

on the Ingleby site and for help and advice throughout the excavation.

ADDENDUM.

Since the above was written the silver wire-work has been identified by Mrs. G. M. Crowfoot as being worked in what Geijer calls "Osenstich".¹³ The stitch was employed on headbands and caps made of silk, and ten examples are known from inhumation burials at the 9th-10th century Swedish site at Birka and six from other burials in Gotland and Smaland in SE. Sweden.

EXCAVATIONS ON RYKNIELD STREET NEAR CHESTERFIELD, 1953 AND 1954.

By R. H. OAKLEY, M.A.

IN 1953 and 1954 two excavations were carried out with the object of proving the course of Rykniel Street at some points between Chesterfield and Clay Cross, described by 18th and 19th century writers but never previously tested by digging.

1. The aim of the first excavation was to obtain definite evidence of the course of the Street north of Tupton, following clues in John Gratton's account, written in 1829. Gratton, a correspondent of Stephen Glover, lived at Wingerworth, and wrote the only detailed description of the course of the Street in this area that has come down to us. He tells us that north of Old Tupton it "crosses the Mansfield and Bakewell road at a farm-house in the occupation of William Hodgkinson; after passing through the orchard there, it keeps the line of the hedge, at one field distance (still on the east side of the road)¹ for several fields in succession, crosses the avenue in front of Wingerworth hall, and still keeping

¹³ Agnes Geijer 1938, Birka III, Die Textilfunde aus den Grabern, Upp sala pp. 109-111, Abb. 25.

¹ i.e. the main road from Clay Cross to Chesterfield.

a little east of the turnpike road until it joins it, half a mile before you come at Chesterfield town end." He adds that in walking over it he found it quite visible as far as the lane leading from Wingerworth to the mill, called Mill Lane; "after this," he says, "I cannot say that I decidedly found any more traces of it."²

It was assumed that the hedgeline referred to is that shown on the 6-inch O.S. Map, Derbys. XXX NE. and XXV SE. (revised edition of 1938/9) as running, with one short break, from Four Lane Ends Farm, New Tupton (Grid 392662) to a point a little south of the Rother (Grid 394676), a distance of nearly a mile. It was proved that this does in fact indicate the line of the Roman road.

In July 1953 a trench was cut across this line just to the south of a "kink" in the hedge, shown on the 6-inch map, about 300 yards south of Mill Lane, on the eastern side of the new housing estate known locally as "Adlington's Estate" (Grid 393668). The road was found as a layer of flat stones of average size about 5 ins. square, resting on a foundation, 12 ins. thick, of rammed gravel and yellowish clay. The layer of stones was 9 ins. thick at the crown of the road and thinned out gradually towards the edges, the camber being very typical Roman work. It had originally been topped with a surfacing of small stones and gravel, but of this little survived. Side-ditches were very clearly marked by a silt-line of coal dust which had washed down from the road surface.³ The width of the road, exclusive of ditches, was 17 ft.⁴

About 250 yards south of this point, at the short break in the hedgeline mentioned above, the Street is still very clear on the surface as a low bank crossing the narrow field on the northern side of Redleadmill Brook. A few yards north of Mill Lane, it was exposed later in 1953

² Glover, *History of Derbys.*, i, p. 290; described by Haverfield (without reasons given) as "not very satisfactory" in *V.C.H. Derbys.*, i, p. 244 footnote 3; but re-estimated by R. W. P. Cockerton in *The Derbyshire Countryside*, No. 34 (April 1939) p. 42 as "most plausible."

³ Coal dust was also noted on Rykniel Street near Higham, some six miles further south, in the course of an excavation conducted by Miss S. Howard for the Ministry of Works in 1955. *Derbyshire Times*, Oct. 7, 1955, p. 14.

