

THE ROMAN ROAD ON THE EASTERN FRINGE OF THE NEW FOREST, FROM SHORN HILL TO LEPE

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ABSTRACT

The Roman road from Applemore Hill to Lepe was re-investigated for three reasons. First, because of doubts that it is an authentic Roman road expressed by various authorities. These doubts have been removed and, furthermore, it has been traced NW to Shorn Hill where it joins the Roman road from Otterbourne to Stoney Cross. In so doing it passes close to the entrance of Tatchbury, a large multivallate Iron Age hillfort. Second, because it played an important role in the network of Roman roads in the Chichester, Southampton and Winchester area, probably constructed by Legio II Augusta in the early stages of the Roman invasion of Britain. And third, because a newly discovered Roman road to Old Sarum also starts from this road at Applemore Hill. This suggests that the Roman roads from Lepe to Applemore Hill, and from there to Old Sarum, may have been later used by Cerdic, and others, during the Saxon advance into Wessex.

INTRODUCTION

The first known reference applying to this Roman road is in a New Forest perambulation of 1217 (Stagg 1992, 26–7), where it is the bound-mark *magnum viam* 'great road' between Applemore Hill and Horestone Hill, Dibden Purlieu. On Isaac Taylor's Map of Hampshire, 1759, it is described as *A Roman Way*, though somewhat misplaced topographically. It is then shown by Thos. Richardson, 1787, as *Roman way* from Applemore Hill to Buttsash Lane, Dibden Purlieu. On the OS 6 inch map of 1872 it is described as *Roman Road* from Applemore Hill to Holbury, and the *agger*, including an alignment angle, is depicted across Beaulieu Heath. O G S Crawford and Williams-Freeman walked the road together in 1912, and they were in no doubt that it was Roman (Williams-Freeman

1915, 442). Margary (1973, 94–6) also accepted it as a Roman road from Applemore Hill to Stone Point on the Solent where, he says, 'there appears to have been an inlet here with berths for shipping, now silted up'. He also suggested the road probably continued N from Applemore Hill through Eling and Totton to join the Otterbourne to Stoney Cross Roman road just to the W of the Test crossing opposite Nursling, as its purpose was obviously to link the southern road system with a small port at Stone Point. The route is also shown in Soffe and Johnston (1974, Fig. 1)

There is another interesting reference to it by Benson and Hatcher (1843, 4) who say 'From Bittern [*sic*] a Roman road ran through Nursling and crossed the Test near the Mill, from whence it passed through the Forest in the direction of Ringwood. A fragment of it still exists in the vicinity of Tatchbury. From this line, and near this spot, branched a road leading to the Isle of Wight. Its course was south-east in the line of the present road from Eling to Beaulieu. It then continued towards the enclosures of Little Holbury, was afterwards lost, but reappeared in a meadow at Great Holbury, and then proceeded by Hopley Mill and Stanswood to Stone. From thence there was a passage across the Channel [*sic*] to the Isle of Wight'.

But others have cast doubt on it as a *bona fide* Roman road. They include Haverfield (1900, 325–6), and the Ordnance Survey who describe it as 'Earthwork' on current mapping. It also does not appear on the OS Map of Roman Britain (1994).

METHODOLOGY (Fig. 1)

Margary's numbering system is adopted, and hereafter the road is referred to as **RR423** [Roman

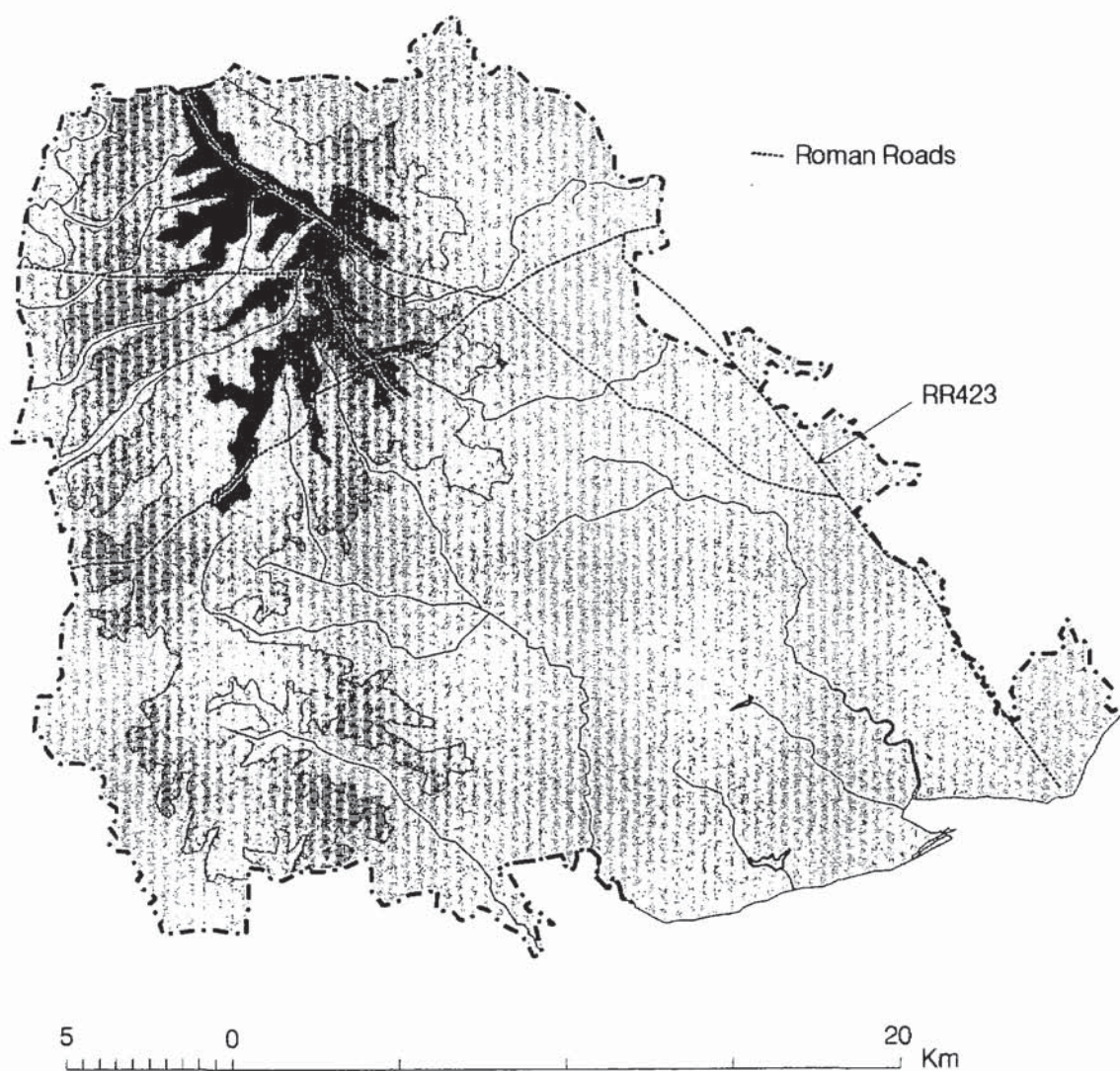


Fig. 1 The New Forest area, showing Roman roads. Route 423 on the eastern fringe of the Forest is highlighted. (Drawn by Deborah Cunliffe, National Monuments Record, Crown Copyright Reserved)

Road 423]. As a newly discovered Roman road starts from **RR423** on Applemore Hill and proceeds via Cadnam to Bramshaw Telegraph, and from there to Downton, Harnham Bridge (*Ayleswade*) and on to Old Sarum (*Sorviodunum*), **RR423** has been re-investigated in order to dispel

any doubts regarding its authenticity. At the same time the relationship between **RR423** and the following Roman roads has been examined:

1. **RR42b** from Winchester (*Venta Belgarum*) to Bitterne (?*Clausentum*)

2. **RR420** from Chichester (*Noviomagus Reg(i)norum*) to Winchester (*Venta Belgarum*) (Soffe & Johnston 1974, 112–14)
3. **RR421** from Chichester to Bitterne (Soffe & Johnston 1974)
4. **RR422** from Otterbourne (**RR42b**) to Stoney Cross. This road has now been extended beyond Stoney Cross, and it proceeds via Picket Hill, Hightown, to Wattons Ford on the Avon, and thence to the vexillation fortress at Lake Farm (Soffe & Johnston 1974, 111–12).
5. **RR424** from Stoney Cross to Fritham. Doubt has also been expressed regarding the authenticity of this road (Johnston, 1984, 19–23). The doubt has been removed, and it has been traced beyond Fritham through the New Forest potteries to Fordingbridge.
6. And finally another new Roman road has been recently identified which runs from **RR422** at Cadnam to *Buckland Rings*, a large Iron Age hillfort N of Lymington, but this road is still under investigation.

Effort has also concentrated on trying to discover the primary sight-lines observed by the Roman surveyors and engineers when setting out these roads, in the hope that the sequence of construction might be revealed. The area chosen extends east to west from Chichester to Lake Farm, Wimborne, and north to south from Winchester (and by inference Silchester) to the Isle of Wight. In other words the area covers the routes probably followed by battle groups of *Legio II Augusta* in the very early stages of the Roman conquest of Britain c AD 43–44.

Investigation of the methods used to survey and set out these roads has revealed a number of points. First, the accuracy achieved in observing sight-lines, and setting out road alignments, is generally to within 0.01 or 0.02 of a degree (0.0167° equals 1 minute of arc) (see Appendix). Second, the repetitive nature of the selection and siting of some sighting-points and alignment angles suggests the *modus operandi* of a particular surveyor or survey unit. Third, the long held belief that Roman roads almost always changed direction on high ground does not hold true in this area. Finally, the evidence that the sighting-points of

some primary sight-lines are common to more than one road indicates that the network formed part of a unitary system, probably designed and set out by *Legio II Augusta*, in the early stages of the conquest.

Sighting-points and sight-lines of RR423

The course of **RR422** from Nursling Mill to Shorn Hill has been identified and this, in turn, has led to the discovery of the junction with **RR423** 'in the vicinity of Tatchbury', as described by Benson and Hatcher (op. cit.).

