



BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Roman community round Wanborough in Wiltshire 55 BC to AD 410

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Status: Complete

Summary

This paper is one of several papers produced by the Society's Berkshire Romans Project 2.

It describes the development of Roman Wanborough and the surrounding landscape as the area evolved from the Late Iron Age, and through the Late Iron Age/Early Roman, Early Roman and Late Roman periods.

This shows that in the Late Iron Age, before AD 43, the area was occupied by a few farms with the people living in the valleys practicing a transhumance existence keeping their animals in the valleys over winter and moving them to the Downs in summer.

In the Late Iron Age /Early Roman period, from AD 43 to 75, the Roman town of Wanborough was established possibly as a vicus to a fort at St Margarets which has yet to be found. At this time, field systems and settlements were established on the Downs. The shape of the fields suggests they were used for a combination of arable and pastoral farming.

The evidence shows that this pattern of existence continued through Early and Late Roman periods (AD 75 to 260 and AD 260 to 410). The Roman small town at Wanborough grew to have a significant urban population while on the Berkshire Downs, the field systems were extended to cover large areas of downland.

Document control

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CHANGE CONTROL

This document is controlled by the authors

CHANGE HISTORY

14th December 2020: added trace of the Lambourn Downs field systems to the maps and details of the fieldwork results from the Compton Beauchamp CB1 and CB2 settlements, Wentworth Supermarket, Stanford in the Vale (SIV1) site and Stanford in the Vale Rising Main Replacement (SIV2) site.

18th October 2020 – Copy added by Keith Abbott to sections 1, 2, 3 and 4

7th October 2020 - The first complete issue by Andrew Hutt

CHANGES FORECAST

None

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Thanks are due to Martin Labram for adding all the Roman archaeological records to the BAS gazetteer and for producing the maps presented in this paper.

The details of archaeological sites were collected from the Roman Rural Settlement project deposit on the Archaeology Data Service (rrs 2015) and the Historic Environment Records for West Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.

The details of the field systems were traced from the map in Small 2002.

Introduction

The **Wanborough (Wilts)** community occupied a landscape which was centred on the roadside settlement of Wanborough and was divided by two Roman roads, Ermine Street between Cirencester and Silchester and the Wanborough to Mildenhall road. Geographically and socially, this community seems to have been separated into five areas:

- Wanborough and the upper River Cole valley. The River Cole flows from the Marlborough Downs passed Wanborough into the Upper Thames
- The Corallian greensand ridge to the north of Wanborough which is split by the River Cole
- The western Berkshire Downs, to the south east of Wanborough and east of Ermine Street
- The Downs between the two roads
- The eastern Marlborough Downs to the south of Wanborough and west of the Wanborough to Mildenhall road.

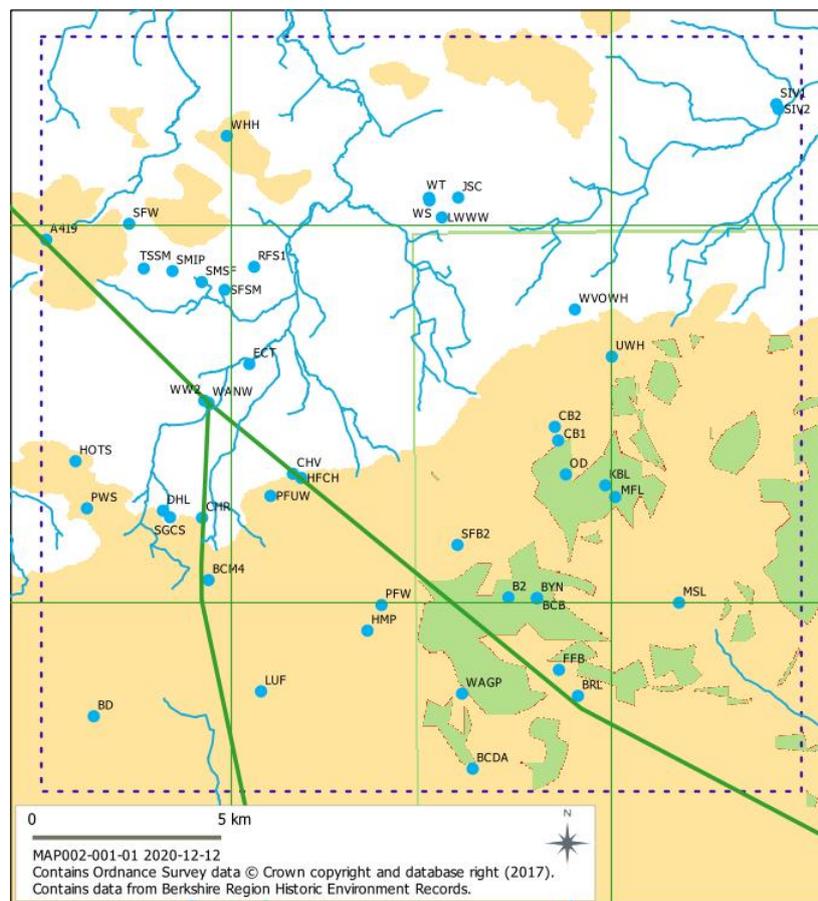


Figure 1. Map of all Roman sites in the Wanborough (Wilts) community (1:200,000)

The Late Iron Age evidence 55 BC – AD 43

Very few Late Iron Age sites have been found in this area (Figure 2).

Alongside the River Cole, the site of 3 areas of an Iron Age settlement have been found at **Earlscourt (ECT)**. They were occupied from 7th century BC until 1st century BC.

On the western edge of the Corallian Ridge at the **Triangle Site, South Marston (TSSM)** evidence of two Late Iron Age/Early Roman inhumations were found on site of a former Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement (rrs 2015: 17140). 600m further east at **South Marston Industrial Park (SMIP)**, excavations revealed a large Late Iron Age settlement with two roundhouses c. 10m diameter one of which was in an enclosure (rrs 2015: 17027). Nearby, at **South Marston Solar Farm, Swindon (SMSF)**: anomalies resembling Iron Age enclosures were identified in the results of a geophysics survey and Middle to Late Iron Age pottery was found in a trench. This site was occupied in the Middle to Late Iron Age and went out of use in c. 1 AD (rrs 2015: 17143).

