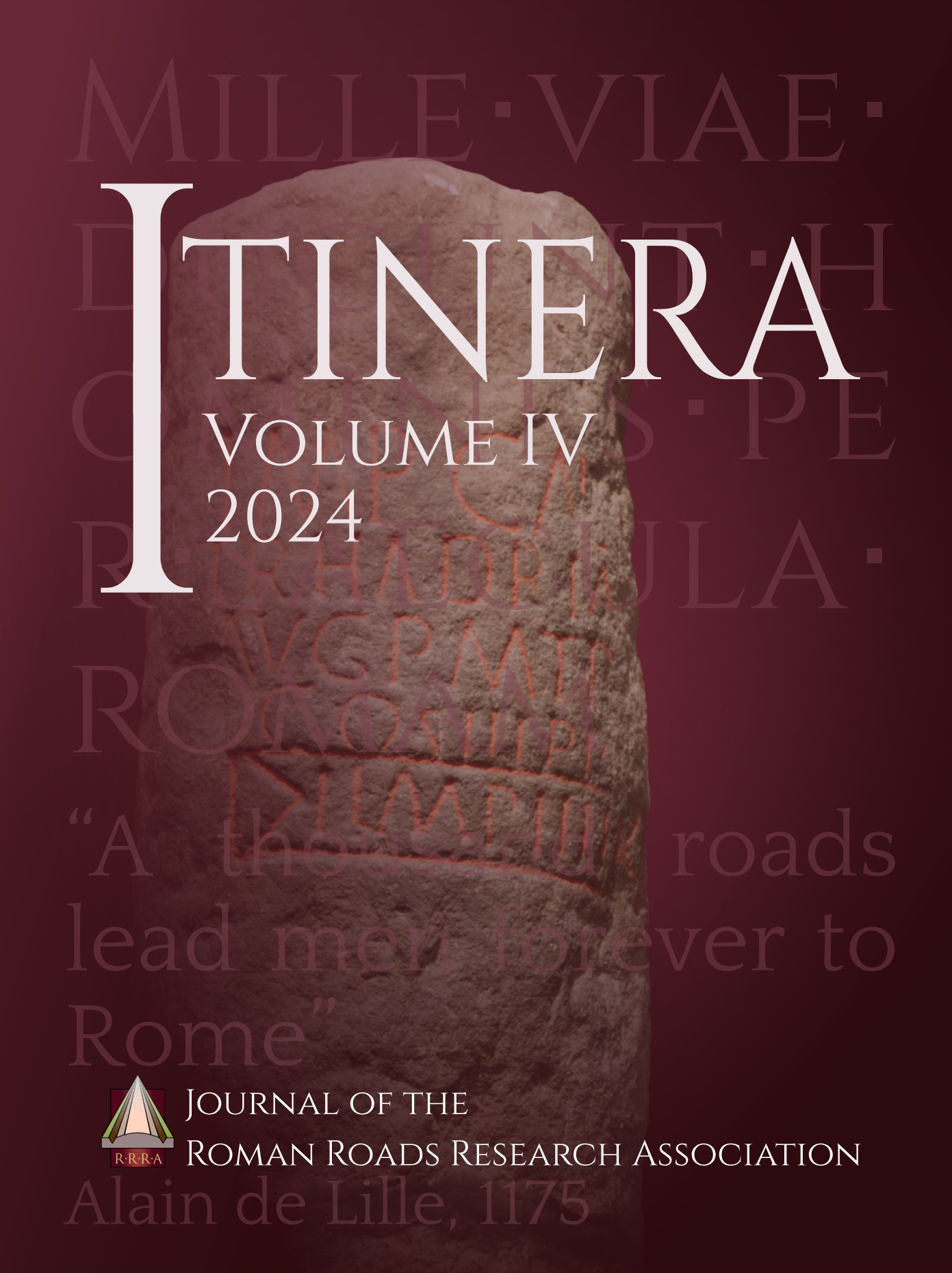


ITINERA

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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ROMAN ROADS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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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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The Network of Local Roman Roads Centred on the Glynde River Crossings in East Sussex

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Abstract

The area of the South Downs which includes the tidal rivers the Sussex Ouse and the tributary called the Glynde Reach was extensively studied by Margary in the 1930s after his remarkable discovery of the Roman road which he called the London to Lewes road. In particular, he described two crossings of the Glynde Reach. He called these the South Ford and the South-east Ford. Connecting to these crossings, he described a network of Roman roads stretching over the Downs to the sea and east to Arlington and Pevensey. The nature of the fords is discussed and the status of the Roman roads that he described is accessed. Evidence for the nature of the suggested fords is considered. Previous discoveries and recent Roman finds are reviewed. In addition, the case for sea level rise in the third century will be made and its impact on the Roman road system considered. It will be shown that the lower Ouse valley was a thriving iron industry, farming and trading centre from early in the 1st century and that this area developed without Roman military presence.

The Glynde River Crossings

The village of Glynde lies to the east of Lewes, the County Town of East Sussex. It is bounded to the south by the parish of Beddingham and to the south-east by West Firle. The southern boundary is formed by a tidal tributary of the Sussex Ouse called the Glynde Reach. The village lies on the eastern slopes of an isolated chalk downland outcrop called the Caburn Massif, which contains the Iron Age Caburn Hillfort and the apparently unfinished Ranscombe Camp. Glynde lies about 10km north of the English Channel at Seaford Bay and 2km north of the steep northern scarp of the main ridge of the South Downs (Fig. 1).

Two Roman roads are believed to have crossed the Glynde Reach in a north-west to south-east direction. They had separate river crossings some 500m apart. These crossings were first identified by Allcroft (1915, 200-232). He published a map of the Glynde fords and connecting roads (Fig. 2).

Margary (1933, 17-44) identified what he called, "A New Roman Road to the Coast" (RR14). He subsequently published an account of the Roman roads in the Glynde area (Margary 1939, 29-61). In the Roman period, the Reach would have been a wide muddy inlet covered in water at high tide. He described both of the crossings as fords and revised Allcroft's map. Margary (1939, 52) shows a new

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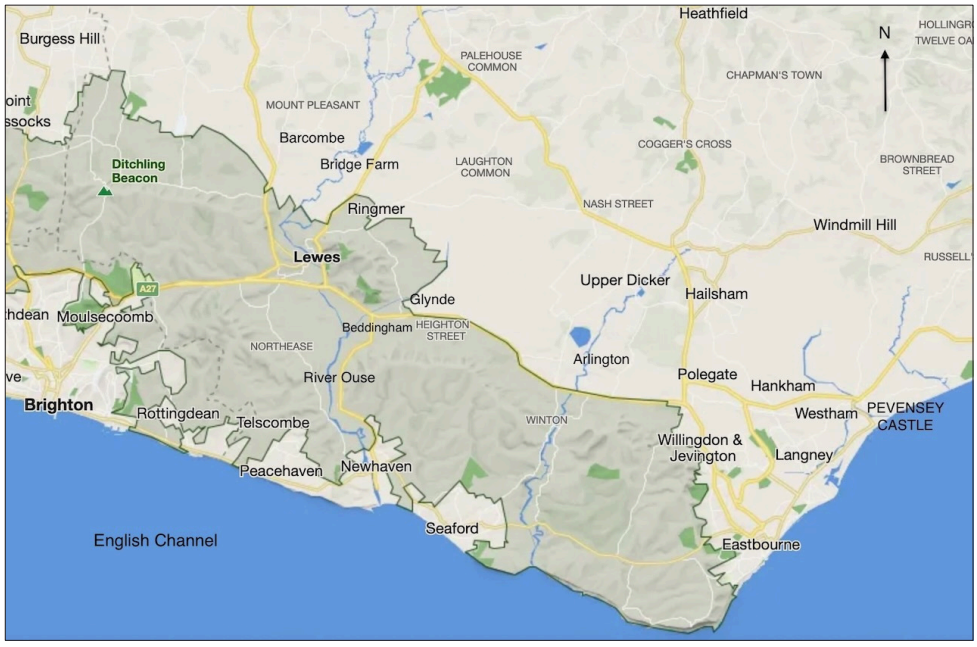


Figure 1. East Sussex between Brighton and Pevensey showing the river valleys of the Ouse and Cuckmere. © OpenStreetMap Contributors 2020, made available here under the Open Database License (ODbL) v1.0

