

A303 Wylve to Stockton Wood Improvement, Wiltshire

Archaeological Fieldwalking

DRAFT

Ref: 55157.01

February 2004

**A303 WYLYE-STOCKTON WOOD IMPROVEMENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWALKING**

Prepared on behalf of
Mott McDonald
Capital House
48-52 Andover Road
WINCHESTER
SO23 7BH

For:

The Highways Agency
Tollgate House
Houlton Street
BRISTOL
BS2 9DJ

by
Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
SALISBURY
SP4 6EB

DRAFT

Report reference: 55157.01

February 2004

A303 WYLIE-STOCKTON WOOD IMPROVEMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWALKING

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Project background.....	1
2	THE STUDY AREA.....	1
	2.1 Preferred route corridor.....	1
	2.2 The survey areas.....	2
	2.3 Archaeological background	2
3	METHODS.....	3
	3.1 Aims and objectives	3
	3.2 Methodology	3
	3.3 Collection conditions.....	3
4	THE FINDS.....	4
	4.1 Introduction.....	4
	4.2 Burnt flint	4
	4.3 Ceramic building material	4
	4.4 Worked flint.....	4
5	DISCUSSION.....	5
	5.1 Summary.....	5
	5.2 Conclusions	5
6	ARCHIVE	6
	6.1 Location and deposition.....	6
7	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	6
8	APPENDIX I – ALL FINDS BY COLLECTION POINT	7

Table 1 All finds by material

Figure 1 Location of survey areas and distribution of finds

A303 WYLYE-STOCKTON WOOD IMPROVEMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWALKING

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Highways Agency, through their design consultants, Mott MacDonald, to carry out archaeological fieldwalking on land adjacent to the A303 between Wyllye and Stockton Wood, Wiltshire (NGR ST 9600 3538 to 9910 3654). This stretch of the A303 is proposed for improvement to dual two-lane standard to relieve congestion and improve safety on the existing single carriageway road.

The emerging Preferred Route for the proposed improvements lies mostly off-line to the south of and close to the existing road. The route crosses an extensive and complex archaeological landscape, including the sites of prehistoric funerary monuments and undated enclosures, visible as cropmarks; Grim's Ditch, a nationally-important prehistoric earthwork; an extensive Iron Age/Romano-British settlement at Stockton Earthworks (Scheduled Monument 525), with associated cropmark field systems; and the projected line of the Roman road from Old Sarum to the Mendips. In order to confirm the selection of the Preferred Route and inform development of the new road design, fieldwalking was undertaken in December 2003, in order to assess the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains represented by artefact scatters on the surface of arable land.

The total scheme area for survey, including essential landscape mitigation as well as land required for engineering purposes, extends to approximately 36ha, of which three areas comprising approximately 20ha were identified as potentially suitable for survey. Plot 1 was situated to the south of the A303 between the bridleway east of Hart Copse and Grim's Ditch; Plot 2 was situated to the south of the A303 and included the area of the proposed C276 junction; and Plot 3 was situated to the north of the road at the eastern end of the scheme corridor.

Fieldwalking was undertaken with 25m collection intervals along transects 25m apart, orientated north-south on the National Grid, providing a total of 16 collection units per hectare (8% coverage); a minimum of 50m was walked along each transect. The fields were under a young cereal crop and soil visibility was moderate to poor at best. The weather conditions were dry with low level sunlight, which may have affected the artefact recovery level.

A very small assemblage of finds was recovered, comprising burnt flint, worked flint and ceramic building material. No significant amounts of any of the material types were recovered, and no significant distribution patterns were identified. The small size of the finds assemblage may in part reflect the poor collection conditions and/or the narrow survey areas walked, but prevents the drawing of any firm conclusion or the identification of any new possible sites along the emerging Preferred Route. Fieldwalking of the remaining areas, to which access was not available at the time of the survey reported here, should be programmed at the earliest opportunity, in order to ensure consistency of survey methods across the emerging Preferred Route.

A303 WYLYE-STOCKTON WOOD IMPROVEMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWALKING

Acknowledgements

The fieldwalking survey was commissioned by the Highways Agency via their consultants, Mott MacDonald. The assistance of Mark Frith and Conrad Frehse is gratefully acknowledged.

