

**A Sea Road Arts Publication**

**for**

**Sussex Heritage Community**

# **PROTECTING OPEN HERITAGE SITES**



## **HOW TO IMPLEMENT A CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY**

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Camber Castle, Scheduled Ancient Monument – built in three phases 1512-44 on the orders of Henry VIII  
English Heritage site on Rye Marshes, East Sussex

## *Welcome*

*Crime against open heritage sites is of great concern. These sites are vital to our national history, yet hard to guard and conserve. Many experience threats, not only to a site and its historical structures and objects, but also the tools and equipment used to maintain these incredible places.*

*Sadly, sites can be the targets of many crime types: theft, criminal damage, and burglary.*

*It is essential that we implement best practice security. You may be interested in helping – or already playing a vital part in preventing crime and to further support you I have published this guide.*

*Daryl Holter  
Sussex Heritage Community*

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**Cover photo:** Old St Helen's Church, Hastings – 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. One of the oldest buildings still standing in Hastings Old Town.

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

**This document offers advice and guidance on how to reduce crime at open heritage sites. It is invaluable to every person who has a responsibility for such places or wish to help in future. Its aim is to provide advice and guidance to help deter these crimes from happening.**

### What is an Open Site?

In dealing with any risk of crime, it is important to consider the value and current purpose of the site. It is here that we find major problems, in that the open sites are of such variable structures and purposes. The task of protection is enormous. Sites can be damaged by natural processes, such as weathering, subsidence, the effects of global warming or sea level rises.

However, our main concern in this guide is the deliberate acts of criminality: theft, criminal damage, vandalism, graffiti, illegal metal detecting and magnet fishing, crimes against existing and developing archaeological sites, unguarded churches, and other religious sites.

In general open sites are made by humans – for example, a hill fort or windmill, or by nature, for example, a bird reserve or chalk stream. Some sites do have legal guardians, such as The Environment Agency, Ministry of Defence, the National Trust, English Heritage, Natural England, The Woodland Trust, the Royal Society for Protection of Birds and the Coastguard and Maritime Agencies. Some sites have local charities and archaeological societies to care for them on a voluntary basis. Some sites will be privately owned on an estate, or on a farmer's land.

However, many sites are 'just there', open and exposed. Few open sites have dedicated wardens, paid or unpaid, and so the work of heritage protection is left to community volunteers. Sussex Heritage Community would like to encourage more local action to protect open sites – and this guide sets out what might be possible for formal, legal, or volunteer groups in protecting these sites. Could you be an activist? A heritage activist is someone who does something to help instead of passing by. Read this guide and see how you can help.



#### **Avebury**

The world's largest Stone Circle: constructed in rings during the period 3500 BCE to 2400 BCE

**National Trust**

## **Categorisation of Open Sites**

To make sense of the many types of open sites needing protection, this guide suggests some practical categories – starting points for plans to protect:

### **(1) Complex locations**

Open air museums, fishing museums with displayed boats, air traffic towers and airfields, airship bases, piers, railway museums, large historic sites. It is likely that some or all of these will have a formal guardian but still need volunteers to help monitoring protect

### **(2) Earth**

Barrows, mounds and long barrows, causewayed camps, hill forts, ring forts, ditches, hill figures, hill viewpoints, iron age places of worship, battlefields, sites where coins or precious artefacts have been discovered previously, burhs, graves, rail track beds and rail pathways.

### **(3) Metal**

Fire beacons, traction engines, farm railways, weathervanes, old fire insurance signs, blue plaques, post boxes, phone boxes and cattle grids.

### **(4) Stone**

Henges, pits, bell pits, iron mines, flint mines, open site Roman villa remains, military camps, amphitheatres, walls, unused church buildings, farmstead remains, open castle sites, follies caves, towers, stone bridges, stepping stones, clapper bridges, rare geological strata exposures, town stone defensive gateways, foundation stones, grave markers and tombstones, groynes and breakwaters, old lifeboats houses, mileposts, boundary markers, rail tunnels, fossil quarries, runways, pillboxes, gun emplacements, air-raid shelters, public sculptures and Martello towers.

### **(5) Travel**

Ancient trackways and paths, Roman roads, wooden bridges, lanes.

### **(6) Vegetation**

Ancient hedges, woodlands yews, oaks and other precious trees, rare plant locations physic gardens, hilltop tree stands, sacred groves.

### **(7) Wildlife and Domestic animals**

Wildlife reserves, nesting sites, deer herds, hares, pheasants and other game birds, swans, badgers, bats, sheep, cattle, llama, alpaca, dogs, horses.

### **(8) Water**

Lakes, marshes, fens, rivers, streams, canals, coast, ancient harbours, salt pans, fish traps, duck decoys, millponds, pumphouses, moats, wells.

### **(9) Wooden**

Windmills, barns, bridges, fences, and gates.



## Protection of Open Sites

This guide is addressed to you as an individual or local organisation with active caring members. The first line of defence is mindset. You go out on your walk, in town or country and see one or more of the open sites features listed above. You have an emotional or intellectual attachment to the item – you love hill forts, windmills, or quiet chalk streams, you enjoy climbing over stiles and walking through open fields with hedgerow or on disused railway tracks – whatever you feel – your emotion - that is the starting point for caring about open sites.

Can you become involved? Can you join an organisation that is already working hard to protect these sites? Can you start your own local organisation to guard these sites from damage? Can you just observe and report? This concept of observing and reporting is probably the most important. You know what is in your heart – you take a deep breath...

### You decide to get involved

There are several methods of involvement:

#### (1) National Involvement

You join a national organisation that already includes open sites. Your annual membership fees go towards general upkeep and administration. But you could then become an activist – reporting incidents to help the national organisation keep tabs on what is happening locally. They will rely heavily on public involvement because they cannot afford to post a site guardian at each site. A list of national organisations with open site caring responsibilities can be found in the Annex to this guide.

### Case Study – National Organisation Responsibility

#### Wayland's Smithy

This prehistoric long barrow grave open site (left) is about half an hour's walk from the famous Uffington White Horse (right) – another fully exposed open site. In fact the whole of this area is covered in ancient remains and is a prime national heritage site, completely unprotected from any illegal activity. It is down to individual people to care for this amazing landscape



This open site is owned by English Heritage – so what do they say about it?

Wayland's Smithy is an atmospheric historic site about a mile's walk along the Ridgeway from the Uffington White Horse. A Neolithic chambered long barrow, it was once believed to have been the home of Wayland, the Saxon god of metal working. Human remains found on the site indicate that 14 people were interred in an earlier burial structure between 3590 and 3550 BC. Between 3460 and 3400 BC a second far larger barrow was constructed on top. It is the ruins of this that can be explored by visitors to the site today.

**Access:** Wayland's Smithy is on an exposed hillside site.

**Parking:** There is a charged car park at White Horse Hill, free to English Heritage members.

**How to Find It:** Wayland's Smithy is just over a mile away from the car park.

**Please be aware:** English Heritage does not permit drone flying from or over sites in our care, except by contractors or partners undertaking flights for a specific purpose, who satisfy stringent CAA criteria, have the correct insurances and permissions, and are operating under controlled conditions.

**Dogs:** Dogs on leads are welcome.

You can see more here: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/waylands-smithy/>

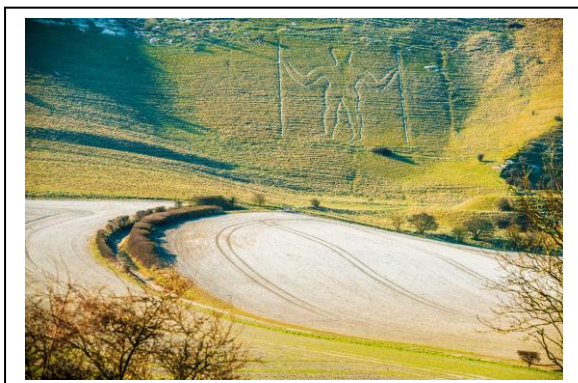
The point is – although English Heritage inspect the site using rangers, they can't be there all the time. You can apply to join English Heritage as a guide here:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/jobs/working-at-historic-places/>

However, if you, as a walker in an open site area do see anyone damaging Wayland's Smithy or The White Horse, you can use your mobile phone to call police and English Heritage to report the illegal activity.

So caring for open sites is all about action. You take action to help guard the site and keep our heritage safe. You become a heritage activist.

You can see from the next example, that it is not easy to ensure total security.



Long Man of Wilmington Hill Figure

## Case Study 2 – Local Group Responsibility

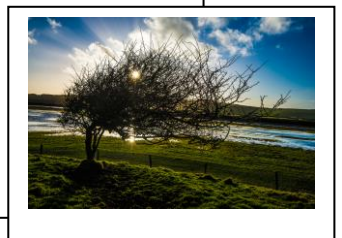
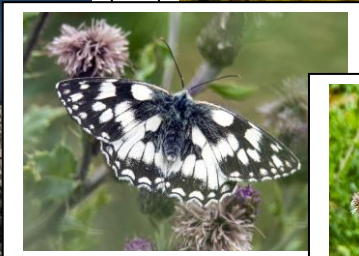
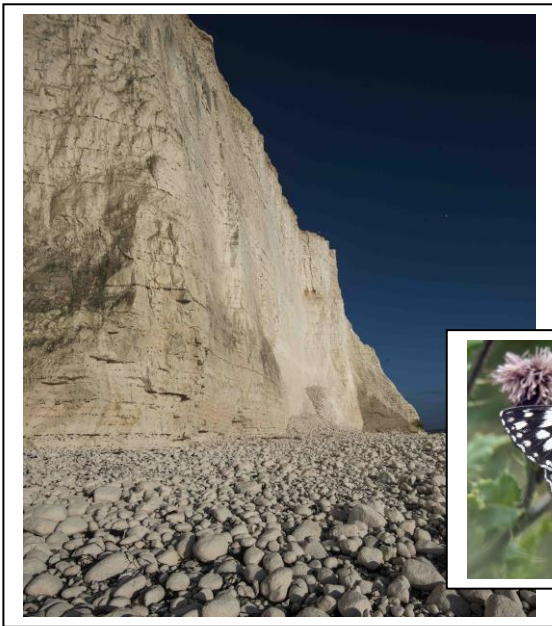
### World War II Pill Box and Tank traps at the Cuckmere Haven, East Sussex



In this example, we have a local group you could follow - The Defence of East Sussex website by expert Peter Hibbs, can be reached by clicking <http://www.pillbox.org.uk/>

As well as World War artefacts, the area is famous for its meandering river and stunning wildlife and chalk cliff scenery along the beaches.

If you like to walk in the beautiful Cuckmere Valley, you could help keep the area and its heritage artefacts safe by reporting to your local group and also to the police.



### Case Study 3 – Activist – You do it

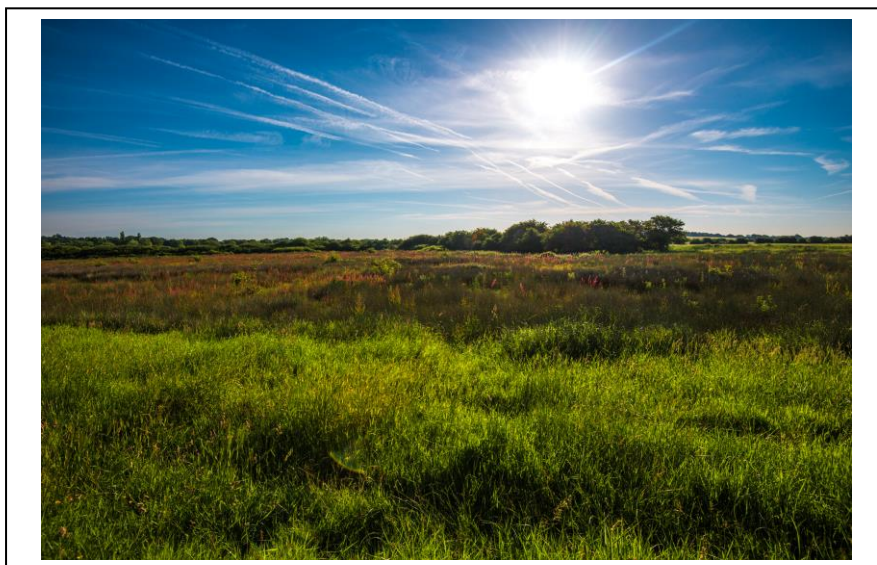
You see someone with metal detecting equipment digging a hole in an area you know full well is an open site subject to legal protection. Is that ancient Langobard Shield Boss ever going to be handed in to the proper authorities? What might you come across on the top of Firlle Beacon in East Sussex, or the Iron Age encampment above Beddingham Crossing at Glynde? Simply use your mobile phone to report the incident to 999 – it's a Crime!



