

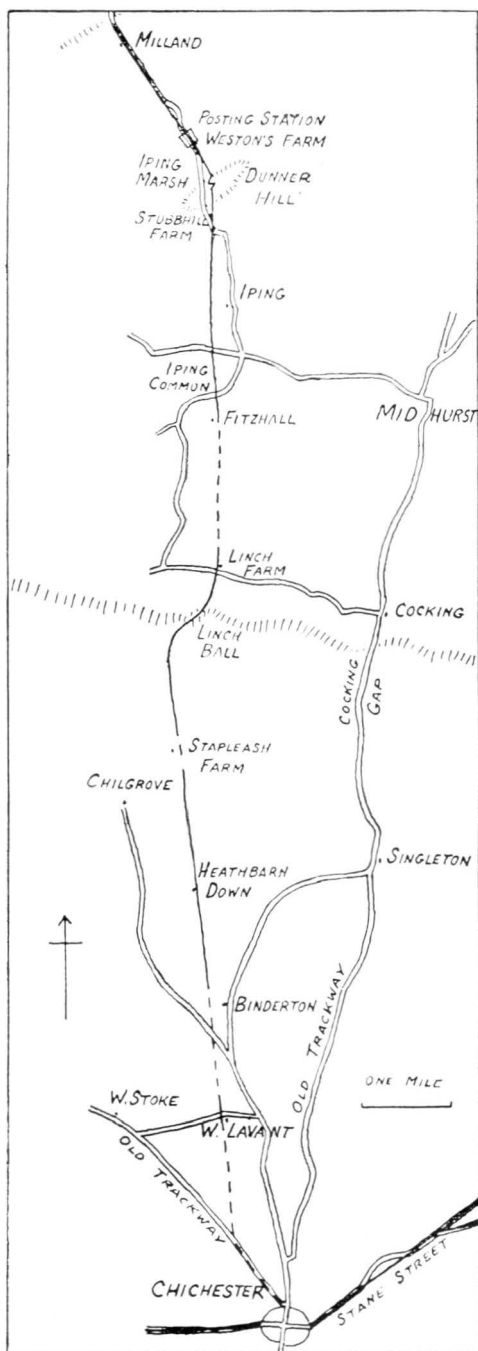
Sussex Archæological Society

RECENT DISCOVERIES BY THE ORDNANCE SURVEY OF ROMAN ROADS IN SUSSEX

BY IVAN D. MARGARY, F.S.A.

SINCE the close of the last war the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey has been reconstituted under the active leadership of the Archaeology Officer, C. W. Phillips, F.S.A. Not only have greatly improved arrangements been introduced in the office for the complete recording of antiquities on the maps, but the staff of the Division have been suitably trained in field work and observation. It is an immense gain to archaeology that the Survey should, through a cadre of trained observers, be properly fitted to assess the true nature of alleged antiquities shown to them, and also be capable of recognizing unrecorded examples in the field. Previously, of course, we owed much to the pioneer efforts of O. G. S. Crawford, the first Archaeology Officer of the Survey, whose work in the field was largely single-handed—a colossal task. He opened a new era in the recording of antiquities on the maps for which we cannot be too grateful, but his time was necessarily much occupied with the correction and removal of the numerous errors that had crept into the maps through the well-meaning but quite uninstructed efforts of the field surveyors to record antiquities of whose nature they had little, if any, personal knowledge. Then came the war, and thus it is only now that the archaeological training of the Survey is beginning to bear increasing fruit.

The air photograph cover of Great Britain is now examined by the Survey as a matter of routine for the possible disclosure of unrecorded field antiquities, and in the course of this work a small rectangular earthwork



at Iping Marsh, four miles north-west of Midhurst, attracted attention. It was bisected by a straight but unimportant minor road and thus appeared as a possible example of the *mansio* type, like Alfoldean, which in fact it proved to be. Hence, of course, the road was also Roman, and further search showed clear traces of it on Iping Common and on the Downs between Linch Ball and Binderton, pointing towards West Lavant. It is clearly a route intended to link Chichester with some centre to the north-west, and, as it was important enough to have a posting-station, this seems likely to have been Silchester, although no trace of the road has as yet been certainly identified beyond Milland.

Next, a search was made on the photographs for traces of the western end of that east-west road which is conveniently termed the Greensand Way, for this part of it had eluded discovery hitherto. It was found, by a distinct alignment of remains from Buncton to Hurston Warren golf links, having made a slight turn from the earlier line east of Buncton, and this linked up satisfactorily with traces of an embankment across the Arun marshes west of the Lickfold Roman villa, and with a short length of old raised track (noted long ago by Allcroft)¹ leading directly towards Stane Street close by Hardham Camp.

Details of these discoveries and of some confirmatory field work upon them were reported to me by the Archaeology Division, and, as their correspondent on Roman roads in this area, I was requested to prepare the material for publication. I have myself examined on the ground all the routes mentioned but, apart from the addition of a few confirmatory details, it must be clearly understood that all these discoveries are due entirely to the initiative and observation of members of the staff of the Division.

