Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Sites & Monuments Record

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

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A note about the maps

The SMR maps in the original Historic Towns Survey (i.e Maps 42-43) are now out of date and have not been included within this revision although references to SMR numbers remain in the text.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.	Ordnance Datum
O.S.	Ordnance Survey
PCNFC	Proceedings of the Cotteswold 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 *πολισ* (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:

Town	Defences	Market	Mint	Borough charter	Burgages/ burgess tenure	Legal autonomy
Berkeley		1086	✓		✓	
Bishop's Cleeve						
Bisley		1687				
Blockley						
Bourton-on-the-Water						
Chalford						
Cheltenham		1226			✓	
Chipping Campden		c1180		1154-89	✓	
Cinderford		1869				
Coleford		eC14				
Dursley		1471/2		C12	✓	
Dymock		1225/6		C13	✓	
Fairford		c.1100-35		1221	✓	✓
Frampton-on-Severn		1245				
King's Stanley		1253		C13/14	✓	
Lechlade		1210		c.1235	✓	
Leonard Stanley		1307-27				
Lydney		1268				
Minchinhampton		1269			✓	
Mitcheldean		1328				
Moreton-in-Marsh		1228		C13/14	✓	
Nailsworth		C18				
Newent	?	1253		C13	✓	
Newnham	?	C12		1187	✓	✓
Northleach		1219/20		c.1227	✓	
Painswick		1253			✓	
Prestbury		1249		C13	✓	
St. Briavels		1208		C14	✓	
Stow-on-the-Wold		1107		C12	✓	✓
Stroud		1570-1607				
Tetbury		1211-1287		c.1211	✓	
Tewkesbury		1086		1086	✓	
Winchcombe	✓	1086	✓	1086	✓	
Wotton-under-Edge		1252		1253	✓	

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).

	TOWN	DATE
1	Tewkesbury	by 1086
	Winchcombe	by 1086
2	Chipping Campden	1154-1189
3	Newnham	1187
4	Berkeley	1190
5	Dursley	C12
	Stow-on-the-Wold	C12
6	Tetbury	c.1211
7	Fairford	c.1221
8	Northleach	c.1227
9	Lechlade	c.1235
10	Wotton-under-Edge	1253
11	Dymock	C13
	Newent	C13
	Prestbury	C13
12	King's Stanley	C13/14
	Moreton-in-Marsh	C13/14
13	Minchinhampton	1300
14	Cheltenham	1313
15	Painswick	1324
16	St. Briavels	C14

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.

	TOWN	DATE
1	Tewkesbury	by 1086
	Winchcombe	by 1086
	Berkeley	by 1086
2	Fairford	c1100-1135
3	Stow-on-the-Wold	1107
4	Chipping Campden	c1180
5	Newnham	C12
6	St. Briavels	1208
7	Lechlade	1210
8	Tetbury	1211-1287
9	Northleach	1219/20
10	Dymock	1225/6
11	Cheltenham	1226
12	Moreton-in-Marsh	1228
13	Frampton-on-Severn	1245
14	Prestbury	1249
15	Wotton-under-Edge	1252
16	Painswick	1253
	Newent	1253
	King's Stanley	1253
17	Lydney	1268
18	Minchinhampton	1269
19	Leonard Stanley	1307-27
20	Mitcheldean	1328
21	Coleford	C14
22	Dursley	1471/2
23	Stroud	1570-1607
24	Bisley	1687
25	Nailsworth	C18
26	Cinderford	1869

Table 3 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: market charters by date

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.

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HISTORIC TOWNS IN THE FOREST OF DEAN (Map 1)

	Definition	Market	Borough charter	Burgages/ burgess tenure	Legal autonomy
Cinderford	Industrial town	1869			
Coleford	Small market town	C14			
Dymock	Roman small town; Small market town	1225/6	C13	✓	
Lydney	Small market town; Industrial town	1268			
Mitcheldean	Small market town	1328			
Newent	Medium-sized market town	1253	C13	✓	
Newnham	Medium-sized market town	C12	1187	✓	✓
St. Briavels	Small market town	1208	C14	✓	

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.

