

## **FWP 80** (rekeyed 29/09/00)

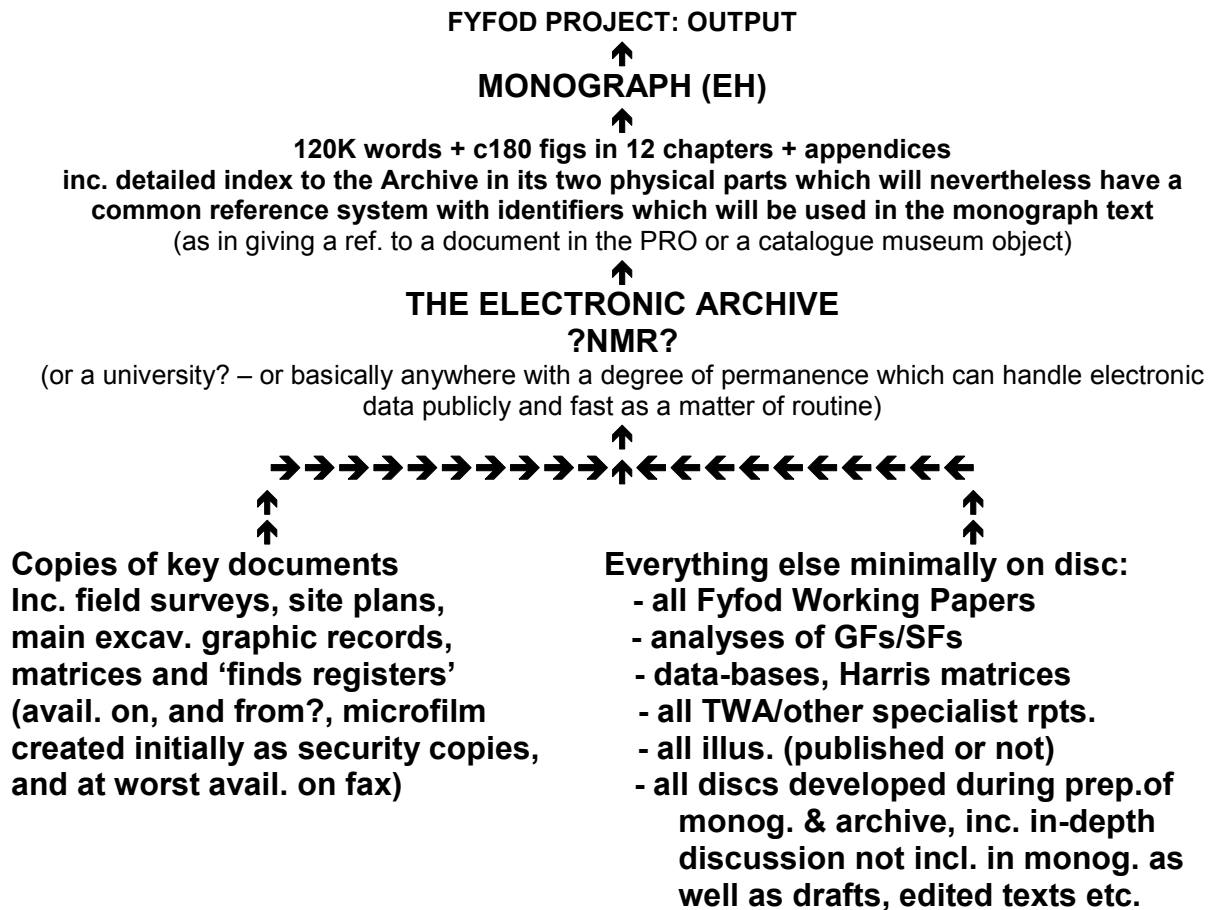
*Copied from a paper printout dated 13.xii.95 (in the paper archive), in the absence of the original, or copy of the, electronic file; with a post hoc comment at the date of rekeying, by which time the 'vision' of this document had largely been achieved -Pjf*

### **FYFOD PROJECT**

#### **Proposal to achieve an "ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC ARCHIVE"** (one of the Project's stated objectives)

