

NEWSLETTER 14

Autumn 2021

LANDSCAPE
SURVEY GROUP



Chris Taylor at Eggardon Hill, Dorset, January 1963

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Editorial

In this edition we have a book review. Fittingly the book in question is, in part at least, about transhumance. The LSG's own book about transhumance, arising from our session at the 2018 LAC Conference, will be rolling off the presses (or available digitally) very soon.

This newsletter also records some sad events. 'Dear Friends, Our great, good friend is dead.' Thus Paul Everson announced to several of us the sad news of the death of Chris Taylor on 28 May. Paul has kindly written an appreciation of Chris as a field archaeologist. We hope to include further reminiscences of Chris in a later edition. Chris was on the interview and field test panels which appointed me to a permanent post with the RCHME in 1986 so I personally have much to thank him for; but I was also always an admirer of his scholarship. Several of his books and articles, not least the little classic *Fieldwork in Medieval Archaeology* (1974), remain among my favourite reading. One thing that struck me particularly was Chris's capacity for self-criticism which led him continually to query his own work, to go back and overturn his own earlier interpretations of sites and places, giving rise to brilliant papers such as 'Whittlesford: the study of a river-edge village' (1989), an object lesson in critical self-evaluation which should be required reading for every landscape archaeologist.

We also sadly learnt this summer of the death of David Lea, a founder member of the LSG and a regular attendee at our meetings and conferences. Judie English has kindly supplied a short note about David's life.

At this time we also mourn the passing of another colleague, Nigel Thomas. Abandoning a career in banking Nigel turned to archaeology, gaining a degree from Reading University and then working for the Cornwall Archaeological Unit for a quarter of a century. Initially employed to work on industrial archaeology, like all true landscape archaeologists Nigel rapidly turned his skills to broader chronological matters and contributed massively to knowledge of historic Cornwall, including its castles, great houses, churches, chapels, parks and gardens, upland and coastal landscapes, and townscapes. Nigel was a quiet and genuinely gentle man, with a great sense of humour, and a good friend to many. He is a great loss to landscape and buildings archaeology; we can ill afford to lose anyone so dedicated and with such capacity for hard work and attention to detail.

You will have noticed that this edition of the Newsletter bears a number. Previous Newsletters have not been numbered but it is the opinion of your committee that they should be and we believe that this is the fourteenth edition.

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Mark Bowden

Fieldwork on the shrunken medieval settlement of Charlton, Steyning, West Sussex

The early history of Steyning makes it one of the most interesting towns in Sussex. A church is said, in a 14th-century copy of a probable 11th-century original *Life*, to have been founded during the late 7th or early 8th centuries at the instigation of St Cuthman. A timber church was built at 'a sheltered place at the foot of a steep-sloping down...fittingly enclosed by the streams of two springs descending from the downs' (Blair 1997). The church became a minster; its location is uncertain but the site of the present church fits the topographical description and seems the most likely contender.

The presence of a minster church does not necessarily infer a secular settlement but Steyning was considered a suitable place for the burial of Æthelwulf, king of Wessex, in 858 before translation of his body to Winchester by his son Alfred the Great. The estate was owned by Alfred in his personal capacity, rather than as part of the royal land-holding, and in 899 he left it to his nephew Æthelwold (Blair 2018, 114-124).

Excavation at Market Field (Gardiner 1993) uncovered two 'farmsteads' dated to the 10th century. However, proximity of the site to the minster together with the presence of an enclosure ditch showing evidence of multiple re-cuts, and therefore longevity and importance, a double-gate entrance seen elsewhere on thegnal and royal sites (Reynolds 2003) and the discovery of a 9th-century gold ring in a rubbish pit encourages the belief that this represented a high status settlement.

A period of growth, largely funded by monastic wealth, has been identified during the period 920-1000 and Steyning is mentioned as a specific example of a proto-urban settlement (Blair 2018, 114-124) - the importance of minsters is emphasised by a Mercian translator who, in c.890, rendered Bede's '*per urbana loca*' as '*burh mynsterstowe*' (*ibid* 350). The minster would have provided a focus both for otherwise fragmented economic activity and for domestic settlement, a role later taken by market places. By 1086 Steyning had become a borough but settlement still appears to have been clustered round the church; later, probably in the 12th century, a planned settlement developed along what is now the High Street, in addition to increasing evidence of planning in Church Street (Harris 2004, 21).

