

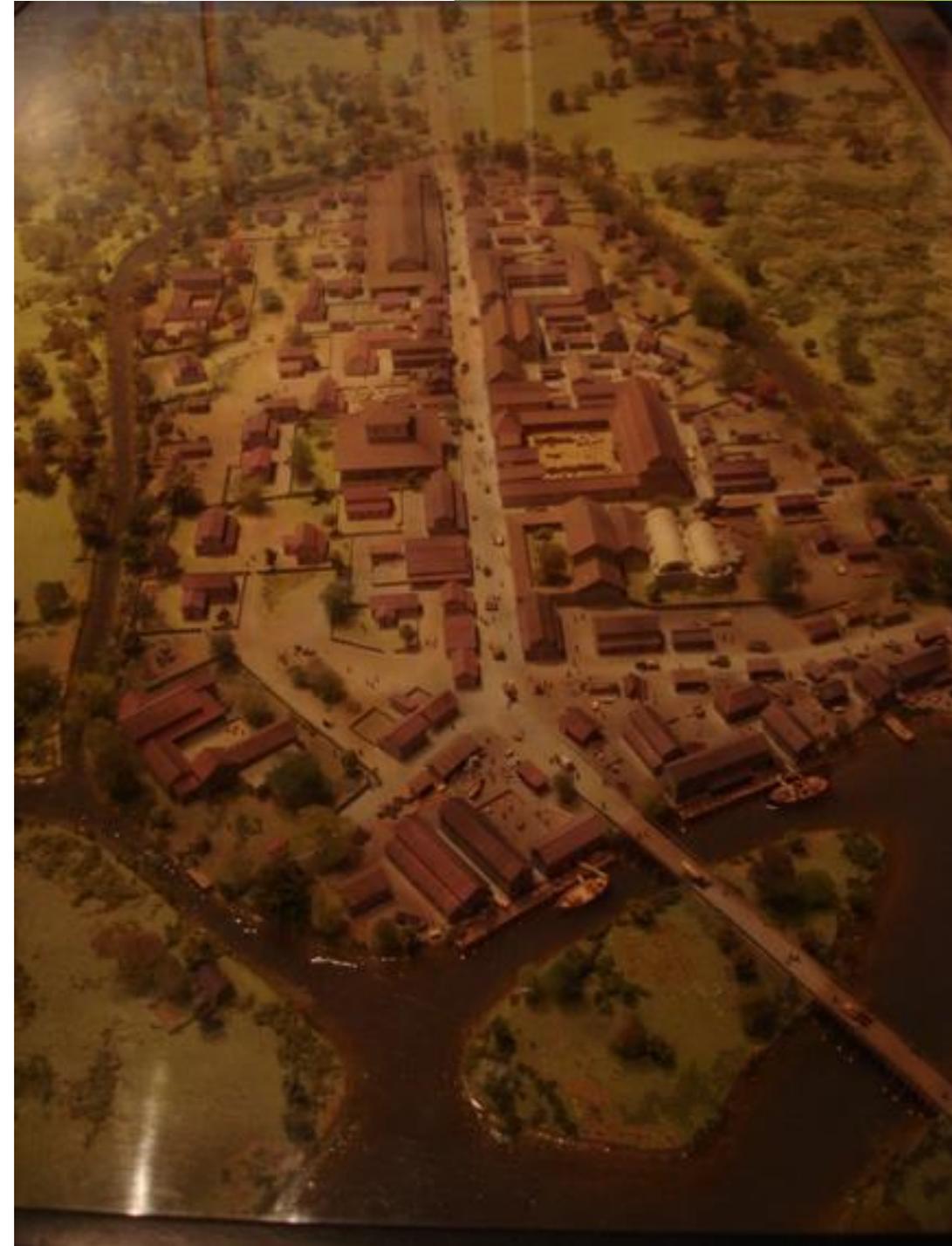
