

Notes from HS2 Archaeology in Bucks, May 2021

Presentation by Fusion JV Archaeologists from work in 2020 and early 2021, covering sites at Stoke Mandeville, Fleet Marston, Twyford, Chetwode, Tingewick, Brackley and Chipping Warden.

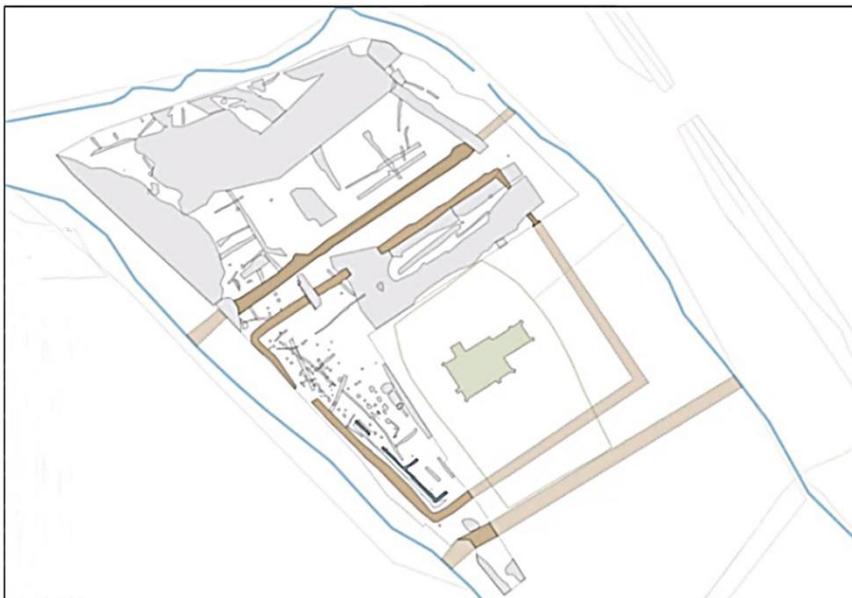
St Mary's Old Church, Stoke Mandeville

The church foundations and the grave yard are now covered in a very large tent. The church is being carefully dismantled with no sign of an earlier (Saxon) building so far, but the team is hopeful for some pre-medieval structure on the church site.

Bodies are being lifted and prepared for re-burial at the local consecrated site. There is a small osteo-archaeology lab on site, studying the remains as they are lifted. To date there have been no significant grave goods. There is an unusually high proportion of males in the cemetery.



Clearance before the tent installation exposed a (double) enclosure around the church. Within the enclosure (early medieval) there is a range of barn-like structures to the south west of the church.



These are currently being interpreted as a local (Aylesbury Minster area) Tythe processing site. This interpretation would be strengthened if a mill on the stream could be found. There is one area to the north west of the church site to be full excavated – the search for the mill will continue here.

