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# HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS: DECIPHERING THE COUNTRYSIDE

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## Contents

List of illustrations  
List of colour plates  
List of tables  
Terms and abbreviations  
Forward

## PART 1: REGIONAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### INTRODUCTION

Our rich and varied landscape  
Past- and future oriented analysis of the historic landscape and 'Historic  
Landscape Characterisation'  
The scope of this Handbook  
A note on townscapes

### REGIONAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND THE TRAJECTORIES OF CHANGE

### APPROACHES TO STUDYING REGIONAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### THE COMPOSITION OF A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE: ELEMENTS, COMPONENTS, TYPES, ZONES AND AREAS

Deconstructing a historic landscape  
Historic Landscape Components  
Historic landscape types, zones and areas  
Approaching the task: top-down or bottom up  
The colour, texture, language and experience of landscape  
Relict and historic landscapes

+++++

CASE-STUDY: Holne Moor, Dartmoor

++ ++++

Putting people in the landscape: the concept of 'natural beauty' and the role of  
the natural environment in shaping historic landscape character

++++

CASE-STUDY: HADLEIGH, ESSEX

++++++#

SUMMARY SO FAR

## **PART 2: APPROACHES AND METHODS**

THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE IN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN BRITAIN

England: 'Historic Landscape Characterisation'

Scotland: 'Historic Landuse Assessment'

Wales

The Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales

The Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study

Further historic landscape characterisation in Wales

++++++

CASE-STUDY: THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST'S HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION OF THE MIDDLE WYE VALLEY

++++++

Attributing value to historic landscape character

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS AND UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESSES OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE

The integration of sources

The scale of research

Base maps in historic a

Patterns of landholding and historic landscape analysis

Establishing a chronology and the role of schematic modeling

++++++

CASE-STUDY: THE EARLY STAGES OF MARSHLAND COLONISATION: PUXTON AND THE CALDICOT LEVEL

++++++

SUMMARY SO FAR

## **PART THREE: APPLICATIONS AND USES**

CORNWALL – THE PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED

The methodology

Subsequent refinements and research applications

LANCASHIRE – A GIS-BASED APPROACH

The methodology

Discussion and examples of analysis

++++++

CASE-STUDY: LANCASHIRE HLC TYPE: ANCIENT AND POST-MEDIEVAL INDUSTRY

++++++

SOMERSET – BEYOND HLC TOWARDS THE ORIGINS OF VILLAGES

The physical landscape

Settlement

Field systems

Farming regions

Discussion: population, economy and lordship

MEARE, SOMERSET: LINKING MAPS AND DOCUMENTS

The historic landscape types

Understanding the processes of landscape formation

The historic landscape character areas

## **PART 4: TOWARDS A MODEL OF GOOD PRACTICE**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INDEX

## List of Illustrations

- Figure 1: Whitson, on the Caldicot Level, South East Wales.
- Figure 2: Places referred to in the text.
- Figure 3: The Somerset Levels: strongly contrasting historic landscapes in close proximity.
- Figure 4: Exeter, Devon: contrasting urban townscapes with distinctive characters to which historic landscape analysis could be applied.
- Figure 5: The major areas of nucleated settlement in Britain, and the three 'settlement provinces'.
- Figure 6: Rackham's basic sub-divisions of the British historic landscape.
- Figure 7: Bradwell, Buckinghamshire: a classic 'Midland-style' parish of the Central Province/Champion landscape.
- Figure 8: The changing distribution of the medieval textile industry.
- Figure 9: The Stroud Valley, in the Cotswolds, Gloucestershire.
- Figure 10: Painting by Henry Bright c.1845 of the ruined South East Tower of Hadleigh Castle in Essex.
- Figure 11: Wheal Betsy, Mary Tavy on the western fringes of Dartmoor, Devon.
- Figure 12: Longham, Norfolk: interpretation of fieldwalking evidence.
- Figure 13.1: Holne Moor and Stoke Farms, Dartmoor, Devon: the relict and historic landscapes.
- Figure 13.2: The 'North Lobe' of the Holne Moor relict landscape, overlying an element of the Middle Bronze Age reave system.
- Figure 13.3: Fields north of West Stoke, looking west from Aish Tor, across the Dart Valley.
- Figure 13.4: Funnel-shaped driveway leading from Holne Lee Moor to the Stoke Farms.
- Figure 14: The deserted Teignhead Farm on Dartmoor.
- Figure 15.1: Hadleigh, Essex: relief and soils.
- Figure 15.2: Hadleigh, Essex: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch map surveyed in 1867.
- Figure 15.3: Hadleigh, Essex: Tithe Map of 1847, extract from Chapman and Andre's county map of 1777, and those parts of Hadleigh depicted on earlier estates maps.
- Figure 15.4: Hadleigh, Essex: selected landscape components: settlement, roads and commons, woodland, reclaimed marshland.
- Figure 15.5: Hadleigh, Essex: enclosed field systems (based on the processes that led to their formation).
- Figure 15.6: Hadleigh, Essex: historic landscape character types.
- Figure 15.7: Hadleigh, Essex: historic landscape character areas.
- Figure 16: Areas of Wales included in the *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales*, and the Middle Wye Valley.
- Figure 17: Caldicot Level in 1831 and c.1880.
- Figure 18 Greater Exmoor, South West England: the configuration of parishes and distribution of 'Type VIII' landscape.
- Figure 19: Heal in Parracombe parish, Exmoor: field-names and patterns of landownership.
- Figure 20: The Caldicot Level, South East Wales: aerial view looking northwest from above the Severn Estuary.
- Figure 21: Caldicot Level: historic landscape components and types
- Figure 22: Schematic models for the reclamation of coastal marshland around the Severn Estuary, in South West Britain.
- Figure 23: Revised model for the evolution of the historic landscape on the Caldicot Level.

Figure 24: Puxton and Rolstone, Somerset: testing the origins of landscape character through fieldwalking.  
Figure 25: Puxton, on the North Somerset Levels.  
Figure 26: Cornwall: sub-divisions of anciently enclosed land  
Figure 27.1: Somerset: extent of former common field identified in the English Heritage sponsored HLC.  
Figure 27.2: Somerset: places mentioned in the text.  
Figure 27.3: Somerset: simplified map of major soil types.  
Figure 27.4: Somerset: major physical regions in terms of how human communities exploited the landscape during the historic period.  
Figure 27.5: Somerset: 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement patterns.  
Figure 27.6: Somerset open fields: extent of Parliamentary Enclosure and evidence for ridge and furrow.  
Figure 27.7: Somerset field systems: extent of detailed research, and areas where open fields are known to have been absent.  
Figure 27.8: Somerset field systems: documentary evidence and the presence of open fields.  
Figure 27.9: Somerset: Domesday population.  
Figure 27.10: Somerset: Domesday ploughteams.  
Figure 31.11: Somerset: 13<sup>th</sup> century farming regions.  
Figure 27.12: Somerset: 16<sup>th</sup> century farming regions.  
Figure 27.13: Somerset landholding in 1066: royal and Godwin family estates.  
Figure 27.14: Somerset landholding in 1066: ecclesiastical estates.  
Figure 28.1: Meare, Somerset: the landscape in 1806 and major landscape elements.  
Figure 28.2: Meare, Somerset: historic landscape types and areas.  
Figure 28.3: Meare, Somerset, in c.1350 and c.1500

## **COLOUR PLATES**

Colour Plate A: Cornwall – derivation of zones from types  
Colour Plate B: Historic landscape types in Hampshire.  
Colour Plate C1: Orkney Historic Landuse Assessment.  
Colour Plate C2: Grimeston, Orkney.  
Colour Plate D1: Lancashire – general or entry level HLC types  
Colour Plate D2: Lancashire – phases of development  
Colour Plate D3: Lancashire – origins of enclosures

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Characteristics of Rackham's (1986) 'ancient' and 'planned' countryside

Table 2: Schematic examples of historic landscape elements, parcels, components, types and areas.

Table 3: Cornwall: textual description for each landscape zone.

Table 4: Historic landscape character types in Meare

Table 5: Historic landscape character areas in Meare

## **Terms and abbreviations**

CCW: Countryside Council for Wales

EH: English Heritage

EN: English Nature

ERO: Essex Records Office

GIS: Geographical Information System

HLA: Historic Landuse Assessment

HLC: Historic Landscape Characterisation

HRO: Huntingdon Records Office

HS: Historic Scotland

ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites

NGR: National Grid Reference

OS: Ordnance Survey

RCAHMS: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of  
Scotland

SMR: Sites and Monuments Record

VCH: Victoria County History

## Foreword

The historic landscape – the settlement patterns, field systems, woodland, industry and communication systems etc that make up our present countryside – is a remarkable record of past human achievement. Selected features of the historic landscape have been used by researchers for at least fifty years but it was only in the 1990s that its potential as a whole started to be realised. Around the same time heritage agencies adopted the concept as a means of emphasising to planners and countryside managers the time-depth present in our countryside and the need to take this into account when making decisions and future policy. The use of this ‘Historic Landscape Characterisation’ is increasingly well known, but when I was approached by the CBA to write this Handbook I was determined to move beyond this work in the planning system towards a broader consideration of how the physical fabric of the historic landscape can help local communities, students, and academics to understand the origins and development of their countryside: what I have termed here historic landscape analysis.

I would like to thank all those who have discussed their work and made the results available, notably Oscar Aldred and Chris Webster (Somerset County Council), Jo Clark and John Darlington (Lancashire County Council), Piers Dixon (Historic Scotland), Graham Fairclough (English Heritage), Chris Gerrard (University of Durham), Peter Herring (Cornwall County Council), David Hopkins (Hampshire County Council), Roger Kain and Richard Oliver (University of Exeter), Richard Kelly (Countryside Council for Wales), George Lambrick (Council for British Archaeology), Lesley Macinnes (Historic Scotland), Bob Silvester (Clywd-Powys Archaeological Trust), and Sam Turner (Devon County Council). I also like to thank Mike Rouillard for making sense of some of the drawings. I am extremely grateful to Jo Clark, Peter Herring, George Lambrick, and Sam Turner for commenting on an earlier draft of this Handbook, though all views expressed here are the responsibility of the author.

Finally I must thank Rick Turner (Cadw) and the Countryside Council for Wales for establishing the Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study: little did I know where a conversation inside a reconstructed Iron Age roundhouse on a cold, wet autumn morning would lead me!



[INSERT FIGURE 1: Whitson]

[INSERT FIGURE 2: general location map of places referred to in the text]

## **PART ONE**

### **UNDERSTANDING REGIONAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

*'England is an old country:...more deeply conditioned by its past than perhaps any of us realise. ... England is also a varied country, one of the most varied in the world in relation to its size: and this fact, too has everywhere left its imprint on our past. ... Antiquity and diversity: these, then, are two of the hallmarks of the English landscape and English society' (Everitt 1985, 1-2)*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **Our rich and varied countryside**

The character of our countryside – the locally distinctive patterns of fields, roads, settlements, woodland, moorland, industry etc – is one of the richest parts of our heritage. As early as the 1950s scholars such as Hoskins recognised that it provides a remarkable record of past human achievement, though it was only from the 1990s that the term 'historic landscape' was widely used to reflect the time-depth present within our modern countryside. Another key feature is its diversity and complexity, as reflected by Everitt's (1985, 2) comparison of the landscape in Kent, Leicestershire, and Westmorland:

'The map of Leicestershire appears like a series of spiders' webs: the roads radiate neatly from the villages in a relatively open network, often more or less straight for considerable stretches, eventually converging on the nine or ten main roads of the county, which themselves converge in regular lines on Leicester itself – the fattest spider in the centre of the largest web. The fields are often large and straight-sided; the villages are large and nucleated. Despite seventeenth- and eighteenth-century enclosures, many farmhouses still stand in village streets, and it is rare to find any in the fields which date from much before the eighteenth century. In the rural areas of Kent – let alone Westmorland – there is no such regularity. The road-map is more like a maze, a tangle of endlessly twisting lanes sunk between wooded banks often too narrow for two vehicles to pass. ... There is no obvious urban centre, like Leicester, but a series of smaller towns, like Canterbury, Maidstone, and Ashford. The fields are small and irregular, broken up with woods and copses, and peppered with isolated farms'.

This Handbook is concerned with how we can systematically describe such local and regional variations in landscape character, and understand when and how these patterns emerged (eg Figures 1 and 3).

[INSERT FIGURE 3: air photograph of Kingston Seymour and Mark Moor – two photos on same page]

##### **Past- and future oriented analysis of the historic landscape and 'Historic Landscape Characterisation'**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeologists, historians, and historical geographers have been studying the origins and development of the British countryside, with approaches varying from the detailed examination of a specific location (often a parish or estate), to broad national or county-based studies of specific individual

facets of the landscape (notably settlement patterns, field systems and farming regimes). Although some use was made of evidence contained within the present countryside, this was usually in a highly selective way: the 'historic landscape' – the physical fabric of the countryside either as it survives today, or was first mapped in a comprehensive fashion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – was rarely itself the focus for systematic study over large areas.

The term 'historic landscape analysis' is used here to embrace a series of approaches that all focus on how the present countryside came into being, through integrating a wide range of source material in order to understand the processes of landscape change. The multi-disciplinary study of individual landscapes is not new, but what distinguishes many of these studies from the approach advocated here is five things: source and interdisciplinarity, inclusivity, focus, scale, and understanding process from form.

- Source and interdisciplinarity: the core source of information in historic landscape analysis is the physical fabric of the historic landscape itself. This provides the ideal spatial and temporal framework for the careful integration of a wide range of other evidence, notably archaeological material, documentary and cartographic sources, and place- and field-names. Vernacular architecture also has enormous potential though this is yet to be realised (though see the Shapwick Project: Aston and Gerrard 1999; SVBRG 1996). *Interdisciplinarity* is where these different stands of evidence are worked on simultaneously, and seamlessly woven together to give one landscape history (in contrast to so many *multidisciplinary* studies where the archaeological, historical etc evidence are discussed in separate chapters).
- Inclusivity: historic landscape analysis is applied evenly and systematically to every part of a pre-determined study area of whatever size (parish, county, Ordnance Survey grid square etc): the analysis must embrace modern as well as ancient, semi-natural as well as man-made, typical as well as unusual/unique.
- Focus: while embracing all facets of a pre-determined block of countryside, the focus of this approach is on the origins and development of the modern countryside: it starts with the present and works back (a 'retrogressive' approach) until the period when fundamental features of the historic landscape came into being is reached. This is not the same as 'total landscape archaeology/history' where all the archaeology/history of the study area is described 'because its there', even though it makes no contribution to the character of the *present* countryside.
- Scale: although mapping historic landscape character can be useful for an individual parish, its full potential for understanding why the character of the countryside varies over time and space can also be realised when applied uniformly and systematically at a regional, county or even potentially national scale.
- Understanding process from form: because of the large areas that are subject to analysis, every individual settlement, field system etc cannot be studied in depth: the landscape has to be broken down into a series of *generic* types based on their morphology/character, for which research elsewhere may by analogy suggest its origins and development.

The research outlined above can be regarded as 'past-oriented' (Bloemers 2002): the focus is on understanding the processes of landscape change, and how the present countryside came into being. The 1990s also saw the initiation of a series of closely related 'future-oriented' projects that, while still falling under the 'umbrella' of historic landscape analysis, have a particular focus on planning and management in the countryside. This work recognises that the whole landscape is historic (including most 'semi-natural' environments), that the historic landscape is

all around us and plays a vital part in shaping our wider cultural environment, and that it is ever changing both physically and in terms of our perception of it. A series of different initiatives to assess historic landscape character are underway in England, Scotland, and Wales (described in more detail in Part 2). English Heritage is working with local authorities to produce a series of county-wide 'Historic Landscape Characterisation Projects' (HLCs), while Historic Scotland/The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland are carrying out a similar exercise called 'Historic Landuse Assessment' north of the border. It is important to stress that 'Historic Landscape Characterisation' as it is being practiced in the England Heritage sponsored projects is not the same as the more holistic concept of historic landscape analysis that is the subject of this Handbook.

In terms of heritage management and conservation this work in England and Scotland represents a move away from designating selected 'sites', though in Wales a different approach has been developed with Cadw and the Countryside Council for Wales having identified certain historic landscapes as being of particular importance and including them in the *The Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales*. These individual landscapes are now the subject of another form of characterisation (also described in Part 2). These projects are all primarily concerned with informing planners and countryside managers of what, in cultural/historic terms, are the key character defining features of particular landscapes across whole regions/counties. While seeking to provide an understanding of how present landscape character came into being such exercises are primarily 'future oriented' (Bloemers 2002), though a carefully constructed database constructed for this purpose should still have great value for 'past-oriented' research (eg Somerset: see Part 3).

### **The scope of this Handbook**

The English Heritage, Historic Scotland/RCAHMS and Cadw/CCW Projects introduced above all have their own methodologies and this Handbook is not intended as an alternative; rather it is aimed at a far wider audience and is designed to show how the broad approaches of historic landscape analysis can be used alongside landscape archaeology and history. Once we learn how to 'read the landscape', anyone from professional academics to local archaeological/historical societies can start to unravel the history of the countryside. This Handbook is intended as a guide to some of the many ways that the historic landscape can be analysed, though it is important to stress that it is *not* a manual describing a single methodology: there is not, nor should be, just one 'technique' of historic landscape analysis, for just as the historic landscape itself is so rich and varied, so are the reasons for studying it, and the approaches that can be used.

The rest of Part 1 begins by introducing some of the major regional variations within the British countryside, and shows how historic landscape analysis has emerged from a long tradition of research across a number of disciplines. The composition of the historic landscape is then introduced in terms of a series of physical and conceptual components/themes that together combine to give a range of generic historic landscape types, and which in turn combine in different ways to produce unique character areas. Other facets of the countryside, such as its language, use of building materials and its relationship to abandoned 'relict' remains of earlier landscapes, are then introduced before a consideration of the concept of 'natural beauty' and the contribution of people to landscape character. Finally, a case-study, of the parish of Hadleigh, in Essex, is used to illustrate these basic principles, and show how the character of the historic landscape is the product of interaction between the natural environment and human communities giving rise to a series of different process and trajectories of change.

Part 2 of this Handbook considers of the main approaches towards historic landscape analysis currently in use, both as a means to enlighten planners/countryside managers and as a research tool. The contrasting 'future-

oriented' approaches of heritage organisations in England, Scotland and Wales are illustrated, before an examination of some of the broader ways through which analysis of the historic landscape can be used as part of 'past-oriented' research into landscape history.

Part 3 examines some of the applications and use of historic landscape analysis. Examples of English Heritage sponsored HLCs in Cornwall and Lancashire are used to show some of the different methodologies, and what they have told us about the evolution of those landscapes, while the Somerset HLC is used as a springboard for a more in-depth case-study of just one of potentially many research themes that can arise from HLC. The fourth case-study presents an example of a detailed parish-based study, of the medieval manor of Meare in the Somerset Levels, illustrating the integration of documentary material with the historic landscape in order to reconstruct the progress of landscape change over time.

Finally, in Part 4 certain key points of good practice are identified.

Key features of this Handbook are the case-studies and illustrations. Whilst clearly relating to specific locations, they are intended to make *general* points regarding sources, methodologies and interpretations. Several of the examples reflect the work of teams in Cornwall, Hampshire and Lancashire County Councils, Historic Scotland/The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, and the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (Wales), which are both models of good practice and easily available through a variety of publication media. The remaining case-studies are the work of the author. While the majority present new explorations of the origins and development of particular landscapes, several also develop new interpretations of earlier work, reminding us that analysis of the historic landscape is a means of stimulating further research, not simply an end in itself: no historic landscape analysis should be left on a shelf to gather dust as interpretations are liable to be updated in the light of further research.

#### **A note on townscapes**

As it is currently practiced, historic landscape analysis has been mostly applied to rural areas and these will be the focus of this Handbook. The historic character of our urban areas is, however, just as varied and complex as the countryside and similarly reflects the different trajectories and agencies of change (eg Figure 4). As with the rural countryside, historical geographers have a long history of exploring the evolution of 'urban landscapes' through the careful analysis of plan and street layouts and standing buildings (eg Lilley 2002, 138-77), and there is ample scope for integrating archaeological evidence with the often abundant historical and cartographic sources (eg Aston and Leech 1977; Leech 1975; 1981; Phillpotts 1999). The principles of historic landscape analysis are also now being applied to the townscapes in a number of areas, including Cornwall, Lancashire and Merseyside, in order to establish the historic character of what survives today. Any future edition of this Handbook would hope to report on this work.

[INSERT FIGURE 4: Exeter: Southernhay and Newtown – two photos on same page]

[INSERT FIGURE 5: the three provinces]

## **REGIONAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND THE TRAJECTORIES OF CHANGE**

What is often so highly valued about our landscape – what gives communities their sense of place and identity – is its local character and distinctiveness, and before describing how we can unravel the story behind these regional differences, it might be useful to outline some of the most fundamental divisions in landscape character within the British landscape. Travelling around our island, one cannot avoid being

struck by its diversity. An obvious contrast is between a zone running from eastern and central/lowland Scotland, through North East England, the Midlands and down to the south coast, which along with parts of southern Wales has a settlement pattern broadly characterised by nucleated villages (Figure 5). This central zone can be contrasted with South East England, the South West peninsula, the west and north west of England, most of Wales and the Highlands of Scotland, that have a landscape characterised by more sprawling patterns of settlement. This is a very broad generalisation, but if one goes back in time, these differences were even greater, and the cultural processes that led to their creation become clearer. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century, topographical writers such as Leland were well aware of the distinction between the 'champion' landscape of open fields and nucleated villages in Midland England, and the 'bosky' or 'woodland' landscape of hedged fields and scattered settlement to the south east and west. In 1685, for example, the writer Aubrey (1685, 104-7) drew a clear distinction between the 'vast champion fields' of Malmesbury and Chippenham in the 'northern vales' of Wiltshire, and the sheep pastures of the 'southern Downes' (Salisbury Plain), while in 1795 Billingsley (1798) contrasted the 'meadow, pasture and arable intermix in high cultivation' of South East Somerset (its 'champion lands'), with the 'rich grazing and dairy lands' in the west and north of the county. Historic landscape analysis is not just a means of *describing* such local and regional variation in the character of the countryside but also helps to *understand* how it came into being.

Rackham (1986), in his seminal work *History of the Countryside*, has produced one of the most accessible examples of how some of these fundamental historical differences in the British landscape have shaped the countryside of today (Figure 6; Table 1). He divided lowland England between 'ancient countryside' (in the South East and West), which equates with the 'woodland' landscapes noted by early topographical writers, and 'planned countryside' (in the Midland zone), resulting from the enclosure of open fields in the 'champion' region. This simple tripartite division of the English landscape has long been recognised (eg Gonner 1912), and most recently has been mapped by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000a; 2002) as their 'South Eastern', 'Northern and Western' and 'Central' Provinces respectively (Figure 5). These different landscapes were the product of different trajectories and timescales of change and episodes of cataclysm, continuity and colonisation (Roberts and Wrathmell 2002, 12-14). Rackham's scheme provides an excellent starting point from which to understand the link between historical process and present landscape character as he is careful to distinguish between *modern characteristics* of the two areas and *historic differences*: the two are not necessarily the same (Table 1).

[INSERT TABLE 1: Highly generalised key character defining features of Rackham's (1986) 'ancient' and 'planned' countryside]

[INSERT FIGURE 6: Rackham's zones]

The origins of landscapes characterised by nucleated villages and open fields have been much debated, and it is now clear that they replaced landscapes associated with more dispersed settlement patterns (Brown and Foard 1998; Foard 1978; Hall 1981; Lewis *et al.* 1997; Roberts and Wrathmell 2002; Rowley 1981; Williamson 2003). In the Midlands and central southern England this reorganisation of the landscape, variously called the 'great replanning' and the 'village moment', appears to have occurred around the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries, while in northern England and parts of southern Wales 'villagization' may have been a post-Conquest phenomena. There is little agreement as to why it occurred, with socio-economic explanations, such as estates owners and communities restructuring their landed resources in order to increase productivity at a time of rising population, growing

economic activity and increasing royal exactions, contrasting with environmentally deterministic factors such as the ability to increase arable production on certain types of soil. Although the essential *medieval* character defining features of this 'central province' were created over a relatively short space of time, it is possible that these distinctive village landscapes were created in what was already an area that possessed a different character to adjacent areas, as Roberts and Wrathmell (2000b, 27-38) have noted that this it corresponds very closely to the area of England that Domesday Book and pre-Conquest place-names indicate was the most extensively cleared of woodland even before it was subject to the creation of villages. The extent to which individual earlier features affected the form taken by the landscapes of villages and open fields is unclear, though if our present village locations represent an element of the dispersed settlement pattern that was otherwise swept away, then part of the Midland landscape owes its origins to the early medieval period or even earlier. In places there are similarly hints that earlier field boundaries may have been re-used/incorporated into the open field systems (eg Gerrard and Aston forthcoming, trench 2700/N; Oosthuizen 2003; Taylor and Fowler 1978; Upex 2002).

