



## Analytical survey of earthworks at Willey Park Farm, Chaldon, Surrey

**Parish:**

**Chaldon**

**District:**

**Tandridge**

**NGR:**

**TQ 3200 5390**

**Date of survey:**

**2013 – 2015**

**Report Author:**

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### Geology, topography and present land use (figures 1a and 1b)

The area under study lies at the top of the scarp slope of the North Downs in the parish of Chaldon, at between 180 and 230mOD, with a central NGR of TQ 3200 5390. The area is south-facing with a relatively gentle slope which steepens to the south.

The southern portion of the fields lies on Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation with that portion on the plateau of the downs lying on Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation covered by a superficial deposit of Clay with Flints.

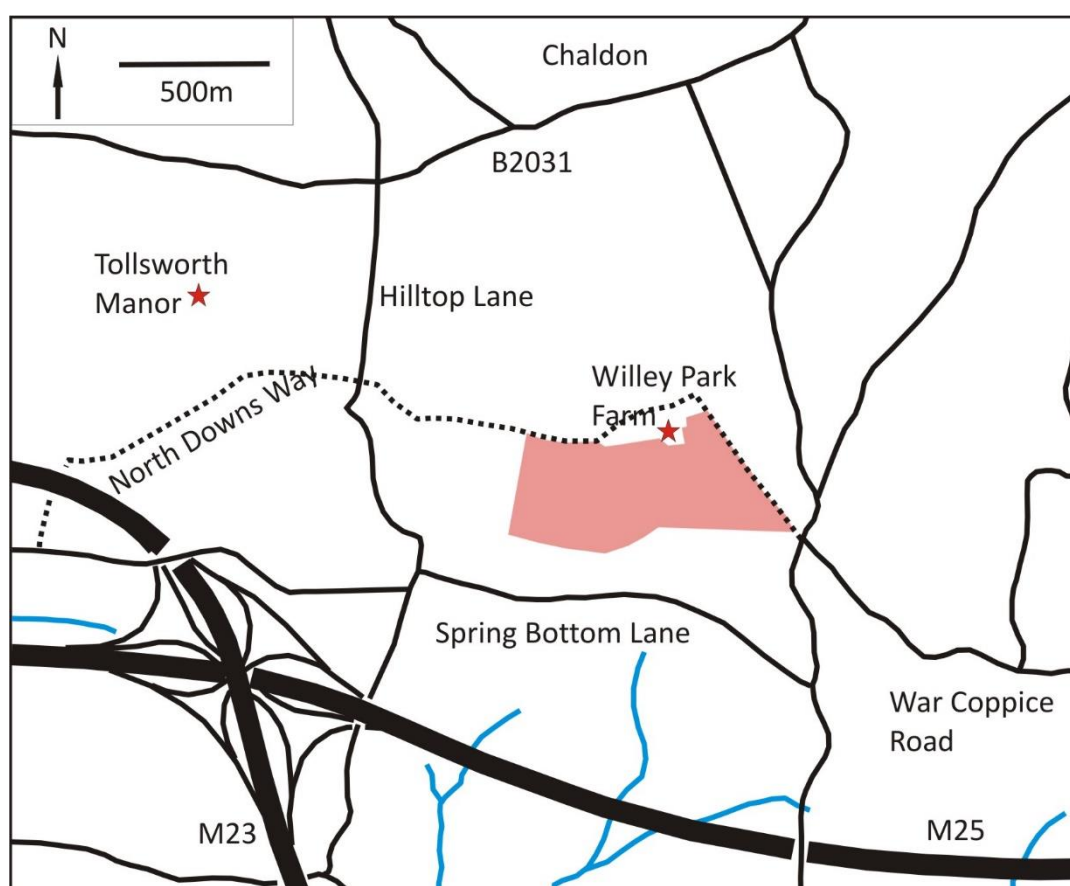


Figure 1a Location of area surveyed at Willey Park Farm, Chaldon (shown in red)

Most of the area under survey is in private ownership as part of Willey Park Farm and is mainly used for horse pasturing but the western field is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Nature Reserve called Quarry Hangers now under the management of Surrey Wildlife Trust. It includes a mixture of species-rich chalk grassland, scrub and woodland, and supports a

number of plants which are rare or local in Surrey, as well as local invertebrates and is open to the public. The northern boundary of the area is marked by the North Downs Way.

