## Miscellanea.

THE QUEST FOR THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE AT CHESTER.

T HE Report of the trial digging, which appears elsewhere in this *Journal,* may well be supplemented by some account of the method adopted in determining the points through which the walls of the amphitheatre would be found to pass.

At the outset, the small section of walling first discovered and pronounced by Mr. W. J. Williams, M.A., to be part of the external wall of a Roman Amphitheatre—Site 1—was measured and plotted on the ten foot ordnance map. In the absence of any other guidance, the plan of the legionary amphitheatre at Caerleon was then taken as a basis for comparison, and alternative directions in which the seating banks might have been disposed, were suggested. The nature and colouration of the soil in the trenches cut for the foundations of the boundary walls of the proposed by-pass, at once eliminated one of these alternatives, and established the general line of demarcation between the seating bank and arena in the north-west sector—site 5. The concentric wall, at that time tentatively regarded as the external wall, was found standing in both trenches, and a wall suspected and now known to be the arena wall, was found in the southern trench. A great slab of sandstone still remains in the northern trench at the point where the seating bank was defined from the arena filling. This may have formed part of a stone flagged podium behind the coping of the arena wall, which was not however, standing at this level. The slab is laid radially, and its presence

supports the view that the back of the arena wall stands practically to its full height at the opposite side of the road.

The Chester Excavations Committee then sought and obtained permission to carry out excavations on the site of the proposed roadway, and an appeal was issued, illustrated
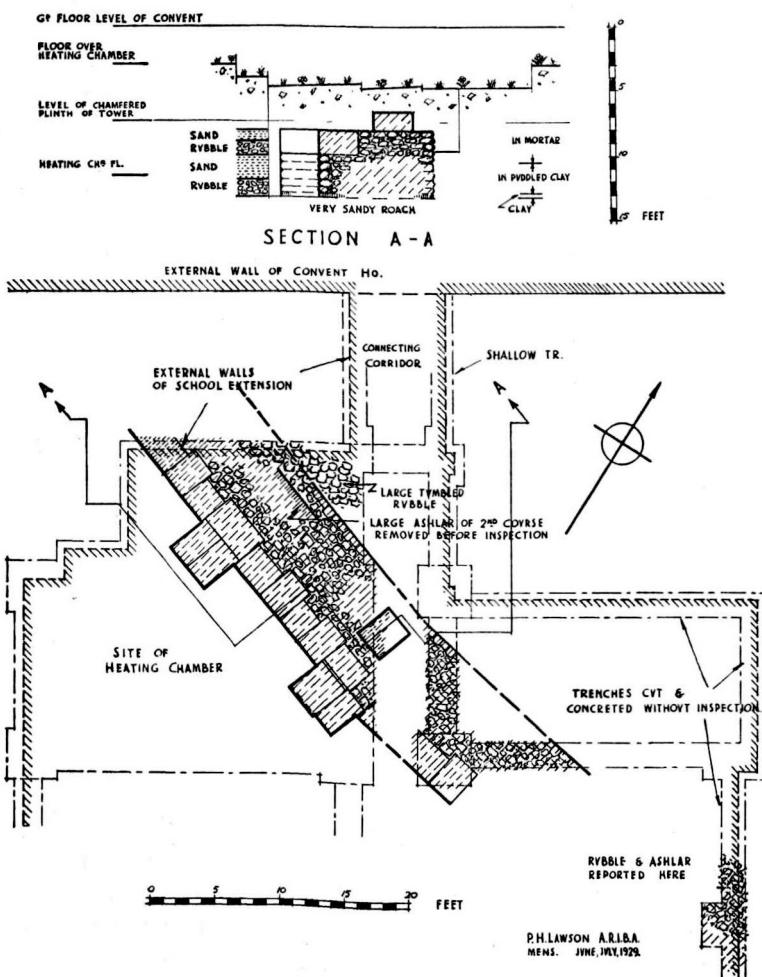
SECTION A-A

Site 1.
Plan and section of the remains first discovered and identified by Mr. W. J. Williams, M.A., as part of the external wall of the Roman Amphitheatre.

by a plan of the discoveries to date. The minor stepped entrance was explored on site 5, and attempts were made to find the arena and the eastern seating bank, but the digging at this stage was too limited in depth and extent for the purpose. It was clear, however, from a study of the plottings on the ten-foot ordnance maps that the arena was larger than that at Caerleon. The conviction of some members of the Committee, that the structure was not only greater in extent, but lying at a considerable depth, was later confirmed by the discovery of the radial wall and arena wall on site 2, which proved to be near the minor axis, as anticipated. The discovery of the exact positions of the outer wall on sites 2 and 5, necessitated further revisions in the plan, and finally, the arena wall at site 3 was found exactly where expected, and at site 4, within a foot or two. The latest plan, incorporated in that accompanying Professor Newstead's Report, is that of a simple two-centred figure, in which the lines of the arena are represented by curves of 100 Roman feet radius, with those of the outer wall concentric. Both the arena and outer walls are actually built in sections tangential to the curve, from which, in all probability, they turn in slightly at the processional entrances.

The development of the plan, by laborious and repeated process of trial and error, was dependent at every stage upon the survey of the first section of walling discovered,—site 1. Being the only portion of the southern half of the structure of which anything is known, the extent of the amphitheatre cannot be determined without it. It is therefore reproduced here for record purposes.

Thanks are due, and are cordially extended to Messrs. Sandy and Norris, the architects of the Convent School extension, for reference to the plans; to Mr. Charles Greenwood, City Engineer, for a lay-out plan of the new roadway; and to Mr. Hastwell Grayson, F.R.I.B.A., for assistance in checking the Ordnance survey, and surveying the site.

<div align="right">P. H. L.</div>