

# Some Ideas on Roman Roads in Bristol and North Somerset

By

E. K. TRATMAN, O.B.E., F.S.A.

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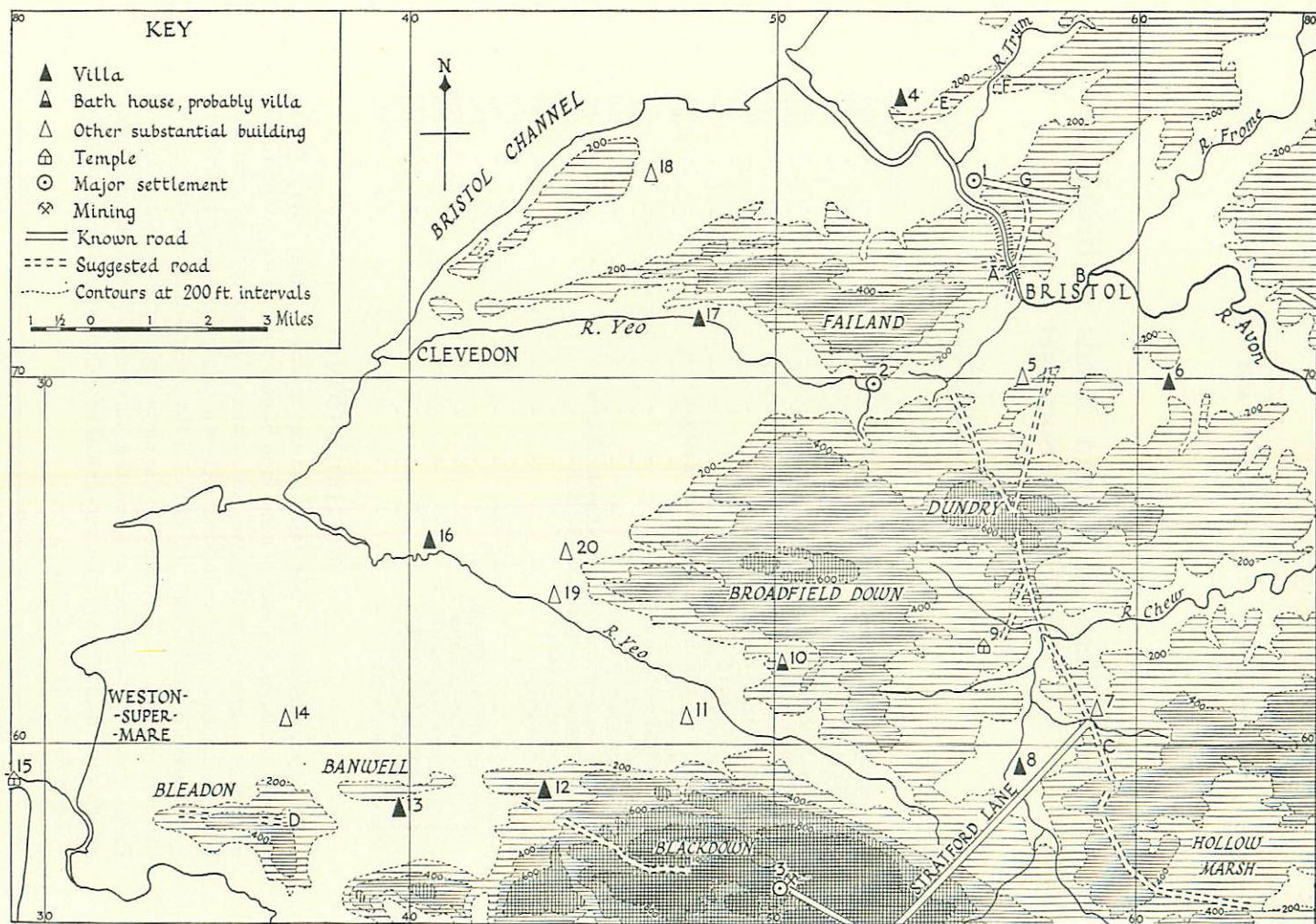
## 1. INTRODUCTION

The foundations of this paper are two axioms. Firstly every Roman settlement must have a road of some kind, if only a cart track, connecting it, directly or indirectly, to the main road system. Secondly there must have been good quality road connexions between contiguous major settlements. Within the City and County of Bristol is the major settlement of Sea Mills (*Abonæ*), (*Fig. 38, 1*). Two miles to the north lies the villa in Kings Weston Park (Boon, 1952) and other settlements in Lawrence Weston (Brown, 1958). A little way outside the city is the very extensive walled township of Gatcombe\* at Long Ashton (*Fig. 38, 2*).

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\* See Appendix 6.

Fig. 38.—1, Sea Mills; 2, Gatecombe; 3, Charterhouse on Mendip; 4, Kings Weston; 5, Bedminster Down; 6, Brislington; 7, Gold's Cross; 8, Chew Park; 9, Pagan's Hill; 10, Lye Hole; 11, Hayat Green; 12, Star (Shipham); 13, Banwell (Chapel Leazes or Wintill); 14, Locking (R.A.F. Station); 15, Bream Down; 16, Wemberham; 17, Wraxall (Birdcombe); 18, Portishead; 19, Woodlands, Congresbury; 20, Cadbury Camp, Congresbury. A, Clifton Suspension Bridge; B, Bristol Hippodrome; C, Bishop Sutton; D, Christon Plantation; E, Kings Weston Hill; F, Blaise Castle; G, Durham Downs.





Further afield is the extensive mining site at Charterhouse on Mendip and others at Green Ore (Palmer and Ashworth, 1958) and St. Cuthbert's.\* In addition there are villa sites including those in the vales of the Lox Yeo and of Wrington.

It is remarkable that there is no established road connecting Sea Mills to the south and west, while Gatcombe has no established roads connected with it at all. An attempt is made in this paper to fill in those gaps and to show that additional roads did exist and can, in part at least, still be followed. Thus the Roman road system in the area can, for the purposes of this paper, be divided into roads already accepted and new roads. About the former little need be said. For the latter considerable detail is necessary. Most of these details are given in a series of appendices to the shorter, general descriptions. The National Grid References are given as simple sets of figures and each reference is deemed to be preceded by the letters ST of the grid system.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of this paper has involved correspondence with various persons interested in the subject-matter and I would like to express my thanks for their assistance and especially to Mr. P. A. Rahtz and Mr. G. P. Rye. Mr. A. M. ApSimon read the draft of this paper and suggested various amendments and I am grateful to him for his advice and assistance. Mr. H. Freke has also redrawn the maps from which *Fig. 38* and *Plate 13* have been made.

