

Learning more at Cotswold Community

The gravel terraces of the River Thames are rich in the remains of our ancestors, from the time of the first farmers in the country 6,000 years ago to the present day.



The remains of a pot found in a Beaker grave

In particular, sand and gravel extraction by Hills has provided the Oxford Archaeological Unit and Thames Valley Archaeology Services with a valuable opportunity to investigate traces of occupation and burial sites and recreate a picture of the changing landscape of the Cotswold Community, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire areas over six million years.

Hills spent over £1 million to fund the discovery of a significant Bronze Age farming settlement in the Cotswold Community area.

One of the oldest boundaries in Britain, made up of hundreds of pits, was found running parallel to the Gloucestershire / Wiltshire county boundary. Careful topsoil stripping by Hills exposed small circular 3,500-year-old houses, animal enclosures and wells.

The Romans were attracted to the area by the rich agricultural land and built one of their major towns at Cirencester. A Roman farmstead has also been excavated in the Cotswold Community dig along with timber hall buildings of the Saxons, pottery and evidence of textile production.

The findings of this major archaeological site in the Upper Thames Valley, of which Hills funded the fieldwork, have been recorded in a book 'Evolution of a Farming Community in the Upper Thames Valley' published in 2010 and is the source for the images provided here.



Artist's impression of a Roman roundhouse