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Road Number	Date
Contractor CBN Hollinrake	
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Somerset Sites and  
Monuments Record

AS03 WINCANTON TO ZEALS  
IMPROVEMENT SCHEME  
WBP 91

C & N Hollinrake,  
12 Bove Town,  
Glastonbury,  
Somerset, BA6 8JE.  
(0458) 833332.

A303 - WINCANTON TO ZEALS IMPROVEMENT SCHEME  
WBP 91

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A 303 WINCANTON - ZEALS IMPROVEMENT  
WBP 91

SUMMARY

Fieldwalking on an 8 kilometre stretch of the new A303 Wincanton to Zeals improvement scheme resulted in the identification of 20 sites of archaeological significance. The sites ranged in date from the Neolithic through to post-medieval with most Roman material being concentrated in the western half of the survey line. Three archaeological excavations of differing size resulted from the survey with a fourth excavation, at Stoke Lane, Bayford, completed before the survey began. The largest excavation, at Encie Farm, proved the existence of an important prehistoric occupation site.

1.0 BACKGROUND

See Fig. 1, 2 & 3.

The A303 Wincanton to Zeals Improvement was already under way when the authors were commissioned to undertake this survey. Turf and topsoil had been stripped and bridgework was well advanced before fieldwalking commenced with the result that several areas were too disturbed for access. Nevertheless, 20 sites were identified, of which 3 were excavated thanks to the full co-operation of the

engineers MRM Partnership and the contractors Wimpey. Site 1 had been excavated previously bringing the total to 4.

Desk top survey and analysis followed.

## 2.0 METHOD

### 2.1 FIELDWALKING

See Fig. 3.

Approximately 8km of the A303 bypass, between Stoke Lane, Stoke Trister parish (ST730289), in the west eastwards to the existing dual carriageway east of Zeals village (ST790322), were walked on 23rd to 25th & 28th January 1991. Fieldwalking was carried out by Richard Broomhead and Nancy and Charlie Hollinrake on behalf of Somerset County Council.

Many stretches of the route were impossible to examine due to the disturbance of the carriageway by construction traffic, clay dumping and stripping. All areas where bridgeworks over rivers and streams were being constructed were also found to be too disturbed to be examined. Frequently only open drain cuts and narrow ribbons of ground either side of the route were suitable for inspection but in spite of these difficulties a number of archaeological sites were noted and recorded.<sup>1</sup>

Findings are kept in bags marked with the site code as underlined below.

WBP 91 Site code for fieldwalking sites (Wincanton bypass 1991). Followed by site number ie WBP 91/2.

SMR numbers refer to Somerset County Council Sites and Monuments Record numbers.

Field numbers refer to Ordnance Survey field numbers.

Tithe number and name refer to parish Tithe Maps.

The following sites are in the county of Somerset.

WBP 91 SMR ~~55600~~<sup>15755</sup>. Stoke Trister parish. Field 0006.

Tithe 65, Corn Close. ST730290.

Excavation by BUFAU directed by Gwylim Hughes.

WBP 91/1 SMR ~~55601~~. Stoke Trister parish. Field 0006.

Tithe 65, Corn Close. ST732290.

Finds: 5 small abraded sherds of RB pot, 1 small post-medieval sherd. Associated with WBP 91.

WBP 91/2 SMR ~~55602~~. Stoke Trister parish. Field 0056.

Tithe 169, Great West Low Mead and 168, Lower Marshwood. ST 738295.

A general unspecified scatter between sites 1 and 2.

WBP 91/3 SMR ~~55603~~. Stoke Trister parish. Field 4475.

Tithe 299, Green Close Hanging. ST 74402975.

Finds: RB or Medieval - 67 sherds, probably all from one vessel.

WBP 91/4 SMR ~~55603~~. Stoke Trister parish. Field 4475.

Tithe 299, Green Close Hanging. ST74422975.

Finds: flint - 8 struck flakes, including 3 calcined  
and 1 disc scraper

RB - 1 small, abraded sherd

medieval - 4 small abraded sherds

WBP 91/5 SMR ~~55403~~. A general scatter between sites 3  
& 4:

Finds:

flint - 11: 6 struck flakes & 5 natural pebbles;

RB - 5 small sherds;

medieval - 1 sherd;

post-med - 2x19th cent. matchboxes, 1 glazed sherd.

This area is adjacent to Chessil Copse ST 74552975; the  
RB sherds here probably derive from settlement  
associated with the cropmark seen on RAF 1946  
series air photo in Local History Library (3343  
CPE/UK/1821) probably a Roman villa (SMR 54607).

SMR 54616. ST 74522957. Lime kiln - post medieval.

Chessils Copse SMR ~~55404~~. is mainly hazel coppice with  
plentiful bluebell in the understory within a wood  
bank enclosure, probably of medieval date. Within  
the copse, and apparently unrelated to it, are a  
number of large banks and ditches, these are  
probably associated with an old quarry southwest of  
the wood at ST744296. None of these features have  
been recorded.

