

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN THE CITY OF LONDON, 1962

Communicated by the Staff of the Guildhall Museum

I. ROMAN

8-10 Cooper's Row (Fig. 1)

The rebuilding of this site has uncovered the length of the Roman city wall which was formerly enclosed by Barber's Warehouse. It stands to a height of 13 ft. 3 in. above the base of the sandstone plinth (section C-D). The wall was constructed of ragstone with courses of bonding tiles, and an offset on the inside of the wall in the middle of each bonding course. The wall was 7 ft. 6 in. wide immediately above the plinth, and was built on a foundation of brown clay with flints and ragstone mixed with cement. A deep disturbance into the natural gravel beyond the east face of the wall was filled with dark grey gravelly earth containing a few fragments of Roman tiles. It is probable that this disturbance was the filling of the Roman defensive ditch, although the outline of the ditch was not seen and its exact limits could not be defined. The surface of the natural gravel lay at 33 ft. 2 in. above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn).

Excavations on the line of the Roman city wall immediately south of the railway viaduct, where it had not previously been recorded, revealed an internal turret bonded into the wall, and a section across the Roman bank behind the city wall immediately to the north of the previously recorded remains. The turret was rectangular in shape and measured internally 10 ft. 4½ in. long × 5 ft. ½ in. wide. Its walls were 2 ft. 10 in. thick and composed of ragstone with a triple course of bonding tiles, corresponding in level with the triple course of tiles on the inner face of the city wall. The foundation of the turret was identical with that of the city wall into which it was bonded. The small part of the white cement floor of the turret which remained was 2¼ in. thick.

About 4 ft. north of the north wall of the turret a section was exposed across the bank behind the city wall. Unfortunately a straight section could not be obtained, but the structure of the bank could be clearly seen by cleaning up the zig-zag section revealed by the builders (section A-B). It was composed of grey earth and gravel, presumably taken from the foundation trench of the city wall and the defensive ditch. The top of the stratum (level a) immediately below the bank contained a considerable amount of charcoal and a scatter of pottery, evidently deposited just before the building of the wall. The pottery included fragments of Castor Ware decorated *en barbotine*, probably of the second half of the 2nd century.

Although a careful watch was kept there was no sign of any Roman stone buildings on this site, and there was no trace of a perimeter road behind the bank, although the Roman strata were undisturbed in this area.

Copthall Close

On a site at the east end of the block of buildings between Copthall Close and Great Swan Alley, shallow excavations exposed the black mud which represents the flood-silt

of the Walbrook valley, and in it were found sherds of the 4th century. The actual stream bed of the Walbrook is thought to be east of the site.

Blackfriars Bridgehead Improvement Scheme

The construction of coffer-dams and the excavation of the river bed inside them have been taking place some 120 ft. south of the present north bank of the river, between Puddle

