

THE FOSSEWAY AT BATH

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1. *Initial considerations, and the Old Fosse Road at Odd Down* (Figs. 1 and 2 and briefly Fig. 3).

The long, straight stretches of the Fosseway, as it runs north eastwards across the country, are well known, but its course as it descends to the valley of the Avon at Bath is not so easily recognisable. It is thought to have been crossed, or converged upon, by several other Roman roads there, possibly in the Walcot area, a little to the north of *Aquae Sulis* (Cunliffe 1986, 17 & Fig. 11) and seems likely to have shared with one of them the route along the present London Road as far as Batheaston (Margary 1973, 137). These roads linked with the whole network of Roman routes in Britain, where all the major ones had been constructed during the military advance between A.D. 43 and 81 (*ibid.*, 504 and Figs. 3 & 5). In his descriptions of the Roman roads in the Bath area (*ibid.*, 127, 137 and 141-3), Margary indicated doubts about the precise line of certain parts of them.

As regards the Fosseway, Cunliffe has pointed out that 'the line of the Fosse is well established to the north of Bath on Bannerdown and to the south at Combe Hay, but between, all is guesswork' (1986, 16). Yet from at least the early 18th century, it has generally been assumed that the Fosseway ran through Bath via the mediaeval South and North Gates, approaching the city from the south by descending from Odd Down into the line of Holloway, and emerging from the North Gate along Walcot Street into the London Road (Stukeley's Plan of Bath, 1724; Margary 1973, 127 & 141).

In considering the route south of the city, most earlier writers regarded the present Bloomfield Road and Holloway (the 18th-century turnpike road) as the route of the Fosseway between Odd Down and the South Gate (Collinson 1791, 102; Colt Hoare 1821, 104 & Plate II; Scarth 1864, 108). More recently, the present Wellsway, between Odd Down and Holloway, perhaps because it is a little more direct, has been labelled as its course (1:2500 O.S. Som. Sheet XIV, 13, 1888). That route may also be implied in Margary (1973, 127), who is quoted by the Ordnance Survey as their authority for currently accepting this line. However, no route appears to have existed along that part of Wellsway which lies between Odd Down and Devonshire Buildings, until the early 19th century, when it was constructed as an entirely new section of road, in connection with improvements to the turnpike at that time (Cf. Thorpe's Survey of a five-mile radius of Bath, 1805 and Cotterell's Survey, 1852). Very recently, other possible positions for the Fosseway, as it crossed the Bath area, have been postulated by Cunliffe (1986, 16) and shown as conventionalised direct routes on his maps (*ibid.*, Figs. 11 & 20).

Apart from the doubt concerning both the Bloomfield Road and Wellsway routes to the city, there is also the fact that the Old Fosse Road at Odd Down strikes off in

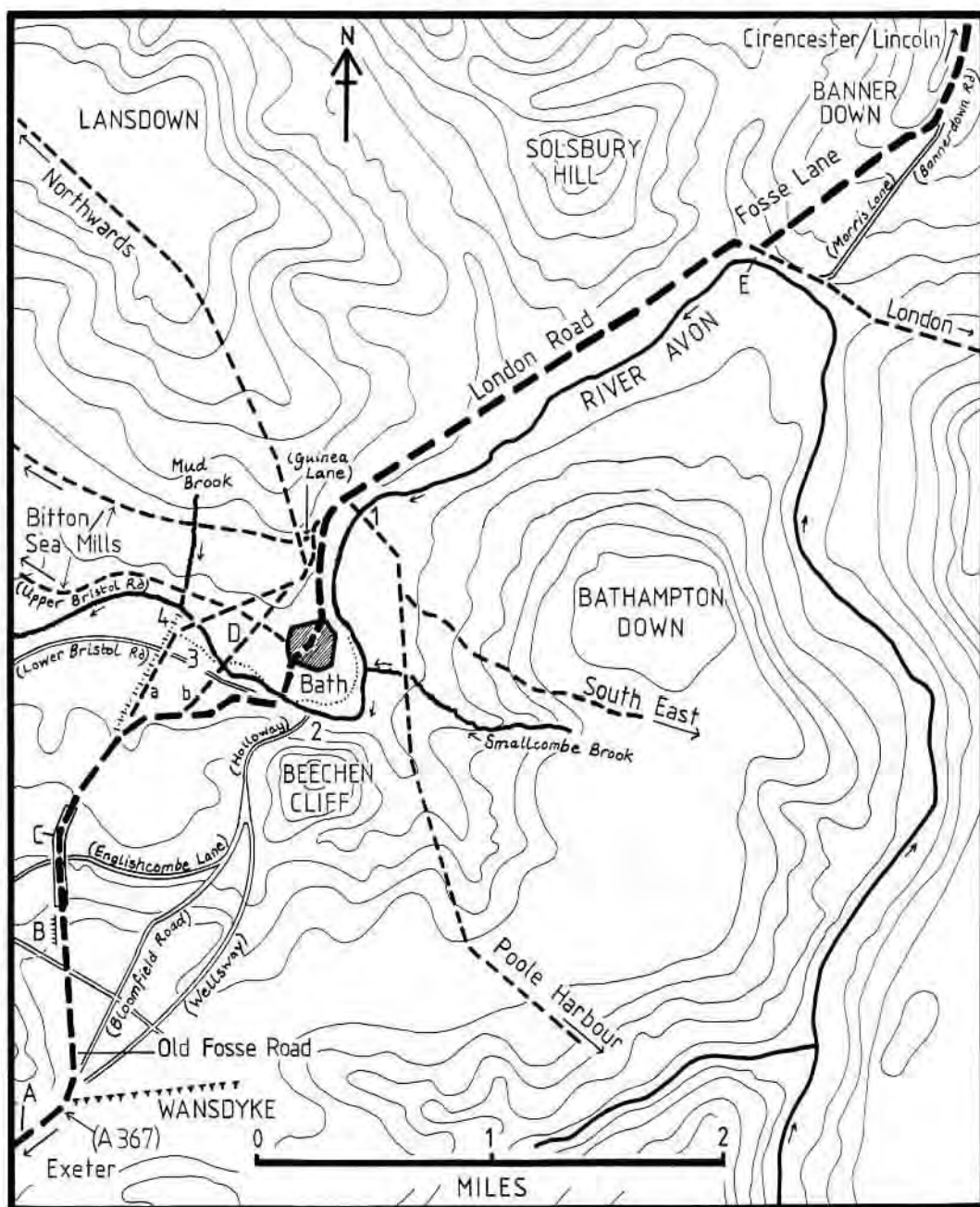


Fig. 1 General map: probable course of the Fosseway and some other probable Roman routes at Bath

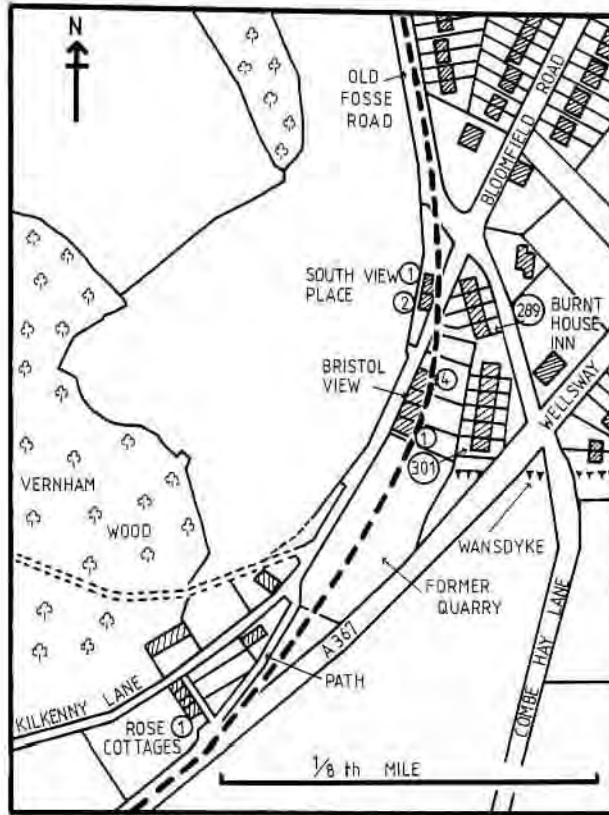


Fig. 2 From the present A367 to the Old Fosse Road

Key:

- probable course of the Fosseway
 ① house numbers marked thus

Key to Fig. 1:

- probable course of the Fosseway
 - - - - - other probable Roman routes (some followed by present roads)
 = = = = = some present roads (including those to which reference has been made)
 probable course of the river in early Roman times (after Kellaway)
 ▲▲▲▲▲ Wansdyke
 - - - - - Lyncombe boundary (final part only, from St. Kilda's Road to river)
 A - Rose Cottages (beside A367)
 B - observed remnants of bank
 C - Major and Burrow's mapped line of the Foss Road
 D - former 'Rope Walk'
 E - Stam Bridge (at Batheaston)
 a - probable early diversion from the Fosseway
 b - probable later diversion from the Fosseway
 1 - Cleveland Bridge
 2 - Churchill Bridge
 3 - Midland Bridge
 4 - Victoria Bridge

a different direction from the route through Holloway to the former South Gate. It was curiosity as to why this should be so that led to the present findings. Although it would be unwise to be categorical, the resulting evidence seems sufficiently strong to suggest the most probable route of the doubtful seven miles or so of the Fosseway between the Combe Hay and Bannerdown sections. The reasons are given, in tracing the course below.

It seemed significant that, in the 19th- and early 20th-century maps, the two mile western boundary of Lyncombe and of the County and Parliamentary Borough of Bath, between Wansdyke and the River Avon, is shown beginning its course along the Old Fosse Road at Odd Down (Cotterell's Survey of Bath, 1852; 1:10,000 O.S. Somerset Sheet, 14 SW, 1903).

The earliest known survey of this area south of the river is contained in a grant by King Edgar to St. Peter's (the Abbey) of Bath in 970 A.D. (B.C.S. 1257). Although it was called 'Cliftune' in the grant, the boundaries set out in the survey (Grundy 1935, 211-213) suggest that it was probably the area later to become known as the manor of Lyncombe (embracing the parishes of Lyncombe and Widcombe). Towards the end of the survey, as it traces the course of the boundary, are the following words: 'Of Woden's Dic on Fosse Straet. Andlang Afene upp eft on Smalan cumes broc'. . . . 'From Wandsdyke to Fosse Street. Along the Avon and up once more on Smallcombe Brook'. It shows that originally the whole of that western boundary was along 'Fosse Straet'. It seems, then, that the Old Fosse Road is an 800 yard fragment of 'Fosse Straet' and, therefore, by implication of the Roman Fosseway.

