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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 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 *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 Brigantium (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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THE ROMAN MARKET ECONOMY AND LOCAL ROADS. REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS IN NORTH SOMERSET

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ABSTRACT

Within the area of Northern Somerset bounded by accepted Roman roads - the Bath to Sea Mills to the north, the Fosseway to the east, the Charterhouse to Winchester to the south - there are no generally agreed Roman roads. Yet this area, especially its western portion, was particularly endowed with a lively economic base and it is suggested that local roads were needed to facilitate this economic activity, and that moreover such economic activity had to be embedded in the Empire-wide market economy. The idea of an inter-regional market-based economy is proposed severally by professors Peter Temin, Keith Hopkins, Brian Ward Perkins, who adduce the sheer quantity of silver coinage throughout the Empire and beyond, the evidence of profitability and value-based trade and the widespread existence of specialised bulk production. Examples include Samian ware and olive oil, and in Britain include Purbeck marble and pottery such as Oxford colour-coated ware. Examples from North Somerset comprise the major industries of lead and salt, and also building stone, iron mining, metalworking including pewter production, Congresbury pottery, with various ranges of distribution. It is argued that the local roads needed to serve this activity fitted into the Roman legal framework relating to roads, being classed as Viae Vicinales, roads that served localised communities, and were administered by the Civitates under the Lex Provinciae. Finance could come from local taxation or euergetism. It is argued that the Roman army had nothing to do with these roads since all military forces were withdrawn from the south-west within 30 years of the initial invasion, and the development of most of the local economy didn’t occur until later. Nevertheless it is suggested that Viae Vicinales conformed to the general pattern of Roman road construction; there are several very short stretches of metalled minor roads in North Somerset as well as evidence of engineering, and it generally seems likely that cultural assimilation and aspiration would lead to imitation of military roads, as with villas and so much else. The traditional objection against land transportation of excessive cost is addressed through Professor Ray Lawrence’s arguments about profitability as opposed to cost, as are aspects of freight technology. Together with this discussion of land freight transportation, three roads are described in detail which fit the requirement that they link centres of population and of economic activity, and which present strong evidence for their being recognisably Roman roads. One of these has excavation evidence, one has geophysics, the third a mass of circumstantial evidence support (such as construction technique, passage through Romanised landscapes, clear economic function), as do the 14 other postulated roads in the appendix.

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INTRODUCTION.

Apart from the road connecting the Roman towns at Charterhouse, Somerset, and Old Sarum, Wiltshire, (Margary RR45b), which clearly had to do with the lead and silver industry of the Mendips (Elkington 1976, 188), no major Roman roads are known to exist in North Somerset. Yet a significant amount of economic activity went on, with production levels beyond the requirements of the immediate locality. Concentration and specialisation argue a market economy, i.e. economic activity well above a general simple peasant subsistence agriculture, providing a meagre surplus to be extracted for the comfortable life of a small minority of the well to do and for defraying the requirements of the army. Such a market economy existed on a macro-economic level in and beyond the Roman world. It is to be expected that a local scale of economic production and exchange also existed – meshing in with, supporting, and enabled by, the wider extent of the Roman market economy. Materials and products therefore needed to be transported. Dirt roads may have served this purpose, but this paper proposes that local metalled roads, constructed perhaps to a lesser standard than the major roads, and administered locally, linked small towns and economic centres, and provided the means to transport the materials and finished goods of the

Fig. 1: The proposed network of North Somerset local Roman roads. (Re-drawn by Tim Richards, after H Freke)
specialised production of North Somerset. (This will be detailed below under ‘North Somerset examples of specialised large-scale production’). It is accepted that waterborne transport will also have contributed to local transportation, but this paper will concentrate on road transport.

THE IDEA OF A ROMAN MARKET ECONOMY

It is now widely accepted that trade and commerce in the Roman world functioned and thrived through a series of inter-regionally connected economies that added up to an overall market economy, most strongly and pervasively in the first and second centuries AD but still continuing in the third and fourth centuries at a lower level of prosperity, which nevertheless exceeded that of areas beyond the frontiers. Moses Finley’s ideas (1973) of a mainly subsistence economy in which a relatively restricted elite creamed off the limited surpluses of a poor peasant mass of small farmers has been substantially modified, not least thanks to the very extensive developer-funded archaeological activity since 1990. Scholars such as Temin (2012), Hopkins (1980), and Ward-Perkins (2005) characterise the Roman economy by describing the huge amount of coinage in circulation, the increasing marketisation and commercialisation of trade, and specialised bulk production. Products such as Samian ware and olive oil are examples of mass circulation.

Britannia

Specialised large-scale production also occurred in Britain. To give just three instances: Purbeck (South Dorset) marble used for a variety of purposes is found throughout southern England and into the Midlands (Pearson 2006, 109-116); Oxfordshire colour-coated pottery is found throughout the province (Ward-Perkins 2005, 93); and fine adzes fashioned in the Weald, Kent, are found from the far north to the south of Britannia (Allen 2007, 354 & Fig.7.51).

North Somerset

Examples of specialised large-scale production

Of course no doubt the main occupation of North Somerset Roman period inhabitants was agriculture, although Row of Ashes farmstead (Fowler 1970) suggests this was not necessarily at subsistence level. Food produce was needed for those, such as the miners of Mendip, whose main activity did not involve agriculture – and numbers of these, unknown but not insignificant, existed in North Somerset.

Two enterprises were substantial:

Lead Mining: a major industrial undertaking of supra provincial importance; ingots have been found along the road to the port of Clausentum (Bitterne, Southampton, Hampshire), in Gaul, and the lead product has been identified in a tank at Pompeii (Elkington 1976, 188). The main centre at a town near the modern village of Charterhouse covered an area of at least
27 ha and perhaps more, as the site has not been fully investigated. Since no field systems have been found, all food had to be carted in (Elkington 1976, 197) together with much else ranging from basic necessities to luxuries. Transportation out of the site required animals, vehicles, repair and maintenance facilities, stabling, drivers, and farriers. It was a busy important place, even if not dignified enough to rate town walls (although much bigger than the area contained by the walls of Bath).

Salt: the site at St Georges, North Somerset, according to its excavators (Cox and Holbrook 2009, 114), operated at an ‘industrial scale’ and its production did not aim at purely local...
supply, so ‘some must have been designated for export’. Furthermore this site, along with a number of other salt production sites in North West Somerset (see fig. 2), comprised one of the six largest centres of this industry in Britannia (Smith 2017, 195)

Other north Somerset industrial activity worked on a more local level:

**Iron mining:** especially on Broadfield Down, North Somerset. An iron smelter has been found just outside nearby Congresbury (Nicholls 2016) and there is evidence of scattered small scale iron smelting across the whole area (Vince Russett 2018, conversation with author, 19 June). Iron working has been found at Gatcombe (Branigan 1977, 184).

**Metal working (smithing):** the making and repair of tools and metal equipment is seen as an important activity in places like Banwell/Winthill, North Somerset (Historic England 2021a) and Gatcombe (Branigan 1977, 125-7).

**Stone quarrying:** quarries to the west of Dundry village provided yellow oolitic limestone for Gatcombe, and it was even exported as far as Cardiff for the fort there (Aston and Iles 1986, 66).

**Pottery:** Many pottery kilns have been found on the south western edge of Congresbury, North Somerset (Russett 2016). Recently an enigmatic double concentric ringed example has been excavated. Identifiable Congresbury Ware sherds occur throughout North Somerset (including Gatcombe) and into South Bristol. Clearly Congresbury did not equal the great pottery production centres such as South Dorset or Nene Valley in quantity, quality, or range of distribution, but did provide medium quality products over a radius of up to 20 miles or so (Smith 2018, 195; Rippon 2008).

Goods produced elsewhere came into North Somerset. For example, no local production centres for glass or ceramic building material (e.g. roof tiles and box flues) are known in this area. Pottery found at Gatcombe came from a wide area beyond North Somerset (Branigan 1977, 95-96). One can be certain of a considerable inflow of goods.

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### SOME LOCAL ROADS IN NORTH SOMERSET

**Introduction**

Moving goods needs good roads, and where feasible, waterborne transportation. With up to 1000 mm of rain each year, much more on the highlands (especially Mendip) and substantial areas of potential marsh, dirt tracks could not have offered the effective communications required for transporting lead, iron, salt, and stone from early in the Roman era. Later, agricultural produce, pottery, manufactured products such as pewter and goods, and materials from elsewhere, added to the need.

