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NEWSLETTER

No.27 Autumn 2023

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

From the Editor, Hannah Collingridge

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter - a good chunky offering, perfect for mulling over on dark evenings. It's good to see that material from previous newsletters is providing material for debate, not least because it proves some of you are reading the letter in the first place.

It's also AGM time again - 30th November. Note the date and send your offers of help and how to improve the society to Dave Armstrong - there's more about this below.

Send your newsletter bits to me via [this mail link](#), although Dave will send things on if you forget and send them to him.

Enjoy.

Cheers, Han

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Suffolk's Roman Roads - Progress and Puzzles

David Ratledge

Introduction

Since my Itinera 2023 article regarding Suffolk's Roman Roads was written (Ratledge, 2023) there have been some very recent developments so I have accordingly updated my map for the county (fig. 1). I also took the opportunity to add to the map the extent of the Fens at the time of the Romans (Pryor, 2001). It helps explain the routes the Romans adopted in that area of East Anglia.

The updates included are as a result of Geoff Lunn's spotting the correct location for the road from Ixworth leading into Long Melford (RR33a). This was excellent spotting of clear lidar evidence that ticks all the boxes – several features in several fields that all align. It would appear that the road could well have passed under Long Melford Hall. This casts some doubt on how the road from Wixoe (RR34a) would have approached Long Melford so I have cut that back that road slightly awaiting (hopefully) local developments.

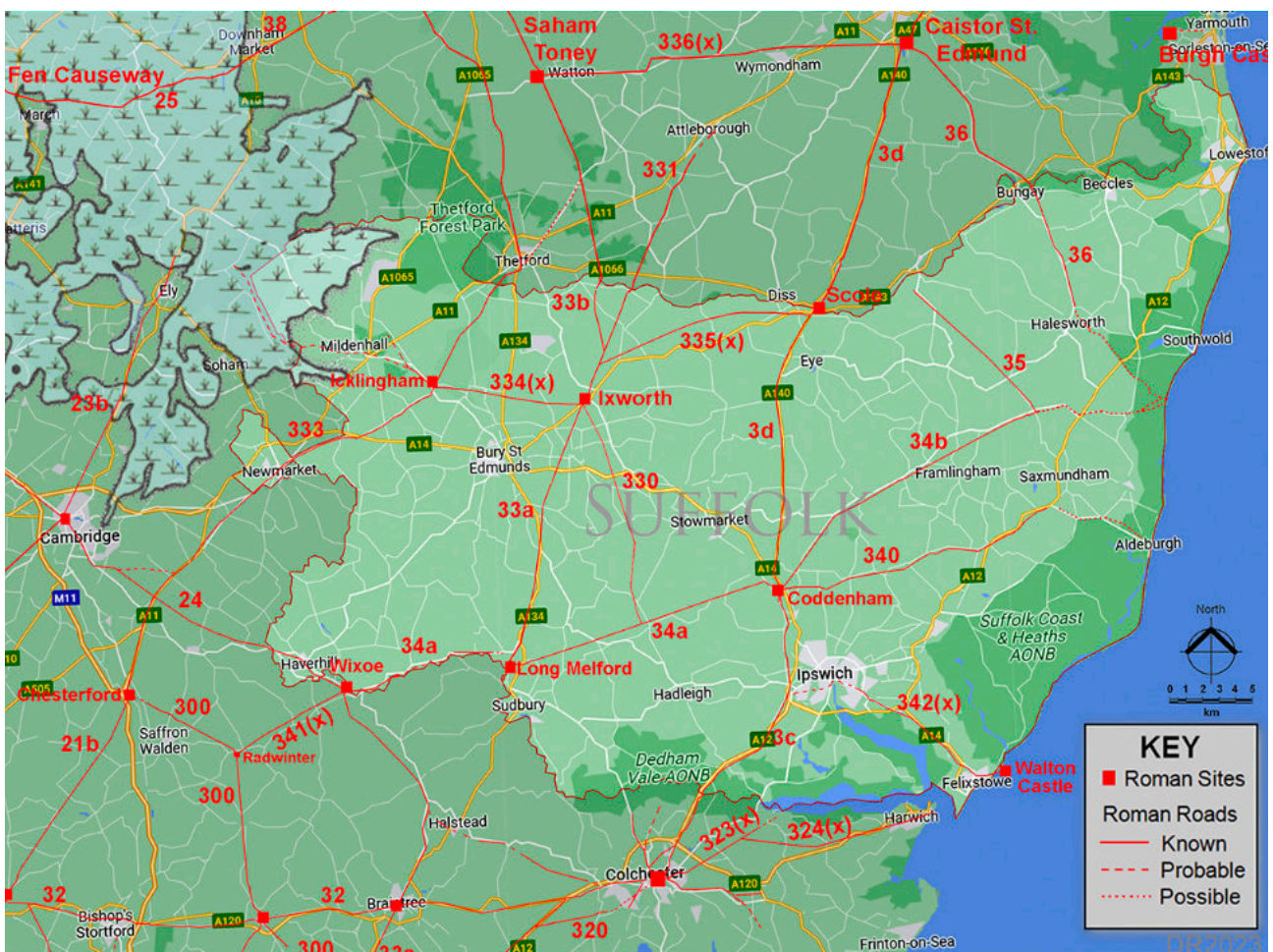


Fig. 1: The updated Roman Road map for Suffolk. The extent of the Fens is derived from Pryor. Base mapping is copyright Google Maps.

However, I have not included Geoff's suggested road from Holton St Mary (about half way between Ipswich and Colchester on RR3c) to Long Melford. My reasoning is set out below but I will leave it up to the reader to decide if it is indeed a *bone fide* Roman road.

Holton St Mary to Long Melford – Roman Road or No Road?

The possibility of a road south-east from Long Melford was investigated in 2020 as part of my lidar research into the Roman roads in Suffolk. Whilst some traces of possible *aggers* were spotted, on closer inspection, these had more mundane explanations. The other important test was 'did they link to a series of *agger*-like features forming a coherent alignment'. In fact I was unable to find anything supportive in my lidar images for Roman road south-east of Long Melford. However, in the light of new evidence being presented by Geoff (Lunn, 2023), this has been re-evaluated using the latest lidar data. This has proved to be a highly trustworthy indicator and has a great track record of showing every other Suffolk Roman road.

Geoff has clearly put a lot of effort into his investigation and written it up well. However, I am very doubtful of his conclusion but, in a more positive vein, I will explain the features and clues I look for when assessing lidar imagery for potential Roman roads. I will go through Geoff's evidence in sequential order along the road south to north rather than in the order Geoff showed them and put forward my reasoning as we go along.

1. Holton St Mary – Junction on RR3c to Shelley Hall

The existence of a junction off RR3c at Holton St Mary (about halfway between Ipswich and Colchester) is not disputed. However, it is narrow and has no associated *agger* visible in the lidar imagery (fig. 2 top). It is hard to explain how, in the same field, an *agger* on the junction road could have disappeared whilst that of RR3c has survived with clarity. Unless, of course, it never had an *agger*.

We should clearly expect frequent minor side road junctions. What better place to farm or trade than alongside a Roman road. There is a very similar one on another RR junction in Suffolk (Hinderclay) where again the side roads are narrow, have no *aggers* and were just local. This would appear the most likely scenario at Holton St Mary – a local road of low quality, hence built without an *agger*.

Note - locating the *Ad Ansam* site here does not match the two complementary mileages for it nor is the meaning of the name (at the bend of a river) applicable to this site.

The causeway to Shelley Hall was spotted in 2020 (fig. 2 bottom). It is straight but



Figure 2: Top - the junction location on RR3c. There is no *agger* visible for the junction road in the fields either side of the modern road. Bottom - the causeway to Shelley Hall. Note how narrow it is (compare to RR3c at the top at the same scale). It also ends very abruptly and so can never have carried any further on. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023

appears far too narrow. The comparison with RR3c at the same scale provides a very stark contrast (fig. 2). The surviving Roman *aggers* in Suffolk, and there are plenty of them, generally look like fig. 2 top and not like fig. 2 bottom. It is also very well defined so it cannot really have suffered 2000 years of weathering. River flood plains are notorious for covering over road *aggers* with silt from floods. Also evident are several old courses of the river but the causeway passes over them with only the current river meander cutting through it, again pointing to youth. Reference was made to the cut(ting) passing Shelley Hall. Certainly there is a cutting but it ends abruptly and clearly never carried any further on than the back of Shelley Hall. All in all this is not a feature I would contemplate as being a Roman road.

2. Shelley Hall to Sprotts Farm

There is a faint feature beyond Shelley Hall, one of the very few over the 15km length of the road, but it is just a single feature. There are also several similar ones nearby well off the road line. Single features are far too risky to base any theory on.

Beyond Newhouse Farm/Rockalls Hall then the road has to cross the Sprotts Farm valley (fig. 3). Here we encounter Geoff's figs. 14 & 15 showing "tramlines" i.e. suggested road ditches (fig. 4). The first actually has the tramlines at an angle of 10 degrees to the line of the road, which casts doubt on precisely what they represent.

Crossing the valley we would expect to see a cutting or terraces easing the gradient but nothing. These do tend to survive well as they are more difficult to plough away in such places. The valley bottom feature would appear to be the northernmost of three "relic dams" rather than a road *agger*. Climbing out of the valley then the "raised bank in line with road" is clearly a natural side valley, of which there are numerous ones here. Aggressive lidar processing can show features in high contrast but what they actually represent can then be lost (fig. 4 top).

That leaves Geoff's fig. 15 which is oddly way off line for no justifiable reason. It is perhaps worrying for the authenticity of such tramline features when the two referenced for here then the first is not correctly aligned and the second is not on line.

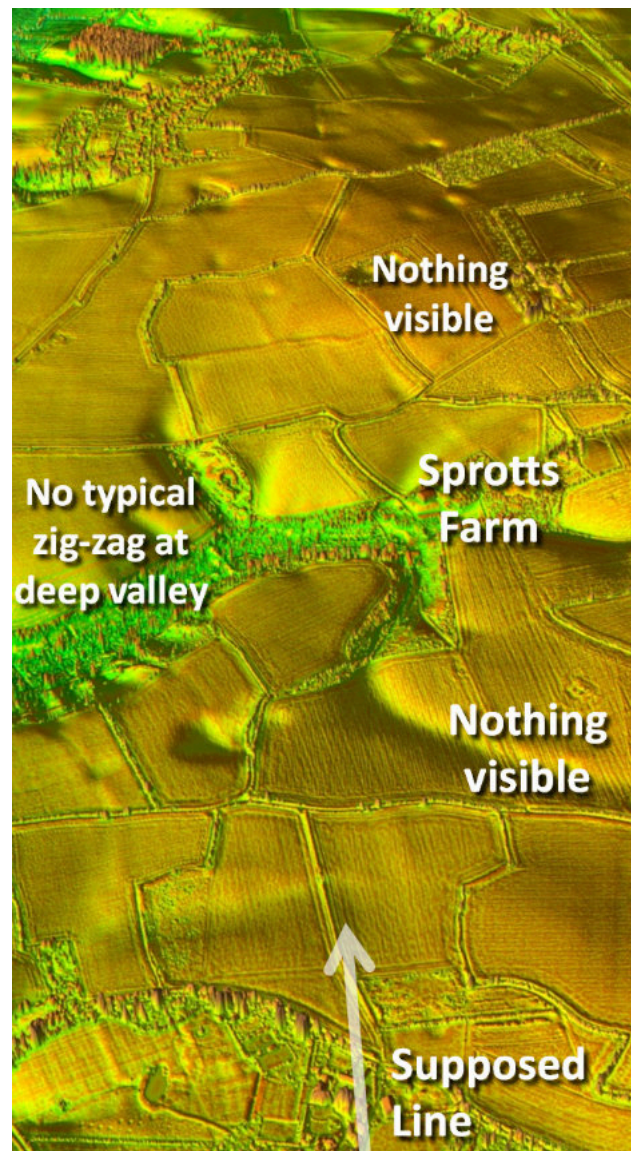


Fig. 3: Oblique lidar image for the route crossing the valley at Sprotts Farm. Lidar fails to show any indications of a Roman road. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

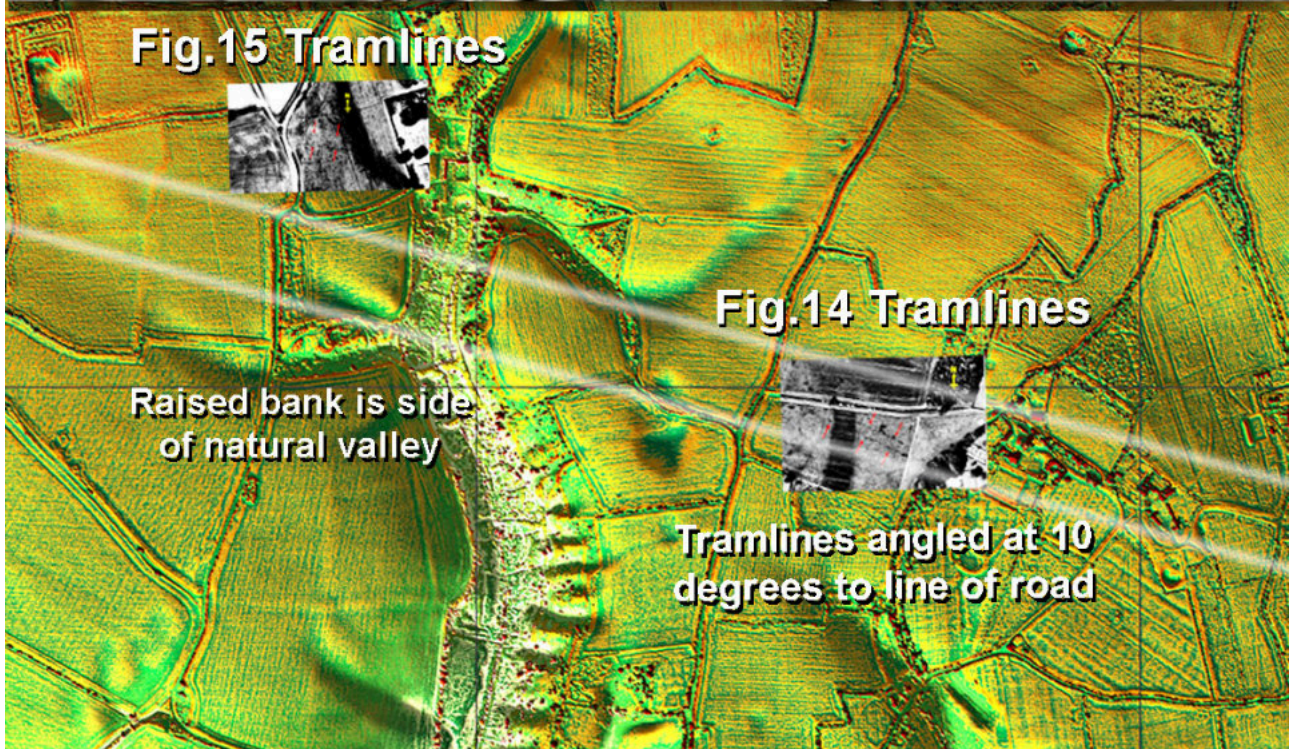
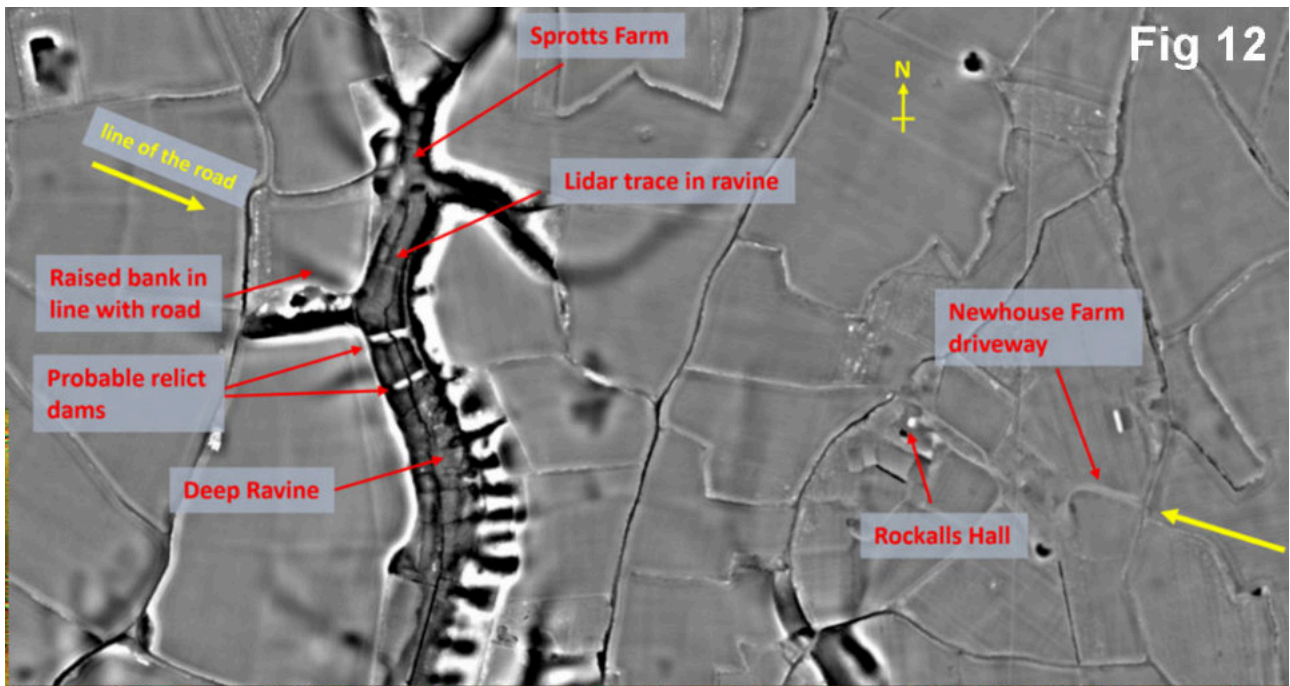


Fig. 4: Top is Geoff's lidar image of Sprotts Valley, his fig.12. Bottom is a more naturally processed lidar image of the same area with the location of the tramlines spotted by Geoff (his figs.14 & 15). Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

3. Stone Street

With that name surely it must be a Roman road? In the rest of the country probably yes but in East Anglia there must be hundreds of “street” names with the vast majority nowhere near a Roman road. A quick scan just away from the road spotted Thorrington, Scotland, Mill, Upper, Higher, Harrow, Wicker, Sherbourne and Broad Streets.

Approaching the next valley at Stone Street then we have Geoff's fig. 8, which this time appears to be an old field boundary or perhaps field edge ditches rather than tramlines. The lidar equivalent is shown in fig. 6 here. There is simply no trace of a potential road.

The Stone Street valley is much less steep than that at Sprotts Farm so cuttings or terraces would not be expected. The line could continue straight across but again nothing is visible in the valley (fig. 5).

On the other side of the valley is Geoff's fig. 6 this time with tramlines (fig. 7). These do look convincing, perhaps the best that Geoff has found and this time they are on line. They continue about one third the way across the second (left) field and then stop (Geoff's last red arrow). They do not seem to continue any further. Of course the reason could be they were ploughed away from there on but there are very similar lines just beyond their end but this time running more north-south but these have not been ploughed away. That is perhaps harder to explain away.

Generally if aerial photos show a Roman road then lidar will do so too and invariably much clearer. I have come across one instance (in Essex) where lidar showed nothing but the parallel road ditches (tramlines) were visible in aerial photos. However, they were aligned with a long stretch of *agger* visible in lidar so not in doubt. In this case we have no supporting lidar evidence aligned with them and they do disappear even when the other similar lines in the field do not.

