

FWP00 FYFIELD AND OVERTON PROJECT, 1959-98

INTRODUCTION TO ITS ARCHIVE

**and in particular to its ELECTRONIC ARCHIVE
and the 'FYFOD WORKING PAPERS' (FWPs)**

THE PROJECT: A SUMMARY

The project involved a study, 1959-98, of the landscape of Fyfield and West Overton, two contiguous parishes in Wiltshire, England. They lie north to south across the upper Kennet valley between Avebury and Marlborough where the young River Kennet breaches the Chalk at the south west corner of the Marlborough Downs. The two parishes embrace a large area of grass downland across their northern parts. Southwards are expanses of mainly historic permanent arable on the slopes north and south of the valley floor. The flood plain, much-used in water management, is traditionally meadow. In all this the landscape is typical of much of the Wessex chalkland, but the parishes differ from many others in two respects, both concerning natural resources which have profoundly affected the landscape's history. To the north, much of Fyfield and Overton Downs is covered by the best remaining extent of Tertiary sandstone blocks ('sarsens'); while much of the parishes' southern reaches is covered by permanent woodland, a western outlier of Savernake Forest.

A combination of methods of study over 39 years so far has been directed primarily to elucidating how and when the landscape came by its appearance. Four main factors have emerged in an answer. First, very little if any of this landscape is now 'natural': virtually all of it is an artefact. Second, the nature of the landscape artefact has been and continues to be strongly influenced by the natural characteristics of the study area, notably its geology (solid and drift), its hydrology, its soils and its climate. Third, land-use has both followed and, except for the climate, fashioned those natural characteristics in a long interaction which has nevertheless seen the present landscape's principal land-use features established at particular times in a sequence which was essentially over before the beginning of our era. Thus the post-glacial forest cover had been removed by 2000 BC at latest, creating open downland, variously grassed, cultivated and under scrub, north of the river and probably to the south too. There the major landscape development was, however, the converse. Fyfield and Overton's permanent woodland, now called West Woods, was created through clearance around it to become a discreet feature and major component of the local landscape over four thousand years. Despite long-term

and probably even continuous management, it has not significantly changed its position, shape or size during that time.

The downland, in contrast, has enjoyed a chequered career, and most of it, though prehistoric, is not as old as the woodland. Most of the present grassland, and at least some of the presently cultivated areas in the permanent arable, were part of an organised, axiometric landscape of enclosed fields, pasture, burial/ancestral lands, tracks and driveways in the mid/late second millennium BC, a downland landscape strangely lacking in settlements until circular, ditched and embanked ones appear in the first half of the first millennium BC. Thereafter, the higher downs became and remained primarily unenclosed pasture, a land-use interrupted only by brief phases of spatially restricted cultivation in the 1st-2nd, 4th, 10th, 13th-14th, 19th and mid-late 20th centuries. Since their permanent establishment two and a half thousand years ago, they, like the woodlands, have seen only fitful habitation, notably in the 1st, 4th-5th, 13th-14th, 16th and 19th centuries, essentially marginal to a valley-based settlement pattern which has been dominant, despite locational and economic variations, since the early centuries AD.

Throughout, the two parishes have generally supported a resident population of under one thousand people, while being both largely self-sufficient yet characteristically serving the interests of absent and distant landlords. There is a landscape of exploitation, as indicated by the absence of any major structure except East Wansdyke (locally unfinished). Local natural resources such as chalk, clay, sarsen, wood, water, soil and grass have been variously utilised in a basically agricultural economy and landscape since farming communities developed in the area some six thousand years ago. Yet the area has seldom been isolated, and has indeed been characteristically easy of access, receiving, for example, religious and architectural influences, building and household materials, and artefacts such as pottery, metalwork and glass.

But the parishes are a place that people pass through rather than stay in. They lie at a natural, insular crossroads where a main west-east route across southern England meets a traditional south-north route between the English Channel with the English hinterland. The former perhaps initially ran through Avebury across the embryonic downs in the third millennium BC and was then variously formalised as Roman, turn-pike and twentieth century trunk road along the Kennet valley; the latter, across the valleys and along the ridges of the Wessex chalklands, has in contrast never become a metalled through-road during a fitful existence for local and transhumant traffic since the last centuries of the prehistoric era.

