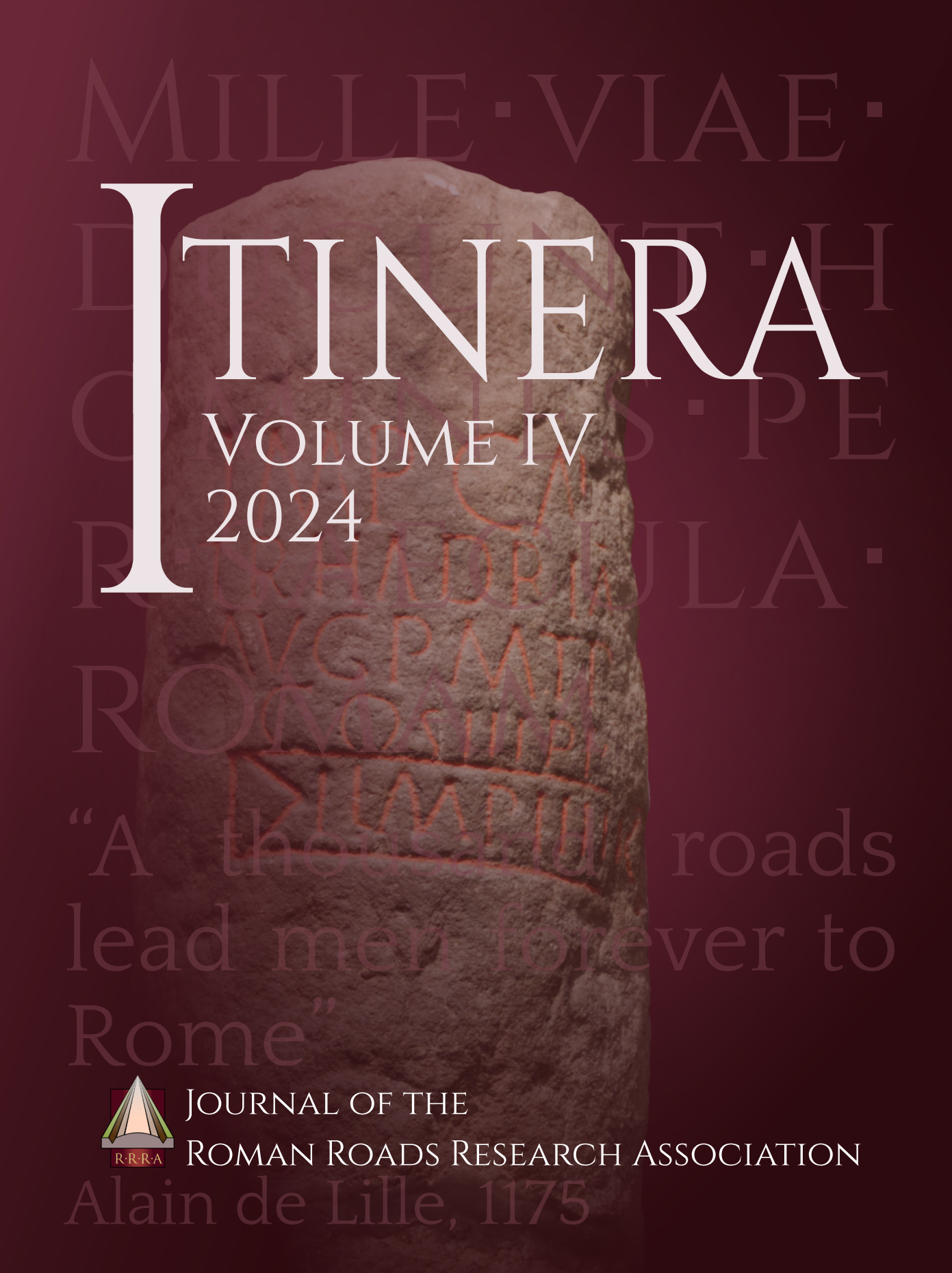


ITINERA

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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Newly Allocated Margary Road Numbers

By Dave Armstrong & Mike Holmes
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Following the protocol published by Armstrong (2021, 279-284), a number of new Margary road numbers have been allocated. These fall into two categories: new roads identified in 2023 since publication of Volume III of *Itinera* and numbers for new roads reported in this volume. All are laid out below. Numbers are either reserved, or fully awarded, using the status rating criteria laid out by Haken (2021, 285-318);

1 A Roman Road number is reserved where there is archaeological evidence sufficient that at least one road segment has the status *2. Road, probable*, i.e. some evidence of a Roman road.

