Notes on the South-East Research Framework public seminar on Historic Landscapes (17/11/07)

Chair: Casper Johnson

Speakers: Casper Johnson, Peter Herring/Nicola Bannister, Peter Brandon/Phillip Masters and Nicola Bannister

Notes: Jake Weekes

Managing change to the historic landscape

Casper Johnson (CJ)

CJ noted that the region has varied soils and geology and therefore a rich environment, but wanted to be clear about terminology from the start: on the one hand there is this physical 'environment' to understand (and indeed reconstruct for the past), but then there is the much subjective and relative 'landscape', which is constructed more of ideas. Moreover, the 'historic landscape' has considerable time depth, and the environment can be considered an artefact through which a present and past dialogue is constructed and mediated.

Via a multidisciplinary approach to various data types (aerial photographs, key documents, seminal works, surface surveys etc), landscape archaeologists reconstruct key aspects of past environments and landscapes and critical relationships between them. This work can now be articulated within European Landscape Convention, which has defined the value of the historic environment as a key historic and social resource stemming from the significance of a sense of place in cultural identities; this resource must be protected and carefully managed for the future.

Palaeo-geographic reconstruction is the first step: we need to know what the template is in order to begin mapping the conceptual 'landscape' at any period. Such work has been carried out on a localised level at Romney Marsh, for example, from the perspective of a multi-period reconstruction of the development of a specific environment. There are also more general period based reconstructions, such as Yates' work on Bronze Age field systems using the 'grey' literature resource. Other initiatives include Environmental Stewardship Surveys, Land Cover Surveys, the Ancient Woodland Inventory and Historic Landscape Characterisation. Work such as the National Trust Historic Landscape Survey represents a shift by that organisation from a focus on stately homes to preserving the landscape. Again, the Sussex Gardens Trust is an example of surveys of planned landscapes, the human construction of landscapes over long periods. There are also planning led assessments to consider, with various methods being used.

Moreover, there are other ways of thinking about landscapes as an intellectual concept (the distribution of ale houses, for example), and this raises the question of how we convey this work and make it relevant to a wider audience. Finally, there is a general theoretical and methodological issue to consider, relating to whether we should take a

"top down" approach to landscape characterisation (looking down on a landscape in its entirety), or a "bottom up" approach, starting from a particular period or subject. Ideally, we would combine elements from different projects and approaches to get a more holistic account of aspects of landscape through time, the results of which should be tied in with Historic Environment Records as well.

What is Historic Landscape Characterisation and can it inform research?

Peter Herring (PH) and Nicola Bannister (NB)

PH pointed out that the first Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) to be undertaken (Cornwall in 1994) is now an iconic map of the present landscape where you can also read the ancient landscape easily. HLC is a technique or approach that was initially led largely by a need for management of change, but it is increasingly seen as useful research tool in itself. This sort of mapping allows us to pull out the past that is here in the present: there is, after all no part of landscape of the British Isles that isn't humanly constructed.

Using sources that are consistent across the region, and landscape historians that understand the landscape already, researchers can build a Geographical Information System (GIS) and analyse the landscape by 'pulling out' polygons of blocks of land that have shared character, for historians to characterise further. We can build previous landscapes into the GIS as well, using historic sources to produce iconic maps: in this way it becomes possible to peel away layers in order to look at environments of the past.

As such there is great potential for the problematising of "place", and this can be seen as the main usefulness of HLC as a tool. HLC contextualises landscape components, then problematises the landscape, tying 'places' in with topographic features, and ancient enclosures as well. It is even possible to begin using HLCs in a predictive way, identifying the likely locations of various past features. HLC also challenges assumptions and opens new research questions to be pursued by other means.

NB continued with a brief overview of the sequence of HLCs across the region, each building on the methodology of the previous. Sussex is one of the most detailed HLCs to date, where unlike previous HLCs, the historic and physical attributes are identified individually rather than as part of the inherent description of HLC types and sub-types. NB then showed a composite map of the South-East region HLC map to date showing, HLC Broad Types. The finer grain of data capture can be seen for Sussex in such a composite. The picture hides the considerable detail that sits behind the map. All the counties of the region can be interpreted by HLC sub-type, and for Sussex by each of its recorded attributes, be it type of boundaries, pattern, size or association with other features etc.

