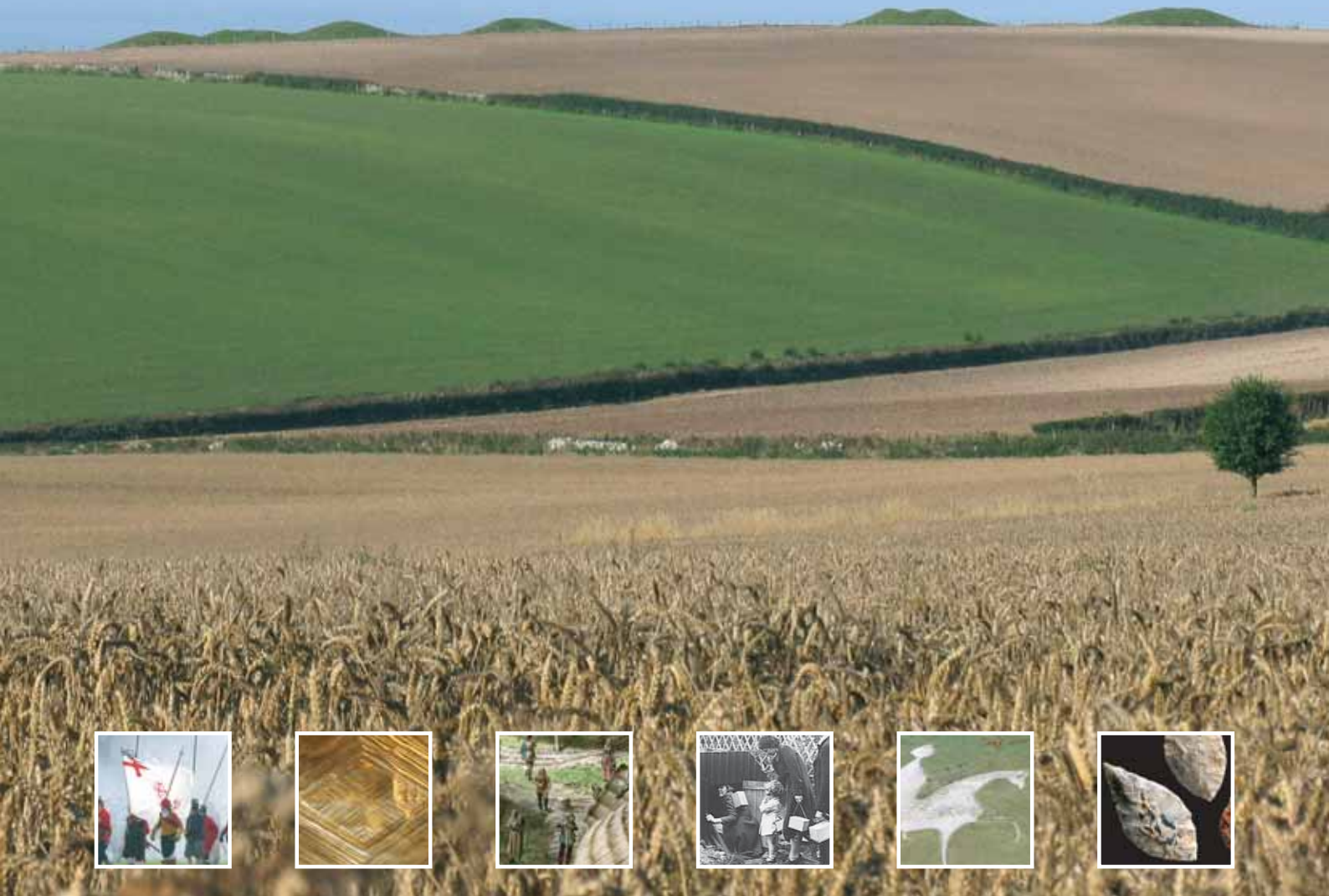




The South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project

TEACHER'S KIT



The South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project

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For Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 teachers and their pupils

Produced for South Dorset Ridgeway Heritage Project by Wessex Archaeology 2009

This pack and a collection of images for use in the classroom can be downloaded from www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

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Activity Sheets for pupils:

- I Spy! Lumps and bumps in the landscape
- What's in a name?
- Puzzle Objects
- What did I look like 4,000 years ago?
- Bronze Age settlement picture
- Prehistoric roundhouse to make

Image Bank

On-line images for classroom use

Virtual Tour of the Ridgeway using Google Earth

Cover picture credits:

Bincombe Bumps © Dorset AONB

Seventeenth Century soldiers © Ivor Hunt

Maiden Castle interior © Paul Birkbeck, source: English Heritage Photo Library

Anderson shelter: Keep Museum, Dorchester <http://www.keepmilitarymuseum.org/>

Osmington White Horse © PR.Elton





A ceremony taking place near freshly built burial barrows

Aims

The South Dorset Ridgeway is unique. Within the 14 square miles of this beautiful stretch of country are at least 500 archaeological monuments, nearly all of them several thousand years old. This pack has been produced to make it easier for teachers and their pupils to understand and appreciate the area where they live and work.

Contents of the pack

The Prehistoric Ridgeway

These pages give information about the earlier history of the Ridgeway, particularly from about 4000 BC to 700 BC. They look at earthworks like *causewayed enclosures*, barrows and henges.

The Iron Age and Roman Period

This section covers the period from 700 BC to AD 410 and looks at hill forts and the Roman legacy.

From the Saxons to the Present Day

These pages consider the last 1,000 years and also look at agriculture and transport in the area.

Virtual Tour of the Ridgeway

This makes use of Google Earth and your classroom white-

board to allow your pupils to make a virtual journey along the Ridgeway, highlighting key points along the way.

The Glossary

Explains some of the words used in the pack (*italicised*) which might not be familiar to teachers and pupils.

Image Bank

The images used in the pack are available for you to download and use in the classroom.

Pupil activity sheets:

Lumps and Bumps in the Landscape helps pupils make sense of the symbols on a map and recognise the earthworks in the landscape.

What's in a Name? shows pupils how the history of the place where they live may be reflected in its name.

Puzzle Objects uses pictures of the objects from the South Dorset Ridgeway Loan Box to help pupils recognise and understand the use of ancient artefacts.

What did I look like? invites pupils to think about the work of an archaeologist, to recognise the limitations of the evidence and extrapolate from it.

Bronze Age Settlement A picture for pupils to use in class work and to colour.

Prehistoric Roundhouse to colour and cut out.





Access

Excellent footpaths make it possible to walk the whole length of the Ridgeway, but vehicle access to them can be difficult. It is possible to park coaches at various points along the route, but none are suitable for them to wait for long. There are, however, several places where school groups can be dropped off safely and later collected:

- Upwey bus stop (SY 670 849) gives access to a half-hour walk uphill to the Ridgeway and fine views of Maiden Castle
- Came Down/Chalky Road, where a coach can drop pupils off on the unmade road (SY 702 852). There are wonderful views of Weymouth Bay and you can take a reasonably level walk to White Horse Hill in one direction or to Broadmayne Bank Barrow or Bincombe.
- There is a lay-by at Blackdown/Smittens Corner (SY 626 878) from which you can walk to the Hardy Monument. A 30 minute walk along a fairly level, narrow path takes you to Bronkham Hill which is an open access area (watch-out for sink holes).
- Goulds Hill layby (SY 663 866) gives access along the Ridgeway and is reasonably level towards Bronkham Hill, though narrow in places.

The easiest place to visit the Ridgeway with a group of pupils is Maiden Castle (SY 666 885). From this vantage point much of the Ridgeway can be seen clearly and pupils will be able to see earthworks on the sky line.

Maiden Castle

Maiden Castle is open all year round and there is no admission charge. It is 2 miles south of Dorchester off the A354, north of the bypass. There is a car park but no facilities; the nearest public toilets are in Dorchester. You can see objects from Maiden Castle at Dorset County Museum. The Museum has an education service.

The walk up to the site takes you through the massive western entrance and into the Iron Age hillfort. Once inside you can trace the *Neolithic* predecessors of the hillfort. You will be able to see a *Neolithic bank barrow*, while an information board describes the *causewayed enclosure* at the eastern end. Also at the eastern end are the remains of a Roman temple so your pupils can see 6,000 years of history on one site visit!

From the ramparts you have a wonderful view of the surrounding landscape and of the prehistoric and historic features in it. Walking anti-clockwise around the ramparts you can see the Hardy Monument to the west and then follow the line of the Ridgeway round to the south. Moving east, you can see the line

of the old Roman Road (now the A354). To the north is Dorchester and on the west side of town is the new development of Poundbury and another Roman road (now the A35).

Hazard Information

Teachers will need to make their own preliminary visits in order to formulate a risk assessment for their pupils.

Points to look out for are:

- Vehicles: the greatest risks are on the roads at access points
- Slipping/tripping hazards: grass can be slippery when wet. Some of the paths are narrow. The ground can be uneven.
- Weather: the area is open to the elements and suitable clothing, footwear and sunscreen should be worn as appropriate
- Access: pupils with disabilities may find access difficult

Suggested activities

English

On your visit ask pupils to record the sounds they hear and collect words which describe what they see, hear and feel. These will make follow-up work back in school much easier and add to its quality.

Pupils could imagine themselves as a prehistoric traveller and describe their journey along the ancient Ridgeway and the difficulties and perils they encounter along the way.

