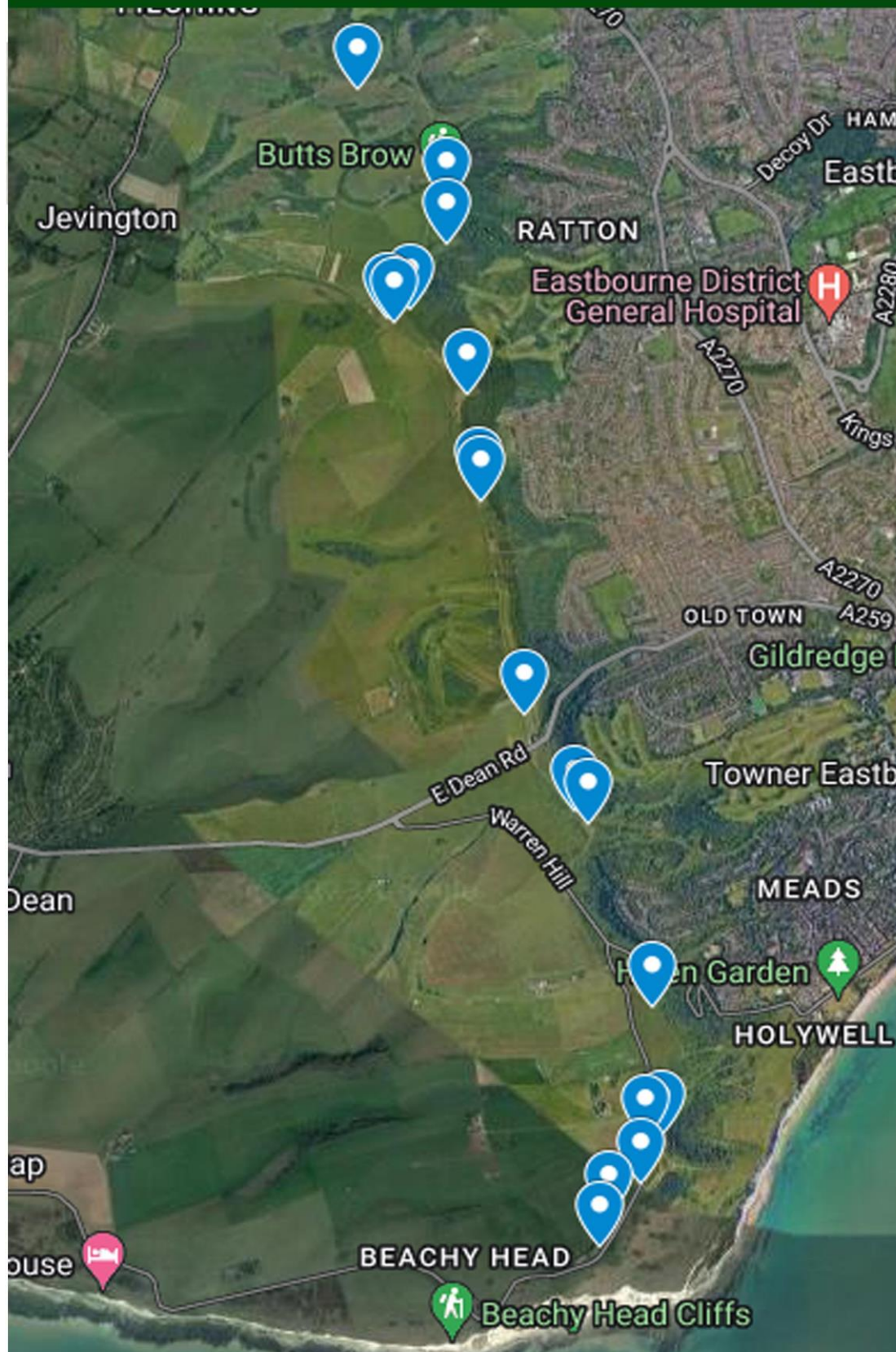
