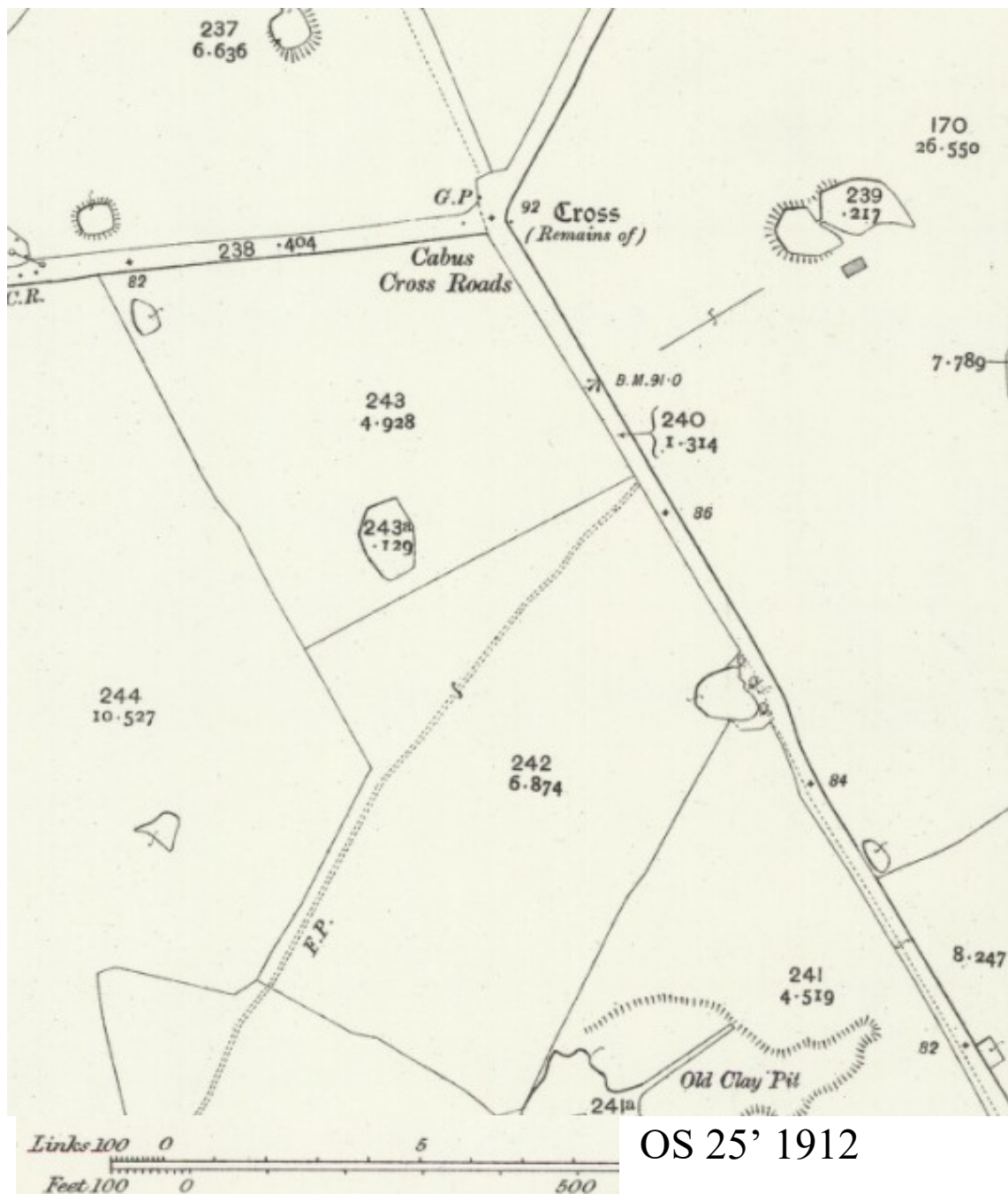


A report on findings At Cabus Cross June 2020



Report: Cabus Cross project.



Background:

David Ratledge in his website on the Roman road from Garstang north to Lancaster [www.romanroads.org/gazetteer/M70d.htm and <http://www.twithr.co.uk/lancs-gm/M70d.htm>] suggests that the Roman road goes north from Cabus and then up Fowler Hill Lane. He says 'At the top of Fowler Hill Lane, near Cabus Cross, the agger becomes visible in the hedge bottom. It also obvious in the field behind the hedge. Strangely the modern track to the canal does not follow it but runs to one side. The (re-erected) cross (shaft) is visible sticking up above the hedge on the right.' The mound in the hedge is clearly shown in the area under the hedge.