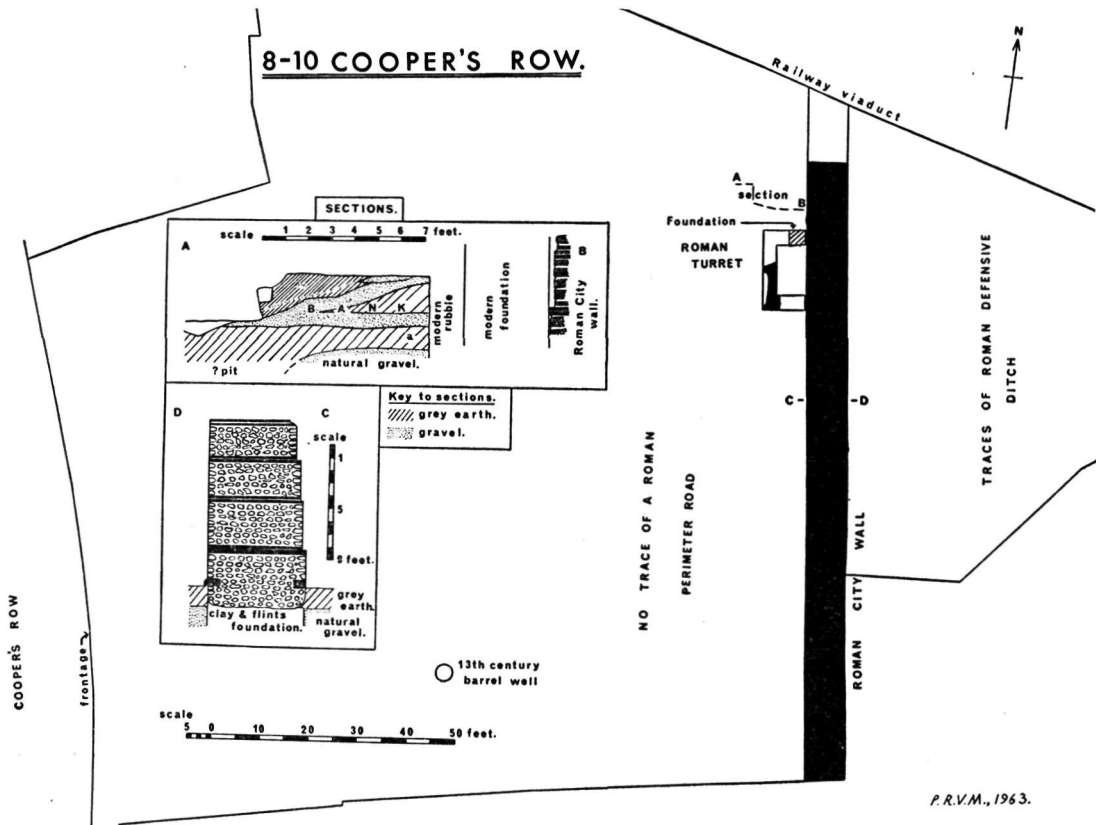


Fig. 1

By courtesy of the Journal of Roman Studies

Dock and the Victoria Embankment. Cofferdam no. 1, which lies opposite Puddle Dock, has produced a collection of Roman pottery sherds, one of which has a *graffito*. In addition there was one almost complete Roman jug of unusual form. Shaped baulks of timber, which had evidently come to their final resting place as river drift-wood, were found in the grey Roman river gravel deposits.

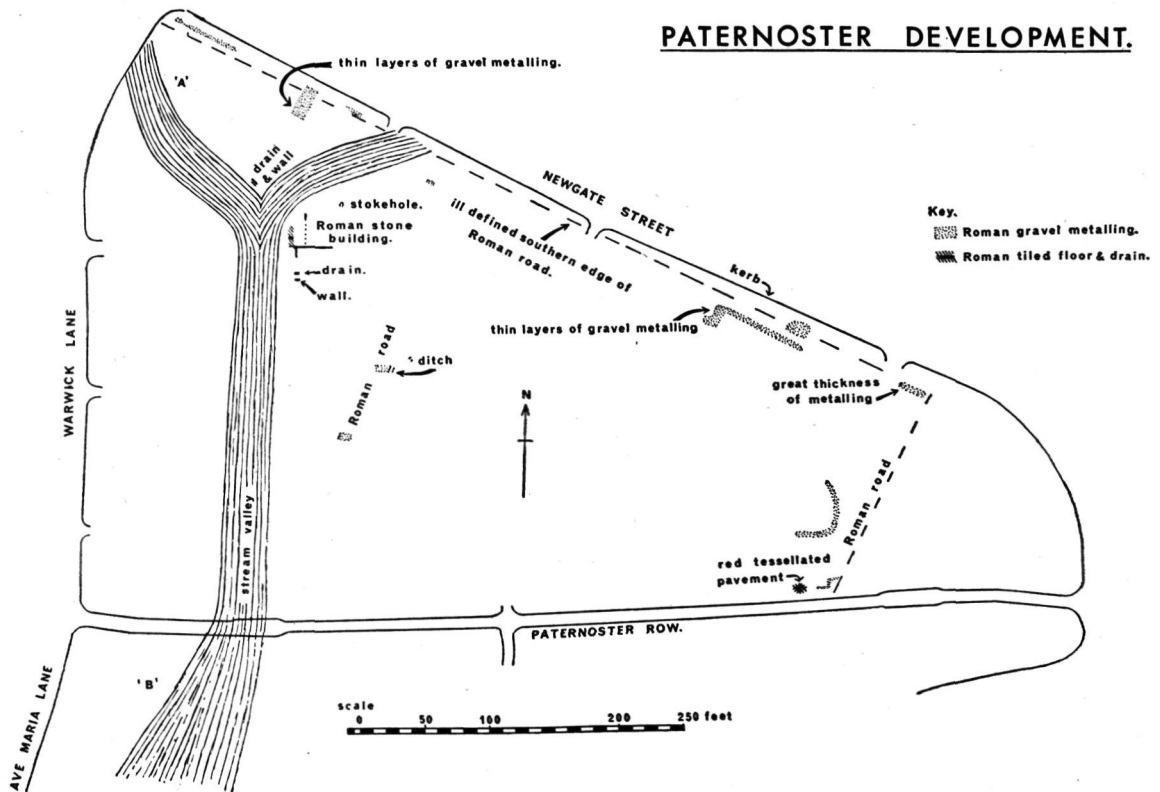
Paternoster Development, Newgate Street (Fig. 2)