Archaeologists found stores of large pebbles at Maiden Castle. They had come from Chesil beach. Take a large pebble into school. Pass it round the class, telling pupils it came from the beach and was found at Maiden Castle. Ask them how and why it might have got there and what it could have been used for. Then explain that archaeologists discovered many pebbles at the hill fort. They also found some bodies with horrific injuries in a British cemetery, including one skeleton with a Roman ballista bolt in the spine. Ask your pupils to imagine the scene and write a story about an attack on the hill fort.

The barrows are ancient burial mounds. Ask pupils to describe the scene as a chieftain is taken to be buried or design a ceremony to honour the ancestors at one of the barrows.

Maths

On their visit ask pupils to estimate the height of banks and the depth of ditches. Remind them that the ditches were much deeper and the banks higher when the hill fort was in use. Ask them to estimate how long they think it took them to build it.





Maiden Castle is massive. The area inside the ramparts is the same as 50 football pitches. It is 1km long and nearly 500m wide. Pupils could make a scale drawing or a model of the hill fort.

Science

Ask pupils to think about what happens to different materials over time and what is likely to survive for an archaeologist to discover. You could bury a small selection of objects – a vegetable, a stone, paper, leather, iron. Decide where to bury it, how long to leave it and try to predict what will happen to each object.

A similar experiment would be to test 4 iron objects, e.g. nails, under different conditions. Immerse one in water, one in damp soil, one in salt water and one in dry air. Leave them for several weeks. This could lead to a discussion about what an archaeologist is likely to find at different sites.

The massive banks and ditches of Maiden Castle have eroded over time. The round barrows and bank barrows of the Ridgeway were once larger and more imposing. Your pupils can discover the eroding power of water for themselves. Create a small 'hill' of mud and simulate the action of rainfall with the sprinkler of a watering can. Pupils could experiment with different shapes of earthwork and different materials.

Design and Technology

You could try making a model of a Roman ballista:
<http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/reticulum/quizes/printables/ballista.htm>

History

Many people once lived inside the ramparts of Maiden Castle: pupils could decide where they would choose to build their roundhouse and think about what they would have inside it.

You will find a scheme of work for teaching prehistory at
<http://www.qca.org.uk/history/innovating/key2/planning/qca-sow/>
You may also find these pupil activity sheets helpful:
<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/learning/resources.html>

Geography

The Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL15, Purbeck and South Dorset 1:25,000 scale is a valuable resource. While on site pupils can learn map skills, comparing what they can see in the landscape with the symbols on the map.

Maiden Castle and the Ridgeway are superb viewpoints for looking at the impact of man on the landscape and with so much to look at there is ample opportunity for pupils to extend their geographical vocabulary. Pupils can also consider what they think of the area, what are its advantages and disadvantages. They might think about why villages have grown up down the slopes of the Ridgeway rather than on the top. Why is Maiden

Castle (a hill fort) on the high point and Dorchester (a town) on the lower ground?

Citizenship

Pupils could debate the principle of rights of way and the right to roam. Why might freedom of access be a problem to a farmer on the Ridgeway? How could visitors minimise those problems? They could consider whether they think it is important to look after the monuments and earthworks along the Ridgeway. What do they think might make it easier for people to enjoy the Ridgeway?

Art

On a site visit pupils could take digital photographs of the things they see and choose the best images to design postcards back in school.

They could use the words they collect and the sounds they record on site to inspire their artwork in the classroom.

Pupils could try painting like our prehistoric ancestors, mixing different coloured soils and sand to make paint and applying it to small pieces of stone. Or they could discuss the colours they think would have been available in the Neolithic and use only those in their artwork.



Aerial view of Maiden Castle





Links

The 'Riddles of the Ridgeway' leaflet offers a concise introduction to the area: available from;

AONB Office,
The Barracks,
Bridport Road,
Dorchester,
DT1 1RN

or from their website:

<http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/>

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/education/> contains useful guides and resources for teaching pupils to read maps. The following websites may also be useful:

<http://www.weymouth-dorset.co.uk/little-bredy.html>

<http://www.martinstown.co.uk/>

<http://portesham.online-today.co.uk/>

<http://www.abbotsbury.co.uk/>

<http://www.weymouth-dorset.co.uk/bincombe.html>

<http://www.weymouth-dorset.co.uk/sutton-poyntz.html>

<http://www.francisfrith.com/search/>

<http://www.broadmayne2000.co.uk/>

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.15733>

<http://www.keepmilitarymuseum.org/history.php?&dx=1&sid=cfaf5b8302f0cc8b4e03114bc0def46d&ob=3&rpn=index>

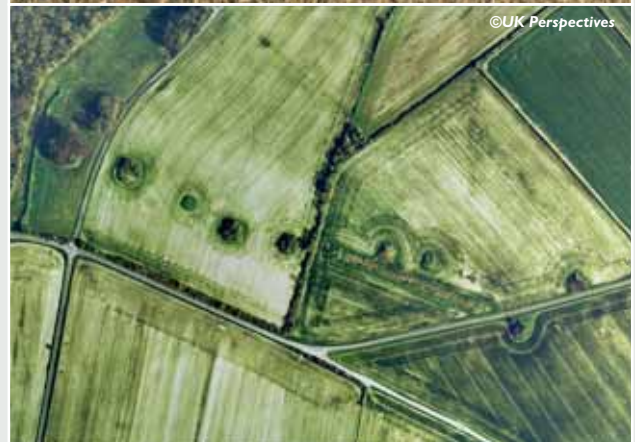
<http://www.dorsetsea.swgfl.org.uk/index2.html>

<http://www.show.me.uk/site/make/Prehistory/STO438.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/celts/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2children/home.shtml>

<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/learning/resources.html>



The South Dorset Ridgeway: The Prehistoric Ridgeway



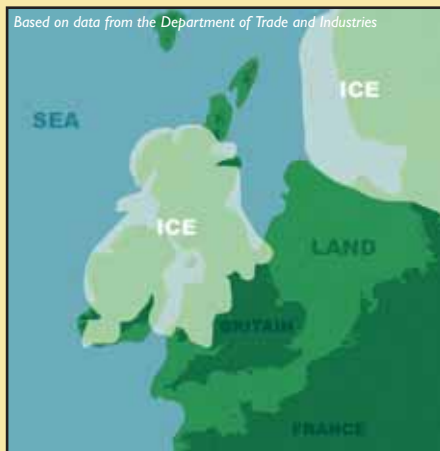
Karen Nichols ©Wessex Archaeology



Mesolithic landscape of the English Channel

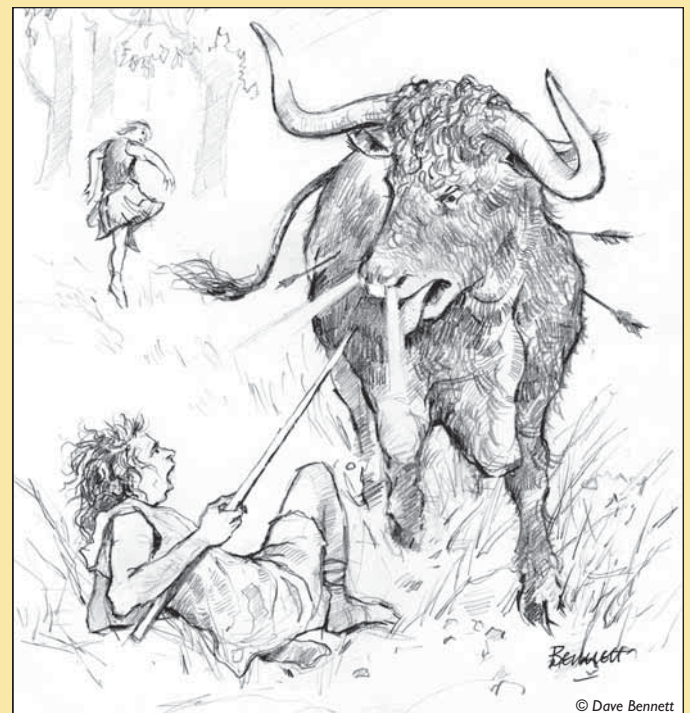
The Earliest Inhabitants

We know there were people on the South Dorset Ridgeway 500,000 years ago because archaeologists have found their flint tools at Bincombe Hill. They were nomadic people who had followed herds of wild animals north from the European mainland. During the *glacial periods* the sea level was low and there was dry land between Europe and Britain.



About 10,000 years ago the temperature began to rise and the ground gradually thawed out. The icecaps in the north melted, raising sea levels and cutting Britain off from northern Europe. The vegetation gradually changed from the cold, glacial *tundra* of grass and shrubs to birch trees, followed by pine, then hazel, lime, oak and elm. The people of the Ridgeway still hunted wild animals like the *aurochs* (wild cattle), but the herds of larger animals were giving way to smaller woodland creatures such as red deer, roe deer and boar.

Animals were attracted to woodland clearings and sources of water and this is where archaeologists find the tools made and used by these hunters of the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age, c.10,000-4,000 BC). Axes for clearing the woodland and the tiny flint barbs from their arrows and harpoons have been found at sites on or near the Ridgeway; for example at Little Bredy, near the River Frome in Dorchester; and at Martinstown, Winterborne Monkton and Winterbourne Abbas.



