

Recent IA Site Investigations

The following list of IA sites investigated over the last year or so was provided by local archaeological units working in our area. Although these findings are publicly available in the Sites and Monuments Record held by the local authorities, only a few of the more significant reports find their way into print in publications such as the BIAS Journal. Nevertheless, the remaining sites, often overlooked or difficult to interpret, can provide important clues to the specialist researcher who might wish to follow them up. We therefore hope that these details will be useful to our readers and worth publishing on a regular basis in future issues of the Journal.

AAU - Avon Archaeological Unit

BAT - Bath Archaeological Trust

BaRAS - Bristol & Region Archaeological Services

BRISTOL

Site A1, Harbourside, Hotwells Road, Bristol (BUAD 3829) ST5906272566

Following an archaeological excavation during January and February 1999 at the former Limekiln Dock, Hotwells Road, a watching brief monitored the final stages of the site redevelopment between March 2001 and February 2002. The removal of up to 2.5m of overburden by 360⁰ mechanical excavator revealed structural features identifiable as dockside buildings on early Ordnance Survey maps. The coping stones and upper courses of the Limekiln Dock (BUAD 761M) were exposed during groundworks, the outline of the Dock was to be preserved within the proposed development. Evidence for construction materials and change of use of dockside buildings was established. A 'Mouchel Hennebique' reinforced concrete wharf was dismantled revealing the earlier wall of the Floating Harbour. This wall had at least five stages of rebuild within it effectively representing the intensification of dockside activity in this area, notably the growing importance of the adjacent Brandons Wharf, until the closure of the Dock in 1903.

Andrew King, BaRAS

Cheese Lane, St. Philips ST5942072909

An excavation was carried out by R. Jackson of Bristol and Region Archaeological Services on land occupied by the former Sheldon Bush and Patent Lead Shot Company.

Although the site lies close to the church of St. Philip and Jacob, between Cheese Lane and the Floating Harbour, no medieval occupation was discovered although sherds of medieval pottery were found in the upper levels of the alluvium on the river bank.

The earliest activity on the site occurred in the mid-17th century involving the construction of a stone wall close to the present river frontage and the reclamation of the river bank by the dumping of rubble and industrial waste behind the wall to provide a level area. At this time a narrow access way, Allcock's Lane, was constructed from Cheese Lane to the river wall. Houses were built along the north side of the lane.

During the second half of the 17th century buildings were erected on the Cheese Lane frontage and appeared to be associated with metal working industries. The stone base of a probable iron furnace was uncovered together with crucible fragments containing what seem to be copper residues.

There is documentary evidence that in the early 18th century a glass works was built on the site. A substantial wall built over the late 17th-century levels, and apparently part of a circular structure, may have been part of the glass cone but was badly truncated by later structures. Quantities of glass cullet and slag were found across the site, together with fragments of large pottery crucibles used for holding molten glass.

In the 18th century Allcock's Lane was widened, encroaching on the houses to its north. In the 19th century the derelict glassworks became a brass manufactory and then a lead works. Extensive remains of 19th- and 20th-century factory buildings, machine bases and lead furnaces were recorded.

Andrew King, BaRAS

Nursing Home Site, Tramway Road, Brislington (BSMR 20412) ST614715

An observation and recording exercise was carried out by Avon Archaeological Unit for the Southmead and Frenchay Healthcare Trust on the site of the Co-operative Wholesale Society Clothing Factory. This factory had been constructed in 1936 and its history is well documented to the present day. The site is

also adjacent to the site of Brislington Roman Villa and the 1863 North Somerset Branch of the GWR, now closed. No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were recovered below the concrete yard and factory floors and heavy brick drains and foundations. A possible air raid shelter was located, dated by building records in the Bristol Record Office to 1940.

J.G.P. Erskine, AAU

St. Phillips Church, Novers Lane, Knowle (BSMR 20684)

ST58516945

The plan of a 19th century limekiln was recovered before construction of an estate of social Housing by Bristol Churches Housing Association. The Methodist Church of St. Phillip was moved in the 1950s from Counterslip in Temple, Bristol. The limekiln was noted on the Bedminster Tithe Map of 1842 and the OS Plan of 1882.

As can be seen from the photograph, only the base of the furnace and arch constructed of limestone slabs survived, together with some exterior hard surfacing.

The project was managed by Andrea Cox and Lynn Hume of Avon Archaeological Unit.

