



ROMAN·ROADS·RESEARCH·ASSOCIATION

R·R·R·A

a charity registered in England and Wales, no. 1163854

info@romanroads.org

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROMAN ROADS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION 2023-2024

Registered charity no. 1163854

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Cover Image: Gradiometer survey one the edge of the Roman settlement of Ad Pontem (East Stoke), Nottinghamshire, , superimposed on a Google Earth aerial photo from 2007. The survey, undertaken by RRRRA members and local volunteers in 2023, shows RR59(x) from Ancaster heading northwest to meet the Fosse Way, which is fossilised by the modern road. This work finally proved the existence of this road, and shows that the settlement at Ad Pontem extended much further south than previously thought.

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OUR VISION & OUR MISSION



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN, MIKE HAKEN

It hardly seems possible that it is now ten years since I organised the excavation that eventually led to the formation of this Association. The excavation, on an engineered cutting on RR720b (Ilkley to Aldborough) on the Ripley Castle Estate, near Harrogate, demonstrated that my friend and RRRA co-founder, the late Hugh Toller (1949-2016), was correct in his observation from lidar imagery that the Roman line kept dead straight through the village of Hampsthwaite, rather than the improbable dogleg shown on most maps. That excavation, with its dozen or so volunteers, quickly led to a public meeting in Wetherby where a more formal group was formed, bound by a common interest in the Roman road network in Yorkshire. Less than a year later, that Yorkshire focus had already evolved into a wider desire to cover the entire country, the group being formally constituted as the Roman Roads Research Association, a registered charity. Since those early beginnings, the time really has flown by, and much has changed, not least the numbers - that original excavation of a dozen volunteers is now an Association with 593 members spread across the world as far afield as Japan.

On this page in last year's Trustees Report, I included a paragraph which sums up our Objectives as stated in our constitution. When looking forwards to what we are trying to achieve in the coming years, it is important to maintain focus on our primary aim, which in my view is perfectly summed up by that paragraph, so I'm going to use it again, as I probably will next year. I'm still avoiding using the phrase 'Mission Statement'!

We promote the study and understanding of Roman roads, infrastructure & heritage in Britain from over 350 years within the Roman Empire. We aim to provide an accessible focal point for our members, our volunteers, local communities, the general public, and heritage organisations both large and small, working together to gain a fuller understanding of the infrastructure and administration of Roman Britain along with the impact it had (and continues to have) on the development of our nation.

So, how much progress along that path have we made in the last year, particularly in working towards our Strategic Objectives detailed in last years report? Brief progress markers are given on pages 5 & 6, however here's a few details of what's been going on, largely behind the scenes. Our first regional group is being formed in Eastern England, based in Colchester and led by Geoff Lunn. We've also engaged a professional web designer to completely re-design our website with a more modern feel, which will include individual member logins to a new members area. Thanks to a mutually beneficial arrangement with one of our members, we now have the use of a second magnetometer cart, which will make it so much easier to carry out surveys in the south. From a personal perspective, most of my time is being spent working on creating a digital map of Roman Britain which will provide the essential starting point for the ReDrawing the Map project, due to be formally launched next year. More on page 4. When the project gets going in earnest, the map will gradually evolve as each region is thoroughly re-assessed. As promised last year, we're not starting in Yorkshire!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Haken', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Haken

PROGRESS IN 2023-4

MEMBERSHIP (from Membership Secretary, Peter Webb)

Following our last AGM on the 30th November 2023, from the 1st December 2023 our membership has increased to a record level, standing at 593 as of 18th November 2024. We have welcomed 117 new members, whilst losing 21 through non-payment and 14 who have left us for a range of reasons. This means that membership recruitment is running at over three times loss.

The figures are therefore looking healthy, not just across England which unsurprisingly predominates, but it is also growing in the rest of the U.K. and abroad, where we now have 30 members around the globe.

Country:	Member number	Country	Member number
England	518	France	1
Wales	15	Germany	1
Scotland	28	Italy	1
N. Ireland	1	Japan	1
Isle of Man	1	Netherlands	4
Australia	3	New Zealand	1
Belgium	1	Portugal	1
Canada	4	USA	12
		Total	593

If as last year we divide England's counties into four geographical groups based upon position, it is interesting this year that the Association has become more broadly spread across the country with a surge in interest in Central and Southern counties:

English Areas	2024	2023	Description of counties selected
North	153	152	above line Mersey to Humber
Central	96	77	above line Avon to Wash
South East	209	172	Lines: Oxfordshire to Wash/ Oxfordshire to Solent
South West	60	59	West and south of line Gloucestershire to Solent
Total:	518	460	

So overall membership is in a healthy position and breaking the 600 barrier cannot be far away.

