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**Excavations at Camp Gardens, Stow-on-the Wold,  
Gloucestershire**

by C. Parry  
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# Excavations at Camp Gardens, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire

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With a contribution by Ann Woodward

## *Introduction*

The town of Stow-on-the-Wold (Fig. 1) is located in the northern Gloucestershire Cotswolds at a height of *c.* 225 m above O.D. on ground formed by Chipping Norton Limestone (O.S. Geological Survey of England and Wales: sheet 217, Moreton-in-Marsh, 1981). The north-east portion of the town stands on the crest of a hill and overlooks a dry valley. Since the 19th century it has been conjectured that this area incorporates part of the defences of a prehistoric hillfort running upon the crest of the hill. However, no significant earthwork can now be identified in the area, and the most notable topographic feature is a flattish terrace measuring *c.* 20 m broad situated just below the crest of slope. The archaeological potential of the terrace is recognized in its designation as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (county monument no. 159). The terrace is under pasture and is traversed by a trackway first recorded on the O.S. map of 1885 when it served a quarry (located on Fig. 1), which is not extant.

This paper reports the investigation by Gloucestershire County Council's Archaeology Service of two areas within and adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument. First, observation and excavation was undertaken in 1991 and 1992 in response to the renovation of a private house called Ellacott. Second, in 1994 excavation was undertaken in advance of the construction of an extension to The Surgery, a building adjacent to Well Lane. This site was the scene of an investigation undertaken in 1972 by a local archaeologist, Helen O'Neil. A note on O'Neil's results is presented below (Appendix 3) to aid interpretation of the results obtained in 1994.

## *Archaeological Background*

The presence of prehistoric defences at Stow-on-the-Wold has been postulated since the mid 19th century, when the antiquary David Royce stated in his history of the town that 'on the north and east sides the traces and name of "Camp" remains' (Royce 1861, 12; see also Grinsell 1964, 11). During the 18th century the area east of Well Lane was known as 'the Camp' (Elington and Morgan 1965, 146) and the same area is named 'Camp Gardens' on all O.S. maps published since 1885. Field-names 'Upper Camp Ground' and 'Lower Camp Ground' relating to an area to the immediate east of the town were recorded on a 19th-century map (Glos. R.O., D674B/P 55: copy of the Mangersbury tithe award of 1838).

The existence of a camp at Stow-on-the-Wold was again postulated by G.B. Grundy during the 1920s on the evidence of a place-name *Maethelgares Byrig* (Maethelgar's fortified place) recorded in an Anglo-Saxon charter of the 10th century (letter to *Times Literary Supplement*, 8

February 1923, 92; reiterated in Grundy 1927, 178–83, and 1936, 161–9). In addition, Grundy deduced that the place-name *Maethelgares Byrig* was preserved in the modern place-name Mangersbury, the hamlet and parish located c. 0.5 km south-east of Stow-on-the-Wold. A supposedly earlier charter of the early 8th century recorded the name as *Meilgaresbyri* (Smith 1964, 222) but the date of this document is thought dubious (Sawyer 1968, 363–4).

Grundy did not investigate the precise location and extent of the earthwork represented by *Maethelgares Byrig*. However, his interpretation was received with great interest by the Ordnance Survey's archaeologist, O.G.S. Crawford. Struck by the town's hilltop location, Crawford had unsuccessfully attempted to locate surface traces of a defensive earthwork at Stow in 1920 (Crawford 1933, 349). An hypothetical circuit of *Maethelgares Byrig* was annotated by Crawford without explanation on a map of the locality published in the mid 1920s (Crawford 1925, map of the Swell district). It was not, however, until the early 1930s that he tentatively identified *Maethelgares Byrig* as a reference to the defences of a prehistoric hillfort whose outline was preserved in the alignment of a former parish boundary and a series of property boundaries together forming an oval shape within and around the eastern part of the town (Crawford 1933). The circuit of the postulated defences is shown on Fig. 1: the area enclosed would approximate to 12 hectares (c. 30 acres).

The former parish boundary thought significant by Crawford ran along the crest of the steep slope on the northern side of Stow-on-the-Wold and divided Broadwell parish (to the north of the boundary) from Stow-on-the-Wold township and Mangersbury parish (Glos. R.O., D674B/P 55: copy of the Mangersbury title award of 1838). The boundary is now of historic significance, since Stow-on-the-Wold was progressively enlarged at the expense of Broadwell and Mangersbury in several parish reorganizations commencing in 1894 (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 142). It has been argued that the township of Stow-on-the-Wold was probably established on land belonging to Mangersbury during the 11th century (Elrington and Morgan 1964, 144). If so, it is possible that the historic boundary divided Broadwell from Mangersbury before the town's foundation.

