

# Fieldwalking at Pinner Wood Farm

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AFTER FIELDWORK undertaken on Pinner Wood Golf Course in December 1985 by the author and two members of the Pinner Local History Society, Patricia Clarke and Iris Long, a ploughed field was noted to the east of Pinner Wood Farm (Figs. 1, 2). Because such occurrences are rare in the Borough of Harrow, it was decided to investigate with a view to fieldwalking at a later date.

Large quantities of burnt flint were noticed in the north-west corner of the field, followed by the discovery of a worked flint flake. Since a potential prehistoric site was present, steps were taken to obtain permission to make further investigations. The way was cleared for Harrow Archaeological Surveys by Mr Ken Kirkman, another member of the Pinner group, who obtained the kind co-operation of the farmer, Mr David Angold, for fieldwalking to commence.

Work was due to start on 10 February 1986, but severe weather delayed the start until 11 March. Unfortunately this put heavy time restrictions on the work, as the entire project was to finish on 4 April and there were other jobs requiring attention which had also been affected by the weather. Consequently some of the detailed study originally envisaged had to be abandoned. Nevertheless, the results were extremely encouraging as the following report will show.

## History of the site

The field under investigation proved to be a substantial part of former Enclosure Map field number 1591, the northern and western boundaries being identical to those that existed in 1817. This particular enclosure originally extended further eastwards than the present field boundary.

The history of the field area has been traced back to a survey of 1285<sup>1</sup>, and is believed to have been part of the area known as Old Field. This name survived until after the 16th century, but had been lost by the late 18th century<sup>2</sup>.

1. K. Kirkman 'Field-names at Woodhall, Pinner, Middlesex' *Journ English Place-Name Soc* 16 (1984) 50-7.
2. *Ibid.*, 55-6.
3. *Ibid.*, 55.
4. K. Kirkman, *pers comm.* Maps based on the Survey of 1285, made by Mr Kirkman, were kindly lent to the Project.

Old Field seems to have been part of the oldest arable land of the medieval manor of Woodhall. It originally covered 115½ acres and was one of the three large arable fields of this manor in the 13th century<sup>3</sup>. It would appear that the northern and western edges of the present field, now about 14 acres in size, were covered by coppice until the late 18th century<sup>4</sup>.

## Topography

Former enclosure Map field number 1591 lies close to a gravel outcrop now covered for much of its extent by Pinner Wood Golf Course. The field examined lies about 300m (1000ft) from this outcrop on loamy soils on the southern slope of Pinner Wood Hill. The area overlooks the heavy clay lands of the Middlesex plain where the village of Pinner now lies.

## Method

On the evidence accrued before the fieldwalking

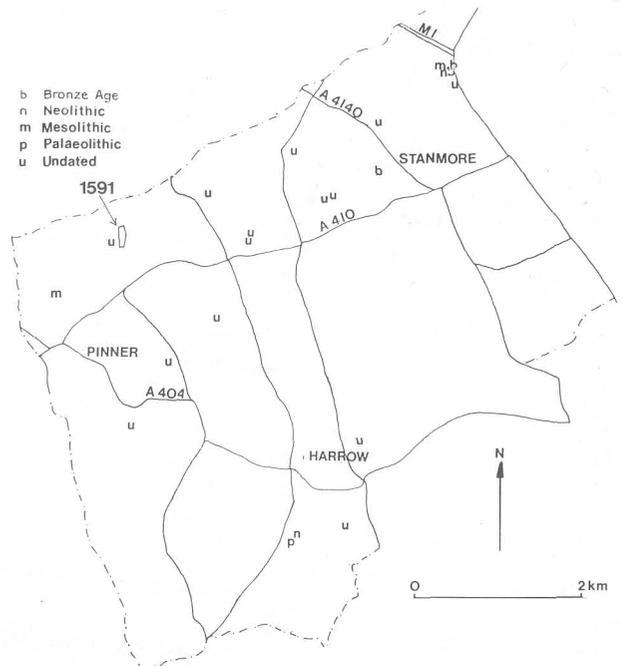


Fig. 1: location map showing the position of former Enclosure Map field no. 1591, and distribution of prehistoric lithic findspots in the London Borough of Harrow (taken from SMR London Borough of Harrow - copies deposited with Planning Dept., Borough of Harrow, and North London Team, DGLA, Museum of London).