### 2. ACCEPTED ROADS

#### 2.1. SEA MILLS-GLOUCESTER

From Sea Mills a road must have run to Gloucester though no certain trace of it is known for the first 20 miles (e.g., Eicholz, 1955, p. 170). The first part of the route probably went more or less north to cross Kings Weston Hill (*Fig. 38, E*) to Lawrence Weston as this is the only feasible direct route to connect with the southern end of Cribb's Causeway, which is usually deemed to be the line of the Roman road running north-east to Gloucester. This route also would provide the necessary road link for the villa in Kings Weston Park (Boon, 1952, and *Fig. 38, 4*) and the rest of the settlements in that area. Brown (1958) briefly refers to the settlement area in his paper showing that Mere Bank, which runs from 540785 to 526800, is not a Roman road. The route would also provide the link for Blaise Castle Camp (*Fig. 38, F*), which continued to be occupied during the Roman period (Rahtz and Brown, 1959).

The very existence of these sites north of the Kings Weston Hill ridge (*Fig. 38, E*) is fairly conclusive evidence that Cribb's Causeway is truly the

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\* An extensive Roman site is known to exist at 543506.



line of the Roman road to Gloucester. If so, then a detailed examination in the field of the ground between the north-east end of the causeway and Almondsbury, where the alignment is resumed by the modern road, might produce evidence of the road.

## 2.2. SEA MILLS-BATH

This road is well known. The only extant portion coming within the area dealt with in this paper is the visible length on Durdham Downs (56727514 to 56857507) (*Fig. 38, G*), where cuttings were made by Martin (1904). Its line from here to Sea Mills is supposed to follow Pitch and Pay Lane and Mariners' Path. This route would carry the road some way east of the proved settlement area at Sea Mills and also would involve a substantial change of direction at the bend in Pitch and Pay Lane some way down the slope from Durdham Downs but still on a minor crest indicated by the Bench Mark at 56237532. If on the other hand the line on Durdham Downs is continued straight then the road would coincide with the long straight east boundary of Old Sneed Park and would continue straight into the main settlement area at Sea Mills. This alternative route is at least as likely to be the real route as that ordinarily accepted. A lane, presumably formerly leading from Old Sneed Park Farm, ran northwards along the eastern edge of the park and even in 1960 part of its line survives amongst modern houses and gardens.

## 2.3. CHARTERHOUSE-OLD SARUM

The road was described in detail and mapped by Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1821). The evidence for it has been recently reviewed by Margary (1957). Parts of the road noted on the 1902 edition of the O.S. 6-in. maps are not now observable due to mining or natural subsidences.

## 2.4. CHARTERHOUSE-CHEW VALLEY (STRATFORD LANE)

A detailed account of this road by Mr. P. A. Rahtz is to appear in the Ministry of Works report on the Chew Valley Lake excavations. The road line is well established across the valley where its line is lost towards the Roman complex to be reported on as Gold's Cross complex. (*See p. 166, 3.2.c.*)

## 2.5. CHARTERHOUSE-UPHILL

### (Appendix 1)

Hoare (1821) has described this road and the line recorded is far from straight and follows a series of lanes and tracks. Margary (1957) makes the comment: "That this is the line of an old trackway is very probable, but it is perhaps not advisable to claim it as a Roman road as it does not lead to any known settlement beyond Charterhouse." This is a remarkable comment as the large villas at Star and Winthill are recorded on O.S. maps as far back as 1902 editions and the supposed road would pass close to both. Further reports on discoveries since the first printing (1955) of Mr. Margary's book of the Roman building at Locking (Lillington and Rogers, 1957), the Roman



temple at Brean Down (ApSimon, 1958) and two as yet unpublished Roman sites in Weston-super-Mare add so many to the original list of sites served by this road that it clearly must have existed.

On the other hand evidence for its existence in the field is hard to find. As the outcome of some field work by Crawford about 1926, a piece of the road was found near the valley bottom on the south slope of Rowberrow Warren (Som. 18 S.W.) and recorded on the 1930 edition of the O.S. maps. A MS. note on the map records a corner of the Roman road at the top of the cutting through Hollow Way Rocks. In 1960 the writer found a further length on the south slope of Blackdown (Som. 18 N.W.) north of Tynings Farm and another portion along the top of Bleadon-Old Mixon Hill as well as probable alignments along existing lanes. Hoare (1821) certainly recorded part of the route on the south slope of Blackdown and almost certainly the piece on Bleadon Hill, but his map is on too small a scale to be certain of the latter identification. There are still substantial gaps in the line but at least these have been partly filled in and the argument for the existence of a Roman road from Charterhouse to Uphill has been greatly strengthened. Details about the route are given in Appendix 1. The line now indicated is much straighter than that recorded on the O.S. maps.

### 3. POSSIBLE NEW ROADS

#### 3.1. BATH-BRISTOL-SEA MILLS

Along the left bank of the Avon between Bath and Sea Mills is strung a series of Roman sites. At Newton St. Loe, a villa, at Keynsham a large villa, another substantial building and Roman pottery at other places, and at Brislington (Bristol) yet another Roman villa. There is a villa, too, at Burnett, a little south of Keynsham. Such a series postulates the former existence of a connecting road unless one supposes that each site was served by a spur road from the Bath-Biton-Sea Mills road on the right bank of the Avon. Each such spur would require a good crossing place, if not a bridge across the Avon, and so many crossing places are unlikely. Thus, though the road can be postulated to have existed, no actual part of the road is known.

#### 3.2. SEA MILLS-DUNDRY-BISHOP SUTTON-RADSTOCK (FOSS WAY)

(Appendix 2 and *Plate 13*)

In 1926 the writer recorded the final destruction of a major Roman building, probably a villa as tesserae were found, on Bedminster Down. This building (*Fig. 38, 5*), if the O.S. map records are correct, must have covered at least half an acre. At the same time the remarkable straightness of the road from Bristol through Bishopsworth to the top of Dundry Hill was noted and the suggestion made that it might mark the line of a Roman road. This line has been followed out and reasonably well proved to be a Roman road. The details are given in Appendix 2. Changes of direction



occur at expected places and parts are clearly marked by a raised causeway or agger.

Its route from Sea Mills to Bishopsworth is unknown. Presumably it connected with the road, 3.1 above, along the left bank of the Avon. It is likely the two roads would join on the Bath side of the Avon before crossing that river. This junction and crossing place may have been immediately down stream of the old confluence of the Avon and Frome, opposite where the Hippodrome now stands (*Fig. 38, B*). A cobbled causeway is said to have been found when the foundation trenches for this building were dug and Roman coins said to have been found alongside the cobble stones.\* If this was the crossing place the new road would presumably have come off the Sea Mills-Bath road on Durdham Downs and would, very approximately, follow the modern Whiteladies Road.

In Bishopsworth where the modern road deviates from the straight line at the commencement of the ascent to Dundry the straight line is continued by a footpath/hedge/sunken trackway combination to the top of Dundry Hill. There all definite trace is lost, though it is likely from the manner in which the modern road behaves between wide verges that the modern route, in part at least, follows the old route to the top of Chew Hill.

