again, it must be emphasised here that this system requires carefully and rigidly defined terminology and application. Many of the distinctions made here cannot profitably be made in smaller or less well-studied urban areas and the methodology proposed here should not be regarded as prescriptive.

A theoretical perspective

At the core of the assessment of the archaeology of Cirencester and its environs is structured thinking which leads from what is actually known about the archaeology of the place (ie the study area) through to an understanding of the archaeological resource as a basis for professional judgements relevant to planning and academic interests. Perception provides a key to this thinking process, and here it is useful to distinguish three perceptual levels within the broad domain of how we might tackle the problem: Data, Information, and Knowledge.

Figure 2 illustrates in diagrammatic form the hierarchical arrangement of these three levels of perception as a system of analysis. The system is a self-organising one in the sense that the patterns which can be seen at any one level are the products or inferences derived from what is perceived rather than what is determined by the system itself. The only fixed links in the arrangement are between levels of perception, the data being the source for any perceptions of information, data and information together being the source for perceptions of knowledge.

Looking in more detail, each of the three levels of perception can be related directly to the main elements of archaeological resource management, and to the main stages in the construction and analysis of an archaeological database. The following sub-sections describe the levels in more detail.

Data

Data represents the descriptive foundation upon which the evaluation process rests and it is crucially important to understand its constitution as the fundamental facts or things which we use as the basis for inference or reckoning. Two main sets of data can be identified: archaeological data and background data.

Archaeological data units are most usefully perceived as the events or opportunities to observe archaeological remains or deposits. In the Cotswold system the fundamental data units (items) are termed sites. These may be regarded as windows or 'sights' onto the archaeological resource; events which represent an engagement between some element of the resource itself and an observer or recorder. The engagement is not neutral, however, because on the one hand the resource may not be fully revealed while, on the other, the actions and perceptions of the observer will be culturally conditioned.

Viewed in this way there are many kinds of site, for example: open area excavations, watching briefs, stray finds, cropmarks on aerial photographs, geophysical surveys, or visual observations of upstanding remains. The quality, nature, scale of application, and reliability of these data units varies considerably; what is important is to recognise this
Philosophy and Methodology

and to appreciate the differences between the main kinds of site.

The units of analysis commonly employed to record archaeological deposits are well understood with reference to excavations: usually a hierarchical system involving objects (including artefacts and ecofacts), contexts, features and components, the precise definition of each element being determined through the principles of stratigraphy and association (see Glossary for further definition). The same units of recording can also be applied to archaeological deposits visible in other kinds of site, for example in watching briefs, or as cropmarks. In all cases, the scale of analysis is closely linked to its place within the hierarchy. Thus in excavations the lowest levels of entity commonly encountered are objects and contexts, while in aerial photography, by contrast, the recorded sites are likely to be seen only as features and components.

Background data is also relevant to archaeological inquiries, particularly details relating to topography, situation, geology, hydrology, recent land-use patterns, ancient land-use patterns, and development constraints (eg Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas etc).

Information

Once a collection of data has been assembled some attempt may be made at comprehending it: giving meaning to the perceived patterns. Archaeological data can be comprehended in two main ways, as monuments and as accumulated deposits. In urban areas the former is especially relevant to the comprehension of individual phases (urban forms - see below) within the development of an urban centre, the latter is germane to the comprehension of superimposition and urban development through time.

The recognition, identification, and definition of monuments or accumulated deposits is based on judgements relating to the intrinsic qualities of the visible or perceived resource. As such any interpretations of data-sets involve an engagement between the record of the archaeological resource (for it may be impossible to see physically all the relevant data at one point in time) and an analyst. In creating a record of the archaeological resource that can be perpetuated and expanded it is therefore appropriate to make explicit the differences between, on the one hand, the data as recorded in the form of observations (ie sites), and, on the other hand, the interpretations which are placed on the information derived from those encounters (ie monuments and accumulated deposits).

Monuments are taken to be regular groupings of associated components which form recognisable and more or less complete entities which often have specific function, use, purpose or symbolic meaning. The idea of a monument is also central to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 where a monument in the legal sense is defined as:

a. any building, structure or work, whether above or below the surface of the land, and any cave or excavation;

b. any site comprising the remains of any such building, structure or work or of any cave or excavation; and

c. any site comprising, or comprising the remains of, any vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other movable structure or part thereof which neither constitutes nor forms part of any work which is a monument within paragraph a. above; and any machinery attached to a monument shall be regarded as part of the monument if it could not be detached without being dismantled.

The 1979 Act (as amended for England) provides for the protection in law of monuments which are deemed by the Secretary of State for the National Heritage to be of 'National Importance', such monuments being listed on a 'Schedule of Monuments' and hence commonly referred to as Scheduled Monuments. The Schedule has been under review since 1985 through the work of the Monuments Protection Programme which is being carried out by English Heritage (Starin 1988; 1991). This initiative seeks to address the problem of the systematic and consistent evaluation of monuments on a nationwide basis and, in doing so, recommend for Scheduling an appropriate selection of monuments which will create a balanced sample of the national resource.

Accumulated deposits are the sum total of archaeological objects, contexts, features and components present within any defined stratigraphic sequence. Such sequences are likely to vary considerably in depth and complexity. Like single monuments, however, they can be discriminated on the basis of their recorded or predicted nature and quality and the discrimination criteria (see below) provide useful headings under which to explore these matters.

Monuments and accumulated deposits also represent the building-blocks of more complicated entities such as urban areas and relict cultural landscapes (see below).

An important point about this information-based level of perception is that while there is probably a high degree of agreement about data (eg that an
excavation took place and that so many contexts, features and components were revealed etc) at this second level there is greater scope for debate and critical analysis. Thus there may be more than one view on the classification of a monument revealed by an excavation or on the quality of the accumulated deposits brought to light during a watching brief. The important point, however, is that the data itself will not change even though revised comprehension (information) may be proposed as new data becomes available or as existing data is reinterpreted.

Knowledge

The final level in this hierarchy relates to knowledge which is here taken to mean a justifiable interpretation based on the sum of available data and information supported with reference to wider and more broadly based frameworks or perspectives. With regard to the kind of archaeology represented at Cirencester there are two main fields of knowledge: academic knowledge and strategic knowledge.

Academic knowledge refers to an understanding of an area and its development in the context of available archaeological models and interpretations pertaining to all related matters in Britain and other countries.

Strategic knowledge refers to an understanding of an area and its archaeological resource in the context of prevailing international, national and local legislation and planning philosophies (eg those relating to conservation, preservation, exploitation etc).

An archaeological perspective

The Cirencester Urban Assessment includes not just the town of Cirencester and its predecessors extending back to the late first century AD but also the surrounding area, represented for convenience by the administrative boundaries of the surrounding parishes. Traditionally this may be seen as a study covering both rural and urban archaeology, yet consideration of the model outlined above causes us to challenge this view in some respects and revise our analysis in others. At the level of 'data', the sorts of events and sources that give rise to what we know are similar throughout the study area, although some site types (eg aerial photography) may be less useful in the built-up areas than in open countryside. The differences become more marked at the first level of interpretation, and here it has become common, for the purposes of archaeological resource management, to recognise three main combinations of monuments and deposits: single monuments, urban areas, and relict cultural landscapes (Darvill 1988a). All three forms are potentially represented in and around Cirencester, although during this urban archaeological assessment programme attention was directed only to single monuments and urban areas.

Single monuments

The archaeological resource is commonly equated with the identification of single monuments. This narrow definition accords well with the main prevailing legislation. Traditionally, monuments have formed the unit of study and analysis in archaeology, not least because they represent a manageable unit in practical terms while having a certain intellectual and visual integrity as well.

Monuments can be hierarchically classified according to how much is known about them. Three main levels are used: Category (where only general details are known - eg mill), Class (where specific details are known - eg Tower mill), and Type (where a great deal of detail is known - eg Smock Mill). Also relevant is a Descriptor which can be applied to any of the above-mentioned levels on the basis of recorded tangential detail (eg corn mill). Of these different levels that of Monument Class is the most commonly used, and several hundred such classes have been identified and described to date.

It is sometimes possible to recognise groupings of monuments, for example clusters of monuments of the same class, associated groups of contemporary monuments of different classes, and complexes of functionally related interconnected monuments.

Urban areas

A town or city is a special environment for archaeology. Although urban areas contain many recognisable single monuments, for example mints and bailey castles, churches, monasteries for men, and so on, they also have other characteristics which set them apart from being simple aggregates of single monuments (Carver 1987a; Schofield 1987). There is often continuity between periods of settlement for example, and although development takes place at differing rates within the complex arrangement of land units it is often possible to recognise major occupation horizons. The general urban matrix which results from long periods of intensive occupation and which can best be envisaged as the glue which both engulfs and bonds single monuments together is referred to as accumulated deposits. These are the sum total of archaeological objects, contexts, features and components present within any defined stratigraphic sequence. Thus, there are two identifiable but intertwined strands to the archaeology of urban areas: definable single
monuments and accumulated deposits. By definition, the latter incorporates the former, but together these two elements provide a reasonably complete picture of a complicated entity. In theory accumulated deposits of the kind described here may also be recognisable outside urban areas. No such deposits have been identified as part of this study but such a dimension may in future hold an important key to the interpretation of non-urban remains of the kind that cannot easily or usefully be classified as single monuments.

Within the sequence of monuments and accumulated deposits in any urban area it is often possible to recognise distinctive horizons. These horizons are referred to as forms and on a national basis they can be roughly classified because of traits which they share with one another and because similar patterns have been recognised in several places. A total of 16 main forms have been recognised to date (EH 1992c), four of them being represented at Cirencester. Archaeologically, the key horizons or forms evident in the development of a place are important because it is at these times that it is easiest to reconstruct on paper at least the basic plan and lay-out of the urban area.

Evaluating monuments and accumulated deposits

Not all monuments and sectors of an urban area are of equal importance in archaeological terms and so, as an aid to the development of strategic knowledge, some kind of evaluation must take place to gauge the level of importance. Such analysis is generally called evaluation, but should not be confused with Field Evaluation (see Glossary). In this study the methods of evaluation developed by English Heritage for use within the Monuments Protection Programme (MPP) are followed (Darvill et al 1987). The methods themselves are now widely known and have been set out in detail elsewhere for single monuments (Darvill 1988b) and urban areas (EH 1992c). The following notes are intended only as summaries of the main elements.

Single monuments

With reference to single monuments, the overall importance of each identifiable class is assessed through four characterisation criteria. These are:

- Rarity
- Period (currency)
- Diversity (form)
- Period (representativity)

Together, these provide an overview of the interest in the class as a whole and give a general indication as to what proportion of those known may be regarded as being of national, regional or local importance. English Heritage has undertaken the task of monument characterisation on a national basis in the context of the Monuments Protection Programme and these studies have been drawn upon for the Cirencester Urban Assessment.

Each known example of a monument in each class is then assessed individually so that its archaeological interest (national, regional, or local) can be established. Every monument is assessed with reference to eight discrimination criteria so that its qualities can be compared with those of other examples of the same class. The discrimination criteria are:

- Survival
- Potential
- Documentation (archaeological)
- Documentation (historical)
- Group Value (clustering)
- Diversity (features)
- Group Value (association)
- Amenity Value.

Seven of the criteria can be graded on a tri-partite scale (good-medium-poor), the eighth (Group Value (clustering)) being graded on a bi-partite scale based on presence/absence of clustering. In order to provide a measure of the relative importance of a specific monument a Monument Interest Value (MIV) can be calculated through combining the scores assigned through professional judgement to the above-mentioned range of eight criteria. The MIV is calculated in the following way:

\[ MIV = \sum (CS_i) \]

where \( CS_i \) is the Criterion Score assigned during the evaluation of each monument. The maximum score attainable with the criteria used is 58 for monuments where seven criteria are relevant (the field of Documentation (historical) does not apply to early monuments) and 67 for all other monuments. In calculating the MIV scores for this assessment, professional judgements have been made on the basis of the recorded archaeological resource represented in the southern Cotswolds and surrounding areas. In Chapters 7 to 11 the scores obtained by individual monuments are used to identify which monuments are of greatest importance. The MIVs resulting from the work carried out for this assessment project are listed as part of the Project archive but at this stage should only be used as a provisional analysis based on regional and local comparanda; this pending the review of scores as part of the Monuments Protection Programme to be undertaken in due course.
Urban areas

The main aim of the evaluation here is to identify, in a general way, the most archaeologically important parts of a given urban area, and thus to enable those areas of greatest interest to be distinguished from those of lesser interest as the basis for informing management strategies. The eight discrimination criteria listed above with reference to single monuments can be used as the basis for systematic evaluation at this stage in the process, although as always professional judgement has a role to play too.

There are two ways in which evaluation can be applied. The first is to look at individual forms within the development of a town (ie slices cut horizontally), while the second is to consider the whole sequence as one entity (ie all the slices together). Both approaches were tried in the case of Cirencester and the results are presented in later Chapters. The actual process of evaluation is broadly the same, however, and is carried out as two parallel but separate exercises.

In the first exercise (Chapters 7 to 11) the discrimination criteria are applied to each form in turn, identifying, for example, areas of high archaeological documentation or amenity value in the early medieval urban form. This is particularly helpful later when writing research agendas for each period of the town’s history and in reviewing the results of the next stage. Site data which do not fall into the period forms under consideration are omitted from this first exercise.

In the second exercise (Chapter 12) the evaluation of accumulated deposits ignores the classification of data into monument classes and instead uses archaeological and background data from all types of site to produce a general characterisation of the deposits. Emphasis is placed on determining the spatial extent of variations in the categories of interest proposed for each criteria. When considering the factors relevant to each, full account must be taken of the vertical dimension of the recorded archaeological resource represented by the stratigraphic sequence of objects, contexts, features and components. As with the determination of values for the discrimination of single monuments, there is no quick, easy or mechanistic way of judging the factors relevant to each criterion, though results from the first exercise may provide an initial guide. Rather, professional judgement has to be carefully applied to make the best use of all the data contained in the record relating to each site.

All parts of an urban area are considered during the discrimination of accumulated deposits, including those areas which comprise or lie above or below defined monuments. In this way it is possible to gauge any major variations in the factors covered by the criteria within the areal extent of large monuments.

The data which is used to assess each criterion will be contained in the site records. Data from several sites may be needed to produce a single value. When all the criteria, or as many as possible, have been determined for all recorded sites it is possible to produce a zoned map of the urban area for each criterion.

Zoning applied in this sense is a simple contouring process using the values assigned to the discrimination criterion in question for each site as the data-points around which the contours are drawn. The defined zones follow the tri-partite grading of each criterion, thus the defined zones will correspond to the high/medium/low or good/medium/poor judgements made for each site. The number and density of sites with relevant documentation of the criteria within the areal extent of large monuments.

Details of the way that individual criterion are assessed are set out elsewhere together with a summary of the application of a simple scoring system to the process (EH 1992c).

As a result of the evaluation process for urban areas two sets of information are available. First there is information on the nature, extent and importance of defined monuments, and second there is a general plot of the overall archaeological importance of accumulated deposits. As indicated, these should be compiled for each form as well as for the urban area as a whole. The two sets of information overlap only to the extent that the deposit overlay includes coverage of defined monuments as well as the ‘grey areas’ in between which cannot so easily be defined according to the recognised classification of monuments.

The two analyses are fundamentally different in that the details relating to defined monuments relate to specific and clearly bounded areas whereas the overlay showing the overall importance of accumulated deposits is by its nature generalised and more concerned with broad zones.
From sites to knowledge

In order to fulfil the aims of the Cirencester Urban Assessment Project it is necessary to move through all three levels of the perceptual hierarchy described above and to make full use of the methods of evaluation. In practical terms, attaining the objectives of the project involves five main stages or steps. These may be summarised as follows:

**Data collection**

The first stage is data collection, during which a wide range of sources are interrogated and documented. The data falls into two broad groups: archaeological data relating directly to the archaeological resource, and relevant background data relating to the context and situation of the archaeological resource. The sources used in compiling the database are considered in detail in Chapter 3.

Archaeological data is recognised to exist at a number of levels. The smallest unit generally appreciated is the ‘context’, for example the bricks in a wall. These contexts may then build into a ‘feature’, for example the wall itself, and then, together with other features, into a ‘component’, such as a gatehouse. Details of the site records which were established are given in APPENDIX A.

**Monument definition**

The second stage involves the interpretation of the primary data (both archaeological and background). This includes defining and documenting identifiable monuments and characterising the accumulated deposits within the urban area. The documentation developed for monuments and deposits is set out in APPENDIX A.

It is important to note, however, that the interpretation of the data presented here is simply a point-in-time statement based on the best available retrievable information. Accordingly, the list of monuments is neither immutable nor exhaustive. As and when the existing data is supplemented or can be interpreted better an expanded or modified set of monuments may be defined.

**Characterising the urban forms**

In the third stage the archaeological characteristics of particular urban forms become the centre of interest.

It is possible, for example, to plot out all the single monuments which pertain to that phase of Cirencester’s development which we recognise as the Roman civitas capital or the medieval medium-sized market town. Discrimination criteria may be applied to each form in turn so as to identify areas of good survival, poor historical documentation, and so on. Those parts of the town known only as accumulated deposits become more readily appreciated.

**Zones of archaeological interest**

The fourth stage aims to define zones within the town which are judged to be of differing levels of archaeological interest. This is achieved by scoring the discrimination criteria for the urban area as a whole and not by urban form alone as in the third stage. The final maps in this sequence aim to define different zones of archaeological interest for the town and the surrounding rural area by combining the information from the eight mapped discrimination criteria.

**Management planning**

In the fifth and final stage the information on the individual monuments and the accumulated deposits can be brought together to provide a strategic overview as the basis for management plans and action policies. Two levels or scales of analysis are generally recognised: plot or land-unit specific management plans, and strategic overviews of archaeological resource management across the urban area as a whole. Whichever scale is being pursued, many factors will need to be taken into account when formulating appropriate management strategies. Among these, four principal considerations are identified by the management appraisal criteria:

- Condition
- Fragility
- Vulnerability
- Conservation Value

The selection of management options requires careful consideration of the alternatives and objectives. This is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 13, but two key options can be recognised, namely: preservation (eg conservation and protection) and exploitation (eg presentation, research priorities etc).
PART II
DATA COLLECTION
3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENDEAVOUR AND DATA SOURCES

by Christopher Gerrard and Linda Viner

Mrs Helena Cripps in a letter to F W Haverfield, 15th January 1918

Archaeological data for Cirencester has gradually accumulated over many centuries and as a result of many different kinds of investigation, observation and inquiry. In this Chapter attention is first directed towards the ways in which data has accumulated and then at the kinds of sources that were drawn on for the Project.

History of endeavour

The study of the archaeology and history of Cirencester has moved through four successive phases between 1480 and 1991. Prior to the eighteenth century there were few interested observers, but there then followed a second stage of burgeoning antiquarian activity and artefact study which began with the visit of Stukeley (1721) and lasted until the excavations of Buckman and Newmarch (1850). With Buckman and Newmarch begins a third phase, an era of archaeological endeavour which culminated in 1958 with the setting up of the Cirencester Excavation Committee and the formation of an organised professional body of interested individuals. The history of archaeological endeavour in each of these phases is traced in detail below.

The first records

Before the eighteenth century observations and speculations about Cirencester’s past are rare and choked with imaginative historical detail. William of Worcester (alias Botoner, 1415–c1485) visited the town, ‘anciently called the City of Sparrows’, in 1480 and noted in his Itineraries the major visible remains such as Grismond’s Tower (Grismund’s Mount), the Chapel of St Cecilia, the Torre Castle (Tar Barrows), the parish church, and the Augustinian abbey (Harvey 1969). He relates for the first time the local tradition that ‘a certain Africanus, who came from Africa, destroyed the city by sending birds over the city with wildfire tied to their tails’. Besides his curiosity with legend and his useful topographical detail, William of Worcester’s notes on church architecture formed the basis of later speculation about the layout of the abbey and display a real interest in the material remains of the past.

Seventy-five years later, John Leland (1503–1552), King’s Antiquary to Henry VIII, described the walls of Cirencester with its ‘towers standing in the wall’ (Toulmin Smith 1964). He records the discovery of coins, pavements, and inscriptions, and describes the hills and ditches of what is probably the amphitheatre. Many of Leland’s inaccuracies have misled later town historians and his statements on the date of the Abbey Church, the origins of the hospital of St Lawrence and the location of Cirencester Castle should be approached with caution (Fuller 1890–1).

Travellers, gentlemen and antiquarians

The roots of modern archaeological scholarship begin in the later years of the seventeenth century. William Aubrey (1626–1697), the influential antiquarian, mentions in his Monumenta Britannica Grismond’s Mount, ‘a camp called Tarbury’, the Roman road system, discusses the derivation of the name Cirencester and relates the discovery of a ‘hypocaustum’ (unlocated). But it was in the early
years of the next century that the county's first printed history by Sir Robert Atkyns (1667–1711) was printed. This volume, *The ancient and present state of Gloucestershire*, was printed in 1712 after the author's death. Atkyns' contribution is largely as a collator of information, an editor rather than a researcher, and his work is perhaps most valuable for the inclusion of two engravings by Kip, one of the Abbey House belonging to the Master family, and one of Earl Bathurst's Cirencester Park. These are the earliest surviving views of the town and show remarkable detail.

The flow of antiquarian research continued with the visit of the antiquarian William Stukeley (1687–1765) on August 23rd 1721, accompanied by Mr Roger Gale. A quarto volume in the Bodleian Library (MS Top.gen.d.13) contains his town plan sketch which is the earliest recorded layout for the streets and tenements (Frontispiece). The street plan is something of a puzzle, in particular the alignment of Lewis Lane and the position of a road cutting through the Watermoor town defences. However, the plan does show accurately the position of the Abbey, the parish church, a fulling mill, the Bell Ale House, Gurmond's Mount (Grismund's Mount) and the Querns cemetery. A number of sketches, of the Hospital gate, a stone sculpture, and the tombstone of Julia Casta, were evidently done on the same visit. The accompanying text, presumably written at the same time, appears in his *Itinerarium curiosum* (1776, first published in 1724). Here he describes the town wall and the 'Lewis Ground' where 'antiquities are dug up every day'. Cirencester reappeared once more towards the end of Stukeley's life under less happy circumstances when, in 1746, he was tricked by the forger Charles Bertram into believing one Richard of Westminster had transcribed a unique itinerary of Roman Britain. In his attempts to authenticate the work Stukeley became convinced that the true identity of the author was one Richard of Cirencester, a monk and known writer with historical interests. Bertram became an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London for his work Stukeley became convinced that the true identity of the author was one Richard of Cirencester, a monk and known writer with historical interests. Bertram became an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London for his discoveries and Stukeley died believing the documents to be genuine.

Samuel Rudder (1726–1801) published his *New history of Gloucestershire* in 1779. This history succeeds that of Atkyns and is of greater interest for its references to archaeological finds and Rudder's deeper knowledge of local affairs. Rudder was the first to publish the correct identification of the Roman amphitheatre (McWhirr 1988). In 1800 his compilation for Cirencester was expanded and published separately as *History and antiquities of Cirencester*. The volume went through a number of editions and was the guide to many future visitors to the town, including the Reverend John Skinner in 1824.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century Samuel Lysons (1763–1819), an antiquary of legal training and a draughtsman of great skill, researched and published three volumes of the highest standard: *Etchings of views and antiquities in the county of Gloucester hitherto imperfectly or never engraved* (1791–6), *A collection of Gloucestershire antiquities* (1803–4) and his best known work *Reliquiae Britanniæ Romanae* (1801–1817). This last work, itself published in three volumes, has illustrations by Lysons of the 'Marine Scene' mosaic from 60 Dyer Street. It is best not to confuse this Samuel Lysons with his nephew of the same name (1806–1877), the author of several pseudo-historical articles of an idiosyncratic nature, such as *What has Gloucestershire achieved?* (1861).

Also at the end of the eighteenth century, between 1784 and 1789, the Thames and Severn Canal was constructed. This included the digging out of the Sapperton Tunnel which was the longest tunnel attempted at that time. The site was visited by, amongst others, William 'Strata' Smith (1769–1839) who incorporated his observations in his Geological Map of England and Wales in 1815 and his map of Gloucestershire in 1819. Smith promoted the principle that rocks were deposited over long periods of time and so provided the intellectual setting for the later work of Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin.

The Victorian age

In the nineteenth century general antiquarian interest transformed itself into purer archaeological observation. In 1824 the Reverend John Skinner (1772–1839) visited Cirencester writing about the town in his diaries and making sketches. The originals are preserved in the British Museum (BM MS 33679). During his two days in Cirencester he undertook the first recorded excavation in the town which took place in the amphitheatre or Bullring as it was then called. He visited the Querns and noted some 30 skeletons 'interred promiscuously', walked the circuit of the Roman walls just as Stukeley had done one hundred years previously, described finds of tombstones at 'Steep Stairs' and 'Gregory's House'. He complains with some feeling of the trials of the field archaeologist in the Cotswold winter: 'If I have not gone through fire,' he writes, 'I am sure I did through water, to show what a zealous disciple I am in the School of Antiquities' (11th November 1824).

The Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club was founded in July 1846. This society provided a forum for all manner of scholarly outpourings ranging over the archaeological and geological debates of the day.
Figure 3
The lifting of the Hunting Dogs Mosaic, discovered in Dyer Street in 1849 (Illustrated London News 8th September 1849)
The honorary secretary (1852–1860) and a regular contributor to the Society's Proceedings, was James Buckman (1816–1884), professor of geology and botany at the newly instituted Royal Agricultural College. Through his energies the major challenges of local geology were overcome and the results published (J Buckman 1853).

Buckman's interests did not rest solely with geology. In 1850 he and Charles Newmarch published their Illustrations of the remains of Roman art in Cirencester, following the discovery of the Hunting Dogs and Four Seasons mosaics in 1849, during the course of sewer construction in Dyer Street (Figure 3). The Roman building from which these mosaics came also contained another pavement with octagonal designs, the 'Marine Scene' illustrated by Lysons (1801–17), an Orpheus pavement described by Beecham (1887), and another pavement observed during a watching brief in 1972 (McWhirr 1973). Taken together this collection is 'the most remarkable collection of mosaics from any single Roman building in Cirencester, and perhaps even from any town house in Britain' (McWhirr 1976a), and illustrates well how four observations over a 155-year period can help to suggest the identity of a monument. James Buckman went on to publish a series of articles concerning the geological properties of materials found on excavations such as mosaics (1833), quern stones (1866b), and roof tiles (1868).

Following the discovery and lifting of the Four Seasons and Hunting Dogs mosaics in Dyer Street in 1849, archaeological interest in the town mushroomed with many national and county societies from far afield paying visits to the town. The support and benefaction provided by Earl Bathurst was acknowledged in 1858 when he addressed members of the British Archaeological Association as their President (Bathurst 1869, 21–5).

During the second half of the nineteenth century and up to the end of the First World War three events served to encourage interest in archaeology: the coming of the railways, concern for public health, and the founding of two museums in the town. The first, the coming of the railways, focused attention indirectly upon archaeology and new Victorian science through increased interest in the new geological exposures (Taunton 1872). Seemingly every year, there were excursions from societies both local and national to see the latest 'diggings in the town, or the new cuttings for the Sapperton railway tunnel'.

The second was an increasing concern for urban health and standard of living. Improvements to drainage works became more important as Cirencester and the surrounding villages grew in population. Inevitably, with extensive groundworks underway archaeology was uncovered. John Bravender (1830–1923) corresponded with the Wills & Gloucestershire Standard on his observations in Latton and his son Thomas recorded finds from new sewerage works in Cirencester between 1878 and 1880 (T Bravender 1881; 1883–4a). Lindsay Richardson continued the work of J H Taunton and published articles on the boreholes dug in and around the town to investigate water supplies and the underlying geological formations (eg L Richardson 1913, 1924a; Taunton 1868, 1867) culminating in the publication of the Memoir to accompany the Geological Survey (L Richardson 1933).

Perhaps the outstanding achievement of the age was the History of Cirencester by Kenneth John Beecham (1848–1922) published in 1887. Although from more recent excavation we now know some of the details to be awry, for example his suppositions relating to Cirencester's early church, the book provides a succinct account of the more important late nineteenth-century discoveries in the town, particularly south of Lewis Lane where major construction was underway for the first time since the Roman period. Beecham also included accurate and unique detail about the medieval history and archaeology of Cirencester, full of perceptive criticism (see his comments on Kip's engravings at the beginning of Chapter 12) and descriptions of the late nineteenth-century institutions and public buildings. Addenda to the book were published in the Wills & Gloucestershire Standard and a booklet of additional material came out in 1910 (and was included in the 1978 edition). Information collected between 1910 and 1921 was given to St Clair Baddeley for publication in his own history of the town (1924). It was Rudder who had commented earlier that 'poets are not always good historians' and this was the case with Baddeley.

