English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Cheddar

Miranda Richardson

Jane Murray
Corporate Director
Culture and Heritage
Directorate
Somerset County Council
County Hall
TAUNTON
Somerset
TA1 4DY

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SOMERSET
County Council

SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

CHEDDAR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Miranda Richardson

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

CHEDDAR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Somerset County Council would like to thank all the people who assisted in the compiling or editing of this report.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report forms one of a series commissioned by English Heritage and prepared by Somerset County Council with the aim of assessing urban archaeology as part of the Monuments Protection Programme. The work was carried out from 1994 to 1998 by Clare Gathercole and Miranda Richardson (from 1996), managed by Chris Webster. The reports are essentially as completed during that period but have been updated by Chris Webster with new archaeological information in early 2003.

English Heritage has funded two programmes assess the urban archaeological resource - intensive and extensive. The former is restricted to the major historic cities, characterised by a great depth of archaeological remains, a wealth of historical documentation and in many cases, by a great deal of archaeological investigation. The extensive urban surveys cover the smaller towns and are based on information in the local Sites and Monuments Record with limited amounts of new information collected during the project. Once the information has been collected and mapped, attention is focused on the analysis of the town plan and defining topographic units within the town. This will lead to the preparation of guidance for planners, developers and others involved in the management of the town.

II. MAJOR SOURCES

1. Primary documents

Cheddar is well endowed with early documents the earliest being a reference in King Alfred's will of *c.*880x888. Meetings of the Witan are recorded in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle for 941, 956 and 968. A charter of 968x978 exists although its authenticity is in some doubt. Cheddar is mentioned in the Life of St Dunstan (c.1000) and in the Domesday Book of 1086. In the reign of Henry I two documents are known to have been written at Cheddar in 1121 and 1130. Documents exist concerning the rebuilding of the royal buildings by King John in 1209-11 and the transfer of the estate to Bishop Hugh in 1230. An inquisition into the Chapel of St. Columbanus at Cheddar dates from 1321. The value of the bishops estate is recorded in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* for 1535, 1539 and 1542. In 1548 it was granted back to the crown (Edward VI) by bishop Barlow and by 1558 had come into the ownership of Sir John Thynne. Other documents are likely to exist in the archives of both the Thynne family and Wells cathedral.

2. Local histories

There is no full local history of Cheddar although Rahtz (1979) covers the early history of the area.

3. Maps

Cheddar is shown on Saxton's map of *c.*1588 but the first plan of the town is provided by the Verry estate map of 1788. Other than the 1837 parish map and the 1839 Tithe map the OS series has been used for this report.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHEDDAR

The parish of Cheddar is one of the richest archaeological areas in Somerset, each period being well endowed with surviving remains and monuments, from the palaeolithic to the industrial period. The town's position at the mouth of Cheddar Gorge from which the Cheddar Yeo river flows into the Axe valley, on the southern edge of the Mendip hills, is both a memorable and impressive situation.

The prehistory of the area is dominated by the cave sites of the gorge which have produced evidence from the palaeolithic onwards. The lower slopes of the Mendips and valley edges are likely to have been used for settlement whilst the high ground is the site of many funerary monuments in the neolithic and bronze age periods.

The Roman history of Cheddar has been little investigated but is much in evidence. Roman period artefacts have been found at several locations in and around the town and some excavation has taken place. Current theory suggests that a Roman villa, evidenced by parchmarks beside St. Andrew's church was reused or grew into the minster which is recorded in the 11th century.

It is the Saxon and medieval history for which the town of Cheddar is best known. In 1960-2 Philip Rahtz excavated a large site which has been interpreted as the site of the documented Saxon and medieval palaces. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records meetings of the *witan* at Cheddar in 941 (*aet villa caelebris*), 956 (*Palatio regis*) and 968 (*sedes regales*). An impression of the royal residence is also provided in the life of St Dunstan which describes him being recalled to Edmund's court at Cheddar after being flung out from St. Mary's Glastonbury and then being appointed Abbott of Glastonbury *c*.940 following Edmund's miraculous escape from death in Cheddar Gorge.

By Domesday the royal estate had been divided into four parts, the palace site however, remained a royal residence, probably as a hunting lodge, giving access to the Cheddar forest, rights to which had been retained by the King. Certainly the royal residence was visited by both Henry I and II and rebuilding orchestrated by King John is documented in 1209. However, in 1213 John granted the royal estate to Hugh bishop of Lincoln who in turn passed it to his brother Jocelin, Bishop of Wells. Episcopal tenure brought about the rebuilding of both the East Hall and chapel. Excavation has shown that the area was abandoned to pasture and cultivation by c.1400. The Axbridge Chronicle, a 14th or 15th century compilation of earlier documents, retells the story of King Edmund hunting in Cheddar gorge but substitutes Axbridge for Cheddar as the site of the hunting lodge. This suggests that the importance of the Cheddar palaces had disappeared from memory by the time the Chronicle was compiled.

Outside the area of the palaces three foci of settlement were established; industrial activity spread along the river, commercial areas around the market place and cross and a further laid-out area along the parallel Bulmire Street and The Hayes. But Cheddar seems not to have had any particular importance in the post-medieval and industrial periods. A variety of factories, using the fast flowing river as power source, were situated along its banks and the lower Mendip slopes were used for strawberry production. However, the gorge and caves have become a major tourist attraction providing an important seasonal income for the town.

The town has gradually spread to include outlying farmsteads and hamlets, many of which are likely to have had early origins.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHEDDAR

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological work in the town

Cheddar was the site of a major open area excavation in 1960-2 during which a number of large post hole buildings, interpreted as the palaces of the Saxon Kings were discovered (Rahtz 1979). Since then several smaller scale excavations and a series of geophysical surveys have been carried out in advance of further building in the same area, as have a number of small scale rescue excavations in other areas of the town. (See section 5.4 for a list of known archaeological interventions).

1. PREHISTORIC
(Map A)

1.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no particular investigation of prehistoric remains in the town. A shallow pit containing neolithic flints was found in excavation carried out by Axbridge Archaeology and Local History Society in 1983 on Froglands Lane (Russett 1983:4). However, the Cheddar gorge and its system of limestone caves is a prehistoric site of great importance and has been the subject of much archaeological investigation (Irwin 1986).

1.2 Context

Cheddar is one of 37 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no strong evidence of prehistoric settlement on the site of the later town - though it should be remembered that it is notoriously difficult for archaeologists to demonstrate a prehistoric presence in modern urban areas. Whilst 'towns' were not, generally speaking, a feature of prehistoric landscapes, many of the same factors which made the site desirable in later periods would already have been operative. The Mendip upland sites above Cheddar - which include nationally important occupation and burial sites dating from the palaeolithic period onwards, and provide evidence of connections with dominant neolithic and bronze age cultures to the east - are likely to represent but a partial survival of a wider landscape which included the fertile Mendip-foot shelf.

1.3 Archaeological features (centre)**, shown on **Map A

1.3.a Settlement

CHE/103 Hut Sites (SMR 10413)

The SMR records the location of a series of scoops which have been interpreted as prehistoric hut sites.

Taken from SMR map.