Thus it is very likely that a network of local, reasonably well-made roads developed over the centuries. If the Fosse Way near Radstock, not too far away, presented multiple rebuilds to the excavators, showing heavy continued use long after the initial military phase
(Davenport 2007, 133), then it is logical to expect the provision of adequate road construction in North Somerset. Furthermore, the recent discoveries of a metalled track to the east of Venus Street, Congresbury (Eaton & Flaherty 2019) and also of a metalled track leading north west from Banwell villa towards Wolvershill Road (one of our proposed Roman roads), suggest the possibility of more general metalling (Simmonds 2019). We have been looking for evidence of such roads. Our method of operation has been to identify likely needed routes between settlements and centres of economic activity, then to discover the roads that followed these routes.

This paper consciously focuses on ‘local’ roads generated by the local industrial and agricultural economy. Such roads of course have to be seen as a component of the wider network of Roman roads, including inter-regional strategic roads (in our region interconnecting say Gloucester, Cirencester, Bath, Ilchester, Exeter and Caerwent), roads to ports (Sea Mills and Crandon Bridge), to villas, to rural temples, and to signal stations. Which route a road chooses, and how roads interconnect, will to an extent be dependent upon which roads were built first; although over the centuries changes to the road network are to be anticipated. None of these higher levels of the road network will be discussed further here.

Methodology

One: Identify study area. The first job was to identify a discrete locality for study. We decided on the approximate area of the North Somerset Council, but adding in some adjacent parts of the county of Somerset and of Bath and North East Somerset. The boundary of the study area goes along the coast of the Bristol Channel from the mouth of the River Avon to that of the River Axe, then along the southern slopes of the Mendips as far as Priddy, then northwards through Chew Valley Lake, Chew Magna, then Pensford, Keynsham, and around the southern boundary of Bristol to meet the River Avon where it divides from the floating Harbour opposite Hotwells. The original plan was to include all of Bath and North East Somerset as far as the Fosse Way, but so far time has not allowed this, and this somewhat arbitrary chunk of country is sufficient to explore the idea described in the introduction and the beginning of the discussion.

Two: Identify centres of population and sites of economic activity using HER, excavation reports, books, and journals, for possible corridors of communications between them.

1: Winthill/Banwell to St Georges

The basic case

A road is to be expected (fig. 3) between Winthill/Banwell (ST 39669 58766) and St Georges (ST 36803 62772). Winthill was one of four main centres of lead production in the Mendips and was the site of metalworking. Investigation has been very limited but it has been suggested that the site may cover a considerable area, perhaps as far south as the river Lox Yeo (Vince Russett 2018, conversation with author 30 April ). To the north, Banwell has a
Fig. 3: Proposed route for Road: Winthill/Banwell to St Georges. Roads are marked as a pair of lines parallel to the road so as not to mask modern features which may fossilise the Roman line. (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 OS 100063221)
substantial number of Roman finds suggesting a further population here, as well as the villa (North Somerset Historic Environment Record) (fig. 4).

Saint Georges has a settlement (North Somerset HER 4914), although its size is not clear, and had a major salt industry described as being ‘of an industrial scale’ and producing more than needed locally, so evidently intended for transportation elsewhere (Cox and Holbrook 2009, 144). Other local saltworks combined with St Georges to comprise one of the six main salt producing concentrations in Britannia (Smith 2017 195) (Brunning and Grove 1998).
The Roman Market Economy and Local Roads of North Somerset

The route (fig. 3)

Starting from West Street in Banwell (ST 39561 59306), Wolvershill Road provides a substantial straight stretch as far as Wolvers Hill (ST 38190 60694) from which the modern road bends from a north west direction towards the north, descends via a small valley and then crosses the M5. Projecting a continuation of the straight stretch before the bend, at first its line is covered without trace by houses and gardens and is then interrupted by the M5, but beyond this the line is picked up by a length of Summer Lane (ST 37663 61314) proceeding roughly north west. Where this Lane turns at right angles to meet Wolvershill Road, the line continues as a bridleway path, with a ditch on one side and the Blind Yeo Rhyne on the other (ST37626149). At one point, the width measures 5 m which seems to be maintained throughout, satisfactory inasmuch as being similar to some known roads such as Akeman Street. At the northern end, Churchlands Way crossing it obliquely brings the bridleway to an end (ST 37137 61783), but the line is continued by a straight unnamed tarmac path accompanied by the Blind Yeo Rhyne on its eastern side (ST 3711 6189). After a while the tarmac path becomes a minor road retaining the direction, in marked contrast to the winding roads of modern suburban development on either side. Reaching the A370, an underpass takes the line beyond this and then continues as Summer Lane and Summer Lane North until further progress is lost at the New Bristol road (ST 36292 62583). This latter stretch north of the A370 becomes a little less direct where perhaps it follows the requirements of modern housing development, especially an apparent aversion to straight lines.

Conclusion

There seems to be considerable circumstantial evidence for suggesting this as a possible Roman road, particularly in terms of connecting two significant places, its directness, and the environment of Roman finds along its route. It is suggested that the accumulation of evidence builds to a near certainty, but this can only be resolved by archaeological investigation of a part or parts of the line of the postulated Roman road itself.

Further work

Archaeological investigation of the postulated road by excavation or geophysics (following professional advice), where appropriate.

Exploration of several apparent routes emanating from the road e.g. Cooks Lane (ST 39266 59696), and the line of hedgerows proceeding north from Wolvershill Batch on the tithe map (ST 37893 61318). This would involve examination of old maps, e.g. the Tithe map, and site visits.

A better understanding is needed of the St Georges Roman settlement which is only briefly mentioned in the North Somerset HER.

2: The Iwood Road

The case for this road is that it links the iron mining area of Broadfield Down with areas to the south-west and especially the metalworking small town of Winthill. It has been
suggested in the past that the road north of Iwood Manor enters the mining area via Ball Wood (ST 45717 64033) but goes no further. However this seems unlikely for several reasons: firstly, although the road fits the idea of linking two sites of significant economic activity, it is to be expected that an apparently important road would extend to another town. Secondly, if iron ore transportation is a major function, then routes are to be expected in other directions, for example towards Gatcombe (ST 52732 69794) (compare the Weald iron mining area, where roads go south towards the English Channel and north towards London).

The route (fig. 5)

The first section to be considered comprises a long line of hedgerows south of the B3133 Congresbury to Churchill Road, starting opposite the south end of Iwood Lane (ST 4520 6216) and continuing its line at the south west end until the line of hedgerows ends (ST 4396 6078) amid fields without obvious extension. Possibilities exist further on to the south west such as Duck Street (ST 43435 60352), especially at its northern end and where it becomes a bridleway. This has not yet been explored, but its direction clearly points to Winthill. The long line of hedgerows is a significant feature in the countryside – all the more so because the parish boundary accompanies it all the way, and none of the eight hedgerows meeting it on one side, and nine on the other, continue across it – suggesting that it is an old feature in the countryside. Roughly halfway along the hedgerow bends slightly (ST 4490 6140); the fact that the two arms continue in a straight line from the bend further argues its significance as a feature rather than being random.

The next section around Iwood Manor is complex (see fig. 6, based upon the 1840s tithe map). The line continues north of the B3133 along Iwood Lane (ST 45224 62153), still accompanied by the parish boundary until the latter bends slightly east away from the lane (ST 45325 62747) and proceeds through a field. The parish boundary descends the slope and on meeting a palaeochannel (ST 45414 62910) of the Congresbury Yeo river, turns abruptly to the east to follow the channel until it meets the current course of the river. It is proposed that the parish boundary follows the line of the Roman road as far as the palaeochannel. There is nothing in the first field now to suggest a road but on the 1840 Tithe map, where the parish boundary diverges from Iwood Lane, it is accompanied for a short distance by the stub of a lane which stops in the field (ST 45345 62759), then is continued by a hedgerow until it meets a hedgerow at right angles which presumably follows the palaeochannel to the east. A later early OS map merely shows a line of trees and hedgerow. Today the parish boundary shows on the map merely as an indicative line of dots in fields. Where the line of the proposed road crosses the palaeochannel would be an excellent place to look for a bridge or ford. Between this point and the river, a linear depression continues the line (ST 45415 62933). North of the river as it crosses ground through the curtilage of Iwood Manor, Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCCART) – a North Somerset volunteer group experienced in using geophysics equipment, found, on the line, geophysics indication of two parallel ditches (ST 45479 63050) (Russett 2012). North of the Manor, the old OS map shows a line of trees that merges into the line of Iwood Lane, carrying the line to a minor road (ST 45550 63605) between Congresbury and Wrington.

