



The Street: A re-evaluation of the Roman road from Buxton to Wirksworth

King Street, Derbyshire: An archaeological assessment report
Margery road number: RR71a/b

Wirksworth Archaeological Society
11th November 2023



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Preface to the Fourth Edition

Fifteen years have passed since we undertook our first work to assess The Street, a known Roman road which runs south eastwards from Buxton and which work we published in a report of the 7th May 2008. Our project has continued in that time and much further work has been done, some of which informs issues related to The Street. This edition, then, is intended to bring our assessment of The Street up to date taking into account both recent fieldwork and the availability of further original source documents.

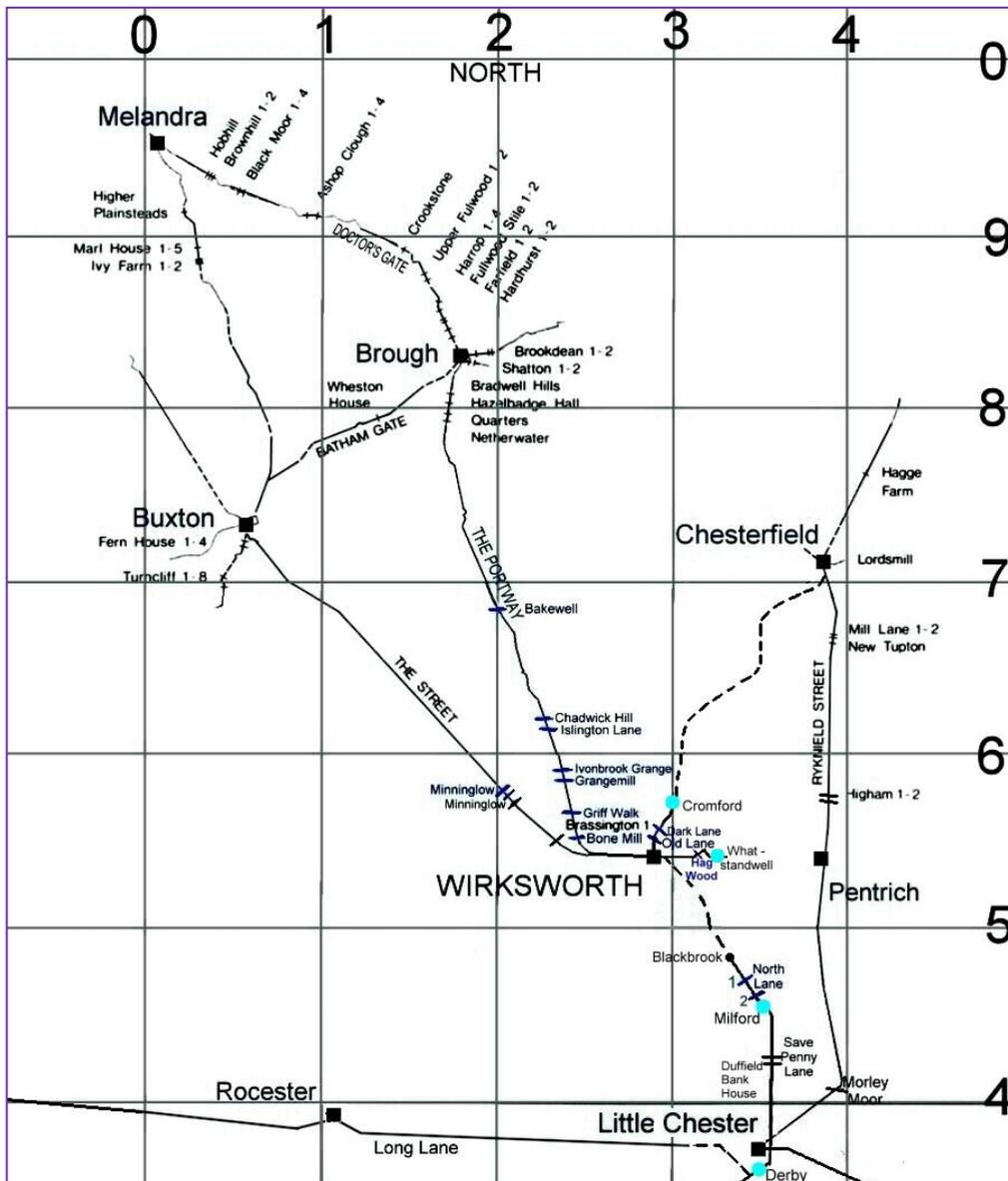
First and foremost, we would like to thank all the farmers and landowners who had so kindly permitted us access to look for evidence of the road and who have responded so well to our requests to examine or record some feature on their land. We also wish to thank the staff of the Local Studies Libraries (Derby and Matlock), the Derbyshire Record Office, the Sites and Monuments Record and Derby Museum for their assistance. The following people have kindly attended examinations or assisted in reconsidering The Street in some capacity or other, such as by documentary research or consultation, and we are most grateful to them all: Steve Baker, Paul Clarke, Stephen Farnsworth, Adrian and Tom Fletcher, Sandra Green, John Hardwick, Clive Hart, Cath Housley, John Sanderson, Ivan Wain, John Wheeldon, Mary Wiltshire, and Sue Woore. The Wirksworth Roman Project was originally funded by the Derbyshire Community Foundation and further provision came from the Derbyshire Greenwatch Fund.



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2023
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Introduction

For nearly two hundred years, the destination of The Street, a Roman road leading approximately south-east from Buxton, was thought to be Little Chester. However, a recently rediscovered 1723 map of Brassington Moor shows The Street, coming from Buxton and Pikehall, exiting Brassington Moor through the Upper Harborough Field Gate. This gate lay then and yet lies on Manystones Lane, west of Wirksworth, and this renders the *only* possible destination of The Street as being Wirksworth. The Street does not run and never did run straight from Buxton to Little Chester.



Archaeological examinations and Roman Roads in the Peak District to 2019 (After Hart, 1984)

Sections after Mellor, Wroe and Hart, and sources in the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal in black.

Sections by Shone and Smart in blue.

Dashed lines: conceptual Roman routes.

Light blue dots: crossings of the River Derwent.

'The Street' is a Roman road across the high limestone plateau of central Derbyshire. It starts in the Roman spa town of Buxton (*Aqua Arnemetiae*) and can be traced relatively easily in a more or less south-south-easterly direction for more than 24km to Street Knolls (now Straight Knolls) just north-

west of Longcliffe. This part of the route had been known for many years. However, the predicted continuation of the road south or east from Longcliffe had long been problematic, with little physical or documentary evidence to suggest a likely destination or route. Publicly available maps, such as Sanderson's map of 1835, were too late to provide any information on the course of the Street from Longcliffe, and the 1723 map of Brassington Moor which showed its correct course, lay undiscovered in the British Library until the Society first undertook this assessment in 2008.

The destination of The Street had for many years been considered to be Little Chester in Derby and assorted, often random, routes had been suggested to this effect. Many authors and antiquarians had attempted to connect Longcliffe to Little Chester (via Carsington, Kirk Ireton and Windley or Kedleston) with a straight line drawn on a map. This approach was first implied in 1817 by William Bennet (Bishop of Cloyne in County Cork) in Lyson's *Magna Britannia*:

"A fourth Roman way may be traced, as I before observed, on the south side of Buxton, in the direction of Little-Chester. The Roman road leaves Buxton in the track of the present Ashborne road, passes through Over-street, and near the 27th mile-stone, where, as the turnpike road bears off to the west, it keeps its own straight line, and is visible on the left hand of it, from Hurdlow-house to Pike-hall; being still called among the peasants by its proper name the Roman road. It leaves Aldwark to the left, is visible on Brassington-moor, passes close by Hopton, where the late Mr. Gell opened a part of it, and probably between Keddleston-park and Duffield to Darley-slade, where it joins the great road from *Ad Trivonam*, and crosses the river with it to Little-Chester. "

Careful comparison between what Bennet said in 1817 in Lyson's "Magna Britannia" and his probable source, the antiquarian Hayman Rooke, makes it obvious that Bennet's statement about the road passing "close by Hopton" is not referring to it passing to the west of Hopton in a straight line continuation from Longcliffe, but can only have referred to the landscaping work carried out by Philip Eyre Gell in 1792 south of Ryder Point (north east of Hopton) in connection with the construction of his new road (part of the "Via Gellia") from Hopton to Ible. Near Ryder Point this Hopton to Ible road crosses Brassington Lane and Gell's workmen must have "opened a part of it" in this area. No road existed from Hopton to Ible prior to this and none is shown on the 1684 map of Hopton, but the crucial lack of clarity in Bennet's statement led many others to interpret the term passing "close by Hopton" as meaning west of the village. The effect of this confusing statement, widely published and continually repeated, was to destroy any rational assessment of the course of the Street for years afterwards.

At the opposite end of the scale, various researchers have offered routes of an overly tortuous nature that attempted to take in every Roman settlement north of Derby (e.g. Smithard, 1910). Whilst some of these ideas have initially appeared attractive and plausible, none of them have ever held up under any kind of detailed scrutiny.

We felt that the reason why no one had found The Street beyond its last known point at Longcliffe was because it ran into Wirksworth along Manystones Lane and Brassington Lane. The idea of a slight turn to

Wirksworth was not entirely new and had already been put forward by Cockerton in 1937, but he did no fieldwork and could find no supporting documentary or map evidence at the time.

In order to prove or disprove this theory, the Society embarked on a complete reappraisal of The Street in terms of existing knowledge and whatever new documentary or field evidence could be identified. In the end, this proved to be a larger than expected task, especially when it was decided to specifically seek to review all the available original source material. It was worth the extra effort though, as the understanding of this enigmatic road expanded enormously and it became possible to unravel the mistakes of previous workers. The Society was fortunate to discover several valuable pieces of documentary evidence which swung the argument firmly towards a definite conclusion. During the course of the work, it also became apparent that some disagreements still existed over the exact course of The Street between Buxton and Longcliffe – a part of the route that had been considered as done and dusted. The Society has also reviewed these disputes and have attempted to settle them.

The Society concludes in this report that The Street is the Roman road between Buxton and Wirksworth.

Review of previous work

Historical material and commentaries

It is perhaps typical of the debate about the course of The Street that one of the most curious observations about it is to be found in a document which appears at first to have no relevance. That document is an article published in 1936-7 by Richard Cockerton about "A Prehistoric Trackway". Cockerton observes that a local, Mr Goodwin, had apparently described part of the route of a "Roman" road (the Roman street from "Buxton to Derby") to a John Taylor who was visiting Derbyshire in October 1820: "...Hurdlow, right of Arbelows, Street House, Pike Hall, Long Edge, Brassington and Wirksworth" Mr Goodwin had said. Cockerton observes of this local knowledge: "this is particularly interesting... as an indication that the local inhabitants in 1820 were under the impression that it went to Wirksworth and not straight on to Derby." It was felt of this statement that while locals might not know a great deal about the origins or construction of their roads, there is a measure of certainty in thinking they know where their roads go. But, as ever with local knowledge, it is rather garbled and could not be held to be of any more than anecdotal significance.

Bennet (1817) also noted that the peasants still called it the Roman road, but he didn't appear (unlike Taylor) to have asked any of them where it went. Unfortunately, he also reported that Mr Gell had "opened part of it" and that it passed "close by Hopton", but never specified exactly where by Hopton. This comment has invariably been taken to mean west of Hopton because that is where the straight line theory of The Street passes closest to the village. In practice the location of the "opened" road was due north of Hopton, at Brassington Lane crossroads south of Ryder Point, where Phillip Gell's workers were landscaping over many months and building his new road from Hopton to the Via Gellia and Ible in 1792. The "opening" was made about the same time as the reporting by Hayman Rooke of the improbable Gell urn inside Ivet Low (Rooke, 1793).

It should be noted that 1820 is almost the last moment in which The Street might still have been in the living memory of locals. It had already fallen out of use due to the opening of a series of turnpikes. New field boundaries created by the enclosures at the time had closed off and isolated parts of the route. Ten years later in 1830, the construction of the Cromford and High Peak Railway would so severely obscure the route at Peak Quarry Farm that understanding of the road would be lost. Indeed, once Bennet's misleading comments had been published and the misinterpretation had become widely known, there was little chance of the local knowledge being taken seriously.

Almost a century later, in 1910, Smithard warned: "archaeologists... take a flying leap from Hopton to Kedleston without troubling about the intervening eight miles of rather awkward country". Cockerton had taken this warning to heart and noted in his 1937 article that the Romans were aware of the difficult nature of this countryside and had "brought their street to a sudden end to swing eastward towards Wirksworth, a more probable site for Lutudarum, by a route which enabled them to avoid bridge building and at the same time lose height by a gradual descent." Unfortunately for Cockerton,

the resources which he had at his disposal to identify the location of the turn were not equal to the task and although he repeated the statement about The Street's eastward turn in a later work in 1953, he was clearly no better placed to support it then either and he was dismissed yet again. Cockerton had no map material available to him prior to 1833 as he was missing the map from the Brassington Enclosure Award of 1808. Though, even that map, which had been seen by Smithard in 1910, would not have helped him as it does not show The Street, only the road via Rockhurst Farm. Cockerton explored in his article that the linkage between the Street and Wirksworth was Manystones Lane, but then became lost in a morass of conjecture about Harborough Rocks and the Chariot Way.

