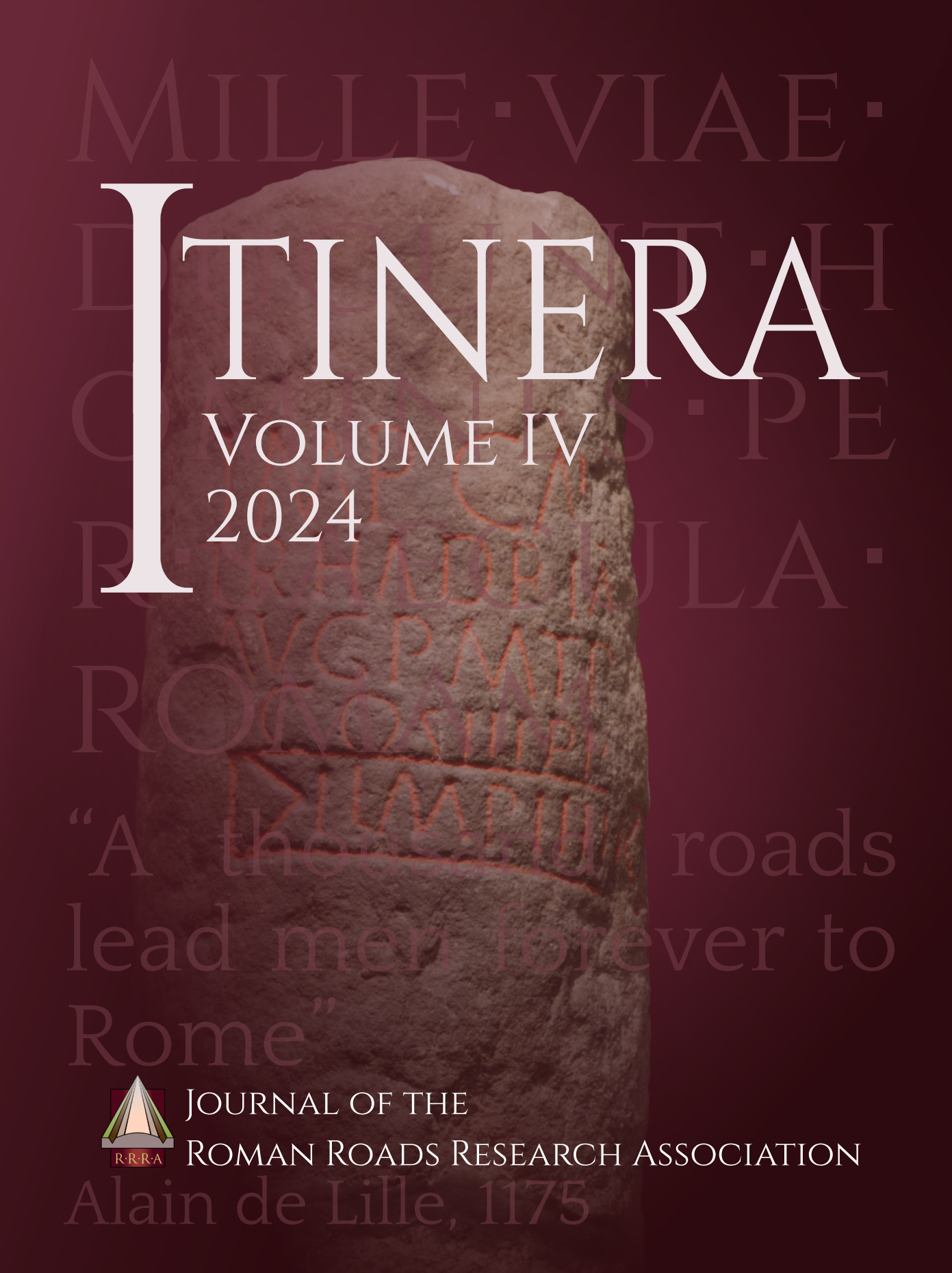


ITINERA

Volume IV
2024

"A thousand roads lead men forever to Rome"

Alain de Lille, 1175

Journal of the
Roman Roads Research Association

ITINERA

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About the Association

by Mike Haken



The late Hugh Toller and I founded the Roman Roads Research Association to provide a focal point for what we thought was a fairly small group of individuals with an interest in the study of Roman roads and connectivity throughout the former Roman province of Britannia. I'm not sure that Hugh, who sadly died in 2016, could have imagined that at the end of April 2024 we would have an international membership totalling 556, a figure that continues to grow. We are a very broad church, ranging from those with just a general interest in the Roman period, through to professional archaeologists from both commercial and academic sectors, not forgetting those those like myself who have had a lifelong passion for the subject (some might say obsession!). The Association welcomes all new members, whatever their background.

The continuing growth in membership may well have been fuelled, at least in part, by some of the things we have achieved. For example, we have just concluded the fourth season of our online lecture series, which we launched in 2021 during the pandemic. As part of our key policy of ensuring that our work is always made as accessible as possible, our talks are open to everyone, are always free of charge, and regularly attract audiences of 200 people or more from across the world. Another excellent programme for our fifth season is being prepared by our Secretary, Dave Armstrong, and details will be released soon. You can catch up with previous seasons on our YouTube channel.

Since 2018, we have conducted over 200 Ha of geophysical survey with our own gradiometer cart, accurately identifying the course of many roads and examining Roman period sites along them. Our most recent survey, assisted by a group of local volunteers from Southwell (SCAG), was near East Stoke (*Ad Pontem*) in Nottinghamshire. This confirmed the location of the junction of RR59(x) from Ancaster with the Fosse Way, making the existence of RR59(x) now beyond dispute. We always welcome suggestions for other potential survey sites, no matter where in the country they might be.

