

SOME EARTHWORKS OF NORTH-WEST MIDDLESEX

BY HUGH BRAUN, F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A.

(1) TRACES OF ANCIENT ROUTES.

MOST writers on ancient Middlesex have referred to the probability of there having been ancient trackways across the north-west parts of the county from the fords of the Thames to the Chilterns and thence to the Midland plains beyond. The existence and approximate locality of the two chief Thames fords, i.e., those at Thornea or Westminster, and the easier and apparently more popular ford by the mouth of the River Brent, seems to have been well enough established. These crossings would presumably have been chiefly used by persons wishing to pass from the south-eastern coasts of Kent towards the centre of England, or *vice versa*. The routes from the fords would have necessarily passed through the dense oak forest of Middlesex, the only landmarks being the summits of a few isolated hills and the ridge of the North Middlesex Heights towards the forest's limits.

What traces can there possibly remain of these ancient routes? There were no roads until the Romans came to show the natives how to survey and lay out permanent tracks, properly paved and drained, and thus able to remain in continuous use. When a road is in continuous use, its line remains constant, and can thus be kept clear. An unpaved, undrained route, however, becomes impassable in wet weather, and its course must, therefore, be continually changed, as drier tracks are sought. In the damp forests of Middlesex, an abandoned track would very soon be covered up with the bramble undergrowth which grows so rapidly and luxuriously

on the London Clay. It will be seen, therefore, that the coming of the properly-made Roman road must have automatically thrown out of use the ancient trackways through the forest, which would presumably disappear in the course of a few years, unless it should chance that a portion of one might be retained by reason of the founding of a settlement, to which access might be required.

It is suggested, therefore, at the outset, that the chances of establishing the course of an ancient route through Middlesex are very slender indeed, there having been no roads but only pathways through the forest, continually changing, and forever disappearing without trace. There are, however, a few slight traces of *unnatural disturbances of the soil which may possibly* assist us in forming an idea as to the ancient routes through the county.

Wherever persons or animals walk continually they will in a short time wear out the natural turf. On level ground this is all that will happen, but on slopes, however, there will be a further disturbance of the natural conditions. Every time a person or animal walks up or down a slope, from the soil of which the natural binding of turf has been removed, this soil will be dislodged, and will slide downwards. A slight groove will thus be made, which will deepen more or less rapidly for one or more of several reasons. The more use will more deeply wear the groove. Soils such as sand or gravel will wear more rapidly than stickier soils such as clay or loam, or hard rocks such as chalk. Rain falling on the slope will be liable to run into the gutter which is being formed, and this will deepen it in proportion to the slope of the hillside and the softness of the soil. If a spring should find the gutter, it will soon turn it into a regular valley for its course. The dragging of timber for fuel or building purposes, or the hauling of loaded sledges, would of course considerably increase the rate of wear in the trade.

Sunken roads are not common in Middlesex. In the north-west of the county only one, on Cuckoo Hill, Pinner, is still in use, and that is not sunk to any very considerable depth. Just outside the boundary of the county, however, is a tremendous cutting, thirty to thirty-five feet in depth, on the hillside above the left bank of the Colne at Hamper Mill, near Watford. A road still passes through this cutting, but another, much shallower, groove climbing the combe between the two south-eastern spurs of Uxendon Hill above the Brent at Kingsbury Church, has been, at this point, deserted by the "Salmon Street," which now turns sharply at the foot of the hill and passes north-eastwards to the present village of Kingsbury. Another deserted road-cutting climbs the southern slopes of Brockley Hill, rather more than a quarter of a mile west of Watling Street. This scar is wider and shallower than that over Uxendon Hill, and its complementary cutting on the north slope of the hill, close to the footpath from Stanmore to Elstree, is even fainter.

There are, doubtless, other sunken roads in the district, but they are not easy to spot unless their roads have left them. The mighty trench of Beech Bottom, crossing the col between the valleys of the Lea and the Ver on its way to Verulamium, would probably have never been noticed by antiquaries had it not been deserted by its road, but no one has ever speculated on the huge cutting, as deep as that of Beech Bottom, in which runs the road to Hamper Mill. (The difference, of course, between the appearance of a linear earthwork and that of a disused road-cutting is that the latter has no adjoining bank to show what became of the soil removed from the fosse.)

Having noted these five traces, however, let us speculate as to the possible routes of which they have formed parts. It will at once appear suggestive (see Fig. 2) that they belong to two approximate alignments, which we may suppose, as a working hypothesis, to have been

connected with the two fords over the Thames at Thornea and Brentford.

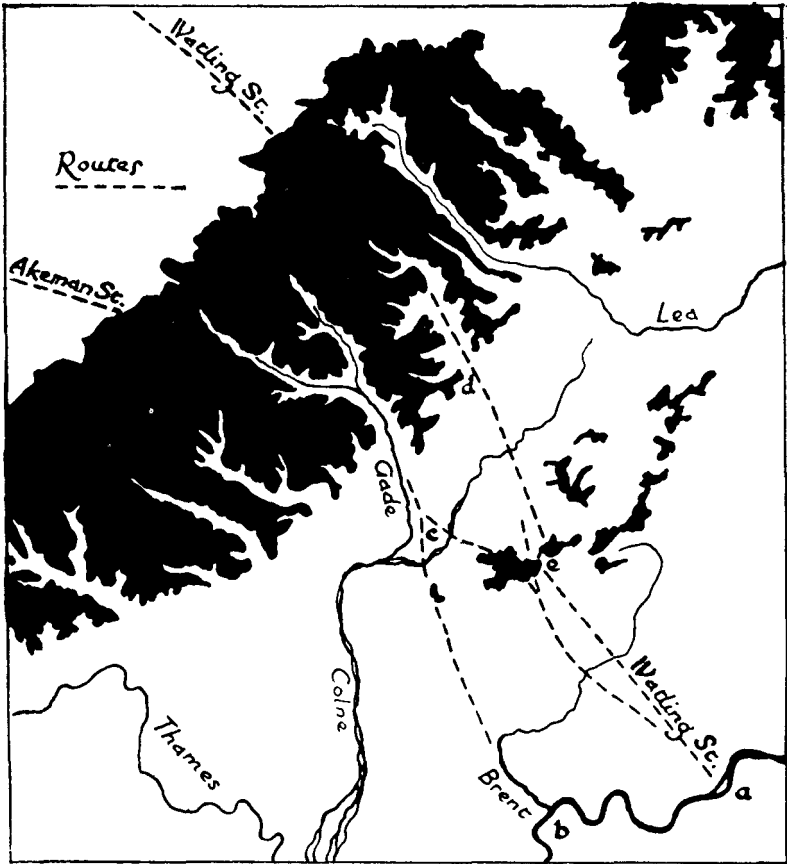


Fig. 1. A Sketch Map showing the Chiltern Passes and the suggested Routes across North-West Middlesex from the Ancient Fords across the River Thames. Land over 400 ft. shown in black.