Here the route probably followed the now deeply sunken lane known, near its southern end, as Battle Lane, to the ford across the river Chew where the route is presumed to turn a little south-east to follow the present footpath and lane, Pitt's Lane, to the west side of Knowle Hill. Beside this lane Rahtz† found an extensive Late Belgic-Early Roman settlement. On the south-west side of Knowle Hill the Roman road is well marked as a raised causeway with a ditch on either side in a cutting made to ease the gradient. The line of the modern road would then be followed approximately to the ford across the Hollow Brook just east of the present bridge. South again the line is marked by a faint flat-topped mound in the next field and two electrical resistance traverses across this mound show the presence of areas of higher resistance corresponding to the mound which is a few yards east of the present road, which, presumably, it rejoins to follow it to the junction with A368. The line is continued direct beyond A368 by a lane/path/hedge combination through Bishop Sutton (*Fig. 38, C*), and on to the top of the eastern end of Burlledge Hill and thence to somewhere west of White Cross. Shortly beyond this the line is picked up by over a mile of straight modern

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\* This information was given to the writer about 1924 by the late Mr. A. Selley, a well-known collector and who worked nearby. Davies, J. A. (1927, p. 42), also quoting Selley, describes the causeway as a "pebble track". Some "potsherds and an undoubted Roman Fibula" were procured from the site by Mr. Selley. Mr. Davies's account differs slightly from mine and was written in 1927, so perhaps Davies's version is the more correct one. A crossing place is clearly indicated.

† Letter to the author.



road into Hinton Blewett and would descend to cross the head of the Cam Brook. Trace is again lost but probably follows the road and lane, with minor deviations, to the top of the descent to Hollow Marsh where, from the brow of the hill to the bottom, there is a well-preserved piece of causeway, nearly 2 ft. high in places, with a ditch on each side. Beyond is Long Dole (or boundary) Wood with a footpath and then a lane, and on the north side of the lane there are indications of a mound, possibly the road in the field. The lane changes direction slightly as it approaches Farrington Gurney and there is a triangle of land with cottages bounded on one side by the lane and on the other by the straight projected continuation of the road line. The road reappears for a few yards just beyond the crossing of A37 and south of the market. Beyond this no trace has been found in the much built over and mined areas into Radstock. Presumably the road keeps north of the Wellow Brook and joins the Foss Way in Radstock.

*Branch Roads from 3, 3.2*

Three are postulated. All may be expected to have existed because of the sites they link.

*3.2.a. Dundry-Gatcombe*  
(Appendix 4)

The first one is from near the top of Dundry Hill northwards to Gatcombe. A series of footpaths runs nearly straight northerly to the edge of the very steep descent to the valley containing High Ridge Farm. At this point the footpath encounters an obviously old road contoured round the heads of the valley. On the opposite side of the valley and directly on the line of the footpaths so far followed is another combination of lane/footpath/lane running straight down to and across road A38 about 200 yards west of milestone 3 from Bristol. Beyond A38 the line is probably continued a little way by Yanley Lane, which twists down to cross Colliter's Brook and thence to Yanley\* and Long Ashton. The route of descent from Dundry Hill is not an easy one and a route connecting with Gatcombe might have been expected to keep further east towards Bishopsworth. On the other hand there is the Roman site† associated with old quarrying on Dundry Hill (555666) which

\* Collinson (1791, p. 304) records that "at Yanleigh, anciently Yonlegh, . . . have been discovered foundations of ancient buildings supposed to be Roman". The exact site is not now known.

† Davies, J. A. (1927, p. 43), refers to this site and states that a "rectangular Roman building" stood there "as potsherds and bronzes from adjoining molehills testify to this day". This site has now been almost totally obliterated by the construction of a service reservoir. Traces of Roman occupation were seen in February 1961 in some trenches cut immediately east of the reservoir. There were no wall foundations but only some grooves cut into the rock possibly to take wall plates for a timber building. A few minute potsherds and darker earth and animal bones all lay within a faintly marked sub-rectangular enclosure measuring about 100 ft. north to south and 90 ft. east to west. Any extension of the site east of the road, if it did extend so far, has been destroyed by buildings.



may have been the source of supply for some of the oolitic limestone reputedly used in Gatcombe. If so, the road would run conveniently close.

### 3.2.b. *Dundry-Pagan's Hill*

(Appendix 3)

The second branch is from the road junction at the foot of the south side of Dundry Hill via Limeburn Hill across the Chew by the old ford alongside and east of Port Bridge with the line continued by a flat-topped long mound in a field beyond. This road would pass close to the site of the Roman temple at Pagan's Hill (Rahtz, 1952) and perhaps to it. No further trace has been found.

### 3.2.c. *Stratford Lane*

The third branch is the north-east end of Stratford Lane. This road has usually been deemed (e.g., Margary, 1957, p. 128) to continue to Bitton and to join the Sea Mills-Bath road on the right bank of the Avon. However, Rahtz\* has not been able to trace the road beyond 572593 but comments that it must have crossed Hollow Brook to reach the settlement area centred on Gold's Cross (*Fig. 38, 7*). This line would join the line of the new road described above at a T junction close to the ford across Hollow Brook and would follow pretty closely the short length of modern road forming the north-west side of the triangle of roads south of Hollow Brook. It is suggested that Stratford Lane never did continue to Bitton but ended at its junction with the new road. A spur from the new road north of the ford would lead to the Gold's Cross settlement.

## 3.3. SEA MILLS-GATCOMBE

(Appendix 5)

No road connexion between these two sites has yet been proved. The present account sets down some evidence, which is by no means conclusive, of a route from Sea Mills across Durdham Downs to the Avon Gorge and thence to Gatcombe. The first site consists of a long low mound on Clifton Down north of Clifton Road. This mound is about 15 ft. wide and does not look like the other old hedge mounds in the area and is not an old tramway associated with the mining round here. Its line, if continued north, would join the Sea Mills-Bath road somewhere near the house known as Durdham Lodge.† To the south the mound ends short of the edge of the descent to Clifton Down Road amongst old mine workings. Presumably a turn was made here to the west to follow the line marked on O.S. maps and referred to by many writers as "Ancient Trackway" or more specifically as "Ancient British Trackway".‡ Its line is not quite straight and in part of it there is a

\* Advance information of his account to appear in C.V.L. report.

† This has been renamed "The Old Halt".

‡ Nothing appears to be known about the trackway except that its origin is at least several centuries ago.



length of about 30 yards of flat-topped bank some 20 ft. wide. The line, if continued, would be crossed and recrossed by the upper part of Bridge Valley Road to emerge by a not unduly steep and even slope just north of the old railway tunnel under Bridge Valley Road at a level about 30 ft. above the present Portway. Cuttings for the railway and Portway have largely destroyed the evidence here but a rock ledge is present and a turn upstream would take the line by a route which would have needed but little engineering down to the river level and the old crossing a little way upstream from the Suspension Bridge (*Fig. 38, A*), and across the Avon to the natural rock ledge on the left bank and thence probably upstream to get clear of the Gorge, when the road would turn towards Gatcombe, probably passing through Ashton Park.