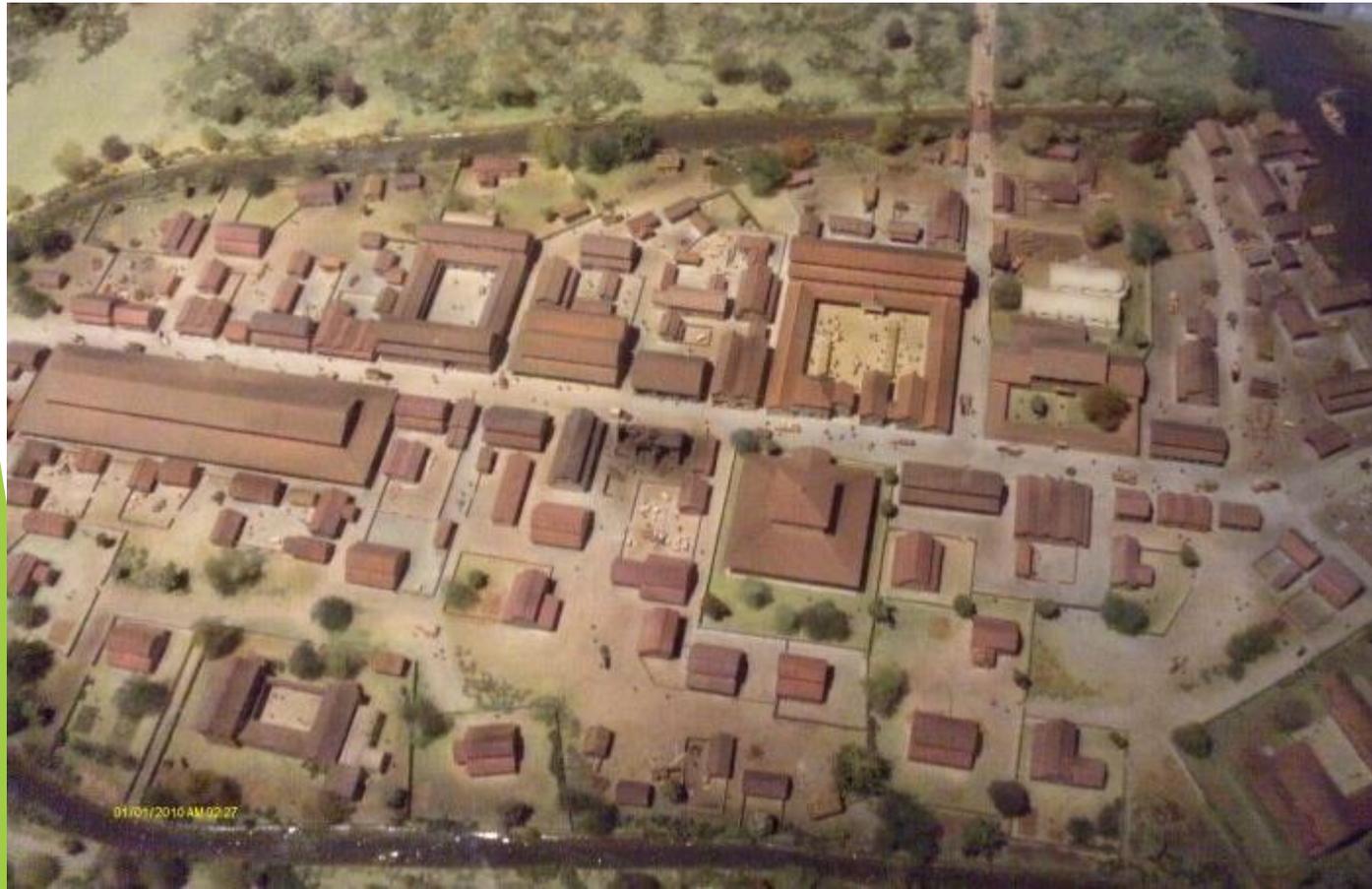
Wednesday 10th February

