

A field study (Vince Russett) observed geological trial pitting on the bridge approaches, and incorporated some further fieldwork. This identified nine further sites, two of which were Roman in date and one mid-Iron Age, and recommended archaeological responses to the sites. This study also made records of the palaeoenvironmental potential of the area, and recorded extensive peat deposits, discussing and recommending further work. It also included some attempt to summarise the evidence for landscape development.

A third study (Vince Russett) examined historical sources for, and watched geotechnical investigations in the area of the bridge abutment construction camp, revealing further environmental evidence, and identifying three further possible sites affected by the work.

All studies are being published under the title of *Archaeology of the Second Severn Crossing*.

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Postgraduate Research in the Severn Estuary

The aim of this research is to study landscape evolution, and especially the reclamation of wetlands, around the Severn Estuary. This includes examining the Somerset, North Somerset, Avonmouth and Gwent alluvial Levels, from the Roman into post-Medieval periods, integrating documentary, place-name, archaeological, environmental and earthwork evidence, within a spatial framework provided by a topographical analysis of the landscape and field-boundary patterns. I hope this integration of a wide range of material will allow the history of these landscapes to be understood in much greater depth than was achieved in previous studies, which were both period and source material specific.

Results of the first detailed case study, the Somerset Levels around Brent and Burnham, show that, after extensive post-Roman alluviation, reclamation proceeded at a slow pace, from the later Saxon through to the late Medieval period, with an extensive 'back-fen' covering both the peat and clay Levels until this time. Here, the major landowner, Glastonbury Abbey, had a major role in the reclamation, but it is hoped that by studying several other Levels, a more general picture will emerge as to the development of these wetland environments.

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