I would like to thank all members for their unfailing politeness and good humour in dealing with me and I look forward very much to a further year with you all.

Peter

ITINERA

Itinera IV was another excellent volume and at 410 pages our biggest to date, of which a whopping 94 pages were devoted to Roman Roads in 2023. The additional section focusing on the Devil's Causeway also increased the size, but unfortunately this also increased printing costs forcing us to increase the price, which appears to have had a major negative impact on sales. Whilst it is clear that the general trend in journal publication is towards digital output, it is also clear that many readers prefer to have a physical

copy on their bookshelf, and the *Itinera* committee is unanimous in its belief that we should continue to produce a printed version.

At the time of writing, *Itinera V* is in preparation and is expected to be a little smaller. Printing costs have not risen, which will enable us to drop the price of the printed edition and hopefully increase sales. We continue to attract contributions from abroad, with two papers this year from Romania.

Mike Bishop has decided to step down from the *Itinera* Committee, and we would all like to take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts over the last four years - without his experience and expertise *Itinera* would probably never have got off the ground. At the same time, we are extremely pleased to welcome Prof. James Gerrard (Newcastle University) to the fold. His insight from the world of academic archaeology will be invaluable in ensuring *Itinera's* future success.

Finally, we must not forget that the journal could not happen without the combined efforts of the 36 RRA members who willing to devote so much of their to making the publication a success.

TALKS & SEMINARS

The 2023-2024 season of online talks was a resounding success, with most talks achieving audiences of around 200 or more. Our Secretary, Dave Armstrong, volunteered to take over the role of organising the Talks Programme in 2023, supposedly on a very temporary basis whilst we found someone else to take it on. Dave has done an amazing job and has put together another excellent programme for the 2024-2025 season, however he would like this season to be his last, so we are now looking to recruit a new Talks Co-ordinator - anyone interested in taking this important and interesting role should contact Dave - dave.armstrong@romanroads.org.

Whilst the talks are hugely successful, we do want to increase our viewing figures on YouTube, which are good, but small by YouTube standards. This is something we will be looking to actively address in the coming months.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who has made a donation to support our talks programme over the last year or so. Your support is very much appreciated and will now enable us to soon move over to using Zoom Webinar, with its increased functionality and control.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

This year has been unusually quiet, whilst we research more potential sites.

The Roman A1 Project. The work on the early south-north road corridor in Yorkshire is now progressing southwards into Nottinghamshire. In spring 2024, RRA members along with local volunteers, conducted a gradiometer survey immediately south of the Roman settlement at Ad Pontem, which sits on the Fosse Way just across the R. Trent from Southwell, Nottinghamshire. The results, used as the cover image for this report, have proven the existence of RR59(x), another link in the chain of roads which, if we are right, would have formed a direct and essential line of communication from the provincial capital into the territory of the Brigantes at a relatively early stage in the Roman conquest of Britain.



Volunteers on site near East Stoke, Nottinghamshire

Permission has been granted for a survey near Staunton in the Vale, Nottinghamshire, which will attempt to locate the junction between RR59(x) and

the road which is suspected to run to Thistleton, Rutland, before joining Ermine Street north of a few miles north of Great Casterton.

EXCAVATION

No excavation was undertaken in 2023-4. As noted in last year's report, our two previous excavations need to be written up, and work has commenced on this, with all external finds analysis now completed, and digitisation of the drawings underway.

However, we are keen to develop a programme of future targets for excavation. One idea is that these could be specifically chosen to assess potential differences in construction techniques between early military roads, and those built later between important settlements, presumably by commercial contractors. This is potentially a project that we could attempt to raise substantial funding to support.