There had, of course, been periodic further warnings about the need to re-examine the evidence for the course of The Street, notably by Lomas in 1958 and Guilbert in 1993. However, such warnings were not heeded and the excitement which understandably accompanied the various Roman finds around Carsington (Ling and Courtney, 1981; Branigan and Housley, 1987; Ling et al, 1990) had drawn The Street debate inexorably towards that place. Indeed, Ling and Courtney specifically stated there was a "strong Prima-Facie case for saying Carsington was Lutudarum" and this statement set a hare running which the fieldwork evidence (of one small farm, the Carsington "villa" and a lead processing site) cannot sustain. Indeed, it is necessary to say that there is no cartographic or documentary evidence to indicate that Carsington was Lutudarum and no evidence to suggest that The Street passed through it. This hare was, depressingly, set running again by Ratledge (2021) in an article which "confirmed" the route from Longcliffe to Little Chester via Windley by Lidar, without so much as putting a spade in the ground.

Place names

Many authors have discussed the occurrence of place name evidence for The Street, almost all of whom have their source material as "Place names of Derbyshire" by Cameron (1959). This being so, let us consider what Cameron had to say. Note that Cameron is not giving us the course of The Street per se, he is (except where annotated) simply observing the occurrence of the place name:

"THE STREET is the former name of the Roman road from Buxton to Longcliffe, the general course of which is marked on the O.S. map. It is le streate 1415 (1); Streete, the Streete Way 1533 (2); Heigh streete, the ould Streete Waye 1599 (3); Streete-way 1701 at Hartington (4); the High Streete 1667 and 1668 west of Aldwark (5). Beyond Longcliffe it is lost but appears to be heading in the general direction of Duffield. In a Rental for Duffield Frith is le Strete 1415 *apparently* in Windley (6)"

Cameron's sources were:

- (1) Duchy of Lancaster Manuscript Books 4, 22, 28, 45, 114, 137, Public Record Office, (TNA DL42/4)
- (2) Bateman Manuscript, Chatsworth
- (3) Duchy of Lancaster Special Commissions, PRO
- (4) Exchequer Special Commissions, PRO
- (5) Belvior Castle Records
- (6) Duchy of Lancaster Manuscript Books, PRO (TNA DL42/4)

Most of these place names appear to be accurately reported, but with two further amendments:

The Windley reference is a problem. Assessment of the source document suggests it is a scribal error, that the reference to le Strete should actually have been to le Sterte - a field name in Windley Manor. So this reference must be set aside as unsafe and a source of confusion.

Cameron also mentions a "Street Crosse" in his Middleton-by-Wirksworth entry and suggests it is "*probably*" Middleton Cross. This entry was an error on Cameron's part. The source document was a survey in the Gell archive from 1576. It doesn't say Street Crosse, it says Street Croft, a field adjacent to Brassington Lane at Four Lane Ends just outside Wirksworth.

For the sake of thoroughness: in terms of the section of The Street between Buxton and Longcliffe, there are a number of surviving "Street" place names on the 1:25,000 OS map OL24. These are, from north to south: Street Farm at SK 1190 6745, Street House Farm at SK 1165 6740, Middle Street Farm at SK 1400 6518 and Straight Knolls Barn (= Street Knolls, Cameron, 1959) at SK 2256 5588. Cockerton (1937) mentions "Over Street", a place-name at or adjacent to the Duke of York Inn at Pomeroy; also noted by Kirkham (1975). The Tithe Map of Smerrill indicates a "Great and Little Street Close" at SK 1760 6130. Cockerton discusses several additional Street names he had found in "old documents" including at Friden where The Street had been recorded as the "Kingestrete" and the "Via de Peco" in about 1225. A charter of King Edgar of AD963 for an estate at Ballidon identifies

"cyngstraet" as part of the estate boundary with sufficient accuracy for it to be The Street (Brooks, 2000). Indeed, these two very old documented names perhaps suggest we should properly call The Street "King Street". As part of the research for this report also reviewed were the tithe and enclosure maps for Carsington, Hopton, Callow, Kirk Ireton, Turnditch and Windley and there are no "Street" place names at all on any of those maps. However, there is a "Street" place name on the east side of the Ecclesbourne in Duffield Frith but this appears to be the family name of the landowners at Knave's Cross at Longwalls Lane (Street's Wood) and similarly at Street's Rough near Sandyford and an unlocated Wyver Street reference in documents for the Wigley estate, perhaps between Wigwell and Colebrook Farm.

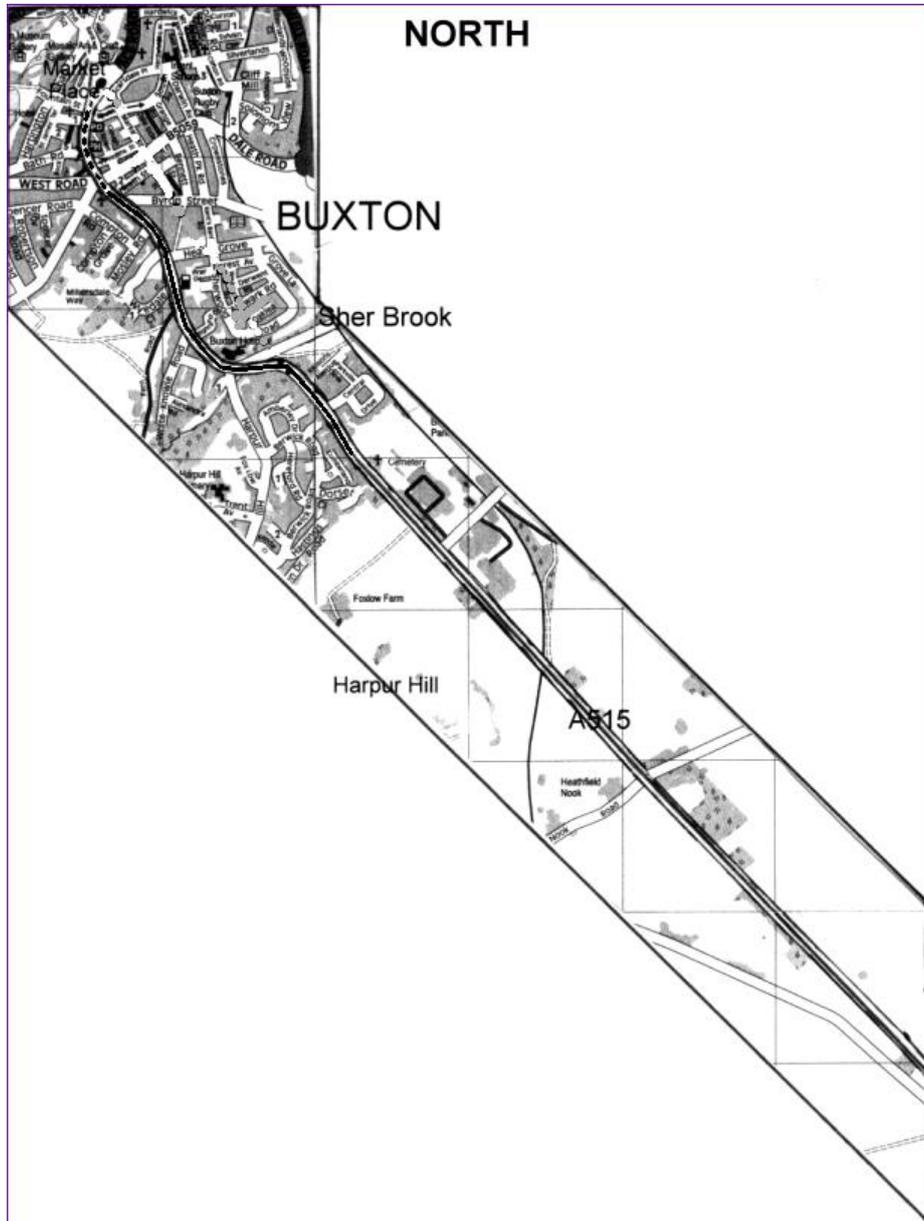
The 1839 tithe map for Carsington gives two "Portaway" field names to the west of the village. These are "Portaway and Scattergood Pingle" located at SK 2442 5335 and the neighbouring "Dale Pingle and Portaway" at SK 2440 5345. These have been used as evidence to suggest the existence of a north-south oriented portway in the area and, by implication, that this is the line of The Street passing through on its way to Little Chester (Willies, 1995). If the line of The Street is projected straight from its last known point though, the two fields are more than 500m off the line to the west. If these field names do refer to an actual portway, it is more likely to be an east-west route, perhaps an old pack horse route from the lead mines near Lark Tor towards Carsington. Indeed, both the tithe map and Hutchinson's 1711 map (D258/69/1) show a footpath doing exactly this.

Archaeological investigations of the Carsington area were carried out as part of the Carsington Reservoir construction project. These began with an initial report which found evidence of a possible Roman settlement (Wildgoose, 1979). This was later expanded to include a supposed Roman fort at "Brough Field" by the former Scow Brook. Later investigation of this field identified domestic, agricultural and lead working activities, but nothing military (Dearne et al, 1995). None of the archaeological bodies involved at the time appear to have checked the accuracy or origin of the field name. In fact, the field name was not "Brough Field", but "Brough's Nether Field" as it appears on Hutchinson's 1711 map (D258/69/1). Clearly this field name has nothing whatsoever to do with a fortification, but is most probably named after the Brough family who lived in Carsington for more than 250 years during the 16th to 18th centuries (Greatorex, 2005) and who probably owned the field. Samuel Brough was Rector of Carsington in 1704 (Clayton and Wales, 2005).

Consequently, the research review of previous statements identified a number of errors, which when corrected show that the Street place names are associated with Manystones Lane, Brassington Lane and Wirksworth.

Excavations and field evidence

From the Market Place in Buxton, there is some debate as to which line The Street takes to pick up the course of the A515 at the Ashbourne Road Cemetery (SK 0664 7196) and from where there is a tolerable certainty of its route. Leach (1987) provides a useful map of the location of the known Roman finds in the town and annotates the route of The Street on this. He comments that the Roman roads are postulated to focus on the Market Place and observes the various archaeological work that has been done in Buxton. This current report is illustrated by a series of maps giving the line of the Street as we feel it runs:



Map1: Buxton to Brierlow Bar

See Appendix 3 for archaeologically examined sections of the road.

1 square represents 500 metres.

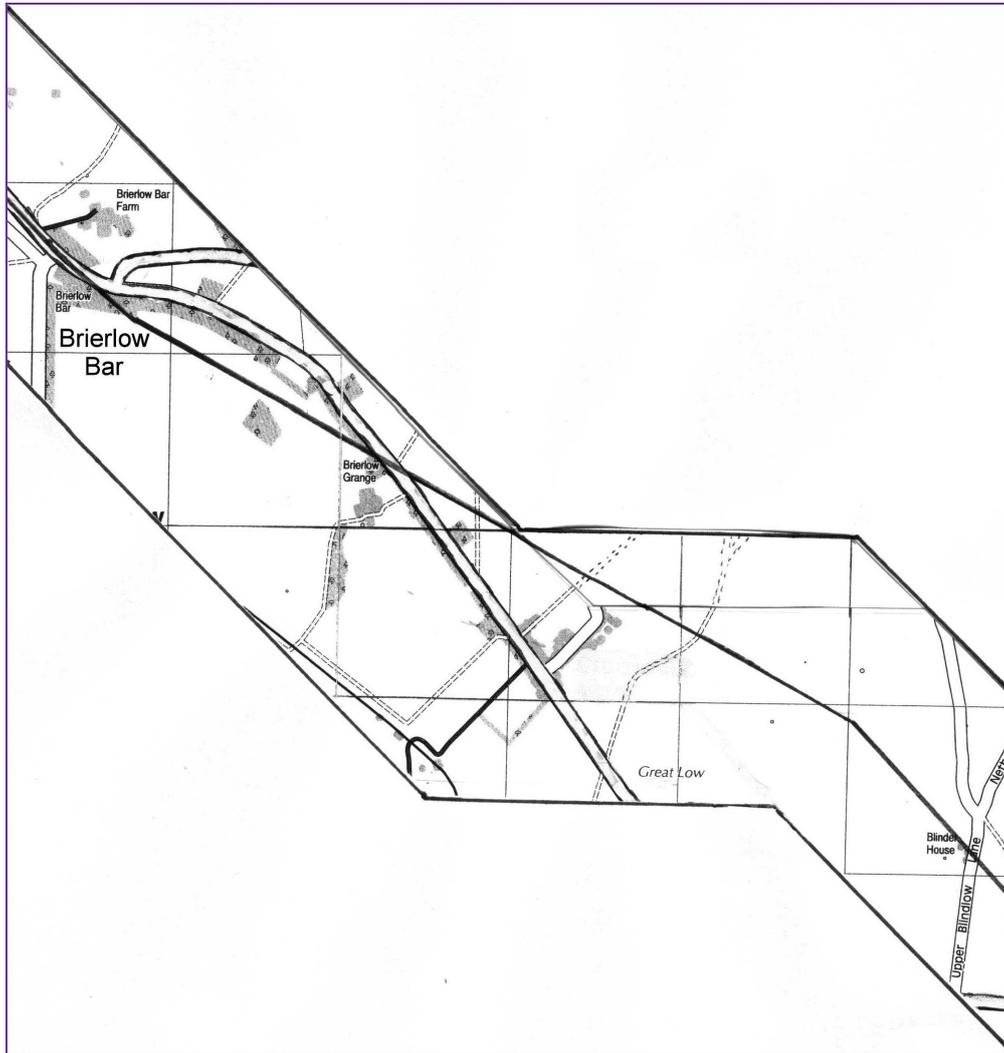
In order to pass to the Ashbourne Road from Buxton Market Place, the road must cross the not inconsiderable obstacle of Sherbrook Dale. The 1631 map of Buckston (sic) by William Senior shows the

course of the A515 as it is today and the 1724 Buxton – Manchester turnpike started from Sherbrook Hill, heading north from there along what is now London Road, so it is conceivable The Street followed a winding course into Buxton, given the hilly topography. Alternatively, it has been suggested that it would be possible for The Street to follow a straight line into Buxton Market Place if the cuttings of the Sherbrook Dale were not as high or as steep in the past as they are now and if the Sherbrook were bridged or culverted. This is discussed in a 1979 article about the Hartington boundaries by Nellie Kirkham, who felt that there was some indication of a terrace on an alignment which would achieve a crossing. Unfortunately, there is simply not yet enough archaeological evidence to draw certain conclusions about the line of The Street through Buxton town. For the record, there was some work carried out by Tristram, 1916, but the reported results are of uncertain value. Yet the longevity of Roman roads is such that if the map of Hartington Manor of 1614 and William Senior’s map of 1631 show the course of the pre-turnpike road, then the balance of probability is that it is correct and the historic route.

