

ROMAN·ROADS·RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017

Welcome to our fourth Newsletter, now a regular quarterly publication, keeping all our members in touch with recent events, research, excavation, etc. organised by ourselves and by other groups. We are happy to consider any article or paper for possible inclusion in future editions - please contact the Editor.

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Edition No. 5, Summer 2017 will include

A "New" Roman Road Identified in Longdendale, Derbyshire

Roger Hargreaves will report in detail on recent work by the Glossopdale and Longdendale Archaeological Society in identifying the road reported in brief on p.2 of this edition

The Life of Ivan D Margary

Dr. David Rudling of the Sussex Archaeological Society gives an account of the life and work of this fascinating and intensely private man. This article builds on David's presentation at our conferences last year.

Whitley Castle to Corbridge

Following the excavation by Altogether Archaeology reported on p.2, Mike Haken will present all the evidence for this road, completing a piece started by Hugh Toller which was intended for publication in Britannia but never completed.

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

Roman Roads Research Review

A “new” Roman road identified in Longdendale, Derbyshire

The Glossopdale and Longdendale Archaeological Society have been researching the possibility of a road heading from the fort near Glossop known as Melandra (probably Ardotalia), linking it with the probable fortlet at Highstones, near Crowden. It would appear that their research and hard work have paid off, as they have identified a probable Roman road (showing clearly on lidar) heading up the dale as far as the hillside above Woodhead Bridge, from whence it seems to be heading towards Heyden Bridge. Its destination is currently unclear, although if this interpretation is correct, Castleford would seem most likely.

The identification of the Highstones fortlet site as Roman has been questioned over the years, however this discovery of a road up the dale tends to support it. Indeed, current aerial photography (Bing) is extremely supportive, showing clearly the classic playing card shape. The apparent presence of a bank or rampart



upslope of the northern ditch (ie. outside it) has always been a problem, however this image shows at least that it is very well constructed terminating with squared ends. A full account of the road will appear in the Summer 2017 newsletter. Thanks to Roger Hargreaves for supplying information.

The Roman road from Epiacum to Coria, Northumberland

In 2016 Altogether Archaeology, an independent archaeology group working in the North Pennines, investigated a site near Hexham, Northumberland, where two parallel features had been identified. One, a hollow-way running for approximately 4km, was interpreted as probably representing the medieval road from Hexham to Alston. The other, a straight causeway running in two lengths (probably destroyed by medieval agriculture in the middle) over 5km, was suspected to be, and ultimately shown to be, a Roman road.

The existence of a Roman road from Whitley Castle (Epiacum) to Corbridge (Coria) has long been claimed, but modern archaeological evidence has been lacking. The excavations carried out by Altogether Archaeology represent the first carried out on this road. When conducting this work, they were, however, unaware that our late Treasurer Hugh Toller, along with Bryn Gethin, had already done a considerable amount of

work with lidar and aerial photographs and were very close to identifying the entire route. Whilst Altogether Archaeology concluded that the road was not actually completed, they hadn't seen the substantial evidence for the rest of the road, which is not yet published. A full description and account of this road will appear in our Summer newsletter, where can look at Hugh and Bryn's evidence and draw your own conclusions. The full report on the Altogether Archaeology excavation can be downloaded here:

<https://altogetherarchaeology.org/Reports%20and%20Proposal%20Docs/Hexham%20Fell%20Roman%20Road/Lost%20Roads%20on%20Hexham%20Fell%20final%20report%2012Feb2017%20pdfA%20compliant.pdf>

Thanks to Martin Green for supplying information.

If you know of any recent work related to Roman roads that you think our members should be made aware of, please let us know



Roads to the Past From Pandora Thoresby



A Heritage Lottery funded project in North Yorkshire which will be of interest to many of our members.

Thornton Le Street History Group launched the project with an Open Day at the village hall in February, and we are now up and running with a website <http://thorntonlestreetbigdig.com> and a series of free training workshops. Jim Brightman of Solstice Heritage, who recently led a community archaeology project at Kiplin Hall, also in the Vale of Mowbray, will supervise the 18 month project.

The present village name seems to suggest a Roman road, being recorded in the thirteenth century as Thoreton in Strata, and in the fourteenth century as Thornton in the Strete. Several routes for Roman roads have been suggested passing through, or close to the present village. Brian Forbes from Thornton le Moor has done considerable local investigation, and the project will build on his research.

Investigating the Roman road network will form an important part of the project, and participation of RRRA members is welcomed. The more expertise which can be mustered, the greater the chance of clarifying the local Roman road network. The project is a multi-period study, and we are also looking at features from later periods which include a shrunken medieval village, early church, corn mill and river crossing.

A series of free training workshops is being run, and the group would consider adding to these and if necessary repeating workshops which are fully booked. The Group would also like to arrange a meeting for all those interested in the Roman era. This is a great opportunity to gain training and practical experience in archaeological field work and historical research including:

- Documentary research, using archives, historic map regression.
- Using remote sensing in archaeology-including aerial photography and Lidar (light direction and ranging). Lidar has proved extremely useful in the study of Roman roads as Hugh Toller, Bryn Gethin, and David Ratledge have shown.
- Non-invasive techniques including field survey, geophysics historic building recording.
- Photography, photogrammetry (measurements from photographs).
- Using computer GIS (Geographic Information System) to bring all the information together and present it in a clear and engaging way.
- Practical training in test pitting, archaeological excavation, finds processing, interpretation and publication.

To register your interest in the project, please visit the website.

