

HS2 DEVELOPMENT AUGUST 2024.

SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AUGUST 21, 2024.

This was designed as a follow-up to earlier surveys taken to present some sort of record for the future of how HS2 construction affected Harefield.

At Breakspear Road the crossing is continued by three contrasting bridges, one permanent and historical, one permanent and being constructed, and one temporary. (see Figure 1). The most southerly of the three has been there since about 1900, and now takes the Chiltern Line, with frequent passenger services and occasional freight, from Marylebone to High Wycombe and beyond. There was no sign of current work on this bridge. In the middle is the conveyor belt system which continues to take the spoil, which is predominately London Clay, from the tunnel under West London. It is being taken to

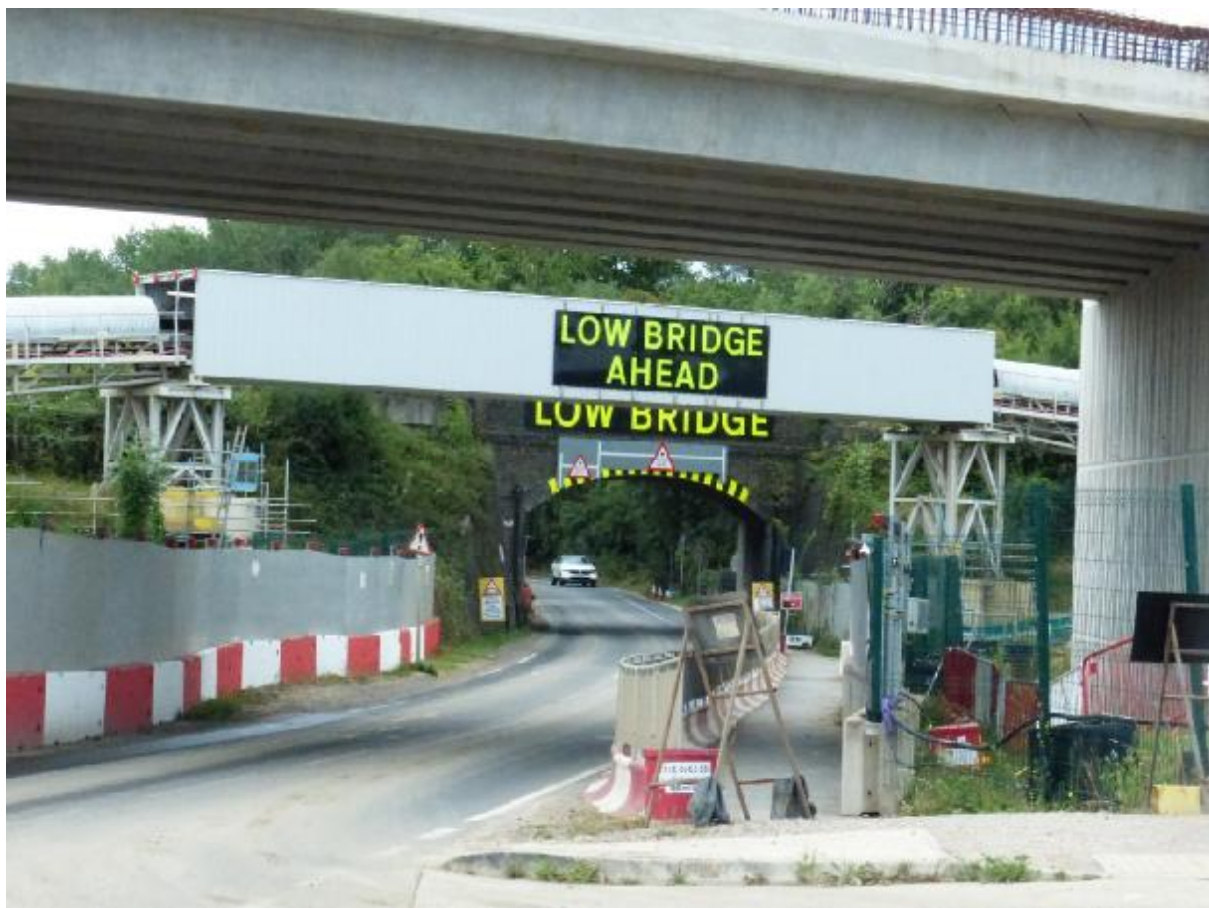


Figure 1

the works by Harvil Road/Swakeleys Road/Breakspear Road also known as the Southern Sustainable Placement Area where it is cleaned and treated before being dumped on selected fields to eventually form raised pasture between ditched hedges.



