

to the south-east of the find-spot it has a gravel bottom and there was a track running on fairly high ground along the Higham Parish boundary across Higham Heath which carried on down to the gravel ford, but disappeared when the cultivated fields were reached. This track was approximately 400m south from the Icknield Way and running parallel with it. The track was ploughed out in 1942-3 when the whole area came under cultivation. This crossing could well have been used as an alternate to the Icknield Way as these two gravel patches would have been the only two crossing places suitable for animals over about 2 miles of the river. The meadow area each side of the river used to be very wet in winter and according to elderly people living in Cavenham in the 1930s the whole form of the river and its water table changed after the building of the railway embankment at, and the subsequent draining of, Barrow Bottom in the 19th century.

TERESA BRISCOE

A Roman road at Bradfield St. George. Norman Scarfe, in his book, *The Suffolk Landscape* (1972), p.183, suggests that a Roman road may run parallel to the known Long Melford to Ixworth road (Margary's 33a). From Cockfield the road would lie 2km east of the known route by Eastlow Hill, skirting Hessett and Beyton parishes. We investigated the section from Quakers Lane, Beyton to Mill Farm, Bradfield St. George. Rural district and parish boundaries indicate much of this route, being supplemented by hedgerows, footpaths and straight lengths of modern road. The alignment lies generally north-north-east from Bradfield St. Clare to Thurston. It reveals careful surveying, changing direction between straight sections at good sighting points. No deviation of more than 10° is made from the general alignment. Along the length examined, occasional linear scatters of flints were seen. Beyond Free Wood, Bradfield St. George, the road crosses open arable country. An ancient hedge follows the course of the road south of the Blackbourne crossing at TM/923596. This hedge terminates abruptly in an arable field. The road alignment continues to a high point in Holly Bush Lane, where a change of direction leads to an interesting section through an overgrown cutting *c.* 6m wide. In line with the cutting a stream has been hardened in its bed, to take a ford. A raised cartway, with very old tree stumps in its verges, continues the road southward.

To confirm the existence of the road under the arable field we approached Mr. Derek Meekings, who readily gave us permission to excavate. The site of the work is shown at S on the accompanying map (Fig. 77). A trench, 1m wide, was opened at right angles to the line of the road. The soil was brown loamy clay to a depth of 52cm, where a scatter of small chalk fragments peppered the loam. A row

