

SURREY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CASTLE ARCH, GUILDFORD
BULLETIN

Number 117

May/June 1975

Edited by Rosamond Hanworth, Folly Hill, Ewhurst, Surrey

SAS VISITS

June 7th. Visit to Romney Marsh. Full details were given in Bulletin 116.

July 16th. Visit to Petersham

July 26th. Car Ramble. Full details are given elsewhere in this Bulletin.

EXCAVATION NOTICES

WANDSWORTH HS EXCAVATION

GWENDOLEN AVENUE, PUTNEY

Work started last Easter at No 14 Gwendolen Avenue, Putney just behind the Police Station—a line of gravel surfaces appeared in each of three parallel trial trenches, suggesting a Roman north-south road; ditches at the sides of the gravel surfaces supported this theory, as did a pottery rim of the third or fourth century found in one of them.

HELP NOW WANTED

During the first week of this March a mechanical excavator was hired and a 100ft length of the gravel surface was cleared to establish the precise alignment of the road and whether it could link up with the length of the north-south road found in the middle of the main Roman settlement in the Gay Street area.

Help is now needed to trowel clean the road surface and to excavate the ditches which should provide pottery and other material to confirm the dating.

OPEN DAYS

Those unable to help with the dig may like to visit the site between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. during the Open Days over the Spring Bank Holiday (24th-26th May); there will be plans showing known and conjectured Roman roads, and displays of finds from the main settlement area.

Enquiries to Pat and Joan Loobey, 157 Longcliffe House, Arndale Walk, SW18 4BN (tel. 874 9369 up to 10.30 p.m.).

Guildford: The Friary Site

Further excavation is not likely until November of this year.

(J. A. Cowie)

Egham: Petter's Field

David Barker is still digging at Petter's Field and has called for volunteers. The weather is improving, so why not get out in the open air on Sundays? Contact him on Egham 3875.

(Egham by Runnymede HS Newsletter)

NOTES AND QUERIES

New Members from 1.3.75

Mrs A. Morton, 21 The Glade, Shirley, Croydon.

Copenhagen Royal Library, Christians Brygge 8, DK-1219 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

Mr A. H. C. McSheehy, Orchard View, 4 Sturt Road, Haslemere, GU27 3SB.

Mr C. M. Woolgar, Willow Brook, Guildford Road, Pirbright, Woking, GU24 0LW.

Local Secretary

Mrs C. J. Newbery, Wrencote, Partridge Lane, Newdigate, is the new Hon Local Secretary for Capel, Holmwood, Newdigate, Ockley and Abinger. (D. G. Bird)

Planning Applications

It is still not proving possible to make full use of the lists of planning applications issued by each District Council in Surrey. If a full checking scheme could be instituted then it would be possible to achieve two aims: pinpointing threats to known archaeological sites and isolating major schemes which, because of their size, should be investigated. Work of this sort is carried on in a few areas only, and most of Surrey is not covered. There is a need for two or three people to spend perhaps half a day a week at Castle Arch checking applications against the Society's record maps. Anyone interested is asked to contact the writer at Castle Arch or on Guildford 32454. (D. G. Bird)

SAS Sites and Monuments Record

The number of known archaeological sites and finds in the Ewell area is such that the Society had to draw up a detailed map of this area for the County sites and monuments record. This detail map, part of TQ26SW, is missing from Castle Arch, and anyone with information which could lead to its recovery is asked to contact the writer. (D. G. Bird)

Pillboxes and other 1940 defences in Surrey

Readers of the 'Surrey Advertiser' may have noticed a recent plea for help by Mr Henry Wills of Wilton, Wilts. He is preparing a book about UK defences in 1940 and hopes to include a gazetteer of pillboxes and anti-tank defences as an appendix. Mr Wills would be grateful for information about these defences. It would also be useful for the Society to keep a record of those known in Surrey and members are asked to send details of any pillbox or defence system known to them to the writer, who will copy the information for Mr Wills. Details required are: 1. Date visited or seen; 2. OS Sheet number (and scale); 3. NG references; 4. Type (polygonal, rectangular, circular, special design); 5. Construction (concrete, brick, mixture); 6. Direction facing (entrance usually at rear); 7. Any special features (eg disguised as summer house). (D. G. Bird)

Smoke Blackened Roofs in Surrey

We are making a special study of houses which have smoke blackened rafters throughout the length of the roof. In some small low houses this may mean the house had been a hall only with no floored ends. In the larger houses already floored over at both ends a completely blackened roof might indicate the roof space was used for a special purpose, such as smoking bacon or fish in large quantities.

The Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) would be interested in any documentary evidence on the preservation of winter food for large establishments which would substantiate this theory. The writer's address is 19 Kiln Lane, Betchworth.

(Mrs Victoria Houghton)

Reigate: Town Centre—Northovers (TQ 25355015)

A total area of 56.5 square metres has been excavated on land immediately to the rear of Northovers, 16 Bell Street by members of the SAS and the Holmesdale Archaeological Group on behalf of the Reigate Archaeological Coordination Committee and with the kind permission of Messrs Northover.

The natural Lower Greensand was met at 1.3m. Flint flakes and a part of a flint axe, probably Mesolithic, were found on this surface. Above was a dirty brown sandy layer, 15cm thick, containing pottery sherds of early to mid thirteenth century. Excavated from this layer were two features; the first, a circular pit, 2m in diameter and 50cm deep, contained pottery, a dog skull, bones, 'figure of eight' headed nails, tweezers, daub and stones; tentatively dated to the mid-thirteenth century.

The second feature was a robber trench, 30cm deep, which outlined the foundations of a building approximately 10m by 5m. Within its west end the remains of a kiln were found, consisting of a hearth with a robbed and collapsed stone flue leading to a shallow pit enclosed by oxidised cob-like material. The kiln was probably used for crop drying as no inorganic remains were found. Pottery in the floor dated the building to the latter half of the thirteenth century and in the robber trench gave a date for its destruction around 1300 AD. The north robber trench lay directly under a later wall which in turn was beneath the present boundary wall.

A grey-brown layer, 15cm thick, above the destruction level of the building, contained early fourteenth century sherds at its base but few in the upper level, probably a natural build up of soil as the base of the next layer had sixteenth century material.

The black cultivated soil to the surface, interspersed with rubble, contained sherds and debris from the sixteenth century onwards. At the west end of the area three adjoining brick structures were found. All appeared to represent some sort of outhouse of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Bryants map of 1785 shows a greenhouse in this position. A nineteenth century earthenware drain crossed the west end and ended in a brick soakaway.

Other items from the excavation included a Nuremburg jetton, an Elizabethan six pence piece dated 1592 and an imitation Regal farthing c 1775. From the medieval layers: a whetstone, two keys and a small square of silver stamped VI.

(R. Ellaby and D. Williams)

Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee

Summaries of excavations in Southwark in 1974 will be published in this and succeeding *Bulletins*.

RESULTS OF WORK IN 1974

The excavations of 1974 have been particularly valuable in elucidating some of the problems of Roman Southwark, and the main results may be summarised as follows:

Geology: the known settlement was on sand and more recently deposited silt at a height between 1.25 and 1.5m OD. Although much more research is needed on the relationship between land and river levels, present evidence suggests that much of this inhabitable area had become dry only shortly before the Roman conquest. Lower land just east of the main north-south road (site 5 below) was cut by a stream running northwards, which had been canalised early in the Roman period, and had silted to at least the top of its banks (0.6m OD) by the mid-second century.

Settlement: further evidence for ditches and banks of Claudio-Neronian date on a slight spur east of the north-south road was recovered (site 7). Imported pottery, metal finds, and leather could indicate a military presence.

The alignments of the two main bridge approach roads were recovered (sites 1, 3, 6)—almost certainly both of pre-Flavian origin—and led to the conclusion that the Roman bridge stood on, or very slightly upstream of, the site of its medieval successor (see the *London Archaeologist*, 2, 8, p 183-191).

Although there is no evidence of structures before c AD 60, it seems that much of the land bordering the roads was lined with houses built in clay and timber by the end of the first century, and that at least two phases of such buildings occupied the sites until the mid-second century (sites 3, 4, 6, 8, and probably 1, 2, 7). Site 6 provided further evidence of metal-working at this period, but other signs of industry and trade remain elusive. This early phase of settlement came to an end in the later second century, when the houses were apparently abandoned and allowed to collapse; one reason for this may have been a decline in population.