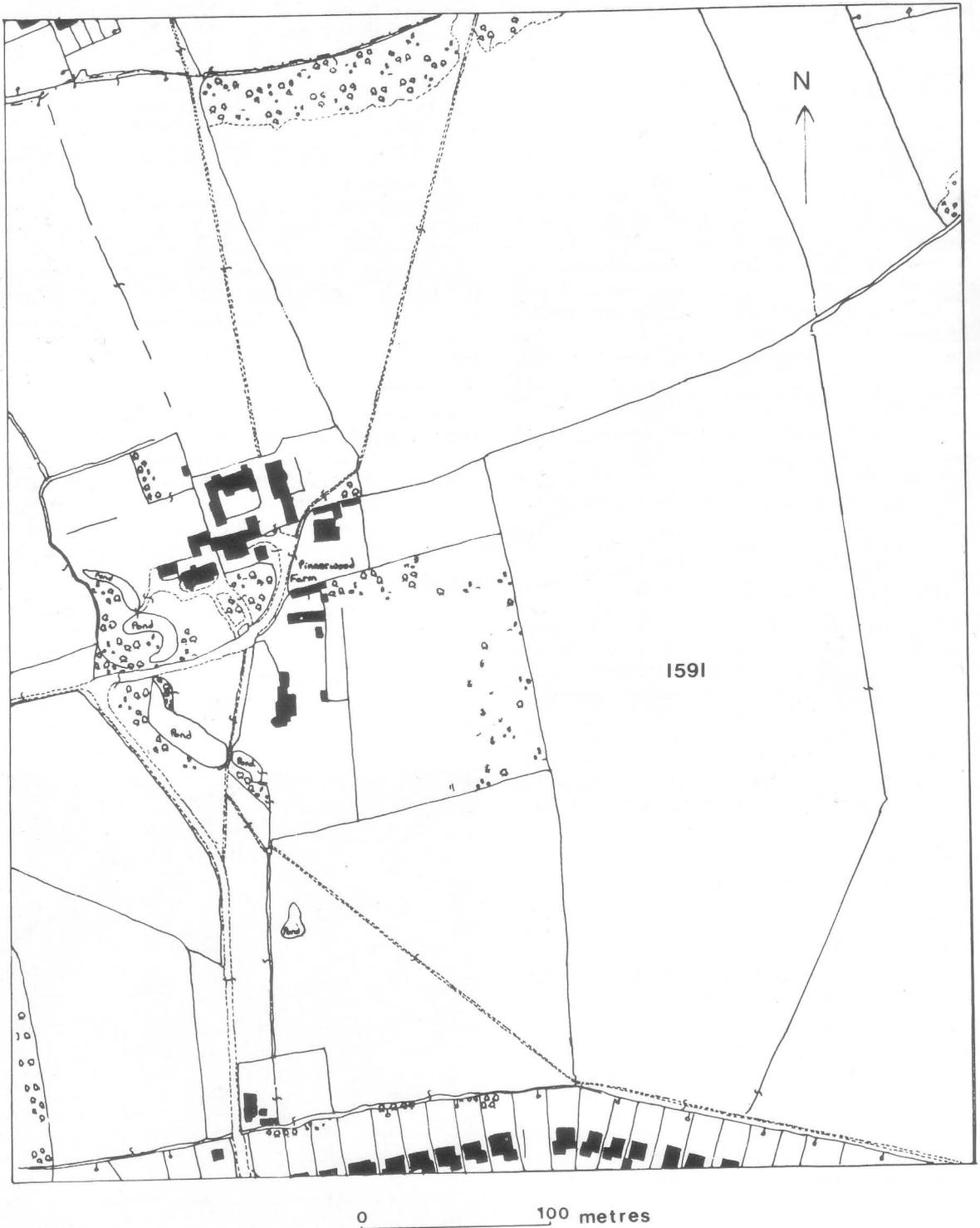


Fig. 2: Pinner Wood Farm. Fieldwalking, Spring 1986, Enclosure Map Field No. 1591.

began, the Project expected to find prehistoric artefacts based on lithic industries, as well as medieval ceramics from manuring patterns. Since there was already evidence for settlement on the site from previous observations, a gridded collection strategy was decided upon as the most likely method to locate and define the boundaries of that settlement and special activity areas within it<sup>5</sup>. The whole field was therefore divided into 30m (100ft) squares.

