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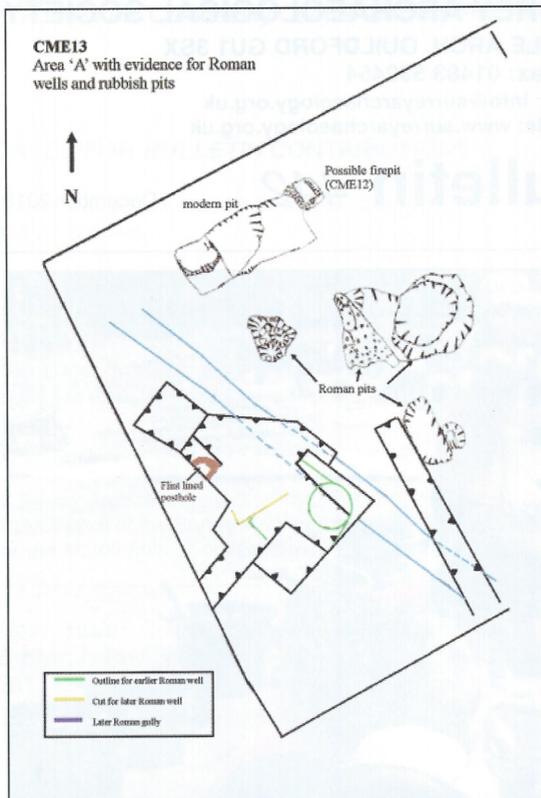
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Hot and thirsty work at Ewell

("Please Miss, can I have a glass of water")



Plan of 2013 excavations.

A second season of rescue excavation took place from 3rd - 21st July. The site lies towards the north-eastern extent of the known Roman settlement in Ewell, and it was anticipated that evidence for Stane Street and settlement activity alongside would be uncovered. The unusually hot weather, with temperatures regularly up to 30° C, made for slow progress in the trench, and thanks must go to all 70 participants who soldiered on regardless.

The 30 x 10m 2012 trench was re-opened to further investigate a number of features, together with another 30m section of the consecrated strip (see Cowlard 2012). For practical purposes the trench was divided into ten 6m sections, notated alphabetically, with 'A' at the lower end of the field closest to Church Street and 'J' towards the Ewell by-pass at the north-east end. Several interesting features were uncovered but not all the archaeology conformed to expectations.

The steam plough damage identified in 2012 as having removed almost all features above Roman ground level, was found to continue up the field. This is in contrast to previous excavations in the adjacent churchyard where Roman above-ground features were recorded (Pemberton 1973; Pemberton forthcoming; Anon 1954, xxii). Evidence in Church Meadow indicates episodes of hill-wash, both before and after the deep ploughing. Whilst a disturbed stratum above the natural was recorded in Areas A-E, this was not evident in Areas F, G and H, which were found to be devoid of archaeology with fewer finds. If there was Roman activity in these areas it must have been surface-based as no features were found cut into the natural. Whilst steam ploughing had cut into the Roman ground level in Areas C-D by some 5-10cm (as shown by narrow strips of flint surviving between plough lines), in Areas H, I and J the ploughing had cut down well into the clean natural. Thus apparent surfaces in these areas are likely to be what remains of features/ foundations below Roman ground level.

The large pit in 'A' was re-opened and the section across it enlarged. It was noted that the fill varied on either side of the section, and further investigation showed that beneath a Roman rubbish pit were the remains of two Roman wells. The earlier well was roughly square in outline, 1.65 x 1.5m, with the shadow of a plank lining. A barrel, approximately 1m in diameter, was incorporated into its construction in its north-eastern corner, seen as a circular stain extending for a depth of 0.8m (through



