

# ROMAN·ROADS·RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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No. 6

## NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2017

Wishing all our members a

**Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year**

### In this edition.....

#### Two New Observations on Margary 300 2

In the light of new discoveries, John Peterson revisits a paper he delivered to our Ivan D. Margary Memorial Conference in Portsmouth last year.

#### The Life of Ivan D Margary 5

David Rudling gives a short tribute to this officer, gentleman, scholar and philanthropist, a man whose importance to Roman roads research cannot be over-stated, but whose other contributions to archaeology and heritage conservation are seldom fully recognised.

#### Epiacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge) 8

In mid 2016, the late Hugh Toller began to write an article summarising his research on this elusive road in Northumberland - he never completed it. Mike Haken has continued Hugh's work, and finished the article.

### News - A review of Cumbria's Roman roads

For the last three years, David Ratledge has been working extensively with LiDAR to make a review of the Roman roads in Cumbria, completing work begun by the late Hugh Toller. David's work makes many changes to conventional understanding of the road network in Cumbria and we are proud to announce that you can view his work online at <http://www.romanroads.org/gazetteer/cumbria/cumbriapages.html>

David's work on both Lancashire and Cumbria will be incorporated into a standard RRRR gazetteer format during the first half of 2018, to match the completed Yorkshire section which will be released (to members only at first) at New Year.

MILLE·VIAE·DUCUNT·HOMINES·PER·SECU·LA·ROMAM

# Two New Observations on Margary 300

John Peterson      j.peterson@uea.ac.uk

On the RRRA web site at [http://www.romanroads.org/portsmouth\\_papers.html](http://www.romanroads.org/portsmouth_papers.html) there is a link under my name to a presentation, given at the 2016 RRRA Portsmouth conference, describing how a hypothetical land survey guided the search for Margary 300 in northern Essex, between Radwinter and Great Chesterford.

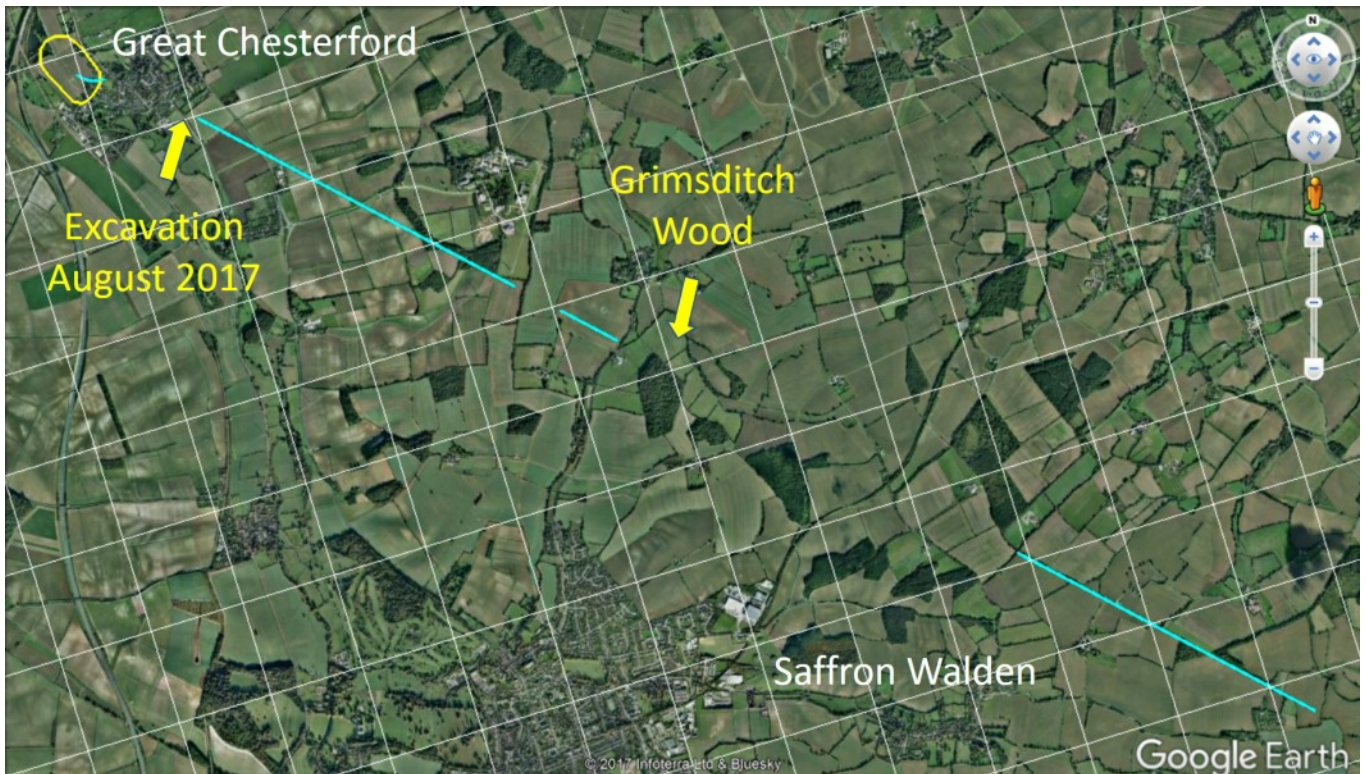


Fig. 1

Apart from a small curved section in the Roman town, all possible traces of the road seen by me (mostly hedgerows and crop/soil marks) support a model in which the road is 12m (40 feet) wide and the ditch on its southern side passes through opposite corners of the survey grid squares. Figure 1 shows this, and also the position of two new observations, in Grimsditch Wood and on the outskirts of modern Great Chesterford.

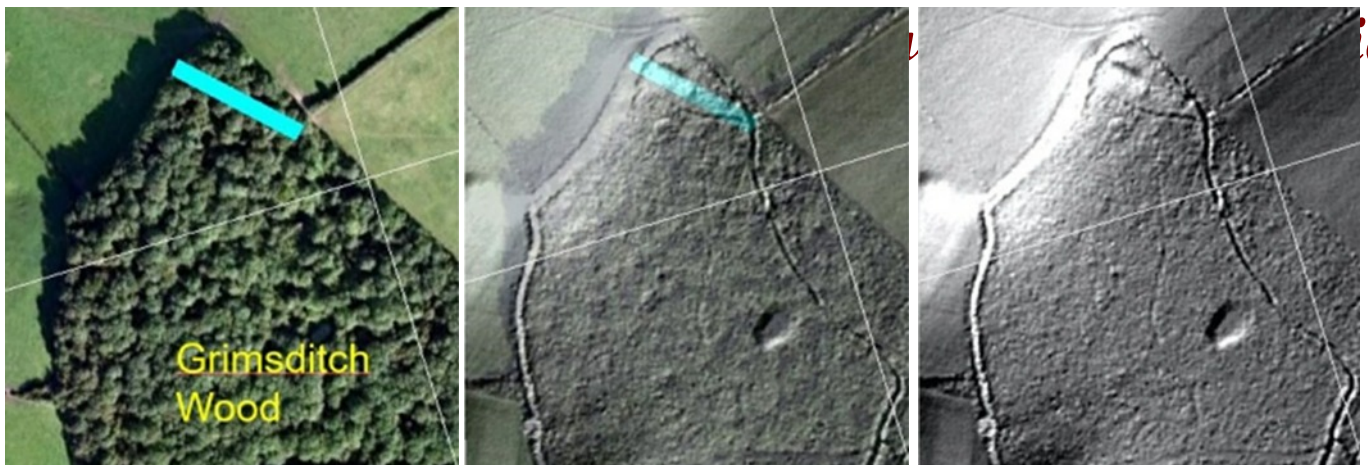


Fig. 2

Grimsditch Wood is one of very few areas of woodland that the road probably intersects. Of these it is the only one for which Environment Agency lidar data are available, so it is fortunate that these data suggest that there may be a feature related to the road within the wood. Figure 2 shows, from left to right, a

## Two New Observations on Margary 300 cont.....

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sequence of aerial views of the wood, in which the Google Earth image is replaced by hill-shaded lidar in the same position. The first two images include a blue rectangle indicating the position of the relevant portion of the road model.

A substantial linear depression can be seen in the lidar image; according to the model it lies on the northern flank of the road. Since the wood contains no other comparable feature it is arguable that this is the ditch from which the wood got the epithet 'Grim's Ditch'. This name, of which there are several examples, is normally taken to indicate, by the attribution to Woden, the antiquity of the feature in Anglo-Saxon eyes. For these ditches a prehistoric origin is now often ascribed or proved, but this possible ditch, alongside a Roman road, could be Roman or even later. Personally, I suspect that it may be Roman, and hence comparable to the 'enormous' earthworks in Dacia described by the Roman surveyor Balbus, or to the 'huge' flanking ditches of Margary 710 at Shephill Farm, Sheffield (RRRA Newsletter No. 2, Autumn 2016). In order to test this idea, excavation is needed.