History LO: to find out if the

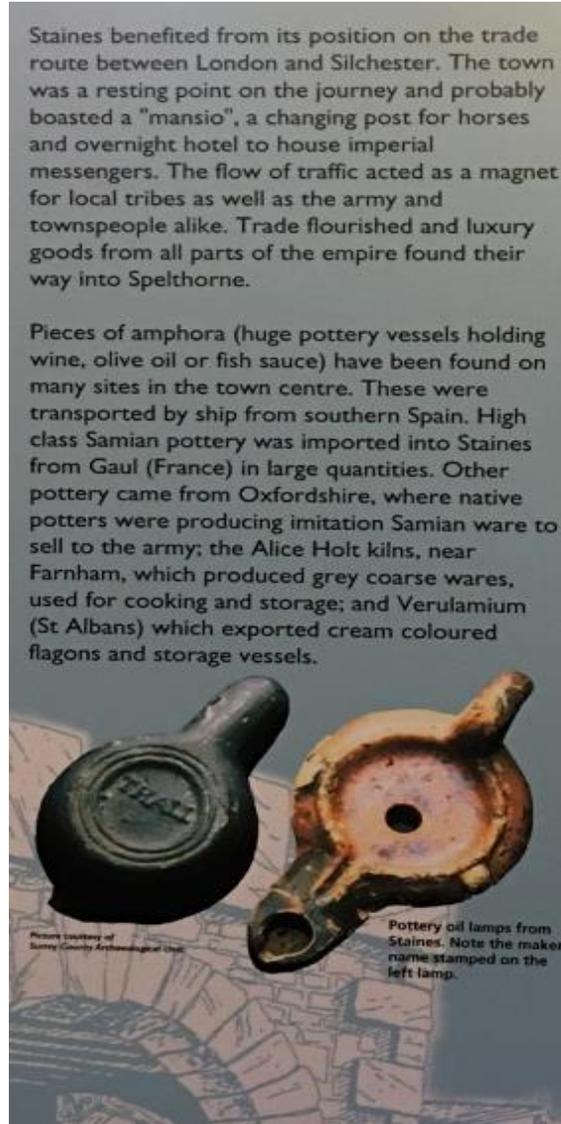
Romans came to Ashford!

Where might this be?

1. What clues can you spot?
2. What features can you see?
3. How can you describe them?



What Roman artefacts can you spot? Why might they have been found in Staines?

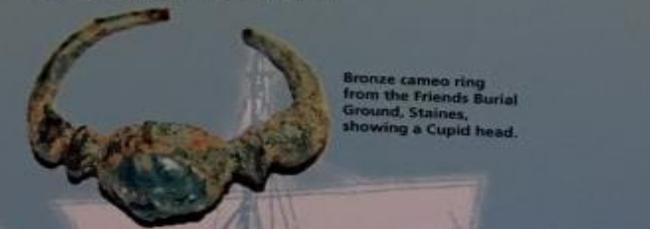


A range of Romano-British pottery from the Two Rivers site.



A sestertius of the Emperor Trajan (AD 53 - 117) found at the Two Rivers site, Staines. Trajan stretched the eastern boundaries of the Roman Empire to include Dacia (Romania) and Armenia. This coin celebrates his victory over the Armenian barbarians.

The local soil is suitable for arable farming and grains were grown, stored and processed locally. Farmsteads have been found at Hengrove Farm in Ashford and across the Thames on the Hythe, but the absence of villas suggests that local farming was controlled from the town. Local industries included forestry, woodland management, and activities associated with the river such as transportation. Animals were brought into town, kept in enclosures and were butchered on a grand scale. Leather shoe parts have been preserved in waterlogged deposits in and around the Market Square. Iron and other metalworking also took place in the town on a small scale.



