

ANCIENT IFIELD



The name Ifield (Ifelt, Yfeld) dates from the very early Saxon period when the word field simply meant a clearing or settlement so Ifield means the clearing or settlement in the yew trees. The use of field in a place name tells us that it is a settlement which probably already existed when the Saxons arrived in the mid C5, as later Saxon language used 'ley' to convey the same meaning, e.g. Crawley.

The earliest evidence of humanoid habitation within the parish comes in the form of four Lower Palaeolithic hand axes and one flint flake found during a development in the Old Horsham Road some years ago. These finds date to roughly 180,000 years ago (some 140,000 years before Homo Sapiens are first seen in Europe) and would have belonged to either Homo Heidelbergensis, who were known to have roamed Sussex (also known as Boxgrove Man) or Homo Neanderthalensis (Neanderthal Man). Also found at this site were multiple Mesolithic (6,000 - 12,000 years old) flint tools, including a tranchet axe and a Neolithic (4,300 - 6,000 years old) stone axe.