

**Three later Neolithic discoidal knives from north-east
Surrey: with a note on similar examples from the
county**

by JONATHAN COTTON

THREE LATER NEOLITHIC DISCOIDAL KNIVES FROM
NORTH-EAST SURREY, WITH A NOTE ON THE TYPE
FROM THE COUNTY

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APPENDIX

The Appendix contains references to all the implements known to the writer up to spring 1983, although it is confidently anticipated that others await discovery in the public and private collections not yet examined. Museum collections consulted during the course of the research include those at Bourne Hall, Ewell, the British Museum, East Surrey, Farnham, Godalming, Guildford, Haslemere, Kingston, the Museum of London, Pitt Rivers Oxford, Reading (Thames Water Authority Collection) and Weybridge.

The Appendix is arranged alphabetically within each of the four groups outlined in the text. Each entry is accompanied by a National Grid Reference (where known), the length/breadth measurement of the implement in millimetres, its typological notation as defined by Clark (1929, 41-4; here Class I is circular, Class II triangular, Class III lozenge-shaped and Class IV rectangular) and a note of the findspot's geology. Published references are cited at the end of each entry.

Group I

BANSTEAD centred TQ 25 59

Measurements: 74 x 69mm. No typology. Geology: ?Upper Chalk.

Bifacially worked implement of mottled pale grey/cream flint with iron staining on the higher points of both faces and along the edge. Probably in origin a polished axe, it has been deliberately trimmed down to its present sub-circular shape by fine blunting retouch on the edge opposite the original axe-blade.

Grinding and polishing are confined to this latter edge and probably pre-date its subsequent re-use as a knife.

Possibly part of the Wright Collection, it was purchased by Kingston Museum with other artefacts from the same area from G F Lawrence in 1936.

Present location: Kingston Museum store (acc no 1259).

Unpublished.

LEATHERHEAD centred TQ 1655 5525

Measurements: 66 x 56mm. Class: II. Geology: Mole valley alluvium over Upper Chalk.

Bifacially worked sub-triangular implement of 'semi-transparent to opaque pale grey flint, with faint milky patina and lustrous surface'. Grinding and polishing have been carried over both faces as well as all edges, and Carpenter (1957) notes that 'examination of the surface under a lens shows that the polishing has been effected on both faces by a circular rubbing motion and that on the bevelled edges by rubbing parallel to each edge. The polishing stone is likely to have been a piece of hard grained Wealden sandstone of the ironstone variety as tiny specks of brassy-looking iron pyrites can be seen in some of the deeper scratches'.

Found by Carpenter in June 1957 'while searching a freshly harrowed strip of the fields adjacent to the river Mole, and to the east of the suspension bridge carrying the Leatherhead-Guildford by-pass'.

Present location: presumed to be in the possession of the finder.

Reference: Carpenter 1957.

SEALE Hog's Back/'Shoelands', centred SU 90/91 47/48

Measurements: 62 x 62mm. No typology. Geology: ?Upper Chalk.

Bifacially worked square-shaped implement of patinated white flint with cherty inclusions. It is unground and has iron staining on the high points of both faces. Part of a small collection of flints found on the Hog's Back and at 'Shoelands' (Farm) near Seale and described as 'Mesolithic'. Presented to Godalming Museum by Mr S Allden.

Present location: Godalming Museum store (acc no B. 980. 378).

Unpublished.

Group II

ELSTEAD centred SU 90 43

Measurements: 73 x 69mm. Class: I. Geology: Lower Greensand.

Bifacially worked circular implement of opaque grey flint with a finely ground and polished knife edge. Complete except for a small crescentic hollow broken out of the edge.

Originally part of the Frank Lasham Collection (no 863), there are no further details regarding provenance beyond those given above.

Present location: Guildford Museum display (acc no A G. 95).

References: mentioned but not illustrated in Lowther 1939, 156; O S Records.

GRAYSHOTT 'Chasemoor', house centred SU 8732 3443

Measurements: c 70 x 45mm. Class: I/IV. Geology: Lower Greensand.

?Bifacially worked oval implement of pale grey flint with cherty inclusions. Grinding and polishing apparently confined to one long side and one end. Found in the grounds of 'Chasemoor' and donated to Haslemere Museum by Cecil Wray in 1938.

Present location: Haslemere Museum display.

Unpublished.

HASLEMERE Wade's Marsh, West Sussex, farm centred SU 9062 3048

Measurements: c 65 x 55mm. Class IV. Geology: Lower Greensand.

