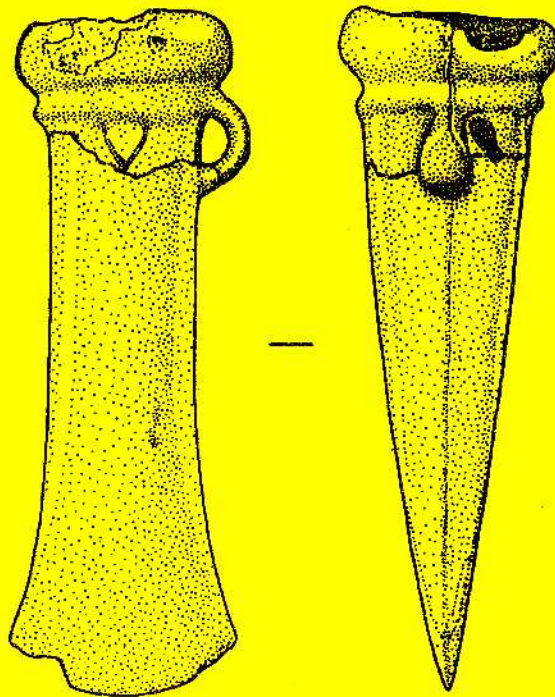




North Hertfordshire District Council



*Fieldwalking the Barkway Park Golf Course,*

*Hertfordshire.*

*An Archaeological Investigation.*

**Fieldwalking  
the  
Barkway Park Golf Course,  
Hertfordshire.  
An Archaeological Investigation.**

**by  
David Went BA., AIFA.**

**Report No. 18  
North Hertfordshire District Council Museums  
Field Archaeology Section  
Department of Engineering and Leisure Services**

**with  
The Barkway and Nuthampstead Parish Map Society**

**October 1992**

## **The Barkway Park Golf Course**

**North Herts Museums site reference: Bark-1'92**

**National Grid (centre of survey area): TL 378 345**

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The cover illustration shows a socketed bronze axe head (c.1000-800 BC.), part of the founder's hoard recovered from the golf course site. Drawing by Jane Read.

## Foreword

The following report is significant for a number of reasons: it is the result of the happy collaboration between local professional and amateur archaeologists, inspired by the leadership and dedication of Dave Went. One off-shoot of this collaboration has been the contact made with a Dutch amateur archaeologist who helped the survey, and who has subsequently kindly acted as host to field team members visiting archaeological sites in the Netherlands.

More seriously, the survey took place over about one third of the area of the new golf course and, as the report demonstrates, resulted in important archaeological discoveries. However, these discoveries were made during the golf course construction when archaeological remains were already badly disturbed. Almost certainly, more information would have been recorded had the planning permission granted allowed for a pre-construction archaeological survey, as had originally been requested by the archaeologists. We have no idea what information has been lost from the two-thirds of the development site not surveyed. We hope that planners and councillors alike will read this report and realise the essential requirement for pre-construction surveys on all golf courses and similar large-scale developments in North Hertfordshire's rich ancient landscape.

The discovery of the Bronze Age hoard is one of the most important archaeological discoveries in Hertfordshire over the last decade, and is the first such sizeable hoard from North Hertfordshire for over one hundred years. It was indeed a fortunate coincidence that one of the finders of the hoard happened by chance to meet Mike Daniells, the County Council's senior archaeologist. We are truly grateful to the finders for bringing their discovery to the attention of the archaeologists, and to the landowner for agreeing to deposit the hoard in Letchworth Museum for study and recording. A full report on the hoard and its significance will appear in due course.

G R BURLEIGH

Keeper of Field Archaeology

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks must go first to Mr. J. Pigg the landowner for kindly allowing us to conduct this survey of his fields, and to Mr. R. Dimsdale for arranging access. Mr Dimsdale, together with Jean Pike must be credited for providing the impetus for this project. The fieldwork was performed by members of the Barkway and Nuthampstead Parish Map Society, whose interest and enthusiasm formed the basis for the success of the project. Further assistance was received from members of the North Herts. Archaeological Society, the NHDC Museums Field Archaeology Section, and from Gerrit Bothof, a visiting amateur archaeologist from Nijmegen, Gratitude should also be expressed to Andy Flude, the local microlight pilot who made the aerial survey possible.

The North Herts. District Council Museums Field Archaeology Section provided the necessary finance and materials for the completion of this report. The project was supervised by David Went, Field Officer with the Museums Archaeology Service, who created this report with the exception of the artifact illustrations (figures 3, 4, 5, 8 and the cover illustration) which were drawn by Tony Offord, Faith Pewtress and Jane Read.

**NB.** The views expressed in this report are those of the author, who takes full responsibility for them. They are not necessarily the views of the North Hertfordshire District Council.



# 1. Introduction

1.1 Fieldwalking is one of the most valuable and direct survey techniques available to the archaeologist. In North Hertfordshire as in other areas in which light soils overlying chalk bedrock predominate, fieldwalking is often perceived as a less significant method of prospecting for archaeological sites than aerial photography. However, the results of this relatively rapid and non-destructive method can often enable sites to be interpreted in far greater detail concerning the period and nature of use, and have provided in many instances conclusive proof for past activity which was not detectable from the air. North Hertfordshire has a rich reserve of archaeological information, and it is unfortunate that fieldwalking surveys are comparatively infrequent. The professional archaeological organisation for the district (North Herts. Museums Field Archaeology Section) has neither the time nor the resources with which to conduct surveys purely for research aims, except on occasions when a large arable area is threatened by development and there is a strong case suggesting that an archaeological site may be endangered. Usually, developer-funded archaeology involves rescue excavation on specific sites where surveys of the surrounding landscape might be desirable but normally fall outside the scope of the project, and therefore beyond the remit of the funding body. Amateur archaeology has a long and respected tradition in this country, frequently undertaking survey work to a high standard. The North Hertfordshire Archaeological Society has, over the years, conducted several successful surveys with the assistance of Museum professionals, and this professional support is available to other societies in the district who wish to become involved in similar ventures.

1.2 In November 1991 the Field Archaeology Section was contacted by Robert Dimsdale on behalf of the Barkway and Nuthampstead

Parish Map Society. The Field Officer, David Went, was invited to present a talk on local archaeology, and later to arrange a fieldwalking exercise with the group. This would be the first systematic field survey in the parish, and given this lack of previous information we were faced with an entire landscape, any part of which might be viable for study. Centring the survey on a archaeological site known either from aerial photographs, chance finds or pre-scientific excavations might have proved interesting for those involved in the work, but such a project would have less value in broadening our knowledge of the area. Mr. Dimsdale with his local connections, was well placed to arrange access to those fields surrounding the village which were then under plough. Of the available land the area which drew our attention comprised approximately 70 acres (173 ha) of arable farmland to the south of the Nuthampstead Road (see figure 1) which was in the process of golf course conversion. In the past the NHDC Field Archaeology Section has carried out a number of surveys prior to such conversion in areas where underlying remains were suspected and therefore liable to damage during construction. In February 1990, the District Planning Department passed the proposals for the Barkway Park Golf Course to the Section for comment. A pre-construction survey was advised and subsequently reiterated in February 1991 when more detailed plans were submitted. The District Council policy, agreed in November 1990, determined that golf courses together with other similar developments in the countryside would henceforth require archaeological evaluation. However, the planning department was unwilling to enforce the policy in this case, since the original proposals pre-empted the Council's decision. An observation condition was eventually attached to the planning agreement, but this, as the results of this survey confirm, was unfor-



# Barkway Survey 1991/2

Fieldwalking  
Areas :