Notwithstanding the tentative nature of Crawford's interpretation, the presence of a hillfort at Stow-on-the-Wold has been cited as an established fact by several commentators (Elrington and Morgan 1965, 144; Beresford 1967, 438; Johnson 1980, 15). Leech's (1981, 79 and map 40) review of the history of the town accepted that the presence of a hillfort was an interesting hypothesis, but he emphasized the need to carry out further research to test its validity. The uncertain nature of the evidence probably explains why reviews of the Iron Age in Gloucestershire have not recognized the existence of a hillfort at Stow-on-the-Wold (RCHME 1976; Saville 1984).

#### *Observation and Excavation 1991 and 1992: Ellacott, Camp Gardens*

Ellacott, Camp Gardens (O.S. Nat. Grid SP 19412595), is a private house which is one of a terraced row of houses perched on the crest of the hillslope forming the north-eastern edge of Stow-on-the-Wold (Fig. 1). The house lies adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument and its renovation during the early 1990s prompted two episodes of work almost exactly a year apart. In February 1991 a watching brief was undertaken to observe the reconstruction of an extension. In February 1992 excavation was undertaken to provide a trench for a sewage pipe within the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

#### *The observation of 1991*

The watching brief was undertaken during the reconstruction of a small extension measuring c. 8.4 m by 1.9 m at the rear (north side) of Ellacott. The site was first visited when a former

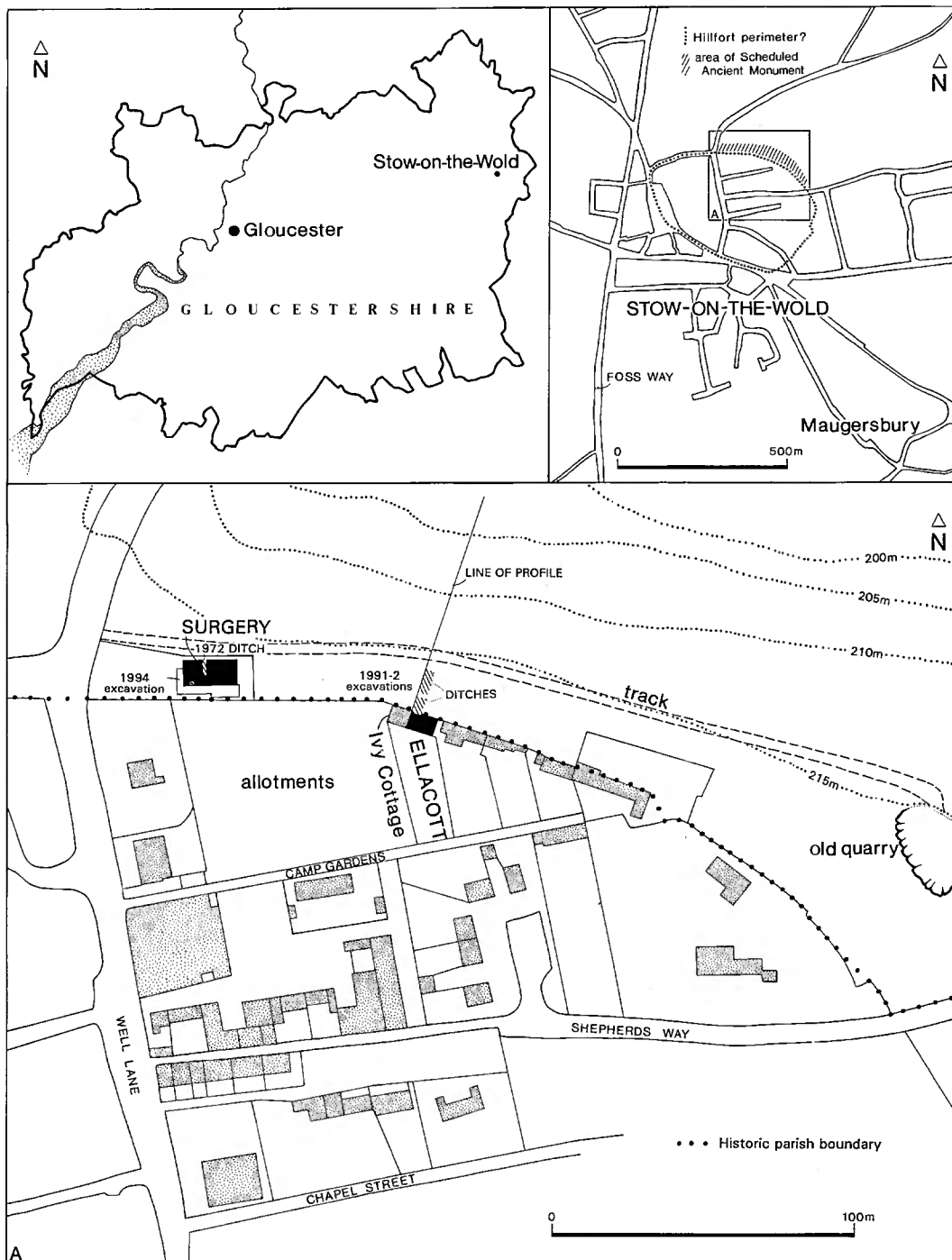


Fig. 1. Location of Ellacott and The Surgery, Stow-on-the-Wold.