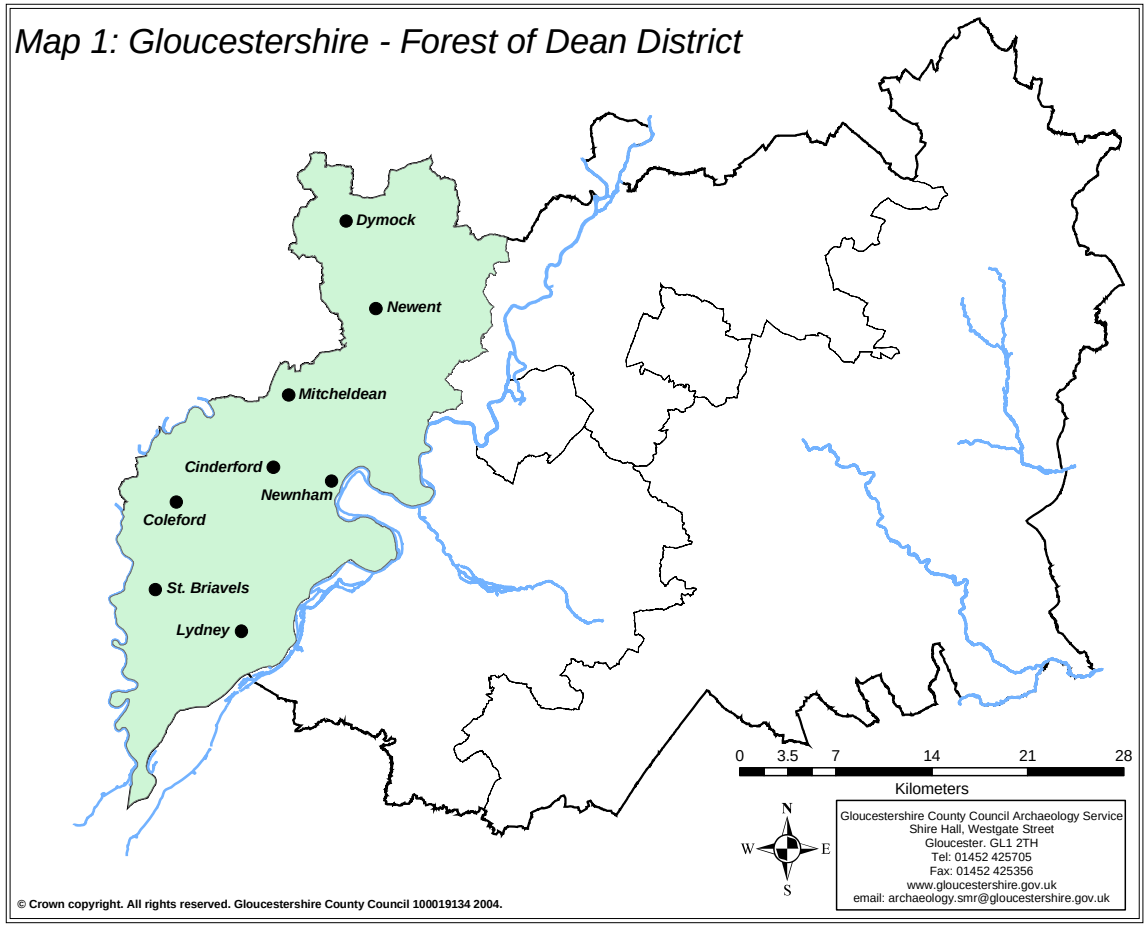
The early archaeology of the Forest of Dean is as yet little studied, in particular information about prehistoric settlement is sparse. In the Roman period local iron deposits became the basis of an important industry although the location and nature of the industrial sites and their contemporary settlements 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.


Map 1: Gloucestershire - Forest of Dean District
Dymock
Newent
Mitcheldean
Cinderford
Newnham
Coleford
St. Briavels
Lydney
0 3.5 7 14 21 28
Kilometers
N
W
E
S
Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service
Shire Hall, Westgate Street
Gloucester. GL1 2TH
Tel: 01452 425705
Fax: 01452 425356
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ST. BRIAVELS

1 Introduction

St. Briavels (SO 558044) lies in the south-west of the Forest of Dean, 11.2km south of Coleford. The town is situated on high ground (c.183-213m O.D.) overlooking the valley of the River Wye. The geology of the area is Upper Old Red Sandstone.

The parish of St. Briavels was partly formed by assarting from the royal demesne lands of the Forest of Dean during the early Middle Ages and was further enlarged by the addition of detached parts of the extra parochial Forest in 1842. St. Briavels was an important royal stronghold on the Welsh border and the castle was also the administrative centre of the Forest: the seat of the Constable of the Forest, the centre of the Vice royalty of the Forest of Dean and of many different courts, ranging from that of the Hundred to the Mine-Law Court. In the Medieval period it was the centre of an iron industry and it flourished briefly as a borough. By the end of this period it was no longer of urban status and it is now a village.

2 The Prehistoric period

There is very little evidence for prehistoric activity in the area of St. Briavels. A Bronze Age flint scraper is reported to have been found at the church (SMR 5091) but there is no evidence for prehistoric settlement in the immediate vicinity.

3 The Roman period

Apart from a possible Roman coin (SMR 6021) found in a garden adjoining the moat of St. Briavels castle (SO 35582045), there appears to be no evidence for Roman activity.

4 The Early Medieval period

The settlement lies about 1.5km to the east of Offa's Dyke, a territorial boundary on the edge of the Wye valley constructed in the eighth century A.D. There is, however, at present no evidence for Early Medieval activity at St. Briavels.

5 The Medieval period

5.1 Domesday Book

Under the name *Ledenei* land at St. Briavels is recorded as being held by William, son of Baderon, and including 3 villagers, 5 smallholders and 3 slaves, along with a mill valued at 5s, 20 acres of woodland and a half-fishery on the Wye. The value of the manor before 1066 was £4, but this had fallen to 40s by the time of the survey (Moore 1982).

5.2 The placename

St. Briavels is first referred to as *Lydney* or *Little Lydney*, which Baddeley has proposed may be derived from the name of the god Nodens or Lludens, a water deity, worshipped at the Roman temple at Lydney, and possibly also at Little Lydney (1921, 81). The area was called by this name in 1086, and its use persisted into the twelfth or thirteenth century, perhaps reflecting a teneurial connection with Lydney to the south-east.

The name St. Briavels was in use by 1130 and is thought to derive from the Celtic Saint Brieuc (Herbert 1996, 247; Smith 1964, 243).

5.3 The manor

The manor of St. Briavels was granted to William Fitz Osbern c.1066, and had passed to William Fitz Baderon of Monmouth by 1086. Fitz Osbern had granted the tithes and advowson of the church at St. Briavels to the abbey of Lire (founded 1046) in Normandy, while Wihanoc, uncle of Fitz Baderon and Earl of Monmouth, had granted a further interest in the church to his own foundation of St. Florent-in-Saumur (Baddeley 1921, 80).

