

# OXONIENSIA

*Oxoniensia* is issued to members of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society for a subscription price of £12. Copies of some back numbers are available and *Oxoniensia* is also accessible in digital format. Please refer to the journal website for further information ([www.oxoniensia.org](http://www.oxoniensia.org)).

Intending contributors to *Oxoniensia* are asked to submit an electronic copy of their work to the editor, Dr Stephen Miles, no later than 1 December each year ([editor@oahs.org.uk](mailto:editor@oahs.org.uk)). The editor will be pleased to advise on preliminary drafts. 'Notes for Contributors' are available on the website.

## EDITORIAL NOTICE

*Oxoniensia* is issued to members of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society for a subscription price of £12. Copies of some back numbers are available and *Oxoniensia* is also accessible in digital format. Please refer to the journal website for further information ([www.oxoniensia.org](http://www.oxoniensia.org)).

Intending contributors to *Oxoniensia* are asked to submit an electronic copy of their work to the editor, Dr Stephen Mileson, no later than 1 December each year ([editor@oahs.org.uk](mailto:editor@oahs.org.uk)). The editor will be pleased to advise on preliminary drafts. 'Notes for Contributors' are available on the website.

## OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society, formed in 1972 by the amalgamation of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (founded in 1839) and the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society (founded in 1852), exists to further the study of the archaeology, topography, architecture, and history of Oxford and Oxfordshire. In addition to publishing *Oxoniensia*, it provides a programme of winter lectures in Oxford and organizes excursions to places of architectural, historical, and archaeological interest. Through its Listed Buildings Committee and associated Victorian Group, the Society makes representations to public bodies, both on its own behalf and for the Council for British Archaeology, to safeguard historical buildings and monuments. The Society also convenes the Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum, which fosters liaison to discuss and advise on issues concerning archaeology and museums, monitor cases and on occasion make representations on matters of concern.

The Society's website can be found at [www.oahs.org.uk](http://www.oahs.org.uk). In 2010 OAHs launched two new initiatives to promote digital access to studying Oxfordshire's past: past volumes of *Oxoniensia* are now available online (the last five years only to members) at <http://oxoniensia.org> and the OAHs online guide to resources and societies for studying Oxfordshire's past is to be found at <http://oxfordshirehistory.modhist.ox.ac.uk>.

Subscriptions (£12 individual, £17 family membership) should be sent to the Membership Secretary, 15 Harding Way, Marcham, Abingdon, OX13 6FJ, who will be pleased to supply further information about the Society.

## THE GREENING LAMBORN TRUST

The Greening Lamborn Trust's objective is to promote public interest in the history, architecture, old photographs and heraldry of Oxford and its neighbourhood by supporting publications and other media that create access to them. It supports scholarly works and smaller publications of local interest. The Trustees make grants, and occasionally loans, to help with publication costs and expenditure on the display to the public of historic artefacts in local museums and industrial heritage sites. Whilst the Trustees cannot support research costs, they can help with the expense of publishing the research when the publication will be available for general purchase. Sometimes the Trustees will meet the cost of including additional illustrations, historic photographs etc. which would otherwise be omitted. Further information can be obtained from [clerk.greeninglamborn@hmg-law.co.uk](mailto:clerk.greeninglamborn@hmg-law.co.uk).

## OXFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

The Oxfordshire Record Society publish transcripts, abstracts and lists of the primary sources for the history of Oxfordshire and work to stimulate interest in archives relating to the county. The annual subscription, currently only £12, supports the Society's work and

entitles members to receive each volume published and a free visit to an historical site at each AGM.

Recent volumes issued by the Society include:

*An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ed. K. Tiller and G. Darkes;  
*Oxfordshire Friendly Societies, 1750-1918*, ed. Shaun Morley;  
*The Life and Times of a Charlbury Quaker*, ed. Hannah Jones.

Applications for membership should be sent to Paul Gaskell, 28 Bulan Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7HT ([oxfordshirerecordssociety@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordshirerecordssociety@gmail.com)). New members receive a volume of their choice from those still in print. Further information can be obtained on the Society's website: [www.oxfordshire-record-society.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshire-record-society.org.uk)

## OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1884, the Society publishes editions of historical records relating to the City, University, and Colleges of Oxford. To date over 140 volumes have been issued, of which almost 100 are still in print (available to non-subscribers from Boydell & Brewer Ltd: <http://www.boydellandbrewer.com>). Works published by the Society include Cordeaux and Merry's bibliographies of the City of Oxford (1976), Oxfordshire (1950), and a supplementary volume on Oxfordshire (1981). The Society's latest publication is *Early Records of University College*, edited by R.H. Darwall-Smith. Enquiries about subscription to the Society's publications should be addressed to: Dr E.M.P. Wells, 24 Tree Lane, Iffley, Oxford, OX4 4EY ([elizabeth.wells@bodleian.ox.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.wells@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)). Subscribers may purchase previous publications at reduced prices.

## OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Association was founded in 1980 to further the study of local history in the County, and in particular to promote links between amateur local historians and academic and professional bodies involved in local history. The Association organizes twice-yearly study days and publishes a regular newsletter and a journal, *Oxfordshire Local History*. Further details at: [www.olha.org.uk](http://www.olha.org.uk)

Enquiries about the Association should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Liz Woolley, 138 Marlborough Road, Oxford, OX1 4LS ([membership@olha.org.uk](mailto:membership@olha.org.uk)).

## BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society publishes volumes of records relating to Banbury and its neighbourhood, including parts of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire as well as Oxfordshire. Thirty volumes have been published to date. These include all pre-General Registration Banbury Parish Registers, 1558—1838, now mostly out of print, but available on microfiche from Oxfordshire Family History Society, c/o Oxfordshire Studies, Central Library, Westgate, Oxford OX1 1DJ.

Recent volumes, available from Banbury Museum, include:

*An Alphabetical Digest of Rusher's 'Banbury Trades and Occupations Directory', 1832-1906*, ed. J. Gibson;  
*Victorian Squaron: The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, of Deddington, 1, 1835-1848, 2, 1849-1869*, ed. G. Smedley-Stevenson; *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, S. Townsend and J. Gibson

In preparation:

*Life (and Death) in Georgian Banbury*.

The Society's magazine, *Cake and Cockhorse*, is issued to members three times a year. Those from 1959 to 2003 are available to buy on a CD-ROM or free online at [www.banburyhistory.org](http://www.banburyhistory.org).

Subscriptions (£13) are payable to the Hon. Secretary, c/o Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, OX16 2PQ.

# OXONIENSIA



A refereed journal dealing with the  
archaeology, history and architecture  
of Oxford and Oxfordshire

VOLUME 81

2016

PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY  
THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

© Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society. All rights reserved.

The Committee of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society wishes it to be understood that it is not responsible for any statements or opinions expressed in *Oxoniensia*.

The authors and publisher are grateful to all the institutions and individuals listed for permission to reproduce the materials in which they hold copyright. Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders; apologies are offered for any omission, and the publisher will be pleased to add any necessary acknowledgement in a subsequent edition.

ISSN 0308-5562

Cover images: photographs and a drawing from 'William Butterfield ... in Oxford' and 'The Camel that Escaped the Nazis'. See figures starting on p. 82.

Produced for the Society by Boydell & Brewer Ltd  
Printed in Great Britain by CPI Anthony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

# Contents

Officers and Committee of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society	vii
List of Abbreviations	viii
List of Contributors	x
ARTICLES	
Historic Routes in Cherwell District, North Oxfordshire PHILIP MASTERS and SALLY STRADLING	1
An Early Anglo-Saxon Great Hall at Benson? An Alternative Interpretation of the Excavated Evidence ADAM MCBRIDE	19
Common Carriers in Medieval England: Evidence from Oxford Archives RICHARD SHARPE	27
William Butterfield's Patrons and Clients in Oxford JENNIFER HARRISON	63
The Camel that Escaped the Nazis: Paul Jacobsthal and a Tang Camel at the Ashmolean KATHARINA ULMSCHNEIDER and SALLY CRAWFORD	87
REPORTS	
Farmoor to Blunsdon Water Main: Excavations along the Pipeline Route, 2001 to 2004 JONATHAN HART	99
The Excavation of Mesolithic Flint and an Early Medieval Enclosure at Rushey Weir, near Bampton STEVEN TEAGUE and BEN M. FORD	153
Medieval and Later Activity at Worcester College, Worcester Street, Oxford STEVEN TEAGUE and BEN M. FORD	179
NOTES	
Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2015 DAVID RADFORD	227
Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire, 2015 HUGH CODDINGTON, RICHARD ORAM and SUSAN LISK	233
The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire, 2015 ANNI BYARD	239
Building Recording and Test Pits at Brasenose College, Oxford ALISON KELLY, CHRIS RICHARDSON, MIKE SIMS and ROBIN BASHFORD	247
REVIEWS	
Duncan W. Wright, <i>'Middle Saxon' Settlement and Society</i> ; George Molyneaux, <i>The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century</i> STUART BROOKES	253
Emilie Amt (ed.), <i>The Latin Cartulary of Godstow Abbey</i> MARK PAGE	254

