

# EXCAVATIONS FOR STANE STREET IN THE CLAPHAM AREA 1966-71

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## INTRODUCTION:

Three long parts of the present A3/A24 main road from London Bridge to Ewell, in Surrey, lie nearly upon a straight line. In the past, it has been accepted that this follows part of the route of a Roman road. Known as *Stanstret* as early as A.D. 1270,<sup>1</sup> surface indications remain in Surrey and Sussex.

Since Captain W. A. Grant's critical review of Hillaire Belloc's excursions on Stane Street, notable investigators in the field have been S. E. Winbolt and Ivan D. Margary.<sup>2</sup> It has been considered that Stane Street (no. 15 in Margary's route system) would have been built for essentially military purposes, and that work on it may have drawn to a close by about A.D. 70, forming a link between Chichester (*Noviomagus*) and London.

Captain Grant calculated its *alignments*, of which the major one, that is between termini, appears to form a basis for the *actual course* of the Roman road from Ewell to London.

However, the northern point at London, through which an alignment would pass, is not yet known. No matter how accurately the Roman engineers were able to peg out this line upon the ground, advantages and disadvantages in the local terrain must have necessitated occasional minor deviations from the intended route. Practically speaking, therefore, we must look to our research and fieldwork to find the *course* which was *actually followed*.

The collected map evidence in Clapham, by the line suggested by Margary, has justified "trial by trowel". The following sites, one in Stockwell and the other two in Clapham, were excavated prior to re-development (see Fig. 1):

281-83 CLAPHAM ROAD, STOCKWELL, S.W.9, in 1971.

On the east side, in front gardens, between Lingham Street and Grantham Road, at O.S. grid reference TQ 3038.7627.

HENRY THORNTON SCHOOL, ELMS ROAD, CLAPHAM, S.W.4, 1966-68.

In the School playing field, north side of Elms Road at TQ 2945.7470.

82 GASKARTH ROAD (AND 81 HAZELBOURNE ROAD), CLAPHAM SOUTH, S.W.12, in 1970.

The addresses are of prefabricated houses erected after World War II. The site lay on the west side of Westlands Terrace at TQ 2905.7409.<sup>3</sup>

A road appears to have been located on these sites, though it was associated with Roman finds only at Stockwell. No Roman material was discovered on either of the two Clapham sites. Details are given later of several roadworks trenches which were successfully examined in the area. The evidence for the other, clearly post-medieval site features from the excavations listed above are recorded in the full report, deposited elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

## HISTORY:

## DOCUMENTARY:

A thirteenth century copy (c. A.D. 1250) of a Charter dated A.D. 1062<sup>5</sup> appears to refer to local Roman roads when briefly describing boundaries as follows:

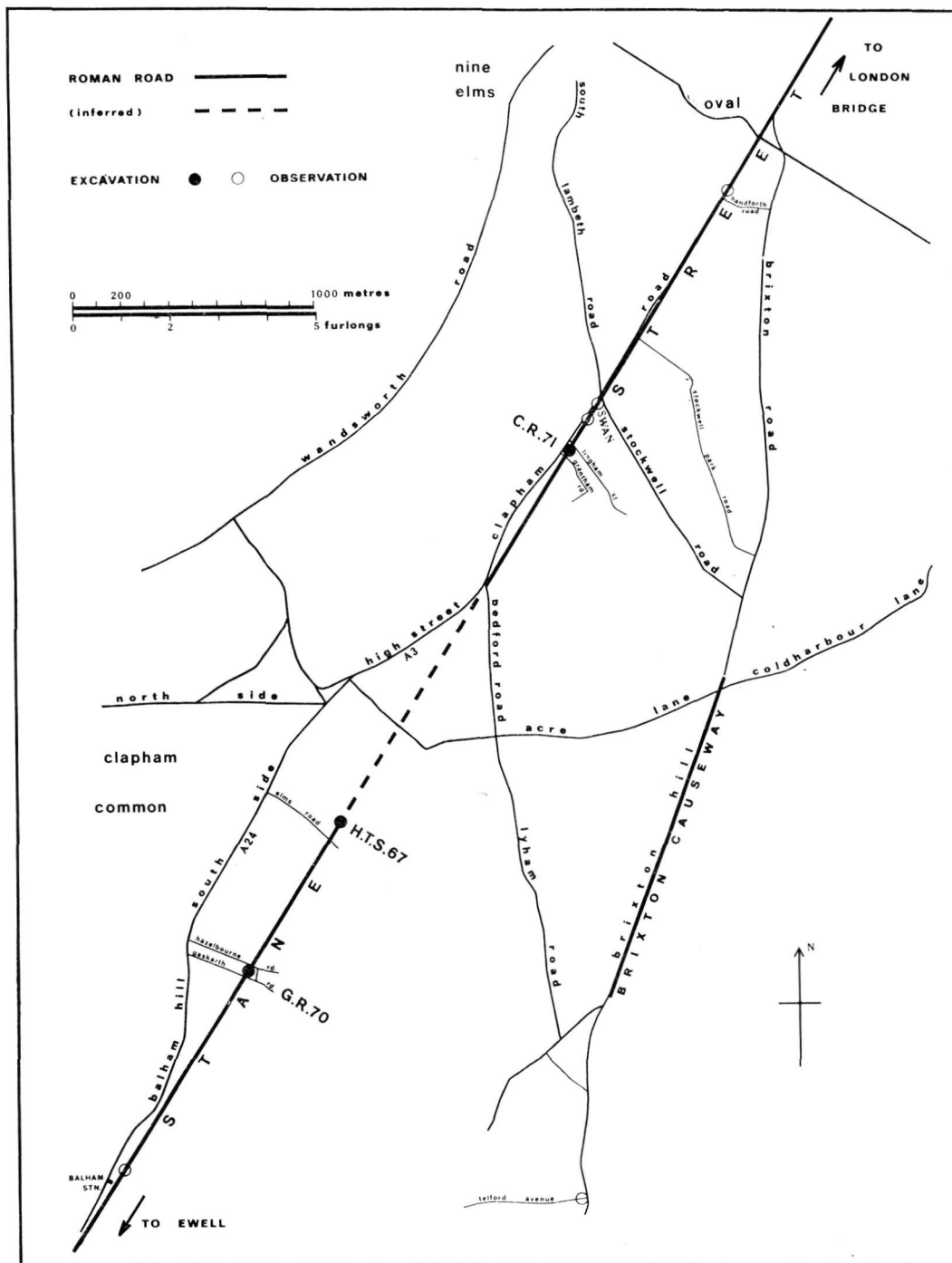


Fig. 1. Excavations for Stane Street; site location map

*This synd tha landgemaere into Lambelhythe.  
 Aerest aet brixges stane;  
 and swa ford thurwih thane graf to tham maercedice;  
 and swa to bulce treo;  
 and fram bulce treo to hyse;  
 and fram hyse to Aelsyges haecce;  
 and swa est to thare strate;  
 and swa andlang strete est to brixes stan.*

The translation runs as follows:

These are the land-boundaries of Lambeth.<sup>5</sup>  
 Start at Brixton;<sup>7</sup>  
 and so onward through the small wood to the boundary-ditch;<sup>8</sup>  
 and so to *bulce treo* (twisted tree);<sup>9</sup>  
 and from *bulce treo* to Hese;<sup>10</sup>  
 and from Hese to *Aelsyge's Haecce* (enclosure);  
 and so east to the Street;  
 and so along the eastern Street to Brixton.

