Re comments.
17/11/95

AC archaeology

Manor Farm Stables
CHICKLADE
Hindon
Near SALISBURY
WILTS SP3 5SU
Tel : 0747 89581
Fax : 0747 89440

Wiltshire County Council
Department of Planning and Highways
County Hall
Trowbridge
Wilts

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for the attention of David Thomas

A303 Wylye to Stockton Wood - Tilley's Grave

I am writing in response to your telephone enquiry relating to the site of Tilley's Grave shown on the 1:2500 OS plan.

I have checked again with the County Sites and Monuments Record and can confirm that the name does not appear to relate to any site of known archaeological interest. I have also checked the Victoria County History Volume for both Chilmark and Stockton (the location of the name is close to the parish boundary) and can again find no reference to the site.

The most likely explanation of the name may be that it relates to a recent grave or to folklore relating to a grave. It was common practice in the 17th and 18th centuries for criminals or suicides to be buried in what was esentially no-mans-land, for example at crossroads or on the parish boundary. A Maurice Tilley is recorded as living in Chilmark and died in 1674 but it is unlikely that the grave reference relates specifically to him.

I hope that this answers your question. To summarise: there appears to be no firm and readily-accessible evidence to suggest that the name Tilley's Grave relates to a site of archaeological significance.

Please contact me if you have any further queries or if you wish me to carry out any additional searches.

Yours sincerely

Julian Richards

Julian Richards

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE A303 WYLYE TO STOCKTON WOOD

Julian Richards BA FSA MIFA

Summary

A programme of surface artefact scanning, test pit and machine trench excavation and geophysical survey was carried out on the route of the proposed improvement of the A303 Wylye to Stockton Wood section.

With the exception of small and very low-level scatters of worked and burnt flint from surface artefact scanning and a single subsoil feature from test pitting little evidence of past human activity was recovered. The investigation of the projected line of a Roman Road by means of both excavation and geophysical survey failed to produce any evidence for its existence.

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AC *archaeology*
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF THE A303 WYLYE TO STOCKTON WOOD

1. Introduction

1.i The road scheme - The archaeological investigations which form the basis of this report were carried out in response to proposals from the Department of Transport to improve the A303 between Wylye and Stockton Wood. These improvements, over a length of c. 3.75km between ST 991360 and ST 957353 would involve the construction of both an additional carriageway and, in places, a new dual carriageway. The archaeological investigations were commissioned by Wiltshire County Council Department of Planning and Highways.

1.ii Archaeological background - The Archaeological Evaluation Brief (GJN/MH dated Feb. 1993) notes that the area through which the road improvements are to run is of high archaeological potential, being situated in an Area of Special Archaeological Significance (No.29 in Wilts LLP 1986). The proposed construction work lies immediately south of the major complex of late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement remains in Stockton Wood (Scheduled Ancient Monument Wiltshire 525) and directly impinges on two major linear archaeologcal features. The more prominent of these is the Groveley Grims Ditch (Wilts Sites and Monuments Record [SMR] ST 93 NE 612), a substantial earthwork ditch and bank crossed obliquely by the line of the present A303. The second is the reported line of the Roman Road from Old Sarum to the Mendips (Wilts SMR ST 93 NE 305), the exact location of which was, at the time that the investigation was commissioned, uncertain. Additional features impinged upon by the eatern end of the proposed road improvement corridor include field systems (Wilts SMR ST 93 NE 614 and 615) while circular cropmrk features, possibly the remains of ploughed round barrows (Wilts SMR ST 93 NE 625 and 629) lie to the south of the route. A polished (ground) flint axe is recorded as having been found at ST 96373530 (Wilts SMR ST 93 NE 109).

1.iii The Brief states that the evaluation should aim to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition , nature, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the road improvement corridor. The corridor was initially defined on Drawing no.

TR245/11/1 with a revised area of study, to include a further section south of the present road corridor, defined on Drawing TR245/11/2.

