



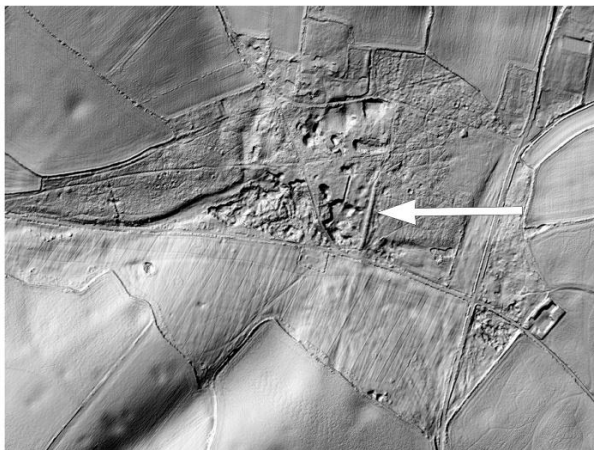
News and events

- Members may have noticed that the tarpaulins on **The Old Bakery** were refurbished last week. Mike Peters of Jarvis writes: "The building is currently very unsightly, but we are committed to restoring the Old Bakery to its former glory, hence our patience with trying to resolve the technical details of the planning application."
- Our **next meeting** will be on **Wednesday 18 March** when **John Morewood**, President of the Arc and Arc, will tell us about **The Civil Wars in Western Hertfordshire 1642 to 1651**.

Hiding in plain sight

In the 1960s a community research group called the *Viatores* identified a spaghetti-junction of four Roman roads that criss-crossed Wheathampstead. Sadly, historians no longer think that the roads exist. The one exception is the Roman road from St. Albans to Braughing that ran through Coleman Green and crossed the River Lea at Waterend.

Wheathampstead may have 'lost' four Roman roads but a genuine one appears to have been discovered in the last few months. Researchers from the Roman Roads Research Association (RRRA) using LiDAR data identified two *aggers* in woodland. *Aggers* are the raised embankment that supported a Roman road and show up very clearly on land that has not been ploughed. One *agger* was found at Priors Wood close to Ayot St. Lawrence. The second *agger* was where nobody expected to find it ... at Nomansland, hidden amongst dense woodland and old quarry sites on the north side of the common.

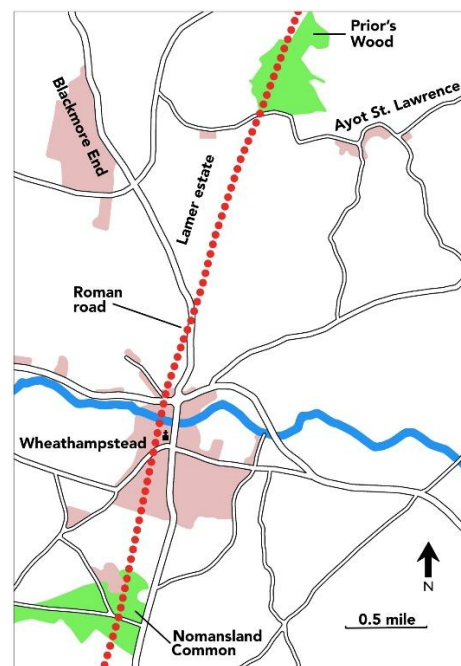


LiDAR mapping showing the *agger* crossing Nomansland and continuing south up the hill towards Sandridge.

The two *aggers* lined up with each other despite being 2.5 miles apart. This suggested that they

were part of the same road. A straight line drawn between the two *aggers* also implied that the Roman road must have gone through the centre of Wheathampstead village. But where was it?

Philip Sparrow, who until recently lived in Wheathampstead and is a member of the RRRRA, came to a surprising conclusion. The *agger* of the Roman road is hiding in plain sight. A 190-metre stretch of *agger* runs from King Edward Place to Church Street and forms the west side of St. Helen's churchyard. This is very clearly visible in LiDAR and also with the naked eye if you look carefully: part of a raised bank runs alongside the Crinkle-Crinkle wall. The History Society recently suggested that this earthwork could have been part of a Saxon defensive palisade. This may still be true. The mound of the Roman road might have been re-used hundreds of years after it went out of use.



The likely route of the Roman road.

Mike Smith