

The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

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The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation Project forms part of English Heritage's national programme of 'historic landscape characterisation' undertaken by local government. It covered the modern administrative county of Surrey. The project is concerned with understanding how the landscape has developed through human intervention and interaction with the physical environment over time. Areas of the landscape are categorized into different historic landscape types according to defined attributes. The Surrey project followed a similar methodology to that undertaken in Hampshire and Kent with the results plotted on to a GIS-based digital system held by Surrey County Council. The results of the mapping revealed that Surrey is essentially a rural landscape with fields making up 36.5% of the county, while commons, heaths etc contribute 7%. Woodland cover was calculated at 13%, significantly lower than the figure of 23% quoted by Surrey County Council (SCC 1997). This difference reflects the method of grouping the character types with some heath woods sub-types being included in the heathland character type. Settlement covers 23% with industry another 4%. Many parts of the county, especially in the south (Weald) and across the Downs dip slope, retain historic landscape character types pre-dating 1811 and often with medieval origins. The resulting database provides a broad-brush base-line for understanding Surrey's historic landscape and is an aid in conservation management, development control, research and education. The aim is for the Historic Landscape Character Map and database to be available to the public via the internet as well as through more conventional sources such as libraries and schools.

Introduction

There has been increasing interest by archaeologists, historical geographers and, more recently, historical ecologists in the historic landscape, pioneered by the now classic work *The making of the English landscape* by W G Hoskins (1955). The work of C C Taylor in the 1970s and Oliver Rackham in the 1980s drew attention to the way the countryside has developed through time and the components (including living ones) that make up particular types of landscapes (Taylor 1975; 1979; Rackham 1976; 1986).

Increased knowledge and understanding of the historic landscape has resulted in appreciation of the need to afford it better protection in order to manage landscape change in a far more sympathetic way and with regard to what has gone before. In response to this greater knowledge, the government in its white paper *Our common inheritance* (DoE 1990) asked English Heritage (EH) to produce a register of historic landscapes of national importance. The outcome of several studies commissioned by English Heritage was the decision that all the country's landscape is historic because humans have changed and modified nearly all the British countryside to some degree. Some landscapes contain features and remains of human activities stretching back thousands of years, such as heathlands and downlands, while others represent a particular activity which has taken place over a short period, for example some formal designed landscapes.

Thus the emphasis was placed on the understanding and identification of the historic character of the whole of the country's landscape, and to this end English Heritage's national programme of historic landscape characterization was born in 1992. It was also a means by which the aims of Planning Policy Guidance note 15 (PPG15), with regard to the all-pervasive quality of the historic environment (Sections 1.3, 2.26), could be addressed. Historic landscape characterization also fitted with the Countryside Commission's 'Character Map of England' and English Nature's 'Natural Areas Map'. A detailed account of the historic landscape characterization programme to 1994 is given by Fairclough, Lambrick and McNab (1999), with a review of the current position presented by Fairclough, Lambrick and Hopkins, who state (2002, 69):

Historic landscape characterisation is concerned with recognising the many ways in which the present countryside reflects how people have exploited and changed their physical environment, and adapted to it through time. It considers this with respect to different social, economic, technological and cultural aspects of life, and the varied underlying influences of geography, history and tradition.

Initially there were several independent pilot historic landscape characterization projects running concurrently, developing their own approaches and

methodologies, for example at Durham, Oxford and Avon (Fairclough *et al* 1999, 38–47). However, a historic landscape character assessment of Bodmin Moor in Cornwall was developed to cover the whole of that county (Herring 1998). It is from the Cornwall project that the most widely accepted historic landscape characterization method was formulated, and subsequent counties then modified it to fit their local context. So far a third of England has been completed with another six counties in progress and six more that were planned to commence in 2002/3 (Fairclough *et al* 2002, 71).

The concept that the whole of the rural landscape is historic was being widely accepted (*ibid*, 69–70), but the idea of some landscapes being of greater historical and archaeological importance than others was taken on board in some counties, and Surrey implemented a programme of identifying within the county Areas of Historic Landscape Value (AHLV; now called Areas of Special Historic Landscape Value: ASHLV). This process proceeded until 2001 without the benefit of a county-wide assessment of the historic landscape of Surrey. One of the objectives of the Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation Project was to provide the base-line information for identifying systematically across the county future candidates for ASHLVs and areas where resources regarding future research could be targeted.

Methodology

In April 2000 Surrey County Council, together with its partner organizations English Heritage and the Countryside Agency, commissioned the author to undertake a historic landscape characterization of the administrative county of Surrey following the methodology already adopted for its neighbours, Hampshire and Kent (Lambrick & Bramhill 1999; Bramhill & Munby 2001). The administrative county was selected on practical grounds and also on the basis that those parts of the historic county that fell within the London boroughs are essentially suburban in character and will be the subject of a later historic landscape characterization project. The characterization was achieved by producing a digital map using key archive material, existing detailed historic landscape surveys and assessments combined with the author's knowledge of the county drawn from extensive fieldwork. The Countryside Agency was involved because of the value the characterization project would have for the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and in particular in the drafting of the new management plan (in progress). The objective for using the same method as that for Hampshire and Kent (with local modifications) was to ensure continuity across the South East, thus facilitating a regional historic landscape assessment in the future.

In essence the objective of historic landscape characterization is to assign units of the landscape (usually fields or groups of fields as defined on the OS 1:2500 map) to a historic landscape character type (HLT) identified by pre-defined attributes. These attributes take account of the process by which that particular piece of landscape has come about, its physical appearance and the time period over which the process has taken place (time-depth). The HLT is a description of what a particular piece of landscape looks like today and takes account of current land use characteristics. The morphological, spatial, functional and chronological attributes of the HLTs have to be easily recognizable and definable, with the number of types being large enough to capture the diversity of the historic character but not too large to become unwieldy, resulting in a loss of patterning. Thus for Surrey a total of 99 historic landscape sub-types (HLsT) were identified which could be grouped into fourteen major historic landscape types (HLT). The full list of HLsTs (with their geographical information system (GIS) code), is given in an Appendix and on the key to the Historic Landscape Character Map (fig 9.1). The full list of HLTs with their attribute descriptions is presented in volume 2 of the *Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation Report* (Bannister & Wills 2001). For each of the HLsTs there is a written description and historical rationale, together with a description of identifying characteristics. Predominant locations of the types together with variations, typical associations with other HLsTs and other similar types are also given. For each HLsT key indicative sources used to identify the type are also listed (see discussion below). One example of a HLsT is 101: Small irregular assarts intermixed with woodlands (fig 9.2).

The plotting of the information in digital format using one of a number of GIS programmes enables detailed analyses to be produced of the database, highlighting trends and patterns in the distribution of HLTs. It also allows cross-referencing with other databases, for example the county's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), or with development control constraints. For Surrey the historic landscape characterization was mapped directly on to the GIS at 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 from the archive sources without an intermediate paper stage. This differed from previous computerized assessments which had undertaken mapping on paper bases prior to digitizing. It was agreed that mapping direct on to computer made the optimum use of limited resources, especially as the archive material was always kept to hand for cross-reference. However, since the completion by the author of a contribution to a review of the historic landscape characterization methodology, on behalf of Somerset County Council for English Heritage (Aldred 2002), it has been concluded that,

for technical reasons, a paper map stage might have been beneficial. By viewing at 1:25,000 scale much larger areas of the county than can be seen on a screen, it may have been possible to achieve greater clarity by drawing out some of the more ephemeral trends with regard to field patterns.

The Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation project was divided into seven clearly defined tasks, the completion of each leading on to the next.

- Collection of data, drawing on published and unpublished sources.
- Identification and documentation of attributes and drawing up lists of historic landscape character types (HLT) and sub-types (HLsT).
- Characterization of key pilot areas, namely eight 5km grid squares, as examples of the varied geological and landscape areas across the county.
- Characterization of the whole of the county, digitized on to GIS.
- Description and analysis of the historic element of the Surrey Landscape Character Areas.
- Production of report with accompanying maps.
- Production of recommendations with reference to the Surrey Hills AONB.

