



Fig. 1: extending the excavation area, January 1985.

Excavation at Prehistoric and Roman Beddington, 1984-85

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THE PREHISTORIC and Roman site at Beddington Sewage Works, near Croydon (TQ 297 658), lies within an area of 408 acres (170ha) due to be destroyed by gravel extraction, which is likely to commence in 1986. Excavation at the site took place from 1981 to 1983¹. Post-excavation work was undertaken from 1983 to 1985, and in September

1985 the final report was submitted for publication². A popular account is being written.

Excavation

Further excavation has taken place to attempt to investigate as much as possible of the site before the gravel extraction. This investigation was made

1. For interim reports see L. Adkins and R. Adkins 'Excavations at Beddington 1981' *London Archaeol* 4, no. 8 (1982) 199-203; L. Adkins and R. Adkins 'Excavations at Beddington 1982' *London Archaeol* 4 no. 12 (1983) 326-9.

2. L. Adkins and R. Adkins *Excavations at Beddington: prehistoric settlement and Roman villa* will be published in 1986 as a monograph by the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society and the Surrey Archaeological Society.

possible by a Manpower Services Commission Community Programme scheme, run by the London Borough of Sutton Agency; it began in November 1984 and will continue until October 1986. The Museum of London is sponsor of the scheme, with L. Adkins and R. A. Adkins directing the excavation, and J. G. Perry as the M.S.C. Project Manager.

The initial aim of the excavation was to sample areas across the Scheduled Ancient Monument, starting immediately south of the 1981-83 excavation and moving towards the known Saxon cemetery³, in order to build up a composite picture of the site. However, the good preservation and large quantity of underlying features (Fig. 2) have made necessary a change in strategy to one of excavating a more limited area in order to obtain an understanding of this very complex part of the site. At present an area of just over one acre (0.4 ha) is under excavation. An arson attack destroyed most of the site huts in May 1985⁴, but delay to the excavation was minimal.

Prehistoric

The excavation has revealed a complexity of

postholes, pits, gulleys and ditches (Fig. 3) beneath and immediately to the south of the Roman villa-house⁵, most of which appear to be prehistoric in date. As yet only a preliminary assessment of the finds has been possible, but it suggests that some of these features can be dated to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age: considerable post-excavation work is necessary to be certain. There is also a quantity of residual Late Bronze to Middle Iron Age pottery, which is providing important evidence for the prehistoric pottery sequence in the area, as well as evidence for settlement of that date, which is rare in this part of the Thames Valley.

The majority of postholes, gulleys and ditches in the north-west part of the excavation, though, seem to belong to the Late Iron Age, and represent at least four round-houses. An inhumation lying on the gravel in a shallow depression with no grave goods is also probably of Late Iron Age date (Fig. 3).

The 1981-83 excavation demonstrated the likelihood of continuous occupation from the Late Bronze Age to the Roman period, even though much of the evidence for the earlier periods was

3. Jacqui Perry 'Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Beddington' in C. Orton (ed.) *The past - our future*, Beddington, Carshalton & Wallington Archaeol Soc occas pap 4 (1980) 23-8.