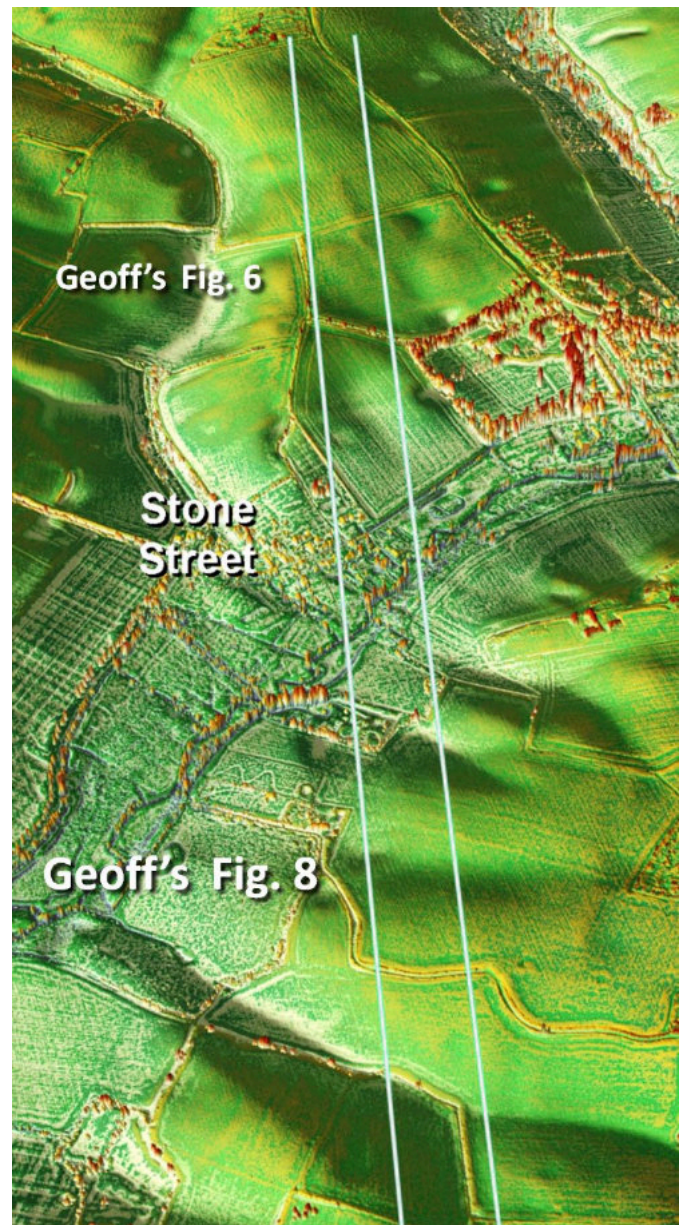


Fig. 5: Oblique lidar image for the route crossing the valley at Stone Street. The location of Geoff's figs. 8 & 6 are shown. Lidar fails to show any indications of a Roman road. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

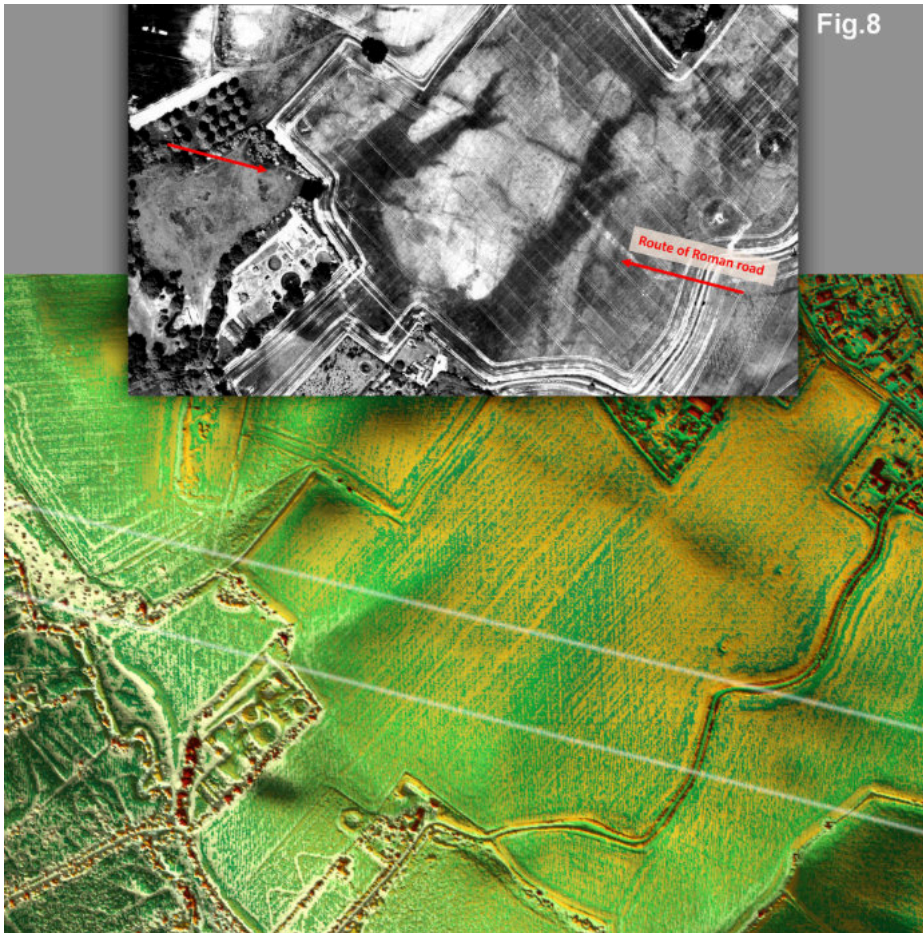


Fig. 6: Top is Geoff's fig. 8 aerial photo of a field before Stone Street. Bottom is the equivalent lidar image. Lidar fails to show any indications of an agger of a Roman road. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

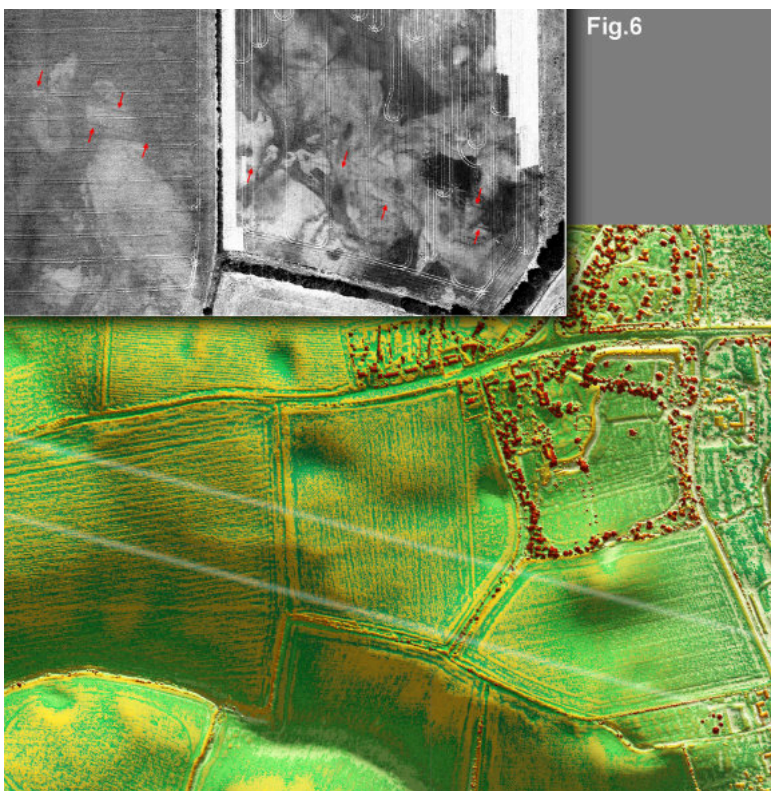


Fig. 7: Top is Geoff's fig. 6 aerial photo of two fields after Stone Street with tramlines visible. Bottom is the equivalent lidar image but also showing an adjacent field. Lidar fails to show any indications of a Roman road agger in any of the fields. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

4. Stone Street to Waldingfield Disused Airfield

Beyond the west side of the valley at Stone Street is the next feature recorded (Geoff's fig. 15), located near Langley Hall on Boxford Lane. I could not see what Geoff was highlighting here so loaded the GoogleEarth original (07/2018) that he referenced. Using a variety of sharpening algorithms I was still unable to see anything on the road line only a general jumble of natural features (fig. 8 middle). However, more significantly for me, the lidar imagery showed the gently rolling nature of the field with no semblance of ever having had a major road across it (fig. 8 bottom).

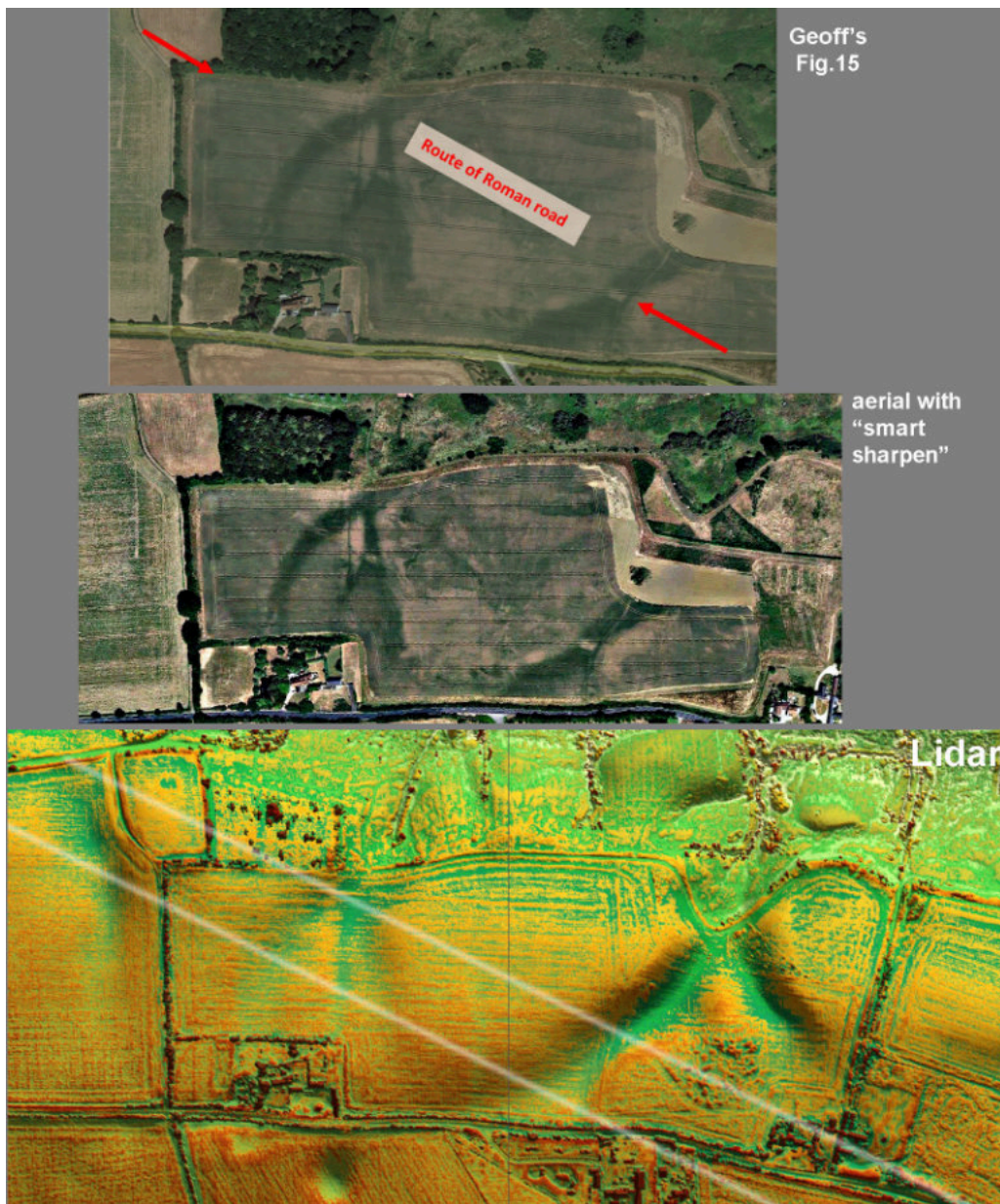


Figure 8: Top: Geoff's fig. 6 aerial photo of a field beyond Boxford Lane.

Middle: the original aerial photo sharpened using Photoshop "smart sharpen".

Bottom: lidar image of the same field but failing to show any suggestion of a Roman road. Aerial Photos: GoogleEarth. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

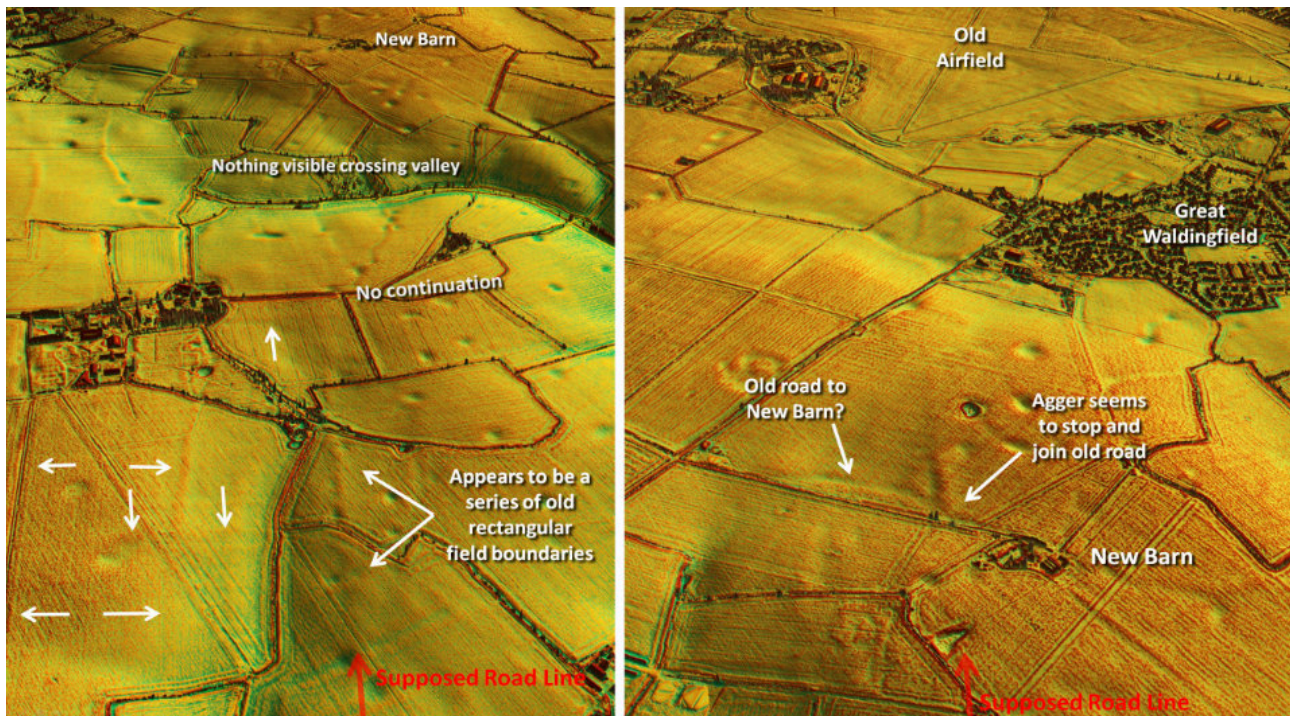


Fig. 9: Oblique lidar image for the route passing New Barn and approaching the old airfield. At first glance there does appear to be road aggers present but on closer examination both seem to have more mundane explanations. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

Some lidar evidence that looked much more promising was spotted in 2020 on the south side of Waldingfield disused airfield. There are two features there, which appear *agger*-like, and Geoff referred to them but were not shown in his article. There is a gap between them over a small valley but nothing is visible there. On closer examination of the southern feature (fig. 9 left) then there are clear indications of old rectangular field system with several old field boundaries evident there. The supposed road *agger* appears to be the easterly boundary of two of the old fields and there is a very similar feature running parallel to it on the westerly side of the old fields. The feature stops at the extent of the old fields, which is a strong indicator of it being just a field boundary.

The northern feature is located beyond New Barn and closer to the airfield (fig. 9 right). There are indications of an old road or track to New Barn and the supposed road *agger* actually appears to join the old track with no continuation to the south of it. It would therefore appear to be most likely an old track to New Barn.

5. Waldingfield Airfield to Long Melford

Beyond the airfield there are no potential indications – I would be looking for multiple features in multiple fields and all aligned. Geoff has highlighted what looks like natural little depression which doesn't align with any other features in the 2km between the airfield and Long Melford (figure 10). The feature is a single feature in a single field and in reality not a convincing one.

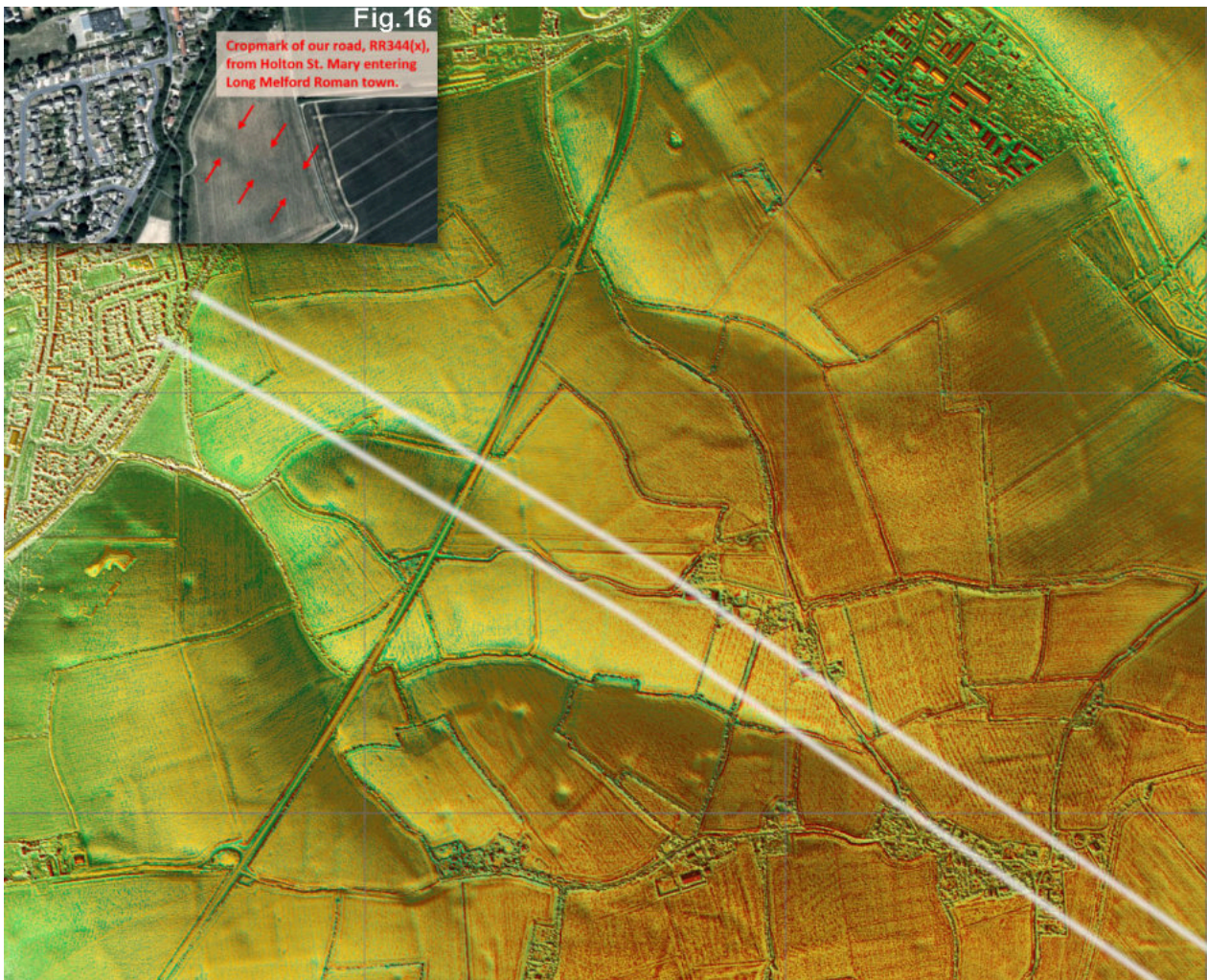


Figure 10: Top is (part of) Geoff's fig. 16 aerial photo of Long Melford. Bottom is the equivalent lidar image but of much wider field. Lidar fails to show any indications of a Roman road and the "cropmark" appears to be a single natural depression. Base lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

Summary

Unfortunately, I was unable to find any credible lidar imagery to support a 15km Roman road from Holton St Mary to Long Melford. How does this compare to the known Roman roads in Suffolk? The one immediately to the north, Long Melford to Coddendam (34a) passes through similar open country. Virtually over its full length then lidar reveals a very obvious course with *aggers*. To its south is RR3c and, where not covered by modern roads, has multiple *aggers* visible.