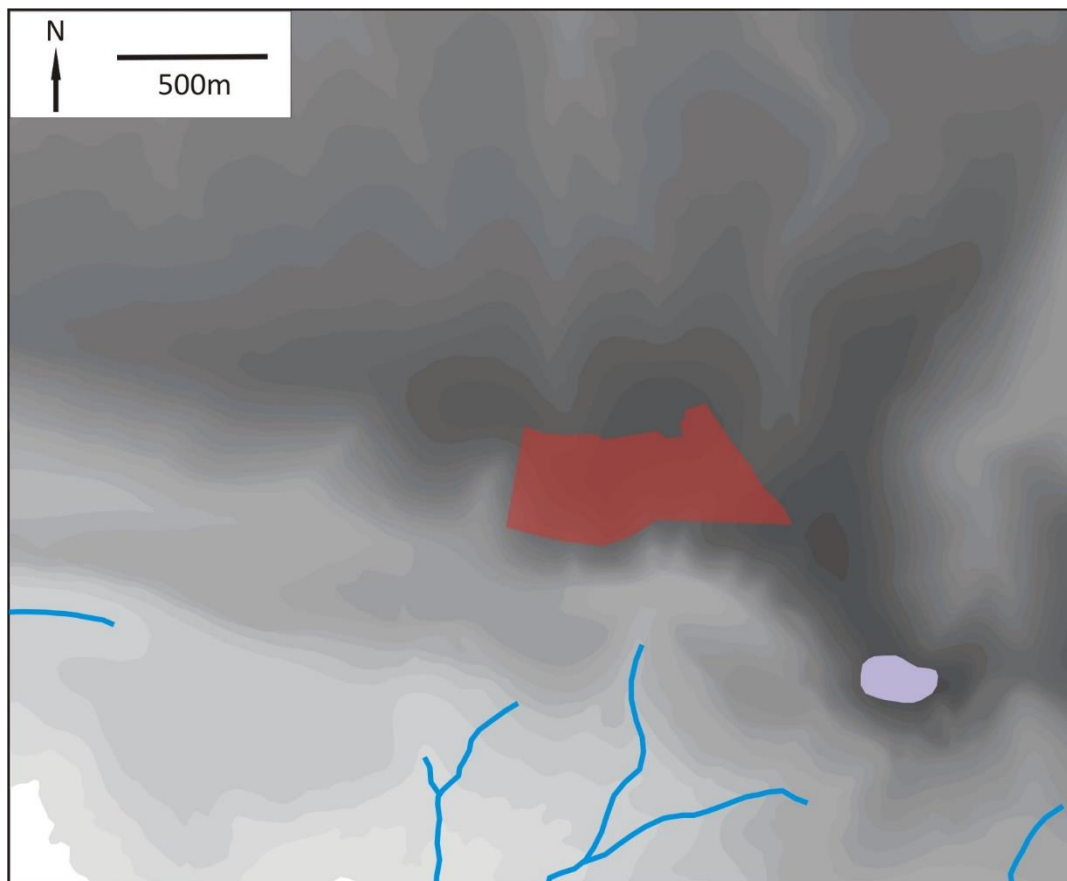


Figure 1b Topography of area surveyed at Willey Park Farm, Chaldon (shown in red). Contours are given at 5m intervals with land below 95m OD remaining white. War Coppice hillfort is shown in lilac.

### Historical and Archaeological Background

The most important archaeological site in the vicinity of Willey Park Farm is the Iron Age hillfort known as War Coppice or Cardinal's Cap (SHHER 1233). The site was partially excavated by Hope-Taylor in 1950 but the intervention remains unpublished. Isolated finds in the area include Mesolithic worked flints from Gravelly Hill (SHHER 1236) and a core tool (SHHER 3210) from Stanstead Road. A denarius of Trajan was found near Spring Bottom Lane (SHHER 3761).