The objective of the pilot mapping stage was to test the list of HLsTs with the mapping process, together with detailed cross-referencing with archive sources and with the digitized 1999 county aerial photographs. The pilot exercise was also a means by which the author could become familiar with the GIS programme Microsoft 'WINGS'. Technical support was provided by the GIS team in the Environment Section of Surrey County Council led by Patrick Wills. The list of HLsTs was revised in the light of the pilot mapping with, for example, the sub-division of golf courses based on their landscape origin. Back-up copies of the database were regularly sent to Surrey County Council. The author kept a daily diary charting the mapping progress across the county, from west to east and north to south, in one seamless process. Each identified historic landscape unit was defined by a polygon and assigned a HLsT together with other information such as confidence levels, archive sources, and previous character types (where known).

The amount of information available for the project was considerable and, given the time-scale and resources, the number of archive sources used had to be restricted yet provide the maximum amount of information in a readily accessible format. Essentially historic landscape characterization is a mapping exercise and to provide the element of time-depth, key archive maps were the main sources consulted. They provided snapshots of landscape change from the late 18th century to the mid-19th

century and included John Rocque's Survey of the County of Surrey (published 1768, surveyed 1762); the Ordnance Surveyors' draft drawings for the 1-inch 1st edition (1797–1801); the OS 1-inch 1st edition (1811); the OS 6-inch 1st edition (*c* 1870s); OS 1-inch 1940–5 and the current OS 1:25,000 Explorer Series. The tithe maps and enclosure maps were only consulted for the pilot survey, when it was found that extracting information from them was time-consuming. However it would be possible in the future to add this information in the form of overlays to the data set. In addition to the maps, the other extremely useful source was aerial photographs, namely the RAF mosaic (1946–9) and the most recent full county flight in digital format (1999). The latter aerial photographs were so clear and detailed that they replaced the need for cross checking on the ground. However for future more detailed assessments, ground checking will probably need to take place. Of limited use were other data sets, for example English Nature's Ancient Woodland Inventory and Phase I Habitat Maps. As part of the background research to the drawing up of the list of HLsTs, the numerous detailed historic landscape surveys which have been completed for either candidate ASHLVs or for National Trust properties were also consulted. These tended to be areas concentrated on either the North Downs or the Wealden greensand.

Results

The results of the Project were presented in a two-volume report together with the completed database in digital format (Bannister & Wills 2001). Copies of the report were distributed to the partner organizations with a copy also going to the Surrey Archaeological Society library. The 'WINGS' GIS programme enables any number of analyses to be undertaken of the data set, in the form of overlays together with computed summary tables and charts. However, the analysis of the database took two main directions. First a comparison with the county's landscape character areas as identified in *The future of Surrey's landscape and woodlands* (SCC 1997), together with the historic character of the Surrey Hills AONB area. Secondly the identification of historic landscape character areas, based on defined patterns in the distribution and patterning of HLsTs across the county. In addition the distribution of woodland in relation to settlement and parish boundaries was examined together with the time-depth characteristics across the county.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project supports the commonly held view that Surrey is one of the most wooded counties in England (13%). This figure is significantly lower than that usually quoted (eg SCC 1997) and reflects the grouping of the

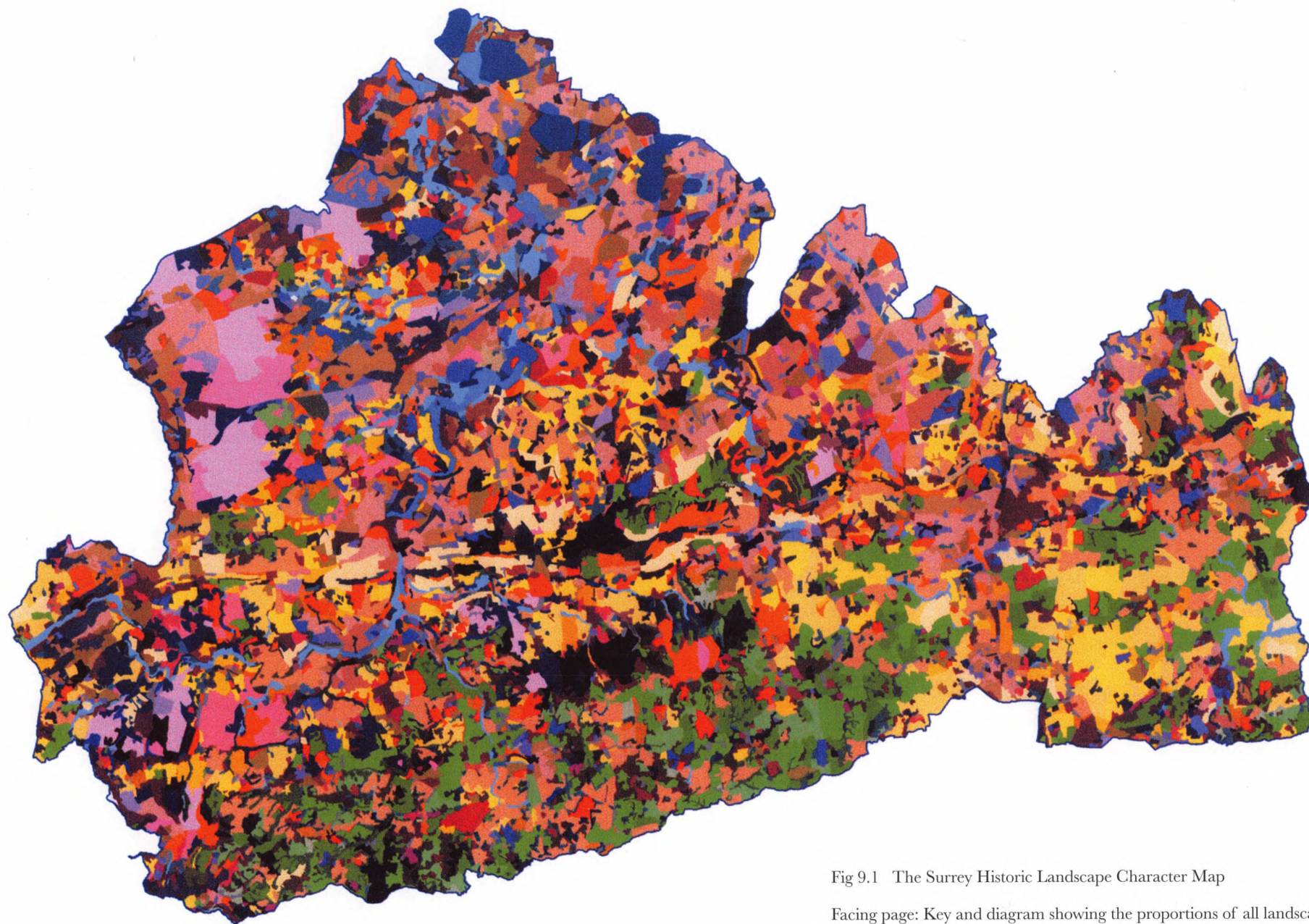
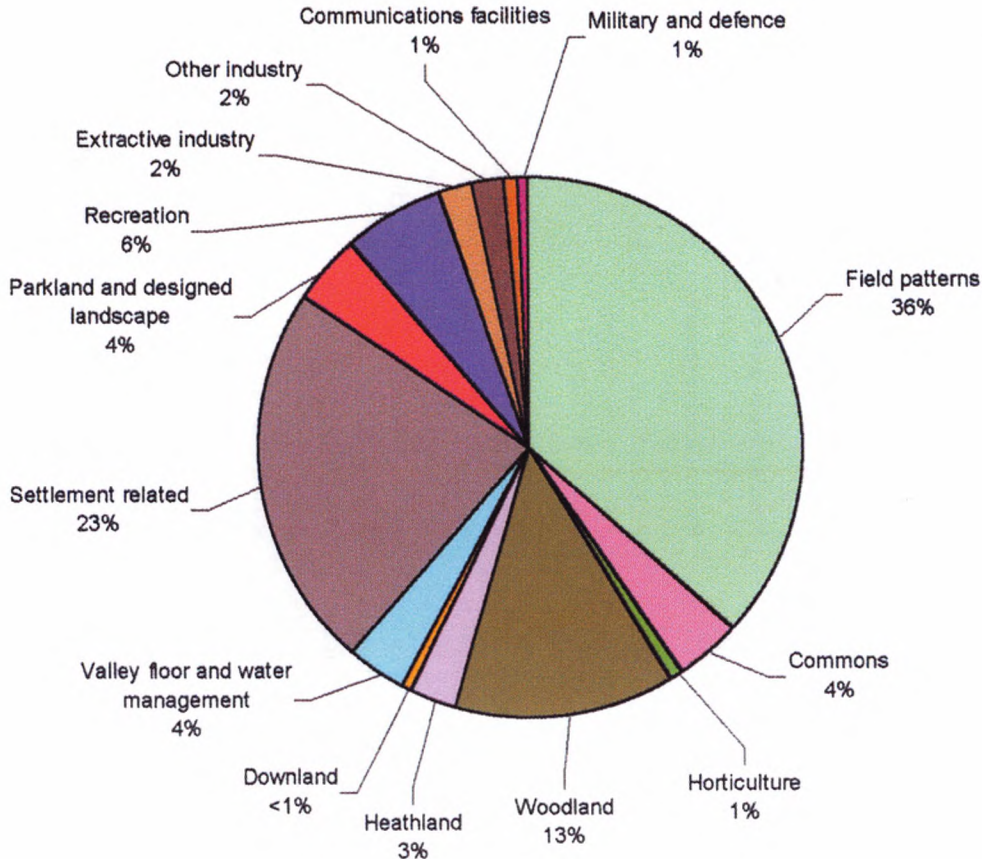