extension had been demolished and the foundation trench for the new extension had been excavated by workmen to a depth of *c.* 0.5 m. The foundations of the former extension were on the same footprint, but (like the adjacent extension foundations of Ivy Cottage: see Fig. 2) they were shallow and had not intruded deeply into the ground. In the upper part of the new foundation trench the southern edge of a substantial ditch aligned approximately E–W was observed cut into the natural limestone bedrock. The fill of the feature—a redeposited limestone subsoil—was relatively soft, and to secure a firm footing for the new extension it was necessary for the workmen to excavate the foundation trench to a depth of *c.* 1.8 m until solid bedrock was reached. Excavation to the required level was observed over two days (6 and 7 February 1991). A sherd of pottery and two small fragments of animal bone were recovered from spoil removed from the fill of the ditch, at a depth of *c.* 1.3 m below ground level (measured from the northern edge of the foundation trench).

### *The excavation of 1992*

Shortly after the conclusion of the 1991 observation the owner of Ellacott applied for Scheduled Monument Consent to construct a sewage pipeline running north from the house to connect with an existing pipe running through the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Consent was granted on condition that the trench was excavated archaeologically. The work was undertaken from 17 to 21 February 1992, and was funded jointly by English Heritage and the owner of Ellacott. The trench measured 16.8 m long by 0.9 m wide by a maximum of 1.1 m deep, and was aligned as a continuation of a section recorded in 1991: a combined section is illustrated on Fig. 2. As a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent excavation was restricted to the level required to insert the new pipe: consequently the two ditches sampled in the trench were not fully excavated.

### Description (Fig. 2)

Ditch 30 was the feature whose southern edge had been observed during the watching brief of 1991. The combined section demonstrates that the ditch measures a maximum of 4.3 m wide by a minimum of 1.7 m deep, but it was not bottomed. The fill, context 29, was a redeposited subsoil comprised of limestones (including a few burnt examples) mixed with brown or yellow limestone clay incorporating sparse flecks of charcoal. In 1992 it was observed that in one area of the fill the limestones were deposited loose. Notwithstanding this variation, no evidence was observed to suggest that a sequence of deposits was present. However, it is not possible to be certain of this because only limited views of the section were obtained during the two phases of work.

No finds were recovered from the ditch in 1992. The two animal bones found in 1991 were subjected to radiocarbon analysis and yielded closely comparable dates spanning the Middle Bronze Age: at two sigma one of the dates (OxA 3652) slightly overlapped the formal Middle–Late Bronze-Age divide (Appendix 1). The pottery sherd from the ditch is identified (Woodward below: Appendix 2) as belonging to the Late Bronze Age, and possibly to the earlier part of that period. The radiocarbon dates and the date of the sherd may not, therefore, be incompatible. The dating evidence could indicate that the ditch was open and slowly accumulating debris during both the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Alternatively, the dating evidence might indicate a date of deposition for the bones and the pottery at around the Middle and Late Bronze-Age divide. However, the exact locations of the animal bones and the pottery sherd within ditch 30 are not known, and due to the method of recovery it is impossible to be certain of their relative positions or any stratigraphic relationship. For this reason any interpretation of the dating evidence must remain tentative.

North of ditch 30, but separated by only 1.4 m, ditch 28 lay on a parallel alignment. The ditch measured 10.05 m broad, although the gentle downward slope of its northern edge (which is suggestive of a counterscarp bank) might indicate an effective width of *c.* 6 m. The earliest infills observed at the limit of excavation were contexts 26 and 27. These were redeposited limestone subsoils very similar in character to the fill of ditch 30. No dating evidence was found incorporated in these deposits. Above lay context 25,

