



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Sites & Monuments Record

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

COTSWOLD DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES.....	4
A note about the maps.....	4
Original description of SMR maps	4
ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS USED IN THE TEXT	5
PERIODS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT	5
POPULATION FIGURES.....	5
THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY	7
1 Introduction.....	7
2 The concept of urbanism.....	8
3 Urbanism in Gloucestershire.....	10
3.1 The Roman period.....	10
3.2 The Early Medieval period.....	11
3.3 The Medieval period	11
3.4 The Post-medieval period.....	14
4 Conclusions.....	15
5 Bibliography	15
HISTORIC TOWNS IN COTSWOLD DISTRICT (MAP 1)	16
1 Introduction.....	16
STOW-ON-THE-WOLD	18
1 Introduction.....	18
2 The Prehistoric period.....	18
2.1 Neolithic.....	18
2.2 Bronze Age and Iron Age.....	18
3 The Roman period.....	18
4 The Early Medieval period	18
5 The Medieval period.....	19
5.1 Domesday Book	19
5.2 The placename	19
5.3 The status of the settlement.....	19
5.4 The church.....	20
5.5 The hospital of the Holy Trinity (SMR 2712).....	20
5.6 Market and fairs	20
5.7 Trade and industry.....	20
6 The Post-medieval period	21
6.1 The status of the settlement.....	21
6.2 The manor	21
6.3 Ecclesiastical history.....	21
6.4 Market and fairs	22
6.5 Trade and industry.....	22
6.6 Stow and the Civil War (SMR 16933)	22
7 The modern settlement.....	23
8 Population	23
9. Plan analysis (Maps 58-60).....	23
9.1 Discussion	23
9.2 Plan components	24
10 Future research.....	25
11 Sources.....	26
11.1 Primary historical sources	26
11.2 Secondary historical sources	26
11.3 Archaeological sources	26
11.4 Maps.....	26
12 Bibliography	26
12.1 Published works	26
12.2 Maps.....	27



FIGURES

Volume 1

Map 1 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: Cotswold District

Map 54 Stow-on-the-Wold SMR Information: Prehistoric

Map 55 Stow-on-the-Wold SMR Information: Roman

Map 56 Stow-on-the-Wold SMR Information: Medieval

Map 57 Stow-on-the-Wold SMR Information: Post-medieval

Map 58 Stow-on-the-Wold: Medieval Plan Components

Map 59 Stow-on-the-Wold: Post-medieval Plan Components

Map 60 Stow-on-the-Wold: Development by Period

A note about the maps

The SMR maps in the original Historic Towns Survey (i.e Maps 54-57) are now out of date and have not been included within this revision although references to SMR numbers remain in the text.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 COTSWOLD DISTRICT (Map 1)

	Definition	Market	Borough charter	Burgages/ burgess tenure	Legal autonomy
Blockley	Small market town				
Bourton-on-the-Water	Roman small town				
Chipping Campden	Small market town	c1180	1154-89	✓	
Dorn	Roman small town				
Fairford	Small market town	c.1100-35	1221	✓	✓
Kingscote	Roman small town				
Lechlade	Small market town	1210	C1235	✓	
Moreton-in-Marsh	Small market town	1228	C13/14	✓	
Northleach	Small market town	1219/20	c1227	✓	
Stow-on-the-Wold	Small market town	1107	C12	✓	✓
Tetbury	Medium-sized market town	1211-1287	c1211	✓	
Wycomb	Roman small town				