⁴ It was found to be 18 feet wide at Morley Moor. See F. W. Munslow in *D.A.J.* vol. lxix, p. 74-77; and for the historical significance of this, as contrasted with its greater width south of where it crosses Watling Street, R. W. P. Cockerton in *D.A.J.* lxxiii, p. 79.

during the course of bulldozing operations prior to the building of the N.C.B. Carbonization Plant. This is an important point, since, as we have seen, Gratton could not positively trace it here.

2. The accounts of Pegge, Bishop Bennett and Gratton concur in making the Street pass by Egstow Hall, but none of them gives precise details of its course in this region, though Gratton claims to have observed it from an "occupation lane" leading from the Clay Cross district to Egstow.⁵ In searching for traces of it in this area, my attention was drawn to a prominent embankment about 40 yards long and 5 ft. high, which crosses a stretch of marshy ground on the the south side of the small stream bordering the first field⁶ south of Egstow Hall Farm (Grid 391646, 6-inch O.S. Sheet, Derbys. XXX NW.). A low, broad mound, plainly the remains of a road of some kind, faced this on the north bank of the stream.

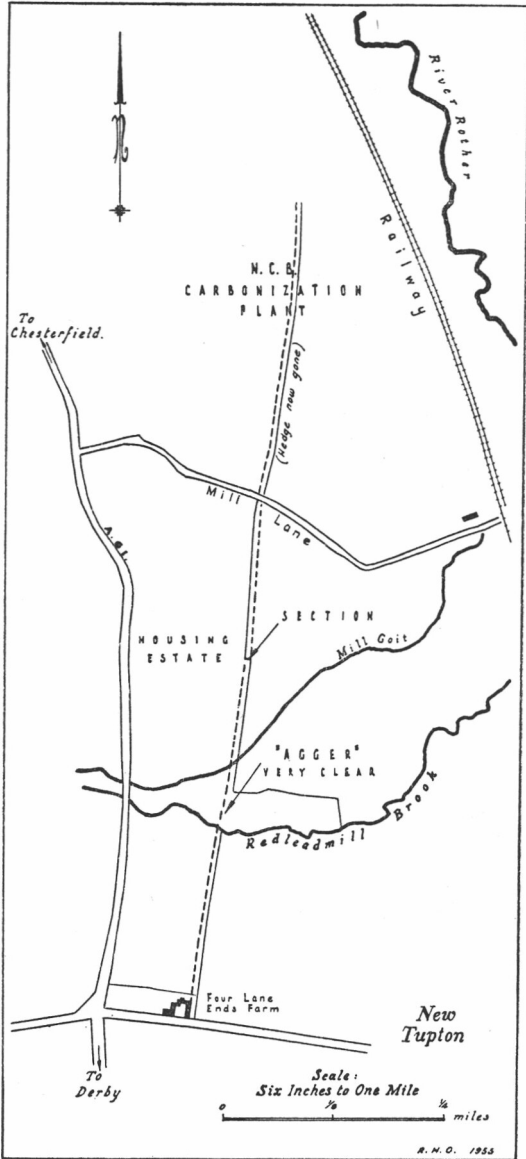
In May 1954 excavation across this mound revealed that it was indeed a surviving portion of the Roman road, originally constructed exactly as at Wingerworth, but in a much inferior state of preservation. Of the surface stones only few survived, and in addition a layer of earth, about a foot thick, had been placed on the top — evidently a post-Roman deposit. The core of rammed gravel and clay still survived underneath, however, and it was noted that the width of the road was again 17 ft. On the top of the embankment on the south side of the stream, surface metalling was exposed immediately below the turf.⁷

One final point relative to the course of the Street hereabouts may be added. Gratton and Bishop Bennett state that it was particularly clear in the Quakers' Burial

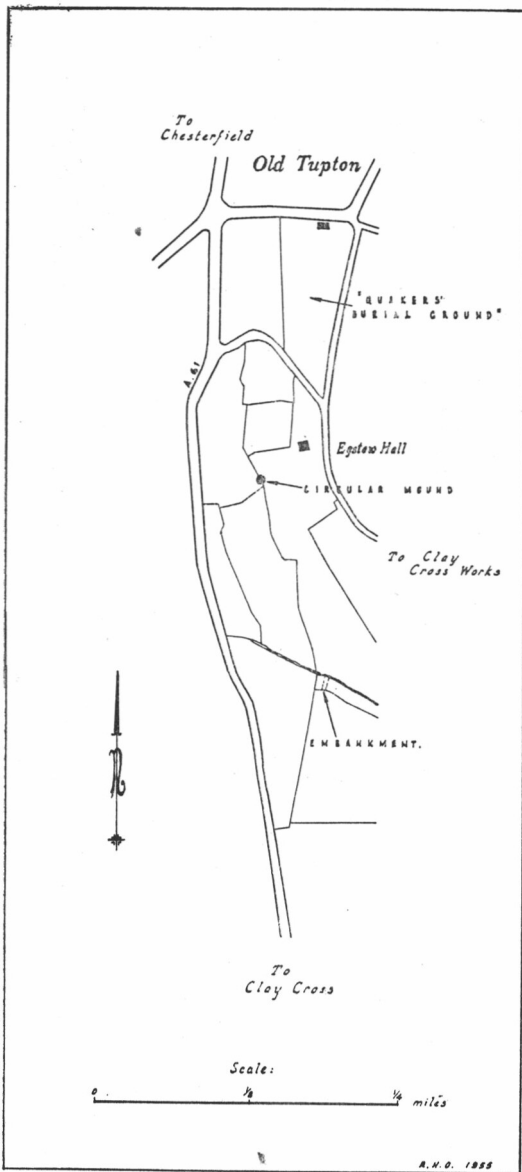
⁵ Pegge, *Roads through the Coritani*, p. 27; Lysons V, p. ccxi; Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 290. Gratton's "occupation lane" is clearly the old lane from Egstow to Clay Cross Works, still in parts rough and grass-grown.

⁶ Shown as the second field on the 6" O.S. Map, but the hedge half-way down from the Hall is now almost non-existent.

⁷ Pegge, *loc. cit.* (followed by Bishop Bennett) also states that there was at Egstow a "fine large barrow." This would seem to refer to a circular mound crossed by the western hedge of the same field about a third of the way down, which is very striking as one enters the field from beside the farm-house. A trial trench cut on its eastern side revealed that it contains numerous fragments of stone and brick of a distinctly modern appearance.



Ryknield Street (shown by dotted line) at New Tupton and Wingerworth.
 Based on O.S. with permission.



Traces of Rykniel Street at Egstow and Old Tupton.

Based on O.S. with permission.

Ground. This, according to local inhabitants, was the field on the western side of the narrow road from Egstow to Tupton; a faint ridge running up this field nearly parallel to the road is still discernible and invites excavation.

I wish to express my thanks to Mr. H. O. Hawkins, Clerk to the Chesterfield Rural District Council, for permission to excavate at Wingerworth, to Mr. Stone of Egstow Hall Farm for permission to excavate on his land, and to Mr. Levick for his drawing of the maps. Thanks are also due to members of the Chesterfield Historical Association Archæological Group who worked on the first excavation, and to those members of the teaching staff and pupils of Netherthorpe Grammar School who participated in the digging at Egstow.

EXPLORATION OF PREHISTORIC SITES IN EAST DERBYSHIRE.

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THE excavation of Ash Tree Cave, near Whitwell, has been continued by Mr. Leslie Armstrong, Dr. Arthur Court, Mr. W. H. Hanbury and Mr. Horace Jones; also the reconnaissance of the district in search of further sites of Creswellian occupation, but so far, without success.

Ash Tree Cave. The excavation of the central cross-section of the cave has been sunk to a depth of 15 ft. 6 ins. over a third of the length and to 14 ft. 6 inches over the remainder. Bed rock was reached at a depth of 14 ft. 6 ins. near the north wall, early in July, but at present has only been exposed over a width of 2 ft. 6 ins., because the limestone dips southwards at an angle of approxi-