

THE CITY WALLS OF BATH, THE CHURCH OF
ST. JAMES, SOUTH GATE,
AND THE AREA TO THE EAST OF THE CHURCH
OF ST. JAMES¹

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Historical records and surviving fragments provide evidence that there was a wall surrounding the medieval city of Bath. It enclosed a pentagon of about 23 acres including the Abbey Church and monastic buildings.

The pentagonal plan of the city has suggested that the medieval walls were built on the foundations of the earlier Roman city wall of *Aquae Sulis* and enclose the same area.² Until recent years no serious investigation of this theory had been made except the observations of Governor Pownall in 1795, when commercial excavations were taking place in the Upper Borough (North) Walls.³ He claimed to have seen the medieval wall superimposed on the remains of the Roman city wall, and described it in some detail. Pownall's theory was contested by Irving in 1874, but it cannot be lightly dismissed.⁴

This report covers investigations made in 1951 and 1962 on the site of the former St. James Church near the South Gate of the city, and of an area within the south-east corner of the wall formerly occupied by Weymouth House and Weymouth House School (Fig. 1).

Several fragments of the medieval city wall still survive. The East Gate in Boatstall Lane is the only remaining gateway. The length of wall opposite the Mineral Water Hospital on the Upper Borough Walls is largely a reconstruction of the medieval wall. By far the best length, over 160 ft., could, until 1963, be seen on the site cleared by the German raid on the city in 1940 (Pl. III). This was at the south-east corner of the medieval city. The later upper part of the wall has now been demolished, and most of the rest now lies buried below the floor of the new Woolworth store.

The area occupied by the medieval city slopes gently southwards from the Upper Borough walls towards the river Avon. Excavations in 1959 on the site of the former Grand Pump Hotel, now Arlington Court, revealed that there was a similar slope in the pre-Roman levels. It is, however, recorded that the tessellated pavement (now in the Roman Baths Museum), found on the north side of the former

¹ The excavations described in this paper took place before the appointment by the City of Bath Excavation Committee of Mr. Barry Cunliffe, F.S.A. as Honorary Director of Excavations for the City.

² H. Lewis, "The Old Walls of the City of Bath", *Proc. Bath N. H. & Ant. Field Club*, 4 (1881), 138-49.

³ T. Pownall, *A Particular Description*, 27; J. Earle, *Bath Ancient and Modern* (1864), 100-2.

⁴ J. T. Irvine, *Bath Herald* 17 October 1874.



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FIG. 1 Map of the Roman and Medieval City of Bath

Weymouth House School, near the south wall, was found 6 ft. below the surface and 2 ft. above the level of the pavement surrounding the great Roman bath (Fig. 2). This indicates a wide platform or terrace to the south of the Baths. The 1959 excavation also revealed a considerable change of level on the south side of the great stone podium of the temple of Sul Minerva, suggesting that the area to the north of the podium was also terraced in Roman times.

The depth of the tessellated pavement at the Weymouth House School is about the same as a layer of white mortar of Roman date, found near the boundary wall between the new Woolworth and Marks and Spencer Stores, within 35 feet of the medieval city wall (Pl. X). It cannot therefore be assumed that the whole of the Roman city was covered with the same depth of debris as was found over the Roman baths, where the surrounding pavement lies over 14 ft. below the present level of York Street. The area to the south of the Roman baths was swampy as has been shewn in the foundation holes on the new Woolworth building site. It is obvious that this area would require to be stabilised before building could proceed in Roman times.

The city wall is mentioned in the charters, maps and other sources. But the only enquiry concerning its origin and date appears to have been that of Governor Pownall. It may well be that the wall had become so much an accepted part of the city scene that no question was raised as to its origin.

The wall with its gates served in the Middle Ages for the defence of the city and this continued until 1643. In the latter part of the 18th century the volume of traffic into and through the city increased and the city gates proved an obstruction. As they no longer served any useful purpose they were demolished with the exception of the East Gate, which still survives. By the end of the 18th century the wall had become the back walls of tenement houses built on the line of the city ditch. This had long been used for the disposal of rubbish. In 1614 the practice was forbidden and a scavenger appointed to remove the town rubbish to the mixons lying in the area between the city wall and the river.⁵

This area, known as the 'Hams', and subject to flooding, was used for the disposal of the city's refuse for many years and was raised, over a period of time, several feet above its former swampy level. The course of the city wall today is identified by the streets known as the Lower and Upper Borough Walls, but until recent years the north, south and west walls were known as the Rampires⁶ (Fig. 1), a reminder that the wall had an elevated walk behind it like those surviving at York and Chester.

⁵ C. E. Davis, *The Bathes of Bathe's Ayde* (1883), 60.

⁶ The Lower Borough Walls were known as the St. James's Rampire, the Upper Borough Walls as St. Mary's Rampire, and the wall between the West Gate and the Saw Close was known as St. Michael's Rampire. Ord. Survey Map, Somerset, sheet XIV 5 (1936 revision).

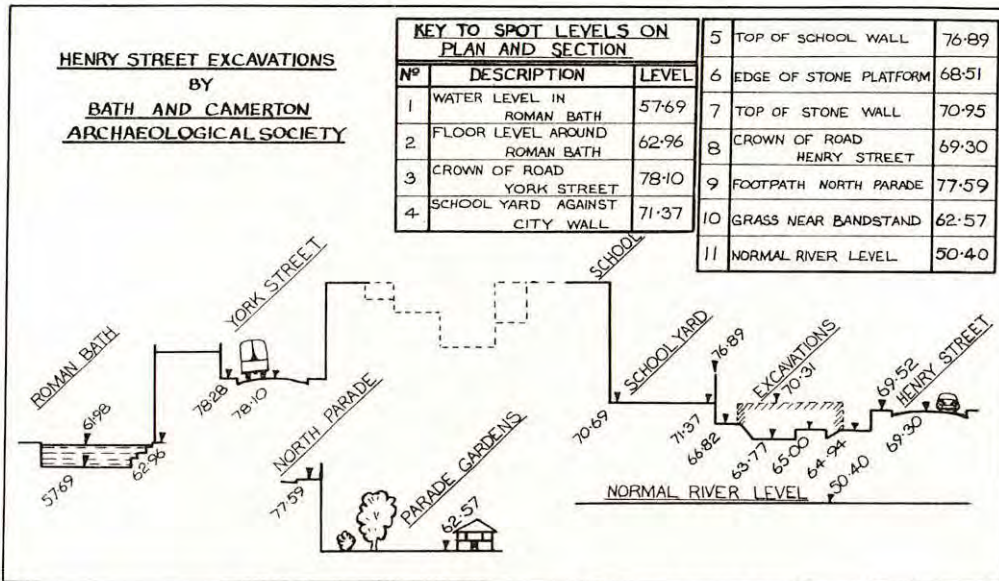


FIG. 2 Bath City Wall Excavation 1951. Relative Levels

THE MEDIEVAL CITY GATES

The four main gates of the city were set at the four cardinal points; their position is shown on several maps of the city. It is perhaps best illustrated on the sketch map of the city made by a Frenchman who visited Bath in or about 1650. From this map it is possible to obtain a fair idea of the extent of the medieval town and also of the appearance of the four principal gates.⁷ The North and South Gates each had a church close by, just within the city walls. The Church of St. Mary was at the North Gate and that of St. James at the South Gate.

It is recorded in the Chamberlain's account of 1588 that four shillings each were to be paid to "John Dellamy, John Chaunter, Thomas Sley, and John Shork for keeping the North, West, East and South gates" respectively.⁸

The four chief gates of the city were locked up at night until four in the morning in 1673 and this arrangement appears to have continued up to at least the middle of the 18th century. It is also recorded that the North, South and West Gates had drawbridges. The East Gate opened almost directly on to the river Avon and no drawbridge was required at this gateway.

⁷ H. Lewis, in *Proc. Bath N. H. and Ant. Field Club*, 4, 140-1. The reconstructions of the city gates are copied from the Frenchman's map. The original of this map is in the British Museum.

⁸ A. J. King and B. H. Watts. *The Municipal Records of Bath, 1189 to 1604*, Appendix F, 40.

