The North Downs Trackway

by D.J. TURNER

SUMMARY

The prehistoric and Romano-British evidence for a trackway along the North Downs is reviewed and the conclusion reached that, east of Guildford, neither the North Downs ridge nor the scarp foot was used as a significant through route in later prehistoric or Romano-British times.

The evidence for the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Surrey is noted and it is concluded that there is also no evidence for a through route along the North Downs in pagan English times. It is suggested, however, that there was a route via the Hog's Back and north-eastwards from Guildford to join Stane Street near Ewell and that this route could have had Iron Age origins. It is suggested that the terraceway east of Titsey was established in the 7th century but that there is little evidence that this ever formed an important through road.

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the precise course of a supposedly ancient trackway along the North Downs from the Hampshire-Surrey border to the Kent coast. Initially, interest was centred on that part of the track which was thought to form a pilgrim route from Winchester to Canterbury. This usage was cogently denied by F.C. Elliston Erwood (1925), W.F. Hooper (1936) and C.G. Crump (1936) but, as Hooper said, the English love a pilgrim as much as they proverbially love a lord and they have persistently refused to eschew the pilgrim myth.

Since at least the time of Hilaire Belloc (1904), the prehistoric and Romano-British use of the North Downs as an important link between Wiltshire and east Kent has also been assumed by many. G.B. Grundy (1918, 165) claimed that the North Downs route was 'probably as old as the existence of man in this country'. O.G.S. Crawford (1953, 78), following J.P. Williams-Freeman (1915, 96), accepted a route along the North Downs as one of the 'trunk routes' of prehistoric Britain. I.D. Margary wrote in 1952 'The importance of the main trackway connecting the principal habitation sites of early man in Wiltshire with the Channel coast in Kent is a matter of general agreement', and by 'early man' it is clear from the context that prehistoric man was meant. Margary's statement was undeniable as silence gave consent and no voice had been raised against the hypothesis of a North Downs trackway, although Sir Cyril Fox (1943, 66–7) had written 'The Thames was the natural highway from the south-east of England to the Salisbury Plain — the traveller would leave the river for the Berkshire ridgeway at Goring'.

The claims of the North Downs trackway have been based on assumption and not on argument. It has been accepted that there was continuous intercourse

between Wessex and the Continent over many centuries, if not actually millennia, and that this took place via the short crossing from east Kent. That this short crossing was linked to Wessex via a land route along the North Downs has also been assumed.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the last assumption by posing the question: what evidence is there for or against the hypothesis that there was a significant continuous trackway or route along, or closely parallel to, the North Downs between north-east Wessex and east Kent?

Considerable effort has been expended on tracing a detailed course for the hypothetical track. Early workers, notably Hilaire Belloc (1904) and Edwin Hart (1933), concentrated on what has now come to be called the 'terraceway' — an apparently (to some eyes) almost continuous trackway along the foot of the chalk scarp. In many places this follows the cultivation line and its continuity is, to other eyes, dubious. More recently, I.D. Margary (1952 and 1953) and H.W.R. Lillie (1964) placed more emphasis on a ridgeway that, it has been suggested, accompanied — and in some places replaced — the terraceway.

As Crawford (1953, 60) clearly summarized, all roads — ancient and modern — fall into two classes: natural tracks and made roads. With very few exceptions prehistoric and medieval routes followed natural tracks, many of them along ridges. These grew in response to needs and developed by human choice involving a long process of trial and error which did not end until the natural tracks were given metalled surfaces and became made roads. Such natural tracks remained in being until the terminal points moved or the need for traffic ceased.

Natural tracks through open country shift if used heavily, to avoid obstacles such as fallen trees or areas worn into a quagmire, or, if not used enough, disappear. Consequently, prehistoric trackways, except where confined artificially across field systems or when passing through entrances in boundaries, will usually be elusive and their precise position difficult, if not impossible, to determine.

Heavily used ancient tracks are sometimes evidenced to-day by the presence of parallel traffic ruts, deeply cut parallel trenches on slopes, as, for example, on the 'Cloven Way' from Southampton Water to Old Sarum (Crawford 1931) or the medieval traffic ruts between Marlborough and Hungerford in the north part of the Savernake Forest (Crawford 1953, 69 and fig 5). No such parallel ruts have been identified along the North Downs route, which includes many valley-side sections where such ruts could be expected, although there are parallel terraces at the foot of the Downs north-west of Reigate between Juniper and Colley Hills.