<http://thorntonlestreetbigdig.com>

Or ring Pandora Thoresby 01423 325368



An Appeal From a RRRA Member

One of our members, David Weston, has asked if our members might be able to help him with research he has been carrying out, off and on, for many years, on the putative road heading east out of Winchester, the direct route to London. This road has long been sought, but never found with any certainty. Indeed it has almost moved into the realm of myth and legend. In the years leading up to 2007, David proposed a theory on the first part of its route (from Winchester to the small Roman town at Neatham (east of Alton), and demonstrated that this theory could be justified by evidence from aerial photography and subsequent excavation.

Following our conference in Portsmouth, his interest has been re-kindled and he is now looking at the probable course of the road to the east of Neatham, assisted by David Staveley (another Association member and speaker at the conference), and members of the Surrey Archaeological Society, including Dr David Graham, who led the excavation at Neatham. His theory is that the survey line of the road runs from the excavated Roman crossroads at Neatham north eastwards to, and along, a significant terrace that later became the southern boundary of Farnham Castle park. This line would also take it almost exactly to a Roman industrial/pottery/villa site to the east of Farnham. (The line is approximately from SU 740 411 to SU 8515 4790). The road would have had to deviate a little off it about 2km from Neatham, in order to avoid falling into the River Wey, but having returned to it, I can see no reason why the line could not be maintained. So far, evidence from aerial photography, LIDAR, and geophysical surveys appear to support it. However, the evidence is still insufficient and largely inconclusive.

If any members have evidence to contribute towards, or dispute the theory, please contact him through RRRA at info@romanroads.org, or post on the RRRA forum under X10: London to Winchester. The article below is a modified version of David's paper first published in the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society .

Roman Roads East of Winchester

David J Weston

"Upon reaching Winchester the southern road again divided forming an almost complete radial network from this centre, which would indeed be quite symmetrical if the short straight road to the east were included, but as yet no continuation of this road has been found" I. D. MARGARY (Margary, 1955)

Since the earliest days of research into the roads of Roman Britain, there has been a belief that a road existed to the east of Winchester. It is presumed to have run north-eastwards towards Alton, along the valley of the river Wey, and onwards to London. Yet its route is unknown, and its very existence is still not proven. Excavations at Neatham (a small Roman town just east of Alton) suggested a crossroads with the south-westerly leg presumed to be the road to Winchester (Millett & Graham, 1979), but its line whilst implied, has not been established. Recently, the search has gained new impetus and, it would appear, acceptance within the archaeological world that it really exists. This article is designed to further the debate, by demonstrating that significant evidence (both circumstantial and actual) exists, indicating a possible route of the road between Winchester and Neatham.

Neatham has been tentatively identified as Vindomi, a town that appears in number XV of The Antonine Itinerary. It was probably compiled in the third century AD, using older sources. The relevant entry reads:-

"Likewise from Calleva to Isca Dumnoniorum 136,000 paces, thus written, Vindomi 15, Venta Belgarum 21..."

Although it may seem strange that any route from Silchester to Winchester should go via Neatham, (given the existence of a direct Silchester to Winchester road), Professor Rivet and others have pointed out that few of the itinera do in fact take the most direct routes (Rivet 1970). Any conclusive proof that Neatham is Vindomi would simultaneously prove that a road between Winchester and Neatham also existed, but sadly no such proof exists. However, if we accept the hypothesis that Neatham is Vindomi, then it should be 21 Roman miles from Winchester. Since a direct line between Winchester and Neatham is barely 19 Roman miles, it would suggest that the road did not take a direct route. Any attempt to locate the road should bear this in mind, whilst seeking to explain why.



Roman Roads East of Winchester cont.....

The straight section of road (now the B3404) from Winchester's east gate over Magdalen Hill Down is an obvious candidate for the western end of the route, as was pointed out by Margary in the opening quote. At the eastern end of the assumed route, a 3 mile straight alignment of roads running through Four Marks (Brislands & Blackberry Lanes, SU654 334 to SU674 351), and extending along the A31 towards Alton also has merit. However, these two potential eastern and western sections do not align. Nevertheless, the often suggested route could be linked by a straight line passing through the Ropley valley. Blackberry Lane's case for Roman origin is strengthened because it is known to be a very old road, and an extension of its alignment to the north-east goes to the very centre of Roman Neatham. On the other hand, its direction is not obvious for a road to Winchester, heading more to the south-west than would be expected. Intriguingly, if its alignment is extended further south-westwards, it goes to the centre of Roman Clausentum (Bitterne). It might be argued therefore that if Blackberry Lane is Roman in origin at all, it reflects a probable road between Neatham and Bitterne, rather than one between Neatham and Winchester. If this were true, it could be that the Winchester road came off the Bitterne road to the west of Neatham, rather than going directly to the crossroads in the town. The 2008 excavations on the western edge of Neatham might add more credence to this. *In the excavation, ditches were discovered that might be related to a road (no road was found). "The site lay on the south side of the line of the suggested Roman road from Neatham to Winchester, although the orientation of the ditches may indicate that the course of the road differed from that previously assumed"* (Powell, 2014). The orientation of the ditches (if they are indeed related to a road), are more south-westerly in direction than the assumed line of a road to Winchester. This could indicate that the road west of Neatham initially took a course towards Bitterne rather than Winchester.

Whatever the truth is, it seems illogical to suggest that Winchester was the intended destination of a road along Blackberry Lane.

