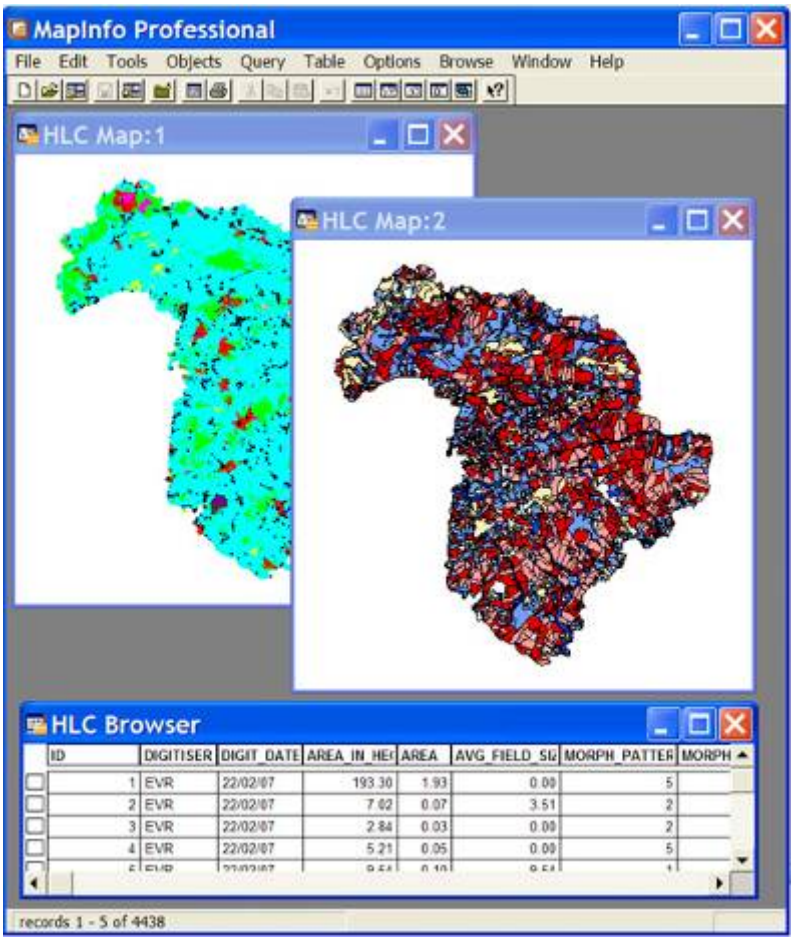
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB
Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED



ENGLISH HERITAGE

METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED 1: Creating the Dataset

The starting point for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Historic Landscape Characterisation is the present day landscape as observed on modern maps and aerial photographs. We are looking to record the historic landscape character of the landscape which can be seen today.

The primary product is a computerised map created in GIS (Geographical Information System) attached to a table of data.

STAGE 1

The first step is to identify individual parcels of land which share both a common form (technically known as morphology) and a common land use history. In this step comparison between modern maps and historic maps is crucial. These individual parcels are known as 'polygons' in GIS.

IN ORDER TO BE IN A PARCEL/GROUP/POLYGON EACH UNIT OF LAND WOULD HAVE		
BOTH		
SHARED MORPHOLOGY	**&**	**SHARED LAND USE HISTORY**
Any piece of land in the AONB can be attributed to a broad type which can be seen in the landscape. These broad types include fields, woodland, water or settlement. Each of these broad types exhibits variations in appearance. Units of land can be grouped together to form a parcel/polygon/group where their form is the same – they can be said to have shared morphology.		Any area of land in the AONB has a primary character which has evolved from a particular historical process and dates from a certain period of land use. The land might also have evidence of previous land uses which survive as fragments. Each unit of land in a parcel/polygon/group must share this layered history of land use which survives to the modern day.
E.g. Shared Morphology in the case of fields, for example, would include factors such as the shape and size of the fields, whether the boundaries are straight or curving, and whether the boundaries are hedge or fenced.		E*.g. Shared Land Use in the case of fields, for example, might be a 20th century fieldscape of large irregular fields which contains some surviving hedged boundaries which are traces of earlier, smaller, regular fields first created in the 19th century.*

In order to undertake this process historic map based sources need to be used. These include 18th Century county based maps, Ordnance Survey 2 inch: 1 mile surveyors drafts (1800-1820), Enclosure Award Maps, Ordnance Survey First County Series 6 inch: 1 mile maps (1843-1893) and Ordnance survey first (1891-1912), second (1904-1939) and third (1919-1939) revisions of the County Series. These can

be used to identify and date changes in land use which can be compared with the modern day landscape, and thereby identify land use history. However these maps only provide snap shots in time, some of them have patchy coverage of the AONB, and the earliest only dates back to the mid 18th Century. This means that the morphology of the land parcels is also crucial in identifying land use history especially for identifying change which occurred before the 18th century.