Above all, however, our greatest achievement is *Itinera*, the only journal in the world dedicated to the study of Roman roads and transportation infrastructure. Published entirely in house by our large team of volunteers, we are proud that our standards are as high as most academic publishing houses. Indeed, As Rob Entwistle points out in the following Editorial, it is a measure of our growing credibility that *Britannia*, a journal of the Roman Society, guides authors of reports on Roman roads that would have previously been published in *Britannia* towards *Itinera* instead.

Looking forwards, the wealth of new research and discoveries that have been reported by *Itinera* have, if nothing else, highlighted the urgent need for an accurate map that reflects the true state of knowledge of the Roman road network in Britain, and the sites it served, since the national maps that do exist are either decades out of date or simply inaccurate and misleading. To rectify this situation we will soon be recruiting volunteers to assist with a nationwide project which aims to accurately redraw the map. In line with our Open Access policy, the results will all be made freely available.

Finally, I am sure that our enthusiastic membership will enable us to continue to expand and develop our activities, ensuring that the next decade is even more productive than our first decade has been.

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Editorial

Robert Entwistle



The late Hugh Toller, co-founder of the RRRA with Mike Haken, was sadly lost to Roman road research when the Association was only a year old. Earlier I had become aware of his work through his part in identifying the long-sought line of the Lune valley Roman road out of Lancaster, my native town. Identifying it through Lidar and on foot, he followed its route up and over Lancaster Ridge towards Caton and the southern flank of the Lune valley.

It is therefore a pleasure to see David Ratledge's contribution to this volume of *Itinera*, a memorial to Hugh's work in the Exeter region, developed in the light of further studies. It is appropriate that this same volume contains a significant paper by Mike Haken identifying *viae vicinales* in the north-east Midlands which perhaps should no longer be regarded as somehow 'lesser' or 'minor'.

Itinera has a record of examining different aspects of Roman road studies, not necessarily restricted to our corner of the Roman empire. The 2024 volume sees a new contribution from the Spanish archaeologist and presenter, Isaac Moreno Gallo: the first publication in English of his work analysing road construction methods and transport development. His trenchant views provide a counterbalance to other accounts, reminding us that the evidence of the trowel is always subject to interpretation.

A new departure for this volume is the incorporation of a 'Focus' section with multiple papers exploring a single theme. The subject is the Devil's Causeway – a road which branches off Dere Street just north of Hadrian's Wall to head (via Learchild fort) determinedly towards modern-day Berwick and the mouth of the Tweed – where no Roman site is known. This theme originated in a 2023 conference held in Berwick-upon-Tweed and coordinated by Dr Lindsay Allason-Jones and the Border Archaeology Society with support from the RRRA, exploring the riddle of the road. Expert presentations have been developed into these papers. We would be happy to repeat, in future volumes, similar suites of papers focused upon a single theme or aspect: suggestions for themes and contributors would be welcomed by the Editor.

As always, this volume treats different geographical parts of Britannia, ranging from the south-west (Exeter) to the north-east (Berwick). Paul Booth explores aspects of the Roman road network in the Oxford area, Mike Holmes considers issues around the River Glynde in East Sussex, and Nigel Rothwell examines the possibilities for a Thames crossing linking St Albans and Silchester.

In a full volume, however, we regret the lack of papers on Wales and Scotland, even though these countries are represented in our annual round-up across Britain. Potential contributors suggesting interesting papers on these areas of would find us warmly receptive. *Itinera* continues to welcome every submission from contributors established or new, and if necessary, will endeavour to advise authors where further work is needed for key improvements. A short proposal to the Editor of what is intended, before making a full submission, is often helpful.

Editorial

We take pride in a professional standard of production maintained entirely through the work of volunteers: our editorial board (Mike Haken, Dave Armstrong, Mike Bishop and Paul Booth, all of whom contribute endless hours to the production of each volume); our academic advisor (Pete Wilson); our index compiler (Chester Forster); and postmaster (Chris Webb). Without the dedicated work of the whole team Roman studies would be the poorer.

We are greatly heartened by the respected position that *Itinera* has achieved in the short period of its existence. The long-established journal, Britannia, acknowledges this in specifying that submissions on Roman roads for their annual update section should be limited to brief summaries of the main points of interest if accounts are also published in *Itinera*, with our journal cited for those fuller reports.

An important part of our role, alongside publicising research, is (through the RRRA) the regulation and classification of new discoveries, as Margary's original system of nomenclature strains to adapt to an expanding known road network. This volume therefore contains a list of newly attributed numbers and a proposal from Mike Haken on the classification of non-standard Roman roads.

This year we have taken the decision to slightly reduce the font size to bring *Itinera* more into line with other similar journals and to control printing costs. Even so, readers will find that 2024 marks a bumper issue: the largest volume we have yet produced.

We trust that RRRA members and all readers will enjoy and profit from this 2024 volume of *Itinera*.

Robert Entwistle

(Hon Editor, *Itinera)*

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R·R·R·A

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A Focus on: The North End of the Devil's Causeway

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Questions as to the exact route of the Devil's Causeway at its northern end have been asked for many years. There are also several subsidiary questions to be answered: where is the most northerly confirmed sighting of the road? Does it cross the Tweed between Tweedmouth and Berwick-upon-Tweed and, if so, how? If the road heads purposefully to Tweedmouth, why was this its destination and is there a fort waiting to be discovered there?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the Border Archaeological Society invited members of the Roman Roads Research Association and the Northern Roman Frontiers Seminar to join them for a day conference in Berwick-upon-Tweed in October 2022. Sadly, this event had to be postponed due to 'works on the line' effectively making train journeys to Berwick from Newcastle and Edinburgh impossible on our chosen day. A second attempt was made in May 2023 and this time, despite a rail strike, a very successful conference was held, with lectures followed by a walk along the banks of the Tweed to allow people to familiarise themselves with the terrain.

