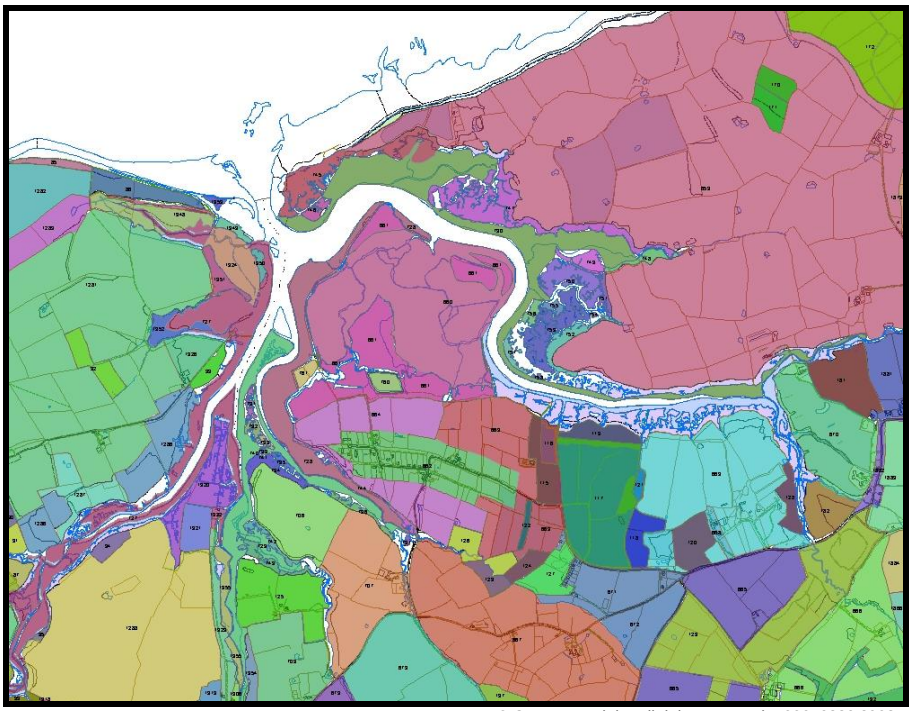
ISLE OF WIGHT
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

FINAL REPORT

VOLUME 1: METHOD AND ANALYSIS



ISLE of WIGHT COUNCIL

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Vicky Basford
HLC Project Officer
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION?

The technique of Historic Landscape Characterisation, usually referred to as **HLC**, is one of a range of mapping and characterisation techniques developed from the 1990s by agencies concerned with the natural and historic environment, primarily for the purpose of landscape management. Historic Landscape Characterisation maps the historic dimensions of the present landscape which has been created from different processes of landscape change. The HLC technique involves identifying units of land with a specific historic landscape character. These land units are assigned firstly to a **Broad HLC Type** such as field patterns, woodland or settlement and then to one of the more numerous **HLC Descriptive or Interpretative Sub-Types**. The HLC sub-types are defined on the basis of a range of attributes selected from a linked database and are drawn on a digital map as **polygons**, using **GIS** (geographical information system software). HLC types are *generic* in that they may occur in different parts of the country. Particular areas of the landscape may contain distinctive combinations of HLC types, giving each of these areas a unique identifiable general character which is distinct from that of adjacent areas and constitutes a **Historic Landscape Character Area.**

HLC data complements existing archaeological data maintained by local authorities in the form of historic environment records (HERs). It places archaeological sites and finds recorded within the HER in a landscape context and builds information about the historic landscape into the HER. It is a valuable tool for planning purposes and for management of the historic environment. HLC can also play a significant role in understanding and conserving landscapes of national importance such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT HLC PROJECT

The Isle of Wight HLC Project forms part of a national programme of county based projects initiated and funded by English Heritage. Approximately two-thirds of all English counties have now completed historic landscape characterisation (2006). In south-east England Hampshire was one of the earlier HLC projects (Lambrick and Bramhill 1999) with Kent following a similar methodology (Croft et al 2001).Surrey's HLC broadly followed the methodology of Hampshire and Kent but developed in new directions (Bannister and Wills 2001). The Sussex HLC encompasses both West and East Sussex. It commenced in 2003 and is due for completion in 2008.

The Isle of Wight HLC Project has been undertaken by the Isle of Wight Council's Archaeology and Historic Environment Service with funding from English Heritage. An original project design was submitted to English Heritage in February 2002 and the HLC Project Officer started work in September 2002.

The project was undertaken on a part-time basis in order to take advantage of independent research into historic rural settlement and land use being carried out by the Project Officer at Bournemouth University (Basford forthcoming). Following a detailed study of other HLC projects and identification of the specific needs of the Isle of Wight, a revised project design was prepared in January 2003 and this was subjected to further amendment following discussions with Graham Fairclough (Head of Characterisation, English Heritage). Work on the project was delayed due to illness but mapping was completed in November 2005 and the final report in spring 2006.

1.3 REASONS FOR THE PROJECT

There are many potential uses for HLC but the following specific uses have been identified in connection with the Isle of Wight project.

- **Contribution to National HLC Programme** – the Isle of Wight project forms part of an ongoing national programme by English Heritage that seeks improved understanding of the historic landscape in order to manage change
- **HER Enhancement -** to provide a historic landscape context for the HER.
- **Development of Integrated GIS linked Database -** to provide GIS based data compatible with that produced by the Isle of Wight Countryside Section and AONB Unit of the Isle of Wight Council with the aim of informing the conservation and management of landscapes throughout the Isle of Wight.
- **Land Use Planning** – especially informing strategic planning, contributing to supplementary planning guidance and providing a context for archaeological development control advice. The use of HLC in assessing sensitivity and capacity for change within the context of large scale strategic development planning on the mainland has been demonstrated (English Heritage 2004-5). Locally, HLC will be useful in the context of The Island Plan (the Local Development Framework for the Isle of Wight).
- **Monitoring Landscape Change** – the HLC provides a snapshot of the Isle of Wight's historic landscape at the beginning of the 21st century.
- **Input to AONB Management Plan** – whilst in preparation the Isle of Wight HLC fed into the AONB Management Plan 2004-2009 and the completed HLC will contribute to the revision of the management plan.
- **Input to Conservation Area Appraisals and Village Design Statements**
- **Input to Agri-Environment Schemes** – especially Countryside Stewardship and Woodland Grant Schemes
- **Public Outreach** – although the original HLC Project did not allow for public dissemination of results HLC offers enormous potential for engaging local communities and helping them to understand their past. This aspect of the HLC was developed in the Historic Environment Action Project from 2006-2008.

- **Research** – HLC can be used as a predictive tool to assess where new archaeological sites may be found. The Isle of Wight HLC has contributed to the Solent-Thames Sub-Regional Research Framework and will be used in preparing the Isle of Wight Archaeological Research Framework. HLC results will feed into research being undertaken at Bournemouth University in connection with historic Isle of Wight land use and settlement patterns

1.4 PROJECT AIMS

The purpose of the HLC process developed by English Heritage is to understand the historic landscape character of an area *at the present time*. However this can only be achieved by understanding the land use processes that formed this character. A secondary but important purpose of the Isle of Wight HLC Project has been to understand the history of enclosure on the Island. The aims of the project were therefore defined as follows:

- To identify and describe Isle of Wight historic landscape character types based on present land use, land management and settlement patterns which reflect different historical processes in their formation.
- To define and describe the past landscape character of the Isle of Wight, using a variety of sources, and to understand how this past landscape character has influenced the present historic landscape character of the area.

1.5. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AREA.

The Isle of Wight lies off the south coast of England, opposite Hampshire, and covers an area of approximately 382 square kilometres (237 square miles). It is diamond-shaped and extends about 37 km (23 miles) from west to east and 21 km (13 miles) from north to south at its widest points. Approximately one half of the Isle of Wight lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Fig 1). In 2003 the population was estimated as 136,250, with about 17% of the population (23,000) living in Newport, the Island's principal town (Isle of Wight Council 2006). The Isle of Wight is a Unitary Authority which supports a County Archaeology and Historic Environment Service with responsibility for the Sites and Monuments Record. Within the Unitary Authority twenty seven modern civil parishes existed in March 2006. Seven new civil parishes have been created since that date and as a result the whole of the Isle of Wight is now enparished (fig. 5). Twenty-nine Isle of Wight ecclesiastical parishes were shown on the OS 1st Edition 25" and 6" maps of 1862 (fig. 6). These ecclesiastical parishes have been called 'medieval parishes' in the text of this report and in the titles of the HLC maps although some did not have full parish status in the medieval period.

Geologically, the Isle of Wight is remarkably varied for its size, with distinct regions of contrasting landscapes and land use patterns (fig. 2). The landscape is dominated by the central ridge of Chalk and Upper Greensand running from west to east across the centre of the Island and by a further block of Chalk and Upper Greensand downland in the south-east. Between these two areas of downland lie the Island's oldest geological deposits. These comprise relatively

small areas of Wealden deposits along the south-west coast and behind Sandown Bay and a much larger area of Lower Greensand providing an easily worked soil that now supports intensive agriculture (Countryside Commission 1994, 17). North of the central downland ridge are the more recent Eocene and Oligocene deposits of the Palaeogene Period, comprising sands and heavy clays with outcrops of Bembridge Limestone. There are also various superficial deposits of the Quaternary Period (Fig 3). The Isle of Wight also contains a remarkable and distinctive landscape zone of recent geological date; this being the Undercliff, an area of landslip less than one kilometre wide, stretching along the south eastern coast from Blackgang Chine to the east of Ventnor. It is likely that a landslide topography was formed here under Pleistocene periglacial conditions but further instability within the last 10,000 years has created the present landscape of the Undercliff.

The Island has three main rivers, all of which flow northwards. The biggest of these is the Medina, which almost divides the Island in two from south to north and is tidal from Newport, reaching the sea at Cowes. To the east is the Yar (sometimes known as the East Yar) which empties into the sea near Bembridge, and to the west is another Yar (sometimes known as the West Yar), estuarine for most of its short length, which reaches the sea at Yarmouth. There are tidal inlets on the north coast at Newtown, Wootton Creek and King's Quay (Fig 4).

1.6 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The only published synthesis of the Island's archaeology is *The Vectis Report* (Basford 1980) and a relatively large amount of archaeological activity has taken place since its publication. However, references to most of the archaeological sites mentioned below can be found in *The Vectis Report*.

During the Pleistocene epoch, from 2 million to 10,000 years ago, glaciers expanded into much of Britain, although not as far south as the Isle of Wight. There were also intervening milder periods. Major changes in sea levels accompanied these climatic fluctuations. During cold phases sea levels fell and the Island became part of mainland Britain, itself at times attached to the Continent. During milder phases the sea rose and the Island was separated from the mainland. The earliest human activity in Britain took place during the Pleistocene. On the Isle of Wight the oldest known archaeological site is at Priory Bay, St Helens, where flint hand axes and flakes of the Lower Palaeolithic period have been found, dating from between 425,000 and 300,000 years ago (Wenban-Smith 2003). Flint hand axes found at Bleak Down, near Rookley, have also been attributed to the Lower Palaeolithic. A recent re-examination of a Palaeolithic lithic assemblage found during early twentieth century gravel working at Great Pan, near Newport, has indicated that the assemblage could have been made at any time between about 300,000 and 43,000 years ago (Roberts et al 2006)

About 10,000 years ago, at the start of the Holocene, the climate improved and sea levels again began to rise. Climatic improvement led to an increasingly wooded environment. During the Mesolithic between 8000 B.C. and 4000 B.C.

humans were still hunter-gatherers. On the Isle of Wight, Mesolithic implements have been found inland mainly on the Lower Greensand but much of the archaeological material from this period has been found in the inter-tidal zone, in areas affected by coastal erosion and sea level change, and underwater. Flint implements dating from the mid seventh millennium BC have been found lying on a submerged wooded land surface buried beneath a peaty sea bed in the western Solent at Bouldnor near Yarmouth.

Analyses of plant and animal remains from submerged sediments in the inter-tidal zone of the Wootton-Quarr area suggest that the Island separated finally from the mainland at the very latest by 4000 B.C., at the start of the Neolithic (Tomalin, Loader and Scaife, forthcoming) although the Bouldnor site suggests a possible earlier separation. The preservative qualities of coastal sediments at Wootton-Quarr allowed a wide range of organic materials to survive. 58 submerged trees in the inter-tidal zone dated by dendrochronology were part of a Neolithic woodland that had thrived during the period 3463-2557 B.C. Wooden trackways, radiocarbon-dated to the Neolithic, were recorded at extreme low water and have been found elsewhere on the Island only at Newtown.

Farming was first practised in Britain during the Neolithic from c. 4000 B.C. and the earliest surviving monuments on the Isle of Wight date from this period (RCHM 1979). The Longstone, at Mottistone, situated on the Greensand to the south of the central chalk ridge, is thought to be the remains of a long barrow with stones marking the position of the entrance portal. The other two surviving Neolithic monuments, which stand on the central chalk ridge on either side of Freshwater Bay, are the Afton Down Long Barrow (surrounded by a Bronze-Age round barrow cemetery) and the Tennyson Down mortuary enclosure. The three monuments at Mottistone, Afton Down and Tennyson Down indicate that some woodland had been cleared from the Chalk and Greensand in Neolithic times by the use of stone and flint axes, but pollen evidence suggests a mosaic of agricultural clearances set within large areas of remaining woodland.

In the succeeding Bronze Age, from c.2300 B.C. to c.700 B.C. metal was utilised for the first time. Hoards of Bronze Age implements and weapons have been found throughout the Island. Large scale woodland clearance for agriculture occurred during the period, leading to the creation of downland and heath land. The central and southern chalk downs contain many Bronze Age round barrow cemeteries, often at the head of combs. Few surviving round barrows are situated away from the chalk, although there are notable examples at Headon Warren and Mottistone Common. Over 300 round barrows have been recorded on the Isle of Wight, although many no longer survive as earthworks, having been destroyed by ploughing and other activities. During the Later Bronze Age from c.1200 to c.700 B.C. human remains were no longer buried within barrows at all but cremated and placed in flat urn cemeteries. At least four such urn cemeteries are recorded from the Island.

Prehistoric field systems have been recorded on the Chalk, indicating that some areas of chalkland were used for arable agriculture rather than for grazing. The best preserved and recorded system lies within the twentieth century

plantations of Brighstone Forest (Basford 2002). Whereas land close to the chalk downland was important for settlement and agriculture the clay soils to the north of the central chalk ridge supported much less intensive land use. Relatively few prehistoric sites and finds have been recorded from this area, although at Newnham Farm, Binstead there is pollen evidence for woodland clearance and agricultural activity at the end of the Bronze Age. However, one area to the north of the chalk near Thorley and Wellow contains easily worked and relatively fertile soils overlying Bembridge Limestone. Air photographs reveal crop marks and soil marks here suggestive of prehistoric activity, and a circular ditch excavated in this area proved to be a ploughed round barrow, sited away from the chalk. Few archaeological monuments survive on the arable land of the Lower Greensand, south of the central ridge, but crop marks and soil marks indicate areas of prehistoric activity here, as do concentrations of worked flint.

Wooden stakes of Bronze Age date have been found within the intertidal zone of the Island's north-east coast in the Wootton-Quarr area. These may include the remains of fish traps, and constitute a rare survival of evidence that hints at the importance of the sea to the subsistence of Island communities. Later prehistoric communities also appear to have exploited coastal resources in the distinctive environment of the Undercliff within a landslip topography that was still forming, since a number of middens (rubbish pits) have been recorded along the cliff edge. Iron Age inhumations have also been recorded from the Undercliff, one with fragments of an iron sword and shield bindings.

There is relatively little direct evidence of prehistoric settlement on the Isle of Wight. Only two Bronze Age hut sites have been recorded, located on the edge of the southern Chalk at Gore Down, Chale. Hut sites dating from the end of the succeeding Iron Age (c.700 B.C. to A.D. 43) have been recorded from Sudmoor on the SW coast and from Gills Cliff at Ventnor. At Knighton, near Newchurch, a late Iron Age enclosed farmstead on the Greensand was excavated in the 1960s but remains unpublished. An earthwork at Castle Hill, close to the Mottistone Longstone, may be an Iron Age stock enclosure but has not been securely dated (Currie 2003). In nearby mainland counties hill forts were prominent features in the Iron Age landscape but on the Isle of Wight only one possible hill fort is known, on Chillerton Down.

It is not known whether the Isle of Wight was occupied by an independent tribe at the time of the Roman Conquest in A.D. 43 or whether it formed part of the territory of one of the two tribes occupying adjacent areas of the mainland; the Durotriges in the Dorset area and the Atrebates in the Sussex and Hampshire area. The Atrebates were friendly towards Rome whereas the Durotriges were hostile. A clue to the political allegiance of the Isle of Wight is provided by the Roman writer Suetonius in his biography of the Roman General and future Emperor, Vespasian. Suetonius records that Vespasian fought thirty battles in Britain, taking control of two powerful tribes, over twenty hill forts, and the Isle of Wight. This is the first written reference to the Island, here called by its Roman name of 'Vectis'.

Artefacts suggestive of late Iron Age occupation dating from about the time of the Conquest are associated with some sites where Roman villas later developed, for instance in the Bowcombe Valley to the west of Carisbrooke, and close to the highest fording point of the River Medina near the site of the much later Newport Villa. At Combley, north of Arreton, late Iron Age pottery is associated with timber buildings erected shortly after the Conquest, although the earliest phase of the Combley villa dates from the 2nd century AD. The area around Brading, like the Bowcombe Valley, appears to have been a key area for late Iron Age and Roman settlement. At that time Brading Haven was a tidal inlet which extended from Bembridge as far as modern Sandown. Occupation deposits dating from the 1st century AD have been discovered beneath the later Brading villa site, to the west of Brading Haven. About a kilometre to the east, on rising ground overlooking the haven, part of a defensive enclosure of possible Iron Age date has been located close to traces of a later Roman building.

Brading was the most elaborate of the Island's Roman villas. When fully developed, in about A.D. 300, it comprised three separate buildings around a square courtyard, the main building being a corridor villa containing elaborate mosaics. Easy access to sea transport via Brading Haven may explain why it was so successful. The Island's other Roman villas were simpler, although mosaics and tessellated pavements have been recorded from the villas at Newport, Rock (near Brighstone), Carisbrooke and Combley. The villas of Rock, Clatterford (in the Bowcombe Valley) and Carisbrooke developed on sites where there is no evidence of Iron Age settlement. All known Roman villas, except Gurnard villa, are closely associated with the central chalk ridge. Gurnard is an anomaly, being on the coast near the later settlement of Cowes and may have been associated with the export of Bembridge Limestone, which has been found at mainland sites such as Fishbourne Roman Palace.

The Isle of Wight appears to have functioned mainly as an agricultural centre in Roman times and no traces of metalled roads or towns have been located. A field system on the south face of Brading Down may have been associated with Brading Villa. Lynchets on a steep slope close to Rock Villa could be the remains of a field system associated with this villa. A corn or malt drying kiln of the mid 4th century AD excavated on farmland near Newchurch may indicate the presence of an unlocated villa and a late Iron Age pottery deposit found nearby suggests a long period of occupation. All the Isle of Wight villas had ceased to be occupied by the early 5th century but British inhabitants undoubtedly continued to live on the Island long after this date,

There are few finds suggesting late Roman activity on the site of Carisbrooke Castle, but the Carisbrooke area and the nearby Bowcombe Valley, which had been a focus for Iron Age and Roman activity, continued to be significant in the Dark Ages when Pagan Anglo-Saxon settlers introduced new cultural traits to the Isle of Wight. A cemetery on Bowcombe Down contained grave goods dating from the late 5th as well as the 6th century but the earliest definite use of the castle hill-top at Carisbrooke was as a cemetery in the first half of the 6th century (Young 2000). Recent finds of Middle Saxon date have been made in the Bowcombe valley to the south-west of Carisbrooke Castle and may suggest

a possible position for a Saxon settlement of earlier date, contemporary with the Carisbrooke Castle and Bowcombe Down cemeteries (Ulmschneider 1999). The important Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Chessell Down, some 7 km to the south-west of Bowcombe Down, contained late 5th and 6th century Pagan graves associated with rich and exotic grave goods.

The Isle of Wight appears to have been independent from the mainland until King Wulfhere of Mercia donated the Island to King Aethelwalh of Sussex in about 661, as recorded in The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The final conversion of the Isle of Wight to Christianity is dated by Bede to 686, following the conquest and devastation of the Island by Caedwalla, the king of the West Saxons (Arnold 1982, 97-101). Large estates which seem to have formed the basis for six or more 'mother' parishes may have been established on the Isle of Wight after its conquest by the West Saxons although it is possible that these estates may have had Roman origins. By later Anglo-Saxon times most of the early estates had been divided into smaller land holdings (see 6.3).

Viking raids on the Isle of Wight in the late 9th century, late 10th century and early 11th century are recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle but there is no archaeological evidence of these raids. In late Saxon times the Island's 'central place' was probably in the Carisbrooke area, whether this central place was the defended *burh* on the site of Carisbrooke Castle suggested by Young (2000), on the site of the present village or elsewhere. Following the Norman Conquest the military significance of the Isle of Wight was reflected in its donation to William Fitz Osbern, an important Norman lord close to William the Conqueror, and in the construction of Carisbrooke Castle.

Domesday Book records ten churches and approximately 100 manors on the Isle of Wight. Most manorial settlement probably consisted of the manor house and a few surrounding peasant dwellings, although one or two may have been associated with nucleated settlements. From the 11th century some lords established chapels close to their manor houses and these gradually achieved parochial status during the Middle Ages.

Planned boroughs were established at Newport and Yarmouth in the 12th century by members of the ruling de Redvers family. The small town of Brading may also have begun life as a planned settlement established by the local lord in the 12th century (Webster nd). Newtown, lay within the manor of Swainston, belonging to the see of Winchester, and a borough was founded here in 1256 although it failed to prosper.

Many of the Island's medieval settlements remained very small church-manor complexes or small hamlets and there were also isolated farmsteads outside these settlements. Population levels fell throughout the country in the 14th century, leading to the desertion of settlements, and on the Island French raids may have exacerbated the situation. However, archaeological evidence of desertion is slight apart from that at the failed borough of Newtown (see 5.1).

The Island's attractive and characteristic stone manor houses, mostly of small size, were built in the slightly more settled times of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Defence was still necessary, however, and military remains from the16th, 17th, 19th and 20th centuries attest both to the Island's vulnerability to attack and to its continuing strategic importance.

Cowes began life in the early 17th century as a small port trading with America before becoming a ship-building centre in the eighteenth century and the Island's only industrial town in the nineteenth century. Ryde started to be developed as a town by the local landowner in the late 18th century, at a time when both Ryde and Cowes were becoming coastal watering-places for the wealthy. Upper class travellers also appreciated the picturesque beauty of the Undercliff and other coastal areas, and holiday homes in these locations were built from the later 18th century onwards. Ventnor was the first town to be developed purely as a holiday resort from about 1830. After Queen Victoria and Prince Albert purchased Osborne as their own holiday home in 1845 the Island's popularity increased and the construction of railway lines from the 1860s made it accessible to many more visitors. The seaside resorts of Sandown and Shanklin were established in the mid 19th century, whilst the annual yachting regatta of 'Cowes Week', established early in the 19th century, became a key event in the social calendar by the end of the century. During the 20th century tourism continued to be of major economic importance, although declining somewhat towards the end of the century.

1.7 RESOURCES AND PREVIOUS WORK ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Reference works consulted during the HLC Project include *The Vectis Report* mentioned above (Basford 1980) and the standard work on Isle of Wight place-names (Kökeritz 1940). Archaeological and historical subjects are covered in the Proceedings of the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society (vols. 1-19). Two modern works cover aspects of Island history (Hockey 1982, Jones and Jones 1987). No overall landscape history of the Isle of Wight exists but there are numerous sources of information that can assist an understanding the historic landscape. Surveys of the Isle of Wight were carried out on behalf of the Crown in the mid 16th century and early 17th centuries and transcriptions are available at the Isle of Wight County Record Office. These were not systematically consulted for the HLC Project because of a lack of time but they form a largely untapped source of information on the Island's landscape history. One source not available in most other parts of the Country is the unpublished six inch to one mile OS Survey of the Isle of Wight completed in 1793. (Other areas of the Country were surveyed at roughly the same time but were generally mapped at a smaller scale). Various agricultural treatises of 17th to 19th century date include information on the Isle of Wight and these have been catalogued by Adams (1960). The earliest topographical guides and histories of the Isle of Wight (e.g. Worsley 1781) date from the late 18th century, a period of considerable agricultural change. A volume of the Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight deals with the manorial and settlement history of the Island (Page Ed. 1912). The extensive landholdings of Quarr Abbey are mapped in Hockey (1991).

Valuable work has been done on the former extent of Isle of Wight downland and heathland (Cahill 1984, Chatters 1984) and on the enclosure of Parkhurst

Forest (Chatters 1991). Other work has focused on particular parishes and manors (Margham 1990 and 1992, Jones 1991 and 2003). Some work on settlement morphology has been done by Margham (1982 and 1983) although this does not consider the smaller settlements without parish churches. A recent paper on the landscape history of the Isle of Wight in the Anglo-Saxon period has defined a number of landscape regions, based on the work of Alan Everitt in Kent (Margham 2003). At a more practical level, a number of historic landscape surveys have been carried out for National Trust properties on the Isle of Wight (Currie 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, Bannister 2003). The extensive urban survey of historic towns in the Isle of Wight has dealt with the settlements of Newport, Yarmouth, Newtown, Brading, Carisbrooke, Cowes and St Helens (Hampshire County Council & English Heritage 1999). Historic parks and gardens have been described in a work published by the Isle of Wight County Council (Basford 1989) and information has also been made available from the unpublished Register of the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust.

Some work on the character of the *present* Isle of Wight landscape has taken place. In 1994 the Countryside Commission published an assessment of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which defined landscape character areas covering the whole of the Isle of Wight, even though the AONB covers only about one half of the Island (Countryside Commission 1994). However, this Assessment was prepared before the now-standard Landscape Character Assessment Technique was developed (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002) and contained only a limited amount of data on the Island's historic landscape character. The AONB Management Plan 2004-2009 is based on the landscape character areas defined in the 1994 Countryside Commission study but includes much more information on the historic landscape character of these areas (Isle of Wight AONB Partnership 2004). The Isle of Wight HLC Project, whilst still in progress, has informed the AONB Management Plan. Recent local characterisation projects have included work on the urban landscape of Ryde (Whitehurst and Murray-Smith 2003) and on the rural landscape of the West Wight (Land Use Consultants 2005a).

CHAPTER 2

ISLE OF WIGHT HLC MANUAL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended mainly for users of the HLC at the Isle of Wight Archaeological Centre but will also be helpful to general readers in explaining how the HLC was carried out.

2.2 TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

The historic landscape characterisation of the Isle of Wight is compatible with that carried out in Hampshire, Surrey and Kent but takes account of the individual landscape character of the Isle of Wight and draws upon recent projects in Somerset, Cheshire and Buckinghamshire. The Isle of Wight HLC has drawn most closely on the Surrey HLC for the definition of broad landscape types (Bannister & Wills 2001) and on the Somerset HLC for the definition of field pattern morphology (Aldred 2001) but relies heavily on the Cheshire HLC for the data analysis methodology (Edwards 2002).

The Isle of Wight project aimed to take advantage of the relatively small size of the project area to provide a more detailed characterisation than would be possible in a larger county. In addition, the methodology sought to answer specific questions about field origins and settlement types that were relevant to the linked research project (see 1.2). Nevertheless, HLC is a *generalising* or *model-making* technique. It will not always correspond with the detailed picture of an area built up from historical sources but aims to build an overall model of historic landscape character. This model will be particularly relevant for landscape management but can also be used to direct and inform detailed academic research.

Historic landscape characterisation deals with a range of HLC types such as woodland, open land and settlement but defines overall historic landscape character very largely by analysis of field pattern morphology. Early HLC projects provided information only about the most recent phase of landscape rearrangement but recent developments in methodology allow for various phases of past landscape character to be recorded in the database (see chapter 3). The Isle of Wight has followed the practice of Cheshire and other recent HLC projects in recording up to three past phases of historic landscape character.

In order to design the best data collection and analysis methodology for the Isle of Wight HLC it was first necessary to define the desired outcomes. As mentioned above, these were not simply to map the present historic landscape character of the Isle of Wight but also to understand the arrangement of the landscape in medieval and early post-medieval times. The desired outcomes were set out in the revised project design as follows:

- Identification of the date and character of land use units, especially those relating to field patterns, open land, woodland and settlement, *as they exist in the present day landscape.*

- Identification of the date and character of land use units, especially those relating to field patterns, open land, woodland and settlement, *in the past landscape* (as they are depicted in core historic data sources or can be deduced from morphological attributes).

- Interpretation of the *origins* of land use units, especially those relating to field patterns, open land, woodland and settlement, by reference to early historic data sources (where these exist) and analysis of boundary and field pattern morphology.

2.3 MAIN TASKS OF HLC PROJECT

The main tasks of the HLC project were as follows:

- Preparation of revised project design and methods statement, including definition of data structure
- Digitisation of sample areas
- Construction of Access database, utilising master data tables set out in the revised project design
- Mapping land use units as polygons, defining HLC types and recording data in the Access database (the primary analysis phase)
- Definition, mapping and analysis of HLC Areas (see Chapter 6)
- Secondary analysis of HLC types, using selected GIS data to build digital maps
- Preparation of report on the Isle of Wight HLC, incorporating maps showing key data and interpretations
- Preparation of Project Archive.

2.4 RECORDING AND MAPPING WITHIN PARISHES

The Isle of Wight HLC was undertaken using the ESRI ArcView 8.2 GIS programme (updated to ArcView 9 during the life of the project) and OS Landline digital map data to map polygons representing specific HLC types. Figure 77 shows a section of the digital map. Data relating to each polygon was recorded within a linked Access 2002 Database. The Isle of Wight HLC adopted a modified version of the Cheshire methodology in the layout of the Access Database. Separate forms were created within the database to record information about individual polygons within each of the thirteen 'broad' historic landscape character groups defined in the master data table (2.8). Figure 78 shows one of the 13 forms within the database.

In most HLC projects polygons are drawn to respect parish boundaries. Modern civil parishes are used as the basic units in most counties because the boundaries are marked on modern maps and they are current administrative units. The Isle of Wight HLC chose to use historic ecclesiastical parishes as the basic unit for mapping, completing the entire land area within a parish before

moving on to another parish unit. The ecclesiastical parishes had previously been mapped as a GIS layer from the OS 1st Edition 6 inch to 1 mile (1862) by the HER Officer. The reasons for choosing ecclesiastical parishes were firstly because it was felt that they were more relevant to the Island's historic landscape character and secondly because parts of the Island did not have modern civil parishes when the project started. There were certain problems associated with the use of ecclesiastical parishes. In some places the boundaries no longer existed on the ground. Where this was the case the polygon was terminated along an existing line as close as possible to the original parish boundary and the loss of the boundary was mentioned in the 'notes' box of the database. Another problem was the existence of many 'detached' parts of ecclesiastical parishes. These were usually respected in defining polygons unless they were very small or no were no longer possible to reconstruct on the ground. There was also an area of extra-parochial land in Parkhurst Forest.

It could be argued that historic ecclesiastical parishes should not be used as the primary mapping division in HLC projects because they are no longer a functioning part of the modern landscape. However, the Isle of Wight project has demonstrated that it is important take account of these historic parish units as in several cases ecclesiastical parish boundaries were found to have dictated the boundaries of relatively modern historic landscape character types. The mapping of polygons did not proceed from west to east or north to south across the Island. Instead, when one parish had been completed, the next parish was usually selected from a contrasting area of the Island. This kept the Project Officer alert to variations in predominant HLC types and prevented monotony during the mapping process but may have had the disadvantage of leading to slight inconsistencies of approach in some cases.

2.5 DATA SOURCES

Ordnance Survey Landline digital mapping, the 1999 AP Survey and the Ordnance Survey 6" 1st Edition of 1862 were consulted for each polygon. The Isle of Wight Council Countryside Section GIS data (BAP Data) was used to help define areas of chalk grassland, heathland, woodland and certain other semi-natural landscape types. The OS 1950s 1:25000 First Series maps were used to clarify landscape character in the recent past. The unpublished 1793 Ordnance Survey of the Isle of Wight was used to assist with the classification of past and present field patterns, and other land uses. This Survey has survived in two versions; a set of field sketches preserved in the National Archives and a set of finished drawings in the British Library. Photostat copies of both versions are kept at the Isle of Wight Record Office. Initially the photostat copies were consulted but a digital version of the British Library drawings was acquired by the Isle of Wight Council in 2004 and this proved invaluable in the later stages of HLC mapping. (The British Library drawings use colour to depict land use and to indicate masonry or brick buildings). Tithe maps and schedules dating from 1838-1847 exist for all Isle of Wight parishes and are preserved in the Isle of Wight Record Office. Transcribed tithe maps for many of the Island's parishes are held in the HER, supplemented by an index of field names and associated land use taken from the tithe schedule. Where transcriptions and field names were available these were used to inform HLC

interpretation. All the above sources were identified individually in the 'Sources Consulted' box of the Access database, where used.

OS Landmark 1:2500 digital historical mapping was made available by the Isle of Wight Council shortly after the HLC Project started and was consulted where necessary. Transcriptions and photocopies of various Isle of Wight estate maps in the Isle of Wight HER were used as necessary. N.B. Sources used in the interpretation of individual polygons, where not identified in the 'Sources Consulted' box, are listed in the database notes for these polygons.

List of Data Sources

Abbreviation	**Description**
OS Landline	Ordnance Survey Landline Digital Map updated to September 2002
CR World	1999 Aerial Photographic Survey (the 'Millenium Map') produced by getmapping uk and viewed through CR World image viewing software
BAP Data	IW Council Countryside Section GIS Data used for Biodiversity Action Plan Designations
OS 1950s	Ordnance Survey 1:2500 First Series. Compiled from 6" sheets revised 1906-39. Partial systematic revision 1938-1957
OS 1st Ed 1862	Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile 1st Edition surveyed 1862-3. (Copies held at IW Archaeology Centre)
OS 1793 PRO	Unpublished Ordnance Survey of IW at 6" to 1 mile scale: Field Sketches in Public Record Office (now National Archives)
OS 1793 BL	Unpublished Ordnance Survey of IW at 6" to 1 mile scale: Finished drawings in British Library
Tithe Surveys	Tithe maps and schedules for all Isle of Wight Parishes 1838 -1847. Isle of Wight Record Office. Transcribed tithe maps and data in HER
OS Epoch 1	Ordnance Survey Historical Mapping (Landmark digital data). 1: 2500 scale. 1st County Series Survey 1862-1893
OS Epoch 2	Ordnance Survey Historical Mapping (Landmark digital data). 1: 2500 scale 1st revision County Series 1897-1898
OS Epoch 3	Ordnance Survey Historical Mapping (Landmark digital data). 1: 2500 scale. 2nd revision County Series 1908-1910

OS Epoch 4	Ordnance Survey Historical Mapping (Landmark digital data). 1: 2500 scale. 3rd revision County Series 1939-1947
IW SMR	Isle of Wight Council Sites and Monuments Record (now Historic Environment Record). Access database with point data mapped as GIS layer).

2.6 RECORDING METHOD

Although the Isle of Wight HLC defines thirteen broad land use types the main element of the HLC is the definition and analysis of field patterns.

The procedure for the characterisation of individual land use units (polygons) was as follows:

- Identification of discrete present-day land use unit on OS Landline digital map. The area was then checked against hard copy OS 1:2500 1992 Outdoor Leisure Map. (N.B. this map was not listed as a core source in the database but was easier to interpret than the OS Landline digital map and therefore was used to help in the initial determination of the landscape unit boundaries).

- Determination of present broad HLC type within land use unit, using 1999 AP Survey

- Character of land use unit noted on OS maps of 1793 and 1862. (This helped in defining the boundaries of the land use unit as well as determining the extent of change.)

- Boundaries of former open fields on tithe map and indicative names in tithe schedule noted, where possible

- Digitisation of land use unit as a polygon.

- Completion of database. This included analysis of polygon morphology, definition of present HLC and past phases of HLC, and completion of 'Notes' box.

2.7 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF DATA

The primary characterisation comprised the definition of individual land use units and the completion of the database entry for each unit. This process provided:

- A set of morphological and other attributes relating to each land use unit
- A suggested date for the present HLC of each land use unit and also for up to three phases of past historic landscape character.
- An interpretation of the origins of the land use unit

In the secondary analysis phase data from the HLC master map was selected and queried, using the ARC GIS programme, in order to produce the interpretive maps which form Volume 2 of this report.