Alan Bott, <i>Merton College: A Longer History of the Buildings and Furnishings</i> GEOFFREY TYACK	256
Sue Simpson, <i>Sir Henry Lee (1533–1611): Elizabethan Courtier</i> R.B. PEBERDY	257
Antony Buxton, <i>Domestic Culture in Early Modern England</i> STEPHEN MILESON	259
Raymond Moody, <i>Burford's Churches and Churchmen</i> COLIN HAYDON	260
Jeremy Catto (ed.), <i>Oriel College: A History</i> MARTIN MURPHY	261
Nina Morgan and Philip Powell, <i>The Geology of Oxford Gravestones</i> R.B. PEBERDY	263
David Bebbington, <i>Mister Brownrigg's Boys: Magdalen College School and the Great War</i> ; Chris Farman, Valery Rose and Liz Woolley, <i>No Other Way: Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War 1936–39</i> MEIRIAN JUMP	264
R.W. Johnson, <i>Look Back in Laughter: Oxford's Postwar Golden Age</i> A.J. HEGARTY	266
INDEX	269

# THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2016

### PRESIDENT

C. DAY, M.A., F.S.A.

### VICE-PRESIDENTS

T.H. WILSON, M.A., M.PHIL., F.S.A.

J.R.L. HIGHFIELD, M.A., D.PHIL., F.S.A.

T.G. HASSALL, O.B.E., M.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

B.W. CUNLIFFE, K.B., C.B.E., M.A., PH.D., LITT.D., F.B.A., F.S.A.

R.T. ROWLEY, M.A., M.LITT., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

J.M. STEANE, M.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

M.R. AIRS, M.A., D.PHIL., F.S.A., I.H.B.C.

G.H. LAMBRICK, M.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

### COMMITTEE

*Honorary Secretary*

J. HIND

*Honorary Treasurer*

P. COOKSON

*Editor*

S.A. MILESON

*Membership Secretary*

P. STEERE

*Lectures Secretary*

A. ROSEN

*Excursions Secretary*

J.P. HINE

*Honorary Librarian*

J. MUNBY

*Honorary Reviews Editor*

R.B. PEBERDY (38 Randolph Street, Oxford, OX4 1XZ)

*Oxford City and County  
Archaeological Forum*

J. HARRISON (Chairman) R. AINSLIE (Hon. Secretary)

*Sub-Committee for Listed  
Buildings*

D.R. CLARK (Chairman) E. WOOLLEY (Hon. Secretary)

*Webmaster*

T. DODD

*Ordinary Members*

N. DOGGETT

# Abbreviations

Abbreviated titles are used in each article after the first full citation. In addition, the following are used throughout the volume or in particular articles:

BAR	British Archaeological Reports (Oxford, 1974–)
BAR BS	British Archaeological Reports, British Series
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BCA	Balliol College Archive
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BRO	Berkshire Record Office
CBM	ceramic building material
ECA	Exeter College Archive
EPNS	English Place-Name Society
EVE	estimated vessel equivalent
Fig./Figs.	figure/figures
f./ff.	folio/folios
FLO	Finds Liaison Officer
HER	Historic Environment Record
IoAO	Institute of Archaeology, Oxford
JMHS	John Moore Heritage Services
KC(A)	Keble College (Archive)
MCA	Merton College Archive
MCR	Merton College Register
<i>MedArch</i>	<i>Medieval Archaeology</i> (London, 1958–)
MOLA	Museum of London Archaeology
MS	manuscript
n.	note
NCA	New College Archive
n.d.	no date
ns	new series
OA	Oxford Archaeology
OBR	Oxfordshire Buildings Record
OD	Ordnance Datum
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 2004)
OHC	Oxfordshire History Centre
OHS	Oxford Historical Society
ORS	Oxfordshire Record Society
OS	Ordnance Survey
os	old/original series
OU DCE	Oxford University Department for Continuing Education
OUSA	Oxford Union Society Archive
OXCMS	Oxfordshire County Museum Service
PHA	Pusey House Archive
QCA	Queen's College Archive
r.	recto
<i>SMidA</i>	<i>South Midlands Archaeology</i> (Oxford, 1983–) [formerly CBA Group 9 Newsletter]
TNA: PRO	The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew



TS	typescript
TVAS	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
v.	verso
VCH	<i>Victoria History of the Counties of England</i> (London, 1900–) [ <i>Victoria County History</i> ]
vol.	volume

# Contributors

ROBIN BASHFORD, Oxford Archaeology

ANNI BYARD, Portable Antiquities Scheme

HUGH CODDINGTON, Oxfordshire County Council

SALLY CRAWFORD, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford

BEN M. FORD, Oxford Archaeology

JENNIFER HARRISON, architectural historian

JONATHAN HART, Cotswold Archaeology

ALISON KELLY, Oxford Archaeology

SUSAN LISK, Oxfordshire County Council

PHILIP MASTERS, ACTA Landscape and Heritage Consultants

ADAM MCBRIDE, D. Phil. student, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford

RICHARD ORAM, Oxfordshire County Council

DAVID RADFORD, Oxford City Council

CHRIS RICHARDSON, formerly of Oxford Archaeology

RICHARD SHARPE, Professor of Diplomatic, Faculty of History, University of Oxford

MIKE SIMS, Oxford Archaeology

SALLY STRADLING, South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse District Councils

STEVEN TEAGUE, Oxford Archaeology

KATHARINA ULMSCHNEIDER, Senior Research Fellow, Worcester College, University of Oxford

# Historic Routes in Cherwell District, North Oxfordshire

PHILIP MASTERS and SALLY STRADLING

## SUMMARY

*In 2013 Cherwell District Council commissioned a study of historic routes within the district to enhance its conservation strategy and to provide planning advice. This article describes the method of survey and evaluation developed and gives an overview of the survival of historic routes. Roman and turnpike roads were predictably well evidenced. Glimpses of the route networks for other periods were obtained and approaches to more detailed investigation of these were tested through place-name studies, map regression, fieldwork and documentary research. The results of the study have been used in the council's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and as the basis for a Supplementary Planning Document.*

In 2012 Cherwell District Council took part in a public inquiry into development at the southern edge of Banbury, where one of the medieval saltways from Droitwich to south-east England was a significant feature. Realising that it knew very little about historic routes within the district, the council commissioned a four-month study to provide guidance on planning decisions, resulting in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).<sup>1</sup> An historic route was defined as one demonstrating one or more aspects of the district's history for any historical or archaeological period. The objectives of the study were to develop a repeatable method, identify historic routes, assess their significance and set out conservation principles. This article describes how the first three of these objectives were addressed, the SPD describes the fourth. A short article in *Context* introduces the study to conservation officers.<sup>2</sup>

There are many studies of particular types of route, especially Roman and turnpike roads, and there is a large literature on canals and railways. But there are few works that give a credible overview of historic routes and the pitfalls of researching them. Taylor's remains the most helpful,<sup>3</sup> and some regional studies, such as Fox's for Dartmoor,<sup>4</sup> with its framework for analysing transhumance and droving, have a wider application. Other work on this theme includes that by Everitt and Ford,<sup>5</sup> while there are studies of individual strategic routes in the region such as Peberdy's.<sup>6</sup> Booth explores the wider economic and social context for the Roman period.<sup>7</sup> Studies of routes have struggled to make effective use of historic landscape

<sup>1</sup> Cherwell District Council, 'Historic Routes in Cherwell District', supplementary planning document, consultation draft (April 2015).

<sup>2</sup> P. Masters and S. Stradling, 'Protecting Historic Routes', *Context*, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, 138 (2015), pp. 32–4.

<sup>3</sup> C. Taylor, *Roads and Tracks of Britain* (1979). See also B.P. Hindle, *Roads, Tracks and their Interpretation* (1993) and R.K. Morriss, *Roads: Archaeology and Architecture* (2005).

<sup>4</sup> H. Fox et al., *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands: Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages* (2012).

<sup>5</sup> A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (1986); W.J. Ford, 'Some Settlement Patterns in the Central Region of the Warwickshire Avon', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Medieval Settlement, Continuity and Change* (1976), pp. 274–94.

<sup>6</sup> R.B. Peberdy, 'From Goring towards Henley: The Course, History and Significance of a Medieval Oxfordshire Routeway', *Oxoniensia*, 77 (2012), pp. 91–106.

<sup>7</sup> P. Booth, 'Romano-British Trackways in the Upper Thames', *Oxoniensia*, 76 (2011), pp. 1–13.

characterization,<sup>8</sup> which deals more effectively with points and polygons than linear features. In any case, a characterization of Oxfordshire was not available. In the light of this, the method was essentially that used by local historians.

