

AN INVESTIGATION OF ROMAN ROAD No. 167¹

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SUMMARY

Fieldwork has been carried out in an attempt to prove a suggested line of route No. 167². Excavations have been carried out in three places and resistivity surveys in seven places along the route. No evidence of a Roman road was found in any of these places, but a road of probable fourteenth century date was found at one site excavated. In addition, excavations were carried out in four places and resistivity surveys in eleven areas not on the Viatores published line, to test alternative routes. A road of Roman date was found in two of the places excavated.

INTRODUCTION

The Viatores in their book suggest a line for a Roman road from St. Albans via Shenley, Well End, Barnet Gate, Mill Hill, Hendon, Golders Green, Hampstead and so into London. They published excavated evidence for this road at Verulam Golf Course (Grid Ref.: TL 161055, O.S. 1 in. Map No. 160), and at Well End (TQ 205983), but they could only suggest a route from there southwards into London. The portion of the route under investigation was south of the last proven section (C.M.5) at Well End to Jack Straw's Castle (TQ 24628645) on Hampstead Heath (see fig. 1). No investigations were, however, carried out north of Barnet Gate. Various factors limited the investigation of the postulated route. Between Barnet Gate and Highwood Hill, the line runs on public footpaths and metalled roads, thus preventing sectioning. South of Highwood Hill the first open space available for investigation was the area to the north of the Lawrence Street Allotments, TQ 219932 (see Site A). At this point the road was thought to realign on to Mill Hill Ridgeway and then run down Milespit Hill. This would bring it into the next site available for investigation, where the line crosses the disused railway track from Mill Hill East to Edgware at TQ 232914. Investigations were carried out both in the south bank of the railway cutting, and in the adjoining Cophall Fields (see Site B). From here the Viatores proposed a route running across the Great North Way and then through a densely populated area of the London Borough of Barnet along the line of Brent Street to the Golders Green Road. This portion of the route from Site B did not lend itself to any form of investigation. At the junction of the Golders Green Road and the North Circular Road it was possible to cut a section on the proposed line (see Site C), in the garden of No. 1 Woodlands (TQ 241885). The proposed route then remains inaccessible until Golders Hill Park and West Heath, the latter being in the London Borough of Camden. Resistivity meter surveys have been carried out at a number of places on West Heath (see Site D), but no surveys have been made south of Jack Straw's Castle. In all, a distance of some seven miles is under consideration, from Barnet Gate to Jack Straw's Castle. Detailed reports of the investigated sites follow.

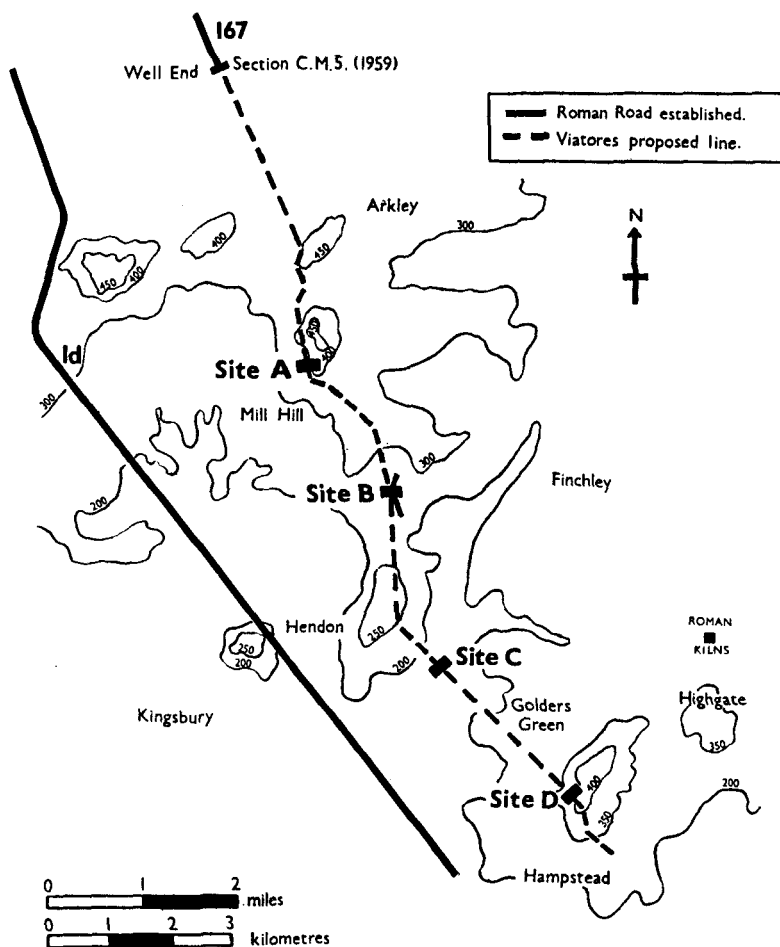


Fig. 1
Location Plan. Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved.

SITE A

Assuming the line of road 167 from Barnet Gate, across Nan Clark's Lane, to Marsh Lane, to be as the Viatores suggested, then the road would run into the open space to the north of the Lawrence Street Allotments, Mill Hill, N.W.7.³ (Grid Ref.: TQ 21859323—TQ 21919328). Here the Viatores consider the road to realign to cross Lawrence Street and then turn south-east along Mill Hill Ridgeway. Thus it was hoped to pick up traces of the road north of any realignment and then to pursue the line to the Ridgeway.

It was reported that when clearing the garden of No. 9 Abbey View, in about 1959, a noticeable area of pebbles was worked through. In the vicinity of this small area there were in evidence blue-grey pebbles as well as quantities of the local pebbles found in most gardens in the Mill Hill area. This evidence was by no means conclusive but it should be pointed out

that concentrations of pebbles were not found elsewhere in the garden of No. 9, and also trenches on this line in the neighbouring building site showed orange-grey clay sections down to at least 10 ft.

The site chosen for excavation on the Viatores line was outside the present allotment area and had only been cultivated for a short period during the war.⁴ Apart from this it has been grazing land as far as can be ascertained. It was planned to open a trench across the Viatores line and also to investigate further north-east, as there was a possibility that the road could have realigned earlier to gain the Ridgeway by one realignment only. A total of 88 ft. out of a section length of 160 ft. was opened, and the ground was found to be undisturbed. In all the areas opened, including the Viatores line, there were only a few inches of topsoil which gave way to undisturbed orange clay (see fig. 2). There was a marked absence of pebbles and the few that were present in places were certainly not indicative of any solid feature. The sections showed no sign of the road ever having been there or of having been subsequently removed.

