A Biography of Power

Research and excavations at the Iron Age *oppidum* of Bagendon, Gloucestershire (1979–2017)

Tom Moore

With contributions by

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Cover: Reconstruction drawing of Bagendon as it might have looked c. AD40-50, looking westwards from the Churn valley (by Mark Gridley, © Tom Moore).

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Part I

Background

Chapter 1

Introduction: research at Bagendon

Tom Moore

'secluded in its Gloucestershire countryside but with wide and significant horizons'
(Mortimer Wheeler, in Clifford 1961: v)

Introduction

The roles of *oppida*, the major earthwork complexes that emerged in Britain towards the end of the Iron Age, have figured prominently in accounts of the dramatic societal changes occurring during, and immediately prior to, the Roman conquest (e.g. Cunliffe 1988; Creighton 2006; Hill 2007). As part of a Europe-wide phenomenon (Collis 1984; Fichtl 2005), *oppida* (sing: *oppidum*) have been crucial in debates over the nature of Rome's influence on Iron Age societies. Discussions have focused on the extent to which they represented the emergence of indigenous urbanisation and increasing state-level social complexity. Within those debates, the earthwork complexes, often referred to as 'territorial *oppida*', (Figure 1.1; Cunliffe 1976; Haselgrove 2000) have proven enigmatic, sitting uncomfortably within continental narratives (e.g. Fichtl 2005), their roles remaining unclear and disputed (Haselgrove 2000).

Discussion concerning these complexes has tended to focus on a small group of sites that includes St Albans (*Verlamion*),[1] Colchester (*Camulodunum*) and Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*), which have witnessed significant archaeological investigation and are prominent in historical narratives of early Roman Britain. In the 1950s, Elsie Clifford's (1961) excavations at Bagendon in Gloucestershire transformed awareness of such complexes, allowing her to propose that the dyke system and occupation at Bagendon represented a 'Belgic' *oppidum*, comparable in scale and significance to those already identified farther east. Clifford argued that she had identified the (previously unknown) location of the pre-Roman *civitas* capital *Corinion*[2] of the *Dobunni* (or *Bodunni*),[3] who, from Ptolemy's *Geography*, were understood to have been the pre-Roman people of the region (Camden 1610).

Despite the importance of Clifford's discoveries, and campaigns of further fieldwork in the 1980s (Trow 1982a, 1988; Trow *et al.* 2009), Bagendon has remained relatively peripheral to narratives of the Late Iron Age (e.g. Creighton 2006). This is perhaps because it lacks the draw of rich burials, such as those associated with *Camulodunum* and *Verlamion,* and has seen limited investigation. It also stems, perhaps, from the residual impact of core-periphery models, which envisaged western Britain as marginal to the emergence of kingship and state-development in south-eastern England (e.g. Haselgrove 1987). More recently, publication of the reassessment of another seemingly 'peripheral' complex at Stanwick, North Yorkshire (Haselgrove 2016), has demonstrated the meaningful social and political roles such complexes played in Britain, comparable to *oppida* elsewhere in Europe. Meanwhile, reassessment of better studied complexes, such as Silchester (Creighton and Fry 2016; Fulford *et al.* 2018), is demonstrating how much remains to be gleaned on their organisation and chronological developments.

The publication of recent assessments of Stanwick and Silchester make it a pertinent time to resituate what is, perhaps, the least well known of the *oppida* complexes: Bagendon. This volume represents a reassessment of the Bagendon complex as a whole, exploring its place in the larger context of the Late Iron Age. It brings together a range of evidence, including the results of older investigations, some of which were never published, alongside a suite of new excavations and surveys conducted over the last ten years. These are placed within the context of other archaeological investigations that have taken place in the Bagendon complex, conducted via developer-funded archaeology. The complex at Bagendon is then contextualised within an assessment of Iron Age and early Roman settlement change in the region, before examining how this complex might contribute to wider debates on *oppida* and the nature of Late Iron Age society. In doing so, this study hopes to follow Clifford in resituating Bagendon as an important contributor to understanding transformations within Later Iron Age Britain. Through various analyses,

[1] The name *Verlamion* is used to refer to pre-Roman *Verulamium*, located close to modern-day St Albans (see Thompson 2005); *Camulodunum* and *Calleva* are used throughout to refer to the Iron Age complexes at Colchester and Silchester, respectively.

[2] Ptolemy gives the Greek name; *Korínion* the Latinised name was *Corinium* (for a discussion on sources of the name, see Chapter 24).

[3] Evidence for the name *Dobunni* and its implications is discussed in Chapter 24.

Figure 1.1. Distribution of 'territorial *oppida*' (after Cunliffe 2005) and other Late Iron Age complexes in Britain.

including isotopic and Bayesian studies, as well as more traditional discussions of material culture, this volume demonstrates that Mortimer Wheeler's description of Bagendon (above), as intimately connected to the rest of southern Britain, continues to be apposite in emphasising not only its role in the Late Iron Age, but also that of the settlements that preceded it.

Bagendon and its landscape

The Bagendon complex (centred on NGR SP012066) is situated on Bagendon brook, a small tributary of the River Churn, which joins the River Thames just to the south of Cirencester (Figure 1.2 and 1.3). Located in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, Bagendon sits on the interface between the Cotswold Hills, which surround it, and the uppermost reaches of the Thames Valley a few kilometres to the south. The areas to the north and south of the valley are as high as 180 m OD, compared to just 127 m OD at the lowest points of the valley. Parts of the Bagendon valley were likely to have been sporadically wet in the past, with periods of considerable flooding around the parish church recorded several times in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Such flooding is also claimed to have happened far earlier (Rees 1930, 1932: 54) and as recently as 2000, although the well-drained limestone geology means that the valley was probably never permanently waterlogged.

Figure 1.2. Location map of Bagendon (drawn by Tudor Skinner).

The topography around the village represents a microcosm of wider landscape contrasts: between the Cotswold dip-slope, characterised by its dry oolitic-limestone plateau, and the well-watered gravel terraces and clay and alluvial soils of the upper Thames Valley. The Cotswolds are periodically intersected by a number of relatively steep-sided valleys, such as that of the Churn (close to Bagendon), created by tributaries that flow southwards to the Thames. Such positioning seems likely to have been highly significant in its role throughout the Iron Age, and is explored in more detail in later chapters. The Roman town of *Corinium Dobunnorum* was located on the site of modern-day Cirencester, *c.* 5 km to the south of Bagendon, at the junction of major Roman roads: the Fosse Way (between Exeter and Leicester), Akeman Street (from St Albans to Cirencester) and Ermin Street (from Silchester to Caerwent).

