

A LATE BRONZE AGE BARBED SPEARHEAD AND ASSOCIATED FINDS FROM PARK WOOD, RUISLIP, MIDDLESEX

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WATSON)

SUMMARY

A late Bronze Age copper alloy barbed spearhead found by metal detector in Park Wood, Ruislip and dated to the 9th–8th centuries BC is described. Subsequent excavation around its findspot by the Museum of London's Department of Greater London Archaeology (DGLA) revealed that it had probably originally lain within the fill of a shallow sub-oval scoop disturbed by a large ?tree-hole, along with several small abraded sherds of flint-tempered pottery fragments of burnt flint and flecks of charcoal and daub. Concluding discussion places the find in its local/regional context. The spearhead itself is currently in the possession of the finder; all other finds and site records are held by the DGLA (West London).

INTRODUCTION

A Late Bronze Age copper alloy spearhead was found in March 1984 by Michael Burdett whilst using a metal detector in Park Wood, Ruislip, in the north of the west London Borough of Hillingdon. Realising the potential significance of his discovery, the finder reported it to Dr Stuart Needham at the British Museum who, in turn, contacted the writer, in whose area of responsibility the find had been made. Upon visiting the findspot with the finder it was quickly apparent that his activities had attracted the attentions of other searchers, for a number of small, unfilled holes lay in the immediate vicinity. In an attempt, therefore, to furnish the spearhead with a meaningful context before further deprecations could take place, a two-day excavation was undertaken round the findspot in April 1984.

The arrangement of the present note reflects this sequence of events. Thus, fol-

lowing a consideration of the historical and topographical background to the area of the findspot, a section is devoted to the spearhead itself and another to the subsequent excavation and its finds. A further section attempts to draw these various strands together to place the find in its local/regional context. Finally, two Appendices provide evidence as to the wood used to haft the spearhead and information relating to other Late Bronze Age finds from the upper Colne valley.

HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Park Wood lies within the parish of Ruislip on the northern side of Ruislip village in the north-west corner of the old county of Middlesex, and is centred at TQ 094 889 (Fig. 1). The River Colne, which runs to the north and west, marks the historic boundary between Middlesex and the neighbouring counties of Buck-

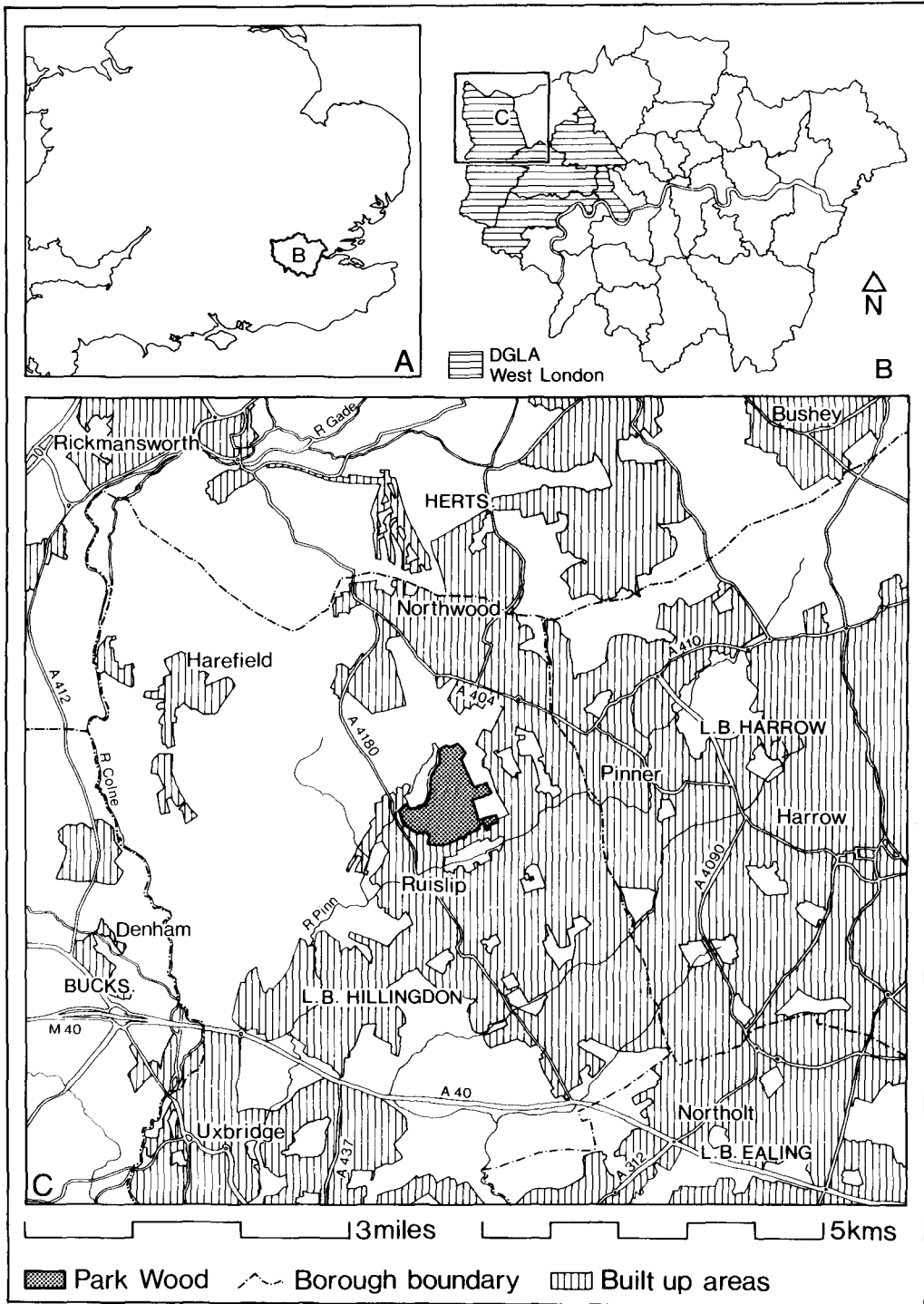


Fig. 1 Park Wood: Site location

inghamshire (to the west) and Hertfordshire (to the north).