THE ARCHIVE

Principles and practice

The idea of an archive was built into the project from the start in 1959. When a full-time, professional programme to publish the project was finally begun in 1995, preparing a publicly accessible archive was quite as much a part of the brief from English Heritage as preparing a printed volume. Both a volume and archive were early accepted, in concept and practice, as part of the same process of 'publication'. The aim was defined as producing an entity the whole of which, irrespective of its media, made the project, its data and materials as accessible as seemed appropriate to its various potential users. In December 1995, the proposal was made to publish some of the material electronically (FWP 80); and by 1998 it became possible to implement the idea of making more material more widely available electronically than would be the case with only conventional printed publication and a static archive. As a result, the total output of the project is now arranged hierarchically by its nature, and is accessible in different media, partly as appropriate to the material but also as designed to meet different needs:

1. The primary archive at the Museum of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, at Devizes, Wiltshire
2. Material available electronically at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>
3. Material available in print

Explanation

1. The ***primary archive*** is deposited at the museum of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Devizes, Wiltshire. It consists of a fairly comprehensive paper record from 1959 onwards, all the existing excavated material, and a select photographic collection.

2. The ***electronic archive***.

The Fyfield and Overton Project has produced an integrated monograph and Internet publication. In combination with the World Wide Web, readers are able to move from the high level interpretations contained in the principal printed publication (*LPP below*) to the minutiae of the data held in the digital archive. The Project digital archive has been deposited with the Archaeology Data Service and can be remotely accessed via its catalogue, ArchSearch (Online: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>).

There are several pathways into the Fyfield and Overton electronic archive. For example, ArchSearch contains many thousand index records describing individual archaeological projects and interventions. These may be searched via the Keyword search button, which is located in the frame on the left hand-side of the screen (Figure 1). A Keyword search on Fyfield, for example, would return several different resources; one of these is entitled *Fyfield and Overton Project*. Selection of this resource would take the user to the Project page from which elements of the digital archive may be downloaded or viewed online.

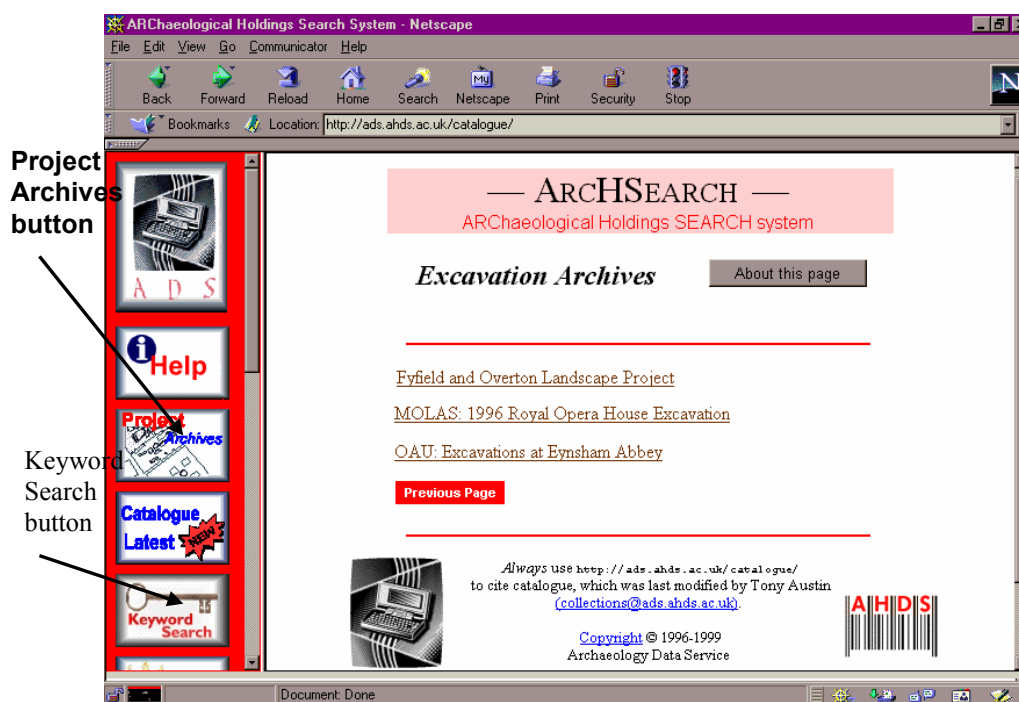


Figure 1: The Excavation and Fieldwork Archives section of ArchSearch

The archive can be accessed most directly via the Excavation and Fieldwork Archives section of ArchSearch, by clicking on the Project Archives button. This is also located in the frame on the left hand-side of the screen (Figure 1). Once in the Excavation and Fieldwork Archives section the Fyfield and Overton Project Archive may be selected, which takes the user to the Project page.