The Plan:

Using the evidence of the road in David's site and from maps, we planned to establish the line of the road by:

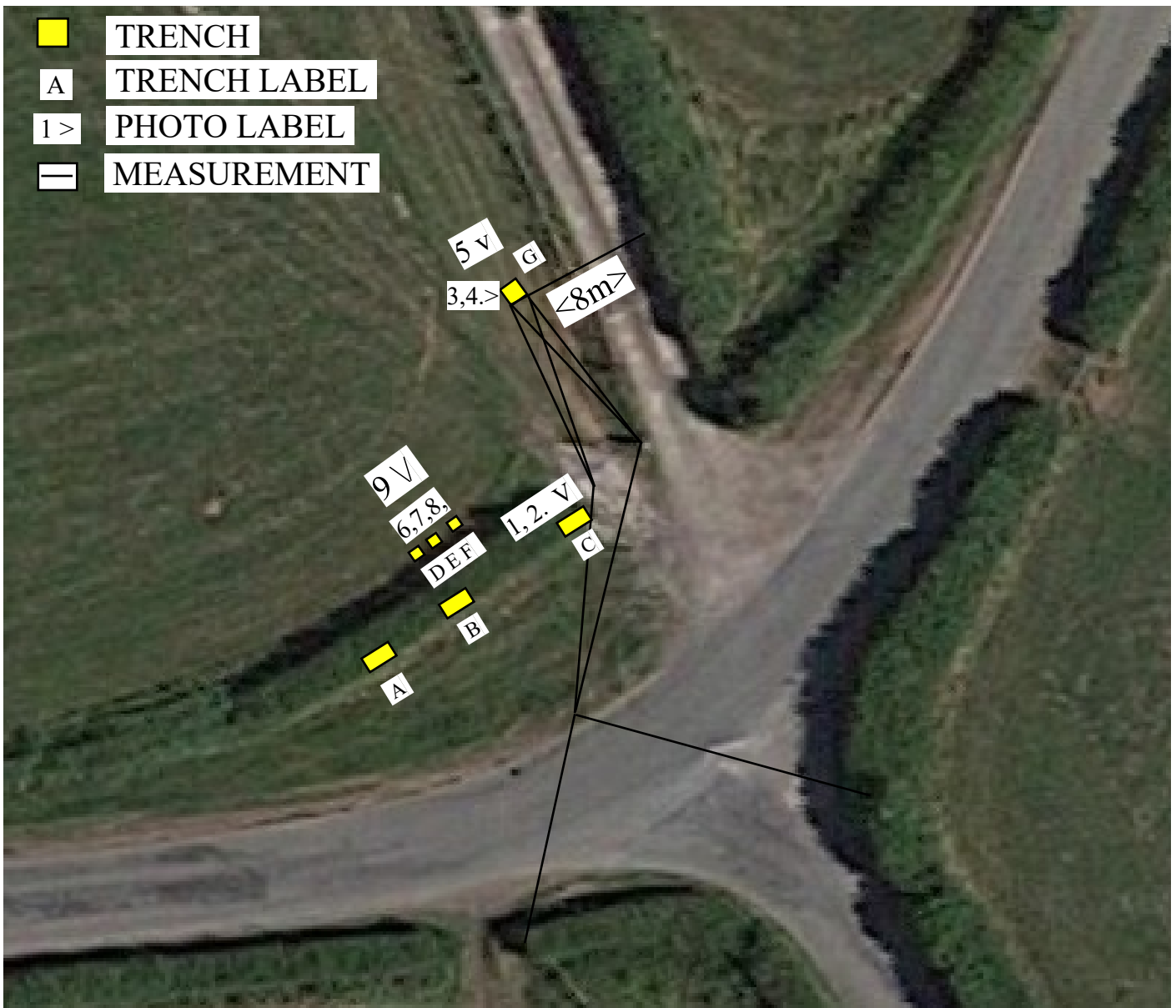
- Putting a 1 metre square trench in the middle of the agger to see how far below the present ground surface the road might be.
- Putting another trench to the west of the road to see if the ditch might be identified.

Methodology:

Since there were only 2 volunteers working, the amount of digging would have to be restricted. We would use pre-fabricated 1 metre square grids to define the size of our trenches, and would use the Cross as the datum point from which measurements would be made. Some finds would be collected, but the expectation of road dating evidence was very small. Social distancing meant we could not share a trench, and ample parking was provided by the grass verge. HiVis vests were worn to ensure visibility, and we were happy to talk to passers by if questions were asked.