Straight roads are not necessarily Roman in origin, and with regards to the road heading east out of Winchester, Professor C.F.C. Hawkes, writing in the 1920s, was convinced that it wasn't Roman at all (Hawkes c.1920). He believed that the straightness of the road was the result of its construction as a turnpike in 1753. Insufficient space precludes a discussion of his case, but evidence discovered since his time suggests that he was wrong, and that this section of the road is indeed Roman. In 1999 whilst cutting a trench to lay cables opposite Magdalen Hill Cemetery, a thick band of flint metalling was observed under the modern road. It was considered that this may have formed part of the surface of a Roman road heading east out of Winchester (Fitzpatrick 2001). Strong evidence also came from post-war aerial photographs in the area where the modern road ceases its eastward course (SU542 294), and bends sharply north-eastwards towards Alresford (HE Archive, Swindon, 58/RAF/2862). These show the soil marks of an ancient double ditched, straight line feature, assumed to be a road running north eastwards from the bend. It can also be distinguished physically on the ground as a faint terrace running towards the cottages (SU548 302), northwest of Orr's Meadow, and marks the parish boundary. The line can be seen on Google Earth (2008) as a light streak with dark edges in the field to the SW of the cottages. The area around this bend undoubtedly holds the key to locating the subsequent route of the road to Neatham, but it is enigmatic. To head directly towards Neatham or Blackberry Lane, the road would need to descend into the steep sided Itchen valley. Although by no means insurmountable, the descent would have required some form of engineering (probably a zig-zag), but nothing is obvious on the ground. Moreover, there is an abundance of good aerial photographs, clearly showing archaeological and geological features in the area east of the bend, and between it and the Itchen. None show any trace of a road. If other ancient features show but the road doesn't, the implication is that there was never a road there. With no evidence of a crossing of the Itchen east of the bend, one has to believe the evidence indicating that the Roman road turned sharply north east at this point. This raises a serious question. Why build a road due east from Winchester, only to abruptly change direction 3½ miles later, when a classic straight Roman road could have been constructed directly to the crossing point of the Itchen, if not Neatham itself?

One possibility is that the "bend" was not a bend at all, and that this section was not built with Neatham in mind, but rather as a road in its own right. It is entirely feasible to postulate pre-Roman trackways or a route from northeast and central Hampshire to the tidal reaches of the Itchen, utilising the spur on the eastern side of Cheesefoot Head (SU529 278) as a means of crossing the east-west line of the downs. For the new Roman city of Venta, it would have made good sense to build a short, straight road, at an early date, due east to link to this route.



Roman Roads East of Winchester cont.....

It would help to ensure that traffic did not bypass the civitas capital on its way to or from the coast. Once constructed, the track over Cheesefoot Head would have become much less important and more difficult than the metalled road through the city, and the junction would have rapidly become a bend. At some later stage one or other of the routes heading north east from the "bend" would have been built as a fully engineered Roman road. Unfortunately, the ancient road ceases to be visible within a few hundred metres of its turning north eastwards, and its subsequent course is far from clear, although as previously mentioned, a possible continuation to the cottages is clearly visible on Google Earth. One possibility is that its route is reflected in the parish boundary running towards Lovington House (SU557 318). Given the limited photographic evidence, a more likely route, and one which makes more practical sense, is to continue the line from the bend to New Cottages (as seen on Google Earth), and on towards Ovington House (SU560 313). From here it would have kept to the south of the Itchen, bending around the valley at the base of the high ground, and making for the crossing point at Swards Bridge (SU574 322). The current road (East Lane) following the same route from Ovington to Swards Bridge is at least medieval in origin. However, a third possibility is that the initial direction after the "bend" is a result of very local geography (a steep slope immediately to the east); and that having negotiated that, it ran pretty much in a straight line to Swards Bridge, along the higher ground and down the spur into the Itchen/Arle valley much as the modern A31 does. This is the route that was also used by the 17th century coach road, and the turnpike. Of the three possibilities, I currently favour the route through Ovington.

Although a medieval road/river crossing at Seward's bridge was probably built in the 12th century, and was certainly in existence by the early 13th century, it is very likely that the medieval builders would have chosen to cross the river at an established crossing point. Given its location at the confluence of the Itchen and Arle, it is quite conceivable that Seward's bridge was the Roman crossing point of the Itchen/Arle. The strong, straight, north-east/south-west alignment of roads and tracks on both sides of the river around the bridge, clearly visible in aerial photographs and maps from Ogilby to the present day, would support this proposition. An extension of those alignments to the northeast of the river, correlates closely with the old ridgeway track, now called the Oxdrove Way, and perhaps more significantly, runs within a few hundred metres of the villa site at Pinglestone Farm. The Seward's bridge crossing would therefore have been a significant point on the roads and trackways linking the hinterland of north east Hampshire with the Civitas capital at Winchester.

If at some later date it had been decided to build a road from Winchester to Neatham, and further eastwards, the most obvious starting point would have been here, at the Itchen crossing, and not the city itself or "the bend". A straight line from Seward's Bridge to Neatham would take it to the north of routes previously postulated by others, and would run through New Alresford and Bighton, crossing the Itchen/Wey watershed near Medstead and then running on through Alton to Neatham. There are historical reports of a Roman road between Alresford and Alton.

"From this place [Alresford] to Alton there goes all along a Roman Highway, part of which makes a Head to an extraordinary great Pond here at Alresford;" William Camden 1607.

"All along, a perfect Roman way from Aulton to Alresford" John Aubrey 1690.

"Here [Alresford] is a very large pond, or lake of water, kept up to a head, by a strong batterd'eau, or dam, which the people tell us was made by the Romans; and that it is to this day part of the great Roman highway, which leads from Winchester to Alton, and, as 'tis supposed, went on to London, tho' we no where see any remains of it, except between Winchester and Alton, and chiefly between this town and Alton." Daniel Defoe 1724.