1 Introduction

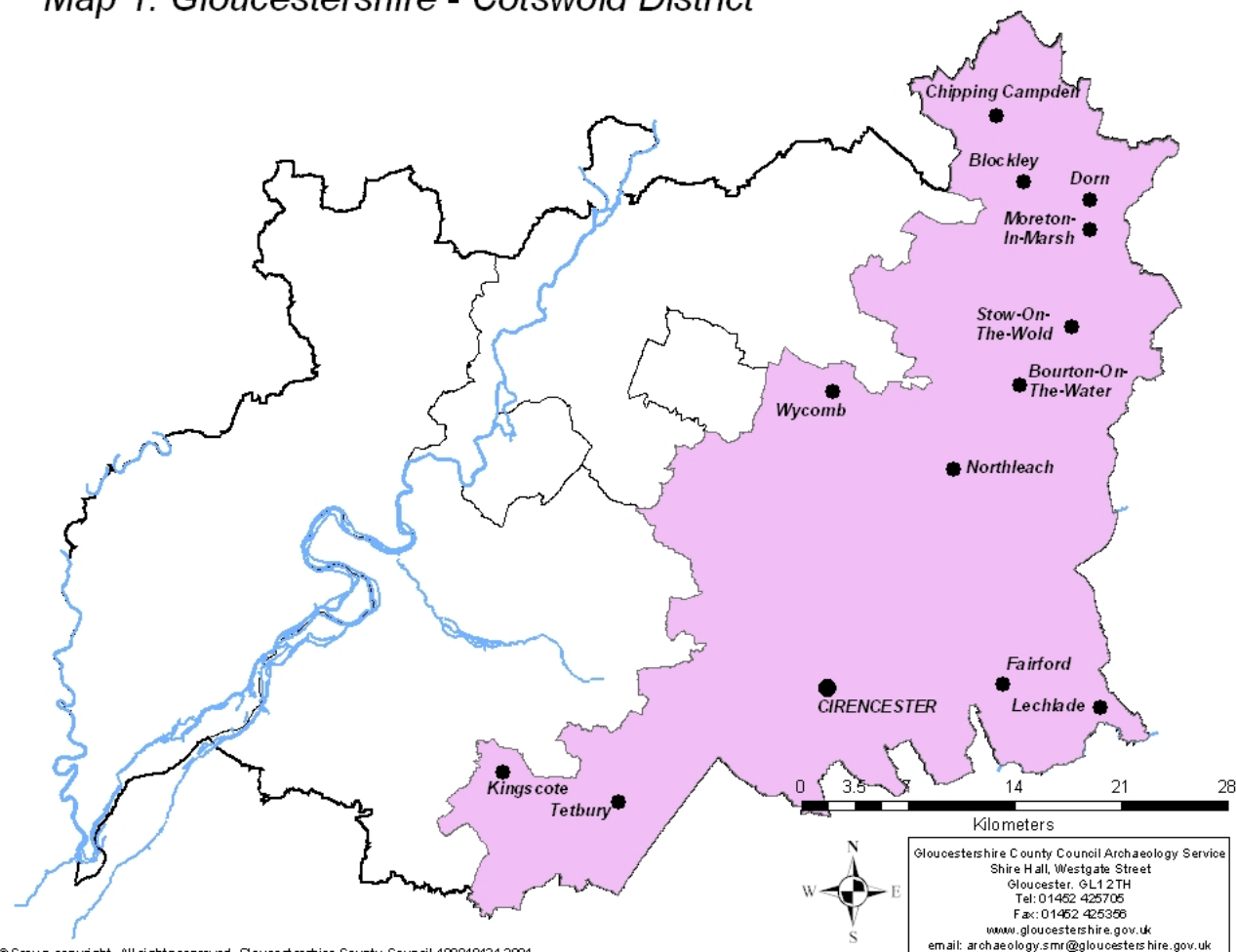
Cotswold is the largest of the six administrative districts in Gloucestershire covering the area east of Gloucester and Cheltenham and extending to the boundary with the adjoining counties of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. Most of the district covers the limestone escarpment of the Cotswold Hills, drained by numerous small rivers, such as the Evenlode, the Windrush, the Dikler, Leach, Coln and Churn, flowing south-eastwards into the upper Thames Valley. The south-eastern part of the district consists of the flat gravel terraces and broad valley of the Upper Thames.

Of the twelve towns studied in the area, three were Roman settlements which failed to survive into later periods, while others, such as Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury, appear to have had their origins in the Prehistoric and Roman periods and continued as significant settlements through the Medieval and later periods. However, the majority of towns, such as Chipping Campden, Moreton-in-Marsh, Northleach, Fairford and Lechlade developed during the Medieval period as market centres, all of which achieved borough status during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The economy of the area was dominated by the production and sale of wool from the twelfth century until the collapse of the English woollen cloth trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the later eighteenth century Cotswold wool began to lose its quality, becoming increasingly coarse due to the crossing of the breed with sheep from Leicestershire in an attempt to increase the length of the fibres, and soon local wool was only used in the production of worsteds and coarse cloths.

The wealth derived from the production of wool in the area is reflected in the architecture of the Cotswolds, where many of the churches were rebuilt by wealthy wool-merchants during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The other reminder of the trade is visible in the scattered market and wool halls, like those at Tetbury, Northleach and Chipping Campden, which were built between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which provided space for the fleeces to be stored and sold at auction. There is less direct evidence for the production of woollen cloth in the Cotswolds, although it would have taken place on a domestic scale. Outcrops of Fuller's Earth, which is vital for finishing the cloth, are found near the spring line throughout much of the region, was of some value for the local finishing of cloth, but the surface water supply was never great enough to allow any form of large-scale production, unlike the Stroud valleys where the plentiful supply of fast-flowing water was ideal for powering mills and for use in the dyeing process.



Map 1: Gloucestershire - Cotswold District





STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

1 Introduction

Stow-on-the-Wold (SP 195255) lies on the Foss Way, 25km east of Cheltenham, between Bourton-on-the-Water and Moreton-in-Marsh. The town stands on a spur of high ground in the Cotswold upland at c.229m O.D., with steep-sided valleys to the west, east and south. The River Dikler flows about 1km to the west of Stow, and the River Evenlode is 5km to the east. The settlement stands on a bed of Limestone surrounded by bands of Inferior Oolite and undifferentiated clays.

The earliest evidence for settlement at Stow dates to the Bronze or Iron Age and is associated with the prehistoric enclosure known as Stow Camp, the site of which underlies the north-eastern part of the modern town. Although Stow lies along the course of the Foss Way, there is little evidence for Roman settlement in the area. Evesham abbey acquired lands at Stow before the Norman conquest and subsequently promoted the development of a town there to serve as a market centre for its Cotswold estates. The town continued to act as an important local market and manufacturing centre throughout the Medieval and Post-medieval periods.

2 The Prehistoric period

2.1 Neolithic

A number of Neolithic stone axes have been found within the area of the town (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 144), although their exact provenances are unknown.

2.2 Bronze Age and Iron Age

It was first suggested in the nineteenth century that Stow lies partly within an Iron Age hillfort (Royce 1861, 12; Grinsell 1964, 11; **SMR 239**). The first archaeological evidence for this enclosure comes from an excavation undertaken in 1972 (O'Neil 1972, unpublished) which revealed the presence of an undated ditch. Further excavations in 1991-1992 (Parry 1994) identified two ditches and suggested an earlier origin for the enclosure, since one of the ditches was firmly dated to the Bronze Age (by pottery and radio-carbon dating) although the second and later ditch contained no dating material.