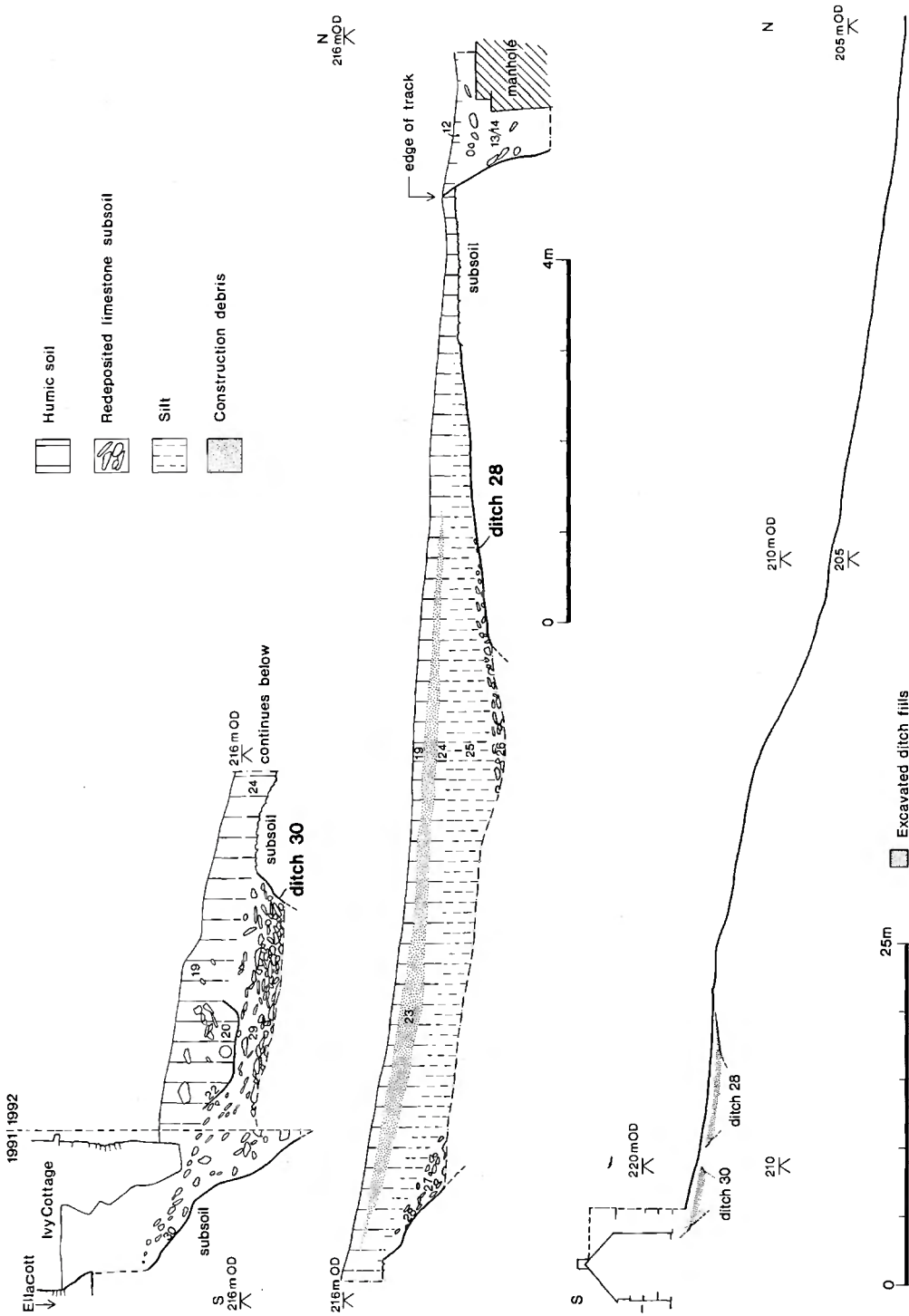


Fig. 2. Ellacott, excavation 1991-2: section and profile.

a compact, inclusion-free silt measuring a minimum of 0.5 m thick, but not bottomed. Finds indicated that context 25 was deposited no earlier than the 18th century, and it is interpreted as a deposit of silt washed into the ditch presumably from its upslope, southern side. Sealing the silt was context 24, a humic soil representing a former ground surface, from which no datable finds were recovered. Deposited over the former ground surface was context 23, a 0.15-m thick layer of redeposited limestone subsoil, probably deriving from post-medieval construction in the vicinity. Above this had formed a modern ground surface (context 19), into which a foul-water pipe (contexts 20 and 22) had been inserted close to the house. At the northern end of the trench was the manhole (contexts 13/14) to which the new pipe was to be connected, and this was sealed by a thin layer of redeposited topsoil (context 12).

*Excavation, 1994: The Surgery, Well Lane*

The Surgery, Well Lane (O.S. Nat. Grid SP 19342597), is located within the Scheduled Ancient Monument *c.* 60 m west of the area examined in 1991–2. The construction of The Surgery in 1972 prompted an investigation undertaken by a local archaeologist, Helen O’Neil, when a large ditch was observed. The results of her work, which were not published, are discussed in Appendix 3 below.

In 1994 excavation at The Surgery was prompted by a proposal to build an extension onto the south and west sides of the building. As a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent archaeological deposits were excavated down to the base level of the proposed raft foundations. The results of the 1994 excavation are illustrated on Fig. 3. Evidence for activity pre-dating The Surgery’s construction was found to the south, where two small quarries (contexts 18 and 21)