© Dave Bennett



Mesolithic flint barb 3 times actual size





Peter Dunn ©English Heritage



Artist's impression of the first earthworks at Maiden Castle

Neolithic (New Stone Age) c.4000-2400 BC

From about 4000BC the landscape of the Ridgeway began to change. New people from Europe came to Britain, bringing with them the skills of farming and making pottery. People became more settled, making clearings in the woodland for animals like cattle, pigs, sheep and goats to graze. They began to grow wheat and barley in small plots. They coppiced timber to make fencing and build houses. In the woodland beyond their settlements they collected wild food and hunted wild animals as they had done for thousands of years.

There were certainly people living on the Ridgeway. Archaeologists have found bone, flint and pottery from this period at Rowden, Maiden Castle and Bincombe, while excavations in the centre of Dorchester and on the outskirts show that people were living near the River Frome.

We have no evidence of what people looked like; their clothes haven't survived. But it is safe to assume that in the early part of the Neolithic they would have had clothes made from leather, possibly ornamented with worked bone, antler and shell. We know from skeletons that life expectancy was about 40 years.

We also know that some people travelled considerable distances. The Ridgeway itself would have been an important

route way. Its well-draining chalk and limestone would make it passable even in wet conditions, while its extensive views may have allowed the traveller to see potential enemies a long way off. Pottery found at nearby Sutton Poyntz was made from Cornish clay. Perhaps marriage partners as well as trade took place over considerable distances.

It's hard to imagine what society was like. We have to presume that there was by now time to spare from the business of getting food and keeping warm, and that society was ordered and organised in some way. How else can we explain the building of huge Neolithic earthworks?

Causewayed Enclosures

The first of these earthworks were *causewayed enclosures*. These are huge monuments (over 0.5 hectare) formed from one or more ring ditches, sometimes with banks. The ditches are not continuous and it is the 'causeways' between them that give the monuments their name.

From the Ridgeway you can see Maiden Castle, but you cannot now see the causewayed enclosure hidden beneath the east end of the Iron Age hill fort. It was formed of two rings of



Neolithic



ditches and was built sometime around 3600 BC. There was another causewayed enclosure, Flagstones, south east of Dorchester. It cannot be seen either, because it was partly destroyed when the ring road was built and the surviving part lies beneath Thomas Hardy's house at Max Gate. Archaeologists found patterns in some of the ditches, scratched into the chalk with the antler picks which had been used to dig them (you can see them in Dorchester Museum). There were burials too, some placed in the ditches when the monument was being dug, and some much later.

We don't know what these causewayed enclosures were for. There is no evidence of buildings inside them, but archaeologists have found animal bones and broken pots, which suggest that feasts and celebrations took place there. Perhaps they were a central meeting place for a tribe, where funerals and other ceremonies took place. (At Hambledon, a third causewayed enclosure about 20 miles away in north Dorset, human bodies and arrowheads suggest that here at least, a more violent event took place.)



© Wessex Archaeology

Neolithic, leaf-shaped arrowheads found at Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester

Long Barrows

There is a theory that the dead were laid out inside causewayed enclosures for the flesh to rot away, and that some of the bones were later collected and buried in long barrows. *Long barrows* are mounds of earth some over 90m long, which contain burial chambers of wood or stone, usually at one end. The best examples are in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire – particularly West Kennet Long Barrow at Avebury. Seventeen have been found on the Ridgeway, though many of them are barely visible now.

Most of the Dorset long barrows had wooden chambers which have long since rotted away, but there were at least five with stone chambers. The Hell Stone near Portesham is the

remains of one of these, though the stones have been moved from their original position and re-erected. The Grey Mare and Her Colts north of Abbotsbury is the most impressive. About 20m of the earthen mound has survived behind a single burial chamber, made of sarsen stones.

Long barrows seem to have been built in cleared, open areas, for the burial of a select group of people living nearby. It used to be thought that they were in use for about 1,000 years, but recent investigations have shown that most of them were only used for burials for two or three generations. Then, mysteriously, at around the same time, many of them were deliberately closed up.

© Peter Emery

Artist's impression of a ceremony at the Grey Mare and Her Colts long barrow





Bank Barrows

There are three even more mysterious long, earthen mounds on the Ridgeway, called bank barrows. They can be found at Broadmayne, near Dorchester; Martin's Down, near Little Bredy; and inside Maiden Castle. The one at Maiden Castle is as much as 545m long. These strange monuments contain no burials and no one knows what they were for:



©Dorset AONB

Broadmayne bank barrow

Henges

Towards the end of the Neolithic, after the long barrows were blocked up and the causewayed enclosures had fallen out of use, new earthworks began to be constructed. These are the henges, circular banks with ditches inside them. Some of them (famously Stonehenge, Wiltshire) have structures of stone or

wood within the surrounding bank and ditch. The best example of a *henge* near the Ridgeway is Mount Pleasant to the south east of Dorchester which was nearly 400m across. It has been ploughed for so many years that you can only just see traces of the bank today, but in the 1970s archaeologists found traces of a huge timber *palisade* inside the ditch, made of large tree trunks set 2m into the ground. Inside this were other, smaller timber circles, one as large as 40m across. There is another henge nearby at Maumbury Rings. Few people realise that the Roman *amphitheatre* was a re-used Neolithic henge.

Timber and stone circles may have performed the same function as a henge. In the centre of Dorchester itself, archaeologists found traces of a timber circle where the Waitrose car park is today. The position of the timbers has been marked so you can still see where they were and there are murals in the shopping centre. At Nine Stones, just to the west of Winterbourne Abbas is a stone circle made of *sarsens*.

A few miles away, south of Kingston Russell, are the fallen remains of another small circle of *sarsens*.



©Dorset AONB

Aerial view of Broadmayne Bank Barrow



©UK Perspectives





The round barrows at Bincombe – The Bincombe Bumps

Bronze Age (c.2400-700 BC)

Around four and a half thousand years ago, at about the same time as the henges were being constructed, there seems to have been a major change in the way society was organised. The long barrows had been abandoned and people were no longer buried in communal graves. Now, it seems, the wealth and power of individuals had become more significant, and important people were buried in *round barrow* burial mounds. Sometimes these round barrows were centred on an ancient long barrow, suggesting that these ancient earthworks were still revered.

Over 2,000 barrows are known in Dorset, and a major concentration is centred along the Ridgeway where over 400 can still be seen. Many others have been lost through ploughing. Now they are grassed over, or hidden by the spoil, but when they were new they would have shown up chalk-white in the landscape.

In the early barrows a beaker was often placed with the body. These pots were finely made and quite distinct from what had gone before. Many people have argued that they belonged to a different people, the *Beaker* folk, who had migrated to Britain from continental Europe.

The Bronze Age is the time when metal (copper, gold and bronze), first appears in Britain. Archaeologists have found out a great deal about this period from excavating barrows, because people were often buried with the things that had been important or significant to them in life. Archaeologists have found flints, pottery, arrowheads, antler picks, polished stone axe-heads, metal knives and grave goods of gold.

In the nineteenth century the lure of this gold drew landowners and amateur archaeologists to excavate barrows in the search for treasure. Although some reported their findings, most did not, and much information about the barrows has been lost for ever.

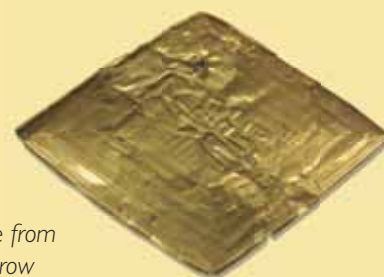


©Mike Franklin

Clandon Barrow

However, one of the richest barrow burials was uncovered in this way. Clandon Barrow at Martinstown was dug in 1882 and you can see the bronze dagger, polished stone mace-head, amber cup and gold lozenge at Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. Was this person a chieftain and were these his badges of office? Whether he was or not, he was sufficiently important to have traded or been given objects from far afield. The stone would have come from highland Britain, the amber from Scandinavia and the gold from Ireland or Wales.

Barrows continued to be built for over 2,000 years and some were used again and again over centuries, with more and more burials added to the original one at the centre of the mound.



The gold lozenge from the Clandon Barrow



The South Dorset Ridgeway: The Iron Age and Roman Period



Julian Cross © Wessex Archaeology



An artist's illustration of a round-house

The Iron Age (700BC-AD43)

From about 1000BC new styles of pottery appear in Britain. The technology to work a stronger metal than bronze – iron – was developed. At this time the language was Celtic and was spoken across Britain and much of Europe.

Trade increased. Tin and copper were brought from Cornwall and Wales. Other goods travelled out of Dorset, for example shale from Kimmeridge which was used for bracelets and occasionally for bigger items like trays and even tables. By the end of the Iron Age *black-burnished ware* pottery, made in East Dorset, was being used by soldiers on *Hadrian's Wall*. There was increased trade with Europe too, bronze was imported while woollen cloaks and hunting dogs were exported.

Industries flourished; as well as pottery, salt was produced on the south coast.

People lived on the chalk uplands and continued to farm the land on the slopes. As the population grew, more and more land was brought into cultivation; traces of these Iron Age fields and even earlier ones can still be seen, for example on the north side of the Valley of the Stones (SY 600 880).

Families lived in large *round-houses*, with mud-caked walls and a steeply pitched thatched roof. A central fire provided both warmth and heat for cooking. You can see a reconstruction of a round-house at the Ancient Technology Centre, Cranborne.
Tel: 01725 517618





Hillforts

The Ridgeway was dotted with Iron Age farms all along its length, but far more visible would have been the *hillforts* that still dominate the landscape today.