The nature of the relationship between the lord of the manor and the castle of St. Briavels during the Medieval period is unclear, but by 1130 the castle had passed under Crown control, and from 1160 the castle, manor and Forest profits were held with the office of *Constable of St. Briavels and Warden of the Forest*. This continued until

1435 when the St. Briavels castle estate was separated from the constableship and wardship of the Forest, and from 1490 to 1528 the manor was held by the Baynham family (Herbert 1996, 256).

In Domesday Book St. Briavels manor is recorded as having a half share in a fishery on the Wye. By 1287 *half the river* - presumably the stretch along one bank - which was held by the Bishop of Llandaff was being rented by the Constable of St. Briavels, but it had been returned to the bishop's possession by 1322 (Herbert 1996, 267).

In 1331 St. Briavels had come into dispute with Tintern abbey over fishing rights on the Wye. Many of the weirs, including Bigs Weir and Ithel Weir were owned by the abbey, and it was reported that they were impeding navigation. A royal order was issued for the weirs to be lowered, and the task of enforcement fell upon the Constable of St. Briavels, who was forcibly resisted by the abbot and his monks (Herbert 1996, 267).

In 1437 Bigs Weir was said to account for part of the St. Briavels castle estate, but nothing was received from it as it was in ruins (Herbert 1996, 267).

The settlement at St. Briavels may have extended to the north of the church during the medieval period, as earthworks thought to represent the remains of house platforms, have been recognised in a field immediately to the north of the church (**SMR 6260**). However, it is also possible that these features marked rectilinear field boundaries of an unknown date (Herbert 1996, 259).

5.4 The borough

Anno 26 Edward III (1351/2) the king granted to the burgesses of the town or vill of St. Briavels a freedom and exemption from all toll, pantage, pavage, murage, pillage and lastage, and all other customs of the like sort throughout the realm (Bigland 1791, 236; Beresford and Finberg 1973, 115). This is the only reference to burgesses at St. Briavels and the only document which refers to the settlement as a town or vill, but it indicates that a borough had been founded in this important royal administrative centre before the mid-fourteenth century, and perhaps soon after the construction of the castle.

5.5 The castle

The first reference to a castle at St. Briavels is in 1130. Although the date of its foundation is not known exactly, it had not been built by the time that William Fitz Baderon acquired the estate c.1086, and it is thus likely that he built the first castle on the site as part of the great defensive scheme started by William Fitz Osbern against the Welsh across the Wye (Baddeley 1921, 79-80).

The castle (**SMR 15**) stands in the centre of the settlement, in a commanding position (c.200m O.D.) overlooking the Wye Valley to the west, and specifically the ford at Bigsweir. The earliest form of the castle is thought to have been an earthen motte which is presumed to have had a timber or stone tower (Herbert 1996, 257). By the later twelfth century a square stone keep had been constructed on top of the castle mound which was said to have been over 100 feet high, and in the thirteenth century a curtain wall was added, on a bank and surrounded by a wide moat enclosing an area of 1.5 acres (Herbert 1996, 257). It has been suggested that in addition two triangular areas of land - Bailey Tump to the west and a similarly sized area to the east - also once formed part of the castle (Herbert 1996, 257).

Between 1209 and 1211 extensive additions appear to have been undertaken to the fabric of the castle, including the construction of a two-storey domestic range to the north-west, which may have been the *Royal apartments* mentioned in 1227. Soon after this, in 1237, a two-storeyed chapel block was ordered to be built adjoining the king's chamber, at the eastern end of the domestic range. To the north of this range, a strong keep-like gatehouse was built in 1292-3; in 1310 the curtain wall was extended to take in a small area to the south of the keep, and a small tower or bastion was added where the new wall rejoined the original curtain at the south-eastern corner of the castle (Herbert 1996, 257).

There were many royal visits to the castle throughout the Medieval period, including by king John who visited on five separate occasions, Henry II who made four visits between 1220 and 1230 and Edward II who stayed there in 1321 (Herbert 1996, 257). The castle at St. Briavels also fulfilled a number of administrative functions. It was head of a hundred, a manor and included the vice-royalty of the Forest of Dean. A number of courts were held at the castle, including the Hundred Court, the Court Baron of the manor and castle, the Court of Criminal jurisdiction and the Mine-Law Court. All offenders from the 96 bailiwicks of the Forest were brought to St. Briavels castle to

be imprisoned, and the castle also served as an arsenal for locally produced weaponry (Baddeley 1921, 82; Herbert 1996, 257).

With the complete conquest of Wales in the late fifteenth century, the prime importance of the castle rapidly declined, the kings no longer visited for the hunting and the Constables were reduced in rank (Baddeley 1921, 84).

5.6 The church

The parish church (**SMR 6101**) is dedicated to St. Mary and was a chapel of the church at Lydney for much of its history. It is believed that the church was originally dedicated to St. Briavel, and that it had received the dedication to St. Mary by 1471 (Herbert 1996, 269).

The earliest fabric in the church is of the twelfth century, including the south arcade and the clerestory. The crossing and the north transept were built c.1200 and the east end was also completed with the addition of a long chancel in the thirteenth century. The north aisle was added in the early fourteenth century and the south transept was also remodelled at this time (Herbert 1996, 270). The original central tower has been taken down, although the Transitional-Norman arches of the crossing remain (Verey 1980, 331-332). However, the advowson and tithes of the chapel of St. Briavels were granted to the abbey of Lire in Normandy by William Fitz Osbern before his death c.1070, while an additional interest was granted to the abbey of St. Florent-in-Saumur by his successor Wihanoc, earl of Monmouth before 1086 (Baddeley 1921, 79). This implies that there was an earlier foundation in the town, evidence for which has not survived.

