

# From Goring towards Henley: The Course, History and Significance of a Medieval Oxfordshire Routeway

R.B. PEBERDY

## SUMMARY

*In the late Middle Ages there was a public routeway across the south-west Chilterns from Goring towards Henley-on-Thames. This article reconstructs the medieval route, which has not survived as a modern road, and attempts to deduce its earlier history and purposes. It concludes that the route's outer sections probably existed by the late Anglo-Saxon period as local droveways, and the intermediate section through a wooded area by the twelfth or thirteenth century. A more speculative discussion suggests that the entire route may have been used as a continuation of the Berkshire Ridgeway by the mid Anglo-Saxon period. An attempt is also made to understand why a once seemingly significant route lost importance. Consideration of changes at national level in the tenth to thirteenth centuries suggests that the spread of bridges, foundation of towns and use of horse-hauled carts altered the usage of routeways. It is hoped that this case study points to unappreciated aspects of the history of medieval land communications.*

Amongst the medieval documents sometimes called 'the Goring charters' there is a conveyance of 1353 which mentions incidentally a 'royal way' in Goring parish 'which leads towards Henley' (*viam regiam que ducit versus Henle*).<sup>1</sup> The reference to a royal way implies an established public highway, yet the route has not become a modern road. This prompts several questions. What was the route of the medieval way? When did it originate? What purposes did it serve? Does the history of such a routeway provide insights into the broader history of land communications? This article reconstructs the medieval Goring–Henley way, using mainly post-medieval sources, and examines its history, functions and wider significance.

## ROUTE OF THE GORING–HENLEY WAY

The 1353 reference is the only known written record of a Goring–Henley routeway before the nineteenth century,<sup>2</sup> and there is no known historical name for the route in its entirety.<sup>3</sup> But despite such obscurity, the routeway's historical course, together with the pre-modern landscape through which it passed, can be reconstructed from maps and other documents mainly of mid eighteenth-century and later date. Because many of the sources deal with individual parishes and originated at different times, the route will be traced through a discussion of parishes in

<sup>1</sup> T.R. Gambier-Parry (ed.), *A Collection of Charters Relating to Goring, Streatley, and the Neighbourhood, 1181–1546*, 2 vols., ORS, 13–14 (1931–2), vol. 2, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> See below for the new route across Goring parish created in 1812.

<sup>3</sup> The name 'Goring–Henley way' is used in this article for convenience. One suspects that in the Middle Ages it was possibly called 'Henley way' or 'Henley lane'. Recorded names for sections of the route are discussed in the text.

topographical order, starting with Goring. The Goring–Henley way differed from most main routes through the south-west Chilterns in its general direction: it crossed the hills from west to east, whereas other routes ran roughly from north-west to south-east.<sup>4</sup> It passed through six parishes, all of which exhibited the characteristics of parishes in this part of the Chilterns: they were long and narrow and included a range of land types (meadow, arable, pasture and woodland).<sup>5</sup> Since the parishes also ran roughly north-west to south-east,<sup>6</sup> the route went lengthwise through some parishes and crossed the narrow ends of others. Because it linked riverside locations via higher land, the landscape changed frequently along the route.

### *Goring Parish*

It is first necessary to determine which historical route through Goring parish was the *via regia* towards Henley mentioned in 1353. The conveyance shows that it ran along the south side of land in ‘Little Field’.<sup>7</sup> Little Field was one of the five main common fields of Goring township in the Middle Ages, though its location cannot be delineated clearly from medieval evidence.<sup>8</sup> Post-medieval evidence, including a late eighteenth-century map, refers to a Little Field that was south of the village and south-west of the way from Goring to Gatehampton (now Gatehampton Road).<sup>9</sup> Across the Gatehampton way there was another common field called Sheepcote Field,<sup>10</sup> a name unrecorded in the Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup> This latter field appears to have been part of Little Field in the Middle Ages as land in Little Field then abutted Hollow Lane to the north (the modern Reading Road going east from Goring).<sup>12</sup> The combination of topographical evidence implies that the *via regia* from Goring towards Henley was the way that went from the former crossroads on the east side of Goring village south-eastwards to Gatehampton.<sup>13</sup> The identification is reinforced by two slightly earlier references to a ‘portway’ associated with Little Field,<sup>14</sup> a descriptive term meaning a way leading to a town.<sup>15</sup> The former importance of the Gatehampton way is also suggested by the existence in 1346 of a *via regia* which continued from Gatehampton to Reading.<sup>16</sup>

The identification of the medieval *via regia* in Goring parish is confirmed by later cartographic evidence. Thomas Jefferys’ 1767 map of Oxfordshire, which predates two inclosure awards for Goring parish (1788, 1812), shows that the Gatehampton way and its direct continuation formed the main west–east route across Goring parish (Fig. 1). After it reached a junction near Gatehampton, the pre-inclosure route continued eastwards and climbed a hill

<sup>4</sup> Cf. T. Jefferys, [Map of] *The County of Oxford* (1767).

<sup>5</sup> For land types in the south-west Chilterns: *VCH Oxon.* 16, pp. 231–2, 266–7, 303.

<sup>6</sup> For an outline map: *ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> A half acre of arable land in ‘Litelfeld’ was recorded as lying north of the way towards Henley: Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*, vol. 2, p. 157.

<sup>8</sup> The fields were: Little North Field, Great North Field, South Field, East Field and Little Field. Gatehampton township, within Goring parish, had its own fields. See Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*.

<sup>9</sup> OHC, E1/9/16D/37; Hen. I/iii/7; P432/7/M1/1 (map). The 1788 Goring inclosure award described this way as an ‘ancient road’: OHC, QS/D/A/vol. A, p. 323.

<sup>10</sup> OHC, E1/9/16D/9; Hen. I/iii/2; E1/9/16D/41; E1/9/15D/3.

<sup>11</sup> A ‘schepecot furlong’ was mentioned in 1536: Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*, vol. 1, p. xix.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 152. In 1661, Hollow Lane ran along the south side of Redcross Field, which appears by then to have been the name for the earlier South Field: OHC, Hen. I/i/1.

<sup>13</sup> The crossroads was displaced by the railway line. This identification of the *via regia* differs from that of Gambier-Parry, who seems to have assumed that it followed the route created by the 1812 inclosure of Goring Heath: Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*, vol. 1, p. xiv. For the post-1812 route, see discussion towards the end of this section.

<sup>14</sup> Land called ‘portwayacre’ was mentioned in 1331, and a ‘portweye’ was mentioned in 1349: Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*, vol. 2, pp. 138, 150.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, 2 vols., EPNS, 23–4 (1953–4), vol. 1, pp. 2–3.

<sup>16</sup> Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*, vol. 2, p. 173.



