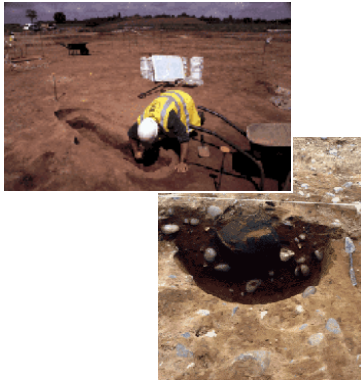


Case Record



Date January 2004

Location Midlands

Client MEL

Main Contractor CAMBBA*

The Construction of the UK's first toll road.

Principal Quantities

- 1,300,000 cubic metres of topsoil stripped
- 9,200,000 cubic metres of excavation (80,000 full double deckers)
- 63,000 cubic metres of structural concrete
- 9,613 tonnes of structural steel - roughly equivalent to the amount of steel used in the Eiffel Tower

Lessons learnt / benefits

- Increased archaeological understanding for the site team
- Archaeological remains properly identified and recorded

*CAMBBA - Carillion, Alfred McAlpine, Balfour Beatty and Amec

Information taken from:
M6 Toll Web site

M6 Toll Archaeology, Wall near Lichfield



Perhaps the most interesting find on the M6 Toll is that of a Roman burial ground, south of the village of Wall. Wall is a former Roman settlement and there is already an English heritage site there, where the former Roman bathhouse has been excavated and is now open to the public.

The site uncovered during preliminary construction works on the M6 Toll road focused initially on the line of the Rykniel Street, a former Roman road connecting the Fosse Way to Derby. Rykniel Street joined Watling Street, some 200m to the north of the new M6 Toll motorway. Excavations revealed the line of Rykniel Street, but also a number of cremation burials in urns, of Roman Age (AD 43 to 410). Further investigation revealed many more burials, although some damage had occurred to many of the burials due to recent ploughing. Many burial urns were lifted in their entirety by the archaeologists. On completion of the excavation of the site, some 50-cremation burials and 20 deposits from the pyres had been found. Within the area of the burials, remains of four small enclosures or buildings were discovered, provisionally interpreted by Oxford Wessex Archaeology as mortuary buildings for preparation of the dead for cremation. The boundary of the cemetery

appears to have been increased at least once and the number of burials found suggests that it was used as a burial ground for many years. It is being suggested that this cemetery used to serve the Roman settlement at Wall. A picture is emerging of a significant Roman settlement, located at a junction of two major Roman roads, which was surrounded by outlying development, including a cemetery. Further afield were small enclosures and farmsteads, evidence of which was uncovered during excavations near to the Wall Island roundabout on the junction of the A5 and A5127. In the same area, a Roman kiln was discovered, which probably provided pottery for the settlement at Wall. The wealth of archaeological information uncovered during the construction of Britain's first toll motorway has revealed evidence of a well-structured Roman society that had developed a local infrastructure not dissimilar to the modern society of today.