ROMAN·ROADS·RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

R·R·R·A

MILLE·VIAE·DUCUNT HOMINES PER· SECULA·ROMAM

ISSN 2752-8235 NEWSLETTER NO.24 WINTER 2022

FROM THE (NEW) EDITOR

First, a happy and healthy mid-winter festival to you all, whether traditional or one of those new fangled Christians. May all the gods and goddesses keep you warm or at least able to pay the heating bill.

Secondly, huge thanks to Dave Armstrong who has been editing the newsletter for an edition or two. It's taken a while but he's finally persuaded me to take over. I shall, of course, be relying on his expertise for future editions (maybe more than he's realising) to ensure the quality remains as high as he has set it. He has left us a legacy to be proud of.

Thanks also to all members who attended the AGM, and to those who volunteered to help spread the load of the various jobs as we look to where RRRA goes in the next few years.

In this edition we have an update from the AGM, the sad and untimely obituary for long-term friend and colleague, Paul Bidwell; and sundry articles to whet your interest. Plus information about talks from various organisations to get you through winter.

Don't forget to send your newsletter bits to me at mountainposture@gmail.com, although Dave will send things on if you forget and send them to him.

Enjoy the newsletter, and don't forget to share with your friends who will then want to be members of the RRRA themselves.

Cheers, Han

IN THIS EDITION

Roman Roads in Focus

Research by Dowsing - to Publish or Not? 2

Brough Roman Fort and the South Roman Roads 4

Might Meg's Cairn be Roman?: Maiden Way to Meg's Cairn 10

Roman Roads around Harlow, Essex 14

Thomas Codrington, 1829 - 1918: The man who started it all 21

Other News

AGM, Paul Bidwell, talks, newsy snippets, snoozy nippets 26

Roman Roads in Focus

Research by Dowsing -to Publish or Not?

From Mike Haken

From time to time, we receive offers of articles, for both the newsletter and for Itinera containing research on Roman roads based almost entirely on the results of dowsing. Dowsing (witching in the USA) in archaeology is essentially the same technique as water divining applied to archaeological remains and as most readers will be aware is somewhat controversial. There is a widespread belief amongst the general public that the technique works, which contrasts with a broad scepticism amongst the scientific community. It became extremely popular in the 1960s and 70s, despite the lack of any objective evidence to support it, indeed, just five years ago, 10 out of 12 British water companies admitted using dowsing at least occasionally (Sharman 2017). There seems to be a greater sympathy towards it within the archaeological community (particularly amongst non-professionals) than it finds in other fields, although the authors of mainstream archaeological texts seem to show a greater scepticism as each decade passes. But the real question is, does it work?

It can be said with certainty that dowsing's proponents believe passionately that it it does, and can be used to detect archaeological remains, whilst its detractors believe just as passionately that it is entirely bogus. The doubters suggest that any positive results occur either through chance, or because of some sort of bias or prior knowledge (possible held subconsciously). A significant number sit nailed to the fence.

It is frequently stated that all scientifically controlled tests of dowsing, using properly established protocols, blinding, and controlled conditions, have failed to demonstrate that dowsing achieves anything better than results by chance, and this certainly seems to be true. For example, James Randi, who famously offered a $1m prize (never won) for anyone who could prove the existence of a paranormal or supernatural ability, conducted a controlled test in 1979 which all the participants failed (Randi 1979). However, almost all those tests were involved with water divining, with only three tests of archaeological dowsing being known to have been conducted and published in Britain (see Aitken, 1959, Bailey et al 1988, Locock 1995). Only Aitken's test had what could be regarded as scientific controls, although a further unpublished test most certainly did, conducted for a TV programme, the results never being published because they were negative and thus not of interest to the public (van Leusen 1998, 127)! If any reader knows of any scientific test that I have missed, please let me know.

My own personal experience with dowsing is somewhat mixed. As a teenager, my party trick was to use a pendulum to identify the denomination of a coin held in a stranger's hand, and I almost always got it right. Whether I was simply picking up on subconscious cues from the teenage subjects is unclear, but once I hit the age of 16 it no longer worked. I'm also well aware that one of our Association's members, Steve

Continued on p.3

Roman Roads in Focus

Continued from p.2

Hedworth, has identified a road in Northumberland, proven by excavation, although whether or not it is the eastern extension of the Stane Street as claimed, or even Roman, is unknown. On the other hand, I have received scores of other documents over the years claiming 'new' Roman roads found by dousing all over the country, most of which displayed no indications of classic Roman road planning, and not one has ever been confirmed by subsequent independent excavation (other than Steve Hedworth's), as far as I am aware (please let me know if you know differently).

Consequently, when we were presented with Alan Bradwell's article that follows, much debate took place about whether or not to publish. We didn't want to expose ourselves to ridicule, but on the other hand we recognise the right of our contributors to put forward controversial ideas and different ways of working. There was no consensus, but since there has been minimal blind testing of archaeological dowsing, most of which was seriously flawed, the majority view was to publish, but with an associated piece (ie this one) explaining the issues and making it very clear that as an Association we cannot endorse dowsing as a means of remote prospection until such a time as it is clearly demonstrated to work.

This also gave us an idea - since there has been minimal controlled testing of dousing in archaeology, why not do our own? Why not devise a series of experiments that would test the efficacy of dowsing as a means of detecting Roman roads, and other archaeological features, to settle the matter one way or the other? We will be putting together a small group who will design the experiments, including both proponents and detractors of dowsing, for balance. They will ensure that the experiments are blinded, with all scope for bias of both experimenter and dowser eliminated, and crucially will test whether any positive results are repeatable. If you wish to be involved with this project, whatever your perspective, please contact me at mike@romanroads.org.

References

Aitken, M.J. 1959. 'Test for correlation between dowsing response and magnetic disturbance'. *Archaeometry 2*: 58-59 http://www.dowsing-research.net/dowsing/articles/Aitken_1%20-%20Test%20for%20Correlation%20Between%20Dowsing%20Response%20and%20Magnetic%20Disturbance.pdf

Bailey, R. N., Cambridge, E. and Briggs, H. D. (1988). *Dowsing and Church Archaeology*. Wimborne: Intercept.

Hancock, P. A. (1998) *Dowsing the Rollrights.* Skeptical Inquirer 22: 1. https://cdn.centerforinquiry.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/1998/01/22164924/p32.pdf

van Leusen, Martijn. 1998: 'Dowsing and Archaeology'. *Archaeological Prospection 5*, 123-138 https://www.academia.edu/1932821/Dowsing_and_archaeology

Randi, J. 1979: 'A controlled test of dowsing abilities'. *Skeptical Inquirer IV*(1): 16-20. https://skepticalinquirer.org/1979/10/a-controlled-test-of-dowsing-abilities/

Sharman, James, 2017: 'UK water companies still use 'magic' dowsing rods to find leaks, despite no supporting scientific evidence'. *Independent*, 22 November 2017

Roman Roads in Focus

Brough Roman Fort and the South Roman Roads

From Alan Bradwell

This article is an extract from a larger Report No. 104/2019 'The Roman Roads of Navio Fort' issued by Darley Abbey Historical Group to its members, describing the 'known' and 'lost' Roman Roads leading out of 'Navio' Fort at Brough in Derbyshire. It is part of a larger project comparing the locations, layouts and Road networks of the other Derbyshire Forts with Little Chester Fort at Darley Abbey. This article traces the Roman Roads leading south from Navio*, which have been proven in parts by prior excavation.*

Background

Most of the Roman Forts in Derbyshire (Little Chester, Pentrich, Chesterfield, Brough, Melandra, and Buxton) have been excavated, and the outlines of the fort walls and gates are known and published. But surprisingly the roads leading out of the fort gates have been little explored in the vicinity of the forts (Patterson, 2016). Brough Roman fort is a typical example: it has been well excavated and its layout is known. There is a *vicus* to the east (Guilbert at al., 1995) and another, recently excavated due to opencast-workings extensions, to the SW. However, there is little evidence about the three 'known' Roman Roads leading out of the four gates of the fort (fig. 1), except for sections cut at some distance (> 2km) from the fort. Wroe and colleagues (Wroe, 1982) have excavated sections on Doctor's Gate at Fulwood Stile (c. 3km.) and beyond, on Long Causeway at Bamford (c. 2 km), on Batham Gate at Wheston House (c. 6km.) and at Quarters Farm at Bradwell on a 'lost' Road (4km) (fig. 2). Guilbert has excavated on Batham Gate at Grey Ditch, Bradwell (2km) (Guilbert, 2013) and Inglis has recently excavated eastwards on the Offerton Road (< 1km) (Inglis, 2021). So the exact lines of the Roman Roads leading southwards from Brough Fort are not known. Cockerton (Cockerton, 1953) and Ordnance Survey assumed Batham Gate ran SW along Stretfield Road (a significant name) to Smalldale, Bradwell, up Clement Lane and over Bradwell Moor to Wheston House (figs. 1 and 2). But Cockerton also proposed a Roman Road, called 'Castlegate', which would run due south past Bradwell and Quarters Farm and on to Castlegate Farm at Great Longstone, then to a 'lost' Fort in the vicinity of Carsington on The Street. Wroe and Mellor checked this proposal with four sections cut at Hazelbadge Hall, at Quarters Farm, at Nether Waters Farm and at Broadlow, Windmill, where they exposed "a wide Roman Road" heading south (Wroe, 1982). This seemed to be proof of Cockerton's south-bound 'Castlegate'