THE NORTH GATE appears to have been a fine structure standing in High Street near the junction of Bridge Street and Upper Borough Walls. The gate had three archways, the largest of which was the central carriageway, 10 ft. wide and 15 ft. high. The smaller arches on either side were 5 ft. 6 ins. wide and 11 ft. 6 ins. high. Over the main gateway was a statue of the legendary King of Bath, Bladud. When the Church of St. Mary within the gate ceased to be used for religious purposes a part of the building was used as a school and the rest with the tower became the city gaol. The North Gate was pulled down in April 1755.⁹ During the course of re-building operations on or near the site of the North Gate in May 1803, the workmen came upon the foundations of the city wall, when large pieces of ashlar together with 'fragments of columns' were found.¹⁰

THE SOUTH GATE into the city formerly stood near the west end of the tower of St. James Church at the junction of Orchard Street, Southgate and Stall Street with the Lower Borough Walls. It was a substantial and imposing structure with a gateway 10 ft. 9 ins. wide and 14 ft. 6 ins. high. Over the south portal were three niches: the central niche contained a statue of King Edward III enthroned, with the diocesan bishop, Ralph-de-Salopia, on one side and John-de-Walcot, Prior of Bath, on the other.¹¹ A major repair to the gates and city wall was made in 1369 during Edward's reign and it is likely that the statues were set up to commemorate this rebuilding, not the original building of the walls. The South Gate, like the North Gate, was demolished in 1755.

THE WEST GATE was at the west end of Westgate Street, where it joins Westgate Buildings and the road to the Saw Close. Incorporated in this gateway on its south side was a large house known as 'Westgate House'. This was used to house Royal and other distinguished visitors to the city. The gateway was 10 ft. 8 ins. in width. The West Gate and the house were demolished in 1776 in response to appeals "from many respectable inhabitants" to "direct it to be pulled down as soon as possible, as it becomes every day not only more and more inconvenient but even dangerous".¹² It is evident that the eighteenth century inhabitants of Bath cared but little for its ancient monuments especially if they in any way impeded progress. Thus three of the city's ancient gateways were destroyed within about 20 years or so to make way for the increasing volume of traffic into the city. The demolition of the West Gate was completed by the middle of June 1776.¹²

⁹ *Proc. Bath N. H. and Ant. Field Club*, 4, 140-9; *Bath Journal*, 27 July 1754 and 3 March 1755.

¹⁰ *Bath Herald*, 7 May 1803.

¹¹ Two of the stone figures over this gate are probably those incorporated in the south-west corner of the Colonnade near the Hot Bath.

¹² *Bath Journal* 31 January 1776; 7 February 1776; and 12 June 1776.

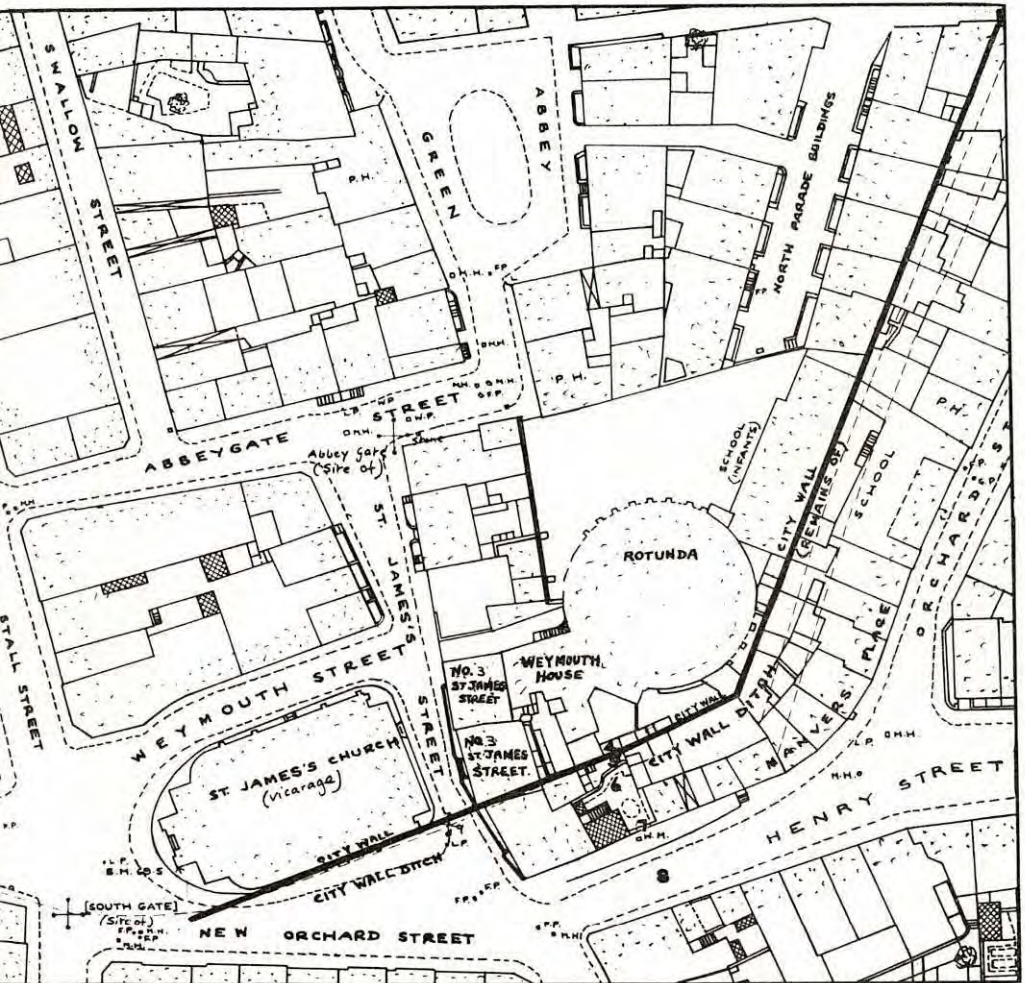
In July 1954 during the reconstruction of Westgate Street well-built vaulted cellars were opened up on the site of the city gate. The cellars are under the roadway at the point of junction with Westgate Buildings and the Saw Close road. The cellars extend 18 ft. to the north and 35 ft. to the west from the approximate centre of the street. Heavy foundations, presumably those of the former gate, were also noted in the cellar about 4 ft. below the street surface on or near the north-east corner of the street.

THE EAST GATE is the only surviving gate. It was the smallest of the four principal gateways, being only 7 ft. 8 ins. wide and 10 ft. 6 ins. high. The gateway can still be seen in the now disused "Boatstall Lane" just north of the Empire Hotel, where the lane leads down to the river near the Pulteney Bridge weir. The city wall is 6 ft. 2 ins. wide at the East Gate. This gateway is now scheduled as an ancient monument.

In addition to the four main gates there were two others opening into the monastic enclosure of the Priory. A gate east of the church is shewn on some maps as St. Peter's Gate, but is referred to in a late 13th century charter as the Gate of Lodyate. By this charter, which was confirmed by the Crown on 28 December 1279,¹³ Bishop Robert (Burnell) (1275-92) granted to the Prior and monks two enclosures. The first lay under the wall on the east of the city extending from the gate of Lodyate to the mill of the monks and from the wall to the river Avon with permission to make the said gate of Lodyate wider for carriage through it and to make a road through the enclosure to the mill. The second lay within the city extending from the South Gate to the Priory precincts. By another charter the Bishop granted for the enlargement of the Priory a meadow adjoining Bath with a mill called Isebell Mill and a garden thereto adjoining and all the land up to the city wall from the South Gate to the mill of the monks. This was to be enclosed with a proper wall when the time serves and meantime with a high hedge or paling. They were also given 'power to make an opening in the City Wall between the Close of the Priory and the South Gate for carrying their hay and driving their beasts to pasture in fair time'. This opening is that which was found during the excavations described below (Fig. 5B, Pl. VI, VII). It was known as the Ham Gate and was closed in 1643 (*see p. 99*).

Mention should also be made of Gascoyne's Tower; this tower was at the north-west corner of the city walls. Leland saw it when he visited the city in 1534 and it is shown on several maps of the city. It was used occasionally as barracks or temporary quarters for prisoners in 1670. It is thought to have stood just north-east of the entrance to the present Theatre Royal on the Saw Close.

¹³ *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (1906), 2, 219 (28 December 1279).



