



society

NEWS

The Bulletin of the ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

June 2001 No 161

CONTENTS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

EAS MEETINGS

The winter lecture programme will commence on 21 September.
Details will appear in the September edition of Society News.

SOCIETY MATTERS

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MEETING REPORTS

The Archaeology of Lebanon
The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain
The Annual General Meeting

PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES IN ENFIELD TOWN CENTRE

A ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT CHESHUNT PARK, HERTS

Society News is published quarterly in March, June, September and December
The Editor is Jon Tanner, 24 Padstow Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 8BU, tel: 020 8350 0493 email: jmt:bhpp.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings of the Enfield Archaeological Society are held at Jubilee Hall, 2 Parsonage Lane, Enfield (near Chase Side) at 8.00pm. Tea and coffee are served and the sales and information table is open from 7.30pm. Visitors, for whom a charge of £1.00 will be made, are very welcome.

There is a break in the lecture programme for the summer, and we resume on 21 September with a lecture by Nigel Swift entitled "York Minster: England's Largest Stained Glass Museum". Details will appear in the September edition of Society News.



SOCIETY MATTERS

YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU

The work of the Committee is not onerous or excessively time consuming provided it is shared among a number of people. The fact that this edition of *Society News* is late is due to too few people doing too many things. If anyone is able and willing to help with the running of the Society in any way, please contact the Chairman Dennis Hill, telephone 020 8440 1593. In particular, a new Meetings Secretary is required, as although the programme for 2002 is arranged, speakers need to be contacted for confirmation of their travel arrangements, bookings for Jubilee Hall have to be renewed and so on.

FIELDWORK AND EXCAVATION

It has become apparent that a number of opportunities for fieldwork are likely to arise in the near future. Members will probably be aware that we are keen for the Society to become more active, as it has been in the past, and the Committee is exploring the possibility of setting

up a Fieldwork and Excavations Group. The name of the group has not yet been decided, but it is anticipated that once set up it will meet periodically, probably at Salisbury House in Edmonton, to compare notes, prepare simple project designs and reports of fieldwork for

publication. The proposed excavation at Elsyng Palace, being on the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is taking some time to arrange and fund and will not take place this year, but other projects include a resistivity survey in the Bulls Cross area, fieldwalking the New River Loop pipeline and watching briefs during construction work in the Borough. While any archaeology students or professionals in the Borough, or anyone with experience or specialist skills would be particularly welcome, by far the most important qualification required is enthusiasm, together with an interest in Enfield's past and reasonable fitness – not necessarily great strength! If we can set up a small excavation, we can teach you basic excavation and recording methods. Frankly, excavations are simply good fun – good company, new friends with a common interest, all in the fresh air and sun (the latter NOT guaranteed!)

Many members ticked the box on the reverse of their application forms indicating that they wished to take part in excavations, but we need to start afresh and update the database. If you are interested in being part of this new venture by the Society, please write to or telephone Jon Tanner (details on front cover). You can always grab a Committee Member at a meeting.

Go on – get muddy!

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A Society's Annual General Meeting is an event distinct from the rest of the year's meetings.

Fortunately for me, even though our Treasurer Ian Jones was out of the country at the time of the AGM, it passed off fairly comfortably. For my part, I believe that the AGM should be a family affair with no guests present, and the chance to review the present standing of the Society and its plans for the forthcoming year. Heartfelt thanks are due to the members of the Executive Committee who have served us so well.

It was pleasant to see a good turnout and the formal business over very quickly. At the risk of nagging, we still urgently require a Meetings Secretary, a Membership Secretary and a Social Secretary. If you continue to ignore my pleas, then the Society will just come down to operating on a minimum lectures-only basis. Please don't say you were not warned.

The AGM section on Fieldwork and Research showed that the Society has some spirit left. The Chairman described the Forty Hall New River Loop project and indicated that he was trying to interest the Borough in designating this loop as an Enfield Local Heritage Trail. It represents a great British civil engineering project and is an excellent piece of local Industrial Archaeology. As a first move, he is keen to get members of the Society to walk as much of the Loop as is possible by public footpath, once the foot and mouth restrictions are lifted, and to report to him on the state of the Loop and the presence of New River Company markers.

Mike Debrey gave a spirited account of his work with a metal detector on various sites

within the Borough and showed a collection of Roman and Saxon coins and pottery that he had found.

Geoffrey Gillam described in his usual scholarly fashion an excavation carried out in the 1950's of a Roman site at Cheshunt, which revealed a hypocaust, and was likely to be part of a farm associated with the nearby Ermine Street.

At the Society's request, the Borough of Enfield has submitted a request to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for permission to carry out excavations on the site of the former Tudor Palace of Elsyng in the grounds of Forty Hall. English Heritage advise the Department and have requested additional research aims. It seems to take forever, but I remain confident that we will eventually get the permission.