Following canvassing of expert opinion, a literature review was centred on the topographical information in the *Victoria County History*,<sup>9</sup> the *Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*<sup>10</sup> and the county Historic Environment Record (HER). Map regression was based on the first edition Ordnance Survey, Davis's 1797 county map, tithe maps and enclosure awards. Routes of known or potential significance were plotted on Ordnance Survey maps and ultimately transferred to the district council's GIS. They were assessed by a combination of fieldwork, aerial photograph analysis and appraisal of the map regression. Fieldwork took into account the character of the landscapes through which the route passed; the route's dimensions and surfacing; associated features; views; and vegetation. Lanes and rights of way mentioned in the documentary sources were walked. Samples of rights of way with no written evidence were also walked to see if the principles identified in assessing documented routes could be applied to them.

Assessment of significance was based on a modified version of current Historic England guidance,<sup>11</sup> focusing on a given route's value in evidential, historical, communal and contextual terms. The last was substituted for aesthetic because there is often little correspondence between landscape quality and heritage significance. For example, in the south-east of the district near Bicester the route from Ambrosden to Whitecross Green Wood crosses a sprawling military complex and low ground with mundane views. But it was shown on a map of 1590 as the way to one of the purlieu woods of Bernwood forest.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, the lanes around Cropredy near the Northamptonshire border have varied views over attractive scenery but date from enclosure in the late eighteenth century. Moreover, setting routes in context enables them to be ranked. The two major Roman roads crossing the area, Akeman Street and Dorchester-on-Thames to Towcester, were part of a national system. Saltways were part of a regional distribution network from Droitwich.<sup>13</sup> Deddington road was a local route linking the two lesser towns of Bicester and Deddington.

Evidential value is 'the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity'.<sup>14</sup> Routes can be a means of explaining the development of the landscape, the relationship between settlements and past land use patterns. For example, they may ignore the pattern of parliamentary enclosure fields and be evidence of earlier activity. They can also have direct physical evidence of a type and period of use such as the aggers (embankments) of Roman roads.

At the simplest level of historical value, routes illustrate the transport needs of a particular period or location. They can also be good evidence of wider landscape change, such as large-scale realignment at enclosure. Broader changes and attitudes to land ownership are also demonstrated, such as the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century practice of creating a uniform character to an estate and routes through it. Humphry Repton called this process appropriation.<sup>15</sup> Within the district it is reflected in the roadside avenues that extend beyond landscape parks. The growth and decline of settlements can be illustrated by the pattern of lanes and tracks.

<sup>8</sup> For example, E. Rouse, 'Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Historic Routeways Characterisation', unpublished draft (2010), pp. 1–6.

<sup>9</sup> *VCH Oxon.* vols. 5, 6, 9–12.

<sup>10</sup> K. Tiller and G. Darkes (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ORS, 67 (2010).

<sup>11</sup> P.J. Drury and A. McPherson, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008), pp. 27–34.

<sup>12</sup> New College, Oxford Archives 5671, reproduced in J. Broad and R. Hoyle (eds.), *Bernwood: The Life and Afterlife of a Forest* (1997), pp. 66–7.

<sup>13</sup> D. Hooke, 'Ancient Roads and the Droitwich Salt Industry', *West Midlands Archaeology*, 43 (2000), pp. 49–52.

<sup>14</sup> Drury and McPherson, *Conservation Principles*, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> H. Repton, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, in J.C. Loudon (ed.) *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton Esq* (1840), pp. 113–14.

Communal value could only be touched upon in this study. For example, in the case of the Noke to Islip corpse way the local community felt so strongly about its obstruction in the sixteenth century that they were protesting fifty years after it had fallen out of use.<sup>16</sup> Another aspect of communal value is the beating of bounds and rogation processions, either as early customs or recent revivals.

## THE CHERWELL DISTRICT LANDSCAPE

The Cherwell valley lies at the centre of the district (Fig. 1). In the north, the land rises from a wide valley floor through a remote landscape around Cropredy to the bleak Northamptonshire wolds. The main valley is much lushier. 'Cow lanes' lead from valley-bottom pastures to the farmsteads on the mid and upper slopes. On the west bank, the principal settlements are linked by winding lanes just below the crest of the ridge, which is dominated by the Oxford to Banbury road (Oxford Ridgeway). On the east bank, Somerton, Upper and Lower Heyford lie close to the valley bottom. The floodplain narrows southwards, but approaching Oxford it opens out where the Cherwell joins the Thames. Here the major modern routes roughly follow the turnpike roads out of the city.<sup>17</sup>

To the east of the main valley, an open plateau is dominated by Upper Heyford airfield and a fragmented enclosure landscape. Two puzzling early routes, Aves Ditch and the Portway, are conspicuous features. Beyond this, the terrain breaks up into minor valleys and ridges within the Great Ouse catchment. It is crossed by the exposed ridge-top route from Adderbury to Buckingham. In the south-east the framework of roads around Bicester is formed by the Roman road from Dorchester-on-Thames through Alchester to Towcester, the east-west Akeman Street and the road to Middleton Stoney. South of Bicester the district takes in part of Otmoor. Routes here were substantially modified by nineteenth-century enclosure, but features such as the Roman road and routes northwards from the 'seven towns' (the main settlements around Otmoor) survive.<sup>18</sup> On the north-eastern edge, older routes have been overlaid by those serving military sites.

At its western end, the district encompasses the edge of the Cotswolds. Much of this area consists of steep-sided valleys and an intricate pattern of minor lanes. In the east there are broad parallel ridges with parliamentary enclosure fields, longer distance routes such as a saltway and a minor Roman road. Finally, in the north-west there is a simpler plateau landform, through which tributaries of the Sor brook have cut roughly parallel valleys. In the post-medieval period the area produced good crops of cereals. Since access to markets was difficult, they were fed to livestock which were easier to move along the steep tracks.<sup>19</sup>

This is a typical central England open-field landscape,<sup>20</sup> dominated by parliamentary enclosure. There is extensive ridge and furrow, evidence of substantial heaths as late as the nineteenth century and many deserted settlements. Three more local characteristics have also shaped routes. The crossing points of the numerous valleys created by the Cherwell, Sor brook, Ray and their tributaries have influenced many alignments. Some of the major crossings, such as Heyford bridge, have a succession of features from undateable ford to twentieth-century road bridge. Second, routes frequently follow ridges within the dissected landform that the watercourses have created. There are others which are often roughly parallel at the edges of floodplains. This has given rise to the idea of higher and lower, winter and summer routes. No documentary evidence has been found to support this, although common

<sup>16</sup> VCH Oxon. 6, pp. 268–76.

<sup>17</sup> B. Trinder, 'Roads in the 18th and 19th Centuries', in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 108–9.

<sup>18</sup> M.G. Hobson and K.L.H. Price, *Otmoor and its Seven Towns* (1961).

<sup>19</sup> J.R. Wordie, 'The South and South-West', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 5.1, 1640–1750 *Regional Farming Systems* (1984), pp. 319–20.

<sup>20</sup> B.K. Roberts and S. Wrathmell, *An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (2000), p. 49.



Fig. 1. The study area.

sense dictates that there would be seasonal local uses. Third, there is a distinctive local pattern of towns and former market centres. Banbury and Bicester are now the only towns, but in the Middle Ages Deddington was also significant.<sup>21</sup> Banbury was a flourishing market and centre of communication from the twelfth century onwards. This has governed the improvement of roads to it, especially for the past three hundred years.<sup>22</sup> Bicester, on the other hand, was a lesser centre. The Roman roads to Alchester 2 km to the south were adapted to meet some of its transport requirements.

## PREHISTORY

Hoskins' description of the Oxford Ridgeway as a prehistoric route<sup>23</sup> illustrates the main issue for this period. It is quite likely that it was, but there is no evidence. Taylor's demolition of the case for the Jurassic Way heading north-east from Banbury as a long-distance prehistoric route<sup>24</sup> was part of the general rejection of the idea of prehistoric man travelling along open ridge-tops above untamed wildernesses. Although there are identifiable long-distance routes in the region, such as the Berkshire Ridgeway,<sup>25</sup> they are outside the study area. However, at Hanborough, south of the study area, Case observed that Bronze-Age and Iron-Age sites may have been set out along a trackway.<sup>26</sup> This appears to have been connected to a strip of gravels capable of supporting wheeled vehicles leading southwards to Witney. Another strip extends northwards to enter the edge of the district in the ironstone-rich area around Ilbury and Iron Down to the west of Deddington. His suggestion that this was a route exploiting the ironstone has never been fully explored. Case noted the importance of this ironstone area in the early Iron Age. Evidence for prehistoric routes therefore falls back on two long-studied features, the Portway and Aves Ditch (Fig. 2), and very limited excavation.