The other new observation is indeed the result of excavation. A recently published Essex HER Summary Sheet (NGR: TL 5127 4278; Site Code: GC62, September 2017) states that excavation in August 2017 revealed a pair of roadside ditches on a west-north-west to east-south-east alignment, with a small Early Roman cremation cemetery beside the southern ditch.

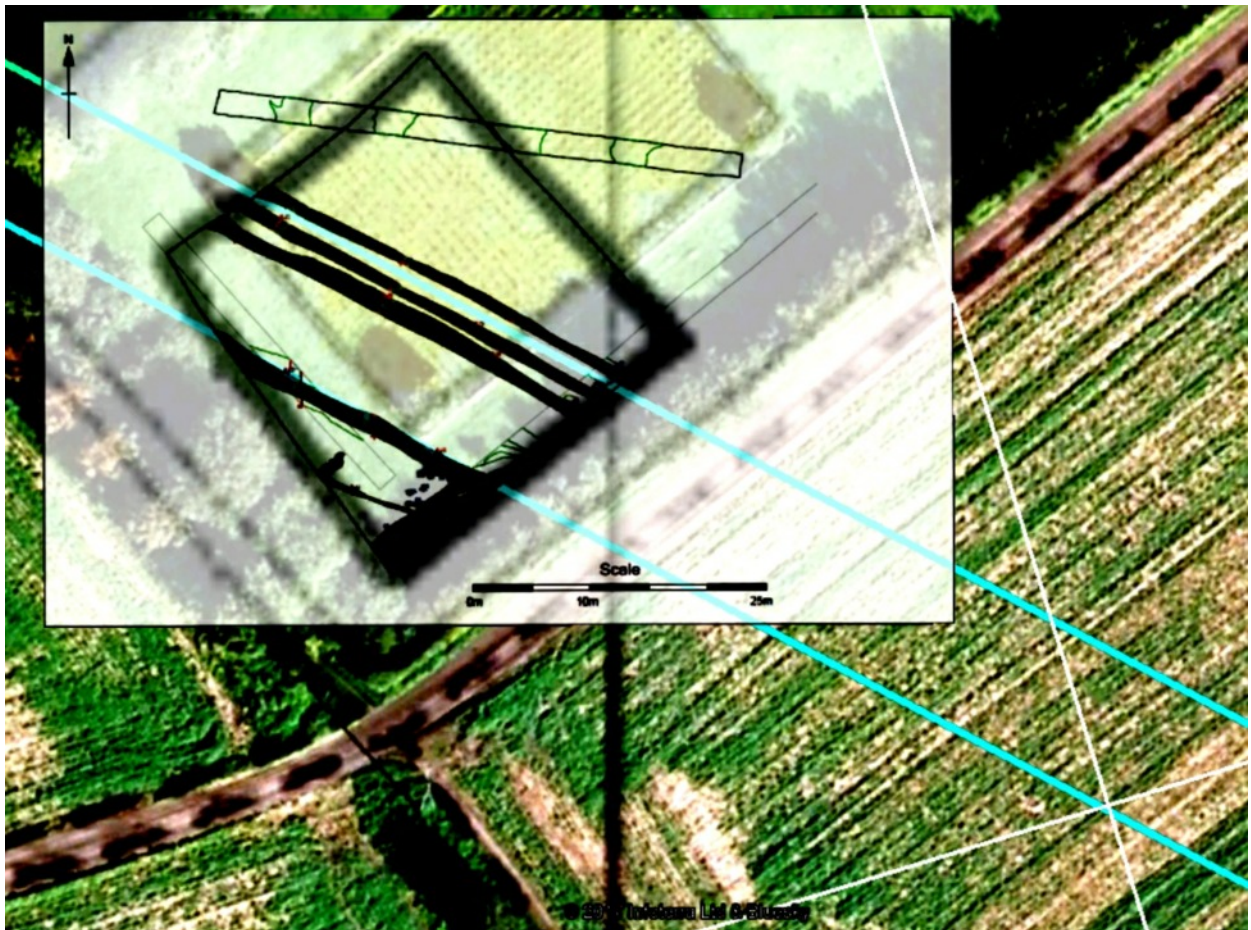


Fig. 2

Google Earth allows the semi-transparent site plan and a similar fragment of the location plan to be overlaid, while still displaying the modelled paths for the Roman survey grid axes and road boundaries, resulting in Figure 3. The southern blue path, through grid intersections, is an adequate model for the



## Two New Observations on Margary 300 cont.....

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excavated southern ditch, but it is not clear which of the other three ditches the excavator saw as the northern road boundary. The full report (OA East in progress) is expected to clarify this.

It might be argued that these two new observations are only minor extensions of a known probable road line, and hence add little to our knowledge. This is not correct. At one end the previously observed traces nearest to Grimsditch Wood are ambiguous because the clearest trace is a light linear feature on the northern edge of the road, as modelled. This is probably a bank but, being only about 3m wide, it is unlikely to be a base for the road, whose position is uncertain. At the other end, near Great Chesterford, the traces seen by me, both on Google Earth and in a Bing aerial image, were not accepted for entry into the HER, and consequently the 2012 HER line differs from my model because, going towards Great Chesterford, it was made to bend slightly to the south. If projected it would not conform to a 1:1 relationship with the Roman land survey, making it out of line with the features that I observed, and with the features recently excavated. As far as the HER is concerned the position of the road ditches seen in the recent excavation is unexpected, necessitating a further revision of the road line.

Anyone interested in further investigation of this area might like to read a recent article (Peterson 2017). As well as summarising part of my RRRRA 2016 presentation, it describes the Great Chesterford extra-mural temple and its relationship to the land survey. Further investigation could lead to an explanation for the diamond shape of the temple's temenos, as possibly influenced by another Roman road related to the grid. Such investigation requires the file of grid lines for Google Earth, which I would willingly supply on request.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Maria Medlycott for the rapid provision of information from the Essex HER and Pat Moan and OA East for permission to use the plans shown (in part) in Figure 3.

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IVAN MARGARY (1896-1976)

# Ivan Donald Margary

An Officer, Gentleman, Scholar and Philanthropist

by David Rudling

At the end of last year (2016), the 40th anniversary of the death of Ivan Donald Margary was marked by the holding of two memorial conferences by the Roman Roads Research Association, at Portsmouth and York respectively. At both events I delivered a lecture about the life and work of Donald Margary, who is best known for his important contributions to the study of Roman roads in Britain. This article is based upon these lectures, the preparation for which had involved the kind help of staff and volunteers of the Sussex Archaeological Society at Fishbourne Roman Palace and Barbican House Library, Lewes (both in Sussex), especially regarding the provision of images - a difficult task as Margary seems to have been 'camera shy'. Sadly I never met the great man, but over the years I, like so many others, have benefited greatly from his work and generosity. I am writing this article as a short tribute (see also: Steer 1976; Wood 1987; Priestly 2008) and to provide examples to us all of the importance of giving, both before and after death.

I. D. Margary (known as Donald to his friends) was born in London in 1896. Both his paternal grandfather and father had careers in the army; his mother was the daughter of Donald Larnach, a very wealthy banker and financier. In 1900 Margary's family moved to Chartham Park, East Grinstead, West Sussex, where Donald was privately educated before going up to Exeter College, Oxford in 1913 to study chemistry. It was also in 1913 that Margary was elected a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society.

Margary's studies were interrupted by the First World War and in 1916 he went to France as a lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment. In 1917 Margary was seriously wounded and returned to England to recuperate. He was back in France five days after the Armistice, but only remained there a short while. In January 1919 he returned to England and subsequently resumed his studies at Oxford. One of the treasures at Barbican House Library at Lewes is the pocket diary that Margary maintained during his war time exploits in France, and also a more detailed but unpublished book (*Some experiences of the Great War whilst serving with the 7th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment in France*) that he



Ivan Donald Margary as a young man.  
Photo: © <http://www.charthampark.com>

wrote in August 1919.

