

Case Record

M6 Toll Archaeology



Date January 2001
Location Midlands
Client MEL
Main Contractor CAMBBA*

A skilled team of more than 60 archaeologists have been working on the M6 Toll and their investigation will significantly add to existing knowledge of the history of parts of Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

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 awareness for the team**
- **Archaeological remains properly identified and protected**

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

The archaeological investigations began with a study of the M6 Toll route to identify sites for serious investigation. This study included site visits, a review of existing local and historical knowledge and use of existing photography of the area.

Follow up activity has been categorised according to the level of investigation required:

Ploughing - Sections of fields have been ploughed and archaeologists have walked through the ploughed sections looking for features / items of note.

Geophysical - Electronic surveying equipment has been used in some areas to identify underlying features such as solid objects, ditch features & rock strata.

Targeted watching brief - Six separate sites were given this category. At these

locations the topsoil was stripped and archaeologists comprehensively mapped the area.

Trial trenching - From the ploughing and geophysical investigation the archaeologists identified sites where trial trenching was warranted. Particular areas/locations within a field/field were trial trenched and any notable finds/information noted. Several sites along the route have been trial trenched and subsequently opened to full excavation.

Full excavation - 4 sites have been opened fully. These sites date from the Bronze Age to Anglo Saxon and Roman. All finds are taken off site for processing. The off site processing includes examination, analysis and cataloguing of all samples.