The old ford is a well-established historical fact.\* It is described as a hazard to navigation by William of Worcester as early as 1480.† Seyer (1821, p. 61) describes it as partly natural and partly artificial and adds that in his time it was wide enough and level enough to take a gentleman's carriage after the tide had gone down. He also described it as allowing children to cross without getting wet above the knees in summer time. It was finally blown up in 1883 and 1884. Codrington (1898, p. 261) has briefly described the Avon here as having a width between the natural rock walls of 700 ft. This narrowed at the level of the rock shelves to about 220 ft. with the rock walls sloping inwards at 45° to a depth of 23 ft. when the unexplored channel was only 72 ft. wide. Test bores for a tunnel under the Avon by the Bristol Waterworks Company a little upstream from the crossing also revealed the existence of the buried channel recorded by Codrington (Donovan, 1960, p. 64). In both cases below the mud were gravel and large stones over the bedrock. It is quite evident that this ford cannot have been a natural rock sill forming a nick point in the river valley. The information quoted is indirect evidence for the partly artificial nature of the crossing as described by Seyer. None of this gives a date for the construction of the work or its exact structure, but it is at least possible that it was a stone-built ford of Roman construction. If so, a passable route from Sea Mills to Gatcombe could have come that way. There the matter must rest for the present.

#### 3.4. GATCOMBE-BARROW HILL-MENDIP-HORNBLUTTON ON FOSS WAY

The Clevedon Archæological Society have postulated the existence of this road (1959). The route is reported as starting on Barrow Hill (522675) and being continued by hedge line/parish boundary/modern road combination across Felton Hill and along the east side of Butcombe Court. The supposed

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\* Since this paper went to press a copy of the original draft of the O.S. 1 in. to 1 m. map of Gloucestershire has been found. This marks "Ford" across the Avon opposite the north side of Nightingale Valley. This is the crossing referred to by Seyer.

† The account mentions how boats get into difficulty and may fall over the edge into the river bed below.



line is not picked up again till about a mile north of the Castle of Comfort Inn on Mendip and the road is then deemed to follow the present road, which is the old Bristol-Wells road, to the top of Rookham Hill. Then comes another very long gap to Steanbow-Pennard Hill and thence to Hornblotton.

The writer has been unable to find the supposed line over Barrow Hill, where the road must turn to go down to Gatcombe, has failed to find any evidence for the road between Butcombe Court and the top of Mendip and between Rookham and south of Wells to the river Shippey. Further, on the essentially level stretch across Mendip, the existing road makes several minor changes of direction. Some of these changes are obviously made to avoid mine workings. It must be remembered that the enclosures on Mendip to which the roads are related are historically late in date and there are many straight lengths of road, which owe nothing to the Romans unless every straight road on Mendip and every straight parish boundary are to be considered as being of Roman origin. If that portion of the alleged route from the Hunter's Lodge Inn to the top of Rookham Hill is examined on the map or in the field it is at once obvious that the present road, field boundaries and drove ways are all part of the same layout and, therefore, hardly likely to be Roman in origin. In view of these facts the author is of the opinion that if the evidence for the road is only that cited in the reference then this evidence is totally inadequate to call this route a Roman road.

### 3.5. WRINGTON VALE-WESTON-SUPER-MARE (UPHILL)

The following Roman villa sites, some of them large, have no known road system connected with them. Lye Hole near Butcombe and Havyat Green, Langford (Tratman, 1960), Locking (R.A.F. camp) (Lillington and Rogers, 1957) and two sites as yet unpublished, in Weston itself. The Locking and Weston sites could have been served by a branch from the Charterhouse-Uphill road but the two former seem to be completely detached from any established road.

### 3.6. GATCOMBE-WESTWARDS

The villa at Wraxall (Sykes and Brown, 1961) was presumably served by a road from Gatcombe and perhaps also the one at Westerham. There is also a Roman building shown on the O.S. Map of Roman Britain at Woodlands (446643) near Congresbury and another related to the feeble earthwork known as Cadbury Camp, Congresbury (442652). No road connexions to these westwards from Gatcombe have been traced (*Fig. 38, 19 and 20*).

### 3.7. FOSS WAY SPUR

To the south of Beacon Hill (Som. 12 N.W.) the well-preserved agger of the Foss Way is seen running slightly west of and nearly parallel to the northern end of Martin's Lane. On the east side of the lane is a quarry (635448) and the quarryman has told me that the overburden has yielded



Roman pottery. Running east from the quarry and approximately at right angles to the Foss Way is a mound 1.5 ft. high and 15 ft. wide with a flat top. It runs about 100 yards and then ends in an open field where there are some vague mounds. The whole suggests a spur road to a Roman site, perhaps an unrecorded building.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Recognized Roman roads in the area are dealt with briefly and some amendments to their generally accepted routes have been described. The absence of road connexions between Sea Mills and the south, Sea Mills and Gatcombe and other connexions to Gatcombe has been noted. The southerly connexion has been filled by a road from Sea Mills to Radstock (Foss Way) and is regarded as proved. This road has possible branches to Pagan's Hill and from Dundry back north to Gatcombe. Stratford Lane is deemed to join it at a T junction and to end and not go on to Bitton. The line of a possible Roman road from Sea Mills to Gatcombe has been described including the use of the old crossing place of the Avon in the Avon Gorge. Another road south from Gatcombe to Hornblotton on the Foss Way has been postulated by others. It is here deemed to be "not-proven". No road has yet been found from Gatcombe westward towards Wraxall and other Roman sites. A spur road from the Foss Way south of Beacon Hill probably exists indicating a Roman settlement.

#### 5. APPENDICES

##### APPENDIX I

##### *Charterhouse-Uphill*

The line of this road is anything but straight, but it is likely to have been a good bit straighter than the line at present marked on the maps. It can scarcely have followed the present-day road to Tynings Farm (470565) as this takes such a devious course. However, just north of this farm at 47175658 a flat-bottomed hollow way commences and continues west to become a faint agger appearing as a shelf in the hill slope at 46955665 (Som. 18 S.W.). The shelf has a flat top about 12 ft. wide, the same width as the base of the sunken way. The shelf continues to 46805670 where it is lost, but may reappear as a 30-yards long length of sunken way on the north side of the modern track at the junction with this track. Here the line probably turned a little south across a stream to follow partly the parish boundary to join the recorded part of the road at 46415677. This minor dog-leg bend takes the road round an awkward gully. From here onwards the road as recorded on the O.S. map is lost in the Rowberrow Forest (Mendip State Forest), and cannot now be traced (1960).

Crawford\* has noted a "Corner of Roman road" at the top of Hollow Way Rocks and the road is deemed to turn and follow along Lippiat Lane and thence with minor changes of direction along North Down Lane (Som. 18 N.W.) across road B3131 at the old toll house (45455776) to continue, perhaps, as Broad Way on to road A38 (Som. 17 N.E.) at Star (43625817). This stretch, comprising North Down Lane and Broad Way, in total provides a considerable change of direction especially along the western part of Broad Way and it seems likely that the real route from the bend in Broad Way at 44085793 kept to the crest of the minor ridge a little south of Broad Way,† but

\* MS. note on map.