The Portway extends from its junction with Akeman Street at Kirtlington to the edge of the central plateau at Souldern.<sup>27</sup> It is described in the HER as a prehistoric trackway and Roman road but no evidence for the former has been found.<sup>28</sup> Either an agger or lane can be clearly traced on the ground for most of its length. Archaeological investigation for the construction of the M40 did not reveal any evidence of a route north of Souldern,<sup>29</sup> but Margary considered that it continued through Aynho and King's Sutton in Northamptonshire, crossing back into the district to Hanwell. Hargreaves and Parker noted that there were several changes of line not typical of a Roman road.<sup>30</sup> They and others suggested that it may have continued southwards crossing the Cherwell to Kidlington, but Sauer's excavation evidence contradicts this idea. He thought that it ended at its junction with Akeman Street.<sup>31</sup> If it extended beyond this, Oxford seems the only possible destination: a map of the parish of Heyford in 1606 labels it 'Oxforde waye or Porte waye'.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>21</sup> VCH Oxon. 11, pp. 81–4.

<sup>22</sup> B. Trinder, 'Banbury: Metropolis of Carrier Carts', *Cake and Cockhorse*, 18 (2011), pp. 210–43; R.B. Wood-Jones, *Traditional Domestic Architecture in the Banbury Region* (1963); VCH Oxon. 10, p. 58.

<sup>23</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955), pp. 236–7; G.B. Grundy, *Saxon Oxfordshire Charters and Ancient Highways*, ORS, 15 (1933), pp. 93–105.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor, *Roads and Tracks*, pp. 32–6.

<sup>25</sup> J. Steane, *Oxfordshire* (1996), pp. 107–13.

<sup>26</sup> H. Case, 'Excavations at City Farm, Hanborough, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 29–30 (1964–5), pp. 51–3.

<sup>27</sup> I.D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain* (1967), p. 168, road 161A.

<sup>28</sup> HER, PRN 8926.

<sup>29</sup> R.A. Chambers, 'Archaeology of the M40', *Oxoniensia*, 57 (1992), p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> G.H. Hargreaves and R.P.F. Parker, 'Kirtlington Portway Roman Road', *SMidLA*, 2 (1972), p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> E. Sauer, 'In Search of the Port-Way: Excavations in the Area of the Moated Site North of St Mary's Church Kidlington', *Oxoniensia*, 57 (1998), pp. 11–22.

<sup>32</sup> J.L.G. Mowat (ed.) *Sixteen Old Maps of Properties in Oxfordshire (with one in Berkshire) in Possession of some of the Colleges of the University of Oxford* (1888), plates i–iv.

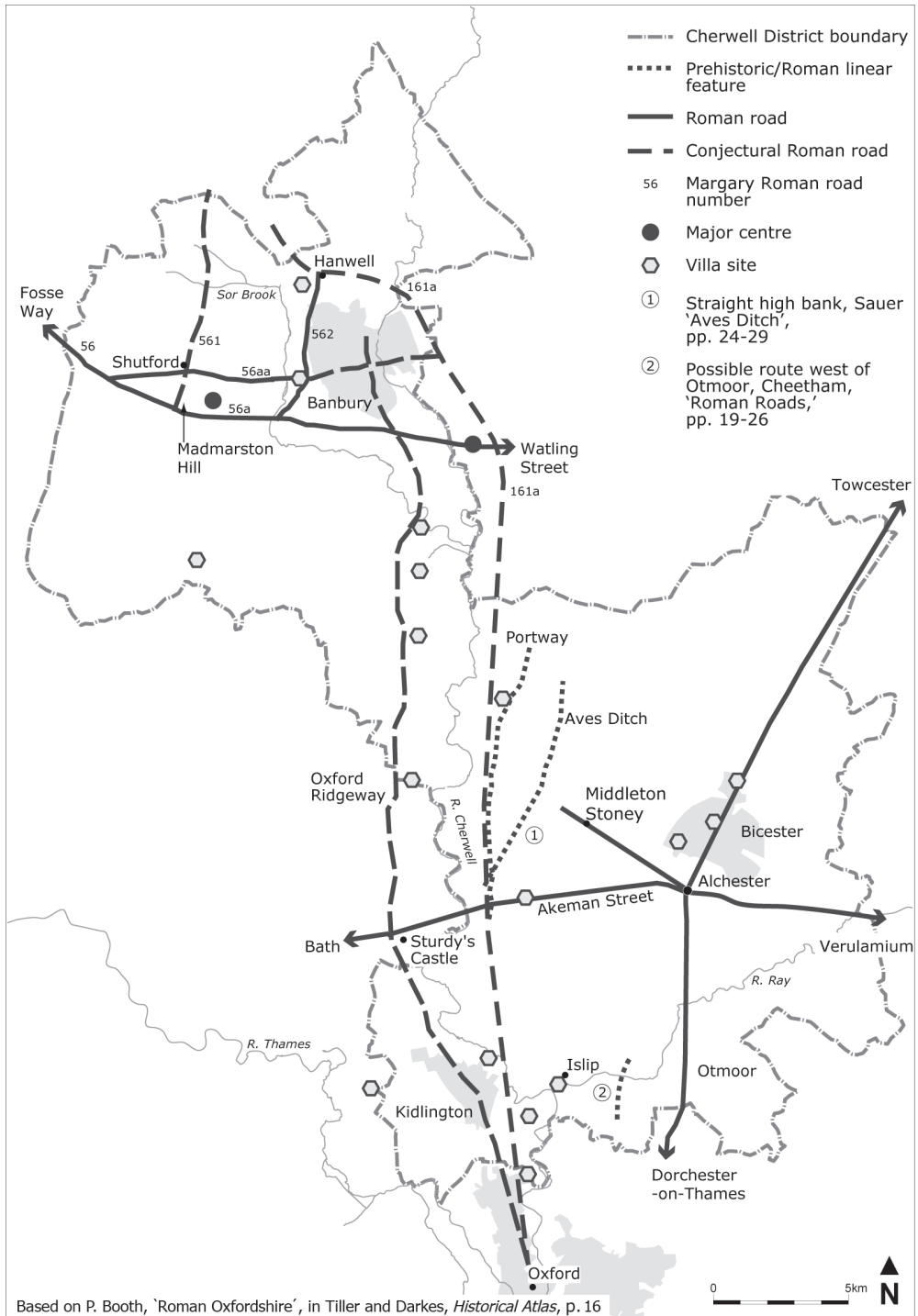


Fig. 2. Prehistoric and Roman routes.



Aves Ditch branches off the Portway 1.5 km north of Kirtlington and extends north-eastwards for 4.2 km as a straight ditch and bank to the Upper Heyford parish boundary. The bank is underlain by an Iron-Age enclosure and was constructed at about the time of the Roman invasion, perhaps as a tribal boundary.<sup>33</sup> It appears to have been used as a road in the Roman period but its bank is much higher than others in the locality. The Upper Heyford section was pulled down in the 1842 enclosure.<sup>34</sup> Beyond this, the evidence for a bank on the same scale as the one to the south is slight. There is no firm evidence of its continuation after Fritwell in the north, or beyond a short section to the south-west of the Portway at the opposite end. Suggestions that it led to a river crossing at Tackley in Northamptonshire or that it is made up of four separate sections comprising three Roman roads on slightly different alignments and a droveway<sup>35</sup> were discounted by Sauer's detailed study.<sup>36</sup> This is partially supported by more recent excavation evidence.<sup>37</sup>

Minor tracks related to pre-Roman land use have been identified in excavations, including those near Islip Bridge and in association with the prehistoric settlement adjacent to Madmarston Hill.<sup>38</sup>

## ROMAN

The framework of the Roman road network in the district was formed by the east-west Akeman Street and the north-south Dorchester-on-Thames to Towcester road through Alchester (Fig. 2).<sup>39</sup> Akeman Street west of Alchester is traceable either as an agger or a modern road to Kirtlington, where it joins the Portway. Beyond this it follows a straight course traced by Margary.<sup>40</sup> East of Alchester the route was formerly traceable through Wretchwick Farm. It then followed the present A43.

The Dorchester to Towcester route enters the district at the southern edge of Otmoor. It cannot now be traced between the River Ray and Alchester, but it was described by Hussey in 1840 and part has been found by excavation.<sup>41</sup> A bridge at Fencott has been dated to AD 95.<sup>42</sup> A possible Roman road around the west side of Otmoor was identified by Plot in the seventeenth century and confirmed in the twentieth.<sup>43</sup> A route to the east has also been proposed.<sup>44</sup> The road is clearly visible as a wide agger through Alchester. It joins the present A41 south of Bicester and, in the main, follows the alignment exactly to the county boundary. A spur heads westwards along the B4030 to Middleton Stoney, where there was a minor Roman settlement.<sup>45</sup>

Much more speculation surrounds the local roads around and to the west of Banbury. Margary's route 56 linked the Fosse Way with Watling Street. Branch 56a enters the district

<sup>33</sup> E.W. Sauer, *Linear Earthwork, Tribal Boundary and Ritual Beheading: Aves Ditch from the Iron Age to the Early Middle Ages*, BAR BS, 404 (2005).

<sup>34</sup> F. Emery, *The Oxfordshire Landscape* (1974), p. 58.