The manor was held by Fécamp Abbey until wars with France meant that alien holdings were repatriated, and in 1403 it was granted by the Crown to Sir John Cornwall and his wife Elizabeth, sister of Henry IV. Its location on a navigable river with a port and a productive hinterland made Steyning wealthy and a number of settlements developed within the estate, and later manor. One of these was Charlton, first mentioned in an Assize in 1279, and in a further Assize of 1307 the settlement is known as *Cherleton juxta Stenyng*. The name derived from Old English *ceorl tūn*, a name often found near important centres (Ekwall 1947, 91) and meaning either 'the settlement of free peasants' or of 'villeins'. The manor of Charlton is first mentioned as a separate polity in 1440. Both free and copyhold tenants held land of Charlton manor between the 15th and 19th centuries. In 1541 there were 32 freehold tenants with 94 tenements, and 18 copyhold tenants with 29 tenements and in 1622 there were 29 freeholders with 60 tenements, but only 7 copyholders. By

1834 no copyholders remained, but 22 freehold tenants held 50 tenements. Already by 1639 many tenements had been engrossed by successive lords of the manor, so that most of the land round Charlton hamlet belonged to the demesne (Baggs *et al* 1980).

All that remains of Charlton now is Charlton Court. A manor house with a gatehouse is mentioned at Charlton in 1464. The present building is listed, from an external examination, as 17th century but it has a timber frame which may date back to the 15th century and it has been suggested that a rectangular earthwork platform to the south of the house may represent the meeting place for the Court Leet (Aldsworth 2007). Extensive analysis and dendrochronological dating of a barn to the west of the house shows that it originated as a three-bay building which was rapidly remodelled as an eight-bay aisled barn with both phases constructed of green timbers from trees felled in the winter of 1404 / 5 and 1406. Its size suggests the scale of arable farming within the manor.

Two areas seemed worth examination with the intention of locating the settlement and assessing its chronological development. Informal field-walking of an area south of Mouse Lane, the probable medieval route between Steyning, Charlton and points west, produced medieval pottery and earthworks exist in a field bordering the lane (Figure 1).