1.3.b Artefact scatters

CHE/101 Flint Scatters

Flint artefacts, a polished flint axe and a flint arrowhead were found at Mascalls Wood (SMR 11421), and a ditch containing flints was found during evaluation excavations at Frogland Lane in 1983 (Russett 1983:4). A handaxe was found during building work on Lower New Road in 1984 (Russett 1985, SMR 12492).

Taken from SMR map and after Russett 1983:4

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1.3.c Other

CHE/102 Cave Sites

Many important prehistoric sites have been found in and around Cheddar Gorge. Most of the cave sites are scheduled ancient monuments.

After SMR map.

2. ROMAN
(Map A)

2.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

Several sites in and around the town have produced evidence of Romano-British activity and settlement, making Cheddar one of the few towns in the county where there is clearly continuity or reuse of settlement from the Roman into the Saxon period. Aerial photographs have also produced evidence of Romano-British field systems and settlements along the Axe valley of which Cheddar forms a part (McDonnell 1985, SMR 11224). The overall picture is of a densely occupied area with several small settlements along the valley edge as well as use of the Cheddar Gorge caves. A large number of coins have been found in the caves as well as pottery and in one at least fifteen burials are thought to date to this period (SMR 10384, 10392, 10393, 10396, 10398, 10399, 10400).

2.2 Context

The Roman period was one of deliberate, strategic urbanisation. The area which is now Somerset appears to have been less affected than some other areas by this, in that few really urban sites are known, and this probably reflects its marginal position. However, the widespread distribution of Roman or Romanised settlements shows that the county - particularly east of the Parrett - was heavily populated and exploited in this period.

Cheddar is one of seven of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is evidence of a Roman site at the core of the later town. Four of these towns, including Cheddar (and Glastonbury, Wells and - perhaps - Street) have probable villa sites at their heart, and in each case there is also an apparent association with a (pre-existing?) religious site: each was later reused as a religious precinct. Cheddar was also possibly associated with a river port

serving the Mendip mines of Charterhouse, and was probably the most important of the scatter of known Roman settlements on the fertile land between the Mendips and the Axe.

*2.3 **Archaeological features (centre)**, shown on **Map A***

2.3.a Settlement

CHE/201 Mascalls Wood (SMR 11416), Hythe Bow (SMR 11414), Steart Farm (SMR 11418), Bradley Cross, Froglands Lane, Wellington House, Punnett Close (SMR 12754)

Each of these sites has produced artefacts of Roman date and could have been farmstead settlements (Aston 1994:224-5). Froglands Lane and Wellington House were the sites of small scale excavations carried out by the Axbridge Archaeology and Local History Society and a programme of field walking was carried out by the Society at Hythe (Russett 1985). An evaluation excavation on Punnett Close produced a small pit containing Romano-British ceramics (Broomhead 1992).

Taken from SMR map and after Russett 1985 and Broomhead 1992).

CHE/202 Roman Villa (SMR 11441, SM 344)

Parch marks, visible in 1975 in the vicarage garden, have been interpreted as marking the walls of a Roman villa although some are caused by earlier garden features. Many Roman finds have been found in this area including tesserae, burials and large quantities of ceramics and metal objects. A small rescue excavation adjacent to the villa site took place in 1970 which showed a metalled access to the site and some evidence of 2nd century industrial working (Hirst and Rhatz 1973). A watching brief on the construction of houses adjacent to the vicarage at Parson's Penn produced similar results (reported in Hirst and Rhatz 1973). Roman material has also been found at the Kings of Wessex School excavations and evaluations over a wide area suggesting that this was an extensive villa complex or small town (Gater 1990, Hawkes 1991, Broomhead 1999a). Excavations in the Old Showground (SMR 57178, Hollinrake 1997) located a ditch from which a calibrated radiocarbon date of AD 350-550 was obtained suggesting continued activity in the area.

After SMR map.

2.3.b Artefact scatters

CHE/203 Coins

Roman coins were found during excavation of the river bed above 'Upper Mill' *c.*1840 (SMR 10339).

Taken from SMR map.

3. SAXON
(Map B)

3.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

In 1960-2 a major open area rescue excavation took place on the site of the Anglo-Saxon palaces and partially on the site of the early minster complex. Further watching briefs, small scale excavations and geophysical surveys have taken place around this site in the intervening period prior to the construction of new school buildings (see section 5.4).

3.2 Context

Though the Post-Roman and early Saxon periods were characterised by a return to non-urban lifestyles, the later Saxon period (from the 9th century onwards) saw the beginnings of a resurgence of trading places and towns. This was controlled, in England, by the Saxon royal families (though it was part of a wider trend), and took place in the context of a network of royal estate administration centres which was already established (in some cases long-established). The reasons for the changes were many and complex, combining defensive, adminstrative and ecclesiastical considerations with, increasingly, purely commercial aspirations.

As one of the heartlands of the kings of Wessex, Somerset played an important part in the early re-urbanisation of the south, and there are a number of places amongst those studied for this project which can claim to have been towns before the Norman Conquest. However, there are also a number which can claim to have been 'central places' performing more limited, and non-commercial, functions: not all such places developed into towns, but many towns originated in such specialised settlements.

Cheddar is one of seven of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which, whilst it had not developed any really urban functions by the end of the Saxon period, had both ecclesiastical and administrative functions. It is one of 22 towns associated with a known or probable pre-Conquest minster, and one of 22 associated with a royal manor centre: indeed, it was one of only four of the historic towns to appear on the pre-Conquest royal itineraries of Wessex.

3.3 Standing structures and visible remains

Although the actual remains of the Saxon palaces are not visible a series of concrete plinths have been set out in the grounds of the Kings of Wessex School, marking out the plan of the early buildings.

*3.4 **Archaeological features**, shown on **Map B***

3.4.a Manors and estates

CHE/301 Palace Complex (SMR 11442, SM 29673)

Rahtz (1979) has suggested three major phases of Saxon building on the site representing the construction of large halls and ancillary buildings. A large boundary and drainage ditch were excavated on the north side of the area and, probably in phase two, an eastern boundary was formed. From phase two (post-930) a chapel was included in the complex. The phase two hall may have been that which held the meeting of the witan in 941, referred to as '*aet villa caelebris*'. The third phase involved the rebuilding of both the hall and the chapel and building over the alignment of the northern boundary. No break in use of the site occurred immediately post-conquest but rebuilding and expansion are features of phase 4 dated to the late 11th or early 12th century.

Taken from SMR map.

3.4.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

CHE/302 Minster

It is possible that an early Christian community set up in the ruins of the Roman villa site prior to the Saxon palace foundations or that the remains of the Roman villa estate was granted for the foundation of a minster (Rahtz 1979:13). Two early documents give clues to its status as such. Alfred's will (c.880x888) includes an unusual phrase *'... and I am petitioner to the families/communities at Cheddar that they will choose him on the conditions of which we have already spoken..'*, suggesting both that there were communities established at this time, possibly referring to a double household, and that the members of the communities had special rights to choose their own royal protector. Also the forged charter of 978 which refers to a double house at Cheddar minster may be based on genuine material (Blair 1996:118). By Domesday *Cheddarmynster* is recorded.

Blair (1996:112), has suggested that a large monastic zone can be recognised stretching from Bath Street and Station Road south to the canalised Yeo, with an entrance on the north-east side opposite the medieval market cross, possibly predating the palace and in place from at least the 9th century.