Fig 9.1 The Surrey Historic Landscape Character Map

Facing page: Key and diagram showing the proportions of all landscape types

All Landscape Types



Field patterns

- Small irregular assarts intermixed with woodland
- Medium irreg. assarts & copses with wavy bdys.
- Large irreg. assarts with wavy or mixed bdys.
- Regular assarts with straight boundaries
- Enclosed strips and furlongs
- Medium to large regular fields with wavy bdys. (late medieval to 17th/18th century enclosure)
- Small irreg. rectilinear fields with straight bdys.
- Small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries
- Regular "ladder" fields
- Small regular fields (parliamentary encl. type)
- Medium regular fields (parliamentary encl. type)
- Large regular fields (parliamentary encl. type)
- Variable size, regular fields (parliamentary encl.)
- "Prairie" fields (large enclosures with extensive boundary loss)
- Fields bounded by roads, tracks and paths
- Previously hops/orchard
- Parkland conversion to arable
- Fields, formerly ponds now dried up

Commons

- Common heathland
- Common downland
- Other commons and greens
- Wooded over commons

Horticulture

- Orchards
- Nurseries with glass houses
- Nurseries without glass houses

Woodland

- Assarted pre-1811 woodland
- Replanted assarted pre-1811 woodland
- Other pre-1811 woodland
- Replanted other pre-1811 woodland
- 19th century plantations (general)
- Pre-1811 gills (scarp & steep valley-side wood)
- Post-1811 gills
- Pre-1811 heathland/common land encl. wood
- Pre-1811 heathland/common land regenerated woodland (unenclosed; not plantation)
- 19th century heathland plantations
- Pre-1811 wood pasture
- 19th century or later wood pasture
- Alder Carr (wet woods next to rivers & wetlands)
- Worked coppice
- Regenerated secondary woodland on farmland

Heathland

- Unenclosed heathland and scrub
- Enclosed heathland and scrub
- Purlicus and other enclosed heathland pastures

Downland

- Chalk grassland
- Chalk grassland and scrub

Valley floor and water management

- Miscellaneous valley floor fields and pastures
- Valley floor woodlands
- Marsh and rough grazing
- Water meadows or common meadows
- Unimproved hay meadows or pasture and common meadows
- Watercress beds
- Pre-1811 fishponds, hatchery complexes, 'natural' ponds and lakes
- Post-1811 ditto
- Watermills, mill ponds, hammer ponds and leats

Settlement related

- Scattered settlement with paddocks pre-1811 ext
- Scattered settlement with paddocks (post-1811 & pre-1840 extent)
- Common edge/roadside waste settlement pre-1811 extent
- Common edge/roadside waste settlement (post 1811 & pre-1840 extent)
- Post 1811 & pre-1940 settlement (small scale)
- Village or hamlet (pre-1811 extent)
- Town pre-1811 extent
- Caravan sites
- Large cemeteries (i.e. not adjacent to churches)
- Hospital complexes (i.e. not within settlements)
- Regular settlements with paddocks post-1840
- Common edge and roadside waste settlement post-1840
- Post-1811 & pre-1940 settlement - large estates
- Post-1811 & pre-1940 settlement - med. estates
- Post-1940 luxury estates
- Post-1940 small to medium estates

Parkland and designed landscape

- Pre-1811 parkland
- 19th century and later parkland and large designed gardens
- Deer parks
- Arboreta
- Smaller designed gardens

Recreation

- Racecourses
- Motor racing tracks and vehicle testing areas
- Golf courses - heathland origin
- Golf courses - parkland origin
- Golf courses - downland origin
- Golf courses - farmland origin
- Major sports fields and complexes
- Marinas
- Studs and horse paddocks

Extractive industry

- Active and disused chalk quarries
- Active and disused gravel workings
- Active and disused clay pits
- Active and disused sandpits

Other industry

- Industrial complexes and factories
- Modern large scale industry
- Reservoirs and water treatment
- Sewage works/water treatment

Communication facilities

- Railway station and sidings complexes
- Airfields
- Motorway service areas
- Motorway junctions

Military and defence

- Prehistoric (hillforts & other defensive encl)
- Medieval (mottes and baileys; ring works)
- 19th century forts
- 20th century

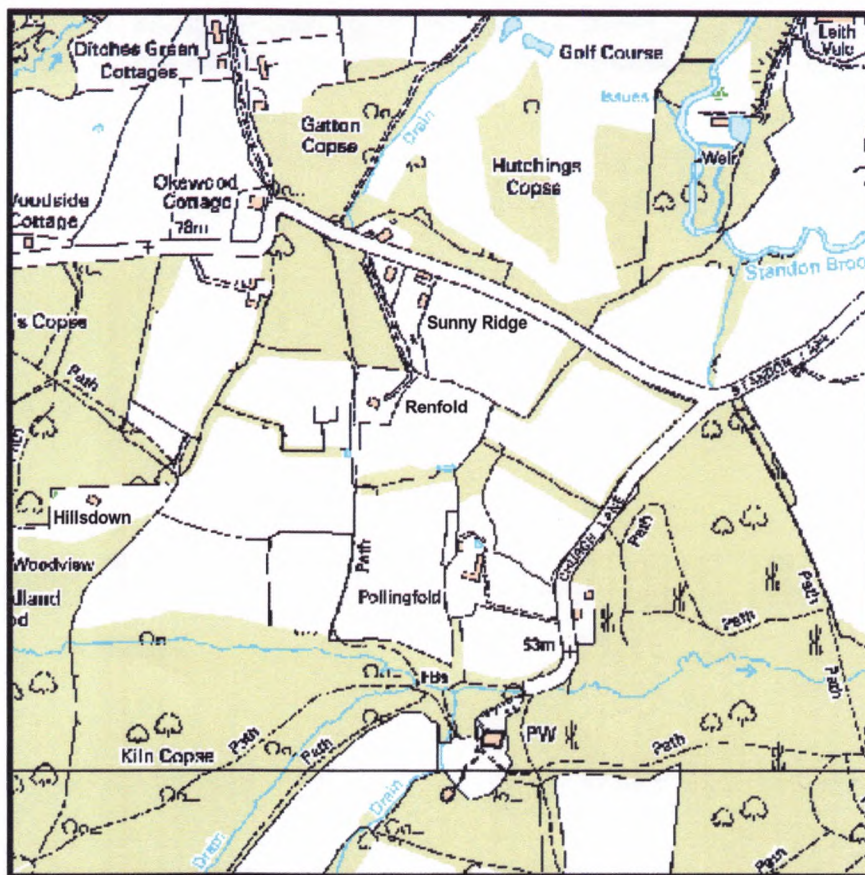


ENGLISH HERITAGE



Fig 9.2 An example of an historic landscape sub-type (HLsT). Small irregular assarts intermixed with woodland in the south of Abinger parish (HLsT 101): Renfold (TQ 126 383).