The wood itself, now some 250 acres in extent and composed principally of coppiced hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and standard and sessile oaks (*Quercus robur*; *Q. petraea*) (Bowl & Bowl 1982, 5; 1984, 73), has an ancient pedigree. Its southern portion, bounded on the north by a substantial curving bank-and-ditch some 30–35 feet in overall width (Braun 1933, 102ff & Fig. 1; 1936, 375–6 & Fig. 3; RCHM 1937, 108; Bowl & Bowl 1984, 73), probably formed part of the ‘park for wild beasts’ (*parcus ferarum*) which is mentioned in the Domesday Book (Morris 1975); the northern area beyond the park, known as the Outwood in the fif-

teenth century (Morris 1980) and within which the spearhead published here was discovered, appears to have been enclosed within slighter earthworks (20–25 feet in width) later in the Medieval period (Bowl & Bowl 1984, 73). D. F. A. Kiddle (1974, 199) suggests that this may have occurred ‘before 1300’.

Although the boundaries of the wood have undergone a number of changes—particularly in more recent times (Bowl & Bowl 1982, Maps 1–6)—the documentary evidence makes it clear that it has been managed since at least the 11th century to provide game for hunting, pannage for pigs (Ruislip was assessed for 1500 at Domesday (Morris 1975)), timber for building and underwood for charcoal



Plate 1 Park Wood: Site of the findspot (marked by ranging rod), looking north

and fuel (Kiddle 1974, 230). Together with the other surviving local woods, Bayhurst Wood, Copse Wood and Mad Bess Wood, Park Wood represents a relict fragment of once more extensive tracts of ancient Middlesex woodland (the Great North Wood of Norman times), and is now designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.).

In topographical terms, Park Wood is situated on the southern slope of Haste Hill (94m OD), one of a series of high, round-topped clay hills overlooking the southern bank of the river Colne, which here runs east to west past Oxhey and Rickmansworth, before turning south to join the Thames at Staines, 22km distant. The River Pinn, a tributary of the Colne, skirts the southern flank of Haste Hill; to the west lies a further small feeder stream which was dammed to create a compensating reservoir (now the Ruislip

Lido) for the Grand Junction Canal following the 1804 Enclosure award (VCH Middx IV, 127–8).

The geology is London Clay over Reading Beds and Upper Chalk, the main expanse of the latter formation surfacing north of the Colne to form the much-dissected southward-facing dip-slope of the Chilterns. The London Clay is in places overlain by isolated patches of High Level terrace gravels (formerly mapped as 'Plateau Gravels' or 'Glacial Gravels'); one of these patches covers the summit of Haste Hill itself, and extends south-westwards into Park Wood. A series of small springs issue from the gravel at this point, making the higher areas of the wood somewhat damp, particularly in the winter months. The spearhead was recovered from a position just down-slope from this gravel deposit on the London Clay at *c.* 70m OD (Plate 1). Its exact

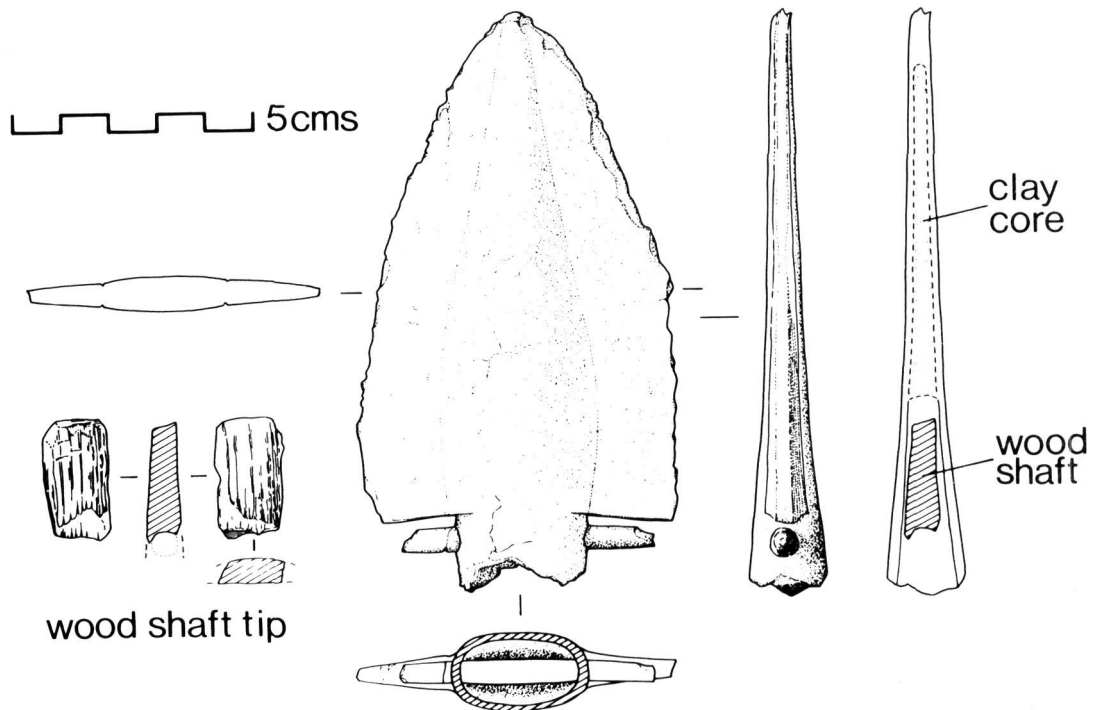


Fig. 2 Park Wood: The spearhead and wooden shaft tip

findspot will not, however, be disclosed here.

Little in the way of Bronze Age material has been recovered from Park Wood or its immediate environs hitherto. However, a probably Early Bronze Age plano-convex flint knife from the centre of the park enclosure is mentioned in passing by Braun (1933, 102), while the blade of a small Late Bronze Age socketed axe was purportedly recovered from 'Ruislip Common' by a metal detector user in 1981 (inf Dr S. Greep; Appendix II). Other relevant discoveries within the upper Colne valley are discussed below (see also Appendix II).

THE SPEARHEAD

The spearhead was located at a depth of about 15" (0.38m) below the modern ground surface, in an area where the finder had previously discovered

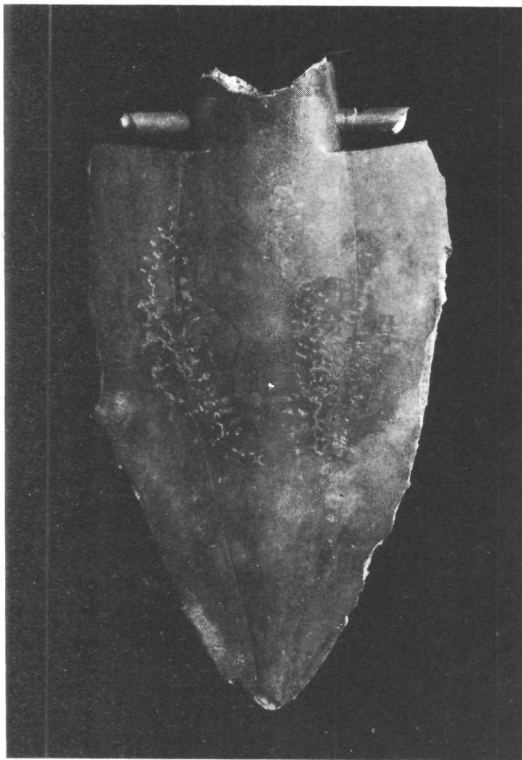


Plate 2 Park Wood: The spearhead

several Georgian coins and an undated (but probably not prehistoric) lead roundel. It was apparently lying in a horizontal position and aligned north-south (inf M. Burdett).

Following conservation in the Museum of London, the spearhead, 111.60g in weight, now measures 122mm in overall length and 66mm at its widest point, and has a short, squat blade with barbs projecting nearly at right angles from the socket (Fig. 2; Plate 2). However, it is clear from the damage it has sustained at the tip, along all edges and at the base of the socket that it was originally somewhat longer and wider (c. 135/140 × 75/80mm). (The preconservation drawing made by the British Museum shows that the implement then measured c. 123 × 74mm (inf Dr S. Needham).) An incomplete extended copper alloy peg of circular section, 5.83g in weight, secured the spearhead to its shaft. This peg now measures 52mm in length (a conjoining fragment 9mm long was recovered during the excavation (see below)), but may originally have been some 25/30mm longer. When complete, it would appear to have tapered from 5mm in diameter at its mid-point, to some 4mm in diameter at either end.

Conservation has also confirmed the presence of a clay core within the oval socket of the spearhead, and revealed the tip of the wooden shaft. Examination of the shaft by scanning electron microscopy has shown it to be of mature, rather than coppiced, ash (*Fraxinus* sp.) (inf J. Watson; Appendix I). The surviving portion of shaft measures 25mm in length, 13mm in width, and tapers from 7mm to 5mm in thickness (Fig. 2). It is clearly plano-convex in section, and appears to represent the tip of a longitudinally split timber. The end has been trimmed with a transverse (?axe) blow, while the perforation through which the copper alloy peg was inserted is also visible.

DISCUSSION

With its distinctive broad blade and pronounced barbs, the spearhead belongs to the Broadward complex, which can be dated to the Carp's Tongue/Ewart Park phase of the Late Bronze Age, i.e. 900–700 BC (Burgess *et al* 1972). The Park Wood piece is an example of the short variant Type III, and apart from a slightly atypical spearhead from Pendoylan, Glamorgan (Burgess *et al* 1972, 246; inf Dr S. Needham) is the first of this type to have been recovered as a single find. Type III spearheads are not common, but are known from three hoards—the eponymous Broadward (Shropshire) hoard itself, with eighteen complete and fragmentary examples (Burgess *et al* 1972, 211–19, 241–2 & Figs 4–8), the Thames Street hoard found 'near the Tower' in the City of London, with a single example (Burgess *et al* 1972, 239, & Fig. 24; Sparrow Simpson Manuscript Notebook, British Museum), and the newly-discovered hoard from Bramber, West Sussex, with nine complete and

PARK WOOD, RUISLIP 1984

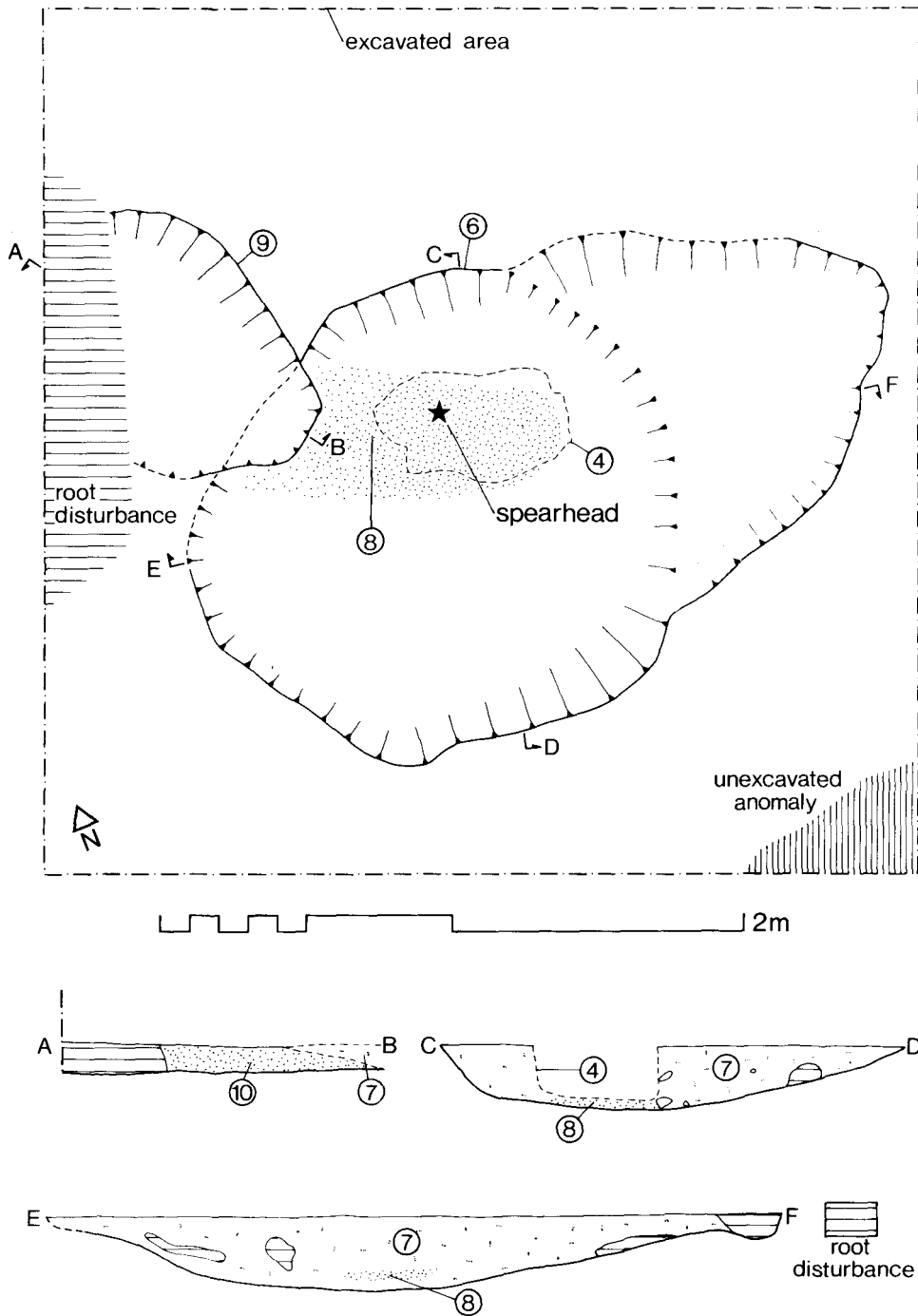


Fig. 3 Park Wood: Plan of the excavated area and section drawings

fragmentary examples (Aldsworth, Kelly & Needham 1981).

The Broadward complex as a whole has a generally southern British distribution, with a main axis which runs eastward from the Welsh Marches, through Berkshire and Hampshire to the lower Thames valley (Burgess *et al* 1972, 235). Its eastern limit is conveniently marked by the large hoard dredged from the Thames off Broadness, Kent (Smith 1909–11).

The complex is characterised by the deposition, often in watery contexts such as lakes and rivers, of weapon hoards made up principally of spearheads and ferrules. Barbed spearheads are its most distinctive component, and seem to represent a peculiarly British development from Wilburton precursors. With the exception of fragmentary examples in hoards from Alderney and the Côtes-du-Nord (O'Connor 1980, 182), none have been found away from the British mainland. The ungainly form of these barbed spearheads, together with their frequent association with riverine or 'wet' contexts, has led to suggestions that they were used mainly for ceremonial or 'ritual' purposes

(e.g. Burgess *et al* 1972, 226–8; Burgess 1974, 210–11).

In addition to the Thames Street hoard, originally perhaps deposited in the Thames itself or, more likely in view of Nunn's work on the development of the main channel in central London (Nunn 1983, Fig. 8D), in a tributary stream (see Bentley 1984), other barbed spearheads from the London area include two of the long Type II variety from the Thames at Chiswick and Wandsworth (Burgess *et al* 1972, 245), and a fragmentary example of a Type IV spearhead from the Watford hoard (Coombs 1974; 1979, 197–233), a bare 6km to the north of Park Wood. This latter hoard was apparently deposited in a marshy area close to the River Gade, a tributary of the Colne (see below and Appendix II). Situated high up on the London Clay hills away from the river, however, the Park Wood spearhead appears to fall outside this pattern of 'wet' contexts.

The choice of ash for the spearshaft meanwhile is entirely consistent with ancient practice, for of 20 Bronze Age spearheads from 'the Thames' with remains of wooden shafts in their sockets, 15 were



Plate 3 Park Wood: General view of the excavated area, looking south-west

of ash (Coles, Heal & Orme 1978, 42). Ash is a resilient, close-grained wood, strong, tough and well able to withstand shocks and jolts. It is preferred above all other native timbers for the handles of hammers, axes, shovels and chisels (Edlin 1975, 72); while traditionally, it has also been used for cart shafts and cart-wheel rims, rakes and paddles (Edlin 1975, 72; Jenkins 1978). Finally, the ash's susceptibility to coppicing and pollarding (Rackham 1976, 34) makes it an ideal tree to manage (but see Appendix I). A few occur within the bounds of the modern Park Wood (Bowl & Bowl 1982, 15).

THE EXCAVATION

Following the discovery of the spearhead in early March, a trench 3m × 3m in extent was excavated round the findspot on the 17th–18th April 1984 (Fig. 3; Plate 3). The aim of this work was to recover evidence as to the context within which the spearhead had originally lain.

DESCRIPTION

The undisturbed stiff orange-brown London Clay <3> was found to lie at a depth of only 0.17–0.18m from the modern ground surface, below horizontal layers of leaf-mould 30mm–40mm thick <1>, and a leached and charcoal flecked grey clay-loam 0.10m–0.13m thick <2>. This latter layer contained a few small rounded pebbles and two pieces of struck flint, and was heavily disturbed by root activity.

The excavated contexts may be summarised in tabular form as follows:

Context No	Context Type	Dimensions	Finds
<1>	Horizontal layer	30mm–40mm thick	—
<2>	Horizontal layer	0.10m–0.13m thick	Charcoal, struck flint
<3>	Natural clay	—	—
<4>	Cut feature	0.67m × 0.37m × 0.40m	—
<5>	Fill of cut <4>	—	Cu alloy peg frag, struck flint
<6>	Cut feature	2.60m × 1.62m × 0.26m	—
<7>	Fill of cut <6>	—	Charcoal, burnt flint, stone
<8>	Layer under <7>	40mm–50mm thick	Charcoal flecks, pottery, daub, ? spearhead
<9>	Cut feature	∅0.95m × 0.80m × 90mm	—
<10>	Fill of cut <9>	—	Charcoal flecks, burnt flint

Underlying layers <1> and <2>, and cutting into the natural clay <3>, was a large, irregularly oval hollow, designated context <6>. This measured c. 2.60m × 1.62m × 0.26m deep and was filled with a mottled grey-brown sandy clay <7>, containing frequent fragments of wood charcoal and burnt flint, together with small rounded pebbles and a number of pieces of unburnt but shattered sarsen stone (inf F. Berry) and flint. Fill <7> was altogether smoother to the trowel than the natural clay. The hole dug by the finder to recover the spearhead was clearly visible cutting through layers <1> and <2> and fill <7>, and was designated context <4> (Plate 4). Its fill, context <5>, comprised a jumbled mixture of layers <1> and <2> and the natural clay <3>, and contained a single struck flint and fragment of the spearhead's copper alloy peg. The base of this hole lay 0.22m below the surface of the London Clay, at a depth of 0.40m from the ground surface, and had clearly broached a further lens of fill lying within the northern part of the irregular hollow <6> beneath fill <7>.

This lens, designated context <8>, comprised a much drier, more compact grey, charcoal flecked sandy loam, and contained several small flecks of daub, fragments of ?crushed burnt flint and three small abraded sherds of flint-tempered pottery. (The depth given by the finder for the recovery of the spearhead strongly suggests that it also lay within this lens.) Although the finder's hole had removed much of it, enough remained to show that <8> probably originated from a further, shallow sub-oval scoop, designated <9> and situated up-slope to the north-west, which had apparently been disturbed by the irregular hollow <6> (Plate 5).