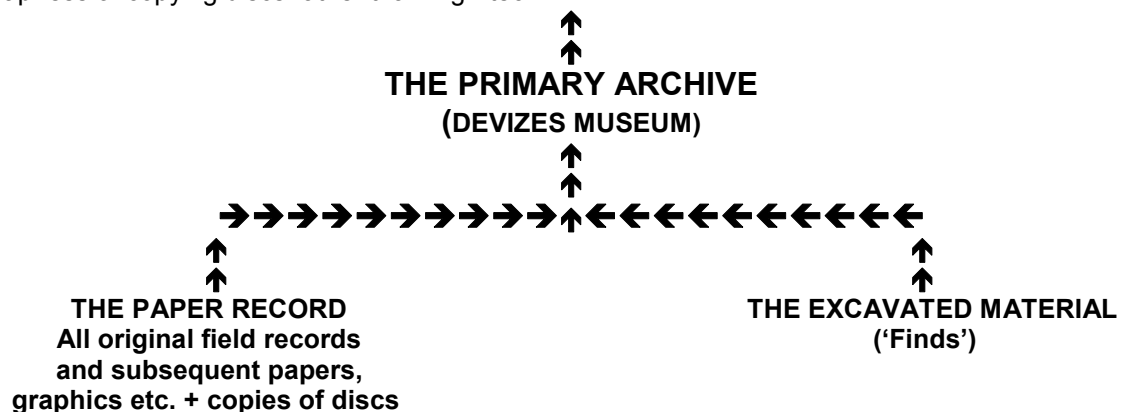
##### with a note on its **Nature and Structure**

1. The immediate origins of this proposal lie in the new introduction to "5edfyf1.doc edited to 4xii95 pjf; minor adjustments 7xi95," a file of draft text for chap 5 in the monograph arising from the Fyfod Project. Chap. 5, currently of c 60,000 words, is about the excavation of a multi-period area of landscape on Overton Down, Wilts, (OD X/XI). The word allocation for this site is 20K in the proposed 120K word, 12 chapter monograph which also has to cover two other major excavations and a dozen smaller ones + a great deal of other field data + discussion etc.). There is simply no way in which the amount and quality of the data can be accommodated in a conventional excavation report – a familiar problem, - and microfiche is certainly not the answer.
2. Discussions with Gill Andrews and subsequently with Ian Blackwell in Nov. 1995 identified two strong guidelines to help handle the huge amount of data from the whole Project a redraft a text which would be usable for publication:
  - a. to play to strength and **produce a strong narrative in the monograph;** and
  - b. in exercising the major act of selection necessary to produce a handleable text, **to give priority only to those excavated data which bear directly on the primary research objectives of the Project as identified in the Assessment Rpt.** (Mar 1995) i.e. excavated data which will not be included in the monograph just because it has been excavated.
3. As a consequence, it was envisaged that **existing text** (c ¼ million words), **all entirely on disc** whatever its academic/editorial state, **would immediately become part of 'the archive'** and therefore eventually publicly available. These discs embrace perhaps some 80% of the measurable product from the '1995 post-excavation' work so far (the bulk of the rest being graphic and photographic), ranging from the most detailed data-analysis (crucial but boring) to highly speculative ('me and my PC are communing in private') interpretation.
4. This stimulated the idea of a **'live accessible archive' (to be called and operated as an 'electronic archive'?) as an integral part of the whole archive.** The consequential thought was that the obvious and **best place** for such **was the NMR**, and that discussions to this end should be initiated.
5. The essence of the Fyfod proposal, not in itself conceptually new, is that **the whole 'product' of the Project should be an integrated one**, of which the conventionally **published monograph is** but the most visible output **at the apex of a triangular structure. All parts of this structure will have been appropriately processed. Distinctions between them reflect**, not so much the 'levels' of academic interest or states of preparedness in primary evidence but **the nature of the material and the medium of its accessibility.**
6. Though judgements about 'significance' have to be made in deciding what to include and exclude in producing the monograph, one advantage of this proposal is that no such judgements have to be made about the rest of **the product**. It **would simply be there, accessible** – much of it anywhere and everywhere, - **in the most appropriate way to a user depending on his/her need and available technology.**
7. **A basic assumption behind this proposal is that, by the end of this century, a very high proportion of (what is likely to be a very small number of largely institutionally-based) potential users will have routine access to machines accessing 'the information highway.'**



**All to go on CD-ROM?? Minimally, all to be available via fax or by manual  
delivery of copies of discs. Actually intended to be accessible via Internet/E-  
mail etc. or C21 equivalent**

(NB the whole of the RH side of the above could be copied by the author in 10 mins x £10 (for discs) x 10 times to deposit a useable archive of 10 discs in the 10 most useful institutions with a PC; or discs could be supplied on demand to individuals i.e. though relative high-tec is involved for this 'disc data' to be available 'live', there is no need to be high-tec for, at the price of 24 hours' wait for postal delivery and £10, anyone in UK could have their own set of copy-discs for ever. The secret lies in the ease and cheapness of copying discs rather than high-tec.