NB then gave various examples of maps generated in the HLC GIS through which the landscape character of the region can be traced back in time to the medieval period, as follows:

- The region's present landscape showing those polygons that have their origins in the 20th century, dominated by settlement, field modernisation and recreation, with limited areas of industrial. We must remember that features of the past land uses may survive within these areas. Also, these areas will preserve extensive potential for survival of below ground archaeology. Areas that have undergone greatest change tend to be areas which historically have always been settled and exploited from earliest times, for example along the Coastal Plain of Sussex, North Kent and along the Thames Valley
- The region's present historic landscape which originated from between the early and the late 19th century: the pattern reflects in part the methodological approaches of data capture for each county as well as the underlying pattern of landscape change. In Surrey and Sussex settlement expansion was recorded and particularly dominates Surrey's 19th century change and the influence of London and the railways. In Kent the development of the horticultural industry – orchards etc, is well illustrated. Across all counties there was an expansion in designed landscapes
- The region's present landscape showing those areas of Broad HLC type which originated in the early post-medieval period. Field systems dominate, and this reflects periods of enclosure of commons, wastes and the pockets of open fields in North Surrey and along the Coastal Plain of Sussex. In Sussex there is a flush of designed parkscapes. Also during this time other periods of field reorganisation took place.
- The region showing the present landscape that originated in medieval and earlier periods. The Antiquity of the Low and High Weald is apparent, as is the dip slope of the North Downs in Kent.
- Time-depth of the present landscape. By combining the last four maps and allocating a grading of colours to each the time-depth of the present landscape is revealed. The darkest polygons are those areas with their origins going back to medieval period and earlier and lightest polygons are those landscapes that have undergone significant change into the 20th century. What becomes apparent is the antiquity not only of the High Weald (which is a statutorily protected landscape) but also of the Low Weald (which is not). This Low Weald landscape is rich in intact medieval and earlier field systems, together with parks, commons, and scattered settlements. Numerous former deer parks lie fossilised within later fields their park pales depicted by hedges and lanes.

Finally, as a prelude to Peter Brandon's paper, NB showed a map of the distribution pattern of the designed landscapes HLC Theme (showing sub-types), with small speckles on the map in Sussex and Surrey representing the smaller designed gardens (Surrey) and large landscape gardens (Sussex). These tend to be a modern feature, especially where former farmsteads have been converted to residential use. This type was not recorded for Kent, but would probably show a similar pattern especially across the Low and High Weald.

Discussion:

Discussion at this point focussed on the need to get make this information available to the public at large and to generate local projects; it would be a wonderful tool for parish surveys, for example. The Sussex HLC will produce a layman's guide on how to interrogate the information in an elemental way, and that for Surrey is available as interactive map with reports. There is a need for a step-by-step guide on how to ask questions of such resources in order to bridge the gap between professional and amateur specialists and the same goes for HERs also. The question as to whether there is a plan to integrate what the environmental sciences can provide in terms of data? SERF should address these sorts of combinations. While HLCs information can lack local detail at present, we can increasingly create predictive characterisations, and as more evidence gets fed in so confidence in the model will improve, to become more evidence based. The South-East is also a special case in terms of the degree of overlapping of successive human imprints on the environment, and indeed the complexity of its historic environment.

HLCs should sit as a layer within the county HERs and viewed as a broadbrush background to the context of site records.

The remaining papers are adapted from texts supplied by the speakers.

Landscape 'gentrification' – understanding the influence and effect of post-medieval 'recreational use' of the rural landscape

Peter Brandon (PB) with postscript by Phillip Masters (PM)

One of the most distinctive characteristics of South-East England are landscapes designed for leisure and pleasure combined with business. Over more than half of it the farmer has never driven the land hard. Missing there was the intensive 'High Farming' of the Agricultural Revolution which had pervaded most of England. Instead there was a world of heaths and Downs and an enormous patchwork of little fields of the Weald bordered by thick hedges and hedgerow timber, little copses and woodlands, and an extraordinary lack of main roads. Such districts had an air of withdrawal, of privacy and intimacy; and of a refuge. They could not have contrasted more with the monstrous London on the doorstep. For those who needed grass and wood and had an aversion of intensive arable farming it was deepest Arcadia. It was also naturally beautiful. Humphrey Repton said of his work in Sussex that 'every berry becomes a bush ad every bush a tree' and in relation to the Sussex Landscape noted that landscape design was 'only a matter of whether you do not spoil nature's work.'

My message is a simple one. It is that up to the Second World War designed landscapes on estates in South-East England extended to some degree beyond the pleasure grounds and the park pale. Although break up of estates, the farming recession of the inter-war years and post-war intensive agriculture have destroyed much of the design, there is enough in the present-day landscape to allow some reconstruction of this. But landscape design was not confined to country houses with

great estates. A pleasure farm of small acreage began as a *ferme ornée* in the 18th century and became a pleasure farm in the late Victorian era. Finally, from the early 18th century onwards to modern times some owners declined to create parks but developed the whole of their estate into a kind of garden. This landscape activity has left features on the landscape which can be recovered by field work.