ROADS OF ROMAN BRITAIN

As suggested in the previous Trustees Report, we will soon be launching ReDrawing the Map, as part of the wider Roads of Roman Britain project. The aim of ReDrawing the Map is simple; to re-examine the evidence for every known and claimed Roman road in Britain using HER records, the old Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division files, each country's national Historic Environment records, excavation reports, geophysical survey, lidar, aerial photography, field investigation, and of course reports in *Itinera* and our Newsletters. In the process, it is inevitable that a few 'new' roads will also be discovered.

This is a huge task, and will take years to collate and assess all the evidence. So, as outlined in 'Making a Start' on p.6 of last year's report, our chairman, Mike Haken, has been working on preparing a temporary stop-gap. Currently about 40% complete, Mike is building a digital map which represents as good a representation as possible of our current understanding of Roman Britain, combining his own research with the massive contribution made by David Ratledge, along with many others. It is not intended to be definitive, but will provide a solid base which can then be further developed as the ReDrawing the Map project progresses. Most important of all, the mapping, when finished some time next year, will be made freely available either as a Geopackage for QGIS users, or as a KMZ to import into Google Earth.

MOVING FORWARDS....

In last year's Trustees' report, our secretary, Dave Armstrong, presented the following aspirations and strategic objectives. Where work has already started or is planned, an indication of progress is given below.

OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR 2028

- RRRA will be seen as a well-managed and respected Association of enthusiastic individuals/groups researching Roman roads in a variety of ways. - **Ongoing**
- RRRA will be visible to others through its reputation, on-line and social media presence, annual journal *Itinera* and the activities/functions it promotes. - **Ongoing**
- While predominantly made up of non-archaeological professionals the Association will be respected for the high, professional, standards it consistently applies to all of its work. - **Ongoing**
- RRRA will have created and made available as an open access (OA) resource, a comprehensive, easy to use and accurate set of detailed mapping of the Roman roads of Britannia, which will become the accepted 'go to' source for any mapping of Roman Britain. - **In progress - completion 2025**
- RRRA will have created free open-access resources detailing the construction methods & techniques including details of alignments, LDAs and surveying of Roman roads along with excavation and geophysics advice. - **Preparation to start Spring 2025**
- RRRA will actively encourage members and aligned community groups to research known and new Roman roads to a high standard providing expertise in the form of assistance, resources and training.- **Ongoing, to be expanded in 2025-26**
- RRRA will make steps to contribute to Empire wide Roman road activities by providing expertise through individuals to projects, resources and technical papers. - **Not yet commenced**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve these aspirations, a set of specific Strategic objectives have been identified.

1. **Placing the Association on a firm organisational footing in terms of business and risk management.** This to include succession planning for Chair and Trustees, timely replacement of members in other key roles, centralised cloud storage and backup for information systems, and an annual programme of meetings, including the AGM. - **100TB Cloud storage in place through Google Workspace for Non-Profits; meeting planning active**
2. **Grow the Membership.** Both for the purposes of enlarging the pool of potential contributors, and for increasing subscription revenue to enable other activities. **Ongoing - 13% increase during 2023-24**
3. **Involving members in activities.** This for the purpose of extending the Association's core objectives, developing the level of satisfaction in membership, and providing a pool of potential role holders and officers. This strategic objective is linked to an associated objective:
4. **RRRA Education Initiative**, aimed at increasing the knowledge of, and interest in, the study of Roman roads. This will include continuing to produce publications such as *Itinera*, along with the development of a suite of training and educational guides, programmes of seminars and talks (both on-line and in person), and an outreach programme involving schools and local communities. - **Ongoing, more outreach needed**

5. **Improved management of the Association website** as an effective, and up-to-date digital showplace, and access point, for the Association. It should include removal of out-of-date information, verifying of links, and ensuring relevance to current activities. This to be achieved through appointment of a paid web manager, lifting a major administrative and technical burden off the current Chairman. - **In progress - completion 2025**
6. **A planned approach to completing the gazetteer ‘The Roads of Roman Britain’.** This is key to the organisation’s purpose of becoming the acknowledged reference point for information on the roads of Roman Britain, developing Margary’s work in the context of present knowledge, making it fit for purpose in the mid-21st century. Actions to be detailed about how this should be achieved, e.g. by creation of digitised road maps (GIS and Google Earth (.kmz files)), and milestones for step-by-step completion of the whole gazetteer. - **Planning in progress**

MAKING A START

In order to begin taking the steps necessary to achieve our Aspirations and Strategic Objectives, several proposals were put to the membership at last year’s AGM. Progress is marked where appropriate