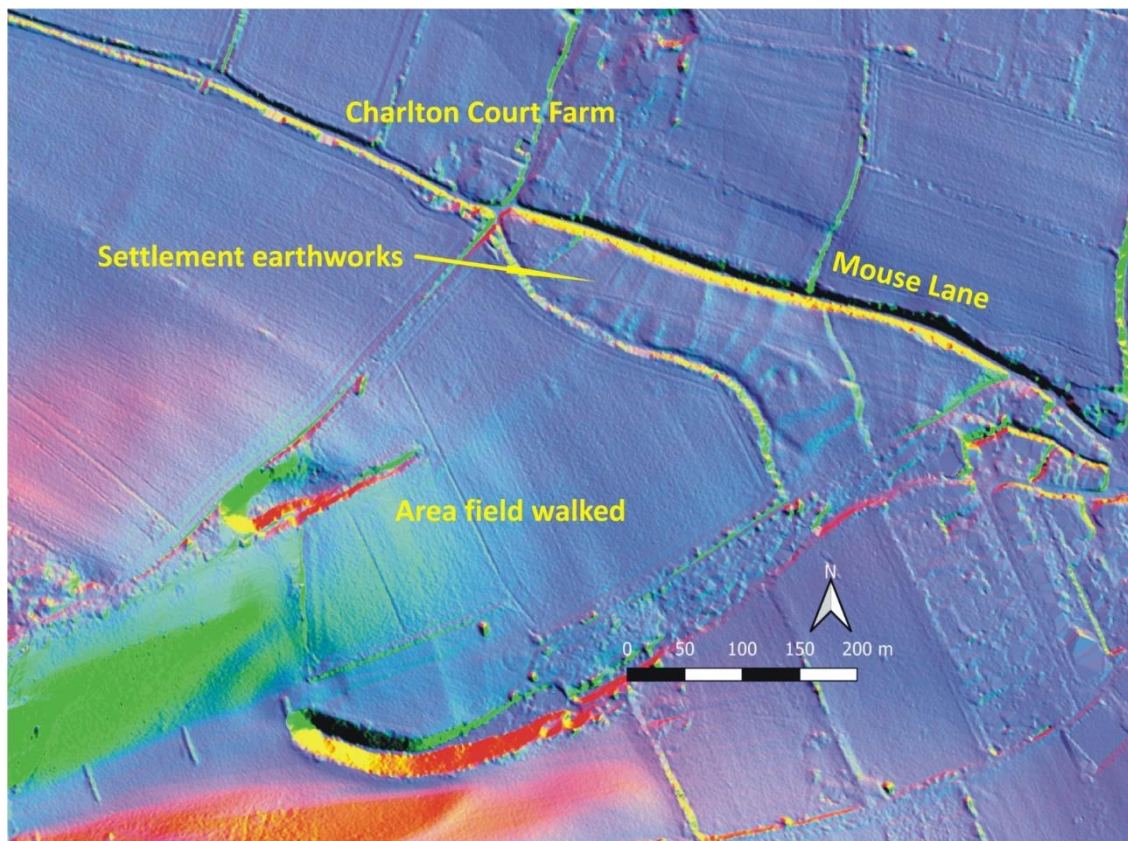


Fig 1: Lidar image of the earthworks visible beside Mouse Lane and close to Charlton Court Farm, Steyning (produced by the late David Lea MA)

A gridded collection was undertaken by the writer with members of Worthing Archaeological Society, Horsham and District Archaeological Group and Surrey Archaeological Society and the pottery was identified by Luke Barber. Some 4kg pottery was recovered and the distribution by period is shown in Figure 2. Much of the pottery was heavily abraded but the presence of a few

larger, unabraded sherds with modern breaks suggests ploughing of previously undisturbed archaeological contexts. Small amounts of prehistoric (mainly Late Bronze Age) and Romano-British material were recovered but the main sequence starts with a single sherd of Middle – Late Saxon pottery. A few sherds may date to the late 11th century but the sharp increase occurs between the early 12th century and about 1350. After this a slow decline through the centuries until about 1820 when a brief recovery is seen which peters out by the end of the 19th century.