Because Wellsway was labelled as the route of the Fosseway on the 20th-century O.S. map, Grundy suggested that where the main line of the Fosseway from the south crossed the Wansdyke at Odd Down, the Roman road must have divided into two spurs 'if the information in O.M. 6 be correct' (*ibid.*). Wellsway and the Old Fosse Road run at an angle of about forty-five degrees to one another, suggesting widely separated routes (current 1:10,000 O.S. City of Bath map). It seems obvious that only one of these could have been known as 'Fosse Straet', otherwise it would have led to endless confusion in interpreting the bounds of the 970 grant. Thus the Old Fosse Road route would seem to have been the true line of the Fosseway leading from the Wansdyke at Odd Down.

It is necessary, then, to show how the Combe Hay section of the Fosseway led into the Old Fosse Road. The well-established line of the Combe Hay part of the Fosseway begins on the track and footpath, sometimes called 'the Old Fosse', which climbs north eastwards from Dunkerton to the A367 (1:25,000 O.S. Sheet ST 66/76, 1976). It then turns slightly clockwise to continue on a straight course along the level top of the hill on the A367 for nearly four-fifths of a mile. The Combe Hay boundary follows this course.

From this Combe Hay section of the Fosseway, there are various indications that its original course to the Old Fosse Road was across a 19th-century quarry,¹ and began with a slight anti-clockwise turn (still apparent at the edge of the road) from a point about fifty yards south west of Rose Cottages, where a field boundary meets the north-west side of the A367 (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7361). An 18th-century map (Thorpe's Survey of a five-mile radius of Bath, 1742), shows the Bath/Wells turnpike road turning from the present A367 at that point, and following a slightly curved or angled route (unfortunately distorted by a fold in the map), strongly banked on the western side, across that area. At its other end, the banking of the route is shown facing into the line of the present Old Fosse Road, while the turnpike route continues, unbanked, for a brief distance beside the Old Fosse Road alignment, before making a sweeping curve into the present

Bloomfield Road. Although quarrying has almost completely destroyed the original line of the junction between the present A367 and the Old Fosse Road, it is probably partly represented by the narrow pathway which runs from the parking bay above Rose Cottages to Kilkenny Lane. Possible evidence of the side of the bank is still to be seen in the gardens of Rose Cottages, on the western side of the pathway. The former, gradually turning, banked route of the Fosseway would almost certainly have passed through No. 1 Bristol View and crossed Kilkenny Lane obliquely, to continue through the present South View Place, on the other side of Kilkenny Lane. The slightly angled and banked western edge of the raised ground of South View Place probably represents the western edge of the Fosseway, as it completed its turning into the line of the present Old Fosse Road.²

The 970 boundary ran 'from Wansdyke to Fosse Straet'. A three-quarter mile stretch of Wansdyke, along which the southern boundary ran, can still be traced between the 'Cross Keys' in Midford Road and the Combe Hay Lane/A367 junction. Beyond that, a further fifty-seven foot fragment still exists on the north-western side of the A367 (Fox & Fox 1958, 35), beside the house known as 301 Old Fosse Road, where it can still be seen. Its quarried-out end, where the City and the Lyncombe/Combe Hay/Englishcombe boundaries now meet, stands above the old quarry face, beside the south-eastern corner of the rear garden of No. 1 Bristol View. It seems likely that, before the quarrying took place, the earthwork actually abutted on the Fosseway, very close to its present end. It is unfortunate that the 1742 Survey did not map the line of the Wansdyke at all.

There is a manuscript survey of Lyncombe dated 1590, when a wood marked the turning place in the boundary, as follows: 'after a ditch called Wansditch until we come to Odwood, and thence after a way called the Fosse, being a high bank'. The earliest known mapped survey of Lyncombe, the Bruton Hospital Survey of 1799, also shows the wood in that spot. The line of the Wansdyke is not indicated among the tree symbols, so that the exact relationship of the Wansdyke and the Fosse at that time is not revealed. The beginning of the western boundary is shown as a piece of road, skirting the western side of the wood, and sweeping very gradually anti-clockwise into the line of the present Old Fosse Road, thus seeming to confirm its course through the present South View Place.

For over a quarter of a mile, the western side of the present Old Fosse Road, on either side of Burnt House Farm, stands two or three feet above the level of fields which slope gently away from its line, before descending more rapidly to the valley below (current 1:2500 O.S. Plans ST 7361 & 7362). Half way along the road, where houses have been built on the western side, the ground sweeps down to the level of their front gardens. In the last 150 yards or so, where some houses have been built at road level, there is some evidence of a bank between two of the groups, so that they may have been built on the line of the original road. The present Old Fosse Road, which runs almost straight for about 800 yards on a course slightly west of north, along an edge of Odd Down, commands wide views to the west and north, and would seem to have been strategically well sited.

According to the 1590 survey of Lyncombe, the boundary followed the Fosse 'until we come to Twerton's lordship'. The boundaries of Twerton and Lyncombe met at Englishcombe Lane and shared a common boundary from there to the river (Cotterell's Survey, 1852).³ It seems likely, therefore, that in 1590 the boundary ran 'after a way called the Fosse, being a high bank' at least as far as Englishcombe Lane. This is twice as far as its present recognisable course along the Old Fosse Road, but still only half the distance between Wansdyke and the river, to which the 970 'Fosse Straet' ran.

Today there is no direct route between the Old Fosse Road and Englishcombe

Lane. Even the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary, from the time of the 1799 survey, followed a somewhat erratic course in that part, including an angled turn to follow a watercourse through various issues and sinkings for the last 385 yards to Englishcombe Lane (Bruton Hospital Survey, 1799; Cotterell's Survey, 1852; 1:10,000 O.S. Sheet Somerset 14 SW, 1903). Parts of that boundary watercourse can still be traced, between a point west of Stirtingale Farm and the eastern side of 159a Englishcombe Lane (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7363).

2. *Evidence beyond the Old Fosse Road* (Figs. 3 and 4)

After crossing Rush Hill from the end of the Old Fosse Road, the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary made a slight eastward bend, apparently to skirt the still existing property line of 169 Rush Hill (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7362). Slight mounding exists for a brief distance against the wall and by the hedge on the eastern side of the property. It may be a remnant of the edge of the bank of the Fosse. A little further on, a slight swelling in the ground of the bungalow 'Walleen', at the rear of Somerdale View, may indicate the course of the Fosse, as it begins to descend from the summit of the hill.

At the cul-de-sac end of Somerdale View, the top edges of two steep slopes, containing scrub and larger trees, meet at an angle in uneven ground, just below the level of the road. The area is somewhat neglected and overgrown, and has been used as a dumping ground for rubbish. There is evidence of former quarrying along the northward-running edge.

In the wooded and scrub area are to be found various remnants of a line of mounded bank. They would seem to indicate the course of the 'way called the Fosse, being a high bank' of the 1590 survey. About ten yards of well-compacted, round-topped bank can be seen descending, at an angle just west of north, from near the north-east corner of the parking bay in front of 15 Somerdale View. It seems insufficiently massive to have carried the Roman road, but may have been the substantial bank of its left-hand (western) ditch, while the road itself has probably been quarried away. At the beginning, the western side of this bank slopes down eight feet or more to a high corner of an L-shaped field below. Although largely cut away and mutilated, the bank appears to continue along the base of the precipitously steep, wooded slope, about twenty feet beneath the edge by the Corston View houses, on a course just east of north, for about 250 yards. Where it can be seen, inside the rough hedge-line, the mounding of the bank appears to rise to a height of about three feet above the level of the ground in the L-shaped field on its western side.⁴ It is a little difficult to be certain whether this is merely a remaining side bank or part of the *agger* of the road itself.

On the western side of the line of bank and the rough hedge-row, runs the slightly irregular course of a very shallow, dry ditch, along the longer arm of the L-shaped field, which slopes westwards from the line of the ditch towards Edgeworth Road. Beyond that, the ground descends more steeply to a deep valley. The field commands wide views to the north and west; the Welsh hills can be seen in good visibility. The 'modern' Lyncombe boundary appears to have followed the line of the ditch (Cotterell's Survey, 1852; 1:10,000 O.S. Somerset Sheet 14 SW, 1903).

Beyond the area of scrub and the point where the steep southern boundary of Stirtingale Farm cuts a slight drainage channel across a remnant of the line of bank, the ground on its eastern side reduces rapidly in height and steepness. A slight but fairly wide swelling of the ground appears for a brief distance, running northwards, just inside the hedge-line of the upper pasture of the farm. A scarcely visible depression marks the eastern side of the contour, while on the west, along the

hedge-line, it is still banked about two or three feet above the ground of the L-shaped field and its ditch. The fairly wide swelling or undulation of the ground along the edge of the upper pasture here may represent the actual line of the Roman road.