The electronic archive consists of:

a. **Four volumes of conventional, illustrated excavation reports** covering the three main excavations and, in a fourth volume, all the smaller excavations:

P.J.Fowler 2000 *Excavation within a later prehistoric field system on Overton Down, West Overton, Wilts: land-use over 4,000 years* (FWP 63, c. 50000 words)

P.J.Fowler 2000 ***Excavation of a Settlement of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries AD on Overton Down, West Overton, Wilts.*** (FWP 64, c. 70000 words)

P.J.Fowler 2000 ***Excavation of the Medieval Settlement of 'Raddun', Wroughton Mead, Fyfield Down, near Marlborough, Wilts.*** (FWP 65, c. 45000 words)

P.J.Fowler 2000 ***Seven Small Excavations on Fyfield and Overton Downs, with summaries of eighteen other excavations in and near Fyfield and West Overton Parishes, Wiltshire*** (FWP 66, c. 15000 words)

These four volumes were initially edited in 1998 as 'stand-alone' conventional excavation reports from an over-large, draft monograph text which tried to include the whole Project, completed by July 1997 (FWP 75). They were subsequently each re-examined as reports in their own right by PJF and then edited in similar fashion to the main monograph (*LPP*, below) by Dr. Julie Gardiner (Wessex Archaeology). She built in many cross-references between the four reports and *LPP*, and it is the results of her editorial work, completed early in 1999, that provide the versions of FWPs 63-66 available electronically.

b. **One hundred 'Fyfod Working Papers' (FWPs).** Beginning as assemblages of data and drafts of parts of early versions of a volume in 1995, these in-house papers quickly became, first, 'building blocks' in working towards a single major volume, and then a device for both handling material and ideas and for keeping an electronic record of the development of the publication and archival programme and spin-offs from it. The FWPs were not originally intended for wide publication, though it was always envisaged that floppy discs of such material would be part of the archive deposited at Devizes Museum and the National Monuments Record (as indeed is the case). With the development of appropriate technology, however, including such material as part of an accessible electronic archive became not only possible but, warts and all, even attractive.

In one respect alone, for example, the more refined the publishable monograph became during its evolution 1995-98, so the less detail it carried; or, conversely, much of the earlier written material contains far more detail, such as the identifier numbers of specific objects in particular contexts, than could possibly be printed in *LPP*. Many of the FWPs were revisited several times and went through numerous revisions, the last of them (for the time being!) in some cases as late as September-October, 2000, when the deposition of the digital archive

with ADS was completed. At that stage, the FWPs contained well over a million words.

The original numbering of FWPs is retained here; the numbers accrued, reflecting spurts of activity in particular directions by team members, and some were superseded or discarded, so not every FWP number now has text attached (and the numbers were not re-used). The later FWPs represent a conscious attempt to round off this part of the archive in a structured way – and indeed in a way which allows for the archive to be added to in future. Some work on it has already taken place since the accompanying monograph, *Landscape Plotted and Pieced (LPP - see below)*, went to press.

This series of FWPs details many aspects of the project and underpins, even supplements, the synthetic overviews contained in *LPP* with primary evidence impractical to present in detail in print (eg FWPs 18a, 76). The content of individual FWPs varies from full excavation reports (eg FWP 64) to artefact (eg FWPs 31, 39a-d) and documentary (eg FWPs 44, 68) analyses. The four excavation reports (FWP 63-66) are available in *html* format. This allows the text to be viewed over the Internet and enables links between text, illustrations and other FWPs. The remainder of the working papers are available simultaneously as *Microsoft Word*, plain text and *html* file formats.

A full catalogue of the FWPs, with bibliographic and other information, is in **FWP 33**; key words are listed for each FWP in **FWP 33a**.

A select, subject index to ninety nine FWPs is in **FWP 100**.

Four FWPs pull together all the other FWPs relating to the three main excavations and the various smaller excavations:

FWP 56: miscellaneous excavations, detailed in **FWP 66**

FWP 57: site OD X/XI, late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age settlement and fields, detailed in **FWP 63**

FWP 58: site OD XII, a fourth-fifth century AD settlement, detailed in **FWP 64**

FWP 59: site WC, Raddun, a thirteenth-fifteenth century farm, detailed in **FWP 65**

Four early **FWPs, 1, 5a, 8 and 9**, are currently available only in paper in the primary archive at Devizes Museum.