Continued on p.5

Brough Roman Fort

Continued from p.4

Fig.1: Map of Navio *site and Roman roads from Evans, 1912.*

Continued on p. 6

Brough Roman Fort

Continued from p.5

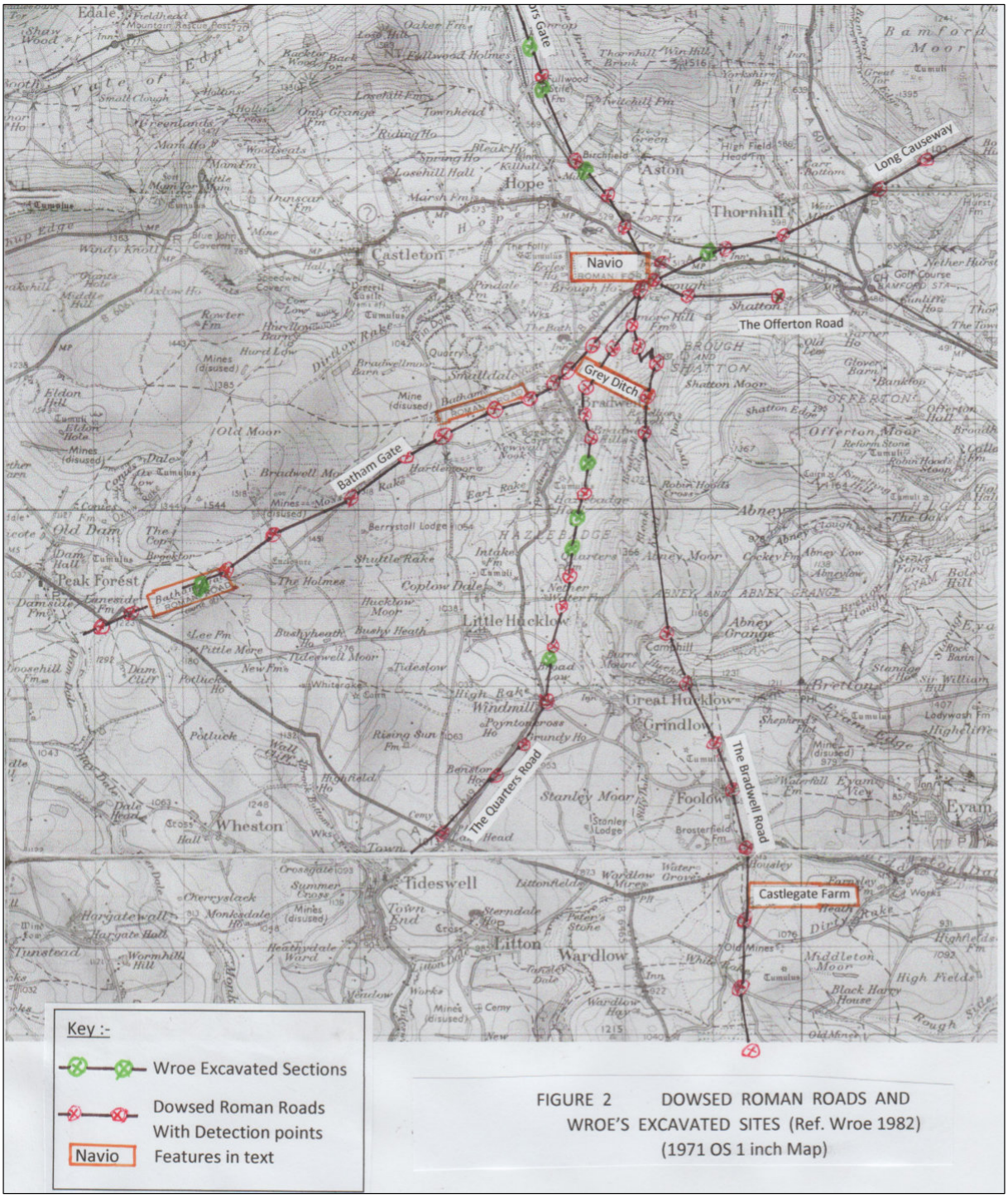


Fig. 2: Dowsed Roman Roads and Wroe's Excavation Sites following Wroe ,1982, on 1971 OS 1 inch map

Continued on p. 7

Brough Roman Fort

Continued from p.6

Site Surveys

The author has been detecting Roman features by dowsing, which match and support the 'known', excavated and published sites of both forts and roads in Derbyshire. The author has surveyed Brough Fort and its surrounds from the fort walls and four gates, and has detected and traced features (Roman roads?) leaving, which give the same detection response. However there is no proof that these are roads, since little is known about their exact courses, as described above. So the author surveyed the area above, where Wroe and colleagues had excavated on Batham Gate and Castlegate, but without knowledge of the exact locations of their excavations, to find the Roman roads. The results are shown in figure 2, which includes the locations of the trenches subsequently found from Wroe's paper; both sets of results match, proving the dowsing technique.

With this demonstration of the efficacy of dowsing, the author's survey was continued in both northerly and southerly directions from Quarters Farm, detecting the Roman road northwards past Bradwell village across Stretfield Road to Brough House and the fort gate, and southwards across Trot Lane to Benstor House and the A623 junction, and along Whitecross Rd. to Tideswell Church. The road was 8 paces (pc.) wide along the whole length, which contrasts with Wroe's description of 'a wide road, since most major Roman roads in Derbyshire are dowsed at 16pc. wide. However the destination of Tideswell for this 8pc. road to the SW (The Quarters Road) shows that it was not the major road proposed as being Castlegate leading due South to Carsington Fort.

Another feature was detected splitting from Batham Gate and The Quarters Road as they cross Stretfield Road near the fort, and which climbs the hill past Botham's Farm to Bradwell Edge, where it was traced to follow Brough Lane to Bretton Edge, Foolow and Castlegate Farm. This is likely to be the 'lost' Roman Road to Carsington and is called 'The Bradwell Road', but that is another story.

One additional finding is that the 'Grey Ditch', a monumental ditch and bank just north of Bradwell village (fig. 3), lies across all three of these south-bound Roman roads. Its purpose and age are not known, and it has only recently been excavated to determine both, (Guilbert, 2013). It has been suggested that it was built to stop the use of the only 'known' Roman Road, Batham Gate, but it climbs to the summit of Brough Lane on Bradwell Edge (figs. 1 & 2), which would seem unnecessary for that task; or it might be a tribal land-boundary ditch or an enclosure for slaves, since there is a legend that the Bradwell folk were descended from Roman slaves who used to work the lead-mines (Evans, 1912). The Ditch was not built by the Romans to protect *Navio* fort, because the ditch was on the *Navio* side. But dowsing showed that the ditch cut through the detected roads at all three crossings, making them undetectable, whereas the roads could be detected undisturbed under the banks. The Grey Ditch was therefore dated later than the three Roman Roads, and was a barrier to their use, probably in the late

Continued on p. 8

Brough Roman Fort

Continued from p.5

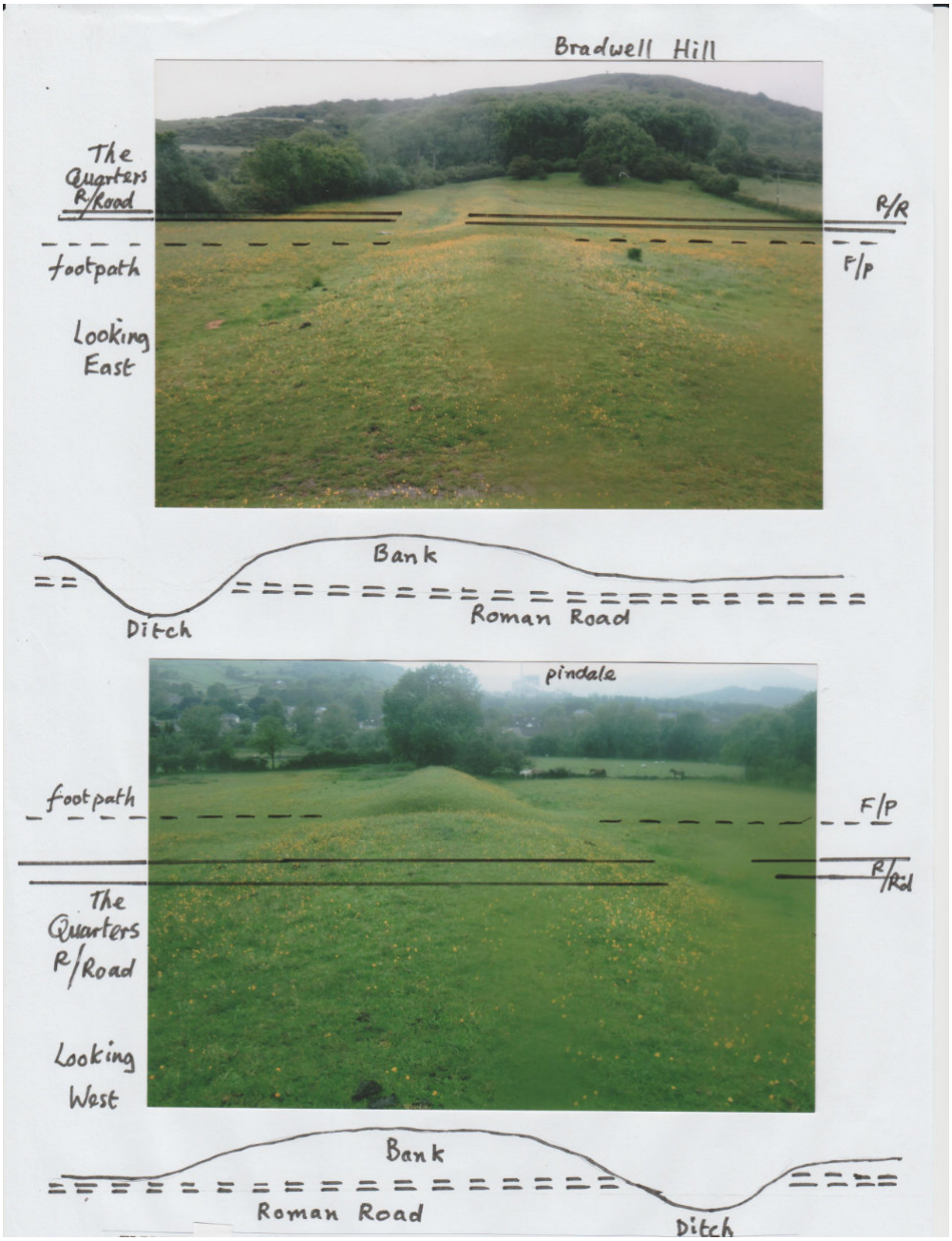


Fig. 3: The Quarters Road cut through by Grey Ditch at Bradwell looking east and west

Continued on p. 7

Brough Roman Fort

Continued from p.8

Roman / early Saxon period. This is consistent with Guilbert's excavation results under the bank (Guilbert, 2013).

Conclusions

1 Excavations of four sections by Wroe in the 1970's revealed a Roman Road heading south past Bradwell towards Windmill / Hucklow.

2. Dowsing in this same area on public roads and footpaths gives a positive detection of an 8pc. feature on the same line, both matching the line of Wroe's excavations and validating the ability to detect Roman roads by dowsing.