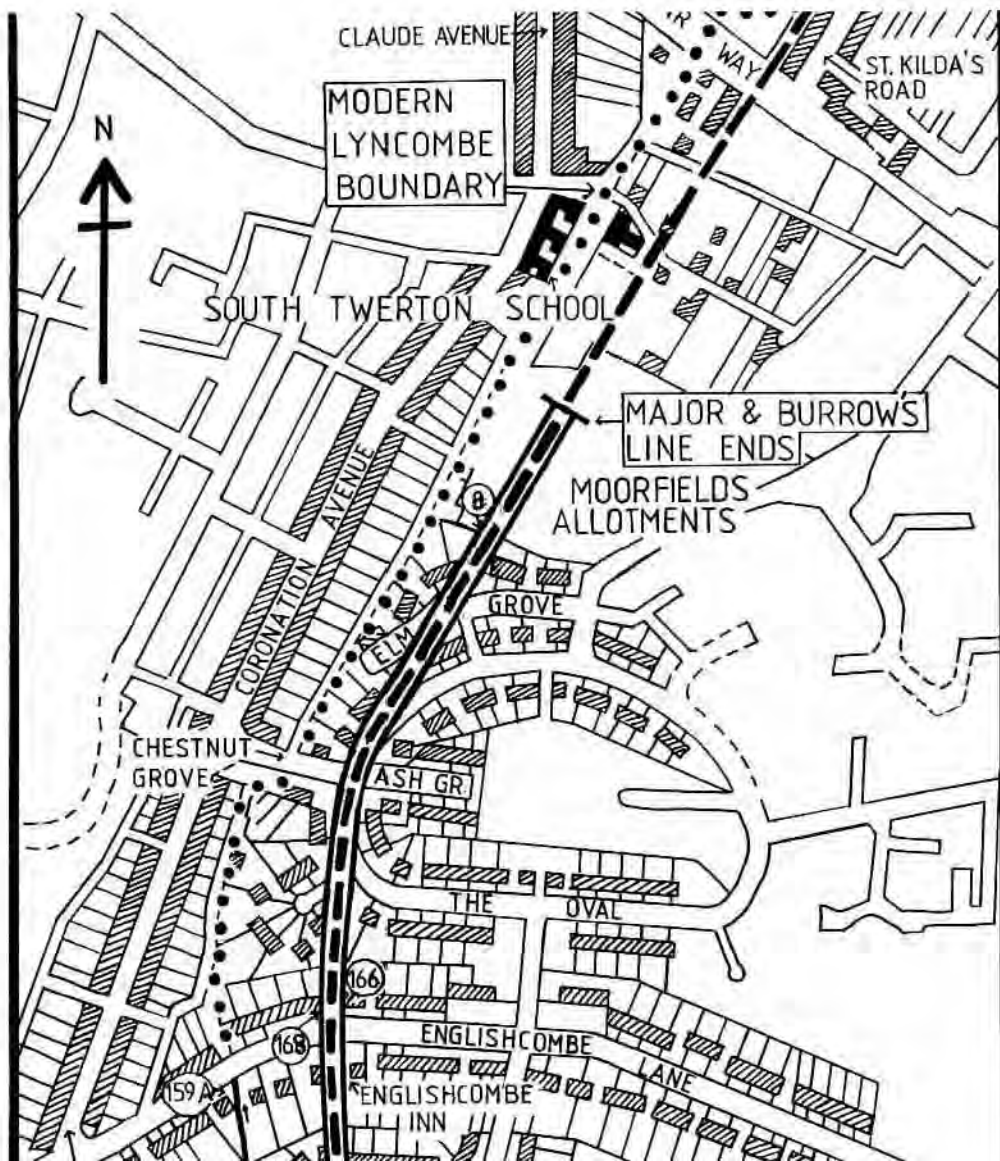
It would be interesting to know its present make-up and compare it with that found during the excavation of an almost unspoiled section of the Fosseway at Radstock in the last century (McMurtrie 1884, 78–82), when each of its layers was measured and described. The width of the Roman surface of the road there was six feet, while the base measured over fifteen feet between the ditches.

At the northern end of the upper pasture of Stirlingale Farm, the ground appears to have been hollowed and cut away across the expected line of the Fosse, and an east-west hedge-line there divides the upper from the lower pasture of the farm. A little brook, issuing nearby, runs beside the east-west hedge, across the former line of the Fosse, and turns into the ditch in the L-shaped field (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7363). The ditch, carrying the brook, then makes a slight westward change of alignment to run a little west of north for a short distance, on the western side of a banked hedge-line and a low, wide stump of slightly higher ground, on which stabling has been built, and which juts briefly into the lower pasture. From beside the banked hedge-line and within about twenty-five yards of joining the ditch, the brook makes a more pronounced westward kink, away from any close connection with the Fosse, but to continue on a similar bearing as before, through various sinkings and issues to Englishcombe Lane, where it can still be seen beside No. 159a. From the time of the first mapped survey of Lyncombe in 1799, the boundary appeared to follow the line of the brook, from the point where it joined the ditch.

Although from nearby there is now no further obvious sign of a banked route, a continuation of its line was apparently visible, for a considerable distance, in the fairly recent past, and was fortuitously mapped and labelled by Major,⁵ in connection with his investigations into the course of the Wansdyke. The map was published in a book under joint authorship after his death, and unfortunately no reference to the mapped line of the Fosse is made in the text (Major and Burrow 1926, 62).

On their map (a reduced six-inch O.S.), they have superimposed a broken black line, running for about eight hundred yards, from a point in the present lower pasture of Stirlingale Farm, in line with the ditch, to a position part way across the present Moorfields Allotments, at the edge of their map. The line, beginning on a bearing of a few degrees west of north, curves gradually clockwise into a north-north-easterly course. They have labelled both the Old Fosse Road and the broken black line as 'British Foss Road'. According to the Key (*ibid.*, viii), the broken black line 'indicates that evidence of the former course can be, or has been, visible along this line'. The Lyncombe (and Borough) boundary sweeps away to the west of their line, by about a hundred yards at its greatest point of divergence (a little below Englishcombe Lane), but bends and kinks back eastwards, to run nearer the line, towards the edge of the map. Although the authors have labelled the line 'British Foss Road', it is almost certainly the course of 'the way called the Fosse, being a high bank' of 1590 and of the 970 'Fosse Straet'. It would seem, therefore, to reveal a further stretch in the course of the Fosseway.

Housing estates have subsequently been developed on most of the fields through which the authors' line passed, but, despite the curvature of the route and the approximate scale of the reduction, it is possible, with the aid of their map, to trace the course of the Foss Road fairly closely in relation to present-day features. In one or two places, the higher ground of a ridge, or other possible evidence, seems to confirm its position.



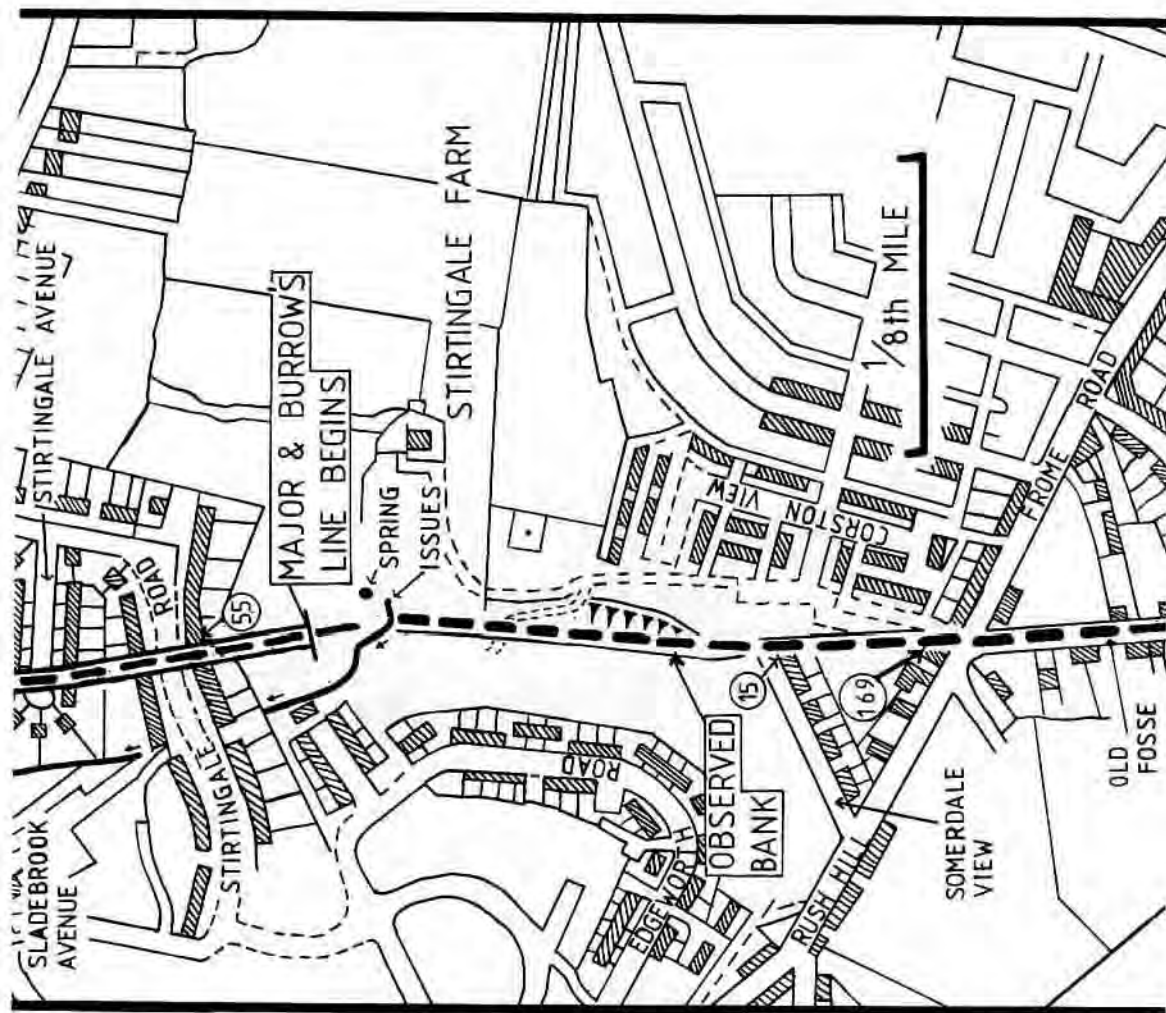
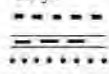