Particular emphasis was placed on the collection of material of medieval date or older. Because of limited time and facilities, systematic collection of post-medieval material was not proposed. Such material was sorted on site, and only those pieces considered datable or particularly diagnostic were retained. Collection of earlier materials was made on an intensive basis, with walkers spaced at intervals of no more than 3m (10ft) apart.

### Results

The following materials were collected from the site:

- (1) Worked stone, both as waste flakes and tools
- (2) Burnt flint and stone
- (3) Medieval ceramics
- (4) Post-medieval ceramics.

No other artefacts of note were discovered. By far the largest groups collected were 1, 2 and 4. Only three sherds of medieval pottery were discovered, with two other sherds dating from either the late medieval or Tudor period. All other ceramic materials dated from the 17th century to the present day.

By far the most interesting finds were the worked stones. They were divided into two categories; waste flakes and tools. The heavily patinated burnt flint found on the site was believed to be largely associated with these finds.

### Burnt flint

The burnt flint collected from within the gridded area was weighed and set out in the form of bar charts within gridded squares (not illustrated). The diagram showed that the concentrations of this material tended to be in the northern half of the field, with a tendency towards denser accumulations to the eastern side of the field.

Next, the weight of burnt stone from each grid was added up and an average weight per 30m (100ft) square was calculated. This was found to be 238g (8oz); Fig. 3a indicates those grid squares where this figure was exceeded. Variations above this norm

were then calculated by multiples of the average figure, each representing a further 238g found.

This exercise appears to indicate concentrations of burnt flint centred on grid squares B2 and E4. The concentration on B2 is larger but more localised, whereas that centred on E4 can be seen to be not only more consistent but more evenly spread as an above-average concentration.

### Worked stone

The worked stone collected can be broken down into the following categories: total worked stone fragments 62; 35 waste flakes, 14 blades, 4 scrapers, 2 points, 2 points/scrapers, 2 retouched flakes, 1 core, 1 awl, 1 awl/scrapper (see Fig. 4).

As with the burnt flint, the worked stone showed patterns within the field, although the total worked stone (Fig. 3b) does not give such a clear picture as the waste flakes and tools separately (Figs. 3c and 3d). Tools seem to be concentrated on the western side of the field, particularly around grid square C7. Waste flakes seem to have been concentrated around two areas, E7 and E3, the latter area roughly coinciding with the concentration of burnt flint on square E4. It is notable how concentrations of burnt flint were particularly low in areas where the higher proportions of tools were found.

### Ceramic materials

Only three sherds of medieval pottery were discovered, all of which were of the locally common coarse ware type known as Herts Grey Ware. Concentrations of pre-19th century ceramics seemed to be restricted to the southern and eastern parts of the field, with 19th century and later materials being found all across the walked area. The earlier ceramics were not of sufficiently high quantities to say anything positive about the field, other than that it does appear to have been used as arable from the 16th century onwards, with the low concentrations of medieval ceramics possibly indicating intermittent land use during this period.

### Discussion

It would seem from the evidence collected that concentrations of burnt flint, waste flakes and tools might be related to specific areas within the field. Tools and waste flakes appear to have been deposited in different parts of the field; this may be put forward, very tentatively, to suggest differentiated working areas within the site to which these artefacts can be related. There does seem to be a correlation between at least one concentration of burnt flint and a concentration of waste flakes, which might suggest a hearth area with knapping taking place nearby. Concentrations of tools away from concentrated areas of burnt flint would further

5. P. J. Fasham, R. T. Schadla-Hall, S. J. Shennan and B. J. Bates *Fieldwalking for Archaeologists* M3 Archaeological Rescue Committee (1980) 6.