After completing his degree in 1921, Margary returned to Chartham Park. Here he resumed his interest in meteorology, publishing various papers on the subject. Another of his interests was botany and in 1927 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. It was also in 1927 that Margary joined both the Sussex and Surrey Archaeological Societies and began his study of Roman roads. He had found part of a road on the family estate and later submitted a report for *Sussex Notes and Queries* (vol. 2, 133-5). Subsequently Donald went on to study all types of Roman roads, first locally in the Weald (Margary 1948 - and revised in 1949 and 1965) and finally throughout Britain (Margary 1955/7 - revised in 1967 and 1973). This research established

## Ivan Margary 1896-1976

By David Rudling

him as the national authority on Roman roads. He used a range of methodologies based on documentary sources, maps, aerial photographs and fieldwork, including excavations.

One such excavation site in 1939, a 100 yard slag metalled stretch of the 'London-Lewes Way' at Holtye, was purchased by Margary and given to the Sussex Archaeological Trust (now part of the Sussex Archaeological Society). He hoped that the section of Roman road would remain visible for the public to view, and initially his grounds staff at Chartham were used annually to weed the remains (SJC11/01). Still in use today is Margary's system of road numbering which involves single digits for main routes such as Watling Street (1), two-digits for the principal branch roads such as Stane Street (15), and three-digits for the minor branches, such as the Greensand Way (140) in Sussex.

Although Margary's contributions to archaeological research were mainly about Roman roads, he also published on other subjects, examples being his papers on 'The Mystery Mounds on Camp Hill and Stone Hill, Ashdown Forest' (*SNQ III*, 101-6), 'The Development of Turnpike Roads in Sussex' (*SNQ XIII*, 49-53), and 'Roman Centuriation at Ripe' (*Sussex Archaeological Collections* 81, 31-41). Donald's historical interests were reflected in his membership, and Presidency, of the Sussex Records Society. He was also a member of Kent Archaeological Society, and as President of the East Grinstead Society he campaigned to help safe-guard the heritage of his neighbourhood. In 1930 he gifted 15.5 acres of

land at Wych Cross to the National Trust.

Margary's other contributions to Sussex archaeology included many years of service to the Sussex Archaeological Society, firstly as a Member of Council from 1932-1964 (which included 18 years as Chairman), and then as President from 1964-1967. During this time Donald made various generous donations to the Society, including the section of Roman road at Holtye (see above), paying for the Margary Building at Anne of Cleves House, Lewes, and most generous of all, buying the site of Fishbourne Roman Palace. He also funded the excavations undertaken at Fishbourne and paid for a site cover building, thus revealing and saving for the nation one of the most important Roman buildings in Britain (Margary 1971). Understandably, Margary took



**Margary showing King Gustav of Sweden the mosaics at Fishbourne, November 1968.**

*Photo: Sussex Archaeological Society.*



**Margary viewing the museum display at Fishbourne Roman Palace.**

*Photo: Sussex Archaeological Society*

a great interest in Fishbourne for the remainder of his life. It is fitting that one of the 'artefacts' deposited at Fishbourne is his fieldwork box, and last year delegates to the Portsmouth conference had the opportunity to view it during an optional visit to the Roman Palace.

Other very important life-time acts of financial support

## Ivan Margary 1896-1976

By David Rudling

or patronage outside the South-East included paying for the restoration of the quadrangle at his Oxford college (Exeter) in 1964, being involved in 1960 in the saving of the academically respected journal *Antiquity*, and in 1943 helping to buy for the National Trust the national important sites of Windmill Hill and Avebury.

When not involved with his scholarly interests, Margary was a country gentleman, managing his estate and



**Margary receiving an award for a prize winning bull at an agricultural show, c. 1957/8.**

**Photo: source not known.**

farm; he was proud to win prizes for his herds of Sussex cattle. In 1927 his maternal uncle died and he inherited a further fortune plus Yew Lodge, the estate next to Chartham. Marrying in 1932, Dorothy Jolly, the couple made their home at Yew Lodge. Built in 1891, Yew Lodge is today mainly a private wedding/event venue, but it is still possible to visit some of the house by participating in the monthly Sunday Lunch dining option. During the Second World War Donald re-enlisted and served at the Prisoner of War Camp on Lingfield Park Racecourse.

As Donald and Dorothy had no children, Donald decided to leave most of his substantial estate (valued at £1,685,084-53p at his death) to five organisations: the Royal Geographical Society, the Society of Antiquaries of London, the Sussex Archaeological Society, and the Kent and Surrey Archaeological Societies. Other beneficiaries included individuals - both relatives and staff, local organisations such as the Felbridge Cricket and Bowling Clubs, and the Parish Church of St. John the Devine, Felbridge, together with organisations including the Royal Meteorological Society, the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, the Institute of Archaeology (London), the Royal Archaeological Institute, the British School of Archaeology at Rome, the Council for British Archaeology, the Sussex Record Society, the Sussex Historic Churches Preservation Trust, the Salva-



**Marriage to Dorothy Jolly in 1932 with a guard of honour from the local fire brigade.**

**Photo: source not known.**

tion Army and the East Sussex Association for the Blind.

Such legacies, and the various financial gifts made during his lifetime, mark out Ivan Donald Margary as an extremely generous, kind and enabling individual. All the financial help Margary gave was done discreetly; he considered it a privilege to share both his wealth and knowledge and was reluctant to accept any form of honour; he refused an OBE. British archaeology and the nation in general are very fortunate to have such a benefactor and scholar, a generous and intelligent man 'who saw needs and met them, unobtrusively' (Wood 1987, 9).

*Dr. David Rudling is Academic Director at the Sussex School of Archaeology, a trustee of the Sussex Archaeological Society and chair of CBA South East*

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## Epiacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

*Just before his premature death last year, our colleague Hugh Toller was writing an article on his research into the Roman road from Epiacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge). Regrettably, he only managed to complete a draft of the introduction, largely reproduced below. Using Hugh's notes, along with some of his own work, Mike Haken has now finished Hugh's article.*

Lidar imagery available from the Environment Agency provides information about the physical remains of Roman roads which allows archaeologists to illustrate in detail the evidence for the lines of the roads on the ground where this has not been possible previously. This imagery provides certainty about the remains of the road agger, terraces, side ditches and cuttings where they cannot be identified easily on the ground through standard fieldwork. These details can be seen both on open ground and also underneath buildings and tree cover where the lidar imagery can be adjusted to 'remove' artificial structures and woodland.

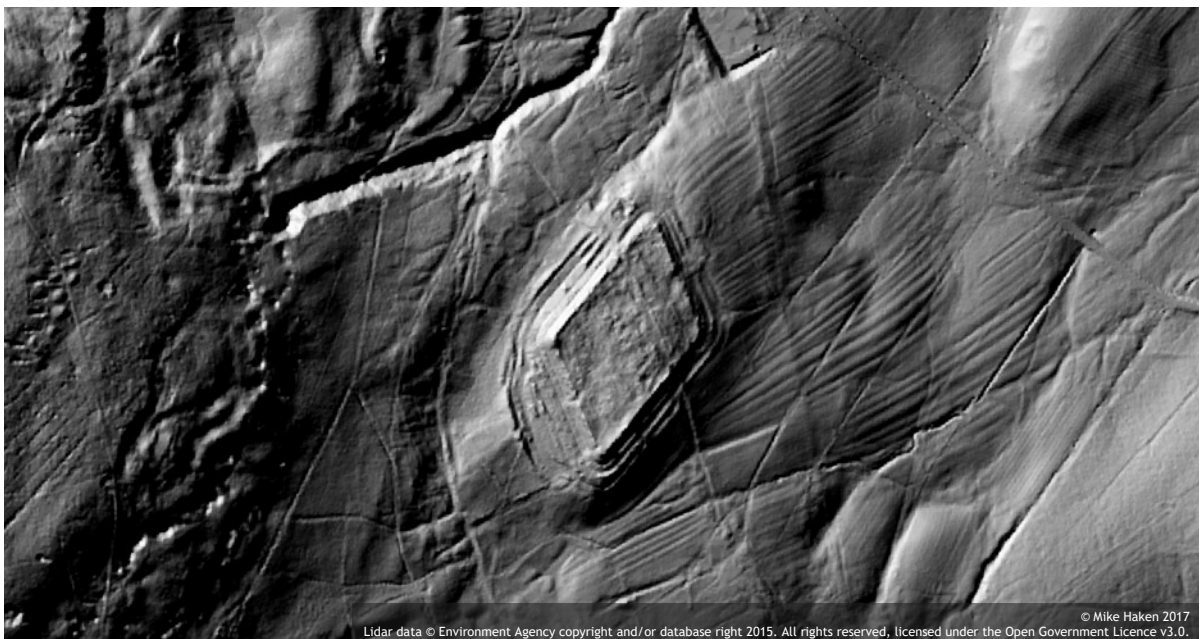
It is now possible to be certain about the identification of lengths of Roman road based solely on the evidence from lidar imagery where this would not have been achievable before. This should be done in conjunction with detailed fieldwork but that fieldwork need not be extensive. It can be done by sampling the physical remains at intervals over the course of the road.

