Worthing Archaeological Society

Newsletter April & May 2026

OUR Museum is open again

That is, on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
Do go and look, they've worked themselves into the ground, but achieved so much.

WAS Field Unit

Highdown Big Dig

It is hoped to return there in 2027.

Malthouse/Whitehouse

A dig is planned for 11th to 25th July, to investigate the walls found at the West side of the site, the well, and also the pit found under the spoil heap!.

Connie and John reviewed the dig so far at our December Lecture.

Burpham Highfield

WAS is going to investigate this site in August 2026, probably starting 22nd. There is a possible Iron Age enclosure. More details to follow.

Knepp Castle

Excavation dates confirmed as Monday 20th April to Wednesday 29th April 2026. Further information to be shared when known

Finds Processing

Our next Finds meetings will be held at the Slindon Shed on Thursdays 2nd and 16th April and 7th and 21st May, from 9.30 a.m. to about 12.30 p.m.

Please remember to bring your own refreshments.

Please let Gill know if you plan to be there as numbers are still restricted.
ggmturner@aol.com



Flint Sessions in the Museum.

Will probably not resume now until the Autumn.

Field Unit Forum

Our next meeting will be on June 16th, from 7.30 – 9pm in St Botolph's Church rooms, in Heene. BN11 4LY. On the North side of the Church, entrance from Manor Road.



2026 WAS Lectures, Day Schools & Other events

- **Tuesday April 14th**
  - Sue Harrington, “Fifth & Sixth century burial grounds along Sussex coast”
  - In the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre, 7.30 to 9pm.

- **Wednesday 8th July**
  - **A** Specialised Tour of Bridge Farm, Barcombe Mills.
  - A wonderful opportunity to walk around this amazing Roman site with a member of the Field Archaeology Team and an opportunity to view the extensive finds collection uncovered over the last 20 years.
  - There will be a charge of £10 per person. They have just become a Registered Charity and are looking to raise funds for a specialised report they would like for Trench 7.
  - More details to follow.

- **Friday 6th November**
  - Save the date
  - WAS Autumn Social. The Black Horse , Findon. More details to follow.

- **Saturday June 6th, between 11am and 3pm**
  - Worthing Heritage Festival
  - As part of this, WAS will be holding a display in Worthing Museum, on .
  - Anyone who can help, please let us know.

- **November**
  - We are delighted to say that John Shepherd will be running a Saturday Day School on Identifying Glass. This will be held at the newly refurbished Worthing Museum.
  - More details to follow.

Bursary *– WAS has a Bursary which is set up to help Members attend events which they might find difficult to pay for. Please ask a Committee Member about this if it would help you.*

Theresa has produced our Lecture Programme in full – look for it at Lectures and on our website.



2026 Other Societies Events 1

BHAS Study Day

Event fees: £25 BHAS members; non-members: £30. (Except the October one - £25 for everyone) A need to book a place (and pay on the day) by emailing Jane Russell at: **russco40@hotmail.com**

Venue: Patcham Community Centre (Room 2), Ladies' Mile Road, Brighton BN1 8TA

- April 18th – Roman Wayside Settlements am – David Millum: The Culver Project at Bridge Farm pm - Tony King: Wayside settlements in Britain, Gaul and Italy
- May 16th – Megan Russell: What we can learn from the excavation of human skeletons
- June 20th— Paul Garwood: The Neolithic of South-east Britain
- Saturday 31st October How to write an Archaeological Report with Simon Stevens from ASE, for.
    - It will be held at the Patcham Community Centre, Patcham, Brighton (just off the A27, main Brighton junction). It will be from 10 - 4pm and cost £25. More detailed information will follow at a later date.