"From this Place to Alton there goes a Roman Highway, of which part serves for an Head or Stank to a great Pond, or little Lake, at this Town": Thomas Cox 1738.

There is insufficient space to discuss in detail why people linked the Alresford dam (built at the very beginning of the 13th century) with a Roman road. However, the proposed line does go straight through the dam, and it may be that this is why the link was made. The more important fact is that reliable witnesses claimed to have seen a Roman road between Alresford and Alton. The critical significance of their reports is that the road they would most likely have been on (and from which they saw sections of a Roman road), was the road through Bighton (SU614



Roman Roads East of Winchester cont.....

343). This was the main highway throughout the 17th century, and had been since the Middle Ages; whereas the current route to Alton via the Ropley valley did not come into being until the building of the turnpikes.

Bighton parish is unusual in many ways. It has almost parallel boundaries along its northern and southern sides, and a greater number of extant and destroyed field boundaries running parallel or at 90 degrees to them, than might be expected. Geography certainly plays a significant part in these alignments, but cannot explain everything, as a number of the boundaries seem to relate to Roman units of measurement. It is quite plausible that the field boundaries and lanes are mirroring something much older within the area. They might reflect a Roman road, or perhaps an ancient estate system, or even an ancient mapping scheme, the ghosts of which are still in the modern parish. If this is the case then it might be significant that the postulated route runs straight down the middle of the area.

A low terrace runs behind the properties that front the medieval road through the village of Bighton. This terrace has been accentuated by the levelling of ground to build the houses, but aerial photographs and maps show that it is older than the buildings. This feature is within metres of the straight line between Seward's bridge and Neatham. Approximately a mile to the east of the village (SU622 349), a 1946 aerial photograph shows a very strong feature with all the hallmarks of a Roman road on exactly the same alignment. The feature is also visible in photographs taken in 1970 and 1982. In each of the subsequent photographs however, increasing damage is evident, with the lighter deposits spreading down the slope. Something similar, but much weaker, can be seen on the same alignment in a field to the west of the village. Field walking demonstrated a greater density of flints on the surface over the feature than elsewhere in the field. The feature was resistance surveyed, and excavated under the direction of David Calow of Surrey Archaeological Society during the summer of 2007 (Calow 2007). On the basis of the excavations and aerial photography, it was interpreted as a heavily damaged, engineered Roman road, about 5m wide, made from sorted and prepared flints, and cut into the chalk hillside. It is quite conceivable that this was what Camden, Aubrey and Defoe saw, prior to its subsequent destruction and disappearance.

If this object is the Winchester to Neatham road then the question of where it crossed the watershed into the Wey valley arises. Difficult terrain, particularly on the eastern slopes of the high ground needed to be negotiated. The position and alignment of the road feature in the field east of Bighton, precludes it from taking the route followed by the subsequent medieval road; and besides such a routing would take it well away from the direct line between Seward's Bridge and Neatham. However, a very small (approx 3°), change in direction, would take it to a highpoint (Crooms Hill), just west of Medstead at SU652367. At this point tracks from 5 different directions meet, all of these paths appear on the oldest maps, and have been in existence for many years. The one running south westwards, points directly at the eastern extension of the Bighton feature, and is itself a continuation of a small straight section (SU646 363) of the otherwise winding modern road between Bighton and Medstead. The views from this highpoint are expansive, and it is the sort of location that Roman road builders might have used as a sighting point. It is approximately 200 metres north of the direct line between Seward's bridge and Neatham. A small directional change at this high point (southwards by 6°), would not only have returned the road towards the direct line, but also would have kept it on a ridge, avoiding the steep ends and sides of the valleys of Beech and Chawton Park Wood. Angular changes of this order at high points are quite consistent with Roman road building practice, and the proposed alignment is coincident with the lower section of the eastern track from the high point. It also coincides with another old track and Holloway (Foul Lane) just east of Medstead (SU661 370), the rear boundaries of properties along the Beech road, and most significantly a straight line feature, invisible on the ground, but clearly showing in 1984 aerial photographs in the field immediately south of Abbey Road (SU672 374), at Old Park farm. This feature, which extends for approximately 600 metres on the aerial photograph is also partially visible on a 1967 aerial photograph, and was excavated during the summer of 2007 under the auspices of Surrey Archaeological Society (See Hants HER record). It was interpreted as an engineered flint, or flint and clay road, approximately 5 - 7m wide which had been damaged to a greater or lesser extent over its length. If this feature is extended eastwards, it runs into Bushy Leaze wood, at a point where an ancient park boundary ditch and bank (probably medieval), comes from the south and makes a sharp turn onto a similar alignment. The park pale may very roughly reflect the line of the road, but further eastwards in an area made difficult by modern forestry and old brick works, the course is unclear. The most obvious route would have been to continue above the southern



Roman Roads East of Winchester cont.....

edge of the Beech valley (where a terrace is visible) and descend into the Wey valley in the area south of Wyard's farm. Here, the straight line from Seward's bridge could have been regained and the road could have continued on dry ground, passing just to the north of the source of the Wey, directly to the crossroads at Neatham. However it is perhaps more likely that it continued straight on to join the postulated Neatham - Bitterne road somewhere in the middle of present day Alton a little west of the railway station, and just north of Kings Pond. This theory has more merit in light of recent aerial photos showing a dark line feature to the south of Wyards farm at SU697384. The feature is within metres of the predicted line (if the road continued straight ahead), and is orientated perfectly to join a Bitterne - Neatham road just north of the Kings Pond in Alton. It is best seen on Bing, but can also be discerned on Google Earth 2005 & 2008.