Fig. 1. Thomas Jefferys, Oxfordshire Map (1767), showing the way from Goring to Goring Heath and Deadman's Lane.

directly to 'Comb Green' (a small green); it then crossed a small area of presumably cultivated land. The route then reached Goring Heath, a plateau of undulating land which before inclosure in 1812 was the largest heath in the south-west Chilterns.<sup>17</sup> Jefferys' map uses parallel pecked lines to show routes across the heath. The Goring-Henley way crossed the southern part of the heath, going almost due east, and then turned north to woodland.<sup>18</sup> The end-point within Goring parish was called Deadman's Lane end in 1812.<sup>19</sup> A similar route across Goring Heath is shown on the Oxfordshire map of 1797 by Richard Davis.<sup>20</sup>

The pre-inclosure route from Goring village to Deadman's Lane must have been about 4.3 miles (7 km) long, including about 2.25 miles (3.6 km) across the heath. The rise from the lowland towards Goring Heath was about 245 feet (75 metres) within a distance of about 2,200 feet (670 metres), a percentage grade of about 11 per cent, or 1 in 9.<sup>21</sup> The historical route across the parish has been preserved only as far as a point just beyond Comb Green because the 1812 inclosure award replaced the existing routeways across Goring Heath. The changes included a

<sup>17</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*; OHC, QS/D/A/book 64 (inclosure award).

<sup>18</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*.

<sup>19</sup> OHC, QS/D/A/book 64, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> R. Davis, *A New Map of the County of Oxford* (1797).

<sup>21</sup> The rise to Goring Heath is between 60 and 135 m OD: OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 171 (2005 edn). In 1812 land on the upper part of the hill, north of the way, was called Godmoor Hill: OHC, PAR 115/16/H1/2 (1833 tracing of map from 1812 inclosure award).

new route from Goring towards Henley, superseding the earlier route via Comb Green.<sup>22</sup> Most of it was called the 'Goring and Reading road'. It went eastwards from Goring village along the historical route, and then took a new course south-eastwards. From this section there was a new spur to Deadman's Lane end called the 'Goring and Henley road'.<sup>23</sup>

#### *South Stoke Parish*

From Deadman's Lane end, the historical Goring–Henley route continued north-eastwards across the narrow eastern 'peninsula' of South Stoke parish. From here onwards the route was known in the nineteenth century by a succession of different names which included the element 'lane'. The use of 'lane' implies that the names were applied at times when the route passed through a landscape of closes as the term refers to a route lined by hedges or banks.<sup>24</sup> The section across South Stoke parish was called Deadman's Lane.<sup>25</sup> There is no compelling explanation for the name, but it could refer to the threatening nature of woodland, or even indicate a route to a gallows.<sup>26</sup> The distance across South Stoke parish is only 650 yards (600 metres), and the way rises just 33 feet (10 metres), from about 360 to 390 feet (110 to 120 metres).<sup>27</sup> The section ended at a crossroads, where the Goring–Henley route met the routeway from Wallingford to Reading, one of the main ways across the Chilterns going north-west to south-east.<sup>28</sup>

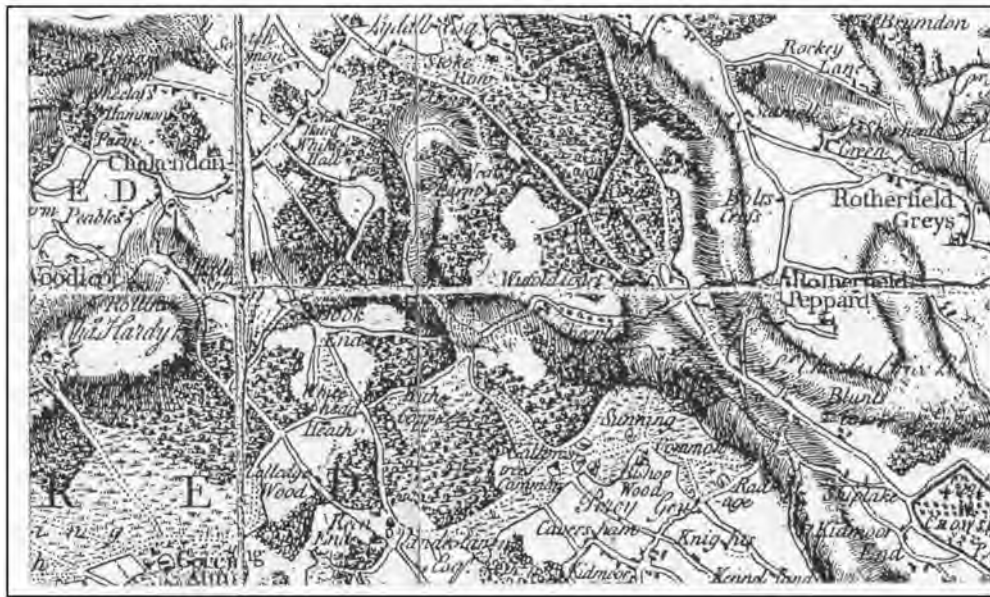


Fig. 2. Thomas Jefferys, Oxfordshire Map (1767), from Goring Heath to Peppard Common.

<sup>22</sup> OHC, QS/D/A/vol. A, p. 323.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* PAR 115/16/H1/2.

<sup>24</sup> OED, online edn (2009).

<sup>25</sup> The earliest known reference is in the Goring inclosure award of 1812: OHC, QS/D/A/book 64, p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> There might be a connection with the nearby Gallowstree Common, though the antiquity of this name is unknown. The term 'dead man' also occurs in field-names and is possibly associated with the finding of human bones: Gelling, *Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 2, p. 439.

<sup>27</sup> OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 171.

<sup>28</sup> VCH Oxon. 7, pp. 93, 102.

In 1767 there was a wood on the north-west side of Deadman's Lane, namely Abbot's or College Wood (Fig. 2).<sup>29</sup> On the other side there was open land. The 1797 Oxfordshire map by Davis shows the latter area divided into two closes with a homestead at its south-east corner (called College Wood Farm in the early nineteenth century).<sup>30</sup> South of the open area there was more woodland, which suggests that the open land originated as an assart, and that this section of the Goring–Henley route had once possibly passed through woodland. Deadman's Lane has been retained as a modern metalled road, presumably to give access to the Wallingford–Reading road.

#### *Checkendon Parish*

The Goring–Henley route continued north-eastwards from the crossroads across the bulbous south-eastern end of Checkendon parish, a distance of 1.5 miles (2.4 km). In 1767 this section passed alongside woodland, heath and open land (Fig. 2, above).<sup>31</sup> Immediately east of the crossroads there was woodland to the north and open land to the south with woodland beyond, again suggesting that the open area was an assart. The route then traversed the small heath called Whitehead Heath in 1767, and also crossed the route from Nuffield to Reading, which was called Park Lane in the later nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Beyond Park Lane the route again passed between woodland to the north and open land to the south with woodland beyond. The route then entered open land. It crossed a shallow dry valley, and then reached the parish edge and a homestead called Wyfold Grange.