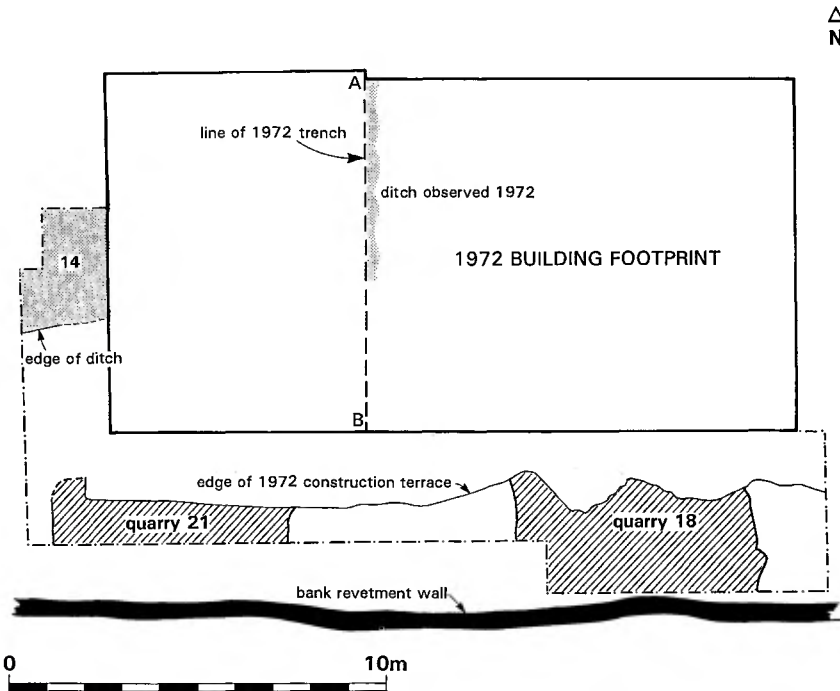


Fig. 3. The Surgery: excavation, 1994: plan of selected features. Also showing the conjectured location of the ditch observed in 1972 by Helen O’Neil.

had been worked and backfilled during the 18th century. The northern sides of the quarries were truncated in 1972, when The Surgery was constructed, by cutting back southwards into rising ground to form a level terrace on which to build.

The position of the ditch observed by O'Neil in 1972 within the footprint of The Surgery is shown on Fig. 3. In 1994 a small area to the immediate west of the building contained the conjectured alignment of the ditch. In this area a soil distinction between limestone bedrock and a modern construction deposit (context 14) was observed, the division being aligned approximately with the southern edge of the ditch observed in 1972. Context 14 is, therefore, interpreted as a modern deposit compressed into the soft infill of the ditch.

### *General Discussion*

Interpretation of the ditches found at Ellacott in 1991–2 is made difficult by the incomplete evidence for their dimensions and infilling. Nevertheless, their large sizes alone provide strong justification for interpreting both ditches as defensive structures. No evidence was found to indicate the presence of any bank accompanying either ditch. However, the deposits of redeposited limestone found in both ditches could derive from the demolition or erosion of adjacent banks. If inner banks were present these would have been located behind the crest of the hillslope to the south of the area investigated. Such banks could, perhaps, have been utilized for the historic parish boundary in this area (which presumably originated during the medieval period), although this may simply have followed the natural crest of the hillslope.

The ditches are located on, or adjacent to, the presumed alignment of the feature called *Maethelgares Byrig* in an Anglo-Saxon charter of the 10th century. No archaeological evidence was found to prove that either ditch was visible as a surface earthwork during the 10th century. Ditch 30 appears to have become infilled during the Bronze Age, and for ditch 28 the absence of dating evidence means that there can be no certainty that this feature existed during the Anglo-Saxon period. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the place-name could have referred to a bank relating to either ditch. In addition, the fact that ditch 28 was open and accumulating fills during the 18th century and later indicates that it could have prompted Royce's (1861, 12) comment that traces of a camp were visible on the north and east sides of Stow-on-the-Wold.

No Middle or Late Bronze-Age feature comparable to ditch 30 has previously been observed in Gloucestershire (see Ellison 1984 and Darvill 1987 for reviews of the Bronze Age in the county). Bearing in mind its date, defensive proportions and topographical location, parallels for ditch 30 may perhaps be sought in the small number of large Middle and Late Bronze-Age hilltop enclosures identified in southern England (Needham and Ambers 1994). The best known of these is Rams Hill, Oxfordshire (Bradley and Ellison 1975), which lies *c.* 45 km south of Stow-on-the-Wold. The radiocarbon dates obtained for ditch 30 (Appendix 1) are within the Middle-Late Bronze-Age range of radiocarbon dates obtained from Rams Hill (Needham and Ambers 1994, 231–5).

The limited excavation of ditch 30 makes structural parallels difficult, but it may be significant that its width (4.3 m) is within the range of 4.2–4.6 m for the width of the enclosure ditch found at Rams Hill. However, whether ditch 30 had steeply-sloping edges and a flat base (as found at Rams Hill: Bradley and Ellison 1975, fig. 2.6) or an irregular 'V'-shaped profile (like the period I ditch found at Norton Fitzwarren, Somerset: Ellis 1989, 62) could not be ascertained.