Exhibition at Colonnade House

- Tuesday 7 - Saturday 11 April—The Worthing Society presents 'The Pioneers of Worthing'
    - Watch the Transition from Fishing Village to bustling Seaside Resort through our interactive audio and visual display. Guided Walks taking place Wednesday 8th and Friday 10th . Pioneers Talk on Saturday 11th. (All at 2pm)
    - Discover the Pioneers who built our Town
    - For more information and to book onto an event visit: https://colonnadehouse.co.uk/whats-on/



2026 Other Societies Events 2

Sussex Archaeology and History

- Monday 27th April 2026, 7.30pm—Sussex Archaeology and History Online Archaeology Lecture
- The George Holleyman Archaeology Lecture 2026 'On the Track of the Hunters of the Prehistoric High Weald'
- Speakers: Dr Helena Griffiths and Andy Bliss

In 2024, Dr Griffiths, a geologist, stumbled on a scatter of human struck flints near Horsted Keynes. Subsequently systematic field walking of 23 acres of ploughed fields identified many more artefacts, all finds being geolocated with What3Words. Alongside research on other nearby prehistoric sites, the project that ensued is revealing more about the nomadic hunter gatherers who moved through the High Weald landscape following the animals they were hunting and gathering a large variety of foods from this rich and varied terrain, as well as the surrounding Downland and coastal area. Fieldwork in 2025 recovered finds dating from the Mesolithic, through the Neolithic, to the Bronze Age, with glimpses of a Roman presence too. Traditionally the High Weald is described as a 'Medieval landscape'. This research project is revealing an enriched picture of extensive Prehistoric human activity in this area, potentially dating back over 10,000 years. Further fieldwork is planned for summer 2026.

This project has been generously supported by the Council for British Archaeology South-East. A display of finds with East Grinstead Museum is planned for late spring 2026, and a display will also take place at the Sussex Archaeology Symposium on 21 March.

For further information and to book (no charge): https://tixoom.app/sussexarchaeology

Chichester District Archaeology Society

- 22nd April - Simon Coleman and Dr Rebecca Welshman: Heathfield Down: An Alternative Location for the Battlefield of Hastings,1066
- 27th May - Members' contributions evening
    - Venue: New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester
    - Fee: non members £5
    - Details from: https://www.cdas.info/Lectures.html
    - Booking and details from: activities@cdas.info



WALKING INTO HISTORY

Archaeology walks for 2026. A celebration year

Alex Vincent

This year marks 40 years since I went on Con Ainsworth's walks in 1986 and 30 years since I have run my walks in 1996. This year also marks 40 years since I've been a member of the Worthing Archaeological Society joining it on 11th March 1986.

Jun 1. Park Brow, Sompting. Multi-period site. L. Con in 1986*.
Jun 8. Islesham, Climping. Site of lost church and village. L.

Jun 15. Applesham. Lost village, salterns and raised beach. M. Con in 1986*

Jun 22. Rest and be Thankful, Southwick. Standing stone. M.

Jun 29. Clapham. Church and shrunken medieval village. M.

Jul 6. Cissbury. Neolithic flint mines and Iron Age Hillfort. L. Alex in 1996*.

Jul 13. Highdown. Recent discoveries on the hill. M.

Jul 20. Steyning. Site of ancient watermills. M.

Jul 27. Mount Carvey, Cissbury. Neolithic village and possible long barrow. L.

Aug 3. Angmering. Roman villa and bath house. M. Alex in 1996*.

If it is raining, we will go to a pub for a final gathering.



Con leading a walk to Angmering Roman villa and bath house.

* = Celebration walks. S = short walk, M = medium walk and L = long walk.

We meet temporally this year at the Waitrose Car Park in the High Street, Worthing, on Monday evenings at 6.45 for 7 PM. Route maps on how to get there will be given on the day. A fee of £2 or £3 for petrol money to the drivers from the passengers is recommended. Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear. All are welcome. After the walks, we go to a pub for refreshment.

SUMMER SOLSTICE. On June 21 we celebrate the Summer Solstice at Highdown Hill. We meet at the Spotted Cow Pub in Angmering to join the Sompting Village Morris Dancers at 7 PM. If one prefers, you could go straight to Highdown and meet us there at about 8PM. Sunset is at 21.19 (9.19 PM).

We have a social get together on the first Monday in September. This will be on Sep 7 at The Hare and Hounds Pub, Worthing for a social gathering at 8 PM.

