



Sussex Archaeological Society

The Piltdown Centenary Conference: Truth and Lies from the Deep Sussex Past

Saturday 22 September 2012



Image reproduced courtesy of the Natural History Museum



In association with the Lithic Studies Society

Conference Information

In 1912 the discovery of a new and remarkable fossil human from Sussex was announced at the Geological Society, London. Now, a century on from this announcement and almost sixty years after it was revealed as an audacious hoax, the Piltdown Man affair continues to intrigue and fascinate. Indeed it is arguable that in the fields of archaeology, human origins and natural science, Piltdown remains the most internationally recognisable Sussex place-name.

Set against a backdrop of the intrigue and excitement of early 20th century science and archaeology and of competing individuals and nations during the years leading up to and through the First World War, the hoax is a gripping story of human fallibility and manipulation. It remains a cautionary tale in the natural sciences on the importance of rigorous method and against uncritical acceptance.

To mark the centenary, the Sussex Archaeological Society has assembled speakers actively engaged in researching the people and materials associated with the fraud. Leading experts on the history of the site and the personalities involved in the hoax will speak alongside specialists in the fraudulent tools, human remains and fossils found at the site. For the first time the intriguing relationship of the Society itself to the prime suspect, Charles Dawson, will be explored and the case against new suspects presented.

The conference will also provide a chance to consider and celebrate the true nature of the early stone age record in Sussex from the internationally important site of Boxgrove to the unexplored potential of Sussex river valleys and rock shelters. It is through continued research of these sites that we can ensure Sussex continues to play a part in the study of human origins. The speakers' new evidence, combined with the scope for lively discussion and debate, promises a day of new evidence and intrigue around the greatest mystery story in the history of science.

Booking information

The ticket price includes morning and afternoon tea/coffee, and a conference delegate booklet. Lunch is *not* included but the Town Hall is situated on Lewes High Street with ample cafes and restaurants nearby, or you may bring a packed lunch if you wish. There will be a bookstall to visit during the breaks.

Venue: Assembly Room, Lewes Town Hall (Fisher St entrance), Lewes BN7 2QS.
Getting there: there is no parking on site. County Hall car park (behind St Anne's church) is £1 for the day and only 10 minutes from the venue. Lewes station is a short uphill walk away, and buses stop in the High Street very close to the venue.
Non-members are welcome.

Further details, including directions, will be sent with confirmation of your booking. All conference enquiries should be directed to: Lorna Gartside, Sussex Archaeological Society, Bull House, 92 High Street, LEWES BN7 1XH, tel: 01273 405737, email: members@sussexpast.co.uk

Conference Booking Form

The fee for the conference is £30 per person (£20 for students) and your ticket includes a delegate booklet and morning and afternoon refreshments. Lunch is not included but may be bought locally.

Book online through the Sussex Past website
www.sussexpast.co.uk (quote 'Pitdown'), by phone
(01273 405737) or complete the form below.

Name..... (SAS member no:.....)

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode:.....

Tel: (daytime).....

Email:.....

Please send me ticket(s) @ £30

There is a discounted rate of £20 for students on award-bearing courses. To qualify, you must name the course you are studying & the College here:

.....

Please send me ticket(s) @ £20

Cheque enclosed for £..... payable to "Sussex Past".

Confirmation will be sent by email where possible.

If you prefer confirmation by post, please include an s.a.e. with your booking form.

Send your completed form & payment with S.A.E. if applicable to:

Lorna Gartside, Bull House, 92 High Street, LEWES BN7 1XH

tel: 01273 405737 (Tuesday - Friday 10am - 3pm)

email: members@sussexpast.co.uk

Conference Programme

Saturday 22 September 2012

- 9.30am *Registration*
- 10.00am **Welcome and Introduction: The Sussex Archaeological Society, Charles Dawson and Pitdown Man**
John Farrant (morning session Chair)
- 10.40am **The Hoax in Historical Context**
Beccy Scott (AHOB3 Researcher/British Museum) and Andy Shaw (Research Fellow, CAHO Southampton)
- 11.15am *tea/coffee*
- 11.40am **New Investigations of the Pitdown Man 'Fossil'**
Natural History Museum (speaker to be confirmed)
- 12.15pm **The animal fossils of Pitdown**
Andy Currant, Curator, Palaeontology Dept, Natural History Museum
- 12.50pm *lunch*
- Afternoon sessions chaired by Matt Pope
- 1.50pm **The Lying Stones of Sussex: what the artefacts tell us about the Pitdown fraud**
John McNabb, Southampton University
- 2.25pm **A Brief History of Crime: the curious career, finds and 'discoveries' of Charles Dawson FSA**
Miles Russell, Senior Lecturer in Prehistoric & Roman Archaeology, Bournemouth University
- 3.00pm *tea/coffee*
- 3.25pm **The Case Against Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Priest, Palaeontologist and Philosopher**
Francis Thackeray, Director, Institute of Human Evolution, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- 4.00pm **Past, Interrupted. Stone Age Archaeology in 21st Century Sussex**
Matt Pope, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Archaeology
- 4.35pm *Questions and end*