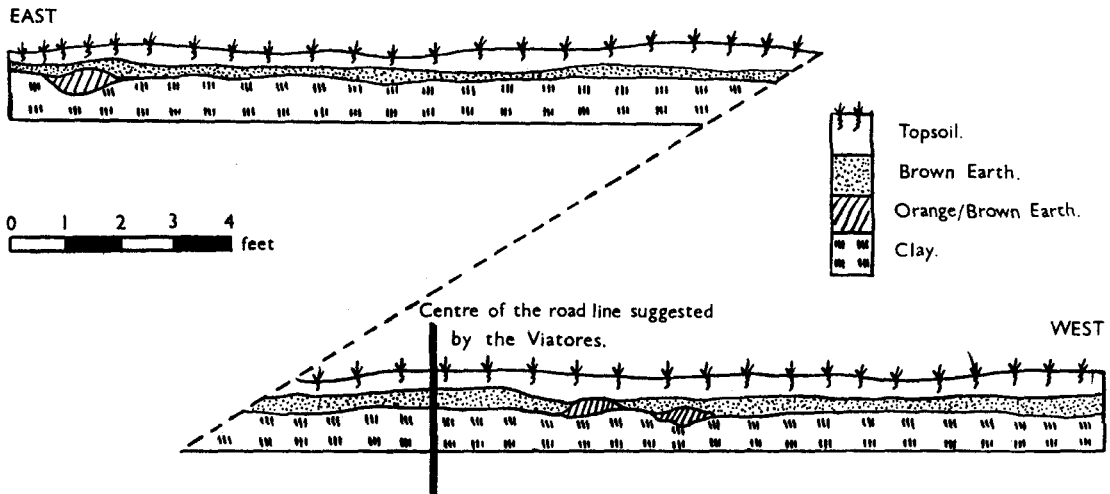


Fig. 2

Site A. South face of Trench 2 showing the section across the Viatores proposed line.

The total absence of the road led to some re-thinking about the route. It must also be noted that those holders of allotments who were questioned had not themselves, nor knew of anyone who had, an excess of pebbles in their cultivation areas. From looking at the cultivated areas, from extensive resistivity meter surveys both north and south of the allotments, and also from the excavations carried out to the north of the allotments, it can be stated that no Roman road crossed this open space. If, however, the very thin evidence at 9, Abbey View, is road-metalling, then the road may lie under the odd numbers of Lawrence Gardens N.W.7. Consultations with the owner of No. 1 Lawrence Gardens, however, cast doubts on this theory, as no pebble features were noted during the landscaping of the garden.

Other routes bypassing the allotments were considered and investigated with a Martin Clark Resistivity Meter.⁵ Routes such as Barnet Gate to the Old Forge, Hendon Wood Lane

to the Old Forge, Barnet Gate to St. Vincents, were all investigated and no positive indications obtained. In all some six routes from Barnet Gate were investigated, and all proved to be negative (see fig. 3).

SITE B⁶

The suggested line for the road ran from Mill Hill Ridgeway down Milespit Hill, across the disused railway line between Mill Hill East and Edgware and then across Copthall Playing Fields to the Great North Way. A suitable site to cut a section on the Viatores line was the south bank of the disused railway cutting at TQ 232914.⁷ It was also planned to trace the line across the adjacent Copthall Fields.⁸ It was decided at the same time to test an alternative theory that the road ran somewhat to the east of the line suggested by the Viatores.

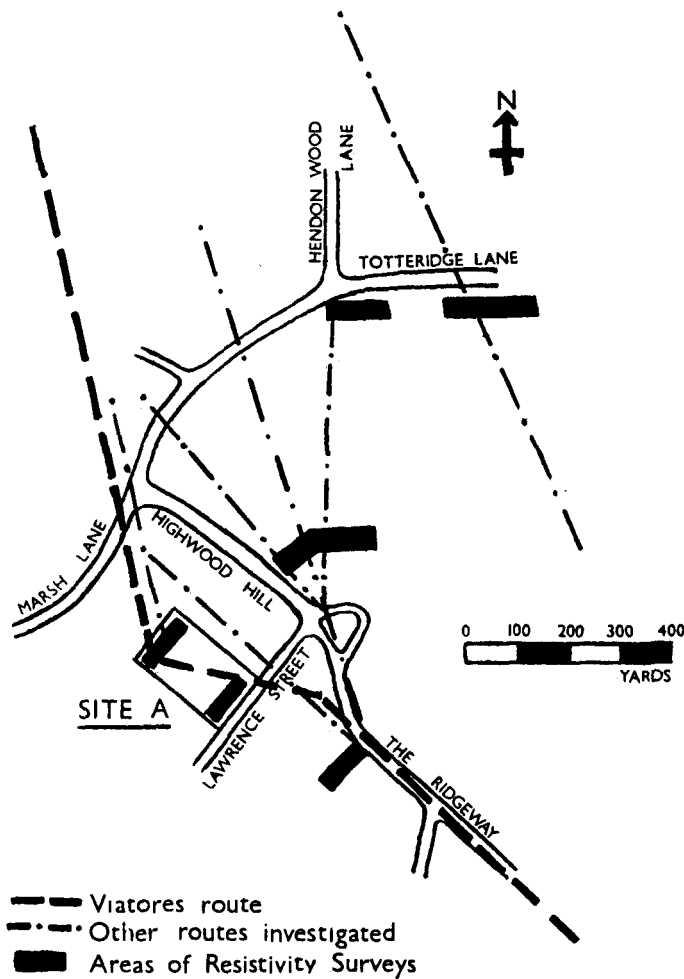


Fig. 3
Possible routes investigated in the vicinity of Site A. Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved.

It would have crossed only a very small part of the Copthall Fields before crossing the neighbouring Hendon Golf Course in an alignment towards the junction of Ashley Lane and the Great North Way. Evidence in support of this line was given by Mr. Mason, an ex-Head Greenkeeper of Hendon Golf Course. He reported finding a well packed pebble spread at TQ 233911, the like of which did not occur elsewhere on the golf course.

Site B comprises both the railway cutting and the relevant portion of Copthall Fields (Areas 1 and 2) which were included in one grid based on the road bridge over the railway at TQ 232914. The base line of the grid was laid along the track bed from a point 14 ft. along a line joining the west face of the two supporting piers. This point was at a perpendicular distance of 11 ft. 1½ in. from the brickwork of the northern pier. The north-west corner of the grid was located 240 ft. from this point and a grid of 10 ft. squares was laid.

SITE B: THE RAILWAY CUTTING

A total of 48 ft. was opened out of a section of 70 ft. as high up the bank of the cutting as permissible. In all the grid squares opened, only half-grid squares were actually excavated due to the proximity of the fence and the public footpath. Square 5D overlay the postulated Viatores route, and when opened yielded a south section cut to 3 ft. depth, consisting of 4½ in. of clay overlying 4 in. of light stony topsoil which lay on a chocolate clay for the rest of the section. Thus in this square, there was no evidence of disturbance of any kind, except the occurrence of a clay surface layer resulting from some earlier earthworks in the cutting. Squares 7D and 8D yielded the foundations of a path (lying on the clay which was taken as natural for the site) with an associated post at the west of square 7D. This post was considered to be part of the stile over which one could cross the railway track when a right-of-way existed across the track, before the footpath was diverted eastwards up on to the bridge. Squares 9D and 10D yielded a considerable amount of pebbles and flints which could well have been disturbed road-metalling. The total thickness of the pebble and flint containing layers varied from 1 ft. 6 in. to 2 ft., and lay directly on the London clay. In square 9D, this supposedly natural clay contained a roughly circular patch of gravel of diameter varying between 2 ft. and 2 ft. 6 in. at a depth of 2 ft. 6 in. to 4 ft. 6 in. Although the pebble containing layers of 9D and 10D were stratified, they did not appear indicative of a road. There was, however, some tailing off of the pebble-containing layers in the south section of 11D, the bulk of which consisted of clay and dark soils, with a few stones. The layer of stony clay visible in the south section of 11D yielded four sherds of grey-coated, red fabric (11.D.A.1 and 11.D.A.8.). These pieces are considered to be of sixteenth century date. In square 9D a piece of sandstone was found (overall dimensions 1 ft. 1 in. x 7 in. x 6 in.). This had its long axis inclined at an angle of about 45° to the vertical. This was well packed into the pebble layers with no apparent hole dug for it, and it was completely covered by the pebbles. Similar lumps of sandstone, although much smaller, were found in other parts of the site in the road metalling where it had been established. These stones are not natural in the London clay, but could very well have come from the glacial boulder clay at Finchley, not very far away.

Other finds from the banks of the cutting were few, and consisted of several decayed wood samples, several fragments of assorted red fabric, unglazed, and red fabric brown-glazed pottery, and part of an upper jaw of a domestic animal. A topsoil find from the north bank of the cutting while probing, was a complete clay pipe bowl and two pieces of clay pipe stem.

SITE B: COPTHALL FIELDS, AREA I—RESISTIVITY SURVEY⁹

While work was in progress in the cutting, and the evidence was pointing more and more to a very disturbed set of resulting sections, an intensive resistivity survey was carried out in Cophall Fields. This was at first carried out in the northern portion of the fields adjacent to the railway cutting and on both the east and west side of the public footpath so that no matter what the outcome of the excavations in 5D to 11D all possible routes would be investigated. The instrument used in this survey was the same as that used on Site A. Trial traverses were carried out using 2, 3 and 4 ft. electrode separation on the Wenner system of surveying.¹⁰ From the results of these, taken in conjunction with the possible road-metal depth in 9D and 10D it was decided to use 2 ft. electrode separation throughout the survey.

The first major traverse (No. 3 on fig. 4), was taken to cross both the possible routes and was started 50 ft. to the west of the public footpath. The resulting graph (fig. 5) showed average readings of between 10 and 20 ohms over the entire portion of the traverse to the west of the public footpath, i.e. over the Viatores route. The public footpath itself gave only slightly raised values as it consisted of only a thin layer of gravel and asphalt, which did not penetrate deep enough to affect the value of the specific resistance. After about 20 ft. to the east of the path the values began to rise steadily to a maximum of 140 ohms and then to drop to the previous average. This peak was spread over some 20 ft. This feature was aligned on the alternative route, across the golf course. A similar traverse, No. 4, was run some 10 ft. further south, and a very similar result obtained. In order to allow for easier recording of the survey, the traverses were, from this stage on, all based on the grid squares, which, at the time of traverses Nos. 3 and 4 had not been laid. An intensive survey of parallel traverses 2 ft. apart was carried out to the east of the footpath to investigate this feature further.

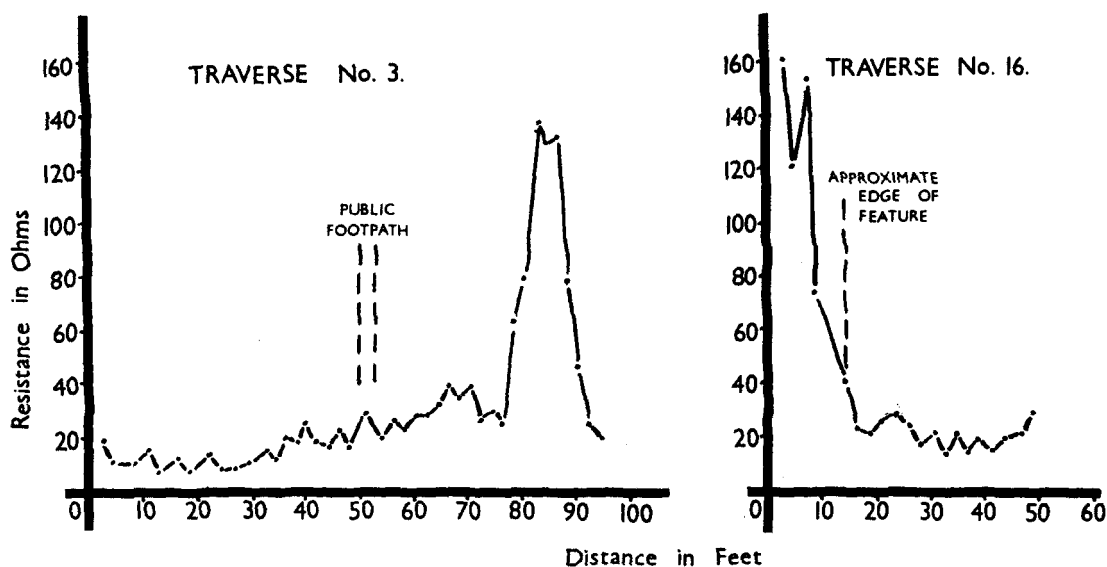


Fig. 5

Two examples of resistivity traverses using a 2ft. electrode separation, which showed the feature.

As they were carried out the traverses pieced together a very interesting result. The first signs that all was not simply on the golf course line came when traverses 5, 6 and 7 produced peaks substantially west of the golf course line, and running in a south-westerly direction. This line was substantiated by traverses 10, 11, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22 and 23 shown on fig 4. Thus a line of resistance peaks was apparent for some 60 ft. In order to try and check this line, which was running diagonally between the Viatores and the golf course line, traverses were run down the grid lines, i.e. in a south-south-easterly direction. Traverses 16, 17 and 18 were done on this idea, and the resistance values were found to drop on the line predicted by the other traverses, thus indicating the edge of the feature (fig. 5). None of the traverses taken showed obvious ditches, which it would be possible to detect using a resistivity meter. Thus, it became apparent that if this feature was a road it was running diagonally between the two possible routes under consideration at this stage. Further difficulties were encountered when traverses 25 and 26 failed to give any peaks whatsoever. Further traverses, north, south, east and west of these two failed to give any indication of any change of direction, or any reason why the feature should have been lost. Traverse No. 36 was taken some 310 ft. in length along the west side of the public footpath, over about half the length of the first field and failed to give any indication that the solid feature had crossed the footpath. More and more traverses were carried out in the first field and no further sign of the feature was picked up on any line.

On moving south into the second field no peaks were obtained on the Viatores line, or in a straight projection of the line indicated by the resistivity meter in the first field. On traversing to the east of the public footpath comparable peaks to those originally obtained were found on the golf course line, in a straight line from the previous evidence of Mr. Mason. Thus it appeared that if this feature was a road, it must realign somewhere in the first field. By projection of the resistivity peaks this realignment, if it existed, would be on the west side of the public footpath, but traverse No. 36 had ruled out any feature crossing the footpath.

SITE B: COPTHALL FIELDS, AREA I—EXCAVATIONS

As this somewhat complicated resistivity picture was building up, excavations were commenced over the area of maximum activity of traverses Nos. 10 and 11, where peaks of 206 and 152 ohms had been recorded. An 18 ft. by 5 ft. trench was cut in the northern halves of grid-squares 8H and 9H (see fig. 4). Within a day the light ploughed topsoil (last ploughed in 1964, according to local information), had given way to a large quantity of pebbles. At first these became visible at the centre of the trench, and on working to the east and the west edges of the trench a distinct cambered pebble layer, extending over the entire 18 ft. trench became apparent. In 1964, this field was ploughed to a depth of 9 in. and this might well account for the large number of pebbles in the topsoil and it was considered that if this was the road, the actual surface would have suffered considerably from ploughing over the years. This theory was later confirmed when the topsoil was removed over the south face of trenches 8H and 9H to expose the pebble layer. This was done by cutting back the south face for a foot over the entire length of the trench and carefully removing the topsoil down to firm pebbles. The result was equidistant heaps of pebbles considerably disturbed, the tops of which were in one or two cases a matter of a few inches below the present day ground level. When a similar procedure was carried out on the opposite side of the trench close to field boundary very little disturbance appeared to have been caused, and a reasonable area of road surface was

exposed. This surface had obviously lost metalling over the years, but it seemed to indicate that the road was metalling only with pebbles, so that its surface would have been kept solid by virtue of being used. There appeared to be little or no damage due to ploughing on this north side, thus indicating that the plough swung round in the space of the trench width.