I. THE MILLAND-CHICHESTER ROAD

The general direction of this road continued to the north-west would bring it a little to the east of Silches-

¹ *Waters of Arun*, p. 21, and map, p. 23.

ter, but it is quite likely that a slight change of direction would have been made at some point on the high ground of Hampshire north of Bentley. Until traces of it can be proved this must, of course, be purely conjectural, but the existence of the posting-station at Iping Marsh makes it clear that the road was an important route, presumably to such a tribal capital.

North of Milland Hill it is possible that hedge banks west of Ripsley House and Ripsley Farm, and along the pond bay of Folly Pond (which may be based upon some older embankment) may represent the line, but traces are disappointingly absent on the heaths beyond, where Sussex and Hampshire meet.

From Milland southward the existence of the road is definitely proved, and it was constructed upon three main alignments:

1. Milland Hill–Dunner Hill (south-east of Iping Marsh).
2. Dunner Hill–Linch Ball (on the South Downs).
3. Linchball Wood–West Lavant.

The Route. From Milland Hill the modern road runs practically straight to Iping Marsh except for a small deviation north of Lyford's Bridge where the alignment is, however, preserved by a hedgerow and parish boundary. At Weston's Farm, 400 yds. south-east of the bridge, the road passes through the posting-station, the farm itself being on the southern border of the enclosure. This measures about 380×350 ft., rather smaller than either Hardham or Alfoldean on Stane Street; its banks are quite clearly visible as swellings in the fields on either side of the road, which appears to run slightly nearer to the western bank, although excavation would be necessary to determine if this were so originally.

At Weston's Copse the modern road leaves the alignment to seek an easier course round the west side of the steep Dunner Hill, but a trace of the old *agger* can be seen on the heath land of Iping Marsh, just north of the small mission church, continuing the alignment towards the east side of Robins Bottom (where a Roman pot was

once found),¹ from which a deeply sunk zigzag road ascends the steep escarpment. It is very probable that this zigzag is in origin Roman, for this is just the manner in which such a slope would have been tackled.

At the top a disused terrace-way can be seen leading due south from the existing lane upon the new alignment to Linch Ball, along the west side of Upper Reynolds Wood to Stubbhill Farm, where the modern road joins it for a few yards before turning off again at Captain's Wood. An old hedgerow bank marks the *agger* southward through this wood as far as Hammer Lane (leading to Chithurst from Iping). In the fields leading down to the Rother it is lost, save perhaps for a slight hollow traceable down the slope, but immediately beyond the river a fine hollow-way leads up from the bank into Crowshole Copse and it is then clearly marked as a terrace and hollow-way on to the farm there. The road was lucky in its crossing of the Rother at this point, for had the alignment lain a few yards farther west a difficult climb up the steep southern bank would have been necessary.

The road is next very clearly traceable right across Iping Common, first as an *agger*, then in a deep gully (which has been deepened by later quarrying), then as an *agger* between large ditches 60 ft. apart, which show very plainly when viewed from the south side of the Common by reason of the grassy vegetation upon them. The *agger* is easily traceable right up to the modern road by Fitzhall, and just before reaching it a little pond is embayed by the *agger*. The existing track past Fitzhall Farm (with parish boundary) marks the line, and the *agger* is very plain, 24 ft. wide, in rough ground between the two lakes there.

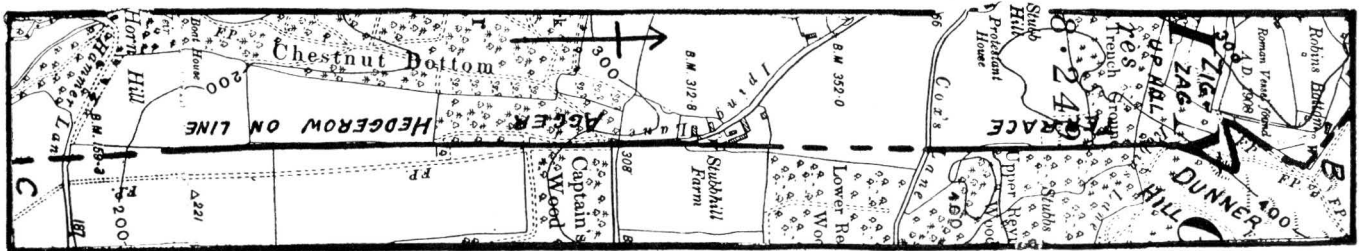
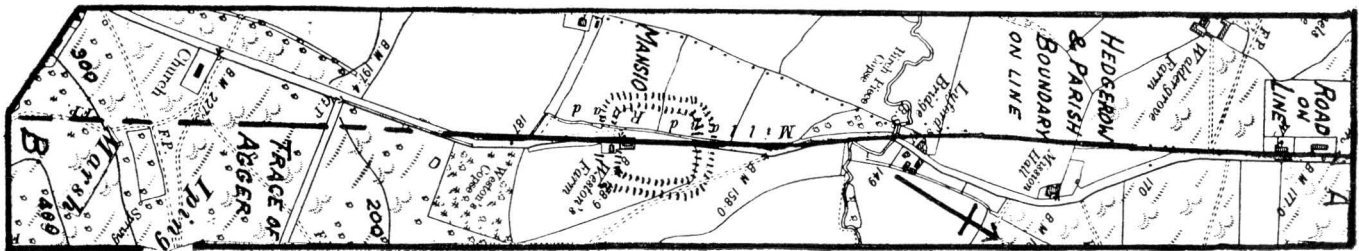
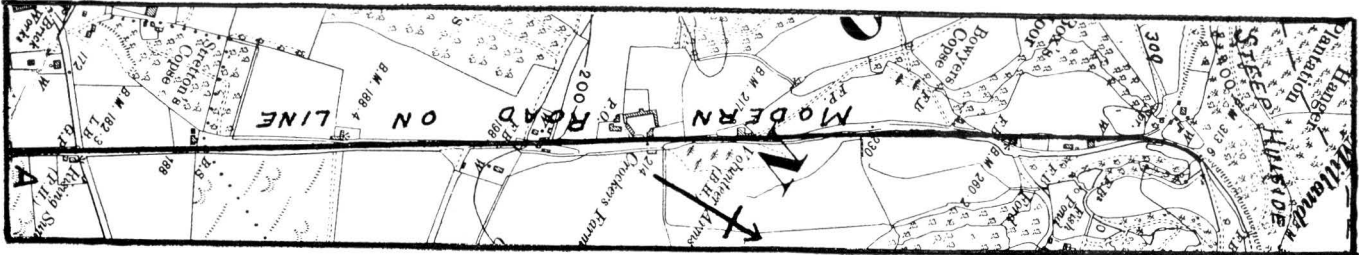
The hedgerow bank along the west side of Haccott's Copse, with parish boundary, next marks it nearly to the Midhurst Railway, and then, except for a doubtful trace of the *agger* in the next wood, Picked Reeds, there is nothing until we near Linch Farm at the foot of the Downs. Here it seems likely that a stony bank on the