Finally, to return to the discrepancy in distances between the straight line from Neatham to Winchester, and the Antonine Itinera quoted distance. The route postulated in this article, from Neatham out on a Bitterne road to a junction in Alton, thence to Crooms Hill Medstead, on to Swards Bridge, and via Ovington to "the bend" east of Winchester, and hence in to the city by the straight East road and a zig-zag down St Giles Hill, is just over 20 Roman miles (29.8km).

In this brief article, I hope to have established that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a major, Roman road east of Winchester existed, and to indicate why it may not have pursued a direct course to Neatham. I also hope to have demonstrated that there is extremely good evidence to indicate that the route may have been via Alresford, Bighton and Medstead. As was stated at the beginning, there has been an upsurge of interest in this road in recent years, resulting in a number of ideas and excavations. Some of these excavations add support to this route, as I have demonstrated. Others may support different routes. Of course, a road through Bighton does not preclude the existence of other minor, or estate roads in the area, nor does it preclude the possibility that different routes existed at different times during the Roman occupation. However, it seems extremely unlikely that there could have been more than one major, Roman road linking Winchester with Neatham at any one time, and I strongly believe that road between the two is the one I have outlined.

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RAF 1959 The Historic England Archive holds a number of photographs showing the feature, amongst which – 58/RAF/2862 14MAY59.

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Roman Roads East of Winchester postscript

The basic theory is that the planning line of the road runs from Neatham towards Farnham, on a course of 240/060°T; this is effectively a continuation of the planning line west of Neatham. This would result in the road running along a very prominent terrace which sits above Farnham, and delineates the edge of the castle park. It would run extremely close to an industrial/villa site just to the east of Farnham. (This area was an important pottery manufacturing region - Alice Holt/Farnham grey ware - and a means of getting the pottery out would have been necessary).

Since my previous paper was revised, the following tantalising information has turned up. Last year David Calow of the Surrey Archaeological Society excavated a Roman settlement at Flexford, about 6km east of Aldershot. They uncovered a road which was interpreted to date from the mid second century. If the line of that road were extended west of Flexford, it would cross the Blackwater river to the North-East of Farnham at SU 88190 49820. This is **exactly** where the extension of my proposed line would cross the Blackwater. One could therefore theorise that the planned line of the road ran from the Blackwater crossing, to the crossing of the Itchen at Swards Bridge (to the west of Alresford), with the small Roman town at Neatham being built where the line crossed the Silchester-Chichester road.

However, theories are one thing – proof is something far more difficult!

David Weston

8th May 2017

Cart Before Horse

Anthony Durham

Anthony Durham, never one to fear courting controversy, examines the meaning of the name Cartimandua, and a few other well known characters from Tacitus's version of history. He goes on to question the interpretation of some Roman place names in the north. Anthony's ideas do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, but his plea to be critical and to follow the evidence most certainly does.

Fake news is not new. Names mentioned in ancient texts are often not historical but fictions invented to fit characters, in much the same way as Shakespeare invented Doll Tearsheet and Dickens invented Wackford Squeers. The process goes way back, for example to the Greek myth of a race between *Melanthos* ("Blackie") and *Xanthos* ("Blondie"). Rome had its *Romulus* and *Remus*, England had *Hengist* and *Horsa*, and so on down the centuries.

People do not like having the identity of their national hero (or the mental health of their religious leader) questioned, so casting doubt on a cherished myth tends not to be a good way to make friends. Prejudice can trump critical thinking in even the most distinguished professor's brain, as I found out when trying to publish an academic paper explaining that *Boudicca* was not Celtic for Victoria.

So there is not much to be gained from thinking intelligently about *Cartimandua*, who was queen of northern England at the time of Roman invasion. The explanation widely offered for her name – 'chasing pony', or something like that, in Celtic – is probably nonsense, but was of no great interest until RRRRA's York conference, when Rob Entwistle mentioned the neat Pythagorean triangle of Roman roads joining three Roman forts near Scotch Corner.

Rob speculated that those roads had been professionally surveyed to demarcate the boundary between land under full Roman control and a *Brigantian* client kingdom to its north. The ancient site of Stanwick, which was perhaps more of a country estate than a hill fort, was the base of some local leader, perhaps even *Cartimandua* herself. Hearing that almost made me fall off my chair, because that name potentially meant something like 'guardian of the map' in Latin.

The Roman historian Tacitus reported that *Cartimandua* called on the Romans for help when her husband *Venutius* rebelled and she took up with his armour-bearer *Vellocatus*. If Tacitus was up to his usual tricks

of inventing names, *Venutius* meant essentially 'Prince Charming' and *Vellocatus* meant 'cunning plucker', in a sort of dog Latin as favoured by Private Eye.

If the name *Cartimandua* was basically Latin, its first element resembles Graeco-Latin *χαρτης/charta* 'papyrus', which developed to mean anything written on paper, while Latin *mando* 'to commit to someone's charge' (literally 'give into hand') obviously led to the modern word *mandate*. Perhaps Roman map-making was so sophisticated that *cart-* had already started sense development to map (and hence the modern word *chart*) in Tacitus' day.

Some other early names began with *Cart-*, notably *CARTIVEL* on British coins, whose likely truncated second element **vellaunus* meant 'ruling'. All this tells us nothing about *Cartimandua*'s ethnicity, but it does reinforce the message that early names may contain useful nuggets of historical information, if only one can escape from preconceptions and look carefully at the data.