During the primary characterisation process a specific HLC interpretation relating to each land use unit was allocated, based on the core data sources and an analysis of morphological and land use unit attributes. Whereas the broad HLC types and descriptive sub-types could be determined objectively by reference to modern data sources such as the OS Landline data and the CR World digital air photographs, the interpretation of historic landscape character was a subjective judgment based on recorded attributes, historic data sources and specialized data sets (such as the BAP data). The menu of available interpretations therefore included descriptions that could only be allocated following an assessment of these sources e.g. 'assarts', 'ancient woodland' In order to produce an interpretative GIS map covering the whole of the Island with no white areas it was necessary to complete the interpretation field for all landscape units. Where no specific interpretative description could be provided the descriptive sub-type was repeated in the interpretation box.

The database allowed for the recording of present day historic landscape character and for three phases of past historic landscape character, a stratigraphic approach building on the methodology adopted by Devon and Cheshire. This approach made it possible to generate maps interpreting the historic landscape character of the Isle of Wight over a relatively long period of time. In some cases, historic landscape character types of an early date have survived to the present day or to the recent past (last two hundred years) and therefore have been identified from core data sources. For instance, the OS 1793 maps and the tithe maps indicated remnants of unenclosed open fields and areas of woodland, heath, common or waste that have since been enclosed. In many areas, however, major changes to the organisation of the Isle of Wight landscape appear to have taken place before the earliest reliable maps covering the whole Island were drawn up. In these cases the interpretation of past historic landscape character has been an informed guess based on 'clues' such the morphology of field patterns or the alignment of roads, or on extrapolation from other land parcels.

A date within the Medieval Period (AD 1066 – AD 1499) could sometimes be suggested for a present or past HLC type whilst in rare cases a known Early Medieval date for external boundaries allowed the origins of a particular land parcel to be determined. Future comparison of HLC results with work on Anglo-Saxon charters and other sources may help to provide a broad interpretation of Anglo-Saxon land use. It may even be possible to demonstrate some continuity between Roman and early medieval land use although the technique of HLC will rarely, if ever, be able to provide a detailed interpretation of land use in prehistoric or Roman times.

It should be recognised that HLC interpretation is provisional in nature and should be open to re-interpretation by reference to data recorded in the earlier stages of the characterisation process**.** The degree of confidence in the

interpretation is indicated by the 'confidence' field. An explanation of the different confidence levels is given below in section 2.9

2.8 DATABASE STRUCTURE

The data in the Access database is arranged in attribute groups, each containing a menu of attributes. These attribute groups and the individual attributes within each group are set out in the master data table below. Headings in bold capitals identify the attribute groups. Sub-headings in bold identify individual boxes on the Access database forms and represent attribute types for which a single attribute can be selected. The attributes that can be selected are listed below each sub-heading. Within some attribute groups multiple selections are possible and these are shown in italics.

The data relating to individual polygons are recorded in the Access database on one of 13 forms corresponding to broad HLC types (Fig 78). Some of the attribute groups listed below are only relevant to certain broad HLC types and therefore are included only on the forms relating to those types.

ID

PLACE

BROAD HLC TYPE

Field Patterns
Open Land
Horticulture
Woodland
Valley Floor
Coastal
Settlement
Parkland/Designed Landscapes
Recreation and Tourism
Mineral Extraction
Industry
Communications
Military and Defence

DESCRIPTIVE SUB-TYPES

Field Patterns
Small Irregular
Small-Medium Irregular
Medium Irregular
Large Irregular
Small Semi-Regular
Small-Medium Semi-Regular
Medium Semi-Regular

Large Semi-Regular
Small Regular
Small-Medium Regular
Medium Regular
Large Regular

Open Land
Heathland
Downland
Rough Ground
Scrub
Unimproved Land

Horticulture
Orchards
Nurseries with Glasshouses
Nurseries without Glasshouses

Woodland
Broadleaved
Coniferous
Mixed

Valley Floor
Grazing Marsh
Enclosed Pastures & Meadows
Osier Beds
Valley Floor Woodlands
Ponds

Coastal
Estuary
Salt Marsh
Saltern
Intertidal Mud
Intertidal Sand & Shingle
Sand Dunes
Coastal Slope
Landslip
Harbours
Marinas
Reclaimed Land
Artificial Pond

Settlement
Urban
Suburban
Nucleation (more than 5 dwellings)
Dispersed Settlement (2- 5 dwellings)
Farmstead

Residential Scatter
Residential Cluster
Residential Infill
Ribbon Development
Housing Estate
Residential Mobile Home Site
Cemetery/Churchyard
Hospital
School/College
Prison
Retail/Entertainment
Garden Centre
Hotel/Inn
Community Facility
Public Institution
Religious Complex
Educational Centre

Parkland/Designed Landscape
Ornamental Parkland/Large Designed Garden (7 hectares and over)
Smaller Designed Garden (under 7 hectares)
Public Park

Recreation and Tourism
Recreation Ground
Public Open Space
Allotments
Golf Course
Sports Ground
Holiday Park
Equestrian Centre

Mineral Extraction
Chalk Quarries
Gravel Working
Greensand Quarries
Limestone Quarries
Sandpits

Industry
Industrial Estate
General Industry
Marine Industry
Reservoirs & Water Pumping
Sewage & Water Treatment
Waste Disposal
Factory
Energy Supplies
Quayside Development

Rural Business Park
Brickworks
Cement Works
Milling

Communications
Road
Track
Railway Line
Airfield
Railway Station
Depot
Ferry Terminus

Military & Defence
Castle
Fort
Battery
Barracks
Rifle Ranges

BOUNDARY MORPHOLOGY

External Boundary Morphology
Sinuous
Curvilinear
Rectilinear
Zigzag
Mixed
None

Internal Boundary Morphology
Straight
Sinuous
Mixed
Zigzag
Aratal
N/A

BOUNDARY CHARACTERISTICS

Doglegs
Watercourse defines one or more boundaries
Trees present on most boundaries
Trees absent on most boundaries
Road/Track defines one or more boundaries
Linear hedge/ditch defines one or more boundaries
Med. Parish Boundary defines one or more sides

ENCLOSURE PATTERN

Long & thin
Interlocking
Axial
Grid
Long-furlong
Non-rectilinear
Ladder
Herringbone
Off-set Grid
None (no overall pattern can be determined)

ENCLOSURE METHOD

Piecemeal
Planned
Parliamentary
Unknown

BOUNDARY CHANGE

External Boundaries Post 1862
No change
Minor change
Significant loss
Significant gain
Changed boundary layout
N/A
Significant Change

External Boundaries 1810-1862
No change
Minor change
Significant loss
Significant gain
Changed boundary layout
N/A
Significant Change

Internal Boundaries Post 1862
No change
Minor change
Significant loss
Significant gain
Changed boundary layout
N/A
Significant Change

Internal Boundaries 1810-1862
No change
Minor change
Significant loss
Significant gain
Changed boundary layout
N/A
Significant Change

LANDSCAPE ATTRIBUTES

Ridge & Furrow
Marl Pit
Ornamental Lake/Pond(s)
Fishpond(s)
Millpond(s)
Farm Pond(s)
Stream(s)

LAND USE NAMES

Common
Withy Bed
Moor
Rew
Ley
Leaze
Heath
Furze/Furzey
Coppice
Copse
Butt
Sheepwash
Hurst
Saltern
Ford
Pound
Down
Chine
Heathfield
Meadow/Mead
Furlong(s)
Green

DISPERSED SETTLEMENT ATTRIBUTES

Farmstead - Medieval Origins (Specify No.)
Farmstead - 16th to 18th C (Specify No.)
Farmstead - 19th C (Specify No.)
Country House (Specify No.)

RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT ATTRIBUTES

Post Med Residential
Modern Residential

ACTIVE AND INACTIVE ATTRIBUTES
Inactive? (Check Box)

SOURCES CONSULTED

OS Landline
CR World
BAP Data
OS 1950s
OS 2nd Revision (not used)
OS 1st Ed (6" 1862)
Tithe Maps
OS 6" Unpubl BL (6" 1793)
OS 6" Unpubl PR (6" 1793
Other

HLC INTERPRETATION
(The attributes listed below are available for the present HLC and for past phases of HLC)

'Prairie' Fields
Amalgamated Fields
Re-organised Field Pattern
Sub-divided Fields
Enclosed Open Field Strips
Enclosed Open Field/Open Field Furlongs
Enclosed Waste/Common
Enclosed Pasture or Meadow (above valley floor)
Enclosed Heathland
Enclosed Downland
Assart(s)
Enclosed Parkland
Enclosed Marsh
Crofts
Co-axial Fields
Vineyard
Unidentified Enclosure Type

Common Pasture/ Meadow
Downland
Heathland
Rough Ground
Scrub
Waste/Common
Green

Unimproved Land

Orchards
Nurseries with Glasshouses
Nurseries without Glasshouses

Ancient Woodland
Replanted Ancient Woodland
Plantation
Secondary Woodland
Ornamental Woodland
Royal Forest

Enclosed Pastures & Meadows
Grazing Marsh
Valley Floor Woodlands
Osier Beds
Ponds

Estuary
Salt Marsh
Saltern
Intertidal Sand & Shingle
Intertidal Mud
Coastal slope
Landslip
Harbour or Quay
Marina
Reclaimed land
Marine
Sand Dunes

Historic Settlement Core (pre 1810)
Urban
Suburban
Nucleation (more than 5 dwellings)
Dispersed Settlement (2-5 dwellings)
Farmstead
Residential Cluster
Residential Scatter
Residential Infill
Plotlands
Ribbon Development
Housing Estate
Industrial Housing
Residential Mobile Home Site
Cemetery/Churchyard
Hospital
School/College
Prison

Retail/Entertainment
Garden Centre
Hotel/Inn
Community Facility
Public Institution
Religious Complex
Educational Centre

Ornamental Parkland/Large Designed garden
Smaller Designed Garden
Parkland or garden formerly cultivated
Public park
Deer Park

Recreation Ground
Public Open Space
Allotments
Golf Course
Sports Ground
Holiday Park
Equestrian Centre

Chalk Quarries
Greensand Quarries
Limestone Quarries
Gravel Workings
Sandpits

Industrial Estate
General Industry
Marine Industry
Reservoirs and Water Pumping
Sewage & Water Treatment
Waste Disposal
Factory
Energy Supplies
Rural Business Park
Milling
Brickworks
Extraction Pit

Road
Track
Railway Line
Airfield
Railway Station
Depot
Ferry Terminus
Droveway

Castle
Fort
Battery
Barracks
Rifle Ranges

Unknown Origins

Confidence (attributes listed below are available for present HLC and for past phases of HLC)
Certain
Probable
Unsure

Date (attributes listed below are available for present HLC and for past phases of HLC)
Prehistoric (500,000 BC - AD 42
Roman (AD 43 - AD409)
Early Medieval (AD 410 - AD 1065)
Medieval (AD 1066 - AD1499)
Post-Medieval (AD 1500 - AD 1799)
16th Century
17th Century
18th Century
19th Century
19th & 20th Century
20th Century
Early 20th Century (pre.1945)
Late 20th Century (post 1945)
21st Century
Unknown

Dating Confidence (attributes listed below are available for present HLC and for past phases of HLC)
Certain
Probable
Unsure

PREVIOUS HLC CHARACTER PHASE 1
Group (Broad Type)
Character Type (Sub- Type)
Interpretation
Confidence
Date
Dating Confidence

PREVIOUS HLC CHARACTER PHASE 2
Group (Broad Type)
Character Type (Sub- Type)
Interpretation

Confidence
Date
Dating Confidence

PREVIOUS HLC CHARACTER PHASE 3
Group (Broad Type)
Character Type (Sub- Type)
Interpretation
Confidence
Date
Dating Confidence

NOTES

2.9 DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF HLC TYPES AND ATTRIBUTES

A complete list of database entry boxes and attributes is given above (2.8). The following section provides definitions and explanations of certain selected database fields. (See also 4.2 for a further discussion of broad types, descriptive sub-types and interpretative sub-types).

Certain limitations and disadvantages of the database input boxes and attributes were discovered during data input. These were the result of amendments made by the Isle of Wight Project Officer to the Cheshire database. The Isle of Wight database format and structure did not reach its final form until the end of the pilot stage because of uncertainties about the choice of GIS programme and, consequently, the choice of the linked database. This meant that there was not an opportunity to identify design faults at the pilot stage, which was undertaken using a much simpler data table.

ID

Each polygon has a unique identity number generated automatically.

PLACE

Polygons have been identified by a specific name e.g. 'Parkhurst Forest', 'Headon Warren'. These names have been employed to make the database more 'user friendly'. N.B. In some cases the same name covers several polygons which all have a different historic landscape character.

BROAD HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AND DESCRIPTIVE SUB-TYPES

The thirteen broad types were selected to be compatible with the Hampshire, Surrey and Kent HLCs and yet to reflect the particular characteristics of the Isle of Wight landscape. These types were selected by reference to modern data sources such as the OS Landline data and the CR World digital AP survey. The sub-types were also selected by reference to modern data sources but provide a more detailed division of character types.

Field Patterns

The descriptive sub-types for enclosed fields incorporate information on size and shape and provide a preliminary morphological assessment of a particular field pattern based on the OS Landline Data.

Field size measures the area of individual fields within each land use unit and should reflect the size of the majority of fields within the unit. The definitions are as follows:

Small (0-3 ha)
Small-Medium (3-6 ha)
Medium (6-12 ha)
Large (12 + ha)

The morphological element in the descriptive sub-type characterises fields as *irregular, semi-regular* and *regular*. These categories are based on the definitions given by Aldred (2001) in the Somerset HLC Report.

Open Land
This broad type might equally well have been called *uncultivated land*. Indeed, with hindsight this might have been a more appropriate description since all the open land sub-types (*heathland, downland, rough ground, scrub, unimproved land*) can occur as quite small parcels of enclosed land. An explanation of the terms 'heathland', 'downland' and 'unimproved land' is given below under Interpretation.

Horticulture
Although horticulture is a significant land use in one part of the Isle of Wight (the Arreton Valley) this broad type might have been subsumed within field patterns but was retained to give compatibility with Hampshire and Surrey.

Woodland
Sub-types of *broadleaved, coniferous* and *mixed* are selected by reference to the OS 1:25,000 Outdoor Leisure Map (1992).

Valley Floor
The extent of the valley floor was mapped according to the limit of the flat ground on either side of rivers, streams or ditches, generally defined by contours running parallel to the watercourse. Where contours passed through a field the nearest field boundary was used to define the edge of the valley floor.
Within this broad type most polygons were classified as *enclosed pastures and meadows*.
The sub-type *valley floor woodland* was used for small strips or pockets of woodland in this situation, sometimes not recorded in the BAP data. (The interpretation of *ancient woodland* or *secondary woodland* was not used for this sub-type.)
The sub-type *grazing marsh* was used for wet grassland (which may have been agriculturally improved) divided by a network of ditches and in some cases periodically inundated. This sub-type may lie on coastal plains, usually behind seawalls or in river floodplains (see BAP definition in Isle of Wight Council 2000, 26). *Grazing marsh* on coastal plains may have been created from the coastal sub-type of *reclaimed land.* The grazing marshes on coastal plains may have a brackish element. The HLC sub-type of *grazing marsh* may include some areas classified as 'wetlands', 'fens' and 'swamps' in the BAP data. It was identified by drainage ditches and symbols for marsh and rough grassland on historic and modern mapping (including the 1970s/1980s 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey). *Grazing marsh* is not necessarily in current use as a grazing resource.
The sub-type *osier bed* was used in the database rather than *withy bed* although the latter term is more commonly used on the Isle of Wight. There was a failure to identify this sub-type systematically. It was sometimes picked up on the OS 1:25,000 Outdoor Leisure Map but use of the OS 1:10,000 Survey of the 1970s/1980s would have identified more examples.

Settlement
The settlement sub-types are allocated by reference to modern data sources. During the development of the project design the possibility of characterizing settlements on a morphological basis was considered (e.g. green settlements, agglomerations/clusters, interrupted rows etc). However, it was felt that this type of characterisation might have been too complicated within the context of the HLC Project so it was not implemented. If a separate GIS based settlement characterisation based on morphology could be undertaken in the future this would add an extra dimension to the Isle of Wight HLC.

There were some limitations to settlement characterisation using the methodology developed for the Isle of Wight. Where individual farmsteads or small dispersed settlements occurred within an area of field patterns they were generally not digitized separately although the use of the 'Dispersed Settlement Attributes' box offered an opportunity to incorporate information about these settlements within the database. In other instances it was necessary to characterize individual farmsteads or small dispersed settlements separately because it was not appropriate to include them within adjacent polygons. Some quite substantial rural settlements could not be recorded as discrete polygons, where buildings were very loosely nucleated or fell within separate areas of field patterns. As a result the Isle of Wight HLC has not resulted in a comprehensive and consistent characterisation of settlements.

The term '*Nucleation*' was used for rural settlements containing over five dwellings in preference to the terms 'village' or 'hamlet' since the distinction between villages and hamlets is imprecise and is based on social structure and settlement hierarchy rather than on morphology.

The term '*Dispersed Settlement'* was used for rural settlements, generally of pre-19th century origin, containing between two and five dwellings, The use of such a term was necessary because the historic settlement pattern on the Isle of Wight includes very small settlements as well as those of village size (see 5.3 and 6.4). However, the limitations of the Isle of Wight HLC methodology described above meant that not all such settlements were recorded.

The term '*Farmstead'* was used where there appeared to be only one dwelling.

The sub-type *Residential Scatter* was used for dispersed settlement of recent origin whilst *Residential Cluster* defined more compact areas of settlement, generally of recent date. The sub-type *Residential Infill* was used for pockets of residential development within areas of older settlement.

The sub-type *Retail/Entertainment* includes tourist facilities such as country parks and coastal theme parks.

Recreation and Tourism
In the Access database the form for this broad type is headed 'Recreation' but the type has been mapped as 'Recreation and Tourism' to reflect the impact of tourism on the Island's present landscape character, particularly in the form of holiday parks. The sub-type 'holiday park' embraces camp sites, caravan sites

and chalet accommodation but not residential mobile home sites which are listed under settlement.

Communications
Mapping of this type was very selective since linear features are not generally recorded by HLC. However, roads, railway lines and tracks were recorded where they were perceived to be a clearly discrete land use. Non-linear sub-types recorded within the communications broad type included airfields, ferry termini, railway stations and depots but mapping of these sub-types was also selective as some communications elements were subsumed within polygons recorded as other broad types.

Military and Defence
This broad type is used where the present day landscape character of the polygon reflects past use for military or defensive purposes. (Only one polygon records *present* land use for military purposes).

BOUNDARY MORPHOLOGY

External Boundary Morphology
This attribute group is used both for woodland and for field patterns, where a definite external boundary to a group of similar fields can usually be discerned. It is the *overall shape* of the polygon that is described here, rather than the edges of the polygon. The terms used are based on Rackham (1995) but sinuous shapes are distinguished from those that are curvilinear. In many cases an external boundary includes both sinuous/curvilinear and rectilinear sections and in this case the term *mixed* is used. It has been found necessary to employ this term in many cases. Woodland with a curvilinear or sinuous shape is generally older than that with a rectilinear shape. A zig-zag profile can often indicate that woodland has been assarted.

Internal Boundary Morphology
This assesses internal field boundaries or woodland boundaries. Sinuous internal boundaries often suggest that a field pattern is of some antiquity.

BOUNDARY CHARACTERISTICS
This attribute group included characteristics both of internal boundaries within a polygon and of external boundaries around the edge of a polygon. In this box only one selection from a drop down menu could be made but the attributes were not mutually exclusive. A check list of attributes would have been preferable but would have required too much space on the input form.

ENCLOSURE PATTERN
Within the field patterns broad type distinctive enclosure patterns could sometimes be identified for individual polygons e.g. *grid, ladder* and *herringbone.* However, in many cases it was not possible to identify a distinctive enclosure type and in these cases this box was not filled in. Where enclosure patterns were identified these included patterns shown on historic maps even if not extant at the present day.

ENCLOSURE METHOD
Sometimes it was possible to distinguish between *piecemeal, planned enclosure* and *parliamentary enclosure*, using this box. However, in many case it was not possible to do so. *Parliamentary enclosure* was limited to a very few places on the Isle of Wight.

DISPERSED SETTLEMENT ATTRIBUTES
This attribute group was intended to give an indication of settlement elements that were too small to digitize individually as discrete polygons.

Farmstead – Medieval Origins/16th-18th Century/19th Century
This referred to the origin of the settlement rather than to existing buildings and was defined mainly by reference to place-name evidence (Kökeritz 1940), the Victoria County History (Page Ed. 1912) and map evidence. It was difficult to be certain, in many cases, whether a farmstead was of 'medieval origin' and an informed guess was sometimes necessary.

BOUNDARY CHANGE
The attributes available for selection included *significant loss* and *significant change*. In some cases *significant loss* or *significant change* to internal boundaries was recorded and yet the field pattern was still deemed to have retained the same basic character or pattern as recorded on historic maps before the loss or change took place. However, in most cases where *significant loss* or *significant change* was identified this led to an interpretation of *reorganised field pattern* or *amalgamated field pattern*.

External Boundaries post 1862/Internal Boundaries post 1862
1862-3 was the survey date of the1st Edition 6" Ordnance Survey. (1866 was the publication date for most sheets).

External Boundaries 1810-1862/ Internal Boundaries 1810-1862
1810 was the publication date of the 1st Edition 1" to 1 mile OS map, based on the unpublished 6" survey carried out from 1791 to 1793. It would thus have been more accurate to make the time bracket *1791-1862* but the absolute date of the 6"survey had not been established when the database was planned.

INTERPRETATION (PRESENT HLC AND PREVIOUS CHARACTER PHASES)
As mentioned above (2.7) some entries in the interpretations box simply repeat the descriptive sub-type. However, for the *field patterns, woodland, open land* and *settlement* broad types this attribute group allowed for an interpretation that was based either on study of specialized data sets (*woodland*, *open land*) or was a subjective judgment based on recorded attributes. Some of these attributes are defined below, where the criteria for use of the attribute is not self-evident.

Field Patterns
Prairie Fields. This term, covering extremely large modern fields, was used sparingly. In many cases the terms *amalgamated fields* or *reorganized field pattern* was preferred.

Amalgamated Fields. Used where elements of an earlier field pattern could still be identified.
Reorganised Field Pattern. Used where an earlier field pattern had been obliterated or very significantly altered. This interpretation was usually selected by comparing historic maps of different dates and nearly always refers to field patterns of 19th century or 20th century date.
Enclosed Open Field Strips. Used where the enclosure pattern appeared to preserve individual strips or bundles of strips.
Enclosed Open Field/Open Field Furlong. Used where the enclosure pattern appeared to follow the boundaries of complete open fields or open field furlongs, rather than that of individual strips or strip bundles.
Enclosed Waste/Common This term was used extensively, following a decision to use the term 'enclosed heath' only where there was ecological evidence of heathland or where there was a *heath* place-name.
Enclosed Heath land. It is known that heath land was formerly very extensive on the Isle of Wight (Chatters 1984) but it proved difficult to define the ecology of past landscape types and this limited the use of the interpretation.
Enclosed Downland. (See description of downland under the *open land* landscape type.
Enclosed Pastures and Meadows. This term was generally used for the *Valley Bottom* broad landscape type but could be used for the *field patterns* broad type where pastures or meadows existed above the valley floor.
Sub-divided Fields. Used where an earlier phase of HLC showed larger fields.
N.B In the context of the Isle of Wight HLC this interpretation generally refers to fairly recent divisions of fields and does not imply the existence of open fields although in studies of medieval agriculture the term is often used as a synonym for common open fields.
Assarts. Historically, this term could refer to the enclosure either of woodland or waste. In the Isle of Wight HLC the term has been used for fields cleared from woodland, except in the area around Parkhurst Forest, where the term has been used for all enclosures within the historic boundary of the forest, whether of areas that were formerly woodland or those that were formerly open land.
Crofts. Small enclosed plots of agricultural land attached to the homes of peasants in medieval times and farmed as separate units, unlike the open fields. A few of these plots can still be identified as past or present HLC sub-types.

Open Land
A weakness of the Isle of Wight HLC was its failure to clearly define what was meant by 'downland' and 'heathland' at the start of the project. A clear definition did emerge once digitisation had started and the initial lack of clarity has probably not had a significant effect on the reliability of Isle of Wight data for comparative purposes. A similar lack of clarity over the term 'heathland' caused more problems. There was no difficulty in identifying the very limited extent of heathland within the Present HLC by reference to BAP data. However, since 'heathland' is an ecological classification based on the presence of ericaceous shrubs in nutrient poor soils it could not usually be identified in previous HLC phases. The term was therefore used only where there was some positive identification of a past HLC type as heathland, e.g. the existence of the place-name 'heathfield', although in the past the term 'heath' may have been a

synonym for unenclosed lowland rough grazing land, irrespective of plant cover. Within the Isle of Wight HLC the interpretation *waste/common* was preferred to *heathland* when a past HLC type was defined on morphological grounds. When making comparisons between the past extent of Isle of Wight heathland and that of Hampshire and Surrey (see 4.2) an interpretative map was used which combined enclosure types derived from waste, common or heath (Figs 56 and 57).

The criteria for HLC interpretations within the broad type of open land are given below.

Downland. Historically, the term 'down' has been used on the Isle of Wight for open grazing land on various geological strata, including Chalk, Upper Greensand, Lower Greensand and superficial gravel deposits (Cahill 1984). The use of the sub-type or interpretation *downland* therefore covers areas outside the BAP definition of *calcareous grassland*. It may include the BAP types *acid grassland* and *bluebell stands*. As a general rule, open land that is unimproved grassland and is associated with a 'down' place-name will be so classified. The term may also be used for small pockets of unimproved calcareous grasslands even when these are enclosed.
Heathland. Despite the historical prevalence of this ecological type, little survives at the present day. Existing heathland has been defined by reference to the BAP data.
Rough Land. This was identified from AP evidence (CR World). The term was sometimes used when it could not be determined whether or not an area of uncultivated land had been improved at any time.
Waste/Common. This term, used mainly in interpretations of past historic landscape character, avoided the difficulties of defining ecological type or tenurial character.
Common Pasture/Meadow. This term was used mainly in interpretations of past landscape character where a 'common' place-name was recorded. Named commons were usually interpreted as being medieval since they were associated with specific medieval manors.
N.B. The term 'common' was generally avoided as a descriptive sub-type or interpretation of present landscape character except in the case of named commons, since it has legal implications and could not easily be determined.

Woodland
Ancient Woodland. This has been defined mainly by reference to the BAP data. 'Ancient Woodland' is generally defined as being over 400 years old but in this context means woodland that is shown on the Ordnance Survey unpublished 6" mapping of 1793 and contains ancient woodland indicator species.
Replanted Ancient Woodland. This occurs on sites that have previously contained ancient woodland but which have been clear-felled and replanted in the recent past, often by the Forestry Commission. Trees within this HLC Type are often (but not always) conifers. The Isle of Wight BAP Audit refers to this woodland type as 'Ancient Woodland Plantation' (Isle of Wight Council 2000, fig 3). The Forestry Commission term is 'PAWS' (Plantation Ancient Woodland).
Secondary Woodland. This term is used in the HLC database for woodland that has regenerated naturally on a previously unwooded site.

Plantation is used where trees have been deliberately planted on a previously unwooded site.
Ornamental Woodland has been used to denote wooded areas within designed parks and gardens.
Royal Forest. This interpretation has been used for polyogons within Parkhurst Forest that may have been open heathland rather than woodland in past HLC phases.

Settlement
Historic Settlement Core. This attribute was used only at the interpretation stage. (In the sub-type box the attribute *urban* or *nucleation* was entered.) The term *historic settlement core* was applied to a general area of settlement discernible on the OS 6" unpublished map (1793), although historic settlement cores usually also contain buildings of later date. Settlement polygons of later periods were defined by the age of the majority of existing buildings.
Plotlands originated as areas of poor quality land divided up and sold as small plots in the early 20th century. These plots were bought by people seeking to support themselves by growing their own food. Most plot holders built homes on their plots, creating a low-density residential scatter (Hardy and Ward 1984).

CONFIDENCE

Certain (used where landscape types have been identified through data sources or HER)
Probable (used for landscape units that are morphologically typical of a specific character type)
Unsure (used where morphological attributes do not decisively indicate a specific character type)

DATE
For ancient woodland, downland and heathland the date ‘unknown’ was generally given, since it was only possible to give a specific date for these types in a few cases.

DATING CONFIDENCE

Certain (used where landscape types have been dated by reference to core or ancillary data sources)
Probable (used for landscape units that are morphologically typical of a specific period)
Unsure (used where morphological attributes do not decisively indicate a particular period).

NOTES
This box was for descriptive text. It was useful to explain how interpretations had been made and to input information that did not fit within any particular box. This box was also used to interpret the significance of external polygon boundaries, which were felt to be inadequately dealt with by means of the database attribute boxes. Sources cited in the ‘Notes’ box may be in an abbreviated from. The full references are listed at the end of this report.

CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSION OF HLC TECHNIQUE WITH REFERENCE TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT PROJECT

3.1 THE EVOLUTION OF HLC

Historic Landscape Characterisation is a GIS-based archaeological method for defining the historic and archaeological dimensions of the *present-day* landscape. The technique was developed between 1992 and 1994 and was pioneered in Cornwall (Fairclough et al 1999, Herring 1998).

HLC mapping is intended primarily to reflect current land-use characteristics and those earlier components with a *substantial impact on visible landscape character* (Fairclough et al 2002, 73). The emphasis on current landscape character is entirely justifiable, given that one of the main purposes of HLC is to inform future landscape change. However, HLC is based on the premise that existing landscapes often retain evidence of past land use patterns, an idea that is expressed in the concept of *time-depth*. This is defined as *'the visible evidence in the present-day landscape for change and continuity over long periods of time'* (Aldred & Fairclough 2003, 44).

An assessment of HLC technique entitled 'Historic Landscape Characterisation: Taking Stock of the Method' has been published by English Heritage (Aldred & Fairclough 2003.). This analyses all the HLC projects that had been completed by 2003 and identifies a preferred methodology for future projects. The methodology is set out in more detail in a companion 'HLC Template Project Design' (English Heritage 2002).

For the most recent HLC projects the starting point has been *'morphological and functional analysis of landscape character using historic maps and documentary evidence in a supporting role, and taking account fully of historic process as well as appearance'.* Present-day land-use, AP evidence, archaeological interpretation, past land-use and other research are considered to be more peripheral but still significant inputs into the HLC process (Aldred & Fairclough 2003, 22).

Some HLC projects lean towards being *visually-led* in defining historic landscape character, in that they mainly describe the appearance of fields and are cautious with interpretative assumptions. These are less useful. Other projects are *process-led* in that they ascribe historic landscape character to its causes (Aldred & Fairclough 2003, 37). The Isle of Wight HLC Project aims to be *process-led* since it is felt that simply describing the appearance of fields does not lead to an increased knowledge of the historic landscape.

3.2 DISCUSSION OF CHARACTERISATION TECHNIQUES

It can be accepted readily that the main purpose of HLC is to interpret the historic character of the landscape at the *present day* because we need to understand the date and significance of *surviving* historic features if we wish to

conserve them. However, some aspects of present-day historic character cannot be interpreted purely from studying how modern OS maps depict field patterns and other features. Loss of field boundaries makes existing patterns very hard to interpret even if significant components of this pattern are of considerable age. Another problem is that two areas of field patterns displaying a similar present-day morphology can have very different origins. In carrying out HLC it is very important that modern maps should be used as the starting point because the object of carrying out HLC is to characterise the present-day landscape. Modern maps, however, provide only a starting point in a relatively complex process of analysis. Recourse to historic maps to help understand the modern landscape is therefore desirable (though this remains a different issue to using historic maps to reconstruct past environments).

Earlier HLC projects were *classification-led*, in that they used a pre-defined classification of types. Later projects were *attribute-led*, using descriptive criteria rather than assigning polygons to predefined types and using computer analysis of attributes to create models and types. The most recent projects have been *multi-mode*, utilising both prescriptive and descriptive data but employing morphology as their starting point and basing characterisation on the manipulation of computer data to create *models* of landscape character. The Isle of Wight HLC Project has utilised a modified version of the Cheshire HLC Database and therefore can be considered as utilising the *multi-mode* approach. The advantage of utilising attributes based on interpretative data in tandem with other data is that it provides the ability to produce a huge possible range of landscape types and to display the data in a variety of combinations.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING PAST LANDSCAPE CHARACTER – TIME-SLICES, TIME-DEPTH AND THE STRATIGRAPHIC APPROACH

The various 'waves' of HLC projects identified by Aldred and Fairclough (2003) have experimented with different methods of building past landscape character into the HLC process. Early projects such as Axholme, Peak District National Park and Derbyshire attempted to reconstruct historic landscape at different points in time by the use of period maps showing landscape features that might no longer exist. More recent projects have sought to find ways in which 'to identify the historic depth of the present day landscape from morphological analysis, general understanding or extrapolation. By definition they identify still surviving visible HL character and features but the method does not often allow the reconstruction of past environments at particular dates' (Aldred & Fairclough 2003, 16).

A distinction is made by Aldred and Fairclough (2003, 24) between *reconstruction* of prior or subsumed historic landscapes as independent *time slices* without connecting branches to the present day and *modelling* of historic landscape from the present day landscape with references back through time via data sources but intrinsically connected with the present day HL character.

Recent HLC projects such as those of Devon and Cheshire allow for the interpretation of past phases of historic landscape character on the basis of extrapolation and of evidence supplied from historic documentary and

cartographic sources, using a stratigraphic approach. The Isle of Wight HLC follows both these counties in having fields to record up to three past phases of historic landscape character within the Access Database. By allowing earlier HLC to be recorded in its own right as a separate attribute set 'the temptation to give priority to degraded (in effect inactive) examples of HLC types at the expense of later landscape change which provides the real present-day landscape character' is avoided. It also 'absolves the HLC Officer from trying to make value judgements as to which types of HLC are more significant – degraded parkland or post-1950 farming patterns for example' (English Heritage 2002, 30).

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING TECHNIQUE

The use of a stratigraphic approach to past landscape character does not entirely resolve the problem of how to characterise time-depth adequately within the present-day landscape. HLC relies heavily on interpreting field patterns *within* defined polygons but it can be argued that the internal field boundaries within a polygon are not the best indicators of time-depth in a landscape. Many internal field boundaries are either of relatively recent date or have been so modified that they have lost their original historic landscape character. In contrast, the *external* boundaries of polygons (whether these are field boundaries, roads, tracks, woodland edge, park boundaries, estate boundaries or administrative boundaries) are very often those elements in the modern landscape which may date back to medieval times or even earlier.

When carrying out the Isle of Wight HLC it was found that internal field boundaries within individual polygons had often been subjected to considerable change, removal or complete reorganisation within the last two hundred years. (Boundary change during this period could be assessed by comparing maps of different dates.) However, generally the external boundaries of polygons had been much less subject to recent change. This is perhaps not surprising, since these boundaries generally represented either historic land holdings or discrete types of land use. It was often more difficult to remove or modify boundaries abutting other land holdings than internal boundaries within a land holding. Discrete areas of land use were often defined by roads or tracks of value to the whole community and therefore were difficult to alter.

Within existing HLC projects only limited data on external polygon boundaries are recorded or interpreted. The Isle of Wight HLC, like other recent projects, records attributes relating to external boundary shape and change. However, this limited assessment does not explain the character or significance of external boundaries.

Another weakness of existing HLC methodology is that it does not adequately characterise settlements or give sufficient emphasis to the relationship between farmsteads and field patterns. Ideally, the form of historic rural settlements should be characterised using the methodology pioneered by Roberts (1982). The Isle of Wight HLC initially considered this approach but rejected it. It is now felt that this was a mistake since an important overview of Isle of Wight rural settlement forms could have been obtained simply by adding one more set of

attributes to the database. The relationship of individual farmsteads to surrounding field pattern also needs to be analysed, particularly where polygons represent discrete landholdings. The Isle of Wight HLC did not generally characterise farmsteads in their own right but always noted the number of farmsteads within a polygon and their ages of origin.

Linear features are not characterised in their own right by existing HLC projects but merely as boundary attributes, yet they are very significant features in the historic landscape and in many areas may be the oldest surviving elements in that landscape. Major historic landholdings are often delineated by linear boundaries, within which various polygons may be defined relating to subsidiary landholdings, or to different areas of land use or land management. Linear administrative boundaries are also important features in the landscape. Modern parish boundaries, for instance, may, in some case follow the exact line of Anglo-Saxon estate boundaries. The Isle of Wight HLC chose to use historic ecclesiastical parishes as the basic unit for mapping, as this is one type of historic linear boundary that still has significance in the modern landscape.

The pace of landscape change is often influenced by the presence or absence of roads leading in or out of an area. Roads and tracks often led up to or defined areas of heathland or common fields. In addition, they very often delineate historic land parcels subject to different ownership or land use. Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, 192) have commented that 'farmsteads were positioned in the landscape with reference to the layout of [the community's] resources, and to the trackways which gave access between them. Indeed, it is the trackways not the farmsteads which often seem to represent constants in the landscape, especially in areas of dispersed settlement'.