¹ *S.A.C.* LII. 194. The note also refers to a tradition of a Roman town or settlement in Iping Marsh, obviously the posting-station.

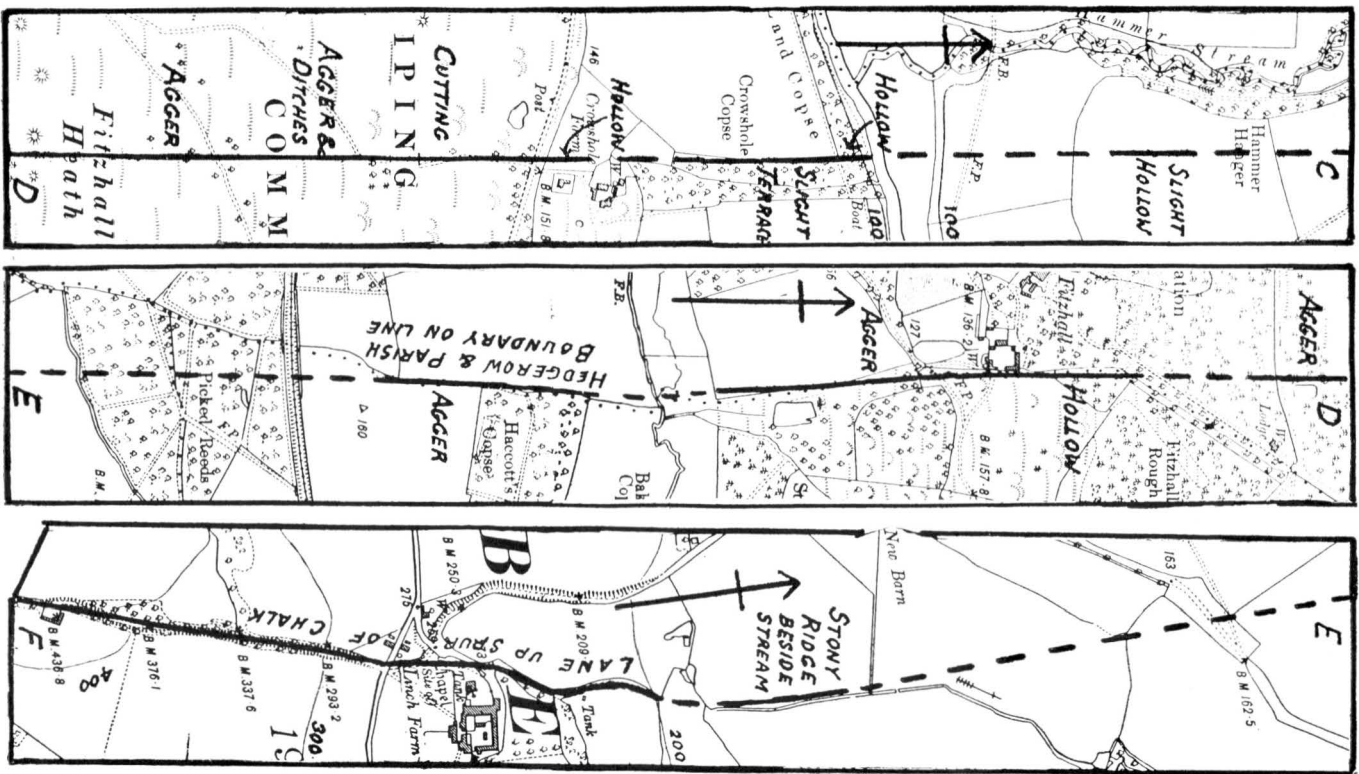
west side of a little stream marks it, and this becomes a lane leading up to the farm along a very prominent spur of the Downs (responsible, no doubt, for the name 'Linch' = 'bank') which gives this route a remarkably convenient ascent to the escarpment, up a natural ramp as it were. A lane leads directly to the top, curving under the north-west face of Linch Ball as a terrace-way of the usual pattern, and crossing the main ridge at a col between Linch Down and Didling Hill. A parish boundary follows the upper part of the ascent, but at the summit this crosses the ridge as a modern boundary bank a few yards east of the Roman road, whose slight *agger*, 15 ft. wide, can soon be traced onwards to Linchball Wood, where it runs first west of, then under, and then east of, the boundary bank for a long distance through the woods. For the first 570 yds. from the main ridge the road trends to SSW. along a spur and so avoids a deep combe on the east, then the new alignment begins, slightly east of south, and is followed very rigidly over Stapleash Down, Warren Down, and Heathbarn Down, certainly as far as Binderton and probably on through West Lavant.