The police will want to know some common-sense information:

Who you are, exact location, date and time of observation, nature of possible offence, who is involved, what did they look like, what were they wearing, what did you see them doing? Did they have a vehicle, could you get the registration number without hazarding your own security? Was no-one there but you can see that likely illegal activity has taken place? Were you able to photograph the damage to the open site – cut turf, one or more holes, and so on? Every detail helps the police and organisation site wardens to build a picture for future protection. Don't be shy – report it.

So now you can see the different levels of heritage protection involvement. (1) Helping a national or (2) local organisation, or (3) doing something yourself to make a difference. Yes, you have become an activist – but for a good reason – to save history for yourself, your family, and others in future generations.



The medieval Salt Pans at Pevensey Levels, in East Sussex, near the lost village of Northeye. The area has many remains of settlements. The area was sea but was drained from 1066 to 1200 CE and then used to gather salt for London until 1400 CE. The area has Great Raft Spiders and Lapwings too.

Now we move on to one more aspect that a heritage activist could do.

## CHAPTER 2 – LEARNING ABOUT HERITAGE

You could join a national or local archaeological society, or an industrial heritage society and become involved in learning the background to open sites. You will receive a magazine as part of your membership. You will be able to go to lectures, form friendships and feel as though you are involved at the leading edge of heritage preservation and discovery.

### List of learning opportunities about Sussex

#### Sussex Archaeological Society (SAS)

**This is the oldest of its type in UK, founded in 1846**

The Society gives online training sessions and when Covid-19 crisis ends they will be doing face-to-face lectures.

<https://sussexpast.co.uk/about-us>

It also offers practical learning for volunteers.

#### Aspire Sussex

Aspire Sussex provides community-based Adult Education that is vibrant, accessible, and sustainable, and responds to the needs of local communities.

<https://www.aspiresussex.org.uk/topic/history/>

#### British History online: Sussex

You can start self-development by reading the Victoria County Histories online – then pick a favoured topic for further research

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/vch--sussex>

#### Romans in Sussex

Study using this website: <http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/>

Or this one concerning castles:

<http://www.sussexcastles.com/sussex-timeline/0043-arrival-of-the-romans.html>

#### Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society

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

There are many more, but this list will get you started.

**Durotriges Project** – Prehistory and Roman studies at the University of Bournemouth

<https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/projects/durotriges-project>

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## CHAPTER 3 – GENERAL CRIME PREVENTION OVERVIEW

We now move on to consider some sensible actions and methods of protection for any organisation or individual who wishes to work towards heritage protection. You will use common sense to see which of these individual or combined aspects are useful.

### Where is Everybody?

An absence of visitors or overlooking properties would point to a need to enhance security, sadly when a site is not staffed overlooked or vacant it will likely attract unwelcome nefarious visitors. The more caring people who visit the site the more likely it is that criminals will be deterred.

There are strategic and tactical things that local communities can do. In order to prevent and deter such criminality or unwanted attention it is vital that security and prevention is at the forefront of your mind. It is inevitably necessary to involve local people in the work of preservation and guarding.

This guide is organised into sections, there is also advice on what to do in the event of break-ins and the most effective means of marking property to ensure it is more identifiable.

The most basic step, however, is to understand the type of crimes that can be committed and how they can be prevented.



Maiden Castle, Dorchester, Dorset, developed in phases – 600 BCE to 450 BCE

## CHAPTER 4 – CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY

**We need to develop an overall crime prevention strategy for open sites and their contents.**

### **Risk analysis – step one**

The first task should be to use this document to be aware of the risks the site may be subjected to.

### **Crime Prevention advice – step two**

The advice will address issues rather than specific action. Will the site be locked or secured? Will equipment be locked away or removed from site? The answers to these questions will form part of this advice, together with many other factors.

Once read, work through this document, and produce a number of recommendations.