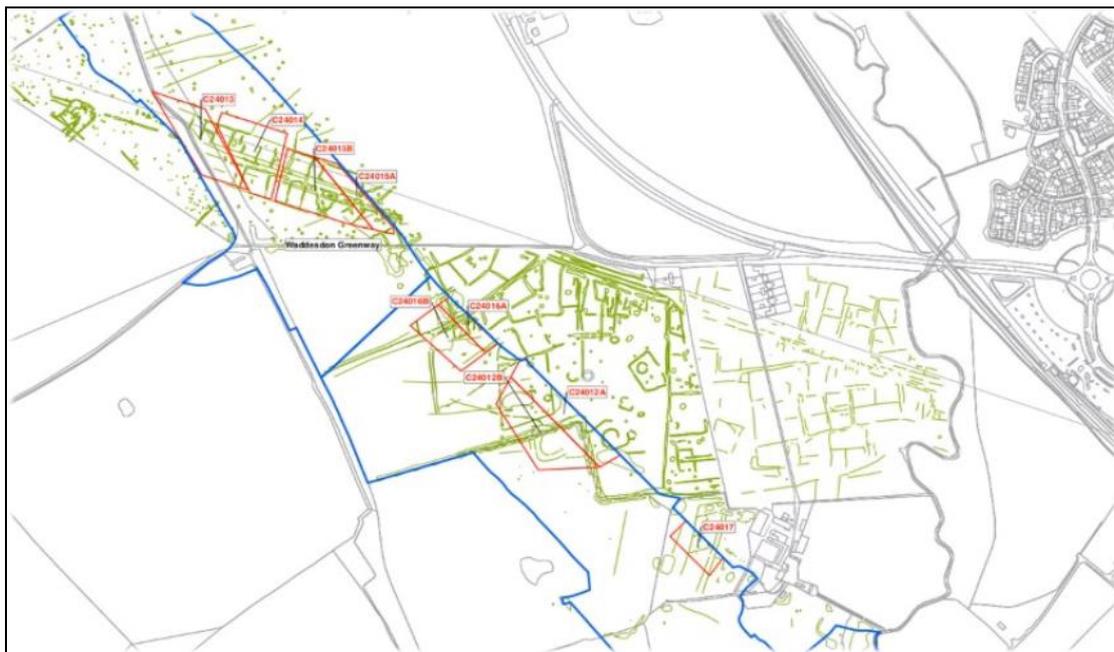
Excavation has confirmed the existence of a Roman farm (ladder settlement) running up the hill to the East of the Church. This

overlays a set of iron-age field boundaries and also extends to the east and south east outside of the HS2 corridor.

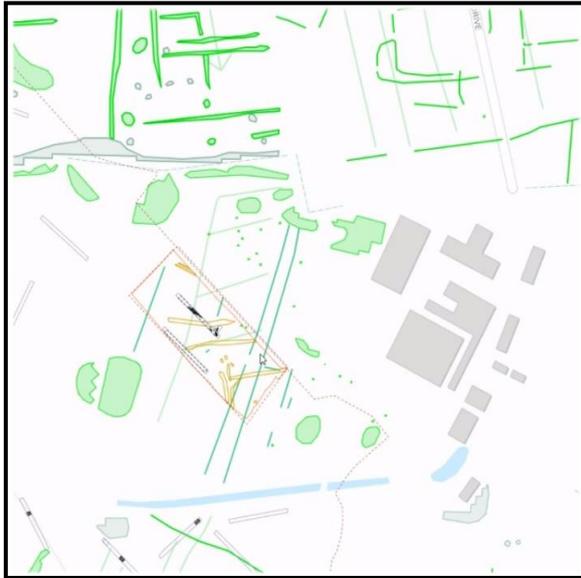


Fleet Marston

Excavation has been undertaken at three sites along the eastern boundary of the HS2 corridor. Further work is planned for the Iron-Age/Romano cemetery identified by the earlier trial trenching and on the small enclosures running parallel with Akeman Street to the north west of Roman Fleet Marston. [The areas outlined in red are the planned excavation sites].



At the southern-most excavation a second (the first has yet to be examined) subsidiary road (or trackway) has been confirmed. This was originally shown on the geo-physics and runs into the south edge of the Roman Town.



Picture of the trackway below:



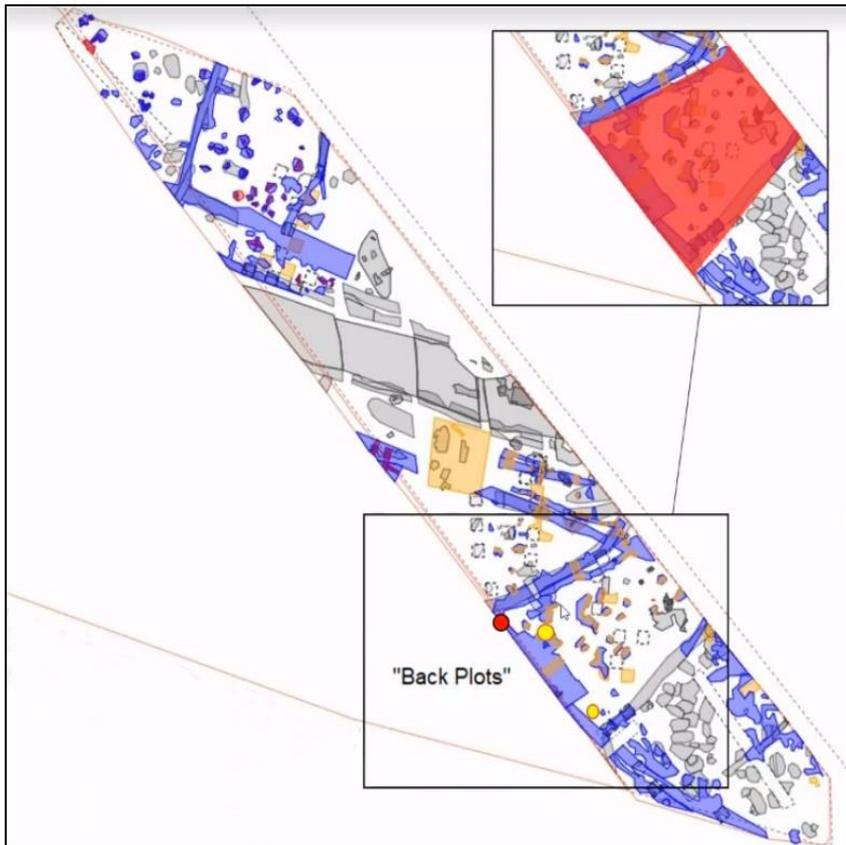
In the excavations immediately south of Akeman street no substantial structures have been uncovered, smaller features include cremation burials, a small bowl furnace (pictured) and an inhumation in a tree-through pit.



A small circular ditch feature was uncovered with finds dating it to the late first to second century CE. Its purpose is currently unclear.



An area of 'cobbled' surface (shown in Yellow below) was close to the road side, further finds



analysis may confirm its use. To the south of this an area of occupation was covered in black dumped material. The location of a cremation burial is shown as a red dot.