The main archaeological features that attracted attention to the site, and remain upstanding, are its earthworks, the major components of which (Cutham dyke 'a' and Perrott's Brook dyke 'f') define an area around the main valley (Figure 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6). These are not, however, especially impressive and this combined with their seemingly incoherent nature

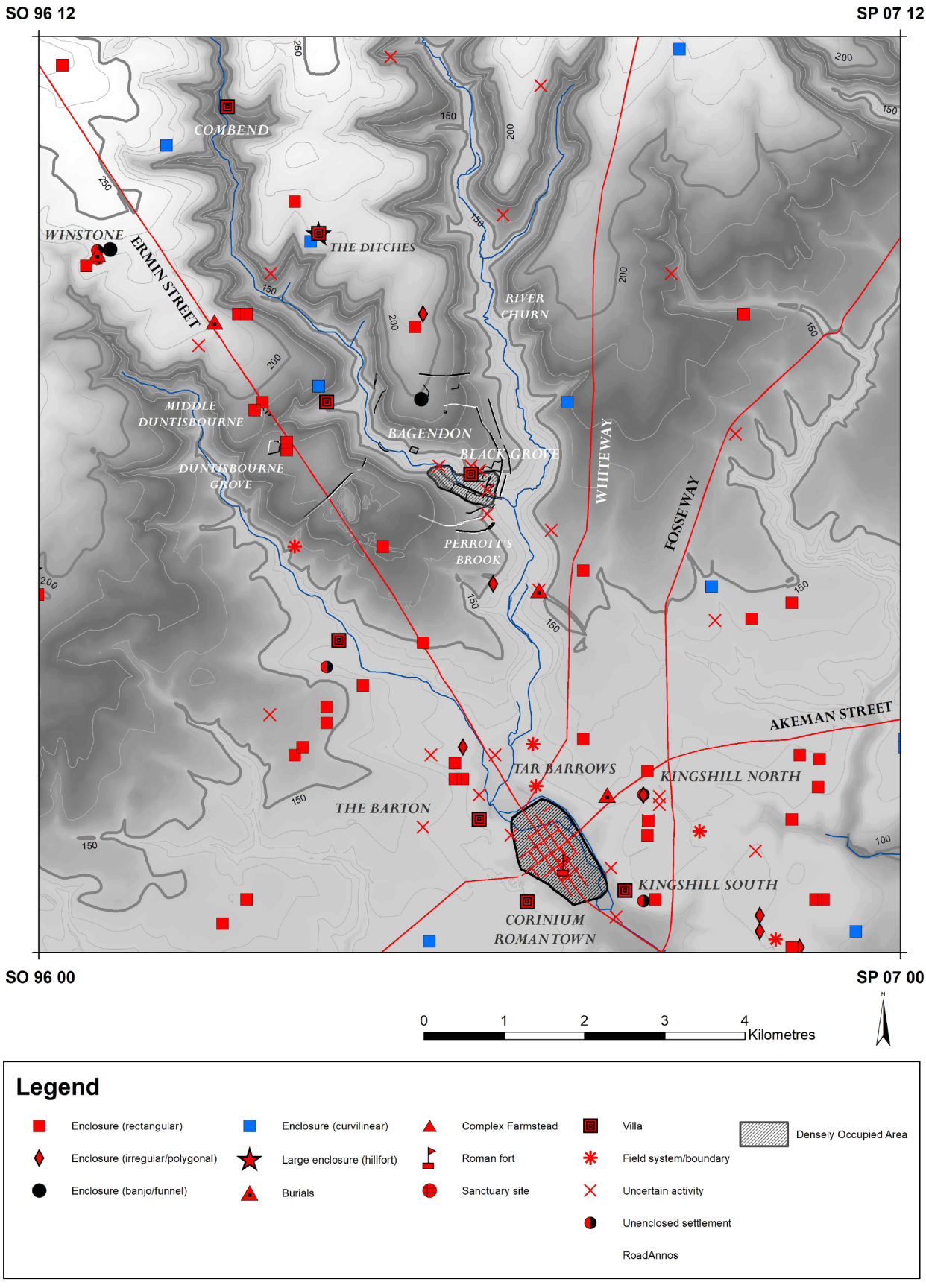

Figure 1.3. Location map of Bagendon in relation to *Corinium* and other Iron Age and Roman archaeological sites (drawn by Tudor Skinner).

Figure 1.4. Photograph of Cutham dyke (photo: Tom Moore).

means that, as with numerous *oppida* (cf. Daval 2009), many local people are not aware of their significance, and they hardly feature in concepts of local identity (Moore and Tully 2018). There is no signposting or information about the area as an ancient monument, and only the earthworks of Cutham dyke 'a' and Perrot's Brook dyke 'f' are provided with any special monument designation (SAM 1003436).

The earthworks encompass, at their core, the present-day village of Bagendon. The name of the village (also referred to as 'Bagginton' or 'Badgington' until the late 19th century: Wilson 1870) derives from early Medieval description as 'the valley of Baecga's folk' (Smith 1964: 56). The Cutham and Perrott's Brook earthworks at Bagendon define the south-eastern end of the parish, which also incorporates the small hamlet of Perrott's Brook. This hamlet was previously called Berrard's Bridge (VCH 1981) or Bearidge Bridge (Atkyns 1712: 248). Confusion abounds as to the origin of the name,

Figure 1.5. Aerial photograph of Bagendon looking Northwest along the valley, taken in 1973. Cutham dyke is marked by the line of trees alongside the road running up hill to the right; Perrott's Brook dyke is marked by the line of trees running alongside the road to the left. (NMR 484/05 © Crown Copyright Historic England Archive)

which possibly stems from Barrow's bridge or perhaps Beranbyrig (Atkyns 1712). An early form of the name also appears to be Beoresford bridge (Fosbrooke 1807: 502). Either way, confusingly, it appears that it has never been the name for the brook that runs through the valley, which continues to be referred to as the Bagendon brook.[4] The current village is split between two occupation areas, one around the Medieval church, itself thought to date from at least the 12th century AD with possible Saxon elements, and Bagendon Manor, which in its current form dates from the early 18th century. This area incorporates a range of post-Medieval buildings, including an overshot water mill. To the west of the main village (south-west of Bagendon House, which in its current form dates to 1846), there is a cluster of houses, some of which are post-Medieval in date (Verey 1970). It seems probable, and is inferred from some of the geophysics surveys (Chapter 2), that the Medieval village was once contiguous between these two areas. Today, the village of Bagendon nestles in a rural valley, although the constant hum of the A417/A419 trunk road from Swindon to Gloucester emphasises its proximity to important transport networks.

History of research

Unlike many other putative *oppida*, Bagendon has seen relatively little exploration (Figure 1.6), and was only identified as of potential significance for understanding Late Iron Age society relatively late in comparison to complexes like those around St Albans and Colchester. This is largely because the Roman town of *Corinium* lies some distance away and thus an association between the 'polis of the *Dobunni*', identified by Ptolemy in his *Geography*, and the earthworks at Bagendon was not made until Clifford's investigations.

