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About the Association

The RRRA was formed in 2015 as a registered charity to bring together disparate individuals who were researching Roman roads, 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, hoped to be complete by 2026.
2. identify key sites where important questions remain, and organise fieldwork necessary to answer those questions. 200 Ha of geophysical survey have been completed, with a further 400 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. make resources available to researchers and other groups, organise events to keep people up to date with research including online talks & seminars.
5. ensure that all our published work is Open Access, including our quarterly newsletter and *Itinera* (following a brief one year members only embargo).

Membership is open to everyone, and our four hundred and seventy 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. The Romans tended to apply their technology uniformly across the empire, this is especially so for Roman road layout and construction. Consequently we do not just restrict our interest to *Britannia* and our membership now includes many international members. 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.

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EDITORIAL

ROBERT ENTWISTLE

The publishing of *Itinera* Volume II is no less an important moment than that of Volume I: it demonstrates that our journal has arrived definitively as a point of reference for all transport-related aspects of Roman archaeology – and that this has been possible in a year dominated by Pandemic-related lockdowns. As in Volume I, you will find a range of authoritative and stimulating papers aiming to develop the study and understanding of everything to do with Roman roads and transport, for academics and the informed public alike.

In this volume you will find some contributors familiar to you from the last volume, and other important new ones. We are delighted to have a welcome extension of focus to other regions of the Roman empire, drawing us beyond a comfortable local perspective. We publish a lively paper (translated by Mike Bishop) from the Spanish academic and presenter Isaac Moreno Gallo, who has, single-handedly, done much to develop an informed awareness of Roman roads in his native country. A man of trenchant views, he champions a rational and rigorous approach not always evident in the past. The perspective he provides has much in common with that of the UK, while being stimulatingly distinct. *Itinera* would be most pleased to host other papers from international contributors, developing an understanding of roads and transport systems across the empire.

Once again, we have an impressive range to the topics covered in our journal. The international theme is continued by Bev Knott who considers an aspect of transport that may be new to many: the likely extent and impact of brigandage and banditry on the roads across the empire. Closer to home we have a major paper from David Ratledge, who has become Britain's leading interpreter of Lidar in terms of Roman roads. He demonstrates the remarkable degree to which he has been able to extend knowledge of Norfolk's Roman roads, filling in gaps on the map. At the other end of the country, our Chairman, Mike Haken, explores what Lidar is able to reveal for the Stainmore Pass. He investigates how this might develop understanding of a murky but much-debated topic, the relation of some Roman roads to Iron-Age predecessors.

Of course, roads are not only a topic of study in their own right but help us develop understanding of other areas of archaeology and history. Thus Dave Armstrong, who recently published a book on the Hadrian's Wall Military Way, contributes a paper that is likely to become a work of reference in its own right. It explores and sets out the sum of present knowledge on the network of link roads connecting the Wall to other aspects of Roman infrastructure in the North, a topic little examined in the past.

Yet another topic is tackled by John Poulter in a paper recording how Roman Long-distance Alignments came to be suspected, recognised and understood, with worked examples from

across the country. A further paper investigates how such matters could potentially elucidate aspects of the Claudian Invasion. Finally, and returning us to basics, we have accounts of road excavations from different ends of the country: the Culver Archaeology Project in East Sussex, and an excavation supported by NAA (Northern Archaeological Associates) in Lancashire.

Our section 'Roman Roads in 2021' is inevitably impacted by a year in which Covid 19 has limited much fieldwork, including the work of many local societies. Fortunately, through our valued local correspondents, we can see that not all the work of investigation ceased.

A new enterprise this year is our introduction of Book Reviews, a feature we hope to continue and develop in years to come. We are most grateful to Dave Fell and John Poulter for their contributions on this occasion.

We should not forget that the RRRA is a charity supported only by its own expanding membership. The dedicated band that makes the production of this journal possible to the highest professional standards, has done so through generous donation of time and expertise, whether they be experienced archaeological professionals or knowledgeable enthusiasts contributing specialist skills, understanding and commitment. This is the group that make up our Editorial Committee and Advisory Panel (listed at the front of this volume), and our wider network of supporters and contributors.

Ultimately, of course, we are dependent upon our authors for demonstrating the health and range of this aspect of Roman archaeology. Our 'Notes for Contributors' are readily available on the *Itinera* section of the RRRA website, and we encourage all, professional or otherwise, to submit their papers to us. All contributions will be peer reviewed, and we take great pleasure in publishing all that can pass that test. We look forward to your contributions for our next volume.

