

On four leaf and lozenge-shaped flint javelin-heads, from an oval barrow near Stonehenge : and on the leaf-shaped type of flint arrow-head, and its connection with long barrows / by John Thurnam.

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ON FOUR

Leaf and Lozenge-shaped Flint Javelin-heads,

FROM AN OVAL BARROW NEAR STONEHENGE; AND

On the Leaf-shaped Type of Flint Arrow-head,

AND ITS CONNECTION WITH LONG BARROWS.

By JOHN THURNAM, M.D., F.S.A.

(From "The Wilts Archæological and Natural History Magazine," 1867, Vol. XI. p. 40.)



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[Read at the Meeting at Salisbury, September, 1865; and reprinted from the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, 1864, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 427; vol. iii., p. 168.]

THE importance of discoveries, even apparently trivial, which throw light on the relative age of our more primeval antiquities, or which serve to connect one with another objects of this description, will at once be admitted.

The barrow in which the flint objects now exhibited were discovered is situated on Winterbourne Stoke Down, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile north-west of Stonehenge. It is within a few yards of the western end of the low earthwork known as the "*smaller cursus*," and is numbered 49 on the "Map of Stonehenge, and its Environs," in Sir Richard Hoare's *Ancient Wilts* (vol. i. p. 170). It was passed over, when the barrows around it were generally excavated, in or about the year 1808; and all that Sir Richard says of it is, "No. 49 is a long barrow" (p. 165); a designation, however, which we shall find is not strictly appropriate, and is very liable to misconception. The form of the barrow is oval, it being about 140 feet in length by 70 in breadth, and in height less than 2 feet above the level of the down. Its long axis lies east and west, and it is surrounded by a slight ditch continued round both ends of the barrow. It is thus seen to differ in several particulars from the *Long Barrow* properly so-called; in which the interments, belonging apparently to the stone-age, and by simple inhumation, are confined to the broad east end of the barrow. The true long barrow is usually of much greater size, often reaching 250 or 300 feet and

upwards in length, and having an elevation of from 5 to 10 feet, or even more. One end, usually that directed to the east, is almost always broader and higher than the other; but the most remarkable distinction is in the trench, which is carried the whole length of the barrow on each side, without being continued around the ends. These peculiarities of the long barrow are well shown in the engraving in "Ancient Wilts," (vol. i. p. 21. "*I. Long Barrow.*") The *Oval Barrow* No. 49, like others of a similar form and description, belongs no doubt to a different and more recent period than the true long barrows, and to the same age as the circular barrows of the ordinary bowl and bell shapes. Its oval form appears to depend upon its having been designed for two or three distinct interments, placed at tolerably regular intervals.¹ This variety of tumulus was not altogether overlooked by Sir Richard Hoare, by whom two or three such were excavated. Of one he gives a representation, as the specimen of his twelfth form of barrow, which he terms "Long barrow No. 2." His words are as follows:—"XII. *Long Barrow No. 2.* This tumulus in shape resembles a small long barrow, but differs from the larger kind, by having a ditch all around it." (p. 22.)

In addition to the two or three *Oval Barrows* opened by Sir Richard Hoare,² I have examined two or three others. The result appears to be, that, like the bowl and bell shaped tumuli, they cover interments sometimes by simple inhumation, but more generally after cremation. Like the circular barrows, they belong chiefly, if not altogether, to *the age of bronze, and of burning the dead*; by which phrase I understand a period when this metal and this mode of burial were in common but not universal use; implements and weapons of stone being still employed for many purposes, and burial

¹ For all purposes of argument, oval barrows (as distinguished from long barrows) and round barrows may be regarded as identical. The two are clearly coeval, and the work of the same people. An oval barrow, in my view, is a *congeries* of two or more round barrows.

² Those referred to in "Ancient Wilts," vol. i., p. 169 (118), p. 241 (10), p. 242 (22), appear to be of this description. On the last Sir Richard Hoare observes:—"These diminutive long barrows differ very materially from those of the larger sort, in which we have almost invariably found the interments (of entire skeletons) deposited at the east and broadest end."