The latest evidence for the course of The Street immediately south of the Ashbourne Road Cemetery is given by Guilbert and Challis, 1993, who determine the line of the road as being directly along the current A515, which is the course of the 1749 Buxton – Hurdlow turnpike, as far as Brierlow Bar (SK 0875 6975). It does not follow the terrace running along the west side of the A515 at Harpur Hill. This was initially examined and thought to be a boundary feature by Guilbert and Challis. Finally, in 2018, prior to a housing development at Foxlow Farm at Harpur Hill, detailed excavation and OSL (optically stimulated luminescence) dating proved that the terrace was a medieval boundary of the eleventh century at the earliest (Steve Baker, pers comm).

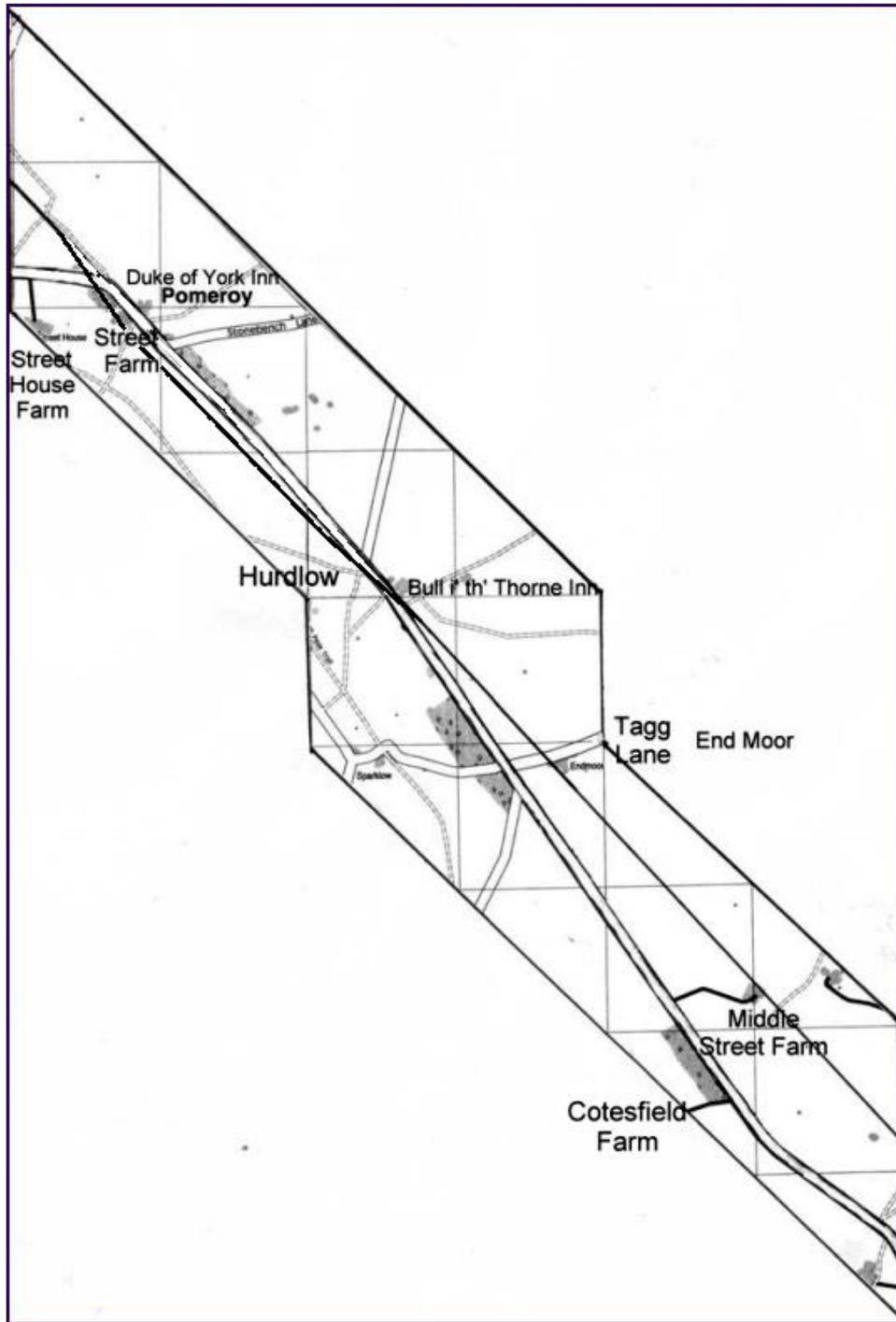


The line of The Street followed by the A515 at Harpur Hill by Buxton, looking south.



Map 2: Brierlow Bar to Blindlow Lane

From Brierlow Bar, the A515 bends away from the course of The Street. The Street makes a slight turn to the south-east and heads to SK 1110 6833 where it turns back to take up a prevailing south-south-easterly direction. The most recent evidence for this part of the route is that presented by Wroe, 1982. The Street now passes by Street Farm and the Duke of York Inn at Pomeroy.

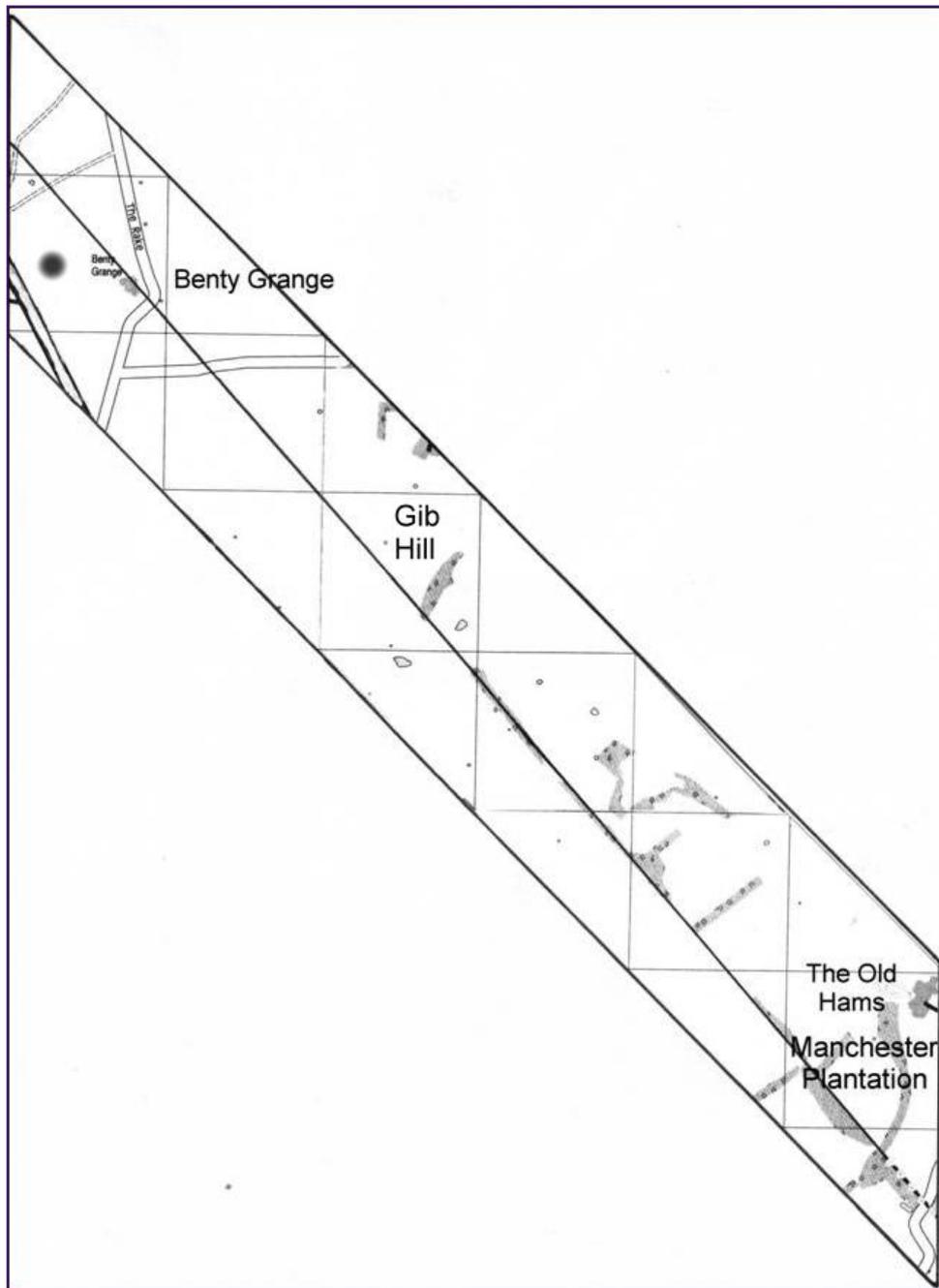


Map 3: Blindlow Lane to Benty Grange

Beyond the Bull-i'-th'-Thorn Inn at Hurdlow, where the inn is aligned to the line of The Street, not the A515, there is a disagreement as to the route. Wroe suggests the line remains dead straight and crosses the A515 to run on the east side of that road and on the west side of a boundary wall through Middle Street Farm and Benty Grange. Lomas, on the other hand, believed that the line turned slightly south and ran on the west side of the A515 before turning back to the south-east near the entrance to Cotesfield Farm (Lomas, 1958). Both routes are in agreement again near Gib Hill at SK 1558 6343.

Wroe's line follows a conspicuously long boundary wall with a parish boundary running along it, but he carried out no excavations. Lomas did get excavation evidence of a disused road, but the section trench

was gravel and rammed earth, this would be typical for a turnpike and untypical for a Roman road. Ogilby's 1675 map of the Manchester to Derby Road unusually shows the road running on the east side of "a wall" where it crosses Tagg Lane at Endmoor. In this period, before many enclosures, roads were rarely walled and hence Ogilby's remarking of it. This line is also confirmed on the 1840 1" OS map of Buxton. The Ashbourne – Hurdlow turnpike was originally built in 1738. It was extensively rebuilt in 1776-77 and this later road became the A515. During this reconstruction, it is believed that parts of the original turnpike were abandoned in favour of a new line and it is felt that it is one of these abandoned sections that Lomas excavated. It does also appear from the construction details he gives that his road is markedly different to other known sections of The Street (including that excavated at Minninglow Hill by Lomas himself in 1958). For these reasons, we are of the opinion that Wroe's line is correct and that Lomas' line was part of the original and abandoned 1738 Ashbourne – Hurdlow Turnpike.



Map 4: Benty Grange to Walk Lane

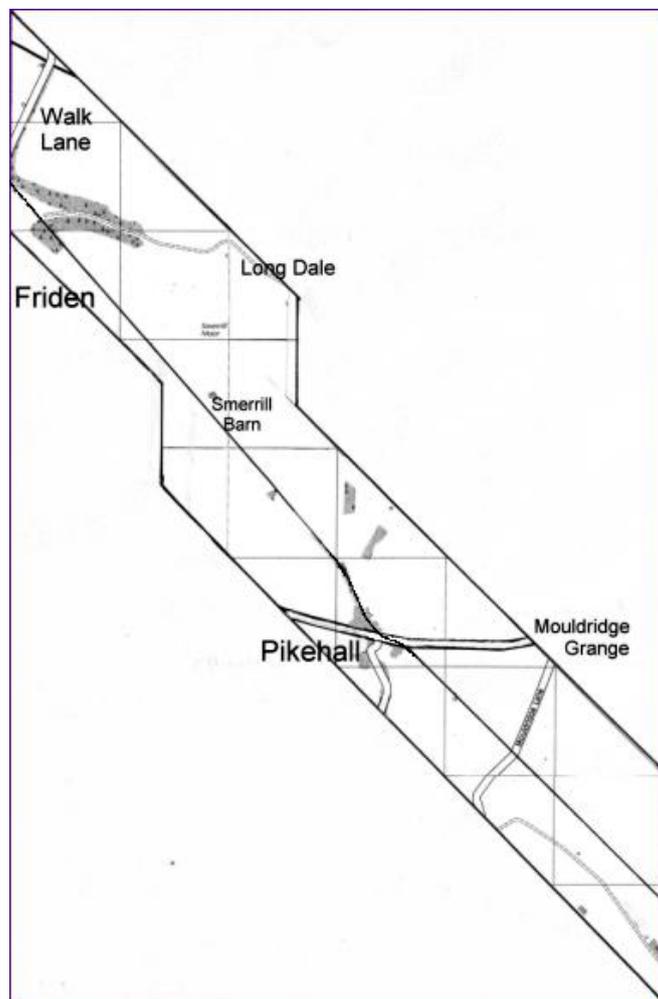
From Middle Street Farm the line of the road continues through Benty Grange, past the site of Bateman's 1848 discovery of the famous Benty Grange Helmet in a tumulus marked as a large dot on the above map. The Street continues past Gib Hill and Manchester Plantation (perhaps so named because The Street was once the road to Manchester) and comes down to and crosses Walk Lane.



