

## **The prehistory of the North Cray area**

### **Evidence exists of settlements in the Palaeolithic period in the North Cray area.**

There have been numerous examples of evidence suggesting settlements in North Cray during the Palaeolithic (c.500,000 - c.9,000 BC), Mesolithic (c.9,000 - 4,300 BC), and Neolithic (c. 4,300 - 2,000 BC) periods, and in the Bronze Age (2,000 - 650 BC) and Iron Age (650 BC - AD43). For example, in 1911, on the west bank of the River Cray, a possible Palaeolithic flint working site was discovered, which contained a scraper core and worked angle flakes of Aurignacian or Magdalenian type. On the east bank of the river, worked angle flakes, a duck-bill scraper, and scraper core were found c. 1905. At North Cray Place an unfinished (Abevillean) tool was also uncovered in 1936, as well as a flint blade found in a field and a hand axe from Crittalls Corner.

Furthermore, items have been discovered from the Mesolithic era. For example, six Mesolithic blades were found at Bunkers Hill. Also, a tranchet axe was discovered, as well as a core found at Foots Cray. There is a possible Mesolithic occupation site at Stable Meadow allotments, where blades, cores, micro-cores and scrapers were found.

Neolithic items have been discovered as well. At a pipeline in Cray Valley, a hundred struck flints were recovered; the majority of the flints were waste flakes and nodules but several blades, one possible borer, several end scrapers, and one possible unfinished arrow-head were discovered and were dated to the Neolithic period or early Bronze Age. On the west bank of the River Cray, a flint axe was also found, along with a leaf shaped arrow-head.

Items from the Bronze and Iron Ages have been recovered from Foots Cray. From the Bronze Age, flint tools including discoidal scrapers were found during gravel workings at Foots Cray. From the Iron Age, a deposit of humic silty clay (buried soil) was recovered and dated to be late Iron Age/ Roman. Also, peat deposits, dug up in Foots Cray radiocarbon dated to a period covering the Mesolithic to the Iron Age were found to contain burnt flint.

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Sources (available at Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre):

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Corcoran, J. (2002). 1-31 Palm Avenue, Sidcup : A report on the geoarchaeological evaluation. Museum of London Archaeology Service