Further east, at **Watchfield, Shrivenham (WS)**, excavations revealed a substantial rectilinear enclosure with evidence of a settlement (rrs 2015: 16063). Nearby, at **Joint Service Command and Staff College, Watchfield, Shrivenham (JSC)**, excavations revealed a Late Iron Age/Early Roman farm with a drove way, enclosures, a palisade fence and pits (rrs 2015: 16119).

On the Berkshire Downs, at **Compton Beauchamp (CB2)**, the remains of an unenclosed settlement in a landscape with rectangular fields and a central trackway was identified on aerial photographs and verified by finds (Oxon HER 27677). In c. AD 40, a settlement site was established at **Knighton Bushes (KBL)** (Gaffney and Tingle 1989; rrs 2015:12029). A key feature of this site was its field systems.

On the Marlborough Downs, at **Piper's Way, Swindon (PWS)**, evidence has been found of Late Iron Age ditched enclosures (rrs 2015: 17141).

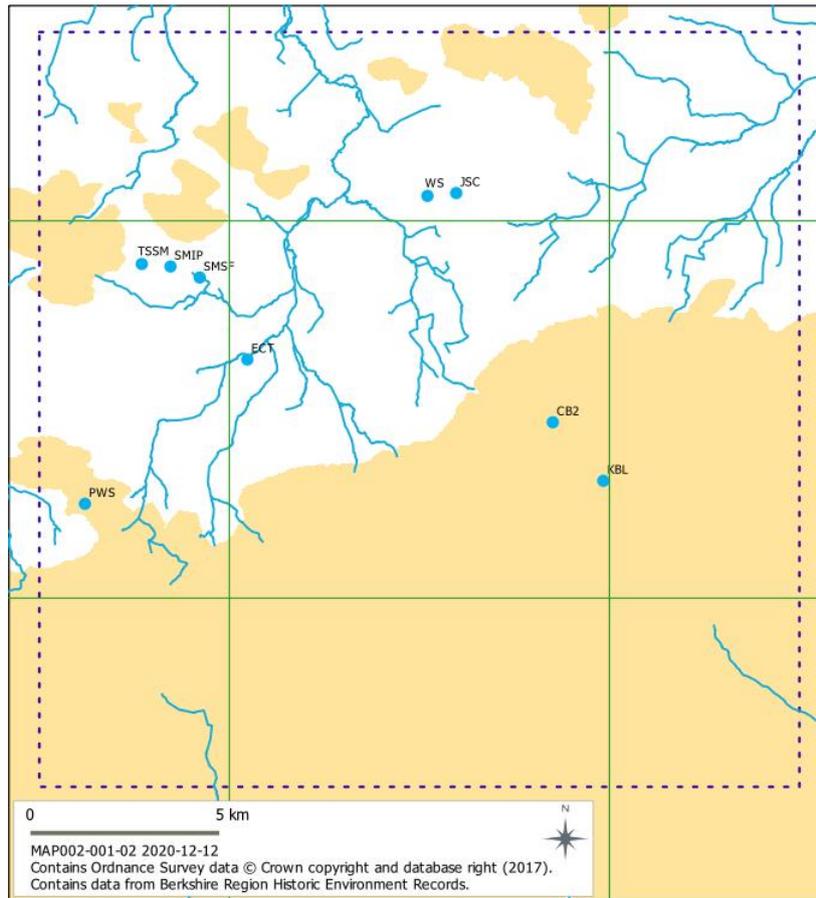


Figure 2. Map of Late Iron Age sites

The Late Iron Age/Early Roman period AD 43-75

It is very likely that the first significant intrusion of the Roman Authorities into this area was the construction of Ermine Street.

At **Wanborough (WANW)**, the roadside ditches were 23m apart. One of them revealed Claudio-Neronian pottery which dated the road's construction to AD 50-60 (Anderson *et al.* 2001). In c. AD 60-65, a large building (Building 23) was constructed alongside the road. It was 9.6m long by 4.6m wide supported by corner posts resting on wooden planks; iron working debris was found nearby. This was demolished in AD 65-75/80.

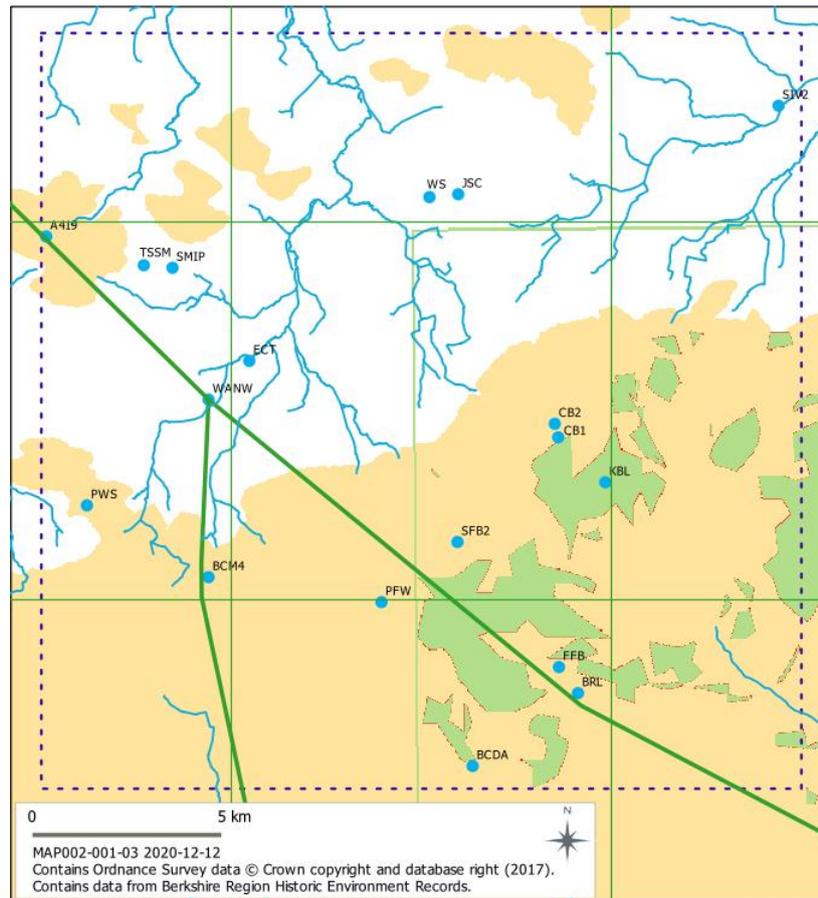


Figure 3. Map of Late Iron Age/Early Roman sites

North of Wanborough (Wilts), excavations at **Earlscourt (ECT)** found 1st century Roman pottery, which may represent either renewed settlement on the site or that the site was used as fields with the pottery being dumped from the adjacent Roman town at Wanborough (Wilts).