Editors' note: This map has been reproduced from the original project report (Bannister & Wills 2001).



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Description and historical rationale

Assarting, or the clearance of woodland to create fields, produced the dominant field patterns in the Weald. These field systems were created by the piecemeal clearance of the original woodland cover. This probably took place in the early medieval period.

Identifying characteristics

The fields are small, between one and five acres, though there may be larger ones created by some boundary removal. The boundaries are wavy and formed of shaws, or narrow strips of woodland or mature hedgerows, traditionally managed by coppicing. Mature oaks often dominate the boundaries and these, combined with the mix of small woods or coppices, create a landscape which appears densely wooded. The general topography tends to be undulating, with valleys, streams and small hilltops.

HLsTs. For example some types of woodland, such as 'wooded over commons' (HLsT 204) and heathland and chalk and scrub (HLsTs 501, 502, 602), were not included in the woodland type category for the historic landscape characterization. In addition some smaller parcels of woodland especially in the Weald were characterized with fields, for example small irregular assarts (HLsT 101). Despite the perception of the county being a dormitory suburb of London, it is essentially a rural landscape (over 65% is not developed or built over). Table 9.1 presents the summary of this initial analysis. The full Historic Landscape Character Map is present in figure 9.1.

Immediately, at this scale, the underlying structure of landscape as defined by its geology is reflected in

Predominant locations and variations

The Low Weald and along the Sussex border. Field boundary removal has made some fields appear larger. Isolated patches occur elsewhere in the county where larger areas of woodland have been encroached upon.

Typical associations with other types

This type is strongly associated with ancient woodland and wooded gills and also with some secondary woodland where fields have been abandoned.

Similar types and distinguishing criteria

Medium assarts but defined by their size.

Key indicative sources

OS 6-inch 1 edn
RAF OS Mosaic Aerial Photographs
1999 aerial photographs
OS 1:25,000 Explorer

the pattern of its historic landscape sub-types. The east-west spine of the North Downs escarpment and to a lesser degree the Greensand Hills can clearly be seen, divided by the Holmesdale and the Tillingbourne valley. The wooded nature of the Weald is very distinctive, as is the distribution of the tracts of heathland in the west of the county. The spring lines along the chalk and greensand define the lines of older settlement, while in the north and north-west are areas of greatest landscape change with high concentrations of extractive industry and suburban development.

Fields dominate the landscape at 36.5% (table 9.1), but further analysis of the HLsTs shows that it is the prairie field sub-type which covers the great-

TABLE 9.1 Summary of the Historic Landscape Character Types by area.

Historic Landscape Character Type	Area in ha	Area by Historic Landscape Character Type (%)
1 Field Patterns	61243.2	36.59
2 Commons	6539.8	3.91
3 Horticulture	1690.5	1.01
4 Woodland	21896.5	13.08
5 Heathland	4568.7	2.73
6 Downland	805.6	0.48
7 Valley Floor and water management	6191.9	3.70
8 Settlement related	38343.7	22.91
9 Parkland and designed landscape	7145.6	4.27
10 Recreation	10258.1	6.13
11 Extractive industry	2935.4	1.75
12 Other industry	3682.8	2.20
13 Communications facilities	939.1	0.56
14 Military & defence	1158.2	0.69
Totals	167399.1	100.00

est area, at 7.5% (HLsT 114). These are large enclosures where there has been extensive boundary loss since the 1870s. The figure provides graphic evidence of the erosion of historic field patterns across the county but most frequently on the chalk and also in the Weald. The wooded origins of Surrey are reflected in 6.43% of fields being characterized by large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries (HLsT 103). Medium regular fields with straight boundaries of the parliamentary enclosure type (HLsT 111) cover 3.72% of the county, reflecting the amount of formal enclosure of either open fields or of commons, downlands and heaths.

The great influx of people in the late 19th and early 20th century settling in suburban estates is shown by the relatively high percentage of post-1811 and pre-1940 medium estates (HLsT 814; 6.43%), with post-1940 small to medium estates (HLsT 816) covering 4.49% of the county. (A full breakdown of the percentage coverage of each HLsT is given in tables 2a and 2b in Appendix II of Bannister & Wills 2001).

SURREY'S LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

The pattern of distribution of HLsTs for each of the landscape character areas identified in the county's landscape assessment was examined and compared with the descriptions given in *The future of Surrey's landscape and woodlands* (SCC 1997). It was found that the historic landscape assessment supported the county landscape assessment and provided the detailed mapping required to justify the visual descriptions. For example, the Ockham and Clandon County Landscape Character Area is described as being open but with small pockets of woodland. Designed landscapes form an important part of the local character (SCC 1997), while the historic landscape characterization analysis supports

this with the identification of landscape dominated by regular parliamentary and prairie-type fields interspersed with small copses and woods. Parkland forms 6% of this character area. In comparison the Wooded Weald is described as low-lying, undulating, small-scale, intimate farmed landscape enclosed by woodland, hedges and shaws, with distinctive villages centred on greens and commons (SCC 1997, 2.71). The historic landscape characterization reveals that it is dominated by assarted fields (35%), ancient woodland (8%) and gills (narrow wooded valleys, 3%). Older settlement is scattered across the character area in the form of small villages and farms.

SURREY HILLS AONB

The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was one of the first landscapes to be so designated in 1958, its designation being due to the very diverse nature of its landscape (Surrey Hills JAC 2000). This diversity is clearly revealed in its historic landscape character (fig 9.3). Over 38% of the AONB is covered by fields (compared with 25% for the county as a whole) with woodland covering 24% (compared with 13% for the county). Over 20% of the Surrey Hills is covered by heaths, commons, downs and heath woodland. This is owing to the fact that much of the AONB covers what were formerly manorial 'wastes' and grazing commons on relatively unproductive soils. These belonged to the parishes and manors which have settlements either in the Holmesdale and the Tillingbourne valley or on the dip slope of the North Downs, where the soils are more productive and conducive to cultivation. The 'wastes' were subject to specific forms of management and manorial rights regarding what could be grazed and when, and what resources could be exploited. It is the lack of intensive landscape change and in particular cultivation in the past