When I began to study designed landscapes in southern England more than thirty years ago my most inspiring authority was Christopher Hussey of Scotney Castle. In his most important book, *The Picturesque* (1927), he tells of the dramatic moment when he took down from his uncle's shelf at the Castle, Price's book on the picturesque from which he grasped for the first time that the house he was staying at was deliberately sited for aesthetic reasons in view of the medieval ruin. He also stated in that book that the effect of the spread of various kinds of landscaping activity was to reshape woods, downs and fields on many estates into what he described as a 'vast, newly-created landscape, natural enough to our eyes, but in reality managed as much for the picturesque appearances as for economic returns.' Later I found that Christopher Hussey had written an introduction to the first Yellow Book of Gardens in 1927, now a national institution, that large part of southern England had become a playground to migrants who had prospered in the City, on the coalfields or over seas.

When I considered Hussey's words about the 'reshaping of woods, downs and fields' I turned my attention from the landscaped park and the pleasure grounds of the country house to the estate at large wrapping around them. I found in J.C. Loudon in his *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* (Ed. 1842), his *beau ideal* of an English country estate. This comprised the mansion, formal garden and terrace and park but also prosaic buildings concealed by trees, an eyecatcher seen from the house, a model farmery of some architectural merit, a sunk fence enclosing the pleasure grounds, hedges retained to harmonise the park with enclosures beyond, park boundaries concealed by copses and belt of trees, farms on estate interspersed with copses for game and beauty, hedgerows lavishly planted up with trees. According to Loudon, the whole estate should have a unity created by a powerful design which interwove the various components of the estate, including the tenant's and the home farms into a single all-embracing composition. This he suggested should be designed to unfold before the eye not as a collection of unrelated parts separated from one another by hard lines and stiff banks, but as a flowing succession of pictures, harmonized and brought into intimate relation with one another.

Although so much of the such design had deteriorated and become lost through the dissolution of the landed estates since 1914, the farming recession before the War and intensive agriculture in the post-war years, there are still visible signs remaining in the present landscape of this wider landscaping activity which once gave landed estates an individuality hardly less real than a kingdom. It is still possible to identify 'gardening' in Loudon's manner on former estates, such as the opening-out of vistas in thick woods, the planting-out of unsightly places, the pattern of carriage ways and walks extending out from the park with specimen trees and views, the heightening by trees, planting of natural features such as bluffs and banks, the free-planting of timber, tree belts on estate boundaries and buildings: the model farmery, ornamental stables, cottages, eyecatchers, etc.

A well documented estate where the free planting of trees with both profit and pleasure in mind was designed with much of Loudon's principles is that of William Robinson at Gravetye in the Sussex Weald. His working principles included avoiding the debased taste for thick park belts, 'pudding like clumps' and unnecessary fences. He had an anathema about dotting specimen trees and preferred landscaping over the estate at large to making a park. He removed needless roads and fences, planted up poorer fields, cleared tangled underwood to open out views, faded out hard edges and rearranged landscape on his purchased farms. Hussey's comment about a vastly newly created landscape is corroborated by Robinson's own remark about his artistic achievement at Graveytye: 'almost every field was dealt with, beauty was never lost sight of, nothing from making a road to forming a fence was done without considering its effect on the landscape from every point of view".

I also began to consider those landowners who had resisted the prevailing fashion to impark their lands at the height of fashion in the eighteenth century. Pope and Addison had led the way in the early 1700s by suggesting that by the free planting of trees 'a whole estate might be thrown into a kind of garden' and Stephen Switzer had give practical effect to it in his *Ichnographia Rustica* (1718 and 1742) when he wrote that 'the pleasures of a country life cannot possibly be contained within the narrow limits of the greatest garden; woods, fields and distant enclosures would have the care of the industrious planter' and adds that an estate should have a nursery of trees to stock and plant 'the exterior parts' of the estate'. Doubtless this style of gardening was once found to be generally on large estates in South-East England. I think that the greatest surviving estate on this plan in southern England is the Evelyn estate at Wotton which owes its present character to Sir John Evelyn, the diarist's successor. There never has been a landscape park there; instead 'forest gardening' was extended over the whole estate which was envisaged as both useful and beautiful. Landscaping activity was extended over the whole estate, even on the common land. All the plantations were conjoined with walks and rides. Avenues of trees were aligned on vantage points affording distant prospects. Evelyn also selected keynote features on his estate such as bluffs, summits, ponds and riverbanks, and accentuated their beauty with plantings. Some of the former elements in design can be traced today including remains of platoons which were square clumps of ten or twelve firs planted within a small cattle-proof enclosure and sited at uniform intervals to diversify heathland. Within the enclosure the firs were planted in rows analogous to the 'hollow square' disposed by a body of musketeers.