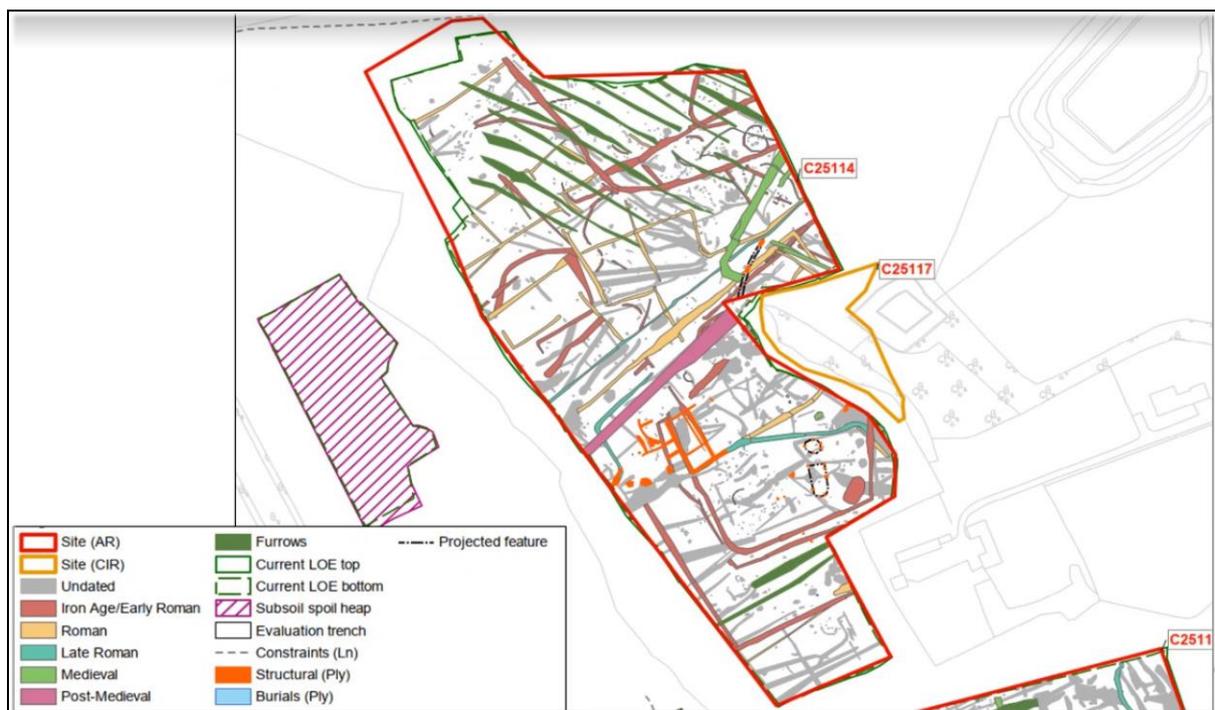
Twyford (Three bridge) Mill

The geophysical survey showed an area of ancient field boundaries on the HS2 corridor. Excavation proved these to be Roman.



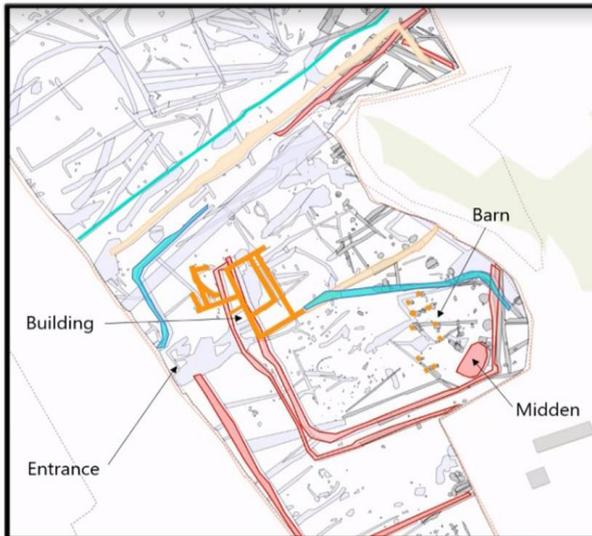
Chetwode

The area between the old Great Central Railway line and the village showed a complex of structures and field boundaries. Trial trenching found roman ditches and a possible Saxon sunken floor building. This southern area is still to be excavated. The main area of excavation to date is shown below.

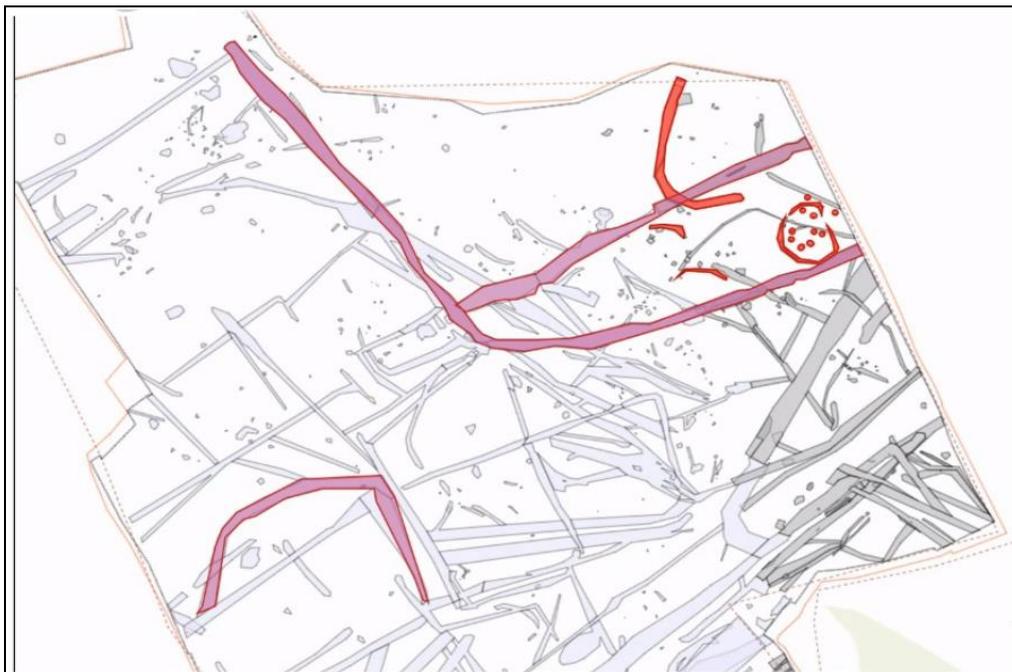


In the centre of this area is a roman farm building and the site of a substantial barn. Finds include a rare Magnentius (AD 350 – 353) Roman coin, a brooch and bone pin.