In the lower part of Linchball Wood, where it is east of the boundary bank, the *agger* is clearly seen, about 30 ft. wide, with heavy flint metalling, then where the modern lane to Stapleash bears away to the west it ascends through the wood called The Ditches, first as a terrace on the hillside and then as a distinct *agger*, 24 ft. wide, with much flint. There is no trace of it in the field just east of Stapleash Farm, but the ascent to Stapleash Down is marked by a terrace-way with a faint *agger* beyond on the summit, the line being conveniently marked by an electricity pylon which stands upon it. A crop mark on an air photograph continued the line into the next field towards Hylters's Farm and a slight hollow is visible there, possibly from removal of metalling.

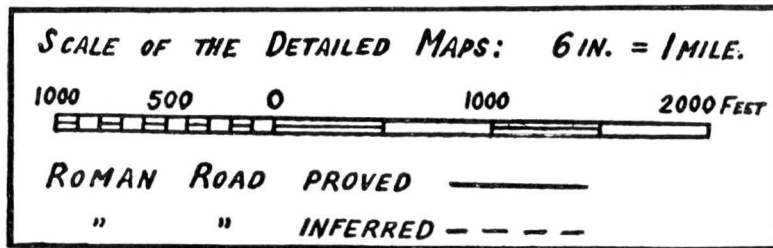
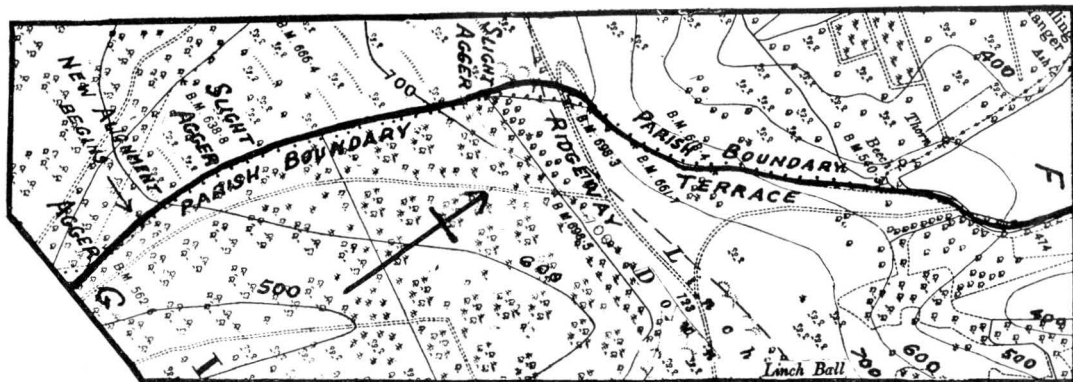
After crossing the valley below Hylters a slight *agger* is visible up the slope to Warren Down, and then very clearly in the rough ground between this and Heathbarn Down as a pronounced *agger*, 30 ft. wide, becoming a