The third great boost to local archaeology came with the founding of the town's two museums. The credit for this must go to two families, Earl Bathurst who erected a purpose-built museum on the Tetbury Road in 1856 to house the Dyer Street mosaics discovered in 1849 (Figure 4), and Wilfred and Helena Cripps who built an extension onto their private residence at Cripps Mead in Thomas Street to house their collections. The finds collected by John and Thomas Bravender, for example, were catalogued in 1881 and donated to the Bathurst Museum where a museum guide was regularly published to update the collections (Church 1867 to 1922). The building-up of the Cripps collection and the circumstances of archaeological discoveries in the town between 1890 and 1930, including excavations paid for by the Cripps' (the basilica excavations 1897–8, Union Workhouse excavations in 1922 directed by St Clair Baddeley), are faithfully
documented in a series of Helena Cripps' personal letters written to Professor F Haverfield at Oxford and now in the Ashmolean Library.

It is notable that both patrons, Cripps and Bathurst, had their loyal disciples, making observations in the town, buying artefacts and reporting back as drainage, gas and electricity were laid in the town for the first time. The most professional of these was F W Taylor, 'the little architect' as Helena Cripps refers to him and also the town surveyor, who assiduously noted his finds and observations and mapped them onto a town plan (see extract at the head of this Chapter) which was later accessioned into the Corinium Museum when the two collections of Bathurst and Cripps were united in 1938. The results from these various sources were gathered together in a series of articles by Haverfield, most notably 'Roman Cirencester' (1920).
His synthesis was far in advance of anything so far written on Roman Cirencester and recognised the importance of the military tombstones, enabling him to predict the later discovery of the fort.

This passion for artefact collecting was paralleled elsewhere in the study and indexing of documents. Roland Austin at the Gloucester Library produced a catalogue of its collections (1928), together with a series of accounts of antiquarian authors such as Atkin and Rudder. Meanwhile, Frank Hockaday (1856–1924) sorted, numbered and catalogued the books and papers of the Gloucester Diocesan Society of Antiquaries, the Gloucestershire County Library Local History Collection, are an important source in helping to trace original documentation for the Cirencester area.

A number of individuals made contributions towards Cirencester's archaeology between the Wars. Welborne St Clair Baddeley (1856–1946) wrote his History of Cirencester in 1924 and a large number of his notebooks are in the Local History Collection in Gloucester. These contain useful bibliographical lists amongst a mass of unreferenced jottings and diary accounts. Baddeley also excavated in Victoria Road and at the Union Workhouse (Baddeley 1922a) under the patronage of the Cripps family and drew attention to the rich medieval heritage of the town (Baddeley 1919b, 1923b). The Reverend E A Fuller published a number of articles concerning aspects of the medieval morphology of the town such as the castle (1890–1), its streets and hundreds (1874), the borough (1884–5) and medieval Cirencester in general (1932), while E C Sewell kept new archaeological discoveries in the public eye through a series of articles he wrote for the Wilts & Gloucestershire Standard (1922a and b, 1927) and the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (1935).

The first professionals

In 1938 the town's first publicly-owned museum was opened, the Corinium Museum, bringing together the BATHURST and Cripps collections of the previous 80 years under one roof for the first time. Following the end of World War II, Mrs Elsie Clifford, well known for her later work at Bagendon to the north of Cirencester, excavated a mosaic uncovered in Lock's Timber Yard in Victoria Road when a pit was dug to extend the sawmill in 1947 (Clifford 1946–8). During the 1950s a number of important excavations were carried out in the town at sites such as Watermoor City Bank in 1952 (Rennie 1957), Dyer Court in 1957 (Webster 1959), and Parsonage Field in 1957–8 (Rennie 1971; K M Richardson 1962). These sites were limited in area and hastily executed and the need was keenly felt for a better planned response to the escalating demands from town-centre redevelopment. In this context, following the example set at Verulamium by Shepard Frere and with the support of the Society of Antiquaries, the Cirencester Excavation Committee (CEC) was formed in 1958 under the guidance of Sir Ian Richmond. Local interest was encouraged, and considerable support was given by members of the Cirencester Archaeological & Historical Society founded in 1955. For the next twenty years excavations were continued annually in the town under the direction of a series of directors – John Wacher, David Brown, and Alan McWhirr. Large scale excavations were undertaken at the Verulamium Gate, Lechlade, Admiral's Walk in St Michael's Field, the Abbey Grounds, the Bath Gate Roman cemetery, the Police Station, the basilica, and the Beeches (Figure 5). During these years Cirencester became a training ground for many archaeologists and, most importantly, the information they retrieved was speedily analysed and published in interim form in the Antiquaries Journal, with a planned programme of post-extraction analysis and thematic publication of results in the series of monographs which deal with such topics as early Roman military history, the Roman cemeteries, and the houses of Roman Cirencester (Wacher and McWhirr 1982; McWhirr et al. 1982; McWhirr 1986 respectively). Future titles in the series will cover the work in the amphitheatre, the town defences and the public and commercial centre of the Roman town around the basilica and forum, with medieval interest sustained in the publication of major excavations on the site of the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary.

When the larger teams were excavating, Richard Reece directed small-scale excavations at the Grammar School (Reece 1970b), Oakley Cottage in 1960 (Reece 1962b), on the Ashcroft/Mycenae site in 1961 (Reece 1976b), and in the Abbey Grounds (Reece 1962a), amongst others. Individual articles on geology (Torrens 1962), prehistory (Darvill 1978), the Anglo-Saxon legacy (P D C Brown 1976), and Victorian housing (Slater 1976b) reflect the variety of interests capable of being sustained by the wealth and variety of information available for the town. Archaeological evidence continued to stimulate and inform national academic debate (Reece 1980).

During the 1980s CEC excavations became less frequent and more modest in size although groundworks continued to be watched where money could be made available (Zeepvat 1979; Wilkinson 1982, 1984a and b, 1986, 1988a, b and c).

Changes in organisation were clearly required in order to sustain continuity in archaeological monitoring and overcome changes in funding. After
some years preparation the Cotswold Archaeological Trust was formed in March 1989 to take over many of the responsibilities of the Excavation Committee. There are many differences between the two organisations which reflect changing times in urban archaeology. In the first place, the Trust maintains a permanent presence of trained archaeologists in the town throughout the year. Secondly, the Trust is a financially independent company which receives its money for a commercial service as well as through grant-aid. The type of work the Trust undertakes is therefore more varied than that of the Committee, generally smaller in scale, and often keyed-in with the development programmes which continue to pose a potential threat to archaeology in and around the town. Fieldwork, privately-funded desk-top assessments and evaluation excavation of sites in and around Cirencester have succeeded state-funded
open-area research excavation in the town centre as archaeology has become more of a constraint in the planning process with legislative teeth to match.

Source types
In the course of the present Project a wide and varied selection of local, regional and national sources were consulted to supply data.

Ordnance Survey maps provided the cartographic foundation for base maps of the urban area at 1:500 scale, and the parishes at 1:2500. For the urban area, maps at 1:500 supplied by the Engineers Department of Cotswold District Council in August 1990 were rectified by copying and enlarging sections of the updated 1:2500 maps held by the Local Plans Section and by field-checking. A scale of 1:2500 was selected for the rural areas and there are 43 of these maps in total, numbered and stored according to Cotswold District Council parish area with an Ordnance Survey map reference concordance available for easy cross-reference.

The Cotswold District Council, as the local planning authority for most matters, provided access to the relevant planning constraints maps covering Conservation Areas, Tree Preservation Orders, footpaths, bridleways, Listed Buildings, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Gas and Oil pipelines, Electricity lines, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Cotswold Water Park, Landfill Sites, Minerals Consultation Areas, Nature Reserves, major hazard installations, areas owned by the National Trust, areas subject to Article 4 Directions, Historic Parks etc. All these constraints were transferred to a series of overlays at the standardised 1:500 scale for the urban area and 1:2500 for the rural area.

The Cirencester area was covered by the Geological Survey in 1933 and part of the area was resurveyed in 1961. These maps have been copied at a scale of 1:25000.

The study area was walked and each field classified according to the land-use classification of the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record, and mapped at 1:2500, 1:5000, and 1:25000. For the urban area, mapped at 1:500, the classes listed in the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Statutory Instrument No. 7.64) provided a useful glossary, with additions to suit requirements within the study area.

The use of individual properties and fields is subject to change and may become outdated within 10 years but the broader blocks of land-use in the town and countryside are stable and will be useful in determining the survival and potential of known sites. Field-checking also served to determine the topography and aspect of recorded sites and identified monuments.

Within a broader framework, land classification, based on a survey of agricultural land throughout England and Wales (1945) was mapped at 1:25000 to provide an interesting comparison with current land-use.

Cirencester is not designated as an Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 but it does contain one Guardianship monument and a number of Scheduled Monuments. The Cotswold District Council have a map showing the notified and scheduled areas compiled in liaison with English Heritage and these were copied off at the standardised scales.

The Corinium Museum has a number of Accession Registers which date from 1890 onwards. These contain descriptions of the artefacts accessed into the collection with information about the donor, findspot, and date of accession. The registers record objects previously held by the two principal private museums in the town which were amalgamated in 1933 when the then Cirencester Urban District Council assumed responsibility for the care of the collections. The B and C Registers record objects from the Bathurst and Cripps' Museums respectively, with the A Catalogue designation being used for objects donated or acquired by the museum in the period 1938–1971. Since that date all objects have been accessioned by year. For a brief period in the 1960s and early 1970s the Non-Roman Museum, administered by the Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society and housed in a small annex to the Roman displays in Park Street, adopted the G Catalogue prefix, and in some instances post-Roman objects from the Bathurst and Cripps' collections were given a second number within the G catalogue. More recently the museum has used identification sheets to record material brought into the museum reception for identification where this material remains in the possession of the owner.

In an attempt to record the possible dispersal of material away from the town, museums in the surrounding counties of Wiltshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Leicestershire, Devon, Avon and Somerset were contacted. Museums with objects relating to the study area - the Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery, the Ashmolean Museum, and the British Museum - reflect the interests of private collectors at the turn of the century, and the national quality of objects found in Cirencester, for example the Cupid bronze from The Leasues, recorded by Lysons and now in the Ashmolean Museum, and the occultist stamp in the British Museum which was once part of the Purnell Collection.

The Ashmolean Library, with its extensive collection of monographs and complete runs of the major British
and European archaeological journals, was the principal source for secondary and published references, augmenting the local access to county and local material held in Cirencester and Gloucester. Included in the unpublished papers are the diaries, letters and private notes of Professor Haverfield. These contain important correspondence with Wilfred and Helena Cripps, Bravender, Buddeley, F W Taylor and Miss Taylor (of the Ashmolean), recording finds and observations made in the town at the turn of the century. The private papers of Sir Ian Richmond and Professor Rolleston were also examined.

Locally, the Bingham Library has extensive collections of local history material with original documents, correspondence, papers and maps. One invaluable source held by the Bingham Library was the corrected and amended map produced by K J Beecham to accompany his History of Cirencester (1887) recording archaeological features and sites observed in the course of extensive development of the Ashcroft and Watermoor areas of the town in the period 1870 to 1910.

The parish index held in the Society of Antiquaries' Library provided a useful check against missing sources. Original archive material deposited in the library includes a previously unprovenanced drawing by W H St John Hope 'measured and plotted on the spot 16th November 1897' (which is in fact of the excavations on the site of the basilica); drawings by Samuel Lysons of Cirencester and Siddington parish churches; and a collection of sketches of architectural stonework by George Fox, and of the military tombstones from Watermoor by C Lee.

The Bodleian Library as a copyright library holds the published material relevant to the study area. Three sources deposited in the Department of Western Manuscripts were invaluable in providing detail of early observations of the town. The most important of these was a manuscript by William Stukeley compiled during a visit to Cirencester in August 1721 containing drawings of the Norman Arch, known today as Spitalgate, and tombstones found at The Quems with the earliest dated plan of the town in which he pinpoints the site of the Roman temple in the Leases Grounds, recorded by Atkyns and others as being first excavated in 1683. Two unpublished county histories by Abel Wanlner (nd, died 1714) and Richard Parsons (nd, died 1717) served as useful comparisons with Atkyns (1712) and Ruddé (1717).

The aerial photographic collections held by the Royal Commission Air Photograph Library in Swindon and the Cambridge University Aerial Photographic Unit, were scanned and features of archaeological interest transcribed onto a 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey map base. In total 800 photographs were consulted at these two locations, augmented by a small number of photographs from private collections.

The Gloucestershire Record Office houses the bulk of the primary documentation consulted, as well as a range of published literature for the county. The majority of the cartographic evidence for the study area is to be found here and comprises tithe, inclosure, estate and parish surveys.

All the county record offices in the country were contacted. All replied and those that responded with new information were Dorset, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Somerset, Northumberland, Oxford, Leicestershire, Hereford & Worcester, Berkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. With the exception of Lincolnshire the documents held in many instances consisted of single references in deeds, wills, or grants of property. Lincolnshire Record Office in contrast contains the Nelthorpe family deposit of papers with numerous references to property in Cirencester, Baunton and Siddington.

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for the county, housed in the Planning Department of the County Council in Gloucester, includes information relating to county property and excavations in the study area. Records of sites within the parish of Cirencester were downloaded using the Superfile package and printouts obtained. For the remaining parishes a manual transcription of specific key fields was made from site files in Gloucester. The SMR provided a cross-check for references within the National Excavation Index, the National Monuments Record, and Ordnance Survey Record Cards.

A cellar survey of all properties in Cirencester was undertaken during May and June 1991. Over 220 cellars were visited and measured by Trust staff, and absence or presence noted for more than 600 properties. Notes were also made on any surviving archaeological or architectural features. The location and extent of cellarage in the town, where it could be established, was then plotted on 1:500 overlays.

At the same time every household in the town centre was leafleted with information about the project, with articles in the local press to enhance and explain the purpose and intent of the project. Trust staff then collected information on a standardised questionnaire form. A great deal of useful information was forthcoming in this way including photographs, plans and personal recollections of archaeological excavations, former buildings, and characters from the town's past.

An Archaeological Roadshow was held in the Corinium Museum in June 1991. It provided a public forum for artefact identification with over 50 people attending between 11am and 4pm, bringing with them artefacts and curiosities for identification and recording. Site record sheets were filled out as new sites were identified.
4. BACKGROUND DATA

'It is noble champaign country, the residence of many of the nobility and gentry, and abounds in verdant plains, downs, corn-fields, parks, woods and little vallies, well supply'd with springs and rivulets, and enjoys a fine healthy air; which . . . has been thought too thin and cold for persons of very tender and delicate constitutions.'

Samuel Rudder, A new history of Gloucestershire (1779)

In this Chapter attention is directed towards the physical facets of the landscape and general environment which represent the backdrop against which past human communities lived and worked.

The Study Area

The Study Area is a roughly square-shaped block of land amounting to some 46 square kilometres and incorporating the civil parishes of Cirencester, Baunton, Preston and Siddington. The town of Cirencester lies at its centre and covers some 10% of the area. Smaller nucleated settlements occur at Baunton, Preston, Siddington and Stratton.

Topography

Cirencester, the "Capital of the Cotswolds", lies in south-east Gloucestershire towards the southern end of the Cotswold Hills on the eastern side of the dip slope. This is an area characterised by wide rolling hills, open country and steep-sided dry valleys (Figure 6).

Earlier this century there was much debate on the definition and extent of the Cotswold Hills (S S Buckman 1895, 1903). The criteria used are not worthy of close scrutiny; it is sufficient to observe that to the south-east of Cirencester is the open, hedge-divided, flat-land of the upper Thames Valley, while to the north and west is the drystone wall country of limestone uplands.

The maximum height OD within the study area is 185m in Oakley Wood, the minimum height OD is 92m at the southern-most tip of Siddington parish. In general, the terrain is gentle, with extensive views from local eminences.

Geology and archaeological deposits

The more important geological formations in the area have been discussed in detail by Torrens (1982). The evidence, much of it antiquarian in style, is drawn from railway cuttings, wells, water boreholes and quarries.

The earliest rocks are those of the Inferior Oolite which outcrop infrequently at the base of valleys such as the Churn (Figure 7). The majority of Inferior Oolite in the study area belongs to the Upper division and is defined by lithological units called the Upper Trigonia Grit overlain by the Clypeus Grit. In hand specimen the Upper Trigonia Grit is a coarse limestone with large broken fossils, typically bivalves, while the Clypeus Grit is more oolitic with marl interleavings and abundant echinoids and brachiopods.

The Inferior Oolite is overlain by a blue clay called Fuller's Earth, used in the past as a cleansing agent. Being impermeable, exposures are usually indicated by the spring line. This clay is capped by a distinctive oyster bed called the actinianata beds and a series of coarse shelly limestones (Arkell and Donovan 1952; Channon 1951).

The overlying beds are those of the distinctive White Limestone formation. As with the Fuller's Earth, the railway cuttings between Cirencester and Chedworth provide the standard sequence. Ammonites, gastropods, corals and brachiopods are abundant. Fossil reptilian eggs were recovered from one section in the Hare Bushes Quarry (S S Buckman 1860a). The best known unit is 'Dagham Stone', sometimes called Daglingworth Stone, which is a curiously perforated stone riddled with burrow systems and popular in nineteenth-century rustic architecture in Cirencester.

The Forest Marbles lie above the White Limestone formation. Their separation from the Kemble Beds of the Great Oolite beneath is much debated (Harker 1890a). The series varies greatly in lithic structure and comprises sands, clays and limestones. The
Figure 6
Topography of the surrounding area, with sections showing the location of Cirencester.
Figure 7
Simplified geological map of the surrounding area
Lewis Lane borehole (L. Richardson 1924a) suggested that the formation consists mainly of clay in the immediate vicinity of Cirencester.

Above the Forest Marbles are the ammonite-rich beds of the Cornbrash (Chidlaw and Campbell 1988). The Upper Cornbrash also contains brachiopods including one named after its type locality in Siddington (Microthyridina Siddingtonensis). Being a hard limestone this has been quarried for road metalling.

The Kellaways Beds are a sequence of decalcified sands with interbedded sandstones, yielding plant material as well as ammonites. The underlying Kellaways clay and overlying Oxford Clay have been worked for bricks locally (Harker 1886, 184).

The overlying Quaternary gravels are of most interest to the archaeologist. Being well-drained they provide some of the best evidence for aerial photographs and thus a high density of recorded sites. The calcareous gravels of the River Churn are terraces up to 9.14m thick which have been abandoned by the river as it has changed its course and responded to sea-level changes during the Pleistocene period.

Within the town any information on the nature of sub-soils is derived from archaeological excavation, watching briefs, water borings and engineering borehole data. Coverage across the town is patchy and has never been systematically collated but there is sufficient detail to show that archaeological deposits are cut into, or have built up on top of these Quaternary gravels. Except in areas of gravel digging the old turf line of 0.20m of brown clay often survives (R Reece pers comm). Deposits vary in depth depending upon the location of gravel quarries and the height of the former terraces but, generally, since the Roman period the town has risen by up to three metres and infilled the former valley so that the modern town now lies on the flat. This effect has been masked by post-medieval and modern landscape changes just outside the Roman town wall such as earth-moving for the canal, railway and, most recently, the bypass.

Outside the town centre there is almost no information on sub-soil character and depth except where excavation has taken place.

Building stone and quarries

The Cotswolds are well known for the aesthetic and structural qualities of the local Jurassic limestone and
after the sixteenth century a distinctive style of vernacular architecture developed as timber buildings were refaced or rebuilt. In the villages and towns this gives a misleading though comforting impression of antiquity and stability in the landscape.

There is nothing near Cirencester to match the famous Cotswold quarries of Taynton or Chipping Norton but there are a number of minor post-medieval and modern quarries in the study area (Figure 8). These include the quarry on the Stroud-Cirencester road (from which the Agricultural College was built) and the quarries off the Fosse Way at Hare bushes and off Chesterton Lane which supplied many buildings, stone walls, and road metallings in the town and countryside throughout the post-medieval period. Not all such quarries provided fine freestone. The composition of the Cotswold limestones varies greatly and some shallow surface quarries produce a fissile limestone which breaks into tabular plates ideal for roofing slates.

Earlier Roman stone quarries are known in The Quens area and excavations have shown that gravel was extracted from areas within the Roman town. More recently gravel was extracted near Cirencester at The Barton.

There was a brickworks taking clays from the Forest Marble at Stratton and Rudder (1779) mentions a quarry for 'plodding coal' at Stratton and the discovery of coal during well digging at Siddington St Peter.

Hydrology and water supply

The study area lies within the hydrological network of the Upper Thames Valley. The source of the river Thames is 5km south-west of Cirencester. The River Churn flows roughly north to south through the study area before joining the Thames at Cricklade. Springs occur locally at outcrops of the Great Oolite/Fuller's Earth clay beds and from wells in the Forest Marble. Particularly deep wells 'in excess of 100ft were sunk at the Royal Agricultural College in 1857' (J Buckman 1858), and at Further Barton and the Bacon Factory, Chesterton Lane (Harker 1891).

Before the turn of the century many houses in Cirencester had their own private wells sunk into the underlying gravel. Rudder (1779) remarks, 'The water is sufficiently pure and pleasant, rising in a fine gravel, about fourteen or fifteen feet below the surface, and almost every house has a pump'. Particularly deep wells are recorded at Oakley Villas and The Beeches (Harker 1891).

Concern over health in the town after 1870 led to much discussion on the possibilities of obtaining a reliable supply of pure water. A borehole was put down at Barton Mill but the site of the former Bowly's Brewery (1832-1882), later for a short time Cripps' Brewery (during 1882) was preferred and acquired by the Cirencester Water Works Company (Taunton 1886). A further borehole was sunk in 1882 and deepened in 1890 (Harker 1891) but proved insufficient to satisfy need and another borehole had to be sunk in 1904 (Hibbert and Richardson 1913).

Between 1900 and 1935 a number of boreholes completed for the Cirencester Urban District Council were observed and published by Lindsay Richardson, who was also responsible for the Geological Survey Memoir on the Cirencester area (L Richardson 1924a for the Lewis Lane borehole; 1925 for additional information on the Lewis Lane borehole; 1933 for Geological Survey Memoir; 1936-8 for Baunton borehole). These boreholes provided much information about the nature and depth of Quaternary gravel deposits directly beneath the town centre as well as successfully providing a new water source for the pumping station on Lewis Lane.

The changing hydrology of the town is poorly understood and much debated. Leland and Rudder, amongst others, believed that the River Churn once flowed through the city and at present it is thought that the river was diverted during the Roman period so that it ran outside the town walls (but see Holbrook, Chapter 8, this volume). Since there is some equivocal evidence for flooding in the town at this period this diversion may have been for practical as much as any defensive or status reasons. The situation is confused further by later changes made by the Augustinian Abbey and by landscaping carried out in the Abbey Grounds. No systematic survey of the town's watercourses has so far been undertaken.

Despite the potential for locating waterlogged archaeological deposits in buried valleys there has, until recently, been no evidence for well preserved organic material such as wood or leather in Cirencester. However, recent evaluation work in the City Bank area of the town has demonstrated that such deposits do exist, certainly in the southern half of the town close to the meandering line of the 'inner' River Churn where the water table may be perched (Gerard 1989c; R King 1990c). Elsewhere it seems that the Quaternary gravels drain the soils quickly and so accelerate decay.

Land classification

Based on the Agricultural Land Classification Map of 1945, and excluding those areas classified as of non-agricultural use (town, village centres and woodland), the study area can be graded as level 3 predominantly, with small areas of grades 1 and 2 to the south and east of the town. The valley of the river Churn provides a corridor of grade 4 land, suitable only for grass or forage crops (Figure 9).
Figure 9
Simplified land classification for 1945 of the surrounding area
Figure 10
Land-use recorded in 1990 within the Study Area
Land-use

For the rural area field visits in the autumn of 1990 established a record of land-use based on the glossary used by the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record. This information was mapped at 1:2500 and 1:10000. As an interesting comparison with the land classification map these categories were simplified to cultivated land, woodland, and grassland (Figure 10).

The land-use is predominantly arable, partitioned by dry stone walls and populated with dispersed farms and settlements of local stone. To the west of the town areas of woodland in Cirencester Park have hampered the recognition of archaeological monuments.

Within the urban area, and mapped at 1:500, a land-use glossary was developed based on the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Statutory instrument No 764). Premises, particularly those within the town centre with multi-function, were classified as at ground-floor.

Palaeoenvironment

To date there has been no general palaeoenvironmental work undertaken which might give indications of the nature and extent of vegetation cover in the past. It has often been assumed that peat deposits of the kind needed for such work are absent from the area and that buried soils and localised micro-environments provide the best hope for obtaining this kind of data (Bell 1984, 89). Recent finds have challenged this assumption. At Latton, just to the south of the present study area extensive peat deposits have been located adjacent to what appears to be a broadly contemporary area of Iron Age and Romano-British settlement (Johnson 1990a). Within the present Study Area peat deposits tentatively assigned to the 1st millennium AD have been identified in the valley of the River Churn near Baunton (CAT 1990). Locating and investigating peat deposits as an adjunct to work on archaeological sites and documentary accounts must now be a research priority in order to test this outline (see APPENDIX C).

Traditional models suggest that the Cotswolds were more wooded before the eleventh century, certainly in the north of the county (Grundy 1936). The uplands around Cirencester may have been open and largely treeless since the Roman period at least, and this was to the benefit of medieval wool merchants after the fourteenth century. With the exception of parks of wooded pasture, like that created to the west of Cirencester, landscape changes began again after the eighteenth century when the Cotswolds, already the home of gentry, were ‘improved’ by planting in landscape parks and tree belts (Bravender 1850).

Designations

Parts of the Study Area as well as a number of individual buildings and monuments within it are subject to a range of designations as Table 1 shows. Details of the effect of each designation and the implications for management are dealt with in Part IV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Cirencester</th>
<th>Baunton</th>
<th>Preston</th>
<th>Siddington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area-based</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AONB</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[where P = present/in part]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site-based</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 Listed Building</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2 Listed Buildings</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Monuments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship Monuments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1 Range of designations within the Study Area
5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

The electric light has been laid in Gloucester Street and rather faint traces of the Roman road have been found, but I do not think any fresh light has been thrown on the direction.

Miss Helena Cripps in a letter to F W Haverfield, 17th September 1912

... the historical study of single sites has been undertaken by scholars in no country ... In England, at least, this generally means a long search ... In short, he must make himself a thorough nuisance to the townspeople, before he attains real results.

F W Haverfield (1920)

Site records

As described in Chapter 2, the basic units developed for the classification and recording of archaeological data are termed 'sites'. Such sites are defined here as events or actions by which data is recognised, observed or transmitted. No assumptions are made about the validity or accuracy of the data recorded. Cripps' observations on Gloucester Street above would qualify as a site in just the same way as a modern open area excavation of the kind represented on Figure 5. It is, however, fair to say that some site-types are inherently likely to yield more reliable data than others, although, ultimately, the validity of a site can only be judged by reference to related data. Although a piece of data is never intrinsically wrong, its integrity and reliability may thus be called into question. In practice, however, careful examination of the sources suggest that it is often the interpretations associated with data in a given source that are questionable, the basic data is usually sound and can make a significant contribution to the database as constructed here.

In compiling the Site Records a wide range of sources were consulted, as documented in Chapter 3. Data obtained from those sources was then classified according to a suite of site types, the main features of which are described below. It should be emphasised, however, that source may not correspond exactly with site. In some cases a single source may give rise to the definition of a whole series of sites of different types, while in other cases a single site may be reflected in a number of sources, as for example an excavation which is reported in the local paper, in summary form in the archaeological literature, as an interim report, as a final published report, and as an entry in the museum accession register when the finds and archive are deposited for long-term curation.

ANTiquarian EXCAVATION (AE): All excavations before 1940 fall into this site type. With exceptions, the standard of recording is less objective and consistent than might be expected for a modern excavation. Absolute dating techniques and environmental sampling are generally absent whilst artefact collection policies may be idiosyncratic. The 1940 cut-off point is arbitrary. The area mapped will correspond to the trenches dug and therefore several small areas adjacent to each other will typically receive the same site number.

MODERN EXCAVATION (ME): All rescue or research excavations carried out after 1940 fall into this site type. There will be a huge range in the scale of work involved for different projects and in the quality of results achieved. Specifically excluded from this type are evaluation excavations which are...
intended for assessment purposes only. The area mapped will correspond to the trenches dug and therefore several small areas adjacent to each other will typically receive the same site number.

