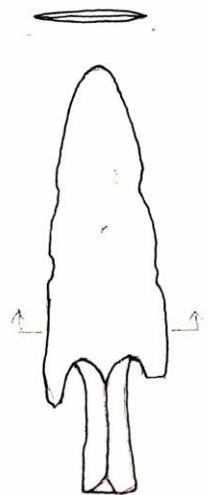


THE MUSEUM OF LONDON TYPE 16 ARROWHEAD.

This particular type of medieval arrowhead has, over the years, created much interest and speculation. Some believe it to be the most popular war head of the period. There are 24 heads in the Museum of London classified as type 16s, but in general far more of the bodkin type heads have been found relating to the medieval period.

The aim of this paper is to try and trace the development of the type 16 war head from its early beginnings through to its ultimate shape in the Tudor period using the accumulation of information I have collected over a number of years.

The earliest type 16s started out as a type 13 with narrow short straight or curved barbs. An example from the river Thames, dated around the 11th century is the earliest example of this type in my records.

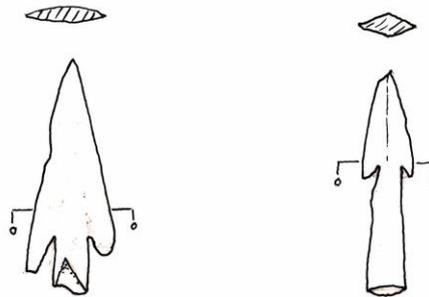


SOCKET DIAM. 10MM

THAMES TYPE 16

Thames type 16. 11th century

CASTLE COMBE HEADS

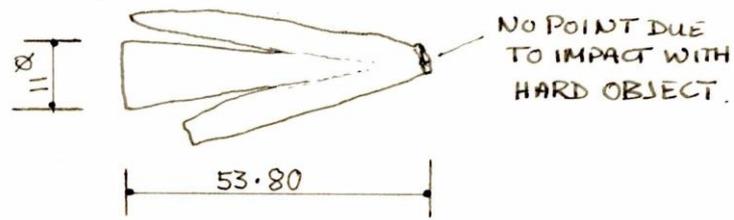


Castle Combe type 16s

Two other early types were found at Castle Combe near Chippenham and date from around the early 13th century. The one is a refined type 13 broadhead and the other is very similar to the small barbed type 3 of the early medieval period. These two heads were part of a larger collection of heads along with knives, spurs and parts of broken barrel locks found by a metal detectorist. Could this have been the after effects of an attack on a baggage train?

Another long barbed type from the type 13 family was found on the Wiltshire Downs and is dated to the 13th century.

WILTSHIRE DOWNS TYPE 16



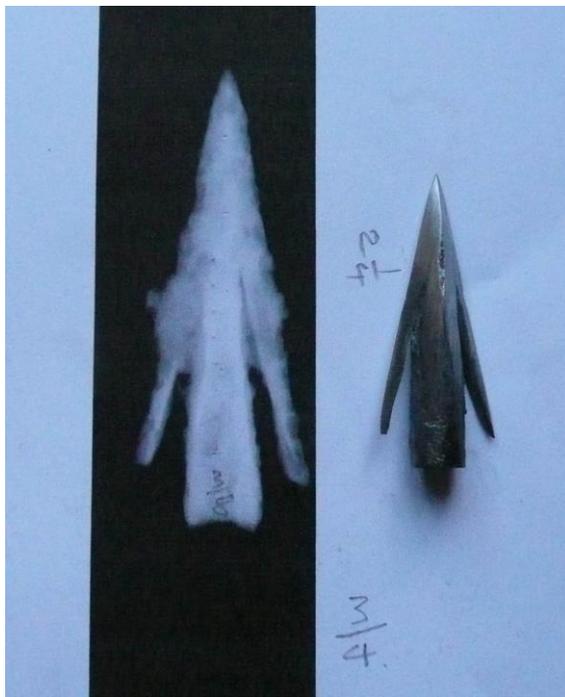
Wiltshire Downs type 16 13th century

Two good examples of early type 16s are from Stafford castle. One has short barbs and the other long barbs. The photographs are of the replicas that I have forged. The broad bladed one is the earlier of the two dating around the 13th century.