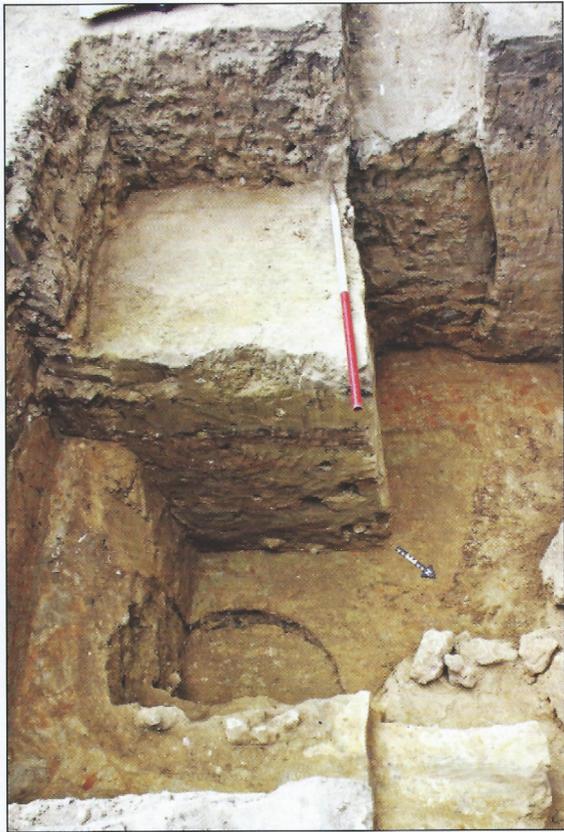
the excavated silt). The later well, about 1.25m², was sunk slightly to the west of the earlier well, overlapping it by about 20cm and aligned at an angle of 10-15°. This showed no signs of a plank lining, but a line of flints was found which may have been part of its lining/revetment. Associated with the wells was a well-constructed flint-lined posthole that may have supported a windlass.

A NNW-SSE gully identified in 2012 overlay the wells and therefore may represent a later property boundary once the latest of the two had gone out of use. A series of rubbish pits, both Roman and modern, were found in the well area. The previously uncovered flint/chalk areas in C and D, which are thought to represent the only Roman ground level remains of a chalk platform and flint surface to have survived the deep ploughing episode, were further investigated, clarified and recorded. From

the chalk spread and small lengths of edges, the chalk platform was identified as being about 2.5m NW to SE, by 6m NE to SW, in extent, constructed of unabraded chalk blocks and standing above the surrounding flint surfaces by about 10cm. This suggests it may represent a chalk floor within a building. The platform appeared to respect the recut gully (171) but was laid over the original ditch (172). The flint spread extends about 8m NE-SW and 4m NW-SE, has a good surface in places and also overlies the ditch (172) and borders the recut gully (171) to the NW, and a charcoal filled gully (174) to the SW.

The alignment of the NNE-SSW ditch (172) and its recut gully (171) first identified in 2012, was clarified. The shallow U-shaped ditch, up to 0.6m in depth, runs diagonally across the trench for approximately 20m and its mottled silty fill contained a small amount of Roman pottery. The recut to the SSE was cut after the original ditch had silted up as there is some wandering in its line and it was seen to have been cut through the ditch fill. The pit in Area D, which was found to be cut into the ditch in 2012, was re-examined. It was found to be a bowl shaped pit with an amphora sited in its NE quadrant and a series of mortar linings. To either side of the amphora (but not behind it) the bowl was lined with first chalk then flint. At the base was a layer of ash between the mortar and flint lining. Below these fills the cut became more vertical and in plan appeared square. It may be that the pits were a re-use of an earlier square feature such as a well or cistern, and this feature will be revisited in 2014 to confirm its earliest use.