[INSERT FIGURE 7: Bradwell before and after Enclosure]

The open fields, which were presumably created at the same time as the villages, were themselves swept away through a long process of enclosure, initially by agreement in the late medieval/early post-medieval periods, and later by Act of Parliament in the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Figures 6-7; see Johnson 1996, 44-69 and Williamson 2002a for recent discussions of this phenomenon). In these Midland parishes, therefore, the landscape of today is largely the product of two episodes of replanning: 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century villagization and later Enclosure, perhaps with some elements of the pre-9<sup>th</sup> century settlement pattern preserved by the location (though not the character) of the villages. In contrast, large parts of Britain were not subject to the processes that led to creation of nucleated villages and open fields, and here the medieval landscape was broadly characterised by more dispersed settlement patterns and with a mixture of enclosed and open/sub-divided fields. The historic landscapes in these areas are, as a result, even more of a palimpsest. In localised parts of East Anglia and the South East, for example, later prehistoric, Romano-British and early medieval planned, coaxial field systems appear to be preserved within the present historic landscape (eg Higham 1992, fig. 5.15; Rippon 1991; Warner 1996; Williamson 1987; 2002b; 2003), while in the far west of Cornwall the present pattern of fields and settlements could date back to the Iron Age (Herring 1993; 1998, 26-7). This remote corner of Cornwall appears to have escaped a restructuring the South West's landscape associated with the emergence of regionally-distinctive system of agriculture known as convertible husbandry, which developed during the later 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD – suggesting that the Midlands were not the only region to see landscape reorganisation at around this time (see Cornwall case-study in Part 3).

In contrast to these landscapes whose essential characteristics date back at least a thousand years (or in some cases two thousand or more), in Scotland the recent Historic Landuse Assessment has shown that vast areas were extensively remodelled in the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural improvements (see Part 2). In England and Wales too many upland areas saw major changes in the post medieval period. Discussion of Parliamentary Enclosure so far has focused on the extinction of lowland open fields, though in upland areas landscapes were also transformed at this time as commons and wastes were divided into large, neatly walled fields often with characteristic field barns. In counties such as Cumbria nearly a quarter of the county was enclosed by Act of Parliament of which a tiny amount was arable open field, and when these upland enclosures are mapped the areas of ancient enclosure

form small 'islands' of settlement within a 'sea' of what would have been open land (eg Whyte 2000, fig. 1; and see Lancashire case-study in Part 3). This is a marked reversal of the situation in lowland areas where the commons and droveways, with their wide strips of roadside waste, that survived to into the post-medieval period were just small 'islands' within a large 'sea' of agricultural land (eg see Hadleigh case-study below: Figure 15). In all these cases, the regularly arranged post-medieval enclosures are often easily identifiable, and their delimitation at an early stage of a historic landscape analysis allows attention to then focus on those older landscapes of greater complexity (eg Exmoor: Figure 18).

## **APPROACHES TO STUDYING REGIONAL VARIATION IN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

The various approaches to historic landscape analysis have developed from a long history of studying regional variation in the character of the British landscape. Perhaps the first systematic overview came about in c.1800 with the Board of Agriculture Reports on the state of farming in each English county (eg Tuke 1800: *General View of the Agriculture of the North Riding of Yorkshire*), which were brought together in a series of summary volumes that identified distinct regions based on physical topography, soils, climate, and farming practice (Marshall 1808; 1818a-d). The partially surviving Tithe Files of c.1840 give a more detailed picture of mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century agriculture in many regions including the proportions of common land, woodland, pasture and arable, and the crops that were grown (Kain 1986).

Despite the clear recognition of regional diversity by early topographical writers (see above) and these Board of Agriculture reports, variation in the historic character of the landscape is hardly evident in the seminal writings on medieval society by late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century historians such as Seebohm (1883), Vinogradoff (1892; 1905; 1908) and Maitland (1911; 1921). Based on their work one could be forgiven for assuming that most of the English population lived in villages, and cultivated various types of open field, and it was only in Gray's (1915) *English Field Systems* that the extent of variation in the medieval landscape started to be appreciated. He recognised a series of regional field systems and cropping practices – the Midlands, Celtic, Kentish, East Anglian, and Lower Thames basin 'systems' – and made it clear that the regularly-arranged Midland-style open field landscapes covered less than half of England and Wales. Gray attributed the origins of open fields, and nucleated villages, to the Early Anglo-Saxon migrations, with the remaining landscapes being seen as later creations through later woodland clearance. This attributing of cultural change to immigration is seen throughout early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeology including Fox's (1932) seminal work *The Personality of Britain*, though he also emphasised the role of a fundamental division of the physical landscape: the two-fold upland/lowland divide. Building upon Mackinder's (1907) earlier work, this simple division was identified as lying roughly along a line between the estuaries of the rivers Tees and Exe, dividing the older and harder Palaeozoic rocks to the north/west, and younger, softer rocks to the south/east.

The 1950s –60s saw two major projects on historical material that allowed the more detailed mapping of aspects of landscape character, notably population and agriculture. Firstly, Darby and his collaborators completed a series of county studies in the *Domesday Geography of England* series (Darby 1977). The regions he identified were largely determined by physical geography, but clear variations in agricultural systems were also discernable. Secondly, in preparing material for the *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Thirsk (1967b) and Emery (1967) used probate inventories to identify a series of 'farming regions' in 16<sup>th</sup> century England. Whilst in very broad terms a south/east – north/west division is evident between

zones with predominantly mixed and pastoral farming respectively, it is the extent of very localised diversity that is most striking. These 16<sup>th</sup> century farming regions were seen as largely resulting from changes in the agrarian economy during the late medieval period, though Campbell (2000) has since used 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century records to identify significant regional variation in land use by c.1300.

The 1950s-60s also saw the emergence of medieval archaeology as a serious discipline, with the study of deserted settlements, notably villages and moated sites, forming a major part (Aberg 1978; Beresford 1954; Beresford and Hurst 1971). Another aspect of the medieval landscape that was seeing renewed attention from the 1950s was its field systems, though despite Gray's demonstration that not all of England and Wales had Midland-style open fields, a number of regional studies outside the Midlands (eg Northumberland: Butlin 1964; Yorkshire: Harris 1959; Kent: Baker 1965), and Baker and Butlin's (1973) major overview *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, research into medieval field-systems remained focused on the origins and development of landscapes characterised by sub-divided/open fields (eg Dodgshon 1980; Rowley 1981; Thirsk 1964).

The 1970s marked a 'high tide' of interest in mapping spatial and temporal variations in different aspects of the British landscape: the classic age of historical geography (Darby 1973; Dodgshon and Butlin 1978). The analysis of data contained within medieval taxations, such as those of 1334, 1377 and 1524-5, for example, led to the mapping of regional variations in population densities and wealth, which in many areas fluctuated significantly over time (eg Baker 1973; Donkin 1973; Emery 1973). The distribution of towns, markets and rural industries also showed marked regional variations that must have had a profound effect on the wider landscape character (Finch 2002). One example is the cloth industry that in the 13<sup>th</sup> century was spread across much of England, but which during the late medieval period consolidated into a restricted number of regions such as Devon, the Cotswolds and East Anglia (Figures 8-9). This reminds us of three things: firstly that some rural landscapes contained a significant industrial component, such as iron production in the Black Country (Everitt 1979, 13); secondly that industry generally was a more significant contributor, albeit at a low level, to landscape character in *many* more areas than many imagine: Devon and Kent would not be regarded by many as being industrial counties yet in the 1860s, industrial workers accounted for 27% and 22% of the population respectively (Everitt 1985, 6); and thirdly that while many archaeologists have focused upon understanding the early origins of the medieval landscape, even outside the areas of Parliamentary Enclosure the character of today's historic landscape was often profoundly shaped by changes in the late and post-medieval period. In Cornwall and Devon, for example, the highly dispersed settlement patterns that so characterise large parts of the countryside have been shown to result from the late medieval shrinkage of what were formerly more nucleated settlements (Beresford 1964; Fox 1989), while specialist fishing villages that so characterise the coastal areas are similarly only late medieval/post medieval in origin (Fox 2001).

[INSERT FIGURE 8: textiles c.1300 and c.1500]

[INSERT FIGURE 9: Stroud Valley]

Though Crawford (1953, 51) said 'the surface of England is a palimpsest, a document that has been written on and erased over and over again; it is the business of the field archaeologist to decipher it', and Hoskins (1955, 00) described the landscape as 'the richest historical record we possess', little progress was made for several decades in realising the potential of the historic landscape for research. Though some historians and historical geographers analysed modern settlement plans and field systems, and there was some integration of this morphological



evidence with documentary sources (eg Sheppard 1966; Sylvester 1969), there was little sense that the fabric of the present landscape as a whole was of historic interest and value. Archaeologists, meanwhile, had been concerned with individual 'sites', though by the 1970s the widespread adoption of aerial photography, fieldwalking and large-scale rescue excavations led to an expansion in the scale at which they worked. 'Sites' were now recognised as forming but a small part of wider buried or relict 'landscapes', and as the whole landscape became a focus for study it was increasingly appreciated that there was also a vast amount of information locked-up within the fabric of the present countryside. So it was that 'landscape archaeology' emerged as a discipline in the 1970s with the study of the present pattern of settlements, fields, roads etc as an integral part (Aston and Rowley 1974; Aston 1985). It was only in the late 1980s, however, that the specific concept of 'historic landscape' emerged in both the worlds of planning and research (eg Cornwall County Council 1994; Council for British Archaeology 1993; Fairclough 1995; Hooke 1988; Lambrick 1992; Rippon and Turner 1993).

A common feature of much landscape research is that it has tended to focus on particular sources of evidence, aspects of the landscape that have gone out of use (eg deserted medieval villages), or individual components of the landscape such as the patterns of roads, settlements, and field systems (eg Hindle 1982; Rowley 1981; Taylor 1975; 1979). Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century historians in particular also wrote about the agrarian economy and society without apparently feeling the need to reconstruct the landscapes they were discussing, with the reader provided with at best a single map with the major places referred to in the text (eg Finberg 1951). A more holistic approach, however, has been developed by scholars such as Hoskins, Everitt, Phythian-Adams and Fox at Leicester University's *Department of English Local History*. A key concept in their work is that of *pays*, a French term for areas that possessed their own innate identity (Braudel 1988; Everitt 1979; 1985; 1986, 5-6, 43-68; Thirsk 2000). This concept, similar to the German idea of *Landschaft* (Leighley 1963, 315-50), saw a more holistic concept of landscape that, while still having a strong element of environmental/geographical determinism, also stressed the contribution of different social structures in shaping landscape character. Hoskins was perhaps the most influential writer on landscape of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his seminal book *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955) remains a classic study of both broad regional variation and local distinctiveness. Though he did not map *pays*, he was keenly aware of their existence, not just in terms of distinctive physical regions (such as marshes, fens and moors), but the cultural landscape, for example contrasting the large-scale open fields of the Midlands with the 'miniature' open field systems of Devon and Oxfordshire (Hoskins 1955, 82-3). *Pays* can be thought of occurring in various senses:

- *generic types of cultural landscape* (eg those characterised by slate mining, villages and open fields, or resulting from woodland assarting),
- *generic types of topographically-defined areas* (eg 'downlands', 'heathlands', 'lowland vales', 'fenlands' and 'moorlands')
- *specific locations* with a unique identity defined by the *cultural* landscape (eg the iron producing Black Country in Staffordshire, coal mining districts such as Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales, and distinctive farming regions such as Felden and Arden in Warwickshire)
- *specific locations* with a unique identity defined by the topography (eg Breckland, the Vale of Clywd or the Yorkshire Dales).

Some such *pays* can be very extensive, such as the c.6,500 km<sup>2</sup> Boulder Clay plateau stretching from Hertfordshire to East Anglia (Warner 1996; Williamson 2003), while others are relatively small and closely defined (eg the c.50 km<sup>2</sup> Caldicot Level: Figure 20).

Crucial to understanding the historic landscape is the pattern of social territories within which it was created and managed on a day-to-day basis. All to

often archaeologists, historians and historical geographers have used counties as the units within which to study the landscape as they are of a convenient size and have a resonance with the public (eg *The Origins of Hertfordshire*: Williamson 2002b). This emphasis on counties is in another way regrettable as, while many of these studies provide excellent overviews of those areas, they rarely examine whole *pays* as county boundaries often across the natural grain of the natural and cultural landscape: the English shires were mostly a 9<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> century creation which in the Midlands in particular were largely artificial administrative units with little relationship to the cultural or physical landscape: it was only around the 16<sup>th</sup> century that counties became the major expression of social identity (Blair 1994, 104; Everitt 1979).

Phythian-Adams' (1993) has explored the impact that the physical landscape had on human territoriality through his concept of 'cultural provinces' that were based on river-drainage basins and the all-important watersheds which represent 'identifiable lines of punctuation in the landscape...characterised for long stretches by bands of primarily pastoral countryside...which, in historic times at least, probably originates as zones for intercommoning, almost invariably...settled late from opposite directions, and then to be occupied far less densely than the more heavily populated heartlands on their either sides' (Phythian-Adams 1993, 11). The arrangement of territories that run from river to watershed, or lowland to upland, has been a recurrent one throughout human history (eg the 'concave landscape' model developed by Coles and Coles (1986, fig. 34) for the way that prehistoric human communities used the wetland resources of the Somerset Levels in the context of a wider landscape exploitation strategy). During the early medieval period, the strategy of incorporating both upland and lowland within a territory was central to the principle behind the 'multiple estate' structure documented in Wales (eg Jones 1979), while discrete *regios* such as the Rodings in Essex (Bassett 1997) and Swaledale in Yorkshire (Fleming 1998) similarly used watersheds for their boundaries. These landscape of large territories/estates often later fragmented into smaller units but the mapping of the medieval vills/townships that were created (usually reflected by ecclesiastical parishes) show that communities often still occupied territories that straddled different zones (see Hadleigh, case-study below Figure 15; and for Greater Exmoor: Figure 18).

Such 'resource optimisation' approaches to landscape exploitation are not uncommon, and remind us that in order to properly understand the landscape, we must study it using the territories that were perceived as significant by past communities themselves. It is, therefore, these extensive 'cultural provinces', medium-sized *regios*, and individual townships that are all in their own way ideal units within which to study the landscape as they had a practical existence in the past in term of how resources and potential were exploited: they were the day-to-day social, economic and agrarian units within which the countryside was managed and the historic landscape was created.

## THE COMPOSITION OF A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE: ELEMENTS, COMPONENTS, TYPES, ZONES AND AREAS

### Deconstructing a historic landscape

Different landscape character results from variations in the form and spatial arrangement of a wide range of features reflecting the different means by which human communities achieved subsistence, communication, recreation, and security at various periods in the past. One way of thinking about these landscapes is as a series of individual **elements** (eg field boundaries) or **parcels** (eg a field), which combine in various ways to form certain discrete **components or 'themes'** within the landscape (the collective term for a group of elements/parcels of the same function, eg field system). The form of each component, and they way that they articulate with other components, determines historic landscape character, and a distinctive and repeated combination of components define a generic **historic landscape character type**. These types can be very localised in their extent, and they in turn combine in different ways to define the unique **character areas** that make up the British countryside (Table 2).

[INSERT TABLE 2]

### Historic Landscape Components

An experienced practitioner of historic landscape analysis can identify character types without the need to disaggregate the landscape into its separate components, though the study of these individual themes within a landscape remains a useful stepping-stone towards a more holistic understanding of its origins and development. In particular, this approach provides a link with more traditional landscape archaeology/history approaches that have often focused on individual themes such as settlement or field systems, and allows the key character defining features of a landscape to be clearly identified. It must be stressed, however, that while a landscape can be disaggregated into a series of discrete components (or themes: see work currently underway in Wales in Part 2) these were all functionally inter-related:

- **settlement pattern**: where people live and work, and where goods (transported through the communication system) are created and consumed.
- **communication networks**: both man-made, such as roads and canals, and the use of natural features such as rivers, estuaries and the sea. The means by which agricultural goods, extracted minerals and manufactured products are transported from source to final destination (usually elements of the settlement pattern, but sometimes different elements of the fieldscape). In the past roads and droveways formed a continuation of common land (see unenclosed land below).
- **field systems**: mostly used for arable, pasture and meadow, though latterly also specialised horticulture. The character of field systems will partly reflect the use for which they were originally designed and partly subsequent changes in landuse, such as long narrow fields with a reversed-S profile that are derived from the piecemeal enclosure of arable open fields and whose survival until today is the result of a change in landuse to pasture that meant they have escaped the large-scale removal of field boundaries associated with the 20<sup>th</sup> century mechanisation of arable farming (eg Johnson 1996, fig 3.5). Patterns of landuse are determined by both the natural environment (eg climate, soils, relief) and cultural factors such as tenurial structures and proximity to centres of consumption.
- **woodland**: an important managed resource long before the proliferation of conifer plantations. Source of fuel (including charcoal) and building

- materials, which needed to be transported to settlements and industrial sites. Could form part of other landscape components such as medieval deer parks, or post medieval landscaped parkland.
- **unenclosed land:** often referred to as common or 'waste', though the latter is an unfortunate term as it fails to recognise its economic importance for grazing etc. Today mostly found in intertidal and upland areas, though some areas of lowland common still survives (eg roadside waste and village greens which were far more significant in the past, often being the focus of settlement). Roads and droveways often had funnel-shaped entrances where they entered a common, to facilitate the movement of livestock (eg Figures 1, 13.4, and 20).
  - **industrial complexes:** extractive and manufacturing, in areas ranging from large-scale industrial landscapes, to smaller-scale activity scattered throughout the wider rural/urban landscapes (eg Figures 8-9, and 11). Specialised industrial landscapes will contain other components such as transport infrastructure and settlements for the industrial workers (differing in character to those rural settlements where most of the population was engaged in agriculture).
  - **open water:** before their drainage, natural areas of open water formed an important part of some landscapes being valued for the fishing and wildfowling (eg Meare case-study in Part 3; and see Coney 1992; Lucas 1998; Bond 1988, 80-1; Hall 1992, 30-3.). The management of water has a long history with the earliest artificial reservoirs and fishponds dating to the Roman period (McOmish *et al.* 2002; Zeepvat 1988), and water supply and fishpond complexes being an important feature of many medieval high-status sites (eg Hadleigh case-study below, Figure 15.4; and see Aston 1988a; Bond 1989; 2001). Modern reservoirs are, however, on an altogether different scale.
  - **military facilities:** defensive features can be scattered throughout the rural/urban landscape (eg lines of pill boxes), or concentrated into discrete military facilities (eg Second World War airfields). In the past the division between military and civilian was perhaps not as clear cut as today: the Roman frontiers in northern Britain – whose impressive remains form relict landscapes which still dominate the historic landscape character of these areas – would have served an important role in controlling the movement of people and livestock, and a number of forts saw the development of civilian *vicus* settlements (Woodside and Crow 1999).
  - **recreation:** some landscapes are devoted to leisure (such as marinas, seafronts and piers at coastal resorts), while sometimes recreation was just one aspect of a multi-faceted landscape (eg medieval deer park which were also important sources of food, timber and underwood landscapes created and/or managed primarily for leisure).

Other influences on the historic character of the countryside are more conceptual in nature:

- **patterns of exchange, trade and consumption:** most notably towns, but also places such as military establishments, would have drawn in rural resources such as food and material used in manufacturing, and were usually the means for articulating the distribution of industrial products (though in the medieval period rural fairs were also important though they have usually left little or no trace in the historic landscape). As such, towns etc would have had a profound effect on the transport infrastructure and local landuse promoting the emergence of regional economies (eg B. Campbell *et al.* 1993; Everitt 1979).

- **status and power:** wealth and power are derived from the control of land and communities, and this is reflected in the landscape. It is increasingly recognised, for example, that sites such as medieval castles were as much symbols of status and power as simply military installations (Creighton 2002; Liddiard 2000). A castle would often form part of a wider **seigniorial landscape**, reflecting the power and authority of an aristocratic elite, illustrated for example by deer parks and fishponds (eg see Hadleigh case-study below).
- **designed/ornamental landscapes:** from the Neolithic, complexes of ritual monuments show that space was being structured and manipulated, sometimes with reference to features in the natural landscape (Tilley 1995; 1996). Moving to more recent times designed parks and gardens are predominantly a post medieval phenomena, but there is increasing evidence for landscape design in the medieval period, from at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century, associated with both castles (eg Creighton 2000; Everson *et al.* 2000; Liddiard 2000) and other high status residences (Landsberg 1996; Oosthuizen and Taylor 2000; Taylor 1989a). The use of water was a common feature (Everson 1996a, b; 1998; Taylor 2000). In part such landscapes were concerned with leisure, but they were also great statements of power and played an important part in social discourse.
- **tenurial structure:** the pattern of estates and landholding that provided the social context within which landscapes originated and evolved. Individuals, institutions and communities could take decisions that shaped the character of settlement patterns and field systems both in the long term (eg the communal/customary management of an open field, or regulation of grazing on an area of common), and the short term (eg the passing of an Act of Parliament Enclosure). This is explored in the case studies of Hadleigh (Figure 15), the Caldicot Level (Figures 17 and 20), Meare (Figure 28) and Somerset (Figure 27).
- **a sense of place/belonging:** the symbolic/ritual value of places, both natural and man-made, and other cultural associations, for example with writers and painters (eg Figure 10). Important to both residents and visitors/tourists in terms of how they perceive the character of a landscape.

[INSERT FIGURE 10: Hadleigh Castle painting c.1845]

### Historic landscape types, zones and areas

Whilst the historic landscape of an area can be disaggregated into its different components, the overall character of a particular place results from the way in which all the components articulate with each other. Certain repetitive combinations give rise to a series of *generic* historic landscape **types**. In some cases these types are relatively simple and contain relatively few components (eg ancient woodland, modern plantations, quarries etc), but agrarian landscapes in particular can be complex. Two examples show the contrast (note that there is a clear distinction between objective description, and the inferred process that led to the creation of each landscape type in a particular period):

- Large areas of carefully laid out large, rectilinear fields (with names usually ending in Acre), containing the occasional 18<sup>th</sup> century farm, surrounding a nucleated village with a range of farmsteads including medieval buildings, from which radiate a series of long straight roads with no waste: Parliamentary Enclosure of former open fields.
- A complex pattern of small, irregular-shaped fields (with a great diversity of names including 'breach'), associated with a series of isolated farmsteads and small hamlets all containing medieval and post medieval buildings, and linked by

winding lanes with small areas of common/roadside waste: medieval woodland assarting.

When analysing the historic landscape care should be taken to identify not only blocks of landscape of a coherent type, but also landscape **elements** that might mark significant boundaries that either form part of the structure of that type (eg a series of long axial field boundaries laid out during enclosure, around which the former common or open field was divided up into fields), or its boundary (eg a 'head dike' marking the upslope limit of a field system in an upland area).

In some cases, landscape of a particular **type** may occur over a relatively large area, while elsewhere its extent may be very limited with a large number of types in a particular locale. In these cases a particular combination of types can be generalised or simplified into a series of generic **zones** where the recurrent association of certain historic landscape character types reflect common patterns of development. The identification of zones was pioneered in the Cornwall Historic Landscape Characterisation (see Colour Plate A, and Part 3) but has not been widely adopted since, though it remains a potentially useful approach where there is considerable complexity.

While the analysis of the historic landscape can lead to the attributing of particular blocks of landscape to certain generalised types, every part of the countryside is actually unique which allows its division into discrete, bounded and distinctive **historic landscape character areas** distinguished from neighbouring areas on the basis its broad combination of inter-related components, types and zones. While internally heterogeneous (in contrast to types which by definition are homogenous) each area is unique. In c.1540, for example, John Leland wrote of the two major character areas in Warwickshire:

'I learnt [at Warwick] that the most part of the shire of Warwickshire, that lies as the river Avon descends on the right hand of it, is in Arden (for so in ancient name of that part of the shire) and the ground in Arden is much enclosed, plentiful of grass, but no great plenty of corne...The other part of Warwickshire that lies on the left hand of the Avon river, much to the south is for the most part champion [open field], somewhat barren of wood, but very plentiful of corn' (based on Toulmin Smith 1908, 47)

The Arden region of Warwickshire was also relatively well wooded, while the 'champion' district, also known as the 'Felden', was part of England's 'Central Province' characterised by open fields and nucleated villages (Everitt 1985, 3-4; Ford 1979; Hooke 1993; 1998, 144-50, 161-3; Roberts 1987, 170-2; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000a, fig. 20; 2000b; Watkins 1993). Understanding fundamental regional differences in historic landscape character is a key theme in this Handbook.

The extent/scale of types, zones and areas will depend on the nature of the research being undertaken, and the time and resources available. In a detailed parish study it may be possible to have a series of very precisely defined types (ie highly homogenous) whose extent in some cases may be relatively limited (eg a small block of fields covering a few hectares: see Meare case-study in Part 3 for which the base map was the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 6" to the mile maps of approximately 1:10,560 scale). The resulting simplified zones/character areas may similarly only cover a relatively small area. In larger-scale projects, where large areas have to be analysed more quickly, some of the types and zones may be defined more broadly (ie allowing for slightly less homogeneity) and so end up covering rather larger areas of several km<sup>2</sup>. In the English Heritage sponsored Historic Landscape Characterisation Projects base maps of 1:25,000 scale have tended to be used.

### **Approaching the task: top-down or bottom up**

There are broadly two approaches to identifying historic landscape character areas. The **bottom-up approach** starts with a base map showing all the landscape components (ie a minimum scale of 1:25,000 that shows all individual fields). Each of these land parcels is then ascribed to one of a number of predetermined generic landscape types: adjacent parcels with the same characteristics will be attributed to the same type leading to the identification of parts of the landscape with the same historic character. This can be done on computer (using a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) package) or on paper-copy by literally colouring in each parcel/field. Another approach is to label or 'tag' each parcel with a number of attributes (size, shape, date etc) though this can only be carried out using a GIS. Once every field etc is labelled in some way, the data can be simplified by identifying zones and ultimately areas.

This 'bottom-up' approach is systematic and objective, but can be time consuming. For an experienced researcher a quicker, though subjective approach is to work from the **top down** identifying the major divisions in landscape character through professional judgement (based on prior knowledge or a rapid assessment of landscape character). This entails simply drawing a line around a block of landscape of relatively coherent character (see discussion of work in Wales in Part 3).