The route through Checkendon parish shown on Jefferys' 1767 map appears unchanged on the OS one-inch map of 1830, though Whitehead Heath is called 'Hook End Common'.<sup>33</sup> By 1877 the route immediately east of Park Lane appears to have been moved slightly south-eastwards as a result of the expansion of a wood called Nippers Grove, and midway between Park Lane and Wyfold Grange the route appears to have been lost.<sup>34</sup> The historical route between the Wallingford–Reading road and Park Lane survives as a bridleway. Beyond Park Lane a bridleway follows the route along the south side of Nippers Grove recorded in 1877; it continues across the short section that appears to have been lost in 1877. The bridleway then joins a metalled road which continues for 650 yards (600 metres) until it reaches the eastern end of the parish and Wyfold Grange. Most of this section crosses flat land at about 390 feet (120 metres) above sea-level.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Rotherfield Peppard and Shiplake Parishes*

After crossing the narrow ends of two parishes (South Stoke, Checkendon), the Goring–Henley route went mostly lengthwise across the remaining parishes (Figs. 2–4). It next entered Rotherfield Peppard parish, a narrow parish which lies roughly west–east between the Chiltern hills and the Thames. The route crossed the western and central parts of the parish in an easterly direction, to a point roughly half way along the parish's northern boundary, a distance of 2.8 miles (4.5 km). Within the parish the route consisted of two distinct sections: firstly from Wyfold Grange to Peppard Common, about 1 mile (1.6 km); and secondly from the common's north-east corner to a junction with the road from Rotherfield Greys hamlet, about 1.8 miles (2.9 km).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*. The wood had belonged to Eynsham abbey in the Middle Ages and in 1767 belonged to Christ Church, Oxford: *VCH Oxon.* 7, pp. 103–4. It was still called 'College Wood or Abbot's Wood' in 2005: OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 171.

<sup>30</sup> Davis, *New Map of the County of Oxford*; *VCH Oxon.* 7, pp. 102, 104.

<sup>31</sup> Except where stated, paragraph based on Jefferys, *County of Oxford*.

<sup>32</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII (1883 edn, based on a survey of 1877).

<sup>33</sup> OS Map 1:63,360, sheet 13 (1830 edn). The remnant of the heath was called Whitewood Heath in 2005: OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 171.

<sup>34</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII.

<sup>35</sup> OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 171.

<sup>36</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*.

From Wyfold Grange eastwards the Goring–Henley route was called Wyfold Lane.<sup>37</sup> Roughly half way between the Grange and Peppard Common the route crossed the upper end of a dry valley known as Shiplake Bottom, which lies within Shiplake parish (Fig. 4).<sup>38</sup> The protrusion of Shiplake parish into the area of Rotherfield Peppard is presumably explained by the use of the bottom as a droveway. Nearer Peppard Common, where the way crosses another dry valley, the route was called Colliers Lane.<sup>39</sup> There is a steep ascent to Peppard Common, rising about 150 feet (45 metres) in about 130 feet (40 metres). The section of the Goring–Henley route eastwards from Peppard Common was called Dog Lane in the later nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The name was presumably derived from the Dog Inn at the north-east corner of Peppard Common, which possibly dates from the late seventeenth century.<sup>41</sup> The route undulates somewhat as it crosses two more shallow dry valleys. Near the northern edge of the historical Rotherfield Peppard parish the way joined Mill Lane, which ran eastwards from Rotherfield Greys hamlet to the River Thames.<sup>42</sup>

In 1767 the route through Rotherfield Peppard parish crossed open country.<sup>43</sup> The section from Wyfold Grange to Peppard Common survives as a metalled road. Just over half of Dog Lane, from Peppard Common, is a bridleway; the remainder is a metalled road.

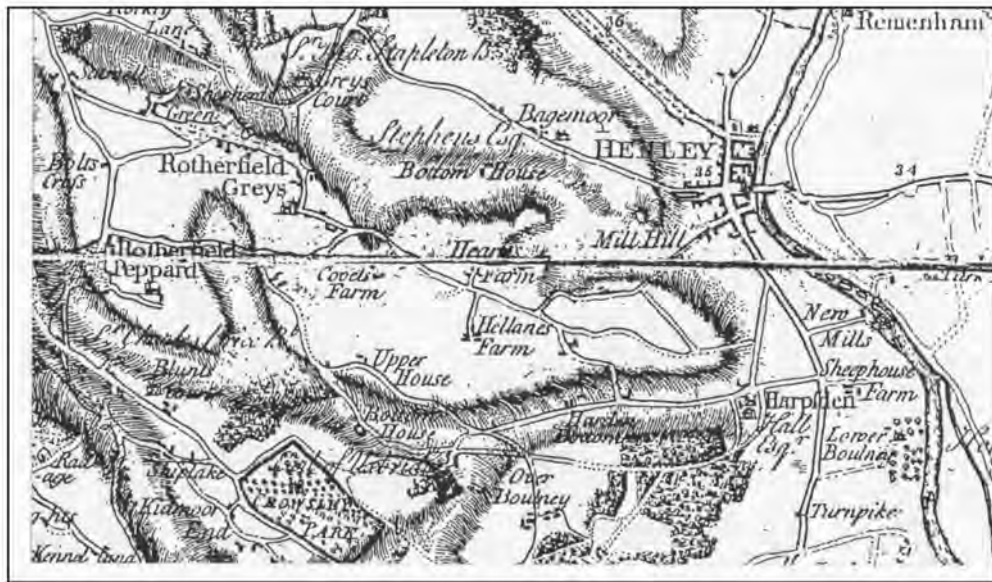


Fig. 3. Thomas Jefferys, Oxfordshire Map (1767), from Peppard Common to Henley-on-Thames.

<sup>37</sup> VCH Oxon. 16, pp. 303–4.

<sup>38</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII.

<sup>39</sup> VCH Oxon. 16, pp. 303–4.

<sup>40</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII.

<sup>41</sup> VCH Oxon. 16, p. 326.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 305.

<sup>43</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*.

*Rotherfield Greys and Henley Parishes*

Contributors to the *VCH* have suggested that the medieval routeway from Goring 'towards Henley' probably continued across Rotherfield Greys parish to Henley-on-Thames via 'Pack and Prime Lane'.<sup>44</sup> The Lane runs from a point on Mill Lane just east of Dog Lane to the west side of the town (Fig. 4). Unfortunately the evidence for its historical existence is ambiguous. It does not appear on the maps by Jefferys (1767) and Davis (1797),<sup>45</sup> but occurs first on the OS one-inch map of 1830.<sup>46</sup> The name 'Pack and Prime Lane' is first recorded in the late nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> It was possibly a much older route because the Rotherfield Greys tithe award map (1844) shows that it was abutted by, and therefore probably predated, field boundaries.<sup>48</sup>

The topography of Pack and Prime Lane suggests that it was a 'secondary' route, in that it appears to have been created to link two pre-existing routes, namely Mill Lane and the parallel northern route from Rotherfield Greys parish to Henley. It has a right-angled junction at each end, so it was not a continuation of another route. At the Henley end it does not appear to have continued beyond the Greys–Henley road.<sup>49</sup> The length of Pack and Prime Lane is about 1 mile (1.6 km). In the mid nineteenth century it crossed open land,<sup>50</sup> running from Mill Lane along the edge of a plateau which overlooks a dry valley to the north.<sup>51</sup> As the Lane approaches Henley it descends steeply into and crosses a valley, falling 82 feet (25 metres) in a distance of only 60 feet (18 metres).