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| a. Thornea ford. | d. Verulamium. |
| b. Brentford. | e. Sulloniaca. |
| c. Cassio. | |

Fig. 1 shows the barrier of the Chilterns, covered with primaeval beech forest, which formed the chief obstacle

to those wishing to pass over from the Thames to the midland plains in the north-west.

From the left-hand edge of the map, the first is the pass of Wycombe, rather far westwards for those crossing at either of the two fords. Next come the

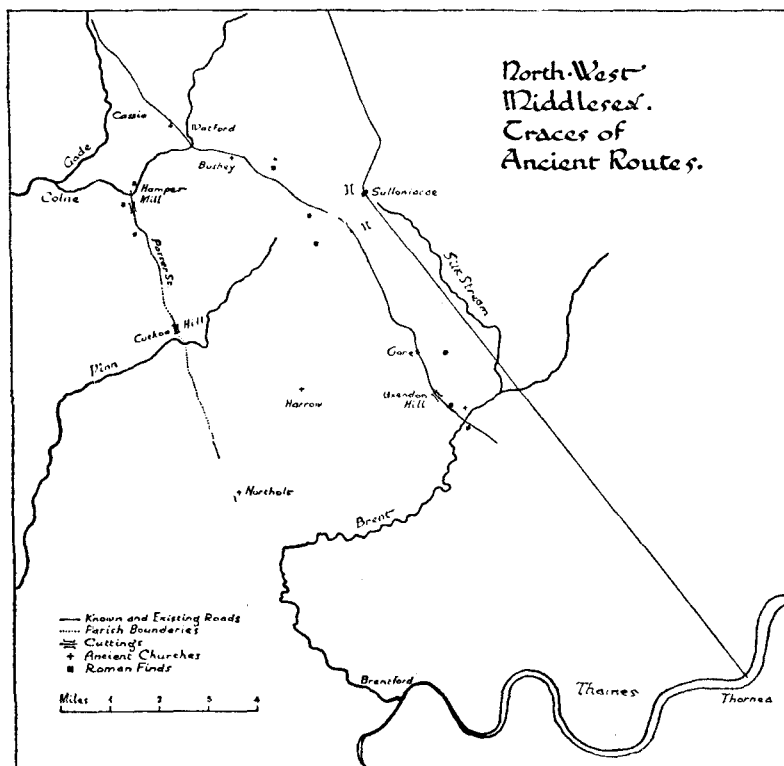


Fig. 2. Ancient Routes across N.W. Middlesex.

two rather inadequate passes of the Misbourne and the Chess. The next pass, however, is the long bifurcated valley down which flows the River Gade or Cassio River, the western head of which, the Bulbourne, cuts back almost to the plains beyond. Through this pass ran the Roman Akeman Street, and it will be seen that it

is an ideally situated gap for those wishing to cross the Chilterns from the Thames fords. The next pass, that of the Ver, is not nearly so useful (it will, indeed, be noticed that the first alignment of Watling Street from the Thames suggests that it was intended to use the Cassio Gap rather than that of the Ver). The long gap of the Lea is too far away to have been of any use at all.

River valleys provide the most useful routes through any thickly forested area, and it seems possible that the early popularity of the Brentford crossing may have been due to the advantages offered by the shallow valley of the Brent which entered the Thames at that point, and which, moreover, pointed in the right direction, towards the distant hills. When the valley turned away eastwards, however, travellers would have to leave it behind and strike out on an unmarked line towards the hills and the hope of a pass through them.

The Cassio gap having been discovered, travellers passing in both directions would gradually establish a more or less straight line between its exit and the lower Brent Valley. This line passes through two of the road-cuttings, noted earlier, which may thus represent the sole remaining traces of the ancient route.

Fig. 2 shows on a larger scale the suggested route of the Cassio-Brent trackway. Passing down the gap into the *peninsular of Cassio*, lying between the Rivers Gade and Colne, it presumably crossed the latter at Hamper Mill. This mill, once Oxhey Mill, is of considerable antiquity, being mentioned in Domesday Book. A paved causeway about eight feet wide, recently excavated, crossed the Colne valley at this point, and to its presence is probably due the existence of the mill at this point, as the present mill-dam is exactly on the line of the causeway. (Ancient causeways across rivers were often used as mill-dams; the crossing-place of a Roman road is often marked by a mill). South of the river, the road climbs the hillside through the deep cutting noted above (see section on Fig. 6). The sides

of the cutting are in sand, and a torrent pours down the roadside gutters after heavy rain.

The road then meanders across the gravelly hills of Oxhey, descending as "Potter Street" to lose itself in what was once the wasteland of Ruislip Common, now reclaimed as Pinner Green. A parish boundary, however, carries the line to the road over Cuckoo Hill, which lies in a wide shallow cutting in the clay and "Woolwich and Reading Beds." The road crosses the Pinn Brook by the name of Bridle Path, but the parish boundary is a few yards east of it, and carries the line of the imaginary route towards the Brent valley, passing along a portion of road on a hillside, a mile north of Northolt Church, which is itself beside the suggested line. The map shows how direct is this imaginary route.

It is not to be expected that any remains of settlement would be likely to be discovered along this line, lying as it does for the greater part through the jungle of the ancient forest. Its use in Roman times, however, is suggested by the discoveries which have been made near the Colne crossing. In 1930, the writer discovered the causeway at this point, and beside it the rough walling of a Roman building containing quantities of potsherds and other remains, including a coin of Hadrian.¹ On the golf links near the north end of the cutting, Roman potsherds were found in the previous year,² together with more building material, and three-quarters of a mile away from the river, at a point where the road is entered by one coming from Batchworth Heath, the writer has found still more Roman building material. Thus there is some suggestion that both road and ford were in use during Roman times. The use of the route, however, must have been abandoned many years ago. There is no trace of a road on the other bank of the river, and, although the "King's Highway from Woxebridge to Watford" passed along the left bank of the Colne in mediaeval times, this portion of it was diverted by Wolsey to the other side of the river when he built his

great house of More in the early part of the sixteenth century.