WBP 91/6 SMR ~~55605~~. Penselwood parish, field 7200.  
Tithe 154, Newmans and 155, Lower Newmans.  
ST747299.

General background scatter:

Finds:

- flint - 15 struck flakes;
- medieval - 1 sherd.

15157

WBP 91/7 SMR no. ~~55606~~. Penselwood parish, field 8700.  
Tithe 140, 8 acres. ST74822990 to 74733006 to  
74683005.

The boundary between fields 7200 and 8700 runs along the eastern bank of a double stone bank (SMR no. ~~55606~~) on the crest of an imposing ridge. The banks are topped by a hazel coppice hedge with stools of some 4m in diameter. Extensive views are possible over many square miles from this ridge top and although the double bank does not appear to be a modern boundary, it would appear to have been of some importance in antiquity.

SMR ~~55607~~. ST79902995. An extensive flint assemblage, site 7, lies in the sheltered lee of this crest. Less than 100m downslope to the south a stream issues - this stream is a parish boundary and may be a focus of this prehistoric site.

15158

Finds:

- flint - 179 struck and waste flakes incl. cores, tools and microliths.



Excavation: by Somerset County Council and AC

Archaeology directed by Mr Julian Richards;

15759

Accompanying the double bank, as described in the fieldwalking report, was a very large recut ditch - ca. 13 m wide and ca. 5 m deep - of Bronze Age and Iron Age date, following the banks and curving away from them to follow the A303. A dark streak in a neighboring field, ST74903012, seen from a light aircraft may be a further course of the ditch. (See Fig 4.)

In two places a palisade trench was revealed following the eastern edge of the large ditch. To the north of the northern terminus of the palisade was a large post hole, next to it a small mound of spoil. Inserted into shallow cuts into the mound were at least 5 burials, consisting of various articulated parts of animals of different sizes from a single scapula to an entire large individual minus its left foreleg.

Surrounding this animal burial complex was a large number of stake and post holes, many arranged in lines, giving the impression of post-built structures, possibly of several different phases, of indeterminate form and function.

To the east of the animal burials were four large stone packed post holes arranged in a skewed rectangle. One of these was found to be part of a larger stake-built structure of indeterminate form and function.

Problems of timing (the construction of the carriageway was well advanced before fieldwork was undertaken) precluded the excavation of many of the other

features detected, but enough pottery, bone and burnt stone were recovered to establish occupation on the site.

WBP 91/8 SMR ~~55607~~<sup>15160</sup>. Penselwood parish. Field 0994.

Tithe 203, Elliots Small. ST75102993.

Across the road from site 7 and probably related to it.

Much of the area disturbed by bridge work.

Finds:

flint - 41 worked and waste flakes with some natural pebbles;

RB - 9 small sherds.

WBP 91/8a SMR ~~55607~~. Cucklington parish. Field 0994.

Tithe 316, Colley Close. Immediately to the east of site 8, near the bridge work and probably associated with site 7.

Finds:

flint - 3 struck flakes, 1 core.

SMR ~~55608~~. ST 75582999. County boundary/Tinkers Lane - road on bank, ditch either side, bank to east.

The following sites are in the county of Dorset.

WBP 91/9 SMR no. Bourton parish. field 6856. Tithe

1719, Dursleys and 1720, Field Close. ST75672990.

Finds:

flint - 40 struck or waste flakes;

post-medieval - 1 silver spoon handle.

WBP 91/10 SMR no. Bourton parish. Field 7100. Tithe  
1721, Longlands, ST75793001.

Finds:

flint - 10 waste or natural flakes.

WBP 91/11 Smr no. Bourton parish. Field no.7100. Tithe  
1721, Longlands. ST75703001.

Finds:

flint - 1 struck flake;

medieval? - 1 Cu alloy object;

post-medieval - 2 pot or tile fragments;

WBP 91/12 SMR no. Bourton parish. Field 0001. Tithe  
1664, Ludlands. ST759300.

Finds:

28 struck flakes, including several cores.

Sites 9 to 12 may represent one large dispersed flint  
scatter.

WBP 91/13 SMR no. Bourton parish. Field 1400  
throughout. Tithe 1912, Meadow; 1913, Summerleaze,  
1914, Homemead, 1915, House etc., 1917, Meadow.

Finds:

flint - 4 struck flakes;

RB - 48 large and small potsherds;

medieval - 3 sherds.

WBP 91/14 SMR no. Bourton parish. Tithe 1912. ST772330.

Finds:

flint - 1 struck flake;

RB - 9 potsherds;

medieval - 3 potsherds;

post-medieval - 3 sherds, 2 tile fragments.

WBP 91/15 SMR no. Bourton parish. ST 77193305.

Finds:

flint - 4 struck flakes, 2 cores;

RB - 16 small sherds;

medieval - 9 small sherds;

undated - 1 iron nail, 3 pieces of slag;

Sites 13 to 15 straddle the Bourton/Silton parish boundary and probably represent a Romano/British rural settlement site with associated field scatter. Earthworks in adjacent fields to the north and the oddly shaped fields 0005 and 0195 to the southwest, may represent the site of deserted farm, the tithe map shows fields here containing a house and barton etc.. Quantities of iron slag and ironstone from this area were not collected.

