

## ANTIQUITY

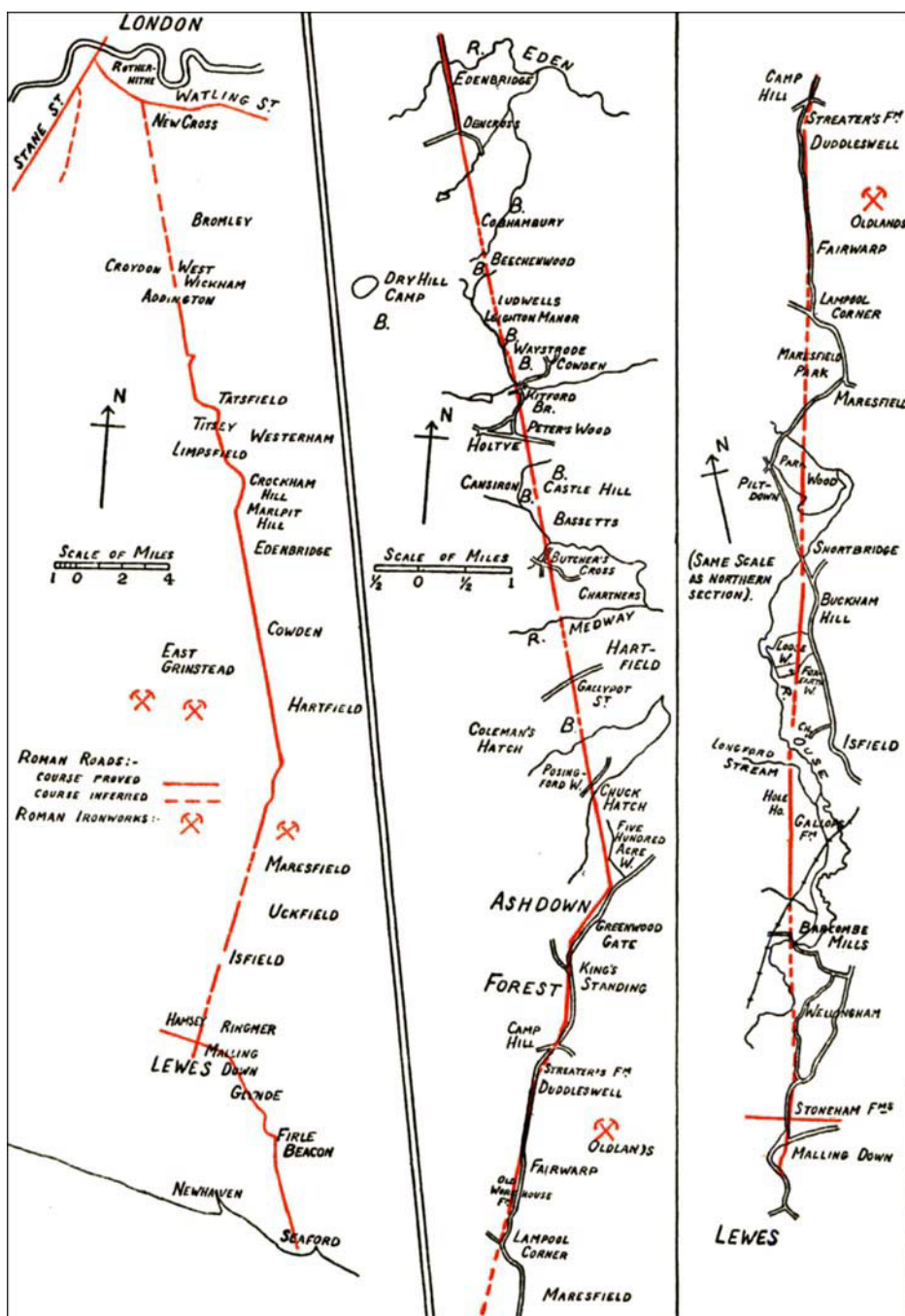
The remains of what might have been thought to be an older ditch were noticed in the main rampart itself, but the General denied this. He may well have been correct in this, for it would appear that the rampart lay too far to the south for any portion of the older entrenchment to have been included beneath it. In any case it is quite certain that the fragment on the counter-scarp itself represents the remains of this tri-vallate earthwork ; and it might be worth while examining objects discovered in association with it again in the light of the knowledge of Romano-British and Iron Age relics which has accumulated during the past 30 or 40 years. O.G.S.C.