Mary Stanford Lifeboat House – Rye Harbour Nature Reserve - 1882

Historic England List II citation: The Old Lifeboat Station, Rye Harbour is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* C19 lifeboat stations, like this one, are examples of early charitable and altruistic activity. \* Constructed in 1882 in pre-cast shingle based "no fines" concrete it is a rare surviving example of the pre-1885 pioneering period of C19 concrete construction and possibly the only pre-1885 concrete lifeboat house. \* The building was de-commissioned by the RNLI after the 1928 attempted rescue disaster, resulting in the death of all 17 crew of the Mary Stanford lifeboat, and the lifeboat house is the only building directly connected with this disaster, the biggest loss of life from a single lifeboat in the history of the RNLI. Its survival provides a link with the area's seafaring past.



## THE PROBLEMS FACING A SITE

The most important first step in managing the crime risk is to become fully acquainted with the problem as it relates to your site. This includes developing an appreciation of the following factors:

1. **Crime trends and threats.** Learning about similar offences and crime trends in the locality. Contact your local neighbourhood watch, Police Force, Rural Crime Team, CountryWatch or local community groups including those on social media.
2. **Prevalence and timing.** The fact that certain crimes are more prevalent at particular times of the year. For instance, criminal damage is more frequent during school holidays when children tend to have more time to themselves.
3. **The market value of items under threat.** The marketable nature of property, i.e. How much, in cash terms, the property may realise in open sale? It may not be appreciated that an item has any value whatsoever.
4. **Easy crime or hard crime?** The ease with which property may be stolen. For instance, diggers are more difficult to steal than portable generators.
5. **Device reality.** The vulnerability of security devices. Locks generally need to be substantial and even then, are only as effective as the doors and frames to which they are attached.
6. **Opportunity and temptation.** The types of activities undertaken by thieves. Most will be prepared to search all nooks and crannies. Many opportunists do this on the assumption that every locked door conceals something of value.
7. **Destructive potential.** The vulnerability of items to criminal damage and arson. The likelihood of children throwing stones at windows may depend on the availability of suitable 'ammunition'. Arson is more likely when combustible items are left lying about.

**Summary.** The most common recorded offences committed against open sites are theft, criminal damage, and anti-social behaviour.



Castle Toll, Newenden, East Sussex – attacked by Vikings in 892 CE

## THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE - THE PERIMETER

The perimeter of your site is an important item within the total security package you decide upon. Factors to be specifically considered are as follows:

1. **The criminal's first impression.** The first impression afforded by secure fencing and gates is vitally important. A well-cared for appearance is daunting to the opportunist thief, these factors contribute to crime prevention and encourage passers-by to be more vigilant. Ensure that access and egress to the site is kept secured and locked if necessary, criminals, especially opportunist will be operating both day and night.
2. **Psychological barriers.** Although it is not feasible to totally secure a perimeter, well laid out fencing and a clean, tidy site with good quality CCTV Signage, signage explaining no valuables left on site is essential. Consideration to permanent CCTV or standalone remote trail Cameras. Certainly, any person -up to no good- will feel more ill at ease.
3. **Vehicle access.** Is it possible to prevent vehicles getting close to the site? This helps to deter criminals planning to carry away heavy objects such as plant, fuel, or tools. If tools, equipment left on site, clear and lock them away at the end of day.
4. **Neighbourhood watchfulness.** Natural surveillance by passers-by and local residents serves to prevent crime and should be facilitated wherever possible. Contact local community, parish council, neighbourhood watch, local neighbours to site, county archaeologist, local archaeological society, and museum, essentially, they are your eyes and ears, if you are going to be on site for some time maybe consider involving local communities. Encourage people to contact the police immediately if they see any suspicious activity.