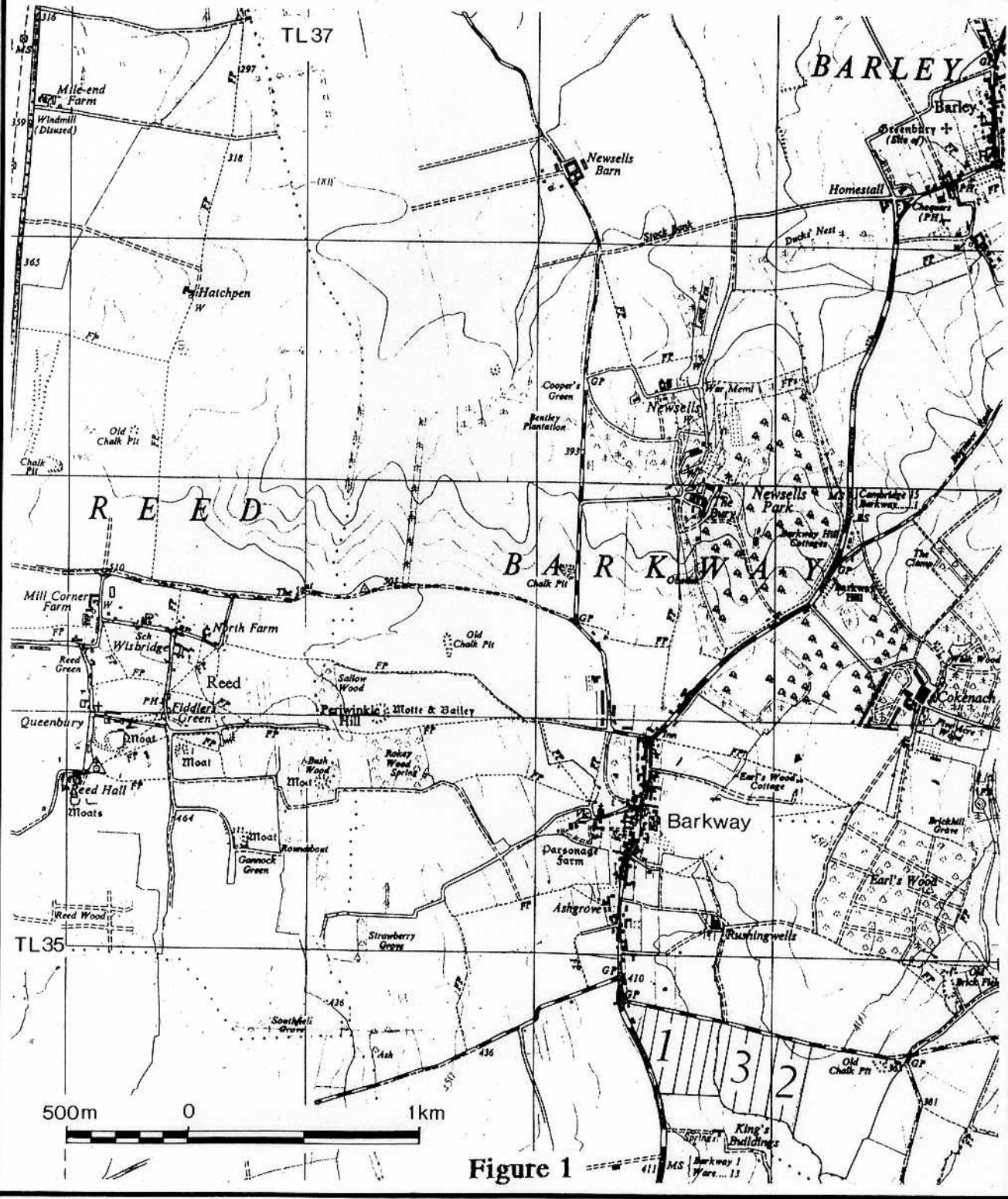
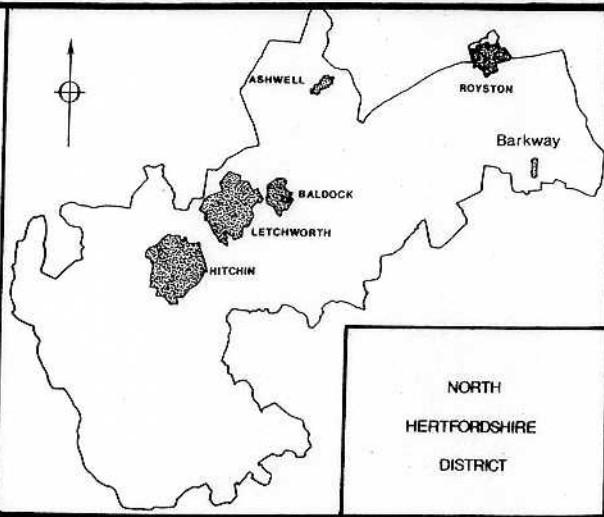
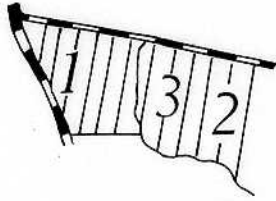


Figure 1



tunately an inadequate response to the problem. The fact that there was no known archaeological evidence from the site in question does not imply that the landscape was archaeologically sterile, merely that little or no recorded field-work had taken place over the years. In the context of the wider area (see section 2) it was evident that the potential for archaeological discoveries within the boundaries of the golf course was considerable, hence the original request for a survey.

1.3 Accordingly, it was decided that the golf course would provide an ideal subject for the group to study and permission was obtained from the landowner, Mr. Pigg of Hail Weston, Cambs. After completion the golf course would naturally become unavailable for study for many years, and since the conversion work was already under way this was considered to be a rare opportunity to assess the impact of the process on the archaeological record as expressed by the surface finds. With the advent of set-aside policies over recent years and the growth in 'leisure-industries', Hertfordshire, in common with numerous counties in southern England has seen a distinct increase in the number of golf courses replacing arable land.

The impact of these developments on archaeological remains may not be immediately apparent, indeed it is often proposed that the changes are quite superficial, or even beneficial, since ploughing no longer disturbs the archaeological horizon. There is a measure of truth in these claims, but depending on the particular layout a great deal of damage can occur through landscaping, the excavation of bunkers and ponds, and even as a result of planting trees and hedgerows. Also, despite the fact that the greater part of any golf course is usually left as 'rough', a sizeable proportion will be covered by fairways and greens which need to be smoothed and planted with high quality grass (see figure 7). In North Hertfordshire this process has often required these areas to be cleared of stones, usually by grading machine, and the resulting discard buried in a trench facilitating drainage along the edge of the feature. The long term effects of this type of work are difficult to calibrate from an archaeological perspective, although the immediate effects of such a technique on the pattern of surface finds can be imagined. Some analysis of the effects is presented in the discussion (section 6).

## 2. The Archaeological Background

2.1 The North Hertfordshire District is rich in archaeological evidence, and there is no reason to suppose that Barkway parish is any exception to the rule. The village itself dates back at least to the eleventh century when it was recorded in the Domesday Survey as Bercheuei(g), which is translated as 'Birch-tree path or way' (A.Mawer & F.M.Stenton 1938). The parish church of St. Mary Magdelene has origins in the thirteenth century with later fifteenth-century reconstructions of the nave and aisles. In general, despite many changes, the village retains a pattern of linear development along the principle north/south road which is characteristic of the growth of mediæval settlements in the region.

2.2 The picture concerning the pre-conquest and prehistoric habitation of the area is considerably less clear. Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups which utilised the chalk uplands along the Icknield Way (circa 8,000-4,000 BC.) have left us an almost imperceptible record of their passing, no trace of which has yet been identified in this particular parish, although tranchet axes of the period have been found at nearby Royston and Sandon (Wymer 1977). The introduction of settled farming practises in the Neolithic period (circa 4,000-2,500 BC.) certainly brought noticeable changes to the landscape. The clearance of the ancient woodlands is detectable in the environmental record extracted from buried soils across the region. Funeral monuments from the period demonstrate both the organisation and territorial aspirations of these societies. Scarcely five kilometres to the north-east of Barkway, on Therfield Heath, a single long barrow can still be seen. In its day it must have provided a strong reminder to any traveller along the Icknield Way that this land was claimed by such a group through the precedence of their ancestors.

2.3 The later Bronze Age societies (circa 2,500-600 BC.) expanded on the apparent sanctity of this area, as their smaller round barrows proliferated on the Heath and the adjacent high ground, particularly to the south and west. It is curious that the burial mounds of these people appear to have amassed at the expense of settlements. Certainly little settlement evidence has been found in close proximity to the barrows; the most notable exception being Whitely Hill, a curious double-ditched defended enclosure three kilometres to the north of Barkway. The opinion is expressed by Mark Stevenson and others, that the Heath and its environs represented a ritual landscape (Stevenson 1980), which at its zenith contained more barrows per square kilometre than the more celebrated burial zones of Wiltshire or Yorkshire. The chalk uplands constituted marginal land more suited to pastoral than arable farming, and doubtless stock rearing continued side by side with the burial practises which endowed the groups living in the hinterland with both identity and territorial rights. Field-walking in areas like Barkway, which appear to border this zone, will be a major factor helping to strengthen or disprove this hypothesis.

2.4 Sometime before the date of the first fieldwalking session (7th December 1991) an important discovery from the Barkway area was brought to the attention of the Field Archaeology Section by the Mike Daniells, the senior County Council archaeologist. A cache of bronze objects had been retrieved by metal detector enthusiasts; the precise location of which however, was not revealed at the time of discovery, nor indeed for sometime afterwards. Letchworth Museum acquired the hoard for initial examination prior to proposed expert analysis at the British Museum; yet the provenance remained vague and it was not established until January 1992 that the dis-

covery had been made during the creation of one of the fairways for the Barkway Park Golf Course. No accurate measurements were made at the time to properly record the position of the find; consequently the position shown in figure 7 is only a best estimate based on eye-witness accounts.

2.5 The hoard consisted of 12 socketed axes, one flanged axe and 28 socketed axe fragments; a complete leaf-shaped spear head and four fragments; 17 fragments from the blades of swords, a pommel and numerous other scraps of bronze including rough cast ingots (see figure 8 and Appendix). The approximate date of deposition (pending further examination) appears to be circa 1,000-600 BC, within the period known as the late Bronze Age. Hoards of this type and date have been found in numerous parts of south-east England. Deliberate deposition of metal objects is a recurrent theme throughout the Bronze Age and is manifested in a variety of ways. Bradley (1984) has divided these activities into two types: votive and functional. The votive category includes instances of items cast into rivers and lakes; both single items such as the Wilburton sword, and larger assemblages such as those discovered at Flag Fen, Peterborough, where objects, usually weapons, were broken and cast into the mere. Functional hoards are a different matter, representing deliberately hidden supplies of potentially re-useable material which, for one reason or another, were never recovered. The Barkway hoard falls into this second category, containing as it does mostly damaged items, miscasts and scrap metal. Earlier archaeological theorists, notably V.G. Childs (1957), suggested that such hoards were indicative of essentially itinerant Bronze Age metalsmiths, who perhaps in the manner of later craftsmen such as mediæval stonemasons, either sought work from those who could afford their services or acquired the patronage of the wealthy and politically powerful. Given this hypothesis it was possible to speculate that a smith approaching a potential source of work

might not unreasonably pause some distance away and bury the bulk of his or her supplies, particularly if uncertain of the reception lying ahead. It would follow that as some hoards were never recovered, things may not have always gone according to plan. Alternatively, such a deposit might have been made as in later periods, at times of uncertainty or unrest. More recent writers have adopted increasingly sophisticated explanations for the presence of these founder's hoards. That the material was a valuable commodity awaiting the eventual attention of a bronzesmith is not usually in question, nor is there much argument concerning the deliberate breaking of items as though to remove them from the normal world of usable objects. The question of ownership however, has received much consideration. Scrapped bronze may well have featured highly in commodity exchange and comprised one of the major resources of a particular society; a material to be carefully gathered and stockpiled against future need (Needham 1990). The fact that some hoards, probably a very small proportion, were never reclaimed can be explained by recourse to the earlier ideas of the lost spoils of war. The Barkway hoard falls into the quite prolific category of late Bronze Age hoards belonging to the Ewart Park phase, a period defined by the style of objects originally recovered from the site of that name. This phase describes the period leading up to the introduction of iron technology to the British Isles. That so few earlier Bronze Age Hoards have been recovered has been explained in two basic theories. Either most earlier hoards were recovered and recycled; or more convincingly, a new system of metal stockpiling and exchange developed at this time. It has been suggested that the 'abandoned hoards' are indicative of a loss of value relative to the new metals. This is possible, but extremely unlikely when one considers both the prolonged assimilation of iron and the continued use of bronze for decorative and certain functional items.