3. Dowsing beyond the excavations both north and south shows that this Roman road leads north to Brough Roman Fort, and south-west to Windmill and Tideswell.

4. This road is therefore not the 'Castlegate' Roman road leading south to a fort in the Carsington area, as Wroe and Cockerton proposed.

5. Dowsing showed that there are two definite Roman roads and one probable road leading in a southerly direction past Bradwell village, one of which might lead to Carsington Fort, and will be described elsewhere.

6. These three Roman roads are cut into by Grey Ditch, making them undetectable by dowsing, but not at the adjacent bank, showing that it was built as a barrier to inhibit movement along these Roman roads, and was built after they were built.

References

Cockerton R.W.P., 1953, *On the Development of the Roman Road System, with Special Reference to Derbyshire*. Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal; DAJ vol. 73, 1953, pp. 67-89.

Evans S., 1912, *Bradwell Ancient and Modern*, Broad Oaks Press, 1912.

Guilbert G., Challis K., Abbot C. & Leary R., 1995, *Romano-British Finds Around Navio,* DAJ vol. 115, 1995, pp. 76-81.

Guilbert G., 2013, *Before Grey Ditch - Finds at Blake Acre, Bradwell*, DAJ, vol. 133, 2013, pp. 1-114.

Inglis D., *The Romanised Landscape at Navio,* Archaeology and Conservation in Derbyshire and The Peak District (ACID); 2021; pp.6-7.

Patterson M., 2016, *Roman Derbyshire,* publ. Five Leaves Publications, Nottingham, 2016.

Wroe P., 1982, *Roman Roads in the Peak District*, DAJ vol. 102, 1982, pp. 49-73

Roman Roads in Focus

Might Meg's Cairn be Roman?: Maiden Way to Meg's Cairn

From John Poulter and David Ratedge

There are quite a few Meg's Cairns, not least in Cumbria, but the one in which we are interested lies beside the Maiden Way Roman road (Margary RR84). Here the road breasts a steep climb to run past Melmerby Fell, on its way from Kirkby Thore to the fort at Whitley Castle, the valley of the South Tyne and, ultimately, the fort at Carvoran. Figure 1.

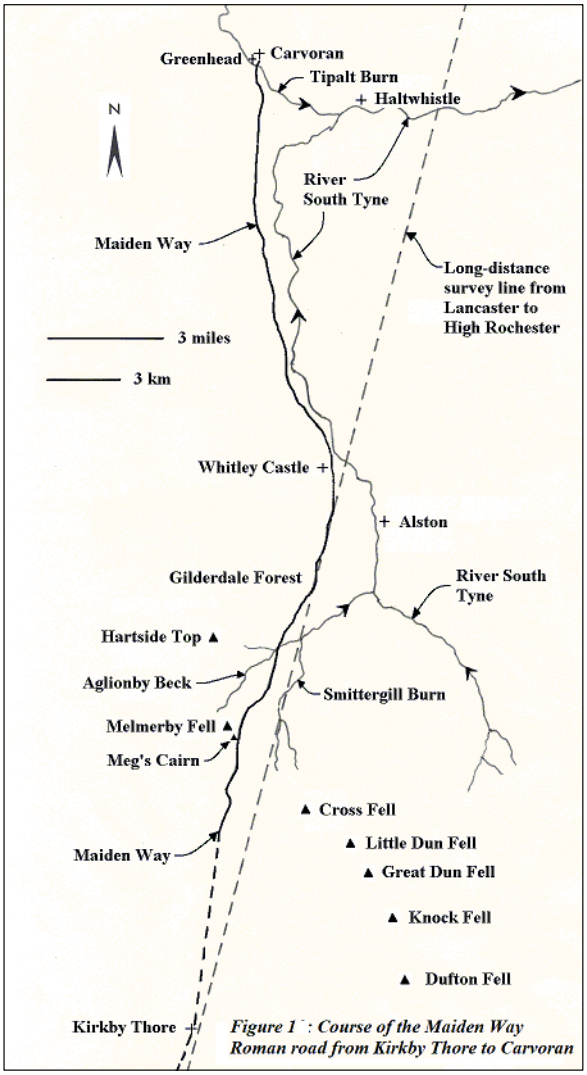


Fig. 1: Course of the Maiden Way Roman road from Kirkby Thore to Carvoran. Map reproduced with agreement of BAR Publishing www.barpublishing.com

Continued on p.11

Meg's Cairn

Continued from p.10

Fig. 2: Meg's Cairn. Photograph kindly provided by Dave Walsh

To do so, the Roman road takes a pass through the ridge just below Melmerby Fell. This pass is little more than a depression across the hillside, but it does represent a very practical route across the Pennine watershed, especially in bad weather. Without Meg's Cairn, however, the entrance to the pass is so slight that it would have been indetectable from Kirkby Thore and from most of the way towards it. Hence the builders of the Maiden Way would have needed some marker towards which to aim.

Meg's Cairn itself is just a large pile of stones today (figure 2) but as a stone platform with a beacon or bonfire on top it would have made a clear target at which the road's builders could aim. This is evidently what they had done, as can be seen on figure 3. Note how the road wavers off line depending on local topography but it is never far from a direct alignment on the Cairn.
Having reached the Cairn, the road builders then curved their road around it, as can be seen on Google Earth (figure 4). This shows that the Cairn had already been there when the road was built.

The Cairn may also have been used to help maintain a steady incline in the final approach to the pass – figure 5 – for the following reasons:

- it is difficult to maintain a constant gradient across a curved hillside
- the climb was steep enough as it was, without making it worse
- the Cairn would have provided a clear aiming-point around the final curved slope.

Continued on p.11

Meg's Cairn

Continued from p.10

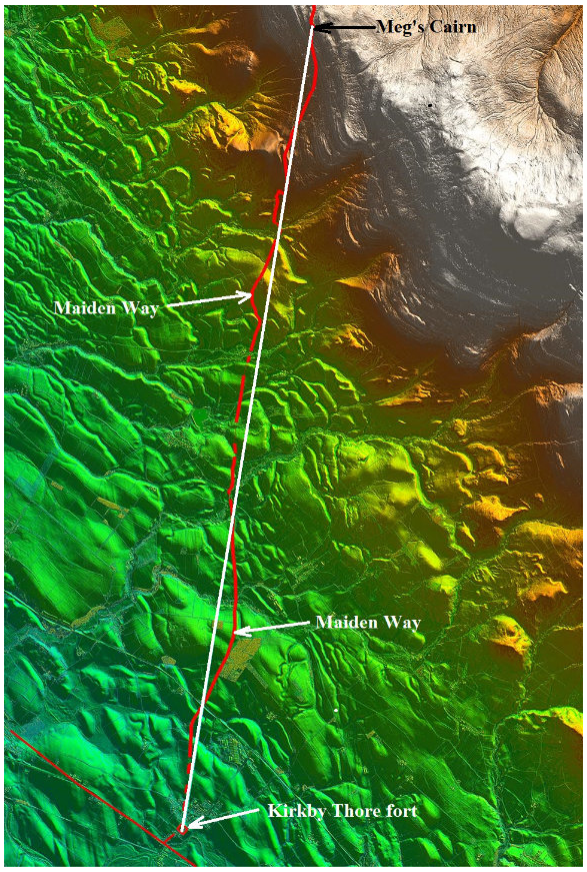
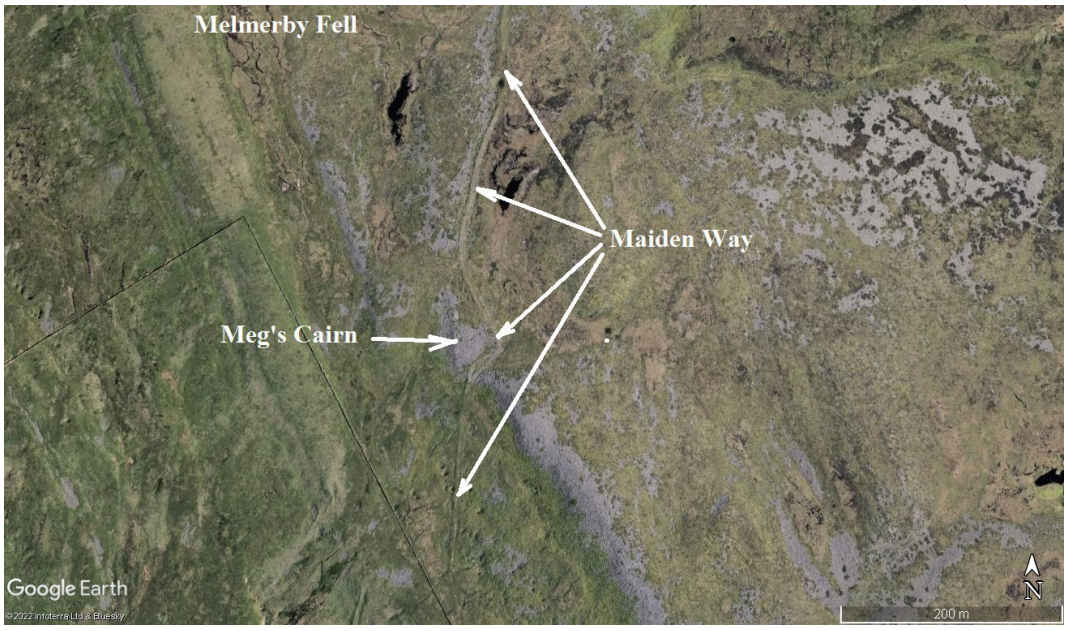


Fig. 3 (left): Lidar image showing the course of the road as it heads towards the Cairn. © David Ratledge

Fig. 4 (below): The Maiden Way aimed exactly at Meg's Cairn but then curved around it to pass below Melmerby Fell