Fig. 3 From the Old Fosse Road to the present St. Kilda's Road

Key:



probable course of the Fosseway

Major and Burrow's mapped line of the Foss Road

Lyncombe boundary

house numbers marked thus

①

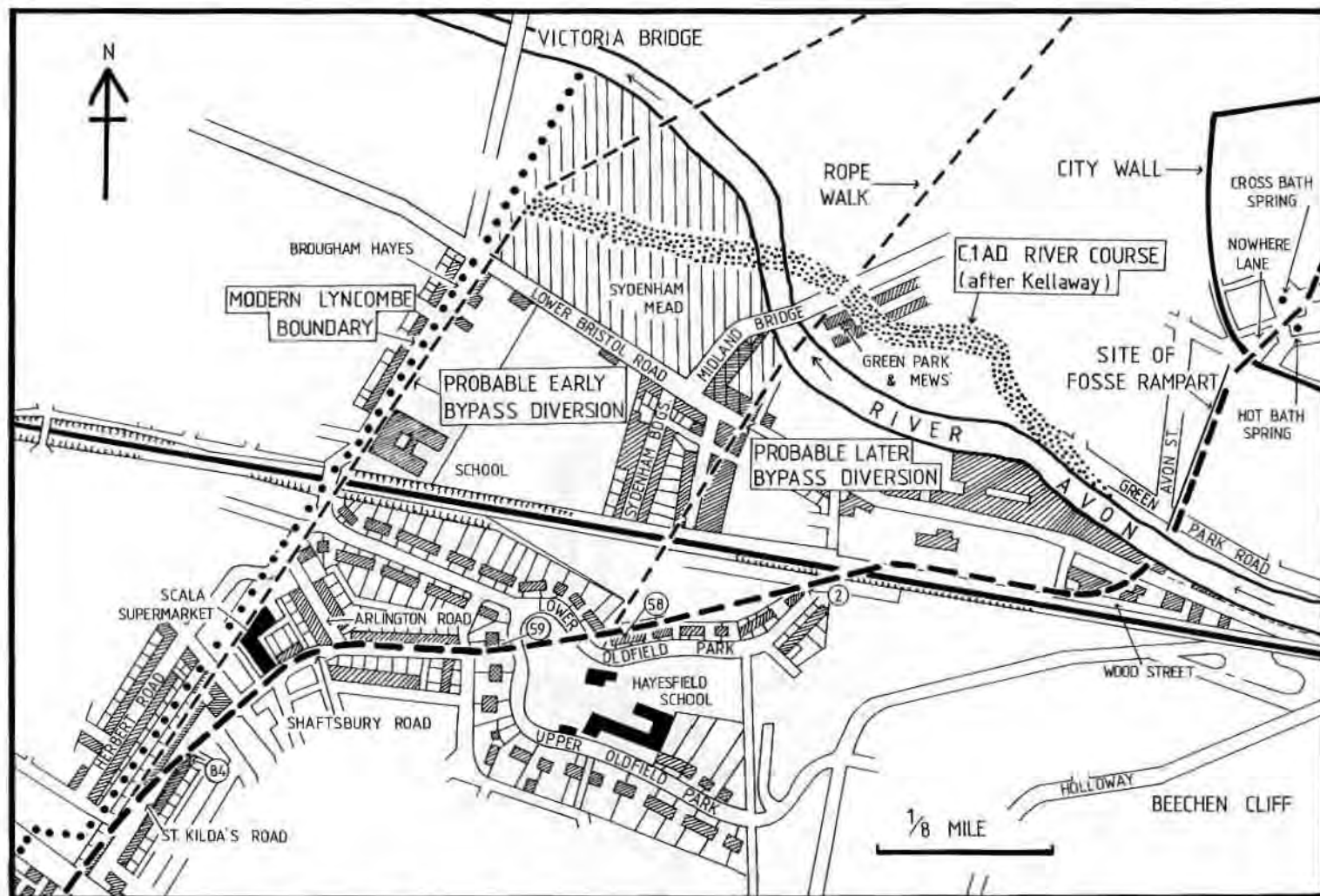


Fig. 4 From the present St. Kilda's Road to the formerly-walled city

The position and direction of their mapped line across the present lower pasture of Stirlingale Farm would take the Foss Road approximately through the present No. 55 Stirlingale Road, where the fairly steep rear garden appears to be slightly raised above that of its western neighbour.⁶ It would continue across the present Stirlingale Avenue at the raised cul-de-sac end, and emerge at Englishcombe Lane through the present Englishcombe Inn, at a point almost ninety yards east of the Lyncombe boundary brook.⁷

Opposite the Inn, on the northern side of Englishcombe Lane, the authors' line would take the Foss Road, as it began the gradual clockwise turn, approximately through the present Nos. 166 and 168, along what appears to be the centre of a very slight ridge. The curving pattern may almost have been incorporated in part of the turning line of the western end of the present Oval, on either side of the Ash Grove intersection, across which the route would seem to have run. At the completion of the gradual turn, the Foss Road is shown pursuing a north-north-easterly course and crossing a field boundary (approximating to the rear boundary of the present Elm Grove), at a distance of about sixty-five yards from the Lyncombe boundary. The position would be at the rear of the present No. 8 Elm Grove. An early 1930s map shows a narrow strip of ground (part of a larger rectangular area) projecting from that point into the present Moorfields Allotments for about thirty yards, on Major and Burrow's alignment (1:10,000 O.S. Som. Sheet XIV, SW, 1933). Of what it consisted at that time is not known, but it would certainly seem to have been on the course of the Foss Road.

The ground is now part of the Moorfields Allotments. Levelling may have been required, as fairly large mounds remain at the rear of Nos. 7, 8 and 9, where the ground now drops to the slightly lower level of the Allotments. To these mounds has been added an accumulation of the small, knobby stones, which abound on the site.

The ground of the Allotments slopes slightly north eastwards along a wide ridge. In all this part, north of Englishcombe Lane, the ground westward from the line of Sladebrook and Coronation Avenues descends more steeply to the deep valley of the Slade Brook. Thus the siting of the Fosseway here appears to follow a similar pattern to that noticed earlier in its course from Odd Down: a deep valley at some distance from its western side, and extensive views to the west and north (current 1:10,000 O.S. Sheet ST 76 SW).

The authors' Foss Road is shown continuing a north-north-easterly course for about one hundred and ten yards along the spine of the ridge of the Moorfields Allotments, to the edge of their map, and keeping about sixty to sixty-five yards from the roughly parallel but slightly bending course of the Lyncombe boundary.

The presumed direct continuation of the authors' Foss Road, beyond the limit of their map, would seem to be indicated, within about thirty yards, by the slightly mounded eastern edge of a wide, wedge-shaped piece of private ground presently extending southwards into the Moorfields Allotments. The alignment suggests that the Fosseway probably ran along the right-hand (eastern) side of that edge.

Key to Fig. 4:

- probable course of the Fosseway
- - - - - probable Roman diversions from the Fosseway
- Lyncombe boundary
- ||||| probable course of the river in early Roman times (after Kellaway)
- ////// former Sydenham Mead
- ① house numbers marked thus

About two hundred and fifty yards beyond the northern end of the projecting edge, on the northern side of the Linear Way (a former railway track) is the narrow back lane of the western side of St. Kilda's Road. The Lyncombe boundary made a final eastward kink of about sixty yards on the northern side of the former railway track, to follow the line of the back lane (1:10,000 O.S. Som. Sheet 14 NW, 1904). It seems likely, therefore, that, from the northern end of the projecting edge of ground, the Fosseway made a further slight clockwise change of alignment of two or three degrees, to bring it into that alignment. It would also seem to enable it to maintain its position along the slightly turning line of the ridge. In following that course, the Fosseway would run on the right-hand (eastern) side of the eastern boundaries of South Twerton School kitchen premises and of the bungalow, 58a Claude Avenue, before continuing along the right-hand (eastern) side of the narrow back lane and the Lyncombe boundary.

As the ground begins to descend a little more steeply, from the Cynthia Road intersection, the short back gardens of St. Kilda's Road, immediately beside the boundary, are raised and slightly banked by about a foot to eighteen inches above the narrow back lane, until the ground begins to level out near the bottom of the hill. The Fosseway was presumably carried on the raised ground, while the Lyncombe boundary along the back lane probably marks the approximate line of its western ditch (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7364).

Before building development and the construction of the main railway route had created various slight distortions, the boundary continued to turn very slightly clockwise (including a section along an existing 19th-century wall, now marking the rear boundary of the Scala supermarket premises)⁸ until it reached the top of the present Brougham Hayes, when it made a slight anti-clockwise change of alignment for the final descent to the river, which it met about seventy yards east of the present Victoria Bridge (Bruton Hospital Survey, 1799; 1:2500 O.S. Som. Sheet XIV, 5, 1888 & 1904; current 1:2500 O.S. Plans St 7364 & 7464). Since the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary (from 1799 to the present century) and the Fosseway appear to have converged on the northern side of the present Linear Way (above), one might expect that the final eastward kink in the mapped boundary there had brought it back to the approximate line of the Fosseway for the rest of its course to the river.

The 'modern' line certainly pre-dated the mapped surveys. The wording of the 1590 survey 'and thence to the waterside, to the lower end of Sydenham mead' not only implies a similarly direct route, but also confirms that the last two hundred and fifty yards to the river is identical with that of the mapped surveys. The very large riverside meadow of Sydenham is labelled on Masters' Plan of Bath, 1794. Its lower end is clearly identifiable as the line along which the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary is shown on the various mapped surveys, where it generally appears as a somewhat wavering line. There is an earlier reference to the meadow in a 13th-century grant by the Prior, to a certain man, of right of common for his cattle 'in all the fields of the Prior of Lincumb, and in a certain meadow called Sydenham, after the hay and corn have been carried' (Green 1892, VI, 173 & 185-6).

Despite the early date and its comparative directness, however, there are doubts as to whether the last part of the 'modern' boundary, between the present St. Kilda's Road and the river, is the original line of 'Fosse Straet', as the 1590 survey makes no further mention of 'the way called the Fosse' in describing the final part of the Lyncombe boundary.⁹

3. *Excavated road, the route to the river-crossing, and through Bath* (Figs. 4 and 5 and briefly Fig. 1)

More compelling evidence is to be found in Kellaway (1985, I (i), 4-8 & Fig. 1). He

reveals that, in the 1st century A.D., a large part of Sydenham Mead is likely to have been on the other side of the river. Although the western edge of Kellaway's river-course sketch-map falls just short of the line of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary, sufficient of the river pattern is shown to indicate that the line of that boundary would probably have met the river bank of early Roman times, nearly two hundred yards before its mapped end on the present course of the river.

Kellaway is not specific as to when the river changed its course, but the implication is that it had done so by the late Roman period. Thus, if 'Fosse Straet' had followed the whole of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary, it would not have reached the changed (present) course of the river in 970 A.D. Yet a gap between road and river is not implied in the wording of the Saxon grant, which describes the whole of the western boundary, from Wansdyke to the river, as being 'on Fosse Straet'. The final part of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary, therefore, seems unlikely to have been the route of the Fosseway itself, although it may have been the route of a diversion, later abandoned because of the river changes (see below).