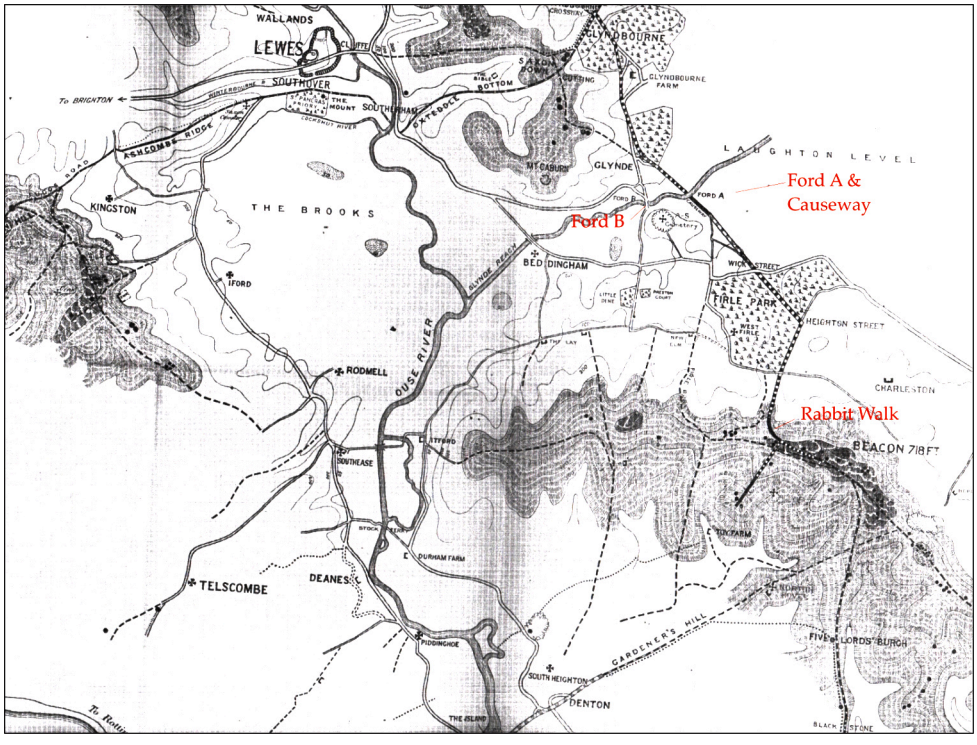


Figure 2. Allcroft's (1915) map of the Glynde Fords and supposed Roman Roads.

map of the Glynde crossings (Fig. 3). He named the two crossings the South Ford and the South-east Ford. The reason for the existence of two substantial engineered river crossings so close together was not and never has been satisfactorily explained. Although he gave details of two Roman roads which used these crossings, he did not specify which one was used by which road. The present paper reviews the evidence for these supposedly Roman roads and their associated river crossings. A suggestion is made about how changes in sea level in the 3rd century can have affected tidal estuaries like the Sussex Ouse and caused the road network to be modified. The roads connecting to the crossings are reviewed and re-interpreted in the light of discoveries made since Margary wrote. In particular it will be proposed that the so-called South-east ford was, in fact, a bridge.

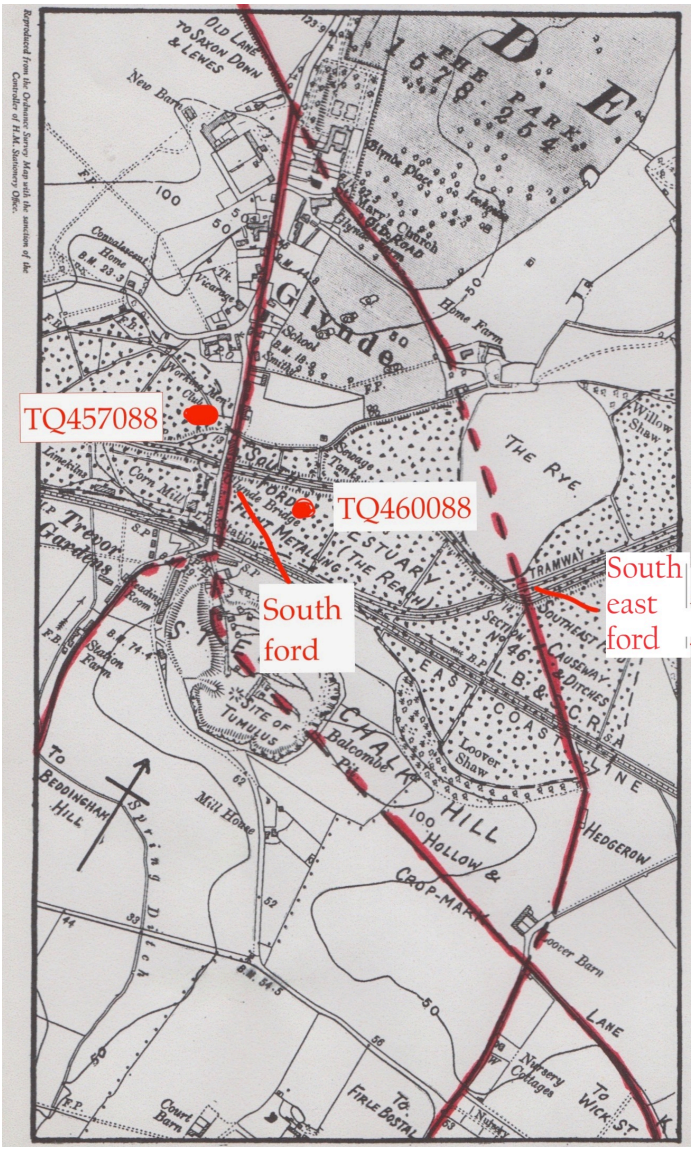


Figure 3. Margary (1939,52) map of the Glynde Crossings.

The South Ford

The South Ford (Ford B) lies directly south of the village of Glynde and, according to reports made in the late 18th century, was composed of a substantial stone roadway. The stones which formed the carriageway for the South Ford were deliberately removed at the end of the 18th century. An account of the removal comes from the notes of the volume of parish memoranda compiled by the Glynde carpenter William Wisdom (1756-1843) (Lusted, 1992). In Horsfield (1828, footnote p.114) an account is given of the removal of the stones based on the written report of an important gentleman, but without giving his name. This account appears to be based on the original notes of Mr. Wisdom. This has been confirmed by Andrew Lusted (pers. comm. 2020) who has inspected Wisdom's notes in the Glynde Place archive. The account as given by Horsfield is as follows.

> *'The road crossing the marsh at Glynde Bridge, was discovered in making a new cut across two brooks, a little eastward of the bridge, in 1794. It was 2 1/2 ft under the surface, 30 feet wide and covered with large flints about two feet thick with here and there a sand stone. I measured the work and remember paying the men something extra for removing 15 tons of flint from the road. There were no piles near it, but at the other end of the brook, where there was no road, we discovered some. I found an Antoninus on the side of the road.'*

According to this account, the Ford was substantial work, 9m wide. In 1794 it was 0.76m below the river bed. The construction is similar to that of the Roman road uncovered at Arlington (Clutterbuck and Massey 2020, 87). Antoninus Pius (presumably the emperor meant in Horsfield's account) was Roman Emperor from AD 138 to 161. The finding of a coin of Antoninus suggests that the river crossing was in use in the mid 2nd century and it may be of late 1st or early 2nd century construction.

It may be significant that the description above does not call the stones part of a ford. It refers to a road. Roman fords are unusual but when they do occur, according to Chevallier (1989, 220, footnote 130), they are formed with rectangular stone blocks. This is seen in the known Roman ford on RR13 at Benenden, Kent (HER: TQ83 SW6), where the ford was composed of substantial stones between 125 and 175mm thick and measuring from 425 x 275mm up to 800 x 550mm. Many of these stones had been removed and re-used as building material. The report of the removal of the stones in Glynde does say '*here and there a sandstone*' which may be a reference to paving which had long since disappeared. The substantial road surface may have been a Roman road built across low lying tidal wetland.