EVALUATION EXCAVATION (EE): Evaluation (field evaluation in the terminology of PPG16) is defined as one of the five stages in the archaeological management cycle as it can be applied in urban areas (Darvill and Gerrard 1990). The purpose of this exercise is to determine the thickness, depth and depositional history of archaeological deposits, characterise the main stratigraphic phases present and assess the survival of evidence. The factual report provides support for a full planning application, a Scheduled Monument Consent application, or an Environmental Statement. Generally, the volume of deposits excavated is less than 5% of the total and contexts present are sampled rather than fully excavated. It is a matter for professional judgement as to whether or not each individual evaluation hole receives a separate site number or whether (as more usually) the whole evaluation event is seen as a single site.

WATCHING BRIEF (WB): An archaeological watching brief involves the presence of a qualified archaeologist whilst groundworks are taking place. Observations are made on any archaeological deposits uncovered by construction workers on the site, where safety restrictions permit. The area covered by the watching brief will receive a single number rather than separate numbers for each observation within the groundworks.

RECORDED OBSERVATION (RO): This type of observation, usually made by a professional archaeologist or a well-informed amateur, occurs under a wide variety of circumstances. For example, archaeological deposits may be recorded when unmonitored groundworks are underway (e.g. when drain or telephone cables are being laid) or occur when archaeologists are asked to advise after archaeological remains have already come to light. Usually visible remains of obvious archaeological significance such as a skeleton or walling alert the observer initially and more detailed observation may follow (e.g. a watching brief). Each observation will be separately numbered.

INTERPRETATION AND MAPPING UNIT (IMU): These are the areas covered by an aerial photograph containing archaeological information (see Whimster 1989). The units will vary in size but their borders will generally correspond to features which are readily appreciable on the ground, for example roads, tracks, and field boundaries. The archaeological interpretation which can be made from information within the IMU will be written onto the site record form. This in turn may lead to the identification of separately numbered monuments and components. Each collection of aerial photographs is a single source and the photographs within it, either singly or in combination, or even in combination with photos from other collections, go to make up the IMU. A good analogy is that the aerial photographic collection is a book (both are defined as sources) with many pages represented by the individual photographs.

SYSTEMATIC SURFACE COLLECTION UNIT (SSCU): These are the areas covered by either line-walking or timed grid-walking, or both when the exercise is nested. Findspots can generally be plotted to within 50 metres and comparisons made between recovery rates within each standardised sample unit. Artefacts of all periods are generally collected unless the project has specialised research aims. The units mapped will vary in size but the edges of the units will correspond generally to visible features or to the Ordnance Survey national grid. Where several discontinuous areas are walked during a large-scale project (e.g. a bypass corridor) thought must be given in numbering each area walked separately.

UNSYSTEMATIC SURFACE COLLECTION UNIT (USCU): These are the areas covered by teams or individuals collecting artefacts on the ploughsoil surface. Findspots are not so rigorously recorded during collection (typically to the nearest field) and not all artefacts will be recovered. Finds recognition may be variable. The non-systematic nature of the work means that comparisons cannot easily be made between sample units. Some metal-detecting runs will fit into this site type.

RECORDED STRAY FIND (RSF): These are finds made by individuals where the circumstances of discovery are known and the findspot can be pinpointed to within 100 square metres or better. Recorded stray finds might be made when digging the garden or walking the dog and usually by persons with some archaeological awareness. Finds and findspots are generally made known to a local unit or museum.

UNRECORDED STRAY FIND (USF): These are finds made by individuals where the findspot and usually also the circumstances of recovery are unknown. Many antiquarian finds from the nineteenth century are unrecorded stray finds.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY UNIT (GSU): The unit refers to the area covered by the survey and should
be taken to include all forms of remote sensing. As with the Interpretation and Mapping Units mentioned above the important area to be mapped is that covered by the survey and not the interpreted features within the wider survey area. The area chosen for survey may lie away from visible features but will usually be orientated along the Ordnance Survey National Grid lines.

TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY UNIT (TSU): Topographical survey includes all levels of survey from basic sketch plotting through to full interpretative EDM plots. As with Geophysical Survey Units the area chosen for survey may lie away from visible features but will usually be keyed in with the Ordnance Survey National Grid lines.

PLACE-NAME EVIDENCE (PN): Both place-names and street names can help to provide archaeological data. This site type was not fully explored during the Project.

VISIBLE FEATURE (VF): Visible features include all features, components and monuments which exist in such a form as to be apparent to the naked eye in the field. The following visible forms are recognised: buildings, standing structures, earthworks, subterranean and submerged sites. A visible site can be the subject of a Topographical Surveyor Standing Structure Record.

CARTOGRAPHIC DEPICTION (CD): All information which can be transcribed from pre-existing maps fits into this type. This will include street-names, place-names, field-names, archaeological finds, earthwork depictions, land-use, geological maps and buildings of historical importance, amongst others. The mapping of cartographic depictions can be best understood by example. In the case of a town map of Cirencester, this is a single source which can be broken down into units of varying size ranging from the area of a former building outline to a single archaeological findspot. The elected size of the units mapped is not important and units can overlap.

INDIRECT RECORD (IR): These are reported secondary accounts, either oral or written. For example, many popular accounts of Cirencester's archaeology are derived from pre-existing archaeological literature. If there is nothing original in the account and it consists only of re-ordered data it must be categorised as an indirect record. Likewise, some diaries and letters recount the actions and words of others without confirmation. These too are indirect records.

DOCUMENTARY RECORD UNIT (DRU): Primary historical documents can contain useful archaeological information either concerning a general area or a particular findspot. The unit size to be mapped remains flexible and can produce several overlapping DRUs. In Cirencester, the number of DRUs for any one monument is surprisingly limited and this reflects the lack of historical analysis of documentary records in recent years. As this bias is corrected more rigorous criteria for inclusion may be considered for this site type.

PICTORIAL UNIT (PU): This is a general term for all works of art or pictorial recording, such as photography, drawing, etc. Architects' elevations fit into this site type.

STANDING STRUCTURE RECORD (SSR): Archaeological principles can be applied to the study of standing buildings when the fabric of a structure comes under critical and/or interpretative analysis.

Site analysis

Site recognition can vary from an antiquarian excavation in the eighteenth century to the interpretation and mapping units of twentieth century aerial photographs. Up to August 1991 there were 3473 sites recorded for the four parishes in the study area (including the urban area of Cirencester). These derive from 1210 different sources. The most numerous single source was fieldwork in connection with the Cirencester Urban Assessment Project which provided a total of 1150 additional sites, followed by the 1875 Ordnance Survey mapping of the town with 167 sites. Of the total number of sites, 3335 are in Cirencester parish, 34 in Baunton, 55 in Siddington, and 49 in Preston.

Accumulation and chronological changes

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentages of different types of site recognition. Indirect records make up 38% of all the site types represented in the study area. A total of 1002 new indirect records (IR, 75%) were collected during the course of the CUA project. Pictorial units (PU) such as photographs and illustrations make up 12%, and cartographic depictions (CD) 10%. In purely statistical terms only a small proportion of the archaeological observations were made during archaeological intervention. There are only 93 modern excavations (ME) which is less than 3% of the total number of sites. These figures are reflected in the bar-chart in Figure 11.

Figure 12 shows the total number of sites made by
Figure 11
Bar-chart showing the number of sites recorded by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE TYPE</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antiquarian excavations</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartographic depictions</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>10.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary units</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation excavations</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation and mapping units</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect records</td>
<td>1326</td>
<td>38.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern excavations</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place-names</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictorial units</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>12.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded stray finds</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded observations</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrecorded stray finds</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>12.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsystematic surface collections</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible features</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching briefs</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>3473</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2 Frequency of site types within the Study Area
Figure 12.
Graph showing the number of sites recorded by year in the period 1750–1990.

Year over the period 1750 to 1990. The peaks around 1800, 1850, 1875, 1911 and 1921 are clearly picked out and represent the input of site data drawn from major sources including the Ordnance Survey maps (1875 and 1921) and Museum records (1911 Taylor map for the Cripps Museum). Much of the early data is derived from the work of Rudder in 1800 and Beecham in 1887. Aside from these very obvious peaks there is a notable increase in the number of observations made in the years after 1850, with a steady annual increase until about 1920. This represents input from well-respected local personalities such as Buckman, Bravender, Cripps, Taylor, Haverfield and Baddeley and, in particular, a flourishing early interest in the Roman archaeology in Cirencester which was being exposed during the laying of sewers and water pipes and in the Victorian building developments in the southern half of the town.
Between 1920 and 1960 the number of observations dropped away dramatically, most notably between the First and Second World Wars. Following the formation of the Cirencester Excavation Committee in 1958 the number of sites recorded each year begins to rise again and this continues into the 1990s under the auspices of the Cotswold Archaeological Trust.

Individual types of site show patterns of incidence which differ slightly from the general trends. Pictorial units, for example, show a steady stream of examples from 1779 onwards, increasing in the early part of this century as photography begins to make a contribution. Excavations, both AE and ME, show a steady gradient of increasing numbers from about 1875 until a peak in the mid-1960s when the work of the Cirencester Excavation Committee was at its height. Since 1980 there has been a drop in the level of government funding for this kind of archaeology and the inclination has been towards small-scale evaluations as a part of the planning process coupled with the preservation of archaeological sites in situ rather than through excavation. The number of excavations fell as the number of recorded observations (RO) increased (Figure 13). Between 1974 and 1988 there were more watching briefs (WB).

Recorded stray finds (RSF) from the study area occur with increasing frequency after 1850. By 1875, 45 recorded observations (RO) were being made a year, whereas 100 years previously the average was only two observations a year. Some 100 years later, in 1975, there were over 90 a year. This reflects increasing antiquarian interest in the late nineteenth century and the influence of professional archaeological interest in the town since about 1960. Different patterning is clear from documentary record units (DRU) which also peak in the late nineteenth century but remain low throughout the twentieth century, reflecting a lack of modern detailed documentary research for the town.

Unrecorded stray finds (USF) have remained roughly constant in number since the mid eighteenth century. Surprisingly, increased agricultural production and urban development since the Second World War has only led to a negligible increase in the number of finds, or perhaps more accurately, the number of known but imprecisely recorded stray finds.

Taking all these patterns into account the most important overall trend is in the quality of the data. Set-piece open-area excavations and evaluations inevitably yield higher quality data (whether positive or negative) than watching briefs and the recovery of unrecorded stray finds. Thus although the number of sites relating to some site-types is small their implications are considerable. Between 1958 and 1976, there were some 37 major open-area excavations (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, fig 2). These ranged from the extensive work at Beeches Road (c2900 sq m), the Bath Gate Cemetery (c7500 sq m), and Admiral's Walk (c4000 sq m) down to cuttings through the defences and the recording of land in advance of small-scale development. Overall, the total area examined by excavation within the Roman town of Cirencester is estimated at c64000 sq m, which amounts to approximately 6.6% of the walled town.

This is not to say that stray finds are unimportant, they are not. For example, the inscribed plinth from a Jupiter column, found in 1892 in the garden of a house known as The Firs in Victoria Road, provides important information about the status of the town in the fourth century. Smaller finds such as coins, burials, and even pottery and tile are important indicators of the nature and extent of different kinds of activities within and around the town for all periods.

One other factor which can be discerned from the trends in the accumulation of site records is the lamentable lack of a full-time professional archaeological presence in the town during periods of rapid growth and expansion such as during the early 1960s and 1970s, and to a lesser extent during the early 1980s. Opportunities for boosting site numbers were undeniably lost during this period.
Future trends

In future the number of evaluations looks likely to increase and the number of large-scale urban excavations will remain low. Stray finds will continue to be found while the numbers of pictorial units will rise. It is to be hoped that the lack of documentary research, particularly for the medieval and early post-medieval periods in Cirencester, is soon corrected. It is recognised that site-types such as those derived from place-name evidence, cartographic depictions and documentary records have not yet been fully exploited.
PART III
DATA INTERPRETATION AND RECORD DEVELOPMENT
6. MONUMENTS AND DEPOSITS

"Grismond's Tower by the Chapel of St Cecilia, where King Arthur was crowned, lies west of Cirencester Town, which anciently was called the City of Sparrows."

William of Worcester, Itinerarium, c1479, translated from the Latin

"It is certain, therefore, that the Romans, the Saxons, and the Normans, all of them in turn, had respected this barrow; though quite probably the last-mentioned people may have used it as a commanding salient, or barbican, in relation to the neighbouring castle."

Welbore St Clair Baddeley, History of Cirencester (1924)

With the full range of archaeological data to hand the process of recognising individual monuments and deposits can be undertaken. This is the first main level of interpretation and demands just as much if not more skill and professional judgement as the definition of sites: wide experience with the recognition of field monuments and the excavation of archaeological deposits is the best training for this aspect of the work. Fanciful interpretation of the kind reflected in the first citation at the head of the Chapter is all too easy and whilst obvious when taken to extremes it is much more difficult to spot interpretations based on wishful thinking rather than solid data as the second citation shows.

This short Chapter looks briefly at the processes of data interpretation and then considers the scale of the interpreted resource in the Study Area.

Monuments

In practice, the recognition of monuments involves carefully trawling through the available data looking for links and connections that allow examples of defined monument classes to be picked out, or at least the constitution of sets of data which may be classifiable as a monument of some kind. In some cases a single site record will be enough to define a monument, or at least provide the basis of recognition which can be supported by the inclusion of data from other sites deemed to be relevant. Equally, a distinctive monument may be visible through recognition of some small element of it (eg a bath-house); the recognition of such a monument carries with it the implication that the aerial extent of the monument conforms more or less to that of other examples of the class. In this way it may be possible to develop predictions about adjacent areas.

The whole process of recognising monuments is one of interpretation and should be seen not simply as a point-in-time operation but a continuing activity involving different areas of specialism. Things which may not initially seem relevant may be seen to connect together when looked at another way. Familiarity with the data is important here. APPENDIX A provides a listing of the main fields used on the monuments record. There is also a worked example of how a range of site records from the central area of Cirencester come together to allow the recognition of the basilica. In viewing the example it is relevant to note that while some of the sites can be seen to relate only to what is here interpreted as the basilica (eg 53622 which is itself an interpretative statement) there are others (eg 50022) which also yield data relevant to other monuments with precede or succeed the basilica (eg the first-century fort).

A total of 538 single monuments have been identified to date within the Study Area. Of the total, some 111 monuments of medieval and earlier date (pre-1540) are in rural areas and 151 are within the urban area. This bias towards monument recognition in the urban area should be expected (Table 3) and reflects the higher density of Roman and medieval monuments in the town as well as the intensity of construction work and ground investigation in Cirencester itself.

Considering only rural monuments within the four parishes it is clear that Cirencester outweighs the contribution of the other three parishes, containing 54% (105 monuments) of all rural monuments (Table 4). If the urban area is included
TABLE 3 Frequency of monuments in urban and rural situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>undated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prehistoric</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-urban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early medieval</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medieval</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-medieval</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The present list of single monuments in the Study Area will undoubtedly change as new monuments are recognised and the interpretation of site data improves. The presence of some monuments has been predicted from the best available data and it is anticipated that further work, particularly within the urban area, will clarify the identity and extent of some possible monuments. Inevitably there are a number of substantial components of what could be recognised as major monuments if only some more distinctive elements were present. Examples include the recorded existence of rooms and even parts of buildings with mosaic floors and upstanding walls which could be components of anything from the Roman baths to a small private dwelling. Only further data, or perhaps in a few cases some additional analysis of existing data, will resolve such questions.

The monuments already recorded do allow some insights into the distribution and extent of activities at various times in the past. Figure 15 shows the distribution of prehistoric monuments (BC to AD 43) within the Study Area as a whole, including that area later covered by the urban area of Cirencester (Figure 16). Figures 18, 26, 31, 33, 34, 41, 43 and 49 show the distribution of monuments of Roman (AD 43 to AD 450), early medieval (AD 450 to AD 1066), medieval (AD 1066 to AD 1540), and post-medieval (AD 1540 to the present day) date in the Study Area. The date ranges reflect the main phases of the prehistoric and historic calendar in use by the Department of the Environment (1983) and English Heritage (Darvill 1988a).

TABLE 4 Frequency of rural monuments by parish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cirencester</th>
<th>Haunton</th>
<th>Preston</th>
<th>Siddingston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>undated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prehistoric</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early medieval</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medieval</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-medieval</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCENTAGE</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accumulated deposits

In the case of accumulated deposits the key to recognition involves the identification of interconnecting stratigraphy which is archaeological in origin and which reflects the successive execution of a series of activities in the past. This is necessary to distinguish such deposits from naturally forming sediments and layers such as may occur through geological or geomorphological processes. Also, the process of monument identification can be criticised for being overly mechanistic and can lead to an unwelcome over-emphasis on static historic episodes (e.g., the Roman period), failing to address the dynamics of change. Consideration of accumulated deposits can be helpful here.

No separate record was made for accumulated deposits as they cannot easily be described in the way that monuments can. The way forward in terms of their future recording is seen in terms of three-dimensional computer generated deposit models (see Carver 1987a for methods of determining deposit quality, and Ove Arup 1991 for York application). These would be based on the data obtained from relevant sites, especially spatial data from excavations and related events. In Cirencester, in spite of a long history of archaeological investigation, there is insufficient available data to provide a reliable model. As indicated in Chapter 2, accumulated deposits can, however, be evaluated in another way in terms of their importance by reference to the non-statutory criteria. This is explored further with reference to specific forms in Chapters 8-11 and with reference to the whole town in Chapter 12.

Before we begin with more detailed discussion of archaeological monuments it is of some interest to consider the changing urban form of Cirencester more generally.

Figure 14 contrasts the formal regularity of a large Roman town against the smaller amorphous medieval town crowded towards the northern half of the former Roman wall circuit. A massive Roman stone form replaced with a more dispersed organic landscape.

During the medieval period attenuated suburbs developed to the north astride the road to Gloucester. Elsewhere, the former Roman town wall has always been substantial enough to impede development across it. The gateways have continued to funnel traffic into the town and clues to the line of walls are still to be seen in the modern ring road system and the web of cul-de-sacs which end at the bank and ditches.

The medieval pattern of land ownership has also had an important impact on modern land-use and the shift of balance from religious to secular authority following the Dissolution is still legible in the urban form. The area of the medieval Abbey precinct which shows clearly as a tongue of empty space to the north of the market place remained as private land until quite recently when it was turned into a public park. Likewise the probable site of the medieval motte and bailey on the western side of the town later became the private estate of Cirencester Park. The ditch or moat for the castle was filled in and turned into a thoroughfare. This gives the modern plan of Cirencester the odd appearance of an apple with two chunks taken out of the western and eastern sides. A process of leapfrogging has taken place here in which the built-up area has expanded leaving gaps and zones of varied land-use behind it.

After relatively slow urban growth in the post-Conquest period, at least in terms of built-up space, in the nineteenth century there came huge leaps in area and scale. Urban infill and the endless subdivision of properties and houses suddenly ended as Cirencester's population was released into the southern part of the town. The full extent of the Roman town was finally reached again after 1875 with planned suburbs and working-class housing drawn towards new industries and lines of communication such as the canal and railways on the peripheries of the town. The extra-mural zone also attracted urban uses in need of plenty of space such as cattle markets, garden allotments and water reservoirs and those activities particularly deemed hazardous to health like hospitals and planned urban cemeteries. Infilling continues today with the trend towards large-scale, low density buildings such as supermarkets at the edge of the historic core.

In 1990 nothing much of the Roman town is visible but the urban area remains where it began and in its present form is just the most recent in many phases of major and minor adjustment. Proof of that continuity is in the interlocking of different periods of our past within the same urban context. The site of the Roman basilica marked out in the street alongside nineteenth-century residential housing and public parks, looks northwards through the barren townscape of the mis-named Forum car-park to the medieval tower of the parish church of St John the Baptist.

For the archaeologist, all these expansions and contractions in the urban area have had a clear influence on the distribution of accumulated deposits and siting of monuments. As we shall see in more detail in subsequent Chapters, thicker deposits tend to be concentrated where several urban areas are superimposed, whereas single phases of post-medieval accumulation lie on the outskirts of the modern town.
Figure 14
The changing morphology of Cirencester from the Roman period to the present day. The 'built-up' areas are shaded.
7. THE CIRENCESTER AREA IN THE PREHISTORIC AND EARLY ROMAN PERIODS

by Timothy Darvill and Neil Holbrook

'...Ala Indiana' occupied for a while some smallish fort. But its ramparts, like those of most early forts, would perhaps have been of earth not stone; its internal structures, too, may well have been wooden, not stone built: but whatever there was has now been built over and effaced in many centuries. If the whole area could be minutely excavated, a skilful excavator might, no doubt, detect the fort by its ditch, or even by the post-holes of its wooden buildings.'

Francis Haverfield writing prophetically in 1920

This Chapter considers both monuments and deposits relating to the prehistoric and early Roman periods, a wide span of time from about 10,000 BC down to the end of the first century AD (Figure 15). During this time there was no urban area where Cirencester now stands and the whole Study Area was essentially rural in its character. The approach adopted is largely chronological, starting with the earliest periods. For many antiquarians and archaeologists concerned with the Roman and later remains of Cirencester the prehistoric period in the area was of no interest. The data which relate to this period are often difficult to handle, and when work is undertaken in a non-scientific manner it is often incapable of all but the most rudimentary reinterpretation.

Palaeolithic and Mesolithic (to 4000 BC)

There is no Palaeolithic material recorded from the Study Area, although abundant stray finds of flint tools have been recorded from gravel terrace deposits in the upper Thames Valley to the south-east of the present area of interest (Saville 1984, 59-79; Darvill 1987a, 20).

The earliest monument known in the study area dates from the Mesolithic period, about 9000 BC, and may tentatively be interpreted as the campsite of a Neolithic hunter-gatherer community. Such monuments are notoriously difficult to define as they are recognised almost exclusively from worked flint preserved in the topsoil. The example in the study area (54032) is from Preston parish and is defined on the basis of data from a systematic surface collection programme carried out as part of the assessment of the possible route of the Cirencester Bypass (CAT 1991). Over 40 Mesolithic sites are known in Gloucestershire, although relatively few are known on the Cotswold dip-slope. The nearest comparable example is at Bagendon in the Churn Valley (Clifford 1961).

Neolithic (4000-2000 BC)

The Cotswolds are famous for their well-preserved Neolithic funerary monuments, mainly long barrows (Crawford 1925; Darvill 1982a), although contemporary settlements are less well represented. A long barrow at the Quems on the south-western fringe of Cirencester has variously been claimed as authentic, seemingly on very little firm data (54079; see O'Neil and Grinsell 1960, 75). As a visible feature there is an earthwork 54.8m long by 15.2m wide and up to 0.9m high. Viewed from the north-east in particular this earthwork looks very like a small Cotswold-type long barrow. An antiquarian excavation in 1820 brought to light human remains. 'I remember opening it by making transverse cuts through it but I have no recollection of finding any skeletons in condition capable of measurement' (see Buckman and Newmarch 1850, 12). Data from other sites in the vicinity reveals that the mound lies within an area of Roman quarrying, adjacent to a Roman road, and on the edge of a known Roman cemetery. There is nothing in the data available which
substantiates the view that there is a long barrow at the Querns. The earthwork is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and in the absence of further substantiating evidence it is probably advisable to question its authenticity as a distinct prehistoric monument.

Possible settlements of Neolithic and early Bronze Age date are represented in the Study Area by flint scatters. One of the most marked is north of Hare Bushes where data from a series of sites combine to allow some insights into the possible monument. A concentration of flintwork was noted by Sydney Coombes in 1972 (Coombes Archive, deposited in Corinium Museum). Subsequently, systematic surface collection in 1991 on an adjacent field brought to light further flintwork including a leaf-shaped arrowhead (CAT 1991). It seems likely that the two scatters are contiguous and represent a single monument. Evaluation excavations within the corridor for the proposed Cirencester Bypass failed to reveal sub-surface features; the focus of the monument presumably therefore lies outside the area sampled or has been ploughed away. A second flint scatter was located by systematic surface collection south of Exhibition Barn, Baunton. Subsequent evaluation excavation revealed sub-surface features including pits, but no firm dating evidence was found.

Away from the proposed bypass line, unsystematic surface collection by Coombes in the early 1970s located a number of activity areas, some of which are possibly settlements and trackways (54017, 54023, 54029, 54031). The nature and extent of these possible monuments requires critical review and should be seen more as a prompt for further research rather than definitively-recognised monuments.

That other Neolithic monuments await definition is supported by the number of stray finds of Neolithic material from the Study Area. One such find, a stone adze of Group VI (Great Langdale) rock was found during an excavation at The Beeches in a Roman context. This implement may have been found locally or imported from elsewhere (McWhirr 1986, 124–6), although the former is more likely. Part of a second axe of Cornish Greenstone (Group I) was found during fieldwalking for the proposed Bypass in Preston.

**Bronze Age (2000–700 BC)**

Evidence of Bronze Age activity within the study area is largely confined to funerary monuments. There is an upstanding mound (54003) to the south of Wellhill Plantation, possibly a bowl barrow, with a diameter of 30m and standing 1.5m high. Beecham (1887, 256) mentions a ‘bell-shaped’ tumulus (54437) in Stratton Field, ‘penetrated in 1868 and found to contain a skeleton’. This monument is unlocated and there are no other known records of the excavation. It is possible, but incapable of proof, that this may refer to the Wellhill barrow. The three other upstanding barrows (Tar Barrows and Grismond’s Mound) have traditionally been considered to be Roman, although an earlier date cannot be entirely excluded (see below). Two round barrows previously marked by the OS in the area of the Querns have been considered as doubtful by O’Neil and Grinsell (1960, Cirencester 4, 5); they are most probably mounds of quarry waste or perhaps related to the medieval gallows. In addition to the upstanding barrows a number of ring-ditches, one of the most distinctive components of a number of classes of round barrow but also components of other classes of quite different monuments, have been recorded by aerial photography (Darvill and Grinsell 1989). Ring ditches occur both singly (54137) or in larger groups (54153, 54541 and 54542).

A concentration of ring ditches and other cropmarks is known to the east of Preston village covering an area of approximately 20ha. Five ring ditches are recorded (54133–6, 54031) one of double penannular form. Evaluation trenching of the latter found an internal pit but unfortunately no dating evidence. Adjacent to the ring ditches is a ditched enclosure of probable sub-rectangular form which was evaluated as part of the Bypass project; the upper fill of the ditch yielded sherds of mid-late Bronze Age pottery. Although further work is required to adequately define the plan of the monument, one possible interpretation is as a Neolithic long mortuary enclosure which preceded the construction of the barrow cemetery.

Less than 1km to the south-east of this barrow cemetery further ring ditches are known (54137 and others outside the Study Area), with a flint scatter of probable Neolithic/Bronze Age date in close proximity. One of the ring ditches (which lies immediately outside the Study Area) produced a sherd of an early Bronze Age collared urn.

The complex to the east of Preston is of some interest as it occupies a characteristic barrow setting (an area of locally high ground) at a location close to the interface between the Cotswold dip-slope and the Upper Thames valley. Of the 300 or so barrows and ring ditches recorded from Gloucestershire there is a bias in distribution towards the north Cotswolds and the gravel terraces of the Thames valley. The Preston cemetery is therefore of interest as it lies at the interface of two environmental zones, one of which, the South Cotswolds, is an area where such complexes are rarely encountered (CAT 1991, 121–7).

On the gravel terraces of Siddington a number of ring ditches are known (seven are listed by Darvill
The Prehistoric and Early Roman Periods

The chronology of Bagendon remains an outstanding problem. Finds of Arretine and early Gaulish samian pottery (Dannell 1977) suggest occupation a decade or so before the Roman conquest. How long the site was occupied after the invasion is more difficult to determine, especially as only a minute portion of the interior has been investigated. Swan (1975) has attempted to push most of the excavated evidence into the post-conquest period, although further revision may be required in the light of recent research. The general dissimilarity between the coarse pottery from Bagendon and Cirencester suggests that occupation had largely ceased prior to the military occupation at Cirencester. Regarding the function of Bagendon there seems no doubt that it was an aristocratic centre of the Dobunni; and the apparent occupation in the years following the invasion suggests tacit Roman approval for the tribal leader (see Wacher 1975, 292-3 for a summary of various earlier theories). The establishment of a Roman fort at Cirencester need not necessarily mark a change in Roman attitude (p 55).

The presence of such a high status site would doubtless have exerted a major influence on the contemporary settlement pattern of the Study Area of this project. The Whiteway may have been a pre-Roman ridgeway track leading off the Cotswolds towards a crossing of the River Churn at the later site of Cirencester (see below). It is conceivable that there may have been pre-Roman activity at the crossing, although excavated evidence to date suggests that this is unlikely to have been on any scale on the site later occupied by the Roman town. The only possible evidence of pre-Roman features found in excavations is a circle of stake holes, 2.4m in diameter, which predates the Leaholme fort (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 28) and just possibly a stake palisade found adjacent to the Verulamium Gate (unless this is Roman military; J S Wacher pers comm). Reece (1990, 39-40) also considered that one of the features excavated at Kingshill might date to the late Iron Age period, but this is not certain.