?Bifacially worked square-shaped implement of pale grey flint. Apparently unground.

Donated to Haslemere Museum by Mr J Kingshott.

Present location: Haslemere Museum display.

Unpublished.

HASLEMERE SU 8996 3524

Geology: ?Lower Greensand.

'Discoidal flint knife, a barbed and tanged arrowhead, scrapers, were found within a large patch of black earth at the above NGR by F N D Rosher ... over a number of years'.

Present location: ? in store in Haslemere Museum, but not seen by the writer.

Reference: O S Records.

LIMPSFIELD 'Lombarden', house centred TQ 4213 5192

Measurements: c 41 x 52 mm. No typology. Geology: ?Lower Greensand.

Bifacially worked but fragmentary implement of cherty grey flint with the edge ground and polished along one side.

Marked 'Lombarden, Limpsfield, Surrey 1889 A M Bell coll. Purch. 1920'. Part of the Montgomerie Bell Collection bought from A C Bell in 1920 by Henry Balfour, curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (1884-1939).

Present location: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (unregistered).

Unpublished.

LIMPSFIELD Redlands Farm, centred TQ 419 528

Geology: ?Lower Greensand.

Described simply as a 'circular flint knife (?Class I) found close to the Westerham Road with a flint knife, two scrapers and a partly-polished flint axe, and a worn unpolished flint axe'.

This may be the implement found by Montgomerie Bell on 'Redlands Farm', which he describes as having been 'sorely handled by the plough'.

Redlands Farm now forms part of Broomlands.

Present location: unknown.

References: Bell 1888, 18; O S Records.

OXTED I centred TQ 38 51/52

Measurements: 60 x 78mm. No typology. Geology: ?Lower Greensand.

Unifacially worked flake of coarse grey-blue flint with the distal end and the higher points of the dorsal face ground and polished. A patch of cortex remains on the striking platform and there is a tiny patch of iron staining on the bulb of percussion.

Marked 'Oxted, Surrey 1885 A M Bell coll. Purch. 1920'. Like the implement from Limpsfield 'Lombarden' above and Oxted II below, it formed part of the Montgomerie Bell Collection purchased by the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford in 1920.

Present location: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (unregistered).

Unpublished.

OXTED II centred TQ 38 51/52

Measurements: 57 x 67mm. No typology. Geology: ?Lower Greensand.

Distal end of a large, broad flake of coarse light grey-blue flint with the edges ground and polished on three sides. The fourth side has been formed by snapping the flake transversely to remove the bulbar end. The dorsal face of the flake has been ground and polished all over, and the apparent grinding facets show up clearly. The ventral face is unground save for the edges.

Marked 'Oxted, Surrey. A M Bell coll. Purch. 1920'. A third implement from the Montgomerie Bell Collection purchased by the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford in 1920 (see above).

Present location: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (unregistered).

Unpublished.

PEASLAKE Burrows Cross, TQ 0915 4639

Measurements: c 76 x 72mm. Class: II. Geology: Lower Greensand.

Bifacially worked sub-triangular implement of light grey flint which has been broken across the apex leaving a concave scar. Both long sides are ground and polished while the base has been neatly blunted.

Found in an arable field with a re-chipped polished axe, it formed part of the combined collection of Mr C H Grinling and Mr A E P Collins which cannot now be separated.

Present location: Guildford Museum display (acc no G 3679).

Reference: O S Records.

Group III

ROTHERHITHE Surrey Docks, centred TQ 360 791

Measurements: 60 x 79mm. Class: I. Geology: ?silted-up river channel.

Bifacially worked oval implement of smoky brown/black flint with the edge ground and polished half the way around, and with the base blunted.

Found on the site of the 'new extension' to Surrey Docks, December 1895

(probably therefore during the digging of the western extension to Greenland Dock - information from Chris Ellmers, Museum of London), at c 23ft below Trinity High Water (ie 10ft 6in below OD) in 'gravel overlaid with peat varying up to 6 ft in thickness'. This was, in turn, overlaid with sandy clay and alluvium. The findspot is given as 'about half a mile from the present bank of the Thames at Rotherhithe'.

Present location: British Museum store (unregistered).

Reference: Stebbing 1937.

THAMES Barn Elms, centred TQ 234 765

Measurements: 94 x 91mm. Class: I/II.

Bifacially worked sub-triangular implement of mottled dark grey-smoky brown flint, with the edge ground and polished on all sides except the base, which has been neatly blunted.