The rights to appoint to the living and to receive the tithes were under almost constant dispute through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, until a resolution was achieved in 1219 when all rights to the chapel were granted to the dean and chapter of Hereford by Lire abbey (Herbert 1996, 269). In 1475, three chaplains are recorded as serving the church, and in 1518 an apostate monk of Grace Dieu abbey was said to have served a chantry in the church. In 1549 a record of property belonging to the various chantries included a number of houses in the village, which were later sold by the Crown (Herbert 1996, 270).

5.7 The chantry of St. Mary

A building to the south of the church is known as the “chantry” (**SMR 5094)**, and its fabric includes a sixteenth century window. Documentary evidence indicates that it was established by two monks from the Cistercian monastery of Grace Dieu, and that it is the same chantry as that referred to in the dissolution certificate of 1548 (Leech 1980, 78).

5.8 Markets and fairs

In 1209 a weekly market to be held on Saturdays was granted to St. Briavels, although the day was altered on a number of occasions during the Medieval period. In 1232 the market day was changed to Tuesday, and shortly afterwards it was again altered to fall on a Monday. By 1309 the day had reverted to Tuesday, and in the same year an annual fair to be held over Michaelmas was granted. The date of this fair was also changed, and by 1318 it was being held over the Nativity of St. Mary (Herbert 1996, 267).

In the mid-1430s the manor claimed two fairs on the feasts of St. John before the Latin Gate and St. Clement, but it appears that neither of these fairs, nor the market, was being held, and Herbert (1996, 267) has suggested that the constant alteration of the dates indicates that St. Briavels was experiencing considerable difficulty in establishing itself as a trading centre. The markets and fairs may initially have been successful because of the town’s role in the Forest iron industry and because of its function as an administrative centre. The decline of the iron industry and the relatively remote location of the settlement may have contributed to the ultimate failure of the market and fairs in the Post-medieval period (Herbert 1996, 267).

5.9 Trade and industry

5.9.1 Iron working

During the period up to c.1600, St. Briavels was one of the centres of iron working in the Forest of Dean. The earliest record of an iron works in the manor is a grant of a forge to Tintern Abbey by Milo, Sheriff of Gloucestershire and Constable of the castle (Herbert 1996, 265). In 1216 a Royal order was issued for the closure of all forges in the Forest, except for those belonging to St. Briavels castle and others held by the Sergeants-at-Fee, which are likely to have been operating in and around the settlement (Herbert 1996, 265).

In 1250 the King's Great Forge, which belonged to the castle, was found to be uneconomic because more profit could be made from selling the wood used to fuel it than could be made from operating it as a forge. In 1255 the forge was reserved to an incoming constable and was destroyed by Royal order soon afterwards (Herbert 1996, 265).

In 1270 eight men were allowed to operate movable forges in the Forest (presumably within the parish of St. Briavels), and this number had risen to thirteen by 1282. Among these thirteen was Adam, the King's reeve of the manor, who in 1270 was reported to be employing eight charcoal burners, and to have destroyed much woodland, even burning timber which had been assigned for repairing the castle (Herbert 1996, 265).

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries much of the Forest iron production went to the manufacture of crossbow bolts (quarrels). In 1223 they were produced under the supervision of the constable, and in 1228 Henry III sent John Malemont, William the Smith and a fletcher to St. Briavels specifically to manufacture quarrels. The large scale of the manufacture throughout the middle ages is reflected in the thirteenth and fourteenth century production figures. In 1257 30,000 quarrels were produced and transported to Chester to supply Henry III's campaign against the Welsh; in 1265 a contract to produce 25,000 bolts per annum was agreed; and in 1327 20,000 quarrels were produced and sent to Dover Castle (Herbert 1996, 265). By the mid-fourteenth century the iron industry had fallen into decline, and the last references to the king's fletcher appear in 1335. By 1437, St. Briavels was no longer recorded amongst the figures for Forest forges owing rent to the Crown, which may indicate that production had ceased by the early fifteenth century (Herbert 1996, 265).

5.9.2 Mills

A mill belonging to the manor was recorded in Domesday Book of 1086, and a number of mills operating throughout the parish appear in other Medieval documents, some of which, such as Mork Mill (SMR 6152), belonged to the manor. Mork Mill was still recorded amongst the manorial holdings in 1350, and rents were still being paid by the operator of the mill in 1430 (Herbert 1996, 265). It is, however, unclear whether these mills were used in the iron, corn or cloth industries.

6 The Post-medieval period

6.1 The status of the settlement

During the sixteenth century St. Briavels was still regarded as a town and was referred to as such in the Chantry Certificate issued in 1548 for the dissolution of St. Mary's chantry (Leech 1980, 76). During the following centuries the settlement's status sank to that of a village, and it continues to be regarded as such.

6.2 The manor

By 1528 the manor of St. Briavels had come into the ownership of Sir William Guise, whose family held it until 1583. By 1611 it had been granted to the Earl of Pembroke on a 40 year lease, at which time it passed to Lord Herbert and his family until c.1706 when it was acquired by the earls of Berkeley. The manor remained with the Berkeley family until 1838 and in 1858 the manor finally passed to the Crown, in whose possession it remained until 1991 (Herbert 1996, 256).