The platoons appear to have been the prototype of landscape design increasingly laid out on the common lands in the valley of the Tillingbourne between Dorking and Guildford. On my walks across the Surrey commons I am always on the look out for signs of former enclosures for trees, bearing in mind that the hill-top clump of firs was the sign of half the county of Surrey. The Wotton estate is notable also for one of the earliest serpentinings of a stream in England (see my article in Mavis Batey [ed] *A Celebration of John Evelyn* [Surrey Gardens Trust: 2007, 121–139]).

Now I turn to pleasure farms. Owner did not value land for its own sake but as a playground, a place where he could wander at will to admire the scenery. To him his estate was a picture to be looked at. The pleasure farm of the Victorians developed out of the *ferme ornée* of the eighteenth century. Loudon defined a *ferme ornée* as a villa residence with farm offices and with ground laid out with a view to utility as well as

beauty. With the decline of agriculture on the poorer lands from the 1870s a simpler type of artistically designed farm known as the pleasure farm arose. They are now tending to come back with the current urban exodus of the wealthy. Such farming also appealed to country clergy. Ruggles at the end of the eighteenth century suggested a turreted ornamental farm, neat cottages, well-bred livestock, planted up hedges, just as Switzer had advocated the 'farm-like way of gardening'. In this way the pleasure farm was turned over largely to ornament and leisure. Hedgerows planted up on the tail end of fields to soften their outline. Ruskin suggested two broad types of landscape suited to pleasure farms, 'wooded or green country' with 'Elizabethan' architecture and 'picturesque blue country' for which he thought classical architecture was desirable with some forty acres of ground. From afar villa country is easily identified by risings crowned with pines, as around Haywards Heath.

Blunt's estate, Newbuildings, south of Horsham on the Weald Clay, has survived much as he left it at his death in1922. He was passionately fond of the Sussex Weald and its history and everything he did was in character with it. He retained the sub-parallel north-south greenways, mostly drove ways, which thread the estate, 30-40 feet wide or more. He carefully retained the wide grassy verges, planted up oaks which now over-arch the roadways. All his field boundaries are not hedgerows but are belts of planted trees of various native species. Like Robinson at Gravetye, Blunt preferred the pattern of little fields on farmland to a landscape park. Blunt was so proud of his handiwork and the historical associations that he showed it to William Morris. Even to day, after more than fifty years of post-war agriculture, the visitor senses a mildly implausible working landscape. A place like this is intimately associated with Sussex's literature – for Blunt was a poet – and landscape history has an individuality worth conserving for posterity.

In the South Downs is the village of Iford near Lewes. In the late 19th century this was acquired by a local banker who began landscaping by closing a road through the estate and diverting it to the margin and then planting up an avenue of trees along the old road, now a greenway, and in several other respects 'gentrifying' a typical austere and workaday Downland village.

The Kneppe Estate, owned in the late 18th century by Sussex's first historian, Sir William Burrell, is currently restoring the park and pleasure grounds. Until recently the estate was devoted to traditional arable and dairy farming but in 2001 the focus was shifted entirely and a series of regeneration and restoration projects was embarked upon aimed primarily at nature preservation. Hedgerows are being grubbed, scrub and weeds have invaded and deer and domestic animals roam freely (Country Life 15 Nov 2007). Here is estate design in an entirely new vogue. Shall we see more?

Summing up, the first landscaped parks on the South-East were probably mainly on the site of old deer parks because these properties were in the hands of the aristocracy and gentry. From the early eighteenth century 'forest gardening' came in as an alternative to a landscaped park and doubtless examples were modified subsequently. The picturesque at Scotney Castle does not seem to have been a general inspiration. Dating to the improvements of roads and the coming of railways 'cockneys' invaded areas deemed beautiful by the prevailing taste and established estates, some of which were on the Loudon model. Simultaneously 'pleasure farms' were expanding over marginal agricultural districts. Traces of this last phase of landscaping activity are

evident as remnants on the present landscape despite the more intensive farming in the post-war years.

Post-Script

Philip Masters (PM)

Location of Country Houses with Parks
Although many country houses/estate centres moved to new locations in pre-existing parks (or in parks that could be easily carved out of chases/forests) throughout the country from the sixteenth-century onwards, I wonder if the sheer number of them is a feature of the southeast. Is there a contrast with regions where many new parks were created on agricultural land? Did a move to parks give particular characteristics to the landscapes of country houses in the region, and were the new houses entirely new or were a significant number built on the sites of earlier hunting lodges? For example at Cobham the estate centre was moved from Cooling Castle to a site based on a hunting lodge in Cobham Park, but the location often led to very odd arrangements as subsequent landscape designs were developed.