Prehistoric man must have moved about the country fairly freely and the precise position of an ancient track is usually a matter of controversy in the absence of phenomena such as traffic ruts or preserved timber causeways. A regularly used prehistoric *route*, however, should be demonstrable by means other than tracing the identifiable remains of its constituent trackways and a prehistoric route that cannot be demonstrated should not be thought to have existed just because we would like it to have existed. Furthermore, we should not assume that every convenient-looking ridge was actually useful to prehistoric man. For example, Richard Bradley (1971, 14) has shown that the commonly accepted South Downs ridgeway could not have existed during either the later Bronze Age or the early pre-Roman Iron Age. In the case of the North Downs,

the extensive capping of Clay-with-flints and other inhospitable soils casts some doubt on even the superficial attractions of the Downs for a ridgeway route and from this, of course, arose the concept of the terraceway as a winter route. However, this represents a reversal of the normally accepted role of high and low routes. Grundy (1918, 71) wrote 'Summerways are tracks below ridgeways, usable when the waters of streams run dry making it unnecessary for the traveller to climb to the ridge'.

A useful marker for the presence of a prehistoric route should be the concentration of find spots around river crossings. Fox (1943, 66) warned that 'where narrow ribbons of open country, unsuitable for settlement but convenient for traffic, occur, finds will turn up only near or at the obstacles provided by rivers, streams and marshes which have to be crossed'.

It is logical to argue that a postulated prehistoric route of any importance should, to be acceptable, have demonstrably along it, or near it, sites or find spots linked by material evidence showing cultural affinities even if these do only occur at the river crossings. Ideally the affinities should be demonstrable over a long period of time and should not be explicable by a single migratory movement or by casual and infrequent passage. Evidence of trade or other exchange mechanism would be of the greatest value.

W.F. Grimes (1951, 144 and 155), examining the so-called Jurassic Way, wrote of the Jurassic Zone as 'a corridor along which early movement between north-eastern and south and south-western Britain took place' and spoke of the Jurassic Way as 'a corridor for traffic rather than a single track'. Grimes demonstrated that the Jurassic Way was a route clearly defined in terms of artefact distribution (1951, 157): 'The Jurassic Way must have functioned as a corridor for human movement at least from the Early Bronze Age . . . it was no doubt the Jurassic Way which helped to carry such demonstrably northern products as the food vessels southwards into the Midlands and the Upper Thames Valley and even into the neighbourhood of Bath'. He went on to establish beyond reasonable doubt the validity of the Jurassic Zone as 'a corridor for traffic' in the pre-Roman Iron Age (1951, 158–71).

E.T. Leeds had previously (1925, 97; 1933, 229) similarly demonstrated the use of the Icknield Way in post-Roman times as a route by which Saxon penetration of Wessex was effected from East Anglia. The presence of a Roman road cannot imply even 5th century movement in significant amounts without supporting evidence.

Elliston Erwood (1925, 5–7) briefly examined the North Downs route from this point of view but did not follow the argument through: despite marshalling a little negative evidence and no conclusive positive evidence, he continued to accept the idea of a prehistoric route along the Downs.

Hart (1933, 10–15) assembled a large but indiscriminate catalogue of sites and speculations that did little to support his thesis of the route's prehistoric origin. Other writers do not seem to have examined this aspect although Stuart Piggott (1938) and J.X.W.P. Corcoran (1963, 8) implied a negative view in respect of Bronze Age evidence.

NEOLITHIC AND BEAKER PERIOD

No attempt is made to review early Neolithic connections. It has recently been

suggested (Brothwell 1973, 284) that even at the close of the Neolithic period the population of Britain was unlikely to have been more than 25,000 people and that for much of this long period the number may have been substantially less. In the context of a population as low as this, the concept of a long-distance trackway or route may have little meaning and the problems of satisfactorily identifying any specific long distance route before the Beaker period are likely to be insurmountable. However, it can be noted that causewayed camps, typical of the Neolithic in Wessex, are not found on the North Downs or in Kent and long barrows are not found between Farnham and the Medway Valley.

The Beaker Period, which is now regarded as having begun in Britain by the end of the 3rd millenium BC (Burgess 1974), has not produced much evidence from Kent or Surrey. The main areas of settlement, known from burials and stray discoveries, were in east Kent and along the Thames and Medway (Clarke 1970, 2, 528–66). Clarke listed fifteen beakers from Surrey and thirty-one from Kent. Of the Surrey beakers one was found at Chiddingfold and two near Limpsfield: the remainder were found near the Thames.

As long ago as 1938, Piggott published a distribution map of objects of Scandinavian flint found in south-east England which strongly suggested that trade routes favoured the Thames Valley and ignored the North Downs. Miss Chitty's distribution map of flat and hammer-flanged axes of the Early Bronze Age emphasized the importance of the Thames Valley (Fox 1943, pl VI) and more recent work has not changed this picture.