† About 400 yards to the south is Winterhead where Knight (1915, p. 102) records a discovery of Roman remains including tiles and pottery. This site is traditionally close to the edge of the drive leading off the main road in a beech plantation on the north. The remains indicate that a building once stood there.



here the ground has been so extensively mined that no trace of the road could survive. This line, if extrapolated, would join and continue along a part of Shipham Lane, which suddenly widens out from 42565832 to 42325844, where it narrows again as it turns away to the north. The Roman villa at Star (435587), is only about 500 yards away on the north.

A long gap in the road line now occurs. The road may presumed to have turned to the west about here, which would take it close to the very large villa at Winthill (397584). It is possible that a very detailed search may locate traces of the road in this gap.\*

Further west (Som. 17 N.W.), and south-west of Christon Plantation (*Fig. 38, D*), an old lane runs from 36655789 to 36005786. The lane then takes a turn to the south and if the line of the first part is extended west it would run along the crest of part of Bleadon Hill and Old Mixon where there is (Som. 16 N.E.), for about 500 yards from 34255802 to 33805804, a very low flat-topped mound about 12 ft. wide and flanked on either side by very faintly marked ditches. These are just discernible in an air photograph, and about 200 yards further west, in an area of old field banks, which banks are probably not Roman in date, Roman pottery has been found by Sgt. B. Rogers of the R.A.F. Locking.† The line along the hill top is much more likely to be the Roman road than the present road noted as such on the O.S. maps. This latter road has all the characters of a modern road. The line would presumably continue to Uphill and be closely associated with known settlement areas especially at 323581 near Uphill Grange where Hoare (1821) records a square earthwork and Roman pottery including Samian ware. More pottery from the same area has been recorded in the past few years.‡ This road to Uphill may be presumed to have had one or more branches to serve the several sites near or in Weston, such as the villa at Locking (Lillington and Rogers, 1957, and *Fig. 38, 14*), the site in Coronation Road (Davies, H. N., 1905), another site nearby† and a building in South Terrace†(31726186).

#### APPENDIX 2

##### *Sea Mills-Radstock (Foss Way)*

(Plate 13)

The first recognizable part is through Bishopsworth (Som. 6 S.W.). From 57437000 to 57206920 is a length of modern road nearly straight on the alignment. Thereafter it deviates and the present road rejoins the alignment at 56906800 and continues as far as 56776750. Part of this is named "Portway" on Strachey's map of Somerset, 1732.‡ From 56776750 the modern road bends away and the alignment is continued by a footpath/sunken way/hedgerow to rejoin the present road at 56656702 (Som. 12 N.W.). From here to 56526658 the alignment is probably continued by the present road, which has wide verges first on one side and then on the other.

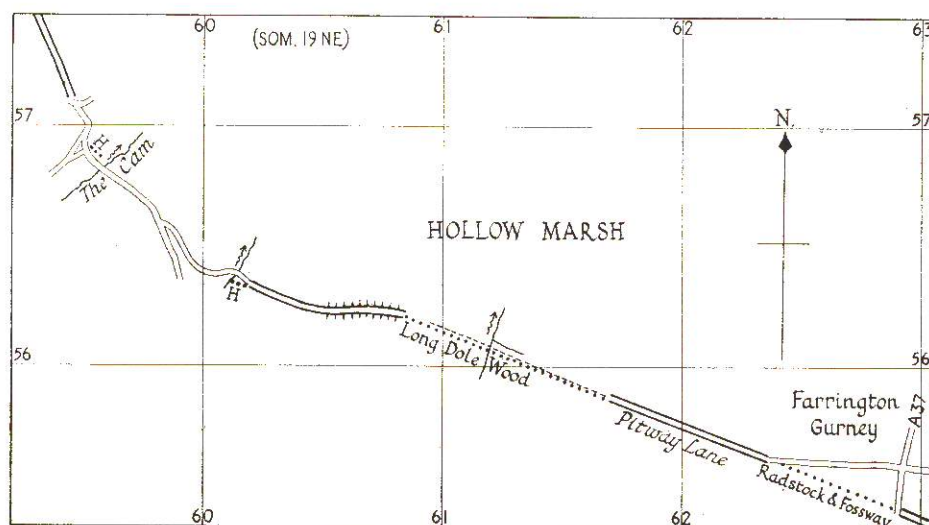
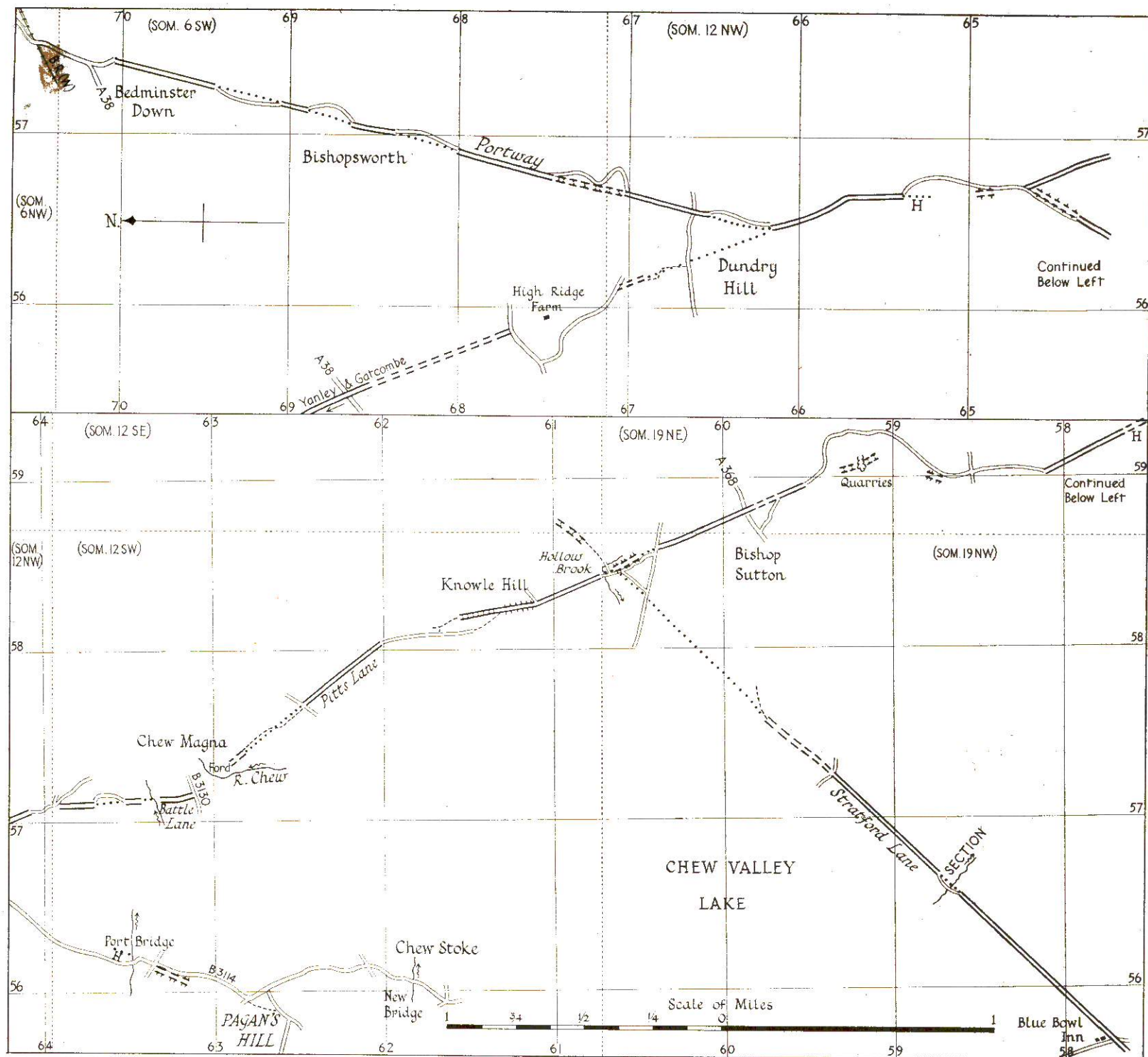
The present road is probably still on the alignment from 56626574 to 56656545 where the line is continued by a hedgerow to 56676524. From 56766498 to 56776485 is a low flat-topped bank passing through parts of two fields and not apparently related to adjacent old field banks as it passes through one cross bank to end just beyond. It probably marks the Roman road. At 56796469 the modern road forks. The west branch is thought to go to Pagan's Hill temple site, while the east branch is probably approximately on the alignment to 57096400 where, from 57126390 to 57146740, Nutgrove Lane (Som. 12 N.W.) probably, except for an obvious detour, continues the alignment. Modern buildings mask part of the straight line. Beyond from 57156335 to 57146310 Battle Lane is probably on the alignment, or approximately so, down to the road B3130 and on down to the still used ford across the river Chew. On the far side there is a slight change of direction presumed to coincide approximately with footpaths from 57356286 to 57686248 where the paths encounter the present sunken Denny Lane. Across this lane the alignment is continued along Pitt's Lane, which, at its junction with Denny Lane, is sunken. Pitt's Lane is very broad, being over 20 ft.