ARCHAEOLOGY WALK MEAL. We have a yearly get together for a meal in the autumn. This will be at The George V Toby Carvery, Goring Road, Worthing on Monday October 26 at 6.30PM. We also celebrate the Winter Solstice at the Railway Hotel opposite Worthing station on December 21 at 8 PM.

Any enquires my mobile number is 07753282714 or Email me alexeclipsing@gmail.com



Chanctonbury Ring



Cissbury Ring



Highdown



Other Societies / Groups

Friends of the South Downs

Based in Pulborough, the Society has a variety of walks and talks which might well be interesting.
Email: **enquiries@southdownssociety.org.uk**

Chichester District Archaeology Society (CDAS) have made their talks available free on their YouTube channel see: **www.CDAS.info**

Liss Archaeology – East Hampshire Community Archaeology

www.lissarchaeology.uk

Or email **lissarchaeology@gmail.com**

Worthing Heritage Alliance of which WAS is part of this group which has a very useful Calendar of all events in the area of an Historic nature.
www.worthingheritagealliance.org.uk

Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society has a variety of events
see landscape-events@hantsfieldclub.org.uk

young archaeologists' club

Brighton Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) is open to everyone aged 8-16 years. We get involved in all sorts of activities, including visiting and investigating archaeological sites and historic places, trying out traditional crafts, taking part in excavations, experimental archaeology and lots more. Brighton YAC is based at Brighton Museum , where we have access to the wonderful Elaine Evans Archaeology Gallery. Occasionally our sessions may be held at other venues depending on planned activities. The club usually meets once, a month on the last Saturday, from 10.30 am-12.30 pm.

If you'd like to get involved please get in touch with the team: contact: Odile Rouard

email: **brightonyac@gmail.com**

BUTSER ANCIENT FARM

Butser Ancient Farm has launched ButserPlus: a way to enter the world of ButserAncient Farm online with professional video content. Details here:
www.butserancientfarm.co.uk/butser-plus

Horsham and District Archaeology Group

horshamarch@hotmail.co.uk or 01903 872309

SUSSEX PAST

Sussex Archaeological Society

https://sussexpast.co.uk

WEALDEN BUILDINGS STUDY GROUP

Wealden Buildings Study Group

www.wealdenbuildings.org.uk

BHAS Founded 1906

Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society **http:/www.brightonarch.org.uk**

Back in the Unitarian Church New Road, Brighton- Start time 7-30 pm. The BHAS lectures will be **live** and not on Zoom.

The University of Sussex Archaeological Society

USAS

The Sussex School of Archaeology and History

admin@sussexarchaeology.co.uk

Photo by DAVID ILIFF. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Hosting a number of events throughout the year

www.sussexarchaeology.org

Email – admin@sussexarchaeology.co.uk

Directors: Dr David Rudling and Sarah Green



Worthing Archaeological Society



Please can you refresh your memories by reviewing this document, which can be found on the Society's website under Documents / Policy / Privacy Notice.

If any of your contact details have changed since you completed your WAS Membership Application Form, please advise the Membership Secretary, Liz Lane.

Many thanks Donna

If you are already on Facebook and would like to join our closed WAS Facebook group, just ask to join on the Worthing Archaeological Society page

Easy Fundraising

If you shop online, do consider using Easyfundraising to make donations to WAS. Retailers give part of every amount spent to WAS, if you nominate us as your charity **https://new.easyfundraising.org.uk**

Photo Archive

WAS is developing an archive of photos, accessible via the website. Past digs are already well covered, but if you have photos you can share, please send them to Theresa and Richard on **theresa_in_brighton@yahoo.co.uk**
If they are not recent ones, could give us names of people and sites included. There are some on our website which we haven't been able to identify – if you know when and where they were taken, please let us know.

WAS Archive

Connie is currently Curator of our Archive. We have a good collection of Sussex Archaeological Collections, starting from

And finally a reminder

Subs for 2026 are due - £30 for ordinary members, £10 for full-time students.
Feel free to pay by standing order or BACs (details on request).