1.iv The Brief notes that the area of investigation can be divided into two distinct land-use types; arable and woodland. Suggested evaluation techniques included, in the following order:

a. Surface artefact collection or scanning within areas of arable cultivation.
b. Test pit hand-excavation within areas of woodland, advanced crop or grassland.
c. Geophysical survey sampling, in all areas excluding woodland.
d. Limited hand-trenching in woodland where b. (above) provided a positive result.
e. Hand-trenching to establish the line, width and condition of the Roman Road.

1.v The specification (AC archaeology E93/28) was prepared with reference to the Archaeological Evaluation Brief and to APSAD (Acquisition and Processing of Archaeological Data; January 1992).

Methodology and Results

2. Surface artefact scanning

2.i Methodology - At the time of survey the majority of the agricultural land was under cereal crop and, although in places higher than would be considered ideal, was judged to be in a suitable condition for surface scanning. Scanning was carried out on a systematic grid basis, the grid aligned with the direction of the road corridor rather than on the National Grid. The field surface was scanned within 25m long transects (nominally 2m in width) within which all pre-modern artefacts were quantified. In order to standardise results all scanning was undertaken by a single individual with proven artefact recognition ability.
The location of the 257 scanned transects is shown in Figure 1. Together these represent an approximately 8% scanned sample of a total area of 16.06 hectares.

2.ii Results - Table 1 summarises location and artefact data. Artefacts recorded include worked and burnt flint and tile, although overall artefact levels were surprisingly low.
A total of 241 pieces of worked flint was recorded, with values between 0 (43% of the scanned transects) and 4-6 pieces (3.9% of the scanned transects). Only one

minor cluster was noted (transects 164-171), but the sporadic occurrence of such relatively low values cannot be interpreted with any confidence.
A total of 41 pieces of burnt flint were recorded, with values between 0 and 5 pieces. No patterning within the distribution is apparent.
A total of 5 tile fragments was recorded and no pottery.
Field surface scanning does not indicate any areas of past activity for which a functional or chronological interpretation can be offered with any degree of confidence.

3. Test pit excavation

3.i Methodology - A total of 44 test pits was excavated in the positions shown in Figure 1, at an interval of 25m except where localised conditions, specifically within woodland, dictated otherwise (APSAD 3.1.1). Detailed examination of the section of the road improvement corridor from ST 96603545 to ST 97203550 showed the roadside verge to have been heavily-contaminated with dumps of road metalling, soil and farm debris. Accordingly permission was sought from the County Archaeological Officer to modify the strategy, substituting surface scanning in the adjacent arable field (to the south) for the excavation of test pits. Permission was granted in a letter of 20th April 1993 (ref RAC/EMC/LM.18.3.2). All test pits were 1m by 1m in area and from each pit a 50 litre sample of soil was sieved through a 10mm mesh (APSAD 3.1.2). Within woodland, and specifically in a sample of test pits dug into heavier clay-with flint soils, a spade-width sondage was excavated into apparently natural clay in order to confirm this identification.
Sieve residues were removed from site and were power-washed prior to sorting. All sorting was undertaken by a single individual with proven artefact recognition ability.

3.ii Results - Table 2 summarises test pit data. Artefact levels were again low. Worked flint values reach a maximum of 8 pieces (3 occurrences), in each case associated with a minor cluster of slightly above average values. Very little burnt flint was recorded, with over 80% of the test pits producing none at all. In only 3 pits (nos 276, 278 and 287) can both numbers and weights of burnt flint be regarded as potentially indicative of past activity.
Only one subsoil feature was located, a possible pit in test pit 285. Excavation, restricted to that part of the feature exposed within the test pit, showed an irregular subsoil feature the fill of which (context 401 - details in archive) contained flecks of

charcoal, comminuted fragments of fired clay and 3 pieces of worked flint, one a broken blade.