Yes all roads have gaps where the lidar imagery shows nothing at all and all of Suffolk's Roman roads do have gaps, but every other one has considerable lengths where lidar does show very clearly the road and its *agger*. This is not the case with this road.

I will leave it to others to decide if this is indeed a Roman road. If you think it is a Roman road then perhaps the critical question is why have all the other Roman road *aggers* in Suffolk survived sufficiently to be clear in lidar imagery but here they have not? Was it a road built without an *agger*, possibly uniquely in that case, or have all the landowners diligently removed every last trace?



References

Lunn, Geoff, 2023, 'A Roman road from Holton St. Mary to Long Melford in Suffolk', RRRRA Newsletter, Summer 2023.

Pryor, Francis, 2001, *The Flag Fen Basin. Archaeology and Environment of a Fenland Landscape*, English Heritage Archaeological Reports, Swindon, English Heritage.

Ratledge, David, 2023, 'The Roman Roads of Suffolk - a Lidar Reappraisal', *Itinera Volume III*.



Wayside stone crosses and Roman Roads in Lancashire

David Ashworth

Abstract

It is shown that the positions of medieval wayside stone crosses can be used to locate the possible alignments of presently obliterated and hitherto unsuspected Roman roads. Three such possible roads have been located in central Lancashire, and a fourth in the upper Ribble valley. In all these cases the alignment of the cross line continues to a known or suspected Roman site. An alternative explanation for the function of some wayside crosses is also suggested.

Background

Although, in this technological age, lidar is the method of choice for unearthing almost obliterated Roman roads it has its limitations e.g. where the road is completely obliterated, and more traditional methods still have a place. Amongst these is the novel use of medieval wayside crosses, which can be used even when all trace of the original road has vanished.

It is generally accepted that wayside stone crosses started to be erected in the 9th century and the practice continued until the 15th century. In Tudor, post-reformation, times these crosses were seen as symbols of Catholicism and many crosses were removed and destroyed, although their base pedestals were left in place. Over time many of the crosses surviving that purge have since disappeared, although the positions of many of them were fortunately recorded on early O.S. maps.

Whilst a few wayside crosses marked on early O.S. maps are remote from any roads or settlements the majority are located on medieval roads, but with a significant minority located on known Roman roads. The Wigan to Walton-le-Dale Roman road alone has at least 6 crosses, the Walton-le-Dale to Garstang road has 3 and the Burscough to Hesketh Bank road has 3. This does not include locations named e.g. Cross House, where it is reasonable to suppose a cross once stood but has since been destroyed.

Where crosses are fairly closely spaced on Roman roads i.e. just one or two miles apart, 3 or more successive crosses usually follow the straight line of the road. An example of this can be seen on the stretch of known Roman road from Walton-le-Dale to Leyland (map 3) where 3 crosses lie in a straight line.

The reason for the erection of these crosses is generally thought to be that they denoted religious sites, or waymarked processional routes, i.e. they would need to have been erected on or close to roads. Whilst some of them may have performed these functions it is difficult to see what function those crosses marked on early O.S. maps as being in the middle of a field or on a bare hillside i.e. remote from any roads or settlements, could have performed. An alternative explanation for the function of some of these crosses is suggested below.

An alternative function of wayside crosses

After Christianity was introduced into the country in the 7th century by St. Aidan the religion gained ground and by the 9th century was spreading throughout the country. At this time Christian stone crosses may well have been erected on many roads existing at that time, including Roman roads (some of which were still in use) to serve the purpose of medieval evangelistic



billboards, proclaiming the message to any traveller on the old roads that Christianity was around and was here to stay. In some instances Christian religious fervour may have led to the destruction of some objects seen as pagan e.g. Roman milestones, and their replacement by stone crosses. This could explain an interesting observation made below.

Using wayside crosses to uncover “new” Roman roads

Roman roads are characteristically straight over long distances, and stone crosses erected on them would thus be aligned in a straight line. An example of this has already been noted above. The occurrence on a map of a more-or-less straight line of 3 or more crosses covering a distance of several miles could therefore trace the ghostly outline of an obliterated, long-forgotten Roman road. In fact, the existence of a straight line of crosses spanning several miles of terrain but not following any obvious feature is exactly what would be expected if the crosses had been erected on a now obliterated Roman road. Three such instances of this have now been discovered in central Lancashire, with a possible fourth in the upper Ribble valley. These are:

Inglewhite – Cabus	map 1
Preston – Longridge Fell	map 2
Bolton-by-Bowland – Long Preston (possible)	map 3
Walton-le-Dale – Withnell	map 4

Each of these routes is dealt with more fully later.

An early O.S. map is needed to show the exact position of the crosses. The earliest such map readily available for Lancashire is the 1846 O.S. map, but the 1890 and 1910 O.S. maps show more crosses more precisely marked. These county maps show many wayside stone crosses, which were particularly abundant in west and central Lancashire.

In addition to the Roman road scenario there are two other possibilities which could account for a linear alignment of 3 or more crosses. The alignment of the crosses could be due to chance, or they could depict a medieval (in origin) feature which lies in a straight line across several miles of terrain. Each of these scenarios will now be discussed.

Could it be due to chance?

To determine whether the alignment could be due to chance the linearity of a line of crosses (i.e. the goodness of fit of the cross positions to the best straight line drawn through them) has to be determined. This can be done by determining the positions of the crosses on the old O.S. map, transposing them to a 1:50,000 O.S. map and determining the coordinates of the crosses. On-line maps make this particularly easy. From the cross coordinates the Pearson correlation coefficient, r , (one measure of the goodness of fit of experimentally determined points to a straight line, 0 implying no fit, and 1 implying a perfect fit) of the regression line (the line which has the closest fit to the majority of points) can be calculated, and an estimate made of the probability that the linear alignment occurred by chance. The results are that in all linear alignments of crosses so far discovered the correlation coefficients range from 0.9928 to 1.0000. These extremely high values show clearly that in all cases there is a negligible probability of the alignment occurring by chance. There is no coincidental lining up here. The alignment is quite deliberate and an alternative plausible explanation must be sought.



Could it be due to a medieval feature?

The alternative explanation, that of a medieval (in origin) feature which lies in a straight line across several miles of terrain, is difficult to consider credible. Only a road could fulfil this criterion and it would be most unusual for a medieval road to be ruler-straight over these distances.





The Roman road scenario

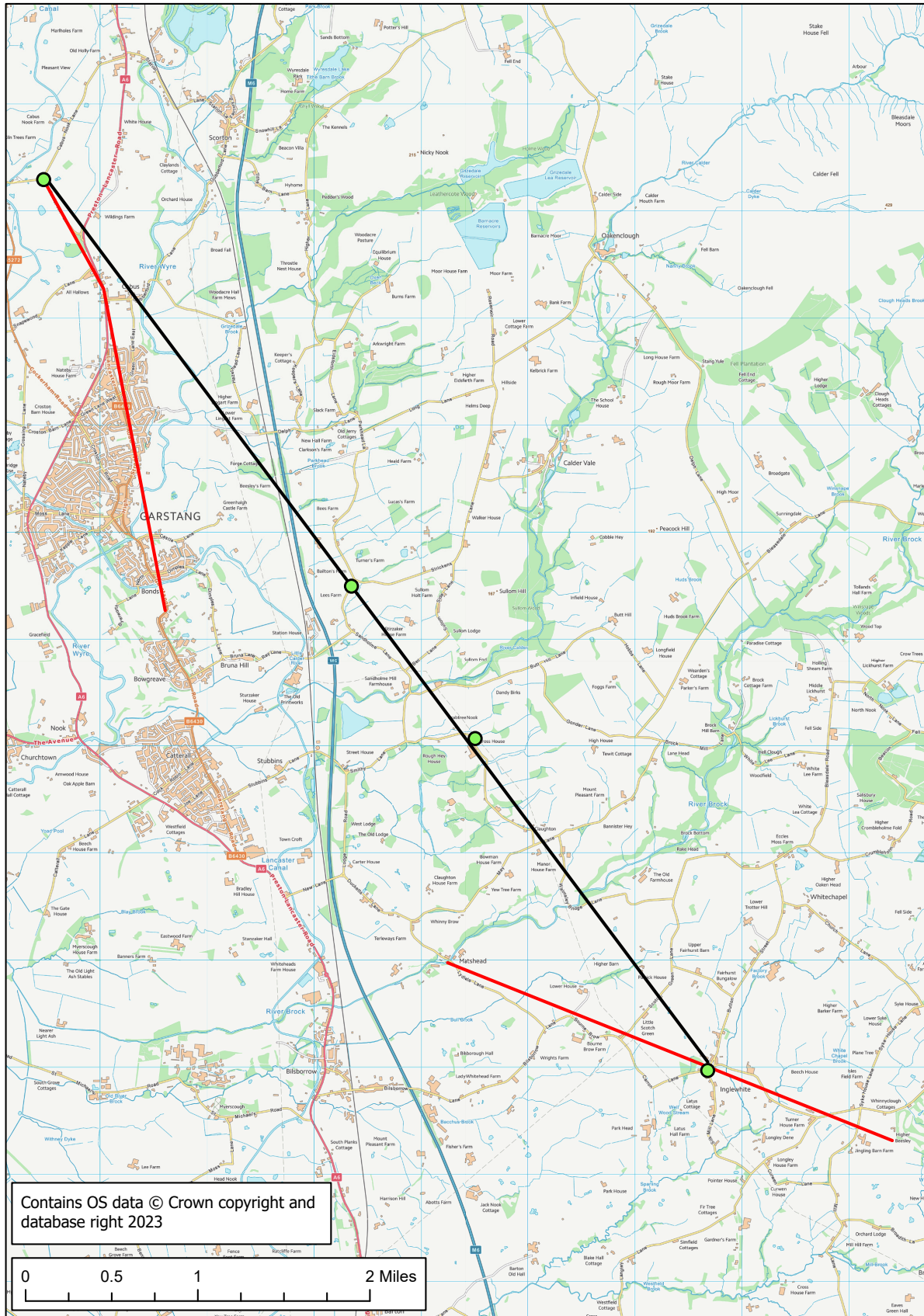
A Roman road is usually the only plausible explanation to account for the above observations and argument. There is, however, additional supporting evidence. It could be argued that, in an area with abundant crosses, it might not be too difficult to find three adjacent crosses in a straight line. However, the regression line would not point in a direction that was significant. The crucial difference between that scenario and the one presented here is that in the present scenario at least three of the four roads mentioned above continue their alignment at one or both ends to meet a known Roman site, or a known Roman road on the same alignment. What this means is that the crosses were erected on a straight line feature covering several miles of terrain pointing directly at a known Roman site. Is there any plausible explanation other than that of a Roman road? An already known example of this is shown by the line of crosses on the Walton – Wigan road (map 3) from Leyland northwards, which points straight at the known Walton-le-Dale Roman site. If the existence of this road was unknown it could readily be deduced from the line of crosses.

The regression lines, as shown on the maps below, do not necessarily indicate the exact line of the Roman road. They are simply the best straight lines through the cross positions as shown on the map. If any crosses have been moved slightly in the intervening centuries since they were erected, that would affect the position of the regression line, which consequently may not point exactly at the site to which the Roman road was directed.

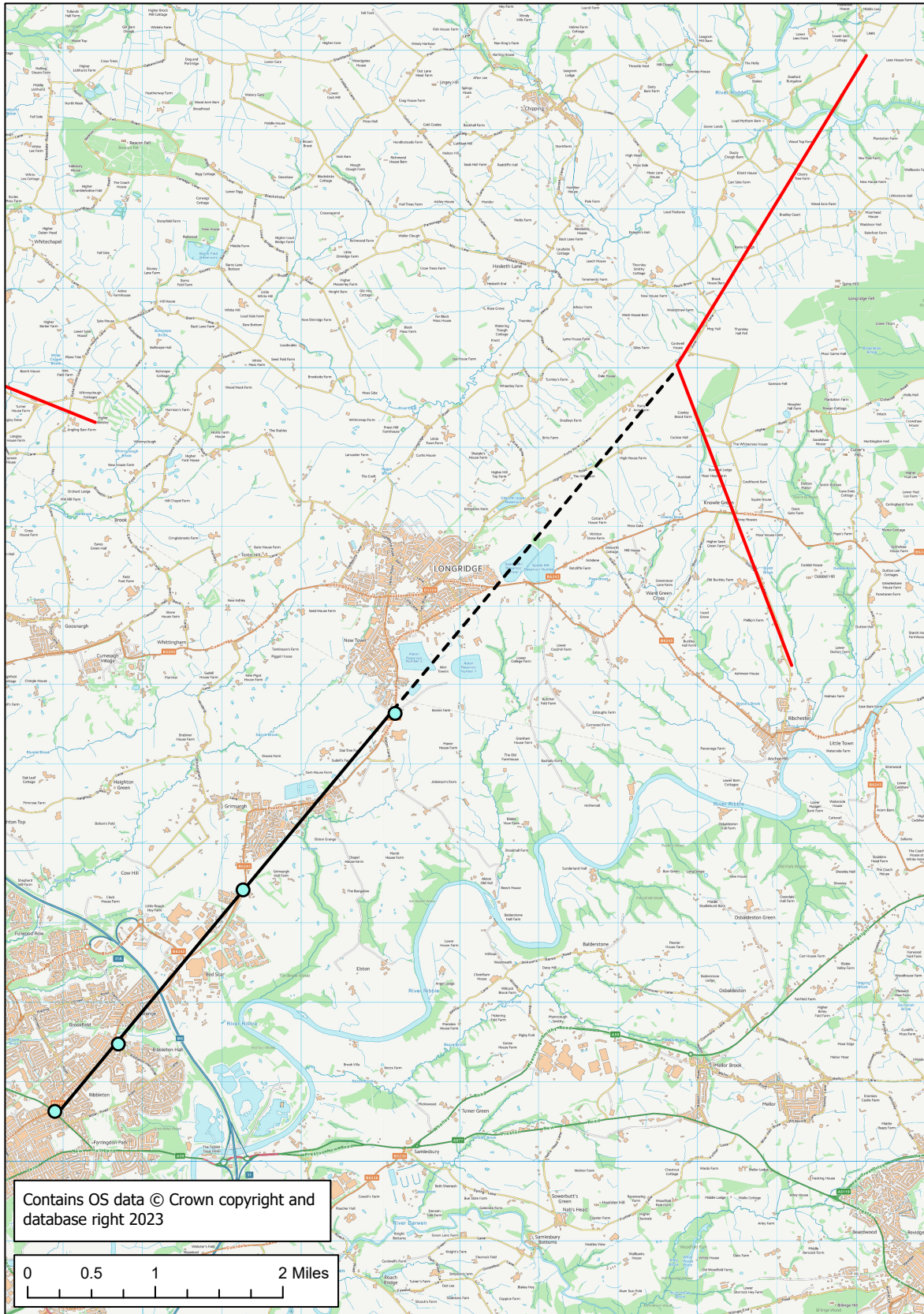
In addition to the incidence of wayside crosses on Roman roads, another facet of interest is their spacing i.e. the distance between successive crosses. On some (a minority of) Roman roads the spacing is, within 5%, a multiple of 1 Roman mile. This is seen most clearly on the Walton-le-Dale to Wigan road (map 3), where 3 pair of crosses have a spacing of 1, or an integer multiple of 1, Roman mile (one pair is at Euxton, not shown on the map). As mentioned earlier one explanation for this could be that they were erected on the site of, or in the close vicinity of, Roman milestones.

General Map Key

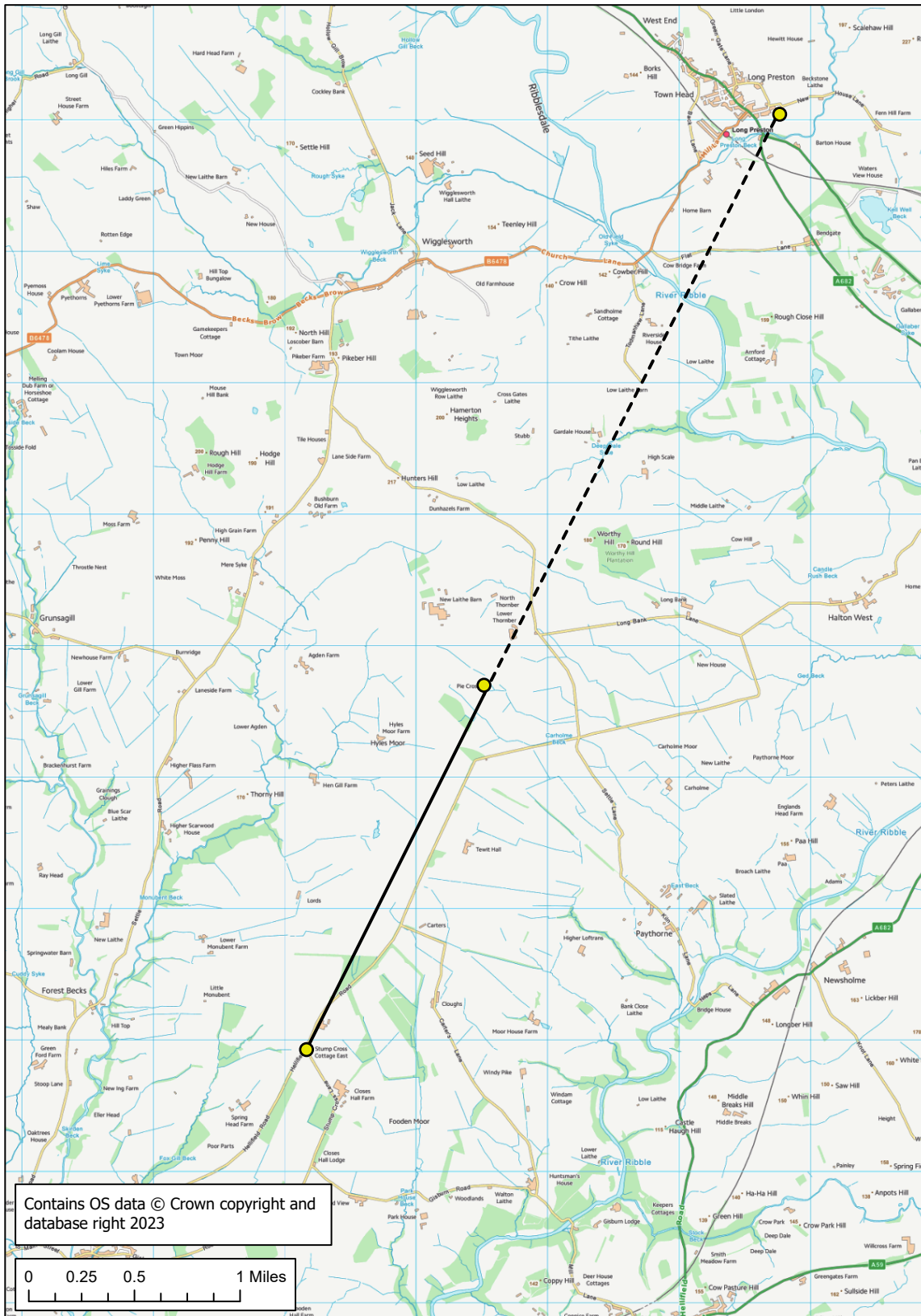
-  Wayside cross position
-  Known Roman road
-  Regression line i.e. best straight line through cross positions, marking the approximate position of the Roman road
-  Continuation from last cross position to known Roman road or site