In the later Roman period a change in the nature of settlement took place, and buildings, where known, were stone-built and much more widely spaced than the clay and timber structures. The three-phased building in St Thomas' Street (site 2) is the first excavated building of this period to yield a plan.

The "black earth" (sites 4, 6, 9) seems, from the evidence available, to date from the fourth century. It lies over the earlier clay and timber structures, and probably represents a change in the use of the land from dwellings to agriculture.

Environmental research: favourable soil conditions within a wood-lined pit (site 2) allowed detailed work to be done. This is still in progress, but has already shown some of the varieties of fish (smelt, eel, mackerel, gudgeon and haddock) and fruit (cherries, figs, apples, plums, and grapes) that were being consumed. Remains of frogs and house-mice, and the larvae of the house and fruit flies, were recovered. It may ultimately be possible to suggest what foodstuffs were available locally.

EXCAVATIONS

SOUTHWARK

1. Bonded Warehouse, Montague Close (TQ 3272 8033)

Director: Alan Graham

A Roman road ran NE-SW towards a point on the river front just east of modern London Bridge. At least six successive phases could be seen. The earliest phase was 5-6m wide, of gravel laid on natural clay; the fills of several gravel pits to north and south suggested a pre-Flavian construction date. In a later period the road was wider and less steeply cambered. To the north-west a large roadside ditch, stratigraphically later than the gravel pits, was apparently filled before the end of the first century; it seems from this that the area by the road was levelled by AD 100, but any associated building levels had been destroyed by nineteenth century cellars. Two stone rubble foundations were recovered, their alignment to the road suggesting a Roman date, and later Roman occupation was indicated by a timber-lined well containing fourth century pottery.

A substantial medieval wall found on the east side was probably part of the buildings of the Priory of St Mary Overey.

2. 1-7 St Thomas' Street (TQ 3275 8018)

Directors: Michael Dennis and Laura Schaaf

The earliest occupation consisted of large shallow pits lying near the north-south road, and dated from the reign of Nero. During the second century this western area was occupied by a building with plastered clay walls and earth floors, and the remainder of the site by a series of fourteen rectangular pits; one pit had vertical posts with timber lining and internal partitions, and contained late second century pottery, glass, shoes, textiles, wooden writing-tablets, an engraved gemstone with legionary parallels, and valuable environmental remains. The pits were later overlaid by a substantial Roman building on ragstone foundations: the plan of one room, with part of a hypocaust, was recovered.

A massive medieval buttress foundation of chalk, and a cellar of dressed stone, both probably still in use in the sixteenth century, were also revealed.

3. 84-86 Borough High Street (TQ 3254 8003)

Directors: Alan Graham and Pat Evans

Below the natural clay on which the Roman deposits lay was a waterlaid sand containing a scatter of worked flint and fragments of prehistoric pottery.

A section across the main north-south road to the Roman bridge was obtained; this consisted of a gravel agger, of which only the lowest level survived, laid on clean clay of a timber corduroy set on the natural clay. Enough of the timbers remained to indicate their alignment and that of the road. To the west were early Roman structures with clay floors, probably on beamslot foundations.

4. 88 Borough High Street (TQ 3254 8002)

Director: Brian Yule

The eastern edge of a burnt clay floor lay on a line roughly parallel to the north-south road, over Flavian occupation deposits. A series of post-holes lay on the same alignment, though it was not possible to establish the relationship between them and the floor. Layers of gravel ran up to the edge of the floor and later covered it; these may have been the metallings of a yard, and perhaps an alley, between the floors here and at site 3. A beamslot at right angles to the road and a number of pits were cut into the gravels, perhaps in the later second century. The gravels were overlaid with yellow silt containing plaster, perhaps from the destruction of a building; this was weathered and sealed by black earth, suggesting use of the land for agriculture from the late Roman period.

5. 93-95 Borough High Street (TQ 3261 8009)

Director: Harvey Sheldon

A stream, at least 8m wide, ran northwards some 10-20m east of the main Roman bridge approach road; this was probably a natural channel with early Roman revetments. The streambed was filled with sands, gravels, and organic deposits, including much domestic rubbish; about 2m of these deposits accumulated between c AD 70-150.