The next section goes up through the woods of the southern flank of Broadfield Down. Initially, the proposed line is continued on the north side of the Wrington Road by a
metalled path (ST 4563 6380) past a quarry, and then bends to the right (north-easterly) to ascend a small shallow valley through Ball Wood (ST 45716 63999). The OS map shows the public right-of-way on this course as swinging from one side of the valley to the other but the actual footpath proceeds with short sections of straight path, bending slightly but keeping a steady overall direction up the hill, much as you might expect of a Roman road ascending a slope. Near the top, the gradient slackens and the path widens to a long straight track now about 5 m across, fashioned as a terrace along the side of a slight transverse slope. Along the side of the track where it cuts into the slope, a line of stone blocks appears as if to act as a kerb or a revetment (ST 4590 6413). At the top, the track bends slightly to the east and descends the north side of the ridge by a fairly easy oblique route (ST 46110 64452) until
it meets a small private tarmac road (ST 46272 64524) leading to a house called Woolmers (ST 45924 64557).

**Conclusion**

The geophysics results to the north and south of the Iwood Manor building obtained by YCCCART is strong evidence for the existence of this road. Similarly there is a large body of circumstantial indications. Above all it is predicated upon a premise that roads link towns
or centres of economic activity; in this case between Winthill and the iron mining on Broadfield Down and further to Gatcombe.

Only one Roman era discovery is known near this road, but it is significant. Just to the west (ST 4522 6320) of the line, around Iwood farm, Roman coins and pottery and geophysics evidence of structures have been found together with a probable track leading to the road just north of Iwood Manor (North Somerset Historic environment record MNS8994; Bedingfield 1996, 9). A little further to the west are the kilns that produced Congresbury Ware.

Why did the road pass by these sites rather than include them in its course? It may be that the lead working at Winthill began quite early after the Roman invasion (as the Charterhouse exploitation certainly did) and that the iron mining on Broadfield Down also started early and perhaps had been in existence before the arrival of the Romans. A first century link between the two is therefore a reasonable assumption. However the Congresbury Ware industry did not get into its stride until the late second century.

3: Gatcombe to Portus Abonae

This road has long been proposed (e.g. Branigan 1977, 70) and is to be expected as a link between two towns: Sea Mills, Bristol (Portus Abonae) (ST 55191 75866) and Gatcombe, Somerset (Fig. 7).

The proposed course will be described in four sections:

(A). Gatcombe to the top of Ashton Hill (ST 52579 70826).

(B). Ashton Hill to Abbots Leigh (ST 53793 73854).

(C). Abbots Leigh.

(D). Abbots Leigh to the River Avon (ST 54931 75248).

A). Starting from Smisson’s proposed gateway in the north-west corner of Gatcombe’s walls (ST 52540 69965) (Smisson and Groves 2010, 300), the first appearance is just north of the north-west gate as a terrace about 5 m wide at the side of a slope descending from east to west. It is then lost in undergrowth for a few metres, emerging as a clear low agger running to the north (ST 52543 70120), a direction it maintains to the top of Ashton Hill. To the west it falls away to a small valley, whilst on the east, after a small dip at the side of the road presumably delineating a ditch, the ground rises sharply. Further up it becomes a flattish terrace without a ditch to the east, then resumes its low agger shape before entering the trees of Ashton Hill plantation (ST 5252 7025). Immediately within the wood, confused terrain results from quarrying, but a section of agger can be seen on the line. After a short while, a continuous terrace is cut into the side of the small valley. Where it reaches a large modern engineered forestry track (ST 5251 7045) at right angles, it is completely lost, but emerges to the north of it as a low agger immediately to the east of a boundary wall (ST 52562 70451). It proceeds to the top of the hill where the ground flattens and then vanishes in modern playing fields.
There are no clues either from old maps or from Google Earth, nor from modern OS as to what happens from the top of Ashton Hill Plantation. If the line is projected to continue northwards it comes to Failand farm (ST 52701 72459). Keith Gardner in the course of his archaeological investigation at Abbots Leigh (see next section) projected the line of the road he had found there back in a south westerly direction as far as Failand farm (ST 52674 72512) (Gardner 1998, 29). Here it could meet with the northward projecting line from Gatcombe. Between his site on Abbots Leigh and Failand Farm there are three features, a hedge row (ST 5375 7388), a line in a field (ST 5375 7388), a footpath (ST 5295 7269) with gaps in between.
and all on the same line, the line of the projected Road. It is suggested that coincidence is improbable and that they illustrate the line of the road proposed by Gardner.

C). Keith Gardner’s excavations of a Romano British site on the western corner of Sandy Lane and the A369 in Abbots Leigh (ST 53809 73832) revealed a section of Roman road which he proposed was part of a road from Gatcombe to Sea Mills (ibid.). The dating was confirmed by Romano British pottery.

(D). Gardner proposed that the road he had excavated in Abbots Leigh went towards the riverbank opposite Sea Mills. His evidence was ‘a straight dark line running north east to Abone’ (ST 5440 67 5139), visible in an aerial photograph (Historic England, CPE/UK/2472, 9-MAR-1948, frame 3003). However the line does not reach the river bank. Of course it might have been destroyed by ploughing or land management, covered by silt as it approaches the river bank, or become less visible because of underlying geology.

Tim Richards, a member of the North Somerset Roman road project, has suggested another possibility after looking carefully at LiDAR images. His line, coming from Abbots Leigh, passes Leigh Court to the south east, proceeds along a level terrace about 4 to 5 m wide above Paradise Bottom near the top on its north west side (ST 54452 74780), then descends by an oblique terrace to reach the level of the stream of the Bottom near the River Avon (ST 5490 7525). At this point it is upstream of Sea Mills. Either the road proceeded downstream along
the bank until it was opposite the Roman town, or the point where the stream of Paradise Bottom enters the Avon. Perhaps a dock was fashioned for a ferry; since the Avon is tidal at this point, awkward loads could be easily carried up or down the stream according to which way the tide was flowing. Of course there might have been a bridge; the Avon here is tidal but there was one on the tidal Thames at London. If this road was important, connecting Gloucester, Sea Mills, Gatcombe and Ilchester, then a bridge is to be expected.

**Conclusion**

The first point is the intrinsic likelihood of a road communication between Gatcombe and Sea Mills. Secondly there are two locations of certainty. One is the short stretch immediately north of Gatcombe up the field and through Ashton Hill plantation; although this has not been proved by excavation or geophysics, the combination of aerial photography, fieldwork and LiDAR analysis (Mike Haken 2021, conversation with author, 23 March) is conclusive. The other is the excavation by Keith Gardner in Abbots Leigh. Putting these three things together creates a case for certainty.

**The Legal and Administrative Position**

In the introduction the phrase ‘local metalled road’ was used, implying that these were somehow different from ‘major roads’. In fact Rome did delineate different classes of roads, as described in *de Condicionibus Agrorum* by the land surveyor Siculus Flaccus (146L, translation in Laurence 1999, 51-61), probably writing in the 2nd century AD:

‘Public roads (viae publicae) constructed at state expense, bear the names of their builders and are under the charge of the managers of roads (curatores viarum), who have the work done by contractors’. (Laurence 199, 59)

‘...local roads (viae vicinales), which after branching from the main highway (via publica), go off across the country and often lead to other highways (viae publicae). They are built and maintained by the pagi (villages/local communities) who usually see that the landowners provide the workforce....over their land’.

Both of these were public roads open to all. Another class of road, the *via privata* or *diverticulum privatum* (private road), went through private estates and typically connected villas to a *via publica* or *via vicinalis*.

Although there is no evidence that Siculus Flaccus came to Britain or knew about Britain, imperial law applied throughout the Empire so it is reasonable to suppose that the above applied to Britain.

The object of the North Somerset Roman road project is to discover *viae vicinales* serving local industrial activity and small towns. They link with the *viae publicae* (a) Bath to Sea Mills Road, (b) Charterhouse to Winchester Road, and perhaps to the Fosse Way (we have not investigated the neighbourhood of the latter as yet).
It is possible that a *Via Publica* may be discovered in North Somerset, most logically from Gatcombe and/or Charterhouse to the south, and north from Charterhouse to Sea Mills.

