

London Bridge — a rejoinder

GRAHAM DAWSON

I AM GLAD that Mr. Merrifield has complemented my article by putting the ideas of those working on the north bank forward, whose problems are clearly different from ours. But Mr. Merrifield makes a number of points with which I cannot agree. It should be kept in mind in discussing this problem that the one certainty is the Montague Close road, while any other road is, at the moment, mere supposition. It is hoped that current excavations by Mr. H. Sheldon on a site in Tooley Street will throw further light on this question, and I would echo Mr. Merrifield's plea for the early publication of material which may have a bearing on the problem (or any other archaeological problem for that matter).

Mr. Merrifield makes a number of points about the position of London Bridge which I shall deal with in turn. Firstly, he mentions an early gravel feature found in 1967 by Mr. Beeby which was pierced by three large post holes. Mr. Merrifield suggests that the posts **might** be part of a bridge and that the road from it would terminate further south. However, if the road terminated further south, what has the gravel to do with it, and if it did run across the site, evidence for it should have been found (presumably Mr. Merrifield is thinking of some sort of pile structure—but there were no post holes for it). In his brief interim report, Mr. Beeby describes this gravel feature as 'a thickening of the surface gravel (which occurred as a scatter all over the site) may indicate a path or road.' But this scatter of surface gravel was found on the northern part of the 1969 site at London Bridge¹ too. So if it is a road, it would appear to be going east-west rather than north-south and went out of use exceptionally early (by the early 2nd century at the latest).

He also maintains that the bridge would have to begin well back from the bank to cross at a reasonable height but it has plenty of room to do this over the river, especially since the deeper channel would be near the north bank and a gently rising bridge would be economical in the use of very long timbers

which must have been difficult to come by.

Secondly, Mr. Merrifield says that Kenyon's alignment cannot be ruled out by the 1962 excavation, yet in the interim report² it states that a Claudian ditch was found running across the line. So, if there ever was a road there, it cannot be the primary one. In any case, the line is ruled out by the excavations at London Bridge which showed it running over Roman pits³. The question of the alignment of the Montague Close road is difficult with only one section across it, but in order to have town planning, we must have two roads and at the moment we only have one, so that question must be deferred until the question of the bridge is settled. It is most unlikely that the Montague Close road is parallel to Stane Street, because it would then be a minor back road leading from nowhere to nowhere and would hardly have been built up to 5ft. 3in. in that case.

Thirdly, Mr. Merrifield discusses the question of the Saxon Bridge. In my critical review of Miss Honeybourne's article⁴ I maintain that the evidence which she brings forth will not support the theory she raises, and only points to a position for Saxon London Bridge somewhere in the area. Most of this evidence argues as well for a Saxon bridge on the site of the medieval bridge as for a site at the bottom of Pudding Lane, and the evidence which points to that site in particular is most unsatisfactory. Since this is so uncertain, it can hardly be used as evidence for any particular site for Roman London Bridge.

The problem for protagonists of the downstream bridge is still to suggest a possible alignment for it south of the river. Kenyon's line is ruled out by last year's excavations⁵ and it is generally accepted that lines B and D⁶ are unacceptable. This only leaves, downstream of the modern bridge, line C⁷ and though this is still just feasible, it looks less and less likely. Apart from the objections mentioned above to the gravel Beeby found having anything to do with the road, a number of pits were found during observation of building work on the south side of the site in 1970. Due to the circumstances of the observations, it was impossible to extract finds from them but the only piece of pottery which was recovered was Roman and they are difficult to fit in with the idea of a road on that part of site⁸. And since this line also runs over the Claudian ditch at 199 Borough High Street, it could not be primary.

Clearly an upstream bridge is presenting problems in the City and I am in no position to suggest solutions to these. But I would add that it has always seemed strange to me that the main ap-

1. Preliminary Report on Excavations at London Bridge and Montague Close.

2. Preliminary Report on Excavations at 199 Borough High Street.

3. *London Archaeol.* 1. 156-160.

