

IX—THE ORIGIN OF THE MILITARY ROAD FROM NEWCASTLE TO CARLISLE

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The failure of Field Marshal Wade to halt the progress of the rebel force of Prince Charles and to bring relief to Carlisle had drawn attention to the need for improved communications between that city and Newcastle upon Tyne. Wade had left his camp on the Newcastle Town Moor on November 16th, 1745, and after struggling for two days to get troops and guns along roads that were hopelessly inadequate, had progressed no further than a mile or two beyond Hexham. His difficulties, however, have not always been fully appreciated and for that reason some account of his march seems appropriate. During October government forces had steadily accumulated in the Newcastle area and been encamped upon the *Towns Common*. A report in *Newcastle Courant* of November 2nd also quoted by Brand in his *History of Newcastle upon Tyne* estimates their numbers at "about 15,000 effective men in high spirits"¹ though the *Journal* puts the total as high as 20,000. The rebel strength at this time was probably about 4,500.

Carlisle had been occupied on the 15th November and Wade struck camp next day. An almost contemporary account of his movements, first published in Edinburgh in 1748, can be found in *A History of the 1745 Rebellion* by Andrew Henderson. His second edition, from which the following extract is taken, was produced in London whither he had gone as a teacher of Mathematics. He says,²

Wade being assured of their Rout, prepared to intercept them;

¹ And also mentions that fifty thousand weight of biscuit is ordered for them!

² P. 57.

but the Rigour of the Season, their late forced Marches, and a Kind of Flux among the Troops, retarded his Operations till the 16th, that he put his Army in Motion for the Relief of Carlisle, now in the Hands of the Enemy. His design was to decamp at Daybreak; but to the Prejudice of the Expedition, by moving from the left, the Swift Troops had the van, and they would not stir till 10 o'clock. The weather now excessively cold, the snow lying three feet deep upon the Ground, and a Hard Frost, were difficulties the Army must encounter.

Henderson claims that his facts have been carefully checked and independently revised and though we may think three feet of snow to be something of a generalisation, it is always possible that there had been extensive local drifting. Indeed support comes from another quarter, namely *Scottish Highlands, Clans and Regiments* Vol. I³ which refers on page 592 to "a deep snow which had just fallen", i.e. at this time. Henderson further reports that the infantry with Major-Generals Howard and Oglethorpe and Brigadiers Cholmondeley and Mordaunt at their head arrived at Ovington at night. Alarm was felt for the last column, many of whom seemed likely to succumb to fatigue upon roads "terribly broken and full of ice" so that countrymen were sent out with lights and carts to bring them up, a process that went on till the march was continued next morning at nine. The first troops reached Hexham about four in the afternoon, the rear at midnight when, says Henderson, they could proceed no further because of the snow. They pitched camp on the south side of the union of the two Tynes and were provided with straw by the townsfolk who also kindled fires all over the ground as a protection against the severe cold.

Some five years later March 8th, 1751,⁴ when Parliament was deliberating the need for the Military Road, evidence was given to a select committee on the state of the existing "road" between Newcastle and Carlisle by three of Wade's

³ Edited by John S. Keltie, F.S.A. Scot. and published 1875. Kindly loaned to the writer by Mr. S. Henderson of North Shields.

⁴ See Journals of the House of Commons, vol. 26, 1750-54, p. 12. It must also be remembered that the year will appear as 1750 since the Parliamentary New Year still began in late March.

former officers and a Mr. Thomas Sayer. One of the officers was (now) Maj.-Gen. Cholmondeley who informed the Committee

That during the Time of the late Rebellion, he marched with the Troops from Newcastle, which were ordered to Carlisle to intercept the Rebels: That on the First Day the Troops set out at Seven in the Morning, and it was Eleven at Night before they arrived at Ovingham, which is only Eight Miles from Newcastle; and the next Day they set out at the same time, and marched to Hexham, where they did not arrive till Eleven of the Clock at Night, and the Carriages did not come in till next Day:

That the Distance from Newcastle to Hexham is no more than Sixteen computed Miles; and in good Road an Army will march Sixteen Miles in Eight Hours; that the Reason of this Delay was the Badness of the Road, which was almost impassable for the Carriages, and quite so for Artillery.

It will be noticed at once that Cholmondeley disagrees with Henderson on the time of departure,⁵ also that he says *Ovingham* and not *Ovington* though perhaps the two places are sufficiently close as to make no real difference to the account. He makes no mention of snow but of course it was the condition of the road upon which he was reporting, not that of the weather. He also underestimates both distances but perhaps some of the details had become less sharp with the passage of time. Be that as it may, his evidence was confirmed by Col. Seabright, Aide to the late Field Marshal, and by a Captain Morgan. All three agreed upon the importance of communications between the two towns "for the commodious Passage of Troops and Carriages on any future occasion". Sayer's remarks concerned the road west of Hexham and he informed the Committee,

That he is well acquainted with the Road from Carlisle to

⁵ See *A History of the Present Rebellion* by John Marchant (published 1746), p. 171. Apparently quoting letters from correspondents to certain sections of the press he mentions the departure of Wade at 10 o'clock with about 16,000 men. Reference is also made to Wade's arrival in Hexham where "finding the roads through the great quantity of snow that had fallen, in a manner impassable" he called a Council of War at which it was resolved to march the army back to Newcastle.