The intricate network of roads and tracks covering much of the Isle of Wight forms an integral part of its historic landscape character and would therefore justify further analysis in the future. In the context of the Isle of Wight HLC, roads and tracks have often been used to define polygons in areas of great boundary loss, where they may represent the only surviving historic features in the landscape. However, it was also found that they frequently defined the boundaries of discrete field patterns.

If due weight is not given to external and linear boundaries and to routeways there is a danger of inadequately characterising the historic landscape. Linear features are sometimes mapped as discrete entries within Historic Environment Records but this recording method does not necessarily recognize their role in defining and linking individual blocks of land. Unless some way is found of identifying and plotting major boundaries and routeways in the present day landscape their value will not be recognised when future changes to the countryside are being considered.

Existing HLC interpretations based primarily on the morphology of internal field boundaries underestimate important historic features in the landscape and are in danger of understating the overall time-depth of present-day landscapes. Framework and structure are, arguably, the most important aspects of the landscape and it is therefore suggested that future HLC projects should be

based primarily on the morphology of external polygon boundaries and linear features, although internal field boundary attributes would also need to be analysed. Additional attributes of external boundaries could be recorded, such as whether they delineate units of landholding (manors, farms etc), areas of past or present land use (e.g. rough grazing, arable, woodland etc) or units of past or present land management (e.g. common land, open-field etc). Attributes of linear boundaries and routeways could also be recorded and a fuller characterisation and analysis of settlements could be undertaken.

This modification of HLC methodology would only be feasible if it did not slow down the characterisation process unduly. It should be possible to compile an HLC based primarily on external boundary attributes as quickly as an HLC based primarily on internal boundary attributes. However, mapping linear boundaries might prove to be very time consuming and possible only for relatively small areas. It was not used in the Isle of Wight HLC and the potential of such an approach only emerged as the project progressed.
Most county based HLC projects have now either been completed or are underway. Future projects will either be at a regional level, synthesising and merging existing HLC data, or will be at a more local level, characterising relatively small areas in more detail. Smaller projects of this nature may offer opportunities to modify the existing HLC method in order to take greater account of external and linear boundaries and of settlements.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT HLC

Certain limitations specific to the Isle of Wight HLC Project have been identified, distinct from the generic limitations of present HLC methodology described above. These limitations are concerned with database structure and the definition of HLC types but also with the overall philosophy of the Isle of Wight HLC.

Section 2.9, which describes the definition of database attributes, identifies some structural weaknesses of the Isle of Wight HLC. Overall, the *broad types* defined by the Isle of Wight HLC were generally compatible with those of Hampshire and Surrey and proved a useful basis for high level analysis, whilst the database (modelled on that of Cheshire) provided a good structure for data input and detailed analysis within the constraints of present HLC technique (see 3.4). However, within some of the new data fields added to those of the original Cheshire database the method of selecting attributes limited choices, as in the case of *Boundary Characteristics*. Some additional attribute groups added to the Cheshire database did not contribute greatly to overall HLC interpretation, as in the case of the *Landscape Attributes* group. The Isle of Wight dataset was modified by the inclusion of additional interpretative types after digitisation of HLC types had commenced and this may have led to some internal inconsistencies. The failure to define certain attributes clearly at the start of the project caused some problems, particularly in the case of the *Open land* sub-types. In the case of *Valley Floor* sub-types there may have been insufficient understanding of present and past valley floor land use on the Isle of Wight and these sub-types will certainly require further study.

The philosophy of the Isle of Wight HLC was that it should provide not only an effective characterisation of the present landscape but should seek to understand the Island's past landscape character, particularly in the medieval and post-medieval periods, where no overall analysis existed. This philosophy has influenced both the selection of attributes and the time taken in primary data analysis. However, the Isle of Wight HLC could be criticized for falling between two stools. The relatively detailed and painstaking approach has delayed completion and possibly led to an over-complicated data set, whilst in tracing the evolution of the landscape the HLC still does not have the academic validity that a comprehensive study of primary sources would provide. However, the Isle of Wight HLC will provide a much greater level of information to HER users than many other HLCs, much of this detailed information being contained in the 'notes' box of the database. It is hoped that this level of detail will ensure that the HLC becomes a significant component of the Isle of Wight HER, consulted routinely to provide the context for planning and academic enquiries about archaeological sites, as well as being an important tool in its own right for the management of the historic environment. The detailed nature of the Isle of Wight HLC should also mean that it has good potential for 'past-oriented' academic historic landscape analysis as described by Rippon (2004, 3-5).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF MAPPING AND OF ISLE OF WIGHT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 ISLE OF WIGHT HLC MAPPING

The *multi-mode* method used for the Isle of Wight HLC Project means that many different classifications can be produced from the recorded data. A range of maps have been produced for this report, showing both simple 'entry level' broad types and complex interpretations. However, future use of the HLC as a management tool and for research will probably suggest many other ways in which HLC data can be mapped to illustrate aspects of the Island's historic landscape character.

The maps and diagrams in this report are arranged in six groups (see List of HLC Maps and Figures). Many of the maps show HLC descriptive or interpretative types in relation to medieval parishes or to the HLC Areas defined in the Appendix and described in Chapter 6. HLC Areas have not been used in many of the English HLC projects completed to date because the Countryside Agency has already mapped *landscape character areas* on a county basis under its 'Countryside Character Initiative' (http://www.countryside.gov.uk/cci). However, it was decided at the start of the Isle of Wight Project that HLC Areas would be defined as an aid to understanding the Island's remarkably varied historic landscape, particularly since the only landscape assessment covering the whole of the Island (Countryside Commission 1994) was prepared before the now standard Landscape Character Assessment Technique was developed (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002).

Figures 1-13 are **Base Data Maps** showing geology, drainage, relief, modern settlement and communications, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and parishes. This map group also contains the base map of Isle of Wight HLC Areas and maps showing the HLC Areas in relation to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to medieval parishes.

Figures 14-37 are **Descriptive Maps and Diagrams** mainly representing Present HLC descriptive sub-types identified from factual data such as maps, aerial photographs and ecological records.

Figures 38-51 are **Interpretative Maps and Diagrams**. These deal with Present HLC but are based on interpretative attributes in the Access database. The interpretations are made on the basis of morphology (both on the ground and as represented in historic maps) as well as on documentary and cartographic evidence. Confidence levels for interpretations have in all cases been recorded in the database but have not been shown on the maps because too many sub-divisions of the data tend to obscure the overall picture. Interpretations of individual polygons may be incorrect but the overall picture should be broadly correct within the limitations of the data-set. Attributes leading to the interpretation are set out in the database and thus are open to reinterpretation.

Some of the maps and diagrams within this group have limitations relating to the HLC technique (see 3.4). For instance, figures 34 and 35 deal with the dates of field patterns. The dating of these patterns has been based on the morphology or cartographic representation of *internal* field boundaries within individual polygons without taking account of the date of *external* field boundaries around the edges of the polygon. The dating of field patterns by internal boundaries ignores the fact that the external boundaries are likely to be of earlier date. A map based on the estimated dates of external field boundaries would provide a more accurate reflection of historic elements within the present day landscape. The maps dealing with settlement within this map group (Figs 47-51) do not give a complete picture of historic settlement patterns because the method of characterisation meant that individual farmsteads and dispersed settlements were often subsumed within larger polygons Some idea of the diversity of Isle of Wight settlements can be obtained from Figure 11 which shows all present settlement, although some of this will be of recent date.

Figures 52-73 are **Interpretative Maps and Diagrams showing Processes in all HLC Phases**. As with the interpretative maps dealing with *Present HLC*, confidence levels have not been shown on the maps because they would obscure the overall picture. However, whilst the overall interpretations of Present HLC should be broadly correct, no such confidence can be assumed with this map group. Since the landscape is a palimpsest in which some earlier 'layers' or phases have been obliterated, these maps will certainly not show the extent of interpretative types very accurately, since all traces of former types will have been erased from some parts of the landscape. In other places the HLC type will have been misinterpreted, particularly in the earlier HLC phases. The process maps are therefore to some extent speculative in nature although they are based on recorded or inferred attributes. Moreover, the successive HLC phases do not represent equivalent periods in time for all polygons but rather attempt to show the *processes* of landscape change that have affected individual polygons. These process maps show *time-depth* rather than *time-slices* (see Chapter 3).

Figures 74-76 model Domesday Landuse on the Isle of Wight. The maps and pie diagram are based on the assumption that the earliest HLC interpretation recorded for some polygons may equate with patterns of land use established in Anglo-Saxon times and linked with the exploitation of Anglo-Saxon estates (see 6.3).

The land uses and landscape types represented in these maps are settlement, arable core, downland grazing, other open grazing, woodland and royal forest, deer parks, valley floor land and open water.

An attempt to use HLC data in order to show the main Domesday settlements failed, as the settlement data for the early medieval and medieval periods were too incomplete and interpretations too uncertain. Instead, HER point data relating to Domesday manors and churches were used. The Domesday Book was basically an audit of land ownership and land use in AD 1086, and Domesday manors cannot automatically be assumed to equate with settlements. However, most Domesday manorial centres on the Isle of Wight

have survived to the present day as farmsteads, hamlets or villages. The more important point to be considered is that Domesday Book probably gives a very incomplete picture of settlement in the 11th century. The Isle of Wight has a number of place-names of Old English origin that first occur in the written record after the time of Domesday Book. Place-names using Old English elements were still being formed after the 11th century but it is also likely that some settlements existing at the time of the Domesday Book were omitted from that record, the purpose of which was to assess land holdings for taxation purposes.

The ancient townfield arable cores on the maps show the possible extent of arable cultivation at the time of the Domesday Book. The term *ancient townfield arable core* is taken from Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, 171) and indicates the land most likely to have been in cultivation during the early medieval period (see 5.2). Roberts and Wrathmell suggest that these arable cores equate roughly with the land that was farmed as open-field in medieval times. Accordingly, the arable core land shown in Figures 74-76 equates with the possible extent of former open-field as shown in Figure 52. These maps probably underestimate the amount of arable land in the northern part of the Island and may overestimate the amount of arable land in the southern part of the Island during the Early Medieval period.

The potential area of *downland grazing* shown on the maps is more or less equivalent to the total extent of the chalklands and also includes some land on the Greensand. One obvious difficulty in making this estimate is the changing pattern of downland use through time. It can be demonstrated from archaeological evidence that significant areas of present-day chalk downland bearing all the characteristics of established calcareous grassland were cultivated in prehistoric or Roman times. However, in the Early Medieval period most of this downland may well have reverted to grazing although there is certainly some evidence for arable farming on Isle of Wight downland during the Later Medieval period.

Other open grazing land shown on the maps has been estimated from the polygons interpreted as waste, common, green or heath in present or previous HLC phases.

Valley floor land played an important role in medieval farming, some of it being used for hay meadows. These generally occupied a small area in relation to the total land owned by each manor but were a vital part of the agricultural economy, supplying fodder for draught and food animals that had to be kept alive over winter. In areas where open-field cultivation was practised the hay meadows were also usually tended as a single unit in which the various manorial tenants held strips. (The Brading Tithe Map of c.1840 shows strips within a former common hay meadow in the East Yar Valley to the south of Adgestone.) Other areas of valley floor land would have been used for grazing, much of this being grazing marsh subject to seasonal inundation. The open water of the tidal Brading Haven (not finally reclaimed until1880) is also shown on these maps.

The extent of *Woodland and Royal Forest* at Domesday has been calculated by adding together *ancient woodland* of all HLC phases shown in Figure 67, Phase 3 assarts and the *Royal Forest* sub-type. This last category represents land that was within Parkhurst Forest at the time of Domesday but was probably open grazing land by that date.

It is possible for woodland to be defined as *Ancient* (i.e. pre 1600) and yet to be *Secondary Woodland* of medieval date so there are uncertainties of dating as well as of interpretation within this model.

Domesday Book records the creation of 'The King's Park' at Watchingwell, which involved taking half a hide of land from the adjoining manor of Watchingwell (Basford 1989, 13). This deer park formed one of the detached portions of the parish of St Nicholas in medieval times. In the late 20th century the western and northern edges of the former deer park retained significance as they lay on the boundary between Medina Borough and South Wight Borough.

Areas where no HLC or HER evidence is available for Domesday land use have been left blank on the maps and account for over 17% of the total land area (Fig 76). Settlements (shown on maps 74 and 75 only as point data) would have occupied a small proportion of this 'white' land but most of it would have been cultivated, grazed or wooded.

Figure 74 is a model of Domesday land use in relation to HLC Areas. Figure 75 is a model of Domesday land use in relation to medieval parishes. This map has anachronistic elements in that the parish system shown here was still developing in the 11th century and some of the parishes had not attained full parochial status by the end of the medieval period (see 1.5). However, the parishes that did not exist in 1086 nearly all developed around chapels on manorial estates that existed at the time of Domesday Book. The superimposition of parish boundaries on the HLC and HER data is intended to give an idea of land use within individual parishes in medieval times.

Fig 76 is a pie diagram which calculates hypothetical percentages for different land uses at the time of Domesday, based on the land uses mapped in Figures 74 and 75.

In the light of the caveats mentioned above the model represented in Figures 74-76 must be viewed as a purely notional one which can be taken as a starting point for academic discussion and study of the Island's landscape in the 11th century.

Figure 77 is an extract from the primary HLC digital map, showing numbered polygons representing various HLC types. This digital map was linked to the Access Database, allowing it to be queried in order to provide the maps and figures in this report.

Figure 78 is an example of one of the thirteen Access database forms used to record HLC data (see 2.4 and 2.8). The form shown is that used for *Field Patterns* which are a key HLC Type.

4.2 The Isle of Wight's Historic Landscape Character in Relation to that of Hampshire and Surrey

Introduction

Rather than discussing the Isle of Wight HLC data in isolation it has been analysed in relation to data from Hampshire and Surrey, two other counties within the south-east region where HLC has been carried out (Lambrick and Bramhill 1999; Bannister and Wills 2001). Data from the Kent HLC (Croft, Munby and Ridley 2001) was not included, as the historic landscape of this county was considered likely to be less useful for comparative purposes. The Sussex HLC is still in progress and so data from this project could not be used.

At 382 square km the Isle of Wight is more than four times smaller than Surrey (1,670 square km) and nearly ten times smaller than Hampshire (3,679 square km). The Island's small size will obviously have influenced the range, distribution and extent of HLC types, apart from any possible factors relating to insularity.

Comparison of HLC Methods

It is possible to compare data from the Hampshire, Surrey and Isle of Wight HLC projects despite the somewhat different HLC method used on the Isle of Wight, as all three counties use virtually the same *broad types*. The main differences between the Isle of Wight HLC and those of Hampshire and Surrey are that the Isle of Wight records three past phases of HLC in addition to present HLC and that detailed analysis within the Isle of Wight HLC is in the form of *interpretations* rather than *descriptive sub-types,* although descriptive sub-types are used for preliminary analysis from modern data sets. The field pattern interpretations for the Isle of Wight do differ considerably from the field pattern sub-types used in Hampshire and Surrey, for reasons explained below.

HLC Areas have been defined in the Isle of Wight and in Surrey but not in Hampshire where HLC types were analysed in relation to the *landscape character areas* that had been defined by the Countryside Commission. In this chapter Isle of Wight HLC types are considered on an island-wide basis but the distribution and frequency of types varies considerably within individual HLC Areas and this is discussed fully in Chapter 6.

Physical Similarities and Administrative Links

Many of the geological strata of the Isle of Wight are also found in Hampshire and Surrey. Indeed, the central and southern parts of the Island could be described as a microcosm of south-east England in geological terms, although the Hamstead Beds and Bembridge Marls north of the chalk are confined mainly to the Isle of Wight. (These deposits are also present in the southern part of the New Forest and the adjoining coastline but here they are mainly overlain by superficial gravel deposits.) The Isle of Wight has strong historical links with Hampshire and was administered as part of that County for many centuries until 1890 when it acquired its own County Council (Isle of Wight County Council 1990). However, the historic landscape character of the Isle of Wight at the present day is somewhat different from that of Hampshire and Surrey as can be seen from analysis of HLC data in the three counties.

Woodland

One obvious difference between the landscape of the Isle of Wight and that of Hampshire and Surrey at the present day is the smaller amount of woodland on the Island compared with the two mainland counties. The Isle of Wight is not regarded as a particularly well-wooded county by regional standards although the total area of woodland cover is around the national average, covering just less than 10% of the land surface according to the local Biodiversity Audit (Isle of Wight Council 2000, 10).The HLC Woodland Broad Type accounts for a slightly lower 9.18%, probably because some woodland has been classified under the Valley Floor Broad Type (Fig 16). The overall percentage of woodland on the Island is greatly boosted by 20th century Forestry Commission plantations, many of these being on the chalk downs. By comparison, the Surrey HLC identifies 13% of its land area as being within the woodland broad type (including *ancient woodland*, secondary *woodland* and *plantation woodland*) and the Hampshire HLC woodland broad type comprises 18% of the county's land area, higher than the 15% percent estimated to have existed in 1086 (Rackham, 1986, 78 table 5.1).

The high percentages of woodland in Surrey and Hampshire are unsurprising, given the extensive wooded Weald of Surrey and the historic royal forests of Hampshire, of which the New Forest survives to the present day. Historically, there was one royal forest on the Isle of Wight at Parkhurst but its size in the 18th century was only 3043 acres or 1215 hectares and it is now a mere 409 hectares, compared with the 37,500 hectares of the New Forest at the present day. Of course, a large percentage of the New Forest is not woodland but open heathland. Parkhurst can be compared with the New Forest in terms of its past historic landscape character, which was a mixture of wood pasture and heathland before its disafforestation and enclosure by Act of Parliament in 1812, although a considerable part of the forest is now a conifer plantation.

Rackham (1986, 78) estimated that only 6% of the Isle of Wight was woodland at the time of Domesday Survey. This estimate is probably too low. HLC figures indicate that woodland on ancient sites, including ancient semi-natural woodland and replanted ancient woodland, occupies over 4% of the Island's land area at the present day. However, the total extent of *ancient woodland* estimated from all HLC phases amounts to 12.5% of the land area (Fig 67). The present-day concentration of *ancient woodland* and *replanted ancient woodland* in the northern half of the Isle of Wight is likely to reflect a pattern that was well-established in the Early Medieval period and probably originated in prehistory (Figs 74 and 75). There is relatively little semi-natural woodland in the southern half of the Isle of Wight including the chalk downs and greensand areas.

The Present HLC woodland broad type for the Isle of Wight is made up of 26.6% *ancient woodland*, 20.5% *replanted ancient woodland*, 20.6% *secondary woodland*, 31.6% *plantations* and 0.7% *ornamental woodland* (Fig 46). Somewhat different percentages for plantation and secondary woodland given in the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Audit may be the result of different definitions for these categories of woodland. Several good examples of former wood pastures exist on the Island, including part of Parkhurst Forest (Cox 2003, 2-3) but none are currently grazed and so could not be defined as wood pasture in the HLC.

Historically, wood pasture is likely to have been more extensive on the Isle of Wight but no attempt has been made to define it as a Past HLC type because of the difficulties of interpretation.

Heathland, Waste and Commons

The Hampshire and Surrey HLCs both define a broad HLC type of *heathland.* The Isle of Wight HLC classification is slightly different, defining *heathland, downland, unimproved land, rough ground and scrub* as sub-types within the *Open Land* Broad Type. In Hampshire the *heathland* broad type occupies 5% of the land area and in Surrey it occupies 3% of the land area. In addition, both the Hampshire and Surrey HLCs define an additional broad type of *commons* which is sub-divided into *common heathland, common downland, other commons and greens* and *wooded over commons.* The *commons* broad type accounts for 1% of land use in Hampshire and 4% in Surrey. Much of the Surrey *commons* broad type is *wooded over commons* but over one quarter is *common heathland*, giving perhaps an additional 1% of heathland land use at the present time.

The Isle of Wight HLC did not define a *commons* broad type because of the difficulties of identifying this type, which is essentially a legal classification rather than a present-day land use type. Existing heathland on the Isle of Wight is identified by reference to BAP data. Identifying *heathland* in past phases of HLC was more of a problem, since the term is an ecological one. Figures 56 and 57 therefore use a grouped interpretation of *enclosed waste, common or heath* to indicate field patterns deriving from these sources This method of interpretation acknowledges that it is usually not possible to identify the ecological or tenurial character of past HLC types without detailed academic research (see 2.9).

The total amount of surviving heathland in the two mainland counties may be estimated as at least 4% of Surrey's land use and over 5% of that in Hampshire, if *common heathland* is included. In contrast, the Isle of Wight HLC records only 0.1% of the total land area as being *heathland* and the BAP data records a miniscule 66 hectares.

Despite the lack of heathland on the Isle of Wight at the present day there is documentary evidence for the former existence of extensive clay heaths and dry gravel heaths in the north of the Island and substantial areas of heathland on the Lower Greensand to the south of the central chalk ridge. HLC interpretations indicate that approximately 15% of present-day field patterns may derive directly from enclosed waste, common or heath (Fig 39). Taking into account all HLC phases, land enclosed from waste, common or heath may account for around 29% of the total area of field patterns (Fig 64). It is calculated that *open grazing* comprising waste, common and heath may have occupied at least 24% of the Island's total land area at the time of Domesday (Fig 76). In fact this figure is probably an underestimate as the pie diagram of Domesday land uses includes over 17% of total land area where there is no HLC evidence for early land use but which probably included some waste, common or heath. In addition, the *Royal Forest* element of the *Woodland and Royal Forest* category in the Domesday models represents those parts of

Parkhurst Forest that were probably heathland or other open grazing land by medieval times if not from a much earlier date.

Some enclosure from waste, common or heath recorded in the HLC may date from medieval times. Enclosure of common pasture on clay heath is recorded from the late 16th century onwards. By the time of the Swainston manorial survey in 1630 Calbourne Heathfield had been divided into several very large enclosures which were to be sub-divided in the 18th and 19th centuries before 'prairification' once more modified this landscape in the late 20th century (Jones 2003). Many areas of heathland throughout the Island had been enclosed before the Ordnance Survey drawings were made in 1793 but these can often be recognised as semi-regular field patterns with straight internal boundaries, one particular example being the clay heath around Bouldnor, Cranmore and Hamstead. In the north-east Wight there were extensive heathland commons at Staplers Heath, Fairlee, Wootton Common and Lynn Common but these had all been enclosed by the end of the 19th century. Fields enclosed from waste, common or heath after 1793 can be identified by comparing later Ordnance Survey maps with the 1793 drawings, which distinguish rough open ground from arable land and better quality pasture. Nearly all surviving remnants of Isle of Wight heathland disappeared in the 20th century, leaving only one substantial area of dry gravel heath on Headon Hill (Chatters 1984). However, heathland is now being recreated on Mottistone Common following the clearance of forestry plantations damaged in the storms of 1987 and 1990.

From the evidence cited above it can be seen that enclosure from waste, common or heath took place on the Isle of Wight over a long period of time. It is also apparent that on the Isle of Wight nearly all enclosure of open grazing land took place by agreement. Only three Acts of Parliament relating to the enclosure of common pasture are listed by Adams (1960), two being concerned with cliff-top commons (127 acres at Chale Common and 84 acres on Norton Common) and one with common downland (Niton Head Down). In Hampshire approximately 30% of the total land area (about 300,000 acres) was enclosed after 1700 and over half of the post-1700 enclosures dealt with common pasture. More than 50% of this common pasture was enclosed by Acts of Parliament, the rest being enclosed by formal and informal agreements (Chapman and Seeliger 2001, Chapter 5).

There appear to be various historical reasons for the survival of relatively large areas of heathland and commons within Hampshire and Surrey in comparison with the Isle of Wight, even though these areas represent only a small percentage of the heathlands and commons existing before the enclosures of the 18th and 19th century. Most of Hampshire's surviving heathland lies within the New Forest and the special legal 'forest' status of this area helped to protect it from the large scale enclosure of common pasture within the rest of Hampshire. Rights of Common in the New Forest were statutorily registered in 1851 and remain so today (Hazel 1983, 4). Unlike Parkhurst Forest on the Isle of Wight, which was disafforested in 1812, an attempt at legal disafforestation of the New Forest by Act of Parliament in 1871 failed. The New Forest Act of 1877 limited the total area of inclosures and took into account the amenity value of the forest (Colebourn 1983, 28). Many of the unenclosed heaths surviving in

Surrey are remnants of the huge expanses of Bagshot and Hindhead Heaths in the north west of the county (Bannister and Wills 2001, 29). The survival of these heaths may be connected with their amenity value as open land in close proximity to London. Wooded commons are scattered throughout Surrey. No explanation for the survival of these commons is given in the Surrey HLC. Could their survival suggest that in the 19th century farming had become less important in Surrey, thus allowing these commons to escape enclosure but also leading to a cessation of grazing?

Downland

The chalk hills or *downs* form a significant component of overall historic landscape character on the Isle of Wight, as in Hampshire and to some extent in Surrey, although in all three counties much of the chalkland is now either in arable cultivation or is improved grassland. The HLC reports of Surrey, Hampshire and Isle of Wight classify *unimproved* chalk grassland and some other categories of unimproved grassland as *downland*.

Despite much loss of chalk grassland in the 20th century the 1998 BAP audit for South-East England calculated that the Isle of Wight still retained 655 hectares of land classified as 'unimproved calcareous grassland' (Wicks and Cloughley 1998). This represents less than 2% of the total land area. The Isle of Wight HLC *downland* sub-type amounts to 818 hectares or 2.1% of land area (calculated from Figs 16 and 26). However, this *downland* sub-type includes some unimproved grassland that is not classified as 'calcareous grassland' in the BAP data, mainly on the Upper Greensand and on Chalk with superficial deposits of acid flint gravel.

The Hampshire HLC classified 1% of its land area within the *downland* sub-type and also listed a separate *commons* broad type that included some *common downland.* 1% of Hampshire's land area amounts to 3,679 hectares but the South-East England BAP audit recorded only 2,800 hectares of 'unimproved calcareous grassland'. The Surrey HLC identified 1% of the County's total land area as *downland*, amounting to 1670 hectares. However, the South-East England BAP audit recorded only 325 hectares of 'unimproved calcareous grassland'. Even allowing for the fact that the ecological definition of 'calcareous grassland' is different from the HLC definition of *downland i*t appears that there are significant discrepancies between the BAP and HLC datasets.

What the BAP data does make clear is the significance of the remaining areas of unimproved chalk grassland in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in relation to the South-East Region as a whole. The figures given by Wicks and Cloughley (1998) indicate that Hampshire contains nearly 30% of the resource, Sussex about 28%, Kent nearly 16% and the Isle of Wight about 7%. (The Isle of Wight Local BAP, published in 2000, calculates that the Island has 10% of the regional resource). All other counties within the South-East Region retain relatively small amounts of unimproved chalk grassland. For instance, Berkshire, traditionally associated with downland landscapes, retains only 180 hectares of unimproved chalk grassland, less than 2% of the South-East Resource.

Enclosure from downland accounts for 6.2% of 'Present HLC' field pattern interpretations on the Isle of Wight (Fig 39).and for just over 11% of field pattern interpretations in all phases (Fig 64). No HLC data exists for the extent of downland enclosure in Hampshire and Surrey. Land interpreted as *enclosed downland* in the Isle of Wight HLC is not always situated on the Chalk or Upper Greensand. Some land lying close to the chalk downs but on other geological strata seems to have been treated as unenclosed downland in earlier times. In the medieval and post-medieval periods Isle of Wight downland was used mainly as manorial common pasture. Even today the names of the downs relate to individual parishes or manors. By 1793 some of these downs had been physically enclosed (e.g. part of Mottistone Down) but in the West Wight, at least, the steep slopes did not allow cultivation. However, fields of a fairly regular pattern on the edge of the high downland are shown on the 1793 Ordnance Survey drawings and often still exist on the ground. The regular appearance of these fields suggests planned enclosure, probably of 17th century and 18th century date, and the various 'New Barn' farms on the Island are clearly linked to this process. Further downland enclosure had taken place on the Island by the time of the tithe surveys in the 1830s and 1840s. However, the only parliamentary enclosure award relating to Isle of Wight downland dealt with the small area of Niton Head Down mentioned above.

Field Patterns and Enclosure

Field patterns account for 36% of the present land use in Surrey, 51% of the land use in Hampshire and 64% of the land use on the Isle of Wight (Fig 14). The greater percentage of field patterns on the Isle of Wight reflects the lesser extent of modern settlement growth and associated recreational land uses, particularly in comparison with Surrey. It also reflects the smaller percentage of woodland on the Isle of Wight in comparison with both Surrey and Hampshire and the smaller percentage of the various open land sub-types on the Isle of Wight at the present day (totalling 3.8%) in comparison with the total percentage of heathland, downland and commons in Surrey (8%) and Hampshire (7%). Field patterns on the Isle of Wight have been analysed both in terms of their size and shape (morphology) and as interpretative sub-types indicating landscape change processes (Figs 18 and 38). In Hampshire and Surrey the descriptive sub-types for field patterns are mainly morphological so it is difficult to make a direct comparison with the Isle of Wight data.

Where medieval field patterns still survive in the landscape, these can be recognised by their irregular shapes and sinuous boundaries. In areas of 'Ancient Countryside' new fields were created during medieval and post-medieval times by clearing woodland, a process called *assarting*. The Surrey HLC records that 32% of existing field patterns within the county are derived from assarts, a figure which reflects the huge extent of the wooded Weald at the start of the medieval period. No actual figure for the percentage of fields derived from assarts is available for Hampshire but figure 3.3 of the Hampshire HLC Report suggests that these amount to about 20% of all field patterns. On the Isle of Wight the interpretative data indicates that *assarts* make up 6.3% of field patterns at the present day (Fig 39) and 12.1% of field patterns in all HLC phases. The very much lower figures for present-day assarted field patterns on the Isle of Wight may to some extent be related to a difference in interpretation,

with the *amalgamated field patterns* or *reorganised field patterns* interpretative sub-types being used in the Isle of Wight HLC for field patterns clearly derived from assarts where these had been altered subsequently.

As well as the various field pattern sub-types derived from assarting of woodland the Hampshire and Surrey HLCs also record other distinctive field pattern sub-types that are likely to pre-date the 19th century and to be of medieval origin in some cases. These other early sub-types account for 15% of all field patterns in Surrey and approximately 32%.of field patterns in Hampshire (no actual percentage given in Hampshire HLC Report). The lower percentage in Surrey is largely related to the much higher proportion of assarted field patterns in this county.

The early field pattern sub-types other than assarts recorded in Hampshire and Surrey include 'medium to large regular fields with wavy boundaries' and 'regular ladder fields'. The first enclosure type is interpreted as representing 'late medieval to 17th/18th Century informal enclosure' and the second as representing informal enclosure of downland in post medieval times, often linking lower ground to higher downs.

In the Isle of Wight HLC 'enclosure pattern' (e.g. ladder fields) was recorded as a separate attribute, distinct from field pattern morphology (average size and shape of individual fields within the polygon) and enclosure method (piecemeal, planned or parliamentary). Where recorded, enclosure patterns contributed to the interpretation of present or past HLC. However, for the majority of polygons no overall enclosure pattern could be identified and therefore no attempt has been made to calculate percentages of different enclosure patterns present on the Isle of Wight.

Some *ladde*r patterns were identified on the Isle of Wight but further research is needed into the date and morphology of downland enclosures. The most distinctive regular enclosure pattern recorded in the Isle of Wight HLC was classified as *herringbone.* This pattern seems to be associated with enclosure from waste, common or heath and has straight internal field boundaries, suggesting that it may be of 18th century date.

5.8% of present day field patterns are interpreted as having been enclosed from open-field on the Isle of Wight. These have been classified either as *enclosed open field strips* or *enclosed open field/open field furlongs*. Although *enclosed strips and furlongs* are included in the field pattern sub-types listed for the Hampshire and Surrey HLCs it appears that no surviving examples were identified in Surrey and that they were very rare in Hampshire. It is unclear whether the definition of *enclosed strips and furlongs* in Surrey and Hampshire allowed former areas of open field to be identified on the basis of their *external boundary morphology* as on the Isle of Wight.

Data over all three HLC phases suggests that enclosed open-field may formerly have accounted for at least 20% of all field patterns (Fig 64) on the Isle of Wight, which would equate with 12.8% of the land area. However, the *arable core* land shown in the models of Domesday Land Use (Figs 74, 75 and 76) are

derived from land interpreted as *open-field* and this land land accounts for over 15% of total land area. The discrepancy probably arises from the fact that Figure 64 deals with *enclosed open-field* and so may have excluded some land that was recorded in the Phase 3 HLC asalready been enclosed from open-field. The Domesday figure could well be an under-estimate, bearing in mind the 17% of land for which there was no HLC evidence of early land use.
It is not possible to compare the percentages of open-field on the Isle of Wight with comparable HLC data from Hampshire and Surrey since the *parliamentary enclosure types* recorded in these counties include land enclosed from common pasture, meadow, downland and heathland as well as from open-field. In Hampshire over 55% of the total land enclosed after 1700 (by parliamentary act and by agreement) dealt with common pasture rather than with open-field systems and was intended to bring new land into cultivation. However, Chapman and Seeliger (2001, 67) have identified a total of 235 common arable open-field systems in Hampshire, of which only 39 were fully enclosed before 1700. It can also be inferred from the data of Chapman and Seeliger that the area of open-field enclosed after 1700 amounted to approximately 12% of the total land area in Hampshire. In Surrey the percentage of open-field enclosed after 1700 would have been smaller than in Hampshire since open-field was not so dominant in the county and a considerable proportion of the arable comprised small fields assarted from woodland or enclosed from heathland and waste. Only fourteen parishes in Surrey have formal enclosure archives that include references to common arable fields although there are a larger number of archives that refer to enclosure from heath/waste, commons/greens and meadows (Bannister and Wills 2001, fig 21).

On the Isle of Wight piecemeal enclosure of open-field strips probably started in the late Middle Ages, although continuing into the 19th century, and individual enclosed strips and small groups of strips can still be recognised in certain places such as at Newtown and Freshwater. A more efficient method of enclosure was to create one field out of a former open field furlong or to create new internal field boundaries within the framework of the former open field. In each case the new field boundaries were still related to the pre-enclosure pattern. This type of enclosure seems to have taken place on the Island in the 18th and 19th centuries, and field patterns created by it can still be still be identified in some places such as Brighstone and Niton.

Another approach to enclosure was to disregard existing boundaries and to create completely new field patterns. In the Midlands, where parliamentary enclosure predominated, this process was taken to its logical conclusion with roads and tracks being re-routed and new farmhouses built in the fields. Where enclosure took place by agreement between local landowners and tenants, as on the Isle of Wight, the scope for re-alignment of roads, tracks and major linear features may have been less and the new field pattern was likely to be less regular than in the Midlands.

However there is evidence for one large-scale reorganisation of fields on the Isle of Wight, described in a parliamentary award of 1860 listed by Adams (1960, 221). The award deals with 1191 acres of land in the parishes of Godshill, Carisbrooke (Detached) and Wootton (Detached) but appears to be

concerned with the rationalisation of ancient landholdings held by several large landowners and various smallholders, rather than with the enclosure of open-field. Large scale re-planning of the landscape also took place in the 19th century on the Osborne estate where Prince Albert took a personal interest in farm management, and at Ashey Farm in the north-east Wight (Wilkinson 1861)

31% of field patterns identified in the Surrey HLC are classified as being *parliamentary enclosure types* with another 20% being later 20th century 'prairie' type fields. In Hampshire these two sub-types cannot be separated out in the relevant pie diagram of grouped HLC types but together account for approximately 50% of all field patterns. The *parliamentary enclosure type* classification does not necessarily imply that these fields were created as a result of a parliamentary enclosure act but is used as a morphological term indicating regular field patterns with straight boundaries of 18th or 19th century date. In fact, Chapman and Seeliger (2001, Chapter 5) have demonstrated that only 13% of the total land area in Hampshire was enclosed by Act of Parliament after 1700 compared with 17% enclosed by agreement. However, they have also pointed out that enclosure by agreement in Hampshire did not necessarily mean that a landscape of small farms and fields was produced. Informal methods were popular with substantial Hampshire landowners who were often able to enclose large consolidated blocks on which was imposed 'a highly regular landscape of large farms and rectilinear fields which differed little, if at all, from the landscapes of parliamentary enclosures'.

On the Isle of Wight there were only five parliamentary awards dealing with previously unenclosed land (two dealing with the enclosure of open fields and three dealing with the enclosure of common). This was one reason why the interpretation of *parliamentary-type enclosure* was not used in the Isle of Wight HLC. Another reason for not using this term was that it did indicate HLC *process* i.e. the earlier HLC type from which the present HLC type had evolved. In the present Isle of Wight landscape, regular field patterns with straight boundaries that cannot be classified in terms of enclosure from a previous HLC type (e.g. *enclosed open field*, *enclosed waste or common*, *enclosed heathland*, *enclosed downland*) have generally resulted from further modification of such types and thus are identified as *reorganised field pattern* or *amalgamated fields*. These reorganised and amalgamated fields can often be dated to the 19th century or 20th centuries by comparing the OS 1793 drawings with tithe maps and with OS maps from 1862 onwards. Amalgamated and reorganised field patterns, mainly of 19th and 20th century date, account for 45.6% of all Isle of Wight field patterns and *prairie fields* of late 20th century date account for another 7.4%.