Sites 13 and 15 were excavated by means of evaluation trenches by R. Broomhead; this excavation also sectioned the parish boundary bank. Results: site 13: various ditches and features of the Romano-British date probably associated with an unknown settlement site in the immediate vicinity. Parish boundary bank was post-Roman, probably medieval. Site 15: pits and possible features of prehistoric

date, Neolithic or Bronze Age. (Report to Somerset County Council).

WBP 91/16 SMR no. Silton parish. Tithe 180, Long Close, 181a, Bleachyard and nursery; 183, Adder Croft. ST 773301.

Finds:

flint - 2 struck flakes, 4 natural flints;  
medieval - 2 potsherds;  
post-medieval - 6 sherds.

The medieval pottery from 15 and 16 may represent occupation on the site of Feltham Farm.

Field 4819, Silton parish. Tithe 170, Spinney; ST77503020, contained a small medieval wood., now mostly destroyed by the new carriageway. Undisturbed areas to the south are ditched and banked and contain small hazel coppices and very large alder coppices, the latter originally growing either side of a stream. Higher ground to the north has large hazel coppices with no alder, a reflection of the drier conditions.

WBP 91/17 SMR no. Silton parish. Field 5831. Tithe 172, The Moor and Woody Ash and 171, Summerleaze. ST77603020.

Finds:

flint - 14 worked tools, waste and natural flakes;  
RB - 1 small abraded sherd;

post-medieval - 2 potsherds, 1 button.

WBP 91/18 SMR no. Silton parish. Field 5831. Tithe 171,  
Summerleaze. ST77603025.

Finds:

flint - 7 struck flakes;

medieval - 21 small potsherds.

Sites 17 & 18 may represent a prehistoric occupation site. The medieval pottery probably relates to site 19.

WBP 91/19 SMR no. 214715. Silton parish. Field 5831.  
Tithe 171, Summerleaze. ST777304.

Dense spread of 12th to 14th century pottery, the majority being 13th century. Quantities of iron slag were noted which may represent medieval settlement, possibly a smithy. The site may extend west to site 18. Much of the pottery was recovered from spoil excavated from a new drain and some from a layer about 0.3m below the turf.

Finds:

medieval - 55 large potsherds, 1 Fe object.

Excavation by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit; report no. 168, director Mr. Laurence Jones.

Results: probably a smithy dating from the 13th and 14th centuries. Situated on edge of parish adjacent to probable medieval road or lane. Probably parts of this complex lie undisturbed immediately north of the new carriageway.

Immediately east and southeast of site 19 lies the site of a deserted settlement. The Silton Tithe Map shows a number of houses and paddocks surrounding a green with lanes running through it.

The green was called Stroud Common and the placename Stroud is common to paddocks and fields around it - the assumption being that the settlement was called Stroud. The smithy, site 19, is therefore also assumed to belong to this settlement. Settlement from ST777303 to 780316 north - south and ST778302 to 779303 west - east.

When fieldwalking took place this area was badly churned up by earthmoving equipment but traces of the settlement should survive either side of the new carriageway.

Field 8152, Tithe 145, Orchard. ST77853040; contains traces of ridge and furrow oriented just east of N/S. The ridge and furrow was visible in section where it was cut by a new drain.

The following sites are in the county of Wiltshire

WBP 91/20 SMR no. Zeals parish. Field 4840. ST78583150. Possible prehistoric occupation site. Three large ditches, possibly cutting each other, were seen in section in a new drain cut. They could present an early, major boundary of unknown date. A number of small field ditches were seen east of this area.

**Finds:**

flint - 25 worked tools, struck flakes and waste.

County boundary bank, Dorset/Wiltshire, along crest of high ground. 1 - 2 metres high and c. 5 - 6 metres wide with mixed hedgerow. ST78403715.

**2.2 MAP STUDIES**

The following maps were consulted:

- 1 Penselwood tithe map - photocopy.
- 2 Penselwood field names from tithe book.  
D/D/Rt 438x, 1842.
- 3 Cucklington and Stoke Trister tithe map - photocopy.  
4 Cucklington and Stoke Trister field names from tithe book.
- 5 Penselwood c.1725;  
SRO no. DD/WY;  
sketch of assarts into woodland with names of landowners. No scale.
- 6 Cucklington and Stoke Trister;  
1782 survey SRO no. DD/PH 158;  
book SRO no. DD/PH 159.  
note that this doesn't cover survey area.
- 7 Silton Tithe map and field names from  
tithe book, DR0 T/SIL, 1839.
- 8 Bourton Tithe map and field names from  
tithe book, DR0/GIL 1841 (Gillingham).
- 9 map of the extent of the Forest of Gillingham 1624;  
DR0 no. D1/11,015.



2.3 SITES & MONUMENTS RECORDS<sup>2</sup>

See Fig. 3.

The following sites are in the county of SomersetDucklington

53822 grid ref: ST 7553 2777  
St. Lawrence's church, medieval.

