GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS
SURVEY

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

CINDERFORD

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TEXT & MAPS UPDATED MATTHEW TILLEY 2007
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FIGURES

Map 1  Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: Forest of Dean District
Map 2  Cinderford SMR Information: Post-medieval
Map 3  Cinderford: Development by Period

A note about the maps

The SMR maps in the original Historic Towns Survey (i.e Map 2) are now out of date and have not been included within this revision although references to SMR numbers remain in the text. For up to date SMR information readers can contact the SMR on 01452 425705 or via email at archaeology.smr@gloucestershire.gov.uk. The other maps have been refreshed using current software and retain their original numbering as referred to in the text.

Original description of SMR maps

SMR maps: these maps show a selection of sites relevant to the discussion of the development of each town. The maps are not intended to provide a comprehensive gazetteer of all recorded archaeological sites in the settlements, and should therefore be only be used in the context for which they were produced. For further information about the archaeology of any area, the Sites and Monument Record should be consulted directly.

Plan component maps: these maps are intended to indicate the most likely areas of settlement in each town during the Medieval and Post-medieval periods, on the basis of present archaeological knowledge. They should not, however, be regarded as definitive, and the interpretations made will require revision as new evidence emerges from future work.
ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS USED IN THE TEXT

Anon   Anonymous
C.   circa
C   Century [e.g. C12]
EH   English Heritage
GSIA   Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology
km   kilometres
m   metres
n.d.   Undated
O.D.   Ordinance Datum
O.S.   Ordnance Survey
PCNFC   Proceedings of the Cotswold Naturalists Field Club
RCHME   Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)
SMR   Sites and Monuments Record
SMR 12345   An SMR site which is shown on the accompanying maps
SMR 12345   An SMR site which is not shown on the accompanying maps
TBGAS   Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
TRE   Tempus Rex Edwardus (i.e. during the reign of king Edward the Confessor)

PERIODS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

Palaeolithic   500,000 B.C. – 10,000 B.C.
Mesolithic   10,000 B.C. – 4,000 B.C.
Neolithic   4,000 B.C. – 2,200 B.C.
Bronze Age   2,200 B.C. – 700 B.C.
Iron Age   700 B.C. – A.D. 43
Roman   A.D. 43 – 410
Early Medieval   410-1066
Medieval   1066 – 1540
Post Medieval   1540 – 1901
Modern   1901 – present

POPULATION FIGURES

The text for each town considered in the GHTS includes a section about the historic population of the parish in which the settlement lies. This information has been drawn from a variety of sources, mainly taxation returns, ecclesiastical returns and what can generally be referred to as censuses. The nature of these sources often makes it unclear what area was included within the survey, and in many cases suburban developments were excluded from the figures. It is also important to note that the accuracy of the information available is variable, and relates to a society which was not accustomed to the same degree of numerical accuracy demanded today. Some enumerations were the result of antiquarian interest in the growth of settlements and were included within descriptions of the nature of the town, as is the case with the figures given by Atkyns (1712) and Rudder (1779). Other population surveys were required by the ecclesiastical authorities, and in the case of Gloucestershire, there were a number of such surveys in 1563, 1603, 1650 and 1676. The 1563, 1603 and 1676 surveys were intended to indicate the number of communicants, papists and nonconformists in the parish. As the surveys were undertaken by the local clergy, there may well have been a temptation to play down levels of nonconformity. The 1650 survey was intended to give an indication of levels of pluralism, as well as to indicate the general size of the communities served.

The figures recorded in these surveys could be for communicants (i.e. anyone over the age of 16), men and women over 16, men, women and children, men over sixteen only, householders, households or families. In the case of Gloucestershire the figures generally relate to households, families and communicants. In order to gain a better indication of the true size
of the population of a parish, calculations need to be made to convert communicants and households into men, women and children of all ages. It has generally been accepted that to convert households into individuals the given figure should be multiplied by 4.25, while to add children under 16 to the number of communicants the figure should be multiplied by 1.5, based on the assumption that children made up approximately 33% of the general population.

It is possible to view the figures arrived at by these means as simplistic but it has been shown that they generally fit quite well with data from other seventeenth century sources (see Whiteman A (ed.) 1986, The Compton Census of 1676, for a full discussion of the issues). It is not intended that the figures given in the following text should be seen as correct values, but it is hoped that the information will provide an approximate indication of the order of size of the parish at a time when there were few other sources of information available.
THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

town n. 1. a densely populated urban area, typically smaller than a city and larger than a village. 2. a city, borough or other urban area.

urban adj. 1. of, relating to, or constituting a city or town. 2. living in a city or town. ~ Cf. rural.

1 Introduction

The Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey was undertaken between 1995 and 1998 by Antonia Douthwaite and Vince Devine of the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service and was funded by English Heritage as part of a national programme of county-based extensive urban surveys of small towns in England. All of the 37 settlements included in the survey once had, or have now, some urban characteristics, and range in date and type from the Roman towns of the Cotswolds through to the Post-medieval industrial settlements of the Forest of Dean and Stroud valleys (Table 1). Not all the settlements are urban at the end of the twentieth century: some are now greenfield sites and others are small villages, although a few have survived as urban foci for modern communities. Both Gloucester and Cirencester were omitted from the project since they were identified by English Heritage as major historic towns, with a considerable history of archaeological investigation meriting individual and detailed study (English Heritage 1992).

The extensive urban surveys were designed as tripartite projects to include: the enhancement of the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), in order to provide a comprehensive database for each settlement, the preparation of assessment reports which would summarise the state of archaeological knowledge for each settlement and the design of a strategy for the management of the archaeology of each town to be implemented mainly through the planning system. The database is now held as part of the Gloucestershire SMR, while the assessment and strategy reports each take the form of separate volumes covering the administrative districts of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Stroud and Tewkesbury. All three phases of the projects were based on the use of secondary, published sources, involved no fieldwork and were tightly constrained by the available resources.

Previous work on towns highlighting their archaeological potential and their vulnerability to development was undertaken in various parts of England, including Gloucestershire (Leech 1981), in the early 1980s. Changes in approaches to the management of the urban archaeological resource since then, particularly the greatly enhanced opportunities for its protection from the adverse effects of development through the planning system, prompted the new urban surveys of the 1990s.
2 The concept of urbanism

A town is a permanent human settlement with two chief and essential attributes. The first is that a significant proportion (but not necessarily a majority) of its population lives off trade, industry, administration and other non-agricultural occupations. The second...is that it forms a social unit more or less distinct from the surrounding countryside (Reynolds 1977, ix).

Although most people understand the term “town” in the modern context, the definition of urban areas in the past is far more varied, and modern concepts of urbanism tend to confuse more than they elucidate. For every period contemporary documents reveal a plethora of terms to describe settlements, depending upon their social, economic and legal status. Under the Roman empire there were seven distinct terms which could be used to place a settlement and its inhabitants in its context: *civitas*, *colonia*, *municipium*, *oppidum*, *urbs*, *vicus* and *πολισσε* polis). Any attempt to equate these words with modern terminology creates considerable confusion as there are just as many English terms to describe the status of any urban settlement: town, city, urban district, municipality, county borough, borough, any or all of which may or may not be a direct equivalent to the Roman terminology. Similarly, there are numerous Early Medieval and Medieval terms relating to settlements, including *vill*, *burghus*, *burh*, *wic* and *urbs*, some of which had very specific meanings while others are more difficult to define with precision.