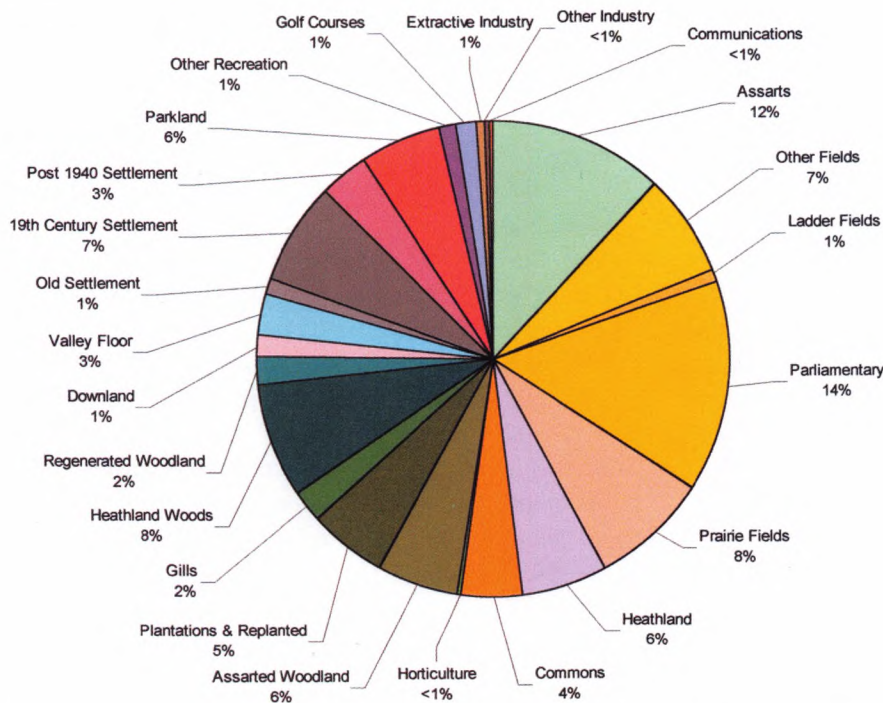
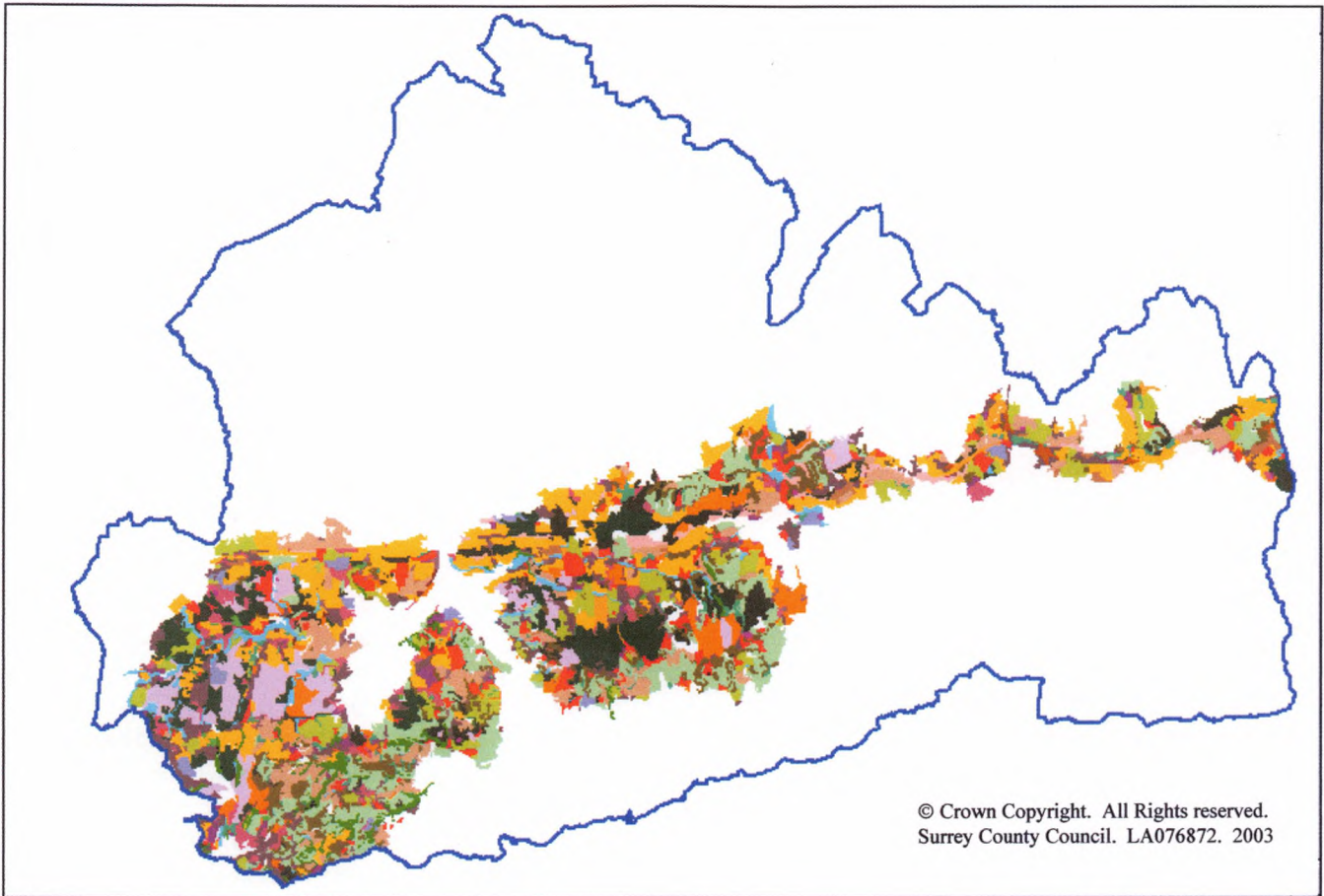


Fig 9.3 Historic Landscape Character of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

which has preserved the unique landscape so highly valued in the Surrey Hills today. Development covers only 11% of the AONB area dominated by 19th century settlement (7%), while older pre-1811 settlement makes up only 1% and post-1940 development 3%. The high figure for the 19th century reflects the expansion in settlement with the coming of the railways and the development of the ‘Surrey style’ in vernacular architecture, with detached ‘cottages’ set

within their own grounds commanding positions with extensive views or in picturesque settings. This pattern is frequent in the Greensand Hills with detached properties overlooking the Weald from the greensand escarpment. The western part of the AONB is dominated by heaths and commons around Hindhead and Thursley, while to the southwest the dramatic hilly landscape gives way to a more gentle countryside of woods, gills and small

fields on the edge of the Weald. Of the 38% of fields, assarts contribute 12% while parliamentary fields cover 14%. The latter are dominant on the North Downs dip slope where enclosure either by private agreement or by act of parliament took place both of open downland and commons, and of medieval open fields associated with villages such as Bookham, Horsley and Effingham.

Surrey Hills is the most wooded of the AONBs but this is probably a 19th and 20th century phenomenon as heathland woods make up 8% of the total (24%). With the decline in grazing management on the heaths and commons, secondary woodland has developed. This, combined with the development of conifer plantations (5%), has significantly reduced the areas of open heaths and downs.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

An attempt was made to identify Historic Landscape Character Areas based on distinct visual patterns in the distribution of the HLTs. These are areas of more or less coherently dominant historic landscape sub-types and their associations with other sub-types. As the historic character of the landscape is led by settlement, these areas are defined by the settlement pattern in relationship with other sub-types. The distribution of these areas as identified by the HLTs is shown in figure 9.4. Dispersed lowland woodland settlements characterize the Weald while ancient scarp-foot settlements lie in the east of the county in the Holmesdale. The river corridors form another area of nucleated and river-orientated settlement.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF WOODLAND

More detailed interrogation of the database provides interesting overlays which can form the starting point for research projects, for example the distribution of woodland in relation to parish boundaries shown in figure 9.5. (The recent civil parish boundaries were used in this instance; there are plans for developing an overlay of historic ecclesiastical parish boundaries which will give a much clearer picture of historical relationships). It was found that generally across the county the distribution of ancient woodland was concentrated around the edges of the parishes with the centres of older settlement towards the middle. However in the Weald, woodland occurs throughout the parishes, reflecting both the later piecemeal clearance of the woodland in Saxon and medieval periods, and the predominance of woods occupying small steeply sloping stream valleys – gills. This supports observations made by Rackham for East Anglia (1981, 113) and by Aston (1985, 11, 104). The pattern is reinforced by the cessation in grazing and livestock management on many heaths and commons which were

also located on the margins of manors and parishes. Such commons as at Holmbury and along the Greensand Hills have become forest through secondary development of woods or planting with conifers.

TIME-DEPTH OF SURREY'S LANDSCAPE

The historic landscape characterization can be used to 'pull apart' the present historic landscape character along defined time periods. Describing these as 'windows' in the landscape, it is possible to obtain a feel for the antiquity of different parts of the county (Lambrick & Bramhill 2000). Essentially the Surrey landscape is generally post-medieval in character but there are areas especially in the Weald which are dominated by HLTs that have origins in the medieval period. The approximate cut-off divisions are based on the OS 1-inch 1st edition of pre- and post-1811. Areas which are dominated by HLTs pre-dating 1811 are indicative of antiquity where landscape change has been relatively slow and where there is likely to be extant evidence of prehistoric activity, for example in the west of the county in the heathlands and on the Greensand Hills (fig 9.6).