No sites on the gravels of Siddington can be conclusively assigned to the late Iron Age, although this is undoubtedly a factor of the lack of fieldwork. In a recent survey of gravel sites Fulford (1992) has noted how settlements which are established in the early-middle Iron Age do not appear to continue beyond the first century AD, or rarely the second century AD. Conversely settlements which show evidence of structural continuity through the Roman period appear to commence in the late Iron Age, ie the first century BC-mid first century AD. Fulford speculates that the evidence for the abandonment of certain rural settlements in the early Roman period might be related to population drift to the newly

and Grinsell 1989, 94-5) and these form part of a much wider distribution of Bronze Age monuments in the Upper Thames valley in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. Although none of the ring ditches in Siddington have been excavated, work in neighbouring parishes in advance of gravel extraction points to the complexity we might expect. Such work has also brought to life evidence of contemporary settlement. The recent work at Shorncote quarry (5 km south of Cirencester) serves as a suitable example: a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age U-shaped enclosure was found in proximity to several beaker graves and a small Deverel-Rimbury cremation cemetery. On an adjacent site a late Bronze Age settlement comprising round-houses and large pits has been excavated (Glass 1991; Gardiner 1993, 15-16).

Iron Age (700 BC-AD 50)

There is currently comparatively little evidence of early-middle Iron Age activity within the Cirencester area. Sample excavation of a series of enclosures on the higher ground to the east of the Roman town took place in 1974-6. The sites were known from cropmarks (RCHME 1976, 30(5)); the excavations found a ditched enclosure with an exterior pit which showed a sequence of at least three phases at the entrance. The pit produced a sherd of hand-made Iron Age pottery which probably predates the late Iron Age wheel-thrown wares found at Bagendon (Reece 1990, 9-25). There are a number of similar cropmark features visible on aerial photographs which might merit classification as later prehistoric monuments in the future as more information about them becomes available. For example immediately south of the Study Area on the gravel terraces of the Upper Thames a middle Iron Age site spreading over 2ha has recently been evaluated at Spratsgate Lane, Somerford Keynes (Wills 1990, 197; Parry 1991, 235).

In the late Iron Age period any discussion of the Cirencester region would be deficient without some reference to the complex at Bagendon which lies immediately north of the Study Area. A series of discontinuous banks and ditches (dykes) define an area of approximately 200ha which includes valley bottom and adjacent hillsides. Excavations in 1954-6 and 1980-1 have elucidated some details, although much remains to be learnt about the function and chronology of the site. The excavations produced evidence for a number of phases of industrial activity, including the manufacture of Dobunnic coinage. The latter, combined with the presence of imported ceramics and glass (and by inference therefore foodstuffs) mark Bagendon as a site of high status and it has commonly been included within the category of oppida (Trow 1990, 108-10).
Figure 15
Prehistoric monuments in the Study Area
established towns and the imposition of Roman administration and taxes. At a local level the pattern seems to be represented in the excavations to the south of Siddington in Somerford Keynes, where the middle Iron Age Spratsgate Lane site appears to be abandoned, while at Cotswold Community a late Iron Age settlement with associated fieldsystems continued into the Roman period (Parry 1989; Wills 1990; Gardiner 1993, 15-16).

Pre-urban Roman (cAD 50–AD 100)

The main monuments examined in this section are the Roman road system and the evidence for Roman military occupation (Figure 16).

The road network

It is a commonly held view that the road network was established in southern Britain within a few years of the Conquest, although critical assessment shows that, in at least some cases, the earliest metalled surfaces detectable in excavation may date to some decades after the period of initial military activity. In the vicinity of Cirencester the following roads have been defined as monuments (see Figures 16 and 25):

Ermin Street: SE of Cirencester leading to Wanborough and Silchester (54292); NW of the town heading for Gloucester (Kingsholm) (54238)

| Key to Figure 15: | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (undated) | settlement (dated) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | settlement (undated) | trackway (prehistoric) | 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The Whiteway: leading northwards in the general direction of Andoversford/Wycomb (S4143).

The absolute and relative chronology of these roads is a major research priority for the future as it may provide a telling insight into the early Roman occupation of Cirencester. There has been useful discussion of the problem (Wacher 1965, 99-101; Margary 1967, 146-50; Reece and Catling 1975, 3-6; Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 65-6) but fresh direct evidence is required to resolve outstanding problems.

By virtue of the incorporation of the Roman roads into the modern highway network opportunities for direct physical examination have been few. Field evaluation in advance of the proposed Cirencester Bypass led to trenching of the Fosse Way at Hare Bushes, although only the margin of the road was available for study as the remainder was overlain by post-medieval and modern surfaces. The Roman road proved to be built from local limestone rubble, and a flanking ditch might have served as a convenient source of roadstone. The ditch was filled in the second-third century. Some 4m beyond this quarry ditch lay a second shallow ditch which might have defined the limit of the area designated as road and thus in state control (CAT 1991, 129-30).

The status of the Whiteway as a Roman road requires closer examination, although a persuasive case can be made. Reece and Catling (1975, 3-5) stress its importance in the early Roman period, considering it to be a pre-Roman ridgeway track leading southwards off the Cotswolds to a crossing of the Churn at Cirencester, which lies at the point where the river valley widens out into the broad and (most probably) marshy floodplain of the upper Thames. The earliest course of the Whiteway as it approaches Cirencester is not as yet known with certainty; the modern road line is a reflection of the medieval and post-medieval development of the Abbey Grounds. To the north of the Study Area the Whiteway runs in straight lengths along the high ground until its junction with the Welsh Way where it adopts a sinuous and presumably later course (an agger is visible in North Plantation, North Cerney parish (RCHME 1976, 86)). Projecting the putative earlier alignment southwards provides a course heading for the Verulamium gate of the town and the earlier Leofholm fort. Close examination of this line revealed that a field boundary clearly rises over an earthwork feature near Exhibition Barn, and an evaluation trench cut to test the alignment revealed a single, well-cut ditch (containing no finds). No metalling was found in this trench, although the road need not have been metalled throughout its course, especially where it passes over firm limestone, as Marshall (1989) has discussed for a more northerly section of the road (CAT 1991, 53-4, 129).

Of the other roads Ermin Street displays a marked change in alignment at the point later occupied by the Silchester gate of the Roman town. Wacher and McWhirr (1982, 55) suggest that this might reflect the position of a military establishment which preceded the known Leofholm fort. Equally it could relate to the need for the road to cross the Churn and its floodplain at a suitable fording or bridging point. Recent work has elucidated somewhat the pre/early Roman course occupied by the Churn. Evaluation at City Bank, Watermoor in 1990 found a channel of the Churn with numerous intercutting subsidiary channels running on a broadly NW-SE alignment. First-early second century pottery was recovered from the sand and gravel fills of the channels, and a causeway, constructed from limestone blocks, traversed the area. The causeway seems quickly to have been covered by black organic deposits which denote a change in the river regime as the area progressively silted up and developed as marshland. Clearly the Churn no longer flowed through this area after the early second century (R King 1990e). A comparable picture was recovered from the evaluation at Kingsmeadow immediately south of the town in 1991 where silted, braided river channels were found to the SW of the present course of the Churn which here runs parallel with Ermin Street. At least one of these channels was still open in the second century (OAU 1991). Taken together the two evaluations point to a change in the riverine regime in the second century and this must surely be related to the canalisation of the Churn and its diversion around the outside of the north-east defences (see below). The general impression gained is that the Churn ran on a NNW-SE alignment through Watermoor and Kingsmeadow in the early Roman period, in which case the change in alignment of Ermin Street could mark the original crossing point of the river. From this point Ermin Street heads north-westwards towards Gloucester (Kingsholm) and the Leofholm fort appears to straddle the road.

The alignment of the Fosse Way either side of Cirencester remains a puzzle. To the north-east the road follows an alignment heading directly towards...
Cirencester until it makes a marked southward deviation at Raggedhedge Covert. Wacher (1965, 99–101) believed this latter section to be a diversion of an original course which would continue the road on a south-westward alignment to meet the north-east gate of the Leaholme fort, and subsequently to dictate the position of the Verulamium Gate which would have been sited upon it. Such an alignment was originally suggested by K M Kenyon (1948, 38) although in the absence of knowledge of the fort. In support we may note that Tar Barrows lie immediately adjacent to the projected alignment (occupied at this point by a field boundary (CAT 1981, 132)). It is conceivable that Tar Barrows are Roman rather than prehistoric in date (see below); if so it is of note that this class of monument is frequently early Roman in date and often adopts a roadside location (Collingwood and Richmond 1969, 169–70). If this hypothesis is correct it would suggest that Akeman Street and Kingshill Lane are later accretions to the road system.

The course of the Fosse Way to the south-west of the town also remains a problem, for once again after adopting a straight course the road undertakes a curious bend to enter the (known) Bath Gate. Excavation of a roadside building outside the Bath Gate indicates that this course was in existence before c. AD 250 (McWhirr et al. 1982, 46–9). Again this may also be a later development and formerly the road perhaps followed a continuation of its original alignment beneath modern Old Tetbury Road. Further observations are required to clarify the picture, although the discovery of first-second century cremation burials close to the point where Old Tetbury Road enters Cirencester, lends support to the notion of a road on this alignment at an early date (Reece 1962b).

In discussions of the road system much has been made of the importance of the Fosse Way, but as Margary (1967, 148) pointed out it is surely significant that the Leaholme fort is aligned upon the north-west extension of Ermin Street rather than the Fosse.

The fort and vicus

That there was a Roman military establishment in Cirencester is not in doubt; its form (or forms) and date are more problematical (Figure 16). Of the military occupation we know a little, reported in detail by Wacher and McWhirr (1982). The defences have been found on three sites. Excavation in 1961 on the site of the later basilica discovered a pair of parallel ditches (Figure 17). In 1964 similar ditches were located in Chester Mews, and the tip of a probable early ditch was observed at Price’s Row in 1974; geophysical survey to locate the south-east defences unfortunately yielded inconclusive results. From these observations and a consideration of symmetry of other fort plans, Wacher and McWhirr reconstructed a fort (known as the Leaholme fort) with dimensions of 110m SE-NW along the via principalis and 165m NE-SW, giving an internal area of 1.8ha (4.5 acres) (54011). As the authors state these statistics are to varying degrees hypothesis and further evidence is required for certainty.

Internal buildings have been examined in small trenches in several locations; they were of timber construction, both individual posts and post-in-trench. In no case has sufficient of the plan been recovered for building functions to be adduced. At least three phases of internal buildings have been recognised and the excavators have sought to identify two phases to the defensive circuit. The putative first phase of the defences is represented by a pair of ditches 0.65m wide and 1.25m deep (one of the ditches was sealed by a later intervallum road). Consideration of the small size of the ditches led the excavators to suggest that they represent the presence of a campaign ‘camp or hiberna (winter quarters) associated with the earlier years of the invasion and the initial military contact’ (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 78). Others may follow Fulford (1983) and wonder if this evidence alone is sufficient to suggest the existence of an earlier phase of military activity. The evidence for the military annexes is discussed elsewhere (p 67).

The proposed chronology of the Leaholme fort may be summarised: foundation c. 45–50; a large dump of pottery (some of it unused) in the fort ditch dated c. 60–65 is argued to relate to a change in garrison rather than abandonment as demolition and sealing deposits have yielded early Flavian material. Abandonment c. 75 is proposed. R Kenyon (1987, 38, table 22) in his tabulation of the small quantity of Claudian copied asses from Cirencester shows that the large heavy asses minted in the years immediately following the Invasion are largely absent from the town however, and Reece (1982) generally considered the assemblage to be consistent with a date after the late 40s. Foundation may not have occurred before c. 50 therefore. Regarding the life of the fort similarities in the pottery from Leaholme and that used at the Gloucester (Kingsholm) site are noteworthy, especially considering the lack of parallels with the pottery from the Gloucester (colonia site) fortress (Darling 1977, 64–7; Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 79). Abandonment of Kingsholm is currently dated to the mid-late 60s, which would accord with the date of the pottery from the Cirencester fort ditch. The dumping of quantities of pottery into the ditch terminals at a gate, by analogy with Cardean and Tiverton (Maxfield 1991, 67–8) points strongly to abandonment of the site. If this is
Figure 16
Pre-urban Roman monuments (cAD 50–AD 100)

Key to Figure 16:

- 54046: Roman fort
- 54011: street (Romano-British)
- 54111: vicus
- 54141: Tombstones

Figure 16
Pre-urban Roman monuments (cAD 50–AD 100)
so, a somewhat shorter period of military occupation, 
c50/55-65/70, might be proposed (the bulk of the
early Flavian material, if that from the putative
annexes is excluded, comes from layers sealing the
military levels). The Leaholme fort may therefore
have been occupied for little more than a decade,
although there is seemingly evidence for at least two
different cavalry regiments in garrison (Wacher and

The siting of a fort at Cirencester in relation to its
proximity to Bagendon has been much discussed. To
Wacher (1975, 30) the location was both tactical and
political: the tactical control of a major bridging point
of the Churn by two roads while also supervising the
political capital a little to the north-west. Reece and
Catling (1975, 3) stressed the importance of the
Whiteway as a pre-Roman route and thus the
policing of native traffic at the river crossing. Much
depends on the relative chronologies of the two sites.
If a late Claudian/Neronian date for the
establishment of the fort is accepted then it is
unlikely that it was established to police a potentially
hostile native centre. Indeed the converse may be
true, that it was sited to support a pro-Roman
Dobunnic aristocrat during the unsettled conditions
of the early Welsh campaigns, and perhaps to double
as a reserve base for the ?legionary fortress at
Kingsholm. Either way the establishment of a fort at
Cirencester must reflect the perceived political
importance of Bagendon and perhaps the developed
systems of agricultural production which had
evolved in its hinterland.

First century activity has been noted on a few sites
outside the Leaholme fort. Excavations beneath the
later forum piazza revealed timber post-trenches and a ditch overlain by a metalled street. Abraded pottery from beneath the road was pre-Flavian in character (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 60–4); an associated pit produced a Flavian sherd. The street had been laid-out at right angles to Ermin Street; 64m distant, the decumanus maximus of the developed street plan was shown to have originated in the pre-Flavian period. At the Mycalex site in Ashcroft Road three rammed-gravel floors from timber buildings were noted in section; a small quantity of associated pottery suggested a date before the mid-Flavian period for their use (Reece 1976b). Levels containing early pottery have also been found at the Health Centre, Watermoor Road, and possibly in an evaluation test-pit in the Brewery Car Park in 1989 (Gerrard and Johnson 1989b, 12).

This material has been regarded as evidence for an extra-mural vicus contemporary with the fort. While this is highly plausible, and a number of Claudian-Neronian vii are known from southern Britain (Sommer 1984, 9–10) it is conceivable that some of this observed early activity might relate to a phase of post-military urban development which preceded the main public building programme in the later first century. Freer’s (1983, 5–9) excavations at Verulamium have demonstrated how the town and street grid developed before the construction of the stone forum in the Flavian period.

Monument Discrimination

Of the early prehistoric monuments only a restricted number of monument classes have been identified and described. The major source types used in the recognition of monuments of this period, such as aerial photography, dictate a clear bias towards morphologically distinctive classes of monument which are easily picked out from the air. Thus, round barrows and trackways (which although frequently undated appear to be broadly prehistoric or early Roman) are particularly well represented and closely grouped in terms of importance. Those monuments which score highest tend to occur in clusters and in spatial association with contemporary monument classes (eg the Preston barrow cemetery). These monuments may be considered to be of regional importance.

Major late prehistoric monument classes which are not present or recognised within the study area include hillforts, cemeteries and field systems. The better known and authenticated Iron Age occupation sites such as Trewsbury and Bagendon which have upstanding earthworks lie just outside the boundaries of the Study Area. This under-representation of certain monument classes emphasises the artificiality of the modern administrative boundaries. Clearly, it would be an error to imply any administrative, social or cultural integrity to the Cirencester region or area at this period.

What little evidence we have of the early Iron Age in the Study Area is restricted to the ditched enclosure partially excavated at Beeches Nursery Field on the outskirts of the modern town (54019). There are no other sites with reliable dating evidence which may be confidently dated to the Iron Age.

Of the early Roman monuments, the fort (54011) scores high and may be considered as being of national importance. Although currently known by only very limited observations, should open area excavation ever occur the potential exists for the recovery of the plan, development and chronology of a Conquest-period fort. Too little is known of the vicus for meaningful evaluation. The roads may be considered to be of regional importance; although by virtue of their continued use into the present day, preservation of Roman features is likely to be generally poor. Nevertheless, they retain the potential to answer some of the questions posed above.
8. CORINIUM DOBUNNORUM: ROMAN CIVITAS CAPITAL AND PROVINCIAL CAPITAL

by Neil Holbrook

"Here they dig up antiquities every day, especially in the gardens; and in the plain fields, the tracks of foundations of houses and streets are evident enough. Here are found many mosaic pavements, rings, intaglio's and coins innumerable..."

William Stukeley (1724), diary entry for 23rd August 1721

**Roman Civitas Capital**

This is the earliest identifiable urban form at Cirencester (Figure 18). There is considerable archaeological evidence for the Roman town; that it was a *civitas capital* (i.e. the centre of a self-governing political unit frequently based upon a pre-existing tribal territory) is indicated by an entry in the Ravenna Cosmography which provides the tribal suffix (see below). Frere (1984a, 68) has suggested that Cirencester may also have been elevated to the status of a *municipium* (a self-governing chartered town) in the second century, although evidence is lacking. *Corinium* was therefore the administrative and political centre of the *Dobunni*, a territory which extended as far as we can tell over the modern counties of Gloucestershire, Avon, West Oxfordshire, North Wiltshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire (for an attempt to define the topographical limits of the civitas see Branigan 1976, 112-14). Within this area the colonia of Gloucester and its accompanying *territorium* (for an estimate of the extent of which see Hurst 1988, 68-9) would have been self-governing and thus excluded from the control of *Corinium*. In the later Roman period it is possible that Kenchester may have assumed control of the western part of the civitas beyond the Severn (Wilmott 1980, 127-8).

**The early development of the town**

Military activity appears to have ended in Cirencester before 75 although the early development of the town is not entirely clear. The previously expressed view is that work commenced on the public building programme shortly after the departure of the military, although the possibility of a phase of civilian occupation between the departure of the army and before the construction of the main public buildings was raised above (p 56). Whatever the truth of the matter there was clearly a major programme of public building, the date of which will now be discussed. Excavations within the fort at Admiral's Walk showed military levels to be sealed by large dumps of refuse and silt, above which buildings which may be attributed to the town of *Corinium Dobunnorum* were built. The latest pottery from these dumps are a samian bowl dated 80-100 and a mortarium considered also to date to after c80 (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, fig 42, 5; fig 51, 68) (a small quantity of second-century material must be regarded as intrusive). A mortarium which probably dates to after c70 was recovered from *vicus* levels beneath the *forum* piazza (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, fig 65, 499). This evidence only provides for the earliest possible date of the building however, which when combined with other public buildings and streets may have taken several decades to complete. By way of analogy we may note that inscriptions suggest that the *forum* at *Lepcis Magna* was at least six years in the building (as Frere 1983, 9, n2 observed).

Further evidence for the date of the construction of the principal buildings comes from the stone quarries in the Querns, for the earliest (such as that beneath the amphitheatre) presumably date to this time; and also the evidence for gravel extraction. A number of quarry pits have been found beneath later civil buildings. These were presumably excavated to
Figure 18
Monuments in the Roman civitas capital
Key to Figure 18:

54094 Chester Street
54113 The Abbey
54114 The Abbey
54123 Price’s Row, Watermoor Road
54130 Mycalex
54413 Leaholme Gardens
54416 Dyer Street
54419 Beeches Road
54423 Admiral’s Walk
54421 The Firs
54424 The Avenue

shops
courtyard house
courtyard house
shops
courtyard house
shops
winged-corridor house
shops
winged-corridor house

Corinium Dobunnorum

amphitheatre 54045
basilica 54012
forum 54009
macellum 54412
theatre 54115
town wall (Romano-British) 54024

The Querns
Watermoor House
Chester Lodge
Leaholme Gardens
41-43 Dollar Street
Cirencester

The street grid is defined by the discovery of street metalling at the following locations:

17 The Avenue 54014
19-23 Church Street 54333
28 Church Street 54330
30 Lewis Lane 54322
33 Sheep Street 54373
3-9 Church Street 54320
5-9 Ashcroft Road 54328
62 Victoria Road 54331
77 Victoria Road 54335
Abby Car Park 54433
Abbay Grounds 54092
Ashcroft Road 54037
Ashcroft Road 54329
Bingham Hall 54051
Bingham Hall 54329
Brewery Car Park 54537
Brewery Car Park 54370
Chester Street 54095
Cotswold Mill 54025
Cotswold Mill 54242
Dyer Court 54001
Dyer Court House 54436
Dyer Street 54039
Dyer Street 54299
Garden of 45-61 Chester Street 54332
Graumont Cinema 54093
Gosfield Street 54321
Grammar School Playing Field 54034
Leaholme Gardens 54013
Locks Timber Yard 54170
Old Railway Line, Sheep Street 54124
Orchard House, London Road 54149
Parallel to Cricklade St 54300

Personage Field 54132
Police Station 54006
Police Station 54007
Price’s Row, Watermoor Road 54122
Purley Avenue 54047
Querns Hill 54128
Querns Lane House 54033
Redlands, Queen Street 54334
Regal Cinema 54240
South of Dairy, Ashcroft Road 54325
South of Lewis Lane 54236
St John’s Church 54352
St Michael’s Field 54336
St Michael’s Field 54337
St Michael’s Field 54375
St Michael’s Field 54338
Telephone Exchange 54050
The Avenue/Tower Street 54116
Trinity Church Gates 54036
Victoria Road 54027
Victoria Road 54038
Victoria Road 54048
Victoria Road 54027
Victoria Road 54094
Victoria Road 54095
Victoria Road 54359
Victoria Road 54434
Watermoor 54296
Watermoor Road 54239
Watermoor Road 54323
Watermoor School 54117
West Market Place 54121
West side of Watermoor Road 54237
provide gravel for street metalling and aggregate for mortar, and by virtue of their location and overlying stratigraphy ought to date to the earliest phase of the town's history. Once excavated the quarries made convenient rubbish pits and seem to have been quickly filled. In the centre of the town the sides of the fort ditches beneath the later macellum were exploited as convenient quarries, and the filling is dated c70–85 (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 187–9). Four other quarry pits have been excavated by CAT in the last three years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date of Filling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Querns Road (context 22)</td>
<td>early–mid 2nd century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–62 Watermoor Rd (context 11)</td>
<td>early–mid 2nd century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter's Road</td>
<td>earlier 2nd century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Sheep Street (context 36)</td>
<td>mid 2nd century</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These sites lie towards the periphery of the Roman town and suggest that construction of the street system may have been continuing well into the second century.

The evidence as a whole therefore suggests that the construction of the principal public buildings and developed street grid may have occurred over a period which may have lasted for as much as three or four decades either side of AD 100.

The street pattern

The process by which the street grid has been progressively reconstructed is chronicled in the earlier interim reports (Wacher 1952, 11–14 and successively thereafter). A previous attempt by Beecham (1887, map opposite page 250) was succinctly evaluated by Haverfield (1920, 173) 'he seems to have assumed, a priori, that the town must have been divided up this way into regular insulae'.

If course this is likely enough, but we need specific proof that it was so divided. The most recent plan shows four streets aligned NW–SE, and seven on the SW–NE axis. This produces approximately 30 insulae (and these have traditionally been numbered I–XXX; see McWhirr 1986, fig 2). It has to be recognised, however, that the street plan as generally depicted is highly generalised and is based on relatively few direct observations which allow precise alignments to be defined.

A new plan has therefore been produced (Figure 18) which attempts a more minimal level of reconstruction than previously. The street plan was founded upon the pre-existing line of Ermin Street which provided an orientation 34 degrees west of north for the grid (that a town did not always follow the orientation of a pre-existing highway is shown by Verulamium where Watling Street runs diagonally across the otherwise orthogonal grid). The alignment of Ermin Street proved in this case, however, to be a convenient orientation for Caracalla: Vitruvius (I, 6) stressed the importance of excluding winds from the streets and the NW–SE plan of the town successfully masked the principal thoroughfares from the prevailing south-west wind. Ermin Street formed the principal NW–SE street of the town (the cardo maximus), with the decumanus maximus linking the later Bath and Verulamium gates.

It is useful to split discussion of the insulae south-east of the decumanus maximus from those to the north-west. In addition to Ermin Street, two NW–SE streets are reasonably well attested in the south-eastern half of the town; a third (XV/XIII) was identified in Wacher's (1965, 101) work at the Gauntown Cinema. On the opposing axis the street bordering the long axis of the basilica is secure; the next to the SE has been moved about 20m further SE on the basis of Wilkinson's observations in St Michael's Park (Wilkinson 1984b, 224). This is of interest as the four central insulae (I, II, V and VI) can now be reconstructed with some confidence as being of almost identical size. Perhaps this represents the initial core of the town plan? To the NW of the decumanus maximus, it has already been noted that the NW–SE aligned streets are offset from their counterparts in the SE of the street (McWhirr 1978, 72–3). Recent watching-briefs conducted by CAT in Ashcroft Road and the Brewery Car Park suggest that street XIX/XX also displays this phenomenon (R King 1990f and g). The reasons for this dislocation remain unclear although it does suggest that the street grid developed by accretion (possibly over a number of decades) rather than being laid a nova in one go. Collecting together Beecham's records of street metalling suggests that a new NW–SE street should be added to the plan dividing insula XX. Two observations also point to the presence of a street or open area immediately inside the defences on the SW side of the town; probably street metalling was noted adjacent to the Bath Gate (McWhirr 1978, fig 4) and at Querns Road in 1992 (R King 1992, 20).

This more minimal plan highlights the gaps in our knowledge of the street grid; analysis of the observations which go to make up the plan also highlight a number of general points. Firstly that the rectilinear grid was probably not so regular as the process of reconstruction tends to make it appear. Secondly, that the overall axis of the street grid and the alignment of individual streets within it changes over the course of time. There are numerous
examples of the shifting position of streets, most recently at 33 Sheep Street where a street was moved 2m to the NW in the second century (R King 1990f). There are also the large, apparently late Roman, metalled areas discovered in excavation at the Gaumont Cinema (Wacher 1965, 101) and Purley Avenue (McWhirr 1973, 202-3); in the former case the metalling sealed an earlier street. Thirdly, there are probably more streets within the grid than previously suspected. Nevertheless to ease reference with earlier work the traditional *insulae* numbers have been retained in the following sections.

**Public buildings**

The largest monuments recorded in *Corinium* are the *basilica* and *forum* (54012 and 54009 respectively). The former was first located in excavations directed and privately funded by Wilfred Cripps in 1897-8 (Figure 19) which produced a plan of the building (Cripps 1898a and b). Correspondence preserved in the Ashmolean Library between Helena Cripps, widow of Wilfred, and Haverfield indicates that 'To be quite correct the Basilica was discovered in the autumn of 1897'. The letter, dated 16th January 1918, is in praise of Haverfield's lecture on 'Roman Cirencester', read to the Society of Antiquaries on December 13th 1917 (Haverfield 1920), but also takes the opportunity to correct and append small details of fact or interpretation. Excavations by John Wacher in 1961 confirmed the position of the south-western end of the *basilica* (Wacher 1962, 5-8).

The *basilica* comprised an aisled hall approximately 85m long and 26m wide, with a paved apsidal recess at the south-west end which probably accommodated the tribunal. The hall was separated into nave and aisles by low sleeper walls which carried a colonnade; sculptured Corinthian capitals were found by Cripps. Beyond the south-east aisle lay a range of rooms which have been partly explored, flanked by an external veranda which returned around the south-west side of the hall. The arrangement of walls recorded by Cripps at the north-east end of the nave would preclude the presence of a corresponding apse at this end of the *basilica* and thus the building was of the long axis type (ie the main symmetrical design was on the long rather than short axis). The *basilicae* at Wroxeter and Leicester were probably also of this type (Bidwell 1979, 82).

