

A THAMES PICK FROM UXBRIDGE

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A Thames pick was discovered in April 1979 by Mr. P. Fieldman in his garden at 4 Colndale Road, Uxbridge (TQ 057850) two and a half feet down under a fallen tree. The find spot is on the 150' contour on the steep slope 50' below the Plateau Gravel capping Uxbridge Common. The pick was reported to have been found with some pebbles at a depth of 1' down into the London Clay. None of the pebbles showed any signs of working but one or two were heat crazed. The find spot had been filled in before it was examined and it is not known whether the pick and pebbles are truly associated.

The pick is 188mm long and approximately 40mm thick and weighs 410gm. It is of pale fawn to grey flint and of fresh unrolled appearance. No cortex is present. The cutting edge is of typical tranchet type. The butt has been thinned on one side and a thick flake knocked off the opposite side. If hand-held there is only one comfortable right-hand grip position with the chisel edge at 90 degrees to the body. The slightly less comfortable left-hand grip results in the cutting

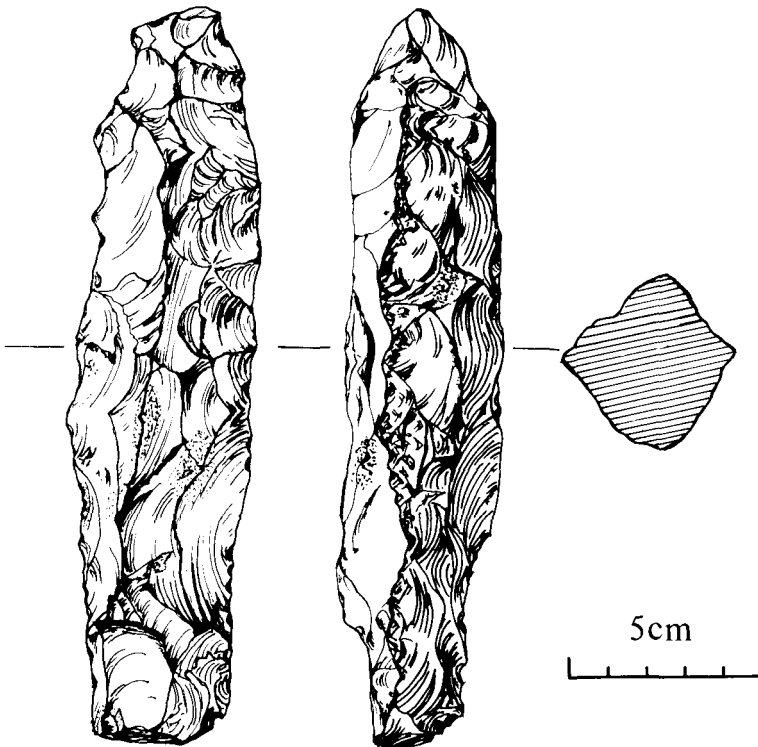


Fig. 1 A Thames Pick from Uxbridge (1/2).

edge at 45 degrees to the body. However, although no mesolithic flint axes with hafts are recorded from Britain, it seems likely – as many authorities suggest¹ – that some at least were mounted in wood or antler.

In south Scandinavia, flint axe or adze blades of Boreal age have been found set in sleeves of root-wood and red-deer antler with shaft-holes to take wooden handles.² Comparable antler artefacts from the London area, some difficult to distinguish from neolithic ‘crown antler’ mace-heads with little internal tissue have been identified as mesolithic-type hafting sleeves.³

Known mesolithic sites have been found just over a mile distant to the north at Dewes Farm, and to the south-west at Sandstone.⁴

The axe has been retained by Mr. and Mrs. Fieldman. I should like to thank Miss Jean Macdonald of the Museum of London for discussing the find with me and Margaret Wooldridge for providing the illustration.

NOTES

1. E.g. J. G. D. Clarke *The Mesolithic Age in Britain* (London 1932) 17, 66 & 67, Fig. 34, 1.
2. J. G. D. Clarke *The Earlier Stone Age Settlement of Scandinavia* (London 1975) 116, 126–7, Fig. 16, 1, 2.
3. A. D. Lacaille ‘Mesolithic facies in Middlesex and London’ *Trans. London Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.* 20, Pt. 3 (1961) 135–6, Fig. 7, 6.
4. A. D. Lacaille ‘The Mesolithic Age’ *V. C. H. Middlesex* Vol. 1 (1969) 22; and M. Bowen *The Archaeology of the Colne Valley Park* Research Memorandum Greater London Council (London 1977) 10.