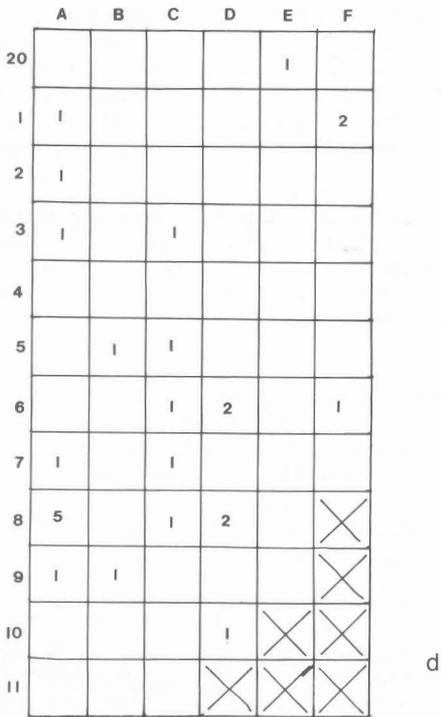
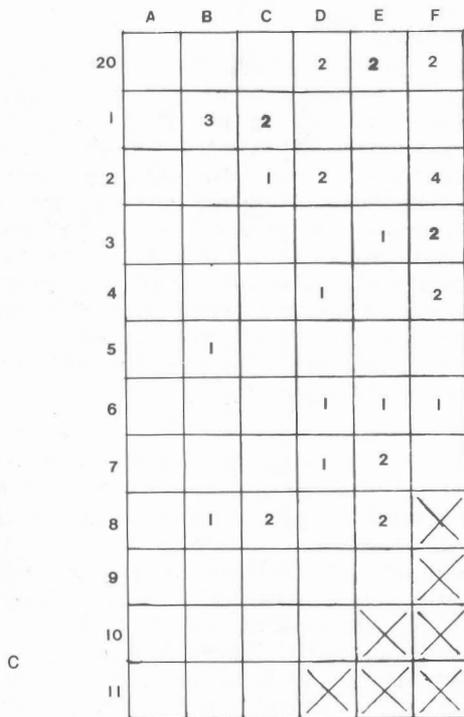
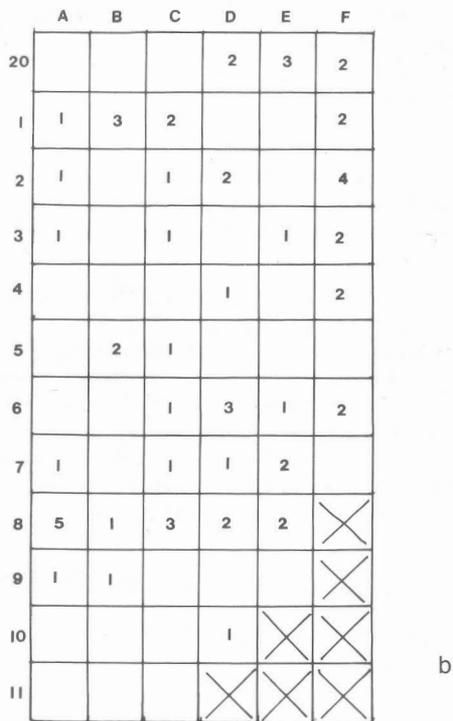
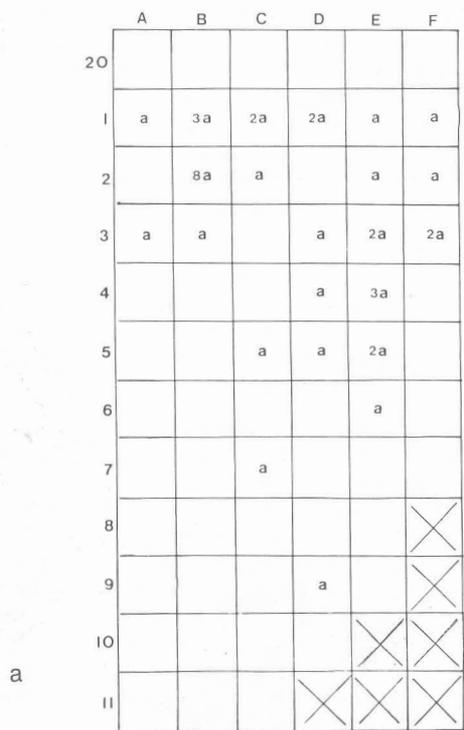


Fig. 3: distribution plots of flint material:  
 (a) weight of burnt flint, (b) total worked stone, (c) waste flakes, (d) tools.  
 Key: on plot (a), a = 238 to 476g, 2a = 476 to 714g, etc., on other plots the numbers are numbers of artefacts per grid square.