The *basilica* suffered badly from subsidence over the infilled fort ditches and the colonnade walls were rebuilt in the mid-second century (Wacher 1962, 7). It is conceivable that the Corinthian capitals already mentioned date to this reconstruction, as it has been noted that they bear a marked similarity to the capitals used in the *basilicae* at Silchester and Caerwent. The capitals from all three buildings display strong Rhineland influence (Blagg 1977, 64-9 following Kahler 1939). The stone *forum* at Silchester is dated c125-50 (Fulford 1985, 52-3); that at Caerwent appears to be Hadrianic (R Brewer 1990, 83 and pers comm). It is uncertain how long the Rhenish architectural fashion persisted, although as Blagg considered the Cirencester capitals to be typologically later than the other examples a broadly Hadrianic-Antonine date might be appropriate. Further repairs to the building in the fourth century are discussed below (p 75). Other elements of the decorative scheme used in the *basilica* are furnished by Cripps whose excavations produced fragments of Purbeck marble and Italian marble wall veneer. From the apse came a small fragment (depicting an eye) of
a bronze (presumably Imperial) statue of super-human proportions (Cripps 1898a, 78).

Of the forum itself excavations by Wacher (1964a, 9-14) found a piazza 107m long by (an estimated) 84m wide to the NW of the basilica. It was surrounded on at least two sides by ranges of rooms with internal and external verandas. As designed the piazza was probably floored with flagstones, as were certainly used in its final phase. Later modifications include the walling-in of the inner portico on the north-west side and its flooring with tesselated pavement. The north-east range of the forum (with similar mosaic floors) was located in 1937 by Priestley and Matthews who also found a fragment of a Purbeck marble inscription which mentions the word respublica, 'the civitas' (Collingwood and Wright 1965, RIB 114). The forum is long in comparison to its width, although Wacher's excavations would seem to disprove any suggestion that there was a temple (capitolium) at the opposite end to the basilica in the manner of continental double-fora (a reasonable enough hypothesis if Cirencester was elevated to the status of municipium at some date (p 57), especially as the known municipium of Verulanium has produced this evidence; it is the only Romano-British town to have done so). Entrance to the forum may have been through the NE and SW sides. It is noteworthy that Beecham (1887, map) marks a street to the NE of the forum (traditionally XIV/V; excluded from Figure 18 as the evidence for its existence is not explicit). An entrance into the forum at this point would find parallel at Leicester, and streets meeting the forum in comparable positions are known from Lincoln and Exeter. Further support for such a reconstruction at Cirencester is provided by the discovery of a (secondary but otherwise undated) cross-wall which divides the piazza into two parts (57m and 70m long respectively excluding porticoes) immediately SE of the postulated entrances.

A market place lay to the south-west of the forum and in its original phase appears to have been simply an area of open metalling (unless traces of any early timber buildings were obscured by the foundations of the later stone building in Wacher's (1962, 8-9) excavations). Open areas bordering the forum are known from a number of towns (such as Silchester, Leicester and Exeter; Bidwell 1979, 80-1) and they presumably served as market places for livestock, a trade hardly appropriate to the forum and normally kept separate (as in Rome). Boon (1974, 111) has suggested that the external verandas bordering fora and basilicae may have provided welcome shelter for traders, and the presence of nests of pottery in a gutter drain at the Wroxeter forum points to the presence of market stalls beneath the veranda (Atkinson 1942, 122-4). In the second century a stone building with apparently timber internal partitions was constructed on the site. It comprised a range of regularly-sized rooms with an external colonnaded walk and internal corridor or veranda. A number of pits discovered both inside and outside the building were filled with sawn and cut animal bones, and the building has been interpreted as a meat market or macellum (54112). The building may therefore represent a formalisation of pre-existing activity on the site. The macellum was extensively repaired to a similar plan in the early fourth century. Macellum have also been identified with varying degrees of confidence elsewhere in Britain at Verulanium, Leicester and Wroxeter (Wacher 1975, 60).

Another major public building (54115) has been tentatively identified in the north-west corner of the town. A number of observations combined to reconstruct a pair of concentric, curving walls, 1.8-2.7m wide; at two points narrower radial walls sprang from the inner curve. The radius of the inner wall was 21.5m; the diameter of the outer may be estimated at 58.5m (Brown and McWhirr 1967, 194-5; and Brown et al 1969, 235). Caution is required in accepting this structure unreservedly as a theatre, although no other interpretation fits the evidence (such as it is) as well. If a theatre, the concentric walls would define the passage which ran around the outside of the seating area (although this does seem very wide), with the radial walls marking walkways which lead to the inner arena. The diameter of 58.5m compares with 57m for the theatre at Verulanium (phase IV) and 66m for that at Canterbury (phase II) (Wacher 1975, figs 12, 13).

The amphitheatre, a major public building which lay outside the defences, is discussed below on p 79.

Commerce

Shops have been discovered in the central area, and are best known from the insula immediately south of the basilica which borders Ermin Street (insula V). Excavations by Wacher in the northern corner of the insula in 1961 revealed timber shops with mortar floors and painted plaster (54413); because of later rebuildings relatively little can be made of their primary plan although the plot widths were in the region of 3m (Wacher 1962, 9-11). The shops were replaced in stone in a piecemeal fashion, and by the second century the Ermin Street frontage was equipped with a colonnade. The plan of this sector is best appreciated in its fourth-century form when some shops appear to possess double the frontage space of others. Small wells are known from the rear (living quarters) of two shops and one building was equipped with a channelled hypocaust. In this phase one or more ovens occurred in each shop, sometimes placed singly, sometimes in groups. Their small size suggested to the excavator that they are unlikely to
have been bread ovens. Later excavations at the western corner of the *insula* in 1972 once again found a sequence of timber buildings replaced in stone (54123) (McWhirr 1973, 201-2). An alley-way leading from the inter-*insula* street was fronted by a row of six small shops; there were complex later developments. Finds from one room included late Roman buckles and belt-fittings, and a group of decorated stonework including altars and sculpture was recovered from a preliminary trench. When the report on excavations in this *insula* is available it is likely to yield important evidence for the patterns of trade and land-holdings over almost three centuries.

Elsewhere probable shops have been discovered in the *insula* (VI) on the opposite side of Ermin Street (54423) (McWhirr 1978, 74-7). Only the rear portion of the shops was available for study, and then only the latest phases. Nevertheless a picture of third-century living quarters to the rear of shops fronting onto Ermin Street has been obtained. The plot widths appear to be about 8m, and the shops were separated by yards and alleys. The living quarters were furnished with brick-mortar and mosaic floors. A collapsed internal dividing wall has yielded valuable evidence for the use of half-timbered panelling.

**Housing**

Turning to evidence of domestic housing McWhirr (1976a, 84-96; 1986) has summarised the evidence and there have been relatively few new observations of substance since he wrote. Of the earliest phase of domestic occupation little can be said. Fragmentary traces of timber buildings (presumably houses) were found in excavations in the Parsonage Field (54423) underlying later stone houses; the timber buildings appear to have stood to around the middle of the second century (Rennie 1972, 73-4). In Victoria Road (54111) building operations uncovered a second-century mosaic contained within a timber room with painted plaster rendering (Clifford 1949). In no case has it proved possible to recover the full plan of a late first-century/early second-century house, and in many cases the chronology of excavated structures is to a greater or lesser extent unclear. At the Police Station the earliest structure was built from plaster-faced clay walls sat upon masonry plinths, although little can be deduced of its plan. A new house (54118, 1) was constructed in the early second century which comprised a simple row of five or more rooms with a corridor on the north-west side. Modifications continued into the fourth century (Wacher 1963, 16-19). Simple houses comprising linear ranges with flanking porticoes and corridors are a common feature of *civitas capitalis* in the period before the mid-late second century (Walthew 1975, 189-95). Elsewhere second-century stone structures which are most probably houses include the Grammar School (X, 3; Reece 1970b); Victoria Rd (XI, 1); Dyer Court House (XVII, 1); Mycalex (XXI, 1); Police Station (XXIII, 1) (see gazetteer in McWhirr 1986, 245-59 for further references). To these may be added the records of mosaics which are stylistically second century (D J Smith 1974); the majority presumably derive from houses.

Of the houses for which we have reasonably complete plans six achieve the status of courtyard house under the criteria used to define monuments adopted in this Project. This low number is largely a function of the method of investigation, for it is only in the course of more modern, open area excavations that the plan and sometimes the function of a building can be evaluated to enable designation to a specific monument class to be made. For that reason the numerous references to mosaics, tessellated pavements, walls and floors only attain the status of contexts and components rather than monuments. Nevertheless they provide an indication of the spread of occupation within the town and are mapped on Figure 15. Of the courtyard houses that at Mycalex (54423) included a simple range with corridor and courtyard (Reece 1976b); The Avenue house (54424) possessed a small central courtyard surrounded on two sides by corridored ranges (Brown *et al.* 1969, 231-4); while Parsonage Field Building 3 was a simple block of rooms with associated courtyard/boundary wall (K M Richardson 1962).

The process by which disparate site records build to define a monument is well illustrated by the Dyer Street house (54416) (McWhirr 1976a, 88-90, 196, 249-51, fig 169, for summaries of the evidence). In the course of laying a sewer pipe on the north side of Dyer Street in 1849 two substantial rooms set around by smaller rooms and corridors were exposed. Earl Bathurst paid for the lifting and display of the Hunting Dogs and Four Seasons mosaics in a purpose-built museum on Tetbury Road, and in so doing stimulated interest in the history of the town. Lysoms (1817, PI 7; Reece 1970, 175) records that in the cellar of an adjacent building a mosaic depicting a marine scene had been discovered in either 1783 or 1793. Subsequent twentieth-century observations furnish further details although the plan of the building is far from completely known. Two ranges at right angles have been identified, which have yielded 'arguably the best group of mosaics to have been found in a single house from any of the towns of Roman Britain' (McWhirr 1986, 251). The bulk of the mosaics date from the late second century or early third century; a poorly documented Orpheus mosaic, if it existed, must be considered as a fourth-century addition. A number of rooms were equipped
with hypocausts, and column bases testify to a colonnade or veranda.

At Bingham Hall Gardens the fragmentary plan of a building complex of some opulence is known from various observations (McWhirr 1986, 191-205). A Roman building adjacent to a street which can now be recognised as Ermin Street was discovered during the construction of the Bingham Hall in 1908 (54421; Figure 20). From the plan made at the time of discovery it is clear that not all of the building was exposed, although the arrangement of rooms has the suggestion of a winged-corridor house furnished with hypocausts. Bravender in a letter to Haverfield (20-9-1915) which seems to refer to this site (see Haverfield 1920, 178, no 38) states 'we found several remains of small detached houses. Stones were burnt, rooms were small, each house with a small pavement, plain in the middle with an ornamental border - on the pavement there was generally 2 or 3 inches of ashes. Finds included coins (Constantine to Honorius), bronze objects, pins and brooches, and many stone roof tiles.' A short distance to the east a hypocausted room was discovered during the same works, and subsequent excavation in 1958 by Miss Rennie elucidated the plan further. The excavation revealed an octagonal room equipped with a channelled hypocaust; it was contained within a larger polygonal structure which also housed the furnace and a hypocausted apse in the south-west corner. To the south-east of this structure lay a second building which may confidently be interpreted as the hypocausted Caldarium of a small domestic bath house with twin apses in its south-west wall.

These remains point tantalisingly towards a complex of some grandeur; a mosaic within the polygonal room is stylistically fourth century and the coins and pottery, although not usefully stratified, also point broadly to a late Roman date. Octagonal rooms are known from a number of south-western villas, frequently containing plunge baths (Brannigan 1976, 56-7). In this particular case, however, an interpretation as a heated triclinium, as at Keynsham and some other sites, seems more likely (Russell 1985). Unfortunately it is difficult to reconstruct how...
the different structural elements fit together, although if the octagonal room is connected with the winged-corridor house we might envisage a plan akin to that at Woolaston, Glos (Branigan 1976, 50) where an octagonal room lay to the rear of the corridor facade.

The house discovered beneath the medieval Abbey is of some interest (54113; McWhirr 1986, 222–33). The excavations revealed two wings with a third suspected; a central court was surrounded by verandas defined by large stylobate blocks with columns at approximately 3m spacings. Although fragmentary, the plan suggests a house in the peristyle tradition so prevalent in the Mediterranean provinces. The factor which distinguishes peristyle houses from courtyard houses is that the central courtyard must be conceived from the outset as an integral part of the architectural plan of the house (Hodgson forthcoming); courtyard houses often developed by accretion with four wings arranged around an open central area. The continuous stylobate in the Abbey house suggests that the courtyard was a designed feature and thus the house may be considered to be in the peristyle tradition. Walthew (1975, 189–95) has observed that peristyle houses are well represented in British towns with a strong military connection (colonia such as Colchester and Gloucester, and the civitas at Caerwent) but are much rarer in other civitas capitals. He suggests that this essentially Mediterranean plan may have been introduced to the province by the army, a link still evident in the late Roman period (Hodgson forthcoming). The date of the Cirencester house is unclear, but it may be no earlier than the third century.

The most well-known house complex in Roman Cirencester is justly that excavated at Beeches Road in 1971–3 (54419), a full report on which is available (McWhirr 1986, 19–189). Baddeley at first identified the site as that of a Roman building in 1918 (Baddeley 1918a and b). The near complete plan of either one complex or two separate houses with associated outbuildings was recovered in the excavations. One house (XII, 1) originated as a simple rectangular structure although later additions were added on all four sides and included a bath-suite (see Figure 5). A rectangular outbuilding (barn?) lay immediately north-west of the house. Some 15m south-east of this first house lay a second building of winged corridor plan which has a similarly complicated structural sequence. It had three associated outbuildings.

Coins and pottery point clearly to the complex being constructed around, or shortly after, the middle of the fourth century on an apparently previously unoccupied site. Finds from the complex include an iron plough coulter and bone weaving tablets; iron smithing also appears to have been conducted.

The similarity in plan between this complex and rural villas has been highlighted and discussed, a link supported by the 'agricultural' artefacts. Indeed it has been dubbed 'villa in urbis' (Wacher 1974, although of the appended comment by Rivet which while accepting the general interpretation points out that the term cannot strictly be applied to this complex as the Latin word refers exclusively to a country house; the anglicised 'urban farm' would make for a satisfactory compromise). It has therefore been proposed that this was a working agricultural complex farming land within, and perhaps also outside, the walls (excavations by Reece 1980b, 39–44). 200m outside the town wall point to a reorganisation of the pattern of land holding hereabouts in the later Roman period.

The Beeches is also of note in that it lies on the very periphery of the defended area and is a late creation. Elsewhere excavations in the zone immediately within the walls have noted structures constructed in the third or fourth century (as at 33 Sheep Street [R King 1990f, 20], and Querns Road [R King 1992, 20 where a building overlay an earlier street). It is possible that the margins of the town were only developed to any great extent in the later Roman period when there appears to be a general trend towards larger houses more widely spaced. There also appear to have been considerable open areas around the periphery of the town; for example in the area of City Bank (R King 1990e) and apparently the Waterloo car-park (McWhirr 1986, 78). This would support the contention that the large area defended in the second century was an over-ambitious provision by the municipal authority.

Defences

The town defences have been investigated by over sixty separate events including excavations (both antiquarian and modern), watching briefs, recorded stray finds, documents, indirect records etc ranging from the sixteenth century to the present day. Despite this intensive investigation there are many unanswered questions relating to the defences, and the forthcoming publication of the CEC/CAT excavations will form the basis for future discussion. This present account is based solely on published interim reports.

The course of the defensive circuit in its final form has now been largely established. The monument today survives as an upstanding earthwork in the south-eastern quarter of the town in the area of City Bank and Watermoor, and a short section of the stone facing is exposed in the Abbey Grounds (54024) north-west of the Verulamium Gate. In about 1850 the Roman defences to the west of Sheep Street were described as an upstanding earthwork (Buckman and Newnham 1850). Plans by Stukeley, Lysons, and
Skinner in 1721, 1817 and 1824 respectively indicate the survival of the circuit as almost complete, but by the turn of the nineteenth century much of the line had been denuded, and preserved only in property, road and estate boundaries. Subsequent records include chance observations, as for instance in 1917 when the foundations of the wall were found during sewerage work near Workhouse Lane, in Tetbury Road, at the foot of Cecily Hill, and near the bridge between Gloucester and Dollar Streets. The earliest purpose-designed excavation was in 1922 (Figure 21) when Baddeley speculated that the stones in the wall of the Workhouse Garden, on the south-western side of the circuit, were from the Roman town wall. Financed by Helena Cripps who had 'sent some unemployed to look for the town wall' Baddeley was able to test his theory and exposed a badly robbed 60m stretch of the curtain wall (Baddeley 1922a, 101-15). More recently Mary Rennie cut a single trench through the south-eastern defences at Watermoor in 1952 (Rennie 1957), but it was upon the establishment of the Cirencester Excavation Committee and work by Wacher (1961) in the vicinity of the Verulamium Gate that the principal phases of the evolution of the defences were identified. Excavations conducted by CEC in the 1960s and 1970s have located the wall at a sufficient number of points for the outline of the defences to be restored.

Figure 21
Excavations by St Clair Baddeley in 1922 on the line of the defences in the grounds of the Union Workhouse (Corinium Museum)
with some confidence; and more recently evaluation test-pits by CAT confirmed the precise line of the rampart along Sheep Street. The area enclosed by the second century can therefore be stated with some confidence as approximately 96ha (240 acres), second only to London within the province in defended size.

The possibility of early (late first-early second century) town defences is worth considering. Traces of earthen rampart have been noted at two points which preclude their association with the Leaholme fort: at Watermoor Hospital Garden in 1963 and The Sands, Watermoor Road in 1966. In the former case the rampart was encapsulated within the later (mid-late second century) town defences; at The Sands it lay immediately inside the postulated position of the same defences (material sealing the ditch was interpreted as the tail of the rampart backing) (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 55). Only a small sample of pottery was recovered from the Watermoor Hospital Garden section (none of it necessarily later than c70). At The Sands the latest material was dated c100-125; if (as the excavator believed) this material is considered to be intrusive then a date of c70-75 was suggested for construction. The mode of construction and date suggested to the excavators that these pieces of rampart belonged to a military fort, fortress or an annex to one of these. If an early Flavian date is accepted this suggests an episode of military activity after the abandonment of the Leaholme fort. If the Trajanic pottery is not disregarded then a military context must be precluded and the second possibility raised in the report has bearing: that the rampart belongs to a late first century/early second century town defence. Two further sightings have relevance to this discussion: in the Abbey Grounds in 1966 a clay, gravel and turf bank 1.8m high and 9.1m wide was found sealed beneath the later town defences. It was suggested in an interim report that this may have formed a dyke associated with the diversion of the Churn. No dating evidence was recovered from the same defences (material sealing the ditch was interpreted as the tail of the rampart backing) (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 55). Only a small sample of pottery was recovered from the Watermoor Hospital Garden section (none of it necessarily later than c70). At The Sands the latest material was dated c100-125; if (as the excavator believed) this material is considered to be intrusive then a date of c70-75 was suggested for construction. The mode of construction and date suggested to the excavators that these pieces of rampart belonged to a military fort, fortress or an annex to one of these. If an early Flavian date is accepted this suggests an episode of military activity after the abandonment of the Leaholme fort. If the Trajanic pottery is not disregarded then a military context must be precluded and the second possibility raised in the report has bearing: that the rampart belongs to a late first century/early second century town defence. Two further sightings have relevance to this discussion: in the Abbey Grounds in 1966 a clay, gravel and turf bank 1.8m high and 9.1m wide was found sealed beneath the later town defences. It was suggested in an interim report that this may have formed a dyke associated with the diversion of the Churn. No dating evidence was recovered from the bank, although sufficient time elapsed for a turf line to have developed on its surface before its incorporation into the later defences (Brown and McWhirr 1967, 185-91). Re-examination of the sections excavated by Wacher adjacent to the Verulamium Gate in 1960 now indicate the presence of the same bank there (J S Wacher pers comm; Wacher 1961, pl 18, section A–B, 38). The fact that all the observations are at points in immediate proximity to the line of the later second century defences suggests that the interpretation as early civil defences should be given greater consideration than has hitherto been the case. Late first-early second century town defences are known from other Roman-British towns, including the coloniae, the municipia of Verulamium and the civitates capitals of Silchester, Winchester and Chichester (Frere 1984a, 66). Such defensive circuits may be more commonplace than has previously been thought. At the interpretation of the Watermoor Hospital, The Sands and Abbey Grounds ramparts remains uncertain, for the purposes of this assessment they are classified as components of a larger, undefined, monument.

Turning to the better-attested defences, at some date a decision was taken to construct stone gates, apparently in advance of the construction of a new earthen rampart. Twin gates have been investigated in recent times. The north-east (Verulamium Gate) was located in 1960 when only the north-west side was available for study (Wacher 1961, 65-7). Assuming perfect symmetry a gate some 30m wide equipped with projecting D-shaped drum-towers may be restored (Figures 22 and 23). The pattern of ruts visible in the street mellowing suggested that there was a pair of carriageways on both sides of a central spina, four openings in all. Architectural fragments which may be assigned to the gate structure include fragments of column drum, string course and moulding.

The opposite gate, the Bath Gate, was found in 1974; known only from salvage recording the gate appears to be 22m wide and to be furnished with similar drum towers to the Verulamium Gate (McWhirr 1978, 71-2). A series of finely carved moulded blocks, perhaps from the parapet, were found in front of the gate. It seems clear that both gates preceded the construction of the stone wall, and at the Verulamium Gate it appeared that the rampart bank overlay the footings of the north gate tower. Strictly interpreted this should indicate that the gate was built before the bank, although it is always possible that a gap might have been left in the bank to accommodate the gate which was constructed subsequently (Frere 1984a, 69, n44). Indeed it is possible that the gates might have had timber predecessors, as has now been demonstrated at Silchester (north gate) (Frere 1992, 302) and Exeter (south gate) (Frere 1990, 348). In terms of their plan the Verulamium and Bath Gates find ready parallel with the London and Chester Gates at Verulamium which may also be attributed to the earthwork phase of defence (Frere 1983, 34-5).

A third gate (the Silchester Gate) is known only from passing accounts which record that a gate or wall foundations were found during construction of the Watermoor railway bridge, and in 1887 Beecham recalled of the Silchester Gate that ‘many can recollect when a thick wall extended along the stream eastwards from the gate’. Beddeley records in his notebook that ‘Mr Birch is said to have found two or more arches in situ a few years back at a point which corresponds with the probable site of the south gate’. The Gloucester Gate is likewise poorly documented,
the only record being 'very substantial foundations' marked at the probable site on the 1921 OS map. In addition to these principal entrances other minor gates might exist, although none are known for sure. Baddeley thought he had found a gate in 1922 on the south-west defences (in litt. 13-3-1922) although mention of a gate as such is dropped in his subsequent publication (1922a), which is a far from clear account of his excavations. A possible site for a minor gate has been speculated at the point where the putative original course of the Fosse Way would have met the defences (p 53; Wacher 1961, pl 19).

It would appear that stone interval towers were also contemporary with the earthwork phase of
defence. Two towers have been found (there is a third possible example); on the north-east defences the tower foundations cut the earliest bank but apparently had the second (pre-stone wall) bank piled around them (Brown and McWhirr 1967, 188-91). As with the gates this suggests on face value that the towers were constructed before the rampart bank, although once again it is possible to interpret the sequence differently (if the walls were placed flush with the edge of a cut into the rampart then they could be an addition). This interpretation bears more conviction if Wacher's (1964a, 16) suggestion that a beam embedded in the rampart bank at Watermoor House marks a timber tower is correct.
Thus it is not impossible that the towers are a later (but pre-wall) addition to the earthwork defences. The sequence is even less clear at the tower excavated on the northern defences in 1965 although the fact that identical layers of banking were found inside and outside the tower suggests that the walls were inserted through these deposits (Brown and McWhirr 1966, 241-4). A third tower may exist on the south-west side where a wall 4.6m to the rear of the town wall was observed in a gas pipe trench (McWhirr 1973, 200).

Of the bank itself it is difficult to determine its original dimensions although it was at least 3m high. Beyond the bank there is evidence for at least one ditch which can be attributed to this phase (Wacher 1961, pl 18, section A-B). The co-existence of stone gates and earthwork defences is attested elsewhere in Britain at Verulamium and Silchester: (Frenc 1983, 34-5; Fulford 1984, 234-5); stone interval towers set in an earthwork bank are currently unique.

The date of the earthwork defences will rest upon an analysis of all the excavated evidence in the forthcoming report; until then nothing can be added to Hartley’s (1983, 86) ‘vaguely Antonine date’ for the samian from the bank at Watermeor; the broadly second century date for the pottery from the CAT evaluation at Querns Road (R King 1992); and Wacher’s (1961, 64) assessment that the bank in the Abbey Grounds may have been erected ‘in the first half of the second century’.

The front face of the earthen rampart was subsequently cut back and a stone wall added. Where examined the wall has proved to be of varying thicknesses, and in the portion available for detailed study in the Abbey Grounds a number of different types of masonry facing have been identified. Although all the subtleties and complexities of the structural sequence relating to the stone defences have yet to be determined the following points at least seem to have been clarified.

i) On the north-east side of the town a 1.2m wide narrow curtain is the earliest walling. This was later replaced in part by thicker walling which varied from 2.3 to over 2.7m wide above the rear scarements. In one section 2.3m ‘wide’ wall rested upon ‘narrow wall’ footings. This wider wall utilised a number of different masonry styles which could reflect different gang lengths or a protracted history of construction and reconstruction (Brown and McWhirr 1967, 190-1; Cullen 1970, Walker 1990).

ii) At one point on the north-west side of the town the pattern of robbing suggested that a narrower curtain had preceded the construction of broader wall (Brown et al 1969, 225-7). Examination of the wall footings (which were here almost 4m wide) immediately north of the Verulamium Gate found a tongue of natural undisturbed soil between the front and rear parts of the foundation, perhaps indicative of subsequent widening (Wacher 1961, pl 17, H-J-K).

iii) That narrow wall was not everywhere replaced is demonstrated by its discovery in sections at Watermoor (Wacher 1963, 22-3); northern defences (Brown and McWhirr 1966, 241); north-east defences (Brown and McWhirr 1967, 190); south-western side (McWhirr 1973, 200); and adjacent to the Bath Gate (McWhirr 1978, 71). With the construction of the original stone curtain the earlier bank was heightened, and perhaps again when the narrower wall was replaced with broader curtain. At three places pitched stone slabs set in clay have been discovered - in section only at two points (Watermoor Hospital (Wacher 1964a, 16), and Querns Road (R King 1992, 16-17)) but on the north-east side the pitching had a width of about 4.8m (Wacher 1961, 67-8) and it was suggested that these may have been steps (opus sectile) to provide access to the rampart walk. The discovery of such slabbing at three points suggests that this was a common phenomenon, however, and in an evaluation test-pit in Sheep Street the rampart was found to be capped with a substantial pitched limestone surface (Gerrard and Johnson 1989b, 7-9; cf Babdeley’s 1992a, 110 ‘sloping saddle or track made from larger stones’ which was 3.9m wide on the south-west side of town). It is conceivable therefore that rather than forming localised points of access the slabbing acted as a widespread revetment of the rampart bank to reduce the effects of erosion and slippage.

On the north-east side of the town two ditches were dug outside the wall; beyond these lay the canalised course of the Churn. As stated above (p 52) the Churn originally flowed on a NNW-SSE course through Watermeor and Kingsmeadow; pottery suggests a change to the riverine regime in the earlier second century and it seems probable that the Churn was diverted into a newly created canalised course to run around the outside of the north-east defences. It is uncertain whether this occurred when the postulated late first- or early second-century defences were built (p 67), or slightly later when the mid-late second century earthwork bank was constructed. Relief flood channels of the Churn may have occupied the innermost two ditches at the Verulamium Gate where they were crossed by a bridge (Wacher 1961, 65).

A consideration of the date of the construction and replacement of the stone wall must again await the forthcoming report, although a date ‘before about AD 220’ has been mentioned for the former event; the heightened bank at Watermeor Hospital yielded ‘late
second century pottery and a coin of Marcus Aurelius" (Wacher 1975, 302; 1964a, 16).

At some date external towers (or bastions) were added to the circuit. They are best known on the north-east side where four towers have been examined (Wacher 1961, 68–9; Brown and McWhirr 1966, 244; 1967, 190; Cullen 1970, 236–9). Bastions 1, 2, and 3 possessed square bases (bastions 1 and 2 were approximately 3.3m square; bastion 3 measured 6.4m x 6.0m). A number of splayed facing stones from the vicinity of bastion 2 suggests a polygonal superstructure above the square base. Bastion 4 was certainly polygonal, with sides angled at 144 and 126 degrees, and funds close parallel with a tower excavated on the northern defences in 1965 (Brown and McWhirr 1966, 244). Bastions are known with differing degrees of certainty from a number of other points around the walls (at Watermoor: Rennie 1957, reinterpreted by Wacher 1961, 68–9; R King 1990e, 15; and the south-western defences: Baddeley 1922a; McWhirr 1973, 200).