4. S.L.A.S. *Newsletter* 24.

5. *Ibid.* Note 3.

6. *Ibid.* Plan 1.

7. *Ibid.*

8. S.L.A.S. *Newsletter* 23. 5-7.

INDUSTRIAL MONUMENTS SURVEY

PAUL CARTER

SOME YEARS AGO the Council for British Archaeology initiated a National Survey of Industrial Monuments, with the intended purpose of locating and providing data on threatened industrial monuments. On discovery of a site field-workers were asked to fill in a standard record card which had been designed by the C.B.A. Research Committee on Industrial Archaeology, and then forward their completed cards to the Council, who passed them on to Mr. Rex Wailes, the then Consultant on Industrial Monuments for the Ministry of Public Building and Works. By 1965, however, it became urgent that a system for recording and classifying the information sent in be established, and ensuring that the original cards sent in were safely re-

turned to their senders. In November 1965, at the suggestion of Mr. Wailes, the Centre for the Study of History of Technology, Bath University of Technology agreed to undertake this work, under the charge of the Centre's Director, Dr. R. A. Buchanan. And so the National Record of Industrial Monuments (N.R.I.M.) came into being.

Since its initiation in 1965, the total number of cards processed by the N.R.I.M. approaches 7,000. On arrival at the Record, the cards are sorted and copied in triplicate. One copy is forwarded to the C.B.A. for use by Mr. Wailes (now C.B.A. consultant on Industrial Archaeology); one copy goes to the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, to be housed at the National Monuments Record¹; and one copy goes into the N.R.I.M. collection. For various reasons it is doubtful if the purpose for which the Survey was originally initiated has ever been achieved. Many reporters, on discovering a site, undertake much fieldwork before a card is finally filled in and forwarded to the N.R.I.M. with the result that the time-lag between the discovery and the placing of the card in the N.R.I.M. is frequently so great that the site has been destroyed in the meantime. Information cannot therefore be relied upon to be up to date. Also the coverage so far shows a wide variation in the standard of reporting; the significance of the items reported; and an uneven coverage from region to region. Many of the 'Meccas' of the industrial archaeologist have yet to be included in the N.R.I.M. collection. Indeed as far as our own area is concerned neither Tower Bridge nor St. Pancras Station are included, for until now there has been no real attempt to provide a systematic coverage of the region. This being the case, does the N.R.I.M. and the Survey as a whole have any purpose? I think it does.

What are its future uses?

Undoubtedly although the Survey has as yet not been of value in providing data for the preservation of industrial monuments, the interest aroused in the subject, due to the promotion of the Survey has led several local Societies or Groups to fight to save threatened monuments from destruction. Additionally, in the long term the N.R.I.M. could form the basis of a national archive on past industry, which could be consulted when compiling local histories.

London Bridge—continued

proach road from the south should cross over the bridge and then stop at the south gate of the Forum rather than being a through route. On the south side of the river, an upstream bridge fits in much better with what we know of the pattern of settlement. For example, the Montague Close road would go through the middle of the area of Roman settlement rather than along one side of it as the downstream road does. Three of the four known Roman stone buildings in Southwark (Winchester Palace⁹, Southwark Cathedral¹⁰ and Borough Market¹¹) are nearer the Montague Close road than the downstream bridge and two (the latter two) would actually seem to front onto it. The fourth building could front onto the downstream road but further south a flimsy wattle and daub one would indeed do so (discovered by Kenyon at King's Head Yard¹²). Thus if there are two roads in Southwark, the Montague Close one would be the one leading to the bridge (on the assumption that the wealthier houses would be along the main road).

9. Preliminary Report on Excavations at Winchester Palace.

10. *Archaeologia* 24. 198.

11. Preliminary Report on Excavations at 4 Southwark Street.

12. K. M. Kenyon. *Excavations in Southwark* (1959). 20-21.

All preliminary reports available at the Cuming Museum, Walworth Road, S.E.17.