2.6 A central question revolves around the relationship between hoard locations and settlement sites. Obviously all hoards are indicative of settlement in an indirect manner, there must after all have been a source or market for the material somewhere in the proximity. However, it is a matter of speculation whether the depositor, itinerant smith or 'headman', would place the hoard within the settlement or in the vicinity of some convenient local landmark. The theories are exhaustive, the facts are less so. Most Ewart Park founders hoards have been recovered out of context, and indeed in pre-scientific archaeological excavations the evidence for settlement may well have been overlooked. For example, a small group of seven bronze axe-heads recently emerged from a private collection at Manor Farm, Barley; these objects may have formerly been part of a larger hoard, but unfortunately all details of their discovery are lost. Only a few notable examples such as the Petters Hoard from Egham, Surrey, have been recovered with corresponding settlement evidence (Needham 1990). The Barkway Park Golf Course therefore provided an opportunity to examine the area surrounding the location of a Bronze Age Hoard for traces of settlement evidence. If such a settlement was located it would be a significant addition to our understanding of an area where virtually no habitation sites of the period are known.

2.7 The advances in metallurgy which determined the period generally known as the Iron Age (c.600BC-AD50) did not alter the structure of Bronze Age society overnight, if indeed they were a major contribution to change. However, through a mixture of cultural contact with the European mainland and indigenous development, gradual changes did emerge. By the third century BC, the boundaries of communities, possibly sub-tribal groups, are discernible from a variety of multiple ditch systems which transect the Icknield Way. These were at quite regular intervals, presumably dividing up the land along this arterial

route. The 'Mile Ditches' on the western edge of Royston are the nearest example of these features to Barkway. Such boundary ditches may have developed together with localised centres of authority. Defended settlements such as Arbury Banks, Wilbury Hill, Ravensburgh Castle, the Sharpenhoe Clappers and Wandlebury Rings are also situated at roughly proportional distances along the route. Once again the smaller farmsteads of this period are generally absent from the archaeological record of the district, although logic dictates that they must have existed in considerable numbers. The problem of identification rests as usual on the unsubstantial nature of the material remains and the limitations of fieldwork in this area. Where areas have been investigated systematically the evidence does sometimes come to light. Recent investigations at Baldock (Burleigh et.al. forthcoming) have shown that some of the earliest recognisable settlement evidence belongs to this period. Other examples of small scale occupation have been investigated on the route of the Little Wymondley bypass, and to the west of Pirton (Went and Burleigh 1990, 1991)

2.8 With the advent of Roman insurgence into north-west Europe in the first century BC and the subsequent successful conquest of southern Britain in AD 43, the picture becomes somewhat more focused. From Roman authorities we can glimpse some of the attributes of Iron Age society prior to the Claudian invasion, including some of their traded commodities, their beliefs and some of their various states and rulers. At the time of the invasion the Barkway area was within the territory of the Catuvellauni - whose name loosely translated means the 'Great Warriors'. The Catuvellauni were at that time engaged in the successful annexation of the Trinovantes (the Clever People) further to the east. It is clear that the Romans took control of a sophisticated and well-organised society, indeed some writers including Julius Caesar, were impressed by British cultures, drawing parallels with the early heroic myths of their own ancestors.

2.9 From the archaeological perspective the period of Roman provincial government equates with a massive increase in the material record. Farming settlements expanded in size and number to cope with the increased demands for their produce, and in many instances the buildings themselves were replaced by structures of increased size and permanence. The rise in manufactured and traded items is reflected in the quantity and diversity of finds from Hertfordshire sites, particularly pottery and metal items, either manufactured locally or traded from other parts of the country and abroad.

2.10 As a consequence of both this expansion and the durability of material remains, Romano-British sites, the term reflecting the fusion of the two cultures over a period of nearly four hundred years, are the most common subjects of the Field Archaeology Section's activities. To date however, little has been discovered in the immediate vicinity of

Barkway. Given our current understanding of settlement distribution derived from work across the district, the Barkway area represents an unusual void which would appear to be again the result of inadequate fieldwork rather than a paucity of finds.

2.11 Only two chance finds of Romano-British objects are recorded in the County Archaeological Register for Barkway: a coin hoard for which no details are available, and a probable votive hoard comprising a bronze figure of Mars, a knife and seven silver tablets. Four of the tablets bear the figure of Mars, two others display the figure of Venus, and the third and largest carries an inscription. These were reportedly found in 1743 when a chalk pit was dug in Rokey Wood, approximately a kilometre to the north-east of the present survey area, and are now displayed in the British Museum. The hoard is almost certainly from a Romano-Celtic temple, but where precisely this was sited is not known.

## 3. The Survey Method

3.1 The basic premise on which fieldwalking is founded is that scatter patterns and the types of artifact found on the surface of fields can reflect the nature and extent of past activity. A concentration of artifacts may indicate the location of an otherwise vanished settlement. Alternatively, artifacts may have been introduced to the area deliberately or as a by-product of agricultural activity. This latter process is equally of interest, and may form the basis of some areas of research, notably mediæval and post-mediæval settlement studies where the ingress of tile and other building debris accompanying the distribution of farmyard waste onto the fields can reflect contemporary divisions of land. Fieldwalking on the scale reported here, although capable of providing clues to this type of activity, really does not provide a wide enough sample from which to develop such ideas. The real value of this work is to assess the potential for actual settlement sites within the designated area.

3.2 Over the centuries archaeological sites become buried. The mechanics of these processes of soil formation and deposition are as yet not fully understood, although a considerable amount of cross disciplinary research is currently focused on the issue. Suffice to say that when this overlying soil is ploughed, particularly with the use of modern deep-draft machinery, artifacts contained within the features belonging to these sites may be brought to the surface. Through observation and excavation it has been shown that plough action is unlikely to move these objects by more than a few metres, much less in the case of artifacts with a diameter less than 5cm (Clark, RJ & Schofield AJ 1991). Consequently, concentrations of pottery sherds, pieces of tile, bone, worked flint and the like, may be used to assess the date, extent and even to some degree the type of archaeological activity.

3.3 Obviously, it would be a near impossible

task to identify and plot the position of every artifact on a field surface, and this is not the purpose of a fieldwalking survey. In practise, the intention is to collect a representative sample of the available evidence using a systematic process of finds recovery related to location.

3.4 Using a prismatic compass, tapes and marker canes, fieldwalking lines were projected at right angles to the Nuthampstead Road (see figures 2 and 5) for each stage of the survey. The separation between these lines was dependant on the number of volunteers for each session (fifteen metres for Sets One and Three, thirty metres for Set Two) in order that each short morning session should cover a reasonable amount of ground. Each walker was allocated a trajectory, and as the team moved forward in unison (more or less), finds were collected from these lines in thirty metre increments. A slow, but not creeping pace was established along the way.

3.5 As a broad sampling procedure this method is generally accepted when approaching an unknown landscape. A rapid survey can be immediately complemented by more detailed investigation using more concentrated collection units once a significant cluster of material has been located.

3.6 This collection method can be translated as a grid formation, each line representing a sample transect through an imaginary square or rectangle. The results of the survey are portrayed in this manner in figures 2 and 6.

3.7 A complete collection policy was established for the first session (set one) whereby all but recognisably modern (ie:late twentieth century) finds were sampled. This resulted in a sizeable assemblage of tile fragments, including a large quantity of mediæval and post-mediæval examples which were susceptible to some analysis (see section 4.5 - 4.7). The collection



of tile was not repeated in the later sessions for two reasons. Firstly, the frequency of tile appeared to diminish on the eastern side of the River Quin, and secondly, a more concentrated effort was made to acquire evidence for earlier periods.

3.8 An obvious caveat for the interpretation of the results must be the level of experience amongst the volunteers. The collection rate in any fieldwalking survey inevitably rests with the ability of the fieldwalkers to recognise material on the ground. With a wide variety of finds all that is required is a sharp eye and concentration on the job in hand, and in this respect the Barkway group proved to be very efficient. However, familiarisation is the key to the successful recovery of certain classes of artifact, notably worked flint (as opposed to plough-struck items) and prehistoric pottery, which often lies well camouflaged in the mud. At the initial meeting to discuss fieldwalking with the Barkway group artifacts were handled and examined, and at the outset of the first session it was agreed that all suspicious objects would be collected, and the sheep separated from the goats at a later stage. The volunteers washed their own finds which were later handed over to me for identification. I was therefore able to bring a selection of finds to a second meeting prior to the second fieldwalking session, at which both the true artifacts and the discards could be inspected and discussed. Nevertheless, it is well nigh impossible, with the best will in the world, to become proficient

in the recognition of flint tools and debitage overnight, and this fact should be noted when considering the results of this survey. Furthermore, it must be explained that on the second and third sessions the Barkway volunteers were joined first by members of the North Herts. Archaeological Society, and then by professionals from the District Council Museums' Field Archaeology Section; both groups having far greater familiarisation with ancient materials. The implications of these factors for the evenness of the survey results are difficult to assess, but having scrutinised the collections from each line few outstanding anomalies were found, and those which did occur have been pinpointed in the relevant sections of the report.

3.9 A further factor which has a bearing on the results is the condition of the field surface at the time of each session. The first set was conducted in near perfect conditions - on recently turned soil, in strong but not dazzling light. The second set was worked in quite dense mist, which had disadvantages for the maintenance of the grid, but also resulted in uniform light and damp ground which were conducive to a good collection rate. The final survey was performed in conditions similar to the first, except that by this time the new grass shoots were quite well advanced (at least 10cm). This did not particularly hamper the team, and had the effect of highlighting those areas which had been seeded for fairways and greens.

## 4. The Results of the Surveys.

### Set One. 7th December 1991.

(see figure 2)

4.1 The first survey was located above the 120 metre gradient, on the relatively level ground to the west of the River Quin, and consisted of nine lines with a maximum length of 330m. To the east of line 9 the ground sloped gently to the edge of the ditched stream. The transects were separated at intervals of fifteen metres and artifacts collected in thirty-metre increments.

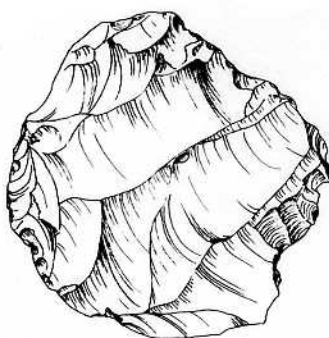
#### Neolithic/ Bronze Age Flintwork

4.2 Nine items of worked flints and debitage were recovered. All were quite large pieces with a average diameter of approximately four centimetres. Three of the fragments were working waste flakes showing no other particular function. Two were core rejuvenation flakes displaying worked out angles on one or two sides; these fragments were the waste produce of radical revision of the original cores. Only two items had been re-touched to form specific tools, both were scrapers : a small end-scraper from line 5/150m, and a re-worked hinge flake

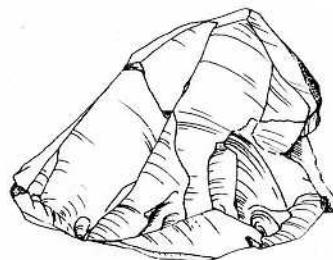
formed as a discoid scraper, found on line 9/180m. Two worked-out cores were included in the collection: one wedge-shaped, showing an irregular flaking pattern (5/150m), the other, from 9/300, an especially fine conical core with working scars on all faces (see figure 3). The find locations did not show a discrete concentration, but might be described as forming a loose cluster in the south east quarter of the investigation area, perhaps centred around line 7, or 8/180m. With the exception of the conical core, the flints appear to be functional items but not of high quality, and as such they are difficult to date with any precision in the absence of any collaborative evidence such as pottery. A date of origin in the early to mid-Bronze Age, circa 2,000-1000BC., might tentatively be suggested; but a later, even Iron Age date, cannot be entirely ruled out.

#### Romano-British Pottery

4.3 Five sherds of Romano-British pottery were collected, all of which were examples of the most commonplace sandy-ware fabric found within the district. The fragments, all small and



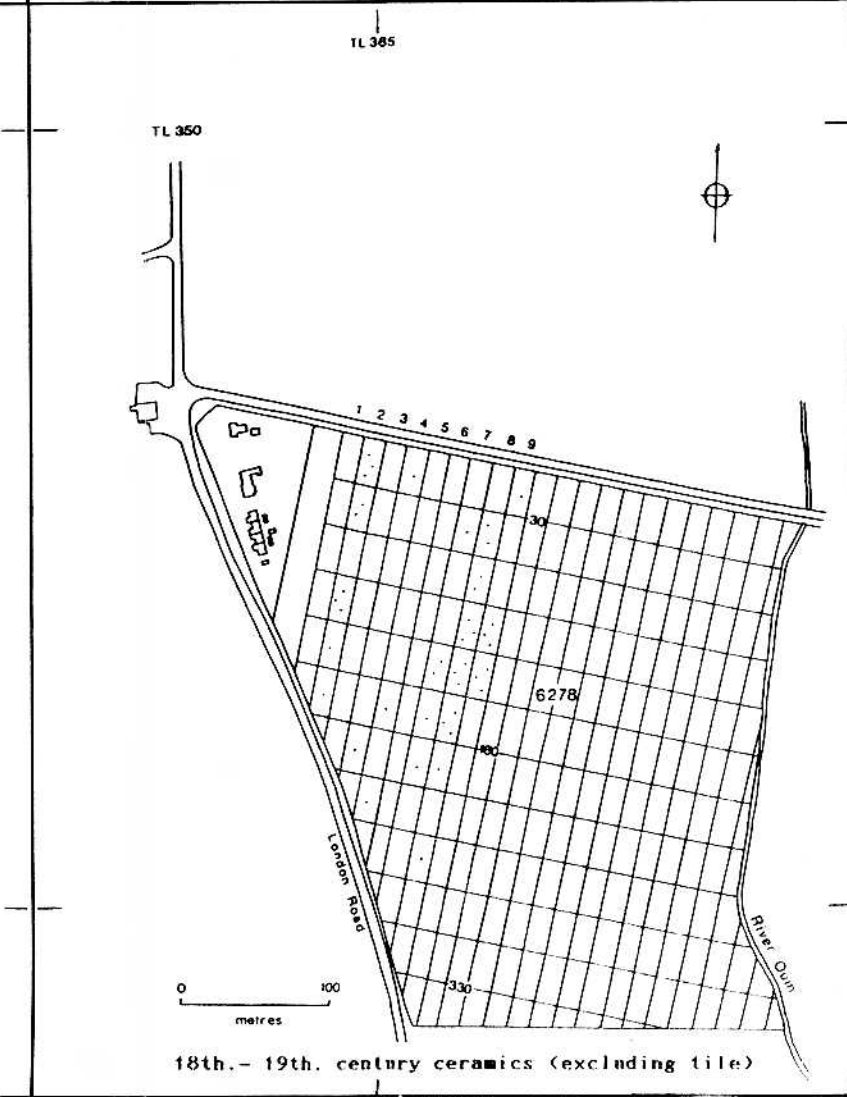
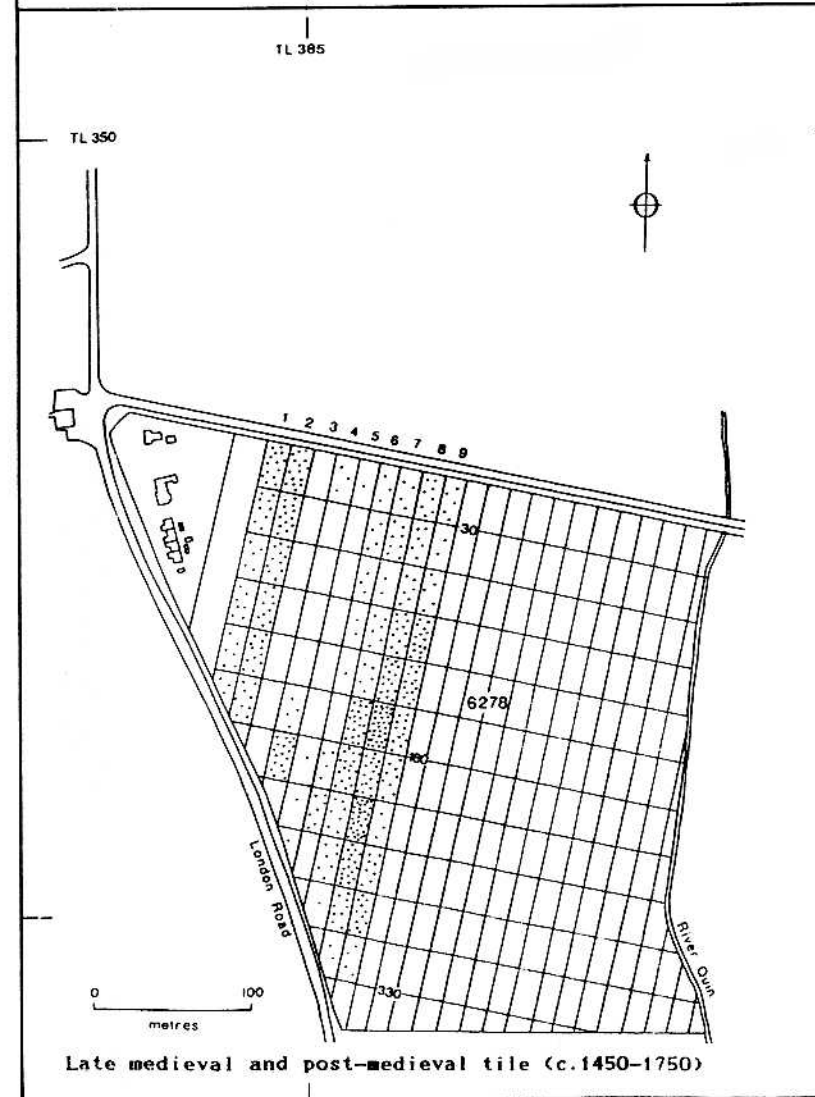
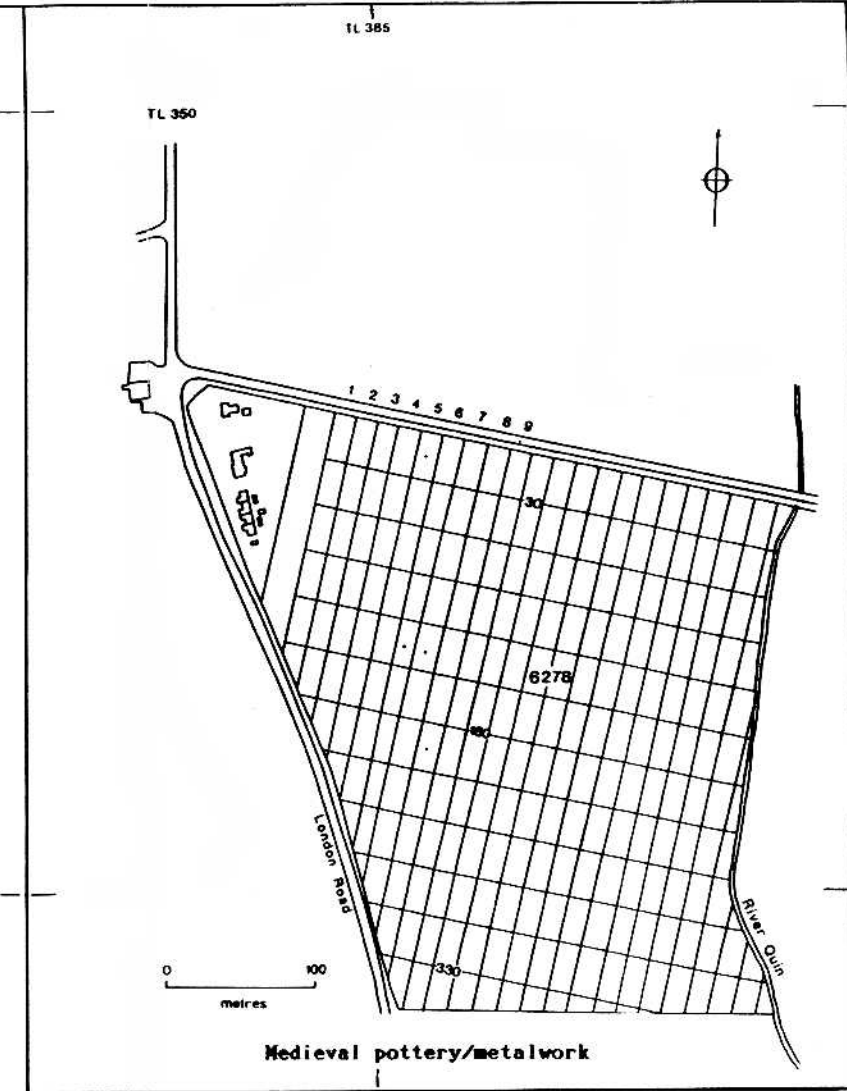
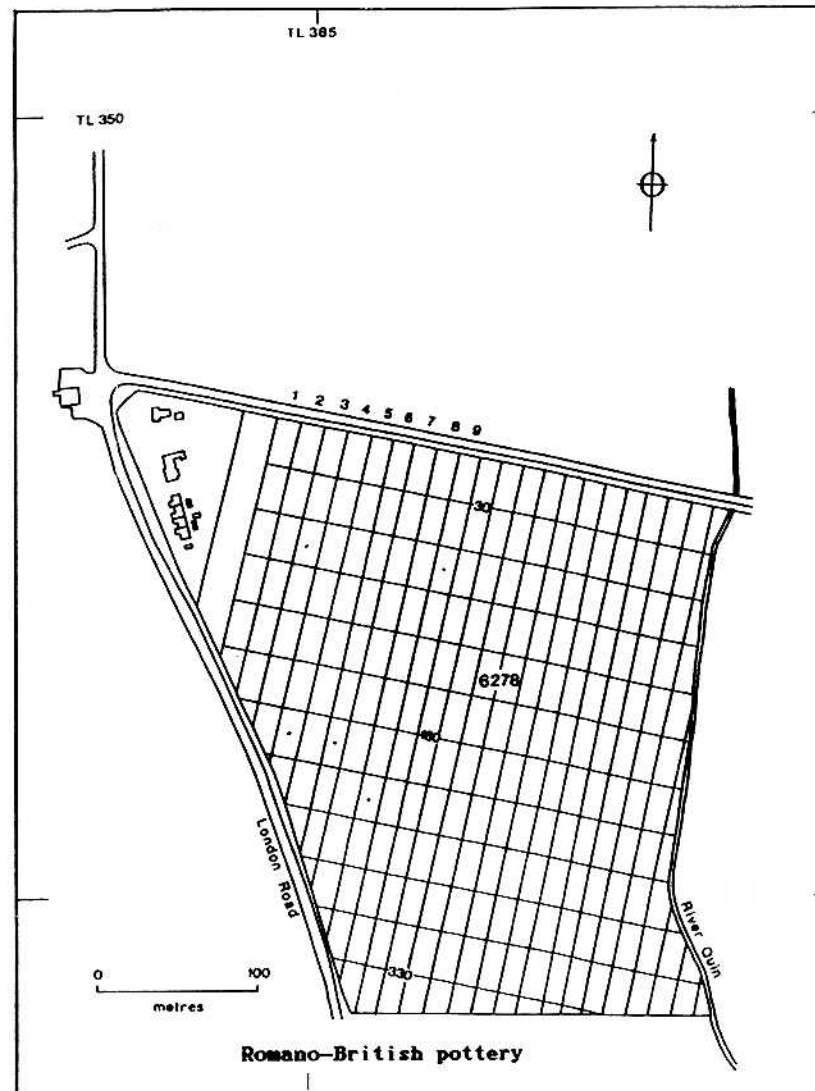
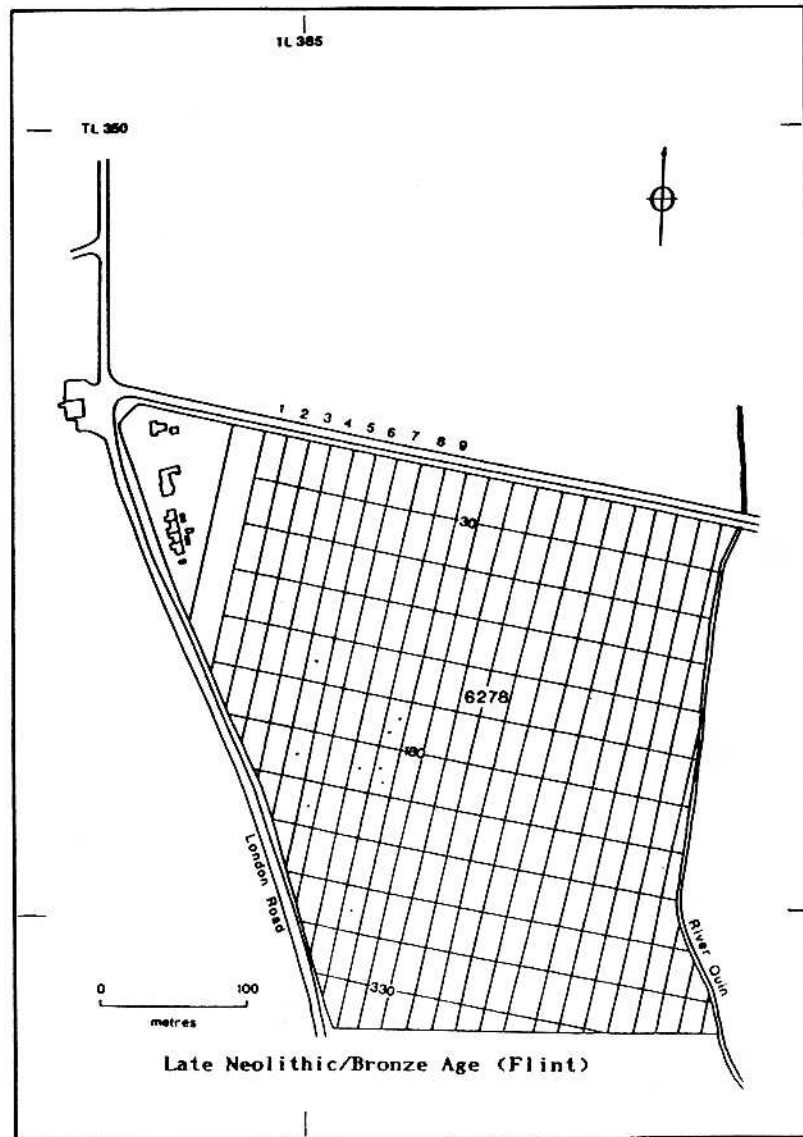
a. Top view.



