

THE WEEKLY WASP



"THE DIGGERS FRIEND"

ISSUE: the eighth

JUNE 7th MCMXXIV

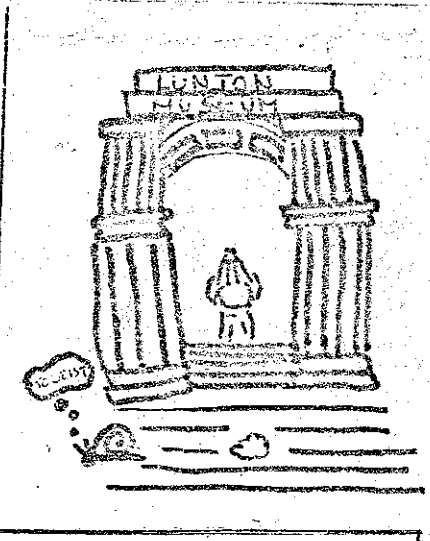
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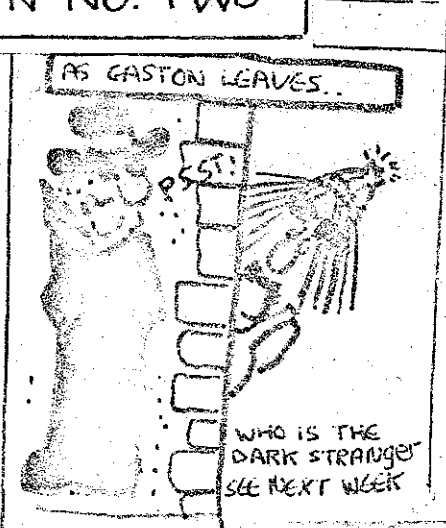
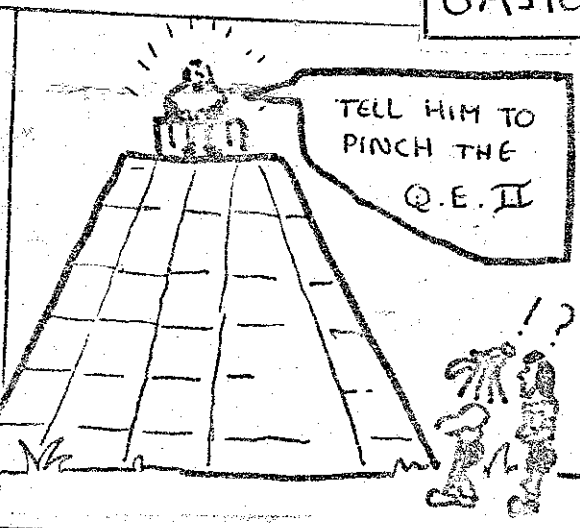
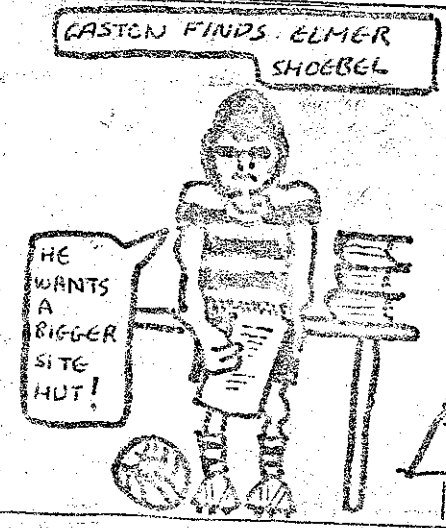
FIRST, THE BAD NEWS.....

Our deepest sympathies go out to Alan: having accepted the Minorities Roman cemetery site which seemed to offer so much, the trial trenches his team dug on Tuesday revealed little else but an ugly series of massive deep set C19th concrete piers on 10' rafts. In spite of compressor troubles his team -Des, Marc G., Howard and Salvador- will continue to excavate the North-South trench as well as an East-West one directly up against the south wall to ensure the area is totally archaeologically barren before packing up. We wonder i) if sufficient field work and research was carried out, ii) why the S.S. was chosen only the day before he started work, iii) how meaningful the selection procedure was (Do you know what to look for when digging a pit? And when did the Romans first come over here?) iv) who put a parking ticket on Des's dumper truck while he was being interviewed.

And now the good news- two new sites are a-cumen in: a Baynard's Castle (!) extension across the street from the Mermaid, and one near the Old Bailey. On the latter, trial trenches will be dug by us, sub-contracted to the demolition firm at sub-cons rates. But as we will only be paid the standard DUA rate, we stand to make a profit on the deal, and we sure need the money!