Hexham, which is mostly through an open Country, with very few Houses, not One Part in Ten of the said Road being through inclosed Grounds: That the Country is rocky, mountainous, and boggy, and absolutely impassable, both in Summer and Winter, for heavy Carriages; and there are several Waters in the said Road, which frequently overflow and render it impassable.

Add to Sayer's report the fact that on the official survey of the area (which we shall consider presently) the way from Hexham to Haydon Bridge is marked "Summer Road" and we can see the situation in which Wade found himself. There seems to be abundant testimony both to the foulness of the roads and the severity of the weather and in such circumstances one wonders if even a reduced force without artillery could have made much progress. Wade waited three days for a thaw and, when none came, returned to Newcastle. He arrived on November 22nd, his army almost spent with fatigue and having failed dismally to halt the progress of the rebels.

The important question now was whether the lesson would be learned and communications between east and west improved to a satisfactory standard. The answer is a definite affirmative and though there are still one or two gaps in our knowledge, recent investigation combined with what was already known on the subject will provide a fairly continuous account of how the Military Road came into existence. Contributions by Sir George Macdonald and Lieut.-Col. Spain which had something to say about the original survey of the road have appeared in *Archæologia Aeliana* in 1933 and 1937, while in the *Proceedings* of this Society for 1923-24 Mr. Parker Brewis had, among other things, dissociated Wade from any part in the entire project. As long ago as 1902 T. H. Hodgson had given a brief account in the *Cumberland and Westmorland Transactions* of the Act of 1751 concerning the road. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and there are other articles, as well as a number of isolated references which originated in the contemporary press or in the correspondence of such people as

Dr. Stukeley, but these relate mainly to the actual building of the road rather than to our present concern which is the sequence of events preceding construction. Such questions as who initiated proceedings, who were the surveyors, how did the 1751 act fare in Parliament, who were the "undertakers" and at what cost, still need answers and these we shall attempt to supply.

On April 27th, 1932, at the invitation of this society, Sir George Macdonald delivered a lecture entitled *John Horsley, Scholar and Gentleman*, a report of which duly appeared in *Archæologia Aeliana* 4th series, vol. X, of the following year. In the course of his remarks Sir George referred (page 55) to a folding map signed "N. Hill sculpt^t" which had been found in the British Museum immediately in front of an Act of 1751 authorising the construction of the Newcastle-Carlisle Military Road. Hill's engraving, a copy of which may be seen at Newcastle Central Library, is entitled:

A Survey of the Country between Newcastle and Carlisle Representing the several present Roads and the Tract which is proposed for the New intended Road of communication between these Towns. As also all the Course of the Roman Wall with all the Military Stations, Castella and Military Ways that lye upon this Survey.

In a postscript to his article Sir George suggested that the original map from which Hill had made his engraving might be preserved at the War Office. Ironically, there was an original copy much nearer than he could have supposed for it had been in the possession of the very society he was addressing for almost a century! This copy, evidently long forgotten, had been presented to the Society by John Bell and is referred to in a catalogue of the Library published in 1839.⁶ Still in good order it is now preserved at the Northumberland County Record Office. Nor is it the only

⁶ Mr. W. Tynemouth, F.L.A., Hon. Librarian to the Society, kindly looked up these facts. A further reference to this map, to which attention was drawn by Professor Birley, is to be found in a footnote on p. 465 of vol. X of Northumberland County History.

copy for how a second came to light in March, 1936, has been described by the late Lieut.-Col. G. R. B. Spain in an article entitled *The Original Survey for the Newcastle-Carlisle Military Road—c. 1746* which appeared in *Archæologia Aeliana*, 4th series, vol. XIV of 1937. Mr. G. H. Allgood was examining the contents of a cupboard at Nunwick when he found an oak box containing the map, beautifully hand-drawn in many colours and in excellent condition. The case was labelled in writing so faint as to be decipherable only after treatment:

For Lancelot Allgood Esqre at Hexham near Newcastle upon Tyne to the care of Mr. Greenwood⁷ an exciseman at Newcastle upon Tyne.

Though the state of the Nunwick map is vastly superior to that of its "twin", both measure about ten feet six inches long by two feet wide and cover five sheets joined together to make a roll.⁸ Sir George suggested in a footnote on page 55 that if the original map of *The New Projected Road* could be discovered it would probably reveal the names of the surveyors. In fact neither copy does though this is a subject to which we shall return presently. For the moment, it will be sufficient to note that the original surveys cover an area roughly sixty miles long (i.e. from about three miles east of Newcastle to about two miles west of Carlisle) by about six miles broad at a scale of just over two inches to the mile. There are five insets all concerned with the Roman Wall and its attendant works and the course of the proposed road is shown as a dotted line co-incidental with *Severus Wall* from

⁷ How Greenwood fits into the picture is not clear. Possibly he sometimes acted in a private capacity as a receiving agent for Allgood. For an outline of this exciseman's movements within the service see Col. Spain's article. Recent enquiries have produced no further information.