The way a *via vicinalis* was brought into being derived from the provisions of the *Lex Provinciae* (Law of the Province) which was a legal framework that laid down the administrative regions of a new province and defined relationships between the various organs of government, including the *civitates* and the provincial governor (Crawford 1998). The following example is taken from the *Lex Tarentina* (1139-42 Laurence 1999, 53), a charter for the southern Italian city of *Tarentum* which includes specific arrangements for *viae vicinales* in typically Roman careful legal phrasing and details local responsibilities and powers:

‘Whatever roads, ditches or drains a quadrumviro, duumviro or aedilo (executive officials) on behalf of that municipium shall wish publicly to be constructed, to insert, to change, to build or to pave within those boundaries (of the city and territory) which shall belong to the municipium, whatever of it may be done without damage (to private individuals) it is lawful for him to do that.’

A *Lex Provinciae* can reasonably be expected to have existed for *Britannia*, but one has not survived. It is certain that local administrative districts, the *civitates* (such as the Dobunni), were set up, managed by executive officers such as the *aediles or duumviris* mentioned in the *Lex Tarentina* above) which had an assembly or Council (an *ordo*) comprising members of local wealthy citizens (*Decurions*). Just one record of such an individual survives in Britain, that being of Marcus Ulpius Januarius, *aedile* of *Petuaria*, civitas capital of the *Parisi* (now Brough on Humber in the East Riding of Yorkshire), (Halkon 2013, 133; RIB 707) but this establishes that the system was probably the same across the empire. It is proposed that the *ordo* of the *civitates* as well as having to maintain its lengths of the *viae publicae*, also had powers to instigate *viae vicinales* within their administrative area.

A number of motivations could be in play. Landowners and commercial operators, the kind of people who might be *Decurions*, or associated with them, had an interest in securing good communications to move their produce (the same kind of people who promoted and served on the Turnpike trusts in the 18th century). Also, inasmuch as these people were already buying, literally, into the Roman way of life in terms of clothes, language, buildings, and so forth, it is conceivable that they might wish to emulate, on a local basis, the great roads that strode across the countryside. They might want to curry favour with the powers that be and so protect the privileges to which they had become accustomed. An individual might want to fund part of a road for personal reasons, for example

‘...cuius mater Geminia Sabina ob honorem eius tria milia passuum ex decreto Decurionum repraesentata pecunia stravit’ (ILS 5878)

‘...his mother Geminia Sabina in his memory (he had died) with prompt payment laid out 3 miles of road ratified by decree of the Decurions.’
Construction

How are we to recognise the local Roman roads, the *viae vicinales* of North Somerset? What characteristics should we be looking for? If built by or under the supervision of the Roman army, then we could hope for such classic clues as an agger or ramrod straight stretches. A military origin is highly likely for the major roads on three sides of North Somerset: the Fosse Way, the Bath to Sea Mills Road, and the Charterhouse to Winchester Road: all have these classic major Roman road characteristics. However there is little trace of the military in North Somerset; just a fortlet within the Iron age hillfort of Cadbury Camp near Clevedon (Papworth 2001), and the two small forts at Charterhouse (Aston and Iles 1986, 53) and Banwell (Historic England 2021d), both near lead mining and probably with particular regard to silver extraction, and these did not last long (the Charterhouse fort probably became a secure storage compound). In any case all military establishments throughout the Southwest were decommissioned and abandoned within 30 or 40 years of the original invasion landing in AD 43 (Bishop 2014, 57). A complication comes from a suggestion by Keith Gardner of an imperial *pagus* in the area (Gardner 2004). The writer of this paper has no knowledge of Imperial estates elsewhere in the locality, but it is conceivable that there could be some military input to communications especially around the exploitation of natural resources. However, it seems unlikely that the army would expend resources on a short haul local basically commercial network when the advance north and into Wales required ever more forts and new fortresses and the long-range strategic roads to serve them. So the assumption will be made that the local roads of North Somerset were constructed as *viae vicinales* to serve local commercial needs. The next question is what might this look like on the ground? If the local civitas was paying for this for their own economic transportation interests, a road is to be expected that is engineered to take wheeled traffic as well as ridden mounts or pedestrian traffic.

The first requirement is drainage ditches on both sides, especially needful in a rainy part of England, and a surface between them rising up from each side to a central higher level to facilitate run-off (but this does not mean lofty aggers which are more the result of frequent rebuilds than anything else).

The next requirement is a durable surface; there is no point in investing in the rest of the engineering if dirt becomes mud every time it rains, with ruts breaking up the surface. Metalled minor roads that are not long-range state roads have been found e.g. at ‘Moreton on Lugg, a metalled track way or minor road links the site to Watling Street’ (Brindle 2016, 299), and we have some examples locally in North Somerset: the metalled track among the pottery kilns east of Venus Street, Congresbury; the metalled track leading Northwest from Banwell Villa (probably a diverticulum); a cobbled trackway (Woodside Avenue, Hutton, MNS798); and a possible metalled track (west end of Tickenham, MNS512).

Next, directness between destination endpoints, which does not necessarily imply very long straight stretches, although these can certainly occur wherever topography is suitable; after all getting to your destination as quickly as possible is usually a transportation virtue, and animal drawn vehicles negotiate bends less easily than modern vehicles.
Next, width. Widths of the metalled area of viae publicae vary widely, as does the depth of metalling. The average width for Watling Street is 10.1 m, whereas for the Fosse Way it is half that at 5.3 m, while the average from 488 excavated sites split the difference to just under 7 m (Davies 2002, 75). For viae vicinales this paper expects them to be at least wide enough for a wagon drawn by two animals; they could be oxen, needing quite a space. This would seem to be 3 to 4 m, and for two vehicles to pass (a requirement for viae publicae, Laurence 1999, 58; Chevallier 1976, 16) 5 m at least is necessary. Therefore from 3 to 5 m for viae vicinales is expected.

Finally, evidence of deliberate engineering, such as terraces, zigzags, cuttings. Roads between the end of the Roman era and the beginning of turnpikes did not routinely exhibit these characteristics.

Who might have surveyed, planned, and managed the construction of viae vicinales? It is hard to imagine that skilled legionary engineers were routinely deployed for this purpose in the peaceful south far from their bases. Roman practice tended towards outsourcing and in Italy contractors were normally hired for road working (Laurence 1999, 40, 41, 46). It is conceivable that in the early days retired legionary experts might come from the Coloniae of Colchester and then Gloucester. In time experienced professional contractors were needed, not just for the routine maintenance and occasional reconstruction of the viae publicae, but also for the networks of viae vicinales. Proper roads, as opposed to trackways, require professional and skilled expertise.

**DISCUSSION**

This paper is an idea rather than a conclusion. It brings together a number of contributing propositions. These, taken together, support the idea of a local network of sub strategic roads, viae vicinales, which served the needs, especially economic, of a local area, specifically in this case the north of Somerset. The following comments support either the notion of viae vicinales, local roads, or their connection with local proposed economic needs.

There was sufficient economic activity to warrant a transportation network. Two major industries, lead and salt, certainly produced more than necessary for local consumption. Broadfield Down iron, Congresbury pottery, and Dundry stone, all provide examples of specialised outputs supplying more than a very localised area. How much agriculture contributed to the need for transportation is unclear. To judge by the Row of Ashes farmstead (Fowler 1970) it was possible to make a good living and so arguably produce a surplus, as presumably also did the villas. It is a reasonable speculation that industrial workers would need food supply. No field systems have been found near Charterhouse so provision was necessary.

These activities were in some cases definitely associated with small towns. Small towns in Roman Britain usually involved industrial and commercial activity and rarely contained the non-commercial public buildings typical of the major cities. It is a guiding principle of this project that roads go to and so connect centres of population and sites of economic activity. Two proposed small towns, Winthill and Gatcombe, and one definite, Charterhouse, existed...
in North Somerset. All of them, as a crude guide, were larger in terms of hectares than the walled area of Bath (10 ha, Cunliffe et al 1985, 9-11) and similar to the regionally important towns of Ilchester (14 ha, Wacher 1975, 408) and Caerwent (18 ha, Wacher 1975, 382) all of which are very well served by transport links.

