

The Pinn Mound

by Colin Bowlt

In the small field on the north side of Pinn Way, Ruislip, nearly opposite the entrance to Winston Churchill Hall, is a mound with a large oak tree growing on top. The tree appears to be now dying. The accompanying bramble and elder now tends to obscure the outline of the mound.

This mound has attracted attention in the past. Hugh Braun in a paper entitled 'Earliest Ruislip' mentions showing it to Sir Montague Sharpe who thought the mound to be a Roman landmark - a *botontinus* - constructed in the course of survey work. Sir Montague Sharpe had described how he thought the Romans surveyed the whole of the country using a grid system, and that intersections on the grid were marked by landmarks, such as mounds. This is now thought generally to be fanciful.

The 1956 volume of the *Journal of the Ruislip and District Natural History Society* has a brief account of a limited excavation into the southern side of the mound. It notes that it was of clay containing some pieces of red flint. No artefacts were found but it was evident that at some time about five inches of clay had been dumped in the meadow, reducing the prominence of the mound. The account states that according to an earlier record in *LAMAS Transactions*, the mound had been disturbed in the 19th century, finding Tudor or Roman pottery - all now lost.

We might never know the historical origin of this clearly man-made feature. However, when the tree eventually goes the mound should be archaeologically examined for any hidden secrets.

References:

Braun H 1935, Earliest Ruislip *Trans. London Middlesex Archaeological Society*, New Series VII, 99-123

Sharpe M 1926, The making of Middlesex; its villages, fields and roads
Trans. London Middlesex Archaeological Society, New Series V, 237-255



**The Pinn Mound on the 7 February 2014 after the heavy rains.
Pinn Way is on the right, and St Martin's Approach bridge is distant on the left**