RR423 was laid down using two primary sight-lines. *Sight-line 1* was observed from Shorn Hill to Dibden Purlieu. The initial sighting-point of *Sight-line 1* is placed in a typical position on the E crest of Shorn Hill, at SU 3363 1524, where there is a slight alignment angle on **RR422** (Fig. 2.1). This is the first place from which it is possible to lay down an unobstructed sight-line to Dibden Purlieu, and before visibility is blocked by Shorn Hill. The sighting point at Dibden Purlieu is an alignment angle on **RR423** at SU 4086 0604 (Fig. 7.1), grid bearing from Shorn Hill 141.83°, distance 11.70km. This line was carefully chosen: it avoids Calmore, probably marshy ground in the Roman period, and passes just above the highest point to which normal tides now flow on the Bartley Water at Brokenford, Totton, and only 30m above the tidal limit on Jacobs Gutter, Eling, at SU 3611 1212 (Fig. 4.3). In the Roman period tidal limits may have been even higher. But there was a more important reason why **RR423** did not proceed from the W bank of the Test opposite Nursling direct to Lepe, as suggested by Margary (see below).

Sight-line 2 was observed from the Dibden Purlieu sighting-point to Stone Farm, Lepe, at approximately SZ 4571 9939, grid bearing 143.90°, distance 8.23km (Fig. 12.3), some 200m above a silted-up inlet. Initially, a single primary sight-line may have been observed from Shorn Hill direct to Lepe, grid bearing 142.69°, distance 19.93km, and subsequently broken down into two parts, but until the end of **RR423** at Lepe is accurately known, there is no way to confirm this. There is also the possibility that the final terminal of **RR423** is Pits Copse, at SZ 4604 9894, grid

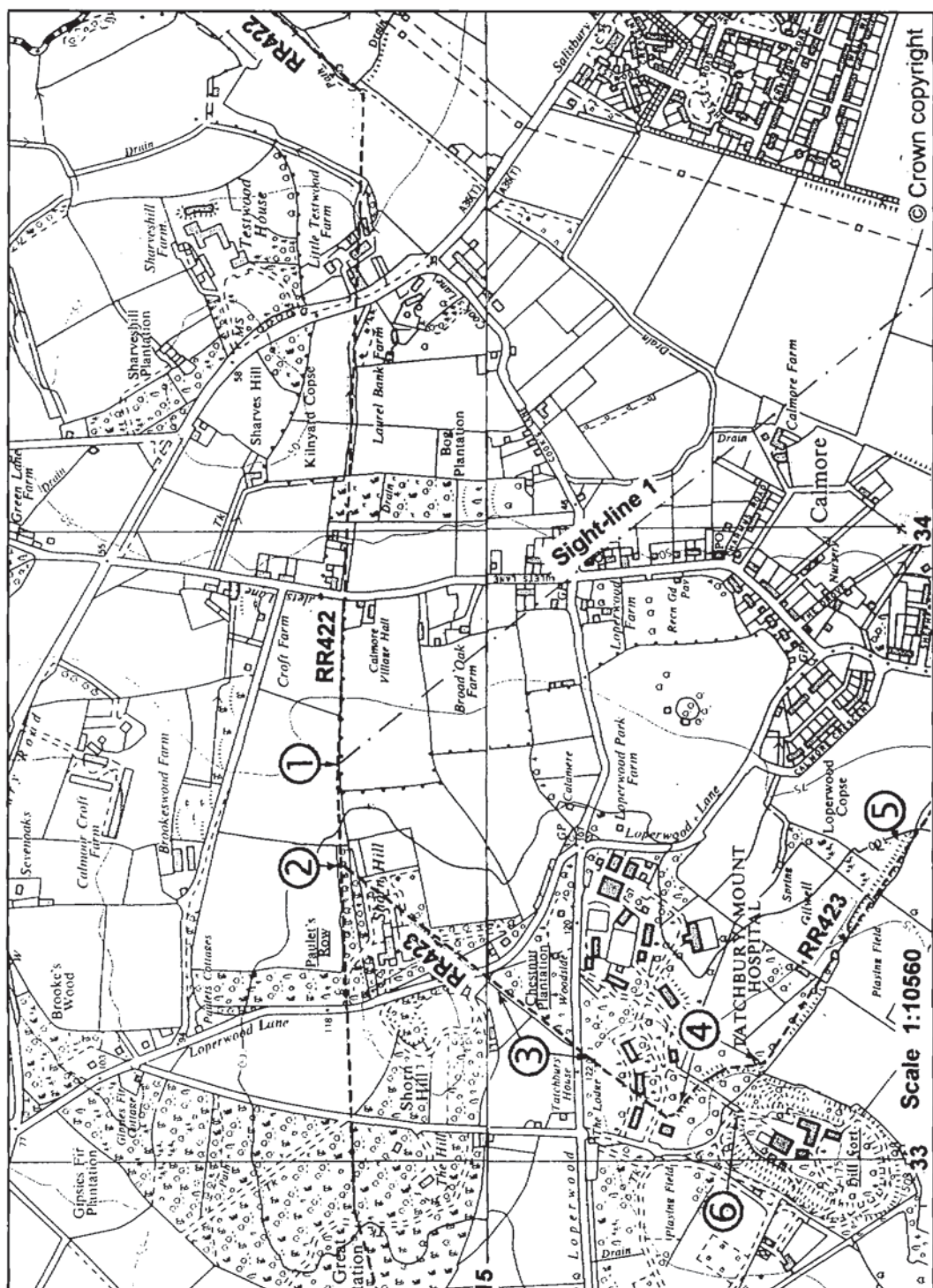


Fig. 2 Plot of the route of the road in the Tatchbury area, and its junction with route 422



Fig. 3 Plot of the route in the Calmore road area

bearing from Dibden Purlieu 143.89° , distance 8.789km (Fig. 12.5). Pits Copse contains enigmatic earthworks, suggested by Crawford, and others, as berths for shipping.

The route and alignments

The course of **RR422** at Shorn Hill is represented by an old lane in Paulets Row, shown on the OS 6 inch map 1911. **RR423** leaves **RR422** in this lane, at SU 3348 1523, some 150m W of the initial sighting-point of sight-line 1, and 30m W of the boundary fence of the new Totton by-pass, but no trace of the junction survives (Fig. 2.2). The first alignment of **RR423** is clearly aiming towards the E entrance of *Tatchbury*, a large Iron Age multivallate hillfort (Fig. 2.6). This alignment was carefully chosen to run along the foot of the SE slopes of Shorn Hill and, at the same time, to skirt the head of a deep re-entrant at the base of steep slopes below the hillfort entrance. There is no trace of the road in the heavily landscaped grounds of Shorn Hill house, and there is no evidence on the OS 6 inch maps of 1872 or 1911, i.e. before the construction of the house. The first evidence appears running inside the W boundary of Chestnut Plantation, and **RR423** is then visible as a mutilated *agger*, accompanied by holloways, for some 30m inside the boundary fence of *Tatchbury* Hospital (Fig. 2.3). Further evidence has been destroyed by hospital buildings, but a prolongation of the alignment continues to SU 3307 1470, at the foot of the slopes of *Tatchbury* Mount, and 90m from the entrance to the hillfort. This point was probably close to the outer limits of the complex hillfort defence system, but the evidence is now obscured by the modern road leading to a derelict mansion. There can be little doubt that the decision not to proceed from the W bank of the Test direct to Lepe, as suggested by Margary (op. cit.), was in order to eliminate this hillfort. This is further confirmation of the evidence obtained by Field (1992, 154–62), that during the campaigns against the Durotriges in Dorset the main targets of the Roman army were the hillforts. Following capture, roads were constructed to these hillforts, which were then used as temporary camps. Williams-Freeman (1915, 165–7, 410), records the discovery of a ‘late Celtic

comb’ at *Tatchbury*, but there is no evidence of Roman military occupation.

There are other well known examples of Iron Age hillforts occupied or attacked by the Roman army: Maiden Castle, Hod Hill and Waddon Hill, Dorset; Ham Hill, and possibly South Cadbury, Somerset; Hembury in Devon; and Brandon Camp, Herefordshire. *Tatchbury* is only one of a number of hillforts in SW Hampshire which may be candidates for this role, but evidence of military occupation within the hillfort is required. The other Iron Age forts in this area which may have been temporarily occupied by Roman troops include *Buckland Rings*, Lymington; *The Walls*, Nursling; *Malwood Castle*, Minstead; and *Frankenbury*, Godshill, all close to Roman roads. *Old Sarum*, Wiltshire, and *Badbury Rings*, Dorset, may also fall into this category. The use of hillforts for this purpose may account for the absence of normal temporary camps in Southern Britain as far west as Devon (OS Map of Roman Britain, 1994; RCHME 1995).

At the end of the first alignment from Shorn Hill, at the head of a deep valley, there are three short connecting alignments to the start of the second alignment. These connecting alignments are indicated by hachures on current OS editions (Fig. 2.4). The first connecting alignment, about 60m long, is represented by a single straight line of hachures, but the feature represented by the hachures has been destroyed by the construction of a hospital building. **RR423** then appears as a well-defined terrace-way, represented in part by a double line of hachures. It runs along a shelf at the base of the slopes below the hillfort in two short straights, each again about 60m long, and is traceable as far as the start of the second alignment of **RR423** at SU 3316 1455. A track along this terraceway appears on the OS 6 inch map of 1872.

It is possible that a sight-line of **RR422** was observed from the junction with **RR42b**, at Otterbourne Manor, direct to Wattons Ford where **RR422** crosses the River Avon, grid bearing 236.78° , distance 38.60km. This sight-line passes over the top of the *Tatchbury* hillfort, and also intersects exactly the start of the second alignment, grid bearing 236.77° , distance 15.38km. This may be coincidence, but it is noted for the record.