<sup>35</sup> G.H. Hargreaves et al., 'Aves Ditch', *CBA Group 9 Newsletter*, 4 (1974), pp. 10–11.

<sup>36</sup> Sauer, *Linear Earthwork, Tribal Boundary and Ritual Beheading*, pp. 24–9.

<sup>37</sup> J. Hart and E.R. McSloy, 'Later Iron-Age Settlement and Burial near Aves Ditch: Excavations on the Angelinos Pumping Station to Ardley Reservoir Mains Pipeline Reinforcement', *Oxoniensia*, 75 (2010), pp. 133–64.

<sup>38</sup> C.J. Cheetham, 'Some Roman and Pre-Roman Roads by the Confluence of the Cherwell and Ray near Otmoor', *Oxoniensia*, 60 (1995), pp. 419–26; B.W. Eames, *The Archaeology of Swalcliffe Lea*, OUDCE Applied Archaeology (1998).

<sup>39</sup> P. Booth, 'Roman Oxfordshire', in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>40</sup> Margary, *Roman Roads*, pp. 158–9.

<sup>41</sup> R. Hussey, *Account of the Roman Road from Dorchester to Alchester* (1841); Steane, *Oxfordshire*, pp. 116–17; HER, PRN 26352.

<sup>42</sup> R.A. Chambers, 'A Roman Timber Bridge at Ivy Farm, Fencott with Murcott', *Oxoniensia*, 51 (1986), p. 31.

<sup>43</sup> HER, PRN 12726; Cheetham, 'Roman and Pre-Roman Roads', pp. 422–3.

<sup>44</sup> T. Hallchurch, *A History of Horton-cum-Studley, Oxfordshire* (2003).

<sup>45</sup> Booth, 'Roman Oxfordshire', p. 17.

at Sibford Heath,<sup>46</sup> where it follows the B4035, lanes and tracks to pass south of Madmarston Hill. From Swalcliffe Lea the line follows an unenclosed road where there are no obvious earthworks to meet the Tadmarton to Shutford road. From there it crosses Broughton Park to a ridge-top route to Bodicote. Margary believed that the route extended south-eastwards to cross the Cherwell at Twyford and join route 161a. As always, his analysis is logical, but in this case the evidence on the ground is slight. His route 56aa<sup>47</sup> branches off 56a to follow roads and rights of way with slight earthworks as far as Shutford, emerging as a ridge-top route at the former edge of Wroxton Heath. It crosses the valley of a tributary of the Sor brook to meet the southern end of route 562. Beyond this it is lost within the urban area.

The east–west routes were met by three north–south ones. Route 561 was a link from Hornton through Shutford to join route 56 at Swalcliffe.<sup>48</sup> The suggested alignment follows a continuous line of hedges along the boundary between Wroxton and Shenington parishes within a landscape enclosed between 1780 and 1803.<sup>49</sup> There are some terraced sections at the southern end, but no obvious agger. Wickham-Steed continued the route to Hook Norton along a similar continuous line which is not a parish boundary.<sup>50</sup> Route 562 ran from Hanwell down the west side of Banbury to join route 56.<sup>51</sup> It follows a ridge-top course across fields to the Warwick road (A4100) and crosses a golf course to the A422. After this it is on a 0.5 metre high track which could be an agger, then a continuous hedge line with no evidence of earthworks. Route 161a around the north of Banbury and thence down the east bank of the River Cherwell to the Portway could not be traced with any certainty.<sup>52</sup>

## ANGLO-SAXON

Five types of evidence were considered for this period: place-names; archaeological finds; charter boundaries; post-medieval rights of access to grazing, hay or woodland in another parish; and saltways. There must have been many routes linking the settlements mentioned in Domesday Book and connecting them to mills and markets, but it is difficult to separate these from later-medieval ones.

Cole has shown that the Dorchester-on-Thames to Towcester Roman road continued in use in this period (Fig. 3), as did Akeman Street from Alchester to just west of the River Windrush. Margary route 56a was certainly travelled as far as Lower Lea Farm, and perhaps further east. The route from Banbury through Drayton to Stratford was also in use at this time, together with the route to Southam. Just outside the district, the road to the royal manor of Woodstock and on to Warwick was active.<sup>53</sup> But there is limited place-name evidence of Anglo-Saxon use of routes close to the Cherwell valley, apart from the Portway and Aves Ditch. The latter was *Portstræte* in the Ardley charter of 995.<sup>54</sup> This implies a road leading to a market town, which is what *Port* normally meant. *Stræte* was the Old English word for a Roman (metalled) road as opposed to *weg*, which was the more general term. Oxford seems the most likely destination. It has also been suggested as the destination of the Portway, although this name is not documented until 1606.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Margary, *Roman Roads*, pp. 153–4.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 154.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

<sup>49</sup> OHC, PAR 321/16/H1/1 (Shenington enclosure award, 1780); PAR302/16/H1/1 (Wroxton enclosure award, 1803).

<sup>50</sup> V. Wickham-Steed, 'Roman Roads of the Banbury District', *Cake and Cockhorse*, 2.7 (1964), p. 116.

<sup>51</sup> Margary, *Roman Roads*, p. 155.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 168.

<sup>53</sup> A. Cole, 'Place Name Patterns', in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 22–5.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/883.html>.

<sup>55</sup> M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, English Place-Name Society, 2 vols. (1953–4), vol. 1, pp. 4–5.

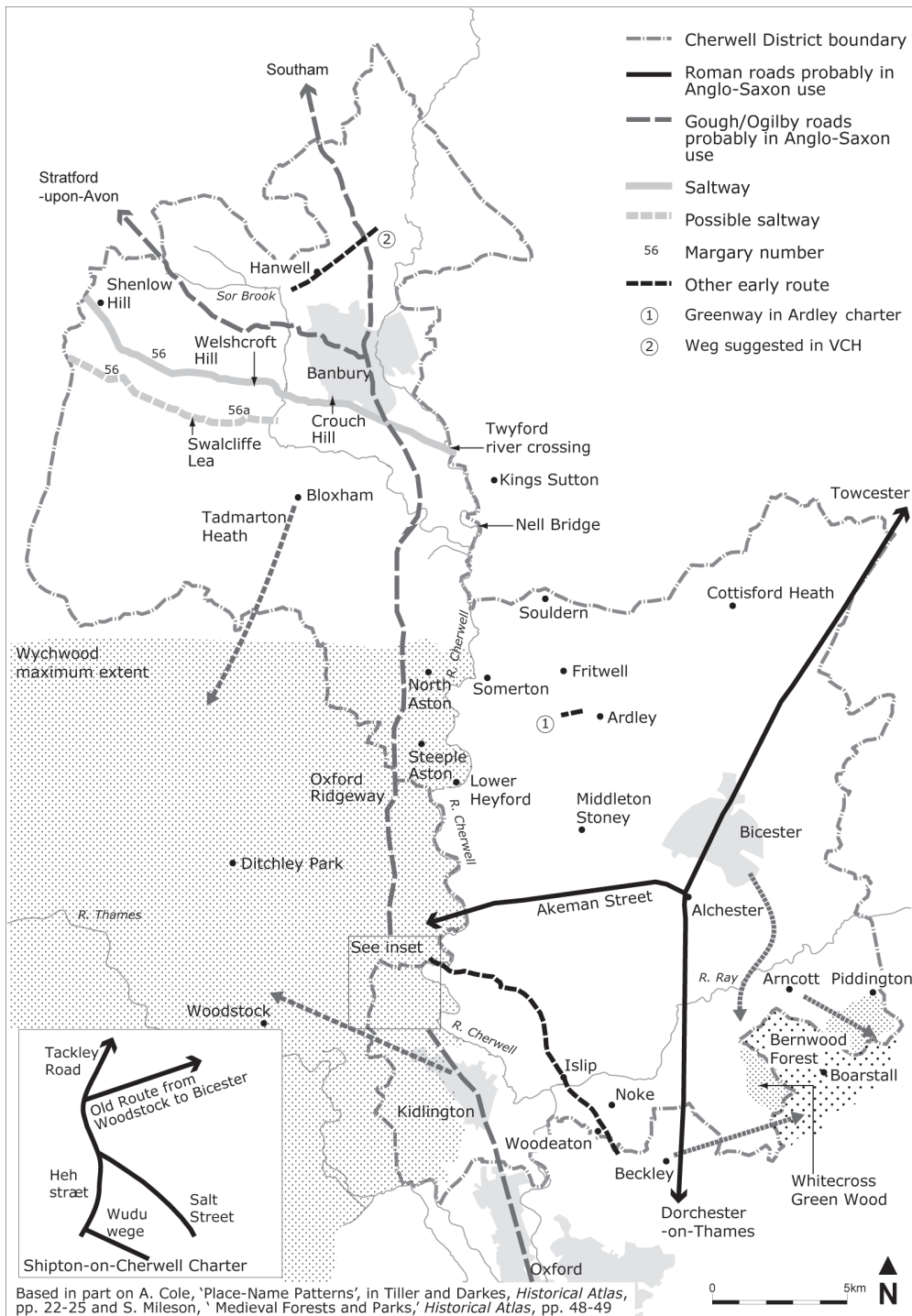


Fig. 3. Anglo-Saxon routes.