The South-east 'Ford'

The crossing which Margary called the South-east Ford lies 500m east of the South Ford along the Glynde Reach. No traces of stonework or piles are known at this position, apart from the rather vague reference in the above quotation. But it is associated with a substantial causeway with side ditches, which are still visible (Margary 1948, 197). The causeway that he saw, was 30 feet (9m) wide with side ditches 130 feet (40m) apart. The causeway crosses an area of low-lying land to the south of the Glynde Reach in a south-easterly direction and is 300m long. The causeway does not connect with any known roads or trackways on the southern side. It does not align with medieval field boundaries.

Opposite the causeway on the north-western side of the river is a small hill called The Rye. On both sides of the river there was elevated ground, either naturally occurring or constructed. This suggests that this crossing took the form of a bridge. From The Rye a track leads north-westwards. It is aligned

with a hollow way, which climbs Caburn Down towards Lewes. It is doubtful if any evidence of bridge construction can now be found, as a mineral railway was built along the river bank in the 19th century when the river was straightened.

Roman Roads associated with the Glynde Crossings



Figure 4. The Roman Roads between Glynde and Arlington. The black lines are according to Margary while the red ones are recent discoveries. Base Map: Ordnance Survey web site.

The Iron Road, RR14

RR14 is a major road which Margary (1973, 59) named 'London – Lewes (44 miles)'. It was part of a very early plan for a network of roads radiating from London (Entwistle 2023, 89). The final alignment runs from the high ground at Camp Hill in the Ashdown Forest to Malling Down immediately north of Lewes. It was very likely that its original purpose was to make connection with the iron foundry sites of the Sussex Weald and the rich agricultural land of the greensand belt, the chalk downland and the sea. Although it did not connect directly with the Glynde Fords, it was central to the development of the economy of the South Downs area between the Ouse and Cuckmere rivers. South of Malling Hill, Margary suggested that it led via Downland trackways to the Glynde fords and a network of Roman roads further south to the coast. The object of this paper is to examine the evidence for this network (see Fig. 4).

Where Margary was able to identify the *agger* of RR14 in an undamaged form, he measured it to be 18 feet (6m) wide. However, when the road needed to climb a steep hill by a terrace-way, the width was reduced to 12 feet (4m) The usual road width for two vehicles to pass side by side was 18 feet (6m) according to Chevallier (1989, 66). Presumably terrace-ways were assumed to be suitable for one way operation of vehicles. This is pertinent to the terrace-ways on the Downs which are possibly Roman work.

Recent geophysical work and excavation at Bridge Farm near Barcombe Mills has revealed an important and previously unknown Roman settlement (Galloway, 2023). The geophysics suggested that the Iron Road apparently terminated there. There was evidence for another Roman road leaving the settlement in a south-eastern direction. This has been shown by geophysics and lidar to lead to Arlington via the Ripe Land Settlement. In addition, a previously unknown Roman road was discovered on the opposite western bank of the river together with a villa and an industrial area (Wallace 2022, 227-229).

The alignment point for the southern section of RR14 from Camp Hill is Malling Hill. A terrace-way exists on Malling Hill which Margary identified as Roman. It commences on the alignment and ends in line with the known Roman Road RR147 (see Fig. 5). Margary inspected the terrace-way and described it as 12 feet wide (3.6m) cut into the chalk without any metalling. He states that it is similar to the escarpment at Glatting Down, where Stane Street (RR15) climbs the Down above Bignor Roman villa (Margary 1933, 41). It is typical of Roman terrace-ways, which are cambered towards the outer edge, to avoid rainwater damage. They also tend to have a constant gradient and width. Mediaeval and modern terrace-ways do not, in general, have these regular features.

It is possible that RR14 was planned as far as Malling Down to link with the short section of road leading to the River Ouse (and a port?) at South Malling (RR147). The section of RR14 south of Bridge Farm, however, was not completed or was abandoned, possibly because of flooding. An alternative road on the west bank of the Ouse and on higher ground may then have been used as the alternative southern continuation of the Iron Road.

RR141 Newhaven-Selmeston-The Dicker (HER MES4816)

Margary (1973, 70-73) mapped this road from Meeching (modern Newhaven), where an extensive waterside site including a bath house was discovered in Newhaven town centre (see below). Substantial quantities of early period Roman ceramics have been found on Castle Hill, Newhaven (Hawkes 1939, 292).

The road crossed the Ouse at the island near to the waterfront buildings and continued on a straight north-easterly course. The route is followed by a downland track (see Fig. 4). About 2km from the river, a pipeline was constructed in a north south direction in 2008. Where the pipeline trench crossed the line of the supposed Roman road, an excavation trench was cut by Archaeology South-East through a 'wide linear feature'. The approximate position of this cut is shown on figure 13 by an X. According to the interim report (Grant 2008, 4), the fill was composed of '*...silty gravel...,potsherds, worked flints and iron dross/ore fragments....*'

It is difficult to suggest any period other than Roman when iron slag would have been introduced into the foundation of a downland track. Iron ore does not occur naturally on the South Downs. This

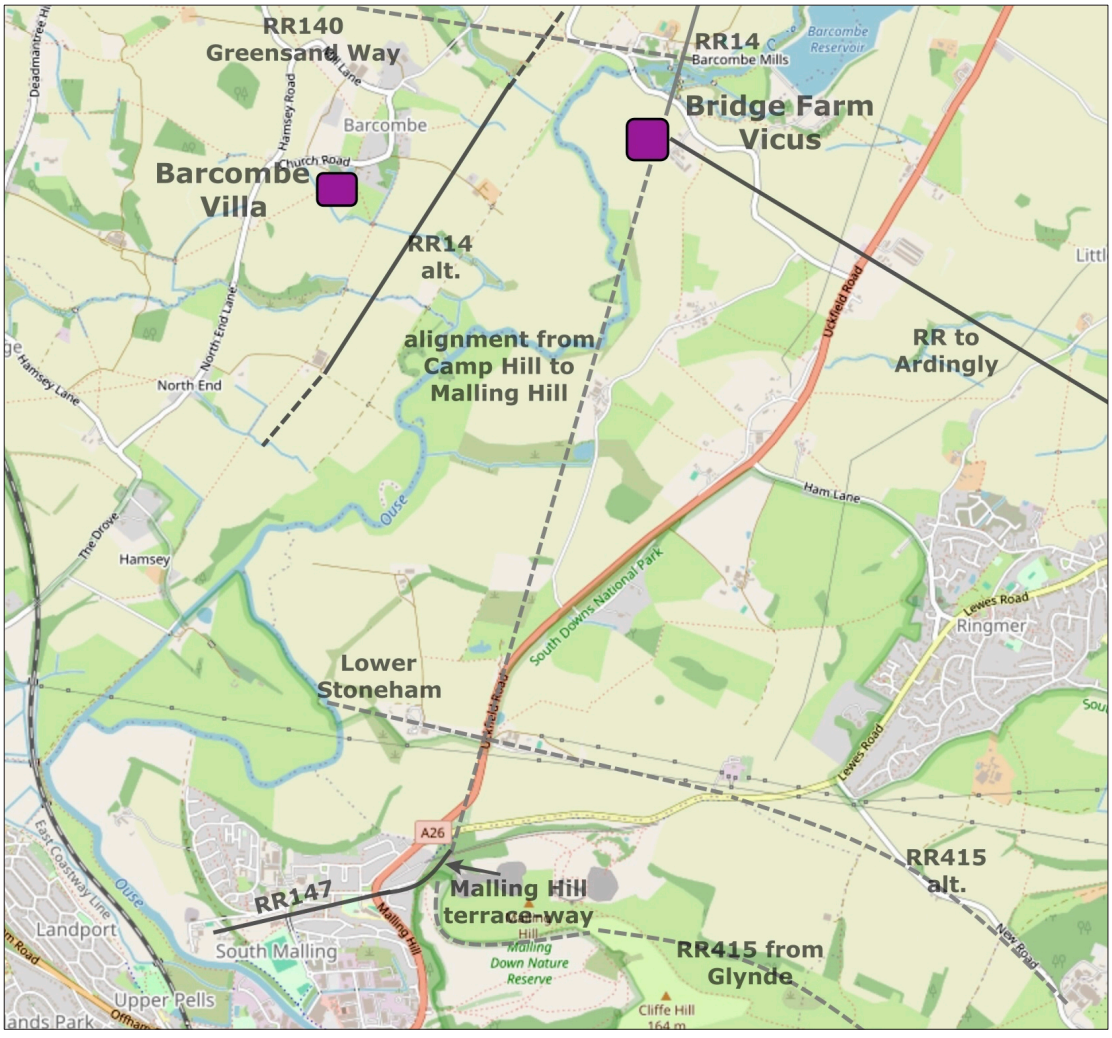


Figure 5. The roads of the Ouse valley between Bridge Farm and Malling Hill, Lewes. Map data © OpenStreetMap Contributors 2020, made available here under the Open Database License (ODbL) v1.0

appears to suggest that the downland track had been improved in Roman times by inserting a mixture of iron/cinder into the chalk bedrock.

