

EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEY OF THE SMALL BARN, HEADSTONE MANOR, HARROW, MIDDLESEX

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SUMMARY

A combined excavation and survey carried out within the Small Barn of Headstone Manor, Harrow, produced evidence to suggest that there had been an earlier structure on the site. A series of repaired pebble and chalk floors with associated postholes and stakeholes was revealed, as well as the remains of an open red brick drainage channel and a flint foundation. An examination of the standing building revealed that this had been constructed from re-used parts of other buildings.

INTRODUCTION

Between August and October 1986, the Museum of London's Department of Greater London Archaeology carried out a combined excavation and structural survey of the Small Barn, Headstone Manor, prior to its refurbishment. The Headstone Manor Complex (TQ 1410 8970) is owned by the London Borough of Harrow. The Small Barn is situated approximately 40m to the south of the medieval manor house and 35m south-east of the 16th-century tithe barn, close to the southern bank of the moat (Fig. 1). It is constructed on a NE/SW axis, and covers an area of 81 square metres. Approximately 1.00m of stratigraphy was excavated below the present internal ground floor level at 53.12m OD.

The excavated contexts have been renumbered for this report: correlations between published and excavated context numbers are given in the 'level III' archive, which can be consulted at the Museum of London.

GEOLOGY

The geological succession for the Harrow area consists of three strata. The lowest is the Upper Chalk which outcrops

from the Chilterns, which is overlain by the mottled pebbly clay of the Reading Beds and, finally, the London Clay, which is capped in places by heavy gravel. Through the area flow both the River Pinn to the north, and the Yeading Brook, which still feeds the moat around the Manor House.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of individual farm buildings at Headstone Manor is not recorded. Below is an abstract of the history of the Manor, compiled by Malcolm Airs for the Historic Buildings Division of the Greater London Council.

The name Headstone appears to derive from the Old English *Hecqtun*, meaning a homestead enclosed by a hedge, which seems to indicate that the site had been a farm or part of a farm from well before the Conquest. The manor of Headstone first came into ecclesiastical hands in AD 825 when Cwoenthryth, daughter and heir of King Coenwulf of Mercia, granted lands in Harrow, 'Herefrething', Wembley and Yedding to Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury¹. For a time the manor of Harrow, of which Headstone formed a part, became detached from Canterbury;