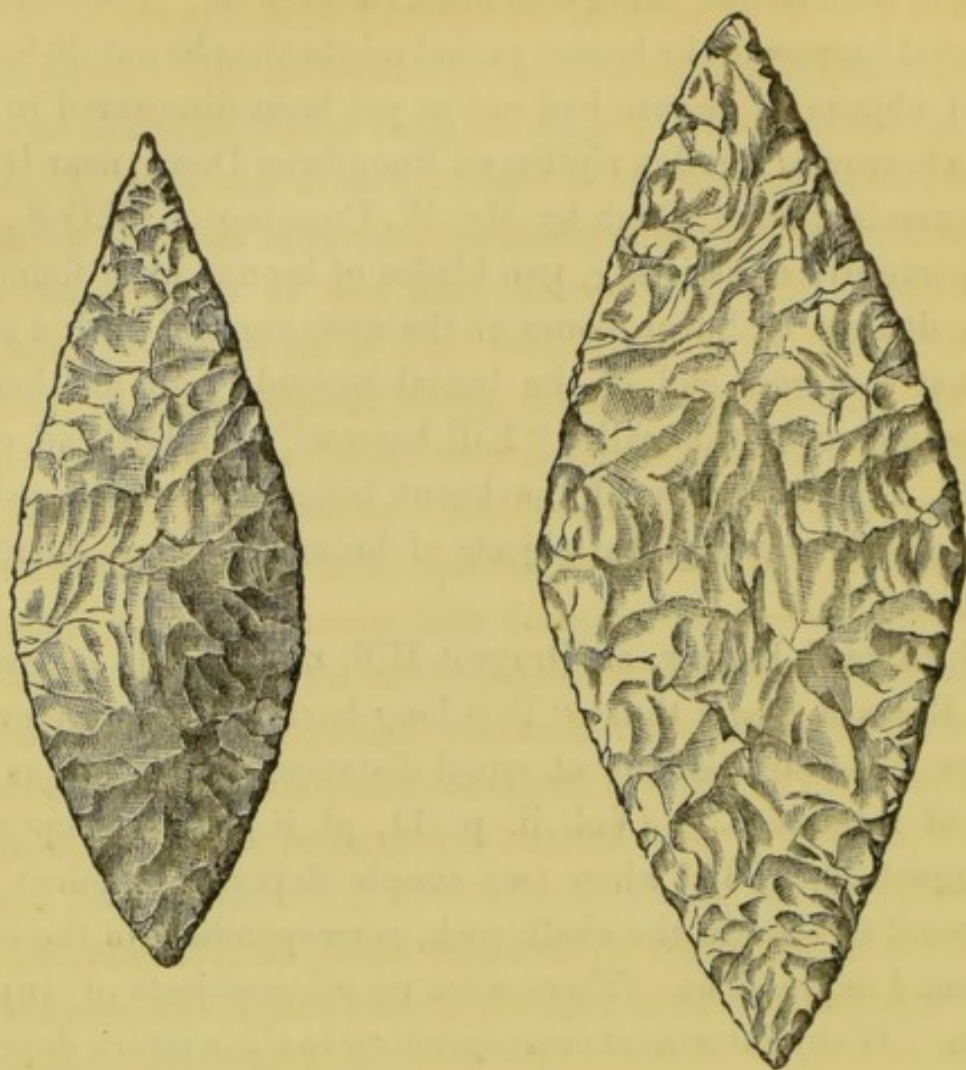
by simple inhumation being still often resorted to. The attribution of the oval barrow to the bronze period might thus be not ill-founded, even if objects of bronze had not as yet been discovered in them. But in a barrow of this description on Roundway Down, near Devizes, in the examination of which by Mr. W. Cunnington, F.G.S., I had the opportunity of assisting, two blades of bronze were found, one with a deposit of burnt bones at the east, another with a similar deposit at the west end of the burial mound.¹ In another oval tumulus, moreover, that called "Kill-barrow" near Tilshead, opened in 1865, I found many of the burnt bones strongly tinged with copper, clearly proving that objects of bronze had been burnt with the bodies.

