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The Roman Roads Research Association also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of all the other individuals who have volunteered their time and expertise in the preparation, production and distribution of this volume, without whom it would not have been possible:

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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 millennia 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 *Itinerae* (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.
WHILE 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
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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.

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MANAGEMENT AND ALLOCATION OF NEW MARGARY ROAD NUMBERS

BY DAVE ARMSTRONG
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ABSTRACT

The Roman Roads Research Association (RRRA) was formed to advance knowledge of the Roman road network and promote the study of Roman roads and Roman heritage throughout the former Roman province of Britannia. Our first objective is to complete a new survey of all the known Roman roads in Britain, collating and re-assessing all the known evidence for each individual road, and publishing the results in our new online Gazetteer, The Roads of Roman Britain. We aim to encourage the involvement of as many people as possible in our activities and, to support this aim, we are publishing this document which will:

• Analyse and explain Ivan Margary’s system for numbering roads
• Determine the numbering systems used since by other national organisations
• Put forward a proposal to establish how new Margary numbers may be allocated
• Assert that RRRA is the best placed organisation to pick up and manage this task.

IVAN MARGARY’S SYSTEM FOR NUMBERING ROADS

When Ivan Margary compiled his magnum opus, Roman Roads in Britain (1955-57) with two subsequent expanded editions, he needed a means of easily cross-referencing the 355 roads he describes in the book. Accordingly, he created a system of numbering Roman roads (1973, 32-33) based upon the modern road numbering system devised by the government’s Roads Board in 1913. Margary probably had no notion that his system would rapidly become the standard method of reference for Roman Roads by scholars and the public alike. The following is Margary’s own description of his system taken from the Introduction to his book (ibid):

Single digit numbers are given to the main routes thus: 1 Watling Street, 2 Ermine Street, 3 London to Colchester and Norwich, 4 London to Exeter, 5 Foss Way, 6 Watling Street (West) in
the Welsh Marches, 7 the western main north route through Carlisle, 8 the eastern main north route through Corbridge, and 9 the northern road from the Scottish Roman Wall to Strathmore.

The principal branches from each of these have a two-digit number, 40, 41, 42..., working as far as possible consecutively along the main route, and then the minor branches are given three-digit numbers related to the nearest two-digit branch available. Thus, a road numbered 421 will be readily identified as a branch somewhere near road 42 (Silchester—Winchester), itself a branch from the south-western main route 4. Then road 40 will be found as a branch of road 4 in London, but 47 is a branch at Dorchester and 49 at Charmouth, nearer the western extremity of road 4. Where it has been found necessary to divide the account of the longer roads into several portions these are indicated by adding the letters a, b, etc., after the number.

Margary recognised that his series had a limited number of available numbers. Already all the single digit numbers (apart from zero), most of the double-digit numbers and many of the triple-digit numbers in his series were allocated. While not described in his text, his solution was to use double lower case letters, for example RR18ee was allocated as an alternative parallel road to RR18e Templeborough to Chesterfield, and in areas where roads are extremely numerous upper case letters were added for separate closely related roads. All the upper case examples, so far, are in the South East Midlands area, and this numbering was described by The Viatores (1964, 13-14).

Where numerous smaller roads occur in a limited area, as happens around Verulamium, the system is further expanded by adding capital letters after the three digit numbers; thus 169, 169A, 169B and 169C are all in the same district in the vicinity of Road 16.

While Margary allocated just the number it has since become accepted practice to prefix this with RR (for Roman road).

**Numbers Allocated by Other National Organisations**

Margary may have continued to allocate road numbers after his third edition was published and records of these may still be within his archive. Details of newly discovered Roman roads were compiled by the Ordnance Survey (OS) for mapping purposes until 1984 when the three Royal Commissions on the Ancient and Historical Monuments for England, Scotland and Wales took over the archaeological role (RCHME, RCAHMS, RCAHMW). The OS and the Royal Commissions added a series of prefixes to produce an almost bewildering array of different number series, especially in Wales (RCAHMW 1994):

- Routes considered to be Roman by Margary are numbered in a series prefixed by RR following Margary’s existing series.