Blair has noted the probable importance of the Oxford Ridgeway to the economy of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia.<sup>56</sup> Despite the lack of place-name evidence, coins of the period have been found on and near the route. By the time of the Norman Conquest, the route from Northampton to Southampton via this road was one of the most important in England. It was related to the growth of Oxford and early commercial connections with Lincolnshire and Stamford. The lower part of the river may also have been a significant transport link.<sup>57</sup>

In a few exceptional locations, such as around Witney, outside the study area, the charter evidence is sufficient to allow a partial reconstruction of routes and land use.<sup>58</sup> Within the district, charters only enable short, widely dispersed sections to be identified. In addition to *Portstræte*, the Ardley charter mentions the 'Greatan Dic', which may be a sunken lane on the north side of the village. The 'Grenan Weg' to Heyford is probably now a minor lane truncated by Upper Heyford airfield. The 'Smalan Weg' at Arccott may survive as a bridleway.<sup>59</sup> The four Tadmarton charters refer to 'The Stræt',<sup>60</sup> which may now be marked by the parish boundary. It is not a right of way, but links Tadmarton Heath with Margary route 56a. The 'Hrycg weg' (ridgeway) in these charters may have been Margary 56. In the Whitehill charter of 1104 'Stennithtanwege' was the road from Woodstock to Bicester and the 'Portstræte' here was probably Akeman Street.<sup>61</sup> It is possible to identify a cluster of routes in the Shipton-on-Cherwell charter of 1005 (Fig. 3).<sup>62</sup> 'Heh strœt' was probably a route of some importance on the line of the post-medieval route from Shipston-on-Stour to Oxford. On the other hand 'Wudu wege' ('wood way') may have been of minor significance.

There is very little evidence that there was transhumance on a major scale in Oxfordshire comparable with the Weald or Forest of Arden.<sup>63</sup> Routes leading from settlements within the district to outliers in Wychwood and Bernwood have been established,<sup>64</sup> but suggestions of a more wide-ranging pattern have not been persuasive. Moreover, in some cases apparent ancient rights of pasture may have been the result of medieval estate management, as at Merton College's estate south-east of Oxford at Cuxham.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, some routes can be traced.

Near the Buckinghamshire border routes south-eastwards from Arccott to Oakley were described as the boundary ways to Boarstall in 1833.<sup>66</sup> Boarstall Lane, between Murcott and Arccott is about 80 metres wide. In addition to the lane from Bicester to Whitecross Green Wood shown in 1590 (Fig. 3) and described above, the right of way from Beckley through Horton-cum-Studley north-eastwards to Boarstall can be traced along the Oxfordshire Way and Brill road. Within the restrictions of the study the identification of exact routes from settlements within the district to outlying woodlands and pasture in Wychwood was not possible. But the royal manor of Kidlington, for instance, held woodland at Kings Wood and

<sup>56</sup> J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (1994), pp. 87, 91–2.

<sup>57</sup> Idem, 'Communications and Urban Origins before 1066', in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 28–9.

<sup>58</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, pp. 130–2; Emery, *Oxfordshire Landscape*, pp. 60–2.

<sup>59</sup> esawyer S 843.

<sup>60</sup> esawyer S 584, 611, 617, 618; G.B. Grundy, *Saxon Oxfordshire Charters and Ancient Highways*, ORS, 15 (1933), pp. 64–6.

<sup>61</sup> esawyer S 909; J. Cooper, 'Four Oxfordshire Anglo-Saxon Charters', *Oxoniensia*, 50 (1985), p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> esawyer S 911; Cooper, 'Charters', pp. 18–19.

<sup>63</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, p. 188.

<sup>64</sup> B. Schumer, *The Evolution of Wychwood to 1400: Pioneers, Frontiers and Forest* (1984), pp. 48–53; I.M.W. Harvey, 'Bernwood in the Middle Ages', in Broad and Hoyle (eds.), *Bernwood*, pp. 1–18.

<sup>65</sup> Walter de Merton acquired Cuxham in 1268 and the Buckinghamshire manors of Cheddington and Ibstone in 1271. By the fourteenth century, Cuxham pigs were being sent for pannage in the Ibstone beech woods (P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village. Cuxham 1240 to 1400* (1965), pp. 7–6, 97).

<sup>66</sup> OS 1-inch series (1833), sheet 45.

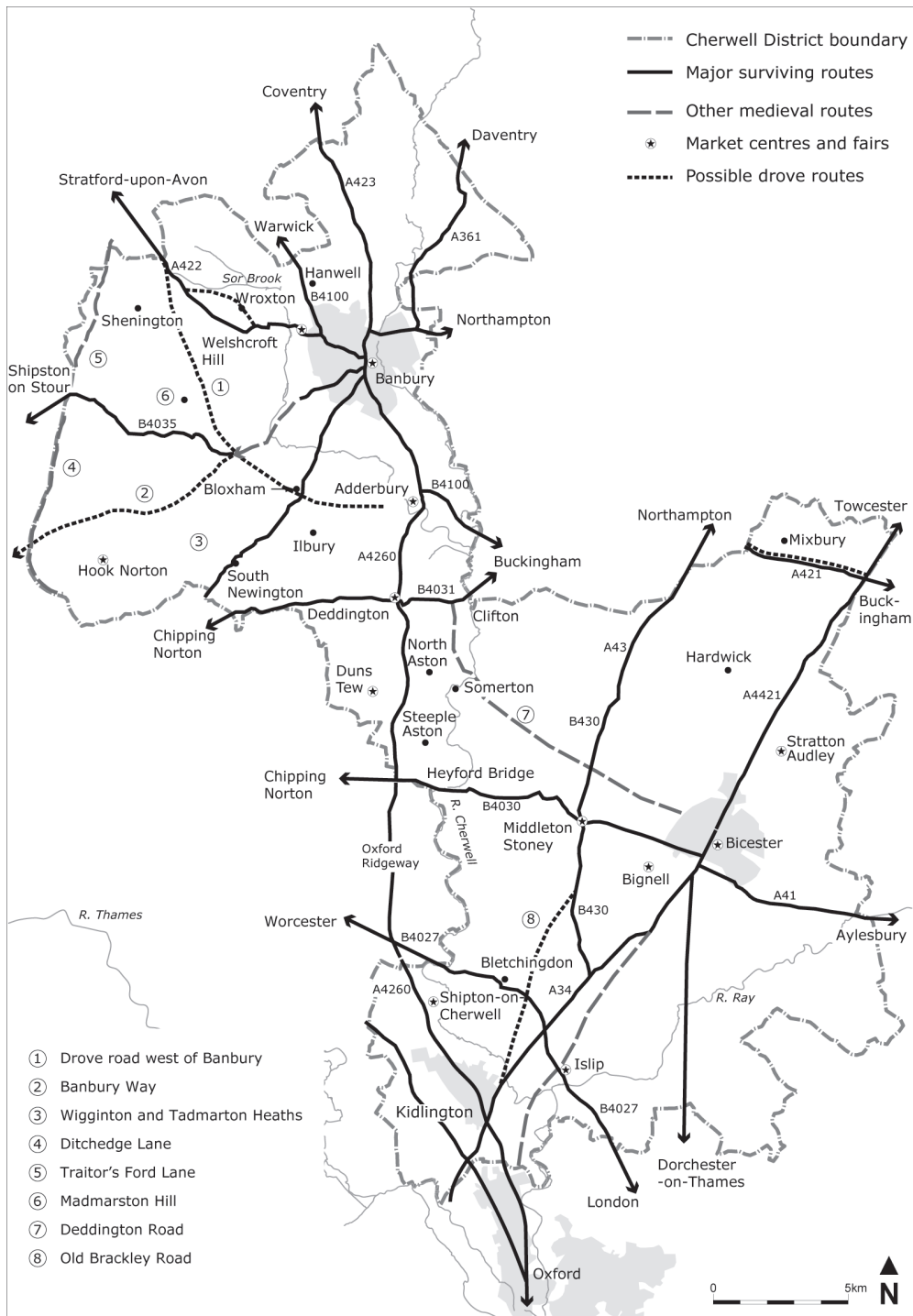


Fig. 4. Late-medieval routes and drove roads.