To the north-east of the town part of the enclosure is visible as an earthwork bank about 2m high running between Well Lane on the west to Shepherd's Way on the south-east (SP 19302500-SP 19542586). The earthwork suggests that the original enclosure was oval and the pattern of modern boundaries on the eastern side of the town indicates that it may have covered about 12 hectares. The perimeter of the enclosure is suggested by boundaries running from Shepherd's Way to the east of Kiln Garden and Ashton House, swinging to the west and north along the line of Park Street and Digbeth Street and through the market square before turning back towards Parson's Corner on Well Lane.

An Anglo-Saxon Charter of A.D. 949 recording *Maesthelgeress Byrig* (Maesthelgeress Camp) is also thought to refer to the prehistoric enclosure (Grundy 1936, 161-169).

3 The Roman period

Although Stow is adjacent to the Foss Way and in the vicinity of two major Roman settlements at Bourton-on-the-Water to the south and Dorn to the north, there is little evidence for Roman activity on the site of the town. A north-south aligned inhumation burial (**SMR 2707**) found in the north-east corner of the market square was *said by Dr. Rolleston to be Roman* (Royce 1861, 72), and a small number of fourth century coins and a fifth century ring were found behind the Grammar School (immediately to the west of St. Edward's Church) in 1937 (**SMR 6992**). During 1993 an archaeological evaluation at Fosseway Farm, High Street (SP 19152598; **SMR 14564**) revealed three undated ditches and a single posthole of first or second century A.D. date (Catchpole 1993, 3).

4 The Early Medieval period

The earliest reference to Stow appears in a chronicle of Evesham Abbey in A.D.708 (Elrington and Morgan 1976, 151). The chronicle claims that that the Abbey had received land at Stow, Mangersbury and Donnington from King Coenred.



Two further references to Stow are contained in two out of the three Anglo-Saxon charters dealing with Mangersbury Camp. One, reputedly of A.D. 949, refers to the granting of certain lands at Bourton-on-the-Water, Mangersbury and Daylesford to Wulfic by King Edred. The charter specifically mentions a boundary *First from Maethelgar's Camp to Deep Combe* (Grundy 1936, 165). A second charter of A.D. 1016 refers to a grant of one hide of land at *Maethelger's Camp* by King Aethelred to Evesham Monastery (Grundy 1936, 167). As noted in section 2 above the camp has been identified with the prehistoric enclosure at Stow.

There is a reference to the church of St. Edward in Stow in A.D.986, although the charter in which it appears is thought to be spurious (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 159). The existence of a pre-Conquest church and possible associated settlement cannot therefore be confirmed.

5 The Medieval period

5.1 Domesday Book

The Domesday entry records Stow as being near Mangersbury, and held by St. Mary's Abbey in Evesham:

St. Mary's Church of Evesham holds Mangersbury near Stow (on-the-Wold). Before 1066 there were 8 hides and a ninth hide lies near St. Edwards Church. King Aethelred gave it, exempt. In Lordship 3 ploughs; 12 villagers, 1 free man and a priest, who between them have 7 ploughs. 6 slaves; a mill at 8s; some meadow. Value before 1066, 100s; now £7
(Moore 1982)

5.2 The placename

The first reference to Stow by name appears in Domesday Book (1086) when *Eduuardesstou* is mentioned. The town was originally named Stow St. Edward or Edwardstow (*Edwardestowe* 1241) which is suggested by Smith (1964, 225) to mean *a place where people gathered for the practice of religion (Stow) and later dedicated to the service of a particular saint (Edward)*.

5.3 The status of the settlement

The ancient parish of Stow was originally larger than its present extent and appears to have comprised Stow, Donnington (both held by Evesham Abbey) and Mangersbury. The inclusion of Donnington is thought to have been undertaken to increase the value of the Stow benefice (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 142).

Stow does not appear as a manorial holding in the Domesday Book, but is referred to as a landmark to locate Mangersbury *near Stow* [on the Wold]. It is therefore unclear whether a settlement existed on the site of the later town at this time, although the reference does mention a church of St. Edward. The modern parishes of Stow and Mangersbury form a land parcel with the smaller Stow located in the north-west corner. It is thought unlikely that the earthwork was named after the nearby settlement of Mangersbury if a village already existed within the earthworks.

Evesham abbey claimed to have received the land on which the settlement of Stow stands, along with Mangersbury and Donnington, from King Coenred in A.D. 708 (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 152). By 1086 the Domesday Book appears to show that Mangersbury and Stow formed one unit of the abbey's estate, while Donnington was included with their Broadwell manor. No estate was described as Stow manor until after the Dissolution, and it would thus appear that the land was a part of Mangersbury manor, and held by the abbey at Evesham, throughout the Medieval period (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 152).

The development of the Medieval borough at Stow was promoted by Evesham abbey as the commercial centre for their Cotswold estates, and twelfth century documentary sources indicate that by that date Stow had attained borough status, although the borough charter itself has not survived; the market charter of 1107 (and the later confirmatory charter of 1476) uses the term borough in its text (Johnson 1980, 35).

Stow was an important judicial and administrative centre by the late fifteenth century when the town was the centre of Evesham Abbey's leet, with a single court for the town and liberty (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 144).



5.4 The church

Although there is a reference to the church of St. Edward at Stow in A.D. 986, the source is not considered to be wholly reliable (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 159). Domesday Book however, does make reference to a priest and a church of St. Edward (Morris 1982), and since there is no evidence for a church at Mangersbury in this period, it is likely to be a reference to an early foundation at Stow. The earliest surviving architectural evidence in the church (**SMR 8255**) however, dates from the twelfth century. The place name *Edwardstow* is thought to have been associated with the dedication of the church (Smith 1964, 225), which by 1476 was believed to have been to Edward the Confessor (1042-1066). This dedication appears to be unlikely as Edward was not canonised until the later thirteenth century. Two other theories relating to the church dedication - that it was named after St. Edwold or a local hermit named Edward - appear to be local traditions dating from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. In the light of the relative implausibility of either of these explanations, it has been suggested that the church was in fact dedicated to Edward the Martyr (c.962-979), further supporting an Anglo-Saxon foundation (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 159).

