

A POLISHED FLINT ARROWHEAD FROM TILGATE LODGE, WEST SUSSEX.

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During the survey of some earth works at Tilgate Forest Lodge, to the south of Crawley, West Sussex, the opportunity arose to fieldwalk a recently ploughed field, called the Round Field at TQ26603145. Amongst a range of other flintwork collected, including pieces dating from the Mesolithic through to the Bronze Age, was a single polished barbed and tanged arrowhead (Fig. 1).

The arrowhead measures 23mm long, 18mm wide and 4mm thick, and weighs approx. 1gm. It has been polished across its entire surface, including the barbs and tang. There is no damage either from use or later agricultural activities. An initial suggestion that it has been water worn has been discounted due to the even polishing and lack of water rolled abrasion, there is also no local flowing water near the site, the nearest stream being over 0.5 km. to the north.

A local collector, Mrs Helen Beard, found another unpolished barbed and tanged arrowhead nearby, together with two leaf-shaped arrowheads, and two microliths. She also found another 38 pieces of worked flint in the Round Field, including a fragment from a polished flint axe.

This polished barbed and tanged arrowhead appears to be unique. A search through the literature has not located a single similar example. Curwen's review of Sussex flint arrowheads (Curwen 1936) was the result of an examination of 1,682 examples in public and private collections, but although the barbed and tanged arrowheads made up 37%, there was not a single polished example. There is no mention of examples in Green's typology of flint

arrowheads (Green 1984) or from either old antiquarian sources (Evans 1897), or from more recent reviews (Gardiner 1988).

The lack of impact damage, the fact that it would have taken many hours to make this item, and its uniqueness, make it very likely that this barbed and tanged arrowhead was made for a specific 'ritual' purpose, and not for hunting.

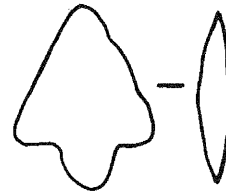


Fig. 1: The polished Barbed and tanged arrowhead from Tilgate Forest Lodge, West Sussex. Scale 1:1 (drawn by Claire Goodey)

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