### **The colour, texture, language and experience of landscape**

So far discussion has focussed on aspects of the historic landscape that can be classified on the basis of their appearance on maps. 'Landscape', however, is not just culturally constructed in a physical sense: its *perceived* character will vary depending on how it is viewed. While field boundary patterns may be one of the easiest components to analyse using maps and air photographs, in practice they may not be the most significant factor in affecting how communities experience their countryside *on the ground*. In an anciently enclosed landscape, the winding lanes and scattered settlements are just as important, and actually more evident on the ground, compared to the small irregular-shaped fields that actually cover by far the greatest area. In fact, when driving through the landscape it is the constant braking to drive around a bend or avoid mud on the road as one passes yet another dairy farm that is more important to most people's daily perception of that landscape than the shape of the fields that may be hidden behind a hedge. This experience in, say Devon, can also be compared to driving in the Midlands at a constant speed along straight roads encountering only the occasional village.

Another visual aspect of historic landscape character is that of its colour, texture and materials. A key feature of the Mid Devon landscape, for example, is its red soils, so different to the white chalky soils of nearby Wessex. Geology is also a significant determinant in the physical form taken by field boundaries which vary enormously such as the neat drystone walls, earthen banks, hedgerows or ditches. Geology is also one influence on vernacular architecture, most notably on the balance between stone, timber and cob (clay, gravel and straw) in walls, and thatch, slate and tiles on roofs. Such distinctive variations can occur across broad regions, such as the elaborate pargetting (decorative moulded plaster work painted in light pastel colours) on timber-framed houses in East Anglia, that contrasts with the weather-boarding that is common in the Home Counties (Brunskill 1992). In places, the colour and texture that geology gives to vernacular architecture is more subtle, such as the contrasting orange (Ham Stone) and blue-grey (Lias) limestones in central and southern Somerset, the red stone/cob of Mid Devon, and granite of the South West's Moors. Elsewhere variations in vernacular architecture result from socio-economic factors such as top-floor 'weavers windows' reflecting the importance of the cloth industry in the North West. Even the design of buildings shows marked regional variation: in South East England, late medieval houses were of the 'Wealden House' type, with a central hall open to the roof, between two-storey blocks with projecting first-floor jetties either side, whereas in the South West

longhouses were the dominant form, with a kitchen/living room and inner private room to one side of a cross-passage and a service room/cow house to the other (reflecting the strongly pastoral economy of this region) (Brunskill 1992).

Even the language of the landscape contributes to its character, such as the 'dales' of Yorkshire, and sudden change from farmsteads with English '-ton' and '-cott' place-names to the Cornish 'Tre-' almost immediately one crosses the river Tamar (Padel 1999). In many regions discrete clusters of '-leigh' names characterise settlements in more wooded areas (eg the Arden district of Warwickshire: see above), while in North West England place-names ending in '-shaw' (eg Ollerenshaw in Derbyshire) are a distinct regional variant (Gelling and Cole 2000, 245-6). The remote character of many valleys in three other discrete upland regions – the central Welsh Marches, the southern/eastern Pennines, and the mountainous areas of western County Durham, Northumbria and southern Scotland – is marked by concentrations of place-names with the Old English *hop* element (eg Hopesay and Ratlinghope: Gelling and Cole 2000, 133-40); in the hillier parts of the South West, Wessex and the Cotswolds 'combe' place-names similarly refer to settled valleys, while in the South East the more common term is '-den'/'-dean'. The 'hope' place-name element also reflects the remoteness of the coastal marshes in South East England, where it is used in the sense of 'enclosure in marsh' alongside a range of other distinctive place-name elements, such as '-wick' and '-worth', which add to the special character of these landscapes (Rippon 2000a). Further local distinctiveness is brought about through even more subtle variations in the language of landscape, such as the term for an artificial watercourse varying between 'rhyne' in Somerset, 'rhine' in Gloucestershire and 'reen' in Wales; in Romney Marsh the same features are called 'sewers', while in Fenland the term 'lode' was common (Rippon 1997a; 2000a). There are also regionally distinctive field-names, such as 'park' (enclosed field) and 'gratton' (stubble, ie cultivated field), 'cleave' (steep slope) and 'down' (upland pasture) in the South West (eg Figure 19), all of which adds to the distinctive character of these local landscapes and can be an important party of historic landscape analysis through linking historical references to landscape features with the physical fabric of the landscape itself (eg Meare Case-Study: Part 3).

[INSERT FIGURE 11: Wheal Betsy]

### **Relict and historic landscapes**

So far discussion has focussed on how historic landscape analysis highlights the time-depth present in the character of the present, *still-functioning*, countryside. What distinguishes this *historic landscape* from other aspects of the archaeological record is that it is principally concerned with features that are still in use today, in contrast to abandoned – or *relict* – elements of earlier phases of landscape-use that survive above ground, as earthworks or ruins (eg Figures 10 and 11). Other landscapes have been completely *buried* by later deposits, as in floodplains and other wetlands, or ploughed flat where they are only revealed as cropmarks or through fieldwalking. The scatters of material revealed through fieldwalking may pre-date, and so be completely unrelated to, the present landscape though deserted or shrunken medieval settlements are simply parts of the historic landscape that have been abandoned and so can only be understood when mapped alongside those aspects of the medieval landscape that continued in use long enough to appear on post medieval cartographic sources or even survive in use today (eg Figure 12; and see Silvester 1988; 1993).

[INSERT FIGURE 12: Longham: the two sets of maps must be on facing pages]



Relict remains can, however, make a significant contribution to the character of the historic landscape. The earthworks of a bank and ditch, or even a line of trees running across an arable field, are suggestive of an old field boundary that was formerly part of the historic landscape. In other cases whole components of a past landscape have been abandoned but although no longer performing their original function their remains still form part of the character of the countryside today. Sometimes these remains only survive as an individual site, but where such features are fairly extensive, and retain sufficient coherence, they can be regarded as 'relict landscapes' (eg Figure 11). Elsewhere, such relict remains are set within the context of a still very-much living 'historic landscape', such as the waste tips from abandoned slate quarries that tower above many still occupied villages in North Wales (Gwyn 2001). In other cases the relict remains are more slight but still make a significant contribution to historic landscape character, such as the earthworks/tumbled stone walls of abandoned prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval field systems that are spread across many of our western islands (eg Skomer: Evans 1990; St Kilda: Fleming 2001) and upland fringes (eg Bodmin Moor: Johnson and Rose 1994; the Cheviot Hills: C. Campbell *et al.* 2002; Dartmoor: Figure 13; Fleming 1988; Gerrard 1997; North Wales: Silvester 2000; Salisbury Plain: Bradley *et al.* 1994; McOmish *et al.* 2002; Yorkshire Dales: Horne and MacLeod 2001). These relict field boundaries may not in themselves be that impressive but they are often picked out by different types of vegetation, which along with their shadows, adds a visual texture and graining to these landscapes. In some cases long abandoned field boundaries appear to have been reused when areas were recolonised in the medieval period (eg parts of the Dartmoor Reaves: Figure 13; Fleming 1988, figs 15, 31 and 69; St David's Head, Pembrokeshire: Murphy 2001), and in a very few cases it is possible to postulate that prehistoric and Romano-British field systems have remained in continuous use and form the basis of the modern historic landscape (eg West Penwith, Cornwall: Herring 1993; South East Essex: Rippon 1991; East Anglian boulder clays: Williamson 1987; 1998; cf. Hinton 1997)

\*\*\*\*\* start of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

[INSERT FIGURE 13.1: Holne Moor]

### **CASE-STUDY: Holne Moor, Dartmoor (Figure 13)**

Fleming and Ralph's (1982) survey and interpretation of the medieval relict landscape on Holne Moor, Dartmoor, was a classic piece of landscape archaeology though it pre-dated the concept of the 'historic landscape': although mapped as a piece of 'archaeology', the remains on Holne Moor can actually be thought of as part of the historic landscape that has simply gone out of use (the well known deserted medieval settlement at Hound Tor is similarly simply an abandoned part of what is a substantially a still-used medieval landscape: Austin and Walker 1985).

The medieval relict landscape on the western slopes of the Venford Stream comprises series of abandoned field systems with earlier lobe-shaped enclosures on the valley sides, sub-divided into cultivation strips defined by low banks, with larger, rectilinear fields upslope (Figures 13.1-2). Note how these relict remains do form a significant part of the colour and texture of the historic landscape which would otherwise be regarded simply as an 'unenclosed upland pasture' type. The southernmost lobe is associated with a deserted farmstead ('South Venford' on Figure 13.1) and a series of droveways, with funnel shaped entrances leading down from the open moor, suggest other deserted settlements are now under forestry and the Venford Reservoir ('Middle' and 'North' Venford on Figure 13.1).

[INSERT FIGURE 13.2: photo of reave]

The Holne Moor relict medieval landscape overlies an earlier, Bronze Age, relict field system known as the 'reaves' (Figure 13.1-2). The early lobe-shaped enclosures ignored these relatively slight remains, though the later fields upslope re-used certain reaves resulting in a more rectilinear layout. The historic landscape at Seale Stoke and West Stoke similarly reuses some of the reaves.

[INSERT FIGURE 13.3: photo of West Stoke]

On the opposite side of the Venford Valley lie a series of isolated farms with the place-name 'Stoke', and their associated field systems (Figure 13.3). The field-boundary patterns here are, *at first sight*, rather different to the relict landscape on Holne Moor: even the fields, let alone the enclosures, at Holne Moor appear larger than those at Stoke which might lead one to conclude that these two landscapes are of different date. In fact, these two landscapes were occupied at the same time as Stoke is documented from Domesday (Glover *et al.* 1931, 302), and the lobe-shaped enclosures at Holne Moor are 12<sup>th</sup> century or earlier (Fleming and Ralph 1982, 105-9): the different layout of these two landscapes results from the fact that at Holne Moor landscape development was halted, whereas at Stoke the landscape has continued to evolve through to the present day. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Stoke probably had a layout more like that on Holne Moor, and Holne Moor would probably have looked like Stoke had it not been abandoned. A good example is the relict funnel-shaped droveway west of 'North Venford' that would probably have looked very much like the extant example leading from Holne Lee Moor to the Stoke Farms (Figure 13.4; see Figure 13.1 for its location). Note that areas of roadside waste such as this have usually been enclosed, leading to a straight narrow road with distinctive long, thin fields on either side (eg see Figure 1). The distinctive stone-revetted earthen banks, topped with hedges form a distinctive part of this historic landscape.

[INSERT FIGURE 13.4: photo of droveway]

It is also noticeable how the cultivation strips in the Holne Moor lobes curve off to the left, as do a number of the extant field-boundaries to the north of West Stoke, a feature of the historic landscape that is seen elsewhere in the upland fringes of South West England including Bodmin Moor and Exmoor (Gillard 2002; Johnson and Rose 1994, 100-15; Pattison 1999; Riley and Wilson-North 2001, 98-102; and see Figure 18). It could be argued that north of West Stoke the extant field boundaries were created to enclose what had been a small open field (like the north lobe on Holne Moor), and that the present boundaries simply followed earlier cultivation strips (in the same way that reversed-S shaped fields were sometimes produced from the piecemeal 'enclosure by agreement' of Midland open fields). Elsewhere the old cultivation strips appear to have been swept away and an entirely new field system imposed which is why the landscape of today is at first sight so dissimilar.

\*\*\*\*\* end of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

### **Putting people in the landscape: the concept of 'natural beauty' and the role of the natural environment in shaping historic landscape character**

So far, discussion has focussed on our cultural landscape: fields, roads, settlements etc. This contrasts with many aspects of the popular perception of landscape, and major pieces of planning legislation, which are concerned with concepts such as 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' and 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. The

idea of 'natural beauty' is itself a cultural construct and a very misleading one that does a major disservice to the past human communities who have created and still maintain the countryside of today. Even most ecological 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' have a little to do with things 'natural' and a lot to do with things cultural: flower-rich meadows, for example, are the product of careful land management and the annual cutting of hay, while bracken, gorse and heather covered moorland results from woodland clearance, soil depletion, different livestock grazing regimes, and periodic deliberate burning to control the vegetation. One might think that an upland area like Dartmoor, for example, is a 'natural' landscape but this is far from the case: woodland has been cleared, large areas were once covered in Bronze Age field systems, followed by the development of extensive peat bogs, with some areas then recolonised in the medieval period (Figure 13.1). In part the current 'wilderness' appearance of central Dartmoor is even the product of settlement desertion as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 14).

[INSERT FIGURE 14: Teignhead farm on Dartmoor]

Understanding the past is essential for managing the future, and some progress has been made in persuading countryside managers of this. Throughout the 1990s Countryside Agency (and its predecessor the Countryside Commission) developed a methodology for 'Landscape Character Assessment'. Although recognising cultural factors such as settlement and historical perceptions, the early examples of LCA tended to place the greatest emphasis on visual appearance – physical landscape (landform) and habitat types (landcover) – with only limited recognition of the significance and complexity of the time depth present (Countryside Commission 1993; eg Warwickshire: Countryside Commission 1991; cf. Hooke 1993; Chichester Harbour: Countryside Commission 1992). In 1994 the publication of *Views From the past: Historic landscape character in the English countryside* marked an important step forward in recognising the cultural contribution to landscape character (Countryside Commission 1994a), though in the same year the Countryside Commission embarked upon its *New Map of England* project to map landscape character across England, starting with a pilot study in the South West (Countryside Commission 1994c). The character areas were, however, essentially based on geology, topography and present appearance of the countryside with only limited acknowledgement of cultural processes that contributed to the 'evolution of the landscape'. The final map of *The Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features* regressed even further down this 'landscape as natural beauty' avenue in combining these 'Character Areas' with English Natures 'Natural Areas' (Countryside Commission and English Nature 1996).

It was similarly disappointing to see that the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage's *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance* were drawn up by a firm of landscape architects and a university 'Department of Landscape' without a significant contribution from those with a clear understanding of the historical processes that have led to the landscape's current appearance: the report acknowledges that 'to understand the "time-depth" aspects of landscape requires expert analysis' so it is perhaps surprising that such 'experts' were not involved in preparing those guidelines (Swanwick *et al.* 1999; <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/ccj/guidance/.htm>). In the initial information gathering stage, for example, the need to consult any existing historic landscape work is not even mentioned, and in the initial mapping stage 'Where resources are limited and time is short, the desk study may need to be limited to an assessment of geology, landform, land cover and settlement distribution. In these cases the opportunity should be taken to update and amplify the data collected, especially in terms of the historic dimension, *when time and resources become available*' (italics added). The statement that 'Patterns of field enclosure can be interpreted from

1:25,000 OS data and from aerial photographs, again using land cover analysis. Map analysis, however, *only provides an understanding of the contemporary patterns* of settlement and enclosure without the important “time-depth” dimension of their historical origins’ (italics added) is an astonishing statement that is simply incorrect: the historic landscape as mapped in two-dimensions provides abundant information on time-depth as some fifty years of academic research since Hoskins, the ongoing programme of HLC/HLA, and hopefully this Handbook have shown. Whilst there are examples of collaboration at the local level (eg the Bath and North East Somerset LCA: 2003), archaeologists, historians and historical geographers clearly still have some way to go in persuading the ‘natural environment’ agencies that the ‘cultural environment’ is an equal partner and that it is impossible to understand and manage the landscape without a more integrated approach.

The impact that the natural environment (geology, topography, climate etc) has had on how the cultural landscape has evolved is much debated and a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this Handbook. Suffice to say that until the 1990s archaeologists and historical geographers had moved away from traditional ideas (eg Fox 1932) that the natural structure of the landscape determined how human society evolved. There has, however, been some revisionist debate in recent years and a recognition that the fear of being labelled ‘geographical deterministic’ means that scholars may have been reluctant to give due consideration to the potential role of the natural environment in shaping cultural landscapes (Muir 1999, 112-13; Tipping 2002). Butlin and Roberts (1995, 10) for example, have suggested that ‘recent ideas in cultural geography, which emphasize the significance of the cultural construction of landscapes by human imagination and agency, are now being questioned in relation to their apparent underestimation of the role of the physical environments in people-environmental relationships’. McGlade (1999) has similarly argued that the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of a wholly humanist approach and that the natural environment provides the crucial context within human cultures created landscapes (and see Coones 1985; Corcos 2002, 190; Gelling and Cole 2000, xvii). Williamson’s (2003) stimulating discussion of the origins of open field farming has progressed this debate even further in arguing for a link between the character of soils and the development of common-field agriculture in the East Midlands/East Anglia. It should also be remembered that the physical character of the landscape can change: soils can be eroded following woodland clearance and arable cultivation, or leached of their nutrients, become waterlogged, acidic and even buried beneath peat. Human intervention can equally improve the condition of soils through marling, manuring and under drainage. Changing technology can make farming easier in areas that were previously difficult, or mineral deposits that were previously inaccessible available to be exploited.

Analysis of the historic landscape shows that the natural environment certainly did have a profound effect on the character of our countryside, but that ultimately it was human agency that determined the form that this took. The history of reclaimed coastal marshes around Britain, for example, reveals how during the medieval period most coastal marshes were embanked and drained, but that in some areas, such as the Thames Estuary, physically identical saltmarshes were left unreclaimed because the profits of dairy production close to a major urban centre (eg London) were equal or greater to that from farming a reclaimed marsh: the same type of environment could have a variety of cultural landscapes due to a range of socio-economic factors and the nature of landownership (Rippon 2000a, 229-40; and see Hadleigh case-study below, and Caldicot Level case-study in Part 2). When putting ‘people back in the landscape’ one must also not forget the role of both individuals and communities. The contribution of the great post-medieval landowners and the landscape designers they employed is clear, though just who did decide to create the great open fields and planned the villages of the Midlands –

lords or the community – is still debated (eg Dyer 1985; Harvey 1989). The impact of different patterns of landowning on landscape character is explored further in the case-studies of Hadleigh in Part 1, and Somerset in Part 3.

\*\*\*\*\* start of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

## **CASE-STUDY: HADLEIGH, ESSEX (Figure 15)**

### **Key features:**

- *multi-period parish-scale case-study*
- *simple demonstration of how the historic landscape comprises a set of articulated components which taken together define the key character defining features of different areas*
- *a ‘past-oriented’ analysis forming part of wider research into landscape history through integrating a variety of sources (including field archaeology, documentary/cartographic material, and place-names)*
- *demonstrates how different historic landscape character results from different processes of landscape creation and evolution, and the various social structures behind them.*
- *further reading: Rippon, S. 1999: The Rayleigh Hills in south-east Essex: patterns in exploitation of a woodland landscape, in Green, S. (ed.) *The Essex landscape: in search of its history* (Chelmsford: Essex County Council), 20-8.*

### **Introduction**

The following simple case-study is designed to illustrate some of the key issues introduced so far, notably how a historic landscape can be broken down into its elements/parcels, components, types and areas. For the sake of brevity and coherence attention will focus on the period between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The example chosen here is the parish of Hadleigh in South East Essex (see Rippon 1991 and 1999a, and Wymer and Brown 1995, 151-73 for background to the region). In terms of the physical topography and soils, the landscape can be divided into four (Figure 15.1):

- an extensive area of flat, estuarine alluvium derived from saltmarshes and mudflats in the south
- a series of hills and valleys (the southern hills) rising above the marshes with soils mostly derived from sands and gravels
- a relatively flat central plateau, with soils derived from sands and gravels with heavier gravely loam and clay (‘head’) on the lower slopes
- the Prittle Brook Valley in the north with loamy soils (derived from ‘head’).

[INSERT FIGURE 15.1: Hadleigh relief and soils]

### **Sources**

The base-map used to interrogate the historic landscape is the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch Map surveyed in 1867 (Figure 15.2). Use is also made of the Tithe Survey<sup>1</sup> that maps the whole parish in 1847, the county map of Chapman and Andre of 1777, and five other maps cover small parts of the parish: the Enclosure map of 1852 (which covers the former Common),<sup>2</sup> estate maps of the lands of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul’s Cathedral (1750)<sup>3</sup> and Sayers Farm (1709),<sup>4</sup> and maps of

<sup>1</sup> Essex Records Office D/CT 154

<sup>2</sup> Essex Records Office TS/M 63/9

<sup>3</sup> Essex Records Office D/DMq E7/1

<sup>4</sup> Essex Records Office D/DQs 28

Hadleigh Park (undated, but probably 17<sup>th</sup> century) and the 'Mill and Hadley Park Marshes' (1670) before they were enclosed and drained respectively<sup>5</sup> (Figure 15.3).

[INSERT FIGURES 15.2 and 15.3: Hadleigh OS 6" and other map sources: must be on facing pages]

[INSERT FIGURE 15.4: Hadleigh historic landscape components]

[INSERT FIGURE 15.5: Hadleigh enclosed field systems]

### **Historic Landscape Components**

- **settlement pattern** (Figure 15.4):
  - a small nucleated village on the southern side of the Common and adjacent to the church and manor (Hadleigh Hall)
  - isolated settlements scattered elsewhere around the Common, including Solby's and Common Hall Farms and more recent non-agrarian buildings (the Rectory, Workhouse and Turnpike Cottage)
  - farmsteads scattered across the rest of the parish but linked to the Common by droveways (Sayers Farm, Castle Farm, Park Farm, Bramble Hall and Garrold's Farm).
  
- **communication networks** (Figure 15.4):
  - a series of roads/droveways radiate from the Common linking it with the marshes, outlying farms and the wider world.
  - the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century railway cuts uncomformably across the reclaimed marshes (where it is clearly stratigraphically later than the field boundary pattern: Figure 15.2).
  - 'Mill Creek', shown on the map of 1670, but largely silted up by 1777 (when it is shown as a relict feature: Figure 15.3). A buried vessel laden with building stone, discovered when the railway line was constructed, shows that shipping used the creek (Rippon 1999a).
  
- **field boundary patterns** (Figure 15.5): comparison of the various cartographic sources reveals the date and processes whereby several of the field boundary patterns were created:
  - Park Farm: medium-large broadly rectilinear fields created after the conversion of the former deer park to agricultural use during/after the 17th century. The line of the former park pale still survives as a field-boundary enclosing this block of fields.
  - Hadleigh Marshes: large, highly irregular-shaped fields resulting from the drainage of former saltmarshes after 1670, with the meandering courses of old tidal creeks sometimes being used as field boundaries.

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<sup>5</sup> Huntingdon Records Office 1716/54

- Broom Wood and 'TM 145-6, 148-9'<sup>6</sup>: large rectangular fields post-dating woodland clearance after 1777.
- Hadleigh Common: straight-sided polygonal fields created by Parliamentary Enclosure in 1852.
- Chapel Lane: long narrow fields adjacent to Chapel Lane (the driveway leading from the Common to Sayers Farm) derived from the Enclosure roadside waste in 1852.

Analogy with elsewhere suggests the origins for a number of other field boundary patterns:

- woodland assarting: the clusters of small rectilinear fields associated with the isolated farms at Solby's Farm, Scrub House, Bramble Hall, Garrold's Farm (and possibly Common Hall Farm).
  - former open fields: the large-medium sized rectilinear fields, with occasional reversed-S shaped boundaries, dog-legs in boundaries,<sup>7</sup> and long narrow fields laid out between slightly sinuous axial boundaries to the south (and possibly east) of the village are suggestive of open fields enclosed through agreement and resulting in the retention of strip and furlong boundaries. Further support for this interpretation comes from the Tithe Survey field-names that show two blocks of fields with the same name: Stock Field and Broom Field (Figure 15.5).
  - enclosed hill pasture: the irregular-shaped fields south of Sayers and Castle Farms on the southern hills are not diagnostic of a particular process though their large size, and the steep sided slopes that dominate this area, suggest a predominantly pastoral use.
  - the small enclosures immediately adjacent to the village and rectory are typical of the gardens, orchards etc found around agricultural settlements.
- **woodland** (Figure 15.4): a large block of woodland still survives to the north of the village, which was even more extensive in 1777.
  - **unenclosed land** (Figure 15.4): the Common was enclosed in 1852; unenclosed saltings still survive to the south of the sea wall.
  - **military facilities**: the ruins of the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century Hadleigh Castle still dominate the Thames Estuary (Figures 10 and 15.4). During the Second World War, the strategic importance of Hadleigh's location was once again recognised when a searchlight and gun battery was built to the south of Sayers Farm to contribute to the protection of London.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Broom Wood' is the earliest name for this area (1777: Chapman and Andre); following 19<sup>th</sup> century woodland regeneration it was known as 'Coxall Wood' (1867: 1<sup>st</sup> edition Six Inch map) and Solbys Wood (1923: 3rd Edition Six Inch map). There is no known historical name for the area of late 18<sup>th</sup> century woodland clearance to the west, though on the Tithe Survey it was divided between field number 145-6 and 148-8.

<sup>7</sup> the clearest evidence for this is shown on the Tithe Map to the north of Sayers Farm; by the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Six Inch Map these boundaries had been straightened, reminding us of the need to consult the earliest available cartographic sources (cf. Figures 9.2 and 9.6)

- **water** (Figure 15.4): earthworks of former fishponds survive on the marshes, while a dam in the valley north of the castle may also have been for a fishpond within the former deer park. Hadleigh Hall was formerly moated.
- **status, power, and tenurial structure**: Hadleigh was a royal manor upon which a major transformation occurred with the construction of the castle and adjacent park in the 1230s, the latter impinging upon the village's field system (documentary material relating to this royal estate is summarised in Rippon 1999a). The estate was sold off in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, eventually leading to the enclosure of the park. Much of the former royal estate along with Sayers Farm to the west was purchased in 1890 by The Salvation Army who undertook a further transformation of the landscape in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century through the creation of the Home Farm Colony with its extensive agricultural facilities (piggeries, dairies, orchards etc), brickworks and an associated tramway system (Yearsley 1998, 51-65).

The northern part of the parish has a very different history. Large areas of woodland were held by several ecclesiastical institutions.<sup>8</sup> The conservative nature of these absentee landlords probably accounts for the relative stability in this part of the landscape. The remaining areas were part of a series of presumably freehold tenements documented from at least the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>9</sup> The extent of the landholding associated with these farms at the time of the Tithe Survey is shown on Figure 15.7).