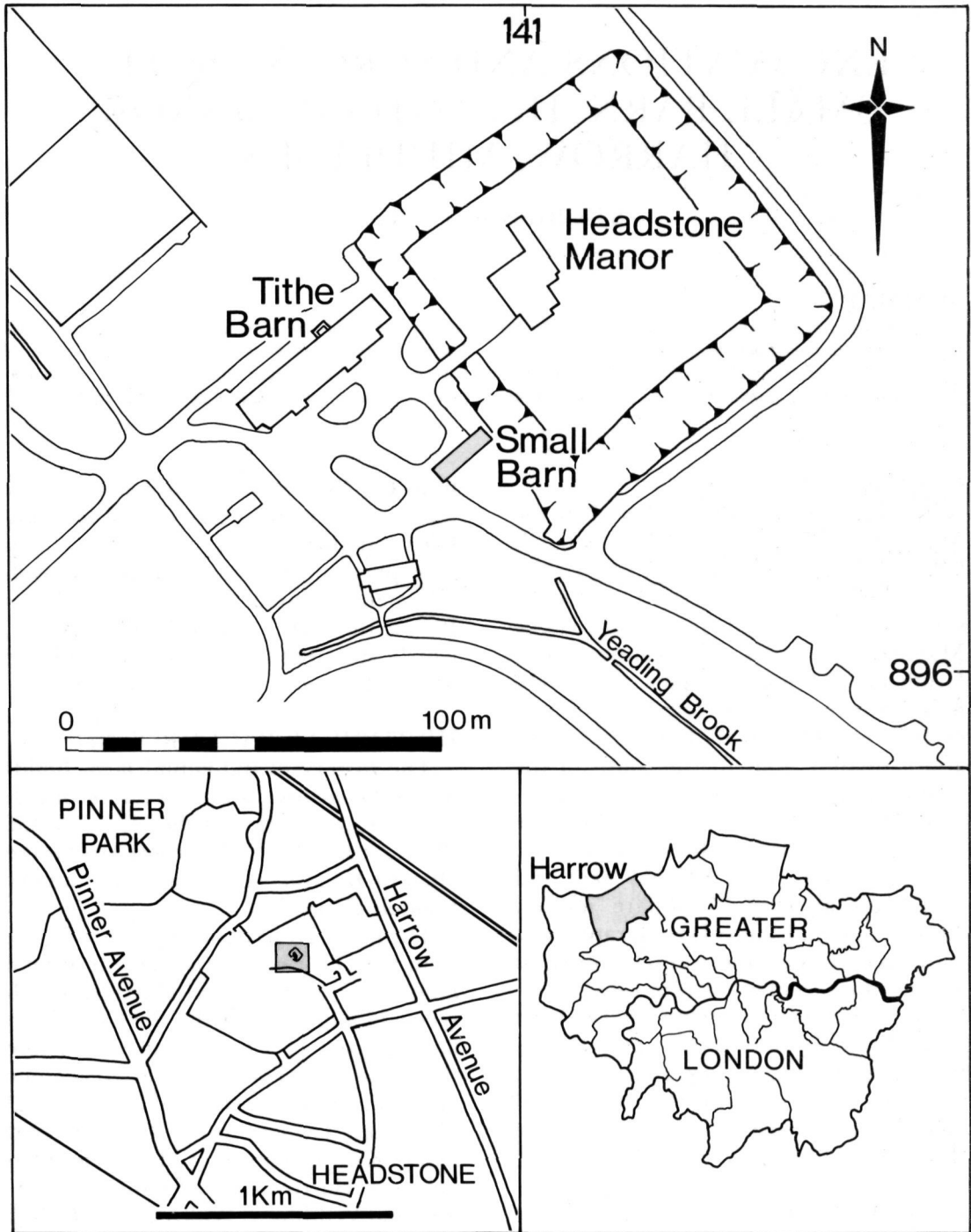


Fig. 1. Location plan. Top plan located on bottom left map.

and in the early 11th century it was held by Leofwine, brother of King Harold. Following the Norman Conquest in 1066 it was restored to Canterbury².

Headstone is first recorded as a separate entity in documents of *c.* AD 1300 where it is named as 'Hegton' or 'Heggeton'³. During the 1330s, Headstone passed to Robert Wodehouse, Treasurer of the Exchequer and Archdeacon of Richmond, who in 1344 granted a package of land to John Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury, whereupon Headstone became the main Middlesex residence of the Archbishop. During this time the demesne was leased to tenants for farming. In 1543 the manor, together with all the other lands of the Archbishopric of Canterbury, were surrendered to the Crown. The manor, three years later, was granted to Sir Edward Dudley, Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, who was to become Lord North of Kirtling in 1554. The manor stayed in the possession of the North family, with the leasehold possession of the farm under the Redyng family until 1630, when the manor and farm was in the tenure of Simon Rewse or Rowse, the Receiver General to Lord North. In 1649 Headstone Manor was sold by the Rewse family to William Williams, a merchant, who sold the manor to Sir William Bucknall in 1671. Bucknall's descendants stayed in possession up to the 19th century, leasing the farm to tenant farmers⁴.

The size of the Headstone Manor estate had fluctuated considerably during the period of its recorded history. For example, during the tenancy of the Redyng family the size of the Headstone farm was increased by the addition of part of the adjoining farm of Pinner Park, which also belonged to the Archbishopric⁵. Further increases in land were made to the Headstone farm, and by 1851 the tenant farmer, John Hill, was farming 412

acres⁶. Shortly afterwards, in 1854, the ownership of the estate was divided between Frederick Harrison and William Cooper, and Hill's farm had been reduced to 150 acres⁷. Harrison's portion, which included the manor house, was sold to Edward Christopher York in 1874. York died in 1885, and his executors were able to sell off some of the land in 1899 and convey the house and 148 acres to his son Edward in 1922. Three years later, in 1925, Edward York sold the house and 63 acres of remaining land to the Hendon Rural District Council⁸, which became absorbed into the Harrow Urban District Council in 1934. This authority, in turn, became part of the London Borough of Harrow in 1965.