The earliest accounts

Research on the complex, prior to Clifford's investigations, was limited. Despite visiting Cirencester, and writing a poem about the Thames and Churn, William Camden (1610) does not mention the earthworks at Bagendon. He does, however, seem to be the first written source to suggest that Cirencester was Ptolemy's *Korínion* (Latinised as *Corinium*) and the capital of the *Dobunni* people (Camden 1610). He

A. Cutham Enclosure (2014)
B. Scrubditch Enclosure (2012-13)
C. Black Grove (2015)
D. Dyke 'e' (2017)
E. Area A (1979-81)
F. Area B (1980)
G. Clifford Site A (1954-56)
H. Clifford Site B (1954-56)
I. Clifford Site C (1954-56)
J. Perrott's brook dyke, WAT (1983)
K. Manor cottage, Foundations Archaeology (2005)
L. Old School, Foundations Archaeology (2010)
M. Malt House, Foundations Archaeology (2017)
N. Middle Duntisbourne, OAU (1999)
P. Duntisbourne Grove, OAU (1999)
Q. Dartley Bottom, OAU (1999)
R. Cutham House, GCCAS (2005)

Figure 1.6. Map of Bagendon area showing earthworks and location of significant archaeological investigations.

[4] E. Carrus-Wilson, of Trinity Farm, Bagendon, made this point as early as 1955 in a letter to the *Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard* newspaper (5 November 1955).

Figure 1.7. Extract of the 1792 'inclosure' map of Bagendon. The map clearly depicts dykes 'd', 'e' and 'f', as well as a feature, possibly a dyke or hollow-way, between dyke 'e' and 'f' (from Gloucestershire Archives: D475/box 94725 Bagendon 1792, reproduced with permission)

suggested that the Roman town of *Corinium*, which he recognised as situated at modern Cirencester, might have had earlier, pre-Roman antecedents. The idea that Cirencester also represented the location of the pre-Roman capital of the *Dobunni* persisted (Atykns 1712); indeed, this idea remained well into the early 20th century (e.g. Baddeley 1922), and was only undermined by Clifford's (1961: 1) arguments.

The first accounts of the earthworks at Bagendon date from the 18th century. Atkyns (1712: 248), in his discussion of the parish, refers to a 'Roman camp' to the west of the Churn and describes some 'barrows', which might be the earthworks. Samuel Rudder (1779: 258) provides a fuller description, mentioning 'two considerable entrenchments fronting each other, one of which extends for about a quarter of a mile towards Barrows-bridge [at what is now the hamlet of Perrott's Brook] with the rampire [rampart] and graff [ditch] entire in some parts'. Intriguingly, he documents that nearby are 'two or three large barrows' (Rudder 1779: 258) from which spearheads and other 'warlike weapons' were retrieved. The reference to barrows by Atykns and Rudder, as well as the place name etymology above, is intriguing as no evidence of any such barrows remains in the immediate area today, raising the possibility that such features were located somewhere in the Perrott's Brook area in the more recent past and have subsequently been destroyed. Given the presence of funerary monuments close to other dyke complexes, for example at Camulodunum (Crummy *et al.* 2007), such a possibility cannot be dismissed entirely. It is possible, however, that Rudder misinterpreted elements of the earthworks around Bagendon, which he might have considered to be 'barrows'. Rudder suggested that the evidence of weaponry and the name of Barrow-bridge might relate the earthworks to a battle that took place close to Cirencester in AD 628, and which is referred to in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles (Giles 1914).

Other antiquarians offer little more information. Rudge (1803) appears merely to summarise Rudder's comments. Despite Samuel Lysons's considerable antiquarian work in the area (he recognised Roman villas at Combend—see Chapter 5—and at his native Rodmarton), there is no mention of the complex in his volumes on antiquities in Gloucestershire (Lysons 1803). His nephew did refer to a Roman roadside settlement at Bagendon (Lysons 1860: 42), but it is not clear to what he is referring and, given that he suggests it is located on Ermin Street, it may be Stancombe or another set of Roman remains. It is clear, however, that the local

people were well aware of the ancient nature of the earthworks around them. The dykes at Perrott's Brook and Cutham are referred to on a number of occasions in the enclosure award from 1790, with an intriguing reference to an 'ancient gate' on the boundary with North Cerney at Scrubditch.[5] At least three dykes are also depicted on the associated map from 1792 (see Figure 1.7).

G.F. Playne (1876) was made aware of the Bagendon earthworks through identification by the local rector, the aptly named Reverend Dyke. Of the earthworks, Playne (1876: 212) writes 'they are found to cross the marshy ground near the stream', suggesting that the earthworks, at this time, were cutting across the meadows at Perrott's Brook, although the dykes are no longer extant in this area.[6] The outer earthworks, opposite Cutham dyke, were certainly more visible according to his description. It seems that he assumed there were additional earthworks to the west, although he does not describe them. His interpretation of the earthworks, like Rudder's, was as defensive with a temporary need for defences as part of a military engagement. Playne also noted the presence of what he interpreted as an additional set of earthworks on the opposing side of the Churn, 'directly facing the Bagendon lines', which he suggested were 'constructed by opposing forces' (1876: 212; cf. Witts 1882: 3). There is no trace of these opposing earthworks today, although it is possible he was referring to a slight lynchet that runs along the opposite side of the Churn, demarcating the slope from the valley. Other features on the higher ground of the eastern side of the Churn Valley appear to be natural and there are no obviously ploughed out features recognisable on aerial photographs, so his suggestion is probably erroneous.

It seems likely that John Wilson's (1870: 93) brief description of two earthworks at Bagendon (probably Cutham and Perrott's Brook dyke) is derived largely from John Rudder's earlier account. Wilson suggests, however, that the earthworks were related to an earlier battle between Saxons and Britons in AD 577 (the Battle of Deorham (Dyrham), described in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles) when, it is claimed, Cirencester was captured by the Saxons (Giles 1914); although why Wilson identifies Bagendon as the site of the battle is unclear. By the late 19th century the current extent of the earthworks was recognised by surveyors, with the 1884 OS map of Bagendon indicating most of the major earthworks later surveyed by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments England in the 1970s (RCHME 1976) (see below). The former recorded the Scrubditch earthwork as representing a 'camp', with the rest as 'entrenchments'.

Connections between the monuments at Bagendon, the Late Iron Age *Dobunni* and the Roman conquest were slow to emerge. It was G.B. Witts (1897), then president of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, who first suggested that the 'extensive earthworks' at Bagendon were potentially related to the march of Aulus Plautius, recorded by Cassius Dio in his *Historiae Romanae* (60.20) as having accepted the surrender of the *Dobunni*:

After the flight of these kings he gained by capitulation a part of the *Bodunni*, who were ruled by a tribe of the *Catuellani*; and leaving a garrison there, he advanced farther and came to a river.