Staines was the biggest Roman town in Surrey, and the only one of which we know the Latin name - "Pontes", meaning Bridges. Evidence of Staines' Roman past has been discovered at many sites during the recent redevelopment of the town centre.



The Roman invasion of AD43 was driven by the army, who landed on the south coast and worked their way towards what would become London. From there they moved north and west to conquer rapidly the whole of southern Britain. Staines was founded on the Roman road from Colchester to Silchester, which runs under the modern High Street. The road was built by the army soon after the Conquest, and used the first bridge crossing the Thames west of London.

The settlement grew up along the route to the bridge, with buildings lining the road like a Wild West frontier town. On the site of today's shops were industrial or commercial premises, each with a large shop or workshop on the street, with smaller rooms at the rear for production, storage and housing. North of the High Street were fewer buildings, with more animal enclosures, ditches, rubbish pits and even gravel workings for repairing the road. Roundhouses have been found, dated to about AD 90 - an unusual feature in a Roman town.



Tilly's Lane in Staines in the course of excavation, before the Two Rivers shopping complex was constructed. In the foreground is a second century building with a tessellated (mosaic) floor. Note how the floor has sunk in the centre - the structure was built over earlier pits which have subsided. The modern High Street is in the background.



Who might these people be, and what are they doing?



Who might these people be,
and what are they doing?
**Archaeologists finding and
researching objects from our
past.**

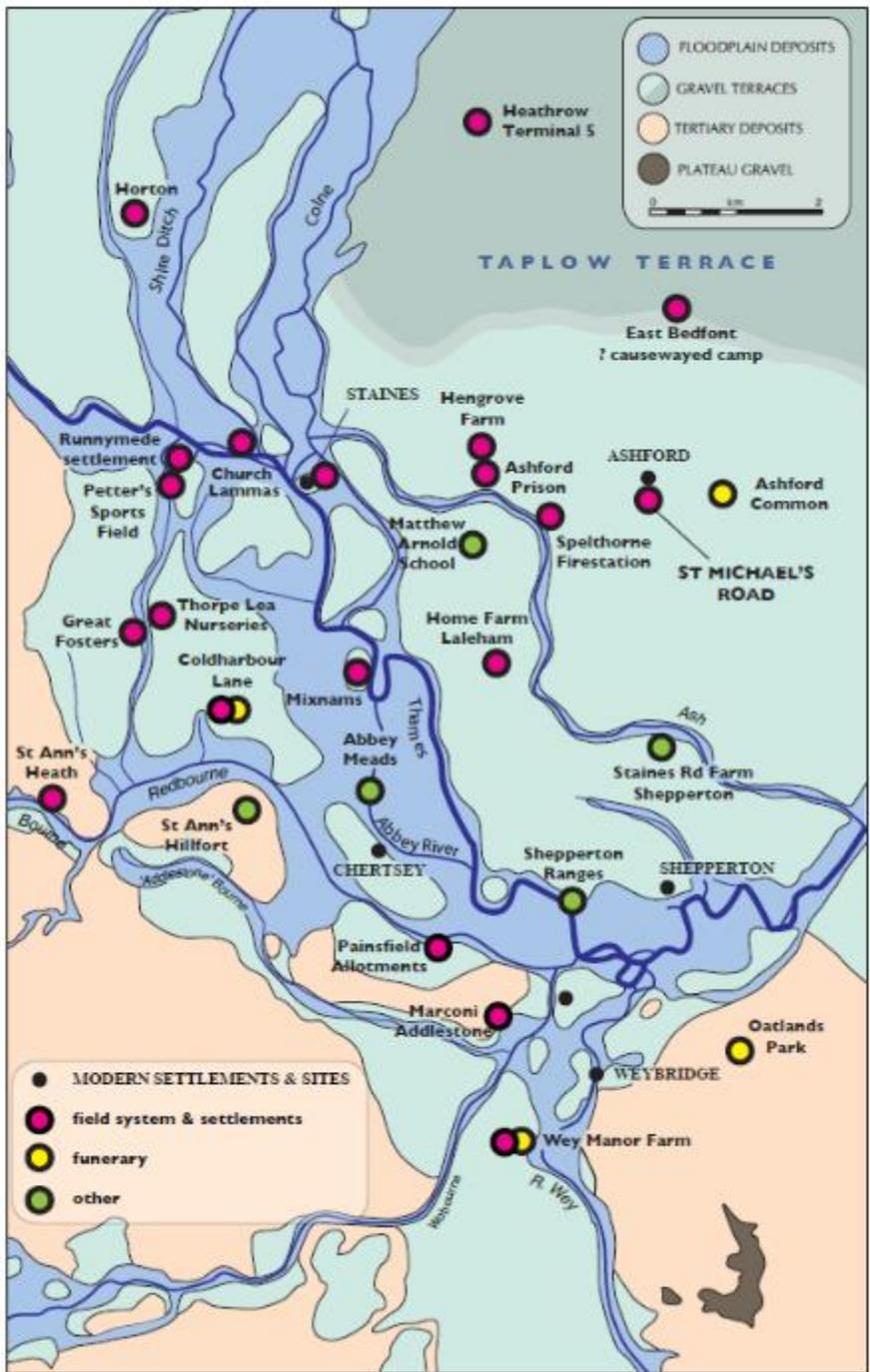
If archaeologists think there might be archaeology below the ground, we carry out excavations. First we carefully dig away layers of soil using a trowel. Then we take the finds back to our office and brush them with water and toothbrushes to make sure they are clean. Once they are dry we study them in more detail and compare them with other similar finds. This can help us discover what date they are. The finds are then sent to a museum.