By 1208 Evesham Abbey was in dispute with the Bishop of Gloucester over its rights to the church at Stow, which was solved by Evesham agreeing to appropriate the church, although the living remained a rectory (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 159).

5.5 The hospital of the Holy Trinity (**SMR 2712**)

The antiquarian Tanner writing in 1744, and quoting an earlier reference by Speed, records that the Hospital of the Holy Trinity was said to have been founded at Stow, by *Ailmar*, Earl of Cornwall and Devon (fl. c.1010) for poor women and was staffed by a chaplain. This sixteenth century reference to the foundation may, however, have been confused with the Benedictine Abbey at Stow in Lincolnshire. Very little is known about the actual hospital, but its existence at Stow-on-the-Wold appears to have been confirmed when in 1535 its income was over £25 4s 4d (Knowles and Hadcock 1973, 395). It is alleged by Royce (1861, 57) that the Porch House and the adjacent building at the bottom of Digbeth Street (SP 192256) had been the hospital although these buildings date only from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

5.6 Market and fairs

In 1107 Abbot Robert de Jumieges petitioned Henry I for a market and received a charter for a port and market at Stow every Thursday. This grant was confirmed in 1241. In 1330 the abbey received the right to hold an annual fair for seven days from the 1st of August. Nothing more is known of this fair, but it is thought to have survived until it was replaced in 1476 by *...two fairs to be held and kept within the aforesaid borough on two feast days* (Johnson 1980, 35). The two fairs were held over a period of five days, from the 1st of May and from the 13th of October (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 152-153). The market at Stow appears to have been highly successful and by the early thirteenth century the abbey's profits from the market were over ten pounds per year (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 153). The main reason for the success of the market and fairs was that Stow was surrounded by a number of small towns and lay within easy travelling distance of the abbeys of Hailes, Cirencester, Winchcombe, Gloucester and Tewkesbury (Johnson 1980, 48).

By the fifteenth century a market cross (**SMR 2709**) stood in the middle of the southern half of the market square with the Cross House (**SMR 20601**), which is thought to have been used for storing hurdles and other market equipment, to the west of it (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 145).

5.7 Trade and industry

In 1341 four merchants of Stow were assessed for tax, fewer than Cirencester, but more than at Tewkesbury. The number of references in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to merchants based at Stow indicate a fairly busy market town (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 153).

Cloth and leather industries were well established at Stow by the early fourteenth century, and documents of that period record dyers, weavers, shearmen and a tailor. A tanner and two shoemakers were also recorded in the fourteenth century, and by the end of the sixteenth century Stow had become well established as a centre of shoemaking. Butchers are recorded in 1381, and bakers from Stow are known to have been selling bread at Northleach in the mid-sixteenth century (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 154). Other traders include coopers and braziers who were mentioned in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries respectively.



6 The Post-medieval period

6.1 The status of the settlement

In 1539 the Abbey had entrusted the supervision of the market and fairs, and the governing of the town to two bailiffs, both resident in the town, for their lifetimes. These appointments coupled with the inevitable confusion caused by the numerous changes of manorial ownership between 1536 and 1603, convinced the local population that Stow was a *self governing corporation* (Elrington and Morgan 1976, 157).

In 1604 Stow secured a charter incorporating the town, with two bailiffs, twelve chief burgesses, and a common clerk. This charter confirmed in general terms the unspecified rights and liberties formerly enjoyed by the town. This charter was perhaps a security measure (by the town) against the intended assertion of manorial rights of Edward Chamberlayne the lord of the manor, who in 1608 brought a legal action against the bailiffs over the holding of the court. The matter was decided in Chamberlayne's favour, on the grounds that before 1604 the rights and liberties defined by the charter did not exist. After this result the corporation remained in existence, but the administration of the town lay in the hands of the lord of the manor (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 158).

6.2 The manor

After the Dissolution in 1547 the manor of Stow along with the markets and fairs and a pension from the rectory were granted to Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley. He sold the manor to the Chamberlayne family in 1603, who had received the rights for Maugersbury in 1598, and who held them both until the end of the nineteenth century (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 151). The manors were sold c. 1900 to John Henry Hewitt and passed to his daughter in the 1920s, although they were eventually split up and sold during the 1930s.

6.3 Ecclesiastical history

6.3.1 The church of St. Edward (SMR 8255)

During the Civil War, Stow church was used as a prison for the numerous Royalists captured during the battle fought just outside the town (see section 6.6 below). In 1657 the structure was declared to be ruinous and was repaired during the early 1660s. In the 1680s the Bishop of Gloucester noted that *the parish church has been very ruinous and not able to have been repaired by the inhabitants of the said parish unless assisted by others charity* (Johnson 1980, 82), although any action taken as a result of his report have not been recorded. The church was restored in 1847 and again in 1873 (Verey 1979, 423), while the churchyard is said to have been levelled and enclosed in 1866 (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 145).

By the early seventeenth century the manorial rights included the advowson of the church, the benefice of which was worth £150 in 1650, and which had risen to over £500 in 1864 (Elrington & Morgan 1965, 160).