Although isolated beaker burials have been recorded from the North Downs, there is little to offset the strongly Thames-oriented distribution of the finds of the period. There is no noticeable concentration of Beaker Period material around possible river crossings of a North Downs route and there is nothing at all to suggest that the North Downs provided a significant route at this period.

THE BRONZE AGE

Extensive Bronze Age and pre-Roman Iron Age settlement has been recognized on the gravel terraces and flood plains of all the major rivers of southern Britain and on the downlands of Wessex, the Berkshire Downs and the South Downs. That similar settlement was extensive along the North Downs of Surrey and Kent can, however, be questioned.

Bronze Age settlement in Surrey, as shown by finds of metalwork (Phillips 1967) and the survival of barrows (Grinsell 1934) follows a markedly riverine distribution with clear evidence also of the exploitation of the lighter sandy soils. Previous exploitation of some of the latter, particularly on the Tertiary sands and the Lower Greensand, may have caused a breakdown in the soil structure resulting in the formation of heathland by the beginning of the Bronze Age (Evans 1975, 103 and passim).

Collared urns form a major group of EBA ceramics which are thought to have developed from late Neolithic Fengate ware (Longworth 1961). The Thames in the vicinity of London has produced seven fragments of such urns while several others have been found in Surrey and Kent. In Surrey their distribution is confined to the Thames Valley, the Tertiary sands in the north-west of the county and the Lower Greensand. A group from Walton-on-Thames

may have come from denuded barrows—such denuded barrows are well known near the upper reaches of the Thames. Another barrow in the Thames Valley at Teddington yielded an ogival dagger and others may have existed at Wimbledon Common.

Specialized barrow forms, possibly indicative of connections with the 'Wessex culture', occur in the Holmesdale west of Dorking (Deerleap Wood) and on the Tertiary sands of north-west Surrey, but it is noticeable that these forms are absent further east. The excavator considered that 'There is little to suggest that the bell barrow in Deerleap Wood was built as a result of contact from trade passing along the North Downs' (Corcoran 1963, 8). Only two cinerary urns of Wessex Culture type are recorded from Surrey: from Haslemere and from Coombe Warren, Kingston (Longworth 1961, 295).

P. Ashbee and G.C. Dunning (1960, 48–50) examined the affinities of a group of burials from east Kent and stated that the group showed 'elements of an advanced EBA character normally associated with the so-called Wessex culture ... [east Kent] lies athwart the presumed trade routes linking Wessex to the Netherlands and Germany ... While the Thames estuary was no doubt a principal route for such traffic as must have passed between these regions, an argument for [traffic] passing along the coasts of Sussex and Kent and so to the Netherlands and beyond could be to some extent sustained'. They appear to have given scant attention to the possibility of a North Downs route being used and their neglect seems fully justified. Even if the barrows on the Hog's Back, at Newlands Corner and at Box Hill can all be accepted, for the sake of argument, as EBA, they do not readily suggest a continuous trackway along the summit. East of Box Hill only field names at Merstham (Rumble 1971, 22) and Woldingham (Greenwood 1967, 8) plus the small enigmatic mounds at Botley Hill, which are probably not barrows (Graham 1946, 51), provide evidence for barrows on the North Downs ridge. Other evidence for EBA use of the North Downs ridge appears to be equally lacking. This may be contrasted with, for example, the situation on the Chiltern ridge (Dyer 1961). It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that there is no evidence for the significant use of a long-distance route along the North Downs during the EBA.

The end of the EBA saw the decline of Wessex and the middle and lower Thames emerged as a centre of bronze trade and, possibly, production. Any distribution map of BA metalwork emphasizes the importance of the middle and lower reaches of the Thames from the MBA on and there are concentrations of finds spots around the mouths of the Wey, Mole, Hogsmill and Wandle. In Surrey, away from the Thames, metalwork finds have been particularly frequent along the valleys of the Wey and Wandle (Phillips 1967). The pattern strongly suggests that movement, and probably also settlement, was concentrated along the river valleys. Some of the riverine material may have come from the erosion of riverside deposits but a large element of ritual deposition — a wet religion — has been postulated (Burgess 1974, 196).

Overseas trade brought in exotic types but again these are mainly to be found in the Thames Valley. Local trade or other exchange mechanisms distributed the products of British smiths over more limited territories. There were regional developments throughout the MBA and into the LBA but contacts continued across the North Sea and with France. There is no evidence, however, that the North Downs played a significant part in this trade; finds from the Downs are

rare and once again there does not seem to be any concentration of bronze finds from the vicinity of the river crossings on the hypothetical North Downs route.