I want to appeal to Roman road researchers to keep their eyes open for possible solutions to some of the remaining puzzles about ancient place names in northern England. Take for example the last three names on *iter 1* of the Antonine Itinerary. *Derventione* was at Stamford Bridge, *Delgovicia* was probably at Malton, and *Praetorio* was probably at the coast, near Scarborough or Filey. Obsessive calculations of road mileages might narrow down where to dig for a lost *praetorium* 'commander's residence'.

All the main evidence about these names is posted online at www.romaneranames.uk, with an appeal for fresh eyes to look at the puzzles. The classic book about ancient names, by Rivet and Smith, cruelly besmirches the Ravenna Cosmography, which is actually a very reliable source of information. For example, the fort at Lanchester is named as *Lincovigla*, which is a perfect linguistic match to the fort's situation, vigilant on the *hlinc* 'hillside'. This liberates the name *Longovicio*, in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, to be shifted to its natural posi-



Cart Before Horse cont.....

Anthony Durham

tion on the Cumbrian coast and to its natural meaning of something like 'warship-building community'. A lot depends on how one imagines Roman bureaucrats recorded details of their establishments. The key to deciphering the Cosmography is to realise that it was based on tolerably accurate maps showing routes used by the army and its logistics ships.

Actually it is the *Notitia Dignitatum* that throws up the biggest problems, notably concerning Piercebridge, notorious for Raymond Selkirk's argument that the Romans built some kind of river-level-controlling weir(s) there in addition to any bridges. Its supposed Roman name *Morbio* has no easy translation, but the least bad parallel available is Welsh *morfa* 'salt-marsh', referring to some undiscovered Roman establishment downstream from there, near the mouth of the river Tees.

The most appropriate *Notitia* name for Piercebridge is *Arbeia*, from *Arbela* (modern Irbil in Kurdistan) where the garrison's Tigris barge-men came from. Unfortunately, that name is enthusiastically claimed by the store-house fort at South Shields, where Rivet and Smith placed it on the basis of invalid logic. At present, all I can do is to highlight problems in locating several names, without being able to clear up all the knock-on consequences. Another unlocated *Notitia* name is *Dic-tim* (possibly the same as *Dixio* in the Cosmography). Bright ideas please!

Ptolemy's Geography supplies latitude/longitude coordinates of places, but they are subject to random errors of tens of miles, plus some systematic errors. His *Dou-non Kolpos* '(hill)-fort bay' was somewhere on the coast, possibly in the general area of Whitby (*Antrum* in the Cosmography). On the whole, Ptolemy focused on native British sites, where seaborne traders could pitch their wares to customers, so one needs to look for a substantial population centre, possibly with a native hill-fort chaperoned by a Roman fort.

Ptolemy's *Kamoulodounon* was a polis (native power centre) of the Brigantes in the general area of Huddersfield, or so his sources led him to believe. Its location has never been positively identified, but Castle Hill, Almondbury remains a prime candidate, despite a lack of archaeological evidence for its occupation in the Roman period. The notion that the name was later borrowed from Almondbury (or Lindley Moor) and ap-

plied to the fort and vicus at Slack five miles away, as suggested by Rivet and others, does, however, seem a bit of a stretch. Actually three-and-a-half places with early names like *Camulodunum* are known. The word *camulus* was a diminutive of a word that survives as *kame* or *kaim*, so it meant something like 'little hill'. The idea that there was a god called *Camulus* is nonsense, except in the psalmist's sense of "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help".

And so back to where this article began: beware fake news. Everyone who writes about the past puts ideas into the heads of long-lost, mysterious people. Lots of clever scholars have written along these lines "If name *nnnnn* was created in a Celtic language, its meaning was *xxxxx*." Far too often that gets improperly transmuted into "*Nnnnn* was Celtic, therefore everyone at that place or around that person spoke Celtic." Don't be fooled.

And, oh yes – the name *Boudicca*, as reported by Tacitus. Maybe he got the name from an Iberian word for 'dairy maid' related to modern butter, or from a Germanic word for 'boss woman' related to modern forbode, or maybe from a Celtic word for 'booty hunter' related to modern Welsh *budd* 'profit'. Take your pick, but beware the seductive appeals of romantic nationalism and argument from authority. Stay sceptical, demand to see evidence, and live with the uncertainties that necessarily follow from fuzzy data.