Continued on p. 13

Meg's Cairn

Continued from p.12

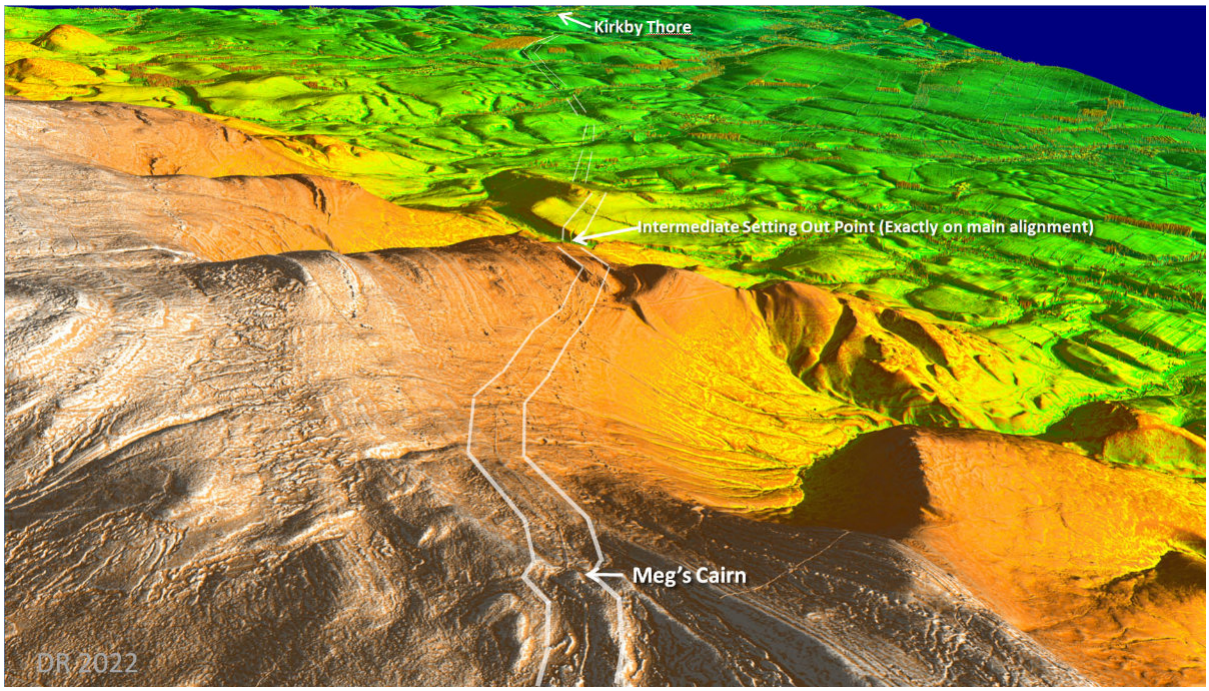


Fig. 5: Lidar view back from Meg's Cairn to Kirkby Thore fort © David Ratledge

It is possible that the Cairn had been a Bronze Age monument (or a prehistoric one anyway) and that the Romans, having come across it, had just used it. Once the Cairn and the pass had been reached it would have served no purpose for the journey northwards, its view in that direction being obscured. However, its functional relationship and value to the course of the road from Kirkby Thore suggests that it had been constructed deliberately by the Romans in order to help lay out the line of their road across this challenging landscape. At more than 2100 feet above sea level, Meg's Cairn stands well above the tree line, so that building it out of the locally outcropping limestone would have been natural.

Roman Roads in Focus

Roman Roads around Harlow, Essex - Part 1

From David Ratledge

Introduction

Harlow was an important Roman site located at a crossing of the River Stort, a tributary of the River Thames. It is most famous for its impressive Roman temple, which is probably the primary reason for the site's origin and subsequent development. This was a sacred spot before the Romans (Iron Age) and also after (Saxons). In addition to the temple there was a large settlement with both industrial and high status buildings with hypocausts and mosaics. It was to be expected therefore that Roman roads would converge on this spot and three did so. In Part 1, we will look at two of them.

The Roman Road from Hobbs Cross (RR30) to Harlow

RR 328x Distance: 8.5 miles

An obvious road and a section of which was suggested by Kemble (2009) but nothing was recorded by Margary or the OS Roman Britain Map (2016). However, thanks to the latest Lidar data we do now have the evidence for the route - well at least as far as the edge of Harlow, where the new town has taken its toll (fig. 1). The route is based on two main alignments (possibly a third for Harlow) with the major turn and setting out point on the high ground just north of Thornwood Common (TL46288 05720).

Figure 1: Lidar image showing the route of the road from its junction with RR30 to the Harlow Temple and Roman settlement. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2022. Inset: Location map. Base mapping is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

Continued on p. 15

Roman Roads around Harlow

Continued from p.14

At its southern end the road branches off the Great Dunmow to London Roman Road (RR30) at Hobbs Cross and there are initially a few minor dog-legs to negotiate a couple of valleys but beyond these then the straight alignment to Thornwood begins (fig. 2).

There are more than enough clues to confirm this first alignment although surprisingly in Epping (Lower) Forest, where you would expect the *agger* to have survived well, there is only the faintest trace in the DTM data. However, beyond Epping Forest there is a continuous string of clues establishing the first main alignment. This stretch to Thornham Common was suspected as Roman by Kemble, based on aerial photos, and we can now be certain as all the visible Lidar features line up.

The route across Latton Common is clear in Lidar imagery (fig. 3) but not so obvious on the ground. It is however, the last secure evidence heading north. The route onwards becomes uncertain due to the modern development of Harlow. The old road

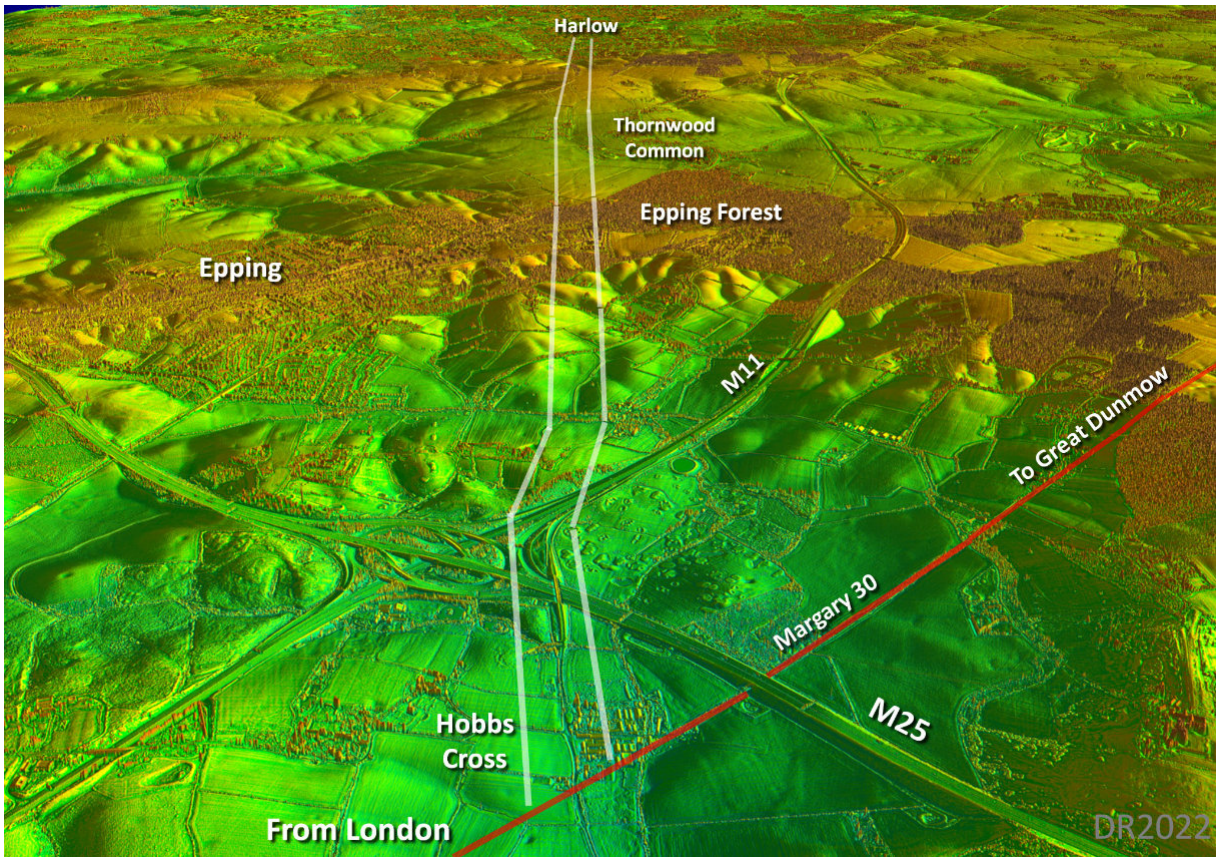


Figure 2: Oblique Lidar image looking north from Hobbs Cross towards Harlow. Once the scene of an important Roman road junction now the location of the M25 and M11 interchange but fortunately enough evidence survives to plot the course of the road. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2022.

