

GUNFLINT

Unique ID: KENT-AA1B15

Object type certainty: Probably

Workflow status: Published

A complete knapped probable gunflint blank from which gunflints for flintlock muskets of Post-Medieval date, c.AD 1600 - 1900, could be produced.

Description: The flint is broadly rectangular in plan and resembles a stretched pillow shaped gunflint. with tapering sides and a trapezoidal cross-section. There is significant conchoidal rippling on the ventral side. The flint is dark grey with some mottled lighter areas. A probable accidental flake has been removed from the top edge.

Measurements: 85.73mm long, 32.6mm wide, 11.22mm thick and 38.77g in weight.

Discussion: This object very much resembles a gunflint if it had been stretched and is likely a blank for the production of spare gunflints. The rough shape of a gunflint in cross-section is already present, new gunflints would be snapped off its length and then finished. An identical example is shown in Oakley (1978, fig. 10b). Jason Gibbons (pers. comms.) has also pointed to a number of examples recently recovered from the Thetford area that very much resemble this example. A 19th century publication discussing the gunflint industry written by Sydney Sketchley in 1879, would support the identification but does also note the links between later prehistoric lithic industry and the gunflint industry which may mean some caution is needed with the ID. One thing noted by all is that often Gunflint blanks known seem to exhibit steel or iron staining from the metal tools used on them particularly on their striking platforms which was not initially identified on this example..

The flintlock was introduced in the middle of the 16th century and became the main regulation firearm for the British Army during the reign of William III. The knapped flint was used within the musket mechanism to produce a spark and could last between 20-25 shots before it had to be replaced.

A gunflint which would have been produced from a similar blank has been recorded as WILT-0B6F58 which states that "there is no documentary evidence for when or where sparks from flint were first used to fire gunpowder, but flintlock guns were being used in France from about 1600. There is a written record of an order received by London gunsmiths in 1661 to provide 15,000 'flintstones cutt' for the garrisons in Tangier and Ireland. This gunflint may have been associated with the local activity during the Civil War, but they continued being used into the 19th century, especially during the Napoleonic Wars"

Notes:

We thank Drs. Jonthan Ferguson, Torben Bjarke Ballin and Mr. Jason Gibbons for further information and their thoughts on this object.

Find of note status

This has been noted as an interesting find by the recorder.

Class: Blank

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: POST MEDIEVAL

Period from: POST MEDIEVAL

Period to: POST MEDIEVAL

Date from: Circa AD 1600

Date to: Circa AD 1900

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 1

Length: 85.73 mm

Width: 32.6 mm

Thickness: 11.22 mm

Weight: 38.77 g

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Materials and construction

Primary material: Flint

Manufacture method: Knapped/flaked

Completeness: Complete

Spatial metadata

Region: [South East](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [Kent](#) (County)

District: [Dover](#) (District)

Parish or ward: [Denton with Wootton](#) (Civil Parish)

Spatial coordinates

4 Figure: TR2247

Four figure Latitude: 51.17911132

Four figure longitude: 1.17487996

1:25K map: TR2247

1:10K map: TR24NW

Grid reference source: Generated from computer mapping software

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 1000 metre square.

Skertchly, S., 1879 [On the manufacture of gun-flints, the methods of excavating for flint, the age of palæolithic man, and the connexion between neolithic art and the gun-flint trade](#) London: H.M.

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