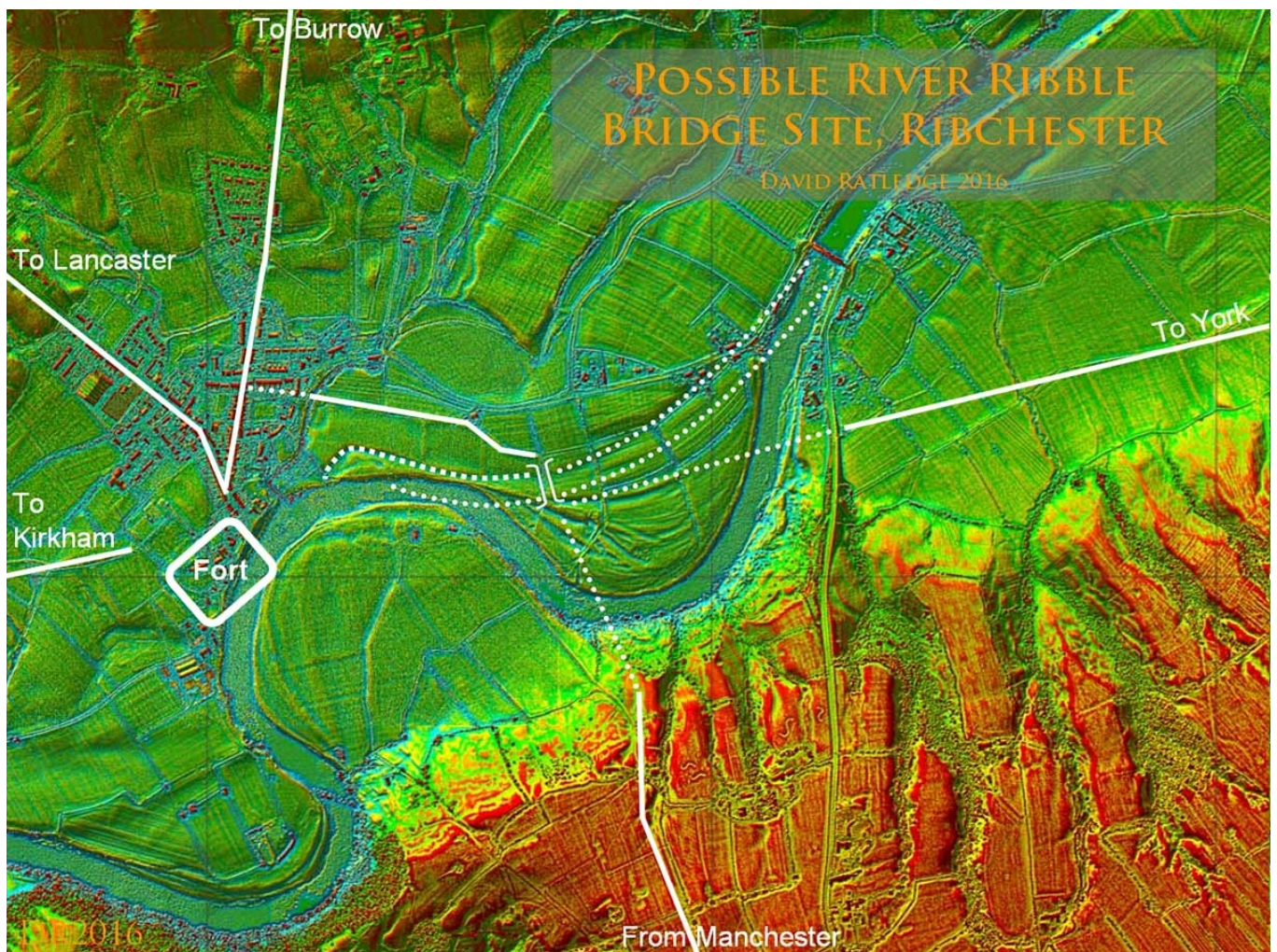
Anthony Durham, 14 April 2017

The possible location of the Roman Bridge, Ribchester, Lancashire

David Ratledge *(author of the Lancashire pages on the RRRRA website)*

The site of the Roman bridge at Ribchester over the River Ribble has been the subject of much speculation. Perhaps with the advent of Lidar we can now make an informed guess as to where it could well have been located.

The route of the road down to the Ribble valley from Manchester and that of the road to York are visible in the Lidar data giving strong clues as to the bridge's possible location. Also visible is the probable linking road from Ribchester near Beech House. Note there is no evidence for the road from Manchester bypassing Ribchester and continuing on towards Jeffrey Hill. To get to Jeffrey Hill and the north then a diversion into Ribchester was evidently necessary.



Despite these clear indication of the roads approaching the bridge site, the big unknown remained - where precisely was the river? Clearly it has moved over the centuries - witness the destruction of around a third of the fort itself. However, also visible in Lidar are earlier courses of the river, perhaps those dating from Roman times. Given that the roads would have been aligned on the bridge then its position can be surmised and figure 1 could therefore represent a possible location for the Roman Bridge. Given the southwards movement of the river, then the northern abutment would represent the best chance for survival. But would there be any supporting evidence?

The possible location of the Roman Bridge, Ribchester cont.....

Fortunately, in November 2016, the opportunity arose during a watching brief at Beech House to explore the possible locations. Thanks are due to Nigel Neil and the landowner Mr Paul for their help and assistance.