The precise function of large Middle and Late Bronze-Age enclosures is uncertain. It was formerly argued by Ellison (1980 and 1981) that they belonged to the Middle Bronze Age and that their siting could be related to the distribution pattern of certain types of artefacts, specifically fine pottery, metalwork ornaments and weapons. From apparent artefactual associations,



Ellison suggested that the enclosures performed an important role in regional exchange networks, perhaps representing the centres of political power through which goods were channelled and controlled. For Gloucestershire, Ellison (1984, 122) postulated that examples of high-status Middle Bronze-Age sites should be sought in the Upper Thames and Severn Valleys, where finds of metalwork are concentrated. However, more recently Needham and Ambers (1994, 239–40) have questioned the artefactual associations postulated by Ellison, and have doubted whether the small number of Middle and Late Bronze-Age large enclosures can be viewed as a functionally coherent and contemporary group of sites. Evidently, more information regarding this type of site is required before the significance of ditch 30 can be understood.

No evidence was found to date ditch 28, but its location corresponds approximately with the alignment of the prehistoric defences of *c.* 12 hectares postulated by Crawford (1925 and 1933), and on these grounds an Iron-Age date for this feature seems possible. In addition, it is tempting to identify the ditch observed in 1972 at The Surgery with a continuation of ditch 28, since this apparently lay in a similar position on the terrace below the crest of the hillslope. However, the uncertain nature of the evidence relating to the ditch observed in 1972 (Appendix 3) means that this evidence cannot be viewed as wholly reliable. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that several large Middle and Late Bronze-Age enclosures have been found on sites later used for Iron-Age hillforts. At Rams Hill the Bronze-Age enclosure lay concentrically within the Iron-Age defences, but at Highdown Hill, Sussex (Wilson 1940 and 1950), Norton Fitzwarren, Somerset (Ellis 1989), and Hog Cliff Hill, Dorset (Ellison and Rahtz 1987), the Iron-Age ramparts, although enclosing larger areas, partly corresponded with the circuits of the Bronze-Age enclosures.

At *c.* 5.6 hectares in extent the enclosure identified at Hog Cliff Hill, Dorset (Ellison and Rahtz 1987, 261), is by far the largest of the Middle or Late Bronze-Age enclosures postulated to date. Therefore, it can be suggested that ditch 30 would be unlikely to delineate the full extent of the *c.* 12-hectare defensive circuit conjectured by Crawford. No trace of a westward continuation of ditch 30 was located during the 1994 excavation at The Surgery, where (as in 1991–2 at Ellacott) an area immediately north of the crest of the hillslope was examined. Therefore, it can be presumed that ditch 30 terminated before, or turned away from, The Surgery site.

#### APPENDIX 1

##### Ellacott, Camp Gardens, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire Radiocarbon dating: summary of results

<i>Laboratory no.</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Age B.P.</i>	<i>Calibrated date range B.C.</i>
OxA 3652	29	animal bone	2955 ± 65	1300–1055 1 sigma 1400– 990 2 sigma
OxA 3801	29	animal bone	2960 ± 65	1305–1090 1 sigma 1390–1005 2 sigma

#### *Notes:*

Two samples (from context 29, the fill of ditch 30) were submitted to the Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit, Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, Oxford University. The 1 and 2 sigma ranges represent 68% and 95% confidence respectively. The calibrated date range for both samples was obtained using the programme of C.I.O. Groningen.

## APPENDIX 2

A note on the pottery sherd from ditch 30 by Ann Woodward

A single sherd was recovered from a point well down in the ditch filling along with two fragments of animal bone, which were dated by the radiocarbon method. The radiocarbon dates indicate a Middle Bronze-Age or Middle-Late Bronze-Age date for the bones. Although it is difficult to comment positively on the basis of a single sherd, it can be stated that the sherd is not of local Middle Bronze-Age type, but appears to come from a vessel similar to examples of Late Bronze-Age date from Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties.

The sherd is a single plain base angle fragment, weight 18 gm, from an almost straight sided vessel with a slightly uneven external expansion at the base. The vessel would have been of medium size, with a base diameter of *c.* 110 mm, and rather thin walled (average wall thickness, 6 mm). The fabric is hard with a sandy feel and slightly laminated fracture. The exterior is buff in colour, while the core and the interior surface are dark grey. The inclusions comprise a moderate density of coarse (usually 1 mm diameter or less, a few larger), moderately well-sorted, subrounded fragments of fossil shell and shelly limestone, and sparse, poorly sorted, subangular mica flakes, 1 mm diameter or less in size.

This particular style of thin-walled, straight-sided jar with everted base is a classic Late Bronze-Age form. In Gloucestershire it can be matched well at Shorncote Quarry where it is classified as B2 (Morris 1994, fig. 11, no. 15). Although no exact match for the Stow-on-the-Wold pottery fabric is present in the Shorncote assemblage, 87% of the material there was tempered with fossil shell. No absolute dating was achieved for the Shorncote site, but Morris cogently argued for a 9th–8th century B.C. date range for the mainly plain ware assemblage represented there. Limestone- and shell-tempered fabrics which also contain mica are common in the Late Bronze-Age/Early Iron-Age phases at Crickley Hill (Elsdon 1994, 203–21, fabric 1), but this assemblage does not include the classic thin-walled Late Bronze-Age jars and it is ascribed to a rather later date, from the 8th–6th centuries B.C.