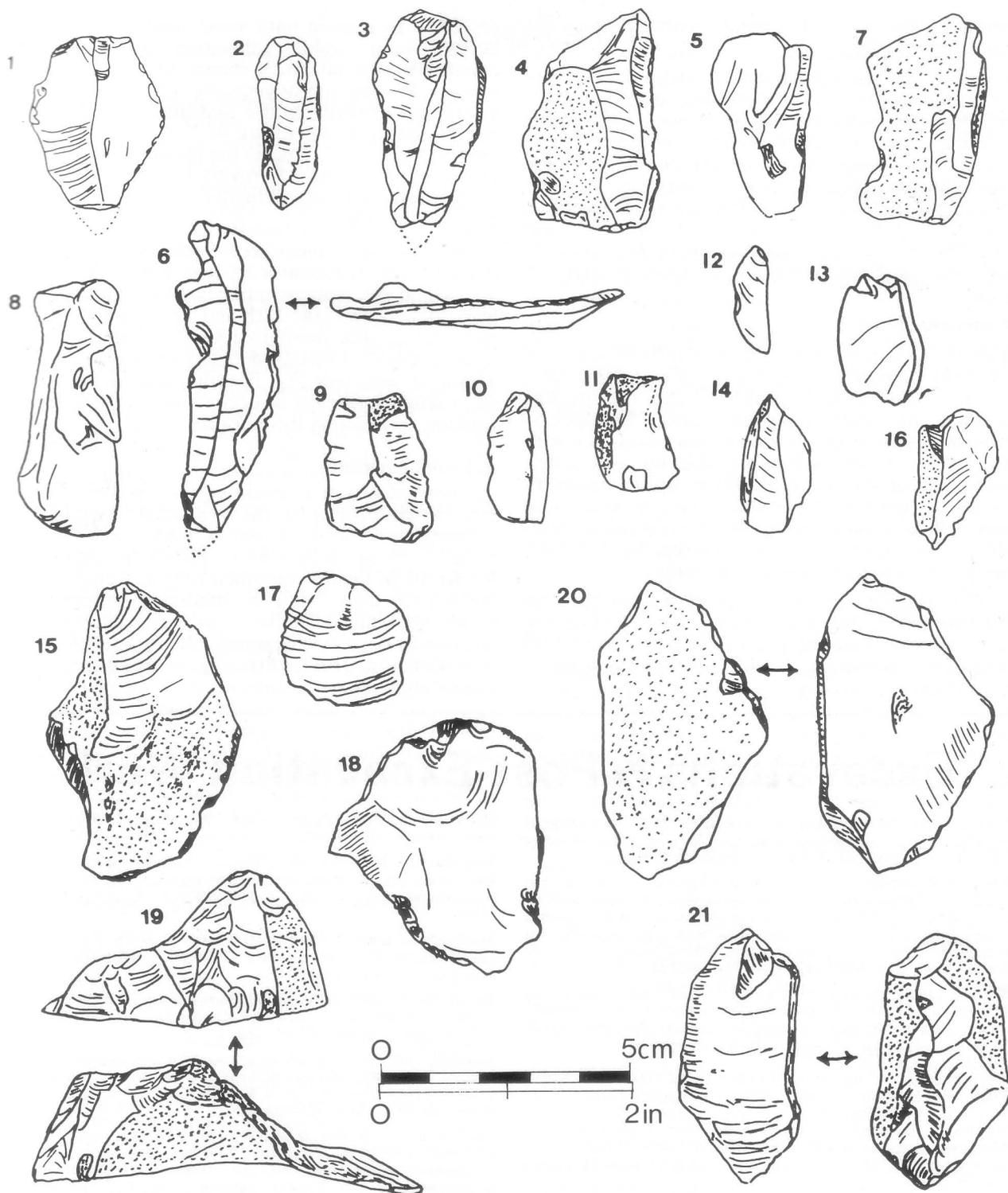


Fig. 4: worked stone from Pinner Wood Farm.  
 Key: 1-3, points; 4-14, blades; 15, scraper?; 16, point/awl?; 17, scraper; 18, scraper/awl?; 19, core;  
 20, scraper?; 21, awl.

reinforce this idea of separate working areas for differing functions.