There has in the past often been the idea that all Roman roads were primarily constructed and used by the military and by the state apparatus e.g. the *cursus publicus* (the state communications service) rather than significant amounts of commercial traffic. However it seems unlikely that the military had anything to do with a purely local network, with the area’s three small forts going out of commission in the AD70s when all military occupation in the Southwest came to an end and the troops moved elsewhere, apparently never to return. The popular idea of legionaries tramping along Roman roads, rather than commercial traffic would not have presented itself in this part of the country. Military expertise for planning and managing road construction could no doubt be had by employing retired officers, especially from the *Colonia* at Gloucester. However in time it seems much more likely that roadwork maintenance was undertaken by commercial contractors as was the case in Italy (Laurence 1999, 46); outsourcing was a common trait of Roman administration. Skilled workers or slaves would be a much better bet than occasional voluntary or forced unskilled labour: roadwork required expertise. Maintenance would provide regular work given such a plethora of roads. And maintenance was needed as demonstrated by examples such as the Fosse Way at Clandown where multiple layers were buried, including buried, rutted and worn top surface levels, showing the need for repeated repair including complete rebuilds (Davenport 1990, 131-133). This also points to the volume of traffic using these roads, especially commercial traffic which could entail loads of significant weight.

It is suggested that the creation and maintenance of a local road network was in the interest of the local well-to-do. Not only did Rome outsource roadworks, it also outsourced local government, allowing and encouraging local native elites to run the local area (the *civitas*) in exchange for assuming local responsibilities and devoting some of their wealth towards civic projects. The Tarentine Charter shows us that this delegation could include local roads, *viae vicinales*. There is very little evidence of the activity of the councils and their executive officers (*ordines* and *duumviri*) in *Britannia*, but it is a reasonable proposition to posit that a local road such as the one suggested between Saint Georges and Winthill came under the authority of the *Ordo* and *Decurions* of the *Civitas* and would not be the concern of the province governor, unless things went wrong, especially the management of finance. Since the *Ordo* would comprise the well to do, local landowners, prosperous farmers, and owners of commercial enterprises, it is reasonable to suppose that good communications were in their interest (much as was true of the Turnpike Trusts of the 18th century). And helping to fund them fell within the culture of funding of civic projects by the rich which was expected of them and which provided opportunities for self-promotion (for involvement of local *duumviri* and *ordines* in local roads, see Laurence 1999, 52-4) and perhaps pleasure and pride in serving their community. Certainly pride in the provision of local roads existed in Italy (Laurence 1999, 62).
So far in this discussion the general terms ‘communications’ and ‘transportation’ have often been used, with a clear emphasis on roads. However it would be a mistake to ignore the part played by water transport, whether by river or by sea. There are no major rivers in North Somerset, but three, the Congresbury Yeo, the Banwell, the Axe, could have taken light river traffic. The Yeo might have carried Congresbury Ware and other local products. Wemberham Villa was well-placed for river traffic and the Congresbury pottery kilns were situated near the river with the recently discovered trackway apparently directed towards it (Wessex Archaeology 2021b). Lead might have been taken down the Cheddar Gorge to be loaded on barges on the river Axe, although a destination is not clear as South Wales has plenty of lead including galena (Smith 2017, 194), and up the Severn does not seem viable as again lead was mined in the Midlands (ibid.). Of course it might have gone up the River Avon to Bath but strangely, Congresbury Ware did not, also not appearing at Portishead or Sea Mills. Congresbury Ware did get to Crandon Bridge, a Roman port on the River Parrett but not upriver to Ilchester (Rippon 2008, 51).

Obviously some products had to be carried by road; Charterhouse and Priddy lead, and Dundry Stone came from locations situated on hills. And the most feasible way for Broadfield Down iron to arrive at the metalworks in Gatcombe was by road: presumably Broadfield Down iron ore travelled to Winhill by the Iwood road. Although useful for some cargoes and some routes, rivers did not always conveniently go where trade needed to go, either at all or by circuitous routes. Generally, well-made all-weather roads proved more reliable and flexible when rivers suffered flood or drought, and the sea could be unkind to traffic. Roads therefore have had an important part to play.

A problem with the notion of road transportation as economically viable is its cost. Cioffi even went so far as to talk of ‘prohibitive cost’ (Cioffi 2016, see section titled ‘getting connected: Roman infrastructure and Roman connectivity’). If it were to be the case that cost made road transportation prohibitive, then local roads would not have been needed for local freight. It is often still an assumption, presented as if no justification is needed, that cost killed significant transportation of freight by road. How then to explain the Vindolanda letter talking of a 100 km road freight journey from Catterick (RIBOnline 2021), or the 70 km from the La Graufesenque potteries of south Gaul to the nearest rivers? (Lewit 2013, 117; also see p116 ‘in spite of emphasis by many modern scholars on the importance of river routes to military markets, pottery operators seem to have been surprisingly oblivious to this supposed advantage’). Laurence accepts that carriage of goods by road is much more expensive than by water but argues that profitability, not cost, is the key factor. If people can afford and are willing to pay the cost of a service, then there will be nothing ‘prohibitive’ about providing that service (Laurence 1999, 95 and chapter 7 generally) and the same applies to goods movement now as then. Part of the extra cost of land transport will be defrayed by its much greater reliability, convenience, reach, and flexibility (again, as is the case today). Laurence compares early 18th century Britain when land transport using draught animals also cost a great deal more than water transport yet saw an explosion in construction and use of new roads, spurred on by landowners and industrialists wanting to move their products in an efficient manner (Laurence 1999,100).
It is sometimes objected that Roman road transport was too slow and cumbersome to be of much economic value. This is to confuse the lumbering, solid wooden-wheeled, rough, oxen-drawn carts used in the fields and countryside tracks (See Fig. 9) with freight wagons running on spoked iron-rimmed wheels, pulled by horses and mules, sometimes sporting covered tops, and differentiated by task (See Fig. 10). Speed of the latter is unknown; virtually all data refer to passenger traffic, for example a *raeda* (a passenger vehicle) could cover 100 miles in a day on good roads (Suetonius, *Div. Jul.* 57). In Italy passenger traffic was so common that Guilds of cisiarii (passenger vehicle drivers) have been evidenced widely. The one detailed freight costing from rural Italy in 160 BC (Cato, *de agricultura* 22.3, discussed in Lawrence 1999, 95-7) does not help; it gives a speed of 8 miles per day but describes an abnormal load (a dismantled mill), drawn by oxen on agricultural carts and not necessarily on made roads. This example has strangely been made a main source for calculating freight wagon speed and costs (eg Yeo 1946).

Laurence (1999, 147) tells us that a system of agricultural trade over long distance can be seen to be embedded in the literature and was a key reason for the improvement of the road surface, but it must always be remembered that Laurence is talking about Italy; it is reasonable to propose that at least some of what he says can be extrapolated for provincial *Britannia*, but surely not at the same level and sophistication as in Italy. An interesting
example of the possibilities from modern times is afforded by the regular traffic of 40 ton loads of borax drawn by a 20-mule team over 165 miles for 10 days in the late 19th century in the USA; it was a costly operation but profitable because the borax was expensive and rare, giving a good example that profitability is the key factor, not simply cost (US Borax 2021). A good example, demonstrating long-distance heavy-load carriage from the Roman world, but without cost data or transport details, is provided by massive stone single-piece columns of rare stone transported over scores of kilometres from remote quarries in the eastern Egyptian desert (Pearson 2006, 80).

Another problematic issue for the commercial use of Roman roads derives from the number of steep gradients. The writer of this paper is not aware of evidence suggesting how this issue was addressed in Roman times, but it does not seem credible that the idea of enlarging the haulage teams did not occur to anyone at the time. It is what was done in the Turnpike era and is still done today with locomotives on challenging railway gradients. On busy roads, no doubt a mutatio (a draught animal provision station) was at hand to turn a useful profit for the owners. Certainly there were challenging slopes on Roman roads, for example Birdlip Hill on the Cirencester to Gloucester Road at the Cotswold edge, which remained in use during Turnpike times and did not deter traffic despite gradients of one in eight and briefly one in five (Davies 2002, 81).

Besides freight traffic, other users involving an economic aspect could be seen travelling on these roads. Certainly the Imperial post (although perhaps not so much on minor roads) and the well-to-do travelling in their carriages to their estates or to town. Chevallier says the Metamorphoses of Apuleius (admittedly a work of fiction) suggests a very mobile society;
the hero, Lucius, is made to say that he is proceeding to Thessalia (Northern Greece) on business and is trading in honey, cheese, and other foodstuffs used by innkeepers all over Thessalia (Chevallier 1976, 22-24). This chimes with the salesmen sent out along the 18th century turnpike roads to promote and sell Josiah Wedgwood’s products in an era when modern advertising methods of commercial products by literature, broadcast media and internet were not available (Pawson 1979, 96); the same considerations applied in the Roman world.