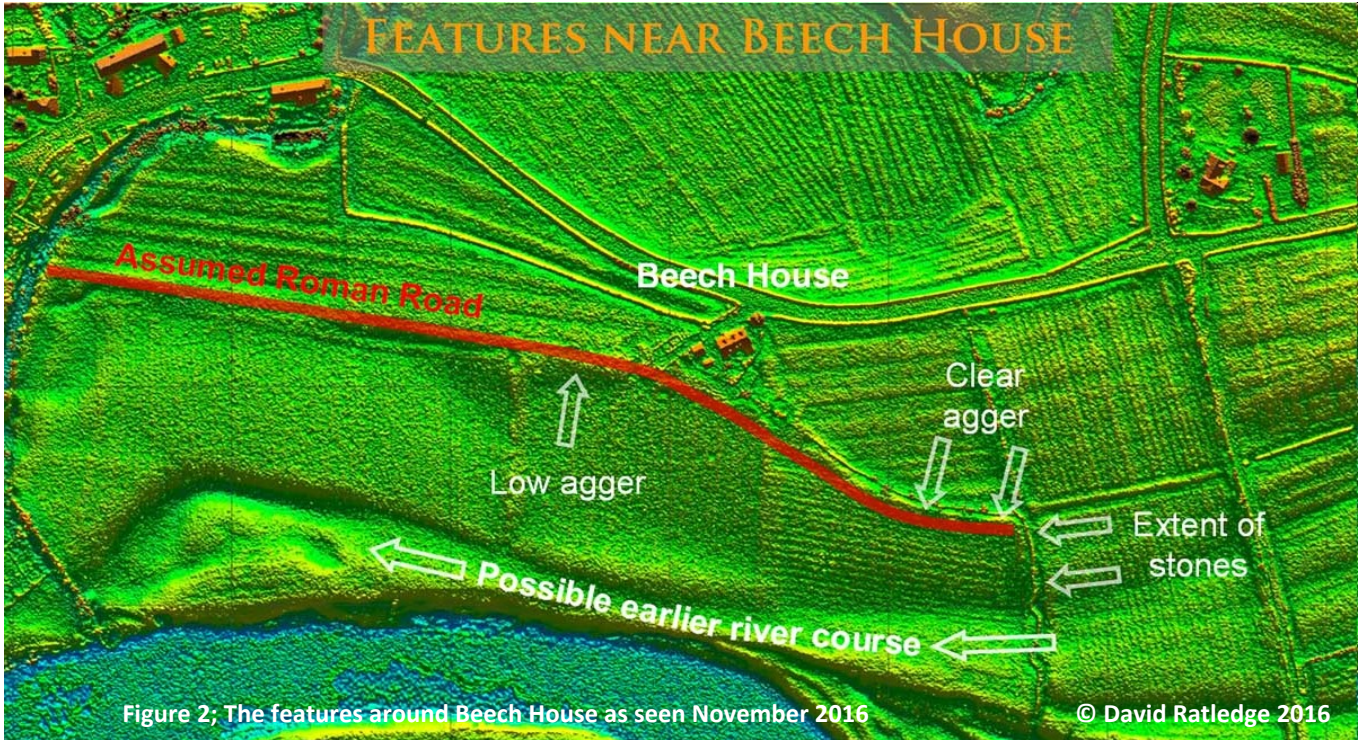


Figure 2; The features around Beech House as seen November 2016

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There were traces of an agger at two spots and where the possible bridge was surmised there was a large assemblage of stones including one dressed sandstone block. There were none elsewhere. Does one dressed stone make a bridge? Probably not but it is a logical position for a bridge bearing in mind the alignment of the roads and the possible old river course there. The coordinates of the possible bridge's north abutment would be SD6566 3522. on the ground?

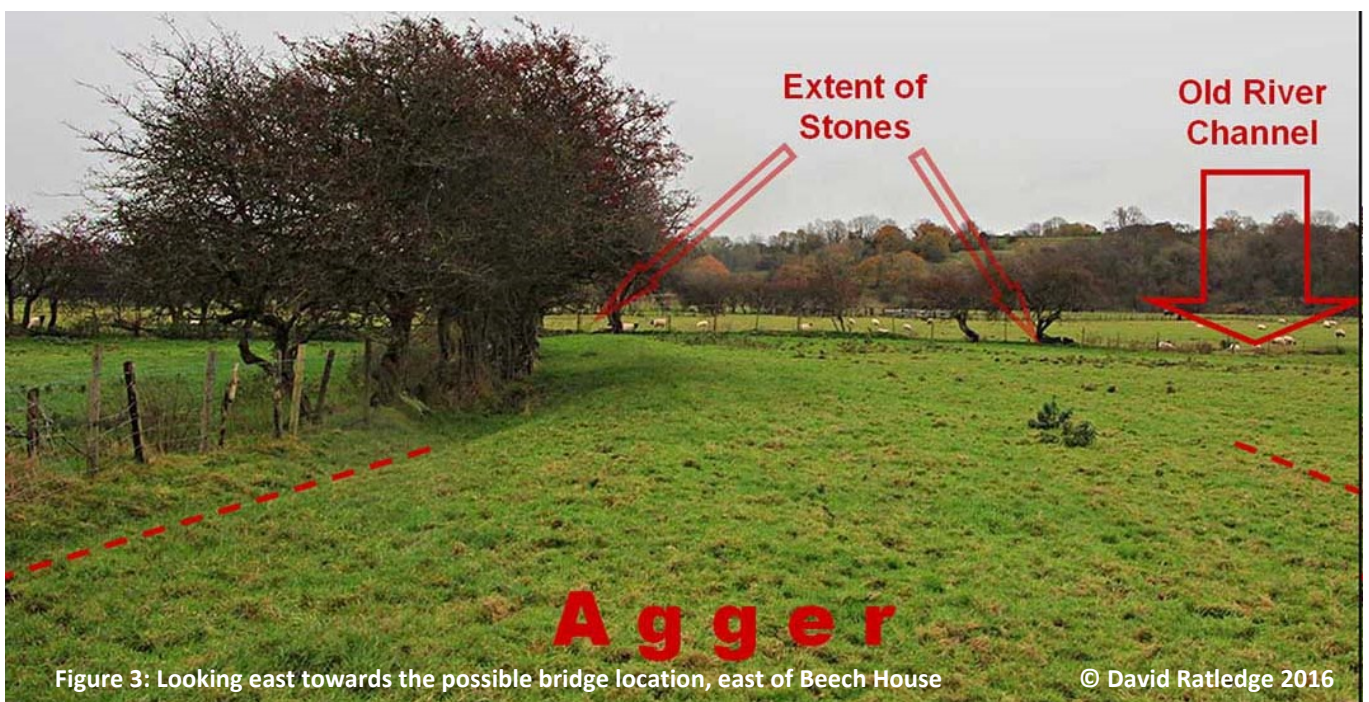


Figure 3: Looking east towards the possible bridge location, east of Beech House

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More detail of David's work on this road, and others in Lancashire, can be viewed on our website at : <http://www.romanroads.org/gazetteer/lancspages.html>