The tools themselves show a definite tendency towards the production of blades, many of them being cutting tools for sedentary work rather than hunting tools. A lesser number of these blades showed the possibilities of their being made for mounting on hafts and hence a hunting use. The blades themselves showed affinities with mesolithic artefact types<sup>6</sup>. The recovery of scrapers and possible awls further reinforces the opinion that the site was used for sedentary working, possibly of skins.

### Conclusions

The artefacts recovered and their distribution over the field seemed to point to a site of mesolithic date. There is some tentative evidence that the site was divided into distinct working areas for specific functions. However, some care must be taken with this interpretation as it is probable that any future ploughing of the site could throw up a completely different distribution pattern. Artefacts seem to be based largely on a blade industry. Together with other types recovered it might be suggested that the tools were used for skin/hide working.

The ceramic evidence seems to suggest an intermittent arable usage dating from around the 12th century. Lack of pottery finds from the 14th and 15th centuries would perhaps indicate a

6. S. Pierpoint, *pers comm.*

reversion to pasture until some time in the Tudor period when arable cultivation was resumed, apparently without much change until the present century. In more recent years the field's land use has vacillated between pasture and arable, and it was last ploughed in the spring of 1985 when a maize crop was grown. The plans for its immediate future appear to be to allow it to revert to pasture and there is no intention of ploughing it again in the foreseeable future.

The evidence uncovered appears to confirm documentary researches by Ken Kirkman on the area's land use, demonstrating possible cultivation at least some time in the 12th and 13th centuries. The discovery of the mesolithic site at Pinner affords opportunities for further detailed study of such sites within the area (see Fig. 1) with a view to enlarging the scanty knowledge of occupation in the Greater London area during this period.

### Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement is made of the invaluable help given to this project by: the farmer, Mr Angold, for allowing us to walk across his land and for being patient with the delays the weather imposed on us; Mr Kirkman for his continued help and encouragement, particularly with the medieval sources, and finally Mr Stephen Pierpoint of the Department of Greater London Archaeology, Museum of London, who looked at the finds and gave much help and encouragement.

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## Excavations & Post-Excavation Work

**City**, by Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term excavations. Enquiries to DUA, Museum of London, London Wall, EC2Y 5HN (01-600 3699).

**Croydon & District**, processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collections every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collection of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glass ware also available for comparative work. Enquiries to Mrs Muriel Shaw, 28 Lismore Road, South Croydon, CR2 7QA (01-688 2720).

**Greater London** (except north-east and south-east London), by Museum of London, Department of Greater London Archaeology. Excavations and processing in all areas. General enquiries to DGLA, Museum of London (01-600 3699 x241).

Local enquiries to:

North London: 3-7 Ray Street, London EC1R 3DJ (01-837 8363).

South-west London: St. Luke's House, Sandycroft Road, Kew, Surrey (01-940 5989).

Southwark and Lambeth: Port Medical Centre, English Grounds, Morgans Lane, London SE1 2HT (01-407 1989 or 1258).

West London: 273A Brentford High Street, Brentford, Middlesex (01-560 3880).

**Hammersmith & Fulham**, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of material from Fulham Palace. Tuesdays, 7.45 p.m.-10 p.m. at Fulham Palace, Bishop's Avenue, Fulham

Palace Road, SW6. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, SW6 (01-731 4498).

**Kingston**, by Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to Marion Shipley, Kingston Heritage Centre, Fairfield Road, Kingston (01-546 5386).

**North-east London**, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, E15 4LZ (01-534 4545).

**Surrey**, by Surrey Archaeological Unit. Enquiries to David Bird, County Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston, Surrey (01-541 8911).

**Vauxhall Pottery**, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. Enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, SE17 (01-703 3324).

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