J.G.P. Erskine, AAU

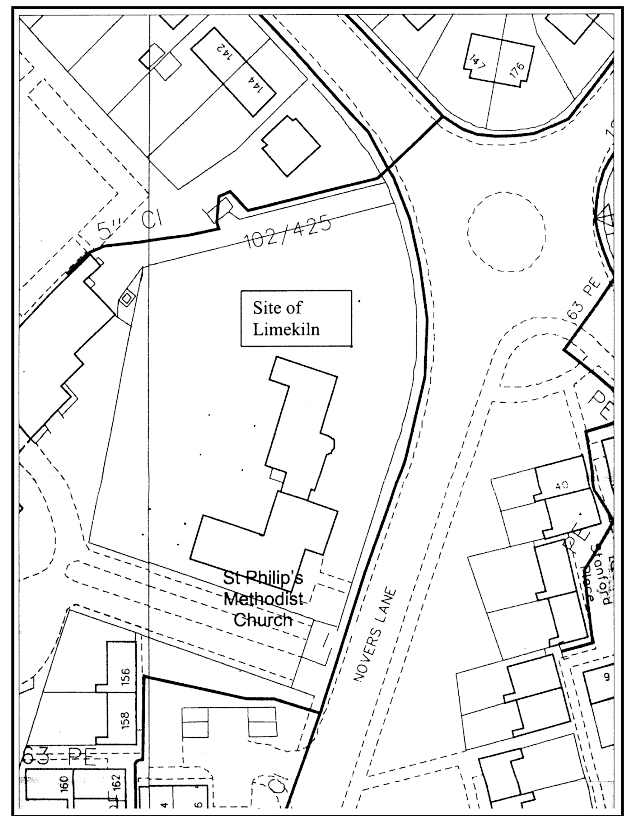


Fig. 1 Site Location of the limekiln at Novers Lane, Knowle

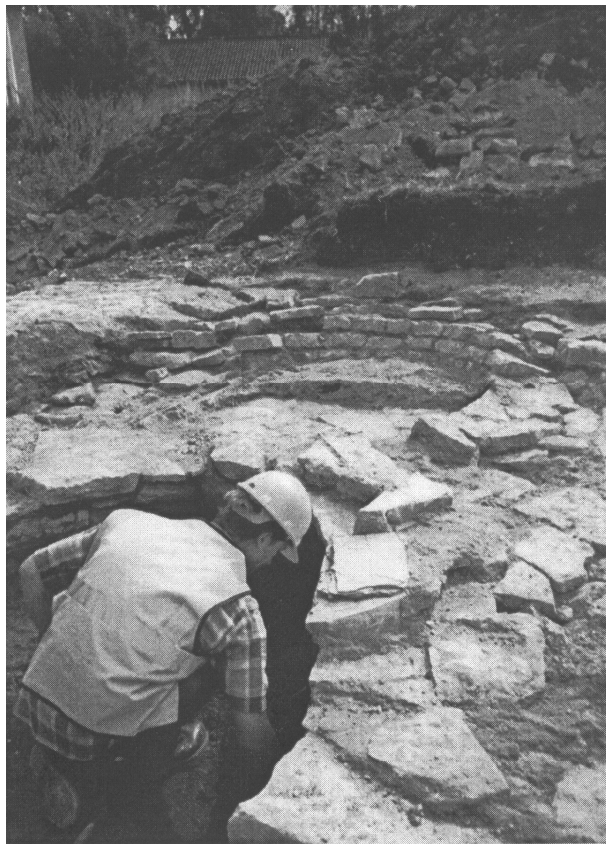


Plate 1 The furnace base of the limekiln at Novers Lane, Knowle

NORTH SOMERSET

Long Ashton Mill and Mill Cottages, Long Ashton (NSSMR 42365)

ST545702

An evaluation exercise by Avon Archaeological Unit (Lynn Hume Director) for Barratt Homes Limited on the site of a former Mill and Mill cottages prior to residential redevelopment produced the following results.

The Mill, reputed to be of medieval origin, produced only structures of the 19th century with earlier residual material below, including medieval and Romano-British potsherds. The 18th to 19th century complex seen on the 1843 Tithe Map and later OS plans indicate that Brook Farm of the 18th century was incorporated into the 19th century Mill Cottages. The Mill buildings were bombed in World War II and finally demolished in 1987.

The project was managed by Lynn Hume.

J.G.P. Erskine, AAU

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The Dramway, Clack's Farm, Willsbridge (SGSMR 12883)

ST66557021

The Dramway had been constructed in c 1830 as a horse drawn railway delivering coal from the Coalpit

Heath and Warmley area collieries to the River Avon at Keynsham and Londonderry Wharf.