It is possible that Pack and Prime Lane was created soon after the town of Henley itself was founded, say in the early thirteenth century, to provide access to the western end of Henley's market place. It is also possible that people reached Henley using an alternative route which left Mill Lane, by a right-angled turn, at a point further to the east. It eventually reached Henley and the Thames via the modern Greys Road and Friday Street in Henley. This route is shown by both Jefferys (1767) and Davis (1797),<sup>52</sup> but its earlier history is unknown.

The historical route from Goring to Henley, via Pack and Prime Lane, was about 10 miles (16 km) long. It crossed a variety of geological formations, with chalk and various kinds of gravel being prominent.<sup>53</sup> Although the route was sparsely populated, water was available in ponds, even in the highest sections. In the late nineteenth century there was a pond to the east of Park Lane ('Sheepwash Pond'),<sup>54</sup> and the nearby name 'Rumerhedge' referred to a 'rough pool'.<sup>55</sup> Until the 1950s there was a pond on Peppard Common opposite the Dog Inn,<sup>56</sup> and a pond remains near the junction of Dog Lane and Mill Lane in Rotherfield Peppard parish.

<sup>44</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, pp. 24, 267, 303.

<sup>45</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*; Davis, *New Map of the County of Oxford*.

<sup>46</sup> OS Map 1:63,360, sheet 13.

<sup>47</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII.

<sup>48</sup> OHC, tithe map 325 (kept separately from schedule of allotments). The boundaries are also shown in *VCH Oxon.* 16, p. 269.

<sup>49</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII, LIV (1883 edn). The junction of Pack and Prime Lane west of Henley was apparently not aligned with any field or other boundary to the north or north-east. The name was also used in the nineteenth century for a 'carriage road' north-west of Henley between Lower Assendon and Henley Park, but this was unconnected with the route through Rotherfield Greys: J.S. Burn, *A History of Henley-on-Thames* (London, 1861), p. 311. In 1843 there was an area of underwood adjacent to the carriage road called 'Pack and Prime': OHC, tithe map 210, entry no. 118.

<sup>50</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, pp. 268–9.

<sup>51</sup> OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 171.

<sup>52</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*; Davis, *New Map of the County of Oxford*.

<sup>53</sup> Geological Survey Map of England and Wales, 1:50,000 (solid and drift), sheets 254 (1980 edn), 268 (2000 edn).

<sup>54</sup> OS Map 1:10,560, Oxon. LIII.

<sup>55</sup> Gelling, *Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 46.

<sup>56</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, p. 303.

### DATING THE GORING–HENLEY WAY

It is difficult to perceive the origins of the Goring–Henley way in its entirety because its physical characteristics do not readily associate it with a particular historical period. The 1353 reference to a highway in the Goring charters is unlikely to indicate a recent creation of the route because it occurs after a centuries-long period of economic expansion during which such a route would have been a valuable line of communication.<sup>57</sup> It can be safely inferred that the outer sections almost certainly existed by the late Anglo-Saxon period (tenth–eleventh centuries), namely Goring village to Goring Heath in the west, and Wyfold Grange to Peppard Common and through Rotherfield Greys parish to the Thames in the east. These will be discussed next, leaving the intermediate, wooded section in South Stoke and Checkendon parishes as a separate problem.

In the later eighteenth century, when the Goring area was first mapped in detail, part of the route in Goring parish connected lowland fields with the higher area of Goring Heath.<sup>58</sup> The Goring charters and other sources show that this combination of resources already existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The heath was then referred to in Middle English as ‘hethē’ or ‘hethelond’,<sup>59</sup> terms meaning ‘uncultivated land’ (derived from Old English *hæth*),<sup>60</sup> or by the Latin equivalent term *bruera*.<sup>61</sup> Other medieval references demonstrate that Goring Heath was used as common pasture: in 1279 the lord of Whitchurch, south-east of Goring, paid 5s. for common pasture in the lord of Goring’s heath,<sup>62</sup> and in 1330 common pasture on ‘la Hethe’ was mentioned.<sup>63</sup> The section of the Goring–Henley route between the lowland and Goring Heath must have been used as a local droveway for cattle and sheep. It is almost certain that the agrarian landscape found in the thirteenth century was created by the tenth century,<sup>64</sup> and the combined use of lowland and upland could be much older.

Sections of the Goring–Henley way east of Wyfold Grange also probably served as local droveways in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Sometime before 1211, common of wood and pasture near Wyfold Grange was ceded to Thame Abbey by Joan Pipard of Rotherfield Peppard.<sup>65</sup> As mentioned above, Wyfold Grange is adjacent to the Goring–Henley way at the west end of Rotherfield Peppard parish. The existence of grazing rights at Wyfold associated with Peppard parish implies that the route eastwards from Wyfold Grange to Peppard Common also served as a droveway. This situation is likely to have predated the appearance of Rotherfield Peppard in Domesday Book (1086).<sup>66</sup>

It is also likely that the route eastwards from Peppard Common – along Dog Lane to Mill Lane, and then from Mill Lane to the River Thames – was also an Anglo-Saxon droveway. This is suggested by the combined topography of Rotherfield Peppard and Rotherfield Greys parishes. Although there have been two Rotherfield estates or parishes since at least Domesday Book,<sup>67</sup> it looks as though there was once a single estate which was subdivided. This is implied by common use of the name Rotherfield and also by topography, in that the two estates shared

<sup>57</sup> For a recent summary see R. Britnell, *Britain and Ireland 1050–1530: Economy and Society* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 71–95.

<sup>58</sup> Davis, *New Map of the County of Oxford*.

<sup>59</sup> Gelling, *Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> M. Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London, 1984), p. 245; M. Gelling and A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford, 2000), p. 279.

<sup>61</sup> Gambier-Parry (ed.), *Charters Relating to Goring*, vol. 1, p. 106; vol. 2, p. 138.

<sup>62</sup> *Rotuli Hundredorum temp. Hen. III et Edw. I*, 2 vols., Record Commission (London, 1812–18), vol. 2, p. 776.

<sup>63</sup> *Calendar of Inquisitions post Mortem*, vol. 7, p. 218.

