

The Tuddingway, an ancient road

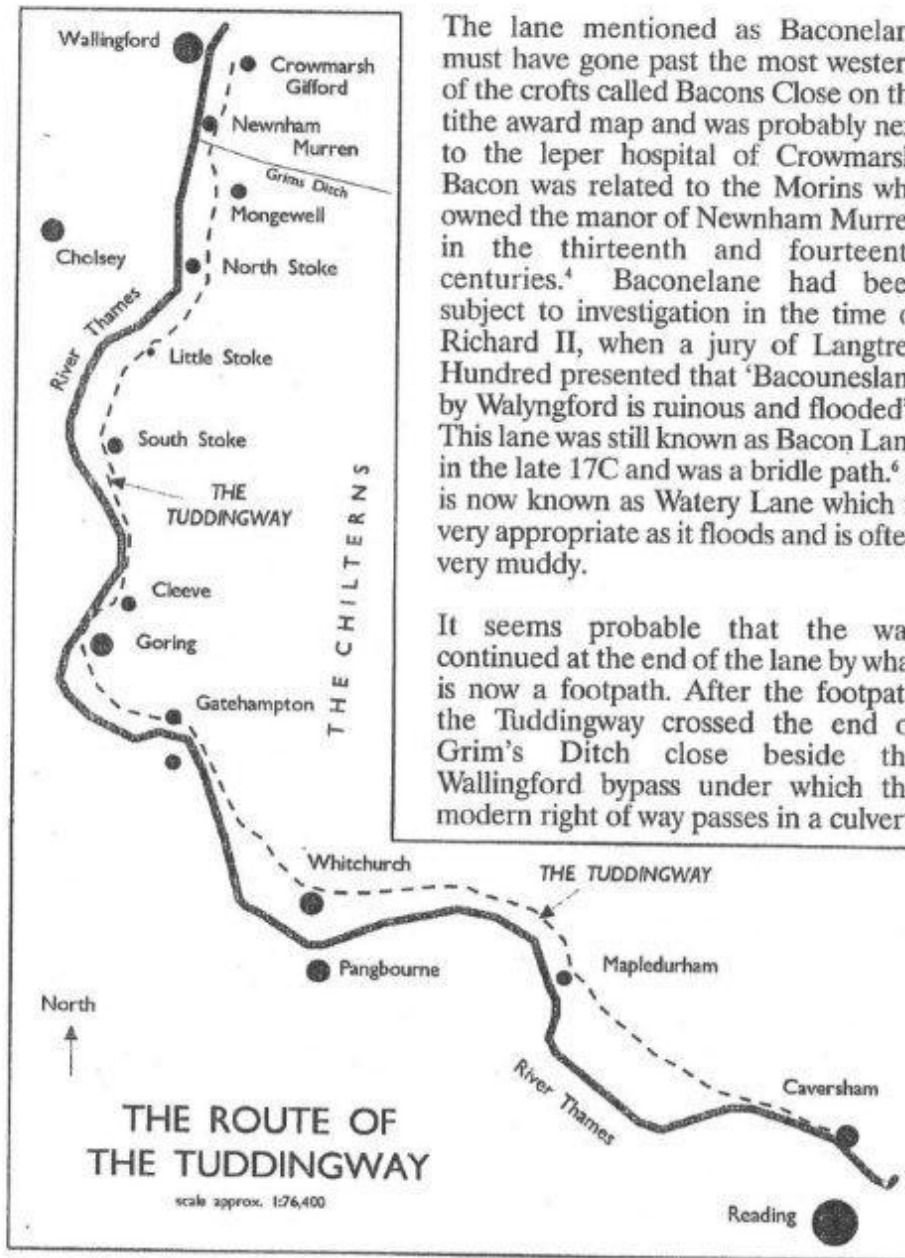
Map by Liam Tiller, photographs by Chris Hall

IN THE COURSE of extensive landscape studies in south Oxfordshire the author found the name Tuddingway (spelt in many different ways) frequently recurring, especially in the mediaeval period. Here she follows the way through a maze of documents. Some six-figure national grid references have been added to the author's text to help those wishing to follow the way on the ground with the help of an Ordnance Survey map.

According to Margaret Gelling the name is formed from a personal name 'Tudda', with the element *ing* used in its connective sense with the final part *weg* or *way*.¹ So it seems that it has Saxon origins.