This varied terminology has led archaeologists and historians to attempt to define urban status in terms of the roles towns played and their physical attributes which have survived in the archaeological record. This approach has been most successful in relation to settlements of the Early Medieval and Medieval periods, based on the work of Beresford (1967) and Biddle (1976), who have defined a town as a settlement possessing a combination of the following:

1) defences
2) a planned street system
3) market(s)
4) a mint
5) legal autonomy
6) a role as a central place
7) a relatively large and dense population
8) a diverse economic base
9) plots and houses of urban type (burgages and burgage tenure)
10) social differentiation
11) complex religious organisation
12) a judicial centre
13) the possession of a borough charter
14) a reference to the settlement as a *burgus* or representation by its own jury at the *eyre*
15) that it was taxed as a borough
16) that it sent members to any Medieval parliament

Table 1 illustrates where there is documentary evidence for some of the main urban characteristics of towns included in the Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Defences</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Borough charter</th>
<th>Burgages/burgess tenure</th>
<th>Legal autonomy</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>King’s Stanley</td>
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<td>Leonard Stanley</td>
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<td>Lydney</td>
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<td>Nailsworth</td>
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<tr>
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<td>?</td>
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<td>C13</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>C12</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: indicators of urban status in the Medieval period
3 Urbanism in Gloucestershire

3.1 The Roman period

The concept of urbanism is often considered to have been a continental imposition brought to Britain by the invading Roman army during the first century A.D. The geographer Strabo, writing during the late first century B.C. and the early first century A.D. implied that the backwardness of western Europeans outside Italy was due to their hunting and raiding way of life and that once they were converted to a settled agricultural existence, urbanisation would develop of its own accord (Wacher 1995, 33). However, there is evidence that some Iron Age hillforts and enclosures had begun to take on urban functions before the Roman conquest of A.D.43. The Iron Age settlements of Bagendon and Salmonsbury Camp in east Gloucestershire appear to have been densely populated, with streets, arrangements of dwellings and ancillary buildings, along with defences, and to have acted as centres of political, commercial and administrative activity (Friar 1991, 386). Compared with Roman towns they may still have been extremely primitive, and the imperial government would have been keen to establish towns on the Mediterranean scale which were an essential part of the Roman way of life, and also facilitated the tasks of administration, the collection of taxes, education and policing. Towns may also have been seen as a means of furthering the acceptance of the Roman government among the native population.

The earliest Roman towns to develop would have been those on which the administration of the province was based - the civitates and the coloniae - some of which were based on early forts, while others derived from settlements of veterans who were given land at the end of their period of military service (e.g. Gloucester). Smaller towns developed around the other early forts where merchants and other civilians gathered to service the army, or at other significant locations on the network of Roman roads, such as the Foss Way or Watling Street, to serve the imperial messenger service along with other travellers who would need somewhere to stop overnight, to eat and change horses, and possibly to trade. Unlike the civitates and coloniae, there is little evidence of planning in many such settlements, which are more likely to have developed organically.

The Roman small towns at Bourton-on-the-Water, Dorn, Dymock, Kingscote and Wycomb (Andoversford) were included in the historic towns survey. At Bourton there are suggestions of continuity of occupation from the Iron Age into the Roman period; the Iron Age enclosure of Salmonsbury Camp lies just over 1km to the east of the Roman small town. The Roman settlement was initially focused around a posting station (mansio or mutatio) on the Foss Way near its crossing of the River Windrush, but then spread eastwards towards Salmonsbury Camp. Dorn is also thought to have served an administrative function during the later part of the Roman period (the late third to fourth centuries), possibly as a site where the official taxes (the annona) were collected; the defences around the eastern part of the site may have been constructed at this time. The Roman settlements at Kingscote and Dymock may also have had military origins – there is a suggestion that there may have been an early fort at Dymock from which a small agricultural and metal-working settlement developed, while considerable material of first century date has been found at Kingscote which then developed into a market centre, covering about 200 hectares by the later fourth century. Unlike the other Roman settlements in Gloucestershire, Wycomb is not associated with any major road and it is thought to have grown up around a site of ritual or religious significance pre-dating the Roman conquest. A settlement would have developed there either to serve the pilgrims and visitors to the site, or as a market centre for surrounding communities which were often associated with ritual sites.

Some Medieval settlements in Gloucestershire may also have developed on sites of Roman activity, including Bisley where there is evidence for Roman ritual activity, possibly associated with the wells; King’s Stanley, where there is evidence for a large Roman villa in the area of the later church; and Lydney which lies close to the Roman cult centre at Lydney Park. The nature of the relationship between the Roman and later settlements is not understood, and it is not clear to what extent the existence of Roman activity influenced the siting of later settlements.

The end of the Roman period in Britain is often thought to have been marked by a hiatus in urban life. There is little evidence for continuity of occupation in urban areas into the fifth century in the county, and it appears that the function of the towns died with the culture that they had been founded to sustain (Wacher 1995, 417). The fact that many sites were reoccupied in the later Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods may be due more to the fact that, by accident of geography, the sites were suitable for the economic and administrative functions of the period, just as they had been during the Roman period.
3.2 The Early Medieval period

The popular perception of the Dark Ages as one of deserted Roman towns, dilapidated villas and a reversion to barbarism still persists to a certain extent, and until 50 years ago academics were still debating the question of whether Anglo-Saxon towns existed at all. Roman towns fell out of use for a time, perhaps because they were too superficial an imposition on a society to which the idea of formal towns was alien. It is likely that the renaissance of internal and external trading networks prompted the increased centralisation of the production and sale of goods. From the eighth century specialist trading centres, such as Southampton and Ipswich, developed. Elsewhere the main impetus for urban development may have been a desire to control and promote economic activity, including the striking of coinage. A second important factor in the development of urban communities were the Scandinavian raids of the eighth and ninth centuries, which prompted Alfred and his successors to create the fortified settlements known as burhs. Some were established on the sites of Roman towns, while others were newly founded, but all were provided with defences of earth, timber or stone. The interest of the ruling elite in the promotion of towns gathered force throughout the later part of the Anglo-Saxon period, with increasing controls and prescriptions on the activities permitted within and outside urban areas: legislation of Edward the Elder and Aethelstan attempted to restrict trade to the towns, while the reform of the coinage by Eadgar in A.D.973 meant that the coins could only be struck in a burh.

The early church also played a significant role in the development of towns. From the seventh century onwards minsters were founded to serve as centres for the conversion and administration of large areas of England. A minster usually consisted of a church and outbuildings within an enclosure, served by a priest and a number of monastic or secular assistants. Such concentrations of priests would have required goods and services, which would in turn have attracted secular settlement to the area to serve those needs, and it is possible that these complexes may have provided the closest equivalent to towns in England until the creation of the burhs in the ninth century.

The tenth and eleventh centuries therefore saw the steady establishment of towns as centres of trade, finance, administration and ecclesiastical affairs, functions which continued into the post-Conquest period and have come to be viewed as indicators of urban status.

In Gloucestershire there is evidence that early minsters were founded at Tetbury, Berkeley, Cheltenham, Bishop’s Cleeve, Blockley, Bisley, Tewkesbury and Winchcombe and it is possible that their existence played a significant role in the development of urban functions at those sites. Winchcombe is also the only example of a burh in Gloucestershire, founded in the seventh or eighth century at the site of an early minster which developed into a monastic house, with a Mercian royal palace and a mint, surrounded by a defensive enclosure. For a while during the early eleventh century, the settlement was important enough to stand at the centre of its own shire - Winchcombeshire - until it was incorporated into Gloucestershire c.A.D.1017.