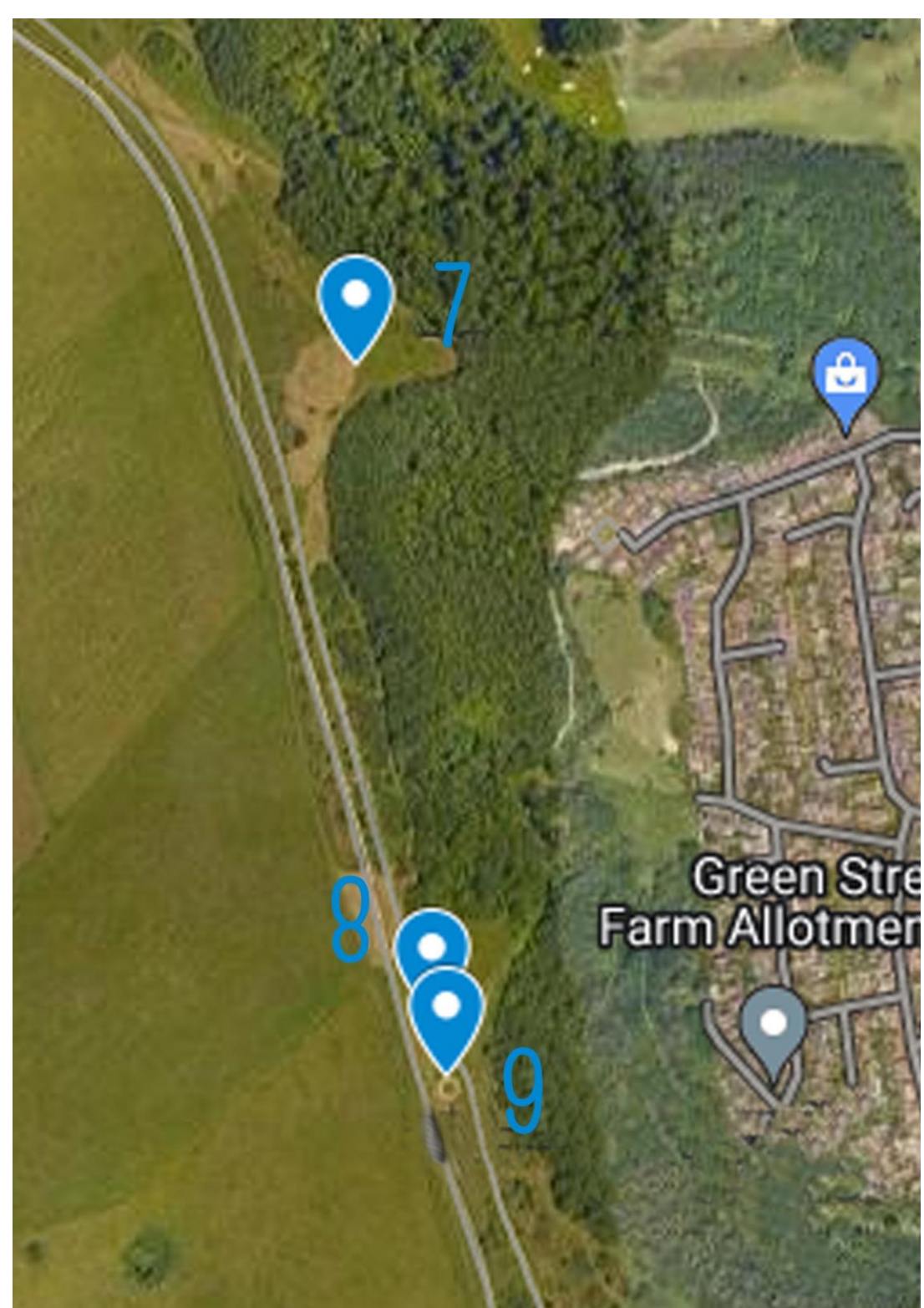