EXCAVATION

PHASE 1 (see Fig. 2)

The earliest artefact found was a fragment of flint-tempered pottery recovered from a deposit of stained clay cut by several small, circular stakeholes to the south-western end of the Barn.

PHASE 2 (see Figs 2 and 3)

Overlying the clay (see above) were eroded remains of a flint nodule surface (1), abutting a layer of redeposited natural clay (2), on average 0.20m thick, which was found to cover most of the Small Barn's interior. The clay contained a very small amount of pottery dating to the 13th century in Areas 2 and 3 and a single sherd dating to the mid-15th century in Area 1. Cut into the clay were clusters of stakeholes, a centrally placed linear trench (3) in Area 1, and a series of postholes (light grey on Fig. 2) in Areas 1 and 2. Although wooden planks are often found on clay floors, no evidence for this was found: it is more likely that periodically replaced straw had been used.

PHASE 3 (see Figs 2 and 3)

Alterations took place that required a posthole (4) to be inserted through the clay floor (2) in Area 3. The area was then re-surfaced with gravelly clay (5) which produced pottery dating to the 15th century. A flint foundation (6) was constructed in the north-east part of the Barn, which had a floor surface of burnt silty clay containing chalk (8). A short linear trench (7), recorded to the north-west,

HEADSTONE MANOR, SMALL BARN

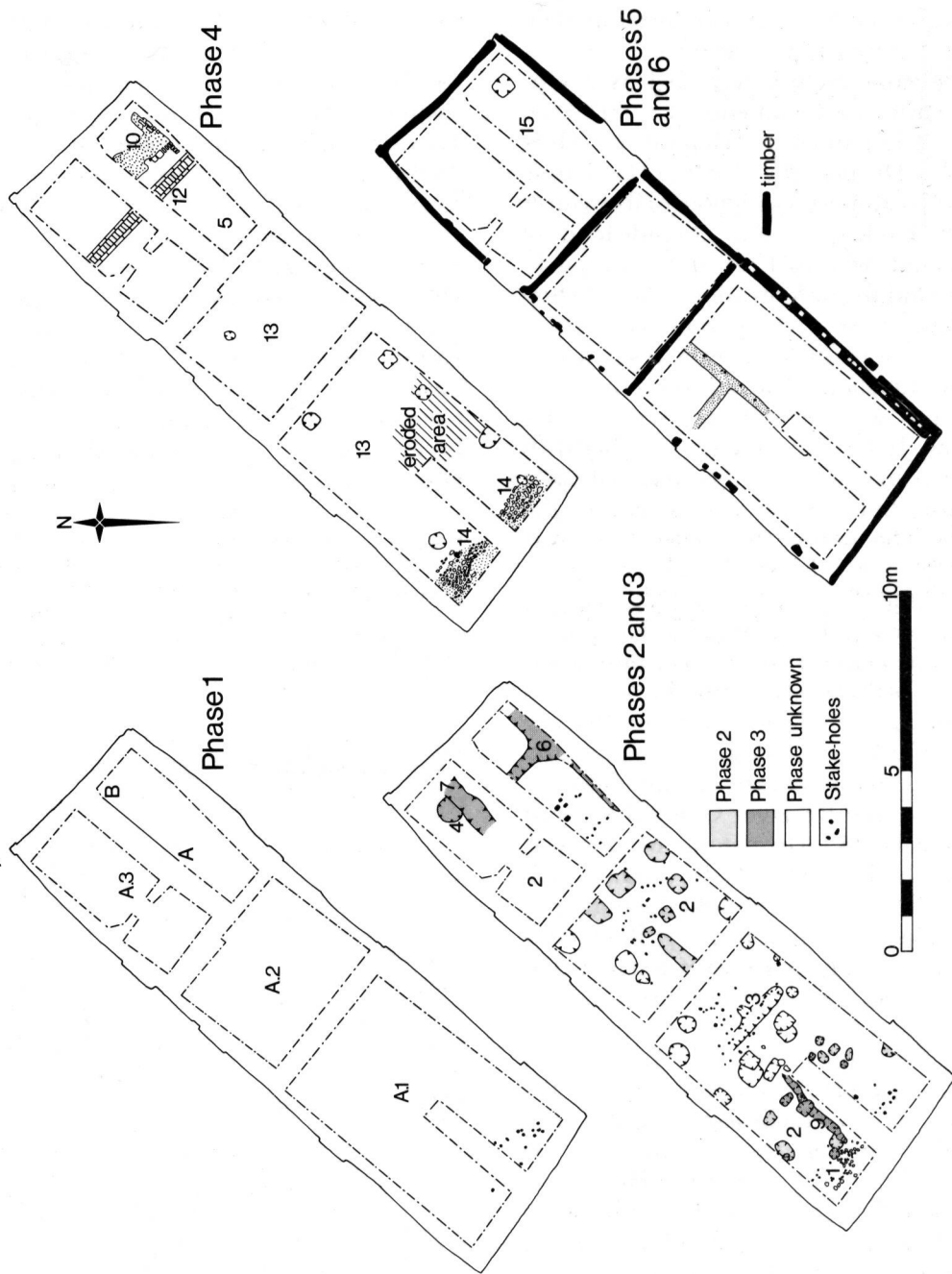


Fig. 2. Phase plans of the Small Barn (located on Fig. 1).

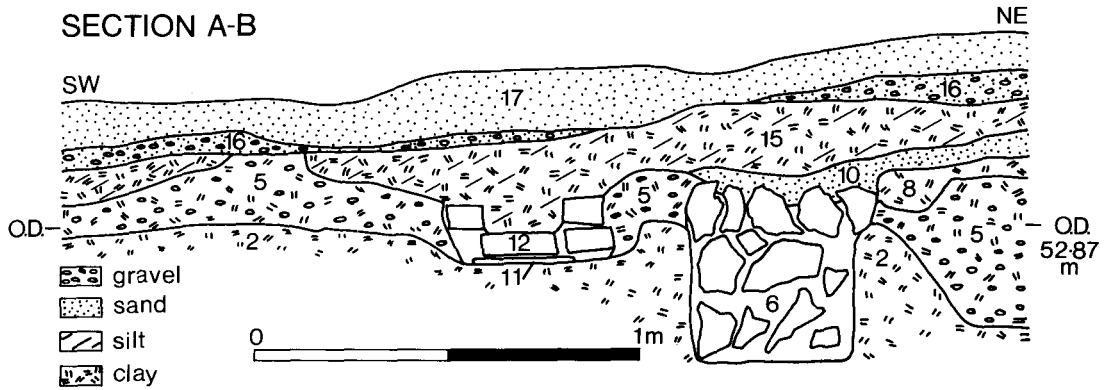


Fig. 3. Section AB (located on Fig. 2, phase plan 1).