1. The Association will employ a professional web designer to restructure the website and resolve the deficiencies. - **In progress - completion 2025**
2. The Association will take steps towards creating regional groups across Britain. - **Initiated**
3. The Association will form working groups to define (but not necessarily create) what suite of ‘how to’ Guide documents are needed to ensure RR research work is conducted to the necessary high standard - **expected commencement 2025**
4. Preliminary steps be taken to explore how funding could be sought. - **In progress**
5. As an intermediate step in progressing the development of the Roads of Roman Britain project (i.e. the gazetteer), the Association will start to produce digital mapping of each Roman road in Britain, easily downloadable from an online catalogue. - **In progress - completion 2025**

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

LEGAL STRUCTURE

The Roman Roads Research Association was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in October 2015, and is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission, no. 1163854

ENSURING OUR ACTIVITIES ACHIEVE OUR CHARITABLE AIMS

The Roman Roads Research Association's objectives, as set out in our constitution are to advance the education of the public in general about the Roman road network in Britain and promote the study of Roman roads and Roman heritage more generally. In particular, we do this (but not exclusively) by

- carrying out research into the course and construction of individual Roman roads.
- promoting the study of Roman roads and associated sites by community groups and organisations.
- presenting talks, lectures and displays to the general public, schools and community groups
- publishing the results of research and excavation.

The aspirations and Strategic Objectives set out in the previous section of this report will enable us to achieve those primary objectives in our constitution, over the next five years.

As a matter of policy (having considered the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission, in particular Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011), the Trustees take the view that it is not only important that the results of our activities have public benefit, but that the activities themselves should do so. To this end, it is our policy that whilst our archaeological activities may be professionally led, the bulk of the actual work should be carried out by volunteers, with a focus on local communities, not just our own membership.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Our **Board of Trustees** makes sure the RRRRA is governed effectively and responsibly. The Trustees are responsible for us delivering our charitable objectives and for ensuring that we are governed in accordance with our Constitution. Whilst we currently have three Trustees, we will be seeking to recruit two more during the next year.

The trustees delegate some functions of management to committees and working groups, drawn from our membership, in order to deliver our five main activities. Whilst a committee will be run fairly formally with regular meetings having an agenda and minutes, the membership and running of our working groups is maintained on a much more informal basis, always remembering that we are all volunteers often with busy lives outside the RRRRA. Our current committees and groups are listed below, although these are very likely to change and develop during the next twelve months.

- The **Itinera Editorial Committee** currently with five members, is responsible for the preparation and publication of our peer-reviewed journal, *Itinera*, and is assisted by an advisory panel which may from time to time include specialists from outside our membership. It generally meets monthly, or at greater intervals should that be more appropriate.

- The **Strategic Planning Committee**, which currently consists of the trustees along with our Secretary, Dave Armstrong. The Trustees may choose to expand that committee as and when they see fit
- The **Seminar and Talks working group** has six members, who ensure the smooth running of all our talks and seminars held online (currently via Zoom). Responsibility for organising the programme rests with our Talks and Seminars Coordinator, a position currently vacant, although Dave Armstrong is temporarily standing in.
- **Fieldwork working group.** A very informal group of four, tasked with organising the RRRRA's geophysical surveys and excavations. Additional members of the group, particularly from southern Britain, are still needed to help ensure a more equal geographical coverage.
- **East of England regional group.** This brand new regional group is soon to hold its first meeting, and it is hoped will form the model for other regional groups across the country.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

From our Treasurer, Albert Hills

INCOME

	2023-2024(£)	2022-2023 (£)
Membership Subscriptions	9453	6848
Donations & Bequests	662	812
Zoom Events Donations	1560	
<i>Itinera</i> (journal) sales	2430	3226
Total Income	14105	10886

EXPENDITURE

	2023-2024 (£)	2022-2023 (£)
Professional Fees	2080	1807
Equipment repair & Renewal	400	1533
<i>Itinera</i> Production & postage	2902	2002
Printing	406	265
Website Redesign	2699	-
Internet Service Fees	423	489
Insurance	215	-
Paypal Fees	256	198
Bank charges & other fees	173	132
Total Expenditure	10030	6986

SURPLUS

	2023-2024 (£)	2022-2023 (£)
Surplus for the year	4075	3900

FUNDS

	2023-2024 (£)	2022-2023 (£)
Unrestricted funds this year end	15699	26624
Reserve funds this year end	15000	-
Total funds this year end	30699	26624

GENERAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

We are pleased to be able to report that the Association created a surplus of £4075 in the last year, mainly as a result of increased membership numbers to almost 600. We have had no major donations, although small donations from the voluntary additional £5 on the membership fee together with donations from attendees of our online talks (which doubled from the previous year) have raised £2,222. As mentioned earlier in this report, sales of *Itinera* IV are markedly down on the previous volume.