The current church appears to be entirely post conquest and the only excavations in this area were small scale trenches excavated in the vicarage gardens and watching briefs during the construction of houses at Parson's Pen in 1965 and 1970. Although these showed signs of Roman occupation evidence for Saxon settlement was present but sparse.

After Blair 1996:112.

3.4.c Settlement (Rural)

CHE/303 Hythe, Bradley Cross

Aston has suggested that the likelihood of early medieval or Saxon settlement in these places is high as they have been shown to have both Roman and medieval settlement, therefore continuity of use is a possibility (1994:228).

After Aston 1994:228

4. MEDIEVAL
(Map C)

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

Evaluation excavation on the Old Showground in 1997 showed evidence of 12-13th century occupation (SMR 57178, Hollinrake 1997). Excavation by the Axbridge Society at Wellington House in 1985 found 13th and 14th century rubbish pits underlying the walls of the demolished cruck-construction house (Russett 1985).

4.2 Context

Both in Britain and on the continent, the medieval period saw the growth of town foundation and, to an extent, urban living (though the bulk of the population continued to live in villages). The reasons for this growth were many and complex. In England they included both general factors - such as the growth of mercantile trade (especially the cloth trade) - and more specific ones - such as the post-Conquest establishment of a network of (theoretically) loyal magnates and prelates with large estates and commercial priveleges. The latter led to the increasing relaxation of the royal stranglehold on the profits of towns and chartered boroughs (where tenants paid cash rents and were free of feudal ties), which in turn enabled the establishment of new purpose-built commercial areas (the majority of places classed as towns in the medieval period have at least some planned elements). Of course, some boroughs were already in existence by the Conquest, and the existing pattern of Saxon urban or semi-urban centres was an important influence on the medieval one. This is evident in Somerset which, like many parts of the south and west (where the majority of the Saxon *burhs* and boroughs had been established), was peppered with small boroughs in the medieval period.

In archaeological terms, the medieval towns are characterised by evidence of partially planned, intensive occupation of restricted areas. Typical features which may occur include: regular, or semi-regular, street layouts; large market places (usually obscured by later encroachments); blocks of regular, long, narrow, plots end on to the commercial frontage; churchyards, either within the medieval layout or outside it - the latter often indicative of a deliberate shift of activity; regular or irregular suburbs or marginal areas occupied by quays, or industrial sites such as mills; and high status sites such as castles, manor sites and large religious precincts.

Cheddar is one of 20 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which first acquired urban status (though not in this case borough status) in the medieval period. It was one of 19 of the 45 towns at which a planned area was laid out in the medieval period partially across or - more commonly - immediately adjacent to an established settlement.

4.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are five listed buildings dated to the medieval period in Cheddar.

*4.4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on **Map C***

4.4.a Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

CHE/401 Tween Town

A fifteenth century document refers to a field as *'Inter les Tonnes'*, which has been retained in the road-name 'Tween Town Way' (Broomhead 1985:40). The place name highlights the fact that the town had developed in two separate areas with the formal laid out roads north of Manor Farm and around the industrial area along the banks of the Cheddar Yeo.

After Broomhead 1985:40

4.4.b Manors and estates

CHE/402 Medieval Palaces

The fourth phase of construction shown by excavation on the Kings of Wessex School site revealed a massive new hall, built probably in the 12th century, maybe for Henry I prior to his visit to the site in 1121 (Rahtz 1979:377-378). Between 1204 and 1209 the manor passed into episcopal hands but in 1209 King John resumed control and embarked on a series of documented rebuilding, changing the palace complex into a recognisable hunting lodge, which is shown archaeologically in the phase five buildings. The late 13th century phase 6, following the return of the manor to episcopal tenure under the bishop of Wells in 1230, was a further period of rebuilding. The main hall was rebuilt as was the chapel which by 1321 was dedicated to St. Columbanus (Rahtz and Hirst 1987). The site would appear to have been abandoned by the end of the 14th century.

Taken from SMR map.

CHE/403 Manor Farm (LB 13147)

Manor farm, which still exists today immediately north of the palace buildings, is a direct descendant of the manorial buildings described above (Rahtz 1979:378).

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

4.4.c Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

CHE/404 Holywell

Holwell Rye, north west of the town, is likely on place-name evidence to be the site of a holy well (Broomhead R. *pers comm*).

Taken from 1995 Digital OS.

CHE/405 St. Andrew's Church (LB 13114) and Church House (LB 13115)

The church of St. Andrew, although likely to have origins in the Saxon period as part of the minster complex, dates in part to the Norman period and mainly to the 13th century.
The farmhouse at Church Farm is dated to the late 15th or early 16th century and is possibly the 'church house' referred to in a survey of Edward Lord Seymour's lands in Somerset (who owned the estate between 1552 and 1558), when it was described as new built (Russett 1988:226).

Taken from 1995 digital OS

CHE/406 Chapel

The chapel of St. Columbanus was re-built in the 13th century and was modified in the 14th century. It is referred to in 1321 by this dedication by which time it had passed out of royal ownership to the Bishop of Wells. After the reformation the building was used as a barn until *c*.1800 and then as two cottages with chimneys inserted into its gable ends. It has been derelict since c.1910 and now stands as a ruin in the ground of the Kings of Wessex School (Hirst & Rahtz 1987).

Taken from 1995 digital OS

4.4.d Settlement (Urban)

(a) Commercial core

(i) Market place(s)

CHE/407 Market Place

The market cross in the central market triangle dates to the 15th century with a 16th century hexagonal structure surrounding it. It is a scheduled monument (SMR 11443, SM 021).

Taken from 1995 digital OS

CHE/408 Station Road/Play Street?

Station Road (shown as Play Street on the 1788 Verry Estate map) is shown to widen at its east end where it meets Lower North Street. This may have been used as a second market area in the centre of the town.

Taken from 1788 Verry Estate Map.

(ii) Burgage plots

CHE/409 Planned Area

A planned area was laid out over the strip field system, north of the palace complex. Recent excavations on the Old Show Ground Site have shown building adjacent to these roads to date to the 12th or 13th century (Holinrake 1997). It is not known if this was a successful enterprise and to what extent plots on the formally laid out streets were ever occupied. The 1788 Verry estate map shows only partial building along these roads and on the north east side the form of the strip fields survive despite the imposition of The Hayes road suggesting that this area, at least, was never fully occupied.

Taken from 1788 Verry Estate Map.

(iii) Other town plots

CHE/410 Bath Street, Union Street, Church Street

These main streets probably began to be built up in the Saxon period as a settlement was established to serve the royal palaces. In the medieval period these roads around the market areas were probably built up with commercial buildings.

After 1788 Verry Estate Map

4.4.e Settlement (Rural)

(a) Farms/Dispersed Settlements

CHE/411 Garston, Kent Street/Venn Lane, Silver Street, Lippiatt, Froglands, Steart Farm

Cheddar has grown up by infilling between dispersed rural settlements. Saxton's *c.*1588 map portrays Axbridge as considerably larger than Cheddar, the latter was probably little more than a loose association of dispersed farms or hamlets around a small rural market by this time.