4. Sample trench excavation

4.1 Methodology - The excavation of test pits demonstrated that tree roots were extremely dense, and this caused considerable excavation problems. On a practical level it appeared likely that any sampling strategy based on trenches would be constrained by the nature of the woodland, largely overgrown coppice with few standards. The excavation of trenches would only be possible within the few woodland clearings noted during the programme of test pit excavation. The Brief and specification indicated that trenches were to be excavated in order to investigate the line of the Roman Road and the context of potential artefact scatters located by test pit excavation. However, the test pit excavation had provided indications of only one potential area of activity (co-incidentally close to the projected line of the Roman Road) and accordingly permission was sought from the County Archaeological Officer to examine instead a series of slight linear features centred on ST 96203545. This permission was granted, as was permission to employ a small mechanical excavator to remove leaf litter and topsoil from the trenches to be investigated. Trenches were accordingly excavated by JCB mini-digger equipped with a toothless bucket of nominal 1.30m width.

4.2 Results

4.2 a The line of the Roman Road - The line of the Roman Road as depicted on the OS 1:2500 map is last represented as an earthwork at ST 9535 3572, c.1.3km to the west of the point at which the line crosses the road improvement corridor. Where shown as an earthwork a low wide bank survives in an uncultivated strip between arable fields and to the east of this location the farmer reports regularly ploughing up cobbled patches of large flints.

Initial reconnaissance survey in woodland to the north of the road improvement corridor revealed an earthwork bank co-incident with the projected line of the Roman Road. Although the form of this bank did not suggest that it was the Roman Road *agger* it was considered possible that it was a woodland boundary bank reflecting the line of the road. This bank did not extend into the road improvement corridor but its line could be projected and was found to diverge from the line of the Roman Road as

indicated on OS mapping. As both potential alignments lay within a substantial woodland clearing 4 trenches (trenches 1 -4, see Figure 2) were excavated in order to provide verification of the line. The total length of trench excavated was 39.70m. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found in any of these trenches. (Please note - geophysical survey to the south of the present A303 also failed to locate any positive evidence for the line of the Roman Road - see below 5.i d and Appendix 1).

4.2 b The context of potential artefact scatters located by test pit excavation - The excavation of test pit 285 had provided the sole indication from a subsoil feature of a potential area of past activity. The context of this test pit was examined in trenches 3 and 4 (excavated primarily in order to examine the line of the Roman Road) but which were co-incidentally positioned as close as woodland conditions would allow to test pit 285. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found in either of these trenches.

4.2.c Linear features parallel with Grims Ditch - Initial reconnaissance survey in woodland within the road improvement corridor revealed a series of what appeared to be shallow earthwork ditches parallel to and south of the line of the Grims Ditch centred on ST 96203545. A single trench (trench 5) 11.30m long was excavated across the line of the possible ditches. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found and it can be suggested that, if not entirely natural in origin, then the 'ditches' may be the remnants of a trackway.

5. Geophysical Survey

5.i In the absence of evidence for artefact scatters from the programme of surface scanning the geophysical survey sample (magnetometer survey of a total area of 2 hectares) was designed to clarify linear features and provide a random sample of areas suitable for such survey. The enclosed report (Appendix 1 - Geophysical Surveys of Bradford report number 93/61) details the methodology and results which can be summarised as follows: (for location of survey areas see figures 1 and 2)

5.i a Area A - 40m by 20m Random sample area; no archaeological response.
5.i b Area B - 40m by 20m Random sample area; possible archaeological features parallel to north-south hedgeline.

5.i c Area C - 60m by 20m Random sample area; no archaeological response.
5.i d Area D - 100m by 20m Roman Road area; possible archaeological features but nothing to indicate presence of Road.
5.i e Area E - 140m by 20m Random sample area; no archaeological response.
5.i f Area F - 180m by 20m Random sample area; possible archaeological features.
5.i g Area G - 160m by 20m Random sample area; features, possibly archaeological but also considered likely to be geological in origin.
5.i h Area H - 300m by 20m Random sample area; possible archaeological features but considered likely to be generated by agricultural practices.

5.i j In addition scanning was carried out on an area centred on ST97274435678 where a linear ditch and bank, visible within woodland, may extend into an arable field. This earthwork, possibly the original line of the the Grims Ditch (M Corney pers. comm) could not be detected by magnetometer scanning.