There are inter-related clues as to the course the Fosseway actually seems to have taken. One is the fairly recent discovery (in cellars under the Old Treatment Centre in Bath Street) of 'a massively constructed Roman road pre-dating the layout of the Temple in the 60s A.D.' (Cunliffe 1986, 16), fifteen feet wide and on a bearing of about twenty-eight degrees east of north. Another clue is in the name 'Fosse Rampart' (1:500 O.S. Som. Sheet XIV, 5, 19, 1886), which applied to the line of a former defensive wall, running from the river to the city wall (see Gilmore's map, 1694), and which had presumably been built upon this convenient stretch of the former Roman road. It ran, on a bearing of about twenty-two degrees east of north, from the former 18th-century little quay at the riverside end of Avon Street, away from the line of that street, until it reached the line of the Lower Borough Walls, at a point beside what is now the projecting end of the present Technical College Theatre.

Although the courses of the excavated Roman road and the Rampart are not on the same alignment, a relationship between them can be discovered. The Walcot/St. James's parish boundary ran along the 'Fosse Rampart', and, from its northern end, the St. James's boundary turned about forty degrees clockwise, to run, slightly distorted by building lines, in the former, now completely blocked 'Nowhere Lane'¹⁰ (current O.S. Historical Map of Bath) and the short distance beyond it to the north-west corner of the 18th-century Hot Bath building, before turning again. A southerly extension of the alignment of the recently discovered Roman road would also cut, in a short distance, the north-west corner of that building. This may suggest that the whole line from the river to Bath Street was that of the Fosseway, which made a zig-zag turn as it entered the area that became the walled city. The route would pass between two of the hot springs (those of the Hot and Cross Baths), which, as Cunliffe states (1986, 11-12 & Fig. 8) 'emerge in the crest of a clay knoll' in that corner of the city.

Johnson's map of Bath, 1634 (see Bird 1986, 144-5), depicts the outfall from these two hot springs being channelled in an open ditch along the western side of the Fosse Rampart to the river. However, Kellaway's sketch-map (1985, I (i), Fig. 1) shows the natural course of the outfall flowing through a little valley and discharging into the river at a point that would be just to the west of the bottom of Avon Street. Between that position and a point immediately upstream of the present Churchill Bridge, his sketch-map shows the probable early Roman and the present courses of the river coinciding. Thus the position of a river-crossing at the foot of the present Avon Street, and presumably the line of the Fosseway approaching it, are likely to have survived the changes elsewhere in the river

from what is now the bottom of St. Kilda's Road for about three hundred yards and pointing in the general direction of the Avon Street river-crossing seems to provide the clue and suggests that it was part of the course of the Fosseway. The present Shaftesbury Road follows quite closely the line of the 1852 track, which bridges two brooks (now entirely culverted) and served as an approach road to the 19th-century Moor Farm (built beside it). To have been part of the clockwise-turning pattern of this route, the Fosseway must have begun turning from near the top of the hill in its course on the western side of the present St. Kilda's Road, so that it would have crossed the line of the modern roadway and emerged through No. 84 into what is now the first section of the turning line of the present Shaftesbury Road (current 1:2500 O.S. Plans ST 7364 & 7464). The latter at first turns very gradually, in three stages, as it crosses the lines of the former brooks, and is slightly banked above the lower ground on its north-west side (largely occupied by the Scala supermarket). It then turns a little more sharply, to climb to the crest of a ridge, where it ends by intersecting with Junction Road. The track appears to have made a more gradual turn to climb the hill, probably passing through what is now part of No. 16 Arlington Road and some of the present Shaftesbury Road houses, before reaching the summit almost on the line of the present road.

At that point, the 1852 track also terminated in a curiously stubbed end, from the side of which a footpath led off at right-angles, to follow a different direction. However, the expected direct continuation is indicated, almost as far as the railway, a quarter of a mile away, by a slightly winding former hedge-line, shown on the Cotterell Survey, 1852, developing towards its end into a track between field boundaries, for nearly seventy-five yards, and then, very briefly, into a stretch of open track. The line, today, from the top of Shaftesbury Road, would run through No. 59 Upper Oldfield Park, descend across the parkland corner of Hayesfield School, and continue at the rear of Lower Oldfield Park, between Nos. 58 and 2, where many of the houses are set below the level of the road, which in part descends along a terrace below steeper slopes. Original levels have clearly been

Key to Fig. 5:

- probable course of the Fosseway
- - - - - probable Roman diversions from the Fosseway
- Lyncombe boundary
- ||||| probable course of the river in early Roman times (after Kellaway)
- A - Cleveland Bridge
- B - Churchill Bridge
- C - Midland Bridge
- D - Victoria Bridge

Location of certain Roman remains

- + 1 - evidence of Roman settlement (Lower Common Allotments)
- + 2 - mosaic (rear of Norfolk Crescent)
- + 3 - burials (inside Victoria Park)
- + 4 - burial (Gravel Walk)
- + 5 - eight sepulchral urns (approach road to Victoria Park entrance from Queen Square)
- + 6 - stone coffin with skeleton, two stone cists with cremations, and 1st-century samian pottery (Guinea Lane, opposite Walcot church)
- + 7 - evidence of dense Roman occupation along whole line of Walcot Street and between Paragon and the river
- + 8 - inscribed tombstone (near 'The Bell', Walcot Street)
- + 9 - stone coffin (Cleveland Place)
- + 10 - pre-Flavian samian ware and evidence of elaborate timber buildings (beneath former 'Citizen House', Westgate Buildings, within former city wall)

changed. Ground has been cut away at the rear of Lower Oldfield Park to form yards and other premises, while the rounded corner of No. 2, beside which the Fosseyway seems likely to have passed, and that of No. 1 on the other side of the road, stand about six feet above the present roads beside them.

Evidence of further continuation of the former hedge-line/track, and of its relationship with the planned route of the railway (shown as a single line with no indication of actual width), is to be found in Manners' Plan, c. 1840 (and, almost identically, but of course without the railway, in Masters' Plan, 1794). A little of the 1852 hedge-line is shown, and also its obvious continuation (gone by 1852) crossing obliquely the route of the railway, approximately where the latter is now carried by a bridge and embankment over the roadway at the bottom of Lower Oldfield Park. The mapped line continues on the other side, close to and parallel with the railway, through what is now the high ground of the former Goods Station shed, where redevelopment is taking place. The line is shown developing into a well-defined road or lane, approximately along the line of the present Wood Street, running fairly straight and between hedges beside plots of garden ground, before making a gradual anti-clockwise turn, to emerge at right-angles (approximately inside the western boundary of the present filling station) into the Lower Bristol Road, opposite the end of Avon Street and its former, 18th-century, little quay. The final twenty yards to the river's edge (through the present building of the former Camden Flour Mill) appears as an isolated piece of road on Thorpe's Survey of a five-mile radius of Bath, 1742.¹¹ From the top of the present Shaftesbury Road to the river-crossing,¹² this mapped route of hedge-line/track seems likely to indicate the approximate route of the Fosseyway as it made the final descent and followed a course around the lower edges of slopes which rise, ultimately very steeply, to Beechen Cliff (current 1:10,000 O.S. Sheet ST 76 SW and 1:2500 O.S. Plans ST 7464 & 7564).

The alignment of the excavated piece of the Roman road under Bath Street shows that it would cut across a large corner of the later Temple Precinct, and run directly to the position where the North Gate of the later walled city would stand (Cunliffe 1986, Fig. 20). As Cunliffe has pointed out, 'the road slashes straight through what would have been the heart of the Celtic sanctuary' and its siting 'may have been carefully calculated to destroy the mysteries surrounding the ancient cult centre' (*ibid.*, 19). There is no doubt that such a route for the great military road must have emphasised the domination of Rome in a very dramatic way.

Irvine's discovery in the 1860s of a section of Roman road, angled to run around the outside of the north-west corner of the Temple Precinct (Haverfield 1906, I, 232 & Fig. 9), and with one angled section directed towards the more recently discovered road under Bath Street, seems likely to have been a later diversion of what appears now to be the original course of the Fosseyway through Bath, as Cunliffe had suggested was a possibility (1986, 16).

As the Fosseyway approached the site of the later North Gate, it is likely to have turned anti-clockwise, through about thirty degrees, to run through the site of the present buildings at the bottom of New Bond Street into the western side of Northgate Street (not following its present alignment which runs to the east of the former North Gate). In the 18th century, Northgate Street was called 'Old Street' (Wood 1749, 332), a name probably dating from Saxon times and likely to be applied to a Roman road, which here runs along an apparently natural terrace beside a fairly steep slope to the river. The obvious continuation of the road would have been along Walcot Street, where evidence of Roman occupation is particularly dense (Cunliffe 1986, 41) and where an inscribed tombstone was found near 'The Bell' Inn (Norton 1969, 214-5). There seems little reason to doubt that the

Roman road through Aquae Sulis would have followed this route through Walcot and passed along the eastern side of the present Walcot church site, as it proceeded on its north-easterly course.

4. *Probable diversion to bypass Aquae Sulis* (Figs. 4 and 5)

It seems appropriate, at this juncture, to show that there are reasons for believing that a Roman diversion from the Fosseway existed, between the present St. Kilda's Road and Walcot church (current 1:10,000 O.S. City of Bath map), to bypass the sacred centre of Aquae Sulis completely.¹³ It may, perhaps, have been constructed after A.D. 60, in the decade of reconciliation (see Cunliffe 1986, 21–22), when the vast suite of baths and the sanctuary Temple, under its unifying dedication to Sulis Minerva, were erected.

The line of road along the present Paragon, between Walcot church and Fountain Buildings (current 1:2500 O.S. Plans ST 7465 & 7565), has for long been regarded as a Roman road, based on Wood's descriptions (1749, 170–1, 255, 329),¹⁴ although there has been more recent evidence, when Roman pottery was recovered in quantity from the sites of bomb-damaged houses there, at the time of the rebuilding in 1949 (Norton 1969, 211).