Plate 4 Park Wood: Re-excavation of the findspot (context <4>)

Measuring at least $0.95\text{m} \times 0.80\text{m} \times 90\text{mm}$ deep, and cut into the natural clay, it was impossible to determine the full extent of this feature because of root disturbance. Its fill, however, designated context <10>, was visually virtually indistinguishable from <8>, and comprised a smooth, dry, slightly mottled grey loam containing charcoal flecks and fragments of ?crushed burnt flint. Finally, a further anomaly was recorded south of context <6>, in the south-east corner of the trench (Fig. 3), but was not excavated.

DISCUSSION

Root disturbance notwithstanding, the stratigraphy suggests that the sub-oval scoop <9> was the earliest feature within the small excavated area. Having silted up, it was apparently disturbed by hollow <6>, as a result of which the upper part of its fill (context <8>) was introduced into the base of the new feature. Lens <8> was then sealed by the charcoal-rich fill <7>, above which layers

<2> and <1> subsequently developed. The hole <4> dug by the finder to retrieve the spearhead represents the latest phase of activity.

Viewed in this way, shallow scoop <9> appears—whatever the reason for its digging—to have been backfilled with a deposit containing flecks of charcoal and daub, fragments of ?crushed burnt flint, three sherds of pottery and very probably the spearhead itself. The small size and abraded nature of the sherds, however, suggests that the focus of any domestic activity lay some way off. It is perhaps tempting to think in terms of a hitherto undiscovered settlement situated further up the slope, closer to the springs issuing from the gravels on the summit of Haste Hill.

The size, depth and irregular shape of hollow <6> meanwhile suggests that it is not an artificially dug, man-made feature. It is here interpreted as a clearance hollow or tree-hole, formed either by the deliberate grubbing out of a tree and its roots or, perhaps less likely in view of the

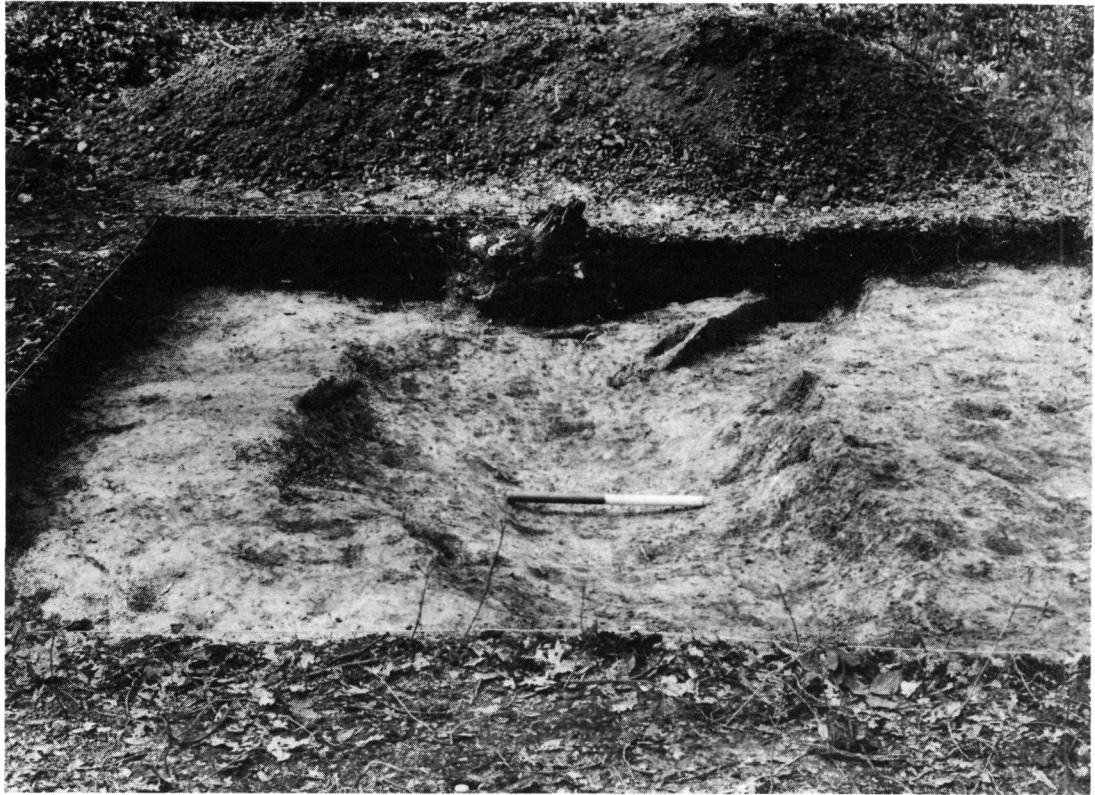


Plate 5 Park Wood: Sub-oval scoop (context <9>) cut by the ?tree-hole (context <6>), looking west (scale = 0.50m)

absence of the asymmetric silting pattern known to be characteristic of such features, by the uprooting of a tree in a storm. Several undated clearance features have been excavated on the brickhearths at Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth further south, while clearance hollows have been recorded on a number of chalk sites, e.g. Rams Hill, Berkshire (Bradley & Ellison 1975, 48–51 esp Fig. 2.19) and Bishopstone, East Sussex (Bell 1977, 7 & Fig. 3). Economy of hypothesis suggests that the Park Wood spearhead may have been deposited in a feature at the foot of a tree which was subsequently grubbed out.

Finally, following the deposition of lens <8> within its base, hollow <6>, the ?tree-hole, was apparently allowed to silt up naturally; the amount of charcoal and small burnt flints contained within this silting, however, is suggestive of considerable (but undated) man-made interference with the local vegetation cover.

THE FINDS

COPPER ALLOY

A fragment of copper alloy peg some 9mm in length was recovered from the backfill of the finder's hole (<5>). It has a circular section, and appears to taper from 5mm to 4.5mm in diameter. When re-united with the spearhead, it was found to conjoin with the peg which attached the spearhead to its shaft.

POTTERY

Three abraded sherds of heavily flint tempered pottery were recovered from lens <8>. They measure 32mm × 14mm × 10mm thick, 24mm × 19mm × 8mm thick and 24mm × 18mm × 9mm thick respectively. Surface colours range from grey/black to buff. The size of the individual fragments of crushed calcined flint temper (<3mm across) is consistent with that used in other local fabrics of early 1st millennium BC date. None of the sherds is worthy of illustration, although one may represent part of the shoulder of a coarse, biconical jar.

