

A WALK AROUND UPHILL ROMAN LINCOLN

On Thursday 17 September Members of the Architecture Group went for a walk around Uphill Lincoln kindly led by Penny Forsdyke one of our members.

We started beside the remains of the Roman East Gate. Penny explained that Lincoln was probably sited where it is today because it was at the junction of several Roman roads and close to the River Witham which both provided excellent transport links. Also the steep hill rising over the flatter land provided a good look out point which could be effectively defended. Lincoln started as a fortified outpost and then became a settlement, or Colonia, for veteran soldiers and their families. The remains at East Gate are of one of the towers flanking the gate way. Soldiers lived above and checked all entries into the Colonia for arms and taxable items etc.



We then walked along East Bight, which follows the line of the old Roman Colonia wall and stopped at the site of the baths and toilets. Also sited here is the cistern that used to provide the water for these. How the water got to the cistern is still a mystery as no inlet has been found and the only known well of this time is situated down the hill. Further along we viewed the wall of the old Basilica which has lines of tiles running through the stonework. This was because the lime mortar used to fix the stones does not set well in winter so each autumn a layer of tiles was put on top to protect the wall and then building continued above this in the Spring.

Next was the Newport Arch, the oldest arch in the UK still used by traffic. To the side of the main arch the smaller pedestrian entrance can still be seen.

We then arrived at the site of St-Pauls-in-the-Bail. The original church on the site was possibly one of the first Christian Churches in England. Next to it is the original Well used to supply the Colonia with water. This area was also the site of the Forum where markets and public meetings were held. The positions of the original stone columns forming the entrance can be seen in the road. Along Bailgate would have been the premises and shops of many craftsmen.

We returned to Eastgate around the Cathedral where Penny was given many thanks for her wonderful guidance.

Dave Newman