The course of The Street looking south-east just south of Manchester Plantation

A minor road Walk Lane, from Newhaven to Bakewell crosses the upper Long Dale Valley at SK 1743 6122. Great and Little Street Close are on the left of this picture.

There is some doubt as to the exact line here, although a road is seen on the right of the picture, the O/S map indicates the Street coming in on the left. We have not been able to resolve this question, it requires fieldwork. The road in the picture turns right at a point just beyond the wall in the centre right of the picture and The Street certainly runs in the line of that turn.



Map 5: Walk Lane to Minninglow

The Street carries on in a south-south-easterly direction and is crossed by Walk Lane at the head of the Long Dale valley near Friden (SK 1744 6113) as above. It then proceeds through Smerrill Barn, where the modern barn lies over its course, and carries on towards Pike Hall, continuing to be marked by the same long running boundary wall and a plantation of trees just north of Pike Hall farm. The descent into Pike Hall is via the farm track through the farm, the older buildings of which are aligned to it on either side.



Former Smerrill Barn in an old photograph
looking south towards Pike Hall and Minninglow



A length of The Street, now used as a farm track

at SK 1960 5875, looking north towards Pike Hall from Mouldridge Lane, the continuation follows the line of trees in the background. The road turns slightly through Pike Hall to negotiate its approach.

From Pike Hall a short section of The Street remains in use as a farm track and then it continues south over Brassington Moor and passes by the north-east side of Minninglow Hill in a gentle curve to resume its straight course south of Minninglow towards Galloway Lane, Straight Knolls and Longcliffe. On the ground The Street gently curves here and there to adjust to the topography.



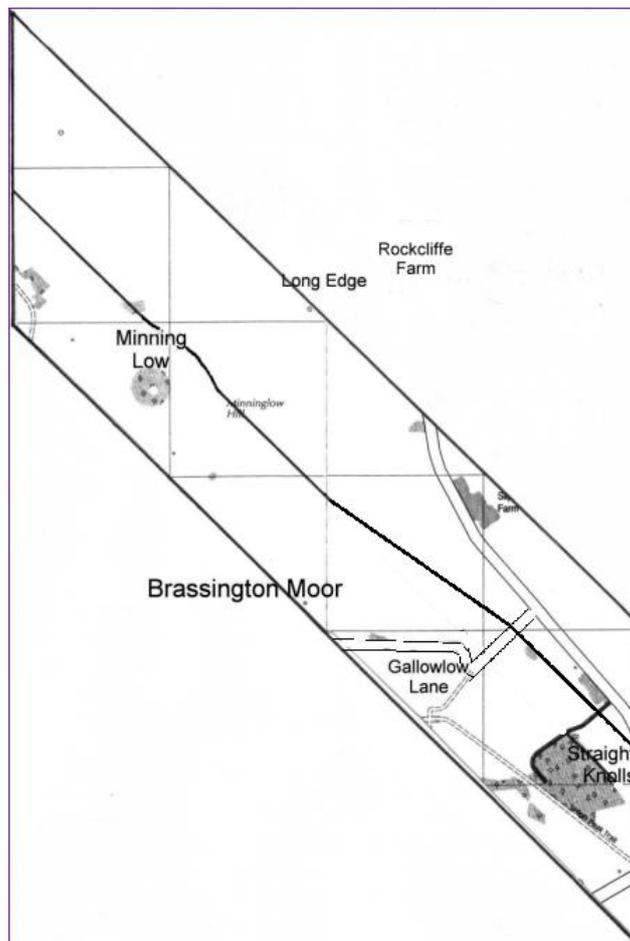
The Street at Minninglow

looking northwards towards Pike Hall.



Minninglow Hill

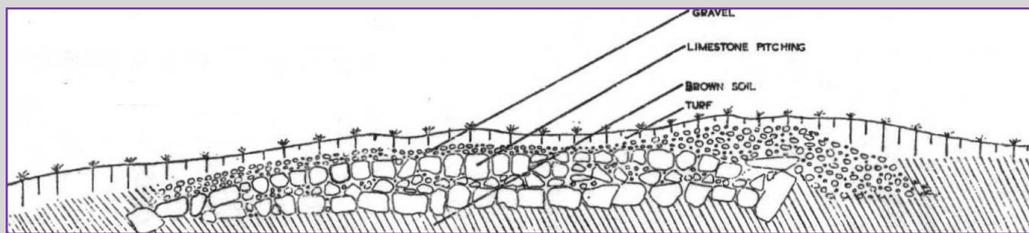
The Street runs next to and on the right of the boundary wall coming over the crest. Looking from the camera, it diverges from the wall and heads towards the right front corner of the photograph. Taken from Gallowlow Lane, looking NW.



Map6: Minninglow to Street Knolls

Fieldwork at Minninglow and opposite Rockcliffe Farm

Two excavations had been carried out at Minninglow Hill: that of Smithard in 1910 and that of Lomas in 1958. Both confirm the same line on the east side of the wall.



1 metre

Section of The Street at Minninglow. Excavated by Lomas, 1958.

In terms of fieldwork, in March 2010 we took a section of The Street opposite Rockcliffe Farm at SK 2088 5754 in a location not in Environmental Stewardship Agreement, and with the kind permission of the landowner, Mr. M Cooper. We felt that as over 50 years had passed since Lomas had examined The Street at this point that there would be a benefit from a modern examination.

The section is similar in all respects to that taken by Lomas at Minninglow in 1958. At this point The Street curves gently round Minninglow and is still extant and obvious for perhaps a kilometre. South of Minninglow towards Longcliffe the agger fades out under heavy ploughing and damage due to lead mining and quarrying activities.

The section was taken on exactly level ground. The agger is just below the topsoil with a width of 2m 80cm to its edges. It is composed of limestone with larger stones at the bottom (called by Lomas "Pitching"), then with a core of mixed sized limestone, sandy and with a little chert, and an upper surface of larger stones with the remains of a small limestone and cherty gravel top in a sandy clay matrix. In so far as these components appear to be the same material, the limestone being veined and with a little galena and barytes (suggesting the source as containing these materials), there was no obvious work beyond the one period of construction. The agger lies directly on top of a fawny-brown sandy clay subsoil and appears to have been slightly rammed into it, either during construction or by the weight of the agger on the subsoil and traffic. It should be noted though that Roman construction of roads tends to be based on clearance of the line of the road, then stripping of the turf, then laying of the aggregate within the stripped line. The subsoil becomes slightly redder, browner and more clay the deeper it goes: but without us finding bedrock, though there are occasional random pieces of limestone in the subsoil.

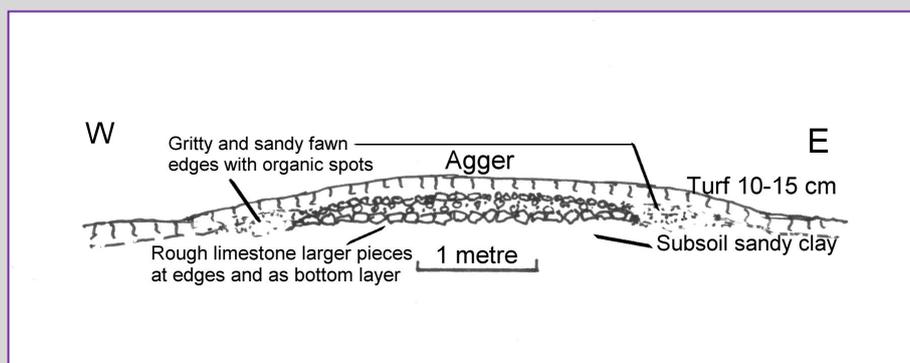
The centre of the agger at this point is 25 m from the western field wall and two control pits were put in 8.8m from the wall and 14.4 m from the wall to check that there were no other road traces. In these pits only turf and sandy clay subsoil were found, though the pit nearer the road contained a 5 cm layer

of unidentifiable burnt material suggesting it had been the site of a small roadside fire, possibly of travellers, or given that the burnt layer was at a slight colour change in the subsoil, it may even have been a fire made during the construction of the road, as its depth was consistent with the bottom of the road surface. There were no finds.



Section of The Street at SK 2088 5754 in process of cutting looking north east.

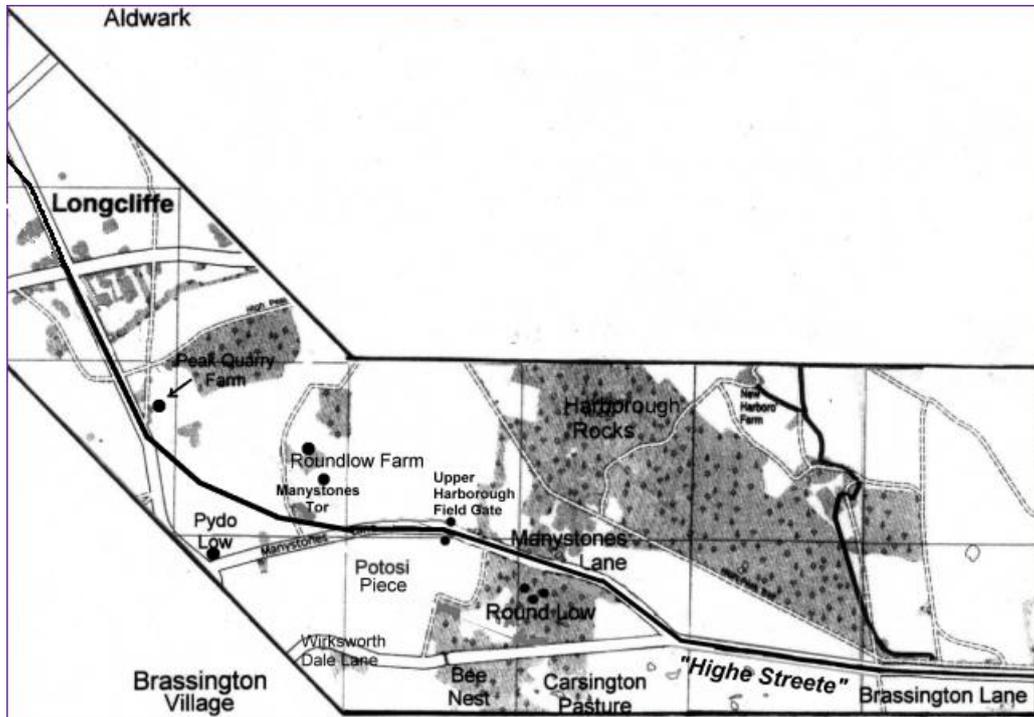
For perhaps 50cm on either side of the agger, which is about 25cm deep, there is a sandy, slightly gravelly clay matrix which may be the result of the top surface being washed down or the effect of traffic, but which does not represent another period of construction or constructional feature. This overlies the natural subsoil, and at these edges the subsoil is mixed with small patches of black organic material for about a depth of 20cm, which might represent vestigial ditching on either side of the agger, but these features are probably too shallow for that purpose and may simply indicate the extent to which the ground was originally cleared to lay the road.



The Street – width on dead level ground of 2.8 m

In so far as we compared this width with the sections taken by Smithard in 1910 and Lomas in 1958 Smithard and Lomas found slightly wider sections to 3.75 m and 4 m, we initially thought ours inexplicably narrow and the result of some error in our measurements, but the section was taken at a location which was in all respects dead level. We then measured a section 100 metres further north where the course of the road lay more obviously on a slight W-E gradient and the width of the agger here was 3.8 metres, suggesting the variation in widths reported is due to the width of the agger

needed to support the level of the road against the slope of the contour, and in the case of the more northerly examination the lower (downside edge) was more pronounced and more built up with larger edging stones than the upper edge. Hence the greater width is needed to support an otherwise relatively level road surface where the underlying contour falls across the width of the road (this is sometimes called the cross-level) and this is most obvious where the road is terraced into a hillside. In plain English, the road is its correct width on level ground, but is wider on a cross slope, because it has to be built up more to compensate for the slope.



Map 7: Street Knolls to Brassington Lane

From Minninglow, The Street and the boundary wall carry on in the same approximate direction for another kilometre, but then the wall peters out just to the north-west of Straight Knolls Barn at Longcliffe. Wroe (1982) followed the line of The Street through Longcliffe and Peak Quarry Farm and felt it ran into Potosi Piece field on the south side of Manystones Lane (Wroe in Goodburn, 1978). However The Society's fieldwork examination of Potosi Piece field was inconclusive and such stone features as were found within it, on a line which appeared to be agger-like, were potentially the result of lead mining and the effects of agriculture. The Street does not run into Potosi Piece but takes up the line of Manystones Lane on the south side of Manystones Tor. In other words The Street turns around Manystones Tor and exits Brassington Moor eastwards through the Upper Harborough Field Gate.

This slight turn eastwards had long eluded previous workers. Two maps showed the course, the first being the 1723 Brassington Moor map and the second being Burdett's map of 1767. They both gave slightly different information and this information needs to be considered in conjunction. The 1723 map gives the boundaries and the exit onto Manystones Lane at the Upper Harborough field gate. The 1767 map gives a slight turn south before the east turn and milestones. The reason for the slight turn south is to avoid Manystones Tor.

