

# SULLONIACAE

## -some further work

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IN HIS INTERESTING account of our present knowledge of *Sulloniacae*, Mr. Stephen Castle has, for some reason omitted to take into account the series of excavations carried out between 1957/63 on behalf of the North Middlesex Archaeological Research Committee by members of the Stanmore, Edgware and Harrow Historical Society which, unfortunately, invalidates Mr. Castle's conclusions about the course of the Roman road up the south side of Brockley Hill.

The series of excavations were planned to endeavour to trace the onward continuation of Grims Dyke eastwards of Pear Wood, to secure evidence of the Roman road up Brockley Hill and to further explore the Roman site in Elstree village.<sup>1</sup>

In 1957, a trench was cut just outside the eastern edge of Pear Wood (Field 157) to try and pick up Grims Dyke but no trace was found. In 1958 a further trench was cut on the east side of Watling Street where there were surface indications but this proved to be a lynchet (Field 413).

In 1960/61, two further trenches were cut in field 157 to the west of Watling Street (A5) in an attempt to verify the course of the Roman road in this area. No evidence of the Roman road surface was observed in either excavation but in trench A (the southerly)<sup>2</sup> a wide but thin scatter of gravel metalting and a number of ditches suggest that before the construction of the modern road, the course of an earlier road lay somewhat to the west of the present carriageway. In both trenches, however, a large ditch running approximately parallel to the

modern road was found and it is believed that this represents the west ditch of the Roman road. At the west end of trench A, and 123ft. from the modern A5 kerb, a large ditch or pit was found, but flooding in the exceptionally wet summer of 1960, prevented final excavation and accurate delineation. A full report with plans and sections was privately printed.

The above will, therefore, invalidate the suspected line put forward by Mr. Castle and place the line almost under the modern road up the south side of Brockley Hill. This line is born out by personal observations at Pipers Green Lane and in the garden of a house further south.

In 1961/63, excavations in the back garden of the house next to the "Holly Bush" PH in Elstree village where five trenches were cut, there was found 4/5ft. of very compact Roman tile, brick, etc., waste over natural clay. In this waste was a little Samian ware and 2nd century sherds. No kilns or structures were found.

In the early 1950s an axe head, believed to be a military type, was found in a pit during road works near the 'kink' in Wood Lane.<sup>3</sup>

Also, in 1956 in the south bank of the pond on the top of Brockley Hill, Mr. Ridley excavated a kiln which some children had found. This kiln produced about a dozen complete miniature votive urns with sherds of about a dozen more.

1. See Map in *London Archaeol.* 1 No. 14 (1972) 325.
2. *Ibid*—trench A was just to the east of site E.
3. *Ibid*.

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## Letters

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### ARCHAEOLOGY IN BEXLEY

GROMATICUS' DISCUSSION of archaeological provision in London (Summer 1972) does not mention the outer boroughs. Few of these can have sufficient archaeology to occupy a full-time professional but many must have active archaeologists in curatorial posts. Mrs. Palmer, my neighbour at Bromley, comes to mind as an example.

In Bexley, archaeological sites are few, and form only a small part of the historical and ecological evidence being destroyed by social and environmental change. A Local Studies Centre set up by the Libraries Department concerns itself with books, documents, newspapers, paintings and photographs, slides, film, tape

recordings and a museum collection ranging from fossils to lavatory cisterns. Archaeology forms part of my concern as Assistant Curator, and I am, as it happens, an archaeologist by upbringing.

Although our establishment is not yet complete, and we have serious arrears of housekeeping, we are already looking at the most urgent fieldwork. For instance, we shall be keeping a close eye on the major redevelopment astride Watling Street in Bexleyheath.

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