Where it descended the northern escarpment quarrying has obliterated the route, but it is seen again in Selmeston where it forms the eastern boundary of the Ripe Land Settlement.

RR142 Pevensey-Polegate-Selmeston-Glynde (HER MES4753)

Margary (1939, 29-61) proposed that this road left the Glynde Fords in an easterly direction and ran via Selmeston and Arlington to Pevensey. The eastern section of this road between Arlington and

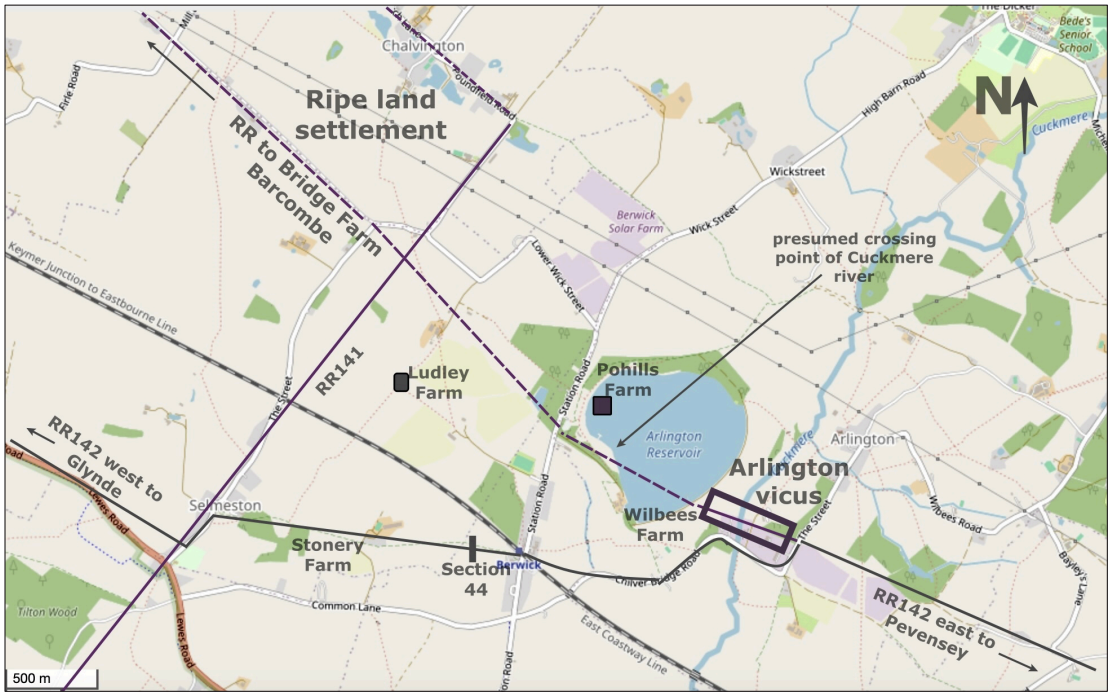


Figure 6. The Roman roads and Roman features around Arlington. Map data © OpenStreetMap Contributors 2020, made available here under the Open Database License (ODbL) v1.0

Pevensey has been identified and confirmed by excavation. The road does not follow exactly the line proposed by Margary (see Fig. 6). At Wilbees Farm, Arlington, a series of excavations have revealed the true course of the road, together with an early roadside settlement and a possible villa. For a summary of the various excavations at Wilbees Farm, east of the River Cuckmere, see Clutterbuck and Massey (2020, 71-106). The Roman road as revealed by excavation was 10m wide. When the Arlington reservoir was being constructed, evidence of industrial activity including pottery kilns was discovered near Pohills Farm (Holden 1979, 63-84; 1985, 85-94). This site of Roman occupation is now covered by the reservoir. The position of the crossing point of the River Cuckmere is now suspected to be south-east of Pohills Farm, based on projecting the known alignment in a westerly direction.

West of Pohills Farm, it is believed that the road divided with a north-west branch heading towards the Ripe centuriation. This road leads towards the Bridge Farm, Barcombe Mills Roman settlement and has been traced by geophysics (MES17111).

The other branch would be Margary's road RR142 which led to the east via Stonery Farm. He reported that in the field to the west of Berwick railway station there was a wide *agger* with a hollow or ditch on either side. At this point he cut a section through the roadway (Margary 1939, 58, section 44) and found a shallow layer of road metal 15 feet (5m) wide with a hollow on both sides, but a resistivity survey of the field to east of the railway station, found no sign of the road to Glynde (Chuter 2007, 21). However, Chuter (2007, 12) reported a sighting of a 10m wide *agger*-like earthwork with a flint metalled surface aligned in an east-west direction at Ludlay Farm (TQ 5210 0760). This find is not on a known or projected route of a road from Arlington to the Ouse Valley (see Fig. 6).

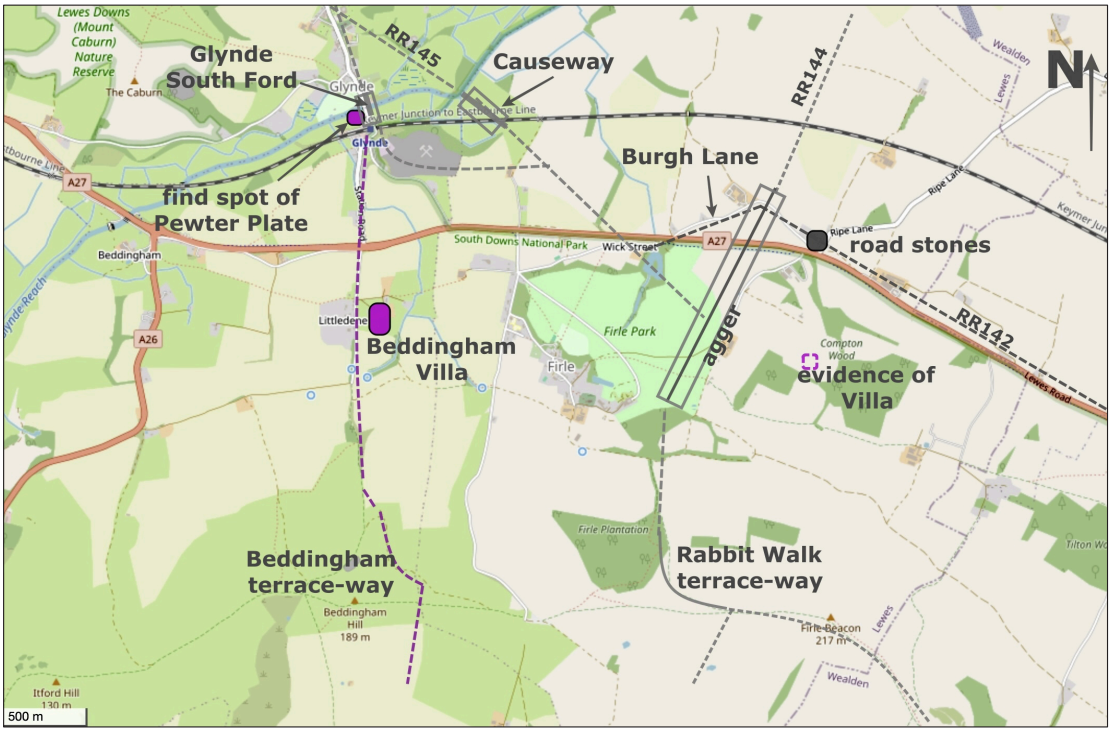


Figure 7. Margary's roads south of the Glynde crossings. Map data © OpenStreetMap Contributors 2020, made available here under the Open Database License (ODbL) v1.0

Further east, nearer to Glynde, Margary (1948, 192) showed, on a 6 inch map, a flint layer in a bank at Stamford Buildings. Further, he reported that a 'member' (presumably of the Sussex Archaeological Society) had found a flint layer buried beneath a drainage ditch, a little to the west of the Stamford Buildings at TQ 4825 0825 (Margary 1967, 281).