On the western end of the Corallian Ridge, at the **A419 Blunsdon By-pass (A419)**, an early Roman enclosed farmstead was established on a hill overlooking Ermine Street. To the south of the farmstead were two parallel ditches which may represent a trackway or changing field boundaries, while to the north was a rectangular ditched enclosure (25m x 36m) with a possible entrance to the north-east. The interior revealed groups of pits and postholes. South of the enclosure was a pit with partially articulated sheep skeletons. To the south east, along the Corallian ridge, the inhumations at the **Triangle Site, South Marston (TSSM)** could have been made during this period (rrs 2015: 17140), while activity at the adjacent **South Marston Industrial Park (SMIP)** site increased with the addition of 3 round houses in a new enclosure

and the reorganisation of others (rrs 2015: 17027). These changes effectively turned this site into a village.

Five Km further east, at **Watchfield, Shrivenham** (WS), the Late Iron Age enclosures were replaced with a new enclosure system with the focus of occupation further to the north (rrs 2015: 16036). Nearby, at **Joint Service Command and Staff College, Watchfield, Shrivenham** (JSC), the Late Iron Age/Early Roman farm with its drove way, enclosures, a palisade fence and pits continued (rrs 2015: 16119).

To the east of the Corallian Ridge, on the banks of the River Ock, at **Stanford in the Vale** (SIV2), a watching brief during the construction of a water main revealed two Roman pits containing cremated human remains dated to AD 50-150. This has been interpreted as evidence of a nearby settlement (rrs 16145).

On the Berkshire Downs, the settlements at **Compton Beauchamp** (CB2) and **Knighton Bushes** (KBL) continued. At **Compton Beauchamp** (CB1) another settlement was established. It took the form of a polygonal enclosure, a hollow way bordered by bordered by post holes and sarsen stones and field systems. (Rhodes 1950: 19; Oxon HER 7909).

Near to Ermine Street, **Starveall Farm** (SFB2) may have been occupied in the 1st century; the supporting evidence is a samian sherd, a 1st century brooch and the surrounding field systems (Phillips 1981). Further south along Ermine Street, **Russley Down, Bishopstone** (RDB), the remains of an extensive settlement in arable fields were recorded (Wiltshire Archaeol Natur Mag 70-1 1975-6 134). This went out of use at the end of the Late Iron Age. Yet further south, at **Finches Farm, Baydon** (FFB), evidence was found of the beam slots of a timber framed building together with pottery, which suggested it was constructed in AD 50-70, and some rectangular ditched enclosures (Fowler and Walters 1979/1980: site 37; rrs 2015: 17108). At **Baydon Road, Lambourne** (BRL), excavations revealed a section of Ermine Street some 16m wide with a small roadside settlement stretching at least 200m on each side of the road (rrs 2015: 17109; Fowler and Walters 1979/1980: 128-129, Sites 35-36).

On the Marlborough Downs between the two Roman roads, at **Plain Farm Wanborough** (PFW), now in the middle of the M4 motorway, excavations revealed 15 ditches and the foundation trenches for timber structures. Finds included pottery sherds, fragments of soot encrusted tile, and shell and bone fragments which suggested that this was a settlement occupied in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Fowler and Walters 1979/1980: 123).

Further south at **Barnes Coaches Depot, Aldbourne** (BCDA) excavations revealed some early Roman ditches suggests that a farm was established in c. AD 50 (rrs 2015:17011).

On the Marlborough Downs, along the line of the Wanborough – Mildenhall road, at M4 site 21, **Badbury, Chiseldon (BCM4)**, now recorded on the Wiltshire HER as Berricot Lane, Badbury, Swindon (Wiltshire HER SU18SE304), excavations revealed beam slots of a timber structure tentatively dated to the mid/late 1st century AD. They are believed to be the remains of a farm (Fowler and Walters 1979/1980: 91-110). To the west, the Late Iron Age ditched enclosures at **Piper's Way, Swindon** (PWS) continued to be used (rrs 2015:17141).

The early Roman period AD 76 - 259

At **Wanborough** (Wilts) (WANW), after Building 23 was demolished in AD 65-75/80, there may have been a period of some 20 years when the site was unused. In c. AD 80, the roadside ditches were filled in and wooden roadside buildings were built. Coins found at Wanborough show significant number dating to AD 69-96 (Reece period 4). In the northern area of the town to the west of Ermine Street, two small trenches excavated for the A419 Covington noise barrier (WW2), revealed a curving gully, possibly from a small roundhouse (5.4m diameter), along with part of a rectangular stone-founded building, all dating to c. AD 80 (rrs 2015: 17017). The masonry building probably fronted on to a side street that ran SW out of town.

In the 2nd century, along Ermine Street, the wooden buildings were replaced with buildings with stone foundations (Figure 3). Recent excavations show that some of the stone buildings faced on to side roads which suggests that the town developed a street grid. This view is supported by a crop mark which shows the outline of a *mansio* which probably dates from c. AD 140. Excavations show that the development of insula V dates from AD 175-200.

Just to the north, the Iron Age settlement at **Earlscourt** (ECT) went out of use in C. AD 100.

South east of Wanborough in 2nd century, north of **Callis Hill** (CHV) a stone-built villa was established and occupied into the 4th century. Nearby, at **Home Farm Callis Hill** (HFCH), there was another stone-built Roman building, which is not dated, may have been built during this period.