At this stage the evidence of site and composition indicated that this feature could well be a Roman road but that as yet the full width had not been realised and excavations were continued westwards into 7H and eastwards into 10H. Excavations were also commenced in squares 7K and 8K, which were located over the last resistivity peaks at the south of the main site. It was hoped that some evidence as to why the resistivity meter should have ceased showing peaks might be found. At a later stage square 6J was opened when the locating of the west edge of the road was becoming both difficult and crucial.

The sections of the south faces of 7H, 8H, 9H, and 10H (fig. 6), showed that the road metalling consisted of varying sizes of pebbles. All that appeared to remain of the upper surface was a layer of hard packed pebbles occupying approximately the central portion of the camber. Below this spreading for some 20 ft. in the north section and 24 ft. in the south section was a layer of much pebble, but in this case there was a fair amount of light clay packing material. At the east end of the north section, this layer appeared to define an edge clearly, and this point was taken as a point on the east edge for plotting purposes. In the north section below the central portion of the pebbles in the light clay layer could be seen a layer of dark clay and pebbles. Spreading westwards from this was a layer of distinctly yellow clay with some pebbles but not in quite the quantity of the layers above.

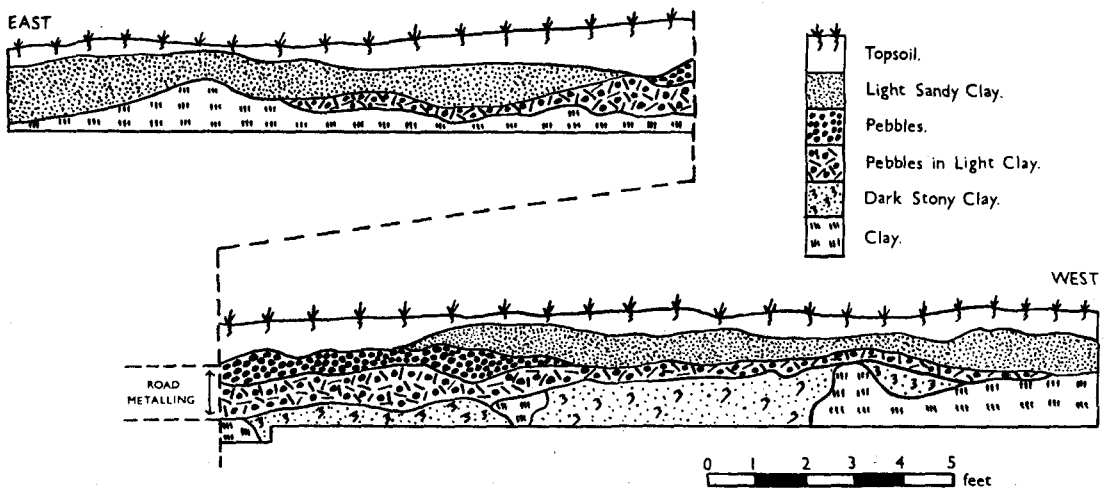


Fig. 6

Site B. South face of Trenches 7H, 8H, 9H and 10H showing the road structure.

It is thus very difficult to decide if these constitute part of the road material, for they show no sign of tailing off. It was noted that the south sections had no parallel to the yellow clay and pebble layer, but in the central portion of the section the layer of pebbles in light clay was thicker as if to compensate for the lack of the dark clay and pebbles of the north section. No ditches were apparent at either end of these sections.

The southern halves of squares 7K and 8K were opened to try and locate two further points on the east edge of the road (fig. 7), and this aim was achieved. A similar set of soil types were present in this trench as in squares 7H-10H. In the north face an east edge of the road was apparent 10 ft. 6 in. from the north-west corner of the trench. These points align well with the two points in square 10H (fig. 7). These sections showed a considerably more damaged road than in 7H-10H. In the south face a portion of the pebble layer had been removed between 3 and 4 ft. from the west end and in the north face a similar but deeper area appeared to have been lost but partially filled with pure clay. These features, which one can suggest were related to field drainage after the road had fallen into disuse and been lost, appear not to have been dug in recent years. This is inferred from the fact that both are well covered by the pottery-containing light sandy clay.

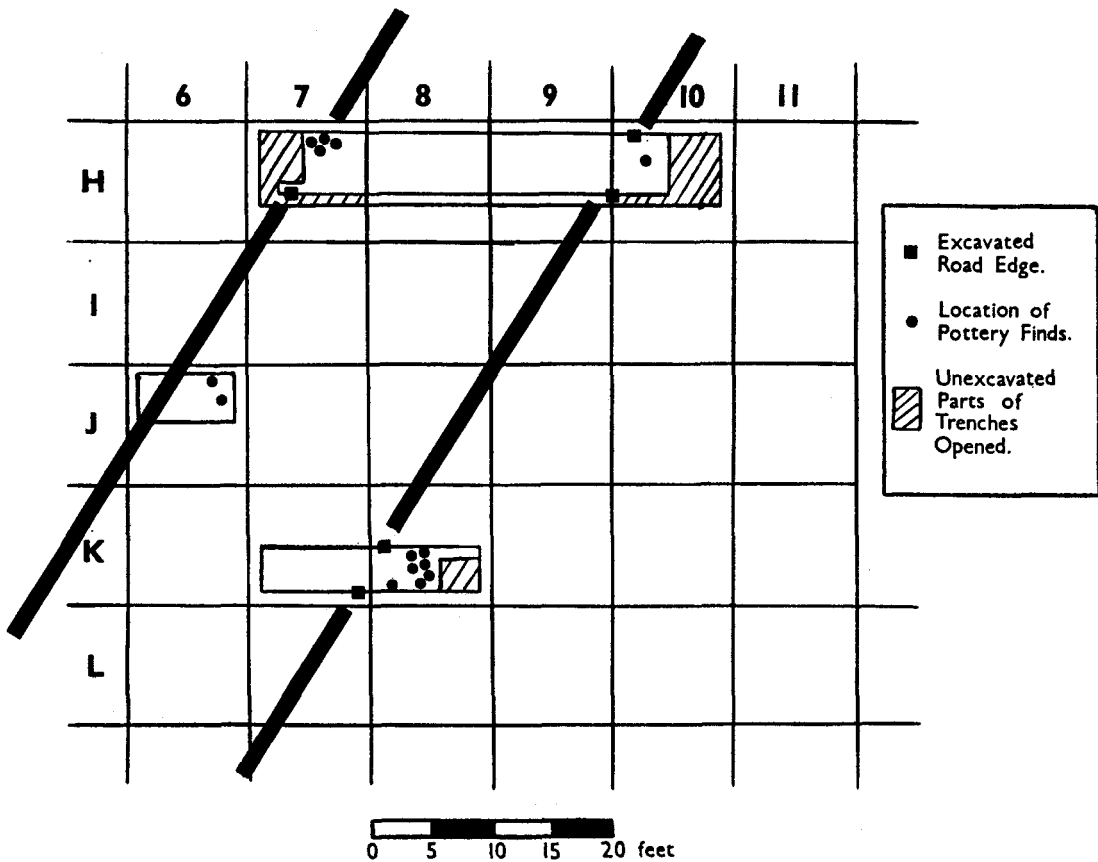


Fig. 7
Site B. A portion of the grid showing the location of the pottery finds.