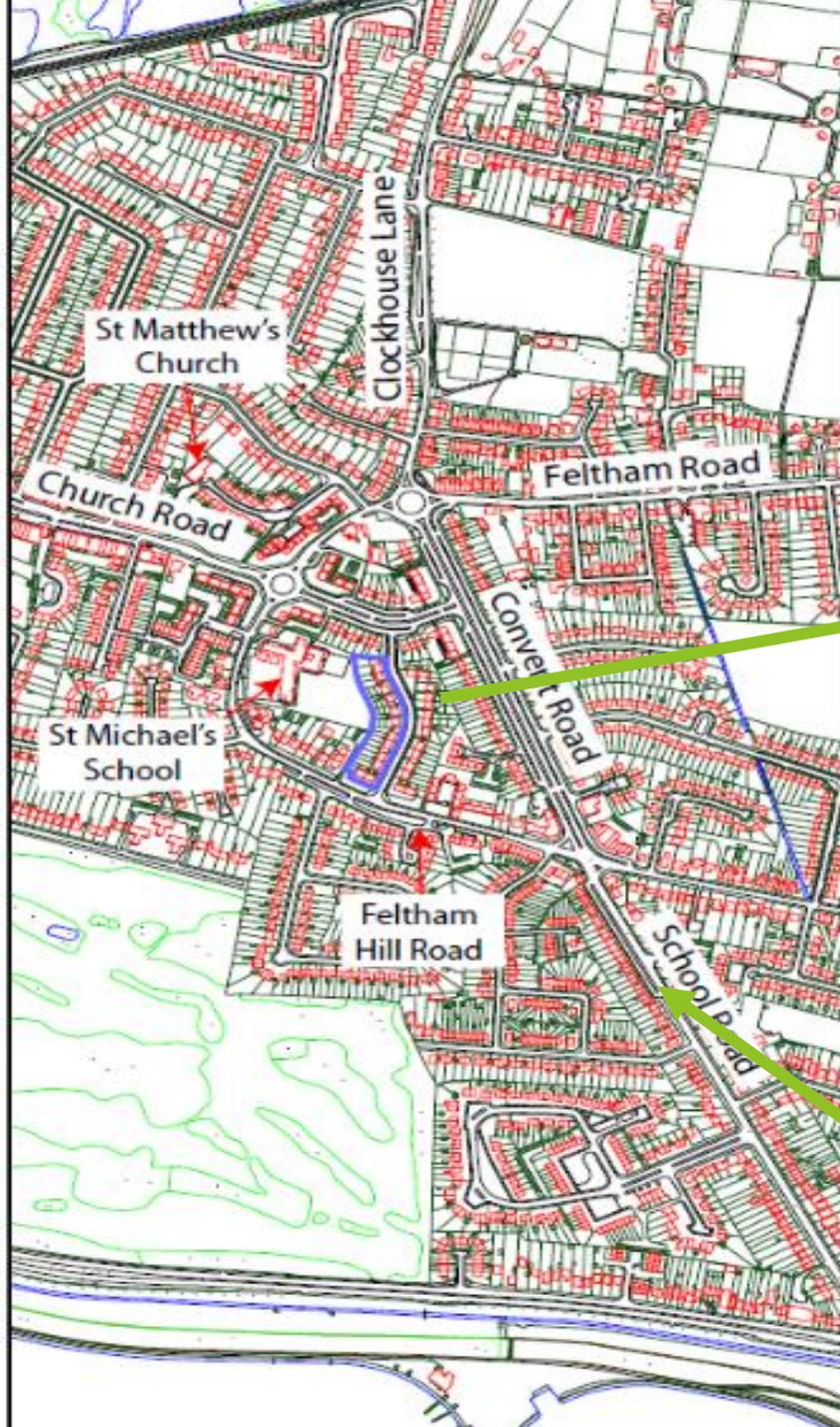
Map of the area around Ashford

Here is a map of other sites that have been excavated by archaeologists. All of these sites are Bronze Age. There is lots of Bronze Age activity around the rivers and floodplain.

The two closest Bronze Age sites to ACE are at St Michael's School, Spelthorne Fire station and Ashford Common.