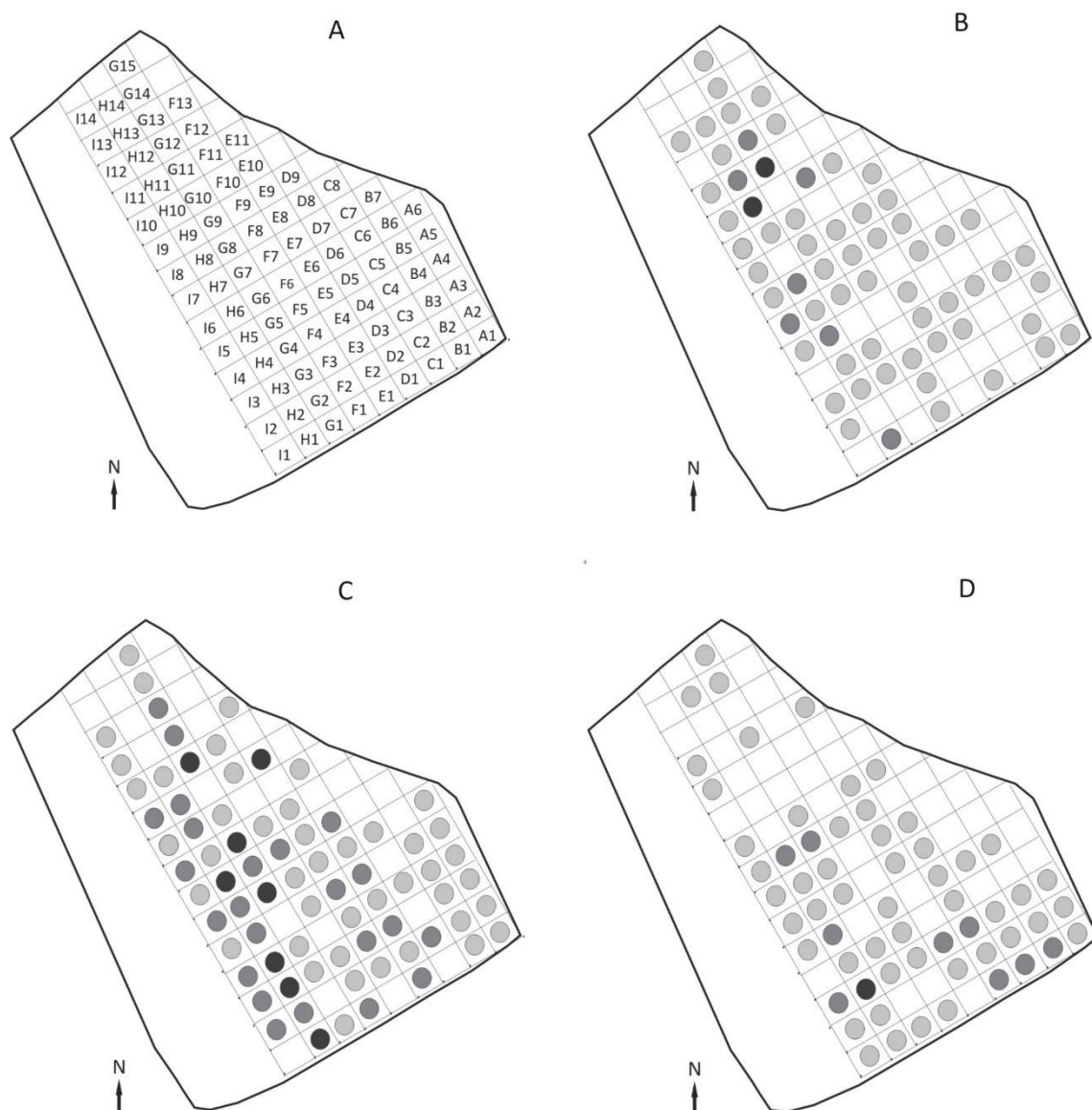


Fig 2: Location of grid squares used for fieldwalking (A) and the distribution of Saxo-Norman (B), High Medieval (C) and Late Medieval (D) pottery. The number of sherds in each 20m grid square was 1-4 (light), 5-9 (medium) and over 10 (dark)

This time scale shows that the settlement described in 1541 as having 123 tenements had declined, at least in this area, since the High Medieval period, but that the further waning after this date reflects the historical evidence. It is tempting to see the initial deterioration as resulting from the famine and successive epidemics of the 14th century.

Analytical survey of the earthworks in the field bordering Mouse Lane has been delayed by the pandemic but it is hoped that it will take place in October. Further fieldwalking in the fields on either side of the lane may also be undertaken.

Acknowledgements

Field walking was undertaken under the aegis of Steyning Museum, with the kind permission of the landowner and farmer, Richard and Johnny Goring of the Wiston Estate, arranged by Janet Pennington. The fieldwork was undertaken by Amon Anderton, Nigel Bateman, Robert Cripps, Maria Gardiner, Rose Hooker, Vivien Kingston-Jones, the late David Lea, Vicky Lillywhite, John Lonergan, Elvin Mullinger, Jenny Newell, Janet Pennington, Pamela Platt, Nick Quinn, Elizabeth Rice, Lois Roemer, Martin Simons and Jennie Williamson.

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Judie English

Christopher Charles Taylor 1935-2021: an appreciation

Chris Taylor died in the early hours of Friday 28 May 2021 in Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge. There have been a number of obituaries and appreciations published so far, and there will be others. Just as we queued up when he retired, remarkably, to honour him with no less than three volumes of essays and still did not cover the breadth of his interests, so now many interest groups wish to acknowledge his contribution in various aspects of field archaeology and landscape history, or in different locations. Because, indeed, he did that and more.

Chris was born and brought up in Lichfield. Not a conventionally clever child according to academic subjects and exams, he was slightly surprised to find himself accepted for his local university – the University College of North Staffordshire (newly created at Keele in 1950); but Keele’s pioneering four-year degree course – including a foundation year in which he and his peers heard lectures on everything the university then taught – served his innate inquisitiveness well. He devoured it all; ‘what a swot I was!’, but we can be sure he was neither unquestioning nor conventional. That sense of needing to know about anything he encountered never left him: ‘every detail of what I see around me I want to explain and understand’. That was perhaps his most distinctive characteristic, which informs all his published work and infected those who worked with him.