In Somerset, the large plain ware assemblage of post-Deverel-Rimbury type from stratigraphic unit 4 at Brean Down contains many everted base angles (cf. Woodward 1990, 135 and fig. 94, 86–91). Here the radiocarbon dates, although somewhat problematic, seem to suggest a date in the earlier part of the Late Bronze Age. The predominant Late Bronze-Age fabric at Brean Down is characterized by calcite inclusions, but shelly and oolitic limestone fabrics are the norm in the Late Bronze-Age assemblage from Combe Hay, Somerset (Price and Watts 1980, 25). A particularly fine group of thin-walled Late Bronze-Age jars of varying sizes has been found recently at Broom in Warwickshire (Woodward forthcoming). In this case the fabrics are coarse and sandy, but mica flecks are also a common component. Radiocarbon dating from this site, however, indicates a date rather later in the Late Bronze-Age period.

It may be concluded that the sherd from ditch 30 probably derives from a plain Late Bronze-Age jar of post-Deverel-Rimbury style. This type of vessel usually belongs to an early stage in the Late Bronze Age and could be in accord with some part of the date range indicated by the two radiocarbon dates.

## APPENDIX 3

A note on Helen O'Neil's observation at The Surgery, Well Lane, in April 1972

*Introduction*

The work of the archaeologist Helen O'Neil (1893–1984) was commemorated in several articles published in the last year of her life (Hall and Saville 1984; Jones 1984). From a base at her home

at Bourton-on-the-Water (c. 5 km south of Stow-on-the-Wold), O'Neil undertook numerous excavations and observations in the Cotswolds, many of them on behalf of the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate. By the end of the 1980s her excavation archives had been acquired by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England (RCHME 1990), and these are held in its National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon (RCHME, NMR Archive no. 615982). The archives contain records relating to an observation undertaken during the construction of The Surgery at Well Lane, Stow-on-the-Wold, in April 1972 and this is presumably the work alluded to in a publication of the mid 1970s (RCHME 1976, 111). A bibliography of O'Neil's publications (Hall and Saville 1984) contains no reference to the work undertaken at The Surgery in 1972. A letter in her archives indicates that she intended to publish a note on the work in these *Transactions*, but this was evidently not carried out.

The O'Neil archives incorporate seven documents relating to the 1972 observation. These are stored within a folder identified in the Royal Commission's catalogue as Item 8 from Box 17. In addition, a photograph of the 1972 investigation is held in O'Neil's collection of colour slides (Box V, no. 87). The records include several drawings of sections across The Surgery site: one of these is reproduced as Fig. 4. A text (which appears to be the note intended for publication) reads as follows:

Parson's Corner, Stow on the Wold, Gloucestershire. April 1972.

In preparing the foundations for the new Surgery on a site on sloping ground on the north side of Stow on the Wold and beside the roadway to Stow Well, the latter situated on the Bridle road to Broadwell, part of an ancient ditch was discovered.

The area under discussion is a rough sloping hillside which falls fairly sharply [*sic*] into an eastern re-entrant valley of the River Evenlode. The site of the new building lies some 24 feet outside a high bank or rampart. The rampart forming what has long been thought to have been part of the defences of the prehistoric hill-fort of Stow on the Wold. The recent find has therefore helped to confirm the presence of a defended site.

Only half the width of the ditch was available for examination, as earlier disturbances by the laying of water mains had destroyed a certain amount of the evidence. However, in the trench dug, the remains of a wide ditch survived, some 16 feet in width, though only 8 feet could be measured, and with a depth 5 feet at greatest depth. The filling was of a consistent solid reddish clay, some 3 feet in depth topped by a layer of a pale yellow clay with more recent layers above.

The rampart or bank was of a natural nature, scrapped [*sic*] from the rock, the Great Oolite, which lies close to the surface of the isolated hill-top on which Stow is situated.

No finds were made from the filling in the ditch to help with dating but the colour and texture of the reddish clay resembles such deposits found elsewhere in prehistoric sites in the neighbourhood. Traces remain in a few areas of Stow which show the limits of the prehistoric hill-fort, a helpful article on the subject is one published in *Antiquity*, September 1933, p. 347, with a map of Stow on the Wold, called *An English Hill-Top Town*, by O.G.S. Crawford.

I am grateful to the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Department of the Environment and Mr P.F.B. Preston, Architect of Hanley Castle, for the opportunity of carrying out an investigation of the site and Dr A.E. Hessel of Stow on the Wold for much help on my visits to Stow.