Continued on p.16

Roman Roads around Harlow

Continued from p.15

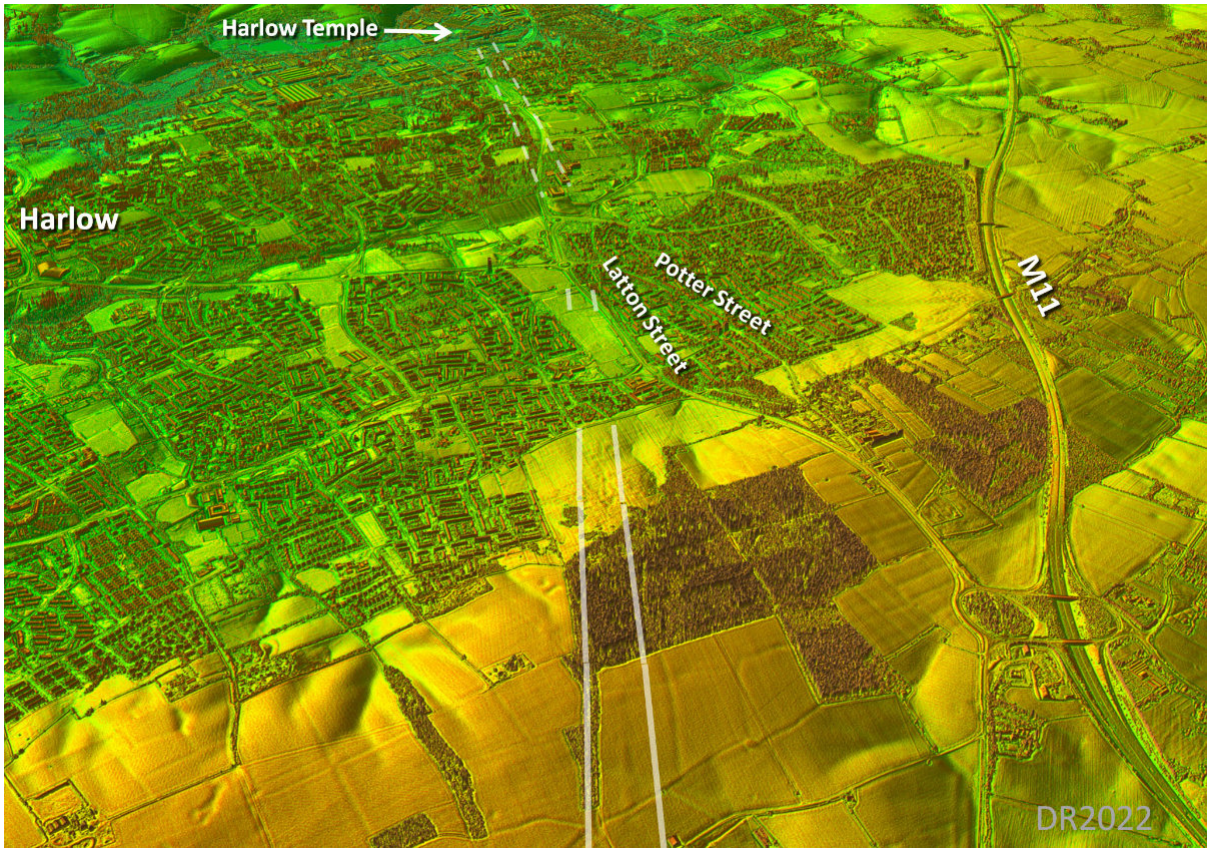


Figure 3: Oblique Lidar image looking north from above Latton Common. Across Harlow the route is somewhat speculative and that shown is best regarded as probably the most likely (see fig. 4). Base Lidar data is © Crown

through "Old" Harlow (London Road) is straight and looks very tempting as are the local names of Potter Street and Latton Street. However, all these are a bit too far east and would require quite a large dog-leg for them to connect to the last certain section on Latton Common. I therefore investigated a more direct route (fig. 4). There is some support for this in the form of old field and parish boundaries shown on Ordnance Survey first edition mapping. These would be a better match to the alignment across Latton Common and would not require a sideways dog-leg. However, without concrete evidence then it is prudent to regard the length across Harlow as still to be proven.

The Roman temple is located on top of a small hillock alongside the River Stort (fig. 5). The site today is a pleasant oasis in the middle of an industrial estate. According to the information boards on site there was first a Celtic temple dating to 200 BC with the first Roman temple arriving in 80 AD. This was rebuilt in 200 AD and destroyed c. 375-400 AD. The Roman road would have passed the temple site on its eastern side and headed on towards a crossing of the River Stort.

Continued on p.17

Roman Roads around Harlow

Continued from p.16

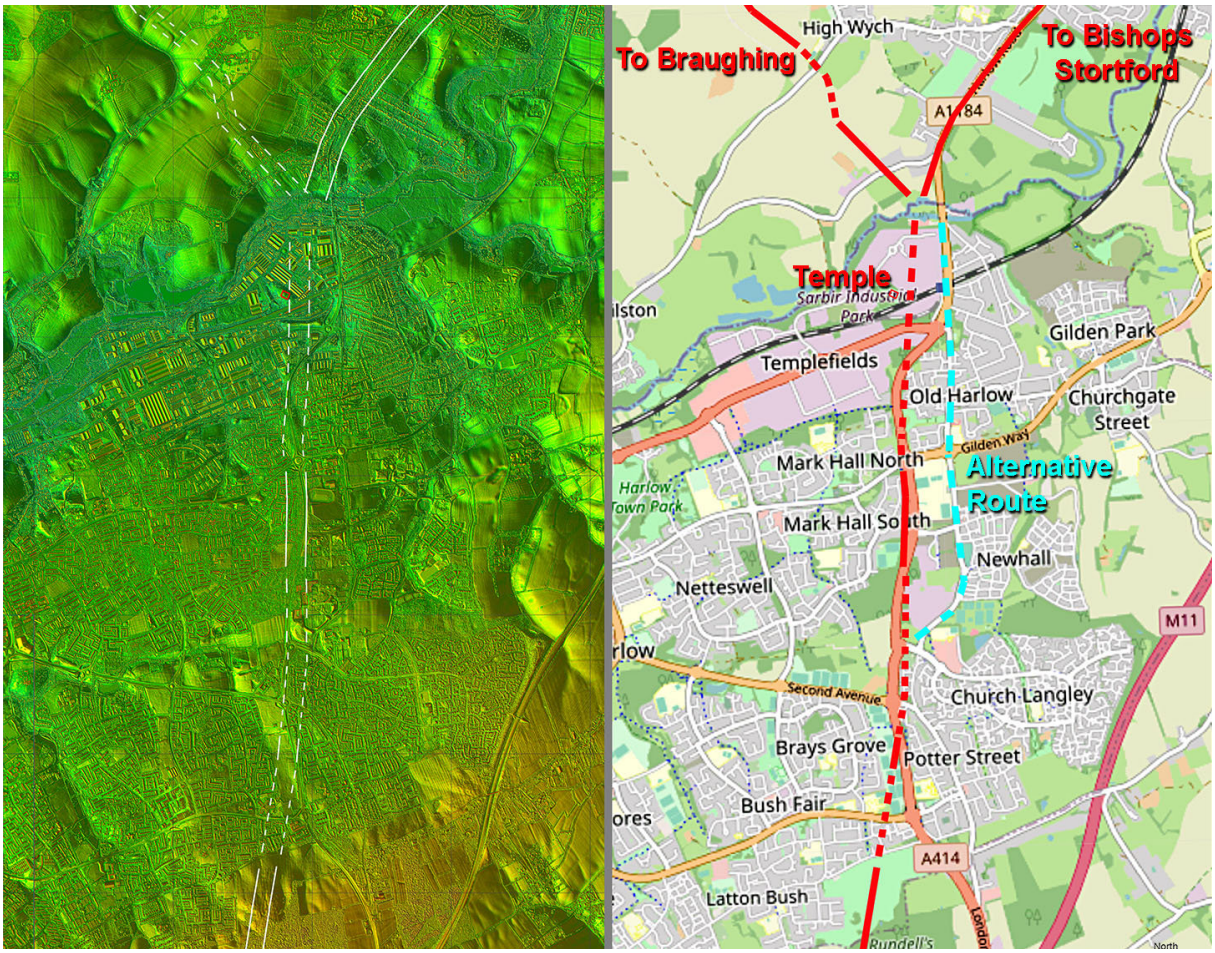


Figure 4: Lidar image and modern street map. The old roads through Old Harlow (London Road and Station Road) are an alternative course for the route (depicted in cyan) but this is perhaps a little too far west and does not align well with the certain section across Latton Common. The red route is therefore believed the more likely. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2022. Base Mapping: Openstreetmap © Contributors

The (Probable) Roman Road from Harlow to Bishop's Stortford

RR 328x Distance: 6.5 miles

A very logical Roman road and one that was most likely a continuation of the road from Hobbs Cross. However, it has to be admitted one without a great deal of real evidence. The *agger* on the north bank of the River Stort at the Harlow end plus the local name "Thorley Street" are just about the sum total. So perhaps it should be placed in the "probable" category. If it were Roman then virtually all its full length is overlaid by modern roads - the A1184/B1383 and London Road.

Continued on p.18

Roman Roads around Harlow

Continued from p.17

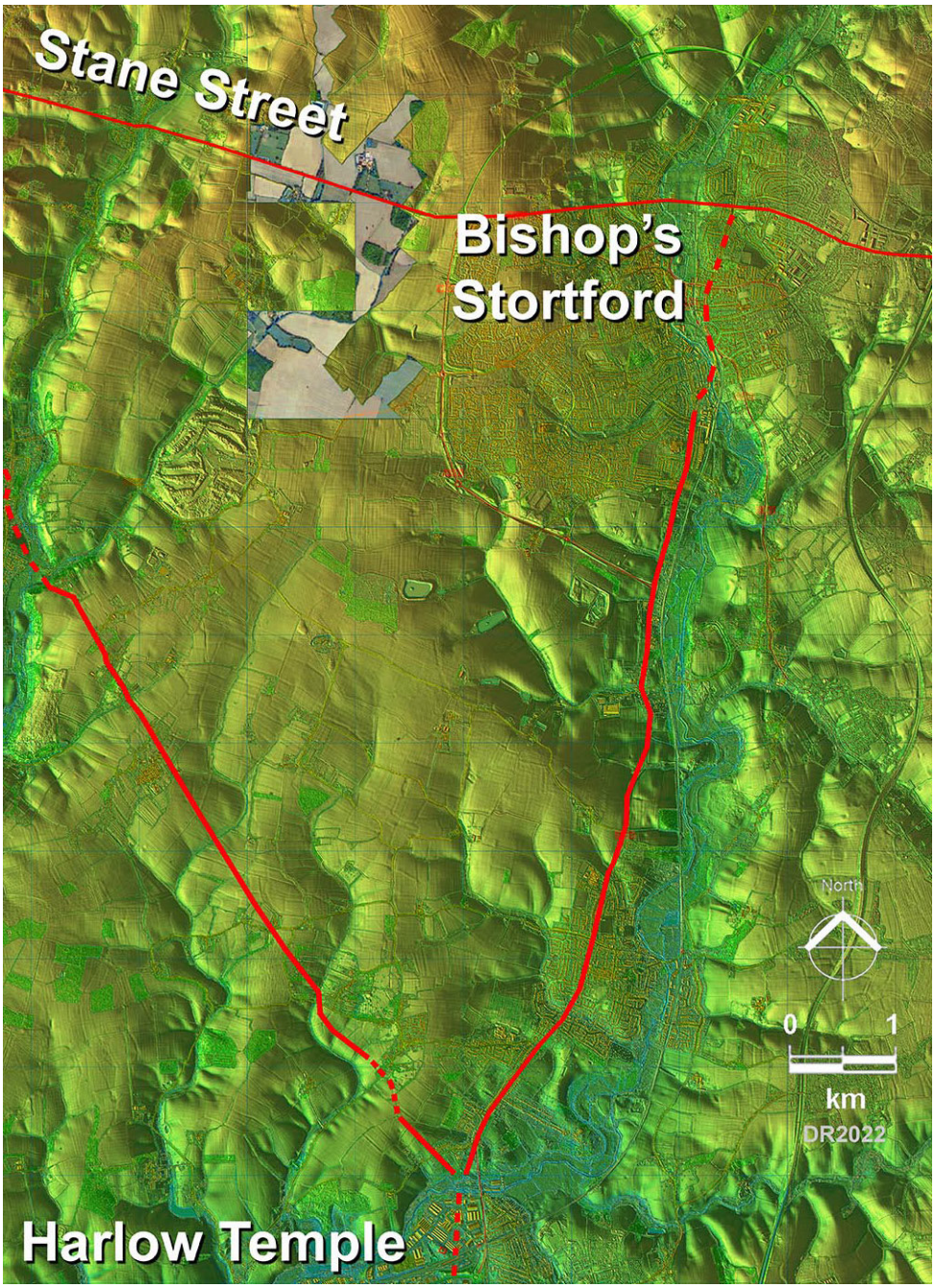


Figure 5: Lidar Image of the full route of the (probable) Roman road linking Harlow to Bishop's Stortford. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2022

