



Military camp of 1793

A partially excavated field kitchen

From the end of the 18th century, there is a lot of evidence for Ashdown Forest being used for military training. In July 1793, a force of 7,000 militia under the command of the Duke of Richmond established a camp at Ashdown Forest. They left behind lines of field kitchens, showing today as circular mounds.

In the later 19th century, the open areas of the Forest were used again for training and firing ranges were built. The Forest was especially used during the First World War, with troops practising digging and using trench systems before going off on active service.

Ashdown Forest was again used for training in the Second World War. Crowborough Camp and West Camp housed many of the soldiers, new firing ranges were built, previous ranges were re-used and numerous slit trenches were dug. A broadcasting transmitter was established near King's Standing, and was run by the Political Warfare Executive in conjunction with the BBC. Later in the War, two airstrips were constructed near Wych Cross by engineers rehearsing for the forthcoming campaign in north-west Europe. Military use of the Forest continues today with the army training area at Pippingford Park.

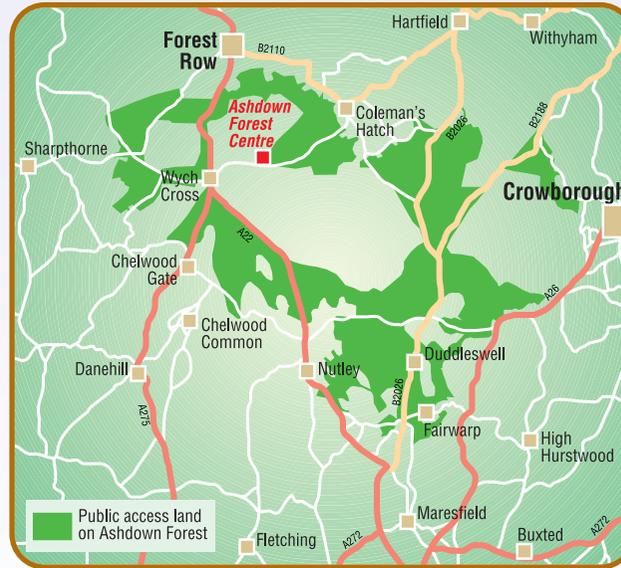
Looking out from King's Standing



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Ashdown Forest is a former medieval hunting forest: the largest of four spread between Horsham and Tunbridge Wells in an area known as the Weald Forest Ridge. This is the highest ridge of the High Weald, itself recognised as one of England's Finest Landscapes and designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

At 2,500 hectares (10 square miles), Ashdown Forest is the largest open access space in the South East. Nearly two thirds of it is heathland, one of the rarest habitats in Britain.



Use your smartphone to scan the code for more information.



You can also find out more about the archaeology and history of Ashdown Forest by visiting [www.ashdownforest.org](http://www.ashdownforest.org) and the Ashdown Forest Centre at Wych Cross.



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## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ASHDOWN FOREST



### EXPLORING ASHDOWN FOREST ON FOOT

Exploring the development of Ashdown Forest's landscape and the archaeological heritage that is visible today.

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# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ASHDOWN FOREST

Ashdown Forest is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its landscape has been changed and managed by man since Mesolithic hunter gatherers first used the area over 8,000 years ago.

A recent archaeological survey of the Forest, in conjunction with the use of a new method of aerial survey called LiDAR, has revealed over 700 previously unrecorded archaeological sites. LiDAR or 'light detection and ranging' can penetrate through the tree canopies and undergrowth to identify potential archaeological features, which are then confirmed by site visits.

In the Bronze Age, about 4,000 years ago, circular burial mounds called barrows, were built on some of the ridge tops. A number of enclosures dating to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods show that the landscape was both open and being farmed at this time.

The London to Lewes Roman road crosses the Forest and numerous sites show the exploitation of the iron-rich seams of the area for Iron production.



Little is then known about the history of the Forest until after the Norman invasion in 1066.

The term 'forest' does not mean a landscape covered with trees, but derives from the name for a royal hunting park with special powers to protect the deer within it. The historic Forest was enclosed by the 13th century by a 'Pale'; a bank with a ditch on its inside, and a wooden fence built on top of the bank to prevent the deer escaping. Access through the Pale was by "gates" or "hatches" and some of these survive today in place names such as Chelwood Gate and Chuck Hatch.

In the 17th century, a number of large iron production sites sprang up around the margins of the Forest. The large ponds

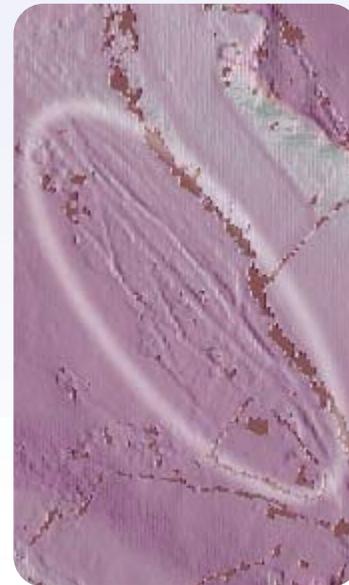
used to provide water to drive the bellows in the furnaces are still a major feature of the Wealden landscape today.

Other industries include the quarrying of stone and sand for building and making roads, and many of these quarries can be seen across the Forest. Another industry was the farming of rabbits for food. The rabbit warrens often took the form of long mounds of earth called 'pillow mounds', frequently enclosed within an area bounded with banks.

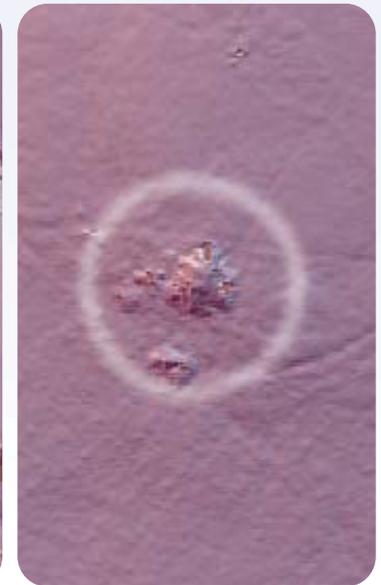
Other evidence of past activity are the numerous banks that cross the Forest and the many old trackways or "hollow ways" that can be found.



A LiDAR image showing 3 pillow mounds



Hollow ways



A barrow

Boundary bank



Roman Road



Part of the Pale near Chelwood Gate



A grazed pillow mound



A well trodden hollow way