When following the westernmost of our two suggested routes, we will begin from the south-east end of it, by that ancient *locus terribilis*, the ford of Thornea. This portion of the early route, however, must have been abandoned in quite early times in favour of the great Watling Street which the Romans built beside it. By now, of course, it is all swallowed up by the new roads of Kilburn and Willesden. The old road, however, appears just south of the Brent in the now arterialised lane which leads from Neasden Green down to the Brent by Kingsbury Old Church. When the schools were built by the river crossing, Roman building material was dug up, and across the river, where the lane has become "Salmon Street," much Roman material has been found where the hedges widen out.³ The old church is built partly of Roman bricks, and hypocaust flues are now used as recesses for prayer-books. At the foot of Uxendon Hill, modern Salmon Street turns away to the north-east, but its old track is shown by the deep scar which climbs the hill-side, and passes over it on its route towards the high hills beyond. Hedges and the parish boundary maintain its line for a mile, during which, however, its existence is not forgotten. It is still called "The Old Road" by the few remaining local countrymen, and in 1445 it was "Eldestrete."⁴ Gore, the site of the Hundred Moot of that name, lies on the road at a point where it comes into use again, winding along to the north-west, and known as "Honeypot Lane," anciently "Gore Lane."

At Stanmore Marsh, however, its course becomes difficult to ascertain. The parish boundary follows Marsh Lane as far as its junction with the eighteenth-century "New Road," joining Watling Street with the old road to Watford, and then wanders off somewhat eastwards, between the continuation of Marsh Lane—Dennis Lane—and the two cuttings marked on Fig. 2.

This boundary seems to have remained unchanged since mediaeval times, but in the tenth century it is not so certain that the line was the same, changes having possibly been made when the vills of Stanmore were formed, Great Stanmore from Harrow, and Little Stanmore from the manor of Tunworth in Kingsbury. Great Stanmore was taken out of Harrow in 793,⁵ and it seems very probable, for several reasons, that the eastern boundary of the new vill was an old road. In 957, the western boundary of Tunworth, part of which is now Little Stanmore, was the "*Wicstraete*,"⁶ which must almost certainly have been part of the old road. The difficulty of establishing its line, however, is increased by the fact that the present parish boundary refuses to follow any known road at all. This, however, may be due to its revision after the formation of Little Stanmore, which is that part of Tunworth lying west of Watling Street.

From Stanmore, therefore, we have two possibilities as to the route of the Salmon Street—Gore Lane trackway. It may well have made for the Cassio peninsular⁷ *via* the ford at Watford, and so up the Bulbourne valley to become the track which the Romans afterwards remade as Akeman Street. There are other points to be noted in connection with this route. One is the occurrence of Roman finds along it, those to the south-east of the Colne being the hoard of coins found at Bentley Priory,⁸ and the portions of tessellated pavement near Coldharbour, east of Bushey Church.⁹ Another is the fact that William the Conqueror met the Londoners at Berkhamsted to receive their surrender. The Watling Street had been closed by Abbot Fritheric of St. Albans, at any rate north of Stanmore, to which, from St. Albans, he held most of the land. The Londoners may thus have journeyed to meet William along the old route, and the Conqueror himself may have advanced on his new capital along it. I would not suggest, however, that the whole of the route to the Thames was still in use. In mediaeval

times, the road from Watford led past the Manor House of Little Stanmore (later "Canons") to join Watling Street at Stone Grove. This looks very like the obvious way of joining the old Stanmore-Watford route with the newer Roman road, and cutting out the old route past Gore and over Uxendon Hill.

The cuttings between Watling Street and the Watford Road have still to be explained. The only obvious suggestion seems to be that they represent all that is left of a branch of the old trackway passing by Sulloniaca towards Verulamium, possibly continuing thence *via* the Ver gap.

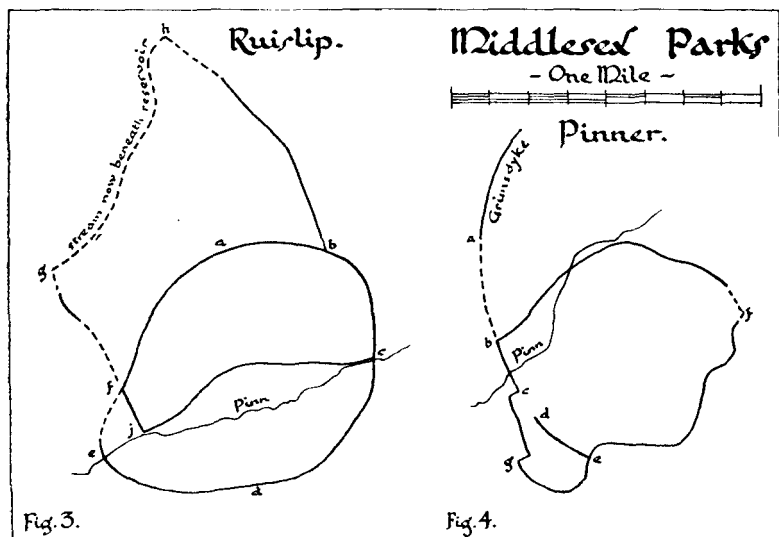
These courses, which have been suggested as being those of the old routes through the north-west of Middlesex are admittedly based on very slender evidence. The most striking feature of the two routes suggested is, however, that they form the east and west boundaries of the ancient vill of Harrow.

(2) ANCIENT HUNTING PARKS.

It is well known that the north-western districts of Middlesex were used, well into mediaeval times, as the hunting-ground of the citizens of London. Indeed, it is supposed by some that organised hunting had been going on there during Roman times and even earlier. Domesday Book gives us a clue as to contemporary arrangements for the sport by mentioning the two parks "for wild beasts of the forest" at Ruislip and Enfield. The latter park seems to have disappeared long ago, swallowed up in the large area known as Enfield Chase, which was only disparked in 1779, and then occupied, despite several previous curtailments, over eight thousand acres. At least one other park, however, must have existed at the time of Domesday Book, as Archbishop Lanfranc had a deer park at Harrow, which was the subject of an order by the Conqueror, who told the Londoners that they were not to interfere with the Archbishop's deer at Harrow.¹⁰ The deer

must have been kept in a park, and this may have been the park at Pinner, then a part of Harrow. It is hoped that the following notes will show that these parks were of some antiquity even at the time of the Conquest.