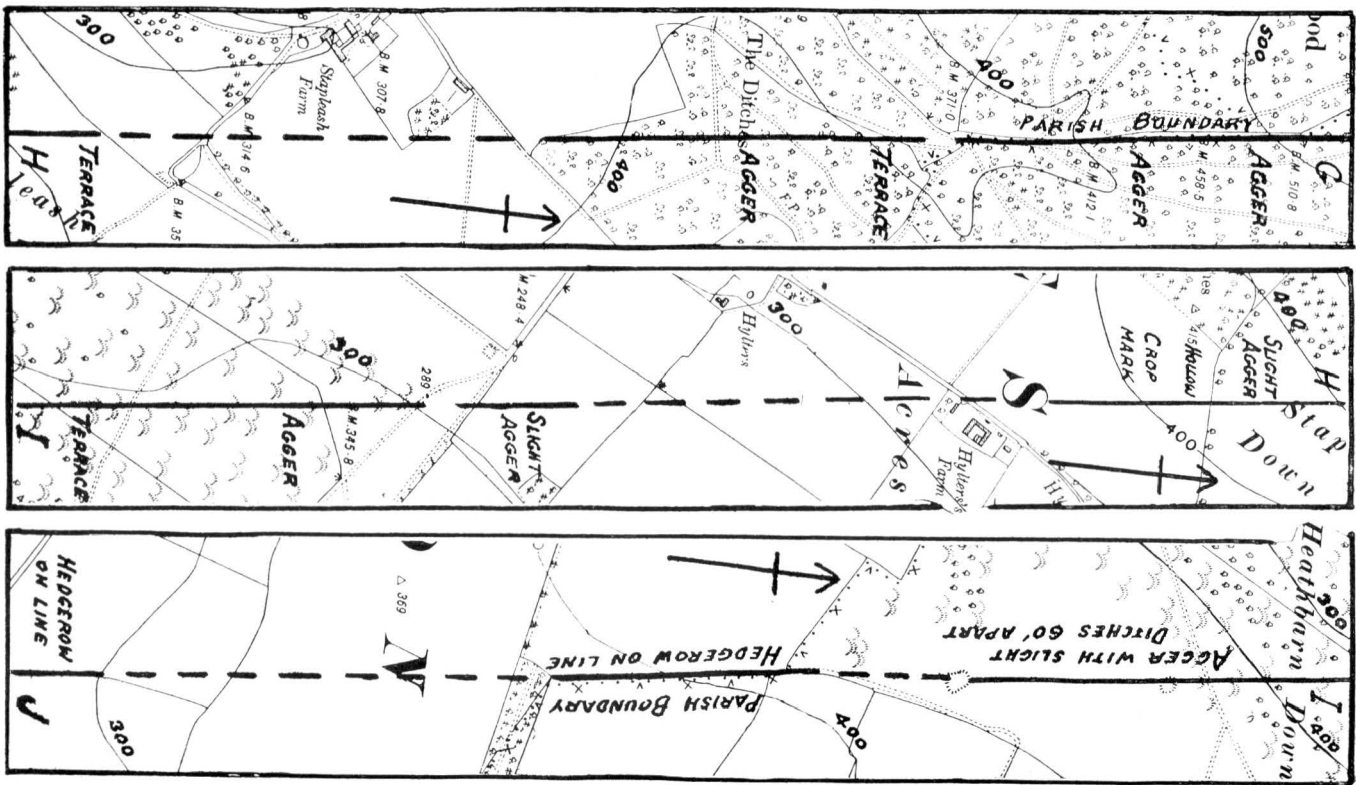
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terrace up the next steep slope. On Heathbarn Down it was very clearly shown on an air photograph, and is a slight *agger*, 24 ft. wide, between ditches of the small type spaced 60 ft. apart. These are distinctly visible upon the ground, but are not easy to distinguish at first sight. Beyond this Down a hedgerow with parish boundary continues the exact alignment to the west end of Hangbush Copse, a half-mile north of Binderton House, after which no traces of the road have been found. If the alignment were still followed, however, it would pass just east of Langford Farm buildings and then pick up exactly the north-south portion of Two Barns Lane leading into West Lavant. If it continued on this line it would meet at East Broyle Copse the old track-way, now Old Broyle Road, leading from Bow Hill and Stoke Down into Chichester by the North Gate. This track-way is pre-Roman and its use in this route would have saved a mile or so of road-making, so the supposition is quite a likely one.

II. THE GREENSAND WAY: BUNCTON-HARDHAM CAMP

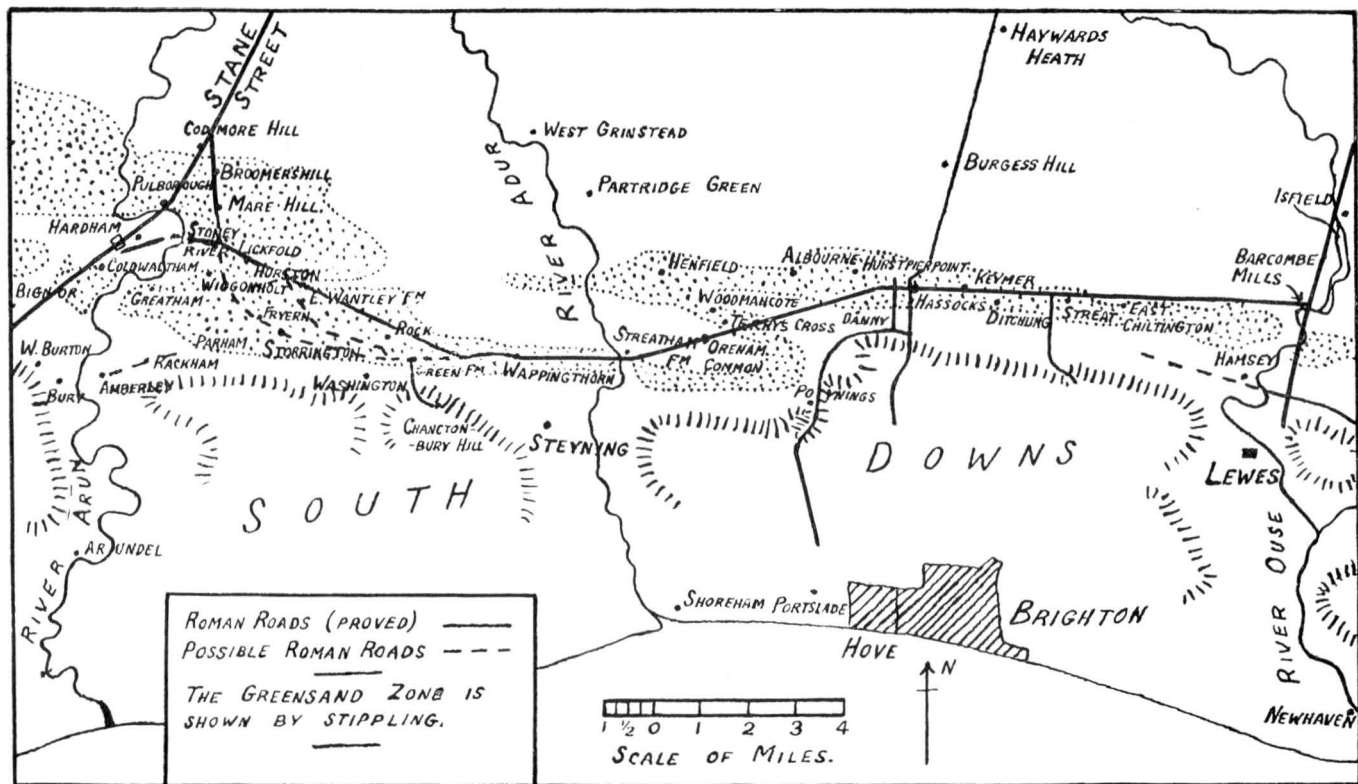
It may be recalled that the course of this east-west road was traced in 1933 from Barcombe Mills, on the London-Lewes Way, through Streat, Ditchling, and Hassocks as far west as the neighbourhood of Buncton¹, where definite traces of it were lost. It seemed almost certain that its true destination lay on the Stane Street at or near Hardham posting-station. Examination of the air photographs has now disclosed its course, lying farther to the north upon a fresh alignment. With this new information as a guide the route is quite clear, but Fate has conspired to make it entirely invisible for the first mile or so from Buncton, and I think no apology is needed for having failed to find it there without this new aid.

