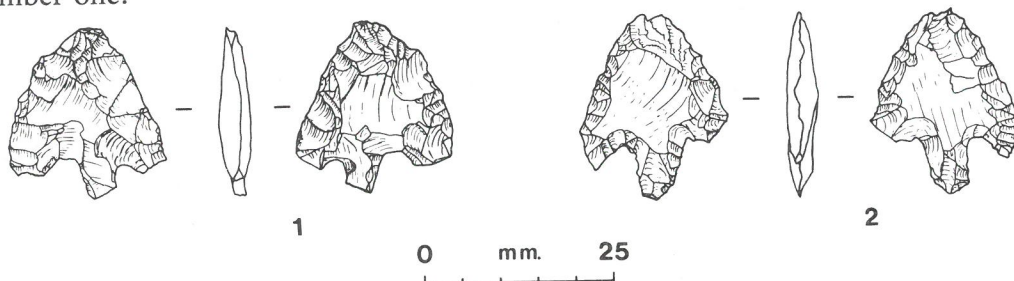


TWO TANGED AND BARBED ARROWHEADS FROM THE THAMES AT FULHAM

Gale Canvin

Two tanged and barbed flint arrowheads were found close together on the Middlesex foreshore of the River Thames at Fulham in April 1978¹. Number one was found at TQ24387568, number two lay ten metres further south at TQ24387567. Both findspots are about 120m east of the north end of Putney Bridge, a little downstream of Swan Wharf. The river-bed here consisted of gravel banks at the time of discovery, but these are often obscured by mud according to changing conditions of river flow.

The arrowheads are in good quality pale translucent flint, with no cortex remaining. Number one is 'greyish brown' (Munsell 10YR 4/3) and is 23mm long, 20mm wide across the barbs and 4mm thick, with a weight of 1.61 grams. Number two is 'greyish brown' (Munsell 2.5YR 4/2), and is 29mm long, 20mm wide across the barbs and is also 4mm thick, with a weight of 1.55 grams. They have both been reworked extensively – barbs, tangs and points are all reflaked – presumably to make good some damage and enable them to be reutilised. This has resulted in a marked asymmetry of outline, especially in number one.



It is difficult to parallel arrowheads quite as heavily reworked as these; most of the examples from barrows are in a much better condition. Grimes² illustrated similar, though unworked, examples from a barrow at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire, associated with a crouched inhumation and beaker. Arrowheads with short barbs and tangs were considered by Grimes to be Early Bronze Age³, although those from Fulham are so heavily reworked that the original length of the barbs and tangs cannot be determined. Similar arrowheads are also known from the henge at Durrington Walls in association with the platform of the Southern Circle⁴, and a damaged specimen similar to number two is known from a mid 2nd millennium barrow at Tallington, Lincolnshire.⁵ Many other examples are known from Beaker and Early Bronze Age contexts and also from undated surface collections.

It seems probable that the Fulham arrowheads are of Early Bronze Age date, and complement the many Beaker period objects from the Thames in West London, notably the beakers from Mortlake, and flint knives from Hammersmith and Barn Elms.⁶

The flints are currently retained by the author.

1. Found by the author during part of a systematic riverside survey of the borough by the Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society, Archaeological Section. Other finds are currently being prepared for publication.
2. W. F. Grimes *Excavations on Defence Sites, 1939-1945. 1: Mainly Neolithic and Bronze Age* (London, 1960) 161-2 Fig. 67.
3. *Ibid.* 212.
4. G. J. Wainwright & I. H. Longworth *Durrington Walls: Excavations 1966-1968* (London, 1971) 173.
5. W. G. Simpson 'A Barrow Cemetery of the Second Millenium B.C. at Tallington, Lincolnshire.' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 42 (1976) 232.
6. G. F. Lawrence 'Antiquities from the Middle Thames.' *Archaeol. J.* 86 (1929) 69-98.