6.3 The castle (SMR 15)

In 1680 the unused parts of the castle were demolished and it was recorded at the time that this included *most of the castle*. The manor and leet courts continued to be held there, and the castle continued to act as a debtors prison until 1842 (Herbert 1996, 258). The stone keep collapsed in 1752, stimulating attempts to preserve the structure which included the restoration of the gatehouse and western range in 1898 (Herbert 1996, 258).

The gaolers of the debtors' prison in the castle are recorded as running an 'ale house' from 1702 until the nineteenth century (Herbert 1996, 255).

6.4 Ecclesiastical history

6.4.1 The established church

In 1549 the properties of the chantries of St. Mary's church (**SMR 6101**) were sold by the Crown. The church remained a chapelry of Lydney, to which all tithes were taken, and by whom all appointments to St. Briavels were made until 1859 when it became independent and a separate benefice was created (Herbert 1996, 270).

A new tower was built over the church porch c.1830 and the nave was rebuilt during the restoration of 1861 (Verey 1980, 332).

6.4.2 Nonconformity

In the Diocesan survey of 1676, one papist and one nonconformist were recorded, although nothing more is known of nonconformity in St. Briavels until 1746 when a house was registered for Presbyterian worship. In 1828 a house was also registered for Baptists, although no chapel appears to have been built. Independents and Congregationalists met in a house in the parish, and by 1861 a chapel had been built on the east side of the High Street (**SMR 17330**; Herbert 1996, 271).

6.5 Markets and fairs

By 1700 both the market and the fairs had been allowed to lapse. In the early twentieth century a pleasure fair was established in the village but this also lapsed before the late 1960s (Herbert 1996, 267).

6.6 Trade and industry

Smith's *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608* lists the trades and occupations for all the able-bodied men in St. Briavels (68 in total). Of these 16 were labourers and 18 were servants. There were 3 butchers, 4 husbandmen, 7 yeomen, 1 mercer, 1 miner, 1 tiler, 1 smith, 2 tailors, a weaver, 4 watermen and a cooper, indicating that agriculture provided the main employment, with a number of other trades being carried out on a local scale.

A number of mills are mentioned in connection with the settlement, including corn mills at Hewelsfield (1628-1630; SMR 6055) and a mill and dyehouse at Mork (1688) (SMR 6152; Herbert 1996, 258). In 1635 an iron furnace was built by Sir John Wynter, although this had ceased production by 1700 (SMR 9935). Other furnaces are recorded from the south and east of the parish (Herbert 1996, 255).

In 1811, eleven families in St. Briavels were supported by trade, while 160 were supported by agriculture. By 1831, 30 families were being supported by trades, which included a blacksmith, shopkeepers and even a surgeon (Herbert 1996, 267).

7 The modern settlement

There has been a small amount of modern development around the historic core of St. Briavels. In 1931 Lydney Rural District Council started to build a housing estate at Cross Keys to the east of the village, which was enlarged during the 1950s and 1960s. A second, more substantial estate of private houses was built to the south-east of the village between Pystol Lane and East Street, and a few small housing developments have taken place during the later 1980s on the Bream Road, to the east of the Cross Keys development.

The majority of buildings in the village date from the nineteenth century, and there are a number of elegant nineteenth century facades along the main streets, including a group of almshouses built in 1895 (SMR 20214). A number of earlier houses have survived, including several from the sixteenth century, such as Church Farmhouse (SMR 6102) and Monk Farmhouse (SMR 6104), and there is a local tradition that the latter is earlier in origin, containing internal features of fourteenth century date.

8 Population

Date	Communicants	Households	Families	Nonconfor-mists	Inhabitants	Source
1551	170				*c.255*	Percival
1563		49			*c.208*	Percival
1603	148				*c.222*	Percival
1650			23		*c.98*	Survey of Church Livings
1676	242			2	*c.365*	Compton Census
1712		80			400	Atkyns
1779		122			766	Rudder
1801					670	
1851					1194	
1901					1065	
1997					1313	

For a full explanation of this table, please see page 6 above.

9 Plan analysis (Maps 44-46)

9.1 Discussion

The settlement at St. Briavels developed at an important strategic location, overlooking the Wye valley and Wales. A number of routeways ran through the settlement, linking it with other early settlements on the east side of the River Wye. St. Briavels was connected to Hewelsfield and Brockweir to the south, from where a road led to Monmouth, and to Mork and Coleford to the north. It is unclear, however, whether the routes developed to serve the administrative centre of the Forest, or whether they pre-dated the foundation of the castle.

Although the exact date of its foundation is not known, the castle (**Area 1**) was certainly in existence by 1130 and it forms the focus of the settlement. Today the castle comprises a gatehouse, curtain wall and inner bailey, although it is likely that the two roughly triangular areas to the east and west (**Areas 2** and **3**; with the former being known as Bailey Tump) may also have formed part of the defences, perhaps as small outer enclosures or baileys. The moat is largely infilled.

The church stands immediately to the north of the castle and marks the northernmost extent of the settlement (**Area 4**). Although it is likely that the foundation of the church predated the construction of the castle, it has had a far less significant impact on the development of the Medieval and later settlement plan.

The Medieval market place lay to the south of the castle, and covered a much larger area than today, occupying the area between the High Street on the west and Pystol Lane to the east (**Area 5**). Today this area has been almost completely built up (**Areas 17**, **18** and **19**), with only The Square to the north and a small area of open green near the nineteenth century school surviving.