The Dramway, more properly the Avon and Gloucestershire Railway, was a standard gauge horse-drawn railway and at this point was constructed on a clay embankment some 3m high which had been roughly revetted or supported on the south west side by quantities of sandstone, probably derived from the two tunnels cut immediately to the north and south of the present study area.

The summit of the embankment has had a 12" cast iron water pipe laid in it by Bristol Water, thereby damaging and destroying the upper layers of cinders and colliery debris, which had almost certainly been used as ballast for the sleepers and rails. There are many examples of roughly squared sleeper stones still *in situ* on the embankment to the north and the south of the present disturbance.

This particular stretch of the dramway is located between two tunnels, the Willsbridge tunnel to the north and the road crossing of the A4175 to the south.

The embankment had been constructed from a deposit of dark yellow/buff clay with a semicircular profile, some 4m deep and 8 metres wide. The upper surface had been laid with approximately 800mm depth of cinders and gravel for ballast as mentioned above. The down slope side of the embankment had been

supported by a considerable deposit of freshly broken red sandstone blocks and scalplings almost certainly spoil from the excavation of the nearby tunnels and cuttings which would have produced a considerable volume of fill. The upslope side of the embankment was unsupported. The level platform visible some 100m to the north of the present site, where it is reported that a turn-out was located, is presumably constructed of the identical material.¹

No finds were located in the spoil or the visible section, but this was not unexpected and of course the Dramway is well dated from documentary sources. This present observation, though, has made a small contribution to the construction engineering techniques.

The Dramway was also investigated at many points to the north of the A 420 London Road Warmley where it was to be disturbed or altered by the construction of the Avon Ring Road, Stage 2.

A sample excavation at two sites, Sites 16 and 17 illustrated below indicate the regularity of the construction and its survival. Site 16 is situated at ST67007540 and Site 17 at ST66807515. Scale plans of these sites show the stone sleepers with two bolt holes. The tunnel and the disused overbridge on the Dramway at Siston had previously been recorded prior to restoration and consolidation at ST6677490. No turn-outs or crossings were located. One piece of fish-bellied rail with cast-iron shoes has been