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Fig. 3 St. James' Church, Bath, and the SE. angle of the City Wall

155
917
217

It is not known when the walls of Bath were built. The city figures in the Burghal Hidage,¹⁴ a list of fortresses drawn up in the reign of Edward the Elder, Alfred's successor.¹⁵ Many of these fortresses were established by Alfred himself and in 906 Bath was a place of sufficient importance for the death of its reeve or headman to be recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.¹⁶ The defences of the Saxon burh probably consisted of a bank and ditch, possibly incorporating the remains of the Roman wall. Bath is assessed in the Burghal Hidage at 1000 hides. Each hide produced one man for the defences; so, at the standard rate of 160 men for the furlong of 220 yards, this would give a length of 1,375 yards against an actual length of 1,250 yards.¹⁷

Domesday Book (1086) makes no reference to fortifications at Bath. In 1088 the Bishop of Coutances and his nephew Robert Mowbray earl of Northumberland burnt the city in the course of a raid through Somerset and Wiltshire.¹⁸ The next mention of the defences of the city occurs in an account of the fighting in 1138, when Bath was held for King Stephen.¹⁹ The men of Bristol, supporters of the Empress Matilda, seeking to capture Bath brought with them ladders and other means of scaling the wall (*murum*). After the failure of the attack Stephen himself came to Bath and ordered the walls to be heightened and outworks constructed. Thirteenth century records contain references to the robbing of stone from the walls.²⁰

THE CITY WALL EXCAVATION, 1951²¹

During the spring of 1951 an opportunity occurred to undertake an examination of the city wall on a blitzed site at the rear of Mr. M. K. Turvey's former premises on the north side of Henry Street, Bath. The wall at the south-east corner of the city was also the boundary wall of the nearby Weymouth House School. Permission to excavate was kindly given by Mr. Turvey, to whom the Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society express their thanks. They would also like to thank the Spa Director, Mr. J. Boddington, and the City Engineer, Mr. John Owens, and his staff, for their kind co-operation. The Society gratefully acknowledges monetary grants towards the cost of the excavation from the Bath City Council, the

¹⁴ A. J. Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, 246-9.

¹⁵ F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 262.

¹⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (ed. D. Whitelock), 60.

¹⁷ *V.C.H. Somerset*, 1, 227. I am indebted to Dr. R. Dunning for this information.

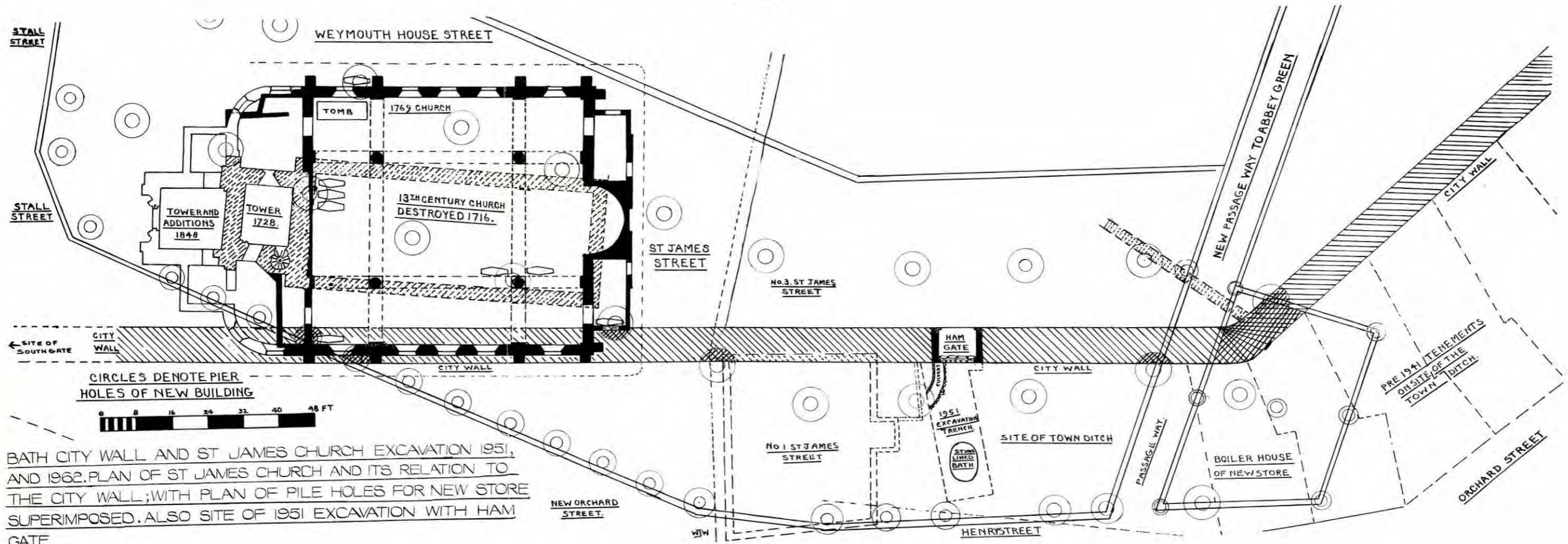
¹⁸ A. L. Poole. *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta 1087-1216* (Oxford 1958), 101.

¹⁹ *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I* (Rolls Series, 82, iii) "Gesta Stephani regis Anglorum", 38, 45.

²⁰ *Rotuli Hundredorum* (London 1818), 123-132.

²¹ A number of volunteers assisted with the excavation. Thanks are accorded to all those who assisted, especially to Miss Mary Rennie, who undertook the arduous duty of general supervision and recording on the site.

PLATE IX



BATH CITY WALL AND ST JAMES CHURCH EXCAVATION 1951, AND 1962. PLAN OF ST JAMES CHURCH AND ITS RELATION TO THE CITY WALL; WITH PLAN OF PILE HOLES FOR NEW STORE SUPERIMPOSED. ALSO SITE OF 1951 EXCAVATION WITH HAM GATE.

Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, Ancient Monuments Inspectorate, the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and the Society of Antiquaries. Mr. and Mrs. Turvey were most helpful throughout and placed part of their premises at the Society's disposal for use as headquarters.

The point selected for the excavation was immediately behind where Mr. Turvey's premises formerly stood at the junction of Henry Street with St. James Street South (formerly known as 'Abbey Lane') (Pl. IX). The remainder of the exposed wall to the east and north including the south-east corner of the city wall, was not then available for excavation; it was later examined when the new Woolworth building was erected on the site (p. 99). The excavation took the form of a large trench 10 ft. wide and 36 ft. long, set at right angles to the city wall on its outer face (Fig. 4). Twenty inches below the floor of the blitzed premises the outline of a small oval shaped stone-built bath was found (Pl. IV; Figs. 3 and 4). This bath is marked on the 1886 edition of the Ordnance Survey. It was built with squared blocks of Bath stone, and a floor of puddled clay; water was supplied by pipe controlled by an outer stopcock. At a depth of 4 ft. was a sewer running alongside the city wall. The sewer was stone-built, and before the work could proceed, it was necessary to remove the drain and place a steel pipe across the excavation to take its place. A disused stone culvert was also found running across the trench at a depth of 4 ft. 6 ins. The first of a series of offsets to the city wall appeared at 4 ft. from the surface. There were in all twelve of these offsets and they varied in width from 1 in. to 3 ins., thereby increasing the width of the wall at its base by about 1 ft. 3 ins. The width of the city wall at the East Gate is 6 ft. 3 ins. At a depth of 10 ft. a well-constructed stone platform was found alongside the wall, level with the third offset (Fig. 6B). The large Bath stone blocks were about 6 ins. thick and the platform was 9 ft. wide. When one of the top stones was lifted, it was found that a second similar layer lay below and the joints between the two layers of stone were sealed by a layer of blue clay to prevent seepage of water and damp from below. This device for stopping damp has been previously noted in Bath. The purpose of this stone platform was at first difficult to determine, but it was later discovered that the floor in Mr. Turvey's basement was of similar construction, and it was at precisely the same level. There is no doubt that the platform was the basement floor of premises, built like Mr. Turvey's against the city wall.²² The filling above the platform was very mixed dumped material containing a number of clay tobacco pipes and pottery sherds mostly of seventeenth and eighteenth century date (Appendix A). Other finds included a William III shilling and a small

²² Buildings were erected alongside the city wall at some time after 1700 and were demolished about 1850. Hunt collection, Bath Reference Library, Vol. I, 19, 22 and 23 (see Pl. VIII).