⁸ This society provides for sale to members a collotype reproduction in reduced dimensions of the Nunwick map. Mr. Allgood kindly permitted the writer to examine the original.

Sir Geo. Macdonald suggested that one purpose of Hill's engraving might be to provide copies for circulation among Members of Parliament while discussions were proceeding. A copy may be seen at Newcastle Central Library.

Newcastle to a point nearly thirty miles west. There are diversions, of course, mainly over Sheldon Common (as the area south of the Wall between Wall Houses and Halton Chesters used to be called) where the dotted line follows *Hadrian's Vallum* and in the Chesters area where advantage is taken of the existing Tyne bridge. Soon after leaving Chesters it returns for a brief spell to the line of the Wall but thereafter follows the Vallum to the point where Wall and Vallum sharply diverge about a mile east of Shield on the Wall. The proposed line, turning south-west, advances independently for some four miles to High Shield when for another mile and a quarter it is superimposed once more upon the Vallum. Not far west of Twice Brewed, however, *New projected road* and Vallum part company, the former following the line of the modern B6318 to Greenhead and then that of A69 (more or less) to Brampton. Thereafter it approximates to the course of B6264, finally stopping just short of the Eden where it apparently joins an existing road (the modern A7) for the remainder of its journey into the city.

Other interesting features are the location of General Wade's Camp on the northern edge of the Newcastle *Towns Common* and again just south of the union of the two Tynes, also the quaint spelling of certain place names such as *Humps Haugh* for Humshaugh or *Leonard Cross Abbey* for Lanercost as though the surveyors had enquired the names of these places of local inhabitants and then recorded what they believed they heard. Several miles of the Stanegate are shown west of Settlingstones as *a Roman Military Way* but nowhere is the course of the Military Way proper recorded. Another matter calling for mention before we take temporary leave of the survey is the fact that John Warburton included in his book *Vallum Romanum* (published 1753) a plan all too similar in most respects—even in its title and insets—to the official survey. Macdonald goes to considerable length to reveal Warburton in his true colours and to show that the official survey, even though he (Sir

George) had not seen it, must have been the basis of Warburton's map. So conclusive are his arguments that no further comment seems necessary though it may be admitted that some details such as the courses of certain existing "roads" are easier to follow on Warburton's map than on the original from which he copied them! To that extent is he useful.

We must now turn attention to the Minutes of the Surveyor General⁹ for 1749 where an entry for 4th April orders that a letter of 31st March from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State for the North, together with the petition from the Nobility and Gentry, desiring a road to be made from Newcastle to Carlisle is to be referred to the Surveyor-General himself. The petition has so far eluded discovery¹⁰ but its general content can easily be ascertained from a passage dated 4th March, 1750/51, in Journals of the House of Commons¹¹ and headed *Carlisle Road*. It had been submitted by the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the Counties of Northumberland and Cumberland and stated, in what is probably the indirect form

That the City of Carlisle, in the County of Cumberland, and the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne, in the County of Northumberland, are situate on the Two principal Passages from the Northern to the Southern Parts of this Kingdom, the one near the Irish Channel, the other near the German Ocean, at the Distance of about Sixty Miles; and that the Road between them is for the most part through a Country uncultivated, and very thinly inhabited, frequently unpassable, and at all times very inconvenient either for Troops or Carriages; and that it has been found by Experi-

⁹ The writer's attention was drawn to two unindexed bundles comprising volumes 34-38 of the minutes of the Surveyor-General (W.O. 47) for the period 1749-51 by Mr. P. A. Penfold of the Public Record Office. A veritable mine of information they proved to be. Valuable assistance with the research was given by Mrs. I. M. Lawson. The Surveyor-General in 1749 was Thos. Lascelles.

¹⁰ A search at the House of Lords Record Office, while failing to find the petition, uncovered the accounts submitted annually to Parliament in respect of the construction of the road. These included contracts with the *undertakers*.

¹¹ Vol. 26, 1750-54, p. 87.

ence, as well during the late Rebellion, as on former Occasions, that the said Passages cannot be properly guarded without a free and open Communication for Troops and Carriages at all times of the Year, between the said City of Carlisle and Town of Newcastle; and that the Want of such a Communication has been attended with great Inconvenience and Danger to this Kingdom, and that a Road proper for that Purpose cannot be laid out, or the Expense thereof defrayed, but by a National Assistance, and the Aid and Authority of Parliament: And therefore praying, That Leave be given to bring in a Bill for laying out, making, and keeping in Repair, a Road proper for the Passage of Troops and Carriages between the said City of Carlisle and Town of Newcastle, in such Manner as to the House shall seem meet.

