

THE STANE STREET IN THE PARISH OF CAPEL.

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THE Stane Street, the Roman road from Chichester to London, has often been described in its whole course. I have had, however, opportunities of observing particularly rather less than two miles of it where it cuts the parish of Capel. Past Oekley Green in the parish of Oekley it is still used; but about a mile north-west of Oekley Green the modern road from Oekley to Dorking goes off abruptly to the right, and the line of the Roman road continues on a causeway raised above the fields on each side to Buckinghamhill Farm for about 280 yards. It continues perfectly straight past the front of the house at Buckinghamhill up the hill into the copse called Great Copse.

Here it is marked by a depression in the ground, a slight cutting having been made to render the slope easier, and the characteristic large flints with which it was paved are to be picked up along its course. When it leaves the copse I can see no traces of it till a point is reached just half-a-mile from Buckinghamhill Farm, where flints occur again, and the depression down a slight incline has been used for the private road between Broome Hall and Bearehurst.

At the foot of this incline it crosses a small stream running through a deep depression, in the sides of which I have found flints with hard cement adhering to them. Just across the stream it diverges from the line of the

private road, and runs up the hill in a well-marked cutting, and so across the field opposite Bearehurst, very clearly visible all the way. It diverges slightly to the left to escape a depression in the ground, where another brook made probably a marshy bottom, and goes into the copse behind the Bearehurst Lodge below Minnick Wood Farm. In this copse I have seen no trace of it on the surface, but a few years ago a large tree standing exactly in the line where it should be was blown down and torn up by the roots. Under the roots I found a bed of flints, of course disarranged by the roots of the tree in its growth and fall, but evidently the remains of a pavement. After crossing the ride through the wood it goes up the hill in the copse called Round Woods, by a well-marked cutting with flints occurring in it, and on the top of the hill crosses the modern lane obliquely 200 yards below Minnick Wood Farm. The second large oak tree on the left of the lane, as one comes from the farm, stands upon it. A ditch runs at right angles to the lane close to the tree, in which flints occur. The road then crosses Perrifield, the field opposite Minnick Wood Farm. By the hedge on the north-west side of this field I caused a cutting (November 2nd, 1888) to be made to examine the pavement, hoping to find it less disturbed on the headland than in the middle of the field, which has been frequently ploughed. We found it less than two feet below the surface. The crown of the causeway, about four feet in width, was intact. It consisted of flints set in cement to a depth of about one foot.

Both sides of the road were much broken up, probably by agricultural work, but I should judge that it had never exceeded fifteen feet in width. Underneath the flints was a bed of sand, the soil of the field being clay. I was of opinion that the sand was disintegrated cement, but, having submitted a sample of it to Aubrey Strahan, Esq., of the Royal School of Mines, he pronounced it not to be this. I am still of opinion, however, that it is not the sand which occurs nearest to this point, the green sand of the hills above Coldharbour.

Some years ago, when this field was being drained, I found traces of the road cut transversely by the trenches, but the pavement was much disturbed already, and was more broken up still by the operations going on. Pickaxes were needed, however, to make the trenches through it.

The road continues across the next field, Woodfield, crosses the public bridle-path and private carriage-road between Kitlands and Moorhurst, and goes nearly through Anstie Grange Farm into the parish of Dorking, beyond which point I have not traced it, except by surface observation. The point where I made the excavation is about half-a-mile from Bearehurst, is close to the highest point above the sea, which the road reaches south of Dorking, and is just half-a-mile from the outer ring of the camp on Anstiebury. It is the nearest point to the camp, which is not Roman at all, and had probably no connection, perhaps not even in name, with this road. Anstiebury means no doubt the Bury of the High Way, *Hean Stige Byrig*, but close upon the other side of it runs the old road from Dorking past Coldharbour, which used to be the main road from London to Arundel (Ogilvy, *Book of Roads*), and which, from the lie of the land, must always have been the natural pass over the hills. I suspect that Anstiebury was named from this. The Roman road must have gone early out of use, to judge from the way in which lanes, certainly not modern, entirely neglect it, cross it, run parallel to it, and do anything but follow it as a rule, all the way from Ockley to Dorking.

The direction of the streets of Dorking has nothing to do with the Stane Street. Draining works there, about three years ago, showed that it crossed West Street opposite the shop of Messrs. Stone and Turner, and went under their yard. This line would take it west of St. Martin's Churchyard; so that, unless the churchyard has been curtailed on that side, Camden's idea that the road went through the churchyard is wrong. It is not said that any pavement has been observed there, only coins.

The whole question of the system of roads in south-eastern England, interestingly treated by Mr. Napper in the last publication of this Society, lies rather beyond the scope of the present paper. I should like to point out, however, that the natural state of the country shows us where to look for remains of roads.

Before and under the Romans, there must have been communications east and west by the Thames Valley, and by the dry, open country on the North Downs and the South Downs, marks of which communications remain. The Wealden Clay in Surrey and Sussex was almost uninhabited as late as 1086 A.D., as we learn from Domesday. The roads, with a general north and south direction, must therefore have been through communications, from the southern ports to the Thames Valley. There were no centres of population in the Weald, and no great centres of population anywhere between the Sussex coast and the Thames, to determine their direction. We shall find them, therefore, as a rule heading from the transverse river valleys in the South Downs to the transverse river valleys in the North Downs, on their way to London and Staines (*Ad Pontes*). So far as I have observed them, their remains do lie in these directions.