

BRIGE?

By S. E. WINBOLT.

HOW does the writer, a comparative stranger to the County, come to the subject of Brige? Years ago, with another, I walked the Roman road from Winchester to Old Sarum. Later I became interested in Buckholt Farm through the Sussex-Surrey glass industry: for in the last quarter of the sixteenth century the French glassmakers, growing unpopular, "took up their carriages" and withdrew thither *via* Winchester, and set up at least two furnaces, which they worked for some five years before retiring to Gloucestershire. Next, Dr. Williams-Freeman's book on Hampshire Field Archaeology brought me back to the Roman road and the Wallop Valley, rich in antiquity. Here I was posed by two mysteries. Years ago I had plotted in on my half-inch Bartholomew—I forget on what precise authority—(a) a Roman station, Brige, at Broughton, or alternatively a little E. of Buckholt; and (b) a Roman villa on the E. side of Whiteshoot Hill, opposite Broughton. About the authority for the allocation of (b) I was for a time at a loss, until I found it on Williams-Freeman's general map, about 600 yds. N. of Cold Harbour. His information is obviously derived from *V.C.H.*: "At Broughton, about a mile west of the Church and three-quarters of a mile north of the Roman road . . . a Roman 'villa' is said to have been found." No named authority and no date: moreover, Mr. Morley Hunt, the present owner of Buckholt, says that neither personally nor by tradition does he know anything of a Roman site there, and no one in the neighbourhood is wiser on the point. So mystery (b) I have been quite unable to solve in spite of many interrogations and investigations. Curiosity is unsated, and it remains to search the ground for definite evidence.

As to (a), I felt that Williams-Freeman was quite justified in rejecting Broughton as Brige, "an irresponsible flight on the part of the philologists." The letters b, r and g, it is true, are shared by the two names, but as Broughton is derived from Old English *Beorg-tun* (the tun near the hill), it can have nothing to do with (? Celtic) Brige. The name may have been derived from a previous British settlement, of which Hoare is rather wishfully inclined to think remains might be discovered "on the higher ground near Cold Harbour, and the adjacent tumuli." Further, would one expect to find a Roman road station or *mansio* nearly a mile away from the road? Williams-Freeman hints that Brige was placed by Colt Hoare on the road near Buckholt on somewhat unsatisfactory evidence.

In beginning to look into this evidence about Brige, I accepted (I now think wrongly) Williams-Freeman's quotation of the Brige

mileage figures from *Antonine Iter* XV, as 11 R. miles from Venta and 8 from Sorbiodunum. The total figure he repeats (p. 233, l. 20) in the case of Ashley Camp. The 8 is due to Richard of Cirencester, but the *Ant. It.* gives 9, as is correctly quoted by Colt Hoare. However, accepting for the nonce 11 and 8, I was puzzled by figures quite demonstrably wrong. Measurements carefully made by myself and another on half-inch and one-inch maps both by ruler and by wheel, made the whole distance $21\frac{1}{2}$ m. (The measurement by Colt Hoare's surveyor was $21\frac{3}{4}$ m.) The longer English miles converted into shorter Roman miles give a distance of $22\frac{3}{4}$ m. and about 50 yds., so that the *Ant. It.* figure of 19 is considerably, nearly 4 miles, out. One can only suppose that the compiler misquoted, or that copyists bungled.

But though the actual figures are wrong, the *proportional figures* for Brige may possibly be right. Worked out on the English mileage, Brige is thus put at a point $12\frac{3}{10}$ m. Eng. from Venta and $8\frac{4}{10}$ from Sorbiodunum, i.e. on a very eligible site c. 350 yds. E. of Buckholt Farm. The farm buildings are $12\frac{1}{2}$ m. from Venta, and $8\frac{7}{10}$ from Sorbiodunum, on a narrow spur coming down from Horsehoe Hill to the N.

At this juncture I was favoured with the kind loan of Colt Hoare's rare volume on North Wilts (1819). He has no word to say about the Roman villa (b). As to (a), he fixes Brige (pp. 58-61)—rather complacently, as in the identification of Vindomis at Finckley Farm, partly by distances, partly by scattered finds of Roman pottery. In regard to distances, one was now faced by the correct *Antonine* figures of 11 and 9. (There seems to be no good reason for accepting Richard in preference to *Ant. Iter*). A new calculation on the proportionate basis of still wrong figures placed Brige at $11\frac{1}{2}$ m. from Venta, whereas Hoare places it at $12\frac{1}{2}$ m. According to modern knowledge, the Roman mile is short of the English mile by 147 yds.; but Hoare, noting the disparity of Roman and English mileages along this road, drew the wrong conclusion, namely, that the Roman mile was longer than the English. Now $11\frac{1}{2}$ m. on Hoare's map and scale would put Brige opposite Queenswood Barn, some 1300 yds. E. of the cross-roads where he marks it. But on the whole, considering the uncertainty of available data about distances, the disparity is not great.