3.3 The Medieval period

From the tenth to fourteenth centuries the process of urbanisation acquired momentum as first royal and then secular and ecclesiastical landlords began to promote existing villages to urban status, or to found completely new towns on virgin sites. Towns were important as a source of income from markets, taxes and tolls. Existing settlements had the added advantage of containing the remains of the Anglo-Saxon administrative structure, with military and fiscal obligations, and many were also episcopal sees. They housed large clusters of the population and many stood at important road junctions or river crossings. Artisans and merchants also found that the towns presented opportunities for the creation of wealth and the advancement of social status.

Medieval landowners were quick to promote the development of urban communities on their land, obtaining income from property rents and tolls levied on trade and commerce. This revenue could be controlled through the establishment of a market in a specific area within the settlement and in the period 1199-1350 around 2500 market grants were issued.

In addition to the foundation of a market, many landlords attempted to promote existing villages to borough status. The grant of a borough charter conferred a number of privileges of administrative, teneurial and legal character, the most important of which was the right to burgage or freehold tenure, for a rent and without labour services. In the period from 1199-1350 c.370 new boroughs were created by the king, lords and bishops. One of the most
characteristic features of towns of this period is the burgage plot - long, thin strips of land extending back from the main street which allowed as many burgesses as possible access to the street frontage and the trade which it afforded. In Gloucestershire at least 22 small towns acquired borough status during the Medieval period, with most charters being granted during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tewkesbury</td>
<td>by 1086</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winchcombe</td>
<td>by 1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Campden</td>
<td>1154-1189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newnham</td>
<td>1187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dursley</td>
<td>C12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stow-on-the-Wold</td>
<td>C12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetbury</td>
<td>c.1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairford</td>
<td>c.1221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northleach</td>
<td>c.1227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lechlade</td>
<td>c.1235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wotton-under-Edge</td>
<td>1253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dymock</td>
<td>C13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newent</td>
<td>C13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestbury</td>
<td>C13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Stanley</td>
<td>C13/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton-in-Marsh</td>
<td>C13/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minchinhampton</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheltenham</td>
<td>1313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painswick</td>
<td>1324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Briavels</td>
<td>C14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: earliest documentary references to borough status.

The units of settlement described as towns during this period were plentiful but remained very small, about 95% of the population of England was still rural, and the main difference between the new towns and the rural villages was that the former contained a substantial proportion of traders and craftsmen whose services would be drawn on by the villagers of the surrounding area (Palliser 1987, 55). This pattern of new foundations and promotions continued until the outbreak of the Black Death (1348-1369) which effectively curtailed the creation of new towns. Up to this time, town growth had been achieved mainly through the attraction of immigrants from surrounding rural populations, who were accommodated through the infilling of open areas and the sub-division of existing burgage or tenement plots.

The Norman and later Medieval town was thus an important instrument of political, administrative and economic control, flexible enough both to exert control over an area and to allow it to be exploited commercially. Through this process English towns were adapted to become a major economic force.

The Medieval small towns of Gloucestershire fit into this general pattern. A number of settlements in the central and eastern part of the county, such as Berkeley, Cheltenham, Tetbury, Tewkesbury and Winchcombe had begun to develop during the Early Medieval period, but the vast majority of the towns in the county owe their existence to the Medieval fashion for founding new markets and boroughs during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Table 3 shows the market towns in the county and the dates at which they received their market charters: 15% of all Medieval market grants were made during the twelfth century, and 55% during the thirteenth century.
Table 3 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: market charters by date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tewkesbury</td>
<td>by 1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchcombe</td>
<td>by 1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>by 1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairford</td>
<td>c1100-1135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stow-on-the-Wold</td>
<td>1107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Campden</td>
<td>c1180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newnham</td>
<td>C12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Briavels</td>
<td>1208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lechlade</td>
<td>1210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetbury</td>
<td>1211-1287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northleach</td>
<td>1219/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dymock</td>
<td>1225/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheltenham</td>
<td>1226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton-in-Marsh</td>
<td>1228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frampton-on-Severn</td>
<td>1245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestbury</td>
<td>1249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wotton-under-Edge</td>
<td>1252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painswick</td>
<td>1253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newent</td>
<td>1253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Stanley</td>
<td>1253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydney</td>
<td>1268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minchinhampton</td>
<td>1269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Stanley</td>
<td>1307-27</td>
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<td>Mitcheldean</td>
<td>1328</td>
</tr>
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<td>Coleford</td>
<td>C14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dursley</td>
<td>1471/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroud</td>
<td>1570-1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisley</td>
<td>1687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nailsworth</td>
<td>C18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderford</td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amongst the boroughs founded after 1086, some appear to have been added on to existing non-urban settlements, while others could have been new creations. Towns in the first category include Stow-on-the-Wold, Northleach, Moreton-in-Marsh, Chipping Campden, Wotton-under-Edge and possibly Dursley. Such settlements generally comprise a large market area which is sometimes triangular or square, and sometimes formed by widening the main street to allow stalls to be set up along its length, with burgage plots fronting onto all available sides. The earlier settlement, to which the borough was attached, can often be seen in a less regular pattern of property boundaries, usually clustered around the church. Towns of the second category include Fairford, Lechlade and Painswick. These settlements also have a well defined market area, but a more complex street pattern, incorporating more than one main street, with burgages also laid out along the subsidiary streets.

The history of the development of towns in the Forest of Dean, is rather more diverse. Some followed a pattern similar to those outlined above, of foundation and development around a market during the Medieval period and thus have a similar layout, such as Newent and Newnham; St. Briavels was connected closely with the development and administration of the Royal Forest of Dean. Other settlements – Coleford, Lydney and Mitcheldean - were the product of the industrial development of the Forest, based on the exploitation of its natural resources, particularly iron and coal.

The Stroud valleys, which would become such an important area of settlement during the Post-medieval period, show little evidence for urban development during the Medieval period, apart from areas at the edge of the Cotswold Scarp such as Dursley, Bisley and Painswick, where the settlement pattern is similar to that found
elsewhere on the Cotswolds. The main reason for this is likely to have been the nature of the terrain, which was mostly unsuitable for Medieval industries and agricultural exploitation, but which was ideally suited to Post-medieval advances in manufacturing techniques.

### 3.4 The Post-medieval period

The mid-sixteenth century marked a further important phase in the development of English towns. The dissolution of the Monasteries and the suppression of religious houses, especially friaries, chantries and pilgrimages had an enormous impact on urban life. Large areas of land and buildings were put up for sale, and were converted into houses or redeveloped by their new, secular owners. The economic impact on towns dependent upon church landlords or pilgrimage cults was therefore severe. Other factors also affected the success of the small towns founded during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Some failed because they had been poorly located, others because of direct competition from near neighbours, and yet others due to the economic changes of the period. Many of the towns which continued to flourish did so by specialising in a certain product at market, such as cheese, wool, grain or leather goods, while others specialised in a particular industry or manufacturing process.

During the later Medieval period changes to the industrial and commercial geography of England also had a significant effect upon the development of towns in the country. One of the main English exports up to the fourteenth century had been raw wool, which was shipped to the continent where it was made into finished cloth to be sold back to England. The wars with France in the early fourteenth century forced an end to this trade, providing the opportunity for the production of cloth to spread rapidly through the rural areas of England. Within a few years finished cloth had replaced raw wool as one of the country’s main exports. Numerous small settlements began to develop in rural areas to service this trade, away from the constraints of the town guilds, which enabled cloth to be produced more cheaply, thereby competing with the Flemish weavers who had dominated the trade up to this time. These settlements were strikingly different from those of earlier towns; they were not confined within town walls and were often not connected to earlier settlements, but took the form of straggling developments along the sides of valleys. The new cloth industry thus allowed small rural settlements in favourable locations to develop into prosperous towns.