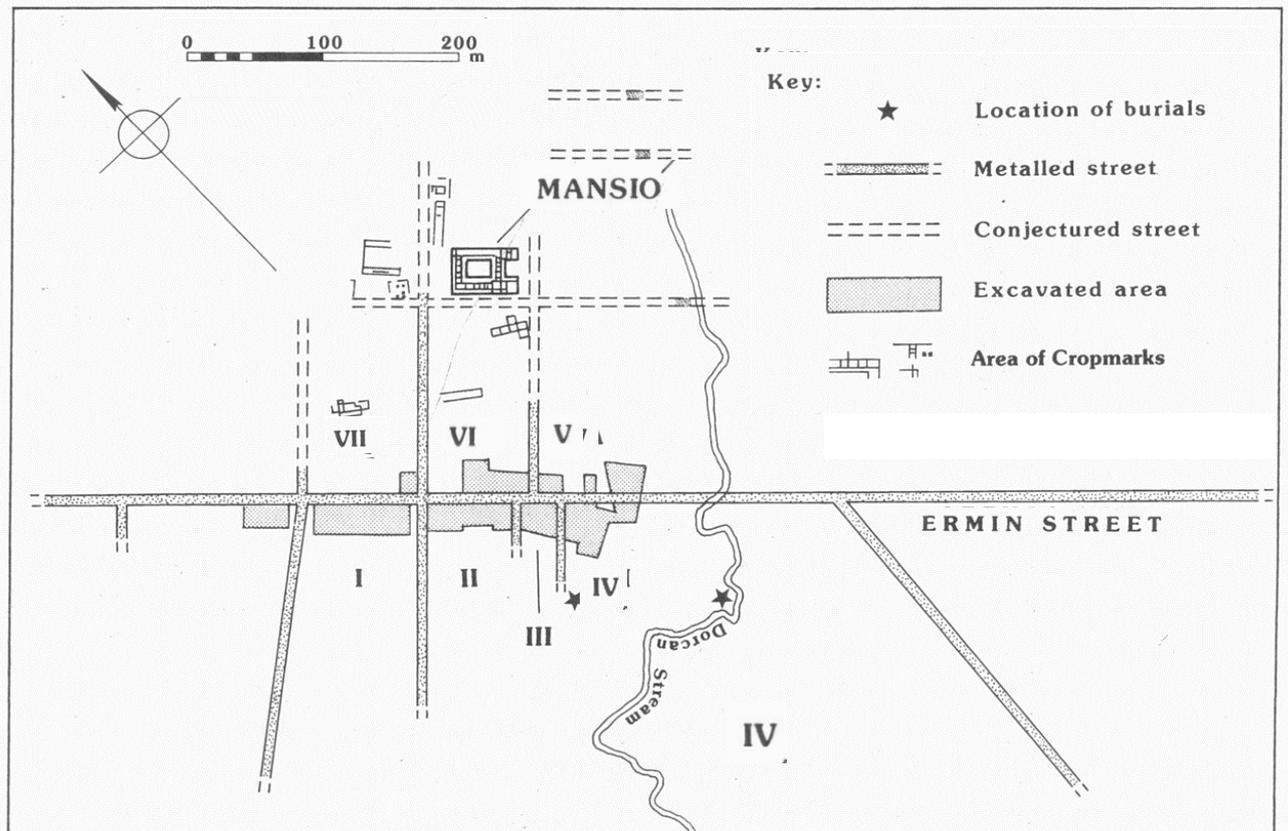


Figure 3. Wanborough based on Anderson et al. 2001)

Along the Corallian Ridge, on the site of the **A419 Blunsdon By-pass** (A419) the early Roman farmstead went out of use in c. AD 125 (rrs 2015:17006). To the east, at **Stanton Fitzwarren** (SFW), a geophysics survey and excavations revealed that in circa AD 125 work started on the construction of a villa masonry building with a bath suite and nearby a tessellated pavement and a metalled road.

The Late Iron Age/Early Roman proto-village at the **South Marston Industrial Park site** (SMIP) was replaced by a field system with a single round house in one of the Late Iron Age/Early Roman enclosures (rrs 2015:17027). Further east, at **Roves Farm, Swindon** (RFS1) a geophysics survey identified that a farmstead with 2 roundhouses in an enclosure with other subdivisions and a trackway was established. Trenching across the trackway ditches revealed pottery dating for AD 70 to AD 300 (rrs 2015: 17142).

To the east, at **Watchfield, Shrivenham** (WS), the Late Iron Age/Early Roman enclosures were replaced by new enclosures and the settlement replaced by post-built structures, ovens and a water tank (rrs 2015:16036). Nearby at **Joint Service Command and Staff College, Watchfield, Shrivenham** (JSC), the Late Iron Age/Early Roman farm went out of use (rrs 2015:16119).

To the east of the Corallian Ridge, on the banks of the River Ock, at **Stanford in the Vale**, it is possible that the two cremations mentioned earlier may date to this period (SIV2). Excavations at Wentworth Supermarket (SIV1) revealed details of a farmstead and some stock enclosures founded in the 2nd century AD.