53823 grid ref: 760 272  
Medieval deerpark, bounds not yet traced.

53824 grid ref: 751 293  
Shrunken medieval village of Clapton, earthworks showing on air photos.

53825 grid ref: 755 278  
Possible shrunken village near the isolated church.

53826 grid ref: 7531 2974  
Post-medieval limekiln NE of Clapton Farm.

53827 grid ref: 7520 2644  
7522 2648  
7530 2648  
7531 2648

"Fishponds" on OS map south of Shanks House may refer to these locations.

54448 grid ref: 7553 2742  
St. Barbara's well gushes forth near the church and gives a plentiful supply of excellent water to the whole village. St Aldhelm may have baptised converts in this water. Now it is known as Babwell. In the church is a 15th century window showing St. Barbara. The well is enclosed in a brick structure and flows into a long brick trough.

Stoke Trister

54600 grid ref: 7420 2881  
Medieval parish church of St. Andrew's, demolished in 1841, west wall of tower survives to ca. 1m in garden wall.

54601 grid ref: 7420 2881  
Medieval churchyard, Stoke Farm.

54602 grid ref: 722 291  
Haverfield of the VCH was told by Mr. George Sweetman of Wincanton that a Roman villa was said to have been found in 1764 when building a new house at Bayford Lodge.

54603 grid ref: 744 289  
A park is documented at Stoke Trister in 1314 when the park was entered and nets "and other engines" were

illegally set to take the deer. The tithe map gives field names "North Park" and "Middle Park" and an area c. 40 acres is almost enclosed by a bank 6m wide and 1m high, now destroyed in places.

54604 grid ref: 7438 2876  
Circular platform c. 9m in diameter surrounded by shallow ditch is probably a medieval cockpit.

54605 grid ref: 7425 2870  
7432 2878  
Two dry medieval fishponds.

54607 grid ref: 745 207  
Chesils Copse name suggests Roman villa site.

54608 grid ref: 732 281  
Medieval strip lynchets around Coneygore Hill.

54615 grid ref: 735 288  
Field walking along the Wincanton by-pass route resulted in finds of RB pottery; may indicate a settlement.

54616 grid ref: 7452 2957  
Post-medieval limekiln on 1903 OS map in Chesils Copse.

#### Penselwood

54379 grid ref: 7561 3142  
Medieval parish church of St. Michael and All Angels.

54380 grid ref: 7558 3144  
Rotary quern found in the garden of the Rectory.

54381 grid ref: 7534 3105  
Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 286  
Ballands Castle - medieval motte and bailey.

54382 grid ref: 767 317  
Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 470  
Pen Pits quern quarries - A series of pits, now collapsed, covering an area of some 700 acres, many having been destroyed by cultivation. A typical pit is a circular depression, max. 30 ft. in diameter and up to 10 ft. deep in the shape of a truncated cone. Roman tile and pottery were found. Now accepted to be pre-Norman quern quarries, probably of more than one period, extending to the Iron Age. Finds of unused and unfinished querns are common in the village and surrounding areas.

54383 grid ref: 76 31  
A middle Bronze Age rapier from Pen Pits is in Blackmore Museum, Salisbury.

54384 grid ref: 7685 3096  
7657 3075

Two flint scrapers and numerous worked flakes found south of Coombe Street. Also, a number of scrapers and flakes suggesting a working floor when the field was ploughed.

54385 grid ref: 7624 3082

Piece of Sarsen stone seen in a farmyard wall annotated on OS map at Long Lane Farm.

54386 grid ref: 76 31

An incomplete bronze torque from Pen Pits was presented to Taunton Museum by the Rev. A. Warle in 1856.

54387 grid ref: 771 3

7732 3175

Cultivated terraces and stone faced terraces forming part of a complex field system extending into Wilts. between Pen Mill and White Cross.

54388 grid ref: 7726 3118

The Ecbrytestone, a Saxon boundary stone situated at the junction of three counties. Egbert was the grandfather of Alfred the Great and ruled Wessex c. 830 AD. Marks a moot (hundred meeting place).

54390

A series of rectangular boundary stones built into the hedge north and south of Penhouse Farm.

54392 grid ref: 75 31

The battle of Peonnan (AD 658), in which Cenwealh of Wessex defeated the British and established Saxon domination at least as far west as the River Parret, is usually taken to have been fought at Penselwood, though other places have been suggested.

#### Charlton Musgrove

53717 grid ref: 7477 3354

Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 319

East half is Wiltshire Ancient Monument 342

Iron Age hillfort in New Park Wood. Univallate hillfort occupying the full width of the flat top of a N-S ridge and, to the E and W, the bank has steep slopes. The gaps through which the road passes are likely to be original entrances.

53716 grid ref: 7461 3218

Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 285

Medieval motte and 2 baileys.

The following sites are in the county of Dorset

Silton

204713 grid ref: 7855 2944

Site of probable 17th century manor house and possibly contemporary fishponds in a field adjoining the churchyard. Here was formerly the park of the old manor house, now destroyed. Present owners understand that house is on site of medieval manor house. Fishponds are in Pond Mead Plantation.