STAGE TWO

Once a parcel of land has been identified its shape is added to a computerised map (in GIS). This shape is attached to a table where information about the parcel of land is recorded.

The next step therefore is to record relevant data for each parcel of land.

The information added at this stage includes: -

- Unique number for each parcel
- The size of the parcel of land
- The date it was created and the person who undertook the identification
- Place name evidence
- The morphology of the parcel of land where appropriate (recorded for fields, woodland and settlement)
- Important Secondary Features which are too small to be recorded individually such as streams, copses, trackways and barns.
- For fields only information is recorded on field shape, type of boundary, field size and amount of boundary loss or gain since the 20th century.

STAGE THREE

The parcel of land is then allocated a CURRENT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE TYPE. This type represents the historic landscape character present in the modern day landscape.

Each historic landscape type exists as a series of nested layers

E.g. Example of Historic Landscape Type given to four separate settlement land parcels (LPs)

LP	BROAD TYPE	MAJOR TYPE	SUBTYPE 1
87	Enclosed Land	20th Century Field	20th Century Clearance Field
235	Industrial	Extractive	N/A
513	Enclosed Land	Pre 1800 Field	Pre 1800 Irregular Field
1024	Settlement	19th Century Settlement	N/A

Each land parcel, for example, which is settlement, will have the same broad historic landscape type, but it may have different Major Historic Landscape Types or even different Subtypes

It is important that it is recorded why each parcel of land/polygon/group was allocated a particular Current Historic Landscape Type, so that the decision making process is transparent.

Therefore, for each parcel of land/polygon/group information is recorded on: -

- **The primary map source used to help identify the Current Historic Landscape Type**
- **The broad time period the parcel of land dates from**
- **The certainty of identification**

STAGE FOUR

As mentioned the project is also interested in evidence for previous land uses which remains as fragments in today's landscape.

If there is time depth present, a land parcel/polygon can also be assigned up to three Previous Historic Landscape Types where evidence for previous land uses survives in the modern day landscape. These also exist as a series of nested layers.

E.g. Example of Previous Historic Landscape Types assigned to a Land Parcel 87

LP 87	Current HLT	Previous HLT 1	Previous HLT 2	Previous HLT 3
Broad Type	Enclosed Land	Woodland	Parkland and Designed	N/A
Major Type	20th Century Field	Recent Woodland	Deer Park	N/A
Subtype 1	20th Century Clearance Field	N/A	N/A	N/A

For each Previous Historic Landscape Type parcel of land identified information is recorded on: -

- **The primary map source used to help identify the Previous Historic Landscape Type make the decision**
- **The broad time period the parcel of land dates from**
- **The certainty of the identification**

STAGE FIVE

The mapping and recording process is repeated (Stages 1 to 4) for every unit of land in the AONB until the individual parcels of land seamlessly cover the whole AONB.

The computerised map with attached data is complete

Analysis and description is then undertaken
(see METHODOLOGY EXPLANED 2)

METHDOLOGY EXPLAINED 1: Schematic Diagram

KEY SOURCES: Modern day Ordnance survey; modern aerial photographs; Historic Ordnance Survey Maps; Historic County Maps; and Parliamentary Enclosure Maps

The primary product is a computerised map attached to a table of data

Shared Morphology

e.g. Regular shaped fields with ruler straight boundaries
e.g. Irregular woodland

STAGE 1
Create primary unit of HLC
"A parcel of Land"

e.g. Group of fields
e.g. Area of woodland
e.g. Area of Parkland
e.g. Group of Houses

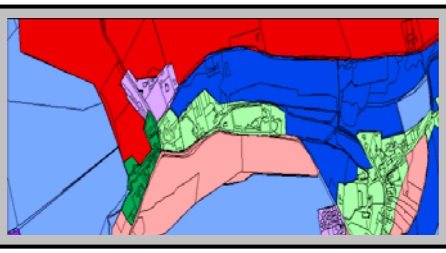
Shared Land Use History

e.g. 20th Century field which retains evidence of earlier 19th Century enclosure pattern

STAGE 3 Data recorded for each parcel of land
e.g. Unique ID, Morphology, Place Name evidence, No of fields, boundary loss and gain, field size

STAGE 3 Assigned nested Historic Landscape Type
e.g. Enclosed Land, 19th Century Field
Data also recorded on source, period, & certainty

STAGE 4 Assigned Previous Historic Landscape Types
e.g. Open Land, 19th Century Field, Parliamentary Enclosure
Data also recorded on source, period, & certainty
Up to three previous types can be identified



STAGE 5
Repeat process so the parcels of land cover the whole AONB

The computerised map with attached data is now complete

METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED 2:
Analysis and Interpretation

The completed dataset of the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation consisted of 4337 parcels of land recorded in a computerised map called a Geographical Information System (GIS).