It was not the creditable degree in History and Geography at Keele that set his later course, however; nor the two-year Diploma in Western European Prehistory at the Institute of Archaeology London that followed in 1958-1960. Those years mainly created long-lasting friendships with Geoff Wainwright and Bill Manning and gave rein, through exploratory walks, to Chris’s enthusiasm to study the building blocks of London’s urban development and the patterns of inter-war suburban housing estates beyond. His guides were Pevsner first-edition volumes: this was before modern scholarship caught up with him, with Oliver, Davis and Bentley’s *Dunroamin* (1981), Stefan Muthesius’s *The English Terraced House* (1982) or A. A. Jackson’s *Semi-Detached London* (1991), all favourites in his library. The life-changer was the happen-chance – as he would say – of signing up as a temporary summer survey assistant for RCHM at Salisbury. Over three successive summers, Desmond Bonney introduced him to the satisfaction and stimulation of archaeological fieldwork. In 1960, having finished the diploma in London and while in the field with Desmond, he was called to an old-style Civil Service interview and appointed to a permanent position as an investigator with RCHM. He retired from the same organisation – though by then it had a rather different face – in 1993.

As a technical surveyor Chris himself was not fastidious. He spoke of surveying earthworks adequately ‘with a blunt pencil and a dead frog’. For himself, and for the sort of illustrative diagrams required for RCHM inventories, he was content with simple survey techniques and practical low-tech equipment of the sort he taught people to use on courses at Knuston Hall and illustrated in *Fieldwork in Medieval Archaeology*. Can I be the only person who devoured that book in a day and wanted to do the same? it reads as if written in a trice ... by someone who actually knows and actually does. As it was. Things changed when RCHME (by then with an ‘E’) took in a group of surveyors from the Ordnance Survey’s disbanded Archeological Division; and at roughly the same time acquired the first electronic distance measuring equipment. Chris had a story about how the traditions met and were content with each other. Cyril Wardale, who transferred with the surveyors

as their mentor, was concerned that his colleagues were joining an organisation with scant knowledge and less regard for technical approaches and metrical accuracy. He decided to check one of RCHME's published diagrams against the field remains and chose the very extensive and complex village earthworks at Braunstonbury and Wolfhamcote from *Northamptonshire III*, which he himself had surveyed for OS depiction. He was reassured by what he found and impressed by the fine detail, and told Chris so. What he did not realise was that the Taylor approach in this case had been to take the existing OS antiquity model, check and enhance it by fieldwork, and have the result redrawn for publication. According to Chris, Cyril went to his grave not realising that he had effectively checked his own survey and approved its metrical robustness. But the exercise – and Cyril's good-hearted positivity in the role he had been given – greatly eased the assimilation and RCHME was the beneficiary of a great deal of skill and know-how.

Chris's great skill, of course, was observation of detail and of relationships in the field remains, and of context in the landscape. His urge was to understand how and why, and to identify in what way it mattered and might change a larger understanding. His rapid transit through Northamptonshire was driven forward not only by a desire to demonstrate that RCHME could (and should) deliver effective results at speed but also himself to see a large quantity and variety of field remains in a short time and to distill new ideas and stimulating insights from them. Which he did in an extraordinary torrent of conference papers and books and articles (at peak as many as eight in a calendar year), produced in his own time. Much related to medieval and later settlement; but when he encountered a striking idea, he recognised and pursued it. So it was with encountering the idea of a medieval designed landscape, in the company of Chris Dunn and myself, at Stow Park in Lincolnshire in 1979; Chris went away and identified another example at Somersham in Cambridgeshire, and in due course sent me to look at another at Bodiam in Kent. Pragmatically, he opted to promote the idea in rapidly-produced individual papers, rather than sink it in a formal RCHME project; and others took up and pursued the idea to such effect that it is now a commonplace. A good result; and characteristically good, self-effacing judgement. His frustration with the straight-jacket imposed by monumentalisation of the archaeological record – whether by RCHME inventories or local authority sites and monuments records – often caused him to bend the rules or introduce innovation – such as short parish entries in *West Cambs* or in the handling of fenland drainage in *North-East Cambs*: neither really effective, as Chris himself pointed out. Increasing appreciation of the value of seeing the inter-relationships between field remains of different eras – sequentially and causally – caused him to promote the concepts of 'total archaeology' or 'landscape history', which have influenced the thinking of many of us.



Chris Taylor and Cyril Wardale

Intellectually curious, then, and determined to get things done, there was an engaging dash of irreverence about Chris, too. Who else could entitle a keynote lecture about the survey process 'Looking at cows' or an article 'Field survey - where did we go wrong?' or '... an admission of defeat'? He was also realistic (surely not cynical!), fair, and endlessly supportive at a personal level. By shining example, too, he urged us to step beyond our employment: to be part of our profession and to share and debate our insights and ideas with our peers and with anyone at all interested. He was a good friend to many within RCHME and far beyond that agency, and made one proud to boast friendship in return.