Witts (1897: 342) suggested that the route of Plautius' march, whom he assumed was marching to the Severn, 'may explain the extensive line of earthworks at Bagendon which extended nearly 2 miles', seemingly implying that these were thrown up by the *Bodunni*, as he describes them (following Dio above), in their resistance to the Roman incursion. While Witts echoed Camden's earlier assertion that the local 'tribe' were the *Bodunni* (*Dobunni*), his description does not suggest that this location was a precursor to, or the original, *Corinion* identified by Ptolemy as the polis or capital.[7] Witts's narrative, of Plautius marching into Gloucestershire and the establishment of a fort at Bagendon, has since been questioned (Hawkes 1961: 58–61), but explaining the region's earthworks in relation to the process of Roman conquest remained popular well into the 20th century (e.g. O'Neil and O'Neil 1952).[8]

Providing wonderful sketches of some of the earthworks (Figure 1.8) and recognising that the Scrubditch earthworks were probably somehow related to those at Cutham, E. Burrow's (1924: 38) description also regards them as some form of 'tribal boundary'. He too recognised the earthworks on the eastern side of the Churn, seemingly drawing on Rudder's earlier account, and argued that they were evidence of an attacking force's opposing earthworks (Burrow 1924: 38). The fullest account of the remains at Bagendon prior to Clifford's work was provided by George Rees (1932: 23–26), rector of the parish, in his rather eclectic history of Bagendon. He noted the discovery of human remains, seemingly

[5] From 'Copy of: Bagendon: award of arbitrators on the division of the commonable and intermixed land, made on the 17th April 1790' (Gloucestershire Archives Document D475).

[6] Also suggested by Witts (1882: 3), although his account appears largely to paraphrase Playne (1876).

[7] It is widely believed that the name *Bodunni* found in Cassius Dio was a scribal error in the Medieval manuscript of the name *Dobunni*, found in Ptolemy (Rivet and Smith 1979: 339). This remained contentious however, with some continuing to argue the *Bodunni* were a separate people (Hawkes 1961: 58).

[8] Earlier, Lysons (1860: 7) appears to have believed that after Claudius' landing he had 'followed the Thames to its source, near Cirencester, made his way over the Cotswold hills towards the Vale of Gloucester, to which his general Plautius had already penetrated'.

Figure 1.8. E. Burrow's 1924 drawing of Cutham dyke 'a', looking south, towards Perrott's brook dyke (from Burrow 1924)

inhumations, 'on the inner slope of the rampart' at Cutham dyke 'a' (see Figure 24.8; Chapter 15), which appears to have been located close to Clifford's later excavation area. He also describes a stone platform, similar to that later excavated from the gravel pit explored by Clifford (1961). In addition, he mentions the discovery, in 1861, of cremation urns found in the grounds of the rectory (Rees 1932: 28). Rees's description of these suggests that they might be of Iron Age or early Roman date. He also alludes to 'Roman finds' from the churchyard, claiming that the unusual siting of the church in a flood zone was due to the presence of an earlier, pre-Saxon, place of worship (Rees 1932: 54). Echoing Witts's (1897) account in placing the Iron Age earthworks in relation to the Roman conquest, Rees argues that they were thrown up by the *Dobunni* in opposition to Plautius' advance. There are indications that he also recognised other remains, but their location and form are confusing. He describes an 'old camp' at Black Grove, presumably the field of the same name designated on the 1832 field map, although it seems that he refers to an area to the south-west. Rees suggests that it is a substantial 'triple walled fort', but no such remains are visible in that area. It is most probable that he is referring to various lynchets along the southern side of the valley (see Chapter 2), which are probably Medieval in date and do not form an enclosure. He also recognised the earthwork at Oysterwell (dyke 'g'), later recorded by the Royal Commission survey (see below; RHCME 1976).

Elsie Clifford: Bagendon, 'the Colchester of the West'

The first real archaeological investigation at Bagendon was undertaken by Elsie Clifford. Clifford described herself as an amateur archaeologist (Wheeler, in Clifford 1961: v), but was, in fact, one of the region's most accomplished (Reece 1984: 20), having trained at Cambridge and held eminent roles in the Prehistoric Society and the Society of Antiquaries of London. She, along with Helen O'Neill, was one of the foremost archaeologists in Gloucestershire during the early 20th century (Reece 1984). Prior to her investigations at Bagendon, Clifford had already undertaken excavations of Iron Age sites around Gloucester (Clifford 1930, 1934; Atkin 1992: 13) and more notably at Minchinhampton and Rodborough, the latter in association with Gerald Dunning, who later went on to excavate at Salmonsbury with Helen O'Neil (Dunning 1976). At Minchinhampton she identified what she interpreted (correctly as it turns out, see Chapter 23) as an important Late Iron Age settlement (Clifford 1937; O'Neil and O'Neil 1952).

Clifford undertook excavations at the eastern end of the Bagendon valley because of her recognition of 'Belgic' pottery revealed through the digging of a small gravel quarry close to Perrott's Brook (also noted by Rees 1932), which she visited in the 1930s (Clifford 1961: 2). She subsequently opened an area immediately adjacent to the quarry (her sites B and C; Figure 1.6), as well as excavating a section across the most prominent of the earthworks, Cutham Dyke (her site A) (Figure 1.6). Her

Figure 1.9. Photograph of Elsie Clifford's excavations by Capt. H. S. Gracie (looking north-east) (from Corinium Museum archives, reproduced with permission)