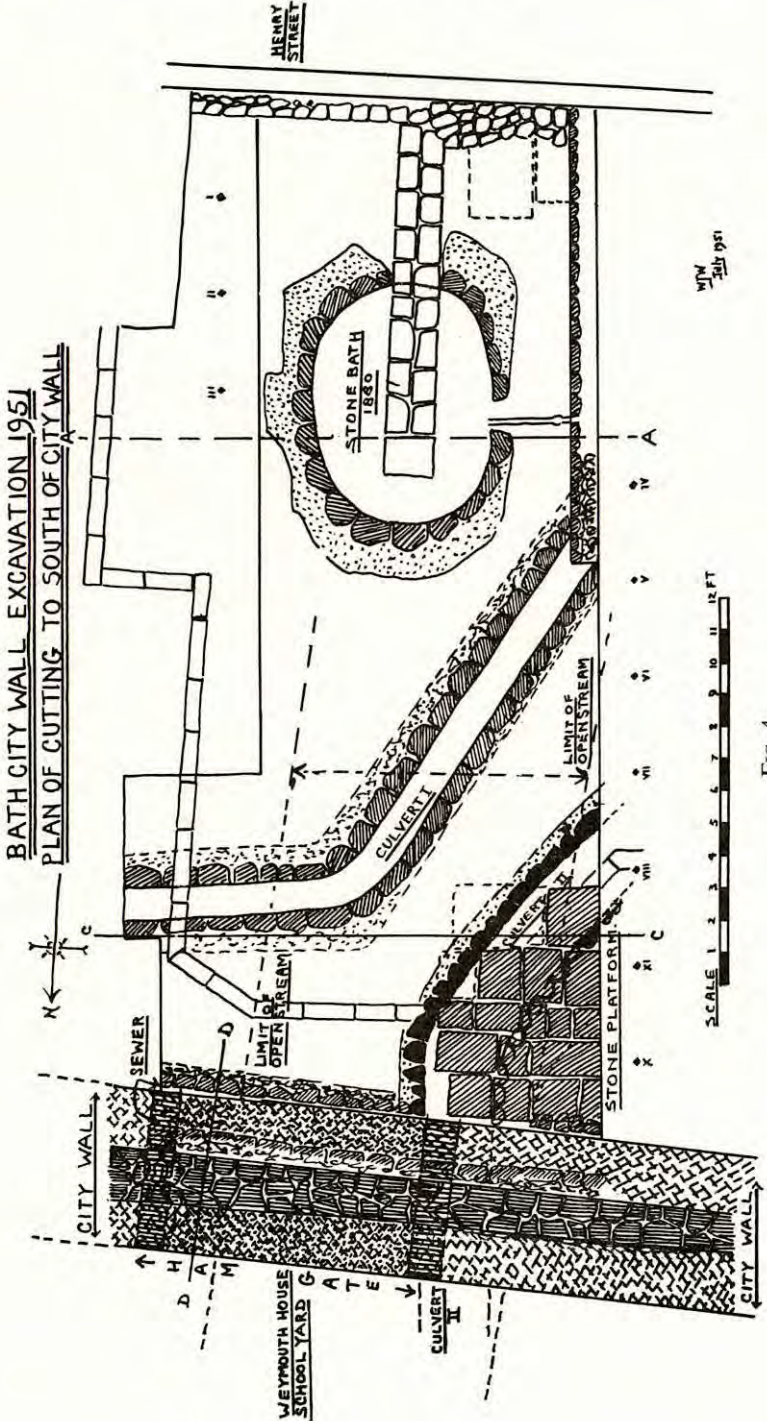


FIG. 4

medal of the "Free Kirk of Scotland" dated 1845. There was also a fragment of late thirteenth century encaustic tile, probably from the Priory.

The stone platform was removed and below this appeared a series of large slabs of lias. The slabs first appeared against the city wall and were traced across the excavation trench to its west side. They proved to be the cover stones of a large stone-built water culvert, that had become completely silted up with earth (Fig. 5B and Pl. V). Mixed with this earth was a large quantity of orange-coloured oxide deposit similar to that which occurs in the water courses of the Roman Baths. There is little doubt that the culvert had formerly carried the hot mineral water from the Baths. It is on record that the 'Horse Bath' which was formerly situated on the site of what is now Messrs. Spear Bros. Pork Factory, was supplied with hot water from the Baths. It is likely that the culvert was constructed for this purpose. The 'Horse Bath' was probably a shallow pool in which the many cab horse owners exercised their horses to clean the mud from their fetlocks after a day's work on the streets of Bath before the macadam road surface was invented. The stone culvert had superseded an open stream running in the same direction. The stone culvert had been built to the west side of the former stream, the filling of which was found intact to the east of the culvert (Figs. 4 and 6B). The stream and 'Horse Bath' are shown on the map made by the visiting Frenchman in or about 1650 (*see* fn. 7 p. 88). Speed's map of 1610 also shews the stream. It was called the "Bum Ditch". The silt filling of the open stream produced a number of cooking pot sherds of eleventh and thirteenth century date; a sherd of glazed thirteenth century ware; two well-worn fragments of Roman pottery: (1) a nondescript worn sherd of samian ware and (2) a sherd of black Roman pie-dish pottery (Appendix B).

The stone culvert trench had been cut into the natural blue clay on its west side. The open stream appeared to have joined up with the town ditch. This latter brought the water diverted from the river at the Pulteney Bridge sluices to work the water wheel at the 'Monks Mill' that stood formerly on what is now the Parade Gardens. The mill stream or town ditch alongside the east city wall is shown on the 1650 map of Bath and also on Dr. Jones's view of the city of Bath (1702). The filling of the town ditch at the south end of the excavation trench produced fragments of 12th, 13th and 15th century cooking pots and green glazed ware (Appendix B).

The footings of the city wall were found to have been built on the solid marl clay and no trace of Roman work could be identified in the section examined (Pl. V). The series of off-sets in the base of the wall did not appear to have been mortared together; they probably represent a rebuild of the wall, made when the culvert replaced the open stream. The wall appeared to rest on the stone culvert and was built at the same time or later than the culvert

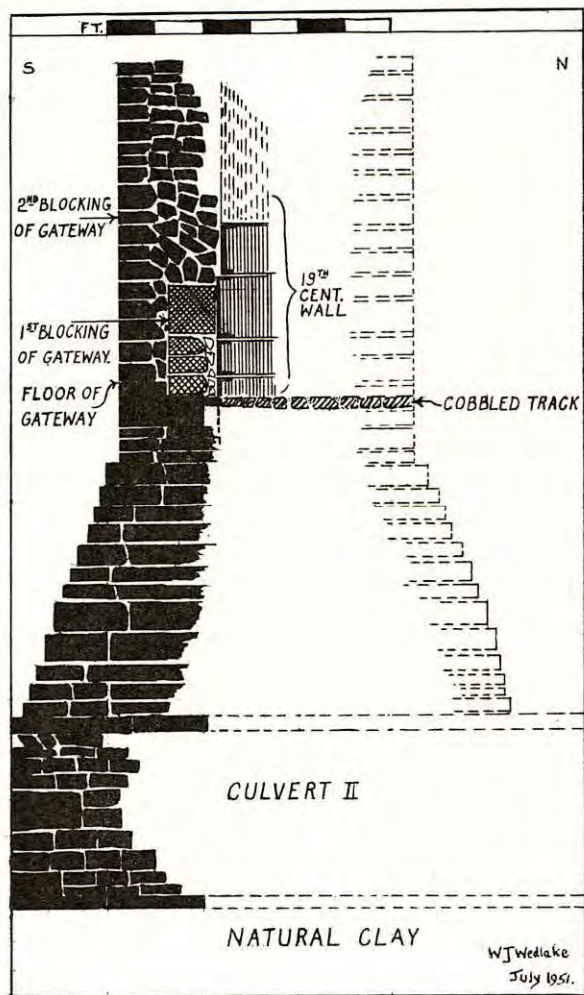


FIG. 5A Section across D — D (see Fig. 4)
(Culvert II has been imposed on to the section)