The dig 04/056/2020

Started at 10.30, and we were pleased to see the farmer who had given us permission to dig on the grass verge pass by and stop to talk. The conversation enabled us to get permission to go in the field and have a look, which in retrospect was very fortunate. Simon worked on trench A, and Andrew on B and it soon became clear through probing with wire rods and going down at least .75 of a metre that nothing was to be found. In conversation there were concerns expressed that the verge had been levelled and the road may have been removed as a result, but neither trench revealed much in terms of small stone or cobbles which might be expected under the circumstances. Andrew then went over the hedge into the field to put in 3 small sondages [D,E,F. Photos 6,7,8 and 9.] on the brow of the 'agger' while Simon moved onto a trench [C Photos 1 and 2.] closer to the gate. Trenches D,E and F also failed to produce much with orange clay soil and a few cobbles found. Probing with a steel rod to more than .75m failed to find any signs of the road. In Trench C [Photos 1 and 2.], an ash like or cinder layer was found under the grass possibly typical of early roads[a few small finds here indicative of habitations and agricultural activity], to be followed by a clay surface which began to produce small cobbles and stone. This lower layer seemed to be more promising of what we expected to find. The edge of this road seemed to indicate it continued to the east and under the existing gate way.



Upon further discussion about the disappointing failure to find the road, we decided to make the plan a bit more dynamic:

- a walk down the field which seemed to indicate that a further 75 m north there was disruption in the smooth path of the line of the road,. This could have been caused by traffic from the marl pit or the road not following that line.
- a suggestion that the local road and farm track builders would reuse a pre-existing road rather than move it to the east 20 m.

The work on trench C was therefore continued to make it a 1m x.5m oblong, and to see if it revealed anything as it moved closer to the gate. Trench G was opened up as well in the hope that it might show the Roman road had been used by the later farm track builders.

Continuing work on Trench G [Photos 3,4 and 5.] revealed very quickly what we had spent a lot of time failing to find. About 20cm below the grass was 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 and similar to ones found at Catterall and at Bilsborrow.

Conclusions:

We think we have found the remains of the road leading North in this field in Trench G. It is very close to the surface, is more than a random spread of stones, contained a possible kerb and followed an appropriate

line that continued that found at Fowler Hill Lane [See Photo 5.]. It also is of a width appropriate to a road of the time if measured to the edge of the farm track [8m]. This suggests that the farm track is on top of the former Roman road. Is it a dual carriage way with the other carriage way shown in the hedge?

We may not have found the road where it was predicted as the hedge was moved further North to allow clearer visibility round the corner. This may have destroyed the road at this point and prevented it being found in trench A and B where previously suggested.

Future plans:



1. Continue Trench G to the edge of the farm track to see if the cobbles found are under the farm track and therefore pre-date it and confirm that the Roman road is underneath.

2. Move further north by the side of the track to see if the Roman road continues along the side of the farm track.

3. Do a similar test trench along the line of the agger in the hedge in the field. This would confirm whether the movement of the hedge from the edge of the road to allow clearer visibility round the corner has destroyed the Roman road at that point and the hedge construction done likewise further north.

4. The farmer clearly pointed out the line of an agricultural drain where the eastern road ditch was expected to be. The Roman ditch may have been reused by the farmer to provide the basis for his drain. There may also be signs of Roman cobbles along the farm track. This could be investigated to decide if they are original or reused.

5. The farmer also has a good knowledge of the local area, and would be happy for us to investigate a mound further down the track. Possibility for future fieldwork presents itself here.



< 1. Trench C 2.V





Trench G
Possible kerb stones can be seen in the north west section of the trench. Photo 5 shows the alignment with the kerb of the roman road under Fowler Hill Lane.