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to the landowners and occupiers for their co-operation in providing access to land.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Moore. The fieldwalking was led by Rachel Every, assisted by Nick Best, Andy Sole and Pete Fairclough. Talla Hopper processed the finds. Rachel Every carried out the finds analysis. This report was compiled by Rachel Every and Chris Moore. The illustrations were prepared by Marie Levertt.

A303 WYLYE-STOCKTON WOOD IMPROVEMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWALKING

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Highways Agency, through their design consultants, Mott MacDonald, to carry out archaeological fieldwalking on land adjacent to the A303 between Wylve and Stockton Wood, Wiltshire (**Figure 1**). This stretch of the A303 is proposed for improvement to dual two-lane standard to relieve congestion and improve safety on the existing single carriageway road.

1.1.2 The emerging Preferred Route for the proposed improvements lies mostly off-line, to the south of and close to the existing road. In order to confirm the selection of the Preferred Route and inform development of the new road design, a series of archaeological surveys are to be undertaken in order to evaluate the archaeological potential of the route corridor. The fieldwalking reported here represents the first stage of these surveys and has been undertaken in order to assess the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains, that may be represented by artefact scatters on the surface of arable land.

1.1.3 The survey area included both the engineering footprint and areas identified for essential landscape mitigation. Within the defined survey areas, the fieldwalking examined arable land suitable for survey and to which access was available. The survey was carried out between 15th to 19th December 2003.

2 THE STUDY AREA

2.1 Preferred route corridor

2.1.1 The A303 between Wylve and Stockton Wood is a single carriageway approximately 3.9km in length, extending between the present dual-carriageway sections from Wylve (NGR ST 9910 3654) at 164m above Ordnance Datum (OD), to south-west of Stockton Wood (NGR ST 9600 3538) at a maximum height of 195m OD. The road lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB) and passes directly to the south of Stockton Wood and Down Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

2.1.2 From the existing dual carriageway south-west of Stockton Wood, the emerging Preferred Route would pass to the south of important species-rich hedgerows to the south of the existing A303 until reaching Setting Copse, where it would pass through the northern edge of the copse. From here it would use the existing road as the northern carriageway and provide a new

southern carriageway adjacent to the existing road on the southern side. A left-in, left-out junction would be provided with the C276, beyond which the new road would pass to the north of the road to rejoin the existing dual carriageway west of Wylve.

2.2 The survey areas

- 2.2.1 The total scheme area for survey, including essential landscape mitigation as well as land required for engineering purposes, extends to approximately 36ha, of which 31ha is situated to the south of the existing road. The majority of this land is under arable cultivation in four landholdings. At the time of survey, the land was variously set aside, under stubble or under young winter cereal crops. Whilst areas of set aside or stubble were not suitable for survey, a total of approximately 20ha under winter cereals was identified as potentially suitable for survey, comprising three areas (**Figure 1**, Plots 1-3). In the west of the route, Plot 1 was situated to the south of the A303 between the bridleway east of Hart Coppice and Grim's Ditch, and included an area for landscape mitigation. Plot 2 was situated to the south of the A303 and included the area of the proposed C276 junction. In the east of the route, Plot 3 was situated to the north of the road.
- 2.2.2 The route runs through predominantly agricultural farmland and woodland. The underlying solid geology of the eastern half of the route is Cretaceous Upper Chalk, within the western half, the route lies on the boundary of the Upper Chalk and deposits of Clay-with-flint (British Geological Survey, 1976). No major watercourses are located within the survey areas.

2.3 Archaeological background

- 2.3.1 An Archaeological Appraisal of the proposed route (Wessex Archaeology 2002) identified several known archaeological sites to the north and east of the route, including enclosures, settlements and field systems (**Figure 1**).
- 2.3.2 The Preferred Route corridor crosses the line of Grim's Ditch, a nationally-important long-distance earthwork monument thought to be of Bronze Age or Iron Age date. Adjacent sections of the monument are protected as a Scheduled Monument (AM 455). The monument is thought to have served as a prominent land division and is situated between Plots 1 and 2.
- 2.3.3 Two cropmark ring ditches immediately to the south-east of Plot 1 may indicate the remains of ploughed-out round barrows of likely Bronze age date. An undated enclosure is also visible as a cropmark to the east of Hart Copse, at the western edge of Plot 1.
- 2.3.4 To the north of the Preferred Route corridor is the Scheduled Monument of Stockton Earthworks (AM 525), comprising an undated circular earthwork enclosure, and an extensive Iron Age/Romano-British settlement to the east. To the north and east of the settlement, rectilinear field systems, also of Iron Age/Romano-British date, extend into the Preferred Route corridor to the north of Plots 1 and 3 and within Plot 2. These are largely ploughed out, but are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs, although some lynchets are

still visible north of the Preferred Route corridor; the cropmarks are not part of the Scheduled Monument.