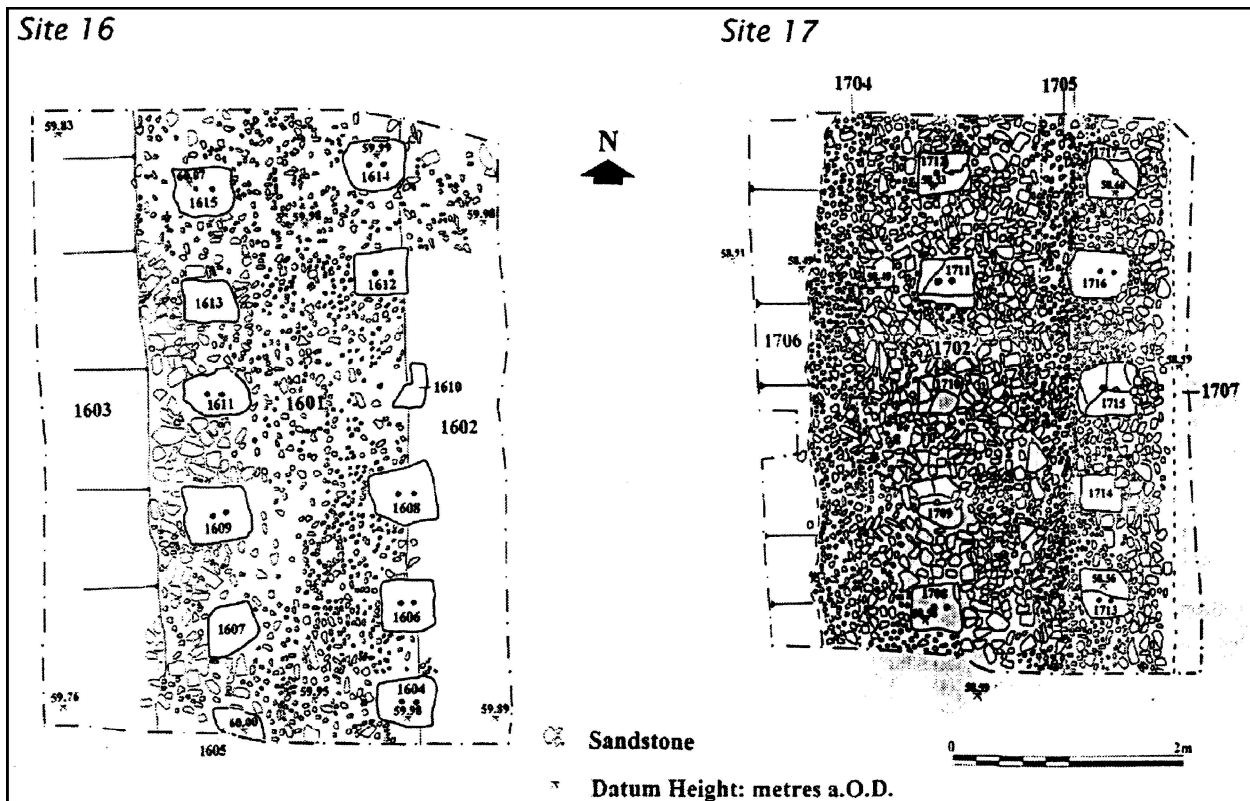


Fig. 2 The Dramway at sites 16 and 17

preserved for possible replica manufacture and replacement on the dramway.

1 Maggs, C., *The Bristol and Gloucester Railway and the Avon and Gloucestershire Railway* (Headington, 1992)
J.G.P. Erskine, AAU

Pomphrey Colliery, Mangotsfield
 (SGSMR 12873)
 ST672762

This colliery site was destroyed by the construction of the Avon Ring Road, Stage 2. Prior to its destruction, an evaluation and an area excavation were carried out to preserve as much of the site by record as possible. The dating of the colliery is uncertain, but was in existence in 1843 when the Mangotsfield Tithe Map was compiled and demolished by the time of the survey for the 1880 First edition OS 1:2500 County Sheet.

The Pit-head buildings appear to be of timber construction represented only by postholes and other soil features. Four mineshafts were located, but not excavated. Later masonry features, including stone built culverts appear to be associated with the construction of the Midland Railway cutting immediately before 1863.

The Project was managed by Andrew C Young.
J.G.P. Erskine, AAU

Land Pit, Church Farm, Mangotsfield
 (SGSMR 7559)
 ST667764

The remnants of the pit-head buildings of Land Pit were recorded by Avon Archaeological Unit (Dr. Andrew Townsend, Director) for Redrow Homes (South West) Limited before redevelopment as residential. A desk-based assessment had been previously carried out (Erskine 1995).

Land Pit was a subsidiary shaft and access for the late 19th century Deep Pit, part of the Mangotsfield Collieries. In origin it was possibly early 19th century, but it was rebuilt and machinery installed and used for a short period at the end of the 19th century. It was finally closed in 1891. The building was finally mostly demolished in about 1955.

The Figure shows the arrangement of the water tank, boiler, chimney and winding engine with the shaft and head-gear to the west. The majority of the machinery had been removed, probably for scrap, and the pit heaps flattened, but the Cornish Engine House at Deep Pit is preserved within the housing development as a Listed Building.

The drawing was measured and drawn by Andrew Townsend Ph.D.

