

Notes on Old Buxton and District.*

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HAT Buxton was a Roman Station called Aquae has been confidently stated. At or near St. Anne's Well various relics have been found, such as baths, the ruins of a temple on the Terrace (Stane Cliffe), and a Roman milestone at Silverlands. (See *Derbyshire Arch. Soc. Journal* for 1885.) Mr. Salt has, himself, found several Roman coins and other relics of the Roman occupation in the neighbourhood. Several archæologists have urged him to note down, for permanent record, various indications around Buxton of an archæological nature, with a view to assist the researches of future explorers in that field of investigation. They are as follows:—

(1) There are indications of a Roman road having existed between the centre of Buxton and Burbage.

(a) About fourteen years ago, when some pipes were being laid in Green Lane, Burbage, a piece of "pitching" was laid bare at a point near to Sycamore Cottages. From its worn, but workmanlike, construction, it appeared to be Roman. A coarse jar of pottery was embedded alongside. It was discovered by one of the workmen, who sold it (the pottery jar) to a passing visitor. The information was given to Mr. Salt by a foreman of the works.

(b) When Lismore Road was constructed, about eleven years

* The information contained in this paper has been supplied by Mr. Micah Salt, of Buxton.

ago, Mr. Gilman, foreman of the works, stated that he came upon an old pitched road, a few feet below the surface, at a point about three or four yards from Burlington Road. A broken piece of dressed millstone grit was discovered. It was about 21 inches by 14, and had a hole drilled in the end of it, and was perhaps the remains of a Roman altar. It was conveyed to Mr. Salt's premises, and placed outside; but, unfortunately, a severe winter ensued, and the frost split it into fragments.

(c) Mr. Gilman also informed him (Mr. Salt) that about the year 1892, when laying pipes in Macclesfield Road, he came upon another piece of pitched road, close to where the bill-posting station now is.

Therefore, taking a bee-line from the centre of the Crescent at Buxton to Burbage, at points indicated, the measurements, through gardens and fields, are as follows:—

Crescent to Lismore Road	1,720 feet.
Lismore Road to Macclesfield Road	1,400 "
Macclesfield Road to Sycamore Cottages	1,500 "
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Total	4,620 "
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or seven-eighths of an English mile.

(2) The Ordnance Map indicates that a road, from "Little Chester" (Derby) to Buxton, existed. Parts of it are traceable, parallel with the Ashbourne Road, near Buxton, but it seems to disappear nearly opposite to the Cemetery. But in a field (opposite to Buxton College) on the south side of Green Lane, there are indications of such a road and what would seem to be foundations of ancient buildings. The swelling of the ground, suggesting a causeway, can be traced east until past the line of "The Ferns," and pointing to the junction of the present-day highways in front of "Sherbrook House." Coming back westward, the road (if it is one) seems to run through the next three fields, to cross the turnpike, near Poole's Cavern, and to pass through the Golf Links, keeping parallel with and

near to the highway (Green Lane), until opposite to Sycamore Cottages, where it would appear to have joined the road (No. 1) from Buxton to Burbage. This is likely enough, because it is supposed that a Roman highway went by Burbage and Axe Edge, and on to Kinderton—the Roman “Condate.”

(3) It has also been thought that the Roman Road from Derby came straight into Buxton. There is, however, no reason why it should not have forked. That is probable, because about twenty-five years ago a piece of solid pitched road was disclosed in the London Road, Buxton, opposite the Primitive Methodist Chapel, when digging the foundations of a building. This information was supplied by the builder.

In this connection, the Roman milestone* might be mentioned which was found at Silverlands, and described in this *Journal*, 1885, page 79, for the Roman road in question may have curved round in that direction to suit Roman engineering plans, and to approach the Bathom Gate Road via Fairfield, as well as to reach the centre of Buxton.

(4) As a further proof that the Romans used Buxton as a bathing place, what appeared to be a bath was found at the back of Clarendon Buildings, Manchester Road, by Mr. Webster, the owner, about twenty years ago. Mr. Salt was invited to see it. The Chalybeate spring rises about this site, and may have been utilised for the purpose of the bath.

(5) About twenty-five years ago, Mr. Brittain, auctioneer, made an excavation at the side of his garden at Fairfield, near Buxton. He found a piece of pitched road, which was dug up and the stones utilised. Amongst them was a Roman milestone, which, ultimately, was built into the foundation walls of his new stables in Spring Gardens, Buxton. His house at Fairfield is nearly opposite to the “Bull’s Head” Inn, on the main road. Again, at about five hundred yards from the “find” of pitching just recorded, in a north-eastern direction, another piece of old pitching was found. A line taken from one to

* This valuable relic of our country’s history is the property of the Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society, and is *on loan* to the Public Museum at Derby, but will shortly be exhibited at the Buxton Museum.—Ed.

the other may, possibly, determine the exact course of the "Bathom Gate," as it points to Bradwell and Brough.

In connection with this road, there is apparently another which may have started from the same point, but at an acute angle to it, and which kept a north course to Dove Holes and onwards. It is discernible to the left of the turnpike leading to that village, but is lost to the north of the great lime-ash heap there. But its continuation would be a road—the old road from Dove Holes to Chapel-en-le-Frith—which is called "Roman Road" by the villagers to this day.

Again, at right angles, or nearly so, to the road just mentioned, and at Dove Holes, there is another striking off to the east, which is still termed "Roman Road." It seems to proceed in the direction of the "Bathom Gate," and if it did so in ancient times, it is evident that a near course would be obtained for military changes from the Roman road in the direction of Whaley Bridge to the station at Brough (Navio).

(6) At Castle Bottoms, Fough Farm, near Hollinsclough, there are traces of extensive foundations, divided into compartments, sufficient for some old castle or hill fort.

(7) At Crowdicote, near Hartington, there are remains of foundations of an old castle. A passage like a cave had been made under them. In it were found, about twenty years ago, a number of relics, as follows: Silver coins (one of Henry III., others unknown), an iron arrow-point, bronze key, frame of a buckle, piece of lead with loop-hole in it, piece of bronze buckle, figure of a man in lead $1\frac{3}{4}$ ins. long, two other pieces of bronze, bronze rowel for spur, a dressed grit-stone. The latter has a socket, and may have been either a "capital" or "pedestal" for a pillar. The cottages near the spot are partly built of sandstone, evidently from the ruins, for they are in a limestone country, and the grit-stones must, otherwise, have been brought from a distance.

(8) On the west side of Staker Hill (two miles south of Buxton) there are the foundations of walls, enclosing several

pieces of ground, each of about 60 yards by 15 yards wide, which may have been the site of a large building, and they are evidently not modern.

(9) In a field between "Heathfield Nook" and Cowdale ($2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Buxton) there is a triangular piece of earthwork, rising about two feet above the original surface, and not modern.

[As this goes to press comes the news that Mr. Salt and his son, Mr. V. Salt, have discovered the remains of an extensive occupation of Romano-British times, on the site of the new road, known as Holker Road, leading from Spring Gardens, Buxton. These remains are within about a hundred yards of where the Silverlands milestone was found, and where a previous discovery of four bronze axes was made. They comprise some five hundred pieces of Samian shards (two bearing potters' names), and of coarser ware, pieces of Roman glass, fragments of bronze, iron and lead, charcoal and charred bones of animals, and also an area of 30 feet by 10 feet rudely paved with blocks of limestone. The explorations are being continued, and the results are watched with great interest. It is almost needless to add that Mr. Turner is one of the explorers.—ED.]