One instance in Cumbria and Northumberland where this approach has confirmed the line of a Roman road is the course of the road between Whitley Castle and

Corbridge, first postulated on John Warburton's Map of Northumberland in 1716 . This road had been suggested by several sources but no definite surface evidence had ever been recorded in detail, apart from the remains of a bridge abutment, scheduled as Roman, on the south west bank of the River South Tyne, just north east of Epiacum (Whitley Castle). Indeed, the Pastscape entry for the road states that:

The evidence .... suggests that a road may have existed between Whitley Castle and Corbridge, and ...implies that it may have been Roman. Nothing, however, was found to substantiate these claims, either by ground inspection, or from available APs .

Recent observations using lidar data from the Environment Agency and then traced on the ground through fieldwork, have changed all that. Surface evidence for the road has been identified in six locations at Kirkhaugh, Ouston Fell, Hawksteel, Catton, Emertley Hill and Stublick Moor and also in four other locations on the lidar imagery at Ayle, Whitewalls, Hollingreen and Dilston Park but these instances have not yet been confirmed on the ground.



The unique lozenge shape of Epiacum Roman Fort, shown on lidar. The Maiden Way can be seen just to the east of the fort, running north - south beneath the medieval rig and furrow.

## Epiacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge) Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

This road was not given a number by Ivan Margary. It is therefore proposed to continue Margary's system and award a number using his method, as far as is possible. As it links the Maiden Way (RR84) and Dere Street (RR8), the first choice would be a second level number indicating a branch from Dere Street, however all those numbers have been used. Instead, it is proposed to treat it as the first known branch of the Maiden Way with the number RR840(x), the "(x)" suffix denoting that it is an extra road, not part of Margary's original scheme.

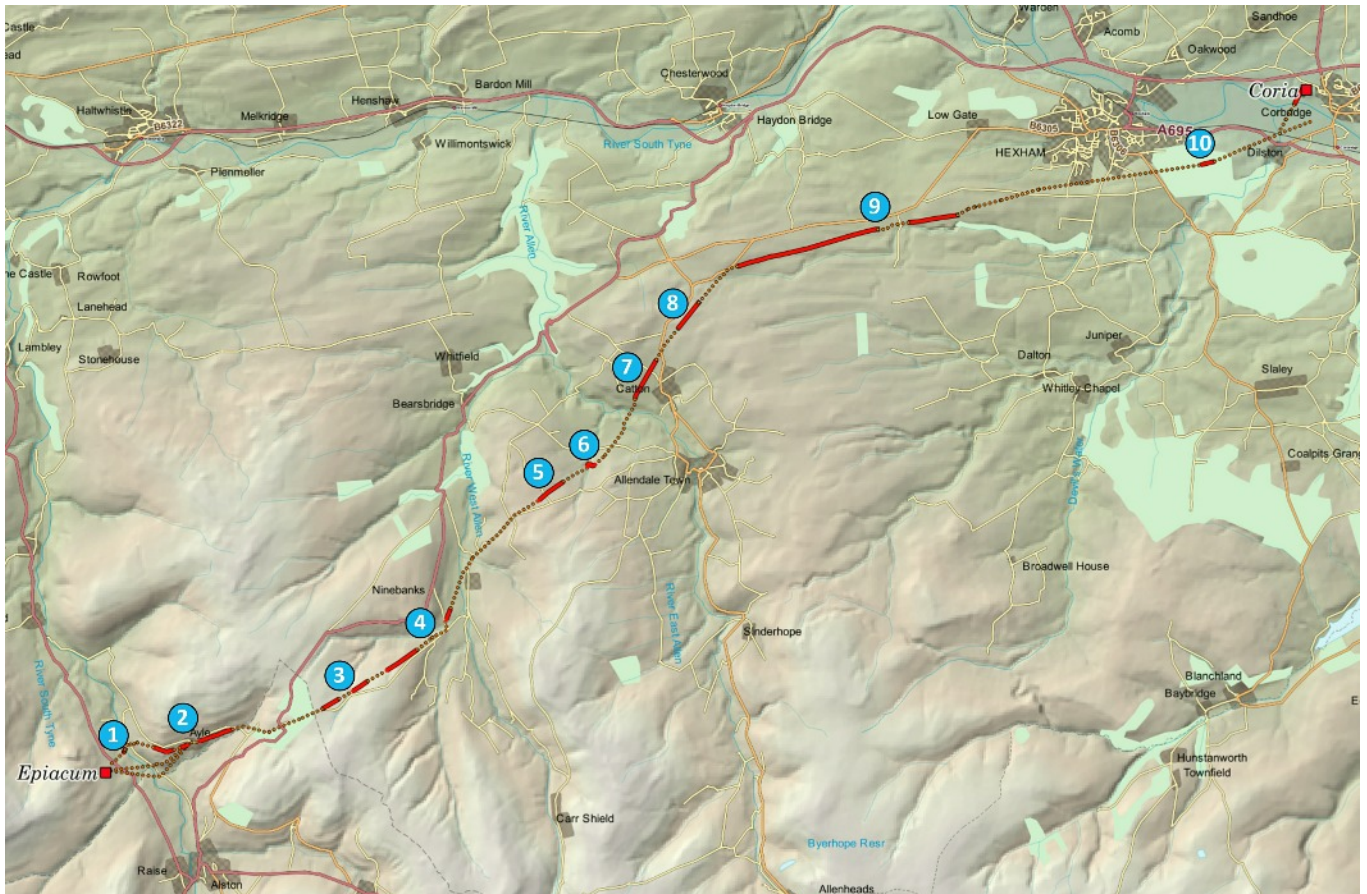


Fig. 1 Map of the route of the Roman road RR840(x) between Epiacum (Whitley Castle) and Coria (Corbridge) showing the locations of the evidence so far identified

No.	Location	Features visible
1	Kirkhaugh	Cutting, Collapsed Terrace, Bridge abutment, zigzag
2	Ayle	5m wide terraceway (visible on lidar, not yet investigated)
3	Ouston Fell	Agger, Cuttings, parchmark
4	Whitewalls	Agger (lidar only, not visible on ground)
5	Hollingreen	Agger (lidar only, not visible on ground)
6	Hawksteel	Terraceway, zigzag
7	Catton	Agger
8	Emertley Hill	Cutting, Agger, parchmark on aerial photos
9	Stublick Moor	Long length of agger visible on lidar and on ground (excavated)
10	Dilston	Agger (not investigated)

## Epiacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Location 1. Kirkhaugh



*Fig. 3. Remains of well engineered terrace leading down to the R. South Tyne at Kirkhaugh*



*Fig.4. Remains of bridge abutment at Kirkhaugh*



*Fig. 3. Remains of just two courses of dressed stone facing of bridge abutment*

Hugh Toller considered a possible route for the road leaving Epiacum heading due east, then crossing the R. South Tyne at Randalholme and heading up to Ayle on a terraceway, although evidence for this is very thin.

It is more likely, given evidence on the ground, that the road branched from the Maiden Way (RR84) immediately south of Castle Nook Farm, and headed straight down the slope towards the river. Whilst there is no obvious trace either on lidar or on the magnetometry and resistance surveys carried out by the University of Durham (ASUD, 2009), a well engineered cutting survives at NY69944919 easing the approach to terraceway, similarly well engineered, which descended towards a bridge. Most of the terraced descent of the extremely steep slope has collapsed, but a 2m wide portion of the uppermost section still survives (fig.3). There are remains of two further terraced descents further north west, but neither exhibit the same quality of construction.