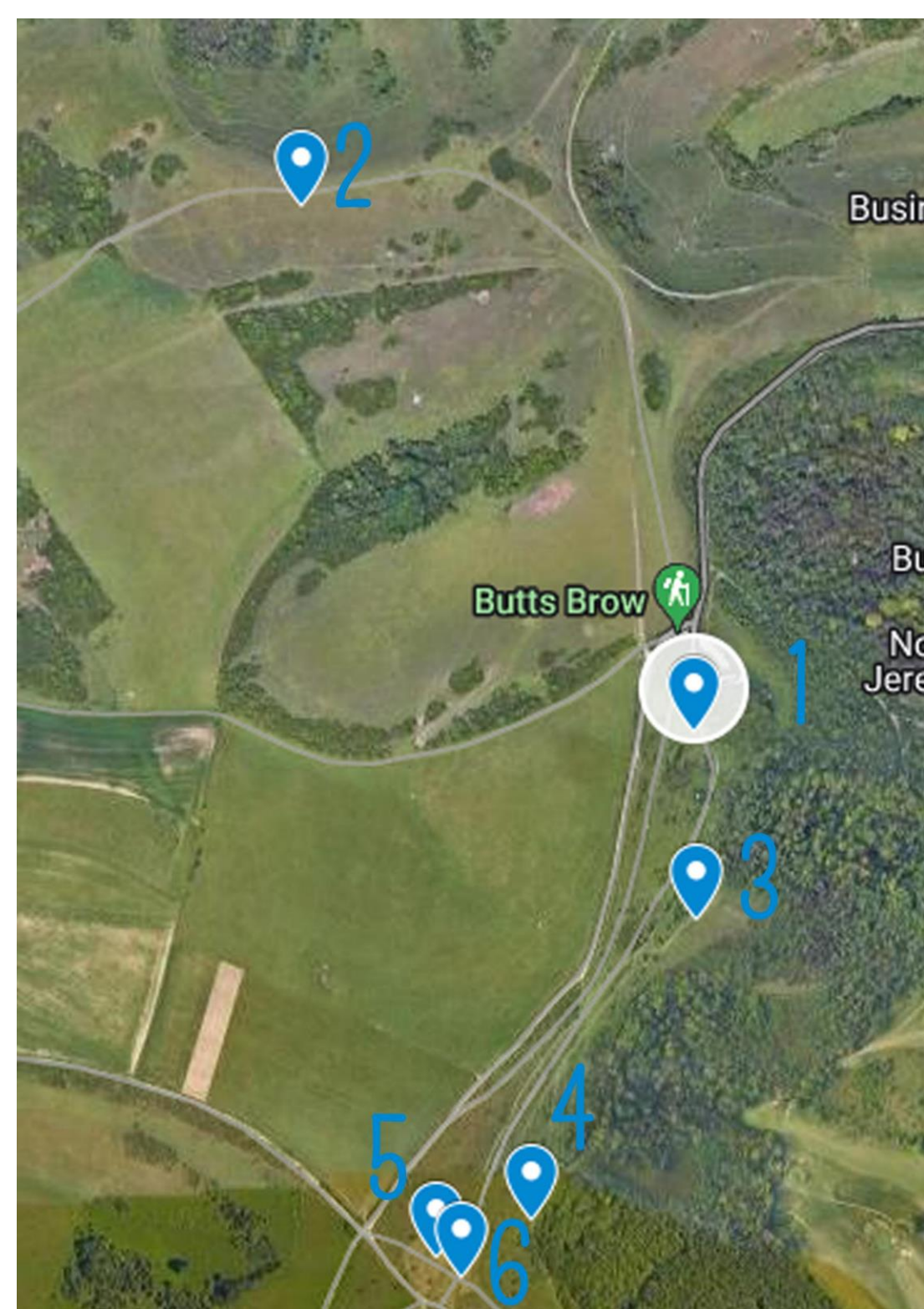