Robert Entwistle

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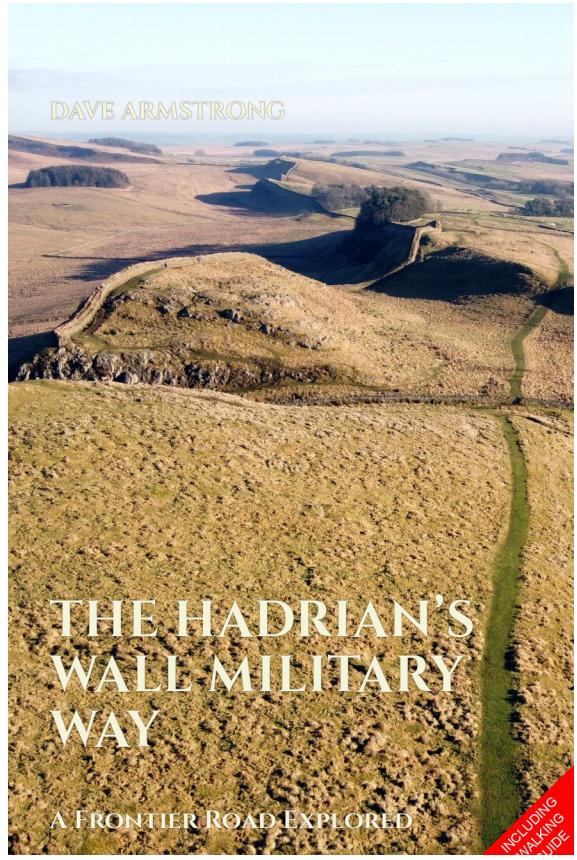
Book Review

The Hadrian's Wall Military Way: A Frontier Road Explored.

By **Dave Armstrong**

Armatura Press, Pewsey, 2021. Pp xiv + 90, illus. Price £15. ISBN 978 1 910238 20 2.

Hadrian's Wall consists of three main linear components: (a) the Wall itself, with its forts, milecastles and turrets, and the ditch on its northern side; (b) the immense double bank and ditch, known as the Vallum, which runs at varying distances to the south of the Wall; and (c) the Military Way which threads its way between them. The Military Way, was, like the Wall and the Vallum, built by the Romans and is not to be confused with what is known as the Military Road (much of it nowadays a part of the B6318), which was built between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Carlisle in the early 1760s in the wake of the 1745 uprising.



The Roman origin of the Military Way has been recognised since antiquarian times, but in contrast to the Wall and the Vallum, it has attracted little archaeological attention. Therefore, apart from occasional reports, sometimes remarking upon unusual narrowness and steepness in places, comparatively little is known about the road. For instance:

- was it a single entity, or had it just been a collection of Roman easements created piecemeal to get travellers around awkward obstacles?
- if it had been a single entity, did it run all the way from Wallsend to Bowness-on-Solway?
- just how steep and narrow does it really get?
- did it cater for wheeled traffic?
- what function was it intended to perform, and when was it built?

At long last, these and many other questions have now been answered by Dave Armstrong, who is a member of the Roman Roads Research Association and Editor of its Newsletter. A long-term but level-headed enthusiast on the subject of Roman roads, he brings an engineer's eye to the topic. No new excavation has been brought to his study of the Military Way. Instead, there has been a thorough researching and assessment of all past reports, antiquarian and archaeological, and this has been coupled with extensive observation and measurements of the remains of the road on the ground and also via lidar. The outcome is a well-written and very readable slim volume in A5 size, illustrated with colour photographs, including some low-level drone shots, and also with numerous lidar images which cover, amongst other things, the entire course of the road over the crags from Sewingshields to Walltown. This book will thus fit easily into the pockets of walkers, and one of the book's chapters is devoted to describing, very informatively, what is visible over the crags for those enthusiastic amateurs - as well as scholars - who might wish to walk along and examine the Roman road for themselves.

But the book makes major contributions to scholarship too. The author has distinguished three modes (he calls them Divisions A, B and C) by which the locations of the road were systematically set out across the landscape, depending upon the proximity of the Vallum to the Wall. In addition, he observes that, wherever possible, the line of the road avoided intruding upon the nearest 100m or so of ground immediately to the south of the Wall. This implies that the Romans had retained a use for this zone when the Military Way was being built. The author also notes that although, when space was really tight, the Military Way occasionally ran on the north berm of the Vallum's ditch, there is no indication that the road ever crossed the ditch itself – even when passing the fort of Carvoran, which happens to lie south of the Vallum. All of this suggests typically thorough and well-regulated Roman planning and execution.