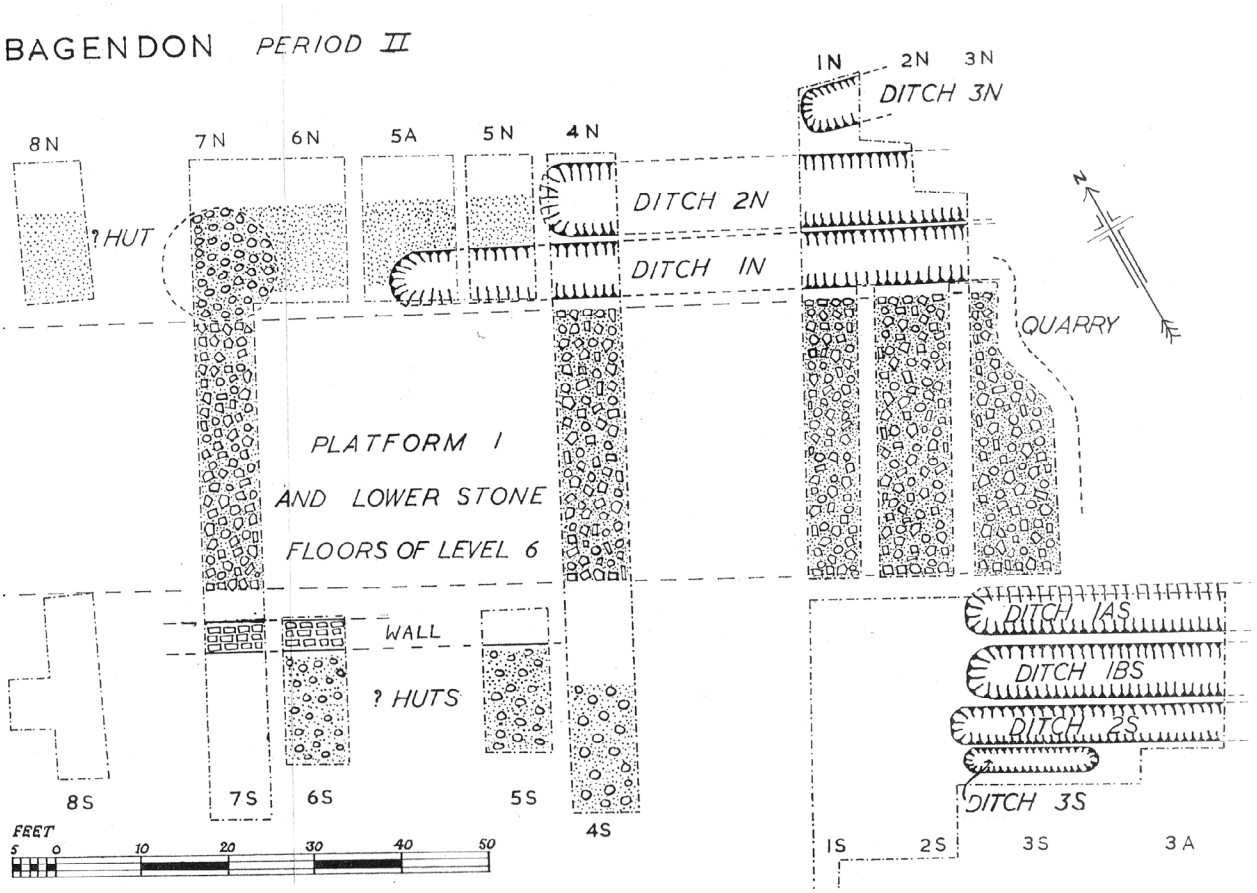

Figure 1.10. Plan of Clifford's excavations at Site B from her report (from Clifford 1961: fig. 8).

excavation technique appears to have acknowledged some of the limitations of following a strict, Wheeler-style, box excavation technique as she often extended the excavation areas to form larger, more open expanses (Figure 1.9 and 1.10; Richard Reece pers. comm.).

Despite her excellent excavations, the publication of the results appears to have caused some problems (Reece 1984: 24). Molly Cotton and Clare Fell significantly reassessed the stratigraphy before publication, which led to a major renumbering of finds and contexts. This seems to have happened subsequent to the marking of ceramics, which has since created some confusion and inconsistences.[9] Even with the apparent problems, the significance of the project's findings were widely recognised at the time (Brailsford 1962; Rivet 1962), with

[9] Although the archive contains correspondence tables from 1977, provided by Clare Fell, it remains difficult to equate finds with contexts.

Figure 1.11. Elsie Clifford with Mortimer Wheeler and Capt. H Gracie at Bagendon in 1955.

numerous high-profile visitors to the site, including Wheeler, Dorothy De Navarro and V.G. Childe (Figure 1.11; Reece 1984: 23, 1999). The final publication of the excavation, and the placing of the results in a wider context, was also undertaken by an eminent team of Iron Age specialists of the day, including Cotton, C.F. Hawkes, Derek Allen and M.R. Hull, and contained a foreword by Wheeler.

Clifford (1961: 2) linked the Bagendon complex to Ptolemy's *Corinion* with compelling logic; excavations in the 1950s suggested to her that Roman *Corinium*, and occupation at Cirencester, dated no earlier than the late 1st century AD. Based on contemporaneous understanding of the Late Iron Age–Roman transition, it was assumed that there must have been a central capital for the local 'tribe' in the vicinity. Minchinhampton Common, which Clifford had submitted to small-scale excavation in the 1930s (Clifford 1937), seemed too distant: the only possible contender was Bagendon. The integrated discussion that the Bagendon volume represented was subsequently well received and made a significant impact, adding a new '*oppidum*' to the small group recognised in south-east England at the time (Brailsford 1962; Frere 1962; Rivet 1962) and to which another 'peripheral' example at Stanwick, North Yorkshire (Wheeler 1954), had only recently been added. Wheeler's description of Bagendon, in his foreword to Clifford's 1961 volume, as the potential 'Colchester of the West' (cited at the start of this chapter), captures the importance that its identification was deemed to have.

Sadly, not long before Clifford's death in 1976, according to correspondence with Corinium Museum from Glyn Daniel (the executor of her estate), she burnt much of her records and paperwork, including, it seems, the Bagendon archive. This means that none of the original drawings and no paper records or diaries survive. Alongside the later renumbering of contexts and stratigraphy for publication, this makes it very hard to reconstruct her excavation, beyond what is published in the 1961 volume. For this reason, it was determined for this project that reassessing the entirety of Clifford's assemblage was both too costly and likely to provide no more than a general overview of the date range of her assemblage. For the samian ware this had been undertaken by Dannell (1977), who did not refer to stratigraphic contexts, but was concerned only with the date of the assemblage overall. Some aspects of this have been reassessed (Chapter 6), where relevant, but the problems in stratigraphy and archiving make any specific judgements on Clifford's original finds problematic.

Reassessment: 1970s–1980s

Clifford's excavations had (literally) put Bagendon on the map of Late Iron Age Britain (OS Map of Southern Britain 1962); it was later incorporated into Barry Cunliffe's (1976) model of *oppida* typology and chronology. Situating Clifford's excavations in context, the Royal Commission also undertook a detailed survey of the complex in the early 1970s, identifying additional, potentially related dykes, as part of their assessment of Iron Age and Roman monuments in the region (Figure 1.12; RCHME 1976). Questions concerning the complex, in particular its chronology, remained, however.

A re-evaluation of the chronology of Bagendon by Vivian Swan, as part of a reassessment of the dating of Oare (Savernake) ceramics (Swan 1975), raised considerable doubts about whether the site began as early as Clifford had claimed. Swan argued, on the basis of the ceramics, that the whole site dated to after the Roman conquest (see Chapter 4). An additional reassessment of the samian from Bagendon (Dannell 1977) also suggested a slightly later date for the start of the complex, although he still argued it began before the Roman conquest. Others, meanwhile, sought to reassess the detailed pseudo-historical narrative developed by Hawkes (1961) in his chapter in Clifford's volume (Rivet 1962; Wacher 1974: 292–293).