For the most part, the bounds appear to follow the early nineteenth century form of Stockwell and Vauxhall Manors, starting near the top of Brixton Hill and going downhill northward along Lyham and Bedford Roads to Clapham North, possibly along Stane Street towards "The Swan" at Stockwell, turning north at some point near the latter (*bulce treo*) to meet the Heathbrook or Hesevall Sewer beyond Wandsworth Road and thereby to Hese near the present Nine Elms (Figs. 1 and 2).

The next part is not clear, since *Aelsyge's Haecce* seems to have left no trace, but the bounds next go east to the Street (probably Stane Street), perhaps along the Effra river to the Oval area. The syntax of the Charter seems to refer to two distinct "Streets" at this point, the term usually being interpreted as a Roman road. Margary's route no. 150, the "London-Brighton Way", presumably joined Stane Street near the Oval; he considers that Brixton Road represents the first portion of that route. Whatever is in fact meant by "Street" in the Charter we are at any rate told that one of them leads to Brixton. I have translated this to be the "eastern Street" although one is not at any time facing east. Stane Street would be nearly followed by Clapham Road and Kennington Park Road at the Oval, and with respect to that turnpike road, in the eighteenth century, Brixton Road is called the "Eastern Road". Brixton Hill is called "*Bristol Causeway*" in the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup> A little further south, this route passes through Streatham, a significant village-name.<sup>12</sup>

The clay sub-soil outlined in Fig. 2 undoubtedly supported a quantity of natural woodland along the line for Stane Street in Roman times (see map list below, no. 10). There is evidence of wood on that side of Brixton Hill at least, from the mention of "*graf*", "through" which one must go in the Charter.

A later medieval document gives more detailed information on this topic, in the words of a partition of lands of Stockwell and Clapham Manors in A.D. 1326:

*There is also assigned to the said Roesia a moiety of wood of Clopham (Clapham), to wit, on the east side, towards Stokwell (Stockwell) . . . and the said moiety contains 70 acres.<sup>13</sup>*

#### MAP EVIDENCE:

Indications which may be of Stane Street suggested by modern maps of the A3 and A24 route from London to Ewell are borne out by the earliest maps drawn with any reliability.<sup>14</sup> They concur in showing the deviation of the present main route westward of Margary's line, between Stockwell and Balham. A map has already been published showing features from old

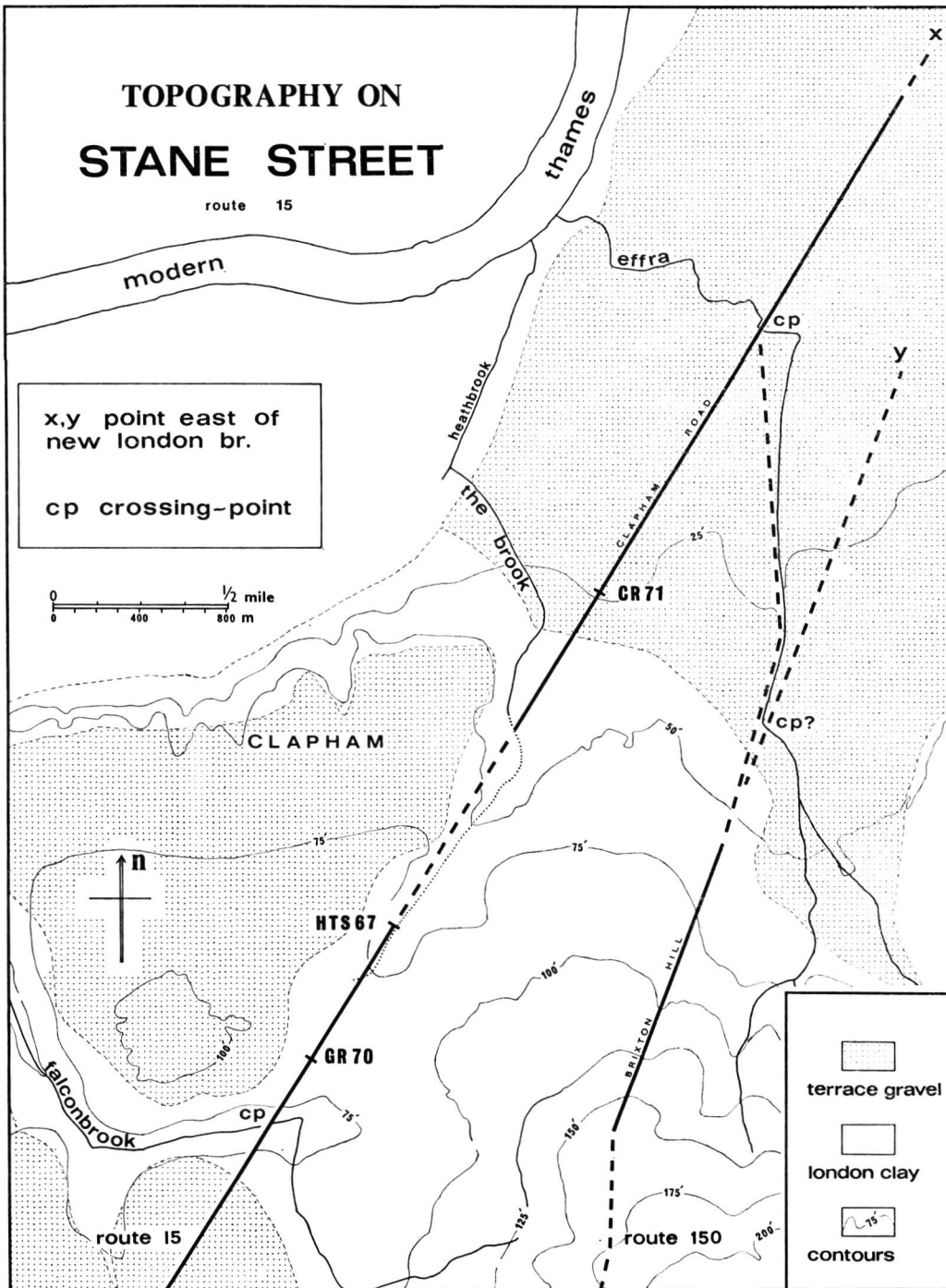


Fig. 2. Excavations for Stane Street

maps which tend to confirm this line in Clapham.<sup>15</sup> A number of maps exist which show buildings formerly standing on the sites excavated.<sup>16</sup>

PREVIOUS FIELDWORK:

North of the Elephant and Castle, several sites have now been examined which throw light on the approach of Stane Street to the Roman crossing into London.<sup>17</sup>

Proceeding southwards; the author, in March, 1974, recorded stratigraphy in a roadworks trench in Clapham Road, just south of the Oval. The small trench had been cut just east of the western gutter, directly opposite the gate of No. 37 Clapham Road, S.W. 9, grid ref. TQ 3103.7736. The possible remains of Stane Street were seen as a layer of gravel mixtures 0.3 m. deep, the top of which lay about 1.42 m. below the present road surface. It was compacted fairly hard in four layers as follows: the top layer, 0.06 m. of very small, angular gravel; below this, 0.05 m. of pebbly gravel with some sandy clay; under this, 0.1 m. of very sandy mix with a little gravel; beneath that, 0.08 m. of pebbles, some palm-sized, mixed in brown clay and resting on the brown clay sub-soil. Several soil horizons separated the modern road from this feature, though none could be interpreted as road make-up. The general soil sequence was the same as on all of the other sites.

At Stockwell, outside "The Swan" public house, on the eastern pavement of Clapham Road, S.W. 9, the author recently recorded similar features at grid Ref. TQ 3050.7648, but here, about 0.075 m. of mixed, pebbly gravel, darkish in colour, with small and large gravel stones, overlay another level of yellow, sandy clay. The top of the feature lay about 1.37 m. below the pavement surface of the present time. A little further south, another trench was cut, again on the eastern pavement of Clapham Road at TQ 3046.7641. The feature there was of a similar depth and texture of pebbly gravel, except that it overlay two other layers of somewhat greater depth: fine gravel and grey-brown clay, then grey clay mixed with brown clay beneath. A dip in the pebbly gravel on the west there corresponds well with the edge of the ditch to the road discovered at 281–283 Clapham Road, a little south of these roadworks. The general sequence of deposition is again consistent with the findings elsewhere on the Stane Street line.

Some years ago, contractors laid trenches on the site of a former convent in Crescent Lane, Clapham, S.W. 4, which were "cut across both the possible lines of the road<sup>18</sup> but with completely negative results as far as the finding of a road are concerned." At about 35 yards from the western boundary wall, at the west end of the plot, Mr. Margary investigated a section of gravel overlain "by miscellaneous pottery some Roman and early medieval" but came to the conclusion that the gravel was natural.

Still more to the south, a building site was examined by the author about 64 m. north of Balham British Rail Station, on the east side of Balham High Road, S.W. 12, at TQ 2854.7325. Beneath the top-soil was a heavily disturbed layer of large flints with mortared gravel lying across Margary's line.<sup>19</sup>

Much further southwards, work has been undertaken on Stane Street in Morden and in Ewell.<sup>20</sup>

With regard to Margary's route No. 150, which has already been introduced, some interesting observations have been recorded along this line in Brixton and Streatham. A large number of the observations of roadworks are inconclusive owing to the considerable modern disturbances. However, in Telford Avenue, S.W. 2, some 10 m. west of the junction with Streatham Hill, at TQ 3038.7326 a long trench was cut from the centre of the road to the north edge of the northern pavement. It revealed a remarkable series of hard gravel layers,

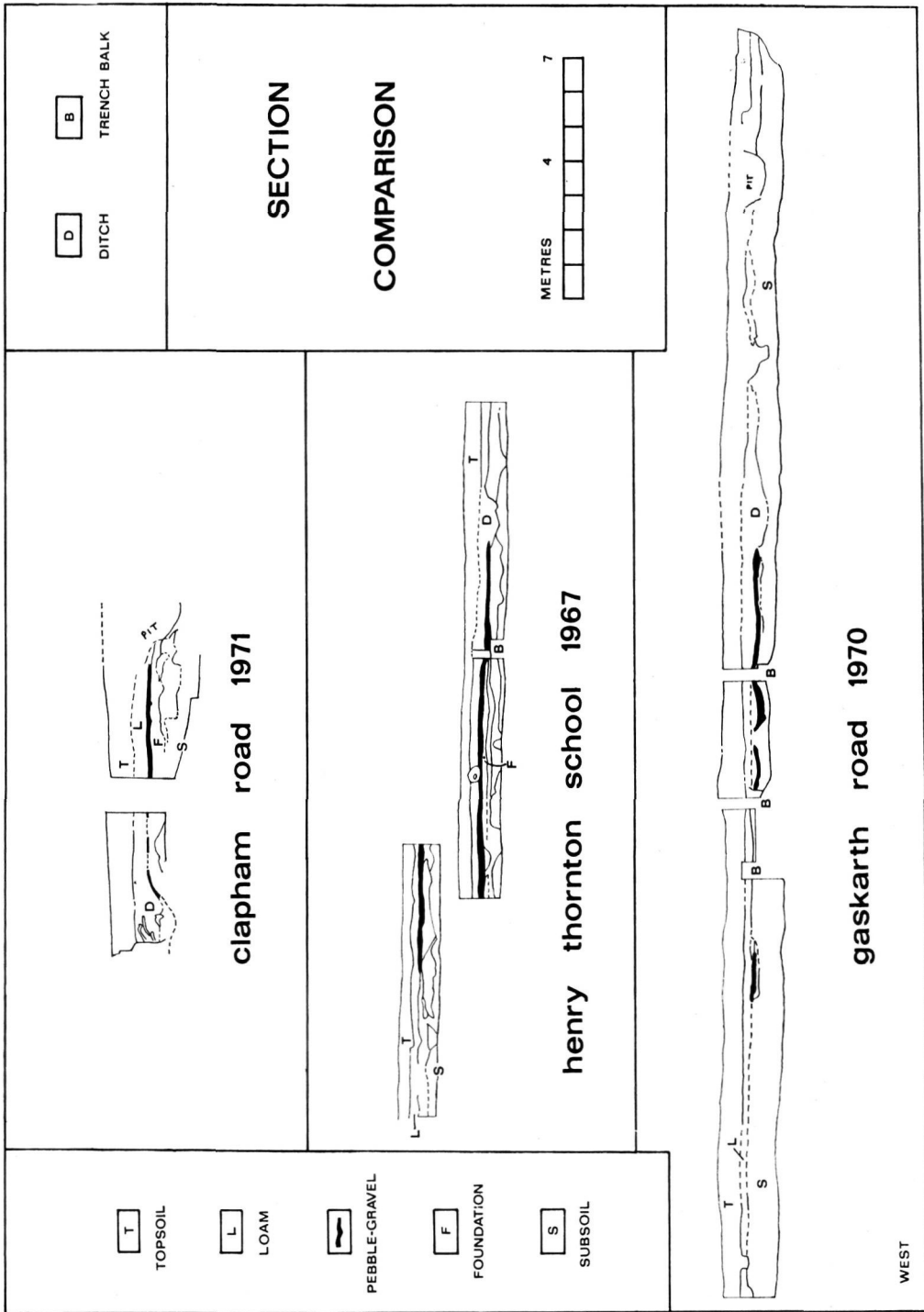


Fig. 3. Excavations for Stane Street

undoubtedly road-metal. Modern road levels were betrayed by stoneware inclusions. These were separated from gravels beneath by a thin band of grey soil. The sealed gravels were in two layers totalling 0.43 m. depth. The upper one was pale buff, with black flints (broken in half in the section where they were rammed very tight), whilst the lower layer was of bright orange-red colour lying neatly on natural brown clay. The top of these two layers was about 1.10 m. below the main road surface of August 1967. The adjacent corner site to the north of this trench was examined, but contractors' trenches there did not confirm that the gravels continued northward; indeed the subsoil levels there excluded it, even though the gravels were on Margary's line. If it represented a Roman road, it would have a different direction.<sup>21</sup>

Thick road metal was also observed many years ago beneath Leigham Avenue—the straight road which led to the assumed site of the former Manor House of Leigham Court, uphill and westward of Streatham High Road, S.W. 16. The exact locations in Leigham Avenue are uncertain.<sup>22</sup>

The foundations of houses near the Bedford Park Hotel, Stanthorpe Road, Streatham, S.W. 16, built in A.D. 1882, were said to have been cut through a hard-packed Roman "pavement".<sup>23</sup>

STOCKWELL—281-283 CLAPHAM ROAD, 1971

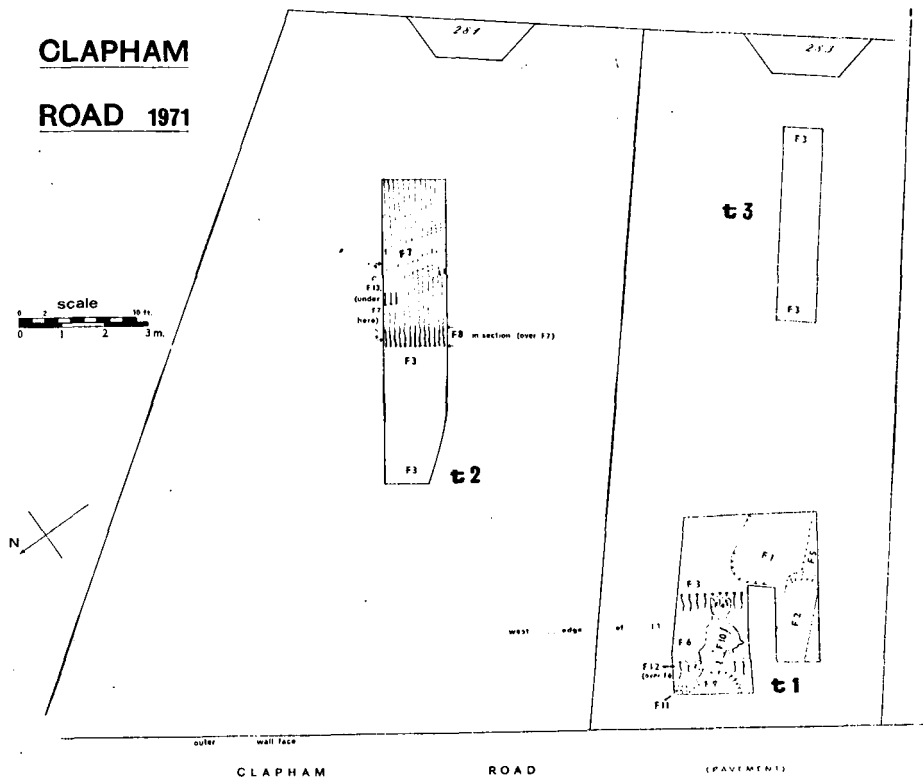


Fig. 4. Excavations for Stane Street, Clapham Road, 1971. Site plan

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

The position of the trenches is shown on the site plan (Fig. 4). Trench 2 was laid initially

by machine, whilst the latter was used to remove much of the top-soil and loam of trench 1 and the whole of trench 3. The north sections of trenches 1 and 2 are shown on Fig. 7.

With reference to this illustration, occupation levels appeared to commence with the pale buff sand and its overlying "surface" of darkish pebbly gravel, F3. The latter sloped at its western edge into a ditch, F6, forming its apparently initial fill. As found, F3 varied in thickness from about 0.03 to 0.13 m. Its eastern edge was rather ragged where observed later in contractors trenches, the overall width of the feature being approximately 15.25 m. F6 was about 0.72 m. deep and rather more than 2 metres wide.<sup>24</sup>

The second fill of the ditch was of dark silt, mottled ginger and grey, a little loamy and lying between and above the stones of the first fill. It seemed possible that the stones may have sunk through the early silt accumulation to invert the apparent stratigraphy.

Water had eroded a channel, F5, through the pale buff sand towards F6, carrying the stones down from F3 to lie in a pocket. Coarse fawn sand lay a few centimetres deep over F3, sloping down to become indistinct in F6.

In trench 1, this was succeeded by brown sand (yellow loam elsewhere) where it was in turn cut by a silty layer of much pea-grit, cutting down to the western edge of F3 and flowing into F6, re-cutting it and depositing the third ditch fill there. It left F4, a band of very hard, black pea-grit and gravel along the edge of F3. Sandy, yellow loam (scaled by a thin band of ginger sand) formed the fourth and final distinctive ditch fill, taking within it several tips of gravel, F12.

F10 was a feature containing animal bones in a soil of mottled ginger and grey silt which was sunk down into the fourth fill of F6, from an unknown level above. F7, only partly shown in Fig. 7, was a large pit, perhaps a gravel quarry, or a ditch, cut from about mid-way in the yellow loam in trench 2, down through F3 to the top of a probable ice-wedge, F13. (See Fig. 4; it is not shown on the section, Fig. 7.)

Black topsoil covered the loam over the entire site.

The post-medieval site features are described in the full report deposited elsewhere.

#### THE FINDS:

Finds from the foregoing are listed below in the apparent order of deposition. The list includes all material from the Roman period and earlier, discovered on the site. Other, medieval and later material was found, following the fourth ditch-fill, but it has been omitted here:

**RED SAND.** The Samian sherd, catalogue No. 8, may have come from either this layer or the bottom of the much later pit F7. It was recovered in machine spoil from Trench 2, with red sand adhering to it.

**PALE BUFF SAND.** Two sherds of ceramic material were found. One is possibly of tile but neither is identifiable. One piece came from over 0.12 m. down in this sand.

**PEBBLE-GRAVEL F3.** Six sherds. One of coarse, grey, sandy fabric, very abraded, is part of a pot, vessel and fabric unknown. Three sherds were in the primary ditch-fill and may be related to the second fill. One sherd of coarse, red, unknown fabric came from F3 in Trench 2.

**SECOND DITCH-FILL F6.** Eight sherds. One is Samian catalogue No. 65. Another may be clay from wattle and daub or tile. Again, the rest are unidentifiable.

**CHANNEL F5.** Three sherds. One of them is Samian catalogue No. 47. The others are too fragmentary to identify.

**COARSE FAWN SAND.** Eight small sherds, one of them is Samian, catalogue No. 12. Several lumps of decayed wood were found, one of them resembling a tree-root.

**THIRD DITCH-FILL F6.** Contiguous with this layer, F4, produced a single sherd of coarse, red, unknown fabric of the same material at that described in F3, Trench 2, above.

**FOURTH DITCH-FILL, F.6.** Four sherds. Two are Samian, catalogue Nos. 1 and 19. Another sherd is apparently of medieval Surrey ware, which would not have been made before *circa* A.D. 1280, but is probably fourteenth or fifteenth century in date.



YELLOW LOAM. A residual flint flake was recovered in Trench 1.

A crumbled fragment, probably Samian, catalogue No. 71, was found as well as a tiny sherd of brown, colour-coated fabric with a slight possibility of it being Colchester-made, third or fourth century A.D. in date. From the eighteenth century onwards, the earlier levels were much disturbed by intrusions from this layer in the form of pits.

F10. The bones appeared jumbled, including a number of rib bones, all of an animal(s). Those recognisable are the mandible of a horse having the first and second premolars intact and a probable femur (probably cattle). All bones and ceramics in Trench 1 below a certain level were softened and decayed by chemical action.

F7. The primary fill yielded a sherd of Surrey ware, catalogue No. 22 and a sherd of Samian, catalogue No. 21A. A piece of a jug in red ware of the thirteenth or perhaps early fourteenth century A.D. was found with post-medieval pottery in the upper fill.

F2. About half of a Samian base and footring, catalogue No. 9, was found here in a late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century context.

BLACK TOPSOIL. Part of a Roman roof-tile (tegula) and a Samian sherd, catalogue No. 10, came from this humus.

## THE SAMIAN WARE

BY JOANNA BIRD

Trench	Layer	Cat. No.	Vessel Type and Remarks
1	Second fill, F6	65	South Gaulish fragment, later first century A.D.
1	F5	47	Dr. 18, probably, South Gaul, Flavian.
1	Coarse fawn sand	12	Fragment, probably South Gaulish.
1	Fourth fill, F6	19	South Gaulish fragment, later first century A.D.
1	Fourth fill, F6	1	South Gaulish fragment, later first century A.D.
1	(Upper) yellow loam	71	Crumbled fragment, probably Samian.
1	F2	9	Dr. 18, probably, with edge of stamp; South Gaul, Flavian-early Trajanic.
1	Topsoil	10	Dr. 37, South Gaul, Flavian.
2	First fill, F7	21A	South Gaulish fragment, later first century A.D.
2?	Machined spoil	8	Dr. 18, South Gaul, Flavian-early Trajanic.

The pieces recovered from the site are almost all too small and abraded to date closely, but would all fit a date range of *circa* A.D. 70-100.

The remaining fragments, catalogue Nos. 68, 18, 14 (Trench 1) and 21B, 37 and 36 (Trench 2) are apparently bits of clay from wattle and daub. or possibly abraded tile.

### STOCKWELL:

#### THE MAIN RESULTS:

The pale buff sand, together with the overlying pebble gravel feature F3 and the associated ditch F6, appear to represent the initial phase in the construction of a road of suggested first century A.D. date, though it could be much later. None of the associated finds, even where unidentifiable, would be excluded from a Roman context. The road lay along the east side of Margary's line.

The second, or destructive phase of the road comprised the surface erosion of the west side of F3 in trench one and the deposit of water-borne material in F5, the coarse, fawn sand sealing F3 and the more advanced filling of the ditch. These features carried identifiable Roman pottery, of the period *circa* A.D. 70-100. It seems likely that the other samian pottery finds, all from within this time period and found in various site features, were dug up from these levels.

There were no positive signs of any attempt to re-surface this road, at least in Roman times. The bands of gravel, F12, sloping down into the final fill of the ditch overlay a sizeable sherd of Surrey ware in circumstances showing no intrusion, and are therefore later than *c.* A.D. 1280. Part of the surface of F3 in trench 2 showed a sandwich effect of fine alternating bands of sand and pea-grit. This, and the pea-grit sloping into the road ditch may be the remains of fine road dressings, but it is difficult to surmise from destruction. The local brown sand seen over F3 in trench 1 contained very hard ferrous-like bands and appeared to be water-laid. The stones trailing into the bottom of the ditch may have sunk through the silt there over a fair period of time.

The large pit or ditch F7, which cuts through all road levels is something of a puzzle. It may be a gravel-pit; clearly, it would be related to a shifting in the axis here of Clapham Road away from the Roman line. Early nineteenth century maps show Clapham Road where it lies today.

The relationship of this site with the other sites and the line of the Roman road is discussed below, p. 247.

#### CLAPHAM—HENRY THORNTON SCHOOL, 1966–68

##### SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

Trenches A, B, C, D and E were commenced in 1966 by a party at Henry Thornton School, but were discontinued. Trenches D and E are not shown on the site plan, Fig. 5, but A, B and C were further developed throughout 1967. Other trenches were cut, again so as to bisect the suggested line of Stane Street (Fig. 8). Trench F was made by machine, but unfortunately due to the pressures it exerted and the continual seepage of ground-water, it soon collapsed, though not before a gravel layer, F1, and ditch, F2, were recorded. The gravel feature and ditch were presumed to be the same as those recorded in trenches A, B, C and, later, H. Trench G was laid on the further (north) side of the field to try to locate them there, but this was unsuccessful. The western 6.7 m. of a well-cambered gravel layer, F3, was found there, under a similar sequence of deposits. It, and the cutting or ditch on its western side were overlain by an irregular band of pebbly gravel not unlike that of F1. Fig. 7 illustrates the features F1 and F2 in a section of the north side of trench A and the reversed south sections of trenches B and C.

The sides of F1 diverged slightly northwards, having the ditch F2 along its eastern side. Of pebbly gravel, F1 varied in thickness from about 0.08 to 0.20 m., thinning out towards the north, with an average width of 12.52 m<sup>25</sup>. Its greatest observed length was 24.4 m. It lay along the east side of Margary's line. There was a slight "camber" down to the ditch in trench C, apparently retaining an original surface. F2 varied considerably in profile, but was about 0.35 m. deep and about 1.37 m. wide. Its fill varied too, from gritty yellow loam to various gravels.

Clay-gravels existed to the east in the abandoned trenches, but this was not investigated in detail. It was generally much lower down than F3 and more resembled the apparently natural gravels beneath F3. These gravels did not extend in trench A beyond the western edge of F3 and so are perhaps to be connected with it. Brown clay formed the basic sub-soil here, whilst all the features described were overlain by yellow loam, yellower just over F3 and F1. Black top-soil covered the entire site, much deeper over the north of the field.

The same basic soil sequence was found as at Stockwell and the yellower loam over F1 would correspond to the coarse fawn sand there.

No Roman material came to light at Henry Thornton School and the lowest layer to yield any finds was the upper part of the yellow loam, with material from the seventeenth century onwards. These layers and features are described in the full report deposited elsewhere.

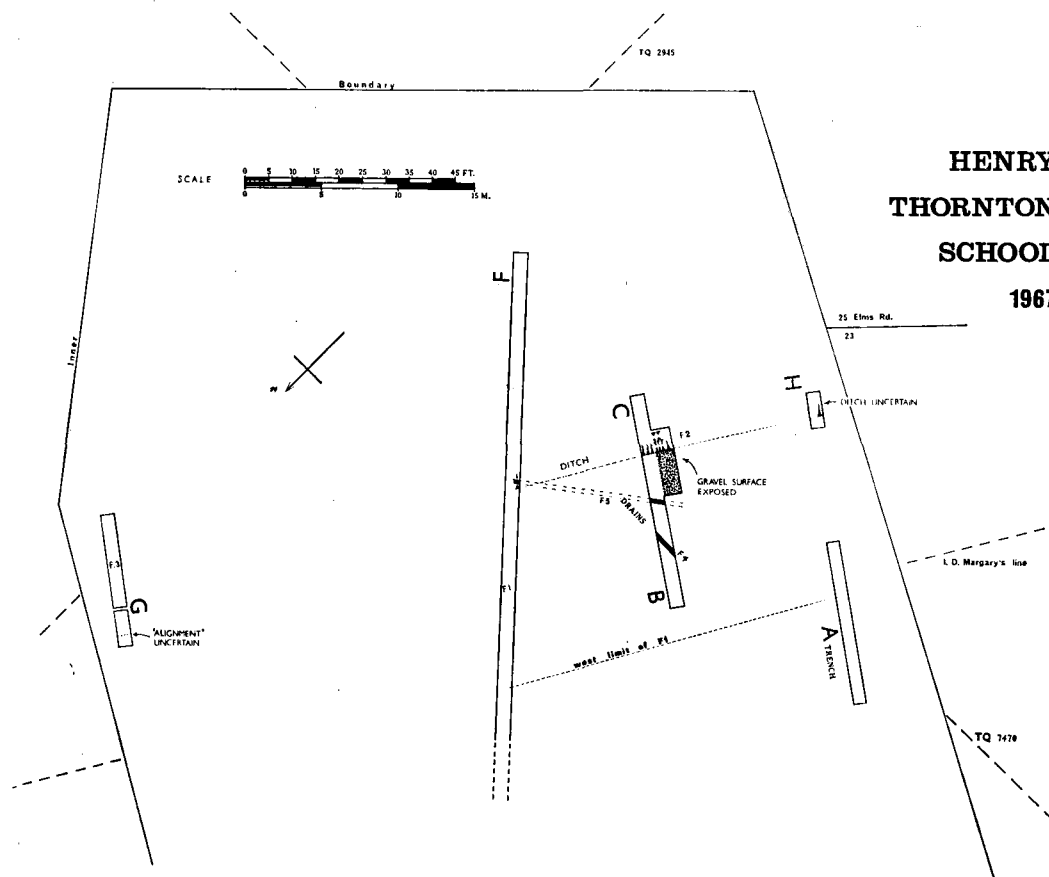


Fig. 5. Excavations for Stane Street, Henry Thornton School, 1967. Site plan

#### CLAPHAM—82 GASKARTH ROAD, 1970

##### SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

The site plan, Fig. 6, shows the very long trench system which was established for over 36 metres across Margary's line. Trenches 2 and 3, and later at the close of work, 4 and 5, were machine-dug whilst trenches 1, 2A and 2B were entirely worked by hand. A pebble-gravel surface, F3 and a shallow ditch along its eastern side, F7, were discovered in similar circumstances, beneath similar deposits to those of the other sites. Only a simplified section is shown here, in Fig. 3.

F3 was again of pebbly gravel, with ragged edges on the west, in parts missing elsewhere; it survived better where it lay in hollows. Two of these adjacent hollows in trench 2A (north and south sections) were spaced 1.8 m. apart, as measured from the centres of the troughs. The gravel feature was generally some 0.1 m. thick but where the machine had cut the western

edge through in trench 4 it was about 0.25 m. thick. Here the feature was composed of three basic levels: a string of large, spaced-out pebbles and gravel stones on the clay sub-soil; this was overlain in two ways: on the north side by large, angular gravel lying on gravel-with-clay, whilst on the south side it was a surface of very small pebbles and angular gravel on sandy clay. A patch of very large stones indeed lay under the pebbly gravel surface in the middle of trench 2A. F3 was about 12.75 m. wide<sup>25</sup>. It was exposed over a "length" of only 5.25 m. but it lay along the west side of Margary's line, approximately in that direction.

The ditch F7, discovered along its eastern side was very shallow in form, scarcely like a ditch at all, some 0.35 m. deep and 2.5 m. across.

The yellow loam which lay next all over the site was more yellow (as at Henry Thornton School) just over the surface of the gravel feature, F3, except where ploughing had removed high spots in the gravel. Black top-soil finally covered the whole site, but the back gardens of Hazelbourne Road had evidently very recently been deliberately terraced with the addition of clay, rubble and top-soil to take account of the considerable slope in the ground down to the south.

As at Henry Thornton School, no Roman material was found, and the earliest level to produce any finds was the yellow loam which had evidently been ploughed very thoroughly, yielding pottery from the early middle ages onward. These later layers and features are described in the full report deposited elsewhere.

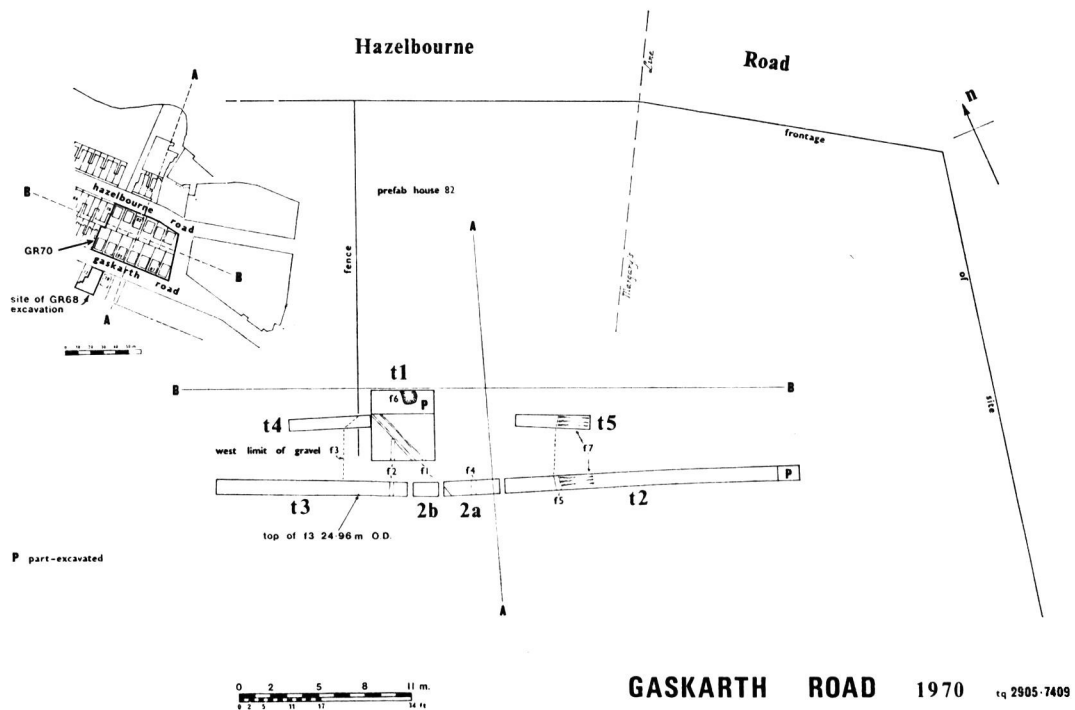


Fig. 6. Excavations for Stane Street, Gaskarth Road, 1970. Site plan

## THE CLAPHAM SITES

### THE MAIN RESULTS:

Since a road has considerable length, when searching for one that has become buried it is desirable to reveal as many sections as possible. The undated gravel features and ditches on the Clapham sites should not therefore be considered in isolation from the similar, dated features at Stockwell.

Their coincidence in a line (indeed that latterly suggested by Margary), seen on three excavations and in three roadworks trenches, is remarkable. The general line, position and direction, in the light of present knowledge, imply a Roman origin. None of the Stockwell features, on a site producing Roman material, showed that the gravel feature there could not be Roman. However, various difficulties arise in accepting certain statements, *e.g.*:

- (a) that it is a road, and
- (b) that it is Roman. These become apparent when examining the nature of the evidence. They are considered below.

### INTERPRETATION:

The principle results of these excavations appear to show that a road follows the line suggested for Stane Street, *e.g.*, Margary's line. The associated finds from 281-283 Clapham Road, Stockwell permit a feasible Roman interpretation. The following points tend to show the evidence for a road:

- (1) All three sites revealed a gravel feature of suitable dimensions along the suggested line. Position and direction are thereby established.
- (2) Features on old maps confirm the line where the modern road does not follow it.
- (3) Over 24 m. of length were observed at Henry Thornton School, Clapham, and the feature was unique in the long section at Gaskarth Road.
- (4) All features were associated with a single ditch along one side (both on the same side at Clapham).
- (5) There was evidence of foundation material as sand at Stockwell and of clay, or sandy clay over gravel stones at Clapham (82 Gaskarth Road). The lense of clay under the gravel feature at Clapham (Henry Thornton School) may fulfil a similar function, perhaps as embanking.

(6) Almost 1.5 miles (about 2.5 km.) separate the furthest sites. To include the roadworks feature at the Oval brings this to nearly 2.5 miles (about 3.75 km.).

Other aspects, however, should be weighed before reaching any conclusions:

- (7) There was no evidence for associated Roman building, even at Stockwell, which produced Roman finds. There is a complete lack of Roman finds on the Clapham sites.
- (8) The single ditch on the Clapham sites is along the downhill side of the road, hardly an arrangement that would prevent damage from flooding rainwater.
- (9) No obvious camber is present, except perhaps in trench C at Clapham (Henry Thornton School).
- (10) Finally, the most serious objection of all must surely be the dearth of metalling and conspicuous lack of attempts at re-surfacing.

The substantial section observed at the Oval and resembling a local aspect in trench 4 at Clapham (Gaskarth Road), is a redeeming factor to this objection, but does little to amend the general picture. The pale buff sand at Stockwell (281-283 Clapham Road) must however be seen as foundation material, and here it does resemble the make-up recently recorded in

the new churchyard at Ewell in Surrey, further south on the line for Stane Street.<sup>20</sup> The surfacing there (at least 20 m. wide), although more substantial, is considered not to be later than early second century with no evidence for subsequent re-surfacing. A scatter of later Roman pottery nevertheless confirmed some sort of continuity. The Stockwell site produced only one (probable) late Roman sherd from the overlying loam, though it may be derived. There was a lack of camber at the Ewell site.

Sections for Stane Street at Morden<sup>20</sup> produced one section with an ill-defined gravel layer 3.6 m. wide and up to 0.3 m. thick resting on undisturbed London Clay with a shallow ditch some 0.9 m. wide at its north-western edge. The single ditch is interesting. Elsewhere, this ditch was not discovered; another section some 15 m. away was limited, but showed a well-defined rut in the road, which was of first-sized flints resting on gravel. Two other sections at Morden showed the road to be of loamy gravel, one of them some 6.4 m. wide and the other some 8 m. wide and 0.33 m. thick at its thickest point (presumably cambered). Humus and ploughsoil covered the road on two of these sites, a similar sequence to that present at the Stockwell and Clapham sites. None of the foregoing produced such a substantial road structure as that recorded recently at Bow.<sup>26</sup>

The lack of finds along the road in the Clapham area may not be the problem that it seems at first to be. Reason dictates that a relatively narrow section placed across a rural stretch of Roman road is scarcely likely to produce any finds at all.

A single layer of pebbles formed the surfacing at Bow, with much clay in the foundation of the road. It may be that a thin pebble-dressing onto the clay sub-soil at Clapham was locally deemed sufficient.

Is the evidence from the Oval and Stockwell a case-in-point illustrating perfect continuity in the line of the road over some 1900 years even though about a metre of undisturbed soils separate it from the modern roadway above? Such a process may be helped by property boundaries "fossilising" the line, but no camber was found at Stockwell.

Perhaps we now know what to expect.

It is unlikely that the excavations had encountered only a side track to the main Roman route at Stockwell, where contractor's trenches over the eastern area of the site refuted the idea, whilst the large ditch to the road would surely exclude it to the west. The very long section at Clapham (Gaskarth Road) made the matter clear there, though it is possible that the gravels, unexcavated, to the east at Clapham (Henry Thornton School) were not natural.

Geological boreholes in the Clapham area confirm site observations by the author that there is a downwash in the region of Clapham Common, south side, as alternate layers of gravels, sand and clay. Some of these resemble a lense of a road in section. There the resemblance ends, for they are usually of bright, clean colours with a "washed" look and are not normally found alongside ditches in a common line.<sup>27</sup>

Observations on the Convent side at Crescent Lane did not identify the Roman road there. Perhaps F3 at Henry Thornton School was a sharp turn in direction to take the road across a stream such as that now shown "underground" on the geological mapsheet. Archaeologically speaking though, confirmation was lacking.

Whilst there is a deeper soil accumulation over the recorded gravel features as one proceeds north from Henry Thornton School, there was a sudden drop in old level commencing at the Stockwell site itself (Fig. 7). The trenches at "The Swan" and the Oval roadworks tend to confirm this, probably a natural terracing towards the Thames. A ford or bridge would seem to have been required over the Effra at the Oval.

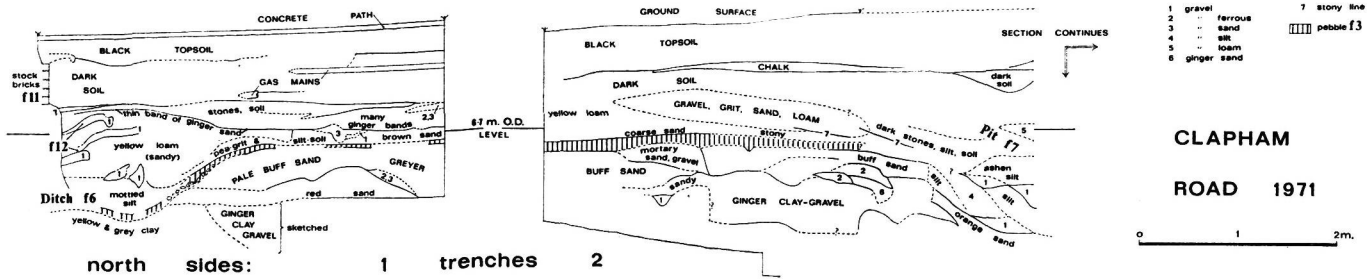


Fig. 7. Excavations, Stane Street

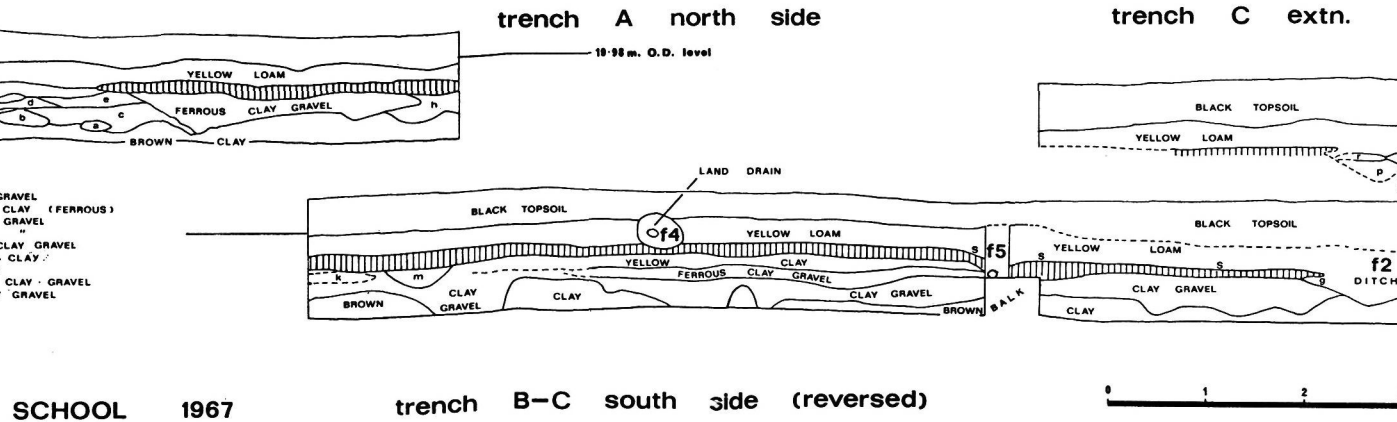


Fig. 8. Excavations for Stane Street

Finally, there are the observations on the “London–Brighton Way” through Brixton. The Charter seems to confirm the existence of such a route and indeed, as Fig 2 shows, both the line for Stane Street and the long straight portion of Brixton Hill suggest a Thames crossing just east of New London Bridge, at or close to the site of the medieval stone bridge (X and Y, Fig. 2). Brixton Road was known as *The Wash Way*<sup>28</sup> on account of the river Effra. The ground rises in parts on both sides of the road and it seems unlikely that it represents a Roman route. To save a river-crossing and unnecessary road-making, it may have passed by Stockwell Road to join Stane Street. Alternatively, it may have crossed the Effra conveniently at the bottom of Brixton Hill (Fig. 2) to join with Stane Street beyond the Oval. The course of this route through Streatham is not clear.