Chetwode – Roman Barn

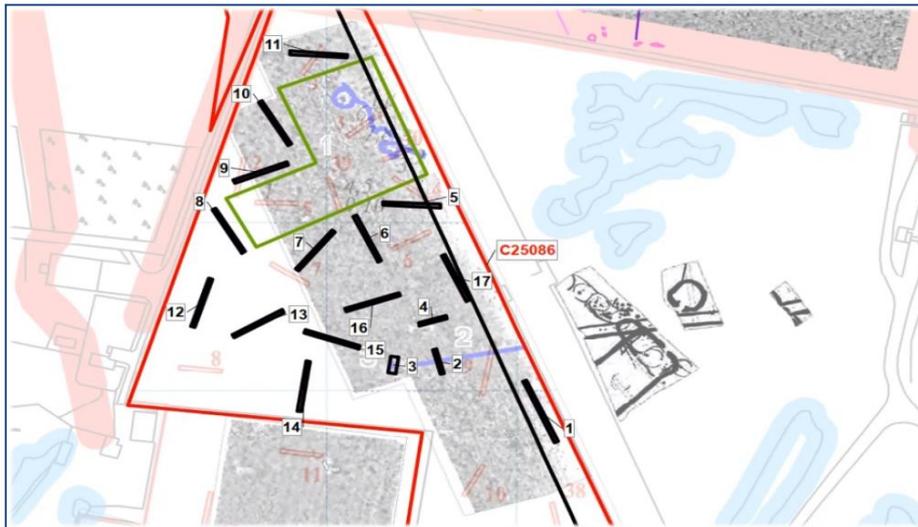


To the north there is an Iron-age round house, field enclosures and post hole structure (inside and outside of the round house). Other features have yet to be dated.



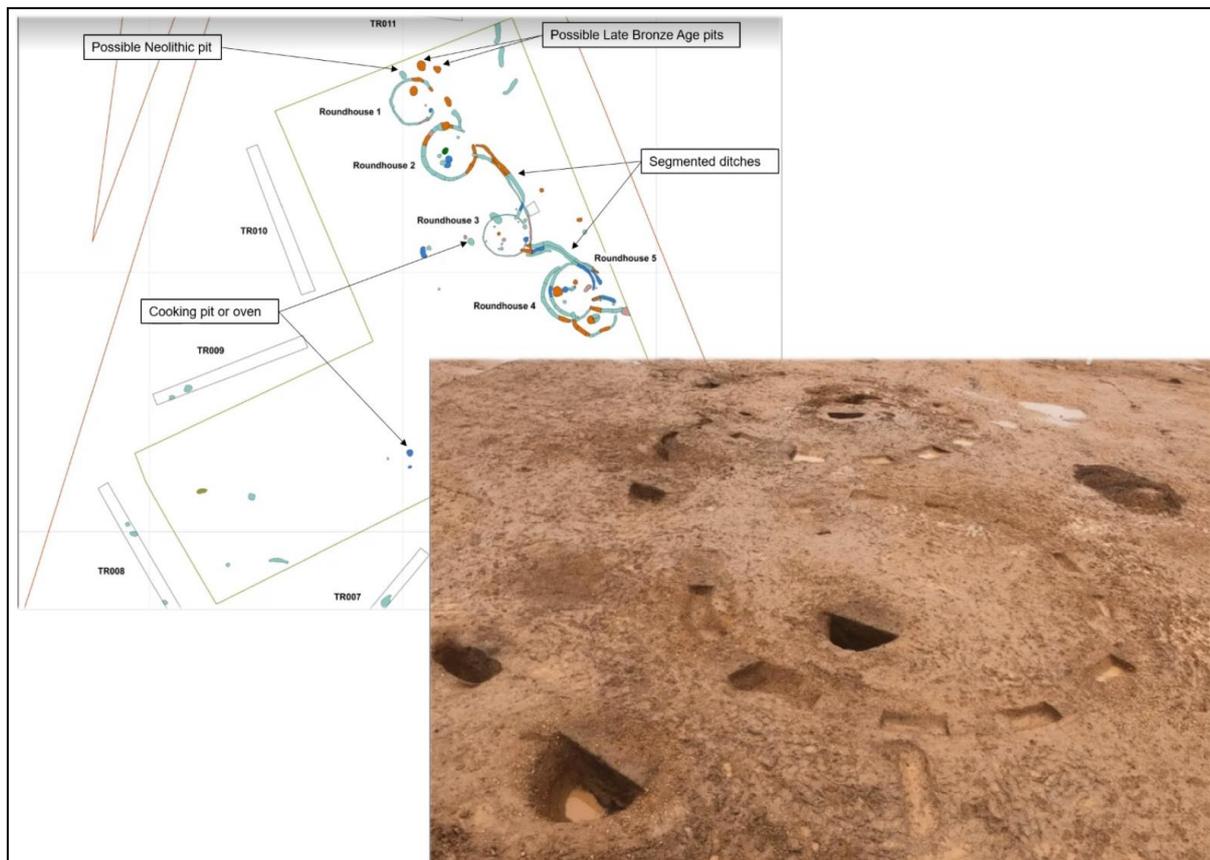
Widmore Farm (Tingewick)

