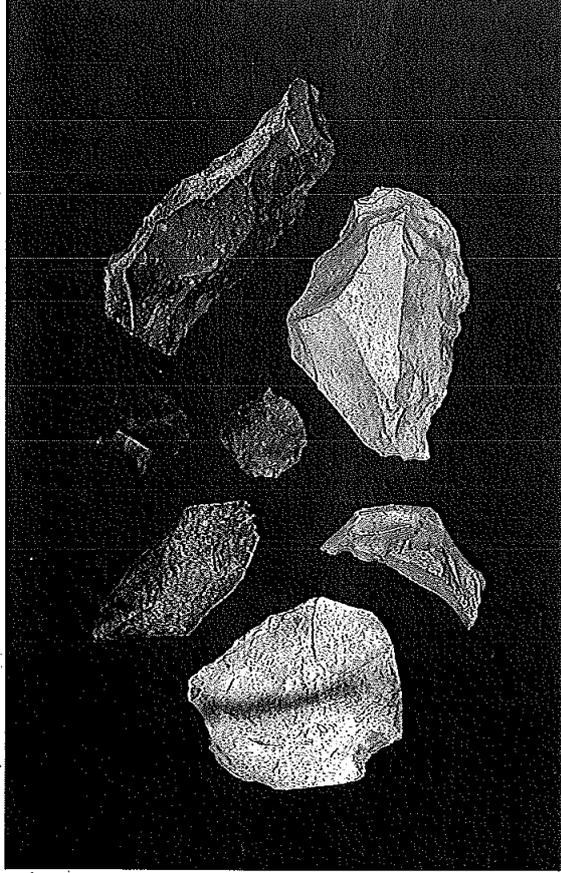
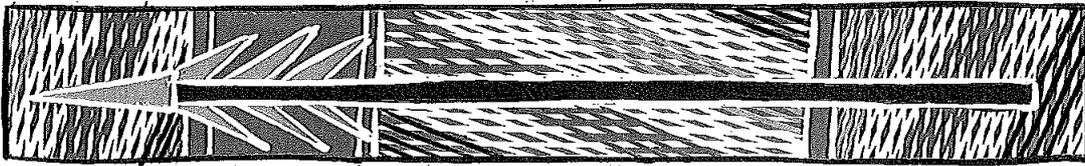


## Aboriginal Technology The Spear - Alex Barlow.

We still don't know for sure how long people have been living in Australia. Aboriginal religions describe the way that people, plants and animals were created by ancestral beings during the Dreamtime which took place in the far distant past.