6.3.2 Nonconformity

The earliest record of nonconformity dates from 1660, when dissenters held open-air meetings near Stow and three inhabitants were fined for dissent. In 1676 there were 55 nonconformists in the parish, but the first meeting house was not licensed until 1690. This house belonged to the Society of Friends, who had a community in the town by 1670. A meeting house was built in 1719 on a piece of land which had been acquired that year in a land behind the White Hart Hotel (SMR 17539). By the mid-eighteenth century there were fifteen Quakers recorded in the town and in 1887 the building was sold (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 163).

A Baptist meeting house off Sheep Street was licensed in 1700 and in 1715 one of the two dissenting preachers at Stow was a Baptist. By 1735 there were 44 Baptists who ran a school and took out further licences in 1736, 1765 and 1772. Until the later nineteenth century the Baptists at Stow relied upon ministers from Bourton-on-the-Water and Naunton, although in 1851 the congregation was said to have reached 200 (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 163). The present chapel, which was built in 1852 on the site of the earlier chapel, is approached through an archway and is located in Back Walls (SMR 17632; RCHME 1986, 94).

The Ebenezer chapel of the Strict and Particular Baptists (SMR 17898) stands on the east side of Well Lane and may have been founded by a group which registered a house for dissenting worship in 1798. The chapel fell into disuse in the early twentieth century and was subsequently used by the Plymouth Brethren. John Wesley preached at Stow in 1767 to a *very dull, quiet congregation*, but a house was not registered for Methodist



worship until 1807. In 1814 a new church was built in Sheep Street and Stow became part of the Witney circuit (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 163).

The Wesleyan Methodist chapel built in 1865 stands on Sheep Street and bears a tablet dated 1814 which is reset from the former chapel (**SMR 20597**; RCHME 1986, 94). Nothing is known about the chapel's congregation.

There is no evidence for any significant group of Roman Catholics in Stow before the twentieth century. The church of Our Lady and St. Kenelm (**SMR 20599**) was dedicated in 1918, and stands between Sheep Street and Back Walls. The structure was originally built in c.1836 as a school (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 162-163).

6.4 Market and fairs

The receipts of the Lord of the Manor indicate that the town's market and fairs were thriving, with receipts from the fairs alone yielded approximately £70 by the mid-seventeenth century (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 153). The increasingly predominant commodities until at least the mid-eighteenth century were sheep and wool, when it has been estimated that over 20,000 sheep were sold at each fair (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 153). After this time increasing enclosure within the neighbourhood was said to have *considerably diminished* the scale of the fairs. The other main commodities were hops and cheese, which may have helped to maintain the lord's tolls at £30 per half-year in 1775 (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 153).

6.5 Trade and industry

Smith's *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608* lists the occupations undertaken by the inhabitants of the town, and includes 3 shoemakers and 1 cobbler, 10 labourers, 2 cheesemongers and a glover among a male population of 72.

A healthy cloth trade flourished in the town with mercers, weavers, fullers and tailors all mentioned in 1608 (Johnson 1980, 34). From the mid-seventeenth century through to the late eighteenth century there are indications of specialisation in linen manufacturing, and in 1815 silk mills are mentioned (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 153). Other important trades included baking, cheese making, hop selling, quarrying, stone working, lime production, iron mongering and brass working. From the fifteenth to nineteenth century there were braziers at Stow, and in the eighteenth century locksmiths and a cutler were also working there. Nail making was carried out into the nineteenth century, but had ceased by 1911, and the manufacture of ropes, candles and straw hats similarly failed to endure. Nineteenth century Stow had the variety of craftsmen and traders to be expected in a small market town of the period, including carriage-builders, chemists, jewellers and a printer. Unfortunately the development of road transport and the growing attraction of Cheltenham caused a certain amount of commercial decline at Stow (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 155).

The leather industry continued to flourish supplying leather for the saddlery and coaching market as well as the renowned Stow shoe industry. The cloth industry (spinning, weaving and dyeing) supplied fabrics to create the high fashions of the period. The visitors to Stow could also avail themselves of the professional services on offer such as doctors, chemists, solicitors, surveyors and valuers, the inns once again offering a venue for business and pleasure. Church Street became noticeably narrower as front extensions were added to the houses to create more shops, within which exotic goods such as tea, coffee and chocolate became increasingly available. In the early nineteenth century there was an attempt to develop Stow as a spa resort although there is no evidence to suggest that it was a successful venture (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 145).

6.6 Stow and the Civil War (SMR 16933)

Both Royalist and Parliamentary troops passed through Stow in the early 1640s, but there were no major engagements until 1646 when the last battle of the English Civil War was fought there. By March 1646 the king's field armies were disbanding and his only hope for victory rested with foreign allies. He therefore hoped that if Lord Astley and his force of 3,000 men could fight through to Oxford from the west, he might be able to hold out until an invasion could be launched. On 21st March Astley was halted just to the north of Stow by Sir William Brereton and a Parliamentary force. The Roundheads, charging up hill, were thrown back, until their cavalry made a decisive attack on the Royalist flank and the Cavaliers fled. Their cavalry escaped, but the foot soldiers were chased as far as Stow market place where they were captured and held in the church. Having lost his last mobile army, king Charles surrendered in May 1646 (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 150-151; English Heritage n.d.).



7 The modern settlement

Modern expansion in Stow began in the 1930s when the large housing estate known as King George's Field was constructed to the east of the town centre. The estate contained almost 100 houses by the 1950s, when a second estate, known as the Park, was begun to the south of Back Walls. By 1961 there were around 50 houses there with more under construction. Within the core of the settlement, modern development has not affected the Medieval street frontages, and although there has been some construction in the back plots, the pattern of boundaries fronting on to the High Street, Sheep Street, Digbeth Street and Market Square has not been affected.