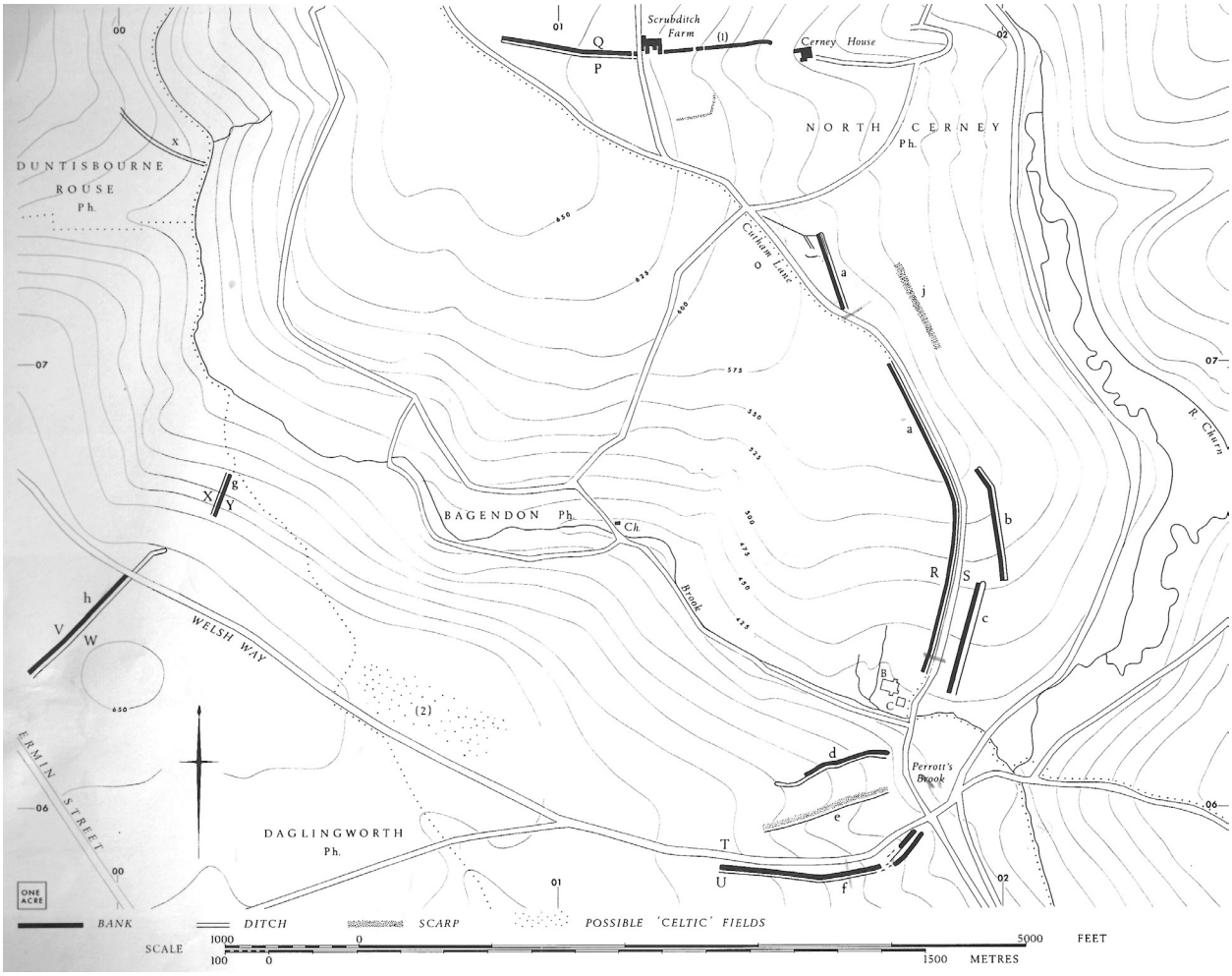

Figure 1.12. Survey of Bagendon earthworks undertaken by the Royal Commission (RCHME 1976; © Crown Copyright, Historic England and Ordnance Survey).

In an attempt to resolve some of these issues, particularly the chronology of occupation, Richard Reece, then lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, undertook excavations between 1979 and 1981. The aim of these was primarily to re-evaluate the stratigraphy and chronology of the area examined by Clifford (Trow 1982a: 26; Reece 1984: 24). This re-evaluation was conducted with a small team of local volunteers and undergraduate students, which included Stephen Trow (Figure 1.13). The results of these excavations were never published, but a short interim report outlined their significance (Trow 1982a). Analysis of these excavations thus forms a core part of Chapter 4 of this volume.

Following the interesting results from Bagendon, Trow, now a postgraduate (assisted by Simon James), commenced his own project, beginning by examining the surrounding area. Particular focus was placed on assessing the significance of the apparent hillfort at 'The Ditches', situated relatively close to Bagendon *c.* 2 km to the north-west (Figure 1.3 and 1.14; RCHME 1976: 85). Subsequent fieldwalking and trenches across the ramparts of The Ditches revealed first-century AD material that indicated it was contemporaneous with occupation in the Bagendon valley. Aerial photography at the time also suggested the presence of a Roman villa within the enclosure (Trow *et al.* 2009: 4). Trow's excavations at The Ditches, between 1982 and 1985, revealed a detailed sequence of occupation, extending from the Late Iron Age through the construction of, and what remains, one of the earliest Roman villas outside of south-east England (Trow 1988a; Trow *et al.* 2009). The initial work on the earthworks at The Ditches was published rapidly (Trow 1988a), but that on the interior and the villa emerged only later after a project of post-excavation led by James and assisted by the current author (Trow *et al.* 2009). Additional fieldwalking, along with aerial photographs from the time (Figure 1.14), also identified Neolithic remains in the area, including a causewayed enclosure to the north-east of Woodmancote (Trow 1985).

Figure 1.13. Planning the excavation of Area B in 1980 (Photo: Stephen Trow).

Developer-led archaeology: the 1990s

The advent of new planning guidance in 1990 (PPG16) led to a substantial expansion in the archaeology of the region, with a vast number of new Iron Age and Roman sites being identified and excavated (Moore 2006; Darvill 2010: 23). Initially, Bagendon's rural location meant that it did not see any meaningful re-evaluation; it was not, for example, re-examined as part of the archaeological assessment of Cirencester in the 1990s (Darvill and Gerrard 1994). Over time, however, investigations undertaken in advance of infrastructure began to provide critical insights into the wider Bagendon complex. Most notable was the dualling and realignment of the A417/A419, to the south-west of Bagendon, which was aligned along the course of the Ermin Street Roman road (Mudd *et al.* 1999). This led to the investigation of enclosures and other features around Dartley Farm, at Duntisbourne Grove and Middle Duntisbourne (Mudd *et al.* 1999: 77–98), as well as an noteworthy section through the Roman road itself at Dartley Bottom, which revealed earlier ground surfaces (Mudd *et al.* 1999: 263) (Figure 1.6).

In addition to the nearby road scheme, watching briefs (by several consultant archaeological firms) have been undertaken throughout the area as part of small-scale developments (Figure 1.6). A number of these have produced relevant archaeological material and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Most notable amongst them, in producing dating evidence relevant to the Late Iron Age/Roman period, are investigations by Foundations Archaeology at Bagendon Manor Cottage (Mayer 2005), Bagendon Old School (Hood 2010) and the Malt House, Perrott's Brook (Hood 2017). Several other investigations have been recorded further to those identified in Figure 1.6, for example immediately to the south of Scrubditch, which have produced no archaeological remains. Many of these have been very small-scale watching briefs and therefore only those that have produced relevant archaeological information are identified in this volume. Various finds have also been produced through metal-detecting (see Haselgrove, Chapter 10), and it seems probable that others have been retrieved without record. An array of developer-led excavations have also taken place in the region, especially in the upper Thames Valley, which also allow for activity at Bagendon and The Ditches to be placed in a wider settlement and landscape context (see Chapter 23).