- 2.3.5 The projected line of the Roman road from Old Sarum to the Mendips as plotted by the Ordnance Survey crosses the Preferred Route corridor to the south of Grim's Ditch, within Plot 1; the actual alignment at this point is not certain.

3 METHODS

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The aim of the fieldwalking was to establish the presence/absence, location, extent, character and date of any subsurface features. The results will be used to establish the need for and extent of further evaluative archaeological work.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 The fieldwalking was carried out following Wessex Archaeology's standard practice (Farwell 1992), which has been widely used in Wiltshire, notably in connection with the Stonehenge Environs and A303 Stonehenge Improvements projects.

- 3.2.2 Fieldwalking was undertaken along transects 25m apart and orientated north-south on the National Grid. Along each transect material was collected and bagged in 25m collection intervals, providing a total of 16 collection units per hectare, or 8% coverage of each hectare (assuming a 2m wide observation corridor). Each collection unit was given a unique number related to a six-figure grid reference. A minimum of 50m (two collection stints) was walked along each transect.

- 3.2.3 A handheld GPS system (Garmin eTrex) was used to establish an east-west aligned baseline on site. Collection points were then laid out using tapes and bamboo canes, with a dumpy level utilised to establish and maintain right angles.

- 3.2.4 In order to ensure effective use of resources, a selective collection policy was adopted in accordance with standard practice. The following categories of material were not collected:

- Intrinsically undateable material, such as animal bone and slag;
- Material of obviously modern date; and
- Metalwork not of clear archaeological origin/interest

3.3 Collection conditions

- 3.3.1 The fields were under a young cereal crop and soil visibility was moderate to poor at best.

- 3.3.2 Plot 1, although forming a single large field, was found to be cultivated in three north-south strips, the central strip being under stubble at the time of

survey; fieldwalking was not possible in that part of Plot 1. Crop growth in the rest of Plot 1, Plot 2 and Plot 3 was variable according to soil cover, being thinner close to the field edges, but obscuring a higher proportion of the ground surface elsewhere. The topsoil throughout the survey areas was generally very thin and cultivation had exposed much of the decayed chalk natural over large parts of the survey areas. A further problem was the frequent occurrence of flint nodules present across the survey areas, which both contributed to the obscuring of the soil and produced a high percentage of machine-struck flint flakes.

- 3.3.3 The weather conditions during the fieldwalking were dry with low level sunlight, which may have affected the artefact recovery level.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 On completion of the fieldwork, all artefacts were washed, marked (where appropriate) and quantified by number and weight according to material category, within each collection unit. The resulting data were entered on an MS Excel spreadsheet to enable the plotting of spatial distributions. **Table 1** presents overall finds totals by material type. The distribution of the artefacts recovered is shown on **Figure 1**. All finds have been retained, with the exception of the burnt flint, which was discarded following quantification.

Finds Type	Number	Weight (g)
Burnt Flint	4	59
Ceramic Building Material	12	560
Flint	8	116

Table 1: Finds totals by material type

4.2 Burnt flint

- 4.2.1 A small quantity of burnt, unworked flint was recovered from all plots. This material is indicative of general prehistoric activity, but is intrinsically undatable. No concentrations of the material were noted.

4.3 Ceramic building material

- 4.3.1 A small amount of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) was recovered from Plots 1 and 2. The material is all of post-medieval or modern date, and includes fragments of roof tile (peg tile) and brick. Post-medieval and modern CBM is commonly found on agricultural land and in the absence of any concentrations is of no significance here.