Differences in design and inconsistency in spacing are not exclusive to Cirencester. Caerwent, for example, lacks bastions on the west and eastern sides, the main approaches to the town. Some argue that this denotes a poor level of supervision in construction (Wacher 1975, 77), others that the provision of bastions was a piecemeal process reflecting the depleted nature of the fourth-century municipal treasury (Casey 1983). The provision of external towers brought the town defences into line with contemporary military architecture, although the concept of an actively defended 4km circuit is barely credible. The town may have played periodic host to detachments of the mobile field army during the fourth century however.

Evidence for the date of the external towers is sparse. Wacher (1961, 69) tentatively thought that a coin hoard from the inner ditch beside the Verulamium Gate might have some bearing as the construction of the towers necessitated the diversion of the river into the outer ditch and the consequent siting of the inner. As the hoard seems to date no later than AD 348 Wacher considered that the towers were constructed in the first half of fourth century. Whether this evidence can be directly related to the construction of the towers is not at all certain however, and generally only a broad fourth century date can be proposed for the towers based on evidence from other towns (Wacher 1975, 302 subsequently ascribed a date in the second half of fourth century for the towers).

Little-known, suspected and unlocated monuments

A number of monuments which may be expected have yet to be identified with certainty. These include the public baths. One possible location is in the insula (II) immediately south-west of the forum where a substantial, presumably public building, is known. The south-east part of the insula was occupied by the probable macellum (p. 62) but further to the north-west recent observations in advance of redevelopment noted traces of a building equipped with hypocausts and brick mortar floors (Clews 1985, 230), and in 1987 further walls associated with gravel surfaces and similar flooring were found.

Investigation was too limited for the determination of a meaningful plan. It is of interest that deposits survived here some 1.6m above the level of the forum suggesting a raised site (Friser 1988, 465–67). Three tessellated pavements have previously been recorded from this area (Haverfield 1920, 179, nos 29–31). This insula most probably also contains the discoveries recorded by Stukeley and Rudder. Visiting Cirencester in 1721 Stukeley (1776, 66) records an important discovery to the south of Lewis Lane

'It is conceivable that a fragment of a large modollion cornice contained within the collections of the Corinium Museum is a survivor of the pieces noted by Stukeley. Blagg (1977, 69; forthcoming) has noted that it is one of the largest and most elaborate cornices from Roman Britain and that it must have come from an important building, possibly a large temple in the classical tradition. New evidence which has come to light in the course of this project identifies the general location of this complex: the 'temple' is marked on Stukeley’s sketch of Cirencester preserved in the Bodleian Library (Frontispiece). Although the sketch does not permit precise determination the 'temple' clearly lay adjacent to the site of the forum.

According to Rudder (1781, 346) the area of Stukeley’s discoveries was re-examined in 1780 and the principal floor found to be 9.7m × 7.3m; there were four hypocaust arches in the walls which were 1m thick. Column fragments had evidently been reused in the hypocaust.

Taking the evidence as a whole the records of hypocausts and brick mortar flooring seem strongly
suggestive of a bath-house, which at Leicester and Wroxeter also lay in insulae adjoining the forum. There may also have been another building in the classical tradition nearby. If a temple, it is worth noting that fragments of a bust and torso from a statue of Minerva have been found hereabouts.

Some further support for a bath-house in this vicinity is provided by a consideration of the water supply, of which a bath-house would have required a copious supply, doubtless provided by an aqueduct. A likely source of water would have been the rising ground to the north-east of the town (where springs are recorded in the post-medieval period; p 103). Timber water pipes with iron junction-collars have been found in excavation immediately inside the Verulamium Gate (Wacher 1961, fig 1) and at Purley Road (Wacher 1975, 300) which probably brought running water into the bath-house. A timber-lined box-drain running down the centre of Ermin Street between insulae IV/V (Wacher 1962, fig 5) might conceivably have been the principal outflow from the baths which fed into the Churn to the south of the Silchester Gate.

Another public building lay immediately south-east of the basilica (insula V) where excavations have revealed a courtyard surrounded on three sides by ambulatory which contained a mosaic in the south-east passage. The structure was built in the later second century on top of earlier timber structures. At some date a timber building was constructed in the courtyard before the area was given over to the dumping of rubbish. Unfortunately this building is only known from a narrow strip excavated across its width and its function remains uncertain (McWhirr 1978, 74; Darvill 1981a, 174). If it extended the full width of the insula it would have had dimensions of about 75m × 100m. Of any building(s) which lay to the north-east of the courtyard little can be said, although Beecham records Roman foundations from the vicinity of Chester Street, and Lysons lists a mosaic from the general area (Haverfield 1920, 177, no 32A). Wacher's (1965, 97-9) possible shop presumably fronted onto the inter-insula street. Interpretation of this building must necessarily be somewhat tentative, although one possibility is that the courtyard represents the temenos of a temple. As noted above (p 62) Verulamium is the only Roman-British town in to have produced evidence of a temple (capitulum) within the forum, although at some towns such as Caerwent, Caistor-by-Norwich and Silchester a temple lay adjacent. Boon (1973, 108, n13) has suggested that these may have served as civic temples to some degree, a hypothesis supported at Silchester by the recovery of a collegiate inscription from the temple. The later developments which connected the temenos with the basilica (p 75) suggest a degree of civic ownership for this structure.

Although poorly known it seems probable that a building or complex of some significance existed in the vicinity of the area known as The Firs (which borders Victoria Road to the south-west and originally extended south of King Street). Chance finds from the area include fragments of Doric column, various Corinthian capitals, fragments from the base and shaft of a Jupiter column (see below), and architectural cornice and entablature. Haverfield (1920, 177-9) also lists a mosaic and tessellated pavements from the area. As McWhirr (1986, 191-2) has observed it is uncertain whether Haverfield's mosaics are the same as those marked by the Ordnance Survey in 1875, although this must be likely. Within the area of The Firs is the Bingham Gardens house complex mentioned above p 64; other buildings hercoubals are hardly known. Small scale evaluation work immediately north-west of King Street in 1985 found Roman walling and demolition deposits (Wilkinson 1986, 233), while a CAT watching brief noted Roman walling exposed in a pipe-trench in King Street (Barber 1992b, 17).

No temples can be located for certain within Corinium. M J T Lewis (1966, 125) cites three examples from the town under his heading of 'Other Temples Where No Structure Is Known'. Firstly a temple to the Matres (Mother Goddesses). A remarkable collection of sculpture was discovered during the construction of a cottage in Ashcroft in 1899 which included an altar (Collingwood and Wright 1965, RIB 105) dedicated to the Suleius by one Sulinus (who also dedicated an altar to the same gods in Bath where he describes himself as a sculptor, RIB 151); two reliefs of the Matres; a statue of a Mater and parts of another; two fragments of column and an uninscribed altar. Cripps (1900) considered the pieces to indicate the location of a workshop of Sulinus. Helena Cripps, in a letter to Haverfield (18-1-1918), wrote, 'one reason why we thought the carved Duci Matres were found in a sculptor's shop was that a partially finished column of Bath Stone was found with them'. Haverfield (1920, 180-4) preferred (but not dogmatically) to see them as coming from a temple or shrine. Lewis is more firm in his ascription to a temple which he gives a second-third century date.

Purely on the basis of sculptural finds Lewis also suggests temples dedicated to Mercury and Minerva which are certainly well represented in the sculptural record from the town, although as Toynbee's (1976) survey shows there are a greater number of Celtic reliefs. Few have useful provenances although the relief of Fortuna from the bath-suite of the Beeches house exemplifies that many probably came from domestic contexts (McWhirr 1986, 123).

Blagg (forthcoming) has undertaken a survey of the architectural carvings from the town, and several
points are of note. Corinium has produced more carved Corinthian column capitals than any other site in Roman Britain, in terms of both variety and quantity. While such capitals were used in the aisles of the forum basilica, and others may have come from free-standing columns, certain capitals at least must testify to the existence of other buildings in Corinium in the classical tradition (temples and a theatre for example). Compared to the number of capitals, remains of entablature are poor with the exception of the modillion cornice mentioned above (p 71) and a sculptured relief which might have come from a pediment (of a temple?; Toynbee 1964b, 138-9, n6). A group of six miniature Corinthian capitals are noteworthy by virtue of their unusually early date, probably late-first century as Strong (1971, 14; Blagg 1980, 31) originally noted. It is interesting to speculate what kind of structure the columns came from; a stone peristyle house is unlikely at such an early a date, and thus a public building is probably indicated. The porch or ambulatory of a temple would be a plausible context.

Corinium has produced some of the best evidence for the cult of Jupiter in Britain. In 1891 a pedestal dedicated to Jupiter recording restoration by governor L. Septimius [. . .] (Collingwood and Wright 1965, RIB 103) was found 'near the corner of Mr Bingham's new building' [ie Bingham Hall] (Bravender in litt to Haverfield 20-9-1915). Bowlby (1892-3) records that it was found in the garden of the Elms 'whether it was in situ is impossible to say'. The date and status of the dedicator of this inscription are of the utmost importance in a consideration of the status of fourth century Corinium and are fully discussed below (p 74). The stone can almost certainly be identified as the base of a Jupiter column, a monument which would have comprised a column shaft crowned by a capital carrying a sculpture of Jupiter (Figure 24). Probably also to be related to this cult is the well-known Corinthian capital, found in Gregory's Nursery (ie south of Lewis Lane) in 1838. The capital is of exceptional size, 1.06m high with a lower diameter of 0.59m and is unusual in being monolithic (capitals of this size were normally carved in two blocks). Between the volutes are four half figures, all drawn from the Bacchic repertoire. There has been considerable academic debate as to the nature of this capital, in particular whether it may be ascribed to a Jupiter column or not. One problem is its size, for most other capitals from such columns are less than a half, or even a quarter, of the height of the Cirencester example. In the most recent survey Phillips (1976, 40) concluded that 'a town of the size and importance of Corinium could conceivably have had an unusually large Jupiter column, which would have matched the scale of the nearby forum complex.' Jupiter columns are well-known in Gaul and Germany, and seem especially prevalent there in the late second-earlier third century. Phillips considers that the style of the Cirencester example would fit this period. Haverfield (1920, 192) observed that a fragmentary capital discovered in 1808 in the Leauses and recorded by Lysons might form a pair with the current example. Another very large Corinthian capital might also have crowned a votive column since there is a commensurate column drum carved with leaf decoration, a feature commonly (although not exclusively) associated with Jupiter columns. If correct this would have been the tallest column from Roman Britain, and also one of comparatively early date (late first-early second century) (Blagg forthcoming). Fragments of other column shafts with scale or leaf decoration have been recovered from The Firs, Grammar School Field and St Michael's Field (Wilkinson 1984b, 224). Corinium has thus produced substantial evidence of this cult, which is attested elsewhere in Britain by architectural
fragments from a sprinkling of towns including London, Lincoln, Chichester, Winchester and Wroxeter amongst other sites (M Green 1982, 111).

Monuments currently unknown or unidentified include a mansio and fourth-century monuments which should be expected if Corinium was the capital of Britannia Prima (see below).

Roman Provincial Capital

The identification of Cirencester as a provincial capital is only hypothesis, and the evidence upon which the argument is based is not unchallenged.

In the Verona List compiled between AD 312 and 314 four provinces are grouped in a diocesis Britanniarum (Britannia Maxima Caesearcensis, Prima, Secunda, Flavia Caesearcensis). It is generally believed that the four provinces were created from the existing Severan provinces of Britannia Inferior and Britannia Superior in the reign of Diocletian, or just possibly shortly earlier. Prima by analogy with other provinces will have been formed from old Superior, and as Maxima was the only one of the original four provinces to later possess a governor with the rank of consularis (as the Notitia Dignitatum shows) it is surely correct to centre that province upon London. Prima must therefore lie to the west. Was Corinium the capital of Britannia Prima? Two pieces of evidence have been advanced to champion its cause. Firstly that it was the largest town within the bounds of the suggested province (which are nowhere attested), and secondly Corinium has yielded the Jupiter column inscription mentioned above. Three faces of the pedestal base survive, although none fully. On the front there is a dedication by one L Sep[timus ..], governor of Britannia [..Prima?] to Jupiter; on the other two sides there is a verse which names the rector of Britannia Prima and records restoration of the column dedicated to 'the old religion'. Rector is a non-technical term which has generally been considered to be equivalent to praeeses. It has been argued however (Birley 1981, 178-80, 315-7) that the interpretation of this inscription may not be entirely straightforward as it is possible that the use of Britannia Prima in the verse may be an informal slang term for Britannia Superior which was used to fit the hexameter prose-style (Superior would not scan). He also argues that the province named on the front face could just as easily be restored as Britannia Superior as Britannia Prima. If correct the inscription could then date to as early as the third century, a date which gains some support by the inclusion of a praecoxmen in the governor's name. Thus the reference to Britannia Prima is not beyond doubt (in the sense of the fourth-century province), and even if this is accepted it is by no means assured that Cirencester was the capital of the province (a governor could dedicate anywhere within his jurisdiction), or indeed necessarily that it lay within the bounds of Prima (Mann 1961, 319 citing the Digest notes that the 'one reason a governor was allowed to leave his province was to make a dedication'); this is further developed by Birley (1981, 317, n14) who suggests that Prima could have lain entirely to the west of the Severn.

On a different tack Reece (1991a, 33, following Burnett) notes that the CL mint mark on Carausian and Alectian coinage could in fact just as easily be read as GL which would indicate a mint at Gloucester (Gloucester). Thus with a known mint at London it is conceivable that the division of Britannia Superior could have been effected under Carausius or Alectus and mints established at both provincial capitals (thus advancing the claim of Gloucester rather than Corinium).

Despite these caveats the majority of modern commentators favour the identification of Cirencester as the capital of Britannia Prima, although the evidence is more equivocal than is sometimes made out. Consequently a second Roman urban form for Cirencester has been identified in this Project (Figure 25). Whether the legal status of Corinium changed with the arrival of the governor and his court is unknown.

No monuments which can be directly attributed to the new administrative functions transferred to the town are known for certain, although Wacher (1975, 304-5) speculated that the modifications apparent in the forum (p 62) might be related to the installation of provincial control. Monuments which might be expected include a palace for the governor (praeeses) and accommodation for accompanying bureaucrats and guards. We should also expect a church for the metropolitan bishop of Britannia Prima. In the acta of the church council of Arles in AD 314 the bishops of Britain are listed. By comparison with their Gaulish counterparts it can be proposed that the four British bishops were the metropolitan of each province (Mann 1961). Unfortunately the surviving text is corrupt but by a process of elimination it has been suggested that the province of Prima was represented by a priest (one Sacerdos) and a deacon (Arminius). By rights we should therefore expect a church for the metropolitan bishop of Britannia Prima in Corinium (although see Reece 1978a, 69; and Boon 1992, 42 for the difficulty in identifying fourth-century house-churches archaeologically).

Many of the monuments discussed in the previous section underwent modification and alteration in the fourth century and these have already been described. Others such as the Beeches Road complex were built afresh. None of these operations can be directly related to the increased administrative functions of Corinium with the possible exception of the area immediately behind the basilica. The external
Figure 25
Imaginative reconstruction of the Roman townscape of the provincial capital (From an original drawing by Casper Johnson)

colonnade of the basilica was removed in the fourth century and the street behind the building blocked by a row of buildings at the point where it joined Ermin Street. A new open area was therefore created which extended across the former street into Insula VI where the public building (?temple) discussed above (p 72) lay. It is difficult on current evidence to evaluate the significance of these developments although the blocking of a street and creation of a new open area suggests official motivation. An apparently abortive attempt to construct a massive new building on the site of the macellum in the adjacent insula (II) in the fourth century might also be pertinent to this discussion (Wacher 1962, 8-9).

The nature of fourth-century Corinium is worthy of discussion from an archaeological standpoint as Reece (1980; 1988) has used the town to advance a general theory of the nature of late Roman towns in Britain, and indeed of the success of urbanism in the province as a whole. Reece believes that after the middle of the fourth century there was not a sufficient density of population for flourishing urban life to have continued. This is not to say that all building and occupation ceased, but rather that the character of towns had changed so much that they can no longer be considered as financial and commercial centres on the Mediterranean model, in whose likeness they were constructed in the first-second centuries. They probably retained their administrative functions to the end, but in his view it is debatable how much effect this activity had on the other inhabitants of the town.

Taking the evidence for Corinium on its merits the evidence for the fate of the basilica is unfortunately lacking, and the courtyard of the public building of unidentified function had become a rubbish dump in
Certainly it is a pattern at variance with many other towns, and finds closest correspondence with the pattern of coin loss on villas, rural settlements and temples (Reece 1991b). Whether this indicates that Cirencester had to all intents become a 'rural' site with few remaining commercial and financial functions by the closing decades of the fourth century, or for that matter a flourishing religious centre, remain interpretations of the established observation.

Accumulated deposits

These two forms are taken together for the purposes of defining importance and quality because they are archaeologically very difficult to separate and in many cases reflect continuous occupation and use of the same spaces and structures. The remains of these urban forms are extensive (c96ha) and locally represent considerable accumulations up to 3m thick. To the south of the line represented today by London Road, Lewis Lane and Querns Lane (the area known as Watermoor in post-medieval times) deposits relating to these two forms lie immediately below superficial deposits which vary in depth from as little as 0.3m (as in St Michael's Field) to more typically 0.5-0.6m. The depth of cover-deposits varies because much of Watermoor was used for market gardening in recent centuries. The lack of superimposed urban deposits in this southern part of the town reflects the restricted area of the post-Roman forms within the northern half of the area within the Roman defences. At the CAT evaluation at Querns Road in 1992 there was up to 1.10m of dark earth and overburden sealing Roman deposits (R King 1992); in Dyer Court Roman deposits lay 1.5m-2.4m below modern ground level (Webster 1959, 45), and similarly at the Police Station (Wacher 1963, 16).

Survival: The areas of highest survival are in the southern half of the modern town and/or where post-medieval disturbance has been minimal and where monuments are exceptionally robust. The defences on the east side of the town are still upstanding, those on the western and southern side have been truncated but where explored preserve their main features below ground level; at Querns Road, for example, the rampart bank survived to a height of 3m above natural gravel (R King 1992). Excavations at Beeches Road demonstrated how well fragile deposits such as mosaic floors and buildings can survive even at shallow depths. Recent excavations in Corinium Gate show how modern house foundations have often punctured but not necessarily greatly reduced the legibility of Roman deposits (Barber 1990d). In the central area of the town excavations at Dyer Court in 1957 revealed a
Potential: The areas of highest potential are mainly in the eastern and southern parts of the town. Here the effects of medieval and later occupation are minimal and the chances of waterlogged deposits greatest. Recent evaluation excavations at Abbey Nurseries resulted in the recovery of organic materials for the first time. The finds included plant material, branchwood and timber, wooden artefacts including a writing tablet, leather shoes, and leatherworking waste (R King 1990e). Curiously, the reason for medieval and later neglect of this part of the town was the incidence of waterlogging – exactly the conditions that favour the preservation of the earlier deposits. Organic preservation may also be expected in the ditches outside the town defences; waterlogging is recorded from the north defences. At School Lane and Dyer Street features visible in the cellar floors are probably of Roman date. Some elements of the Roman town plan can still be traced in the modern street pattern; for example the decumanus maximus is preserved by the line of London Road, Lewis Lane, and Querns Lane.

Medium survival occurs in areas of shallow or localised disturbance, for example, under post-medieval buildings where cellars are not present. Zones of poor survival mainly coincide with areas of recent and intensive disturbance. The average depths of cellars recorded within the area of the medieval and post-medieval town is 2.5m and suggests that their construction will generally have little impact on the underlying Roman deposits. At School Lane and Dyer Street features visible in the cellar floors are probably of Roman date. Some elements of the Roman town plan can still be traced in the modern street pattern; for example the decumanus maximus is preserved by the line of London Road, Lewis Lane, and Querns Lane.

Documentation (historical): This criterion can only be applied to the early urban forms in a general way because the level of expected documentation is minimal (for a convenient collection of the evidence see Rivet and Smith 1979, esp 321–2). Cirencester is referred to as Corinium, Corinium and Coriium, the polis of the Dobunni, by Claudius Ptolemaeus, a mathematician and astronomer working in Alexandria in the second quarter of the second century AD, in Book II of his Geography. It has been clearly shown however that much of Ptolemy’s information derived from earlier sources, and it is conceivable that the town may have taken its name from the oppidum of Bagendon (Corinion?; Rivet 1966, 102) or else have been newly given to the fort. The town is omitted by scribal error from the Antonine Itinerary, but occurs as Corinium Dobunnorum in the Ravenna Cosmography, a document compiled from earlier sources in cAD 700. The name of the town is generally, and surely correctly, restored as Corinium Dobunnorum by modern scholars. From the town itself there is a small but significant collection of inscriptions, although few can be attributed to particular monuments or components within the town. A notable exception is the fragmentary inscription mentioning the word ‘respublica’ from the forum (Collingwood and Wright 1965, RIB 114).
Group Value (clustering): At present there is generally little evidence for the localised repetition of monuments or major components within the town. Exceptions occur in the insula south-east of the forum where the rear of three strip buildings were examined during excavations between 1973 and 1976 on the site of Admiral’s Walk in St Michael’s Field (McWhirr 1978, 74-7) and in the insula on the opposite side of Ermin Street where a series of shops appear to occupy the whole of one frontage (Wacher 1962, 9-11; McWhirr 1973, 201-2). Thus zones of high Group Value (clustering) are rare but the present evidence is extremely restricted. The majority of the urban form must at present be considered as being of low Group Value (clustering).

Diversity (features): A common finding of excavations in Cirencester is that, once established, the main monuments and key components remain fairly constant over the course of time, being subject to remodelling but rarely major change. Thus few cases are presently known where one class of monument has been swept away to make room for another, although exceptions include the late walls cutting across the street south-east of the basilica (Wacher 1962, 8) and similarly at the Gaumont Cinema where the site of an earlier street was covered by a large tract of metalling in the late Roman period (Wacher 1965, 101-2). The public building of unidentified function south-east of the basilica was constructed in the later second century on the site of earlier timber buildings (p 72). At the Police Station a corridored house appears to have been demolished in the fourth century and a new building of uncertain function constructed on its site (Wacher 1963, 18-19). Likewise there was an apparently abortive attempt to construct a massive new building on the site of the macellum in the fourth century (Wacher 1962, 9). Generally there is ample evidence for houses constructed in the second century continuing in occupation as houses until at least the earlier part of the fourth century (see p 76). Although lying outside the walls, the area immediately outside the Bath Gate shows an interesting chronological progression from quarry to industrial workshop to cemetery (p 85).

Group Value (association): The north-eastern part of the town is a zone of high group value association because of the presence of later occupation. The south-eastern part of the town is a zone of medium group value association as only the two Roman forms are represented here. No areas of low group value association can be recognised.

Amenity Value: That fact that very little of these forms survives above ground level means that amenity value is generally rather low. Exceptions, which represent zones of high amenity value, include the defences on the eastern side of the town where a programme of interpretation and display will occur in 1994 and the apsidal western end of the basilica which is marked out in the street tarmac. Zones of medium amenity value reflect the perpetuation of the Roman street patterns in the modern town (eg the London Road-Querns Lane axis). Much of the town, however, can only be regarded as being of low amenity value. A guide to the visible remains of Roman Cirencester has long been out of print (Viner 1973c).

The overall quality of Roman archaeology represented in Cirencester is very high, perhaps greater than the assessment of the deposits might suggest. It is one of only sixteen or so civitas capitals attested or inferred in Roman Britain, and very probably one of only four or five late Roman provincial capitals. Corinium therefore deserves to be considered as one of the major towns of the north-west provinces of the Roman Empire, and we may note that in terms of size Corinium finds ready parallel with colonia Agrrippianus (Cologne), one of the most important towns of Roman Germany. The town is well known for the abundance of mosaics discovered; approximately 90 separate pavements have been recorded over the last 100 years or so. One building in Dyer Street contains one of the most remarkable collections of mosaics known from a town house in Roman Britain. Corinium also makes a significant contribution to the sculptural record from the province. Although there is comparatively little to see of the Roman town today, the Roman amphitheatre is an exceptional example of its monument class. Overall as a resource for the study of the nature and form of Romano-British urbanisation Cirencester has considerable untapped and unexploited potential.

The Roman Countryside (cAD 80/100 to early fifth century AD)

A division may be made for convenience between those monuments which lay immediately outside the area of urban occupation later encompassed by defences ('the urban fringe'), and those which may be considered to lie within 'the countryside' (Figure 26).

The urban fringe

1) Civic pride and magnificence

A bridge (54025) spanning the Churn (here on its second century and later diverted course; p 52) was discovered in 1960 immediately outside the Vindolanda Gate (Wacher 1961, 63). The abutment comprised a 1m wide facing of large unmortared
stone-blocks standing at least five courses high. A similar facing retaining a rubble core was detected 4.2m from the abutment and interpreted as a pier. If the plan of the abutment has been correctly reconstructed, the spacing would narrow to a little over 2m at the centre of the gate, which suggests that this may have only been a subsidiary flood relief channel rather than the main river course of the Churn. The latter was probably bridged in the unexcavated area to the north-east. The robber trench of the abutment contained some moulded blocks and small taping stones. No firm evidence was recovered for the form of the bridge superstructure, although stone-arched bridges are a notable rarity in southern Britain (Holbrook forthcoming).

An amphitheatre lay to the south-west of the town some 110m outside the Bath Gate (54045; Figure 27). The site was described by Rudder (1779, 349: 1800, 69-70) who was the first to identify it as an amphitheatre; he stated '...I am of the opinion, that there was originally rows of seats, or steps, one below the other, from top to bottom; but time has much defaced them'. Nineteenth-century investigations by Skinner and J Buckman proved relatively disappointing to their excavators and it was not until 1962 that Cirencester Excavation Committee commenced a programme of limited research excavations. It is from this work that the history and form of the amphitheatre may be sketched (Wacher 1963, 23-6; 1964a, 17-18; 1981; Brown and McWhirr 1967, 185-8). The site is popularly known as the 'Bull Ring' today, a name derived from its more recent use as an arena for bull-baiting (an eighteenth-century Cirencester Bull Club is attested).

As seen today the amphitheatre comprises an arena measuring about 47m along the long axis and 41m along the short. It is surrounded by earthen banks on average 30m wide. Excavations at the north-east entrance demonstrated that in its original form the great mass of the earthen banks was retained by timber posts and drystone walls. The date of the construction of the amphitheatre must await the final report, although broadly a second-century date seems likely. Later repairs include the reconstruction of the entrance in dressed stone where imposts for vaulting indicate that seating was carried over the entrance-way. Later still the dressed walls were dismantled and replaced by timber posts. At the same time two small chambers were built either side of the entrance with double-doors communicating directly with the arena; this treatment of the doors suggests that they served as beast-pens.

Examination of the bank showed it to be terraced with (presumably timber) seating placed upon low dry-stone walls. By comparison with better preserved structures Wacher suggests a capacity of 8-9000 (cf the estimate of 3640 seated or 7250 standing at the smaller timber amphitheatre at Silchester; Fulford 1989, 163). The arena was floored with sand and fine gravel.

At some date the width of the north-east entrance was drastically reduced to only 1.2m by the construction of rough stone walls. Whether this is a late or sub-Roman development must await publication of the excavations. The same applies to the date of a large post-built structure found within the arena, although for the views of the excavator see Wacher 1976, 16-17.

The amphitheatre is large by comparison with those at other British civitas capitals, (that at Dorchester is larger but this was dictated by the size of the reused Neolithic henge monument (see Fulford 1989, fig 80)), and is on the same axis as the street plan, by no means a typical arrangement (Fulford 1989, 179). A more telling statistic than pure area is to compare the area covered by the seating banks with that of the arena. This demonstrates that Cirencester, Dorchester and Chester stand apart from other Romano-British amphitheatres by having a ratio of roughly 2:1, whereas the ratios of other amphitheatres are roughly 1:1. Excluding Dorchester for the reasons mentioned above, this statistic places Cirencester between the legionary amphitheatres of Chester and Caerleon, and serves to emphasise that Cirencester probably had a greater crowd capacity than any other civilian amphitheatre in Britain (Wheeler 1992, fig 51).

Cemeteries

Three cemeteries have so far been identified around the town, all beside main roads.