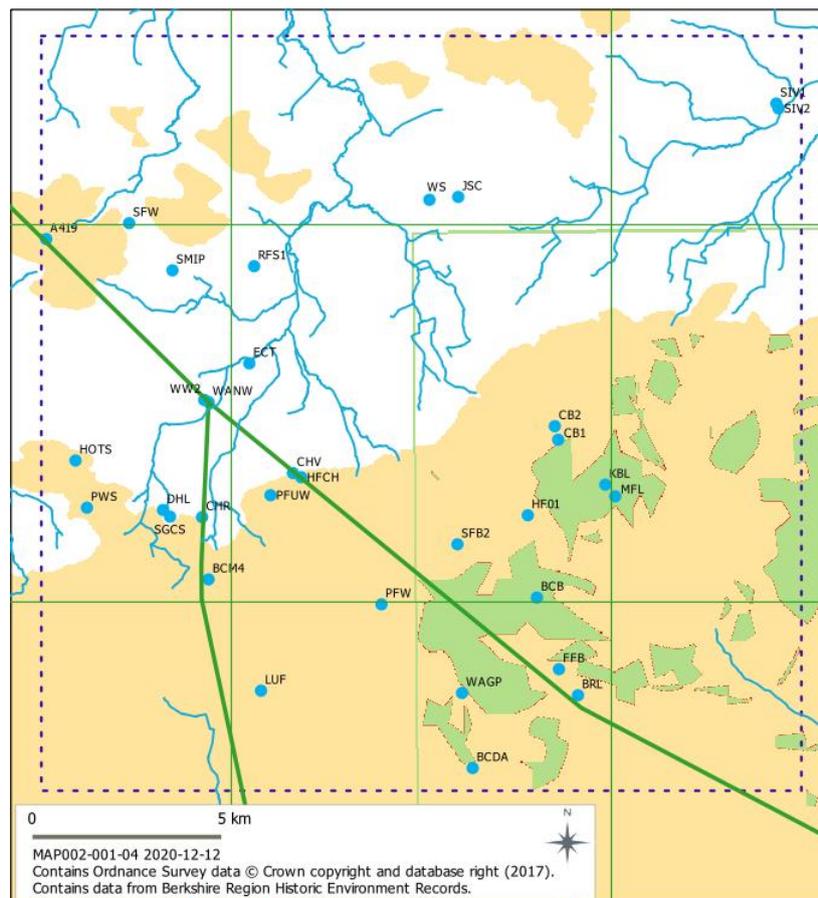


Figure 4. Map of Early Roman sites

On the Berkshire Downs, in c. AD 100, at **Maddle Farm, Lambourne** (MFL), a large barn-like structure with chalk-block walls, some with painted plaster, and crushed chalk floors was built and was occupied throughout the rest of the Roman period. It lay on the northern edge of a

farmyard and is believed to be the centre of a villa estate (Gaffney and Tingle 1989; rrs 2015:12030). Nearby, the settlement at **Knighton Bushes** (KBL) continued throughout this period.

Also, in c. AD 100, at **Alfred's Castle** (HF01) a masonry building was constructed. This may have been an aisled building with a thatched roof. It was positioned in the Iron Age hillfort with some other structures built in sarsen and tile. Later in c. AD 200, an extra room was added to the aisled building and the interior divided into 5 rooms some with mortared floors and painted plaster walls thus creating a simple villa (Gosden and Lock 2003; rrs 2015: 16109).

Along Ermine Street, there is no evidence of any development at **Starveall Farm** (SBF2) during this period. Further south at **Botley's Copse, Bishopstone** (BCB), a settlement, with buildings with stone foundations and a corn dyer, was established within a ditched enclosure. The presence of samian ware and the stone foundations suggest it was founded in the Early Roman period (Rhodes 1950: 16-17, 26). The settlements **Baydon Road, Lambourne** (BRL) and **Finches Farm, Baydon** (FFB) were occupied throughout this period.

Between the two Roman roads, at **Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon** (PFUW), a farm was created with a masonry building and field ditches (rrs 2015: 17094). Further south east, the settlement at **Plain Farm Wanborough** (PFW) went out of use. Along the **Wanborough to Aldbourne Gas Pipeline (WAGP)** (rrs 2015:17105) a farm was established. The farm at **Barnes Coaches Depot, Aldbourne** (BCDA) remained in use throughout this period (rrs 2015: 17011). At **Lower Upham Farm, Ogbourne St George** (LUF) a Roman boundary ditch was dug (rrs 2015: 16108).

Along the line of the Wanborough to Mildenhall road, at **Badbury, Chiseldon** (BCM4), the timber framed buildings were replaced by a simple open barn-like building with associated corridor in the mid-2nd century. This associated evidence shows that this was still a farming establishment (Fowler and Walters 1979/1980: 91-110; rrs 2015: 17017).

West of the Roman road to Mildenhall, at **Commonhead Roundabout (CHR)**, excavations in 2002 found 2 NW-SE oriented trenches and a N-S gully with a fill of early 2nd century AD pottery. East of the gully was a spread of 2nd century AD pottery; there was no obvious relationship between the pottery spread and the gully. Just to the north was an oval (0.58m x 0.30m) post hole/pit with a fill containing 2 shreds of 2nd century AD pottery (Wiltshire HER SU18SE359). This was probably a settlement with a single period of occupancy during the 2nd century.

Just to the east, at the foot of the Marlborough Downs at **Swindon Gate, Coate, Swindon (SGCS)** a geophysics survey revealed the remains of rectangular anomalies which were interpreted as the remains of stone-built buildings. Trial trenching found the remains of a stone Roman building which was probably a farm stead which was constructed in c. AD 100 and remained in use until AD 400. (Tannahill and Pomeroy-Kellinger 2006). Nearby, **east of Coate Stone Circle** (DHL), a series of Romano-British ditches, representing a field system, were excavated.

Excavations at **Piper's Way, Swindon** (PWS) showed that the Late Iron Age ditched enclosures were reorganised in the 2nd century to create large rectangular fields, some of the land was used as a quarry and that the site may have been abandoned at the end of the 2nd century (rrs 2015:17141).

Small scale excavation, at the **Hermitage, Old Town, Swindon** (HOTS), towards the eastern end of the ridge of Old Swindon Hill, revealed the fringes of a Romano-British settlement (rrs 17064). Features comprised boundary fences and ditches, a possible post-built circular structure, a number of pits (including one with a complete 1st-2nd C AD pottery vessel set upright and in situ) and linear gullies.

The Late Roman period AD 260 - 410

At **Wanborough** (WANW), in the 3rd and 4th centuries, there were lots of new buildings with stone foundations some with tiled roofs, others with thatched roofs. Building 6A may be the remains of a mill. A geophysics survey identified the remains of some substantial town houses to the north of the *mansio*. The excavations at the A419 Covington noise barrier (WW2) showed that this site went out of use in c. AD 300.

At the southern end of Wanborough, a cemetery was excavated and two overlapping groups of inhumations were found. One group had been buried c. AD 275 and were aligned north to south. The second group, buried c. 385, were aligned east to west. The dates of the groups were confirmed from coins buried with the bodies.

Artefacts found at Wanborough included: a significant number of coins dating from AD 260-296 and from AD 317-402), 14 woodworking tools, 8 metal working tools, horseshoes, bridles and lynch pins, steel yards and weapons dating to 4th century (Anderson *et al.* 2001). Significantly, very few agricultural tools were found.