Ruislip Park (Fig. 3) was dealt with to some extent by the present writer in a paper in the earlier part of



Figs. 3 and 4. The Remains of Two of the Ancient Hunting Parks of North-West Middlesex.

Fig. 3.

- a, b, c, d, e, f.* The original oval park.
- f, g, h, b.* Northward enlargement.
- h, b, c, d, e, f, g.* Enlarged park.
- h, b, c, j, f, g.* Mediaeval park.

Fig. 4.

- a.* Woodridings Farm.
- b.* Angle of park.
- b, c.* Ancient earthwork.
- d, e.* Hedge continuing line.
- a, b.* Suggested line of Grimsdyke.
- b, f, e, g, c.* Mediaeval park.
- f.* Hatch End.

this volume,¹¹ but some further notes on its earthwork may be added here. It was originally an oval enclosure of some 350 acres, having as its nucleus a wide patch of gravel flood-plain formed by the Pinn Brook which forms the axis of the oval. The original earthwork consisted of a ditch with a bank on the inside of it,

the height from bottom to crest being about five feet (see Fig. 6). Later, the park was extended northwards, probably to the line of the little stream which is now beneath the Ruislip reservoir. At this time, the scale of the earthwork was considerably increased (see Fig. 7), the southern and eastern lines of the original park being strengthened to match the new. Later still, the portion of the park lying south of the Pinn was disparked and added to the manorial pasture. It would seem that this third park must have been that in existence at the time of Domesday Book, as the earthwork of the Castle of Ernulf de Hesdin lies within the area of the two earlier enclosures. The present southern boundary of the park is a weak bank, quite unlike those of the earlier enclosures, but that it is the ancient limit is shown by comparing the areas of the fields to the south with those of an old survey.

It is suggested, therefore, that the park at Ruislip is older than the Norman Conquest. The arrangement of other earthworks referred to in the paper on Ruislip mentioned above¹² suggest that the foundation of the park may be carried back even earlier, possibly to the time of the Romans, as a Roman building was discovered at its south-west end a few years ago, which may have been connected with the hunting organisation. This building, also, is within the original oval, so perhaps the third modification was effected before the time of the Roman occupation. Ruislip Park was still enclosed in 1436,¹³ but to-day it is only represented by Park Wood, fortunately preserved in perpetuity for the people of Ruislip and Northwood.

The vicissitudes of the earthwork of Pinner Park, however, are unfortunately not so easy to comprehend, as it has been cleared for some centuries. The interesting feature concerning it is, however, that it is almost indisputably connected with Grims Dyke, which, sweeping sharply southwards and eastwards from its present end at Woodridings Farm, apparently once enclosed an

approximately circular area of rather less than 250 acres, and then rejoined itself as shown in Fig. 4. Whatever the course of this ancient boundary may have been, however, it has since been altered during the re-adjustment of adjoining field boundaries, possibly for the purpose of squaring them up. The area enclosed, however, remains about the same. The only portions remaining of what was apparently the original line of earthwork do not resemble ancient work, being for the most part low banks, having a ditch on *both* sides, and of varying breadth—some of them wide enough to have a way between double hedges passing along them. The enclosure has obviously been reworked again and again; the bank crossing the Pinn on the downstream edge of the park has been considerably broadened and raised to form a dam to the brook. However negligible the remains of ancient work, however, the plan shows almost indisputably that the park is connected with the Dyke, and, indeed, formed the termination of the main run of the work as it is known to-day.

Pinner Park remained in the ownership of the Archbishop of Canterbury until 1545, and was finally disparked about 1730,¹⁴ but like its neighbour at Ruislip, has been preserved in perpetuity as an open space.

All that is known about the early history of Pinner Park is that at the end of the eleventh century it was a deer park. Domesday Book does not mention it as a "wild beast park," as it does those at Ruislip and Enfield. If the oval park at Ruislip was used for hunting wild beasts, how was it restocked when the beasts had all been killed, as they might well have been in a day's hunting over such a small area? They could not have been carted—so they must have been driven in from the surrounding out-wood. To drive beasts into a narrow opening through a ring-fence, one must have a barrier against which to drive them and to assist them towards the opening itself.

In the case of Pinner Park, Grims Dyke would provide

such a barrier. Beasts rounded-up in the woods of Harrow Weald could be driven from the south-east against the palisades of the Dyke until they found themselves in the angle between it and the returning fence of the park, with no alternative but to enter the latter through an opening presumably provided at the apex of the trap.

It is possible that there was yet another park on Archbishop Lanfranc's lands at Harrow besides that known to have existed at Pinner. There was land at Harrow Weald which belonged to Lanfranc and was given by him to St. Gregory's Priory at Canterbury, which founded at Harrow the small Priory of Bentley,¹⁵ A large mansion now occupies the site of the Priory. It is surrounded by a large estate which was, until recently, a deer park (not, however, of long standing as such). The large bank surrounding the park remains in places, having been preserved on the north-west and north-east sides through the encroachment, on the Harrow Weald and Stanmore Commons respectively, of previous owners.¹⁶ This expansion of the park has forced the roads from Harrow and Stanmore to "Bentley Corner" (now "The Alpine Coffee Tavern") outwards, away from their old tracks, which remain in places within the park, and skirting the park earthwork. The run of this on the north-west side is noted by Clutterbuck,¹⁷ and was rediscovered by Mr. Cruickshank, who was led by it to believe that the Grims Dyke turned north-eastwards along it and round the Priory, returning along a very large earthwork which skirts the old park on its north-east side and is cut by the east drive of the mansion. It seems probable, however, that these two lengths of earthwork are part of an enclosure, and this suggestion is further emphasised by the fact that part of a southern earthwork may be found also. The long footpath which passes from Stanmore to the south of Priory Farm and thence to Clamp Hill by the old brickyard, runs for part of its course through a narrow track

between hedges, to the north of which is a very large bank which must be part of the southern limit of the park.

These three lines of earthwork are shown on Fig. 5, and it will be seen that they may well have formed part of a strong earthwork enclosure some 200 to 250 acres in extent, slightly smaller than Pinner Park. Future exploration may perhaps be successful in recovering the plan of the whole park, but the estate at present is in the hands of the Royal Air Force. And a word of caution to future archæological explorers. When the estate ceased to be a deer park it became—a golf course. So beware of bunkers!

(3) GRIMS DYKE.