204715AB&C grid ref: 7770 3035

Medieval smithy at Feltham Farm (see above).

Bourton

200556 grid ref: 7672 3052

Two Iron Age pottery sherds and oyster shells.

The following sites are in the county of Wiltshire.

Mere<sup>2</sup>

grid ref: 813 326

Chipped flint in Mere Church Museum from Manor Road allotments. Also unprovenanced loopless palstave with ledge-stop in same museum.

grid ref: 808 325?

palstave, no details, private collection.

grid ref: 8135 3143

Loopless palstave with sunk stop found in garden of Woodlands Farm.

grid ref: 834 328

Incense cup found in Charnage.

grid ref: 845 340

Socketed Bronze Age socketed axe with 3 ribs at Charnage Down.

grid ref: 8348 3218

2 socketed Bronze Age axes, one with 3 ribs, the other with 5 ribs near Charnage Farm.

grid ref: 847 337

Early Iron Age la Tene bronze brooch at Charnage Down.

grid ref: 804 346

Iron Age sherds from surface of White Sheet Hill.

grid ref: 843 343

Roman bronze dolphin brooch at Charnage.

grid ref: B134 3218

Cemetery; hoard of coins from AD 65 to 166; also various other unprovenanced hoards and coin finds: barbarous radiates, Constantine, Carausius.

grid ref: B44 340?

Pagan Saxon split socketed iron spearhead found on arable field.

## 2.4 DOCUMENT SEARCH

### 2.41 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

#### 1 SELWOOD FOREST<sup>4</sup>

See Fig. 1.

Bounds described by McGarvie from C13th end with a note attributing them to Henry II in 1154. The jurors declared that the following villages had been wrongly added to the forest by King John: Penne (Penselwood), Bruton east of Bruton Bridge, North Brewham, Upton Noble, Clofordm Merston, Nony, Postlebury, Half of Wondestre, Truttokeshull, Smethwyke, Keyford, Filetham fflynford, Rodden, Yarnfield, Norton (Ferris), the hamlet of Leygh, Charleton Muchegros (Musgrove), Barrow, Northstoke (Stoney Stoke), Estrap, Hennegrove (Henley Grove), Regwood Careville.

Forest Laws were unpopular. When asked as to how they knew that the above were not originally part of the Forest, they held it was local tradition.

#### Selwood in Wiltshire<sup>5</sup>

Places represented in the 13th cent. forest eyre rolls: (West?) Knoyle, Chaddenwick, Mere, Zeals, Stourton, Monkton Deverill, Hill Deverill, Brixton Deverill and Longbridge Deverill, Norton Bavant, Maiden Bradley, Horningsham, Sutton Veny, Heytesbury, Bishopstrow, Warminster, Corsley, Whitbourne, Upton Scudamore, Chapmanslade, Westbury, Bratton, Penleigh, Brook, Hawkridge, Heywood, North Bradley, Southwick, West Ashton, Semington, Littleton, Great Hinton, Hilperton, Keevil, Rode, Langham, Midford, Limpley Stoke, Westwood, Rowley, Bradford on Avon, Pomeroy, Wingfield, Keevil Wick, Steeple Ashton, Edington, Melbourne, Erlestoke, Kingston Deverill, Smallbrook, Bugley, Sambourne Thoulstone, Chalcot, Short Street, Dilton, Brenneridge, Cutteridge, Honeybridge, Middleton.

i.e.: county boundaries to W & S, the River Avon and Semington Brook to the N. & S., area c. 165 square miles.

In the reign of Edw. III it was reduced to an area c. 2 miles wide, not more than 14 square miles.

Selwood in Wilts. had its own warden appointed during pleasure or for life.

Assarting into the forest wastes recorded from the 12th c.

In 1627 arrangements were made for the sale of Selwood and Neroche Forests to raise £20,000 for the fleet. Sold off to the lords and commoners of the manors within the forest.

2 COUNTY BOUNDARIES

See Fig. 5.

Along the Harroway from the B3092 to Alfred's Tower.<sup>4</sup>

Bourton was surveyed as part of Wiltshire in 1086,<sup>7</sup>

Kilmington was formerly in Somerset (Norton Ferris hundred).<sup>8</sup>

3 THE LIBERTY OF GILLINGHAM

See Fig.1

The Liberty of Gillingham was split into two areas: Gillingham Major or the Town Tithing and Gillingham Minor or the Free Tithing which included Bourton, Milton, Preston and Motcombe. The place was first mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry of AD 1016 regarding the battle of Edmund Ironside and Canute at Peona near Gillinga. The Danes were defeated.<sup>9</sup>

"The Forest is included in the town tithing, or Gillingham Major and was heretofore part of Selwood Forest, county of Somerset, and only distinguished by the names of places, as this was by Gillingham, a place of the greatest note in it." <sup>10</sup>

Parishes within the Liberty: Brixieswode, Wabenhull (wood), villat of Stourpreaus, Villat of Stour Cosin with its wood, Magerston with its wood, Todebere villat, Burton villat with its wood of Cornelesham, villat of Stoureminster from the west part of the bridge of Neuton Castoe, wood of Canepwode.<sup>11</sup>

4 HUNDREDS<sup>12</sup>

See Fig. 5.

