



ROMAN VILLA



During the Roman occupation of Britain (about 55BC to 450 AD) a good deal of the southern and eastern parts of England became farm estates, to produce wheat and grapes and other agricultural and dairy produce. A Villa was the equivalent of our farm-house and, similarly, had buildings associated with farming, as well as the main block which was occupied as living quarters.

Villas were often built just on one level, but sometimes, as in the model, they had an upstairs as well.

The large, central living room was called the 'atrium'. There was also a kitchen and a dining room or 'triclinium', a shrine to the gods, sleeping quarters, women's apartments, servants' quarters; a bath-room (or series of rooms) and a stoke-hold, the heat from which fed the 'hypocaust' or under-floor heating.

There would also be farm buildings, probably separate from the main block. In the model, the wing with the large outer doors is a corn drying chamber, with under-floor heating.

Walls were made of stone or brick, but were sometimes timber-framed, with an infill of 'wattle and daub'. Roofs were of timber, covered with clay tiles or stone slates.

The best rooms in the villa had mosaic floors made with small pieces of stone or tile. The inside walls were plastered, and sometimes had pictures painted on them.

The garden was quite formal, with rows of small trees and shrubs.

Many Roman Villas have been excavated and there is much Roman material in our Museums.

HOW TO MAKE THE MODEL

- 1 Paint the areas of the plan which will not be covered by the buildings – grey for the yard, a mixture of greens for the surrounding areas, and a mixture of greens and bright colours for the garden beds. When dry, stick the plan down to a piece of plywood, hardboard or chipboard.
- 2 Do all the scoring on the 3 cards – practise first on a spare bit of card, so as to get a clean cut, but without going right through the card. Places to score are marked — Sc As each line is scored it is a good idea to tick off where the mark appears, viz. —/Sc . The valley tiles for joining the roofs have to be scored on the back and are marked ScR —
- 3 Do all the colouring. Water-colours are best, mixed thinly so that the printed lines show through. If you vary the colours a little as you paint, it will be more realistic than an even overall shade. The roofs are of clay tiles and may be coloured with a brown or orangy red. The garden wall and the lower parts of the buildings, and the pillars, are stone, and may be coloured with yellow-ochre or with a light brown. The plaster in between the woodwork should be tinted with very pale yellow-ochre or pinkish brown. The wood itself, wherever it appears should be painted a darker brown.
- 4 Cut the pieces out as you need them, and do not add pieces until the first ones are securely glued. Stick all the buildings down first, and the strengthening partitions, then the lean-to buildings; then assemble and stick down the walls and pillars for the verandah. Make sure that the slope at the top of the pillars corresponds to the slope of the roof when it is put on. You may prefer to use balsa-wood or something of round section for the pillars instead of the card. The verandah roof is glued first to the wall of the main block - when that is well stuck, lower onto the pillar tops which have had glue put onto them. The lean-to roofs come next, and finally the main roof (with strengthening pieces inside) the roofs of wings 'A' and 'B' and the valley tiles, which bend from the rear. The garden walls may be stuck together and stuck down to the plan before the separate ends of walls A and B are stuck on in an edge-to-edge manner.