The problem of Grims Dyke is one which has been tantalising antiquaries for several centuries. All, however, make the grave mistake of accepting it as it stands, and refusing to admit the possibility of its having ever existed except in such places as it may be seen occupying to-day. Thus the explorer will examine an area for traces of its line, and, not finding anything, will thereupon *satisfy* himself that it has never existed there. The fact is, we should not so much wonder at the gaps in this great earthwork as to feel surprise that any of it at all remains to-day, a dozen miles from the Metropolis, in a district which has been occupied and cultivated for hundreds of years.

An important survey of the existing remains of the Dyke was published earlier in this volume. Except for one slight criticism, which will be noted later, this report accurately covered all the features connected with the plan of the Dyke and its geological and geographical setting. The present writer begs to add a few comments on the architecture of the work, and to suggest a few missing portions of the Dyke which have escaped the notice of the above investigator, who had not the advantage of the present writer's twenty years' acquaintance with Grims Dyke, nor that of having once been

associated with its chief explorer, the late G. E. Cruickshank, F.S.A., who devoted many years to its problems.

One fact, however, should emerge at the first glance of a map of the Dyke as it exists, and that is that it is in two definite portions. From Royston Park to Woodridings the eastern section sweeps in a regular

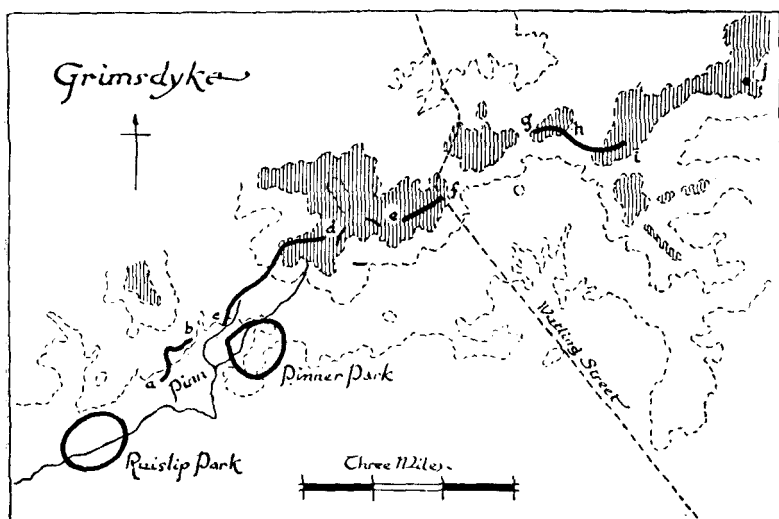


Fig. 5. A Sketch Map of the Track of the Grimsdyke. The Land over 400 ft. Shaded.

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| a. Cuckoo Hill. | e. Site of Stanmore Windmill. |
| a, b. Pinner Green section. | f. Sulloniaca. |
| b. The Dingle. | g, h. Woodcock Hill Dyke. |
| b, c. Woodhall Gap. | h, i. "The Hay." |
| c. Woodridings Farm. | i. Grendle's, Grims, Green's or |
| d. Harrow Weald Kiln. | Barnet Gate. |
| d, e. Bentley Gap. | j. Barnet Church. |

curve towards the south, completely ignoring the north-eastward-thrusting Pinner Green section, which, if produced, would impinge against the eastern section in mid-flight. As a general principle it may be laid down that if two lines of earthwork join to form a T, that is to say, so that one only of them crosses the other,

that line was the first laid out. Let us assume, therefore, that this is the case at Woodridings, and deal firstly with the eastern portion of the Dyke.

There are no further comments to make on the run of the Dyke from Woodridings to Harrow Weald (see Fig. 5). One feature of its architecture, however, is of interest. Fig. 6 shows a section through the work near Woodridings, and another on the golf course by Old Redding. The first is an ordinary section of bank-and-ditch work on level ground, facing south. At Old Redding, however, the Dyke is on such a steep slope that it has to be scarped, the earth being thrown down the slope instead of upwards, a very good method of forming a deep ditch without too much labour. The remarkable feature of the Old Redding section, however, is that it is facing *north*, not south, the bank being a counterscarp bank, not a rampart. It would have been just as easy for the Dyke to have climbed the southern slope—indeed, it would have better suited the line, but the surveying has apparently been rather careless and the Dyke has taken the northern slope and been faced towards that direction. The significant fact to be deduced from this behaviour is, therefore, that the Dyke can face both north and south in a few hundred yards. This proves quite incontrovertibly that the work was not a defensive one.

Most archæologists have been content to leave the Dyke where it ends amongst gravel-diggings just north-west of the kiln at Harrow Weald. Mr. Cruickshank, however, always considered that it was unsatisfactory to let the matter rest there, and felt convinced that it had run further eastwards. Since his death, documentary evidence has come to light to show that he was correct in his convictions.

A valuation of the Manor of Canons, Little Stanmore, made in 1535, mentions "2 fields called Grymesdich."¹⁸ The approximate locality of these fields is suggested by their being named in conjunction with Cloister and Pear

Woods, which lie on the southern slopes of Brockley Hill. In 1306 the rental of the Priory of St. Bartholomew

