



Bawtry Heritage Group

Preserving our Past for the Future

Registered Charity No. 1188945

THE HUNT FOR ROMAN BAWTRY

June 2024 - June 2025

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

July 2025

Bawtry Heritage Group

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Summary

The research project, "The Hunt for Roman Bawtry", took place between June 2024 and June 2025. Its two main aims were:

1. To provide a more cohesive story of the area that is now Bawtry during the Roman period
2. To establish whether there is any likelihood of a Roman settlement that is part of the foundation of today's modern Bawtry.

The pages that follow are the conclusions and observations made as a result of the work undertaken by the project. The substantive evidence supporting these can be found in the 5 desktop reports:

Desktop 1 - Roads

Desktop 2, Part 1 - Monuments, Features and Artefacts from central, north and west Bawtry. Also evidence from recent community activity.

Desktop 2, Part 2 - Monuments, Features and Artefacts from south and east of Bawtry

Desktop 3 - The Shrine/Temple?

Desktop 4 - The Scaftworth Fortlet - Morbio?

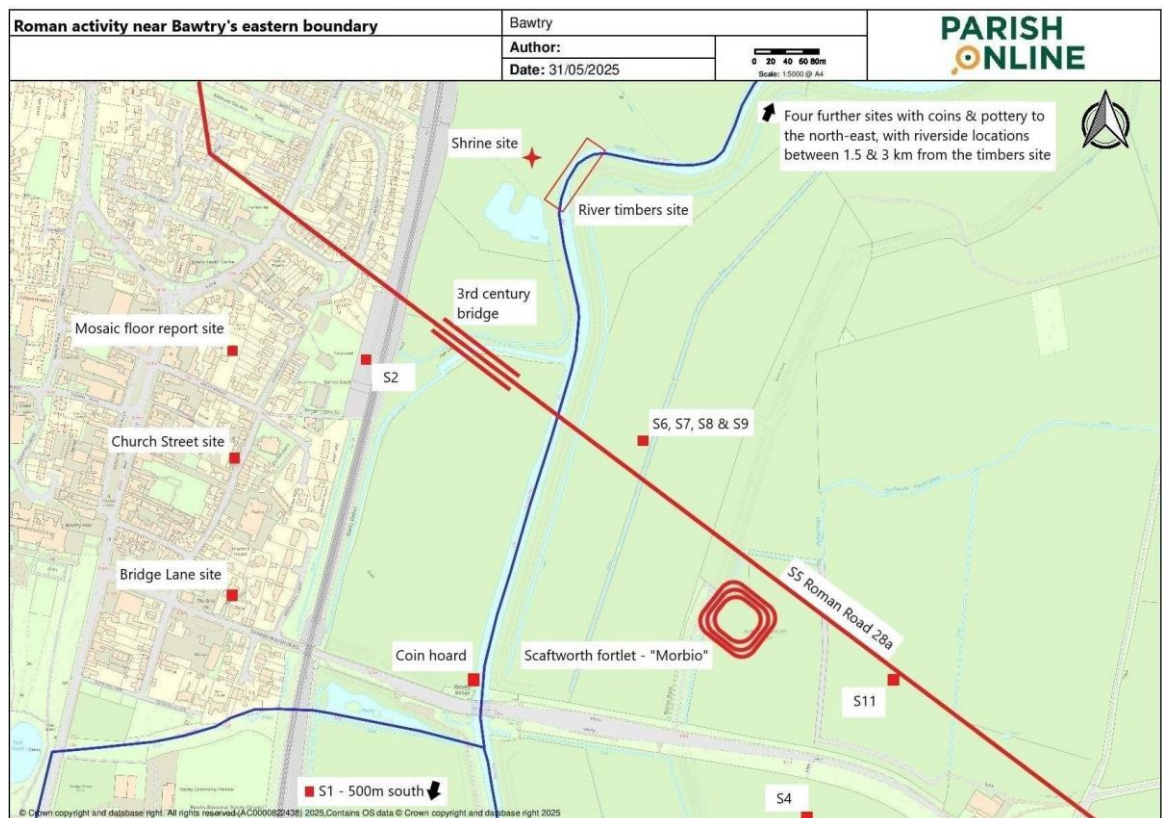
These reports can be accessed in full via the Bawtry Heritage Website at www.bawtryheritagegroup.co.uk alongside this summary or via the Bawtry Heritage Centre situated in the town's Community Library.