The effect of these economic changes was felt very strongly in Gloucestershire where the towns of the Cotswolds had specialised in the marketing of locally produced wool. Many of these towns, such as Northleach and Winchcombe, fell into decline during this time as they were not located in areas suitable for the manufacturing of woollen cloth. Prosperity spread instead to the valleys around Stroud where easy access to high quality Cotswold wool, to abundant supplies of fuller’s earth, to water of a quantity sufficient to drive a number of mills and to Bristol as an outlet for the finished product allowed numerous small valley hamlets to develop into towns serving the cloth industry. Three kinds of English cloth were produced, the finest of which was broadcloth; kerseys were a lighter, cheaper and often coarser cloth and worsteds were the cheapest and did not require fulling. Gloucestershire held foremost place in the production of broadcloth, mainly due to the steep-sided valleys in the Stroud area which were well suited to the creation of reservoirs for the large fulling mills, and later for the dyehouses for the coloured cloth which supplanted the finished broadcloth. This is how settlements such as Chalford, Nailsworth and Stroud developed from the later fourteenth century, spread out along the sides of the river valleys and clustered around the mills. Within these towns evidence for the cloth trade is well preserved, not only in the form of large mill buildings, but in the architecture of the houses of the weavers, who produced the cloth, and the large, commodious dwellings of the clothiers who owned the mills, and distributed the wool to be woven.

In the Forest of Dean the settlements which developed during the Medieval period - Lydney, Newnham, Newent, Coleford and Mitcheldean - did not expand or develop greatly between the later Medieval period and the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, when new industrial techniques were developed and large scale mining operations began as the free miners were persuaded to sell their rights to speculators and entrepreneurs. This industrial activity was so concentrated in the area of Cinderford Bridge that a new town developed purely to service the requirements of the mine owners and their workers.

From the mid-seventeenth century the conglomeration of buildings and social classes which had characterised so many Medieval towns was superseded by the introduction of new urban styles from the continent, which reflected the growing prosperity of the period. The concept of large open circuses, squares and terraces of elegant town houses dominated the urban scene for the next two centuries, exemplified in the Gloucestershire context by the development of Regency Cheltenham, with its pump rooms, promenades, elegant terraces and town houses. Elsewhere the picture was not quite so pleasant, the industrial towns also had terraces, but these were usually...
‘blind-backed’ or ‘tunnel-backed’ with inadequate sanitation for the large families who occupied them. This form of dwelling can still be seen at Lydney and in the Oldbury development at Tewkesbury (although the houses have been modernised for modern use). Innovations in methods of transport also played an important role in the development of settlements, encouraging the separation of commercial, residential and industrial areas, as people no longer had to live in the same area that they worked. Most of the Gloucestershire small towns show some evidence of nineteenth century redevelopment, and most also have examples of Victorian civic pride in the form of public buildings such as libraries (Stroud) and town halls (Bisley, Stow-on-the-Wold, Nailsworth and Painswick).
4 Conclusions

Perhaps the most striking conclusion of this survey of the historic small towns of Gloucestershire is its demonstration that, despite documentary evidence of the Medieval or earlier origins of the majority of settlements, there is as yet very little archaeological evidence for most of them.

The town centre redevelopments of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s were not generally preceded by archaeological investigation and during this period many sites of high potential in the historic cores of small towns were destroyed without record. It was not until the later 1980s, and the advent of Planning Policy Guidance 16 (DoE 1990), that a more systematic approach to the archaeological evaluation and recording of sites in small towns became possible. Most recent large scale development has, however, tended to be away from the street frontages in the historic cores of towns, and the archaeological investigation in the latter areas has therefore been on a very small scale.

The summary of archaeological evidence provided by the Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey assessment reports and the policies contained in the strategies will, however, provide a good basis for ensuring that, in the future, sites of archaeological potential in small towns are managed appropriately and not developed without an assessment of the archaeological implications and implementation of suitable mitigation strategies.

5 Bibliography

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HISTORIC TOWNS IN THE FOREST OF DEAN (Map 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Borough charter</th>
<th>Burgages/ Burgess tenure</th>
<th>Legal autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cinderford</td>
<td>Industrial town</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleford</td>
<td>Small market town</td>
<td></td>
<td>C14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dymock</td>
<td>Roman small town; Small market town</td>
<td>1225/6</td>
<td>C13</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydney</td>
<td>Small market town; Industrial town</td>
<td>1268</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Small market town</td>
<td>1328</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>C13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C12</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td></td>
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<td>St. Briavels</td>
<td>Small market town</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>C14</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About one third of the county of Gloucestershire lies west of the River Severn and the greater part of this area forms the administrative district of the Forest of Dean. The area is geologically and topographically complex and comprises a number of distinct zones: the steep-sided Wye valley which forms its western boundary; the central high ground, much of which is above 200m, consisting of mineral-bearing limestones and sandstones, and now extensively forested; the Leadon valley to the north bordering Herefordshire; and the low-lying land alongside the Severn estuary. The natural resources of the area – sandstone, limestone, iron, coal and timber – have formed the basis of an industrial economy from the Roman period onwards.

The early archaeology of the Forest of Dean is as yet little studied, in particular information about prehistoric settlement is sparse. In the Roman period local iron deposits became the basis of an important industry although the location and nature of the industrial sites and their contemporary settlements remains to be investigated. From the eleventh century the central area was designated as a royal forest, the purpose of which was the protection of the beasts of the forest (red, roe and fallow deer, along with wild boar) for hunting, along with the trees and undergrowth which protected them, and which was known as the vert. This area was owned by the Crown, and governed by Forest law. The mineral wealth of the area was exploited by the Free Miners, who had the exclusive right to extract coal, iron ore and stone from the Forest, subject to the payment of royalties, which were codified during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Between 1611 and 1613, the Crown allowed the first charcoal blast furnaces to be built in the Forest, and within a generation 12 blast furnaces and 13 substantial forges were operating on a considerably larger scale than ever before. However, due to the government’s concern to protect its timber stocks during the later seventeenth century, the industry foundered and had almost reached the point of extinction by the early eighteenth century. It began to revive during the 1820s when smelting works were opened, or re-opened, at Parkend and Cinderford. New iron mines were opened throughout Dean, and by the mid-nineteenth century the Forest was producing over 100,000 tons per annum. However, by the end of the century iron mining and smelting had almost ceased.

Officially, settlement was not allowed within the area of the Royal demesne, but the Forest always attracted large numbers of squatters, poor men attracted by the chances of sporadic employment in the mines as well as by the opportunities for poaching, and who were regularly expelled by the officers of the Crown. In 1735, despite a large-scale eviction only 50 years before, a large number of cottages were recorded to have been erected at the borders of the Forest, the inhabitants of which were said to live by rapine and theft (Finberg 1955, 88). In 1788 the number of cottages and encroachments had almost doubled, and upwards of 200 cottagers were said to be resident in the Forest, occupying 589 cottages and 1385 acres of land. It is likely that these people had been attracted by the increasing industrialisation of the area, along with the increased accessibility of some settlements following the construction of new roads from 1761 onwards.