Most archaeologists agree that they were built to express the power and prestige of tribal leaders. People did live in hillforts and some were quite densely populated so we could think of them as the forerunners of towns. The top of a hill is not a particularly convenient place to live because it is far from a source of water. However, it is a good place to be in time of attack and all the hillforts we know were fortified by ditches and ramparts.

The first hillfort in the area was probably Chalbury, near Sutton Poyntz.

The ramparts, built for defence, were faced with vertical limestone slabs both inside and out. In some places pieces of the stone can still be seen today. Inside the hillfort, you can trace the flat platforms of the round houses which once stood there.

There were other hillforts at Poundbury, Flower's Barrow and Abbotsbury. At Abbotsbury you can still see the footprints of eleven round-houses where the inhabitants once lived.



© Wessex Archaeology

Chalbury Hillfort

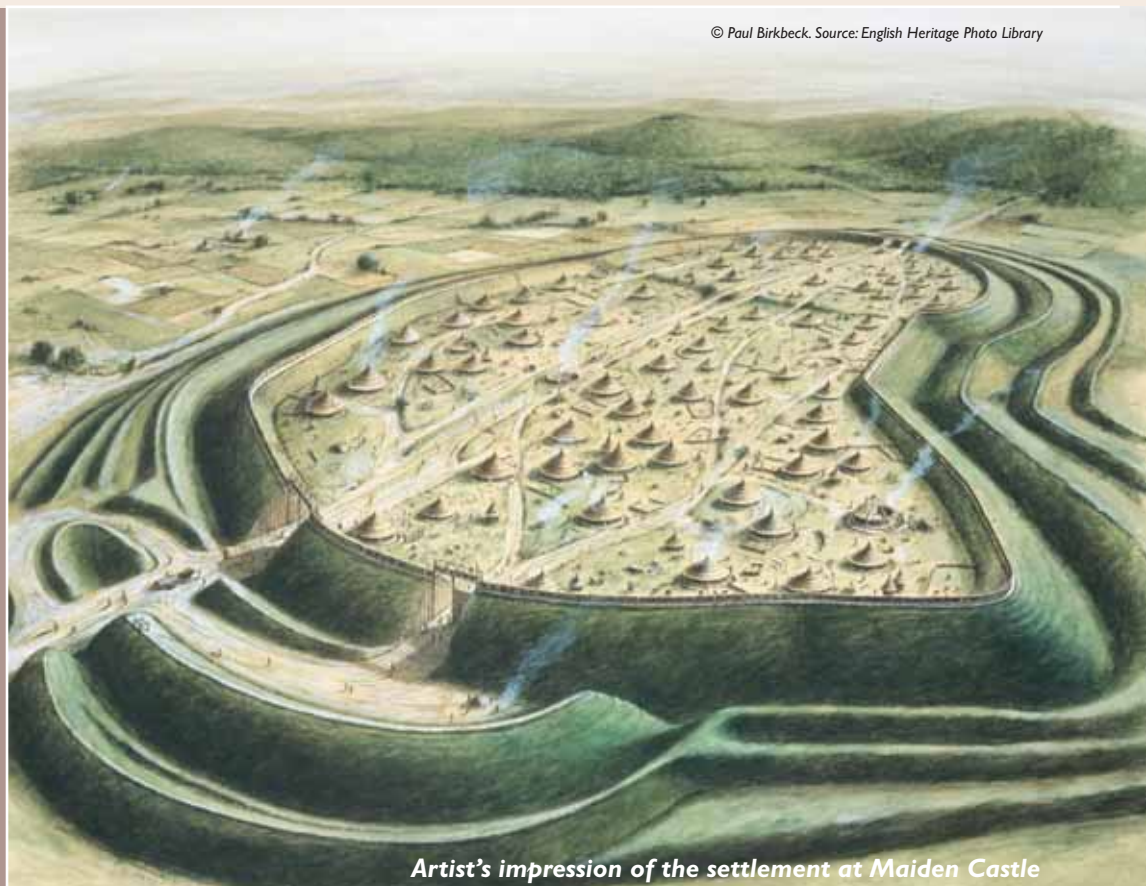


© Wessex Archaeology

The ramparts at Chalbury Hillfort

Maiden Castle

Maiden Castle later came to dwarf the other forts in the area, but to begin with it was a small earthwork of about 16 acres, much the same size as the hillforts at Poundbury and Abbotsbury. It was surrounded by a rampart and V shaped ditch, with a timber-faced eastern entrance. This first earthwork had a second entrance: perhaps it was the focus for two separate farming communities who needed access from opposite sides.



© Paul Birkbeck. Source: English Heritage Photo Library

Artist's impression of the settlement at Maiden Castle



Iron Age



During the two or three hundred years that the early hillfort was in use its defences had to be rebuilt. The eastern entrance was extended and made more elaborate with extra banks and ditches and a stone-faced wall.

Around 450 BC, as the smaller hillforts became less important, Maiden Castle was extended westwards making it three times its original size. The eastern entrance was radically altered yet again. It was now by far the most significant hillfort for miles around with many round-houses inside the ramparts. If we could see inside Maiden Castle at the end of the Iron Age we would see a bustling place with streets running between the round-houses and people busy with spinning, weaving and metal working.

It was undoubtedly the largest community for miles around, but towards the end of the Iron Age, as society became more settled, villages developed on the lower ground, for example at Dorchester.

We know the name of the people who lived along the Ridgeway and throughout Dorset at the time when the hillfort was built. Roman writers called them the Durotriges. They had their own coinage and were clearly a well-organised society.



© Paul Birkbeck. Source: English Heritage Photo Library

Artist's impression of the settlement at Maiden Castle

Maiden Castle covers an area as big as 50 football pitches!



Liam Wales ©English Heritage





© Paul Birkbeck. Source: English Heritage Photo Library



A Roman soldier

The coming of the Romans (AD 43-410)

Towards the end of the Iron Age the culture of the Durotriges was already influenced by ideas and objects from Rome. But the invasion, when it came, was nevertheless a shocking and devastating event. The Durotriges were not as 'Romanised' as other tribes further east, and when General Vespasian led the Second Augustan Legion into Dorset he faced fierce opposition before he captured all the hillforts. It used to be thought that there was a desperate battle at Maiden Castle because a skeleton was found with the head of a Roman ballista bolt still embedded in its spine.

We don't know how long it took for the Durotriges to surrender, but it may not have taken very long. The wealthier members of society had already tasted the advantages of a more luxurious and civilised way of life through trading contacts with Europe and Rome. Before long these people, the elders and nobles of the Durotriges, were appointed to the *Ordo* or city council, thus ensuring their loyalty to the new regime.

The first major Roman settlement in the Ridgeway area was probably a legionary camp at Dorchester built to secure the river crossing. Maumbury Rings was built as a military *amphitheatre* re-using the ancient henge. They called the place Durnovaria.

In those early years, when the threat of rebellion was still very real, it was important to have good links between the Roman

forts. Small 'fortlets' were built between the larger ones, so that signals could be transmitted by smoke or fire. One of these has survived as a rectangular earthwork at Black Down, 1 km northwest of the Hardy Monument.

There was also a small camp at Frampton. This was the base for the soldiers responsible for building the aqueduct which brought water from Frampton through Poundbury to the camp at Durnovaria. The *aqueduct* was a major feat of engineering. It was 9 km long, following the contours of the hills with a gentle incline all the way to Dorchester. You can still see the line of the aqueduct in Fordington Bottom. The final section was diverted from the camp to the new town of Durnovaria, and excavations in Prince's Street and Durngate Street uncovered a section of the timber water main.

At first the buildings were made of wood, but they were gradually replaced by more substantial ones of chalk, flint and stone. The houses of wealthy citizens were substantial and many had beautiful mosaic floors. You can visit a good example of one of these houses at the Roman Town House, behind the County Hall. This house grew from a modest early timber building to a more substantial stone building, and by the second and third century a very impressive town house or *domus*. You can see finds from the excavations and mosaics from other Roman town houses in the Dorset County Museum.



Roman



As society became more settled, the amphitheatre just outside the town at Maumbury Rings would have been used for civilian events. In a town the size of Durnovaria these were probably not expensive gladiatorial combats, but entertainments much like a circus today. The amphitheatre held 5,000 – enough to seat all the free inhabitants of the town.



© Dorset AONB

Maumbury Rings today

Around the outside of Durnovaria were the town's cemeteries. At Fordington and Poundbury many burials have been discovered over the years. A tombstone from one of them has been built into the porch of St George's, Fordington and there is a replica of it in the County Museum. The names on the tombstone – Carinus, his wife Romana and children Rufinus, Carina and Avita, give us the names of five Romans who lived in Dorchester.



© Wessex Archaeology

Stone coffin excavated at Poundbury in 2008

This busy small town, with its grand town house, its amphitheatre, public buildings and impressive public baths, was in stark contrast to the Iron Age settlements that preceded it. Outside the town, the countryside changed more slowly. As the population grew, more land was farmed and new crops were introduced, such as rye, oats and flax, but farming methods

hardly changed. Buildings in the landscape varied from imposing villas, to farms and small hamlets. The round-houses of the Iron Age probably continued in use, only gradually being replaced by rectangular buildings with tiled roofs and plastered walls. Grimstone Down to the west of Dorchester, is the site of a Roman village, and its fields, tracks and house platforms can still be seen today.