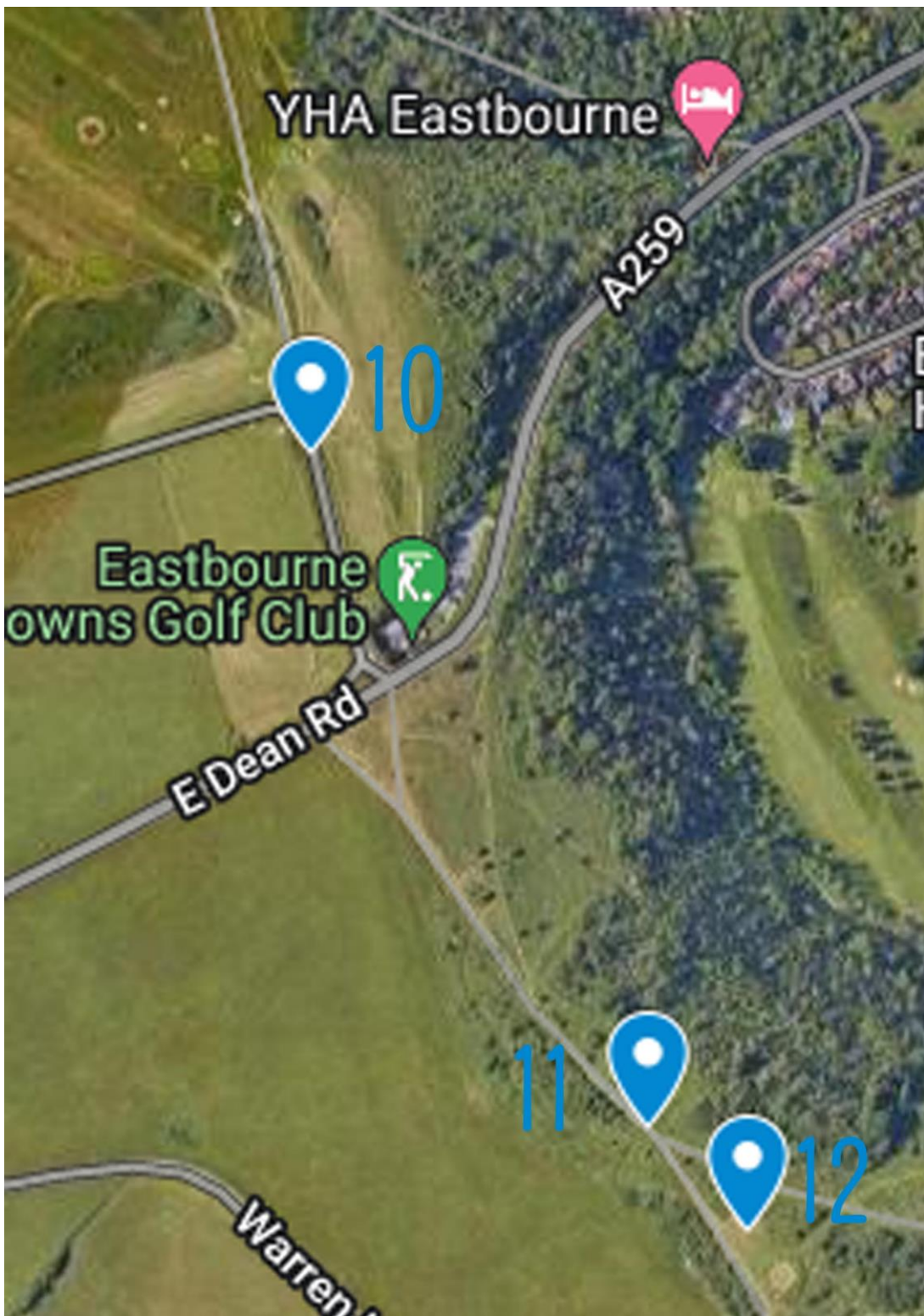
The Story of the Town around the Downs



Explore artefacts uncovered along the route in full 3D by scanning the QR code or visit tinyurl.com/f2w56kk8







1. Butts Brow

You are standing on or near the Neolithic ditch and bank that runs around this hill top. Although we don't know exactly what enclosures like this were used for, there are a few possibilities. It's unlikely to be a settlement – it's too exposed and windy on this hill top and there's no easy access to water. During excavations of the ditch, a large amount of flint debitage (the flakes created when flint knapping to make stone tools) was found. Some of the debitage was quite crude, something that might have been created by someone learning how to make tools. So, could this be some sort of flint school? It's also possible that the enclosure here and the one on the next hill over, Combe Hill, are part of a processional route leading from or to a Neolithic settlement at Beachy Head. Evidence for an opening or entrance into the enclosure that leads directly onto the Downland ridge and path (now the South Downs Way) supports this idea. We will, more or less, follow the same route today.



2. Combe Hill

You could walk over to Combe Hill but you also get a great view of the Neolithic Enclosure and barrows from here. Look over to the next hill top (towards Willingdon/Polegate). Find two trees standing on their own – to the left will be a mound then a single tree. Just down the hillside that we can see is a darker curved line between the single tree and the mound – this is some of the ditches of the Neolithic enclosure.



During excavations of the enclosure by Dr Veronica Seton-Williams in 1962, 3 polished stone axes were uncovered at the end of the ditch nearest the mound you can see. These axes had been deliberately deposited in the ditch and were probably polished to make them stronger. It's also possible that they were polished to make them 'special' and a treasured object or gift.

You can have a look at a 3D models of the axes here <https://tinyurl.com/2m8mhwfw>

Earlier excavations of the enclosure by Mr Reginald Musson in 1949 uncovered a dump of 912 sherds of Neolithic pottery, ox and pig bones, a leaf shaped flint arrowhead and two sandstone rubbing stones. In the same area, a possible hearth was revealed containing charcoal from ash, hazel and hawthorn. The charcoal was dated to 3400BC and could

suggest that the hearth and these finds were deposited around the time of scrub regeneration in the area. Evidence from environmental samples including an analysis of land snails suggests that the enclosure might have been constructed in shaded conditions or in an area of recently cleared woodland.

The mound is a Bronze Age barrow that, as well as a burial, contained a Bronze Age hoard of 3 and a half axes – all deliberately broken and there is an idea that objects found like this (broken then buried) particularly in burial mounds, represent a ritual 'killing' of the objects, perhaps a way for them to accompany the person buried in the barrow to their next life.

3. View of Pockocks Field

From here, you should have a clear view of the area to the right of the hospital (the big white chimney with the black band at the top is near the hospital). This area, known as Pockocks Field, was excavated in 2014 and uncovered evidence of settlement in this area from the Bronze Age to at least the Tudor Period. The excavation also revealed a number of Iron Age burials. This glass bead is one of two beads found buried with an Iron Age Woman and Child near Kings Drive. They were buried with the woman's arm around the child so we don't know whether the beads were worn around the wrist of the woman or the neck of the child.