\* Mr. J. Hunt, of 1 East Street, Banwell, has informed me that a telephone cable trench cut through what might have been the road along its expected line, but I have not been able to check this.

† Letter from Mr. G. P. Rye, F.L.A., Borough Librarian and Curator Weston-super-Mare Public Library and Museum, Feb. 8th, 1961.

‡ MS. note on map by O. G. S. Crawford.





Key	
	Existing Road
	Roman Road along Existing Road
	Roman Road along Existing Lane or Path
	Roman Road, Agger
	Roman Road, Sunken Way
	Roman Road, Presumed Line no Field Evidence
	Hedge Line
	Footpath
	County Sheet Lines
	County Sheet Numbers



wide. At 58006202 (spot level 237) the lane continues wide but changes direction. It may or may not be on the alignment. Mr. Rahtz has told me that a water-main trench dug along the side of Pitt's Lane cut through ditches containing late Belgic and Roman pottery in their filling.

From 58206152 to 58206145 at the north-west corner of Knowle Hill a sunken lane climbs to the more level west side of the hill. The lane continues as a footpath, partly along a bank, southwards to spot level 270 where a flat-bottomed cutting begins. At its south end the cutting is over 15 ft. wide and is occupied by the agger of the road here about 10 ft. wide and 1 ft. high. This cutting makes an easy gradient down to the level ground at 58246114. This line takes the road just east of a marshy piece of ground and crosses the present road near a bend and rejoins it just beyond the bend. Here there is a slight change of direction at a change of slope and the alignment is considered to follow very closely the present road down to the ford (Som. 19 N.W.) across Hollow Brook. The brook is now bridged a little west of the ford. Just south of the ford Stratford Lane is presumed to join the road and to end.

A footpath leads up south from the ford, 58476065, and is marked from 58496059 to 58566044 by a low bank; geoelectrical traverses show a high resistance anomaly under this bank and this is explained as being due to the road foundations. The footpath continues the alignment till it is lost amongst modern buildings near Bishop Sutton. The line is deemed to continue along Bonhill Lane (Som. 19 N.E.), to its junction with road A368 at Bishop Sutton; across A368 at 58785986 the line is continued by a lane/hedge/footpath arrangement to 58865965 where it joins the present road running up the valley and on to 58945947. Here for a stretch the line is lost amongst houses to be picked up again for a short stretch from 59005928 to 59015926 by an old cart track which has had its line further south altered by quarry tip and the line is interrupted by quarries. On the south side across the main quarry and ascending the fairly steep slope of the eastern part of Burlledge Hill is a sunken way from 59055913 to 59085906. It is easily seen from Knowle Hill when the sun is setting.

A little south of this the road must change direction to avoid descending again into the valley, but in the critical area there is a confusion of old hedge banks, one of which may mark the road. A little further south there is from 59005882 to 58965873 a poorly marked platform cut into the side of the hill below an old hedge bank. The platform has a ditch along its upper, west, side under the old hedge bank and is about 15 ft. wide. This is thought to be the road. The line is now lost as far as south-south-east of Curtis' Barn where a long straight stretch of present road from 59015810 to 59455712 continues the alignment to just north of Hinton Blewett (Som. 19 S.E.). This road has a minor deviation from 59285754 to 59355740 but the straight line is continued by a hedge/copse/double hedgerow combination till the present road rejoins the alignment.

For a space the line is lost on the descent to and crossing of the Cam close to *Greenway* Pool and up the far side past *Cadbury* Spring to spot level 461 (59805661), and thence, with a slight change of direction, presumably along *Hollow Marsh* Lane. The hedgerows at the northern end of this lane indicate that it once took a straighter route; though no certain trace can be found along the first part of this lane where it bends north to cross a small stream an old hedge bank, at present marked by elm stumps in the bank, forms a chord across most of the bend from 60105637 to 60185634. At the crest there is a slight change of direction where the descent to *Long Dole Wood* begins. Here the lane becomes much wider and contains the well-marked remains of the agger, stony in this part, and about 12 ft. wide by 18 in. high with a ditch on either side from 60455625 to 60805623. At *Long Dole Wood* western edge there is a minor change of direction at the bottom of the descent and the lane soon ends but is succeeded by a footpath, almost straight, to the west end of *Pitway Lane* and along this straight lane to close to *Farrington Gurney*. The Roman road probably ran just north of the lane rather than exactly along it as there appears to be a slight bank on the north with the hedge bounding the lane upon it. Beyond 62355562 *Pitway Lane* changes direction to a more northerly course and there is a triangle of land occupied by small houses between the present lane and the straight projected continuation of the western part of the lane. This true line crosses road A37 and just beyond at 62905541 appears a raised causeway between a present hedge on the north and an old hedge bank on the south. The causeway soon peters out and becomes a sunken way traceable to 62965540, but beyond this no further trace of the Roman road can be found. Presumably it keeps north of the *Wellow Brook* to join the *Foss Way* in *Radstock*.



