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'Wimbledon Common 1810'
A watercolour view of an 'encampment'
now known as Caesar's Camp

Early Inhabitants

Hunter-gatherers lived in the area from around 450,000 years ago. Our oldest object in the collections is a handaxe dating to the Ice Age. Further remains excavated at Chester House date to 10,000-6,000 years ago, and prehistoric stone and bronze tools have also been found on Wimbledon Common.

More recent remains date from 10th-9th centuries BC. These are from a Late Bronze Age site, known as Caesar's Camp. The site has nothing to do with the Roman General Julius Caesar – it predates him by centuries. Romans may have lived here however: large amounts of pottery and tile were excavated nearby in 2010, and interpreted as belonging to a possible villa.

The first written records of a place called Wimbledon are from the Middle Ages, in the mid-10th century. Medieval records describe crops, sheep and two watermills – one for grinding corn and one for cleaning the sheep's wool. Tenants who worked the land had homes here too.