The north of the county shows the greatest evidence of landscape change and thus is historically a relatively modern landscape dominated by industry and 20th century development. And yet from an archaeological perspective it is a landscape rich in prehistoric remains, with the Thames gravel preserving flints and occupation evidence of some of the earliest human occupation in the county (Ellaby, 1987).

The development of the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

A part of the Surrey project was to explore proposals for using the database especially as a tool in the conservation and management of Surrey's landscape. This included looking at ways of disseminating the information, both through the planning and development control process and also to the wider audience. As a means of furthering the project, a technical seminar was held shortly after the completion of the final report. Professionals and members of the public with an interest in the history and archaeology of Surrey were invited to a presentation of the Characterisation where the Historic Landscape Character Map was displayed. There then followed a series of discussions whereby people were grouped according to their interests. For example planners, local researchers, and members from non-governmental organizations were asked specific questions about how they would like to access the database, for example what they would use it for and whether they could contribute to any up-dating programme. The

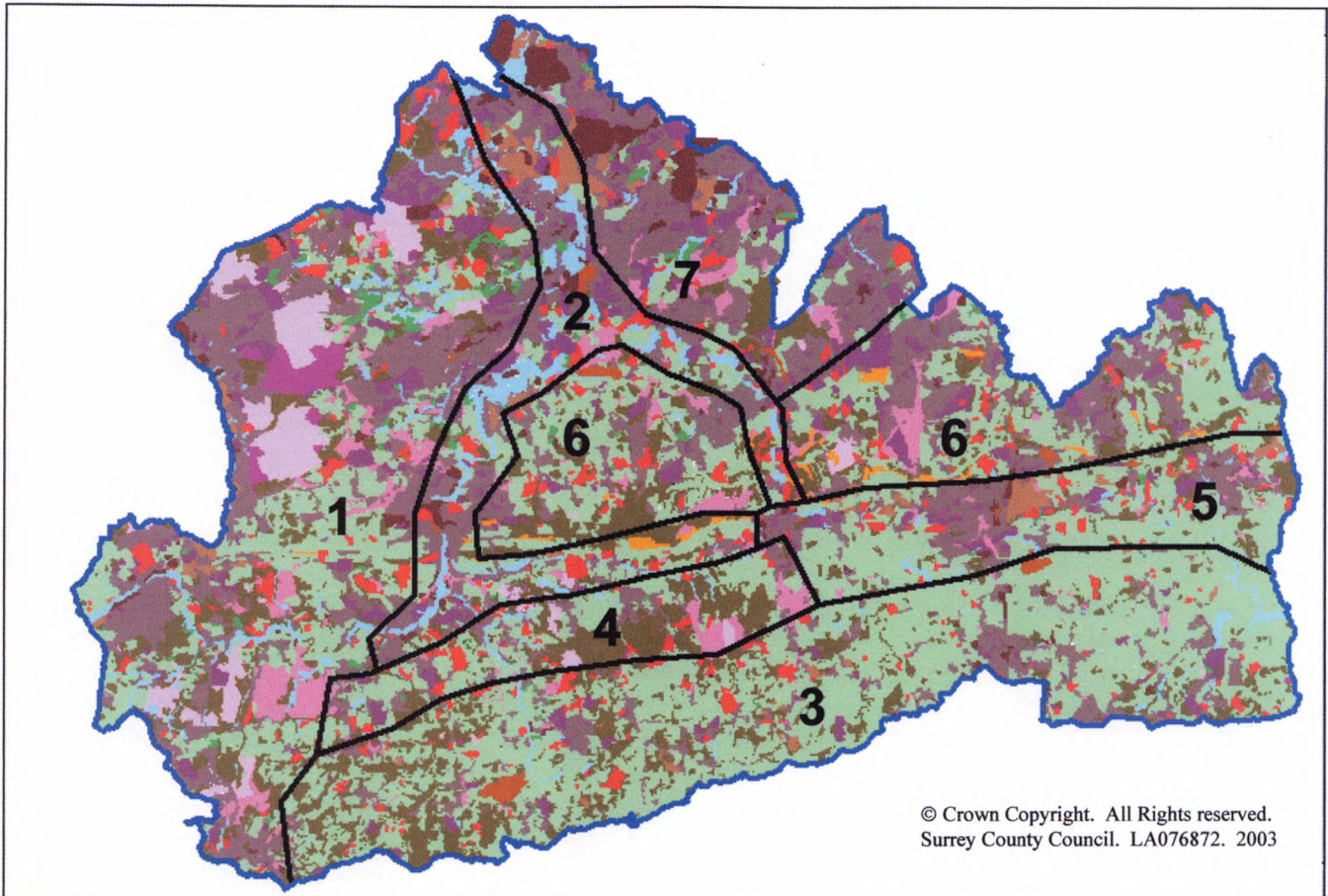


Fig 9.4 Map of the Historic Landscape Character Areas of Surrey

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 Dispersed lowland heathland-edge settlement | 5 Ancient scarp-foot settlement |
| 2 Nucleated and river-orientated settlement | 6 Dispersed upland settlement |
| 3 Dispersed lowland woodland settlements | 7 Ancient nucleated settlements |
| 4 Dispersed upland heathland-edge settlement | |

results of the seminar were collated and used in the preparation of a draft strategy for the future development of the Characterisation Project (Bannister 2001).

Two issues arose from this seminar. First the desire by development control officers to have a value placed on the HLSTs. Secondly, the need for the database not only to be accessible through the internet but also in more conventional forms, especially as paper maps. It also became apparent that some people had difficulties grasping the concept of historic landscape character being based on visual attributes, with little or no reference to below-ground archaeological features or land use activities which survive only in documentary evidence.

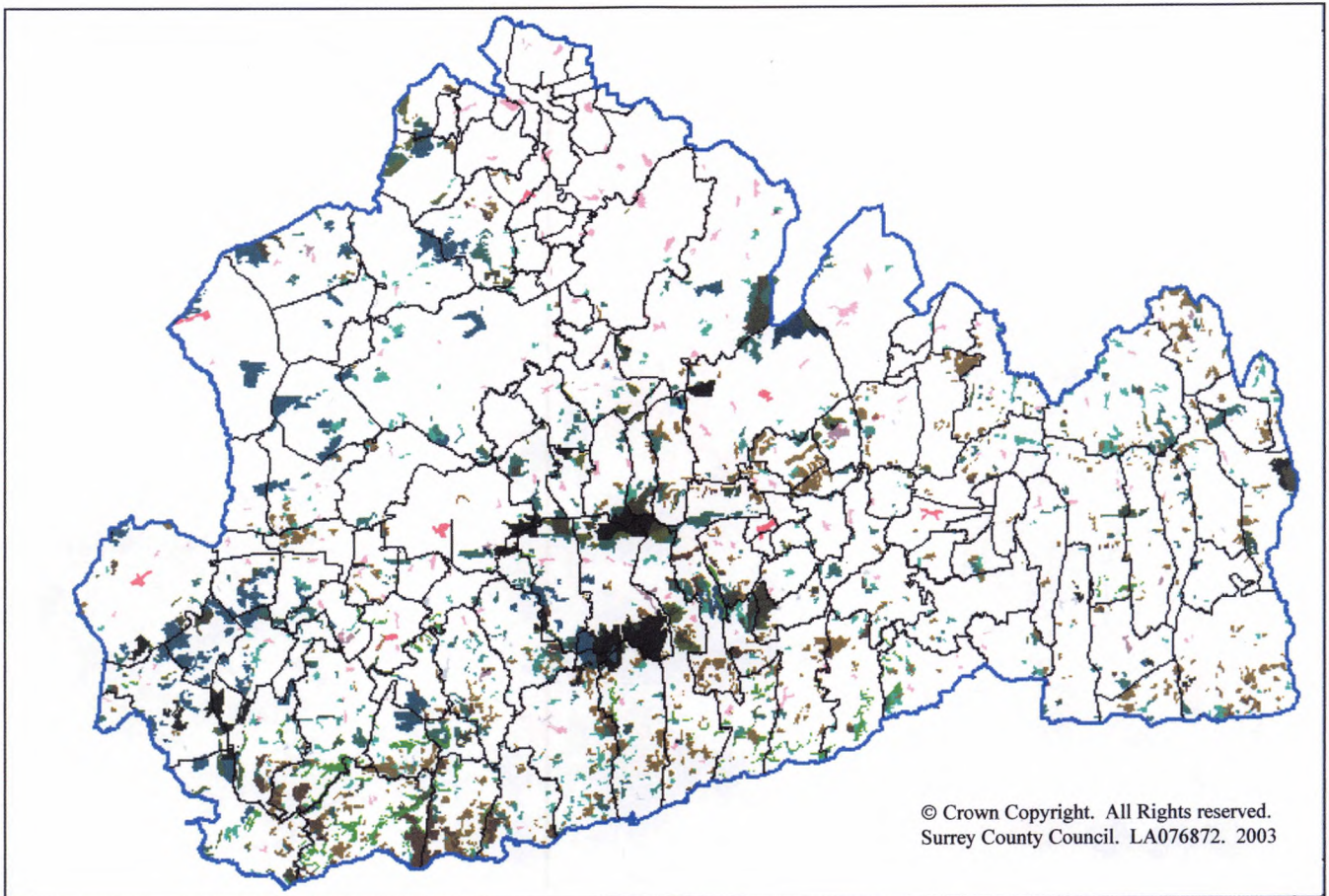
The first stage in the dissemination of the Characterisation Project is the production of a leaflet by Surrey County Council in collaboration with the Surrey Hills AONB, to be widely distributed throughout the county. This leaflet explains historic landscape character, the character map, and ways of accessing it, as well as ways of getting involved with aspects of either management or research into local landscapes. In addition a web