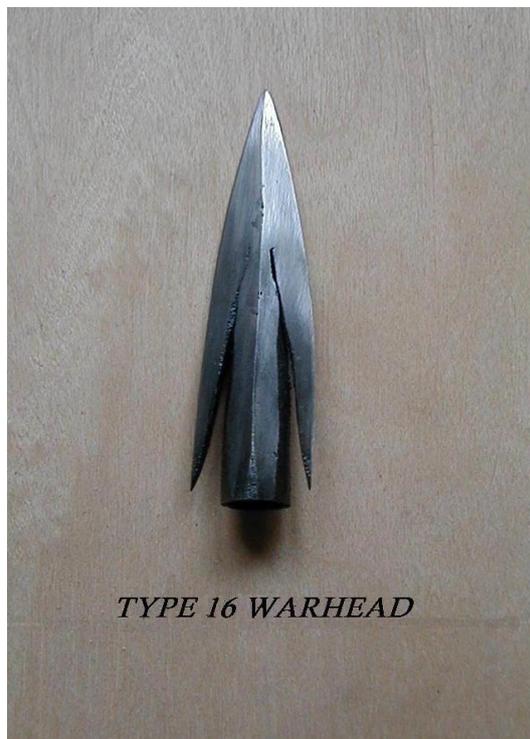
Replica Stafford Castle type 16s

Most of the early broad bladed heads were intended for hunting though they were certainly used to shoot people, with good effect, as can be verified by the one found in a body from Chester dating from the 14th century.



The Chester type 16 X ray and replica.

Note that this particular head has straight barbs unlike the later type 16s that have the typical curved barbs lying close to the socket. The classic example of the long curved barbed head is one of the London Museum heads that is in near perfect condition and has been quoted by many as a standard for the type 16 arrowhead.



Replica London Museum type 16

The Westminster type 16 is a good example of the short barbed variation where the barbs are fine and tight to the socket. This head is in fact a poorly forged head as the barbs are not equal in length and are not set true to the socket. The point has been broken off and due to the thinness of the barbs it may have been subjected to frequent sharpening.



Replica of the Westminster head

Another interesting variation of the type 16 is the one illustrated by Froissart in his painting of the battle of Poitier. Here he depicts a swept out version with a long thin point and short swept out barbs. This particular head would certainly let the archer know when he had come to full draw.



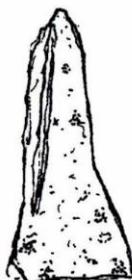
Battle of Poitier (Bibliothèque Nationale Paris)



Replica of Poitier arrowhead

As we approach the Tudor period the barbs of the type 16 eventually become part of the socket and we then have a Tudor bodkin of the type used on the Mary Rose arrows. This head easily enters and draws out of the leather spacers in the arrow bags without snagging. Two good examples of Tudor bodkins are from Hereford Castle site that date from that period.

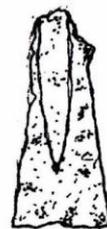
HEREFORD CASTLE



TUDOR BODKIN



HEREFORD CASTLE



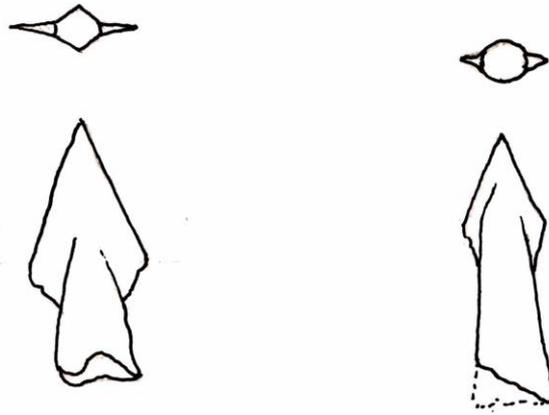
SOCKET DIAM. 13mm

ATROPHIED TYPE 16



It could also be said of the Tudor bodkin that it is also a refined version of the one piece kite shaped heads found on the Towton battle site and the Castle Combe site. The sockets on the Castle Combe heads are 13mm diameter which for that period suggests that they are quarrel heads and not arrowheads.

CASTLE COMBE



TWO 12TH CENTURY QUARREL HEADS

It is interesting to note that of the 24 heads in the Museum of London the majority have a socket size of 9mm. The smallest socket size is 5mm but that could be because it is not a full socket and the largest is 13mm. The Castle Combe heads have 9mm and 10mm sockets. The Wiltshire Downs head has an 11mm socket. The Stafford Castle sockets are 10mm. The Chester socket is 11.5mm. The Poitier socket I make to fit a 12mm shaft as it is not possible to get an exact size from the illustration. The Westminster socket is 11mm. The Hereford sockets are 13mm. There is one other type 16 arrowhead that is a long barbed London Museum type head that has a 12.5mm socket and is still attached to the shaft but confirmation of its dating as a medieval arrow has yet to be determined. This particular head is the largest type 16 that I have examined to date. From this it can be seen that the most type 16 heads have sockets between 9mm and 12mm with the majority of them being 9mm diameter.

Hector Cole

May 2014.