

PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE PROGRESS OF HS2 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE HAREFIELD LANDSCAPE

The survey was carried out on the morning of March 23rd 2023 by John Parkinson and Keith Piercy, with Keith Piercy making a supplementary visit to the Breakspear Road South and Southern Sustainable Placement area sites on March 31st.

Colne Valley View.

Our first stop was to consider the impact of the HS2 works on the view of the Colne Valley from Colney Farm. The west side of the valley is dominated by the factory making concrete segments for the tunnels and viaduct. They are also dumping large quantities of the rock and earth from the Chiltern Tunnel, which at a distance is creating a white moonscape from the chalk. How will all this be restored when all is done, and will they at least achieve a better landscape and ecology than the prairie farming that preceded it? Photograph 1 provides an overall view.



Photograph 1

Colne Valley Viaduct.

The dominant feature of the viaduct is currently its construction, but there are still associated piling and earthworks going on. The work is done at night, when the noise often travels a good distance. The viaduct is now well across the A412 (photograph 2) and some distance alongside. The concrete segments for the construction of the viaduct are moved along from the A412 end (photograph 3) and when their slow progress is stopped at the end of working schedule, they are stored temporarily on top of an already constructed pillar which will take the weight (photograph 4).

It will be some time (in 2024?) before the viaduct construction reaches Moorhall Road, where there is also preparatory work going on. Pile driving is still evident along the route of the bridge (photograph 5). There are also large concrete structures (photograph 6), which are being constructed at various places along the line of the viaduct. These include bearings designed to contain the effects of sudden and strong stress when a train travelling at speed of 200 mph or more has to brake suddenly, which could release forces capable of causing severe damage to the structure. These are an extra to

viaduct construction that already contain bearings which respond to more frequent and regular pressures such as the expansion and contraction caused by changes in temperature.



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6



Photograph 7

By Moorhall Road there is the pumping station to take high quality water from the valley gravels to local consumers (photograph 7). Keith has been informed that the Harefield Residents and Tenants Association has been informed that the station is not operating at the moment because of the HS2 works having contaminated the water.

From the canal bridge at Moorhall Road it is possible to look south down the Grand Union Canal and see the bridge they have constructed across the canal to assist the future viaduct construction across the lakes (photograph 8).



Photograph 8

Harvil Road.

Where Harvil Road intersects the Chiltern Railway Line and the line of the future HS2 there are considerable earth movements (photograph 9). The aim is to realign Harvil Road to a new bridge (photograph 10) across the Chiltern Line, to the south of which there will be a new junction with Skip Lane. Work is also going on here to create the new Copthall Tunnel along the HS2 railway (photograph 11). This is involving excavation, drainage, concrete pouring for walls and tunnel backfilling works. Work has already been done to manage the drainage of and into The Bourne (photograph 12).



Photograph 9



Photograph 10.



Photograph 11



Photograph 12



Photograph 13

The beginnings of the construction of the electricity substation on the west of this site has also started (photograph 13).

There is now a road through the site along which HGVs are taking the concrete segments for the tunnel boring machines to install in the tunnel under West London from West Ruislip. Conveyor systems are being constructed to take spoil for disposal in the Northern Sustainable Placement Area, which is currently being taken to the existing conveyor by truck along New Year's Green Lane.

The eventual change to the landscape and ecology of the part of Harefield will be considerable. It currently has no aesthetic appeal to the ordinary non-engineer, and restoration progress will be worth close interest.

New Year's Green Lane.

There are two Northern Sustainable Placement Areas to the north of New Year's Green Lane which are shown on the attached maps. One close to the Lane, starting close to the hamlet itself and then extending around St. Leonard's Farm to the height overlooking the junction with Breakspear Road South, is the currently under construction. Trucks are bringing material excavated from the Copthall Tunnel to a depot by the lane, from where it is transferred on to a conveyor belt across the lane (Photograph 14) where it is possible to see the earth and rock being transferred to the placement area (Photograph 15). Here (Photograph 16) it is deposited and then moved about mechanically, with the aim of forming mounds (Photograph 17).