These areas are conjectural after the 1837 Parish Map

4.4.f Industrial sites

(a) Mills

CHE/412 Mills

A document of 1527 refers to the Bishop owning six mills at Cheddar, five of which were used for fulling. Saxton's Atlas of England and Wales of *c.*1588 shows Cheddar and Hythe on the river Yeo with a note stating that the '*..this spring driveth 12 mils within one quarter of a myle of his head.*' The precise location of each of these is not known although with this number a continuous run of mills and mill ponds could be expected from the mouth of Cheddar Gorge where the river rises, as it falls into the Axe Valley.

This area is conjectural based on Saxton's c.1588 note.

5. POST-MEDIEVAL AND INDUSTRIAL (Map D)

5.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

Isgar Cottage, which was shown on the 1840 Tithe Map, was excavated in 1987 (Russett 1987). The railway bridges removed following the demise of the line were photographed in the same year (Russett 1987).

5.2 Context

The basic pattern of towns had been established by the end of the middle ages, and there were very few major changes in the post-medieval period, though the economic fortunes of particular towns rose and fell. Cheddar, however, is one of nine of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which, though in some way urban in the medieval period, were not really so in the post-medieval period.

The late 18th and 19th centuries saw some changes to the urban pattern, with the beginning of the emergence of larger centres (often at the expense of smaller ones), linked by vastly improved communication lines (turnpikes, railways and canals). Somerset was not characterised by the kind of large scale industrialisation and urbanisation seen in other counties - indeed, the virtual collapse of its most important industry, which was cloth, affected nearly all of the medieval and post-medieval towns - but some did take place. The changes were reflected in a series of alterations to town governance, which left the county with a total of only fifteen Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts by the end of the 19th century.

Cheddar is one of the 22 or so places which though they did not merit Borough or Urban District status at the end of the 19th century, remained market centres and can probably be regarded as towns (though several of them sank again towards village status during the course of the century). It was one of a handful of tourist centres in the county by the end of the 19th century, and was one of a number of places at which there was moderate expansion (though it was not one of the seven towns at which there was large scale growth).

5.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are 27 listed buildings dated to the post-medieval and industrial periods in Cheddar.

*5.4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on **Map D***

5.4.a Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

CHE/601 Toll Roads

The Wells Highbridge and Cheddar Trust was formed in 1841 and lasted until 1870. The Cheddar to Wells route crosses the town and continues through Draycott (Bentley and Murless 1985: 59).

The Wedmore Trust was formed in 1827-1874 and had only this one route from Rowberrow in the north, along the west side of Cheddar, then through Wedmore and on to Pedwell (Bentley and Murless 1985:58-59).

After Bentley and Murless 1985 map 6.

(b) Railways

CHE/602 Great Western Railway, Cheddar Valley Branch

The Cheddar Valley branch of the Great Western Railway was completed in 1869 and closed in 1963.

Taken from 1886 OS.

5.4.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

CHE/603 Chapels

Four chapels are shown on the 1886 OS; the Baptist Chapel on Bulmire Street, the Wesleyan Chapel on Cliff Street, the Plymouth Brethren Chapel on Upper North Street, and the Non-conformist Chapel on Tween Town Way.

Taken from the 1886 OS

5.4.c Settlement (Urban)

CHE/604 Post medieval and industrial period Infilling

Gradual infilling between the farmsteads and hamlets mentioned above and the more urban areas took place through the post-medieval and industrial periods. Built up areas shown on the 1904 OS are mapped here.

Taken from the 1904 OS

5.4.d Industrial sites

(a) Mills

CHE/605 The industrial core along the Cheddar Yeo was maintained through this period. By 1904 this area was home to a Shirt Factory, the Valley Paper Mills a corn mill and another mill of unspecified use.

Taken from the 1186 and 1904 OS maps.

(b) Other industrial sites

CHE/606 Other Industrial Buildings

Away from the river the 1904 map also shows the Tweentown Factory, a smithy on the corner of Bath Street and Lower North Street/Bulmire Street, and Gasworks south of the river and the railway line.

Taken from the 1904 OS.

5.4.e Other

CHE/607 Gorge Tourism

By the end of the 19th century Cheddar gorge and caves had become a major tourist attraction with many new buildings, hotels and tearooms etc. sprung up to serve the needs of the visitors. Tourism around the caves and gorge now forms a large part of the town's economy.

Taken from the 1904 OS

6. 20TH CENTURY
(Map F)

6.1 Context

The 20th century has seen a vast physical expansion of some existing towns, and some expansion in most of the 45 historic towns covered by the project. However, there have only been limited alterations to the overall pattern of urban settlement. The County Structure Plan still contains fifteen settlements defined as Towns: this is almost identical to the late 19th century list of Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts. Cheddar is one of 30 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is not classed as a town in the County Structure Plan.

*6.2 **Settlement components**, shown on **Map F***

6.2.a Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

CHE/702 Chapels

A Baptist church is shown on the 1980 1:10 000 OS at the corner of Upper North street and Tween Town Way.

Taken from the 1980 1:10 000 OS

6.2.b Settlement (Urban)

CHE/701 20th Century Infilling and Expansion

The process of infilling and expansion described above has continued in the 20th century such that previously rural settlements are now joined forming a single urban area.

Taken from the 1995 digital OS

V. THE POTENTIAL OF CHEDDAR

1. Research interests

Cheddar has potential for many major lines of research, for example study of continuity of settlement or reuse of the Roman remains and the interplay between the minster church and the royal palace recorded in both documentary and archaeological evidence at Cheddar. The planned element in the town puts Cheddar in a group of medieval towns with implanted laid out areas which form a subject of research. Also the river has provided a good water supply and power source throughout making a good candidate for research into both industrial archaeology and trade.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

In general the history of Cheddar is one of creeping expansion and infilling rather than continual reconstruction which is likely to have enabled good preservation of earlier deposits and buildings in several areas of the town. There may also be waterlogged deposits along the length of the river, perhaps relating to the industrial activities in this area.

3. Limitations

The potential survival of archaeological deposits at Cheddar is limited only by more recent expansion and development within the town.

4. Extent of current protection

There are 32 Listed buildings, an AHAP and a conservation area at Cheddar. The area of the Roman villa and minster, and the area of the Saxon and medieval palaces along with the medieval market cross are scheduled monuments.

5. Management Proposals

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

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4. Archaeological Interventions

Year	*Site*	*Grid Refs.*	*SMR*	*Report*
1960-2	Kings of Wessex Exc.	4574 5312	12760	Rahtz (1979)
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1987	Kings of Wessex WB	457 531	12738	Adkins, Broomhead & Croft (1988)
1988	Kings of Wessex WB	457 531	12738	Broomhead R. Unpub report in SMR
1989	Kings of Wessex			Adkins Unpub report in SMR
1990	Kings of Wessex	4557 5304	12742	Gater Unpub report in SMR
1991	Kings of Wessex Eval.	4561 5310	12739	Hawkes (1991)
1993	Kings of Wessex	4565 5314		Broomhead (1993)
1996	Kings of Wessex WB	4563 5314	90038	Broomhead (1996)
1997	Kings of Wessex			Broomhead
1965	Parson's Pen WB	4579 5302	11441	Hirst and Rahtz (1973)
1973	Vicarage Gardens		11441	Hirst and Rahtz (1973)
1983	Froglands Lane Exc.	4612 5303		Russett (1985)
1983	Bristol Water Works WB	4530 5311		Russett (1983)
1983	Cheddar Station WB	4530 5330		Russett (1983)
1985	Bradley Cross WB	4700 5300		Russett (1985)