The majority of buildings in Stow date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although a number of seventeenth century and earlier buildings have also survived, and it is possible that many of the buildings may have had later frontages attached to earlier structures. The Masonic Hall (SMR 2710), formerly the grammar school, was built in 1594, while the Royalist Hotel (SMR 17261) also dates from the sixteenth century and has retained two original windows on the ground floor as well as an internal Tudor arch fireplace. South Close Cottage (SMR 17637) on Digbeth Street is also thought to have been built during the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and has retained internal timber-framed partitions. Other notable structures in the town include numerous inns, some of which have been recorded from the fifteenth century, and one, the King's Arms (SMR 17543), was reputed to be the best inn between London and Worcester during the seventeenth century.

8 Population

Date	Communicants	Households	Families	Nonconformists	Inhabitants	Source
1551	350				c.525	Percival
1563		82			c.349	Percival
1603	400				c.600	Percival
1650			200		c.850	Survey of Church Livings
1676	257			55	c.441	Compton Census
1712		329			1300	Atkyns
1779					1180	Rudder
1801					1471	
1851					1515	
1901					1118	
1997					2114	

For a full explanation of this table, please see page 5 above.

9. Plan analysis (Maps 58-60)

9.1 Discussion

The prehistoric enclosure appears to have influenced the plan of the later settlement at Stow, and the outline of an oval enclosure is still visible in the modern property boundaries on the eastern side of the town.

The Medieval town developed to the east of the Foss Way (the modern A429), at the point where it crossed an ancient routeway known as the Cotswold Ridgeway (the modern B4068/A436), and also where it formed a junction with the Evesham to Burford Road (the modern A424), which is thought to have followed the course of an ancient saltway from Droitwich. A map of 1675 in Ogilby's *Britannia* shows that the main north-south road left the Foss Way to the north of the town, to run along the High Street through the market square and back out along Church Street. The main east-west route during the Medieval period is thought to have run along Digbeth Street and Church Street, which were originally considerably wider.

The site chosen for the Medieval church (**Area 1**), and presumably the centre of the contemporary settlement, lay between the Foss Way (to the west) and the projected line of the ramparts of the prehistoric enclosure (to the east). The churchyard may have originally been larger, including the area to the north and west now occupied by Stow



Lodge (**Area 2**), but it is recorded to have been levelled and enclosed in 1866 at which time the churchyard may have been reduced to its present extent.

Evesham abbey took full advantage of the commercial advantages offered by the Foss Way and the Cotswold Ridgeway when they founded a market at Stow. Bourton-on-the-Water, which was also among the abbey's possessions, was denied the right to hold a market in order to improve the revenues derived from that at Stow. A similar level of protectionism can be seen in the abbey's demand that Walter of Clifford should demolish a group of houses which he had built on the western side of the Foss Way, opposite the town (**Area 15**). These houses would have been outside the area of the abbey's borough, and their occupiers would thus have been free from the rents levied on burgesses within the town while enjoying all the facilities of the settlement, which would have affected the abbey's revenue.

The market place (**Area 3**) is a large, elongated rectangle immediately to the east of the church and extending across the projected line of the prehistoric enclosure, the western boundary of which may therefore have been levelled when the borough was laid out. This large open area provided space for the maximum number of stalls on market days. Streets lead into the north, east and west corners of the market from the main roads, which would have funnelled passing traffic through the square. The market square was subject to encroachment and infilling from the fifteenth century onwards when the market cross and cross house stood in the middle of the southern side of the square (**Area 4**). During the sixteenth century the Court House was built in the south-east corner of the area, and in the early seventeenth century a row of houses was built to the east of the church (**Area 5**), along the western side of the square. Shortly afterwards a second row was constructed on the opposite side of the market area (**Area 6**), and only the northern half of the square remained unencumbered, although it did later become the site of the Post-medieval town stocks.

The Medieval borough was focused around the market place and the streets leading into it, and burgage plots can still be identified in the town plan preserved by modern property boundaries on either side of the market square and along Digbeth Street and Park Street (**Areas 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12**). Sheep Street was known as Back Street c.1600, which may indicate that it marked the southern extent of the settlement at that time, but shortly afterwards, as the settlement expanded, properties were constructed running between Sheep Street and Back Walls (**Area 13**). Seventeenth century expansion of the settlement expanded eastwards along Park Street (**Areas 26 and 27**), and by the nineteenth century only the areas around Well Lane and to the west of the Foss Way (**Area 29**) were still available for new buildings.

9.2 Plan components

9.2.1 Medieval (Map 58)

1. The church of St. Edward and its surrounding churchyard
2. Possible area of church land to the north and west of the present churchyard
3. The market square
4. Area of infilling containing the market cross and cross house
5. Area of infilling to the east of the church
6. Area of infilling on the east side of the market place
7. Probable group of burgage plots to the west of the High Street
8. Group of burgage plots fronting on to the east side of the market square
9. Group of burgage plots fronting on to the north side of Digbeth Street
10. Group of burgage plots fronting on to the south side of the market place and the north side of Sheep Street
11. Group of burgage plots fronting on to the west side of Church Street



12. Group of burgage plots fronting on to the north side of Park Street
13. Group of burgage plots fronting on to the south side of Sheep Street
14. Probable area of back plots to properties fronting on to the market square, converted to allotments by the 1880s
15. Area of settlement to the west of the Foss Way, abandoned at the abbey's request