### ROMAN ROAD FROM LONDON TO SUSSEX

Recent discoveries, initiated by air-photography on Ashdown forest, have enabled the entire course of a new Roman road to be traced through Surrey, Kent and Sussex from West Wickham, near Croydon, through Edenbridge to Maresfield and thence down the valley of the Ouse to Malling Down, east of Lewes, where it connects with roads in the South Down area. Two detached portions of this route had previously been identified as Roman ; the northern forming the Kent-Surrey boundary for  $4\frac{3}{4}$  miles in a straight line from Wickham Court near Addington to Coldharbour Green on the escarpment of the North Downs above Titsey, and the southern (lying parallel with the other but half a mile farther east) from Marlpit Hill across the Eden valley at Edenbridge and up the slope of the ridge beyond, a distance of some 3 miles.

Investigations by Mr James Graham have established the portion connecting these two sections, but it is with that part of the route lying between Edenbridge and Lewes that the writer is directly concerned. A large hill-top camp, probably of Early Iron Age, with triple ramparts, crowns Dry Hill on the ridge to the south of the Eden valley at a point about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles west of the Roman road, but until quite recently no other ancient sites had been discovered anywhere near the course of the road until the well-known Roman ironworks site at Oldlands near Maresfield is reached. The unpromising nature of the country had presumably checked investigation and no efforts appear to have been made to discover a southward continuation of the Roman road.

Air-photographs of the high ridge of Ashdown forest between Hartfield and Maresfield had disclosed portions of an ancient road, in



## ANTIQUITY

straight alignments and apparently of Roman construction, crossing the forest, and the northern portion was found to be pointing directly to Edenbridge. Suspicion that this was actually the continuation of the Edenbridge route was at once aroused, and a search of the intervening country has led to the discovery of abundant traces of the road at many points, sometimes in a perfect state of preservation, and the whole course has been properly established.

Identification of the remains was greatly facilitated by the fact that iron slag (known locally as 'cinder') was very largely used for the metalling for considerable lengths of this part of the road, thus enabling comparatively slight remnants of the agger to be recognized as of artificial origin. By a fortunate coincidence Mr Ernest Straker was just completing his survey of the ancient iron sites of the Weald at this time<sup>1</sup> and the writer is greatly indebted to him for information regarding ancient bloomery sites in the vicinity of the road, and for assistance in investigating and comparing the cinder used in its construction. These ancient bloomeries (marked B on the map) produced cinder identical in type with that used on the road and *may* be of Roman or British origin, though in the absence of definite evidence (*e.g.* pottery) this cannot be proved, for this primitive method was long used. Obviously the huge quantities of slag required for the road must have removed all trace of many of the early bloomery sites.

The course of the road will now be described, starting from Edenbridge and working southwards. The existing lane from Den-cross, near Edenbridge, follows the line as far as Cobhambury, a small farm on the Dry Hill ridge, remains of the agger being visible in places.

All trace is then lost through Cobhambury wood but at Beechenwood farm a strip of cinder metalling following an old hedgerow runs from the farm to a small but deep gully that crosses the line. Beyond this the field shows no surface-traces but air-photographs indicate the road clearly as a distinct light-coloured streak leading onward to Ludwells. These traces are in continuation of the Edenbridge line.

Nothing can be seen in the next three fields east of Leighton manor, but in Birchenwood field where the road descends to a gill the cinder is found along the line and a solid bed of it was discovered near the southern corner of the field. For the next 1000 yards the road departs very slightly from the alignment in order to follow a terrace along the east bank of the gill, where the cinder can be readily traced.

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<sup>1</sup>*Wealden Iron.* G. Bell & Sons, 1931.

# PLATE I



ROMAN ROAD, HOLTYE

Looking north along the line of the road towards Peter's wood. Note the cambered surface and ruts. The spade stands 3 ft. high and the metal rule is 6 ft. long



## PLATE II



ROMAN ROAD, HOLTVE

Looking west *across* the road, showing ruts in its surface. The trench on the extreme left was hacked through the concrete to obtain a section and the continuation of the road surface beyond the cut is faintly visible

## NOTES AND NEWS

It crosses this stream and the Kent Water dividing Kent and Sussex at a point 100 yards west of Kitford Bridge, Cowden, and sections of the cinder metalling are visible in the banks, giving the road an apparent width of 25–35 feet there. It probably lay upon a solid embankment across the valley, but is now buried under 2 feet 6 inches of alluvium.