A third oval barrow, on Draycot Hill, near Huish, is described by Sir Richard Hoare thus: "This long barrow is of low elevation, and has three depressions at equal distances, indicating as many places of interment." (Vol. ii. p. 11, pl. ii.) It was opened by me, August 20, 1863,² when two simple deposits of burnt bones were found in cists in the chalk rock, corresponding to the eastern and second depressions. There were no other objects of any description. If any interment corresponding to the western depression exist, it was not reached by our excavations.

The oval barrow on Winterbourne Stoke Down, in which the flint objects now to be described were discovered, was opened May 5, 1864. Near the east end, at the depth of about a foot and a half, was the skeleton of a person of middle stature, closely doubled up, and with the head to the north. Close to the back of the skull was a small "drinking cup" of richly decorated red pottery, such as is found with skeletons in the later round barrows. Like the brachycephalic (.80) skeleton with which it was found, it was much decayed and broken. The centre of the mound was searched for a second interment; if any exists in this situation it was not reached by us, though, to the west of the centre, a small cup of coarse thick pottery was dug up. A third opening was successfully made

¹ Wilts Arch. Mag. vol. vi., p. 162. Barrow No. 6, Cran. Brit. pl. xxxi., 43, p. (2).

² On the occasion of the Meeting of the Wilts Archæological and Natural History Society, at Devizes, 1863.



Leaf-shaped and Lozenge-shaped Javelin-heads of Flint.—(Actual size.)
From an Oval Barrow on Winterbourne Stoke Down.

near the west end of the barrow, where, at a depth of from one to two feet, was the skeleton of a tall man of a stature of about six feet. This was likewise doubled up, but had the head directed to the west. Fragments only of the cranium, with the whole of the jaws and teeth, were found; the rest of the skeleton had not been before disturbed. Close to the remains of the skull were the four very beautiful javelin-heads of flint exhibited to the Society, two of which are figured above. They were found in close contact with each other, and had probably been deposited with their shafts entire. They have a beautiful milky porcelainous tint, due no doubt to the length of time they had been buried in the chalky earth.

Three of the javelin-heads are of a delicate leaf-shape, tapering to each extremity. They vary a little both in form and size; the length being $2\frac{3}{4}$, $3\frac{1}{10}$, and $3\frac{1}{8}$, and the breadth 1, $1\frac{1}{4}$, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches

respectively. The fourth is of a rhomboidal lozenge form, and is larger than any of the others, being more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad. All, with great pains and skill, have been chipped into form, both at the edges and on the surfaces. The central part has been left moderately thick (quarter of an inch), apparently for strength. This is especially the case in those of leaf shape. That of lozenge form is thinner and more delicate. I suppose these objects to have been the heads of javelins and not of arrows, from their size; their average length being twice that of the barbed flint arrow-heads. There can at least be but little doubt that they formed part of the warlike equipment of some ancient Briton. Is there any sufficient reason why the missile weapons or javelins ("tela") with which Cæsar repeatedly tells us the Britons opposed the advance of the legionaries through the south of the island, (B.G. lib. iv. c. 24, 26, 32, 33), may not in many instances have been tipped with flints; so admirably fashioned for the purpose as these are?

Objects of this description have very rarely been found in barrows, and never before, so far as I know, in this part of England.¹ Out of the large number of more than four hundred barrows excavated by Sir Richard Hoare and his friends, and described in "*Ancient Wilts*," I do not find that a single specimen was obtained, and there is not one in the Museum at Stourhead. Examples, however, do exist in collections—apparently casual finds; and there are figures of such in Sir W. Wilde's *Catalogue of Antiquities of Royal Irish Academy*, p. 22, fig. 22, 23, 25), and by Mr. Franks, in *Horæ Ferales*, (p. 135, pl. ii. fig. 39, 41, 42). These, however, are none of them quite similar in form to the specimens from the oval barrow of Winterbourne Stoke, to which also they are inferior in beauty.