## APPENDIX 3

*Branch Road-Pagan's Hill*

The road junction at the foot of Dundry Hill at 56796469 (p. 166) is thought perhaps to be the starting point for a road to Pagan's Hill and its Roman Temple. The evidence is slight but at least one road must have run to the site. The road would probably have run past the hill with a short spur up to the temple itself.

From 56786465 to 56656442 along the road (which has recently been greatly altered) known as Limeburn Hill there is a stretch of waste ground with twin hedges on the south-east side of road. The hedges are now about 10 ft. apart and the whole may be the supposed Roman Road. The present road crosses the Chew at Port Bridge but there is an old ford to the east. To the north of this ford a length of hedgerow from 56246352 to 56196341 picks up the alignment of the double hedgerow described above and this alignment is continued south of the ford and the Chew Magna-Winford road by a 20-ft. wide by 1.5-ft. high flat-topped bank from 56156331 to 56076314. It does not look like an old hedgerow and is probably the road to Pagan's Hill.

## APPENDIX 4

*Dundry-Gatcombe*

Its starting point from the Sea Mills-Radstock road on Dundry Hill is unknown. The footpath system considered to be a possible line starts from the road along the crest of Dundry Hill at 56256665 and continues, with a minor kink at a farm, down the hill, which is quite steeply graded in part, to just east of Winifred Cottage at 56096710. From here the line is presumed to have gone round the valley heads to north of High Ridge Farm at 55846772, and following in part at least the existing road. Thence the original line is exactly picked up and continued by a lane/footpath/lane combination to 55496864 on road A38. Beyond the line is continued approximately by Yanley Lane to 55406886, where the present road bends easterly to avoid the southern head of Colliter's Brook. Here all definite trace is lost across the brook and up the north slope beyond to 55326924, where the lane suddenly widens with wide grass verges between the hedgerows as far as 55246945 (B.M.234.73). Here an obviously recent deviation occurs to the east with the old route first continuing on straight to 55216950 and then curving down the slope towards the road junction at 5506965 in Yanley. This old route has a gentler slope than the modern deeply sunken road. The only other possible trace is immediately north of the passage through the railway embankment at 54997000. Here from 54997002 to 54997012 a length of old roadway about 1 ft. high by 10 ft. wide is seen diverging slightly from the modern road. This is likely to be nothing more than the old road line before the railway was built. No trace beyond the access road to Lower Court Farm can be found. The line, if continued, would cross the next stream, Ashton Brook, at an easy and still used ford and thence to join the Sea Mills-Gatcombe road at a T junction about a mile to the east of Gatcombe.

## APPENDIX 5

*Sea Mills-Gatcombe*

This probable route would leave the Sea Mills-Bath road close to Durdham Lodge and run nearly due south. This line would coincide from 56717440 to 56737411 on Clifton Down with a flat-topped ridge, 10 ft. wide and 1.5 ft. high, composed of limestone. It is not a natural outcrop as it runs across the jointing. It does not resemble the old field banks in the area and though it ends amongst old mine workings it is obviously not an old mining tramway. The junction with the north-east to south-west "Ancient Trackway" cannot be observed. Much of this trackway has been destroyed, some of it quite recently by a dump of builders' rubbish used to fill in a muddy part. But from 56707404 to 56677401 is a raised portion which looks like a piece of causeway. This line, if continued, would cross and re-cross the present Bridge Valley Road following an even and reasonably gentle gradient to arrive over the old railway cutting at 56357376. The slope is not steep. No definite evidence of the former existence of a roadway can be seen, but there are places where the natural gradient seems to have been made more even by a little rock cutting.

From this point over the old railway cutting the road would have had to turn up stream. The area of the supposed turn is completely obscured by modern road works but if the site is viewed from the opposite side of the river in winter there are



still the remnants of ledge to be seen, where it is not completely obscured by modern road works, running down at a very even and fairly gentle gradient for about 250 yards in an upstream direction. Beyond this the ledge has been totally destroyed by road works. If the line had been continued it would have come down to river level approximately opposite the old crossing place.

There is ample evidence from borings that there is a submerged channel in the bed of the Avon from as far upstream as Keynsham (e.g., Donovan, 1960) and engineering works in the Sea Mills and Avonmouth areas have demonstrated the continuation of the buried channel downstream. Thus only at the old crossing place is there an alteration in the normal profile of the valley and this is strong support for the idea of Seyer and here repeated that the crossing was partly, at least, an artificial construction. As the place was so important an impediment to shipping that it was noted by William of Worcester, it could easily date back to Roman times but that it was constructed then cannot be proved.

Dolloway (*Antiquities of Bristow*, 1, 1834, pp. 56-57) gives:—"*Breke-faucet est quaedam rupis in Ghyston-clyft locus periculosus pro obviacione navium tempore introitus navium tam magnosum quam parvorum, quorumcunque ponderum seu quantitatis fuerunt, in fundo aque de Frome et Avyn venientium de Bristollia; et morabitur navis supra dictum Breke-faucet, quosque flexus narius fluendo ad portem Bristollia accrescit . . .*". The last part is printed in italics in Dolloway and is translated in a footnote as "and a ship borne towards the port of Bristol would be foundered upon the rocks of Breke-faucet, at the influx of the tide".

On the left bank of the Avon, Seyer (1821, p. 62) has described a raised causeway at the bottom of what was called Stokeleigh Slade and is now called Nightingale Valley and another part, presumably of the same causeway, at the head of the valley. This could conceivably be a route to various Roman-British settlements on the top of the Long Ashton-Failand ridge. The approach to the valley would be by a branch from the Avon crossing turning downstream along the natural rock shelf to the mouth of the valley. Such a route would have required but little engineering to make it passable along the line followed by the now abandoned service road to old quarries. The lower end of this causeway in Nightingale Valley has been obliterated by a railway embankment but there are definite traces to be seen extending up the valley for about 350 yards. For part of this length, about 100 yards in all, the side of the valley at its bottom on the northern side has been evidently scarped to allow the causeway to take a straight course; the causeway is about 10-12 ft. wide and 1 ft. high where it is well preserved. At 56207311 the causeway crosses a small hollow and its level has been maintained by building it up on the northern side, possibly using stone quarried alongside. No continuation of the causeway could be found at the head of the valley, which does provide an easy route to the top of the Failand ridge, the gradient is not steep and it would have taken but little engineering to make a passable road up it.

The route from the Avon crossing to Gatcombe is presumed to follow along the natural rock shelf upstream from the crossing to a point where it would be clear of the gorge and it would turn slightly to pass through Ashton Park to somewhere near the bottom of Clarken Combe and to be continued thence to Gatcombe. Phillips (1933) has demonstrated the existence of an extensive Celto-Roman field system in the park with a sunken way leading up to it from what is here assumed to be the Roman Road. No trace of the road can be found in the park but this is not surprising in view of the evident effects of later cultivations of the lower portions of the park lands. Beyond the park the area is so built over that there is no hope of tracing the road.