By the later nineteenth century the central Forest of Dean had been developed into a complex industrial zone incorporating coal and iron mines, iron and tinplate works, foundries, quarries, wood distillation works producing an array of chemicals, along with a network of railways and tramroads. The population of the area increased rapidly as the industries grew and many of the Forest towns show evidence for considerable expansion with the construction of new houses and public buildings during this period.
The towns which developed in the district are as diverse as the area. All lie outside the central afforested zone. Dymock has origins in the Roman period and may first have developed as a military site at the junction of two routes. Most of the rest of this group of towns first developed as market centres during the Medieval period, St. Briavels having in addition a specialised function as the administrative centre of the Royal Forest. Cinderford, a much later industrial settlement, gained a distinctive plan based on its origins in assarts on the edge of the Forest in which small industrial sites and associated houses were established.
CINDERFORD

1 Introduction
Cinderford (SO 657141) lies on the eastern edge of the Forest of Dean, close to the point where the Gloucester-Coleford road crosses the Cinderford Brook, on land which rises from 140m O.D. in the west to 245m O.D. on the east of the town. The land on which the Forest settlements lie is formed from beds of iron ore-bearing carboniferous limestone which outcrop in many places, including Cinderford, above which lie bands of sandstone, shale and coal. These mineral resources were one of the major factors which affected the location of the town.

The town developed during the nineteenth century in connection with the industrial exploitation of the Forest, and is surrounded by the sites of numerous ironworks, foundries, brickworks and collieries. Cinderford maintained its importance as a manufacturing and commercial centre into the twentieth century, with an economy based on engineering and printing.

2 The Prehistoric, Roman and Early Medieval periods
There is little direct evidence for any pre-nineteenth century occupation on the site of the modern settlement at Cinderford. Finds from Cinderford itself include a Neolithic arrowhead (SMR 5176) which was found in c.1929, and a coin of Antoninus Pius (SMR 6685), found to the west of the modern settlement.

A routeway, known as the Dean Road, ran from Lydney to Mitcheldean via Cinderford, crossing the brook to the south of the modern town. The road had a pitched stone surface and borders or kerbstones, much of which survived after the road went out of use in the turnpike era, and the possibility that it had linked two important Roman centres at Lydney and Ariconium led to the suggestion that it was a Roman road (SMR 5904). However, much of the stonework is thought to date to the early Modern period and Standing has suggested that the paved road probably developed from a series of local trackways of Medieval and later origin (Standing 1986, 33-35). There is at present, therefore, no reliable evidence for a Roman origin for this route.

Despite the current lack of evidence for early settlement, the area’s mineral resources are likely to have been exploited long before the nineteenth century.

3 The Medieval period
Cinderford lies at the edge of the Royal Forest of Dean, in an area where natural raw materials (timber, coal, iron ore and stone) provided the basis for industrial development. The paucity of evidence for activity during the Medieval and preceding periods on the site of the modern settlement is more likely to be due to the lack of archaeological investigation in the area, rather than indicative of a true absence of activity.

The name Cinderford is first recorded in 1258 as Synderford, and is thought to refer to the point at which the Littledean to Coleford Road crossed the Cinderford Brook, either as a place where heaps of cinders were left by Forest iron workers (Waters 1951, 25), or as a ford made from cinders, probably slag from iron working (Smith 1964, 217). Jurica (1996, 305) places the construction of a bridge over the Brook in the seventeenth century, and the first documentary reference to a Sunderford bridge appears in 1635 (Smith 1964, 221).

4 The Post-Medieval period
900 houses and 4,000 inhabitants sticking to a hillside (Western Mail, 1874).

4.1 Introduction
The origin of settlement at Cinderford lies in the early nineteenth century when large scale industrial exploitation of the area’s mineral resources began, although there had been considerable industrial activity in the area of the town for the preceding 40-50 years. Large scale industry required a large labour force, and thus attracted men to the area, for whom accommodation was provided. These workers would in turn have attracted traders to the settlement, who would have been quick to take advantage of the good communications routes on which the settlement stood. The development of a small urban community at Cinderford would have helped to maintain the prosperity of the settlement when the manufacturing industries on which the town had been based fell into decline in the later nineteenth century.
4.2 Industrial history

4.2.1 Mining: Iron and coal

The rich deposits of iron ore in the Forest were exploited in the Iron Age and Roman periods, and supplied the iron industry in Dean, documented from the eleventh century onwards. Coal was being dug from the mid-1240s, although its extraction was secondary to the mining of iron ore until the seventeenth century (Jurica 1996, 326). Medieval mining techniques were primitive, with ore being extracted from the limestone outcrops to the west and east of the coalfield through surface workings known locally as ‘scowles’. During the nineteenth century the exploitation of Forest resources was transformed as outsiders invested in it and formed partnerships with local men. Coal mining was developed with the construction of tramroads to carry the coal to shipping points on the Severn and Wye, and by installing more equipment and steam pumps in the mines to allow them to be sunk deeper into higher quality seams. The iron industry was revived by the introduction of coke-fired blast furnaces, which also gave added impetus to the extraction of coal in the area, and during the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries the Forest of Dean developed as a complex industrial region including deep coal mines and iron mines, iron and tinplate works, foundries, quarries and stone dressing works, wood distilling works producing chemicals and a network of railways along with numerous tramroads (Jurica 1996, 293).

Only those mines which lie within the area of the modern town have been listed below, although a large number of other operations were taking place in the area of the Forest throughout the period.

St. Annals Iron Ore Mine (SO 66361434; SMR 5686) was the only ore mine in the Cinderford area, as much of the ore processed in the local foundries was imported from Edgehills and other Dean sources. St. Annals Mine lay to the east of the settlement, was operated between c.1849-1899, and was one of the deepest in the Forest, along with the Shakemantle, Buckshaft, Edge Hill and Old Sling mines (Cross 1982, 2).

Foxes Bridge Colliery (SO 640135; SMR 4363) lay to the west of the settlement. In 1880 the output of this pit was 12,978 tons - making it the largest mine operating at that time. It was still operating in 1906, and closed in 1931. A pond, the remains of the mine buildings and gantry pillars survive along with two tips, which have been extensively reclaimed for the local brick works.

Winning Colliery (SO 644149; SMR 9982) operated in the early nineteenth century, although there are few remains of the works visible today apart from the engine house, which bears the initials EP - Edward Protheroe - who was a prominent local coal owner.

Crump Meadow Colliery (SMR 9983; SO 63871397) covered an extensive area to the west of the settlement. The colliery had closed by 1929, but is believed to have incorporated a Cornish engine house, and the surviving, massive concrete foundations are thought to have been the site of the winding engine. A large spoil heap, covering approximately 6.5 hectares also survives.

Worgreen Pit (SMR 10717; SO 638127) was in operation between 1787 and 1906, and had its own railway branch line.

Duck Colliery (SMR 10703; SO 647149). Nothing is known about the working life of this pit, although it is shown as disused on the second edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1923).

Whimsey Colliery (SMR 10550; SO 64881512), also shown on the second edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1923.

Haywood Colliery (SMR 17385; SO 65591456), shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1883.

Paragon Colliery (SMR 17387; SO 65341467), was being worked by the Cinderford Iron Company in 1841, but by the 1880s it had fallen out of use and the area was being used as a brickworks.

Spero Colliery (SMR 17391; SO 65201428), shown on the tithe map of 1840, and on Ordnance Survey maps until the 1920s, by which time it must have fallen out of use.
Bilson Colliery (SMR 12340; SO 65051405) was in operation throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, but had been abandoned by the early 1920s.

Cinderford Bridge Colliery (SMR 12710; SO 65091269) is known to have been worked between 1833 and 1858, but it is shown as disused on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1883.