A network of new roads was laid going to Weymouth, Ilchester and Exeter, with Dorchester at the junction. (The A354 to Weymouth follows the course of the Roman road all the way to the Ridgeway.) These were built for military use, but were soon used for trade. Imported wine, fish sauce and oil, were all carried up the road to Dorchester from the harbour at Weymouth.

Maiden Castle was by-passed by the Roman Road, which shows that this stronghold of the Durotriges had ceased to be an important centre. But in the later Roman period a temple was built there. It was for the worship of pagan gods, and in fact it may have been on the site of a much earlier pagan temple. Christianity had become fairly widespread in Dorset by the fourth century, but this temple was built at a time when the old gods were undergoing something of a revival. There is another Roman temple at Jordan Hill south of Preston that can still be seen today.



© Linden Milner

The remains of the Roman temple at Maiden Castle

The end of the Roman period came gradually to Dorset. When the Romans began to withdraw in the late 4th century, the governing systems slowly collapsed, coinage was in short supply and so bartering once more became common practice. But the decline was not brought about by Saxon invasion, as it was in the east of the country. In fact it was not until the early ninth century that the Saxon town of Dorchester was established within the Roman walls. With that, the Roman period in the South Dorset Ridgeway area was over.



The South Dorset Ridgeway: from the Saxons to the Present Day



Saxon

Nearly every village in, or near, the South Dorset Ridgeway was settled in the Saxon period. We can tell that from their names: Abbotsbury = 'the town of the Abbot'; Bincombe = 'the valley where beans grow'; Waddon = 'the hill where they grow woad'.

In AD789 peace was shattered by the first Norse and Danish Viking raid on England. From the Ridgeway near Broadmayne a Saxon farmer could have seen their ships off Portland. They landed and killed the messenger sent to meet them by Offa, King of Wessex. Sporadic raids continued until the beginning of the 11th century, when the Danish King Cnut laid waste parts of Dorset before becoming king of all England in 1017.

When the Normans invaded in 1066 the people of Dorset would not accept William the Conqueror as their king. They were punished harshly for their resistance and only half the houses in Dorchester were left standing by 1086. Estates that had belonged to the Saxon king and noblemen were taken over by King William and granted to Norman grandees.

Medieval

Like the rest of the country, south Dorset was organised according to the Feudal System. The king granted land to his barons, they granted some to their knights, and the knights even less to their villeins. In return, each order of society had certain duties: the villeins had to provide the knight with labour, food and service while the knights were duty bound to protect their baron and support him with military assistance when the king required it. The land was strip farmed, with individuals or families each working long strips of land spread over 3 or 4 fields. Ridges and furrows gradually built up at the edges of the strips but those on or near the Ridgeway have gradually disappeared.

In 1348 this ordered way of life was threatened by the outbreak of the bubonic plague or Black Death. The first case to be reported in England was at Weymouth, and it quickly spread through the county and across the whole of Britain. In Dorset a chronicler wrote 'it made the country quite void of inhabitants so that there were almost none left alive'. It had a devastating affect on the countryside. Half the population was wiped out and whole villages deserted. The remains of the deserted village of Friarmayne lie hidden beneath the fields near Broadmayne. Near Winterborne Herringston is the deserted village of Winterbourne Farringdon. A single wall of the church stands amongst the lumps and bumps which mark the plots and lanes of the village. Much of the land was given over to sheep pasture.



Winterbourne Farringdon Deserted village

Tudor

Sheep were not new to the Ridgeway. For centuries their wool had been an important part of the local and national economy. By day the sheep grazed on the upland pastures and at night they were folded on the arable land so that they could fertilise the thin soil.

Sheep were driven into Dorchester from all along the Ridgeway to be sold at the annual fairs and their wool was woven and dyed in the town. People made their way to the weekly markets there to buy and sell their produce.

The major events of the Tudor period did not affect the Ridgeway directly, but the shepherd with his flock on the hills would have been able to see in the far distance the building of Sandsfoot and Portland castles, commissioned by Henry VIII to protect Portland Roads. Fifty years on, his son or grandson could have seen the ships of the Spanish Armada fighting their way up the channel and skirmishing between Portland and St Alban's Head. There was a chain of beacons across the country to alert people to the danger of invasion. One of these was at Black Down where the Hardy Monument is today.

The Seventeenth Century

Like the rest of the country, Dorset was divided by the English Civil War (1642-49). In the east, Corfe Castle was captured by the Parliamentarians after a siege lasting nearly three years. In the south, Abbotsbury held out for the King until it was set alight by the Parliamentarian force and razed to the ground. (You can still see the holes in the pulpit of the church made by two musket balls.) Dorchester meanwhile supported Parliament. The town was prepared for battle and Maumbury Rings was turned into a fort. Despite this, the Royalists captured and ransacked the town in 1643.





© Ivor Hunt

English Civil War re-enactors

Weymouth held out for Parliament despite desperate attempts to take it. In 1645 villagers who sympathised with the King from Upwey, Broadway, Preston and Sutton Poyntz, joined in an unsuccessful attempt to take Weymouth.

After the death of Charles II in 1685 his illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, landed with his supporters at Lyme Bay in a bid to claim the throne. Within a couple of months the rebellion was over and Monmouth was captured and executed. But the aftermath was to have terrible effects in Dorset. In Dorchester Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, 'the Hanging Judge' presided over what was to be called the 'Bloody Assizes'. Two hundred people were condemned to death while 814 were transported to the West Indies. Most of the unfortunate victims were hung, drawn and quartered. Parts of bodies were displayed at Culliford Tree barrow near Came Wood, north of Bincombe.

The Napoleonic Wars 1793-1815

The threat of invasion at the end of the eighteenth century felt very real to people living as close to the coast as the villages of the South Dorset Ridgeway. While the 39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment of Foot went off to fight on the continent, many of the sons of the better-off joined the local Volunteers. Soldiers camped on the hills above Sutton Poyntz and children were told that Napoleon would come and eat them if they misbehaved. The York Hussars were camped on Bincombe Hill. Two young

soliders deserted the regiment. They were shot and now lie buried in unmarked graves in Holy Trinity churchyard, Bincombe. The author, Thomas Hardy, based his novel 'The Trumpet Major' at this time, setting it at Sutton Poyntz (calling it 'Overcombe'). The wars were still within living memory when he was writing in the 1870s, and he was able to base his story on real people and happenings.

There is a lasting reminder of the Napoleonic Wars on the Ridgeway. Hardy's Monument at Black Down was erected to the memory of Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy. He had been born near Portesham and joined the navy at the age of 12. He fought in many of Nelson's battles and was captain of HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.



©Mark Connell

Hardy's Monument





Agriculture

Many small holdings along the Ridgeway had been amalgamated in the Tudor and Stuart period to provide grazing for sheep. By 1724, when Daniel Defoe made his tour of Britain, he was told that there were 600,000 sheep within a 6 mile radius of Dorchester. Clean fleeces fetched higher prices: at Martinstown there was a sheep wash near Church Farmhouse, while at Broadmayne a section of the stream in Watergates Lane is still called the 'wash-pool'.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the Enclosure Acts were passed and the pace of change quickened. Common land disappeared and with it villagers' rights to free grazing. Long-term leases were converted to short-term tenancies, causing real distress in times of scarce food and high prices. The life of farm workers and their families was very hard. Dorset was a by-word for the low wages and appalling living conditions of its farm labourers.

Until the twentieth century agriculture was by far the biggest employer on the Ridgeway, and because of low wages it was not just the adults who were involved. In 1891 the School Log Book for Portesham despairs:

'The task of teaching anything above Standard IV seems quite hopeless in this district. First the older children are kept at home for the garden work, then the fishing and now haymaking and fruit picking. The harvest will soon follow and then getting in apples and potatoes.'

Transport

The steep hills and valleys of the Ridgeway made travelling difficult for centuries. Without a hard surface, roads became muddy and deeply rutted. Turnpike Trusts were set up to levy a charge on road users that paid for the road and its repair. The new turnpike road from Weymouth crossed the Ridgeway near Upwey, following the course of the Roman Road to Dorchester. Another turnpike road from Weymouth branches northwest, crossing the Ridgeway at Portesham Hill. Some of the old roads survived while others disappeared or became mere footpaths.

Other survivors are the old droves along which sheep and cattle were driven to and from the Ridgeway. At Broadmayne several have survived: Osmington Drove, Bramble Drove and South Drove. Others have become public rights of way.

In 1847 the railway came to Dorchester, and in 1885 a branch line was completed to transport stone from Portesham and iron ore from Abbotsbury to Weymouth. There was a further station at Upwey and a 'milk platform' at Friar Waddon. The

railways didn't just change the landscape of the Ridgeway, they changed people's lives too.

Industry

Although the Ridgeway was first and foremost an agricultural area, a significant number of people were engaged in other jobs.

In Portesham a number of men were employed quarrying limestone from the nearby pits. Some men from the village worked in the Portand quarries removing the layer of soil from the stone beneath so the Portland men could hack it out.

Some women worked at braiding or net making. It was very poorly paid but it could be done at home. Twine was brought from Bridport once a week and the finished nets collected. Children were taught net-making at school, and many helped their mothers make nets for fishing, agriculture, and even tennis courts.

Button making was another home-working job. The centre of the industry was around Blandford but it was carried on all over Dorset. Decorative patterns of thread were worked over tiny discs of sheep horn or later, metal rings. In the 1850s the cottage industry died when button-making machines were introduced.