¹ Since this was written, I have received "The Celtic Tumuli of Dorset," by Charles Warne, F.S.A. In this volume (*errata*, p. 15; comp p. 16, 27,) is a woodcut of *four* leaf-shaped flat arrow or javelin heads, from an oblong barrow on Pistle Down, Dorset, opened by Dr. Wake Smart in 1828. The coincidence with my Winterbourn Stoke discovery is not a little curious. Dr. Smart informs me that the tumulus was of "no great height, and had nothing in common with the true Long Barrow, and only deviated from the ordinary type of Round-Barrow by presenting an oval or somewhat oblong shape." It was doubtless one of those I have distinguished as Oval Barrows.

They seem, from their size, to be the heads of arrows, and not those of javelins.

I have been somewhat particular in the description of the objects figured above, and of the barrow whence they were obtained, in order to distinguish them from some small and extremely delicate leaf-shaped arrow-heads of flint, which I have in several instances found in long barrows, properly so called, which seem to me to merit the name of the "*long-barrow type of arrow-head*," and as to which I will now offer some remarks.

In the summer of 1860 I made an excavation in a very large long barrow on Walker's Hill, Alton Down, North Wilts. The barrow appears to have been a chambered one, and had been surrounded by an enclosing wall, as described in the *Archæologia*.¹ Among the *débris* of the ruined chamber, near the east end, I picked up the flint arrow-head by which my attention was first directed to the subject before us. This relic in its present state, measures about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length, and $\frac{8}{10}$ of an inch in breadth. It is of a leaf-shape, delicately chipped at the edges and on both surfaces to a surprising tenuity, and weighs only thirty grains. Both points of this arrow-head were broken off when found, the fractures being evidently ancient. The total length when perfect must have been 1·8 inches, or 46 millimetres.

In the year 1863 the Rev. S. Lysons, F.S.A., excavated a remarkable chambered long barrow at Rodmarton, Gloucestershire, at the operations connected with which I was invited to be present. Here, in an undisturbed chamber, containing twelve or thirteen skeletons, two delicately chipped flint arrow-heads, of similar type with that last described, were found. Each, at both ends, was

¹ Vol. xxxviii., p. 410. Salisbury vol. of Arch. Institute, 1849, p. 98. By the peasantry of the neighbourhood this barrow is known as "Old Adam," (meaning Adam's grave), and one of the stones at its base as "Little Eve." It is a conspicuous object in plate 2 of Hoare's *Ancient Wilts*, vol. ii., p. 8. The hill, corruptly named "Walker's Hill" on the Ordnance Map, is by the shepherds more properly called *Walcway Hill*. It is crossed by the ancient British ridge-way (continuation of the Icknield),—the *Weala-wege* or *Welsh-way* of an Anglo-Saxon charter in the *Codex Winton* (Alton Priors). See Jones's *Domesday for Wiltshire*, 1865, p. xxvii.

despoiled of its points; injuries which it was conjectured had been purposely inflicted. When complete, they must have measured, the one $2\frac{4}{10}$, the other, $1\frac{6}{10}$ inches in length; the breadth of each is $\frac{8}{10}$ of an inch.¹

Curiosity being thus excited, I was induced to inquire whether a connection could be established between this particular type of silicious arrow-head and the long barrow. Possibly, in consequence of the abundance of flint flakes and splinters on the surface of the chalk in Wiltshire, the presence of the simpler sorts of flint objects in the barrows was sometimes overlooked in the excavations made by Sir R. C. Hoare and Mr. Cunnington, early in this century. However this may be, it is certain that no flint implements or weapons are mentioned as having been found in the ten or twelve long barrows opened for the most part by the latter gentleman.²