1985	Hythe FW	4470 5240		Russett (1985)
1985	Wellington House Exc.	4577 5344		Russett (1985)
1987	Isgar Cottage Exc.	4496 5475		Russett (1987)
1987	Rail/Road Bridges WB	4610 5252		Russett (1987)
1988	Cinema Site WB	4594 5320		Russett (1988)
1990	Cala Homes DT	4550 5316		McDonnell (1992)
1990	Cala Homes GP	4550 5316		McDonnell (1992)
1992	Punnett Close	4588 5329	12754	Broomhead (1992)
1995	Albion Terrace	4593 5336	90044	Broomhead (1995)
1997	Old Show Ground Eval.	4567 5326	57178	Holinrake (1997)
1998	Kings of Wessex WB	4570 5317	12977	Broomhead (1998a)
1998	Coopers Hole Exc.	4682 5402	15372	Bellamy and Currant (2002)
1998	Kings of Wessex Eval.	4570 5305	35934	Broomhead (1998b)
1998	Draycott Road	4556 5275	44873	Batt and Matthews (1998)
1998	Old Show Ground GP	4570 5320	57179	Barker (1998)
1998	Old Show Ground Eval.	4567 5326	57180	Hollinrake (1998)
1998	Business Park WB	4538 5280	90131	Broomhead (1998c)
1999	Kings of Wessex WB	4580 5300	12891	Broomhead (1999a)
1999	Kings of Wessex Eval.	4570 5290	12892	Broomhead (1999b)
1999	Kings of Wessex GP	4570 5300	35937	Barker and Mercer (1999)
1999	Kings of Wessex WB	4585 5296	44731	Grove (1999)
1999	Kings of Wessex WB	4570 5290	57100	Hollinrake (1999)
2000	Station Yard Eval.	4545 5325	44757	Broomhead (2000a)
2000	Kings of Wessex WB	4587 5288	44911	Hollinrake (2000a)
2000	Middle School Eval.	4560 5342	44958	Broomhead (2000b)
2000	Kings of Wessex Eval.	4570 5304	44966	Hollinrake (2000b)
2000	Kings of Wessex WB	4570 5304	44966	Hollinrake (2000c)
2000	Draycott Road WB	4200 5266	57103	Leach (2000)
2001	Kings of Wessex WB	4571 5304	11337	Hollinrake (2001a, 2001b, 2001c)
2001	Caravan Site	4601 5294	15075	Broomhead (2001)
2001	Kings of Wessex WB	4570 5304	44966	Hollinrake (2001d)
2002	Church Farmhouse WB	4599 5298	15371	McDonnell (2002)
2002	Kings of Wessex WB	4570 5314	15836	Hollinrake (2002a)
2002	Kings of Wessex WB	4564 5315	15898	Hollinrake (2002b)

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Component to map

Component	*Map*	*Component*	*Map*
CHE/101	A	CHE/408	C
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CHE/103	A	CHE/410	C
CHE/201	A	CHE/411	C
CHE/202	A	CHE/412	C
CHE/203	A	CHE/601	D
CHE/301	B	CHE/602	D
CHE/302	B	CHE/603	D
CHE/303	B	CHE/604	D
CHE/401	C	CHE/605	D
CHE/402	C	CHE/606	D
CHE/403	C	CHE/607	D
CHE/404	C	CHE/701	E
CHE/405	C	CHE/702	E
CHE/406	C		
CHE/407	C		

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Maps

Map A – Prehistoric and Roman

Map B – Saxon

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map C – Medieval

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map D – Post-medieval and modern

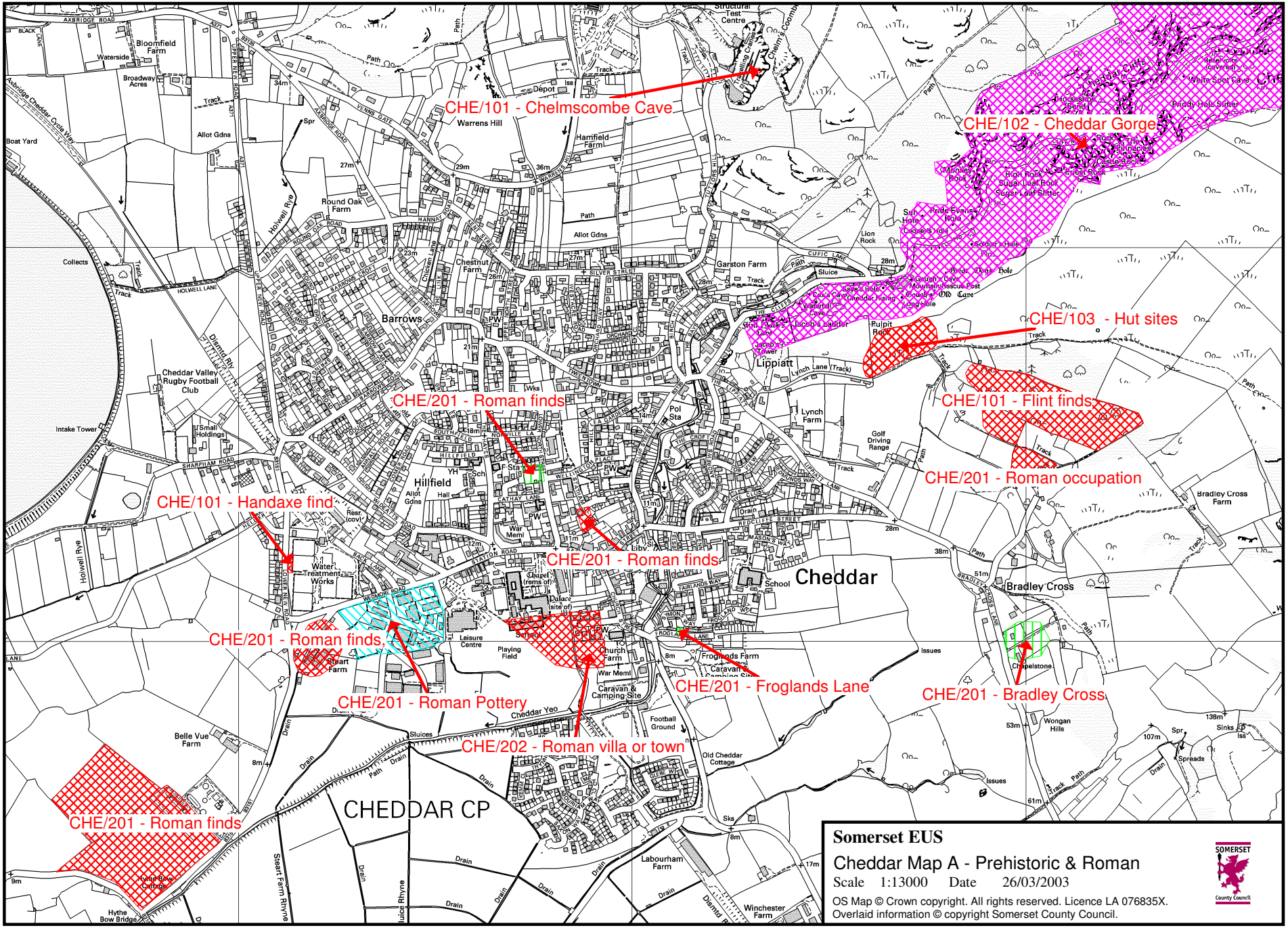
Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map E – 20th century