The HLC interpretation of *prairie fields* has been used only in cases where boundary alteration has fundamentally altered the HLC of an area. Generally, the terms *reorganised field pattern* and *amalgamated fields* have been preferred. P*rairie fields* on the Isle of Wight account for 7.4% of present-day field patterns, considerably less than in Surrey, where this sub-type accounts for 20% of all field patterns. No percentage for the *prairie field* sub-type is given in the Hampshire HLC Report.

Although all Isle of Wight field patterns were assigned to a descriptive sub-type based on size and shape (Fig 18) it was not always possible to assign these field patterns to a definite interpretative sub-type, reflecting a particular enclosure process. Just over 5% of all Isle of Wight field patterns were recorded as *unidentified enclosure type* (Fig 39). In the 95% of cases where an interpretative sub-type was assigned this could be *certain, probable or unsure* so there may be a considerable margin of error in the interpretations given.

The Hampshire and Surrey HLC projects did not attach date attributes to field patterns and so it is not possible to make a direct comparison between the age of field patterns within these two counties and the Isle of Wight. 66.75 % of field patterns on the Isle of Wight have been attributed to the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and it might therefore be assumed that the Island landscape has been altered to a greater extent than that of Hampshire where parliamentary and prairie field patterns account for approximately 50% of all field patterns and Surrey where these sub-types account for 51% of all field patterns. In reality, it may be that the Isle of Wight HLC was more rigorous in assigning field patterns to a recent date if there was evidence of change to a pattern originally laid out at an earlier date. It is suspected that the Isle of Wight HLC underestimates the overall time-depth of the local landscape, partly as a result of not fully characterising external boundaries.

Despite the large amount of boundary loss in the later 20th century, field patterns on the Isle of Wight seem to have retained more irregularities of size and shape than in many parts of Hampshire. Most field boundaries within individual field patterns do not have a particularly 'ancient' appearance but the land units occupied by individual field patterns may represent older elements in the landscape as they are often irregular in shape, some having sinuous external boundaries. The area of individual field patterns digitised in the Isle of Wight HLC is generally fairly small and this is felt to represent a real variability in the landscape. This variability seems to be the result of accommodating existing landscape features such as the linear boundaries of holdings, manors and parishes, and also the intricate pattern of roads, tracks and paths that exist across much of the Island. The existence of an intricate pattern of roads, tracks and paths is one of the characteristics of 'Ancient Countryside' defined by Rackham (1986). These features, often delineating discrete areas of field patterns, contribute very significantly to the historic landscape character of the Isle of Wight.

In summary, the Island seems to have retained a considerable amount of its pre 19th century framework and to have adapted or remodelled existing field patterns within this framework. This could be linked with a general lack of large-scale enclosure schemes (with the exceptions noted above) and the virtual absence of parliamentary enclosure. However, as already noted, informal enclosure undertaken by substantial landowners in Hampshire did not necessarily create a landscape of small farms and fields (Chapman and Seeliger 2001, 88). The fairly irregular landscape covering much of the Isle of Wight may therefore indicate that there were relatively few 'improving' landowners on the Island in the 18th and 19th centuries, rather than being linked with informal enclosure or local topography.

Valley Floor

The *valley floor and water management* broad type defined in Hampshire and Surrey has rather more complex sub-divisions than the *valley floor* broad type defined on the Isle of Wight (Fig 28). Non-tidal rivers on the Isle of Wight are shorter and have less extensive areas of valley floor than in the two mainland counties, resulting in fewer opportunities for economic exploitation. No records of *water meadows* have been identified for the Isle of Wight although these were a significant historic component of Hampshire valley floor land use and also occur in Surrey. The sub-type *Valley floor woodland*, as defined on the Isle of Wight, was used for small strips or pockets of woodland in this situation, sometimes not recorded in the BAP data. The sub-type *grazing marsh* was used in the Isle of Wight HLC for wet grassland (which may have been agriculturally improved) divided by a network of ditches and in some cases periodically inundated. This sub-type may lie on coastal plains, usually behind seawalls or in river floodplains *Osier beds* were occasionally identified within the Isle of Wight valley floor broad type. However, most polygons within the *valley floor* broad type on the Isle of Wight were classified as *enclosed pastures and meadows* without differentiation between unimproved hay meadows or pastures and areas of improved grassland. (See 2.9 for definition and discussion of the *valley floor* sub-types).

Further work will need to be done on the Isle of Wight *valley floor* type. Historically, most of the common hay meadows would have been situated on valley floor land and it might be possible to plot the extent of this resource. The Ordnance Survey 6 inch drawings of 1793 will provide a useful research tool, as all valley floor pasture and meadow is shaded green on this map. The SSSI data and BAP data will also require further study.

Settlement

23% of the total land use in Surrey consists of settlement-related broad types. These types account for approximately 13% of Hampshire land use (no percentage given in Hampshire pie diagram) but for only just over 11% of Isle of Wight land use. The high percentage of settlement in Surrey reflects 19th and 20th century suburban development in the north of the county, fairly close to London whereas in Hampshire much of the urban and suburban settlement of the 19th and 20th century is concentrated in the South Hampshire Lowland and South Hampshire Coast areas. The Isle of Wight is still relatively undeveloped although 20th century ribbon development and unplanned rural development in some areas gives some parts of the Island a suburban appearance. Rapid population growth since the 2001 census has generated some new settlement and industrial land use that will not be shown on the HLC.

In Hampshire and Surrey descriptive sub-types were used to categorise settlements by a mixture of age and morphology. However, the Isle of Wight descriptive sub-types recorded only morphological or functional attributes, distinguishing *urban, suburban, nucleated* and *dispersed* settlement forms and various elements within these overall forms such as *housing estate, cemetery/churchyard, hospital* and *school/college* (Fig 30).The age of Isle of Wight settlements was recorded as a discrete attribute of the interpretative data set (Figs 47 and 48) and *historic settlement cores* were defined as a distinct

interpretative sub-type by reference to the Ordnance Survey 1793 drawings (Figs 49, 50 and 51).

Recreation

This accounts for 6% of present land use in Surrey but only 1% of land use in Hampshire. The much larger figure for Surrey reflects its proximity to London, with golf courses accounting for 48% of recreational land use and major sports complexes for a further 36%. On the Isle of Wight the HLC broad type of *recreation and tourism* accounts for 1.6% of present land use. *Holiday parks* including chalet, caravan and tented accommodation are a significant sub-type, reflecting the importance of tourism in the Island's economy and land use. *Golf courses* are also fairly significant (Fig 32).

Parkland and Designed Landscapes

This type accounts for 1.6% of current land use on the Isle of Wight (Fig 31), a considerably smaller percentage than in Hampshire (3%) or Surrey (4%). The higher percentage in the two mainland counties probably reflects both the creation of more parks and gardens in these two wealthy counties and a greater survival rate. The Isle of Wight was a favoured location for the construction of cottages ornés with ornamental grounds in the late 18th century and early 19th century but the size of these grounds was usually modest. A higher survival rate for parkland and gardens in Hampshire and Surrey may also be related to the large numbers of wealthy commuters and second-home owners living in these counties in recent times.

Hampshire and Surrey divide the *parkland and designed landscape* broad type into *deer parks, pre-1811 parkland* and *19th century and later parkland.* Surrey also has separate sub-types of *smaller designed garden* and *arboreta.* In the Isle of Wight HLC the date of parks and designed landscapes was recorded as a separate attribute and the descriptive sub-types distinguished between *ornamental parkland/large designed gardens* of seven hectares and over and *smaller designed gardens* of under seven hectares in size. *Deer parks* were also distinguished as a separate sub-type, as were public parks although these were only recorded for past phases of HLC (Figs 68 and 69).

Other HLC Types

The Isle of Wight follows Surrey (but not Hampshire) in having a broad type defined as *horticulture* (Figs 34 and 71). In Surrey, this type is concentrated mainly in the north of the county, accounting for 1% of the total land area. On the Isle of Wight horticulture is concentrated in the Arreton Valley and accounts for less than 0.6% of present land use.

A *coastal* broad type has been defined in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight. Within this broad type the Isle of Wight HLC defines semi-natural sub-types of *salt marsh, intertidal mud, intertidal sand and shingle, sand dunes, coastal slope, landslip* and man-made sub-types of salterns, harbours, marinas and reclaimed land (Fig 29).

The Hampshire, Surrey and Isle of Wight HLCs have all defined similar but not identical broad types relating to *industry*, *mineral extraction*, *communications* and *military & defence* land uses. These broad types have been defined in slightly different ways and account in total for relatively small proportions of present land use.

2% of Surrey is occupied by *extractive industry* and 2% by *other industry.* Only 1% of Hampshire is occupied by the combined *extractive & industry* broad type. On the Isle of Wight 1% of the land area is occupied by *industry* (Figs 16 and 33) and 0.25% by *mineral extraction* (Figs 16 and 35). The higher figures for Surrey obviously relate to its proximity to London.

In both Surrey and Hampshire the *military and defence* broad type accounts for 1% of present land use whereas on the Isle of Wight it accounts for only 0.2% of land use (Figs 16 and 37). Moreover, nearly all the polygons within the Isle of Wight *military and defence* type are *inactive* i.e. features relating to military use remain but the area is not in active military use. The Isle of Wight played a very significant military role in the 19th and 20th centuries in terms of defending the Solent and Solent approaches. There was also a large barracks sited inland at Albany from 1799 to the 1950s (Fig 73). However, in contrast with both Surrey and Hampshire there are now no military establishments based on the Island except for a Territorial Army Training Base.

Communications recorded by the Surrey HLC account for 1% of land use but are not shown on the Hampshire HLC pie diagram of land use as they occupy less than 1% of land use. (Hampshire mapped only communication facilities, not communication routes, whereas Surrey also mapped motorway intersections and junction as well as railway sidings.) Communications account for 0.3% of land use on the Isle of Wight (Figs 16 and 36) but mapping of this type was very selective, as in the other two counties (see 2.9).

<u>Conclusions</u>

Some of the differences between the historic landscape character of the Isle of Wight and that of Hampshire and Surrey may possibly be attributed to the Island's small size. However, the Isle of Wight HLC Project has identified just as many historic landscape types as in the mainland counties. If anything, the Isle of Wight could be said to have a more diverse historic landscape character.

CHAPTER 5

ISLE OF WIGHT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IN RELATION TO REGIONAL MODELS

5.1 ISLE OF WIGHT SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES AND THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Depopulation seems to have affected the Isle of Wight in the later Middle Ages, in line with national trends. In 'The Deserted Medieval Villages of England' (Beresford and Hurst 1971) no fewer than thirty two deserted medieval villages were identified for the Island. A map showing these supposed DMV's prompted Sir Mortimer Wheeler to comment 'my God, they've sunk the Isle of Wight'. However, there is little archaeological evidence on the Isle of Wight to indicate the wholesale desertion of nucleated villages. Sly (1988) has suggested that documentary evidence has been misinterpreted to some extent and that settlement shrinkage can be clearly demonstrated at only a few sites. The terminology 'deserted medieval village', when applied to the Isle of Wight, begs the question as to how many medieval settlements on the Isle of Wight were nucleated villages and emphasises the need to consider the Isle of Wight in relation to wider patterns of settlement and land use in South East England.

The earliest contemporary accounts of the Isle of Wight landscape, dating from Tudor times, give the impression that a large area of the Isle of Wight had been enclosed and that this had led to depopulation. The very first Act of Parliament against depopulation, dating from 1488, deals only with the Isle of Wight (4 Hen.VII c.16, 17). In the Act it is stated that 'many towns and villages have been let down, and the fields dyked and made pasture for beasts and cattle' However, Jones (1978, 11) has speculated that the reason for this early legislation for the Island could have been the military vulnerability of its position rather than any exceptional speed with which rural enclosure was taking place, although an eye-witness account of the Isle of Wight landscape in 1545 does give a hint of an enclosed countryside. Sir Edward Lellingham, concerned with the defence of the Island against the French, found it unfit for moving artillery or marching, being 'fowle, full of egerowse, lans, dyks, wods, yll and dale, and in sum placys marys' (quoted in Jones 1978, 12).

A key source of information about the Isle of Wight landscape in the 16th and 17th centuries is provided by the Royal surveys. The first of these surveys was carried out in 1559/60 in response to a commission issued by the Crown to Sir Francis Knolles, Sir Edward Warner and John Goodwin 'to survey the state of the isle of Wighte and the fortifications and castles by the sea in the county of Southampton'. (A typed and annotated transcript of the 1559/60 Royal Survey is held at the Isle of Wight Record Office). Jones (1978,12) has commented that 'the evidence given to the Knowles commission in 1559 does support the picture of progressive and damaging enclosure, albeit the judgements are subjective and non-quantitative'. The picture given from local testimony was of small farms being swallowed up in larger ones, with houses standing empty and 'armies of sheep nibbling the country population out of its subsistence'. The evidence suggests that depopulation was a rural rather than an urban trend.

People were moving from country to town and one economic factor seems to have been the unprofitability of cereal cropping. Jones (1978, 15) concludes that the farming picture at the start of Elizabeth I's reign was one of mixed agriculture, with arable increasingly giving way to grazing, and with more hedged enclosures steadily appearing.

5.2 REGIONAL MODELS OF HISTORIC SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE IN ENGLAND

In *The History of the Countryside* Oliver Rackham divided lowland England into two landscape regions. His map of these regions showed a zone of 'Planned Countryside' running diagonally across England from Dorset to East Yorkshire, flanked on either side by a zone of 'Ancient Countryside'. The Isle of Wight was included within his 'Ancient Countryside' zone (Rackham 1986 fig 1.3). Since the publication of Rackham's work landscape historians have tended to think of the small irregular enclosed fields present in 'Ancient Countryside' as being of great antiquity. However, Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, 169) have recently asserted that the bulk of the enclosed fields within 'Ancient Countryside' are actually later in date than the communally farmed open fields which were established throughout most of England from later Anglo-Saxon times, and which dominated the landscape within the area of 'Planned Countryside'.

In Roberts and Wrathmell's revised model of historic settlement and enclosure zones, Rackham's region of 'Planned Countryside' is called 'The Central Province' and his region of 'Ancient Countryside' has been sub-divided into 'The South Eastern Province' and 'The Northern and Western Province' (Roberts and Wrathmell 2002, fig 1.4). However, both Roberts and Wrathmell and Rackham agree that major differences have existed between the Outer Provinces and the Central Province since Roman and early Anglo-Saxon times. This contrast was originally between the more wooded landscapes of the outer provinces and the more open landscapes of the Central Province. The open landscape of the Central Province allowed the development of large regular open fields with associated nucleated villages from late Anglo-Saxon times. In the outer provinces the more wooded landscape ensured that blocks of open-field were smaller and more irregular, and were associated mainly with hamlets and dispersed farmsteads. The countryside of the outer provinces also contained large areas of heathland and wood pasture, providing common grazing, and it was the presence of abundant open pasture as well as woodland, and the differing settlement patterns, that really distinguished the outer provinces from the Central Province at the start of the Middle Ages. Small irregular enclosed fields in the two outer provinces are likely to be accretions around ancient townfield arable cores and to represent intakes from woodlands and open pasture of mainly post-Conquest date

5.3 ISLE OF WIGHT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IN RELATION TO REGIONAL MODELS

The Isle of Wight was included within Rackham's 'Ancient Countryside Region' and has been placed by Roberts and Wrathmell within their 'South Eastern Province'. Its history of settlement and land use is clearly different from the 'Planned Countryside' of the 'Central Province'. Within the 'Central Province' nucleated villages are the norm and modern field patterns derive from 18th or 19th century parliamentary enclosures which themselves replaced very extensive medieval arable open fields. In contrast, the South Eastern Province as a whole has a very mixed settlement pattern, with some villages but also with many smaller settlement clusters and individual farmsteads of early origin. However, the South Eastern Province has been further divided into three sub-provinces by Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, 158-161), these being 'Thames', 'Weald' and 'East Wessex'. The last of these sub-provinces comprises the chalk and sand area stretching from the Sussex coast, through Hampshire, Berkshire and the Isle of Wight to East Dorset and East Wiltshire. 'East Wessex' had a relatively low overall density of nucleations in the mid-19th century (unlike the 'Central Province') but most of the sub-province also had extremely low densities of dispersed settlement, in contrast with the South East Province as a whole. Higher densities of dispersed settlement were mapped only on the the coastal fringe of the New Forest and on the Isle of Wight. Thus there is a marked difference between the Isle of Wight's settlement pattern and that of the adjoining mainland.

Despite Rackham's assertion that open-field was 'either absent or of modest extent' within his region of 'Ancient Countryside' (Rackham 1986, table 1.2) it has been demonstrated by Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, fig 5.10) that open-field formerly covered considerable areas of the South Eastern Province. Williamson (2003, 5) has also stressed that in areas of 'Ancient Countryside' open-field systems were often extensive in medieval times although they were usually irregular, smaller and more numerous than in Midland districts, and enclosed at an earlier date.

It is unclear when common open-field farming was first practised on the Isle of Wight but there are no references to open-field furlongs in Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries. From this lack of evidence Margham (2003, 32) has inferred that 'although open field agriculture may very well have been established within some estates by the later tenth century it would have been restricted to the core of estates'. He concludes that even in the later medieval period the extent of open-field arable was generally restricted and the Island did not develop parish or estate-wide open-field agriculture. Manors would have retained other complementary forms of land use, particularly on the margins of land-holdings.

Prior to the HLC Project no systematic study had been made of the extent of open-field on the Isle of Wight as a whole in medieval or post-medieval times. However, studies of Freshwater Parish (Margham 1992) and Swainston Manor (Jones 1991) showed that these areas contained some open fields which survived into post-medieval times. The HLC Project has now provided evidence for the probable existence of open fields in many parts of the Island, although

they appear to have been largely absent from the northern claylands, the central chalk ridge and the Undercliff, and in some cases occupied a relatively small area in relation to the total land of each manor (Figs 52 and 53). Much of this open-field appears to have been enclosed by 1793 although remnants survived into the nineteenth century. There were only two parliamentary enclosure awards on the Isle of Wight involving open fields and nearly all enclosure of formerly open grazing land on the Island was also by agreement (Tate 1947, Adams 1960), in contrast with the 'Planned Countryside' of the 'Central Province' where a high proportion of present-day fields derive from parliamentary enclosure.

Until post-medieval times the Isle of Wight appears to have possessed a fairly considerable area of land classified in the HLC as *waste, common or heath* (see pages 54-56) and much of this land was probably heathland. According to Rackham the former existence of heathland constitutes one of the historic characteristics distinguishing 'Ancient Countryside' from 'Planned Countryside'. Winding roads and tracks are a distinctive component of the Island's present historic landscape character and have been defined by Rackham as one of the modern characteristics of 'Ancient Countryside'.

The presence of many small woods has been defined by Rackham as a historic characteristic of 'Ancient Countryside' (Rackham 1986, tables 1.1 and 1.2). In this respect only the northern half of the Isle of Wight conformed, historically, to Rackham's model (see Figs 65, 66, 74 and 75) whereas the central and southern parts of the Island possessed a considerable area of chalk downland cleared of woodland in prehistory and relatively large areas of former Greensand heath. Margham (2003, 32) has pointed out that in Anglo-Saxon charters relating to the Isle of Wight there are no references to woodland on boundaries within the Greensand area to the south of the central chalk ridge although Figure 66 shows that some ancient woodland of past and present HLC phases is situated on the medieval parish boundary between Newchurch and Brading in the Greensand area. From swine-rents recorded in the Domesday survey Rackham (1986, 78) has very tentatively estimated that only 6% of land on the Isle of Wight was woodland in 1086, compared with 15% in Hampshire and 70% in the Weald. However, the HLC Domesday Model (Fig 76) estimates that *Woodland and Royal Forest* may have occupied about 19% of the Isle of Wight at the time of Domesday. This includes Phase 3 assarts but also land within the royal forest of Parkhurst that was probably heathland or other open grazing by 1086. The 12.5% of total land use that has been calculated as *ancient woodland* within all HLC phases (Figure 67) may be a better indication of the true extent of woodland at the time of Domesday.

Although the Isle of Wight as a whole can be seen to fit within the South Eastern Province defined by Roberts and Wrathmell it has a remarkably varied historic landscape character in relation to its small size. The marked differences between different areas of the Island have been alluded to above. A full characterisation of the Isle of Wight must therefore consider HLC types within defined HLC Areas.

CHAPTER 6

ISLE OF WIGHT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

6.1 THE USE OF HLC AREAS IN ENGLISH AND WELSH HLC PROJECTS

The earliest county-wide HLC was carried out in Cornwall during 1994 and this project identified Historic Landscape Areas in addition to HLC types and zones. The project defined these areas as follows:

'Historic landscape areas are discrete, bounded and distinctive areas of the Cornish historic landscape arbitrarily separated from the whole on the basis of common or interrelated historic influences or components. They are internally heterogeneous (whereas types, within the assumptions of the characterisation process, are homogeneous), but they possess a unique identifiable general character which is distinct from all other areas.'

Certain reservations were expressed in the Cornwall HLC Report about the usefulness of historic landscape areas, the most significant one being that the areas were not directly derived from the types and zones of the characterisation exercise. They were therefore not produced from the bottom up but were instead top down 'expert'-led impositions that were inherently less objective and democratic than the types and zones (Herring 1998, 47).

As explained in Section 4.1, HLC Areas have not been used in many other English HLC projects because the Countryside Agency has already mapped 'landscape character areas' on a county basis under its 'Countryside Character Initiative' (http://www.countryside.gov.uk/cci). The Surrey HLC did use HLC Areas and in this project they were derived from groupings or patterns of HLC types, using a bottom up approach (Bannister and Wills 2001). In Wales historic landscape characterisation has followed on from the identification of discrete landscapes of historic interest (Cadw 1998; 2001). Characterisation work has been carried out within some of these landscapes by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts. The method has been to identify a series of character areas within individual landscapes of historic interest, using a top down approach. Each character area is then described under a number of headings or themes, such as 'settlement landscapes' and 'agricultural landscapes'. The Welsh methodology emphasises a more traditional historical approach to characterisation, in contrast with English HLC methodology where the emphasis is on a specifically archaeological approach based on morphological analysis.

The use of HLC Areas is perhaps most useful in helping to understand past historic landscape character. Rippon (2004, 55) has commented that 'from a past-oriented research perspective they are essential and equate to the *pays* and regions that early topographic writers were so keenly aware of'.

6.2 THE DEFINITION OF HLC AREAS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

The Isle of Wight has a remarkably varied historic landscape character in relation to its small size. For this reason it was decided at the start of the Isle of Wight HLC Project that HLC Areas would be defined as an aid to understanding the complexity of its historic landscape, particularly since the only landscape assessment covering the whole Island (Countryside Commission 1994) was prepared before the now standard Landscape Character Assessment Technique was developed (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002). The Isle of Wight HLC Areas were defined initially on a top down basis based on previous research, taking into account historic field patterns, settlement patterns and woodland distribution patterns as well as present historic landscape character, landscape, geology and archaeology. As characterisation of HLC types proceeded a better understanding of the Island's historic landscape was achieved and this resulted in the creation of additional HLC Areas and the redrawing of boundaries. HLC types from the completed HLC mapping helped in defining the final HLC Areas as follows:

- West Wight Chalk Downland
- West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge
- East Wight Chalk Ridge
- South Wight Downland
- South Wight Downland Edge
- Northern Lowlands
- Freshwater Isle
- Thorley/Wellow Plain
- Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle
- South-West Wight Coastal Zone
- Atherfield Coastal Plain
- South Wight Sandstone and Gravel
- Arreton Valley
- Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay
- The Undercliff

Following completion of HLC digitisation the final HLC Areas were formally defined on the basis of the characteristics set out below.

- Geology
- Relief
- Drainage
- Coastline (where applicable)
- Soils
- Woodland
- Designed Landscapes (where applicable)
- Landscape Character
- Economy and Industry
- Archaeology
- Settlement Patterns
- Past HLC

- Present HLC
- Buildings
- Threats to Character

Tabulated descriptions of each HLC Area, defined by the above characteristics, are set out in the Appendix. The characteristics were designed primarily to ensure the definition of robust HLC Areas but also to assist in responding to the Countryside Quality Counts Survey www.cqc.org.uk and the list of characteristics reflects this dual purpose.

In contrast with the deliberately arbitrary boundaries of the Cornish and Surrey HLC Areas it was found that meaningful boundaries which marked a real change in historic landscape character could generally be defined for the Isle of Wight HLC Areas. The boundaries were mainly drawn along man-made features such as roads and field edges but it was discovered that these had frequently been laid out at the interface between two HLC areas. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that HLC Areas are artificial divisions of the landscape reflecting different land use and settlement patterns but not corresponding to actual tenurial or administrative divisions in the past or present.

Definition of the HLC Areas has been influenced by John's Margham's work on the Island's historic landscape. Margham has identified five landscape regions in papers dealing with Anglo-Saxon settlement and land use on the Isle of Wight (Margham 2003, Margham forthcoming). He has named these regions 'The Northern Lowlands', 'The Lateral Ridge', 'The Southern Vale', 'The Southern Massif' and 'The Undercliff'. 'The Northern Lowlands' Area is defined as the whole of the northern part of the Isle of Wight. To the south is 'The Lateral Ridge' which is defined as the chain of hills running across the Island from the Needles in the west to Culver Cliff in the east, consisting mainly of chalk downland but also including the subsidiary greensand ridge to the south of the chalk. This area of downland is separated from the downland of 'The Southern Massif' by the lower-lying 'Southern Vale' where the underlying deposits are mainly Lower Greensand. 'The Southern Massif' runs from St Catherine's Down in the west to Luccombe Down in the east. Much of the underlying geology is Chalk but there is also Upper Greensand and Gault on the northern margins of the area, as well as areas of landslip. The most southerly landscape region is 'The Undercliff', a naturally well-defined area bounded to the north by an inland cliff for much of its length, which was relatively isolated from the rest of the Island before the development of modern communications.

Margham (2003) has described in detail the historical ecology and land use of the various Isle of Wight landscape regions and also their relative productivity at the time of the Domesday Survey. The HLC Project has attempted to build on Margham's work to identify and describe areas of settlement and enclosure that had a specific character in medieval and post-medieval times, although this character may be of far older origin in some cases. HLC Areas represent sub-divisions and modifications of Margham's landscape regions and the definition of HLC Areas has been greatly influenced by his work, including the parish surveys of Thorley and Freshwater (Margham 1990, Margham 1992).

6.3 HISTORIC ESTATES AND PARISHES ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT IN RELATION TO HLC AREAS

HLC Areas are connected with land use and settlement rather than with land ownership and administration and cut across historic tenurial and administrative boundaries. It would seem that early communities and estates used the resources of several areas. In Anglo-Saxon times 'mother parishes' appear to have evolved and to have had the form of 'bacon-rasher' slices, crossing the Island from the Solent to the south coast. (Hockey 1982, 1-13). Freshwater, Calbourne, Carisbrooke, Newchurch and Brading provide convincing evidence of such parochial territories in the period before the Norman Conquest and Arreton was possibly at the centre of a further such territory (Margham 2000, 121-123). Newchurch Parish survived as a unit of land stretching right across the Island until the 19th Century (Fig 6). These parishes seem to have corresponded with the territories of early Anglo-Saxon estates. In origin they may even have pre-dated the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the Isle of Wight and have been connected with Roman estates (Tomalin unpublished) although this suggestion has been challenged (Sewell 2000).

The early Anglo-Saxon estates contained land in most of the Island's topographic zones and seem to have been laid out to allow exploitation of various resources within the landscape. Transhumance may possibly have been practised, with the less productive and more wooded area of the Northern lowlands being used for extensive grazing on a seasonal basis. Parallels for this practice exist in the Surrey Weald (Blair 1991). Calbourne is the most well documented of the Island's Anglo-Saxon estates. The boundaries of this estate are described in a charter purporting to be a grant of land to the Diocese of Winchester in AD 826. By later Anglo-Saxon times some of the early estates had been broken up into smaller landholdings which are described in a number of charters (Margham 2005; Margham 2007) but the parochial boundaries seem to have remained largely intact.

By 1086 many independent estates existed within the territories of the mother parishes, 103 manors being listed in Domesday Book. At an earlier date these had probably been subsidiary settlements linked to the main estate centre. Manorial chapels on some estates within the original mother parishes became independent parishes during the Middle Ages but in the later Middle Ages the territories of parishes became fixed and remained the same until the later 19th century (Fig 6). Many parishes had portions of 'detached' land, indicating early tenurial links. Isle of Wight parishes usually contained several manors, in contrast with other parts of England where parishes and manors were coterminous. In the western half of the Isle of Wight several of the original parochial units, which had formerly stretched from coast to coast, became divided into smaller parishes on either side of the West Wight downland ridge after the Norman Conquest. The boundaries of several of these parishes can be observed as earthworks running along the tops of the downs

After the fragmentation of the early Anglo-Saxon estates, manors and farms tended to hold the majority of their land within one HLC Area although the central and southern downs were a resource utilised by manors situated in

various other HLC Areas. Most parishes included some downland within their territories and the names of individual downs refer either to the parishes in which they were situated or to individual manors within those parishes.

The medieval manors would have had a core of open-field arable farmed by manorial tenants but the Island landscape would have looked quite different from that of the English Midlands, where open-field arable occupied up to eighty or ninety percent of the total land in some townships. On the Island the amount of land devoted to open-field arable would generally have been much smaller and each manor would have had variable amounts of common or waste (including downland common pasture in many cases), valley-floor meadow and woodland

6.4 SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE IN RELATION TO HLC AREAS

Interpretative maps generated from HLC data show the past distribution of open-field and other land uses such as woodland, downland, waste or common, and heathland within the various HLC Areas (Figs 52-67). Since these interpretations of past land use are often based purely on the morphology of past or present field patterns and other HLC types they will not be entirely accurate. However, it is hoped that the overall picture will be correct. Maps modelling the Domesday Landscape of the Isle of Wight in relation to HLC Areas and medieval parishes have also been constructed (Figs 74 and 75).

Early maps are an important source of information for past settlement patterns, especially the OS 1793 drawings in the British Library. (All references to the OS 1793 drawings in this chapter refer to the finished drawings in the British Library rather than the field sketches held at the National Archives). The 1793 drawings show a concentration of nucleated settlement around the downland edge and at the interface between different HLC Areas. In addition, there are clusters of settlement within the *Freshwater Isle* and *Thorley/Wellow Plain* HLC Areas. However, the drawings also show a distribution of dispersed settlement that covers all HLC Areas and most kilometre squares within the Island, excluding only a few areas of high downland and Parkhurst Forest. Any question regarding the mixed nature of Isle of Wight settlement is answered by the 1793 drawings. The density of dispersed settlement relative to other parts of England clearly justifies the Island's inclusion within Roberts and Wrathmell's 'South East Province' which has been defined on the basis of their national map of dispersion density (Roberts and Wrathmell 2002 fig 1.3). The origin of dispersed settlement on the Isle of Wight merits further study. Can it be seen as a faint echo of settlement patterns in prehistoric or Romano-British times or does it reflect the colonization of less productive areas of the Island in medieval times?

Archaeological finds, archaeological sites plotted from air photographs and place-names all have limitations as evidence for the distribution of early settlement but have been used in the discussion of individual HLC Areas to assess the significance of these areas for settlement in the past. The picture that seems to emerge is of some settlement in most HLC Areas from prehistoric times. Selection of sites for habitation and farming activity within the individual HLC Areas was influenced by very local differences in geology, topography and

soil type. Margham has pointed out the significance of small patches of superficial gravel for colonisation of the northern clays in early medieval times (Margham 2003 and forthcoming b). However, the downland edge can be regarded as the core historic settlement area of the Isle of Wight despite evidence of early settlement in other areas. Seven of the Island's eight known Roman villas lie on or close to the chalk. In his analysis of Anglo-Saxon landscape regions on the Isle of Wight Margham has identified the margins of both the Lateral Ridge and the Southern Massif as 'landscapes of continuity', in contrast with the Undercliff and much of the Southern Vale and Northern Lowlands which he considers to be 'landscapes of colonization' (Margham forthcoming b).

6.5 DOWNLAND AND DOWNLAND-EDGE LAND USE AND SETTLENT

The downland edge comprises the HLC Areas of the *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* and the *South Wight Downland Edge*. Historically, settlements on the downland edge varied in form although this historic form is now often masked by twentieth-century development. Where settlements lay on relatively flat land with rising ground behind they were often small nucleated clusters such as Godshill. Brighstone comprised several nucleated clusters in close proximity. Where settlements lay within valleys a more linear form occurs, as at Chillerton, Gatcombe and Whitwell. Brading and Carisbrooke have regular row plans suggesting an element of planning. Dispersed farmsteads also occur on the downland slopes.

Early settlements on the downland edge would each have had access to a core area of arable land. There is aerial photographic evidence for field systems and lynchets covering some of the higher downland but this should not necessarily be seen as the most important arable area for prehistoric and Romano-British farmers. Evidence for early arable farming on lower ground may have been destroyed by later farming activities. In medieval times open fields seem to have existed on the flatter areas of Chalk and adjacent Greensand where this was sufficiently extensive. The open area of Upper Greensand between Carisbrooke and Gatcombe appears to have been occupied by large open fields, and fairly extensive open fields also lay close to Niton. Elsewhere, open-field strips occupied a more constricted space on the valley side, as at Chillerton and Whitwell. In times of land hunger medieval arable farming extended onto the slopes of the higher downland, one example of this being the strip lynchets on the steep south east face of Chillerton Down.

It has already been noted that downland edge settlement often occurs at the interface with other HLC Areas. Medieval open-field associated with downland edge settlement frequently seems to have occupied land on the edge of an adjacent HLC Area. For instance Brighstone had a relatively large area of open-field lying to the south of the village within the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* and Chale seems to have had open-field lying in the *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel* Area. The *South Wight Downland Edge* Area, although apparently an area of early settlement, appears to have had limited open-field and some of the present field patterns appear to derive from the medieval enclosure of rough open ground.

The settlements and core arable areas of the downland edge surrounded the high downland and were closely associated with this resource. Land that can be considered as 'downland' was not restricted to the chalk grassland alone. Cahill (1984) has suggested that this habitat type had little or no meaning to earlier generations as a distinct entity. However, the three HLC Areas of high downland comprising the *West Wight Chalk Downland*, the *East Wight Chalk Ridge* and the *South Wight Downland* are all on the Chalk or Upper Greensand and of generally high elevation with steep slopes and flat summit ridges or plateaux.

There are clear visual and vegetational distinctions between the main blocks of downland. The *West Wight Chalk Downland*, has a narrow summit ridge and very steep slopes on both sides from the Needles to Mottistone Down. East of Brighstone the downland broadens out into a wider plateau where the chalk is overlain with Angular Flint Gravel. This plateau is bisected by the Bowcombe Valley and then contracts to a narrow band of chalk which is interrupted by the alluvium of the Medina Valley at Newport. The chalk continues to the east of Newport but does not form a distinct ridge of downland between Newport and Arreton. In this area the higher land comprises the Plateau Gravel and Lower Greensand of St George's Down. *The East Wight Chalk Ridge* commences at Arreton and has steep slopes on the southern side and in places on the northern side. The ridge is narrow, being less than one kilometre across at its widest point and typically only about half a kilometre. Mersley Down and Ashey Down have rounded profiles and are separated from adjoining areas of downland by north-facing combes. At Brading the chalk ridge is cut by the river Yar and Bembridge Down forms a detached area of downland to the east of the river, stretching to the eastern extremity of the Island at Culver Cliff. *The South Wight Downland* rises to 235 metres on St Boniface Down, the Island's highest point. Deposits of Angular Flint Gravel overlie the chalk on parts of the Southern Massif, giving rise to acid vegetation, as on Luccombe Down.

The High Downland possesses many Bronze Age round barrows. In addition a Neolithic mortuary enclosure has been identified on Tennyson Down and a Neolithic long barrow on Afton Down. Only one probable Iron Age hillfort has been identified on Chillerton Down although a defensive ditch of Iron Age date has recently been discovered on the northern edge of the chalk to the east of Brading. The earliest defences at Carisbrooke Castle date from Anglo-Saxon times or earlier, and pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are known from Bowcombe Down as well as from Chessell Down.

Historically, the major use of the high downs on the Island, at any rate from medieval times, was probably for the pasturing of domestic animals although Cahill (1984) has cautioned against viewing the downs as a static monocultural habitat. The evidence for prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval field systems on the downs has already been mentioned. In medieval times the downs were probably used mainly as manorial commons with pockets of land intermittently in use for arable cultivation, as on Ashey Down where ridge and furrow has been recorded (Drewett 1970). A stock enclosure also recorded on Ashey Down is the only known example of enclosed pasture on the chalk in

medieval times but enclosure of the downs to create private grazing lands was widespread from the 16th century. Various 'Newbarn Farms' exist on the downland edge and these may have been post-medieval farmsteads that were cultivating newly enclosed downland or heathland. The OS 1793 drawings show that many of the downs had been enclosed by this date although most were still used as pasture.