Much that was new was discussed and it was suggested that the papers should be published so those who could not attend might discover what was discussed and those who did attend could digest the contents at their leisure. The members of the Border Archaeological Society are very grateful to the Roman Roads Research Association for allowing these contributions to be inserted into *Itinera IV*. Sadly, not all the speakers were able to prepare their papers for publication, but it is hoped that the following will provide much food for thought and move on the debate about the purpose of the Devil's Causeway.

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The Devil's Causeway - A Preliminary Investigation of its Presence at Berrington, Northumberland

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Abstract

This paper describes the evidence for the existence and location of the Devil's Causeway at Berrington in North Northumberland. The project was prompted by a small assemblage of metal detecting finds of the Roman period that were unearthed in the vicinity of the road. A correlation was established between the observations of Victorian surveyor Henry MacLauchlan, aerial photography and lidar images. A survey of the plough-soil along this line revealed a significant quantity of stones consistent with the known fabric of the road. Based on these clues a series of test pits were excavated close to a river crossing. The results seem to suggest the presence of the road at this location. Documentary evidence is also presented showing that the Devil's Causeway may have continued to function as a significant route at Berrington into the mid-14th century.

Introduction

William Camden lamented that Roman roads, '*being dismembred ... and cut one peece from another in some places, by reason that the countrey people digge out gravell from thence, are scarcely to be seene*' (Camden 1607, 44-5).

The north end of the Devil's Causeway (Margary 1955, Roman Road 87) fits Camden's description of a road that is '*scarcely to be seen*'. For the most part it has remained elusive, having been destroyed by the plough or buried beneath modern sections of road. The most northerly confirmed sighting of the road prior to 2023 was 30 km south of the Tweed at Wooperton quarry in 2000 (Gates and Hewitt 2007). Excavations at Netherwitton in 2001 (Tyne and Wear Museums Service 2001) and Thornton Moor Farm in 2018 (AP 2018) revealed its surface including a central rib. A bridge abutment was discovered at the Hart Burn in 1989 and a paved ford at the River Wansbeck around the same time. (Brown and Hudson 1989) R.P. Wright opened seven sections of the road between Bradford and Ryal in 1937 (Wright 1938) and the most southerly sighting to date was at Matfen in 2017 (Morton 2018). For a more detailed summary of these excavations see Carlton 2018, 7-9.

A positive identification of the Devil's Causeway as far north as Berrington - just eight kilometres from Tweedmouth - would add a new piece of information to the current body of knowledge. It is hoped that what follows will provide a foundation for further investigation.

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MacLauchlan's Memoirs

Henry MacLauchlan visited Berrington during a three year-long survey of the Devil's Causeway that he began in 1857. In his memoirs he wrote that, '*Our line ran about 300 yards on the east of South Berrington House*' (MacLauchlan 1864, 46). This appears to refer to a projection of the line of the road northward from Lowick, rather than a physical sighting at this location.

Having established his datum, MacLauchlan describes four specific observations that he recorded with the assistance of farm steward John Todd. He reported that the road...

- may still be seen in the brook dividing South from North Berrington;
- appears near a well a little further on;
- is visible at a spot where four hedges meet in a field road, about 600 yards north from North Berrington House;
- passes about 180 yards east of the house, and traces of it may possibly be found in a ridge of land somewhat broader than the others.

Despite more than a century and a half of agriculture, MacLauchlan's survey may still be used to locate the line of Devil's Causeway as it passes through Berrington (Fig. 1). Resources that were unavailable to the Victorian surveyor, including aerial photography and lidar, compliment his work but also help to refine his fourth observation as will be discussed presently.

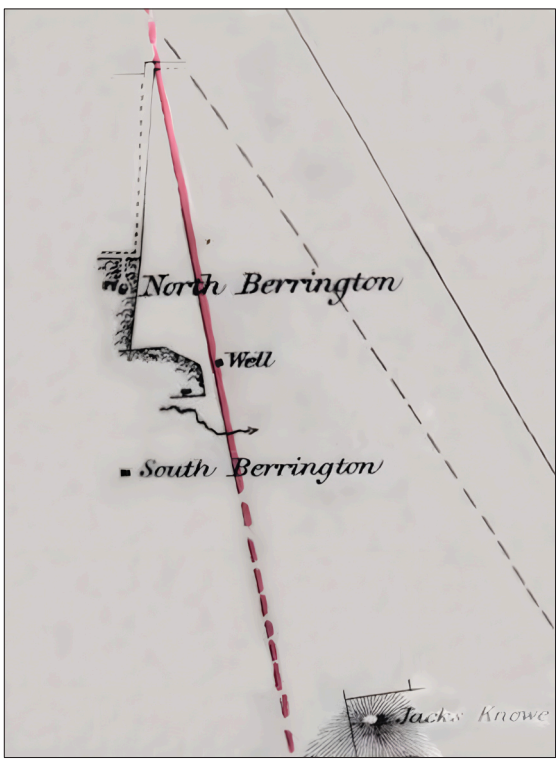


Fig. 1, Henry MacLauchlan's survey of Berrington. Published 1864

The well that MacLauchlan referred to no longer exists; however, a series of Ordnance Survey maps from 1868 to 1968 are in close agreement as to its exact location. Maclauchlan draws the road adjacent to the well on its west side. The vicinity of the well contains a significant amount of stone and water-worn cobbles that become visible after every harvest. It appears that the road may be close to the surface at this flat spot before it ascends the slope onto the east-west ridge of the field.