The Hunt for Roman Bawtry June 2024 - June 2025 - Conclusions

1. There are very strong indicators that a settled economic environment functioned on the eastern border and immediate hinterland of Bawtry in the Roman period. Agriculture, road and river trade were most likely its mainstay. The indicators are:
 - Eight Scaftworth labelled sites from 1997 yielding enclosures and field systems and 101 sherds of pottery
 - A fortified feature with surface pottery and 19 sherds and a coin, 1958 and 1997
 - A possible ritual structure with 653 pottery sherds and 71 coins from a surface scrape 2006
 - The Bridge Lane excavation 2012 produced 11 pottery sherds. To date the richest for Roman artefacts when compared collectively against all other excavations undertaken within the modern built up area
 - A coin hoard alongside the Gainsborough Road bridge.
 - An eyewitness account given to the BHG in 2024 of a mosaic floor at a location in the DN10 6HP postcode area
 - 4 Nottinghamshire HER river sites between Bawtry and Misson yielding Roman pottery and coins
 - The riverside timbers that are in close proximity to the ritual site, identified via BHG fieldwalking in 2021, currently unexamined

- The 3rd century Roman road bridge (1997).
- The evidence of Roman river use on and associated with the Idle. A Roman 4th/5th century boat found at Mattersey Thorpe and the canal linked to the Trent at Byscarrdyke, constructed during the occupation.
- The possibility of Bawtry being an important staging post for mined lead from Derbyshire en route to the North Sea. See Gardiner 2001.
- Greater significance of the Church Street excavation. This yielded minimal Roman finds but is of importance when considered against the context presented by the bullets above.

Each of the bullet points above are illustrated in the map below.