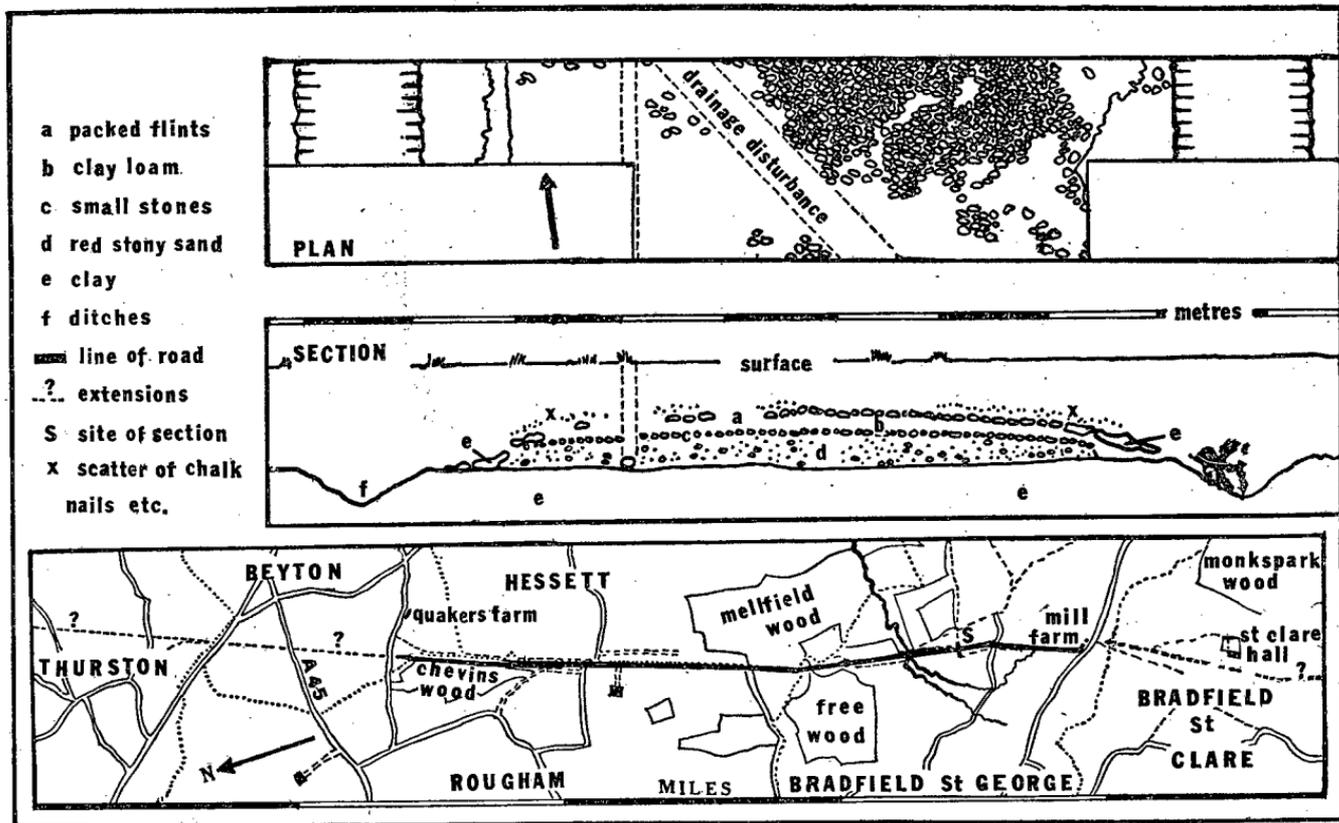


FIG. 77.—Roman road at Bradfield St. George.

of rotten roots across the trench shewed that the old hedge had formerly followed the course of the road across the field. A sherd of medieval pottery recovered in the same stratum confirmed our dating of the hedge as over 4 centuries old. Beneath the remains of the hedge we found 7 hand-made nails, with square shanks. The nails had been clenched over in wood about 3cm thick. Near the nails were other fragments of iron. None of this material is dateable. A spread of flints lay under the nails. The flints were carefully laid, being closely packed and laid on their flat sides. They were graded into two sizes, the larger measuring *c.* 8cm by 4cm, with smaller flints, *c.* 4cm by 2cm, in the spaces. This flint surface was gently cambered, being 8cm lower at the sides. The cobbling, which was $4\frac{1}{2}$ m in width, was embedded in a layer of compacted clay and sand, orange in colour, and free of stones. These layers had been disturbed by mole and tile draining. Under this, complete across the section, was a thick layer of bright red gravelly sand, $5\frac{1}{2}$ m wide, and 30cm thick at the centre. It was slightly cambered, being 2cm lower at the edges. This foundation layer rested directly on the boulder clay subsoil, and was hardened on its surface with a capping of small stones. No trace of the original ground surface was seen under the road. Gravel of the kind used in this construction is not found in the immediate vicinity of the section, the nearest source probably being pits near Thurston station. 70cm beyond the red layer, on each side of the road was a well-defined drainage ditch. The ditches were of flattened V-section, 120cm wide and 40cm deep. Land snail shells were found in the bottom of the easterly ditch, 142cm below the present land surface. The boulder clay from the ditches had been piled on the sides of the road layers as retaining kerbs. 3 pieces of old iridescent glass, 3 flint flakes, and 6 fragments of medieval pottery were found in disturbed portions of the excavation.

It is interesting to note that the alignment of this road, if extended northwards, heads straight for the Roman villa site at Stanton Chare. Exploration and determination of this and the southward extension beyond the Bradfields awaits action.

The writers are indebted to Mr. Derek Meekings, Mr. Stanley West, and Mr. Norman Scarfe for their help and encouragement.

MAVIS BAKER AND GEOFFREY OXBORROW

An intaglio from Burgh Castle. Through the kindness of Mr. P. K. Brewer I have had occasion to examine an impression taken from a Roman intaglio gemstone which was discovered on 18 August 1938 near the walls of the Saxon Shore fort at Burgh Castle (Plate XXVII). The intaglio was evidently cut on a cornelian, ovoid in shape and with a slightly convex upper surface (dimensions, *c.* 15 x 10 x 3 mm). This yields an impression of the winged horse Pegasus,