b. Profile

Figure 3. A worked flint core from Set One, line 9/300 metres. (Actual size)

*Barkway Survey : Set One*  
*Finds distribution*



**Figure 2**



abraded body sherds, belong to the generic type termed Hertfordshire Grey-ware. This term can be misleading. In the first instance this pottery type is not exclusively grey. Depending on the firing conditions, particularly the amount of oxygen in the kiln, the surface, and even the core of the fabric may become pinkish-red or orange. Furthermore, although this form of pottery is common in Hertfordshire and probably emanated from within the county at Much Hadham, its distribution was far from local, having had a wide circulation throughout South-East England. The Much Hadham potteries are thought to have maintained production from the mid-first to the mid-fourth century, using essentially the same fabrics throughout. Over the centuries the potteries' prolific output encompassed a broad diversity of forms - from small beakers to large jars in a variety of styles which changed constantly to suit the buyers' tastes. These stylistic changes can be dated with reasonable accuracy from their occurrence with other dateable items such as coins in stratified deposits on archaeological excavations. Unfortunately, the fragments from Barkway were all featureless body sherds, too abraded to enable the precise vessel form to be determined. The quantity of finds is far too low to suggest habitation *per se*, a more likely interpretation is that the sherds were deposited along with other more degradable refuse on the a field belonging to a Romano-British settlement. The location of the settlement itself remains a mystery.

#### **Mediaeval Pottery and Metalwork**

4.4 Mediaeval material consists of only four items, of which only three - the pottery fragments, can be classified with any certainty. All three are earthenware sherds, one of which is plain, the other two bearing fragmentary yellow and green glazes. Both fabric and glaze indicate dates of manufacture in the late thirteenth or fourteenth century with Stamford or Bedford as the most likely sources. A copper alloy terret ring has been included in this section, although there must be reserva-

tions concerning its age. On visual inspection the alloy composition suggests an origin no later than the mediæval period, although in the absence of decoration a Romano-British date cannot be ruled out. A full, scientific examination of the metal might resolve the question, although, in relation to the amount of information gained, the process would be prohibitively expensive.

#### **Late Mediaeval and Post-Mediaeval Tile**

4.5 A large amount of tile, nearly 25 kilograms, was collected during the first survey, of which approximately half was of nineteenth or twentieth century manufacture. The remaining half was examined in greater detail and some attempt made at classification. Firstly, some of the problems attendant on the attribution of dates to tile samples should be explained. The techniques of tile manufacture vary little in detail throughout the medieval period, and indeed have much in common with the methods formerly used by the Romano-British. If therefore, as is often the case, the clay sources are similar or the same, there is little to distinguish the tile fabrics of different periods. Variations that are diagnostic such as specific tile forms, are difficult to identify from the small, heavily abraded fragments which appear on field surfaces. In the absence of a stratigraphic sequence or closely related finds there is often little hope of establishing secure dates. Comparative dating is the only method which might be used to shed light on the problem. For this it is necessary to refer to a dated sequence of tile, usually provided by a local excavation covering the period in question.