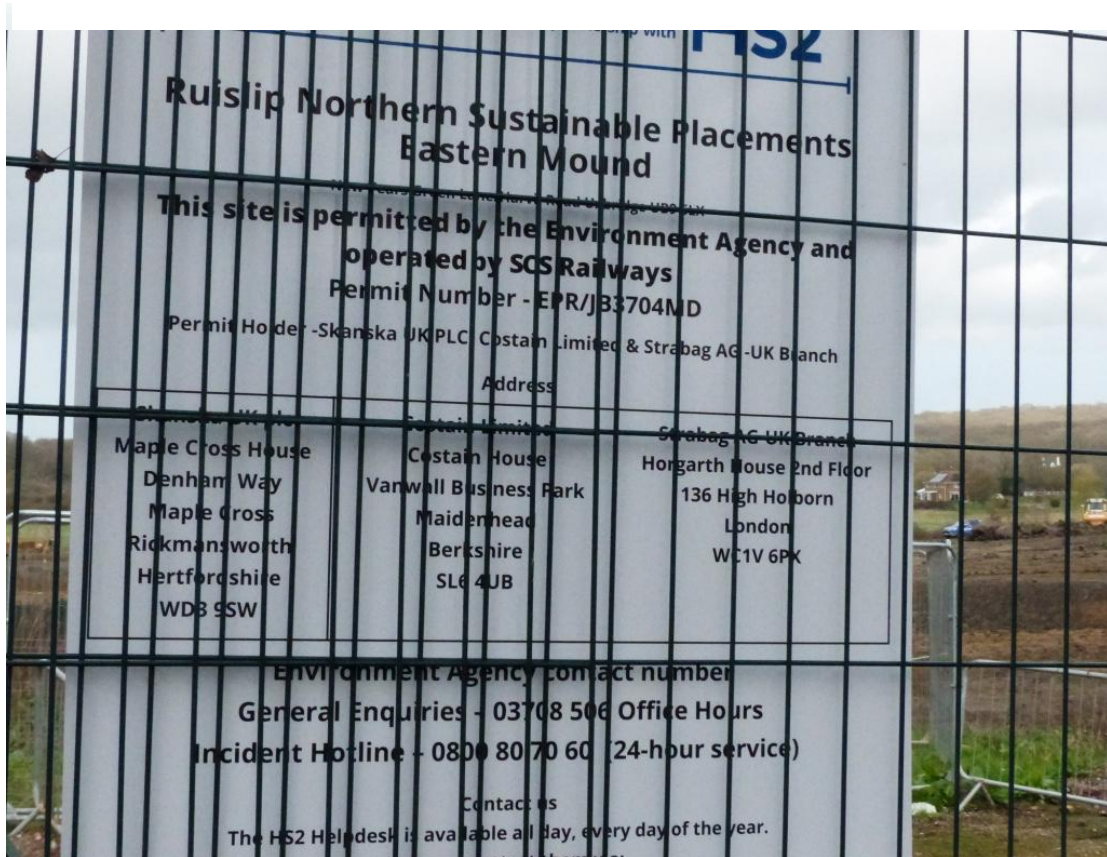
Photograph 14



Photograph 15

Eventually the more efficient conveyor system will carry the material from the tunnel at West Ruislip, and the large and dirty lorries will not be needed. The

conveyor system will presumably be extended to the other placement area stretching from Harvil Road around Park Lodge Farm to the area in front of Breakspear House.



Photograph 16



Photograph 17

The plan is to cover the mounds with topsoil, subsoil and earth from the tunnels which will allow them to be revegetated. The plans indicate woodland for the New Year's Green SPA and grassland for the Breakspear one. The result will be a considerable alteration to the landscape, with higher areas of land, a different drainage set up and changes to the hedges used as field boundaries.

The Southern Sustainable Placement Area.

This extends from Swakeleys Road and between the ends of Harvil Road and Breakspear Road South. It is well into the reception of excavated material and part of it is now formed of shaped, and in some places grassed, mounds (Photograph 18). HS2 has fenced off this area, to spare the local residents the worst of the current view? and it would hide any construction indiscretions as well (Photograph 19).



Photograph 18

The area is also being used for treatment of the spoil from the Tunnel Boring Machines, and the extended conveyor belt for transporting the material to the NSPA is under construction.

Breakspear Road South.

The work here is concentrated on the bridges crossing the road itself (Photograph 20) and also the river Pinn.



Photograph 19



Photograph 20

It is emphasising piling and preparatory work to create the foundations for the HS2 bridges over road and river (Photograph 21). The beginnings of the bridges can also be seen.



Photograph 21

For the period from April 1st to April 16th a road closure has been arranged for Breakspear Road South around the bridges. As well as allowing HS2's contractors (SCS) to construct trenches for getting water to the tunnel boring machines at West Ruislip and doing some road repairs, it will allow Network Rail to do necessary repair work on the bridge taking the Chiltern Railway across here, close to the HS2 bridge.

So, the landscape and ecology of Harefield in the southern part of the parish is being changed. At the current stage of construction, it all looks ugly, whether excavated into or deposited upon. It can only be hoped that in a few years' time the recovery will be good, including to the cleanliness of our water.