4.4 Worked flint

- 4.4.1 A small flint assemblage was recovered from Plots 1 and 2, comprising flakes with possible worked fragments from collection units 695409 and

825813. The material is indicative of general prehistoric activity, but is chronologically undiagnostic; no further information can be gained from this assemblage.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 The assemblages of material recovered are notable only in their extremely small size. No significant amounts of any of the material types were recovered, and no significant distribution patterns were identified: the majority of artefacts were recovered from the western end of Plot 1 and the eastern end of Plot 2, with only a very small amount from Plot 3.

5.1.2 Although a low recovery rate is not uncommon on the Wiltshire downlands, the small size of the assemblages may in part reflect the poor site conditions at the time of survey, with crops restricting surface visibility, and low light levels and acute sun angles likely to further reduce collection returns. A further factor may be the narrow survey areas walked, which limit the potential for useful distribution analysis compared to a wider survey area, such as a complete field; the potential to relate the results to other known evidence, such as cropmarks, for example, is similarly restricted.

5.1.3 Nevertheless, the results of the fieldwalking do seem to suggest a general absence of settlement activity along the ridge. The very thin and variable topsoil cover noted in the survey areas suggests that modern arable practices may have an adverse effect on the survival of archaeological remains suggested by the presence of cropmarks. If archaeological sites on the ridge are subject to ongoing erosion by agricultural activities, then such sites might be expected to be represented in the artefactual evidence in the topsoil.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 The fieldwalking survey has produced very small assemblages of material. The quantities and distributions recorded are too small to be correlated with any sites whose presence is already known or may be suggested from other information. The small size of the assemblages prevents the drawing of any firm conclusion in this regard, or the identification of any new possible sites along the emerging Preferred Route.

5.2.2 Fieldwalking of the remaining areas, to which access was not available at the time of the survey reported here, should be programmed at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure consistency of survey methods across the emerging Preferred Route. The potential for archaeological remains suggested by the presence of cropmarks to survive should be addressed during later stages of survey, notably geophysical survey and any subsequent trial trenching.

6 ARCHIVE

6.1 Location and deposition

- 6.1.1 The project archive, which includes all finds and records, is presently stored at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the project code 55157. It is intended that the archives will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, 65 The Close, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2EN, in due course, subject to the agreement of the landowners.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

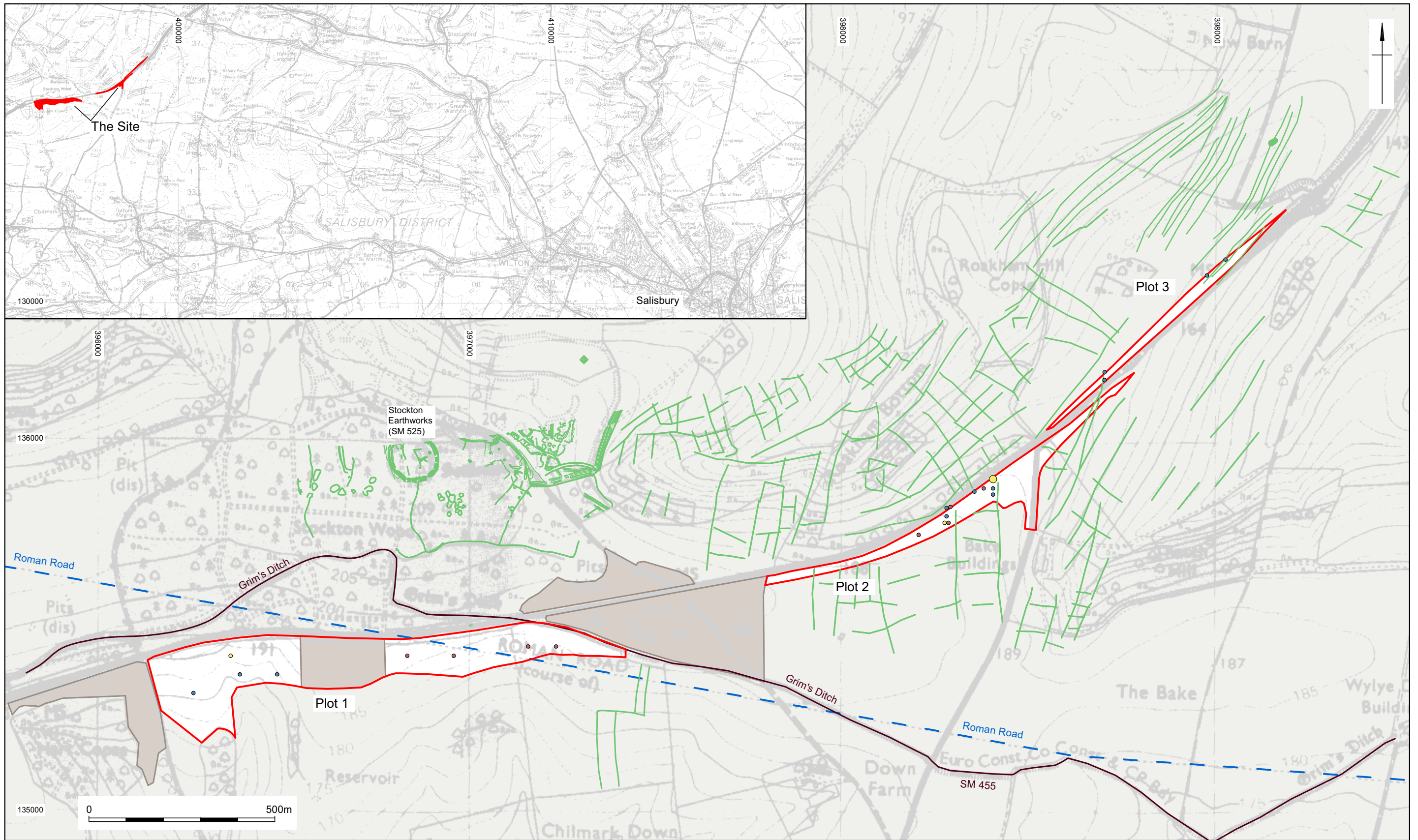
British Geological Survey 1976 Sheet 298 Salisbury