- Routes considered to be Roman by the OS but not listed by Margary are prefixed with X, a numerical sequence not linked to the geographical position. This is described (ibid) as ‘consisting of those routes considered by the Ordnance Survey to be Roman or probably Roman but not listed by Margary’. An example is X120 for a suggested Roman road between Lanchester and Chester le Street. These are usually written with a RR prefix – RRX120. In fact, this
series also include a number of roads proposed as Roman on the basis of antiquarian research but rejected by the OS.

- Roman roads catalogued in Wales subsequent to both Margary and the OS were prefixed RRN by the RCAHMW, with a non-geographical series starting at RRN001. Further work assigned numbers jumping ahead of the series numbers previously allocated, starting at RRN050. Independently, in the southern part of Wales the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd allocated their own numbers to non-Margary roads discovered in their area with a non-geographical numerical series. For example, RR GGAT006 for a road West Aberthaw to Llanharry.

- In Wales, records of miscellaneous roads that do not relate to existing routes covered by the above were prefixed RRZ by the RCAHMW.

- In addition, though not clearly described, Scottish roads are often listed in Canmore with a non-geographical series of RR1 to RR8, for roads where there is certainty and RX1 to RX25 for more speculative roads. This series is in addition or independent to the Margary or OS number which are sometimes quoted and cross referred to as being ‘formerly’.

Thus, there are a number of legacy series numbers, perhaps with some overlap and duplication. All these numbers are already embedded in various literature and reports so to replace or supersede a number would be unnecessarily confusing.

**Margary’s Numbering System; Moving Forward**

Margary’s numbering system has now been in use for over 60 years and is so well established that it seems likely to continue as the main referencing system. However, since Ivan Margary died in 1976, his numbering system has become effectively frozen leaving all the ‘new’ Roman roads discovered since outside his system.

Clearly, the current situation is chaotic and confusing and is only going to get worse as more roads are discovered, especially as the use of new technologies such as LiDAR has increased the rate of discovery.

RRRA are proposing to perpetuate, expand and manage the Margary numbering system. This complex and difficult numbering issue was discussed by Participant Groups at the RRRA Ivan D Margary Memorial Conferences in Portsmouth and York in 2016. The overarching conclusion was that that RRRA should take the lead and re-start Margary’s system from where he left it in 1976 and this work has already started. As each region in Britain is incorporated into our Gazetteer, all newly discovered roads and ones with numbers in other existing series confirmed as being of Roman origin will be given a unique Margary number.

This will involve the allocation of new Margary series numbers to newly discovered roads, along with the allocation of Margary numbers to roads numbered under other series. This will require the ongoing and responsible management of a master database to record the allotted numbers plus the cross reference with other number systems where necessary. A
protocol for this will be necessary (with some tact and diplomacy) to maintain consistency and ensure that the evidence for a new road warrants the allocation of a new number.

A valid challenge to this could be to question whether the RRRA is the most appropriate body to take this on, as opposed to a national body. In response, there are no other bodies with a national Roman road focus in a position, nor having the visible desire, to pick this up and resolve what is clearly necessary. One other organisation, the North East Hampshire History and Archaeological Society, Field Archaeology Branch (NEHHAS), has expressed, on line (NEHHAS 2019), the need to update the system but they are southern orientated and have had no visible initiative in allocating new numbers. Professional bodies can only undertake work such as this with funding and, as evidenced by the Roman road project across Wales; even when there was a large, focused initiative this aspect was not tackled. This paper asserts that RRRA are best placed to take a national approach to this and have the desire, capability, wherewithal, and infrastructure to undertake it to a consistently high standard. A database of all existing road numbers, including the other legacy series, is already maintained by RRRA.

To this end, absorbing the principles established by the legacy series, the following protocol is proposed.