The historical and archaeological background of the land around Willey Park Farm has been extensively researched and what follows is largely derived from those works (Saaler 2000; Fookes 2002).

The area under study is recorded as having a 'possible Iron Age field system, farmstead and road identified from aerial photographs as there is nothing to be seen on the ground' (SHHER 1237).

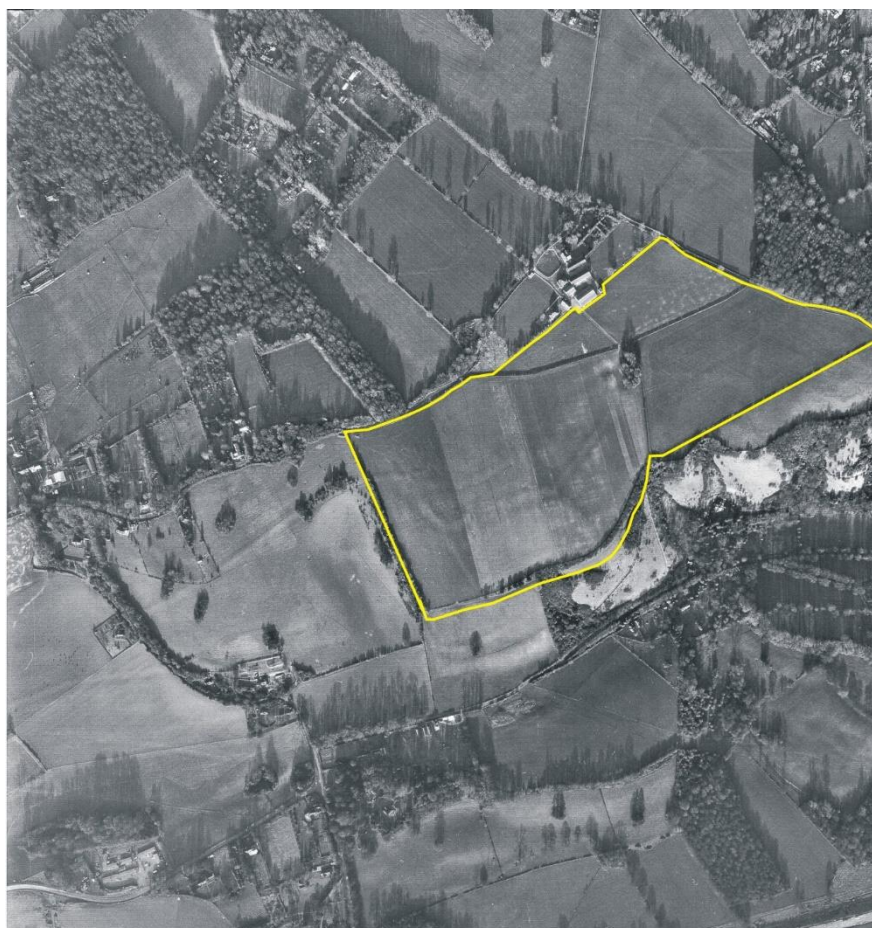


Figure 2 Aerial photograph of Willey Park Farm taken in 1975 showing the area surveyed. (MAL-75006-V-35) © British Gas