The Thames continues to dominate the distribution pattern of metalwork throughout the LBA and important settlements have been found on the Thames gravels at Egham. Hoards of the LBA — probably the 'carp's tongue sword phase' (Burgess 1974) — have been found on the dip-slope spring line (Carshalton, Beddington, Addington Park, Wickham Park) suggesting that settlement was still established here on land that had favoured man since Mesolithic times. A dip-slope or spring-line route may have been in use by the end of the LBA and this route is better evidenced from the Iron Age times on. The present suburban cover of most of the dip-foot spring line renders it improbable that many LBA settlement sites will be found in this vicinity although the Aldwick Road site on the boundary between Beddington and Croydon may have been of that period (Gallant 1966). Settlement sites from near Farnham (Lowther 1939) and at Weston Wood (Harding 1964) also may have belonged to the LBA but, once again, the near absence of contemporary material from the downland to the east or, more importantly, of concentrations at possible river crossings, argues against the use of the North Downs as a significant trading route. The paucity of material from the summit plateau of the Downs is emphasized by isolated finds like the Beddlestead hoard and is in sharp contrast to the situation on the Sussex Downs, on the Chilterns, and in the Thames Valley.

The North Downs route is, in popular mythology at least, often linked with the LBA tin trade. There is, however, no reason to argue that tin traders would have used a different route to others and there is thus reason to think that any such trade would have used the Thames Valley route. The 'Phoenician tin-trade' is frequently casually invoked as underlining the long-distance nature of the alleged North Downs route but Bowen (1972, 57–60) has shown that there is no evidence that the Phoenician tin trade involved an overland route from Cornwall to Kent.

THE IRON AGE

M.W. Bishop (1971) has reviewed the 'non-Belgic' Iron Age material for Surrey and his work may be used to supplement the distribution maps of D.C. Whimster (1931, 87), G.J. Copley (1951, 89 and 104) and the Ordnance Survey (1962). It can be noted that Bishop's analysis might not be accepted by all workers but, as alternative views can be seen as little more than re-shuffling the same pack of evidence cards, these divergencies of opinion do not affect the present discussion. Bishop's analysis has recently received support from Dr Close-Brooks (Hanworth 1977, 37–44).

Despite recent overall surveys (Cunliffe 1974; Harding 1972 and 1974) the uncertainties regarding the chronology and cultural division of the pre-Belgic Iron Age make it dangerous to attempt anything but a generalized approach to the period in relation to the possible North Downs trackway. R.F. Jessup (1970) takes the existence of the North Downs trackway for granted but, while several named Kentish sites are said by him to be on branches of the trackway, only a valley-bottom site at Canterbury is said to actually lie on the trackway itself. Canterbury lies ten miles to the north of the North Downs ridge. In Surrey, the

published distribution maps, supplemented by Bishop's gazetteer, emphasize the fact that few Iron Age sites have been recorded from the summit ridge of the North Downs and few, if any, discoveries made at possible river crossings of a North Downs trackway. East of Guildford, the hill-fort at White Hill, Blechingley (Hope-Taylor 1951), and minor discoveries above Titsey close to a possible north-south route (Philp 1973, 99–101) are the only Iron Age sites recorded on the ridge of the Downs before Hulbury is reached overlooking the Darent Valley. On the other hand, sites are strung along the northern dip slope from Clandon and Fetcham to Ashtead, Ewell and Carshalton. On either side of the Mole Valley signs of 'Celtic' fields are found wherever rendzina soil covers the Chalk — on Fetcham, Leatherhead and Mickleham Downs and at Box Hill above Burford Bridge. Caution is needed in using the evidence of these field systems as they may not all belong to the Iron Age and it could also be argued that field systems on the inhospitable red-brown chalk soils, or even on the Clay-with flints, would have left little recognisable trace. There is, however, a general impression of a river-based distribution in the Iron Age similar to that argued for the Bronze Age plus a series of dip-slope settlements distant from the North Downs ridge.

The pottery from the Iron Age site excavated at Hawks Hill, Leatherhead, a dip-slope site, was the subject of a detailed account by Professor Cunliffe (1965). The early pottery included decorated haematite-coated ware with firm affinities to Wessex, but the bulk of the earlier pottery was 'part of a larger cultural continuum which includes areas of eastern England and the Upper Thames Valley'.

The haematite-coated ware appears at many sites in north Surrey, all of them on the northern slopes of the Downs or in the Thames Valley. Thirty years ago Frere argued (1942, 1946 and 1947) that contact with Wessex continued until the first century BC but chronological views have changed and Cunliffe's dating of late 3rd or early 4th century BC for the haematite ware at Hawks Hill is generally accepted to-day. The connection between Hawks Hill and Wessex is germane to the present discussion. There are two possible routes from Wessex: via the Hog's Back to Guildford and thence via tracks along the north edge of the North Downs and into the Thames Valley, or, alternatively, via the Berkshire ridgeway into the Thames Valley and so via the Thames Valley into Surrey. Material of this date from Wisley (Lowther 1945) and Brooklands (Hanworth 1977) shows Thames Valley influence but the pottery from Brooklands is markedly different from that at Hawks Hill and the Lower Greensand hill-forts, suggesting that both routes from Wessex were probably in use. There is still no evidence of a through route from Wessex into Kent along the summit of the North Downs or at its scarp foot, since such clear connections with Wessex are absent further east. The haematite coated ware of east Kent was shown by Frere (1942) to be different in technique to that of Wessex and Surrey haematite coating.