Chevallier suggests a whole throng of road users (Chevalier 1976, 202-3): business travellers, itinerant craftsmen, gangs of seasonal agricultural workers, theatre performers, the sick going to healing places (such as Bath), pilgrims to sacred places (such as Pagans Hill, Wiltshire), road workers, even tourists such as Pliny the elder pursuing scientific observation (Pliny, Natural History) or Pausanias researching his description of interesting places (Pausanias, Description of Greece). All these users implied economic activity; even mere tourists required inns, and often transportation with its servicing costs. An inscription from Aesernia (Italy) nicely illustrates this point: copo, computemus. habes vini sextarium unum, panem, assem unum; pulmentar asses duos. Convenit. Puellam asses octo. Et hoc convenit. Faenum mulo, asses duo. Iste mulus me ad factum dabit. ‘Innkeeper, let us settle up. One measure of wine, and bread, one ass, stew, two asses. Agreed. The girl eight asses. That too is agreed. Fodder for the mule, two asses. The animal will take me to my destination.’

CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the apparent quality of construction and the potential level of economic activity of the North Somerset area, it seems reasonable to propose that the area was served by a network of local roads, viae vicinales, as well as waterborne transportation where appropriate.

APPENDIX: OTHER POSSIBLE NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL ROADS

4. Congresbury to Broadfield Down

The case for this road is that it led from one area of economic activity in Congresbury (ST 44048 63535) to another on Broadfield Down and then on towards Gatcombe (Fig. 11). On the Down was iron mining; at Congresbury, various works including a pottery described by Wessex Archaeology as ‘large scale industrial activity’ (2021b), with geophysics indicating many kilns widespread around Venus Street, Congresbury (ST 44605 62854). There is also evidence for an iron smelter, and a corn dryer (ST 44557 64016). Clearly workers were needed for these activities although where they lived, or even whether there was a settlement, is not known. It is nevertheless generally accepted that there was a settlement somewhere in the Congresbury area. The road may have gone no further than Broadfield Down, but it is suggested that after being joined by the Iwood Road it continued in an approximately north of east direction to Gatcombe.
The route (Fig. 11)

The postulated route follows a track and a small private tarmac road. An overall East-West direction is maintained but the course is somewhat winding. It may be that in later years its importance declined and, as happens with Roman roads in such circumstances, blockages were simply circumvented; one such bend can be seen to have abandoned the straight section which can still be discerned (ST 45382 64464).

Starting from the Congresbury end and near where an iron smelter was discovered recently near Cobthorn Way (Nicholls 2016), it begins at the Wrinton Road next to and winding around an establishment named Woodlands (ST 44715 64217) (where Roman remains have been found) whose building may have distorted the course of the track at its start. The biggest bend in Its course (towards the north) (ST 45622 64507) comes where the track avoids the head of a steep sided gully. When it arrives at a house called Woolmers , the track becomes a minor tarmac lane and continues as far as the junction with the road coming up from Iwood to the south.
5. Broadfield Down to Gatcombe

At ST 45924 64557 the road previously described above (the Congresbury to Broadfield Down Road) is met by the road coming up from the south from Iwood and ultimately from Winthill. A further route (Fig. 11) from this junction as far as Gatcombe to the north-east is very likely for two reasons. Firstly, a connection between the centres at Winthill and at Congresbury and the centre at the small town of Gatcombe is to be expected. Secondly, a route between Broadfield Down with its iron mining activities and Gatcombe with its iron smelting and smithing works seems obvious.

This route will be described in two sections:

1. From the junction described above in the previous paragraph as far as the eastern edge of Wrington Warren.

2. From the eastern edge of Wrington Warren as far as Gatcombe.

Section 1, as far as Wrington Warren

From the junction, the proposed route follows the line of the minor tarmac road as far as Cleeve Hill Road (ST 46950 64631) where, as with the far end, its original course might have been distorted by subsequent buildings. It is not a classic ridge track, keeping just north of a steep sided ridge which rises up to 50 m above it (ST 46515 64395) throughout its length. No evidence of engineering was noticed.

The proposed continuation east of Cleeve Hill road is problematic, but possible. My eye was caught on the modern OS map by a footpath and right-of-way starting a little north of Wrington Hill farm (ST 47633 64740) and proceeding in two straight legs joined by a shallow angled bend to the edge of the woods of Wrington Warren, some way to the north of Abspit pond (ST 48499 65478). The western end of this path (just north of the farm) is on the same line as the eastern end of the Woolmers Road, but the two ends are separated by a small wood and several fields; such gaps (in a straight alignment) are always suggestive of a Roman road but of course not conclusive. No trace has been found in this intervening gap. The route starts at an apparently awkward right angles to the line but is in fact negotiating, by zigzag, a side combe coming up from Goblin Combe to the farm. The section sloping down the west side of this side combe (ST 47578 64779) is wide enough for vehicular traffic and is clearly engineered as a descending terrace, yet seems to serve no current purpose; at the top of the slope it simply abuts the fence of the field which has a stile at this point (for a right-of-way from a different direction) but without any trace of a gate or entrance way for the terraced track. Having executed its sweep across the combe (its bottom end is blocked with vegetation so is out of use now) it climbs up the opposite side along an engineered ascending terrace (which is very possibly a modern forestry track) (ST 47664 64794). A right-of-way leaves this track at nearly right angles (perhaps the top of the eastern side of a zigzag to address its passage across the gully). It then proceeds up a slope north-east through trees (ST 47799 64827) but along not the faintest trace of a path, so a direction has to be guessed at. At first we guessed wrongly because it led to the lip of a precipitously steep slope plunging down into Goblin Combe, arriving at a point which was clearly off the line. However, further to the east along the lip, the downward slope becomes less steep and here
a post signalled the right-of-way (ST 47858 64856) which was immediately lost in dense undergrowth. However it was possible to see that at the bottom it crosses Goblin Combe proceeding up a side combe (ST 48011 64922) and continuing along the north east line of the right-of-way. Where the combe comes to a head and the ground levels out, the path continues straight north east although while the straightness is encouraging, it is hardly decisive as an indicator since other tracks in the vicinity are also perfectly straight, created as part of woodland management. The virtue of its direction was that it was heading generally for Gatcombe on a line that passes above the heads of various Combes cutting down into Broadfield Down from the north, such as Bourton, Chester, and Taps, and crossing Brockley Combe where its precipitous slopes to the north have softened somewhat. A triangle of woodland sticking out towards the airport offered hope for visible continuation (ST 48753 65589) but nothing decisive has been found.

Section 2, Wrington Warren to Gatcombe

From the eastern edge of Wrington Warren as far as Barrow Court, no further trace or indication of a continuation towards Gatcombe can be seen in the fields, whether by paths, rights of way, hedge lines, tracks, modern roads, old parish boundaries, edges of woods, or other indicators. The fields seem regularly set out as a result of Enclosures.

While there are no general indications of a route across this stretch, a notional line proceeding in a rough north-easterly direction towards Gatcombe (between the eastern edge of Wrington Warren and Barrow Court) is crossed by paths and an investigation of one shows some hope.

At Edson’s Farm (ST 49935 64557), on the North Somerset 1840 pre-enclosure map, a minor road (long since vanished) is shown proceeding from just north east of the farm up the side of the hedge row. Dense undergrowth spreading into the field makes investigation difficult, but near the farm and to the west of the hedge row, a shallow hollow way can be seen, about 5m across. A little further up the field, the hollow way can again be seen. At the top of the field, the hollow way proceeds a short way through woodland until it meets at right angles a well engineered ascending terrace (ST 50011 66652) climbing the side of Heall’s Scars, the northern slope of Brockley Combe. Following this terrace up the slope, at the top it meets the notional line leading north east towards Barrow Court (where a more definite proposal starts ). It is certainly an old road since there is no trace of it on the Tithe map or on any subsequent map and since it is on the notional line between the eastern edge of Wrington Warren and Barrow Court, it could well be a trace of the road.