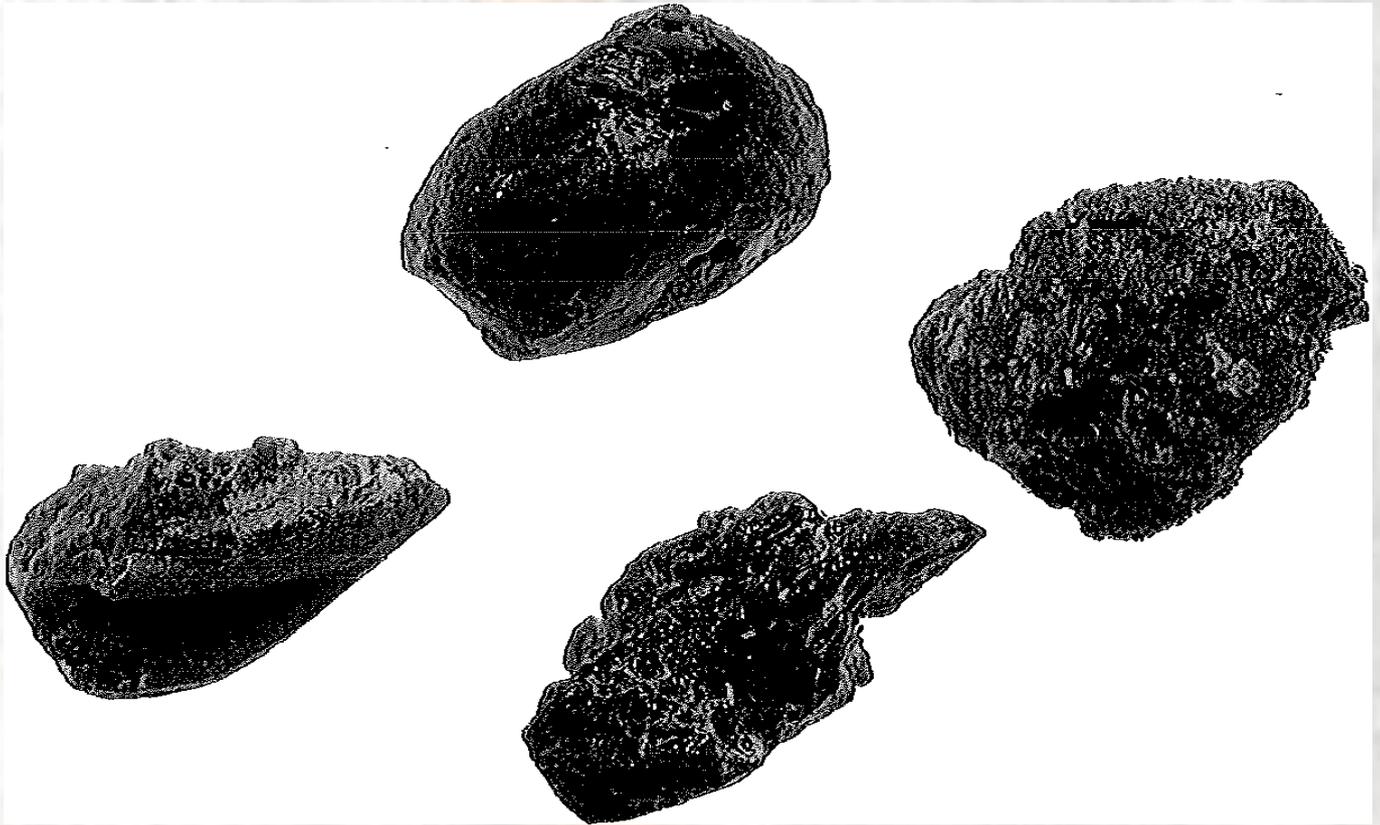
We have strong scientific evidence that people were living here at least 60 000 years ago, and there is other evidence that suggests that they could have lived here up to 100 000 years ago or more. From these early times, people probably used stone tools to manufacture a whole range of wooden tools and weapons, including the spear.



Some of the stone tools that were found in Wyrrie Swamp. These are estimated to be 10 000 years old.

**Early Evidence of Fire making** ('The Polemics of Making Fire' Aboriginal History 2008 Vol 32 page 3-4.)

- The various accounts of fire making in Tasmania describe two main methods: a flint stone that struck a spark, and the friction between two pieces of wood. Most of the earliest references to Tasmanian fire making describe the former, the 'percussion method'.
- In 1773, during the du Fresne expedition, Tobias Furneaux reported finding a stone kept in a basket 'to strike fire with and tinder made of bark' at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. Lieutenant George Mortimer (on Maria Island) wrote of finding a 'few flints and stones and a little dried grass; from which circumstances I conclude they provide fire by collision'.
- In 1792 George Tobin, an officer on Captain William Bligh's ship, found in an empty hut at Adventure Bay 'two small pieces of white stone, very different from any about Adventure Bay, and soft bark wrapped up carefully in grass'. Tobin concluded that, 'with the stone and bark the natives probably strike their fire.
- Some forty years after the first explorers came to Tasmania, GA Robinson wrote in his journal on Bruny Island, that he had 'obtained a stone' used by the 'Brune natives with which they sharpen their waddies and by means of which they strike fire'.



## Darwin glass

Found on slopes of Mt Darwin, Tasmania Collected by Mr E Hewitt, Mrs JH Sticht Y1034.1, Y1416.3

Some objects, in themselves, may appear to be uninteresting at first, but the stories they tell are of great importance. This is certainly the case with Darwin glass.