Fig. 5. *Deddington road.*

Kings Wood Farm,<sup>67</sup> and part of Woodstock manor. The royal manor of Bloxham's outlier was near Ditchley Park at the centre of the forest and it held a chapelry in Wychwood until at least the late thirteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

Within the Cherwell valley, Hoskins proposed an estate comprising the parishes of Souldern, Fritwell and Somerton.<sup>69</sup> There is an outlier of Fritwell parish on the riverside, and the place-name Somerton ('summer farm') indicates summer grazing.<sup>70</sup> Several routes from the east led to this settlement, including Deddington road from Bicester (Figs. 4, 5), although they may have been heading towards the important river crossing-point north of the village rather than pasture. On the west bank, Duns Tew had rights in North Aston's meadows. These may have been approached along the main lane through North Aston village. Wootton, which is just to the west of the district, had rights in Steeple Aston.<sup>71</sup> The apparent rights of Steeple Aston in Heyford's meadows may have been post-medieval, but older rights were claimed by Middleton Stoney in Lower Heyford's meadows and also on King's Sutton meadows 13 km to the north.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to longer distance links, there are several cases where routes survive from intercommuning between parishes. Examples include Noke, Wood Eaton and Beckley in Islip Wood,<sup>73</sup> and Cottisford, Hethe and Hardwick within the heathland now shrunk to Juniper Hill.

## SALTWAYS

Maddicott has shown how important the trade in salt was to the kingdom of Mercia, and Houghton mapped the network radiating from Droitwich.<sup>74</sup> Hooke's review has enabled the location of saltways to be refined.<sup>75</sup> A northern route (Fig. 3) probably entered the district to

<sup>67</sup> Schumer, *Wychwood*, pp. 20–2; Steane, *Oxfordshire*, p. 78.

<sup>68</sup> Schumer, *Wychwood*, pp. 20–2; *VCH Oxon.* 9, p. 72.

<sup>69</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England*, 3rd edition (1984), p. 58.

<sup>70</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 235.

<sup>71</sup> Emery, *Oxfordshire Landscape*, pp. 56–7.

<sup>72</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 6, p. 246.

<sup>73</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 6, p. 210.

<sup>74</sup> J.R. Maddicott, 'London and Droitwich, c. 650–750: Trade, Industry and the Rise of Mercia', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), pp. 7–58. See also J.T.S. Houghton, 'Salt-Ways', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 54, 1929 and 1930 (1932), pp. 1–17; Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, pp. 3–4.

<sup>75</sup> D. Hooke, 'The Droitwich Salt Industry', in D. Brown et al. (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 2 (1981); D. Hooke, *The Anglo-Saxon Landscape: The Kingdom of the Hwicce* (1985), pp. 122–6; Hooke, 'Ancient Roads', pp. 49–52.

the south-east of Shenlow Hill, joining Margary 56a as far as Welshcroft Hill and continuing across the Banbury to Bloxham road to Bodicote. Beesley described it in 1841 as ‘an ancient road which yet exists under that name [saltway] at Banbury running by the foot of Crouch Hill and leading towards the southeast’.<sup>76</sup> A second route to this point may have extended through Swalcliffe.<sup>77</sup> The line eastwards from Bodicote is not clear, but it may have headed for one of the two known early river crossings at Twyford and Nell Bridge.<sup>78</sup> A route further south is less well defined. It may have linked Salford near Chipping Norton to Charlbury. From there it ran to the salt street in Shipton-on-Cherwell.<sup>79</sup> At present, only the short section at Shipton can be identified with any certainty.

## LATE MEDIEVAL

The Gough Map of 1360 and royal itineraries indicate the major long-distance routes of this period (Fig. 4).<sup>80</sup> The Dorchester-on-Thames to Towcester Roman road (A422) remained in use and the town of Bicester developed along it. There was a market to the north at Stratton Audley and one to the south at Bignell. Bicester was also served by the east–west B4030, crossing the Cherwell at Heyford Bridge and continuing to Aylesbury. Oxford was connected to Bicester by a route across Gosford Bridge. The most important route was probably the Oxford Ridgeway. Banbury, Adderbury and Deddington grew as market centres along it, each sited at a junction with an east–west route. The road from Worcester along the B4027 through Bletchington and Islip was also important since it connected a major wool-growing area with London. Most of these roads and the others linking the late-medieval markets and fairs were subsequently turnpiked. They form the framework of today’s A-class and more important B-class roads in the district. It is impossible to say whether their present-day alignments exactly reflect the medieval ones. The more circuitous roads, such as that between Wendlebury and Weston-on-the-Green may do.

The terminology, status and purpose of medieval routes is not always clear. For example, king’s highways, subject to the king’s peace,<sup>81</sup> were most often roads between market centres, but they were sometimes apparently minor routes. Some of the ‘ridgeways’ such as those at Hook Norton, Steeple Aston, Bloxham, Ilbury and South Newington were not on ridges. Gelling suggested that they may simply have followed a headland ridge.<sup>82</sup> Lanes parallel to major routes are another intriguing feature: cattle driven from the Astones to Oxford went not along the Oxford Ridgeway, but a parallel lane known as the ‘green riding’.<sup>83</sup> Similar lanes lie alongside the Bicester to Northampton road and probable drove roads in Sussex. There are thus many difficulties for documentary research and fieldwork. The following paragraphs suggest four further issues for consideration.

The first is the different purposes of routes close together, in this instance access across the River Cherwell. Just north of the shrunken village of Somerton, ‘Gambon *brugge*’ leading across the river to North Aston was first mentioned in the thirteenth century.<sup>84</sup> The valley floor at this point has a complex of causeways, bridges, lanes and tracks. Some may have led to

<sup>76</sup> A. Beesley, *The History of Banbury* (1841), p. 16, n. 36.

<sup>77</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> J. Munby, ‘Land off Bloxham Road, Proof of Evidence on behalf of Cherwell District Council’, unpublished OA report (2012).

<sup>79</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Cole, ‘Place-Name Patterns’, in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas*, p. 24; B.P. Hindle, *Medieval Roads* (1989).

<sup>81</sup> F.M. Stenton, ‘The Road System of Medieval England’, *Economic History Review*, 7:1 (1936), pp. 1–21.

<sup>82</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> C.C. Brookes, *A History of Steeple Aston and Middle Aston* (1929), p. 16; Hoskins, *Making of the English Landscape*, p. 238. One suggestion is that the unmetalled lanes would not have harmed the cattle’s feet.

<sup>84</sup> *VCH Oxon* 6, p. 290.



Fig. 6. *The Noke to Islip corpse way.*

the summer pastures described above, others to the Domesday mill. Somerton road extends westwards up the side of the valley through North Aston and across the Oxford Ridgeway to Duns Tew. This is likely to be an old route since the freeholders of Duns Tew had rights to hay on Bestmoor adjacent to the river.<sup>85</sup> A roughly parallel route leads from the deserted southern part of the village to Aston Mill.<sup>86</sup> Beyond the mill a causeway on the floodplain has superseded one constructed by the canons of Chetwode Priory in Buckinghamshire who had a grange at Nethercote, a short distance further up the west bank.<sup>87</sup> The route passes close to the deserted grange where there are holloways extending down the slope.<sup>88</sup> In this instance the two routes can be explained by the pattern of lordship and land use, but there are many other cases where different functions are not clear.

Second, there are wide routes along major boundaries. Traitor's Ford Lane and Ditchedge Lane follow the ridge along the county boundary with Warwickshire for about 14 km.<sup>89</sup> Most of the route is a green lane about 10 metres wide. Eventually the lane curves away from the boundary towards Great Rollright. The Warwickshire boundary had been established by the early eleventh century.<sup>90</sup> Were such lanes an early feature, and what was their purpose?

Third, there are lost routes as possible indicators of the decline in importance of settlements. Deddington road (Fig. 5) extends north-westwards across the study area from Bicester. It is shown on Davis's 1797 map as far as Somerton, but is then less clear. However, the line is picked up on the 1833 Ordnance Survey and shown continuously on enclosure awards and tithe maps for Bucknell, Ardley, Upper Heyford, Somerton, North Aston and Deddington parishes. The section from Bicester to the Ardley to Middleton Stoney road follows public rights of way on gently curving alignments. To the west it is lost beneath Upper Heyford airfield, emerging as a lane to Somerton. Beyond the river crossing it probably followed rights of way leading to Bowman's Bridge and thence to the Deddington to Clifton road. It is called Deddington road on almost all the historic maps and may have fallen out of use as Deddington declined as a market centre.

<sup>85</sup> Emery, *Oxfordshire Landscape*, pp. 56–7.

<sup>86</sup> National Heritage List 1004826; HER PRN 5614.

<sup>87</sup> Emery, *Oxfordshire Landscape*, pp. 104–6.

<sup>88</sup> HER, PRN 5412.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* PRN 5468.

<sup>90</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, p. 102.



Finally, there is much to be learned from corpse routes and church ways. Their common characteristic, also to be seen in such routes examined by Puckle in Brittany, is that they are as straight as the landform allows.<sup>91</sup> This is the case for those identified in the study area: Noke to Islip (Fig. 6); Sibford Gower to Swalcliffe; Bodicote to Adderbury; Duns Tew to Great Tew.<sup>92</sup> The first is the most informative. Interlocking boundaries indicate that Noke may once have been a chapelry of Islip, although it had its own church by 1191. Some Noke parishioners were said at a bishop's visitation of 1630 to have carried their dead for burial at Islip along the corpse route that can be identified today and also to have paid tithes to Islip's rector. They were tenants of Westminster abbey which had land in both parishes and claimed to have been granted the manor of Islip in 1065.<sup>93</sup> The corpse route leads not from Noke's church, but from the west end of the polyfocal settlement and is a link likely to pre-date the formation of the two parishes.