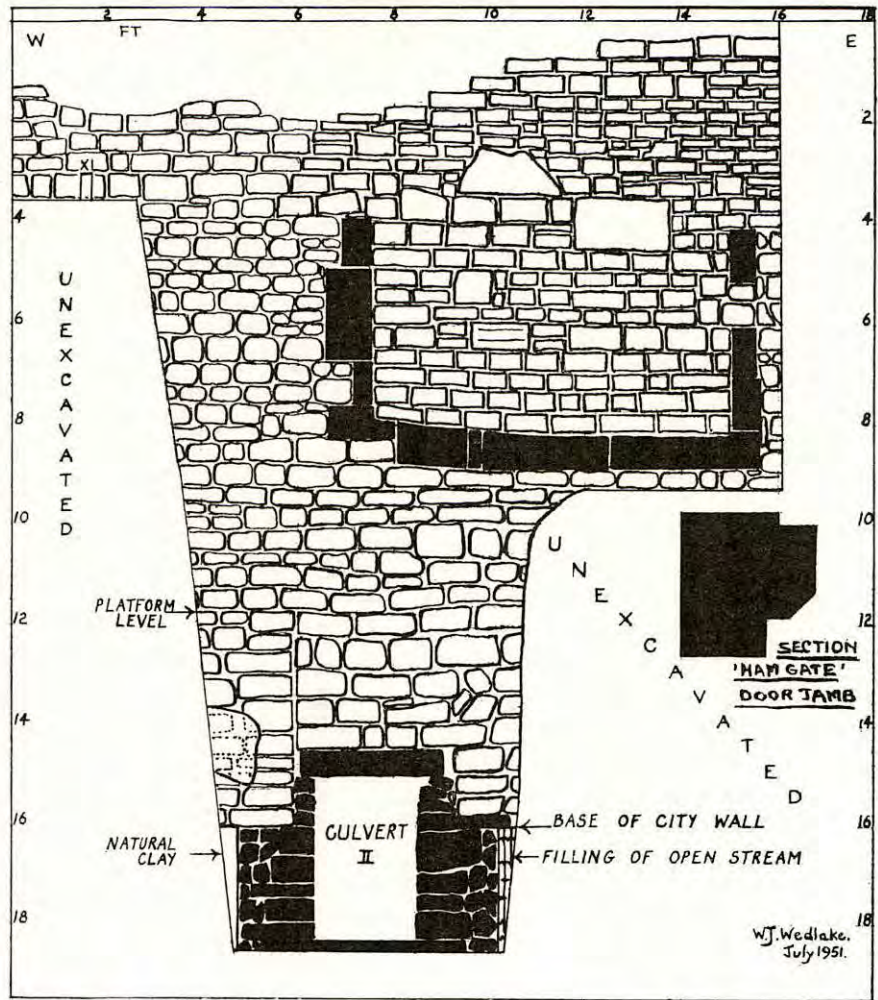


FIG. 5B South face of Bath City Wall, showing underlying culvert
and Ham Gate with later blocking wall

(Fig. 5B). The filling of the open stream was definitely earlier than the wall at the point examined, as the wall partially rests on the stream filling. The bottom of the open water channel was 17 ft. 9 ins. below the present surface, only 7 ins. higher than the present normal river level (Fig. 2).²³ The straight joint shown in the wall to the left of the culvert in Pl. V was probably the west side of an arch through the wall for the open stream.

After the stone platform was reached at 10 ft., it was necessary to keep pumps working continuously to keep the excavation clear of water. A considerable quantity of water continued to seep through the silted filling of the culvert and it was noticed that the water was tepid and not cold as might normally be expected from a water-course at that depth.

After the completion of the large trench, a small extension was made alongside the wall to the east, but this was not dug below the level of the sewer which continued alongside the wall. The purpose of this extension was to examine several large blocks of Bath stone in the exposed wall face (Fig. 5B). The blocks, unlike those in the normal wall, were placed in an upright position, suggesting that there may have been a gateway at this point in the city wall. This surmise proved to be correct; a further four blocks were found, clearly revealing the outline of a blocked up gateway (Pls. VI and VII). The width of the gateway was 7 ft. 4 ins. with the threshold 7 ft. below the present surface. Three stones of the door jambs survived on each side and the threshold was intact (Pl. VI). A small amount of the stonework blocking the gateway was removed and an earlier blocking wall was found behind the outer blocking (Pl. VII). Behind the threshold, within the width of the wall, a well-worn cobbled stone surface to the roadway was found intact (Fig. 5A). The newly discovered gate is 4 ins. less in width than the existing East Gate which is 7 ft. 8 ins. wide and 10 ft. 6 ins. high in the centre. The colour of the mortar used was similar to that used at the East Gate.

The newly discovered gate lies too far east to have any connection with the South Gate of the city which was to the west of the former St. James Church. Several early maps of the city shew a gateway in the wall near the point excavated.²⁴ It was known as the 'Ham Gate' and gave access from the monastery to the meadow land known as the 'Hams', an area of land in the Prior of Bath's possession lying between the city wall and the river Avon.²⁵

Leland writing in 1534 notices that in the area "Bytwixt the bridge [Old Bridge] and the south gate of Bath, I markid fair

²³ The levels were taken by Mr. J. Owens of the Bath City Engineer's Dept.

²⁴ The Ham Gate is shown on a 16th century map, on Joseph Gilmore's map dated 1694 and on a later map dated 1717. The gateway is not shown on Smith's map dated 1571 nor is it shown on the Frenchman's map of about 1650.

²⁵ *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 2 (1906), 219.

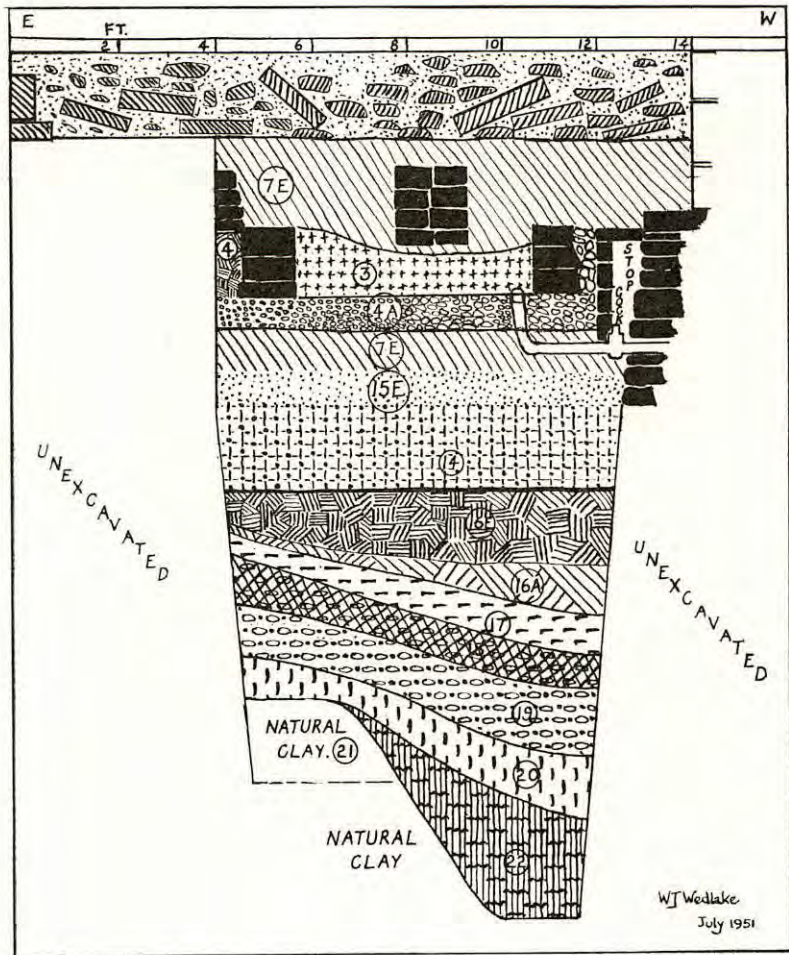


FIG. 6A Section across A — A (see Fig. 4)

