

MOVING THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE

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'I have little interest in roads as such.....' (Taylor 1979, ix); nor has this author. Their interest, we also both agree, 'lies in the way in which they affect people and the landscape....' (*op.cit.*). Taylor was in fact being quite bold, or extraordinary naive, to write a book about tracks when he was approaching his academic prime. Vital topic though it is in trying to understand the workings of the countryside, the history of its study shows it to be characteristically the haunt of the romantic, the irrational and the obsessional (e.g. Belloc 1910, Watkins 1925, Timperley and Brill 1983). This dangerous essay will probably bear that out. It is nevertheless of good intention as a respectful and cheery salutation from one traveller to another on the road to - well, we all know the destination of the road paved with such intentions.

The discussion here arises, as with so much of Taylor's own work, from detailed local studies. They have brought home to us the crucial significance of trying to identify and understand the nature, motivation and mechanism of movement in the landscape, at different scales quite as much as at different times and for different purposes. If landscape is not only the result of dynamics but is itself dynamic at any one time, then movement within and through it by people and their materials is both a lubricant and a product of those dynamics. Such is truism; but perhaps there is no harm in re-engaging with truism when the generality arises unbidden from detail on the ground and in documents rather than from theory-driven expectation. We note with interest in that context the absence of 'Road' and 'Track' from the index of a properly most influential work (Tilley 1994) which also discusses movement in the landscape but in almost spiritual terms rather than the secular movements of Taylor's approach. In the latter, people walk, for example; in the former they perform a pedestrian speech act (*op. cit.*, 28). Given the happy reality that the landscape is large and diverse enough to accommodate both perceptions, and many in between, my example merely seeks to highlight the very strengths of Taylor's output. He became so influential as populariser because he wrote from first-hand knowledge, used accurate description and deployed logical analysis within a methodology which seldom bothered the reader by being explicitly theoretical.

Here, *après* Taylor, looking at landscape with an emphasis within the two millennia either side of 1BC/AD, our consideration is of movement through two working landscapes. It flows from current work, in both cases incomplete, in two areas far apart in space but sharing not dis-similar solid geologies and a similar methodological

approach. Indeed, the study of the Causse Mèjean in the limestone area of Lozère, Languedoc, builds on experience gained examining the largely chalk country of Fyfield and Overton, Wiltshire. Our contention is that the former now reciprocally illumines interpretation of the latter.

Fyfield and Overton, Wiltshire

The landscape of these two parishes is archaeologically a familiar one: rolling chalk downs liberally dotted with antiquities, dissected by dry valleys and cut through by a pleasant-looking river valley, in this case that of the River Kennet. The area lies between two places not irrelevant to west-east movement through it: Avebury 2 miles (4 kms.) to the west, Marlborough 3 miles (5 kms.) to the east. Equally important to movement, and particularly on a north-south axis, were some natural resources. Within a half-day's walk, for example, were those of the sluggishly-drained Vale of Pewsey to the south, and about a day's walk and more to the north was the diverse ecology of the Upper Thames valley. But most movement day to day would surely have been to access local resources, ones within the two parishes themselves and at most no more than an hour's walk away for an unencumbered walker starting from the riverside: soils for arable, downland pasture, the river itself, woodland, heath and, almost unique to this place, sarsen stones. These stones have a special place in movement hereabouts, both as encumbrance and as generator of traffic.

An often suburbanised, romantic view of the happy peasant, and an over-theoretical academic version of what might have been, will naturally tend to shy away from a reality which is neither too difficult nor too fanciful to imagine. One simply observes with sympathy, and possibly even shares to some extent, the day-to-day work of pre-mechanised agrarian societies. Loading a wooden cart with cut timber, for example, empirically does seem to be largely a matter of (learning from) long experience and using common sense rather than being a matter of choosing between theoretical options. The fact is, some ways work, others do not. A mind attuned to the speed of the modern world can sometimes find its biggest difficulty, however, in grasping the sheer slowness with which low technology operates.