5.2 Summary - Magnetometer survey has indicated anomalies which may be interpreted as archaeological in origin, although the nature of the solid and superficial geology within the survey area makes positive interpretation difficult. Features tentatively identified include possible pits and linear features although no positive evidence of either the Roman Road (5.i d) or of the original line of the Grims Ditch (5.i j) was found.
In the context of the scanning carried out in order to clarify the line of the Grims Ditch it should be noted that the Wiltshire SMR offers two alternatives lines at this point. The 1:10000 plot shows the ditch emerging from the wood and turning a right angle at ST 97325 35650 to head north-east. Geophysical scanning does not support this suggestion. The 1:2500 revision indicates that the ditch turns to the north and follows the edge of the wood but field observations do not support this interpretation. If the ditch does emerge from the wood and follow a parallel course to the extant and more southerly section of the Grims Ditch then it may cross the line of the road improvement corridor around ST 9760 3555.

6. Survey of Grims Ditch

In order to facilitate the formulation of mitigation strategies designed to minimise the impact of the proposed road improvement scheme on the line of the Grims Ditch a survey was undertaken of the line of the earthwork within the road improvement

corridor to both the north and south of the present road line. Reconnaissance within woodland, specifically to the north of the present road line, suggested some discrepancy between observed condition and position of the earthwork and that depicted on 1:2500 OS mapping. Owing to the dense vegetation conditions the entire line of the Grims Ditch was not re-surveyed by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England as part of their survey of the Stockton Earthworks complex (M Corney pers. comm.). Vegetation conditions, particularly within the dense scrub belt adjacent to and parallel with the present road line made the recent survey difficult and the results shown in figure 3 could be rendered more precise by survey work undertaken after scrub clearance.

What is clear however, is that the Grims Ditch survives as a well-preserved earthwork ditch and bank to both the north and south of the present road line. Survey has demonstrated that the position of the ditch nd bank is as depicted on the OS 1:2500 map. However, to both the north and south of the present road line vestiges of the earthwork extend closer to the edge of the carriageway than depicted and the potential for survivig ditch deposits must be considered greater that the OS map suggests.

7. Artefact Studies

7.i Worked flint - Details of the small quantity of worked flint observed in surface scanning and retrieved by test pit excavation are contained in archive. The overall assemblage is characterised by a total lack of diagnostic tools and by the almost total absence of technologically diagnostic pieces. The few cores are unsystematic and for the production of flakes and, with the exception of a single crested blade from test pit 290 - potentially of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date, the flint could all be considered as the product of late (ie Bronze Age) industries.

7.ii Pottery - The only sherds of pottery of pre-modern date are two featureless examples (from test pits 277 and 307) each of less than 2gm which, on the basis of fabric, may be considered to be of Later Iron Age/Romano-British date.

8. Conclusions

The programme of investigation demonstrated that almost the entire length of the proposed road improvement scheme crosses an area of clay-with-flint capping above chalk. The exceptions to this are at the extreme eastern and to a lesser extent western

ends of the scheme. The archaeological investigations have provided, with the exception of small and very low-level scatters of worked and burnt flint from surface artefact scanning and a single subsoil feature from test pitting, very little evidence of past human activity. This is in sharp contrast to the extensive settlement remains surviving to the north and suggest that localised soil conditions may have played a significant role in determining the nature of past land use and settlement location. In this context considerable importance can be placed on the retrieval of palaeo-environmental data, specifically relating to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Investigation to date has provided no indication of the presence of a Roman Road within the broad location suggested on OS mapping and in the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record.

9. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Dick Broomhead, Julian Cotton, Jaqueline Dodd, Mark Hinman, Vicky Roulinson and John Valentin. Field supervision was carried out by Andy Weale who also prepared the figures.

