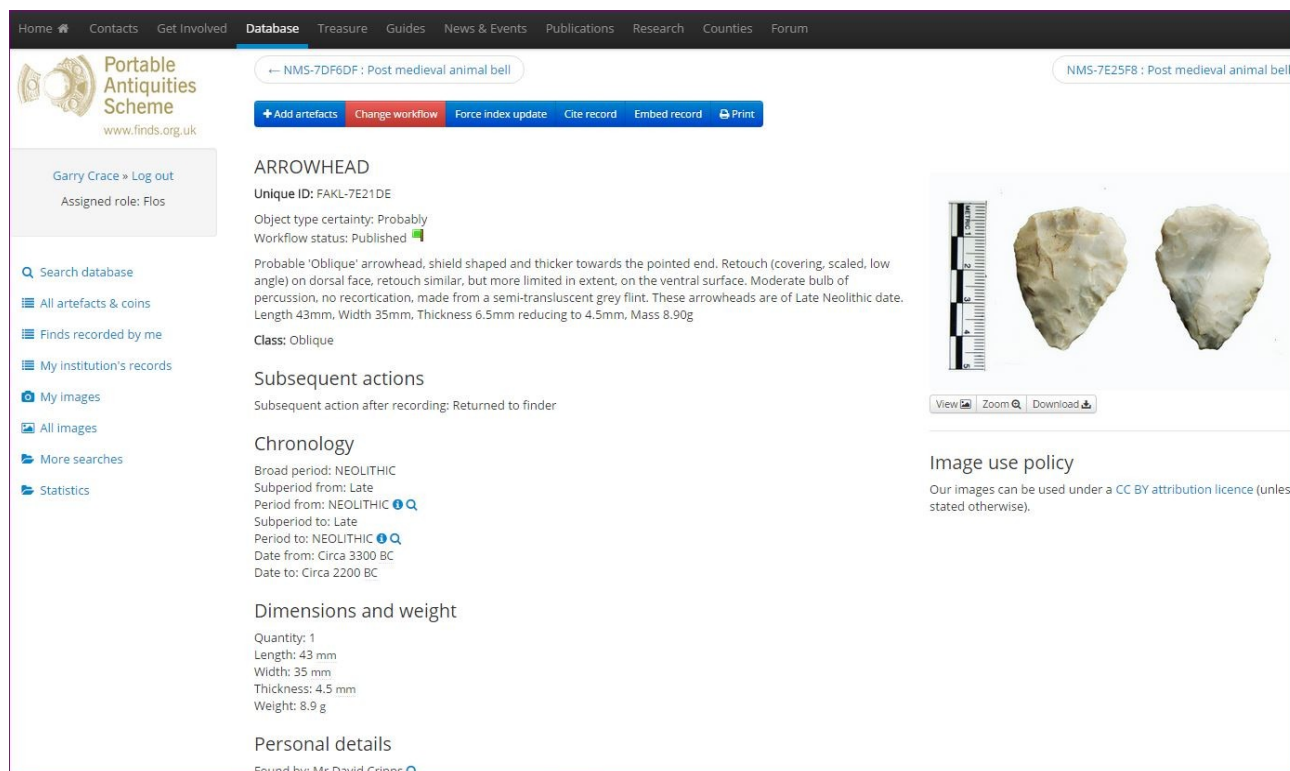


There's Prehistoric flints on them there hills

Back in late 2014 the Sussex Pastfinders (SPFs) gave a talk to the Parish Council on the material history of Iford and Swanborough. During our chat we expressed some surprise that there was a consistent dearth of worked prehistoric flints over the local landscape. We did not appreciate until the end of the evening when Linda Cripps a local resident spoke to us, that part of the reason for this was because fieldwalking for worked flints in the area had been something of a passion for her late husband David. Moreover, all the flints he had lovingly collected were all saved and still stored at home. Thanks to Linda and always up for a challenge, we set about trying to arrange to get all the flints professionally recorded and placed on the archaeological record for the area. When all the material was gathered together there were over 6 stones in weight of worked flints. The identification and recording of worked flint tools is a very specialist task and there are relatively few people in the country who have the skills and knowledge to undertake such a task. Fortunately the SPF's have a direct connection with Dr Kevin Leahy **a National Finds Adviser at the British Museum with an interest in flints**, who, despite the magnitude of the task and the consequential blocking out of a large chunk of his time, willingly undertook to record them all. Since being struck by the hand of prehistoric man thousands of years ago the flints soon began a journey across the country to be photographed, researched, described and added to the database of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). By far the majority of the flints were discovered by David on the hills that overlook the plains of Iford and Swanborough and an extract from the record for one such flint is given below. The flint is probably a so-called **oblique** arrowhead and was fashioned and used around 5000 years ago in the Neolithic period.



The screenshot shows the PAS database record for an arrowhead. The record includes the following information:

- Object Name:** ARROWHEAD
- Unique ID:** FAKL-7E21DE
- Object type certainty:** Probably
- Workflow status:** Published
- Description:** Probable 'Oblique' arrowhead, shield shaped and thicker towards the pointed end. Retouch (covering, scaled, low angle) on dorsal face, retouch similar, but more limited in extent, on the ventral surface. Moderate bulb of percussion, no recortication, made from a semi-translucent grey flint. These arrowheads are of Late Neolithic date. Length 43mm, Width 35mm, Thickness 6.5mm reducing to 4.5mm, Mass 8.90g
- Class:** Oblique
- Subsequent actions:** Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder
- Chronology:**
 - Broad period: NEOLITHIC
 - Subperiod from: Late
 - Period from: NEOLITHIC
 - Subperiod to: Late
 - Period to: NEOLITHIC
 - Date from: Circa 3300 BC
 - Date to: Circa 2200 BC
- Dimensions and weight:**
 - Quantity: 1
 - Length: 43 mm
 - Width: 35 mm
 - Thickness: 4.5 mm
 - Weight: 8.9 g
- Personal details:** Found by: Mr David Cripps

The record also features two photographs of the arrowhead, a ruler for scale, and an image use policy.

Surprisingly the pointed end of the flint is the end that would have been hafted to the shaft of the arrow and the broad end would be the business-end of the weapon. Without going into the gory detail the aim of these projectiles was to cause maximum arterial damage to the prey being hunted and so bring them down more quickly. A graph showing the different types of tools

forms were more common during the Neolithic period as the move towards settlement and farming resulted in the need for more tree clearance.

There are now over 200 Portable Antiquity Records for this assemblage of flints found on the hills above Iford. They serve to enhance and develop the rich heritage of this wonderful landscape and contribute another fascinating piece to the historic jigsaw, helping researchers to understand the bigger picture.

We hope this short article has been of interest, and in particular would like to thank Linda Cripps and Dr Kevin Leahy for their invaluable help, and of course the late David Cripps to whom we hope the recording of his collection provides a fitting memorial to his efforts.

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