What was discovered at St Michael's School, Ashford?



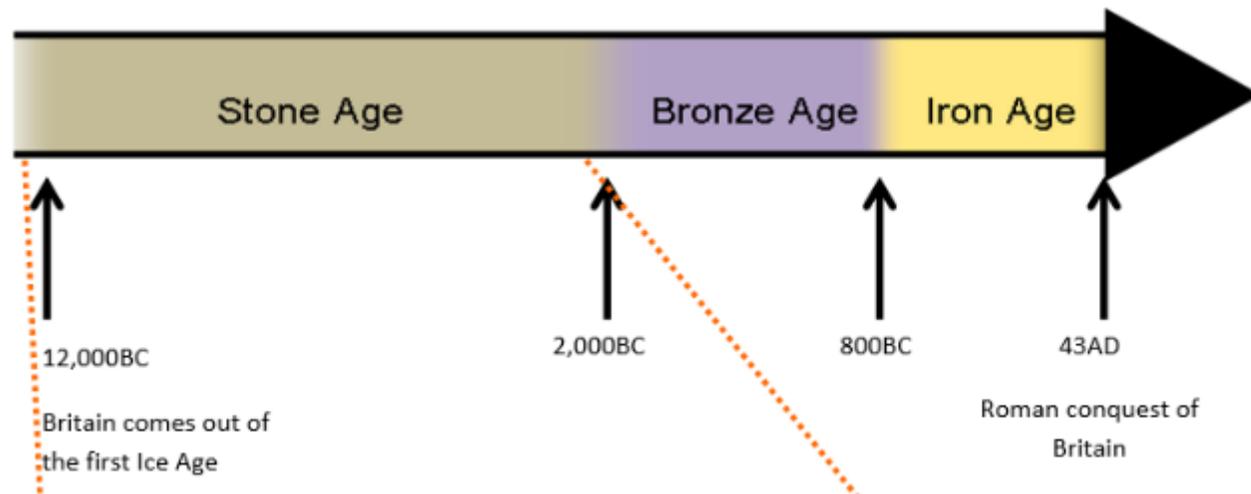
We carried out excavations in the blue area

In 2010 archaeologists from Surrey County Archaeological Unit dug 4 trenches near St Michael's School to see if there was any archaeology under the ground.