The woman and child lived in Eastbourne almost 2250 years ago. She probably lived in a settlement, on what is now Kings Drive, and could have spent a lot of her time working to get salt from the marshes, just metres from her home. She was around 30 – 45 years old when she died and was 156cm tall. The child was aged between 4 and 5 years old.

Have a closer look at a 3D model of this Iron Age Bead here <https://tinyurl.com/mryz42p3>



4. Ancient Droveway from Willingdon, Jevington, Eastbourne and the Willingdon levels

The path you're walking down is an old road or droveway, possibly used for thousands of years. It leads to a junction with paths continuing towards Eastbourne (Old Town), the Willingdon Levels/Shinewater (see stop 8) and Jevington (the path up the hill we will take). The path you have just walked down was probably the road travelled by those going to and from Willingdon Mill, worn by centuries of traffic carrying corn up and flour down the hill. If you look at the painting for the next stop, you can see the continuation of this droveway going down the hill into Willingdon.

5. Willingdon Post Mill

One of the mounds next to the trig point here is the site of the Old Willingdon/Jevington Mill. We don't know exactly when this mill was built – we know there was a mill on site here in the 16th century as there are records of a terrible accident involving a labourer John Dyggons who was caught in one of the sails and was killed. The first known miller was John Gallad in the 17th Century.

The mill was damaged by storms in February 1769 the Sussex Advertiser reported: 'Last Tuesday, 3am, at Lewes and about 20 miles away, a terrible tempest of thunder, lightning and rain... Willingdon Mill had the doors & windows carried a great distance'



Painting by Lady Sophia Burrell 1781

In December 1787 it was on the route of a group of smugglers who were apprehended by Messrs Mandy, Baker & West, Revenue Officers, with 7 Light Dragons. They seized 119 Casks of Brandy and Geneva and 19 horses.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Nicholas Chapman was the miller here and had committed to providing 6 sacks of flour daily in the time of invasion but didn't have his own supply of wheat. A couple of years later, the mill site was one of the 14 sites chosen for Sussex beacons – a warning system of a series of fires which to be lit in the case of invasion.

The mill was destroyed by a huge storm on 3rd March 1817 – newspapers reported that the whole of the mill, with the exception of the brickwork of the round house was carried away by the fury of the gale to a considerable distance from its site and shattered into a thousand pieces. The mill stones were unbroken and what is remarkable, a cat, the only living creature on the premises at that time, was extricated from some fragments of timber, alive and unharmed.

6. Roman Cinerary Urn



We don't know exactly where this urn was found, all we know is that it was excavated in the 1940s in Willingdon. It contained the cremated remains of an adolescent aged between 13 and 17 years old, who lived in this area in the Roman period. Roman cremations were often buried, sometimes in mounds like the ones around us here. Slightly later in the Medieval period, this site could have been incredibly important at the centre of 3 neighbouring parishes (Eastbourne, Jevington and Willingdon) and could have represented a neutral or meeting space for matters or disputes between them.

You can view a 3D model of this urn here <https://tinyurl.com/2p9yetb3>

7. Two Bowl Barrows and a view towards Filching Road

We will find out more about Barrows at stop 11 but if you look around here, you can see two (probably Bronze Age) bowl barrows next to each other.

Just below us and to the right is Filching Road. Excavations here in 2012 uncovered a simple, but finely made, cooking pot was found broken and abandoned on a stone hearth. The hearth, an open fire, formed the focal point, the heart of the house, abandoned shortly after the pot was made, no later than 1350.



Though the pot itself may be unremarkable and fairly common, the nature of its loss may tell us stories that are far more memorable. People in medieval England would not live with broken pots littering their homes and would not abandon a house without very good reason. This pot and this home seem to have been left and forgotten in a hurry.

In fact no house was built on this site again until the middle of the last century over 600 years later. The date of the pot may give us a clue as to why this home was abandoned. The fourteenth century was a turbulent time with war and pestilence very real dangers.

Nearby Hastings and Seaford were attacked by French forces around this time and the village of Exceat on the banks of the Cuckmere River completely abandoned after devastating raids. Eastbourne may have been better protected, being inland and closer to the garrison at Pevensey. But perhaps there were raids that history has forgotten and the house was lost as a result?

Perhaps there was an even more terrifying reason for discarding this pot. It was made around the time that the Black Death, a terrible outbreak of bubonic plague that swept the country during 1348-9, wiped out around half of the population. Further outbreaks in the 1360's may have killed another 20%.