The place '*where four hedges meet in a field road*' was previously identified by the current landowner as an especially rocky area where many stones are to be found deposited in the field margins. One particularly large specimen measures 1.2 x 0.45 x 0.3 m. MacLauchlan's drawing shows the line passing to the east of



Fig. 2, MacLauchlan's observations plotted on Google Earth. His line coincides with a linear cropmark to the north of the well.
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the point where the hedges intersect. We can draw a line from there, passing just west of the well, to his datum '*300 yards on the east of South Berrington House*'. The GoogleEarth image taken in 2006 is useful in this context. The section of our line between the well and the next hedge to the north can be seen to pass through a light-coloured linear cropmark (Fig. 2; see also Fig. 3).

The intersection of this line with the Berrington Burn is where MacLauchlan saw the road '*in the brook dividing South from North Berrington*'. At this precise spot sandstone blocks protrude from the north bank of the river. Other examples are to be found in the stream and more worked stones can be seen scattered around the vicinity.

MacLauchlan's final observation at Berrington was of '*a ridge of land somewhat broader than the others*', a feature he located 180 yards (165 m) east of Berrington House. Patterns left by ridge and furrow ploughing are visible in aerial photographs of the field that is known in the modern estate plan as Big Field. Broad 'reverse-S' shaped ridges, likely from the medieval period, are evident. The north-west corner of the field contains narrower, straighter ridges that may be post-medieval in origin (Fig. 3). Although it has been somewhat obscured by modern agriculture, it is likely that these features were still visible in the mid-19th century. MacLauchlan makes reference to an especially prominent ridge that he suggested might be evidence of the Devil's Causeway. Figure 4 shows this earthwork highlighted by snow during the *Beast From The East* storm in 2018. A parallel earthwork, 150 m further west, can also be seen in the background.

This '*ridge of land*' is a prominent feature when viewed in lidar (Fig. 5). By overlaying MacLauchlan's line (indicated by 'A') it can be seen that the earthwork (indicated by 'B') is probably not the *agger* of



Fig. 3, Big Field rendered in grayscale highlighting the ridge and furrow furlongs. © 2023 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky



Fig. 4, Earthwork, likely the 'ridge of land somewhat broader than the others' seen by MacLauchlan. Highlighted by snow during a storm in 2018. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC

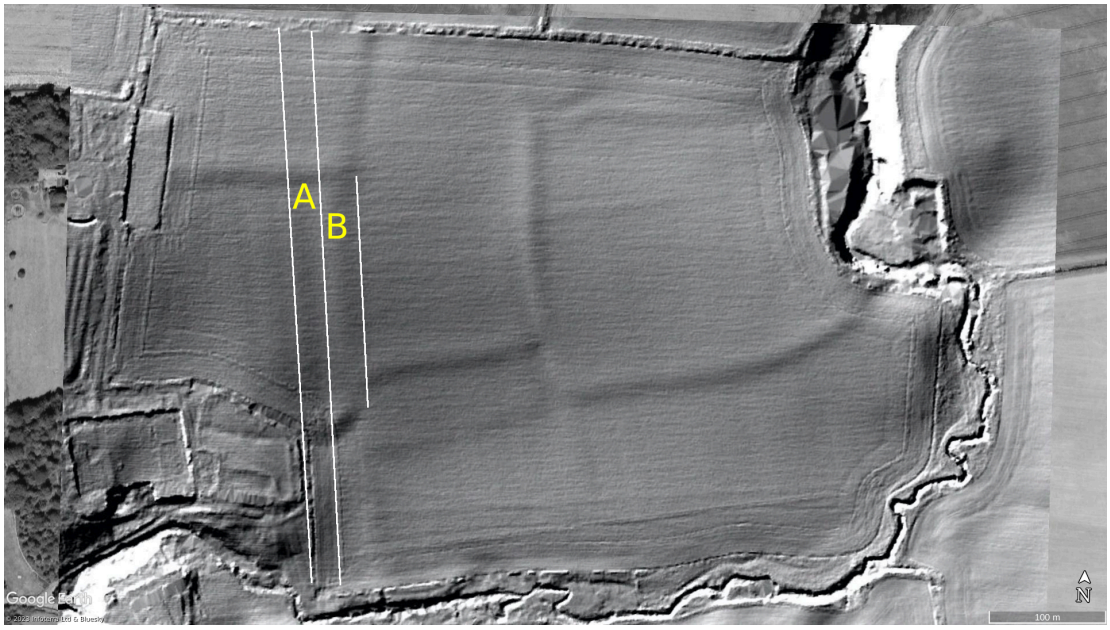


Fig. 5, lidar image of Big Field showing MacLauchlan's line (A) with the earthwork (B) immediately to the east.. Basemap © 2023 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky: Lidar © Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS | Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

the Devil's Causeway but lies immediately adjacent to the line on its east side. A complex pattern of earthworks is evident in the lidar image; a comparison with Figure 3 reveals these to be artefacts of a medieval open-field system. The headlands and baulks that separate the furlongs or *flatts* have left a permanent record in the landscape. It seems that MacLauchlan's caution was justified when he suggested the road '*may possibly be found*' in this earthwork, and what he saw was not the road but evidence of the way it had impacted the agricultural layout of Big Field.

Stone Survey

After harvest in 2022 a fieldwalking survey was conducted along a zone 50 m either side of the putative line of the road. A significant quantity of water-worn cobbles and blocks of whinstone were observed on the surface of the plough soil. The largest blocks of whinstone measure 0.2 - 0.3 m cubed. Geologist Dr Ian Kille observed that, '*The presence of whinstone in the field clitter is somewhat puzzling as ice movement here would have been from north to south and all outcrops of whinstone are south of this area. It leaves open a highly speculative possibility that these stones were purposely moved at some point in history*' (Kille 2023).