The excavation of 7H, 8H, 9H, and 10H, yielded two points on the east edge of the road and very late in the excavations a point on the west edge in the south face of 7H. Square 6J was opened in an attempt to locate another point on the west side of the road. The northern

half of this trench was taken down some 2 ft. by which depth work was well into the London clay, with no evidence of the road metalling except for a few pebbles scattered in the topsoil and sandy soil below. The excavation of 6J leads to the conclusion that the road had suffered damage at some time, and considerable working of the soil had been carried out, which would account for the solid structure of the road being lost.

SITE B: COPTHALL FIELDS, FINDS FROM AREA I: INTRODUCTION

A variety of post-medieval topsoil finds was recovered from the site, all of which have been retained but will not be discussed in this report. The only post-medieval find of interest was a piece of decorated clay pipe stem. Each side of the portion of the stem found bears part of an inscription, which on one side reads: 'EXHIBITION OF INDUST' and on the other '19 PORTLAND ST. SOHO.'

Important Roman finds were made at each end of the long trench 7H-10H. From later evidence it can be concluded that the finds from squares 7H and 10H were either on the edge or outside the line of the road (fig. 7). The pottery from square 7H all came from a very small area, approximately 1 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. 4 in. in the layer of light sandy clay. This was the pottery-bearing layer, already referred to, and it was a common layer all over the main site. Where it occurred in reasonable proximity to the road levels the pebble content increased, presumably the work of the plough. The small area in 7H yielded 78 assorted fragments of pottery. In the area were also noted soil discolourations and charred particles. The Roman finds from square 10H, at the east end of the long section, numbered only 5 pieces. Like those at the western end of the trench, these were in the light sandy clay layer. Square 8K yielded 35 pieces of Roman pottery, all from the layer of light sandy clay. This layer did contain a few pebbles, but, as elsewhere on the site the pebble content varied considerably depending on the proximity of the road metalling. Although no road structure was found in square 6J, the sandy soil present in the trench yielded some 6 pieces of Roman pottery. As these were similar to those from the rest of the site, they tend to indicate that the road had been in the vicinity.

ROMAN POTTERY

The following items of pottery were found at the edges of the road in the trenches indicated by the first number and letter of their identification number (fig. 7). The pieces are predominantly native British wares dated between the mid-first and the early second century A.D., some of which are pre-conquest in character. The writer is indebted to Mr. N. Cook, Mr. M. R. Hull and Mr. H. L. Sheldon for their kindness in examining the finds and for their invaluable comments.

- 6.J.A.1 (fig. 8 No. 3) 3 pieces of grey fine fabric pottery, 2 of which form part of a rim. This is considered to be late first century in date. This rim form is very close to the type A.5 rim group from the Highgate Wood kiln site at present under excavation.¹¹ The fabric is, however, sandier, but not all that dissimilar.
- 6.J.A.2 3 pieces of coarse black fabric pottery, probably pre-conquest in date.
- 7.H.A.1 (i) (fig. 8 No. 1) 3 pieces forming part of a rim. Grey fabric with a brown exterior. The form of this rim is similar to the type A.7 rim group from Highgate Wood. There are, however, no fabric similarities. This jar is considered to be Belgic and is dated to the end of the first century.

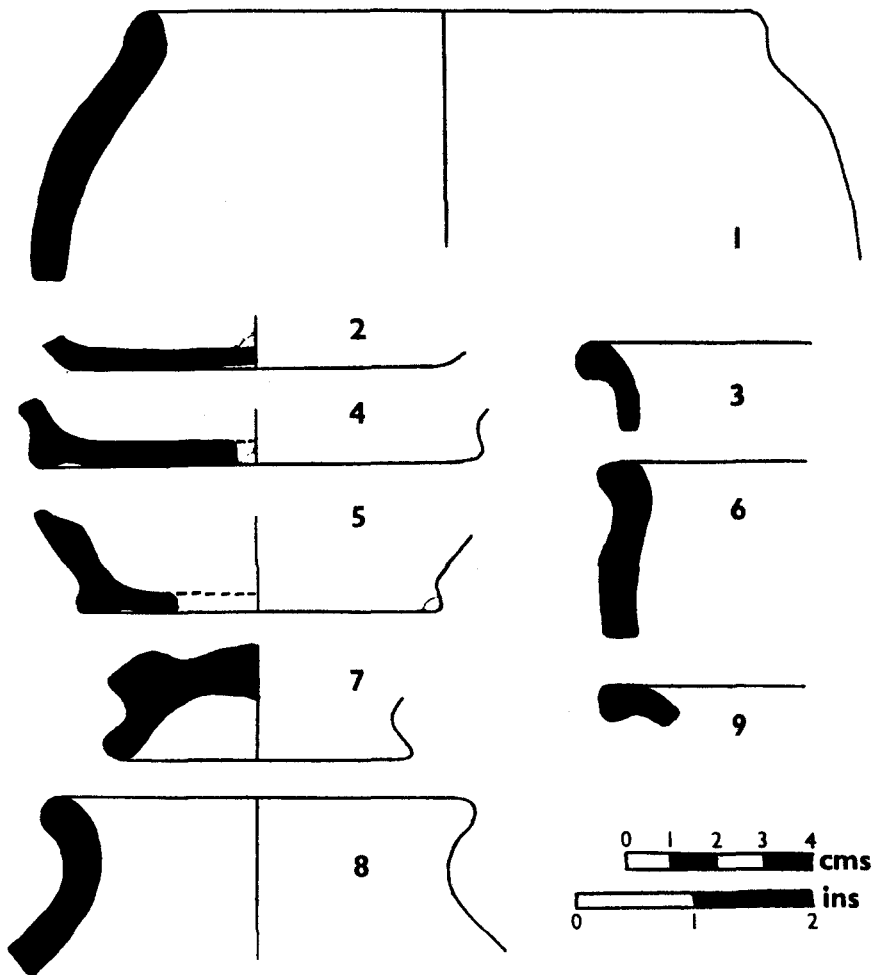


Fig. 8
Site B. Roman pottery sections.

- 7.H.A.1 (ii) (fig. 8 No. 4) 8 pieces forming 3 parts of a base. The fabric is grey/buff and is of fine texture.
- 7.H.A.1 (iii) 10 pieces of thin coarse fabric pottery. These pieces were considered to be similar to the 'Legionary' wares made by the native potters. The pieces had, however, undergone a process of erosion, leaving a thin wall and the coarse appearance.
- 7.H.A.1 (iv) 37 pieces of assorted black, brown and grey fabric pottery. Fabrics vary from fine to coarse. Predominantly native wares of either pre-conquest or very soon after the conquest.
- 7.H.A.2 (fig. 8 No. 2). 6 pieces of grey fabric pottery, forming half of a 9.5 cm. diameter base of a dish or bowl. Possibly similar to the ware made at Ardleigh Essex, which dates to the Trajanic period (98-117A.D.).