Forests and Chases
I wonder if there are differences in the organisation of the forests and chases in the region which also ultimately had an effect on the way designed landscapes around country houses developed. For instance in the Broadwater Forest around Eridge and in Southfrith Chase around Somerhill, parks and park boundaries seem to have ebbed and flowed. The present park Old Park at Eridge was found by merging two parks in the eighteenth century. This allowed a park with a strong picturesque element to be created. On the other hand the pattern of land use in the much smaller forest of Stansted appears to have been largely fixed by the late Middle Ages and later designs was accommodated within this pattern.

Designed Landscapes beyond the Park
Design might be too strong a word, but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries how common was 'ornamental 'planting (as opposed to planting news woodland, reclaiming heath etc) beyond the park. Because many parts of the region have very good tree cover, is such planting less well recorded than elsewhere?   For instance the 'tolls' in Broadwater Forest often appear to be clumps of Beech, perhaps rather similar on a different scale to planting on barrows on the Wiltshire downs, but we notice them less because the tree cover is so good. Another widespread example seems to be planting of a single species alongside roads/lanes. This seems to be especially the case with turnpikes through, or at the edge of, an estate. Quite often, as at Herstmonceux, the species are not the usual run of estate planning and an extreme example is around what is now Northbourne School where large areas are dominated by Holm Oak.

The location of carriage drives extending beyond the park may be relevant to these effects. Where they can be traced on tithe and estate maps (as opposed to the eye of faith on the ground) there are usually contrived views and vistas from them. Peper Harow is a good example. The drives extend across a wide area of hilly ground well beyond the registered park boundary.

The Picturesque

I wonder if the extent of picturesque design of the period *ca.* 1780 onwards has been underestimated in some parts of the region. For example: the survival of the work by the picturesque improved Reynolds at Ashburnham is at least as great as that by Brown; the present park at Eridge is a largely picturesque creation; and the park at Scotney was created by Edward Hussey I in the 1790s as a contrast to his grandson's more famous work from 1928 onwards.

The documentary evidence for this is very sparse – generally painting commissioned in a very picturesque style and a few letters and memoranda - but once you get your eye in for work of this type there is no mistaking it. It may have been underestimated because the way that the picturesque improvers worked – by making suggestions to the owner and perhaps by directing operations on site. It is also easy to confuse designed picturesque effects with those that have occurred by happenstance that they were designed to imitate.

The starting points for getting a better overall picture might be:

- Study of paintings and engravings commissioned in the period of say 1790-1820
- Looking at gentry networks – e.g. Scotney and Eridge were developed at much the same time was there much in common between Edward Hussey I and the Earl of Abergavenny?
- Checking whether references to gentleman improvers are hidden within personal correspondence. Apart from the obvious quite fine-grained picturesque effects, the following might be worth looking at in a generic way
- Location of Veteran Trees. It is easy to assume that the survival of groups of veteran trees in parks is a result chance, but Brown certainly retained veteran trees for a particular design purpose. It seems possible that this was done at a much wider scale – for example at Eridge they were kept to frame the drives and views out
- Re-making/Exaggerating Park Pales and Earthworks. This certainly happened at some sites – e.g. Cobham, but perhaps much more generally
- Softening the Edges of Woodland. Woodlands where there is a gradual transition from scattered trees in open ground to the core with a dense canopy and understorey are quite frequent. I only know of one well-documented case where this was part of a landscape design of the picturesque period. But were there two phases of such work one in the picturesque and a later one that you mention in your book on the Weald?
- Removal of understorey. I've only come across this in two places – Eridge and Ashburnham – but as both of these are often considered to be particularly good examples of wood pasture so I wonder how widespread it was. There is no doubt that in both cases the understorey was removed to change the character of the landscape, creating views through the woods. It must have been driven by something other than woodland management, since underwood was still profitable.

Regional Improvers and the Main Phases of Design
In other parts of the country there were improvers contemporary with Brown and
Repton who generally worked within a limited region, rather than being national
figures. Were there equivalent improvers in the southeast? Were there regional figures
within the ambit of London but not beyond? If there were not is that because there
was a limited market, with the aristocracy employing the national figures and the
gentry doing things themselves or not at all?

Is there a more general question of the major phases of development of designed
landscapes relative to other English regions? Were they later, earlier or contemporary,
more or less significant? Is there a need to tackle significance? For instance within
the Weald the gardens created by the 'lords of the rhododendron' are of national
significance. But this is perhaps largely because of their plant collections. As designs
some of them are nothing special.

The Nature of the Landscape
I'm not sure how serious a point this is, but some landscapes lend themselves to
particular types of design. The limestone belt lends itself to Brown's style, the Welsh
borders to Payne Knight's. Within the southeast the most obvious case is the Weald
but are there other areas where the combination of the aspirations of landowners, the
current design fashion and physical characteristics produced a particularly distinctive
landscape over a significant area? Parks in the scarp foot zone perhaps?