The first obviously visible part of the new alignment is a line of hedgerow and lane, with a parish boundary, which crosses the main Ashington-Worthing road a short half-mile north of the hamlet of Rock and leads

¹ *S.A.C.* LXXVI. 7.

north-west for half a mile to Rock Nursery and Mutton's Farm. Even this piece is rendered inconspicuous on the 6-inch map through lying diagonally half-and-half upon adjoining sheets! Midway between this part and Buncton the photographs showed a distinct mark diagonally across a field, 570 yds. south-east of Upper Chancton Farm, exactly upon the same alignment. This mark is clearly visible from the Buncton-Washington road, nearly half a mile distant, but is almost invisible close up; it is due to a very slight terracing along the gentle slope where the road ran, now almost obliterated by ploughing. This is the first certain trace of the new alignment, which would have begun close to the north side of Buncton Manor Farm moat, where a short piece of bank may be part of it. Between there and Wiston Rectory there is no sign.

Continuing north-west along the same alignment from Rock Nursery, the line passes through Gravelpit Plantation (now houses and gardens), emerging as a distinct terrace upon the north slope, and then very visible as an *agger* across a little field in front of some old cottages. After crossing the Warminghurst-Storrington road the *agger* is again seen in Limekiln Piece and between Duke's Piece and Merrywood. Then there is nothing for half a mile to Merryhill (on the Thakeham-Storrington road), where one of the most striking parts of the remains begins. First this is a hedgerow line to New Buildings (Greenhurst), where some ancient cottages stand upon the *agger*, then this can be clearly seen as a nicely cambered bank, $13\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide, first south of the road to Roundabout and then north of it. The alignment passes exactly through the house marked 'Roundabout' on the 6-inch map, and is perhaps seen as a piece of faint *agger* in the gardens of 'Cobbers' and 'Cranford' to the north-west. A bank in the grounds of the Roundabout Hotel may also be part of it, although very slightly south of the true line. Just beyond, between the entrance gate of 'Sunflower Cottage' and the large Fish Pond the *agger* is very distinct, about 30 ft. wide, and it is evident that the modern bay of this pond has utilized the old



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embankment. Traces of the *agger* are again visible between the pond and the little River Chilt beyond which the golf course is reached. The alignment, still rigidly followed although at some inconvenience, here skirts the higher ground but has to climb over several steep spurs and hollows. In the first hollow the *agger* is plainly visible as a dry bank of tawny-coloured grass crossing an arm of the marshy ground. Where it climbs the spurs the side ditches have been deepened by water action, giving the *agger* an exaggerated height. Across the most westerly of the golf fairways a row of bunkers has been scalloped out of the north face of the *agger*, which is still a recognizable bank. Then a convenient little gully takes the road down into the valley of the small River Stor just opposite the site of Lickfold Roman villa. The road must have crossed just to the south of this.