Titsey: The London-Lewes Roman Road (TQ 547422)

The M25 motorway is due to cross the Roman Road close to the Surrey/Kent county boundary between Limpsfield and Westerham approximately 1270m north of Moorhouse Bank on the A25. The opportunity was taken by the Bourne Society Archaeological Group to verify the believed course of the road along the parish boundary between Titsey and Tatsfield.

The road is shown on the OS map coming from Addington across the hills east of Farleigh and on to the North Downs above the Roman villa at Titsey. It is then lost, but appears again a little further east running southwards half a kilometre west of the county boundary along the parish boundary hedge between Church Wood and Titsey Wood, though this section is conjectural. It has been firmly established at Moorhouse Bank on the south side of the A25 and on Limpsfield Chart where it continues on its way to the coast.

Probing on the west side of the hedge of the parish boundary between Titsey and Tatsfield indicated a hard surface 20cm below the turf and a strip 2m wide by 8m long was lifted across this area. A rough flint and cobbled road surface was found, estimated to be 6.7m wide but the east edge of the road, following the camber, sank below the water in the field ditch alongside the hedge and it was not possible to define that edge. The crown of the road, 3.6m wide, was of hard-packed flints and large pebbles of a maximum depth of 20cm. On either side were gravel aggers about 1.5m wide and beneath the road was natural heavy clay. The surface was rough and loosened, perhaps by ploughing and may have been thicker by at least one layer of cobbles. A slight diagonal channel crossed the road towards the ditch. About 10cm below the road surface was a

horizon of larger flints, probably indicating a former road surface, but no kerb stones or dating material of any sort were found.

It has therefore been established that the Roman Road followed the old parish boundary from the south side of Church Wood to the A25, a distance of about 1½km.
(Lesley Ketteringham)

COURSES

SOUTHWARK ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION COMMITTEE

Montague Chambers, Montague Close,
London Bridge, London SE1 9DA
(Tel: 01-407 1989)

Three Summer Training Excavations:

June 2nd-5th and 9th-13th—beginners' course; apply to Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1.

July 12th-27th—course primarily for Diploma and Certificate students; apply to University of London Department of Extra-mural Studies, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AD.

August 2nd-9th—beginners' course; apply to City Literary Institute Centre for Adult Studies, Stukeley Street, London WC2B 5LJ.

FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL, JUNIPER HALL FIELD CENTRE

Dorking, Surrey RH5 6DA. Telephone Dorking 3849

30th July-6th August—Recording Old Farmhouses and Cottages in Surrey. Tutor: Joan Harding.

27th August-3rd September—Roman Roads and How to Study Them. Tutor: Rosamond Hanworth.

VISITS

JULY

Wednesday 16th

SAS VISIT TO PETERSHAM

Arranged by Mr F. E. Manning and Capt M. Wilson, RNR

10.30 a.m. Meet in River Lane, Petersham, where cars may be parked. Petersham Church and seventeenth century houses in Petersham will be viewed.

There are two inns in Petersham where refreshments may be obtained but members may prefer to take a picnic by the river.

In the afternoon tea will be arranged at Ham House. If required please advise when booking.

Tickets (members 20p, visitors 25p, students half price and accompanied children free) from Mrs J. Major, 3 Riversdale Road, Thames Ditton, KT7 0QL.

Admission fees to Ham House, NT, will be payable at the door.

Saturday 26th

SAS CAR RAMBLE ROUND EUROPEAN SURREY

To be led by Mr J. C. Batley

- 10.00 a.m. Meet in the Car Park behind Woolworths in Reigate.
The route will be Gatton, Kingswood, East and West Horsley, Clandon, Guildford, Compton, Albury, Abinger, Coldharbour and some twenty-four European styles of architecture will be viewed.
Detailed itinerary will be available but a good road map should be brought, also a picnic lunch.
With care, parking should present no difficulties. Offers of spare seats will be appreciated.

Tickets (members 15p, visitors 20p, students half price and accompanied children free) from Mrs J. Major, 3 Riversdale Road, Thames Ditton KT7 0QL.

WE ARE REPRINTING

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