- 7.H.A.4 14 pieces of assorted black and grey fabric wares. These are also very thin in nature.
- 7.H.A.5 (fig. 8 No. 6). A single piece of a wheel-made native rim. The fabric is light brown internally and black externally.
- 8.K.A.1 (fig. 8 No. 7). 4 pieces of a black and light brown fine fabric native ware of about the mid-first century date. The portion remaining has been considered to be either part of a pedestal base or part of a lid. The most favourable comparison is with a lid, Hawkes and Hull (1947) plate LXXXV, No. 2.¹² There is, however, also some compatibility in form with the pedestal base, plate LXXIV, No. 203c. Unfortunately there is not sufficient remaining to enable a categorical decision to be made.
- 8.K.A. 3 & 4 (fig. 8 No. 5). 3 pieces of a fine grey fabric base. The pieces are slate coloured externally and brown/grey coloured internally. Possibly late first century in date.
- 8.K.A.5 (fig. 8 No. 8). 2 pieces forming part of a black coarse fabric rim. Similar to Hawkes and Hull, (1947) fig. 56, No. 13.
- 8.K.A.6 25 pieces of assorted brown, black and grey fabric pottery. At least 6 types are represented among these pieces.
- 8.K.A.7 (fig. 8 No. 9). 1 piece of a grey fine fabric rim.
- 10.H.A.3 4 pieces of assorted pottery. 2 grey fabric, 1 brown and 1 black. All the fabrics are coarse in texture. The fragments are considered to be first or early second century.

SITE B: COPTHALL FIELDS, AREA 2

A further area (TQ 23259120) was investigated in the second field south from the railway cutting. This investigation was of necessity brief and aimed at just picking up evidence of road metalling to confirm the line of the road. As mentioned earlier, resistivity traverses at the north end of the second field on the east of the public footpath showed comparable peaks to those from the main area of site B. A Single 10 ft. grid square was located over the area of maximum resistivity activity of traverses 44 and 45. The west side of this square was on a line perpendicular to the grid base line in the railway cutting, originating from a point 20 ft. to the west of the north-west corner post of the main grid. The north-west corner of this single square was 610 ft. from the grid base line in the cutting.

On the opening of this square a very similar ploughed topsoil to that found in squares 8H and 9H was excavated. 3 to 4 in. of this topsoil gave way to a light sandy clay, again very similar to that found on the main site. The degree of sand in this layer gave it a fine nature and the clay particles were also mixed with a few pebbles. At between 7 and 9 in. deep across the whole width of the trench a packed pebble layer became apparent; in places this was 6 in. thick. Below this was a narrower layer of pebbles in a distinct orange clay, and below this was the pure orange clay considered to be the natural. This section, (fig. 9), compared well with the others from the main site, and appeared to constitute a section through the centre of a road consisting of two pebble layers. Time did not permit the complete excavation of this road section, but a narrow strip was excavated eastwards in an attempt to find the east edge.

WEST

EAST

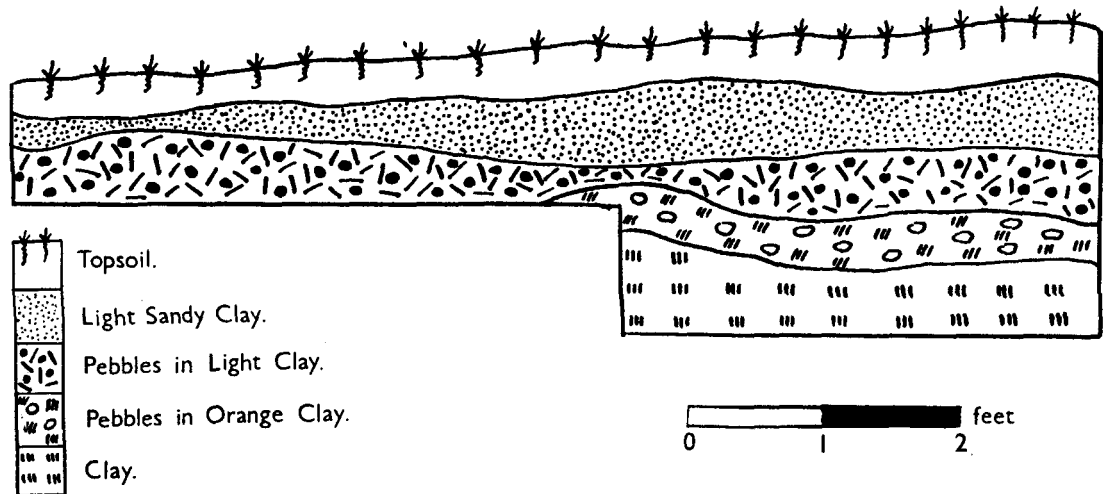


Fig. 9
Site B. Area 2. The north face showing the road structure.

If one edge could be found in the time available, it would be possible to link this to the two tall trees which were considered to mark the east edge of the previous golf course evidence and so extrapolate back to the point of realignment in the first field. An east edge of the pebble layer was found 8 ft. 6 in. east of the east edge of the section shown in fig. 10. Thus it is possible to say that if the estimate of road width from the main site is reasonable, then the original section at this point was cut slightly west of centre. No finds of any description were made in Area 2.

The excavations in Cophthall Fields produced 5 points on the east edge of the road and one on the west. The east edge of the previous evidence on the golf course was indicated by two trees. Thus it is possible by joining up these points and assuming the perpendicular width of 21 ft. given by the one west edge point, to infer a line for the road across this northern portion of Cophthall Fields as shown in fig. 10.

The major pottery finds, all of which have been dated between 50 and 100 A.D., appear to imply similar dating for the road itself. The fact that the pottery containing layers appear from the sections to encroach over the camber, indicates that at a comparatively early date the road lost its importance and was reduced to a narrow track which eventually disappeared completely.

SITE C

A section was cut through a bank at the west end of the garden of No. 1 Woodlands, Golders Green Road, London N.W.11 (TQ 24108850). This bank was on the road line as suggested by the Viatores. The site was observed by Mr. M. Hammerson, who obtained permission from the owner for an investigation to be carried out. There was, however, only one week-end (12th-13th October 1968), available between receiving permission and the sale of the house, to carry this out.

A single trench, 16 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 6 in. was cut across the feature. The size of the trench was dictated by the modern road to the south-west and by a modern garden path to the north-east. Both ends of the resulting section showed disturbance near to these limits. The southern face (section fig. 11), showed, at a depth of approximately 1 ft. 6 ins., a layer of pebble ranging from 3 in. to 6 in. in thickness. This feature appeared to be some form of road metalling, overlaid by light sandy clay and underlaid by a thicker yellow-brown clay. The latter layer was not completely excavated owing to the time factor. The pebble layer was clearly defined for some 12 ft. of the section before it ran into the disturbances at each end of the trench. At the north-east end of the trench a further small layer of pebbles was found at a depth of about 2 ft. Due, however, to the modern disturbance it was very difficult to establish whether or not it was continuous with the main pebble layer thus constituting part of the road metalling.

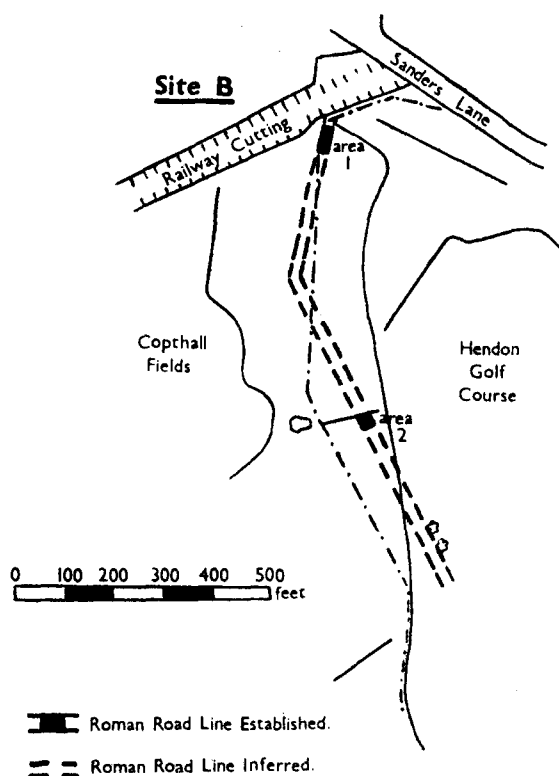


Fig. 10

Site B. Excavated evidence and the proposed line of the road. Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved.

The Medieval finds listed below, represent some 2 or 3 vessels which came from the light sandy clay layer overlying the pebble layer and in one case the sherd was within the pebbles. Two of the items listed (F.I.1 and 2), came from the disturbance at the north-east end of the trench. The writer is indebted to Mr. J. G. Hurst for his most helpful comments on this material.

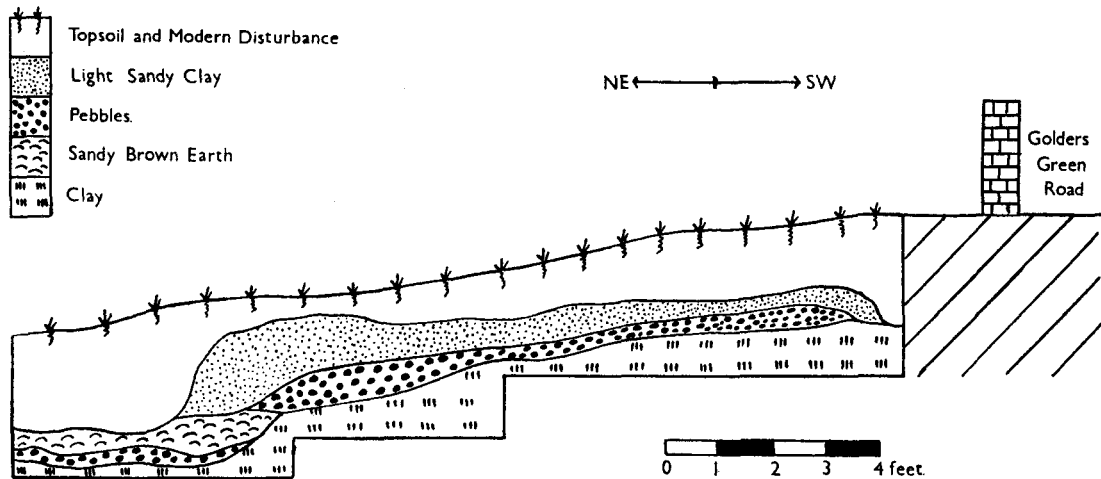


Fig. 11
Site C. South section showing the road structure.

- L.II.1 Sherd of fine fourteenth century ware from a kiln in West Kent. It is of red fabric with a white slip, exterior decorated with vertical combing.
- L.II.2 Sherd of Surrey Ware of the fourteenth or early fifteenth century.
- L.II.3 Sherds of fine fourteenth century ware also from a kiln in West Kent. It consists of red fabric with a white slip and a mottled green glaze.
- L.II. 4, 5, & 6 Sherds of Surrey Ware of the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. (For L.II.4 see fig. 12 No. 3). L.II.6 has a patch of green glaze common to this ware.
- L.III.1 Part of a Surrey Ware flanged rim of the fourteenth or early fifteenth century (fig. 12 No. 1).
- F.I. 1 & 2 2 pieces, one of which is part of a rim, (fig. 12 No. 2) of a variety of thirteenth century Herts. Grey Ware.

This site appears to have a road structure which is not obviously Roman in shape or construction and from the pottery evidence a tentative fourteenth to early fifteenth century date can be assigned to it. The one section available does not give any indication of an earlier road on the site, but it must be noted that because of the modern road the section cut was only on one side of the bank. Therefore an earlier road, should one exist, may well be under the present Golders Green Road. It is hoped that this site will be investigated further in the future with a view to establishing a firm date for the road and perhaps picking up traces of any earlier feature.

SITE D

The Viatores suggest two possible alignments for the road from Brent Bridge to Whitestone Pond. The first would run along the line of part of the Golders Green Road to North End where it would realign almost due south to run to the Whitestone Pond and on through Hampstead. The alternative alignment suggested is more southerly and would run along the greater portion of the Golders Green Road and then cross a larger portion of Golders Hill-Park and West Heath to take it straight to the Whitestone Pond without a realignment.

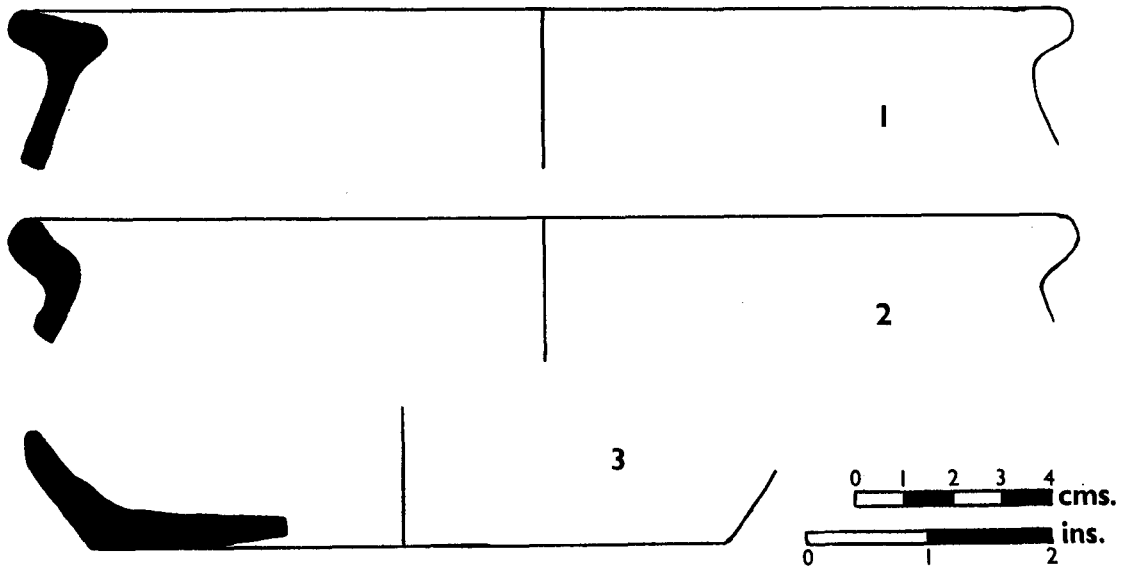


Fig. 12
Site C. Medieval pottery sections.

These two possible routes were covered by 22 resistivity traverses in an initial investigation of the area in an effort to pick up some solid feature indicative of a road.¹³ None of these traverses gave any indication of a feature of any kind being on either line. There were, however, peaks and high resistance values that have to be accounted for, and they indicate that more intensive research and surveying must be carried out before the complete absence of a road can be established. Research showed however, that there are beds of pebbles and gravel within the Bagshot sands.¹⁴ This fact can be correlated to some of the high resistance readings. It must not be forgotten that extensive working of Hampstead Heath for the sands has been carried out over the years, thus much archaeological evidence may have been lost.