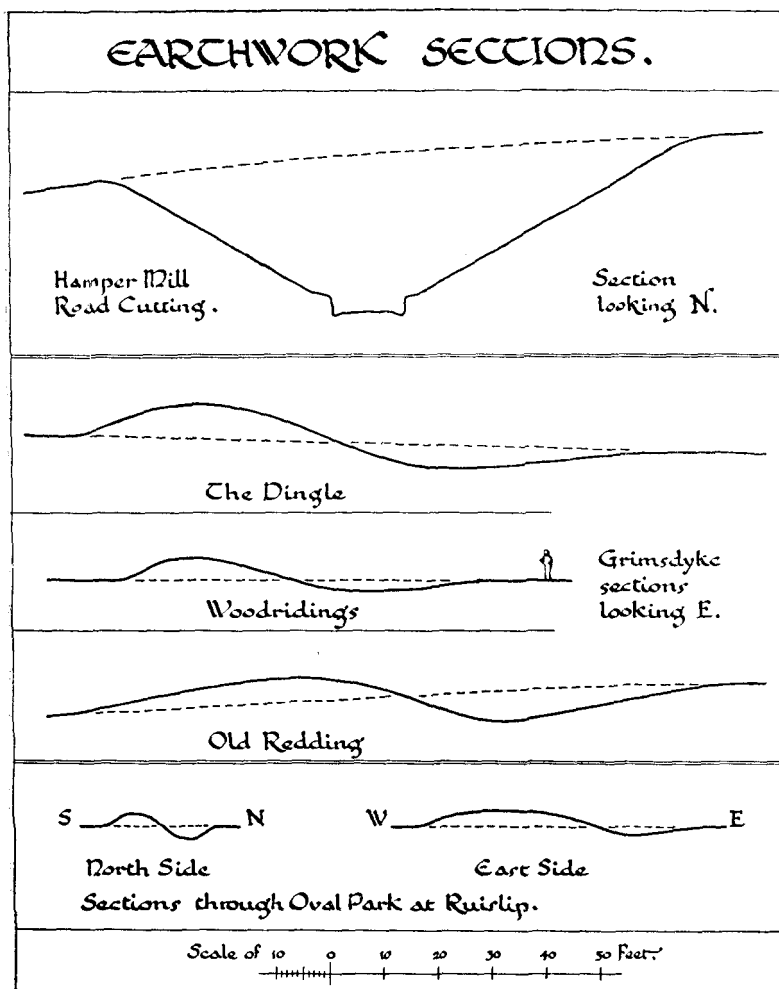


Fig. 6.

the Great, London, now preserved at the Bodleian, mentions the Dyke itself—" *Et sunt ibi apud Grymesdich*

et iuxta Molendinum cxiiij pasture separalis pro bouetis."¹⁹ The only place for a mill in Little Stanmore would have been on the ridge of Brockley Hill. The mill itself has been gone for centuries, but its site is mentioned in 1680 as being on the boundary between the two Stanmores and on the crest of the ridge. It is therefore quite certain that the Dyke entered the parish of Little Stanmore at some point near the crest of Brockley Hill, and passed along it to within a very short distance of Sulloniaca.

East of Brockley Hill we are still in the dark concerning the run of the Dyke, although there seems to be no reason at all why it should not have continued in that direction. Documentary evidence has yet to be unearthed, and it is idle work to hunt for traces which may be "on the line" unless there is only a clearly pointered and not too lengthy gap to be filled. One cannot ignore, however, the several hundred yards of a very large bank which lines the north side of the modern road over Woodcock Hill (anciently, "Boys Hill") between Elstree and Barnet. This bank is some fifteen or more feet in width and two to three feet high, and is no mere hedge-bank. It forms the county boundary, which demonstrates its antiquity. There is no ditch visible on the north side of the bank, and the contour of the ground suggests that the ditch was on its southern, or road, side. It would thus fit in with the general architecture of the Dyke. Just to the south of it are the remains of "Scratch Wood," which, as our Editor has pointed out to me, suggests the presence of the Devil, to whom, as "Grim," the Saxons appear to have ascribed the origin of the Dyke.

From the eastern end of the Woodcock Hill Dyke, the county boundary follows a curving line of hedgerow of considerable antiquity, being mentioned in a charter of 978,²⁰ describing the bounds of Lotherslea, a Manor of the great Vill of Kingsbury. This hedge ends at a spot called in the charter "Grendle's Gate," in mediaeval

times "Grimsgate," about 1600 "Greensgate," and to-day, prosaically, "Barnet Gate." The early names are very suggestive of the presence of Grims Dyke.

The possible eastward run of the Dyke from here is perhaps best left for further research, but it must not be forgotten that the very name of Barnet is derived from a Norman-French word, the diminutive of one meaning "the edge of a slope," and possibly referring to the edge of a small slope such as the scarp of an earthwork. The older name of Barnet was Southaw.

There has been much discussion as to the relationship between Grims Dyke and the county boundary. Surprise has been expressed at the two not being the same. The fact is, of course, that the boundary has been continually changing, in accordance with the honesty or otherwise of the landowners on either side of it. As late as 1595 the Manor Court Rolls of Great Stanmore contain lengthy disputations as to the exact site of the "Shire Ditch." Probably the worst offenders in ancient times were the rapacious and apparently thoroughly dishonest Abbots of St. Albans, to whom most of the land along the Hertfordshire side of the boundary belonged. They would even claim a whole manor which belonged to their brethren of Westminster, so the matter of a few acres of heath or woodland would be of no great matter to them. Generally speaking, their southern boundary seems to have been a ditch of some sort—"quoddam fossatum apud Barnet,"²¹ for instance. The Charter of 957 delineating the northern boundary of Tunworth, in Kingsbury, describes it as the "*hredes maerce aet Sancte Albane*" which stretched between the "*wicstraete*" and "*waetlingen straete*."²² The only Saxon word which resembles "*hrede*" is *hreddan*, "to rid from enemies." This suggests a protective dyke, so possibly the Grims Dyke was in 957 the southern boundary of St. Albans (that is to say, Hertfordshire), at any rate where Little Stanmore adjoined it.

To return to the western portion of the Grims Dyke, it is impossible to say to-day whether it ever actually met the eastern portion, the mediaeval Manor of Woodhall having effectively removed all trace of the Dyke, although there is some slight suggestion of a scarp immediately south of the old farmhouse which stands "on the line." The eastern end of this portion at present is just above a small wood, in which is an old quarry known as "The Dingle." The present writer, when a boy, has often heard references to "Saxon" burials having been found at this spot, but is now unable to confirm this. Just west of this is the finest portion of the Dyke now existing (see section, Fig. 6), although the ditch has been almost entirely ploughed-out, as it has been at the Woodridings section further east.

As regards the present western termination of the Dyke, I must venture to disagree with that shown on the survey published earlier in this volume. All investigators seem to be agreed as to the route of the work as far as the Cuckoo Hill Road. Mr. Stone, however, and indeed his predecessor, Mr. Cruickshank, considered that it passed along the eastern side of the road to the summit of the hill. Since, however, the field on the western side of the road has become pasture, the line of the Dyke can be clearly seen crossing it, almost ploughed-out, it is true, but the width of the great bank clearly visible. The work is facing north and scarped. Below the bank is permanent marshland. In the next field westward the Dyke has completely vanished.

The remarkable feature of the western section is, of course, the curious kink northwards which it makes at Pinner Green. The solution to the problem as to why this was done may assist it solving both the purpose of the work and the date at which it was laid out. At present there is a lane passing through this kink, but it is not quite on the line of the route of the old way suggested earlier in this paper. It may, however, represent an alternative route or a divergence.

As regards the purpose for which the Dyke was constructed, there can be no doubt that it was used at some period of its existence for the purpose of hunting wild beasts. Both the Middlesex and the Buckinghamshire Grims Dykes pass through country which in ancient days was a noted hunting-ground.