4.6 Unfortunately, there has been no such excavation in the vicinity of Barkway, indeed the only tile series assembled in North Herts. is from the Church of St. Mary and St. Thomas, Knebworth (R. Ozanne in K. Matthews 1992). Owing to the localised nature of tile manufacture, close correlation between the Barkway and Knebworth tile group was not possible. However, based on firing conditions and coarse

inclusions it was possible to isolate four general fabric types, believed to date from between 1450 and 1750. Closer dating within the four fabric types, examples of which have been retained in the archive material, proved impossible. As can be seen from figure 2, the distribution of late and post mediæval tile is uneven. Line three can be ignored as these finds were not returned for analysis. Even so, the tile falls into two concentrated strips separated by lines four and five. The most probable interpretation is that the distribution reflects the pattern of fields during this period through the deposition of artifacts together with the farmyard waste within the field boundaries. This hypothesis can be checked against estate and tithe maps of the area, an area of research presently pursued by the Barkway and Nuthampstead Parish Map Society. Certainly the type of field represented here is consistent with strip cultivation practises which survived into first half of the nineteenth century when the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts began to take effect in this part of Hertfordshire.

4.7 The source for such a quantity of tile poses an interesting question. Since several different fabrics were present this might imply the demolition of more than one structure. Furthermore, the fairly narrow date range could suggest a single act of destruction. Such a disaster was recorded by Sir Henry Chauncy in his *Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire* (1700):

*In the month of November 36. Eliz. a sad and*

*Lamentable Fire broke out in this Town, which consumed most of the houses, to the great Impoverishment of the Inhabitants.*

The year, 1593, is central within the date range suggested for the tile, and the field lies less than five hundred metres to the south of the village, an acceptable distance for the disposal of demolition debris. However, allowing for the inherent uncertainties surrounding this attractive theory, including the location of tiled structures in an age dominated by thatch, this must remain in the realms of speculation. Further investigation of the historical records could however prove rewarding.

4.8 Two other finds of particular interest are illustrated below. Both are clay pipe bowls, which despite considerable erosion, can be dated with reasonable certainty. The bowl illustrated as figure 4a, recovered from line 8/90m, is of a type made around 1640, evident from the shape and angle of the bowl, the overall size and the profile of the pedestal. The rim is decorated with a rouletted band also common to this period. The second bowl (line 3/120m), judged on the same criteria with reference to standard works (Oswald 1975 & Davey 1981) appears to be even earlier, in the region 1610-1630 (figure 4b). Unfortunately, neither pipe bears a manufacturer's stamp. The factors which led to the replacement of the clay pipe by the more popular briar (c.1840), namely fragility and limited useful life were also responsible for its frequent occurrence on

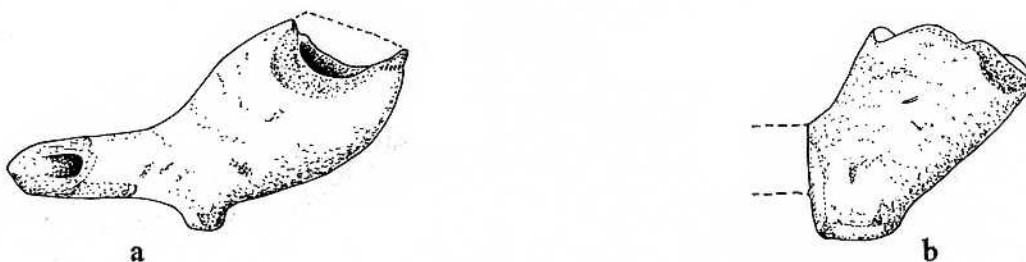


Figure 4. Two seventeenth-century clay pipe bowls from Set One.

Hertfordshire's fields, discarded when broken or clogged. Nevertheless, items such as those shown here, from the early decades after the introduction of tobacco remain comparatively rare.

### **Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Material**

4.9 The material collected which represents this period included a substantial amount of roofing tile. This has been excluded from this report after a preliminary examination of the distribution which proved uniform. The remaining items, all domestic ceramics were only of passing interest, composed in the main of earthenware sherds, with occasional examples of lustreware and blue-patterned china. From the distribution pattern of these items (see figure 2) it can be seen that they follow a similar pattern to that of the late/post-mediaeval tile. This may either be regarded as a coincidence, or as suggesting that the majority of these items were discarded towards the end of the life of the previous field boundaries.

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### **Sets Two and Three.**

**8th and 29th February 1992.**

**(see figure 5)**

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These two phases of the survey will be dealt with together for the purposes of this report, since they cover two adjacent areas of the same hillside.

#### **Worked Flint**

4.10 The distribution pattern established by these two sessions shows a distinct cluster in the north-east quadrant of the field, contrasting with a complete absence of finds in the remaining area. The twelve identified items: a burin (awl-like instrument), two scrapers, four core fragments (see figure 6) and five waste flakes, form a sample too limited to represent a long term working area, much less a settlement;

however, it does indicate short term or periodic manufacture, and infers the presence of habitation in the vicinity. The finds were clustered around the 115m contour as were those on the opposing hillside on the edge of the slope leading down to the present course of the River Quin. The dating of these flints followed the same reasoning as outlined above (section 4.2), namely the early to middle Bronze Age (c.1500BC).

#### **Romano-British Material**

4.11 Romano-British pottery of the same coarseware fabrics as those collected during Set One appeared in slightly greater abundance in Set Three, although all but absent from the Set Two area. As opposing hillsides, these two areas might be expected to have formed parts of quite separate field systems, and thus it is not surprising that the distribution of artifacts varies in accordance with differing agricultural practises or even ownership. Again, the thirteen items of pottery (predominantly Much Hadham wares) are insufficient to indicate settlement, but do demonstrate the utilisation of the land. It is even possible, although it should not be stressed too highly, that the linear distribution of the finds may be a reflection of the dimensions of such a field.

#### **Mediaeval Pottery (12th-15th century)**

4.12 Five fragments of mediaeval pottery were recovered from the Set Two area and a single fragment from Set Three. Three fragments of Tyg-ware, coated with an opaque, dark-reddish brown glaze were collected from line five. The other fragments were an eroded body sherd probably of local manufacture and two rim-sherds: a Stamford-ware fragment with a plain lip from line 6/60m (12th-13th century), and a fragment with an everted rim from an Oxford-ware vessel (line 6/150m, 14th-15th century)

4.13 It was decided that tile would not usually be collected during these latter surveys on account of the processing problems encountered after the initial fieldwalking and the limited value of the results. In the event, the



field surfaces to the east of the River Quin showed a relative scarcity of tile, of which a

few samples were collected for future reference.

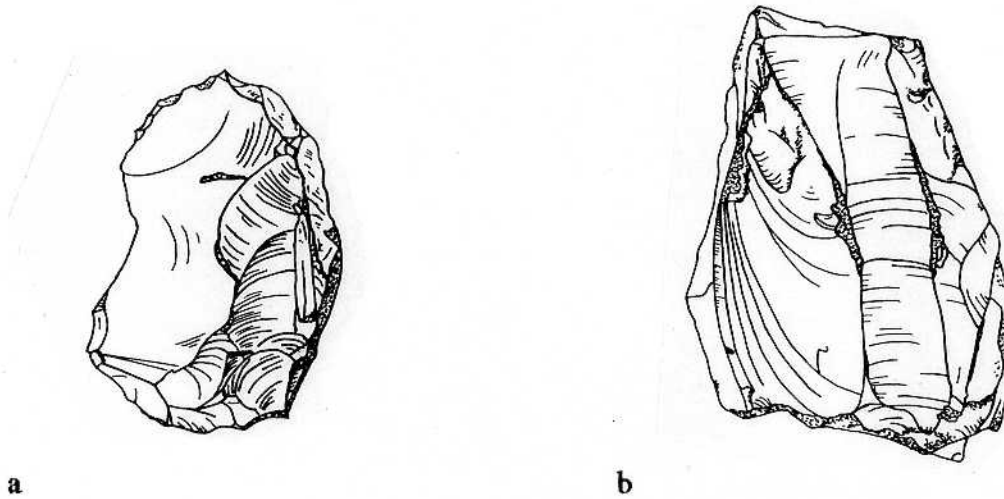


Figure 5. A flint scraper (a) and a core (b) recovered from Sets two and Three (Actual size).