Who took the lead in initiating the petition and who the signatories were we cannot be sure but it may be significant that the Act, which was the outcome of the petition, nominated several hundred commissioners in Northumberland and only some three dozen in Cumberland if we exclude corporate bodies such as the *Aldermen of Carlisle*. We may guess that perhaps those who were appointed commissioners were also those who had signed the petition and that by reason of the greater numbers involved wider interest had been evoked in Northumberland. If that were so then who more likely to initiate the project than some well known and influential member of local society such as Lancelot Allgood, especially since he is known to have taken a keen interest in the improvement of road communication. It is true that the Allgood letters at this period contain no clue but this need not be conclusive. Indeed it may be of much greater significance that Allgood's name, out of alphabetical order, stands at the head of the list of commissioners and that he received a personal copy of the original survey, of which there cannot have been many. He was, of course, the ancestor of the present owner of Nunwick, Mr. G. H. Allgood, and became Sheriff of Northumberland in 1745, in which capacity he must surely have met Wade, as Lieut.-Col. Spain suggested. In fact it is easy to imagine him listening to the Field Marshal's bitter remarks about the roads over

which he had just struggled to Hexham (where Allgood still had a house) as he compared them with roads that he (Wade) had made in the Highlands some years before. He may even have imparted to Allgood something of his own enthusiasm for road-building for after the latter had become a Member of Parliament in 1749¹² he was actively associated not only with the Military Road but also with the *Corn Road* from Hexham to Alnmouth. He also served on Committees to which details of two roads of Sir William Middleton were referred, viz. one from Longhorsley to the Breamish and the other from Morpeth to Elsdon.¹³ That Allgood could have been the principal initiator of the scheme thus seems not unlikely, though it must be granted that Sir William Middleton and not he steered the Bill through Parliament. This may also be an appropriate point at which to consider Wade's claims¹⁴ since the road has long been associated with his name. If he did urge upon Allgood or anyone else the need for such a road then that was probably the limit of his influence. After being a member for Bath from 1722 he died in March, 1748, so that while it is unlikely that he had any part in organising the petition¹⁵ it is certain that he could have had nothing to do with the construction of a road which, as we shall see, did not commence till 1751.¹⁶

The next relevant entry in the Minutes of the Surveyor-General is dated May 9th, 1749, and states that he has now considered both the letter of the Duke of Newcastle and the Petition and that it is ordered

That Mr. Dugal Campbell Sub Director of Engineers go thither, make an exact Survey of the present Road betwixt New-

¹² As the result of a disputed election the previous year.

¹³ Welford, *Men of Mark*, Vol. 1.

¹⁴ In the preface to his *Vallum Romanum* even Warburton claims to have suggested the road as early as 1715. Allusion to his untrustworthiness has already been made.

¹⁵ Obviously the petition could have been originated some time before its submission to the Surveyor-General.

¹⁶ See Gregory *The Story of the Road*, p. 213, where it is stated that a number of Military roads are often referred to as Wade's but were really made later in the 18th century. Examples are given.

castle and Carlisle, also a Project for Opening a Communication betwixt those Places, and making the same Practicable at all Seasons of the Year for Troops and Carriages to pass and repass, that he transmit the same to the Board, with his Report thereupon, and an Estimate of the Charge of Making it, that the same may be laid before His Majesty.

On May 22nd a further entry directed

That Mr. Hugh Debeig¹⁷ assist Mr. Dugal Campbell in Surveying the Road between Newcastle and Carlisle, and that he follow such Orders as he shall give him from time to time, for the Furtherance and Promotion of His Majesty's Service.

Who the surveyors were has often been pondered. Now that we know, we may simply turn to page 549 of Vol. XXII (Suppl.) of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and find the same answer under the heading of *Debbeig, Hugh!* There follows a long and fascinating account of the career of this brilliant engineer who reached heights that were denied to his superior, Campbell. Military engineers at this time held office under warrants which conferred no regular army status and had their own system of grades which began with that of practitioner engineer and ascended through those of sub-engineer, engineer-extraordinary, engineer in ordinary, sub-director and director to chief engineer. The chief engineer also held the office of surveyor-general until 1750 when the latter office became detached from the engineers. To avoid embarrassment engineers could be granted commissions in various regiments but not till about 1757 was their position improved when, after the direct intercession of the Duke of Cumberland with the King, officers of the Corps of Engineers received military rank.¹⁸

Hugh Debbeig had been born in 1731 and entered the Royal Artillery as Matross at the age of eleven. By 1745 he had become a cadet-gunner and in the following year had been attached as an engineer to the expedition of Sinclair against Lorient. His studies were resumed at the Royal

¹⁷ Elsewhere spelled *Debbeig*.

¹⁸ Details are from Porter, Vol. I, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers*.

Military Academy at Woolwich though in 1747 he was in Flanders with the temporary grade of engineer-extraordinary where by reason of his boldness and intelligence he was made an extra aide to the Duke. In July of the same year he was present at the battle of Val and also at the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom.¹⁹ After conclusion of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle he returned home and was employed in Scotland where in 1747 the survey of the Highlands had begun. The year 1749, as we have seen, brought him to the North of England to assist "Col. Dugald (thus) Campbell in the construction of the Military Road from Newcastle upon Tyne to Carlisle, which with its fourteen bridges, was completed in 1752 . . ." So says the *Dictionary of National Biography* though in the light of recent research we may say that the road was not finished before 1757 and that Campbell and Debbeig were employed upon the survey and not the construction. The rest of Debbeig's career, had we occasion to report on it, would be a remarkable one of service in North America under Wolfe at whose death he was present, of secret work in France and Spain, of high appointments in many places and of compliments from the King. He was even court-martialled for his outspokenness but it made little difference to his progress. He died, a general, in 1810.