Jon Cotton of the Museum of London concluded our summer session with his May lecture on "Retrieving London's Prehistory". Our visit to the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey occurs on 21 July, and then we have our summer break, meeting again on 21 September for Nigel Swift's fascinating lecture "York Minster – England's largest stained glass museum".

During the summer, it is likely that various small-scale archaeological activities will be undertaken. Those interested should enquire of Jon Tanner for further information.

Thanks for your support and encouragement.

Dennis Hill

MEETING REPORTS

Molluscs to Mamelukes – Archaeology of Lebanon

Friday 16 February 2001: Ian Jones

This was the intriguing title of an excellent paper presented to the Society by its Treasurer Ian Jones on Friday 16 February 2001.

Ian opened by pointing out that the Lebanon lies at the extreme northern end of the African Rift Valley with the Bekkar Valley and mountain ranges to the east. The Lebanon Mountains slope down to the Bekkar Valey, then after the Anti-Lebanon Mountains the plains are equally fertile. The city of Byblos lies on the coast and there is a narrow fertile plain near Beirut. Fossil fish are commonly found in the mountain rocks: a great extinction of species

occurred at the end of the Cretaceous Period, approximately 65 million years ago.

Ian showed the remains of the floor of a hut dating back to 4000BC. After 2000BC the population settled down to trade, for example in the cedars of Lebanon - whole trunks were

shipped by boats down the River Tigris for the roofing of an Assyrian palace.

Canaanite people settled on the coast and exported the purple dye extracted from Murex shellfish and used for royal robes. The "sea peoples" - the Phoenicians - first developed the production of glass. Byblos imported

papyrus in bulk from Egypt and re-exported it. Byblos started as a Bronze Age city, and was sacked in about 2300BC. It contains an enigmatic obelisk temple in which were found anchors and bronze figures. Small cities were individual kingdoms, and there was an active trade between the Lebanon and the Nile Valley.

The early use of an alphabet was shown on a tomb dating to 1250-1000BC. The city walls rise from a sloping "glacis". There is a Temple to Astarte - the Egyptian goddess of fertility. The greatest centre of the Phoenicians was Tyre, which was originally built on an island site. Alexander the Great conquered Tyre and turned it into an isthmus site. Outside the city there is a large sarcophagus painted with a representation of the Hounds of Hell and Persephone, dated to about 32BC. Scenes from Homer's Iliad are carved on the sarcophagus.

At Tyre, there is no Roman forum or other market place as in other western Roman towns. However, Tyre has the largest chariot-racing circus, 500 metres long. Tyre was a rich city and had a mosaic street, which was a luxurious feature that did not last long as it could not withstand wear and tear.

Large baths located on the seafront had underfloor heating and were not just baths, but more social centres.

Underground cisterns featured strongly to hold rainwater and were filled by an aqueduct from the mainland. Tyre became the largest religious site in the whole of the Roman world.

Baalbeck may have housed the Great Sun Temple of Emessa, some of whose stone blocks weighed 1000 tons. Baalbeck has an eastern layout. A massive platform supports a main courtyard having a large tower and the Sun Temple with another large temple adjacent. This has grey granite columns from the Bosphorus area of Turkey and marble from Damascus. The Sun Temple has a large flight of steps leading up to it, with columns 20 metres high, from Aswan in Egypt, surrounding the temple each made of three drums. The temple has a massive entablature. Huge Lebanese cedar trunks formed the roof.

Lebanon has many Roman temples and some were converted to churches in the Byzantine period. At Byblos there is a classical builder's tracing floor used for setting out drawings for buildings. A metal mortice and tenon system was employed to hold stone blocks in position.

In AD636, the area was captured by Islamic forces. Early in the 12th century the Lebanon was recaptured by the Crusaders. In 1109 an early Crusader castle was built at

Byblos. It consists of a keep, surrounded by massive walls and tower and is the best preserved of the earliest Crusader castles. St John's Church also dates to the early 13th century and is strongly built with high windows for defence.

Sidon has a Crusader castle on the coast dated to AD1227, while the castle at Tripoli guards the only ancient road into the city.

Dennis Hill

The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain

Friday 16 March 2001: Dr Neil Faulkner

In a fascinating lecture the speaker presented us with a new interpretation of the end of Roman Britain very different from the usual picture. This is shaped largely by the historical sources with many excavators using them rather than their finds to base their conclusions on. Interpretations should be based on the archaeological evidence, which should be used to tell the story of what people did in the past. Many excavators still prefer just to classify and measure everything without realising that what they are looking at are the remains of actions carried out by the people of our past.

As far as the end of Roman Britain is concerned many prefer the so-called 'long chronology', which sees urban life especially continuing well into the 5th century. This is based on evidence like that provided by house 27/2 at Verulamium, which was built in the 380's, altered, demolished and replaced and then had a water pipe laid across its site in the 5th century. As further excavation and research demonstrated the rarity of such sequences Richard Reece began to suggest instead that urban life in fact had collapsed rapidly round about 350. When this idea was first put forward in the late 1970's it was seen as a heresy and some archaeology students were forbidden to study it. The idea however did not go away.

Our speaker studied 300 excavation reports and examined 1500 urban buildings, which were analysed with the help of a quantity surveyor to provide a chronological sequence of occupation levels and construction levels. In general terms he found steady growth in the numbers of rooms occupied until AD200 followed by some 100 years of stability then a sudden collapse after AD325. Construction evidence after costs had been estimated showed a similar pattern with the emphasis on

public buildings for the first 100 years from the mid 1st century. This was followed by some 75 years of major house building then in the mid 3rd C. massive resources were diverted to urban defences. There was some recovery in the early C.4th then a rapid collapse just as Sir Mortimer Wheeler had said many years before. This 'short chronology' matched the pattern of urban growth and decay in much of the Continent.

Despite its splendours the Roman economy was primitive, being described as 'robbery with violence.' Wealth could only be generated by expansion and the plunder of subject peoples and most went to enrich the elite at the centre. As far as its provinces were concerned Rome was mainly concerned with maintaining the flow of taxes and preserving the law and order necessary to ensure this. Claudius attacked Britain in 43 for reasons of personal prestige and the south-east quadrant was rapidly and easily occupied and Romanised being already heavily populated and extensively farmed. As the armies moved North and West costs rose as permanent garrisons had to be deployed against people who were often better fighters than those in the south. Resources were also a problem as the grainlands of the south were replaced with the pastures and stock raising of the North whose surpluses could not meet the cost of the imposed garrisons. The army was overstretched and war was no longer able to produce the profits necessary to maintain the military infrastructure. When expansion stopped taxes had to take over the costs and this would inevitably place great strain on what was, despite its splendours, little more than a subsistence economy with small surpluses. The defensive wars fought from the mid C.2nd to expel barbarians made the situation worse as the tax base was inevitably further weakened.

The chaos of the third century led to massive reforms under Diocletian and Constantine, which resulted in massive centralisation and control of resources, a situation not unlike Stalin's Russia. Peasants became tied to the land while many urban occupations became hereditary. Massive defence expenditure was also needed with towns being walled and the Saxon Shore Forts being built. In total some 100 towns were walled, a level of military expenditure not to be seen again until the 12th century Edwardian conquest of Wales with its vast castle building programme. Towns changed drastically. By the early 4th century metal workers were operating in the basilica at Silchester. As the building was town property it is likely that it was occupied by

one of the urban armaments or uniform factories we know the state set up at this time. Colchester and other sites have huge store buildings dating from this time also very probably used for military purposes.

Christianity was effectively the state religion from around 300 but its limited and usually high status remains suggest it was the religion of the elite membership of which was essential, like communism, if people wanted the best jobs. The mass of the population remained pagan. In town and country a few massive residences like Bignor and Chedworth villas existed for the elite while most working villas remained small. This elite was the only major source of artistic patronage as shown by mosaics like those at Bignor and Woodchester and the many high value hoards of silver deposited in the 4th century.

In Verulamium decline begins around 300 with some gentry returning to the country to escape the increasingly onerous exactions of the state. By 350 little construction work is being done and by 375 most large town houses have been abandoned. By 425 the site appears to have been totally abandoned: the countryside decline starts later but affects all levels from super rich villas to peasant settlements. The 4th century sees 1/3 of all settlements abandoned as the tax base continues to shrink while the authorities pile more burdens on those who remain forcing marginal land out of cultivation. The constant barbarian pressure and the damage caused destroyed resources and reduced what remains while events in the centre of the empire lead to peripheral Britain being starved of reinforcements except on an occasional basis. The military losses at the battle of Adrianople in 378 could not be made good despite the increasing use of barbarians and this weakness culminated in the sack of Rome itself in 410.

With British resources needed elsewhere troops were withdrawn and the coinage that paid them went with them. Coins diminish on sites after 360 and virtually none enter the province after 400. There was little of Roman culture left in Britain by 400. Without the army the remaining elite families could no longer collect taxes and the farmers would produce what they needed and no more. The Dark Ages begin in archaeological as well as other ways. What is needed is the careful and large-scale excavation of the levels above the last floors of an urban site to try and shed some light on this period.

This was a fascinating talk which made us look at the ending of Roman Britain from a new

viewpoint and I hope that the speaker's work will not only stimulate debate amongst his peers but also lead to further research to tell us more of the story of these complex and difficult times.

Ian Jones

The Annual General Meeting

Friday 20 April 2001

Chairman Dennis Hill opened the 45th Annual General Meeting of the Enfield Archaeological Society by extending a warm welcome to all present.

Apologies for absence were received from Treasurer Ian Jones and Committee Member Caroline McKenna.

The Minutes of the 44th AGM which was held on 14 April 2000, had been distributed in *Society News 157*, were agreed by all present as being a true and correct record of the meeting.

The Report of the Executive Committee had been distributed with the March edition of *Society News* (no. 160) and was accepted by those present.

In addition to the three members who obtained their Birkbeck Diplomas in Field archaeology, as described in the Report, Dennis Hill has received confirmation that he has been awarded an MA in Archaeology by Birkbeck College.

The Financial Statement for 2000 was distributed at the meeting, and was approved by the members present. The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Society to the Treasurer Ian Jones, and to the Auditor, Michael Ranson.

The next item on the Agenda was subscriptions, and as the Executive Committee proposed no change in the rates for the year 2002 those present agreed that the rates remain as follows:

Ordinary Members:	£5.00
Junior Members (under 18 years of age):	£2.50
Joint Membership:	£7.00

The Chairman then moved on to the Election of Honorary Officers and Committee Members. The existing Executive Committee stood for re-election, with the notable exceptions of Geoffrey Gillam and Roger Dormer. Geoffrey has given many years service to the Society in many capacities, including that of Chairman for some 29 years, but has been obliged to stand down from the Committee due to ill health. On behalf of the Society, the Chairman expressed grateful thanks to Geoffrey, and wished him well in the future.

Roger Dormer has also diligently served for a number of years, but other commitments

prevent him from seeking re-election: the Chairman thanked Roger for all his efforts.

There was one nomination to the Executive Committee: Mike Dewbrey was proposed by Dennis Hill and seconded by Jon Tanner, and was duly elected. The remainder of the Executive Committee was then re-elected unopposed, as follows:

President:	Harvey Sheldon BSc FSA FRSA
Vice Presidents:	Dr Iliad Anthony Ivy Drayton Geoffrey Gillam
Chairman:	Prof. Dennis Hill
Vice Chairman:	Ian Jones
Treasurer:	Ian Jones
Gen. Secretary:	Jon Tanner
Meetings Secretary:	vacant
Membership Secretary:	Jon Tanner*
Social Secretary	vacant
Editor:	Jon Tanner
Auditor:	Michael Ranson
Committee:	Roger Eddington Les Whitmore Caroline McKenna Peter Warby Mike Dewbrey

* denotes "Acting" capacity.

As additional help with the running of the Society is still needed, Dennis Hill appealed for volunteers to step forward.

Under "Any Other Business" Dennis announced that our neighbouring Society, the West Essex Archaeological group, have invited members to join them in their coach outing to Grimes Graves and Castle Acre Priory on 20 May 2001: booking forms were available on the Information Table. Dennis also reminded members of the forthcoming visit to the Royal Gunpowder Mills on 21 July 2001.

The formal proceedings drew to a close

with Dennis confirming that a varied and interesting programme of lectures has been arranged for 2002, beginning in January with Robin Densem speaking on the effects of PPG16 on British archaeology.

Dennis remained on his feet to open the Reports of Fieldwork and Research by describing his investigation into the industrial archaeology of the disused lop of the New River where it passes through the grounds of Myddelton House. This all began when Steven Dowbiggin of Capel Manor College drew the attention of the Society to the existence of a sluice feature on the former course of the "river", and led to the discovery of a 610mm diameter iron pipe running from the pumping station at Whitewebbs. This research will be described in detail in a forthcoming issue of *Society News*.

Dennis then gave a brief resumé of progress at Elsyng Palace. A digital topographical survey was followed by non-intrusive survey subsoil surveys including magnetometry and ground penetrating radar. Robin Densem of Compass Archaeology has prepared a Project Design for an excavation on the site, enabling an application to English

Heritage for Schedule Monument Consent to be made. Assuming that this is granted, the next task will be to procure the necessary funding, and it is hoped that the work could be carried out in the summer of 2002.

Mike Dewbrey took the floor to give an account of his activities as an estate agent and amateur archaeologist. His professional duties often require him to value empty properties, and the owner of one such house in Bush Hill Park (*Society News* 160) gave permission for a small trial trench in the garden. Mike showed examples of the Romano-British pottery recovered from the trench.

Geoffrey Gillam then rose to explain his research into an enigmatic Romano-British site in Cheshunt that was excavated in the 1950's by local enthusiasts. This was an intriguing talk, and is explained in detail in the main paper in this edition of *Society News*.

Dennis Hill then drew the 45th Annual General Meeting to a close.

Jon Tanner

PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES IN ENFIELD TOWN CENTRE

During June 2002 in the car parks in Enfield Town Centre adjacent to the Shopping Centre, archaeological test pits have been dug as part of the preliminary works before the construction of the new civic buildings.

The works are being undertaken on contract to Gifford Consulting Engineers of Southwark whose Senior Archaeologist is Simon Blatherwick. Simon has an interest in Iron Age archaeology and taught the Post-Excavation studies module of the Birkbeck College MA in Archaeology. The excavation work was sub-contracted out to Pre-Construct Archaeology whose site team was led by Becky Lithe, a graduate in archaeology from the Institute of Archaeology.

The northern car park was first the subject of a ground penetrating radar survey. This detected a large circular artefact which was thought to be associated with the 19th century gas works known to have been located on this site. However, it was not found in the test pits

which were opened up with a JCB. The soil here smelt strongly of tar, but there was no significant contamination as had been found at Greenwich. No artefacts were found, just London Clay at the bottom of the 2m by 2m pits, and bricks and tiles of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Three test pits were dug in the southern car park. The two eastern pits found natural clay some 2m down. The southern pit of this pair, near the Catholic church, revealed a substantial double brick wall some 2m deep and with a gap between its two parts. The quality of the rendering was not very good. This may well have formed part of a house, but the early maps of the site were not available.

The western pit revealed orange coloured gravel at least 3m deep and no clay. Presumably, this area of the site had been levelled with gravel. One side of the pit showed clearly the cross-section of a previous pit with slightly sloping sides. In this pit were many broken clay pipes and pieces of willow pattern plates.

A geological survey of the site was also in progress with a drilling rig hammering in metal tubes to remove core samples of the subsoil to provide evidence for how far the piling rigs would need to drill down for the piled foundations. At various locations the gravel was found to extend for depths of 8, 9 or 13m overlying clay at depths of 16 to 18m on top of limestone rock.

This was not the most rewarding of excavations, but the professional archaeologists were keen to liaise with the Enfield Archaeological Society. There was no evidence found of medieval Enfield, but it is likely that an archaeological "watching brief" will be maintained as the site is developed by the building contractors.

Dennis Hill

A ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT CHESHUNT PARK, HERTS

The main roads of the Roman Empire were not only used for the movement of troops and supplies but also by government officials and couriers of the Imperial Post: the *cursus publicus*. A system of posting stations, *mutationes*, enabled fresh horses to be obtained, and rest-houses, *mansions*, also provided overnight accommodation for official travellers. The usual arrangement was for two *mutationes* between each pair of *mansions*, which were on average about 25 Roman miles apart (1). Along the line of the Roman Road, later to become known as Ermine Street, between London and Braughing, a distance of just over 28 Roman miles, there is archaeological evidence for roadside settlements at approximately 9 Roman mile intervals, at Enfield and Ware (2) and it is believed that, in common with the majority of roadside settlements, both sites had their origins in *mutationes* of the *cursus publicus* (3).

Midway between London and Braughing there is what appears to be another Roman roadside settlement at Cheshunt (TL34490425), which has led to the suggestion, that this too could be the site of a *mansio* or at least a *mutatio*. However, a closer examination of the archaeological material found alongside Ermine Street in Cheshunt Park, and in particular the place-name evidence, leads to a different conclusion.

Cheshunt Park consists of a plateau created by the eroding effect of the River Lea and the once much larger streams, Turnford Brook to the north and Rags Brook to the south. The high ground thus formed, which has in part a capping of Pebble Gravel, rises to a height of 65m at Cheshunt Park Farm and continues to rise to over 100m about a kilometre to the west (4). This sort of terrain occurs elsewhere in

Hertfordshire, and was caused by other eroding streams flowing from the west to the river Lea and thereby creating a succession of minor valleys.

(A) Excavations at Cheshunt Park Farm in the 1950's and 60's uncovered the ill-defined outline of a room, measuring c. 5.48 x 4.87m, which contained a hypocaust. Most of the building material had been robbed and the remainder disturbed by subsequent ploughing; it is noted in the journal (5) that three barrow loads of tiles were removed during the clearance of the north-east corner of the hypocaust area. Little more than a few flint nodules and tiles, some of the latter of which had been used to support a floor over the hypocaust, had survived *in situ*. The journal makes no mention of tesserae being found so it is uncertain what type of floor was supported on the pilae. Pieces of roller-patterned box flue-tiles have been identified and were Flavian in date: 69-96AD (6). On the west side were two low walls constructed of large flints and unmortared tiles 1.82 x 0.61m set 0.53m apart, which might have been part of the flue of a stokehole: the journal refers to "a black layer" and the fact that "pebbles had been discoloured by fire" in this area. There was also some painted wall plaster, described as being pink and white; none has survived and nothing is known about how the plaster was decorated. Mention is made of a fragment of thin clear glass being found, but it is not known if this was part of a straight-sided glass vessel or a fragment of window glass. A scatter of broken tegulae and imbrices show how the roof was covered. Fragments of clay daub indicate a half-timbered structure standing on flint and tile foundations.

At right angles to the suspected stokehole and running beneath it was a long sinuous tile-built structure c. 8.5m long. It was c. 0.61m wide and 0.3m thick and constructed of tiles and large flints enclosing a narrow channel, which varied in width from 50 to 100mm and was 115mm deep, capped with stone slabs. The bottom of the channel was clay-lined except on the curves where it was lined with tiles. At the north end was a horseshoe-shaped oven-like structure, also made of tiles with a roughly tiles area at the rear. The tiles forming the floor of this feature were "covered with a 26mm layer of soot". The journal records that five barrow loads of tiles were removed during the excavation of this structure, which measured 1m x 0.46m internally.

At two points along its length there were vents, described by the excavators as "chimneys", which were formed by placing two imbrices together on end. The channel, thought by some to be a drain and by others to be a flue, sloped steeply away from the horseshoe-shaped tile structure at its north end reaching a maximum depth of 1.07m from the present ground level. According to the excavators, there was no internal connection between the horseshoe-shaped feature and the channel.

At the other end of the channel was a "brick lined pit" c. 0.91m in diameter, but it was not established what if any connection there was between the two features. A drawing of a longitudinal section of that part of the drain which lay beneath the stokehole of the hypocaust, indicates topsoil followed by a "thick black layer" over a layer of clay which covered the surface of the drain and in which one of the chimneys was embedded, but with the top of the chimney just clear of the clay. About 4.27m to the south was a second chimney, made of a pair of imbrices in exactly the same fashion. It too was embedded in clay but with the top of the chimney exposed. Both chimneys had clay packing containing tile chips around their bases. The south end of the channel was found to be filled with "blackened clay and ash, which could have originated from the stokehole. Although there was no obvious connection between the channel and the stokehole above, the chimneys were placed symmetrically at equal distances of 1.82m on either side of the overlying feature. Nothing was noted by the excavators to indicate what sort of structure, if any, may have stood over the line of the tile-lined channel elsewhere. The journal records the different opinions expressed regarding the purpose of the channel, but the consensus eventually arrived at was that it had been a drain. However, no

satisfactory explanation was given regarding the large amounts of soot and ash associated this structure, nor were any suggestions made concerning its specific use.

On the north side of the channel layers of tiles and several large flints were discovered. There were also "hard-packed layers of pebbles" about 380mm thick and thought at first to be Ermine Street, but the alignment of the Roman road is further to the east and takes it beneath the site of Miss Debenham's house (7). The layers of pebbles could be part of a minor road, or they may represent floor(s) of barns or courtyard areas. Elsewhere there was a large depression c. 2.74 x 1.22m and c. 0.46m deep which contained "burnt wood and potsherds". Two "gullies" were also noted nearby. About 6.1m north of the hypocaust there was a well from the upper levels of which sherds of late second and fourth century pottery were recovered. This feature was not fully excavated, nor was its construction described in any detail. The thin capping of Pebble Gravel on the London Clay meant that only a shallow well would be necessary to ensure an adequate water supply.

A lot of pottery was recovered from the site, but none of it was provenanced; Tom Howlett's Journal records that on one occasion "at least a hundredweight of pottery" was recovered. An extensive display of pottery, which contained some complete pots, was seen by the writer in the conservatory of Miss Debenham's house, and the journal refers to coins and pottery being given to Miss Debenham "for her collection". This was no doubt dispersed following her death in 1968, shortly after which, in 1970, the house was demolished. Notes in the Herts County Archaeological Record describe "pottery and coins of the first and fourth century" (8). Unfortunately, very little pottery has survived and all the coins and other objects have disappeared.

An examination of the journal and a look at the relatively small amount of surviving pottery, now in the Loewood Museum, shows that as well as samian, castor ware, a first/second century poppy-head beaker, fragments of an amphora, fourth century mortaria, and a wide range of other coarse wares of first to fourth century date were found. A quern, at least one bronze fibula or brooch, a bronze needle and a few coins were recovered. The coins included: a sestertius of Marcus Aurelius AD161-180; a denarius of Septimus Severus AD197; and a bronze As of Phillip I AD244-249.

Roman material has been found at three other places along the line of Ermine Street to the north of Cheshunt Park Farm for a distance of 1.2km:

B) Building debris and Roman pottery were found in 1954 during the erection of an electricity pylon (TL34540474) **(9)**.

(C) During the digging of a gas main trench in 1967 (TL34550520) a samian bowl, dated to AD55, a bronze key, a ring, tiles – tegulae and imbrices, bone, the rim of an amphora and a quern were discovered **(10)**.

(D) A scatter of potsherds and fragments and tile were noticed after ploughing (TL34620546). A small trial trench revealed more “pottery and broken brick in dark earth” **(11)**.

The Herts County Archaeological Record and Tom Howlett’s journal record various suggestions made to explain the significance of the Roman site at Cheshunt Park, which appears to have been occupied throughout the Romano-British period, and the possibility of it being a *mansio* has already been mentioned – and dismissed.

The discovery of iron slag led to the suggestion of it being an industrial site but any iron-working carried out at Cheshunt would have been for local requirements; the manufacture and/or repair of agricultural implements etc. by the local blacksmith. Samples of iron ore found on the site were submitted for analysis; the report, dated 13 July 1962, is brief and states that “this sample of ore is quite rich in iron from an English deposit. Probably from the Northampton region” **(12)**.

Inevitably, a Roman villa or some sort of agricultural unit was proposed. Dr Ild Anthony, who made several visits to the site, is recorded in the journal as saying that “the wealth and variety of the Roman material found indicated more than just a villa, and it is possible that both a villa and a small settlement existed at Cheshunt Park.”

During correspondence with Dr Kent regarding the discoveries made at Cheshunt Park Farm, he stated that in his opinion it could be the site of a temple or perhaps a hilltop shrine. He went on to say that the majority of the buildings had yet to be discovered and were probably on the high ground to the west of the farm where surface finds of Roman pottery have been made in an area bounded by co-ordinates TL 342043, 344048 and 345048.

A closer examination of the place-name, Cheshunt, may provide a clue to the true nature of the site. Until recent years, the interpretation of the place-name was considered to have been derived from *Ceasta Funta* – “the ruins by the spring or stream” **(13)**. Margaret Gelling **(14)** drew attention to a published article which explores the significance of the place-name in much more detail **(15)**. It is suggested that the Anglo-Saxon place-name *funta*, deriving from the element *Fontana*, refers to a spring or fountain with some unusual attribute, such as an elaborately built well with a large stone basin which had continued in use for secular needs long after the farm or other buildings had gone.

The site could have been a place where drovers watered their animals, which was a suggested use for part of the roadside settlement in a similar situation at Brockley Hill on Watling Street **(16)**.

Alternatively, as the place-name also implies, there could have been some other sort of Roman edifice associated with water, such as a fountain, which on a hilltop site with the ground falling away on each side of the plateau, would make it an ideal location for a Romano-Celtic temple or shrine. Its proximity to Ermine Street would have been convenient for travellers using the road.

One thing is certain, it must have been a substantial structure for it to have been remembered and for its description to have passed into the vocabulary of the successors to the Romano-Britons.

Nevertheless, firm evidence regarding the nature and purpose of the site is lacking and properly controlled excavations to re-examine the structures previously found and to explore a much wider area, in particular the high ground to the west of Cheshunt Park Farm and the sites to the north, are obviously needed before this can be determined.

There have been a few other finds of the Roman period made elsewhere in Cheshunt **(17)**.

Geoffrey Gillam

LOCATION PLAN

PLAN OF THE EXCAVATION

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Brian Warren who first drew his attention to the journal, which by this time had been deposited in the Herts County Record Office, and who obtained copies of the relevant pages. He also provided an introduction to Neil Robbins, Curator of Loewood Museum, who in turn allowed access to the material from the Cheshunt Park excavations. Thanks are also due to the Herts County Archaeology Officer for supplying copies of the entries for Cheshunt Park from the County Archaeology Record, and to Brian Warren who obtained details of later finds subsequently entered in the County records; to Dr Ilid Anthony who donated colour slides she had taken during one of her visits to the site; to the late Dr John Kent who allowed colour slides he had taken of various features uncovered during the excavations to be copies, and for his opinion regarding the significance of the site.

References

- 1 E W Black, "Cursus Publicus", *The infrastructure of government in Roman Britain*, BAR 241 1995
- 2 Geoffrey Gillam *An Archaeology of Enfield* (forthcoming)
- 3 Roger Finch Smith *Roadside Settlements in Lowland Britain* BAR 157 1987
- 4 Ordnance Survey *Geological Survey of Great Britain* Sheet 239
- 5 Journal; Herts County Record Office D/EHW23 *Cheshunt Park Roman Site 1957-61*, 116 pages, 52 drawings, 80 photographs. In the beginning digging was carried out on a very casual basis. There are no properly drawn sections or adequate plans of the site and the notes of the excavations are not very informative.
Dr J Kent first visited the site in 1957 and gave advice to members of Cheshunt Park Archaeological Group, and he continued to do so between 1958 and 1960 while he was directing excavations on behalf of the Enfield Archaeological Society at Periors Manor, a nearby medieval site. Dr Ilid Anthony, Director of the Verulamium Museum, also came to see the excavations. On two occasions the writer was invited to look at the site and examine the features uncovered as well as the pottery that had been found. Fortunately, Tom Howlett, who was closely involved with the excavations between 1957 and the time he left the district in 1966, kept a journal in the form of a diary of events recording the discoveries as they were made and containing drawings of the various features uncovered, as well as about 80 photographs of the site. Without the drawings, photographs and the notes made by Tom Howlett very little information about the site would now be available.
Brief accounts of the site at Cheshunt Park Farm were published in *The Cheshunt and Waltham Weekly Telegraph* on 23 November 1962 and 8 March 1968; a reference to the site appears in *Cheshunt in Hertfordshire* by Jack Edwards 1974 p15.
- 6 A W G Lowther, "A Study of the Patterns on Roman Flue-Tiles and their Distribution", *Research Paper of the Surrey Archaeological Society No. 1* p7 & p25
- 7 Confirmed by J W Philips, Archaeology Officer for the Ordnance Survey Office during a visit to the site in October 1961.
- 8 *Herts County Archaeological Record (Cheshunt)*, Herts County Council, County Hall, Hertford 2038 and 2759
- 9 *HCAR* 1353
- 10 *HCAR* 2293
- 11 *HCAR* 1354
- 12 *Journal D/EHW23* Herts County Record Office
- 13 English Place Name Society *The Place Names of Middlesex* 1942
- 14 Margaret Gelling *Signposts to the Past* 1988 pp 83-86 & 249
- 15 Ann Cole *Topography, Hydrology and Place-Names in the Chalklands of Southern England: Funta, Aewiell and Aewiel* Nomina Vol 9 1985 p3
- 16 Excavation of a Roman-British Roadside Settlement at Brockley Hill, Sranmore, Middlesex, 1995-7, Jacqueline I McKilley, *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* 49 1998 p6.