The Tuddingway (*see map on p.4*) follows the river Thames above the flood plain and seems to have gone from Crowmarsh to Caversham, although it may have been an extension of a road from Dorchester and Oxford. In an inquisition of 1479 there is what appears to be a description of the road: *Ipsa via ducet a ponte de Walyngford per venellam vocatam Baconelane et sic subter Mungewell Courte, Northstoke, Southstoke et per Gatehampton, Whitechurch Mapledurham et sic usque Causham Brygge et Redinge*.² (In translation: That same way leads from the bridge at Wallingford through a lane called Baconelane and so below Mongewell Court, North Stoke, South Stoke and through Gatehampton, Whitechurch, Mapledurham and so as far as to Caversham Bridge and Reading.)

The start of the route seems to be opposite Crowmarsh Gifford church (*pictured p.7*) (GR615893) as there is a description in 1219-22 of ten acres being below 'Tudingaweya' next to the crofts nearest to the hospital of Crowmarsh.³ The crofts mentioned are perpetuated by the name of a collection of houses and one croft can still be found as a rectangular hedged allotment. They were still marked as crofts on the tithe award map of Newnham Murren in 1847; they were then several small fields south of the houses in Crowmarsh.



The lane mentioned as Baconelane must have gone past the most westerly of the crofts called Bacons Close on the tithes award map and was probably next to the leper hospital of Crowmarsh. Bacon was related to the Morins who owned the manor of Newnham Murren in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁴ Baconelane had been subject to investigation in the time of Richard II, when a jury of Langtree Hundred presented that 'Bacouneslane by Walyngford is ruinous and flooded'.⁵ This lane was still known as Bacon Lane in the late 17C and was a bridle path.⁶ It is now known as Watery Lane which is very appropriate as it floods and is often very muddy.

It seems probable that the way continued at the end of the lane by what is now a footpath. After the footpath the Tuddingway crossed the end of Grim's Ditch close beside the Wallingford bypass under which the modern right of way passes in a culvert;

and in a document of 1219 the 'Tuddingweie' is mentioned in conjunction with the 'Grimesdich'.⁷ The road was sometimes called the 'Cromersh' way and in 1556 John Stamp bequeathed 3s 4d towards the upkeep of the Crowmarsh highway.⁸ The road continues as a footpath to what remains of Newnham, passing the church (GR610885) on the way. Newnham Murren is site of a deserted mediaeval village, possibly due to the Black Death which had the same effect on Mongewell. There used to be a ferry at Newnham from Bradford's Brook on the southern edge of Wallingford, so providing another connection to the town.

The road continued to Mongewell (*vide* reference to Mungewell Courte above) probably bypassing the largely ruined church and passing the manor house or court, the situation of which is unknown but may have been where the former Carmel College now stands. South of Mongewell the road is now a track leading to North Stoke and forming part of the Ridgeway National Trail; it has obviously been made up over the years because the surface is very stony. The way passes through the middle of North Stoke. The first reference found to the way in North Stoke is in the North Stoke terrier of 1685⁹ which mentions a strip of one acre in Hemp Furlong abutting on the 'Tiddgin Way otherwise the Crowmarsh Way'. Hemp Furlong is named in the North Stoke tithe award and is on the north side of the way which is described as a bridleway on the map. Another later terrier of North Stoke in 1765 refers to 'the highway called Tidging Way',¹⁰ so it was considered to be a road in those days.

From North Stoke it continued as a trackway into the old parish of Ipsden. In 1321 there is reference to the 'Tuddingwaye' lying next to the Northfield in Ipsden.¹¹ Unfortunately the position of this field is unknown as it does not appear on the tithe award, but judging from the name, it is likely to be the large field on the dip-slope stretching towards the meadows by the river.

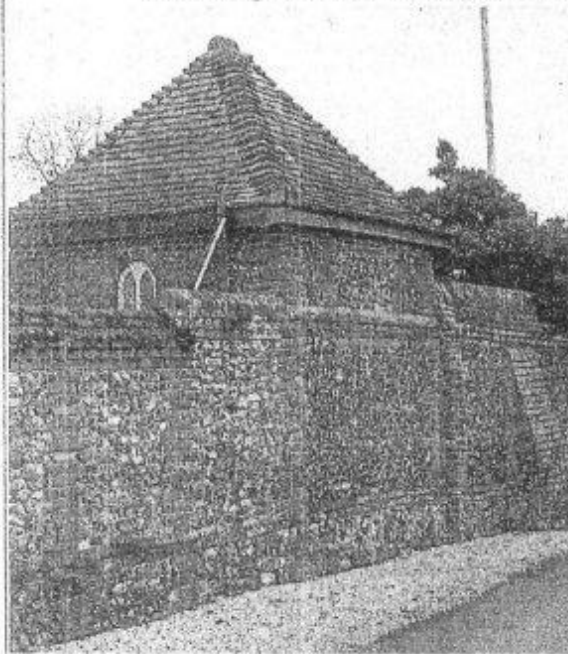
Beyond this the Tuddingway continues as a small modern road past Littlestoke Manor (601850) which used to be in Checkendon parish. In 1298 a Roger Wychele of Ipsden quitclaimed (i.e. formally relinquished) one acre of arable under 'Totingway' to John Marmion.¹² The Marmions were the mediaeval lords of Little Stoke and it is possible that this piece of land abutted on the area of land owned by

Ipsden near the river in Little Stoke. The manor here has a gazebo on the outer wall (*see picture below*) which must have looked down on the way, so the ladies could watch the traffic passing below. At Little Stoke a track leaves to connect with the ferry to Cholsey.

The road continues, now as a footpath to South Stoke, its route as the 'Tidging Way' is marked on a map of 1818 by Frederick Young, which is at Christ Church, Oxford. The way goes through South Stoke, passing Ferry Lane and the church (GR599836), and then running quite near to the river. In 1213-20 the way is mentioned running near Egbaldiche,¹³ which was probably on the flood plain, and it certainly appears to run now as a footpath just above it. This part might have been rather muddy at times, although according to the OS six-inch-to-the-mile 1877 map it is just above the area liable to flood. In the South Stoke records of Christ Church there occurs the last reference I have found to the way where in an 1831 valuation of the estate there is an entry for a 'Tudgsingway furlong'. In the same book there is a 1753 reference to the 'Stichen Way' as being next to Maslings and Maslings is 'Marshland' in various Christ Church surveys.

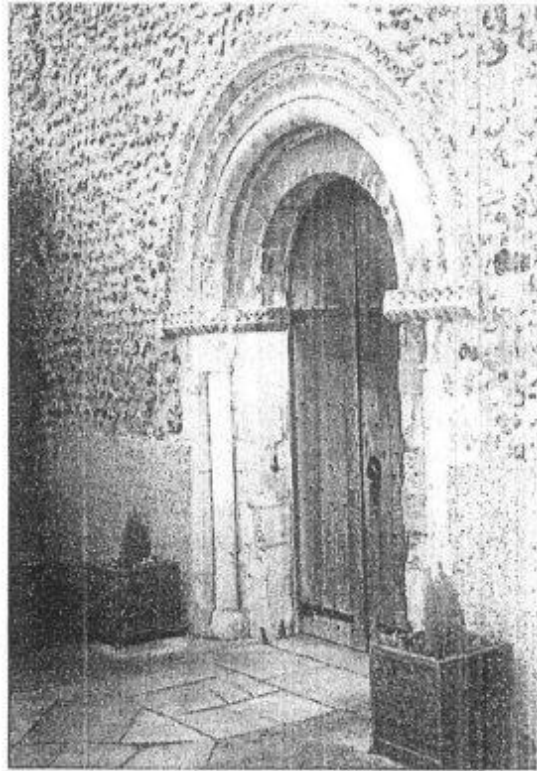
The track passes the mill at Cleeve (GR600816), where there was a wharf, at which barges called, possibly collecting goods from or delivering them to the packhorse trains. The way then continued

through Goring just above the bridge which has only existed since the early 19C; passing the church which was the centre of the Goring Priory of nuns, several of whose charters mention the Tuddingway, The road leaves Goring by Manor Road with Ferry Lane on the right (GR598806). This ferry



Left *The gazebo overlooking the Tuddingway at Little Stoke. Above right* *The west doorway of St Mary Magdalene, the Norman church of Crowmarsh Gifford, at the northern end of the way.*

was owned by the priory and was the access to Streatley in the past. The way now proceeds as a bridleway to Gatehampton Manor where there is a DMV (GR610798). In 1353 there is a description, among others, of strips that bordered on '*viam vocatam Tuddyngweye*' (i.e. the way called Tuddingway) between Goring and Gatehampton.¹⁴ It is thought that the fulling mill owned by the priory was in Gatehampton,¹⁵ probably on a stream called the Drincan which runs into the Thames there. It is possible that the cloth was carried into Reading along the way