At Firle, Margary (1948, 195) suggests that the road makes a pronounced turn to the south-west following the line of a by-way called Burgh Lane (see Fig. 7) to Wick Street, where it would meet RR145. The name 'burgh' often indicates a fortification. There is no evidence of any known fortification here in the Roman period. Burgh Lane suggests the possibility of a mediaeval boundary embankment. A nearby lost village is called Croteberge. The Mount Caburn hillfort, which overlooks Glynde and Firle, was re-fortified as an Adulterine Castle (one built without royal permission) in the 12th century (MES 1456). If Burgh Lane refers to a 12th-century fortification, there is no reason to suggest that the Roman road followed that line. If an eastbound connection existed from Arlington to Glynde, its alignment is not certain.

RR144 Seaford - Firle Beacon (the Rabbit Walk) - Heighton Street - Ripe

There is extensive evidence of an early Roman settlement in Seaford (Gerard Smith 1939, 293-305) and evidence of habitation along the coast to the west towards Bishopstone and Newhaven. An early period Roman cemetery was excavated at Fitzgerald Avenue, Seaford by Pitt-Rivers in 1876. A large

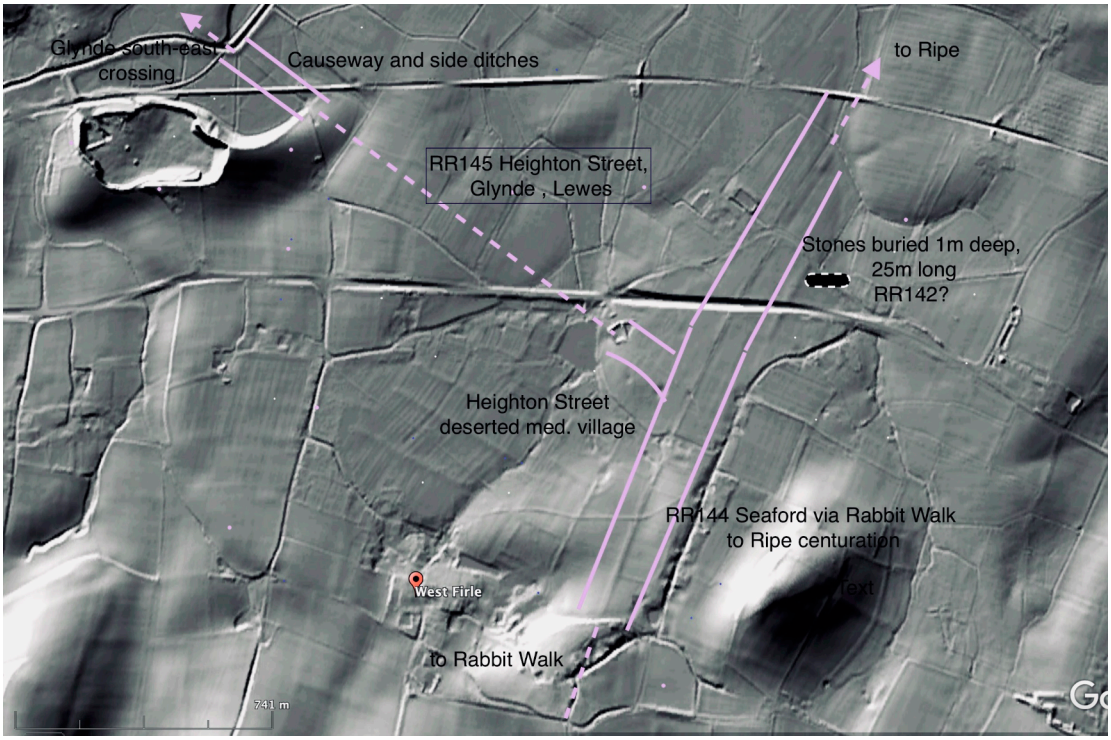


Figure 8. lidar image of the Roman Road in Firle Park. Base Lidar data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2020. All rights reserved

quantity of Romano-British sherds and Samian ware was found (Hawkes 1939, 269-292). The settlement itself is not known and the area has now been subject to extensive development.

It is highly probable that Seaford was connected to the national Roman road network. Margary (1948, 193-196) proposed a road, which followed a downland track northward. He suggested that the downland track connected to the top of the terrace-way which is called the Rabbit Walk. Margary's map (Margary 1948, 195) shows the road proceeding northwards across Firle Park with labels stating '*Agger* along hedgerow with Flint Metalling'. In Firle Park the *agger* is clearly visible. The lidar image (figure 8) shows that the *agger,* allocated the number RR144 by Margary, continued north-eastwards outside the park boundary and beyond Burgh Lane in the direction of Mark Cross on the western edge of the Ripe centuriation. At Mark Cross considerable finds of ceramic sherds and Roman tiles have been found suggesting a possible Roman villa (MES4506).

There is further evidence of Roman roads in the Seaford area. A report was made of metalling being found at TV 476 997 (MES1707) and on the same alignment as at TV 482 999. This might suggest a Roman road along the coast between Seaford and Bishopstone. These sites have now been built over.

RR145 Heighton Street- Glynde-Lewes

Margary (1948, 196-198), describes this road as a branch of RR144 (see Fig. 8). It starts at the abandoned medieval village of Heighton St. Clere in Firle Park, passes Wick Street and crosses the



Figure 9. a coin of Empress Faustina (reign 161-180), one of a number of Roman coins found by metal detectorists at Lower Stoneham in 2003.

Glynde Reach by the two crossings: Margary does not specify which one of the two. According to Margary (1973, 72), north of the Glynde Reach RR145 goes to Lewes (where evidence of Roman occupation is known; Bleach (1997, 131-142), follows a sunken lane from Glynde Place in a north-west direction, and proceeds over the Caburn Massif. However, it is more likely that it led to Malling Down rather than Lewes. The old sunken lane referred to by Margary is a deeply hollowed way, which in early modern times served a chalk pit. After 450m the hollow way bends sharply to the left. At this point there is a disused ramp going straight ahead into the grass downland. On the same line, after another 200m, there is a terrace-way curving around the head of a valley called Glynde Holt. The 1947 1:25,000 O.S. map shows this track continuing in the direction of the summit of Malling Down, which is the sighting point for the final alignment of RR14 from Camp Hill (see Fig 5).

Margary (1948, 197) suggested that at a later date, another road around the north of the Caburn Massif was probable (see Fig. 4). This alternative route starts at the South Ford and follows approximately the present road past Glynde Place but some 100m east. At a point north of Glynde Place, the modern road bends sharply to the right. Here the possible Roman road continues straight ahead, until it reaches a steep downward hill slope that is descended by a zig-zag which is shown in the 18th-century Tithe Map of Glynde. When the road crosses the ridge and descends to flat land it is marked by a line of hedgerows and trackways to Lower Stoneham on the River Ouse north of Lewes. Numerous early Roman finds, including Republican coins, have been collected at Lower Stoneham by metal detectorists (see Fig. 9).

Malling Down to South Malling RR147

This short section of Roman road runs from Malling Down on an alignment which continues that of the south-western end of the Malling Down terrace-way, see Figure 5 (Norris 1956, 10-12). It leads towards the River Ouse near the site of South Malling church. It was traced in a school playing field to the west of Malling Hill and according to the excavtors accounts was seen when the foundations were prepared for a block of flats at The Martlets, Lewes. Twenty meters south of the metalled road, Norris excavated a group of Roman-British cremation burials which contained a variety of coarse wares and Samian forms. These were catalogued and deposited with the Barbican House Museum in Lewes. In the road surface and in the neighbouring ditch were two early Saxon burials with an iron knife and gilt bronze saucer similar to the ones found at Alfriston. The road is securely dated to the Roman period, as a Saxon burial was inserted into the carriageway, presumably after it had gone out

of use. Its alignment with the terrace-way on Malling Down is evidence that the terrace-way also reflects Roman engineering. It may have connected to a port on the River Ouse at South Malling.