Λ 3

4 >

5 V





Trenches F,E & D

Photo 9 ^

Photo 8 >

Photo 6 v



Photo 7. v

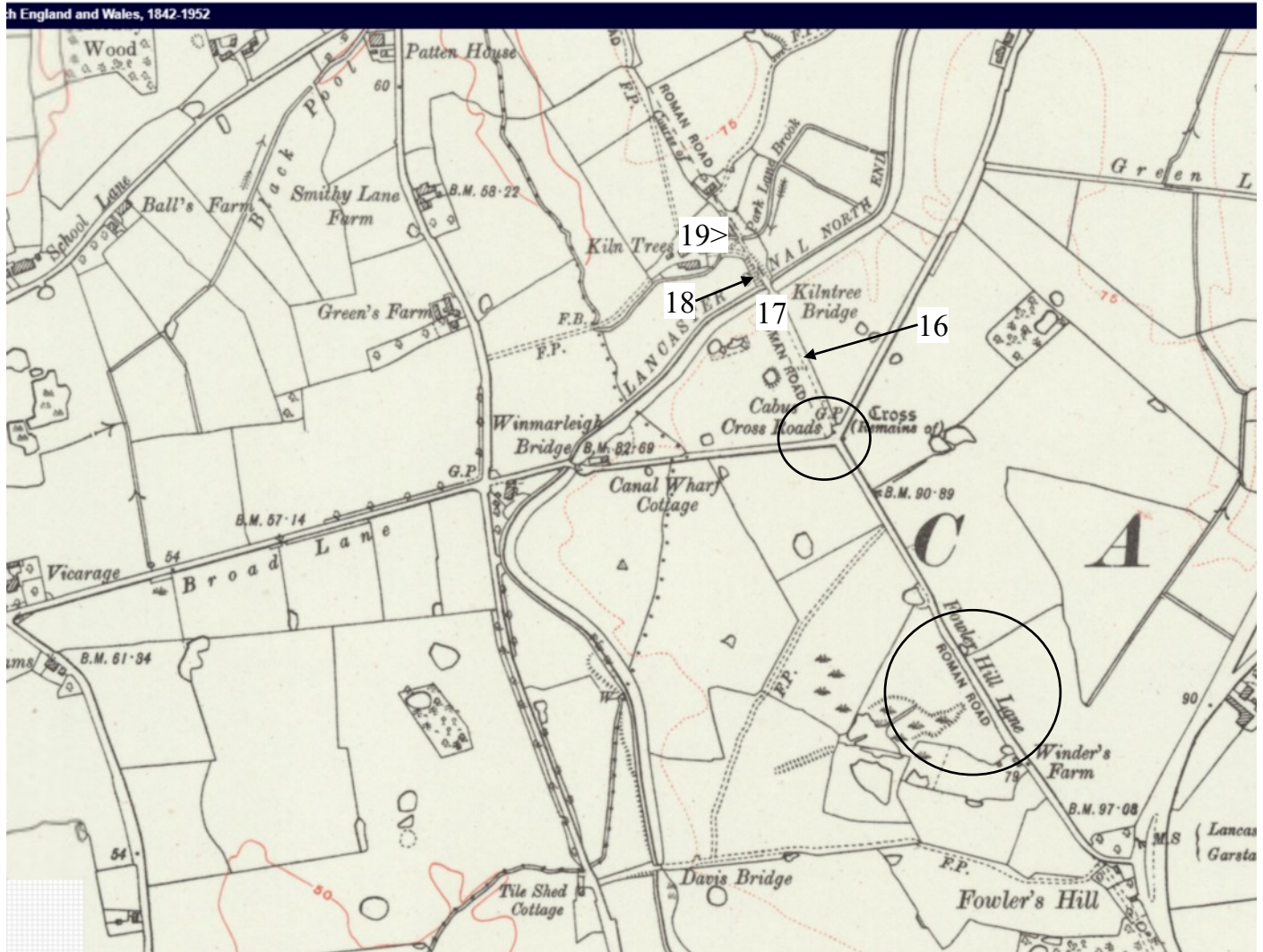


Further research and Fieldwork.

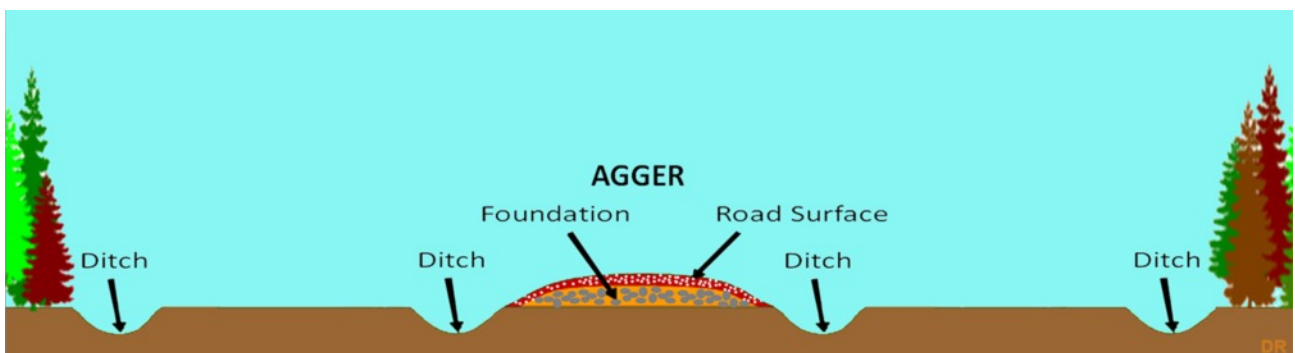
Further research was done on the site which threw up more interesting information. A look at the records in the National Library of Scotland revealed that the 1933 OS map for the area recorded a roman road running along Fowler Hill Lane and down the farm track under which the excavations had reveal the remains of the road.

