

THE WINCHESTER—SILCHESTER ROMAN ROAD FROM SHERBORNE ST. JOHN TO SILCHESTER.

Notes by S. E. WINBOLT,
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FROM an examination of the ground for some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles through fields and woods, I conclude that the straight line drawn across the map is correct. There is nothing in the nature of the terrain to prevent a perfectly straight line for the road.

I proceed from Sherborne St. John northwards. About 160 yds. N. of the crossing of the Weybrook the line close E. of the Sherborne St. John (West) earthwork is simply a track used as a footpath. The earthwork is on a slight southerly slope and is bounded on the West by the Aldermaston Road, here a cutting. The other three sides are slight banks with traces of ditches outside. The entrance was probably in the middle of the North side.

North side, c. 105 paces (yds.) ; E. side, c. 75 paces ; S. side, c. 105 paces ; W. side (on the road), 165 paces. This is almost certainly a medieval (?house) enclosure : its shape and similarity to Morgaston Wood and its position beside the road justify this inference (see below).

About 700 yds. North of this earthwork the line of the Roman road is represented for a few hundred yards by a distinct, broad agger, especially where it passes close West of the Morgaston Wood earthwork, between the West bank of which and the agger is a broad ditch.

Morgaston Wood Earthwork. Whereas Sherborne St. John earthwork is West of the line of the Roman road, this is East of the visible agger of the road. It is on level ground on the top of a rise from the South and consists of banks and ditches outside. West side, c. 67 paces, has a tree on each of its two rounded corners ; N. side, 65 paces ; E. side, with three trees on it, 43 paces ; S. side, 74 paces. Entrance probably middle of South side. Down hill South the agger passes through a hedgerow diagonally. In the N.W. corner of the area I found several fragments of (possibly 14th century) medieval pottery. Outside the N.E. corner there was a fishpond. There is no earthwork South of this, as I have seen represented on a map, and as the conformation of the ground might lead one at first sight to suppose.

The two earthworks (Sherborne St. John and Morgaston Wood) are not Roman, but medieval, for the reasons stated above.

They were probably sited there when the Roman road was still in use before about A.D. 1400.

N.B.—The portion of the Roman road West of the Bramley Corner loop road was enclosed in the Beaurepaire property as derelict by W. Brocas in 1415. Though unimportant, probably these two earthworks should be shown in future maps as medieval evidence of the course of the Roman road.

Through Pollards End Copse the line of the road is that of a ride. After passing through the S.E. end of Cranes Copse, the line is quite distinct as an agger (in a grass field), through which, for drainage purposes, several small trenches have been cut; these help to show up the agger. After skirting Peat Gully Copse and Beaurepaire Wood along their West sides, the Roman road becomes a disused green road, East of Hillbend Farm, for about 230 yds. At the North end of this straight is a shallow water splash about 2ft. deep. In the water here I found a good specimen of heavy Roman tiles. Across the next field, once ploughed, I saw no sign of the Roman road. At the South end of the Bramley Corner loop road the agger is faintly discernible going through a gate and up the field to the North, and coinciding with a hedgerow in the next field North: while North of Latchmere Green it is still plainer going up the field opposite to the second house, North of the cross-roads. After traversing two more fields (not examined by me), at Three Ashes the Roman road is coincident with the present road for about 1 mile, till it approaches the South gate of Silchester Roman town.