The later material at Hawks Hill, significantly, included the 'saucepan pot' in a regional variation resembling 'more closely those from the central and eastern Sussex style-zone than those from the neighbouring parts of Hampshire and the Thames basin'. Cunliffe claimed that this new polarization was matched on the South Downs at this period and that saucepan pots from Cissbury, Caburn and Park Brow can be differentiated from those further west. The north-

south linkages seen at Hawks Hill may have some bearing on the hill-fort pattern in Surrey and west Kent where forts are sited on the Lower Greensand and in the Weald itself. Only one hill-fort, White Hill near Caterham, is sited on the crest of the North Downs in contrast to the half-dozen on the dissected Greensand ridge to the south. The situation is hardly one that implies the presence of a significant east-west route through these areas along the North Downs.

In the last century or so of the pre-Roman Iron Age, there were strongly defined Belgic centres in east Kent and north-east Hampshire: a situation that could well have led to the establishment of the North Downs as an important route. However, the evidence suggests that at this time a large but ill-defined part of Surrey and Sussex was outside the Belgic kingdoms and obtruded between them. As Jessup (1970, 161) following Ward Perkins (1944) and others, summarized: 'Between the two tribal areas there still existed in east Sussex, Surrey and part of south-west Kent, an enclave of the old Wealden peoples who refused to conform with the Belgic way of life'. The non-Belgic 'enclave' probably extended northwards onto the Downs — 'Wealden' pottery was found at Hulbury (Perkins 1944) while the hill-fort at White Hill is bivallate and may be related to similar forts on the Lower Greensand. Positive evidence of Belgic occupation on or traffic along the North Downs ridge in Surrey is absent.

There is no concentration of PRIA material at any river crossing and, in all, it must be concluded that there is remarkably little evidence in favour of the existence, at any time during the pre-Roman Iron Age, of a through route of any importance along the line of the North Downs.

ROMANO-BRITISH TIMES

Although, during the Romano-British period the extent of the evidence changes, that for or against the North Downs trackway is surprisingly inconclusive.

The Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain (1956) firmly shows the North Downs trackway. It may be fair to assume that this trackway was considered by the cartographers to be one of the few identifiable minor trackways of the many in use during the period. There must have been a network of 'native' tracks at that time which derived from late pre-Roman Iron Age tracks and which were, equally with the 'made' Roman roads, ancestral to the later system. It is only possible to identify a few of them.

A carefully engineered system of north-south roads crossing the Weald has been firmly charted (Margary 1948). To travellers on these roads the North Downs would have presented a clearly defined transverse feature that, in the absence of maps, may have guided movement between the north-south roads. There is, on the other hand, little evidence that any Roman road was engineered along any part of the North Downs. There is growing evidence that the red and brown chalk soils and possibly the Clay-with-flints capping the North Downs were partly colonized at this time and Romano-British farmsteads at Headley and Hooley have been excavated but remain unpublished, while burials at Titsey and farms at West Wickham and Downe have been described by Philp (1973, 55–78). An important series of Romano-British sites, many of them villas, in

the Surrey Holmesdale could suggest a route along the valley. Abinger, Betchworth, Blechingley and Titsey would merely, however, have required short linking tracks to unite them to the basic north-south road system, leaving only the villas at Compton, together with the complex of native farms south of the Hog's Back, and ill-recorded sites at Reigate, Redhill and Gatton, at all remote from a road. The villa at Compton and the nearby farms would not have been far distant from a road if the Rowhook-Farley Heath spur did continue northwards across the Downs, as most authorities now believe, or if the Roman road from Neatham, near Alton, to Farnham continued north-eastwards. The sites at Reigate, Redhill and Gatton could have been linked to Stane Street via a track crossing Walton Heath and passing close to two other villa sites, one on the Heath, and the other at Sandilands Road, Walton-on-the-Hill.

The existence of short linking trackways using the Downs as a convenient route or topographical marker can be accepted, even if not proven. The existence of a continuous route or trackway is harder to establish. In the uniform cultural horizons set up during the Romano-British period, it is difficult to identify a route in the absence of a recognizable road, but there is some evidence against a North Downs trackway as a continuous long-distance route of importance.