## DROVE ROADS

Droving was the movement of cattle and other livestock to market. It reached its peak in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but died out almost overnight with the coming of the railways. Many of the cattle driven across north Oxfordshire came from Wales via Stratford-upon-Avon or Broadway, moving on to Northampton or Buckingham, although Wordie said of droving in the midlands that 'everywhere the broad streams of the south-easterly drift were fretted with local cross-currents.'<sup>94</sup> There are studies of routes at Welsh Way and Banbury Lane just over the Northamptonshire border.<sup>95</sup>

Drove roads can be recognized from place-names, wide verges, isolated inns, waymarking vegetation, and overnight resting places called stances.<sup>96</sup> However, within Oxfordshire, where the amount of year-round pasture was often limited, road verges could be wide for purely local grazing.<sup>97</sup> 'Le Forthdrove' is recorded at Bletchingdon c.1250 and the 'Fordrove way' at Lower Heyford in 1697.<sup>98</sup> It is not clear whether the name 'drift' referred to droving or local movement to nearby grazing.<sup>99</sup> Three such names were found: Drift Lane at Wroxton is still there. Welsh or Scots place-names may also be indicators. The prominent Welshcroft Hill is the only known Welsh feature. The name Scots or Scotch is more frequent, but makes little sense in relation to droving and probably comes from lowland Scots being given tenancies because they were good farmers. The place-name Cold Harbour appears to have nothing to do with droving as such, and it is no longer thought to be indicative of Roman roads. However, there is anecdotal evidence to link it with wayside shelters in exposed locations.<sup>100</sup> The three within the district are certainly such places.

<sup>91</sup> B. Puckle, *Funeral Customs: Their Origin and Development* (1926), p. 23.

<sup>92</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 6, pp. 268–76; 10, pp. 225–60; 9, pp. 5–44; Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 2, pp. 296, 288–9.

<sup>93</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 6, pp. 205–19.

<sup>94</sup> Wordie, 'The South and South-West', p. 542.

<sup>95</sup> J.H. Drew, 'The Welsh Road and the Drovers', *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 82 (1967), pp. 38–43; C. A. Markham, 'The Roads of Northamptonshire', *Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club*, 17 (1913–14), pp. 119–28; *Oxfordshire Museums, Information Sheet 4: Drove Roads in Oxfordshire* (1977).

<sup>96</sup> W. Addison, *The Old Roads of England* (1981), pp. 70–83.

<sup>97</sup> Wordie, 'The South and South-West', p. 347.

<sup>98</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, pp. 203, 220.

<sup>99</sup> James Bond, personal communication.

<sup>100</sup> Ann Cole notes that this name only came into widespread use after 1600 and was associated with a notorious London tenement. A. Cole, 'Place-Names as Travellers' Landmarks', in N.J. Higham and M.J. Ryan (eds.), *Place-Names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape* (2011), p. 58; R. Coates, 'Coldharbour – For the Last Time?', *Nomina*, 8 (1984), pp. 73–8; A. Bonner, 'Coldharbour', in J.E.B. Gover et al., *The Place-Names of Surrey*, English Place-Name Society, 11 (1934), pp. 406–10. Of the eighteen names in Surrey and twenty-six in Sussex identified by Bonner, the great majority are in exposed locations that were remote until the nineteenth century.



Fig. 7. Old Brackley road.

Pounds or pinfolds were used for cattle wandering from droves, but also for those falling foul of local grazing agreements. They are mentioned at Drayton, Hanwell (big and little pinfold) and Shenington.<sup>101</sup> Isolated inns are present on Banbury Way and close to Wroxton Heath. The most notable examples of wide verges found were old Brackley road near Bletchingdon (Fig. 7) and the lanes immediately south of the Buckingham road at Mixbury.

In all, five sections of road had some evidence for droving (Fig. 4). Hoskins described Banbury Way as a drove route to Banbury and thence to Northampton.<sup>102</sup> The Northamptonshire section is well documented. The Oxfordshire section crossed Wigginton and Tadmerton heaths for much of its length. These would have provided grazing. The very large area of cow pastures where the route enters the county may also have been significant. Second, the lane west of Banbury near Madmarston Hill was described as an ancient drove road by Beesley in 1841, when it was still in use.<sup>103</sup> Welshcroft Hill is adjacent to what could have been a spur along Margary route 55a. Third, the Stratford road has an isolated inn at the point where it was diverted south-westwards to its present alignment at some time between Davis's 1797 map and the first edition one-inch Ordnance Survey. The valley immediately to the north offers sheltered, well-watered grazing. Fourth, the ridge-top road to Buckingham across former heathland has adjacent wide lanes and a Coldharbour Farm. Finally, old Brackley road (Fig. 7) would have been on a direct route from Oxford to Northampton. The north section has very wide verges. It meets the Bletchingdon to Weston road at a bowl-shaped area of unenclosed meadow. This was probably an overnight stopping place (stance) and perhaps the site of 'Le Forthdrove' mentioned above.<sup>104</sup>

## TURNPIKE ROADS

Most of the turnpike roads for the district have been investigated by Rosevear.<sup>105</sup> Almost all were set up on existing roads and continued improvement has left only a few toll buildings and

<sup>101</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 2, pp. 397–8, 403.

<sup>102</sup> Hoskins, *Making of the English Landscape*, p. 242.

<sup>103</sup> Beesley, *Banbury*, p. 18.

<sup>104</sup> Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 202.

<sup>105</sup> A. Rosevear, *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, Banbury Historical Society, 31 (2010); *Oxfordshire Museums, Information Sheet 5: Turnpike Roads in Oxfordshire* (1977); *Oxfordshire Museums, Information Sheet 7: Milestones of Oxfordshire* (1977); *Oxfordshire Museums, Information Sheet 6: Tollhouses of Oxfordshire* (1977).



Fig. 8. Typical enclosure road.

milestones. Some sections of original turnpike road alignment survive. There is a particularly good example near the A43 out of Bicester. The only road turnpiked within the pioneer phase was the Stokenchurch–Oxford–Woodstock road of 1719. Between 1730 and 1770 seven turnpike trusts were formed, providing the framework of roads around Banbury, but the first turnpiking of a road approaching Bicester did not take place until 1770. This sequence reflects the limited commercial importance of the district and the fact that it was not on one of the main routes to the industrial centres of the midlands. It was not until 1802 with the passing of the Banbury, Brailes and Shipston Act that the network was complete.

Large swathes of the district were enclosed between 1758 and 1842.<sup>106</sup> As enclosure progressed, the required width of the new or realigned roads decreased from 60 ft to 40 ft to 30 ft. These are the lanes which dominate the district away from the major roads (Fig. 8), although the balance between realigned routes and wholly new ones requires further study. In some cases the original planting of hedgerow trees survives and treeless hedges often have the large stumps of the original elms buried within them.

## CONCLUSION

The method used and the level of information gathered for the study met Cherwell District Council's objectives. The heritage significance of individual roads could be ranked and information transferred to the council's GIS. Further fieldwork or documentary research is particularly well suited to volunteers and can fit within this established framework. Using the values discussed above, significance can be graded in accordance with Historic England criteria and used in environmental assessment. However, the method described in this article is essentially a practical way of informing planning and land use decisions. Routes have been classified by the period of their first known use. It would be more logical and informative to assess them thematically by development and purpose. This more fundamental research

<sup>106</sup> K. Parry, 'Parliamentary Enclosure 1758–1882', in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 114–15.

would need to tackle issues such as dealing fully with linear features in historic landscape characterization and the often fragmentary references to roads and tracks in the grey literature. One overriding conclusion can be drawn. There is always a logic to routes based on the shortest distance between two points, although a road might deviate to avoid a toll or steep incline, or to serve a settlement of which no trace survives. Ultimately, understanding an individual route depends on the analysis of what is on the ground, documentary evidence and an understanding of the local history of the locality, exemplified by figures as different in time and character as Robert Plot and W.G. Hoskins.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project relied heavily on detailed and constructive comments from James Bond and the knowledge of district council staff, local historians, archaeologists and members of the Oxfordshire *Victoria County History* team. Contributors included Carol Anderson, Jeremy Gibson, Simon Townley, John and Elaine Steane, Ann Cole, Tim Hallchurch, Derek Turner, Janice Ure, Peter Chivers, Meg Latham, Tony Dale and Bob Hessian. We are particularly grateful to David Godfrey for his work on enclosure awards and tithe maps. The project was supervised for Cherwell District Council by Rose Todd and Clare Mitchell.