The agger is distinctly visible as it leaves the valley and traces are to be found in the fields near Holtye House. It becomes very plain through Peter's wood where the perfect surface can be disclosed in places, and crosses the East Grinstead–Tunbridge Wells road 200 yards east of the White Horse inn, Holtye. On approaching the valley to the south of this road the agger is very clear and for a considerable distance is composed of very solid cinder. A section examined near the stream showed the agger in perfect condition, 15 feet wide and 1 foot thick in the centre with a pronounced camber. (See plates I–II). The cinder had rusted into a hard concrete mass which could only be broken with great difficulty. The agger is very plain beyond the stream up the slope of Castle Hill, and though invisible on the surface has been found in good condition at several points beyond in the fields of Bassetts farm.

On approaching the Hartfield–Cansiron lane at Butcher's Cross it becomes visible again, and south of the lane shows perfectly as a fine cambered strip some 50 feet wide across the field. A section here showed the road to have the unusual effective width of 27 feet (35 feet to the edges of the agger), the cinder metalling being as much as 16 inches thick in places. The perfect surface was also found to the south of the ridge on the descent to the river Medway, 500 yards west of Chartners farm, and the river is crossed at a convenient point where the valley is comparatively narrow. The line crosses the Coleman's Hatch–Hartfield road at Gallypot Street, and is indicated by a series of hedge-rows and subsequently by the east side of Posingford wood. From the Sussex boundary to the forest the alignment is closely followed, no part of the road (after the first 350 yards), being more than 100 feet out of line, although several ridges and streams are crossed.

The road enters Ashdown forest at Chuck Hatch, traces of the agger being visible at once. It passes through a small croft and has been much damaged by later tracks. It is traceable up the slope outside the southwest edge of Five Hundred Acre wood and just beyond the crest the road becomes very distinct and perfect. From this point to Camp Hill, across the highest part of the forest, it assumes a very interesting form which is particularly well seen here. The agger is perfect, 18 feet wide with a distinct camber, and is accompanied by

## ANTIQUITY

ditches, 62 feet apart, the intervening side spaces being left flat and unmetalled. This form of construction is exactly similar to that of Stane Street across the highest part of the South Downs where it is accompanied by small ditches identical in shape and character 85 feet apart.<sup>2</sup> Similar ditches also occur on part of Ackling Dyke. The purpose of the ditches is obscure, for they do not seem intended primarily for drainage, and it may be that they were used to define a roadside zone to be kept free of vegetation or other obstacles when not actually metalled up to the ditches as on Stane Street.

The long alignment from Edenbridge comes to an abrupt and definite end, clearly defined by the ditches, just before it reaches the Groombridge–Maresfield road, and the Roman road makes a sudden turn of 134° southwestward, keeping roughly parallel to the modern road. It then follows the high ridge of the forest past King's Standing to Camp Hill in a series of four main short alignments designed to skirt the valleys sloping first eastward and then westward. Traces of all these alignments remain and have been definitely proved. The ditches show very plainly on the air-photographs owing to the grassy nature of the vegetation contrasting with the heather. Most of the forest section is metalled with local sandstone upon a bed of clay laid on the old heath surface, but near Camp Hill the use of cinder was resumed, this being brought no doubt from the Roman ironworks at Oldlands, only 1¼ miles distant.

At Camp Hill the modern road obliterates the track but diverges from it again near Fairwarp church where traces of the agger with its cinder metalling are again visible. Quarrying has obliterated it to the southern edge of the forest, but in the first field of Old Workhouse farm the perfect road surface with hard rusted slag metalling, about 14 feet wide, was found, and in the next field a portion of the agger is distinctly visible as a raised strip (containing the metalling) against the western hedgerow, 100 yards west of the farmhouse.

The road has not as yet been definitely traced through Maresfield park (which has suffered greatly by wartime disturbance), but immediately to the south of the Maresfield–Piltdown road its course is clearly marked, upon the same alignment, by a shallow depression which is also traceable in another field as it approaches a stream. Through the southern part of Park wood, Piltdown, and the western edge of Fairhazel wood beyond, the alignment is further marked by a distinct deposit of

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<sup>2</sup> Curwen, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, LVII, p. 137 and plates.