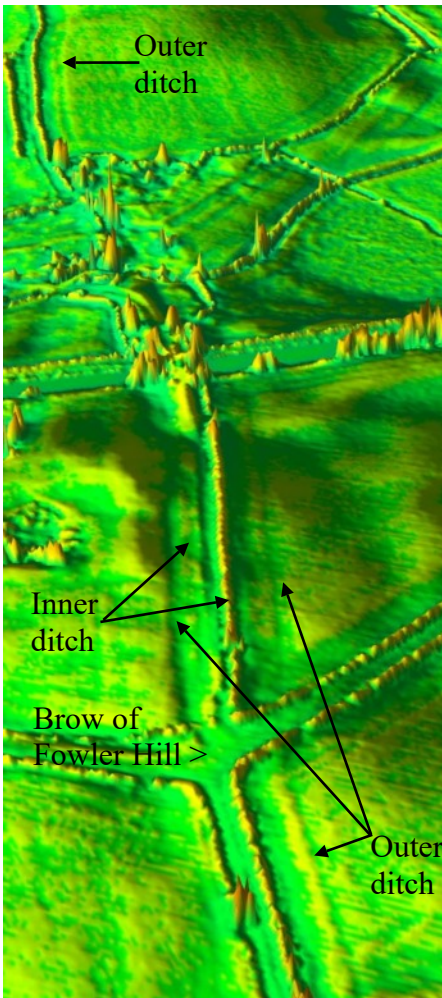
David Ratledge read our report and was happy to agree with the slight change in the position of the road,

Lancashire XXXIX.SE (includes: Barnacre with Bonds; Cabus; Cockerham; Forton; Garstang; Nether Wyresdale; Winmarleigh.)
Revised: 1930
Published: 1933



and produced a LIDAR map [Photo 15] to indicate the tell tale signs of ditches and roads that supported the excavation's evidence. We were also able to walk down the farm track and take photos of various elements of the track which could, with the eye of faith, be the remains of the road, though they may equally be the remains of the farm track if it was constructed with reclaimed elements of the roman road underneath it. Photos of the relevant features were taken, and their position recorded on the map above.





< Photo 15: this photo clearly shows that the road realigns itself at it gets to the top of the brow. Ditches can be seen on either side of the road as well as further out from the road edge. When the excavated kerb was found it was 8 metres from the eastern edge of the farm track, the typical expected width of a road of this type. The inner ditch we expect to be found under the eastern hedge, with the outer ditch in the adjacent field. Only a further excavation might reveal this, or a very dry summer! To quote David's response to this find: 'if we could find the outer 4th ditch that would be something – not many of them in captivity'.



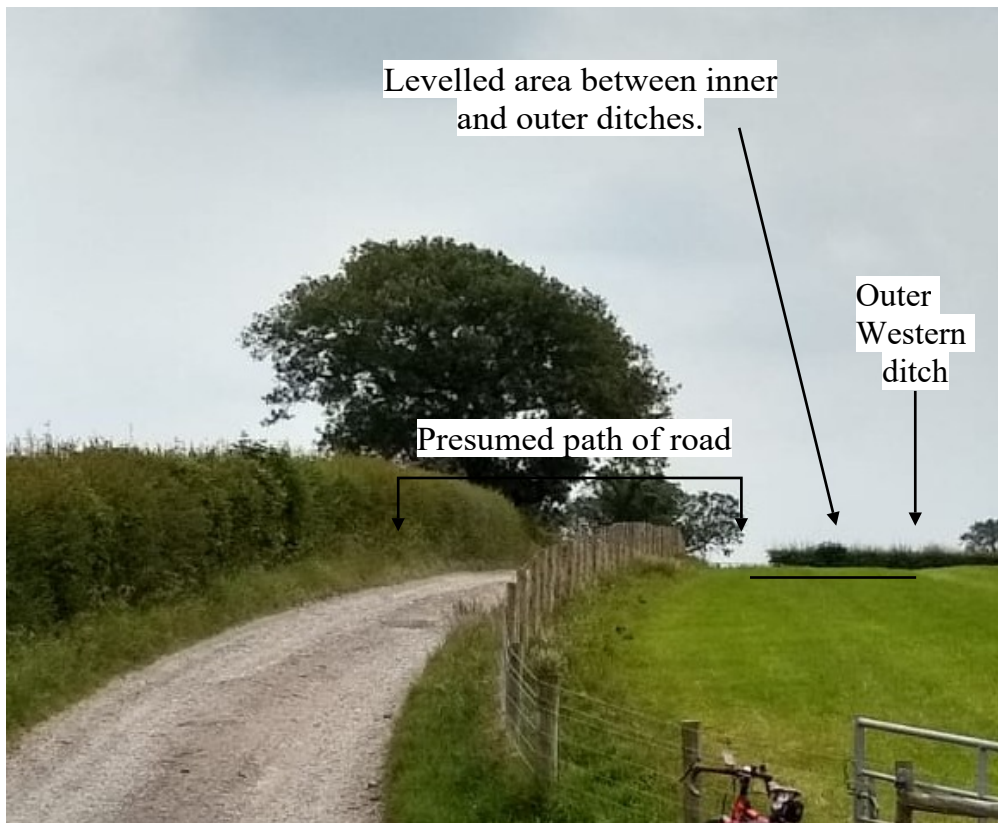
Photo 16 > [see map for location]:

This is the view North along the farm track. We discussed the possibility this may actually be the remains of the roman road reused by later farmers to access Kiln Trees before the building of the canal bridge. We have no map evidence for this yet, but it could be the subject for later research. Some of the track is modern gravel but some of the surface resembled that found in the field. This may be because it is either the original road [see centre of photo], or reused cobbles and material from the road as well as later repairs of the road [see sides of photo]. The presence of larger stones suggests the material has been reused. On the eastern side of the track there were cobbles in the edge of the grass [see label A], as we found elsewhere, which may indicate that the road had worn down under the pressure of traffic, and may therefore have got down to the roman levels. Some clever surveying and levelling might prove whether this is true. Other similar examples of cobble inset in the side of the track where found the other side of the canal.



< Photo 17:

The photo is taken from near the bridge looking south. It clearly shows the western outer ditch as a nick in the green of the field and the level line of the road down the slope.



< Photo 18:

This photo was taken over the canal bridge looking south west with access to the canal through the gateway.

It is similar in construction and wear damage to the track shown in photo 16, and therefore may indicate that if this section is not roman, as it is on top of the bridge access built by the canal company to Kiln Tree farm, then the other section is also not roman.



Photo 19:

This was taken past the farm access point where the track may no longer follow the exact line of the roman road. It lies below the possible site of a kiln that gives the farm its name. If that is the case, then these stones may indicate the kerb of the western side of the roman road. If they are the eastern side, then we are still standing on the roman road looking south east, the track has worn away the road and we would expect to see signs of it on the other side at this point. LIDAR evidence seems to support the location of the road here.



Conclusions:

The line of the road needs to be further traced by people with more experience to confirm the observations already made. The farm track to Kiln Trees farm appears to use half of the remains of the roman road and then moves into the farm yard as expected after the construction of the canal access route. There may be some confusion caused in the field north of Cabus cross by a modern field drain being located in the same position as the roman outer ditch. If the road follows the line of the hill crest to Cockerham, there should be clear signs of it further on the crest of the hill in the form of hedges, ancient lanes and LIDAR evidence. I am sure the hunt will continue.

Many thanks to Ian Pye for allowing us to access the property and his cheerful enthusiasm and informed conversation, to David Ratledge for his experience, photos, diagrams and expertise in the area [diagram 1, Photo 15 & 38.] Dave Hampson for explaining where the name for Cabus came from [possible origin of Cabus, Ekwall shows it as 'Kaibal' in 1200s, becoming 'Caiballes' by 1300 and 'Caboos' by 1550s. Suggested it may be combination of a personal name Caeg(a) plus 'ball' meaning rounded hill (as in ball of the foot). His later view is that it could be an Old English word meaning 'peg' plus 'rounded hill' but he does say the meaning isn't clear.] And finally Andrew who socially distanced and did a lot more trench digging than a metal detector is used to. As the author, I apologise for going on too much.

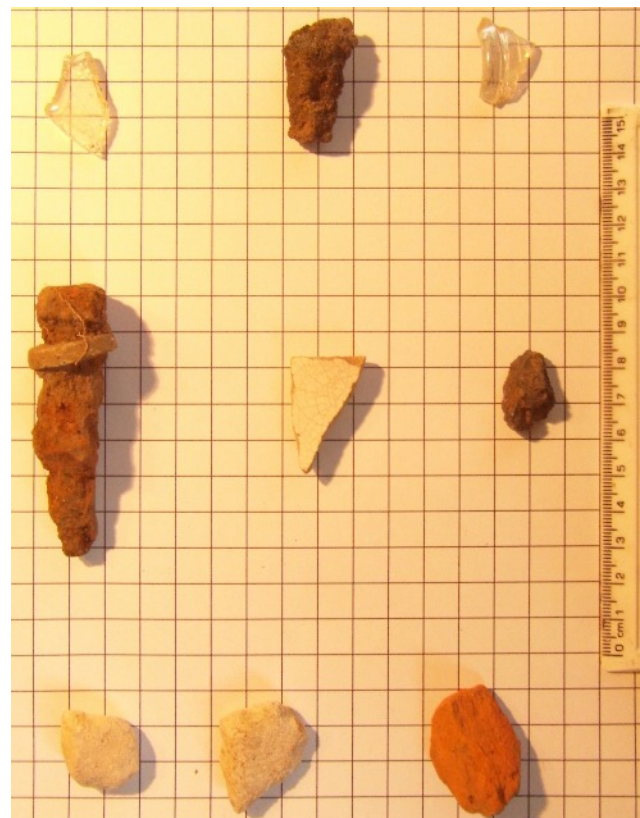
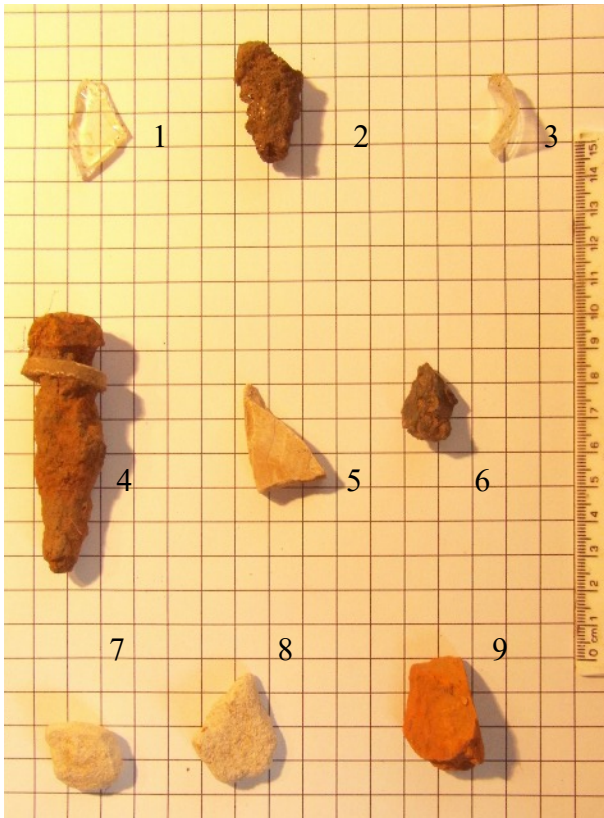
Simon Millward-Hopkins

