

# EXCAVATION OF ROMAN

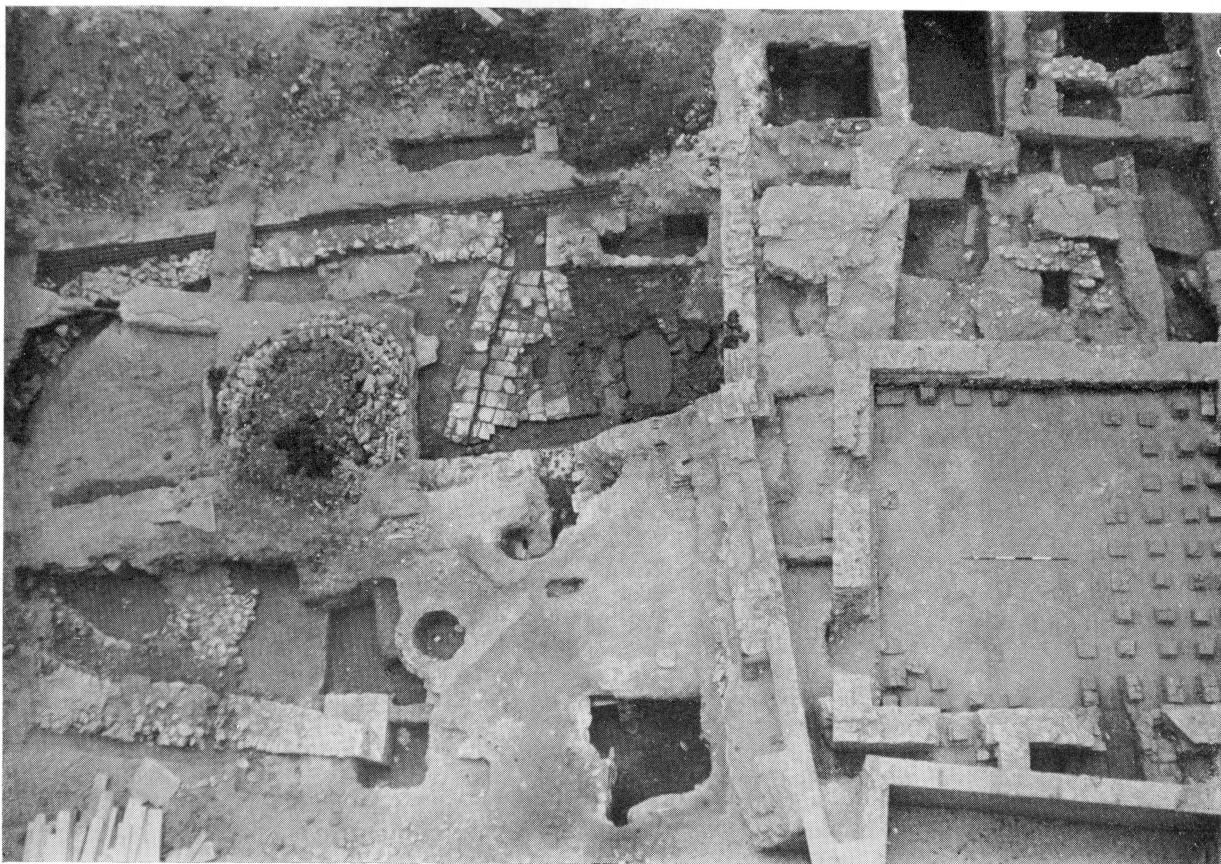
## Further Work on the Huggin Hill Site

WHEN THE MODERN warehouses at the south-east corner of Huggin Hill and Upper Thames Street were to be demolished in 1969 for the construction of the new Fur Traders' Association building, permission to excavate in the pause after demolition was requested of the City Engineer by the Guildhall Museum. This was readily given, and a hurried archaeological excavation was started.

The site was clearly of considerable importance as previous discoveries on neighbouring sites had

disclosed the presence of a very extensive Roman public bath building. In 1964, for example, a weekend excavation had disclosed the large *caldarium* and the cold water bath<sup>1</sup>. Almost certainly the excavation of the new site would produce much more of the layout of the public baths, and clarify the curious problem of the dating evidence which

1. P. R. V. Marsden, "Archaeological Finds in the City of London, 1963-4" *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 21 (1967) 194-202. Offprints of the whole 33 page article are still available.



# PUBLIC BATHS

By PETER MARSDEN

*Photographs by  
the Author*

**Fig. 2** View of the furnace and pilae added to the square room. In the background is part of the corridor featured in Fig. 3.

pointed to a date in the early 2nd century for the demolition of this enormous public building.

At the time of writing this article much work has yet to be carried out on the results of the excavations, and this must of necessity be a provisional report. The main elements of the baths on the present site are clear, and these comprise three originally unheated rooms. At a later date one room was converted into a heated room, and beside it a large apsidal-ended *caldarium* was added. This new room was 52 feet long and 29 feet wide, and beneath it there passed a fine drainage system.