A milestone, the 17th milestone, is shown at the junction of The Street and Gallowlow Lane and then the 16th Milestone (both now lost) indicates the start of the eastward turn. This turn can be identified exactly because modern Lidar shows the junction of the Street and Gallowlow Lane, so that even if the rest of the road is now lost in quarry workings we can match the turn, from a mile from the junction of The Street and Gallowlow Lane and this again results in the exit at the Upper Harborough field gate.

It is reasonable to note that pre-turnpike maps are often the best source we have of the potential alignment of former Roman roads, this is because of the slow development and change to the road system before the advent of turnpikes. This is not to say pre-turnpike maps provide certain evidence of the course of a Roman road, only that they are more likely to, than maps made after when turnpikes have changed the road and traffic patterns.

It is still necessary to take examination opportunities where these offer themselves and the same applies to the use of Lidar to predict the course of a Roman road. An example is the manorial boundary which runs on the west side of the A515 at Harpur Hill, The Street is under the A515 but it would be easy to see the manorial boundary as the Roman road if excavation and dating evidence had not proved otherwise - all evidence that can be found should be taken and assessed together.



Manystones Lane

Looking west at the site of the Upper Harborough Field Gate (red posts)

Discrediting the straight line to Derby

It is at this point, south of Longcliffe and Manystones Lane, that the certain course of the Street was always lost in the past and subject to speculation about it carrying on in a straight line to Little Chester.

From this point on and down the slope towards Carsington, there exist a series of single and double orthostat walls, rectilinear field boundaries and other agricultural features that are most likely to be of Romano-British age (Bevan, 2005; Derbyshire HER 3205). Given these features have survived intact, it seems unlikely that something as important as a road should not survive. There is nothing resembling a road in the area. The steepness of the slope off the high ground here is also problematic. There are much easier gradients available further east.

Thereafter, the conjectured "straight line" route was supposed to take a course down Carsington Pasture, through the two fields named "Portaway" and into Brough Field. Dearne et al, 1995, noted work by the Hunter Archaeological Society (HAS) immediately north of Brough Field suggesting that a possible road surface ran along "a disused field boundary" there. However, a second and later unpublished trench dug across the same earthwork concluded it was a lynchett, a field boundary (Barnatt, 1999).

Beyond, the supposed "straight line" route continued over the now flooded Scow Brook and through Lendow Wood on the east side of Carsington Reservoir where a bridge would have been needed to cross a ravine. A 'ramp' here has often been cited as evidence for such a bridge, but the ramp is of dubious origin (an association with the construction of the reservoir cannot be excluded) and it may even be natural, it cannot be seen on aerial photographs from before the reservoir was built. Beyond Lendow Wood, the evidence for the supposed straight line route becomes even more questionable. Proponents claim that the route is marked by an 'alignment' of assorted features including field boundaries, footpaths, lineations on aerial photographs, terraces across fields, etc. (Wroe, 1982; Farnsworth, 2003; Farnsworth and Whirrity, 2006). Initially, the concept appears quite attractive and plausible, especially when presented with the aid of computer graphics, but thorough scrutiny of the evidence quickly reveals that there are the most severe problems.

The features cited as evidence are too limited in scale to be accurately projected across the landscape (most extend less than the length of one field) and many are not oriented along the 'alignment' anyway. They are also too few in number and too far between (several kilometres in some cases) to be seriously considered as being connected. Any apparent lining up is almost certainly due to coincidence. Another problem is that the topography of the area is all too often ignored and some of the proposed routes have been more like assault courses than roads. Apparent evidence provided by aerial photographs is unclear and could be interpreted in several ways. It must be pointed out that a line on an aerial photograph or Lidar is simply a line until there is another source of evidence showing that it is a Roman road, a land drain, a gas main or an old field boundary. The terraces and lynchetts have, in every case to date, proven to be of agricultural origin after probing or excavation (e.g. Farnsworth & Whirrity, 2006, p.47-49; note 2).

Blind Lane, to the north-west of Kirk Ireton, crosses this conjectured Carsington – Windley route at SK 2630 5075. In October 2007, a 500m length of the lane was dug up by Severn Trent in order to lay a new water main. This work was monitored via a watching brief by the University of Sheffield who found

no evidence of a road surface, Roman or otherwise, crossing the excavation (Steve Baker, University of Sheffield, pers comm).

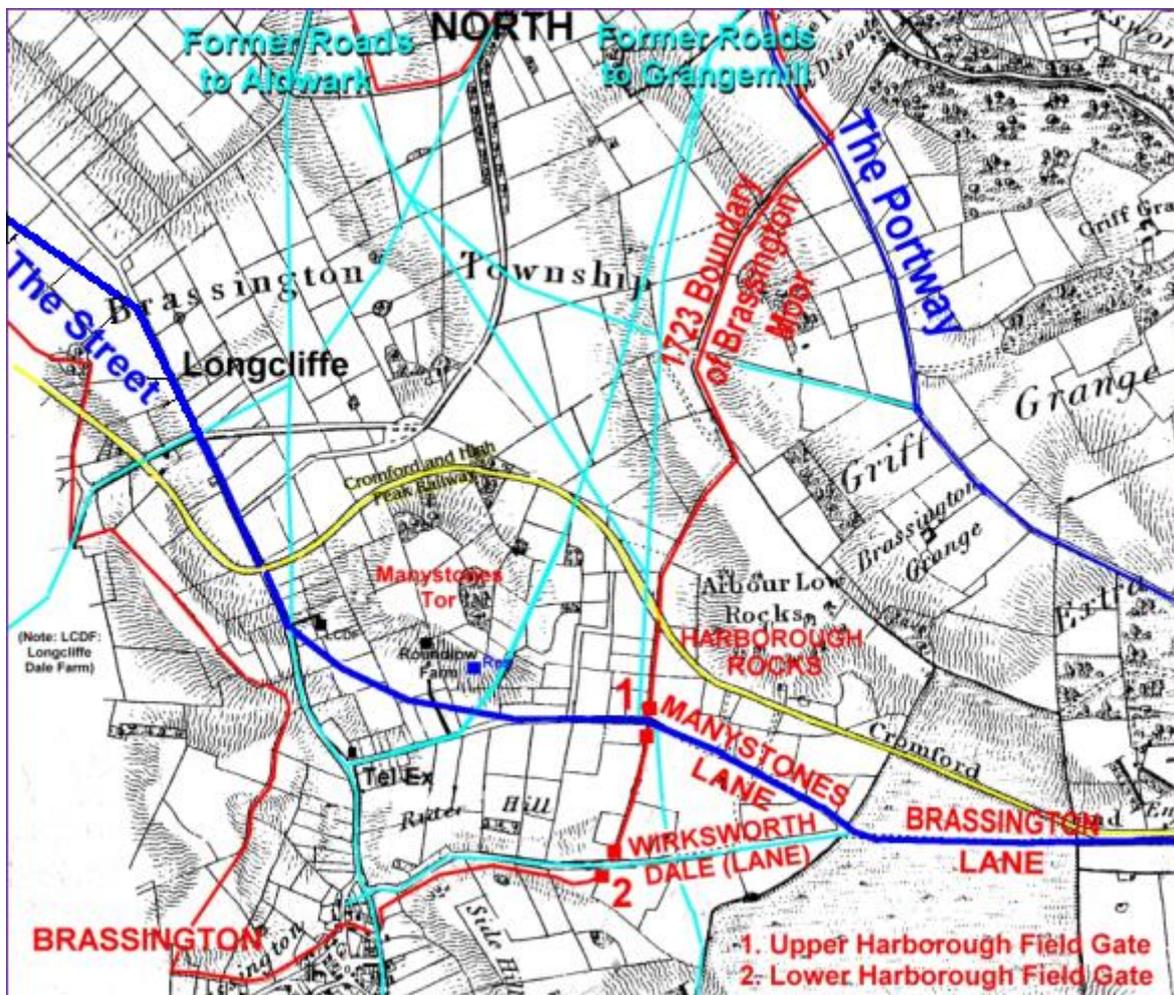
It is difficult to feel that if The Street did indeed go to Little Chester via Carsington, Kirk Ireton and Windley, then something substantial of it should remain, because the distance is 14 miles - of nothing.

The northern section of the Street from Buxton survives in the form of long stretches of extant agger, useable trackways and main roads. The absolute lack of physical and documentary evidence for The Street Roman road from Little Chester to Longcliffe suggests it is a complete fiction.

Discovering and recovering evidence

Brassington Moor Cummembris 1723

A 1723 map of Brassington Moor was found in the manuscripts of the British Library. This pre-turnpike, pre-enclosure map shows The Street entering Brassington Moor at Pikehall and heading south-south-east along the east side of the border with Ballidon. There is a gentle turn as The Street and boundary pass round Minninglow Hill. A short distance south-east of Minninglow Hill, The Street and the boundary diverge. The Street continues on, past "Brassington Stoops" to a point where it swings gently eastwards and exits Brassington Moor south of Harbrough Rocks. When overlain onto the 1:25,000 OS map, it can be seen that the 1723 map is quite accurate with the borders of the Moor corresponding extremely well with current field and parish boundaries. The turn of The Street towards Wirksworth is gradual and is located between Peak Quarry Farm and Manystones Lane with The Street gradually turning round Manystones Tor onto the line of Manystones Lane and emerging at the Upper Harbrough Field Gate.



The Street south of Longcliffe

1723 Map overlaid on the 1835 Sanderson Map and adjusted for Burdett.

Brassington Moor boundary in red. Street and Portway in dark blue.

Minor paths and ways in pale blue. High Peak Trail in yellow.

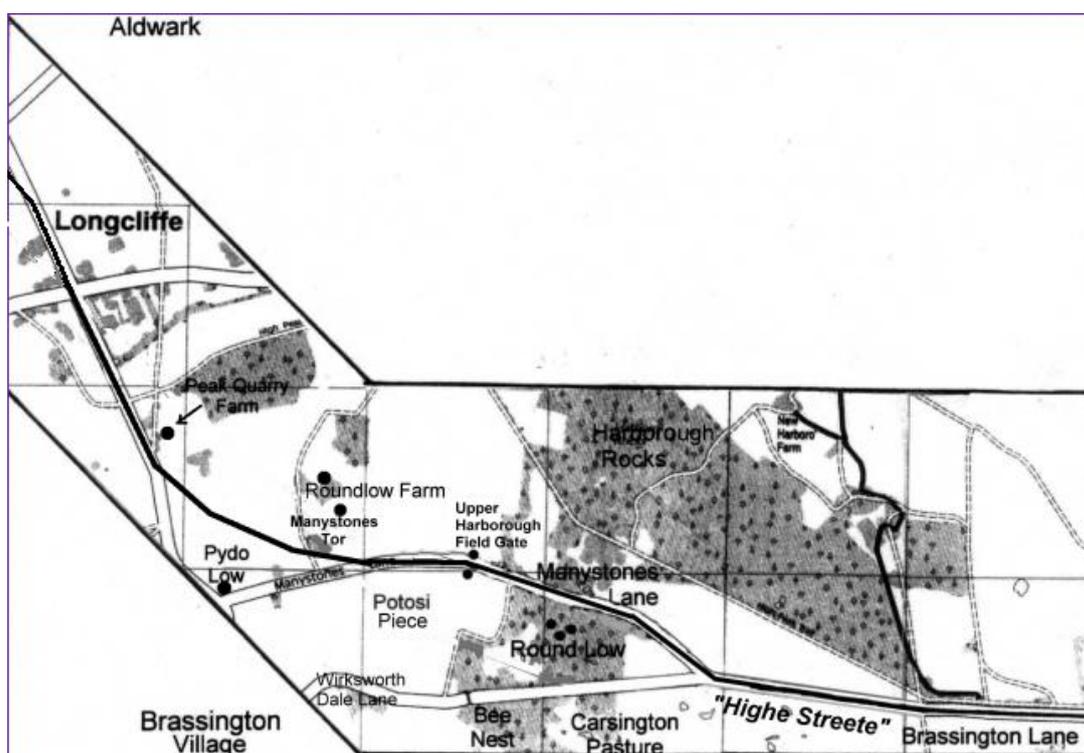
A road heading north from Brassington towards Aldwark joins The Street near the top of the hill going towards Longcliffe. This would be the road mapped by Ogilby in 1675 and although he does not show the junction with the Street (he has a tendency not to show junctions), he does show a slight bend at mile 39. The road to Elton past Slipperlow Farm is shown as a minor side road, as is the track past Rockhurst Farm. These roads were upgraded at the time of the enclosures in the early 1800's. Two turnpikes, Fenny Bentley to Longcliffe and Longcliffe to Haddon are not shown as they did not exist in 1723. The map is reproduced in Appendix 1.

Feoffment of Ralph Gell of 1613

A further previously unidentified document found in the Derbyshire Record Office places the name "Highe Streete" firmly between Brassington and Wirksworth, to the north of Carsington. This document is a feoffment or land agreement recording the transfer of ownership of various pieces of land in the Carsington area between Ralph Gell and Thomas Westernne. It is dated 1613 and kept in the Gell collection of papers under reference D258/23/10/8. The relevant section is as follows:

"And also of in and to all other the comon groundes belonging to Kersington aforesaid lying belowe the Highe Streete there leading betwene Brassington and Wirksworth..."