The White Horse

At Osmington, at the eastern end of the South Dorset Ridgeway, is the famous White Horse. It was cut out of the hillside in 1808. The rider is meant to be George III who was very fond of Weymouth. He was concerned that it showed him riding away from the town. He had made his first visit in 1789, for the sake of his health, establishing the town as a fashionable seaside resort.

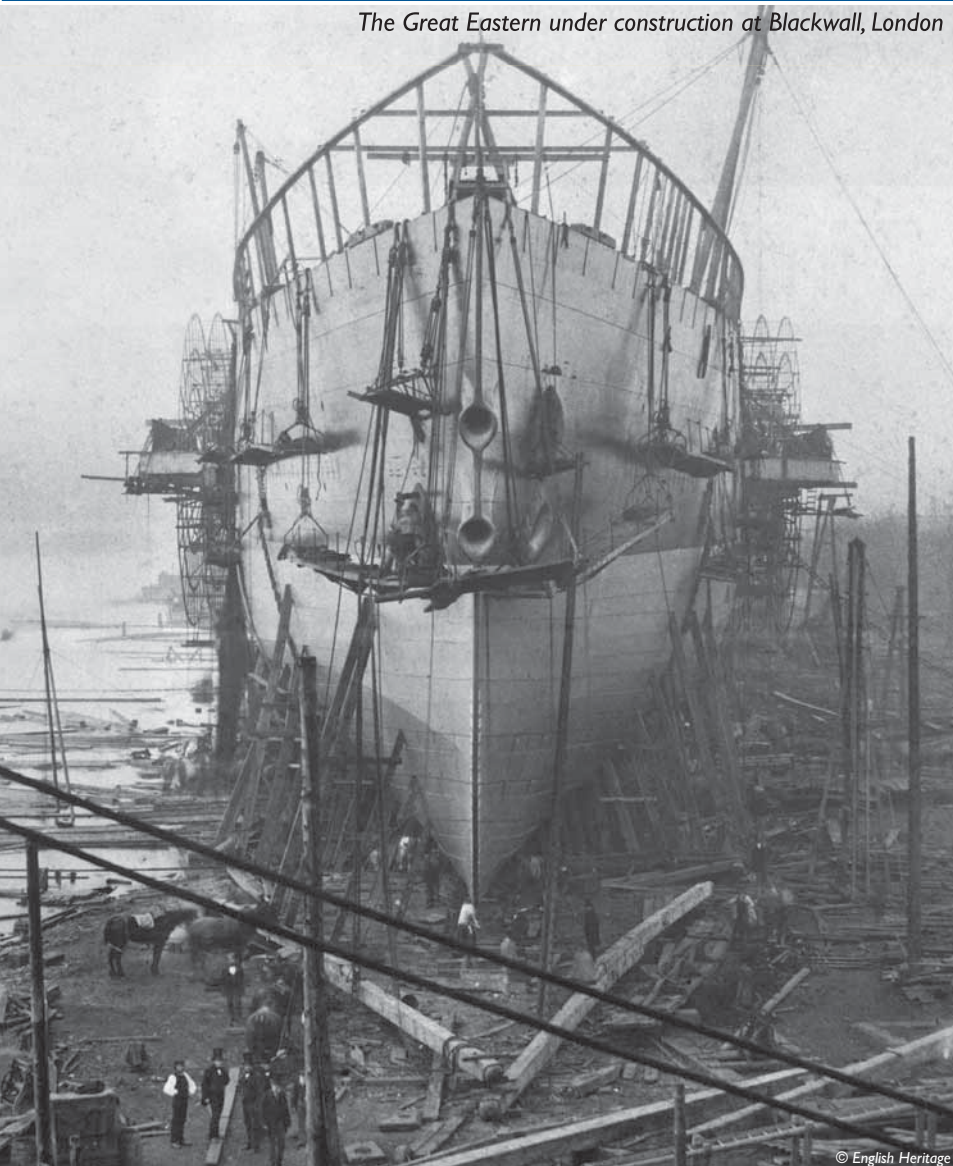


The White Horse at Osmington





The Great Eastern under construction at Blackwall, London



© English Heritage

There were 48 raids on Weymouth alone and bombs fell on some of the villages, for example Martinstown. Everyone was issued with a gas mask, and each family was advised to build themselves a shelter.

Newcomers came to the Ridgeway: evacuees from London and the industrial towns of the North.

In the build-up to D-Day American soldiers of the 1st U.S. Infantry Division (The Big Red One) were camped in the villages along the Ridgeway, for example at Martinstown and Broadmayne, and there was a command post at Blandford. The American soldiers seemed to have endless supplies of chewing gum and chocolate which made them very popular with children.

Perhaps some of those same children, walking on the Ridgeway, had looked towards the sea and watched the little ships sailing to Dunkirk to help evacuate troops. Or perhaps they had seen the Wellington bombers testing the bouncing bombs that would later be used by 617 Squadron, RAF – otherwise known as 'The Dambusters'.

Perhaps they or their descendants still live near the South Dorset Ridgeway today.

'The Great Eastern'

During sea trials off Portland in 1859, there was a catastrophic explosion on board Isambard Kingdom Brunel's ship 'The Great Eastern'. One of her huge funnels was blown off and later salvaged. It was bought by the Weymouth Waterworks and taken to Spring Bottom, Sutton Poyntz. With holes driven all around it, it was filled with gravel and sunk into the ground to act as a filter for the spring water. It is still in use today!

World War II

South Dorset did not suffer like London and other big cities, and most bombers passed over the county on their way to major targets like Bristol. But it was easily accessible to German bombers and very close to the Naval harbour at Portland and the busy port of Weymouth.



A family go into their Anderson shelter carrying their boxed gas masks



What's in a Name?



Place names can be a clue to hundreds of years of history!

Some of the names around the Ridgeway are well over 1,000 years old. The earliest are British names, from before the Roman period, next come Latin names from Roman times, then Old English ones from the time of the Saxons.

Here are some names you know well – but do you know where they come from?

1. **Abbotsbury**: Old English for 'the town of the Abbot'
2. **Broadmayne**: *Broad* is Old English for broad or wide and *mayne* is even older, from the British name for stone.

So what do you think **Little Mayne** means?

.....

3. **Bincombe**: *Bean* + *cumb* is Old English for 'the valley where beans grow'.

How do you think **Lower Bincombe** got its name?

.....

4. **Came Wood**: is Old English for 'Wood belonging to the Abbey of Caen' in France.
5. **Dorchester**: Dorchester is a Old English name but it has earlier roots: *chester* means a Roman camp and *Dorn* was the British name for the people who lived there.

Can you think of any other towns which end in '**chester**'?

.....

6. **Elwell**: *El* comes from the Old English name for an omen, so it gets its name 'The Wishing Well'
7. **Little Bredy**: Little Bredy takes its name from the **River Bride**. *Bride* is a British river name meaning 'boil' or 'bubble'.

What do you think **Bride Head** means?

.....

Timeline

**Old English (Saxon)
(AD500 –)**

**Roman/Latin
(AD43 –)**

**British
(in use before AD43)**



What's in a Name?



8. **Maiden Castle**: *Mai* + *dun* comes from the Celtic for 'great hill' or 'principle fort'

9. **Portesham**: *port* + *hamm* In **Old English** *port* can mean either a harbour or a market town. *Hamm* means village.

Which do you think **Portesham** means?

.....

9. **Upwey**: *Wey* is a **British** river name.

What do you think **Upwey** means?

.....

10. **Waddon**: In **Old English** it is *wad* + *dun* which means hill where they grow woad. (Woad is a plant used to dye material blue.)

11. **Winterbourne**: Winterbourne comes from the **Old English** words *winter* + *burna* and means a stream that flows in winter. **Winterbourne Abbas** was once owned by the Abbey of Cerne. **Winterborne Monkton** was once owned by monks.

What do you think **Winterborne Came** means? (Remember Came Wood!)

.....

Timeline

Saxon/ Old English
(AD500 –)

Roman/Latin
(AD43 –)

British
(in use before AD43)



I Spy!

Lumps and Bumps in the Landscape



How many of these can you spot on the map?

You will need Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL15, Purbeck & South Dorset



Broadmayne bank barrow: a Neolithic (New Stone Age) burial chamber over 4,500 years old.



Clandon round barrow: a burial mound for an important Bronze Age person, about 4,000 years old.
Clue: look for the words Tumulus/tumuli.



Chalbury Iron Age hillfort: a camp about 2,500 years old.



Hampton Stone Circle: Built about 4,500 years ago and used for ceremonies.



Deserted village of Winterbourne Farringdon: Some villages were deserted in the medieval period, either to make more pasture for sheep or abandoned after the plague. Bumps and hollows show where the houses were.



Hardy's Monument: A monument in honour of Admiral Thomas Hardy who fought at the Battle of Trafalgar.



Puzzle Objects

All these photographs are of things that were used by people long ago on the South Dorset Ridgeway. Unfortunately the labels have been mixed up. Can you sort them out by drawing a line from each label to the correct object? Can you work out which is the oldest and which the youngest?

Flint Arrowhead

For hunting and fighting, about 5,000 years old

Iron Age Bone Comb

Used when weaving cloth on a loom, about 2,000 years old

Roman Brooch

Made from gold and enamel, it is about 1,800 years old

Gold Lozenge

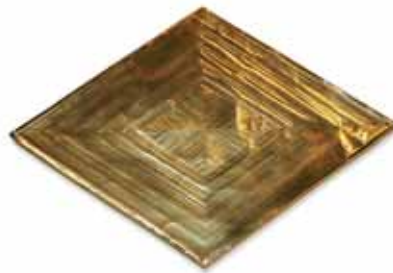
About 4,000 years ago this was worn by a Bronze Age chief

Bronze Dagger

Bronze Age dagger, about 4,000 years old

Clay Beaker

About 4,500 years ago this was placed in an important grave



Mystery Object

This object has been photographed from an unusual angle.

zenrob - exa

Unscramble the letters to make its name.

Try drawing it from a different angle.

What do you think it was used for?

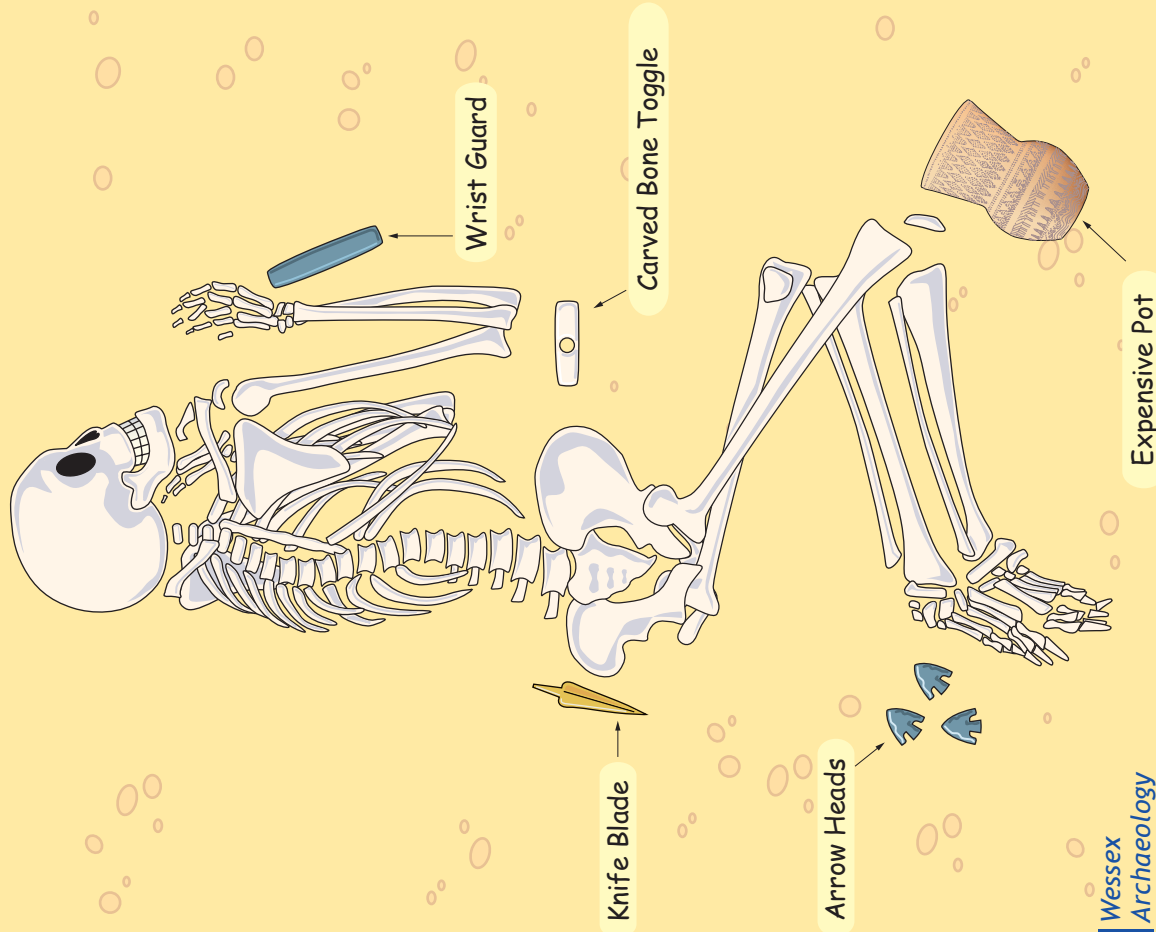
What did I look like 4,000 years ago?

Archaeologists excavated a Bronze Age barrow in Dorchester. It was the grave of an important man. Some of his belongings were buried with him. His clothes have not survived. Use the archaeological evidence to draw how you think he would have looked.



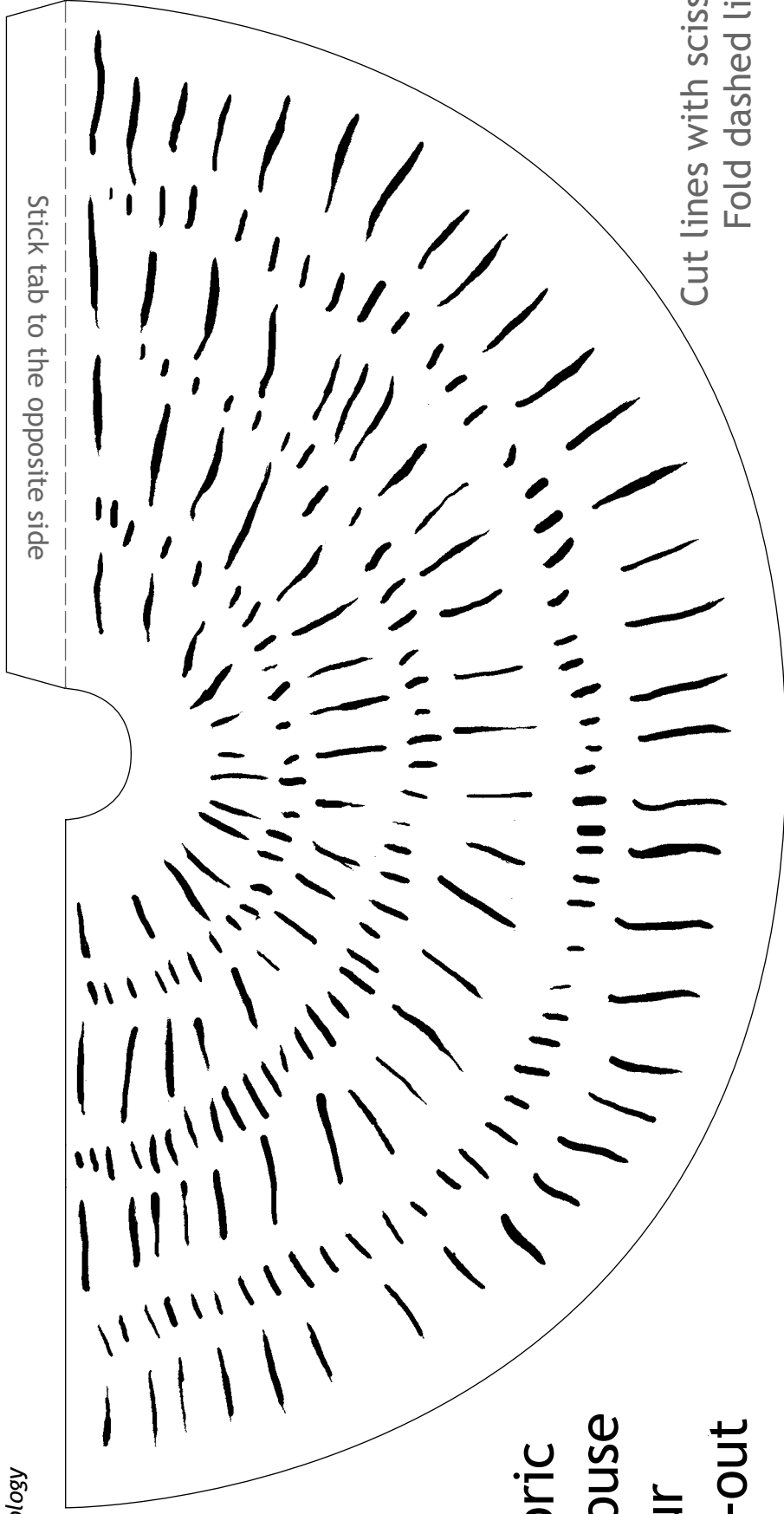
I look like this now!