R.P. Wright observed similar-sized whinstone blocks in his excavation of the Devil's Causeway at Brandy Well Hall. He described a sandstone layer of '*bottoming*' 23 ft. 9 in. (7.2 m) wide, topped by a '*massive upper layer, which was composed of whin-boulders averaging 10 inches (0.25 m) cube*' (Wright 1938, 354).

Excavations

Based on this evidence an investigation was begun in August 2023, initially by way of a series of test pits, to see whether any physical remains of the road might survive north of the river crossing. The location on a strip of pasture was chosen to avoid disruption to the arable field, and because of the presence of the blocks of stone in the north bank mentioned above. It was also hoped that land so close to the river might have escaped the attention of the plough.

In the first test pit a compact layer of stones was discovered at a depth of 0.7 m. This pit was extended and a further two pits were opened to the west in an attempt to locate an edge. All three pits revealed the same layer. Four metres from pit one - at the western end of the third pit - the depth of the layer was found to be increasing, perhaps suggesting the beginning of a camber.

When an mechanical excavator briefly became available, the opportunity was taken to open a larger trench 20 m north of the Berrington Burn in the border of the arable field. The trench was 6 x 1.5 m with an east-west alignment. Again, a compact layer of stones was found at the same depth as the test pits. These stones are on average slightly larger (0.1 - 0.3 m) than in the test pits and also differ in that the upper layers have a distinctive orange-yellow colour (Fig. 6.1). Ian Kille recorded that:



Fig. 6.1, Trench opened on MacLauchlan's line, 20 m north of the Berrington Burn. The top layers have been consolidated with orange-yellow coloured clay. (Ranging pole is 2 m; north is at the bottom of the picture) *© Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA*

> *'Almost all of the stones examined consisted of sandstone with one piece of shale and no limestone. Most were entirely angular, but a significant number were rounded and weathered in a manner that was consistent with material found in glacial till'. Regarding the colour of the surface, he observed that, 'the orange-yellow colouring is likely a product of the poor-quality clay found between the stones in the top layer. This colour of clay is typical of clays found in glacial till and appears to have been used deliberately as a material to bed the stones together providing a more resilient surface'* (Kille, 2023).

The sandstone construction and absence of limestone - despite extensive limestone deposits nearby - is noteworthy. MacLauchlan observed a road parallel to his line across three fields at South Berrington but rejected it on the basis that it was formed from broken limestone, '*and it seems probable that there was no excavation made of that rock for the use of the road'* (MacLauchlan 1864, 45).

Although most of the surface has a random appearance there are a few areas that seem to show evidence of more careful hand-setting of the stones. The surface cambers down towards an eastern edge, but at the time of writing, the nature of the edge has not been resolved (Fig. 6.2). No diagnostic features have yet been discovered, such as kerbs or the central spine that was observed by Wright in his excavations at Edlingham and Bridge of Aln. It is interesting to note, however, that, at Brandy Well Hall, Wright found a combination of sandstone, clay and whinstone, but noted that the road *'lacked well-defined kerbs*' (Wright 1940, 65-74). It may be that the surface corresponds to that referred to by



Fig. 6.2, Facing west. Ranging pole is level showing camber and apparent edge. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA

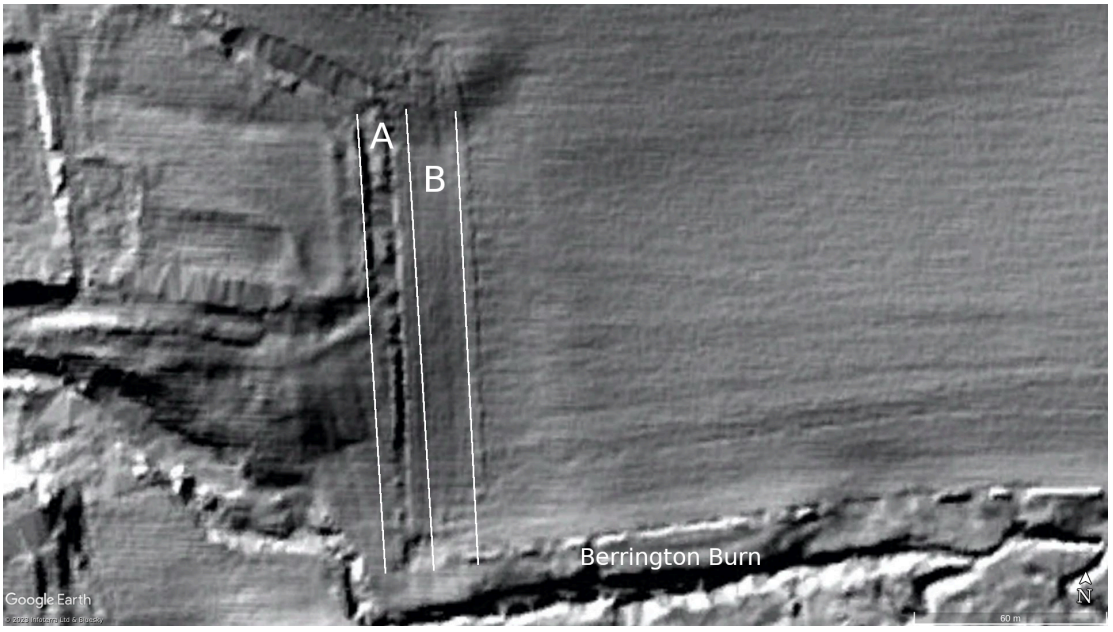


Fig. 7, lidar image showing a ditch (A) that that runs parallel to the line of the road (B) Basemap © 2023 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky: Lidar © Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS | Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

Wright as '*bottoming*', with larger stones having been robbed out in antiquity. A more extensive excavation will hopefully reveal further details of the road's construction and width as well as any evidence of a bridge abutment.