This investigation was only a preliminary survey and it did make clear that there is an extensive area in which the road could be, assuming it crosses this part of the Heath. Therefore much detailed research and surveying will be required if the road is to be found on Hampstead Heath. No useful discussion as regards this area can be carried out until more evidence is available.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The portion of road established at Site B could indicate occupation in the vicinity, and this road must come from somewhere and go to somewhere else. From the researches reported here, the line published by the Viatores for road No. 167, is undoubtedly unsatisfactory. Careful watching of road works and other excavations over recent years yielded no evidence of metalling or other disturbances along the line of the Ridgeway or Milespit Hill.¹⁵ After taking into account the result of the routes investigated under Site A, one cannot say a road exists northwards from Site B, across Mill Hill and Totteridge, to the most southerly published excavated evidence for road 167 at Well End.¹⁶ It is possible, therefore, that there are two different roads to be considered.

The Viatores claim road No. 167 to be a late one built after London had attained its importance.¹⁷ This is based on the evidence of the sections cut at Verulam Golf Course, London Colney¹⁸ and Well End, yet the evidence from Site B shows an early road which was well on the decline in usage and importance by the beginning of the second century. A further difference is the width. The Viatores sections appear to be fairly constant in having widths between 28 ft. and 30 ft., yet the Site B width is only 21 ft. Thus one must keep an open mind as to whether the road that leaves St. Albans as No. 167 did ever reach London. Perhaps one should be looking for the settlement it served somewhere in the vicinity of Well End or Arkley.

Whether or not the portion of road established in Copthall Fields is part of 167 from St. Albans, and present evidence seems to indicate that it is not, it must run somewhere in a southerly direction. The lack of positive signs of an early road at Site C cast further doubts on the Viatores line, although there may well be an early road somewhere in the vicinity. From Site B, the line established appears to ascend Holders Hill, but from here it is unlikely to go straight on, if the ground fell as steeply as it does today, to the present course of the Dollis. It could realign to the south-west to cross the Hendon Hill and then run down to join Watling Street in the West Hendon or Colindale areas. John Norden the sixteenth century cartographer, who himself lived in Hendon Place, the site of which is off the present Brent Street, believed a Roman road to pass through Hendon. He considered the road to cross Hampstead Heath, pass from Brent Bridge to the Burroughs, Hendon, and then on to join Watling Street in the Colindale area.¹⁹ No effort has been made during the present researches to investigate any section of this line. Should, however, the route from Site B realign to the south-west it could well join a portion of the Norden line. Alternatively, the road could have realigned in some easterly direction from the top of Holders Hill.

It is all too easy just to draw lines on maps and dream up lines for Roman roads, but once having gained the top of Holders Hill the road could realign east-south-east to run towards the Roman pottery factory in Highgate Wood, centred on TQ 28298897.²⁰ At present no access roads have been established to or from this site, yet they must have existed. Although divorced from the area under investigation, the presence of this industrial site must not be forgotten as it is likely to have been established near an existing road. This factory site, which has yielded several kilns and large quantities of pottery, is considered on present evidence to have been in production between 60 and 120 A.D. It is important to remember that this compares well with the limits applied to the usage of the road found at Site B. There is, unfortunately, no evidence to suppose that the road at Site B does run to Highgate. As more work is carried out in Highgate Wood, it is to be hoped that exit roads will be found. Such discoveries would enable this industrial site to be fitted more accurately into the road network.

On the present evidence, the single section cut at Site C, does not seem to have Roman origins and appears to be the fourteenth century forerunner of the Golders Green Road. Documentary evidence reveals that Hendon in the fourteenth century was well established as a farming community with farms scattered over a wide area. The centre of this community appears to be around St. Mary's Church and successive Abbots of Westminster, who held the Manor, stayed in a Rectory built in Parson Street sometime between 1319 and 1326; this building later became the Manor House.

Lloyd, (1967)²¹ published details of farm accounts of the Manor of Hendon for the years 1316-1416. The accounts for the years 1376-1416 were made by John atte Hegge who

farmed at Cowhouse in south Hendon. This appears from circumstantial evidence to be near the boundary with Hampstead.²² It is therefore possible that as John atte Hegge managed the Manor for Westminster from the south Hendon area and as he is buried in St. Mary's Church, the road structure found at Site C could have been the route linking the northern and southern parts of the Hendon community. It is curious to note that despite good documentary evidence from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries very few actual finds of this period have come to light in the area. Therefore the precise locations of many buildings known to have existed have yet to be established.

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NOTES

- 1 The Roman Road numbering system adopted in this report is that of I. D. Margary as used by the Viatores in *Roman Roads in the South East Midlands*, Gollancz, 1964.
- 2 Viatores, *Roman Roads in the South East Midlands*, Road No. 167 Verulamium to London, Pages 117-125.
- 3 Owned by the London Borough of Barnet Council who kindly permitted the investigations to be carried out.
- 4 Excavations carried out by Hendon and District Archaeological Society in July 1968.
- 5 Kindly loaned to Hendon and District Archaeological Society by Mr. M. Rivlin.
- 6 Investigations carried out by Hendon and District Archaeological Society during August 1967.
- 7 The railway cutting was the property of the London Midland Region of British Rail who kindly agreed to investigations being carried out.
- 8 Cophthall Fields are owned by the London Borough of Barnet who kindly permitted the resistivity survey and the subsequent excavations to take place.
- 9 For technical details of the principles and techniques of resistivity surveying reference should be made to:—
 - I *The Scientist and Archaeology* edited by E. Pyddoke, Phoenix, 1963.
 - II *Physics and Archaeology* M. J. Aitken, Interscience 1961.
- 10 The Wenner system, named after the inventor, uses a system of equal spacing between the electrodes. This is the most commonly used system archaeologically and in simple terms the reading obtained using this configuration is at a depth equal to the electrode separation.
- 11 A. E. Brown and H. L. Sheldon 'Post Excavation Work on the Pottery from Highgate.' *The London Archaeologist*, i, (1969) 60.
- 12 C. F. C. Hawkes and R. Hull 'Camulodunum' *Society of Antiquaries Research Report No. XIV*, Oxford 1947.
- 13 Preliminary investigation carried out by Hendon and District Archaeological Society, August 1968.
- 14 Composition of the Bagshot sands at Hampstead:

Quartz and Feldspar, with one or two percent of flint fragments and one percent of clay	96%
Grains attracted by a strong magnet	2 %
Zircons in recognisable crystals	approx. 0.5 %
Grains more or less opaque	approx. 0.25 %
Others	approx. 1.25 %

- 15 Observations of Mr. J. Warbis (personal communications).
- 16 Viatores (1964) *op. cit.* in note 2, 501.
- 17 Viatores (1964) *op. cit.* in note 2, 117.
- 18 Personal communication of unpublished evidence from Mr. C. Morris of the Viatores.
- 19 R. A. Smith, 'Roman Roads and the Distribution of Saxon Churches in London' *Archaeologia* lxxviii (1916-1917) 246. Evidence derived from Norden *Speculum Britanniae* (1723) 15.
- 20 A. E. Brown and H. L. Sheldon 'Early Roman Pottery Factory in North London,' *The London Archaeologist* i, (1969) 39.
- 21 E. Lloyd 'The Farm Accounts of the Manor of Hendon 1316-1416,' *Trans. London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* xxi, (1967) 157.
- 22 E. Lloyd, (1967), *op. cit.* in note 21, 161.

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