

3. A NEW SECTOR OF ROMAN ROAD EAST OF LYNE.

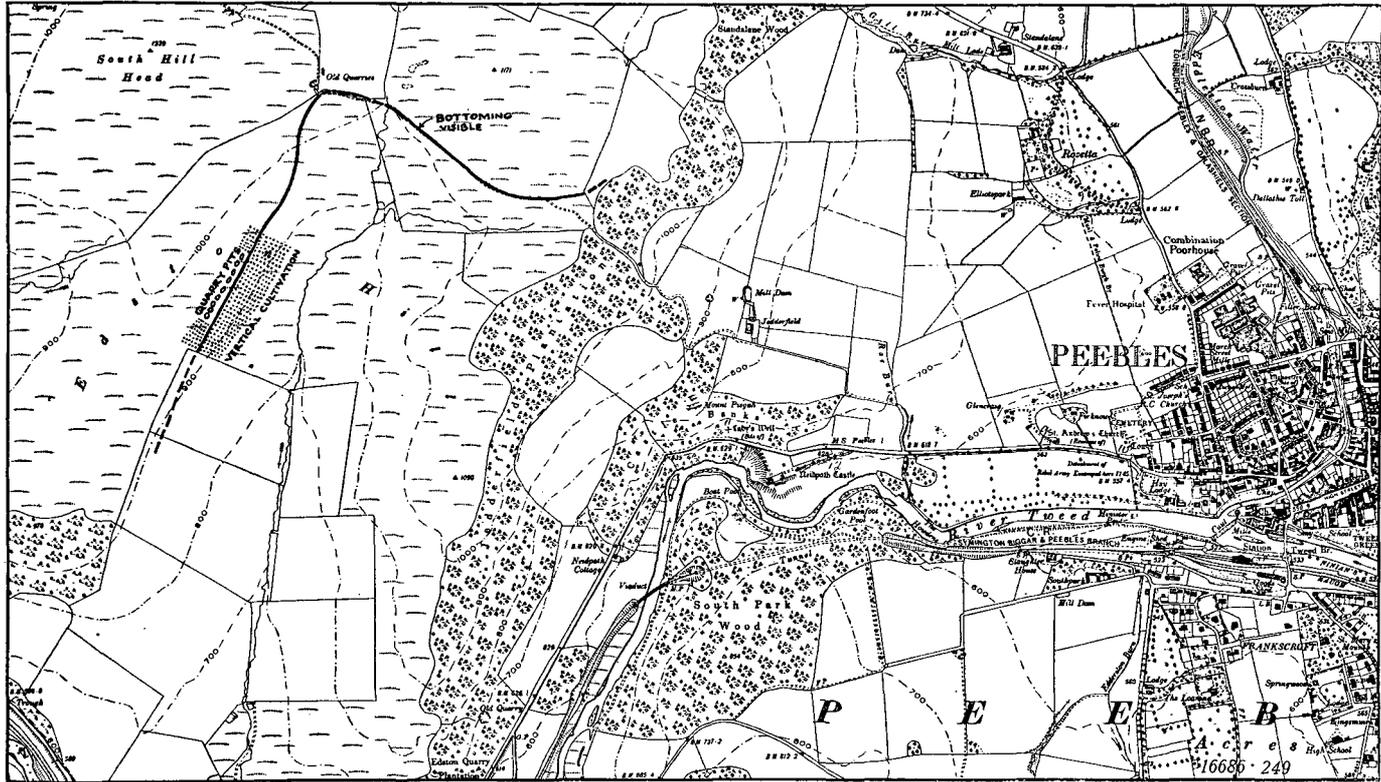
Previous knowledge of the Roman road-system associated with the fort of Lyne is summarized in a brief but important observation made by the excavators of the fort in 1900,¹ who verified by excavation the observations of Horsley² and the Rev. Andrew Handyside³ that the fort was approached by a road from the north-east. They further established that this road "joined at right-angles another road coming up the valley from the south-east", probably Horsley's "visible military way". It is thus evident that Lyne, as its position suggests, lay on a transverse route in the upper Tweed valley, and was placed at a point where that route abandons the Tweed and swings north-west by the Lyne and Tarth Waters towards the valley of the Medwin and Clydesdale. Whether there was a road-junction here and further roads ran northwards or north-eastwards, and even southwards, as the natural traffic-lines render possible, remains uncertain. But the fort was clearly placed at this point in order to watch the junction of these natural routes.

The road leading down the Tweed valley was not traced far by the spade and visible remains are lacking. But there is no obvious obstacle to a course along the north side of the river until the Neidpath gorge is reached, half way between Lyne and Peebles. Here the river banks become precipitous, and the modern

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxv. pp. 182-183.

² *Britannia Romana* (1732), p. 357.

³ *Stat. Accl.*, vol. xii. (1794), p. 564.



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Fig. 1. Roman road east of Lyne (Scale 3in. to mile).

road takes to a long cutting through the rock while the railway is driven to the south side of the river and into a tunnel. A direct course along the river bank is thus precluded.

The fact that the Roman road here took to a little side-valley on the north bank of the river was first discovered by the second author on New Year's Eve, 1942. This valley (fig. 1) is the small double-headed valley north of Edston farm, dominated by high ground, known as Edston Hill, on west, north, and east. The lower end of the valley is cultivated and no remains of the road are there visible, but in the open moorland beyond the enclosed fields on the west side of the valley a bold cambered mound, at least 20 feet wide, becomes visible. For the first 100 yards it is considerably flattened and spread by old cultivation rigs running across it, up and down hill, but a more perfect stretch some 250 yards long then appears accompanied on the upper side, where the causeway has evidently been provided with a drainage ditch, by a row of quarry pits for road-metalling. More than twenty quarry pits are visible, some separate but many coalescing. The mound then becomes less distinct, again owing to rigs, but can be traced swinging round the north-west bay of the valley, where it coincides with the boundary wall of Upper Kidston farm and is still in use as a rough track running along the protuberant shoulder of Edston Hill. Some 80 yards south-east of the point where the track leaves the Upper Kidston boundary-wall a streamlet has worn through the surface and has revealed much of a solid, kerbed bottoming of large and carefully laid stones. The road continues to follow the track to the north-east head of the valley, where it breaks away from all modern tracks or paths and is last seen, just short of the north-west end of Jedderfield plantation, as a bold mound pointing north-eastwards towards the valley of the Eddleston Water. How it crossed this valley, or whether its further course lay by Peebles, is not now apparent. But the sector now described, which extends for a mile in length, ingeniously avoids the first of the great natural obstacles in the Tweed valley east of Lyne by a course which is well engineered and graded throughout. The discovery is a useful addition to knowledge at a point where a fresh discovery was hardly expected.

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