# Barkway Survey : Sets Two & Three

## Finds distribution

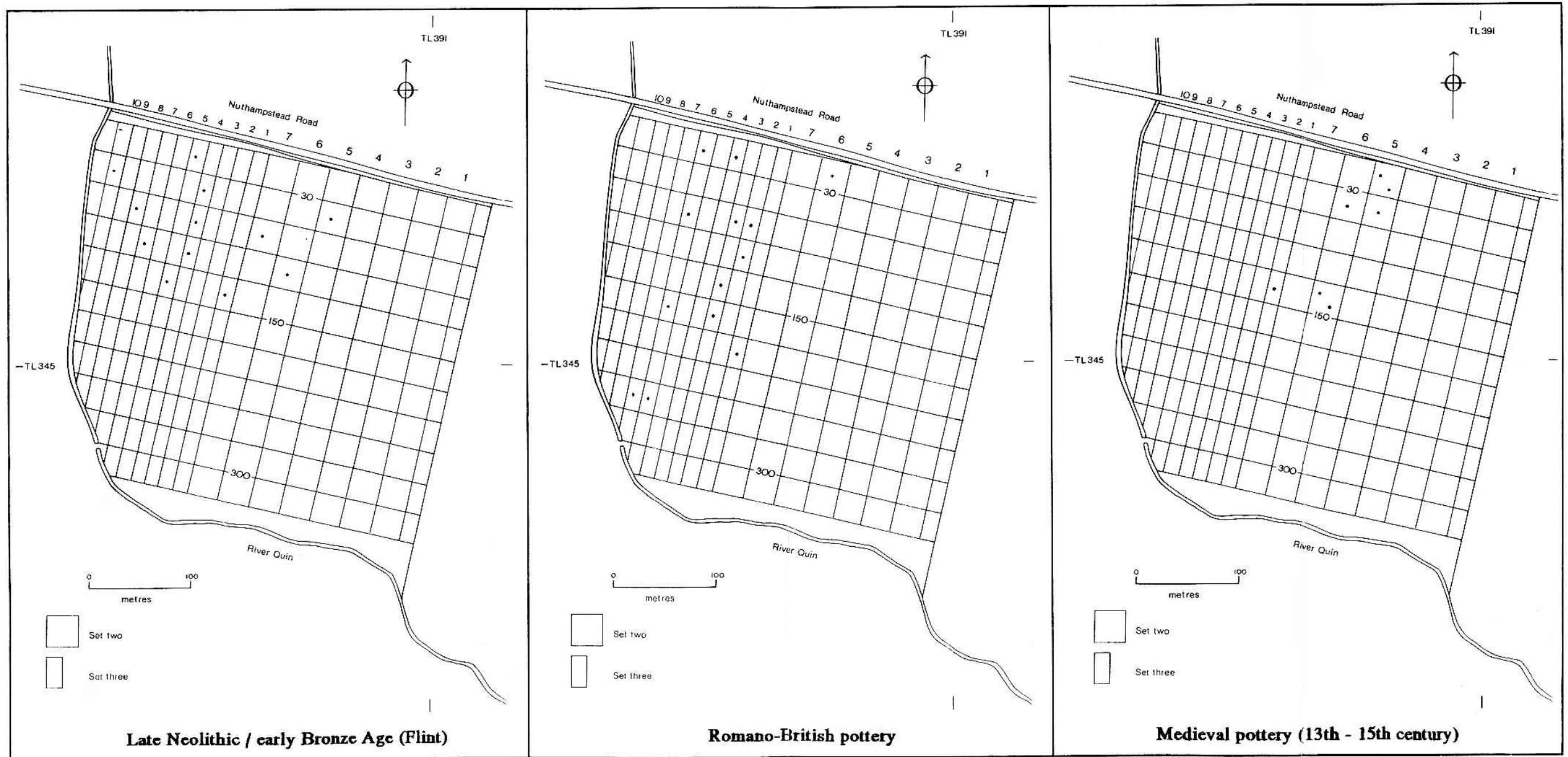


Figure 6

## 5. Aerial Photography

5.1 Over the last two years the Archaeology Section has been in the enviable position of being able to examine sites of particular interest from the air. Christine Colley and Dave Went managed to persuade local microlight pilots to overfly the district, with themselves as passengers, in the search for new archaeological information. Aerial photography has a respected tradition as one of the most effective methods of non-destructive archaeological detection and interpretation. Developed by academics such as O.G.S. Crawford and Major J. Allen who became pilots during the First World War and realised the potential, aerial photography is now a major discipline adding immeasurably to our understanding of the past across the entire country.

5.2 Many sites which survive only as indistinct scars and undulations in the landscape can only be interpreted properly from the air. Even sites which have vanished completely from the surface can be traced by growth variations in the overlying vegetation. A submerged, backfilled ditch will retain a higher moisture content than the surrounding subsoil and therefore promote taller, more verdant crops along its length; the contrast is especially clear in times of drought. Conversely, a stone wall foundation, cobbled surface or beaten floor may be indicated by stunted or retarded growth in the crops immediately above. Ploughed fields, particularly those overlying chalk, often display patterns or anomalies created by previous disturbance: darker soils contained within ditches, or the remnants of upcast subsoil which once formed banks or mounds. Although sometimes apparent from the ground, it is only

from the air that these features resolve themselves to reveal enclosures, boundaries, burial mounds and the like. Microlights have several advantages over more conventional survey methods. Apart from the cost which is obviously far less than for other types of aircraft, the microlight is also more manoeuvrable, enabling examination of a site from a variety of heights and angles. A further improvement is our use of high definition colour film, which records a greater range of tonal differences than the more usual monochrome pictures.

5.3 The golf course was examined in June 1992 as part of a wider sweep across the east of the district, and produced some impressive results. The ring ditches of two previously unknown round barrows were recorded in the north-west quarter of the Set three area (see figure 7). The precise date of these features is understandably uncertain, however they appear to be within the early to mid Bronze Age tradition exemplified by the Therfield group. The most northerly of the barrows (TL 3885 3467) was still visible despite lying within the area of a new fairway. The second barrow lay approximately 40 meters to the south-east (TL 3888 3463) in an area of rough. Beyond this several less distinct markings suggested the possibility of two or perhaps three further examples within the two fairways immediately to the south. Inevitably, the golf course development dominated the area, and will further obscure earlier features as the conversion continues and matures. Several segments of linear features were recorded and transcribed, although unfortunately the sense of these had been eliminated by the new layout.

## 6. Summary and Discussion

6.1 The survey, which began as an interesting exercise with local volunteers has produced some valuable and surprising results. The distribution of post mediæval tile, and to a lesser extent pottery, shows quite clearly a pattern which may be confirmed as that of an earlier field system, quite possibly pre-dating the enclosure acts. This question is left open for the Barkway and Nuthampstead Society who are perhaps better placed to find an answer; although the possibility of artificial distortion of the distribution must be borne in mind and is discussed below (section 6.7).

6.2 The suggestion that the volume of tile found during Set One reflects the disposal of building debris in the aftermath of the 1593 Barkway fire is an enticing theory. Further fieldwork in the vicinity of the village, and more thorough documentary research into the effect of the fire on tile-clad structures, such as the church or the homes of the wealthy, might clarify the picture.

6.3 Mediæval material, for all the recorded activity in Hertfordshire throughout the period, was scarce as is usually the case in fields without a direct association with a sizeable settlement. This is not truly surprising since throughout the period the products of material culture were never abundant in rural settings; indeed far less so than in the preceding Roman period. In support of this fact, the quantity of Romano-British pottery recovered from the survey area marginally exceeds that of the mediæval material; not however, in a sufficient amount to denote a settlement in the immediate vicinity, despite the likelihood of such sites in the surrounding countryside.

6.4 It is the earlier prehistoric evidence which really combines to produce a fascinating picture. Worked flint, probably of Bronze Age date (c.2000-1000 BC.) occurred in small but significant numbers in both Set One and Set Three. The Set Three material was concentrated

in an area now known to contain at least two vestigial round barrows (see aerial photography, section 5), as well as the location of a late Bronze Age founder's hoard (sections 2.4-2.6). Coincidence alone is insufficient to explain the convergence of these three activities within such a small area; they are doubtless interrelated.

6.5 The Barkway barrows probably derive from the same period which saw the proliferation of barrows on Therfield Heath and within the general environs of the eastern Icknield Way; further examples of which can be found to the south of Barkway in the parish of Anstey. Such early Bronze Age monuments may well have formed the focus for later activities. On the golf course site this may have included flint knapping, if indeed this was not contemporary with the barrows' construction, and utilisation of these landmarks as a point of reference for the concealment of the late Bronze Age founder's hoard. The search must continue for the settlements implied by these aspects of Bronze Age culture.

6.6 It is to be hoped that the further development of the golf course will be sympathetic to the survival of the barrows. The mounds have long since disappeared due to the depredations of ploughing and perhaps more active destruction in the past. It would be a tragedy if the ring ditches, the last surviving remains, were to similarly vanish without trace. To this end representations have been made to the landowner to curtail plans for the afforestation of this area, a process which would have disastrous consequences for their preservation.

6.7 The survey has provided a valuable insight into the process of golf course conversion and the subsequent effects on the archaeological horizon. Although the survey was far from extensive, being limited to the north-western third of the total area affected, and not even comprehensive within that area, some particular