In Kent, east of Maidstone, the Romans found it necessary to engineer a road on the Lower Greensand running parallel to the general line of the alleged North Downs trackway for a distance around thirty-five miles. This was spaced from the ridge by only four miles (Margary 1948, 212–43) and implies that any track along the North Downs east of the Medway was of little practical use. If a track forming part of a long distance route had existed along the Downs at this time the road on the Greensand would not have been necessary. It is interesting to note that this is just the section where the medieval continuity of the terraceway can be most convincingly demonstrated (Erwood 1925, 2–3).

POST ROMAN

There is again little in the evidence of the immediately post Roman settlement of south and south-east England to suggest that any route between east Kent and north Hampshire was of great importance.

John Morris reviewed the evidence concerning pagan Anglo-Saxon Surrey in some detail in 1959, particularly in respect of the brooches. He emphasized that, in the 5th century, the Saxons in north-east Surrey had close connections across the Weald with west Sussex, presumably via the Roman road system, and with the middle Thames Valley and northwards to Northamptonshire, but not with Kent. In the early 6th century there was still nothing in common with Kent beyond the Medway but there was some trading of Surrey brooches into Wessex. By the middle of the 6th century the local brooch types disappear and the Anglian types come in but there is a general decline in the standard of the jewellery. The 6th century Frankish jewellery found in Kent is not found in the Surrey cemeteries (Bidder and Morris 1959, 128–31; Morris 1959, 148–58). The north Surrey Saxons traded their brooches with Wessex but not with Kent.

The battle of Wibbandune may well, as both Morris (1959, 156) and Myres (1969, 116–7) presumed, have been fought for the possession of Surrey. Ceawlin of Wessex defeated Æthelberht of Kent and the Surrey Saxons were firmly

absorbed into Wessex where they remained until Ceawlin died in c591 after which Æthelberht gained effective control of England south of the Humber.

Pagan burial sites lie along the dip slope of the North Downs at the head of the Wandle, the Beverley Brook and the Hogsmill River, above Stane Street, along the Mole valley from Dorking to the Thames, and along the head streams of the lower Wey.

Dodgson has examined the evidence concerning place-names in *-inga-*, etc. (1966) and in *-hām* (1973). He concluded that while the *-hām* names probably belong to the pagan period, the *-inga-* and related names probably did not begin to be coined until the late pagan period and continued into the succeeding century or so. Morris had written (1959, 157–8):

> 'The small communities of early Saxons remained [up to the seventh century] as they had begun, small groups of heavily armed poor farmers, limited to the banks of the rivers and the chalk downs, tending to concentrate along the lines of the major Roman roads (including the Ridge Way) especially preferring the same sites as their Roman predecessors, located where the roads crossed the rivers'.

A glance at the distribution maps of Morris and Dodgson shows, however, that the North Downs ridge had no special attractions. Only Woldingham (an *-ingahām* name) provides possible evidence of the pagan period on the ridge and, in the Holmesdale, the pagan sites lie close to the Sussex-bound Roman roads while *-inga-* names are found on the Lower Greensand hills. It is certainly probable that the Saxons in north-east Surrey traded and expanded down the Roman roads to the Sussex coast and to Wessex via the dip-slope route (Fetcham, Effingham) to Guildford and the Hog's Back. But, east of Guildford, the ridge was as unattractive to the pagan English as it had been to their predecessors. It is noticeable that Guildford High Street, the backbone of the late Anglo-Saxon town, points to the dip-foot route and the pagan cemeteries of Fetcham, Ashtead and Ewell. At Banstead and Farthing Down important late pagan barrow cemeteries stand on north-pointing ridges of the Downs: no known Saxon cemetery lies near the main ridge of the Downs east of the Wey until the Darent is reached. It is not until the subsequent stages of Anglo-Saxon consolidation, the late 7th, 8th and 9th centuries (a period of relative obscurity from the archaeological and local history points of view) that the possibility of east-west routes arises. At Polhill, on the west flank of the Darent valley, a substantial Anglo-Saxon cemetery of the 7th and 8th centuries has been excavated (Philp 1973, 164–214). The cemetery comprised six or more diminutive barrows and at least 107 flat graves. All burials were oriented east-west and, although most were accompanied by grave goods, the excavators considered that the cemetery was probably Christian and that it possibly belonged to Otford, a village one mile to the east on the other side of the river. A jewelled brooch had strong affinities with east Kent, while other grave goods had wider ranging connections, but no parallels were noted with Surrey or Hampshire.