Continued on p.19

Roman Roads around Harlow

Continued from p.18

Bishop's Stortford was a small Roman settlement on Stane Street (the Essex one). The known area is located to the east of where Stane Street crossed the River Stort. During the 1950s, rebuilding uncovered remains of Romano-British houses having gravel floors and timber-slots, with associated livestock ditches and storage pits. Large quantities of pottery recovered ranged from the mid-first to fourth centuries. Recently, rescue excavations by Oxford Archaeology at Grange Paddocks leisure centre (2022) found the Stane Street road, a possible temple, coins, and pottery plus burials. A connection between Bishop's Stortford and Harlow was therefore very much to be expected.

Figure 6: Oblique Lidar image from above the Roman Temple site looking north. There is the indication of an agger on the north side of the River Stort supporting a Roman road heading to Bishop's Stortford. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2022

Just about the only visible evidence for a Roman road to Bishop's Stortford is on the north bank of the River Stort. The fact that the road from Braughing (Part 2 - forthcoming) seems to have joined it for a shared crossing of the River Stort is additional support for this interpretation. It was to be expected that these two roads would have shared a common bridge. However, the river has been much altered in modern times having been made navigable and Harlow Lock constructed. So the actual Roman crossing point is almost certainly lost but it would obviously have been where the roads intersect.

The route to Bishop's Stortford (fig. 7), assuming it is marked by the A1184 and B1383, is reasonably direct. The road passes through Thorley Street, Bishop's Stortford, where the modern road becomes London Road. This area has many listed buildings signifying its undoubted age so the assumption that it marks the Roman line does have some credence.

Beyond Thorley Street the road crosses to the east side of the River Stort and is still named, at least initially, as London Road. This last section would have required a

Continued on p. 20

Roman Roads around Harlow

Continued from p.17

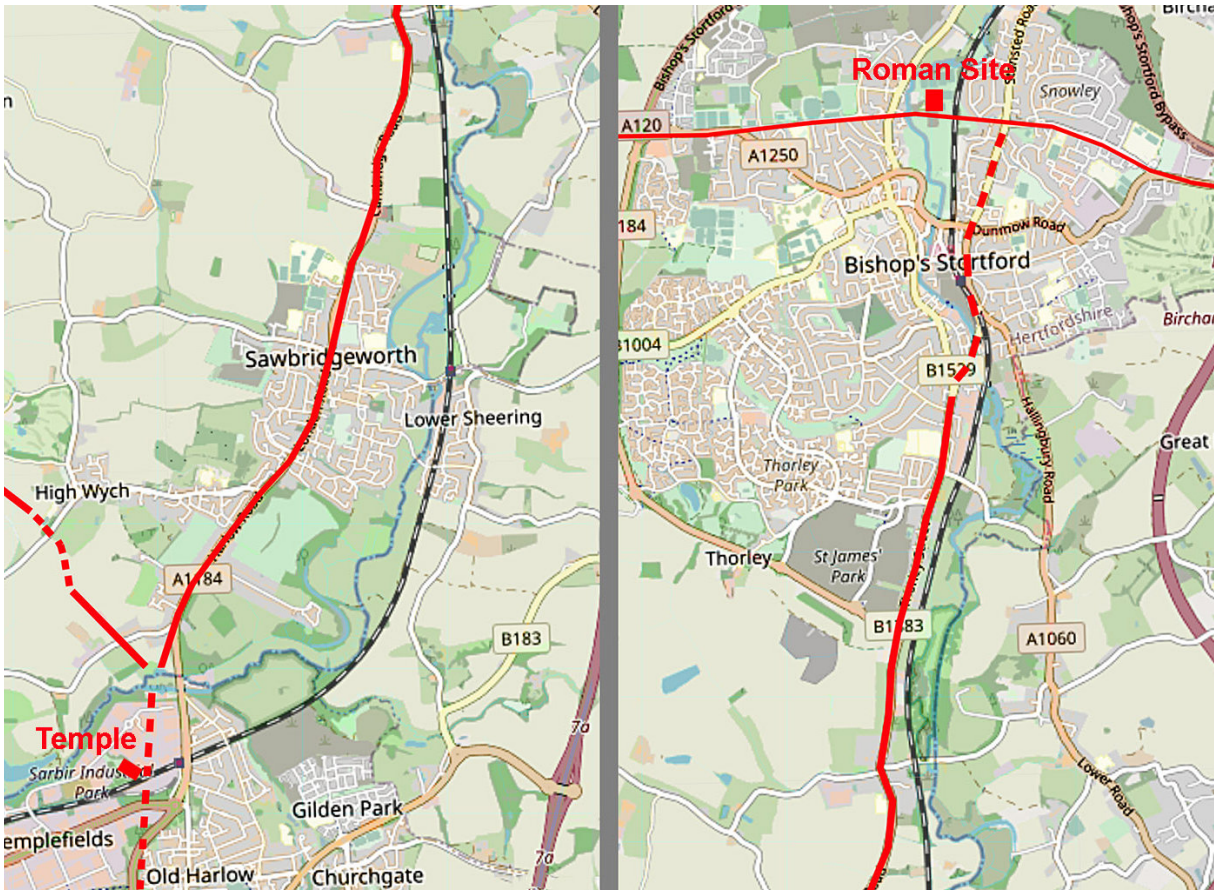


Figure 7: the assumed course of the probable Roman road between Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. Thorley Street is not marked but it is to the east (right) of Thorley Park. Base Mapping: Openstreetmap © Contributors

bridge over the River Stort whereas continuing via the west bank would have not needed another bridge as it could have used the one on Stane Street. However, the east bank option is the older main London Road and is also more directed towards the known settlement area so is perhaps the more likely.

Conclusion

We have now examined two of Harlow's three Roman roads and in part 2 we will cover the third – one that Margary had partially located and suspected its destination would be Harlow. We shall see that he was correct.

Reference: Kemble, J., *Prehistoric & Roman Essex*, (Cheltenham, 2009)

Roman Roads in Focus

Thomas Codrington, 1829 - 1918: The man who started it all

From Dave Armstrong

Through a random conversation with Mike, we somehow got onto Codrington whose book, *Roman Roads in Britain,* confusingly the same title as Margary's book (or was that a deliberate nod to his predecessor Codrington?); started off the serious and scientific study of Roman roads in *Britannia*. We discussed how we knew quite a bit about Margary, even though he seemed a most private man. See David Rudling's excellent biographical talk about IDM for a full account of his life and achievements, available on catch up from our site, here. Other than his name and the little green book that we still refer to, Margary's predecessor remains largely a mystery.

This provoked my interest. In amongst all the other things I'm on with, I put my investigator's thinking cap on and started researching. An early but admittedly unconnected discovery was that Sir John Codrington, possibly an ancestor, was Henry V's Standard Bearer at the battle of Agincourt. Wikipedia quickly came up with a short summary of Thomas's life, including authoring the book, with key birth and death dates that then quickly lead you into genealogy websites. While I can understand why folk research their family history, I've never got into it myself. Now that I've done some, I can assure you that it is completely compulsive and if you are doing your own family, it must be addictive! Each little revelation is satisfying, tempered with the usual researcher's questioning mind about how things fit together and whether the facts stack up against other information – and if not, which bit may be in error? Quickly I established Thomas and his family's basic dates and details, correcting the on-line information, more of which below. I had hoped that there would have been an obituary or two for this noted man that would have put more colour into his life adding to the basic bones of dates and places. Eventually I traced one that was well buried but unfortunately it was very brief and didn't add a lot to the story. Also, while he lived through the start of the photographic age, I have been unable to locate a photo of the man himself. This led to me tracing down his children's families trying to find a current descendant who may have and be willing to share information and photos. Unfortunately, this was not successful but does illustrate the extent you can go to when you are really in the saddle on a mission! On the plus side, Codrington is not a common surname cutting down the possible connections and matches that help simplify the research.

So, what of the man and his life?

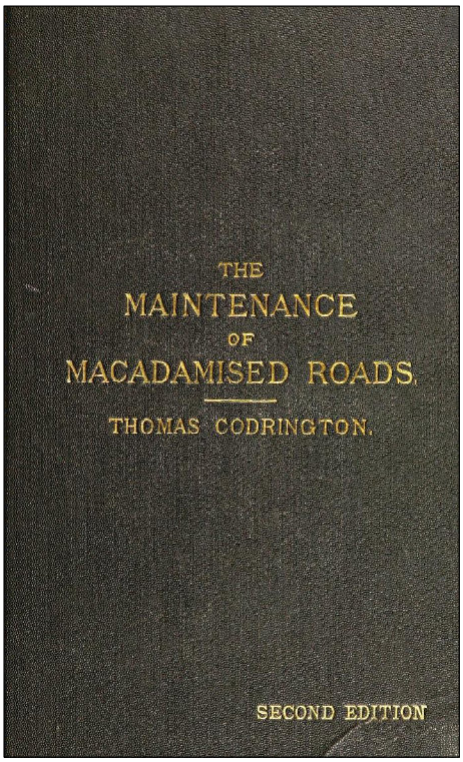
Continued on p. 22

Thos. Codrington

Continued from p.21

Born in 1829, he was the eldest of six sons (with no recorded sisters), of Thomas Stretton Codrington and Elizabeth Jemima White. His father was the youngest son of a branch of the Codrington family of Wroughton, Wiltshire who perhaps as the youngest followed the tradition of becoming a cleric in the Church of England. Our Thomas was born in Wroughton but brought up in his father's parish of Clifton, in Bristol. This was prior to the opening of Clifton suspension bridge (1864) and seeing the early and dramatic construction underway may have promoted his interest in civil engineering. He was educated, alongside many other boys (according to the census), at Eagle House School in Hammersmith, London – which conjures up images of schooling as depicted in a Dickens' novel - and then on to the College for Civil Engineers in Putney, London where he presumably learnt his trade.