Figure 2

As can be seen from Figures 2 and 3, the bridge that will carry HS2 over Breakspear Road is the focus of present building, with the need to create the embankment along which the line will run to rise up to the bridge and then progress to the Copthall Tunnel and the beginning of the viaduct crossing the Colne Valley and its gravel pits. Occasional closures of Breakspear road are still needed.

At New Years Green Lane the dumping of spoil in the placement area to the north of the road seems near completion. The conveyor system moving spoil to here is no longer in evidence, but there are still lorries moving rocky material along the lane, which remains busy, and in the fields there is still machinery dealing with the material.. As Figure 4 shows much of the surface is now grass covered, presumably sown; the grassy areas form land higher than before surrounded by hedges.



Figure 3.



Figure 4

SCS who operate this area of construction have been held to the need to maintain the public footpath along New Year's Green Lane, and it shows clear signs of maintenance in order to keep it open and fit to use (see Figure 5.)



Figure 5.

At Harvil Road SCS have now completed, and in spring 2024 opened, the replacement bridge over the Chiltern Line, which also crosses the HS2 embankment. Traffic now crosses the bridge at a 30 m.p.h. limit, unaware that the virtually straight line they are following is a restoration of the course of Harvil Road after the enclosure up to the building of the Great Central Line (now Chiltern), although now on a much more imposing structure (see Figure 6). There are still large banks of moved earth around the site as work continues on the embankment and Cophall Tunnel, which seems well under way and likely to be consumed by the new landscape (see Figure 7). The post-1900 route of Harvil is preserved by the existence of Skip Lane as a continuing entry to the works there (see Figure 8).



Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.

SCS are still removing the spoil from the tunnel starting at West Ruislip to go below West London, and this is transported along the conveyor belt over the Chiltern Railway (see Figure 9) for cleaning treatment in the buildings in the area known as the Southern Sustainable Placement Area but now apparently Copthall South site (see Figure 10) before being dumped on the fields.

The old road bridge over the Chiltern Line is still there, being a typical example of the Great Central use of a particular stone for its bridges and no doubt capable of many more decades of use in different circumstances (see Figure 11). It is still in use to give heavy traffic access to the HS2 construction sites (see Figure 12). These are for the building of the electricity sub-station provision of *power* for the line, and for the construction of the embankment to carry HS2 and its link to the viaduct over the Cone Valley and its lakes. The former is still creating a need for some earth movement but the line of pylons to provide the power is in place and can be seen at the back of the site (see Figure 13).

From the Harvil Road bridge the embankment construction to carry HS2 by SCS has been completed to the extent that the viaduct being constructed by ALIGN is about to be joined with it. The launching girder *Dominique* has reached the end of its construction path of the concrete spans and deck and then at last work is imminent which will tie the two together. The line of the viaduct is visible behind *Dominique* coming from Moorhall Road and the Grand Union Canal crossings (see Figure 14).



Figure 9.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.

