

Mosaic

ROMAN SOUTHWARK'S HINTERLAND

TWO RECENT Southwark sites alongside Watling Street have provided information on Roman occupation at some distance from the main settlement around the bridge-head area. The first, at Rephidim Street, S.E.1, 500m. east of the Chaucer House site (*L.A.* 2 no. 14, 359) revealed a 2nd century ditch system adjacent to the Roman road (Tabard Street), with possible evidence of agricultural activity in the form of a deposit containing hulled grains of emmer and barley, in carbonised condition; this might represent the burnt off residue from threshing. The strip of land was, however, quite narrow; 70m. to the north of the road, the Roman ground level fell away rapidly to what may have been a shallow tidal creek or inlet of the Thames, some 80m. wide, silted up with clay and overlaid by a sandier layer containing 2nd-3rd century pottery and Roman building material; it is not clear whether this deposit was an erosion level from the Roman farm land, or, as is more likely, a reclamation of the silted-up tidal area.

2.5 km. east of Rephidim Street, an area adjacent to Asylum Road, Peckham, S.E.15 has revealed (at the time of writing) two ditches, joining at right angles, containing Roman pottery and probably indicative of Roman farming operations. The site is 500m south of Watling Street, and is on the hypothetical route of the London - Lewes Road and near to the River Peck; an excavation here in 1930 purported to have located the road, but current observations have not yet confirmed the claim.

These sites might hint at a continuous system of Roman agriculture along Watling Street; the area will certainly require careful long-term observation and excavation of numerous sites if the pattern of land use is to be elucidated.

BINDERS

NOW THAT Volume 3 is under way, keen readers will no doubt be thinking about a third binder for their collection. They may also be thinking about how to tell them apart as they rest on the book shelf, and one reader has written to ask our advice about spine numbers to indicate different volumes. The most elegant solution seems to be to use gold Letraset: the "Letraset Volume Sheets" from Easibind, 4 Uxbridge Street, London W.8 7SZ are suitable, at 30p including postage and VAT (at time of going to press). Alternatively, you could use black Letraset on a white self-adhesive label — if you don't have any spare, you could buy one sheet and share it with some friends in the same need. Cheapest, if least elegant, are numbered self-adhesive labels (black on gold) from W. H. Smith's at 12p a sheet.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MERRYMAKERS

THE SPEED of modern transport is such that one can now visit in a day places that would have seemed far beyond one's horizon only a few years ago. Thanks to British Rail's need to attract passengers, visiting them doesn't have to be expensive, as I discovered while browsing through the British Rail (Midland Division) booklet *Merry-maker Trips*. While most of their trips are to resorts, scenic areas or sporting events, some are of historical or archaeological interest. Our northern and midland historic towns are well represented, with day trips to Carlisle, Hexham, Lancaster, Chester, York, Chesterfield, Banbury and Lichfield, and for those more interested in stately homes I found Chatsworth, Haddon Hall, Hardwick Hall

and Sulgrave Manor in the list. Purist archaeologists might find the Hadrian's Wall tour, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Gladstone Pottery, Wedgewood Pottery Works or Stoke Bruerne Waterways Museum more to their taste. One that I can't resist mentioning, although it has no connection with archaeology, is the guided tour of the Carlsberg brewery in Northampton. The starting point of the excursions is usually Euston, St. Pancras or Marylebone. I have found them to be well organised but some do involve early starts or late finishes (leaving Euston at 7.45 a.m. may not suit everyone: most starts are between 8.30 and 9 a.m.). The cost is very reasonable — none of the trips mentioned here cost more than £5 in 1976, many appreciably less, and some included a coach tour in the price. You generally have to pay your own admission to stately homes, etc. Special arrangements can be made for school and other parties. If you are interested, the 1977 booklet can be obtained from:

Divisional Manager,
Direct Mail Unit (PX7),
Euston House,
Eversholt Street,
London, N.W.1
Tel. 01-387 9400 ex 4012.

You may find the answer to an awkward hole in your Society's programme, or just a pleasant day out for yourself.

GREYFRIARS SITE

IN ORDER to drive a tunnel from the ventilation shaft in Newgate Street to St Paul's Station, London Transport sank an access shaft inside Wren's Christchurch, beside the south wall. The contract for this work specified that time should be allowed for archaeological work, thus presenting an ideal opportunity to investigate the Greyfriars foundations to test the survival of archaeological deposits. Four periods of use were apparent, producing stratification some 5.5m thick.

Although little time was spent on the Roman deposits, it was established that they were similar to those found just to the east at the G.P.O. site, including a similar layer of burnt mud-brick and daub. Numerous early medieval pits intruded into them, completely eradicating any possible Saxon deposits. They were sealed by a series of early medieval floors and occupation layers, with associated robbed out walls. The floors were made of gravel, crushed chalk, mortar and brickearth; the walls of chalk and mortar. One unusual feature was a probable chalk wall supported on a brickearth sill.

On the north side of the trench an octagonal pillar foundation with a square base was exposed. The south side revealed the foundation of the south wall of the Greyfriars, which was constructed with ragstone springer arches. It was overlaid by Wren's Christchurch wall which, as was common elsewhere, was built directly over the earlier foundations.

Three brick, chalk and flagstone piers were located across the middle of the trench; they were apparently constructed in the 19th century as additional support for a pre-existing gallery.

TESSERA E

Congratulations: to Tom Hume on his C.B.E. in the New Year's Honours list; to Rhoda Edwards on the success of her first novel, *Some Touch of Pity*. Strongly recommended if you haven't already read it.