In the lidar image of this location (Fig. 7) a ditch (indicated by 'A') can be seen to run parallel to the line of the road (indicated by 'B'). It is tangible beneath the vegetation on the east side of the fence and it would not have functioned well as a drainage ditch in the context of current ground levels. Resolving whether this feature is associated with the road might be an additional objective of future work.

Evidence for Post-Roman Continuity

Ridge and Furrow Alignment

The 150 metre section of fence line that marks the western edge of Big Field, just north of the Berrington Burn, is the only field boundary adjacent to the line of the Devil's Causeway between Lowick and Berrington that is parallel to it. There is another possible alignment at Scremerston Hill Farm, more than five kilometres to the north.

David Astbury compared the alignment of the Devil's Causeway in south-east Northumberland - between the rivers Tyne and Wansbeck - with that of surrounding field boundaries, tracks, and ridge

and furrow. He reported that he found there to be '*very little relationship between the two*' (Astbury 2010, 292). He went on to say.

> *'For most of its route through this study area the Devil's Causeway runs oblique to field boundaries and evidence for ridge and furrow'. In his judgement, 'the lack of this feature type showing any affinity in terms of orientation with the Devil's Causeway is a clear indicator that the road had ceased to hold any importance by the time medieval furlongs were being laid out. Stretches of the road can be traced beneath medieval furlongs, which carries the implication that the physical components of the road such as stone used for the drains on either side of the road had been robbed or largely cleared for practical purposes during the process of laying out and ploughing medieval furlongs'* (Astbury 2010, 297).

In view of this lack of alignment Astbury thought it likely that *'at least significant stretches of the Devil's Causeway went out of use sometime after the fourth century and the eleventh century AD'* (Astbury, 2010, 298).

Our site is outside of Astbury's study area, but if a similar picture holds true north of the Wansbeck, then it is interesting to note how the ridge and furrow furlongs in Big Field share the same orientation as the line of the Devil's Causeway. Does this suggest that the road continued to be important at the time the medieval field system was laid out at Berrington? There is some documentary evidence that would seem to support an affirmative answer.

Documentary Evidence

Among the muniments of Durham Cathedral is a document penned on the feast day of St. Gregory (March 12) 1348 (Specialia GB-0033-DCD 3.1 Spec. 41). It records a grant by Robert Manners, soldier and Lord of Berrington, to chaplains Dom William of Middleham and Dom Robert of Dalton. In exchange for the annual payment of a hewing axe Sir Robert pledges a *messuage* (dwelling) with a garden containing *a rod and a perch* (approximately half an acre) to the north of the '*villa de beringdon'*. The document describes the location of this property as being between the tenement of John, son of Thomas, on the east, and on the west side the '*regiam viam que vocat le Lonynges*' (the Royal Highway called the Loanings) (Fig. 8).

The term *regiam viam* or *via regia* appears regularly in medieval records, often in the context of boundaries. According to Robert Peberdy it was not so much a name as the designation of the status of a road and implied certain legal obligations.

> *'The description of the route as [a] royal way in the mid fourteenth century suggests that it was well-established and had possibly been regarded as a strategic line of communication. The term was applied to 'primary national routes' and to 'secondary routes' between market towns and between market towns and shire centres. It appears to have been introduced by the Normans, though designated royal routes existed in Anglo-Saxon England, probably for military purposes. In the early twelfth century the designation via regia indicated that a route led to a major centre, namely 'a city or fortress or castle or royal town'. Royal ways were under the king's jurisdiction, and compensation for assaults on royal ways had to be paid to the king. Royal ways had to be kept open – they could not be closed or diverted' (Peberdy 2012, 103).*

This, then, is a reference from the mid-14th century to a significant road with a north-south orientation (since it marked a western boundary) that is adjacent to the village at Berrington. We also