With Dugal Campbell the case is different for details of his career have to be gleaned from the history of the Corps of Royal Engineers and from the 1660-1898 list of its officers. The latter gives the bare record of his progress from practitioner to sub-engineer in 1734, to engineer-extraordinary in 1742, to engineer in ordinary in 1744 and ultimately to sub-director (apparently with responsibility for the Berwick-Carlisle area) in 1748. At the outbreak of the '45 Rebellion he was one of the only three engineers known to have been in Scotland at the time and was probably at the defence of

¹⁹ Notes on Debbeig are mainly based upon *Hist. of the Corps of Royal Engineers* and *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Loan of Vols. I and II of History of the Corps and the 1660-1898 list of its officers was obtained from the Institution of Royal Engineers, Chatham. The kindness of Brig. Lacey and Lieut.-Col. Stear is acknowledged.

Edinburgh Castle. He was at Culloden and then in Flanders whither a Warrant of February 3rd, 1747, had ordered a *Brigade of Engineers* and appointed Campbell as chief-engineer at 15s. a day.²⁰ The whole brigade was present at the battle of Val (or Lafeldt). On the next Corps list as at April 16th, 1748, after the suspension of hostilities, Campbell appears as sub-director and Debbeig as practitioner. The account is now continued in the Surveyor-General's minutes where, following the instruction to Campbell of May 9th, 1749, to survey the area between Newcastle and Carlisle, the next relevant entry is one of July 18th which records his claim of £20. 4. 6. for "Horsehire and Expences from London to Berwick and from thence to Newcastle on His Majesty's Service, by Order of the Board" and one from Debbeig for "an allowance of £8. 8. 0. for his Passage, Horsehire and Expences on the Road to assist Mr. Campbell on the Road between Newcastle and Carlisle." Both claims were allowed "except the £1 charged in Mr. Debbeig's Bill for Extraordinary Expences", whatever they may have been! Debbeig's next two claims, however, the first of £9. 15. 9. on October 3rd "for Horsehire and Expences to Newcastle to attend Mr. Dugal Campbell on the Survey of the Road between that place and Carlisle, from the 10th July to the 25th Ultimo" and the second of £11. 15. 2. on December 12th "for Horsehire and other Expences, in Surveying the Road from Carlisle to Newcastle, and coming thence to London", were both allowed in full.

Campbell's final claim, as recorded in a minute of 22nd December amounted to £54. 1. 8. and represented his "Bill of Disbursement and Travelling Expences, on account of the Survey of the Country from Newcastle to Carlisle, for a Road of Communication in the months of July, August and September last".²¹ The importance of this entry lies in the

²⁰ The same Warrant mentions Debbeig as engineer-extraordinary at 5s. a day.

²¹ The same minute also allows a further bill of Campbell's of £24. 10. 0. "on account of Works and Repairs carried on at Berwick and Carlisle between 1st July and 1st ulto."

fact that it dates precisely the survey of the Military Road.

How the two engineers applied themselves to their task is further revealed by another entry for December 22nd, 1749, which is reproduced in full

Mr. Dugal Campbell Sub-Director of Engineers having (Pursuant to Minute of the 9th May last, and agreeable to a Letter the late Master General received from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle with the Petition of the Nobility and Gentry, desiring a Road to be made from Newcastle to Carlisle) transmitted a Report of the several Roads at present used for the Communication between Newcastle and Carlisle, and of the most proper Course for the new intended Road, with an Estimate of the Charge to make the same, and the several Stone Bridges that are necessary upon it, amounting to £22,450 and inclosing a Plan or Survey of all the Country between those Places and some Miles further on each end, extending in all 60 Miles, and about 6 Miles in Breadth,

ORDERED

That the same be sent to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle to lay before His Majesty, and that His Grace be desired to observe in folio 12 of Mr. Campbell's Report, that he proposes to Carry the new Road Sixteen Miles and an half through several Inclosed Grounds, which are private Property, and must be first purchased, the Value whereof is not included in the £22,450 at which the Charge of making the said Road is Estimated by Mr. Campbell.

In six months (July-December) an area of 360 square miles had been surveyed and the map, estimate, and report produced. Whether either man had any part in the actual drawing of the two maps that have been preserved, or of that submitted to the Duke of Newcastle, we cannot tell nor can we digress within the scope of our present study on the subject of the sixteen and a half miles of enclosed ground since Campbell's report has not yet been found. Competent engineer he may have been but antiquary he was not for surely the recommendation to lay the road where possible upon the course of the Wall must have been his and his reasons those of convenience and cheapness. The Act itself was to stipulate that the course of the road should be "from

the West Gate of the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne to East Denton; and from thence by Chapel Houses to Heddon on the Wall, Harlow Hill, Portgate, etc." Upon what else would such a course be based but the surveyors' report though the exact line of the road between the stated points could be left to the discretion of the commissioners who, in the event, were just as guilty as the surveyors?²² The report might even explain why the line of the Military Way was ignored even if much of the actual roadway had fallen into decay. Stukeley had no doubt about the use to which it could have been put, for writing some years later in 1754, he says with no little bitterness