<sup>64</sup> For a summary of changes in landscape and settlement in the mid and late Anglo-Saxon period see R. Fleming, ‘Land Use and People’, in J. Crick and E. van Houts (eds.), *A Social History of England, 900–1200* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 22–37.

<sup>65</sup> H.E. Salter (ed.), *The Thame Cartulary*, 2 vols., ORS, 25–6 (1947–8), vol. 2, pp. 124–6 (nos. 177–8).

<sup>66</sup> J. Morris (ed.), *Domesday Book: Oxfordshire* (Chichester, 1978), entry no. 35,7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* entry nos. 35,7 and 59,5.



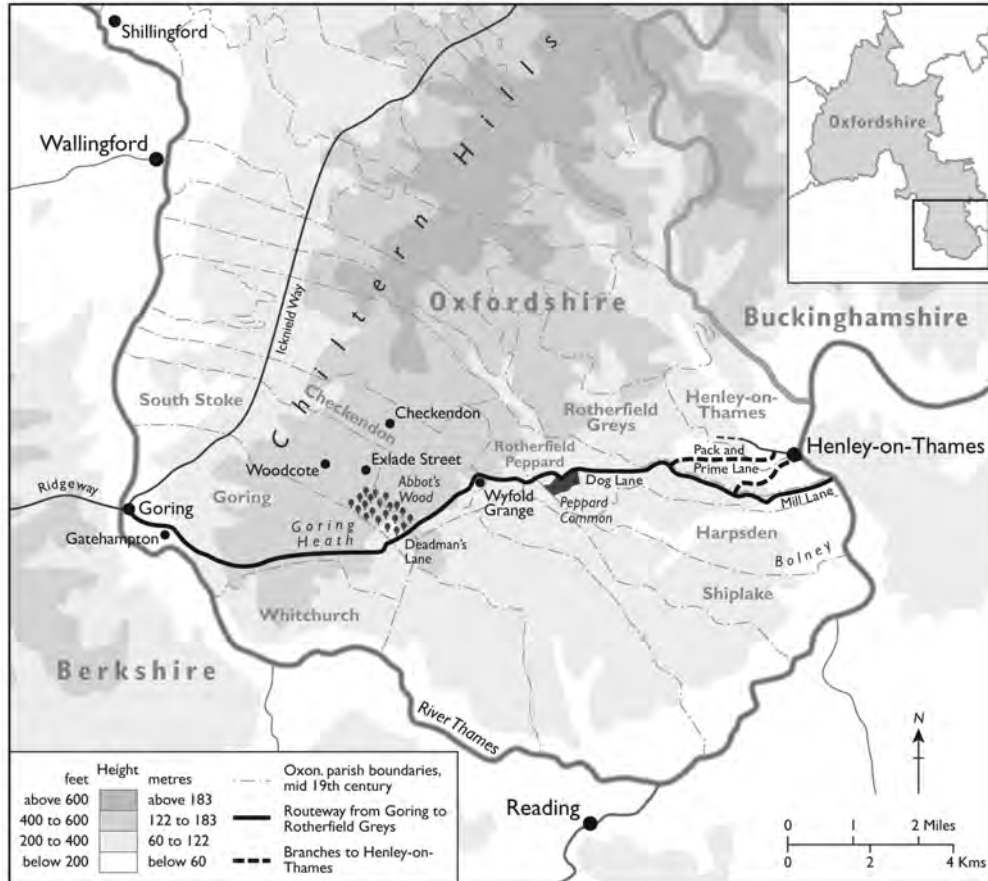


Fig. 4. Routeway from Goring towards Henley, before 1812.

a single route to the Thames (Mill Lane).<sup>68</sup> It may be that the single Rotherfield estate was organized around a 'spine' which consisted of a central route going inland from the Thames which then divided into separate routes to the main commons (Greys Green, Peppard Common). This configuration must have predated the two estates recorded in 1086, with the routes between the river and the commons serving as droveways.

The intermediate section of the Goring–Henley way, between Goring and the area around Wyfold Grange, is more difficult to date because it is not a 'structural' feature in the topography and economy of South Stoke and Checkendon parishes. It is notable that in 1767 it formed the border between woodland (to the north-west) and open land (to the south-east), with the latter looking like assarts (cleared woodland). This suggests that the Goring–Henley way was used as a boundary from which land was cleared, and that it therefore preceded the clearances. It is well known that woodland in the Chilterns was assarted before and during the thirteenth century,<sup>69</sup> and so the open land alongside the Goring–Henley way could represent medieval

<sup>68</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, pp. 268–9, 304–5.

<sup>69</sup> D. Roden, 'Field Systems of the Chilterns Hills and the Environs', in A.R.H. Baker and R.A. Butler (eds.), *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 326–7.

clearance. But the only available evidence points to post-medieval activity. In 1366 Abbot's Wood in South Stoke parish was stated to measure 9 stades and 11 perches along its north-eastern side, adjacent to the royal way from Wallingford to Reading, which crossed the Goring–Henley way.<sup>70</sup> The distance equates to 1 mile and 118 yards (1.7 km), which accords closely with the wood's north-eastern boundary in 1818, to the north-west of the Goring–Henley way, plus the boundary of open fields on the other side.<sup>71</sup> In other words, it looks as though in 1353 there was woodland on both sides of Deadman's Lane.

If the assarts in South Stoke parish cannot be ascribed to the Middle Ages, there was expansionary economic activity to the east in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The town of Henley-on-Thames existed by the 1170s,<sup>72</sup> and must have attracted immigrants and traders from a wide distance in its early years. Moreover, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries Thame abbey assarted the area near Wyfold Grange and developed it into a settlement.<sup>73</sup> In 1241 there was a community at Wyfold which was fined collectively,<sup>74</sup> and in 1279 the abbey had 15 tenants (possibly about 75 inhabitants) who held various crofts, cottages and groves.<sup>75</sup> It seems likely that people living on the west side of the Chilterns, in the Goring area, would have wanted contact with Wyfold and Henley, and that the intermediate section of the Goring–Henley way, and thereby the entirety of the route, is likely to have existed by the twelfth or thirteenth century. There are, however, good reasons for envisaging an even earlier origin.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GORING–HENLEY WAY

Although the outer sections of the Goring–Henley way, in Goring and Rotherfield Peppard parishes, were almost certainly local droveways providing access to pasture, the significance of the complete route must have been related to long- or medium-distance communication because it essentially connected separate areas: the west and east sides of the south-west Chilterns, and the south-west Chilterns with other regions. It did not link a set of regularly spaced settlements or complementary land types. These greater connections require consideration if the route's likely historical significance is to be discerned.