Draft. NOT for publication.

8/6/2020

Appendix 1

Few finds were made, but for the sake of accurate recording, here they are. Photo 20 and 21. All are from Trench B. Scale: Graph paper is in cm squares.



1. Small fragment of glass. 2. Piece of ash or clinker. 3. Glass from mouth of small bottle. 4. Iron bolt [?] with washer, perhaps from a passing vehicle. 5. White tile [bathroom as signs of pattern on back to enhance adhesion.] 6. Piece of clinker. 7. Lump of lime mortar? 8. See 7. 9. Small piece of fired brick.

Even Further Fieldwork.

After the success of the initial work, Ian kindly offered the chance to have another investigation of a section of the hollow track further north of Cabus Cross.

A morning expedition was arranged, and since the amount of tools were limited by me arriving on a bike, we decided to continue with our dynamic approach and see what could be done on the spur of the moment. Further investigation had found its way to the National Library of Scotland's depository of OS maps, and we were pleasantly surprised that the 1933 edition [and only the 1933 edition it would seem], appeared to record the course of the road.

We were duly led up the hill, found no cows to disturb us, and set about constructing a set of 3 small trenches across a section of the hollow lane under which the road may have been where there was a kink in the line of the road.

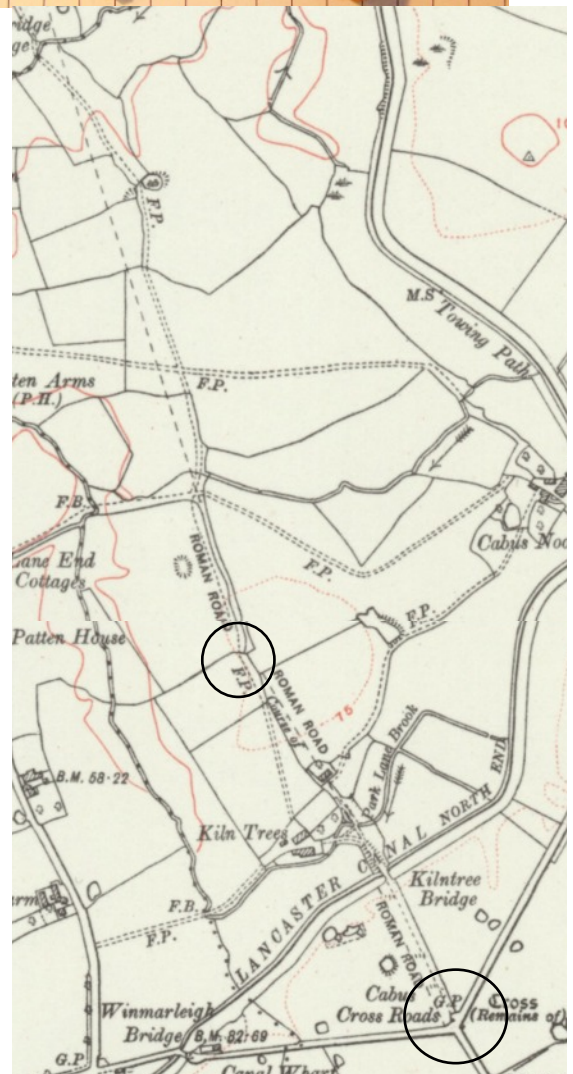


Illustration 22 OS Map 1933 >

Photo 34



Three small and shallow trenches were put in after the ground had been probed either side of the barbed wire fence. There were some large stones in the hedge row, perhaps having been cleared there as a result of farming. There was also a water trough to the left of the picture with a pipe line coming in to it from the south, and an electricity cable in the local area.

