

# Mosaic

## FATHER OF THE O.S.

AS ARCHAEOLOGISTS we all rely heavily on the Ordnance Survey, not only for archaeological information but even more for basic geographical and topographical facts, which we often tend to take for granted. It is interesting to learn that the O.S.'s connection with archaeology goes back before the foundation of the Survey itself.

From 1747 to 1755, following the Jacobite rising, William Roy, a soldier and surveyor, had the task of organising the Military Survey of Scotland. He also found time to draw plans and sections of a number of Roman forts and bath-houses, and in 1755 he surveyed the Antonine wall. His work eventually appeared in *Military Antiquities of the Romans in North Britain* (1793) — not fully superseded until 1924.

Fears of a French invasion led him south, and in 1765 his map *The Defence of South East England* was produced, showing the Roman roads and 'stations' (on the grounds, apparently, that the French might choose the same invasion routes as the Romans). His proposals for a National Survey (1766) were overshadowed by the War of Independence, but in 1791 (the year after his death) the Board of Ordnance took over his work, which became known as the Ordnance Survey.

The life and work of William Roy is the subject of a small exhibition by the British Library's Reference Division, in the North Hall of the British Museum. It is open (normal Museum hours) until 31 December 1977.

## BOROUGH HIGH STREET SITE

RECENT excavation on the eastern side of Borough High Street at numbers 175-7 has produced evidence of a channel revetted in the early Roman period, and part of a clay and timber building. The site lay on the western side of the curve of a channel running NW-SE. In the late 1st century a timber post and plank revetment was placed across its southern edge, diverting it to the east. This channel silted up and was backfilled in the late 1st-early 2nd century. Subsequently a second timber post and plank revetment with a N-S alignment was constructed, forming the western side of a canalised channel which silted up in the early-mid 2nd century. Overlying the in-filled channels was a deposit of earth and domestic rubbish, containing pottery of mid-2nd century date, which was probably dumped to raise land level. Into this earth was cut a building of which two rooms were present on the site.

The walls were made of clay with occasional small internal posts. One room had a clay floor and unpainted white wall plaster, and the other room had a pebble and mortar floor and multicoloured painted wall plaster. The collapsed walls were sealed by a dark earth containing pottery dated to late 3rd or 4th century.

Excavation, directed by Laura Schaaf for S.A.E.C., has been made possible by the kind permission of Haslemere Estates Ltd., and with the assistance and co-operation of the employees of Braine and Co. A fuller report will appear in a later issue of *the London Archaeologist*.

## BEAM ENGINES

TWO of London's legacies from the 19th century are its comprehensive system of water supply and its partner, the mains sewerage system. These essentials of modern life were (in part) made possible by the development of large beam engines, each capable of pumping millions of gallons

of water per day. Although their work is now done by more prosaic diesel or electric pumps, many of these old engines still survive in various parts of London — for example at Crossness (the Southern Outfall Sewer) and at Kew Bridge (Pumping Station).

At Kew the five engines, preserved by the Metropolitan Water Board since 1944 with the eventual aim of creating a Water Supply Museum, are being restored by the Kew Bridge Engines Trust, who leased the site three years ago. Already one engine — an 1820 Boulton & Watt — is in working order and "in steam" each weekend — and work is in progress on a second. These huge engines are breathtaking in their power and beauty, and evoke the spirit of the Industrial Revolution in a unique way. A sight (and sound and smell) not to be missed!

The engines are now open to the public from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2 p.m.-6 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday. For 40p (20p for children) you can watch the Boulton & Watt in action, examine the other engines and some of the exhibits for the future museum, and watch the restorers at work. Entrance to the site (which has its own car park) is in Green Dragon Lane, about 100 yards west of Kew Bridge Station. So "go down to Kew at any time". (If you are interested in helping with this work, then contact the Trust's secretary, Nick Reynolds, 11 The Vineyard, Richmond, Surrey (01-948 1577).

## EXCAVATION AT PUTNEY

WANDSWORTH Historical Society are currently excavating on the former site of a horse bus depot in Felsham Road near to the river. The whole area which is to be redeveloped within two years by Wandsworth Council for housing and a community centre, is some two acres in area.

One trench (8m. x 10m.) at the eastern end of the site has revealed a complex of Victorian surfaces which appear to relate to some form of industrial purpose(s). A number of the surfaces are made of reused refractory blocks, some with brown glaze. At the moment there are no other indications of a kiln, but an old inhabitant remembers that in his youth there was a pottery in the area which made rough wares for shipboard use.

Another trench is producing a two metre wide Roman ditch alongside what presently appears to be a road. The metalling of this 'road' seems to be far superior to the three other Roman roads discovered elsewhere in Putney, suggesting that it is the main arterial route which hitherto has been elusive; its alignment appears to be roughly NNE.

## TESSERAE

**Aeronautical Archaeology 1:** the London Borough of Croydon has recently given permission for the excavation of a Messerschmitt of World War 2, believed to be buried under the turf of Coulsdon Golf Course.

**Aeronautical Archaeology 2:** archaeologists at Cambridge have been experimenting with the use of kites for aerial photography. The verdict: "considerable potential but a much lighter and carefully packaged camera pod will be needed."