Eastbourne suffered as badly as anywhere else in the south of England and perhaps the hearth and this pot are evidence of a long forgotten tragedy, a tiny but terrible part of a much larger story seen throughout the country.

8. View towards the Levels and Shinewater

Look out over Eastbourne – to the left of the hospital, you can see the light-coloured buildings of the industrial estate in Hampden Park, behind that is a big green space – this is the Willingdon Levels and includes Shinewater Park. In 1995, the area we now call Shinewater Marsh was undergoing a huge change. For around 800 years this flat area of land, known locally as the Willingdon Levels and stretching between Polegate and

Eastbourne, had been used as farmland. Plans to construct a landscaped park, school and major road improvements led to some very unexpected discoveries.

Works to create a lake revealed dozens of upright wooden posts buried a meter beneath the ground and surrounded by other timbers and scatters of bone and pottery. This structure became known as the platform.

The Platform was an area at least 2000m², around the same size as half a football pitch created by driving oak posts almost 1.4m deep into the ground to secure in place a series of horizontal timbers, in turn covered with smaller rods of wood such as hazel. On top of this platform were layers of reeds or rush matting and patches of sand and silty clay, maybe used as a floor covering or surface to live on. On this matting at least three raised hearths or fireplaces were discovered, these looked like clay mounds around 20cm deep covered with burnt material. Covering all this was a band of dark, silty, soil full of pottery, animal bones and other artefacts. We call this the Cultural Layer.

Later that year, during a cold and wet winter another area of wooden posts was investigated prior to road building. This excavation lasting just 8 weeks, revealed the massive remains of a timber causeway up to 6 meters wide and over 250 meters long. This seemed to link the platform to the higher ground in the south-west and was far larger and more complex than other similar structures found elsewhere in Britain.

The Trackway was a massive timber construction, linking the Platform to the higher ground in the west. It appears to be a kind of causeway providing support over the wetter or more uneven patches of marsh. It was built using three parallel rows of upright oak posts driven deep into the ground to secure horizontal timbers (some up to 3.5m long) and smaller pieces of wood that sat on the ground surface. Next to this was a path made of thin roundwood pieces laid into deposits of sand.

An investigation of these finds revealed them to be the superbly preserved remains of Bronze Age structures hidden for over 3000 years.

One of the many finds included fragment of Bronze Age Pottery made from clay dug from the ground in Shinewater. The complete pot would have been used for cooking. If you look closely at the 3D model here <https://tinyurl.com/3n53ne93> you can see the fingerprints of the person who made it.



9. Dew Pond and view of field system

Once you get to the Dew pond, look over the path towards East Dean/Birling Gap, you might be able to see a few horizontal lines or banks in the field near the bottom of the valley. These are part of a field system created by ploughing – probably medieval but likely to have been in use earlier.

Arable farming on the Downland peaked in the early 14th centuries. Around this time, plagues swept throughout the country killing up to a third of the population. This meant there were fewer people to work on growing crops so farming had to change. Lots of sheep could



be cared for by one shepherd and could be supplemented by a bit of arable farming so this became the achievable and successful method.

As time went on, more arable farming returned but never to the levels of just before the 13th century. Before 1950s, the downland looked very different, fields were used more for arable farming which also meant more windmills to process the wheat grown here.

Sheep kept by farmers and landowners on the Downs were

used for meat but also for their wool. In the 13th and 14th century, the English wool trade was integral to the economy and the wool from sheep here was the most prized in Medieval Europe. Most of the wool was exported from the south coast and Flemish and Italian merchants were familiar figures in the wool markets of the day ready to buy wool to take back to their looms.

Due to the success of the wool trade, even when the country was at war and exports were not allowed, there was a lot of money to be made by sneaking it overseas to sell to its 'enemies'. This was the first recorded smuggling in this part of England and because it was very, very illegal and had to be carried out at night, the participants used owl hoots and calls to communicate with each other. They became known as Owlers. By the Sixteenth Century, when England's rulers had, yet again dictated that we would be at war with much of Europe, Owling was still a big problem and was losing the King revenue from taxation. Therefore, if you got caught smuggling fleece or wool out of the country you could expect to spend a year in jail followed by having your left hand cut off and '*nailed up in the openest place suche as a market*'.

Dew Pond

Ponds like this one have had an important role on the Downland since at least the Bronze Age. Access to water sources at the top of Chalk Downland are limited so ponds were dug and lined with clay or pounded and compacted chalk to stop rain draining away through the porous chalk. Lime or soot was sometimes mixed into the lining to deter worms then straw and rocks was placed on top of the lining to protect it from the hooves of cattle, or most likely here, sheep. These ponds have only been called Dew Ponds since the 19th century, from the lovely but not likely idea that the water contained in them was dew condensed each morning. Earlier records refer to them as ponds or sheep ponds.