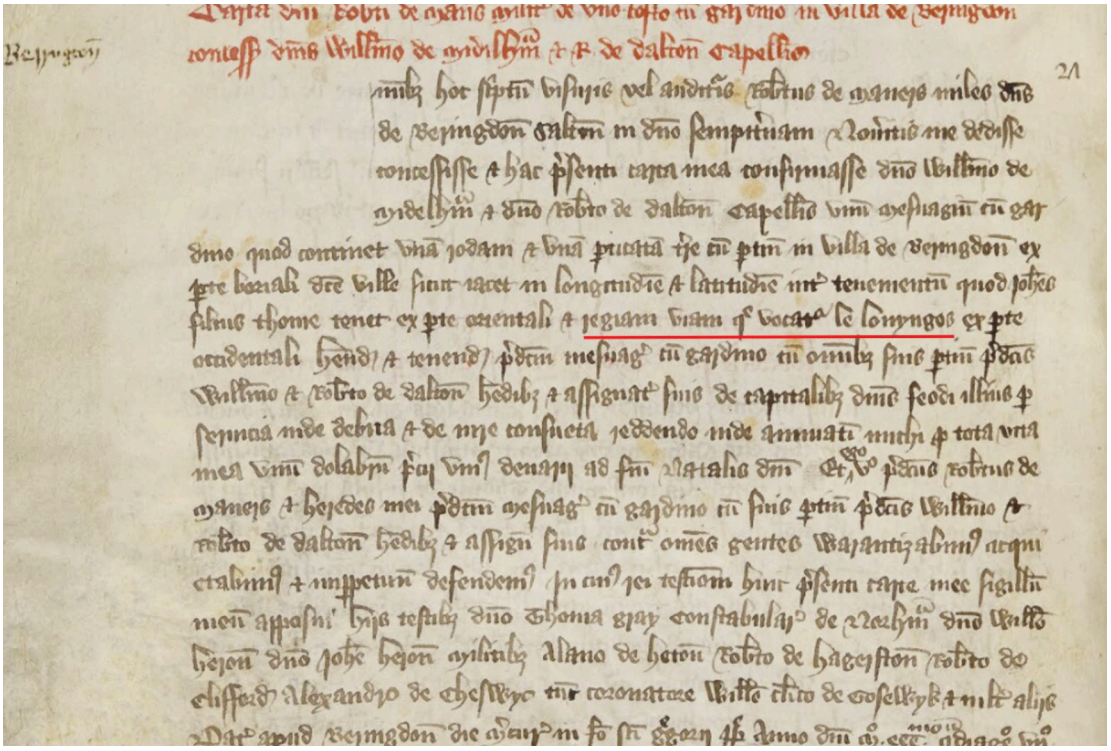


Fig. 8, Fourteenth century document that references a 'regiam viam que vocat le Lonynges' at Berrington. Provided by Durham Priory Library Project - a collaboration between Durham University and Durham Cathedral. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

have evidence on the ground that the line of the Devil's Causeway was sufficiently influential in the medieval period to constrain the layout of the adjacent field system. The route led towards the major centre at Berwick-upon-Tweed, with its castle and harbour. It would seem reasonable, then, to identify the Roman road that became known as the Devil's Causeway with that referred to locally as the Loanings, and which held the legal status of a Royal Highway in the 14th century. Robert Manners' use of the designation *regiam viam* in the present tense suggests that the road was functionally, as well as physically, present at that time. While recognising the limitations of negative evidence, it may be worth noting that if the 'Lord of Berrington' was aware of the appellation Devil's Causeway he makes no reference to it in this document. As for the road's colloquial name, a section of the Devil's Causeway in the Hartburn area was also known locally as the *Harpeth Loaning* (Haycock 2021, 3).

Another example of a Roman road that went on to attain the medieval status of *Regiam Viam* can be found in a 12th century charter of King Malcolm IV that gifted the lands of the royal cook Gocelynton to the Monastery of Newbattle. The description of the boundaries includes the phrase, *'ad viam regiam que vocatur derestrete'* (as far as the Royal Way which is called Dere Street) (Curle 1911, 15).

If the destination of the Devil's Causeway in 1348 was Berwick-upon-Tweed - in English possession since the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333 - the question arises about its southern terminus. Royal Highways tended to be long distance routes but how much of its original course was navigable in the 14th century remains a subject for further research.

Early Medieval Clues

When discussing a road built by Romans and known to still be in use in the medieval period, a question then arises about the intervening centuries. There is one written reference to the Devil's Causeway from the pre-Conquest period. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* records a grant of land made by King Ceolwulf to Lindisfarne in AD 737. The description of the boundaries includes the phrase '*et ab Alna usque in dimidiam viam inter Cocwud et Alna*' (and from the Aln to the mid-point of the road between Coquet and Aln). Although there are differences of interpretation regarding the details of the boundaries, it is generally agreed that the *viam* referred to here is the Devil's Causeway '*therefore providing evidence of the road being in use in the 8th century*' (Haycock 2021, 25).

J. E. Albone addressed the once prevalent opinion that '*Roman roads were largely, if not completely, abandoned during the early Anglo-Saxon period*', and those that survive today are the few that were later reinstated (Albone 2016, 29). Albone argues that this view was based in part on the questionable assumption that there was little or no long-distance travel taking place in the 5th or 6th centuries to ensure that the roads continued in use:

> *'Increasingly, excavated evidence, particularly in the form of grave-goods from cemeteries, is demonstrating that early Anglo-Saxon communities had very wide communication and trade networks and that long-distance travel was likely to have been a regular occurrence for at least some elements of the population'* (Albone 2016, 29).

Citing Oliver Rackham, Albone states that roads only survive through continuous use and any road that is neglected soon becomes '*more impenetrable than if it had never been a road'* (Albone 2016, 30). In support of this hypothesis is the example of Sandyford Bridge, which carried the B6353 Berwick to Wooler road at Berrington until it collapsed during a storm in 1958; this was replaced by a new bridge nearby and a short section of the road abandoned. Just over six decades later it would be difficult to discover that a road ever existed there. Any road that fell out of use for many centuries would surely become beyond recovery. It seems probable then that the Devil's Causeway continued to be used as a route in the early medieval period at Berrington.



Fig. 9, Early Medieval strap end found in Big Field Berrington. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA

Deb Haycock has examined the influence of the Devil's Causeway on post-Roman settlement patterns and found that the etymology of place-names and the location of pieces of Anglo-Saxon sculpture were among the factors considered in locating potential sites (Haycock 2021, 17-24). It was observed that places where the road crosses rivers or burns frequently coincided with sites of continuous occupation.

There are a few hints of an early medieval presence at Berrington that could account for the continued use and maintenance of the road. Richard Lomas identifies Berrington, Kyloe and Low Lynn as an example of a pre-Conquest thanage that survived the reorganisation of the incoming Norman regime (Lomas 2005, 15). In his

Dictionary of English Place Names Eilert Ekwall writes that Berrington is derived from the Old English *byrig-dun* meaning a 'hill with a burg' (Ekwall 1935, 39). Mark Wood identifies the characteristic feature of a *burh* as a '*man-made landscape feature, generally a fortified place*'; as a place-naming element *burh* suggests a date of the 7th and 8th centuries (Wood 2007, 267-69). Regarding the second naming element *dun,* he cites Margaret Gelling, who suggests it was '*probably used in the formation of settlement names from the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon period and into the 8th century but was not commonly used for settlement naming after 800 AD*' (Wood 2007, 308). Wood cites Berrington as an example of a place that combines these two naming elements (Wood 2007, 269).