[INSERT FIGURE 15. 6: Hadleigh historic landscape types]

[INSERT FIGURE 15.7: Hadleigh historic landscape areas]

### **Historic landscape character types**

Whilst it is convenient to disaggregate the landscape into its different component parts, in practice each of these cannot be understood in isolation from each other. The way that different components interact with each other helps to define a series of *generic* **historic landscape character types** (Figure 15.6):

- woodland
- pre-1777 woodland clearance
- post-1777 woodland clearance
- Parliamentary Enclosure
- village (nucleated settlement)
- dispersed settlement
- enclosed former open fields
- enclosed former deer park
- enclosed hill fields
- reclaimed marshland
- unenclosed saltings

In many places these types have a clear boundary. In some cases these are long, straight or sinuous field boundaries that are easily identifiable in the field boundary pattern: the line of former park pale is still preserved as a fields boundary, most of the surviving woodland is surrounded by a substantial earthen bank, while the edge

<sup>8</sup> Great Wood and West Wood were held by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral, London; Horseleigh Wood was held by Prittlewell Priory, Essex, and later St Paul's; Pound Wood was the property of Westminster Abbey, London (Rackham 1986, 17, 21, 88; Rippon 1999a).

<sup>9</sup> Solbys, Bramble Hall and Garold's Farms (Reaney 1935, 185; Yearsley 1998, 30)



of the reclaimed marshland is marked by the sea wall and a hedge bank running along the fen-edge. The southern edge of the enclosed former open field is also marked by a long sweeping boundary, though north of Sayers Farm its boundary with enclosed hill fields is less clear from the cartographic sources. In many cases fieldwork might resolve the issue though in this case housing development and agricultural intensification (ie field-boundary loss) have removed all evidence.

### Historic landscape character areas

The mapping of these various *generic* historic landscape character types can then be simplified into the five *unique* **character areas** within Hadleigh (Figure 15.7):

<i>character area</i>	<i>character defining features</i>
1. Village droveways	settlement: nucleated greenside village fields: small paddocks/orchards/gardens enclosed former open fields unenclosed land: former Common and roadside waste along the droveways woodland: absent lordship and community: moated manorial complex (Hadleigh Hall) beside the church; adjacent village with probable open fields to the south and east.
2. Southern Hill Farms farms 1852	settlement: isolated farms fields: large fields of irregular shape (largely pastoral) unenclosed land: roadside 'waste' along the droveways until woodland: very occasional small copses lordship and community: partly former royal demesne farm (Castle Farm) and partly freehold (Sayers Farm) – the historic landscape character in these is not distinguishable; later part of Salvation Army Home Farm Colony.
3. Hadleigh Park pale	settlement: single isolated farm (site of park lodge) fields: large rectilinear fields surrounded by line of former park unenclosed land: none woodland: absent lordship and community: former royal medieval deer park; later part of Salvation Army Home Farm Colony.
4. Hadleigh Marshes	settlement: absent fields: reclaimed marshes unenclosed land: saltings to seaward of sea wall woodland: absent lordship and community: partly in former royal estate and partly freehold (Sayers Farm and various monastic estates); later part of Salvation Army Home Farm Colony.
5. Prittle Valley Woodland and Assarts: 1852	settlement: isolated farmsteads fields: pre-1777 piecemeal woodland assarting post-1777 woodland clearance unenclosed land: roadside 'waste' along the droveways until

woodland: abundant  
lordship and community: series of woods held by remote  
ecclesiastical institutions, and several freehold farms.

### **Discussion**

The historic landscape of Hadleigh can be disaggregated into a series of components that come together to form a number of generic types that in turn can be grouped into fewer, unique, character areas. The morphology and spatial configuration of these landscape components, alongside other sources of information such as early maps, place-names and documentary references, allows the various processes that led to the creation and subsequent evolution of this landscape to be unravelled. The medieval landscape was focused around the Common that occupies the central area of the interfluvial plateau (such greenside settlement is typical of South East England and East Anglia: eg Williamson 2003, fig. 30). Land to the south and east appears to have been laid out in a small open field system, which may have been impinged upon by the creation of the medieval deer park in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The village community was linked to outlying farms and other resources, such as woodland and marshland, through a series of droveways. Subsequent changes to the landscape included the reversion of the deer park to agricultural use probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the drainage of the marshes after 1670, the assarting of woodland both before and after 1777, and the enclosure of the open fields that must have been carried out by agreement without the need for an Act of Parliament. These changes clearly demonstrate just how dynamic the historic landscape is at a certain level, but it should also be remembered that certain key character defining features of the Hadleigh landscape appear to have been more enduring: the basic four-fold division of marshland, the southern hills (with large enclosed fields, occasional farmsteads and little woodland), the central plateau (the village and its associated field system), and the Prittle valley (with woodland, assarts and isolated farmsteads) can be traced back well into the medieval period.

The case-study has also shown how we cannot understand historic landscape character purely on the basis of morphology: the different character areas in Hadleigh resulted the different timescales and trajectories of change, in this case the decisions of landlords and tenants to exploit different parts of the landscape in different ways. In the central area the village *community* was dominant, with its nucleated settlement, large common and probable open fields. Beyond this there was a landscape where the *individual* was dominant with a series of isolated farmsteads associated with enclosed fields. The woodland survived due to the *conservatism* of several large ecclesiastical institutions located many miles away, while the south east of the parish was dominated by a magnificent royal residence, and a landscape *transformed* through the creation of a deer park, its subsequent enclosure, and then the areas transformation by the Salvation Army into its Home Farm Colony. Adjacent landscapes could have very different histories, and historic landscape analysis can make a significant contribution to understanding how that came about.

\*\*\*\*\* end of boxed case-  
study\*\*\*\*\*

### **SUMMARY SO FAR:**

The British countryside displays marked regional variation in character reflecting its geology/topography/natural ecological potential and the varied cultural/historical factors affecting how it was exploited by human communities in the past and present. This regional variation was certainly recognised by early topographical

writers and historic landscape analysis is a means of describing and understanding how it came about. The natural/physical background and the historic landscape that overlies it can be mapped in two dimensions (eg different patterns of settlement and field systems), but can only be understood when time-depth is added in order to understand the different process of landscape creation and change. From the discussion so far, a number of key facets of the cultural landscape should have emerged:

- **Historic landscape analysis** has developed from local/regional history, historical geography and landscape archaeology and is not a single technique, but an approach to describing/mapping spatial variation in landscape character, most notably as a means of **integrating** a wide range of archaeological and documentary material.
- The **physical fabric** of the historic landscape:
  - the rural countryside comprises a series of inter-related **elements/parcels** (eg individual fields, settlements, and roads) and **components** (eg field systems, settlement patterns, and communications networks), that together combine to create generic landscape **types/zones** of different character
  - all these aspects of the cultural landscape must be studied together rather than isolation: the way in which the individual components **articulate** with each other is fundamental to understanding historic landscape character
  - in different areas the particular components, types and zones combine in unique ways, leading to distinctive local character **areas**. At a regional scale these can be regarded as analogous to French *pays*, and at a national scale can be generalised as the 'champion' and 'woodland' landscapes (corresponding to Rackham's planned and ancient countryside, and Roberts' and Wrathmell's Central, and South Eastern and West and North Western Provinces).
  - **relict landscapes**, vernacular **architecture** and **building materials** (including field boundaries etc) also make a significant contribution to historic landscape character.
- The **linguistic** dimension of the historic landscape – place-names and field-names – also make a significant contribution to regional variation in landscape character, as well as our understanding of how the landscape has evolved and what it looked like in the past.
- The cultural dimension (**human agency**): the landscape is the product of a wide range of cultural processes, interacting with the physical environment, and human agency has been instrumental in shaping bio-diversity and habitats.
  - the term 'natural beauty' is misleading in not acknowledging the cultural contribution to landscape.
  - different patterns of landownership and land tenure clearly influenced historic landscape evolution and are often crucial to understanding differences in the physical fabric of the countryside
- The temporal dimension (**time depth**) of the historic landscape:
  - landscapes have a **time-depth** resulting from various historical processes, operating in different places and at different times, that led to marked regional variation in landscape character

- most landscapes will be a **palimpsest** of features from different periods, though some areas will have a character that is dominated by one or more major processes/events.
- understanding this temporal dimension is essential in planning for the **future** if valued aspects of the landscape's character are to be maintained.
- the historic landscape is a still-functioning part of the archaeological record (the **buried-relict-historic** landscape continuum) and as such should be studied alongside those buried and relict landscapes that were contemporary.

## PART TWO

### APPROACHES AND METHODS

Growing awareness of the historic landscape as a cultural and academic resource presents two problems: from the research perspective there is the sheer volume of potential information that is locked up within the historic landscape, while from the management perspective there is the problem of how to deal with a cultural resource that is simply everywhere. It has been shown in Part 1 that landscapes are dynamic and ever-changing and they will no doubt continue to evolve, but if they are to retain the essential characteristics that led to their being so highly valued in the first place, then this evolution must be managed. One cannot manage what one does not understand, and as such the value of historic landscape analysis to planners and countryside managers is two-fold: firstly, it identifies what the present landscape comprises (including the key character defining features), and secondly, it can then be used to inform decisions about how future change can be accommodated: what Bloemers (2002, 90) has described as 'future-oriented archaeology'. Analysis of the historic landscape is also an important element of 'past-oriented' research into the origins and development of our countryside, notably its ability to infer process from morphology and to provide a framework for the integration of a wide range of disparate sources. Therefore Part 2 of this Handbook reviews the development of different approaches towards historic landscape analysis by researchers and heritage managers in England, Scotland and Wales, while Part 3 describes selected examples in greater detail. The aim is to present to the reader with a range of possible approaches to unlocking the wealth of information contained within the physical fabric of the historic landscape which can be tailored to particular projects: this Handbook does not attempt to present a single 'standard' technique, though certain key points of good practice are identified in Part 4.

### THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE IN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN BRITAIN

#### England: 'Historic Landscape Characterisation'

In 1991, a Government White Paper *This Common Inheritance* invited English Heritage to consider preparing a list of landscapes of historic importance to complement the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest*, with the intention of identifying areas of landscape that were deemed to be of particular historical importance and therefore worthy of greater protection. This led English Heritage to instigate a research and development project, carried out by Cobham Resource Consultants and the Oxford Archaeological Unit, to assess appropriate methodologies for identifying 'historic landscapes' (published as *Yesterdays World, Tomorrows Landscape*: Fairclough *et al* 1999), alongside a pilot project in Cornwall (see Part 3), and the secondment of English Heritage's Graham Fairclough to the Countryside Commission to advise on the preparation of its policy statement *Views from the Past: historic landscape character in the English Countryside* (Countryside Commission 1994a; 1996).

This early work led English Heritage to conclude that a simple Register was not appropriate (cf. Wales: see below) and that since the whole landscape has a historic dimension, the whole landscape is of value and as such should be subject to characterisation (see Fairclough 1994; 1995; 1999a, b, c; Fairclough *et al.* 2002). English Heritage's resulting approach has been to sponsor a series of **Historic Landscape Characterisation Projects** (HLCs) carried out by/on behalf of planning authorities (mostly counties, along with some 'Areas Outstanding Natural Beauty'

and National Parks) ([http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/Filestore/policy/pdf/countryside/boundless\\_horizons.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/Filestore/policy/pdf/countryside/boundless_horizons.pdf)). This is in line with approaches to landscape assessment undertaken for non-historical reasons, the general purpose of which has been defined by the Countryside Agency as assisting local authorities, land use and conservation agencies and the private sector to:

- understand how and why landscapes are important
- promote the appreciation of landscape issues
- successfully accommodate new development within the landscape
- guide and direct landscape change (Countryside Commission 1993; Swanwick *et al* 1999).

The methodologies adopted in the earlier English Heritage sponsored HLCs have shown considerable variation, which was inevitable as both the philosophy behind HLC, and the technology available, was both new and evolving (Aldred and Fairclough 2003). The pilot project in Cornwall (see case study in Part 3), along with its immediate successors<sup>10</sup> can be considered as the first generation of HLCs. They were paper-based, and entailed ascribing each parcel of landscape to one of a series of pre-determined 'historic landscape types' which in turn were simplified into 'zones'. These early HLCs established a series of key principles:

- that the whole landscape is historic including semi-natural environments (such as unenclosed upland pasture)
- that the historic landscape is ever present, all around us and always changing
- that the basis for mapping is the modern landscape (though in contrast to later HLCs, extensive use was made of earlier cartographic sources in order to gauge the degree of recent change within the landscape)
- the sources used were systematic and region-wide
- the methodology was objective, transparent and repeatable

The next 'generation' of HLCs saw several methodological changes.<sup>11</sup> Most notable was the use of GIS (though by digitising paper-based work rather than using a fully electronic map-base) which allowed every single parcel of landscape to be assessed and/or tagged with a set of 'attributes' (size, shape etc) to which an interpretation could then be added to define blocks of uniform 'historic landscape character type' (eg Hampshire: Colour Plate B). These second generation HLCs took longer than the earlier examples, but dispensed with the use of earlier cartographic sources, lacked such detailed interpretative commentaries, and moved towards more morphological descriptions.

The third 'generation'<sup>12</sup> of HLCs in England started to see GIS reach its full potential in that the 'base-map' was itself electronic. The use of GIS also facilitates the integration of HLC with other sources (eg digitally rectified air photographs, early cartographic sources, and other databases such as Sites and Monuments Records). This allowed each 'polygon' to be tagged with increasing numbers of attributes, and while there was a tendency for strongly morphological descriptions these could be interpreted through further appropriate tags. Another key aspect of

<sup>10</sup> Peak District National Park and then the rest of Derbyshire: Barnatt 1999; the now abolished county of Avon: Sydes 1999; and the Isle of Axholme in the Countryside Commissions' 'Historic Landscape Character Area' of the Humberhead Levels: Miller 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Hampshire (see Figure 15): Lambrick 1999; Tartaglia-Kershaw 1999; Fairclough *et al.* 2002; the Cotswolds 'Area of Outstanding Beauty' and then the rest of Gloucestershire: Wills 1999; Nottinghamshire: Bishop 1999; Kent; and Suffolk.

<sup>12</sup> Lancashire (see Part 3), Somerset, Herefordshire, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Essex.

this 'generation' of HLCs was the distinguishing of present and past historic landscape character where the two differed significantly (a feature of the first generation).

Based on the sixteen completed studies (along with some input from four projects in progress and three at the planning stage), in 2002 English Heritage undertook the 'National HLC Method Review', leading to two reports: a review of the methodologies used to date (*Historic Landscape Characterisation: Taking Stock of the Method*; Aldred and Fairclough 2003; <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/Filestore/conserving/characterisation/1-Cover.pdf>), and a more standardized methodology for future work (*Historic Landscape Characterisation: Template Project Design for EH-supported county-wide HLC projects*; Fairclough 2002; <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/Filestore/conserving/characterisation/HLCPDtemplate1stEd25nov.pdf>). Both advocated greater standardisation in both methodology and terminology, including a uniform set of 'broad types' (a move back to the interpretative 'zones' of the older schemes). This more standardised approach is reflected in the fourth wave of county-based HLCs, which are also seeing the greater use of earlier cartographic sources (a feature of the first generation).<sup>13</sup>

A feature of the early work in Cornwall that has not usually been continued is that the full sequence of historic landscape character types, zones and areas were initially identified, though the map of areas has been left in draft form and not published (for an extract see Herring 1998, 47-8). Subsequent English Heritage sponsored HLCs have not identified 'historic landscape character areas' because the Countryside Agency's 'Countryside Character Initiative' ([www.countryside.gov.uk/cc/](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/cc/)) have already mapped 'landscape character areas'. Whether 'historic landscape character areas' are deemed useful is for these 'future-oriented' projects to decide; from a 'past-oriented' research perspective they are essential and equate to the *pays* and regions that early topographic writers were so keenly aware of (see above and Lambrick and Bramhill 1999).

[INSERT COLOUR PLATES]

### **Scotland: 'Historic Landuse Assessment'**

Historic Scotland and The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland have been collaborating since 1996 in their version of HLC – Historic Landuse Assessment (HLA) – which aims to 'map the landuse of Scotland from a historical perspective, showing its functional complexity and date of origin' (eg Colour Plate C; Macinnes 2002a, b; Dixon and Hingley 2002; Dyson Bruce *et al* 1999; Stevenson and Dyson Bruce 2002). The methodology was inspired by that of Cornwall but adapted substantially for the Scottish context. The term 'historic landuse' is used instead of 'historic landscape' for two reasons: firstly, Scottish Natural Heritage were concerned that the title 'historic landscape character assessment' was too close to their own 'landscape character assessments', which at the time (1994/5) were fairly new and just starting to be used by planning authorities (Stevenson and Dyson Bruce 2002, 52). The second reason was that the Scottish approach was to focus upon the physical remains of the cultural landscape that inherently are related to landuse, as opposed to the wider issues perception that are a sometimes a factor in the work in Wales (see below: Lesley Macinnes, pers. comm., February 2003).

In contrast to many of the earlier English HLCs, but in common with more recent developments there (eg Cornwall: Herring and Tapper 2002) and in Wales, the Scottish methodology also considers relict landscapes and the contribution that

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<sup>13</sup> Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Cumbria, Devon, Dorset, the Isle of Wight, Northamptonshire, and Shropshire.

they make to the character of the present countryside. Two categories of Landuse Type are, therefore, defined:

- Historic Landuse Types: reflecting historic landuse types in current use, which may include types that are in origin several hundred years old
- Relict Landuse Types: reflecting historic landuse types that are no longer maintained for their original purpose, but which have left a visible trace in the landscape, and also relict archaeological landscapes that may be mapped (Dixon and Hingley 2002, 86).

Initially 47 'historic landuse types' (eg crofting township, 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century rectilinear fields) were identified alongside 48 relict types (eg pre-improvement agriculture and settlement, abandoned 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century rectilinear fields) that in places were also a current type as they form the key character-defining feature of today's countryside.

It was well-known that medieval settlements and field systems in the Highlands and Hebrides were swept away in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural improvements, and now only survive as relict remains (Dodgshon 1993a; 1993b; 1994) and in occasional depictions in contemporary paintings (Smout 1996), and an important result of the Scottish HLA has been to reveal the extent to which the Scottish landscape generally was re-modelled in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the result that most of the countryside studied so far is essentially only up to 300 years old (Piers Dixon, pers. comm., February 2003). Shetland and parts of Orkney stand out in this respect as being different. At first sight, Orkney is dominated by regimented field-systems, as may be seen on Shapinsay where the whole island has been laid out to a single grid of fields. On west Mainland, however, there are elements of the landscape that relate to the pattern of settlement that preceded the agricultural improvements. Within the rectilinear fields and modern farmsteads there are clusters of smallholdings or crofts that have continued to occupy the site of their pre-improvement townships, comprising a pattern of scattered steadings and fields that are irregular in plan and small in scale in comparison with the neighbouring improved farmland. This is unusual because crofting townships in the western highlands and islands were laid out to a single plan that owed little to what went before, and in lowland areas small tenants, if they got any recognition at all, generally received plots of marginal land. Grimeston is an example of this continuity of settlement (Colour Plate C2-3). At the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map the unenclosed fields of Grimeston and the scatter of tenants steadings may be discerned in a sea of unimproved pasture, except for the fields of an improved farm to the south east. Today this pattern is inherent in the crofters' steadings and the irregular small fields surrounded by the rectilinear pattern of improved farmland (I wish to thank Piers Dixon for providing this case-study).

### **Wales: *The Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales***

In England and Scotland HLC/HLA is being used to establish the historic character of the landscape through a systematic 'bottom-up' analysis and crucial to this approach is that no individual areas are identified as having particular importance. By contrast, in Wales, Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments did follow the Government's suggestion in *This Common Inheritance* and, in collaboration with The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and working with the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and the Welsh unitary authorities, embarked upon the creation of the two-part *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales* (Part 2 of the *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales*: Cadw 1998; 2001). In an ideal world this would have been preceded by a 'bottom-up' HLC of the whole Welsh landscape to determine the range of historic landscapes present, the relative rarity/abundance of each type, their quality of preservation, and ultimately the



relative importance of each type/area. However, as the experience in England and Scotland has since shown this would have been a very long process and so the decision was taken that there was sufficient expertise amongst professional archaeologists, historians and historical geographers working on the Welsh landscape to identify the most important areas through a 'top-down' approach. From over a hundred consultations, there was a clear consensus as to the 36 outstanding and further 58 special historic landscapes, and this ensured the speedy production of the Register, so that it could start to input into planning decisions (Figure 16).

In addition to areas of still-functioning historic landscape, the Welsh Register includes examples where relict remains make a major contribution to present landscape character, for example the prehistoric monument complexes of the Preseli Hills in Pembrokeshire, and post medieval lead mining landscape of Holywell Common and Halkyn Mountain in Clwyd. Certain historic landscapes in the Register also have important cultural associations such as the Vale of Dolgellau's early Quaker community, and the inspiration that the Lower Wye Valley's provided for the Reverend William Gilpin's treatise on the notion and depiction of landscape as Picturesque.

### ***The Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study***

Alongside the creation of the *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales*, Cadw and CCW also funded a detailed examination of one of the outstanding historic landscapes: the Gwent Levels. The *Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study* was based upon in-depth research into the history and evolution of this c.111 km<sup>2</sup> of reclaimed coastal marshland between Cardiff and Chepstow (Figure 16), which started with a desegregation of the historic landscape into its components/themes which were then reintegrated into a series of historic landscape types that were initially defined on the basis of morphology (variants of irregular, intermediate and regular) and then the inferred process of their creation (eg piecemeal reclamation etc): this is discussed further below: see Figure 17 and 20-1. The research was published as *The Gwent Levels: the evolution of a wetland landscape* (Rippon 1996a; and see Rippon 1995; 1997b) which essentially tells the story of how the landscape of today came into being, as far as it was understood at the time: survey and excavation in advance of developments and coastal erosion have led to a series of subsequent archaeological investigations that have advanced our understanding of the prehistoric and Roman periods (Bell *et al.* 2000; Meddens 2001; Nayling and Caseldine 1997; Nayling 1998; Rippon 2000c, and the journal *Archaeology in the Severn Estuary*), while work elsewhere has led to a more detailed mapping of the early phases of landscape development (see case study on the Early Stages of Marshland Colonisation below).

A separate report *The Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study: characterisation and assessment of the landscape* (Rippon 1996b; and see Rippon 1996a, fig. 42) was designed to inform planners and countryside managers of the time-depth present in this remarkable landscape. This took the academic research into the origins and development of the landscape (the 'past-oriented' work) one step further in identifying a series of discrete and well defined 'character areas', which were each described using the following criteria:

- **Location:** noting significant relationships to other character areas
- **Period:** including main period(s) or creation and modification
- **Components:** key character defining features such as field boundary and settlement patterns
- **Existing designations:** national and local planning and conservation designations
- **Condition**

- % of the Gwent Levels that this character area comprised c.1880 (base-mapping being the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Six Inch maps)
  - % of the original (c.1880) area surviving
  - % field boundaries lost since c.1880
  - % of fields having seen agricultural improvement
- **Documentation and association**
- **Current proposed developments**
- **Significance and value:** identification of the key features of this historic landscape character area.

The Gwent levels are an example of a discrete physical *pay* that in part was occupied by communities whose territories (ie manors/parishes) were restricted to the marshland, although parts of the lower-lying backfens were exploited by communities living on the fen-edge and whose territories/estates embraced both wetland and dryland. During the post medieval period large amounts of land on the Levels was owned or leased by farmers living elsewhere and used as 'accommodation' land to fatten up livestock over the summer, and this seasonality is reflected in field-names such as 'Summerlease', and droveways such as 'Summerway'. If the GLHLS had been a purely past-oriented research project then the wetlands themselves would have to have been part of a far wider study area that to a certain degree explored these wider socio-economic themes (see Rippon 1997a).

### ***Top-down historic landscape characterisation in Wales***

Following the example of the Gwent Levels, the four Welsh Archaeological Trust are currently carrying out detailed characterisations for each of the landscapes the *Register*. For each landscape the report comprises a short introduction, followed by a description of nine '**historic landscape themes**' that cover the whole area:

- The natural landscape
- The administrative landscape
- Settlement landscapes
- Agricultural landscapes
- Transport and communications
- Industrial landscapes
- Defended landscapes
- Funerary, Ecclesiastical and Legendary landscapes
- Ornamental and Picturesque landscapes

These descriptions have a strong feel of historical narrative, introducing the reader to how the landscape of today came into being. Following a 'top-down' approach each of the historic landscapes is then broken down into its discrete and unique historic landscape character areas as determined by the physical fabric of the historic landscape, landuse patterns and a series of 'key historic landscape characteristics' that have shaped these areas:

- topography
- general settlement character
- description of settlements
- landuse today
- field patterns
- woodland
- roads
- mills
- quarries/industry

- churches/chapels
- parks and gardens
- sources

This work can feed into the Countryside Council for Wales' landscape assessment methodology known as *LANDMAP*, and will inform various initiatives to protect and manage the Welsh countryside most notably the *Tir Gofal* agri-environmental scheme. An acronym for 'landscape assessment and decision-making process', *LANDMAP* has been developed by CCW in partnership with the local and National Park Authorities, the Welsh Development Agency and other organisations with interests in landscape management and aims to collect, collate and evaluate information on landscape resources in Wales (geology, visual qualities, wildlife as well as its cultural and historical interests) and to assess landscapes on a transparent and systematic basis. Assessors will examine a number of factors when describing a landscape and grading its worth. The methodology is GIS-based and has been devised to enable a wide range of information to be integrated into a single data-base capable of informing and supporting the needs of a variety of end users and decision makers concerned with landscape management. Once all-Wales cover is available *LANDMAP* will become a powerful strategic tool to inform the sustainable use of landscape in Wales, including a historic landscape component.