Each of these parcels had an entry in an associated data table which contained over 30 different columns into which information could be entered. The dataset therefore contained over 10000 separate pieces of information.

The flexibility of the GIS system means that it is possible to analyse and map any aspect of the data.

As an example, analysis could include the following: -

- Maps showing which parcels of land have been assigned a particular Historic Landscape Type
- Numerical calculations indicating what percentage of fields have a certain morphology
- Map showing which woodlands are associated with a particular place name AND are associated with a particular Previous Historic Landscape Type

This flexibility and power is limited of course by the time constraints of the project, so only certain aspects of the information contained in the dataset could be explored in detail.

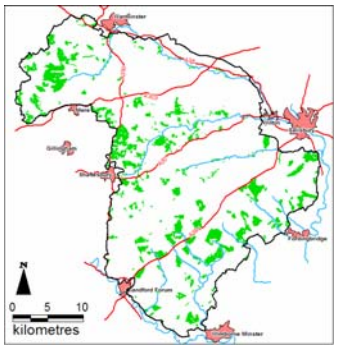
The analysis and interpretation followed two strands: -

1. **Understanding the detail in the HLC dataset**
2. **Comparing the HLC with other datasets e.g. SMR data**

1 UNDERSTANDING THE DETAIL IN THE HLC DATASET

The first stage of the analysis focussed on understanding the detail in the dataset

1.1 The first task undertaken was to Map and Analyse the distribution and character of each nested historic landscape type



This map, for example, shows the distribution of Pre 1800 Fields across the AONB. The distribution was described and its relation in respect to other factors, such as topography, geology, and hydrology, was studied. Numerical analysis was also undertaken which looked at factors such as the total % by area of the AONB the type covered, the period the type came into being, its morphology, the land use and period from which this type originated and the total recorded area that this type covered at any point.

This process allowed the preparation of detailed written descriptions for each nested Historic Landscape Type.

These descriptions aimed to be comprehensive and detailed. They contained distribution maps and pictorial examples as well as key descriptions. The text describes the defining criteria of the type, distribution, principal historic processes which created the type, typical components, rarity, survival, degree of surviving coherence, past interactions with other types, evidence for time depth and contribution to present day landscape character.

These comprehensive descriptions allow a detailed picture of the Historic Landscape Character of the AONB to be built up.

1.2 The second task undertaken was the preparation of a general description of historic landscape character across the AONB

The aim of this description is to help everyone gain an impression of the historic landscape character of the AONB.

The historic landscape type descriptions described above include over 75 separate descriptions and they needed to be complemented by a more general synthesis of the historic landscape character of the AONB.

This aimed to answer the more generic questions which can be posed of the dataset.

These questions include: how has the settlement of the AONB developed over time? What has been the impact of industry in the AONB? What is the history of land use in the valley bottoms?

2 COMPARING THE HLC WITH OTHER DATASETS

The Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset can also be compared against other spatial datasets e.g. census data or SMR data.

This comparison can give an indication of how historic landscape character can be used to: -

1. place the other datasets in context
2. indicate how the spatial elements of these datasets have been shaped by historic processes and land use history
3. indicate how these datasets have themselves shaped the historic landscape character of the AONB

For simplicity these external spatial datasets have been split into three broad categories.

2.1 Modern Data

The HLC was compared against designated Wildlife Sites in the AONB (SSSIs, SACs etc.) to look how the historic landscape character of an area influences the location of designated sites. The analysis also looked at how Wildlife Sites in the AONB could be placed in their wider context. Finally the AONB Landscape character Assessment was compared against the HLC dataset.

2.2 Historical Data

Changes in census data by parish between 1881 and 2001 was compared to the HLC to study how changes in land use are related to changes in factors such as employment and population.

The relationships between historic landscape character and the locations of possible medieval deer parks was also analysed.

2.3 Archaeological data

Point data from the relevant county Sites and Monument Record (SMR) or Historic Environment Record (HER) were compared against the HLC dataset to see how the distribution of particular historic landscape types related to the distribution of particular listed buildings.

All of these strands fed back into the final products of the project

FINAL PRODUCTS OF THE PROJECT

1. Website – The website for the project was launched in March 2008 and provides an introduction to the project as well as a technical section which allows the data to be explored in detail.

2. Written Report – This is aimed at a general readership and outlines the aims of the project, the location of the AONB, introduces the methodology and contains descriptive text of the historic landscape character of the AONB

3. Technical report – This explores the project in much greater depth and includes a full methodology and the full historic landscape type descriptions.

OUTPUTS

The results of this work were disseminated as widely as possible to the AONB Partnership, relevant organisations and the general public. The results and findings of the project were fed into the AONB management plan review. Finally the AONB hopes to extend the work of this project by creating Historic Landscape Character Areas and Historic Environment Action Plans based on the Historic Landscape Character.

See the Historic Landscape Characterisation Website for more details
www.historiclandscape.co.uk

METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED 2: SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM