EVENT PRN 35237

ST. PETER'S CAR PARK, CARMARTHEN

The opportunity was taken, prior to the building of a doctors' surgery, of examining the Roman deposits underlying the north west corner of St.Peter's Car Park. Permission was kindly granted by Carmarthen District Council for the excavation of six trenches in the car park, and encouragement was received from Doctors M. and Jones and architects L. Taylor of Taylor and Evans Partnership Cardiff.

The siting of the six 1m by 4m trenches was determined by the layout of the car park and the position of the proposed foundations for the surgery building. The trenches serving the dual purpose of examining the archaeology and acting as trial holes for the buildings foundations. The location plan shows the positions of the trenches, the proposed foundations of the surgery and the location of the 1969 archaeological excavations.

From the 1969 excavations it was known that the northern end of the car park was occupied by the clay rampart forming the defenses of the Roman town. The tail of the clay rampart (9) was picked up in trenches A and F. Below the rampart pre-defensive occupation was detected (10,16,17,18). Over the tail of the rampart in trench F a layer of cobbles (14) was recorded.

Trenches C & E were only excavated to the top of the Roman deposits. In trench C, the Roman deposit was represented by a layer of cobbling (11). The clay rampart (9) was discovered in trench E, plus the backfilled trench of the 1969 excavation (19, 20). Trench B was excavated down to the Pre-Roman soil (12). Three Roman layers (5, 6, 7) were excavated. A silver coin was discovered sitting on the surface of layer 6.

From the 1969 excavations it was known that approximately under the rear garden walls of Richmond terrace there was situated a backfilled Roman defensive ditch. This southern side of the ditch was backfilled with a dirty white-yellow clay (24) and a pure white clay (22) separated by a thin charcoal layer (23). The ditch was cut through crushed shale and clay (25). This deposit (25) is probably subsoil, in which case the natural ground surface rises dramatically between trenches F and D. If, however, it (25) represents a redeposited layer the original ground surface must slope down below the level of excavation in trench D. The 1969 excavations indicate that the original ground surface over the area in question was virtually horizontal at approximately 21.20 m O.D. The subsoil at 22m O.D. in trench D must be a localised anomaly.

These small scale excavations have confirmed the existence of a massive rampart and ditch in the northern end of St. Peter's Car Park, and the paucity of stratified deposits immediately to the rear of the rampart. The deep build up of soil and car park make up will ensure that the majority of the Roman deposits will not be affected

by the surgery construction.

Description of Deposits Shown on Sections.

1. Tarmacadam - 10 - 15 cm thick.
2. Hardcore. 25-50 cm thick. In trenches A, B and C high quality quarried hardcore used. In trenches D, E & F building rubble was mixed with hardcore.
3. Black garden soil, compressed due to car park construction.
4. Dark greyish-brown loamy soil, soft and friable, contains 18 and 19th century pottery.
5. A compact layer of gravel and small stones.
6. Dark brown loamy clay soil with specks of charcoal and burnt clay, soft in consistency. Probably a Roman layer.
7. A compact layer of small stones and gravel.
8. Dark yellowish brown clay-loam, a firm even compact layer being a mixture of the clay from 9 and loam from 4.
9. Yellowish brown clay, very compact. The clay rampart.
10. A dark greyish-brown loam, very soft, it contains a highproportion of charcoal and burnt clay. A pre-rampart occupation layer or soil.
11. A cobbled surface. The topmost Roman deposit in trench C, not excavated.
12. The pre-Roman buried soil, a reddish brown loamy clay, compact but easily broken up.
13. Brownish yellow silty clay loam, compact, probably derived from the rampart 9.
14. Cobbled surface overlying tail of rampart 9.
15. Thin layer of pebbles and small stones underlying the rampart.
16. Soft light grey-brown silty clay loam.
17. Silty clay brown, yellowish brown, soft.
18. Dark grey-brown silty clay with a high proportion of charcoal.
19. Mixed black soil clay lumps and modern building debris.
20. Black soil in the backfilled 1969 archaeological trench.
21. Loose black soil with stones and mortar lumps in a pit. The same feature was detected in 1969? then interpreted as the robbed out revetment to the second phase rampart.
- Pure white clay, part of the second phase rampart?
- A thick layer of charcoal.
- A white- yellowish orange dirty clay. This layer is the backfill of the first phase defensive ditch. The ditch was not excavated to its full depth.

Orangey-brown crushed shale mixed with silty clay. The subsoil through which the defensive ditch was cut.

K. Murphy,
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