Paul Everson

David Lea 1953-2021

Many active archaeologists in the south-east will remember David Lea who died on the 17th July 2021. David was born in Bournemouth and from an early age wanted to be a pilot. Few boys achieve their childhood ambitions but David did, flying first for Dan-Air (Dan Dare to those who remember that far back) and then as a Captain on short haul flights with BA.



David Lea in the cockpit of a Spitfire at Biggin Hill

He became involved with archaeology through CCE courses at the University of Sussex, completing an MA under the tutelage of Dr David Rudling. David put his considerable skills at the service of both Dick Tapper and myself when we were undertaking our doctoral fieldwork, Dick's at Black Patch and mine on prehistoric field systems in Wiltshire, Hampshire and Sussex. He chose not to pursue a doctorate himself but when we developed the South Downs Cross Ridge Dyke Project started by Sue Hamilton and Mike Seager Thomas he took on a leadership role. That project is now in the final stages of publication. He also undertook excavation work on Bridge Farm, with Worthing Archaeological Society in Gobblestubs Copse and elsewhere.

David's meticulous fieldwork was much appreciated, as was his kindness and steadfast support; he developed a profound ability to understand the landscape context of monuments and his good humour added immensely to many hours of field survey. He will be sadly missed.

Judie English

Book Review

Andrew Margetts, *The Wandering Herd: the medieval cattle economy of South-East England, c.450-1450*, Oxford: Windgather Press, 2021, price £34.99 (on offer at £27.99). Soft back, 272 pages, 26 plates, 96 figures, ISBN 9781911188797

The Late Saxon and early Medieval settlement of the Low Weald of South-East England has long attracted attention but much early work tended to view those involved as entrepreneurial herders taking their stock into the previously unutilised woodland devoid of tracks or clearings except for those created by the Romano-British Wealden iron industry. More recent scholarship has recognised that the area was extensively used throughout prehistory (for example Margetts *et al* in prep) and that tracks, possibly originating in the Late Bronze Age (Bell 2020, 219-239), remain in use up to the present day. Although there may well have been a hiatus after the iron industry moved to the Forest of Dean in the Late Roman period, it is clear that the Low Weald never reverted to some impenetrable jungle – if indeed British vegetation could ever be so described. What has been unclear is the nature of the stock transhumed and later managed at permanent settlements. Most Domesday renders refer to pigs, but place-names suggest cattle (Cowfold), goats (Gatwick), horses (Horsham) and even hens (Henfold) were also involved, and the assessment of woodland by the number of pigs it could sustain may rather have been a convenient and easily understood convention – ‘fiscal pigs’.

Andy Margetts and his colleagues at Archaeology South-East have already produced work which adds greatly to our understanding of archaeology in the Low Weald (Margetts 2017; 2018) but this book, the result of doctoral research, adds both depth and breadth to those excavations. Starting with a chapter summarising the present state of our knowledge about the landscapes of medieval farming, particularly settlements specialising in cattle husbandry, and landscape research in the south-east of England. A detailed view of the documentary background to all aspects of cattle rearing and its relationship with other aspects of farming follows.

The next chapter is limited to a consideration of the relevant place-name elements in Surrey and Sussex, no volume of the English Place-Name Society’s county series being available for Kent. As well as the expected elements – *den*, - *falod*, - *wic* and words identifying cattle, sheep or goats, the ‘shielding’ terms – *scydd*, -*stede* and – *gesell* are mapped. An interesting observation here is that -*stede* names, thought to represent summer pastures on downland (Everitt 1986, 20), spread onto the High Weald by the 13th century, perhaps suggesting later utilisation of this heathland landscape.