Probably the knife of 'crescentic form with ground edge' mentioned by Lawrence (1929, 89) found 'at a point where a small outflow from the ditch at Barn Elms was situated, now covered in by the embankment'. Ex-London Museum Collection.

Present location: Museum of London display (acc no A 23813).

References: Clark 1929, 50; Lawrence 1929, 89.

THAMES Chelsea Reach, centred TQ 280 778

Measurements: 79 x c 105mm. Class: I/IV.

Bifacially worked oval implement of mottled and stained banded grey flint with one long edge and both faces extensively ground and polished. The opposing long side has been neatly blunted. There is a crescentic break at one end, and small patches of Thames 'race' adhere to both faces.

Originally from the river at Chelsea Reach, it was found in filling Ham Gravel Pit and passed to the old London Museum via the J Orrell Knowles Collection.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no 60. 176/351).

Reference: London Museum 1961.

THAMES Mortlake, centred TQ 210 761

Measurements: 62 x 63mm. No typology.

Unifacially worked flake of smoky dark brown/black flint with Thames 'race' adhering near the striking platform. The distal end has been ground and polished, and the flake is obviously still virtually as struck from the parent core. The bulbar, ventral, face is unretouched.

This may be the flint knife 'with ground edge' described by Lawrence (1929, 82) as having been found somewhere between a point just above the Red House and the Ship Hotel. However, its anomalous shape and workmanship suggests that he may be referring to another example, since lost. Ex-London Museum Collection.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no A 10667).

Reference: Lawrence 1929, 82.

THAMES Richmond Lock I, centred TQ 170 751

Measurements: 64 x 78mm. Class: II/III.

Bifacially worked sub-triangular implement of mottled smoky brown flint whose two long sides are ground and polished, but whose base has been carefully blunted. An old label reads 'Thames Lock & Weir Richmond Jan 19/92'. Thacker (1920, 488) notes that the lock was constructed between 1890 and 1894 on the Surrey side, with 'a slip and rollers' (the weir) against the Middlesex bank. The date and findspot given for both this and the following implement make it clear that they were found during the same series of river-works. The present implement passed to the old London Museum from the Lloyd Collection and appears to be the example which Lawrence could not locate during the cataloguing of this collection (1929, 77).

Present location: Museum of London display (acc no 49. 107/4).

Reference: Lawrence 1929, 77.

THAMES Richmond Lock II, centred TQ 170 751

Measurements: 83 x c 97mm. Class: II.

Bifacially worked triangular implement of mottled pale grey-dark grey/brown flint with two long edges and the high points of both faces ground and polished. The third, longest, edge has been neatly blunted, while one corner has been broken off in recent times.

Found during work on the 'New Lock', Richmond in 1893 (see Richmond I above), it passed to the British Museum as part of the Canon William Greenwell Collection.

Present location: British Museum store (acc no WG 604).

References: Clark 1929, 50; Lawrence 1929, 77; Vulliamy 1930, 78.

THAMES Strand-on-the-Green I, centred TQ 195 777

Measurements: 98 x 99mm. Class: I.

Bifacially worked sub-circular implement of smoky brown/black flint, ground and polished two-thirds of the way around the edge and on the higher points of both faces. The unground third of the edge has been neatly blunted.

According to Lawrence (1929, 82) both this and the subsequent implement (see below) come from 'a small cut' into the eastern end of the backwater which separates Strand-on-the-Green from a small eyot in the river.

It was purchased from the G H Vize Collection by the London Museum in December 1920.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no A 23481).

References: Clark 1929, 50; Lawrence 1929, 82.

THAMES Strand-on-the-Green II, centred TQ 195 777

Measurements: 70 x 68mm. Class: IV.

Bifacially worked square-shaped implement of dark grey/black flint with lighter mottling. Two small patches of cortex remain on one face together with some Thames 'race'. An unground example, it is described as 'apparently unfinished' on the Museum Accession card.

Possibly the 'delicately chipped flint knife' mentioned by Lawrence (1929, 82) as being found in the 'small cut' off the north-east corner of the eyot off Strand-on-the-Green (see above). Purchased by the London Museum in August 1924.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no A 27164).

Reference: Lawrence 1929, 82.

THAMES Twickenham I, centred TQ 16 72/73

Measurements: 35 x 62mm. No typology.

Unifacially worked blade segment of smoky brown/black flint with one long edge ground and polished. The opposite long edge together with the distal and proximal ends of the blade have been neatly retouched.

Marked 'Thames, Twickenham'. Purchased by the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford from S G Hewlett in May 1912.