2 A Roman Road number is awarded where there is sufficient evidence to have at least one road segment of status *3. Road, known,* i.e. convincing evidence of a Roman road.

These allocated numbers are recorded in RRRA's master register of Margary road number and cross references. The RRRA master database is securely retained and maintained by Mike Holmes. For any queries contact him on the above mail address. It is intended to make this information available for reference on our website, in due course.

Margary Numbers allocated during 2023

Two Gates to Waddon Hill, Dorset. Status, possible road. (Holmes 2023 & this volume). **RR481(x)** reserved.

The Street to Mapleton, Derbyshire. Status, possible road. (Buckley 2023 & this volume). **RR716(x)** reserved.

Ash to Richborough (via East Street Farm), Kent. Status, known road. (Haken 2024 & this volume). **RR10aa(x)** awarded.

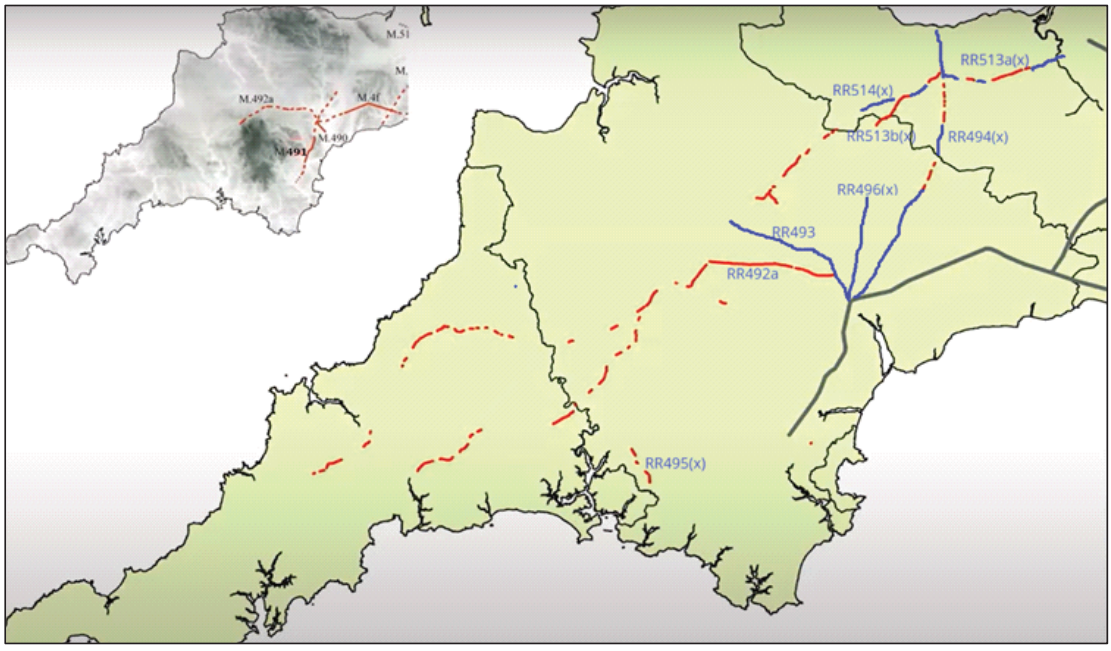
South from Brough *(Navio)* heading up Bradwell Dale, Derbyshire. Possible road. (Buckley 2024 & this volume after original work by Peter Wroe). **RR717(x)** reserved.

Link from RR720a towards Beamsley, N. Yorkshire. Status, known road. (Barrett 2023, Poulter and Ratledge 2024 & this volume). This new section of road continues the alignment of RR720b from Kettlesing south-west from Round Hill (north of Ilkley) from what had previously appeared to be a sharp turn but is clearly a 'T' junction, apparently heading to join RR72a. After consideration, it was felt it would be unwise and confusing to change the numbers allocated by Margary. Thus, RR720b and RR72a will remain unchanged, and we are awarding **RR720bb(x)** for the new segment.

Margary Numbers allocated from work reported within this volume

The preceding Roman Roads in 2023 section, along with other papers in this volume, provides brief reports of new roads found recently. These are listed below with the new Margary number awarded or reserved.

As noted in previous volumes, there remains the potential for a previously unrevealed network of roads and Roman occupation in the three south-western counties of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. Determining the connections between some of the isolated fragments of probable road has proved difficult with long lengths of road yet to be found and the connections often less than obvious. To give better clarity the sketch map below is annotated with the numbers so far allocated; un-numbered segments are also mapped.