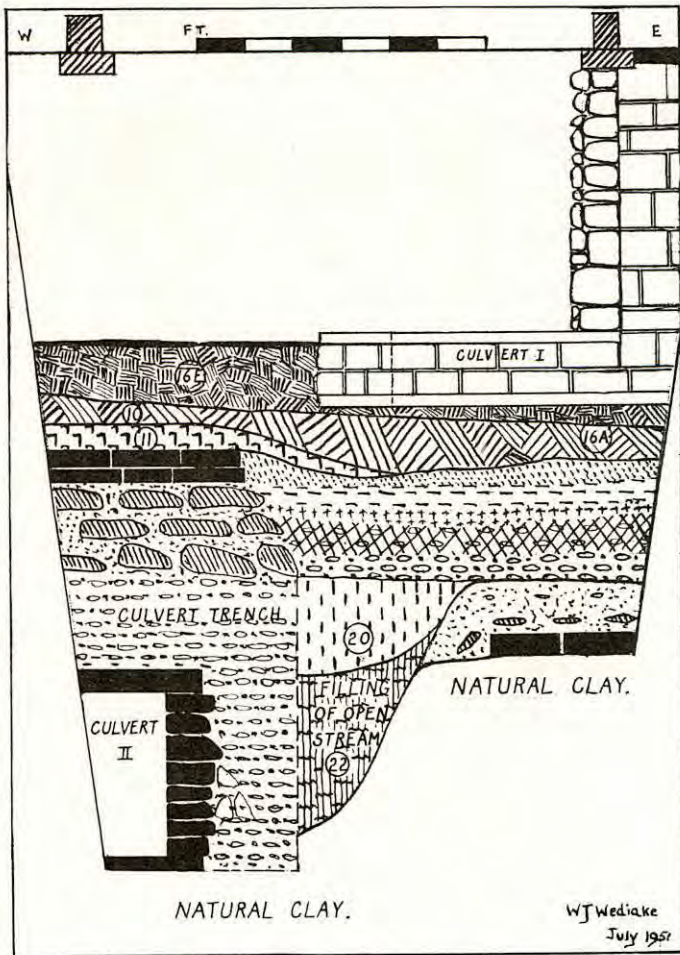


FIG. 6B Section across C — C (see Fig. 4)

medowes on eche hand".²⁶ A description of the city walls made in 1675 contains the following: "The church of St. James appears to have been built on the Walls of the City, so we cannot continue our walk without descending [from the wall walk], until we approach the site of Ham Gate, now closed up, from which our visitor can look down into the Horse Bath, which received the overflow of the Hot Springs, and into a canal, rather than ditch, that took off the flood waters of the Avon, in a direct line across the Ham Gardens, thus hastening its flow." The reference to the overflow from the hot springs obviously refers to the water culvert already described. In 1643 the Ham Gate was closed "in order that all tolls and dues should be paid at the main gates of the town."²⁷

The 1951 excavation produced two unexpected features: the Ham Gate and the stone culvert built to replace an open stream. Pottery sherds of 11th and 12th century date found in the filling of the stream indicate that the wall resting here on this filling must be of later date.

The fact that the wall at the point chosen for excavation in 1951 was of medieval date does not prove that there was no Roman wall surrounding the city. Excavation of the outer face of the wall by Mr. Michael Owen in 1961 failed to disclose offsets similar to those found in 1951; the wall was built in regular courses of small blocks of limestone of fairly uniform size (Pl. III). Mr. Barry Cunliffe has recently drawn my attention to this feature suggesting that it represents Roman masonry. With this in mind the photographs taken in 1951 were re-examined and it was noted that similar masonry occurred on the wall face at the left (west) side of the trench (Pl. VI). The small rectangular blocks of limestone were set in courses about 5 ins. high in the lower part of the wall and are quite different from the rest of the masonry which contains re-used stones. This is the wall face prior to its breach in the late 13th century for the insertion of the Ham Gate and the underlying culvert.

ST. JAMES CHURCH SITE (Pl. IX and Fig. 7)

The enemy air raids on Bath in April 1941 destroyed the Church of St. James at the South Gate leaving only the stone outer walls and the tower standing. The Church remained in this derelict state until 1955 when it was decided to clear the site for commercial development. The parish of St. James was incorporated with the Abbey and the site sold to Messrs. F. W. Woolworth Ltd. Before the church was demolished a number of burials were removed from the crypt for reburial.²⁸

In the meantime Messrs. Woolworth had also taken over Mr. K. Turvey's premises, including the site of the 1951 excavation on

²⁶ Leland *Itinerary*, I, 140 (ed. Toulmin Smith).

²⁷ C. E. Davis, 76, 67.

²⁸ The church of St. James drew its congregation from the central business part of the city and many prominent citizens including Mayors of the city were buried within its walls.

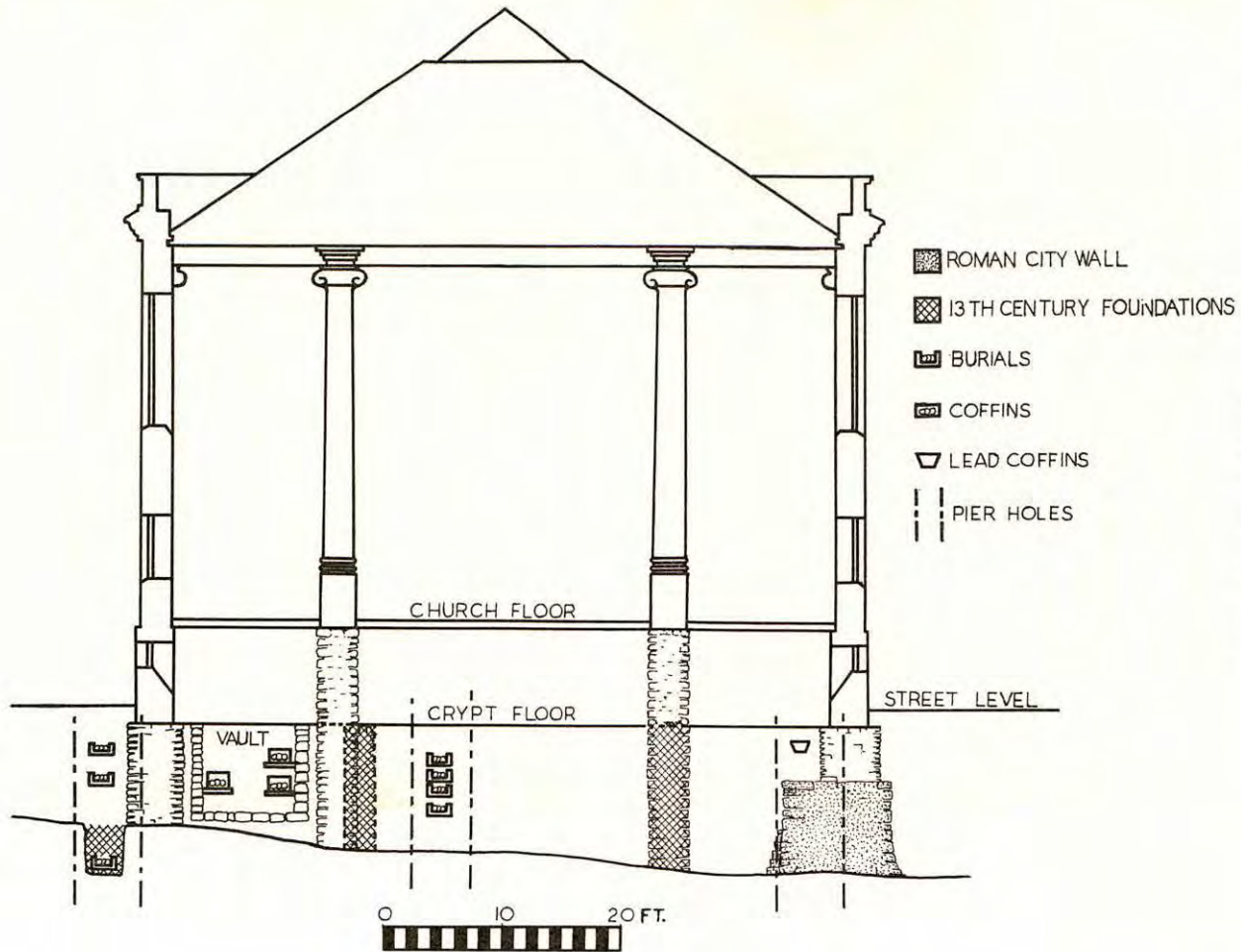
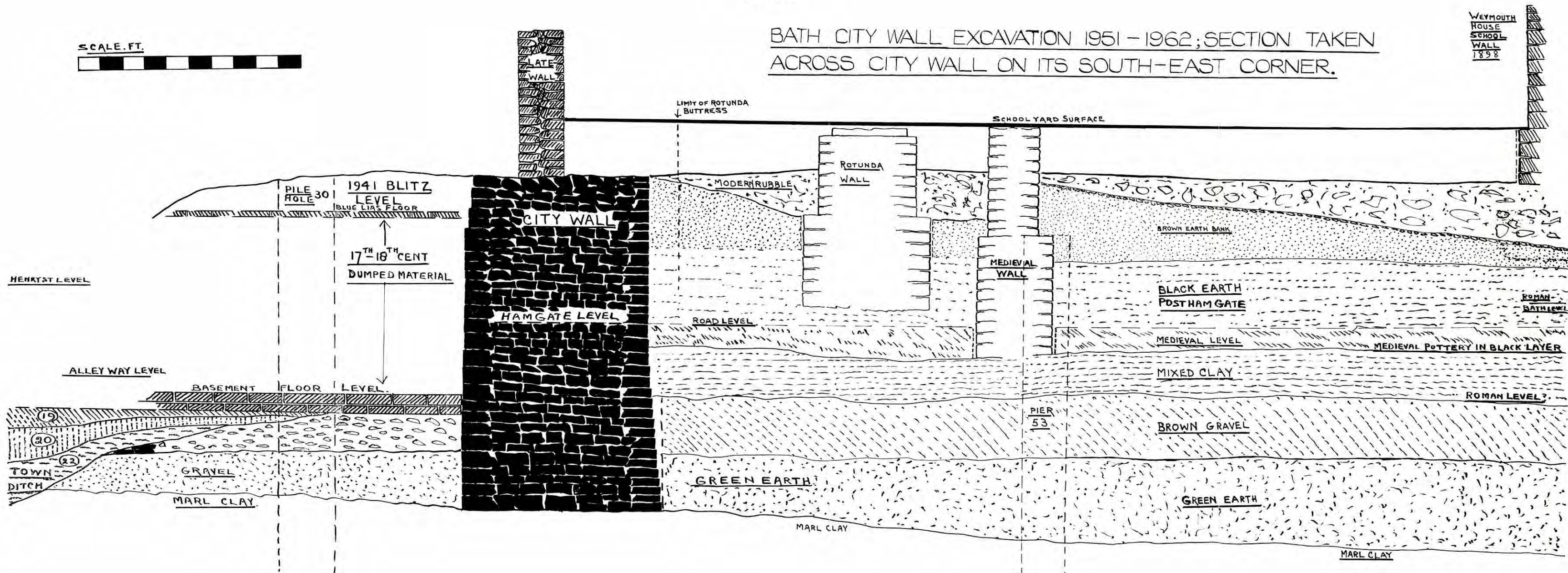


