

# Butser School Trip Activities

With the wide range of activities on offer at Butser we have compiled some suggested groupings of activities based on your focussed area of study. For full day visits **please choose 4 activities** from the suggestions below, more information can be found on subsequent pages.

Because of the sheer breadth of history and prehistory which we cover, we recommend that school groups focus on a single period or periods such as; 'Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age', 'Iron Age and Roman', 'Saxon and Viking' or any single period.



## Stone Age

Archaeological excavation  
**Wattling**  
 Chalk Carving +  
**Cordage+**  
 Pottery +\*  
**Clunch\***  
 Stone Age Tour  
**Artefact Handling**



## Bronze Age

Jewellery+  
 Archaeological excavation  
 Wattling  
 Chalk Carving+  
 Cordage+  
**Pottery+\***  
 Clunch\*  
**Artefact handling**  
 Archaeology -  
 reconstructing the past



## Iron Age

Archaeological excavation  
**Jewellery+**  
 Wattling  
**Chalk Carving+**  
 Spinning+  
**Pottery+\***  
 Clunch\*  
**Artefact handling**  
 Archaeology -  
 reconstructing the past

## Roman

Mosaics  
**Jewellery+**  
 Flint wall building  
**Villa Tour**  
 Archaeological excavation  
**Spinning+**  
 Roman Maths  
**Pottery+\***  
 Clunch\*  
**Artefact handling**  
 Archaeology -  
 reconstructing the past  
 Board Games - 'Bear'



## Saxon

Archaeological excavation  
**Spinning+**  
 Wattling  
**Sewing Runes+**  
 Chalk carving+  
**Pottery+\***  
 Clunch\*  
**Saxon Tour**  
**Artefact handling**  
**Archaeology -**  
**reconstructing the past**  
 Jewellery  
**Quills and Ink+**



## Viking

Archaeological excavation  
**Wattling**  
 Chalk Carving+  
**Spinning+**  
 Sewing Runes+  
**Pottery+\***  
 Clunch\*  
**Artefact handling**  
 Archaeology -  
 reconstructing the past  
**Jewellery**



\*pottery and clunch are only available from the Summer Term to October.

+ these activities give participants something to take home at the end of the day.



**Activity:** Jewellery

**Suitability:** Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Viking

**The task:** Jewellery has been an important part of identity, status and style for thousands of years. Using metal wire and pliers you'll be shown how to make a range of jewellery types such as rings and bracelets before each making your own piece of jewellery to take home.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn how to work safely with the materials provided including the safe manipulation of metal wire and pliers. Not only will you learn how jewellery was made, but also about what jewellery meant, why it was worn, and the symbolism of different jewellery styles. This is a great creative activity where each participant will get to design and create their own beautiful piece of jewellery to take home.

**Activity:** Pottery

**Suitability:** All time periods. Only from Summer Term to October.

**The task:** Pottery has been a revolutionary part of human development, vital for storage, transport, cooking, figurines and more. Just like our ancestors you'll get hands-on, preparing and using materials straight from the ground to design, create and decorate an item of pottery, relevant to the period you are studying, to take home using natural resources. Please bring labelled boxes for each group to take your creations home in.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn about where clay comes from and the properties of the soil and local geology. You'll also find out about the importance of pottery in human development and the wide range of things it was used for. This is a great creative activity with each participant designing and making their own piece of pottery to take home. Pottery also develops great manual dexterity, learning how to prepare and manipulate the material to make it do what you want it to do and ensuring the design and functionality of the piece work together.

**Activity:** Chalk Carving

**Suitability:** Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Saxon and Viking

**The task:** As a relatively soft rock, chalk has been used for millennia to make carvings of decoration and veneration. Using a flint tool each participant will carve a relief picture onto your own piece of chalk, you'll also colour parts of the chalk using natural materials such as leaves to make an even more striking design to take home with you. Please bring labelled boxes for each group to take your creations home in.

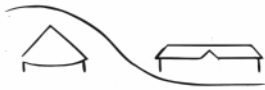
**What you'll learn:** We'll cover ancient beliefs, art, symbolism and meaning tailored to the period that you are focussing on and how these were expressed through the medium of rock carvings. You'll look at the local geology and learn safe use of materials to explore creativity using natural materials.

**Activity:** Cordage

**Suitability:** All periods

**The task:** Cordage is an ancient technique of rope and string making, this technique forms the basis of ropes used to bind thatch to a roof, a roof to its walls, or even sails to a Viking long boat. By preparing and twisting together natural raffia fibres each participant will make their own strong piece of cord. They can then add a beautiful wooden bead to create a bracelet, bookmark or key ring to take home.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn how to turn natural materials into something essential and strong and the valuable properties of natural materials that may normally be taken for granted or dismissed. You'll develop manual dexterity as you learn the techniques of cordage and will be able to apply techniques learnt to make fibres from a range of materials from grasses to nettles.



### Activity: Flint Wall building

Suitability: Roman

**The task:** Flint walls were used extensively by the Romans in their constructions of buildings in this area - we estimate that over 350 tonnes of Flint went into making our reconstructed Roman Villa! You'll be shown examples of the flint and lime mortar walls in our Villa area, before building your own wall using dry flints. Finally you'll test the strength of your wall by each walking across it!

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn about the local geology and environment of the South Downs and how ancient people utilised the unique properties of the materials available to them. Working in a group you'll develop important team-working skills, understanding the safe use of materials and ancient construction techniques. Building a flint wall is like a giant 3D jigsaw puzzle and the process will develop problem solving skills, spatial understanding and awareness.

### Activity: Spinning

Suitability: Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Viking

**The task:** Spinning is an ancient textile skill in which plant or animal fibres are drawn out and twisted together to form a yarn. It was an essential skill for making warm clothing and textiles. Using wool from our Manx Loaghtan Sheep you'll create a small piece of yarn that could be transformed into a bracelet, bookmark or similar.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn to transform wool from our sheep into workable textile fibres, the first step in making clothes or fabrics. Using a drop spindle - a straight stick on which the yarn is wound after twisting - is a great exercise in hand eye coordination. Participants will work with wool from our very own sheep here at Butser - a rare breed called Manx Loaghtan. You'll learn about early textiles and clothing and the basics of a textile technique that is still used today throughout the world.

### Activity: Mosaics

Suitability: Roman

**The task:** The Romans made intricate mosaics to cover the floors of their villas and many public buildings. You'll view our recent mosaic reconstruction in our villa (which used over 120,000 tesserae!) and then have the chance to create your own mini versions using small tiles inspired by Roman designs.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn about the artistry and techniques used by the Romans in creating their mosaic floors and the types of designs and patterns they most prized. Working together you'll use your creativity and maths skills to design your own pattern and lay it out in mosaic tiles using symmetry and pattern.

### Activity: Site Tour (Please specify time period required e.g. Iron Age)

Suitability: All time periods

**The task:** Choose to visit houses of a particular period - Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman or Saxon, to gain a greater understanding of what daily life was like in the past. A tour can also offer a contrasting view of two periods such as Stone Age vs. Iron Age, Iron Age vs. Roman and Roman vs. Saxon.

**What you'll learn:** The houses at Butser provide a wonderful opportunity to step back in time. Explore what daily life would have been like using all your senses... from the smell of woodsmoke, feel of a mosaic floor underfoot or sound of a crackling fire. We can show many aspects of home life from high status decoration and artwork to ancient toilets!





### Activity: Sewing Runes

Suitability: Saxon and Viking

**The task:** Runes were a form of writing used by Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. Runic letters were created using straight lines that could be easily carved or created on a range of surfaces. You'll use a needle and wool to sew a rune, such as your initial, on to card to take home.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn about the runic alphabet, how it differs to our Latin alphabet and how it was used by the Anglo Saxons and Vikings. Sewing was an essential skill in the past, but one that few people are confident in today. You'll have the chance to learn or practise this ancient skill and translate letters from our Latin alphabet to a Runic alphabet.

### Activity: Roman Maths

Suitability: Roman

**The task:** Roman numerals are very different to the numbers we use today and might be completely unfamiliar to students. Despite this, numerals still turn up in modern life in lots of unexpected ways! You'll learn the basics of Roman numerals and take part in a maths lesson as if you were a Roman student!

**What you'll learn:** Exploring Roman maths helps to cement mathematical abilities and prompts further thought and enquiry through the gentle challenge of thinking mathematically... the Roman way! It's also a chance to think about the different ways people learnt and were schooled in the past and what life would have been like for a Roman schoolchild.

### Activity: Wattling

Suitability: All time periods

**The task:** Work together as a team to create a section of wattle fence. Wattling is an ancient building technique used in the construction of fences and walls. It is the basis for most of the buildings here at Butser Ancient Farm. As a technology, wattling spans all periods, from the Stone Age to the Vikings and even up to present day.