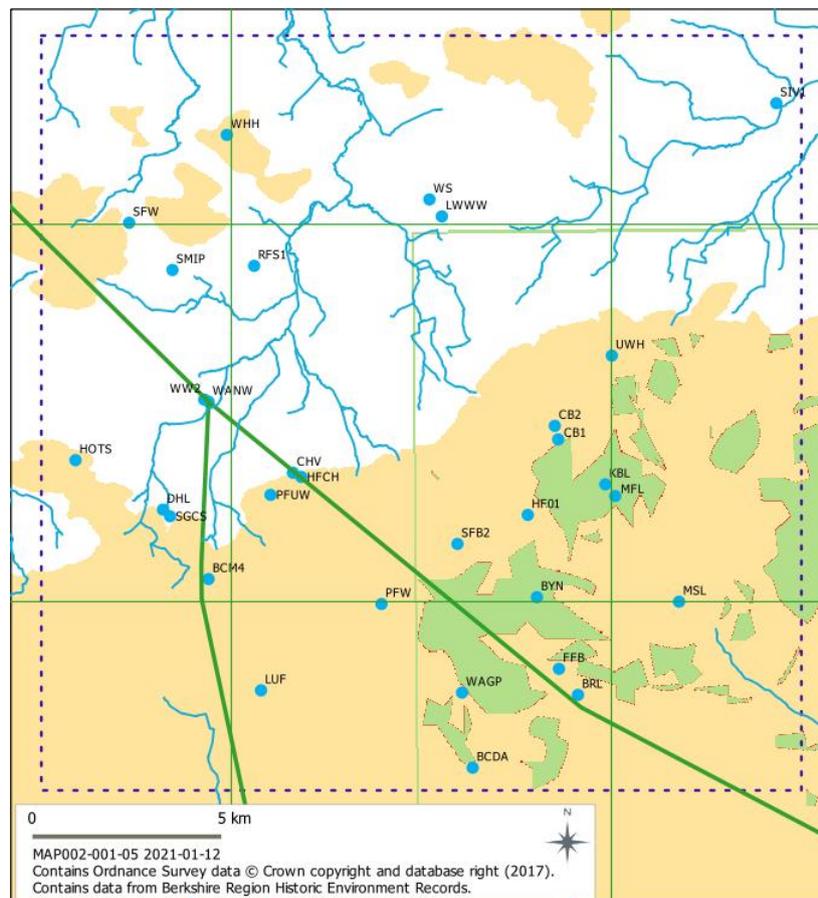


Figure 5. Map of Late Roman sites

To the east of Wanborough to north of **Callis Hill** (CHV) pottery evidence showed that the villa continued to be occupied and the nearby, stone-built Roman building at **Home Farm Callis Hill** (HFCH), continued to be occupied.

Further south along Ermine Street the sites of **Finches Farm, Baydon** (FFB) and the small roadside settlement at **Blaydon Road, Lambourne** (BRL) were occupied throughout the 4th century (rrs 2015: 17108; rrs 2015:17109).

On the Corallian Ridge, at **Westrop House, Highworth** (WHH), a Roman inhumation burial was found in a small mound (rrs 2015: 17135). To the south west, at **Stanton Fitzwarren** (SFW), the villa was demolished in AD 350 and the site was redeveloped as a farm with timber framed structure with post holes cut into the demolition debris. The evidence shows this the site was occupied into the 5th century. To the south east, at **South Marston Industrial Park** (SMIP) the single round house in one of the Late Iron Age/Early Roman enclosures went out of use in AD 300 (rrs 2015: 17027) as did the farm at **Roves Farm, Swindon** (RFS1) (rrs 2015: 17142).

Further east at **Watchfield, Shrivenham** (WS), the Early Roman enclosures went out of use some time after AD 300 (rrs 2015: 16036). Nearby, at **Little Wellington Wood, Watchfield** (LWWW), a settlement was established with buildings and a well. A number of Gallic Empire coins were found on the site (Pastscape 225922).

On the Berkshire Downs **Maddle Farm** (MFL) and **Knighton Bushes** (KBL), and the two settlements at **Compton Beauchamp** (CB1 and CB2) continued to operate throughout this period (rrs 2015: 12030; rrs 2015: 12029). At **Alfred's Castle** (HF01), the simple villa went out of use in c. AD 300 (Gosden and Lock 2003; rrs 2015: 16109). Fieldwork at Uffingham Castle (UWH) revealed a small cemetery dated to AD 300 -450. Further south, at **Malt Shovel Lane, Upper Lambourn** (MSL), three burials of Late Roman date may indicate the existence of a cemetery.

At **Starveall Farm** (SFB2), in the last quarter of the 3rd century, the owners built a stone villa with a heated dining room. Later, in the early 4th century, they added a large hall with a large mosaic floor, painted walls fronted by a colonnade façade (rrs 2015:17097). Further south at **Baydon** (BYN), an enclosure with a stone wall enclosing a tile roofed building, pits and a corn dryer was built. A coin of Constantinian dated this site to AD 300 – 400 (rrs 2015: 17050). To the east, at **Botley's Copse, Bishopstone** (BCB), artefacts suggested that activity at this settlement increased during this period (Rhodes 1950: 16-17, 26; Pastscape 225522).

At the foot of the Marlborough Downs, the farmstead at **Swindon Gateway, Coat, Swindon** (SGCS) was in use through this period, (Tannahill and Pomeroy-Kellinger 2006). On the Marlborough Downs at **Badbury, Chiseldon** (BCM4) in the late 3rd/early 4th C AD, the simple corridor villa was replaced by an opulent winged villa with a bath suite (Fowler and Walters 1979/1980: 91-110; rrs 2015: 17017).

At **Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon** (PFUW) the Early Roman farm continued (rrs 2015:17094). At **Lower Upham Farm, Ogbourne St George** (LUF), a burial showed that the Early Roman boundary ditch remained in use during this period (rrs 2015:16108). The field system at **Wanborough to Aldbourne Gas Pipeline (WAGP)** remained in use throughout the Roman period (rrs 2015: 17105). Similarly, a large pit showed that **Barnes Coaches Depot, Aldbourne** (BCDA) continued to be used throughout this period (rrs 2015:17011).

The settlement at the **Hermitage, Old Town, Swindon** (HOTS) continued throughout this period (rrs 17064).

