



CISSBURY RING

In all, Sussex has 27 prehistoric structures termed as Iron Age hillforts. Actually the term is something of a misnomer, as not all are now thought to have been defensive, and some span more than the Iron Age.

Cissbury, (north of Worthing and easily reached by turning off the A24 at Findon up a dead-end lane to the car park) is the undisputed king of all Sussex hillforts, and makes ideal post-Christmas lunch strolling territory. Dating from around 350BC, the massive ramparts take some 20 minutes to walk round. Last time I was up here I could see right along the coast, from the Beachy Head promontory to Culver Cliff on the east side of the Isle of Wight. A hummocky area within the ramparts marks the largest of ten known Neolithic flint mines in England – predating the hillfort by some 3000 years, where miners hacked their way with antler picks through a series of shafts (all now filled in). On the surface you may well spot worked flints – identifiable by the small flat ‘platform’ where the flint was struck, and beneath it on the smooth face of the flint a bulbous lump or ‘bulb of percussion’ and a series of ripples that appeared like shock waves when the flint was struck. You can’t dig them up or take them away from this Scheduled Monument, but heritage-oblivious rabbits have thoughtfully churned up dozens for us to peruse. *Tim Locke*

More details of this and other Slow pleasures in Tim Locke’s Slow Sussex (£14.99 from Skylark, Lewes Tourist Information Centre and Barbican House). Visit facebook.com/slowsussex