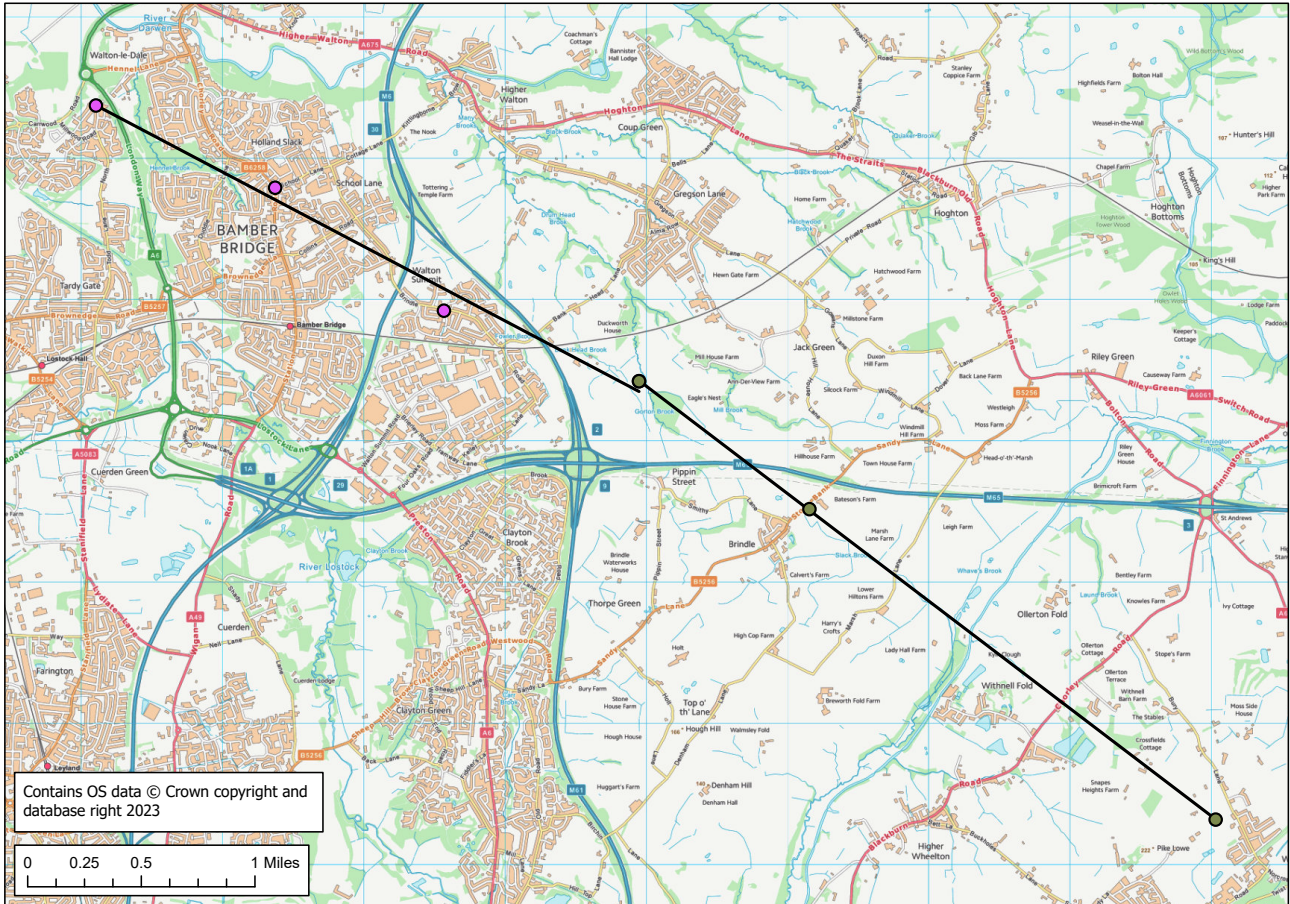
Map 1: Inglewhite to Cabus



Map 2: Preston to Longridge Fell



Map 3: Bolton-by-Bowland – Long Preston (possible)



Map 4: Walton-le-Dale – Withnell

Results

The alignment and spacing of wayside crosses, and the continuation of the alignment at one or both ends to a known Roman site has suggested several hitherto unsuspected Roman roads in central and west Lancashire:

Inglewhite – Cabus (map 1) $r = 0.9993$

This was presumably part of the road from Ribchester – Lancaster, following the route described by Ratledge from Ribchester to Inglewhite. Ratledge has the road continuing to Catterall but the line of crosses suggests an additional direct route to Cabus, where it joined the Walton-le-Dale – Lancaster road.

Preston – Longridge Fell (map 2) $r = 0.9998$

This road presumably ran from Preston to meet up with the known Roman road at Longridge Fell on a near-perfect alignment, The known inland Roman road from Ribchester to the north executes a 500° turn on top of Longridge Fell, difficult to explain considered in isolation but making more sense if the road going in a south-westerly direction over Longridge Fell continued in a straight line to Preston and Walton-le-Dale.

Ribchester – Long Preston (map 3)

This possible road is less well-defined by wayside crosses. However, river valleys were natural communication routes and there are crosses all the way up the Ribble valley on the north side of



the river, from Ribchester to Long Preston. After Bolton-by-Bowland there is a cross alignment (Stump Cross and Pie Cross) pointing directly at the site of a formerly supposed Roman fort at Long Preston. (There was not a cross at Long Preston – the cross mark on the map is there simply to indicate the supposed site). The correlation coefficient of this alignment is 0.9997 – almost impossible to be a coincidence. Interestingly, the distance between Stump Cross and Pie Cross is almost exactly two Roman miles – further evidence of a Roman origin. A dig took place at the Long Preston site in 1992 and no evidence of Roman occupation was found. However, the alignment and spacing of the crosses still remain to be explained. Coincidence?

Walton-le-Dale – Withnell (map 4) r 1st leg = 0.9928, 2nd leg = 1.0000

This could be part of the road from Walton-le-Dale to Manchester, which incorporated a branch to Brindle stone quarry. The alignment of crosses suggests that the road left the known Walton-le-Dale – Wigan road south of Walton and continued to Haddock Park Wood cross (4th from left). This road shows clear milestone spacing, with 4 pairs of crosses 1 Roman mile apart +/- 5%. One cross a mile south of Haddock Park Wood could indicate the existence of a branch road to Brindle stone quarry (marked with an X on the map) (local folklore has Romans mining these quarries) which would go through Pippin Street (a name supporting this conjecture). The alignment of crosses south-east from Haddock Park Wood indicates that the main road turned slightly at this point and headed to Withnell. After Withnell the crosses end, but the general direction of the alignment could indicate a continuation to Manchester. There is some evidence of a Roman road on the required alignment through Egerton (north Bolton) and, speculating, this road could have joined the Manchester – Ribchester road north of the Irwell bridge at Radcliffe.

Conclusion

Evidence has been presented that the positions of wayside crosses could indicate the presence and alignment of obliterated Roman roads, particularly if the continuation of the alignment at one or both ends points to a known Roman site. The possible whereabouts of four “new” Roman roads have been discovered, but additional confirmatory evidence will be needed to be reasonably sure of their existence.

A Roman Road from The Street (RR71a) near Arbor Low to the Dove Valley

Neil Buckley

Introduction

In Feb 2022, using publicly available, processed lidar mapping from the internet, RRRRA member Mick Parker noticed a possible ancient road close to the A515 near Newhaven in the Hartington Nether Quarter of the Peak District. He was able to trace it some distance but asked for a second opinion based on more detailed lidar mapping using QGIS and 3D processing. After a more detailed study it was found that the road terminated at a junction on the Roman road between Buxton and Derby known as The Street (RR 71a). This fuelled conjecture that this was also likely to be a Roman road. From the junction, a clear lidar trail of the road could be followed and it was noticed that the alignment from the south would have been focussed on the Arbor Low monument immediately behind the junction (fig. 1). In Derbyshire HER MDR1535 Arbor Low is described as “a circle henge on the false crest of a limestone ridge – almost exactly due north of Stonehenge . . .”. Close to Newhaven the Roman *agger* was seen to be running adjacent to the Buxton Road (A515). It passed through Smithy Farm where HER MDR1023 records crop marks reported in 1964 and aerial photographs from 1989, of a presumed north/south medieval road. It appears not to have been excavated but was measured and found to be approximately 3 metres wide. Further south the line joins the route of the ‘railway replacement service’ known as The Tissington Trail, to go through a small pass at Eaton & Alsop. To the west of Alsop en le Dale the *agger* falls back into line with the A515 and follows it closely as far as Tissington. Eventually lidar evidence was also found to suggest that the alignment continues south and west at least as far as Mapleton in the Dove Valley.

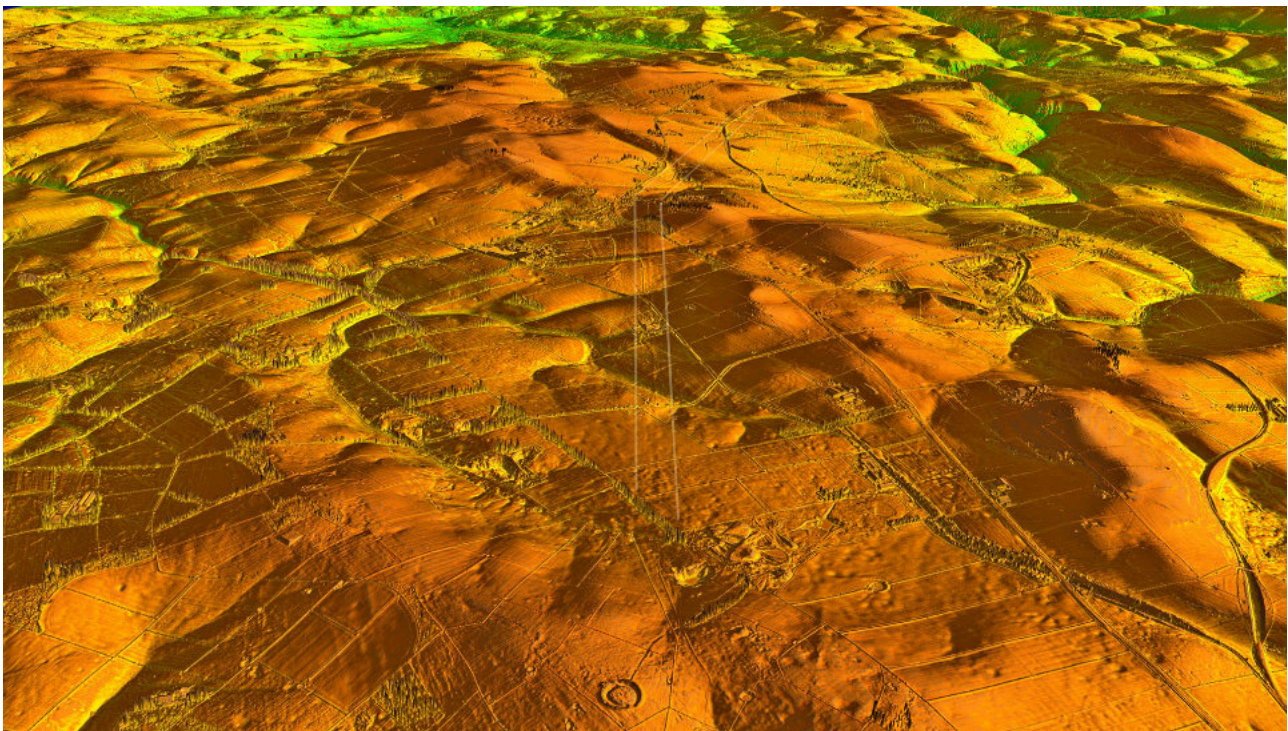


Fig. 1: The view south from Arbor Low. 3D lidar by David Ratledge. Base Lidar data © Crown Copyright 2022

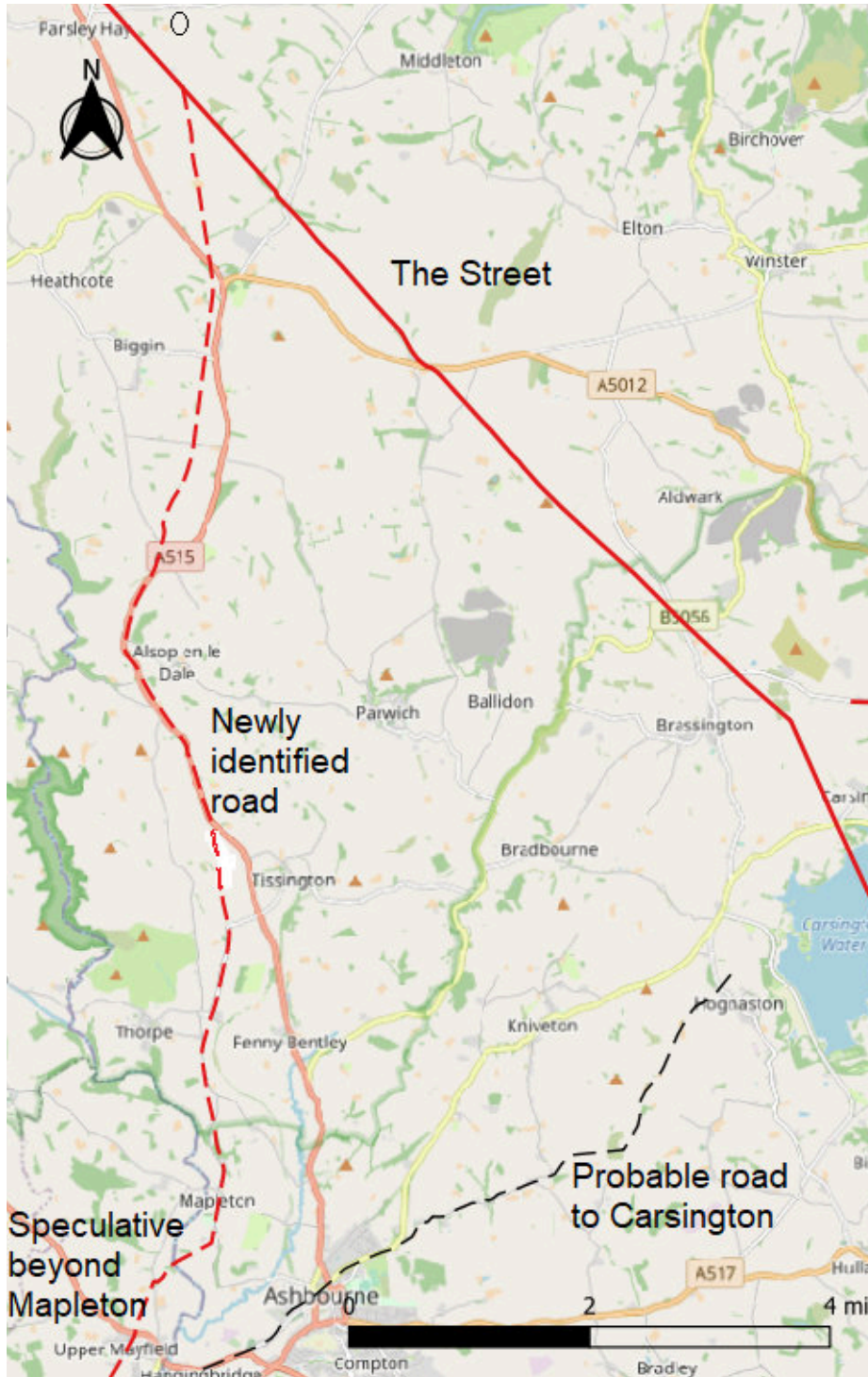


Fig. 2: The route from Arbor Low to Mapleton. Base map OpenStreetMap.

If this is a Roman road it is likely that the alignment crossed the River Dove and would have been heading for Rochester but no lidar evidence for a crossing point has emerged so far, although Okeover Bridge area at Mapleton must be a candidate location for a river crossing (fig.2). Lidar mapping shows that a probable Roman road north from Rochester can be tracked as far as Mayfield where a ford or bridge is also likely to have connected it to another probable Roman road running east through Ashbourne to Carsington. Perhaps Mayfield was at the junction point of all three roads.

The Street to Newhaven – 1.7 miles

This alignment between the junction point on The Street and the direction change at Newhaven suggests that Arbor Low was the intended destination of the road from the south. However the surveyor's sighting point was probably between the Arbor Low circle and Gib Hill. The actual location of the junction (SK 1606 6238) is also the site of an old clay pit (MDR 12008) so, over the first 300 metres, the archaeology has probably been lost but the trail is picked up by lidar beyond the second field boundary. The original builder of Brundcliffe farmstead (SK1625 6153) probably exploited the *agger* as a solid foundation because it was built right on top of it, the alignment passes beneath it. After crossing the abandoned route of the Buxton and High Peak railway line (now The Midshires Way) old field boundaries run parallel about 30m away from the eastern side of the *agger* between SK 1630 6128 and SK 1641 6052. The *agger* then crosses the A515 and enters the Newhaven Plantation on the other side of the road. It can be followed using DTM lidar and when it emerges from the plantation it follows the field boundary on the east side of The Low, at SK 1646 6010, behind Newhaven House it changes direction turning west by 20 degrees (fig.3).