An Iron Age farmer in Fyfield, for example, would have needed a whole day, and a long one at that, to move with his ox-team and cart from his dwelling high on the northern downs to collect cut timber from West Woods, haul it back and be sitting down for supper at home after a return journey of some 6 miles (9.5 kms.). Despite this being an 'easy' countryside, the journey would have involved descending an incline of 3-5°, passing down a sarsen-filled valley probably then soft and perhaps marshy even in summer, navigating the flood-plain, fording the river, gaining the dry land of the low river terrace and then a relatively long but gentle climb up another sarsen-littered valley on to the slopes covered with Clay-with-Flints and trees. After loading the cart by hand and persuading the oxen that their day's work was not yet finished, the journey

would then have to be repeated in reverse and with a heavy load. Difficulties could be expected at particular passages or even, in bad weather, over much of the way - on some or all of the descent, the sarsen terrain, the flood plain, the ford, and on the not very steep but long haul with tiring oxen back up and across Fyfield Down. Even within this local landscape of undramatic topography and short distances, several days would be needed if an accident happened, say a load shifting, or if a heavy shower, for example, made a descent across the Clay-with-Flints too risky, or if the timber had to be cut and prepared before removal. Perhaps most difficult of all for us to grasp today is that, despite all that, despite the effort as well as the long time, the contemporary mind-set would still see it as worthwhile. If that was what had to be done to acquire some materials to repair the house, then so be it; there was no alternative. Local movement, and the development and use of local track systems, probably do have to be appreciated in that sort of context, psychological as well as material and functional.

Investigation

The Fyfield/Overton area has been examined archaeologically since Colt Hoare (1821, 45) and, more recently, in a long-term project investigating its landscape history (Fowler *forthcoming*; Fowler and Blackwell 1998). Among the several aspects of landscape development to emerge as significant from the large amount of information has been that of routes, roads and tracks. This seems to be so regardless of the fact that most tracks are undatable, the aspect of their nature which has, on the one hand, discouraged serious investigators ('I have little interest in roads as such for one cannot date most of them.' Taylor *op. cit.*) and provided such a field day for so many others ('Despite this difficulty [of dating roads and tracks], topographic literature is full of unsubstantiated references to roads having prehistoric origins....' Hindle 1993, 17). We have found that we can 'date' some tracks and, rather more importantly, can begin to recognise some ways in which the presence and use of tracks at different times has influenced the formation of the historic landscape and, arguably, at least some strands of the tenurial framework within which it has developed.

To substantiate that statement, some attention to the detail of evidence is necessary.

Tracks and ditches

Over much (but not all) of Fyfield and Overton Downs is a cover of earthworks, in the main of a landscape which developed between c 2000 BC and c 600 BC. This was in its turn selectively overlaid by further workings which have left earthwork remains in the 1st-2nd centuries AD, when a dramatic and lasting impact on the local communications network was made, and in medieval times. Not to be further pursued here was a third overlay of a pattern of movement of sorts across the landscape, though not actual communication: race-horse training gallops, clearly imprinted on the landscape and still partly in use.

Visually, the skein of complexity on the ground seems to be held together by linear features (fig. 00). Essentially these are of three types, field boundaries, tracks and ditches. They are not necessarily as distinct as that statement implies, certainly not as earthworks now and not necessarily even functionally in former times. Nevertheless, for present purposes we ignore the first category and look briefly at some tracks and ditches. An ambivalence immediately arises: ditches were sometimes also used as tracks and much-used tracks tended to be come hollowed out and end up looking like ditches - sometimes also used as boundaries.

