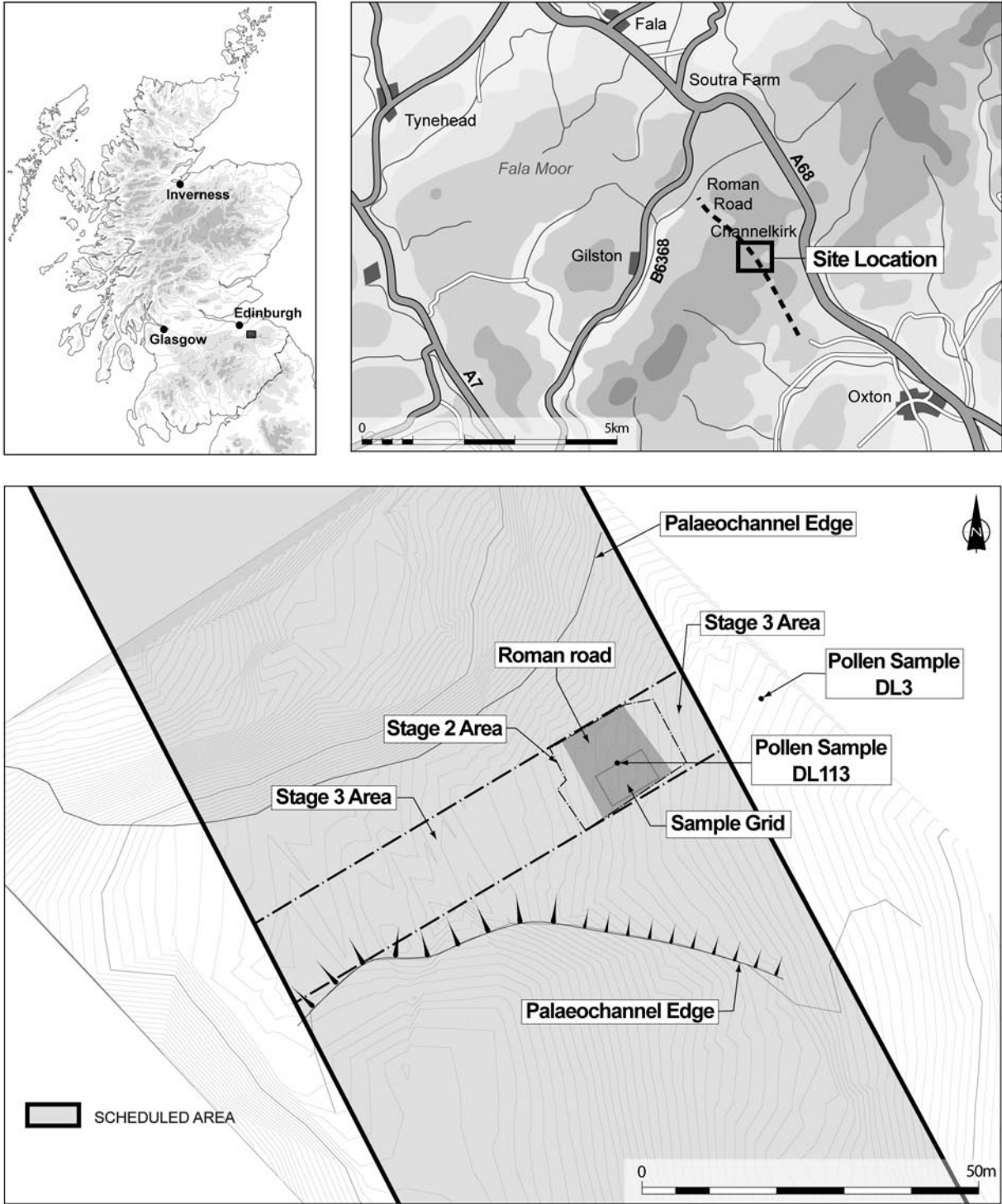


2 INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the results of an archaeological excavation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in October and November 2007 in advance of the construction of a wind farm access road, part of

the wind farm extension development at Dun Law, Scottish Borders (illus 1). The alignment of the access road crossed a scheduled section of Dere Street Roman road (Scheduled Monument site SM No. 2962).



