

# **The Naming of a New Road - a First for EPRA**

**by**

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The unenviable task of coming up with a unique and appropriate name for any new road or housing development in Salford falls to a lady in the Traffic and Transportation Department. A small development of apartments was being built on the site of some old garages off Oxford Road and she thought that due to the fairly close proximity to our Roman road running through the Three Sisters Local Nature Reserve, a Roman related name would be ideal. She contacted EPRA for suggestions as she was aware of our involvement in the archaeological survey of the road as part of Channel 4's Time Team Big Roman Dig back in 2005. The rules seemed simple, nothing rude or that could be misconstrued, nothing Royal and roads cannot be named after living individuals.

The road runs from Manchester (Mamucium) to Wigan (Coccium) and first suggestions of Mamucium Mews or even worse Coccium Close were quickly discounted as they sounded as if they could be straight out of Frankie Howerd's Up Pompeii. Naming it after one of the Emperors around at the time our road was built circa AD 200, was a possibility and threw up Aurelius Avenue, Commodus Close, Severus Close, Caracalla Close or as a last resort, Philip The Arab Avenue! One of the problems in choosing the name of a past Emperor was that most of them had some highly questionable practices and were largely truly terrible rulers. Other ideas thrown into the hat were Senatus Close (part of the SPQR emblem of the Roman Republic, Senatus Populusque Romanus), Romanus Road or Groma Grove. A groma is a Roman surveying instrument used to ensure that roads were built in straight lines. We know that these were used on our Roman road, so that choice of name would be highly appropriate, although Groma Grove sounds a bit of an unappealing place to live.

Our Vice-Chair then had the brainwave of Centurion Close which we all agreed was a great suggestion and submitted as our preferred option. Unfortunately, the Council rejected this as there is already a Centurion Grove in Lower Broughton and one of the rules now is that to save confusion by the emergency services, all new names of roads within the city have to be unique.

One of our Committee then suggested the Roman name for a Centurion, Kentarchos Close, but this was considered too much of a mouthful and we were back to the drawing board.

My wife had just returned from a shopping trip and was relayed the bombshell news that after hours of brainstorming by some of the finest minds in Ellesmere Park, our eventual choice of Centurion Close had been thrown out within minutes. She straight away just said, “why didn't you think of Chariot Close?”

After a quick check that there wasn't already anywhere in Salford with Chariot in the name, we were there. All that remained was to verify with our Treasurer, who led the team during the 2005 survey, that the road was wide enough and there would indeed have been chariot traffic. He confirmed that it was the standard width of seven metres which would have allowed chariots to cross in each direction. The Council approved the choice, the developers liked it and it seemed doubly appropriate as the site was formerly used as garage space, although to the best of our knowledge none of the garages ever housed a chariot. It was that simple picking a road name. Although we were pleased to have been approached, we are hoping that there won't be any new developments needing names in the near future.