Several other pit sites are recorded on the 1840 tithe map of Cinderford, including Prospect Land (SMR 10710), Tease All Pits (SMR 20477) and Tormentor Colliery (SMR 20478). By the time of the 1883 Ordnance Survey map, all three appear to have fallen out of use, probably due to competition from the larger commercial mining operations. The third edition map, however, shows a newly discovered coal drift at Little Dean Walk (SMR 10729)

**4.2.2 Iron and other metals**

In 1795 the first Cinderford Ironworks (SO 654134; SMR 5685) were opened about half a mile to the north of Cinderford Bridge, and became the first furnace in the Forest to use coke for the smelting of iron-ore. Pig iron of good quality was made there for almost 10 years but production did not reach 20 tons per week, and the furnace was closed c.1806 due to its inability to compete with iron produced in South Wales and Staffordshire (Hart 1971, 121).

In the 1820s the ironworks were revived by Thomas Teague, prompting the building of many cottages and a substantial growth in population. It is thought that this time the furnace operated for about three years (c.1829-1832), following which, in 1835, the second Cinderford Iron Company was founded to resuscitate the works. By 1841 the works comprised 3 blast furnaces... and a melting finery for scraps and runners, there were 28 workmen’s houses, a counting-house, a smith and carpenter’s shed, a range of stables, an agent’s house and ‘bate shop’, and even a surgeon’s house included in the yard. These works finally closed in 1894, the majority of the buildings were demolished and the stables were converted into dwellings known as White Chapel Row (themselves demolished in 1960).

From c.1887 until 1924, Tingle’s Foundry stood close to Station Street and formed part of an extensive engineering works. Bungalows have since been built on the site (Hart 1971, 165).

Upper Bilson Foundry (SO 650140; SMR 5684) operated from c.1838 until the 1850s. It originally consisted of an engine house, blacksmith’s shop and casting house, but by 1841 also included an air furnace, a cupola-stove and a turning and boring machine powered by a high pressure steam engine. By 1859 the site had been converted into a boiler works. The site of the foundry is marked on the first edition O.S. map of 1880, to the west of the main residential area, and considerably to the north of Cinderford Bridge.

The Forest Vale Iron Works (SMR 9939) were established c.1850 and included a foundry large enough to produce pig iron suitable to be handled in the puddling furnaces there before going to the rolls. It had a huge steam hammer, which gave its name to the nearby beer house the “Forge Hammer” (Hart 1971, 165-166). By 1856 the works had come to be known as the Cinderford Wireworks, and by 1880 took the form of a well equipped factory with a foundry, rolls and shears, employing 100 men (although output could be increased, requiring the employment of 25 more men) using Dean pig iron supplemented with iron from Middlesborough, Cumberland, Bristol and Wales. About 100 tons of wire were produced each week, including 20 tons of charcoal iron. Trade depression towards the end of the nineteenth century led to the closure of the works c.1895. The buildings were demolished c.1900 and all that now remains are the offices and stables converted into dwelling houses and outbuildings (Hart 1971, 205).

Local enterprise also played a role in the industrial development of the settlement. In the early 1900s, Charles Wheeler made brass castings from his home, building small brass furnaces at his successive properties in Cinderford. In 1912 his son built a house next to the Teague Foundry in which he installed a small brass furnace from which he produced bearing castings and other products for local collieries and other industries. In the 1930s he founded the existing works at Haywood and began casting iron alongside brass (Hart 1971, 166).
4.2.3 Wireworks

Wiremaking was an important local industry, as the wire produced was used extensively for making “cards” for the preparation of wool for spinning as well as for items such as birdcages, knitting needles and curtain rings. Unfortunately, the depression of the woollen industry in the later eighteenth century led to the closure of most wireworks by c.1900 (Cross 1982, 19).

4.2.4 Tinplate works

Tinplating, involving the coating of sheet iron or steel with a thin, protective layer of tin, became an important industry in the Forest after its introduction in the late eighteenth century (Cross 1982, 17). Tinplated products were widely exported and production did not cease until 1961. The Hawkwell Tinplate Works (SMR 5665) were a four-mill works was built at SO 642154 - to the north of the railway lines - in 1879. They were closed in 1895 and c.1900 the site was converted into the brickworks mentioned below (SMR 4356). Other works were founded at Redbrook, Lydney, Parkend and Lydbrook.

4.2.5 Brickworks

There is evidence for the quarrying of material for making bricks over much of the area around Cinderford, and a number of brickworks operated there throughout the nineteenth century. Production must have been stimulated as more houses were built, especially after 1830 as more and more people were attracted to the area and the employment opportunities it afforded.

The Coleford Brick and Tile Company began a brickworks at Hawkwell (SMR 4356) on the site of the old tinplate works (SMR 5665). An area of at least 1.5 hectares was being actively quarried in 1958, while in 1991 bricks were still being made by hand. A clay pit (SMR 12701) shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880, is thought to have been connected with the Hawkwell Brickworks.

Other brickworks (SMR 12922 at SO 64661601 and SMR 12924 at SO 64801585), and a brick kiln are shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880, although no trace of them is visible today.

4.2.6 Lime burning

There are numerous examples of lime kilns around the town of Cinderford; much of the evidence comes from the early editions of Ordnance Survey maps, e.g. SMRs 16223, 16224, 16225 and 16226.

4.2.7 Engineering

In 1944 R.A. Lister and Company opened an engineering branch factory in Cinderford to relieve pressure on their Dursley plant. The factory manufactured a range of machines, including diesel engines from 1952, but closed in 1985 at the height of the economic recession (Jurica 1996, 349-350).

Rosedale Associated Manufacturers Ltd., a plastics manufacturer, opened a factory in Foundry Road c.1945 which assembled toys and domestic articles. The plant was destroyed by fire in 1968 and not rebuilt (Jurica 1996, 349).

In 1957 the business of the Cannop Foundry (SMR 5688) was also transferred to the site of the former Bilson gasworks (SMR 5849) in Valley Road, which was still manufacturing manhole covers and other casings for road and ornamental use in the early 1990s (Jurica 1996, 349).

4.2.8 Power

The Bilson Gas Works (SMR 5849) were established in Valley Road in 1857, and the premises were vacated in the 1940s. The site was taken over by Cannop Foundry in 1957 and the buildings were converted.

4.2.9 Chemical works

Chemical works (SMR 12929) are documented on the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1880 at Broadmoor (SO 64701525), but are shown as disused on the map of 1903. These are probably the works built to the north of Cinderford by John and Thomas Powell which were manufacturing lead acetate c.1864 (Jurica 1996, 346).
4.3 Communications

Before the eighteenth century, coal and iron were transported through the Forest on pack horses, as the lack of roads limited the use of carts and wagons. The Cinderford blast furnace had coke brought in via a private canal and ore brought to the plant by mules, while coal and ore produced for more distant markets were generally taken to wharves on the Rivers Severn or Wye, and transported by boat. The eighteenth century intensification of industry in the Forest led to the provision of tramroads and tramways to carry coal, ore and stone to the rivers. The tramroad nearest Cinderford was known as the Bullo Pill line (SMR 5705), and provided outlets for numerous branch lines supplying local iron works with coal and iron ore, and to allow mines to transport coal, ore and stone out of the Forest. Some of the early branch lines were constructed by the tramroad companies, but most of the lines were laid by the Forest mine and quarry owners (Jurica 1996, 352).

The Bullo Pill Line (SMR 5705) opened in 1809 to serve the eastern valley of the Forest of Dean from the Severn as far as Cinderford. In 1826 it was adapted for use as a railway line and the Forest of Dean railway (see below) was constructed in broad gauge along much of its course, being completed in 1854. In 1872 the line was converted to standard gauge until 1958 when it was closed (Jurica 1996, 350-352).