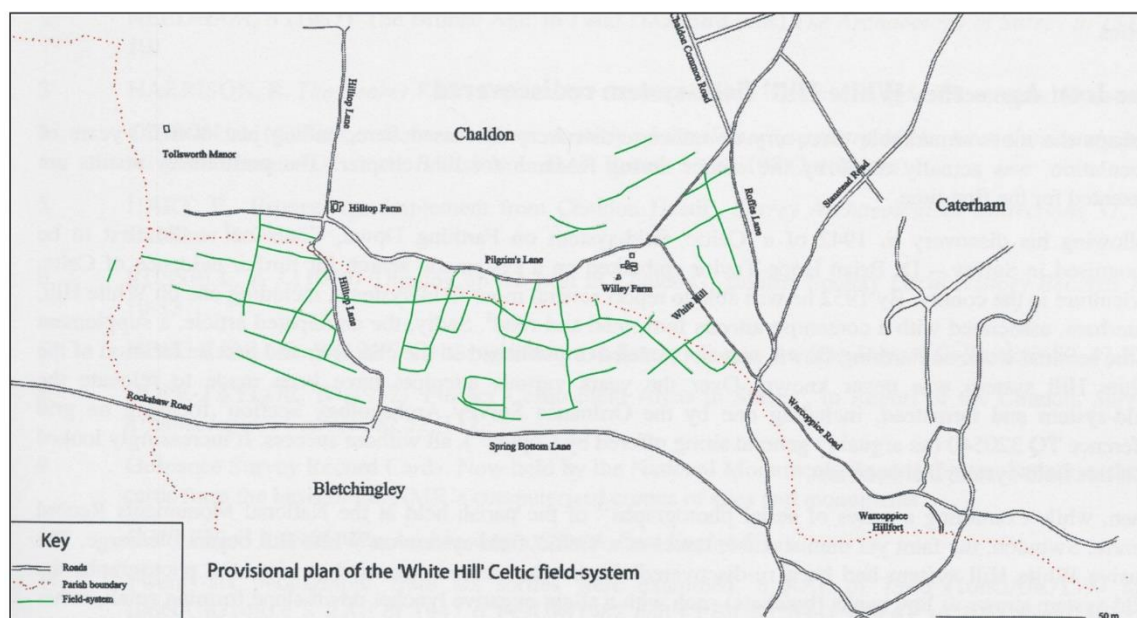


Figure 3 Transcription of the aerial photographs of fields south of Willey Park Farm by Simon Crutchley and Mike Russell (Historic England) and published in Fookes 2002.

The presence of a field system was first recognised, but not published, by Hope-Taylor and the exact location lost. Later examination of aerial photographs revealed a system running along the top of the scarp slope of the downs from TQ300 542 to TQ 324545 – that this continuous system crosses three parishes, Chaldon, Caterham and Bletchingley, strongly suggests an early date (figure 2). A transcription of the crop marks by Simon Crutchley (then of the English Heritage Aerial Survey Department) and Mike Russell (then of English Heritage) is shown as figure 3.

Chaldon is one of the many Surrey estates apparently granted to Chertsey Abbey by Frithwald, *subregulus* of Surrey and Bishop Erkenwald in 675; although these charters are almost certainly later forgeries it is thought that they contain earlier, genuine information. This grant was apparently confirmed by a charter of Edgar Athelstan in 933 considered spurious (Sawyer 1968, 173, S420) and by a further dubious charter of Edgar in 967 (*ibid*, 242, S752). The number of names containing the OE element *-ham* mentioned in a further charter dating to the same year (*ibid*, 242, S753), in which Edgar gave an estate in Chaldon to Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, and which appears to describe land north of that under study (Northfield 2006), has been used to suggest a number of small enclosures on the downs (Blair 1991, 46). This suggests private ownership of areas within a grazing area implied by the place-name *Chalvedune*, calves down (Gover *et al* 1982, 42) and part of a large estate based on

Banstead (Gray 2002). A further dubious charter of 1062 has Edward the Confessor confirming the grant of Chaldon to Chertsey Abbey (Sawyer 1968, 307, S1035).

However, the Domesday Survey of 1086 records Chaldon as belonging to Edward the Confessor before 1066 and held by Dering. It had been handed to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux who in turn granted the two hides to Ralph Fitz Turolde which was later attached, with the rest of Ralph's land, to the Honour of Rochester Castle. Ownership of the main Chaldon Manor after this is somewhat obscure but the Hansard and Covert families appear to have held it until 1475 when the St Legers purchased Chaldon (Malden 1912).