We were not going to go very deep therefore.



The width of the hollow way from the eastern ditch to the other side of the barbed wire fence was around the expected 8 m mark.

All three trenches were made up of the same material: top soil with a few river cobble inclusions coming down to a layer of orange clay with roots that seemed little disturbed.

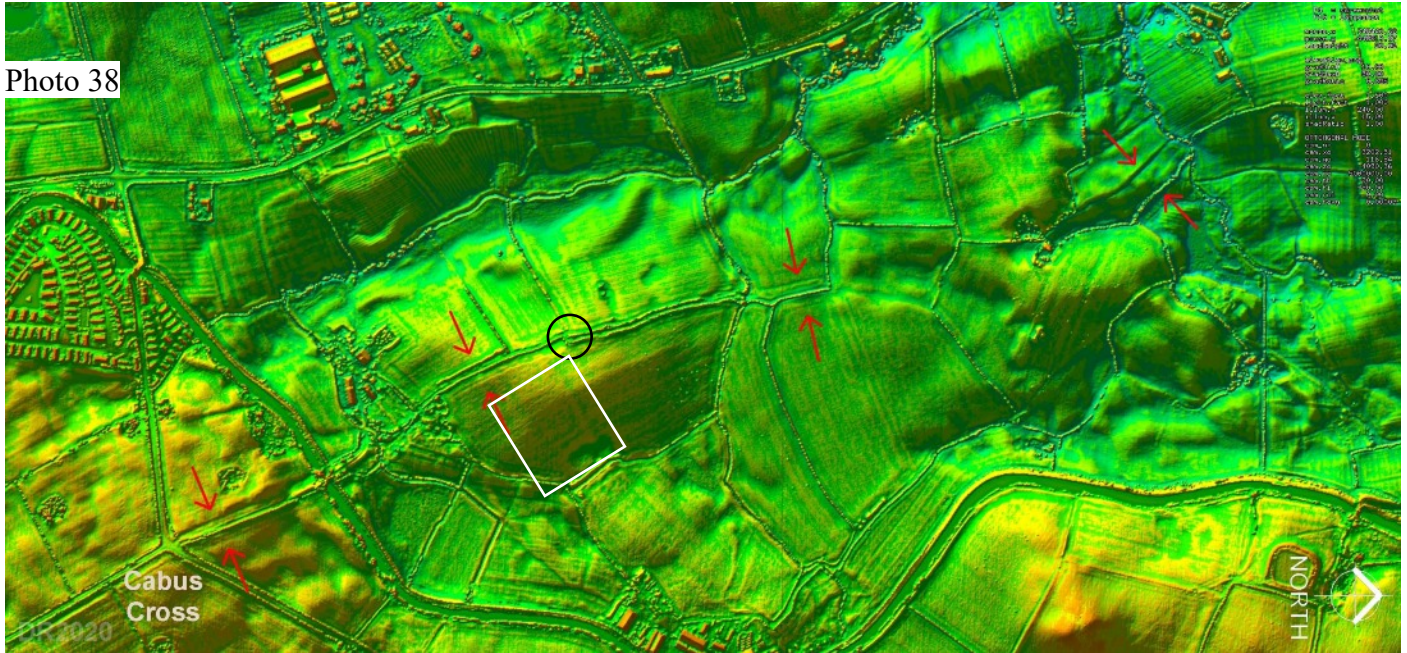
The course of the road needs yet again further investigation to reveal itself. It may be under the track, which is considerably narrower than the standard 8m and then extend to one side or the other, similar to the farm track at Cabus Cross. LIDAR shows a ditch on the either side of the hollow way.

< Photo 35



< Photo 36

Photo 37 >



This LIDAR photo shows the line of the road that David Ratledge propose from Cabus Cross north. The line of the ditches can be seen on either side of the hollow way [red arrows], and the black circle [Photo 38 and 39] indicates the position where the further trenches were dug. To the south of this point the road appears in the field to the east of the modern track. The white box appears to identify an L shaped feature in the field. As always with LIDAR, there are many others.

Both pictures [Photo 39 &40] below trace the route of the road on the immediate horizon and illustrate how the road maintains its presence on the brow of the hill , as seen from the gate on main road close to the School Lane/Park Lane junction on the road to Cockerham [B5272].