Derbyshire is differently circumstanced as regards flint, which must have been imported from a distance, and the long and chambered barrows of that county and of Staffordshire differ in important respects from those of Wilts and Gloucestershire. On turning however to the descriptions by Mr. Bateman of his researches in these barrows, I find indications of the connection of the leaf-shaped flint arrow-head with the long barrows of that part of England. In that, from its form called Long Lowe, near Wetton, Staffordshire, in a cist containing thirteen skeletons, were discovered "three very finely chipped flint arrow-heads," which, from the notice on the next page, may be presumed to have been "leaf-shaped."³ In a cist in another long (?) barrow, called Ringham Lowe, Mr. Bateman "found three very beautiful leaf-shaped arrow-points of white flint, one of which, considering the material," is, he says, "of wonderful execution; it measures $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. in length, is an inch broad in the middle, and weighs less than 48 grains, although it is not made from a thin

¹ For this barrow see Proc. Soc. Antiq. 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 275. *Crania Britannica*, plate xxvii., 59, p. (3). Small and not very good woodcuts of the arrow-heads are given by Mr. Lysons in his recent work, entitled "Our British Ancestors," 1865, p. 150.

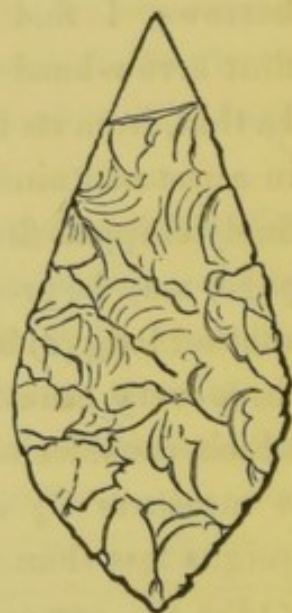
² *Archæologia*, vol. xv., pp. 340, 345. *Ancient Wilts*, vol. i. *passim*.

³ *Ten Years' Diggings*, 1861, pp. 145, 146. *Catalogue*, p. 37, 208 C. See the "Reliquary," vol. v., p. 27, for a ground-plan of Long Lowe, and a further description.

flake, but is elaborately chipped all over both surfaces." From another cist in the same barrow, "two very beautiful leaf-shaped arrow-heads of white flint" were obtained.¹

Another instance, also recorded by Mr. Bateman, is from a mound described as a long barrow, in Yorkshire, near Heslerton-on-the-Wolds, in the East Riding. Near the centre, was a pile of about fifteen skeletons, with the skull of one of which "was a small and neat flint arrow-head," which, from a sketch by Mr. Ll. Jewitt, I find is leaf-shaped. It is rather broader in proportion than those from the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire long-barrows, from which it likewise differs in retaining both its points. It measures $1\frac{2}{10}$ of an inch in length, by $\frac{8}{10}$ in breadth.²

During the summer of 1865, I had an opportunity of opening a long barrow of great extent on Fyfield Hill, near Pewsey, Wiltshire, locally known as "the Giant's Grave." It is not less than 315 feet in length, by 70 feet in width at the east, and 50 feet at the west, and is about 7 feet high at the east end. A moderately wide trench runs along each side, but is not continued round the ends of the barrow. On the natural level, near the east end, a heap of three or four skeletons was found, the only perfect skull from which is of a remarkably long and narrow form, the breadth being as .69 to the length taken as 1.00. One of the other skulls had been forcibly cleft before burial. The only object of antiquity with the skeletons was a finely-chipped arrow-head of flint, of a beautiful leaf-shape, and weighing forty-three grains: the point of its more tapering extremity was broken off when found, as represented in the woodcut. It has measured 2 inches in length, by $\frac{9}{10}$ inch in breadth; or 51 by 23 millimetres.



Leaf-shaped Arrow-head of Flint, from Long Barrow at Fyfield, Wilts. (Actual size.)