In hunting wild beasts, whether on foot or on horseback, in forest regions where the beast can move far more swiftly and easily than the hunter, better sport can be obtained if the beasts are driven towards and past the person waiting to show his skill with bow or spear. Walking or mounted beaters would be hampered by the forest conditions, and, although they might rouse and annoy the beasts, would probably find it extraordinarily difficult to drive them where they wanted them.

If a barrier is used, however, no beaters are required at all, the hunters acting as their own, by driving the beasts towards the Dyke and hunting them as they recoil from it past their pursuers. A feature of both the Hampden and Cholesbury sections of the Buckinghamshire Grims Dyke is the manner in which their ends are returned as wings to prevent the escape of the driven animals into the cultivated valleys below.²³ The southward sweep of the Middlesex Dyke at Woodridings suggests the same purpose.

In Middlesex, however, conditions were not quite the same as they were in Chiltern, where the beech woods had no tangled scrub through which the hunters had to force their way, as was the case in the Middlesex Forest. This may have led to the founding of the Middlesex parks. That at Pinner was possibly added to the "wing" of the Dyke, as was possibly also that in the Hadley district—the Enfield Park of the Domesday Survey. These parks could be kept clear of undergrowth or even had "rides" through them, as has that at Ruislip to-day. (I can imagine that a dozen or a score of horsemen could have a very good day's pig-sticking in Ruislip Park.)

The oval park of Ruislip, however, seems to be rather out of the scheme of things, and may have been founded, as was suggested in a previous paper by the writer in the early part of this volume,²⁴ at a spot where a different soil was making the undergrowth less luxurious. The northward extension of this park enabled even better land to be brought in, and this enlargement, with its stronger earthwork, may perhaps have been made when the Dyke was extended westwards to meet it and enable it to be restocked. It is possible to suggest a line from the present end of the Dyke at Cuckoo Hill towards the park. It is pointing in the right direction, and banks and ditches may be found "on the line" which would carry it to the park. There is even a groove and a gap in the eastern side of the oval enclosure which would serve very well as an entrance. But this is dangerous work, and it is best left until further exploration has been made.

The supposed park at Bentley is also on light soil, and may have been inserted in the line of the Dyke. About a furlong south of the mansion there is a sunken fence which would seem to have been "on the line" from Harrow Weald Kiln to Stanmore Mill. The park, however, was under cultivation for centuries by the monks of Bentley, and, since the Reformation, has served many purposes, including that of a golf course, so it is not to be expected that there may be much trace of *ancient* earthwork within it.

The date at which Grims Dyke was constructed can only be solved by excavation, although any amount of speculation may be indulged in as regards its probabilities.

But I have not the slightest doubt that the problem of the *purpose* for which the Dyke was constructed was solved many years ago by our distinguished President,²⁵ who has himself hunted the country in those days which have passed from it for ever.

To recapitulate, the work seems to have been laid out to serve as a hunting-fence along the northern

boundaries of the Great Forest of Middlesex,²⁶ stretching approximately between Hadley and Pinner. Parks may either have formed a part of the scheme, or, more probably, have been added subsequently as an improvement, the Dyke having possibly been extended westwards to enable it to be used for restocking the park at Ruislip.

(4) SULLONIACAE.

Middlesex rivers were apparently named by the Saxons after the names of their sources. Thus the Stanbourne rises at Stanmore, the Roxbourne at Roxeth, the Tatbourne at Totteridge, and so on. The derivation of Colne is uncertain, as the river has been called by other names at different times. The Brent rises in a district, between Elstree and Arkley, anciently known as "*Braegen*"—"the brain," possibly an allusion to the elevated nature of the district. One of its tributaries, however, had a remarkable designation in Saxon days, being called progressively *Sulue*, *Sulli*, and then, as the difficulties of its last consonant became more easily appreciated, *Sulc*, and, finally, *Sulh*.²⁷ It is now known as the Silk Stream, and takes its name from that of its source, the ancient Catuvellaunian town, called on the Antonine Itinerary *Sulloniacae*, and by Ptolemy, the contemporary Alexandrine astronomer, *Salenai*. The latter authority brackets it with Verulamium as the other town of the Catuvellauni, so it would seem that the Middlesex township must have been, at any rate in the second century A.D., an important place.

The native origin of the town is suggested by its name, which, if the Latin ending is removed, has an obviously Celtic sound. Nor has it the softness of the Belgic place-names, but more of the ferocity of the Brythonic. It is, however, a topographical, not a personal name, so the site may have been named by the natives before there was any settlement on *Sulloniac*—"The View-Point." There can be little doubt that the most remarkable feature of the site—its magnificent

view over the Thames Valley—gave to the place its resounding name. The last consonant is probably that guttural aspirate which is often found at the end of Celtic names, and is represented to-day by various letters. The various words for “a prospect” in Celtic languages are—Welsh, *syllwg*: Gaelic, *sealladh*. A Breton equivalent of *regarder* is *sellein*. These words are all derived from the primitive *sul*, *sil* or *syl*, which, originally meaning the Sun, became to mean an eye.

The hill of Sulloniac must have been an important view-point in early times, whence much that was going on in the forest-covered plain between it and the great river could be observed by those who dwelt in the fertile valleys of the Colne and Lea. The marshes which skirted it at its foot, of which Stanmore Marsh is a remnant, were still known in the tenth century as “*Linyssac*.”²⁸ This, another Celtic name, seems related to the common word *llyn*, a pool, and the Welsh *hesg*, reed-grass, the Breton for which is *hesk*.

The first settlement of the Saxons by the site of Verulamium seems to have been called by them “Kingsbury” in tribute to the ancient grandeur of the ruined city. They seem to have been equally impressed by the importance of Sulloniace, giving the name of Kingsbury to the extensive *Vill* which lay between the old road and the western hills, and extended as far as the Brent to the south, where the eleventh-century church still stands by the ancient route.