\*\*\*\*\* start of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

[INSERT FIGURE 16: Wales, with CPAT area and landscapes included in Register]

## **CASE-STUDY: THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST'S HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION OF THE MIDDLE WYE VALLEY (Figure 16)**

### **Key features:**

- *representative of the top-down identification of historic landscape character areas in Wales*
- *future-oriented work to inform planners and countryside managers*
- *a simple product making high level generalisations*
- *carried out by staff of the local archaeological unit, with a good local knowledge of the landscape and actively engaged in researching its archaeology/history*

further reading: <http://www.cpat.org.uk/projects/longer/histland/histland.htm>

Cadw 1998 *Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales*. Cardiff: Cadw Welsh Historic Monuments.

*The following description, taken from the Historic Landscapes Register, identifies the essential historic landscape themes in the historic character area as a whole.*

This distinctive Powys landscape lies to the southwest of Hay-on-Wye in the shadow of the Black Mountains, and runs from Hay Bluff at its north end to Mynydd Troed in the south. The landscape identified includes the floodplain and steeply sloped northern edge of the Wye valley, and the deeply incised plateau beneath the northern scarp of the Black Mountains.

This particular region of the Wye valley is in many ways similar to the Usk valley further to the southwest, around Brecon, typified by small hedged fields enclosing the rich agricultural land on the valley floor between about 80 and 100 m above OD. To the southeast the land rises steeply onto the Black Mountains, which reach up to 700 m above OD, with evidence of agrarian encroachment along the

lower slopes, rising onto the open moorland beyond. The area has a rich and varied history with important cultural associations.

Along the southern side of the valley, on the edges of the upland, lie a series of important Neolithic funerary monuments of a type known, because of their distinctive form and plan, as Severn-Cotswold tombs. These tombs were in recurrent use as communal repositories for the remains of the dead during the later half of the fourth millennium BC. There are impressive tombs surviving at Penywrlodd (Llanigon), Little Lodge, Pipton, Fostyll and Penywrlodd (Talgarth). Among the other impressive prehistoric monuments in the area is the Pen-y-Beacon Bronze Age stone circle on the edge of the Black Mountains.

Although much of the area owes its appearance to Anglo-Norman influences, there is significant evidence for native Welsh settlement. Glasbury is thought to have originally been a *clas* foundation (the administrative centre of a monastic unit of settlement in medieval times), and it is also recorded as being the site of the Battle of Clasbirig in 1056 between the Saxons and the Welsh. Llyswen is reputedly focused on another *clas* church, founded during the 6th century, and there is documentary evidence for a religious site being given to the See of Llandaff in about AD 650.

The Anglo-Norman settlement is most clearly seen at Hay-on-Wye, which still retains its medieval street plan, with remnants of the castle and town defences. Today, the town is best known for its bookshops and the annual festival of literature. Across the Wye from Hay lies the site of the Roman fort alongside the river, and beyond it, Clyro, made famous by the diary of the Reverend Francis Kilvert, who lived in the village in the 1870s. Although many of the places described by Kilvert are currently outside the area described here, the lifelike account he has left of the places and people he knew, has caused the region centred upon Clyro to become known as Kilvert Country, and to become a place of literary pilgrimage. Other important medieval settlements include Talgarth and Bronllys, both of which had extensive open arable field systems surviving up to the middle of the 19th century; that of Bronllys having been only enclosed in 1863. Many of the small villages are thought to have had early medieval origins and some, such as Llanfilo, display important earthwork remains relating to their former medieval extents. Trefecca is famous for Trevecca College founded in the mid-18th century by Howell Harris, who was well-known for founding early Welsh Methodist societies, assembling a community of about 100 followers at his home, Trevecka Fach, in 1752. The community was influential in printing religious books and also for agricultural improvements.

Along the northern slopes of the Black Mountains lie several commons, such as Tregoyd Common and Common Bychan, which preserve their post-medieval field systems. The landscape here contrasts strongly with the moors to the south-east and the hedged landscape of the valley floor.

*There follows discussion of each of the **historic landscape themes** listed above, and the Middle Wye valley is then broken down into a series of **historic landscape character areas** each with a detailed description. The following example illustrates the systematic discussion of the archaeological/historical background, the present landscape appearance including the standing buildings, relict remains that still contribute to the present character of the landscape, and cultural associations.*

### **Bryn-yr-hydd Clyro and Glasbury, Powys (Historic Landscape Character Area 1082)**

*Summary:* Small medieval nucleated church and castle settlements on valley edge, and medieval and later scattered farmsteads on lower-lying hill land in landscape of small irregular fields, representing gradual encroachment on upland commons.

### *Historic background*

Early settlement in the area is indicated by scatters of flintwork of Mesolithic, Neolithic and early Bronze Age date, a Neolithic polished stone axe, and the remains of the Neolithic chambered tomb at Court Farm, just to the south-west of Clyro. Settlement in the Iron Age period is suggested by the earthwork enclosure on Bryn-yr-hydd Common. The character area fell along the southern edge of the Welsh medieval kingdom of *Elfael*, whose boundary at this point lay along the river Wye on the south and probably along the line of Cilcenni Dingle on the west. The area formed part of the medieval ecclesiastical parishes of Clyro and Llowes. The earliest evidence relating to St Meilig's church, Llowes, is a decorated cross of the 11th-century, but both the church and the settlement around it possibly date to the early medieval pre-Conquest period. The early history of St Michael's Church at Clyro is less clear. Parts of the church are possibly of early 15th-century date, though the church and associated settlement may have been first established in association with the earthwork and stone castle, known as La Royl, to the southeast of the village. The castle is first mentioned in 1396, but it may have had its origins in the period between the late 11th to 13th centuries. Castle Kinsey motte and bailey at Court Evan Gwynne is again likely to this period. Buildings at Court Farm, Clyro, include part of medieval stone buildings probably belonging to a monastic grange of Cwmhir Abbey, Radnorshire. At the Act of Union in 1536 the area fell within the hundred of Painscastle in Radnorshire. In the mid 19th century the area fell within the tithe parishes of Clyro and Llowes.

### *Key historic landscape characteristics*

The area occupies low, south-facing undulating hills, overlooking the floodplain of the river Wye, between a height of between 80 and 244 m above Ordnance Datum. The soils are predominantly well-drained fine reddish loams overlying sandstone bedrock (Milford Series). The present-day land-use is predominantly pasture, with areas of modern conifer plantation on steeper slopes, as at Cwm-Sirhwy Wood, Forest Wood and Pen-y-lan. There are some areas of ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland along some of the steep-sided stream valleys such as Clyro Brook, Garth Dingle, Fron Wood and Cilcenni Dingle. Small remnant areas of unenclosed upland Common Land survive at Llowes Common and Bryn-yr-hydd Common, with birch scrub, and bracken.

The present-day settlement pattern includes the small nucleated villages at Clyro and Llowes on low-lying ground on the edge of the floodplain of the Wye, together with a pattern of dispersed medium to small-sized farms about 300–900 m apart, mostly on the higher ground, in many cases lying within their own lands and approached by farm tracks. The large country house of the 1840s at Clyro Court approached by a long drive to the south-west of Clyro and is set out in a dominating position above the former turnpike road to the south.

Surviving medieval buildings include part of the fabric of St Michael's Church at Clyro and the pointed arches in a barn at Court Farm, Clyro, which are believed to be part of the a monastic grange belonging to the Cistercian abbey at Cwmhir.

A number of building platforms on sloping ground to the north of the village of Llowes possibly represent abandoned medieval or later house sites. The earliest surviving domestic buildings are of late medieval to early post-medieval date and include a number of cruck-framed timber buildings rebuilt in stone in the 17th–19th centuries. This building horizon is represented by several dwellings in the village of Clyro, the Old Vicarage and Radnor Arms in Llowes (both of which area based on late medieval hall houses), and Bryn-yr-hydd farmhouse and barn, the farmhouse at Bryn-yr-hydd possibly being derived from a longhouse plan. Other farmhouses, and larger and smaller dwellings built anew in the 17th to early 19th centuries are generally of stone rubble, as at Moity farmhouse, Parciau, and cottages within the

villages of Clyro and Llowes. A number of 17th- to 18th-century stone farm buildings survive, occasionally with stone gable walls and weatherboarded sides, including a linear range of buildings at Moity Farm, Gaer Farm, a hay barn at Court Evan Gwynne and a converted stone hay barn within the village of Llowes. Stone rubble, sometimes rendered or roughcast, continued to be the predominant building material in the area in the 18th to early to mid 19th-century, as in the case of houses and farmworkers' cottages within the village of Llowes and Clyro, including some with brick window and door dressings. Local stone roofing tiles were probably commonplace before the widespread adoption of slate in the later 19th century. Stone tiles survive on a number of buildings, including the Old Vicarage, the Radnor Arms and Barn Cottage in Llowes and Sacred Cottage and a number of other cottages in Clyro.

Clyro in particular expanded following improvements to the road system from the later 18th century onwards, notable buildings of this period including the earlier 19th-century Baskerville Arms Hotel, the former stone Victorian school, Clyro Court (now the Baskerville Hall Hotel), and the former stables and coachhouse to Clyro Court (now Cil y Beiddiau) and the stone-built Victorian school and Schoolmaster's House. Clyro Court and a number of later 19th-century buildings, such as the Vicarage House at Llowes, were built in ashlar masonry, or had ashlar dressings.

Traces of ridge and furrow on west side of Clyro possibly represent former medieval open fields belonging to the village. The modern agricultural landscape is dominated by small and irregularly-shaped fields, with lynchet formation on the steeper slopes indicating that more widespread cultivation in the past. Most of the field boundaries are formed of multi-species hedges, including hazel, holly, and blackthorn. Small areas of unenclosed land at Bryn-yr-hydd Common and Llowes Common appear to represent the remnants of more extensive areas of upland grazing, perhaps enclosed during the course of the 18th century. Relatively late enclosure appears to be indicated by a pattern of medium-sized rectangular fields with single-species hedges to the north-west Llowes Common, in the area between Old Forest and Fforest-cwm. A number of the upland farms evidently represent earlier phases of encroachment in the medieval and late medieval periods, with occasional drystone wall field boundaries and low clearance banks on some of the higher ground. Many of the farms and houses in the area were associated with orchards in the 19th century, particularly in the area around Clyro, of which some remnants survive.

A pattern of early winding roads, lanes and footpaths links the farms, townships and village centres, many of which are likely to be of medieval origin. The lanes generally skirt around the field boundaries, some occupying hollow-ways up to 3m or more in depth, which formed in the period before the introduction of metalled road surfaces. Surviving from the turnpike era of road transport are milestones near Clyro, Courtway and Llowes and Bronydd.

Processing industry is represented by several former water corn mills. Llowes Mill on Garth Brook, a tributary of the Wye is first mentioned in the 1840s; it ceased working in about 1920 and is now derelict. The Clyro Brook in the village of Clyro once provided power for two water corn mills, Pentwyn Mill and Paradise Mill, both possibly of 18th century origin. Pentwyn Mill had probably ceased working by 1840, whereas Paradise Mill was last worked in 1940. Extractive industry is represented by a number of small stone quarries which were probably worked for building stone from about the 17th century onwards.

Defensive structures within the area include the possibly Iron Age earthwork Bryn-yr-hydd enclosure, Castle Kinsey motte and bailey at Court Evan Gwynne, and Clyro Castle, which has a motte-like platform with possible foundations of stone shell keep.

Important religious buildings include the churches within the medieval nucleated settlements at Llowes and Clyro, both of which were substantially rebuilt in the 1850s. The former early 19th-century New Zion Chapel near Moity Farm, is built of stone rubble. Like many nonconformist places of worship in the area it is characteristically sited in isolation on the higher ground, where it would have served a dispersed rural community.

In terms of cultural associations, the area is well known for its links with the writings of the diarist Francis Kilvert, curate of Clyro between 1864–76. Clyro Court is associated with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who is said to have stayed at the house (built by the Baskerville family) to write *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, serialized in the *Strand Magazine* between 1901–02.

Source: <http://www.cpat.org.uk/projects/longer/histland/histland.htm>

\*\*\*\*\* end of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

### **Attributing value to historic landscape character**

The use of HLC in Wales is very different to that in England and Scotland in terms of its top-down methodology, and the decision to identify certain areas of the historic landscape as being more important than others. English Heritage rejects this selective approach:

‘There was ... a need for a comprehensive broad-based approach to landscape to counter the strong and well-intentioned (but ultimately misguided) desire in some quarters (some of whom ought to have known better) to ‘solve’ the problem of landscape protection by the selection of the “best bits”. This would have taken us down more than one cul-de-sac, and we needed to avoid this by putting forward a more sensible, integrated approach (what is now called “joined-up” thinking) (Fairclough 1999b, 5).

This issue is a contentious issue and HLC practitioners, planners, and countryside and heritage managers have some stark differences of opinions as to whether or not certain areas of the historic landscape should be identified as being of greater value than others. While a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this Handbook the issue should at least be aired so the reader can start to form their own opinion (and see Foard and Rippon 1998).

The British planning system presently has as one of its underlying principles that we control development in areas of particular importance for their nature conservation value (eg Sites of Special Scientific Interest), visual character (eg Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and National Parks), architectural interest (eg Listed Buildings, and Conservation Areas), and archaeological significance (Scheduled Ancient Monuments). The Welsh *Register* follows this approach for the historic landscape, while in contrast the English Heritage philosophy rejects the idea that some areas of the historic landscape (the “best bits”) are more important than others. Is it not the case, however, that some areas of historic landscape are better preserved than others, or have greater cultural associations? Has the debate between the English and Welsh approaches got too polarised (‘to designate or not to designate’), and what we should be moving towards is a recognition that, whilst acknowledging that all landscapes have a historic dimension, and all landscapes must continue to evolve, certain places have a greater capacity to absorb change of a certain nature than others? Where, for example, is it more appropriate to accommodate a new industrial estate: on an area of well-preserved agricultural landscape which retains a wide range of historic features, and has excellent documentary sources for the medieval period, or an area subject to intensive agricultural ‘improvement’ that has removed most of the historic landscape components, along with piecemeal light industrial development that is increasing

peppering some parts of our countryside? What might be the more appropriate course for a new motorway: through the middle of a well-preserved and unique 12<sup>th</sup> century planned village and its associated field system, or on agricultural land of a fairly common type, where there has already been significant field boundary loss, and adjacent to the existing urban/industrial fringe (so that the motorway simply represents a relatively limited extension of this urban/industrial zone). In each of these cases, having assessed the historic landscape character of *all* these areas, and accepting that *each* has a value, it is surely quite clear that the proposed developments are more appropriate in the latter locations?

It is only possible for HLC to steer development away from the most sensitive areas in this way if specific *character areas* are identified, as value cannot be attributed to generic types or zones. Assessing the value of all areas is also not the same as designating just certain places and ignoring the rest: it advocates an objective description of historic landscape character across the *whole* region (county etc), and an assessment of each character areas' importance in terms of its rarity, condition, cultural associations etc. The comparison of modern and historic maps, for example, can allow certain areas of landscape to be identified that have experienced considerable change, and which will therefore be more able to accommodate future change than areas of historic landscape that are better preserved.

Some degree of change can not only be acceptable but even beneficial if it is compatible with the prevailing historic landscape character: the planting of small areas of mixed deciduous woodland on steeper hillsides within areas of 'ancient [ie medieval] enclosure' would be perfectly acceptable, as such valley-side woodland has always been an important part of the historic landscape character such areas. Planting the same woodland on *most* areas of a reclaimed coastal wetland would be totally unacceptable as there has never been such a habitat on these areas; small areas of alder woodland in the lowest-lying backfens of such wetlands would, in contrast, be an interesting development for although very little remains today, such a landscape component is historically well-attested. The role of HLC here would be to advise a countryside manager proposing to plant woodland of the location and species that are most in keeping with the historic landscape character.

There will probably never be agreement on whether the *designation* of particular historic landscapes as being of particular significance is a good or a bad thing: the approach certainly has its advantages and its disadvantages. What seems clearer is that a *comprehensive* HLC, uniformly carried out across a whole region (county, National Park etc), is of great benefit to planners and countryside managers who have the task managing change throughout the historic landscape. Some 'change', however, amounts to wholesale destruction, and the extent to which universal characterisation should be used to identify certain areas as being of *particular significance*, so that such development avoids these areas, will no doubt continue to be debated.



## **HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS AND UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESSES OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE**

The discussion above has focused on how analysis of the historic landscape can be used to inform the planning process and countryside management. As such, this work has as its focus the mapping of today's landscape character, although both the early work in Cornwall and more recent HLCs incorporate historical map sources so that the degree of recent landscape change can be gauged. While 'forward-looking' in terms of their primary role, the careful design of these databases give them great potential for further research into the origins and development of our countryside and townscapes (eg see Cornwall case-study in Part 3). There is far more to historic landscape analysis, however, than HLC/HLA and the principle that different landscape morphologies (settlement patterns, field boundary patterns etc) reflects different processes of landscape creation and evolution, particularly when integrated with a wide range of other archaeological, documentary and place-name evidence, is explored further in the rest of this section.

### **The integration of sources**

A key feature of historic landscape analysis is that its physical fabric provides a framework for the mapping and integration of a wide range of sources:

- early cartographic sources that record the landscape at different stages in its development
- archaeological evidence, in terms of both 'relict' features and buried sites/landscapes, that form parts of the historic landscape that have been abandoned, or relate to earlier, long since abandoned landscapes but which still contribute to historic landscape character
- documentary sources referring to components of the landscape, patterns of landuse and landholding.

Documentary sources in particular contain a huge reservoir of information on past landscapes in terms of who held land and how it was used, and Britain has a long history of social, economic and agrarian histories, notably of the great monastic estates whose archives have survived the best (eg Finberg 1951; Keil 1964). All too often, however, the discussion of settlements, field systems, agriculture and landholding takes a very 'abstract' form with little or no attempt to reconstruct what these landscape actually looked like. Historic landscape analysis can, however, achieve this as many Tithe Surveys and other early cartographic sources record place- and field-names which can be compared to those in earlier documents (see Field 1972; 1993; Richardson 2002). In Shapwick (Somerset), for example, post-Enclosure field-names preserve many medieval furlong names listed in a 16<sup>th</sup> century survey which have enabled the structure of the open field system to be reconstructed (Aston *et al.* 1998), while in nearby Meare 19<sup>th</sup> century field-names can be traced back through a variety of 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century sources allowing the sequence in which different areas were reclaimed to be established (see Case Study in Part 3).

### **The scale of research**

The historic landscape can be studied at a wide variety of scales, and the size of a study area will be determined by a wide range of variables including:

- aims of the project: ranging from an in-depth investigation of a particular community and its landscape, through to the more rapid assessment of a limited number facets of landscape character over a county or larger scale.

- resources: the time and expertise available
- sources: the extent to which fieldwork, field- and place-names, historic maps and other surviving documentary sources are being used

Examples of convenient study-areas include:

**parish/manor:** clearly-defined territories that correspond to the communities and manors that were the basis of how the landscape was exploited on a day-to-day basis, and which led to the creation of many key landscape-related documentary sources (such as estate surveys, court rolls etc). Examples in this Handbook: Hadleigh (Figure 15); Meare (see Part 3).

**district:** areas defined on the basis of physical topography and/or early territorial divisions. Example in this Handbook: the Caldicot Level (Figures 17 and 20-1), a discrete and closely defined physical *pay* extending encompassed by four wholly marshland parishes and parts of ten others which extended onto the adjacent drylands. Another example of landscape study on this scale includes the eleven parishes of the Whittlewood Project (in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire), focused on a royal forest and the communities living around its fringes (Page and Jones 2000; Jones and Page 2001). The large early medieval estates that fragmented into the units that became the basis of medieval parishes would also make for convenient units of study (eg the eight Rodings parishes in Essex: Bassett 1997).

**region:** larger-scale *pays* defined on the basis of broad physical divisions within the landscape giving rise to similar approaches by human communities towards their exploitation. Example in this Handbook: Greater Exmoor (Figure 18), the thirty nine parishes spread across Devon and Somerset that extend down from the high moors and across the upland fringe.

**county:** administrative unit that often bears little relationship to the cultural or physical landscape, though currently the basis for strategic planning. Convenient for research as many sources are organized on a county basis (eg Records Offices, Sites and Monument Records, county Records Society series, the Victoria County Histories, English Place-Name Society volumes). Examples in this Handbook: Hampshire (Colour Plate B), Lancashire (Colour Plate D), and Somerset (Figure 27.1).

**national:** in Scotland the plan is to apply HLA to the whole country, though in England methodological differences in the individual county-based HLC may make this difficult unless ultimately a 'top-down' approach is used. Roberts and Wrathmell (2000a; 2002) have completed a national characterisation of 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement patterns that has enormous potential for correlation with other data -sets (eg Darby's (1977) Domesday Geographies, and Campbell (2000) and Thirsk's (1967b) farming regions (see Somerset case-study in Part 3).

Historic landscape analysis could also be applied to a study area comprising scattered or disparate units. This might entail the comparison of a specific type of generic physical *pay* that occurs in various locations in order to compare how the same environment was exploited under different socio-economic conditions (eg under different patterns of landownership, and different proximities to centers of consumption). Another type of study could be an extensive but scattered estate such as those of the church (eg for ecclesiastical landholding in Somerset see Figure 27.14) or secular lordships (eg the Honor of Dudley: Hunn 1997).

### **Base maps in past-oriented historic landscape analysis**

The 'future-oriented' HLCs now use GIS systems that have as their base modern 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey maps. In contrast, 'past-oriented' research should use the earliest appropriate cartographic sources that show the landscape at a level of individual fields before the degradations of 20<sup>th</sup> century intensive farming. For historic landscape analysis covering large areas the best source is the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch Series (approximating to the modern 1:10,000 scale mapping), mostly surveyed between the 1860s and the 1880s (Oliver 1993, 30-4), and which should be available through most Records Offices or Local Studies Libraries. These maps are increasingly being used in digital form in HLCs. The First Edition Six Inch Series generally show the British landscape in a state of maturity, after the completion of what in many areas was a period of dramatic change in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, notably the enclosure of open fields and common pasture, and the reorganisation of large parts of the Scottish landscape as part of the agricultural improvements. The First Edition Six Inch Series also pre-date the large-scale destruction of field boundaries that formed part of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural intensification, and urban/industrial sprawl that has completely destroyed large areas of countryside: if the later 19<sup>th</sup> century represents a period of 'maturity' for the British landscape, the damage of recent decades to its historic coherence – such as the removal of field-boundaries, the drainage of wetlands, and cutting of peat – might represent its 'senility', and our insanity for allowing such destruction to happen!.

For smaller-scale study areas the Tithe Maps of c.1840 provide the earliest comprehensive mapping for most areas outside the Midland-zone, where Parliamentary Enclosure had usually already extinguished tithe payments making a survey unnecessary (Kain and Prince 1985; Kain and Oliver 1995). For areas that were subject to Parliamentary Enclosure the resulting maps usually cover all or most of the parish after enclosure (Kain *et al.* forthcoming), and earlier arrangement of the open fields normally requires the use of field evidence such as earthworks and documentary sources (eg Hall 1981). For a lucky handful places there are earlier maps covering the entire parish (eg Meare: Figure 28.1), while most places have at least a few pre-1840 estate maps that smaller areas (eg Hadleigh: Figure 15.3).

[INSERT FIGURE 17: Caldicot Level 1831 and c.1880]

### **Map regression/retrogressive analysis**

For anyone used to interpreting the morphology of field systems and settlement patterns, the earliest cartographic source with comprehensive coverage of the study area provides the best starting point for historic landscape analysis (see above). In order to interpret a two-dimensional map of a historic landscape, however, one has to understand the processes behind its creation. For those new to landscape research there is a benefit in starting with far more recent cartographic sources, and seeing how landscapes have changed over the last couple of centuries through studying a sequence of maps of the same area at different points in time (Williamson 1987 remains the seminal demonstration of this; and see Aston 1988c, fig. 4.3; Hunn 1994). The best place to start is a modern map, and then the sequence of previous Ordnance Survey maps of the same area, and finally the Tithe Map along with any earlier estate maps (eg Figures 15.2-3). Such an approach is known as **map regression** or **retrogressive analysis** and is a key to understanding the processes of landscape change.

An obvious question to ask is why is it necessary to look through a sequence of recent maps when earlier ones exist: why not simply consult the earliest source? The answer is that retrogressive analysis is not simply about establishing what the landscape looked like in the past, but understanding the *processes* whereby

landscapes change. Figure 17 shows the Caldicot Level, in South East Wales, at two periods: in 1831 when it was mapped for the Commissioners of Sewers (who were responsible for maintaining the drainage system in this reclaimed wetland: Gwent Records Office D.1365/2) and 1880/1 when it was mapped by the Ordnance Survey the First Edition Six Inch Series (published in 1886/7). A comparison of these maps shows several examples of the processes of landscape creation. A number of areas were subject to Parliamentary Enclosure: a series of common 'wastes' associated with droveways in Redwick and Whitson (and see Figure 1), the common pasture of Caldicot Moor, and the open fields of Redwick. In the case of the last two, morphologically distinctive landscapes were created following Enclosure, characterised by large rectangular fields, and long, straight, narrow roads and once a number of such comparative exercises have been completed the landscape researcher will soon be able to recognize the distinctive product of Parliamentary Enclosure. The enclosure of Whitson Common (and the other droveways) also resulted in a distinctive set of landscape features: the post enclosure road was set down the centre of the common with a set of long, narrow fields to either side representing the former road-side 'waste' (Figures 1 and 15.2). Another distinctive feature of this common being enclosed is how the row of farmsteads that were next to the edge of the Common are now set back from the post-Enclosure road (and see Figure 12: Longham). The network of roads, droveways and commons can be thought of as the skeleton of the historic landscape and their reconstruction in this way is often a good starting point when disaggregating a landscape into its component parts.