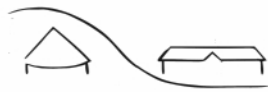
**What you'll learn:** You'll learn to weave a section of fencing, using the same techniques and materials utilised for millennia. Using hazel rods up to 4m long, all participants will learn how to hold and manipulate wood safely, as well as the properties of different woods and the ways in which ancient people worked sustainably with their environment. This activity develops important team-working and communication skills as you work together to create a strong section of fencing. By the end you'll have mastered one of the building blocks of ancient engineering and construction techniques and can take a photo with your completed fence!

### Activity: Clunching

Suitability: All time periods. Only available from Summer Term to October

**The task:** Help us to construct a section of wall for a new building using the ancient technique of clunching. You'll learn to make clunch, an ancient name for a local building material, from scratch by mixing natural ingredients - crushing chalk and mixing it with mud, straw and water. You'll then add this to a wall of a new building on the farm, your work becoming an integral part of the farms very structure!

**What you'll learn:** Through getting hands on with local materials you'll get a sensory experience of the local geology and environment. You'll learn about the properties of the landscape and ground beneath our feet, and how mud, rocks, straw and water can create an incredibly strong and durable building material, used for thousands of years. As well as getting to grips with an important ancient building technique, you'll learn how to safely work with a range of materials and work as a team to create a section of wall.



### Activity: Saxon Quill and Ink

Suitability: Saxon

**The task:** With the conversion of the Anglo Saxon peoples to Christianity came the use of the Latin alphabet instead of the futhork runes used before. Monks started to record works in illuminated texts using quill and ink and the earliest known history of England was recorded by a priest of the time using these very same processes.

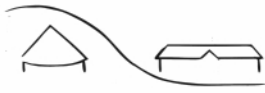
**What you'll learn:** You'll learn how to work safely with the materials provided including how to make a quill or reed pen. Not only will you learn how pens were made in period but also how to shape them for purpose, how to make your own ink and how to write combining the two elements. Every child will leave the farm with their own pen and scroll to take home.

### Activity: Roman Board Games – Bear

Suitability: Roman

**The task:** In Roman life board games were not just a pastime but an important early lesson in the tactics and strategy which were integral to life as a Roman citizen in both the military and senate. They would be easy to learn but take a lifetime to master.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn the history of the games Roman's used and how adaptive they can be to the rigours of life. Your children will learn the importance of strategy and tactics using a two-player game called Bear where the onus of the game is using your pieces as a team to achieve success. The game itself has very few rules and is very easy to pick up and play but has enough depth to provide a challenge at all levels of abilities.



If you are choosing one of the below archaeological activities, please only select **one** of these options. Thank you.

**Activity:** Archaeological excavation

**Suitability:** All time periods

**The task:** Using our demonstration archaeological pits you'll get hands-on and experience what field archaeologists do. Excavate for finds, discuss your discoveries and find out why they are important to us in the present day and what they can reveal about the past.

**What you'll learn:** You'll learn basic excavation methods used by archaeologists and then have the chance to become an archaeologist yourself, digging in our pits and uncovering some of the fascinating objects hidden beneath our feet. These discovery sessions provide an excellent springboard for using powers of deduction and reasoning to place finds in an archaeological context, thinking about what does and doesn't survive from the past.

**Activity:** Artefact handling

**Suitability:** All time periods

**The task:** An opportunity to handle artefacts from a particular time period - Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon or Viking - and discuss as a group how those items were made and used and why they were important to people.

**What you'll learn:** Through the handling of a range of artefacts, chosen to represent the diversity of materials, techniques and manufacturing skills of each time period, you'll learn about many different aspects of ancient life. This is a great group discussion activity encouraging group deduction, communication and listening skills.

**Activity:** Archaeology - Reconstructing the past

**Suitability:** Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Viking

**The task:** In this alternative to our 'Archaeological excavation' activity you'll be presented with a real excavation plan alongside a range of archaeological artefacts and coordinates. Work as a team to explore the 'post-excavation' elements of an archaeologist's role and how individual artefacts can be pieced together to build up a picture of life in the past.

**What you'll learn:** Learn how archaeologists move from digging things up from the ground to understanding how life might have been in the past. A bit like a giant jigsaw puzzle - with no image to copy! - you'll need to use logic and communication skills to build up a picture using the evidence presented.