

Re :

PL/2026/02943

Dear Wiltshire Planners,

6th August 2026

Further to my letter of 16th June, Cotswold Archaeology have published the report of their 114 trench investigation (dated 7th July) and I would like to make the following observations :

The paleolithic tools in the clayey "orange silt" along the North-East boundary of the field I have been looking at (Between Beehive Field and the old Golf Course) are really very interesting. "Mesolithic / Early Neolithic" was also my best guess until I noted tools embedded in the clay-silt spoil at the N.E. end of trench 78 and started looking at published examples. So they are around 5000-6000 years older than Cotswold's designations. They collected 14 worked flints - 3 (a core and 2 flakes) from this field; I sampled 39 in the primary deposit along the N.E. boundary and 35 mainly concentrated in 2 secondary deposits in the rest of the field. Cro-Magnon men may have been overwintering in rock shelters where the Avon cuts through the Bath limestone nearby and coming out onto the plateau above in warmer weather. This would not have been simply "transient / spasmodic".

The circular earthwork (Trenches 105 & 106) found using geophysics near the sailing club is too deep down to be a ploughed out barrow ("Neolithic / Bronze Age").

The area has probably never been ploughed, certainly not with heavy equipment. In my view, it could be a small Neolithic 'henge' (of c-3000 BC?) associated with the ecologically rich wetland and the bend in the river.

The storage pit with four Iron Age potsherds found at Trench 59 in 'Am field' shows that there was a precursor to the Romano-British settlement. The linear feature identified by geophysics nearby could be the boundary of an Iron Age enclosure.

There is diagnostically Roman building material scattered across the whole field (and part of the adjoining field with the pylons). A piece of 'imbrex' roof tile was observed in Trench 55 (though not bagged up for cataloguing). Roy Canham, when he was County Archaeologist, used to say this was a sure sign that you "had a (Roman) site".

Cotswold Archaeology's utterances can be somewhat Delphic. At Southwick Court Fields a large courtyard villa with a commercial centre along a Roman road became, in Cotswoldspeak a "small rural farmstead". Here, an extensive rural settlement has become "undated post-holes and ditches".

The two ditches running across the field through trenches 60-64 and 65-70 clearly are field divisions shown on the 1841 Tithe Map. Cotswold described 18 other archaeological features (in the south-western half of the field, where aerial photography gave the clearest

indications of likely Roman settlement), but a further
42 (in all parts of the field - either not investigated
or overlooked in the report) were observed in the trenches.
Of course, the purpose of the exercise is essentially
a sampling one, with constraints of time - but one
is left feeling that the archaeology is being distinctly
underplayed. A cremation burial of a man
excavated in the field south of the Sailing club
is described as "more likely Roman" - but of
Roman material in the area where he likely lived
- which is proposed for housing development - there is
no mention.

Yours Sincerely,



B.A. Hons. Dip. Arch.

(Committee Member, West with C.P.R.E.)

cc. Cllr. George Simmonds

Neil Adams, Wilton Archaeological Service.

