



E D I T O R I A L

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The recently published report on 'Industrial Archaeology' has been well received and over 700 copies have been sold to date. Apart from orders from all parts of Britain there was one from the West Indies and another from New Zealand!

Members who have not already done so are urged to buy a copy without delay as the report is likely to become something of a collectors item.

You are reminded that members of the Society can purchase the report for a reduced price of 40p and a list of addresses from which they can be obtained is given elsewhere in this bulletin.

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Following representations by this Society, the Department of the Environment has accepted our recommendation that the cast iron aqueduct in Flash Road should be scheduled as an ancient monument.

We hope this will lead to the aqueduct being cleared, in part at least, of the accumulated soil and a general tidying up being made of that part of the course of New River.

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We are pleased to include in this issue another report of the excavation, under the direction of Mr. B. Barr, on the line of the Ermine Street near Braughing. It was here that the Roman road was first examined in detail in 1961.

Members of the Enfield Archaeological Society have helped with the work from time to time, the results of which should prove useful in the hunt for the course of the road through this area.

It is curious that such a substantially built road should have left no traces in our own area. There have been one or two theories suggested, none of which are entirely convincing. Perhaps an answer will be given when the Roman British Research Group publish their report.

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: FORTHCOMING EVENTS :  
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Wednesday 25 August Members Night Salisbury House Arts Centre,  
Bury Street, Edmonton, 8 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE FROM THE 18th AUGUST

The theme of the meeting will be geology and prehistory and is being arranged, naturally enough, by members of the Prehistory Research Group. If you have any geological specimens please bring them along to the meeting.

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ENFIELD COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE - CAPEL HOUSE

The third conference on Industrial Archaeology by the Enfield College of Technology will be held at Capel House on Saturday 30th October 1971.

The theme of the conference will be "THE DISCERNING EYE IN INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY".

Various speakers will discuss the standards and values to be applied when deciding what to keep and where to keep it. There will also be films and displays by local societies.

The conference fee will be £2. 50. and will include lunch and a conference handbook.

Further details can be obtained by writing, in September, to E. Higgins, Press and Publicity Officer, Enfield College of Technology, Queensway, Enfield.

Numbers will again be limited so early application is advised.

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GREATER LONDON INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

BISHOPS STORTFORD, HARLOW MILL, CANAL WALK  
Saturday 21 August 1971

Members of the Enfield Archaeological Society have been invited to join a walk along the River Stort Navigation with a pre-lunch tour of Bishops Stortford, where several maltings survive, and an afternoon visit to the corn mill at Hallingbury which has been restored to working order. There are several other items of interest en route.

Travel: Lower Edmonton Station 10.25, Southbury Station 10.29  
arrive Bishops Stortford 11.10, connection Waltham Cross  
10.34 change Broxbourne.

Afternoon only participants travel by trains two hours later  
and join main party at Bishops Stortford Station at 1320.  
Return from Harlow Mill by 17.13 and 1743 trains due  
Southbury 17.40 and 18.10 respectively. Only the 17.13  
has a connection to Waltham Cross arriving at 17.15.

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### WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### WALK ALONG THE LEE NAVIGATION WALTHAM TOWN LOCK TO BOW LOCKS

Another canal walk to which members of this Society have been  
invited is on Sunday, 19th September, 1971 at 10.00 from Waltham Abbey.  
Packed lunch to be brought. Lunch break at Ferry Boat Inn, Ferry  
Lane, Tottenham 1300-1400. Depart Tottenham Lock 14.15 and arrive  
at Bow Locks at approx. 17.00. Distance 13 miles. It is hoped that  
some of the more energetic members will take part in the walk.

Further details can be obtained from Mr. D. Needham, telephone  
01.363.0201 (home) or Waltham Cross 23688 (work).

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### INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN ENFIELD

As mentioned in the editorial, copies of the report may be  
obtained by calling at one of the addresses below.

Miss J. Green 24, Lynmouth Avenue, Enfield.  
Mrs. J. Ledran 34a, Hertford Road, Enfield.  
Mr. G. Gillam 23, Merton Road, Enfield.  
Mr. A. Hall 23, Uvedale Road, Enfield.  
Mr. A. Smith 10, Orchid Grange, Chase Side, N. 14.  
Mr. L. Fereday 779, Cambridge Road, Enfield.  
Mr. J. Sykes 30, Goat Lane, Enfield.  
Mr. D. Needham 74, Monks Close, Enfield.  
Mr. C. Smith 22, Westminster Drive, N. 13.

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## TRAVELLING THE ROMAN ROADS OF BRITAIN

W. JOHNSON.

My work sometimes makes it necessary for me to travel varying distances from London regularly for several weeks. In the past two years I have spent over 30 weeks in Wolverhampton travelling up by road on Monday and returning on Friday. What does one do to relieve the monotony of such a journey? Well for those interested in archaeology the answer is simple. There are many things to see along the way and many signposts with names which arouse interest.

I am particularly interested in the Roman period so it is only natural that I look for things with Roman connections. What could have stronger connections with Rome than the very roads we travel? The Roman roads of Britain have long been the happy hunting ground of the field archaeologist but sad to relate they are rapidly changing and soon vast sections of the network of roads will no longer show traces of their origin.

Some sections have already lost the atmosphere that always seems to be attached to an old road. What is it that generates this atmosphere has always eluded me, but to drive along a nice straight road lined with trees, with a ditch on either side and raised above the bordering fields on a bank or agger gives one the feeling that here is an old road. The same cannot be said for a motorway no matter how much landscaping and preservation of natural features has been done. Barrows and other relics of the past seem out of place beside modern roads even though they were there first.

The road I used and which I have seen slowly lose much of its character is "Watling Street" better known these days as the A5. In two years much of this road has been changed to dual carriageway with a central reservation. The section of the A5 I travelled most regularly is that which goes from B557 junction to Lutterworth and Ullesthorpe to the A460 Wolverhampton-Cannock road.

The best way to describe this stretch of road is by heading north-west from the B557 junction. Here the road is a modern dual carriage way which is growing in length day by day but it does regain its character with an agger and ditches for a few miles before reaching the roundabout at Hinckley. Leaving the roundabout there is a pronounced ditch on the left this disappears but soon ditches reappear on both sides of the road until they peter out at the junction of the A47 going right to Hinckley and a sign marks the Warwickshire boundary.

The road is still nice and straight as we pass the A47 junction going left to Nuneaton. It remains straight with ditches appearing at intervals until we meet another section of dual carriage way at the junction with the A444 Tamworth-Nuneaton road. Leaving the modern road the agger once again becomes pronounced and a sign post declares that Tamworth is twelve miles ahead. The agger is still noticeable for several miles. It is still with us at our next landmark which is the Mancetter garage.

A minor road goes off to our right sign posted Mancetter, the Roman MANDVESSEDDVM, soon after we find we are on a modern stretch of road once more. This carries on past Grendon and the road is very much altered. This modern section ends at a roundabout and on leaving this the agger and ditches reappear for a short stretch but the dual carriage way takes over once again right into Tamworth.

From Tamworth to the junction of the A419 to Fazeley is an industrial area but between here and Hints the agger and ditches are occasionally visible. After Hints they disappear completely. There is a nice bowl barrow on the high ground very close to the right hand side of the road as it leaves Hints.

It is a pity that the modern road passes Wall, LETOCETVM. This is a pretty little site well worth a visit. The remains consist of a complete bath suite. Although there are no mosaic floors it is a magnificent example of its kind. There is a nicely laid out museum but this was closed during 1970 for re-arranging.

From Wall to the junction with the A460 the road has been altered over many years because due to mining it has been liable to subsidence. This could explain why, although I looked in many trenches at the many development schemes along the route, I never saw anything that remotely resembled a Roman road surface or section.

When returning from a holiday on Hadrian's Wall, later in 1970, I diverted at Mancetter because I had heard that some of the wall could be seen as an earth bank in some of the fields. Unfortunately I was unable to find them.

Why don't you become a member of the AA Automobile Archaeologists?

## ERMINE STREET

Further Excavations on the Roman Road at Pumps  
Mead, Puckeridge, Herts, 1970. TL/387235.

B. Barr.

The village of Puckeridge is situated in the parish of Standon some 27 miles north of London. The meadow known as Pumps Mead lies in the south-east angle of the junction formed by the A10 and the B1368 branch road to Cambridge.

A planning application for the residential development of the field was rejected several years ago owing to inadequacies in the local sewage system. Extensions to the local sewage works in Standon, now completed, will result in Pumps Mead and an adjoining 40 acres being made available for development under the "filling-in" procedure.

Topographically, Pumps Mead yields three elements of archaeological interest. In the south-west corner of the field is a ditch, about 15ft. wide and 2ft. deep, which lies at right angles to the A10 and extends into the field for about 50 yards before turning through 180 degrees to disappear under the houses of the Roman Way Housing Estate. This ditch could have formed part of the Puckeridge Moat system now largely destroyed by the building of Roman Way.

A bank and ditch, aligned roughly north-south, crosses the field at its narrowest point. Both of these features appear to have been levelled where they intersect with the Roman road in Pumps Mead, Ermine Street. Although the bank and ditch may form part of a late drainage system it would appear that some investigation is required to determine their relationship with Ermine Street.

**ERMINE STREET** Ermine Street follows a direct northerly alignment from London to Ware. However, after crossing the River Lea it diverges slightly to the north-east and continues towards the Belgic and Roman settlement at Braughing. The modern route, the A10, now follows much the same line to Puckeridge.

At Puckeridge a sharp re-alignment occurs which turns the road further to the east and it appears in Pumps Mead at the rear of Cannons Garage as a broad shallow mound which then crosses the meadow into the adjoining arable field, Drage's Mead. It is in this latter field that a series of parch marks vividly reveal the position of the buried road and indicate two further changes of alignment which allow Ermine Street to return to its northerly alignment.

The curious and rapid series of re-alignments on a short stretch of road otherwise remarkable for its directness may be due to some military influence. It is possible that a small fort, perhaps built in the early stages of the Roman invasion, lies between the two re-alignments in Drage's Mead and that Ermine Street was aligned on its gateways. Annual inspections of the field have so far failed to reveal any traces of ditches, military or otherwise.

Previous work in Pumps Mead In 1961 members of the Enfield Archaeological Society and the Braughing Hundred Archaeological Group cut a narrow section through Ermine Street close to the hedge separating Pumps Mead from Drage's Mead (E.H.A.S. Trans. XIV, pt. 2, 1958-1961(1964), 113).

The cutting revealed a primary road of closely packed pebbles rammed into the natural soil and laid between two ditches 40ft. apart. A deposit of black silty soil had accumulated on the flat road surface and both the early road and silt were later sealed by a well constructed agger.

The agger was built with a foundation of large flints and sandy gravel bound together with a surface of mortared gravel. A further make-up of gravel also held in place by a mortared surface yielded a brooch dated as pre-Flavian but possibly pre-50 A.D.

PUMPS MEAD EXCAVATIONS 1970 With the aid of grants from the Hertsford Museum and the (then) Ministry of P.B. and Works, a trial excavation was undertaken to test the extent of occupation, if any, in Pumps Mead and its relationship to the Roman Road. An area 50 yards west of the 1961 section and apparently clear of any modern features was selected for examination. With this area a trench 5,000 sq. ft. in extent was cleared of topsoil by a mechanical excavator. The trench was so placed that it exposed Ermine Street and an extensive area to the north of the road.

Ermine Street As in the 1961 section a flat pebble road surface was located resting on an outcrop of the natural clay/gravel at this point. The road, approximately 28ft. wide, was disturbed to the north but sloped gently to a small ditch, 4ft. wide by 1.5ft. deep to the south. The road yielded a coin of Cunobelin (A.D. 5-10 to A.D. 35) in very worn condition, together with a few sherds of mid-first century storage and cooking pots.

A thin layer of brown gritty silt, 2-4 ins. thick separated this early road surface from the agger raised above it. The agger 14 ins. thick was built entirely of gravel. No further make-up was noted although there were traces of repairs to the upper surface.

(Comparison between the two sections cut through Ermine Street in Pumps Mead suggests that the 1961 section was cut at a point where the road crossed a natural depression or water course. This would account for the accumulation of the black silty mud, 9ins. thick, on the primary road and could also be the reason for the thick and elaborate construction of the later agger. However, in the 1970 section the undisturbed natural gravel lay close enough to the ground surface to allow its utilisation as a road foundation).

Before the agger was constructed the small southern road side ditch was filled with flints and clay. The agger extended over the filled in ditch and the tail was covered by a thick deposit of fine sandy brown loam. This layer is tentatively identified as a soft sandy side track for use by cavalry and unshod beasts of burden. Evidence for this has been found elsewhere (E.H.A.S. Trans. XIV pt. 2, 1958-1961(1964), 156). and (Antiquaries Journal, XXXIX, 1959, 80-).

A pit, filled with occupation debris including pottery of late first century date but also yielding one or two sherds of early second century date, cut deeply into this deposit. On the evidence of the pottery the road and agger must have been constructed well before A.D. 100 and it seems likely that the agger was constructed within a decade or so of A.D. 43.

The sandy nature of the deposit must have made it ideal for digging rubbish pits and more may exist in the vicinity.

#### THE AREA TO THE NORTH OF ERMINE STREET

A gravel "floor", covered with a spread of dark occupation soil containing pottery of mid to late first century date, lay to the north of Ermine Street. Two large rubbish pits, a shattered storage jar lying close to a small hearth, together with a shallow beam slot and various post holes, testify to the presence of wooden structures and a fairly lengthy period of occupation.

However, the area was greatly disturbed by four parallel ditches (including a possible palisade slot) which ran diagonally across the site (roughly NNE - SSW). This prevented any firm assessment being made of the various structural elements found and the completion of the plans of buildings.

The ditches Three ditches and a possible palisade slot crossed the excavated area and cut through Ermine Street. The slot, 1.25ft. wide by 2.5ft deep lay to the west; the vertical sides and regular nature of the slot strongly suggest that it was dug to support a palisade or heavy fence.

Two U-shaped ditches, 3ft. and 2ft. wide respectively by 2.5ft. deep may have added some slight obstacle to anyone attempting to scale the palisade. All three ditches were filled with a mixture of large flints, gravel and brown soil. There was little trace of silting. The uniformity of the filling points to it being deliberate and a possible source could have been a rampart backing the palisade. Where these features crossed Ermine Street the filling was sufficiently compact for little settlement to take place and the road could have continued in use. Finds from the ditches consisted entirely of the mid to late first century pottery found on the site together with a coin of Vespasian (A.D.69-79) in worn condition.

The fourth and largest ditch, 10 ft. wide by 5 ft. deep, lay 6 ft. beyond the smaller ones. The ditch was silted up to a depth of 2 ft., at which level a layer of large flint cobbles was deliberately placed to cover the bottom of the ditch. The silt proved to be sterile of dating evidence. The ditch was then backfilled fairly rapidly and with similar material to that found in the smaller ditches although the soil was much darker. Second century samian and Nene Valley colour coated wares, together with second century pottery was recovered from this filling. Again, where this ditch crossed Ermine Street a new surface of large flints, similar to those in the bottom of the ditch, was provided.

A date and purpose for these ditches is very difficult to find;

that they were dug some time after the late first century is obvious but the general layout is unusual and might be no more than a boundary for small fields of postRoman date. A major boundary is shown roughly on this alignment, i.e. NNE-SSW, on the 1835 Standon Inclosure Map, together with two minor field boundaries. This would make the present Pumps Mead into an amalgamation of five old fields. (Information and above suggestion from Mr. E. Stacey). It is possible that the large ditch represents a field boundary but the slot and smaller ditches something else entirely.

**FUTURE WORK** The excavation has shown that Ermine Street changes character very quickly over a short distance, which is neither unusual nor unexpected when dealing with Roman roads. Further excavation in Pumps Mead might yield closer dating evidence for the construction of Ermine Street in view of the proximity of early occupation to the road.

It must also be considered desirable to complete plans of structures adjacent to the road and attempt to ascertain their purpose, i.e. as shops or dwellings, etc. Slight evidence of metal working in the form of "slag" was found in one of the rubbish pits and suggests some industrial activity. Dating evidence for the desertion or demolition of these buildings might be expected to throw light on the early years of Roman Braughing.

The ditches remain something of a puzzle. Their structure and number suggest more than a simple field boundary but if they are defensive in character, what area did they enclose and against what potential enemy?

Finally, a small trial trench, dug 100 ft. north of the road and well clear of the excavated area, exposed a rubbish pit containing food bones, fragments of Nene Valley colour coated pottery and some small sherds of pottery from the fourth century kilns on Bromleyhall Farm, Much Hadham. The contents of this pit hint at later occupation some distance from Ermine Street.

It is hoped that further work on the site will be possible before it disappears beneath modern housing.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** The writer wishes to thank the following for their help:- Miss Audrey Free and her assistants in the pottery shed, Eric Stacey for dealing with finance, Mr. A. J. Allan and his boys for undertaking much of the heavy work, and to Frank Cowler for help in various ways.

Special thanks must be made to the many volunteer helpers from the Hertfordshire Archaeological Society, the Enfield Archaeological Society and the Braughing Hundrede Archaeological Group who together with J. Booth, D. Cranstone, M. Long, Miss Rosemary Evers and Miss "Gigi" Pakradooni, from Philadelphia, worked devotedly under temperatures reminiscent of Near Eastern excavations.

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