Top of Rabbit Walk to Lords Burgh.

Hadrian Allcroft found traces of a metalled road on the downland at a group of round barrows called Lord's Burghs at Toy Farm. The road he described, runs south-east from the top of the Rabbit Walk (Allcroft 1915, 200-232). He excavated at the southernmost of the burghs and described the finds as follows:

> *'The Agger now turf grown of a Roman Road of the first class overlies the southerly of these [tumuli]. From this point it is intact for a distance of 230 paces, running in a line 27^0 east of north, perfectly smooth except where the material has been grubbed in parts... The relief is 12 inches, the crown 25feet in width....The road was built of smallish flints laid to a depth of 12 to 15 inches upon a bed of chalk rubble....when the turf was removed were found scraps of common Romano-British pottery.....'*

Margary (1948, 195) included a description of this road, but omitted it in his later work. There is no doubt that he was sceptical of Allcroft's finds, some of which were probably not Roman at all. Nevertheless, this appears to be something which merits further investigation.

Recent discoveries in the Glynde Area

Since Margary wrote his comprehensive account of the Roman roads of Britain, a number of significant discoveries have been made in or near the downland region between the Rivers Ouse and Cuckmere. These include the settlements at Wilbees Farm in Arlington, the settlement at Barcombe Mills as well as the villas at Beddingham, Barcombe, Mark Cross and Firle. How these fit into the economic structure of the area will be discussed.

The Bridge Farm (Barcombe Mills) Roman Settlement.

This significant site was initially discovered through a metal detectorist's finds. These included a range of coins from the Republican period through to the 4th century. Subsequent geophysics and excavation revealed a multi-period settlement and industrial site (Millum, 2013). The settlement is clearly central to understanding the economy of the region and probably had connections to the iron industry (Best, 2015, 63)

The geophysics revealed evidence of a previously unknown Roman road leading from the settlement in a south easterly direction towards Ardingly and probably joining with RR142 to provide a route to Pevensey. Subsequently, evidence of this road has been identified at Laughton Place. It has been suggested that it is a continuation of the Greensand Way (RR140) in an easterly direction and that the whole route from Hardham on Stane Street RR15 to Pevensey was constructed as one road (Staveley 2022, 2). However, it is not established that RR140 does connect directly to the new Ardingly - Pevensey road. Therefore, it is preferable to consider this new road as an alternative route to RR145. As indicated elsewhere in this volume, the label RR142aa(x) has been reserved for this branch route following the protocol laid out in Armstrong (2021: 282).



Figure 10. The Beddingham Hill terrace-way which has the characteristics of Roman work. The modern track-way can be seen on the right.



Figure 11. The Rabbit Walk terrace-way which is believed to be Roman Road RR144 climbing the 150m. escarpment above Firle.

Road past Beddingham villa

Between the South Ford and the escarpment of the South Downs, a multi period Roman villa has been discovered and excavated at Beddingham (Rudling, 2003, 118). This lay about 1km south of the Glynde Ford and is linked by a straight by-way which passes the villa on its western side. The by-way continues as a track, which climbs Beddingham Hill by a terrace-way which is remarkably similar to the Rabbit Walk (see Figs. 10 & 11). Both terrace-ways have gradients of 1:5 which are maintained over most of their rise. Their width is 2.5m and there is evidence of a sloping surface, which allows rainwater to run off. The terrace leaves the modern by-way and climbs the hill towards the south-east. Unlike the Rabbit Walk, the Beddingham terrace is not a public right of way; because of this, it is in remarkably good state of preservation. Margary was aware of the Beddingham Hill terrace and considered that it could be Roman work (Margary 1939, 51). He included a brief description of the road from the South Ford and the climb of Beddingham Hill. He was, of course, unaware that a substantial early Roman villa lay alongside the road, one kilometre south of the South Ford.

There is no direct evidence that the track continued southwards from the top of the terrace. If the alignment was resumed, it would have led to the Roman settlement of Rookery Hill, (Bell 1977, 131-191) above the tidal inlet of Bishopstone. The road may have served a possible port at the estuary of the River Ouse. As indicated elsewhere in this volume, the label RR145aa(x) has been reserved for this branch route following the protocol laid out in Armstrong (2021: 282)

The possibilities of ports and harbours on the River Ouse.

Near the western bank of the River Ouse, in the present-day Newhaven town centre, was an early Roman group of five buildings, including a bath house at TQ 44604 01304. The structures were interpreted by the excavator as the outhouses of a Villa (Bell 1976, 250-251). The associated villa was not found. The site was dated from the middle of the 1st century and continued throughout the 2nd. At the end of the 2nd century, the buildings were deliberately demolished and the site was levelled.

Traces of a villa were found in Newhaven in an upland meadow belonging to W. Elphick in the 19th century (Spurell 1852, 262-266). The exact position of the Upland Meadow was not recorded, but on the evidence of finds made during house building the suspected villa is believed to be centred on TQ 441 012 (HER 1793), around 250m west of the waterfront site. That is too distant for the riverside bath and outhouses to belong to the Upland villa. However, it is improbable that two villas would have existed so close together. Therefore, it is possible that the waterfront buildings had another function and were not part of any villa. They may have been customs or administrative buildings for a port or river traffic on the River Ouse. A similar building existed on the inlet to Fishbourne and was later interpreted as a possible customs house (Rudkin 1986, 51-77).

A coastal Roman settlement has been discovered and partially excavated on Rookery Hill above Bishopstone (Bedwin 1978, 241-255). Near to the site, a Roman period field system and ditch was found on high land overlooking the Ouse estuary. To the east of Rookery Hill, the Bishopstone valley was a tidal inlet until the 14th century (Bell 1977, 4). When the land to the south of Bishopstone was drained for farming in the 16th century, it is recorded that numerous anchors were found. According to the account, these were in a field called ‘New Lands’. Unfortunately these artifacts have not been preserved (Brandon 1971, 102-104). Anchors of various types were in use in Roman times, but there is no known record of the Bishopstone inlet or the adjoining New Lands being used as a harbour. In the

Medieval period, the Ouse harbour was at Seaford, which was an associate of the Cinque Ports. Subsequently, when the new channel was dug, the harbour was moved to Newhaven.

North of the Alps, flat bottomed boats called 'prams' were in widespread use for river transport. Vessels have been found in the Netherlands and along the Rhine which were capable of carrying loads up to 50 tons. A flat bottom cargo vessel of this type apparently capsized and sank on the River Thames near what later became Blackfriars Bridge. It was carrying 25 tons of building stone. The find and rescue of this vessel called Blackfriars 1 has been described by Marsden (1994). Such vessels would have been ideal on the tidal rivers such as the Ouse and the Glynde Reach (Bockius and Iserhardt 2013, 24). Jones (2012) states that water transport had a significant role in the movement of troops and supplies of equipment in Roman Britain.

As a drying tidal inlet, Bishopstone would have been ideal for both sea-going and river vessels. Additionally it would have been a sheltered place for goods to be transferred to or from flat bottomed vessels for journeys on the River Ouse and the Glynde Reach.

In the pottery report of the Beddingham villa excavation, Lyne (2003, 146) states '*the sheer variety of German fine-ware imports at the Beddingham villa suggests that one of the ports dealing with shipping from the Rhine and Meuse ... was at the mouth of the Ouse*'.

Coates (1990, 7-8) has suggested on the basis of field-name evidence that there was a possible wharf or quay for flat bottomed river boats on the Ouse near Beddingham villa. The Glynde South Ford may have been such a loading point, where flat bottomed vessels could be taken up-river on the flood, grounded at low tide for unloading or loading before returning to Newhaven on the ebb. This process required no external power source and was used on the Glynde Reach until the 19th century.

Wallace (2022, 237) states that a large aisled building excavated in the south-west of the Bridge Farm site could have been a warehouse close to a possible port on the River Ouse. See Galloway (2023) for a discussion of the large ailed buildings at Bridge Farm.

The connection of Beddingham villa with the iron industry of the Weald is strong. Best (2015, 63) states that ironstone was used as a construction material for the villas at Beddingham and Barcombe as well as in the Roman settlement at Bridge Farm. Ironstone, and very probably iron objects, could have been transported by the Iron Road to be used in Roman buildings in the lower Ouse and no doubt beyond, using both water transport and the local Roman roads as appropriate.