Further excavations in the western tributary of the stream at the west end of the site (area A) revealed the filling of black peat and pebbly grey sand in the bottom 7–8 ft. of the stream bed.⁽¹⁾ Roman pottery, including a Samian ware cup, Dragendorff form 27,

of the 1st century, with a stamp probably of *INGENVVS*, was found in this deposit. Overlying the peat and sand was a layer of yellow sand which contained pottery of the late 1st century.

Another part of the stream (area B) was uncovered at the south end of the site, and this showed that the stream turned towards the south-west.

In the north-west corner of the site, and along the old Newgate Street frontage, was found a layer of hard gravel metalling, 10½ in. thick, which lay directly below the modern



P. R. V. M., 1963.

By courtesy of the Journal of Roman Studies

Fig. 2

cellar floor and immediately above the natural brickearth, the surface of which is at 43 ft. above Ordance Datum (Newlyn). The metalling is clearly closely associated with the Roman main road leading to Newgate, if it is not part of the roadway itself. In some areas, however, relatively thin layers of gravel metalling extended for some distance to the south of the probable line of the road, most of which must lie beneath the modern Newgate Street.

St. Vedast House, Foster Lane

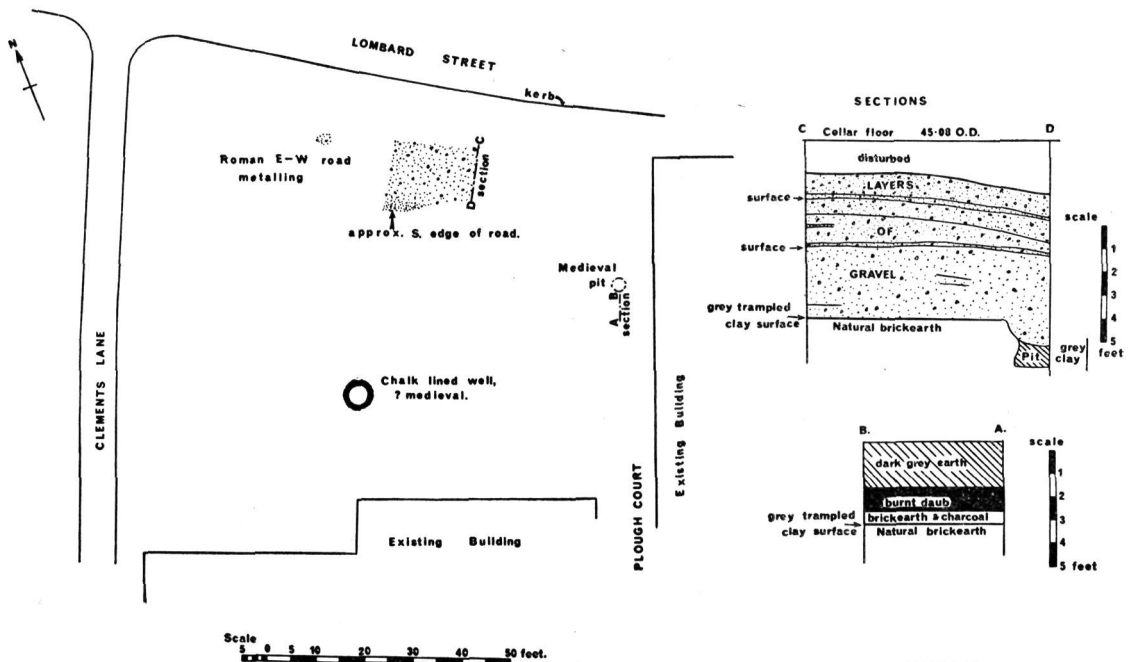
Excavations on this site exposed gravel metalling 18 in. thick at the south (Cheapside) end of the site. It overlay one inch of grey clay which in turn overlay the natural