Model Farms
I haven't had much to do with these but model farms as the setting for model farm
buildings seem quite thin on the ground outside the ambit of London (were there
many on the Sussex coastal plain?). If there are many, is there a useful distinction to
be made between these and pleasure/hobby farms where the landscape might be
designed deliberately not to conform to the contemporary ideas of good farming? Or
are pleasure farms the regional expression of the same movement as model farms?

Discussion:

CJ highlighted Bodiam Castle as a case study of designed landscape that also showed
considerable time-depth extending prior to the medieval period. Dallingridge's plans
in 14th century are confined by a pre-existing landscape, consisting of a Roman road
which bends to avoid a site at the present day rectory, known to contain a late
prehistoric cemetery (so respecting it?). The Saltwood landscape recently studied as
part of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link work is another good example of articulating of
new landscape features around the pre-existing landscape.

The influence of the hunting of hounds was noted in terms of its enormous effect on
the current landscape (e.g. copses to hide foxes, fences for jumping, glades etc for
spying the fox), as well as other forms of hunting (including deer). Medieval deer
parks of Canterbury can also still be seen in the landscape. Sussex has been more
transformed by post-medieval landscape design than parts of Kent, representing the
perceived need of the *nouveau riches* to be able to get in and out of 'the wilds'.
Recent trends in management of some areas seem to be more of a return to this

attitude; the current 'wilding' of parts of the Weald for example, represents efforts to bring a historic landscape back.

Woodland Landscapes – are we missing the archaeology for the trees?
An assessment of the Resource and Issues

Nicola Bannister (NB)

The study of woodland archaeology and the archaeology of woods has sat on the fringes of archaeological research and investigation for the past 25 years or so: until recently. The subject of woodland archaeology is receiving more attention than in the past especially with local interest groups, the voluntary sector and the general public, with more awareness through publications, booklets etc. and the Internet. The value and importance of woods for preserving archaeological remains is now appreciated and the time has come for a more holistic and structured approach to research and thence the sensitive management of this archaeological resource. Nowhere more than in "wooded landscapes" is the need for constructive dialogue and exchange of ideas needed between archaeologists and woodland ecologists.

Most people will be aware of and know the work of Dr Oliver Rackham, who back in the 1970s and 1980s showed how valuable and rewarding the understanding of the history woodlands waswoodland as an historical resource and how much more could be gained by integrating archaeology with ecology, to understand past land use in the woodland, wood pasture, coppice environment. His books, *Ancient Woodland* and the *History of the Countryside* are seminal works on the subject – though I am still surprised to come across both ecologists and archaeologists working on aspects of the historic landscape who have only a passing acquaintance of them. Hayley Wood was one of the first woods to be systematically researched and the discipline of Historical Ecology developed. Admittedly his work covered in the main Essex, East Anglia and countries westward and only barely touched on the woodland landscapes of the South-East. Also the woodland ecologist George Peterkin was one of the first to look at woods and their management in a systematic way and led the way to classifying woods as part of the National Vegetation Classification system.

WG Hoskins writing in the 1950s was the first to see a clear pattern between those landscapes enclosed from woods and those from an open, previously cleared landscape. This was built on by the research work of Chris Taylor. Rackham defined these as 'anciently enclosed landscapes' and 'champion' landscapes. This distinction has been more fully researched in the study of rural settlement by Roberts and Wrathmell. The map of Settlement Provinces shows that the champion landscapes occupy the spine of England from the North East to the eastern end of the South West. Our research framework area lies within their defined "Weald sub-province". Anciently enclosed landscapes are characterised by small scale settlement with scattered isolated farmsteads, mixed specied irregular hedges bounding irregular shaped field patterns, sunken winding roads and tracks, many woods, often small with numerous ancient pollards scattered through the landscape. To this I would add numerous commons, greens, roadside wastes. Planned landscapes are rarely present in woodland landscapes except for areas enclosed commons, heaths 'Forests' etc. This

work has been succinctly summarised by Rippon in his work in Historic Landscape Analysis
.
Within our research area, the Wealden district of the three counties together with the area of The Blean around Canterbury could be considered a "wooded landscape".

What is Woodland Archaeology? Two main types have been accepted to date: the Archaeology of Woodlands – their management and exploitation [Woodland related], and the Archaeology in Woodlands – everything else that can be found in the wider landscape but often in a better state of preservation, when located in woodland. [Non-Woodland related]. To this I would now add Historic Geography of Woodlands – the understanding of the role of woodlands in the evolution of the wider historic landscape. The work of Roberts and Wrathnell is a national example of this type of approach.

Why is Woodland Archaeology important?