Please send to: Liz Lane, Membership Secretary. 5 Smugglers' Walk, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. BN12 4DP. Membership forms can also be downloaded from the WAS website: **www.worthingarchaeological.org**

The Worthing Archaeological Society is a registered Charity (291431)
Please note: our email address is: **worthingarchaeological@gmail.com**

Items for next News sheet please to
Liz, as above, or
liz.13lane@gmail.com

Lecture: James Sainsbury: The Highdown Big Dig 2025



James Sainsbury's John Pull Memorial Lecture on the results from the Highdown Big Dig proved to be a very popular event with the lecture theatre full to capacity. This was the largest dig in the area since Cissbury in 1953. It uncovered evidence from a whole spectrum of periods: Stone Age activity, Bronze and Iron Ages, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and 20th century.

The oldest artefact found was a 300,000 year old Levallois point. The temporal distribution of flints was shown in a bar-chart, with a very prominent peak in the Mesolithic and may be evidence of nomadic hunters in the area. There were some flint surprises too. An arrowhead was identified as being of North American Indian design! It was probably produced by a Canadian serviceman stationed here during the Second World War. During the war, a radar station was established on the site, and one trench exposed a large pit that originally contained a generator for the station. Also a considerable quantity of various second world war munitions turned up. So altogether a very complex site.



The site has been subject to previous antiquarian and primitive archaeological excavation, most notably by the then owners, the Henty family in 1892 [Read 1895]. So in addition to prehistoric archaeology, the history of archaeology itself was exposed. Apparently Henty was prompted to dig when his workmen planting trees on the site unearthed archaic material including glassware, that they threw stones at!

James worked through each trench detailing the reason for its location and the resulting finds.

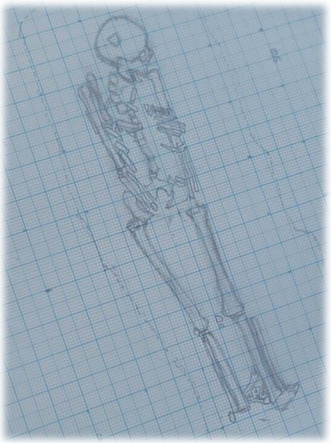


Trench B, within the hill fort, had been dug by the Victorians. The bones of grave occupants had been moved to one end of the grave cut, minus any skulls. Skulls were prized exhibits, to be interpreted according to the deprecated pseudo-scientific racial cephalic anthropology of the time (e.g., [Ripley, 1899]). An empty port bottle was found there; a generous interpretation may be that they were indicating their excavation of the site. The bones and bead grave goods have gone for analysis by Hayley Forsyth-Magee at UCL's Archaeology South-East. There were Roman coins of 4th century and a 2nd century brooch.

Trench G was to examine what appeared to be lynchet, however it turned out to be a geological feature. Among the finds here was a probably Saxon loom weight, a dished Iron Age silver coin, and an enormous number of other finds, each painstakingly labelled in situ with lottery tickets. Mike Allen, the environmental archaeologist, took samples to paint a picture of the landscape change over time.

Trench F was identified as a late Roman ditch. It yielded up forty-three 4th century Roman coins, together with late Roman pottery from a wide local area.

Trench A revealed a few beads together with Iron Age pottery sherds.



Trench H (Vincent's Barrow) was to investigate what was found to be a turf barrow containing a Saxon grave cut with an intact skeleton and what look like cremation pits. The skeleton was initially identified as that of a young woman. Further analysis will be carried out by the Francis Crick Institute. The grave forms part of what appears to be a Saxon cemetery 200 yards below the previously identified one on the top of the hill. It is speculated that this was an area used by the less affluent sector of the population.

Trenches C, D and E yielded hardly any finds.
Evidence suggests that there had been a later settlement or reoccupation at the top of the hill, maybe in response to threats of invasion.

Metal detectorists surveyed a wide area of the site, uncovering many finds including a part of a bronze axe, coins of different periods, an Anglo-Scandinavian zoomorphic mount, and large quantities of Second World War munitions, including a live hand-grenade!

Jane Clark the Finds Liaison Officer, used her own time over Christmas to examine found metalwork and will report soon. Gordon Hayden is examining the pottery finds, consisting of many Prehistoric, some late Iron Age and much Roman, some Saxon and not much Medieval.



James suggested that the Big Dig was likely the most visited archaeological excavation in the country, with over 6,000 visitors and tours averaging 150 people at a time.

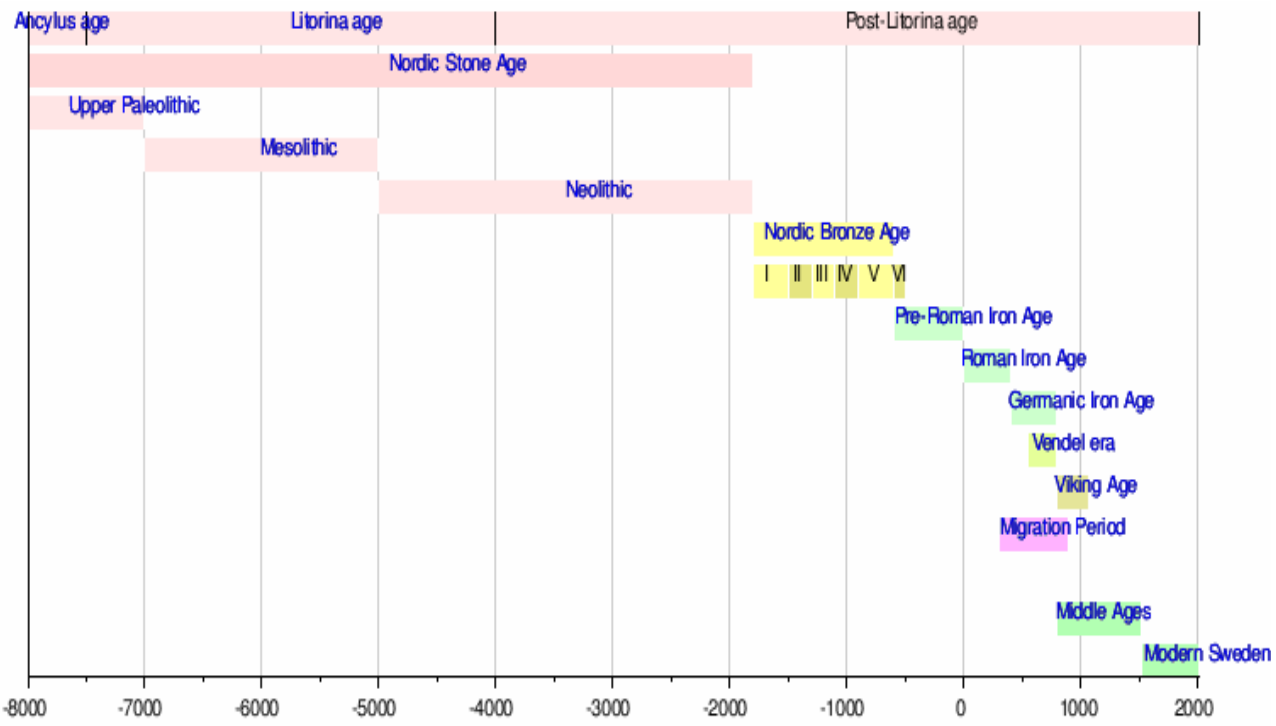
References

Read, Charles Hercules: *On Excavations in a Cemetery of South Saxons on High Down, Sussex*, Archaeologia , Volume 54 , Issue 2 , 1895 , pp. 369 - 382 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261340900018075
Ripley, William Zebina :*The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study,* New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899, Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/raceseuropeasoc00riplgoog

The Vikings

Bob Turner gave the lecture following the AGM on 10th March 2026 on the subject of the Vikings.

He began by relating how the people we call Vikings entered popular culture and how myths about their appearance, culture and customs grew, before introducing us to the era and climate in which these Scandinavian warriors and traders thrived after the fall of the Roman Empire.



He noted that "*the beginning of the Viking Age is commonly given as 793, when Vikings pillaged the important British island monastery of Lindisfarne and its end is marked by the unsuccessful invasion of England attempted by Harald Hardrada in 1066"*

Their seafaring skills and prowess in boat building for both sea and river transport was demonstrated by the distances they travelled. The ability to penetrate the heartlands of Europe depended on the lightness of the boats which could be carried across land when head waters were reached.