A comparison of the Caldicot Level in 1831 and 1880/1 illustrates another example of the process of landscape evolution, in this case how stratigraphic relationships can establish the relative chronology to two landscape elements. The Great Western Railway, from London Paddington to Cardiff, sliced through the northern part of this landscape during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and stratigraphically it clearly post-dates the earlier field and road system, creating small, awkwardly shaped, and sometimes even triangular parcels of land (and see Figure 15.2). Interesting, there is a very similar set of oddly-shaped fields on the northern side of the sea wall which runs along the southern edge of the Level, and analogy with the railway line's relationship to its neighbouring field boundaries suggests that the sea wall similarly post-dates the adjacent historic landscape: other research has demonstrated that this was indeed the case, and that the sea wall was set-back to its present location sometime in the late medieval period as a result of coastal erosion (Allen 1988; 2002; Rippon 1996a, 97-9).

[INSERT FIGURE 18: Greater Exmoor]

[INSERT FIGURES 19: Heal]

### **Patterns of landholding in the historic landscape**

Since the historic landscape was crafted by human hand, it is to be expected that different patterns of landholding/landownership will have had a far-reaching impact on the form that the landscape took. In the Hadleigh case-study (see Part 1) the communal regulation of the central area (the village, common and open fields) was contrasted with the dramatic impact of lordship on the royal estate, the small-scale and piecemeal assarting of the freeholders, and conservatism of the absentee ecclesiastical landowners (the who held most of the woodland).

Another example of how an appreciation of the nature of landholding can assist in understanding the origins and development of the historic landscape is shown in Figure 18. Gillard's (2002) characterization of the historic landscape in the Greater Exmoor region led to the identification of a distinctive landscape with small blocks of long narrow 'strip-like' fields associated with isolated farmsteads or small

hamlets. The distribution of these 'type VIII' landscape shows a marked bias towards the higher upland fringes, close to the upper limit of medieval/early post-medieval enclosure, some distance from what are assumed to have been the older settled lands around the parish churches. This location suggests that these were the colonising settlements of communities being forced to occupy some of the higher, more environmentally 'marginal', lands while the field boundary morphology is suggestive of small formerly sub-divided or common fields surrounded by larger closes probably held in severalty. This hypothesis was tested in a number of ways. Field survey showed that a number of the major linear boundaries that divided the blocks of different field morphology were more substantial than average, while an analysis of the Tithe Survey field-names identified several blocks of fields with both a common morphology and the same field-name (eg Newer Parks, Gratton and Holland: Figure 19A). The Tithe Survey also showed that the pattern of landownership in the blocks of small strip-like fields was extremely fragmented, in contrast to the larger closes that occurred in blocks of common ownership, supporting the hypothesis of a common-field core (now enclosed) with blocks of closes held in severalty beyond (Figure 19B). Such contrasting patterns of landownership have been noted elsewhere in the South West and alongside the physical fabric of the historic landscape, and patterns of field-names, can be a useful indicator of the structure and management of field systems (Aston 1988d, fig. 5.6; Longley 2001; Pattison 1999; Rippon in press).

### **Establishing a chronology and the role of schematic modeling**

Within any area of countryside there will be features of different date and historic landscape analysis can help establish both a relative chronology and an absolute chronology for these phases of development. The examples of the railway line and sea wall post-dating the rest of the historic landscape on the Caldicot Level represent one simple example of **landscape stratigraphy**. Other examples include the Grand Junction canal slicing through the ridge and furrow and post-Enclosure fields in Bradwell (Figure 7), the medieval fields at Holne Moor overlying the Bronze Age reaves (Figures 13.1-2), and the railway line cutting across Hadleigh Marshes (Figure 15.2). Other examples of landscape stratigraphy are more subtle, such as the sequence of enclosures from Heale Down shown in Figure 19. The overall pattern of field boundaries, their relationship to the major earthen banks (eg the junction between the block of fields called 'Holland' and 'Higher Close' to the north), the clustering of field-names, and patterns of landownership as recorded in the Tithe Survey suggests a sequence of intakes starting with the block of long narrow fields including Bean Garden and Wheat Park, followed by the intake which included Gratton, then Holland, and then the block of fields to the north (Gillard 2002, figs 6.2, 6.10-13).

The chronology of different historic landscape components and types can also be enlightened by identifying when they are first **documented**. The historical record is very fragmentary and landscape features can go undocumented for many centuries, but even in moderately well-documented areas there may be some correlation between different landscape types and when features there are first documented. Figure 3 (top), for example, shows a very distinctive type of landscape, which is consistently associated with settlements recorded in the Domesday Book: since this is the first comprehensive documentary source for this area all we can say is that the essential components of that landscape existed by 1066. Figure 3 (bottom) shows a very different landscape where no settlements are recorded before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Through firstly the use of stratigraphic and typological principles to establish a relative sequence for the evolution of a landscape, secondly the attributing of some absolute date ranges through the identification of certain features in

documentary sources, and thirdly by drawing analogies with other, better documented/dating areas, the evolution of a particular historic landscape can be established. In addition to this strongly empirical approach, schematic models can be drawn up to show in a general way how a particular landscape evolved. Such analysis has been applied before to particular landscape components such as settlements and field systems (eg Dodgson 1980; Roberts 1987; Roberts and Wrathmell 2002; Taylor 1975; 1983; Unwin 1983; 1988), but there is also scope for modelling complete landscapes (see Marshland Colonisation case study below).

Finally, there is a desperate need for the hypotheses generated by historic landscape analysis to be tested through **fieldwork**, and where this has occurred the results are encouraging. A few examples must suffice. In Cornwall, for example, a Romano-British or earlier origin for the distinctive landscape of West Penwith has been confirmed through the excavation of field boundaries (Herring 1993; 1998, 63). On the Polden Hills in Somerset, a late prehistoric date has been confirmed for at least one of a series of long sinuous boundaries which the principles of landscape stratigraphy outlined above suggested pre-date the sub-division of the area into a series of manors recorded in Domesday, and indeed the laying out of a series of open field systems associated with the planned nucleated villages around the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

\*\*\*\*\* start of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

[INSERT FIGURE 20: Caldicot Level air photo]

## **CASE-STUDY: THE EARLY STAGES OF MARSHLAND COLONISATION: PUXTON AND THE CALDICOT LEVEL (Figures 17, 20, and 22-4)**

### **Key features:**

- *regional-scale*
- *past-oriented research, integrating archaeological and documentary sources*
- *explores the role of schematic modelling, and its testing through fieldwork, in order to increase our understanding of one of the physical processes behind the evolution of historic landscapes: the reclamation of wetlands*

### *further reading:*

Rippon, S. 1996: *The Gwent Levels: the evolution of a wetland landscape* (York: Council for British Archaeology Res. Rep. 105).

Rippon, S. 1997: *The Severn Estuary: landscape evolution and wetland reclamation* (London: Leicester University Press).

Rippon, S 1999 Medieval Settlement on the North Somerset Levels: The Fourth Season of Survey and Excavation at Puxton, 1999, *Archaeology in the Severn Estuary* 10, 65-73.

Rippon, 2000: The Historic Landscapes of the Severn Estuary Levels, in Rippon, S. (ed.) *Estuarine Archaeology: The Severn and Beyond* (being *Archaeology in the Severn Estuary* 11), 119-135.

### **Background**

Since the 1980s the author has been researching historic landscapes created through wetland reclamation around the Severn Estuary. Over the years, a series of detailed local studies led to the realisation that very similar processes of marshland colonisation appear to have been going on all around the Estuary, with a notable feature of the earliest phase of colonisation being roughly oval-shaped enclosures which were given the name 'infields' (eg Figures 23-4). Analysis of the historic landscape showed that such features are found on all the higher, coastal areas of

marshland around the Estuary and that they appeared to predate the immediately surrounding field boundary patterns. A key issue, however, was when in the evolution of these historic landscapes the 'infield' enclosures were created, and following Taylor's (1989b) seminal lead in self-reflection, the following case study will show how the generation, contemplation, testing, and revision of schematic models derived from historic landscape analysis can be an important part of the research process.

### **The Natural Environment**

The Caldicot Level is an area of reclaimed coastal wetland in South East Wales (Figure 20). Whilst appearing flat, like all wetlands it does have significant topographical variation, with slightly higher ground lying towards the coast since this is the area most often flooded by the tides, and so where most sediment is deposited (Figure 21.A). The higher coastal zone is crossed by a network of tidal creeks that drained the marshes at low tide, and which were often fossilized within the later historic landscape when they were used as field boundaries (Figure 21.B). A second set of natural watercourses are the rivers and streams that flow off the adjacent dryland areas and have to cross the marshes before discharging their water into the Estuary: these were commonly canalised following reclamation to avoid the freshwaters from flooding the reclaimed lands (Figure 21.G).

[INSERT FIGURE 21.i-ii: must be facing each other]

### **The historic landscape**

The key historic landscape components of field-systems, settlements, commons, and roads/droeways, along with a relict landscape component, ridge and furrow, are shown on Figures 17 and 21. In terms of the landscape as it was mapped in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 21.C-G), a series of broad historic landscape types can be identified (Figure 21.H):

- Parliamentary Enclosure: towards the eastern end of the Level lies an area of carefully planned mostly square fields, laid out between a grid of long, straight, narrow roads, resulting from the Parliamentary Enclosure of Caldicot Moor. This area has never been settled.
- Gradual, piecemeal reclamation: to the east and west of Caldicot Moor, on the higher coastal marshland, the landscape is mostly characterized by irregularly arranged field boundary patterns and sinuous roads, droeways and commons that appear to respect (ie post-date) the 'infield' enclosures which became the focus for loosely nucleated settlements. Settled by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The inland limit of this landscape character type is often marked by long sinuous boundaries marking the former line of 'fen banks' designed to stop flooding by freshwater runoff in the backfens.
- Early enclosure of the backfens: between the coastal areas with their highly irregular layout, and the lowest-lying backfens, lies a heterogeneous 'intermediate' zone of more regularly arranged fields and just the occasional isolated farms and cottages. Several discrete blocks of landscape were created by the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (eg Grangefield, Lower Grange, and Porton), while elsewhere this landscape type was probably still being created into the early post medieval period. A number of long straight boundaries appear to mark the line of former 'fen banks'.
- Late enclosure of the backfens: the lowest-lying backfens are characterized by very regular arrangements of rectangular fields, often laid out between long straight roads. This area has never been settled.
- Planned village: towards the centre of the Level lies a unique block of landscape, comprising a planned single-row village (Whitson) next to a funnel-shaped droeway/common (Figure 1).

### **A social context for historic landscape character**

Part 1 of this Handbook introduced the idea that the same type of physical landscape could have a very different historic landscape because in the past human communities/individuals decided upon different approaches towards exploiting that environment. A fundamental feature in the history of the Caldicot Level was Collister Pill which marks the western edge of Caldicot Moor as well as the boundary between two lordships established after the Norman Conquest and which provided the tenurial context within which the historic landscape was created: Strigoil to the east (ie the unreclaimed Caldicot Moor) and Caerleon to the west (ie the embanked area of marshland around Redwick, Whitson, Goldcliff and Nash). In the case of the Lordship of Caerleon, the decision to embark upon reclamation and colonisation appears to have been part of the wider Anglo-Norman policy of actively improving the productivity of their newly acquired estates, and the management of the landscape around Redwick in particular had a very 'English' feel: the loosely nucleated green-side village with its extensive evidence for open fields, the single-row planned village at Whitson, and the almost uniformly English place-, field-, and personal names both today and in medieval documents. This contrasts sharply with another area of reclaimed marshland, the Wentlooge Level, immediate to the west, where place-, field-, and personal names were predominantly Welsh, settlement was largely dispersed and there is almost no evidence for open fields. As in Pembrokeshire, the landscape of the Redwick area appears to have been the product of English colonisation, whereas the Wentlooge Level reflects the indigenous Welsh approach to landscape management.

### **Understanding the early stages of marshland colonisation**

Very similar landscapes to that of Redwick are found on reclaimed coastal wetlands on the English side of the Estuary, and that there was a fundamental similarity in the process of wetland reclamation and historic landscape character all around the Severn Estuary was first observed by the author in his thesis *Landscape Evolution and wetland Reclamation Around the Severn Estuary* (Rippon 1993). The *Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study* led to an initial, and with hindsight rather crude, attempt to model the process of reclamation that could be inferred from the historic landscape (Rippon 1996a, fig. 4), though publication of an Estuary-wide overview gave the opportunity to improve upon this model (Figure 22 A-G: Rippon 1997a, fig. 7). A key feature in the earliest phase of marshland colonisation was clearly the stratigraphically early 'infield' enclosures, which a programme of earthwork survey, fieldwalking, soil chemistry and excavation at a number of sites has established were manured agricultural areas; they were not enclosed settlements, though a recurrent pattern was for one or more farmsteads to occur on the edge or just outside the enclosure (Figures 24-5; Rippon 1999b; 2001; 2002). The oval shape of these 'infields' suggests that they were created in an open landscape without other features to constrain their shape (woodland and moorland assarts similarly often take an oval shape: eg Holne Moor, Dartmoor: Figure 13). The question was: were the 'infield' created on an open saltmarsh or did they post-date the construction of a sea wall along the coast?

The initial model assumed that the first act on the part of those individuals and/or communities wishing to colonise these marshes was to construct a sea wall along the coast: after all, these landscapes are only sustainable today because of the massive embankments that protect them from tidal inundation. This was mistake number one: the natural environment is not constant, and in fact the mean sea level in the Severn Estuary during the medieval period was c.0.9 m lower than today, meaning that the flood defences could have been on a significantly smaller scale (Rippon 2002, 63). The assumption that the sea wall had to come first led inexorably to another, potentially erroneous, assumption: that the oval-shaped 'infield'



enclosures had to follow the construction of the sea wall: after all, who would live on a saltmarsh? This was mistake number two: we should not judge landscape potential through 21<sup>st</sup> century eyes. Medieval communities may have had a higher tolerance of occasional flooding as a price worth paying for avoiding the costs of reclamation, and experiments with growing crops on mature saltmarshes, and palaeoenvironmental assemblages from both Britain and the continent, have shown that this was certainly done in the past (Rippon 2000a, 46-7).

A final stimulus leading to a revision of the model regarding the early stages of the reclamation came during a trip to the Netherlands, where the author became aware of a tradition of constructing 'summer dikes' on very high saltmarshes that were only flooded at the highest tides. These 'summer dikes', also known as 'ring dikes', were low embankments designed to protect an area of meadow or crops from unseasonally high summer flooding, but which made no effort to keep back the higher winter tides. This represented an alternative approach by human communities to the utilization of marshland landscapes: rather than transforming them through reclamation, they could simply modify them through the construction of summer dikes to make a small area more suitable for growing crops. The building of a sea wall along the coast came later. This realization led the author to present an alternative schematic model for the initial stages in the creation of the historic landscape in coastal wetlands, with the oval-shaped 'infield' enclosures pre-dating the construction of the sea wall along the coast (Figure 22, 1-4; Rippon 2000a, fig. 51). This in turn led to the presentation of an alternative more detailed model for how the historic landscape of the Caldicot Level may have evolved (Figure 23: Rippon 2000d, 152-8, fig. 4).

The hypothesis that the 'infield' enclosures were in fact 'summer dikes' has also been tested through fieldwork on the North Somerset Levels at Puxton (Figures 23-4; for location see Figure 27.2). Here excavation has shown that the 'infield' enclosure was indeed surrounded by a bank. Its enormous breadth (c.13 m) and very shallow angle suggests that it was designed to limit erosion, and so it would appear that these 'infield' enclosures were indeed summer ring dikes built on an active intertidal saltmarsh: the revised model of the early phases of marshland colonisation appears to be correct (Rippon 1999b; 2002; in press; Rippon *et al.* 2001). The fieldwork in and around Puxton has allowed another hypothesis from the historic landscape analysis to be tested. To the south west of Puxton, in East and West Rolstone, a series of long sinuous boundaries are suggestive of the lines of former fen-banks designed to prevent flooding of the enclosed lands to the north by freshwater runoff in the lower-lying unenclosed backfens to the south. Fieldwalking supports this hypothesis as light manure scatters of medieval pottery only occur in field to the north of the putative fen-banks (Figure 25).

[INSERT FIGURE 22: Severn Estuary reclamation models: Fig.22.A-C must face D to G]

[INSERT FIGURE 23: revised Caldicot Level reclamation models: Fig.23.1-3 must be facing 4-5]

[INSERT FIGURE 24: Puxton/Rolstone fieldwalking]

[INSERT FIGURE 25: Puxton air photo]

\*\*\*\*\* end of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

## **SUMMARY SO FAR:**

- the term '**historic landscape**' was created in the 1990s to demonstrate to planners and countryside managers the time-depth present in our countryside (the '**future-oriented**' approach), and stress the value of studying the present pattern of fields, roads, settlements etc in academic research into the origins and development of the landscape (the '**past-oriented**' approach).
- the two broad approaches are '**bottom-up**', where every parcel of the landscape is assigned a particular set of characteristics and then this data is simplified in order to produce more generalised blocks of historic landscape character, and '**top-down**' where these generalised blocks are identified straight away, usually through existing professional knowledge of the area.
- in **England**, English Heritage are sponsoring a series of county-based future-oriented, bottom-up Historic Landscape Characterisation Projects which attribute all areas of landscape to one of a range of pre-determined types/zones.
- in **Scotland**, Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland are similarly carrying out an on-going countryside programme future-oriented, bottom-up Historic Landuse Assessment that follows a broadly similar approach.
- in **Wales**, Cadw and the Countryside Council for Wales have adopted a different approach, creating a selective *Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales* through a top-down process of consultation. This has identified the most important historic landscapes in Wales, and detailed Historic Landscape Characterisations are now being carried out for each in order to identify character areas, starting with the *Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study*.
- **local knowledge** of the landscape and its archaeology and history, as well as understanding of the HLC/HLA techniques, is essential in a successful project.
- as a research **tool** historic landscape analysis is a means of integrating a wide range of source material relating to the origins and development of the historic landscape.
- it can be used at a variety of **scales**. For studies of relatively small areas, the earliest large-scale sources such as Tithe Maps should be used. When studying larger areas these are impractical and the best source is the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch Series that provides the earliest comprehensive coverage of the British landscape at a level of detail to include field boundary patterns.
- for those new to landscape archaeology/history, the process of **retrogressive analysis** is a useful means of means of understanding the processes of landscape evolution.
- the historic landscape was created by human communities and understanding socio-economic factors are crucial to understanding why its character varies so much. Such factors include general phenomena like population levels and economic development, but also patterns of **landownership** that can be mapped, at least for the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of historic landscape analysis.
- the morphology of a historic landscape can be suggestive of its **date of origin**, and the creation of **schematic models** can help make sense of what are usually

complex palimpsests. Such hypotheses can be **tested** through documentary research and archaeological fieldwork.

## **PART THREE**

### **APPLICATIONS AND USES**

#### **SOME USES OF HLC IN PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT**

In the 'future-oriented' world of planning and countryside management Historic Landscape Characterisation and Historic Landuse Assessment can be used in a number of ways:

##### **Landscape Character Assessment**

- The Countryside Agency has already published guidance on Landscape Character Assessment and the limited significance of time-depth and historical process is discussed in Part 1. The on-going programme of HLC in England and HLA in Scotland is, therefore, essential as the importance of historic landscape character is otherwise so poorly addressed in Landscape Character Assessment.

##### **Planning**

- informing development plan policies at strategic (regional and structure plan) and local level
- informing studies of development potential, for example to help in finding sites for new development, both within or on the edge of towns, and in the wider countryside
- informing the design conditions for particular forms of development such as housing, minerals and wind energy
- providing an input to Environmental Assessment for individual development proposals.

##### **Landscape conservation, management and enhancement**

- informing the preparation of landscape management strategies
- helping to guide land use change in positive and sustainable ways, for example programmes of woodland expansion, and new uses for disturbed and degraded land
- informing the targeting of agri-environment schemes

In Part 3 of this Handbook some examples of historic landscape analysis and the uses to which it has been put are explored through a series of case-studies. The first two are English Heritage sponsored county-based projects in Cornwall and Lancashire whose results have been widely published allowing the reader to explore them further. The third case-study is of the county of Somerset (in its pre-1974 form), taking one result of another English Heritage sponsored HLC project – revealing the possible extent of former open field farming – and exploring this further in order to show regional variation in historic landscape scale can be investigated at this scale. Alongside the case-studies earlier in the Handbook, these will hopefully show the benefits of both analysing the historic landscape, and using existing HLC/HLAs for research. Finally there is a parish based case-study, of Meare in Somerset, where the historic landscape is broken down into a series of discrete areas, the evolution of which is enlightened through relatively extensive documentary sources.

#### **CORNWALL – THE PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED**

### **Key features:**

- *the first English Heritage sponsored HLC*
- *county-scale future-oriented HLC designed to inform planners and countryside managers*
- *paper-based 'bottom-up' methodology based upon ascribing every parcel of landscape to one of a series of pre-determined landscape types based upon an interpretation of the major historical process (es) that contributed to that land parcel acquiring its present characteristics*
- *a straight-forward product making high level generalisations (notably the simplification of types into zones)*
- *carried out by staff of the local archaeological unit (then part of the County Council Planning Department), with an excellent local knowledge of the landscape and a long history of actively researching its archaeology/history*
- *has seen a wide range of applications and further refinements of the methodology*
- *further reading: Herring, P. 1998: Cornwall's Historic Landscape: presenting a method of historic landscape character assessment (Truro: Cornwall Archaeological Unit).*

### **The methodology**

Cornwall was the first English county to be subject to HLC, and as such set the methodological agenda. In 1993 (as the Gwent Levels Historic Landscape Study started in Wales) the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) developed a methodology for assessing historic landscape character within the Bodmin Moor Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Countryside Commission 1994a, b), while in 1994, the CAU and Landscape Design Associates were appointed by the Countryside Commission and English Heritage to develop a methodology for assessing historic landscape character at a county scale (Cornwall County Council 1994; Herring 1998; 1999; Johnson 1999). This work built on a long history of both detailed and wide-ranging landscape work that is essential to a successful project. The Cornwall HLC followed two stages:

1. the attributing of each land parcel (ie field etc) to one of a series of generic descriptive 'historic landscape character **types**'
  - Rough ground
  - Prehistoric enclosures [field systems]
  - Medieval enclosures
  - Post Medieval enclosures
  - Modern enclosures
  - Ancient woodland
  - Plantations and scrub woodland
  - Settlement (historic)
  - Settlement (modern)
  - Industrial (relict)
  - Industrial (active)
  - Communications
  - Recreation
  - Military
  - Ornamental
  - Water (reservoirs etc)
  - Water (natural bodies)

This very first HLC pre-dated the widespread use of GIS systems and so was carried out on paper, colouring-in each historic landscape parcel.

2. the simplification of these 'types' into a series of generic interpretative 'historic landscape character **zones**' so identifying broader patterns each with a predominant historical landscape character derived from a historical process (Colour Plate A):

<i>zones</i>	<i>derivation from types</i>
Anciently enclosed land	amalgamation of 'prehistoric enclosures' and medieval enclosures' types
Upland rough ground	subdivision of the 'rough ground' type
Coastal rough ground	subdivision of the 'rough ground' type
Dunes	topographical subdivision of 'Rough Ground' type
Recently enclosed land	amalgamation of the 'post-medieval enclosures' and 'modern enclosures' types
Anciently enclosed land altered in the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries	interpretation of elements of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval enclosures types
Anciently enclosed land altered in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	modern enclosures which are adaptations of prehistoric and medieval enclosures
Navigable rivers and creeks	topographic zone using OS maps as the principle source
Steep sided valleys	topographic zone using OS maps as the principle source
Upland woods	subdivision of 'plantation and scrub woodland' type
Urban development	amalgamation of the 'Settlement (historic)' and 'Settlement (modern)' types
Predominantly industrial	amalgamation of the 'Industrial (active)' and 'Industrial (relict)' types
Military	simple derivation from 'military' type
Ornamental	simple derivation from 'ornamental' type
Recreation	simple derivation from 'recreation' type
Reservoirs	simple derivation from 'water (artificial)' type
Inter-tidal zone	[no type]

For each landscape zone, and textual description was prepared based a standard format (see Table 3)

[INSERT TABLE 3]

### **Subsequent refinements and research applications**

The Cornwall HLC was the first of its kind and established that historic landscape character could be mapped at a county scale. Time was, however, limited, and in this early work the 'anciently enclosed land', which clearly covered a variety of field-boundary patterns, was left undifferentiated (Herring 1998, 77-8). In what is an excellent demonstration of how HLC should not be allowed simply to gather dust, this important type has now been sub-divided, and one Project that contributed to this refinement – the Lynher Valley appraisal (Herring and Tapper 2002) – is also an excellent example of the use to which HLC can be put. In the late 1990s the Cornwall Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, the Environment Agency, and the Cornwall Environmental Trust were increasingly concerned by the loss of soil from arable fields within the catchments of the rivers Lynher and Tiddy, and the effect of soil, chemical and nutrient inputs into the rivers and their tributaries, resulting in

plans to encourage farmers to alter their regimes and practices. Cornwall Archaeological Unit was commissioned by the County Council to prepare a report on the historic environment to inform advice provided to farmers and landowners, to guide the targeting of agri-environmental schemes and the design of other environmental programmes (eg the Environment Agency's run-off retarding schemes). HLC has also been used to raise the profile of the historic environment amongst the local community, including the promotion of more sustainable methods.