Rob Goller @Wessex Archaeology

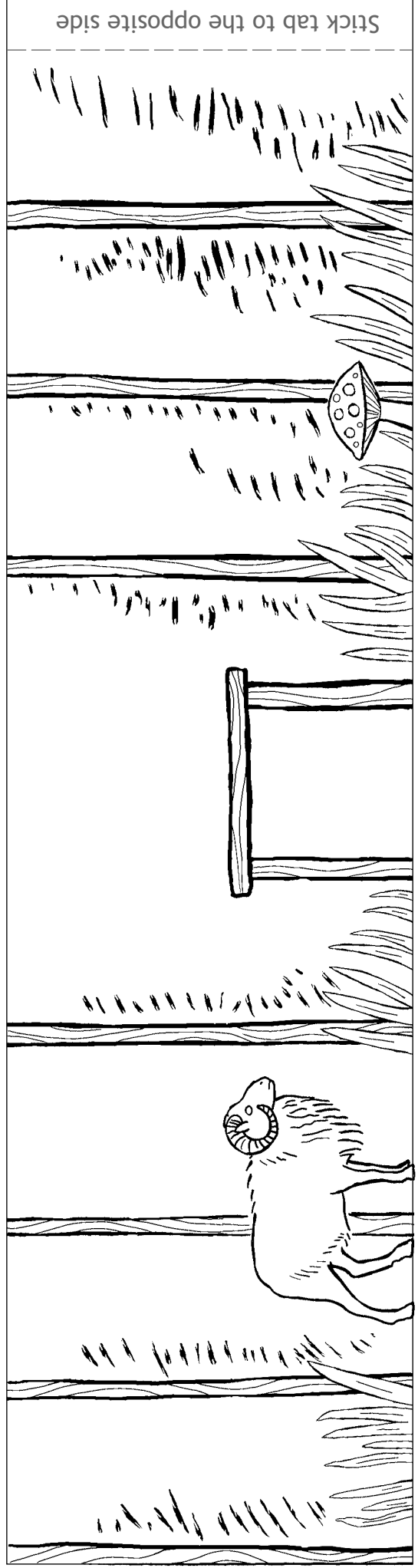


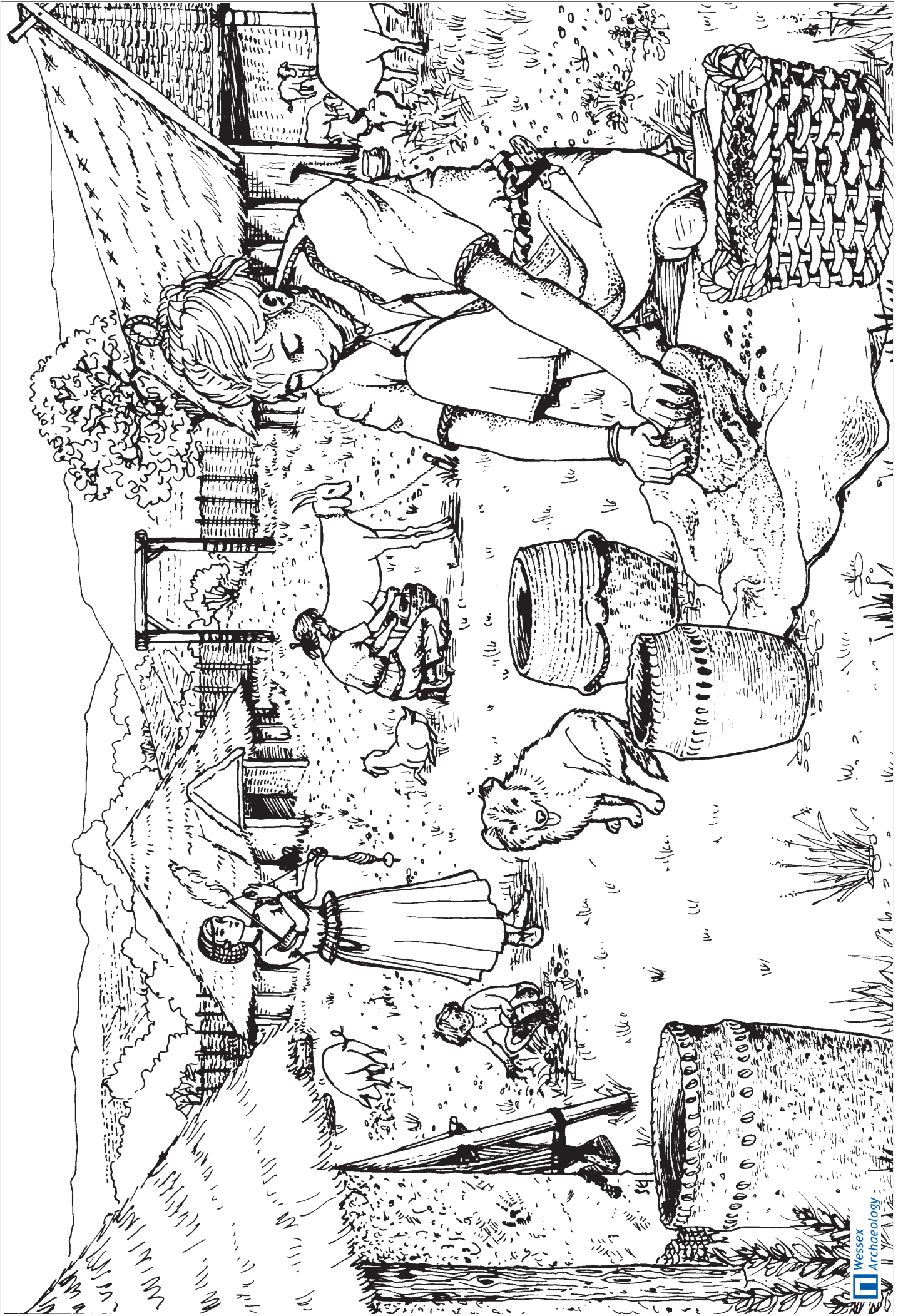
What did I look like 4,000 years ago?

Prehistoric Roundhouse to colour and cut-out



Cut lines with scissors.
Fold dashed lines.







Amphitheatre: An oval Roman building used chiefly for spectator sports, games and displays. The best known example is the Colosseum in Rome.

Aqueduct: a long pipe or conduit to carry water over a distance.

Aurochs: a very large type of cattle, now extinct, which was found in Europe from about 250,000 years ago. They died out in Britain in the Bronze Age, but survived longer in Eastern Europe. The last recorded aurochs died in Poland in the seventeenth century. Over 1.7m tall at the withers, they were very aggressive and would have been a formidable foe for prehistoric hunters.

Bank barrow: a long mound of earth which contains no burials. Their purpose is unknown.

Beaker: The years c. 2600-1600 BC were a transition period between the Neolithic and Bronze Age period. Archaeologists refer to this time as the Beaker period. The new technology of working copper and new ways of making pottery make their first appearance in Britain.

Black-burnished ware: dark-coloured, fairly coarse sandy pottery with burnished surfaces. Produced in the Poole area, it was widely distributed around the country from the late Iron Age and through the Roman period.

Bronze Age: c.2400 – 700 BC. The Bronze Age is the time when bronze was first used.

Causewayed enclosure: a large central area surrounded by a series of discontinuous ditches and banks. It is the spaces between the ditches and banks that give causewayed enclosures their name. They date from about 3700 BC.

Coppiced: Some trees will grow back vigorously when they are cut at the base. Coppicing is a traditional way of growing small diameter wood for fuel and fencing.

Glacial periods: The last glacial period began about 110,000 years ago, and ended around 10,000 years ago.

The Great Eastern: Isambard Kingdom Brunel's ship was launched in 1858, the largest ship that had been built at the time. Brunel died soon after her fateful maiden voyage, but the ship went on to sail the Atlantic many times. She is best known for laying a 4,200km transatlantic telegraph cable in 1865.

Hadrian's Wall: a frontier wall built between AD 122–130 by order of Emperor Hadrian. It ran the 73 miles from Bowness on the Solway Firth in the west to Wallsend-on-Tyne in the east.

Henge: a nearly circular or oval-shaped flat area that is usually surrounded by a bank and ditch. Henges vary a great deal. They can have one or more entrances, and additional circles of stone and timber were sometimes constructed inside. They date from the early Neolithic period.

A 'classic' henge, like Avebury, has the ditch on the inside which suggests that henges were for ceremonies, not for defence.





Hillfort: A hillfort is a fortified settlement or place of refuge. The visible remains are usually one or more lines of bank and ditches following the contours of the hill. The original fortifications would have included stockades and sometimes reinforced walls.

Iron Age: c.700BC – AD43. The Iron Age is characterised by the first use of iron, though bronze continued to be used in the early part of the Iron Age.

Long barrow: Long barrows are ancient communal tombs. They are elongated mounds of earth, or chalk and earth, covering a wooden or stone 'house' for the dead.

Mesolithic: Middle Stone Age (meso = middle, lithic = stone) c.8500 – 4000 BC. Rising sea levels separated Britain from the continent. Small groups of people lived a nomadic life, fishing, gathering wild food and hunting animals.

Neolithic: New Stone Age, neo = new, lithic = stone c.4000 – 2400 BC. When people first began to clear the forests and farm the land in Britain.

Palaeolithic: Old Stone Age (palaeo = old, lithic = stone) c. 750,000 – 8,500 BC. Flint tools and fragments of bone are evidence of the first known inhabitants of Britain.

Palisade: A row of sharpened stakes set into the ground to form a fence or fortification.

Round barrow: a mound of earth built over a wooden burial chamber which housed the remains of an important individual. Later burials were sometimes placed in the earthen mound or the ditch that sometimes surrounded a barrow. The concentration of round barrows on the South Dorset Ridgeway is of at least national significance.

Round-house: these range in size from 4 or 5m diameter in the Bronze Age to well over 12m diameter in some Iron Age examples. They had low, daub-covered timber walls and a thatched roof.

Sarsen: a type of sandstone with quartz grains formed when groundwater became saturated with silica. They are about 30-35 million years old. The name comes from 'saracen' implying alien or foreign, or from 'sar stan' meaning 'troublesome stone' in Old English.

Tundra: a vast, treeless plain with a permanent layer of frozen soil beneath the topsoil. This frozen subsoil prevents anything other than mosses, lichen and sedges from growing.

Villein: a peasant under the feudal system who gave dues and services to a lord in exchange for land. Villeins were not slaves, but neither were they free; they were tied to the lord's manor working on the lord's land two or three days a week.