1. Woodland Archaeology and the Archaeology of woodlands can help in understanding how different types of landscapes have evolved
2. Woods are a complex unwritten record of how our fore-bears used to live
3. The detail, diversity and form of archaeological features of woods contribute to local distinctiveness and character
4. Features of woodland archaeology are often not found anywhere else in the landscape [unless wood has been grubbed and they survive as crop marks]
5. Increasingly finding that woods are very good at preserving extant prehistoric features
6. Many types of features of woodlands are not protected by statutory legislation
7. The archaeological resource of any given wood can inform present and future management
8. The archaeological potential of woods is not represented in the HER and is therefore not available for research and cultural resource management/decision-aiming. In terms of really developing county SMRs into an HER there must be a fuller understanding of the potential resource within woodland areas. In the absence of research de facto that any piece of woodland will preserve some features of archaeological interest.
9. The very nature of surveying in woodlands is very difficult when compared with open farmland etc. Systematic overviews using aerial photographs

As more surveys and research are undertaken, by individuals and organisations, the value of woodland as an archaeological resource, especially for the prehistoric and medieval periods, is becoming more apparent.

What we do know about wooded landscapes and woodland archaeology is very little and limited, with few if any excavations of features, and few detailed studies of the archive resource – an exemption is the work in the Blean by the Blean Research

Group. Where a small research group has looked at many of the archives held at Canterbury Cathedral relating to the Church's holdings in this area.

The issue of woodland archaeology is nowhere of more importance than in the South-East where over 40% of the nation's Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland is located (for example 17% in East Sussex) and which is the most wooded region in the country with extensive tracts of secondary and plantation woodland. The unique geology underpinning the South-East landscape gives rise to rare and distinctive woodland types with rich diversity of flora and fauna, which in turn can inform how the woodlands were managed in the past. Woodland crafts and industries are embedded in the economic and social history of the region, from prehistory to the early part of the 20th century. Peter Brandon's books on the North Downs and the Kent and Sussex Weald provide the detailed setting to the development of the Wealden Landscape and the late Geoffrey Robert's book on the Woodlands of Kent is a first attempt to look at the history of that county's woodlands.

NB then demonstrated the HLC Distribution of Woodland for the region, drawing on a number of different sources, culminating in her own extensive surveys.

Most of this work was to record the presence of woodland archaeology, the role that those woods had in the development of the particular landscape under study, the results of which were to advise future management of the woodland. The detailed research of woodlands, their history, landscape role, and in-depth study of the archaeological resource has not really been tackled to any great extent, but a number of examples of features dating to various periods can be cited, including:

- English Heritage Landscape Team Survey work in Goblestubb's Copse, Whiteways plantation, West Sussex on Romano-British earthworks
- Great Church Wood, Surrey, with a possible Bronze Age field system surviving on the edge of a field formerly called Barrow Leys (now a golf course); in the 16th century at least five *tumuli* recorded on estate map, and surface finds support this.
- Clowes Wood, The Blean: two round barrows hidden in a conifer plantation, now being carefully cleared; work also revealed low boundary banks in close proximity
- Dering Wood near Pluckley in the Low Weald. Here low banks appear to lie beneath the medieval coppice wood divisions
- Moated sites and their wider landscape Moat Wood, East Hoathly, boundaries in close association with the moat
- Iffin Wood near Lower Hardres on the North Downs: there is a moated settlement with boundaries and trackways associated with it
- Anglo-Saxon settlement of Wellhead in Salehurst recorded in an area now covered by extensive woodland.

The role of woodlands in designed landscapes is also evidenced by extant features:

- Dering Wood, near Pluckley (already mentioned): overlying the medieval coppice enclosures and wood banks is a 19th century ride and

avenue system laid out by Sir Edward Dering, with Red and Turkey Oak planting, and rhododendron
- Scotney Castle: in Kilndown Wood there are remnants of Edward Hussey III's pinetum, a smaller version of that of the Beresford-Hopes' at nearby Bedgebury (now the National Pinetum Collection).

Importantly for the SE there are also remnants of the Iron industry to consider, and especially the role of woods in the industrial development of the Weald. The Wealden Iron Research Group have carried out the most systematic coverage of any aspect of woods, leading to greater understanding of the production of charcoal (e.g. the tonnage required to produce iron, and the number of hearths).

Routeways are also important, with links between and through woodland, and more surveys (such as that carried out by NB and volunteer colleagues at Bedgebury on a mult-ditched linear feature) are called for. Historical Ecology is another approach in need of more application, involving the integration of survey work between ecologists and archaeologists. Broadham Wood (part of the already mentioned Scotney Estate) contains a double bank and ditch (old estate boundary), ancient boundary stubs, a sunken trackway along its southern boundary, numerous pits and hollows and remains of a hop pickers camp (the latter now partly restored by the National Trust). In the 18th century the northern part was not wooded, but it was in the 19th. This division was marked by low banks. The woodland ground flora species pattern indicated a period of short lived and low intensity agricultural activity in the northern part. The presence of dogs mercury, a plant associated with lime loving ground, indicates the possiblity that marl was spread on this area, there being a clearly defined line between the area of dogs mercury and bluebells.