At that time, as now, there were clear visible distinctions between the three main blocks of downland. The West Wight downs were still very open and Marshall (1799) recorded only one break or large enclosure in this part of the lateral chalk ridge although the lower margins around Carisbrooke were generally enclosed. However, he noted that the southern downs were divided into large enclosures. The Arreton-Ashey-Brading ridge was partially wooded and well enclosed. The tithe surveys of the 1830s and 1840s record the land use within some of these high downland enclosures as arable. In the early 20th century a considerable area of the central chalk ridge in the West Wight was planted with trees by the Forestry Commission. In the later 20th century arable agriculture became common on parts of the high downland where this was not in National Trust ownership.

6.6 DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL HLC AREAS

West Wight Chalk Downland

This Area contains a higher concentration of archaeological sites and monuments than any of the other HLC Areas. Many Bronze Age round barrows survive as earthworks on the chalk grassland and in forestry plantations, with ploughed barrows on arable land. There is a Neolithic mortuary enclosure on Tennyson Down and on Afton Down there is a long barrow surrounded by a later Bronze Age barrow cemetery. A prehistoric field system survives beneath plantation woodland on Newbarn Down. There is a probable Iron Age hillfort on the summit of Chillerton Down and medieval strip lynchets along the side of the down. The Bowcombe Valley was an important focus of settlement from the later prehistoric period & contains traces of a Roman building at Bowcombe and villas at Clatterford and Carisbrooke, as well as Middle Saxon material. The earliest defences at Carisbrooke Castle are of Anglo-Saxon (or possibly late Roman) date with stone defences dating from the twelfth century to the seventeenth century. Pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were excavated in the 19th century at Bowcombe Down and Chessell Down.

Within this HLC Area there are three distinct sub-areas. Sub-area 1 stretches from the Needles to Mottistone Down and comprises a narrow ridge with steep slopes to the north and south. The maximum elevation is 203m OD on Mottistone Down. Sub area 2 is a wide dissected plateau to the north-east of Brighstone, sloping downwards into combes around the edges of the area and attaining a maximum elevation of 214m OD on Brighstone Down. Sub-area 3 comprises the low-lying land of the Bowcombe Valley, Carisbrooke and Shide, on the outskirts of Newport.

The Chalk is overlain by clay-with-flints in places on Mottistone Down and on the dissected plateau. Combes within Sub-areas 1 and 2 are dry. Within the

Bowcombe Valley the Lukely Brook rises south of Bowcombe Farm and flows north-east into the Medina.

Sub-area 1 comprises a high ridge of unenclosed chalk grassland, with outstanding views of the Island, the Solent and the English Channel. Much of this sub-area is in National Trust care and with open access. Chalk cliffs lie to the south of West High Down, Tennyson Down, Afton Down and Compton Down. Freshwater Bay is carved out of the surrounding chalk. Thin alkaline soils support calcareous grassland within much the sub-area. Recent scrub woodland exists on Tennyson Down and there are twentieth century plantations on Shalcombe Down, Chessell Down and Westover Down. There is no settlement within this sub-area.

The clay-with-flints drift deposits within sub-area 2 support deeper and slightly richer soils than those of sub-area 1 but these are still classified as Grade 4 agricultural land, indicating relatively poor quality. There are extensive 20th century plantations within this sub-area although some plantation woodland has been cleared since 1987. Agricultural land use consists mainly of improved grassland, or large exposed arable fields, with uncultivated combes on the northern edge of the plateau. Settlement consists mainly of dispersed farmsteads set within these combes but the small nucleated settlement of Calbourne, with its houses clustered around the parish church, lies on the northern edge of the Chalk at the interface with the *Northern Lowlands*,

Within sub-area 3 the Bowcombe Valley is a mixture of farmland and valley-floor pasture. There are dispersed farmsteads along the length of the valley with an interrupted row settlement at Bowcombe and small nucleated clusters at Plaish and Clatterford. Carisbrooke, the centre of an Anglo-Saxon mother parish, is a regular-row settlement which lies on the junction of the Chalk and the Reading Beds. Shide was a Domesday Manor but is now on the outskirts of Newport.

Sub-area 1 has earthwork evidence of some prehistoric and Roman arable land use and sub-area 2 has earthwork and aerial-photographic evidence of fairly extensive prehistoric field systems. However, in the Middle Ages sub-area 1 and much of sub-area 2 was common manorial pasture. Individual manors had enclosed discrete areas of downland by the late eighteenth century but within sub-area 1 the land use continued as unimproved rough grazing. Large arable enclosures were created within sub-area 2 in post-medieval times, with forestry planting in the 20th century. There may have been some open-field on the slopes above the valley-floor pasture in the Bowcombe Valley. There is some ancient woodland on the slopes surrounding the Bowcombe Valley.

Buildings within this HLC Area include stone farmsteads around the edge of the plateau in sub-area 2 and also within the Bowcombe Valley where there are nineteenth-century estate cottages. Carisbrooke is a mixture of stone and brick buildings with the fine church tower being constructed of Greensand. Carisbrooke Castle is mainly of Greensand with some Bembridge Limestone.

West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge

This HLC Area lies immediately to the south of the *West Wight Chalk Downland*. It comprises three distinct sub-areas; these being the region from Compton to Shorwell including the sandstone ridge, the sandstone ridge and downland edge slope from Shorwell to Gatcombe, and the south-eastern side of the Bowcombe Valley.

Sub-area 1 lies on Lower Greensand deposits (Carstone, Sandrock and Ferruginous Sands) on Gault and on Upper Greensand. It comprises a sandstone ridge which runs to the south of the higher chalk ridge of the *West Wight Downland* and parallel with it. This sub-area has a distinct landscape character of its own but its land use and routeways link it with the adjacent *West Wight Downland.* A string of settlements lie *w*ithin this sub-area at the foot of the sandstone ridge on the junction with the *South West Wight Coastal Zone*. Hulverstone and Mottistone are of hamlet size, although Mottistone has a medieval church. Brighstone is much larger but historically was polyfocal in form, with a nucleated cluster around the church and outlying areas of settlement. Buildings within this sub-area utilise Lower Greensand of various kinds including Ferruginous Sandstone. Chalk block are also used, especially on farm buildings, and some older buildings are thatched. There are a number of former manor houses of relatively small size, built of Greensand. Mottistone Manor, of somewhat larger size, was restored by the Seely family in the 1920s and is now owned by the National Trust.

Mottistone Common occupies the sandstone ridge to the north of Mottistone and Brighstone and was formerly an area of common heathland grazing. The Common was planted with conifers in the early 20th century but the trees have now been cleared and the area is being restored to heathland. Mottistone Common contains the Neolithic long barrow known as 'The Longstone'. A nearby earthwork at Castle Hill is a possible Iron Age stock enclosure (Currie 2003). A large round barrow on Mottistone Common is one of relatively few round barrows not sited near the crest of the chalk downs.

Rock Roman Villa sits at the interface with the chalk downland beside the Buddlehole Spring north of Brighstone.

Sub-area 2 lies on the Upper Greensand and the Gault formation. A distinct sandstone ridge continues to the south of the chalk downland from Shorwell to Berry Hill. Shorwell lies at the base of the chalk and historically its form was that of a linear spring-line settlement focussed on the church and on Northcourt Manor. The remains of three Bronze Age burial mounds lie on the sandstone ridge to the east of Shorwell, including Sheards Barrrow.

From Berry Hill to Gatcombe the topography becomes more varied but remains hilly, with a steep slope to the south-east of Chillerton descending into the Medina Valley. The dispersed farmsteads of Ramsdown, Lower Rill, Upper Rill and Loverstone lie at the base of this slope on the interface with the *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel* Area. At Chillerton and Gatcombe there are linear interrupted-row settlements with twentieth century infilling lying within combes. The settlement at Gatcombe includes a church/manor element.

Evidence exists for medieval common open-field fitted into this hilly landscape, sometimes forming strip lynchets as at Chillerton. Today this sub-area is mainly in arable use with large fields but also with some smaller, irregularly shaped fields and a network of hollow-ways and tracks. The older houses are of mainly of Greensand with some brick. There are manor houses at Northcourt, Gatcombe and Sheat.

Sub-area 3, on the south-eastern side of the Bowcombe Valley, comprises a level plain of upper Greensand. It has an open, exposed aspect with large arable fields and few hedgerows but good views to nearby chalk downs. Froglands Farm is the only settlement within the sub-area. An extensive area of medieval open-field appears to have existed within this fairly flat and low-lying area, associated with the settlements of Carisbrooke and Gatcombe, and possibly also with the small settlements of Bowcombe, Plaish and Clatterford on the edge of the adjacent *West Wight Chalk Downland*. Gatcombe was a daughter parish of Carisbrooke and the indented boundary between the two parishes, with dog-legs at the junction of open-field blocks, suggest that it was laid out after the open-field system had been established. This sub-area is one of the relatively few parts of the Island where open fields would have dominated the landscape in medieval times. No earthworks have survived within the sub-area but there are ancient tracks and significant finds, notably of Middle Anglo-Saxon material.

East Wight Chalk Ridge

This chalk ridge running eastwards from Arreton has steep slopes with a narrow summit plateau, widening out in places. The maximum altitude is 135 OD north-east of Arreton Down. At Brading the ridge is cut through by the eastern Yar, which separates the Arreton-Brading Ridge from the Bembridge/Culver Down ridge. The chalk is overlain with limited superficial deposits of Angular Flint Gravel on Mersley Down and Brading Down. Springs radiate north and south from the base of the chalk ridge. Culver Down, at the eastern end of the ridge, terminates in chalk cliffs.

This area differs from the *West Wight Chalk Downland* in having some non-plantation woodland along the ridge. This includes secondary woodland north of Arreton Down and ancient woodland east of Ashey Down at Eaglehead Copse. Nunwell Down abuts the eighteenth-nineteenth century Nunwell Park which lies in the Northern Lowlands HLC Area. Kelly's Copse is ornamental woodland associated with Nunwell.

This HLC Area has an open landscape with excellent views from the Arreton-Brading Road and from the Bembridge Down road, both being on top of the ridge. A large chalk quarry still operating on Arreton Down is very visible from the land to the south of the chalk ridge. There is less unimproved chalk grassland than in the *West Wight Chalk Downland* Area*.* Nearly all of the land on the north side of the ridge from Arreton to Brading is ploughed with the exception of Ashey Down, much of which is improved grassland. There is unimproved grassland on the south side of Arreton Down, and on parts of Mersley Down and Brading Down with smaller pockets elsewhere. Much of

Bembridge Down has been ploughed although there is some open grassland on the sides of the ridge and on Culver Down.

Between Arreton and Brading dispersed farmsteads occupy the base of the ridge on either side, at the interface with other HLC areas. There are no vernacular buildings on the chalk ridge itself. 19th century and 20th century military fortifications exist on Bembridge Down and Culver Down as well as a nineteenth century monument and a later coastguard station.

There are unploughed Bronze Age round barrows on Arreton Down, Ashey Down, Nunwell Down and Culver Down. Ploughed or damaged round barrows occur on Mersley Down, Middle West Down and Bembridge Down. Remains of prehistoric and Roman field systems have been recorded on Mersley Down, Ashey Down and Brading Down. There are remains of medieval ridge & furrow and a medieval stock enclosure on Ashey Down.

Archaeological evidence for prehistoric, Roman and medieval field systems suggests that parts of the East Wight chalk ridge were cultivated from early times. However, in medieval times much of this area would have been used as unenclosed manorial common grazing, a land use indicated by the individual downs named after adjacent manors. By the time of the OS 1793 drawings much of the East Wight chalk ridge was divided into large enclosures and the tithe surveys of the 1830s and 1840s record arable land use within some of these downland enclosures. At the present day there are fairly large arable fields on the north side of the ridge from Arreton to Brading, with smaller fields and areas of uncultivated grassland on the south side of the ridge. Much of Bembridge Down is divided into large enclosures but Culver Down is open grassland.

South Wight Downland

This HLC Area comprises three distinct blocks of high downland, separated by somewhat lower ground around Niton and north of Ventnor. The western block of high downland comprises Gore Down, St Catherine's Hill, St Catherine's Down and Head Down. The middle block comprises Week Down, Rew Down, Stenbury Down and Appuldurcombe Down. The eastern block comprises Wroxall Down, St Boniface Down, Bonchurch Down, Luccombe Down, Shanklin Down and St Martin's Down. The high downland ridges widen into broader summit plateaux on St Catherine's Hill, Week Down and Appuldurcombe Down, with steep slopes on either side of the ridges. St Boniface Down attains a maximum altitude of 240m OD and is the highest point on the Isle of Wight.

On the high downland the geology is mainly Middle & Lower Chalk, with Upper Greensand on St Catherine's Down, Head Down and the lower downland slopes. There are superficial deposits of Angular Flint Gravel (Clay with Flints) on St Catherine's Hill, Week Down, St Boniface Down, Bonchurch Down, Luccombe Down, Shanklin Down and Stenbury Down.

The western block of high downland has much of the feel of traditional downland with good access on footpaths and excellent views of surrounding land and of English Channel. However, most of St Catherine's Hill is enclosed

and improved grassland, with only small a small amount of unimproved chalk grassland. Much of the narrow spine of St Catherine's Hill is unimproved acid grassland but with a substantial area of scrub. Head Down has some unimproved acid grassland and a small patch of heathland. The middle block of high downland is mostly cultivated farmland with an exposed and open feel. There is unimproved chalk grassland on the southern side of Rew Down and the SE edge of Week Down, with the ancient woodland of Rew Copse and Appuldurcombe Wood on the eastern slope. The eastern block of downland comprises a horseshoe-shaped ridge overlooking lower ground to the north-west and the Undercliff to the south. Much of this downland is of nature conservation interest with areas of unimproved chalk grassland, acid grassland, heathland and bluebell stands. There is ancient woodland on the northern and eastern slopes, comprising Wroxall Copse and Luccombe Copse. The twentieth-century holm oak woodland on the south-facing slope of St Boniface Down is invasive and requires management but is also of nature conservation interest. A radio station and the remains of a Second World War radar station on the summit of St Boniface Down detract to some extent from the landscape quality of the sub-area, although the radar station is of historic interest.

Archaeological features on St Catherine's Hill include a Bronze Age round barrow, medieval strip lynchets, remains of a medieval lighthouse and oratory, and an eighteenth century lighthouse. The round barrows on Week Down have been ploughed but the burial mounds of the round barrow cemetery on Luccombe Down survive as earthworks. There are medieval strip lynchets on St Martin's Down. The 18th century landscape park of Appuldurcombe included Appuldurcombe Down, with the now- ruinous stone deer park wall encircling the base of the high downland. Much of Appuldurcombe Down has been cultivated in the recent past and does not have recognisable parkland characteristics today.

There is no settlement within the high downland area but the nucleated settlement of Niton lies below Niton Down. Between the southern edge of Niton Down and the high downland of Week Down is a fairly level plateau with two local hill tops at Niton Reservoir and High Hat (St Lawrence) reaching altitudes of 155m OD & 141m OD. The soils derive from the Chalk and Upper Greensand and so are light and easily worked. Fairly extensive open fields formerly lay to the east and west of Niton, which was one of only two places on the Isle of Wight where the open fields were enclosed by Act of Parliament in the 19th century. The landscape in this area to the south of the high downland is generally open and exposed, being dominated by arable agriculture with few hedgerows and no trees. The north side of Niton village, tucked into a fold of the downs has a more intimate landscape, as does Dean Farm at the head of a downland-edge combe to the south of Whitwell. Between the high ground of Rew Down and Littleton Down lies Lowtherville, an early twentieth century suburb of Ventnor. Wroxall Manor Farm lies at the centre of a bowl of lower land to the north of Wroxall Down, St Boniface Down and Luccombe Down. Here, fairly large regular fields shown on the OS 1793 map may derive from open-field.

The OS 1793 map shows unenclosed downland on much of Gore Down (then called Chale Down) St Catherine's Hill, St Catherine's Down and Head Down (then called Niton Down), although some fields are shown on the downland slopes. Rew Down, Week Down and Appuldurcombe Down are shown on the 1793 map as unenclosed downland although some enclosure may have taken place on Stenbury Down. The eastern block of high downland is shown largely as unenclosed downland on the 1793 map although Shanklin Down had been divided from the neighbouring downland. A considerable extent of high downland within this HLC Area was enclosed and cultivated in the 19th and 20th centuries but St Boniface Down and Luccombe Down remains unenclosed (except for the Radio Station precincts) and uncultivated.

There is woodland around the northern edge of Wroxall Down (Wroxall Copse) Shanklin Down (Greatwood Copse) and St Martin's Down.

South Wight Downland Edge

This HLC Area lies to the north of the *South Wight Downland*. Heavy Gault clay surrounds the high downland, with lighter Greensand soils beyond. There are also areas of landslip at the interface with the high downland. Within this Area there are widely scattered pockets of woodland. Where woodland exists it is often associated with designed landscapes as at The Hermitage, beneath St Catherine's Down and along the former carriage drive from Godshill to Appuldurcombe House.

The Area is characterised by historic nucleated settlements, often at the interface with other HLC Areas, but also contains dispersed combe-head manor houses and farmsteads. The main settlements are Chale, Chale Green, Whitwell, Godshill, Wroxall and the church/manor complex at Shanklin, with minor historic settlements at Nettlecombe and Sandford. Historically Godshill was a nucleated cluster, Chale, Whitwell, Wroxall were of linear form and Chale Street was an interrupted-row settlement. Chale Green is one of the relatively few 'green villages' on the Isle of Wight. Wroxall, Sandford and Nettlecombe do not have parish churches but Wroxall was an important manor at Domesday. This manor was presumably centred on Wroxall Manor Farm which lies in a combe on the edge of the *South Wight Downland* Area but settlement appears to have spread down the valley within this HLC Area and Wroxall was of large hamlet size at the time of the OS 1793 drawings, before its nineteenth century expansion. Nettlecombe is a shrunken hamlet with medieval earthworks indicating some retrenchment from this combe-head settlement on the gault clay. Medieval earthworks also exist at Stenbury

The HLC mapping suggests that there was probably only a limited amount of open-field within this Area in medieval times (Fig 52 and 53) despite the existence of nucleated settlements and Margham's identification of this general area as a 'landscape of continuity' (Margham forthcoming b). Open-field strips occupied a constricted space on the valley side at Whitwell and are shown on the 1840s tithe maps, although largely enclosed by that date. Blocks of open-field also existed elsewhere but in certain parts of the Area it appears to have been absent.

Around the western, northern and eastern slopes of St Catherine's Down there are fairly steep slopes dissected by small valleys where much land slippage has occurred. Here, the landscape is generally small-scale and intimate with dispersed settlements and small irregular hedged pasture fields which probably derive from medieval and post-medieval enclosure of rough open land. However, it is possible to over-simplify the characterisation of past land use. For instance, around Wydcombe there are small, irregular fields which are mostly now under pasture but the tithe schedule lists a surprisingly large amount of arable (Basford and Smout 2000).

Only a small amount of prehistoric material appears to have been found within this HLC Area, possibly because many fields have been under pasture within the last century and thus have been unavailable for field-walking.

Northern Lowlands

This area encompasses much of the land to the north of the central chalk ridge. It is mainly a lowland area but is moderately hilly in parts, although the land does not rise above the 75 metre contour. The area is characterised by its extensive Solent coastline and by the creeks, inlets and estuaries punctuating that coastline. Drainage is provided by streams flowing northward into the Solent. Most of the area lies on Oligocene geological formations, particularly the Hamstead Beds which provide clayey, seasonally waterlogged soils. Bembridge Marls and Bembridge Limestone are present in certain areas. Most vernacular buildings within this area utilise the local Bembridge Limestone which was quarried from Roman to post-medieval times. The only known Roman villa on the Isle of Wight to be sited far from the central chalk ridge was on the coast at Gurnard and may possibly have been involved in the quarrying or export of Bembridge Limestone (Isle of Wight County Council 1992, 27). Between the central chalk ridge and the Oligocene formations lies a narrow belt of Eocene strata comprising the Reading Beds, London Clay and Bracklesham Group. Newport Roman Villa and Combley Roman Villa are sited on this narrow belt immediately north of the chalk ridge. Inland from the coast are patches of Plateau Gravel and Marine Gravel, forming a capping on locally prominent hilltops.

Much of the agricultural land is pasture at the present day but arable use does occur on the Osborne and Headon Beds and on areas of superficial gravel, particularly around Osborne and Wootton. Another distinctive area of arable lies immediately beyond the chalk ridge to the north of Mersley Down. Fields are generally of small-medium size (3-6 ha) and are often surrounded by well-wooded hedgerows, giving the impression of a much larger amount of tree cover than actually exists. The historic parklands of Westover, Swainston, Nunwell, Norris and Osborne contribute to the present historic landscape character of the area. The *Northern Lowlands* contain most of the Island's ancient woodland and replanted ancient woodland.

Most of the *Northern Lowlands* HLC Area is interpreted by Margham (forthcoming b) as a 'landscape of colonization' which was less favoured than other areas for early settlement but he has also shown that specific locations on the more freely draining gravel areas attracted settlement in Anglo-Saxon times.

Several fairly early settlements have tūn suffixes to their place-names and probably came into existence between AD 750 and AD 950, a period to which many mainland settlements with tūn suffixes can be dated. A study of population figures in Domesday Book shows that the North Wight included three 2km squares with higher population densities than parts of Central and South Wight. (Margham1988). These squares contained the parish churches of Calbourne, Whippingham, and Shalfleet. Calbourne is probably best considered as a 'Downland Edge' settlement and has been included within the *West Wight Chalk Downland* HLC Area. Whippingham, on the edge of the plateau gravel, was a manor which possessed a church by the time of Domesday and was the centre of a medieval parish. Shalfleet, one of only four Domesday manors situated on the Hamstead clays, also had a church mentioned in Domesday Book. The church and manor house lay close to a natural harbour at the head of Shalfleet Lake and this may explain its early significance. Binstead and Wootton, mentioned in Domesday Book, have churches of twelfth century origin which later became parish churches. Margham (forthcoming b) has suggested that the settlement at Binstead may represent late Anglo-Saxon colonisation of a peripheral pasture area and that Wootton may have originated as a specialised component of a much larger Mid-Saxon estate. The building of Binstead Church may be linked to settlement associated with the nearby medieval stone quarries. The site to the west of Binstead chosen for Quarr Abbey in the 12th century may possibly indicate the colonisation of new land so typical of the Cistercian order. However, the abbey is on Bembridge Marl rather than the Hamstead Clay and the nearby home farm of Newnham, sited on a gravel outcrop, was almost certainly occupied by later Anglo-Saxon times (Hockey 1970, Margham forthcoming b). Northwood, one of very few significant early settlements on the Hamstead clays, was not mentioned in Domesday Book but had a chapel dependent on Carisbrooke by the 12th century and became a parish by the 16th century. Some Roman material has been recorded recently to the east of Northwood Church.

Although Domesday Book indicates specific concentrations of population within the *Northern Lowlands* it does not provide evidence for the settlement *pattern*; that is whether settlements were nucleated or dispersed. The OS 1793 drawings show both the small size of settlement nuclei within this area (often comprising only the manor house, church and a few other buildings) and also that there were fairly high densities of dispersed settlement in three discrete areas of the Northern Lowlands - to the north of Calbourne, in the Cowes/Northwood Area and to the south of Ryde. The dispersed settlement to the south of Ryde lay mainly within Ashey Manor and was associated with the numerous very small farm holdings of that manor (listed in the Mount Edgecumbe Suvey of 1771).

A region of very low settlement density can also be detected in Domesday Book on either side of the Medina, corresponding roughly with the area of Parkhurst Forest and Wootton Common and this pattern of low settlement density is also reflected in the 1793 OS drawings.

The position of the planned medieval towns of Newport, Yarmouth and Newtown within this HLC Area can be explained in terms of their proximity to

navigable estuaries and sheltered harbours which, for trading centres, would have been even more important than access to good quality agricultural land. Nevertheless, Newport was the only one of these towns to achieve successful urban status, having the advantages of being centrally placed and in close proximity to the routeway along the chalk ridge. Newtown, on the heavy Hamstead Clay, was failing by the end of the fourteenth century and is now a tiny hamlet although the street plan and burgess plots of the medieval borough are well preserved. There were only a dozen houses in Yarmouth by 1559 (Edwards 1999a) although it later staged a modest recovery.

The post-medieval towns of Cowes and Ryde were not dependent on the quality of agricultural land in their rural hinterland. Today, much of the Island's settlement is concentrated in north-east Wight, within a zone encompassing the towns of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes and Ryde, and a considerable part of this zone has an urban and suburban character. To the east of Ryde the 19th century coastal village of Seaview developed as a holiday and yachting resort. In the north-west Wight a speculative development of smallholdings or plotlands was planned and partially developed on poor quality agricultural land at Cranmore in the early 20th century (Hardy and Ward1984).

It has sometimes been assumed that little woodland clearance took place within this HLC Area in prehistoric times. However, a small peat mire at Newnham Farm has provided evidence that lime woodland was largely felled in the Neolithic, with some woodland remaining into the Bronze Age before its final demise at the expense of increasing agriculture. Oak and hazel remained in the region to become managed woodland (Scaife 2003, 25). Nevertheless, the extent of cultivation in prehistoric and Romano-British times was probably very limited and most of the *Northern Lowlands* is likely to have been a mosaic of woodland and wet clay heath. It was undoubtedly exploited for timber, firewood and hunting but was probably also used for extensive grazing. A similar pattern of land use may have continued into Anglo-Saxon times when each of the seven putative mother parishes had a share of this heavy marginal land. There may be a parallel with the Weald in Surrey where the settlement pattern evolved from a woodland pasture transhumance system (Bannister 2001, 53), with the break up of estates in later Anglo-Saxon times creating small manorial holdings separate from the main manor which was situated on better land some distance away There are few specific references to arable land anywhere on the Island in the Anglo-Saxon charters. Those charters describing land within the northern part of the Island contain only two such references and one of these, referring to 'the wheat marshy meadow' suggests an attempt to grow a crop in an unsuitable location (Margham 2003, 26-27).

Woodland probably still covered a substantial area of the *Northern Lowlands* in medieval times but was a finite resource that was carefully managed. This is shown by the reservation of Parkhurst as a hunting forest for the Lords of the Island, by the creation of enclosed parks at Watchingwell, Wootton and elsewhere, and by the creation of an enclosure bank around Combley Wood which belonged to Quarr Abbey. A considerable part of the Northern Lowlands may have been wood pasture, which was used for extensive grazing but maintained a light cover of trees from which timber and wood could be

harvested. No wood pasture exists on the Island today although there are a few areas where its former existence can be demonstrated.

There are relatively few indications of medieval open fields within the Northern Lowlands (Fig 52). Isolated examples have been identified, for instance at Newtown where there is archaeological and cartographic evidence for a small area of open-field associated with the planned 13th century borough. However, most existing field patterns seem to derive from the enclosure of woodland or open grazing land.

A substantial number of field patterns in the *Northern Lowlands* have been identified as possible or probable medieval woodland assarts, including land in the north-east Wight around Combley Great Wood, Briddlesford Copse and Firestone Copse. Another area of assarted fields has been identified to the south of Ryde and formerly belonged to Ashey Manor. Probable medieval assarts have also been identified around Parkhurst Forest. Later assarts south of Parkhurst can be dated by reference to 17th and 18th century documents. In 1812 a Parliamentary Act for the Enclosure of Parkhurst Forest was passed. Some of the forest was enclosed as farmland and these lands to the south and west of the surviving forest are rare examples of Parliamentary enclosure on the Isle of Wight (Fig 58).

Large parts of the *Northern Lowlands* may have been open clay heath commons in medieval and early post-medieval times. Documented examples of these commons include Calbourne Heathfield, part of which survived into the seventeenth century (Jones 2003), and Ashey Common which still existed in 1793. Two-thirds of Parkhurst Forest consisted of open heathland and grassland, prior to its enclosure in 1812 (Chatters 1991). HLC data suggests that clay heath was gradually enclosed from medieval times onwards. Around Bouldnor, Cranmore and Hamstead open rough land was probably enclosed in the eighteenth century, as semi-regular fields are shown on the 1793 Ordnance Survey drawings. At Elmsworth, Lambslease and Shippes Farm, situated near Newtown in the North-West Wight, better quality pasture land was divided into very large closes in the 17th century and the present field pattern in this area probably represents 18th century sub-division of the earlier closes (Basford and Loader 2002). In the East Wight there were extensive heathfield commons at Staplers Heath, Wootton Common and Lynn Common but these had all been enclosed by the end of the 19th century.

Freshwater Isle

This area is situated to the north of the chalk and to the west of the Yar estuary. It can be distinguished from the *Northern Lowlands* HLC Area by its geology, historic settlement and land use pattern and present landscape character. The underlying geology consists mainly of Eocene beds and the Osborne and Headon Beds, providing soils that are more easily worked than those of the Hamstead Beds which cover much of the Northern Wight Lowlands. The main drainage is provided by the Western Yar which rises close to Freshwater Bay, virtually cutting off the land to the west from the rest of the Isle of Wight and giving rise to the epithet of 'Freshwater Isle'. The Yar flows northward through marshland for just over a kilometre before becoming a tidal estuary stretching

some three kilometres to the Solent. Alluvium underlies the marshy land of the Yar Estuary and gravel terraces occur along the valley side. There is also a deposit of plateau gravel at Headon Warren.

The historic landscape character of *Freshwater Isle* is unlike that of any other part of the Island although it does have some similarities with the *Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle* HLC Area at the opposite end of the Isle of Wight. There is very little woodland at the present day and this reflects the historical situation, for there are no references in Domesday Book to woodland in the Freshwater area (Margham 1992, 113). This lack of woodland may have encouraged the creation of open fields in the later Anglo-Saxon period. In contrast with the *Northern Lowlands*, where there were few open fields, the evidence of the Freshwater Tithe Map of 1839 suggests that at least a third of this parish had formerly been cultivated as open-field (Margham 1992, 110). Enclosure of these open fields may have started early but seems to have been a gradual and piecemeal process, since the tithe map and the OS 1st Edition six inch map of 1862 show that individual strips were still being worked, although most of the open fields had been enclosed by that date. The enclosure of the 37 acres of open field at Easton, on the eastern flank of High (now Tennyson) Down, was authorised by the Annual Enclosure Act of 1861. This was one of only two instances of Parliamentary enclosure relating to arable open fields on the Isle of Wight (Adams 1960). Today much former agricultural land in Freshwater has been built over but some surviving fields still follow the outlines of former open fields, open field furlongs or even of individual open field strips.

It is unclear why the enclosure of open-field took place on a piecemeal basis in Freshwater, in some cases involving just a few strips, whereas elsewhere on the Isle of Wight it resulted in the enclosure of entire open fields and the subsequent creation of new internal boundaries unrelated to the former open-field strips. There may have been a lack of large 'improving' landlords over the centuries with the result that smaller farmers carried out enclosure on an ad hoc basis.

In addition to open field arable, there was a large amount of unenclosed rough grazing within Freshwater Isle until post-medieval times, much of it concentrated in the large area of 'Gaulden Common'. Even today there is still quite a large area of rough, uncultivated, gorse covered land around Golden Hill Fort. Norton Common was an area of 84 acres which ran along the cliff edge overlooking the Solent. Enclosure of the common was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1856 but did not take place as it was purchased by the War Department in 1856 (Margham 1992, 114). The *Freshwater Isle* HLC Area also contains the Island's largest surviving area of heathland, approximately 50 ha in extent, on plateau gravel at Headon Warren. Manors within Freshwater Isle would also have had communal grazing rights on Tennyson Down and West High Down.

The medieval settlement pattern within *Freshwater Isle* was 'polyfocal', consisting of numerous hamlets around small greens rather than the isolated farms and small nucleated villages that occurred elsewhere in the Island

(Margham 1992, 105). The parish church, which contains Anglo-Saxon material, stands on a gravel deposit commanding the highest point of the Yar Estuary. Margham has suggested that a planned medieval village may have been laid out at Freshwater Green, although if so this had decayed by 1793. Historic settlement patterns have now been partially obscured by 19th century development of seaside resorts at Freshwater Bay, Colwell and Totland, although these make a distinctive contribution to historic landscape character. Later residential development in the 20th Century has given much of the area a suburban feel.

The combination of open-field arable with polyfocal settlement and small greens has similarities with the settlement and enclosure pattern recorded in north Bedfordshire (Brown and Taylor 1989) which falls within Roberts and Wrathmell's 'Central Province'. This pattern, so unusual for the Isle of Wight, may have developed as a result of the local topography and soils. Early clearance of woodland from the area could have influenced the medieval land use. The influence of early landowners may also have been significant. Freshwater Parish was the core of a late Anglo-Saxon estate although this included land outside Freshwater Isle.

Archaeological earthworks are not common in Freshwater Isle to the north of the chalk although there are Bronze Age burial mounds on Headon Warren. Recent archaeological finds provide some evidence for possible Iron Age and Roman occupation. The Anglo-Saxon architectural remains in All Saints Church and the presence of a Royal Manor at Freshwater, recorded in Domesday Book, hint at the significance of the area in early medieval times. The farm house at Kings Manor was probably the only substantial building in the area until Farringford was built in the early 19th century, becoming the home of the poet Tennyson later that century. Weston Manor, nearby, dates from the 1870s. Military fortifications of the 19th century are quite prominent in the landscape around the coast and include Hatherwood Point Battery, Fort Albert and Fort Victoria.

Thorley/Wellow Plain

This HLC area is situated to the north of the central chalk ridge, centred on the settlements of Thorley and Wellow. It lies between *Freshwater Isle* and the *Northern Lowlands* but can be distinguished from both of these areas by its distinctive geology, historic landscape character and modern land use. The area contains the only extensive outcrop of Bembridge Limestone on the Island with Eocene deposits to the south. Soils derived from the limestone are easily worked, well drained loam.

The *Thorley/Wellow Plain* is of moderate altitude, rising gradually southward from 5m OD at Thorley Manor to 80m OD near the Freshwater-Calbourne Road with a somewhat steeper rise from the road to the foot of the chalk ridge at 105m OD. The Barnfield Stream flows in a north-westerly direction towards the Yar Estuary. Other minor watercourses flow north to join Thorley Brook. The Caulbourne rises near Chessell and runs north-east within this area before entering the Northern Lowlands.

The HLC Area extends westward as far as the River Yar and northward to the Thorley Brook, whilst the Freshwater-Calbourne Road forms the southern boundary. Three distinct sub-Areas can be distinguished, these being the Thorley/Wellow plain, the Wilmingham/Tapnell area and the sub-chalk zone between the Thorley/Wellow plain and the *West Wight Chalk Downland*. On the Thorley/Wellow plain the geology is Bembridge Limestone with some deposits of Osborne and Headon Beds. In the Wilmingham/Tapnell area the geology comprises the Osborne and Headon Beds. In the sub-chalk zone narrow deposits of Reading Beds, London Clay and Bracklesham Group deposits lie north of the of chalk ridge with a wider area of Bracklesham Group deposits around Afton and between Chessell and Calbourne.

The three sub-areas derive from different historic land uses but all have a generally open and exposed landscape with large 'prairie' type fields & few hedgerows or trees. The sub-chalk zone includes an area of agricultural land with some surviving elements of designed landscape associated with the Westover estate. At the western end of the area is the 19th century Afton Park, associated with Afton Manor and also largely in agricultural use. Woodland is confined to the Wilmingham/Tapnell area where there is secondary and plantation woodland, and to the sub-chalk zone where there are some copses to the east and north-east of Chessell. There is no significant woodland on the Thorley/Wellow plain.

Much of the Island to the north of the chalk ridge is thought to have contained a substantial amount of woodland in later prehistoric times but this HLC Area, like *Freshwater Isle*, was probably an exception to the rule. An abundance of archaeological crop marks recorded to the south of Thorley and Wellow and east of the Yar Estuary are thought to be of prehistoric date and indicate that the area had been cleared of trees by the second millennium BC. The crop marks include at least ten ring-ditches, four sub-rectangular enclosures and various linear features. One of the ring-ditches was excavated in 1984 and proved to be the surviving ditch of a ploughed-out Bronze Age round barrow. Roman material was also found in the plough soil during the excavation of the ring-ditch. Subsequently, field walking on the limestone plateau revealed a wide distribution of prehistoric flintwork and Romano-British ceramics (Margham 1990, 116). An archaeological watching brief across this Area in connection with Seaclean Wight revealed features and artefacts ranging in date from the Mesolithic to post-medieval periods (O'Rourke 2006, 4.26). Recent closely-monitored metal-detecting within the Area has revealed a Roman coin hoard, evidence for Roman occupation, rich concentrations of 6th century Anglo-Saxon metalwork and other finds including a copper-alloy Early Christian skillet thought to be a baptismal vessel dating from the 7th or 8th century A.D. (Basford 2007, 204). The finds have been made in four main locations and have been recorded under the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Afton, Wilmingham, Thorley, Wellow and Shalcombe were manors mentioned in Domesday Book. Chessell was part of Shalfleet Manor until the early 14th century when it became an independent manor. Afton and Wilmingham lay within the medieval parish of Freshwater. Thorley became an independent parish by the 12th century, taken out of either Freshwater or Shalfleet Parish.

Wellow lay in Shalfleet Parish and the holding of Shalcombe formed a detached part of St Nicholas Parish.

There are only two nucleated settlements within this area, these being Thorley and Wellow. Thorley comprises a church/manor complex with the interrupted row settlement of Thorley Street some distance to the east. Margham (1990) has suggested settlement shift from the manorial site to Thorley Street by the mid sixteenth century. Wellow is also an interrupted row settlement slightly to the east of Thorley in Shalfeet Parish. Apart from Thorley and Wellow,

Today the only buildings on medieval sites outside Thorley and Wellow appear to be the manor houses of Afton, Chessell and Shalcombe, although the place-name 'Churchills is mentioned in a document of 1295 (Kökritz 1940, 209) and a farm is shown here on the OS 1793 map. The lack of small settlement clusters dotted about within the present agricultural landscape contrasts with the polyfocal settlement pattern of *Freshwater Isle.*

Medieval land use around Thorley included a block of open-field to the west and south of the manor house. A manorial survey of 1648 refers to 'Westfield', 'Home Field' and 'East Field'. Margham (1990) has demonstrated that most of this open-field was enclosed by 1608 when the overwhelming majority of fields listed in a manorial survey were closes. A document of 1646 refers to 'three acres in a close, lately part of Thorley Common Field' (IWCRO JER/HBY102/5) but there appear to be no 17th century references to surviving open field. By contrast, in the neighbouring Shalfleet Parish a 1608 survey of farms held from Wellow Manor indicates that most of the farms possessed 'arable land in east field' and 'arable land in west field'. These strips in the east field and west field amounted to 219 acres, compared with 55 acres held in closes, some of which were pasture. The principal holding of Wellow Manor, comprising 150 acres, seems to have held all its land as closes in 1608 with the exception of 20 acres of 'common pasture called the Down' and 2 parrocks of 1 acre each adjoining the house. However, part of Wellow's open-field land was still unenclosed in 1793 when the OS map shows a large 'L' shaped block of land surrounded by small fields. The names 'West Field Arable' and 'Part of West Common Field' shown within this block of land on the Shalfleet Tithe Map of 1840 indicate that one of Wellow's open fields had been in this area.

Field boundaries in the Thorley and Wellow areas shown on the OS 1793 map, the tithe maps and the OS 6" survey of 1862 suggest that the open fields were enclosed in a much more systematic and planned manner than in the neighbouring HLC Area of *Freshwater Isle* even though enclosure took place over a long period of time. Most of the fields created by the enclosure of open-field land took the form of rectangular or sub-rectangular blocks of similar shape and small-medium size with straight boundaries. In contrast the 19th century field pattern within the former open-field area of *Freshwater Isle* consisted of small irregular fields, many of which appear to have been strips or bundles of strips enclosed directly from the open fields in a piecemeal fashion. Small enclosed strips are shown on 19th century maps within the *Thorley/Wellow Plain* Area to the south of Thorley Street but these may have been crofts attached to individual tenements rather than being within the open-field.

Surprisingly, in view of recent land use, and the relatively good quality of some of this land, the arable land of Thorley Manor listed in a survey of 1648 accounted for only 156 acres. This can be compared with the 1580 acres making up Thorley Parish, which was coterminous with the manor. The non-arable area probably included downland, the poorer quality land to the north west of Tapnell Farm, and Thorley Common. Within Thorley parish there was common for 616 sheep in 1560 and 590 in 1680.The lower slope of Tapnell Down had been enclosed by 1608. However, the amount of unenclosed land within Thorley Parish was still over six hundred acres in the seventeenth century and most of this would have been common pasture, as the open-field had been enclosed by this time. Some of the unenclosed land would have been on the high chalk downland and much of it may have been on the relatively poor quality land to the west and north of Tapnell. However, Thorley/Wellow Common was located on relatively good quality land lying on the Bembridge Limestone. Thorley Common adjoined Wellow Common in neighbouring Shalfleet Parish. It seems to have been an irregularly shaped area lying to the east and south of Thorley's open fields and to the south of Wellow's 'West Field', with a possible further area of rough ground separating Wellow's 'West Field' from its 'East Field'. In Wellow Manor there was common for 420 sheep belonging to copyholders in 1608. Some of this would have been on Wellow Down but much would have been on Wellow Common. The area of Thorley/Wellow Common seems to have been enclosed between 1680 and 1793. The OS 1793 map and the later tithe maps both show small enclosed plots on either side of the parish boundary and field names in the tithe survey books indicate the shares of former copyholders after enclosure.

The relatively late date for the enclosure of Thorley and Wellow Common is clearly indicated from documentary evidence, from field boundaries shown on the OS 1793 map and from field names in the early 19th century tithe surveys. The relationship of Broad Lane to the surrounding enclosures on the OS 1793 map confirms the late date of these enclosures. Broad Lane runs in a south easterly direction from Newclose Farm in Thorley Street to the Freshwater-Calbourne Road just west of Shalcombe. It is shown on the OS 1793 map and cuts across the recently established enclosure plots on Thorley and Wellow Common, respecting enclosure boundaries in only one area, where it follows the boundaries of former open fields in Thorley (Broad Field and East Green Field, as named in the tithe survey). The lack of respect for the enclosed plots carved out of Thorley and Wellow Commons suggests that Broad Lane predates these enclosures. Broad Lane also cuts across field boundaries within the holding of Shalcombe Manor, indicating that Thorley/Wellow Common may also have included some unenclosed land belonging to this manor.

The existence of the relatively large Thorley/Wellow Common on the Bembridge Limestone poses two interesting questions. What was the significance of the shared land use between Thorley and Wellow and why was this relatively good quality land being used as a sheep common? The close linkage between the commons of Thorley and Wellow may possibly suggest some former tenurial connection in Anglo-Saxon times. Thorley parish originated in the eleventh or twelfth century and would formerly have been part of a larger 'parochia' or mother parish but Margham (1990, 115) is uncertain whether Thorley was taken

out of Freshwater or Shalfleet parochia. However, Thorley being a daughter church of Shalfleet can be argued from links between Thorley church and Christchurch Priory's manor of Ningwood in Shalfleet Parish, from the tithing of Thorley in 1560 including Hamstead and Wellow (both in Shalfleet Parish) and from the presence of small leaved limes (an indicator of ancient woodland) along the stream forming the medieval boundary between Freshwater and Thorley parishes. The indented parish boundary between Thorley and Shalfleet parishes, shown on the OS six inch 1st Edition of 1862, may possibly indicate that open fields were laid out in the area at a time when Thorley and Wellow were still a single tenurial unit.

It is possible that Thorley Common occupied land that was formerly a rabbit warren. Worsley (1781, 264) stated that 'the greater part of Thorley was once a rabbit warren, as appears by a grant of the Countess Isabella, who gave to the Prior of Christ-church a fifth part of the coneys in her manor of Thorley'. However, a more likely site for this rabbit warren would have been the land to the north west of Tapnell Fam. The farm is a post-medieval holding associated with intakes of downland, possibly dating from the later 16th century and represented by regular fields with a north-south axis running along the northern edge of the chalk ridge. Tapnell Farm may also have exploited the former Thorley Warren. Some large enclosures are shown on the OS 1793 map to the north-west of the farm and these are shaded green, indicating pasture. However, much of this land is identified as rough ground on the OS six inch map of 1862 and is named as 'Tapnell Furze' on the 1898 map A Forestry Commission plantation was established here in the later 20th century.

At the eastern end of the HLC Area, beyond Dodpits Lane, the character of the landscape is somewhat different from the main area of the Thorley/Wellow Plain. Although still dominated by large fields created by extensive boundary removal in the later 20th century, this sub-area has more varied relief and is dissected by feeder streams of the Caulbourne. The 1862 Ordnance Survey map shows fairly regular fields with straight boundaries within much of this area and these may represent agricultural improvements on the Westover estate. There are also elements of 'designed landscape' connected with the Westover estate within this sub-area, notably plantations, shelter belts and estate buildings.

This HLC Area has suffered more boundary loss in the 20th century than other areas. Its present landscape character is dominated by large 'prairie' type fields with few hedges, woods and trees except on the western fringe of the area at Wilmingham and Tapnell.

Some vernacular Bembridge Limestone farm buildings and cottages survive within the area although there are also many late 20th Century residential buildings in Thorley and Wellow. The most significant historic buildings are the early 18th Century manor houses of Thorley and Afton. Only the porch of Thorley's medieval parish church survives close to Thorley Manor, the replacement 19th century parish church being some distance to the east.

Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle

This HLC Area comprises land surrounding the former Brading Haven together with the reclaimed land of the haven itself. It includes the settlement of Brading to the west of the former haven, St Helens and Nettlestone to the north, Bembridge to the east and Yaverland to the south.

Part of this Area, including Bembridge and Yaverland, was for much of its history an island in its own right, cut off from the Wight mainland by arms of the sea at high tide and by muddy gulfs at low tide; hence its former name of 'Bembridge Isle'. A wide area of sea flowed up between Bembridge and St. Helens, past Brading and Yaverland and then joined up with another branch of sea that entered through a gap between Yaverland and Sandown where the boating lake is today. The area between Yaverland and Sandown became known as the 'Sandown Level' after it had been drained. A further branch struck off west towards Alverstone. These tidal inlets effectively cut Bembridge Isle off from the rest of the Island until the construction of a causeway at Yar Bridge in the Middle Ages. Even in post-medieval times the haven extended as far as the quay to the east of Brading. Various attempts at drainage were made in the 16th and 17th centuries but these were largely unsuccessful and most of the haven remained a tidal inlet until it was finally drained between 1878 and 1880 to allow the construction of a railway line from Brading to St Helens and Bembridge (Martin 2004 a). The remaining area of tidal water beyond the embankment carrying the railway line between St Helens and Bembridge became known as Bembridge Harbour and is now used by pleasure craft.

Today, the area of the former haven consists of low lying pasture on alluvium containing some field boundaries and drainage channels, with the canalised River Yar flowing through the centre. These grazing marshes represent one of the most significant areas of this habitat on the Isle of Wight at the present day and have been designated as an SSSI. Much of the land is now managed by the RSPB as a bird reserve. The archaeology of Brading Haven includes the stone and earth structure of the former quay at Brading and earthwork embankments representing the various phases of reclamation from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

The main watercourse is the Eastern Yar which flows in an artificial channel through the reclaimed land of the former Brading Haven. To the north of Brading the main geological deposit is that of the Bembridge Marls, capped in places with Marine Gravel, surrounding the alluvium of the reclaimed Brading Haven. There are also narrow bands of Reading Beds, London Clay, Bracklesham Group deposits and Osborne and Headon Beds. A small amount of Chalk and Upper Greensand lies within the HLC Area. South of the Chalk there are older Lower Greensand and Wealden beds around Yaverland to the east of the alluvial old sea channel. Land within this area rises gently from sea level within the reclaimed Brading Haven to about 50m OD north of St Helens and below Bembridge Down.

The present historic landscape is characterised by the large area of valley-floor land reclaimed from Brading Haven and in use as grazing marsh, by a mix of distinctive settlement types, and by field patterns of varying sizes in the

undeveloped areas above the flood plain. To some extent this HLC Area mirrors that of the *Freshwater Isle* HLC Area at the other end of the Island. Both areas contain a series of Palaeogene geological deposits but, significantly, neither area contains any deposits of the heavy, easily waterlogged Hamstead clays that characterise the *Northern Lowlands*. The absence of the Hamstead Beds in the *Freshwater Isle* and the *Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle* HLC Areas may explain why both areas show evidence for a considerable amount of open-field farming in medieval times, in contrast with the *Northern Lowlands*. The Area is also somewhat more open and less wooded than the *Northern Lowlands* although there is some ancient and secondary woodland around Bembridge, to the north of Yaverland and on the eroding cliff slope above Priory Bay. The sand dunes of St Helens Duver and the rocky foreshore of Bembridge Foreland are distinctive components of coastal landscape character within this Area. There are sandy beaches at Priory Bay and Whitecliff Bay. Coastal cliffs occur between Hoarstone Point and Node's Point, above Whitecliff Bay, and from Culver Cliff to Sandown Bay Holiday Centre.

The Brading area, immediately below the chalk downland and in close proximity to the haven, seems to have been a key location for settlement from prehistoric times. In the Iron Age a defensive ditch was constructed on high ground overlooking Brading Haven. Evidence for Iron Age settlement has also been recorded beneath Brading Roman Villa which lies approximately 1km to the west of the Iron Age defensive site within the *Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay* HLC Area but close to the haven. The small medieval linear urban settlement of Brading to the east of Brading Down may have been established in the late 12th century by the local lord (Webster nd), although the first grant of a market and fair was not until 1285 (Edwards 1999b).The town was situated to the west of Brading Haven and boats sailed up to the quay, close to the town.

The medieval settlement of St Helens was situated close to the northern edge of the haven. Although there may have been a Domesday manor at St Helens the settlement appears to have developed after the establishment of St Helens Priory within the adjacent manor of Eddington during the twelfth century. The medieval church of St Helens, of which only the tower now remains, was first built as part of the priory complex. Until the thirteenth century St Helens lay within the parish of Brading and the foundation of a separate parish of St Helens may date from the latter part of that century (Edwards 1999c, 2). Fourteenth-century taxation records indicate the relative importance of St Helens and in 1379 there was a recorded population of ninety-four people. In the 14th and 16th centuries St Helens was mentioned as a port.

The settlement morphology of St Helens is almost unique on the Isle of Wight in comprising a regular one row plan with a green (Margham 1982 fig 1, 1983 fig 4) although this settlement form is common in some parts of the country. A similar planned settlement may possibly have been laid out at Freshwater Green in the Middle Ages (see above under *Freshwater Isle*) but the evidence is open to different interpretations. The OS 1793 drawings and the OS First Edition six inch map of 1862 show evidence of enclosed open fields beyond the property plots at St Helens. This former open-field area appears to have been

laid out with a degree of regularity unusual on the Isle of Wight and its relationship with the adjacent village suggests a degree of planning more commonly found in the 'Central Province'. St Helens is one of the few places on the Island where the formal planning or re-planning of a village-sized settlement can be suggested, although all of the Island's medieval towns were planned foundations.

The open-field system associated with St Helens was enclosed as individual strips at some time before 1793. This field system was probably farmed by tenants of Eddington Manor. To the north of Eddington Manor lay land belonging to St Helens Priory which was owned by Eton College in the post-medieval period. Large closes existed by the 16th century within the area owned by Eton College and these presumably replaced earlier open fields. Beyond the priory land lay Nettlestone Manor where the small hamlet of Nettlestone Green is shown on the OS 1793 drawings.

Before the construction of the Yar causeway in the 14th century Yaverland and 'Bembridge Isle' were cut off from the rest of the Isle of Wight (Martin 2004b) . Historically, Yaverland was a small linear settlement lying to the south of the manor house and parish church. An area of open-field existed to the east of the settlement. To the west lay the low-lying land of 'Sandham Levels' which was reclaimed grazing marsh in post-medieval times.

Within Bembridge Isle two types of field patterns can be distinguished on the OS 1793 drawings. Between Bembridge Down and the former Brading Haven the OS 1793 drawings show small enclosed fields with sinuous boundaries, suggestive of enclosed open-field. The historic settlement pattern in this area consists of very small settlement clusters and individual farmsteads. To the north- east of Steyne Cross there is a different and very distinctive land use pattern. A grid of roads is shown on the OS 1793 drawings, comprising High Street, Steyne Road and Howgate Road on a south-west to north-east alignment, with Mill Road, Hillway and Forelands Road running at right angles. Prior to the development of Bembridge from the early 19th century the main settlement of Bembridge Street was an irregular row of buildings along High Street but there were also individual farms linked to the road grid. The 1793 OS drawings show a pattern of small-regular enclosed fields with straight boundaries incorporating dog-legs stretching from Brading Haven to Forelands. The regularity of this field pattern and the straightness of its internal field boundaries are not characteristic of enclosed medieval open-field elsewhere on the Isle of Wight but neither are the fields indicative of post-medieval enclosure from waste, common or heath. It is possible that the unusual pattern of fields, roads and farmsteads may represent an early co-axial field system similar to those identified in Essex and Norfolk (Rippon 1991, Williamson 1998).

The distinctive settlement and enclosure pattern at Bembridge has now been largely obscured by the development of Bembridge as a small seaside resort for the well-to-do in the 19th century and by subsequent 20th century residential development. Later development has also surrounded the medieval street plan at Brading. There is a very large modern housing estate to the east of Nettlestone Green and a somewhat smaller estate to the south of Yaverland.

The archaeology of this HLC Area includes the important Palaeolithic site at Priory Bay, and a prehistoiric flint-working site at Redcliff, north of Sandown. An Iron Age salt working site has also been recorded at Redcliff. There are medieval earthworks within the secondary woodland of Centurion's Copse, embankments associated with a tide mill at St Helens, and a windmill at Bembridge. Buildings within this area include manor houses, farms and cottages built of Bembridge Limestone and Greensand; small 19th century seaside cottages; grander 19th century houses; and 20th century estate houses and bungalows.

South-West Wight Coastal Zone

This HLC Area is a lowland coastal zone stretching from Compton Bay to Shepherd's Chine. A chain of settlements lie along the interface with the *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* HLC Area. The sandstone ridge forms a clear northern boundary to the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* and makes it feel less exposed than the *Atherfield Coastal Plain* to the south-east, although there is no protection from the prevailing south-west winds blowing in from the sea. The geology of this area comprises Wealden deposits between Compton Bay and Shepherd's Chine. Superficial gravel deposits run along the coastal strip from Shippards Chine to Grange Chine and are exposed in the cliff face, indicating the valley of an ancient river truncated by coastal erosion. A sinuous strip of alluvium and a minor stream running roughly parallel to the coast between Chilton Chine and Shippards Chine indicates the former course of this river. The coast line is punctuated by a series of chines, these being a distinctive Isle of Wight landscape feature in various HLC areas. There are soft eroding cliffs with areas of landslip

The area is low-lying and fairly flat, sloping gently southward to the coast from a maximum altitude of c.60m OD at the interface with the *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* HLC Area. Watercourses flow mainly south and south-west to chines on the coast, the most significant being the stream which runs from Shorwell to Brighstone before flowing into Grange Chine. The agricultural land is generally Grade 3 but Grade 4 on the damp, low-lying land near the coast to the west and east of Brook.

Within this HLC Area as a whole field sizes are smaller than within the *Atherfield Coastal Plain*, there are more hedgerows and there is pasture land as well as arable cultivation. In the western part of the area, stretching roughly from Brook to Mottistone, most of the fields have hedged boundaries. Trees are present along field boundaries and there is also some woodland, whereas woodland is virtually absent from the rest of the zone. However, nearly all the woodland between Brook and Mottistone appears to have been planted since the mid 19th Century and may be associated with the Seely family of Brook House. Some features of the 19th century park around Brook House survive, although it is mainly in agricultural use. To the east of Mottistone there is no woodland except on the valley-floor near Grange Chine and north-west of Wolverton Manor. Beyond Brighstone field sizes are larger, there are fewer hedges and trees are virtually absent.

Running parallel to the coast between Brook Green and Grange Chine, along the line of the ancient river mentioned above, there is a band of low-lying, somewhat marshy land that was traditionally used for pasture. Much of this coastal area is still pasture, in contrast with the coastal strip further to the east which is ploughed right up to the cliff edge. On the Isle of Wight and elsewhere in southern England the word 'moor' is used for areas of marshy rough grazing and the place-name 'Sudmoor' occurs in this area between Brook Green and Chilton Chine. (The term 'moor' was also sometimes used for flat, low-lying areas bounded by watercourses, capable of producing a heavy cut of grass.) Small areas of green-shaded land shown on the Ordnance Survey unpublished drawings of c.1793 in this coastal zone indicate meadow land or pasture. Close to watercourses there were withy beds containing willow trees that could be coppiced for basket making. An area of damp valley-floor pasture also runs between Shorwell and Brighstone, passing close to Wolverton Manor, Yafford, Thorncross and Waytes Court. The stream flowing through this valley powered water-mills at Yafford and Brighstone.

A string of villages, hamlets and farms occur along the Shorwell-Brook road, at the interface with the *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* and partly within that Area. Shorwell's historic settlement core, around the church and Northcourt Manor, lies within the *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* Area but some outlying parts of the village and the manors of Wolverton and Westcourt fall within the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone*. Brighstone, which has a nucleated cluster around the church and outlying areas of settlement, straddles the two HLC Areas. Mottistone is of hamlet size but has a church and manor house whilst Hulverstone has a manor house but no church. Brook parish church lies at the base of the sandstone ridge within the *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* Area but the settlement of Brook and Brook House (on the site of the medieval manor house) lie within this HLC Area,

Medieval settlement elsewhere within the South West Wight Coastal Zone is of a more scattered nature. Yafford is an irregular hamlet to the south of Shorwell and there are scattered dwellings at Hoxall and Chilton Green as well as some dispersed farmsteads e.g. Marsh Farm, Sutton Farm and Thorncross Farm. Historically, settlements associated with small irregular greens seem to have been a feature of this area. Hoxall, Fernfield Green, Brook Green, Marsh Green and Chilton Green are shown on the OS 1793 map. Yafford, also shown on the 1793 map, comprised a cluster of six dwellings midway between Yafford Mill and Yafford House.

Some settlement desertion occurred in the19th century, for instance at Brook Green, Fernfield Green and Hawkes Hill Green (Hoxall Green) where these were areas of common grazing with associated cottages recorded in the early 19th century but now gone. Two cottages survive at Hoxall out of six shown on tithe map. Abandonment or clearance of cottages at Brook Green may have been associated with the enclosure of the green in 1835 as part of the rationalisation of archaic landholdings on the Mottistone estate in the early 19th century (Currie 1999, 24 & 28).

The pattern of roads and tracks differs in the western and eastern parts of this Area. Between Brook and Brighstone roads and tracks run northward from the coastal fringe. Historically, these routes connected the arable fields with the main settlements of this Area and probably also functioned as drove roads, connecting the fields and settlements with the common grazing of the West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge Area (Currie 1999, 22). In medieval times these routes would have allowed stock to be moved down to the open fields after the harvest in order to manure the fields. From Brighstone to Shorwell roads and tracks run both north-south and east-west. Historically, these routes linked farmsteads and hamlets and connected these settlements with the open fields and with pasture or meadow land. They appear to have evolved with the open fields, as field boundaries are aligned on lanes and tracks (e.g. Wicken Hill Lane) and several rights of way have dog-legs suggesting that they formerly ran between strips.

In the Middle Ages there was an extensive open-field system to the south of Brighstone which survived until post-medieval times and is very well documented in the Swainston Estate survey of 1630 (Jones 2003). The external boundaries of former open fields in the Brighstone area appear to be preserved by remaining hedgerows and road patterns. There is also evidence of former open fields in Mottistone Parish (Currie 1999, 24) and within the manor of Hulverstone, close to the coast (Currie 1999, 15; 19; 127).

Within this HLC Area older vernacular buildings utilise Lower Greensand, including Ferruginous Sandstone, and some buildings are thatched. Cottages and farm buildings built of chalk blocks also occur. There are manor houses within this HLC Area at West Court, Wolverton, Limerstone, Waytes Court, Shate, Mottistone and Hulverstone. Modern buildings in Brighstone and Shorwell are mainly bungalows.

Archaeological discoveries within this area have mainly come from the eroding gravel and brickearth deposits in the cliff face from Shippard's Chine to Grange Chine. Mesolithic flintwork and prehistoric hearths have been found in these deposits as well as a Bronze Age burial urn and a preserved hurdle. Further to the south-east a late Bronze Age urn cemetery was recorded at Barnes High in the 19th century. A supposed Iron Age burial mound and hut sites were recorded at Sudmoor in the early 20th century. Away from the coast, a large Iron Age coin hoard has recently been recorded from this HLC Area.

Atherfield Coastal Plain

This HLC Area is low-lying and flat with a maximum altitude of 55m OD south of Samber Hill. It lies to the south-east of the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* but is a much more open and exposed landscape with large arable fields, few field boundaries and an almost total lack of woodland. It is distinguished from the *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel* Area which lies inland by its low relief and coastal location and from the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* by its geology. The underlying geology is mainly Ferruginous Sands in the Lower Greensand series with superficial deposits of Alluvium and of Blown Sand Shingle. The soils are light and fertile, supporting intensive arable agriculture. Some of this HLC Area is Grade 2 on the Agricultural Land Classification Map, in contrast

with most of the Isle of Wight's agricultural land which is Grade 3 or 4. Along the coastline an eroding coastal slope which has produced prehistoric flintwork is punctuated by the dramatic landscape feature of Whale Chine.

Small clusters of farmsteads and cottages are strung out along Atherfield Road, which was the only road through this area before the construction of the 19th century Military Road. One of these clusters is centred around 'Atherfield Green', a name which records the former green situated to the south of Atherfield Farm and shown on the OS 1793 map.

In the Middle Ages arable open fields may have accounted for much of the land use within the western and eastern parts of this Area. This assumption is based on the patterns of the enclosed fields shown on the OS 1793 map. These interlocking field patterns may have been formed by the enclosure of open-field strips at some time prior to 1793. In the central part of the Area (corresponding with a detached portion of Brighstone Parish and coterminous with the land of Atherfield Farm) the pattern of fields shown on the 1793 map suggests a different enclosure process. Here, the 1793 map shows larger fields than those to the west and east. Some of these larger fields may have been enclosed from a former green. A triangular remnant of this green is shown on the 1793 map to the east of Atherfield Green Farm and south of Atherfield Farm but had become an enclosed field by the time of the 1st Edition OS 6" of 1862. Small irregular pasture fields or hay meadows are shown on the 1793 map on the damper valley floor land to the east and north of Atherfield Road near to the farmsteads of Atherfield Green.

This is one of the few areas of the Isle of Wight where it is difficult to relate existing field patterns to the 1793 OS map because of radical reorganisation of fields in the 20th century. The small pasture fields shown on the 1793 map have vanished. Atherfield Road and the settlement along the lane provide the main link with the area's past historic landscape character.

The farmhouses and cottages within this HLC Area are mainly constructed out of local Greensand and some have thatched roofs. Walpen Manor House and Downend Cottage are of 17th century date, and are built of local stone with mullioned windows, drip moulds and thatched roofs.

South Wight Sandstone and Gravel

This inland HLC Area stretches from the *Atherfield Coastal Plain* as far as Newport, lying on either side of the upper Medina Valley and also including the upper valley of the Eastern Yar. The geology mainly comprises Ferruginous Sands in the Lower Greensand Series but with ridges of Plateau Gravel at Bleak Down, Rookley and St George's Down, and with Gravel Terraces and Alluvium in the river valleys. To the south of Burnt House Lane the area also includes a narrow band of chalk which does not form a prominent ridge at this point but is subsidiary to the gravel ridge of St George's Down. This area has a similar geology to the *Atherfield Coastal Plain* and *Arreton Valley* HLC Areas but is on higher ground except within the river valleys. Slopes are generally moderate but with pronounced ridges on the Plateau Gravels as at Bleak Down

and St George's Down. The highest points are 105m OD north of Bucks Farm & 106m OD south-east of Great East Standen Manor.

At the south-west edge of this area some streams flow towards the south-west coast but the main drainage is provided by the River Medina flowing north-east from The Wilderness to Shide. The Eastern Yar also flows north through this area from Southford to Kennerley Farm. A tributary stream of the Medina flows north-west from the Pagham area to Blackwater.

The area has light, easily worked soils on Greensand but also includes acid unproductive soils on the gravel ridges. In general the landscape is open and exposed with large fields and few trees or hedgerows. There are extensive views from high points such as St George's Down. Very few woods exists within the area except for the ancient woodland of Kingston Copse, a secondary woodland south of Highwood Lane and some valley-floor woodland, particularly beside the River Medina to the east of Gatcombe. The river valleys provide a contrast with the higher ground, having areas of enclosed pastures, damp rough pasture and some former withy beds. The tract of grazing marsh on either side of the Medina River between Chale Green and Cridmore is known as 'The Wilderness'.

Heathland may have developed in this Area following prehistoric cultivation of potentially infertile, drought susceptible soils. Rough open grazing land and heathland were certainly important in medieval times and post-medieval times, with the OS 1793 map showing fairly large areas of rough open ground still occupying the gravel ridges of Bleak Down and St George's Down. In addition, regular and semi-regular field patterns with straight field boundaries shown on the 1793 map suggest that other former areas of rough grazing within the area may have been enclosed in the 18th century.

Although much of this Area is now in intensive agricultural use there is only limited evidence for medieval open-field. HLC suggests the former presence of open-field to the south of Newport. A study of documentary sources for the Rookley area has indicated the former existence of some open-field in that locality (IWCAS 2006). Another area of medieval open-field appears to have lain to the east of Roud and had been enclosed into small strip-shaped fields by 1793. Existing Field patterns to the west of Chale Street may be derived from enclosed open- field.

There is documentary evidence for large-scale early 19th century reorganisation of holdings and rationalisation of boundaries in the Appleford area described in a parliamentary award of 1860 listed by Adams (1960, 221). In the 20th century there was a widespread loss of boundaries throughout much of the area, creating large arable fields. Gravel working took place at Bleak Down in the early 20th century and extensive active gravel works still occupy St Georges Down.

Historically, the area was fairly sparsely populated, with settlement mainly in the form of dispersed farmsteads. This is still the case today although there is late 20th century residential development at Rookley and on the north-western edge

of Godshill (outside the historic settlement core of this village which falls within the *South Wight Downland Edge* Area).

Kingston was a Domesday Manor and its chapel originates from the 13th century, later becoming a parish church. The settlement today consists only of the church and manor house. The 17th century manor house lies beside Kingston Copse, one of the very few woods in this area classified as 'ancient woodland', although the presence of fishponds within the copse indicates its secondary character. However, there appears to have been some woodland in the Kingston area in Medieval times as in 1441 Lewis and Alice Meux of Kingston Manor were granted free warren for deer and coneys (rabbits) in Kingston and Shorwell and licence to inclose 300 acres of wood and pasture there (Page ed. 1912, 250). Roud is a hamlet that may have been more significant in medieval times (Hockey 1982, 147). Blackwater is shown as a small hamlet on the OS 1793 map. Rookley appears to have developed as a green-edge settlement shown on the OS 1793 map, with later-twentieth-century residential development. There are no village-sized settlements of any antiquity within this HLC Area and few notable historic buildings apart from Kingston Manor House, although there are some vernacular farm buildings and cottages.

Apart from the fishponds in Kingston Copse there are few recorded archaeological earthworks within this HLC Area, possibly because of intensive arable agriculture. Crop-marks at Samber Hill, to the north of Pagham and east of Merston Red Barn suggest prehistoric activity in these areas. In the Medina Valley to the east of Gatcombe there is pollen evidence for arable farming in the Neolithic period, associated with substantial assemblages of worked flint (Tomalin and Scaife 1980). Flint assemblages have also been recorded from Whitecroft, St George's Down and Bucks Farm.

The Arreton Valley

This inland area abuts the *East Wight Chalk Ridge* on its northern side and the *South Wight Downland Edge* on its southern side. The *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel* Area lies to the west and the *Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay* Area to the east. The land is generally flat and low-lying, being mainly below 50m OD with a maximum altitude of 62m OD near Arreton Cemetery. The main river flowing through the Arreton Valley is the Eastern Yar, into which various tributary streams flow. There are moderate slopes on the north-western side of the Eastern Yar and on the sides of tributary valleys.

The solid geology of the area is mainly Ferruginous Sands of the Lower Greensand Series with thin bands of other Lower Greensand deposits along the boundary with the *East Wight Chalk Ridge*. Gravel Terraces overlie the Greensand in a considerable part of the area. There are also some Plateau Gravel deposits. There is alluvium in the river valleys and some peat deposits.

Within this HLC Area the soils are light, fertile and easily worked. Much of the land is Grade 2 on the Agricultural Classification Map, in contrast with most of the Island's agricultural land which is Grade 3 or 4. The Area is generally open and exposed and is characterised today by intensive arable agriculture and horticulture. Field sizes are fairly large and there are only small isolated pockets

of non-coniferous woodland, mostly near streams. Large commercial greenhouses are quite dominant in the landscape, as are the windbreaks of large conifers with which some of them are surrounded. Salad crops are grown in the greenhouses whilst crops grown outside include sweet corn, garlic, asparagus and potatoes.

The present-day large fields seem to reflect a fieldscape that already existed in the late 18th century when the Ordnance Survey drawings recorded relatively large field sizes within much of this area. Different types of field patterns can be discerned on these drawings. Very regular fields are shown on the Ordnance Survey drawings between Heasley Manor and Arreton Down and documentary evidence suggests that this area may have been an unenclosed sheepwalk in medieval times (Cahill 1984, 5). In contrast, a lease of Quarr Abbey's lands at Arreton dating from 1453 refers to East Field, South Field and West Field (Hockey 1991, no.167) and fieldnames of this type usually indicate open fields. The same field names are given for the fields surrounding Arreton Manor in the Schedule accompanying the 1840s Tithe Map. There are some other indications of former open-field around Arreton. However, the total amount of open-field so far identified within this HLC Area appears to be surprisingly limited considering the fertility and lightness of the soil and the existence of many medieval manors. Extensive areas of regular medium and large fields shown on the OS 1793 drawings have been interpreted as possibly representing post-medieval enclosure of former heathland.

Green shading on the 1793 Ordnance Survey drawings indicates the presence of small meadows and pastures in the low lying valley lands adjacent to the River Yar and smaller streams, a land use which still exists in these areas today. In prehistoric, Roman and medieval times the amount of marshy, undrained land, may have been much greater.

Most of this HLC area lies within the historic parish of Arreton, although it extends into Godshill and Newchurch parishes. There are only two nucleated settlements within the area, both of relatively small size. Arreton comprises a church/manor complex and the straggling interrupted-row settlement of 'Arreton Street'. The original church at Arreton may have been a pre-Conquest minster serving a parochia encompassing both the north and south coasts of the Island (Margham 2000, 122). Merstone is a straggling linear settlement, associated with nearby Merston Manor but without a medieval parish church. There are manor houses at Great Budbridge, Horringford, Heasley, Hale and Redway and a lost manor house site at Pereton, in addition to those at Arreton and Merston, suggesting that the Arreton Valley was an important agricultural area in the medieval and post-medieval periods, as it is today. There are also some dispersed farmsteads of various ages. The historic manor houses and farmsteads are often sited on the Gravel Terraces or close to valley-floor pasture except for the Arreton church/manor complex which is situated immediately below the *East Wight Chalk Ridge*.

Both Arreton and Merstone have more buildings belonging to the 20th Century than to earlier times but the basic pattern shown on the late 18th Century Ordnance Survey drawings is still recognisable in the modern settlements.

Other settlement within this area consists of individual farmsteads. Farm houses and farm buildings are usually built of local Greensand but brick has been employed to a greater extent in the settlements of Arreton and Merston.

There are no surviving prehistoric earthworks within this HLC Area characterised by intensive agriculture but prehistoric flintwork has been recorded from Mersley Farm and Heasley Farm. Iron Age and Roman occupation is also indicated by finds made to the north of Newchurch. Concentrations of crop-marks and soil-marks recorded from aerial photographs to the west of Hale Manor and around Arreton Street suggest prehistoric activity in these areas.

Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay

The historic landscape character of this area can be distinguished from that of the *Arreton Valley* on the basis of relief, field patterns, vegetation and settlement patterns although the precise boundary between the two areas has been difficult to define and may be somewhat arbitrary. The area is generally hillier and of higher altitude than the Arreton Valley, although it does not rise above 76 metres and includes low-lying land in the river valleys. Air photographs and modern maps reveal that the area contains somewhat smaller fields and more woodland than the Arreton Valley. This distinction between the two areas can also be observed on the 1793 Ordnance Survey drawings. The area extends to the coast at Sandown Bay where the resort towns of Sandown and Shanklin developed in the 19th century.

The Eastern Yar flows eastward through this area between Newchurch and Brading. Scotchells Brook flows north-east from Apse Manor to join the Yar east of Alverstone. Geologically, this HLC Area forms a continuum with the Arreton Valley. Ferruginous Sands of the Lower Greensand series form the underlying rock within most of the zone although Wealden deposits surrounded by Atherfield Clay appear in the Sandown area. Patches of Plateau Gravel occur throughout the zone and there are Gravel Terraces on the west side of the Scotchells Brook Valley. Alluvium occupies the valleys of the River Yar and Scotchells Brook.

When examined in detail, the 1793 Ordnance Survey drawings show a varied pattern of land use in this HLC Area. This includes considerable areas of heathland at Winford, Apse Heath, Royal Heath (later developed as Sandown) and in the Lake Common/Blackpan area where the two manors of Blackpan and Lake possessed adjacent commons. Areas of former open-field can be identified around Adgestone and Shanklin. A substantial area of damp valley-floor pasture and grazing marsh is also shown on the Ordnance Survey drawings.