4. An article on the fire is forthcoming in *the London Archaeologist*.

5. L. Adkins and R. Adkins 1983, see fn 1.



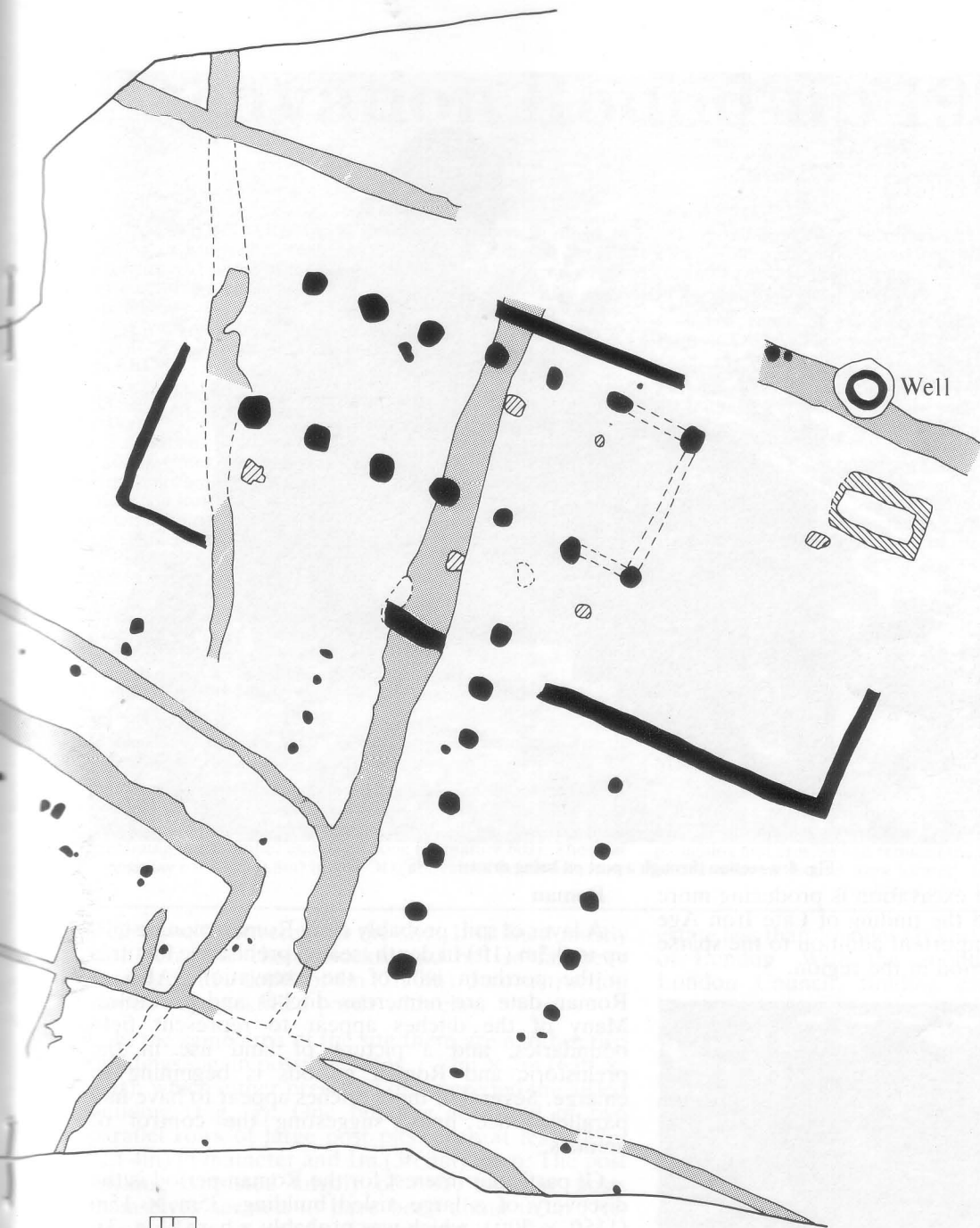
Fig. 2: part of the excavated area, looking north.



Fig. 3: plan of 1984-85 excavation, showing the major features.

(drawn by J. G. Perry)

For plan of 1981-83 work see *London Archaeol* 4 no. 12 p.328.










- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|------------------|
|  | Villa-House |  | Cobbled Feature |
|  | Pit, Posthole |  | Clay Feature |
|  | Ditch |  | Probable Feature |
|  | Wall Foundation | | |



Fig. 4: a section through a post pit being drawn.

residual. The current excavation is producing more certain evidence, and the finding of Late Iron Age structures is a very important addition to the sparse knowledge of this period in the region.

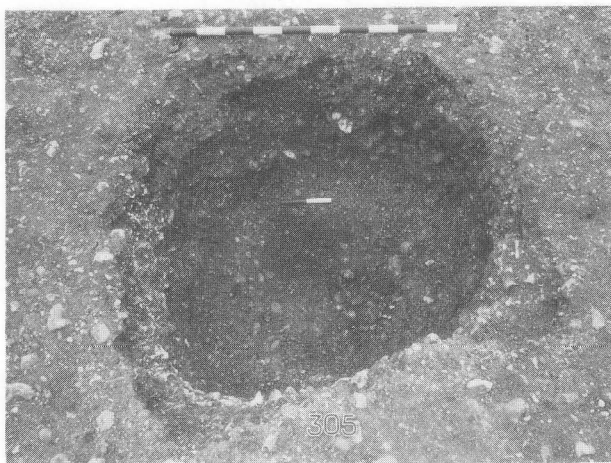


Fig. 5: an excavated post pit. The original position of the post can be seen as a stain in the gravel.

Roman

A layer of soil, probably early Roman ploughsoil⁶, up to 0.3m (1ft) in depth, sealed prehistoric features in the northern half of the excavation. Also of Roman date are numerous ditches and postholes. Many of the ditches appear to represent field boundaries, and a picture of land use in the prehistoric and Roman periods is beginning to emerge. Several of these ditches appear to have had parallel fence lines, suggesting the control of animals.

Of particular interest for the Roman period is the discovery of a large aisled building, 35m × 15m (115ft × 50ft), which was probably a barn (Fig. 3). The internal posts of this building were supported on post pads composed of large, closely-packed flint cobbles. A post pit in one of the post pad positions suggests a later repair. In the south-east corner of this building is a rectangular area of clay which must have been deliberately brought to the site from elsewhere. Outside, to the south-east, is the first

6. See fn 2.

Excavation Round-up 1985

BETH RICHARDSON

EXCAVATIONS ARE LISTED by the London Borough or County in which they took place. They are followed by grid reference, the name of the Society or Unit and the name of the director of the excavation. WC and WMC indicate that work continues or may continue in 1986. I am very grateful to Louise Priest for typing this report.

BARKING

Barking Abbey Industrial Estate (TQ 438 840) Passmore Edwards Museum (M. J. Stone)

Excavations between the W end of the medieval Abbey and Barking Creek have revealed prehistoric activity consisting of mesolithic and neolithic flints from the gravel terrace, a crouch burial and Iron Age pits and post holes. Residual Roman building material indicates Roman activity in the immediate vicinity of the site. Evidence of Saxon activity dating from the foundation period of the Abbey (AD 660) consists of two timber buildings. One, with a fine plaster finish, was apparently destroyed by fire, the final floor level containing mid-late Saxon pottery and imported glass. In the Saxo-Norman period pits containing fullers earth and a plank-lined gully feeding in water from a stream give evidence of a sizeable fullery. The medieval layers were destroyed by later industrial activity but the main culvert was excavated and a brick rebuild of the 15/16th c investigated running to the town quay area. WC.

12 Parkview, Alfred's Way (TQ 4512 8323) Passmore Edwards Museum (M. Redknapp)

Two areas were examined in the back garden. Preparations for fish ponds, involving the excavation of two 2.5m (8ft) deep trenches had exposed a peat horizon 0.2-0.3m (8in-1ft) thick containing much timber and some bone (immature *bos*). The peat deposit lay c 0.5m (1ft 8in) below OD, above and below estuarine clay.

well to be discovered on the site. It is lined mostly with tufa and chalk blocks, and has so far been excavated to a depth of 1m (3ft 3in). Its construction trench was backfilled partly with clay.

In the same area of the site there are another two buildings, again possibly barns, c 19m x 7m (62ft x 23ft), which either preceded or succeeded the aisled building (Fig. 3). One building consisted of two parallel rows of large post pits, each at least 0.7m (2ft 4in) in diameter and 1m (3ft 3in) deep. The post packing consisted largely of tufa, and the posts themselves seemed to have been about 0.3m (1ft) square (Figs. 4 and 5). The second building, lying immediately to the west, had post pits of a similar size; so far one row of at least seven and a parallel row of at least four post pits have been revealed.

Future work

From these more recent excavations it is clear that the survival of evidence is very good and of considerable importance to our understanding of the prehistory of the Lower Thames Valley, and equally important is the further evidence of the Roman villa

Two tree trunks were recorded, one lying perpendicular to the other. Both were worked, and together with other worked wood (including a stake point) suggest an early artificial consolidation of the marshy lowlands at this site.

Campbell Tomb, St Margaret's Church (TQ 441 838) Forests Projects Ltd (A. Thompson)

Excavation at the E end of St. Margaret's Parish Church, Barking, revealed a brick built tomb, constructed directly onto natural sand and gravel, with two vents at ground level and a low domed roof. Pottery from the limited excavation, immediately around the tomb, was all of mid 17th c date. Within the tomb was a W door, which led directly into the church, and on the south side 4 burial niches (two above two). Centrally placed in the two upper burial niches was an inscribed stone of Tho. Cambell, who had had the tomb constructed in 1645 for himself and his wife Hester. Eight original occupants of the tomb were examined and removed, plus a quantity of dumped and unrelated human skeletal material.

BARNET - no excavation

BEXLEY - no excavation

BRENT - no excavation

BROMLEY

M20, Ruxley South-East London Unit (of Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit)

Rescue excavations during construction of new section of the M20 N of Swanley revealed a small RB farmstead site. Deep ploughing and erosion had reduced the site, and only the bottoms of unconnected ditches were located. 1st and 2nd c pottery was
(continued on p. 158)

estate less than 10 miles (16km) from the Roman city of London. With the abolition of the Greater London Council, funding can unfortunately no longer be assured for the continued support of this project, and support from other bodies is essential if any meaningful record is to be made before the archaeology of 408 acres (170ha) is bulldozed into oblivion.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Thames Water for continuing to allow us to excavate the site. We are also grateful to the Manpower Services Commission for its support, and to the London Borough of Sutton M.S.C. Agency, in particular A. J. Wilton. We would also like to acknowledge support from the Greater London Council (Historic Buildings Division), Balfour Beatty Ltd., A. Bell & Sons (Paddington) Ltd., Coode and Partners, London Borough of Sutton Libraries and Arts Services, Stewarts Plastics plc and Waygood Peerless Ltd. Thanks are also due to the staff on the excavation, in particular Steve Haynes, Alison Nailor and Andrew Skelton, and to the volunteers.