17 In Kilsmore Field about a kilometre southeast of Cheshunt Park Farm (TL354031) there were earthworks thought at one time to be Roman. Apart from three coins (Hadrian 117-38, Claudius Gothicus 268-70 and Constantine 306-37) found in the vicinity when digging gravel for a road in the 18th century, no other archaeological material has been found there and the site is no longer considered to be Roman. The earthworks have long since been obliterated as the result of the construction of a reservoir (*Salmon History of Hertfordshire* 1728; *VCH Herts IV* 1914; *Herts SMR* 1356).

A hoard of 280 Roman coins contained in a pot was found in c.1904 somewhere in Cheshunt. Twenty four of the coins, which ranged in date from Gaallienus 253-68 to Constantine 306-37, found their way into Hertford Museum but have since been lost (*VCH Herts IV* 1914, *Herts SMR* 1122).

Five copper coins of Hadrian 117-38 "in very good condition", were found in the late 19th century near Oliver Cottages at the junction of Brookfield Lane and Cheshunt High Street (TL360034) (*VCH Herts* 1914; 1120)

A few sherds of Roman pottery were found on the site of Cheshunt Nunnery (TL370041) (*CBA Group 10 Newsletter* 4, Oct 1958; *Herts SMR* 1352).

A Roman amphora handle was found in the old cemetery in Dark Lane (TL345021). Two more amphora handles were later found in the newer cemetery west of Dark Lane (TL34430190) (*Herts Archview* 1970 p34; *Enfield Archaeological Society, RB Group* 1971 p14; *Herts SMR* 2965).

A Roman mortarium, complete except for a hole in the base, was found at Turners Hill in 1900 (TL359023). It was stamped with the name of the potter Marinus/Fecit (*East Herts Arch Soc Newsletter* 1962 p13; *Herts SMR* 2968).

Ditches, perhaps field boundaries, believed to be part of a small enclosure together with pits containing pottery dated 150-180AD were found during the construction of the A10-A122 Cheshunt Link Road in 1994 (TL355008) (*Herts SMR* 9636)

In 1885 a lead ingot, stamped with the name of the emperor Hadrian, was found when a field was being drained at Theobalds Park (TL340005). The exact find spot is not known, other than it was close to Ermine Street. The letters "xx" which also appear on the ingot may refer to the 20th Legion which was in charge of the lead mines in Derbyshire

at this time (*Haverfield Ephem Epig* IXC 1264a; *VCH Herts* 1914; *Herts SMR* 1121).

A coin (Follis) of Constantine 307-337AD was found near Temple Bar (TL344009) (*Herts Arcxh Revies* 1971 p57; *Herts SMR* 2957).

Another coin of Constantine was found when a tree was felled in the grounds of Theobalds School (*Bulletin Enfield Archaeological Society* 8 1961; *Herts SMR* 6265).

Two small Roman sherds were found in 1978 on the line of the M25 (TL34720040) (*B Warren; Herts SMR* 6265).

A linear ditch about 200m long at Goffs Oak (TL327162739) has been interpreted as the possible line of a Roman road (*Herts SMR* 7988).

A study of the co-axial pattern of field boundaries and roads in Hertfordshire has led to the suggestion that their layout could be Roman if not prehistoric in origin. (*The Origins of Hertfordshire*, Tom Williamson 2000; see also *Herts SMR* 9224).

SMALL FINDS

VALETTA CONVENTION

Members have no doubt read in some of the popular archaeological publications about the Valetta Convention (on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage), to which the British Government has recently become a signatory. Article 3 of the convention appears to have angered certain parties, who assert that this Article will "destroy British archaeology as we know it" (Council for Independent Archaeology circular letter) or even "ban amateur archaeology" (*Current Archaeology* 174). The opposite view is held by others, including Rescue: the British Archaeological Trust, who point out that the Article simply requires that "anyone undertaking archaeological excavations must be capable, qualified and responsible" (*Rescue News* 84: 2001).

Perhaps it is wise to read the actual document for oneself, to make up one's own mind without the influence of emotive rhetoric and selective quotation.