From the southern end of the Paragon, at an angle across a wide junction, south west of Fountain Buildings, is the eastern end of the present George Street. The kerb-line at the foot of the stepped pavement in front of Edgar and Prince's Buildings (at the eastern end of George Street, which runs at a slightly different angle from that to the west of Edgar Buildings) is almost identical in length and alignment with a short, straight piece of road shown in that position on Gilmore's map, 1694, and being undeveloped at that time was probably of much earlier origin. Its relationship with what is now the Paragon is indicated on Gilmore's map by an approximately forty degree, angled corner, at its eastern end, pointing across the wide junction to the line of road beside what is now Fountain Buildings,¹⁵ leading into the Paragon. The piece of road also led, through a gate at its western end (at the western extremity of the present Edgar Buildings) into the grounds of the Barton Farm, to which it would seem to have provided the principal access, from roads converging upon it from several points of the compass.¹⁶ It may be of some significance that the Walcot/St. Michael's parish boundary followed its line from the Paragon and beside Fountain Buildings westwards to the western end of the present Edgar Buildings, when it turned to run somewhat irregularly southwards to the Upper Borough Walls (Thorpe's Plan of the parish of Walcot, 1740). The inference could be that the road in front of Edgar and Prince's Buildings was a continuation of the Roman road along the Paragon (and beside Fountain Buildings), which had diverged from the Fosseway at Walcot church.

A westerly continuation of the direct alignment of the present kerb-line in front of Edgar and Prince's Buildings would, in about half a mile, reach a spot (near the former rail bridge across Victoria Bridge Road) remarkably close to where Kellaway's sketch-map (1985, I (i), Fig. 1) indicates that the probable early Roman course of the river would have crossed the line of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary (1:10,000 O.S. Som. Sheet XIV, NW, 1904), suggesting, perhaps, that the whole of the described route from Walcot church was a Roman road that once led to a river-crossing there.¹⁷

This route may account for the particular location of certain Roman remains not previously attributable to the line of a Roman road. The alignment between the presumed river-crossing and Edgar Buildings would cross the northern end of the present Norfolk Crescent. A mosaic pavement was found in Kingsmead, at the rear of Norfolk Crescent (Haverfield 1906, 263). The alignment would also cross the

northern end of the present Queen's Parade, beside the gateway into Victoria Park. Eight sepulchral urns were discovered when the approach road to the Park was being dug from Queen Square, while Roman skeletons were unearthed inside the Park and in the Gravel Walk nearby (Scarth 1864, 110).

South of the river, the route between the presumed river-crossing and St. Kilda's Road, would seem likely to have been along the comparatively direct line of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary (as described above), to merge with the line of the Fosseway along the rear of the western side of the present St. Kilda's Road.

If it were not for the weight of the other evidence (above), one might have expected this route (between Walcot church and St. Kilda's Road) to mark the course of the Fosseway itself. Unless or until firm archaeological evidence becomes available to determine whether this route or the one through the city is the earlier, a slight doubt must remain as to which of the two is the original and which the diversion (see note 12).

In addition to this probable bypass diversion, there is also some indication of a further diversion to another river crossing. Perhaps it had been necessitated by river changes during the period of Roman occupation, affecting the route of the earlier bypass. The 'new' river crossing would seem to have been sited beside the present Midland Bridge, fairly close to the position where Kellaway's sketch-map (1985, I (i), Fig. 1) shows the present and probable early Roman courses of the river crossing one another. Contours on his sketch-map (of 18 m. and below) indicate the existence of a low ridge on either side of the river there, on a north-easterly axis.

It would seem to be more than mere coincidence that, on the northern side of the river, from the south-western end of the present Green Park Mews (where the building line of Green Park and its Mews is set back thirty yards from the present course of the river, and nearer Kellaway's line of the probable early Roman course there), beside the Midland Bridge, the perfectly straight course of a 'Rope Walk' once ran north eastwards, for about four hundred yards, as far as the angled entrance into the present Palace Yard Mews (at the western rear of Queen Square), and served as the western boundary of Great King's Mead (Thorpe's Plan of the parish of Walcot, 1740; Buck and Buck's engraving, 1774, III, pl. 1; and Masters' Plan of Bath, 1794, which shows only a remaining one hundred and fifty yards of 'Rope Walk' from Green Park Mews). A direct continuation of the alignment, from the north-eastern end of 'Rope Walk' would, in about three hundred and fifty yards, reach the western end of the present Edgar Buildings, and the line of the probably original bypass route.

South of the river, this suspected route along the former 'Rope Walk' is likely to have linked with the line of the Fosseway, approximately where the probable line of the latter is now met by a short (thirty-five yard), blocked, former slipway between the present Nos. 58 and 60 Lower Oldfield Park (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7464). The slipway is in almost direct alignment with the bottom building in Green Park Mews (and the approximate beginning of the former 'Rope Walk') a quarter of a mile away, and appears to be on the line of part of a 19th-century field boundary (Cotterell's Survey, 1852). In an 18th-century map, about one hundred and fifty yards of hedge-line, in direct alignment with the end of 'Rope Walk' (and apparently continuing the approximate line of the present slipway) is shown running north eastwards to the Lower Bristol Road (Thorpe's Survey of a five-mile radius of Bath, 1742).

A river-crossing 'roughly in the vicinity of Green Park Station or a little further to the west, thus completely bypassing . . . the later walled area of Aquae Sulis' was suggested by Cunliffe in referring to one of the possible routes of the Fosseway (1986, 16 and Figs. 11 & 20).

5. *From Walcot to Bannerdown* (Figs. 1, 5 and 6)

As the line of road along the Paragon runs for about a quarter of a mile to the London Road in Walcot, it makes a gradual S-bend along a terrace of ground below the eastern slopes of Lansdown, but high above Walcot Street and the river valley. It descends as it makes the final clockwise curve, keeping under the steeply rising ground to the north west. Because of the topography, it is likely that the Roman road would have followed a somewhat similar pattern. The diverted route, bypassing the Roman walled area of *Aquae Sulis*, ends on the northern side of Walcot church, where its line from the Paragon merges with the Fosseway itself from Walcot Street. The united road continues the clockwise curve, more or less following, at a distance, a bend in the river, to complete the descent into the London Road.

Roman burials have been discovered beside this line: at the bottom of Guinea Lane, opposite Walcot church; and in its continuation along the London Road, from Cleveland Bridge to Lambridge (Norton 1969, 214–215), although some of these may be associated with the London/Sea Mills Roman road, which probably shared this part of the route (Haverfield 1906, 345–346), and is thought to have turned from it into Guinea Lane, on its way westwards.¹⁸

There seems very little doubt that the two mile, practically straight stretch of the London Road, north-eastwards as far as Batheaston (at a little distance from the river, but more or less parallel with it), is along the course of a Roman road (*ibid.*, 345). This part may also have carried both the London/Sea Mills Roman road and the Fosseway, but is almost certainly the route of the latter, as it made its way towards its well-established line on Bannerdown (Margary 1973, 141–2). Where there are fields or open spaces on the south-eastern side of the road, the latter is seen to be generally well raised above ground which slopes away to the river.

At Batheaston, the London Road makes another gradual clockwise turn of about sixty degrees altogether, to follow another bend in the river. About two hundred yards along this new alignment, it crosses St. Catherine's Brook at Stambridge (current 1:10,000 O.S. Sheet ST 76 NE).

A grant of 957 A.D. by King Eadwig to St. Peter's (the Abbey) of Bath, referring to Bathford, defines its western boundary, between the Avon and Bannerdown, as being 'along the Straet', almost certainly, therefore, along the Roman road (B.C.S. 1001; Grundy 1935, 215), so that one would expect the Fosseway to have followed the line of the present Batheaston/Bathford boundary, as it turns from the main road into Morris Lane, a little over a quarter of a mile east of Stambridge. In this century it has been regarded as the preferred route (Haverfield 1906, 345; Margary 1973, 142).

However, other evidence weighs more heavily in favour of its having turned from the main road at Stambridge into the line of the traditional route in Fosse Lane (current 1:2500 O.S. Plans ST 7867–7967 & 7868–7968). In the early part of the 19th century, Colt Hoare, in describing the route of the Fosseway from the other direction (from the north), explained that on entering Bannerdown 'the Fosse quits the turnpike road and at this point is destroyed by large stone quarries, so that no part of the causeway is visible on the down, but we soon recognise its course in descending the hill to Batheaston on a road which bears the name Fosse Lane' (1821, II, 103–4). Possible early metalling is still apparent in the track part of the lane on the north-west side of the High Bannerdown estate. In the 13th century it seems that Fosse Lane was called 'Grenestrete' (Dobbie 1969, 15 & 164), a name regarded as a likely pointer to a Roman road (Margary 1973, 507–8). In recent times, a Roman coffin was unearthed during the building of the Elmhurst Estate; another was found at Millway Gardens (Dobbie 1969, 8). Both places are adjacent

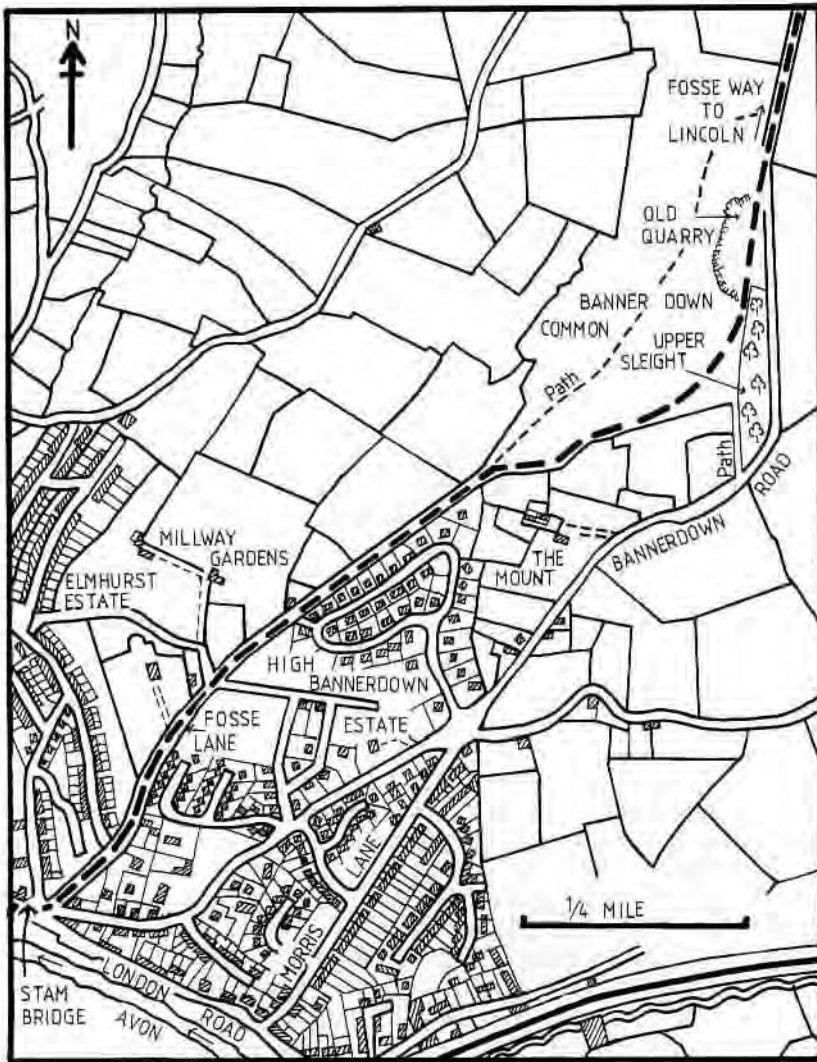


Fig. 6 From Stam Bridge to Bannerdown

Key:

----- probable course of the Fosseway

to the north-western side of Fosse Lane. The present arch of Stam Bridge and its surmounting wall, beside the 'White Lion', in the London Road, are in almost direct alignment, not with the main road, but with the left-hand edge of the beginning of Fosse Lane, across the Five Ways junction. The alignment is likely to be following an historical pattern. The name of Stam Bridge, derived from 'Stone', is significant in connection with a Roman road (Margary 1973, 26). The combination of name and alignment may provide yet another indication that Fosse Lane is the course of the Fosseway.