The installation of heating into the 20 feet square room adjacent to the *caldarium* probably occurred at the same time as the construction of the *caldarium* and it may have been a *tepidarium*. On the other hand as the square room was heated by its own furnace it could have been a *laconicum* or "Spartan room" of hot dry heat.

Eventually the baths were demolished and in this rubble has been found a large number of interesting objects. Amongst them is a roof tile bearing the official stamp P. PR.B., a considerable quantity of

**Fig. 1** Aerial view of the baths showing at the left the curve of the later apsidal-ended *caldarium*; left of centre is the 'V' shaped channel which brought together a pair of drains, detectable in the two holes at the bottom; right, the large square room into which under-floor heating was later introduced—the furnace is at the bottom; just off the picture to the right is the corridor in Fig. 3.



shaped Purbeck marble and a pewter spoon. A provisional examination of the pottery and coins from this layer suggests a demolition date not later than the middle of the 2nd century, but this needs checking.

If the dating of the demolition is correct, then it is an important clue to the building of the second *caldarium* in the baths, and the conversion of the square old room to a heated room. It was the emperor Hadrian who first insisted that mixed bathing must not take place, so it is unlikely that the addition of a second bath suite to the existing baths occurred before his time. London was already the provincial capital when Hadrian visited Britain in A.D. 122, and the erection of a life-size bronze statue to him in the City indicates that his association with London was more than that of just a quick passing visit. He "set many things right in Britain", and



Fig. 3 Corridor alongside the square room showing the Roman demolition rubble, mainly roofing tiles, blocking up an axial drain.

perhaps the addition of the second bath suite was one of those things.

After the baths had been demolished and the rooms filled with rubble and clay, a rough stone building was constructed on part of the baths site. It was badly built and contained much re-used material from the baths. Part of a similarly constructed building was found in 1964 overlying another part of the baths. The cheap quality of these buildings suggests that they were privately owned and were clearly not the reason for the baths being demolished.

Now that the enormous size of the public baths has been established it is clear that this riverside area 200 yards west of the Walbrook stream was a focal point in the life of the Roman City. Previously it had been thought that this region was probably relatively quiet. Future research in this area will be aimed at trying to establish whether or not there was any other reason for people congregating there. Already two curious and incompletely recorded public buildings have been found which might hold a clue. The first is a massive building on the site of the Salvation Army Headquarters in Lambeth Hill, and the second is the structure which comprises two parallel walls in Knightbridge Street, one of which is nearly 600 feet long at least.

## Current Excavations

**Bow** by the London Museum. Site of Romano-British area of occupation, possibly a settlement (see also back cover). Excavation at week-ends directed by Harvey Sheldon. All inquiries to R. A. Canham, London Museum, Kensington Palace, W.8 (WES 9816).

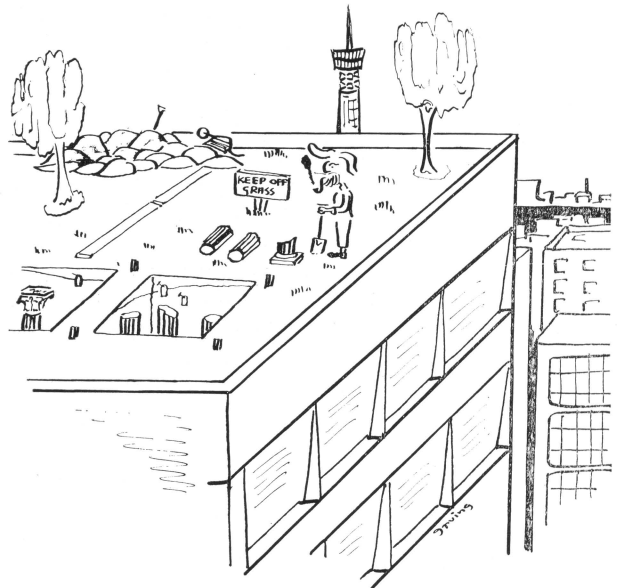
**City**, Lower Thames Street, opposite Billingsgate Market by Guildhall Museum and City of London Archaeological Society. Site of Roman town-house and baths (see the *London Archaeologist* No. 1). Inquiries to Peter Marsden, Guildhall Museum, Gillett House, 55 Basinghall Street, E.C.2. Society inquiries to Mrs. M. Smith, 26a Noel Road, N.1.

**Epsom**, Lower Kingswood, on behalf of Surrey Archaeological Society. Excavation of a Paleolithic site. 10 beginners welcome. Inquiries to F. Pemberton (tel. Burgh Heath 50744).

**Mucking**, by the Ministry of Public Building and Works. Ranges from a ditch of the late Bronze Age to Saxon graves (see the *London Archaeologist* No. 1). Excavation takes place seven days a week. Inquiries to Excavation Supervisor for M.P.B.W., Mucking Excavations, Stanford-le-hope, Essex.

**Northolt**, by Northolt Archaeological and Historical Research Group. The site is the medieval Manor but there is also an important early Saxon phase. Work continues on Saturday afternoons throughout the year. Inquiries to C. H. Keene, 21 Islip Gardens, Northolt, Middlesex.

### IN A HOLE



"This is going to look great in the next L.A."