[INSERT FIGURE 26: Cornwall – sub-divisions of anciently enclosed land]

The Lynher Valley report was based on the original Cornwall HLC, though now the same characterisation was also applied to the landscape as mapped in the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch maps. An important development was that three distinctive sub-divisions of the 'Anciently Enclosed Land' were recognised, the first two of which relate to a regionally-distinctive form of farming known as 'convertible' or 'ley husbandry', whereby all the agricultural land of a particular farmstead or hamlet was divided between a series of 'cropping units'. Each cropping unit was surrounded by a stock-proof hedge bank, but could be sub-divided into strips that were simply defined by a low bank; following the harvest all the strips in a particular cropping unit were grazing in common. A cropping unit would be cultivated for just two or three years and then put down to fallow for six or seven years, producing a rotation in the order of nine to ten years (Hatcher 1970, 11-13; Jewell 1981). The first distinctive sub-division of the Cornwall HLCs 'Anciently Enclosed Land' is blocks of long narrow fields, often with marked dog-legs (Figure 26.1), so characteristic of the 'enclosure by agreement' of former open fields. These would appear to represent the cultivation strips within the former 'cropping units' of convertible husbandry, and the second sub-division of 'Anciently Enclosed Land' is that of larger, roughly rectangular fields often with curving sides that represent these 'cropping units' themselves (Figure 26.2). A third sub-division of the 'Anciently Enclosed Land' is blocks of large, rectangular fields that morphologically are not dissimilar to post-medieval enclosures in the uplands (Figure 26.3). Place-names of the farmsteads associated with these blocks are often 'Home Farm' or 'Barton' suggesting that they represent former manorial demesne held in severalty.

This evidence contained within the fabric of the historic landscape is important as it provides virtually the only indication we have for the former extent of common-field farming in Cornwall: there is very little medieval documentary material for Cornish agriculture, and by the time that such material does survive, in the post-medieval period, the landscape was enclosed. Convertible husbandry appears to have been restricted to Cornwall, Devon and possibly the west of Somerset and is well attested from the 15<sup>th</sup> century though a lack of good documentary material before that date makes its origins unclear (Fox 1991; Harrison 1984, 370-1; Hatcher 1988, 387). Recent palaeoenvironmental work around the fringes of Exmoor, however, suggests an 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> century date for the onset of convertible husbandry in that area (Fyfe *et al.* in press; Fyfe *et al.* forthcoming) although an earlier date is possible in Cornwall (Turner 2003).

## **LANCASHIRE – A GIS-BASED APPROACH**

### ***Key features:***

- *representative of the third generation of English Heritage sponsored HLCs*
- *county-scale future-oriented HLC to inform planners and countryside managers*

- fully GIS-based 'bottom-up' approach with each land parcel allocated to a defined 'polygon' with the same physical attributes based on field-boundary morphology and a wide range of other components including road and settlement patterns
- a mass on local detail can be manipulated within the GIS to produce a simple product making high level generalisations on the date and origins of each land parcel
- carried out by staff of the local County Council Planning Department, with a good local knowledge of the landscape and actively engaged in researching its archaeology/history
- further reading:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/lhlcp>

Darlington, J 2002 European Cultural Paths: a model of co-operation between archaeologists for the management and preservation of cultural landscapes, in Fairclough, G and Rippon, S (eds) *Europe's Cultural Landscape*, 97-106.

Ede, J. with Darlington, J. 2002: *Lancashire Historic Landscape Characterisation Programme: a report on the context, method and results for the Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Backpool areas* (Preston: Lancashire County Council with English Heritage): available on CD.

### **The methodology**

In common with other 'first generation' HLCs in England the mapping in Cornwall was on paper, and had a methodology based upon attributing each land parcel to one of a relatively limited series of pre-determined thematic landscape types. The methodologies in subsequent English Heritage funded county HLCs have developed this approach both in terms of the technologies used (notably computerised GIS systems), and the approach to classification. In common with the other English county-based HLCs, the Lancashire team was invited to develop its own methodology, which benefited from the experience in a number of other studies including the Cotswolds and Hampshire, and eventually being similar to its contemporaries such as that in Somerset. The method began with the objective identification and description of historic attributes in each parcel of the modern rural and urban landscape. These attributes included 'all aspects of the natural and built environment that have been shaped by human activity in the past – the distribution of woodland and other semi-natural habitats, the form of fields and their boundaries, the lines of roads, streets and pathways, the disposition of buildings in the towns, villages and countryside' (Ede and Darlington 2002, 25). For the whole of the county the following attributes were examined (note that at this stage these attributes are wholly descriptive: the interpretation comes at a later stage):

- current landuse
- field shape
- field size
- field groups
- boundary types
- shape and disposition of paths/lanes/roads
- shape and type of woodland
- shape and type of water
- distribution and types of buildings
- contour/geology/soils
- place names
- settlement pattern



- previous fieldwork
- c.1850 mapping (Ordnance Survey First Edition Six Inch Series)
- enclosure awards and other historical information
- and, at the later assessment stage, SMR data.

After gathering these layers of data parcels were grouped into blocks ('polygons' in the GIS) sharing similar attributes, and for each the following information was entered into the project database:

- **Polygon** – a unique identifier for each of the 4,800+ polygons in the GIS
- **current landuse** of the polygon, including:
  - o Enclosed land
  - o Woodland
  - o Recreational land
  - o Communications
  - o Coastal rough ground
  - o Upland moor
  - o Other unimproved land
  - o Industrial land
  - o Settlement
  - o Ornamental land
  - o Military
  - o Water

Further subdivision was made on the basis of more specific landuses (for example Dunes or Saltmarsh within Coastal rough ground), or on the basis of enclosure size or shape. The coding also included an element to indicate degree of change between the c.1850 First Edition Six Inch and the modern mapping.

- **former landuse** (and shape and size) in c.1850, taken from the First Edition Six Inch mapping if different from the present day.
- **Slope** – a field for identifying steep ground; only used in association with Woodland categories
- **Pits** – a field for identifying the presence or absence of sand, marl or gravel pits in the Enclosed land and other categories
- **Boundary** – a field for identifying water-filled boundary ditches in the Enclosed land categories
- **Interpretation** identifying origins of enclosed land (for example areas of current enclosed land which were previously mossland)
- **Date** - the date of the predominant historic character of the polygon
- **Confidence** – a field in which a combined measure of confidence is allocated to the date and interpretation fields
- **Comment** - a field for descriptive notes
- **Checked** – a field to confirm that the polygon has been double-checked by someone other than the Project Officer.

The primary attributes that dictated the extent and scale of subdivision were **current** and **historic landuse**, with further subdivision made on the basis of enclosure size and shape. In this way areas of the same landuse were subdivided along morphological grounds. For example irregular wavy-edged fields were separated from areas of irregular straight-edged fields, or straight-edged plantations of woodland were split from tracts of irregularly bounded woodland. This methodology also allowed the interpretative elements of the mapping (ie predominant date of current land-use, or likely origins) to be distinguished from the purely descriptive.

Once each polygon had been described and digitised they were analysed and grouped under generic historic landscape character types that shared distinct attributes. For example, an area possessing a pattern of small, irregular fields, dissected by winding lanes and footpaths, associated with known medieval settlements, place- and field-names, and shown to be in existence prior to the earliest comprehensive map evidence may have been allocated to the 'Ancient Enclosure' (pre-AD1600) HLC type. The resulting mapping includes the following HLC types, each of which is accompanied by a detailed textual description (Colour Plate D1):

- Ancient (pre-AD1600) Enclosure
- Post-Medieval (AD1600-1850) Enclosure
- Modern (post AD1850) Enclosure
- Ancient and Post-Medieval (Pre-AD1850) Woodland
- Modern Woodland
- Ancient and Post-Medieval Settlement
- Modern Settlement
- Ancient and Post-Medieval Industry
- Modern Industry
- Ancient and Post-Medieval Ornamental Land
- Modern Ornamental Land
- Modern Recreational Land
- Modern Military
- Modern Communications
- Moorland
- Reverted Moorland
- Lowland Moss and Grassland/Scrub
- Water
- Coastal Rough Ground
- Saltmarsh
- Dunes
- Sand and Mudflats

### **Discussion and examples of analysis**

The GIS-based Lancashire HLC can be interrogated in various ways. The analysis shows, for example, that not surprisingly 'Ancient Enclosure' (pre-AD 1600) concentrates in the lowlands, with a subsequent expansion of agriculture into both the low-lying wetlands and higher uplands during the post medieval period (Colour Plate D2). 'Enclosed land' is the most extensive historic landscape type in the county being used mainly for grazing sheep and cattle. As with all agricultural areas 'the type has a significant impact on aspects of the social and cultural life of the county, where both its form and maintenance are defining characteristics of the aesthetic appeal of the landscape, and is in turn a major influence upon matters such as tourism and planning' (Ede and Darlington 2002, 92). 'Ancient Enclosure' accounts for 39% of enclosed land (25% of Lancashire as a whole), 'Post Medieval Enclosure' for 48% and 'Modern Enclosure' for 13%. Around 80% of both 'Ancient' and 'Post Medieval Enclosure' types have changed little in the past 150 years, especially when compared with the 'Modern Enclosure' type which is largely the result of changes to a previously-enclosed landscape (ibid.). Most enclosure in Lancashire is irregular in layout. These patterns, coupled with their small size, point to enclosure by individual farmers for their own use or by the agreement of small communities over a long period of time. It is typical of Rackham's (1986) 'ancient countryside' (see Part 1 above), a landscape of hamlets and dispersed settlements, of irregular

ancient woodland, of a complex pattern of footpaths and roads, and of intricacy and diversity rather than uniformity and plan.

One of the HLC interpretative attribute tags for each land parcel attempted to identify the origins of enclosure (Colour Plate D3). When plotted, this shows a clear distinction between the east and the west of the county which is entirely influenced by topography, with enclosure from mossland (peat bogs) in the lowland west, and enclosure from upland moor and woodland in the east on the fringes of the remaining unenclosed uplands. Seven percent of the 'Ancient Enclosure' type originated from the division of open fields, which remain in the landscape today either as fossil strip fields (with their boundaries usually formed by hedges; 3%), or as a distinctive pattern indicative of the enclosure of bundles of strips and other elements of the previously open field (4%) (Ede and Darlington 2002, 98-9).

As a 'future-oriented' HLC, a key feature of the work in Lancashire was making recommendations for enhancing and safeguarding each historic landscape type. For 'Ancient and Post Medieval Industry' for example, the 'historic landscape character type' description and list of recommendations is as follows:

\*\*\*\*\* start of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

## **LANCASHIRE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE TYPE: ANCIENT & POST-MEDIEVAL INDUSTRY**

### **General description**

*Historical and archaeological background and principal processes: **Ancient and Post-Medieval Industry** covers 549 hectares of Lancashire. Of this 368 hectares (67%) comprise disused quarries. The bulk of the remainder (158 hectares or 29%) includes active quarries that were present on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition mapping, although understandably their extent was often considerably smaller than that of today. Most of the quarries lie in east Lancashire where sources of sandstone were particularly important for roofing, paving and building material. There are also limestone quarries in the Silverdale and Kellet areas of north Lancashire and near Clitheroe.*

The mapping scale selected for the project precluded small areas of older industry. Consequently the evidence for rural textile milling and many smaller quarries still extant in the landscape are not included within the type. Instead these represent attributes of other HLC types, in particular **Settlement** and **Moorland**.

Time depth can be visible in the active quarries where a chronology of quarry progress may be mapped within the landscape, particularly if that progress follows a specific seam of source material. In addition, older structures may be present within quarries, both in active and abandoned states.

*Typical historical and archaeological components: There are likely to be structures and features associated with different phases and processes of the relevant industry, for example limekilns in the limestone hushings of Burnley and Colne, or abandoned tramways and railways in the stone quarries of the Rossendale Valley. The features associated with this HLC type may abruptly interrupt older landscape elements such as previously existing tracks, banks and field systems. The rock faces today may be valuable geological sites and protected as such as SSSIs or RIGs.*

### **Enhancing and safeguarding the type**

- *Conserve and enhance* the remains of Lancashire's early industrial landscape. The industrial heritage of Lancashire remains one of the county's defining characteristics, providing instantly recognisable local distinctiveness for those living both in and outside of the county. Such heritage, particularly when measured against its international contribution, has much to offer that is unique

and special to the county. Whilst much of this character is present as individual buildings and structures within other HLC types (especially **Settlement** and **Moorland**) the concentration of surviving or relic industry in the industrial type indicates a significant resource that may be retained for economic and social benefit as well as in its own right.

- *Pursue* opportunities for heritage-led regeneration in areas through tourism and sustainable reuse of key industrial buildings and areas. The *Heritage Conservation in Lancashire* strategy document provisionally identifies the following priority industrial landscape areas: Lancashire's textile and related heritage, and the quarry heritage of the Rossendale valleys. To this may be added the landscape of limestone hushings at Burnley and Colne, copper and ironworking areas in Silverdale and the leadworking at Rimington and Anglezarke.
- *Ensure* that the historic dimension of industrial landscapes is properly assessed during proposals for change. Industrial landscapes are vulnerable to change both through neglect and through programmes of land reclamation. Initiatives such as quarry reclamation schemes, derelict land programmes (for example the REMADE in Lancashire programme and the Small Sites programme), contaminated land strategies and environmental improvement projects may all coincide with areas of former industrial heritage. These should be informed by appropriate levels of information in order that decisions can be made to conserve important assets, record others and to ensure that the historic environment may act as a positive catalyst for change.
- *Increase* awareness of the historical basis and context for **Ancient and Post-Medieval Industry** landscapes in order to improve perception and appreciation. Priority will be given to establishing an inventory of textile working sites to match surveys already completed in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and Cheshire, and within Pendle District, and to completing an audit of Rossendale quarry heritage.

Source: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/lhlcp/3results4.pdf>  
\*\*\*\*\* end of boxed case-study\*\*\*\*\*

## **SOMERSET – BEYOND HLC TOWARDS THE ORIGINS OF VILLAGES AND OPEN FIELDS**

### ***Key features:***

- *takes a county-scale, past-oriented study using a 'future-oriented' HLC as the starting point for research into the origins and development of the historic landscape in the context of research*
- *investigation of the role of the natural environment and socio-economic factors in shaping historic landscape character.*

The fundamental division in landscape character between the 'champion' and the 'woodland' regions of England was introduced in Part 1, and this case-study is a contribution to the long-running debate over how these marked regional variations came about. Somerset is an interesting county as it straddles the western limit of nucleated villages and open fields, which Rackham (1986), and Roberts' and Wrathmell's (2000a) mapping of 19<sup>th</sup> settlement, draws along a line between the estuaries of the Axe on the Devon – Dorset border and the Parrett in Somerset.

Somerset was the subject of an English Heritage-sponsored HLC (Aldred 2001; 2002) and this case-study uses that as the starting point in considering the development of the county's broad character areas or *pays* through analysing and integrating a series of data-sets relating to the natural environment, the physical fabric of the historic landscape, and the socio-economic and tenurial context within which it was exploited. In using the HLC as a starting point, in this case the suggested extent of former open/sub-divided fields (Figure 27.1), this case-study will hopefully serve as an example of how these 'future-oriented' projects can be taken forward through further research.

[INSERT FIGURE 27.2]

### **The Physical landscape**

#### **Relief** (Figure 27.2)

The physical topography of Somerset is extremely complex, ranging from low-lying wetlands through to a range of what until the 19<sup>th</sup> century were unoccupied uplands. This varied topography has had a profound effect on the origins and development of the historic landscape. Central and North West Somerset are dominated by low-lying wetlands that are today protected from flooding by an extensive and complex system of artificial embankments and drainage ditches. These wetlands are mostly fringed by gently undulating foothills which in the north lie in the shadow of the limestone uplands of Mendip, Wrington Down and the Failand Ridge, the highest parts of which were unenclosed common pasture in the medieval period. North east of Mendip lie a series of limestone hills and clay vales around Bath and Bristol, while to the south east of Mendip and the Levels lies the gently undulating lowland plain of the South East Somerset around Yeovil. To the west of the Somerset Levels lie extensive gently undulating lowlands around Taunton, Bridgwater and Minehead, interrupted by the Quantock Hills and bounded to the west by the uplands of Exmoor and the Brendon Hills, the higher areas of which were unenclosed until the later post medieval period.

Although many county boundaries bear little relationship to the wider landscape those in Somerset did: the eastern, southern, and western boundaries of Somerset all lie close to major watersheds which were either only sparsely settled or unoccupied until the post medieval period: to the east lies the woodland-covered scarp of the eastern hills at Penselwood, while to the south lie the Blackdowns and associated hills west of Chard; to the west lies Exmoor.

[INSERT FIGURE 27.3]

#### **Soils** (Figure 27.3)

Even a cursory examination of a national soils map reveals that those in Somerset were extremely varied: nowhere are there extensive areas of relatively uniform soils such as the claylands of the Weald, East Anglia, and the Cheshire Plain, or the shallow chalky soils of Wessex (Mackney *et al.* 1983). The uplands of Mendip, the Blackdown Hills, Quantocks, Brendon Hills and lower parts of Exmoor typically have moderately deep to deep-loamy soils (Manod and Milford Series'); the higher parts of Exmoor have waterlogged peaty soils (Larkbarrow Series). The lowlands of western Somerset (around Bridgwater, Minehead and Taunton) are predominantly moderately well-drained loamy/clay-loam soils (Whimble Series). The lowland areas of western Somerset, the foothills surrounding the Somerset Levels, and parts of the lowland plain to the south (in the Taunton – Somerton – Castle Cary area) have a range of generally relatively poorly-draining/slowly-permeable clayey soils of the Denchworth, Evesham, Wickham and Worcester Series, with areas of lighter soils of the Sherbourne Series on the higher areas (notably the Polden Hills and west of Somerton). In the South East, around Ilminster, Yeovil and Castle Cary, lie further

areas of moderately well-drained loamy/clay-loam soils (Whimple Series) and well-drained silty loams (Sherbourne and South Petherton Series); to the east, between Frome and Wincanton, lie further areas of heavier soils of the Denchworth and Evesham Series'. The patterns of soils in the North East of Somerset are particularly complex and varied, though they are predominantly moderately well-drained loamy/clay-loam soils in the vales (notably the Whimple series) with areas of shallow well-drained soils on the limestone hills (notably of the Sherbourne Series), with slowly permeable clayey soils of the Evesham Series predominating south of Bath.

[INSERT FIGURE 27.4]

***The regions of Somerset from a socio-economic perspective*** (Figure 27.4)

The physical landscape of Somerset can be divided into four upland-related regions, three lowland-related regions, and three wetland and fen-edge related regions. Traditionally these would have been based on criteria such as contours but the contention here, however, is that this is not always a very helpful approach: when trying to understand the evolution of the historic landscape uplands and lowlands were linked via the key interface zones of the upland fringe and fen-edge. Thus, while some areas of the lowlands and wetlands were indeed sufficiently extensive to support communities whose territories (as reflected in parishes) were wholly within those topographies, and the uplands all had areas that were beyond the limits of medieval settlement and cultivation, large parts of Somerset lay within parishes that *straddled* these topographical zones.

*Upland and upland fringe communities*

- **Exmoor:** Exmoor dominates the western end of Somerset though only the far west actually lay beyond the limits of medieval cultivation/settlement. Its relatively extensive upland fringe fell within a series of large parishes that incorporated small areas of unenclosed land on the higher watersheds of the hills and ridges, with settlement/agricultural land in the intervening valleys. Exmoor's eastern outliers, the **Brendon** and **Quantock Hills**, fell within a series of large parishes radiating from those uplands.
- **Blackdowns and other southern Hills:** largely in Devon, the northern fringes of this upland extend a short distance into Somerset, being exploited from a series of adjacent lowland parishes.
- **eastern hills:** ridge/scarpland along the eastern boundary of Somerset lying within a series of large parishes whose centres lay on the edge of the adjacent lowlands.
- **Mendip:** limestone upland dominating northern Somerset, exploited from a series of large parishes around its periphery. The associated uplands of **Wrington Down** and the **Failand Ridge** lay to the north and similarly marked the boundaries between relatively large parishes.

*Lowland communities*

- **The west Somerset lowlands:** vales and gently undulating lowlands with good agricultural soils around Bridgwater, Minehead and Taunton.
- **The Lias Plain (South East Somerset):** gently undulating lowlands in South East Somerset with mixed generally good agricultural soils though with areas of impeded drainage.
- **The northern hills and vales:** sometimes steeply-sided limestone hills with gently undulating clayland vales, giving rise to mixed generally good agricultural soils with some areas of impeded drainage.

### *Wetlands and fen-edge communities*

- **The Somerset Levels, North Somerset Levels and Vale of Gordano:** a mixture of higher, alluvial marshes towards the coast, freshwater peatbogs in the valleys either side of the Polden Ridge, and a series of alluvium-filled valleys leading into the Levels from the south and east. The coastal alluvium supported wholly marshland communities (often based upon small bedrock islands), while the remaining areas were exploited by communities living close to the fen-edge and whose territories included both wetland and dryland. Figure 27.4 shows how these fen-edge communities, whose parishes extended across the non-settled areas of wetlands, dominated the central part of Somerset.

[INSERT FIGURE 27.5]

### **Settlement** (Figure 27.5)

The 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement pattern in Somerset ranged between almost wholly nucleated in the Central and South East regions, to almost wholly dispersed in the West (around Exmoor and the Brendon Hills). There was not a black and white divide between the nucleated and non-nucleated areas, but based upon Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000a) mapping the following settlement 'zones' can be identified

- The main 'village zone' occupied South East and Central Somerset (and see Ellison 1983), along with an isolated area of wholly nucleated settlement around the Gordano Valley in the North West. In the far east of Somerset settlement was (and still is) more dispersed.
- To the north of Mendip the settlement patterns were more mixed, with some nucleated villages, some areas with predominantly small hamlets, and other places where settlement was almost wholly dispersed.
- In central southern Somerset, the lowlands immediately west of the Parrett, and along the coastal zone of western Somerset the settlement pattern was also mixed with some areas with predominantly small hamlets, and other places where settlement was almost wholly dispersed. Note that although Roberts and Wrathmell include these areas in their 'Central Province' the significant levels of dispersion should exclude them from the village-zone proper.
- In the far west of Somerset the landscape was dominated by the uplands of the Quantocks, Brendon Hills and Exmoor. Settlement on the fringes of these upland areas was almost wholly dispersed with isolated farmsteads and only occasional small agglomerations.

### **Field systems** (Figures 27.6-8)

The historic landscape contains two distinctive signatures from open field farming. Piecemeal enclosure can lead to the fossilization of strips as long, narrow fields, with their distinctive curved boundaries, while Parliamentary Enclosure led to rigid, geometrically planned patterns of large rectilinear-square fields. Using such morphological criteria Aldred (2001, fig. 16) has suggested that the distribution of open/sub-divided fields extended across the whole of lowland Somerset, including areas west of the River Parrett that fall beyond the zone of nucleated villages (Figure 27.1). Was this really the case?

[INSERT FIGURE 27.7] + [INSERT FIGURE 27.8] = same page or facing

The extent to which open fields survived into the **late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries** can be shown through the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts (Figure 27.6; Turner 1978). These show that the surviving open fields were almost wholly restricted to South East and Central Somerset, with a few outliers notably around the Gordano Valley in

North West Somerset (this significantly modifies the more general picture given by Gonner 1912, map A).

A comprehensive characterisation of pre-19<sup>th</sup> century field systems is impossible and so the actual extent of open field agriculture in say 1300 is impossible to reconstruct. There are various sources, however, that give a general picture. Aston (1988d, fig.5.5) plotted the distribution of known open fields based on **medieval and early post-medieval documentary evidence**, including that published in the then available Victoria County Histories (Dunning 1974; 1981; 1985) and Whitfield's (1981) study of South East Somerset. Aston's work can be updated through subsequent VCHs (Dunning 1992; 1999) alongside a number of other studies: Corcos' (2002) examination of Carhampton, Chew and Whitley Hundreds; Gillard's (2002) work in the Greater Exmoor area; Musgrove's (1997; 1999; 2001) and Rippon's (1993, 1997a) research on the Somerset Levels and adjacent fen-edge manors; and Keil's (1964) study of the Glastonbury Abbey estates (Figure 27.7). The coverage of these studies is fairly good although the North East and South West remain under-represented. The pattern observed by Aston is confirmed, with places where there is evidence that open fields were absent being restricted to the very south and south west of the county (Figure 27.7). Regular two-field systems dominated Central and South East Somerset, with three-fields systems concentrating in the central-south. Whilst there is clear evidence for common field agriculture in the lowlands west of the Parrett this was mainly in the coastal lowlands and was of a relatively small-scale and irregular nature (Figure 27.8): this was not the same as the Midland-style two- and three-fields systems of areas to the east. This is crucial in qualifying Aldred's results: morphology alone cannot be used to reconstruct past field systems. Gillard (2002), for example, has reconstructed the extent of some of these small open field systems, usually associated with a small hamlet of a handful of farmsteads, and shown that they typically covered 0.2-0.5 km<sup>2</sup> (eg Heale, Exmoor: Figure 19) which is in contrast to the regular two and three field systems of the 'village zone' that covered virtually entire parishes (eg Bradwell, Buckinghamshire: Figure 7).

The distribution of regular open fields being restricted to central, southern and south eastern Somerset as derived from documentary material is confirmed by the evidence from surviving **ridge and furrow** that is wholly restricted to the south and east of the County (Figure 27.6). This distribution will, however, reflect a number of factors: the creation of ridge and furrow in the first place through open-field farming, its survival due to a subsequent change in landuse (to pasture), and the visibility of now ploughed-out ridge and furrow through cropmarks.