Fosse Lane begins as a ten foot wide, tarmac-surfaced road between banks, and the ground soon drops steeply away beyond the left-hand bank. The lane winds

slightly as it climbs steeply from Stambridge for the first seven hundred yards. In places the road is only six feet wide, in others as much as twelve, and the banks are sometimes six feet high on either side. For about a quarter of a mile beyond the tarmac the route runs fairly straight, in a sometimes slightly raised and generally metalled track, between widely spaced banks. There is always at least a runnel and sometimes a ditch, quite deeply pronounced for a short distance, on its eastern side. In two or three places in the track there are isolated, lengthwise, worn, but possibly grooved, stones. The appearance of Fosse Lane seems to bear out Colt Hoare's recognition of it as the course of the Fosseway (above).

About one hundred yards north west of 'The Mount' in Bannerdown Road, the side banks of Fosse Lane converge to form a narrower neck, and then fan widely apart. The mapped line of the track (O.S. maps above) is shown dividing into two diverging footpaths, at the end of the narrow neck between the banks. On earlier O.S. maps (1:2500 O.S. Som. Sheet VIII, 15, 1886 & 1904), both footpaths are shown as tracks, similar in width to the track in Fosse Lane itself. Although the left-hand track, together with Fosse Lane and Bannerdown Road beyond, formed part of the 18th-century 'Oxford Road' (Thorpe's Survey of a five-mile radius of Bath, 1742), its appearance makes it unlikely to have been the course of the Fosseway.

The right-hand track, about five or six feet wide at the beginning, seems more likely to indicate the original continuation of Fosse Lane. The first part follows a fairly regular zig-zag course, immediately beside a somewhat similar pattern in the continuation of the Fosse Lane right-hand wall, and runs quite deeply below a high bank, with rising ground covered in scrub and rough grass, on its left-hand side. Beyond the wall on the right-hand (southern) bank, the ground soon descends quite steeply – similar to the situation in Fosse Lane, except that in its initial climb from Stambridge, the steeply descending ground is beyond its left-hand (western) bank. There is occasional evidence of possible metalling along the track, although little may now remain, as there are obvious signs of former quarrying nearby.

After about three hundred yards, the present footpath leaves the sunken position immediately beside the wall (which continues a very slight zig-zag for a further two hundred yards), and climbs along what appears to be a fairly pronounced *agger* for a short distance. However, unlike the present footpath, which then bends away to the left to join a former quarry track, the earlier, and perhaps original, track (1904 O.S. map, above) followed a direct alignment for about a hundred yards altogether, in this part, before coming to an end by intersecting with the curving quarry track.

Amid the humps, hollows, and great pits of this formerly much-quarried area, the original continuation of the Fosseway beyond that point is very doubtful. It is within about a hundred yards of the present Bathford/Batheaston boundary, and one would expect it to turn anti-clockwise into that line, which, from about that point, follows a direct alignment – in part, along what appears to have been the eastern edge of the very large, former quarry, to which Colt Hoare referred (above) – into the established course of the Fosseway in Bannerdown Road. It is of interest, therefore, that the first edition of the one inch O.S. map Som. Sheet XIX just discernibly shows a track, turning anti-clockwise across the line of the quarry track of that period (running a little further north than at present), into a straight course along the present Bathford/Batheaston boundary, and ending abruptly, after about one hundred and fifty yards, at the south-eastern corner of the long, large quarry.¹⁹ Evidence of such a former track, following the expected pattern in this part, suggests that it was indeed the route of the Fosseway and that, before the quarrying, it had continued along the boundary into its established course on the summit.

In following the route northwards along the line of the parish boundary, the Fosseway would seem to have run along the top edge of the present Upper Sleight, which slopes steeply away from the right-hand (eastern) side. The anti-clockwise turn, of about fifty degrees altogether, into this line, would seem to have occurred below the summit of Bannerdown, but a little above the part where fairly steep south-facing and east-facing slopes meet (current 1:10,000 O.S. map ST 76 NE). Thus the route to the summit would have climbed around the edge of the hill.

When the present Bathford/Batheaston boundary reaches Bannerdown Road, it crosses to the right-hand (eastern) side of the modern highway, just as the road begins to bend to the right (presumably marking the point of its diversion from the Fosseway) and gains the summit. The boundary continues on the right-hand side of the present road, as it follows the established course of the Fosseway. Its direct route across the high plateau (600 feet) to Huntershall (current one inch O.S. Sheet 156) is raised by as much as five to six feet generally, above the surrounding ground, suggesting an impressive *agger* in this part (Margary 1973, 142).

This, then, completes the tracing of evidence of the Fosseway in the immediate vicinity of Bath.²⁰ A fairly detailed description has been attempted, as it is to be hoped that archaeological verification, of at least some key parts, may yet prove possible.

Notes

- 1 The Combe Hay/Englishcombe boundary follows the edge of the former quarry beside the A367, after crossing from the right-hand (south-eastern) side of the latter.
- 2 Two stone coffins were found near Burnt House turnpike gate 'in the line of the Fosse' in 1822 (Scarth 1864, 99). Scarth (mistakenly, as it now seems) regarded Bloomfield Road and its present junction with the A367 (past the southern end of the present Burnt House Inn, which stands beside the approximate position of the former turnpike gate-house – see Cotterell's survey, 1852), as the line of the Fosse (*ibid.*, 108). The location of the coffins would, nevertheless, have been very close to what is almost certainly the true course of the Fosseway, between the Wansdyke and the present Old Fosse Road.
- 3 Although a small, isolated pocket of Twerton is shown on the 19th-century Tithe map actually abutting on part of the Old Fosse Road, it is unlikely to have marked the position intended by the wording of the 1590 document, as it would have been reached within a very short distance of the Wansdyke.
- 4 A track leading from the L-shaped field mounts up over the line of bank before climbing to the top of the hill by the Corston View houses.
- 5 According to his obituary (*SANHS* LXXI, 1925, 109–110), Major was a recognised authority on ancient earthworks and had been commissioned by the Ordnance Survey to map, as far as possible, the correct line of the Wansdyke.
- 6 An aerial photograph reveals the angle of a trickle of water across the present lower pasture of Stirling Farm, from a nearby spring (1:10,000 Aerial Survey photograph, 1975). A seemingly parallel band of shadow to be seen there at times, when viewed from a distant, opposite hillside, may indicate the former line of the Fosseway there. If so, its course across the pasture is somewhat puzzlingly a little more west of north than that shown on Major and Burrow's map, although there may be some other explanation for the phenomenon.
- 7 Although a number of Roman burials have been discovered in Englishcombe Lane (Norton 1969, 217), their distribution (where known) is to the east of the Fosseway and they seem to be associated with the line of the Lane rather than with the Fosseway. Englishcombe Lane led via either Holloway or Greenway Lane to Claverton Street and a river-crossing to the former Ham Gate (the original South Gate, situated a little east of the later, mediaeval South Gate of the city). In the 10th century, it was the likely river-crossing point to the Saxon town, with the establishment of its street grid pattern (Cunliffe 1986, 60 and Figs. 44 & 45). Perhaps this followed an earlier lay-out, if the 'remarkable correlation' between stone-built Romano-British sites and later Saxon settlements noted by Aston (1986, 73) can be applied to townscapes. However, this river-crossing could scarcely have come into being, until the Beechen Cliff late prehistoric landslip obstruction above the present Churchill Bridge had cleared, the swampy area drained, and the river settled into its present course.

there (see Kellaway 1985, I (i), 7 and Fig. 1), presumably in late Roman times, when the route along Englishcombe Lane may have become a diversion from the Fosseway, perhaps to avoid the hollow, wet area around the present Scala supermarket premises beside Shaftesbury Road, where watercourses converged.