The Severn and Wye tramroad (SMR 5701) opened in 1810 and ran from Lydney to Bishopwood with several branch lines connecting it to collieries and iron works throughout the Forest. Various parts of the line were absorbed into the Severn, Wye and Severn Bridge railway from 1868 onwards (Cross 1982, 97-99). Branch lines included the St. Annals tramroad (SMR 5686) which was built between 1842 and 1847 and which ran for over 1.5 miles (Paar 1971, 47; Pope and Karou 1997, 187); the Buckshaft Ironstone Mine tramroad (SMR 5679), between Buckshaft Mine, the weighbridge and Cinderford Furnaces, and which was operating between 1856 and 1901 (Paar 1971, 68-69); a tramroad from Paragon coal pit and Spero Colliery which was in use from 1835 (Pope and Karou 1997, 60-7); and a tramroad to Winning and Duck Collieries (SMR 20408) which operated between c.1880 and c.1900 (Pope and Karou 1997, 311).

Haywood Colliery was served by a branch of the tramway (SMR 17385) from St. Annals Mine to Cinderford Ironworks which was built c.1863 and which had been replaced by a tramroad by 1873 (Pope and Karou 1997, 306-311).

Brain’s tramway (SMR 12704) ran from Trafalgar Colliery to Steam Mills, Nailbridge and Drybrook. It was built c.1862 and continued in use until the end of the century, despite the construction of a railway line to Bilson in the 1890s (Paar 1971, 145).

A private tramroad (SMR 9983) connected the Crump Meadow Colliery with the Bullo Pill tramroad by the later 1830s, continuing in use until 1929 (Pope and Karou 1997, 201).

Crabtree coal pit and Foxes Bridge Colliery sent coal to Bilson via a tramroad (SMR 4363) built c.1868 until 1930 when the pits closed (Paar 1971, 70).

The St. Annals tramroad (SMR 5686) connected St. Annals’ Ironstone Mine to the weighbridge on the Forest of Dean tramroad (SMR 5705) (Paar 1971, 69).

In 1854 the Bullo Pill line (SMR 5705) was replaced by a broad gauge steam line laid by the South Wales Railway (SMR 5704), with goods stations at Bilson and Cinderford Bridge (SMR 12705 and 9994). Following the laying of the railway, many industrialists built mineral lines and sidings to bring their works into the railway networks. Passenger services from Gloucester and Newnham started on the Dean railway in 1907, and halts were provided at Cinderford Bridge for Ruspidge (SMR 12713) and Bilson (SMR 12341), although Bilson Halt closed the following year, when the completion of the loop line enabled trains to run into the Severn and Wye Company station at Cinderford (SMR 15977). Passenger traffic was always a secondary consideration, and most services had been withdrawn by 1930, leaving only the Gloucester to Cinderford line open until 1958. The decline in mineral traffic from the later 1920s led to the abandonment of branch lines and tramroads and the virtual abandonment of the entire network by the later 1940s, and in 1966 Cinderford station was closed to freight (Jurica 1996, 352-354).
4.4 Ecclesiastical history

Various ministers have occasionally preached there [Cinderford], but latterly, by union of different denominations, a commodious room has been fitted up for the purpose of religious worship...It was opened 3 August 1829, as a place of worship for the Baptists, Independents and the Methodists (Horlick, c.1832-1850).

4.4.1 The established church

Before the nineteenth century, the Forest of Dean was extra-parochial with squatter settlements and no churches. Newland church was regarded as the Foresters’ parish church, and in the early sixteenth century one of its chantry priests was required to preach the gospel twice a week at forges and mines within the parish. By the early eighteenth century a number of chapels had been built in the extraparochial areas of the Forest, and even though they were unconsecrated, they were well attended. It was not until the mid-1840s that under an act of 1842 the Forest was divided into four ecclesiastical districts, one of which was for the church of St. John in Cinderford (SMR 5847) which was consecrated in 1844 (Jurica 1996, 389-390). Under the 1842 Act the church was a perpetual curacy in the gift of the Crown, and its fabric was maintained by the Commissioners of Woods from a trust fund.

In 1845 the church was given a district or parish comprising the eastern part of the Forest from Blaize Bailey in the east to Cannop in the west, and including Ruspidge and Soudley in the south. Missions were sent out from the church to the northern part of Cinderford which became a separate parish in 1880, and to Soudley where a permanent church was built (Jurica 1996, 393). The church is built of sandstone rubble in an early thirteenth century style, with an apsidal sanctuary with north vestry, an aisleless nave with short transepts, south porch and small south-west tower and spire and contains fine examples of Forest ironwork (Verey 1980, 159).

St. Stephen’s Church (SMR 8485), built for the ecclesiastical parish of Woodside to the north of Cinderford, was begun in 1888 and consecrated in 1890. The building was designed by EHL Barker in an early fourteenth century style and has a chancel with north vestry and a clerestoried and aisleless nave. In 1984 the benefice was united with Littledean, and the vicarage house which had been built next to St. Stephen’s church c.1912 was retained by the united benefice (Jurica 1996, 394).

4.4.2 Nonconformity

Like many other Forest towns, Cinderford has a strong tradition of nonconformity. Baptist missions to Cinderford were attempted before 1842 and in 1843 Cinderford became a separate church with 10 members and a chapel on Commercial Street. This became the largest Baptist meeting in the Forest, and in 1860 the chapel was replaced by a larger building slightly further to the south of the original (SMR 8486; Jurica 1996, 397).

The Independents had organised meetings at Cinderford before 1830, and in 1940 they established a mission to Drybrook, with a meeting house being built on the corner of Forest Road and Woodside Street (SMR 20479; Jurica 1996, 400).

Cinderford’s Primitive Methodists met in a rented room in 1859, and built their own chapel in 1864 in what later became Church Road (SMR 20480; Jurica 1996, 401).

In 1841 the Wesleyan Methodists had a meeting house at Cinderford Bridge and were responsible for the construction of a chapel at Cinderford Iron Works. In 1860, after a schism in the 1850s, Wesleyan loyalists opened a Zion chapel in the lower High Street (SMR 20481; Jurica 1996, 403).

In 1859 the Plymouth Brethren met at Cinderford in a small chapel at Flaxley Meend (in what is now Abbey Road), while in 1886 a building in Station Street was registered to a group called the ‘Blue Ribbon Gospel Army’ (Jurica 1996, 404).

4.5 Markets and fairs

Produce markets are believed to have been held in Cinderford Town Hall (SMR 17384) from 1869, when it was opened, although they moved to a different site later in the century. It is likely that markets were also held in the streets, giving a name to Market Street and possibly Commercial Street, as well as making the most of the
triangular area at the junction of the Littledean - Nailsworth road with Dockham and Woodside Roads, which would have provided an ideal location to capture passing trade through the Forest.

In the early 1870s livestock fairs were also held at Cinderford, and it has been suggested that the Town Hall was built on the land originally reserved for such fairs (Jurica 1996, 306).

Many of the Forest settlements had small retail shops by the 1870s and a co-operative society, formed at Cinderford in 1874, was responsible for opening shops in the town and elsewhere, with Cinderford becoming a centre for the retail trade. The Co-operative Society has continued to be active in the town, operating large grocery, furnishing and hardware stores there during the 1960s and building a new supermarket in recent years (c.1990) (Jurica 1996, 348).