Mere:

Mere, West Knoyle, Zeals, Stourton, Maidin Bradley & Kingstone Deverill. 1st ref: 1084 Geld Roll; D.E. mere "lake"

Norton Ferris:

Wincanton, Bratton Seymour, Shepton Montague, Charleton Musgrove, Stoke Trister, Cucklington, Penselwood, Kilmington, Yarnfield (in Maiden Bradley), Gasper(now in Wilts. but formerly in Somerset).

In 1084 this hundred was included in Bruton hundred. In the lists of hundreds in the Geld Roll there also occurs a hundred of Wincanton.

Named after the manor of Norton Ferris, the caput. Ferris is a corruption of de Ferrers, the family who held the manor( earls of Derby had same name).<sup>13</sup>

## 2.42 ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS

### 1 HUNTERS WAY

See Fig. 5. Templefield Corner - Kingsettle Hill - Gare Hill - Yarnfield Gate - Kingsettle Way "... as the way lyeth on the Estesyde of Wylkyns Castell upon the top of the hill northwards as the same way goyth alonge by the Manor of Kylmyngton unto Shepysredehill"<sup>14</sup>

### 2 A303

The Amesbury roads first turnpiked 1761-2<sup>15</sup>.  
The Wincanton roads first turnpiked in 1755-6<sup>16</sup>.

## 2.43 SITES

### 1 CASTLE WOOD CAMP

known as Pennebury in 1219.<sup>17</sup>  
named Kennewilkins Castle by local woodmen to Phelps<sup>18</sup>  
or Kenwalch's Castle - Group I, no surface finds, no excavations.<sup>19</sup>

### 2 STOKE TRISTER

Trister Gate, the entrance to the Manor House of Stoke, was the seat of the Lieutenancy of Selwood and head of the Forest since 1219. Tenants of the manor had right of commonage for cattle "from Tryster Gate to Collen Myxon nere Ffroome Selwood."

Trister is a corruption of the name of the Norman lords: Del Estre. "The Mannor Place of Stoke Tryster is a stately house within ye pke. pale..." survey of the manor in 1547. "The Lord of this Mannor is Lord lyvetenante of the said fforest by inheritance and hath the placinge and desplacinge of an rainger and iiii quartor keepers."<sup>20</sup>

### 3 PEN FITS

former extent of Pen Pits from Colt-Hoare, *The History of Ancient Wiltshire*

A very large number of pits dug into the Greensand for stone for querns, fragments of which were found in the pits by Pitt Rivers and others. At least one of the pits is pre-Norman, being covered by the bank of the Norman earthwork at Orchard Castle (Pitt Rivers, *Report on Excavation in the Pen Pits*, 1884.)<sup>21</sup>

### 4 PENSELWOOD

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, AD 1016 re. the battle of Edmund Ironside and Canute at Peona near Gillinga. The Danes were defeated. Pen Pits was thought to be the effect of that battle.<sup>22</sup>



## 2.5 MAPS

1 DRO photocopy Ph 325 AD 1636 demonstrates that the boundary between Silton and Bourton at Furze Hill common was uncertain and only laid down definitely at this time.

2 Neolithic and early Bronze Age distributions in Dorset from Gardiner, J. Lithic Distribution and Neolithic Settlement Patterns in Central Southern England, in Bradley, R., & Gardiner, J., Neolithic Studies, BAR, Brit. Ser. 133, 1984.

3 DRO D1/11,014 extent of Forest of Gillingham 1624.

## 2.6 AIR PHOTOS

RAF 1946 series in Local History Library

3343 CPE/UK/1821

shows distinct cropmark on level plateau above Chessils Copse.  
? Roman villa.

1233 CPE/UK/1924

3350 CPE/UK/1821

## 2.7 Figures

Using the above information, a series of maps were drawn:

fig.1 location, SW England, with extent of Selwood Forest. & Forest of Gillingham.

fig. 2 map of the 6 parishes with routeways and contours

fig.3 location of fieldwalking sites. SMR sites.

fig. location map of Encie Farm showing contours, excavated features, earthwork survey, soil marks from AP.

fig 4 Parish of Fenselwood.

fig.5 land units: Hunters Way, Harroway, hundreds, Theissen polygon for Castle Hill Camp.

### 3.0 DISCUSSION

This stretch of the A303 passes through the junction of two major features of the ancient landscape; an important routeway running from the chalk uplands of Salisbury Plain to the lower ground of Somerset and Dorset, and the ancient Forest of Selwood.

#### 3.1 THE ROUTEWAY

The present roadworks are but the most recent development of a routeway of considerable antiquity. The A303, beginning in Basingstoke and ending in Honiton, is part of the A30 network from London to Cornwall. The section of the road from Andover to Ilchester is flanked by a number of prehistoric monuments, from Stonehenge in the east to the Iron Age Oppidum at Ilchester in the west, including a significant number of hillforts, the implication being that it has been in use for millenia. South-west of Ilchester the A303 follows the course of the Roman Fosse Way (See Fig. 1).