We are here: ACE!

What did we find at dig by St Michael's School?

- ▶ A Stone Age pit. It had flint dating from this time at the bottom of it.
- ▶ A Bronze Age field system (where people would have grown crops), waterholes and pits. 379 pieces of Bronze Age flint were found.
- ▶ **3 pieces of Roman pottery were found**
- ▶ Anglo-Saxon Pottery
- ▶ Medieval field boundaries



Task: answer these questions in as much detail as possible.

1. Did the Romans come to Ashford?

2. How do you know?

(C) Explain how archaeologists find out about the history of an area.


 ROMAN STAINES

Julius Caesar led expeditions to Britain in 55 and 54BC establishing trade with the Roman Empire and persuading some local kings to pay tax to Rome. However this mutual toleration started to crumble and when Claudius became Emperor in AD42 he saw that by outdoing Julius Caesar and invading Britain he would gain military glory and so establish his reputation as a great leader.

The force that sailed to Britain in AD43 comprised 4 legions and auxiliary troops, about 40,000 men in all. The invasion met with fierce resistance but by AD47 Britain was occupied. Organising the country into a Roman province needed a high status governor who had command of an exceptionally large group of legions. They lost no time in establishing efficient supply routes between the towns they built.

Staines was 19 miles from London and 25 miles from Silchester and was the first place upstream from London that the River Thames could be bridged. The river would have been very different then, wide and marshy and with no locks or weirs, possibly still tidal. The Roman name for Staines was Ad Pontes or "at the bridges" indicating that there was more than one bridge here. They may have crossed the Thames linking bridges to an island or the River Colne may have needed a bridge to cross it. The crossing was downstream to the current bridge, near the Market Square.

A fort was built to guard the bridge and since soldiers need feeding, weapons repaired and horses stabled a town grew around the original supply base at the foot of the bridge. The town spread along the road, which follows the line of the present High Street and may have extended as far as today's railway bridge.

Various industries grew up with the town especially pottery production, which included the making of lead glazed ware. It became a market centre and there is evidence that cattle were brought here and slaughtered. Imported material

from Gaul, Italy, Spain and Germany as well as goods from other parts of Britain were brought up river from London to The Hythe, which means 'landing place' or inland port and local produce was sent back down to London. There was a heavy metal working industry, which probably owed its existence to the original military needs, making and mending armour and transport.

There would have been many inns for the comfort of travellers. Since not many people could read shops and tradesmen had a symbol to show the various trades. The symbol for an inn was a bush and there was a Bush Inn in the approach to Staines Bridge until the present bridge was built in 1832.

During excavations evidence of scorched earth may mean that the town was burnt by Boudicca in the revolt against Roman invasion in AD 60. It was rebuilt and expanded. The area was very prone to flooding and serious flooding during the second century led to some rebuilding in stone and brick but most of the buildings were still of wood, which was more plentiful.

The collapse of the Roman Empire ended the occupation of Britain and the troops left Staines about AD 410. The Saxons moved on to the slightly higher ground around St Mary's Church. The Saxon name for Staines was 'Stana' meaning Stone. This could refer to the stone bridge built by the Romans. The top segment of the London Stone, a stone marking the limit of the jurisdiction of the River Thames by the City of London, is thought to be part of a Roman altar stone.

If you want to know more about Romans in Staines a book 'Up Pontes' is available in the Museum shop in the Thames Room, open when volunteers are on duty Wednesdays and Fridays 2pm-4pm, Saturdays 1.30pm-4.30pm. The Museum Education Team run a Roman teaching session for schools.

A SPELTHORNE MUSEUM PUBLICATION

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