A number of routeways radiate out from the castle, and the Medieval settlement is likely to have developed along these streets, close to the castle, the church and the market place (**Areas 6-10**). There is no clear evidence for burgage tenements surviving on early maps or in the existing settlement plan, reflecting the presumably very brief life of the borough. By 1608 the High Street was built up only along its western side (**Area 6**), where seven houses stood which are thought to have been the residences of the serjeants-at-fee, officials of the Forest administration, who are recorded from the thirteenth century. Some development also appears to have taken place along the east side of Pystol Lane, fronting on to the market area (**Area 10**).

After the Medieval period, the importance of the castle within the administration of the Forest declined, and the settlement also became reduced in extent and importance. In the early eighteenth century, Atkyns recorded that the sites of demolished houses could be seen between The Square and Cinder Hill, and along Barrelwell Lane. Some new development began to take place during the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although the settlement never extended much beyond its original Medieval extent (**Areas 20-27**). The seven houses to the west of the High Street were replaced during the nineteenth century, and the infilling of the market area had begun by 1842 when the tithe map was drawn up (**Areas 17-19**). By 1880 the settlement had reached its full, pre-modern extent, stretching from the church on the north to the national school on the south, and as far as Whitepool on the east.

Twentieth century development at St. Briavels has been discussed in section 7, above.

9.2 Plan components

9.2.1 Medieval (Map 44)

1. The Castle

2. Bailey Tump, possibly part of the Medieval castle

3. Area of open ground, also possibly part of the Medieval castle

4. The Church of St. Mary and the surrounding churchyard, as shown on the first edition O.S. map of 1880

5. The market place

6. Medieval housing, including seven houses thought to have belonged to the Sergeants-at-Fee.

7. Area of Medieval settlement to the north of Church Road

8. Area of Medieval settlement to the south of Church Road

9. Area of Medieval settlement to the south of Bailey Tump

10. Area of Medieval settlement to the east of Pystol Lane

9.2.2 Post-Medieval (Map 45)

11. The castle

12. The church and churchyard

13. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the north of Church Road

14. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the south of Church Road

15. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the west of the High Street

16. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the east of Pystol Lane

17. Post-medieval infilling of The Square

18. Post-medieval infilling of the market place

19. Post-medieval infilling of the market place
20. Post-medieval development to the north-west of the church
21. Post-medieval development to the west of Cinder Hill
22. Post-medieval development to the west of Lower Road
23. Post-medieval development to the east of Lower Road
24. Post-medieval development at the southern end of the High Street
25. Post-medieval development to the south of Barrelwell Lane
26. Post-medieval development to the south of Church Road
27. Post-medieval development to the south of Barrelwell Lane
28. Post-medieval development to the east of the castle
29. Post-medieval development to the east of the church

10 Future research

Priorities for future work include:

1. Pre-castle settlement: was the site chosen for the construction of the castle, or was the castle added to an existing settlement?
2. The first church of St. Briavels: documentary evidence indicates that there was a church by the later eleventh century, although the earliest fabric in the present structure dates to the twelfth century .
3. The extent, character and economy of the Medieval borough, including the documented iron works: the borough was relatively short lived, and its layout has not been preserved in the existing form of the settlement.

11 Sources

11.1 Primary historical sources

There are a number of Medieval documents which relate to the castle at St. Briavels, as well as to the market and fairs, the manor and the wardenship of the Forest of Dean. Where these are referred to, the information has been drawn from secondary, published sources.

11.2 Secondary historical sources

St. Briavels is covered in volume five of the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire, as well as being described by many eighteenth century historians and antiquarian travellers. More recent research has generally been centred on features such as the castle and church rather than the nature of the settlement during the Medieval or Post-medieval periods.

11.3 Archaeological sources

There have been a few archaeological investigations within the area of the Medieval settlement in advance of modern development, although none has produced evidence for activity pre-dating the Post-medieval period. Similarly, there have been very few chance finds made in the area of the settlement to suggest early activity or occupation.

11.4 Maps

The 1608 map of the Forest of Dean covering several of the Forest settlements shows a slightly schematic representation of the settlement at St. Briavels, but does indicate the extent of housing around the castle and the main routes through the town. The tithe map of 1842 and the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880 illustrate how small the settlement was before twentieth century development took place around the castle and to the west of the Medieval core.