Flower's Barrow , Worbarrow Bay, Dorset 500 BCE – damaged by coastal erosion



## **Shoreham Fort, Scheduled Ancient Monument 1854**

### **The site itself, specialist site considerations.**

- At the beginning of each day look for tell-tale signs of unauthorised activities, discarded alcohol or drinks containers, food wrappings and general rubbish.
- When closing at end of day take care to put away all items of value, ideally out of sight.
- Keep a watchful eye on those visiting the site and those who are asking lots of questions.
- Write down registrations of suspicious vehicles parked close by.
- Consider your site with regards graffiti on boarding, signage or containers, deal with it as soon as you can, graffiti attracts graffiti.
- If possible empty on-site bins, post boxes every day, secure wheelie bins to a solid object, and lock the lid.
- Secure any benches where possible, remove any other temporary seating
- Where there are secluded points try and monitor these for signs of unauthorised use
- Where possible remove any objects that could be used as a missile or projectile

- Where possible do not leave any combustibles on site
- Where possible cover windows to outbuildings or offices, don't leave any valuables on site or in view and place a sign stating all money removed and no valuables left on site.
- Remove items for sale, i.e. plants, artwork, garden furniture or otherwise to a secure building overnight

## **OTHER SECURITY ASPECTS**

The foregoing advice of this document has emphasised the level of crime risk and how this may be managed by implementing, predominately, physical security precautions. This section will deal with other measures that may be taken to enhance security.

### **Property marking**

Property marking is an internationally accepted means of rendering your property identifiable both to yourself and the police. In the United Kingdom, this is effected by using the postcode of the premises to which the property belongs, together with the name or part of the name.

The purpose of marking property in this manner is to ensure that it can be identified and returned to you after being stolen.

The marking of property also has a strong deterrent effect, and it is always advisable to ensure the property bears signs of having been marked.

Property marking is a quick, do it yourself task, costing you very little. The following methods may be used:

### **Ultraviolet marker pens**

This uses a cheap ultraviolet, fibre tip pen, obtainable from most large stationers. The mark is invisible to the naked eye until viewed under an ultraviolet lamp.

Sunlight has the effect of causing such marks to fade after a period of about eighteen months. It is therefore advisable to re-mark property so exposed after this period. The advantage of this type of marking is that the criminal is unable to see it and therefore will not take steps to remove it. It also does not affect any resale value and for this reason is suitable for electrical goods and other items you may wish to sell.

The main disadvantage is that it is not visible which limits the deterrent effect. The thief knows he will have no problems in selling it on to innocent purchasers.

### **Permanent ink marking**

Where appropriate, the use of permanent ink markers is highly effective. Ordinary marker pens which have a solvent based ink and are advertised as 'Permanent' are ideal for use in marking items where a fairly large visible mark is unimportant, and particularly on items that are porous.

### **Forensic marking**

This is a fairly new concept which has shown **excellent results** in crime reduction. It is particularly suitable for marking heavy items such as tools and generators. Many different types of product are available for a range of items including specialist grease and dyes.

## **Branding**

Branding of wooden or plastic items is a possibility and is very effective. Soldering irons are remarkably effective on plastics and some woods but you are advised to practice first on similar materials.

## **Photographs / Videos**

In addition to marking property you are advised to retain a permanent photographic record of it. This will enable photographs as well as descriptions to be circulated in trade and police publications and also assist in later identification.

Photographing property may be undertaken by a keen amateur or by specialists in this service. Items should be photographed against a neutral background with a ruler alongside to indicate actual size. Each exposure should contain only one item and a backup of the SD card containing the entry should also be retained for safety. Wherever possible, hallmarks and other identification mark should be photographed.



Martello Tower 73, Eastbourne, East Sussex 1805 – List II

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## **CHAPTER 5 – WAYS TO HELP**

### **The following organisations take national responsibility for heritage conservation**

National Trust: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/>

English Heritage: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Environment Agency: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/>

County Archaeologist – you will need to do an online search for your own county.

### **Here are some local organisations in Sussex**

Heritage Eastbourne: <https://www.visiteastbourne.com/heritage>

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

Chichester & District Archaeological Society: <http://www.cdas.info/>

Horsham Archaeological Society: <https://horshamarchaeologygroup.webs.com/>

Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group: <http://www.haarg.org.uk/>

### **List of Archaeological Sites in England:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological\\_sites\\_in\\_England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological_sites_in_England)

## Photographic Credits

Daryl Holter – pages 3,12,16,19, 20

David E P Dennis BA(Hons) FCIPD LCGI RAF – pages 7,9,10,11,12 (lower), 17

**Durotriges Project** – Prehistory and Roman studies at the University of Bournemouth

<https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/projects/durotriges-project> pages 15,18,24

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Hambleton Hill, Blandford Forum, Dorset – a prehistoric hill fort dated to 2850 BCE