Landscape approaches are also called for, involving the wider study of wooded landscapes, their associated fields, boundaries and farmsteads, to give a greater understanding of woodland clearance and settlement. HLC provides a base line from which to look at the historical geography of wooded landscapes. HLC has been used by the Sussex Wildlife Trust Western Low Weald Project to look at increasing the landscape biodiversity through restoration of key historic features such as woodland, shaws and hedgerows to create an inter-linking network of habitats, whilst still retaining the historic character of the landscape.

There is a need to focus research on some key areas:

- Recording the presence of archaeology in woods and enriching the HER databases. De Facto all woods contain features of archaeological interest and some of which may be of immense regional and national importance if we did but know
- Conducting more detailed Level 3 Historic Landscape type surveys to place the role of woods in the wider historic landscape (e.g. the proposed ASHLV survey at Godstone, Surrey)
- Carrying out more detailed investigative excavations of a wide range of archaeological features. Building up a gazetteer of woodland archaeology to aid in identification, developing an understanding of the relative age of features by their relationship with other features and with archive evidence. We need to look at developing methods for

fixing dates of features through excavation and below ground stratigraphy. We need also to engage and work with palaeo-environmental archaeologists to identify buried ground surfaces and old soils

- Working more closely with ecologists in order to understand the contribution of ground flora and trees, especially veterans.
- Understanding the role of woodlands during periods of national defence both for supplying timber and also for training, defence obstacles and the preservation of military earthworks.

The need to understand the archaeology of woodland landscapes is never more pressing than today with the various landscape change pressures impinging on the region, from wholesale loss of woods through development and infrastructure improvements, to insensitive and unsustainable management of woods, to climate change and associated development of biomass fuel. Ancient Woodland needs to be managed in a sustainable way; some trees need to be cut down, and on the other hand we need to plant more trees to soak up carbon.

Woods seen as primarily an aesthetic, cultural and recreational part of the environment in which we live. Our perception of them is also as places to exploit, where wood and timber products were as important to the past societies as plastic is to us today. Trees were indeed grown to be cut down. An interesting view of woods was presented by Alan Betts at the recent Ancient Woodlands Seminar, as dark, oppressing, hostile places where the wild things live. A Germanic / fairy tale influence was brought in to this country in the latter part of the post-medieval period, coinciding with the move from coppice with standards to 'High Forest', as found on the Continent. Prior to that, woods were seen as sylvan glades with open areas, managed, with stock grazing through. Our medieval 'Forests' were a mix of coppice wood pasture and areas where there were few if no trees.

Finally, some Initial Steps for the Research Agenda would be to:

- Set standards in survey work (including excavations, measured surveys etc)
- Organise a Wealden Woodland Archaeology Forum to promote and disseminate knowledge on woodland archaeology, and to work with the Wealden Iron Research Group, local archaeology societies etc, holding meetings (and producing a newsletter?) as well as conducting direct research
- Establish a network of surveyors, to engage with woodland owners and managers, and also woodland brokers and future owners.

Discussion:

CJ picked up on the theme of industrial landscapes, which also raise the subject of extractive industries, and the distribution of ponds, coppicing, and the supply of timber material that has always been significant aspect of region. The 'agricultural efficiency' of the region was also discussed, and the complexity of landownership and renting out of grazing land and animal stocking, as well as movement of livestock

around. Surveys need to challenge assumptions about tree species and woodland use. Detailed surveys just don't exist, and there needs to be more dialogue between archaeologists and ecologists: the latter do not have same understanding of time depth as the former and are tending to just using signpost features in order to to designate ancient woodland. Surveying techniques have also moved on: GPS surveying is turning up very interesting results in remnants of the Blean and Iffin Wood, for example, so more is possible now than even five years ago, and with LiDAR much more can now be surveyed in much more detail. The role of standing building types, sizes, and density in the landscape is important to remember: patterns in buildings in the medieval period were repeated very clearly in 17th century. Work by the Domestic Buildings Research Group or work the work of the Martins in Surrey is adding much more detail than just listings of buildings in characterising the landscape. There is also the development of towns to consider in this respect, of course, as well as the materials used in that development. Dendrochronology is beginning to reveal distinct coppice cycles. One area of Surrey can't be dated because most of the wood used was elm. Place names and field names are also likely to be significant, and, while there hasn't yet been a systematic study of the names of woods, this would be an important way forward, particularly in relation to toponyms.