Two small manors were also formed. Tollsworth was also held by Merton Priory before 1201/2 when further land was granted to them by the Hansard family (*ibid*). This charter mentions a grange, probably close to the site of the present Tollsworth Manor whose land adjoins the fields under study on the downs scarp, to the west of Hilltop Lane. The name, given as *tunles weorð* in 947 (see above), may indicate an enclosure, possibly privately owned and used for arable production, in an area of open grazing (English 2002).

The place-name Willey is first mentioned in 1316 and means either 'habitation at the edge of a willow wood' or 'Willa's habitation at the edge of a wood' – if view of the relatively dry location on top of the downs the latter seems more likely. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century it was held in socage by Battle Abbey as of their Manor of Limpsfield, but it is not mentioned in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* so ownership may have ceased before the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The manor had been granted by the Abbey to the Warbleton family by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and in 1332 was described as a 'tenement called Willwyke'. It remained with the same family until 1484 when it was granted to William Puttenham.

By 1552 Willey Manor was held by John Cooke, a London goldsmith, who granted it to Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of Tents and Revels to Henry VIII, who also held Place Farm, Bletchingley. At that time the demesne buildings at Willey Manor comprised three dwellings, arable and pasture land, with small areas of woodland, heath and furze. He obtained a confirmation of the grant of free warren made to John de Warbleton and in the following year devised Willey Manor to John Browne and Alice his wife. During ownership by the Bettenson family the Hearth Tax Returns of 1664 listed 'the Manor house of Willey, which now stands vacant, being part of the demesne of Richard Beteson, unpaid: 8 hearths'. A description by

John Aubrey of c.1672 says 'in the parish (Chaldon) is a hamlet called Willey, belonging to Mr Beteson, where there is a fine grove of ashes; it is situate on the top of a hill from whence is a prospect southward to the vale of Surrey and so to the South Downs, which seem of an azure colour, to Hampshire in the west and Kent in the east' (Aubrey 1975). Willey Park Farm is thought to be of 17<sup>th</sup> century date.

In 1734 the property passed to Sir William Clayton, a major landowner in the area, and in 1761 an estate map drawn for Sir Kenrick Clayton depicts the fields surveyed (figure 4) split between three properties, Constables Farm, Willey Park Farm and Quarry Farm. The large Old Quarry was in operation, as it was to be until at least 1775 (SHC 61/2/19-20) and two smaller chalk pits existed in a strip of woodland adjoining the track north of Park Ham. The area depicted is bounded on the north by the North Downs Way, on the east by White Hill Lane, on the south by Quarry Farm and on the west by Hilltop Lane.



Figure 4 Part of a map of Willey Park Farm drawn for Sir Kendrick Clayton in 1761 (SHC 8948/1/22) reproduced by kind permission of Surrey History Centre





Figure 5 Part of a map of Chaldon Parish drawn for the Rector, Thomas Weldon by B Badcock in 1825 with later amendments (SHC 2874/1). Reproduced by kind permission of Surrey History Centre.

The field names are:

- 36 Strum Field Shaw
- 37 Strum Field
- 38 The Grove
- 39 Great White Field
- 40 Middle White Field
- 41 Little White Field
- 46 Great Poor Robins Field
- 47 Barn Field
- 48 The Meadow
- 49 The Old Orchard

In 1825 a map was drawn for the rector of Chaldon, probably for Tithe Assessment purposes and this gives the first complete set of field names for the area under study (figure 5). The relevant field names are:

- 208 The Old Banks
- 209 Barns and Yard
- 212 Broad Ham
- 213 Park Ham
- 214 Three Cornered Ridge Hill
- 215 Kiln Field and Ridge Hill
- 216 Ridge Hill Shaw

217	Great White Field, Little White Field, The Grove and part of Strum Field
218	Cow House and Mead
219	Willey Homestead
220	Road and Yard
221	The Meadow
224	Grub Wood Field
225	Barn Field

Willey Park and Quarry Farms were being run as a single enterprise and much of the enclosed land was under arable use. A lime kiln is shown on common land beside Hilltop Lane, probably sourcing chalk from the pits in Ridge Hill Shaw. The Tithe Map and Award of 1837 (SHC) adds the information that the Old Banks contained two houses, a barn and a hovel. Field boundaries were removed between 1837 and the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6" OS map surveyed in 1868/9 (figure 6) and the common land beside Hilltop Lane had been enclosed. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the track between Quarry Farm and The Old Banks had been rerouted and names Spring Bottom Lane, Rockshaw House was built on The Old Banks and houses were being built on the former common land along Hilltop Lane and in Ridge Hill Shaw.



Figure 6 Willey Park Farm as depicted on the OS 6" map Surrey XXVII surveyed 1868/9

The land surveyed is in Chaldon and Bletchingley parishes but this results from modern changes which granted the southern portion of Chaldon parish to Bletchingley (Gray 2002).

## The survey

The level 3 survey was carried out over the winters of 2014 to 2016, at an original scale of 1:1250, using tape and compass (Bowden 1999, 62-63; Ainsworth *et al* 2007) and entailed both fieldwork and non-field-based investigation sufficient to provide a detailed and fully analytical record. The results of the fieldwork are shown in figure 7a and in an annotated version in figure 7b.

All the area surveyed, with the exception of that within the nature reserve, was covered with a series of very slight ridges running from east to west, and about 5m apart. These overlay all other earthworks and appear to result from modern agricultural practices – they have been omitted from the survey drawings for the sake of clarity. No features of interest were recorded in the easternmost field, to the east of the track running south from Willey Park Farm, and this area is also omitted from the survey drawings. The letters used below refer to the annotated version of the survey (figure 7b).

The well-preserved earthworks in the nature reserve comprise a number of lynchetted enclosures with rounded corners, marking the western portion of ‘looped’ fields. All the fields in one line (a) may be contemporary but a further three (b) were clearly added later. The reason for the rounding of the corners is uncertain – it may be that the fields were outlined with rounded corners to facilitate ploughing, or that ploughing round a square corner resulted in loose soil spilling over either side and thus obscuring the original shape. A short portion of a probable eastern boundary to three of these fields can be seen within the field which has been ploughed extensively in recent centuries and this suggests that the older fields were very small, possibly no more than approximately 600m<sup>2</sup>. Although this may seem small by medieval and modern standards, prehistoric fields vary enormously in size - on Orcheston Down (Wilts) they can be as small as from 25m<sup>2</sup> and are seldom larger than 50m<sup>2</sup>, whilst on Upavon and Thornham Downs, again on Salisbury Plain, they can attain some 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (McOmish *et al* 2002, 54-56).

The line created by the successive western edges of these fields is seen in the aerial photograph (figure 2) but shows very little detail and this has been transcribed as a single line (figure 3).



Figure 7a Analytical survey of fields at Willey Park Farm



Figure 7b Annotated version of the analytical survey of fields at Willey Park Farm



The features within the large field to the south-west of Willey Park Farm buildings comprise a number of lynchets some of which probably derive from field boundaries shown on early map of the area. One (c) is a direct continuation of one of the boundaries on the 'looped' field system in the nature reserve but coincides with the position of the hedge-line between parcels 37 and 39 (Strum Field and Great White Field) on the 1761 map prepared for Sir Kendrick Clayton (figure 4) but which had disappeared by 1825 (figure 5). A second lynchet (d) appears to represent the 1761 boundary between parcels 38 and 40 (The Grove and Middle White Field) and this also had been removed by 1825. Two further features (e and f) seem to be part of the same system as (d) but are not shown on any of the available maps and may have belonged to an earlier or intermediate pattern of field arrangements. One of these (f) is also a direct continuation of one of the boundaries of the 'looped' system. Although these earthworks may relate to hedge-lines seen on maps, or result from other relatively modern boundaries this does not exclude their having originated earlier, possibly as part of the suggested late prehistoric system. Two other small lynchets (g and h) running approximately east / west in the southern portion of the same field are also not shown on maps and one (g) appears to underlie one of the 'looped' fields, although the scale of these features is too slight for the phasing to be clear.

The area south of the enclosed fields is on an increasingly steep slope and shows a series of lynchets (i). These seem too close to be bounding fields and may result from multiple and slightly shifting hedge- and fence-lines marking the property division between Willey Park and Quarry Farms.

Towards the western limit of the area surveyed these lynchets are crossed by two very slight banks (j and k) running approximately north / south. Since the eastern of the pair (k) is in a direct line with, and on the same alignment as the edge of the 'looped' field system to the north it may be that the banks are of an enclosure related to those fields – again the earthworks are so slight that phasing of the relationship between the lynchets and the banks is uncertain.

The parish boundary between Chaldon and Bletchingley crosses these fields but is not marked by any visible earthwork, probably because this portion of the boundary only dates from about 1933.

## Discussion

The great majority of the area surveyed contained only very minor earthworks and there were clear signs of the fields having been ploughed many times. Although traditionally the chalk downs are thought of as open grazing, particularly for sheep, use for arable production took place when grain prices were high enough to make the relatively poor yields obtained economically worthwhile. Ploughing may have taken place during the period up to 1350 when population increased to an unsustainable level and place-names containing the element *-land* strongly suggest conversion of grazing to arable (English & Turner 2004). However, in this case, the parish map of 1825 shows that Broad Hamm, Three Cornered Ridge Hill, Kiln Field and Ridge Hill were all in arable use and the field name Grub Wood Field indicates clearance of woodland at some period. This 19<sup>th</sup> century arable use falls within the period 1815 to 1846 when grain prices were kept artificially high to protect British producers from overseas competition.

However, the western field surveyed, now within the Nature Reserve, has clearly escaped this regime and lynchets up to 1m high, most unusual for Surrey, have survived. They comprise a series of 'looped' fields, of which only the western portion of each field has survived. With the lack of any dating evidence only the morphology of the system can be employed but very similar fields have been surveyed on the South Downs at Tenantry Ground, Lullington and Thunderbarrow Hill, Shoreham by Sea, and in Wessex on Stockbridge Down, Stockbridge, (English 2013, figs 7.9, 9.10 and 8.9 respectively). A portion of the system on Thundersbarrow Hill is overlain by an Early – Middle Iron Age enclosure whilst that on Stockbridge Down can be seen to pre-date both a Wessex Linear Ditch complex and the outer rampart of the Middle Iron Age Woolbury Rings, suggesting a Middle or Late Bronze age date for the 'looped' field systems. To ascribe such a date to the system on Willey Park Farm would be something of an assumption but the presence of War Coppice hillfort eastwards along the chalk scarp and of late prehistoric field systems on the greensand to the south at Mercer's Farm, Nutfield (Coombe *et al* 2018, 223-224) and North Park Quarry, Bletchingley (Marples & Poulton, 2019) render the suggestion feasible.

Surrey is not rich in prehistoric field systems, particularly when compared with chalk areas of the adjacent counties, and the protection of the best preserved here by their incorporation into a nature reserve is serendipitous.

## Acknowledgements

Those involved in the survey include Rose Hooker, the late Pauline Hulse, John Jennings, Jenny Newell and Ken Waters. Field drawings were undertaken by Jenny Newell and the late Pauline Hulse. We are grateful to Nicky Blatch of Willey Park Farm and Geoff Hewlet of the Surrey Wildlife Trust for permission to work on land under their control.

## Primary sources

Surrey History Centre

SHC 61/2/19-20 – Title Deed for property belonging to the Clayton family

SHC 8948/1/22 – map of Willey Park Farm drawn for Sir Kendrick Clayton in 1761

SHC 2874/1 – map of Chaldon parish drawn by B Badcock in 1825

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### **Distribution**

Surrey Archaeological Society

Surrey Historic Environment Record (Surrey County Council)

Nicky Blatch – Willey Park Farm

Surrey Wildlife Trust