may have been a continuation of that foundation: it was not possible to establish how far to the south-west the flint foundation continued. In both Areas 1 and 2 there was evidence for the positioning of new posts (dark grey on Fig. 2) and the laying of new gravelly clay that extended the floor south-westwards. In Area 1, a linear trench (9) with an associated posthole and some stakeholes suggest that the area was divided. Two square postholes, in the centre of Area 1, were re-positioned slightly to the east and recovered from the fill of the northernmost posthole was a fragment of 17th-century tin-glazed ware.

PHASE 4 (see Figs 2 and 3)

Further structural changes then took place, possibly during or after the 17th century. The small structure in Area 3 was removed, and the foundation (6) was covered by sand (10) which had been burnt *in situ*—possibly part of a hearth. It is possible that farm animals were housed in the building, as an open red brick drainage channel (12) was cut into the gravelly clay floor (5) in Area 3. Under the eastern section of the drain was a course of roof tiles (11) apparently used to reduce the fall in gradient. In Areas 1 and 2 there was a change in surfacing material from clay to sandy gravel (13) from which came pottery dating to the early 18th century. Over parts of this gravel were thin deposits of crushed chalk: although chalk is commonly used as marl in fields, it can also be used to provide a warm surface for animals. At the southern end of Area 1, was a flint cobble surface (14) bedded into fine sand. An eroded area of the gravel floor, which had been repaired with a deposit of broken roof tiles mixed with building rubble and capped with chalk, may indicate that there had been a doorway on the eastern side of Area 1.

