

'INVASION A.D.43'

The Roman Invasion of Britain: Dover Museum

JACK WOOLFORD

I WAS PLEASED to accept Dover District Council's invitation to the opening of the new exhibition, the more so as the words 'togas optional' appeared on the card. I could not comply with this because the Woolfords (wolf wards: guardians of the community against wolves) who came to Dover with the first Anglo-Saxon pirates but who immediately settled and romanised, pawned their togas, when the legions left in A.D. 410, to pay their travel costs to Hartlepool. I was very favourably impressed with the libation-pouring ladies and with the gentlemen, like Cllr. Kit Smith who had retained their togas – though the fact that all the gentlemen, including one in horn-rimmed spectacles, wore laurel wreaths puzzled me. I didn't know which of their personal triumphs they were celebrating. The fully armed warrior who read the proclamation of the exhibition, which he translated from Latin effortlessly, and at sight, into English, was even more impressive.

Christine Waterman, the Curator (also speaking in English) rightly singled out Jon Iveson as the main begetter of the exhibits and the display, and how right she was. Rightly, because Dover was less important in A.D.43, when invasion was successful, than in 55 B.C. when it failed, and it was accordingly necessary to borrow exhibits from Bath and beyond. I was, however, especially pleased to note that Brian Philp had provided some artifacts, an augury, one hopes, of improving archaeological relationships.

The design of the exhibition, with its red panelled walls, is atmospherically brilliant, and, using the best modern display techniques, offers enough information to explain the campaign and the exhibits without making too great demands on visitors.

The exhibition lasts until 31st October and I shall be surprised if our members do not feel themselves enriched by it.



A Centurion's
Helmet