The Bath Gate cemetery is the largest and most extensively explored. A tombstone inscribed to Julia Casta was found before 1721 near the Querns. Stukeley (1776, 67) records that it was one of five similar stone-lined graves which lay in a row; there had been a second inscription but this had been destroyed before his day. A large stone coffin was dug up in 1760 on the side of the Tetbury Road 'in which was found a human skeleton, with the head between the legs' and a sword placed on the right side (Rudder 1779, 347). Eight small coffins were uncovered in 1867 on the cattle market site and workmen here 'constantly came across the evidence of numerous interments' (Beecham 1886, 237). In 1875 further evidence for a cemetery was uncovered at the Querns Hospital and a stone coffin was found in Cirencester Park. There are further twentieth-century references to coffins and skeletons, although by far the most useful information derives from the rescue excavations conducted outside the Bath Gate between 1969 and 1976 (fully reported in telling detail by McWhirr et al 1982).
Figure 26
Romano-British monuments in the rural area (see Figure 18 for monuments within the urban form)
Some 453 burials were archaeologically recorded in the excavations and the extent of the cemetery appears to be about 60m north and south of the Fosse Way and laterally for at least 120m; a particular concentration lay on either side of the Fosse Way between the Bath Gate and the amphitheatre. In addition burial seems to have been prevalent in a line running between Querns House, the Cattle Market and Oakley Cottage (where Reece (1962b) recorded 45 cremations and inhumations buried with jewellery and metalwork). The density of cremations might suggest an early core and they possibly reflect the original course of the Fosse Way before it was diverted into the Bath Gate (see above). The salient points to mention in the present context are that the cemetery appears to date from the early fourth century and for burial to have continued throughout the century; a siliqua of Honorius from beneath the lumbar vertebrae of one burial points to continued deposition after AD 400. Many of the burials were aligned north–south and there was a complex sequence of later graves cutting earlier burials which hindered the recovery of a detailed chronology, as did the lack of grave goods. A few (25) higher status burials interred in stone coffins are known. Large fourth-century inhumation cemeteries are known from other towns such as Winchester (Lankhills) and Dorchester (Roundbury, Dorset). Where the third-century cemetery lay, if it existed on any scale, remains a problem.

Key to Figure 26:

Abbey Road Garages 54231  road (Romano-British)
Ambulance Station, The Querns 54188  field system
Amphitheatre 54045  trackways
Bath Gate 54118  villa
Bath Gate 54119  settlement
Bath Gate 54116  settlement
Emmin Street 54292  settlement
Fosse Way 54020  settlement
Gloucester Gate 54435  settlement
Grismond's Tower 54217  road (Romano-British)
Kings Hill Lane 54021  road (Romano-British)
Kingsmeadow 54062  road (Romano-British)
Kingsmeadow 54372  road (Romano-British)
North of The Barton 54167  road (Romano-British)
Phoenix Way 54126  road (Romano-British)
Phoenix Way 54159  road (Romano-British)
Preston 54041  road (Romano-British)
Querns Kitchen Garden 54042  road (Romano-British)
Querns Kitchen Garden 54044  road (Romano-British)
Fosse Way 54125  road (Romano-British)
SW of Sandy Lane Farm 54166  road (Romano-British)
The Barrow 54089  road (Romano-British)
The Barrow 54220  road (Romano-British)
The Barrow (?) 54219  road (Romano-British)
The Querns/Bath Gate 54057  road (Romano-British)
Verulamium Gate 54025  road (Romano-British)
Verulamium Gate 54026  road (Romano-British)
Verulamium Gate 54431  road (Romano-British)
Whiteway 54143  road (Romano-British)
Elsewhere evidence for burial seems heavily related to later factors such as the extent of ground disturbance and intensity of archaeological recording, although some general observations may be offered. Only 14 burials were recorded when the eastern ring road was constructed and this provides a ready contrast with the western route. The former included a number of inhumations on the east bank of the Churn immediately outside, and to the south of, the Verulamium Gate which might suggest a small cemetery hereabouts (McWhirr 1973, 195-7). Whether burial really was less prevalent on this side of town or simply lies further out in still undeveloped areas remains to be resolved. Stukeley (1776, 67) notes that a stone coffin burial was found during ploughing between Tar Barrows and the town, and F W Taylor recorded several discoveries of human bones hereabouts.

Some 600m from the Verulamium Gate are two barrows known as Tar Barrows (and anciently as Thoreberuh: or Theoberuh:; Beecham 1887, 83). They stand about 100m apart. The more easterly has a conical profile with indications of horizontal limestone coursing in the upper part of the mound (O’Neil and Grinsell 1960, 108). Stukeley (1776, 67) mentions that several Roman gold coins were dug-up at the mound, and Rudder (1800, 75) describes ‘a large and lofty tumulus near the town called Tarbarrow-Hill which was opened about a dozen years ago [c1780], and nothing found in it but a small coin and a larger square stone, and should therefore think that it had been formerly exploited, and its contents
taken away'. Baddeley records in his notebook a visit to view further excavations in 1935 directed by a Mr Groves who cut into the neck and shoulder of the mound at three points. Finds included a semi-circular fragment of worked stone which he considered to be Roman, and two fragments of pottery including a large rim from a 'pre-Roman cinerary pot'. Baddeley considered the mound to have been much altered in the Civil War, although the basis for this assertion is unclear. Taking the evidence as it stands, and considering especially the conical profile of the mound which is more a trait of Roman than prehistoric barrows, a Roman date may be tentatively proposed. Their location adjacent to the postulated early course of the Fosse Way has already been discussed (p 53).

Grismond's Tower which lies in Cirencester Park 90m from the town defences has also been considered to be a Roman rather than prehistoric barrow. Leland (Toulmin Smith 1964, 102) records that before 1540 two 'sepulchres ex secto lapide' were found, in one of which was 'a round vessel of leade covered and in hit ashes and peaces of bone'. 'Several very large urns, full of ashes and burnt bones' are said to have been found some years before 1780 (Rudder 1800). O'Neil and Grinsell (1960, 108) consider it more likely that Roman burials were inserted in a prehistoric mound, although it is hard to be conclusive on present evidence.

Early burial is indicated to the south of the town along Ermin Street. A green glass cremation urn containing ashes and burnt bones was dug up about 1710 in Kingsmead. This urn was placed in a stone coffin and covered with a flat stone, enclosed within a stone wall and covered with paving 'in the form of a very obtuse cone' (Rudder 1779, 347). In August 1793 'heaps of dead bodies, with bones much decayed' were discovered just outside the town and during the first half of the nineteenth century pre-Flavian military tombstones, dedicated to the cavalrymen Genialis (Figure 28), and Dannicus, were found adjacent to Cricklade Road and 700m southeast of the presumed location of the defences of the Leaholme fort (Leemans 1838). Later tombstones found dumped behind the town wall at Stepstairs in 1971 (awaiting reuse?) perhaps also originated from this cemetery (McWhirr 1973, 212–14). Evaluation at Kingsmead in 1991 found one possible cremation and areas of burning which were tentatively identified in a provisional report as a pyre (OAU 1991). A child burial was uncovered during sewer-pipe works in Cricklade Road opposite the Plume and Feathers pub in 1973.

There are unsubstantiated verbal accounts of a possible cemetery outside the Gloucester Gate, with recollections of 'bones' and 'vaults full of bones' discovered during extensions to the Texaco garage in

Figure 28
Tombstone dedicated to Genialis, discovered beside Ermin Street in 1835 (Corinium Museum)
the 1970s. It is uncertain how much credence should be given to these accounts. An outlying burial accompanied by an iron knife was found at Stratton Mill in 1927.

Reece and Catling have speculated on whether the medieval churches of St Lawrence and St Cecilia, which lie outside the defences, might have originated as late Roman cemetery churches (1975, 13). These are attested in the north-west provinces at places such as Bonn and Xanten, although a critical review of the evidence by Esmonde Cleary (1989, 36–8, 125–7) suggests they were predominately a fifth century phenomena in northern Gaul and consequently may not be as prevalent in Britain. Archaeologically the best evidence for an urban cemetery church is at Butt Road, Colchester, which also contained Christian mausolea; a similar mausoleum has also been found at the Poundbury cemetery, Dorchester. It is of note that neither of these sites had medieval successors around which settlement developed on the continental model, and the mechanism by which Reece and Catling seek to explain the northward shift of medieval Cirencester. Indeed the only good British parallel for the topographical shift proposed for Cirencester is St Albans where there is strong circumstantial evidence for a late Roman cemetery church preceding the medieval abbey. The pattern has also been suggested for a number of other British towns (such as Dorchester-on-Thames and Gloucester, p 93) although in an absence of firm evidence for a pre-existing Roman church.

In Industry

The local Great Oolite limestone was evidently much prized for the ease with which it could be worked for both building and sculpture. The main source was clearly the rising ground to the west of the town (known today as the Querns, a name derived from the old English *crūndel* meaning quarry) where irregular humps and hollows are still visible. Evidence for stone quarrying has been recovered from a number of observations, fully reported in McWhirr et al 1982. Excavations at Querns Hospital Kitchen Garden in 1978 demonstrated the method of extraction. Following initial opening, quarrying proceeded to a stepped face from which blocks were removed along their natural bedding and joint planes. Wedge and pick marks visible in the face testify to the tools used. Quarry waste was piled up into irregular mounds which still characterise the area. Quarrying took place on either side of the Fosse Way and covered in total an area of some 4ha. Metalled tracks serving the quarries have been located at several points.

The limestone was clearly being quarried from the early Roman period, as the sculptured military tombstones recovered from Watermoor testify (p 83). Excavation within the north-east entrance of the amphitheatre showed the arena to have been founded on the site of a pre-existing quarry which had already eaten into the spur of a low hill (Wacher 1981, 2). The construction of the amphitheatre is dated to the second century (p 79), and so the most likely context for the commencement of quarrying on any scale is the initiation of the public building programme at the end of the first century. A point of note, for which I am grateful to P T Bidwell, is that the amphitheatre was presumably constructed on 'public land', and thus the stone from the earlier quarry was presumably used for 'public' purposes, in short the civic building programme. At Querns Hospital Kitchen Garden (Figure 29) a quarry had been backfilled by the early fourth century at the latest, and generally the area on either side of the Fosse Way seems to have been given over to burial by this date. Bowling Green Pits (54371) to the north of the town may have been another Roman quarry although conclusive evidence is lacking.

Further evidence of industrial production is provided by the detached building excavated outside the Bath Gate in 1973–4. Here an apparently open-fronted rectangular stone building, 16m long by 7.5m wide with an internal partition, was found fronting onto the Fosse Way. It possessed a flagged stone floor and a small smithing hearth; the 2000 or so iron hobnails recovered from the site are best interpreted as products of the building (and perhaps also a timber predecessor) and suggest a workshop associated with the manufacture and salvage of footwear. The building was constructed cAD 280 and abandoned before 330 (McWhirr et al 1982, 50–68).

To date no potteries or tile-making sites have been positively identified in the vicinity of the town, although petrological analysis of tiles stamped

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*Figure 29*  
Roman quarrying exposed in 1978 at The Querns (Cirencester Excavation Committee).
ARVERI and TPLF from the Beeches houses suggests that they were manufactured from local clays (McWhirr 1986, 127–9). The more prevalent tiles stamped TFF, TPFA, TFFF and LHS appear to originate from the known tile kilns at Minety, 12km south of Cirencester.

Study of the environs of Roman Cirencester is instructive in a number of regards. In particular, it is possible in the area outside the Bath Gate to observe a chronological progression of differing functional activities on the same site. Originally exploited as a limestone quarry, the quarries were utilised as convenient rubbish dumps upon disuse. Later, cAD 280, a building associated with footwear manufacture was constructed, and abandoned in the early fourth century when the area was given over in favour of burial. One notable result of this study is the lack of evidence for extra-mural occupation, particularly the ribbon development outside the principal gates apparent at some other large towns (Esmonde Cleary 1987, 45). This suggests that development and land-holding within the walls may never have reached a state where there was pressure on the available land (and indeed there is evidence to this effect; p 65).

The countryside

The current study area lies at the intersection of two distinct zones of Roman settlement: the Cotswolds, an area of dense villa settlement, and the Upper Thames valley where villas are hardly known. It was noted above (p 49) that there is considerable evidence for continuity of Late Iron Age sites into the Roman period on the terrace gravels of the Thames valley; less is known of the origin of Roman settlement on the Cotswold dip slope. It is beyond the scope of the current study to address general questions relating to the origin and patterning of settlement in these areas, and indeed the study area as defined for this urban project is manifestly unsuited to do so. Similarly, the study area is too small for useful discussion of the effect the development of Corinium had on the agricultural regime of the region. For example, it has been suggested that it was the growth of the town which led directly to a change in the economy of the rural settlement at Claydon Pike, 15km from Corinium (Robinson 1992, 58–9; Miles 1984). This section, dealing with the tract of Roman countryside contained within the study area, will be largely descriptive therefore, and will consider firstly villas (in the sense of rural structures constructed in the Roman tradition) and secondly other forms of settlement.

The spatial distribution of settlement in the environs of Corinium is worthy of comment. A view expressed by a number of earlier authors has been succinctly summarised by Branigan (1976, 27):

‘There are relatively few [villas] close to the town itself, as one would expect since much of the land there must have been farmed from the town, but in the 8–16km zone villas are far more numerous and attest to a class of rural landowners who required the amenities of Cirencester to be close at hand.’

Thanks to the evidence collected by RCHME and this project we are now able to see that the environs of Cirencester were far from devoid of contemporary settlement. There are indications of high status buildings which might be termed villas in the immediate environs of the town, although unfortunately none are known to any great extent.

At The Barton, which lies 360m from the walls of the town, excavations in 1824, 1909 and 1937 revealed a fourth-century Orpheus mosaic, part of a column and fragments of painted wall plaster. At Somerford Road, Chesterton (350m from the walls) there are reports of a Roman building, including fragments of column (RCHME 1976, 31 (7)). Elsewhere Rudder (1800, 63–4) records a mosaic ‘lately [found] at a place called Aings ash in Oakley Wood’ in Cirencester Park, and James Buckman (1866b, 292) mentions:

‘I have only found one example of a quern made of this stone; it was found on the farm of the Agricultural College at Cirencester, having been turned up by the plough in an arable field, in which I had previously observed evidence of Roman occupation, besides finding the remains of a Roman Villa in another field on the same farm. Both sites are a little removed from Acmans Street, about one-and-a-half miles from Corinium.’ (54144)

A single tessera was recovered from fieldwalking at the south of Clark’s Lane site (54190) in the south of the town (RCHME 1976, 102).

Too little is known for any meaningful discussion of the nature of these sites, although Esmonde Cleary has observed (1987, 173–4, 188) that high status sites lying within a short distance of the defences such as The Barton are known from other large towns (such as the Dagmar Road and Olga Road buildings, Dorchester (Dorset); Ilchester Mead, Ilchester; and the Norfolk Street complex, Leicester). Although frequently referred to as villas it is unclear whether these buildings were purely residential suburban homes or working agricultural complexes; indeed the same debate applies to the Beches Road complex within the walls (see p 65). We would be in a much better position to address these questions if more was known of The Barton; in particular whether the site originated in the period before the town defences, in which case its apparent location outside the defences is of little consequence. If a third or fourth century foundation, however, the evidence for tracts of undeveloped land within the town
suggested that it is unlikely to have been pressure on space which led to its sitting outside the defences.

Fleshing-out the picture significantly are the apparently non-villa settlements detected by fieldwalking and aerial photography in the vicinity of Corinium; these sometimes give the lie to the notion that the land surrounding the town was exclusively farmed from estates within the walls. Some 2.3 km north of the town an extensive area of settlement is known on the high, well-drained land between Ermin Street and the Churn valley. Revealed by aerial photographs the site presents a confusing mass of cropmarks but appears to include linear trackways, several rectilinear enclosures and traces of field systems. Despite a number of difficulties in interpretation the cropmarks suggest a tract of managed agricultural landscape covering some 180 ha (54138-54140). Although there is no direct dating evidence for the features, metal-detecting and fieldwalking finds from the general area including third-fourth century pottery and coins. Two inhumation burials, one containing Roman artefacts, immediately south-west of Ermin Street at this point should probably be related to this settlement (Anon 1981). Further to the east on Baunton Downs and adjacent to the Whiteway a rectilinear enclosure (about 20m by 10m) is visible on aerial photographs (54189). Excavation and fieldwalking finds point firmly to a Roman date (finds include two uninscribed altars; no structural debris is recorded; RCHME 1976, 13). Other, apparently agricultural sites, are known from the south of the study area where elements of fieldsystems and track/droveways have been identified at three sites where Roman dating evidence has been forthcoming. To the east in Baunton parish two sites are known through surface collection: that adjacent to Witpit Copse has produced 36 fourth-century coins, late third-fourth century pottery and Roman tile (Anon 1981). To the west of the town the lack of evidence is probably merely a reflection of the presence of Cirencester Park inhibiting arable agriculture which has led directly or indirectly to the discovery of the other sites.

Agricultural activity on the very fringe of Cirencester has been demonstrated by Reece's small excavation at Kingshill on the line of the Cirencester ring-road. Lying only 200m from the town wall the excavation suggested that occupation commenced around the mid first century AD. Features interpreted as pallsades and ditches appear to have been filled in the third century before being covered by ploughsoil which yielded fourth-century pottery and coins. Finds of roofing tile and burnt daub in the filling of the ditches suggested the presence of a nearby building (Reece 1990, 39-44).

Of the agricultural economy of these sites we can say little. Bones recovered from the Kingshill excavation included cattle, sheep, horse and pig although in too small a quantity for meaningful statistics. Analysis of bone assemblages of late Iron Age/early Roman date from Bagendon and of late Roman date from the Beeches Road complex in Cirencester both point to the dominance of cattle over sheep in the meat supply, a pattern at variance with earlier Iron Age and high medieval assemblages where sheep are more prevalent (A King 1978).

Monument Discrimination

Large areas of the Roman town are scheduled as being of national importance. Specific monuments which score 'high' include the forum and basilica, the town wall with its component gates and towers, the macellum, and a number of town houses. It remains true that in areas of reasonable preservation within the walls, there is a good possibility that Roman deposits of national importance will be encountered. As additional data are gathered new Roman monuments of national importance will probably be elucidated.

Outside the walls, the cemeteries (54057, 54372, 54631, 54435) score high. Uncertainties over the identification and date of the Tar Barrows and Grismonds Tower as Roman burial mounds and the inadequate documentation of previous investigations on these sites tends to restrict their scoring at present but future research may change this. The amphitheatre (54045) is also of undoubted national importance, reflecting the rarity of this upstanding monument and its close association with a variety of other contemporary monuments of national and regional importance such as a cemetery, roads and quarries.

Of the rural sites the settlement at Kingshill may be classed as being of regional importance, especially considering that the early structures are covered by late Roman ploughsoil. The other rural settlements should probably be classed similarly, although little of substance is known of these sites. Depending upon the current state of preservation, the Roman building at The Barton may be classed of regional-national importance; too little is known of the other Roman 'villas' within the Study Area for meaningful assessment of their importance. Monuments not as yet recognised within the rural area include temples and potteries. These may exist elsewhere within the hinterland of the Roman town but have not so far been identified within the modern boundaries of the civil parishes chosen as appropriate units for this study.
This Chapter describes the archaeological evidence for the urban area between the end of the Roman period and the Norman Conquest. During this period the name of the town is variously recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Cirencester (sa 577), Cirenceastre (sa 628; A), Cirnceasire (E) and Cyrenceastre (sa 1020). Unlike the preceding Roman period, the data available are scant and often questionable. Naturally, interpretations may be similarly flawed.

Certainly, the urban character of Cirencester in the early post-Roman period was very different from that of the preceding 400 years, in population size, structure and even location. While substantial Roman buildings must have remained standing and occupied, girdled by the town wall (and hence the 'caesier' name), initially there seems little to differentiate settlement in the town from settlements in the countryside. A number of Roman buildings have late features which suggest occupation into the fifth century, for example the winged-corridor villa at the Beeches (McWhirr 1986). Likewise, the heavy wear on paving stones at the forum has been taken to imply use to a late date (CAD 430) while the lack of finds and debris suggested 'high standards of cleanliness' to its excavator (Wacher 1964a, 14; 1975). Viewed more dispassionately, it would be wrong to speculate how long buildings such as the forum might have continued to function and in what capacity.

After the mid fifth century there is precious little to go on. An undated ditch, of late Roman or possible early medieval date was discovered in 1961 on the Mycalex factory site (Reece 1976b; Wacher 1962, 11). Elsewhere, dubiously dated bodies found in the 'organic' fillings of ditches at Leaholme (McWhirr et al 1982, 207) and Dyer Court (Webster 1957; McWhirr et al 1982, 207) have fuelled speculation of fifth-century epidemics and 'unburied bodies left to rot in roadside ditches' (Wacher 1975, 313) inspired by the writings of Bede and Gildas (Colgrave and Mynors 1969). Between AD 450 and AD 550, the earliest date for the artefacts from the Barton Farm cemetery, the gap is filled only by such undated and troublesome pieces of the puzzle as the black earths and the modifications to the amphitheatre.

The site of the Roman amphitheatre is the one candidate for early medieval housing within the study area and a fifth and sixth century fortified site has been suggested by the excavator. Late in its use the entrance passages were narrowed, flanking rooms blocked off and the entrance route improved. Crucially, excavations in the amphitheatre in 1963 uncovered a number of large holes together with rough cobbled floors and finds of fifth-eighth century pottery tempered with vegetal grog (Wacher 1964a, 18; 1981). The excavator interpreted these holes as being designed for the timber uprights of an Anglo-Saxon hall but insufficient of the plan was recovered to securely identify the monument. Photographs show that these holes might be better described as pits up to 1.5m across and, since the associated pottery was unstratified (Heighway pers comm) any further interpretation must await final publication.
The possible fortification of the amphitheatre is of great interest, not least because of the apparent importance of fortified bases to British military leaders of the post-Roman period, as shown by the re-use of hillforts in Somerset for example (Burrow 1981). The interpretation of the re-used amphitheatre as a chieftain's residence or place of shelter prior to the Battle of Dyrham in AD 577 has a seductive pseudo-historical authenticity but it may prove too exclusive an interpretation on the basis of so limited information.

Elsewhere the form and location of settlements are, if anything, even less certain. The field name 'Kingsmead' on the south-east periphery of the town had always been thought to hold some potential until recent evaluation proved negative (OAU 1991) but, tantalisingly, a possible Anglo-Saxon sunken featured building was identified but not recorded during a watching brief for the Cirencester ring road in 1973 (Reece pers comm). Away from the town, there is as yet no archaeological evidence to establish a pre-Conquest origin for any of the later medieval rural settlements, at least in their present locations, and it would be wrong to assert that Domesday Book tells us otherwise.

In 1886 an early medieval cemetery was discovered at The Barton (54420) where nine skeletons were found (P D C Brown 1976, 31–3). A number of discoveries have been made here including, in 1909, two shield bosses of pagan Anglo-Saxon type in association with one adult male and one child burial which had been cut down through a Roman Orpheus mosaic inside the former villa buildings (Figure 30; Badeley 1924, 60–1). There is also an Anglo-Saxon pot decorated with stamped patterns, bosses and incised lines from this site. The extent and layout of the cemetery is quite unclear but has been dated to the sixth century (perhaps earlier than AD 550) on the basis of typological parallels with similar artefacts from the Upper Thames Valley (P D C Brown 1976). Nothing beyond selected skeletal remains and artefacts survives for study.

Figure 30
Skeleton of an adult male, cut through the Orpheus mosaic at The Barton, discovered in 1909 (Corinium Museum)
Cyrnceastre: The Early Medieval Period

Figure 31
Monuments in the early medieval Royal/Ecclesiastical Centre
Key to Figure 31:
54090 The Abbey (1) pre-conquest church
54420 The Barton cemetery
54474 The Abbey (2) pre-conquest church

Possible religious centres
Possible settlement extent

1 km
The historical evidence for Cirencester in the sixth and seventh centuries adds further complications. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 577 Ceawlin is said to have defeated and killed the kings Conmail, Concan and Fairnmail at the battle of Dyrham and to have taken Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath (Whitelock et al 1961). On the face of it a harmonious splicing of archaeological and historical evidence begins to look untenable in the face of mid sixth century material from the Barton cemetery which suggests Anglo-Saxon settlement around Cirencester well before AD 577. However, as Sims-Williams (1983) has pointed out, there are ways of reconciling the archaeology with the historical data. One could suppose, for example, that the artefacts in the Barton cemetery were already antiques when they were deposited or that the Britons had recovered the areas from the English before the 570s when they promptly lost them again. However, the chronology of the Chronicle must remain suspicious.

More generally, even if the dates cannot be given too much weight, the ninth century compiler of the Chronicle presumably intends it to be understood that Cirencester was an important central place c400-600 AD (Yorke 1990). In 628 Cirencester again was fought over by Cynegils and Penda. This chiefly reflects the competition between the West Saxon and Mercian rulers to control the area but the forceful acquisition of administrative districts or regions by Anglo-Saxons again implies a town of some status with a surrounding area dependent upon it.

A number of early medieval finds have been made in the town including pins, a buckle, a disc brooch, a mouthpiece from a sword scabbard, iron spearheads, a number of beads including imported examples, garnet houks, a pin beater (for work on a warp-weighted loom), and a carved bone tube (possibly a gaming piece) (P D C Brown 1976, fig 3.2, 23). Only one of these objects has a secure provenance but they do prove that artefacts from Ireland and possibly France were not unknown in the town before the seventh century and suggest bronze metal-working and weaving in the locality. Taken together, this information suggests at least intermittent activity in Cirencester in the immediate post-Roman period though there is little evidence for the continuity of town life after the mid fifth century judged by any satisfactory set of criteria. There was certainly trade and travel to and through the former Roman town but no recognisable urbanised form in Cirencester's continuing history of settlement.

There is considerable debate about whether Cirencester shows evidence for 'continuity' or not (eg Brooks 1986). Much depends on how the word 'continuity' is defined. It is probably true that there has been continuous use of the site and its environs from Roman times, perhaps because it was a river crossing on a major route or because the place carried a memory of its past, possibly an administrative identity, which was never forgotten. However, there have also been dramatic shifts in location, from Roman town to Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical centre to medieval market town. Each urban form is so much an expression of a changed set of circumstances as to defy any argument for continuity.

**Royal/Ecclesiastical Centre**

By the mid seventh century Cirencester had probably re-emerged as an estate centre through the initiative and influence of the church and, later, royalty. How far this centre can be said to have had urban characteristics is debatable for, in common with many other towns and cities, few monuments have so far been identified from this form (Figure 31). It seems plausible that survival of the town was dependent more on administrative continuity than commercial or demographic growth which are arguably more visible in the archaeological record. One interpretation might envisage Cirencester retaining some limited 'central place functions' throughout the sub-Roman period and increasing commercial activity and population as a result of an early medieval role as an ecclesiastical centre.

What evidence is there for an effective urban centre after the ninth century? In general terms, the political and administrative complexity of the region in the pre-Conquest period as suggested by historical evidence is confirmed by considerable investment in later Anglo-Saxon rural programmes of church building and mill construction. Evidence for the nucleation of villages and the creation of open field systems might also be expected (C C Taylor 1983). The importance of the town itself is indicated by references in both Asser's Life of Alfred (Jane 1966) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which describe how the Vikings moved camp from Chippenham to Cirencester in AD 879. The Vikings generally used royal 'tuns' for their camps probably because they were centres of collection of royal 'farms' which were still probably paid in kind at this time. A big minster church would also have been a tempting attraction, if the proposed eighth century construction date can be accepted (Evans 1991).

In the tenth and eleventh centuries Cirencester did not have a mint, unlike Cricklade to the south and Gloucester or Winchcombe to the west and north-west (Loye 1961) and does not feature in the Burghal Hidage (Hill 1978; Biddle 1976). In the absence of these attributes the relative importance of the town is difficult to gauge, though the layout of key topographic features is significant, as Haslam has remarked for Anglo-Saxon towns in Wiltshire.
It is quite possible that excavation programmes, exasperated perhaps by the constraints of time and opportunity in past construction, may be to blame, coupled with the most rudimentary assessment of this form is possible. Little investigation has taken place to the north of Lewis Lane where the greatest potential for fragile Saxon archaeology must lie. In part, medieval and post-medieval damage from cellarage and post-hole, post-in-trench or sill-beam structures of post-hole, post-in-trench or sill-beam alignment from the late Roman street plan. Wooden structures of post-hole, post-in-trench or sill-beam construction might be expected (Rahtz 1976). These kinds of buildings are not easy to recognise in the archaeological record and might well have been missed in the past. Occupation may also have been very limited and, if Gloucester may be used as a model, parts of Cirencester may have been in agricultural use in the ninth and tenth centuries and occupation may have shifted around inside the urban area (Heighway 1984a). Sadly, given the lack of eighth to eleventh century recorded stray finds from Cirencester it is not possible to chart the growth of the town in a meaningful way.