An Early Medieval strap-end has been found in Big Field (Fig. 9). Similar examples recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme fall within a date range of AD 750-95. In 2023 a recycled window head of early medieval date was discovered in the wall of an 18th century barn at Berrington within metres of the projected line of the Devil's Causeway (Allason-Jones 2023).

Roman Small Finds

The Romans who travelled along the road left behind a few tokens of their presence that were rediscovered by metal detecting in Big Field and one adjacent field. Lindsay Allason-Jones has kindly contributed the following descriptions of these objects.

(Fig. 10.1) Part of a terret (a rein ring for a yoke) with circular-sectioned hoop, which narrows from the base. The centre has a double lipped projection. The base is hollow with a large elliptical hole; the integral strap bar is missing. This falls into the category of 'massive terrets', the double-lipped projection being typical of the type. Most massive terrets have been found in the North of England or Scotland, with a preponderance from Aberdeenshire, although some are known from Wales. Parallels found in closest proximity to Berrington are from Corbridge (MacGregor 1976, no. 115) and Eyemouth (MacGregor 1976, no 119), which may be described as being at either end of the Devil's Causeway. MacGregor has suggested that this type was '*devised by British craftsmen, working under Continental influence sometime between the late 1st and the mid-3rd centuries A.D.*' (MacGregor 1976, I, 48). W: 67 mm, Surviving H: 44 mm, Max. Th: 22 mm.

(Fig. 10.2) Circular pendant stud with a bevelled flange surrounding the hollow, domed centre. There are incised concentric lines on both the flange and the dome. The attachment is flat with a flared end and 5 mm circular hole. These would have been attached to the body straps of harness to carry heart-shaped pendants. Although the majority of such studs are hexagonal in shape, circular studs are known in Roman military contexts in the 3rd century AD. They are particularly common along the German limes, see Oldenstein 1976, 137-8, but are known in Britain. Diam: 38 mm, L with loop: 41 mm, H: 14 mm.

(Fig. 10.3) Pendant terminal? Crescentic loop with a bulbous shaft and part of a second open terminal. This would appear to come from a swivel, possibly from a cauldron, although those elements are usually of iron. Roman? Total L: 15 mm, Max. Th. of shaft: 14 mm.

(Fig. 10.4) Flared oval head of a small trumpet brooch with a circular-sectioned bow. Traces survive of the double lug hinge mechanism. This is a common type of bow brooch, dating to 75-200 AD. It is slighter than many trumpet brooches and would not have been strong enough to hold a cloak, but



Fig. 10.1, above left, terret ring (rein guide), late 1st to mid 3rd centuries AD. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA. Fig. 10.2, above centre, harness decoration, mid 3rd century AD. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA. Fig. 10.3, above right, pendant terminal, identity uncertain. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA



Fig. 10.4, above left, part of a small trumpet brooch AD 75-200 © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA. Fig. 10.5, above centre, three of eleven domed studs found at diverse locations within the vicinity of the road. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA. Fig. 10.6, above right, coin probably of Antoninus Pius AD 138-61 © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA



Fig. 10.7, lead steelyard weights; typically Roman in form. © Bill Blyth 2023, licensed CC BY-SA

may have been worn in a soldier's cravat or as one of a pair to fasten a woman's tunic. They are mostly found in military contexts. For type and dating, see Mackreth 2011, 114-6. Surv. H: 15 mm, W of head: 13.5 mm.

(Fig. 10.5) Eleven copper alloy domed studs. Five have rectangular-sectioned, slightly tapering shanks *in situ*. Two have circular holes roughly pierced from the outside in the middle of the domed head but with no trace of the shanks. Three have a small section of rectangular-sectioned shanks *in situ*. Although they are mostly now corroded, one still retains a polished surface to its dome. It is possible that these are Roman in date, as they are a type found on Roman sites, but this type of domed stud has a very long period of use so dating them out of context is not possible. Diameter: 21- 30 mm, length of only complete shank: 20 mm.

(Fig. 10.6) Very badly worn AE2 coin, probably of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD). The obverse has an emperor's head facing right in full profile; the reverse is too corroded for identification.

(Fig. 10.7) Two of three lead steelyard weights with integral iron suspension loops. The biconical shape is typically Roman in form.

Conclusion

In summary, this paper is making two propositions. Firstly, that physical remains of the Devil's Causeway still exist at Berrington, and secondly, that it continued in use as a significant highway into the mid-14th century.

Various lines of evidence point to the presence of the road and to its exact location. A small assemblage of finds consistent with a military context are suggestive of Roman activity. Henry MacLauchlan's memoirs are particularly precise at Berrington. His putative line is supported by cropmarks that are visible in aerial photography and with features that are revealed by lidar. Stones of a type and size that are known to be consistent with the road were found in the plough soil. Finally, an excavation targeted on this line uncovered a compact surface of sandstone. More work remains to be done; however, it seems reasonable to propose that the most northerly sighting of the Devil's Causeway can be moved a further 30 kilometres towards the Tweed.

References to the Devil's Causeway in the post-Roman period are relatively rare so the mention of a major road at Berrington in the mid-fourteenth century is potentially an important piece of data. Its status as a *Regiam Viam* and the record of its colloquial name are useful pieces of information that add to our knowledge of the road's history.

Further investigation will hopefully resolve unanswered questions such as the construction and width of the road, the possible presence of kerbs and the nature of the river crossing.

At other locations, such as Piercebridge, a number of small finds have been recovered from river crossings (Eckardt and Walton, 2021). Further searching in the Berrington Burn may also reveal clues about the lives and practices of the people who briefly occupied this distant corner of Roman Britain.

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