- 8 A late 19th-century map shows the Lyncombe boundary as being 'centre stream' of a brook, apparently diverted at right-angles into the line of a ditch, running for nearly one hundred and twenty yards immediately along the outside of the still-existing wall, forming the rear boundary of the present Scala premises (1:500 O.S. Som. Sheet XIV, 5, 17, 1886).
- 9 There is no matching parish boundary on the northern side of the river, opposite the end of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary. The Weston/Walcot parish boundary begins some three hundred and fifty yards further west and runs away from any association with its line. However, the course of 'Mud Brook', running southwards (along the western rear of Marlborough Buildings) from Weston Lane, to a point approximately opposite the end of the 'modern' Lyncombe boundary, became the western boundary of the Liberty of Bath, from the time of the Bath Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth in 1590 (Warner 1801, 182-6). The northern boundary of the Liberty was along Weston and Guinea Lanes (a probable route of the London/Sea Mills Roman road), eastwards to Walcot (see note 18).
- 10 The former 'Nowhere Lane' (which ran along the south-eastern side of the present Abbey Church House, site of the 12th-century Leper Hospital), apparently marking the position of a brief section of the Fosseway, would seem to have been appropriately named, after its earlier continuation to the river had been blocked by the building of the Fosse Rampart along it. This, at least, would seem a more likely explanation of the origin of the name than the one given in Wood's quaint anecdote (1749, 327). Green (1889, 61), quoting from the *Gesta Stephani*, refers to an occasion in 1138, after the city had suffered marauding raids from Bristol. King Stephen came to Bath and after having 'examined the entire circuit of the walls' pointed out a 'special spot very capable of defence which would defy assault' and commanded that 'the walls be raised higher and outworks constructed'. It is conceivable that the Fosse Rampart dates from that time and was the 'special spot' and the 'outworks' to which the quotation refers.
- 11 The clockwise turning pattern of the Fosseway, from Englishcombe Lane nearly to the top of the present St. Kilda's Road, and again in the present Shaftesbury Road, as well as the change of pattern beyond that (in the present Lower Oldfield Park), are clearly recognisable in a series of three hedge-lines (of approximately 660, 300 and 220 yards respectively) shown on Thorpe's Survey of a five-mile radius of Bath, 1742.
- 12 Cunliffe, in referring to the Fosseway river-crossing 'somewhere in the vicinity of Bath' stated that 'such a significant junction must surely have been garrisoned in the early years of the occupation' (1986, 16). Although there is as yet no positive archaeological evidence of a military station, he suggested that a most likely Roman choice could have been the elevated gravel terrace near the river at Bathwick where early samian pottery was discovered (*ibid.*, 18). Another possible spot was where 'some scraps of early material have recently come to light' (*ibid.*) in the Lower Common Allotments, about a hundred yards north of Victoria Bridge (see Fig. 5 and note 18a). However, one of the other very few places where pre-Flavian samian ware (A.D. 43-69) has been discovered at Bath is beneath the former Citizen House, Westgate Buildings (*ibid.*, 19). The spot is immediately inside the former Borough Walls, within one hundred yards north of the former 'Nowhere Lane' and the probable course of the Fosseway. There was also evidence at the site of elaborate timber buildings of the period (*ibid.*). Elsewhere, Cunliffe suggested that this site and the level ground to the north and west was a most likely location for the Claudian fort (1979, 137). Present evidence regarding the probable course of the Fosseway and the position of its river-crossing seems to add further weight to the likelihood. The military camp may well, therefore, have been situated in part of the King's Meads, lying outside the Borough walls immediately west of the Roman remains (above).
- 13 The Saxons appeared to distinguish the original route of the Fosseway from any, even Roman, diversion from it, and the surveyors of 'Cliftune' in 970 A.D., in using the name 'Fosse Straet', clearly identified that original line.
- 14 Wood appears to show in his description (1749, 329) that he regarded the route 'past the east side of the Win Yards' (along the present Paragon) as having been at one time part of an approach road, starting from 'about the middle of Berton Lane' (which ran immediately outside and parallel with the Upper Borough Walls), and 'formerly well-known by the name Foss Lane' (*ibid.*, 171), which ran northwards to Walcot 'till it intersects with the great road called the Foss Way' (*ibid.*). There is at the present time such an approach road, crossing diametrically into the known line of the Fosseway near Clandown, Radstock, called Fosse Lane (current 1:25,000 O.S. Sheet ST 66/76).

Wood's description is suspect, as he also claimed that the route was the 'Roman road that led to the Praetorium' (*ibid.*, 329), which he believed he had located beneath the 18th-century Hospital

(*ibid.*, 170), near the top of the present Union Street (inside the Upper Borough Walls), an idea which Haverfield regarded as 'mere fiction' (1906, 229).

Mapped evidence scarcely supports Wood's claim that the whole of his described route had originally been one road. Gilmore's map, 1694 shows a northward-running lane, starting 'from about the middle of Berton Lane', but coming to an end, by abutting at right-angles on the line of roadway in front of the present Edgar and Prince's Buildings, as though it had served as an approach to that road, and not as part of it or of its continuation along the present Paragon. Thorpe's Plan of the parish of Walcot, 1740 labels the road along the present Paragon as 'Back Lane' (of the Fosseway in Walcot Street?), while, to add to the confusion, *A new and correct plan of Bath*, 1750 labels Foss Lane as running west-east, from the present Prince's Buildings, across Broad Street, and apparently continuing via a steep slipway to Walcot Street (the probable course of the Fosseway).

In view of the more recent evidence of the discovery of Roman pottery in quantity along the line of the Paragon (Norton 1969, 211), which appears to confirm that it was the route of a Roman road, it may be that Wood drew on a local tradition of the fact, but had assumed that it must have been connected with his Praetorium, rather than with a river-crossing to bypass the city.

- 15 Fountain Buildings forms a triangular site which is thought to have retained the shape of the ground in which the 12th-century St. Werburga's Oratory is known to have stood (Greening 1966, 20-24). Its outline, as shown on Gilmore's map, 1694, is certainly similar to that of today, and it is similarly well set back from the junction with the Prince's Buildings corner of George Street (current 1:2500 O.S. Plan ST 7565). In view of the saint's Mercian royal origin and late 7th-century date, the original dedication of the site may well have been in the 8th century (see Aston, 1986, 79), when Bath was still a Mercian town, and apparently enjoying royal patronage (Cunliffe 1986, 52). Wood described the position of 'Werborough Church', as he called it, as being 'on the south side of Win Yards' (the latter is labelled on *A new and correct plan of Bath*, 1750) 'where Lansdown Road and the Foss make an angle' (1749, 255). His use of the term 'Foss' here obviously refers to the line of road along the present Paragon. This is slightly confusing, as it is the road which elsewhere (*ibid.*, 171) he treated as an approach road, claiming it had been part of the route 'formerly well-known by the name Foss Lane' and which ran northwards to Walcot 'till it intersects with the great road called the Foss Way' (see note 14).

- 16 Barton Farm, occupying an area immediately north west of the walled city (Thorpe's Plan of the parish of Walcot, 1740) was part of the 'manor de la Berton (sic) without Bath', as it was called in the 14th century (Hunt 1893, VII, 141). Until the early 13th century, it had been valued more highly than the city, at a rent of £30 as compared with £20 (King & Watts 1885, 12-13). It had become Crown land at the Conquest, and was granted to the Priory in 1203/4, although rights of common for the citizens were maintained (*ibid.*).

Information given by Aston (1986, 75-78), regarding the Bath multiple estate, points to the likelihood that the Barton was the *caput* of the 100-hide, 7th-century Bath estate, with the added possibility that the administration related to Roman or even pre-Roman arrangements. He pointed out that 'although there is no evidence at Bath for the lower status of settlements, . . . further research might alter this' (*ibid.*, 77). There is, in fact, evidence in a 13th-century presentment (King & Watts 1885, 15), of failure 'to do suit at the hundred of Berton forinsecum, to the detriment of the King (if he had kept the hundred in hand)' in respect of land holdings in several of the manors of the Bath multiple estate. Elsewhere (Hunt 1893, VII, 77), there is evidence of grants of land in Lyncombe being subject to 'suit of court at the two hundreds of la Berton'. These instances would seem to confirm the superiority of the Barton.

The Barton House, described by Warner as 'an old-fashioned mansion now standing in John Street' (1801, 187) may well have been the site of the manor court of the hundred of Berton forinsecum. Its importance may account for the focus of roads (dating at least from Roman times) upon its grounds. The presumed, original, direct continuation of the probable diversion from the Fosseway across those grounds would have passed within one hundred yards of the Barton House. The route would seem to have provided an important line of communication with an important administrative centre.

- 17 It has been suggested that a river-crossing may have existed in the vicinity of the present Victoria Bridge in prehistoric times, on a possible spur route from the Jurassic Way on Lansdown, descending to the river via Winifred's Lane (Grimes 1951, 152 & Fig. 39; current 1:10,000 O.S. City of Bath map). Roman coffins have subsequently been discovered (in 1954 & 1959) close to Winifred's Lane in the Sion Hill area (Norton 1969, 217). The western boundary of the Liberty of Bath would have run close beside that spur route (see note 9), which would have been crossed by the probable main and bypass routes of the London/Sea Mills Roman road (along the Upper Bristol Road and along Weston Lane, respectively - see note 18). A Roman link, therefore, may also have existed along the line of the spur route.
- 18 (a) The turn into Guinea Lane seems more likely to have been a diversion to bypass the sacred

centre of Bath. The *Antonine Itinerary* lists *Aquae Sulis* in the London/Sea Mills Roman route. It would seem strange, therefore, for it to have come no nearer than one third of a mile from what became the walled town. Aston has now shown that measurements in the *Itinerary* were both from and to the centre of Bath (1986, I, 71). It seems more than likely, then, that the original route continued along the approximate lines of Walcot and Northgate Streets into the centre of *Aquae Sulis*, and left it near the position of the later West Gate, to follow the appropriately named Monmouth Street into the Upper Bristol Road to Bitton, Sea Mills and the Severn crossing. Roman burials have been found beside the Upper Bristol Road, between the Old Gas Works site and Partis College (Norton 1969, 217). Evidence of a fairly extensive Roman settlement in the Lower Common Allotments, beside the Upper Bristol Road, was recently partly excavated, under the aegis of the Bath Archaeological Trust (report forthcoming).

(b) Cunliffe, in referring to a fairly wide area of settlement around the walled town, and in noting that evidence of Roman occupation is particularly dense along Walcot Street, states that it would be wrong to regard the settlement as extra-mural, for much of it was in existence long before the defensive wall was erected, probably in the 4th century (1986, 40–41 & Fig. 20). It seems worth noting, therefore, that bypass routes appear to have diverged from both the Fosseway and the London/Sea Mills Roman road beside Walcot church, at the end of Walcot Street.

19 There is unpublished early one inch O.S. material (held by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments) which shows the track more clearly defined.

20 Except for the section along the London Road, the Fosseway at Bath does not follow for any great distance the typically direct course of a Roman road, but 'rigid straightness is not an invariable characteristic' as Margary has pointed out (1973, 18). However, 'the most convenient and winding course' . . . will then often be laid out in a series of short, straight lengths, rather than on true curves' (*ibid.*). This construction seems likely to have occurred at Bath, where the route from Odd Down, in particular, appears to curve clockwise for a great deal of the way, while following the most suitable course in its descent to the river-crossing and the Roman town. A part of the present Shaftesbury Road turns in very short, straight sections, as it crosses the lines of two former brooks, and may be following quite closely the original pattern of the Fosseway there.

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