## NOTES AND NEWS

slag now mixed with small brown flints. The line of the road would pass through the bridge at Shortbridge.

In the park of Buckham Hill House there is a very clear piece of the agger, on the west side of a small pond, composed of a hard compact layer of slag about 17 feet wide. It is traceable onwards by means of the scattered slag and flints, closely following the alignment, through Lodge wood and Foxearth wood, emerging close to the southeast corner of the latter.

The exact position of the crossing of the river Ouse is not yet known but it must be almost due west of Isfield church, for only 500 yards farther on the course of the road is again certain, being marked by scattered slag adjacent to a long line of hedgerows past Hole House and Gallops farm. Near the farm part of the undisturbed metalling is exposed by a ditch. It is probable that between the crossings of the Ouse and of a western tributary, Longford stream, part of a drive to Sutton Hall lies upon the road. Apart from the actual crossings the route lies just above flood level.

It is rather surprising that slag was brought so far south, for the nearest source of supply is believed to have been at Maresfield, but it is clear that slag mixed with flints was used right down to a point some 700 yards south of Gallops farm. Beyond this the slag is not found and the road is therefore much more difficult to trace. A definite bed of flints does, however, mark its course with certainty in the south-east corner of a large arable field just before the alignment crosses the railway 600 yards north of Barcombe Mills. It is heading exactly for the crossing of the Ouse at the mill and there can be no reasonable doubt that it recrossed the river there. If this line was followed southward, as is probable, it would graze the large eastward bend of the Ouse near Wellingham (the river has, doubtless, eroded its eastern bank there considerably since Roman times), and follow approximately the southern portion of Wellingham lane, falling into the line of the main Isfield-Lewes road near Stoneham farm. Here it would intersect the line of another Roman road which ran along the foot of the Downs to Glynde and thence over Firle Beacon to Seaford,<sup>3</sup> but it certainly appears to have continued straight on to Malling Down, where a turf-covered agger skirting the western shoulder of the Downs is

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<sup>3</sup>A. Hadrian Allcroft. *Arch. Journal*, LXXI, 201. [The Roman origin of this and of many others for which Mr Allcroft claimed a Roman origin, is doubtful. Many of them differ greatly from *aligned* Roman roads.—EDITOR.]



## ANTIQUITY

plainly visible. Perhaps this led down the Ouse valley to the sea, and so avoided the steep ascent by the more easterly route, but it is at least clear that the road connected the iron mines with the coastal downland area.

As for the northern destination it can hardly be other than London, for the line at West Wickham points directly to Rotherhithe only 10 miles distant; this would cut Watling Street at the junction of New Cross road with Pepys road, at the point where Watling Street in its arc from Greenwich to Southwark begins to turn northwestward towards London Bridge, the very place from which a radial road south-south-eastward could best be started. The road may have been planned to serve the dual purpose of connecting the iron mines with the London market and with a Sussex port at the mouth of the Ouse.

IVAN D. MARGARY.

## AN IMPORTANT LINK BETWEEN ANCIENT INDIA AND ELAM

No one who is interested in the archaeological discoveries at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa can fail to appreciate the letter of Dr Frankfort to *The Times* (26 March 1932).<sup>\*</sup> The cylinder-seal that he has lately found at Tell Asmar is certainly of Indian workmanship, as shown by the elephant, rhinoceros and the gharial, or fish-eating crocodile, carved upon it. These animals, as is now well known, frequently appear on the seals of the Indus Valley civilization, but in the art of no contemporary culture. Cylinder-seals of Sumerian type are rare at Mohenjo-daro—we have found only two as yet—and none has been found at Harappa; but in view of the trading that clearly went on between India and Sumer it will not be surprising if a good number of seals of this convenient form are eventually found to have been used in ancient India. We should expect to find them at Mohenjo-daro especially, in view of its more easy access by river and sea to Sumer and Elam.

Dr Frankfort has dated his Mesopotamian find to approximately 2500 B.C., as it was found in a house of the time of the Dynasty of Akkad. The question arises: with which of the levels of Mohenjo-daro was it contemporaneous? And here it is noteworthy that in the same buildings as his Indian seal, Dr Frankfort also found a number of heart-shaped pieces of inlay and decorated carnelian beads, which as far as

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<sup>\*</sup> See reference in *ANTIQUITY*, June 1932, p. 227.—EDITOR.