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map E – Existing designations

Key: Scheduled Monuments (dark blue)
Listed Buildings — Grade I (light blue)
Grade II* (light green)
Grade II (dark green)
Conservation Area (light green)
Area of High Archaeological Potential (pink)


CHE/101 - Chelmscombe Cave
CHE/102 - Cheddar Gorge
CHE/103 - Hut sites
CHE/101 - Flint finds
CHE/201 - Roman occupation
CHE/201 - Roman finds
CHE/101 - Handaxe find
CHE/201 - Roman finds
CHE/201 - Roman finds
CHE/201 - Roman Pottery
CHE/201 - Froglands Lane
CHE/201 - Bradley Cross
CHE/202 - Roman villa or town
CHE/201 - Roman finds
Cheddar
CHEDDAR CP
Somerset EUS
Cheddar Map A - Prehistoric & Roman
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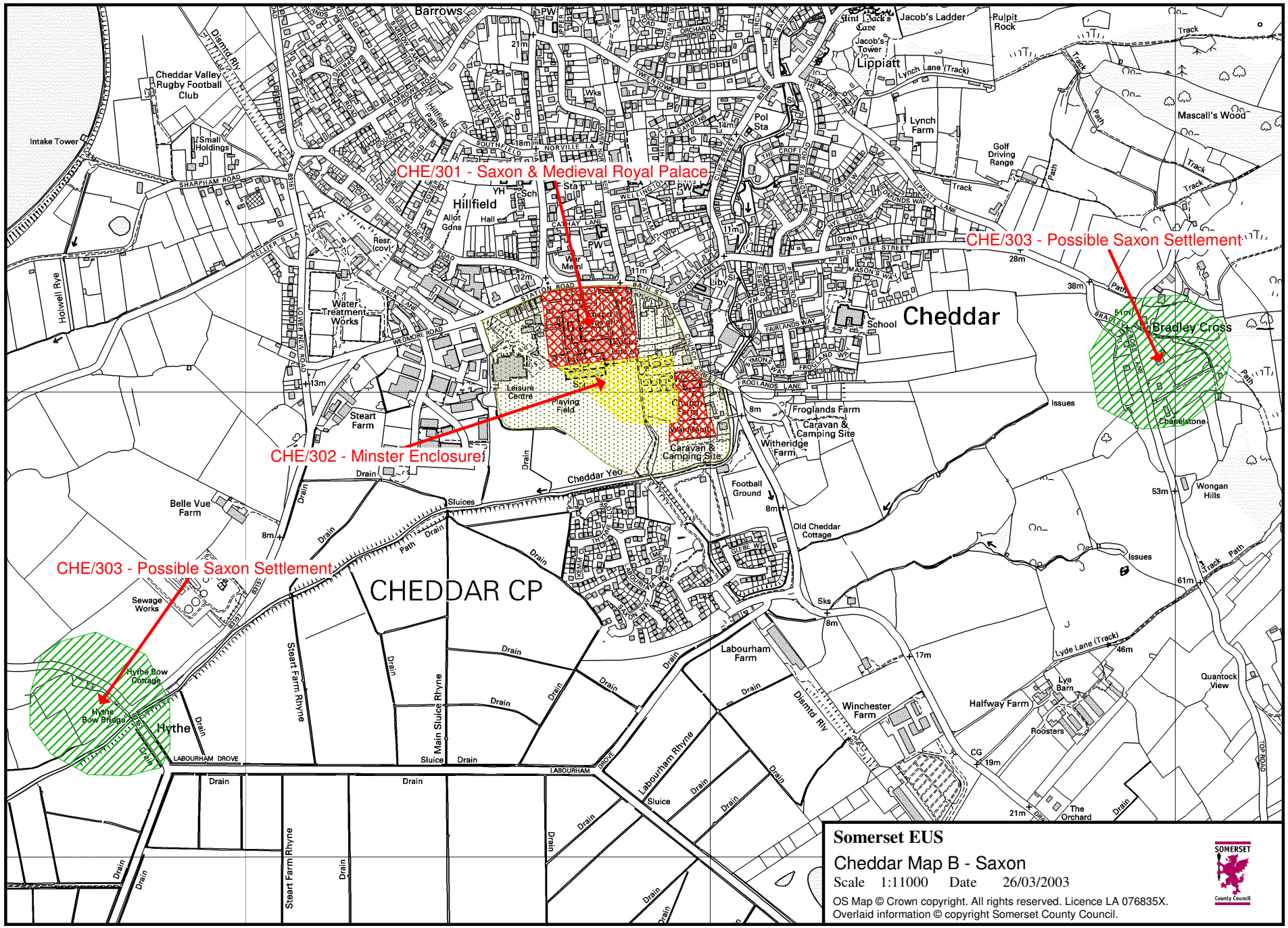
CHE/301 - Saxon & Medieval Royal Palace
CHE/302 - Minster Enclosure
CHE/303 - Possible Saxon Settlement
CHE/303 - Possible Saxon Settlement
CHEDDAR CP
Cheddar
Bradley Cross
Hillfield
Hythe
Barrows
Lippiatt
Cheddar Valley Rugby Football Club
Intake Tower
Small Holdings
Water Treatment Works
Steart Farm
Leisure Centre
Playing Field
Caravan & Camping Site
Froglands Farm
Witheridge Farm
Football Ground
Old Cheddar Cottage
Belle Vue Farm
Sewage Works
Hythe Bow Cottage
Hythe Bow Bridge
Labourham Farm
Winchester Farm
Halfway Farm
Lye Barn
Roosters
The Orchard
Quantock View
Wongan Hills
Chapelstone
Mascall's Wood
Golf Driving Range
Lynch Farm
Jacob's Ladder
Pulpit Rock
Jacob's Tower
Cheddar Yeo