Bob then took us through many myths and carefully demolished them:

1. Vikings wore horned helmets – **No** - traditionally they went bareheaded or wore simple leather and metal-frame helmets with the occasional face guard.

2. They were filthy and unkempt – **No** - Archaeologists find evidence on a regular basis of combs, spoons and other grooming utensils

3. They spent all their time raiding and warring – **No** -While raiding proved an excellent source of income, many of the Vikings held farms back in their homeland that their wives maintained during Viking season. When the men returned home from a raid, they resumed their normal routine of farming.

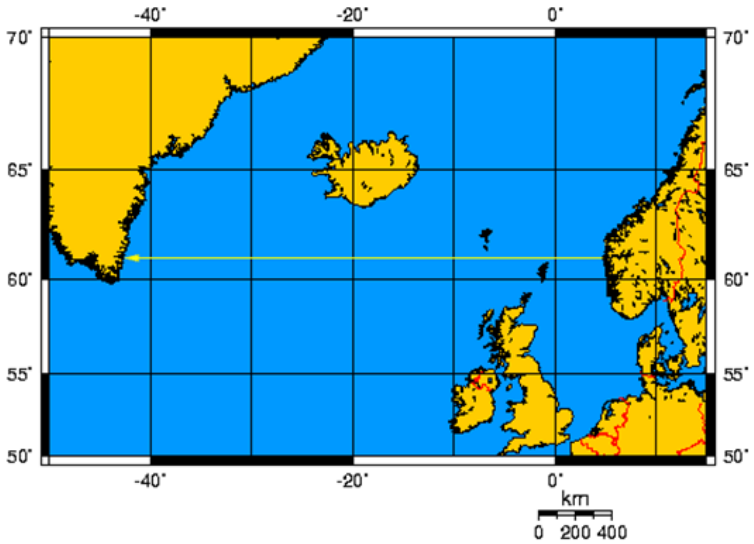
4. Vikings were a unified army – **No** - Due to the difficult geographic location, the Scandinavian people were very spread out to conserve limited farmland.

5. They were large and heavily muscled – **No** - resources were always scarce so people remained small.

6. The biggest myth of all - The Vikings attacked and pillaged a peaceful and settled land- No - There were 7 kingdoms in Britain with all at war with each other for land and riches.

I enjoyed the explanation of the explanation of navigation with a bucket of water and a floating spike! (This video gives a demonstration of the navigation techniques - https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=viking+navigation+along+a+line+of+latitude+using+a+shadow+at+midday&mid=ED762E3F16C27B9025C4ED762E3F16C27B9025C4&FORM=VIRE

Bob gave an overview of the life, times and beliefs of the Viking era with the point that they were no more brutal and often more civilized than the other peoples of the era. His final thoughts being "*They are clearly one of our many minority groups who need a bit more understanding."*





Bob gave an overview of the life, times and beliefs of the Viking era with the point that they were no more brutal and often more civilized than the other peoples of the era. His final thoughts being *"They are clearly one of our many minority groups who need a bit more understanding."*

A Visit to Dr Mike Allen's Laboratory in Wiltshire

On a glorious spring day, fifteen members of The Worthing Archaeological Society travelled across to near Stonehenge in Wiltshire, where Dr Mike Allen is based and performs his laboratory activities in his role of Environmental Archaeologist and one of the leading experts in the analysis of molluscs



On entering the world of Dr Mike Allen, the large gate posts were topped with not a horse, dog or eagle but with Snails!

During the morning, Mike explained the various actions and processes he performs here including:



Flotation which is performed outside



Storage of core samples



Land snail processing demonstration



Microscope assessment of finds including snails, charred plants & charcoal remains





Environmental archaeology & geoarchaeology

After eating our picnic lunches in Mike's amazing garden, the group set off towards Stonehenge, where Mike had planned a walk through the Stonehenge landscape to see various sites of archaeological interest including:

- Amesbury 42 Neolithic long barrow
- Greater Cursus
- King Barrow ridge Bronze Age barrow
- View of the Stonehenge landscape
- Prehistoric walk not prehistoric archaeology