### Comment on the above Proposal of December 1995

1. The following note is written from memory, without research into the archive.
2. The above Proposal was sent to G. Wainwright at English Heritage (cc to Gill Andrews) in Dec. 1995 and was shortly afterwards turned down on grounds of cost. It was estimated (by me, on request) that it would take c£20K at that stage to digitise the graphics and this was considered unaffordable by EH. The idea itself was not, however, rejected.
3. Ian Blackwell and I never forgot the basics of our proposal as we continued to work towards a publishable monograph during our work 1996-8. We continued to keep, and even prepare new, files on disc for at least a static electronic archive, and we proceeded to develop the hierarchical concept of the archive overall as outlined in this proposal.
4. I went and discussed matters with Nigel Clubb at NMR and Paul Robinson at Devizes Museum: both agreed to the copying and distribution of discs as a practical way forward involving the co-operation of their institutions; I even considered using Newcastle University's Computer Centre, given the degree of investment and expertise there, to advance the electronic side since it did not seem to matter where the material was put 'on-line'. I gathered there was technically no problem in arranging this but there would be up-front costs in preparing material and setting up the electronic archive.
5. The way forward proved, however, to be the rapid technological advances in 1996-8 (so I was given to understand), allied to the establishment of the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) at York University (as part of a larger computerisation programme in the Humanities funded by the British Academy) and the personal interest of Tim Williams at English Heritage. Suddenly, it seemed, just when we thought (wrongly, as it happened!) we were on the point of finishing Fyfod, much of what we had proposed in 1995 became possible; and money to do what had by now become a relatively cheap task could be made available from EH from funds separate from the 'post-ex' budget.
6. The moment was in fact opportune because by July 1997 a large (and unpublishable) monograph volume had been prepared and had gone out to readers; inevitably, before the end of the year we were facing a situation of encouraging noises but basically of advice that 'you cannot publish this as it stands.' Early in 1998, inspired by Williams' interest and the electronic possibility, I privily tore the 1997 volume to bits over one weekend, removing from it all the excavation report material and distributing it into four Fyfod Working Papers (63-66) destined for electronic publication alone. This was the breakthrough towards creating a publishable monograph (eventually *Landscape Plotted and Pieced* - LPP - after another complete rewrite, but that's another story!) while making as much as possible of the excavation record available to those likely to want it.
7. The practicality of an electronic archive also made available a lot more than that, such as the '1997 volume' and its 1996 predecessor (which contains much more direct site detail, such as finds numbers, the sort of detail progressively edited out in attempts to keep the monograph length down) – that is, material which was already prepared and in many case already existing as discrete numbers as FWPs.
8. By 1998-9, however, there was almost no money left for Fyfod purposes i.e. to undertake the considerable work required on the material to prepare it for electronic publication. IWB had left for other employment, and PJF was busy on other matters and only able to spend 2-3 days a week on the project – time which was completely taken up in final preparations for the publication of the agreed monograph through the Society of Antiquaries of London. In the summer of 1998, nevertheless, using copies (some much reduced) of the variously-sized artwork on standard sized A3 sheets, The Archaeological Practice, Newcastle University, digitised the whole of the illustrative content of LPP and FWPs 63-66; the data were passed on to ADS which also received the first batch of FWPs on disc. (The hope that this same digitisation programme could provide the data for the printer of the monograph was later dashed when the quality proved inadequate for hard-copy publication and all the LPP illustrations were redigitised, this time from the original artwork, not copies thereof. We learnt the hard way (expensively for EH) that we had digitised the wrong way round. The lesson, obviously, is in future to get the printer to digitise from artwork early on in the process and then use his data for electronic archive purposes).
9. In late 1998-early 1999, Dr. Julie Gardiner, working as editor of the monograph, made the most important contribution to the linkage of monograph and electronic archive by editing FWPs 63-66 to the same standard as the hard-copy text and cross-referencing from LPP to FWPs 63-66. In 2000, she, Kate Owen (Production editor), Kate Fielden (proof-reader), Elizabeth Fowler (Indexer) and PJF all contributed in the final stages of LPP text preparation and proof-reading to ensuring adequate FWP linkage between monograph and electronic archive.
10. It was only in the last week of September, 2000, immediately after completing all final work on LPP proofs, that serious work on the electronic archive by pjf was recommenced – and completed.