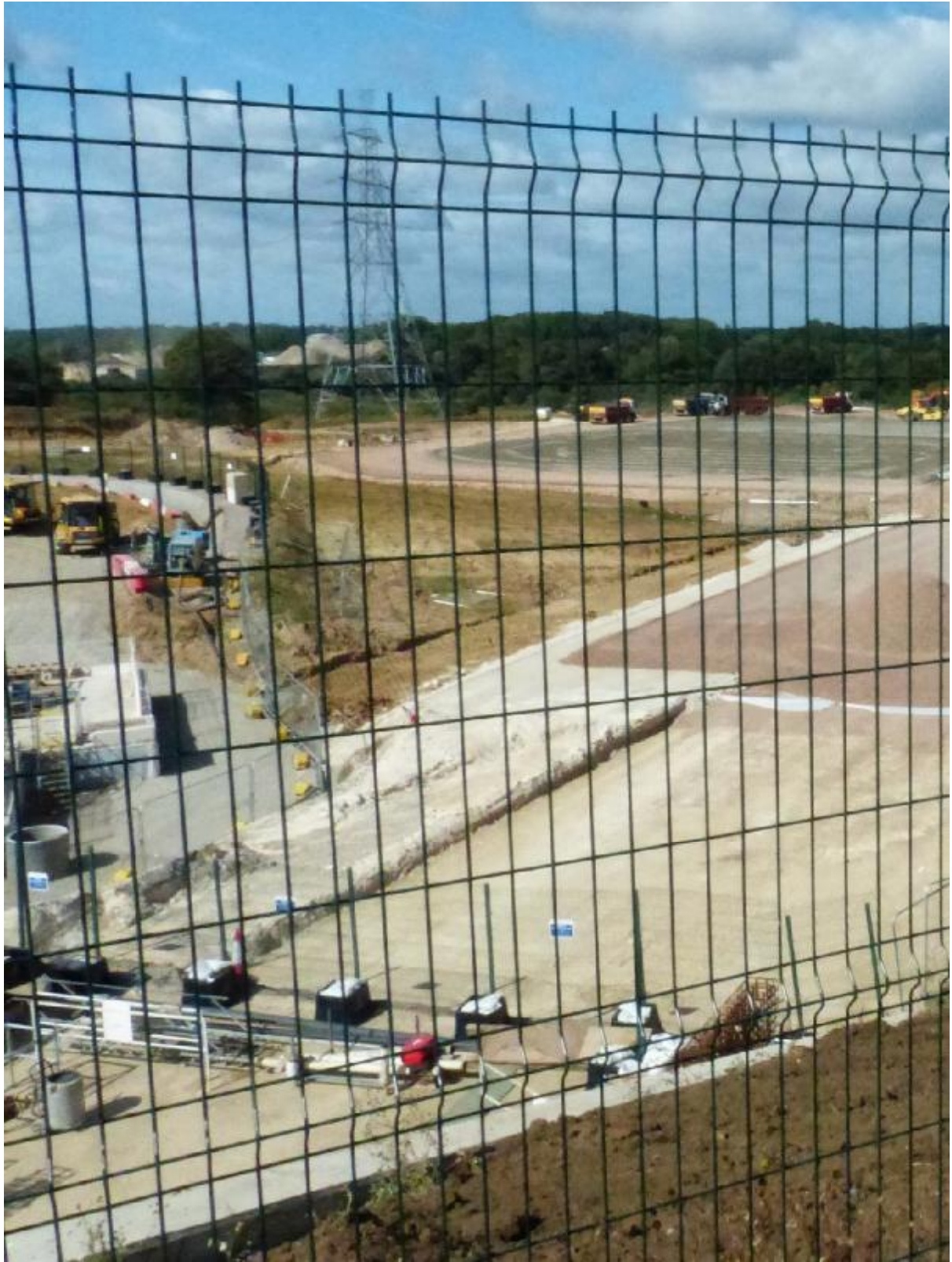


Figure 13.



Figure 14.

In early 2024 *Dominique* reached the Grand Union Canal in the course of constructing the deck and piers for the viaduct and needed to be built across. The canal was closed while it was bridged during the spring of 2024 and the bridge and piers were in place. On the east side it then passed along the boundary of Harefield Marina before crossing the former HOAC lake to Harvil Road (see Figure 15).



Figure 15.

The viaduct at its crossing of Moorhall Road is now well established (see Figure 16). The most recent work has been to install the noise abatement panels along the viaduct, hence the road closure (see Figure 16) as well as the continuing evidence of work being done (see Figure 17).



Figure 16.

The survey was marked by a considerable interest in me by the HS2 security. They were in general friendly and very courteous, and I was given two address cards and told to contact the help desk if I needed to.

A stage has been reached where the nature of what is being built is becoming much clearer. There is still a great deal to do, particularly with the disposal of the spoil from the tunnel at West Ruislip. The viaduct has now reached its full length as a concrete structure which will be a major feature of the landscape, but noise proofing still has to be completed and eventually they will begin work to install a railway. It is taking time and is arguably not making the south of Harefield a more beautiful place.



Figure 18.