

# Historical findings by HS2 archaeologists go on show at Coleshill Town Hall

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Exhibition panels charting the ancient history of Coleshill from Bronze Age to the medieval period unearthed by HS2 archaeologists have gone on display at Coleshill Town Hall.

The exhibition panels were given to Coleshill Town Hall by Wessex Archaeology and LM JV who are working on behalf of HS2. They offer an overview of archaeological work at Coleshill Park with information dating back to the Bronze Age, and including photographs, artistic reconstructions and 3D models to help people visualise the past.

Coleshill Town Mayor, Councillor Caroline Symonds officially unveiled the archaeology exhibition on Monday 18 October, with representatives of the Town Council, Wessex Archaeology, HS2 Ltd, Coleshill Civic Society Coleshill Library all present.

The area will now be accessible to the public, who are welcome to visit during Coleshill Town Hall opening hours, to see how Coleshill has featured in three key historical periods: Bronze Age to Iron Age; Romano-British; and Medieval.

The team from Wessex Archaeology have been working at Coleshill Park for the last four years on land that is needed for the new HS2 railway. There's been a huge amount of interest in the work from locals and expert archaeologists, and the team have held talks for community groups, online webinars and school workshops.

The archaeological investigations at Coleshill have provided a remarkable insight into the exploitation and occupation of the local landscape over a period of more than 5,000 years. There has been a breadth of historic activity documented within the site, with the team uncovering Bronze Age burnt mounds which heated water from the River Cole; Iron Age houses and funerary remains; and evidence of Roman salt processing, not to mention Elizabethan gardens of national significance.

The exhibition now provides a permanent place to access information on the local archaeology of Coleshill Park, providing a resource for the people of Coleshill, as well as visitors, for years to come.

Coleshill Town Mayor, Councillor Caroline Symonds said: "We have been delighted to work alongside Wessex Archaeology and thank them for producing these boards which hirers, members and visitors will enjoy reading as they visit our Town Hall. We will also be working with our partner organisations in the town, the Coleshill Civic Society and the Library and we will ensure that they have copies of the boards in a form of media that is suitable for their available space and visitors.

"We wanted a launch event to thank all those people who have contributed to not only the successful archaeological digs themselves but to giving the town a marker of its place in history as a longer-term record of it. We have many respected historians in the town, and I am sure that they will enjoy these boards in raising the profile of Coleshill's heritage."

Richard O'Neill, Senior Project Manager from Wessex Archaeology said: "Our work at Coleshill over the past four years on behalf of HS2 has formed part of the largest archaeological investigation in the UK, and the largest infrastructure project in Europe. The investigation, carried out in advance of the main construction programme, has significantly enhanced our understanding of the archaeology and history of Coleshill and wider area. It has been a pleasure to see our community engagement develop through webinars, talks and workshops and I hope that this exhibition provides further access and insight into the fascinating remains uncovered."

Jon Millward, HS2's Historic Environment Manager said: "HS2's unparalleled archaeological programme is uncovering new and important information about Britain's history, shining a light on how people used to live, including these exciting findings in Coleshill. HS2's archaeology programme seeks to engage with all communities both local and national, to share the information and knowledge gained as well as leaving a lasting archive for everyone to enjoy."

Paul Hunt, LM JV's Historic Environment Project Manager said: "It's been fascinating to be involved with the archaeology at Coleshill and we are delighted that we have been able to share the exciting finds with the local community and provide these exhibition panels as a lasting legacy of the project."

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*