The position of the cemetery, adjacent to the 'terraceway' where it links Chevening to Otford, suggests that here the terraceway may have been in existence by the end of the 7th century. It can be noted that, from Titsey eastwards, there is a string of villages at the scarp foot linked by the terraceway: Titsey, Chevening, Otford, Kemsing, Heaverham, Wrotham, Trottescliffe,

etc, some of them with *-inga-* names, running parallel to the road linking villages in the normal Greensand-edge position: Limpsfield, Westerham, Brasted, Sundridge, Chipstead, Riverhead, Seale, Ightham, etc. The parishes of this double series of villages follow a strip pattern and J.E.A. Joliffe (1933) argued for a very early date for the establishment of this pattern. West of Titsey the terraceway disappears and it could be argued that it merges with the road connecting the villages on the Lower Greensand: Oxted, Tandridge, Godstone, Blechingley, etc.

The boundary between Kent and Surrey is marked by a substantial bank across the Holmesdale (Clark 1960). This bank straddles the valley bottom and is pierced by the modern A25 road but does not extend up the North Downs scarp to reach either the terraceway or the alleged ridgeway. This bank must pre-date the terraceway and may date from the troubled times of the 6th century. Whatever its date, it emphasizes the primary importance of the valley bottom Lower Greensand route, and the secondary nature of the terraceway.

The growth of settlement in the Holmesdale requires more study before it can be fully understood. It is, however, probable that the routes used between the 6th and 8th centuries were natural tracks linking settlement to settlement. Only where a number of settlements occurred close to the scarp can the terraceway be seen as a reasonably continuous entity and the terraceway east of Titsey probably dates from this general period. Parts of the terraceway were certainly in use in Kent in medieval times (Erwood 1925, 2–3) and short lengths further west are recorded in the early post-medieval period (eg at Reigate, Hooper 1945, 83). But the evidence for a *continuous* medieval road along the Downs from Farnham to Dover, avoiding the villages and towns in the Holmesdale, is negligible.

In the 13th century the east-west road through Oxted (only recently superseded by the bypass) was referred to as 'the main highway from Guildford to Canterbury' (Mumford 1966, 85) while the terraceway seemed unknown. In the 12th century, the new mesne boroughs of Reigate and Blechingley had been established on the east-west road (Beresford 1967, 491).

It can be argued therefore that, from the end of the pagan settlement through the medieval period, east-west communication was effected along a route linking Holmesdale settlements: an inconsistent road, sometimes on the valley floor and sometimes along some convenient ridge on the south side of the valley, duplicated eastwards from Titsey by the terraceway on the north side. There is, again, no evidence for the use of the terraceway or the ridgeway by anything other than local traffic. Much of the argument used by Hooper against the use of the terraceway by pilgrim traffic (Hooper 1936) is equally applicable to other medieval traffic.

It can be concluded that there is negligible evidence in favour of the North Downs trackway as a significant through route at any time between the Beaker period and the Middle Ages.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ashbee, P. and Dunning, G.C. 1961 'The round barrows of East Kent.' *Archaeologia Cantiana* **74,** 48–50