J G P Erskine, AAU

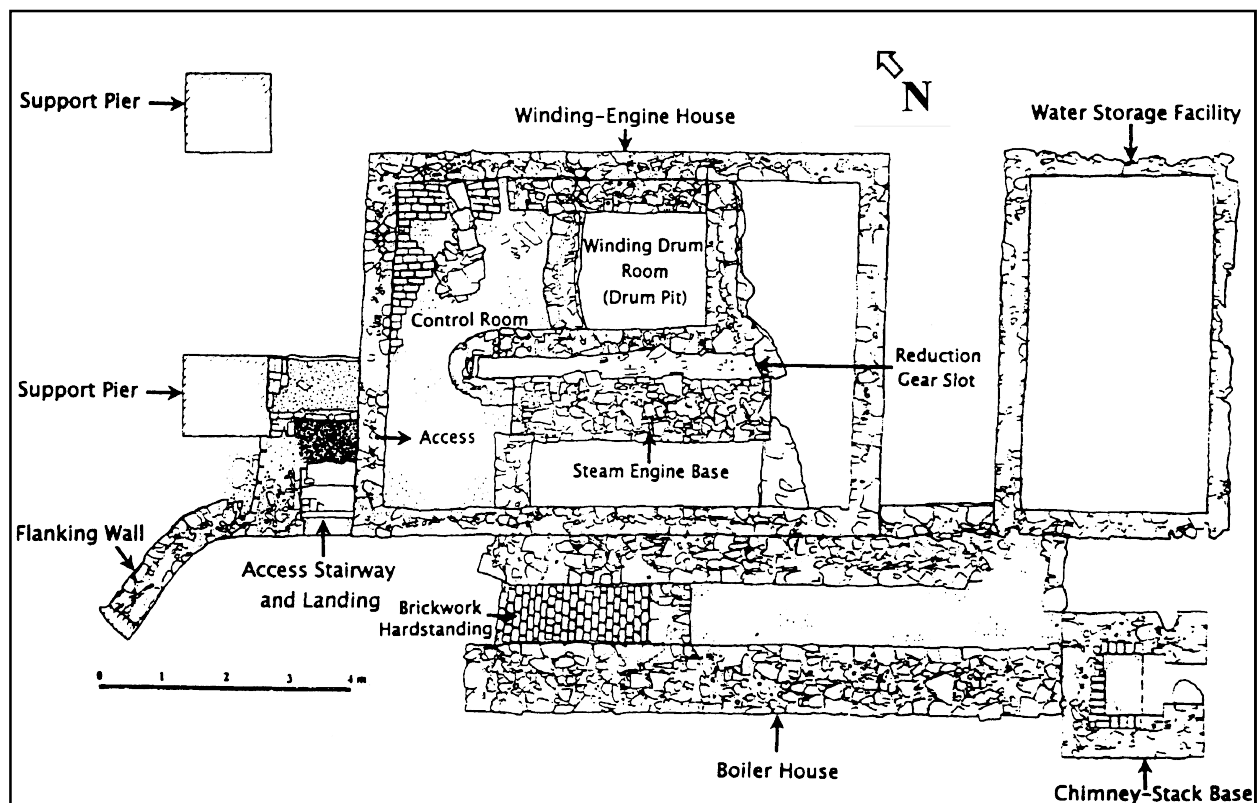


Fig. 3 Archaeological building recording of Church Farm, Land Pit, Mangotsfield, Bristol. Suggested functional scheme

Monks Mill, Alderley

ST 772914

Minor observations were made on stabilisation works on the ruined walls of this building which may have its origin in the Medieval period. A flagged floor of probably post-medieval date was also located.

Donna Young, AAU

BATH**The Tramsheds, Beehive Yard, Walcot Street**

ST 7512065230

A team of archaeologists from Bath Archaeological Trust, under the direction of A. Crutchley (Project Officer) and R. Bell (Project Manager), undertook excavations in advance of the redevelopment of the former Bath Electric Tramways depot in Walcot Street.

Expanding upon existing documentary and cartographic evidence, the excavations demonstrated how the site had developed from agricultural land occupied by market-gardens in the early 18th century, into a tightly-packed complex of domestic and industrial buildings within 100 years.

The dumping of large quantities of clay make-up layers on top of rich agricultural soils marked a major change in land-use on the site. This process of clay deposition provided the level surface upon which a series of mid-18th and 19th century domestic and industrial buildings was constructed, but it also marked the end of a process of soil development which had begun in the post-Roman period and gathered momentum from the 14th century onwards.

The excavation of the levelling deposits produced an important assemblage of mid to late-18th century clay tobacco pipes, wasters and kiln debris. This included previously unknown types associated with known bowl forms, which might now be attributed to one maker. Moreover, the nature of the wasters and kiln debris, as well as the quantities in which it was recovered, suggest the presence of a hitherto unknown pipe-maker in this area of Walcot Street in the later 18th century.

In the early 19th century, a terrace of three cottages had been built against the southern wall of a pair of well-appointed late 18th century

houses. Only the S. and E. walls of this terrace could be identified. However, it was found that the E. wall was shared with a mid-19th century iron foundry complex, which occupied the NE. corner of Beehive Yard until it was demolished and replaced by a newer structure in the 1890s. Substantial remains of the first Young's Iron Foundry (later known as the Walcot Iron Foundry) were identified. These included numerous walls and floors, as well as a square, stone-lined pit showing signs of intense heat.

Excavations in the immediate vicinity of the former Bath Electric Tramways depot identified the remains of a mid-18th century malt-house and brewery complex. The original N. and W. walls of this substantial building were found to be still well preserved beneath the existing structures. Although the brewery closed soon after 1800, a number of other walls related to the continuing expansion of the malt-house during the course of the 19th century. All of the walls belonging to the malt-house complex were demolished and the site levelled prior to the construction of the tramshed, as well as its associated boiler house and generating plant, in 1903.

Although the Bath Electric Tramways system closed in 1939, it was found that many of the original fixtures and fittings, including the rails in the tramshed itself, remained in place. However, of most importance was the discovery that the floors, structures and mechanised coal-shifting apparatus, associated with one of the boilers for the generating plant, remained intact and well preserved. Unfortunately, the Babcock & Wilcox boiler, as well as the Yates & Thom compound engines and Westinghouse generators, had long since been removed.

Andrew Crutchley, BAT



Plate 2 Bath Tramway Depot in 1938

W.A.Camwell