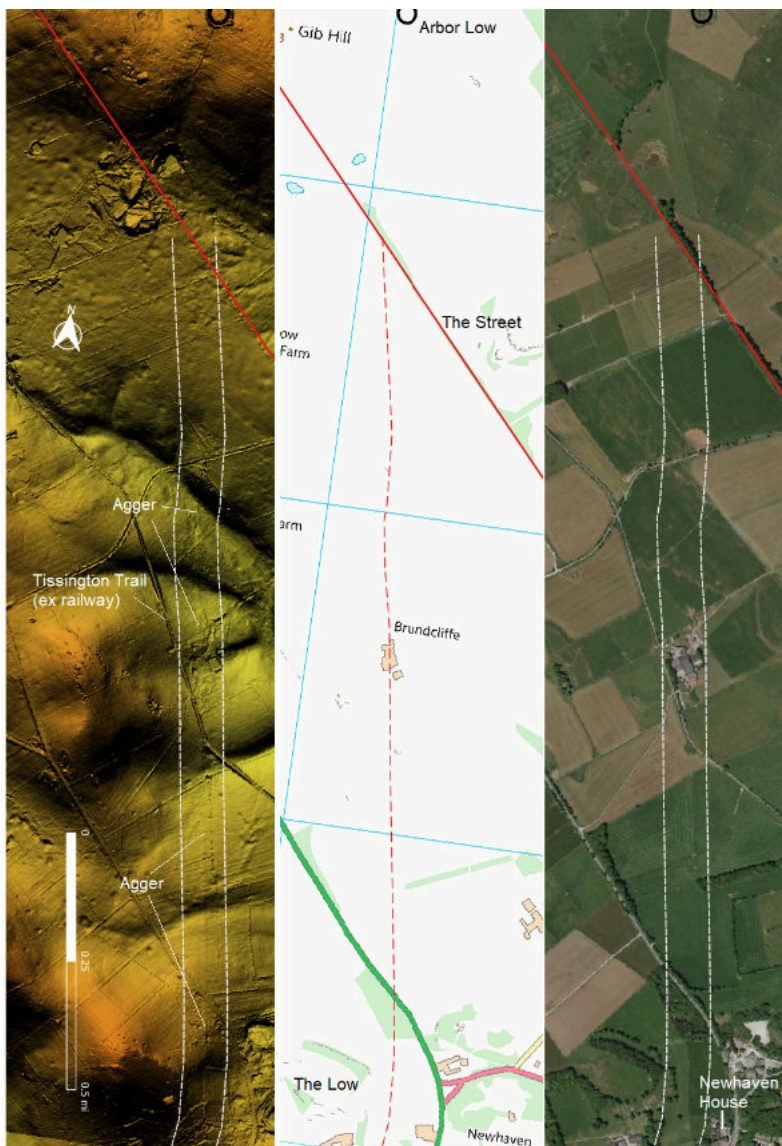


Fig. 3: The junction of RR 71a (The Street) to Newhaven. Base Lidar is © Crown Copyright 2022. Base Satellite map is copyright Microsoft Bing. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

Newhaven to The Tissington Trail - 1.4 miles

After the course change behind Newhaven House, the *agger* becomes quite visible on lidar. The section down to Smithy Farm was first noticed on aerial photography and reported to the HER and numbered MDR1023, but at that time it was assumed to be a medieval road. The *agger* appears again in the fields south of Smithy Farm and three locations south of Biggin Main Street. It was cut through by the Buxton to Ashbourne railway line (now Tissington Trail) at SK 1625 5844 and again about 600m further south where the railway cut into the western edge of the Roman road alignment and then destroyed it completely from SK 1607 5761 (fig.4).

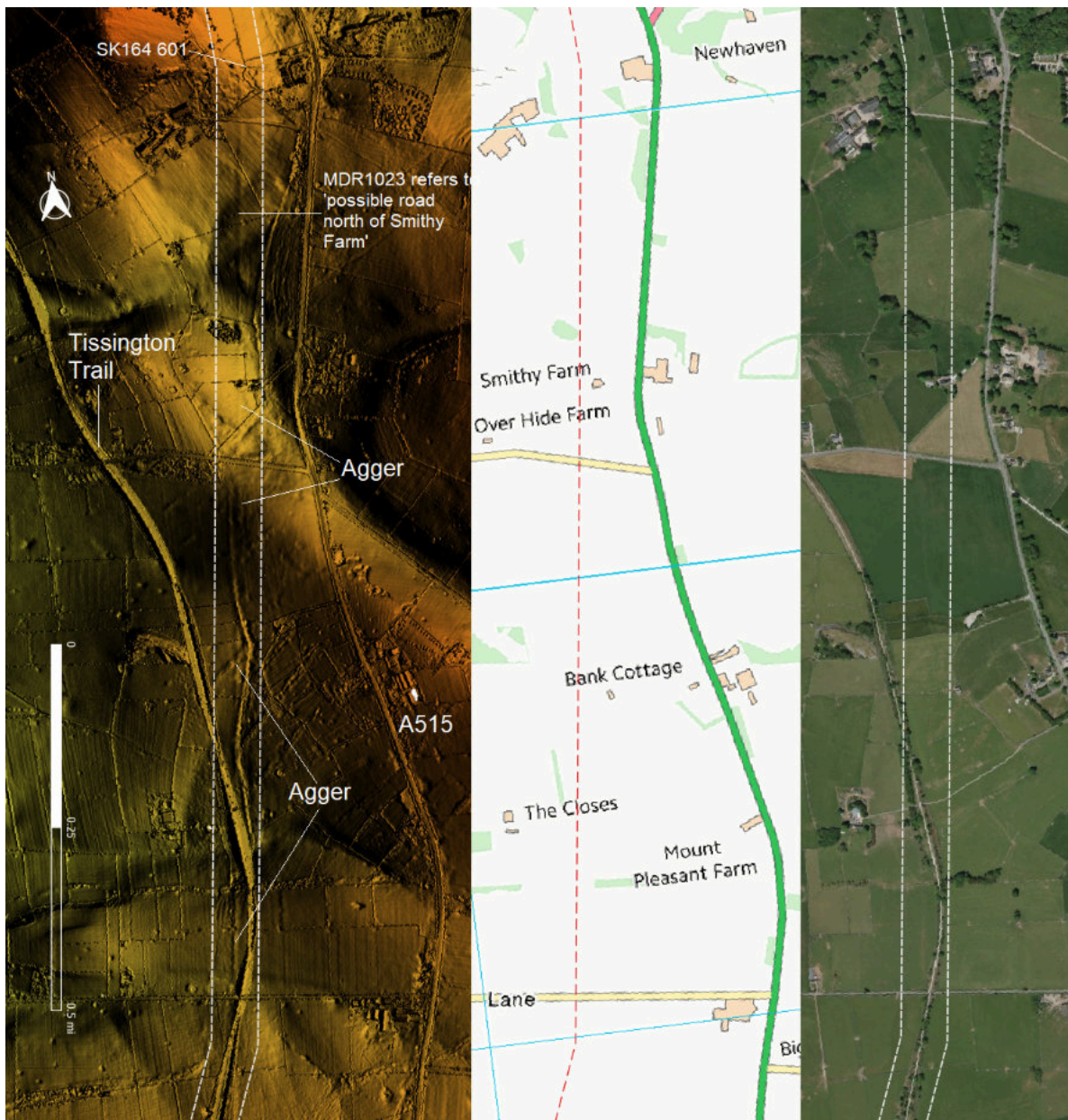


Fig. 4: Newhaven to the Tissington Trail. Base Lidar is © Crown Copyright 2022. Base Satellite map is copyright Microsoft Bing. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

Tissington Trail to Alsop en le Dale – 1.2 miles

For the next third of a mile the *agger* is lost under the Tissington Trail but it re-emerges at SK 1584 5718 where a path crosses the old railway line. The remains of the *agger* then bend slightly east before adopting a straight alignment across the terrain until it again meets and crosses the Tissington Trail. The *agger* then appears to run alongside the A515 on the west side until it blends into the course of the modern road at SK 1561 5627. From here the *agger* and A515 are as one as they curve around Crosslow to the junction with Dam Lane, the turn off to Alsop en le Dale (fig. 5).

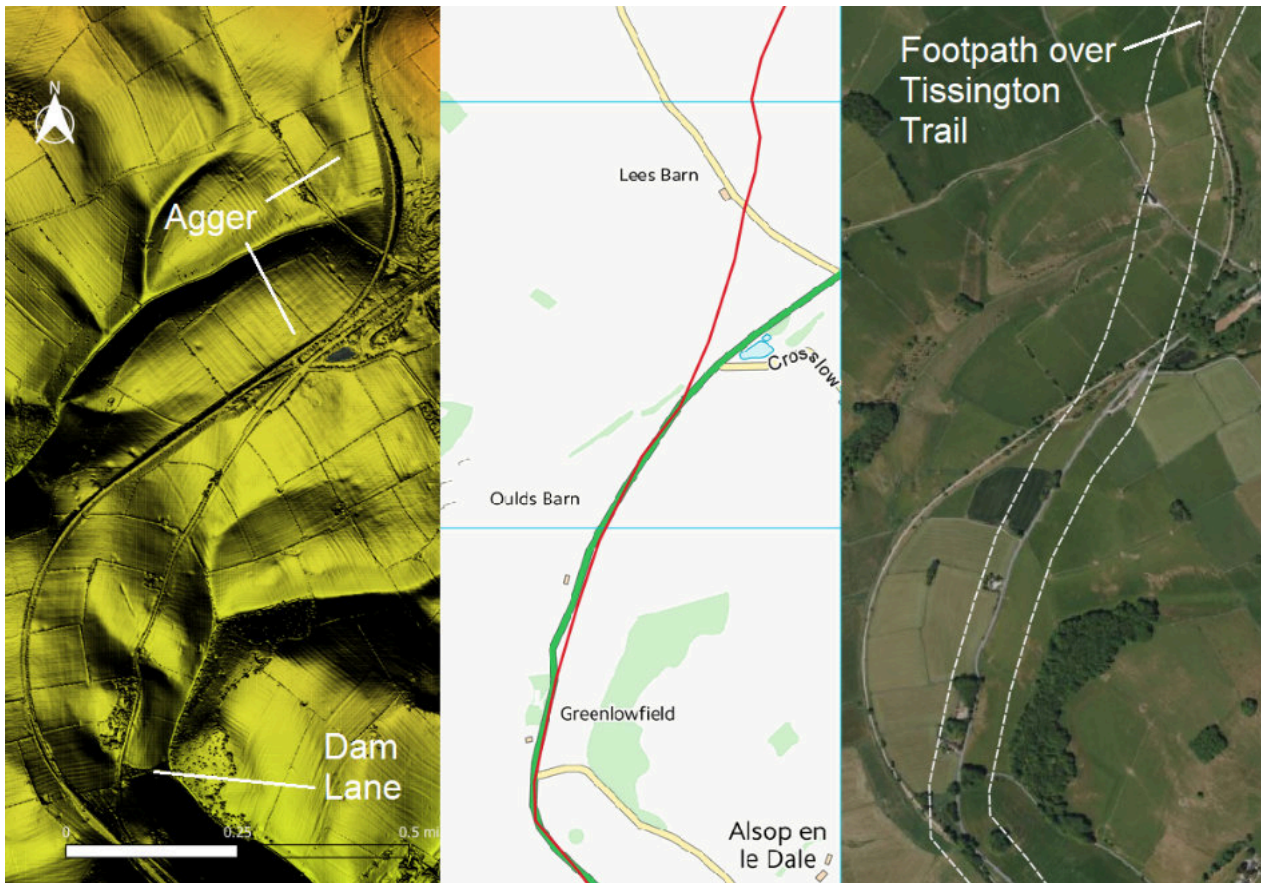


Fig. 5: The path over the Tissington Trail to Dam Lane Alsop en le Dale. Base Lidar is © Crown Copyright 2022. Base Satellite map is copyright Microsoft Bing. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

Dam Lane to Hollington Ring – 2 miles

After passing Dam Lane, both the A515 and the Tissington Trail pass between two small knolls or lows and the *agger* is lost in the confusion and some braiding. The next time that the *agger* comes into view is at SK 1543 5509 on a corner between the Trail and the A515. It may also just be visible as a lidar bulge projecting across the next well ploughed field in the direction of New Inn. Beyond New Inn it again appears to be beneath the A515 until at Railway Cottage, where it re-appears on the west side of the A515 and can be seen on lidar as a zig zag through a shallow gully at SK 1613 5391. After the gully the course of the Roman road stays on the same line as the A515 until SK 1640 5309 where the modern road starts to turn east towards Tissington. From this point there is lidar evidence of a badly damaged, ploughed out *agger* that maintains the alignment through two fields to the west of a field boundary that leads to Sharpflow Farm. That field boundary is also a Parish Boundary. After crossing another two fields where the *agger* is almost lost, it appears to take up the direction of another two field boundaries taking it through the mid point between two substantial

monuments. On the west side is a clump of trees covering Hollington Ring on the east side is a ploughed out circular monument that is only clearly visible on the lidar picture (fig. 6).

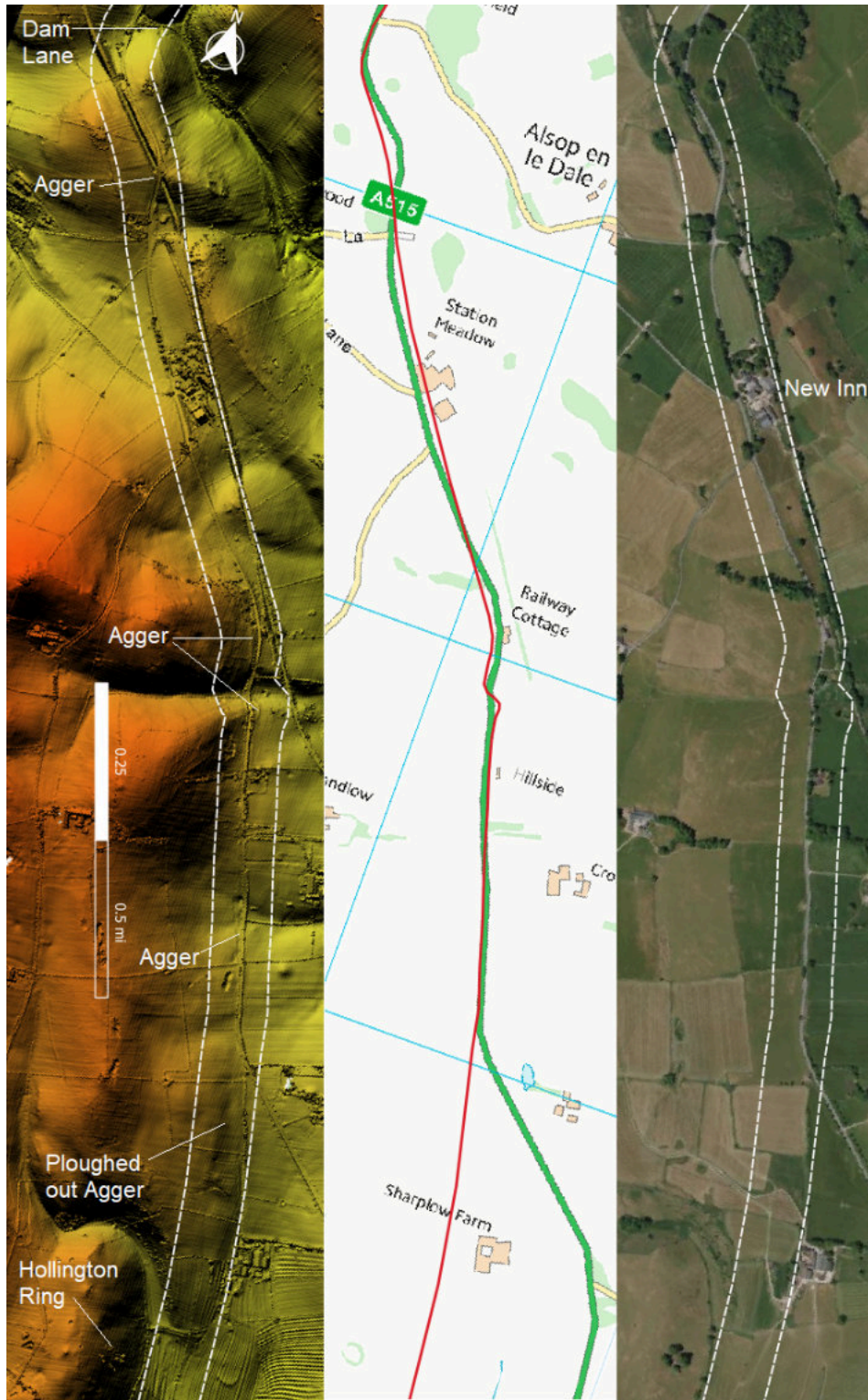


Fig. 6: Dam Lane to Hollington Ring. Base Lidar is © Crown Copyright 2022. Base Satellite map is copyright Microsoft Bing. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

Hollington Ring to Spend Lane at SK 163 500 – 1.5 miles

Hollington Ring, centred on SK 1638 5220 is not currently recorded in the Derbyshire HER but a lidar examination of it suggests it was a henge consisting of up to 24 stones, the sockets of at least seven stones can be seen on the lidar (DTM) picture. This henge was approximately 55m diameter. On the other side of the *agger* the lidar imprint of what appears to be another unrecorded circular monument can be seen at SK 1669 5226. The lidar shows the remains of a platform about 59m diameter, but an outer ring is just discernible on Google Earth. Possibly a levelled bowl barrow? The remains of possibly one more circular monument are hinted at by lidar, centred on SK 1663 5237, or it could have been an enclosure. Its presence is indicated by it being the convergence point of what appear to be three ancient tracks. The most prominent is a curving avenue-like track approaching from the south east. Another straighter track goes off to the north west, diagonally crossing the presumed Roman *agger* and a third meets the *agger* at SK 1655 5232 before heading off to the west in the direction of Sharplo Dale. This appears to be a location that should be further investigated.

From Hollington Ring the course of the *agger* stays with the field boundaries until it joins the top of Narlow Lane (where it is may also be called Washbrook Lane) at SK 1666 5236. It then stays with Narlow Lane to the corner at SK 1644 5045 where the *agger* goes straight on as a field boundary again until it meets Spend Lane at SK 1632 5000 (fig. 7).

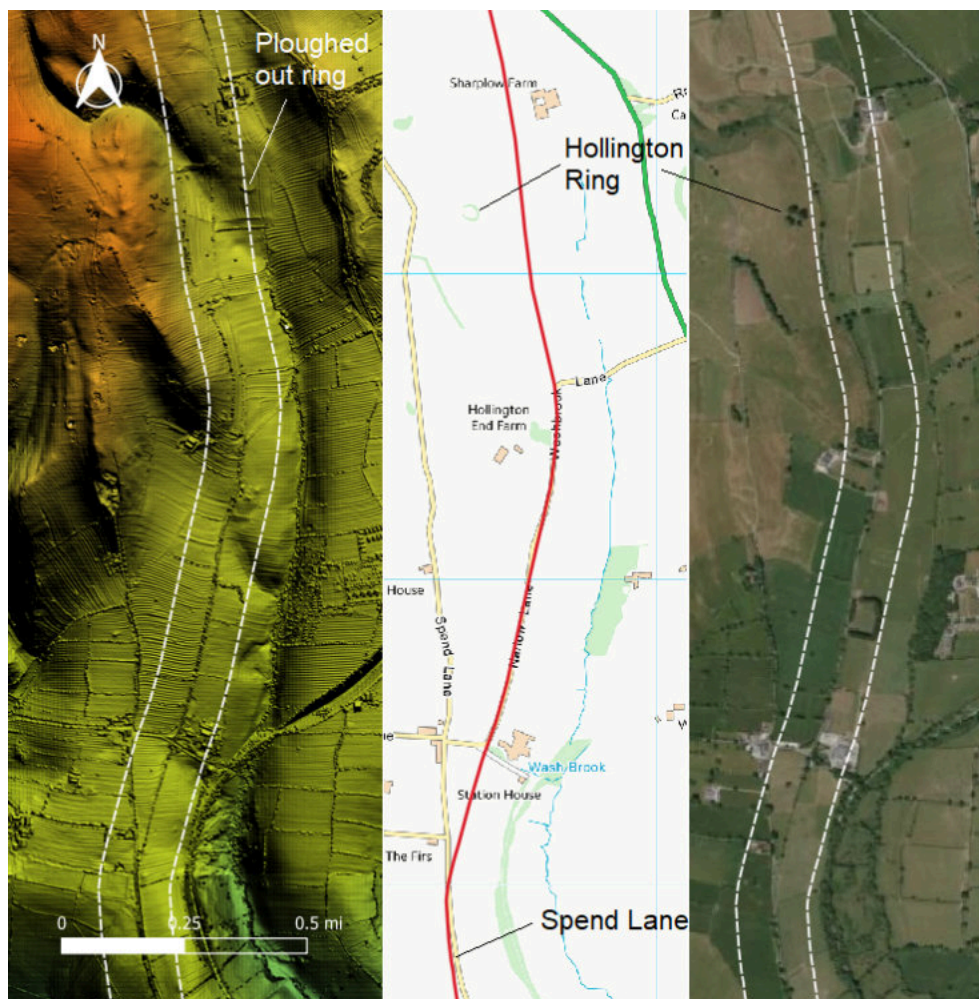


Fig. 7: Hollington Ring to Spend Lane. Base Lidar is © Crown Copyright 2022. Base Satellite map is copyright Microsoft Bing. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

Spend Lane to Mapleton - 1.25 miles

Having traced the possible Roman road to Spend Lane the most likely line of sight from that position high on the ridge, suggests that the Roman road descended down the steep valley side to crossing point on the River Dove. In the longer distance, the road was probably aiming for (or coming from) Mayfield where it would connect with the Rochester road. Lidar reveals that the valley side has been crossed by a number of tracks over time but probable erosion and land slips have left the evidence confused and intermittent. A short length of Spend Lane may be on the line of the Roman road before it started its descent (fig. 8). But it is also possible that the line ran across and to the west of Spend Lane and is now lost to erosion. However an alignment can be deduced that connects the Spend Lane junction with Mapleton Road (see fig 9). This alignment includes the most likely evidence of the Roman road on the valley side surviving as a holloway heading in the direction of Hinchley Wood.