9.2.2 Post-medieval (Map 59)

16. The church of St. Edward and surrounding churchyard after 1866 levelling and enclosure
17. Area of market infill to the east of the church
18. Area of market infill on the east side of the market square
19. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the west of the High Street
20. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the east of the market square
21. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the west of Church Street
22. Area of Post-medieval settlement between the market square and Sheep Street
23. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the north of Park Street
24. Area of Post-medieval settlement to the south of Sheep Street
25. Area of Post-medieval development to the east of the High Street
26. Area of Post-medieval development to the east of Well Lane
27. Area of Post-medieval development to the south of Park Street
28. Area of Post-medieval development to the north and west of the church
29. Area of Post-medieval development to the west of the Foss Way

10 Future research

Priorities for future work include:

1. The prehistoric period: the full extent, date and function of the prehistoric enclosure.
2. The Roman period: there is very little evidence for Roman activity in the area of the modern settlement although it is possible that there may have been some form of settlement in the area, given the proximity of the Foss Way and the existence of the prehistoric enclosure.
3. The church: the date of its foundation.
4. The Early Medieval period: the existence of a pre-Conquest church suggests that there may also have been an early settlement at Stow.
5. The Medieval period: evidence for Walter of Clifford's twelfth century houses to the west of the Foss Way.
6. The hospital of the Holy Trinity: its location and period of use.



7. The Medieval borough: its character, extent and economy.
8. The Post-medieval borough: evidence for trade and industry and associated structures.

11 Sources

11.1 Primary historical sources

There are a small number of original documents relating to Stow-on-the-Wold, including a Saxon charter and Medieval references. These have not been consulted directly, but where they appear in the text, have been drawn from secondary, published sources.

11.2 Secondary historical sources

A number of articles about Stow-on-the-Wold have been published in archaeological journals which have been consulted during the production of this report. The town has been covered by the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire, which provides an excellent historical account of the development of the town. Johnson (1980, 1994) has published two historical accounts of Stow-on-the-Wold, which provide a good general history of the town.

11.3 Archaeological sources

The prehistoric enclosure was subject to investigations in 1972 and between 1991 and 1994, which provided information about its date, although its function and full extent are still unclear. Archaeological investigations have been undertaken in advance of development at a number of sites around the town, including Fosseyway Farm, the Royalist Hotel, Jasmine Cottage, The Manse, the Old School, and in Digbeth Street. However, relatively little information about the sequence of occupation in the town has been provided, although evidence for Roman activity was found at Fosseyway Farm, and Medieval and Post-medieval deposits were encountered during work on Digbeth Street.

11.4 Maps

The earliest historical maps available for Stow-on-the-Wold are the plate in Ogilby's *Britannia* and the Ordnance Survey first edition 25":1 mile map of 1880, which illustrates the plan of the town before modern expansion took place.

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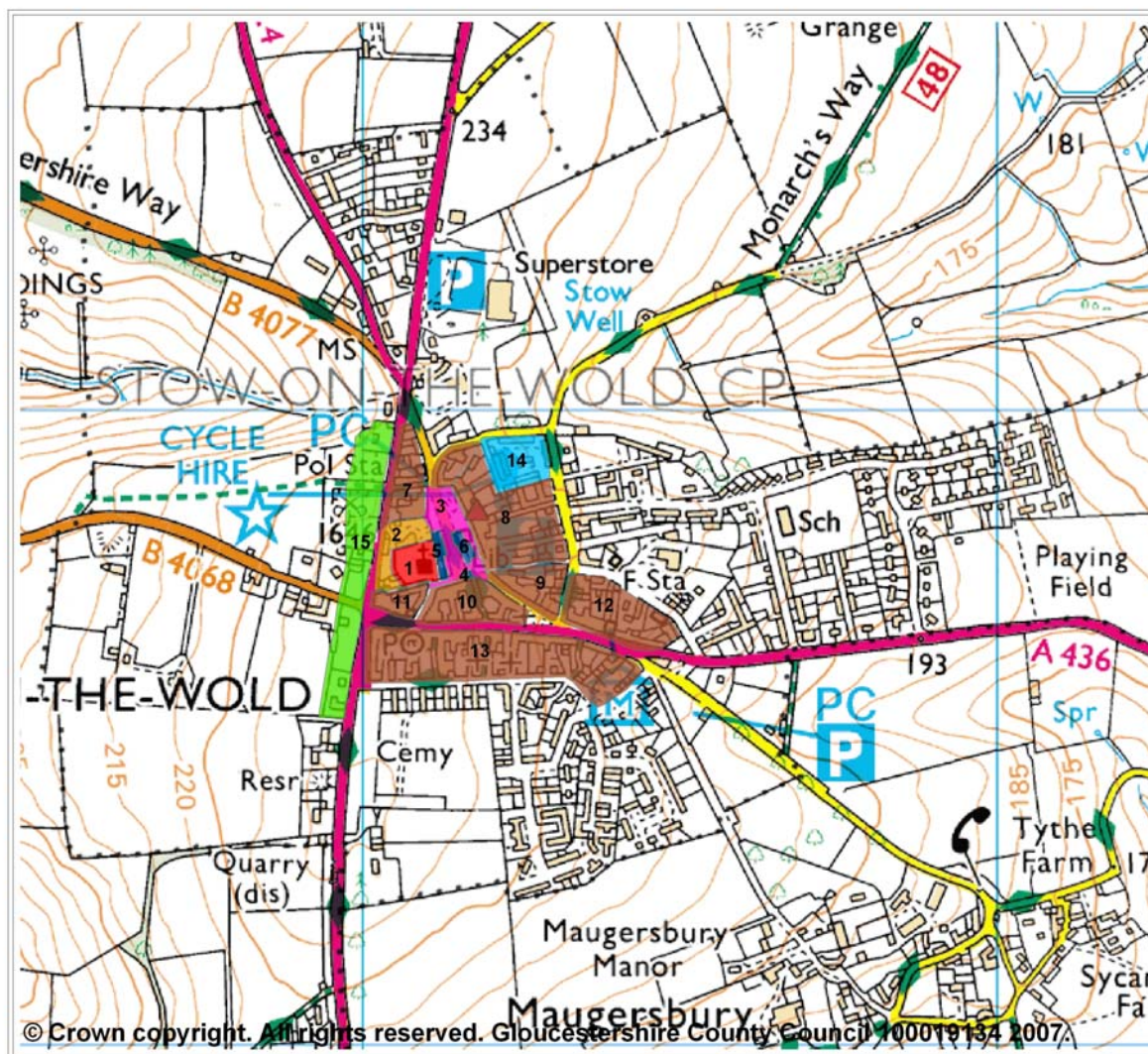
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12.2 Maps

