

Who looks after our history and why is it important?



Sussex Heritage Community

What is this person doing?

What do you call someone who is doing this job?



This person is an archaeologist

What does an archaeologist do?

Archaeologists are very important in helping us to understand our heritage and history. For the majority of history there was no writing so we can't find out what was going on thousands of years ago by reading documents from the time.

This is where archaeologists come in!

Archaeologists carefully dig for clues from our past, whether that be signs of settlements, religious practices, burials or even signs of long forgotten battle!

For example, when digging a Roman villa archaeologists would expect to find lots of building rubble from when the villa collapsed or was ruined after the Romans left. They would also find lots of pottery, some of which may be broken.

Pottery is very important because it can tell us how wealthy a particular site is, as well as the kind of food and drink the people were enjoying at the time. A Roman villa dig would also find coins, which are fantastic for dating the building (as are mosaics and the pottery).

Other sites, like prehistoric hunting camps, might only be seen by very carefully digging down and finding flint tools.

It's important to remember that archaeologists are only finding a small part of the material that would have existed in history – wooden buildings don't generally survive very well in our climate, so the story has to be brought together like pieces of a jigsaw.

Without archaeologists we would only know about our history through historical documents, many of which don't survive over centuries. This would leave us with no knowledge of how our ancestors lived for the vast majority of history!

What is this person doing?

**What do you call someone who is doing
this job?**



This person is an art historian

What does an art historian do?

Art historians are interested in lots of different types of art, like paintings, sculptures, photography, ceramics – and even video art!

They often focus on the work of specific artists, artistic movements, or types of objects.

What are these people doing?

What do you call someone who is doing this job?



This person is a museum curator

**How does a museum curator look after
our history?**

Curators work in museums to look after our heritage and history. Whilst archaeologists dig for old finds from the past, curators are responsible for not only looking after it but also displaying the finds / artefacts and teaching visitors about their importance.

Once the finds are ready to go on display then the curator will do research into the items and begin to create a story. This is very important as displaying archaeology without any information removes its context and value to visitors.

For example, if a Roman coin comes into the collection then the curator will find out when it was minted, where it was minted and the condition of the coin. From this we can then tell a story about how far the coin has travelled and for how long it was being used. Giving this information to visitor's means that they will have a much better understanding of Roman coinage than if the coin was just put on display by itself.

Some curators also give talks about their collections and tours of the museum. This can be very useful to visitors as it gives them an opportunity to find out even more about the objects and sometimes even get to hold them in their hands.

When archaeologists dig a new site they usually give all of the finds into a museum. This is where the curator will take these items into the collections. After this the curator will have to decide whether the finds need to be clean or conserved. Sometimes this is done by specialists who are experts at cleaning old metal finds like coins or even things like Roman glass.

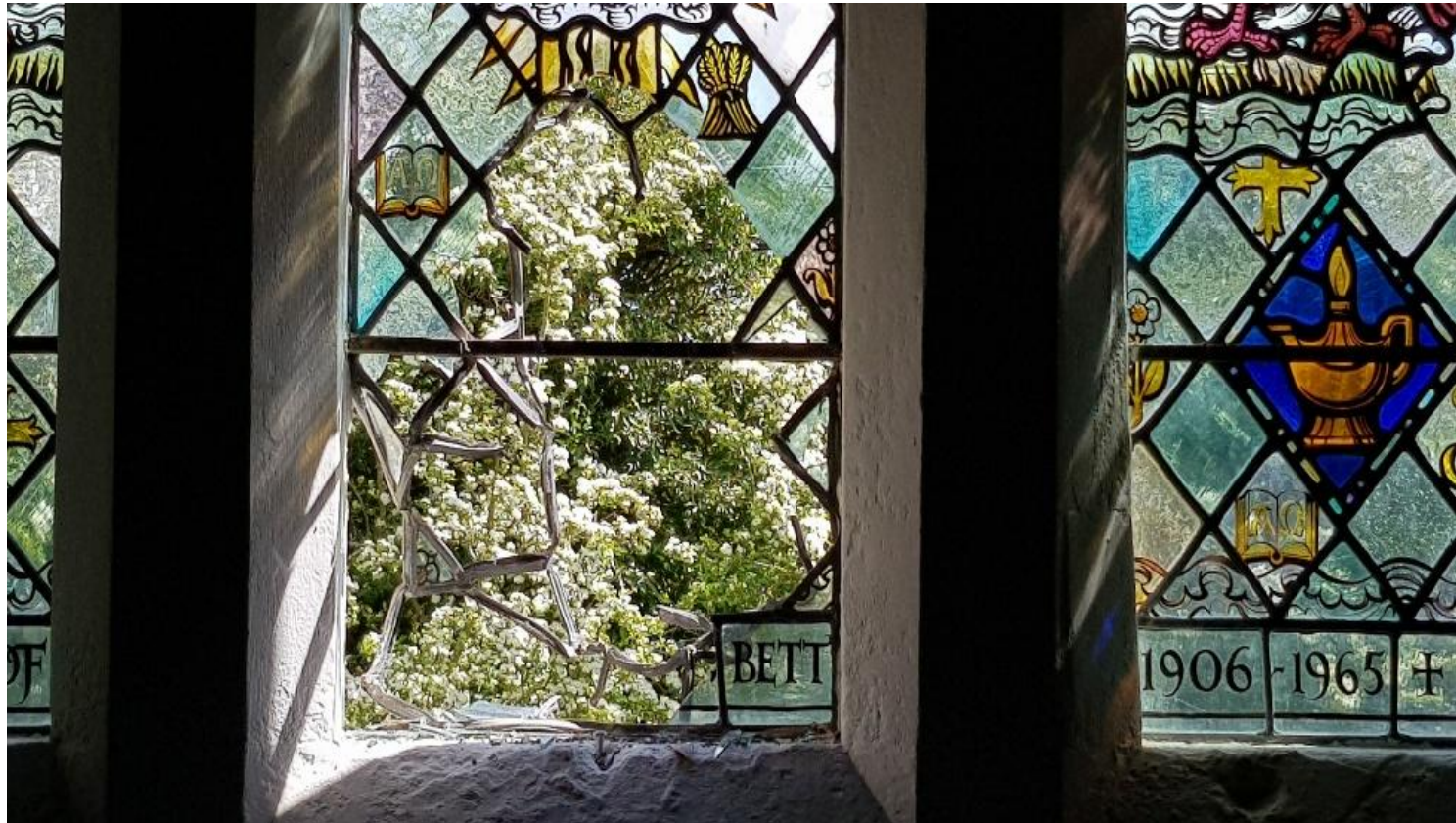
What is this building?