Fig. 4 Plot of the route in the Brokenford area

The sighting-point of the second alignment of **RR423** is just outside the entrance to the hillfort at SU 33080 14605, and the sight-line is aiming at the point where the Shorn Hill – Dibden Purlicu primary sight-line crosses the Bartley Water at SU 35422 12960, grid bearing 125.08°, distance 2.862km (Fig. 4.7). The course of the second alignment, SE of *Tatchbury*, is indicated by a very deep holloway as far as the new Totton by-pass (Fig. 2.5), followed by a hedgerow (Fig. 3.1), and then by Calmore Road (Fig. 3.2) to an alignment angle at Bears Lane End, at SU 34952 13290, grid bearing 125.09°, distance 2.288km (Fig. 3.3). This alignment later formed part of the *Cloven Way*, which Crawford (1931, 441–458) originally suggested was used by Cerdic on his way to *Cerdices Ford*, but Crawford then changed his mind (1952, 193–200). The massive holloway, and significant name *Cloven Way*, may indicate that this section of **RR423** was subsequently used as an important drove road.

The Bears Lane End alignment angle was necessary in order to avoid steep slopes at the point where the Shorn Hill to Dibden sight-line crosses the Bartley Water at Brokenford, and to keep to higher ground above the high water marks of ordinary tides at Brokenford and Jacobs Gutter. From Bears Lane End the next alignment goes to Jacobs Gutter, at SU 3610 1198, grid bearing 138.72°, distance 1.74km (Fig. 4.4). The first part of the alignment is marked by a hedgerow and footpath as far as the A336 at Bears Lane End, and by another hedgerow, shown on OS 6 inch map of 1872, past the Old Farmhouse public house (Fig. 4.1). The course is then obscured by modern development and again one has to rely on the OS 6 inch map of 1931 for evidence in the form of hedgerows exactly on the line (Fig. 4.2). Jacobs Gutter is crossed some 150m above the point to which normal tides now flow on this stream (Fig. 4.3), but high water mark was probably somewhat higher in the Roman period. A short dog-leg of 270m was then introduced in order to cross former boggy ground of Jacobs Gutter, to another alignment angle visible on higher ground near a field gate a few metres E of Thatch Cottage at SU 3635 1189, grid bearing 109.80° (Fig. 4.6). Jacobs Gutter Lane is on the line of this dog-leg, which is bisected exactly by

sight-line 1, Shorn Hill – Dibden Purlicu, at SU 3623 1193, grid bearing 141.83° (Fig. 4.5).

At Thatch Cottage the next alignment then heads straight for the Applemore Hill sighting-point, where it rejoins *sight-line 1* at SU 3965 0758, grid bearing 142.56°, distance 5.43km. Beyond Thatch Cottage there are no traces of **RR423** across a market garden, but it can be seen as a bump crossing a track at SU 36655 11492 (Fig. 5.1). Intermittent traces of the *agger* and ditch are then visible as far as East Veugles Copse, with the *agger* well-preserved across a pasture field between the oil refinery railway line and the copse (Fig. 5.2). The *agger* measures 5.5m in width and up to 0.3m in height, and there was a water-filled ditch on the SW side when visited in January 1999. The course is then represented by a hedgerow alignment SW of Trotts Lane (Fig. 5.3), followed by the massive S boundary bank of Park Road as far as Staplewood Lane, Pooksgreen (Fig. 5.4) all, including the *agger*, exactly on the alignment, grid bearing 142.56°.

Between Pooksgreen and Applemore Hill the road traverses beds of Barton Clay and evidence becomes difficult to find. The construction of the Marchwood by-pass (A326) has also destroyed much of the evidence but the course is marked by hedgerow alignments on the OS 6 inch map of 1931. The much-reduced remains of the *agger* then reappear running inside the boundaries of Hammers Copse and Rudes Copse, grid bearing 142.56° (Fig. 6.1), and in Nutchers Copse a stream has been diverted by the road for a distance of 130m, but the old stream course can still be seen in the field to the NE (Fig. 6.2). Nutchers Copse inclosure bank is then on the *agger* as far as Twiggs Lane at SU 3821 0946, grid bearing 142.57° (Fig. 6.3).

There is no trace of **RR423** as it climbs the E slopes of Beacon Hill, past the Old Vicarage, but a 'zig-zag' would not have been necessary as the gradient is not severe (Fig. 6.4). Certain traces in the grounds of Marchwood Priory, and then across agricultural land, are difficult to find, and the next good evidence is in the form of a suggestive 'kink' on a stream and hedgerows in marshy ground, at SU 3929 0805, grid bearing 142.56°, distance 4.84km (Fig. 7.1). On leaving the Barton Clay for the Barton Sand, the much-reduced

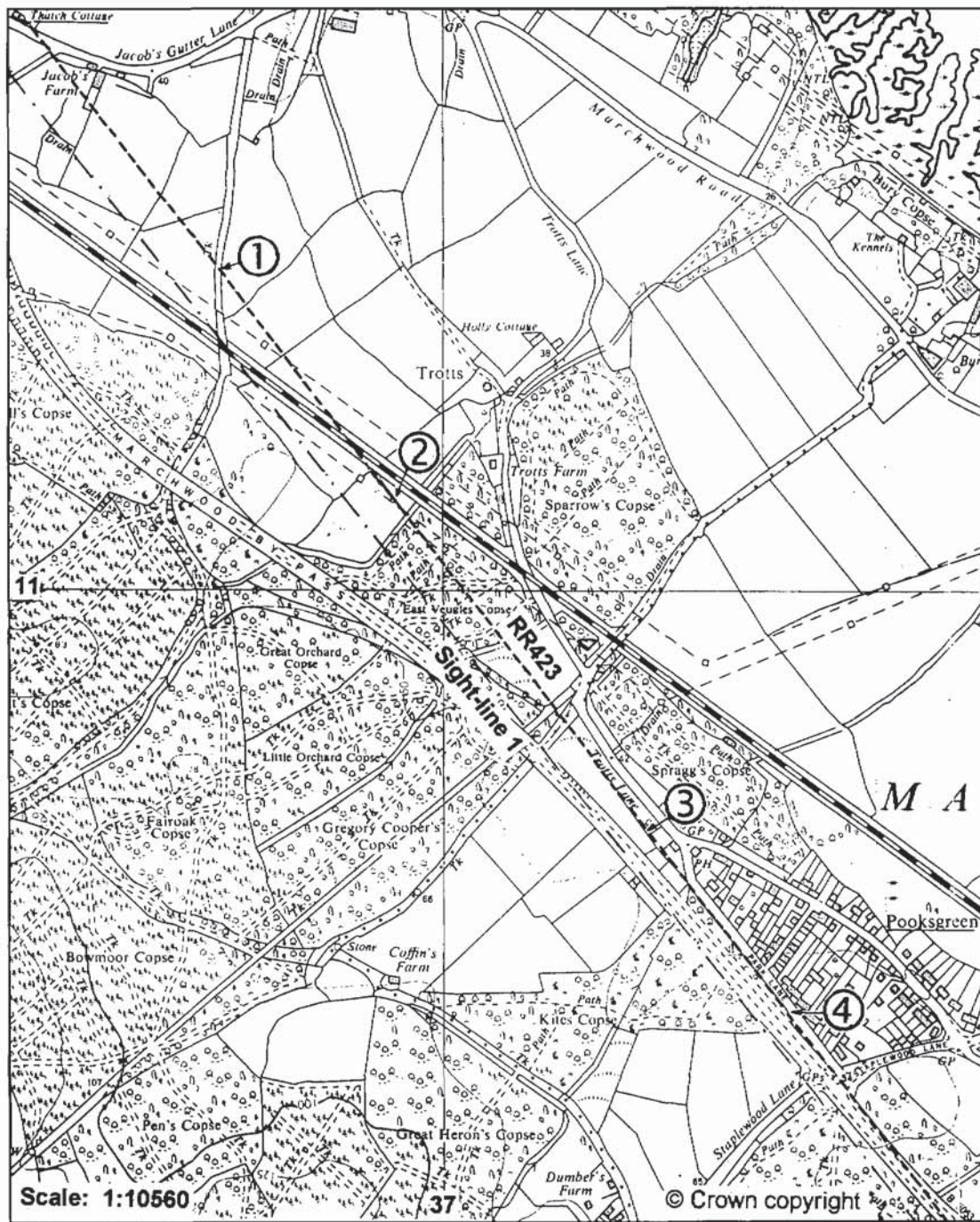


Fig. 5 Plot of the route in the Trotts Farm area

remains of the *agger* and terraceway, grid bearing 142.56° (Fig. 7.2), appear for a distance of 77m across a horse paddock between the road to Dale Farm and Manor Lane. From the N end of the terraceway at SU 39427 07871, **RR423** then runs on Plateau Gravel virtually all the way to Stone Farm. The SW boundary of Manor Lane is on the line (Fig. 7.3) to the Applemore Hill sighting-point and alignment angle at SU 3965 0758, where **RR423** rejoins *sight-line 1* from Shorn Hill, grid bearing 143.83°, distance 9.73km (Fig. 7.4).

The Applemore Hill sighting-point was the New Forest bound-mark *Donschamele*, 1215, *Dunshamele*, 1298, later *Applemore Hill*, 1670, or *Ipplemore Hill* on Thos. Richardson's Plan of part of the New Forest, 1787. A newly discovered Roman road to *Old Sarum* also starts from **RR423** on Applemore Hill. The course from Applemore Hill is generally marked by the ancient New Forest boundary as far as Cadnam. From Cadnam the B3078 is on the line to Bramshaw Telegraph, then through Woodfalls, and on to Downton passing some 100m N of the Roman villa. It crosses the Avon at *The Moot*, the meeting-place of the Downton Hundred, and within 25m of the Saxon cemetery at Charlton Plantation, before crossing the Avon again at Harnham Bridge (*Ayleswade*) and on to *Old Sarum*. The first alignment of this new road from Applemore Hill is the bound-mark 'and thus by the great road (*magnam viam*) as far as Dunshamele' in a New Forest perambulation of 1297–8 (Fig. 7.6).

The next alignment of **RR423** SE of Applemore Hill, is described as *A Roman Way* by Isaac Taylor, 1759, and as *Roman way* on Thos. Richardson's Plan of Part of the New Forest, 1787. It continues along the primary sight-line to the Dibden Purlieu sighting-point, grid bearing 141.84°, the course marked by the old main road and Dibden/Denny Lodge parish boundary. **RR423** also formed the ancient New Forest boundary hereabouts, the first stretch from Applemore Hill to the top of Horestone Hill being the bound-mark 'by the great road (*magnam viam*)' in a perambulation of 1217 (Fig. 7.5).

The sighting point-cum-alignment angle at the Dibden Purlieu end of *sight-line 1* is situated outside the entrance to a house called 'Forest View', on the old main road now a by-road called Roman Road (Fig. 8.1), and on high level ground

on the watershed between Southampton Water and the Beaulieu River. Today the position is undistinguished, but on the OS 1 inch map of 1810 the Roman road is shown running parallel to, and SW of, a minor tributary of the Beaulieu River, now covered by a large housing estate. The sighting-point and alignment angle are close to the source of this stream. On O G S Crawford's record map, compiled when Archaeology Officer of the Ordnance Survey (*penes* David Stagg), 'Linear earthwork' is shown facing N, and running in a westerly direction from the alignment angle, for about 450m, to a stream in a steep-sided valley at SU 4039 0595 (Fig. 8.2). The earthwork has since been destroyed by afforestation and clearance for an electricity pylon line. The area to the E was already developed when Crawford discovered this earthwork, but he shows it as possibly extending to the head of a stream, at about SU 4146 0624 (Fig. 8.3), which flows via Butts Bridge into Southampton Water. It is also possible that the earthwork may have continued to end on the stream shown on the OS 1 inch map of 1810 described above. In either case it would have formed an obstructive barrier across the Roman road, each end terminating on a natural obstacle. Crawford (1931) argued that the earthwork was part of an enclave, or 'bridgehead', constructed by Cerdic following his landing at *Cerdicesora* [?Lepe].

Sight-line 2 was laid down from Dibden Purlieu to the probable terminal of **RR423** at Stone Farm, at or about 4571 9939, grid bearing 143.90°, distance 8.23km (Fig. 12.3). The first alignment from the Dibden Purlieu sighting-point is represented by a parish boundary and the old main road, now a by-road called Roman Road (Fig. 9.1), as far as Buttsash Lane, at SU 4177 0552, grid bearing 119.48°, distance 1.06km (Fig. 9.2). This short alignment was introduced to skirt the head of a tributary of the Dark Water. The end of Buttsash Lane is the site of the New Forest bound-mark *Bottesassch* or *Buttesashe*, 'an ash (bound) tree defining the extent of the property of the *But* family': a *William le But* of the vill of Hardley is recorded in 1327 (Stagg 1979, 208). The bound-mark is still defined by an old boundary stone, and the ancient New Forest boundary leaves the Roman road at this point. On

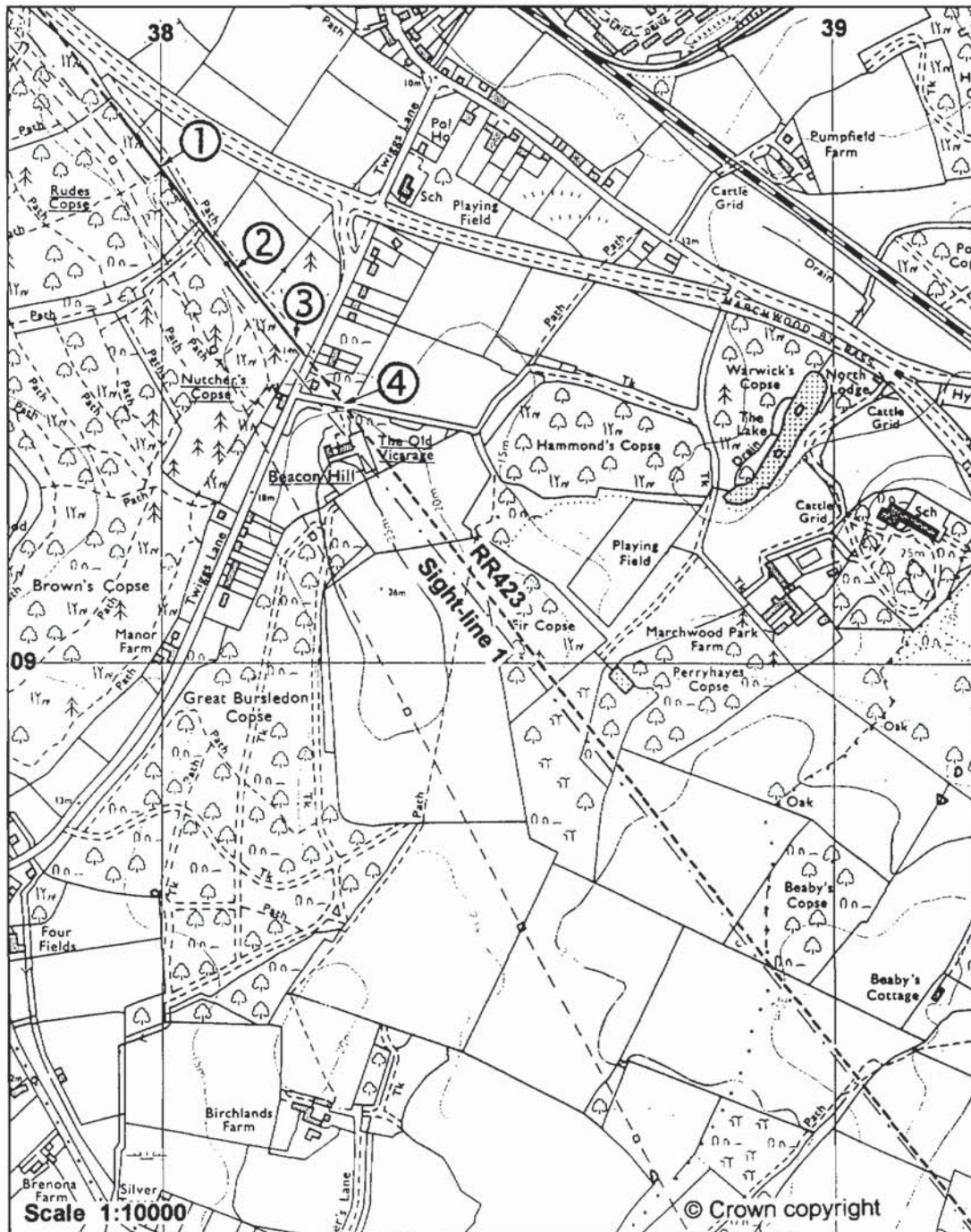


Fig. 6 Plot of the route in the Beacon Hill area

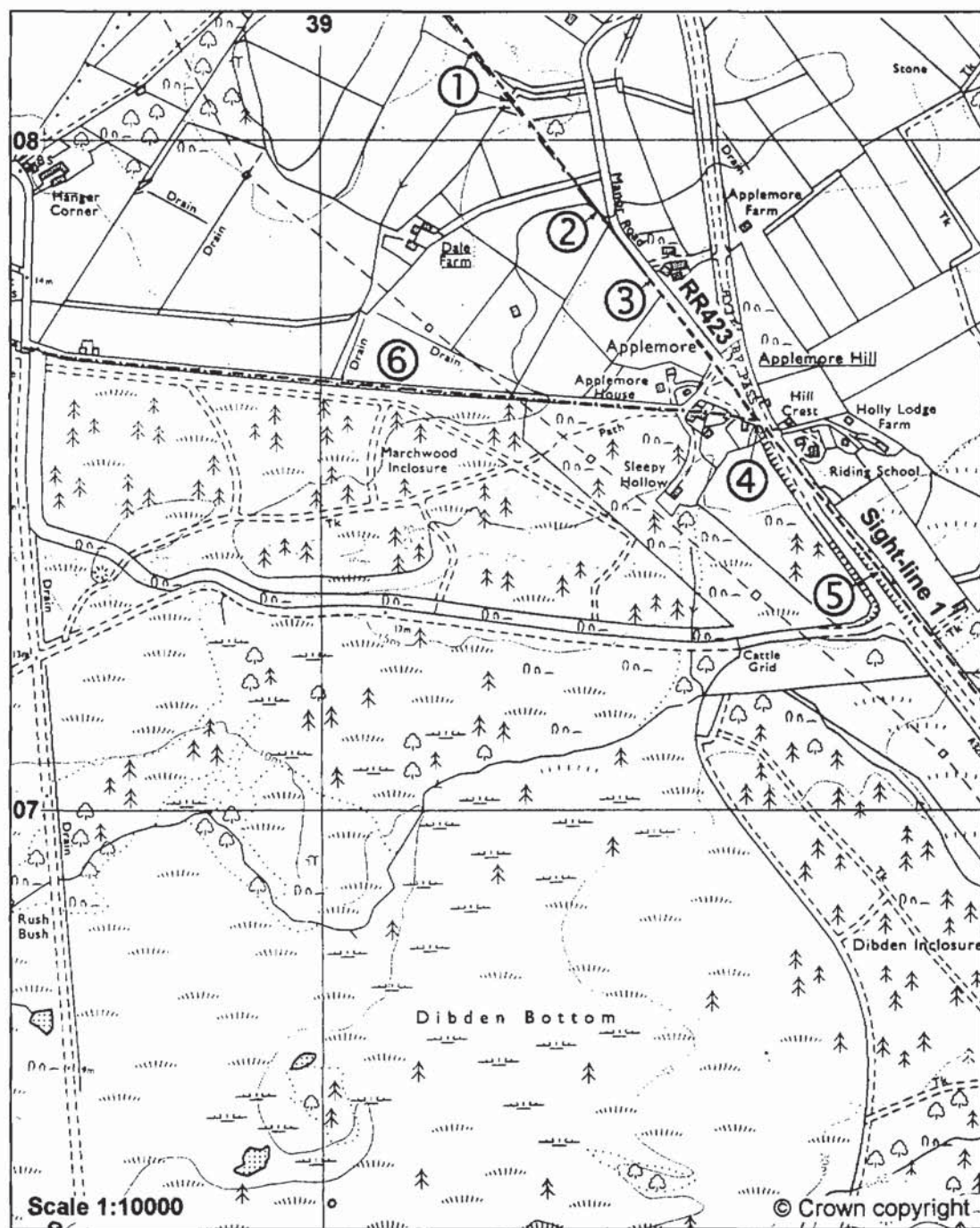


Fig. 7 Plot of the route in the Applemore Hill area



Fig. 8 Plot of the route in the Dibden Purlieu area

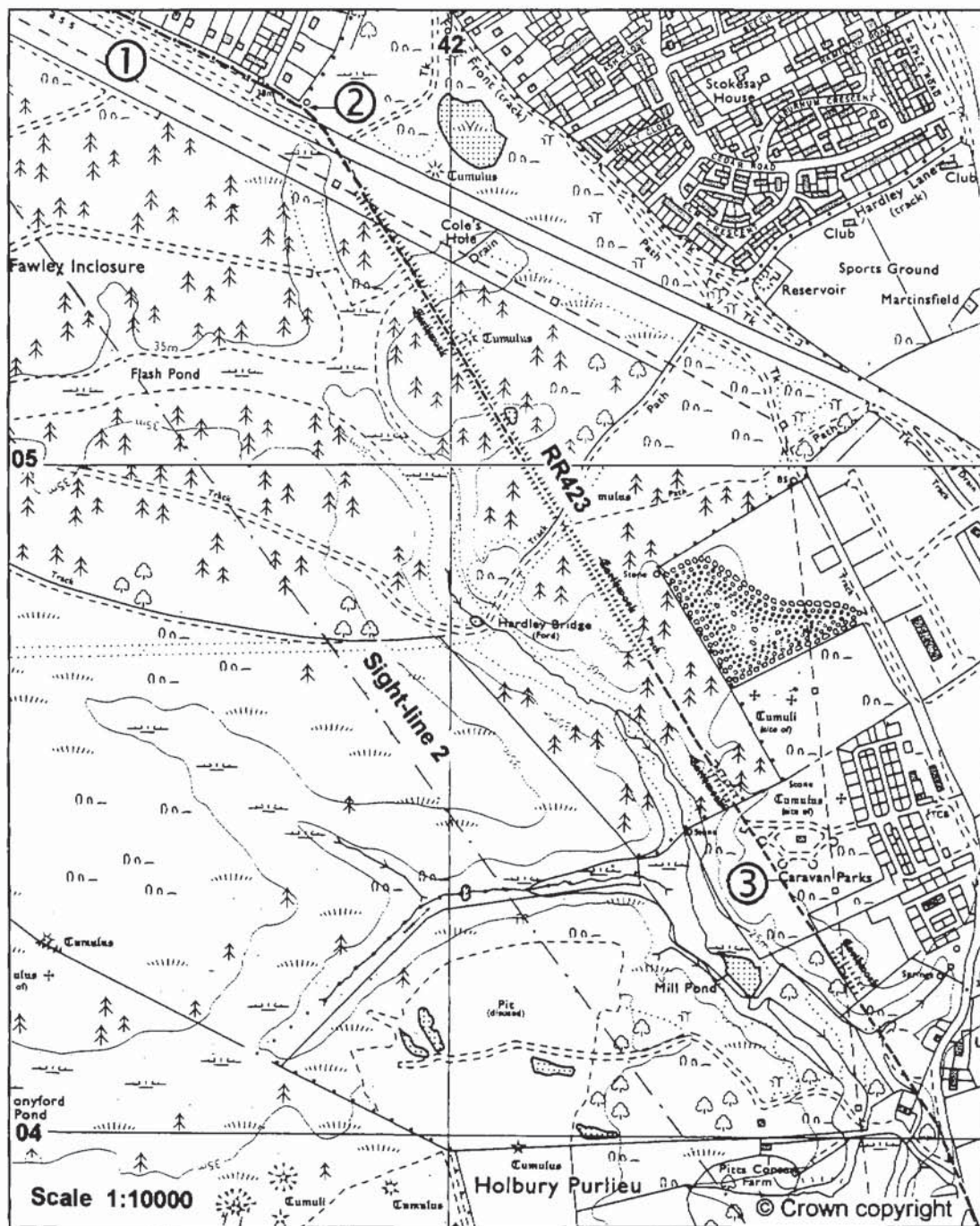


Fig. 9 Plot of the route between Dibden Purlieu and Holbury Purlieu

the OS 6 inch map of 1872 the Roman road is shown as a well defined *agger* hereabouts, and the alignment angle as a gentle curve. A curved alignment angle was probably repeated on Applemore Hill at the start of the new road as it leaves **RR423** en route to *Old Sarum* (Fig. 7.6). Close to the Buttsash Lane alignment angle, at SU 418 055, the road was sectioned by a pipe-line: the *agger*, 12m wide and 0.7m high, was flanked by shallow ditches, but little metalling survived (Lawson 1985). The quoted width is presumably the result of the pipe-line trench cutting through the road at an angle, the true width of the *agger* hereabouts is between 5.5 and 6.5 m (see below).

Across Beaulieu Heath to Little Holbury, **RR423** traverses difficult country, but it keeps as far as possible to the crest of the steep E slopes of the boggy valley of the Dark Water (Fig. 9.3). **RR423** is shown on current OS maps as 'Earthwork' but, where best preserved, it comprises an *agger* measuring between 5.5 and 6.5m wide, and 0.3–0.4m high, with a carriageway about 3.0m wide. There are now no apparent lateral ditches, but quarry-ditches can be seen at intervals with the best examples on the NE side of the causeway. The course is traceable through Holbury, and a fragment of the *agger* can be seen crossing a former stream bed S of Holbury Manor at SU 4291 0362 (Fig. 10.1). The course is then obscured by housing estates, and there is no trace until the N end of Bell Lane, at SU 43425 02600 (Fig. 10.2). The *agger* can then be seen inside the E hedge boundary of Bell Lane, until it finally converges on *sight-line* 2 at an alignment angle in Bell Lane at SU 4355 0235, grid bearing from Dibden Purlieu, 143.91°, distance 4.57km (Fig. 10.3). Two slight changes of alignment (c. 0.8°) were then introduced in order to negotiate a tributary of the Dark Water on the S side of Blackwell Common. Remains of the *agger* are visible along the E side of Bell Lane (Fig. 10.4), followed by a very well preserved section on Blackwell Common, again described as 'Earthwork' on OS maps (Fig. 11.1), and continuing as far as a ford at SU 4409 0164 (Fig. 11.2). **RR423** is then lost across housing estates until it reappears as an *agger*, accompanied by quarry-pits across a horse paddock (Fig. 11.3). *Sight-line* 2 from Dibden Purlieu is regained on reaching level ground at

Whitefield Farm Cottages at SU 44703 00770 grid bearing 143.90° (Fig. 11.4). An old bank, shown by hachures on current OS maps, overlies the *agger* at a slight angle (Fig. 11.5), and **RR423** then runs along *sight-line* 2, under or close to the NE hedge of Lepe Road, the boundary of the ancient Domesday manors of Exbury and Stone (Driver et al. 1789) (Fig. 11.6), before disappearing across arable land N of Stone Farm (Fig. 12.1).

The exact terminus of **RR423** has not been identified during re-investigation. Margary (op.cit.) says the farm road past Stone Farm is on the line to near Stone [Stansore] Point (Fig. 12.6), where there is an inlet, now silted up. From the Dibden Purlieu sighting point, the bearing to the N end of this lane, at SZ 4556 9957, is 144.00° (Fig. 12.2). Crawford (1952, 193–4) thought the terminus was probably on the narrow tongue of land about a quarter of a mile wide, between the Dark Water and an unnamed stream, close to a harbour, now blocked by a shingle bar. He says 'the Roman settlement has yielded no positive evidence unless the old foundations and lumps of limestone, and banks and hollows on the W bank of the stream just N of the point where it is crossed by a private road to Stone Farm are evidence of it'. This point is very close to the end of *sight-line* 2, at SZ 4571 9939, grid bearing 143.90° (Fig. 12.3). Williams-Freeman (1914, 42) records 'Both sides of the meadow [between Stone Farm and the sea -SZ 457 992] show irregularities in the ground, which are suggestive of old buildings'. There is certainly disturbed ground here, together with patches of nettles usually indicative of former occupation. A concentration of Roman finds, coins and copper alloy, has been found in an area centred at SZ 457 992, that is on the spur between the unnamed stream and the Dark Water (Fig. 12.4). Stone Farm contains building material from Beaulieu Abbey, and it is probably the site of one of the two halls recorded at Stone in Domesday (Munby 1982, 69, 54). Stone Farm is situated at the head of a silted creek, which may have been navigable to a point some 200m S of the farm, at SZ 458 992. If *sight-line* 2 is extended, it is aiming at the enigmatic earthworks in Pits Copse, at SZ 461 989 (Fig. 12.5 and inset), which Crawford said 'look like ship's docks, and whatever their

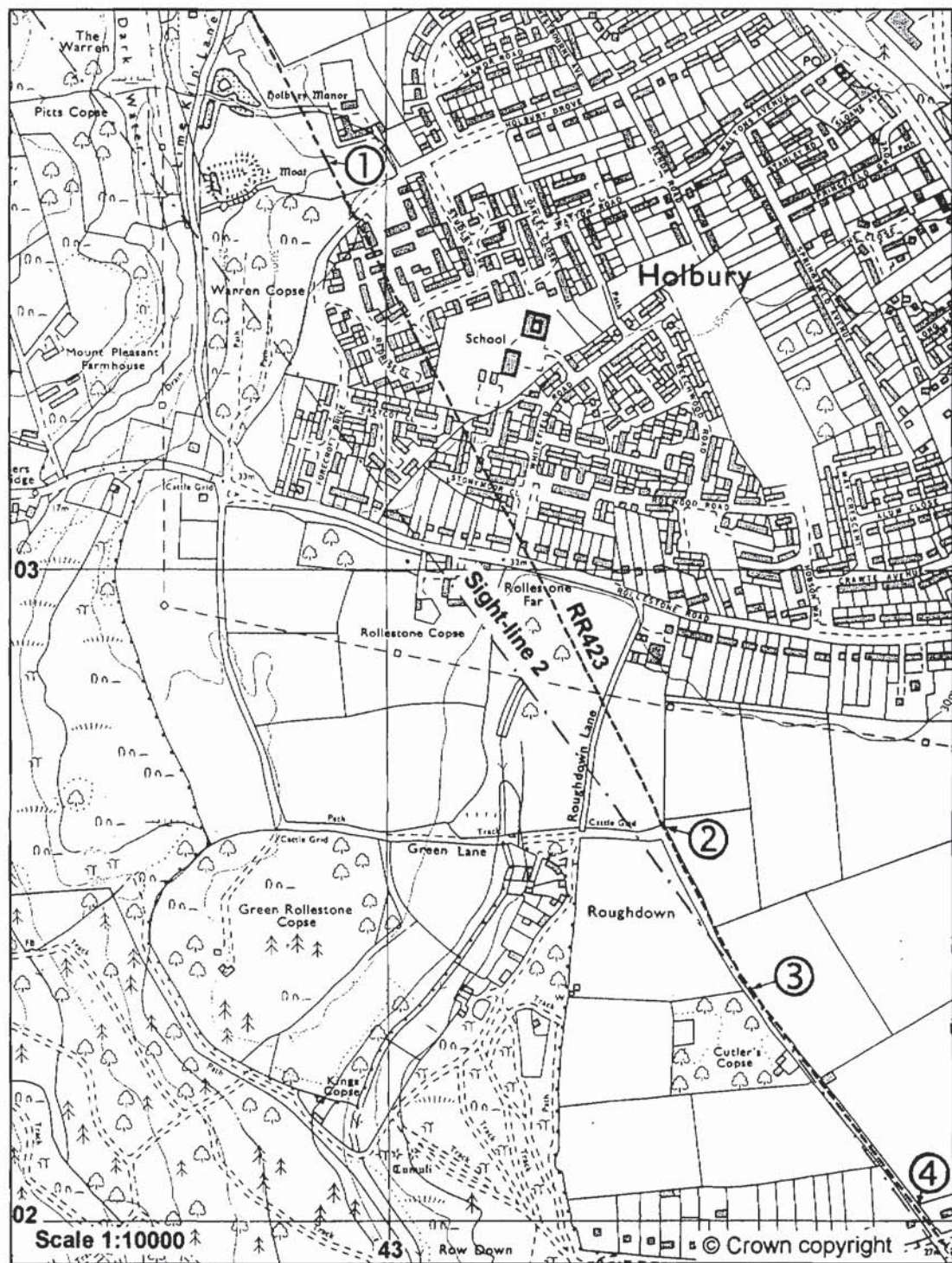


Fig. 10 Plot of the route in the Holbury area

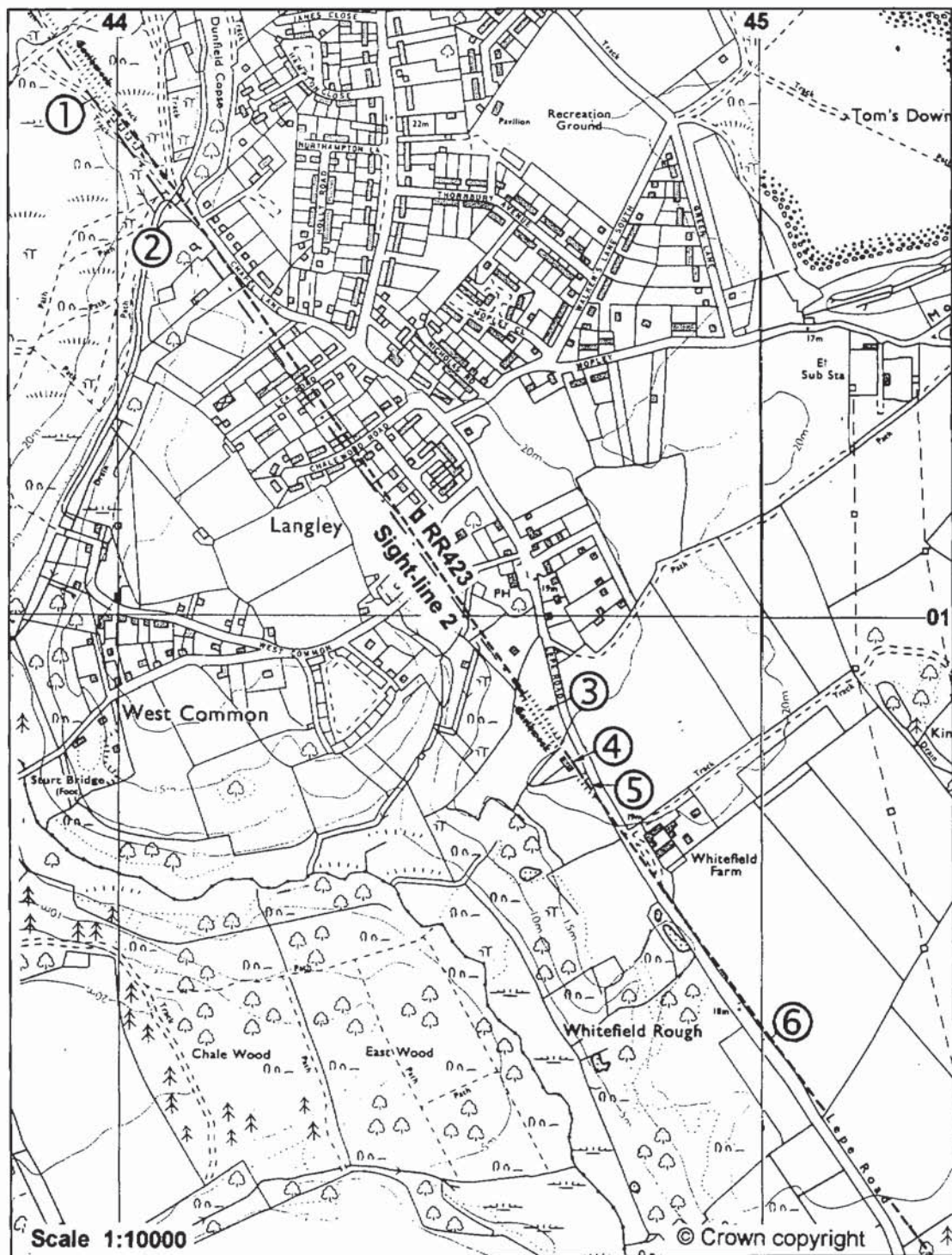


Fig. 11 Plot of the route in the Langley area

age and purpose, belong to a period before the estuary was blocked by a shingle bar'.

Lepe was chosen as the site of a dockyard following a favourable report to the Navy Board in 1744 – that it was 'very commodious for building ships of war of any rates' (Holland 1971, 118). Henry Adams and Moody Janverin built three men-of-war (HM Ships *Greenwich*, *Fowey* and *Europe*) at Lepe between 1748 and 1765, after which Lepe's brief period as a site for naval ship-building came to an end (Holland 1971, 118–9, 132). The exact site of the dockyard was not identified by Holland, but he thought it may have been near the old coastguard and preventive station (The Watch House- SZ 4504 9855) (Fig. 12.7).

By comparison with nearby contemporary dockyards at Bucklers Hard, Bursledon and Hamble, all situated in sheltered positions on the Beaulieu and Hamble Rivers, this seems a strange choice: it is very exposed to winds funnelling up the Solent from the SW, and Spithead to the SE. Nevertheless, the name *Leap Wharf* appears on Thomas Milne's Map (surveyed between 1788 and 1790), near to Lepe House where a jetty is shown on current OS maps at SZ 4480 9859, that is close to the point where the Beaulieu River now flows into the Solent.

If the site of the mid-18th century naval dockyard has been correctly identified, the Pits Copse earthworks must have served another purpose. They occupy a sheltered estuary position on the end of a spur of Plateau Gravel, at or just above former high water mark. Mr Maldwin Drummond, owner of the Cadland estate, has in his possession (undated) clench nails found hereabouts. Sanders (1935–7, 39) was puzzled by these earthworks and, on the basis of the large trees growing upon them, he thought they must be at least 300–400 years old, and possibly gravel pits for ships ballast. This seems unlikely, however, as they appear to be too regular for gravel quarries (see inset, Fig. 12).

If **RR423** was laid down as part of Vespasian's operation to capture the Isle of Wight, this sheltered inlet at the end of the road would have provided a suitable embarkation point for assault troops. From Lepe to Gurnard is the shortest crossing to the Island, albeit in the area of the strongest tidal streams. At the end of the recently

discovered Roman road from Cadnam to *Buckland Rings*, Hawkes (1935–7) identified possible docks at Ampress Hole, near the highest point to which normal tides now flow on the Lymington River. He also suggested there was evidence that the Roman army may have slighted the hillfort defences by dismantling the main gate (op. cit., 153–4, and Fig. 6).

A full scale survey of the Stone Farm area, including geophysical methods, followed by excavation, is required in order to determine (i) the exact position of the terminal of **RR423**, and (ii) the date and purpose of the Pits Copse earthworks.

DISCUSSION

RR423 is a *bona fide* Roman road, and any doubts as to its authenticity can be dismissed. It is almost certainly a very early military road constructed probably as part of the operations for the capture of the Isle of Wight by *Legio II Augusta* under Vespasian. The newly discovered Roman road from Cadnam to *Buckland Rings*, Lymington, may have been constructed in support of the same operation. Further investigation of this road, and the role of the whole Chichester, Southampton and Winchester network, in relation to the operations of *Legio II Augusta*, should be pursued.