Woodland is shown on the OS 1793 map at Borthwood Copse and America Wood. Borthwood was termed a forest in the 15th century; this term indicating its legal status as a hunting area rather than necessarily indicating a wooded area. However, the Victoria County History claimed that Borthwood was ‘originally a wooded tract of far greater extent’. It suggested that the wood formerly encompassed an area stretching from Hill Farm and Queen’s Bower in the west

to Lee and Blackpan in the east, and from Alverstone in the north to Apse in the south (Page 1912, 162) but HLC evidence does not indicate that such a large wooded area existed in medieval times.

Much of the woodland shown on the 1793 Ordnance Survey drawings still survives today and there is still an area of grazing marsh around Alverstone. Traces of enclosed open field patterns (much modified) can also still be detected at Adgestone but heathland has now disappeared from the landscape except for a part of Blackpan Common now in use as a golf course.

The 1793 map shows linear row settlements at Newchurch and Sandham, and small settlement clusters at Adgestone, Alverstone and Lake. Dispersed settlements are also shown at Upper Borthwood, Lower Borthwood and Branstone, as well as individual farmsteads. Newchurch is the only settlement with a medieval parish church within this HLC Area. Sandown and the part of Shanklin within this HLC Area were built as seaside resorts on agricultural land and heathland in the 19th century and expanded in the 20th century. Alverstone Garden Village was originally planned in the early 20th century although most existing buildings are of later-twentieth-century date. Residential development at Winford is nearly all of late-twentieth century date.

Farmhouses and cottages built of Greensand occur within this HLC Area but there are possibly fewer examples of pre-nineteenth-century vernacular buildings than in other HLC areas. Victorian and Edwardian brick buildings dominate Sandown and Shanklin, with 20th century suburbs on the outskirsts. There are concentrations of late- twentieth-century houses and bungalows at Alverstone Garden Village, Winford and Yaverland.

Evidence of prehistoric flint-working and occupation has been recorded in the Blackpan Common/Scotchells Brook/Lake areas. Waterlogged timber remains have been discovered recently at Alverstone Marshes. A late Iron Age enclosure and a medieval pottery kiln have been excavated at Knighton just below the Chalk Ridge. The Isle of Wight's richest Roman Villa lies within this HLC Area immediately below the chalk ridge at Brading.

The Undercliff

This HLC Area is the largest inhabited *rotational landslip* in Western Europe, of major geological and ecological importance (Isle of Wight AONB Partnership 2004, 132). The Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliff is a comparable landscape feature of similar length (c. 11 km) but differs from the Isle of Wight Undercliff in being uninhabited.

The Isle of Wight Undercliff consists of a narrow coastal zone less than 1 km wide between the inner cliff and the coastline. A landslide topography was formed here under Pleistocene periglacial conditions but the present landscape is the result of two massive landslides with subsequent slumping that have occurred within the last 10,000 years. Archaeological discoveries suggest that the Undercliff may still have been forming in late prehistoric times. There have also been large landslides documented in fairly recent times from the 18th century onwards and these continue to the present day. The towering inner cliff

which forms the boundary between this HLC area and the *South Wight Downland* gives the area a dramatic quality.

Prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval middens have been recorded along the coastline in several places. A Bronze Age hoard has been found at Steephill and Iron Age burials have been found at St Lawrence. A Romano-British coin hoard has been recorded from Gills Cliff. In the Middle Ages there were tiny settlements within the Undercliff at St Lawrence and Bonchurch, each with a parish church. There is also some archaeological evidence of late Saxon and medieval settlement in the Steephill and Flowers Brook Area.

John Speed's 1611 map shows 'St Laurence Park' occupying most of The Undercliff. However, field-names on the Whitwell Tithe Map of 1838 refer to 'The Warren' and 'Green Park' within the Old Park estate and it would seem that the park may have occupied this more limited area. In medieval times the holding of Old Park, then known as 'South Wath', was part of the manor of Whitwell but by 1604 it had become part of the Appuldurcombe estate owned by the Worsley family. The first recorded mention of the name 'Old Park' was in 1628. The holding was probably so-called to distinguish it from the Worsleys' newly created deer park at Appuldurcombe but Old Park may have been used for hunting purposes only for a short time after its acquisition by the Worsleys since 'The Parke at Wath' was let to John Harvey in 1613 (Worsley Rent Roll). Old Park may have been an area of open land used for hunting rather than an enclosed park. No park pale is shown surrounding 'St Laurence Park' on John Speed's map although his map of the Isle of Wight shows 'Waching Park' and 'Wootton Park' enclosed by pales. However, the rocky, land-slipped ground in this area may have needed very little pale-building to close off escapes and make a self-contained deer park. It is possible that the boundaries of the Old Park estate shown on the OS maps of 1793 and 1862 may have equated with the boundaries of the deer park.

A recent survey of coastal archaeology discovered some evidence of cultivation in the form of blocks of narrow ridge and furrow at Watershoot Bay, near to the old Blackgang Road, at Knowles Farm, around St Catherine's Lighthouse and at Woody Bay. Some of this ridge and furrow was situated in areas of very uneven and broken ground seemingly unsuitable for arable cultivation. However, the present condition of this coastal land may be due to fairly recent land-slippage.

Chale Common lay on the western edge of The Undercliff. This was an area of rough common grazing situated beneath the cliff on both sides of Blackgang Chine which was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1845 (Adams 1960).

The Ordnance Survey Drawings of 1793 show tiny fields intermixed with rough grazing land along much of the Undercliff. In the 18th century the landscape was still very open, with few trees, and the towering inner cliff may have appeared even more dominant than at the present day. This dramatic landscape appealed to the aesthetic sensibilities of the late 18th century and a number of cottages ornés were built, surrounded by designed grounds. More summer residences of the gentry were built during the 19th century between

Niton and Bonchurch, also with large gardens, and there was a great deal of amenity tree planting. This planting and the growth of secondary woodland led to a fundamental change in the character of the Undercliff. Another factor which had a major impact on the Undercliff was the development of Ventnor as a seaside resort from about 1830. Bonchurch also developed in Victorian times, as did St Lawrence and Niton Undercliff.

In the 20th century there was much low density residential development around St Lawrence and Ventnor. As a result of 19th and 20th century development a substantial part of the Undercliff is now suburban in character. The pre-nineteenth century pattern of tiny fields and rough grazing has been greatly changed by residential development, woodland growth and erosion. However, there are still some parts of the Area unaffected by residential development and woodland growth, notably the Knowles Farm estate near St Catherine's Point belonging to the National Trust. St Catherine's Lighthouse, built in 1838-1840, survives as a prominent local landmark although it is not now manned. The stone walls defining field and estate boundaries that survive in some parts of The Undercliff do not occur elsewhere on the Isle of Wight except on St Catherine's Hill. The coastline of The Undercliff is still largely undeveloped except in the Ventnor area, and a 19th century fishing village still survives on the shore at Steephill Cove. One major component of the Undercliff landscape is the Ventnor Botanic Garden, created within the grounds of the demolished Royal National Hospital from the early 1970s.

CHAPTER 7

USE OF HLC IN LOCAL MANAGEMENT, PLANNING AND RESEARCH

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Historic Landscape Characterisation has been developed by English Heritage as a tool 'to promote better understanding and management of the historic landscape resource, to facilitate the management of continued change within it and to establish an integrated approach to its sustainable management in partnership with other organisations' (English Heritage 2002, 2). The Isle of Wight HLC Project will have been successful if the HLC report, GIS mapping and database are fully utilised to promote understanding and beneficial management of the local historic landscape.

This HLC Report was prepared for English Heritage and the Isle of Wight Council but it was always intended that it should be made available to a wider public, subject to resources. As a result of the Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Character Dissemination Project (2008) the report will now be made available in hard copy or CD format to key officers of the Isle of Wight Council and the AONB Unit. In addition, the report will be placed on the webpage of the Isle of Wight Archaeology and Historic Environment Service.
http://www.iwight.com/living_here/planning/Archaeology/

A presentation for members and senior officers of the Isle of Wight Council and representatives of Town and Parish Councils is planned for autumn 2008. There will also be a technical presentation for Isle of Wight staff members likely to use HLC regularly in their work.

7.2 USE OF HLC IN STUDY AND MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The Isle of Wight Archaeology and Historic Environment Service provides strategic advice to the Isle of Wight Council on the historic environment. Advice on planning applications is provided by the Planning Archaeologist and the Conservation and Design Team based in Planning Services The HLC will be fully integrated within the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Archaeology Service and will thus inform all future planning advice. An archive copy of the HLC will be maintained within the HER, recording the historic landscape as it was in 2005 and acting as a benchmark from which future landscape changes can be measured. However, it is also intended that a working copy of the HLC will be maintained as a layer within the HER and will be updated as new information becomes available or as landscape changes occur. HLC data will be used to inform the County Archaeological Service Strategy and the County Archaeological Research Framework. It has already been used to inform the Solent Thames Research Framework for the historic environment.
www.buckscc.gov.uk/archaeology/strf

The HLC Areas defined in this report will be valuable in devising fieldwork programmes for HER enhancement. In addition, HLC data could be used in the future for targeting fieldwork on historic hedgerows and other boundaries. It could also be used to prepare GIS maps of historic land units and boundaries such as Anglo-Saxon estates, the granges of Quarr Abbey and the pre-enclosure extent of Parkhurst Forest.

In a wider context, the Isle of Wight HLC will contribute to a planned second stage of English Heritage's HLC Programme which aims to produce regional HLC maps drawn from county level HLCs and other landscape scale work (Aldred and Fairclough 2003, 13).

7.3 USE OF HLC IN REGIONAL PLANNING

The Isle of Wight falls within the South East Region which covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex. A South East Region Plan was completed by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) in 2006 http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan.

The plan referred to local character assessment, for example historic landscape and urban characterisation, as a useful tool to inform policy development. Within the overall South East Plan the Isle of Wight was declared a Special Policy Area and a draft sub-regional strategy was completed for the Island in November 2004. This document refers to local distinctiveness, sense of place, conservation of the historic and built environment and biodiversity as principles for creating sustainable communities. The thirteen provisional Historic Landscape Character Areas defined at an early stage in the Isle of Wight HLC Project were included in a table of key environmental data for the Isle of Wight.

7.4 THE ISLE OF WIGHT HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN (HEAP) AND THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Isle of Wight HLC has provided the basis for further work on the Isle of Wight's historic landscape character within the context of the Isle of Wight Historic Action Plan. HEAPs were first proposed in the publication 'Using Historic Landscape Characterisation' (Clark et al 2004). They are the equivalents of the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) developed by the natural environment sector and make full use of HLC types in developing strategies to manage 'cultural habitats' appropriately.

The Isle of Wight HEAP Project commenced in June 2006 with funding from the Isle of Wight AONB Partnership and LEADER+. Drawing on the successful model of the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan, the project established a Steering Group to oversee the preparation of the Historic Environment Action Plan by the HEAP Project Officer. The Isle of Wight HEAP used HLC Areas as a framework within which to explore historic landscape processes, time-depth, rarity and typicality, coherence, condition and fragility, forces for change, management issues and future management of the historic environment. By the end of the project in March 2008 documents had been completed for the 15

HLC Areas in addition to a HEAP Overview of the Isle of Wight and a document setting out HEAP Aims, Objectives and Proposed Actions.

A key aim of the Isle of Wight HEAP Project was to promote community understanding, conservation, and management of the historic environment. The Project Officer worked to make information on the historic environment available to local councillors, countryside managers, planners and the wider community. The work of the HEAP Project also included the promotion and support of specific community action projects connected with the historic environment.

The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Character Dissemination Project (2008) has allowed further work to be done on the HEAP, including the preparation of a popular booklet and public consultation on the plan. As a result, the HEAP will be adopted by the Isle of Wight Council as background evidence for the Local Development Framework (The Island Plan). Consultation on the Island Plan Core Strategy has taken place in 2008 and the Isle of Wight Archaeology and Historic Environment Service has referred to the HLC and HEAP in commenting on the Core Strategy.

The HEAP documents are also intended for use in development control. In terms of general landscape management the HEAP will facilitate the assessment of Environmental Stewardship applications, woodland plans and proposals by the Council's Countryside Section.

The HEAP sets out aims, objectives and proposed actions to manage the Isle of Wight's historic environment from 2008 to 2013. The HEAP Steering Group will oversee delivery of the plan in the next five years by supporting work on characterising and recording HLC Types, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and promoting awareness, access and enjoyment of this resource.

7.5 USE OF HLC IN RESEARCH

The Isle of Wight HLC will contribute to a PhD Study being undertaken at Bournemouth University. This research is investigating Isle of Wight medieval and post-medieval settlement and land use in the context of regional models of historic landscape character and will also explore the potential of HLC for past-oriented research (Basford forthcoming).

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RCHM: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England

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Appendix 1
HLC Area Tables (in alphabetical order)

Arreton Valley

Geology	Mainly Ferruginous Sands, overlain with Gravel Terraces in a considerable part of the area. Some Plateau Gravel Deposits. Thin bands of Sandrock, Carstone, Gault and Upper Greensand lie along the northern edge of the area on the boundary with the East Wight Chalk Ridge. There is Alluvium in the river valleys.
Relief	Generally flat land lying below 50m OD with maximum altitude 62m OD near Arreton Cemetery. Moderate slopes on NW side of Eastern Yar & on sides of tributary valleys.
Drainage	The main watercourse is the Eastern Yar which enters this HLC Area at Great Budbridge and flows NE to leave the area near Newchurch. Tributary streams flow into the Eastern Yar.
Soils	Light, fertile and easily worked. Much of the land is Grade 2 on the Agricultural Classification Map, in contrast with most of the Isle of Wight's agricultural land which is Grade 3 or 4.
Woodland	Deciduous woodland is entirely confined to river valleys and generally comprises small copses except for a linear strip of woodland on the eastern edge of the area near Wackland. Late C20 coniferous shelter belts surround horticultural glasshouses.
Economy	Arable agriculture and horticulture are the dominant activities, with a large garden centre and a visitor attraction housed in former horticultural glasshouses.
Landscape Character	Generally open and exposed with fairly large arable fields and glasshouse complexes. Field boundaries are relatively few, straight and treeless but the landscape is broken up to some extent by the sinuous valley-floor pastures. The busy main road from Arreton to Sandown detracts from the rural feel of this area but its historic character can be appreciated from the cycle track running along a former railway line which passes close to several manor houses and areas of valley-floor pasture.
Archaeology	Prehistoric flintwork recorded from Mersley Farm and Heasley Farm. Iron Age and Roman occupation indicated by finds made to the north of Newchurch. No surviving prehistoric earthworks. Concentrations of crop-marks and soil-marks occur to the west of Hale Manor and around Arreton Street, suggesting prehistoric activity in these areas.
Settlement Pattern	The church/manor complex at Arreton was the centre of an Anglo-Saxon mother parish. Arreton Street is an interrupted-row settlement, shown on the OS 1793 map, which runs along the main road to the SE of the church and manor. Merstone, also shown on the 1793 map, is a straggling linear settlement associated with nearby Merston Manor but without a medieval parish church. Both Arreton Street and Merstone have a high proportion of C20 buildings. There are manor houses at Great Budbridge, Horringford, Heasley, Hale and Redway and a lost manor house site at Pereton, in addition to the manor houses of Arreton and Merston, suggesting that the Arreton Valley was an important agricultural area in the Middle Ages. There are also some dispersed farmsteads of various ages. These historic manor houses and farmsteads are generally situated close to valley-floor pasture except for the Arreton church/manor complex which is situated immediately below the chalk ridge.
Past HLC	The OS 1793 map shows medium and fairly large fields, often with straight boundaries, within much of this area. Very regular fields are shown between Heasley Manor and Arreton Down where documentary evidence suggests that there may have been an unenclosed sheepwalk belonging to Quarr Abbey in medieval times. Field names around Arreton Manor are recorded in a lease of Quarr Abbey land dating from 1453 and suggest that some land around the manor was worked as open-field in the Middle Ages but no surviving open-field is shown on the 1793 map. There would have been larger areas of undrained valley-floor wetlands in the past.
Present HLC	C20 boundary loss has increased the average field size within this area considerably.
Mineral Extraction	Gravel extraction started recently at Hale Manor Farm.
Buildings	Arreton Manor, Heasley Manor, Redway and other smaller houses date mainly from the C17 and are built of local Greensand. Merston Manor is an unusual Isle of Wight example of C17 brick construction. There are C18 and C19 brick buildings at Arreton Street and Merstone, as well as many of C20 date.
Threats to Character	Road traffic detracting from rural character and continuing loss of nature conservation habitats.

Atherfield Coastal Plain

Geology	Mainly Ferruginous Sands in the Lower Greensand Series with superficial deposits of Alluvium and of Blown Sand Shingle.
Relief	Low-lying and flat with maximum altitude of 55m OD south of Samber Hill. The low relief and coastal location of this area distinguishes it from the generally hillier terrain and somewhat higher altitude of the *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel* HLC Area, which lies inland from the Atherfield Coastal Plain.
Drainage	Minor watercourses flow south or south west and drain into Shepherd's Chine, Whale Chine or Walpen Chine.
Coastline	Eroding coastal slope, with Whale Chine being dramatic. Quiet sand and shingle beaches with access only at chines. Coastal Path.
Soils	Light, fertile soils supporting intensive arable agriculture. Some of this HLC Area is Grade 2 on the Agricultural Land Classification Map, in contrast with most of the Isle of Wight's agricultural land which is Grade 3 or 4.
Woodland	Almost total lack of woodland.
Economy	Main economic activity is farming, although tourists visit beaches and use Coastal Path.
Landscape Character	Flat, open and exposed to south- westerly winds from the sea, with large arable fields and few hedgerows or trees. Main landscape features are the chines and the beaches. Good sea views from the Military Road which passes through this area, carrying tourists to the South West Coastal Zone and to Freshwater.
Archaeology	Prehistoric flintwork recorded from the eroding coastal slope.
Settlement Pattern	Small clusters of farmsteads and cottages are strung out along Atherfield Lane, which was the only road through this Area before the construction of the C19 Military Road. One of these clusters is centred around 'Atherfield Green', a name which records a former green situated to the south of Atherfield Farm and shown on the OS 1793 map.
Past HLC	In the Middle Ages arable open fields may have existed within the western and eastern parts of this Area where the OS 1793 map shows interlocking field patterns. In central part of Area the 1793 map shows larger fields than those to the west and east. Some of these larger fields may have been enclosed from a former green. A triangular remnant of this green is shown on the 1793 map to the east of Atherfield Green Farm and south of Atherfield Farm but had become an enclosed field by the time of the 1st Edition OS 6" of 1862. Close to the dispersed farmsteads and the main settlement cluster at Atherfield Green the 1793 map shows small irregular pasture fields.
Present HLC	This is one of the few areas of the Isle of Wight where it is difficult to relate existing field patterns to the 1793 OS map due to radical reorganisation of fields, partly in response to the C19 construction of the Military Road. The small pasture fields shown on the 1793 map have vanished. Atherfield Lane and the settlement along the lane provide the main link with the area's past historic landscape character.
Buildings	The farmhouses and cottages are mainly constructed out of local Greensand and some have thatched roofs. Walpen Manor House and Downend Cottage are of C17 date, and are built of local stone with mullioned windows, drip moulds and thatched roofs.
Threats to Character	Erosion of coastal cliffs, leading to loss of archaeological material and threats to coastal path and chine access.

Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle

Sub-Areas	Sub-area 1: Brading and St Helens to NW of former Brading Haven. Sub-area 2: Reclaimed land of Brading Haven. Sub-area 3: Bembridge Isle.
Geology	Mainly Bembridge Marls, capped in places with Marine Gravel, surrounding the alluvium of the reclaimed Brading Haven. Narrow bands of Reading Beds, London Clay, Bagshot Beds and Osborne & Headon Beds to the N. of the Chalk.
Relief	Gentle slopes rising from sea level within the reclaimed Brading Haven to about 50m OD north of St Helens and below Bembridge Down
Drainage	Main watercourse is Eastern Yar which flows in an artificial channel through the reclaimed land of Brading Haven. Yaverland and 'Bembridge Isle' were cut off from the rest of the IW before the construction of the Yar causeway in the C14.
Coastline	Sandy beach at Priory Bay backed by eroding coastal slope from Horestone Point to the sand dunes of the Duver. Rocky foreshore around Bembridge Isle leading to Whitecliff Bay north of Culver Down.
Soils	Possibly lighter soils than those of adjacent Northern Lowlands HLC Area. Reclaimed land at Brading Haven is Grade 4 Agricultural Land too damp for arable farming.
Woodland	Ancient woodland on cliff slope from Horestone Point to St Helens. Pockets of woodland within Bembridge Isle, mainly secondary in character.
Designed Landscapes	'The Priory' has a park & garden developed from the late C18 to early C20 (outline survives). Smaller C19 & early C20 gardens exist at St Helens & within Bembridge Isle (some maintained).
Landscape Character	This area is defined by the relationship of the more elevated sub-areas 1 and 3 with the existing Bembridge Harbour and with the flat lands reclaimed from Brading Haven. The area is more open and less wooded than the Northern Lowlands. Sub-area 1 consists of fields, tourism-related land use, historic settlement at Brading and St Helens, and C19-C20 settlement at Nettlestone. Sub-area 2 is grazing marsh now maintained as an RSPB reserve. Sub-area 3 includes the C19 and C20 settlement of Bembridge with farmland and tourism sites to N. and S. of the chalk.
Economy and Industry	Tourism is significant, with seaside holiday centres at St Helens, Bembridge and Whitecliff Bay & tourist attractions at Brading. Bembridge Harbour supports yachting and pleasure boats whilst Bembridge Airport supports pleasure flights. Local retailing is significant at Bembridge. There are farms around Bembridge and St Helens.
Archaeology	A Palaeolithic site is known at Priory Bay and similar material has been found elsewhere in the area. Only small amounts of other prehistoric and Roman material have been recorded. Medieval earthworks exist within secondary woodland at Centurion's Copse on the site of Woolverton Manor. The only surviving structure associated with the medieval priory of St Helens is the church Tower. There are embankments associated with a tide mill at St Helens, and a windmill at Bembridge. Around the edge of the former Brading Haven is the stone and earth structure of the former quay and earthwork embankments representing the various phases of reclamation from the C16 to the C19.
Settlement Pattern	The former Brading Haven is the key to this HLC Area. A small linear medieval town was established at Brading west of the haven and boats sailed up to the quay, close to the town. The medieval settlement of St Helens was on the N. side of the haven and has a settlement form comprising a regular one row plan with a green. This form is not seen elsewhere on the IW, although common in some parts of the country. Roads run from the green to the edge of the former haven. Within Bembridge Isle the historic settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and a hamlet at Bembridge itself has been largely obscured by the development of Bembridge as a small seaside resort for the well-to-do in the C19, and by subsequent twentieth century residential development.
Past HLC	Former open-field strips associated with St Helens may have been enclosed piecemeal in post-medieval times and contrast with fields N. of the village where large closes existed by C16. Highly unusual pattern of regular open-field with associated roads & tracks shown on OS 1793 drawings within Bembridge Isle.
Present HLC	Mainly small-medium fields N. of St Helens. Smaller fields to the W. of Bembridge surround the low density but regular settlement grid which dominates Bembridge Isle, both contrasting with low-lying grazing marsh within the area of the former Brading Haven.
Buildings	Mainly brick, with a few older Bembridge Limestone farmhouses & cottages.
Threats to Character	Unfinished golf course at edge of Brading Marsh. Climate change leading to drying out of grazing marsh.

East Wight Chalk Ridge

Sub-Areas	Sub-area 1: Arreton-Brading Ridge. Sub-area 2: Bembridge/Culver Down.
Geology	Middle & Lower Chalk, Upper Chalk. Small patches of Angular Flint Gravel on Mersley Down and Brading Down.
Relief	Steep slopes with narrow summit plateau, widening out in places. Maximum altitude 135 OD NE of Arreton Down
Drainage	Springs radiate N. and S. from springs at the base of the chalk ridge.
Coastline	Culver Down, at the E. end of the ridge, terminates in chalk cliffs.
Soils	Light soils that have been cultivated mainly on the north side of the ridge.
Woodland	Differs from West Wight Chalk ridge in having some non-plantation woodland along the ridge. This includes secondary woodland N. of Arreton Down and ancient woodland E. of Ashey Down at Eaglehead Copse.
Designed Landscapes	Nunwell Down abuts the C18 Nunwell Park which lies in the Northern Lowlands HLC Area. Kelly's Copse is ornamental woodland associated with Nunwell.
Landscape Charcater.	An open landscape with excellent views from the Arreton-Brading Road and from the Bembridge Down road, both being on top of the ridge. Views to the S. encompass the Arreton Valley, Sandown Bay and South Wight downland. Views to the N. encompass much of NE Wight, the Solent and Portsmouth. There is less unimproved chalk grassland than on the West Wight Chalk downs and the tranquillity of that area is missing from the East Wight Ridge, particularly between Arreton and Brading where the road is very busy. From Arreton to Brading much of the ridge to the north of the road is ploughed, with improved grassland on much of Ashey Down. On the S. side of the road there is unimproved grassland on Arreton Down, and on parts of Mersley Down and Brading Down, with smaller pockets elsewhere. Much of Bembridge Down has been ploughed although there is some open grassland on the sides of the ridge and on Culver Down.
Archaeology	Unploughed Bronze Age round barrows on Arreton Down, Ashey Down, Nunwell Down and Culver Down. Ploughed or damaged round barrows on Mersley Down, Middle West Down and Bembridge Down. Remains of prehistoric and Roman field systems on Mersley Down, Ashey Down and Brading Down. Remains of medieval ridge & furrow and medieval stock enclosure on Ashey Down. C19 and C20 military remains on Bembridge Down and Culver Down.
Settlement Pattern	Between Arreton and Brading dispersed farmsteads occupy the base of the ridge on either side, at the interface with other HLC areas.
Past HLC	Archaeological evidence for prehistoric, Roman and medieval field systems suggests that parts of the East Wight Chalk Ridge were cultivated from early times. However, in medieval times this Area was probably used mainly as unenclosed manorial common grazing, a land use indicated by the individual downs named after adjacent manors. By the time of the OS 1793 drawings much of the East Wight chalk ridge was divided into enclosures and the tithe surveys of the 1830s and 1840s records the land use within some of these large downland enclosures as arable.
Present HLC	Sub-area 1: Fairly large arable fields on N. side of ridge. Smaller fields and areas of uncultivated grassland on S. side of ridge. Sub-area 2: Much of Bembridge Down is divided into large enclosures but Culver Down is open grassland.
Mineral Extraction	Large chalk quarry operating on Arreton Down. Elsewhere there are disused chalk pits.
Buildings	No vernacular buildings on the chalk ridge itself, all settlements lying at the base of the ridge in neighbouring HLC areas. C19 and C20 military fortifications on Bembridge Down and Culver Down, also C19 monument and later coastguard station.
Threats to Character	Increased road traffic on Arreton-Brading Road, leading to further loss of rural tranquillity. Ploughing of archaeological sites.

Freshwater Isle

Geology	Narrow deposits of Reading Beds and London Clay immediately N. of the chalk with Bracklesham Group deposits beyond, then Osborne and Headon Beds with some Bembridge Limestone. Plateau Gravel at Headon Hill and near Hill Farm. Alluvium in floor of Yar valley and Gravel Terraces on valley slopes.
Relief	Fairly low altitude - maximum 125m OD at Headon Hill but generally 20m OD - 55m OD with moderate slope, except for steeper slopes of Headon Hill and Golden Hill.
Drainage	Via River Yar, which forms the W. boundary of the area. The Yar flows northward into the Solent and is tidal to Freshwater Causeway. Small streams flow out to western coast via chines at Alum Bay, Totland Bay and Colwell Bay
Coastline	Soft eroding coastal slope between Norton and Cliff End then low cliffs with sand and shingle beaches at Colwell Bay and Totland Bay. Eroding coastal slope north of Headon Hill.
Soils	Mainly loam and sandy loam, more easily worked than *Northern Lowlands*. Impoverished acid soils at Headon Hill and Golden Hill
Woodland	No ancient woodland except for Saltern Wood. Some secondary woodland and scrub around Golden Hill Fort and Norton Common.
Landscape Character	Rather more open than *Northern Lowlands* due to lack of woodland. Viewpoints into the area and seaward from Headon Hill and Golden Hill. Surviving agricultural land south of Freshwater is defined by historic roads and tracks leading to farms and groups of cottages. More open pattern of fields and roads north of Freshwater. Much Victorian and C20 built development. Heathland occurs at Headon Hill (the largest surviving area of heathland on the IW) with acid grassland and scrub at Golden Hill. There is valley-floor marsh along upper course of River Yar and saltmarsh north of Freshwater Causeway.
Archaeology	Bronze Age round barrow on summit of Headon Hill and two more on hill slope. Finds of prehistoric flintwork, Bronze Age axe hoard from Moons Hill. Iron Age gold coins and Roman finds from Freshwater Bay area. C19 military forts and road along coast.
Settlement Pattern	Parish church (with some Anglo-Saxon material) on gravel deposit overlooking Yar estuary. OS 1793 drawings and OS 1862 map show a polyfocal rural settlement pattern of hamlets around small greens (unusual in IW). This pattern is overlain by later Victorian accretions around Freshwater, by late Victorian and Edwardian resort development at Totland and Colwell Bay, and by late C20 suburban accretions.
Economy and Industry	Tourism based at Cowell Bay, Totland Bay and Freshwater Bay has declined to some extent in later C20 but there are hotels at Freshwater Bay and holiday centres at Norton. Small amount of light industry. Local shopping centre at Freshwater. Some farming, with individual farms providing tourist-related activities.
Past HLC	Medieval open-field agriculture in about one third of area, contrasting with general lack of open-field agriculture in *Northern Lowlands*. Enclosure was piecemeal, often involving small strips or groups of strips and took place over a long time, with some unenclosed strips in later C19. Parliamentary enclosure of 37 acres at Easton in 1861 (one of only two parliamentary enclosures of open-field on IW). Easton Field actually lay on chalk at the E. edge of High Down). Fairly large amounts of unenclosed rough grazing survived into post-medieval times at Golden Hill, Headon Hill and Norton Common.
Present HLC	Evidence of former open-field can be found in existing field patterns and layout of roads and tracks. Open land survives on Headon Hill (heathland) and Golden Hill (partly scrub) but Norton Common has become secondary woodland. The former polyfocal settlement pattern can still be traced but much of the landscape is dominated by Victorian building around Freshwater, late C19 and early C20 resort development around Totland and Colwell, and later C20 suburban development.
Buildings	Some farmhouses and cottages of stone and thatch. Kings Manor is early C18. An appreciation of the IW by the wealthy in early C19 led to building of isolated larger houses at Norton, Westhill and Farringford (home of Lord Tennyson). Weston Manor dates from 1870s. Victorian and Edwardian buildings around Freshwater are mainly modest red brick semi-detached properties, with larger Edwardian properties around Totland. Many of the later C20 properties throughout the area are bungalows.
Threats to Character	Further encroachment on remaining farmland by built development. Continuation of inappropriate 'suburban' style of building which does not fit well with the surviving rural character of the area.

Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay

Geology	Mainly Ferruginous Sands overlain with patches of Plateau Gravel. Alluvium and Gravel Terraces in the river valleys.
Relief	Generally hillier and of higher altitude than the adjacent *Arreton Valley*, rising to a maximum of 60m OD in various places and to 76m OD near Apse Castle Wood on the southern edge of the area, but also including low-lying land around the River Yar and Scotchells Brook.
Drainage	Eastern Yar flows east through this area between Newchurch and Brading. Scotchells Brook flows NE from Apse Manor to join Yar east of Alverstone.
Coastline	Sandown Bay has been developed as a seaside resort, containing the twin towns of Sandown and Shanklin. A promenade runs behind the beach as far south as Shanklin Chine. Above the promenade are high but eroding cliffs, mainly composed of Ferruginous Sandstone but with earlier Wealden deposits exposed between Sandown Pier and Redcliff to the north.
Soils	Light and easily worked. The valley-floor Alluvium supports damp pastures such as Alverstone Marshes.
Woodland	This area differs from the *Arreton Valley* in containing three woodland areas of a relatively substantial size; these being Borthwood Copse, America Wood and Apse Castle Wood, as well as other smaller woods and some valley-floor woodland.
Designed Landscapes	Late C19 grounds at Landguard Manor are now largely developed or in use as a holiday park. The garden at Morton Manor has C19 and later C20 components.
Economy	Sandown Bay is the Isle of Wight's major tourist centre, with hotels, guest houses, camp sites and tourist attractions at Sandown, Shanklin and surrounding areas. The countryside to the west of Sandown and Shanklin supports agriculture.
Landscape Character	Varied landscape of cultivated fields, woodland and valley-floor grazing, then urban fringe land uses such as Sandown Golf Course and Sandown Airport giving way to the Victorian and Edwardian seaside towns of Sandown and Shanklin and C20 suburbs. The rural nature of the landscape outside Sandown and Shanklin has been modified to some extent by C20 residential development at Alverstone Garden Village and Winford.
Archaeology	Evidence of prehistoric flint-working and occupation in Blackpan Common/Scotchells Brook/Lake areas. Waterlogged timber remains recently discovered at Alverstone Marshes. A late Iron Age enclosure and medieval pottery kiln have been excavated at Knighton just below the Chalk Ridge. The Isle of Wight's richest Roman villa lies immediately below the chalk ridge at Brading.
Settlement Pattern	The 1793 map shows linear row settlements at Newchurch and Sandham and small settlement clusters at Adgestone, Alverstone & Lake, as well as dispersed settlements at Upper Borthwood, Lower Borthwood & Branstone and individual farmsteads. Newchurch is the only settlement with a medieval parish church within this HLC Area. Sandown and Shanklin were built on agricultural land and heathland in the C19, with C20 suburbs. Alverstone Garden Village was originally planned in the early C20 although most existing buildings are later C20. Residential development at Winford is nearly all of late C20 date.
Past HLC	The OS 1793 map shows considerable areas of heathland at Winford, Apse Heath, Royal Heath (later developed as Sandown) and in the Lake Common/Blackpan area, where the two manors of Blackpan and Lake possessed adjacent commons. An area of former open-field can be identified around Adgestone. The 1793 map also shows large areas of valley-floor grazing.
Present HLC	The area contains somewhat smaller fields and more woodland than the Arreton Valley, a distinction which has certainly existed since the time of the 1793 OS map. Much of the woodland shown on the 1793 maps survives today and the same basic field pattern can still be detected (modified by later amalgamation and reorganisation) but the heathland has disappeared except for patches on Blackpan Common (which is now part of Sandown Golf Course).
Mineral Extraction	Peat extraction in the East Yar valley during the 1980s (continuing?). Sand pits near Knighton, one site now landfill, one still in use.
Buildings	Some older farmsteads (e.g. at Knighton & Adgestone) as well as cottages built of Greensand. Victorian and Edwardian brick buildings in Sandown and Shanklin with C20 suburbs. Late C20 houses & bungalows at Alverstone Garden Village, Winford and Yaverland.
Threats to Character	Continued suburban development, expansion of urban fringe land use and erosion of rural character.