The common grounds of Carsington were located on the hill north of the village – an area now called Carsington Pastures. There is only one road above here that leads between Brassington and Wirksworth and that is Brassington Lane. It is clear that the "Highe Streete" and Brassington Lane are one and the same. The feoffment is reproduced in full in Appendix 2.



Map 7: Street Knolls to Brassington Lane showing Manystones Tor

Field work around Manystones Tor

Several field investigations and surveys were made in the area between Longcliffe and Carsington to try to confirm the line of The Street as indicated in these two newly identified documents. These investigations are presented in order from Longcliffe to Carsington (i.e. north-west to south-east).

An examination of the field at Barn Close, Roundlow Farm, Brassington, indicated the presence of a very faint agger running in a south-south-east direction between SK 2316 5531 and SK 2325 5522. The visual prominence of the agger was accentuated by a newly erected fence, which rose slightly as it passed over the ridge, matching a corresponding ground surface rise below the north side field wall. Probing at 1 metre intervals found the top of the ridge to be noticeably more gravelly than the surrounding field. The field has not been ploughed within the last 40 years (Neil Spencer, Roundlow Farm, pers comm), but earlier ploughing would have been sufficient to destroy the cohesion of the agger and spread the surface.

Between Roundlow Farm and Manystones Lane, in a field with a large round boulder which sits towards the top of the hillside, no trace of an agger remains due to small-scale, but wide-spread lead mining. Given that Manystones Lane must have been diverted to meet the new turnpike it is entirely possible that The Street was stripped of its stoning to build the diversion.

Two excavations were undertaken, one in Potosi Piece Field (SK 2355 5492) with no road surface and the other on the disused length of Brassington Lane (from its junction with Manystones Lane westwards, Brassington Lane should correctly be called Wirksworth Dale Lane) to the east of Bee Nest Sandpit (SK 2428 5469).

Excavations were carried out in 2019 by kind permission of the owner Mr A. Maier. Beneath 20cm of topsoil and grass, the agger at the southeast corner of the field comprises an orangey brown, clay subsoil covered by a thin pebbly gravel layer. Towards the middle of the field, the same subsoil is topped by a more substantial layer of sparse limestone pieces and pebbly gravel some 7cm thick. The north west portion was also excavated, but found to have been disturbed by mining activity. In August 2019, Western Power Limited dug a narrow but 80cm deep trench around the perimeter of the southern half of the field to facilitate laying an earthing cable. Where the trench crossed the supposed agger at the south east end, the soil contained quantities of pebbles and gravel. Away from here the ground contained none. Probing of the field has produced the same results. Clearly this feature is anomalous. It has the superficial appearance of a plough damaged path or linear feature (e.g. medieval lynchet) but too little remains to be comfortable with this identification. It could equally have been created by mining, quarrying or agricultural processes. Perhaps it is a remnant natural landform. The outcome is indeterminate.



Potosi Piece Field. 50 cm rod in 10 cm intervals

Sparse limestone with gravel in the plough damaged section through this field.

A now disused length of Brassington Lane (Wirksworth Dale Lane) is covered by modern tarmac totalling 20 cm thickness. Underneath is a definite cambered road of two layer construction: an upper layer of 4 cm graded limestone with sandy/gritty gravel binding and a lower, thicker layer of large 20 cm limestone pitching with edging stones. The graded layer is packed down and 4.8 metres wide – extending beyond the width of the modern tarmac on both sides, but considerably more so, on the south side. Here, the stone shows signs of having been spread further by wear or use and there is no obvious edging. No evidence of boundary ditches was found, though we have noted the road runs above the natural field surface. The underlying natural material comprises brownish, sandy, loamy soil with occasional pebbles. A control pit in the field 2 metres beyond the south field/road boundary wall yielded only natural subsoil. Both boundary walls for the road appear to be enclosure period walls constructed of small quarried limestone.



Brassington Lane (Wirksworth Dale Lane)

Close to the Roundlow tumuli:

Well packed, graded 4cm limestone surface on a layer of larger 20cm limestone pitching on an underlying sandy subsoil. 2 metre rod in 50cm intervals

Brassington Lane is built up above the level of the surrounding fields, is straight, of consistent width and has a smooth surface (suggesting that the substrate has been well constructed). It has all the appearances of being a road that was purposefully designed and built rather than being developed out of a footpath. A tentative conclusion of this work is that the lane at this point (beyond its junction with Manystones Lane) is a candidate for being another previously unsuspected Roman road to Brassington or another location such as Bradbourne or Parwich.

There are no physical signs of a road or track of any kind heading south down the hillside from Bee Nest Sandpit to Brook Knowles in Carsington. Even though mineral extraction and ridge and furrow agriculture have extensively remodelled the landscape, it is difficult to see why anyone could or would want to build a road down such a steep slope. The track heading north-west out of Carsington village along the foot of the hill is 19th century in age and not Roman (see D258/41/22/10). The footpath to Brassington that now follows this track, headed straight across the fields in 1711 (see D258/69/1).

We conclude, on consideration of the comparative results of the two examinations, that the route of the Street did not cross Manystones Lane and pass into Potosi Piece field.

The Street, therefore, enters Manystones Lane at the Upper Harborough Field Gate as shown on the 1723 map of Brassington Moor. The modern course of Manystones Lane having been changed at its western end to join the turnpike road coming out of Brassington to Longcliffe.

Street Cross or Street Croft

Finally, in terms of newly discovered, or perhaps recovered evidence, in "Place-names of Derbyshire" Professor Kenneth Cameron recorded that there was a place-name "Street Cross" in a survey of Middleton and he associated this with Middleton Cross, implying that it was of little importance in the search for the route of the Roman road. Indeed, in his summary of place-name records for The Street (see page 8) he didn't mention it.

Although Professor Cameron's work is comprehensive, his referencing system is obtuse by modern standards: it had never been possible to check this reference because the original document from which it came could not be found when the Society did its first research in 2008. That is, until by chance, thirteen years later the Society were reviewing a 1576 rental of the tenants of Gell's estates in Middleton by Wirksworth and Wirksworth, which transpired to be Cameron's source.

Professor Cameron had made an error. The reference was not to Street Cross but to Street Croft: an easy mistake to make in speed reading such an old document. In practice the 1576 rental recorded Street Croft twice, with two different tenants, one of whom had the main field at just over two acres and one of whom had a small headland of just over a rood. In an effort to check this place-name the Society also obtained a later rental, for 1640 also from the Gell Archive. This document was for Middleton only and provided a third reference: "Street Croft Side" with about a rood.

There are no maps with these rentals so finding Street Croft depends on the information in the rentals, because the Street Croft place-name had not survived to reach the Victorian Tithe Awards and Maps. From these rentals it was known:

Firstly, the 1576 rental said Street Croft and its headland were in Middleton or Wirksworth but not which.

Secondly, the 1640 rental said Street Croft Side was in Middleton but makes no mention of Street Croft itself or its headland.

The logic of these two points is that Street Croft Side was in Middleton and Street Croft was in Wirksworth (because it doesn't occur in the Middleton document), therefore the field would be adjacent to the parish boundary between Middleton and Wirksworth. This reduced the search area considerably.

The 1576 rental lists all the other plots of the Gell estate and comparison between the rentals and the Victorian tithe awards for both Middleton and Wirksworth reveals that most, perhaps over 80%, of the field names were the same in both earlier and later documents: it is not surprising, really, that field names should survive over long periods of time. So those fields which have the same names in both periods can be eliminated from the search. This reduced the search area still further.

The consequence of this process of elimination was to leave any field near the Middleton / Wirksworth boundary whose name did not match in the earlier and later documents. There were only four fields which served this location criteria and only one which was actually bounded by it: field 665.

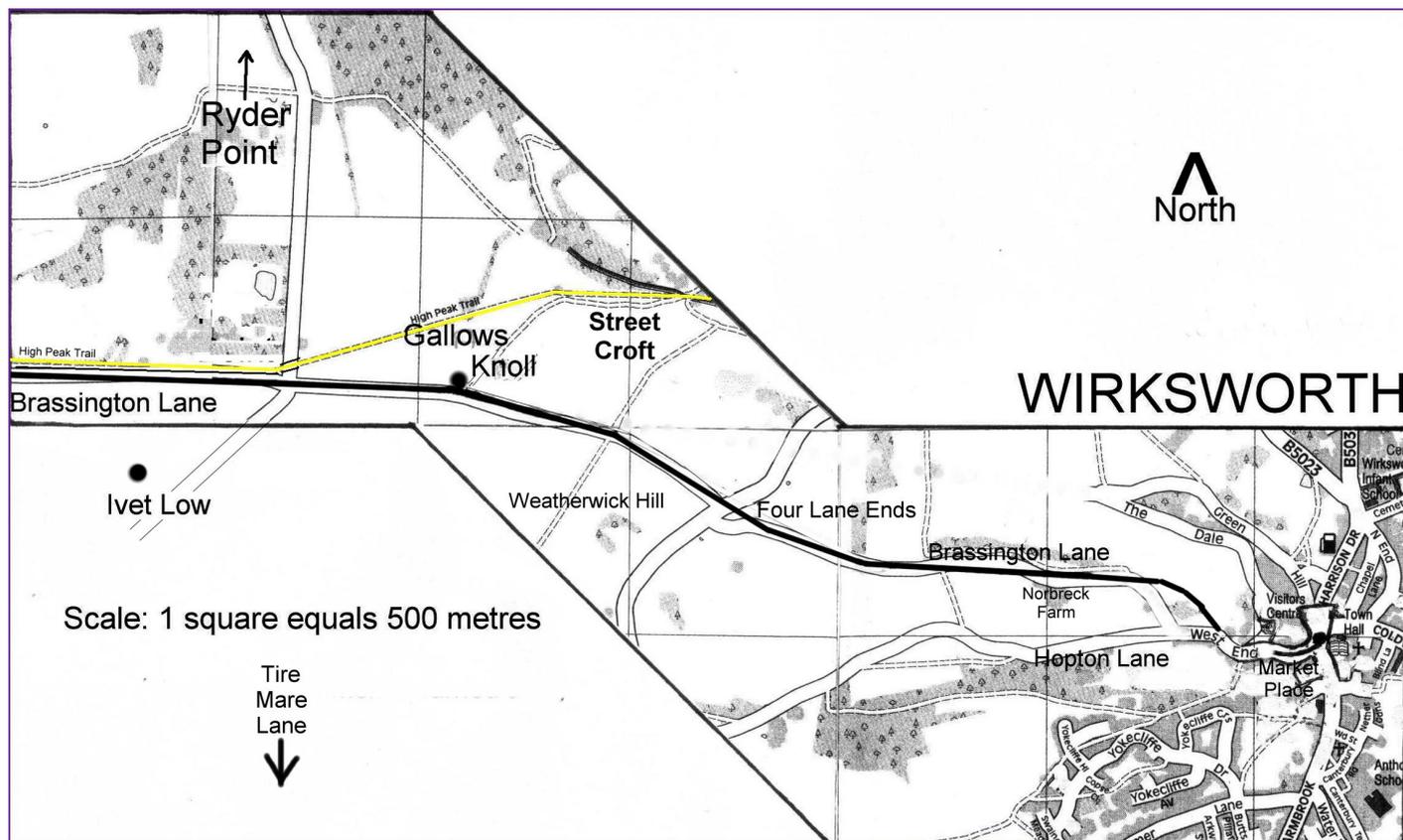
Finally, the size of the field was known - Street Croft is a little over two acres (with or without its headland) and it should be next to a rood or so of land (Street Croft Side) along which the boundary of the two parishes runs. Only one field fulfilled this size criteria, again it was field 665.

This field is called in the Wirksworth Tithe Award "Milking Piece". Next to it is a small sliver of land in Middleton, field 788, called "Intake", which by its size, location and non-continuing name would be Street Croft Side. The location is at SK 2709 5477 between Broxendale Farm and Moor Farm in Wirksworth. The field slopes down from Middleton Moor and standing in it the main features which dominate its landscape are Brassington Lane 200 metres away in front and Porter Lane 400 metres away to the left. Moor Lane (Intake Lane) runs behind it and two footpaths converge on it, one of which leads directly down into Wirksworth via the Dale.

To summarise: Brassington Lane was referred to as "High Street" in the Feoffment of 1613 and the 1723 map of Brssington Moore shows The Street turning eastwards onto Manystones Lane and so into Brassington Lane (it's the same lane). The 1576 and 1640 rentals naming Street Croft also support the view that Brassington Lane is indeed The Street and that its destination is inescapably Wirksworth and no other place. In short, there are four pieces of evidence suggesting this: one map and three different documents.

The Street runs into Wirksworth from Manystones Lane and Brassington Lane, past Ivet low and south of Ryder Point and up to Gallows Knoll where there is a small tumulus. It descends Wetherwick Hill, passes Street Croft field and crosses Porter Lane at Four Lane Ends, runs past Norbreck Farm and enters Wirksworth from the west (Brassington Lane here having been diverted and foreshortened in the

nineteenth century), to a junction with Hopton Lane at the edge of Wirksworth town and runs down the hill at West End to the site of the former Market Cross in the Market Place.



Map 8: Brassington Lane to Wirksworth

Travellers, turnpikes and the end of the working life of The Street

It is not possible to say anything certain about people and traffic using The Street in Roman times, there are no written sources whatsoever and archaeology cannot shed light upon ghosts. However, it is possible to recognise that the road passes through a Roman landscape of small farms and lead mines and there would be traffic related to people going to market or for entertainment to Lutudarum and the transport of lead ore and finished lead (ingots, for example) by pack horses, also items such as timber for use in the lead mines and for building, as well as consumable goods. The road would have been used by army detachments being rotated around the forts of the Peak District as well as people on official business of one kind or another. Buxton, as Aquae Arnemetiae, would probably have attracted people to its warm springs for leisure, business or their health and the road network carried on from Buxton to Manchester and other places.