5 The modern settlement

Piecemeal development has continued on all sides of Cinderford during the twentieth century. In 1924 a small housing estate was built in Church Road, and a number of council houses were also built in Victoria Street and at the top of Belle View Road. By 1937 the demolition of older buildings deemed uninhabitable had begun, while new estates were being built to the North of St. White’s Road. Two large housing estates were built at the northern end of Cinderford after the Second World War, and became known as Hilldene and Denecroft. During the 1960s there was a significant amount of private residential development, while more recently new industrial estates and roads have been laid out. The later 1950s and 1960s saw redevelopment intended to widen the streets and to form a longer open area in the centre of the town. This led to the demolition of buildings on the south-west side of the High Street, down to, and including the Town Hall, and on the east side of the northern end of Market Street. The nineteenth century buildings were then replaced with a new range of shops and the nineteenth century character of the area was considerably altered. By 1992 the town’s housing estates stretched as far as Littledean Hill on the east and St. White’s Road on the south-east while the western side of the settlement remained the principal industrial zone.

There are very few buildings of note in the centre of Cinderford, apart from the churches. This is due in part to the late origin of the settlement, but also to the modern redevelopment of the central area of the town during the later twentieth century.

6 Plan analysis (Map 3)

6.1 Discussion

Before the eighteenth century, settlement in the Forest of Dean consisted of temporary cabins used by miners, charcoal burners and iron workers who moved through the Forest following the natural resources until expelled by the Forest authorities. Permanent settlements did not start to develop until the mid-eighteenth century, and the only town in the extraparochial Forest – Cinderford – was the result of the nineteenth century industrial exploitation of the area. Cinderford’s form and development are unique, as they were dependent entirely upon the requirements of the coal and iron industries, with mines, foundries and housing for the workers scattered across the landscape, rather than nucleated around a church or other focus.

Settlers were attracted to the area by the employment opportunities offered by the increasingly large scale exploitation of the Forest’s mineral resources. The earliest settlement in Cinderford took place through the process of assarting, where small areas were cleared and settled by an individual family, often done hastily in the widespread belief that the Forest authorities had no power to pull down cabins erected over one night.

Cinderford lies along the course of a possible early route through the Forest and at a crossing point over the Cinderford Brook. The industries developed in a corridor running north-south, sandwiched between the bounds of the Forest on the west and the line of the road on the east. The town itself developed around two main foci – Cinderford Ironworks and the Forest Vale Ironworks to the north of Cinderford Bridge, and at the junction of the road from Littledean to Mitcheldean, which ran along Belle View Road and the High Street, with Church Road/Commercial Street. From these two points, Cinderford expanded to form one long urban sprawl, stretching from the Hilldene and Denecroft estates on the north to Cinderford Bridge and Ruspidge on the south.

The 1840 tithe map shows a distinctive and unusual settlement pattern, with collieries and other industrial sites linked by tram roads and housing in numerous small assarts dotted throughout the area of the later town. Relatively
ordered settlement appears to have started to grow up around the church and along St. White’s Road, which runs north-east from the bridge. In 1832 it was recorded that about 51 dwellings stood in this area, which had become known as Lower Cinderford. Upper Cinderford was the area around the Cinderford Ironworks, about 800m to the north of the bridge and to the west of Victoria Street. In 1832 this area was said to contain 38 houses, mostly in the form of terraced cottages provided for the workers by the owner of the ironworks, along with a beerhouse known as the Forge Hammer, which had taken its name from the steam hammer at the nearby works. The tithe map also shows settlement stretching north along Commercial Street and Haywood Road, through what is now the town centre, with some development along the High Street to the north-west, where about 86 dwellings were recorded in 1832. These early areas of settlement are shown in red on Map 3. The boundaries of many of these assarts are visible within the modern plan of the town as they were simply incorporated within later developments. Most assarts contained only a couple of houses, and perhaps a beerhouse, but all were supplied with wells and connected via a series of footpaths. These assarts illustrate the nature of early settlement in the Forest before the main period of nineteenth century development, where encroachments were common, if illegal, and industry was carried out on a domestic scale.

The Littledean to Mitcheldean road was begun in the 1820s and followed a line along Belle View Road and the High Street where it passed through Cinderford. During the 1850s and 1860s development began to increase along the High Street stretch of the road, as well as along Commercial Street and Woodside Street. The Swan Hotel was built at the junction of High Street and Dockham Road in 1867 as a posting house, illustrating the volume of traffic which had started to pass through the town. In 1869 the Town Hall, which also served as the market house, was built on the western side of the southern end of the High Street. The junction of Dockham Road, Market Street and High Street forms a large triangular area in which markets may have been held before it became built up, and which became the commercial centre of the settlement.

The area of Flaxley Meend, to the east of Commercial Street, began to be built up during the 1850s. The triangular area defined by Belle View Road, Flaxley Road and Woodside Street was developed as an area of higher class housing where properties were set back from the road and lay within their own grounds. By 1883 this area had become known as ‘New Town’ and had a population of c.230.

Elsewhere in the town, vacant plots along the High Street were built up, and from the 1850s Market Street, to the north of Commercial Street, and Station Street, which runs west from the triangle, were also built on so that by the early 1880s Cinderford extended from the northern end of the High Street to the southern end of Commercial Street, west along Station Road and east as far as the southern end of Belle View Road. Comparison of the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1883 with the earlier tithe map shows that, although by the late nineteenth century the scattered industry and housing was still present over the western side of the settlement, a more formal and recognisably urban layout had developed around the main roads to the east.

During the 1890s Valley Road was laid out along the course of a disused tramroad to the west of the settlement running across the site of Cinderford ironworks, and had a considerable influence of the development of the western part of the town, including the conversion of surviving ironworks buildings into dwellings.

The closure of the ironworks and collieries surrounding the town during the later nineteenth century significantly affected the pattern of development. Building continued to take place in the Flaxley Meend area, especially in Dockham to the east, along the new Valley Road and parts of Church Road had also been built over by c.1900.

Twentieth century development has mainly taken the form of housing estates in the areas surrounding the nineteenth century core, and is described in greater detail in section 5, above.

**6.2 Components of development**

The development of Cinderford has not been mapped by individual area, but is shown on Map 3, where periods of development illustrated by the 1840 tithe map, the 1883, 1900 and 1925 Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile maps have been identified.
7 Future research

Priorities for future work include:

1. Early industrial development and associated settlement: the mineral resources of the Forest of Dean have been exploited from the late prehistoric period onwards. The place name Synderford was first recorded in the thirteenth century, but there may be evidence of much earlier activity on the site.

2. The archaeology of the Post-medieval settlement, its industries and associated communication systems.

8 Sources

8.1 Primary historical sources

Apart from the place name evidence there are no primary sources which relate to the Post-medieval settlement at Cinderford, although sources connected with the management of the Royal demesne lands may be available for further study.

8.2 Secondary historical sources

The history of the Cinderford area has been covered by the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire, which provides the most comprehensive and accessible account of the extraparochial Forest. Other histories for the Forest of Dean also exist, most notably the works by Hart, which cover aspects of the archaeology and industrial history of the area.

8.3 Archaeological sources

There has been no investigation of the area of the modern settlement of Cinderford, and there has been no comprehensive survey of the industrial archaeology of the town.

8.4 Maps

The earliest maps available for Cinderford are the tithe map of 1840, which clearly illustrates the locations of the earliest assarts and industries, and the Ordnance Survey first edition 25”: 1 mile map of 1883, which shows the settlement and the surviving mines and industries before their decline in the later part of the century.

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9.2 Maps

Tithe map, 1856
Ordnance Survey First Edition 25”:1 mile map, 1883
Ordnance Survey Second Edition 25”:1 mile map, 1900
Ordnance Survey Third Edition 25”:1 mile map, 1925