Helen O'Neil April 1972

*Some further information relating to the 1972 observation*

Some further information concerning the construction of The Surgery in 1972 is contained in records owned by Dr. M. King, formerly practising at The Surgery, now retired. These include written specifications, and an extract reads as follows:

[*Specification no.*] '28. Department of the Environment To comply with the requirements of this Department it is necessary to excavate [*a*] trial trench across the width of the plot running from

North-South. It is proposed that this trench should be along the line A-B on the drawings so that it can be used as part of the building. The trench will be excavated as previously specified. 2 [sic] weeks notice are to be given to the Department before excavations are commenced so that arrangements may be made for a local archaeologist to record the findings.'

The plan accompanying the specification locates the line A-B within the width of the proposed surgery building, as shown on Fig. 3.

#### *Discussion of the 1972 observation*

It is clear from the architect's specification of 1972 that O'Neil's work at The Surgery arose from the interest of the Department of the Environment in the proposed construction of the building within the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Unfortunately, no records relating to the work appear to have passed down to English Heritage.

O'Neil's archive contains two similar drawings which provide a record of the ditch in section. One version appears to be a working copy, a second (reproduced as Fig. 4) appears to be a drawing intended for publication. However, it should be noted that the drawings are problematic, since they locate the southern edge of the ditch only 3.35 m distant from the wall forming the southern boundary of the plot of land containing The Surgery. For several reasons it is difficult to accept that the ditch lay in that position. Firstly, the drawings would place the southern edge of the ditch to the south of the structure of The Surgery, and thus to the south of the trench line A-B shown on the architect's plan of 1972. In addition, this distance does not accord with the evidence observed during the excavations of 1994, when the limestone bedrock was found to be intact for a minimum distance of 7.5 m north of The Surgery's southern boundary.

It is, therefore, surmised that O'Neil's section drawing (Fig. 4) does not show the correct relationship of the ditch to The Surgery's southern boundary. An explanation for O'Neil's misplacement of the site of the ditch is provided in an archive report on the 1994 excavation (Parry

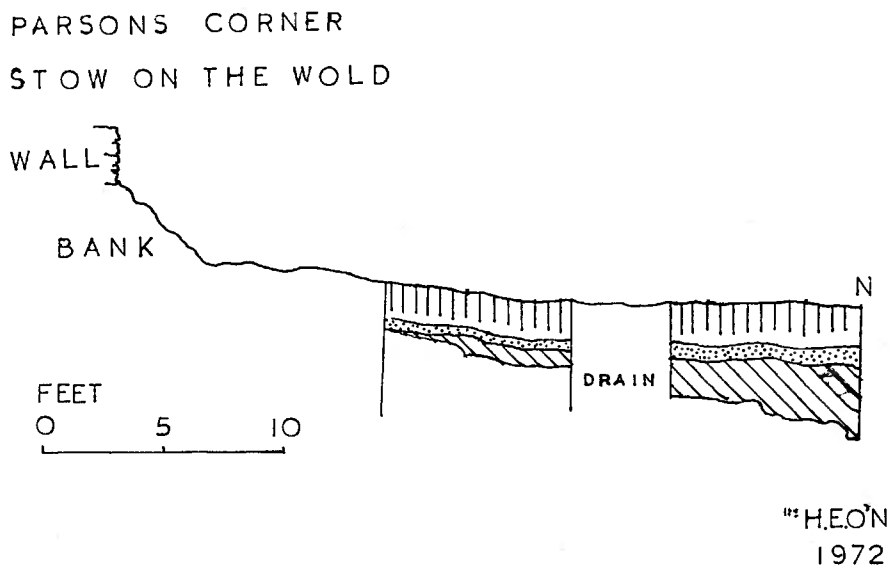


Fig. 4. The Surgery: section of the ditch observed in 1972, drawn by Helen O'Neil (RCHME: Crown copyright).

1996). For this account it is sufficient to state that the evidence suggests that O'Neil compiled both drawings of the ditch some time after her observation in 1972 was completed, and that she misinterpreted her information relating to the work.

### *Acknowledgements*

I should like to thank Mr. D.J. Coleman and Mrs. A.D. Whitby (respectively the owners of Ellacott and the Scheduled Monument in 1991–2) and Dr. T.J. Healey (of The Surgery, Well Lane, in 1994) for their help and co-operation during the investigations. Jan Wills, County Archaeological Officer, instigated the watching brief at Ellacott in 1991 and provided encouragement during the subsequent excavations. I am grateful to staff of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) for permission to quote from documents contained in the O'Neil archive, and for permission to reproduce Fig. 4. Figs. 1–3 were drawn by Caroline Jamfrey.

The archive of records and finds deriving from the investigations of 1991–2 and 1994 are currently in the custody of Gloucestershire County Council's Archaeology Service. Detailed archive reports (Parry 1994 and 1996) have been deposited with the archive and with the County Sites and Monuments Record. Statements contained in published interim notes of the investigations (Parry 1992 and 1993; Parry and Edmondson 1995) are superseded by those made in this report.

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