10. Beachy Head Woman

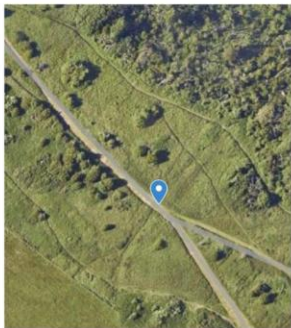
Rediscovered in a box labelled *Beachy Head 1959* as part of the Eastbourne Ancestors Project in 2012, the story of Beachy Head Woman would take another 8 years to be told and even now there is still much to discover. We still do not know for sure where she was buried and later excavated from or where she may have lived but we do now know a lot more about her. One of the possible burial places might have been between here and Birling Gap.



The skeleton of this young woman (she was in her early 20's when she died) revealed many secrets when it was carefully examined and tested by scientists. It was discovered that she grew up on the Downs near here, traces of the unique elements from the chalk geology found their way into her teeth and bones through the food she ate and the water she drank. Her diet was a healthy one of seafood and vegetables. She had no tooth decay and there was no evidence of major physical trauma or illness in her bones, just an old, healed wound on right shin.

In 2020 the opportunity arose to have her DNA, the building blocks of all life, examined and this was able to tell us that Beachy Head Woman had travelled a long way in her short life. She had ventured over 3000 kilometres (1864 miles) from Cyprus to the northern fringe of the Roman Empire in Britain. Why she made this journey, we may never know, but the latest research indicates that she was buried just a few kilometres from where she now lies, near the village of East Dean. She would have known the hills and valleys around Beachy Head and perhaps she would have watched the migratory birds and ponder her own long journey that ultimately ended here.

But her story does not end there. It seems highly unlikely that she travelled from Cyprus alone and she may well have had children meaning that, at least in a small way, her DNA that has told us so much about her own life may live in some of us...perhaps even in you.



11. Cross Dyke

This prehistoric earthwork was probably first made in the Bronze Age but likely also used later. Cross Dykes were used as territorial boundary markers, probably marking land use and ownership within communities, although they may also have been used as trackways, cattle droveways or defensive earthworks. Cross dykes are an important way to find out how land was divided up in the prehistoric period.

12. Bowl Barrow

Although often thought of as burial mounds, barrows like this could have had a number of uses and been the site of various activities and ceremonies. One idea is that the visible part of a barrow – the mound, signals the end of a long period of activity on the site. A physical

and symbolic way of preventing access to whatever is underneath. There are some examples with evidence of a wooden stake circle built on top of the mound and some locally with chalk cappings that would have ensured the mound stood out in gleaming white. Barrows like this are rarely found on the top of a hill, so maybe their location is influenced about the view from the barrow, the sight of the sunrise or about it being visible from a specific place on the downland or the lowlands.



These monuments may have been altered throughout their history and cultural material (pottery, stone tools, Bronze/Iron tools and other personal objects) or human burials were added. Where barrows have been excavated, it has revealed wooden and stone chambers, pits and post-holes that could have been part of a shrine like feature.

Some of the earliest barrows date to the Neolithic period but most of the ones we can see on the Downland here are likely to be from the Bronze Age.

13. The Prehistoric Environment



Along this stretch of downland, you might see some gorse. After the Ice age – there weren't glaciers here but very cold tundra-like conditions at the edge of the ice sheets, gorse was prevalent on the Downs. It grows quickly, and easily – it really just needs enough water. It's also excellent for wildlife, especially bees and other invertebrates that need a supply of nectar early on in the year. It flowers from Jan – June and the flowers smell like coconut!

Then slowly, trees like ash, hazel and oak start returning until the end of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age when the downland is again cleared of trees – this time by people farming on the downland and using the wood as a resource. Once there are fewer trees, gorse makes a return.

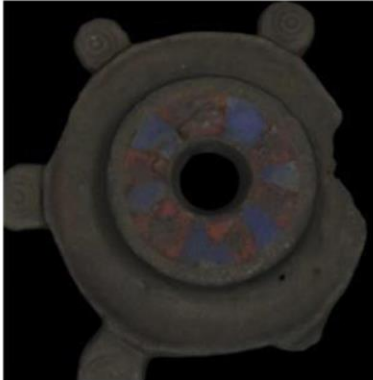
14. Whitbread Hollow

Whitbread Hollow was the temporary home for soldiers in the Royal Army Medical Corps staying in bell tents just before and during the time Summerdown Camp was being built. Summerdown Camp was a convalescent camp for wounded soldiers in the First World War in the area around Summerdown Road. One of the objects found during excavation of land once occupied by the camp, was this ring. It's likely that it was made



by one of the soldiers in the tin workshop as part of their treatment. You can view the 3D model of this ring here <https://tinyurl.com/yvc5xe8a>