It was the business of the surveyors of the work to trace out this road. They would have found it pretty strait, well laid out in regard to the ground, and it would have been a foundation sufficient for their new road. The late learned Roger Gale and myself rode the whole length of it in 1725, so I speak as an eye witness, and I write down with grief to see so little taste, so little judgement shown by the public in this otherwise laudable undertaking.²³

The remains of the Wall, then, were condemned to an obliteration almost as effective as if they had been carted bodily away. No doubt the decision to re-use one defunct piece of military engineering in the construction of another was hailed by many as a stroke of genius.

Campbell, at any rate, was an indefatigable worker for the next entry concerning him in the Surveyor-General's Minutes is one of June 15th, 1750, which says

Mr. Dougal Campbell, having signified by letter belief that all attempts by Engineers to improve themselves in their profession would be acceptable to the Board, and as there is little service at

²² See *Last days of the Old Roman Wall at Rudchester* by H. L. Honeyman, *PSAN* 4, VI, or the original Denton estate letter at County Record Office, where a report of a "site meeting" of commissioners and others says "We all agreed that the Military road would be best upon the Old Roman Wall through that ground, for it is the strightest (thus) way, the easiest expence and will do the least damage to the ground . . ."

²³ Surtees Soc. 80, vol. III, p. 141, *Stukeley's diary*.

home for him this year desires leave to go abroad to visit the Fortifications in Flanders and Germany to make what observations he could, that the Lieutenant General²⁴ had approved his request and procured the Duke's consent and he only wanted the Board's approbation and leave which he hoped they would grant for a year or two. He would acquaint the Board from time to time where he is, in case he should be wanted to attend his duty.

His request was speedily granted for another entry of the same date directs that a letter be sent to Mr. Smelt, Engineer in Ordinary at Carlisle

to acquaint him that as the Board have given leave to Mr. Sub-Director Campbell to go abroad for his improvement they commit the care and direction of the Works in the Berwick and Hull Divisions to him and require him strictly to observe and follow the instructions given the said Mr. Campbell and that a copy of the same be given him.

There is little more to tell of Campbell though further research into the Minutes beyond 1750 might reveal fresh details. The official history of the Corps²⁵ mentions him again in 1755, still as sub-director but with the Medway as his station and Debbeig as one of his subordinates, and two further entries in List of Officers of the Corps (1660-1898) concern him. One completes his War Services with the terse entry *Louisbourg, 1757* and the second records his death at sea between Halifax and New York in September of the same year.²⁶

To make further progress we must return to Journals of the House of Commons.²⁷ The petition, with the King's recommendation signified by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was presented to the House on 4th March, 1750 (51), and referred to a committee for the purpose of examin-

²⁴ Evidently the Lieut.-General of Ordnance who at this time was probably Sir John Ligonier.

²⁵ Vol. 1, p. 172-3.

²⁶ Further references to Campbell and examples of his work may be seen at the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, but they seem to throw no fresh light on our present study.

²⁷ Vol. 26, 1750-54, as cited above.

ing "the Matter of Fact" contained in the petition. This Committee consisted of over fifty nominated members (including the familiar names of Middleton, Allgood and Blckett) and all who served for the six northern counties. They were to meet that same afternoon at five in the Speaker's Chamber "and have Power to send for Persons, Papers and Records". Those sent for evidently included the four gentlemen mentioned above (Cholmondeley, Seabright, Morgan and Sayer) and on March 8th Sir Wm. Middleton included their testimony in the course of his report from the Committee to the House. Cholmondeley's and Sayer's remarks we have already discussed and need only add that Seabright considered

"That if this Road was passable for Troops and Carriages, an Army might march from Newcastle to Carlisle in less Time than they could from Edinburgh to Carlisle."

The report concluded

And it appeared to your Committee, That it is impossible to repair the said Road by the ordinary Course of Law, nor even by the erecting Turnpikes thereon, it being open in some Parts for Twenty Miles together, so that the Payment of the Tolls might easily be evaded; but could they be collected, the Country having little Commerce, and being uncultivated, a very small Income would arise therefrom, the Inhabitants for Twenty Miles together, not being able to furnish Forty Carriages towards the Repair of the said Road; there being in some Parts no House to be seen for Ten or Twelve Miles together.

It was then ordered that the Report be referred to a Committee of Supply and when this met on April 22nd a sum not exceeding £3,000 was granted towards the laying of the road. It was then moved that the report from the Committee which had considered the petition be read and when this was done leave was given to bring in a bill for the making of the road which Sir Wm. Middleton, Sir John Mordaunt, Mr. Allgood and others were instructed to prepare and introduce.