PHASE 5 (see Figs 2 and 3)

This phase apparently saw a change of function in Area 3: the drainage channel (12) was backfilled and covered with a 0.10m thick deposit of silty clay (15), which spread to the north-east over the hearth area (10), and was cut by a square posthole. The southern part of the area was then covered with a compact silty sand and coarse gravel (16) containing a 19th-century clay pipe. In parts, the floor (16) was overlain by a patch of chalk covered with clay (not shown on Fig. 3). Damaged surfaces in Area 1 were remade with similar material which contained pottery fragments dating to the late 18th century. Both Areas 1 and 2 were totally resurfaced with compacted coarse gravel which extended the floor, in Area 1, south-westwards and produced pottery dating to the 19th century. The gravel to the south-east was capped by a thin deposit of crushed chalk. Area 1 was also divided by a shallow gully containing compact sand cut by stakeholes.

PHASE 6 (see Figs 2 and 3)

Fragments of pottery dating to the mid-19th century were recovered from both the backfill of the phase 5 postholes and the overlying floor surfaces, suggesting that the present building was erected during or after that period. The floor surface (16) in Area 3 was cut for the construction of a brick plinth for the present building, and the central part of Area 3 surfaced with large flint nodules set in sand (17). (The nodules are not shown on Fig. 3 as they were removed by contractors before the section could be drawn.) The internal surface in Areas 1 and 2 had also been severely truncated along the north-western and south-eastern edges. Subsequently, both these areas were repaired with a mixture of red brick and building rubble. On top

was a thin layer of mortar and the patchy remains of a deposit of brown sand. All three areas were subsequently re-surfaced with a layer of bitumen mixed with crushed stone (not shown on Fig. 3).

FINDS

A report on the finds from the excavation has been prepared by Lyn Blackmore and included in the site archive, which can be consulted at the Museum of London.

STRUCTURAL SURVEY

The survey showed that the Small Barn consisted of seven common post-and-truss cross-frames, joined by two parallel wall-plates with intermediate posts supporting two rows of light rafters (see Fig. 4). The base of the frames were joined by sill beams resting on solid footings of brick. The majority of the original timbers were of oak, with mortice and tenon joints fastened by single or double oak pegs. To secure the cross frames to the wall-plates,

a tie-beam lap dovetail was used. This elaborate method of jointing reduces the danger of structural movement within the truss, and was extensively used throughout the south-east of England from the 13th century onwards. The survey also showed that the structure had been constructed with re-used timbers from other buildings: some of these may have been salvaged from the Manor House during alterations. The Barn seems to have consisted initially of a small farm building which was extended to the south-west by the addition of compounds from another structure, and the two roofed together. However, the archaeological evidence does not show conclusively that either building ever stood independently of the other, and it was suggested that the two buildings were used concurrently and for different functions. Alterations to the Small Barn using modern materials