The 'old' landscape of earthworks and, mainly on Avebury and Manton Downs, crop-marks and soil-marks, is full of shorter stretches of now abandoned trackway, some of considerable antiquity. Most are integral with, or fitting into, a SW/NE and NW/SE axial field system. Essentially the somewhat wobbly outlines of a sort of grid are apparent. As an example, take two tracks almost 2 kms apart. One is a c 1 km.-long stretch of hollow-way from Totterdown Wood SE to Clatford Down across the high, northern reaches of Fyfield Down (Pl. 00). Nothing branches from it to the north but a major track comes off it to the SW towards and past Wroughton Copse and then on to Down Barn. A similar track runs the length of Overton Down on approximately the same axis: we call it the 'Overton Way', for in fact in various forms it traverses still today the whole length of the medieval tithing of East Overton. It begins at its north beside a linear ditch immediately west of The Ridgeway so-labelled on modern maps. It then runs down the spine of Overton Down via two right-angled bends defined by stone edges and past a Romano-British settlement. The track then turns SW twice: first as a clearly-defined terrace-way skirting the south side of a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age settlement; and then, c 290 m further SE, into a large Romano-British settlement near Down Barn. There it almost certainly joined with its counterpart, as described *above*.

These lengths of downland track were part of the working Romano-British countryside, used primarily then for local purposes; but they formed elements of a network that was already old, and which has persisted. The now-single main track passed on down the long boundary between two Anglo-Saxon estates to a ford as part of a long-distance route passing through the two Overtons. It is still a right of way, in part a bridle path.

One of the most significant *ditches* was that which linked those two tracks in our example. The ditch was dug eastwards across Avebury Down to the present Ridgeway and then across the north end of Overton Down and Totterdown for at least 3 kms. to Totterdown Wood. In the 2nd millennium BC, it divided fields and both cut them and was overlaid by them. It seems to have been a boundary between fields on both of its sides towards its west end, but elsewhere, notably on Totterdown, it bounded fields on their north, with nothing but a 'blank' in earthwork terms on its north. It also served as a track, both at its west end and, probably beginning in Roman times, over much of its eastern length. Clearly a considerable time-depth lies within these observations, with

the ditch being earlier than, contemporary with, and later than adjacent fields. Such longevity may have had a bearing on its existence as a later track. It may, for example, have been followed because it had become a permanent tenurial boundary by being so old, perhaps as much as fifteen hundred years by the time of the Roman conquest. It played no part, however, in the landscape of documented post-Roman tenure.

To appreciate its context as an east-west track, we need also to take account of The Ridgeway, locally the main north-south track. Apparently, this was a major route related to regional and national movement; indubitably it possess a magnetic aura of antiquity whether or not it is actually 'the oldest road' (Anderson and Godwin 1982). Our ditched track was either cut through or was crossed by this supposedly mighty highway, depending on which evidence is taken into account and how the evidence is interpreted. Both Taylor (1979, fig. 8) and Hindle (1993, fig. 3) tackled this Ridgeway and its local history directly. Both discussed it in its landscape context of Avebury and Overton Down, and both came up with fundamentally wrong accounts.

The Ridgeway is apparently the only major track running north-south in this area. That is a misconception. Wrongly, it is almost invariably considered on its own when the fact is that the line now designated 'The Ridgeway' is but one of a bundle of former track lines. One such line is our 'Overton Way' which is a line actually called 'Ridgeway' in the 10th century AD. All lie within a zone of movement forming what it would be helpful to think of as 'the Ridgeway route'.

The landscape from Avebury Down to Fyfield Down is comprehensively parcelled up into at least two axially arranged systems of organised landscape, prehistoric and Roman (Fowler *forthcoming*, fig. 2.1), and The Ridgeway as currently defined is unequivocally later than both. It overlies their earthworks of both and bears no relationship, other than of discordance, to either. In particular, it does not accord with the track systems internal to those earlier landscapes. The Ridgeway was simply not there in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC nor in the early centuries AD. Its claim to be 'the oldest road', in the sense of having been continuously in use to the present (Anderson and Godwin 1982), cannot therefore be upheld. In our area alone, it is younger than the prehistoric ditch-cum-Roman track across the north of Overton Down, which it crosses; just as it rides over the Roman road to Bath. Indeed, our interpretation can begin to adjust to the idea that, in its present form, The Ridgeway is one of the most recent features to have appeared in our contemporary landscape.