Immediately below the terrace on the flood plain is the

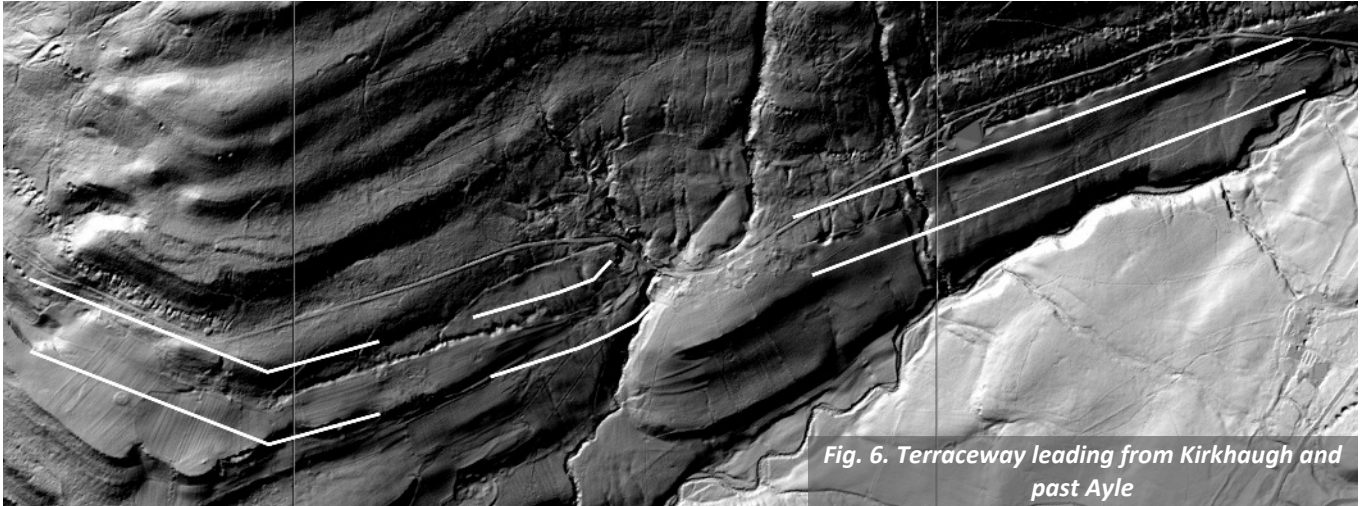
remains of a small bridge abutment, long interpreted as Roman, standing now some 25m south west of the river, the course of the river having moved away to the north east. Despite being scheduled (Historic England, 2017), the abutment is in extremely poor repair thanks to a tree growing out of its core (figs. 4 & 5). The Edgars, who own the farm and the fort site, wanted to remove the tree many years ago to halt the progressive damage, but without going into too many details, were effectively prevented by a certain conservation body from doing so, the tree being deemed more important than our Roman heritage.

On the opposite bank, at least three zig zag trackways lead straight up the slope behind Underbank Farm, of which the northwestern most one, which carries the modern public footpath, is the most recent. The oldest, and therefore probably the Roman one, appears to be the middle one of the three. The tight angle of turn of these zigzags suggests that this road was only ever intended for foot traffic - wheeled vehicles would have

## Epiaicum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Location 2. Ayle



*Fig. 6. Terraceway leading from Kirkhaugh and past Ayle*

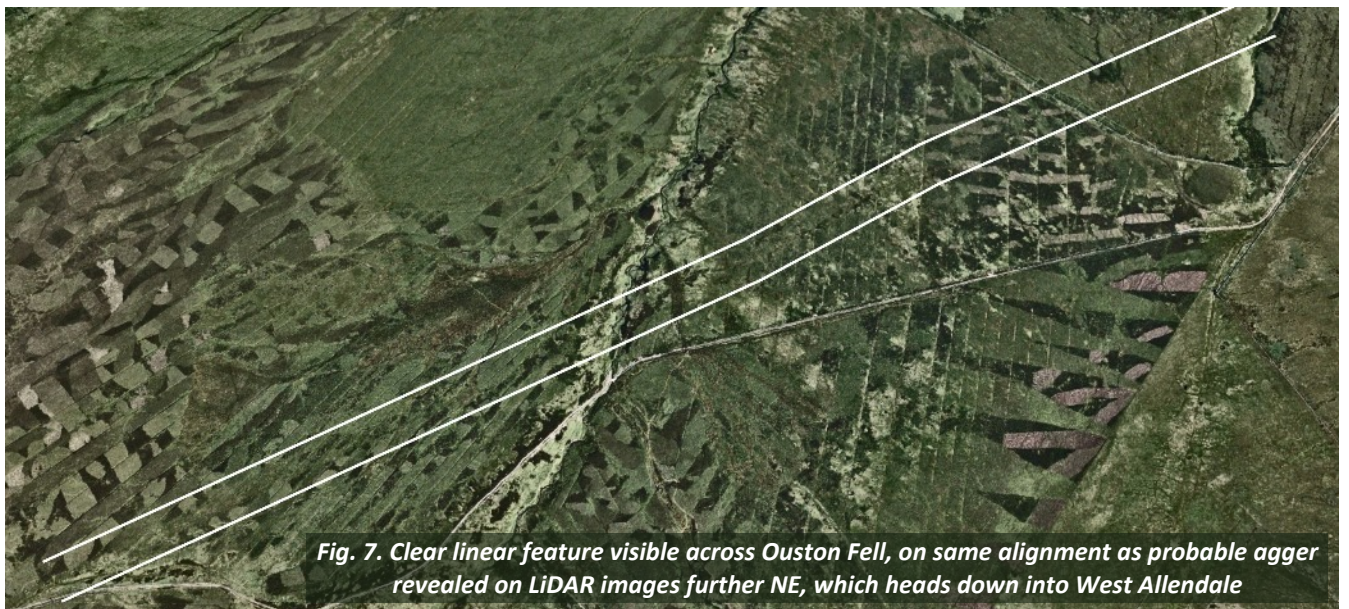
difficulty getting round the tight corners. The road leading from the ascent has not yet been located, however lidar shows the probable Roman road clearly as a very straight terraceway climbing gently up the slope just south of the modern lane, and a field wall marks part of its course. It changes alignment sharply at NY70964919 to follow the valley of the Ayle Burn, and can be followed on lidar as a straight but discontinuous terraceway all the way to White Lea, about a mile distant.

Just east of White Lea, mining activity has made tracing the course impossible but it must cross the Burn and ascend onto Ouston Fell. The most likely course is an easy and direct ascent of the moor past Clargillhead (NY73854986) probably just south east of the modern

track until the two appear to coincide very briefly between NY74345004 and NY74505011, although there is no obvious indication on the ground. From this point, the course of the Roman road is very clear on aerial photographs across Ouston Fell to the north of the modern track (fig 7.), first identified by Bryn Gethin.

Where the road crosses Sandiford Sike, more fieldwork is required to determine whether the very obvious terraceway to the east of the stream is part of the Roman road. Certainly, a little further ENE there appear to be possible remains of agger which at the time of Hugh's visit was not possible to investigate further due to adverse weather conditions.