Mostly travellers would be on foot, probably in small groups as travelling alone was unsafe (in terms of getting lost or benighted) and the road would probably have been guarded or at least patrolled by the army. The Street is not a wide road, at Minninglow it is only a single carriageway, but there would have been travellers on horseback, messengers and probably horse or ox drawn carts, either for freight or more rarely for passengers, chariots also being used for personal travellers. The road condition in

Roman times would have been good, for there is archaeological evidence of repairs of various kinds on this and other known Roman roads. By medieval times traffic would have changed somewhat and the presence of small religious out farms, such as granges along or near this road would suggest small amounts of traffic to and from them as well as religious people on their business or pilgrimage. Lead mining continued in the medieval period so the same kind of traffic could be expected as in former days and the growth of traffic such as wool for cloth and malt for beer is known from later sources describing traffic in the Peak District. Road maintenance declined however and work was only done if it involved some aspect of manorial or lordly activity. With the end of monasteries, their impact on road maintenance and the care of travellers ceased and this resulted in an acute decline in the state of roads in general.



Roman carriage of the *cursus publicus* (post) from a bas relief

It was observed by Davies (2002) that once the Roman road making skills had been lost, the standards of road making in Britain did not again reach a comparable level until the days of the turnpike trusts and the great road engineers of the eighteenth century, such as Thomas Telford and John Macadam. In the mediaeval period new roads and sometimes bridges were constructed by religious houses such as monasteries. It was also the case that wealthy people gave money in their wills for road repairs within a particular parish or manor. The nobility maintained (and occasionally built) roads and bridges if they had an interest. Wiltshire et al (2005) noted that the Duchy of Lancaster spent money on road repairs, such as the Ashbourne – Turnditch – Belper road because of the need to transport charcoal to the “Lord’s Forge”, in 1314. In the medieval period a few important roads were guarded and it is known that the Duchy of Lancaster paid for the guarding of some roads on market days.

However, the road system was still largely that created by the Romans and it had suffered a long period of decline, which was barely arrested by haphazard local repairs. In consequence, by the middle 1600s, the road system was hardly capable of handling wheeled traffic and war with France, who were blockading coastal shipping, caused Parliament to take stronger measures to ensure the improvement of inland routes. Initially this involved greater strictures on the local parishes whose “Surveyors of the Highways” were by then responsible for road repairs and reported to the Justices of the Peace (Radley

and Penny, 1972). It is clear that such repairs were being carried out locally and account books exist for the expenditures involved. Much of the local effort around Wirksworth was probably due to the influence of people such as Sir Philip Gell (as Lord of the Manor and a Member of Parliament). This extended not only to the repair of local roads, but also, much later, to the placing of guide stoops (guide posts) in the area (Smith, 1996). However, merchants and carriers were still unsatisfied and in the end Parliament began to authorise firstly the repair of roads and later the making of new ones through the creation of Turnpike Trusts.

The earliest of these wholly in Derbyshire was the route from the River Trent at Shardlow to Brassington via Derby, Kedleston, Mugginton and Hognaston. Radley and Penny (1972) give it as 1738, however the Act was passed in 1737 and it covered not only Shardlow to Brassington but also Derby to Hurdlow House. In either case, it was realistically the first in the county and Glover (1829) has this interesting observation to make about it: "The reason for this first Derbyshire turnpike road terminating at so small and obscure a town as Brassington was that the traveller towards the north having, by means of this improved road, been helped over the low and deep lands of the county, might proceed over the rocky districts to Buxton... without further assistance." The implication of this is it would be possible to join the route of The Street north of Brassington because it was still in sufficient repair for its use to be practicable.

The further inference is that The Street did not run south of Brassington - it had no continuation to Derby, otherwise it would still have been in viable use at that date. If The Street's general condition of repair was satisfactory in the wild country north of Brassington, there is no particular reason to suppose it should be in any worse repair south of Brassington if it existed there: it would conceivably have been a better candidate to be turnpiked than the Hognaston road. It did not exist, so the Hognaston road was turnpiked.

Not that this first turnpike improved matters all that much, because the Hognaston turnpike had a terrible reputation for being "monstrous hilly" and a wretched road. An example of the poor state of this 'improved' road is given by The Earl of Egmont's journey from Derby to Brassington in 1744. The coach took five hours to reach its destination and the Earl was none too pleased either: "all the road entirely bad" he said (Dodds, 2000). Another account of a journey on the roads of the time reported: "the roads grew bad beyond all badness, the night dark beyond all darkness and our guide frightened beyond all frightfulness." (Burke, 1946).

Of course, the state of repair of The Street itself north of Brassington is one of many things that one might question. Defoe, a few years before (1727) having stopped at "the good town" of Wirksworth on his journey through the Peak, then proceeded towards the village of Buxton as it was then. He does not mention the road per se, only that he went via Brassington Moor and had 8 miles of "smooth green riding" to Buxton bath. The ride was most likely along The Street or next to it as this would be the smoothest, shortest route. The mileage seems completely wrong, even taking into account Defoe's

statement that the mileage was taken from his entry onto Brassington Moor. But his observations were probably based on incorrectly spaced milestones. The real distance is nearly 16 miles.

Celia Fiennes, writing of her similar travels on horseback in the Peak in 1697 had the same problem. Having travelled "six" miles from Castleton to Buxton, she remarked: "You might go 10 of miles near London as soon as you are going halfe so many here". The "six" miles she travelled from Castleton to Buxton is, in fact, the best part of 11 miles. Also, Defoe is doubtless travelling in the summer. One's view from a horse of the wintry high moors of Derbyshire would be rather different: few places, far between, no inns, a howling dark wilderness and terrible weather. Summer though might present a problem in terms of shortage of water for those travelling the roads on the high limestone plateau. In 1705, Joseph Taylor made that "teadious journey thro' a desolate and barren country" from Brassington to Buxton and was forced to beg for water at a "poor womans cottage" (Taylor, 1705). Similarly, in the summer of 1755 a traveller by horse and carriage, having visited the Devil's Arse at Castleton and then Buxton, and being rather more complimentary about the Arse than Buxton, wrote: "We dined at a lone house, called Pike Hall; and we were so badly put to it for water, that none could be got for the horses on any account:" (Johnson, 1979). He was none too happy with the roads either, his "charioteer" (driver) having to get the carriage repaired repeatedly.

The Cavendish Bridge - Derby - Hognaston - Brassington turnpike was not a success and the post road route from Derby to Buxton shown on Rocque's map of 1756 was still via Wirksworth, not via the Hognaston turnpike. Ogilby in 1675 had mapped the Hognaston route so it was well known, but mapping it does not make it a good road - a point that is too often forgotten. The Dodds (2000) in their famous book "Peakland Roads and Trackways" discuss the route but feel Ogilby was not terribly accurate between Brassington and Pike Hall ("Pikeham Inne") in so far as they suggest Ogilby is travelling via Rockhurst Farm. This is not so. Ogilby travelled via The Street past Minninglow Hill. The hill he shows at mile 37 with "Pipers Inn" next to it is obviously Minninglow Hill and the building to the west of the road between miles 36 and 37 is Minninglow Grange. Ogilby's mileages, which were taken by trailing a wheel with a measuring cord from the rear of his carriage, are remarkably accurate. The 1723 Brassington Moor map provides further evidence. The route via Rockhurst Farm is shown only as a minor diversion branching away from The Street. It has no guide stoops or destinations indicated and is clearly of lesser importance. Similarly, Burdett's map of 1767 shows The Street passing over Minninglow Hill between miles 17 and 18 and Minninglow Grange is shown as "Intack" to the north-west. This map does not show the diversion via Rockhurst Farm at all, which was probably only upgraded from a footpath as a result of the enclosures of 1803-5. Use of the Rockhurst Farm route did not last long though as this has now been superseded by the modern Elton road and the A5012.

From 1776, the pattern of traffic began to change and in that year an Act was passed for a new turnpike from Derby to Hurdlow via Ashbourne. Cockerton (1937) felt that the result of this was to cause the final disuse of that part of The Street between Brassington and Hurdlow.

The Brassington enclosures of 1808, as well as lead mining, also severed any remains of the route around Longcliffe through the creation of new field boundaries and the removal of old ones (as had the Hartington Enclosure Award of 1799 further north, noted by Lomas, 1958). These boundaries were then further disrupted by the building of the Cromford and High Peak Railway. Consequently, by the time a decent map of the Manor of Brassington was produced in 1833, the line of The Street across Brassington Moor via Longcliffe to Manystones Lane had been lost, with Manystones Lane diverted at its western end to join the turnpike. The remaining agger of The Street then appears to have been partially destroyed between Longcliffe and Manystones Lane by ploughing, lead mining and perhaps by stripping its stone to build the turnpike.

However, survival of The Street at the Wirksworth end of Manystones Lane and Brassington Lane as a modern but minor road serving Brassington still enables us to see one of the finest alignments of any road in the area. Standing at Gallows Knoll, one can look along the line of the road down the Knoll past Enniscloud Meadow Farm and see the sun set along it in the west of an evening. For the last mile eastwards into Wirksworth the road turns into a raggedy country lane.

Hutchinson's 1709 map of Wirksworth (D258 M/18/6) shows Brassington Lane more or less on its present route into West End with the exception of a small diversion of the early nineteenth century. The change from fine alignment to raggedy lane is not unusual. The line of the road into Wirksworth was extremely badly encroached upon by lead mining and extracts from the Wirksworth Court Leet give many cases of attempts even to block or encroach upon the local roads and we cannot be certain of the effectiveness of the Leet in keeping local road alignments as they were originally laid out.



Brassington Lane from Gallows Knoll at Wirksworth
looking westwards towards Manystones Lane and Brassington

Yet in travelling up the road from Wirksworth in a north westerly direction, the turn at the hilltop at Gallows Knoll and the view along the straight alignment still has the ability to impress. Perhaps this was a deliberate policy of the Roman engineer. By this means and at this point could he demonstrate to the natives the superiority of his endeavours.

Conclusions

It is, in many respects, understandable that the question of the route of The Street had for so long proved intractable. There were a number of reasons for resistance to its solution and these reasons are to do with the availability of resources, the distractions caused by other interesting discoveries and the lack of accuracy of certain early writers and antiquarians, whose influence still convinces the unwary today.

Wirksworth was an important town throughout history and with a documentary and archaeological history stretching back to Mercian and Roman times. But there had been uncertainty about the town's origins, causing confusion to creep into the understanding of the road network of the district and a failure to systematically examine it, almost as if some writers could hardly bear to utter the word "Wirksworth" and might do anything and everything to avoid it. Wirksworth could not have developed as a key mediaeval town without a far better road network than has previously been understood.

The Street had long been known to run south-south-east from Buxton to Longcliffe based on the availability of place name, documentary and excavation evidence (Patterson, 2016). But there knowledge and understanding ran out and a variety of theories arose over almost two hundred years staking spurious claims to the line of the continuing road and its final destination. For some, the temptation to imagine a straight line route stretching from Longcliffe to Little Chester proved too great. As AE Dodd wrote: "There can be no doubt this Roman road started at Little Chester...". In practice there should at least have been a modest doubt, as Myers (2000) observed. Consequently a great deal of time and effort was expended searching for corroborative evidence, but after years of trying, there was nothing to support the idea of a straight line route. There never will be: The Street did not follow this route and did not go directly to Little Chester. It went to Wirksworth.

The Street appears to have remained in use as a main road up until the Derby to Hurdlow turnpike was opened in 1738, after that date its traffic was diverted by the turnpike and later turnpikes, it would have been in serious decline by the time of the 1776 turnpike and by 1804 the various turnpikes in the area had stripped the Street of any remaining traffic, its long working life was over and it was fading from memory. The enclosures of the early 1800s, lead mining, intensive mineral extraction around Longcliffe, Peak Quarry Farm and Roundlow Farm, the construction of the Cromford and High Peak Railway in 1830 and more recent intensive industrial activities helped to obscure and destroy evidence of the route between Straight Knolls Barn and Manystones Lane.

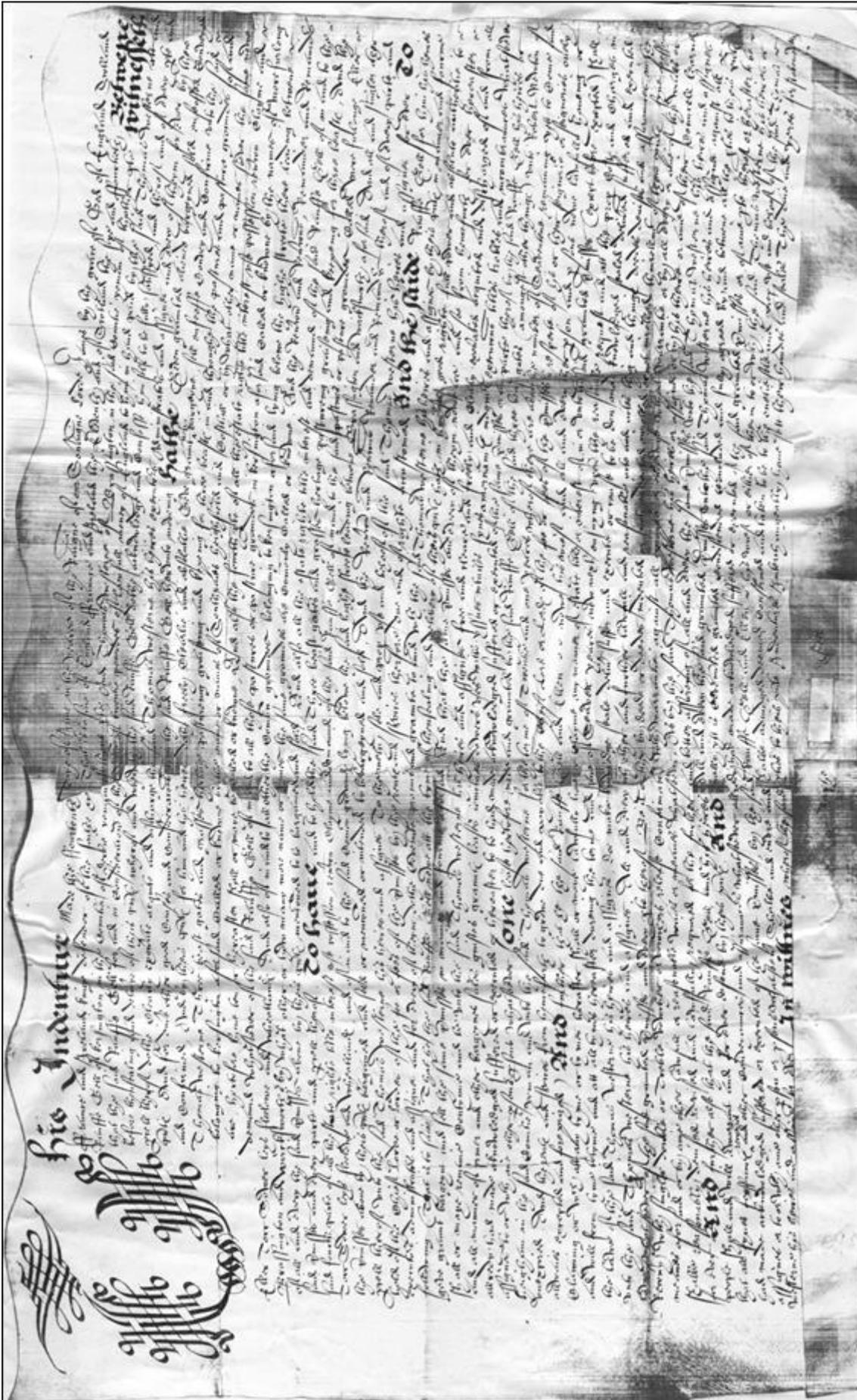
The archaeology of the rest of the route between Longcliffe and Buxton was also somewhat confused and in parts rather inadequate, having accumulated haphazardly since Tristram and Smithard wrote about Roman Buxton and The Street over a century ago. The Society hope this report has served to clarify a number of the outstanding issues and brought the available knowledge together into a single reference.

In the course of this study, several new key pieces of documentary evidence were found. The first, from the British Library, the 1723 map of Brassington Moor showing the Street turning towards Wirksworth, which confirmed Burdett's 1767 map; secondly, from the Derbyshire Record Office, is the feoffment land agreement dated 1613 which names the "Highe Streete" as leading between Brassington and Wirksworth. Thirdly, there is the corrected location of Professor Cameron's mistaken Street Cross place-name.

It is the conclusion of this assessment that the Peak District Street is the Roman road between Buxton and Wirksworth.

Cameron's narrative of 1959 can now be brought up to date:

THE STREET is the former name of the Roman road between Buxton and Wirksworth, the general course of which is marked on the O.S. map and in partial use as modern roads. It is le streate 1415; Streete, the Streete Way 1533 south of Buxton; Heigh streete, the ould Streete Waye 1599; Streete-way 1701 at Hartington; Cyngstraet 986AD east of Ballidon; the High Streete 1667 and 1668 west of Aldwark; Highe Streete 1613 at Brassington Lane, Wirksworth; Street Croft, Street Croft Gate 1576 and Street Croft Side 1640 near Four Lane Ends, Wirksworth.



Appendix 3: Summary table of archaeological examinations associated with The Street

O.S. reference	Locations	Comments
Not noted	Buxton Town	Recorded by Tristram (1916): sections in "a paddock at the back of Heath House, in a field in front of the Highlands stables and at the north side of London Road opposite the Methodist Chapel". This is north of Sherbrook Dale and not in the Harpur Hill section of road.
Not noted	Foxlow Grange, Harpur Hill	Recorded by Wroe 1982, a section was taken across the suspected line of The Street at Foxlow Grange, that is immediately north of the investigations later undertaken at Harpur Hill (below). This was claimed to be a road but the section diagram simply shows soil, clay and substrate. There is no road in the section and the claim of one does not withstand neutral assessment. The Street is shown passing east of the section site on the 1614 map of Hartington on what is now the line of the A515.
SK 0828 7020	Harpur Hill	Undertaken and recorded by Guilbert and Challis (1993): several sections associated with pipeline work, etc. Guilbert concludes that assumptions made by previous authors about an earthwork near Harpur Hill being The Street were not correct (Thompson-Watkin, 1886; various thereafter). Its proper course should be considered to lie beneath the A515 between the Sherbrook dale and Brierlow Bar.
SK 0681 7136 (Site centre)	Foxlow Farm, Harpur Hill	Undertaken and recorded by Parker et al for Oxford Archaeology in 2014. Four trenches were put in as well as test pits to identify the road surface or boundary feature previously stated by Guilbert and Challis. No road surface was found and again a boundary feature was suspected. Further examinations were undertaken in 2018 and the boundary feature was finally confirmed as medieval (Steve Baker, DCC County Archaeology Office, pers comm), the Street is believed to be overlain by the A515.
SK 0675 7175	Foxlow Farm, Harpur Hill	Evaluation study ahead of a housing project, CgMs Ltd found that the bank/terrace running along the west side of the A515, which has previously been assumed to be the Street, is actually a mediaeval boundary. OSL dating confirmed the earliest date as 11 th century.
SK 1364 6519	Cotesfield Farm	Undertaken and recorded by Lomas, 1958, two sections on the west side of the A515 in an apparent agger identified by Mrs Kirkham. We consider the road section found here to be the remains of the 1738 turnpike road as the construction is unlike the other known sections of The Street, consisting only of rammed earth and gravel. References to the course of The Street from earlier periods including Ogilby 1675 would appear to put it on the east side of the A515.
SK 2088 5754	Opposite Rockcliffe Farm	Shone and Smart (2010). A section of The Street taken on level ground - 2.8 metres wide. This comprised an agger composed of palm sized limestone with larger stones at the bottom (called by Lomas "Pitching"), then with a core of mixed sized limestone, sandy and with a little chert, and an upper surface of larger stones with the remains of a small limestone and cherty gravel top in a sandy clay matrix
SK 2065 5770	Minninglow Hill	Lomas (1958). A section of The Street being a steeply cambered, well paved road 3.3 metres wide showing signs of having been repaired or re-surfaced. It comprised layers of limestone with a gravel surface and "pitching" (a layer of larger, basal stone) below.
About SK 2101 5744 judging from photos	Near Minninglow	Recorded by Smithard, 1910, close to Minninglow. Two sections of The Street each 3.6 metres wide comprised (in the more detailed annotation) of 10cm of limestone "rubble" on top of a layer of limestone "pitching" on top of the underlying ground.
SK 2302 5544	Peak Quarry Fm	Wroe, 1982, Peak Quarry Farm details of the structure not published.
SK 2333 5508	Roundlow Farm	Watching brief in 2009 (Barnett) on mechanical topsoil stripping 200 metres long in two fields between the farm and Manystones Lane. Too far east of the line we deem to be the correct one for The Street, but based on the incorrect assessment that the Street went to Carsington. In all probability, had this examination been another 50 metres west, it would have cut the line of The Street on the west side of Roundlow Farm.

Appendix 4: Windley and Tiremare Lane surveys

Examinations and probing of some of the locations that have been proposed as evidence for The Street were undertaken in the Windley area to confirm or eliminate the implied course. In every case, we have not found evidence of The Street. Where an "agger" or terrace has been identified, we have in all cases found either lynchets or ridge and furrow remains. One field name of uncertain origin is "Castor Field" near Turnditch, this is extremely isolated both archaeologically and topographically (it is below the hill crest so doesn't command the location) and the spelling with "or" instead of "er" suggests that a non-Roman derivation is most likely (i.e. Beaver field). Also probed a terrace in the fields west of Stainsborough Lane (SK 2660 5242) that appears to line up with the causewayed road at Sitch Farm, this was another lynchett. The causeway is probably mediaeval.



Tiremare Lane looking south-east, SK 2613 5417

West of Wirksworth on Hopton Lane at Sycamore Farm is the earliest guide stoop in Derbyshire dated 1705 and marking a crossroads to "Wirksworth, Derby, Ashbourne and Bakewell" (now a T-junction). "Tyremare Hill" on a map of Hopton of 1680 (D258/41/28/2) runs north from this crossroads towards Brassington Lane and Ryder Point. The southward continuation of this road at Kirk Ireton is given as "the way from le Peke to Derby" in D238/26/3/2+19 of 1500. Excavated a section of 13th Dec 2007 and found no evidence of Tiremare Lane being Roman, but it had been a holloway repaired in the 18th century with tipped limestone. We conclude the lane is a packhorse route up the hill to join the main Wirksworth to Bakewell Portway and The Street near Ivet Low and Ryder Point. The lane is not even the easiest line of ascent - there is a better one less than 500 metres to the west up through a field called "stoney way" in 1807 (D258/11/1).

The section was taken (with the kind permission of the owner, Mr B Corbett) at SK 2682 5412. At this point, there is a 6 metre gap between the two boundary walls and within this a 3 metre wide, roughly tipped, large limestone surface with ruts. The style is similar to that at Street's Rough at Sandyford south of Wirksworth, which was a remarkable example of shoddy Georgian road repairing. Below this, to one side, is a small layer of loose gravel and pebble on top of the natural bedrock, which is friable dolomite. We feel this lane, which is visibly hollowed out below the level of the surrounding fields and comprises an unpacked, ungraded limestone surface, is a packhorse route of mediaeval age with two pre-turnpike era repairs: one minor (the gravel) and one major (the tipped stone). In places the surfacing is edged with large limestone blocks. This appears to restrict the width of the carriageway to a single track in order to reduce expenditure and effort. The only finds were a small piece of clay pipe and some broken horseshoe nails. There is nothing to suggest the lane is Roman. Two further, smaller pits were also excavated in the road surface with the same results (SK 2617 5424 and SK 2618 5427). A test pit in the field beyond the wall revealed topsoil resting on dolomite bedrock.



Tiremare Lane

Roughly tipped, large size ungraded limestone mixed with soil in one whole layer on an underlying friable dolomite bedrock

The boundary walls are of different ages. The eastern one being wholly ruinous with large basal limestone and dolomite blocks up to 75 cm in size. The western one is enclosure period of small quarried limestone. The Lane turns a tight corner at SK 2613 5417 and thus appears to run around the older boundary. There is only natural bedrock beneath this boundary wall, no roadstone.

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Maps List

Aldwark – D53Z/P1a+b Aldwark Tithe Map and Award, 1848+1849

Brassington – Q/RP/1/72/1 Plan of proposed Brassington to Haddon turnpike, 1807

Brassington – Q/RIc5+6 Brassington Enclosure Map and Award, 1803+1808

Brassington – Q/RP/1/26 Plan of Cavendish Bridge to Brassington turnpike, 1826

Buxton (Buckston) - William Senior Map of Buckston 1631 copy in Buxton Museum.

Callow – D258/35/27/1 Plan of fields in Callow, 1790

Callow – D258/1/15/2+3 Callow and Kirk Ireton Enclosure Awards, 1803+1807

Callow – D3311/131/1-4 Note regarding (highly spurious) Roman camp at High Callow Farm, C19-20

Carsington – D258/35/25 Carsington Pasture Quartered(sic), 1665 "Ashborne Way"

Carsington – D258/22/11 Plan of Carsington, C17

Carsington – D258/18/6/22+23 Samuel Hutchinson Lands of Carsington (rough drafts), 1709

Carsington – D258/69/1 Samuel Hutchinson Lands of Carsington, 1711

Carsington – D2360/3/182a+b Carsington Tithe Map and Award, 1838+1839

Carsington – D258/41/22/10 Plan of Ashbourn & Oakerthorp Road, C19 "new road on Carsington Pasture"

Griffe Grange – D258/33/14/14 Plan of Griffe Grange, C17 "porthway"

Griffe Grange – D258/17/24/3 Veins in Worke, 1725

Griffe Grange – D258/41/29 Map of Griffe Grange and Hopton Moor, 1803

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Hopton – D258/41/28/1 Map of Mr Stufings House, Hopton, 1684

Hopton – D258/20/27/25 Plan of Hopton Town Street, C17

Hopton – D258/24/26/1-3 Samuel Hutchinson Lands of Hopton (rough drafts), 1709

Hopton – D258/11/1 Survey of Hopton and Griffe Grange for Enclosure, 1807

Hopton – D3105 A/PI 18/1-2 Hopton Tithe Map and Award, 1841+1846

Middleton by Wirksworth– Q/RI72 Middleton Enclosure Map and Award, 1836

Middleton by Wirksworth– D4996/6/47a+b Plan of Middleton in Parish of Wirksworth, 1843 (tracing with field names)

Smerrill – D2360/3/106 Smerrill Tithe Map, 1843

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