While a young man, after his father's death, he described himself in the census as a landed proprietor but subsequent entries were consistently as a civil engineer. Interestingly he was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society of London before he achieved Professional Chartered Engineer status with the Institute of Civil Engineers perhaps indicating his own interest and hobby for which he wrote a few papers for the Society. Marrying Elizabeth Emily Maurice of Marlborough in St. Peter's church in 1861 he lived in the High Street of the nearby village of Pewsey through the early 1860s with his wife and growing family before moving to Iffley in Oxfordshire and then Notting Hill, London probably relocating to follow his work as a civil engineer. He eventually settled in Richmond through the rump of his life and then a short move to Twickenham.



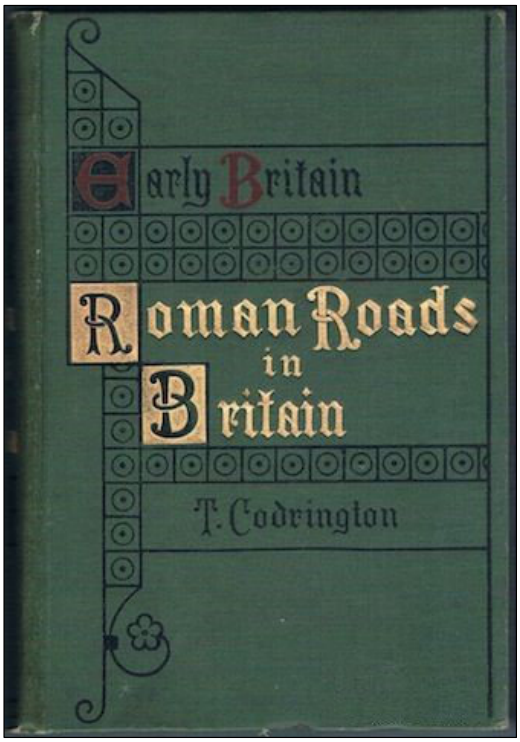
The not so well known but splendidly geeky and informative Maintenance of MacAdamised Roads *was clearly popular enough to run to a second edition.*

His early career is not obvious to us now but clearly from his later trajectory was related to the building, structure and maintenance of roads that in the pre-asphalt era were wholly constructed from stone in a traditional manner. In 1874 he attained the position of General Superintendent for County Roads in South Wales; later in addition undertaking the supervision of the main roads in Herefordshire. From there, in 1884 he became an Engineering Inspector under the Local Government Board. From newspaper accounts around England and Wales he was quoted to be an 'Eminent authority on road-making' and his role inferred from the summaries was to sit and adjudicate as the

Continued on p. 23

Thos. Codrington

Continued from p.22



The far more relevant, to us, 1903 publication.

commissioner from the Local Government Board at Inquiries for the granting of a loan. Seemingly this was to endorse that a proposed road scheme was soundly based and that the loaned funding would be well invested in the construction of the road. Around this time (1879), when at the peak of his career and drawing from his knowledge and experience, he published the little-known book *The Maintenance of MacAdamised Roads*. The bulk of this book compares costings of the time and materials for various maintenance and construction activities, but the opening part was the most interesting to me where he describes MacAdam and Telford's techniques for constructing roads and how they were made up and should be maintained. Illustrations would have greatly helped me understand this but being from the horse-drawn, stone road era by a recognised expert in the subject it gives a very insightful appreciation when applied to Roman roads with their comparable structure and construction. It is, perhaps, during these journeys around the country to sit on Boards that he noticed and started recording the Roman roads, deploying his knowledge and experience to analyse how the Romans had constructed them. He also wrote the 'Roads section for the Encyclopaedia Britannica 1885 edition. All this eventually led to his second, better known book, *Roman Roads in Britain* of 1903. This was the first comprehensive study and gazetteer of the roads of *Britannia*. Roman road folk lore has passed down to us that he personally visited all the roads described in the book in a pony and trap. Whether this is true or not remains to be confirmed but it does conjure up a romantic image of him trotting around the Victorian countryside. Thomas retired in 1895 but was said to be still undertaking consultancy.

Some aspects of Thomas's family life can be inferred from the genealogy information. Consistently through the censuses the family home had the very middle-class support of three or four servants. Thomas and Elizabeth Emily had nine children, six sons and three daughters, but we can imagine some personal grief with his wife through two infant mortalities and the fact that he outlived all but one of his sons.

He seems to have been one of a very successful family, his brothers having successful careers in their own right. Oliver was a military and subsequently private doctor, who

Continued on p. 24

Thos. Codrington

Continued from p.23

w

was also a respected authority on Indian numismatics, Robert Henry as a cleric and missionary in the South Pacific and (Sir) William a Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy.

Thomas's own four sons followed similarly successful careers perhaps most notably (Sir) Robert Edward who was the Administrator, a colonial Civil Servant, in Northern Rhodesia (now part of Zambia). Said to have been personally appointed by Cecil Rhodes (perhaps not something you'd want to have on your CV these days) he will have known the early exploration and colonisation of central Africa and the characters involved.

George Geoffrey pursued a successful career in the Royal Navy starting at the bottom as a naval cadet but eventually retiring as a Commander. An interesting episode from his career was being court martialled for "*accidentally punctur[ed] a seaman's leg with his sword*," which was deemed "*unofficerlike conduct*." It is not recorded what actually happened and why the sword was unsheathed. A few years later he was a in a bigger pickle:

> Captaining the destroyer HMS Sparrowhawk patrolling the mouth of the Yangtze with HMS Whiting and Janus, Codrington led the trio to an anchorage at the northern end of Raffles Island and struck an object at 3.08pm, initiating flooding in his forward stokehold, which was evacuated and sealed as she settled on the obstruction, stabilized by anchors. As the high tide approached, Sparrowhawk's fore guns were unshipped and moved aft and the contents of her forward magazines passed to her consorts. Though this allowed her to be floated free at 11pm and the battleship Glory arrived and came alongside with pumps, the water advanced and the destroyer was lost at 7am the next day, sinking by the head. Codrington was not blamed for the loss, as the danger which had befallen his command was found to be uncharted and no due caution was left unexercised.

Nonetheless, we can imagine that he must have been very worried about what had happened and the implications for his career.

William James was a successful military doctor. After qualifying at Durham University he was subsequently a Naval doctor with a series of on-board deployments with the Royal Navy.

Oliver Thomas's early career was as a London merchant and international banker. At some point he joined the diplomatic service travelling around the Middle East, then part of the Ottoman Empire and Africa, dying in Beirut in 1906.

Only George Geoffrey survived Thomas's 1918 death, Oliver Thomas having passed on in 1906, Sir Edward in 1908 and William James in 1915. These latter three were all

Continued on p.25

Thos. Codrington

Continued from p.24

apparently unmarried and childless, George Geoffrey dying himself in 1946 after coping with the death of his own son in a submarine in 1940,

Thomas's three daughters had longer and perhaps more productive lives. Emily Marianne married a Scottish doctor Alexander Frazer and had a family of her own in Nottinghamshire.

Louisa Mary lived her life as a spinster and accompanied her mother after Thomas's death, with uncle Oliver the doctor numismatist, from the family home at 8 Riverdale Road Twickenham to 10 Ailsa Road also in Twickenham.

Mary Agnes married (Sir) Richard Jeffery Allmond Goode who was also an administrator from Rhodesia coming himself from a family of Colonial Judges. I do wonder if this match grew from an introduction given by Mary Agnes's brother Robert Edward to one of his colleagues. Of their three sons, (Sir) William Allmond Codrington Goode was a prisoner of war on the infamous Burma railway surviving that to become the last British governor of Singapore. (Brigadier) George Henry Wallace Goode was a much-decorated soldier married into a titled family.

Thomas died at home, 8 Riverdale Road, in his 89th year from unspecified ailments. His will left an appreciable sum to his widow Elizabeth Emily, his surviving son George Geoffrey, his daughter Louisa Mary and his brother Oliver. Another beneficiary in his will, his son William James had pre-deceased him. While Thomas's death was registered in the Brentford district, the location of his grave is as yet unlocated.

I wonder how Thomas gained an interest in Roman roads, was it an extension of his professional expertise or, like many of us, did he see something that caught his imagination in his early years? His book *Roman Roads of Britain* went to at least three editions, the last being in 1919 just after his death. There don't seem to be any obvious differences between these editions that I can detect. Scanned copies are available on-line here (1903) and here (1919) with a pdf version here (1903) but you can't beat a tactile copy of the book especially if the large map is still present in the wallet inside the back cover. Modern reprints are available from the usual on-line book source but original copies are still modestly priced.

Other News

The AGM: a Summary *from Dave Armstrong*

Thank you to those who attended the RRRA AGM. We know from our own past experiences that AGMs aren't gripping entertainment so thank you for those who turned out and saw it through.

A formal set of minutes have been drafted but this more informal report is to update you, the members, of what was discussed and agreed, some of which affects us all.

It is pleasing to be able to tell you that in addition to re-electing the names that you are already familiar with we have had members step forward to take on some aspects of the Associations business.

Trustee and Chair: Mike Haken

Trustee and Treasurer: Albert Hills

Trustee and *Itinera* Editor: Rob Entwistle

Secretary: Dave Armstrong

Membership Secretary: Peter Webb

Social Media Co-ordinator and Newsletter Editor: Hannah Collingridge

Talks Coordinator and Training Officer: Lesley Fraser

PR Officer: Richard Judd

Liaison Officer: Penny Jackson

Margary Road Number Listing Officer: Mike Holmes

The AGM heard that the Association has grown from a handful in 2015 to around 450 members currently. We have a mix of lay and professional commercial / academic individuals based across *Britannia* but with some international members too. It was pleasing to hear that we also have some younger members which bodes well for the future. This expansion necessitates a change in the way the Association is managed, and the larger group of those undertaking roles will help spread the work around more shoulders.