The full list of one hundred FWP's, here with abbreviated titles, is:

00 – *this document*

01 - ODX and ODXI: an overview

02 - ODXI/A and ODXI/B: the lynchet and 'fence'

02a - ODXI/A/B/C: postholes under the lynchet

02b - ODXIC: features analysis

03a - ODXI/A South 1

03b - ODXI/A South 2

04a - ODXI: towards a text of the Excavation Report

04b - ODXI: towards a text of the Excavation Report

05 - ODXII: preliminary analysis of General Finds Numbers

05b – drawn objects and finds numbers

06 - a potted History of Fyfield, Wiltshire

07 - 'Raddun': the documentary evidence

07a - 'Raddun': the documentary evidence

08 - Wroughton Copse Medieval Site (WC): Raddun, some archaeological implications

09 - Draft Text of Miscellaneous Excavations (FWP 66)

10 - ODXII: finds distributional analysis

11- East Overton charter boundary S449

11a - West Kennet charter boundary S547

12 - Monograph structure

12a - Monograph structure

12b - Monograph structure

12c - Monograph structure

12d - Monograph structure

13 - ODX and ODXI Interpretation: three models

14 - ODXI/ A/ East 3: intersection of Gullies 6 and 8

15 - List of Illustrations for publication

15a - List of Illustrations for the monograph

15b - List of illustrations in FWPs 63-66

16 - ODXI/East 1: analysis of features and finds

17 - ODXI: summary of TWA finds report

18a - Sandford Charters

18b - The Templars in Rockley and Lockeridge

19 – ODXII: features Inventory

20 - ODX/15: cutting 15

21- Thoughts on ODXII

22 – WC: initial analysis of finds and features (see FWP92 for final data)

23 - Field Archaeology: the data and their place

23a - The Field Archaeology of the Down Barn area

24 - The Villages
24a - Village houses and their dates
25 – Finds bibliography
25a - Bibliography
25b - Bibliography
25c - Bibliography in *LPP*
26 - West Overton village morphology
26a – West and East Overtons: morphology
26b – Villages in the bottomlands
27a - LBA/EIA abstracts
27b - Important themes, LBA/EIA
28 - ODXI East 2 and 3
29a - Environmental Evidence
30a – The Ridgeway: documentary evidence
30b – The Ridgeway: Assessment Report: text
30c - The Ridgeway: Assessment Report: appendices
31 - Flint report
31a – Summary of flint report
32 – OD XII: Initial text and interpretation
32a – OD XII draft text
33 - List of Fyfod Working Papers
33a – Keywords for Fyfod Working Papers
34 - ODXI table of pits
34a - ODXI table of pits
35 - Aerial Cartography: draft discussion of RCHM AP map, 1995
36 – Environment chapter: first draft
37 - General discussion: first draft (*file deleted*)
38a – ODXI: TWA Finds Report: tables
38b – ODXI: TWA Finds Report: archive catalogue
38c – ODXI: TWA Finds Report: text
39a – ODXII: TWA Finds Report: tables
39b – ODXII: TWA Finds Report: archive catalogue
39c – ODXII: TWA Finds Report: text
40a – WC: TWA Finds Report: tables
40c – WC: TWA Finds Report: text
41 - Miscellaneous sites: TWA Finds Report
42a - ODXI ardmarks: record note
42b - ODXI ardmarks: description and analysis
43 – Agriculture and land-use, Overton manor
43a – edited version of FWP 43