It appears that the estuary of the Ouse into Seaford bay was settled early in the Roman period and may well have been a place where ceramic goods were imported and iron and farm products were exported. It is very probable that the tidal Ouse and Glynde Reach were used for water transport.

The Glynde Pewter Plate.

In 1974, workmen digging a trial trench on flat land between Glynde railway station and the Glynde Reach found, by chance, a late Roman pewter plate (Fig. 12). This artefact was presented to Sussex Archaeological Society and a short account of its discovery was published by Marsden 'Roman pewter plate from Glynde (TQ 460 088)' (1979, 229-230). At the time of writing, the plate may be seen in the Barbican House Museum in Lewes.



Figure 12. The Glynde Pewter Plate, found on a bed of stones south of the Glynde Reach near to the South Ford.

Unfortunately, the description of the find spot is ambiguous. The grid reference included in title leads to an area somewhat to the east of the Glynde railway station. The report states, however, that the trench was dug to the west of the railway station. With the kind permission of the curator of the Museum, the author consulted the original notes that were left with the artefact deposit. These notes clearly state the find spot as being TQ 457 088. This defines an area to the west of the railway station yard in line with the description of the position of the trench. However, it creates a problem because it is also west (i.e. downstream) of the bridge over the Glynde Reach. Marsden records that workmen

digging a trial trench found the pewter plate on top of a bed of flints and that the trench was west of the Railway Station as implied by the grid reference in the notes. However, William Wisdom's account, above, states that stones of the ford were removed a little eastward (upstream) of the bridge; but not of course, the same bridge. He would have been standing on the bridge, where the Turnpike from Lewes crossed the Glynde Reach on its way to Firle and the east of the County. The 1795 Map of Sussex shows the Turnpike Bridge in approximately the same place as its successor, the existing railway-era bridge, but the map is not detailed enough to say that the two bridges were in exactly the same place. Despite this ambiguity about the position of the trench, Marsden's account is clear that the workmen found the plate on top of a layer of flints. It is unfortunate that the find spot of the pewter plate was not recorded more accurately. If the find spot was west of the railway station as the account and the original grid reference suggest, it may have been on top of the stones of a road approaching the South Ford from the south. This would be consistent with a Roman road from the South Ford leading past Beddingham villa.

Marsden suggested that the pewter plate was lost in transit while a vehicle was crossing the South Ford, a statement that needs to be considered. Pewter plates of this sort were of high value and are rare as finds in rural Sussex. They are more commonly associated with trading families in London (Lee 2009, 81). In the 3rd century, a time of considerable political instability, they were deposited in the Walbrook River in London in considerable numbers, presumably as votive offerings. It seems unlikely that an unusual and valuable item would have been casually lost and remained for so long lying on a roadway that it became covered in mud and forgotten.

In the 1st century the sea level around the south coast of Britannia is believed to have been quite similar to that of the present day. However, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, the Mean High Water (MHW) of the English Channel and the North Sea rose steadily. This is known as the Dunkirk II transgression. According to detailed work based on the movement of habitation sites in the German and Dutch coastal regions and the evidence from deposition of soils on the seabed, the transgression between AD 50 and AD 300 resulted in more than a one metre increase in MHW (Behre 2007, 82-102). Although his work was based on the southern North Sea coast, a similar increase in sea levels occurred in southern Britain. Cracknell (2005, 130-133) has given evidence of abandonment of coastal habitation along the low-lying parts of the Sussex coast by AD 260. For example, the bath house at Newhaven, which was on low ground close to the sea level was apparently abandoned around this time and demolished as above. The gradient of the river Ouse between the sea and Lewes is very slight, being only 0.1m per kilometre (Robinson and Williams 1983, 50-66), so changes in MHW at the coast would have affected water level in the Glynde tributary and the whole of the River Ouse as far as the tidal limit at Barcombe.

In addition to the effects of sea level rise, the Glynde Reach was affected by the shingle barrier at the mouth of the Ouse. Woodcock (2003, 2) states that the shingle barrier caused by eastward drift of shingle along the south coast periodically builds up and impedes the flow of water from the Ouse and other Sussex rivers, then at some point the barrier is breached and the river water can flow unimpeded into the sea again until the next build-up of shingle and blockage occurs. This process leads to changes in the water level of the low-lying lands of the Ouse valley. We cannot know at what stage this process was at in the 3rd century but an increase in MHW would certainly have had an impact on the Glynde South Ford and could have made it impassable at all states of the tide. Shingle build-up would make the situation worse. The combination of these two effects could have led to a

situation in the 3rd century in which the South Ford or roadway was no longer usable because it was under deep water at all states of the tide.

The pewter plate may have been deliberately discarded into the Glynde Reach at a time when the South Ford or its approach road was under deep water at all states of the tide. It may have been, like the ones found in the Walbrook, a votive offering. Deposition of valuable objects typically occurred in the 3rd century.

Discussion

Margary's network of Roman Roads centered on the river Glynde Reach crossings has been summarised. The question remains as to what extent were these roads and river crossings actually Roman?

Margary based his observations on the study of landscapes, maps and in some cases aerial photography. He visited personally many of the places he described and in some cases saw details which are no longer available. We should be careful about dismissing his work which was thorough and based on careful assessment of evidence. However, we now know that some of his suggested roads were not exactly where he proposed. It is instructive to consult his original papers on these roads as they contain a wealth of detail which is not included in his later writing.

To put the whole scheme into context, it is necessary to understand the nature of this Downland region in the 1st century. It appears that the chalk downland region between the Ouse and Cuckmere rivers, including the Greensand and Wealden forests, was a thriving and well populated area in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods. It encompassed iron smelting, ceramic manufacturing and valuable farmland with trading routes to the European mainland via the rivers and the sea. There were a number of significant, certain and possible, 1st century nucleated settlements including Bridge Farm, Arlington, Newhaven, Bishopstone and Seaford. In addition, there were a number of small settlements and several villas. The villa at Beddingham showed continuity of occupation from the Iron Age into the early Roman period. There is no evidence at all of Roman military activity in this region. The *Classis Britannia* had ports and facilities further east beyond the Pevensey wetlands. In West Sussex evidence has been discovered of possible pre-Claudian military activity at the site that later became Fishbourne palace (Manley 2002, 112-115). However, there is no evidence of military activity in this area under consideration. This, together with the widespread early Roman artefacts at many of the sites, suggest that the Lewes to Ardingly region in the 1st and 2nd centuries originated as part of a British client state allied to Rome and that the roads were civil and focused on trade. This is supported by the large variety of early Roman European mainland ceramics found at all the settlements.

Many writers have referred to Roman roads as military ways on the assumption that they were built by the legions and used primarily for military purposes. This has led to the Glynde fords and other roads in the area being linked to Pevensey, the site of the Saxon Shore Fort *Anderitum,* for example, Staveley (2022, 2). However, in understanding the context of the Glynde crossings, this is misleading. *Anderitum* is a 3rd century creation while the South Ford and much of the surrounding landscape and roads probably predates it by two centuries. Knott (2022, 151-180) has discussed the typical use of roads in the non-military parts of the Empire. Many such roads show evidence of being re-surfaced

many times. The wear and tear, from trader's wagons, was clearly substantial. Further evidence for the volume of trade using roads is given by the variety of ceramics found in excavations. Sites in the Ouse Valley, even remote ones like Highdole Hill (Hollyman 1936, 202-222), show sherds of typical Iron Age East Sussex wares as well as New Forest and continental types including Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian ware sherds. The roadside settlement at Arlington also saw many examples of continental wares. Rather than military ways, the river and the roads of the Glynde district seem to have been serving trade and communication, connecting the region to the iron works of mid-Sussex, to London and the sea. The evidence is that there was a vibrant network of Roman and Romano-British roads and water transport connecting London, the iron industry, the settlements at Barcombe Mills, Arlington, Seaford and Newhaven.