Steart Farm Rhyne
Main Sluice Rhyne
Labourham Rhyne
Dismtd Rly
Holwell Rye
Sluices
Drain
Path
Track
Issues
Lyde Lane (Track)
Lynch Lane (Track)
Sharpham Road
Station Road
Redcliffe Street
Froglands Lane
Labourham Drove
Top Road
Somerset EUS
Cheddar Map B - Saxon
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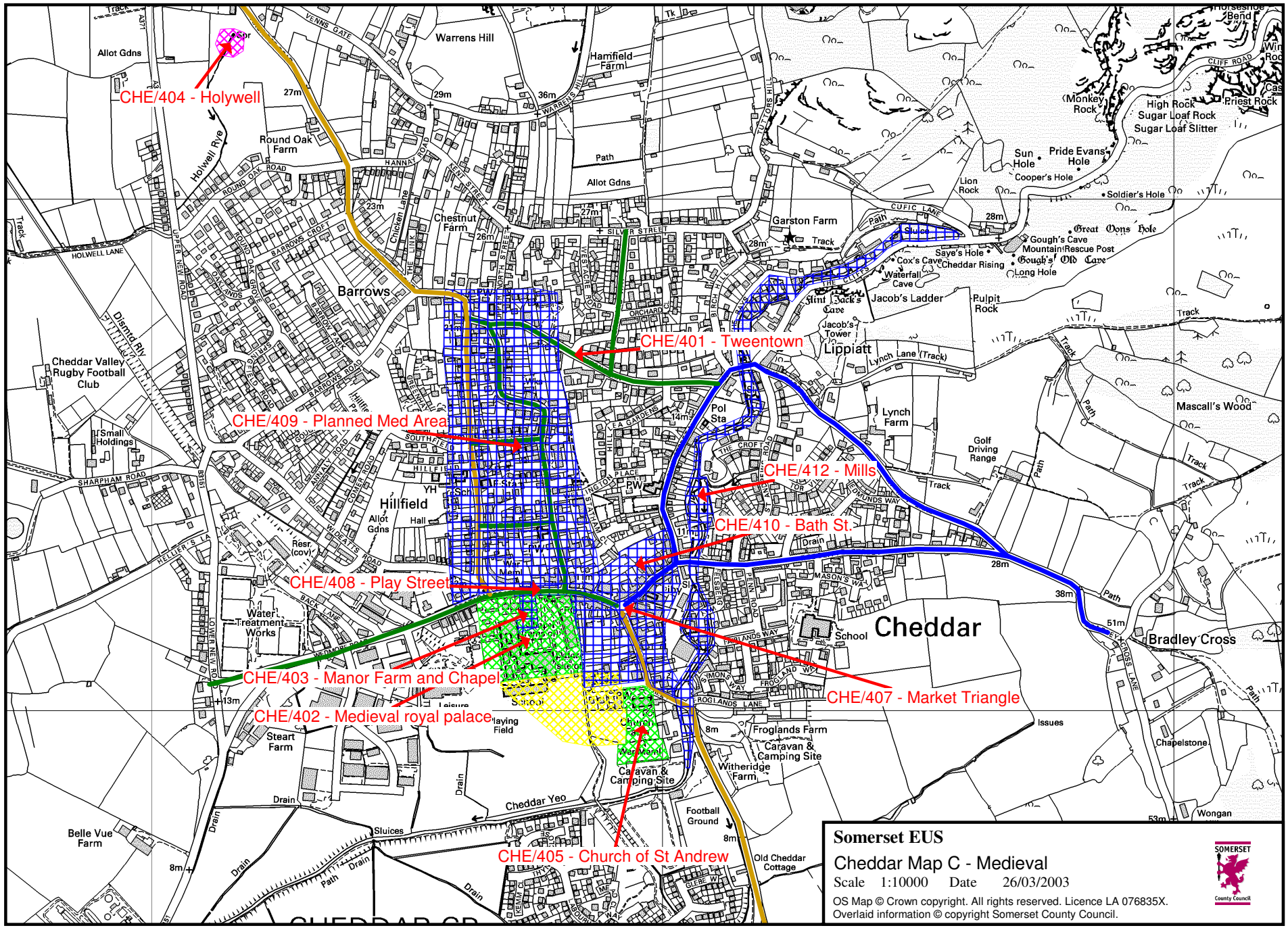
CHE/404 - Holywell
CHE/401 - Tweentown
CHE/409 - Planned Med Area
CHE/412 - Mills
CHE/410 - Bath St.
CHE/408 - Play Street
CHE/403 - Manor Farm and Chapel
CHE/402 - Medieval royal palace
CHE/407 - Market Triangle
CHE/405 - Church of St Andrew
Cheddar
Barrows
Hillfield
Lippiatt
Bradley Cross
Warrens Hill
Round Oak Farm
Chestnut Farm
Garston Farm
Lynch Farm
Golf Driving Range
Mascall's Wood
Cheddar Valley Rugby Football Club
Water Treatment Works
Steart Farm
Belle Vue Farm
Froglands Farm
Caravan & Camping Site
Witheridge Farm
Football Ground
Old Cheddar Cottage
Cheddar Yeo
Sluices
Drain
Path
Track
Allot Gdns
Hamfield Farm
Monkey Rock
High Rock
Sugar Loaf Rock
Sugar Loaf Slitter
Priest Rock
Sun Hole
Pride Evans Hole
Cooper's Hole
Soldier's Hole
Lion Rock
Great Oons Hole
Gough's Cave
Mountain Rescue Post
Gough's Old Cave
Long Hole
Saye's Hole
Cox's Cave
Cheddar Rising
Waterfall Cave
Jacob's Ladder
Pulpit Rock
Jacob's Tower
Flint Jack's Cave
Pol Sta
Chapelstone
Wongan
Issues
Sluice
Cheddar Rising
Somerset EUS
Cheddar Map C - Medieval
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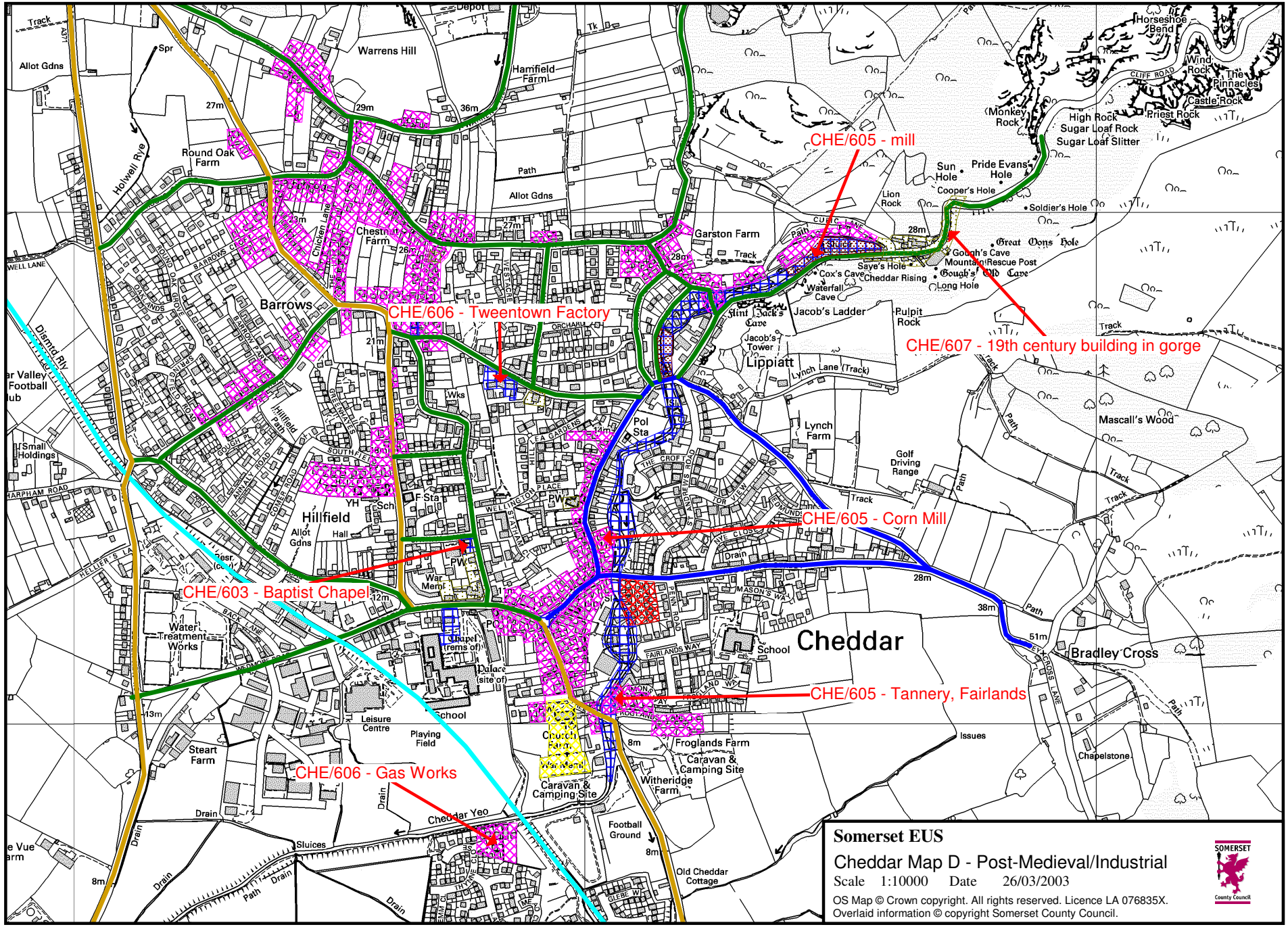