The repeated discovery of simple leaf-shaped flint arrow-heads in the long barrows, must, I think, be regarded as something more than a

¹ Ten Years' Diggings, pp. 95, 96.

² Ibid, pp. 230, 276. Comp. p. 227.

coincidence. It seems, indeed, to indicate the concurrence of the earliest type of finished flint weapon with probably the earliest form of sepulchral tumulus in this part of the world. The more advanced and complex barbed flint arrow-heads, which are not unfrequently found in the circular barrows of the age of bronze and of burning the dead, have never been found in the long barrows. It would be no objection to this view if leaf-shaped arrow-heads were frequently met with in the round barrows. Indeed, we know that the simpler and earlier varieties of all objects of utility frequently continue in use long after the invention of the more elaborate and costly forms. As regards the Wiltshire barrows, however, it may be observed that Sir R. C. Hoare nowhere records the discovery of a leaf-shaped flint arrow-head in any of the numerous round barrows which he explored. In the Museum at Stourhead there is only one such among many beautiful ones of the barbed form.¹ It is much thicker and clumsier than any of those I have described above; measures $1\frac{3}{10}$ inch in length, and bears the number "83." I have not been able to obtain access to the Catalogue to which, no doubt, this number refers; but possibly, this is one of the "two rude arrow-heads of flint found near the head" of a skeleton, in a circular barrow near Tytherington.² It may belong to a period when leaf-shaped arrow-heads were no longer used by the chiefs, and when less pains were bestowed on their fabrication.

The flint heads of missile weapons, when chipped into form at all, were no doubt of a shape for which, in the first instance, the foliage of some tree or plant supplied the ready type. This shape

¹ See the barbed arrow-heads found in round barrows, described by Sir R. C. Hoare, sometimes with the entire skeleton, "*Ancient Wilts.*," i., p. 211, pl. xxx., p. 239, pl. xxxiv. (in the latter case with a fine bronze dagger blade); and sometimes with burnt bones, "*Ancient Wilts.*," i., 183, pl. xxii. In two or three other instances, there is nothing to shew whether the arrow-heads were of the barbed or simple leaf-shape. [*Ibid.*, i., 104, 209, 242.] The examination of the Museum at Stourhead, makes it probable that they were of the barbed form.

² *Ancient Wilts.*, i., 104.

was never departed from as regards the blades of javelins and spears, it being the most suitable for the purposes of those weapons; but was, for the most part, replaced by the barbed form for the heads of arrows. When I speak of the leaf-shaped as the *long barrow type of arrow-head*, I desire not to be understood as restricting it to that form of tumulus, but as indicating it as that which is alone found there.¹

The long barrows are a remarkable class of tumuli, which stand apart from all others. The narrow and elongate (*steno- or dolichocephalic*) character of the skulls found in them contrasts strongly with the prevailing broad and short (*brachycephalic*) form of the skulls from the round barrows. Again, many of the long-barrow skulls are cleft in all directions; having been shivered, as would appear, by the stroke of a stone axe, wielded perhaps by a sacrificial priest or Druid, in honour of the obsequies of some primeval British chief. Another feature, derived from the form of the associated flint weapons, may now, I think, be added to the characteristics of a class of tumuli, which there are many reasons for regarding as the oldest sepulchral monuments of this part of Britain.²

¹ Such a discovery as that by Mr. J. R. Mortimer, of leaf-shaped arrow and javelin heads in a circular barrow on Bishop Wilton Wold, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and which has been described by Dr. J. Barnard Davis in the "Reliquary." (vol. v., p. 185,) and since brought by him under the notice of the Society of Antiquaries, (May 17th, 1866, Proc. Soc. Antiq. 2nd series, iii., p. 323) is by no means inconsistent with the conclusions arrived at in this communication.

² Since this was written, I have ascertained that the fictile remains in the long barrows are of a quite distinct and peculiar type. Pottery of any kind, however, associated with the primary interments, is of very rare occurrence in them.