

ventional view, based on 19th century observations and apparently supported by Dr. Kenyon's evidence on Stane Street, has favoured the latter.

In support of Mr. Dawson's theory, it may be pointed out that there is apparent discontinuity between the wooden revetments of the Roman terracing on the east and west sides of Miles Lane.⁴ If this is not due to faulty plotting — an ever present possibility in the conditions under which these observations were made — it might indicate a feature earlier than the terracing on the line of Miles Lane, which is about where the hypothetical westerly bridgehead ought to be on the City side, if it led to the street on the west side of the forum.

In support of the conventional view, which need not be abandoned on the evidence so far presented, we have the general argument of topographical continuity. London Bridge is the basic feature of London's topography, and the principal reason for the city's development. As such, its position is likely to have remained unchanged from a very early date until rebuilding became necessary. The new bridge would then probably be built close beside the old in order to minimise the disturbance. We know that this is what happened in the case of the last two bridges — the last three, if Miss Honeybourne's identification of the site of the Saxo-Norman bridge is correct. Each time the new bridge has been placed within about 50 yards of its predecessor.

The suggested westerly position of the Roman bridge fits the late 1st century street plan, but is difficult to explain in relation to the earlier phases of *Londinium*, as Mr. Dawson admits. Recent work has shown that the basilica/forum insula was laid out round a pre-existing public building, which was sub-

4. R.C.H.M. *Roman London* (1928) 133, fig. 50; R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London* (1965) Gaz. 304 and 306.

sequently demolished.⁵ This building was narrower than the forum, but was also centred on the Fish Street Hill - Gracechurch Street axis. A bridge near the bottom of Fish Street Hill would therefore have had precisely the same relationship to the earlier town centre as the later. If the centre of Roman London from an early date remained constantly on the Fish Street Hill axis, there is a strong suspicion that the bridge lay at its southern end.

A subsequent move 50 yards downstream to Pudding Lane would be of the same order as the known moves of later times. The only surprise is that it should be downstream rather than up, but this may reflect a temporary reversal in Anglo-Saxon times of the steady rise in the tidal level. It would be much more difficult to account for a leap downstream of 150 yards or so, which would represent a change in the topographical pattern without parallel in later times. That such an innovation could have taken place for no apparent reason either in late Roman or Anglo-Saxon times is hard to believe.

The question therefore remains open, and arguments can be advanced for and against both hypotheses. The final answer can be given only when we are able to collate many more facts. It is unlikely that these will be produced by any one site, though many sites on both sides of the river might produce evidence with a bearing on the problem. In this connection, negative evidence is as important as positive. The danger is that because no firm conclusions can be drawn, excavators may be reluctant to publish the apparently insignificant facts. It is strongly urged that all who have information about riverside and other relevant sites in the City or Southwark shall not delay the publication at least of interim reports with their plans and sections, however unglamorous these may appear to be.

5. B. J. Philp in *Current Archaeol* 28 (March 1970) 220.

Current Excavations

Brentford, by West London Archaeological Group. Site at Brentford High Street between St. Paul's Road and the County Court access in St. Paul's Road. It is hoped to establish the line of the Roman road through Brentford. Excavation takes place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 9.30-5.30. Further details from Roy Canham, London Museum, W.8.

Clapham, Gaskarth Road, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Roman Stane Street cuts through this site. Excavations on Saturdays and Sundays, 12-27 September. Entrance through prefabs on north side of Gaskarth Road. Further details from Donald Imber, c/o Cuming Museum, Walworth Road, S.E.17.

Southwark. Two excavations, one revealing 2 delft-ware kilns, near London Bridge are nearing conclusion. A further dig near Tower Bridge on the Mark Brown Wharf site (see Mosaic), is expected to start up again shortly. Inquiries to Cuming Museum, Walworth Road, S.E.17. (Tel. 01 703 3324).

**ST. MARY THE VIRGIN
PUTNEY PARISH CHURCH**
(dating from the 15th and 16th century)
BY PUTNEY BRIDGE
RESTORATION APPEAL SALE
OF ENGRAVINGS, PRINTS AND SKETCHES
dating from the 18th century
over 400 items for sale
including
Putney Fulham Wandsworth Kew
Wimbledon Battersea Richmond Barnes
Chelsea Hammersmith Chiswick Clapham
Southwark Environs of London Surrey
Middlesex and City of London Churches
also
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION
By WANDSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FRIDAY, 30th OCTOBER
7 p.m. to 9 p.m. — Admission 2s.
SATURDAY, 31st OCTOBER
10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. — Admission 2s.