An obvious and demonstrable function of the Goring–Henley way was its long-term role as one of the five main lines of communication that largely defined the directions and extent of Henley's economic and social hinterland, from the late twelfth century.<sup>76</sup> (At the eastern end people could reach Henley in three ways: via Pack and Prime Lane, the modern Greys Road, or Mill Lane and Reading Road.) Like some of the other hinterland routes, the Goring–Henley way enabled Henley to interact with places beyond the Chiltern scarp. The route connected Henley not only with Goring but with places on the western side of the Chilterns such as Whitchurch and South Stoke. It also provided a route to settlements in the Chilterns such as Woodcote, Checkendon and Exlade Street.<sup>77</sup> Routeways from the western side of the Chilterns

<sup>70</sup> H.E. Salter (ed.), *Eynsham Cartulary*, 2 vols., OHS, 49, 51 (1907–8), vol. 2, p. 127.

<sup>71</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 7, p. 102.

<sup>72</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, p. 31.

<sup>73</sup> P. Preece, 'Mediaeval Woods in the Oxfordshire Chilterns', *Oxoniensia*, 55 (1990), p. 57. Idem, 'The Medieval Manor of Wyfold', *SOAG Bulletin*, 60 (2005).

<sup>74</sup> J. Cooper (ed.), *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*, ORS, 56 (1989), p. 166.

<sup>75</sup> *Rotuli Hundredorum*, vol. 2, p. 764.

<sup>76</sup> The others were the routes to Marlow, Watlington (via Assendon), Wallingford/Oxford and Reading (via Caversham): R.B. Peberdy, 'Late Medieval Communications', in K. Tiller and G. Darkes (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 50–1. Henley's hinterland is discussed in idem, 'The Economy, Society, and Government of a Small Town in Late Medieval England: A Study of Henley-on-Thames from c.1300 to c.1540', Leicester University Ph.D. thesis (1994), pp. 54–6. Little of the hinterland was in Berkshire.

<sup>77</sup> Jefferys, *County of Oxford*.

enabled people from the Goring area to use Henley's trading facilities and to take advantage of its regular and close connections with London.<sup>78</sup> Use of these links is demonstrated by the presence of people from the Goring area in medieval Henley. Robert and John of Stoke were fined in Henley's manor court in the late thirteenth century,<sup>79</sup> and John and Alice Short of South Stoke were granted two houses in Henley in 1377.<sup>80</sup> Henley's access to a large hinterland helps to account for its relatively large size and success in the Middle Ages.<sup>81</sup> The connection between the Goring area and Henley also facilitated ecclesiastical business after Henley emerged as a deanery centre in the thirteenth century.<sup>82</sup>

The Goring–Henley way was also, geographically, a continuation eastwards of the Ridgeway (or Great Ridgeway) in west Berkshire. The Ridgeway has usually been seen as part of a prehistoric long-distance routeway which crossed the Thames via a ford at Goring and continued north-eastwards as the Icknield Way, below the Chiltern scarp.<sup>83</sup> Together the Ridgeway and Icknield Way allegedly connected the Dorset and Norfolk areas in prehistory and thereby facilitated long-distance trade. But the antiquity, importance and character of the routeway have been questioned. It is now doubted that long-distance commercial trade, as opposed to other forms of exchange (for example, reciprocal gift-giving), was prevalent in much of prehistory;<sup>84</sup> so it cannot be presumed that long-distance routes existed because trading required them. It has also been argued that the Ridgeway and Icknield Way were delineated as prominent prehistoric long-distance routes by antiquaries, partly on the basis of artefact distributions.<sup>85</sup> Later discoveries have inevitably made the old distributions out-of-date and have therefore undermined the routes inferred from them. More importantly, a presumed section of the Ridgeway in Wiltshire has been shown to post-date the prehistoric period,<sup>86</sup> and part of the Icknield Way in Cambridgeshire was even possibly post-Saxon.<sup>87</sup>

However, Ann Cole has argued from place-name evidence that the entire combined route of the Ridgeway and Icknield Way, from the English Channel to the Norfolk coast, was used in the Anglo-Saxon period.<sup>88</sup> It is also clear, from references in Anglo-Saxon charters, that a section of the Ridgeway going at least 22 miles (35 km) west from Goring existed in the tenth century and was described as a *herepæð* – literally an army track,<sup>89</sup> but possibly a long-distance route in a strategic position.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the ford at Goring, and by implication its connecting routes, were probably important several centuries earlier. It is striking that there were ‘-ingas’ names (names referring to a people or possibly a kindred) at three fords in the mid Thames

<sup>78</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, pp. 78–92.

<sup>79</sup> L.M. Midgley (ed.), *Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, 1296–1297*, 2 vols., Camden Society, 3rd series, 66 and 68 (1942 and 1945), vol. 1, pp. 92–3.

<sup>80</sup> OHC, BOR3/A/IX/1/119A.

<sup>81</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 16, pp. 22–3. Cf. R.B. Peberdy, ‘Medieval Towns, Markets and Fairs’, in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, pp. 38–9.

<sup>82</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 2, pp. 58–9 and map. See also J. Blair, ‘The Thirteenth-Century Seal-Matrix of Henley Rural Deanery’, in L. Gilmour (ed.), *Pagans and Christians – From Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, BAR IS, 1610 (2007), 289–90.

<sup>83</sup> C. Taylor, *Roads and Tracks of Britain* (London, 1979), pp. 183–5; P. Hindle, *Roads and Tracks for Historians* (Chichester, 2001), pp. 6–9.

<sup>84</sup> S. Harrison, ‘The Icknield Way: Some Queries’, *Archaeological Journal*, 160 (2003), pp. 5–7.

<sup>85</sup> P. Fowler, ‘Moving through the Landscape’, in P. Everson and T. Williamson (eds.), *The Archaeology of Landscape* (Manchester, 1998), p. 31; Harrison, ‘The Icknield Way’, pp. 3–5.

<sup>86</sup> P. Fowler, *Landscape Plotted and Pieced: Landscape History and Local Archaeology in Fyfield and Overton, Wiltshire* (London, 2000), p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Harrison, ‘The Icknield Way’, pp. 13–14.

<sup>88</sup> A. Cole, ‘The Place-Name Evidence for a Routeway Network in Early Medieval England’, Oxford University D.Phil. thesis (2010), pp. 113, 120–1. See also A. Cole, ‘Place-Names as Travellers' Landmarks’, in N.J. Higham and M.J. Ryan (eds.), *Place-Names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape* (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 67.

<sup>89</sup> Fowler, *Landscape Plotted and Pieced*, pp. 22, 60.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. D. Hooke, *The Anglo-Saxon Landscape: The Kingdom of the Hwicce* (Manchester, 1985), p. 147.

valley, namely Shillingford, Wallingford and Goring.<sup>91</sup> The names suggest the existence of small polities focused on river crossings, and may even indicate the existence of embryonic kingdoms.<sup>92</sup> Such names and associated peoples are thought to belong to the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>93</sup> The association of peoples and Thames fords suggests that the fords and their connecting routeways existed by the early to mid Saxon period. Given that the Goring–Henley way was comparable to the Icknield Way as a continuation of the Ridgeway, it is reasonable to suggest that it possibly existed by the seventh century and should be assessed in conjunction with the Ridgeway.<sup>94</sup>

At the very least, the Goring–Henley way would have provided a short cut across the south-west Chilterns. Travellers and pack animals heading to London via the Henley area could have used the way to avoid the alternative longer route following the river. They could have re-crossed the river in the Henley area and continued across the Eastern Chalk Plateau to another river crossing at Maidenhead, or have continued along the north bank of the Thames. The Goring–Henley way would have provided access to important Anglo-Saxon sites in the lower Thames valley as well as to London itself: Cookham (minster), Taplow (burial site), Bray (minster), Dorney (meeting-place), Old Windsor (high-status site), Brentford and Chelsea (council meeting-places).<sup>95</sup>

The topography and later history of the Goring–Henley way also suggest another possible use. Because ‘Pack and Prime Lane’ from Rotherfield to Henley looks like a secondary route across Rotherfield Greys parish, and as most of the Goring–Henley way probably predated the town at Henley, it is possible that an original important destination of the route from Goring was not Henley but Rotherfield (Fig. 4). Furthermore, Rotherfield’s name, meaning ‘cattle pasture’,<sup>96</sup> could be connected with the route. If so, the combination of route and place-name suggests that the way from Goring was possibly used for cattle droving, an activity that would have been facilitated by the ponds between Goring and Rotherfield Peppard. This might have been local droving to seasonal pasture, but it could equally have been long-distance droving, as is suggested by later evidence. Between the later Middle Ages and the nineteenth century the Ridgeway towards Goring was used as a route for cattle and sheep being driven from south and mid Wales towards London; it has also been presumed that the animals continued along the Goring–Henley way to Maidenhead, Hounslow and London.<sup>97</sup> Another possibility is that cattle driven eastwards from Goring went to Bolney, the ‘bullocks’ hythe, though why bullocks should have been embarked from Bolney is unclear.<sup>98</sup> The extent to which animals were moved long distances for commercial reasons, rather than periodic grazing, in Anglo-Saxon England is unknown.

Two final matters of interest are the failure of the Goring–Henley way to survive as a modern

<sup>91</sup> Shillingford means ‘The ford of Sciell(a) or his people’: Gelling, *Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 139. Wallingford means ‘The ford of Wealh’s people’: idem, *The Place-Names of Berkshire*, 3 vols., EPNS, 49–51 (1973–6), vol. 1, p. 535. Goring probably means ‘people of the gore’: information from Margaret Gelling; cf. Gelling, *Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, p. 51 and vol. 2, pp. 446, 447. Fords in this section of the Thames are discussed in A.J. Grayson, ‘Thames Crossings near Wallingford from Roman to Early Norman Times’, *Oxoniensia*, 75 (2010), pp. 1–14.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. S. Bassett, ‘In Search of the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms’, in idem (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London, 1989), p. 19.

<sup>93</sup> R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1997), p. 133.

<sup>94</sup> There is no obvious topographical connection between the Goring–Henley way and an earthwork, probably prehistoric, south-west of Wyfold Grange. Cf. *VCH Oxon.* 2, pp. 333–4.

<sup>95</sup> Information from John Blair.

<sup>96</sup> Gelling and Cole, *Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 87. Cf. Gelling, *Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, pp. 77–8.

<sup>97</sup> K.J. Bonser, *The Drovers: Who They Were and How They Went* (London, 1970), pp. 14, 18, 20, 186–7, 196–7, 198.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *VCH Oxon.* 16, p. 232; A. Cole, ‘Place-Name Patterns’, in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, p. 25. The hythe has hitherto been linked to routes to central Oxfordshire.

road, and the relevance of this for the broader history of land communications. The description of the route as 'royal way' in the mid fourteenth century suggests that it was well-established and had possibly been regarded as a strategic line of communication. The term was applied to 'primary national routes' and to 'secondary routes' between market towns and between market towns and shire centres.<sup>99</sup> It appears to have been introduced by the Normans,<sup>100</sup> though designated royal routes existed in Anglo-Saxon England, probably for military purposes.<sup>101</sup> In the early twelfth century the designation *via regia* indicated that a route led to a major centre, namely 'a city or fortress or castle or royal town'. Royal ways were under the king's jurisdiction, and compensation for assaults on royal ways had to be paid to the king. Royal ways had to be kept open – they could not be closed or diverted.<sup>102</sup> It was also suggested earlier that the Goring–Henley way possibly served in the Anglo-Saxon period as a link between a *herepæð* and major centres in the lower Thames valley, including London, which also indicates importance. By contrast, its later, post-medieval history was one of relative unimportance: though it possibly served as a drove route from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, its direct course in Checkendon parish was lost in the mid nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century a corresponding metalled through-route was not created.

This interpretation associates the Goring–Henley way with other routes that appear to have been important in the Anglo-Saxon period and later but have since become insignificant or have even disappeared. For example, in south Oxfordshire in the Anglo-Saxon period 'Knightsbridge Lane' went from the Henley area northwards across the Chilterns to Pyrton (site of a minster church) and Wheatley, and provided access to royal estates at Islip and Headington.<sup>103</sup> There was also the 'Tuddingway', of Anglo-Saxon origin, which once went from Crowmarsh near Wallingford to Caversham near Reading.<sup>104</sup> Both no longer survive as continuous routes. Research in west Oxfordshire at parish level has started to reveal former saltways, including routes to the former royal and minster centre of Bampton and to the minster at Minster Lovell,<sup>105</sup> and a study of charter boundaries in the Lower Windrush valley has demonstrated the complexity of Anglo-Saxon routeways in this small area.<sup>106</sup> In Somerset various Anglo-Saxon saltways and *herepathas* have been glimpsed in charter bounds which were apparently once part of a dense network.<sup>107</sup>

Anglo-Saxon society seems to have used a larger number of medium- and long-distance routes, which were valued as important routeways, than were needed and valued as such in later periods. Important places of various types had to be connected, such as royal centres, major churches, rural meeting-places, ports, inland hythes, and (less commonly) towns. Important households led itinerant lives which required access to a range of places, such as rural estate centres, hunting lodges and royal centres in towns. Ordinary people visited the jurisdictional centres of large territories and other meeting-places. It was also necessary to move commodities, such as salt, from production centres or ports to important settlements.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>99</sup> D.F. Harrison, *The Bridges of Medieval England: Transport and Society 400–1800* (Oxford, 2004), p. 67.

<sup>100</sup> A. Cooper, 'The King's Four Highways: Legal Fiction meets Fictional Law', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2000), pp. 355, 366–7.

<sup>101</sup> Hooke, *Kingdom of the Hwicce*, p. 147; J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 1994), p. 131 (reference to 'Kingsway').

<sup>102</sup> L.J. Downer (ed.), *Leges Henrici Primi* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 248–9.

<sup>103</sup> M. Hammond, 'The Anglo-Saxon Estate of *Readanora* and the Manor of Pyrton, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 63 (1998), pp. 25–6; Cole, 'Place-Name Patterns', p. 25.

<sup>104</sup> P. Preece, 'The Tuddingway, an Ancient Road', *Oxfordshire Local History*, 8(1) (2006), pp. 3–10. The Tuddingway was apparently not described as a 'royal way'.

<sup>105</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 13, p. 9; 15, pp. 3, 38–9, 206.

<sup>106</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, p. 131.

<sup>107</sup> M. Costen, *Anglo-Saxon Somerset* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 168–71.

<sup>108</sup> For maps showing saltways see Hooke, *Kingdom of the Hwicce*, p. 125; J. Blair, 'Communications and Urban Origins before 1066', in Tiller and Darkes (eds.), *Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, p. 29.

The means of travel in Anglo-Saxon England enabled a wide range of routes to be used, even if routes were sometimes inefficient and fords could be dangerous. Overland traffic consisted mostly of people moving around on foot or horseback, and of animals going on foot; Andrew Fleming has argued that the provision of long-distance routes in early medieval Britain partly reflected the needs of horse-riding élites.<sup>109</sup> This meant that narrow and steep routes could be used, and that rivers and streams could be crossed at many places. By contrast, carts and waggons appear to have been little used beyond the farmyard and farm.<sup>110</sup> Oxen were the main draught animals.<sup>111</sup>

The routeways used by Anglo-Saxons were partly derived from earlier periods (prehistoric routes, Roman roads), but they appear to have supplemented surviving routeways to create dense networks of long- and medium-distance routes. These still need to be reconstructed in detail, for example at a county or regional scale, if historians are to appreciate fully the landscape, society and economy of pre-Conquest and early post-Conquest England. The late Alan Everitt observed in 1986 that the topography of post-Roman roads 'is possibly one of the least understood aspects of landscape history',<sup>112</sup> and David Harrison noted in 2004 that books about Anglo-Saxon England still tended to show the Roman road network.<sup>113</sup> Fortunately, research by Ann Cole has illuminated the network of major roads in Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>114</sup> The study of routes designated as royal ways in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries might also help to recover pre-Conquest routeway networks.

At a certain stage, routes like the Goring–Henley way lost their seeming earlier importance. A combination of technological, economic and social changes provides clues about when and how this might have happened. The use of Anglo-Saxon routeways probably began to change markedly from the tenth century with the spread of bridge-building, which made certain routes more reliable and preferable. The effects were doubtless slow and incremental as bridge-building on a large scale took place cumulatively across three centuries.<sup>115</sup> The widespread development of small towns, essentially between 1100 and 1250, also enhanced the importance of some routes, caused the decline of others, and sometimes resulted in the creation of new routes.<sup>116</sup> This development was itself further reinforced from the late fourteenth century by the provision of specially built inns in towns for travellers. But perhaps more important than these developments, particularly for a route like the Goring–Henley way, was the spread of horse-hauled carts in southern England in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and particularly their use for conveying commodities to markets as urbanization and commercialisation increased.<sup>117</sup> Carts required better and wider surfaces than foot traffic, and it was difficult or impossible to use them on very steep gradients.<sup>118</sup> It has been suggested that carts and waggons could not normally cope with gradients steeper than 1 in 20.<sup>119</sup> Steep gradients must have deterred or prevented the use of carts on many routes. Carts also required bridges for crossing watercourses effectively.<sup>120</sup> As a result of these changes, England's long-

<sup>109</sup> A. Fleming, 'Horses, Elites...and Long-Distance Roads', *Landscapes*, 11 (2) (2010), pp. 1–20.

<sup>110</sup> P. Fowler, *Farming in the First Millennium AD* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 178.

<sup>111</sup> J. Langdon, 'Horse Hauling: A Revolution in Vehicle Transport in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England?' *P&P*, 103 (1984), pp. 37–40.

<sup>112</sup> A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986), p. 267.

<sup>113</sup> Harrison, *Bridges of Medieval England*, p. 50.

<sup>114</sup> Cole, 'The Place-Name Evidence for a Routeway Network'.

<sup>115</sup> Harrison, *Bridges of Medieval England*, pp. 38–47; A. Cooper, *Bridges, Law and Power in Medieval England, 700–1400* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 9–11, 15.

<sup>116</sup> For a local example, see W.G. Hoskins, 'The Origin and Rise of Market Harborough', in idem, *Provincial England: Essays in Social and Economic History* (London, 1965), pp. 53–67.

<sup>117</sup> Langdon, 'Horse Hauling', pp. 45, 58.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p. 40.

<sup>119</sup> Cole, 'Place-Names as Travellers' Landmarks', p. 53.

<sup>120</sup> Cooper, *Bridges, Law and Power*, p. 23.

and medium-distance routeways must increasingly have become a two-tier system in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with some routes becoming recognized as main routes for wheeled traffic (routes with easier gradients going via bridges and through main towns) and others continuing as primarily routes for foot, drove and pack traffic. This likely medieval development seems to have been formally recognized much later in an Act of Parliament of 1691 which differentiated between roads to market towns and horse routes.<sup>121</sup> Many important routes that became effectively downgraded in the Middle Ages were later closed or further diminished by landscape changes of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.<sup>122</sup>

The Goring–Henley way looks like one of the many routes in England that were affected by the change from an Anglo-Saxon pattern of society and economy to the more technologically ‘advanced’, urbanized and commercialized world that emerged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The lack of a bridge at Goring,<sup>123</sup> and the route’s unsuitability for wheeled traffic (notably between the fields and heath in Goring parish, on the ascent to Peppard Common, and in the valley crossing near Henley) probably resulted in its demotion in the central Middle Ages and eventually its disruption by inclosure and other changes in the nineteenth century. Where there was once a *via regia* from Goring towards Henley, now there is only an obscure route comprising metalled roads and bridleways following a roughly similar alignment.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the staff of the Oxfordshire History Centre and of the Bodleian Library (especially the Upper Reserve and map section) for their ready assistance. Charles Dickerson kindly helped to explore the Goring–Henley way on the ground and provided perceptive appreciation of the surrounding landscape. I also thank the following for commenting on an earlier draft: Professor John Blair, Dr Ann Cole, Ann Cottingham, Charles Dickerson, Dorian Gerhold, Dr David Harrison, Roger Kendal and Dr David Pelteret. Angela Wilson kindly drew the map. I offer thanks for encouragement to Dr Stephen Miles, editor of *Oxoniensia*, Dr Ros Faith and Professor Charles Phythian-Adams, and salute the memory and kindness of the late Professor R.R. Davies.

<sup>121</sup> Hindle, *Roads and Tracks*, p. 50.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* chapters 8–9.

<sup>123</sup> A bridge was built in 1837: F.S. Thacker, *The Thames Highway*, vol. 2, *Locks and Weirs* (Kew, 1920), p. 211.