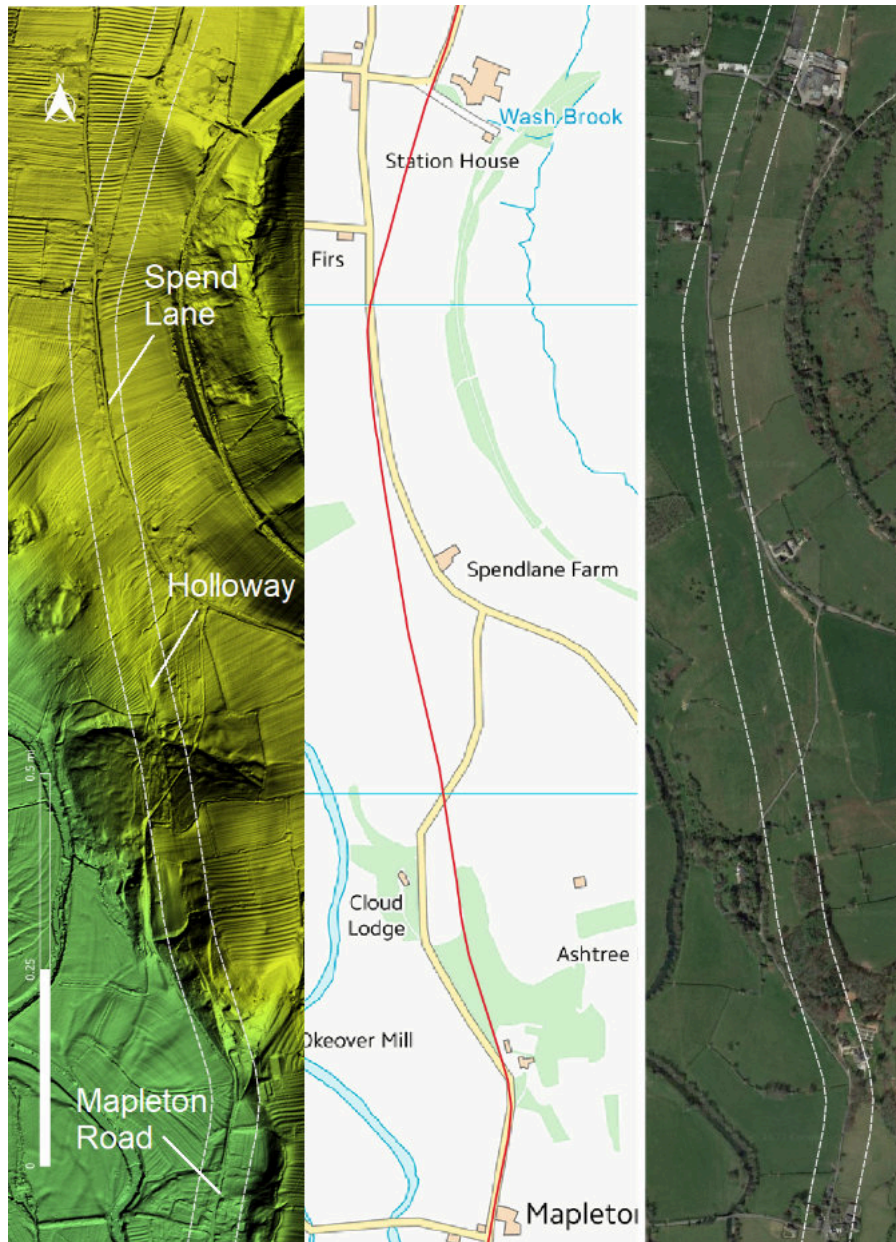


Fig. 8: Spend Lane to Mapleton and Okeover Bridge via holloway. Base Lidar is © Crown 2022. Aerial map is © Google Earth. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

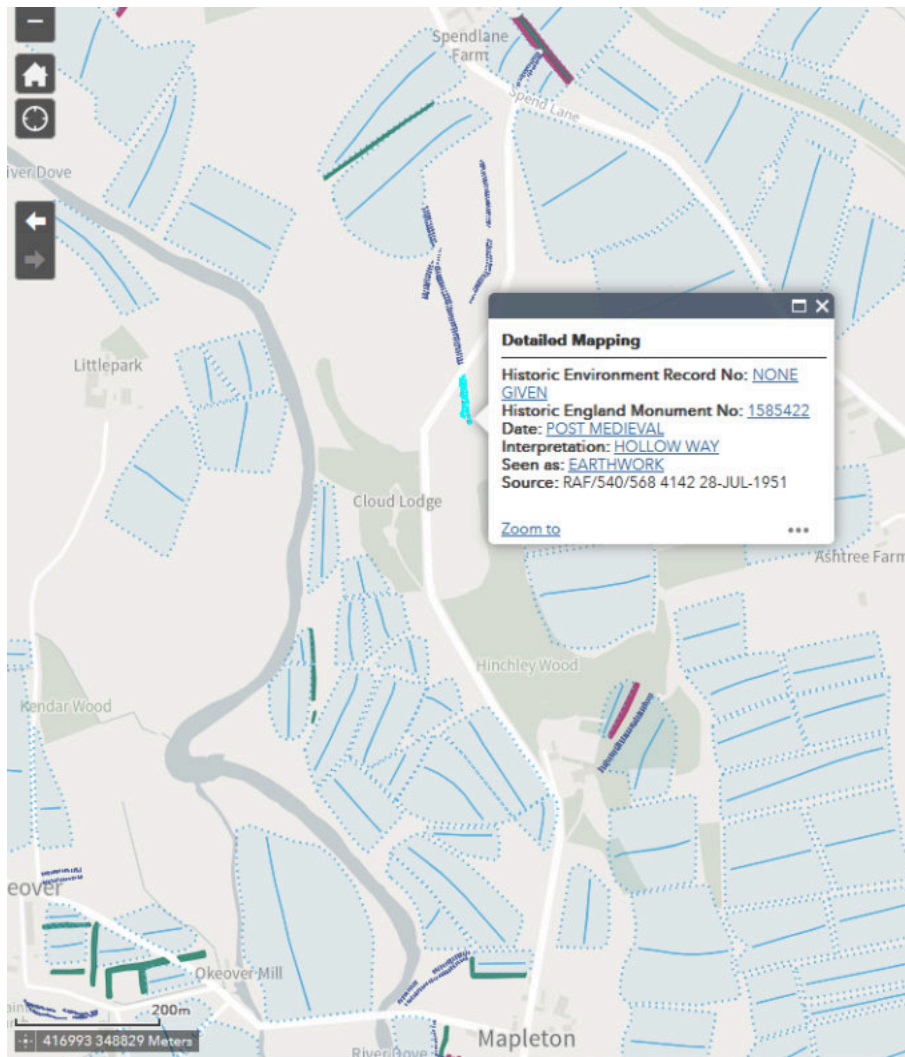


Fig. 9: Historic England Monument No 1585422.

The holloway is thought to be Historic England Monument number 1585422 that is described as a Post Medieval Hollow Way. It was identified from RAF aerial photography in 1951. In the Detailed Mapping box it is stated that it has not yet been given an HER number but it appears to be the same holloway feature described in MDR868 (fig. 9).

Two earlier RAF aerial photographs of the area, taken in 1945, clearly show the holloway and they can be georeferenced to confirm its location on the suggested *agger* line. They are available to view on line at:

https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/RAF_106G_UK_488_RS_4081

https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/RAF_106G_UK_488_RP_3069

The deduced route through the holloway is supported by a direct connection between Spend Lane and Mapleton that is clearly recorded on Burdett's 1791 map of Derbyshire, see fig 10.



Fig. 10: Burdett's 1791 map showing a direct connection between Spend Lane and Mapleton. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>). Reuse CC-BY (NLS)

Beyond Mapleton

As mentioned in the Introduction, the alignment of this road from the north to Spend Lane suggests that the length of probable Roman road described so far is likely to be the northern section of a road originating in Rocester. Much of the likely route north from Rocester to Mayfield is known and can be described as a follow-on to this paper. The search is now on for a link between Mayfield and Mapleton, no doubt determined by a preferred river crossing point. Okeover Bridge and Hanging Bridge at the bottom of Old Bank in Mayfield both appear to be ancient crossing points that may have been used by the Romans. But Hanging Bridge is most likely to have been crossed by a road to the east (probably to Carsington) passing through what is now Ashbourne.

Confirmation that this is a Roman road from Rocester to Buxton will fill a significant gap in the Roman road network of Derbyshire. But to date there has been no excavation work carried out anywhere on the alignment described above. It therefore awaits verification but in due course both this road and the probable road from Mayfield to Carsington will need to be allocated a number. See Fig 11 for the updated Roman road map.



Fig. 11: Roman roads in Derbyshire and adjacent counties. The location of the newly discovered road is in the green oval. The possible road to Carsington is also shown. Map by David Ratledge. Base map is Opendata copyright Ordnance Survey.

The Stanegate: Fourstones to Howford. A Highway Engineer's View

David Ratledge

This is a short follow on from Steve Hedworth's exploration and review of the possible routes of the Stanegate east of Fourstones. It hopefully explains the rationale behind mine and John Poulter's thoughts on the route we suggested. Fig. 1 is an oblique lidar view over Fourstones looking eastwards and showing the 3 options that Steve considered. Being 3D it allows a much clearer understanding of what options the Roman road engineer would have had to consider.

Taking the left-most, the traditional Ordnance Survey line, first. This takes a very indirect route to the north of Warden Hill and stops just before the North Tyne with no connection onwards ever having been located. But never mind that – what we are interested in is its course at Fourstones. But, any self respecting highway engineer would struggle to defend a dog-leg to the left only then to have to reverse the dog-leg back to get around a ridge. A straight line instead would obviously be shorter but also involve a much better vertical alignment (gradients). The dog-leg to the left only makes sense (from a highway engineering viewpoint) if it was a later link road to Chesters. Its initial direction is after all on Chesters rather than Corbridge but of course Chesters would only arrive around 50 years after the Stanegate.

Taking the right-most one next, Steve's yellow route. Again it fails the highway engineers test. It is longer and involves a climb up to the far end of Fourstones only then to have to dog-leg sharply

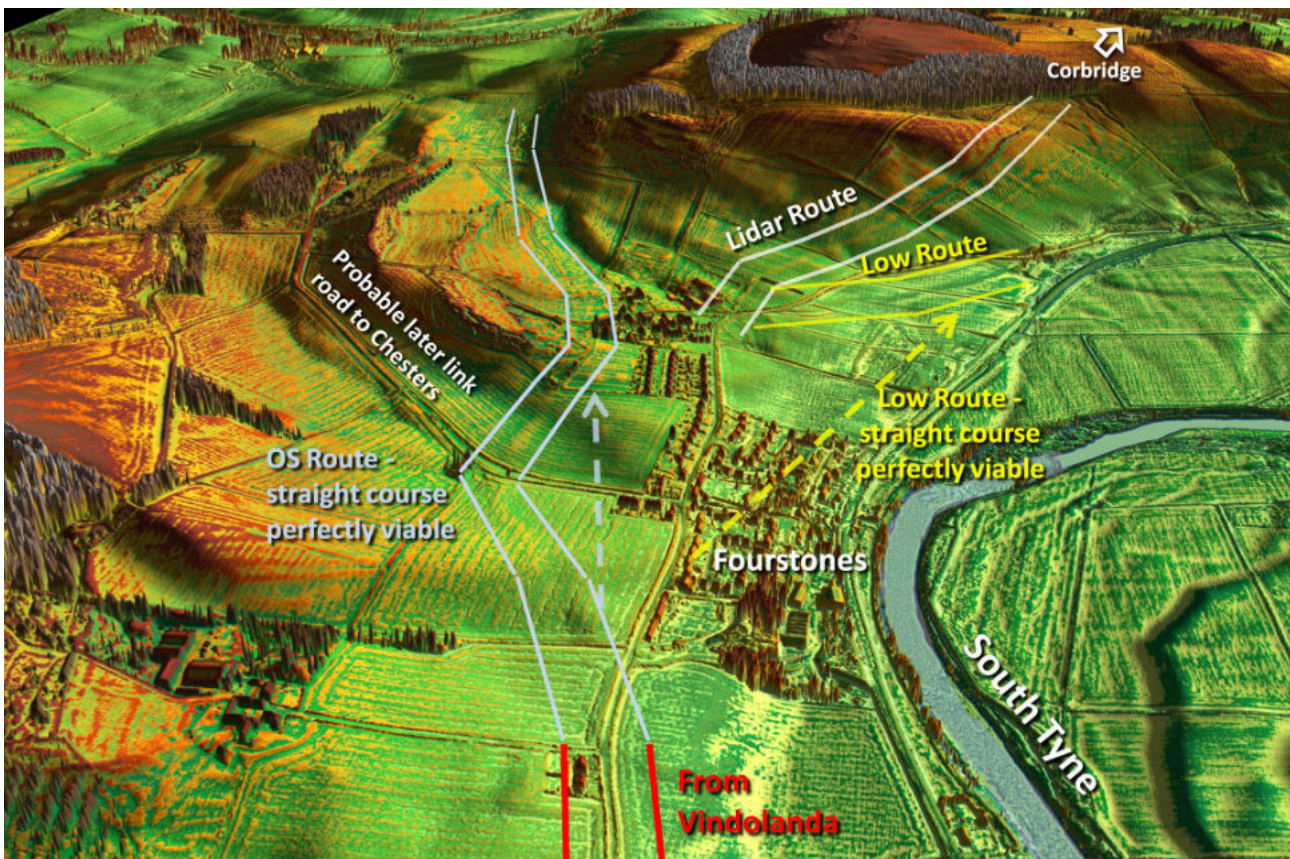


Fig. 1: Oblique lidar image looking eastwards over Fourstones. The 3 options considered by Steve Hedworth are shown. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.



Fig. 2: The view from the modern road at the east end of Fourstones. The suggested Stanegate road line can be clearly seen heading over the crest of the hill (red arrow). Note Steve's map did not depict our central route correctly at Fourstones. Lidar shows it clearly (fig.1) heading diagonally across the field beyond the gate. Image Google StreetView.

and lose all the height it has just gained. I accept there is a feature angling down there but beyond it nothing is visible connecting it onwards to the *aggers* at Howford. There is no reason for the short-cut direct route indicated (dashed) not to have been adopted – it is simply sensible engineering.

So that leaves just the central suggestion, i.e. mine and John's. It is obviously the most direct – it does actually head in the direction of Corbridge but more importantly it does have lidar evidence to support it. Sure not 100% support over its complete length but more than enough to confirm it as the most likely route of the Stanegate. I should also point out what is often blindingly obvious in lidar is often invisible on the ground. Believe me this is normal so Steve not finding much evidence on his walk is what I would have expected. If the *aggers* were that obvious they would have been spotted years ago. If you are concerned about the climb then don't worry – the lidar image has a 50% height exaggeration so it is not as steep as it looks. The real view is in fig. 2 where the line of the road is very obvious (red arrow). Did I say if obvious it would have been spotted years ago? Not sure how this was ever missed.

On the other side of the hill Steve raised two issues. Firstly the very obvious road *agger* (figure 3) does indeed point directly towards Low Warden Church. This *agger* is pretty reliable as it fits perfectly well with the *aggers* of the road on the east side of the North Tyne. A test pit on it would be a good idea. Steve was concerned about a Church being built on a Roman road. Putting my civil engineer's hat on again, what better foundation could you have? Many a country mansion has been built on top of a Roman road and, not far from where I live, there is a church on top of one too.

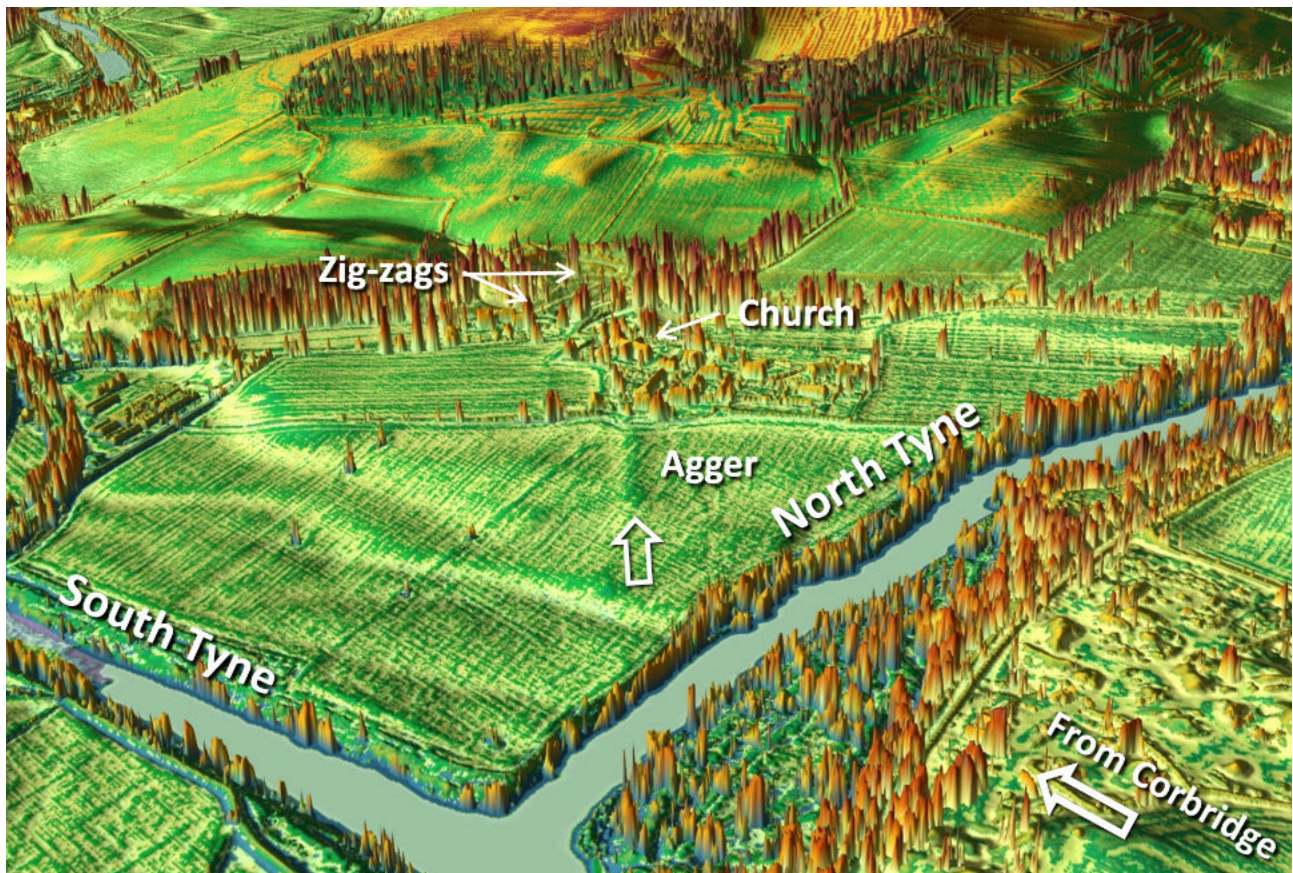


Fig. 3: Oblique lidar looking towards Low Warden Church. The agger towards the church is very clear and the zig-zags up the bank beyond it can be made out. Base Lidar data is © Crown Copyright 2023.

Beyond the church in fig. 3 is a bank directly on the road line, which Steve was also worried about. We would expect the Romans to construct a terrace a zig-zag up it. Sure enough if you look carefully at fig. 3 just such a zig-zag is in view and it is in line with the *agger* approaching the church.

I hope this explains the reasons we suggested this route and also why the other options were both rejected. The latter are simply impossible to reconcile with sensible highway engineering. In the words of Sherlock Holmes: "When you have eliminated all which is impossible then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

Reference:

Steve Hedworth, 'The Stanegate: Fourstones to Howford', RRRA Newsletter No. 26, Summer 2023.



The Stanegate: Corbridge to Howford

Steve Hedworth

John Poulter has proposed an initial Stanegate alignment from the fort at Corbridge to St John Lee and further west to two small Roman camps south west of Acomb which are close to the river. Poulter's line, marked red on the map in his paper, and this section of road, are in pretty close alignment and it is a fair assessment to say that, at NY96222 65212, the Stanegate merged with Corchester Lane and continued to Anick Grange. Further from this point the lane heads SW but the Stanegate probably continues across this turn into the front garden on the north side of the lane at NY95842 65275.

The land north of Anick Grange rises steeply towards Anick and Oakwood villages. The red line traverses this slope into fields south of Oakwood. To use a technical term, there are lumps and bumps here. Some will be related to old coal workings but David Ratledge located a lidar feature running WNW-ESE directly south of Oakwood. A projection to the east suggests the Stanegate would have crossed the road to Anick in the vicinity of NY953 654 and to the west it is headed to a meeting with the modern Peasley Gates to Oakwood road. This is interesting because earlier researchers have suggested that the long straight section of this road between West Oakwood to St John Lee church, via Peasley Gate, might be the Stanegate. Looking at Poulter's red line and the accompanying lidar shots suggests the authors were thinking along similar lines. However, between West Oakwood and the junction with the road from Hexham, the Peasley Gate road exhibits a pronounced zig-zag. It also appears that Ratledge's Oakwood feature is not aligned with this junction and subsequent straight section, and will cross the Hexham road about 25ms to the south close to NY9452 6542. On the other side of this road is a small plantation. The projected line from the Oakwood feature is aligned with a natural stone outcrop. It is marked on the OS map and initially heads WSW to the edge of the plantation. The outcrop forms a terrace which is more than wide enough to accommodate the Stanegate. A public footpath cuts through a section that has been quarried, at NY94351 65395, which allowed access to field walk. At the west end of the plantation access is more difficult but it is likely the suspected Stanegate exits the wood via an apparent gate and continues in alignment with a field boundary wall. This heading continues across the next field west and can be seen on lidar. Then it appears to follow a natural feature heading north west which is prominent on lidar and appears to adhere to the OS 80m contour line. Geologically it could be the base of the stone outcrop exposed in the quarry wood. Continuing north west there is another short field wall which leads to the driveway of Peasley Gates. This merges with the Hexham-St John Lee road at NY96313 65567 on a NW-SE heading. The road crosses the small bridge and we are now at a Four Lane Ends. The road to the left heads to St John Lee, straight ahead to Riding Farm and then, as a public footpath, to Acomb. To the right, heading north east is a road that will take you to Sandhoe and the last road on the right is the road from Oakwood, long thought to be the Stanegate.

Now why is this not so? Well, for a start, the roads to Riding Farm/Acomb, to Sandhoe, and the Peasley Gates-Oakwood road, don't appear to be going to anywhere Roman. It appears they are all inter-connected and more likely headed towards the once great Stagshaw Fair cattle market. This leaves the road to St John Lee. This structure is believed to have origins that go back as far as the time of the Venerable Bede (late 7th century - early 8th). Poulter's red line draws through the church grounds and heads westwards to the Roman camps near to the river. The church sits on top of a high outcrop of sandstone. To the west and south the drop is severe and prevents further passage. The road would appear to avoid these slopes, passes the church heading north and has to execute a turn to the west to begin the steep descent down the north side of this escarpment. After another sharp turn to NNW the long descent starts. As the valley of Birkey Burn is approached the road turns to the west and follows the burn. This road terminates at the junction with the modern A6079



Fig. 1: The footpath on the south bank as it reaches Birkey Burn. The overgrown area east of the path appears level compared to the bankside. To widen the route it may have been levelled off into the bank. This area is wetter and softer ground, possibly a consequence of soil deposition caused by run off into a lower area.

but a continuation into the fields west of this road is headed towards the Roman camps and the red line. This route has now entered land that is extremely vulnerable to flooding. Poulter has drawn attention to the river being wider and shallower in this section. Today, with the advantages of modern drainage, this land is still regarded as High Risk to flooding by the authorities. The river channel is lower as well. In the 1950s sand and gravel were extracted at Warden. Similar operations were carried out at Ovingham, down stream, and the river bed was lowered by between 6 to 8 feet. Additional flooding could be caused if the waters of the Red Burn and Birkey Burn were hindered by a rise in level of the main river. This would cause water to back up these tributaries and when they overflowed the water would accumulate on the camp fields. In times past, I would consider this land to be, at best, summer pasture, and probably wet underfoot for the best part of the year.

Returning to Peasley Gates, the lay of the land when the Stanegate was constructed should be considered. That is probably six hundred years before the church at St John Lee. I don't believe any of these four roads as we now see them would have existed hence the suggested use of the stone outcrop south of West Oakwood. Poulter mentions a hedge which runs along the public footpath heading to Birkey Burn (fig. 1). This is about a quarter of a mile NNW and rounded boulders are quoted within this hedgerow which would have provided suitable metalling for a road. The map references provided are NY934 659 to 662 which is east of the old windmill at Lanthorn Cottage. This path descends to Birkey Burn where it looks as if the bankside has been altered to lessen the gradient. It is suggested that a direct line from Peasley Gate, through the field east of the Commonwealth Graves cemetery, to the boulders near Lanthorn is a reasonable course of action.

The suspected Stanegate will now cross Birkey Burn a little upstream of Acomb Old Mill. This could well be significant because as a location it can be practically guaranteed to remain above the most severe of flood levels. Even the record breaker of 2015 did not reach here. Significantly, it is at the same height as the lowest point of the proposed lower southern route on the west side of the North Tyne.

After crossing the burn, the Stanegate could have followed the old route still shown on OS maps rather than the modern footpath. This heads NW to traverse the slope and meets the modern road to Acomb Hall at NY93188 66239. At this point we are 1.45kms, 0.9miles, due east of the point where the lower route is believed to meet the North Tyne. Unfortunately, progress was stopped as we are now within private land and our only means of passage was the public footpath which now heads north into Acomb. As it is nowhere near Cross Bank and the A6079 this is unlikely to have any connection to the road to Chesters theories.



Lidar provided the next clue. From the public footpath to the gated entrance to Acomb Hall is about 120ms. It exits onto the back road to the centre of Acomb. Lidar showed that this land has been subject to ridge and furrow. There is no indication of another feature within this ground until the gate is reached. On the south side of the road there is a lidar feature within this section from near the gate to Birkey Burn which headed SSW and parallel to the modern road. However, this created a bit of a quandary. I had considered a direct link to Howford Lane. Ratledge had suggested a lidar feature on the north side of this road running NW-SE with the northern end heading towards the sand and gravel works. To reach Howford Lane the Stanegate will have to cross Red Burn but the land between Birkey Burn and Red Burn is now filled with housing estates so gauging the original lie on the land is difficult. There is also the question of why the lidar feature is heading down towards the more flood prone ground?

If the Acomb Hall feature is the Stanegate it will have to resume a north westerly course if it were to arrive at the North Tyne opposite Low Warden. The feature had tracked along the top of a ridge on the north side of Birkey Burn and the OS contours were heading NW across the wide tongue of land to Red Burn. Geology had suggested a solution west of the river and I wondered if we may be looking at a similar prognosis. I consulted the relevant BGS map to get an idea of the strata. However, it was a vertical section of the shaft sunk in 1900 which lies in the old mine yard, now an industrial estate, at the east end of Howford Lane, that suggested a possible solution.

<http://www.dmm.org.uk/shafts/t032-01.htm>

At a depth of eight feet a layer of sandstone known as the White Post was encountered. It was ten feet thick, described as hard sandstone by no less an authority than Westgarth Forster, and the inclination of the strata varies between 14 degrees in the vicinity of the North Tyne to four degrees or less near Carr Hill, east of Acomb. The inclination is to the north and within these boundaries would bring the White Post to the surface within a hundred metres south of the shaft. This stratum would provide a solid foundation for a road which would follow the contour around the land between the two tributaries. What is more is that it would remain well above the flood prone ground. At the point where it is suspected this feature would have turned to head north west, to continue following the most solid conditions underfoot, it would be at a height of 43mOD, 141 ft. It would remain on the north bank of Birkey Burn which flows southwest towards the junction with the A6079.

Birkey Burn runs along the south side of the road to this junction. Most of the north side is the site of Old Acomb pit. This bank looks as if it has been artificially raised by about a metre, presumably by the levelling of the waste tips. This reclaimed land would now be more suitable for mine buildings, and later housing, and it would give greater protection from rising water levels. The land to the south is lower and remains more vulnerable to flooding. At the junction with the A6079, Birkey Burn is joined by the Red Burn tributary mentioned above. United they now head southwards to the main river.

At this point we are at 40mOD, 131 ft. Spot heights of 121ft and 116ft show the descent towards the Tyne. The latter, on modern maps, 36mOD, is north of the A69 and it is estimated there is another couple metres to fall before the river. Walking the course of Birkey Burn as it runs parallel to the A6079 along the east side suggests it is contained by an earth bank between it and the road and the stream bed appears to be the same level as the road. The land on the west side of the road is visibly lower. I do wonder if part of Birkey Burn did not once flow into this low land. The 6" second Series OS map of this area <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101027535> suggests the change of course from southwesterly to southerly is rather doglegged and does suggest a deliberate change. However, this is probably water management common within the mining fraternity. The earliest map located is Armstrong's Map of Northumberland 1769 which shows Birkey Burn heading south. Parts of the combined streams may have fingered out to an extent into this lower land while the main channel

continued to the Tyne. In addition, the valley of Birkey Burn, prior to the suspected raising of the north bank at the old pit, was likely wet and boggy and prone to flooding which would make the section of road between the A6079, to the junction with the road to St John Lee, less than viable until the ground was raised. The driest, most reliable course was to remain on the north side of the stream. Although two Roman temporary camps and two native structures have been investigated on the land south west of Acomb it remains vulnerable to flooding today and prior to modern drainage may have been suitable as summer pasture only. It has been suggested that these are practice camps, built by trainee soldiers. The land to the west of the A6079, where the Roman camps are situated, is certainly no higher and possibly lower than 36mOD. I consider it fair to claim that there is a 25ft, 7.6m, height differential between the red line route proposed by Poulter and the alternative route through Acomb Hall. To put this in perspective, the recording breaking flood of 2015 created a level of 21.5ft, 6.55 ms.

After crossing the Red Burn, it is proposed that the suspected Stanegate would continue as part of Howford Lane. This road heads to the ancient ford crossing at Waters Meet but Ratledge has pointed out a potential linder feature which is headed north west towards the bank opposite what may be a paved track, or exposed foundation, at NY917 644. The age of this feature is unknown, neither have the square cut stones in the river been dated, but recently a spread of stones along the base of a water channel has been discovered on the east bank, opposite the west bank features, at NY91737 66302. Further investigation is required after the river levels have dropped. Could this possibly be the site of an early bridge?

As for protection of the river crossing the more likely candidate for a guard post would be the suggested Roman temporary camp quoted on HER as N8560. This was discovered on an aerial photo in 1949 and had an entrance on the east side and dimensions of 60 x 70 yards. Unfortunately, it has been completely quarried away and the land restored. According to Gordon Scorer, a leading light

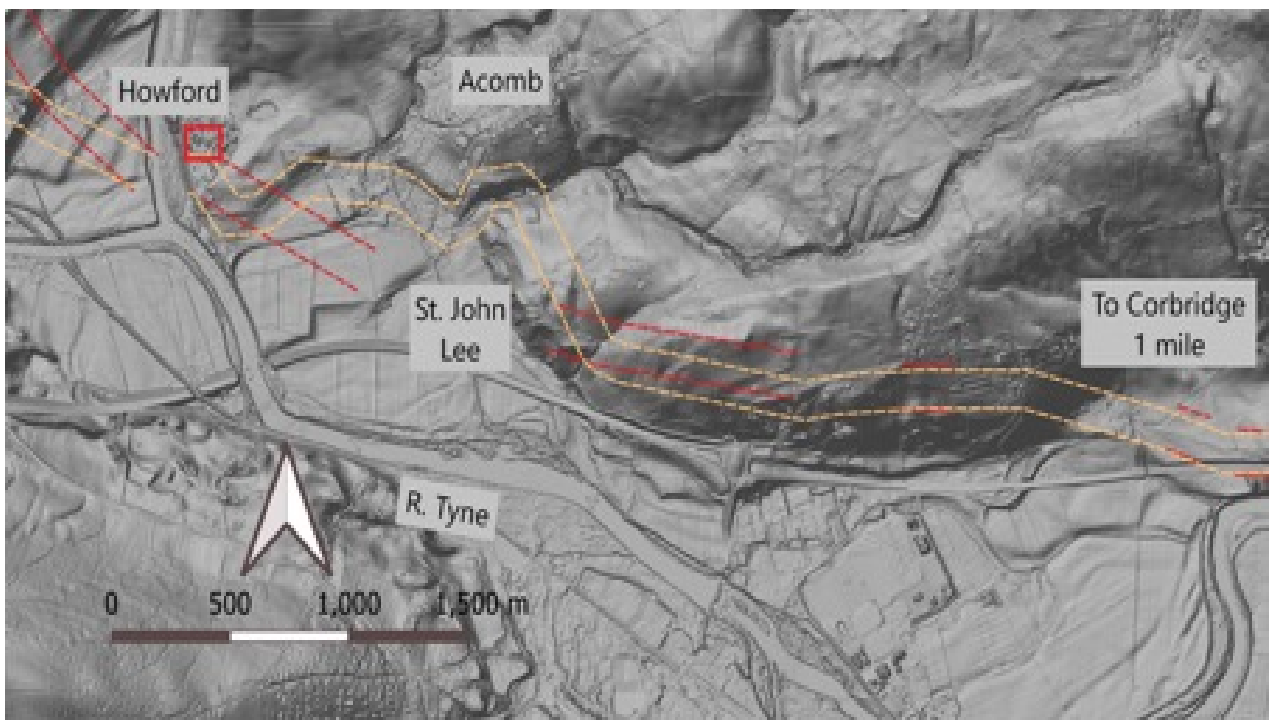


Fig. 2: Dotted red line highlights the Ratledge/Poulter proposed route. Dotted yellow line highlights the proposed alternative route



Fig. 3: Looking upstream, east bank, along the channel which has exposed the stones and the possible source of the debris.

in the Acomb Local History group, a depth of 40 feet of land was removed. It looks to be a better site to overlook both the suspected crossing place and road at NY9202 6628.

<https://keystothepast.info/search-records/results-of-search/results-of-search-2/site-details/?PRN=N8560>

While Poulter's theory regarding an alternative course of the South Tyne is not totally convincing further investigation is required before committing to paper. For the moment, it is suggested that the ground west of St John Lee would have been too prone to flooding to be considered for a permanent fortification or road.

Notes on a Possible Roman Road and Military/Industrial Site in Cornwall

Andrew Ross

As part of ongoing research for a book (Ross, forthcoming) it was interesting to note work published in *Itinera* (2023, 246-7, 250-255) and online by Smart and Fonte (2023) and Parcero-Oubina et al (2023). The identification of a new section of Roman road near Davidstow led to a search of the area nearby, where a possible ancient route leads from the current A39 to Tintagel. Reported here is a possible section of Roman road and an associated possible military or industrial site. The area of interest is shown below to the North of Condolden Barrow (SX 0905 8718. Map and lidar images are aligned with True North at top).

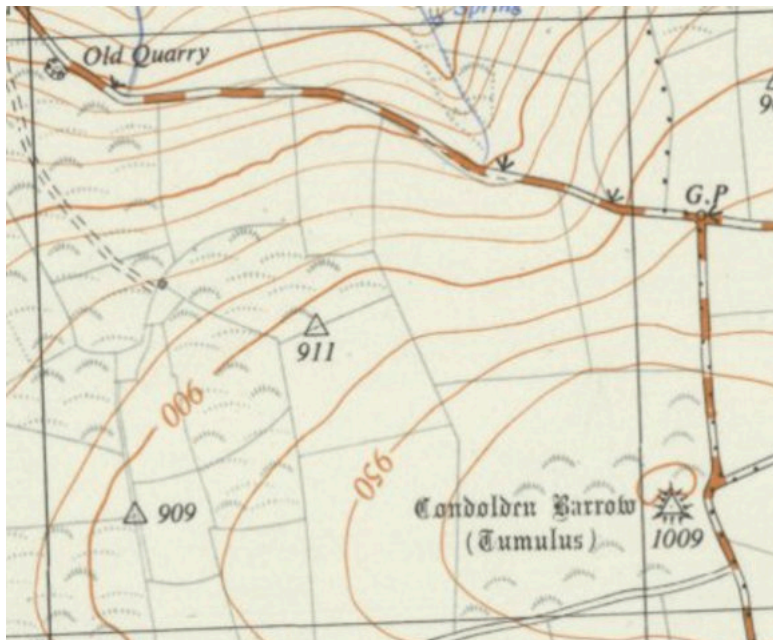


Fig 1. General Area of Site (from OS 1:25000 Sheet SX 08) Grid size 1km. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland under (CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

According to the Cornwall and Scilly HER, there are two known sites of interest nearby. The first is the poorly preserved remains of a Romano-British round at MR SX 084 878. This is just visible on 1M DSM lidar. The other site is at Trewinnick farm, which is Early Medieval or Medieval.

As can be seen on Fig. 2 below, 1M DSM lidar shows a possible Roman road with quarry pits running from SX 0877 8700 for about 450m and leading to an area shown on Fig. 3. This is not shown as a field boundary on OS Maps. The same applies to the portion at 90 degrees to the road leading to the modern road to the East of the figure.

This road does not appear to be part of the network proposed by Parcero-Oubina et al (2023, figure 15), but could be connected to a possible Western extension of the Roman road identified by Smart and Fonte (2023) near Davidstow. Possible connecting routes are currently being investigated by the author of this article.

Fig. 3 shows the faint outline of possible nearly rectilinear structures, together with a possible open cast mining site.

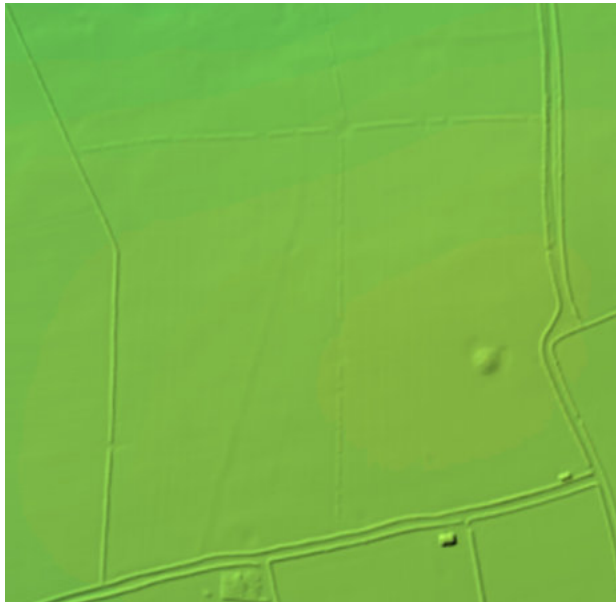


Fig. 2. Possible Roman road from 1M DSM lidar. Crown copyright Scottish Government, SEPA and Scottish Water 2012 - © Environment Agency Copyright 2022 - © Welsh Government 2022



Figure 3. Possible Military/Industrial Site from 1M DSM lidar. Crown copyright Scottish Government, SEPA and Scottish Water 2012 - © Environment Agency Copyright 2022-© Welsh Government 2022

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'Roman Roads in 2022.' *The Journal of the Roman Roads Research Association Vol 3* 225-302

Parcero-Oubina, C, Smart, C, and Fonte, J. 2023, "Remote Sensing and GIS Modelling of Roman Roads in South West Britain." *Journal of Computer Applications in Archaeology*, 6(1): 62-78

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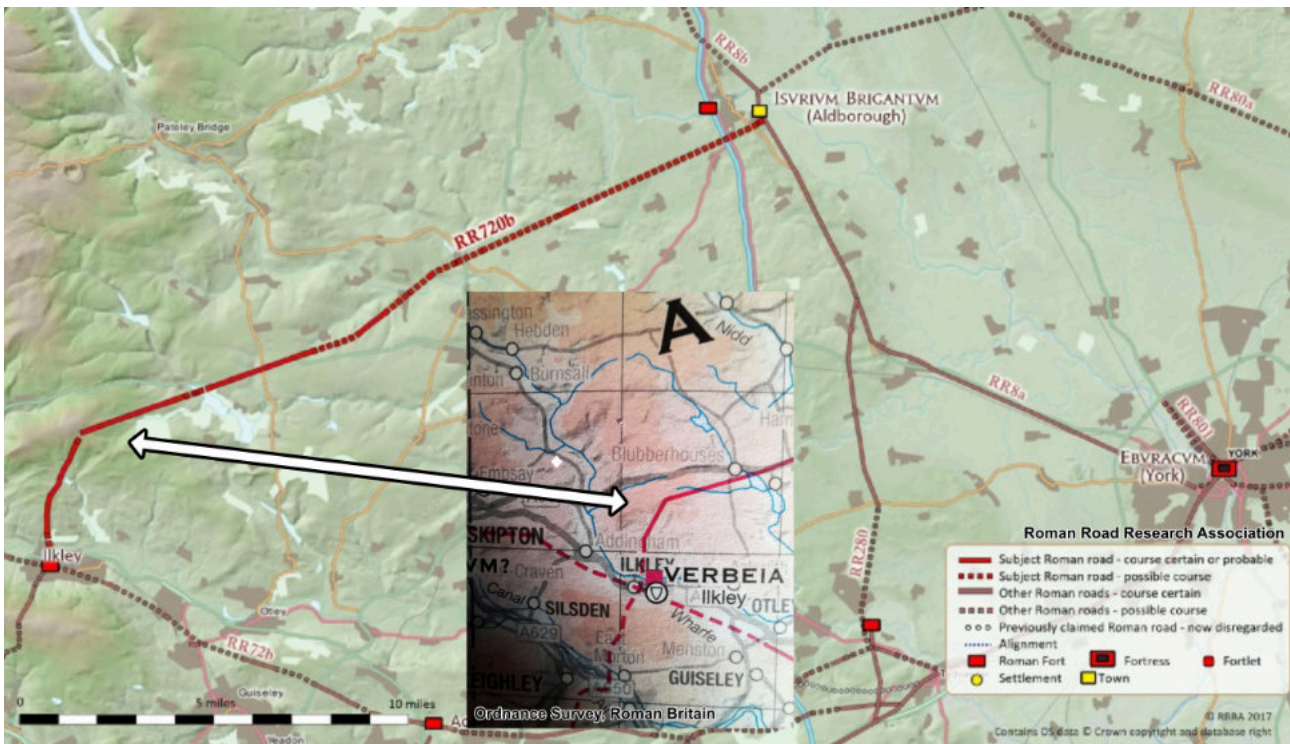
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<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqRwv1RsLjSct0lcQ9Voki6rglg4j55Kj>

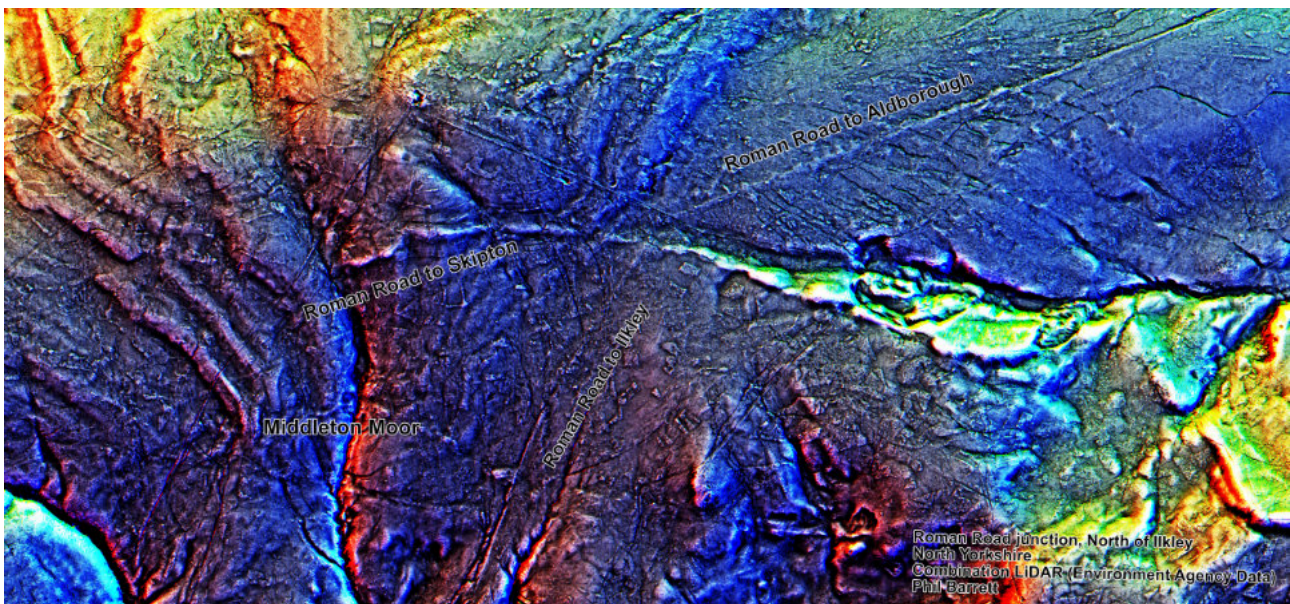
Other News, Events, Updates & Miscellany

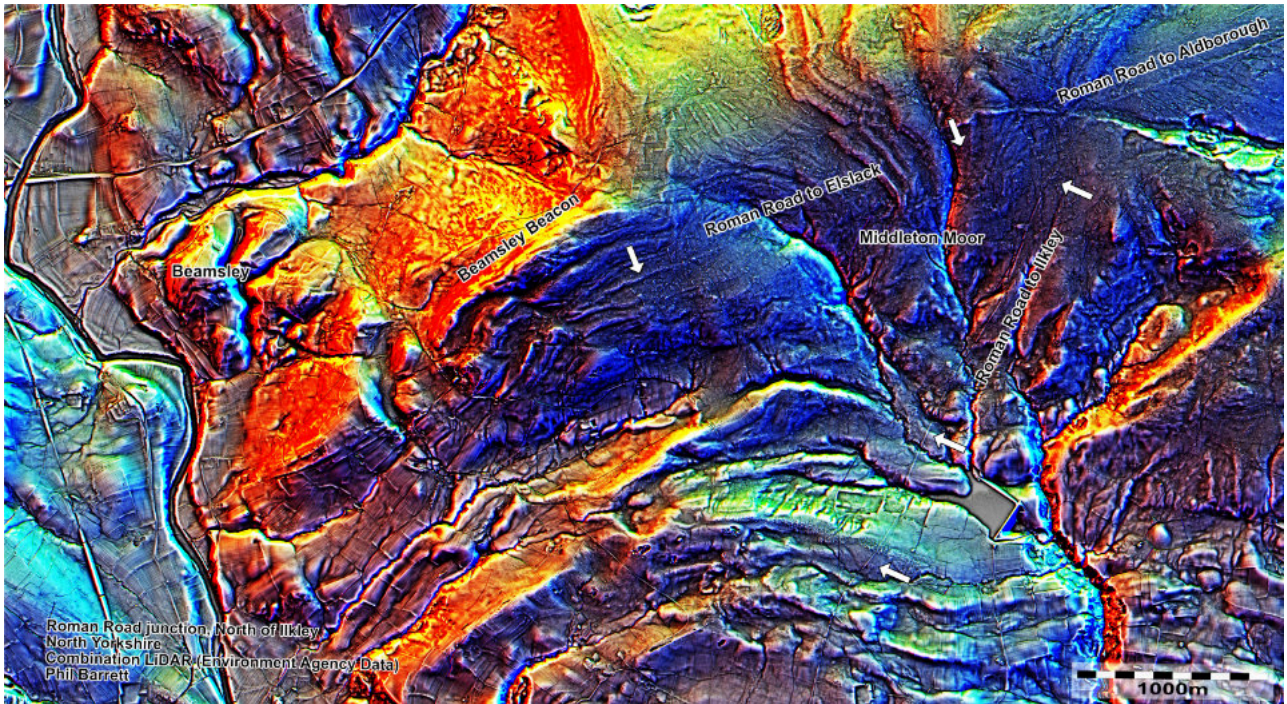
Roman Road 720b, Ilkley to Aldborough, an oddity - Phil Barrett

It always seemed strange that the Roman road from Aldborough to Ilkley (RR720b) should take a pretty straight alignment for 90% of the way until just north of Ilkley when it takes a sharp deviation to the fort at Ilkley, especially considering that the final destination of the road was probably Ribchester (on the original alignment). The Ordnance Survey 'Roman Britain' map (and indeed, the RRRRA website), both show this deviation.



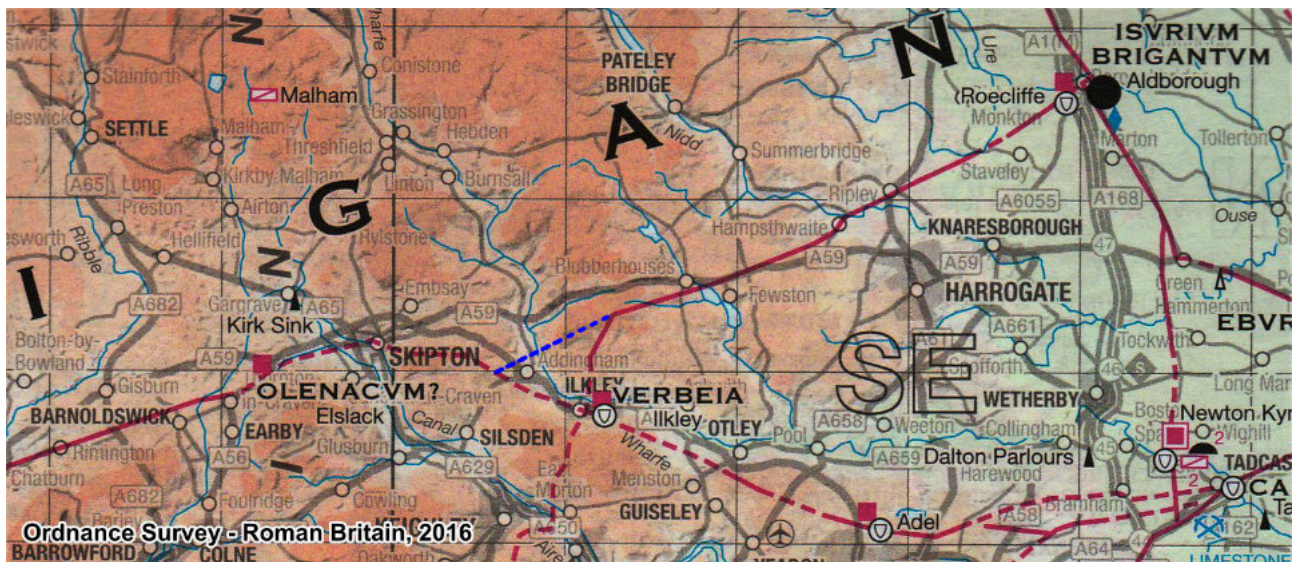
A quick investigation of processed Environment Agency lidar data soon showed that the deviation was, in fact, a junction and the perfectly straight alignment of the road did continue in the direction of Addingham (and Elslack fort and Ribchester) and was visible for approximately 3km to





just below Beamsley beacon where the land started to fall to the valley. Here the more unstable land shows a number of possible routes down and a definitive route is not clear on the lidar.

The road would have undoubtedly joined the Elslack to Ilkley road somewhere between Addingham and the Chelker reservoir (under which the Elslack – Ilkley road passes).



Editor's note: Thanks Phil for allowing me to nag him enough to write up his notes and let us have his pictures after a conversation we had on Twitter which, while it has many problems, is great for this sort of impromptu matter. This new piece of road was also spotted independently his summer by Robin Terry who reported it to Mike Haken - he promises to update the gazetteer soon!



Sally Woodlock 1940-2023

It is with sadness that we have to inform you that Sally succumbed to cancer aged 83 on the 18th October. Sally of Blandford Forum in Dorset was a strong supporter of our Association, along with many other local organisations, for example Secretary of Blandford Museum Archaeology Group. A regular contributor to the newsletter most prominently proposing an alternative interpretation to the conventional view on the route of Iter XV. Sally was 'Mrs Dorset' for *Itinera*, our correspondent reporting the years' Dorset RR news for the *Roman roads in 20XX* section of the journal. Emails invariably, with RR information, contained other snippets from her life; 'no breakfast yet', 'the printers not working', illustrating her distracted human side that we can all relate to. The last mail a few weeks back said 'Being fit, I had been running friends around too much and now can relax. Very little pain, and very good food, so not all bad.' Wise words. Her infectious enthusiasm and boundless curiosity will be missed.

AGM

Dave A reminds us that it's that time of year again.

Save the date for the event of the year. It's the AGM on the evening of 30th November. We will be issuing a Zoom invite to members along with an agenda and supporting documents nearer the time. It's your chance to get involved with the running of this incredible organisation as we try to spread the load of the Association and what we are working on a little further afield. It's also the opportunity to review the activities and progress we have made and consider where it will develop over the near future so if you have firm views on this then get involved. We hope you can attend. If you have particular skills, or just time and enthusiasm, you feel would help with the running of the Association please let Dave Armstrong know with an email before the meeting. Also any specifics you want to raise to get them on the agenda for the meeting.

dave.armstrong@romanroads.org

Leicester Canal

Remember the article in *Itinera* 3 about the possible Roman transport canal in Leicester? David Ratledge has produced a [flythrough video](#) of the potential route at the suggestion of the authors. It also includes original music from John Poulter as well.

Random Things from the Internet

It's been a great few months for Roman related stuff popping up on the internet. Thanks to all those who send in nippets - here's some links in case you missed any.

And in modern [Iraq and Syria](#) there's suddenly lots and lots of forts after reinterpretation of Cold War era aerial photos. Forts mean roads, right?

A Serbian coal mine has produced the [remains of a Roman boat](#).

Want to know what the Romans smelled like? [Patchouli apparently](#). As well as rotting fish sauce.

In Newark excavations ahead of road building have led to the discovery of many ages of things but including what could be a [Roman pottery](#) industrial site.

Just to prove [scientists do have a sense of humour](#).

A little [video from Pete Savin](#) tracing part of RR72a near Downham, Lancs. For those familiar with the area, that's the same Downham where you go to feed the ducks.



Sadly this one about [‘Modeling a key lines: Least-cost and spatial analysis to uncover a Roman intramountainous path in the Aures, Algeria’](#) isn’t full open access but those with institutional log ins may be able to read the whole thing.

There’s a new website for [Lanchester/Longovicium](#) which may be of interest.

If you are young, and I’m sorry but that’s a lot of you not included for this one, there’s a group aimed at connecting early career scholars interested in Roman frontiers. Their [website is here](#). Looks like early days yet but could be well worth getting involved if it applies to you.

I’m presuming we’re all aware that Sycamore Gap on Hadrian’s Wall has had to be renamed Stump Gap? Thought so. I’m not putting any links because there was so much coverage and Dave is devastated about it.

Oh how we all love an aerial photograph. Historic England have added some in what they are calling [‘Baseball and Bombers: USAAF Reconnaissance Photography During the Second World War’](#)

This thesis is open access: [‘Mapping the Via Hadrumetina and Its Roman Period Landscape’](#)

More open access for [‘Explaining Known Past Routes, Underdetermination, and the Use of Multiple Cost Functions’](#)

Many of you also noticed the exciting stuff happening down in the south-west earlier in the year which not only made the [news](#) but also produced an [open access article](#).

Newspaper reports are claiming that [RR9](#) has been discovered near Stirling. It may well be but the images I’ve seen show that it was a very small excavation with some stone in the bottom. How was that extrapolated to the certainty of a Roman road? Hopefully a proper account will be available for adding to *Itinera*.

2023-24 Talk Series

Our series of talks continues - don’t forget they are also put on the RRRA YouTube Channel once the video editing fairy has done her magic. We’ve got an extra one next April as well.

The Military Roads of Scotland By John Poulter, 25th April

There will be lots of photographs of the Military Roads in Scotland, largely as built in the 1700s under General Wade and his successor, as Inspector of Roads, Major Caulfeild. A comparison will be made with Roman Roads, which were planned and constructed quite differently, albeit with similar purposes for their existence. The historical background will also be presented, along with the subsequent history of the Military Roads, and consideration will also be given to the personalities involved – or not! – including not only Wade and Caulfeild but also General Roy and Thomas Telford.

LAMAS Lecture, 14th November, A Tale of Two Fords? An Alternative Model of Roman Infrastructure in Southwark and Beyond

By Beccy Haslam of AOC Archaeology

The November LAMAS lecture will be a hybrid event both on Zoom and at the Lecture Theatre G6, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY.

Becky Haslam from AOC Archaeology will be telling 'A Tale of Two Fords? An alternative model of Roman road infrastructure in Southwark and beyond'. Recent discoveries at Brandon House and Harper Road have prompted a reappraisal of the route of Stane Street in Southwark. Could there have been a hitherto unknown road extending westwards from Watling Street towards modern Vauxhall?

There is no need to book you can just turn up on the night but we suggest that you arrive by 6.20pm for a prompt 6.30pm start. Non LAMAS members £2.50 and there will be sherry and soft drinks available for a small fee (cash only). For Zoom access you can sign up for this lecture via Eventbrite using the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lamas-lecture-a-tale-of-two-fords-tickets-748101540847?aff=oddtcreator>

You will receive confirmation from Eventbrite of your booking and, about an hour before the lecture begins, will be sent the link to the lecture which is being given via a Zoom webinar, a little different to the usual Zoom meetings. Please check your Junk and Spam folders as the link comes directly from Zoom and not from a LAMAS email address. When you join the webinar on the evening as an attendee you may be asked to sign in with your name and email address but don't worry if you aren't and go straight in. You will be muted and your video will also be off so that the only people you will see and hear are the hosts and the lecturer.



You will have the opportunity to ask questions of Becky which you can do by typing them into the Zoom Q&A or Chat boxes - all will be explained on the night.

A Roman Joke

I apologise, but this made me laugh possibly way more than it should have so I pass it on.

At Hadrian's Wall.

Soldier: Centurion, there's a problem.

Centurion: What's that then?

Soldier: It's these painted guys. They keep showing up, they draw a cock on the wall and then run back off north.

Centurion: Ugh, unsolicited Pict dicks.