About 820,000 years ago the impact of a meteorite resulted in the formation of a 1.2 kilometre-wide crater on the Andrew River, a tributary of the Franklin River, western Tasmania. The Impact would have destroyed all animal and plant life in a 20-kilometre radius around the crater. While much of the crater rim has been eroded over time, the force and heat of the impact resulted in the formation of an impact-generated glass, which is known as Darwin glass.

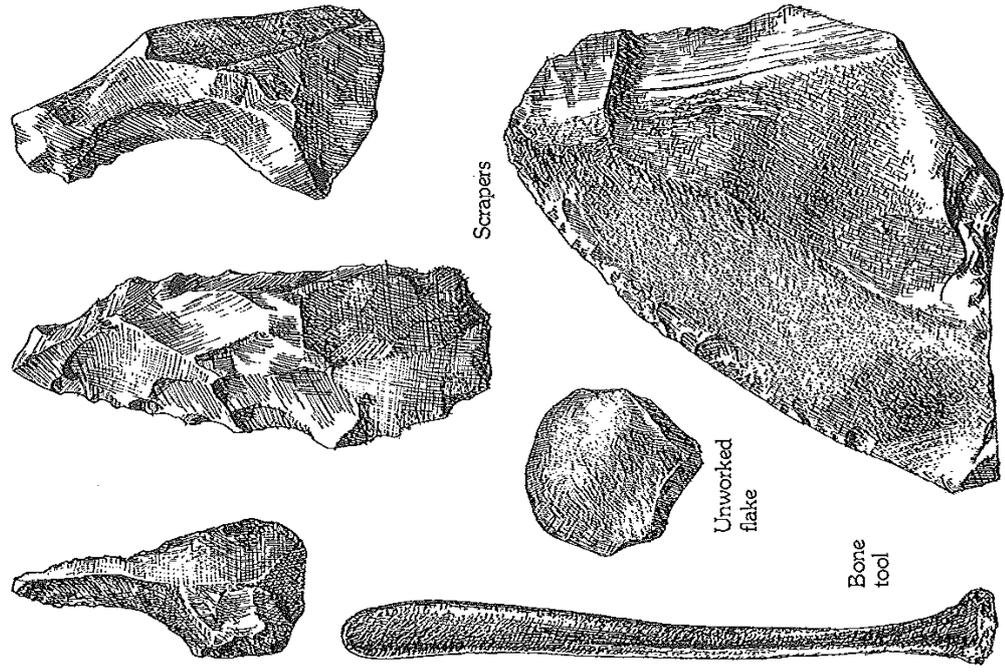
Darwin glass ranges from colourless, through to green and black, and comes in various sizes. The fragments of glass are often irregular in shape, spheroidal but sometimes show splash, ropy structures and droplets consistent with being liquid.

Tasmanian Aboriginal people used Darwin glass to make small tools. These would have had a finer cutting edge than those made of stone and were probably mainly used for preparing animal skins. Darwin glass was transported for distances up to 100 kilometres away from the crater, and has been found in many late Pleistocene sites, including Kutikina and Nunamira caves, in the south-west of Tasmania.

The morning: Temper  
 Tasmania - Julia Clark.  
 TMA9.

## The Tasmanian toolkit

The Tasmanians made tools and containers from wood, bone, stone, seaweed, bark, grass and sinew or tendons. Many of their tools were made on the spot, used, then discarded after use rather than kept. Many of these throwaways were clever adaptations that allowed the Aborigines to move easily from one place to another without being weighed down by possessions. They made a variety of stone tools which could be used for chopping, scraping, cutting and grinding; skin preparation and woodworking, as well as much of the collecting and preparing of food, were done with stone tools. Most of these were made from flakes driven off a core of stone with another rock. Others were simple rounded stones, either unmodified or with flakes struck off to form a cutting edge. All these stone tools were simple but efficient. Bone tools with rounded, flattened ends have been found in middens. Their use is unknown.



Scrapers

Unworked flake

Bone tool



Pebble chopper

Hammerstone