Map developed from a screen shot provided by Chris Smart. His team's work marked in red lines with other roads added by David Ratledge (this volume) marked in blue. Margary road numbers are marked where allocated. Routes down into Cornwall are still not clearly connected nor correspond with Margary's RR492b route, hence are not yet numbered.

Kettering via Laxton to Great Casterton, Northamptonshire. Status, known road. (from the RRRA talks season, January 2024 by Paddy Lambert, available at https://youtu.be/aZCLlFwg4Ac?si=suNFHZ2TGSoXEshE> plus a wider write up, by Dr. Wayne Kirk, this volume). **RR574(x)** awarded.

Irchester to Kettering, Northamptonshire. Status, known road. (Dr. Wayne Kirk, this volume). **RR575(x)** awarded.

Barton Seagrave to Geddington, Northamptonshire. Status, possible road. (Dr. Wayne Kirk, this volume). **RR576(x)** reserved.

Sandy to Thrapston, predominantly Cambridgeshire. Status, known road. (David Ratledge, this volume, also at <http://www.twithr.co.uk/cambridgeshire/sandy-thrapston.htm>). **RR226(x)** awarded.

River Trent to Loughborough, Lincolnshire. Status, possible road. (Haken, this volume). **RR182b(x)** reserved.

Worlaby north-eastwards, Lincolnshire. Status, known road. (Haken, this volume). **RR276(x)** awarded.

Thistleton to Kirby Bellars to Leicester, predominantly Lincolnshire. Status, known road. (Haken, this volume). **RR582(x)** awarded.

Brough (Crococalana) south-east to either River Witham or Ancaster, predominantly Lincolnshire. Status, possible road. (Haken this volume). **RR592(x)** reserved.

Ermine Street, Cold Harbour to Ropsley to Sapperton, Lincolnshire. Status, known road. (Haken, this volume). **RR58bb(x)** awarded.

Beaconsfield via the Wye Valley to the River Thames at Hambleden, Hertfordshire. Status, possible road. (Rothwell, this volume). **RR163C(x)** reserved.

Bridge Farm to Ardingley, Sussex. Status, possible road. (Holmes, this volume). **RR142aa(x)** reserved.

Lower Stoneham to Beddington, Sussex. Status, possible road. (Holmes, this volume). **RR145aa(x)** reserved.

Enmore to Cothelstone to junction with RR494(x) at Elworthy, Somerset. Status, known road. (Ratledge, this volume). Previous work on this segment gained the number RR513(x) but the further extension beyond RR494(x) warrants extending the numbering with suffixes so this segment is re-awarded the number **RR513a(x)**.

Junction with RR494(x) at Elworthy to South Combe, Somerset. Status, known road. (Ratledge, this volume). **RR513b(x)** awarded.

Rainsbury west over Haddon Hill, Somerset. Status, possible road. (Ratledge, this volume). **RR514(x)** reserved.

Exeter towards Tiverton, Devon. Status, possible road. (Ratledge, this volume). **RR496(x)** reserved.

Pylle Hill to Bruton, previously RRX037, Wiltshire. Status, possible road. (Godfrey, this volume). **RR465(x)** reserved.

Currently Disregarded

Not all roads listed by Margary are still believed to be genuine Roman constructions. Work by Haken within this volume has found no evidence supporting the existence of some Roman roads in Lincolnshire. These are to remain in the number schedule but be marked 'currently disregarded'. New evidence supporting their existence would promote them back into consideration.

Relevant numbers are; **RR590, RR58b, RR262, RR271 & RR272,** all Haken, this volume. Also **RR821,** Armstrong, this volume.

Others widely regarded as not Roman and now to be appended as 'Currently disregarded' are **RR74**, (High Street, Cumbria) and **RR81b** (Wade's Causeway, North Yorkshire).

Romano-British Ways

It is clear from increasing observation (e.g. Haken this volume) that the fully engineered Roman roads were sometimes enhanced by a number of less well engineered but equally important roads which supported the needs of nucleated settlement, the *vici*. To provide awareness of these, the Margary number Register is being expanded with a new section RBW (Romano-British Way). These are roads or tracks not displaying classic characteristics of Roman roads but which have often been claimed to have been either 'Romanised' prehistoric trackways, or prehistoric routes that remained in use during the Roman period.

These were all re-examined and compared with evidence from lidar imagery to confirm their routes. Assessment was then made as to their likely use during the Roman period based mainly on their relationship (or lack of) with Romano-British settlement. These sinuous roads/tracks can be branches of more significant Roman roads and appear to run for long distances from nucleated/agglomerated settlements. This point is crucial in sentencing these as RBW and not earlier or later routes.

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