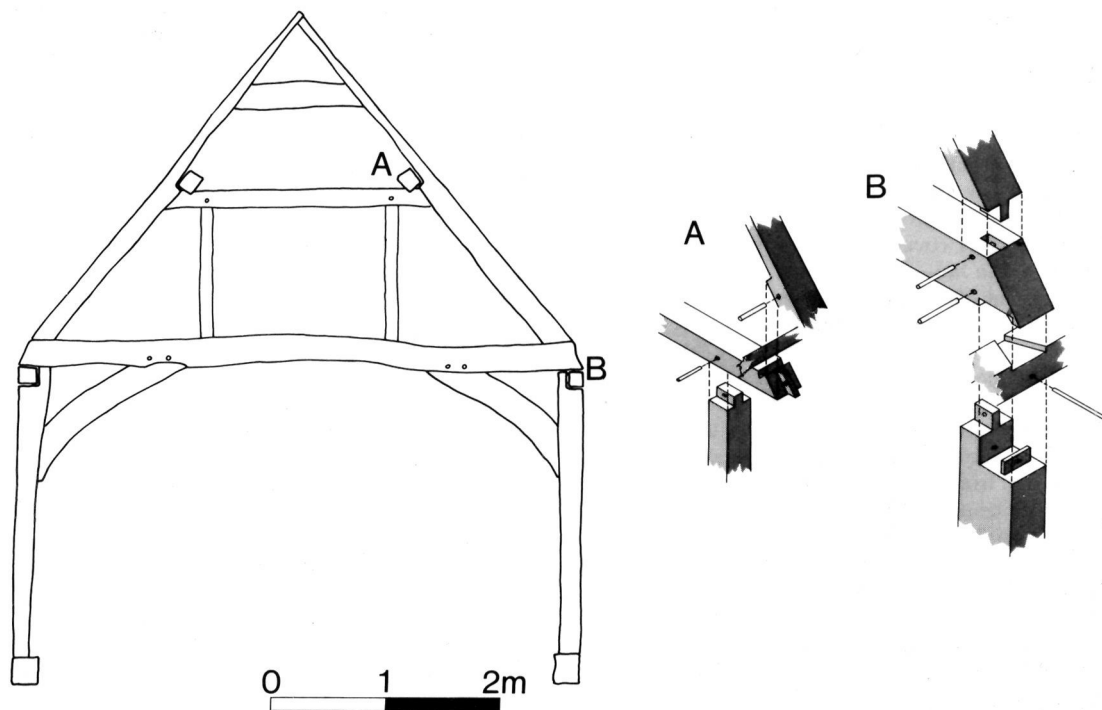


Fig. 4. Elevation of a cross-frame of the Small Barn, showing details of joints.



Pl. 1 Headstone Manor. The Small Barn is covered by the protective sheeting on the right, and Tithe Barn is on the left. Photo: Museum of London.

occurred until the mid-1970s, when the structure suffered considerable damage by fire.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The excavation showed that the three areas shared a common floor surface only in the final period (phase 6). Previously the nature of the floor, and presumably the functions of the earlier building, differed between Areas 1 and 2, and Area 3. Unfortunately, the brick plinth for the existing barn separates Areas 1 and 2 from Area 3, preventing any stratigraphic correlation.

The stakeholes and gullies found in Areas 1 and 2 (phase 2) suggest that there had been smaller internal divisions such as pens or stalls for animals: the resurfacing of these areas with more durable

gravelly clay (5) and chalk (8) during phase 3 shows that further changes took place, but the presence of a drainage channel (12) in Area 3 (phase 4) suggests that animals continued to be housed. The flint cobbles (13) in Area 1 could have been a harder surface against the inside of the south-western wall of the barn, or could have been an outside surface. As the cobbles were subsequently covered by a re-surfacing of the floor, the former explanation seems more likely. However, the drainage channel was backfilled at a later stage (phase 5), and it may have been then that the barn served a new purpose. The earlier construction methods contrast with the later technique, used for the Small Barn, of solid brick footings supporting a wooden framework (phase 6).

The existing Small Barn was built over the features discussed above (phase 6). The uppermost floor surface, which required repairs, remained in use until a bitumen surface was laid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

1. W. Done Bushell, *Harrow Octocentenary Tracts* (Cambridge, 1893), I, 14.
2. *Ibid.*, II, 9.
3. Victoria County History, *Middlesex*, iv (1971), 178: Canterbury, Eastbridge Hosp. Archives, H(10-13).
4. E. M. Ware, *Pinner in the Vale* (Pinner, 1957), p. 115.
5. Middlesex Registry Office, Acc. 1052, f. cccl.
6. Public Records Office, HO/107/1700.
7. Public Records Office, RG/9/782.
8. Victoria County History, *Middlesex*, iv (1971), p. 205.