The Glynde river crossings may have been Roman work. The so-called South Ford, rather than a ford, could have been a road which crossed a wetland area which sometimes flooded at high tide. The account of the removal of the stones and the finding of a 2nd century coin suggests Roman work. Furthermore a road, heading south from the South Ford, which passed the Beddingham villa and climbed the escarpment by a terrace-way, has characteristics which look Roman. The potentially votive deposition of the pewter plate suggests that by the 3rd century the Glynde Reach was under deep water at all states of the tide. The place where the pewter plate was found would be consistent with the location of a road south past the Beddingham villa. The causeway and so called South East ford may have been a replacement for the South Ford when sea level rise caused the low lying lands of the Glynde Reach to become impassable.

RR144 which runs from the Rabbit Walk north across Firle Park looks like a good possibility for a Roman road. The visible *agger* and lidar show that it continued beyond Burgh Lane, which is probably a medieval feature. It appears to head toward Mark Cross which has been identified as a probable villa site and would connect with the newly discovered road from Barcombe Mills to Arlington. However, the southern part towards Seaford rests entirely on accepting that downland tracks are part of the road.

The buildings with bath house at Newhaven and the discovery of iron slag in the make-up of RR141 suggest a probability that this is an improved Iron Age track made up to Roman standards. There were early Roman settlements at Seaford and Newhaven, about which very little is known, but they both indicate transport and trade activity in the lower Ouse valley and the possibility of a port at the mouth of the Ouse. The use of ironstone in the construction of Beddingham villa suggests that transport for such heavy materials was possible, either via the river Ouse or the Glynde crossings and a connection with the Iron Road.

The western section of RR142 from Glynde to Arlington is not established but parts of it may have been built. The find of an *agger* at Ludlay Farm (TQ 5210 0760) is not easily explained, as it does not correspond with either of the roads which are believed to run west from Arlington. It suggests that the Roman road layout in the Selmeston to Arlington region is not yet known.

It is clear that the area of the South Downs between Barcombe Mills and the sea was a thriving and populous area in the late Iron Age and early Roman period which had strong connections to the Wealden iron industry and the European mainland via the sea. The Roman roads may not be exactly as Margary proposed, but it is likely that a network of local roads existed in this area making connections to London, the Wealden Iron bloomeries, Gaul and the Rhine. It is to be hoped that in the

future geophysics and excavation will reveal more detail about this hitherto little studied region of the early Roman Empire.

SUMMARY

The roads proposed by Margary as branches from RR14 with their status based on present knowledge are given in Table 1 (except RR148 which is north of this region and outside of the scope) together with the recent discoveries. The roads and the main Roman period features are shown schematically on Figure 13. Smaller sites and coin finds etc. are not shown. Some possible investigations which might throw light onto the network are suggested.

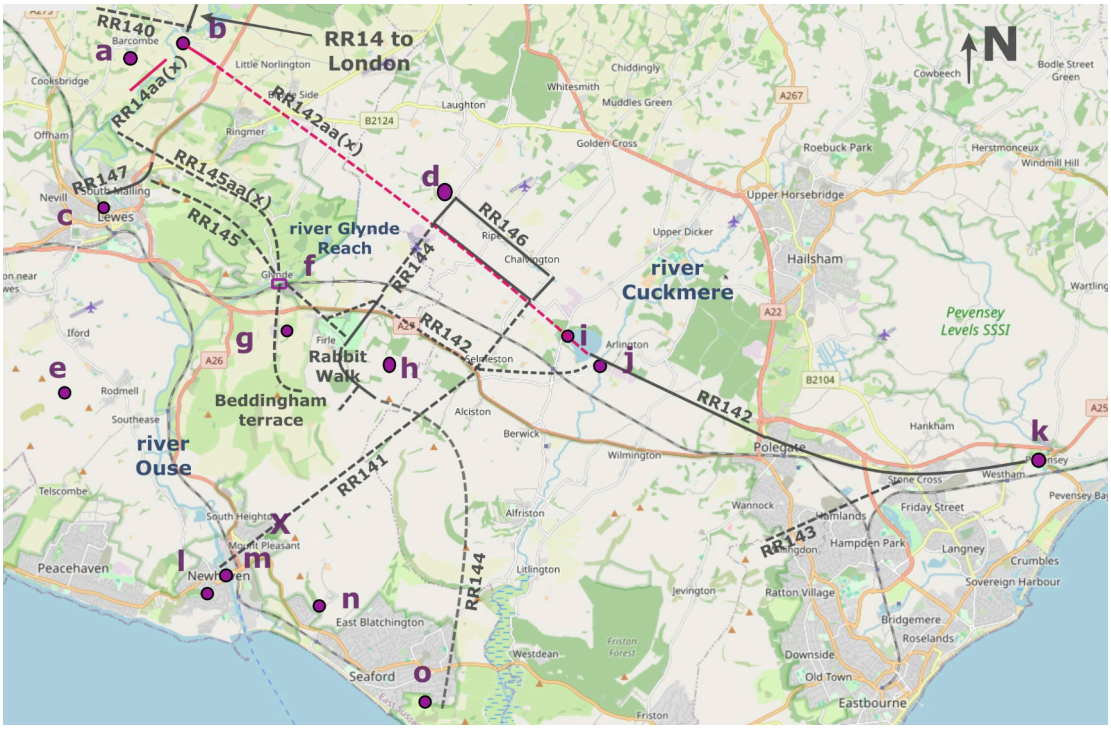


Figure 13. Map showing relative positions of Margary's roads (in black) and recent discoveries (in red). The dotted lines show roads which are not yet confirmed as known. Map data © OpenStreetMap Contributors 2020, made available here under the Open Database License (ODbL) v1.0.

Key to Figure 13

a; Barcombe, Villa and industrial area on RR14aa(x), **b**; Barcombe Mills, Bridge Farm, multi-period Vicus. **c**; Lewes, votive deposits and possible port on river Ouse. **d**; Mark Cross- scatter of building material -possible Villa. **e**; High Dole Hill, Telscombe, Romano-British settlement. **f**; Glynde river crossings - stone roadway/ford and causeway, find spot of the Pewter Plate. **g**; Beddingham multi-period Villa. **h**; Firle - scatter of building material -possible Villa. **i**; Pohills Farm - industrial site now under reservoir. **j**; Ardingly, Vicus and road excavated , possible Villa. **k**; Pevensey, *Anderitum* Shore

Fort. **l**; Newhaven, scatter of building material -possible Villa. **m**; Newhaven, waterside buildings and bath house excavated. **n**; Rookery Hill, Bishopstone, Romano-British settlement excavated. **o**; Roman cemetery- settlement not known. **X**; Excavation reveals iron slag in make up of RR141.

Road	Route (letters in brackets refer to figure 13)	Status	Possible investigations
RR14	The Iron Road, London - junction with RR1c to Barcombe Mills (**b**)	Known	
RR14aa(x)	Alternative route to RR14 on west bank of river Ouse	Known	
RR140	The Greensand Way, Hardham on RR15 to Barcombe Mills (**b**).	Known except for eastern segment- junction with RR14	
RR141	Newhaven (**m**) to Selmeston and RR146, excavation found slag at point **X**	Possible	Magnetometer survey of road
RR142	Western segment - Glynde (**f**) to Ardingly (**j**)	Unrated - Margary's route cannot be confirmed	
RR142	Eastern segment - Ardingly (**j**) to Pevensey (**k**)	Known but with variations to Margary's route	Ongoing excavations
RR142aa(x)	Alternative route to eastern segment of RR142, from Pohills Farm (**i**) to Barcombe Mills (**b**).	Probable	
RR143	Stone Cross to Levington	Pending ongoing excavations	
RR144	Seaford (**o**) to Mark Cross (**d**) via Rabbit Walk and Firle (**h**).	Partly known, downland tracks hard to date	
RR145	Lewes (**c**) to Firle.	Possible	Geophysics in field south-east end of causeway could establish if it led to a Roman road.
RR145aa(x)	Alternative route connecting Lower Stoneham to Beddingham (**g**) via the Glynde crossings.	Possible	
RR146	Ripe land settlement -possible centuration or field system associated with Mark Cross Villa(**d**).	Possible	
RR147	Lewes (**c**), South Malling to Malling Hill terrace-way.	Known	

Table 1. The current understanding of the status of the Roman roads in the Glynde area.

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Abbreviations:

BAR: British Archaeological Reports.

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SNQ: *Sussex Notes and Queries*, published by the Sussex Archaeological Society, Lewes.

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