The recording and accessibility of investigation records for the work undertaken in the Bagendon area since 1990 contrasts the lack of information on the impact of development that took place in previous decades. Around Bagendon, the construction of a number of gas pipelines cut across the occupation area. Archaeological investigation was only undertaken, by the Western Archaeology Trust (WAT) (Courtney and Hall 1984), where this construction intersected with Perrott's Brook dyke (Figure 1.6). It seems that a form of watching brief was undertaken in some areas, however, with stray finds of *Terra Sigillata* (Willis, Chapter 6) and Gallo-Belgic ware in the Bagendon archive that are identified as having been discovered in 1983. This material also includes a single brooch noted by Don Mackreth (see Adams, Chapter 7). These finds do not derive from the recorded excavations undertaken by WAT, which recorded no finds except some flints (Courtney and Hall 1984). It seems most probable that they were discovered when the pipeline (visible on the geophysics—see Chapter 2) cut along the south side of the present-day road into the valley, which we now know from the geophysics (see Chapters 2 and 4) was densely occupied in the Late Iron Age/early Roman period. Whether features were encountered elsewhere, for example with the additional pipeline to the north, from Bagendon village to North Cerney, remains unknown, but from the geophysics, it appears probable that these pipelines did disturb archaeological contexts.

Figure 1.14. Aerial photograph, looking south, showing The Ditches Iron Age enclosure in the distance and the Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Aycote, Rendcomb in the foreground (NMR 2144/1252, © Crown Copyright, Historic England Archive).

The development and aims of this project

The combined previous research at Bagendon, particularly the excavations between 1979 and 1981, although relatively small in scale compared to many other complexes, nevertheless permitted clarification of its chronology, relating it to the more recent assessments of the occupation at The Ditches. The work undertaken nearby at Duntisbourne further illustrated the dispersed nature of Late Iron Age occupation and raised key questions about how these elements were inter-related. When the opportunity arose to publish results from the 1979–1981 excavations it was clear that publishing them alone, especially given the vagaries that time had left on the archive of material, was likely to mean that they could provide only a limited contribution to understanding the place of the Bagendon complex in the study of Late Iron Age *oppida*. Notable transformations have also taken place since the 1980s in considerations of the nature of British '*oppida*', suggesting that they may have been more dispersed, polyfocal complexes, rather than proto-urban centres (e.g. Haselgrove 2000; Hill 2007; Moore 2012, 2017a, 2017b). The confusing nature of their earthworks has also led some to see them not as designed to define settlements, but to connect separate areas of activity. Recent discussions have also emphasised the complex issues regarding where and why *oppida* emerged, with some suggestions that this was in empty or marginal parts of the landscape (Haselgrove 1995; Moore 2006: 149, 2007a; Hill 2007; Sharples 2010). Increasingly, the role of these complexes as major economic hubs for production and exchange has also been challenged, emphasising instead their roles as elite centres and places for demonstrating kingship (Fitzpatrick 2001; Creighton 2006; Hill 2007). A re-examination of the

Bagendon complex therefore had the potential to address questions on the origins, roles and development of so-called '*oppida*' more generally, on a site that had previously been peripheral to such debates. In order to situate the evidence from Bagendon in a broader debate on the Late Iron Age, the research undertaken as part of this project focused on the following questions:

- Did Bagendon emerge in what had been an 'empty' area in preceding centuries?
- Did the landscape in which the complex emerged have some form of pre-existing cultural or social significance, or was this a marginal agricultural landscape?
- What was within the dyke system at Bagendon? Was much of the interior devoid of occupation or were there areas of dense occupation? What other roles might the large interior area have had?
- How did the arrangement of earthworks function? Did they define a settlement area or have alternative roles? How did that arrangement relate to occupation at The Ditches and Duntisbourne?
- What role did the complex at Bagendon perform? Was it, for example, a 'central place', a centre for trade or a residence for emergent kings?
- Can Bagendon be defined alongside other 'territorial *oppida*' or does it compare more readily with different forms of settlements?
- What happened to Bagendon after the creation of the Roman town at *Corinium*? Was it simply abandoned or did it develop new, but perhaps related, roles in the Roman province?

All of these questions could just as easily be asked of most so-called *oppida* in Britain, allowing Bagendon to be contextualised alongside other centres. Assessment of the material from Bagendon and its wider landscape was fundamental in addressing these project aims. Fundamental to this was determining whether it could be defined as a 'territorial *oppidum*' or if, as has become increasingly apparent (Corney 1989; Moore 2012), it might be better compared to a range of other Late Iron Age complexes not normally defined as *oppida*. Contextualising the occupation area in the valley within a much broader geographic and chronological scope was thus essential in gaining a better understanding of what the Bagendon complex was and of its place in the Late Iron Age of the region.

Some aspects of the Bagendon landscape make it particularly useful for addressing the research questions above. Unlike *Calleva*, *Verlamion* and *Camulodunum*, the creation of the Roman town at Cirencester, rather than at Bagendon, means there is little Roman (or later) urban archaeology that is likely to have destroyed Iron Age activity or obscured its layout. Apart from the village at its core, and a handful of houses built in recent decades, Bagendon's landscape remains largely open, allowing extensive remote-sensing surveys to be conducted (Figure 1.15; see Chapter 2).

Through his fieldwalking and excavations, Trow was one of the first to recognise that Late Iron Age Bagendon was not just focused around the Bagendon valley. In particular, he realised that The Ditches enclosure was intimately related to Bagendon (Trow 1982a: 29). Despite Trow's more expansive perspective, the limited survey techniques available at the time meant that a more complete picture of the complex was impossible, with aerial photographs not always especially effective at revealing archaeological features in this landscape. A brief assessment of the complex as part of a broader overview of the Iron Age in the region (Moore 2006: 148) did, however, identify some features, including a possible banjo enclosure, within the Bagendon area that were worth investigating. The application of high-resolution geophysical survey to the greater Bagendon area, combined with lidar data from the Environment Agency, enabled the context of the areas previously

Figure 1.15. View of Bagendon valley looking east towards the area of the 1950s and 1979-81 excavations. Area B, 1980, was located to the left of the water trough (Photo: Tom Moore).

excavated to be understood and the nature of activity across the rest of the complex to be examined.