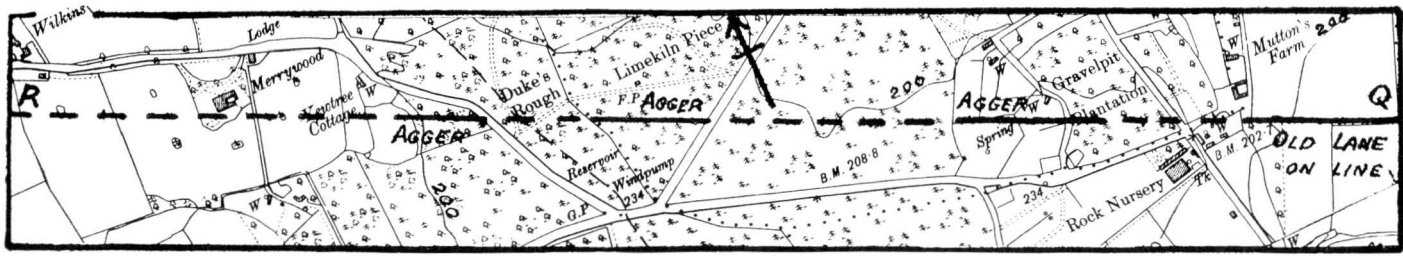
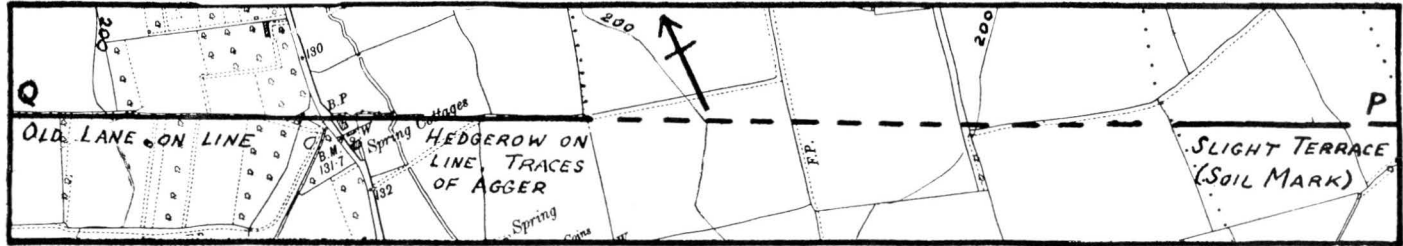
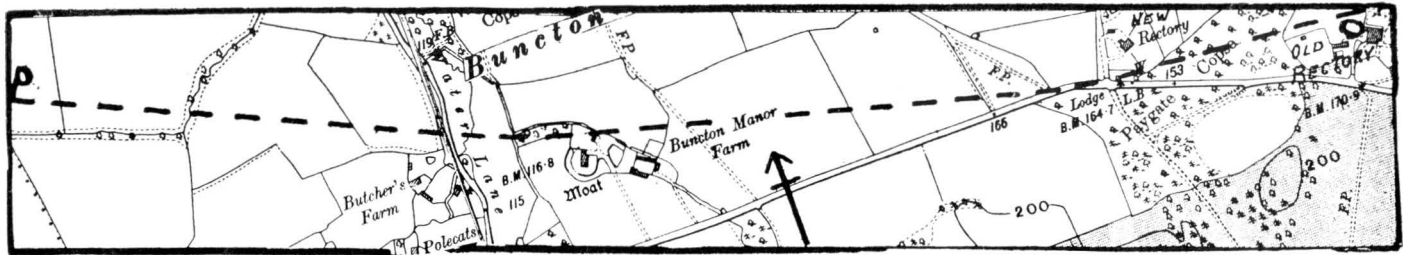
At this point the road is due east of Hardham Camp and it now turns directly towards it. This involves a crossing of the Arun valley half a mile long which must have been a considerable embarrassment to the engineers. It seems a most unlikely spot for such a crossing owing to the width of the marshes, yet the evidence is very definite. If the field in which Lickfold Roman villa stood is crossed due westward a gateway will be found giving access to the marshes. This stands in a distinct hollowing of the scarp bordering the flood-plain. From this point a gently raised but quite definite causeway can be made out traversing the entire width of the marsh to the Arun, which is here close to the farther edge of the flood-plain. For the first half of the way this causeway has a metalled layer, 15–18 ft. wide, just under the turf, and for much of the remainder stone can be felt or seen scattered upon it, and it is dead straight throughout. That it is ancient seems attested by the numerous breaches in it, not all containing the present drainage dykes, and by its faint and irregular outline. Moreover, although used as a cattle track it is noteworthy that the small bridges are often not truly aligned on it, but stand slightly to one side as though

the existence of the causeway was not fully realized when they were made. It is, too, in such exact relation with the Roman alignment east of Lickfold that there can be no reasonable doubt they were connected. The causeway is of interest, too, as showing what the causeway of Stane Street at Pulborough Bridge must have been like in its earliest form before the later accretions were piled upon it.