The next three chapters form the heart of the landscape investigation underpinning this piece of work. Road and field systems, and the occurrence of commons are seen to vary between and, in some cases, within the geologically based character areas. In the Low Weald some fields appear to have developed organically whilst other ‘co-axial’ systems hint at large scale land management (Chatwin & Gardiner 2005). Of particular interest to this reviewer is the recognition of a number of vaccaries – land enclosed for cattle farming – both in the present landscape where they are marked by enclosing ‘primary’ boundaries, and in the documentary and place-name records. These oval enclosures are primarily found in the Low Weald but examples also exist on the Surrey greensand and on the South Downs, and they are usefully compared with others on the uplands of the south-

west and in Lancashire as well as the wetlands around the Severn estuary. Also brought into consideration are 'valley entrenchments' – an under researched type of rectilinear, ditched and banked earthwork clustering on the eastern, less wooded portion of the South Downs. These appear to be associated with north / south routes through the downs and into the Low Weald, and have access to water, usually dew ponds. It is suggested here that they had a role in seasonal movement of stock possibly originating from a period when the downs were grazed in common. The presence of water may mean movement of cattle was being undertaken since sheep can derive sufficient liquid from their diet but linkage of these enclosures with the place-name element *-wic* could indicate dairying of cattle or sheep.

Analysis of bone assemblages provides information about where various species ended their lives, but not necessarily where they were normally kept. Throughout the study area pigs were ubiquitous though seldom the most common species, sheep were found on the wetlands of the coastal levels and the higher areas of the downs but cattle dominated the Low Weald and the river valleys of the South Downs. This, together with the recognition of vaccaries, makes a cogent case for the importance of cattle to the economy of the medieval south-east but particularly that of the Low Weald.

Two case studies are detailed, The Hayworth near Haywards Heath and Wickhurst near Horsham, and the book ends with two chapters of discussion and conclusions. The book is not without its faults, the most egregious of which is the lack of an index but it should be required reading for anyone with an interest in the Saxon and medieval south-east. It's relevance in terms of economic responses to geological constraints should also have a wider audience in those from other areas and with different period specialisations – in terms of the former the author intends 'to pursue similar studies in other regions, ones that also experienced the fundamental influence of *the wandering herd*'; I look forward to the results!

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Judie English

Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer

A number of members will have heard and those who have not will be interested to hear and circulate news of the new resource launched by Historic England last Friday 8th October - a web app called the 'Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer'

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/aerial-archaeology-mapping-explorer/> .

For the first time ever, Historic England has made the results of over 30 years of aerial photograph mapping projects freely available online. The mapping allows all these features to be seen not just as individual sites, but as part of complex, multi-period landscapes. Visualising the evidence in this way can help transform our understanding of those landscape, especially when studied in conjunction with other forms of evidence – the site-based data available from local Historic Environment Records or the Heritage Gateway and historic maps.

The map brings together the results of numerous projects undertaken by specialists at Historic England and its predecessor organisations since the late 1980s, as well as many partner organisations. Hundreds of thousands of aerial photographs, ranging in date from the 1920s to the present, have been studied. More recently, innovative technologies such as lidar – airborne laser scanning – and web-based sources, such as Google Earth, have been added to the resources used.

Individual projects have been rationalised and standardised. Every site mapped has a simple description (FISH compliant) with links to the full Historic Environment records held online; for most of the areas mapped there is also a free report detailing the highlights and new discoveries encountered in each project.

LSG Business

Conference

As you will know the virtual 2021 Conference originally planned for 10th-11th September was unfortunately postponed and has not yet been re-programmed. Apologies for any inconvenience or disappointment. The LSG committee will be meeting shortly to discuss this and we would be grateful to hear from any members who might be willing and available to join a digital conference group to help in the organisation and running of LSG online events. We will be in touch again soon.

Membership subs

We have not been chasing overdue subscriptions this year due to the ongoing uncertainties caused by the pandemic. Many thanks to those who have already shown their continuing support. Our membership secretary will be contacting those who are in arrears soon.

Member activities

We were pleased to hear that fieldwork was able to resume in some form in September for a number of projects in which our members are involved. We would like to hear from you if you would like to share any news or results with members in our next edition.

Committee posts and Spring AGM

We will be announcing details of committee posts which are or will become vacant in advance of the Spring AGM but please do get in touch via the group email if you might be interested and would like any further information on roles and responsibilities of any committee post.

And finally...

Many thanks to our contributors to this issue.

You can find out more about our ethos, activities and officers via the LSG website, and you can currently follow us or connect with us on social media:

Website: <http://landscapesurvey.org/>

Twitter: @LandscapeSurvey

Or search for 'Landscape Survey Group' on Facebook and LinkedIn

For specific enquiries about events or membership, you can contact us by email using:
landscapesurveygroup@gmail.com