As to scattered finds, these are perhaps slightly more satisfactory. As his book is available to very few, I venture to quote somewhat at length. "I may venture to say that the site of Brige is at length discovered. . . In sundry places we picked up certain evidence of Roman population: the soil, however, was much against us, having been sown down to grass, and exhibiting a solid surface of flint. . . . In the present cultivated state of the lands, not the smallest outward or visible sign exists of British or Roman ground. . . . In the point of distance, the situation of Brige agrees

very well with the numbers stated in the Itineraries, for according to modern computation, the distance will be nine and a half miles from Old Sarum, and eleven and a half from Winchester." Accordingly in his map (p. 60) he puts the word *Brige* athwart the cross-road, printing it close to and parallel with the Roman road. On the map he marks his "sundry places" for pottery as follows: (i) pottery (? Roman, not stated to be such) c. 200 yds. W. of the cross-road from Romsey to Wallop and 60 yds. S. of the Roman road. Almost on the same spot Mr. Morley Hunt says he ploughed up a few years ago lumps of hard sandstone in soil consisting of clay and gravel: they probably served a structural purpose. (ii) Roman pottery athwart the next cross-road E., c. 200 yds. N. from the Roman road and 100 yds. up the road. (iii) Pottery (? Roman), c. 40 yds. S.S.W. of the Cold Harbour clump of trees, c. 300 yds. N. of the nearest point on the Roman road. This is very close to one of the glassmakers' furnaces, and the pottery may be their remains.

On the whole, it seems that *Brige* should be looked for a little E. of Buckholt, between $11\frac{1}{2}$ and $12\frac{1}{2}$ m. Eng. from Winchester.

Now it happens that for approximately 1025 yds. E. of Buckholt, *i.e.*, as far as the first cross-road, the course of the Roman road has for many years been ploughed out, though W. of the farm it is still in good condition, especially after $\frac{1}{4}$ m., where it is banked up on the S. side: and a stretch E. of the gap is scheduled by O.W. as an ancient monument. In 1819, according to Hoare's map, the gap in the road began 220 yds. W. of the cross-road and continued for only about 250 yds., the N. limit of the road existing in two stretches. It is perhaps significant that the E. end of the gap is marked by a field boundary crossing the road, and that across this boundary on the S. side is marked 'pottery.' It is probably here that remains of *Brige* might be found.

What kind of a station might we expect it to be? Perhaps a site astride the road like Hardham and Alfoldean on Sussex Stane Street (the former of about 4 acres, 440 by 400ft., the latter $2\frac{1}{2}$), and containing a taberna, stabling for horses, and quarters for a few officials. Both these *mansiones* were bisected by the road and bounded by vallum and ditch. If *Brige* was of this type, the ploughing out of the road might be accounted for: the banks and ditches parallel with and across it would have to be levelled if the area was to be made arable. On the other hand *Brige* may have been something more slight, just a taberna and stables by the side of the road: not much more would be needed for a rest-house on a through stage of only twenty-one miles. (Was there an intermediate station on the twenty-three miles of the Winchester—Silchester road?) Stations on Stane Street are distanced, Hardham from Chichester 13 m. Eng., Alfoldean from Hardham $11\frac{1}{2}$, and Dorking from Hardham $11\frac{1}{2}$. Hence in the matter of distances

Brige is reasonably placed. Apart from its favourable site, a reason for shortening the Sarum stage of this road was perhaps, the hillier character of the route over the Winterslow country, by Thorny Down and under Figsbury Ring.

We may yet settle Brige's business ; if spade investigations were made, Mr. Morley Hunt would be sympathetic.

The idea may not be far-fetched that Buckholt, the *box-holt*, beech wood, known to the Saxons, derives from plantations made in Roman days round the *mansio* of Brige. The Romans are known to have been solicitous about a supply of wood for a permanent settlement. Beeches lured the French glassmakers out of Sussex : the sites of their two furnaces are still traceable at short distances N. and E. of the farm, the latter 40 paces S. of the Cold Harbour clump. Beeches still ennoble the neighbourhood, but at Horseshoe Wood they are being thinned out owing to the present war demand for timber.

In considering the location of Brige (or Brigae), we must take into account the character of *Iter XV* as a whole, as we have it in our best text that of Parthey and Pinder (1845). It is full of uncertainties.

(a) The route is from Silchester to Exeter *via* Vindomis 15, Winchester 21, Brige 11, Old Salisbury 8, Woodyates 12, Dorchester 8, (?) Seaton 36, Exeter 15 : total 126. But the whole route is given as 136.

(b) If the termini were Silchester and Exeter, why *via* Vindomis to Winchester 36, when the direct road was *c.* 25 m. Rom. (23 Eng.)—an unnecessary 11 miles ?

(c) Vindomis and Brige have so far defied all efforts to identify them, and Moridurum is doubtful.

(d) The distance from Woodyates to Dorchester is given in texts variously as 8, 9 and 18 corrected to 8. In common with many of the figures in other *Itinera*, X and I are continually going wrong, being either added or omitted, and X and V interchanged : thus one item in *Iter. XIV* has alternative readings XIII, XIII and VIII.

The conclusion is that to fix Brige only by figures as recorded in *Ani. It.* must be highly problematical, and that probably the best chance is a proportional calculation as above. Documents failing, the only remedy is the spade.