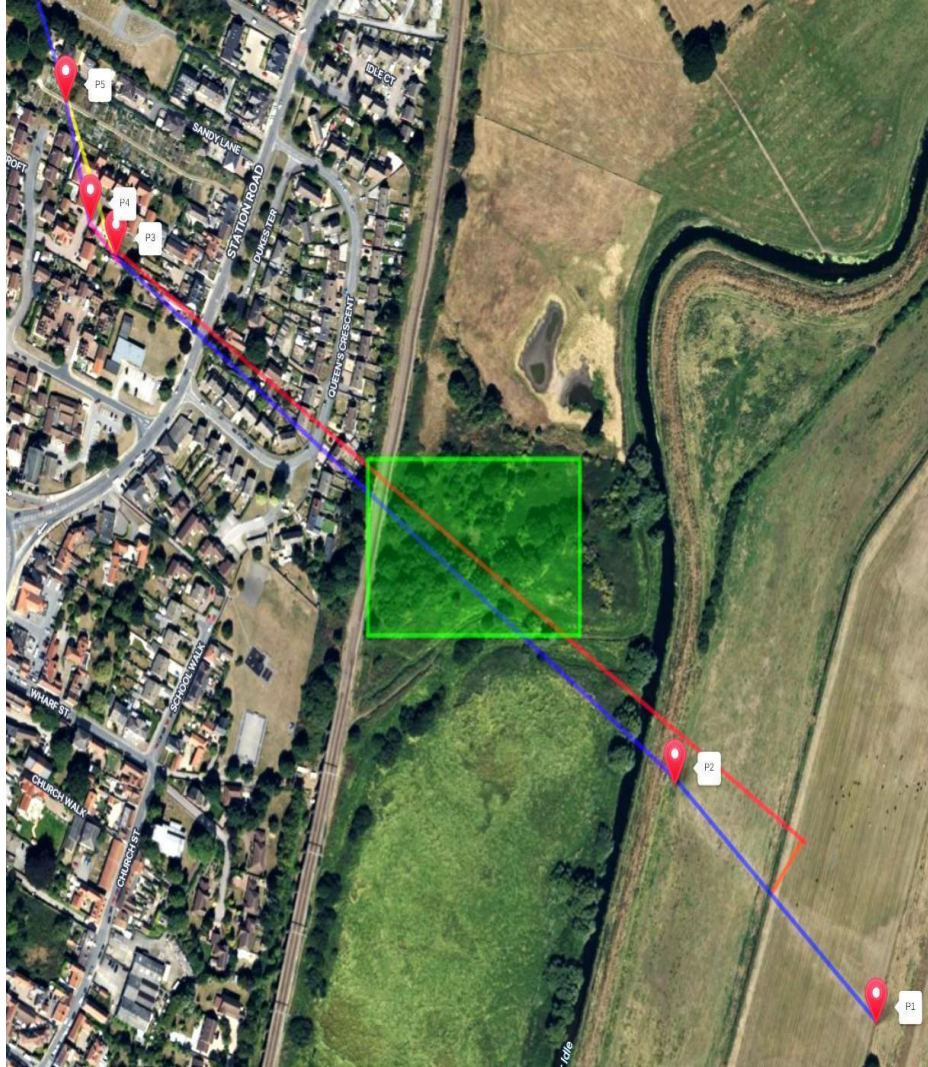


- Human activity thrived before the Romans came expanding and developing as they did in other parts of the north from between 71 CE and 410 CE. Aerial photography identified that the Roman roads cut through an agricultural landscape proving Iron Age Britons populated this area aplenty before the conquest. A number of what are considered to be likely Roman period settlements are recorded immediately north of the modern town in the SYHER and NHER.
- We can establish entry and exit points for the main Roman road (RR28a, which allows for the plotting of its route through modern day Bawtry via the application of Long Distance Alignment principles.

4. A Roman road from the immediate south through the modern centre of Bawtry is not supported by tangible evidence and would appear to be very unlikely given the known existence of RR28a within the modern boundary and RR282x 2 km to the west. Note, the latter is on a south-north trajectory. Any road entering the environment that is now modern Bawtry from the south if it existed may well have had its origins in the Iron Age.
5. There is strong documentary evidence that the Scaftworth Fortlet was called Morbio during the Roman period.

The Hunt for Roman Bawtry June 2024-June 2025 - **Observations**

1. Potential sites for exploration with regard to the trajectory of RR28a are plotted on the images below.





2. SYHER 1843/01 and Historic England Scheduling Record 1012453. These records reveal what appears to be a confusion between two separate and distinct sites north and north west of Bawtry 1.5 km apart. Pages 14- 20 of Desktop Report Stage Two, (Part One) unravels the confusion and reveals a potential site of interest 115 metres outside the northern edge of the project's 1.7km zone. This is an area that appears hitherto to have been unrecognised in its own right. Recorded observations and artefacts from SYHER 1843/01 and the Portable Antiquities Scheme database serve to elevate this location as an area worthy of further intrusive exploration. The image below presents the site's location



3. Work to better define the Shrine/Temple and Fortlet sites is well overdue. Does this work provide a case for elevating the priority of these sites in the professional archaeology environment?
4. What value would exploring the date of the timbers partially immersed on the west bank of the Idle near to the shrine/temple site? (see image below). Such activity may further inform conclusions expressed in conclusion number one above.



5. Greater consideration of the historic potential on the eastern boundary of the modern town when considering heritage preservation might be prudent.

These conclusions and observations alongside the main desktop reports are designed to prompt discussion and provide a potential platform for further work related to the discovery of Bawtry's Roman past.

Submitted to the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service and Doncaster City Council Conservation Officer in July 2025.

Bawtry Heritage Group.