12 Bibliography

12.1 Published works

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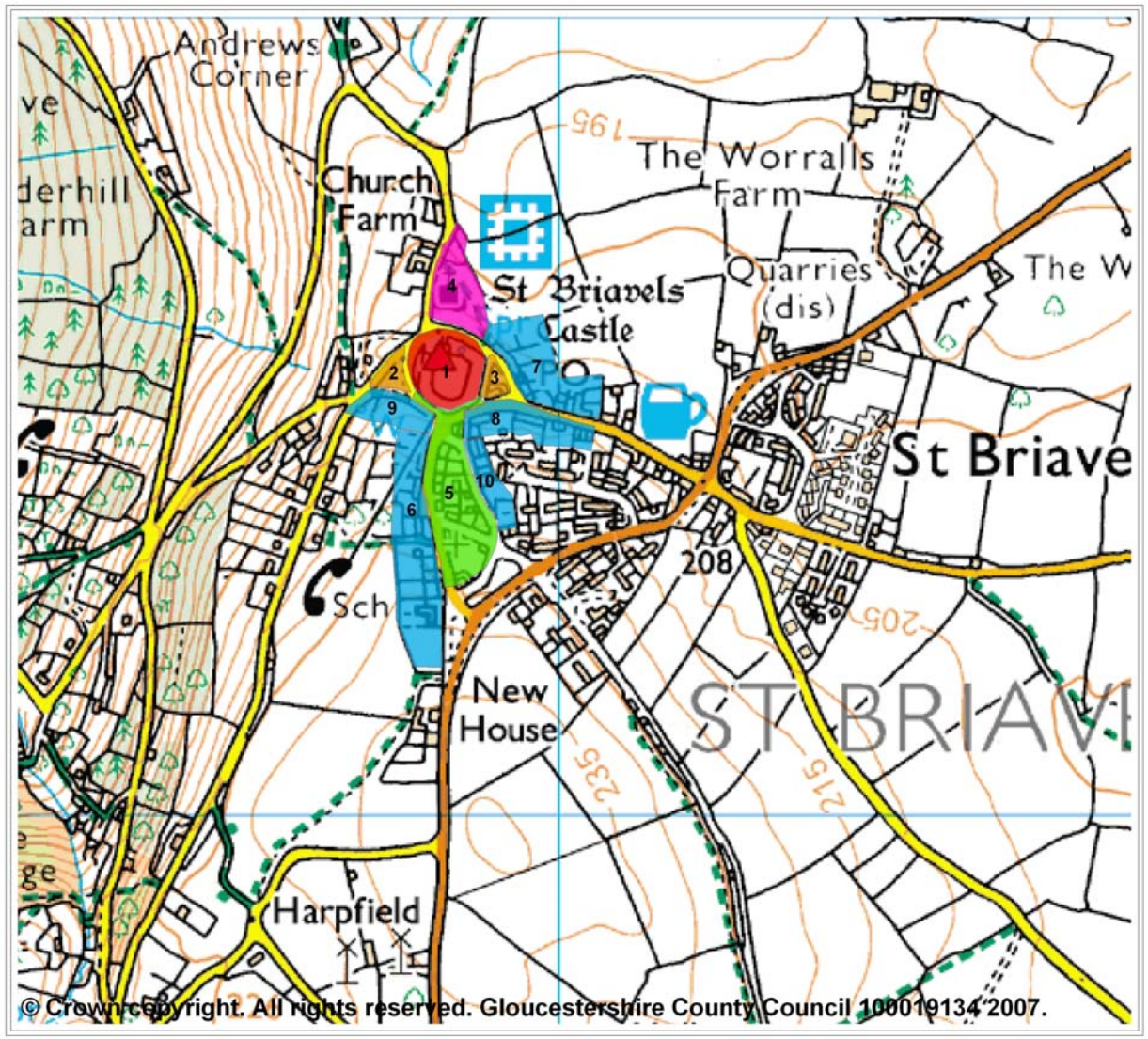
12.2 Maps

Map of the Forest of Dean of 1608, section showing St. Briavels
Tithe map, 1842
Ordnance Survey first edition 25":1 mile map, 1880



MAP 44
St. Briavels
Medieval Plan
Components

Legend

- Areas of Medieval settlement
- Castle
- C14 Church & churchyard
- Market place
- Possible parts of the castle

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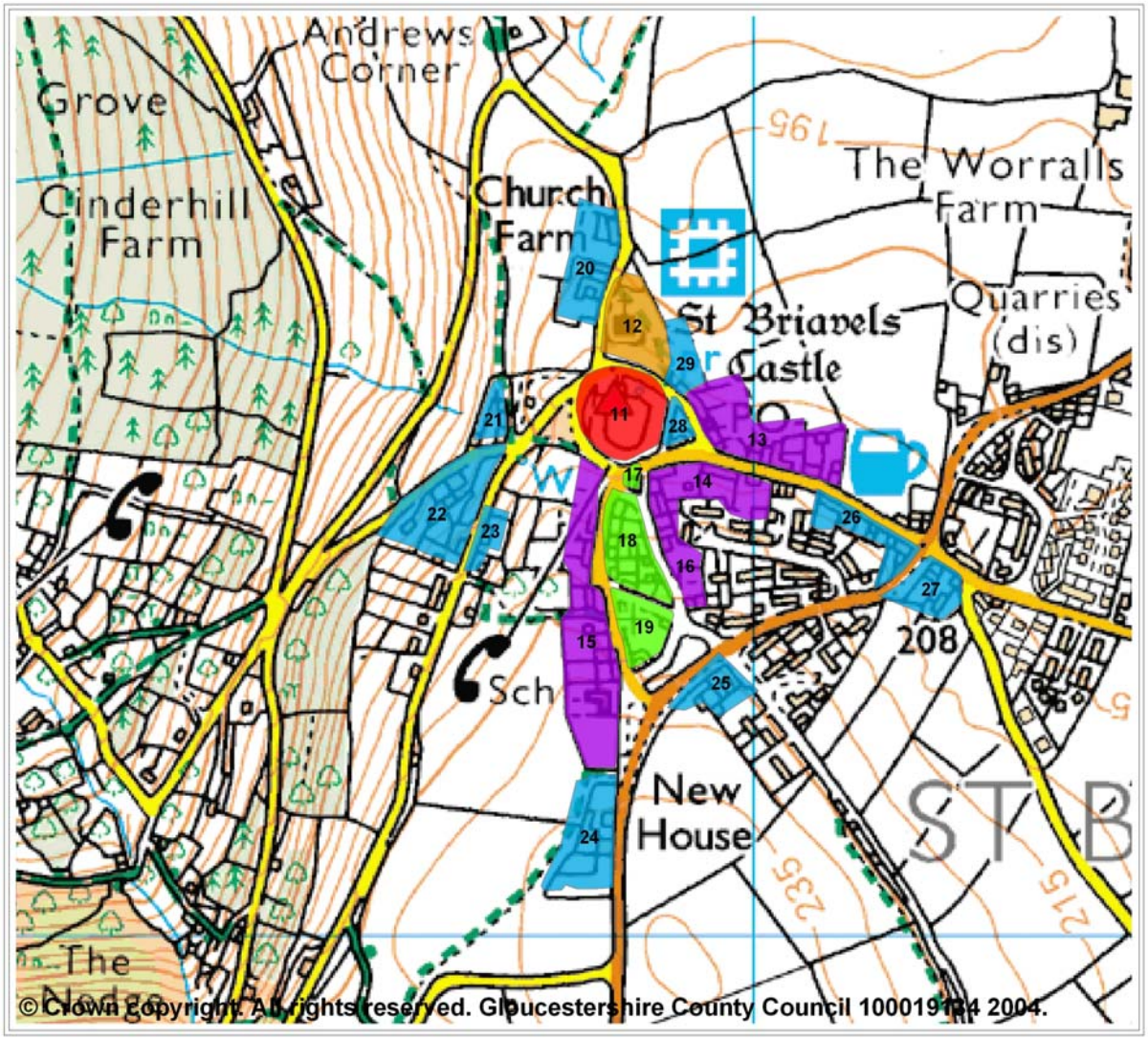