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#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “Feet of Fines”, Surrey (Ivan D. Margary, *Roman Ways in the Weald* (1968), 45); *Stanstrete*, A.D. 1279, Assize Rolls (*Place-Names of Surrey*, English Place-Name Society, Vol. xi (1934), 8).
- <sup>2</sup> Captain W. A. Grant, *The Topography of Stane Street*, 1922; a critical review of Hillaire Belloc, *The Stane Street*, 1913. S. E. Winbolt, *With a spade on Stane Street*, 1936. I. D. Margary, *op. cit.*
- <sup>3</sup> Limited excavation for Stane Street, undertaken in 1968 on the vacant site of 74/76 Gaskarth Road, S.W.12, at TQ 2899.7400, was abandoned at an early stage due to flooding ground-water and the restrictions from buried rubble of World War II. Dragmire Lane was the eighteenth century name for Cavendish Road which has a history of severe flooding, the most recent in 1973. Ground-water hampered the work at Henry Thornton School, 1966–68. See Note 4 below.
- <sup>4</sup> The complete sites report, together with the individual preliminary reports, are deposited with the Cuming Museum, 155/157 Walworth Road, S.E.17.
- <sup>5</sup> B. M., Cott. Tib. C ix, fos. 48–49 (s.xiii); P.R.O., Cart. Ant. R.12, No. 1 (s.xiii). Both are printed in Mon. Angl. vi, 61–62 (No. 1). See also *Anglo-Saxon Charters—an annotated list and bibliography*, Royal Historical Society, Guides and Handbooks, No. 8, (1968), 307–08, No. 1036; most authorities consider it spurious. The land-boundaries appear from my research to be correct for the most part, though perhaps abridged in the extant Charter copies.
- <sup>6</sup> “Lambeth” is a direct translation; later evidence would equate it with the Manor of South Lambeth; see P.R.O., *Cal. of Inquisitions*, Vol. I, 50, 564; *Cal. of Charter Rolls*, 1261–64, 178; *Cal. of Patent Rolls*, 1247–48, 88, etc. It appears to have devolved into the Manors of Stockwell and Vauxhall soon after A.D. 1293.
- <sup>7</sup> Brixton has two spellings in the Charter; literally, “(at) the stone of Beorhtsige (Brihtsige)”; rendered as *Brixistane*, B.M., Cott. vi, 3 (A.D. 1067), see *Place-Names of Surrey*, *op. cit.*, 11 and 23. Brixton was in the Hundred of that name.
- <sup>8</sup> A ditch or dyke implies an artificial course, perhaps along Stane Street itself towards Stockwell. Such an interpretation fits a later change in boundaries between this part of Clapham and Lambeth Parishes; see *Key to the Plan of Clapham*, (1827), 147, entry for A.D. 1791 (Minet Library, Knatchbull Road, London, S.W.9). The re-formed bounds are shown in Map 1, A.D. 1808. See list below.
- <sup>9</sup> A field called *bolketrowefeld* is listed in the MS in Note 13 below.
- <sup>10</sup> Hese was close to Nine Elms, by Vauxhall. See *Place-Names of Surrey*, *op. cit.*, 14; it recurs as *Hese*, A.D. 1134, Cott. Claud. A viii; it had devolved into *Hesefeld*, A.D. 1456 and *Hesewall* by A.D. 1474, Westminster Abbey Muniments. The present Heathbrook sewer takes its name from the Heathwall or Hesewall (Sewer), the ancient boundary with Battersea. See Fig. 2.



- <sup>11</sup> *Cal. of Surrey Deeds*, 5208 (Minet Library). See also Map 11 listed below.
- <sup>12</sup> *Place-Names of Surrey*, *op. cit.*, 33.
- <sup>13</sup> P.R.O., *Cal. of the Close Rolls*, 1323-27, Vol. 18, 582-85, *Partition of lands that belonged to Juliana Romayne, deceased*.
- <sup>14</sup> Principally, Maps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11; see list below.
- <sup>15</sup> *The London Archaeologist*, Vol. 1, 12-15. The introductory paragraph in heavy type was not written by, or with the knowledge of, the author. See Map 7, listed below.
- <sup>16</sup> Maps 3, 6, 8 and 9; see list below. Refer also to the early 25-in. and 60-in. O.S. maps, A.D. 1865-78 (Minet Library).
- <sup>17</sup> Articles by Ralph Merrifield and Dr. Graham Dawson in *The London Archaeologist*, Vol. 1, 114-17, 156-60, 186-87, 224-25, 261. See also Vol. 2, 106-13 by Judith Plouviez, and Kathleen Kenyon, *Excavations in Southwark*, S.A.S. Research Paper No. 5, 1959. For evidence of Stane Street in the Elephant and Castle area see the *Survey of Archaeology in Lambeth* (The Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee), forthcoming, 1974.
- <sup>18</sup> C. T. Wetherby, in *Surrey Archaeol. Collect.*, L (1949), 151-52. He means both the hypothetical "direct" Chichester to London line and also the practical one of Winbolt and Margary. His site drawings appear to be lost.
- <sup>19</sup> Reported in *The Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society Newsletter*, No. 13 (September/October, 1968), 7. Note also that the portion of Stane Street in Tooting Bec may be that referred to as Upstrete in the *Court Rolls of Tooting Beck Manor*, L.C.C., Vol. 1, 1909, 55; (A.D. 1401) presents that the King's highway, called Upstrete is flooded by default of the scouring of Thomas Hauldone's ditch . . . ; by A.D. 1422 (p. 221), the King's highway in the Uppestrete had become exceedingly foundrous. Three acres at Hauldone (Hauldonescroft) are said to lie in Totynge. (Minet Library).
- <sup>20</sup> D. J. Turner, *The London Naturalist*, No. 38 (1959), 22-23 and No. 39, 130-32. See also *Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin*, No. 43 (July, 1968), and F. Pemberton's report on recent excavations for Stane Street at Ewell, forthcoming in *Surrey Archaeol. Collect.* In addition, *The London Archaeologist*, Vol. 2, 84-86.
- <sup>21</sup> These fieldwork notes are deposited with the Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee's Files; refer to the Cuming Museum.
- <sup>22</sup> Col. Sir Gordon Hearn, C.I.E., D.S.O., *Itinerary of Streatham*, 13. (Minet Library).
- <sup>23</sup> Herbert Baldwin, *Streatham Old and New*, (1912), 7-8. This reference is quoted incorrectly on p. 40 of the *Itinerary of Streatham*. Note also *sothe Strete et alia jacet apud Holiwelle* (A.D. 1312), described on p. 247, *Court Rolls of Tooting Bec Manor*, *op. cit.* These places, with *Sohldone*, seem to have lain near *Suhteforlang* which is said to lie in Streatham.
- <sup>24</sup> The western side of the ditch was not available for excavation.
- <sup>25</sup> At right-angles to Margary's line.
- <sup>26</sup> Harvey Sheldon, "Excavations at Lefevre Road, Old Ford, E.3, September 1969-June 1970", *Trans. London Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.*, 23, Pt. 1 (1971), 42-77. Also at "Parnell and Appian Roads, E.3, February-April, 1971", *Trans. London Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.*, 23, Pt. 2 (1972), 101-47.
- <sup>27</sup> Map 10; see list below.
- <sup>28</sup> Map 2; see list below.

## MAP LIST

1. "A perambulation of the Parish boundaries of Lambeth", A.D. 1808. (Minet Library).
2. "Manor of Lambeth (Enclosure Map)", A.D. 1806. (Minet Library).
3. "Plan of the Parish of St. Mary, Lambeth, 1838, completed to 1841 A.D.". (Minet Library).
4. "Map of Surrey", John Rocque, A.D. 1741-45. A large scale for its time, but some of its detail should be treated with caution. (Minet Library).
5. "A journey from London to Brighthelmstone", edition of A.D. 1789. (There is another edition of 1800.) (Minet Library and Members' Library, County Hall, S.E.1).
6. "Estate Map of Clapham, 1849". A very large scale, exceptionally clear and accurate. (Minet Library).
7. "Plan of the Clock House Estate", Cavendish Road, Clapham. (West Hill Library, Wandsworth, London, S.W.11).
8. Bryant's Map, A.D. 1823. (Guildhall Library, Folded Maps).
9. Crutchley's Map, A.D. 1833. (Guildhall Library, Folded Maps).
10. Geological 6-in. Mapsheet, London, N. IX S.W., 1920 edition (it is included in 1-in. Map 270).
11. "Roads out of London: being photographic reprints extracted from 'Ogilby's Britannia', 1675, with so much of his text as relates to them", by T. Fairman Ordish, *London Topographical Society*, (1911). Generally, it appears locally reliable but contains at least two gross errors.

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