Farwell, D. E. 1992 *Fieldwalking: Surface Artefact Collection Guidelines*. Salisbury. Wessex Archaeology Guideline No. 19

Wessex Archaeology 2002 *A303 Wylve to Stockton Wood Improvement, Wiltshire. Archaeological Appraisal*. Salisbury. Wessex Archaeology, unpublished Client Report Ref. 50841.01

8 APPENDIX I – ALL FINDS BY COLLECTION POINT

Collection point	Hectare E	Hectare N	Find Type	Number	Weight (g)
625309	396200	135300	C.B.M.	1	486
635315	396300	135300	C.B.M.	1	6
635409	396300	135400	Burnt Flint	1	19
645315	396400	135300	C.B.M.	1	6
685405	396800	135400	Flint	1	8
695409	396900	135400	Flint	1	12
715410	397100	135400	Flint	1	7
725406	397200	135400	Flint	1	7
825702	398200	135700	Flint	1	2
825715	398200	135700	Flint	1	7
825715	398200	135700	Burnt Flint	1	8
825716	398200	135700	C.B.M.	1	173
825813	398200	135800	Flint	1	41
825813	398200	135800	C.B.M.	1	1
835811	398300	135800	C.B.M.	1	3
835815	398300	135800	Flint	1	32
845802	398400	135800	C.B.M.	1	30
845803	398400	135800	C.B.M.	1	3
845804	398400	135800	Burnt Flint	2	32
876103	398700	136100	C.B.M.	1	14
876104	398700	136100	C.B.M.	1	97
896414	398900	136400	C.B.M.	1	85
906408	399000	136400	C.B.M.	1	56



- Artefacts by number**
- 1 ● Burnt flint
 - 1 ● CBM
 - 1 ● Flint
 - 2 ● Burnt flint
 - Areas not suitable for survey (Dec 03)
 - Cropmarks
 - ▭ Surveyed Areas

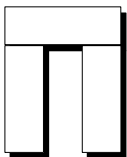
Reproduced from the 1998 Ordnance survey 1:25000 Explorer © map and the 1993 1:50000 Landranger map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number:AL 100006861. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date:	05/02/04	Revision Number:	
Scale:	1:10000 and 1:100000	Illustrator:	MCL
Path:	Y:\projects\551571...\fieldwalking\04_02_04\Figures.dwg		

Location of survey areas and distribution of finds

Figure 1





THE TRUST FOR WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.
Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 E-mail: info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 701, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.
Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 E-mail: london-info@wessexarch.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 287786. A company with limited liability registered in England No. 1712772.

