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STATION :
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From H. R. HODGKINSON,
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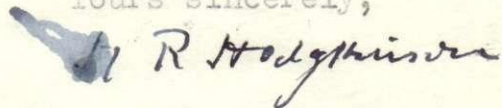
Oct. 23/57.

Dear Mr. Whiston,

I enclose a paper on the Ryckniel Street between Little Aston and Wall which I wrote some years ago, and have recently touched up. I shall be glad to have your observations on it. The Ordnance Survey maps referred to I sent to Mr E.A. Knight at the Midland Institute some days ago.

I am now in my 86th year with failing eyesight; I cannot expect to do much more in the way of archaeology.

Yours sincerely,

H. R. Hodgkinson

Are you a member of the Birmingham Archaeological Society ?

THE RYCKNIELD STREET IN THE VICINITY OF
LITTLE ASTON AND WALL, STAFFS.

The object of this note is to preserve a record of personal observations on the ground in 1927 and earlier years.

Mr. Benjamin Walker in his very valuable paper on the Rycknield Street in the neighbourhood of Birmingham (Trans. Vol. LX. p.42. (1936)) postulates a straight course from the high ground now occupied by the Selly Park Recreation Ground to the junction with Watling Street a little to the east of Wall. The evidence adduced in support of a straight course is substantial, and there are no physical obstacles which would render any deviation desirable.

At various times I have made a careful examination of the ground between Sutton Park and Wall based on the assumption that a prolongation of the line of the well known length of the road in Sutton Park would in fact be the actual course of the road as far as the Watling Street. This examination produced the following results -

1. Just beyond the place where the road emerges from the Park, the agger and ditches were clearly to be seen in a plantation nearby the site of the present chapel.
2. The road was clearly discernible near the lodge of Little Aston Hall, and could be traced for some distance along the carriage drive.

3. From this point the line of the road passes a little to the east of St. Peter's Church, Little Aston, but no trace of it can be seen on the surface. It then emerges into a lane which for about 500 yards is on the actual line.
4. On the road from Blake Street to Aldridge the line of the Rycknield Street was indicated by a "hump". This road has since been improved and the hump is no longer to be seen.
5. At the point marked _____ on the map, a trench was dug across the presumed line of the road in 1927. An abundance of stones and gravel was disclosed, but the material had been so spread by ploughing that the form and width of the road could not be ascertained.
6. The straight part of Ashcroft Lane is on the actual line of the road.
7. At the point where Ashcroft Lane turns towards Chesterfield the Rycknield Street passes into field O.S. 175 (Edn. 1923) which was pasture and showed no visible trace of the road.
8. Thence it passes into an arable field, O.S. 126. This field was planted with large cabbages of the type used for feeding cattle. The western part of the field was very stony, and the crop had almost entirely failed.
9. The ridge of the Roman road could be clearly traced across the next field which was under potatoes.

Map sent
to Mr. Knight
Oct. 1937

10. The next field was planted with cabbages. In the western corner the ground was full of stones and gravel and the crop had entirely failed.
11. The road now passes into O.S. 276. This field is of a very strange shape, it includes a narrow neck joining two wider portions. Prolonging the same straight line, the road passes through the neck. This field was under corn, but no difference could be detected in the crop on the line of the road.
12. Continuing in the same direction, the road passes along the line of the eastern hedges of O.S. 79, 78 and 77. Much stone and gravel was visible along the hedge of O.S.78.
13. The next field O.S.67 contains the Watling Street crossing. A complete section of the Rycknield Street was obtained in this field (vide Walker p. 53 and fig. 3). At this point the road was in exact alignment with the length in Sutton Park.

The result of excavation at the point of intersection of the two roads was disappointing. A large gravelled area of indeterminate shape was encountered, and a small patch paved with blocks of sandstone. Beyond the crossing the Rycknield Street turns towards the North-east. The stony debris of the road was seen in the corner of field O.S. 74, A little further on, the present road to Wall is crossed west of the railway bridge; the road then passes to the east side of the railway, and follows the line of Knowle lane towards Lichfield.