The line of HS2 runs to the west of Tingewick Quarry where an iron-age settlement was uncovered



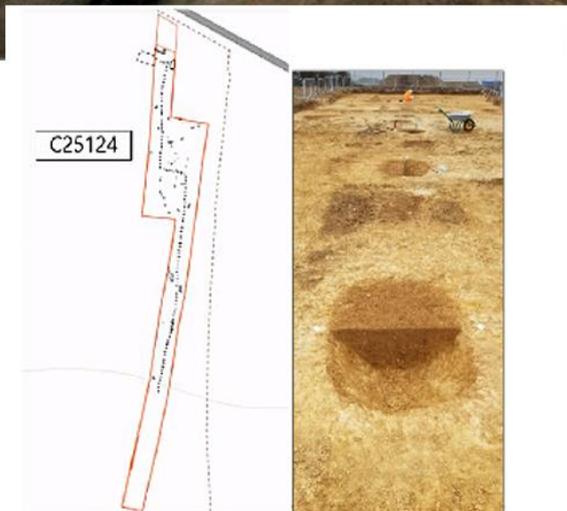
preceding quarry expansion. Trial trenching proved that the settlement continued west beyond the quarry/old railway boundary. The now excavated area is outlined in green.

The Fusion excavation uncovered the continuation of the settlement with linking ditches and earlier evidence at the northern end of the site. The picture shows round houses 1 and 2.



Grovehill Farm and Oatleys Farm (near Brackley)

An L shaped line of pits (over 100 pits) running along the ridge (at Oatleys farm) and then at right angles down the slope (at Grovehill) towards the infant river Great Oose. The pits may be all that remains of a linear bank (made from the pit contents) that formed a visible boundary line.



Background (near Chipping Warden, Warwickshire)

The geophysical survey shows two areas of settlement north of the Edgecote battle site on the north bank of the river towards Chipping Warden. The southern settlement area is planned for imminent excavation. The northern area proved to be a complex of iron-age roundhouses, a bronze age barrow (similar barrows occur in the area), an infant burial with bangle, and a roman dated adult burial. All overlaid with medieval ridge and furrow.



A significant trackway is also evident and appears to continue down to the southern settlement area, which is suspected to be a Roman farm.

The iron-age settlement (above) contains a significant number of round-houses. Further analysis will show if this is a large settlement at a single period or a smaller population using the site over a longer period.

For Bucks Archaeology Members, notes following the fourth HS2 Archaeology along the line conference, May 15th 2021.