Belloc, H. 1904 *The old road*

Beresford, M. 1967 *New towns of the Middle Ages*
Bidder, H.F. and Morris, J. 1959 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Mitcham.' *SyAC* **56,** 99–131
Bishop, M.W. 1971 'The non-Belgic Iron Age in Surrey.' *SyAC* **68,** 1–30
Bowen, E.A. 1972 *Britain and the western seaways*
Bradley, R. 1971 'Stock raising and the origins of the hill fort on the South Downs.' *Antiq J* **51** (1), 8–29
Brothwell, D. 1973 'The human biology of the Neolithic population of Britain.' *Fundamenta,* Reihe B, Band 3, 280–99
Burgess, C. 1974 'The Bronze Age.' In Renfrew, C., ed. *British prehistory,* 165–232
Clark, A.J. 1960 'A cross-valley dyke on the Surrey-Kent border.' *SyAC* **57,** 72–4
Clarke, D.L. 1970 *Beaker pottery in Great Britain and Ireland*
Copley, G.J. 1951 *Archaeology of south-east England*
Corcoran, J.X.W.P. 1963 'Bell barrow in Deerleap Wood.' *SyAC* **60,** 1–18
Crawford, O.G.S. 1931 'The Cloven Way.' *Antiquity* **5,** 441–58
——— 1953 *Archaeology in the field*
Crump, C.G. 1936 'The Pilgrim's Way.' *History* June 1936
Cunliffe, B. 1965 'The pottery' In Hastings, F.S. 'Excavation of an Iron Age farmstead at Hawk's Hill, Leatherhead.' *SyAC* **62,** 13–39
——— 1974 *Iron Age communities in Britain*
Dodgson, J.McN. 1966 (1967) 'The significance of the distribution of the English place-name in *-ingas, -inga* in south-east England.' *Medieval Archaeol* **10,** 1–29
——— 1973 'Place-names from hām . . .' *Anglo Saxon England* **2,** 1–50
Dyer, J.F. 1961 'Barrows of the Chilterns.' *Archaeol J* **116,** 1–24
Erwood, F.C. Elliston 1925 'The "Pilgrims' Way", its antiquity and its alleged medieval use.' *Archaeologia Cantiana* **37,** 1–20
Evans, J.G. 1975 *The environment of early man in the British Isles*
Fox, Sir C. 1943 *The personality of Britain* (4th ed)
Frere, S.S. 1942 'An Iron-Age site near Epsom.' *Antiq J* **22,** 123–38
——— 1946 'An Iron Age site at West Clandon.' *Archaeol J* **101,** 50–67
——— et al 1947 'The occupation at Sandown Park, Esher during . . . the early Iron Age.' *Antiq J* **27,** 24–46
Gallant, L. 1966 'Three early Iron Age sherds from Beddington.' *SyAC* **63,** 169–71
Graham, J. 1946 'A pre-Roman trackway to the Sussex iron fields.' *SyAC* **49,** 20–55
Greenwood, J. 1967 'William Bryant and his book.' *Local History Records* (Bourne Soc) **6,** 6–11
Grimes, W.F. 1951 'The Jurassic Way across England.' In Grimes, W.F., ed, *Aspects of archaeology,* 144–71
Grinsell, L.V. 1934 'An analysis and list of Surrey barrows.' *SyAC* **42,** 26–60
Grundy, G.B. 1918 'Ancient highways and tracks of Wiltshire and Hampshire.' *Archaeol J* **75,** 69–144
Hanworth, R. 1977 *Brooklands, Weybridge: excavation of an Iron Age and medieval site.* (Res Vol SyAS, 4)
Harding, D.W. 1972 *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames basin*
——— 1974 *The Iron Age in lowland Britain*
Harding, J.M. 1964 'Interim report on the excavation of an LBA homestead in Weston Wood.' *SyAC* **61,** 10–17
Hart, E. 1933 'The Pilgrims' Way from Shere to Titsey.' *SyAC* **41,** 1–33
Hooper, W.F. 1936 'The Pilgrims' Way and supposed pilgrim use.' *SyAC* **44,** 47–83
——— 1945 *Reigate: its story through the ages.* (Reprinted 1979)
Hope-Taylor, B. 1951 In *SyAS Annual Report for 1950,* 4
Jessup, R.F. 1970 *South east England*
Joliffe, J.E.A. 1933 *Pre-feudal England: the Jutes*

Leeds, E.T. 1925 'The West Saxon invasion and the Icknield Way.' *History* **10,** 97–109
——— 1933 'The early Saxon penetration of the Upper Thames area.' *Antiq J* **13,** 229–51
Lillie, H.W.R. 1964 'The North Downs trackway.' *SyAC* **61,** 18–28
Longworth, I.H. 1961 'Origins and development of primary series in the Collared Urn tradition.' *Proc Prehist Soc* **27,** 263–306
Lowther, A.W.G. 1939 'The Bronze Age and Iron Age.' In Oakley et al *Survey of the prehistory of the Farnham district,* 153–217
——— 1945 'Iron Age pottery from Wisley.' *Proc Prehist Soc* **11,** 32–8
Margary, I.D. 1948 *Roman Ways in the Weald*
——— 1952 'The North Downs main trackway.' *SyAC* **52,** 29–31 and *Archaeol Cantiana* **64,** 20–3
——— 1953 'The North Downs trackway.' *Archaeol J* **109,** 39–53
Morris, J. 1959 'Anglo-Saxon Surrey.' *SyAC* **56,** 132–58
Mumford, W.F. 1966 'The manor of Oxted.' *SyAC* **63,** 66–94
Myers, J.L.N. 1969 *Anglo-Saxon pottery and the settlement of England*
Ordnance Survey 1956 *Map of Roman Britain.* 3rd ed.
——— 1962 *Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age*
Perkins, J.B. Ward 1944 'Excavations on Oldbury.' *Archaeologia* **90,** 127–76
Phillips, Winifred E. 1967 'Bronze Age metal objects in Surrey.' *SyAC* **64,** 1–34
Philp, B. 1973 *Excavations in West Kent 1960–1970*
Piggott, S. 1938 'The Early Bronze Age in Wessex.' *Proc Prehist Soc* **4,** 52–106
Rumble, A.R. 1971 'The Merstham charter bounds.' *English Place-Name Soc J* **3,** 6–31
Whimster, D.C. 1931 *The Archaeology of Surrey*
Williams-Freeman, J.P. 1915 *An introduction to field archaeology as illustrated by Hampshire*