A common feature of excavation is the accumulation of a homogenous black earth which may be partly ploughsoil, partly dumping and the accretion of compost from dying vegetation (McPhail 1981). Excavated Roman monuments within the town are commonly found to have been masked by these earth (see below) would suggest that much of the town was buried beneath a thick mantle of soil.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the continued presence of a single, strong ecclesiastical lordship, there is no evidence of the deliberate reorganisation of the Roman topography though the proximity of the market place, church and, presumably, housing suggests a complex of features typical of a late Saxon urban centre. Elsewhere in the town whilst zones of 'plan-units', plots of regular size, shape and orientation, can be recognised on nineteenth-century maps along Gloucester Street, Cricklade Street, Dyer Street and on Cecily Hill, they cannot with any certainty be assigned an early medieval date (Conzen 1968). These units contrast with the sub-circular street blocks defined by modern Castle Street and Black Jack Street and may signal a different land-use history. Hopefully, archaeological excavation might in the future be of some assistance in dating particular blocks and recent work in Worcester (Baker et al 1992) shows the exciting potential of this kind of work.

Housing

Cyrneastre was apparently confined to an area less than half that of the preceding Roman provincial capital and was located in the north-western part of the town. Minor foci are possibly to be identified at Cecily Hill (medieval Inchtchaffre) and at the site of St Lawrence’s Hospital, as well as at unidentified sites outside the Roman town walls (see below).

No early medieval structures have been identified from the town but logically, structures might be grouped around the church sites and along the major arterial routes (especially those which differ in alignment from the late Roman street plan). Wooden structures of post-hole, post-in-trench or sill-beam construction might be expected (Rahtz 1976). These kinds of buildings are not easy to recognise in the archaeological record and might well have been missed in the past. Occupation may also have been very limited and, if Gloucester may be used as a model, parts of Cirencester may have been in agricultural use in the ninth and tenth centuries and occupation may have shifted around inside the urban area (Heighway 1984a). Sadly, given the lack of eighth to eleventh century recorded stray finds from Cirencester it is not possible to chart the growth of the town in a meaningful way.

The streets

The Roman road system had only a passive role in determining the layout of the early medieval town. The line of Lewis Lane, for example, may reflect a route straight through the town rather than to it and Cirencester’s location at an important road junction must be one of the reasons why trade and town life reawakened. Within the Roman walled area, however, many minor streets were aligned differently from their Roman antecedents so that property boundaries and formal classical spaces were lost. Much of the area to the south of the modern alignment of Lewis Lane became redundant.

The alignments of Dyer Street, Castle Street, Park Street, Black Jack Street, and others, are all directed towards a clear activity focus, the church, and cut across the Roman streets. The accumulations of black earth (see below) would suggest that much of the Roman town, with the exception of the town walls and throughfares, was invisible to later inhabitants.
dark soils and, where they were formerly used to suggest the disuse, abandonment and decay of the Roman town, they are now suspected of containing valuable evidence of continuity for the period between the mid fifth century and the emergence of a convincing early medieval urban form. However, in Cirencester there is little dating evidence for these soils, which are thickest to the north of Lewis Lane, and much of this deposit may be medieval and post-medieval in date, as implied by the cautionary quote at the head of this chapter. Further micromorphological studies are needed.

The historical evidence suggests a number of additional monuments about which we have no evidence at present. First, the assemblies of large numbers of important people in late Saxon Cirencester implies the ability to house them. At present there is no indication where this might have taken place, though it is notable that at Gloucester the 'palace' site at Kingsholm was outside the main town (Heighway 1984a and b). Second, there may be buried archaeological evidence for temporary Viking encampments and burials, as at Repton, Derbyshire (Biddle 1985).

Religious buildings

The massive foundations of a pre-conquest church (54090), incorporating robbed Roman masonry, were discovered in 1965 to the north of the present parish church. Later stone robbing, the lack of post-Roman artefacts and subsequent building caused some difficulties in interpretation and dating but the church, which is all of a single construction phase, had a 175ft (53.5m) nave with aisles to north and south divided into porticus and an apsidal east end with a crypt beneath (Figure 32). A number of burials were also excavated (P D C Brown 1976, 33-43; Brown and McWhirr 1966, 1967; Wilkinson and McWhirr, forthcoming), but ancillary buildings, as possibly at Northampton (Williams et al 1984) were not recorded, though they should be expected nearby.

The probable existence of such a site, though often in the past misrepresented as a prebendal college (eg Leland (1535-1543) in Toulmin Smith 1964), is documented in the cartulary of Cirencester Abbey as well as by later historians (eg Collinson undated) although local opinion had previously placed the church below the Abbey House (Beecham 1887, 83).

The excavated church has been dated to the late eighth century and the presence of an early ecclesiastical centre seems as crucial for our understanding of the early medieval and later development of Cirencester as it does for Gloucester and Tewkesbury. The church clearly ranks amongst the known major Middle Saxon Mercian churches such as Brixworth and must have been a minster with jurisdiction over a dependent surrounding area. This is reflected in later links which acknowledge the former dependency of daughter churches such as Baunton on the mother church at Cirencester.

The construction of this large church in the late eighth century raises questions about the earlier religious beliefs in this area. Were the inhabitants of the town non-Christian until the early eighth century? and if so, as Bassett inquires (1989), why are sources so silent about their eventual conversion? One likely alternative would be to envisage Cirencester, together with London, York and Lincoln as sites of late Roman/sub-Roman bishoprics with fluctuating roles as ecclesiastical centres throughout this period. By the seventh century, in spite of the large numbers of sees at former Roman cities, Cirencester was not amongst them, perhaps because of the town's location on the frontiers of unstable Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (see Bassett 1989 and 1992 for further discussion). If this interpretation is followed it seems quite possible that future work

Figure 32
The south wall of the apse of the Saxon church, with surviving parts of the robbed crypt to the left, and cut by a later tomb (Cirencester Excavation Committee)
might reveal archaeological evidence of an early episcopal centre in the town which would later have been succeeded by the excavated church site. Quite possibly, our vision of a single church is false (Blair and Sharpe 1992) and there is more than one pre-Conquest church to be excavated within the Abbey Grounds. An alternative view, put forward by Evans (1991) would place the origins of the earliest church in Cirencester to the mid seventh century, the period of conversion of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of the region.

Besides the status it afforded, the location of a church profoundly influenced the layout of all subsequent urban forms. Its construction is surely the single most important explanation as to why the northern half of the town came to be developed during this period. Sadly, its excavation gave us no clues as to why it might have been located in this particular spot. Was this cleared ground? Was there a pre-existing Roman religious site here (see Holbrook, Chapter 8)? Why were the sites of Roman official buildings such as the forum or public baths, surely a good source of quality building stone, not re-used as they were at Gloucester, Winchester and elsewhere?

The excavator’s published interpretation is that this church of late seventh to ninth century date was taken down and replaced by a second, smaller pre-Conquest church (54447) some time before the Conquest (P D C Brown 1976, 33-43). In turn, this building was demolished to make way for the Abbey in the second half of the twelfth century and is presumably that mentioned in Domesday Book. Later re-interpretation of the stratigraphy seems likely to place this second church amongst remodellings of early thirteenth century date. The sequence is thus rather simplified with a large Saxon church, now redated to the late eighth century, of the twelfth century (Wilkinson and McWhirr, William the Conqueror, with the site other than that Abbey and there is little to connect the name of the church with the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of the region.

Important recent work (Evans 1976, 1989, 1991) has made clear that there is no documentary evidence for the early church in Cirencester. The earliest mention of a group of canons seems to be in the charter of 1133 in which Henry I endowed the Abbey and there is little to connect the name of Regenbald, clerk to Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror, with the site other than that he once owned the land. Regenbald was endowed with a number of minster churches on royal estates by Edward the Confessor and he probably took the greater part of the revenues and left priests to carry out the parochial duties. His acquisition of the Cirencester site is further confirmation for minster status for the site, since minsters were the normal form of endowment for royal priests. The distribution of his land holdings before and after Domesday, in which he is referred to once as ‘Regenbaud of Cirencester’, suggests a strong association with the town and it may be that he settled down here and was buried in the church. His lands certainly form the basis of the group granted by Henry I to the foundation at Cirencester (Keynes 1987).

Two further chapels are shown on Figure 31 at the site of the medieval St Lawrence’s Hospital and at the Chapel of St Cecilia. Reece suggests that both monuments may have their origins as late Roman cemetery churches and that this helps to activate a shift of settlement towards the north of the town by the medieval period (Reece and Catling 1975, 13). Something similar could be proposed for Gloucester where two leper hospitals overlaid the Roman cemetery at Wotton Pitch (Heighway 1984a and b), and there are possible British and European parallels (eg Doggett 1986 for Dorchester-on-Thames; Biddle 1976). St Cecilia was also a popular Roman saint (Slater 1976a, 97) but it has to be said that there is no archaeological evidence whatsoever for these suggestions and, for that reason, no monuments have been marked on the map.

Accumulated deposits

This form is probably the least well understood in Cirencester’s history. The kinds of evidence that might be expected contrast markedly with those available for the Roman town. Instead of stone walls and substantial and sometimes impressive floors the building techniques of the occupants of the town in the fifth-­ tenth centuries favoured timber and earth construction. It should not be assumed, however, that the changes in building technique represent a deterioration in the quality or impressive character of the structures. Timber buildings can be just as large and just as architecturally sophisticated as stone buildings, they simply do not survive as well in the long term. The most distinctive deposits of relevance to this period are the so-called dark earths, although visual comparison of the results of available site data suggests that there are several different kinds of dark earth in Cirencester, ranging from the locally famous oyster-shell level (see head of Chapter) to a relatively compact brown-black deposit immediately above later Roman structures.

With the exception of the cemetery, the majority of the deposits in this form are unclassifiable. There are no earthworks and the only known substantial building, the Saxon church site, is buried and mostly robbed out. The state of individual plots un-
Survival: Cirencester retains few visible clues as to the whereabouts of buried features in this urban form and so data for the assessment of survival is very limited. There are no zones of high survival. Zones of medium survival must include the Abbey Grounds and areas of open space around the market place. Dark earths which are thought to contain deposits of fifth to eleventh century date are present over much of the northern half of the urban area. The majority of the urban area must at present be considered of low survival because of the superimposition of later developments.

Potential: In spite of Cirencester’s valley location and the potential for thick and/or waterlogged strata, there is no evidence so far to indicate any potential for wet recovery of artefacts at this date. Whilst casual stray finds from unknown locations indicate some general potential, the character and volume of deposits are poorly understood.

Documentation (archaeological): Relatively little detailed exploration of deposits of this period has taken place. Zones of high archaeological documentation are restricted to the area of the Anglo-Saxon church excavated in 1968-69 to the north of the modern parish church and miscellaneous stray finds, whose distribution shows no patterning. The remainder of the area of this form is of low archaeological documentation in spite of small-scale excavations and watching briefs which have helped to identify the presence of black earths.

Documentation (historical): The difficulties in handling the historical documentation for this period have been assessed by Sims-Williams (1983). Cirencester is mentioned in the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the 577 Annal when the ‘kings’ of Cirencester, Bath and Gloucester are defeated at Dyrham. According to the same source, which may be questioned on many counts, Penda was victorious against the pagan West Saxon kings Cynegils and Cwichelm in a battle at Cirencester in 628 (Whitelock et al. 1961). Afterwards the people known as the Hwicce came under Mercian lordship (Brooks 1989).

There are no Anglo-Saxon charters from within the study area, although portions of shared boundaries may be assumed from clauses in charters for the neighbouring lands of Kemble and South Cerney (Grundy 1935-6).

Cirencester was the site of a synodal council for Ethelred the Unready (991-993) as well as a council of King Canute. Significant late Saxon assemblies were held here in AD 925, AD 956, AD 985, and 1020 (Sawyer 1968). The town is listed in Domesday Book (Moore 1982).

Group Value (clustering): Knowledge of this form is so weak that no cases of repetitious monuments can be identified. Industrial zones, for example, have not been recognised. The whole form is zoned as poor in Group Value (clustering).

Diversity (features): There are no known cases of superimposed monument forms nor the re-use of Roman buildings such as the forum. However, the Roman buildings and streets have a passive role in determining the urban structure of the later town, particularly the major gateways. The whole form is zoned as poor.

Group Value (association): A large part of this form as presently understood can be regarded as of high Group Value (association) because it overlies the Roman forms and is in turn succeeded by the medieval and later forms. The putative north-eastern section of the form can be regarded as being a possible zone of medium Group Value (association) because it is overlain by the medieval town yet lies outside the walls of the Roman defences. The presence of the early medieval town in this area depends wholly upon the interpreted origins of the medieval suburbs along Gloucester Street and Cecily Hill which are poorly understood at present.

Amenity Value: With the exception of the amphitheatre, the survival of monuments of this period is generally poor and provides little visual amenity. It is not readily appreciated that the area of the post-Roman town is different from that of the preceding forms; there is no recognised ‘old town’ for example. There are, however, some popular early medieval associations for the town. The fables of Holinshed and Geoffrey of Monmouth, amongst others, recount the antics of a certain Gurmund, described by some writers as ‘King of the Africans’ and by others as a Norwegian pirate (Beecham 1887, 12-13). In an attempt to take the city, he tied burning fibres to the feet of sparrows which nested in the eaves of the houses and so burnt the town to the ground. The legend appears on the shield of the present Town Council with the phoenix rising from the flames, and Grismond’s Mount, though it has no known early medieval archaeology, is still a prominent earthwork just inside Cirencester Park.
Given the popularity of romantic legend it is slightly surprising that the medieval claim of Grismund's Mount as the coronation site of King Arthur, and of King Alfred living a year in Cirencester are forgotten today.

Overall, Cirencester is one of about 25 prime examples of Royal/Ecclesiastical Centres across England. However, there is little published archaeological data, especially when compared to the Roman or later medieval evidence for the town. Visitors to the town may leave quite unaware of even the existence of the early church site, the later history of Roman monuments such as the amphitheatre and the lasting influence of the pre-Conquest period upon modern land-use and town layout. Nevertheless, Cirencester has the potential to contribute to debate on a number of key issues in the early middle ages. These include our understanding of British power bases following the end of Roman rule, the reasons for shifts in the focus of settlements, and the development of the later Saxon urban form.

**Early medieval countryside**

*Administrative frameworks*

Land ownership and administration is often invisible in the landscape but has an enormous influence on archaeology. For the early medieval period attention has been drawn to the existence of 'multiple estates', multi-vill manors dependent on head places or caput. Cirencester shares miscellaneous characteristics in common with other head places: for example it was the head of a hundredal manor (a quarter of the shire); it is surrounded by subsidiary place-names such as Preston (meaning 'the priests' tun') and Siddington (meaning 'the place to the south'); it was a medieval royal demesne manor; it has a known early church site; and its medieval church had a number of dependent chapellaries indicating earlier dependency. The overall pattern suggests that early estates approximated to the area of the Seven Hundreds of Cirencester and that this unit may have earlier, possibly even pre-Roman, antecedents. The territory of the Seven Hundreds as it existed in AD 900 has been reconstructed (Slater 1976a, 82-6) and implies an effective urban centre (Cooper 1986).

Although there are no Anglo-Saxon charters from within the study area, extant charters for South Cerney and Kemble-Ewen provide information for shared boundaries (Grundy 1953-6). In AD 909 King Aethelred (K703) granted 15 hides of land at South Cerney to the monastery at Abingdon, and the survey outlines the southern boundary of Siddington with South Cerney. Further to the west, the bounds of the former parish of Ewen are described in a charter of AD 951 (B671, 672, 673, K 355) whereby King Aethelstan granted 15 hides to Malmesbury Abbey. Here shared portions include the line of the Fosse, the line of the present parish boundaries between Cirencester-Kemble and the western edge of Siddington-Kemble.

Some monuments of known date are spatially related to boundaries and so help to date them. For example, the parish boundary between Preston and Cirencester follows the line of the Fosse Way and clearly post-dates it, as does the eastern margin of the parish of Baunton which also follows the road and is known to be a post-medieval invention. The only candidates for early boundaries are the Stratton-Cirencester boundary, the tything boundaries within Cirencester, the Siddington-Cirencester boundary and parts of the outer boundary of the Study Area. The Stratton-Cirencester boundary is particularly interesting because it is straddled by The Barton early medieval cemetery (54420). Similar cases elsewhere have been used to support the hypothesis that burials are deliberately placed on pre-existing or 'primary' economic boundaries in order to reinforce territorial claims (Goodier 1984). This would suggest a date before the mid-sixth century for that part of the boundary line at least. Reece has argued that the medieval tythings are the heirs to late Roman farmsteads in or near the Roman town (Reece and Catling 1975).

By the tenth century these large administrative estates had fragmented into uncellular manors and the boundaries of some earlier economic units, like Stratton, became fossilised through the establishment of parishes.

**Settlement, cemeteries and industry**

The classic diagnostic features of Anglo-Saxon churches such as pilasters and long-and-short work are not to be found within the Study Area. However, the blocked remains of a Saxon doorway are still visible in the north wall of the nave in the pre-Conquest church of All Saints at Preston (54146). Upper and Lower Siddington (54438 and 54439) as well as Stratton (54440) are likely to have had pre-Conquest churches and are recorded as having a priest at the time of Domesday (Slater 1976a) (Figure 33). This evidence for Anglo-Saxon church sites around Cirencester must be seen in the context of a larger group identified by Taylor and Taylor (1968-78) including Bibury, Daglingworth and Coln Rogers amongst others. The reasons for such a grouping are unclear, substantial investments by late Saxon society are certainly indicated but whether this is a genuine 'cultural efflorescence' (Cooper 1986) or simply a misleading pattern which results from a lack of later medieval investment in
Figure 33
Early medieval monuments in the rural area (see Figure 31 for monuments within the urban form)

Key to Figure 33:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54146</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>pre-Conquest church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5420</td>
<td>The Barton</td>
<td>cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5438</td>
<td>Upper Siddington</td>
<td>pre-Conquest church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5439</td>
<td>Lower Siddington</td>
<td>pre-Conquest church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5440</td>
<td>Stratton</td>
<td>pre-Conquest church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54247</td>
<td>Stratton</td>
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<tr>
<td>54274</td>
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<td>mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54377</td>
<td>Cirencester</td>
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<tr>
<td>54379</td>
<td>Cirencester</td>
<td>mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54422</td>
<td>Siddington St Peter</td>
<td>mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54425</td>
<td>Siddington St Mary</td>
<td>mill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not located:

- 54146 Stratton mill
- 54247 Stratton mill
- 54377 Cirencester mill
- 54378 Cirencester mill
- 54379 Cirencester mill
- 54422 Siddington St Peter mill
- 54425 Siddington St Mary mill
church building outside of the major wool centres is unclear.

Domesday Book provides documentary reference to seven watermills lying within the four parishes. Three watermills recorded for Cirencester (54377–54379), valued together at 30 shillings, were part of the main manor, which Moore (1982) suggests was centred around Barton Farm. Archaeological evidence is lacking but one or more of these could be expected to be an antecedent for medieval watermills at The Barton and Gildenbridge. Assuming all seven were stream or river-driven, effective management of the river Churn can be envisaged, with two mills on its course to the north of Cirencester at Stratton (54247 and 54374), and two to the south in Siddington St Peter (54422), and Siddington St Mary (54425).

Environment

Organic clay deposits of possible Saxon date examined close to Trinity Mill showed good pollen preservation. Recorded in Domesday Book, the mill lies just outside the immediate study area in the parish of Bagendon, but illustrates well the potential for the survival of environmental evidence based on pollen analysis. A moderately diverse assemblage was identified including cereal pollen, grasses and herb pollen (buttercups, ribwort plantain, rat-tail plantains, Great Burnet), tree pollen (oak, ash) and shrubs (hazel and willow). This suggests a variety of vegetation environments typical of a species-rich water-meadow close to woods and farmland. Cereal grains may be derived either from adjacent arable areas or from crop processing associated with the mill (Scaife 1991), but too little material was available to provide accurate dating.

Monument Discrimination

The number of monuments identified in early medieval Cirencester is small in comparison with the previous Roman urban forms and the medieval market town. Only one identified monument has been investigated through techniques of modern excavation, the pre-Conquest church to the north of the present-day parish church of St John the Baptist. This monument ranks high. With the exception of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery site at The Barton, the existence of all the other monuments is only implied in written accounts such as Domesday Book. Their archaeological character is entirely unassessed.
10. CIRENCESTRE: A MEDIUM-SIZED MARKET TOWN IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

by Christopher Gerrard

"Here was a castle on the south-west side of the town, and that I have not been able to discover when nor by whom it was built, our histories give us a more certain account of its destruction."

Samuel Rudder, *A new history of Gloucestershire* (1779)

"There will always be uncertainty until there should chance to be, for some other purpose, any deep trenching, when the base of old foundations might be discovered."

Rev E A Fuller discussing Cirencester Abbey Church (1892-3, 52)

Medium-sized market town (medieval)

This Chapter gives an account of the archaeology of the post-Conquest town, from the eleventh century to the mid sixteenth century (Figure 34). During this period Cirencester grew from the focus of the late Saxon town into a market and service centre for surrounding settlements, one of almost 1000 such communities of varying sizes spread across the country (EH 1992c).

Before the early fourteenth century, when the woollen industry and later the cloth industry began to create wealth and new markets, Cirencester probably remained little changed from the Domesday settlement, with the exception of the addition of the Augustinian Abbey. In rural areas this lack of investment has been observed in the striking lack of new building programmes in churches (Pounds 1988) and the consequent survival of Romanesque architecture generally on the Cotswolds. In the town itself archaeological evidence is ephemeral and most industries which process agricultural products have left few archaeological traces.

Throughout the medieval period the effects of surviving Roman fortifications and the Anglo-Saxon street plan had a continuing effect on the development of the town plan but new elements were added, such as the castle site and a wide range of public buildings which indicate a new urban lifestyle. The prosperity of the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is proudly symbolised by the parish church dedicated to St John the Baptist, built from the profits of the market place in which it stands. The market place, beyond the west precinct wall of the abbey, had become the dominant focus of the town. As we shall see, the archaeological evidence for this period is not inconsiderable and can act as a crude guide to medieval changes in the urban fabric.

The streets

The principal streets of the medieval urban area radiated from the market place. In only two instances does the medieval street pattern follow Roman alignments: in Dollar/Gosditch Street, and Querns Lane/Lewis Lane. However, the former Roman gateways remained as entrances to the town and so made an important contribution to the developing plan. The line of the Roman town wall was re-adopted as an administrative boundary for much of its length and, though ruinous, would have been sufficient to protect the collection of market tolls.

Many streets were defined as running between road bridges or street crosses and it is useful to locate these first. There are a number of bridges recorded within the urban area: Gildenbrigg (54314) was probably the later Bailiff's Bridge at the end of Gloucester Street (Fuller 1894a, 223); Clement's Bridge or Groomsbole (Gunstoole) Bridge (54251) at the bottom of Cecily Hill (Figure 35), and the Swyne Bridge in Gosditch Street (54170) both crossed the Gunstoole (Daglingworth) Brook. St John's Bridge
(54160) was at the northern end of Dollar Street, with New Bridge (54254) to the north of New Mills (Slater 1976a). No structural surveys of these bridges have been undertaken and it is not known if any of the medieval fabric survives. Fuller equates 'Welfrid Marescal's ford' with the site of a ford (54169) at the present Oxford Bridge, in London Road and it can be assumed that animals were washed down here on their way into the market just as they would have been at other horseponds and water troughs in the town.

None of these bridges are known to have had crosses or chapels but there was a series of standing crosses or chapels but there was a series of standing crosses around the town, located mainly at ford junctions. Of the six described by Pooley (1868, 34–8) only one survives, the High Cross, relocated to the West Market Place in 1927 after a sequence of moves since the eighteenth century. A document of 1413 refers to the High Cross (54084) as the Nova Crux, thus implying a predecessor. In 1795 the cross was removed to Cirencester Park (Figure 36) to a plantation known as Cathedral Firs in the northern sector of Oakley Wood where it stood for some years before being transferred to a spot near the Woodhouse. It originally occupied a space opposite the Ram Inn at the western end of the market place and 'stood on a base 10ft square, with four steps on each side with an octagonal column or pillar supporting a capital which was much defaced' (Rudder 1800, 115–7).

Of the other five, the Pig Cross (54083) stood at the northern end of Dyer Street opposite the Waterloo Passage where the pig market was held (Fuller 1932; Slater 1976a, 101). In 1800 Rudder recalled a sundial fixed on a pillar at this spot which was taken down before 1795, and 'Site of Cross' is recorded on the 1875 Ordnance Survey of the town. In 1800 the round pedestal of the Pig Cross (54078) was 'still remembered' although 'removed' (Rudder 1800). The sixth recorded cross stood at the junction of Querns Lane and Cricklade Street (54077) and, together with the Sheep Street and London Road examples, demarcated the bounds of the township.

The streets which ran between the crosses and over the bridges had varying names and those listed in the Lady Chapel Register (1460) and the Minister's Accounts (1540) have been studied by Fuller (1893-4b) and more generally by A H Smith (1964). Some may be helpful in indicating the location of former monuments. Castell Street (54418) in 1540 is modern Castle Street and supposedly leads to the castle site. Dyar Strete in 1459 becomes Chepeyngstrete in 1540, modern Dyer Street (54104). Richard le Dyere is mentioned in 1341 tax records and the street name may indicate a developing industrial quarter centred on the wool and cloth industry (but see below). Chepyng suggests a market which we know to have existed here. Bochereuie Row (54097), later Butcher Row, and Shoe Lane (54151) were both streets threading their way between former buildings in The Shambles in the market place. Dolchhall Street (54108) in 1540 is modern Dollar Street a name which must be derived from the Almory or Almery gate or dole gate of the Augustinian Abbey. Slater Street (54248) in 1540, modern Sheep Street, may indicate the site of the medieval archery butts (Slater 1976) or possibly, in its earlier form of Schygh DUP, the site of the public latrines. Temple Street (54101) in 1549 became St John's Street (1559) and is now Black Jack Street. This street began at the bottom of Cecily Hill and led to the parish church of St John the Baptist. According to Baddeley the Knights Hospitallers from the preceptory at Quenington had a courthouse (54252) in Black Jack Street where they succeeded the Templars (Baddeley's notebooks for 1935).

There have been many modifications during the evolution of modern street names: Le Fosse (54267) in 1540 became modern Lewis Lane and shows that the name Fosse was originally used inside the town; New Street (54268) is possibly the name used for Querns Lane in the 1460 Lady Chapel Register; Cecily Street (54102) was recorded as Cleeke Hill in 1202, Inghydoch or Inghydochstrete in 1392 and 1428, St Cecily Strete in 1459, and Indchthorpe Strete in 1540; Lawegutter (54426) is modern Park Lane; St Lawrence Street (54105) is modern Gloucester Street and ran from the Gildenbrigge to St John's Bridge (see below); Raten Rewe (54269) in 1459 or Rotten Rewe in 1540 is the medieval alignment of Spitalgate; fifteenth-century Abbot Strete (54099) became Abbot Street by 1540 and is now Cowell Street, renamed in the seventeenth century after a wealthy resident family of that name; Battel Strete (54106) went from Clements Bridge to Dollar and later became Bartle Street in 1619 but is now Thomas Street and named after the hospital. This street led from Clement's or Groomstole Bridge to the Dollar Street/Gloucester Street Bridge.

Some modern streets have retained their medieval names: Silver Street (54100), Gosediche Strete (54110) in 1540, modern Gosditch Street, may be corrupted from Foss-dyche Strete, or Goat-ditch (Slater 1976a, 102) and ran from Clements Bridge to the Swyne Bridge (Fuller 1874, 223); Cricklade Street (54109) was Chepeyng Strete in 1540, running south from the market place beyond the cross which stood at the junction of Querns Lane/Cricklade Street towards Cricklade.
Figure 34
Monuments in the medieval Medium-Sized Market Town
Typically, historical debate over the evolution of street names in Cirencester has proved more distracting than details of greater significance such as dates for street improvements (e.g., paving) or changes in alignments.

**Public buildings and works**

Of some of Cirencester’s more important public buildings during the medieval period little can be said. The original south porch of the parish church of St John’s has been suggested as being a guild meeting room before 1500 (54081) and it seems likely that the church served a variety of public functions before that date. An exchange (54145) in the market place, otherwise known as the Bottehall or Boot Hall, held a market on Fridays before 1800. Two further buildings are unlocated: Baddeley records a saltewhich near the Boot Hall, presumably some kind of salt market, and the Tolsey was the meeting place of the Pie Powder Court which controlled the customs of the market.

*Figure 36*

The medieval High Cross removed to Cirencester Park (Corinium Museum)