FIG. 7 St. James Church, shewing relation to City Wall

BATH CITY WALL EXCAVATION 1951-1962; SECTION TAKEN ACROSS CITY WALL ON ITS SOUTH-EAST CORNER.

WEYMOUTH HOUSE SCHOOL WALL 1898

SCALE. FT.



the east side of St. James Street, and the adjoining fine Georgian house, No. 3 St. James Street. At about the same time the Weymouth House School and its grounds were purchased by Messrs. Marks and Spencer to make extensions to their store in Stall Street. This large development entailed the closure of Weymouth Street and St. James Street, and provision was made for a new pedestrian right of way from Abbey Green to Henry Street towards the east end of the new buildings. This extensive site covered a long length of the city wall extending from Manvers Hall in Pierpont Place to the junction of Orchard Street with Southgate Street, including the south-east corner of the section of the wall excavated in 1951, together with the whole of the area formerly occupied by St. James Church (Fig. 1).

The new buildings were designed to stand on a series of concrete piles extending to an average depth of 26 ft. below floor level, a method requiring a minimum of excavation.²⁹ The Bath and Camerton Society observed the boring of the holes and plotted the result, establishing the correct alignment of the city wall (Pl. IX) and recovering the plan of St. James Church. In cases where the borehole was obstructed by masonry, manual digging had to be resorted to. But it was unfortunately impossible to carry out a detailed examination of the site. The city wall, together with the recently discovered Ham Gate and the foundations of St. James Church, are still preserved to a depth of 10 ft. below the floor of the new Woolworth building.

A series of presentations to the church or chapel of St. James and resignations therefrom are recorded in the Bath chartulary.³⁰ The earliest is by Gilbert Prior of Bath (c. 1180-1209) with the consent of Master Nicholas to Peter his clerk of the perpetual vicarage in the chapels of St. James and All Saints "de la Biri".³⁰ But it is clear from the charter of Robert Burnell confirmed by Edward I on 28th December 1279, that records previous to that date refer to the old Church of St. James adjoining the bishop's chamber. In this charter Bishop Robert of Bath and Wells granted to the Prior and Convent of Bath two closes of land. In the second of the two closes, "within the city wall from the south gate of the city to the close of the Priory they shall construct a parish church of St. James in lieu of the Church of St. James adjoining the Bishops

²⁹ The pile boring operation was accomplished with a mechanical boring machine. The pile hole was about 2 ft. in diameter and the holes were kept intact by lowering steel liners as the boring proceeded. Holes were bored to an average depth of 26 ft. Some 9 ft. of this was natural and this consisted generally of blue clay 1 ft., rock 3 ft., clay 2 ft. and rock 3 ft. On completion of the boring operation the pier hole was filled with concrete and the steel liners withdrawn before the concrete had hardened. If an obstruction was met with it was possible to lower a man with a pneumatic drill into the pier hole.

³⁰ *Bath Chartulary* (Som. Rec. Soc., 7), ii, 2.

chamber, the chancel of which the Bishop has thought fit to remove reserving to himself and his successors the nave or body of the church as a site for a chapel . . ."³¹ The Church of St. James at the South Gate was therefore not erected until after 1279. The Bath chartulary also records³² the "Institution by Thomas Prior of Bath of Sir Walter de Melles, Chaplain to the rectory of the chapel of St. James within the walls of Bath. Dated in the Nones of October 1298 (7th October)".

The 13th century church was a simple rectangular building with a nave and chancel 70 ft. long and 32 ft. wide and a western tower, probably of later date, 16 ft. by 20 ft. This church was placed close to, but not parallel with the city wall (Pl. IX), with the west end set further to the north than the east end, so that the door was clear of the nearby South Gate.

The thirteenth century church of St. James continued to be used until 1716 when the tower was rebuilt and strengthened. The Gothic tower was stated to be similar in appearance to the Widcombe church tower. In consequence of a fire in Southgate Street the tower was again rebuilt in 1728 and the old church was replaced by a new nave and chancel built on classical lines. The footings of the south wall of the new church rested on the foundations of the city wall, and the church must have had a somewhat incongruous appearance with its western Gothic style tower not in alignment with the new church which was parallel with the city wall. The new church was built in 1769 and was 61 ft. long and 63 ft. wide (Pl. IX and Fig. 7).

The South Gate was destroyed in 1755. In 1845 a movement was set on foot to clear the tenements to the west of the church, and the corporation granted the plot of land to the church in 1848. A plan was then prepared to extend the church westward and to build a new western tower 152 ft. high, to harmonise with the classical style of the 1769 church.³³ The new church was quadrangular in plan; including the tower it measured 109 ft. long and 63 ft. wide with an apsidal sanctuary. The floor level of the church was sufficiently high to allow for a crypt for burials below (Fig. 7). The plan (Pl. IX) shows the thirteenth century church of St. James, the superimposed plan of the later church with its additions and its relation to the city wall, and the position of the 68 piers on which the new Woolworth store rests.³⁴ In addition to the pier borings a number of trenches were also excavated but most of them were not dug to a sufficient depth to penetrate the Roman levels. The one exception was on the site of the

³¹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 2, 219.

³² No. 495 (Som. Rec. Soc., 7, ii, 97).

³³ Plans of the Church of St. James were kindly lent to the Society by Mr. F. W. Beresford Smith, F.R.I.B.A., to whom we express our thanks.