Roman roads probably provided convenient access routes during the Saxon colonisation of Wessex in the late 5th and the 6th centuries AD. In dealing with this period the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is fraught with problems as regards dates and historical accuracy (Yorke 1995, 32–4). In 495 Cerdic and Cynric are said to have landed at *Cerdicesora*, generally thought to be near Stansore or Stone Point, Lepe (Fig. 12.6), at the end of **RR423**. But Coates (1989, 51) says *Cerdicesora* is unidentified. Cunliffe (1993, 277–9) also expresses doubt regarding the reliability of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* account of the West Saxon colonisation of Wessex. He says multiple landings by Jutish settlers in the Solent area and the Isle of Wight in the 5th century are confirmed by settlements and cemeteries, but he considers the West Saxons chose a more westerly landfall, and that the site of *Cerdicesora* may have been near Christchurch

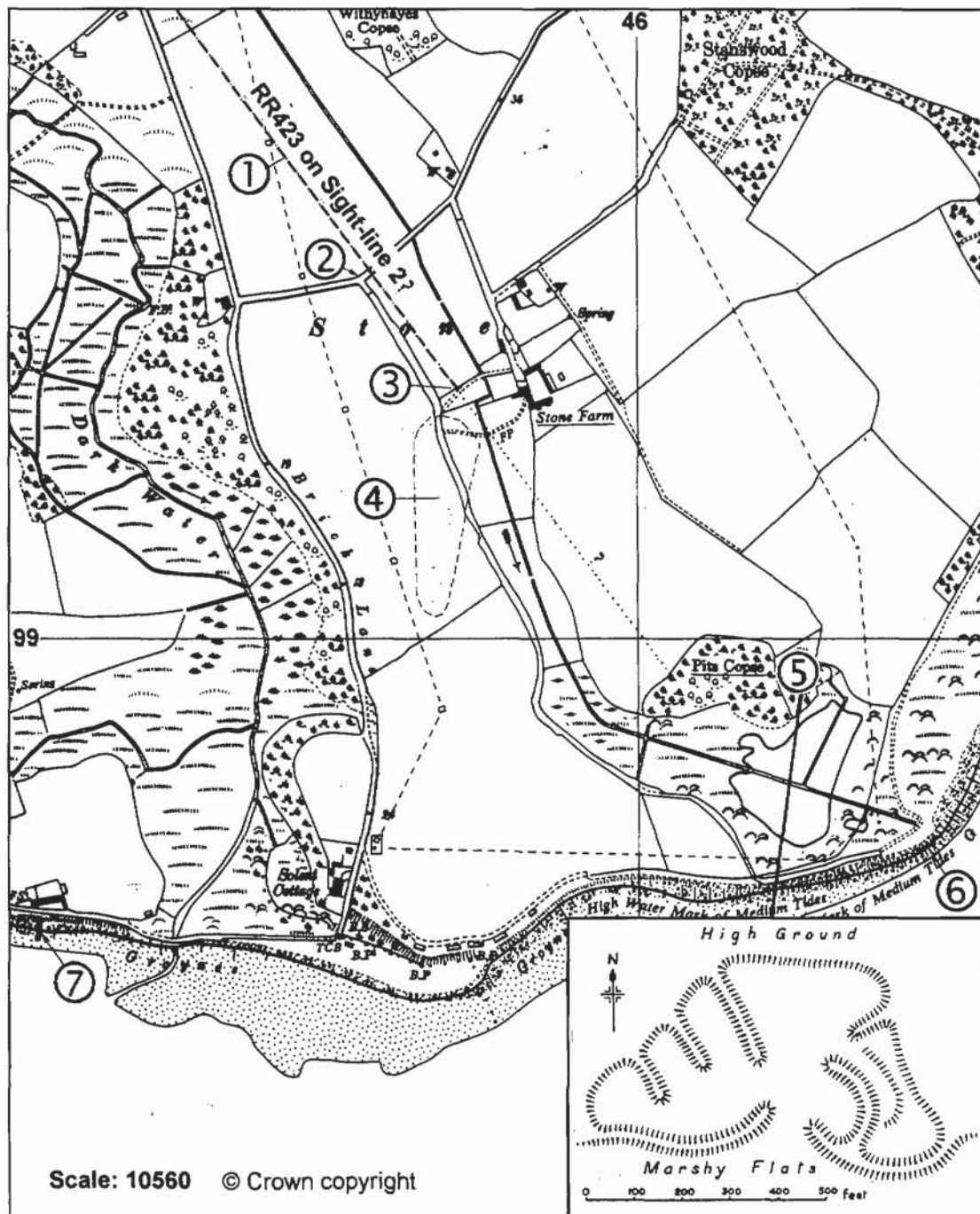


Fig. 12 Plot of the route at its southern end. Inset: earthworks in Pits Copse

Harbour followed by penetration northwards along the Avon Valley.

If the identification of *Cerdicesora* with Stone Point or Lepe is correct, however, Cerdic (and others) could well have used **RR423** and the new road from Applemore Hill to *Old Sarum* to advance from the Solent into Wessex. Crawford (1952, 193–200) suggests that after landing at *Cerdicesora*, Cerdic constructed an ‘enclave’, or beach-head, defined by linear earthworks in the Beaulieu area, including that abutting on the primary sighting point and alignment angle of **RR423** on Dibden Purlieu at SU 4086 0604. This earthwork was of similar dimensions to examples at Whitley Wood (SU 3013 0601) and Spore Lake (SU 3016 0465) which also face north away from the coast, and were strategically placed across the Roman road from Cadnam to *Buckland Rings*. Other linear earthworks in the New Forest are also sited across old roads and trackways, generally face away from the coast, and the ends rest on dense woodland, rivers, streams or bogs. Some may have been of the obstructive type and served to control traffic, others as temporary boundaries whilst rear areas were consolidated.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in 508 Cerdic and Cynric fought a battle with a Welsh king called *Natanleod* who was killed with 5000 men, in consequence of which the district was called *Natanleaga*. Coates (1989, 121–2) says that the story the *Chronicle* gives for the name is pure fabrication: *natan leaga* is not a Welsh personal name but the name of a wood ‘wet wood’, and he equates it with Netley Marsh, near Cadnam. In 519 the *Chronicle* says Cerdic and Cynric again engaged the Welsh at *Cerdicesford* and that the

battle was decisive. In company with most other authorities Coates (1989, 51) identifies *Cerdicesford* as Charford on the River Avon.

From **RR423** on Applemore Hill, a newly discovered Roman road was constructed to *Old Sarum*. This road proceeds via Cadnam and Bramshaw Telegraph to cross the River Avon at Downton. Cadnam, situated at a river crossing, and at the junction of three Roman roads, would appear to be a classic situation for the battle of *Natanleaga*. Cerdic probably then marched along the new Roman road from Cadnam as far as Golden Cross (SU 2132 1794) where it is joined by the *Cloven Way* (Crawford, 1931, 441–458). At this point Cerdic probably turned off the Roman road and along the *Cloven Way*, via Hatchet Green and Hale to Charford on the River Avon, and the battle of *Cerdicesford*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank David Stagg for access to his library; and for sharing with me his unrivalled knowledge of the New Forest. I am also most grateful to Trevor Thomas for his help, advice and encouragement during many long days in the field.

Editors' Note

Arthur ‘Nobby’ Clarke FSA was the last Archaeology Officer of the Ordnance Survey. He died suddenly on 23 March 2000, shortly after completing this paper. An obituary by David Stagg is available from the Society of Antiquaries. The editors of *Hampshire Studies* are very grateful to the Ordnance Survey for a grant towards the publication of this paper, and for permission to reproduce the detailed route maps, which remain Crown Copyright. Deborah Cunliffe, National Monuments Record, Swindon, kindly drew the general map.

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COMPUTATIONS DATA

Applemore Hill SP/AA	SU 3965 0758
Bell Lane, N end	SU 43425 02600
Blackwell Common (ford)	SU 4409 0164
Brokenford, Bartley Water intersection	SU 35422 12960
Buttsash Lane AA	SU 4177 0552
Calmore Road, Bears Lane End AA	SU 34952 13290
Dale Farm Lane, Dibden	SU 39381 07932
Dibden Manor, stream diversion	SU 3929 0805
Dibden Purlicu SP/AA	SU 4086 0604
East Veugles Copse, N edge	SU 3694 1112
Eling, bump on track	SU 36655 11492
Hedgerow/Downes Copse (OS 6 inch 1872)	SU 3583 1229 and SU 3576 1237
Holbury Grange, <i>agger</i>	SU 4291 0362
Jacobs Gutter (? ford)	SU 3610 1199
Jacobs Gutter intersection with primary sight-line	SU 3623 1193
Lepe Road	SU 45097 0023
Lepe Road, nr. Whitefield Farm	SU 44860 00555
Little Holbury AA	SU 4279 0386
Manor Farm Lane, Dibden	SU 39427 07871
Nutchers Copse, E corner	SU 38210 09466
Otterbourne Manor, junction RR42b/RR422	SU 4603 2298
Otterbourne Hill?, RR422	SU 4536 2261
Park Lane hedgerow, Pooks Green	SU 37388 10535
Pits Copse	SZ 4604 9894
Rough Down AA	SU 4355 0235
Rudes Copse <i>agger</i>	SU 37961 09790
Shorn Hill SP/AA	SU 3363 15237
Shorn Hill Jct with RR422	SU 3348 1523
Stone Farm, Lepe (track)	SZ 4571 9939
Stone Farm Lane, N end (Margary's line)	SZ 4556 9957
Tatchbury Mount NE entrance SP	SU 33080 14605
Tatchbury Mount AA	SU 3316 1455
Tatchbury Mount sight-line SP? (Otterbourne – Wattons Ford)	SU 3302 1446
Thatch Cottage, Jacobs Gutter Lane	SU 3635 1189
Twiggs Lane	SU 3821 0946
Wattons Ford, R. Avon	SU 1374 0183
Whitefield Farm Cottages AA	SU 44703 00770

BEARINGS

Bearings are calculated using 10m National Grid references, unless more accurate evidence is available in the form of the *agger*, terraceway, etc, to enable say a 1m coordinate to be applied. It follows that a bearing derived from a 10m grid reference is calculated from the SW corner of the grid square. If

the SW corners of the grid squares at the ends of an alignment fall on the centre line of the road, then the bearing will be precise. But if the centre line of the road falls elsewhere within the 10m squares, slight variations in the bearing will occur. Over long distances errors arising from this cause will be

slight; but over short distances they may be appreciable. On short lines an adjustment of 1 or 2m in northings or eastings is usually all that is necessary to produce exact agreement. For tables showing the effects of bearing errors, see Appendix.