On April 29th, 1751, Middleton presented the Bill for its First Reading. The Second Reading took place on May 3rd and on May 10th the House resolved into Committee to consider the bill further. On 13th Lord Dupplin reported such amendments as had been made. These were read a second time, and, with a further alteration to one, agreed. Bill and amendments were then ordered to be engrossed and on May 16th came the Third Reading when it was resolved that the Bill should pass and the title be *An Act for laying out, making and keeping in repair, a road proper for the Passage of Troops and Carriages from the City of Carlisle to the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne*. Sir William was then ordered to carry the Bill to the Lords and desire their concurrence. This was speedily forthcoming for on May 22nd the Royal Assent was granted and in less than one month Bill had become Act.

The Act,²⁸ of which we can only mention the more pertinent details, runs to nearly forty pages. Stripped of its verbiage, the preamble echoes the general tone of the Petition by observing that a road "proper for the passage of Troops, Horses and Carriages at all times of the year" would be of great service to the public; indeed the lack of such a road had been found to be a great inconvenience and danger to the realm. It could not, however, be laid unless at public cost and with the sanction of Parliament although it was anticipated that when finished maintenance would be recovered by the levying of tolls and duties. Next came the Commissioners for Cumberland, some three dozen being mentioned by name, and the Mayor, Recorder and Aldermen, and the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle *for the time being*. The Northumberland Commissioners ran to nearly four hundred ranging far and wide over the county and covering practically every family of note. Several corporate bodies, such as the Aldermen of Newcastle and the Bailiffs of Morpeth are also included. The course the road is to

²⁸ XXIV George II.

follow comes next, starting from the West Gate of Newcastle and passing by East Denton, Chapel Houses, Heddon on the Wall, Harlow Hill, Port Gate, Chollerford Bridge, Walwick, Carrawburgh, Whinshields, Clowgill (Closegill), Brampton, High Crosby, Drawdikes, and Stanwix to the Scotch Gate of the City of Carlisle. Rules follow regarding the calling of meetings and the conducting of business; seven may act for the rest and all commissioners shall defray their own expenses and take the stipulated oath. Officers are to be appointed, accounts kept, and copies of accounts and contracts delivered to each House of Parliament within thirty days after the opening of each session. Commissioners are to be responsible for the detailed setting out of the road, i.e. between the points already specified, and this, as we have seen, is highly relevant in apportioning blame for the utilisation of the remains of the Wall in the eastern sector. No part of the road is to be less than twenty-seven feet in width where conditions permit.

Then follows a multitude of clauses concerning the acquisition of materials, cutting of drains and ditches, purchase of land, and resolving of differences which are probably usual in most Highway Acts and which need not detain us. Of more interest, however, are the instructions that when the road is completed (i.e. *passable for Troops, Horses etc.*) notice shall be given to the Newcastle newspapers²⁹ and also posted at the Town Hall in Carlisle and the Moot Hall in Newcastle; and that of the £3,000 to be paid out of Supplies for the year 1751³⁰ £1,000 shall be paid to the Cumberland Trustees, £2,000 to those of Northumberland. A glance at the map will show there to be roughly two thirds of the road in the latter county. When the road is complete, turnpikes and toll houses are to be erected and details are given of the rates to be charged, with the provision that no more than a third of the toll due shall be taken at any one gate in Northumberland and no more than half in Cumber-

²⁹ This was done in 1757.

³⁰ Construction was the subject of annual grant.

land. Exemptions are specified and these include post horses, most military traffic, and waggons officially engaged in conveying vagrants elsewhere! No toll shall be levied on election days in respect of vehicles and their passengers or travellers on horseback. Penalties for the evasion of tolls as well as for failure to perform statutory work upon the road are, as we would expect, set out in considerable detail.

Such then are the main features of the Act though perhaps two other small details might claim attention. The first is that at the place where the two counties meet a *boulder stone* shall be positioned and maintained at the joint expense of the trustees for both counties and the second that the road shall be measured from the West gate of Newcastle upon Tyne to Carlisle and milestones erected to show distances from that gate; each county shall meet its own costs in this respect.

Our account is now continued with the help of the press and of the original contracts and accounts³¹ found in the Record Office of the House of Lords. On June 8th, 1751, *Newcastle Courant* gave notice³² of a meeting of the Northumberland trustees to be held at the Moot Hall on the twenty-fourth of the same month. Persons willing to make any part of the intended road within the county of Northumberland, beginning at the Westgate, were to deliver their proposals at the office of the Clerk of the Peace in Westgate before that date and to attend the meeting. The result was that a contract was drawn up (though not signed for some months) between Wm. Biggs, Geo. Delaval, Robt. Shaftoe, Gawen Aynsley, John Blackett, Joshua Douglas, and Edward Ward for the Commissioners, and Christopher Lightfoot, Thomas Lightfoot, and James Paul, all from Yorkshire, and Robt. Rowntree of Gainsforth in Durham, whereby Lightfoot and his partners should make the road as far as Cumberland. It is specified that all work shall be

³¹ Funds for the photographing of these documents were kindly made available by the Dept. of Archaeology of the University of Durham.