15. Bullock Down Farm



A comprehensive landscape project took place at Bullock Down in 1982 and revealed incredible stories, objects and archaeological features from multiple periods of history. One of the hundreds of finds uncovered through this project was a Copper Alloy brooch and although a small object, is another piece of the puzzle telling us about life on the Downland in Roman Eastbourne. You can view the 3d model of this brooch here <https://tinyurl.com/59xt9ynb>

The Roman farmers living in the settlement at Bullock Down were carrying out a mixture of arable and sheep farming and were probably responsible for at least 7 buried coin hoards found near their homes. These hoards buried in large clay pots, copper bowls or

bronze or brass buckets were filled with coins collected over a number of years. This could suggest that these hoards contained the farmers savings, buried to keep it safe or perhaps they are votive offerings to the Gods? The fact that seven coin hoards were never recovered by the Roman residents who buried them may make this the most likely option.

When this brooch was made in the 2nd Century, Beachy Head Woman may have been living in Eastbourne, she may have known its owner, it could even have been her brooch. Although we now know more about her life and what she looked like, we don't know where she lived. It could have been in the farming community at Bullock Down or in the Villa whose foundations lie underneath the Seafont.

Fragments of flue tile found at Bullock Down, dating to 75 - 110AD match complete flue tiles recovered from the site of Eastbourne's Roman Villa. These patterned tiles are unlikely to have been used in the farmstead buildings at Bullock Down so could have been brought there as rubbish or part of manure used on their fields or are they from a villa on the Downland?

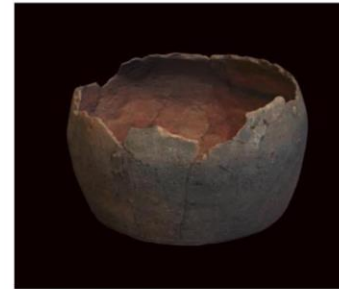
16. Prehistoric Field Boundary

This field boundary was in use from at least the Bronze Age to mark out spaces for different crops, separate fields between different farmers or to stop animals getting into the field. Roman archaeology has been found in the bank at this end and further up the valley, Bronze age and Iron age finds have been uncovered. At the top of the valley there is evidence of a Neolithic settlement. Soil quality was often higher in the valleys so were a perfect place to plant crops as well as being easier to get water from ponds dug into the chalk. If you look further to the left (towards the coastline),



you can also see a marl pit – although these look a bit like ponds, they were actually used to enrich and fertilise the soil by adding clay, or in this case, chalk to restore the Ph levels.

17. Kiln Combe Med and Roman Farm



Between the farm buildings ahead of you here and Belle Tout, you can see where a number of field boundaries cross. This is Kiln Combe. This cooking pot was made between 1350 and 1500 and was found sunk into the ground behind the remains of a barn in the medieval farm at Kiln Combe. The pot was most likely repurposed after being used for cooking in the farmstead. Analysis of its contents revealed grains of wheat, barley and oats and is too small for grain storage so a feeding bowl for small animals (possibly chickens) seems likely.

Archaeological finds from within the barn included a mica schist whetstone (the stone likely coming from Norway), a chalk spindle whorl and an unfinished spindle whorl. This might suggest this building was used as a work area rather than a dwelling. Sheep were kept for meat and wool and a smaller number of cattle and pig bones were uncovered. Crops of wheat, six row barley and oats were grown on this farm and we know that by the 16th century, these were common crops around the Downland. The rest of their food they would have hunted or gathered from the Eastbourne Downland area, including the coastline. A total of 19,778 marine shells were found during the excavations here. An unusually high percentage of these were limpets followed by periwinkle and oyster shells. These shell fish, as well as tell us what the people living here ate (as well as possibly the diet for their pigs), reflect the ecological conditions along the sea shore beneath Beachy Head. The rough rocky conditions are great for limpets and winkles but not suitable for oyster beds.

The farmers here were successful enough to be able to buy iron and bronze goods from local markets (though made elsewhere in sussex) and imported whetstones and quernstones.

You can view the 3D model of this cooking pot here <https://tinyurl.com/5axxutha>

18. The Beachy Head Story

Beachy Head has inspired and intrigued people for thousands of years but the story is much older. This exhibition brings you a story 75 million years in the making where you can discover tales of fossils, fairies, smugglers, shipwrecks, ancestors and artists. Plus the gift shop stocks a range of gifts inspired by the exhibition and Beachy Head.