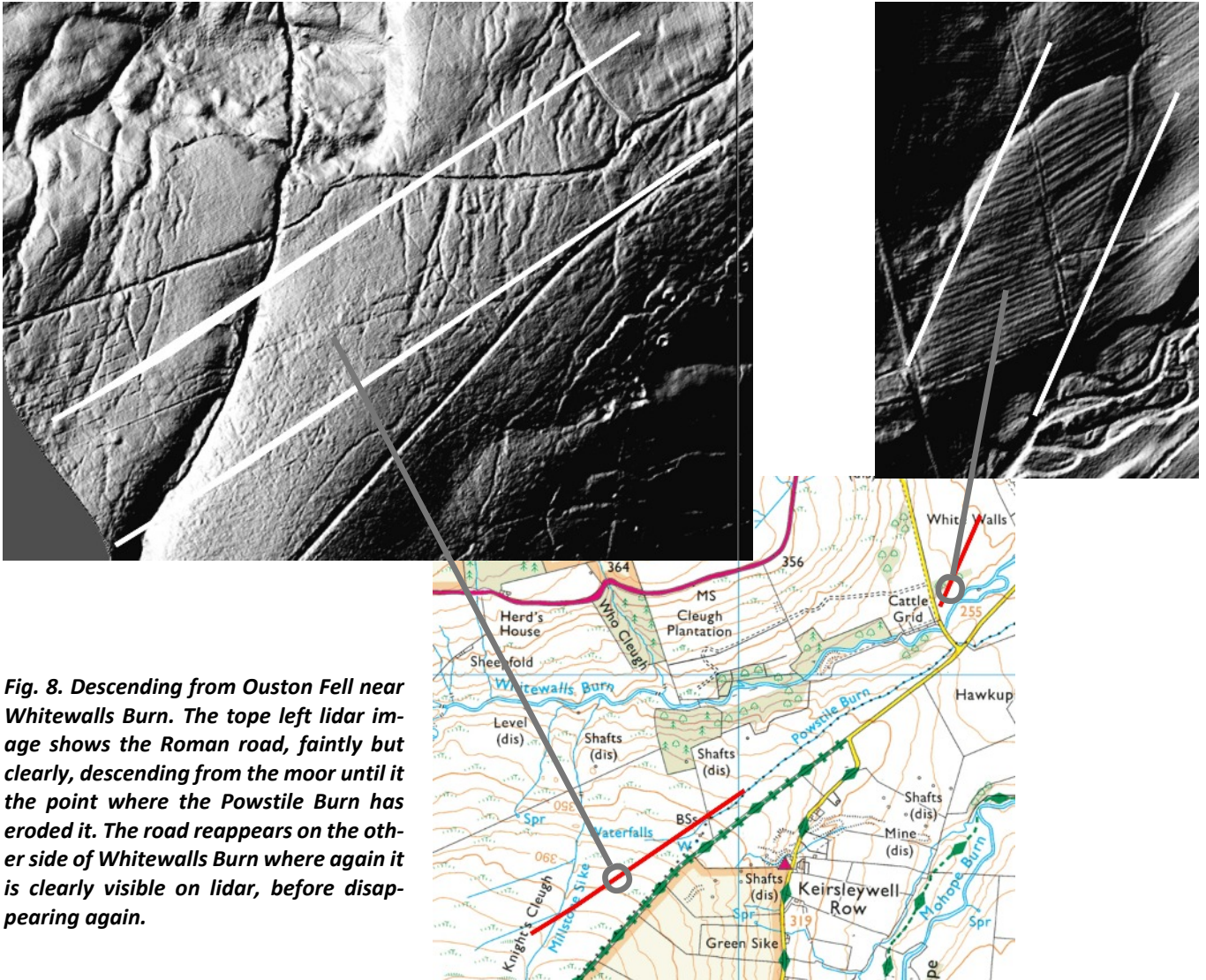
### Location 3. Ouston Fell



*Fig. 7. Clear linear feature visible across Ouston Fell, on same alignment as probable agger revealed on LiDAR images further NE, which heads down into West Allendale*

## Epacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge) Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Location 4. Ouston Fell - Whitewalls



**Fig. 8.** Descending from Ouston Fell near Whitewalls Burn. The top left lidar image shows the Roman road, faintly but clearly, descending from the moor until it the point where the Powstile Burn has eroded it. The road reappears on the other side of Whitewalls Burn where again it is clearly visible on lidar, before disappearing again.

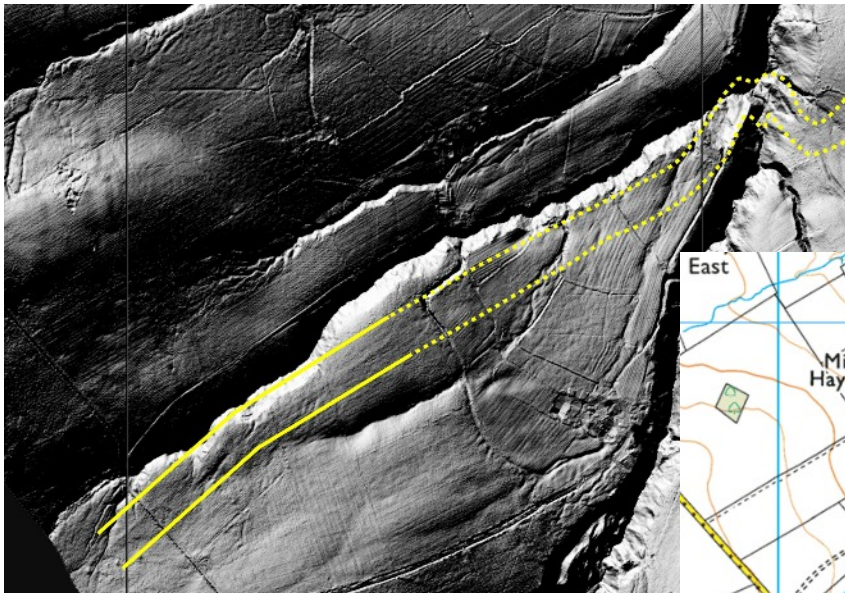
Coming down off the Fell, the road becomes increasingly difficult to see on the ground but lidar coverage starts again at about NY76325117 where the road is visible as a very faint raised earthwork until NY77035166. The Powstile burn actually runs along the course of the road from this point. Inspection further up its course suggested that the burn was initially a man-made drainage ditch, and it seems possible that one of the Roman roadside ditches had been utilised from NY77035166 north-eastwards, eventually resulting in the total erosion of the Roman road. The road probably descended to the Whitewalls Burn by means of a shallow cutting, crossing at NY77645214, and can then be seen on lidar for a short distance showing beneath both recent and medieval rig and furrow.

The course from here across West Allendale has not yet been traced, although the projection of this short alignment would suggest a crossing of the R. West Allen just west of Ninebanks. Hugh Toller's notes suggest that he had located the road ascending north eastwards at Ninebanks, but there is no detailed information. Ground observation by Dave Armstrong and Mike Haken failed to locate it with certainty, although the most likely course would seem to be north east from Ninebanks crossing Dryburn Cleugh at about NY7856 5363, where a slight embankment rising from the north of the Cleugh may represent it. The slope is steep at this point, so a temporary more northerly route obliquely up the slope would seem probably to ease the gradient. There are several old roads and routes climbing the

## Epacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Locations 5 & 6. Hollingreen & Hawksteel



*Fig. 9. Descending from Broken Moss alongside Hollingreen Burn, towards the R. East Allen. About 600m of road is visible on lidar, but is difficult to see on the ground. There are clear hints on lidar further east, but nothing definite.*



*Fig. 10. Looking back westwards towards Ninebanks, from about NY81125599. To avoid the need to cross steep sided valleys, a road has been cleverly engineered to descend to the confluence of Hollingreen Burn and Hawksteel Burn utilising a double zigzag before climbing in a cutting in the direction of High Oustley. There is no obvious sign of the remains of a bridge.*

steep hill, and the Roman line has not yet been located. Two obvious terraceways heading northwards from the Dry Burn could potentially fit, although they seem to run almost horizontally rather than climbing the slope, and so appear unlikely to represent the road. Lidar coverage soon ceases so doesn't help. Our best guess is that the Roman road climbed somewhere close to the modern road before taking a course slightly to the north of the modern one across Broken Moss.

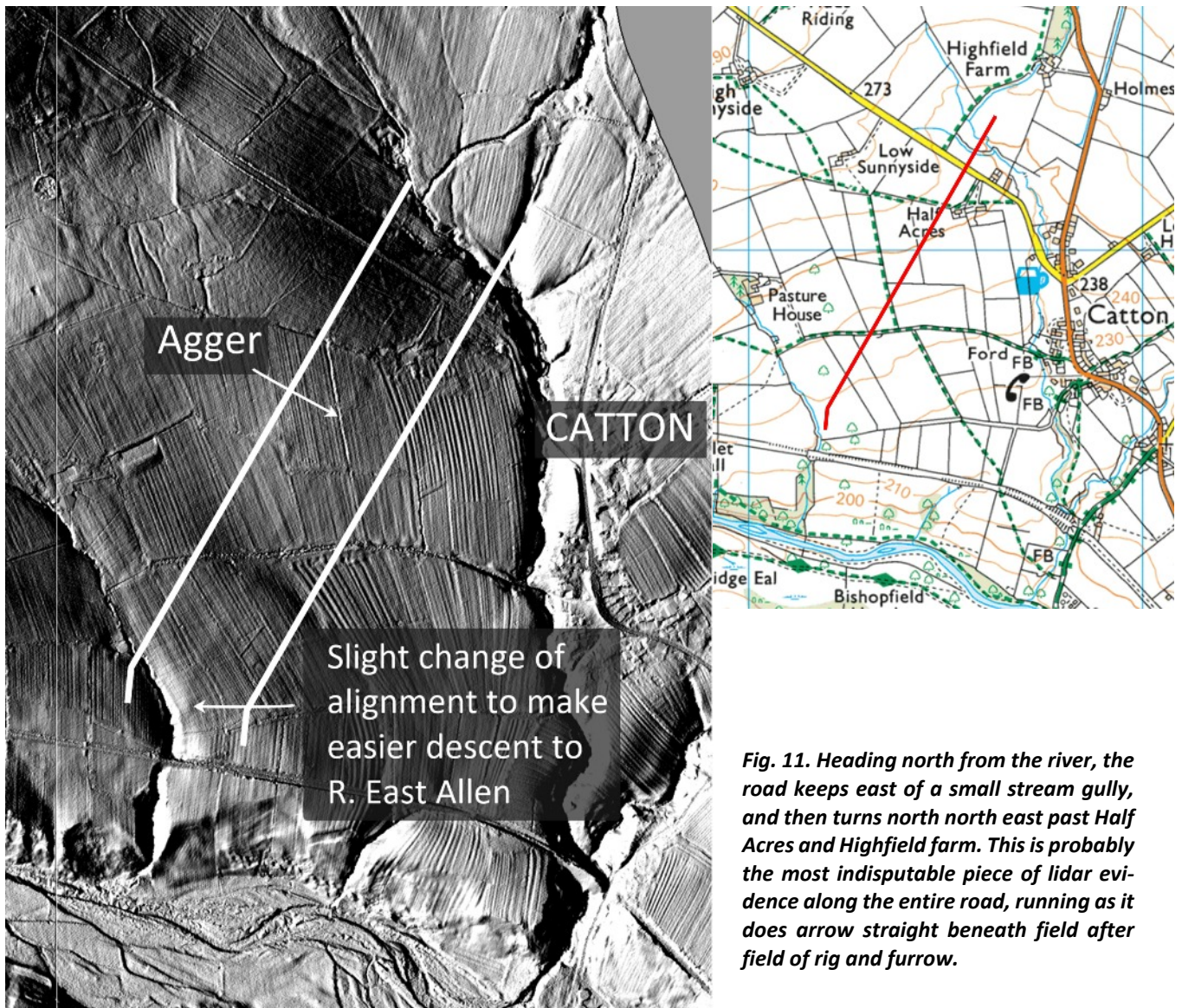
Lidar coverage resumes here, and the road can immediately be seen, albeit faintly (fig. 9), keeping to the south of the Hollingreen Burn. It is extremely hard to make out on the ground, although Prof. Stewart Ainsworth