Despite its obvious importance, and, above all, its nearness—ten miles—to the Metropolis, there can be few sites which have been treated by archaeologists with such complete indifference as Sulloniace. It has been remembered throughout the centuries, appearing on early maps with curiously distorted spelling (Morden, in 1695, calling it “St. Slomaca”!). The farmer on the hill-top knows that he is dwelling on the site of “Sul-loneeka.” Local legend still has it that here was the town of Cassivellaunus stormed by Julius Cæsar, whose

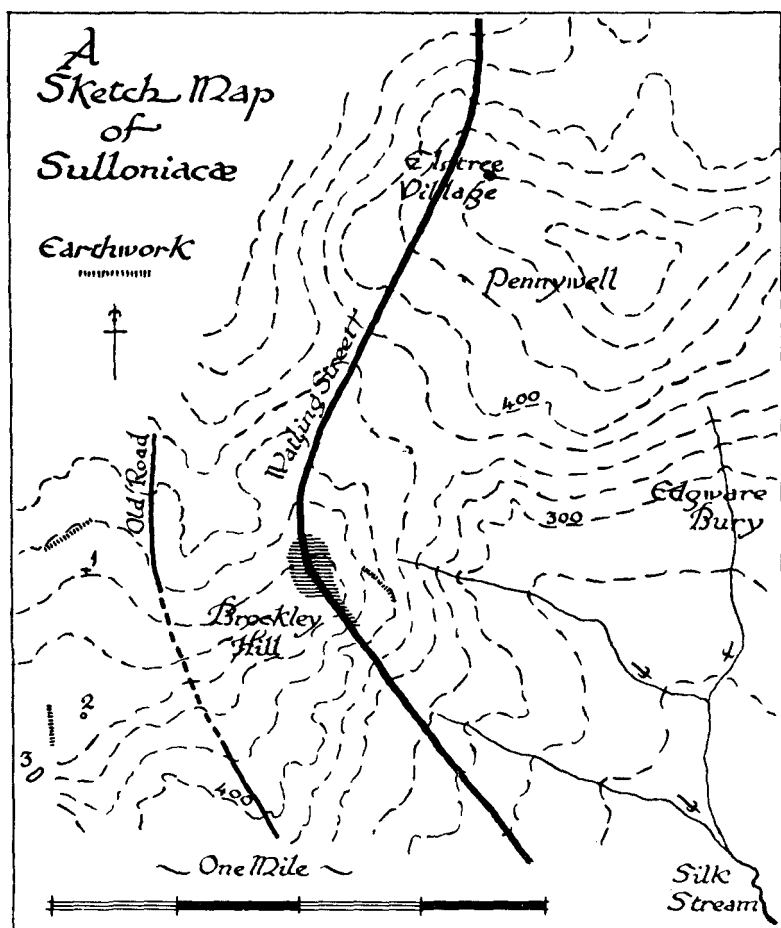


Fig. 7. A Rough Contour Map of Sulloniacæ. Roman Finds are Plentiful within the Shaded Area.

1. The Obelisk.
2. "Boadicea's Grave," (supposed tumulus).
3. "Julius Cæsar's Pond."

name has been bestowed on the remarkable reservoir to the west of the ancient site, and also to a now-vanished mound "Julius Cæsar's Fort." Certainly it was protected by forest and marsh, and was, moreover, on a singularly easily defended site, steep-scarped on all except the western side. The mounds which are said to cover ancient dead were once thick on the ridge. Three at least remain, and the approximate sites of two more and the doubtful site of a sixth has been recorded. There is hardly a villager in Stanmore who has not at some time found a "Roman relic," and the present writer, as a child, could take his friends to the hill-top, and fulfil his promise of filling their pockets with surface Roman potsherds after half an hour or so of searching. Yet do the archaeologists of London pass it by, while the mechanical navvy of the road-maker and the house-builder storm the scarps of ancient Sulloniaceae unchecked. It will not be long before all will be covered and lost forever.

Fig. 7 shows, roughly, the contour of the district. Most of the finds have been from the eastern spur of Brockley Hill. (A list of these, together with various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century references, was recently published in a book on the antiquities of the County of Middlesex, and need not be recapitulated here.)²⁹ Various mentions have been made of Sulloniaceae from time to time, but nothing has ever been *done* there in the way of organised archaeological investigation.

Surely the legendary lore of the site and the finds which have been from time to time recorded are sufficient encouragement for an exploration of the site to be attempted. It may be that much light may be thereby thrown on the problems of the district, the *territoria* of London, if its ancient neighbour, Sulloniaceae, be invited to tell her story.

There is still time—but that time is short.

Explore Sulloniaceae!

NOTES.

1. See report in the *St. Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archæological Society Transactions*, 1931.
2. See note in *British Archæological Association Journal*, Vol. XXXV, p. 293 (1929).
3. *Old Kingsbury Church*, by Simeon Potter, p. 11 (1920).
4. See paper on "The Hundred of Gore and its Moot-Hedge," in *London and Middlesex Archæological Society's Transactions*, N.S., Vol. VII, p. 218.
5. See Grant by Offa to St. Albans, Birch, 267.
6. See Deed, giving boundaries, in Birch, Vol. III, No. 994.
7. It would be interesting to know whether this district has any connection with the Belgic tribe of the *Cassi*.
8. Lyson's *Environs of London*, Vol. III, p. 392 (1795).
9. *British Archæological Association Journal*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 387 (1927).
10. Dugdale's *Monasticon*, Vol. I, p. 111.
11. *London and Middlesex Archæological Society's Transactions*, N.S., Vol. VII, p. 99.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *A Short History of Ruislip*, by J. T. Cattle, p. 13 (1930).
14. *Harrow Through the Ages*, by W. W. Druett, p. 90 (1935).
15. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
16. The last occasion when this was done appears to have been during Queen Adelaide's tenancy of the Priory in 1848-49.
17. *History of Hertfordshire*, p. vii—"the faint traces of a bank and ditch running north of the brick kiln on Harrow Weald Common, and to the left of the road from Harrow to Elstree"—Clutterbuck wrote before the expansion of the estate, and presumably refers to the old road, now within the park.
18. Misc. Accounts, Henry VIII, 2396.
19. Bodleian Rental, as described.
20. B.M., Stowe Charters, No. 32. (I have to record my thanks to Mr. Trelawny Roberts, of Stanmore, for directing my attention to this and the 957 Deed.)
21. *Gesta Abb. Mon. St. Albans*, i, 474.
22. *V. sup.*
23. See map opp. p. 255 in *The Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. XIV.
24. *V. sup.*
25. *Middlesex in British, Roman and Saxon Times*, by Sir Montagu Sharpe, 2nd edition (1932), pp. 22-24.
26. It would also, of course, have served to keep wild beasts from trespassing upon the cultivated lands in the Colne Valley.
27. See the Saxon Charters quoted above.
28. See the A.D. 957 Charter quoted earlier.
29. Vulliamy, *Middlesex and London* (1930), pp. 202-7. No mention is made, however, of an interesting book, *The Twelve Churches*, written in 1849, and published anonymously in 1860, which gives much interesting information concerning the antiquities of the district.