³⁴ Both Messrs. Woolworth Ltd., and Marks and Spencer Ltd., co-operated with us and gave every possible facility for recording on the site. We express our thanks to them and especially to Mr. Roffley, the site foreman, and his staff for their co-operation.

south-east corner of the city wall where it was necessary to make a large excavation to take the boiler house for the new store. This involved the removal of the south-east angle of the city wall and it was possible at this point to obtain a complete section across the wall and the material lying on either side of it (Pl. X). At the point examined the wall was 9 ft. wide and was built of well-shaped blocks of the local limestone with a brown cinnamon coloured mortar. The same mortar was also found in the six pier borings through the city wall. The wall foundations were clearly of one period with no additions; they rested on the virgin marl clay. The wall examined in the 1951 excavation was of different construction from the wall sectioned on the south-east angle. The wall in the 1951 excavation appeared to have little mortar; the stones were larger and seemed to have been re-used. The stones in the south-east corner were not re-used and this wall could well be of Roman construction. If this is so, it also follows that the wall in the other six points along its course on the plan (Pl. IX) is also Roman. There was no sign of an internal turret at the south-east angle; a later wall with brown mortar appeared to run in a north-westerly direction from the city wall (Pl. IX). An eighteenth-century tenement had been constructed against the outer face of the city wall over the rubbish-filled ditch in much the same way as that found in the 1951 excavation (Pl. VIII). The walls of the tenement building rested on large blocks of stone 9 ins. thick and 2 to 3 ft. long, placed across the filling of the town ditch at a depth of about 9 ft. from the surface. Apart from the lower levels on the inside of the city wall the material was much disturbed by the insertion of later foundations, including the buttresses and wall of the curious building known as the 'Rotunda' that occupied the Weymouth House site before the school was built in 1898 (Pl. VIII; Fig. 3).³⁵ Within the city wall at a depth of 10 ft. from the modern surface a thin layer of black, burnt material appeared; it is possible that this burnt level was associated with the burning of the city by Robert Mowbray in A.D. 1088 (*see* p. 92). Sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this layer which equates with the level of the roadway at the Ham Gate (Pl. X). Below this there was a level of mixed clay down to a depth of 13 ft. followed by a layer of gravel to 15 ft. 6 ins. and finally a greenish loam down to 19 ft. which was also the bottom of the city wall foundation. The layers below the burnt medieval level are possibly of Roman date. The lowest level of greenish loam was completely sterile and was possibly the surface in pre-Roman times. A small fragment of plain samian ware was found lying on the tail end of this layer which equates with a white mortar level that is known to be of Roman date and is likely to be associated with the nearby Roman building in which the tessellated pavement was found in 1898. The white mortar layer appeared to run under the gravel layer and was certainly above the sterile greenish loam

³⁵ Weymouth House and No. 3 St. James Street.

level.³⁶ The mixed clay and gravel layers would therefore appear to be the remnants of a bank of Roman date behind the wall and the stratified material is in the correct sequence if it had been thrown up from the excavated ditch in front of the wall.

Although it has not been proved that the wall is of Roman construction the results of the excavation do tend to confirm that it is primarily of this date apart from the Ham Gate area which was a medieval rebuild of the wall, made to construct the culvert and the gateway.

It is to be hoped that additional opportunities will occur for further examination of the city wall which may perhaps definitely determine this intriguing feature of the city's history.³⁷

The writer is indebted to Dr. C. A. Raleigh Radford for helpful suggestions and for kindly reading this paper.

For reasons of economy it has been necessary to omit some details concerning the excavations from this report. A typescript copy including the unpublished material with additional plates and drawings will be deposited at the City of Bath Reference Library.

APPENDIX

BATH CITY WALL EXCAVATION 1951

POTTERY

A considerable and varied collection of pottery sherds was found during the course of the excavation. A complete record was made of the layers in which the various types of pottery occurred. Unfortunately the greater part of the pottery recovered came from material which had been dumped on the site after the 18th century buildings that had occupied it was demolished in 1850 (Pl. VIII). The pottery found above the level of the former basement floor is consequently of little use from a stratigraphical point of view, but a list of the types noted is appended to this report (A). The pottery found below the level of the basement floor was stratified and has proved to be useful for dating the stone culvert and the earlier open stream filling. A list of the stratified material is also appended (B).

The sherds of Roman pottery came from several different layers associated with later medieval sherds, and all had the appearance of

³⁶ The City Council Foreman, who has had many years experience of the soils in the Bath valley, states that before the lias rock is reached the soils encountered are: (1) Brown clay. (2) Gravel. (3) Blue clay 2 to 5 ft., in all about 10 ft. in depth. This agrees with the results obtained from the pile holes on the Woolworth store site where the average depth of the pile holes was 26 ft.

³⁷ The writer thanks Mr. Peter Greening, Secretary, for help in the compilation of this paper; also the Treasurer, Miss M. F. Jaine, Mrs. Brackenbury, Miss Procter and Messrs. Dunning, Kneen, Maddacott and Scott for keeping observation on the St. James Church excavations, and Messrs. Bilby, Browning and West for assistance with the illustrations.

considerable wear. The same number of sherds could no doubt be found in a similar excavation made at any point in or near the Roman city.

(A) The pottery was examined by Mr. E. A. Lane, Keeper of the Department of Ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and it has also been seen by Mr. J. G. Hurst, F.S.A., to whom thanks are expressed.

List of wares ranging in date from the 17th to the second half of the 19th century found in dumped material on site of building demolished in 1850 behind the Bath City Wall.

- 1 Thick red earthenware with green and brown glazes; probably West of England, 17th-18th century.
- 2 Thick red earthenware with cream coloured glaze and 'Sgraffito' (scratched) designs; probably German 17th-18th century.
- 3 Earthenware decorated with brown and cream 'slip'; Staffordshire first half of 18th century.
- 4 English 'delft' ware; the thicker fragments 17th century; the rest 18th century and perhaps West of England.
- 5 'Elers' red stoneware; Staffordshire; late 17th or beginning of 18th century.
- 6 Salt-glazed stoneware coloured mottled brown or grey and blue; German (Westerwald); late 17th/early 18th century.
- 7 Brown salt-glazed stoneware; probably from Staffordshire and Nottingham; first half of 18th century.
- 8 Fine white salt-glazed stoneware; Staffordshire, about 1760-70.
- 9 Chinese porcelain printed in underglaze blue; second half of 18th century.
- 10 Miscellaneous 19th century earthenware.

Note: A number of sherds of Roman and medieval pottery were also found in the dumped material and are of no stratigraphical value but the following were noted for record:

Sherds of samian ware Forms 18; 33; and 37 represented. The form 37 sherd is stamped: ISURUSI.

There were also miscellaneous sherds of 13th, 14th century and Tudor pottery.

(B) The earlier stratified material was submitted to Mr. G. C. Dunning, F.S.A. and the appended remarks are based on his report. To him also we express our thanks.

BATH CITY WALL EXCAVATION 1951

Stratified pottery forms below the stone floor level of the 18th century building built against the city wall and partially over the site of the town ditch.

Layers 16-18 the material is somewhat mixed, but below this the sherds are predominantly of medieval date (Figs. 6A and 6B).

The Roman sherds are no doubt intrusions thrown into the city ditch from the Roman town.

| <i>Layer</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Date</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16 | Samian with stamped motif. Form 38. Flanged. | Roman 2nd Century A.D. |
| 17 | Two sherds of grey ware with thin pale green glaze. Combed vertical lines. | Probably 13th century. |
| 17 | Samian base. Form 27. Roman. rosette stamped; rouletted. Pattern stamped tile, Samian form 37. | 1st Century A.D. 4th Century A.D. Late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D. |
| | Medieval cooking pot rims (7) early everted types. Also saggy bases. | 12th Century A.D. |
| | Sherds from medieval jugs glazed, some scored. | 13th Century A.D. |
| | Two glazed sherds and coarse cooking pot sherds. | 13th Century A.D. |
| 18 | Grey ware plain; sagging base of large jug with poor glaze and flared rim and some glazed sherds. Several jug handles of round section small flat base glazed inside. Tubular spout of pitcher. | 13th Century. 14th - 15th Century. Probably 12th Century. |
| 18 | Pitcher one sherd. Strip and pellet decoration, olive glaze. Sherd Bellamine. | Probably 12th Century. 16th and 17th Century. |
| 19 | Green glass. Roman tile; Amphora sherd. Medieval rims and sag bases of cooking pots. | Probably Roman Roman 1st - 2nd Century 12th Century. |
| 20 | Samian sherd; grey ware sherd; scored tile. Cooking pot rims (6), sag bases (5), sherds of jugs; glazed sherds, some scored. One sherd notched, strip and pellets. Olive green glaze. Cooking pot rims moulded and everted; glazed jug sherds, plain sagging base rouletted along edge. | Roman. 12th - 13th Century. Late 13th Century. Probably all 13th Century. |

| <i>Layer</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Date</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 22 | Roman mortarium sherd. Tile. Large sherd of squat cooking pot, rim outward slope, beaded inside. <i>cf.</i> Old Sarum (Salisbury Museum), Barry Island (Cardiff Museum). Everted rims; 5 sagging bases, squat cooking pots. | Roman. 12th Century. 12th Century. |
| 23 | Samian rim, Form 18/31. Everted cooking pot rim. Two sag bases and 2 sherds. | Early 2nd Century. 12th Century. 12th Century. |
| Blue clay filling of open stream | Cooking pot rim, beaded outside. Jug sherd neck; rims (5) poor light green glaze. | 12th Century. 13th Century. |

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