CHE/605 - mill
CHE/606 - Tweentown Factory
CHE/607 - 19th century building in gorge
CHE/605 - Corn Mill
CHE/603 - Baptist Chapel
CHE/605 - Tannery, Fairlands
CHE/606 - Gas Works
Cheddar
Barrows
Hillfield
Lippiatt
Bradley Cross
Somerset EUS
Cheddar Map D - Post-Medieval/Industrial
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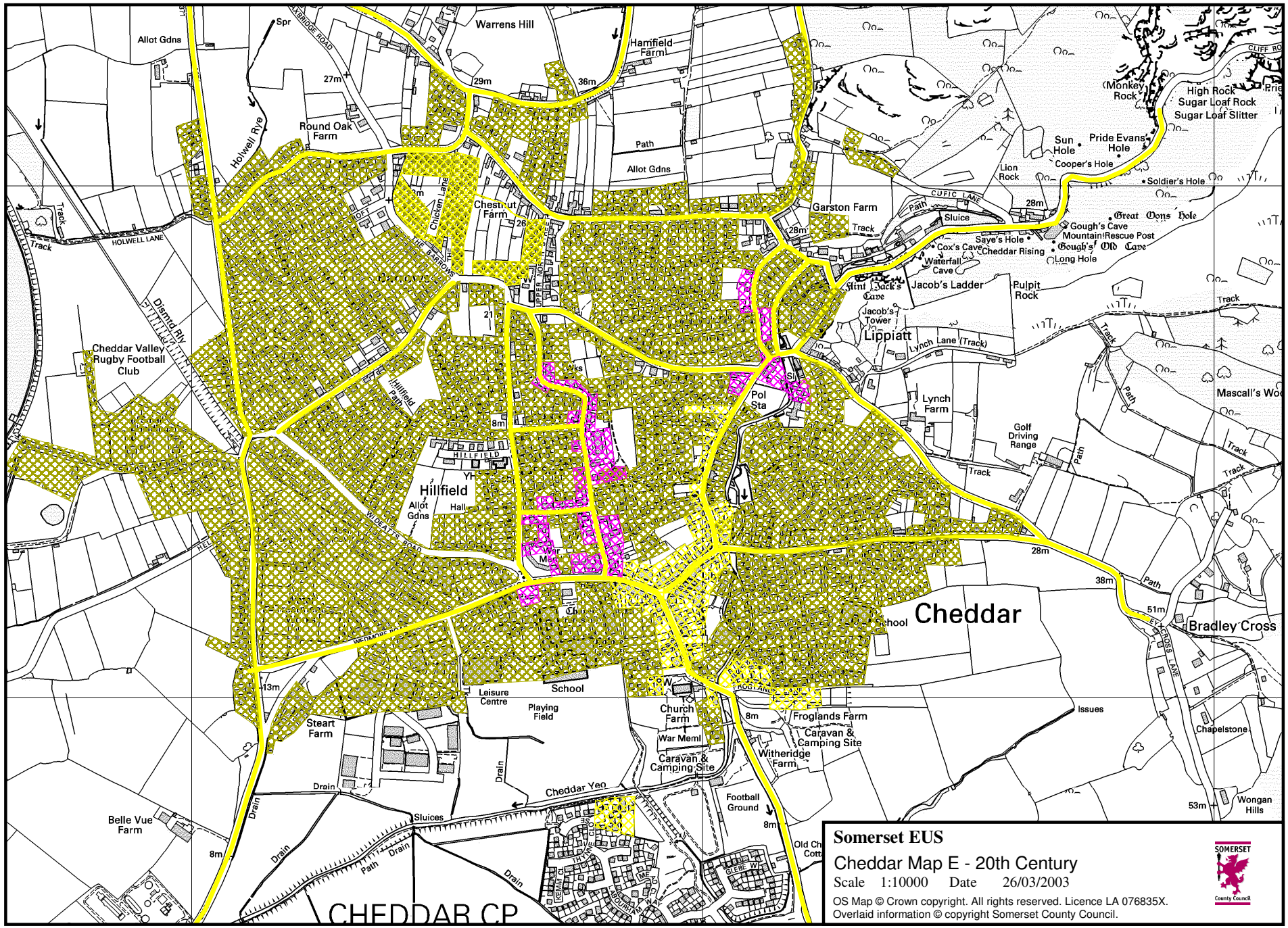
Warrens Hill
Hamfield Farm
Allot Gdns
Round Oak Farm
Holwell Rye
Path
Allot Gdns
Chestnut Farm
Chicken Lane
Garston Farm
Track
Path
Sluice
Monkey Rock
High Rock
Sugar Loaf Rock
Sugar Loaf Slitter
Sun Hole
Pride Evans' Hole
Cooper's Hole
Lion Rock
Soldier's Hole
Great Oons Hole
Gough's Cave
Mountain Rescue Post
Gough's Old Cave
Long Hole
Saye's Hole
Cheddar Rising
Cox's Cave
Waterfall Cave
Flint Jack's Cave
Jacob's Ladder
Pulpit Rock
Jacob's Tower
Lippiatt
Lynch Lane (Track)
Lynch Farm
Golf Driving Range
Mascall's Wo
Track
Path
HOLWELL LANE
Track
Dismtd Rly
Cheddar Valley Rugby Football Club
Hillfield Path
Pol Sta
HILLFIELD
Hillfield
Allot Gdns
Hall
WIDEATH ROAD
War Meml
Cheddar
School
Bradley Cross
EYCROSS LANE
Leisure Centre
School
Playing Field
Church Farm
War Meml
Caravan & Camping Site
Froglands Farm
Caravan & Camping Site
Witheridge Farm
Issues
Chapelstone
Steart Farm
Drain
Cheddar Yeo
Football Ground
Wongan Hills
Belle Vue Farm
Sluices
Drain
Path
CHEDDAR CP
Somerset EUS
Cheddar Map E - 20th Century
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