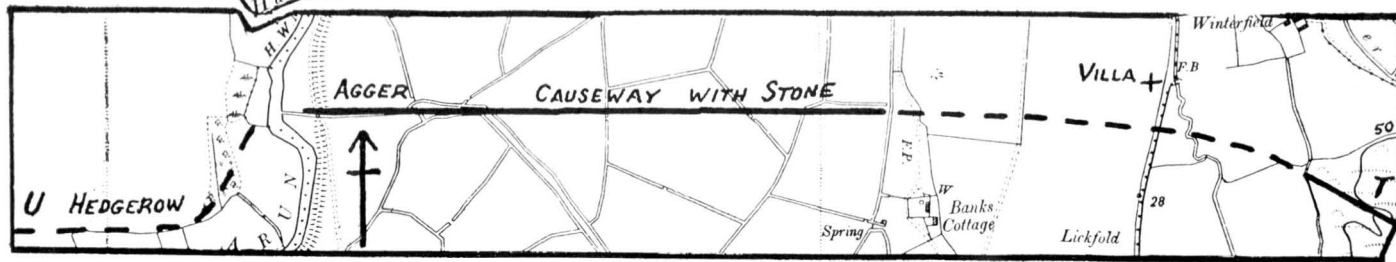
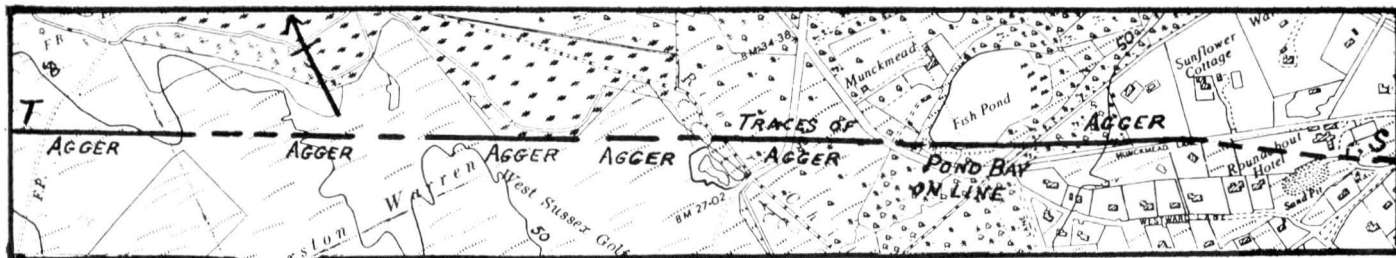
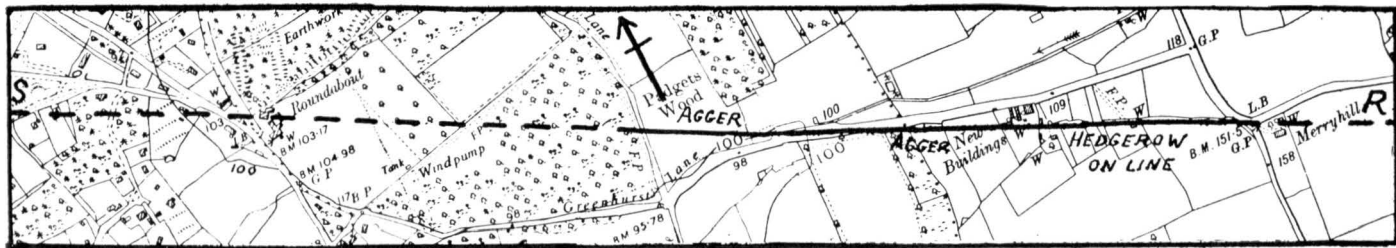
Upon the western bank of the Arun things are less certain for a short distance, but it is probable that the road followed a line of hedgerow almost due west to a farmstead 375 yds. south of Hardham Church. Here a very distinct though unmetalled *agger* is visible for some 440 yds., and, when this fades out, the road is only 500 yds. from Hardham Camp or posting-station. A metalled layer was proved on this line only 90 yds. from it, and it seems likely that the road joined Stane Street just outside the south-west entrance.

Earthwork at Roundabout. Since it is shown upon the map-strip R-S a note should perhaps be included here upon this unknown earthwork, which lies upon a distinct ridge just north of the modern road junction at Roundabout. A wide and deep fosse appears intended to guard it from the ridge to the east, and from this fosse at its upper end a square enclosure with quite a feeble bank and ditch extends westward for some 90 ft. A few yards beyond its western side a similar deep fosse (not shown on the Ordnance Map but inserted in the map-strip) runs down to the road and appears to be a defence on that side similar to the eastern fosse. Both fosses fade out at the northern ends. The form of this earthwork is anomalous, and it seems very unlikely that it was Roman or connected with the Roman road near by, though in the circumstances it is possible.

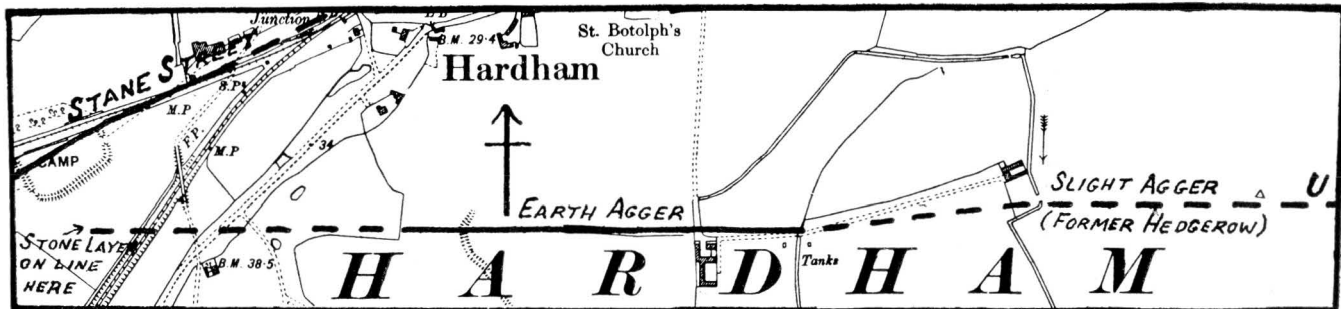
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