During initial machining a linear flint feature aligned NNE-SSW was identified in Areas I-J. It corresponded to the anticipated line of Stane Street but excavation showed it to be lying on/within disturbed soil, having been turned over by the deep ploughing. A metre wide section was cut across the flint feature at a right angle, and beneath the plough soil in J was a steep-sided sub-circular pit about 1m in diameter. It was roughly half-sectioned and excavated to 1.4m. Augering suggested the fill extended a further 0.5m, and pottery and a mid 4th century Chi- Rho coin suggest a late Roman date for this feature. It has been mooted that this pit was a latrine, and environmental samples were taken for analysis. If the flint feature above it is road-related it suggests that the road at this point had already gone out of use by the late Roman period. Other features at this end of the trench



Looking south-west, with outline of earlier Roman barrel well to left of arrow, and cut for later Roman well to its right.

included areas of pebbles, flint and chalk, and four postholes, including one double. A 1m wide trench of the Ewell Churchyard excavation of 2000 (ECY00) was identified, crossing Area I. This had been laid out at right angles to the anticipated line of Stane Street to assess the concentration of Roman settlement activity, and in particular how the intensity and nature of such activity changed away from the eastern edge of the road (Orton 2000). Orton had identified an area of chalk, which related to similar findings this season. Adjacent to the pit a narrow gully was identified cut into the clay natural, on the same orientation as the disturbed linear flint feature; it may be that this is all that remains of the road structure. Whilst material evidence for the Roman road crossing the trench is slight, features to the west appear to relate to its proposed alignment. It is planned to re-open the northern 10m of the trench next season to fully elucidate any features that may have survived beneath the plough soil.

The excavation hosted the first of a two-day SyAS environmental course run by Becky Lambert. Surrey County Archaeological Unit kindly lent a flotation tank and sample buckets, and a grant from The Council for British Archaeology enabled us to hire a petrol pump to circulate the water, as running water was not available on site. The participants learnt how to take and process bulk soil samples from a number of the pits, gullies and wells and the resulting environmental evidence is currently being analysed.

A large amount of Roman pottery was found in the plough soil and in the subterranean features, together with bone and metal finds. As in 2012 the majority of the pottery was of Roman date, with a few possible prehistoric sherds. The range of pottery was wide, including fineware imports such as eggshell ware, terra nigra, *c ramique   l' ponge*, and samian. Post-Roman finds of any kind were rare but included two Charles I Rose farthings and a medieval long-cross penny. Over 200 Roman coins were retrieved with the help of metal detectorists Bill Meads and Mairi Sargent, together with metal and bone hairpins, brooches and an intaglio ring.

A number of visits to the site took place during the excavation as part of the project's commitment to community involvement. All 180 pupils from a local infant school visited, as did the Classics class from Ewell Castle School, and 75 children from Bourne Hall Museum Club took part in a day of excavation, finds washing and sieving on the spoil heaps (see *front cover*). A number of parents are hoping to join the project as volunteers next season. The Open Day held on 13th July, which welcomed more than 300 visitors, was held in conjunction with The CBA 'Festival of Archaeology' and the Ewell Village Fair. Since the excavation, a group meets weekly to catalogue the Roman pottery, and an exhibition was held in Ewell on 26th October to inform local residents, parishioners and the wider community about this season's excavation.

Thanks must go to all the volunteers involved in the project, and in particular: Emma Corke, Assistant Director, who supported the Site Director, and ran the trench and diggers - a considerable task; Frank Pemberton, Assistant (Finds) Director; Chris and Gay Harris who ran the finds tent; Lou Hays, Volunteer Co-ordinator, environmental sampling and site assistant; Colin Nutley who organised the 'pot washers'; Jenny



The flint-lined pit



Becky's gang.

Newell, site assistant; Michelle Cave, environmental sampling; trench supervisors Roger Brookman, Rose Hooker, Phil Stanley, Nick Moore and David Calow; assistant trench supervisors Laura Dodd, Meurig Thomas and David Hartley; metal detectorists Bill Meads and Mairi Sargent; and Becky Lambert (above) who ran the environmental course and advised on environmental sampling.

This project would not be viable without grants and loan of equipment from Surrey Archaeological Society and Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society, and CBA Challenge Funding. Thanks also to SCAU for environmental archaeology support. The Vicar of St. Marys Church, Russell Dewhurst has arranged the extension of the faculty enabling us to excavate on consecrated ground, has afforded us access to the site and given much practical support. Neighbours Jane and Rob Pedler gave us the use of Rectory Barn for storage and access for equipment, and generously provided us with a water supply.

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