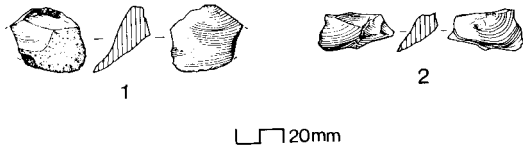


Fig. 4 Park Wood: Struck flint from context <2>

STRUCK FLINT

Three pieces of orange/umber coloured struck flint—all flakes—were recovered, two from layer <2> (Fig. 4) and one from the backfill of the hole dug to recover the spearhead (<5>). The prominent bulbs and cones of percussion, together with the low flaking angles and wide flake scars suggest that all are the products of poorly-controlled, stone-struck knapping of gravel pebble flint—the latter presumably obtained from the patch of High Level terrace gravels on the summit of Haste Hill a hundred metres or so to the north-east. A late prehistoric date is the most plausible in terms of the limited stratigraphic evidence and the knapping technology.

STONE AND BURNT FLINT

The fragments of sarsen stone and burnt flint, all from context <7>, can be tabulated as follows: (A number of tiny pieces of ?crushed burnt flint recovered during wet-sieving of soil from contexts <8> and <10> are not included)

	No of pieces	Weight
Stone	4	1150 grams
Shattered (not struck) flint	11	100 grams
Burnt flint	20	60 grams

THE CHARCOALS

by ANNE MILES

Soil samples from contexts <7>, <8> and <10> were retained. Of these, all 4.68k from context <8>, and sub-samples from contexts <7> and <10> (2k from 31.85k and 3.93k from 12.93k respectively) were wet-sieved and the flots collected on a 250µm sieve. After drying, each flot and residue were hand-sorted under a magnifying glass. The wood charcoal thus recovered was submitted for identification.

Wood charcoal samples from contexts <7>, <8> and <10> were examined, and the following species identified:

Context <7>	No of frags
beech (<i>Fagus</i> species)	266
oak (<i>Quercus</i> species)	55
hornbeam (<i>Carpinus</i> species)	14
poplar (<i>Populus</i> species)/willow (<i>Salix</i> species)	4
holly (<i>Ilex</i> species)	4
hawthorn (<i>Crataegus</i> species)	2

Context <8>	No of frags
oak (<i>Quercus</i> species)	24
hawthorn (<i>Crataegus</i> species)	5
hornbeam (<i>Carpinus</i> species)	2
poplar (<i>Populus</i> species)/willow (<i>Salix</i> species)	2
ash (<i>Fraxinus</i> species)	1
hazel (<i>Corylus</i> species)	1
holly (<i>Ilex</i> species)	1

Context <10>	No of frags
beech (<i>Fagus</i> species)	39
oak (<i>Quercus</i> species)	11
alder (<i>Alnus</i> species)	4
hawthorn (<i>Crataegus</i> species)	2

COMMENT

Dr Colin Bowlt writes that all the species represented in the samples are present in the Ruislip woodlands today, although in somewhat different proportions. (The most common species now are oak and hornbeam (in roughly equal proportions by mass), with some birch, hazel, hawthorn, sweet chestnut, beech, ash, wild cherry, aspen, field maple, sallow, holly and yew (Bowlt & Bowlt 1982, 13–16).)

It is often assumed that beech—the predominant species in two of the samples—does not grow well on clay, although it is common in parts of Bayhurst Wood nearby. In addition, quite a large number of beech saplings have recently appeared over an area round one tree in Park Wood (probably as a result of the hot weather in 1976, which was a good year for mast). This all suggests that natural communities are not necessarily as immutable as they might appear at first sight, even in the short term.

The beech has no particularly special properties that might account for its high proportion in the Park Wood samples. It may therefore simply have been the closest source of useable kindling. The absence of birch and lime from the samples is also of note.

PARK WOOD AND THE LATE BRONZE AGE IN THE UPPER COLNE VALLEY

A limited, two-day excavation round the original findspot was sufficient to provide the Park Wood spearhead with a context, and also to confirm its likely association with presumptively domestic debris including charcoal, burnt flint, pottery and daub. At first glance, the pres-

ence of occupation material would appear to set it apart from the majority of other Broadward finds, which have usually been recovered from waterlogged, 'ritual', contexts. However, the association of such finds with occupation debris may have been more common than the often garbled account of individual discoveries allow. Thus, for instance, the hoard from Broadward itself was apparently accompanied by vast quantities of animal bones, including whole skulls, which 'could be dug up in almost every part of the field' (Burgess *et al* 1972, 212), while more recently the find from Bramber, West Sussex was associated with deposits of burnt flint, charcoal, human and animal bone (one piece worked into a mount for a ?knife handle), a flint scraper and sherds of possible crucible and pottery (Aldsworth, Kelly & Needham 1981, 10–12). This potential complexity of evidence has far-reaching implications for the way in which such finds have been interpreted in the past, and underlines the need for careful observation at the scene of future discoveries.

Whatever the mechanism by which it came to be deposited—and the excavated evidence allows little to be said of this—the Park Wood material is the most recent in a small series of Late Bronze Age finds to have been discovered in a restricted zone of complex geology centred round the upper reaches of the Colne valley (Fig. 5). This area of variable sub-soils—principally outcrops of Upper Chalk and Reading Beds, and expanses of mixed gravels and alluvium—can be distinguished in terms of its potential appeal to early communities from the wide tracts of heavy London Clay which lie to the south and east. The majority of the finds have been recovered from the lighter sand and gravel deposits of the district; despite considerable disturbances over the years by house and road construction, the Park

Wood find is so far the only one to have come from the London Clay.

The finds in question (Appendix II) consist of two metalwork hoards, a scatter of single bronzes and several groups of pottery and other domestic material. Looked at in turn, the metalwork belongs almost exclusively to the Ewart Park phase of the Late Bronze Age—a now widespread phenomenon which, it has been argued, may owe something to the dumping of surplus bronze following the successful introduction of iron technology (Burgess 1979; Needham & Burgess 1980, 456). On the evidence available, the large hoard from Watford found close to the River Gade and, perhaps, the 'sword of the Bronze Period' from Denham (which lies on the River Misbourne, a tributary of the Colne) may represent deliberate river offerings of the sort mentioned earlier; the socketed axe blades from 'Ruislip Common' and Harrow Weald simply regarded as casual losses; and the Rickmansworth hoard, with its accompanying reference to 'blackened sand' and 'a stone-lined cavity measuring 14 inches by 12 inches', seen as metalwork abandoned at a workshop-site—a possibility supported by the presence of bronze cake and the unfinished condition of one of the five axes in the hoard (Leach 1972, 597).

In addition to the Park Wood find, domestic material has been recovered from three other locations within the area. It seems likely that the hearth discovered in 1937 in Sandy Lodge Lane (Cottrill 1939), and containing cylindrical loomweights and sherds of 'post-Deverel Rimbury' type pottery (Barrett 1980), stands at the head of the local sequence. In view of the current uncertainties over the dating of 'hooked-rim' jars such as that found at Sandy Lodge Lane, however (Dr S. Needham pers. comm.), its precise chronological position remains to be

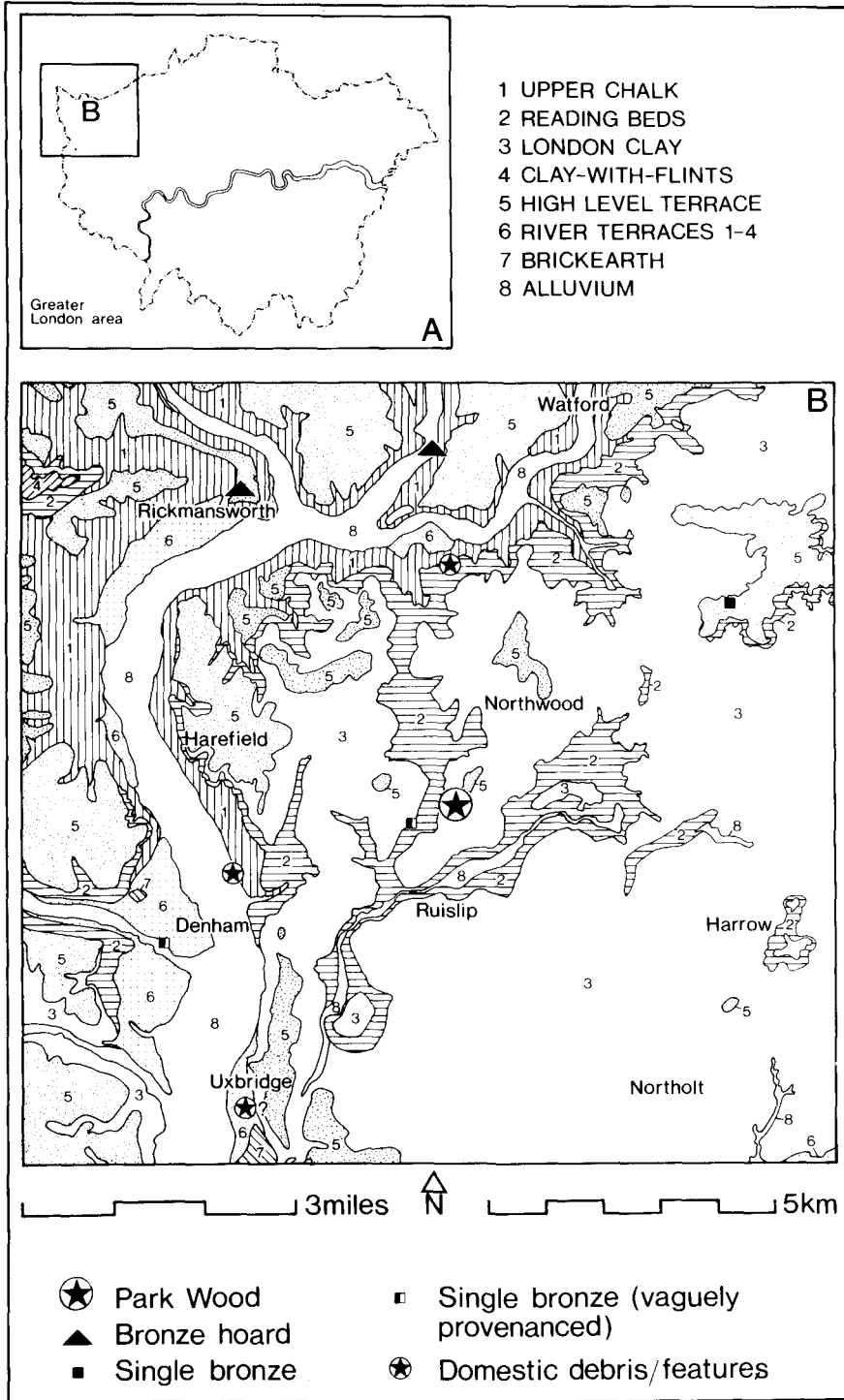


Fig. 5 Park Wood: Late Bronze Age finds from the upper Colne valley in relation to drift geology

determined. The apparently *single* carinated jar (*contra* VCH Middx I, 57 and Cotton, Mills & Clegg 1986, 48) from Dewe's sand pit meanwhile has, as Needham and Burgess have pointed out (1980, 465), probably transitional Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age affinities. (A single flint scraper in the Lewis Price Collection from the same general area does not advance the argument). Finally, in Uxbridge, scraps of flint tempered pottery and struck flint recovered from a group of features including several short lengths of possibly parallel ditches may be regarded as very broadly contemporary (Mills 1984). Sited on a well-drained eminence of terrace gravel, the ditches—which run just west of north along the 40m contour—presumably form part of a field system belonging to an as yet undiscovered settlement.

Together, these finds suggest that the upper Colne valley was a favoured locality in the Late Bronze Age, whose success was probably founded equally on the ability of its local communities to exploit a wide range of natural resources, and on their participation in the movement of goods and raw materials up and down the valley between the central Chilterns and the Thames. (The importance of this route is exemplified by the presence of the contemporary Runnymede-Egham complex at the valley mouth (O'Connell & Needham 1977; Longley & Needham 1979).) Situated on the London Clay hills, the Park Wood find is an important element in the picture which is beginning to emerge, in that it points to the presence of people perhaps engaged in the (? seasonal) exploitation of a number of clay-based resources (e.g. timber, game and pannage) away from the lighter soils adjacent to the river Colne. The presence of the Broadward type spearhead here, meanwhile, bears witness to the range of metalworking contacts which such Late

Bronze Age communities were able to command, and also hints at complex depositional practices which even the most thorough excavation cannot now hope to elucidate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the finder for reporting his discovery and allowing it to be published here; to Dr Stuart Needham for bringing it to the writer's attention; and to Mr J. Bell and the Leisure Services Department of the London Borough of Hillingdon for sanctioning the excavation, which was carried out by John Mills (DGLA), Tony Lewis (West London Archaeological Field Group), Dr Colin Bowlt (Ruislip, Northwood & Eastcote Local History Society) and the writer.

