

ROMANS IN CHESHIRE.

Whilst on holiday at Weymouth in Dorset last year, we came across the Roman History Society of Dorset. They were giving a display of Roman life. We met a man dressed up as a Legionnaire, and we got talking about Cheshire, he took great interest in the history side of our Church magazine, and gave me an insight as to what happened around here. He spoke of Northwich, Middlewich, Wheelock and as far as Chesterton (Newcastle). The most important thing we had here was our salt. Soldiers were often paid in salt around here; the soldiers would sell their salt as they moved from place to place. (hence the saying, "he is not worth his salt") He told me of the road which ran from Middlewich to Chesterton (Kings Street and sometimes referred to as Kind Street) and that it passed through Sandbach and Wheelock area. This brought to mind Houndings Lane, the road from Mill Hill Lane to Hassall Road. Recently when they were clearing the site for the bypass they took the tar surface off Houndings Lane and it revealed a cobbled surface, similar to that used in Roman days.

Cobbles were used because of the sandy soil, all important routes had to be firm and dry, in extreme cases sandstone slabs were used under the cobbles.

Since coming back home I have been trying to verify his facts, and they seem to be correct. As to where the actual road is we are not certain. The construction of the bypass has not revealed any thing as to where the Roman Road is. We do seem to be at the junction of roads in Roman Cheshire.

Watling Street runs from Manchester to Chester. We have Kings Street from Warrington to Chesterton on to Rocester and Derby. We also have an unnamed road that leads from Middlewich to Shrewsbury, then on to London.

These roads are the main arteries for the fast moving of armed soldiers, and so had priority over any other road. They were not always direct routes, but were designed for the fast movement of the army, avoiding big hills and valleys wherever possible. Other roads served as local byways to settlements.

We must also remember that Cheshire at this time was very thick with trees and had large forests.

There have been many Roman finds in Cheshire, you may recall last year a firm building houses tried to hush up the Roman remains near Middlewich.

The land between the rivers Croco and Dane were used for settlements for both civil and military uses. According to artifacts found there it stems from AD 80.

Finds were made when the local canals were constructed, but they were not always recorded as the urgency was to finish the work. It is only since then that more interest has been taken in our past history.

I am not aware of any local finds here in the Wheelock area, I would be grateful if you could let me know, if you are aware of anything.

I can only tell what the books say, often fresh evidence is found after the writing of them.