These surveys identified various new elements of the complex that were targeted for excavation.[10] Focus was placed on areas which could address some of the core questions outlined above that concerned not just Bagendon but also *oppida* more generally. Excavations at the newly identified banjo-like enclosures at Cutham and Scrubditch were undertaken over three seasons (2012–2014), and the stone buildings at Black Grove were briefly examined in 2015. A small excavation of dyke 'e' in 2017 (Figure 1.6) attempted to understand the nature of the earthworks better, and the wider landscape was assessed through an augering survey (see Chapter 19) and limited test-pitting, also in 2017.[11]

A biographical approach

As the project developed, and as the complex nature of Late Iron Age centres became more fully appreciated (Haselgrove 2000; Moore 2012, 2017a, 2017b), the incoherent earthworks and the dispersed nature of Late Iron Age occupation at Bagendon meant that conceptualising it as a 'site' was highly problematic. For this reason, it was more useful to approach Bagendon as a wider landscape, of which the topography and archaeology were integral and integrated. This approach recognised that 'landscapes' should not be conceived of as the backdrops against which 'sites' exist or things took place, but taskscapes of which human interaction (and the archaeology it has created) are integral parts (Ingold 1993). This perspective also sought to draw on the significance of such landscapes as perceptual and as ways of embedding concepts of memory and identity (Stewart and Strathern 2003). Reflecting on these perspectives, detaching one element of Bagendon's landscape (its role in the Late Iron Age) might divorce it from the longer-term relationships it had with preceding and succeeding communities and generations. Taking its inspiration from Ingold's (2000: 189) suggestion that the 'landscape tells, or rather is, a story', this study of Bagendon thus aims to examine the complex through its biography, one in which earlier activities, uses, perceptions and features of the landscape will have influenced and been incorporated by subsequent generations (cf. Kolen and Renes 2015). It is hoped that this approach allows its role within a short period in the 1st century AD to be examined as part of the longer shaping, reshaping and renegotiation of the wider Bagendon landscape, in which human monuments and environmental contexts were indivisible, and one that continues to this day. Although this volume focuses on a relatively narrow window of that landscape biography (the Iron Age and Roman periods), it is hoped that considering it in these terms allows for a deeper appreciation of the *longue durée* of landscape transformations.

As research progressed, a strong theme emerged from the biography of the 1st millennia BC and AD, one that hinted at how this area was modelled and reformed to enact and display forms of power. Indeed, the changing nature and expressions of power throughout these periods (cf. Thurston 2010) are vividly illustrated in the physical manifestation of the landscape and monuments of the Bagendon area, hence the title of this volume: 'a biography of power'. Of course, this does not mean that other biographies do not, and did not, exist in this landscape, or that other stories could not be told, but it emphasises the fundamental importance that forms of power have in shaping and informing landscape. This biography seeks to create a narrative inspired by the concept of thick description (Geertz 1973), not just examining the findings of fieldwork but also presenting a narrative of society and landscape. Undoubtedly, such a narrative must deal with the fragmentary and imperfect nature of the archaeological record. Yet as Hawkes (1961) understood in his contextual account in Clifford's volume, only through such narratives can we truly grasp the impact of creating and recreating the spaces in which communities and individuals lived and embodied their worlds.

In light of the conceptual value of landscape biographies, this project also explored how this could be used to examine contemporary perceptions of the wider cultural landscape of the area (cf. Kolen and Renes 2015), and be translated into new presentations of these landscapes and integrated into management practices in the present. This was undertaken as part of a larger European project (REFIT: Resituating Europe's first towns: a case study in enhancing knowledge transfer and developing sustainable management of cultural landscapes) on cultural landscape management via the Joint Programme Initiative on Cultural Heritage of the European Council, conducted with colleagues Vincent Guichard (Bibracte EPPC, France), Jesus Álvarez-Sanchís and Gonzalo Zapatero (Uni. Complutense Madrid, Spain). The methodologies and results of this project are discussed elsewhere (Moore and Tully 2018; Tully and Allen 2018; Tully *et al.* 2019; Moore and Tully forthcoming Moore *et al.* in press www.refitproject.com). These studies remind us that the narratives outlined in this volume for the Iron Age and Roman periods are part of a longer story of the intimate and integrated relationships between people

[10] Each 'site' has been given a particular name (Figure 1.6). To avoid confusion, the trenches for the 2012–2017 excavations have been given sequential trench numbers (TR1–11 and site prefix code of BAG/year; contexts numbers relate to each trench, e.g. 1001 = Trench 1; 4012 = Trench 4 and so on), irrespective of their location within the complex in order to ensure that material is clearly located and to emphasise the approach towards Bagendon as that of a single coherent landscape rather than discrete entities.

[11] The main site archives and finds have been deposited with the Corinium Museum.

and landscapes in which past, present and future are intertwined. The contemporary stewards of that landscape, many of whom have been essential enablers of this research, are as much a part of that biography as the coins, pottery and earthworks described here. The ways in which their perspectives are part of the 'dwelling' in that landscape (see Ingold 1993: 152, 2000) are explored and reflected on in the publications and outputs of the REFIT project (e.g. Moore and Tully forthcoming).

Structure of this volume

Part II of this volume begins with an assessment of the wider landscape using geophysical survey (Chapter 2). This assessment underpins much of what follows and emphasises the volume's 'landscape' approach to the complex; it then examines various elements of the landscape, broadly in chronological order, commencing with the occupation of Bagendon prior to the Late Iron Age and focusing on the excavations at Scrubditch and Cutham (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 then considers Late Iron Age and early Roman Bagendon, primarily through the results of the 1979–1981 excavations as well as more recent small-scale investigations and assessment of the Bagendon ramparts. A discussion of how Bagendon's landscape was transformed in the Roman period is then presented, focusing on the excavations of the Roman villa at Black Grove (Chapter 5).

The excavation evidence is followed in Part III with a discussion of the material evidence from these investigations, and others, which enables the narrative of Bagendon to be constructed (Chapters 6–14). Part IV focuses on the environmental evidence (Chapters 15–19), including isotope analyses of human and faunal remains. Part V uses GIS to examine movement though the landscape, reports on additional geophysics surveys, and brings these together through an assessment of the nature of landscape change in the region (Chapters 20–23).

Finally, Part VI draws all of the above together in Chapter 24 to examine how the different phases of Bagendon may be understood, and places them in the larger context of how we define Late Iron Age complexes and their social roles. To conclude, Chapter 25 outlines the main contributions of this study to Iron Age research, and considers the questions that future research at Bagendon, and similar complexes, could address.

Presentation of excavation results

Each 'site' within the complex has been given a particular name (Figure 1.6). To avoid confusion, the trenches for the 2012–2017 excavations have been given sequential trench numbers (TR1–11). These include Scrubditch enclosure (Trenches 1 and 2), Cutham enclosure (Trenches 3 and 4), Black Grove Roman building (Trenches 5 and 6), Dyke 'e' (Trench 7), test pits in Bagendon valley (Trench 8 to 11). Contexts numbers relate to each trench, e.g. (1001) = Trench 1; (4012) = Trench 4 and so on, irrespective of their location within the complex in order to ensure that material is clearly located and to emphasise the approach towards Bagendon as a coherent landscape, rather than discrete entities. Within the main text and specialist reports, contexts are presented for the 2012-2017 excavations with the following brackets: (1000), for positive layers or 'fills', and [3003] for 'cuts' or negative features. Because the 1979-1981 material did not provide unique context numbers these have now been prefixed with the year of excavation, e.g. (80-40). No negative (i.e. cut numbers were used in the 1979-1981 excavations). The main site archives and finds have been deposited with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester. The excavation areas from 1979–1981 are identified as Area A and Area B, as done at the time, distinguishable from Clifford's excavation areas: site A, site B and site C.