With regard to the steepness of the Military Way in places, the author has sought to provide an unequivocally accurate answer to this question, using lidar to measure the slope in most cases, but also employing an instrument of his own devising, called a Clinometer, to corroborate the results. His conclusion is that the Roman road builders had adopted a maximum ruling gradient of 1 in 6 for the Military Way, and that they had applied it consistently. With regard to the date of construction of the road, the author deals with this in two pages of deliciously crisp deduction. The question of whether or not the Military Way had been intended to allow for wheeled traffic is perhaps more difficult. Because of the gradients, and the zig-zag bends in places, the author is inclined to conclude that the central section of the Military Way – i.e. that part over the crags – had not been intended to take wheeled traffic. He makes the acute observation that whilst there are wheel ruts on the threshold of the eastern gate at the fort of Housesteads, there are none at the west gate. This may indicate that this fort had been as far as any wheeled traffic could get, along the eastern arm of the road.

Complementing these insights, the author has equipped his book well for scholarly use. It has an index, a table of those published articles which relate to each stretch of the Way, and an extensive bibliography that, very usefully in these times, provides the electronic addresses of documents which are also available on-line.

Any criticisms? A few, and all minor.

The book lists eight maps, but in fact these are the aforementioned lidar images covering the course of the Military Way over the crags from Sewingshields to Walltown. These lidar images are annotated to some extent, but your reviewer would have preferred to have had, in addition, a traditional-style map at the front of the book, pointing out for ready reference the locations of the places frequently mentioned in the narrative and in the captions, such as Cockmount Hill, the Walltown Gap, King's Hill, Limestone Corner, Lodhams Slack, Green Slack, Sycamore Gap, etc. as well as, for those readers who might be quite unfamiliar with the Wall, the locations of all of the forts. The author rightly commends the English Heritage (now Historic England) Archaeological Map of Hadrian's Wall, but those readers who wish to follow the author's accounts in detail will probably find that they need to have the English Heritage Map open beside them when they do so.

As your reviewer well knows, Roman roads can be very difficult to photograph on the ground, and it would have been helpful to have used arrows on many of the photographs to point out unerringly the course of the road being described in the caption. Even with your reviewer's experience of following Roman roads on the ground, there were a few photographs where it wasn't entirely clear where the road ran, as described in the caption.

Finally, the cover of the book and some of the photographs of the Military Way show it as a bright green track running across the landscape. Presumably the result of recent strimming, this attractive pathway makes the line of the road easier to follow, but for the sake of inexperienced observers it might have been helpful to indicate that the Roman road underneath is wider than the track may imply.

On archaeological matters, it is stated that the construction of Hadrian's Wall began with Hadrian's visit to Britain in AD 122. However, the latest thinking, perhaps led by the Dutch archaeologist, Erik Graafstal, has swung to the view that construction of the Wall had been initiated maybe two or three years earlier, and that it was the occasion of Hadrian's visit to Britain which saw the change of plan and the decision to build forts into the line of the Wall.

The author notes that the second bridge built beside Chesters fort had been made wide enough to carry a road (i.e. not just Hadrian's Wall) over the North Tyne River, and he uses this to help date the construction of the Military Way. However, it might also have been useful to have commented on the Romans' bridges over the River Irthing at Willowford, near Birdoswald fort. In their book *Hadrian's Wall Bridges*, Paul Bidwell and Neil Holbrook report that it was only with the third bridge at Willowford that it was made wide enough to carry a road. Initially Bidwell and Holbrook dated the constructions of both the widened bridges to the early AD 200s, but new evidence subsequently caused them to redate the second bridge at Chesters to the Antonine period. Unfortunately coin and pottery evidence from Willowford seems to indicate that the third bridge could not have been built before AD 200, so clearly there is some discrepancy here. If the construction of the Military Way had indeed been initiated towards the end of the Antonine period, then perhaps the road had initially been carried across the Irthing for some years on a separate bridge, probably built of timber. By AD 200 such timber could well have become due for renewal, and a decision could then

have been made to widen the Wall's bridge over the Irthing rather than erect another one separately.

To sum up: this slim book makes a significant contribution to our understanding – not just of the Military Way – but to the functioning of the Hadrian's Wall zone as a whole, and it forms a valuable contribution to the literature on the subject. Mike Bishop of the Armatura Press is to be congratulated for publishing it. In addition, the book offers a valuable guide to walkers of all kinds who want to see what a well-preserved Roman road looks like on the ground. At last the Military Way running behind Hadrian's Wall has received - and from now on will be receiving - the attention it deserves.

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