- 44 - Documentary analysis of West Overton, East Overton, Lockeridge and
Fyfield
- 45 - Documentary analysis: Lockeridge
- 46 - Documentary analysis: East Overton
- 47 - Documentary analysis: Fyfield
- 48 - Documentary analysis: West Overton
- 49 - Miscellaneous excavations: early/draft accounts
- 50 - List of photographs for the Monograph
- 51 - The high downland (see FWP 75)
- 52 – Fyfield and Overton Downs (see FWP 75)
- 53 – Manton Down (see FWP 75)
- 54 – Lockeridge and Overton Downs, and Down Barn area (see FWP 75)
- 55 – Northern West Overton (see FWP 75)
- 56 - FWPs related to Small Excavations
- 57- FWPs related to ODX and ODXI
- 58 - FWPs related to ODXII
- 59 - FWPs related to WC
- 60 - The Archive: principles and practice
- 61a – First catalogue of original drawings
- 61b - Catalogue of original drawings deposited in Devizes Museum
- 62 – ODXI: the Beaker accompanying Burial 1a
- 62a - The Beaker skeletons
- FWP 63 – Excavation ... on Overton Down ... : land-use over 4,000 years
- FWP 64 - Excavation of a Settlement of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries AD on Overton
Down
- FWP 65 - Excavation of the Medieval Settlement of 'Raddun'
- FWP 66 - Seven Small Excavations on Fyfield and Overton Downs, with summaries of
eighteen other [local] excavations ...
- 66a – Small Excavations on Fyfield and Overton Downs, Wiltshire
- 66b – Small Excavations on Fyfield and Overton Downs, Wiltshire
- 67 - Society of Antiquaries lecture
- 68 - Analysis of Saxon charters: the 10th century Saxon landscape
- 69 - ODXI and ODXII and small excavations: layer numbers and descriptions
- 70 – *amalgamated into FWP 69*
- 71 – ODXII: Romano-British pottery
- 72 - SMR data for West Overton and Fyfield parishes south of the Roman road
- 73 - References in *Wilts. Archaeol. Mag.* for study area
- 74 - July 1996 monograph text
- 75 - July 1997 monograph text
- 76 - Translation of 1567 Pembroke Survey
- 77 - WC pottery database

- 78 - SMR data for area (inc. parts of Preshute, Savernake, Marlborough and Mildenhall parishes)
- 79 - Captions to the penultimate list of plates
- 80 - Proposal to archive an 'Accessible Public Archive'
- 81 - 'The Ridgeway incident'
- 82 - The pottery finds from TD VIII and IX, and TDI-III
- 83 - The finds from Shaw
- 84 - 'Crimean War' cultivation on Overton Down
- 85 - Air photography catalogue inc. RCHM data base
- 86 - Air photography report (RCHM, rev. ed., 12/98)
- 87 - OD XI and XII: small mammals report
- 88 - 'Cultural landscape: dreadful phrase, great concept'
- 88a 'Cultural landscape: archaeology, ancestors and archive'
- 89 - Catalogue of finds....as boxed in Devizes Museum
- 90 - 'Moving through the [Fyfield] landscape'
- 91 - 'Wansdyke in the woods'
- 92 - WC: detailed catalogues of finds, structures and cuttings
- 93 - *The Land of Lettice Sweetapple. A Countryside Explored* (Tempus, Stroud, August, 1998): contents, illustrations and captions of the colour plates
- 94 - Note on the Bayardo Farm flint and pottery collection
- 95 - ODXII: the coins
- 96 - ODXII: the glass: report and catalogue
- 96a - ODXII: the glass report: a summary
- 97 - Catalogue of the photographic archive
- 98 - Bibliography of Fyfield and West Overton: the primary publications
- 99 - Summary of the project's 'total product' and its archival deposition
- 100 - A select, subject Index to the preceding ninety nine FWPs

3. Printed Material available in multiple copies:

- a. 'Popular': Fowler and Blackwell 1998 = P. Fowler and I. Blackwell 1998, *The Land of Lettice Sweetapple. An English Countryside Explored*, Tempus, Stroud. (abbreviated as *SL*. The opportunity to include colour plates in this book was seized to publish images from 32 original colour transparencies from the archive, so in that sense alone the book is very much part of the project's academic publication output. The book was republished in paperback in Autumn, 2000, as *An English Countryside Explored. The Land of Lettice Sweetapple*, but otherwise with only minor textual modifications and two replacement colour plates)
- b. 'Academic': Fowler 2000 = P.J.Fowler 2000, *Landscape Plotted and Pieced. Landscape History and Local Archaeology in Fyfield and Overton, Wiltshire*, Research Report 64, Society of Antiquaries, London

- c. 'Research/archival': P.J.Fowler assisted by I.W.Blackwell, *Landscape Plotted and Pieced. Field archaeology and local history in Fyfield and Overton, Wiltshire*, July, 1997 (though with '1998' misleadingly on its front cover), six copies of a draft monograph of c 230,000 words produced in-house by the Computer Centre, Newcastle University.
- d. Other printed material: the study area has also generated a considerable bibliography quite apart from *LPP*. The Bibliography in *LPP* is fairly comprehensive and is available independently in **FWP 25c**. Primary printed sources and significant studies are listed in **FWP 98**; **FWP 73** lists references in a prime local source.



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Updated to October 2000