GASTON NO. TWO



We in the finds department at B.St. have always found ourselves in complete agreement with the emphasis that the D.U.A. so rightly places on publication. In view of this, we would like to publish in this learned archaeological journal, the results of one of the most important aspects of our work here- the detailed analysis and translation of the many writing tablets now coming to light as a result of the dedicated efforts of the readers of the W.W. These remarkable contemporary records give a fascinating insight into little known aspects of Roman daily life, such as the problems of non-delivery of post (undelivered letters appear to have been dumped at sorting points all over the City and then abandoned because of the inefficiency of the Imperial Post Office), the prevalence of athletes' foot among soldiers stationed at Vindolanda, and the nation-wide Samian stamp collecting club. Indeed, as one reads these human records of our forebears, one realises how like ourselves they really were; in this context, it becomes relevant and meaningful for us to give these miniature kitchen-sink dramas the attention they deserve.

The earliest example we have dates from about 55 BC and is written by a Roman Tourist on a reduced party excursion to the S. coast to his wife:

"Dear Calpurnia,

Having a lovely time. Wish you were here. Thanks for packing my Kwells and my umbrella. Stupendous view of bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover during channel crossing. All my love,

Your own Julius."

The picture on the front shows the 'Marelink' boat in which Julius must have travelled, with its advertising slogan "Curaus Publicus makes the going easy". Perhaps, had Julius stayed longer, he would have travelled to other parts of the province by the fast 'Inter Civitates' routes. But speculation aside, here is another heartwarming extract from this unique documentary record:

"Eboracum, A.D. 319

Dear Momma,

Ain't half cold up here on the northern front. Need me caligulae and corselets, and throw in a salami while you're at it. Love to Uncle,

Private Gaius Mix, LEG XXI "

Some of the letters are particularly interesting because they are written in telegraphic form which possibly indicates that they were sent at a cheaper rate. Here are two examples:

"Aqua Sulis, A.D. 132.

Clodia dear STOP Pulcers subsiding STOP waters like cocacola STOP mind the shop carefully STOP take care junior dosent pinch Sestertia STOP Brutās"

"Caistor, A.D. 180

TO ALBION POTTERY SUPPLIES LTD STOP WHERE'S MY SLIP QUERY. SEXTUS CHIEF POTTER"

Unique legal records also survive, like this extract from Verulamium municipal decrees, c. 310 A.D. (this inscription much damaged).

"IV. Wanted M-----Felix Rhodensis of no fix-- abode, for Samian theft at -----reward of --red: XXV denarii for info-----leading to ---apprehe-----All calls will be treated as confid-----"

Finally, we feel that this example of Roman bureaucracy will be dear to the hearts of at least some members of the DUA.

"MEMORANDUM.

from: The governor of the Province of Britain, at the governor's palace in the oppidum of Londinium.

to: His Imperial and Divine majesty, the Emperor Nero.

Re: The murderous and savage attack on Lon. by Boudicca, regina Icenorum
HELP! help! h-e-l-p! he///// (indecipherable scratches) "

We close this everyday story of ordinary folk with a short inscription from a writing-tablet found in the London Docks area, as yet untranslated.

"Salve, nauta!"

Nick Freidin has had the gross misfortune to have been conscripted for the French Army, and leaves us in a week or so. He has pleaded ~~insanity~~ insanity, even archaeology, but alas, to no avail.

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit".
(with apologies to J.R.R. Tolkien).

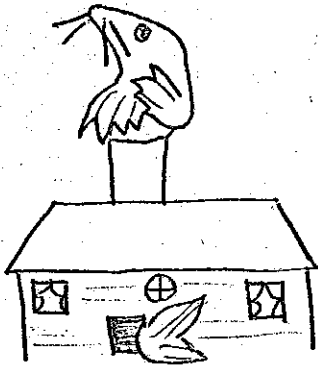
It is with regret that the death is announced of the Guildhall Museum. This tragic event took place on 31st. May 1974, just 148 years after its inception in 1826. The Musuem passed its days almost entirely in the City of London; it spent its early manhood in the crypt of the recently completed Guildhall Library. During the War years it lived at Newbury and in 1955 moved to take up temporary quarters at the Royal Exchange. It transferred in later life to the even more inappropriate premises on Bassinghaw High Walk, where it spent its last days.

In common with others who have achieved greatness, albeit in relative obscurity, a regenerative fervour marked its declining days. After a life of almost monastic celibacy, a marriage was arranged with the London Museum. Of this union a new branch of the museum servive was born. The pregnancy was long and bereft with difficulties, and the delivery painful: despite all efforts to save it, the Guildhall Museum died while giving birth to the Museum of London. The prognosis of the infant is good, although its early life is heaped with innumerable obstacles.