did see this feature on lidar and find it in the field where the authors both failed, without realising its significance (Ainsworth, 2017). The road then disappears from lidar but if the line is continued north eastwards it would come to the confluence of the Hollingreen and Hawksteel Burns, where there is a very cleverly engineered terraced descent (fig. 10) which avoids having to cross a deep ravine with the necessary expense of a substantial bridge. The road then climbs east through a cutting but is quickly lost again. It is impossible without excavation to say with any certainty that his terraceway is Roman but there is no indication of another road needing to take this route.

## Epacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Location 7. Catton



*Fig. 11. Heading north from the river, the road keeps east of a small stream gully, and then turns north north east past Half Acres and Highfield farm. This is probably the most indisputable piece of lidar evidence along the entire road, running as it does arrow straight beneath field after field of rig and furrow.*

The road presumably runs west of High Oustley passing just east of Pia Troon (although there is no trace of it), heading to a crossing of the R. East Allen somewhere near NY82165725; the actual crossing has not yet been determined.

Over the years there has been much confusion caused by the mistaken belief that there was a Roman camp or fort at Old Town, well over half a mile to the northwest, causing people to look for the road in completely the wrong place. Warburton marked a fort at Old Town on his map of 1716, and other writers such as Horsley repeated the wild claim, and yet by 1769 Wallis was able to write categorically that : "There is not the least memorial of its being a Roman station, as supposed by

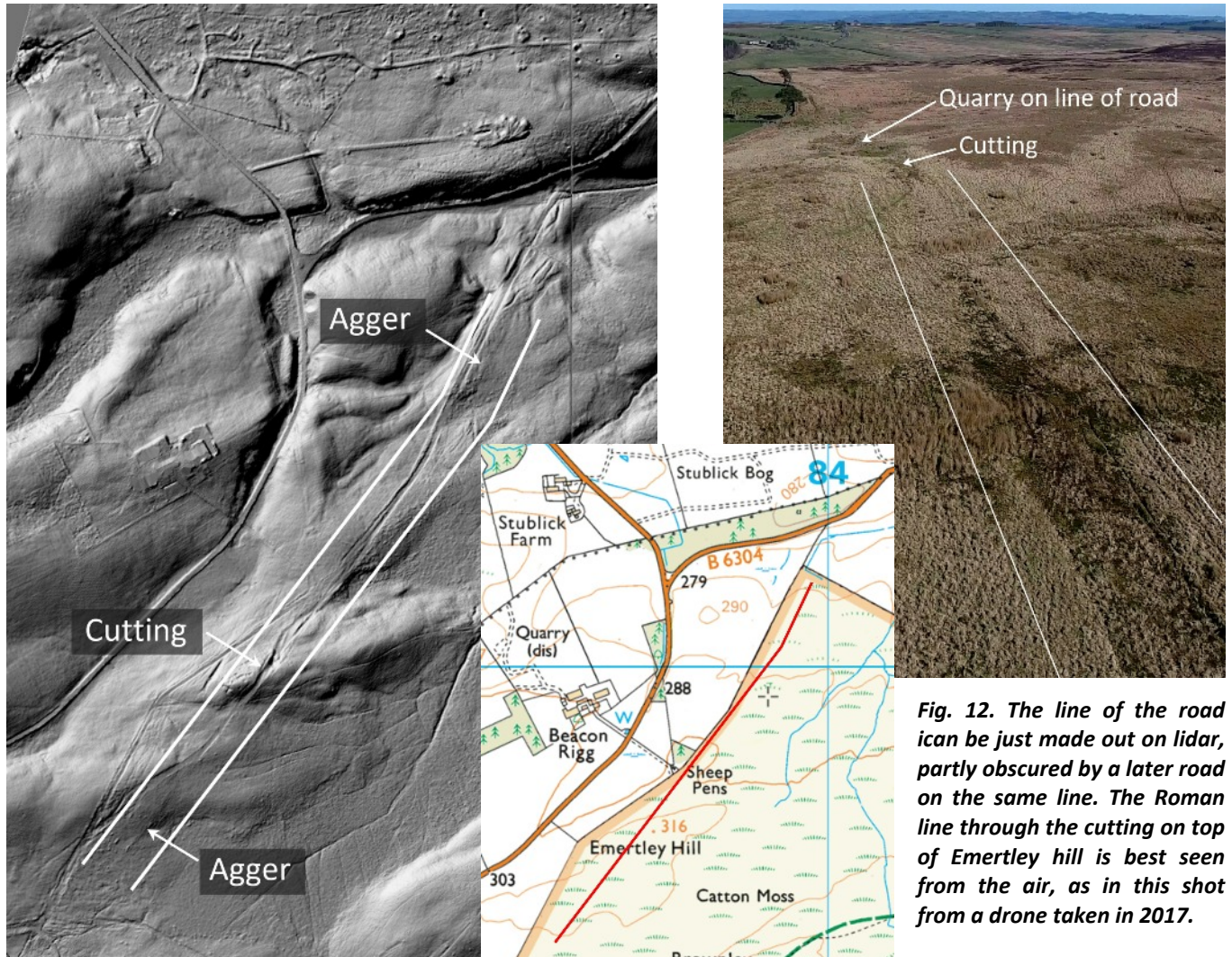
Mr. Horsley, either by funeral-stones, altars, inscriptions, coins, or foundations of buildings; not even a tradition from any body on the spot of it being of roman original." (Wallis, 1769, p.34).

There can now be no doubt that the Roman road is actually to be found much closer to Catton, as it can be seen very clearly on lidar running beneath several fields of rig and furrow, maintaining a straight alignment. Lidar coverage ceases yet again above Catton, although the course is only lost for about half a mile, before being picked up again on aerial photos on Emertley Hill. This is the only point in its entire 22 miles where it can be stated confidently that a clear sighting point was used by the surveyors, with the road above Catton

## Epiacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Location 8. Emertley Hill



**Fig. 12.** The line of the road can be just made out on lidar, partly obscured by a later road on the same line. The Roman line through the cutting on top of Emertley hill is best seen from the air, as in this shot from a drone taken in 2017.

heading straight for the slight rise of Emertley Hill.

The road leading to Emertley Hill can be just made out on lidar (fig. 12) although it is heavily disguised by a later road curving in from the west which then follows its course over the hill. This later road makes good use of the substantial cutting the Romans had created over the brow of the hill and could be giving access to the small quarry created on the line of the road on the north side of the hill, presumably in the 18th or 19th centuries.