A closer look at the routeways in the study area shows a network of parallel roads and tracks running in an east - west direction characteristic of droveways for animals and which may well derive from their seasonal migration routes.<sup>23</sup> (See Fig. 2.) It seems likely that transhumance and the droving of flocks of sheep and, to a lesser extent cattle, would have accounted for a major proportion of the traffic on the roads and it is probably significant in this

context that Wincanton was a wool town until the 18th century.

The distribution of Neolithic stone axes, especially Type I from the Lizard in Cornwall, demonstrates that even in those days the bulk movement of heavy goods was undertaken more on the rivers and seaways than by road.<sup>24</sup> This stretch of the road, however, is somewhat removed from navigable waterways so it is likely that there was a considerable amount of short-haulage of such heavy goods as flint and especially the quern stone quarried from Pen Pits.

### 3.2 SELWOOD FOREST

Early in the Saxon period any untilled land passed into the royal fisc. These tracts became known as *forestis*, in that they were beyond ( *for* ) the fields. The laws of Ine (688-94) declared any stranger who wandered off the main roads without blowing his horn could be treated as a thief<sup>25</sup>, only one indication of the value placed by the crown on the resources the forests provided.

Something of the extent of Selwood - ca. 25 miles north-south ,ca. 15 miles east-west - can be seen in Fig. 1 where the places mentioned in 2.41 above were mapped. (This may not be definitive since some of the places could not be identified.) It was administered in three sections: Somerset, Wiltshire and Gillingham, highlighting Selwood's additional function as a boundary zone.

Trister Gate, the entrance to the Manor House of Stoke, was the seat of the Lieutenancy of Selwood and head of the Forest since 1219. Tenants of the manor had right of commonage for cattle "from Tryster Gate to Collen Myxon nere Ffroome Selwood." Trister is a corruption of the name of the Norman lords: Del Estre. "The Mannor Place of Stoke Tryster is a stately house within ye pke. pale...The Lord of this Mannor is Lord lyvetenante of the said fforest by inheritance and hath the placinge and desplacinge of an rainger and iiii quantor keepers.<sup>24</sup>"

Assarting into the forest wastes is recorded in Wiltshire from the 12th century. The 13th century bounds of the Forest in Somerset described by McGarvie end with a note attributing them to Henry II in 1154. The jurors declared that the villages shown in Fig. 1 had been wrongly added to the forest by King John. The map of Forest in Wiltshire, taken from the 13th century forest eyre rolls, suggests that the jurors were taking the opportunity to restrict the unpopular forest laws to a smaller area. In 1627 arrangements were made for the sale of Selwood and Neroche Forests to the lords and commoners of the manors within the forest to raise £20,000 for the fleet. Deforestation accelerated from this time.

### 3.3 PENSELWOOD

At Penselwood the roads all converge into one Ridgeway which then descends through a gap in the escarpment. The first mention of the parish may be the battle of Peonnan

(AD 658) in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in which Cenwealh of Wessex defeated the British and established Saxon domination at least as far west as the River Parret, though other places have been suggested.<sup>27</sup> There is no doubt about the site of the battle between Edmund Ironside and Canute at Peona near Billington ( Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, AD 1016 ) where the Danes were defeated. Pen Pits was thought to be the effect of that battle.<sup>28</sup>

This spur of high ground is notable for the number of defended sites: two Iron Age hillforts, Castle Wood camp in Somerset, and one in Wiltshire at Park Hill, ST763347, and three Norman motte and bailey castles. The Ecbrytestone, a Saxon boundary stone situated at the junction of the three counties, was the rallying point of the men of Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire in 878 from which they launched a successful attack on the Danes in Edington, also in Selwood. ( ASC)

Castle Wood camp was named as Kennewilkins Castle by local woodmen to Phelps<sup>29</sup>, however it was known as Pennebury in 1219<sup>30</sup> so the attribution to Cenwalh is questionable. If the Peona of 658 is Penselwood it is highly likely that the Iron Age fort would have been re-occupied at that time in common with many other similar sites.

Fig. 5 was drawn to test both the status of Castle Wood as a Group I hillfort and its relationship to the Hundred of Norton Ferris. The northern and western sides of the Theissen polygon were easy to locate, but a hillfort to the south-east was not forthcoming. The line on the map

derives from Duncliffe Hill near Shaftsbury. This hill has no obvious fortifications, but it was suggested by Claire Pinder of Dorset County Council on account of the finding there of an Iron Age ritual statue.

The Theissen polygon suggests that the territory of Castle Wood camp was bounded by rivers: the Brue to the north, the Cale to the west and the Stour to the east, and that it straddled the ridge now marking the county boundary. The hundred of Norton Ferris does the same and is a reasonably good match for the polygon. Parts of the territory naturally attributable to Castle Wood seems to have been carved out for Bruton and Gillingham.