Map of Stow-on-the-Wold (plate 85) in Ogilby's *Britannia*, 1675

Ordnance Survey first edition 25": 1 mile, 1880.



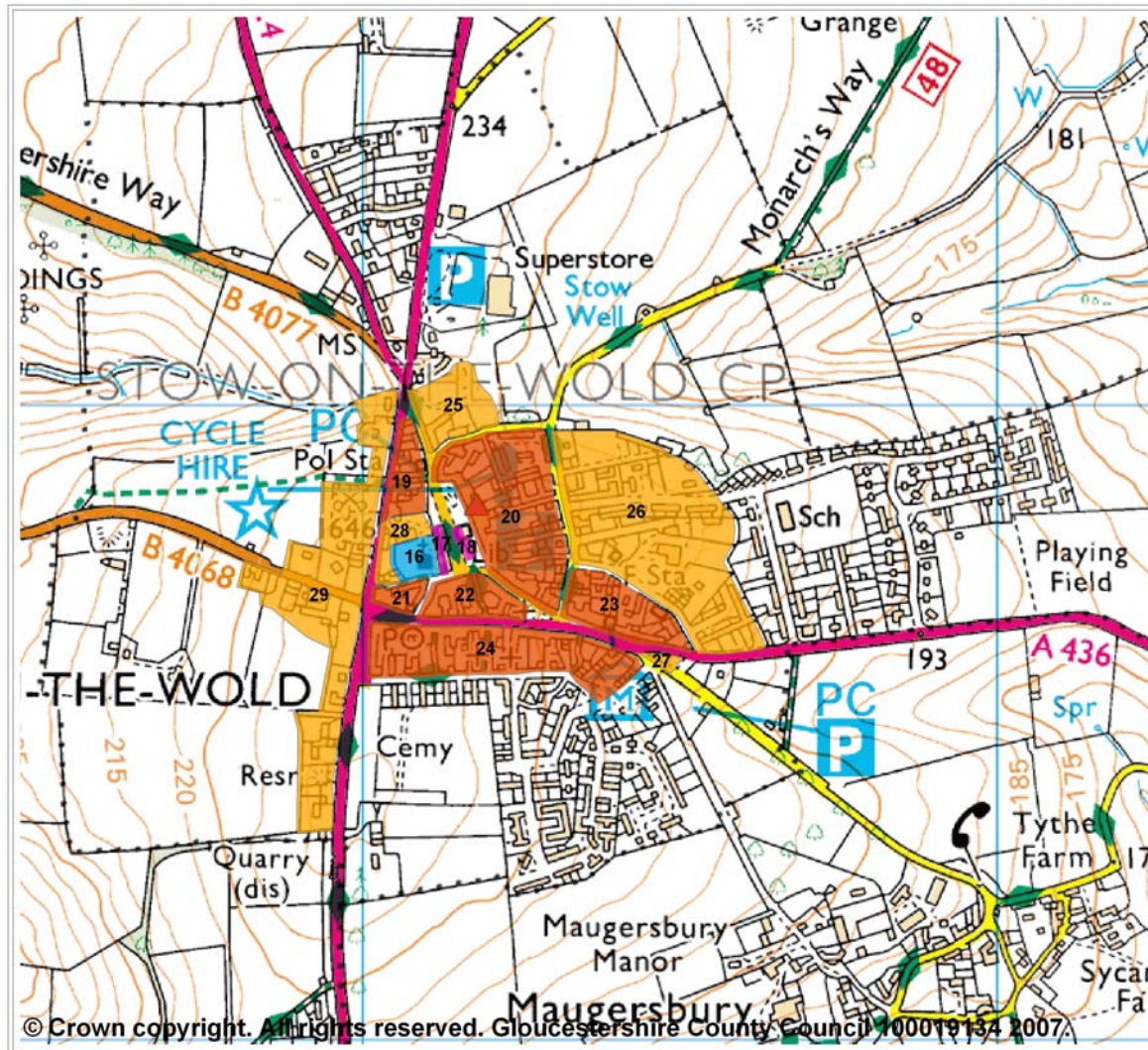
MAP 58
Stow-On-The-Wold
Medieval Plan Components

Legend

- Area of settlement
- Burgages and tenements
- Church & churchyard
- Encroachment into market place
- Market place
- Possible back plots of burgages
- Possible church land

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SCALE: 1:8,457
DATE: 11 October 2007
DRAWING NO: MAP 58



MAP 59
Stow-On-The-Wold
Post-Medieval
Plan Components

Legend

- Church & churchyard
- Market infill
- Areas of development
- Areas of settlement

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