The bridle path now continues along the edge of Hartslock woods on a level track obviously well made up in the past, close to the river but well above flood level. On leaving the wood (GR622785) the Tuddingway descends into a deep combe as a track with hedges on either side. On the south side of the track the hedge has an average count of seven species in every 30 yards including buckthorn, maple and dogwood; and on the north there is an average count of seven similar shrubs with spindle also present. According to the Hooper hypothesis, this suggests that both hedges are 700 years old or more.*

It seems likely that the packhorses would have zigzagged up the very steep eastern side of the combe until they reached the road which passes Coombe Park and extends, leaving the riverside, to the B471 on the northern edge of Whitchurch where there was a small wharf in

* Dr Max Hooper's formula states that the age of a hedgerow can be more or less accurately dated by counting the species therein. The age of the hedge in years equals the number of woody species counted within 30 yards multiplied by 110. See Pollard, Hooper and Moore, *Hedges* London, 1974.

early times. At GR634775 a minor road leaves the B471 heading east below Boze Down towards Hardwick. This road also has hedges on either side with an average count of seven species including many indicative shrubs such as spindle, dogwood, maple, crab apple and wild plum. The gate of Hardwick House lies ahead and the way runs along the estate drive past the house which has a long history from mediaeval times.*

In the inquisition of 1749¹⁶ it was said that there was no public road here for wheeled vehicles driven by tenants of 'Whytechurch', but that there was a lawful road for horses ridden or driven with packs ('*cum pakkis*'); in other words this was a packhorse route.

East of Hardwick House the road followed the track passing the field in Mapledurham¹⁷ parish called 'westfelde' now commemorated as Westfordhill Copse on the OS map. At the White House (GR671771) the Tuddingway reaches the minor cul-de-sac road (formerly known as Sheepcote Lane) which goes south into the village of Mapldedurham. Until the middle of the 19C the White House was a public house (the King's Arms) and is mentioned in 1844 as an ancient hostelry.¹⁸ It may have been a stop for packhorses; apparently a great many clay pipes were found in the garden there.

The road heads for the mill and an area near to which was once a wharf but, just over 100 yards south of the White House, the way leaves the road (GR6717689) and goes eastwards past the house which used to be the village post office into a lane.

This lane then continues as the Tuddingway past Park Farm and onto the lane leading to Chazey Court farm. The latter was the manor house of the de Chaseys, who were Norman knights. Eventually this bridleway becomes the Warren in Caversham. A count of several surviving stretches of hedge along the Warren gives an average count of six species including spindle, hazel and maple. So

* *Hardwick Court* in the Pevsner guide: Nikolaus Pevsner and Jennifer Sherwood *Oxfordshire* in the Buildings of England series, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 839.

eventually the Way reaches St Peter's church and the bridge at Caversham. The first bridge here is recorded in 1231.¹⁹

Conclusion

It is interesting that the various hedge counts along the Tuddingway were mostly of seven species or more which, if Hooper's theory is correct, takes us back to the 13C, a time when the Tuddingway may have been consolidated.

It seems likely that the road was mostly used in the mediaeval period, possibly mainly as a packhorse way. It followed the river and passed some of the little wharves, such as Cleeve, Whitchurch and Mapledurham, where barges might have loaded or off-loaded goods. The fact that it ran close to various estate houses may have meant that it was used by the families from these houses travelling on horseback. The villagers may have used it to walk to the markets in Reading and Wallingford. Now, however, apart from the various references found, it has disappeared from maps and memory.

References

1. Margaret Gelling, *The Place Names of Oxfordshire Vol.I*, English Place Name Society Vol. XXIII, Cambridge, 1971, p.4.
2. Cited by A. Cooke, *The Early History of Mapledurham*, Oxford, 1925, p.56.
3. B.R.Kemp (ed), *Reading Abbey Cartulary*, Camden 4th series, Vol.I, p.384.
4. Ibid, p.382.
5. A. Cooke, op cit, p.56.
6. B. and D. Pedgley, *Crowmarsh*, Crowmarsh History Group, 1990, p.63.
7. B.R.Kemp, ibid.
8. B. and D. Pedgley, op cit.
9. North Stoke Terrier, Bodleian Library, Oxon, b41.
10. Ibid.
11. H.E.Salter (ed.) *The Boarstall Cartulary*, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. LXXXVIII, 1930, p.25.
12. Ibid, p.23.