

‘Radwell Only’: a village cut off from the world by the A1 motorway



The sign from the A507 (the former Great North Road) to the village reads ‘Radwell Only’: the community lies on a single street running west from here. Radwell Lane passes under the A1 motorway, crosses the River Ivel and stops at the parish boundary on the west side. The parish is a curious reversed-L shape, the area to the northwest being part of Stotfold in Bedfordshire. How did it get to be such a strange shape? What do we know of its history? There has never been a large village in the parish. It had an unexpectedly large population at the time of Domesday Book in 1086, which can hardly have lived in cottages surrounding Radwell Lane.

There is a lot of archaeological evidence from Radwell, despite it being a small parish. It covers human history from the Late Neolithic (third millennium BC) onwards, allowing a general assessment of land-use over the centuries. For the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, the Roman period and the later medieval period onward, we can identify at least some of the places where people were living. There is an intriguing possibility that the medieval estate, based around Radwell Bury, was a direct successor to one of the most magnificent Roman villas known in the area.

[Read more about the archaeology and early history of Radwell here.](#)

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