At Barrow Court, just opposite its entrance from a minor road, a footpath begins (ST 51673 68354) and extends on a reasonably straight alignment as far as the proposed south gate of Gatcombe (Fig. 12). The proposed route crosses a field in a roughly north easterly direction, until it enters the next field along a right-of-way via an odd zigzag (ST 51896 68500). This must be a modern change, perhaps to avoid the corner of a new copse, because the 19th century Ordnance Survey map shows a very straight course into and crossing the next field. Here, sadly, a metalled track has been removed by the farmer (information from the owner of the old rectory at the edge of the field) although we cannot be sure that it was actually on the proposed line. At the far end of this latter field, the line enters private property at
Vicarage cottage (ST 52063 68609) and so the footpath does not continue on the line. However the footpath resumes on the same alignment on the far side of the private property, just across the B3130 (ST 52230 687961). The footpath continues the alignment, but without any evidence of engineering, across the field until it meets the river Land Yeo. On the far side, the line carries on, crossing a recently laid pipeline at right angles (ST 52391 68969). Looking up the pre-works geophysics report, a faint piece of ‘possible archaeology’ with a ‘trending line’ in the right direction for our line was found at the intersection of our hoped for road and the pipeline (Wessex Archaeology 2016). Through this field no vestige of a road can be seen but at the far end, and on the line, a hump is visible in the hedgerow.
which the proposed line meets at right angles. On the far side of this hedgerow, again at right angles to our proposed line, a minor tarmac lane leads towards Redwood farm. On the verges on each side of this lane, and on our proposed line (ST 52435 69104), humps can be seen cut through by the lane, strongly suggesting an interrupted agger (Fig.13). The footpath and our proposed line continue north east on the far side of this lane until it crosses Colliter’s Way (A4714), on the far side of which a possible flattened agger can just be discerned (ST 52579 69276). The footpath and our proposed line continue on a straight North-easterly alignment until meeting the proposed south gate of Gatcombe. This south gate and a possible road alignment proceeding south-west from it along the footpath had been proposed by Smisson (Smissen and Groves 2009, 298) as a result of their Geophysical survey of the Roman town’s south wall.

6. The Charterhouse to Winthill road.

The case
A road is definitely to be expected between these two towns, both as towns and as centres of the lead industry. However there has never been certainty either as to the route or even its existence (Margary doubted it). The argument for its existence has centred on the idea that there ought to be a road between Charterhouse and the Bristol Channel to enable lead to be exported by sea. The most probable direction is towards the Axe estuary in the Uphill area (ST 31506 57902), yet nothing comparable to the port at Sea Mills has been found here, or
indeed anything else. To complicate matters, a settlement has been discovered by Wessex Archaeology (Simon Flaherty 2019, conversation with author, 10 November) at the coast end of the top of Bleadon Hill (ST 33298 58061), much too far up the hill to be thought a port, yet some scattered indications of a road seem to lead towards it from the Winthill direction. In any case, the excavation has not yet been published so it is unclear how significant this settlement is. Generally, this paper takes the view that the importance of water transportation, either by sea or river, has been given greater prominence than is warranted by the evidence, and no proper commercial and economic model rigorously constructed. Therefore examining a route for Winthill to the coast has not seemed to be a priority, whereas the route for Winthill hill to Charterhouse most certainly is.

The route (Fig. 14)

The investigations can be divided into:

Section 1: Charterhouse to Tyning’s farm

Section 2: Tyning’s farm vicinity

Section 3: Rowberrow forest to Lipiatt Lane

Section 4: Lipiatt Lane to Sandford Road.

Section 5: Sandford Road to Winthill
Section 1. LiDAR shows a very suggestive line leaving the western edge (ST 50101 56123) of the Roman town at Charterhouse and making for the wood shaving factory (ST 49689 56041), which interrupts the feature. It reappears on the western side of the factory and closes diagonally with the Charterhouse Village to Tyning’s Farm road along a hedgerow (ST 49430 56110). When this hedgerow reaches the road, an agger-like feature can be seen a few metres to the north of and parallel with the road (ST 49210 56068). What happens next is less clear. An early ordnance survey map shows the line of the road bending back to the north and crossing a stream upstream from the modern bridge. But this alignment is not repeated on later maps and no evidence is to hand to verify it. Vince Russett has examined the line of the stream for signs of an engineered crossing but in vain, so proposes that the line joins the modern road and crosses the stream at the same place (ST 48939 56058), then following the same line as the modern road until Tyning’s farm is approached (Vince Russett 2018, conversation with author, 18 September).

Section 2. It is generally agreed that the line leaves the road before it gets to Tyning’s Farm and passes the farm a short way to the north. Both the 1761 map of Charterhouse and a hollow way visible as late as the 1980s indicate a route passing about 50 m north of Tyning’s farm (ST 47053 56648) and running down the hill towards the current gate into Rowberrow forest. The road was called ‘Magnum iter’ and the ‘Sewey’ (sea way) in the late 12th century, and this is the first place since leaving Charterhouse that the sea is indeed visible. Recent YCCCART work around Tyning’s farm has shown a slight but convincing agger on the projected line (V Russett 2018, conversation with author, 18 September).

Section 3. The precise route is unclear from the field around the north of Tyning’s Farm down to the stream of Rowberrow Bottom through the trees. There is a well-made track leading down towards the stream, though whether this is the line of the road cannot easily be determined. After a while the track becomes a path leading down to and along the water’s edge. This appears to have been wider in the past with its edges overgrown, so might be the line of the road. The stream (ST 45747 57314) is easily forded, after which a track ascends quite steeply (but not too steep for wagon and draught animals) (Vince Russett 2018, conversation with author, 17 July) until it reaches Lippiatt Lane at the top of the slope (ST 4553557419). The ascending track has a number of quite large stones embedded, which could be remains of a foundation layer of the road. Lippiatt Lane continues in a reasonably straight line and changes name to North Down Lane, until it meets New Road, the main north-south road through Shipham (ST 44472 57740).

Section 4. On the far side it becomes Broadway, continuing in an overall direct but sinuous course until it crosses the A38 (ST 43615 58182) and becomes Shipham Lane, equally sinuous.

Section 5. Meeting Sandford Road, it crosses over and proceeds as Ilex Lane (ST 41868 58493), then is lost in the field, but is clearly pointing towards Winthill which is now not far away. In this field a stretch of linear rubble was identified as the core or foundation of a road just across from Banwell Garden Centre on the east side of A371 Castle Hill (ST 40820 58557). Running roughly east and west, it is almost certainly the line of the proposed road (Williams 2007, 153; V Russett 2018, email to author, 10 December). Not far north of the line is Star Roman villa (ST 43512 58665) and a short way further on is the small Roman fort (ST 40319 58782) (Historic England 2021d).
Conclusion

There is much imprecision about this route. However, to reiterate the main point made earlier, a road connection between the Roman towns of Winthill and Charterhouse is to be expected. The sinuosity is not uncommon with Roman roads which have not survived as important highways, the two end destinations being no longer centres of population. What is important is that neither of the two stretches of lanes deviates far from a line drawn between the ends of each stretch. If there were a road, this is a good candidate for it.

7. Clevedon to Gatcombe

The case

This is a more speculative proposition. The rationale for it is first, the probability of a link between a likely settlement at Clevedon and the town at Gatcombe, secondly, the existence of a possible route along the Failand Ridge; and thirdly, a range of Roman era finds along its route.

However, the evidence does not allow more than the word ‘likely’ for the settlement at Clevedon. Scatters of coins (not apparently hoards) and pottery in at least four different spots in Clevedon suggest more than a simply rural landscape. The discovery of what was thought to be a road with associated Roman pottery near All Saints Church in the east of Clevedon provides a possible communications link (North Somerset historic environment record MNS483). If the evidence for the road is acceptable and is aligned towards Clevedon, then some kind of population centre seems a reasonable assumption. However all these finds occurred in the 19th century and the writer of this paper is not aware of any discoveries made since. Prima facie the existence of a population centre, however modest, seems feasible even if only a fishing settlement.

It may be that this is a pre-Roman route way which continued in use during the Roman era.

The route (Fig. 15)

The beginning might be the possible Roman trackway, east of Strawberry hill, (Beale 1906, MNS483) (ST 41653 71752).