The Guildhall Museum from its earliest youth adopted a conviction that its role in the life of the city should embrace an active involvement in ~~xxx~~field archaeology as well as the more obvious elements of the accommodating and display of its collections. This attitude, in the face of some who would adopt a more conventional approach, has prevailed and of it has emerged a unit devoted to the undermining of every highway in the City, the delaying of every building development and the expansion of ~~xxxxx~~ the Museum's collection to a size insupportable in a building smaller than Taj Mahal.

It must be a great comfort to the mourners of the passing of this splendid City institution to know that the offspring born of the union of those two London museums carries the high hopes of all ~~xxxx~~ who have been in any way connected with it during its long and glorious life.

This oppurtunity must not be allowed to pass without a mention of the many varied tributes paid to the Museum on its passing. Wreaths were received from simillar institions throughout the length and breadth of the country, and a panegyric was read by the National Association of Property Owners.



The site with up to three hours of sunshine daily has resolved into a series of houses. At the top is Hilary's well, full of paint pots undoubtedly used by J.W.M. Turner, the noted painter of waterfront women. This is adjoined by Karen's yard, and then by Richard and Graham's house (They have seperate rooms, Julia). Tiled floors (to be reconstructed at Bonhill) give way to dirt and clay walls for Ivan's house, to the south, and then Des' well. Finally Ron's house sports a fireplace waterfront and garde-x robe occupying $\frac{1}{2}$ the room.

Mr Troilet won £23.46 on the Derby, which all went back to his missus; and John Allan who was renowned as a dating expert and for grinning, is sorley missed now he has moved to Exeter. Ron Bishop will boast a new address should you wish to send him a threatening letter after Friday, c/o the Seal House Site Hut, He also won his round of the Hairy Legs Contest, while Des Woods was disqualified (we're not sure why) and Richard was appealing.

SMALL FINDS

*** Trig Lane now have a dock, would you believe. In order to photograph that and more, a 100' extending ladder will appear on Monday courtesy of the Fire Brigade, to be tested by our brave Mr. Harrison. A new crane is also required cos its predecessor was outgrown by Mr. Muir's Ziggurat. The latter, incidentally, is a great favourite with the local constabulary, not to mention Steve (green fingers) Edson who is doing wonderful things with his sweet peas thereon. The Hanging Gardens of Trigylon will, we are convinced, become the 7th. Wonder of Upper Thames Street, along with Mark's new hat etc.

*** Peter Muir has been doing fine things at the ICA this last week, and has also had the pleasure of Enoch Powell reading his very own poems.

*** The Triangle waved Clara the Little Red Crane goodbye on wednesday: all that remains for them to do is pot wash, pot wash and pot wash, and then the manual back-fill number. Good luck to Dave T. in his exams, and many thanks to Margie and Co. for their Sunday support!!

*** Fingers have been pointed at the DUA since disturbing accounts of two streakers in Lower Thames St. were reported in Mondays Evening News.

*** A parked Ford Trannie crashed into the Museum van on Tues., damaging his rear offside. Serves him jolly well right.

***X The very fine Nerva coin from the Triangle pleased our G.M. friends very much, and they'd like some more please.

*** Phootball: in the recent match between Trigoslavia and the Rest of the World, The well-drilled fire power of messers. 'Arrison, Maloney & Ellis, backed by strong midfield support and a game goalie, eventually won the evening 6-5, but the play was every bit as close as the score-line suggests; the winners had to come from behind all the way. Steve and Ed did a lot of the damage for the Rest, most ably supported by a scratch team that never gave up trying. Next weeks return match should be quite something. Thanks be to Mr. Woods for the ball, and to Miss Scamell for supporting so beautifully.

*** Daniel's first words were neither 'daddy-waddy' nor 'sug-sug' but "Clear up your loose".

*** Tony Johnson and Tim Tatton-Brown will no longer be seen adorning the hallowed precincts of the G.M. One has returned to his hole in Shadwell, t'other is heading for Lybia again.

*** Peter Taylor, who now subscribes to such stirring mags as 'Cycling' 'Shoot'?'Goal', 'Soccer' and 'Pilot' not to mention 'Farmers Weekly' has gone on a holiday, As he once went to Ramsgate for the day but ended up staying a couple of months in Brussels, we dare not be more definite than to say that he has gone to York, or the Lakes or, in the Great Billingsgate tradition, to Grimsby, to work as a deck hand on a trawler.

*** While on the subject of holidays, for those wot fancy zun and zider why not take your vacation with old Cus 73 friend Peter Leach, whose currently organising the CRAAGS EXCAVATIONS c/o Post Office, ILCHESTER, nr. Yeovil, Zummerzet. £25 p.w., a warm welcome and a field full of cows.

*** We have located Brian Hodgkinson, who could do amazing things with half-bricks, at Kjopmannsgt 26, Boks 199, TRONDHEIM, Norge, where he is supervising, drinking, and reading the W.W.