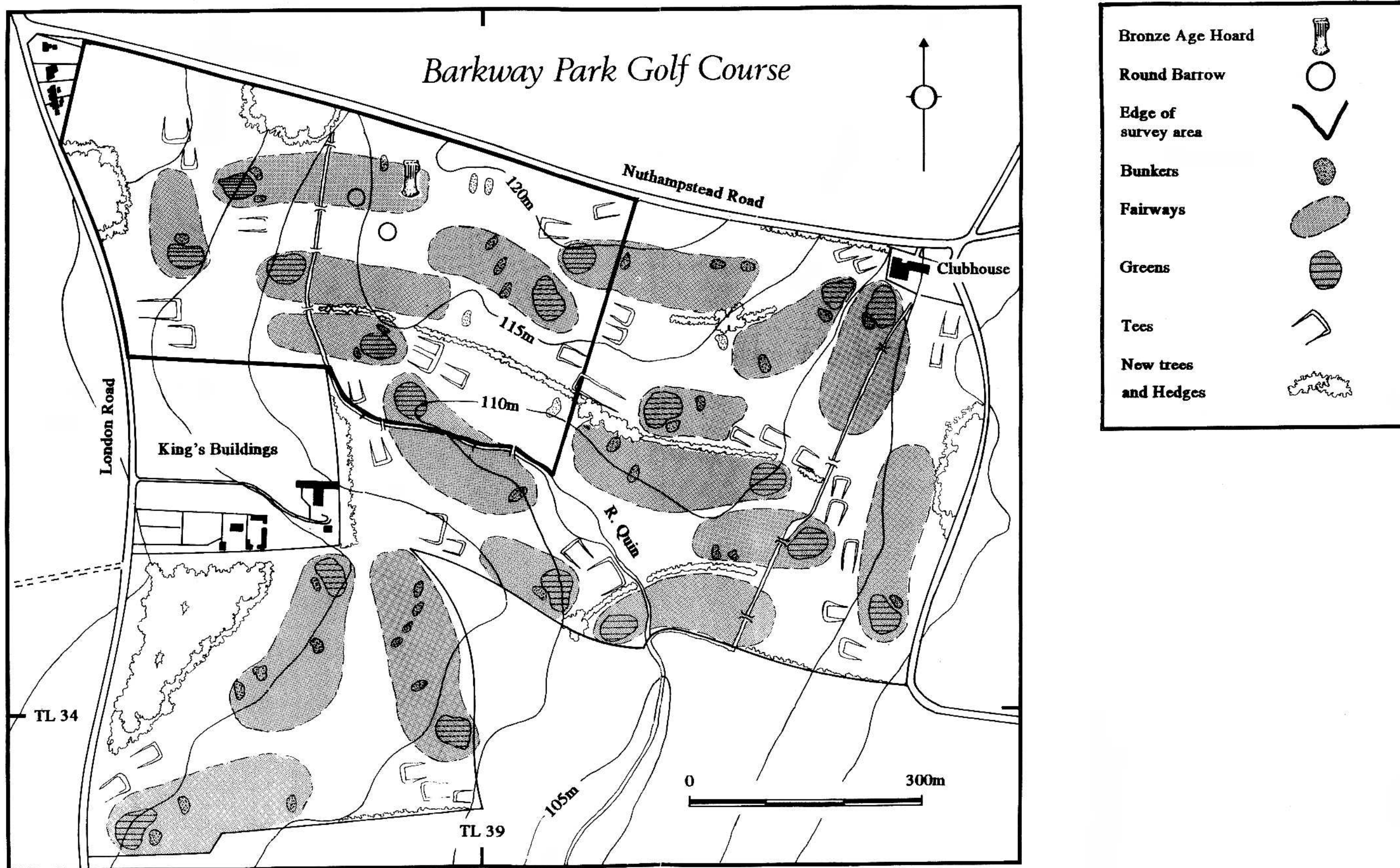


Figure 7

effects can be noted since the primary groundworks had been completed at the time of the surveys. The greens proved invalid for the survey as they appeared to be constructed from imported fine soil, rather than from the indigenous topsoil. The fairways were also of a different character to the surrounding field surface due to the processes of smoothing and stone clearance. The implications of these actions are difficult to assess. During the survey frequent comments were made about the lack of finds on the fairways, and this impression may be visible in the final results. The southern sections of Sets Two and Three, in which fairways were predominant, show distinct voids on the finds distribution maps (figures 2 and 5). The conclusion that these areas were denuded of finds by the construction process is, however, made less certain by the apparent lack of a similar effect relating to the fairway in the north-west corner of Set Three. Comparison of figures 5 and 7 will illustrate the point. Of greater concern is the scarcity of finds in the centre of Set One which coincided roughly with a north-south oriented fairway. If this void is a consequence of stone gathering along the fairway area then specula-

tive field boundaries inferred from the distribution patterns are invalid.

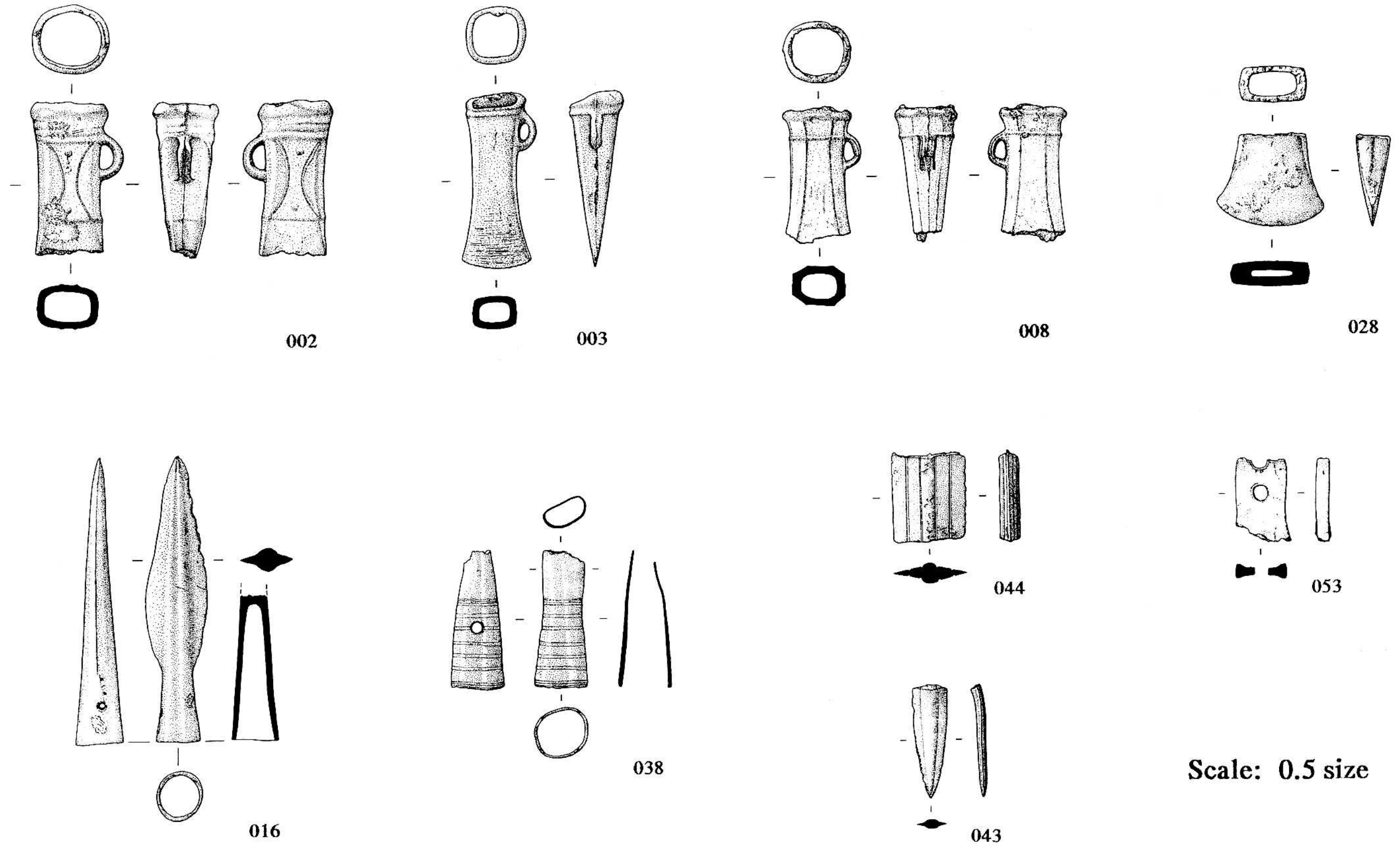
6.8 In either case, I believe that the point is well made that landscape alteration on this scale is bound to confuse and distort an archaeological resource which might otherwise prove very rewarding for study. In the worst cases, valuable evidence can be irreparably damaged. In the case of the Barkway Park Golf Course a fortuitous set of circumstances led to the examination of a site, which owing to the lack of previous archaeological discoveries, might not have been investigated otherwise. This is often the case under present planning conditions wherein only recognised archaeological areas of importance are protected by proper procedures to ensure funding for the necessary work. As a result the majority of virgin landscape sites, which are a critical area for study escape the attention of archaeologists. As an exception to the rule, the Barkway Park Golf Course provided a series of important discoveries, which despite the limitations of the survey, have enhanced our knowledge of this too often ignored area of Hertfordshire.



## 7. Appendix: The Bronze Age Founder's Hoard.

001 Socketed axe-head (complete) Class A	026 Socketed axe-head (blade point only)	056 Spear point
002 Socketed axe-head: psuedomorphic flanged-axe (winged) design.	027 "	057 "
003 Socketed axe-head (complete) Class A.	028 "	058 Socketed axe fragment including loop.
004 " Class A.	029 "	059 "
005 Socketed axe-head: psuedomorphic flanged axe (winged)design.	030 "	060 "
006 Socketed axe-head Class A.	031 "	061 "
007 " Class A.	032 " (probable)	062 Sword pommel with transverse crest composed of small nodules.
008 Socketed axe-head: octagonal section,decorative seams Class D.	033 "	063 Rim fragment of socketed axe
009 Socketed axe-head. Class A.	034 "	064 "
010 Socketed axe-head (complete) Class A2- Pellet decorated.	035 "	065 "
011 Socketed axe-head: slightly octagonal section. Class D	036 "	066 "
012 Double flanged axe-head	037 Socketed axe blade fragment (probable)	067 "
013 Ovoid object, flat diamond section, lozenge profile.	038 Fragment of dagger or sword handle. Close rivet holes and lip similar to Ewart Park swords.	068 " Class D?
014 Blade fragment	039 Fragment of bracelet	069 Curved piece of decorated plate bronze - scabbard fitting ?
015 "	040 "	070 Plain blade fragment
016 Spear head. Haft rivet holes (complete).	041 Sword blade fragment	071 Possibly part of a gouge.
017 Spear head. Haft rivet holes.	042 "	072 Gouge blade.
018 Socketed axe-head (blade point only)	043 Sword blade point	073 "
019 "	044 Sword blade fragment	074 Fragment of socketed axe -head. Class D
020 "	045 "	075 Fragment of cast bronze, possibly part of socket for some tool or weapon
021 "	046 "	076 Fragment of socketed tool
022 "	047 "	077 Unidentified piece of broken cast object.
023 "	048 "	078 Bronze plate: harness/belt fitting?
024 "	049 "	079 Unidentified fragment.
025 "	050 "	080 "
025 "	051 "	081 "
	052 "	082 Blade fragment.
	053 Haft socket for spear? Banded decoration.	083 Unidentified fragment.
	054 Fragment of spear socket	084 "
	055 Spear point?	

# Examples from the Barkway Hoard



Scale: 0.5 size

Figure 8 (refer to appendix for descriptions)

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Unworked, partially refined ingots.

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085 415 (grams)	095 260 (grams)	105 80 (grams)	115 55 (grams)
086 815	096 145	106 55	116 50
087 740	097 140	107 50	117 10
088 340	098 40	108 25	118 175
089 740	099 40	109 15	119 135
090 450	100 50	110 75	120 125
091 450	101 20	111 35	121 45
092 600	102 55	112 25	122 90
093 410	103 25	113 70	
094 335	104 60	114 70	

Total : 7.315 Kg

Average weight : 192.5g

Indexed with Letchworth Museum's accession numbers minus the prefix: 01.1991.

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