brickearth at 42 ft. 6 in. above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn). The metalling lies in the probable course of the Roman east-west road leading to Newgate.

30-32 Lombard Street (Fig. 3)

This site was much disturbed by numerous deep modern foundations, but, nevertheless, it was possible to locate the main Roman east-west road which in this area apparently bounded the south end of the Forum. The Roman road was 6 ft. 3 in. thick and built of

30-32 LOMBARD STREET.



P.R.V.M., 1963.

By courtesy of the Journal of Roman Studies

Fig. 3

layers of hard gravel metalling. The first layer directly overlay the grey trampled surface of the natural brickearth and therefore was one of the earliest features on this site, although an earlier pit, seen only in section, bore witness to some occupation of the area just before the metalling was put down (see section C-D). Section A-B, which lay to the south of the road, showed the same trampled surface of the natural brickearth, but here it was overlaid by brickearth containing charcoal, which was covered by a layer of red burnt daub one foot thick. This burnt daub layer was, in fact, found over almost all of the site. It is therefore significant that no trace of burnt daub lies beneath the earliest levels of gravel metalling in section C-D, and that these occupy a position in the stratification corresponding with the deposit of brickearth and charcoal in section A-B (i.e. immediately above the trampled surface of the brickearth). The man-made deposit of

brickearth and charcoal lay *beneath* the burnt deposit and is presumably of Claudian date, representing the make-up for the earliest buildings, and the lowest levels of road metalling must therefore be of equally early date. It would appear, therefore, that the main east-west road is one of the earliest features of Roman London.

This part of the City was first occupied during the Claudian period⁽²⁾ and most of the sites in this area have revealed extensive traces of burnt daub associated with pottery of the middle of the 1st century. This is usually ascribed to the destruction by Boudicca in 60 A.D., and, although no closely dateable pottery was found in the burnt daub on this site, it is reasonable, in view of its stratigraphical position, to assume that it belongs to the same period.

No traces of Roman buildings were seen on the site apart from the burnt daub of the early destruction layer. This, however, contained also red and white painted wall-plaster, so these early houses, although constructed of wattle and daub, had some pretensions and were not merely huts of native type.

II. MEDIEVAL

8-10 Cooper's Row

Apart from the beautifully preserved medieval wall which is intact up to the sentry-walk, the only other medieval structure was a very deep barrel-well, containing pottery of the 13th century, found at the south end of the site.

40 Basinghall Street

A builder's excavation exposed, above the natural brickearth and gravel, a layer of grey clay overlaid by black mud, which evidently indicates the onset of marshy conditions on this site. This probably took place in post-Roman times as the black mud contained, near its base, two sherds of Pingsdorf ware of the 10th-12th centuries. There was no definite Roman deposit on this site and no Roman pits were observed. Several chalk foundations, presumably of medieval date, were seen, and workmen's finds included a few very fine green-glazed jugs of the period *circa* 1300, said to have come from a pit or well.

III. POST-MEDIEVAL

St. Alban, Wood Street

The inscriptions on some lead coffin plates of the 19th century were recorded during the removal of burials from this site prior to rebuilding.

NOTES

- 1 An account of the finds on this site in 1961 appeared in vol. 21, part 1 (p. 75) of these *Transactions*.
- 2 See, for example, report on Barclays Bank site, in Lombard Street (immediately opposite Nos. 30-32) in 'Archaeological finds in the City of London, 1961', published in Vol. 21, part 1, (p. 72).