This might connect with a trackway that starts above on Court Hill to the east (ST 41916 71831). There are well-made zigzagging tracks up the hillside connecting the two, but the suspicion must be that these, or at least some of them, could be for vehicles from Clevedon Court; they may be leisure drives since there is in modern times a perfectly good road along the south of the ridge into Clevedon. But there is a feasible route to the bottom which may have pre-existed any carriage drives. Where it reaches the bottom near All Saints Church, on the western side of the valley (ST 41500 71797) the 1840 Tithe map shows a path ascending obliquely up the steep slope of Strawberry Hill and proceeding on to Dial Hill (ST 40976 71819), where a settlement might have existed.
From the top of Court Hill above Clevedon Court, a path proceeds east along the top of the ridge (ST 43006 72117) until the M5 interrupts its course. Beyond the deep cutting of the M5 the line is continued as a track, again following the ridge top (ST 44638 72315) until just beyond Cadbury camp hillfort (ST 45152 72139). Here it becomes Cadbury Camp Lane (ST 46744 72857), maintaining its course between large modern houses until it reaches White House Lane (ST 48086 72991), then continuing as Clevedon Road B3128 towards Bristol which it reaches at Ashton gate. Still on the Tickenham Hill ridge, it passes to the north of Gatcombe and so a way must be found to connect the postulated Roman road route with the walled town. This means finding a way down the south slope of the ridge. Flax Bourton Road (ST 51741 71639) (existing in the 1840s so perhaps an old route) offers an obvious route towards Gatcombe. Where it reaches the entrance to Ashton Hill Plantation opposite Clifton Lodge, the earliest OS map shows a path (ST 52019 70713) continuing the line and cutting across the plantation’s grid of tracks. Projecting the line leads to the top of Gatcombe Court Lane (ST 52250 70021) and so into the west gate (ST 52524 69795) of Gatcombe Roman town (Smisson and Groves 2009).

**Supporting considerations**

Firstly, the proposed line connects a probable (though possibly not large) population centre at Clevedon with the Roman town at Gatcombe.

Secondly, overall the course is quite direct with long straight sections: not proof it is Roman but a factor.

Thirdly, it passes through a Roman landscape:
• Clevedon settlement. Whatever its size and importance, coin and pottery scatters indicate something.

• The Roman pottery associated with the reported road or track way near All Saints Church. (North Somerset HER MNS483)

• Occupation material found at Clevedon Court (ST 42405 71511) (Papworth 1960)

• Causeway with associated Roman pottery south of Cadbury Court farm (ST 43693 71419), western end of Tickenham (North Somerset HER MNS512)

• Cadbury Camp: Roman coins, pottery, small statue of the God Mars (Burrow 1981, 291-293). Also, likely Roman fortlet or signal station in north-west corner (Papworth, 2001)

• Birdcombe villa, Towerhouse Lane, north of Nailsea (North Somerset HER MNS 554) (ST 47972 71713).

• Trackway south of Clapton Court with associated Roman pottery (North Somerset HER MNS 540) (ST 46664 73446).

• Roman era settlement on the line, just east of the junction of White House Lane and Cuckoo Lane. (North Somerset HER MNS5236) (ST 48187 73103).

• Trackway, south of Beggarbush Lane, possibly Roman (North Somerset HER MNS7311) (ST 5434172075).

• Roman settlement at Abbots Leigh (North Somerset HER MNS681) (ST 53814 73825).

• Gatcombe small walled Roman town (ST 52692 69829)

Other possible roads

There are other possible roads which have not yet been fully studied.

Three have had some work:

**Dundry Roman quarries** (ST 55049 67062) (Russell 2013) to Gatcombe. Some map studies have been done but further work is needed.

**Road going north past Nempnett Church** (ST 53425 60396) (North Somerset HER MNS3231). A section of about 2 miles has been closely studied including on foot, but will not be described in detail here. However, its destination to the north beyond the village of Regil (ST 53900 62442) is not clear, perhaps Gatcombe, perhaps Dundry quarries, perhaps both. There may well be connections to Pagan’s Hill temple (ST 55728 62638) (Rahtz 1977) and to the Chew Magna complex (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977)(ST 588 610). Its uncompromising north/south alignment makes a junction to the south with the Charterhouse to Winchester Road probable. Perhaps it continues to push directly south to meet the Fosse Way at Ilchester and so constitute a major route from Gloucester via Sea Mills and Gatcombe and so to the south-west. Perhaps! While the general form of this possible road is very promising, it does not yet meet our criterion of joining centres of population or sites of economic activity.
A route from Sea Mills to Gatcombe via Clifton suggested by E K Tratman (Tratman 1962), a ford across the Avon near Hotwells (ST 56339 73272) up Nightingale Valley (ST 55962 73138) of Leigh Woods. Some fieldwork has been done on this.

Other routes are speculative but fulfill the idea of connections between population centres and sites of economic activity.

Gatcombe to Keynsham Roman town at Somerdale (ST 65350 69448) (Historic England 2021c) and on to Bath. This road has long been assumed but not found. Smisson suggested this after his work establishing Gatcombe as a town. It has been considered likely that the road was necessary to serve the villas at Brislington, Keynsham, Newton St Loe, but this is the wrong way round; roads probably come first and villas usually later to take advantage of the road.

Congresbury to Kenn Moor to St Georges to Weston-super-Mare. This is very speculative. The amount of activity around Congresbury very strongly suggests a settlement but it has not been found. The same can be said about St Georges; North Somerset HER uses the word ‘settlement’ but provides no details at all. Likewise, Weston-super-Mare: significant finds and Congresbury Ware discovered in the north west of the town below Worlebury Hill, but no details are to hand. Also North Somerset HER describes Kenn Moor as an area of Roman ‘occupation’ (North Somerset HER MNS1784) and refers to the ‘Roman settlement and landscape of Kenn Moor by Stephen Ripon 1994’; a large cemetery recently found west of Yatton (Wessex Archaeology 2021a) and the temple at Henbury Wood (ST 4429 6520) add to this picture (Watts and Leach 1996).

Gatcombe to Portbury and Portishead. This depends on what there was at these locations. Certainly there is Roman material at both; for Portbury near or perhaps under the church (ST 50281 75419) (North Somerset HER MNS5166), for Portishead near the Gordano school (ST 46528 75399) (Historic England 2021b) and perhaps elsewhere. But does it amount to a population centre or a site of economic activity, i.e. enough to warrant a road, and a Via Vicinalis? This is not clear. If, as is proposed, the road from the north west gate of Gatcombe continued to proceed north until the vicinity of Failand farm, then turned in a north easterly direction towards Abbots Leigh, as Keith Gardner suggests, then it is conceivable that the road forked here (at Failand farm) with a north-westerly branch going to Portbury. However it also could be that the possible road coming out of Gatcombe West gate and up to Flax Bourton Road crossed the B3128 Clevedon Road and went on to Gordano school.

Winthill to Uphill. It has long been thought that the Winchester to Charterhouse Road continued on to the north-west towards the sea at Uphill. However not all have been convinced, e.g. Margary: ‘that this is the line of an old trackway is very probable... But perhaps not advisable to claim it is a Roman Road since it does not lead to any known settlement beyond Charterhouse’ (Margary 1973, 103). It is now known that Winthill represents a significant site so it is reasonable to expect a road between Charterhouse and Winthill (Russett pers. comm.). Further on is possible but not yet examined in detail. The writer of this paper is not aware of any strong evidence for a port at Uphill (as there is at Sea Mills or Crandon Bridge further up the river Parrett), but a settlement has been discovered at the seaward end of Bleadon Hill, (Wessex Archaeology, report in prep.) about 2 km from the Axe estuary; however that is some 100 m above sea level so hardly likely to be a port. If
the Bleadon Hill settlement is sufficiently large or significant, then the road to it from Winthill is worth looking for; the report of the excavation has not yet been published.

**Gatcombe to the south.** E K Tratman discusses a route suggested by Clevedon archaeological society, proceeding south over Barrow Hill (ST 51484 67383) and then bending generally east to meet the Fosse Way. He is dubious, and we have not examined the possibility (Tratman 1962, 167). However a route to the south from Gatcombe, possibly as far as Ilchester, is a very reasonable proposition.

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ADDENDUM

It is argued above, on the basis of widespread random finds, that a substantial settlement or small town may have existed south of Banwell. An important roadside settlement site has now been identified by archaeologists, described as ‘high status’ and ‘potentially of national importance’. In view of on-going excavations at this important and sensitive site it is too early for details to be released, but the author believes that the discovery is welcome confirmation of this paper’s basic concept that Roman roads should be considered in the context of population centres and sites of economic importance.