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Matt Sparkes  
Alan Taylor  
Gary Whitaker  
James Whitaker  
Sally Woodlock

If you’re interested in Roman roads or would like to know more contact us via our web site http://romanroads.org/ or by mail to one of the below;

Mike Haken (Chairman)  
mike@romanroads.org
Dave Armstrong (Membership Sec. & Newsletter Editor)  
dave.armstrong@romanroads.org
Rob Entwistle (Itinera Editor)  
itinera@romanroads.org
Rebecca L. Ellis (Finds Officer & Social Media)  
reb.ellis@romanroads.org
ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

What did the Romans do for us? One thing they certainly did was to lay the foundations for our modern road network, with millions of us driving every day along roads first laid out by Roman surveyors two millenia ago (such as Oxford Street in London, and large parts of the A1, A5 and many others). Unfortunately though, much of the Roman road network is not represented by modern roads, and despite a common assumption that Ivan Margary’s comprehensive gazetteer, *Roman Roads in Britain* (1973) made our understanding of the Roman road network reasonably complete, less than 40% of the network is actually known with any certainty. That false assumption has also frequently led to a lack of attention from the professional archaeological community (with the notable exception of roads in Wales), and for most of the past hundred years the serious study of Roman roads was left to a handful of disparate individuals and small amateur groups, with little or no co-ordination or cooperation between them.

The RRRA was formed in 2015 as a registered charity to bring those disparate individuals together, and to coordinate a nationwide programme of consistent and high quality research, promoting the study of Roman roads and Roman heritage throughout the former Roman province of Britannia. Over the last couple of decades, it has often been a race against time to discover and record what we can of the 60% of the Roman road network about which we are still uncertain, since modern agricultural methods and urban development have been steadily removing surviving features from the landscape. Fortunately, new technologies such as LiDAR and geophysical survey have helped enormously and enabled researchers to identify the remains of hundreds of miles of previously unknown Roman roads, along with associated Roman sites, and we continue to work to fill the many gaps. Research is only half the story though, we also have to ensure that the results of our work are readily available. We aim to:

1. bring together all known information on Roman roads in Britain, summarised in a freely accessible online interactive gazetteer, expected to be complete by 2026.

2. identify key sites where important questions remain, and organise fieldwork necessary to answer those questions. 100 Ha of geophysical survey have been completed, with a further 500 Ha already planned, and several future excavations are currently at the planning stage.

3. encourage the involvement of as many people as possible in our activities. We care passionately about community archaeology, and will always encourage local people to get involved in our work, without any charge (unlike some organisations, we will never do this!).

4. organise events to keep people up to date with research including online talks & seminars.

5. ensure that all our published work is Open Access, including our quarterly newsletter and *Itinera* (following a very short initial members only embargo).

Membership is open to everyone, and our three hundred or so members come from a wide variety of backgrounds ranging from those with just a general interest in our Roman heritage to professional archaeologists from both the public and commercial sectors, alongside seasoned Roman roads researchers. Joining the RRRA gives you the knowledge that your modest subscription (just £14 a year for a single adult) is helping to support our important work. You might even get a warm and fuzzy glow.
WHILST IT MAY NO LONGER BE FASHIONABLE FOR ACADEMIC JOURNALS TO CARRY A CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE OR ANNUAL REVIEW, WE FELT THAT FOR OUR FIRST EVER VOLUME A BRIEF OUTLINE OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2020 WAS MORE THAN JUSTIFIED, ESPECIALLY IN THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

The Roman Roads Research Association is a young organisation and was less than five years old at the beginning of 2020. Of course, at that time we had no idea of the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic would present. For ourselves, the impacts were felt mainly in our fieldwork and public engagement. Our plans to revisit the site of our hugely successful community excavation on Dere Street (RR8a) and a nearby Romano-British settlement in 2019 had to be shelved, and we currently cannot say with certainty if we will revisit the site this year. The pandemic also prevented us moving forward with our Devil’s Causeway project in Northumberland, examining possible Roman military sites along the route of the Roman road, and it seems unlikely that much fieldwork will take place there until 2022. Similarly, plans to launch a major community based geophysical survey also had to be postponed, as did a planned community project near Doncaster which was to process the finds from a fieldwalking survey conducted just before the first lockdown on a newly identified Roman roadside settlement.

However, the year’s events were far from being entirely negative. Despite the difficulties, or even perhaps because of them, 2020 did bring positive changes as well. It was right at the start of the first lockdown that we took the decision to launch Itinera, and just over a year later you are now reading our first ever volume. Our increased social media presence resulted in a doubling of our membership in the year, a trend that has continued since, with membership now standing at 311 at the time of writing (early March 2021). Whilst most of our community projects were postponed, our small but highly dedicated team conducting geophysical survey on parts of the road corridor between Doncaster and Aldborough did achieve some excellent results (when the regulations permitted). Turning out in all weathers, even in a blizzard, they surveyed the fort at Roecliffe, confirmed the route of RR720b as it approaches Isurium Brigantum (Aldborough, N. Yorkshire), and discovered an entirely unexpected ‘new’ road near Tadcaster. These are just a few examples of their many achievements, and the reports for all these surveys will be published on our website later this year.

2020 also saw the launch, quietly, of a pilot project in the East Riding. Living Beyond the Town – Petuaria is our contribution to the Petuaria ReVisited project (shortlisted for the 2020 Marsh Award for Community Archaeology) and will conduct a magnetometer survey of the Roman road corridor out of Brough (Roman Petuaria) heading towards York, as far as South Cave. The project aims to give us a clearer idea of how the Roman period landscape developed...
along this road corridor. The survey is being carried out by a group of fourteen local volunteers, who have all received training and support in using our equipment, and it will cover about 300 Ha. It is one of the largest community geophysics projects ever conducted in this country, and if successful it will be replicated elsewhere in Britain.

Without question, the most significant event for us in 2021 is the launch of this first volume of *Itinera*. From the beginning, the Editorial Committee was very conscious of the increasing problems faced by researchers when attempting to access academic papers, even by those with access to university libraries, since so many academic journals these days are held securely behind a publisher’s pay wall. We wanted to ensure that no researcher would ever struggle to obtain a paper published in *Itinera*, and so we took the decision to produce the journal entirely ourselves and without the aid of a publisher. This was far from being a straightforward process, but we have now proved that with a dedicated group of volunteers, inexpensive publishing software and the advice of people with experience in publishing, typesetting and illustration, it can be done. We can only hope that others follow our lead. Crucially, by going down this route we can not only keep the price of the printed version low but are able to make the entire journal open access online, after an initial members-only embargo of one year.

We continue to promote a strong community-based approach, and 2021 will see the launch of two further community geophysics projects examining sites along the course of Roman roads, one in Nottinghamshire and the other in North Yorkshire. Another potential project is being discussed in Cambridgeshire. We are very well aware of an apparent bias towards projects in Yorkshire; this is an unintentional but inevitable consequence of the Association being founded in Yorkshire. However, we are extremely keen to undertake fieldwork elsewhere in Britain, especially geophysical survey, and welcome any suggestions for areas of future research. In time, we hope that we can meet many more of our members face to face, whether that be by our planned zoom series of chats and lectures, or back out in the field when circumstances allow.

Despite the uncertainties of the coming months, thanks to the enthusiasm and participation of our membership, the long-term outlook for the RRRA is extremely bright. In the meantime, we hope all our readers remain safe and well in these challenging times.

Mike Haken
Chairman
mike@romanroads.org
EDITORIAL
ROBERT ENTWISTLE

The first Editorial of a new annual journal is a significant moment. Launching *Itinera* marks a step forward for the RRRA, focusing light on an aspect of Roman archaeology that has not previously enjoyed its own published academic outlet. That such a development is possible, demonstrates the current health and breadth of an area of Roman studies that will always be associated with the expert labour of Ivan Margary in the middle years of the twentieth century.

*Itinera* is, from conception, a journal intended to bridge the gap between academic researchers and that large band of enthusiasts – the backbone of so many local societies and our own RRRA membership – who wish both to stay informed about, and contribute to, developments in the field. Thus *Itinera*’s content will include quality work by capable independent researchers alongside significant papers from established academics. To ensure maintenance of standards, all papers are peer assessed.

*Itinera* has been established to offer a point of reference for all those doing work which can develop and broaden understanding of Roman roads and land communications. It is an aspect often touched upon in wider archaeological investigations (see for example Janet Phillips and Pete Wilson’s paper in the current volume) but in the past such isolated findings have not always been treated with due emphasis and made readily available for a better understanding of the road network as a whole. *Itinera* will allow Roman road studies to make their proper contribution to understanding Roman society, technological practice, communications, and military and economic development. The journal will inform academics about the current state of knowledge while also making it available to local individuals and societies, allowing future work to be targeted for maximum efficacy. Thus this journal is published both in digital form for maximum reach (free to RRRA members), and in paper form for permanent academic reference and record.

Our content, as may be judged from this first volume, is wide-ranging. The first paper, from David Ratledge, shows how an experienced and skilled practitioner is able to exploit modern technology (in this case LiDAR) to expose and clarify routes that were previously imprecisely defined. Other papers demonstrate the findings of specific excavations, examine the artefactual and archaeological evidence for Roman transport, explore issues of planning and surveying, and speculate about the extent of local road networks. A major contribution from Bill Trow represents the culmination of many years work in testing some of Selkirk’s conclusions regarding the existence of a ‘Proto Dere Street’. A roundup of the year (interpreted broadly for this first volume) keeps track of investigative work relating to Roman roads around the country.
The starting point of Roman road studies has long been Ivan Margary’s classic study, ‘Roman Roads in Britain’. A major challenge for the present day is how to build constructively upon this work in the 21st century, allowing recent findings, seldom pulled together, to be readily referenced by the archaeological community. Two important papers in this volume, from Mike Haken and Dave Armstrong, examine ways in which the RRRA supports identification, classification and nomenclature of new discoveries, building upon Margary’s work and ensuring that it remains fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

A new journal is not launched without the labour of a dedicated band. Our editorial committee has met regularly on-line throughout this year of pandemic to resolve the many issues that have arisen. It has established ground rules; invited, gathered, reviewed, and selected material; communicated with authors; edited text and images; created and used templates; entered materials into publishing software; stitched together the journal itself; and finally sent the completed journal for printing and circulation.