Present location: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (acc no B III. 44).

Unpublished.

THAMES Twickenham II, centred TQ 16 72/73

Discoidal knife of 'oval outline (?Class I) and partly ground ... found in the river near Twickenham'. In private hands.

Present location: unknown.

Reference: Vulliamy 1930, 78.

THAMES Wandsworth, centred TQ 243 757

Measurements: 153 x 132mm. No typology.

Bifacially worked implement on a large oval flake of dark brown flint. Unground. Although included within the discoidal series by Clark (1929, 50), its large size and atypical workmanship make this unlikely. Lawrence considered it to be Mousterian (1929, 89).

Found in the river near Putney Bridge, Wandsworth, it was purchased(?from G F Lawrence) by the London Museum in August 1922.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no A 24954).

References: Clark 1929, 50; Lawrence 1929, 89.

No known provenance.

Measurements: 108 x 104mm. Class I.

Bifacially worked circular implement of dark grey-brown flint with the edge ground and polished all the way around. There is some polishing of the higher points of both faces, and the implement gives the impression of having been rolled.

Received by the London Museum in 1959 as part of the Thomas Layton Collection (Smith 1920, 4), it has no recorded provenance, but, like so

much of the Layton Collection, is likely to have been recovered from the west London stretches of the Thames prior to 1911.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no 0.673).

Reference: Smith 1920, 4.

No known provenance

Measurements: 80 x 80mm. Class: I.

Bifacially worked circular implement of banded light grey/dark blue-grey flint ground and polished on the high points of both faces but only very infrequently on the edges. A chip has broken off the edge in one place, leaving a small flattened scar which has then been used as a striking platform for the removal of further small flakes.

Received by the London Museum in 1959 as part of the Thomas Layton Collection (Smith 1920, 4; see preceding), it has no recorded provenance, but may, like the previous implement, have come from the west London Thames prior to 1911.

Present location: Museum of London store (acc no 0.769).

Reference: Smith 1920, 4.

No known provenance

Measurements: 56 x 74mm. Class: II.

Bifacially worked sub-triangular implement of smoky dark brown flint with a patch of light grey mottling. All edges and the higher points of both faces are ground and polished.

Un-numbered and unprovenanced example. However, may like the two previous implements have come from the west London stretches of the Thames.

Present location: Museum of London store (unregistered).

Unpublished.

Group IV

CLAPHAM Clapham Common, centred TQ 282 749

Measurements: 67 x 59mm. Class: I. Geology: Boyn Hill terrace gravels.

Bifacially worked implement of mottled olive-brown flint made on a broad oval flake, much of whose original surface has survived the subsequent shallow flaking.

The dorsal face retains traces of the three broad flakes removed in dressing the parent core; retouch is confined to the distal end. The ventral face has been retouched around the edge and has had the bulb of percussion deftly removed. Grinding and polishing are confined to the distal end and one long edge. Found on Clapham Common in 1919 or 1920 'at the bottom of a shallow hole caused by the uprooting of an elm tree' which was located on the west side of the Common 'just off The Drive and about opposite to Wakehurst Road'. Donated to the British Museum by Mr E S Gyngell.

Present location: British Museum store (acc no 1935 10-21. 1).

Unpublished.

FARNHAM The Ranges (Site 'U'), Hampshire, centred SU 847 503

Measurements: 94 x 58mm. Class: IV. Geology: Bracklesham Beds.

Bifacially worked sub-rectangular implement of 'smoke brown flint' ground and polished on three sides and on the higher points of both faces. To judge from the published drawing (Lowther 1939, 156, fig 60), the fourth side may have been neatly blunted.

Part of the Canon O'Farrell Collection.

Present location: unknown.

Reference: Lowther 1939, 155-6, fig 60).

WEYBRIDGE centred TQ 07 64/65

Measurements: c 55 x 39mm. No typology.

Unifacially worked trimming flake of mottled yellow-brown flint. Possibly part of a polished axe; all grinding and polishing are confined to the 'dorsal' face, while the bulb of percussion has been removed from the ventral face.

It is described as a 'discoidal knife' on the Museum Accession card, and although 'certainly local' to Weybridge has 'no known provenance'.

Collected by the late Brett Watkinson and donated to Weybridge Museum by Mr and Mrs J A Watkinson. It should not be confused with a modern copy of a circular unground discoidal knife of dark grey flint also held in Weybridge Museum.

Present location: Weybridge Museum store (acc no 155. 1966/2).

Unpublished.