Discussion

LATE IRON AGE

In this area, Iron Age settlements have only come to light in area where there has not been a lot of development in the 19th and 20th centuries. Fieldwork along the Corallian ridge has revealed a few farms. On the Berkshire Downs, many Iron Age enclosures has been identified but few of these have been excavated to provide evidence that dates them to this period. This suggests that at this time, the Downs were being used for transhumance farming with animals, particularly sheep, being brought on to the Downs in the late spring/summer and taken back to the valleys in the autumn. The evidence shows that this was about to change. Knighton Bushes, a permanent settlement, was established in c. AD 40. It is probable that some of the surrounding field systems were also created at this time.

LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN PERIOD

This first intrusion of the Roman Authorities into this area was to build Ermine Street as a route from Silchester to Cirencester. It is believed that a fort may have been established at Stratton St. Margaret and as a result Wanborough was established as a vicus. The large building (Building 23) parallels similar early buildings found at Neatham and Dorchester on Thames which suggests that it may have been constructed to accommodate *Cursus Publicus* travellers once the fort at Stratton St. Margaret was abandoned. Further south along Ermine Street, the buildings at Baydon were probably used as a *Cursus Publicus mutatio*.

Along the Corallian Ridge, there were changes to the settlements. There is evidence of land consolidation at South Marston Industrial Park.

On the Berkshire Downs, it is likely that the field systems round Knighton Bushes were developed but there is no positive evidence to support this

Significantly, a new site was established at Badbury. This was adjacent to the Roman road from Wanborough to Mildenhall and later was developed to become major villa site. This could be an indication that a Romano-British elite family established a foothold in this area at this time.

EARLY ROMAN PERIOD

The evidence shows that this was a period with lots of investment in the built environment and further land consolidation in land ownership.

At Wanborough, timber buildings were built along Ermine Street only to be replaced, in the 2nd century, by buildings with stone foundations. The creation of a street grid showed that there was a significant growth in the town's population during this period. In probably c. 140, the Roman authorities built a *mansio* in the town which would have provided yet more jobs. Surrounding Wanborough are a series of monuments recorded on the Wiltshire HER as field systems. Typical examples are: Earls court (ECT) downstream of Wanborough with evidence of an inhumation and to the south of Wanborough the scarps and ditches east of Coate Stone Circle (DHL). These suggest that Wanborough may have been surrounded by a landscape of fields which were cultivated by the townsfolk and extended some 5km from the town.

On the Corallian Ridge, there were changes. A new settlement, with two round houses, was built at Roves Farm. Two settlements were reorganised with less housing and more space for agriculture and two settlements went out of use presumably replaced by field systems.

On the Berkshire Downs, at the end of the 1st century, a villa was built at Maddle Farm. Wall plaster and lack of other Roman style decorations suggests it was probably the home of a farmer. At the same time, at Alfred's Castle, a stone-built building with a thatched roof was constructed. The evidence suggests that this was the centre of an estate which raised sheep and made textiles. In c. AD 200, the addition of an extension with 5 rooms shows that this is a profitable activity. A comparison of these two properties shows that the levels of Roman style decoration were very similar.

On the Marlborough Downs, outside Wanborough two new farms were established, one along the line of the Wanborough to Albourne pipeline and the other at Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough. This suggests that there were opportunities for farmers to supply foodstuffs to Wanborough's population and beyond.

Along the Wanborough to Mildenhall road, at Baydon, the timber framed buildings were replaced by a large building with a corridor.

THE LATE ROMAN PERIOD

At Wanborough, the evidence shows that there was further building and the town got very crowded and busy. Artefacts from the town showed that the population was dependent on the people travelling along Ermine Street. The evidence from the nearby cemetery showed that some of the population had become Christians

On the Corallian Ridge, the settlement at Wentworth Supermarket, Stanford in the Vale (SIV1) was still occupied during this period. Several settlements went out of use and a new settlement at Little Wellington Wood, Watchfield (LWWW) was established. Excavations at this site revealed building foundations a well, a stone drain. Finds from the site included coins from the site included coins from the Gallic Empire and Carausius; they suggest the site went out of use in around AD 400.

On Berkshire Downs, there were no recognisable changes at any of **Maddle Farm** (MFL), Knighton **Bushes** (KBL) or the two settlements at **Compton Beauchamp** (CB1 and CB2). To the north, alongside Uffingham Castle hillfort (UWH) a mixed rite cemetery was established; its use continued into Saxon times.

In a similar timescale, the villa at Alfred's Castle went out of use. There are a number of scenarios which could account for these changes.

- The family could have moved from Alfred's Castle to Starveall Farm, because it had better road links to Cirencester and to London via Silchester.
- The family at Alfred's Castle could have run out of male heirs so the property could have become a remote part of another estate. This scenario is unlikely because a building for a farm manager would have been required
- Alfred's Castle could have been confiscated by the Roman Authorities as a reprisal against those involved in the Gallic or Caurasian Empires. If this had happened then the estate would probably have been sold on or transferred to a member of the local elite

Alongside Ermine Street, there was a major building programme at Starveall Farm; it started in c. AD 275 with a second phase of development in c. AD 325. The result was a building with a palatial entrance hall. Further south, Blaydon, there is no evidence that this site expanded during this period.

On the Marlborough Downs, at Badbury, the villa was expanded to become an opulent mansion. There is no evidence of the surrounding settlements going out of use which suggests that the developments at Badbury was more likely to be funded by the owners playing a significant role in the development of the Western province of Britain following the reorganisation of the Empire after AD 260.

Other sites

In this area, there are a number of other sites with insufficient information to include in this analysis. In alphabetical order, they are:

Bishopstone Roman villa (B2): located just north of Ermine Street, was built of chalk blocks with walls up to 1m thick and a range of rooms and corridors. Evidence from the site included a tessellated pavement, wall plaster, a small area of mosaic, a hypocaust and roofing and flue tiles. Adjacent to the villa was an agricultural building and an associated field system (Philips 1981: 74-75). Unfortunately, nobody has dated this site so it is difficult to establish its economic and social significance.

Burderop Down (BD) excavations in the 1930s revealed traces of possible square "hut sites", two of which were excavated revealing post-built timber, wattle and daub structures with rough stone floors. Much pottery and some iron slag found on these floor surfaces. No precise dating information. Cropmarks of the settlement are apparent.

Half Moon Plantation (HMP): is a site where a concentration of pottery has been interpreted as a possible villa site but on the current evidence it is more likely to be a settlement site.