Why is it important?



What has taken place here ?

Who does this affect ?



What has taken place here ?

Who does this affect ?



Churches are often a victim to crime, collection money boxes, for example, are forced open or stolen for the donations they may contain, lead is pulled up off roofs, tiles and stonework taken, stained-glass windows smashed or removed, all show the skills of medieval craftsmen, and many are stolen or smashed beyond repair - destroying in a moment something that has been familiar to and appreciated by the local community.

- **What's an historic building or site?**
- **Why do you think these are protected?**
- **Can you find any of the special laws that protect our history?**

Historic buildings, churches, houses, castles, forts, earthworks, battlefields, wreck sites and other historic sites are often damaged or have things stolen from them.

Our heritage is often targeted with no regard to what they may represent to the communities in which they are located. Those who for instance are knowingly buying stolen scrap metal or stolen relics from heritage assets are creating a market, some of these buildings have been around for hundreds of years, surviving world wars and the elements of time and nature but are now being spoiled by us.

There are several reasons behind these crimes, can you guess what they may be ? , answers : greed, selfishness, sheer wanton vandalism, a misguided self-belief of saving our heritage and simply unknowingly committing offences.

What has happened here ?

Who does this affect ?



Often holes like this are a tell tale sign of illegal metal detecting, cut holes, the turf / grass folded back, what was found..... We'll never know !

Sadly when people are illegally metal detecting they are stealing our history, they don't tell anyone about what they have found, either keeping items for themselves or selling the items on.



This is Cissbury Ring on the South Downs near Worthing, it's a Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Scheduled Ancient Monument and is a 2,300 year-old hill fort.

It has been damaged by the illegal use of metal detectors. The damage is impossible to return to its previous condition .

This site is of national importance, we may never know what could have been found and taken.

Illicit Metal Detecting on land, generally farmland, archaeological sites and other areas of archaeological interest usually takes place in order to find coins and other artefacts for their historical and financial value.

Removal of any object from land without the landowner's permission could be viewed as theft. It is also an offence to damage a protected archaeological site, known as a scheduled Ancient Monument without a licence from Historic England as is failing to report objects that are potential treasure.

Illicit metal detecting can take place on farmland or land, it can cause damage to crops, seedlings and the environment, gates can be left open or damaged allowing livestock to escape.

The majority of the metal detecting community are great, helping to build a picture of the historic environment, they work within the laws and regulations. Sadly its them small minority that are stealing our history and understanding !

What has taken place here ?

Who does this affect ?



The picture shows damage caused by a 4x4 driving onto a Neolithic Causewayed enclosure, its over 3000 years old. What cannot immediately be seen is the potential irreparable damage to any artefacts and archaeology.

Thinking about where you live, are there any of these?

- **Scheduled monuments**
- **Registered Battlefields**
 - **Listed Buildings**
- **Wrecks or Parks and Gardens**

Whilst Sussex has over 600 Scheduled Monuments, at least 15,000 Listed Buildings, 2 Registered Battlefields, 75 Parks and Gardens and a number of Designated Wrecks, over 90% of the recorded heritage has not got the same level of protection.

We all need to look after our history and heritage.

Any questions?