Julian Richards
for **AC *archaeology***

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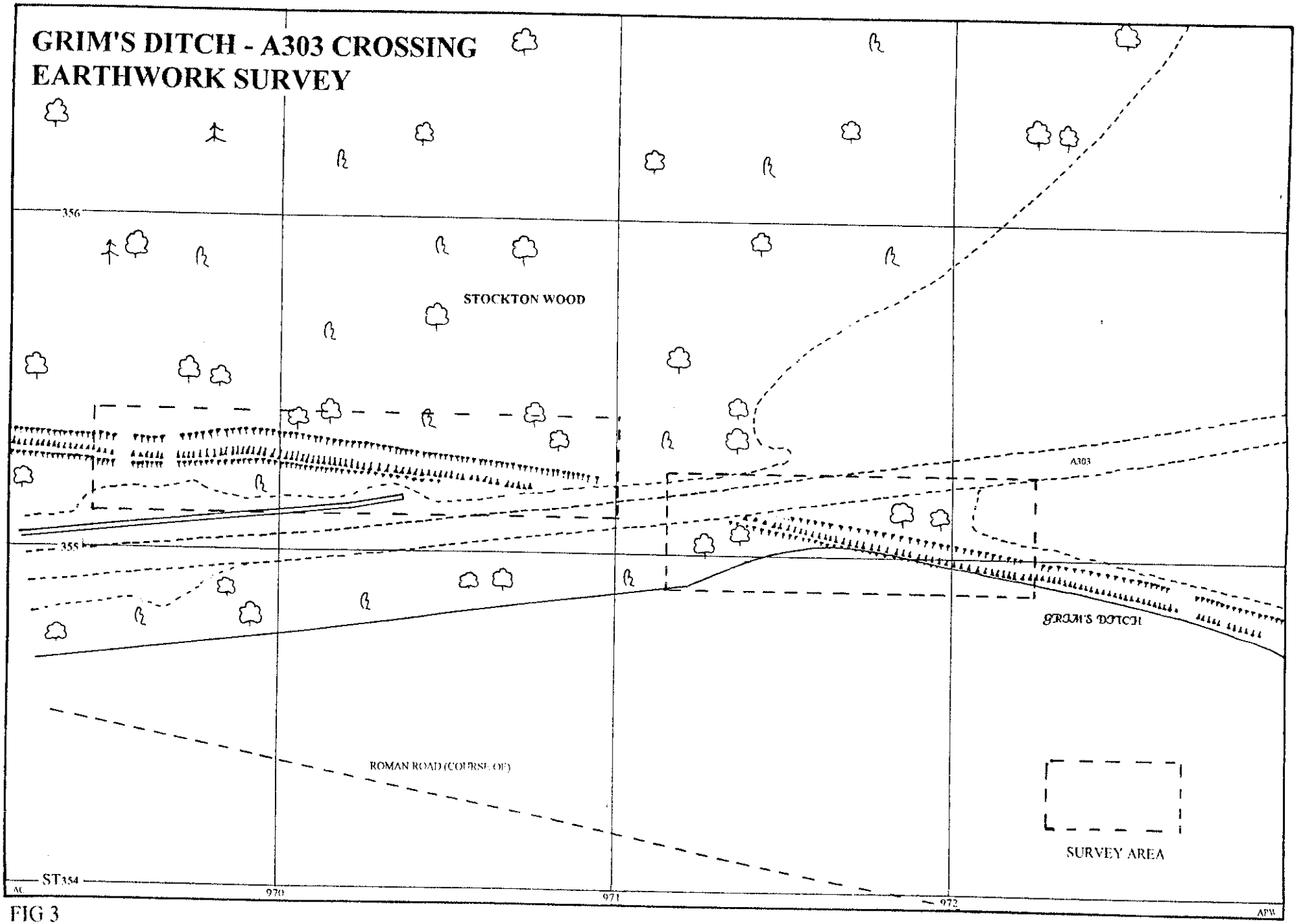
GRIM'S DITCH - A303 CROSSING
EARTHWORK SURVEY
356
STOCKTON WOOD
A303
355
GRIM'S DITCH
ROMAN ROAD (COURSE OF)
SURVEY AREA
ST354
970
971
972

FIG 3