

- over the age of 50 years and represents an ageing process in the cartilaginous matrix;
- the presence of marked wear and tear osteoarthritis in the thoracic spine (T10 and T11) with fusion of two vertebrae by bony outgrowths;
  - disappearance of most of the saggital suture of the skull. Although noted by Krogman to be a variable feature, it puts the age at over 50 years.

A well healed spiral fracture of the left tibia and fibula was found (fig. 5) which is the type of injury that probably resulted from a twisting force applied to the left foot rather than direct violence to the shin. The position of bones (alignment of the two broken parts of the bones) was very good and resulted probably from a splint being used to stabilise the bone fragments after the injury — it was not possible to say at what age the fracture was incurred. The bones of the lower part of the left leg were shortened by 2cm. as a result of this fracture and might well have caused him to limp.

There was a very considerable amount of dental caries on the non occlusal surface of the teeth and at least five cavities were seen. A periapical abscess had formed in this region of the right lower premolar and had ruptured outwards through the mandible (fig. 6) and probably through the skin covering the lower jaw as a persistent discharging sinus; this would certainly have been a painful and miserable affliction. The wear on the occlusal surface of the teeth was very marked even for Romano-British. This probably denotes:

- a tough fibrous diet;
- an age of over 50 years.

Lateral profile of the skull presented a fairly low forehead and also an occipital bun which was noted by Warwick<sup>6</sup> as being a feature of many of the Romano-British skeletons found at the Trentholme cemetery, York. As in skeleton 1 the deltoid markings on the upper forearm bones (humeri) were exceptionally pronounced particularly on the right

6. R. Warwick *The Romano-British Cemetery, Trentholme Drive, York* (1968).

## Local Societies

Some further amendments to the list published in Vol. 1 No. 15 are noted below:

**City of London Arch. Soc.**; Sec. Miss R. Nash, 1 Phoenix Road, S.E.20.

**London Nat. Hist. Soc., Archaeology Section**; Sec. W. H. Prentis, 8 Glebe Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3DY.

**Nonsuch Antiquarian Soc.**; Sec. G. T. Wignall, 199 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashtead, Surrey.

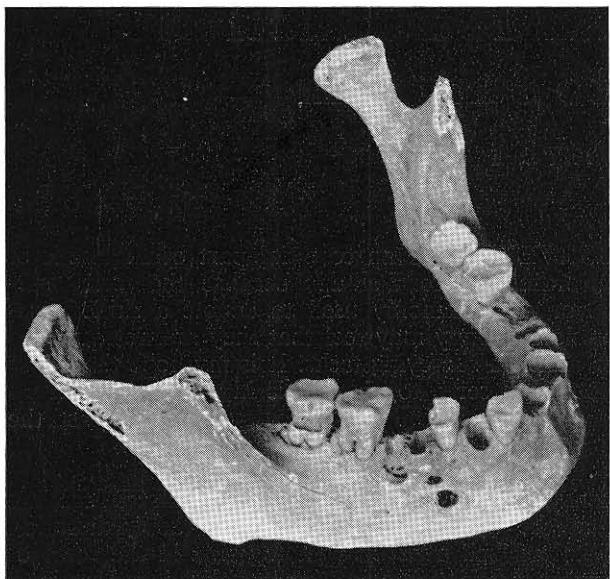


Fig. 6. Lower jaw belonging to skeleton 2 showing evidence of a dental abscess which had burst through.  
(Photo: John Earp)

side and again denote much heavy lifting during life and that this man was right handed.

The main points of interest therefore that stem from the study of these bones are:

(i) the extensive dental decay found. Romano-British teeth in general tended to be very healthy and free of caries; this has been related to the tough fibrous diet and also the lack of refined sugars;

(ii) it is tempting again to speculate that, if the burial of the male took place about 10 years after that of the female in the same coffin, then they were husband and wife;

(iii) the only marker of racial affinity in this find is the occipital bun which was seen on skeleton 2.

### Acknowledgements

The excavation was conducted by members of a full-time unit based in Southwark. The unit was assisted in excavation and removal of the bones by Dr. A. Missen and Dr. W. Owen of Guys Hospital, P. Daniels and E. Jeffreys. It would like to thank Mr. Farrow and the staff of McInerney's Beale Road Development site for their help, without which it would not have been possible to excavate and lift the sarcophagus.

Special thanks are also due to Mrs. V. Conlon of the Institute of Archaeology and to Andrew Kelt, Deputy Borough Architect and Planning Officer for the Borough of Tower Hamlets. The report was typed by Win Exley. The excavation was on behalf of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society and was financed by the Department of the Environment.