As well as containing sites of military and boundary significance, Penselwood is notable for the extensive deposits of Quern stone. Fig. 4 shows the former extent of Pen Pits taken from Colt-Hoare, *The History of Ancient Wiltshire*. A very large number of pits were dug into the Greensand for quern stone, fragments of which were found in the pits by Pitt Rivers and others. At least one of the pits is pre-Norman, being covered by the bank of the Norman earthwork at Orchard Castle (Pitt Rivers, *Report on Excavation in the Pen Pits*, 1884.)<sup>21</sup> The locations of the finds of metalwork, flint and Iron Age pottery from the SMR suggest that the quarrying probably began in prehistory. Many of the pits have been backfilled.

### 3.4 THE SURVEY

It is against this background that the results of the fieldwork must be viewed. Sites 1 and 2 are probably related to the Stoke Lane site excavated by BUFAU. This may represent an outlying settlement of the estate centred on the Roman villa at Bayford, but it may equally relate to the villa at Chessils Copse, being roughly equidistant to both.

Sites 3 to 5 must derive from the villa above Chessils Copse and combine with the cropmarks on the air photo to confirm the suggestion of the place-name. The gap in findings between sites 2 and 3 was marked on the tithe map with fields called Marshwood, suggesting a genuine gap in the archaeology.

Sites 6 to 8 - a spread of flint tools extending over an area of 700 metres - are part of the site excavated at Encie Farm and it is even possible that sites 9 to 12 are also a part of this complex. There is no way of knowing whether the spread represents contemporary activity or smaller sites shifting about in a larger area, either way this is a major prehistoric centre. Excavation was hurried and interpretation of the structures discovered is difficult, but the following functions could be considered:

1. Defensive: Defensive sites and structures of different historical periods are a notable feature of the landscape in this area. The natural defensive properties of the marked break in slope at the Encie Farm site are reinforced by the large banks and ditch encountered in the excavation.

Further, there is excellent visibility from the banks in all directions and the site itself has marked strategic possibilities.

2. Boundaries: The large banks and ditch could also function as boundary markers. Distributions of many types of artifact from Neolithic stone axes to Iron Age pottery suggest that a boundary should be expected in this area from a very early date, and the high ridge that Selwood encloses forms a natural barrier.

3. Exchange: The site at Encie Farm is positioned at a point where all the roads converge into one. This puts it into an excellent position to monitor the routeway and its consequent trade and traffic. The quern stone from Pen Pits may have relevance in this regard.

4. Settlement/Central Place: The flint scatters are distributed along the road corridor for a distance of over 1500 metres. As flint of all periods from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age appears to be present this might be construed as implying that this site, given its strategic position, might have been, at the very least, a periodic settlement for several thousand years. The full extent of the flint scatters is not known although future fieldwalking programmes around this area would help to clarify this position.

Sites 9 to 12 appear to represent either a continuation of sites 7 - 8 or another prehistoric occupation site. It should be emphasised that fieldwalking on the road corridor



was extremely difficult and the quantity of finds recovered must be only a fraction of those present.

Sites 13 to 16 are separated from site 12 by an island of higher ground containing the field names 'Midney' meaning middle island, and a stream valley. The excavation at sites 13-16 proved both prehistoric and Roman occupation, both of which should be present either side of the new road corridor.

Sites 17 and 18 suggest a prehistoric occupation site represented by a large flint scatter.

Site 19 was proved by excavation to be the site of a medieval smithy. The Silton tithe map shows the location of the settlement of Stroud, now disappeared, and it is probable that the smithy was connected with this hamlet rather than with the village of Bourton to the north. Between the valley of the river Stour and site 20 was an area of moor and common, including Furze Common and the high ground of the county boundary.

Site 20 was a large flint scatter and a number of ditches representing a further prehistoric occupation site.

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VCH Wiltshire.

KEY TO FIGURE 1

Selwood in Somerset

- 1 Penne (Penselwood)
- 2 North Brewham
- 3 Upton Noble
- 4 Cloford
- 5 Merston
- 6 Nony
- 7 Half of Wondestre
- 8 Truttokeshull
- 9 Keyford
- 10 Yarnfield
- 11 Norton (Ferris)
- 12 the hamlet of Leygh
- 13 Charleton Muchegros (Musgrove)
- 14 Barrow
- 15 Northstoke (Stoney Stoke)

Selwood in Wiltshire

- 1 (West?) Knoyle
- 2 Zeals
- 3 Stourton
- 4 Monkton Deverill
- 5 Brixton Deverill
- 6 Longbridge Deverill
- 7 Norton Bavant
- 8 Maiden Bradley
- 9 Horningsham
- 10 Sutton Veny
- 11 Heytesbury
- 12 Bishopstrow
- 13 Corsley
- 14 Upton Scudamore
- 15 Chapmanslade
- 16 Westbury
- 17 Bratton
- 18 Hawkridge
- 19 Heywood
- 20 North Bradley
- 21 Southwick
- 22 West Ashton
- 23 Semington
- 24 Great Hinton
- 25 Hilperton
- 26 Keevil
- 27 Midford
- 28 Limpley Stoke
- 29 Westwood
- 30 Steeple Ashton
- 31 Edington
- 32 Kingston Deverill