

# Scaftworth

## A Roman bridge and road in the wetlands

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The ability of the Romans to bring wasteland under cultivation is well known, and in the Humber wetlands we found ample evidence of this. The Project discovered a range of Roman settlements, the largest at Trent Falls, where the Rivers Ouse, Don and Trent combine to form the Humber. Now believed to exceed 12ha, it was found through field-walking the extensive alluvial plains in the area, and geophysics was used to define the outline of the settlement. These results, combined with excavation and



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coring, suggest a settlement located on an island in the River Trent or on the banks of the River Don.

The best example of Roman-period ingenuity comes from the roads that were built in the wetlands. In CA151, we reported on a 'turf and timber' road near Scaftworth, on the South Yorkshire-Nottinghamshire border. This road had been built as a raft that floated on the waterlogged peat. In 1997, we returned to excavate the bridge that carried the road over the River Idle. The excavations found the bridge-structure to consist of parallel rows of three oak posts, which had been driven into the clays beneath the water and peat. We can only guess at the total span of the bridge, but it may have been more than 150m. The quality of carpentry was exquisite, and the state of preservation of the archaeological timbers excellent. ■



Left. A close-up view of one of the Roman bridge timbers.

Far Right. Two of the parallel rows of bridge supports that carried the Roman road over the River Idle at Scaftworth. The bridge span may have exceeded 150m.

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