#### APPENDIX 6

##### *The Gatcombe Site*

(Fig. 39)

Som. 5 S.E. NGR. ST5269

The first notice of the Gatcombe site occurs in Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal* of Feb. 9th, 1839. This is an account of the discovery of Roman buildings at Cambridge Batch (521698) during the excavation of the deep cutting for the Bristol and Exeter Railway (Fig. 39, 10). The *Journal* states that numerous coins were found "principally of the reign of Constantine", but amongst them was one of Julius Caesar "in excellent preservation and one of Diocletian". An early date, possibly in the 1st century, for the foundation of the town is indicated. The account mentions burials in coffins made



of oak planks, two capitals of pillars and foundations "extremely well built". A manuscript note by Stephen Jarret appears on page 304 of a copy of Collinson's *History of Somerset* (1791) in the University of Bristol Library and this describes the site as an "entire Roman village with an outer wall 15 feet thick". The coins are stated to have

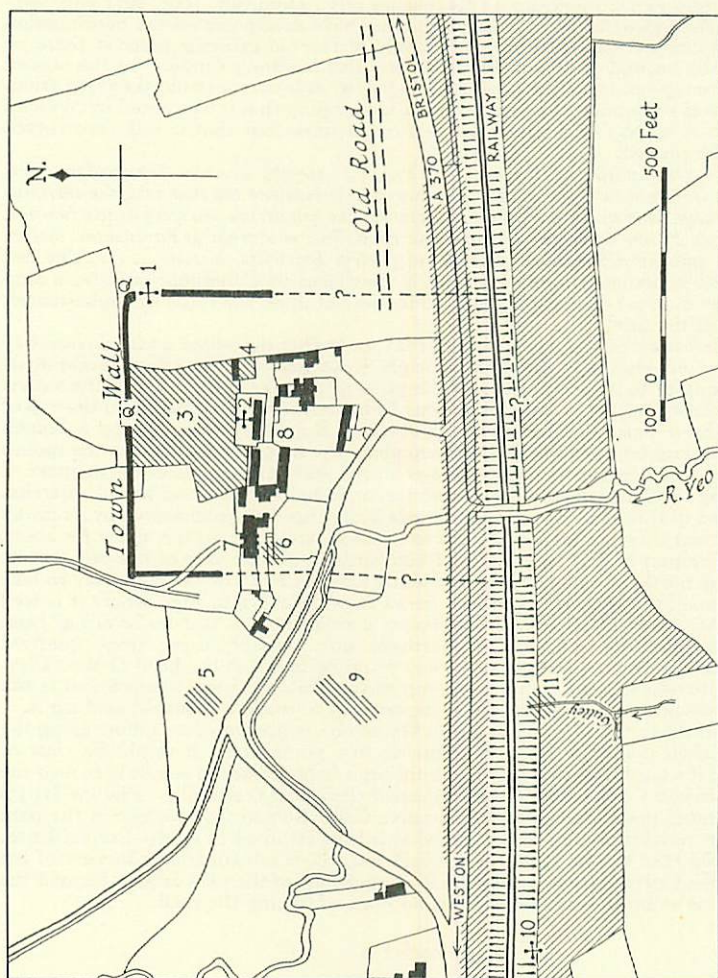


Fig. 39.—1. Roman coins found 1928; 2, Roman coins found 1924; 3, Area of orchard with several Roman buildings visible; 4, Roman building visible; 5, Orchard where Roman buildings reported; 6, Roman pavement reported; 7, Gatcombe Court; 8, Gatcombe Farm; 9, Roman building reported in field; 10, Roman building 1838-1839; 11, Roman building reported at gully-drain. Q, Quarry. (Based on Ordnance Survey 1:2500, map, Somerset V, 12. Crown Copyright reserved.)

been of "gold, silver and copper of Trajan and others". There is no date to this note but the internal evidence suggests that it was written in 1839.

The next reference seems to be that of Davies (1928), though his account is clearly based on that of 1839. Little additional information is added though he does mention that much of the site had been covered by the mass of spoil from the railway cutting. He notes the existence of an old roadway running into the settlement from the direction of Long Ashton as perhaps the road to the settlement but also considers it may have been only the old road in use up to the time when the present day re-alignment, along



the top of the spoil from the railway cutting, was made. This track can still be seen from 52616977 to 52926979 though it seems too old to have been only abandoned about 120 years ago.

Eicholz (1955) gives the area of the town as being between 12 and 13 acres. The Clevedon Archaeological Society (1959) states that the area is 25 acres but in neither case is the evidence for the estimate given. Nevertheless it is the members of the Clevedon Society who must be given credit for reviving interest in the site. They have made some preliminary excavations including a cutting through the north wall at 52656993. The wall here is about 15 ft. thick and composed of two parallel face walls very well finished on their external faces. The north outer face wall is about 3 ft. thick and the south wall a little less. The space between had been filled in by stones pitched in against the irregular internal faces.

Many other buildings, some with the tops of the walls partly visible, occur in the farmyards and grounds just to the north of both Gatcombe Farm (*Fig. 39, 3 and 4*) and Gatcombe Court (*Fig. 39, 7*). On a visit to the site on Jan. 8th, 1962, Mr. J. H. Butler of Gatcombe Farm and Mrs. Charles Clarke of Gatcombe Court gave me various pieces of information. Mr. Butler informed me that the latest coin found was of Arcadius (c. 390) and that foundations of buildings could be seen in the south face of the railway cutting and as far west of the Yeo River as the gully-drain 52426966 (*Fig. 39, 11*). Mrs. Clarke informed me that traces of Roman buildings had been found in the orchard to the west of Gatcombe Court (*Fig. 39, 5*), and in the field south of this in the central part of the field (*Fig. 39, 9*).

The north boundary wall can be traced for its entire length from the north-west corner (52516994), where there may have been a bastion, to the north-east corner (52726994), where there has been some quarrying. The north wall is thus approximately 220 yards long. The angles made at the corners seem to be right angles or nearly so and the south going returns can be traced some distance. As the boundary wall was cut by the railway works the enclosed area cannot have been a square but was, presumably, a rectangle with the long sides, east and west, about 300 yards long. The enclosed area would thus be about 14 acres. But from the information cited above there must have been buildings outside and west of the wall in the orchard, the field, at the gully on the south side of the railway cutting and again nearer to Cambridge Batch. The settlement may well be even more extensive and 25 acres might be near the mark. The range of date indicated by the coins is from soon after the Claudian conquest to the end of the 4th century and the existence of buildings outside the original walls is to be expected.

There is an old roadway running down from the north from Shipley Brake (52527023) and this turns obliquely through the west wall. It may be a Roman road but its minor sinuosities keep it parallel to a present-day hedgerow to its immediate west and its association with quarries in Shipley Brake and a building just outside the south edge suggest that it is comparatively modern.

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