MAP 45
St. Briavels
Post-Medieval
Plan Components

Legend

- Castle
- Church & churchyard
- Extent of settlement c.1608
- Infill of market area
- Post-medieval development

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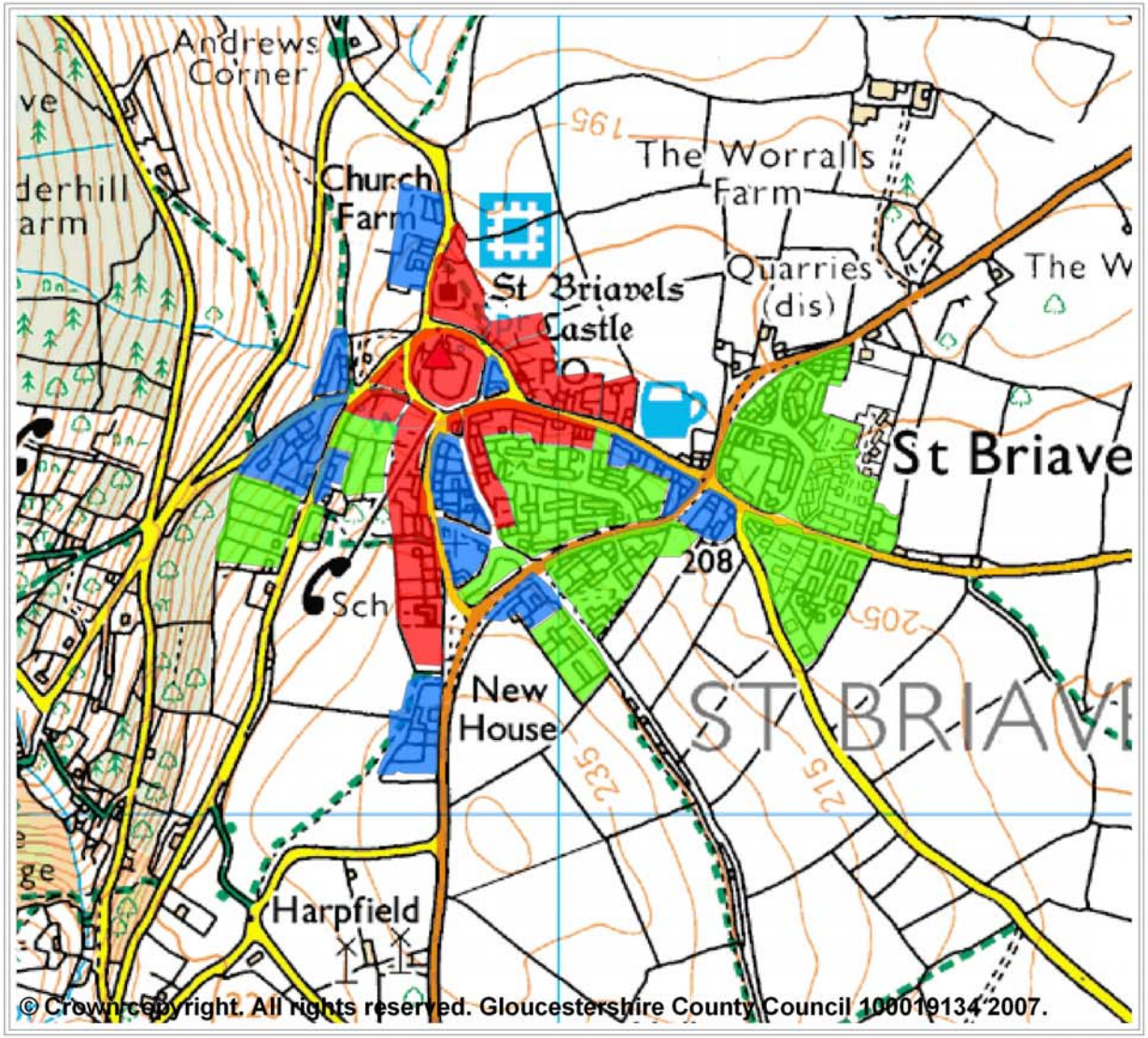

MAP 46
St. Briavels
Development By
Period

Legend

- Medieval
- Modern
- Post Medieval

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