*** We were both heartened and touched to receive the following statement which Mark Harrison has positively forced us to print: "Everybody, and we mean everybody, would like to thank Gus sincerely for all the hard work he does on the W.W. and let him know how much he is appreciated."

*** Brian Hobley (43) is taking a fortnights working holiday at the moment with a Swan's 'Roman Britain' Tour, visiting many famous sites, but not, as far as we can ascertain, the well-known reconstruction in Warwicks.

*** We are pleased to report the recovery of conservator Joyce, following a nasty attack of Formic Acid.

*** As from next week, Miss M. Tallan has kindly consented to run a problem page for us, so come on you spotty adolescents, send your worries direct to her at Trig, or in a plain sealed envelope to:

"Dear Margie" c/o Whispering Heights, 10 Offord Road Islington, LONDON N.1.

The story so far: His Amazing Grace the Very Important Emperor Vespasian has decided that Disgustus, of General Potters Inc., should embark forthwith on a sales drive to Londinium to sell Central Gaulish Ware to the R.Bs. It was decided that our hero of long standing and fine potting, the incomprable Terry Sigillata, should go to, with Tina Boppa for company of course. The trio met at Portvs Itivs.....NOW READ ON!!!

Luckily the crossing was very calm, for our three travellers had a little bit of a hangover, and would not have enjoyed a rough sea at all: as it was, they only just managed to stagger aboard the boat in time- once installed in their cabins, Tina slept soundly, Terry noisely, and Disgustus not at all, spending the whole night vowing he'd never drink again. Anyway, the navigator, who had also spent an enjoyably-alcoholic evening, chose a slightly longer route than was strictly necessary, and it was not until noon that they hove to 'neath the White Cliffs of ~~Dvbrx~~ Dvbris. "Blasted British Sail! Late again!" moaned Disgustus, who was in a foul mood by this time, as you can imagine. His companions were too excited to worry about it though, and once their luggage and the consignment of pot had been cleared by customs, they made straight for the ROAMIN' ROMANS TRACTION CO. to book a northbound wagon.

"You want to go Londinium eh?" declared the booking clerk helpfully, "That good, that verry good! You go today, eh?" Terry nodded enthusiastically. "O.K! You go today! I book you rreal good! You like Londinium verry much!" The threesome smiled, assured him they certainly would, and boarded the Inter-city ox cart to Big L., calling at Dvrovernem, Dvrobrivae and Vagniacae.

The journey was pleasant, though all agreed that the scenery was not a patch on Gaul or Italy, depending on who was arguing, and the only event of note was the picking up of a hitch-hiker outside Noviomagvs, which was Tina's idea cos she felt sorry for him. He was one of the backward but harmless tribe of the Hippi, and spent the residue of the journey muttering "Pax et Amor, man!" in an inoffensive if slurred fashion.

As Terry said, Londinium was an ace place. Everything was busy and bustling, and all the buildings were brand new- indeed, many were still being built, and so everywhere 'Alexanders Ragstone Band' hoardings were in evidence. They checked into the 'Oliva ~~XX~~ Hocus', a quaint little inn on the Via Pisces Col, famed for its bread pudding and take-away red ~~xxx~~ wine, where Disgustus left the happy couple as he had to arrange an audience with the Govenor of the city, the Right Honourable D. Whittingtonius, who liked cats. As that venerable gent had very little on, ~~xxxx~~ in the way of official functions that is, he kindly agreed to see the potters that very afternoon, an arrangement which was readily adhered to by the delighted Gauls.

"I must send my Mum a postcard of this Palace !" said Tina, quite overawed, which reminded Terry that he'd promised to send one to all the folks back in Beatrix just as soon as he arrived in the town. Still, souvenir hunting would now have to wait till after the meeting with the Govenor.

A dashing young centurion led them down the cool tessalated corridors to the audience chamber, and annaunced their arrival to the be-throned and belaulrelled figure swathed in purple.

"Come in, come in!" answered the latter hospitably, "Do please sit yourselves down. How nice of you to have come all the way from, er, where was it now? just to see little old me. So kind. You'll be thirsty after your journey no doubt? " Terry and Tina always were anyway, and Disgustus, abandoning his recent resolution, went along with the majority. "Good, good. ~~XX~~ I'll have some tea and crumpets brought in at once." He rang a little silver bell, placed the order with a most smartly dressed servant, and in minutes, our heroes had been introduced to the national beverage of the Britons. Terry, like a true Gaul, was game for anything, and had knocked back his cupful before realising it was made from boiling water; Disgustus, like a true Roman, drank his with a stiff upper lip, which is quite a difficult thing to do, and Tina stuck to the crumpets, thank you.