Thanks are also due to Helen Ganiaris (Museum of London) for supervising conservation of the spearhead and for arranging the scanning electron microscopy, which was undertaken by Jacqui Watson of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory; to Anne Miles for identifying the wood charcoal; to Dr Bowlt for his comments on the results; and to Frank Berry (formerly of the Institute of Geological Sciences), Carolynne Cotton (Hillingdon Borough Libraries), Mike Farley (Aylesbury Museum), Dr Stephen Greep (Verulamium Museum), Nick Merriman (Museum of London) and Dr. Needham (British Museum) for supplying additional information. I am grateful too, to Dr Bowlt, John Lewis, Nick Merriman, John Mills, Dr Needham, Clive Orton and Harvey Sheldon for reading and commenting on the manuscript.

APPENDIX I

The wood from the socket of the spearhead was submitted to Jacqui Watson of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory for examination by scanning electron microscopy (SEM). She reports as follows:

'Bronze Age spearhead with wood preserved in the socket—*Fraxinus* sp. (ash). As this is a ring porous wood the curvature of the annual rings is clearly visible, and in this sample they indicate that the shaft was fashioned from mature timber rather than branch or coppiced wood'.

APPENDIX II

Appendix II lists the Late Bronze Age finds mapped in Fig. 5. These are arranged alphabetically by location, and accompanied by a grid reference. Following an indication of the geology and topography of the findspot, the find itself is

briefly described, and its present location and published references listed.

CASSIOBRIDGE FARM, WATFORD

TQ 090 956

Geology/topography: Alluvium, 55m OD

Description: Bronze hoard found at a depth of 4 feet in August 1960 whilst digging a pile-hole for factory foundations. Hoard consists of 22 complete and fragmentary socketed axes (7 ribbed, 2 ribbed with wing ornamented); 4 gouges; a tanged chisel; a Thorndon type knife; 2 Ewart Park swords and fragments of 3 others; 10 socketed spearheads with leaf-shaped blades (7 with decorated sockets); a fragment of a Boardward Type IV barbed spearhead; 23 fragments of copper ingot; 3 razors; 2 cast discs; ?cast pommel piece; fragmentary cast plate; cast mount with zig-zag edges; and a further complex cast mount. A bowl of sheet copper may, like 3 copper printing plates, be of modern date.

Present location: Central Library, Watford.

References: Coombs 1974; 1979.

'DENHAM' (village centred TQ 041 871)

Geology/topography: ?Alluvium/terrace gravel, c. 40m OD

Description: 'Sword of the Bronze Period' with 'slots in the handle in which were fixed plates of horn or other material to form a grip'. Apparently 'dug up in Denham' and exhibited in Aylesbury in 1905 by Mr Swithinbank of Denham Court (inf M. Farley).

Present location: ?Lost.

References: Head 1955, 150.

DEWE'S FARM, SOUTH HAREFIELD

TQ 056 882

Geology/topography: Alluvium, 40m OD.

Description: 67 sherds of a single large carinated jar of coarse, heavily-flint tempered sandy fabric with a short, inwards-sloping neck and simple rim (VCH Middx I, 57, mentions 'remains, probably of two pots'). Found at a depth 'stated as 18 inches in the natural sand, in working sand-pit (in January 1935)', and given to the British Museum by L. S. Rose, Harefield Park Estate Office, Uxbridge, Middlesex. The position of the pit is described as '450 yards north of Dewe's farm house'. The jar apparently contained 'black stuff', although 'no bones'. (A flint scraper in the same box, from the Lewis Price Collection, is marked 'DENHAM. 400 YDS NW HIGHWAY FARM IRON AGE SITE'. A second hand has added 'i.e. that of our HAREFIELD URN 1935, 2-13'.) A further eight small sherds, accompanied by a label reading 'FRAGMENTS OF BRONZE AGE POTTERY FOUND

IN A SANDPIT AT HAREFIELD', in the Hamson Collection in the Central Library, Uxbridge, may very well belong to the same vessel.

Present location: British Museum (Acc No 1935 2-13 (1)). Inf Dr S. Needham.

Hamson Collection, Uxbridge.
Inf C. Cotton.

References: VCH Middx I, 57; Needham & Burgess 1980, 465; Cotton, Mills & Clegg 1986, 48.

HARROW WEALD TQ 143 928

Geology/topography: High Level gravel, c. 130m OD.

Description: Blade of a socketed axe, found by a metal detector user c. 1981.

Present location: Private.

References: Unpublished (British Museum, Pre-historic Bronze Implements Index).
Inf Dr S. Needham.

HIGH STREET/WINDSOR STREET, UXBRIDGE TQ 0550 8405

Geology/topography: Terrace gravel, 40m OD.

Description: Group of features including shallow scoops and short lengths of at least two possibly parallel ditches containing struck flint and small sherds of heavily-flint tempered pottery.

Present location: Finds and site records currently with DGLA (West London).

References: Mills 1984; Cotton, Mills & Clegg 1986, 48.

RICKMANSWORTH TQ 0550 9495

Geology/topography: High Level gravel, 70m OD.

Description: Bronze hoard found in 1949 during the construction of a path in the garden of 'Pine Croft'. The hoard consists of 5 socketed axes (3 ribbed, of which 1 is unfinished); 2 socketed spearheads with leaf-shaped blades; a fragment of a sword blade, and 3 lumps of bronze cake. A 'quantity of blackened sand' and a 'stone-lined cavity measuring 14 inches by 12 inches' were also observed on the site.

Present location: Private.

References: Leach 1972.

'RUISLIP COMMON' (centred TQ 085 890)

Geology/topography: ?Reading Beds, c. 50m OD.

Description: Blade of a socketed axe, found by a metal detector user c. 1981.

Present Location: Verulamium Museum (Acc No 81.3324). Inf Dr S. Greep.

References: Unpublished.

SANDY LODGE LANE TQ 092 936

Geology/topography: Reading Beds, close to the junction with the Upper Chalk, 70m OD.

Description: Hearth found 2'8" below ground level in September 1937 in the garden of 'Slamat'. 18" in diameter, the hearth consisted of a 6" layer of lumps of burnt clay, burnt stones, potsherds [about 60], and fragments of loomweights lying on a 1" layer of dark soil and charcoal'. The sherds belong to at least two vessels. A fragment of unperforated clay plaque was also recovered.

Present location: ?Museum of London (ex London Museum); not located.

References: Cottrill 1939; Needham & Burgess 1980, 465.

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