Illus 1 Site and trench location maps

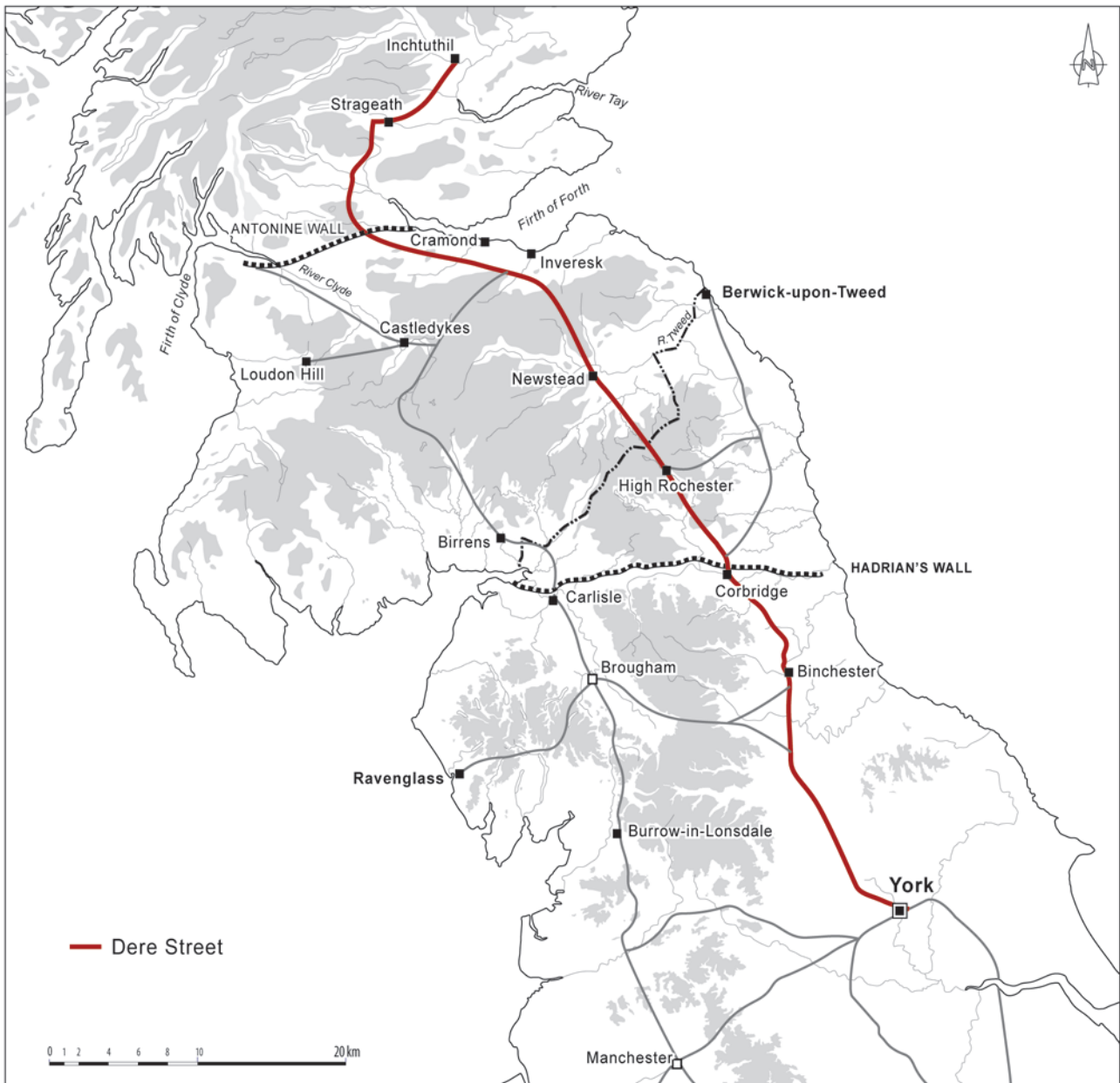
A location for a potential crossing of the scheduled area by the access road was identified at NGR NT 4643 5663, based on a field inspection by CFA and a resistivity survey carried out by GUARD (see O'Connell 2005 for details). At this location, the structure of the Roman road was not visually apparent for a distance of 40–50m. Either side of this, the alignment of the Roman road is easily detectable as a broad terrace with a bank on its upslope (south-west) side and a ditch on its downslope (north-east) side, where it crosses a broad low-lying boggy stretch of ground. The boggy ground appears to be the result of water run-off from the higher ground on the north-east side of the conifer plantation, which ultimately drains into the Windy Cleugh Burn.