³² Notices of this type are usually repeated in the following issue.

done to the satisfaction of the commissioners' surveyor and shall measure twenty-seven feet from ditch to ditch. Stonework is to be sixteen foot broad and fifteen inches thick at the Crown declining to five inches at the extremities. From Newcastle to East Denton it is to be covered with three inches of gravel and likewise thereafter when gravel can be obtained within one and a half miles of the road. Failing gravel best quarry rubbish or other proper material may be used. Payment is to be at the rate of eight shillings per rood³³ of which sixpence shall be retained pending the satisfactory maintenance of the road for three years. To make easier the "passage of artillery, heavy carriages, and other carriages", a further sum of fifty-two pounds ten shillings is to be made for adjustment to the gradient of Benwell Hill in accordance with a plan accompanying the contract. The document was signed, sealed and delivered on November 2nd, 1751, by Christopher Lightfoot in the presence of John Tweddell, clerk to the commissioners and Lightfoot received £300 *on account* for work already done.

Two bridges, one over Newburn Dean (thus) the other over Denton Dean are the subjects of a further agreement between the same seven commissioners and Thomas Layburn of Wolsingham and William Wheatley of Lanchester. Detailed specifications are given and a plan³⁴ of both bridges accompanies the contract. The work is to be completed on or before the next Midsummer Day for the sum of £160 and the bridges to be kept in good repair for seven years at the builders' expense. The contract is signed by Layburn and Wheatley, again on November 2nd in the presence of John Tweddell and John Brown; Layburn received £30 the same day *on account*. John Tweddell was of course clerk and treasurer to the Northumberland commissioners. John Brown, the surveyor, was the elder brother of the renowned

³³ According to *Shorter Oxford Eng. Dict.* a rood might vary locally from 6 to 8 yards. Cumberland Commissioners, as their documents show, regarded it as 7 yards.

³⁴ Copies will ultimately be deposited in the Society's Library.

“Capability” Brown and still lived at Kirkharle³⁵ as later press notices show.

In Carlisle events were also moving at a fair pace. Fortunately the minutes of some of the Commissioners meetings have been preserved and include those of their first on June 24th, 1751, at the Town Hall. Officials appointed that day were Richard Waller as surveyor at a salary of £40 a year and George Pattinson as clerk and treasurer at £20 a year, both salaries to commence from Midsummer 1751. It was also ordered that the treasurer should send for twenty-five copies of the Act for the use of Commissioners. This meeting was adjourned till the following day when it was resolved

That the Making of the Road to begin at John Bowsteads house at Stanwix bank. That it be Carried the whole way in as streight a Direction as the Ground will admitt. That it go along the lane to Luke Fishes, Thence thro' Widow Bells Close by Draw Dikes, thro Draw Dikes Grounds to the Wood bridge near Lance-lot Clemisons from thence thro Mr. Hoskins Ground to the 2 ashes in Crosby Lane, from thence thro Crosby Lane by High Crosby, from High Crosby over Newby moor to the River Irthing at the Ford near Ruleholme.

It was further resolved that an advertisement be published in Newcastle papers that the road will be contracted for by the mile and that Mr. Waller will attend those willing to undertake. They are to deliver their proposals sealed, to George Pattinson and attend the next meeting, which will be at the Bush in Carlisle on 16th July. Similar conditions are to

³⁵ The relationship is confirmed by Hodgson, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 247, where his marriage with Jane Lorraine at Hartburn on April 23rd, 1743 is noted. He was also agent to the Duke of Portland. With the help of Mr. Matthews of the County Record Office, the writer examined microfilmed records of Kirkharle Parish Church and found an entry for the baptism of John Brown on 3rd February 1708. He was the third child and eldest son in a family of three girls and three boys born to William Browne (thus) of Kirkharle. When he resigned in 1757 as surveyor for the Northumberland part of the road a notice in the *Newcastle Courant* on October 7th advertised for a successor at £20 a year. Entries in the same paper for September 22nd and November 18th show that he had also resigned appointment with the Trustees of the Alnmouth and the Ponteland turnpike roads.

apply to those willing to build a bridge over the Mill beck in Draw Dikes field.

The notice duly appeared in *Newcastle Courant* on 29th June and at the meeting of the 16th it was decided to contract for the making of the road with John Byers, Thos. Hetherington, John Hetherington, Isaac Byers, John Byers younger and Benjamin Byers. In the ensuing agreement Rev. John Waugh, Mr. Robt. Graham, Henry Aglionby, Joseph Dacre, Mountague Farrer, Wm. Milbourne, Rev. Wm. N. Jackson, John Brown, and Jos. Nicolson represented the trustees. Specifications were much the same as those for Northumberland and work was to be completed as far as the two ash trees by 25th December. The *undertakers* were also to be responsible for drainage (trenches to be a yard wide on either side of the road) and for the maintenance of the road for one year. Terms, however, were more generous than in Newcastle, namely twelve shillings per rood and no retention clause. Not until 9th September was the matter of the bridge settled however when Richard Bell, Arch. Thompson, and Jos. Robinson undertook to erect the same "on consideration of the sum of forty-six pounds".

Examination of these documents, cursory as it has been, really terminates our investigation into the genesis of the Military Road. At the eastern end construction began on July 8th, 1751, as that month's issue of *Newcastle General Magazine* reported.

Acknowledgements:

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