

NOTE ON THE TRIAL EXCAVATION AT BROCKLEY HILL, 1937

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A TRIAL excavation was carried out by the London and Middlesex Archæological Society on part of the supposed site of *Sulloniacae* at Brockley Hill, Middlesex, permission to do the work having been granted by All Souls' College, Oxford. The necessary arrangements were made by an Excavation Committee, consisting of Major N. G. Brett-James, F.S.A. (chairman), Mr. Trelawny Roberts (secretary), Lt.-Col. W. W. Dove, F.S.A. (treasurer), Mr. H. S. Braun, F.S.A., Mr. W. MacBeath Marcham and Dr. J. F. Nichols, F.S.A. Labour was kindly provided by Lt.-Col. Dove, and many members of the Society and of the Stanmore and Edgware and Mill Hill Historical Societies acted as volunteers. The work began on August 30th, 1937, and continued for ten days, under the direction of the writer.

The area chosen for exploration lies on the east side of Watling Street, opposite the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, and in the fields numbered 410 and 413 on the O.S. ¹₂₅₀₀, Middlesex Sheet V, 12. A trench in the west corner of 413 cut through two depressions, 20 ft. and 9 ft. wide respectively, that had been dug into the natural clay. The dark filling of these produced pottery of well-known late first and early second century types in bulk. The screw-neck flagon predominated, but two-handled flagons, bowls, jars, two mortaria stamped *SECVNDVS*, and a few Samian sherds, as well as brick and tile wasters and lumps of baked clay, also occurred, and the proximity of kilns for making pottery and bricks on a considerable scale may be assumed. The topsoil in this trench produced occasional third or fourth century material.

Running along the brow of the hill in field 413, and about at right angles to Watling Street, is a slight scarp. The cutting of a trench through this showed it to be not ancient, but led to the discovery of a small and apparently isolated Belgic pit, containing part of a jar with rilled shoulder.

A trench in the south corner of field 410 showed that a low broad bank running parallel to Watling Street covers the site of a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century house, the builders of which had removed any ancient levels. The east end of the trench, however, cut into Roman occupation debris, which produced pottery and a brooch of the first century. A trial hole 100 ft. to the north of this, and farther from Watling Street, showed no traces of occupation.

No buildings were struck, and the results actually obtained point to the existence of an industrial settlement on the roadside. It appears likely, therefore, that the main part of Sulloniacae lies to the west of Watling Street—where, indeed, Stukeley, when writing of discoveries made there, seems to place it.

The possibility of a Belgic Sulloniacae having existed on the gravel upland lying to the south-west also deserves to be considered. Small banks and ditches, and a larger ditch running along the brow of the hill, are traceable in Pear Wood, to the south of Wood Lane, and invite comparison with the Belgic ditch-system in Prae Wood, near Verulamium. One of the small ditches was sectioned, and found to be 6 ft. wide and 2 ft. 6 in. deep; its filling produced a much worn but possibly Belgic sherd. A systematic exploration of these works, to be carried out concurrently with that of the Roman kiln area, may therefore be suggested as a plan of campaign for next season.