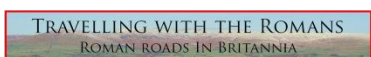




Stay in touch! If you have an interesting topic you'd like to share or a question just get in touch and we'll try to answer.

Hopefully you are all well and not yet completely stir-crazy. We were disappointed that the Government has not indicated that amateur archaeologists may return to the field, although construction work is continuing and development-funded professional archaeological projects are taking place. Maybe we just don't appear on their radar – or LiDAR.

Speaking of which, if you haven't already, take a look at David Ratledge's new Roman road website:



at www.twithr.co.uk. David points out that the RRRRA website, although still accessible, is considerably out of date.

NEWS

Also speaking of Roman roads, Simon (who needed homework for the Dig Ventures *How to do Archaeology* course) and Andy who negotiated access to a site near Garstang, maintaining appropriate social distancing by working in separate trenches, have excavated what looks pretty convincingly like a section of the major Roman road to Lancaster. More on this below.

FINDS TRAY

We said we'd revisit more from the *Lancashire Archaeological Bulletin* created and published by Ben Edwards and Margaret Edwards who was also Editor in Chief (see WA News Issue 28). Launched in March 1975 it offers an eclectic overview of what was happening in Archaeological Lancashire...

LAB Volume 1 Issue 2 of May 1975 included a brief mention of a 'Missing' Roman road – an issue that we successfully tackled in the field at Matshead (Issue 26). The item reported:

Further evidence of the difficulty of tracing Roman roads... comes from examination, by permission of British Gas, of their 'Frig' Natural Gas pipeline between the Preston-Longridge road and the Alston Hall road. Whatever line the Ribchester - Kirkham Roman road may have taken must surely have crossed, but it has not yet proved visible. B.J.N.E.

The website www.twithr.co.uk/lancs-gm/M703.htm shows what a difference LiDAR has made to such endeavours and has an interesting note by Ben Edwards from a 1977 issue of *LAB*.

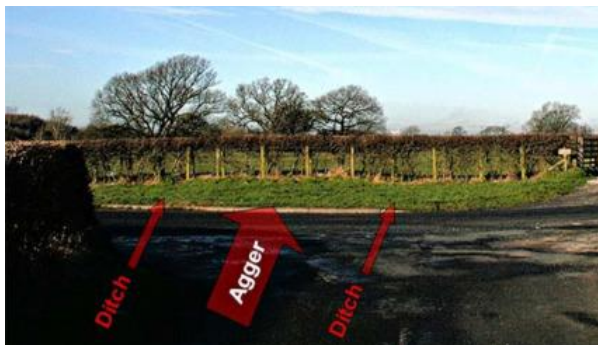


DIG UPDATE

Brock: Colin reported at the end of May that the dig site at Brock Bottom that we started work on last autumn has partly reverted to nature. The dig team will remember that the first task was to clear the undergrowth before excavation could actually start. The photo above shows the site before work started and below is the site as we left it in November.



Simon and Andy's Roman Road Dig: As mentioned above, Simon was looking for an opportunity to do some practical homework for his *How to do Archaeology* course but, since we've suspended group activities for the time being, he realised he'd probably have to go it alone. From a H & S point of view, solo digging is not ideal but it was suggested that Andy might be willing to help and indeed he was. Simon had hoped to get access to a site on the line of the Roman road at Bilsborrow but, having been unable to make contact with the owner, he followed up on a lead

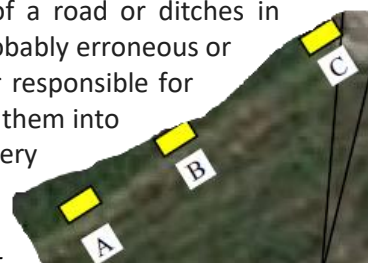


suggested by Andy who was keen to investigate a likely site identified by David Ratledge's LiDAR researches. Andy had spoken to workmen digging nearby and they pointed him in the direction of the land owner/farmer, Ian Pye, to whom Andy explained the proposal. Ian kindly gave them permission to open trenches on the identified piece of land which in fact lay outside his field fence and formed part of the roadside verge.

In early June, therefore, Simon and Andy carried out 3 short excavations on the suspected line of the Walton-le-Dale to Lancaster Roman road north of Garstang. The initial plan was to

excavate three small trenches to expose what appeared to be boundary ditches on either side of an *agger* that showed as a slight rise in the field hedge line in a photo on David's website (above).