page and interactive CD are being produced of the database for dissemination to the public. Meanwhile this is available for consultation at County Hall. A steering group has been set up to take the project forward by looking at various options.

A second piece of work arising from the characterization has been the identification of future candidate Areas of Special Historic Landscape Value (Bannister 2002). Over 40 new candidate areas have been listed which reflect Surrey's varied industrial and agricultural past, together with smaller designed landscapes. Emphasis has also been placed on field patterns, for example areas of north-south co-axial systems which tend to lie on the northern edge of the Weald and also in the Tillingbourne valley and the Holmesdale. This list has been presented to the Historic Countryside Group of Surrey's Countryside Strategy for consideration.

Research directions arising from the Characterisation Project

The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project now provides a base-line from which more detailed landscape research projects can be taken forward.



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Woodland

- Assarted pre-1811 woodland
- Replanted assarted pre-1811 woodland
- Other pre-1811 woodland
- Replanted other pre-1811 woodland
- 19th century plantations (general)
- Pre-1811 gills (scarp & steep valley-side wood)
- Post-1811 gills
- Pre-1811 heathland/common land encl. wood
- Pre-1811 heathland/common land regenerated woodland (unenclosed; not plantation)
- 19th century heathland plantations
- Pre-1811 wood pasture

Woodland continued

- 19th century or later wood pasture
- Alder Carr (wet woods next to rivers & wetlands)
- Worked coppice
- Regenerated secondary woodland on farmland

Settlement related

- Scattered settlement with paddocks pre-1811 extent
- Common edge/roadside waste settlement pre-1811 extent
- Village or hamlet (pre-1811 extent)
- Town pre-1811 extent

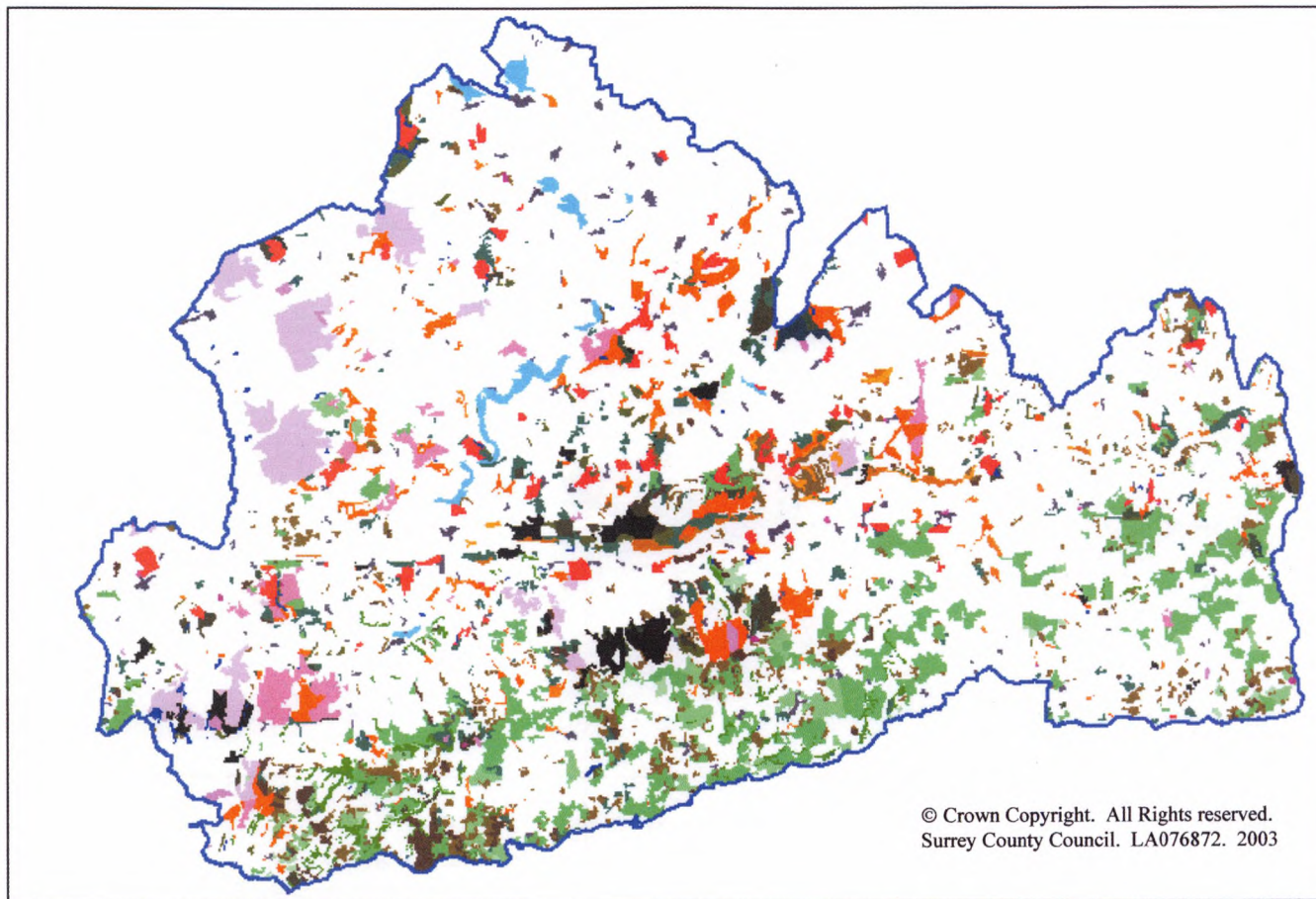
Fig 9.5 The distribution of woodland in Surrey

There are also opportunities to integrate this project with research work being undertaken in the county, for example on the history of manorial settlements, especially villages (see Turner in this volume).

Further research is needed to integrate the historic character map with information from the tithe maps such as place and field names and the development of ecclesiastical parish boundaries.

The Characterisation Project highlighted areas where further academic research is needed in understanding how Surrey’s landscape has evolved. Key to this is the movement of stock from the north to the

south of the county during seasonal transhumance that took place in the early medieval period and may even have origins in prehistoric times. This north-south movement has left highly visible features in the landscape, in the form of lanes, paths, administrative boundaries, and possibly co-axial field patterns. Associated with this movement is the very frequent occurrence of small commons and greens strung out along apparent droving routes. A greater understanding of the origins and development of these elements in the wider development of parishes and settlements is needed.



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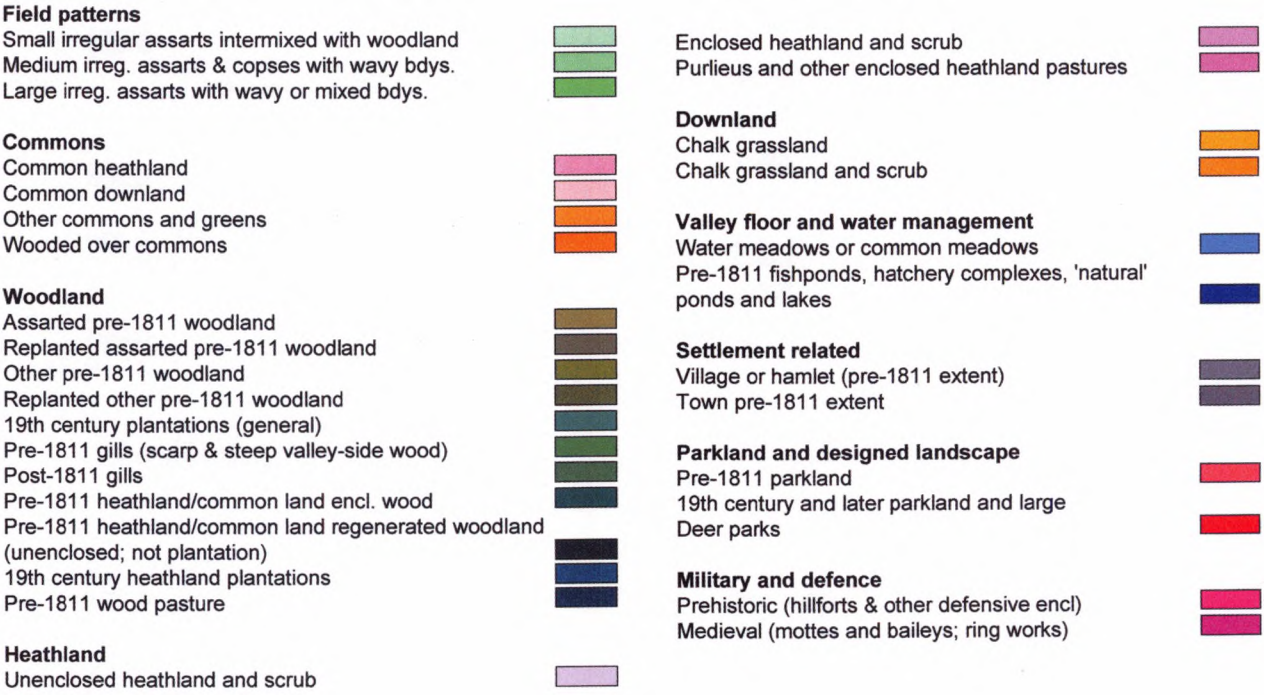


Fig 9.6 Time-depth of Surrey's landscape – distribution of pre-1811 historic character sub-types

Further research into the origins of field patterns and systems, together with the boundaries that define them, is considered fairly urgent in the light of changes to the management of hedges and shaws resulting from the cessation of cutting or coppicing. Field boundaries are one of the most prominent features identifying landscape character. Understanding the origins of field boundaries and the antiquity of field systems will help in directing resources to those which are most vulnerable.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation Project marks a major development in the understanding of the Surrey landscape. It provides a systematic broad-brush statement of the historic character of the county and areas of local distinctiveness. The database, while of interest in its own right, also provides the springboard for future research, especially at the local level.

APPENDIX

Summary list of historic landscape character types

<i>Code</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Type</i>
1	Field pattern/systems	410	19th century or later wood pasture
101	Small irregular assarts intermixed with woodland	411	Pre-1811 wood pasture
102	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries	412	19th century or later wood pasture
103	Large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries	413	Alder carr
104	Regular assarts with straight boundaries	414	Worked coppice
105	Enclosed strips and furlongs	415	Regenerated secondary woodland on farmland – not plantations
106	Medium to large regular fields with wavy boundaries (late medieval–17th/18th century enclosure)	5	Heathland
107	Small irregular rectilinear fields with straight boundaries	501	Unenclosed heathland and scrub
108	Small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries	502	Enclosed heathland and scrub
109	Regular ladder fields (long wavy boundaries sub-divided by straight cross divisions)	503	Purlicus and other enclosed heathland pasture (not in Surrey)
110	Small regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary enclosure type)	6	Downland
111	Medium regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary enclosure type)	601	Chalk grassland
112	Large regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary enclosure type)	602	Chalk grassland and scrub
113	Variable size, semi-regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary enclosure type)	7	Valley floor and water management
114	'Prairie' fields (large enclosures with extensive boundary loss)	701	Miscellaneous valley floor fields and pastures
115	Fields bounded by roads, tracks and paths	702	Valley floor woodlands
116	Previously hops and orchards	703	Marsh and rough grazing
117	Parkland and conversion to arable	704	Water meadows or common meadows
118	Fields, formerly ponds now dried up	705	Unimproved hay meadows or pasture/common meadows
2	Commons	706	Watercress beds
201	Common heathland	707	Pre-1811 fishponds, natural ponds and lakes
202	Common downland	708	Post-1811 fishponds, natural ponds and lakes
203	Other commons and greens	709	Water mills, mill ponds, hammer ponds and leats
204	Wooded-over commons	8	Settlement related
3	Horticulture	801	Scattered settlement with paddocks (pre-1811 extent)
301	Orchards	802	Scattered settlement with paddocks (post-1811 and pre-1940)
302	Nurseries with glasshouses	803	Common edge/roadside waste settlement (pre-1811 extent)
303	Nurseries without glasshouses	804	Common edge/roadside waste settlement (post-1811 and pre-1940 extent)
4	Woodland	805	Post-1811 and pre-1940 small scale settlement
401	Assarted pre-1811 woodland	806	Village or hamlet (pre-1811 extent)
402	Replanted assarted pre-1811 woodland	807	Town (pre-1811 extent)
403	Other pre-1811 woodland	808	Caravan sites
404	Replanted other pre-1811 woodland	809	Large cemeteries (ie not adjacent to churches)
405	19th century plantations (general)	810	Hospital complexes (ie not within settlements)
406	Pre-1811 gills (scarp and steep valley sided woodland)	811	Regular settlement with paddocks (post-1940 extent)
407	Post-1811 gills	812	Common edge/roadside waste (post-1940 extent)
408	Pre-1811 heathland/common land enclosed woodland	813	Large-scale estates (post-1811 and pre-1940 extent)
409	Pre-1811 heathland/common land regenerated woodland (unenclosed not plantation)	814	Medium estates (post-1811 and pre-1940 extent)
		815	Luxury estates (post-1940 extent)
		816	Small to medium estates (post-1940 extent)

Code	Type
9	Parkland and designed landscapes
901	Pre-1822 parkland
902	19th century and later parkland plus larger designed gardens
902	Deer parks
903	Arboreta
904	Smaller designed gardens
10	Recreation
101	Racecourses
102	Motor racing tracks and vehicle testing areas
103	Golf courses – heathland origin
104	Golf courses – parkland origin
105	Golf courses – downland origin
1006	Golf courses – farmland origin
1007	Major sports centres and complexes
1008	Marinas
1009	Studs and equestrian centres
11	Extractive industry
1101	Active and disused chalk quarries
1102	Active and disused gravel workings
1103	Active and disused clay pits
1104	Active and disused sandpits
12	Other industry
1201	Industrial complexes and factories
1202	Modern large scale industry
1203	Reservoirs and water pumping
1204	Sewage and water treatment

Code	Type
13	Communication facilities
1301	Railway stations and sidings
1302	Airfields
1303	Motorway service areas
1304	Motorway junctions
14	Military and defence
1401	Prehistoric hillforts and other defensive enclosures
1402	Medieval fortifications (motte and baileys, ringworks)
1403	19th century forts
1404	20th century military

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