Taken together, the results of the field inspection and the resistivity survey indicated that the Roman road at the proposed crossing point was

either absent, badly degraded or buried at a depth not detectable by the methods used. Invasive methods were necessary to test these possibilities. Accordingly, a field assessment and evaluation were undertaken by CFA in November 2005, which found that the remains of a section of the Roman road survived beneath the peat (ibid). Full excavation was carried out with the aim of recovering and recording physical evidence relating to the construction, use and lifespan of the Roman road. Further monitoring was carried out during works across the scheduled area.

2.1 Dere Street in context

The reasons for the Roman Empire's success in its subordination of western Europe are manifold. Their



Illus 2 Route of Dere Street

expansionist ideology was manifest in their road-building schemes. Roads were essential in spreading its legions, culture and political influence. By the end of the 2nd century AD there were over 53,000 miles of roads within the Roman Empire (Berechman 2003). The decline of the western Roman Empire in c 476 AD saw the decline in construction and maintenance of Roman roads, although many were still used in a degraded state throughout the medieval period.

The Roman conquest of Britain was also facilitated by road building. Dere Street formed part of the Roman army's eastern arterial route and was linked, via Stanegate, to the western arterial route. It linked the Roman legionary forts of *Eburacum* (York) and Inchtuthil near Perth. Because of its strategic importance Dere Street was primarily a military road (*viae militares*; Berechman 2003, 459). It, like other roads, served as a communication and supply line for the Roman army and was heavily fortified with marching camps situated along its route. Built under the command of Agricola, Governor of Britain between AD 78 and 84, it was one of many commissioned during his reign, and facilitated his advance into Scotland. Although Agricola won a significant victory against the Caledonian Confederacy led by Calgacus at the battle of Mons Graupius in AD 83 or 84, the Roman occupation of Scotland was short-lived. Agricola was called back to Rome, the Roman fortifications along the Gask Ridge were abandoned and Inchtuthil was dismantled before it was finished. The Romans subsequently withdrew and constructed a new line of defence, Hadrian's Wall.

2.2 *The toponymy and route of Dere Street*

We do not know the Roman names for their roads in Scotland. Many of the names that are in use today

are probably of Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon derivation (Davies 2002, 22). The name Dere Street may derive from Deira, a 6th-century Anglo-Saxon kingdom which later merged with the kingdom of Bernicia to the north to form the kingdom of Northumbria, through which the longest stretch of Dere Street is found (Higham 1993). Dere Street was probably the most important of the Roman roads in northern Britain, being listed as number one in the Antonine Itinerary (Inglis 1916, 32).

Much of the course of Dere Street (illus 2) has been replaced by modern roads including the A1 and A68 north of Corbridge. Heading north from York, the Roman engineers that built the road had also to ford and bridge a number of rivers including the Nidd near Aldborough, the Ure near Catterick, the Tees near Piercebridge, the Wear near Bishop Auckland and the Tyne near Corbridge, where the route crossed the later alignment of Hadrian's Wall (Bidwell & Holbrook 1989; Fitzpatrick & Scott 1999). From Corbridge the road continued into Redesdale and then through the Cheviot Hills, where the remains of Roman marching camps can be found at Fourlaws, West Woodburn and High Rochester.

The road crosses into Scotland near the present A68 at Carter Fell, where the remains of another marching camp can be found at Chew Green. The road then crosses the River Tweed at *Trimontium* (Newstead). From there the route follows the Leader Water to the foot of the Lammermuirs with a marching camp at Oxton. From Oxton the road traverses Soutra Hill, then reaches the alleged stronghold of the Votadini tribe at *Din Eidyn* (Edinburgh). It was near here that the Romans garrisoned at Cramond and Inveresk in order to service the eastern arm of the Antonine Wall in the mid 2nd century AD.