Financially we seem well placed holding a healthy balance, predominantly from a very generous donation. But with our two major sources of income, membership subscriptions and *Itinera* sales, not quite offsetting our expenses over the past two years, our funds are being gradually diminished. There has been a strong message from members that they like and appreciate what the Association is doing and the way it is going but to expand and press on with our objectives we may need to engage more professional help for some aspects and that incurs expenditure. After much discussion we decided to make a modest increase to the membership subscriptions that have not changed since inception. Single membership will rise from £14 to £16pa commencing

Other News

from the beginning of January with the other rates increased pro-rata. It was also discussed that members could make an optional additional donation topping this up to £25 if they wished. The new membership secretary will liaise with you on what that means if you have an automatic Paypal renewal in place or a standing order.

It would help our income if we sold more copies of *Itinera* to match the printing costs; there are still copies of Volume 2 available if you are seeking a very bespoke Christmas present!

The nature of membership benefits was discussed, and it was decided to rationalise the embargo on free access of our newsletters and *Itinera* to a uniform one year. On a similar basis we decided to retain our open access to the monthly talks rather than making some members only events. It is hoped that by having open access that we encourage interested individuals to join us, make a subscription and retain them in future years.

What the Association does and how it progresses those plans - our strategic objectives - were discussed. While the overall trajectory is essentially unchanged, what that means, what needs to be done and achieved needs further refinement. On a detail front it is intended to dispel the perception that some have expressed that the Association has a northern bias or centre of gravity, this being a function of the locations and interests of the originators and current active members. It is hoped that we can identify more sites across the country to deploy the geophysics gear if local members can gain site access permission and are willing to be trained to undertake the surveys. In our own research we have all occasionally been frustrated by fieldwork that has been done but not written up or reported. To avoid falling into the same negative spiral and retain our good reputation the Association needs to catch up on reporting work already completed. To assist those who are already working on this we may need to engage some professional expertise.

The Chair, Mike Haken, will be discussing these aspects further with the other two Trustees and is to set up a working group to engage with, and receive help and advice from, the wider membership. Watch this space.Thank you to those who took part in the AGM and particularly those who are taking on a role.

From the Editor: Thanks, Dave, for the update. As mentioned, formal minutes will be issued when signed off. More practically it means some of the contacts have changed if you are supplying or seeking particular information:

News, snippets, things for the newsletter, juicy gossip goes to Hannah Collingridge: mountainposture@gmail.com;

Information about the Margary Register goes to Mike Holmes who will be writing us a piece about how the Register functions and how we can all contribute for a future newsletter: southoverstores@gmail.com

Other News

Paul Bidwell, OBE, FSA 1949 – 2022 *from Dave Armstrong*

Paul Bidwell's name was synonymous with multiple facets of Roman archaeology; in the south-west of England, Hadrian's Wall, Roman pottery, Roman forts and the Roman army to list but a few and it is hard to come to terms with him not continuing his work any further. He was a member and strong supporter of this Association and was a member of the Advisory Panel of our journal, *Itinera*.

After being brought up on the south coast of England, he only came to archaeology after graduating with a Law degree from Exeter University in 1971. He remained there to complete a masters in archaeology whilst working for the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit with excavations on the Exeter legionary fortress. Moving to the north-east of England in 1980, he took up a position with the Tyne & Wear Museums Service (now the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Service) in 1983, at the Roman site at South Shields (*Arbeia*), at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall. He was to remain based there for 30 years, becoming Senior Manager of museums in both South and North Tyneside, and establishing the commercial contracting unit Tyne & Wear Museums Archaeology.

After excavating 200m of Hadrian's Wall in advance of the A1 Newcastle bypass in the late 1980s, he championed the Wall within the Tyneside conurbation. In particular, he saw the huge potential of the neglected and ignored archaeology of the Roman forts, realising how, with the right approach, they could again play a part in the lives of local people. He believed in making the Roman heritage of Tyneside relevant and interesting to all, and was a strong advocate of the reconstruction of various Roman structures and buildings, sometimes in situ with the difficulties that brought. Reconstructed buildings at South Shields and Wallsend along with a length of Wall at Wallsend are testament to the success of the strategy. He was a pioneer of what we now term community archaeology, with his hugely successful and socially inclusive excavations and research programmes across Tyneside, particularly at Wallsend and South Shields, frequently helping develop the experience of others and helping them along an archaeological career path. All these achievements were recognised with the award of an OBE in the New Years Honours list of 2012.

Perhaps the work that he will be most associated with in our area of study, are the 1980s excavations on the east and west abutments of Chesters bridge working with Neil Holbrook, prompted by erosion by the River Tyne, along with the similar Wall bridge structure at Willowford, near Birdoswald in Cumbria. The Chesters bridge excavation established him as a leading authority on Roman bridges which also led onto similar recording and stabilisation of the southern abutment of the Corbridge Roman road bridge.

The quality and scale of his published work is quite outstanding, with archaeological monographs on work at Exeter (*Isca*), Wallsend (*Segedunum*), Newcastle (*Pons Aelius*) and South Shields (*Arbeia*), Hardknott, *Vindolanda,* and on pottery

Continued on p.29

Other News

Continued from p.28

assemblages from Colchester. He also published numerous shorter papers, along with more accessible books such as *Roman Exeter*, *Roman Forts in Britain*, and of course *The Roman Army in Northern England* (with Nick Hodgson).

Paul's career with T&WAMS ended when he retired as Head of Archaeology in 2013 although he continued his work independently, with, as you might expect, copious publication. Recent projects have included reports on Roman pottery from Exeter, sites in Devon, Scotland and on Hadrian's Wall (with Alex Croom); a study of the archaeology of Roman towns in the Midlands and North since 1990; a reassessment of the Cathedral Close excavations at Exeter (the legionary baths and the later Roman and Anglo-Saxon phases); and a report on the Anglo-Saxon settlements at Shotton, Northumberland (with Jonathan McKelvey and Warren Muncaster). He recently led on work deciphering the various Roman structural repairs and rebuilds of the Wall to the west of Wallsend fort, including the discovery of *cippi* (man trap pits) in front of the Wall.

Frontier studies also drew on Paul's knowledge and energies. He was a regular contributor to conferences and edited the 10 year summary of work prior to the 1999 Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage and with Nick Hodgson and Judith Schachtmann he edited the Proceedings from the 21st Limes Conference in 2009. He was also one of those who established the Arbeia Society, becoming their President overseeing their annual

Continued on p.30

Other News

Continued from p.29

conference in South Shields and the publication of their journal. He was also on the Editorial Board of Britannia

Paul was a private, modest and quietly spoken individual who would willingly and unquestioningly pass on his extensive knowledge and experience to those who asked. He was a strong supporter of RRRA and before his untimely demise was due to speak at one of our monthly talks on his recent review of Hadrian's Wall bridges. A measure of this modesty is the relative brevity of this account which is largely based on published works. He rarely used titles nor the letters after his name, and and the fact that he was awarded an OBE in 2012 for Services to Heritage was not widely known.

In recognition of his significant contribution, a festschrift; *Roman Frontier Archaeology – in Britain and Beyond: Papers in Honour of Paul Bidwell* has been published by Archaeopress, edited by Nick Hodgson and Bill Griffiths, with 27 articles by leading authorities; available in hard copy or as free ebook here. This was scheduled to be presented to him at this year's Arbeia Conference, which was sadly cancelled due to his sudden illness although a copy was presented to him by his friends and colleagues in hospital. The postscript to a summary of the book at Ancient World Online is very apt:

> What was conceived as a gesture to honour Paul has become, in effect, a monument to one of the most respected Roman archaeologists of his generation, and a testament to the wide range of his archaeological interests and achievements.

After a short and sudden illness Paul died on 7th November 2022. He will be sadly missed, not only by those who knew him personally but also by everyone who consults his significant published contribution to archaeology and Roman studies in particular.

Talks and Presentations for Winter Nights

Frankly it's the season now for inside research rather than field work and should you need distraction or diversification, here are some ideas for your delectation.

Our own series of talks continues and you can find the full listing on the site here - Dave Armstrong will no doubt ping reminders about bookings as they become available. I think this was one of the jobs he didn't manage to shunt onto someone else at the AGM. Talks remain free and open to all so feel free to spread the word to your friends while gently encouraging them to become members as well. Similarly, tell them about the newsletter and point out what good value membership of RRRA really is in these hard times. You can also catch up on the previous talks on our YouTube channel.

Other News

Bedale Archaeology & History Society

Last issue we mentioned a talk by Martin Henig. If you missed it it's supposed to be here but doesn't seem to have been posted yet. However, I'll leave the link in as there may well be other stuff to pique your interest. Get sidetracked - it's what the internet is for.

Thornton-le-Street History Group Webinars

The autumn/winter Webinar series is now available for booking through Eventbrite - the talk on 19 January 2023, which may be of particular interest to RRRA members, is entitled:

The Roman conquest of central Britain and the nature of the main roads

This lecture will explore how the Roman military utilised roads during the conquest of northern Britain. It will be suggested, following recent discussions of Dere Street and Roman roads in the south, that these campaigning routes usually followed pre-existing (Iron Age) lines of communication, formalising these as the campaigns of conquest progressed. Particular attention will be given to the Stanegate, which pre-dates Hadrian's Wall. It is usually argued that this road line was established during late first century AD, although the previous studies have underestimated the density of Iron Age occupation and activity in the landscapes of central Britain. It will be argued that these ideas need to be reevaluated as we develop a more fully informed interpretation of how the Roman military reacted to the local populations across central Britain. For a preview of this topic, you can look at the author's recently published book: *Conquering the Ocean: The Roman invasion of Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2022)

Richard Hingley is Professor of Roman Archaeology at Durham University and the author of several books, including *Londinium: A Biography* (2018); *Boudica: Iron Age Warrior Queen* (with Christina Unwin, 2005); *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (2012) and *Conquering the Ocean: The Roman Invasion of Britain* (2022). His research focuses upon Roman imperialism and Roman landscapes.

Tickets are free but the society welcomes donations.

Random Things from the Internet

Finally a few internet links to Roman news which you may or may not have seen. As ever, thanks to RRRA's own search engine, David Brear.

The potential Roman ford near Evesham which I'm sure most of us got quite giddy about.

Wakefield suddenly becomes more exciting.

And if you go out drinking in Cambridge have you been to this pub?