Northern Lowlands

Geology	Hamstead Beds and Bembridge Marls, overlain in places by Plateau Gravel and Gravel Terraces. Narrow bands of Reading Beds, London Clay, Bracklesham Group deposits and Osborne & Headon Beds north of the chalk.
Relief	Generally of fairly low altitude, maximum c. 75m OD, but moderately hilly in places.
Drainage	Tidal inlets along coast, with the tidal estuary of the River Medina running inland to Newport at the centre of the area. Smaller streams mainly run north.
Coastline	Low-lying, eroding cliffs with sand and shingle beaches and mud flats. Areas of saltmarsh around tidal inlets and estuaries.
Soils	Mainly heavy, easily waterlogged clays on Hamstead Beds with some better soils on other deposits. Generally Grade 3 agricultural land but with poor quality Grade 4 land near the coast from Bouldnor to Porchfield, and in NE Wight around Staplers, Combley, Great Briddlesford and Havenstreet.
Designed Landscapes	C18-C19 landscape parks at Westover, Swainston and Nunwell on EH Register are all fairly close to the chalk ridge and are partly in agricultural use. Early C19 parks at Norris Castle, East Cowes (on EH Register) and at Northwood Park, West Cowes (outer park now developed). Osborne Park & Gardens (EH Grade II*) developed in the mid C19 under influence of Prince Albert from a late C18 landscape park. Late C19/early C20 garden and park at Woodlands Vale, east of Ryde.
Woodland	Most heavily wooded part of IW, with much of the Island's surviving ancient woodland and replanted ancient woodland
Landscape Character	Fairly enclosed landscape, in places appearing more heavily wooded than it is because of numerous hedgerow trees.
Archaeology	Few prehistoric sites and monuments except on the coast. In the NE Wight, at Wootton-Quarr, Neolithic trees have been recorded on the beach - also prehistoric, Roman, Early Medieval and Medieval structures and artefacts buried in silt and peat deposits. Gurnard Roman Villa was near the coast (possibly connected with Bembridge Limestone export) and Combley lay immediately north of the East Wight Chalk Ridge. Significant medieval and post-medieval historic landscape features have survived (e.g. the plan of the failed medieval borough of Newtown) and many more historic landscape features may as yet be unrecognised and unrecorded.
Settlement Pattern	Medieval rural settlement pattern mainly dispersed and thinly populated with some church-manor complexes. Planned medieval towns of Newport, Yarmouth and Newtown (failed borough). Small C17 port of Cowes became ship-building centre in C18 and Isle of Wight's only industrial town in C19. Ryde developed from the late C18. The NE part of this Area is now the most heavily developed zone within the IW.
Economy and Industry	Agriculture dominant until C20. Ship-building significant at Cowes and East Cowes from C18, with towns becoming industrialised in C19 but industry declining in later C20. Tourism significant from C19 at Ryde and Cowes, the latter town hosting the yachting related 'Cowes Week'. The 'North-East Wight Triangle', encompassing Newport, Cowes and Ryde, now contains much of the Island's economic infrastructure, supporting light industry and commercial uses.
Past HLC	Mosaic of woodland and clay heath in prehistoric times with low levels of settlement and agriculture. Parkhurst Forest, partly wooded and partly heathland, was a defined landscape feature by the late Anglo-Saxon period. In medieval and early post medieval periods there were large areas of unenclosed common grazing on clay heath e.g. Calbourne Heathfield. Only small areas of medieval open-field.
Present HLC	Mainly small-medium pasture fields and woodland, including Forestry Commission replanted ancient woodland. Some arable on gravel cappings and immediately north of the chalk in NE Wight.
Mineral Extraction	Bembridge Limestone was commercially quarried and exported in the Roman period and the Middle Ages. Medieval quarry sites survive in the Binstead/Quarr area of NE Wight. No Bembridge Limestone quarries exist at the present day.
Vernacular buildings	Older rural buildings are Bembridge Limestone with thatch, tile and slate roofs. C18 town buildings, particularly in Newport, are of variegated red and grey brick. Many brick kilns within this HLC Area in C19, utilising local clay. Brick building almost universal from mid C19 with industrial workers' terraced housing in Cowes and East Cowes.
Threats to Character	Commercial and industrial development in and around towns does not always respect existing character. Decline in agriculture, particularly dairy farming, resulting in inappropriate leisure uses. Demolition & unsympathetic conversion of vernacular farm houses and farm buildings. Growth of unsympathetic horse-related buildings. Inappropriate treatment of rural roads & bridges. Loss of hedgerows.

South-West Wight Coastal Zone

Geology	Wealden Beds with superficial Gravel Terrace, Valley Brickearth and Alluvium.
Relief	Low-lying and fairly flat area with maximum altitude c. 60m OD at interface with *West Wight Downland Edge & Sandstone Ridge*, sloping gently southward to coast.
Drainage	Minor watercourses flow mainly S. to chines on the coast but at Sudmoor a stream flows NW before reaching the sea at Brook Chine.
Coastline	Soft eroding cliffs with areas of landslip & chines. Sand & shingle beaches. Coastal path.
Soils	Generally Grade 3 agricultural land but Grade 4 on damp, low-lying land near coast to W. and E. of Brook.
Woodland	Small plantations & patches of secondary woodland from Brook to Mottistone. No woodland E. of Mottistone except on valley-floor at Grange Chine and NW of Wolverton.
Designed Landscapes	Some features of C19 park around Brook House survive, although mainly in agricultural use. The Brook estate may have planted woodland in the Brook-Mottistone area.
Economy	Coastal tourism is important in this Area, the beaches being popular with families, surfers and fossil hunters. National Trust coastal car parks are sited at Compton Chine and Shippards Chine. There are holiday centres near Grange Chine and at Shepherd's Chine, with a commercial retail outlet beside the Military Road at Chilton Chine
Landscape Character	Area is bounded by *West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge* to north, making it feel less exposed than Atherfield Plain to SE, although there is no protection from SW winds. Field sizes within this Area are smaller than within *Atherfield Plain* with more hedgerows and there is pasture as well as arable land. Military Road runs parallel to coast, offering good coastal views, and chines provide variety. Eroding cliffs and beaches are important for fossils including dinosaur remains. Public rights of way run southward through this area from sandstone ridge to coast.
Archaeology	Gravel and brickearth deposits in cliff face from Shippard's Chine to Grange Chine indicate the valley of an ancient river truncated by coastal erosion. Mesolithic flintwork and prehistoric hearths have been found in these deposits, also a Bronze Age burial urn and a preserved hurdle. Further to the SE a late Bronze Age urn cemetery was recorded at Barnes High in the C19. A supposed Iron Age burial mound and hut sites were recorded at Sudmoor in the C20. Large Iron Age coin hoard recorded from this Area.
Settlement Pattern	A string of villages, hamlets & farms occur along Shorwell-Brook road, at interface with *West Wight Downland Edge & Sandstone Ridge* and partly in that HLC Area. Brighstone, straddling the two HLC Areas, has a nucleated cluster around the church & outlying areas of settlement. Mottistone is of hamlet size but has a church & manor house whilst Hulverstone has a manor house but no church. Brook parish church lies at the base of the sandstone ridge but the settlement lies within this HLC Area, At Shorwell the historic settlement core lies within the *West Wight Downland Edge & Sandstone Ridge* but some outlying parts of the village and the manors of Wolverton and Westcourt fall within this HLC Area. Small hamlets subsidiary to the main settlements lie closer to the coast at Hoxall, Chilton Green and Yafford. Hoxall was larger in the C19. Dispersed farmsteads lie between the Brook-Shorwell road and the coast e.g.Sutton Farm, Thorncross Farm.
Past HLC	In the Middle Ages open-fields accounted for a significant amount of land use, particularly around Brighstone where surviving open fields are recorded in a survey of 1630. Between Brook Green and Grange Chine an area of low-lying damp pasture known as 'Sudmoor' ran parallel to the coast and this area also contained withy beds. Brook Green and Fernfield Common were areas of common grazing with associated cottages recorded in the early C19 but now gone. (Brook Green was recorded on an enclosure map of 1834). An area of damp valley-floor land with some woodland ran between Wolverton Manor and Yafford Mill. In the W. part of the area trackways ran southward from the settlements at the base of the sandstone ridge to the coast. To the east of Brighstone minor roads and tracks ran both N-S and E-W. These roads and tracks may have given access to different areas of land use and to coastal resources such as seaweed, as well as leading to dispersed settlements.
Present HLC	Remaining hedgerows and road patterns preserve external boundaries of former open fields in the Brighstone area. Field sizes are mainly small-medium and medium. Much of the historic settlement pattern survives, modified by late C20 residential development at Brighstone and Shorwell. The historic pattern of roads and tracks also survives.
Buildings	Older vernacular buildings utilise Lower Greensand stone of various kinds including Ferruginous Sandstone. Chalk block are also used (sometimes displaying ship carvings) and some older buildings are thatched. There are manor houses within this HLC Area at West Court, Wolverton, Limerstone, Waytes Court, Shate, Mottistone and Hulverstone. Modern buildings in Brighstone and Shorwell are mainly bungalows.
Threats to Character	Coastal erosion. Development within existing settlements which does not respect settlement form or character of older buildings. Loss of tranquillity, traffic congestion and pollution from motor vehicles along the coast.

South Wight Downland

Sub-Areas	Area comprises three blocks of high downland separated by lower ground. Sub-area 1 comprises Gore Down, St Catherine's Hill, St Catherine's Down and Head Down. Sub-area 2 comprises Week Down, Rew Down, Stenbury Down and Appuldurcombe Down. Sub-area 3 comprises Wroxall Down, St Boniface Down, Bonchurch Down, Luccombe Down, Shanklin Down and St Martin's Down. Sub-area 4 comprises the lower ground between and below the high downland blocks.
Geology	Middle Chalk, Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand. Superficial deposits of Angular Flint Gravel (Clay with Flints) on St Catherine's Hill, Week Down, St Boniface Down, Bonchurch Down, Luccombe Down, Shanklin Down and Stenbury Down.
Relief	High downland ridges, widening into broader summit plateaux in some areas, with steep slopes on either side of the ridges and flatter land between and to south of high downland. Maximum altitude: sub-area 1: 236m OD on St Catherine's Hill, sub-area 2: 226m OD on Appuldurcombe Down, sub-area 3: 240m OD on St Boniface Down. Sub-area 4 155m OD at Niton Reservoir.
Drainage	Spring-line below base of high downland. Streams rise to N. or on N. edge of Area.
Soils	Calcareous on Middle & Lower Chalk. Acid on Upper Greensand and gravel deposits.
Woodland	Sub-area 1: Scrub at northern end of St Catherine's Down. Sub-area 2: Rew Copse and Appuldurcombe Wood are ancient woodland. Sub-area 3: Cliff Copse, Greatwood Copse, Luccombe Copse and Wroxall Copse are ancient woodland. C20 secondary holm oak woodland on St Boniface Down and other scrub and secondary woodland on Bonchurch Down Luccombe Down and Shanklin Down. Sub-area 4: no woodland.
Designed Landscapes	Appuldurcombe Landscape Park (EH Register Grade II) included Appuldurcombe Down, with a now-ruinous C18 stone deer park wall encircling base of high downland.
Landscape Character and Present HLC	Sub-area 1: Some downland characteristics with good access & excellent views of surrounding land & of English Channel but St Catherine's Hill is enclosed & improved grassland, with only a small amount of unimproved chalk grassland. The narrow spine of St Catherine's Down is unimproved acid grassland with a substantial area of scrub. Head Down has some unimproved acid grassland and a small patch of heathland. Sub-area 2: Mostly cultivated farmland with an exposed and open feel. Unimproved chalk grassland on south side of Rew Down & the SE edge of Week Down. Ancient woodland at Rew Copse & Appuldurcombe Wood. Sub-area 3: Horseshoe-shaped ridge overlooking lower ground to the NW with Undercliff and English Channel to the south, offering a sense of space and sweeping views, with very good access. Much nature conservation interest with areas of unimproved chalk grassland, acid grassland, heathland and bluebell stands. Ancient woodland of Wroxall Copse and Luccombe Copse on northern and eastern slopes. C20 holm oak woodland on south-facing slope of St Boniface Down is invasive and requires management but is of nature conservation interest. Radio station/ WW2 radar station on summit of St Boniface Down detracts from landscape quality but is of historic interest. Sub-area 4: Cultivated farmland with an exposed and open feel.
Archaeology	Sub-area 1: Bronze Age round barrow, medieval lighthouse and remains of C18 lighthouse on St Catherine's Hill. Medieval strip lynchets on east face of St Catherine's Hill. Sub-area 2: Ploughed Bronze Age round barrows on Week Down. Sub-area 3: Bronze Age round barrow cemetery on Luccombe Down. Remains of WW2 radar station on St Boniface Down. Medieval strip lynchets on St Martin's Down.
Settlement Pattern	Some dispersed settlement on downland slopes and in combes. A part of Niton village (not the historic settlement core) and a suburb of Ventnor lie on S. edge of Area.
Past HLC	Sub-area 1: OS 1793 map shows unenclosed downland on much of Gore Down, St Catherine's Hill, St Catherine's Down and Head Down although some fields are shown on downland slopes. Sub-area 2: 1793 map shows Rew Down, Week Down and Appuldurcombe Down as unenclosed downland although some enclosure may have taken place on Stenbury Down. In C19 & C20 much of the downland within sub-areas 1 and 2 was enclosed & cultivated. Sub-area 3: 1793 map shows sub-area largely as unenclosed downland although Shanklin Down had been divided from neighbouring downland. Sub-area 4: Fairly extensive open fields lay to the E. and W. of Niton, enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1856. Another possible area of open-field may have lain to the E. of Wroxall Manor Farm.
Mineral Extraction	Gatcliff at N. end of Appuldurcombe Down is a Greensand cliff modified by medieval and early post-medieval quarrying. Small Greensand quarries & chalk pits elsewhere.
Buildings	Farms of local Greensand. Older buildings In Niton of Greensand and modern bungalow estates of brick. Flint and brick buildings In Lowtherville (suburb of Ventnor).
Threats to Character	Lack of grazing leading to scrub encroachment upon remaining area of unimproved grassland.

South Wight Downland Edge

Geology	This HLC Area lies to the north of the *South Wight Downland* and comprises bands of Gault, Carstone and Sandrock Beds with a small area of Ferruginous Sands. Areas of landslip occur at the interface with the high downland.
Relief	This area has a varied topography, with fairly steep slopes dissected by small valleys surrounding much of the high downland, particularly in the west.
Drainage	Most watercourses flow N. but there is drainage in a westerly direction off the W. slopes of St Catherine's Down. The Medina rises on the slopes to the SE of Chale Green and flows NW for about 1km within this HLC Area. The Eastern Yar rises on the W. edge of Niton and flows NE to Whitwell & then N. to the edge of the HLC Area. A minor tributary of the Yar rises at Dean Farm, at the interface with the South Wight Downland Area and flows N. through Whitwell. More significant tributaries of the Yar rise from springs to the N. of Rew Farm and Wroxall Manor Farm.
Coastline	This HLC Area touches the coast only in a small area to the south of Shanklin Chine.
Soils	Heavy Gault clay surrounding the high downland with lighter soils to the north.
Woodland	Widely scattered small pockets of woodland, with greater concentrations only to the north of Appuldurcombe Park.
Designed Landscapes	Appuldurcombe House and much of the C18 Appuldurcombe landscape park (English Heritage Grade II) lie within this area although the deer park falls partly within the *South Wight Downland* Area. The park is currently in agricultural use. Appuldurcombe's designed landscape extends N. beyond the park boundary at the Freemantle Gate almost as far as Godshill, in the form of a carriage drive backed by a Beech plantation. Formerly, this designed landscape also extended E. beyond the settlement of Wroxall to the Gothic folly of Cook's Castle on the slopes of St Martin's Down. The Hermitage, of early C19 origins, has modest wooded grounds dominated by beech trees. Wydcombe has C19 parkland, in agricultural use but still with parkland characteristics.
Landscape Character	Generally fairly small-scale and intimate with small irregular hedged pasture fields in the zone of Gault clay.
Archaeology	Only a small amount of prehistoric material appears to have been found within this HLC Area. This may reflect the fact that many fields have been under pasture within the last century and thus unavailable for field-walking. Medieval settlement earthworks exist at Stenbury and Nettlecombe. The C18 parkland at Appuldurcombe may be on the site of a Tudor deer park.
Settlement Patterns	This HLC Area is characterised by historic nucleated settlements, often at the interface with other HLC areas. Most nucleated settlements have expanded significantly in the later C20. The main settlements are Niton (historic settlement core), Whitwell, Chale, Chale Green, Godshill (historic settlement core), Wroxall and the church/manor complex at Shanklin, with minor historic settlements at Nettlecombe and Sandford. Historically, Godshill and Niton were nucleated clusters. Whitwell, Wroxall and Chale were of linear form whilst Chale Street was an interrupted-row settlement. Chale Green (partly within the South Wight Sandstone Hills HLC Area) is one of the relatively few 'green villages' on the Isle of Wight. Wroxall, Sandford and Nettlecombe do not have medieval parish churches but Wroxall was an important manor at Domesday and appears to have been of large hamlet size at the time of the OS 1793 map, before its C19 expansion. Nettlecombe is a shrunken settlement. Dispersed manor houses and farmsteads are also characteristic of this HLC Area.
Past HLC	Field patterns probably derive largely from medieval enclosure of rough open land.
Present HLC	Mainly fairly small and irregular fields, often under pasture
Buildings	Vernacular Greensand manor houses, farmhouses & cottages. Late C20 bungalows in villages.
Mineral Extraction	Minor chalk pits and stone quarries, no longer active.
Threats to Character	Loss of hedgerows. Residential development of unsuitable character, form or size.

South Wight Sandstone and Gravel

Geology	Mainly Ferruginous Sands but with ridges of Plateau Gravel at Bleak Down, near Rookley and on St George's Down. Gravel Terraces and Alluvium in river valleys. This HLC Area also includes a narrow band of chalk to the south of Burnt House Lane which does not form a prominent ridge at this point but is subsidiary to the gravel ridge of St George's Down
Relief	This area has a similar geology to the Atherfield Plain and Arreton Valley HLC Areas but is on higher ground except within the river valleys. Slopes are generally moderate but with pronounced ridges on the Plateau Gravels as at Bleak Down and St George's Down. The highest points are 105m OD N. of Bucks Farm & 106m OD SE of Great East Standen Manor.
Drainage	At the SW of this area some streams flow towards the SW coast but the main drainage is provided by the upper reaches of the River Medina flowing NE from The Wilderness to Shide. The Eastern Yar also flows N. through this area from Southford to Kennerley Farm. A tributary stream of the R. Medina flows NW from the Pagham area to Blackwater.
Soils	Light, easily worked soils on Greensand. Acid unproductive soils on gravel ridges.
Woodland	Very little woodland except for Kingston Copse, secondary woodland south of Highwood Lane, and valley-floor woodland beside River Medina east of Gatcombe.
Economy	A rural area with a focus on arable agriculture rather than tourism.
Landscape Character	Generally open and exposed with large fields and few trees or hedgerows. Extensive views from high points such as St George's Down. The river valleys provide a contrast with the higher ground, having areas of undrained pasture and some woodland.
Archaeology	Neolithic and Bronze Age flint assemblages from Medina Valley near Gatcombe, Whitecroft, St George's Down and Bucks Farm. Few earthworks, possibly because of intensive arable agriculture. Crop-marks at Samber Hill, to the north of Pagham and east of Merston Red Barn suggest prehistoric activity in these areas. Fishponds of possible medieval date within Kingston Copse.
Settlement Pattern	Fairly sparsely populated area, with historic settlement mainly in the form of dispersed farmsteads. Kingston is a church/manor complex that attained parochial status in the Middle Ages. Roud is a hamlet that may have been more significant in medieval times. Blackwater is shown as a small hamlet on the OS 1793 map. Rookley appears to have developed as a green-edge settlement shown on the OS 1793 map, with later C20 residential development. No village-sized settlements of any antiquity
Past HLC	Although now in intensive agricultural use there is only limited evidence for medieval open-field. Heathland was certainly an important part of the landscape in medieval times, with the OS 1793 map showing fairly large heathland areas occupying the gravel ridges of Bleak Down and St George's Down. Straight field boundaries shown on the 1793 map suggest that much post-medieval heathland enclosure had already taken place by this date. The 1793 map also shows considerable areas of valley-floor pasture. There is evidence for large-scale early C19 reorganisation of holdings and rationalisation of boundaries in the Appleford area.
Present HLC	Widespread loss of field boundaries in C20, creating large arable fields.
Mineral Extraction	Large-scale gravel working on St George's Down.
Buildings	Vernacular farm buildings and cottages in local Greensand but relatively few historic manor houses, of which Kingston Manor is most significant. Some C18 and C19 Gentry houses. Later C20 residential development at Rookley is mainly in the form of bungalows.
Threats to Character	Loss of remnant heathland areas and other habitats important for nature conservation.

The Undercliff

Geology	Undercliff is a Landslip area caused by groundwater lubrication of slip planes within the Gault Clays and Sandrock Beds along the SE coast. It lies beneath the *South Wight Downland*, from which it is separated by vertical cliffs. Major land slides have been recorded from the C18 onwards and land movement continues at the present day.
Relief	A fairly low-lying zone, rising from the coastal cliff to a maximum altitude of 69m OD below inner cliff at St Lawrence. Parts of Area near Blackgang and within 'The Landslip' between Bonchurch and Luccombe consist of unstable and broken ground although other parts consist of more stable and level ground.
Drainage	Small streams flow south to coast.
Coastline	Unstable coastal slope from Blackgang to St Catherine's Point. Coastal cliff of medium height in most areas from St Catherine's Point to Shanklin Chine. A number of small bays, including Ventnor Bay, with sand and shingle beaches.
Soils	All surviving agricultural land has Grade 4 classification and is fairly poor-quality land.
Woodland	Fairly large amount of secondary woodland has become established since later C19.
Designed Landscapes	Picturesque beauty of Area attracted wealthy residents from later C18. Cottages ornés with ornamental grounds included Steephill Cottage (later Steephill Castle), St Lawrence Cottage, Lisle Combe, Puckaster Cottage, Mirables, Old Park and The Orchard.
Economy	Tourism is most important economic activity, centred on Ventnor but with some tourist accommodation at other locations. Theme park at Blackgang.
Landscape Character	The Undercliff runs from Blackgang almost to Shanklin as a narrow coastal strip less than 1km wide. Largest inhabited rotational landslip in western Europe and of major geological & ecological importance. Highly unusual and distinctive landscape with dramatic vertical inner cliff. Development from C19 to present day has modified the Area's character, giving some parts the feel of a garden suburb, but many older buildings are attractive & distinctive. Significant areas of undeveloped land and coastline remain, ranging from bare, wild slopes of Blackgang Landslip to enclosed, wooded ambience of Undercliff Drive. Southern aspect and temperate microclimate has encouraged recent residential development but has also inspired creation of Ventnor Botanic Garden.
Archaeology	Archaeological discoveries suggest that Undercliff may still have been forming in late prehistoric times. Evidence of past occupation includes prehistoric and medieval middens along the coastline, a Bronze Age axe hoard from Steephill, Iron age burials and currency bars from St Lawrence, a late Iron Age hut from Gills Cliff and a Roman coin hoard from the same area. A recent excavation has found evidence of late Saxon and medieval settlement in the Steephill/Flowers Brook area. Narrow ridge and furrow close to St Catherine's Lighthouse within an area of uneven and broken ground.
Settlement Patterns	There were tiny medieval settlements at St Lawrence and Bonchurch, each with a parish church, in addition to various manorial holdings. Development of individual summer residences for the wealthy took place from the late C18 followed by development of Ventnor as a coastal resort from c.1830. Bonchurch, St Lawrence and Niton Undercliff also developed in Victorian times. A small C19 fishing settlement at Steephill Cove has survived. Royal National Hospital at Ventnor, built from the 1860s, had a substantial impact on late C19 and C20 landscape but was demolished in the 1960s and became the site of the Ventnor Botanic Garden. Late C20 residential development has significantly modified the character of the area between St Lawrence and Ventnor.
Past HLC	OS 1793 map shows tiny fields in some areas. Much of the Undercliff may have been rough uncultivated land in medieval and later times. John Speed's map of the IW (1611) shows 'St Laurence Park' within the Undercliff. Rough grazing survived into the C19 at Chale Common beside Blackgang Chine and at the Landslip between Bonchurch and Shanklin.
Present HLC	Pre C19 pattern of tiny fields & rough grazing has been largely obliterated by C19 and C20 development, woodland growth & erosion. Stone walls define surviving fields and other boundaries. The Undercliff is the only place on the Isle of Wight where stone walls occur (apart from St Catherine's Hill). A survey could identify surviving walls.
Buildings	St Lawrence Old Church and Bonchurch Old Church are medieval. At Woolverton a medieval stone building and a small C17 stone manor house survive. There are several early C19 cottages ornées and marine villas, as well as later C19 houses, along the Undercliff. Concentrations of C19 buildings occur in Ventnor, which is essentially Victorian in character, and also at Bonchurch. Later C20 residential development is usually in the form of bungalows.
Mineral Extraction	None recorded in HLC.
Threats to Character	Desire to maintain Undercliff Drive from land movements and to prevent coastal erosion & land slip is changing character of area to some extent. Loss of historic buildings to landslip & erosion.

Thorley/Wellow Plain

Sub-Areas	1. Thorley/Wellow Plain. 2. Wilmingham/Tapnell Area. 3. Sub-Chalk Zone.
Geology	Sub-Area 1: Bembridge Limestone with some deposits of Osborne & Headon Beds. Sub-Area 2: Osborne & Headon Beds. Sub-Area 3: narrow deposits of Reading Beds & London Clay N. of chalk ridge with wider area of Bracklesham Group deposits.
Relief	Moderate altitude rising gradually southward. from 5m OD at Thorley Manor to 80m OD near Freshwater-Calbourne Road with somewhat steeper rise from road to foot of chalk ridge at 105m OD.
Drainage	Barnfield Stream flows NW towards Yar Estuary. Other minor watercourses flow N. to join Thorley Brook. Caulbourne rises near Chessell and runs NE within this area before crossing *Northern Lowlands* to enter Solent via Shalfleet Lake.
Soils	The Area contains the only extensive outcrop of Bembridge Limestone on the Island. Soils derived from the limestone are easily worked, well drained loam.
Woodland	Secondary and plantation woodland in Wilmingham/Tapnell area and some copses to NE of Chessell but no significant woodland on Thorley/Wellow Plain.
Designed Landscape	Sub-Area 3 includes a large part of the early C19 landscape park of Westover, (Grade II on EH Register) now partly in agricultural use but with surviving estate buildings and ornamental plantations. At the W. end of this sub-Area is the C19 Afton Park, associated with Afton Manor and also largely in agricultural use.
Landscape Character	The three sub-areas derive from different historic land uses but all have a generally open & exposed landscape with large 'prairie' type fields & few hedgerows or trees. Entirely rural with nearly all land in agricultural use.
Archaeology	Many crop marks exist to the south of Thorley and Wellow and east of the Yar. These are thought to be of prehistoric date and indicate tree clearance and occupation from the 2nd millennium BC. A ring-ditch excavated in1984 was from a ploughed-out Bronze Age round barrow and Roman material was found in nearby plough soil. Subsequent field walking on the limestone plateau has revealed a wide distribution of prehistoric flintwork and Romano-British ceramics. Recent metal-detecting has revealed Roman and Anglo-Saxon material. This includes a Roman coin hoard and early Anglo-Saxon metalwork, pagan Anglo-Saxon grave goods, Roman pottery and coins, and early Anglo-Saxon metalwork.
Settlement Pattern	Church/Manor complex at Thorley. Interrupted-row settlements at Thorley Street and Wellow with later C20 infilling. Otherwise thinly populated with a few farmsteads. Manor houses (other than Thorley) at Afton, Chessell & Shalcombe.
Past HLC	Medieval open-field recorded for Thorley and Wellow but from the C16 the area was enclosed into consolidated fields, rather than into small piecemeal strips, as in Freshwater Isle. Thorley and Wellow Manors shared a common which was enclosed in the C17 or C18. The Wilmingham/Tapnell area contained poor quality open land partly enclosed by the late C18 but known as Tapnell Furze in C19. Regular fields with N-S axis run along northern edge of chalk ridge and were probably enclosed from downland-edge commons. The land use history of the area to the NE of Chessell is unclear.
Present HLC	The Area is dominated by large prairie-type fields, created by the removal of post-medieval field boundaries in the later C20.
Mineral Extraction	Prospect Quarry, off Broad Lane, is on Bembridge Limestone and lies on land that was formerly within Wellow Common. The quarry appears to have been exploited only from the early 20th century and the quarried material is classified as 'weak limestone'. At present the quarry is only worked intermittently for use as infill. Prospect Quarry is the only Bembridge Limestone Quarry still being worked on the Isle of Wight.
Buildings	Some vernacular Bembridge Limestone farm buildings and cottages survive within the Area but there are many late C20 buildings in Thorley and Wellow. The most significant historic buildings within the Area are the early C18 manor houses of Thorley and Afton. The porch of Thorley's medieval parish church survives close to Thorley Manor, the replacement C19 parish church being some distance to the east.
Threats to Character	A proposed wind farm within this Area was perceived by many local residents as a threat to its character and did not receive planning permission.

West Wight Chalk Downland

Sub-Areas	Sub-area 1: Ridge slopes and summit west of Brighstone Down. Sub area 2: Dissected plateau to E and NE of Brighstone. Sub-area 3: Bowcombe Valley, Carisbrooke and Shide (outskirts of Newport).
Geology	Upper Chalk and Middle & Lower Chalk, overlain by Angular Flint Gravel in places on ridge of Mottistone Down and on dissected plateau.
Relief	Sub-area 1 has narrow ridge with steep slopes to N. and S. Maximum elevation 203m OD on Mottistone Down. Sub-area 2 is a wide plateau, sloping downwards into combes around edges of area. Maximum elevation of 214m OD on Brighstone Down. Sub-area 3 comprises low-lying land of Bowcombe Valley and valley slopes.
Drainage	The combes within Sub-areas 1 and 2 are dry. The Lukely Brook rises south of Bowcombe Farm within the Bowcombe Valley and flows NE into the Medina.
Coastline	Chalk cliffs lie to the S. of West High Down, Tennyson Down, Afton Down & Compton Down. Freshwater Bay is carved out of the surrounding chalk.
Soils	Sub-area 1 has thin alkaline soils supporting calcareous grassland. In sub-area 2 gravel cappings support deeper and slightly richer soils but these are still classified as Grade 4 agricultural land, indicating relatively poor quality. Bowcombe Valley is classified as Grade 3 (as is majority of the Isle of Wight's agricultural land).
Woodland	Sub-area 1 has recent scrub woodland on Tennyson Down and C20 plantations on Shalcombe Down, Chessell Down & Westover Down. Sub-area 2 has extensive C20 plantations but some areas have been cleared since 1987. Some ancient woodland in combes on N. edge of sub-area 2 and on slopes surrounding Bowcombe Valley.
Designed Landscapes	A small part of Westover Landscape Park (EH Register Grade II) lies within this Area, including early C19 ornamental Westover Plantation, replanted by Forestry Commission.
Landscape Character & Present HLC	Sub-area 1 is a high ridge of unenclosed chalk grassland, with outstanding views of the IW, the Solent and English Channel. Much of sub-area is in National Trust care and with open access. Sub-area 2 is mainly plantation woodland, improved grassland or large exposed arable fields, with uncultivated combes on the N. edge of the plateau. Excellent views and good access on footpaths. Sub-area 3 (the Bowcombe Valley) is a mixture of farmland and valley-floor pasture. Whole area is rural with nearly all land in agricultural or forestry use, except Carisbrooke village and outskirts of Newport.
Archaeology	Many Bronze Age round barrows survive as earthworks on chalk grassland and in woodland, with ploughed barrows on arable land. Neolithic mortuary enclosure on Tennyson Down and Neolithic long barrow on Afton Down. Prehistoric field system surviving beneath plantation woodland on Newbarn Down. Probable Iron Age hillfort on the summit of Chillerton Down with medieval strip lynchets along the side of the down. Bowcombe Valley was an important focus of settlement from later prehistoric period & contains Roman villa remains at Bowcombe, Clatterford & Carisbrooke, as well as Middle Saxon material. Earliest defences at Carisbrooke Castle of Anglo-Saxon or earlier date with stone defences of C12 to C17 date. Pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were excavated in the C19 at Bowcombe Down & Chessell Down.
Settlement Pattern	No settlement in sub-area 1. Sub-area 2 has dispersed farmsteads set within combes on the N. edge of the plateau. Sub-area 3 has dispersed farmsteads along the length of the Bowcombe Valley with an interrupted row settlement at Bowcombe and small nucleated clusters at Plaish and Clatterford. Carisbrooke, the centre of an Anglo-Saxon mother parish, is a regular row settlement which lies on the junction of the Chalk and the Reading Beds. Shide was a Domesday Manor but is now on the outskirts of Newport.
Past HLC	Sub-area 1 has a few prehistoric and Roman lynchets suggesting arable land use. Sub-area 2 has earthwork and AP evidence of fairly extensive prehistoric field systems. In Middle Ages sub-area 1 and much of sub-area 2 was common manorial pasture. Individual manors had enclosed areas of downland by the late C18 but within sub-area 1 land use continued as unimproved rough grazing. Large arable enclosures were created within sub-area 2 in post-medieval times with forestry planting in C20. The Bowcombe Valley may have had some open-field on the slopes above the valley-floor pasture.
Mineral Extraction	Old chalk quarries within area (mostly small) and marl pits at base of chalk. Large extant chalk quarry on Cheverton Down.
Buildings	Carisbrooke has stone and brick buildings. Church is of Greensand. Carisbrooke Castle is mainly of Greensand with some Bembridge Limestone. Stone-built farmsteads around edge of plateau and in Bowcombe Valley. C19 estate cottages in Bowcombe Valley.
Threats to Character	Off-road four-wheel drive vehicles and motor bikes. General recreational pressures leading to loss of tranquillity and erosion of byways, bridleways and footpaths, particularly the Tennyson Trail. Scrub invasion where grazing is not taking place. Possible future planning applications for wind turbines.

West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge

Sub-Areas	Sub-area 1: Compton to Shorwell. Sub-area 2: Shorwell to Gatcombe. Sub-area 3: East Side of Bowcombe Valley
Geology	Sub-area 1: Ferruginous Sands and other Greensand Series rocks, including a sandstone ridge to south of chalk ridge, running W-E. Sub-areas 2 & 3: Predominantly Upper Greensand with some Gault and Carstone.
Relief	Sub-area 1: Fairly steep slopes - max. altitude 137m at Grammar's Copse. Sub-area 2: Fairly steep slopes - max. altitude 148m OD NE of Sheard's Copse, descending to 50m OD at edge of area. Sub-area 3: Flat, low-lying land, c.40m OD close to Bowcombe valley-floor, becoming hillier and rising to c.95m OD at Whitcombe Rd.
Drainage	Small streams issuing from springs at junction with chalk; flowing S. and E.
Coastline	Compton Chine and part of Compton Bay fall within this HLC Area.
Soils	Sub-area 1: Poor, acid soils. Sub-area 2: Light soils. Sub-area 3: Light, fertile soils, much of sub-area classified as Grade 2 land (most IW land is Grade 3).
Woodland	Sub-area 1: Plantations on Brook Hill, Mottistone Common (now largely cleared) & Grammar's Common. Sub-area 2: Small ancient woodland at Sheard's Copse. Small copses on SE slope below Berry Hill. Ornamental & planted woodland around Gatcombe House. Small 'hangars' above Whitcombe Rd. Sub-area 3: No woodland.
Designed Landscapes	Early C20 wooded grounds at Brook Hill House. Late C20 garden at Mottistone Manor (National Trust). C17-C20 garden & designed landscape at Northcourt (EH Grade II). Late C18-early C20 park at Gatcombe.
Landscape Character and Present HLC	Sub-area 1: Generally open aspect, particularly following clearance of plantation woodland & recreation of heathland on Mottistone Common. Land use includes arable fields near Compton, rough grazing on Mottistone Common area & improved grassland between Brighstone & Shorwell. Sandstone ridge offers good footpath access & views to S. Narrow strip of unploughed grassland survives at crest of ridge to east of Shorwell. Sub-area 2: Arable with large fields but also smaller, irregularly shaped fields & a network of hollow-ways and tracks. Sub-area 3: Open and exposed with large arable fields & few hedgerows but good views to nearby chalk downs. All sub-areas are rural with some small businesses in converted farm buildings.
Archaeology	Sub-area 1: Sites on Mottistone Common include the Longstone (remains of Neolithic long barrow with associated standing stone and recumbent stone), the earthwork of Castle Hill (possible Iron Age stock enclosure) and a large Bronze Age barrow. Rock Roman Villa sits at interface with chalk downland N. of Brighstone. A few Bronze Age round barrows on the sandstone ridge. Sub-area 2: Small irregular fields to the SE of Chillerton enclose medieval strip lynchets. Sub-area 3: No earthworks have survived but there are ancient tracks and significant finds, notably of Middle Anglo-Saxon material.
Settlement Pattern	Sub-area 1: A string of settlements lie beneath sandstone ridge on spring-line at edge of chalk and at junction with *South West Wight Coastal Zone*. Historically, Brighstone was polyfocal in form, with a nucleated cluster around the church and outlying areas of settlement. Sub-area 2: Historically, Shorwell was a linear spring-line settlement focussed on the church and on Northcourt Manor. Interrupted-row settlements at Chillerton and Gatcombe with C20 infilling. The settlement at Gatcombe includes a church/manor element. A few dispersed farmsteads. Sub-area 3: Froglands Farm is the only settlement.
Past HLC	Sub-area 1: Mainly common rough grazing, with extensive forestry planting between Brook and Brighstone in the early C20. Sub-area 2: Evidence for medieval common open-field fitted into this hilly landscape, including strip lynchets at Chillerton. Sub-area 3: A relatively extensive area of medieval open-field existed within this fairly flat and low-lying area.
Mineral Extraction	Sub-area 1: some evidence of past sand digging e.g. on Mottistone Common. Sub-area 2: Evidence of fairly large Upper Greensand quarry NW of Gatcombe (possible site of stone for Carisbrooke Castle).
Buildings	Sub-area 1: Buildings of Lower Greensand including Ferruginous Sandstone. Chalk block are also used (some displaying ship-carvings). Older buildings often thatched. C16 manor house at Mottistone and other small former manor houses. C17 manor house at Northcourt. Sub-area 2: Buildings of Greensand with some brick. Historic properties at Gatcombe House and Sheat Manor.
Threats to Character	Loss of field boundaries & hedges along trackways. Development which does not respect settlement form or built character of settlements.