The clear implication for the historical landscape, as distinct from the interesting but narrower issue of the date of the Ridgeway, is fundamental. In its landscape and indeed parochial context the Ridgeway across Overton Down is not now as important as used to be thought; and meanwhile, in any case, other local tracks have become more significant. Instead of a near-straight line being stuck down the west side of our

two parishes as a permanent feature around which the local landscape history had to develop, The Ridgeway itself has become a component of the dynamics of what happened and of our interpretation of those processes.

Nor was The Ridgeway described as such on Overton Down until much later. It was a *herpoth* there in the 10th century. Three charters (S272, S668, S449) re-iterate the description 'path' rather than *wege*. Inspired by precisely the evidence we are now summarising, Brentnall (1920, 124) noted that 'herepaths led to the meeting-places of the various hundreds, for it was there that the levies gathered when the army was mobilised. [The Herepoth/ Ridgeway] was the nearest way from Overton to ... Man's Head...', probably the meeting-place of the Hundred of Selkley. Taylor (1979, 93) considers several specialist explanations of what 'herepath' meant e.g. a military road, but concludes that 'such tracks were used by other [than soldiers] people.....to travel distances beyond the normal limits of local economic and social demand.'

The Ridgeway has no known existence or name across Overton Down for centuries afterwards. Even Andrews and Drury (1773), who show a track approximately along the line of the present Ridgeway, provide no name for it. Maps of the subsequent few decades either do not show the Ridgeway at all or not as a fixed trackway, whereas other routes are clearly depicted. If The Ridgeway ever had been a major route between, say, the 8th and 18th centuries, by the earlier 19th century it had apparently ceased to be one, or at the very least was not perceived by cartographers and their clients as being one. The notion of The Ridgeway as a British *i.e.* prehistoric, trackway is even more recent (Long 1862, map facing title-page, is our earliest source so far). By 1885, 'British Trackway' had become embedded in the cartography of the nation through the Ordnance Survey. It seems that the idea of The Ridgeway as really old, as distinct from being medieval or Anglo-Saxon, is entirely a 19th century one, formalised and accredited as prehistoric with its capital T and capital R in the The pursuit of 'The Ridgeway' is as much the pursuit of an idea as it is of an actual road and the proper questions about it.

Green Street is The Ridgeway's partner in myth in this Overton/Fyfield landscape. Again, we must distinguish between the track and the name. The track heads west across Manton, Fyfield, Overton and Avebury Downs from Marlborough, and straight into the east entrance of Avebury itself. Unless one is to deny that anyone ever entered there, in some sense, however minimally, the present track perpetuates a prehistoric line of access. In fact, of course, as air photographs show, tracks funnelled towards, and from, that eastern entrance around a quadrant from north east to south west. The deep rutting of the tracks and hollow-ways in medieval and later times (Pl. 00) both caused traffic to fan out across the unenclosed downland between its two end points and yet at the same time heavily marked the preferred line. In 1815/16 at Enclosure,

this line was limited to a width of 25 ft. on Fyfield Down. Fencing of the track has continued to the present, and it is now the width of a five-barred gate in places.

Brentnall (1920), re-iterated in 1938, knew that the *herepath* and The Ridgeway were one, and yet here we are, in the last quarter of the 20th century, with Taylor (1979, 93), Hindle (1993, 22, fig. 3) and the Ordnance Survey (current maps 1997) perpetuating the myth that this so-called 'Green Street' is the Herepath. It is not; nor is it in any historical sense even 'Green Street'. The name is a 20th century invention, again canonised on Ordnance Survey maps and probably reflecting the influence of Hippisley Cox' *Green Roads of England* (19%%).

The possibilities are, then, considerable for 'dating' roads and tracks by examining them, not as single strands rather like antiquaries used to look at monuments in isolation, but in a landscape context. The crucial perceptual development is for that context to become stratified through detailed fieldwork, detailed documentary work, and a melding of the two in interpretation minimally at two scales, local and sub-regional.

Causse Méjean, Lozère, Languedoc-Rousillon, France

The nearest English equivalent to 'Causse' is 'plateau' but better is 'Plain' as in 'Salisbury Plain'. It is definitely not 'moor' as the French sometimes translate it. 'Méjean', locally still often spelt 'Méjan', effectively means 'middle'. The Causse Méjean is the middle one of four 'Causse majeurs' of 'Grands Causse': Larzac and Noir to the south, Sauveterre to the north. They occupy a central position at the southern end of the Massif Central, Méjean being c 100 miles NNW inland from Montpellier. The nearest town of any size is Millau to the south west; Mende, the Departmental capital, is to the north, with small local towns - Florac, Meyrueis and le Rozier and Ste. Enimie, - in the surrounding gorges. More significantly, immediately east of Méjean and stretching away to the north east and south are the Cevennes with their heavy rainfall, forested slopes and metamorphic mountains.

The Causse are essentially blocks of limestone; more picturesquely, they have been formed from one huge mass of limestone which has been dissected by rivers. The Causse Méjean (33,000 ha.) is virtually an inland island about the size, and roughly the shape, of the Isle of Wight. On its west, north and north east, the famous Gorges du Tarn dramatically separate it from the parent limestone block, while on the south the Gorges de la Jonte cut it off from the Causse Noir and the way south. There is, however, one natural bridge, a very significant one for present purposes. The Col de Perjuret separates the headwaters of the Tarnon/Tarn and Jonte on the south east of Méjean and provides a crucial, walkable link, albeit only 10 m wide at one point, between the outside world, here Mount Aigoual, and the Causse.

All this occurs at between 900-1000 m. above sea level on a plateau of jurassic limestone with dolomitic outcrops around its edges. Three things are immediately apparent about today's landscape, begging questions about how long they have prevailed. Méjean is almost incredibly empty of people: the resident population is under 500 distributed in 6 small villages, 14 hamlets and 37 single farms at a density as low as 1.4 people per km.². In 1734 it was nine times that. Secondly, the plateau has a strikingly different macro-flora. The relatively much-visited east is covered with grass and virtually devoid of trees except in some modern coniferous plantations; yet, over an area embracing almost the whole of the western half of the Causse, is continuous and at times dense evergreen pine forest (*pinus sylvestris* with box and juniper). Tourists love seeing flocks of 200-300 *brebis* (Pl. 00; unimproved sheep) browsing the Causse *pelé* or *nu*, but few people can realise, because it is an invisible function, the crucial importance of the forest as pasture in a local pastoral economy feeding 18,000 sheep for milk production (for Roquefort and local cheeses).

Thirdly, the Méjean looks very dry; yet, as any guide-book relates, the annual rainfall is c 800 mm; and you probably read that figure in a torrential, summer thunderstorm of a sort rarely experienced in England. The dryness of what erosion has left of the soil is, however, not an illusion. As one of the several good studies of the area puts it, the plateau is very permeable, like gruyère cheese full of more than two hundred swallet holes (Galibert 1982, 16; and the factual source of much in the preceding).

Méjean is indeed blessed in its huge and seriously scientific topographical literature, symbolised by Martel's (1936) half-century of amateur endeavour and brought together in Marres' (1935) magisterial historical geography. The latter has been recently re-assessed in an excellent half-centennial commemorative volume (Bonniol and Saussol 1995).

The Méjean landscape is liberally littered with archaeological sites: some 70 'dolmens', 60 menhirs and many round barrows, with a few prehistoric/Roman stone-walled enclosures on hill-tops and promontories. A Roman resin industry is well-established. Our own work has identified many hectares of 'organised landscape' similar to that on the Overton/Fyfield Downs. Such landscape is not, however, ubiquitous, nor is the concentration around the central Causse merely the accident of survival. Through some of the field systems run trackways, characteristically 2-3 m. wide and stone-walled (type 3 *below*; Pl. 00). They seem to be designed to funnel sheep through an enclosed landscape, though they could also have accommodated the long, narrow two-wheeled carts in use locally until well-into the 20th century (Pl. 00).

There are basically four sorts of road or track on the Causse Méjean: contemporary and tarmacadamed, engineered but largely redundant, narrow, walled and ultimately prehistoric, and drove-roads or *drailles*. Our interest here is primarily in the last two,

but we must dispose of the first two by showing that they are different even though they overlap with what we argue to be the older tracks. This landscape, like the Fyfield one, is not just laced with 'old tracks'; they can be sorted out, differentiated and 'dated'.

The existing tarmacadamed roads used by motor traffic should be easily dismissed, for they ought to be modern and for considerable lengths they are indeed new *sensu* mid-19th century or later (Pl. 00). They are of both interest and concern in that all overlie and incorporate earlier tracks for at least short lengths; and the network of them is currently enjoying a continuous, long-term and palpably effective widening programme apparently without archaeological oversight.

Secondly, some of the hundreds of unsurfaced tracks lacing the landscape are also recent in that they are carefully engineered, notably with revetments controlling the angle of the longitudinal slope and keeping the surface more or less horizontal laterally (Pl. 00). Such roads were characteristically also prepared by cutting back into the rock on their uphill side - rather as a machine does during the current road-widening, - and seem often, and perhaps always, to have been metalled. In part they followed and improved existing tracks, in part they struck off on new lines. These would seem to be improved and new roads of the late 18th-19th century designed for haulage by wagon with an ox-team, perhaps with horses. While they would doubtless have been used for local traffic, their character suggests their main purpose was for through or longer-distance work, heavy rather than speedy, in particular to take materials and produce off the Causse. They were designed to extract local resources like timber and stone, and carry produce such as animals and threshed grain, to market and, even in such a remote area, to the railway. Both Florac to the north east and Aguessac to the south west, at least two day's lumbering journey away, had railway stations in the later 19th century (the latter still does). But local histories stress the extent to which 19th century technological and social developments exacerbated differences between the urban-based, communications-led life down in the gorges and that on Méjean where (summarising Marres 1935) 'Les mauvaises communications engendrent des difficultés' and 'Seules, deux drailles traversent ce causse et ne sort praticables que par voitures de paysan ou troupeau.' This strongly suggests that, whether or not only sheep and farm-carts ('voitures de paysan') used the narrow, stone-walled local tracks, use of the through-routes was confined to them too. And the latter were primarily drove-routes used in transhumance. They are well-documented. Martel (1936, 7), in particular, has a telling passage: ' Les troupeaux transhumants du printemps et de l'automne ...montent aux pâturages des Cévennes ou du Mont-Lozere, suivant ... les large pistes séculaires, jamais modifiées, foulées comme des routes, et que l'on appelle des *drayes* ou *drailles*.'

Our last third and fourth types of Méjean tracks are directly analogous to those in the Fyfield/Overton landscape. That at least is the proposition, the implication being that

the ready explanation of those on the Causse Méjean provides an explanatory model for those on the Marlborough Downs. Our third type, the stone-walled tracks, exist in fragments over much of the Causse, fragments because everywhere lengths of them have been left redundant in the landscape by our first two types. The network they once formed was clearly the 'old' one which, whenever it originated, persisted as the main means of local access, between villages and between each habitation and its resources, until the 19th century. Perhaps above all, their main function was to control access to and the use of pasture by sheep. Doubtless it was significantly different a century ago, before the availability of electricity, piped water, mechanised milking and the daily milk-lorry; but the controlled movement of sheep through the landscape, systematically grazing a somewhat sparse but florally-rich herbage, still provides glimpses of the ways things were done. The raw material, sheep in an enclosed landscape, remains the same.

Droving and transhumance have now almost ceased and are certainly not economically important despite their nostalgic remnants at tourist occasions. But the function has left its imprint on the landscape, even though a 'draille' as such was not built. The two main 'drailles' across the Causse are well-known, documented and recorded on maps; effectively they ceased to function as transhumance droves some between 50-100 years ago. Some lengths are walled, and seem as often to relate to prehistoric and Roman elements as to later ones; some lengths have become 'engineered' while others continue in use as parts of long-distance bridle-ways and footpaths or are indeed surfaced roads (Pl. 00). One road leads, as it always has done, to Esperou.

In the mountain village of Esperou in the Cevennes a fête took place on the 15th June, 1997. Remote though that may sound, Esperou lies only 7 kms. south of the Col de Perjuret, linking the outer world with the Causse Méjean, south along a winding modern road past the peak of Mont Aigoual. The occasion was a 'fête de la transhumance'. Doubtless those concerned were, in part at least, playing at the genuine thing but nevertheless the brochure about the occasion echoes a not very distant past: 'Comme chaque année, les troupeaux de brebis traversent le village pour rejoindre les hauts pâturages de l'Aigoual où ils estiveront.' They do so by walking the *drailles*, succinctly defined by the same impeccable source as 'voie d'échange et de communication entre la plaine et la montagne.'

We see The Ridgeway, the Overton Way and the rest of the bundle of north/south downland tracks through Overton and Fyfield as the Wiltshire equivalent of these 'drailles'. If so, they reflect transhumance, a form of farming not only not practiced but almost forgotten in southern England. An insight into how and why these tracks were probably operating in earlier times, locally and as

through-routes, is offered by Smith (1885, 24), writing of the Ridge Way in the middle and earlier 19th century and arguably just in touch with an older tradition: *'... [this British road,] ... twenty years ago, ... was the regular route adopted by the thrifty drovers who would avoid the tolls on the high road; and only fifty years since [c1835] ... was the much-frequented path employed by smugglers for conveying their contraband goods from the south coast to the interior of the country.... They were merely tracks over the turf ... and lying open to the wind in [their] exposed position, are generally firm and hard.'*

The Rev. Smith, who could obviously have written the Espérou brochure, was writing in the 1880s of his countryside one to two generations before his time just as the transhumance fête a thousand miles away today speaks of a way of stock-farming which has persisted there into the mid-20th century. The relevance of the latter is to remind us of long-distance transhumance, to suggest that it was normal practice in certain agrarian societies, and to provide us with a model to explain the Ridgeway 'bundle' of trackways spilling off the Marlborough Downs; or, if you are a shepherd from the south, climbing on to the summer pastures of those Downs and beyond. Furthermore, if these droveways are at all ancient - and they seem to be of at least the early centuries AD and very probably prehistoric, - then they contributed to the shaping of the land units, the tithings and the parishes and goodness knows what before them. In part at least, so the proposition goes, West Overton, East Overton, Lockeridge and Fyfield, are the shape they are, with their boundaries where they are, because of the lie of the droveways around which they tended to arrange themselves. It is pleasant to think that stupid old sheep may after all enjoy an interest which, like roads, 'lies in the way in which they affect people and the landscape....' (Taylor 1979, ix).

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Poss. illustrations:

full-page fig. of archaeo-landscape as plotted from AP

full page fig. of through-routes, Fyfod

fig. fields and tracks (EIA?) on Causse Mejean

Plates: RB and earlier hollow-way, Fyfield Down

The Ridgeway, Overton

Hollow-ways on to Overton Down on the former London-Bath road

Brebis

Transhumance 'draille' + dolmen on to Mejean

Old and new tracks, Drigas

Narrow (BA?) track and fields, Hures

Narrow carts, Hyelzas Museum