Odstone Down (OD): a site with little information (Rhodes, P. 1954. Excavation at Odstone Down, TNDFC XV: 1-28).

Plain Farm, Wanborough (PFW): 15 ditches and wall foundation trenches were identified during the construction of the M4 motorway (Fowler and Walters 1979-80: 123).

Sevor Farm, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire (SFSM) where a geophysics survey identified various anomalies which led to an excavation which identified pits, ditches and postholes and occupation evidence dating to the Roman period

Woolstone villa (WVOWH): a 30 foot corridor villa bounding a courtyard with mosaics and painted wall plaster and a baths was first excavated in the 1844 and again in 1955. There is little documentation and no dating evidence (Pastscape 225384).

Key to sites on maps

Map Depiction Code	HeritageAssetName	Reference
A419	A419 Blunsdon By-pass	Roman Rural Settlement 17006
B2	Bishopstone, Swindon BC, Wiltshire	Wiltshire SU28SE301
BCB	Botley Copse, Bishopstone, Swindon	
BCDA	Barnes Coaches Depot, Aldbourne	Roman Rural Settlement 17011
BCM4	Badbury, Chiseldon (M4 Site 21)	Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine Volume 1970/1980: 91-110
BCM4	Badbury, Chiseldon (M4 Site 21)	Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine Volume 57
BCM4	Badbury, Chiseldon (M4 Site 21)	Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine Volume 67
BCM4	Badbury, Chiseldon (M4 Site 21)	Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine Volume 69
BCM4	Badbury, Chiseldon (M4 Site 21)	Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine Volume 74-5
BCM4	Badbury, Chiseldon (M4 Site 21)	Wiltshire SU18SE304
BD	Burderop Down	
BRL	Baydon Road, Lambourne	West Berkshire MWB3351
BYN	Baydon	Roman Rural Settlement 17050
CB1 CB2	Two settlements at Compton Beauchamp	Oxfordshire HER 7909 and 27677 Rhodes 1950:19
CHR	Commonhead Roundabout, Swindon: Romano-British Settlement,	Wessex Archaeology
CHR	Commonhead Roundabout, Swindon: Romano-British Settlement,	Wiltshire HER SU18SE359
CHV	Villa, North of Callas Hill	Fieldwork Swindon Archaeological Society 1974 Bernard Phillips
CHV	Villa, North of Callas Hill	Wiltshire HER SU28SW300
DHL	Romano-British ditches, East of Coate Stone Circle	M002-406
ECT	Earlscourt	Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine 109 pp. 240-267
ECT	Earlscourt	Wiltshire HER MWI74478
FFB	Finches Farm, Baydon (M4 Site 33)	Roman Rural Settlement 17108

Map Depiction Code	HeritageAssetName	Reference
HFCH	W of Home Farm Callas Hill	The Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine -Volume 70/71
HFCH	W of Home Farm Callas Hill	Wiltshire HER SU28SW309
HMP	Half Moon Plantation , Wanborough, Wiltshire	Wiltshire HER SU27NW303
HOTS	The Hermitage, Old Town, Swindon	Roman Rural Settlement 17064
JSC	Joint Service Command and Staff College, Watchfield, Shrivenham	Roman Rural Settlement 16119
KBL	Knighton Bushes, Lambourn, West Berkshire	West Berkshire MWB 7153
LUF	Lower Upham Farm, Ogbourne St George	Roman Rural Settlement 17076
LWWW	Little Wellington Wood. Watchfield	Pastscape
LY	Lyford, Vale of White Horse	Oxfordshire HER 16514
MFL	Maddle Farm villa, Lambourn, West Berkshire	West Berkshire HER MWB 1601 and 1603
MO	Moulsford, South Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire HER 15641
MSL	Malt Shovel Lane, Upper Lambourn	Roman Rural Settlement 12033
OD	Odstone Down	<i>Gaffney, V. and Tingle, M. 1989. The Maddle Farm Project. Oxford: BAR British Series 200: 91.</i>
OD	Odstone Down	<i>Rhodes , P. 1954. Excavation at Oddstone Down, TNDFC XV: 1-28</i>
PFUW	Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon	Roman Rural Settlement 17094
PFW	Plain Farm, Wanborough, Wilts	Pastscape 867750
PWS	Piper's Way, Swindon	Roman Rural Settlement 17141
RFS1	Roves Farm, Swindon	Roman Rural Settlement 17142
SFB2	Starveall Farm, Bishopstone	Wiltshire HER SU28SE300
SFSM	Sevor Farm, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire	Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine 109 pp. 240-267
SFSM	Sevor Farm, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire	Wiltshire HER MWI64241
SFW	Stanton Fitzwarren	Roman Rural Settlement 17031
SGCS	Swindon Gateway, Coate, Swindon	Tannahill, and Pomeroy-Kellinger 2006
SGCS	Swindon Gateway, Coate, Swindon	Roman Rural Settlement 17095

Map Depiction Code	HeritageAssetName	Reference
SIV1	Stanford in the Vale Rising Main Replacement	Roman Rural Settlement 16145
SIV2	Wentworth Supermarket, Stanford-in-the-Vale	Roman Rural Settlement 16143
SMSF	South Marston Solar Farm, Swindon	
SMIP	South Marston Industrial Park	Roman Rural Settlement 17027
TSSM	Triangle Site, South Marston, Swindon	Roman Rural Settlement 17140
UWH	Uffington Hill Fort: Roman Cemetery	Roman Rural Settlement 16108
WAGP	Wanborough to Aldbourne Gas Pipeline	Roman Rural Settlement 17105
WANW	Wanborough, Wiltshire	Wiltshire HER SU18SE302
WF	Warren Farm (NE), East Garston	West Berkshire HER MWB3166
WHH	Westrop House, Highworth	Roman Rural Settlement 17135
WS	Watchfield, Shrivenham	Birbeck, 2001
WT	Watchfield Triangle, Watchfield	Oxfordshire HER 16800
WW2	Durocornovium, A419 Covington noise barrier, Wanborough	<i>Roman Rural Settlement 17017</i>
WVOWH	Woolstone, Vale of White Horse	<i>Pastscape 225384</i>
WVOWH	Woolstone, Vale of White Horse	<i>Peake .1931.Berkshire Archaeology: 119, 249</i>

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