Overall, therefore, the various indicators of former open fields suggests four broad 'zones' that, not surprisingly, match very closely the settlement patterns:

- The area of regular open fields (predominantly two-field systems) occupies South East and Central Somerset, along with an isolated area around the Gordano Valley in the North West matching the limit of ridge and furrow and the wholly nucleated settlement very closely. There is no correlation with the different areas of heavier and lighter soils.
- To the north of Mendip evidence is rather limited but the open field systems appear to have been more irregular.
- In the lowlands west of the Parrett there were some small-scale open fields, but which were not comparable to the regular two- or three-field systems in the south east of Somerset that embraced most of the agricultural land within a parish. What open field agriculture there was in the west of Somerset occurred in small-irregular systems associated with one of several hamlets within a parish, and which covered a small proportion of the agricultural land. There were also places in this region that appear to have lacked open field all together.
- In the far south and south west of Somerset there is very little evidence for open field farming at all.



[INSERT FIGURE 27.9] + [INSERT FIGURE 27.10] = same page or facing

### **Farming regions**

A series of historical studies have worked towards mapping patterns of landuse in the past, though as one goes further back in time sources become more fragmentary and the overall picture more conjectural. The different historical sources also record different data in different ways making it impossible to give a standard description of the agricultural regimes at that time. What follows is, therefore, a generalised overview of the agriculture in Somerset over the past millennium in an attempt to see whether there is any correlation with historic landscape character.

In the Domesday Survey the uplands of Mendip, the Quantocks and Exmoor, along with the lower-lying parts of the Somerset Levels were unoccupied; the Blackdown Hills and eastern hills were sparsely occupied (Figure 27.9). Arable cultivation was extensive elsewhere, with the greatest density of ploughteams in the lowlands west of the Parrett, parts of the South East and in the North between Bath and Bristol (Figure 27.10; Darby 1967, figs 84-6; Welldon Finn and Wheatley 1967, figs 37, 39). There is a broad correlation between the density of population and plough-teams in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but no correlation with those areas whose historic landscape was characterised by nucleated villages and open fields (see below). Of the other landuses recorded meadow was abundant in the whole of northern and eastern Somerset, while not surprisingly pasture was most abundant on and around the uplands of Mendip, the Blackdown Hills, the Quantocks, and Exmoor (Darby 1967, 91-2; Welldon Finn and Wheatley 1967, figs 42-3). Of the livestock only sheep show significant patterning, being most abundant in the North East (Welldon Finn and Wheatley 1967, fig. 49).

[INSERT FIGURE 27.11]

For the 13<sup>th</sup>/early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the national overview of demesne agriculture by Campbell (2000), supplemented by the more detailed studies of the manors of Glastonbury Abbey (Ecclestone 1996; Harrison 1997; Keil 1964), and the Victoria County Histories (Dunning 1974; 1981; 1985; 1992; 1999) allows a number of farming zones to be identified (Figure 27.11). Mixed farming was found across most of lowland Somerset with significant areas of arable both east and west of the Parrett. Cattle predominated amongst the livestock in these areas (south of Mendip), notably on manors adjacent to the Somerset Levels that also had some notable herds of pigs. There is a strong link here with the 'fen-edge related communities' identified in Figure 27.4: although the wetlands in these backfens had seen relatively little reclamation they would still have offered fertile pastures and meadow. Glastonbury's major arable manors were located on the Polden Hills and the lowlands south (High Ham) and east (Pennard) of Glastonbury, all in central Somerset. Its manors adjacent to the valleys flowing into the eastern side of the Levels tended to specialise in dairying (Baltonsborough, Butleigh, Glastonbury, and Pilton), while manors located wholly on the Levels (or islands within them: Brent, Godney, Meare, Sowey, and Withy) specialised in dairying and stock raising, with the arable production including a very high proportion of legumes (for fodder). Sheep were once again often more important around Mendip and on the limestone hills to the north (Doulting, Houndstreet, Marksbury, Mellis, and Wrington) (and see Campbell 2000, figs. 3.0-3.06, 3.14).

[INSERT FIGURE 27.12]

By the 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Somerset was a largely pastoral county, with stock raising predominating in the west and dairying in the east (Figure 27.12;

Thirsk 1967b). Communities living on the Somerset Levels and fen-edge were still pursued a largely pastoral regime though with an emphasis on fattening rather than dairying (ibid. 77). The main arable area was in fact the lowlands of western Somerset: in the Vales of Taunton and Wellington, for example, farmers were rearing cattle and sheep, while a few were dairymen; fruit and hops were grown alongside wheat, barley, oats and beans (ibid, 75, 79). The 'village zone' was by now a largely dairying and cloth-making region and was not self-sufficient in cereals (ibid. 79-80).

This series of snapshots of the regional agrarian economies of Somerset reveals several key conclusions: firstly, that the predominant landuse of the various regions changed significantly over time (so shaping historic landscape character), and secondly, that there is no correlation between the 'village zone' and high population and the suitability for soils for arable farming. The 'village zone' does not represent an 'arable' or 'core' region of greatest agricultural potential within the county.

### **Discussion: population, economy and lordship**

A detailed analysis of *why* South East and Central Somerset saw the creation of Midland-style open field/village landscapes is beyond the scope of this study, though certain observations can be made in the light of the material presented above. The date when the 'village landscape' emerged in Somerset is unclear, though evidence points to a date (or dates) between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries being most likely. Fieldwork has shown that the village Shapwick existed by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the context for its creation appears to have been the fragmentation of the large 'multiple/federative estate' of Pouholt, a process that place-name evidence suggests was complete by Domesday (Aston and Gerrard 1999; and see Costen 1992a, b; Rippon 1997a).

Various arguments have been forward suggesting that villages and open fields were created in response to pressures relating to resources: over population, a scarcity of meadow/pasture, or poor drainage. The suggestion that it was population growth that stimulated the reorganisation of rural landscapes (eg Thirsk 1964; 1966), can be dismissed as in common with other areas of England (eg Williamson 2003, 28-32) there is no simple correlation with areas of high population in 11<sup>th</sup> century Somerset and its nucleated settlements/open fields. While the South East and Central Somerset did have amongst the highest densities of population in Domesday, so did a number of areas that did not have nucleated settlement/open fields. Indeed, the lowlands around Taunton and Bath had amongst the highest densities of population and plough-teams in Domesday Somerset, and indeed the whole of South West England, yet lay outside the 'village zone'. It has also been argued that open fields were created in response to the increasing proportion of a community's land that was being placed under arable cultivation, leading to a lack of meadow and pasture (Lewis *et al.* 1997, 199). In Somerset, at least, this does not appear to have been an issue as the numerous rivers that flowed into the Somerset Levels afforded good meadowland, which is reflected in the Domesday Survey: communities in the 'village zone' of South East and Central Somerset had amongst the largest amounts of meadow in the County (Welldon Finn and Wheatley 1967, fig. 42). The third resources-related factor – soils and poor drainage – was recently been promoted by Williamson (2003) who puts forward a strong case for this being a significant factor in the East Midlands. In Somerset, however, there does not appear to be a particularly strong link.

It does not appear, therefore, that communities were directly forced to reorganise their landscapes due to pressure from population, the increasing proportion of land under the plough, or as a response to poor drainage. In contrast, other possible explanations for the creation of villages/open fields suggest that communities chose to do so as they took advantage of wider economic circumstances. It has been observed elsewhere that the creation of nucleated

villages and open fields around the 10<sup>th</sup> century occurred just as the economy shows signs of expansion, reflected in the emergence of new urban/market centres and the more widespread production/trading of pottery (Lewis *et al.* 1997, 199). The ‘village zone’ in Somerset, however, does not show a very strong link with that part of Somerset which had the greatest density of pre-Conquest urban centres which, particularly those with mints, may represent ‘a series of new market centres, chosen by the king to fully exploit the commercial potential of his estates’ (Hill 1982, 117; and see Aston 1986, fig. 7.7). This suggestion that the King may have played a direct role in promoting economic development in this region raises the possibility that he may also have been responsible for reorganising the rural landscape in order to increase its productivity. The link between patterns of landholding and landscape character have long been recognised, such as Everitt’s (1985, 4) simplistic division between ‘manorial’ parishes where all the land was owned by a single magnate or a few large landowners, and ‘freeholders’ parishes where land was divided between a multiplicity of owners. The former was far more common in the ‘Midland zone’ of nucleated villages (eg Northamptonshire where around two thirds of the parishes were in the hands of magnates), and the latter typical of the South East and West of Britain (eg Kent where just one third of the county formed part of major estates).

[INSERT FIGURE 27.13]

In 1066, perhaps half of Somerset formed part of major estates though they were concentrated in the central part of the county. The distribution of royal and related estates in Domesday is presented here in Figure 27.13. The King held a series of ancient properties spread across Somerset including a number in the ‘village zone’ of Central and South East Somerset,<sup>14</sup> and Cheddar. Other royal estates,<sup>15</sup> however, lay outside the ‘village zone’, including those that had formerly existed at Congresbury and Chew in north Somerset (Corcos 2002; Rippon in press). Though cumulatively extensive, these estates were, therefore, scattered across the county and show no direct link with landscapes characterised by nucleated villages and open fields.

In 1066, another major landholder in Somerset was the Godwinson family, notably King Harold (Fleming 1983; 1991, 59-72; Williams 1980). These estates were acquired from a variety of means, including the illegal seizure of estates from the church,<sup>16</sup> grants of ancient royal demesne<sup>17</sup> or were part of an ancient set of estates set aside for royal officials or as part of earldoms that were granted to members of the Godwin family (as denoted by the payment of third-penny borough right and/or listed as *mansiones de comitatu* in the Exeter Domesday).<sup>18</sup> Most of these manors made payments of *albo argento* (‘white silver’), as did the majority of the other Godwin estates.<sup>19</sup> The payments of third-penny and white silver clearly suggest a strong link between these manors and the royal estate, while the configuration of later parish boundaries also shows that several of these Godwinson manors represent sub-divisions of once larger units.<sup>20</sup> Taken together, whilst having a significant presence in South East Somerset, these royal estates – both those held

<sup>14</sup> Bruton, Milborne Port, Crewkerne, South Petherton, Somerton (with Ilchester), Curry Rivel (with Langport)

<sup>15</sup> Cannington, North Petherton, Carhampton and Williton

<sup>16</sup> Banwell and Congresbury

<sup>17</sup> Crewkerne with Easthams

<sup>18</sup> Bath, Brompton [Regis), Henstridge, Old Cleeve, Milverton and Winsford

<sup>19</sup> [Queen] Camel, Capton, Coker, Creech [St Michael], Dulverton with Brushford, Hardington [Mandiville], Nettlecombe and North Curry; only Langford [Budville] did not make this payment.

<sup>20</sup> eg Winsford appears to have been carved out of Dulverton; Nettlecombe from Old Cleeve

as the King's demesne or occasionally granted out to his Earls – were far from being the dominant landowner in the 'village zone' and so cannot have been solely responsible for reorganising all these landscapes.

There is one place in Somerset where we have a very clear idea who was responsible for village planning: Shapwick and the other manors of Glastonbury Abbey's Polden Hills estate. In 1066 Glastonbury dominated central Somerset including much of the northern part of the 'village zone'. Its estates occupied a continuous stretch of countryside from Mells in the north east to Woolavington some 40km to the west, which together comprised around a third of the 'village zone'. The 'multiple' or 'federative' estate based on the Polden Hills was granted to Glastonbury in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, long before it is thought that settlement nucleation occurred elsewhere in England, and so would appear the Glastonbury has to have been responsible for the creation of the 'village landscape' in this area at least. These parishes, including Shapwick, have a particularly distinctive landscape with a series of planned villages, many with a personal-name + '-ington' place-names, and a very even distribution of resources in the Domesday Survey (Aston and Gerrard 1999; Corcos 2002; Rippon 1993; 1997, 159-62). A similarly planned landscape of nucleated villages and open fields occupied the Glastonbury manor of Sowy to the south (Musgrove 1999; 2001), suggesting that this was a common approach by Glastonbury towards the management of its estates.

[INSERT FIGURE 27.14]

If Glastonbury Abbey – or its tenants – must have been responsible for village planning on the Poldens how far were ecclesiastical landowners elsewhere doing the same? Figure 27.14 shows the distribution of church property in Domesday, and it reveals that, once again, there was no dominant landowner in the remaining part of the 'village zone': Glastonbury held a few outlying manors, whilst the Abbays at Athelney and Muchelney also held a small number of estates in this area. It is also notable that an extensive area of South West Somerset – the Bishop of Winchester's estate at Taunton Deane – lay outside the main area of 'Champion' landscape. It is also striking that the core area of the 'village zone' in South East Somerset was not part of any royal or ecclesiastical estate. Rather, this was a landscape of fragmented lordship with a multiplicity of thanes, many of which were not even named in Domesday. It may be that there were once large estates in this area of which no evidence now survives: it may have been in the context of the fragmentation of these estates, and the creation of the thane's holdings, that landscape reorganisation occurred. More research is required on this social context of regional variation in landscape character.

The discussion so far has focussed on the potential role of major landholders, but Lewis *et al.* (1997, 199-201) have argued that it was the rural communities themselves that were responsible for the replanning through an 'evolutionary process' whereby communities in regions with a bias towards arable cultivation reorganised themselves in order to adapt to the new economic circumstances, with others then following, emulating their neighbours. The Somerset evidence suggests that a similar 'evolutionary process' may have occurred there too, perhaps following the lead of Glastonbury Abbey. In terms of its natural environment, resources such as good meadow and pasture, Domesday population, and pattern of landholding (excepting the dominant position of Glastonbury) there seems little reason why nucleation should have been restricted to South East and Central Somerset. The existence of so many emerging urban centres certainly suggests that this was a region with a growing economy, while Glastonbury may just have provided the inspiration for others in restructuring their settlement patterns and field systems. Like ripples on a pond, the trend towards nucleation may have spread out from this core region, barely reaching the extremities of the county

which show just limited signs of nucleation and small-scale irregular open field systems: do these represent the very diluted effects of 'villagization' on what was before a landscape of wholly nucleated settlement and enclosed fields, or in fact were these areas untouched by the c.10<sup>th</sup> century replanning and represent the landscape that was swept away in Central and South East Somerset? Maybe more detailed historic landscape characterisation could help answer that crucial question.

## **MEARE, SOMERSET: LINKING MAPS AND DOCUMENTS**

### **Key features:**

- *parish-scale, past-oriented historic landscape analysis used in the context of research*
- *demonstrates a clear relationship between natural and cultural landscapes*
- *integration of a wide range of sources using the historic landscape as a means of relating documentary information on the medieval agrarian landscape to physical evidence on the ground*
- *a detailed research used to understand the physical processes behind the evolution of a historic landscape, and to reconstruct what that landscape looked like at particular periods in time*

### **Introduction**

The case-studies of Cornwall, Lancashire and Somerset all assessed historic landscape character over very large areas with the result that the 'types' are very generalised and cover what at a local level are quite varied landscapes. This final case-study goes to the opposite end of the scale with regards to the size of case-study areas that can be subject to historic landscape analysis – the parish – in order to demonstrate the degree of details that can be achieved.

The Somerset case-study shows how Glastonbury Abbey was the dominant landowner in medieval Somerset, and this is an examination of the origins and development of the historic landscape in the one of its manors: Meare, in the Somerset Levels. The surviving archives of Glastonbury Abbey contain a wealth of material relating to socio-economic and agrarian history and have seen a series of seminal studies on the management of a medieval estate (eg Abrams and Carley 1991; Carley 1988; Holt 1987; Lennard 1955/6; 1975; Postan 1952/3; 1955/6; 1975) and been the subject of a number of theses (Corcos 2002; Ecclestone 1996; Harrison 1997; Keil 1964; Musgrove 1999; Stacey 1972; Thompson 1997). Very little work has, however, been carried out on reconstructing what the medieval landscape of the individual manors actually looked like, and how they changed over time. The following case-study shows how historic landscape analysis can be used to achieve just this.

[INSERT FIGURE 28.1: Meare 1806]

### **The historic landscape types**

Meare is a bedrock island in the Brue Valley, part of the Somerset Levels immediately west of Glastonbury. Immediately to the south of the island, and to the west/north of a large former lake (Meare Pool), there are peat bogs while to the east there are extensive areas of alluvial soil. Figure 28.1.A shows Meare parish in 1806 (the earliest date for which we have a complete map). A number of key features in the landscape can be identified, such as major drainage ditches and fen banks around which field systems were subsequently planned (Figure 28.1.B: Paddock Rhyne, Heath Rhyne; 'rhyne' is the local word for an artificial watercourse which in

these cases would have run alongside the fenbank), while the historic landscape as a whole can be broken down into a series of generic landscape ‘types’ that occur in one or more unique ‘character areas’ (Figure 28.2 and Table 4).

[INSERT TABLE 4]

[INSERT FIGURE 28.2: Meare – types]

### **Understanding the processes of landscape formation**

As described in Part 2, different landscape morphologies give an indication of the processes that led to their formation and subsequent use, and this becomes clearer through documentary analysis (Table 5; Musgrove 1999). The highly rectilinear patterns of roads and fields on Godney and Westhay Moors, for example, were created in 1783 when the area was enclosed (SRO Q/Rde 125). The pattern of fields around the eastern fringes of Westhay (the ‘short strips’ type) are suggestive of enclosed former common meadows, and the Tithe map field-names support this (eg Broadmead: SRO D/D/Rt 423; Broadmead can in fact be traced back to a survey of Meare carried out for Abbott Monnington in 1355 when it was indeed meadow: Musgrove 1999, 276). The regular (longitudinal) type, is interesting in that it appears to have been created in a number of stages: initially a series of narrow fields were laid out from the fen-edge as far as Paddock Rhyne, and then extended, sometimes with a change in orientation, to Heath Rhyne, and finally as far as the parish boundary (Figure 28.1.B). The manorial account rolls for Meare suggest that the first stage was already completed by 1343/4, describing Meare and Westhay Heaths as ‘waste’ to the ‘south of *Hamweye*’ [Hammes], ‘outside the south part of *Henangre*’ [Honeygar], and ‘outside the south part of *Halperryparroke*’ [Paddock Rhyne??].

The area of ‘irregular, large’ fields north of Meare Island can be identified as the former Meare Pool that was drained and enclosed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A survey of the manor of Meare carried out for Abbot Beere in 1515 described Meare Pool as being one mile long and three quarters of a mile wide, while another survey conducted at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539 described it as ‘circuit five miles, and one mile and an half broad (Phelps 1836). The first serious attempt at its drainage was in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, as in 1630 Mr William Freake is described as having drained many hundreds of acres there; in 1638 there is reference to 480 acres of ground ‘lately a fish pool’ (Williams 1970, 106), and in 1641, tithes ceased to be paid of fishing, swans, fuel and turves in *le Mere* as ‘the water was drained away’ (Harris 1991, 87). In 1684 an enquiry into the tithes owed from the newly reclaimed land stated that ‘New Cutts’ (Decoy Rhyne: Figure 28.1.B) was dug some 25 years earlier (ie c.1660) so creating the historic landscape of today (Williams 1970, 106).

[INSERT TABLE 5]

### **The historic landscape character areas**

Once the processes that lay behind the creation of the different historic landscape types have been established, and their character described, a series of unique character areas emerge that correspond to the phases of reclamation (Table 5). This in turn leads to Figure 28.3 that shows reconstructions of what this landscape may have looked like in c.1300 and c.1500. These first of these dates relates to a period when the landscape of Meare is particularly well documented, notably with the Survey carried out by Abbot Ford in 1260, and a run of account rolls (1257-1344); the latter date corresponds to the Survey of Abbot Beere in 1515.

Initially reclamation focused on the alluvial marshes to the west, north and east of the bedrock island, the field-names of which (mostly being ‘-ha and ‘-mead’)

and surviving medieval surveys and account rolls suggest was mostly used for meadow (providing winter fodder for livestock). The peat moors were left as unenclosed pasture rich in wetland resources, which the manorial surveys, court rolls and legal records of a series of disputes suggest included the rights of turbary (peat cutting for fuel), sedges and reeds (for thatch and animal bedding), and most importantly grazing for cattle and pigs, and alder woodland. 'Ferlingmere' (Meare Pool) was the Abbeys most important fishery that was also used for wildfowling. Field boundary morphology (long narrow strip-like fields) and documentary references suggest the meadows were mostly sub-divided, and most of the arable in Meare was also arranged in an open field system which survived in part into the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the enclosure of these open fields was by agreement and the furlong boundaries retained in the post-enclosure field boundary pattern (cf Figures 28.1.A, 28.2.A and 28.3). The structure of the landscape on Westhay is unclear and requires further research.

By the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the landscape had changed little had changed. Some former meadows had been abandoned (eg Broadmead to the north east of Westhay), though to the east of Meare and south of the island at Godney there was extensive reclamation. The field morphology here, with relatively large rectilinear fields is suggestive of enclosures held in severalty and not common/open fields.

This case-study illustrates another relatively simply example of landscape evolution, showing how information contained within the historic landscape itself can be integrated with documentary sources to both recreate what the landscape looked like at a particular point in time, and how it changed over time. Past patterns of landuse, and something of the social/tenurial structure within which it occurred, can also be reconstructed. Meare is just one of over 50 manors held by Glastonbury and the scope for reconstructing and understanding the medieval landscape on such well-documented estates is enormous.

[INSERT FIGURE 28.3: Meare c.1350 and c.1500]

## **PART FOUR**

### **TOWARDS A MODEL OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Our historic landscape has been created through the interaction of human societies and their environment, most notably through various forms of subsistence, communication, recreation and defence. Historic landscape analysis is based upon an objective understanding of the cultural processes that have given the landscape its current appearance. Unlike the traditional material studied by archaeologists (buried and relict features/sites/landscapes), the historic landscape is complete (though the survival of features from any particular period will be more fragmentary due to the constant evolution of the countryside). It comprises a set of physical cultural features (eg elements such as field boundaries, that together form parcels such as fields, and landscape components such as field systems) draped across the natural landscape. The individual elements/components interact with each other (eg elements of a settlement pattern are linked by roads which pass through field systems), and it is this articulation of different landscape components in both time and space that leads to different historic landscape character. While currently used mostly for rural areas, historic landscape characterisation could equally be used to understanding the origins, development and cultural associations of urban landscapes.

Today, most landscapes are palimpsests, comprising a range of elements that combine in a particular way to give rise to a certain character. In some cases landscapes were subject to an 'event', notably a replanning, which will lead to the creation of an enduring pattern but in such cases it must not be forgotten that there has been a history of subsequent evolution that will have to a greater or lesser degree changed that original 'design'. Other landscapes will simply have evolved gradually over time and as such their complex nature will be reflected in their historic character. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the historic landscape was constructed and used by people, whether they were acting as individuals, institutions or communities, and for many areas we have an abundance of documentary material for the different patterns of lordship and community: if we are to understand how different historic landscape characters came about, then we must explore the potential role that these social factors played.

There is no single methodology for historic landscape analysis: just as historic landscape character varies so dramatically, so do the reasons for studying it. The output of historic landscape analysis can be considered as a 'past-oriented' understanding of the origins and development of that landscape, and a 'future-oriented' description of historic landscape character to inform planners and countryside managers. The aim of this Handbook has been to introduce some of these many different approaches that have been used to date so that the reader can pick and mix elements to suit their own research agenda. There are, however, some underlying elements of good practice that can be suggested. Before embarking upon historic landscape analysis consideration should be given to a number of factors that will effect the size of the study area that can be tackled, or the level of detail that can be achieved if the study area is pre-determined:

- Extent: how large is the study area?
- Complexity: how diverse and complex is the historic landscape within the study area?
- Sources of data: are the necessary base-maps available; what other datasets are available (eg existing mapping of relict features/landscapes from air photography)
- Knowledge/expertise: what previous research has been carried out on this or analogous landscapes



- Requirements of known and likely users: planners, countryside managers, local and regional historians and archaeologists

Mapping must occur against a back-drop showing individual fields: 1:25,000 is generally found to be the most appropriate for large-scale work (eg County-scale) since this balances the requirement for field-scale data with a broad overview of the landscape, and the need to avoid getting bogged-down with too much detail. For smaller-scale work, 1:10,000/1<sup>st</sup> Edition Six Inch maps will give greater precision on the size/shape of fields, and individual relationships between field boundaries.

If the primary aim is to understand the origins and development of the landscape, the earliest complete cartographic sources should be used. Although for many areas these are the Tithe maps of c.1840 these only cover individual parishes and are large/cumbersome to use: it is generally easier to use the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Six Inch maps of c.1880 transcribing any changes shown on the Tithe maps (ie deleting boundaries on the Six Inch maps that post-date the Tithe survey etc).

If the primary aim is to advise planners and countryside managers then a case can be made for using modern maps as the back-drop for HLC, though the earliest possible cartographic sources must still be consulted in order to gain the best possible understanding of the historic character of a particular area.

Relict (ie no-longer functioning) features can form part of the character of historic landscapes. Such features may be earlier and unrelated relict landscapes (eg areas of ridge and furrow underlying a field system created through Parliamentary Enclosure), or simply be elements of the historic landscape that have gone out of use (eg abandoned field-boundaries or deserted settlement). Such relict landscapes/features can be vital in understanding the origins and development of historic landscape character.

The historic landscape can be broken down into a series of inter-linked components (or themes), notably field systems, settlement and communications. For research purposes other layers might include place/field-names, landownership in the Tithe Survey and relict landscapes/features. The most powerful way of managing and manipulating this data is to use a GIS, though if this is not practical then each data-set can be produced to the same scale (ie 1:25,000 etc) on sheets of tracing paper/permatrace.

An area of historic landscape can also be broken down into a series of generic 'historic landscape types', which are not area-specific (and which can be further simplified into a series of still generic 'zones'). In specific places, the particular combination of landscape features, types and zones combine to form distinct 'character areas'.

Historic landscape analysis is at its most powerful when used as a means of integrating a wide range of source material, including cartographic and documentary material, place- and field-names, and archaeological evidence fore buried or relict components of both the historic landscape and what it replaced.