As anticipated, expenditure in 2023-24 was significantly higher than in the previous year. The major differences in expenditure this year are large increases in printing and postage costs for *Itinera* and the anticipated initial payment for the redevelopment of our website.

Looking forward to 2024-25, the current trend suggests that we can expect membership numbers to continue to rise, although of course we must not be complacent. As discussed earlier in this report, it is intended to lower the price for *Itinera* with the aim of increasing sales and reducing the loss incurred this year.

Expenditure is expected to be higher in the coming year. The strategic planning committee has approved expenditure of £4,200 for a GPS system which will allow us access to a second gradiometer array which has been acquired by one of our members specifically for our use. This new array can more easily be deployed in the southern half of the country. We will also be spending at least a further £2,700 on website development.

RESERVES

In order to ensure the maintenance of our core activities, and in accordance with good practice as recommended by the Charity Commission, it has been the Trustees' stated aim to establish a reserve fund as soon as circumstances permitted. This is intended to hold sufficient funds to maintain our scheduled activities for at least twelve months. It was agreed by the trustees that the original plan for a reserve of £10,000 was insufficient, and a Reserve Fund of £15,000 was created using a Virgin Saver account, currently earning 4.5% p.a..

TRUSTEES

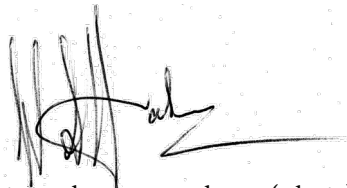
Michael S Haken Chair (Re-elected at 2023 AGM)
Albert Hills Treasurer (Elected 17 November 2022)
Robert Entwistle (Subject to re-election at 2024 AGM)

DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MSH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Stuart Haken (Chair)

19 November 2024

Roman Road Research Association Income and Expenditure

Nov 23 - Oct 24

	Income	Expenditure
Subscriptions	9,452.58	
Donations	662.20	
Zoom Events Donations	1,559.81	
Zoom Charges		- 475.82
Itinera Sales	2,430.78	
Itinera production cost		- 2,902.27
Professional Fees		- 2,080.20
Equipment Repairs & Renewals		- 400.00
Printing		- 406.21
Web Resdesign part payment		- 2,699.40
Internet Service fees		- 422.96
Insurance		- 214.80
Paypal Fees		- 255.74
Bank Charges & Paypal Fees		- 172.66
Totals	14,105.37	- 10,030.06
Surplus for the Year 23/24		4,075.31
Bank Balances y/e 23	26,624.34	
Bank Balances y/e 24	30,699.65	
Virgin 4.5% Saver	15,000.00	
Natwest 1	10,598.82	
Natwest 2	2,404.93	
Paypal	2,695.90	
	<u>30,699.65</u>	

Notes

Subscription Revenue has increased in line with Membership increase (but

Zoom Donations almost doubled

Itinera sales include both No.4 and some No.3

Web site redesign has commenced and the Exec have approved a £ 5400 sp

The Exec has also approved the spending £ 4200 for a GPS system,
this will allow the RRRA to have access to a second Magnetometry cart syste

Transferred £ 15,000 of surplus cash into 1 yr Virgin 4.5% Saver account

nditure

Nov 22 -Oct 23

	Income	Expenditure
	6,848.09	
	811.83	- 557.65
	3,226.57	- 2,002.14
		- 1,807.25
		- 1,533.85
		- 265.47
		- 489.20
		- 198.46
		- 131.88
	10,886.49	- 6,985.90
Surplus for the Year 22/23	3,900.59	
y/e 22	22,723.75	
y/e 23	26,624.34	

this year have separated Donations over and above the standard £ 16)

end

em, that can be deployed elsewhere in the country.