Their initial findings were disappointing: it seemed that there was no evidence of a road or ditches in trenches A, B and C on the roadside verge and that therefore the LiDAR trace was probably erroneous or confused by a modern agricultural ditch. Fortunately, however, Ian Pye, the farmer responsible for the site, had come to see what was going on and became interested enough to allow them into the field where an additional small trench was opened by Andy, this time with very positive results (below left). Further evidence of Roman river cobbles were found nearer the westerly gate post. As Simon recorded: *Continuing work on Andy's trench ... revealed very quickly what we had spent a lot of time failing to find. About*

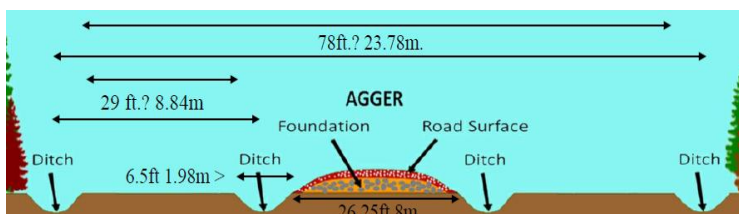


20cm below the grass he found a possible road edge made up of larger kerb stones and, when measured to the other side of the farm track, gave a distance of roughly 8m, the average road width of Roman roads in this area & similar to ones found at both Catterall & Bilsborrow. Conclusions: We think we have found the remains of the road leading North in this field in trench... and under the farm track.



Work on the track further north showed signs of the Roman road still eroding from below the modern surface and of possible kerb stones in other places, though further small sondages half a mile away were disappointing. Later in June, Simon and Andy were joined by Steve, who participated in our Matshead road dig, and once more maintaining social

distancing by working on separate trenches, revisited the site. The kerb was confirmed, as were the Roman river cobbles running under the farm track, and a possible ditch, though the infill was much later than Roman. The team was much assisted by David Ratledge's informative diagram (right) of what they could/should be looking for.



Most importantly, Mr Pye, on whose land the site lies, appears very keen to have the investigation continue and has invited the team back later in September. We hope that by this time it will be possible to have a wider trench to cover road, kerb, inner and outer ditches and an 'official' Wyre Archaeology dig that provides clearly defined road measurements.

Left: Andy, alias 'Happy Bunny' as he described himself with this find, extended his trench towards the farm track. The suspected Roman road surface lay under the farm track metalling.

Archaeology reaches new heights: Spot the digger!



Archaeologist, Clare, took the opportunity of a quiet moment on her development site to get an aerial photo.

So glad we've got Chris and his drone!

In response to Government advice regarding measures to mitigate against the spread of Coronavirus, Wyre Archaeology has cancelled future meetings until further notice. Digs are also suspended for the time being. News will be circulated to members by e-mail, the website and the newsletter.

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We're always on the lookout for new projects so if you have a view about potential sites – especially if you have a contact – get in touch. Come to our meeting (**when re-instated**) or email: [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com)

**Prospective new members are especially welcome just email: [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com)**

### WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

Lancashire Archaeological Society  
Lancashire's Roman Roads (David Ratledge):  
Wigan Archaeology Society:  
University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age

<https://lancsarchaeologicalsociety.wordpress.com/>  
[www.twithr.co.uk](http://www.twithr.co.uk)  
[www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk](http://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk)  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/lytham-st-annes>,  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/wyre-lancs>,  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/preston>

**Membership Benefits: Full Membership:** 10 meetings with voting rights, group membership of CBA and CBA(NW), free training, participation in digs, basic kit loan, personal dig insurance, WA Newsletter, Wigan AS and Lancashire Local History Federation newsletters, Lancaster Uni's Centre for Regional Studies circulars. (*£12 individuals, £18 two family members at same address, full-time students up to age 21 free*). **Associate Members:** participation in digs, basic dig training, loan of kit, dig insurance, newsletter and circulars as above (*£5*). **ALL CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP ONLY £5 THIS YEAR**

**If YOU have any articles, news or views, email to [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com). Check out Wyre Archaeology Group on Facebook too!**

### WYRE ARCHAEOLOGY OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

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|----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Chair                | Brian Rigby                            |
| Vice Chair           | Davinia Jackson                        |
| Immediate Past Chair | Chris Clayton                          |
| Treasurer            | Simon Millward-Hopkins                 |
| Secretary            | Dave Hampson                           |
| Committee Members    | Mike Edwards, Dave Berry, Peter Scott. |

### CONTACTS

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**Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think may be interested.**