Over the short distances involved in the sight-

lines and alignments of **RR423**, and the general NW-SE direction of the road, distortion arising from the Transverse Mercator projection used for OS mapping (i.e. the difference between the true ground distance and the grid distance) is negligible, and it may be ignored.

SIGHT-LINES

Sight-line 1

Shorn Hill (SU 3363 1524) to Dibden Purlieu (SU 4086 0604) = 141.83° : 11.70km

Sight-line 2

Dibden Purlieu (SU 4086 0604) to Stone Farm, Lepe (SZ 4571 9939) = 143.87° : 8.23km

Possible primary sight-line: Shorn Hill to Lepe

Shorn Hill SP (SU 33630 15237) to:	
Rough Down AA (SU 4354 0237)	= 142.40° : 16.24km
Whitefield Farm Cottages AA (SU 4473 0074)	= 142.57° : 18.26km
Stone Farm (SZ 4571 9939)	= 142.69° : 19.93km

These bearings do not fall within the normal error limits (0.01° or 0.02°) of roads in the Southampton area. They are, therefore, not convincing evidence of a initial single surveyed sight-line from Shorn Hill to Lepe, but are included out of interest. And, in any case, the precise position of the end of the road at Lepe has still to be determined.

? Sight-line: Otterbourne – Tatchbury hillfort – Wattons Ford

Otterbourne Manor, the junction of RR42b and RR422 (SU 4603 2298) to:	
Wattons Ford (SU 1374 0183)	= 236.78° : 38.60km
Tatchbury hill Fort ?SP (SU 3302 1446)	= 236.78° : 15.55km
Start of Tatchbury-Calmore-Brokenford alignment RR423 (SU 3316 1455), see below	= 236.77° : 15.38km

Shorn Hill – Applemore Hill – Dibden Purlieu

Shorn Hill (SU 3363 1524) to:	
Brokenford, Bartley Water (SU 35422 12960)	= 141.83° : 2.90km
Jacobs Gutter intersection (SU 3623 1193)	= 141.83° : 4.20km
Applemore Hill, sighting-point and start of new road to Old Sarum (SU 3965 0758)	= 141.83° : 9.73km
Dibden Purlieu (SU 4086 0604)	= 141.83° : 11.70km

Tatchbury Mount SP (NE entrance to hillfort) (SU 33080 14605) to:	
Calmore Road, Bears Lane End AA (SU 34952 13290)	= 125.09° : 2.288km
Brokenford (primary sight-line intersection) (SU 35422 12960)	= 125.08° : 2.862km

Tatchbury Mount AA (at foot of SE defences) (SU 3316 1455) to:

Calmore Road AA (SU 34952 13290)

= 125.11°: 2.19km

Brokenford/sight-line (SU 35403 12980)

= 125.09°: 2.765km

(Tatchbury Mount AA lies exactly a possible sight-line from Otterbourne Manor, RR42b/RR422 (SU 4603 2298) to Wattons Ford, River Avon (SU 1374 0183) (see above), but it could be coincidence.)

Calmore Road, Bears Lane End AA (SU 34952 13290) to:

Hedgerow, Spicers Hill (OS 6" 1872)(SU 3576 1237)

= 138.71°: 1.224km

Downes Copse, N end (OS 6" 1872)(SU 3583 1229)

= 138.72°: 1.33km

Downes Copse, Jacobs Gutter (?ford) (SU 3610 1198)

= 138.72°: 1.743km

'Dog-leg' : Jacobs Gutter (?ford) – Thatch Cottage (SU 3635 1189)

= 109.80°: 270m

Thatch Cottage, Jacobs Gutter Lane (SU 3635 1189) to:

Lane intersection, Eling (SU 36655 11492) (very short line)

= 142.54°: 501m

East Veugles Copse, N (SU 3694 1112) (short line)

= 142.56°: 967m

Trotts Lane hedgerow, Pooksgreen (SU 37338 10535)

= 142.57°: 1.707km

Rudes Copse *agger* (SU 37961 09790)

= 142.57°: 2.645km

Nutchers Copse inclosure bank, E corner

= 142.56°: 3.06km

Stream diversion, Manor Farm, Dibden (SU 3929 0805)

= 142.56°: 4.84km

Dale Farm Lane (SU 39381 07932)

= 142.56°: 4.98km

Manor Lane terraceway, Dibden (SU 39427 07871)

= 142.56°: 5.06km

Applemoor Hill SP/AA (SU 3965 0758)

= 142.56°: 5.43km

Dibden Purlieu SP (SU 4086 0604)

= 142.37°: 7.39km

Applemore Hill (SU 3965 0758) to:

Dibden Purlieu SP/AA (SU 4086 0604)

= 141.84°: 1.96km

Pits Copse, NW perimeter of earthworks and 5m contour (SZ 4604 9894)

= 143.51°: 10.75km

Dibden Purlieu to Lepe

Dibden Purlieu (SU 4086 0604) to:

Roughdown AA (SU 4355 0235)

= 143.91°: 4.57km

Whitefield Farm Cottages (SU 44703 00770)

= 143.90°: 6.522km

Lepe Road, Whitefield Farm (SU 4486 00555)

= 143.90°: 6.788km

Lepe Road, E of E hedge) (SU 45097 00230)

= 143.90°: 7.19km

N end of lane, Stone Farm (Margary's line) (SZ 4556 9957)

= 144.00°: 7.997km

Stone Farm (SZ 4571 9939?)

= 143.90°: 8.23km

Pits Copse, NW perimeter of earthworks, and 5m contour (SZ 4604 9894)

= 143.89°: 8.789km

Buttsash Lane – Little Holbury AA (SU 42789 03860)

= 153.25°: 1.691km

Little Holbury AA – N end, Bell Lane (SU 43425 02600)

= 153.25°: 1.41km

Little Holbury AA – Rough Down AA (SU 4355 0235)

= 153.25°: 1.691km

Rough Down AA – Blackwell Common Ford (SU 4409 0164)

= 143.00°: 0.91km

Blackwell Common Ford – Whitefield Farm Cottages (SU 4473 0074)	= 144.65°: 1.063km
Whitefield Farm Cottages AA (SU 44703 00770) – Stone Farm	= 143.88°: 1.708km

APPENDIX

Bearing errors

On the basis that 1° at 60 miles subtends 1 mile (1760yds/1609.35m):

At:	60 miles:	1' subtends	29.33yds/26.82m	2' subtends	58.67yds/53.64m
	30 miles:	1' subtends	14.67yds/13.41m	2' subtends	29.34yds/26.82m
	15 miles:	1' subtends	7.33yds/ 6.71m	2' subtends	14.66yds/13.42m
	10 miles:	1' subtends	4.89yds/ 4.47m	2' subtends	9.78yds/ 8.94m
	5 miles:	1' subtends	2.44yds/ 2.23m	2' subtends	4.88yds/ 4.46m
	1 miles:	1' subtends	0.49yds/ 0.45m	2' subtends	0.98yds/ 0.90m

And if 1° at 60km subtends 1km (1000m):

At	60km:	1' subtends	16.67m	2' subtends	33.33m
	50km:	1' subtends	13.89m	2' subtends	27.78m
	40km:	1' subtends	11.11m	2' subtends	22.22m
	30km:	1' subtends	8.33m	2' subtends	16.67m
	20km:	1' subtends	5.55m	2' subtends	11.11m
	10km:	1' subtends	2.78m	2' subtends	5.55m
	9km:	1' subtends	2.50m	2' subtends	5.00m
	8km:	1' subtends	2.22m	2' subtends	4.44m
	7km:	1' subtends	1.94m	2' subtends	3.89m
	6km:	1' subtends	1.67m	2' subtends	3.33m
	5km:	1' subtends	1.39m	2' subtends	2.78m
	4km:	1' subtends	1.12m	2' subtends	2.22m
	3km:	1' subtends	0.83m	2' subtends	1.67m
	2km:	1' subtends	0.56m	2' subtends	1.11m
	1km:	1' subtends	0.28m	2' subtends	0.56m

Bearing conversions

01' = 0.0167°	21' = 0.35°	41' = 0.6833°
02' = 0.0333°	22' = 0.3666°	42' = 0.70°
03' = 0.05°	23' = 0.3833°	43' = 0.7166°
04' = 0.0666°	24' = 0.40°	44' = 0.7333°
05' = 0.0833°	25' = 0.4166°	45' = 0.75°
06' = 0.1°	26' = 0.4333°	46' = 0.7666°
07' = 0.1166°	27' = 0.45°	47' = 0.7833°
08' = 0.1333°	28' = 0.4666°	48' = 0.80°
09' = 0.15°	29' = 0.4833°	49' = 0.8166°
10' = 0.1666°	30' = 0.50°	50' = 0.8333°
11' = 0.1833°	31' = 0.5166°	51' = 0.85°
12' = 0.20°	32' = 0.5333°	52' = 0.8666°
13' = 0.2166°	33' = 0.55°	53' = 0.8833°
14' = 0.2333°	34' = 0.5666°	54' = 0.90°
15' = 0.25°	35' = 0.5833°	55' = 0.9166°
16' = 0.2666°	36' = 0.60°	56' = 0.9333°
17' = 0.2833°	37' = 0.6166°	57' = 0.95°
18' = 0.30°	38' = 0.6333°	58' = 0.9666°
19' = 0.3166°	39' = 0.65°	59' = 0.9833°
20' = 0.3333°	40' = 0.6666°	

Linear conversion factors

1 yd	=	0.91442m	1 kilometre	=	0.6214 mile
1 m	=	1.09359yds	1 statute mile	=	1609m
1 m	=	3.2808ft	1 Roman mile	=	1480.5m or 1619yds