Mike Haken, the RRRA Chairman, has been unsparing of his time and expertise, actively involved at every stage. Dave Armstrong, indefatigable as the man at the centre, has pulled together the materials into the form of a journal, always positive and perceptive, no labour too challenging. Mike Bishop has given generously of his archaeological knowledge and crucial publishing experience; Chester Forster has brought his experience from other archaeological journals both to head up our band of local correspondents and to manage the indexing of this volume; and John Poulter has been a valued consultant. Paul Bidwell and Pete Wilson, among several others, have acted as readers and referees, their immense knowledge and expertise allowing us to maintain a solid academic basis to this venture.

Nevertheless, it is the authors to whom a journal is ultimately indebted for its success: we thank all our contributors for making Itinera’s first volume possible. We trust that others will be inspired to maintain and develop this journal, taking note of our mid-November deadline for 2022 copy. Similarly we welcome offers of help for our next volume in terms of reading, reviewing, managing images or digital typesetting.

We look forward to receiving ideas for relevant and authoritative papers, whether from inside or outside the UK.

Robert Entwistle
Hon Editor, Itinera
itinera@romanroads.org
NEWLY ALLOCATED MARGARY ROAD NUMBERS

BY DAVE ARMSTRONG
dave.armstrong@romanroads.org

Following the proposals by Armstrong in this volume, a number of new Margary road numbers have been allocated to roads reported in this volume of Itinera, based on the criteria laid out by Haken in this volume;

1 A Roman Road number is reserved where there is archaeological evidence sufficient that at least one road segment has the status 2. Road, probable, i.e. some evidence of a Roman road.

2 A Roman Road number is awarded where there is sufficient evidence to have at least one road segment of status 3. Road, known, i.e. convincing evidence of a Roman road.

3 These allocated numbers are recorded in RRRA’s master database of Margary road number and cross references.

**Ebchester to Beukley, Northumberland.** Status - known road, **RR8ee(x)** awarded. This volume, full paper, by Bill Trow.

**Osmanthorpe to Rossington Bridge, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire.** Status - known road, **RR282(x)** awarded, cross referencing with RRX104. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Tim Jeffery and Mike Haken.

**Ancaster to Ad Pontem, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.** Status - known road, **RR59(x)** awarded. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Tim Jeffery and Mike Haken.

**Housesteads to Stanegate RR85a Grindon, Northumberland.** Status - known road, **RR854(x)** awarded, cross referencing with RRX038. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020, by Dave Armstrong.

**Housesteads to Vindolanda/Stanegate RR85a, Northumberland.** Status - known road, **RR855(x)** awarded, cross referencing with RRX038. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020, by Dave Armstrong.

**Exeter to Watchet, Somerset and Devon.** Status – probable road, **RR494(x)** reserved. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Steve Kaye.

**Morton Ley Farm, Oswestry, Shropshire.** Status - probable road, **RR641(x)** reserved. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 work by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.
**Cothelstone to Enmore, Somerset.** Status – probable road, RR513(x) reserved. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Chris Smart.

**Winchester to Chichester, Hampshire & Sussex.** This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Richard Whaley of NEHNAS FAB. Status – probable road, RR425(x) reserved.

**Holwell to Sansoms Platt between Woodstock and Wootton, RR16a Akeman Street parallel route, Oxfordshire.** Status – probable road, RR16aa(x) reserved. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by John Blair, published in Oxoniensia, 2020.

**The Suga-Rodu (Pay Lane/St. John’s Lane), Oxfordshire,** a branch road from RR16aa(x) above crossing Akeman Street RR16a. Status – probable road, RR563(x) reserved. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by John Blair, published in Oxoniensia, 2020.

**Otmoor, Oxfordshire, parallel route to RR160b.** Status - probable road, RR160bb(x). This volume under Roman Roads in 2020. Work by Oxford Archaeology.

**Dalswinton to Glenlochar, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland.** Status – probable road, RR760(x) reserved, cross referencing to the OS RRX number and Historic Environment Scotland RX14. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Dave Armstrong.

**Glenlochar to Gatehouse of Fleet, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland.** This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by Dave Armstrong. Status – probable road, RR761(x) reserved, cross referencing to the OS RRX number and Canmore RR8.

**Chawton Woods, Hampshire and Flexford, Surrey London to Winchester.** Status – probable road, RR400(x) reserved, cross referencing to the OS RRX010 number. This volume under Roman Roads in 2020 by David Weston, Richard Whaley of NEHNAS FAB and Surrey Archaeological Society.

A number of other roads have already been allocated new numbers when put up in the RRRA Gazetteer. These will be reviewed and summarised in the second volume of *Itinera*. Similarly the extensive work in Wales and Scotland with alternative number sequences need drawing into the Margary series. Again, this will be summarised in the second volume.