Continuing north, the agger can just be made out on lidar but is lost amongst the old mine workings before it reaches Stublick Sike. It probably crosses Stublick Sike at about NY84276039, changing alignment almost immediately to a course just north of east. It can be seen with certainty after about 300m where it can be seen on lidar continuously for over 2 miles (fig. 13). After a

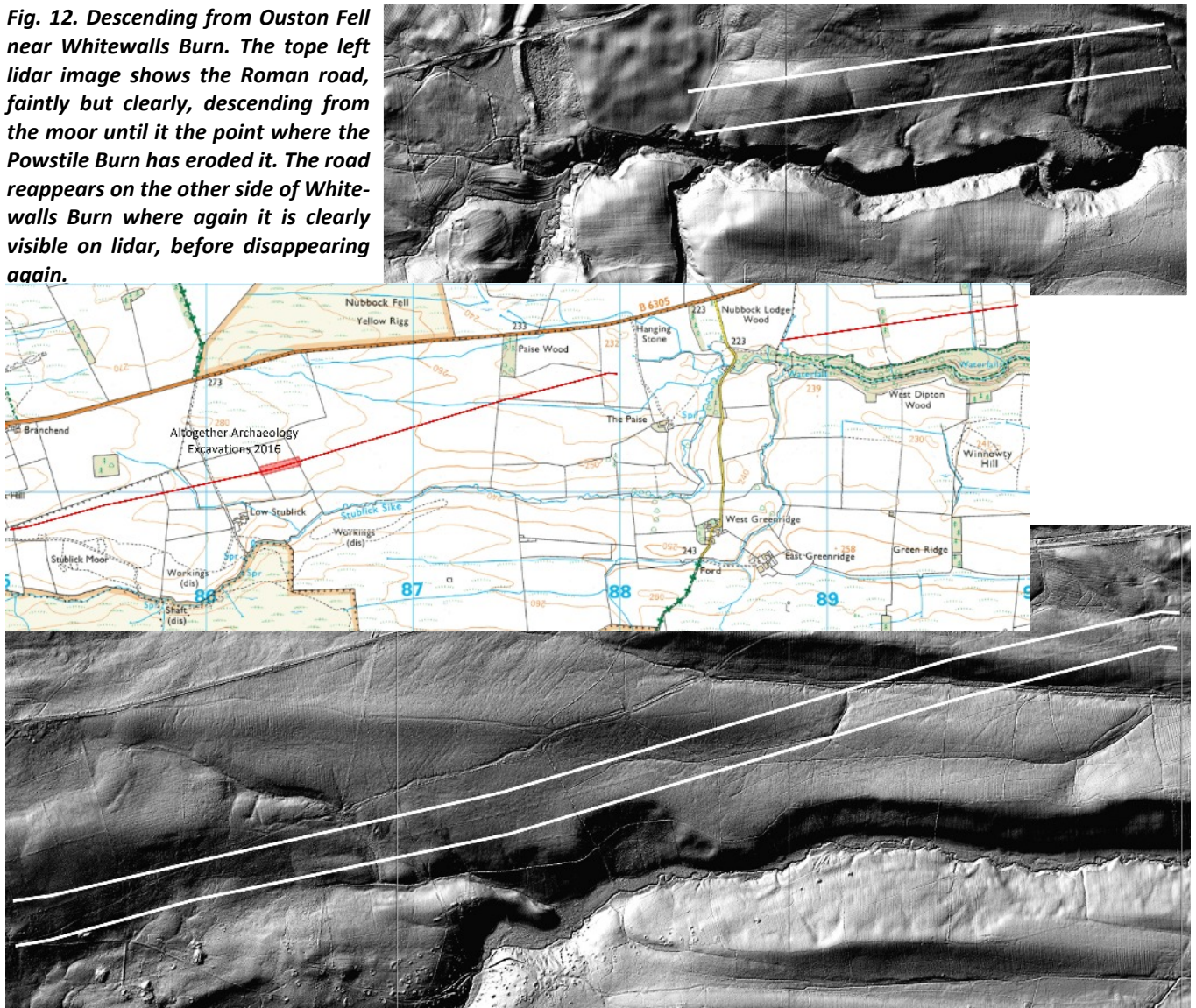
gap of just over half a mile, where medieval and post-medieval agricultural activity has obliterated it, the road reappears for another half mile stretch. These two lengths of road were observed by both Bryn Gethin and Hugh Toller in July 2014, exactly where they expected the road from Epiacum to be, though their discovery was never published. The features were also seen independently by two members of Altogether Archaeology in late 2015, Greg Finch and Martin Green, resulted in excavations taking place in 2016 with no less than seven trenches being opened. These excavations confirmed that this feature is indeed a Roman road, of fairly typical upland construction being of a single base layer between 5m and 6m in width, of a single build of rough stone and cobbles. Ditches were found in only one trench, and were very shallow and slight “scoop” ditches (Green & Finch, 2009, p.33). Apart from one possible slight survival on the western edge of Hexham

# Epacum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

## Location 9. Stublick Moor

*Fig. 12. Descending from Ouston Fell near Whitewalls Burn. The top left lidar image shows the Roman road, faintly but clearly, descending from the moor until it the point where the Powstile Burn has eroded it. The road reappears on the other side of White-walls Burn where again it is clearly visible on lidar, before disappearing again.*



**Fig. 13. Altogether Archaeology excavations 2016 - Trench 7 looking south west.**

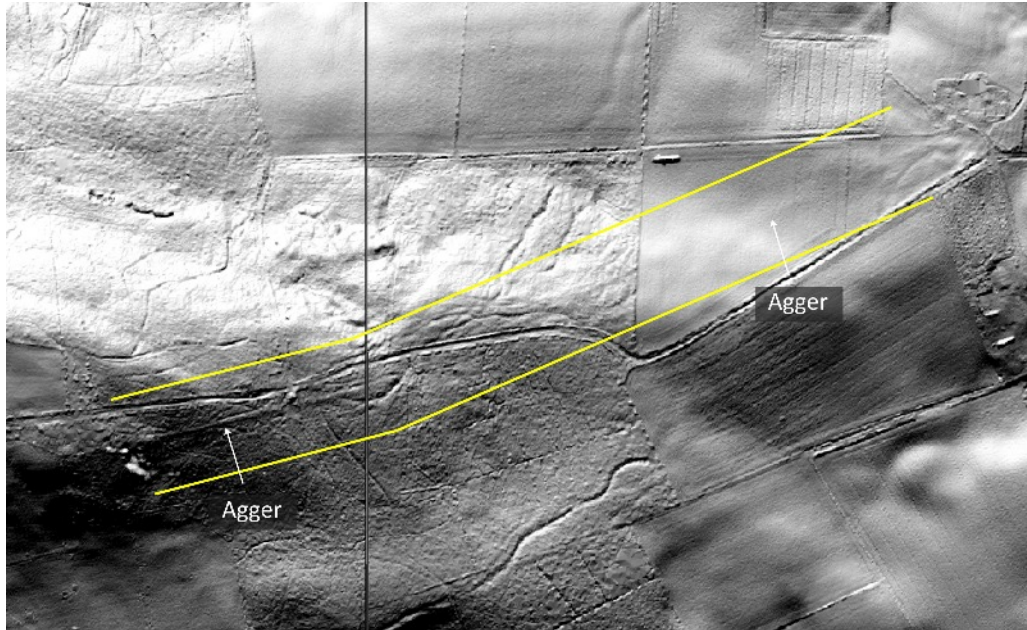
*The denuded remains of the road structure can be clearly seen, although the actual road surface has been lost.*

*Reproduced from Green & Finch, 2016 under CC BY-NC-ND-03 licence.*

## Epiaicum (Whitley Castle) to Coria (Corbridge)

Hugh Toller & Mike Haken

### Location 10. Dilston



**Fig. 14.** Lidar image showing the agger of the Roman road in the woods at Dilston, south east of Hexham. The road then heads east across a field to Dilston Park, where the almost totally ploughed out agger can still just be made out.

racecourse, there is one final piece of lidar evidence to the south east of Hexham, in the woods at Dilston where the agger is very clear, then showing as a largely ploughed out agger across the field to Dilston Park. It is to be assumed that the road then heads directly to the Roman bridge at Corbridge, although one last change of direction would be needed.

In total, there is now evidence from lidar, aerial photography, and ground observation, for over ten miles of the total 22 mile length of the Roman road from Epiaicum to Coria, which is far greater than for many Roman roads in this country already regarded as certain. The Altogether Archaeology excavations have proved not only that the road existed, but that it is of typical construction for an upland Roman road. Its planning and layout are similarly typical, avoiding the river valleys and keeping to high ground wherever possible, skilfully utilising the topography to plan a direct but still easily usable route comprising a long series of short straight

alignments with modest gradients for most of its length.

There are still gaps in our knowledge, mainly where the road must cross the valleys of the Ayle Burn and the R. West Allen and between Hollingreen and the R. East Allen. Further fieldwork is needed to try to fill those gaps, although we must accept the possibility that former mining and agricultural activity could have obliterated most of the evidence. Excavation would certainly be useful to confirm some of the evidence from lidar and aerial photography, principally on Ouston Fell and Emertley Hill, sites which have not been significantly impacted by past agricultural activity and where the remains might therefore be more intact than those revealed by the Altogether Archaeology excavations.

In conclusion, despite the remaining questions about this road, there can now be no doubt that its general course can now be regarded as known, thanks largely to the work of Hugh Toller.

## References

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