- Existing Margary numbered roads retain the number, consolidating the norm of preceding the number with RR, e.g. RR82. Currently, some individuals and groups use ‘M’ or ‘Margary’ as a prefix to Roman road numbers, however, the prefix RR is in general use amongst most heritage organisations such as Historic England, RCAHMW and Historic Environment Scotland, and it is to be hoped that ‘RR’, by consistent use by RRRA, will become generally accepted, as it is the form that Margary himself preferred.

- Newly allocated numbers in the Margary series will have (x) added after the number (and letter, if applicable) to make it obvious that this is a road subsequent to the original series. For example, the road from Lancaster which extends Margary’s RR70e northwards to Ambleside, has been allocated the number RR70f(x).

- Roads already numbered under other series will be allocated new Margary numbers as above, whilst cross referencing their legacy numbers. For example, OS road RRX2, Templeborough to Thorpe Audlin will also be allocated RR18f(x). This cross referencing will be visible on the relevant Gazetteer page.

- Segments of a new long road (longer than 50 miles) should continue to be separated into reasonable geographic lengths using lower case subscripts as per the original Margary series, for example Dere Street RR8e. Whilst the likelihood of discovering a new long road segment is low, new extensions to existing roads are possible. It is strongly suggested that existing Margary roads are not further split; the process should be reserved for long new segments.

- Alternative or parallel routes on existing numbered segments should have a second lower case subscript the same as the existing; for example, for example, RR8ee(x) would be a road next to RR8e.
Where further double or triple-digit numbers are no longer available the series can be continued and expanded with some judgement using double lower case or upper-cased numbers as Margary did. Thus, a new route that leaves or is closely parallel to the existing Margary road RR161A could be allocated RR161Aa(x).

LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE ATTRIBUTES OF A ROMAN ROAD REQUIRED BEFORE ALLOCATING A NEW MARGARY NUMBER. THE PROPOSED PROTOCOL.

To maintain the quality of the confidence in Margary numbered roads it is important that new road numbers are only allocated when there is a reasonable level of confidence that a discovered road does have a Roman origin. To this end, a new protocol has been developed as an aid to judgement on the confidence level. The new protocol utilises a system of ratings, developed to assess the confidence or ‘status’, of individual segments of Roman road, rather than entire roads. The new system is a revision of the previous one successfully deployed by the RRRA and now, at least at first sight, similar to ones developed by the Welsh Roman roads project. This new rating system is given in the table below, and fully explained in the next paper (Haken, this volume).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welsh categories</th>
<th>Current RRRA definitions</th>
<th>Proposed RRRA categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Road, known</td>
<td>Road, known</td>
<td>3. Road, known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Road, proposed</td>
<td>Road, probable</td>
<td>2. Road, probable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Road, predicted</td>
<td>Road, possible</td>
<td>1. Road, possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road, presumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. Road, discounted</td>
<td>Road, no evidence</td>
<td>0. Unrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed protocol is as follows;

- **No Roman Road number awarded.** No part of the road rated higher than 1. Road, possible. Roads that fall into this category have little, conflicting or contradictory evidence, notably no strong and credible field evidence. This category is not stating there is no Roman road but that no credible evidence of a Roman road has been presented. Researchers should consider the attributes of roads in the higher categories that direct what needs to be determined to raise the category of the road in question

- **Roman Road number reserved.** Roads must have archaeological evidence sufficient that at least one road segment has the status 2. Road, probable. A new Margary road number will be allocated, and recorded in the database, but not publicly awarded since the level of evidence is not yet sufficient to be sure that a Roman road exists. Many of Margary’s published roads would actually fall into this category.
• **Roman Road number awarded.** Roads that have sufficient evidence to have at least one road segment of status 3. *Road, known.* A new Margary number will be fully awarded and published in *Itinera.*

This paper proposes that the awarding of new Roman road numbers be a function of the Editorial committee of the RRRA annual journal, *Itinera* which will weigh the evidence for the existence of a Roman road using the above ratings before reserving, or awarding, a new number. New road discoveries will be reported through this body, and published either as a full paper or in the annual round up *Roman Roads in 20XX*, along with the new number. A record of the number allocation will be retained by RRRA and entered into the database while being communicated with the author.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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