

The relationship between research and landscape management: the English experience

England lies in one of the most crowded corners of Europe and, as such, experiences all the pressures that come with expanding western nations. Settlements have grown dramatically over the last 50 years or so, especially around old conurbations, but with new growth areas, especially in the south-east, swallowing up great tracts of countryside. Attempts to modernise our road system have also cut swathes through the rural landscape and also led to an enormous extension of extractive industries producing sands, gravels and road-stone. There have been, however, more insidious changes which have affected the landscape from within – mostly concerned with farming and the demands of modern agro-industrial pressure.

In this paper I outline some of the pressures upon the English countryside and some of the schemes that have been set in place to mitigate their effects. However, I shall also try to outline ways in which academic research has played a significant part in advising such schemes. A separate problem is that of communication, for there is the not inconsiderable difficulty of steering academic research towards specific practical requirements and of getting informed advice through to the practitioners and government bodies who help to formulate countryside strategies: it is essential to maintain a dialogue between researchers and planners and to make sure that the results of this do filter down to those actually managing the countryside.

Pressures upon the countryside

Our landscape was very largely produced by farming – traditional methods created a rich and varied regional tapestry which evolved over thousands of

years. This was not without change – in early medieval times open field agriculture spread across much of the fertile crop-growing regions of eastern, southern and midland England; in Tudor times many of the large open arable fields were subdivided and laid down to pasture for cattle and sheep; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the remaining open fields were also enclosed, a process which was also extended over many of the remaining hills and wastes to give the network of fields still typical of much the English landscape today. Yet regional patterns were still distinctive – the more fertile crop growing regions presented a very different picture to areas which were mainly pastoral and the way that these patterns had evolved was still evident in the landscape.

As an example of two very different regions which lie in close proximity one might choose the Arden and the Feldon in Warwickshire, landscape types that are mirrored across western Europe (Fig. 1). Arden in the early medieval period was still relatively well wooded and had earlier served as a zone of wood-pasture for estates in the more intensively settled and farmed area in the south of the county, a function which appears to have given rise to a pattern of trackways, possible droveways, linking the two areas.¹ Gradual colonisation in medieval times added to the already dispersed settlement pattern as outlying, often moated, farms were established beyond the tiny manorial centres, linked by winding tracks, and enclosure produced a pattern of irregular hedged fields which have often survived to the present day. Although patches of surviving ancient woodland became scarce, hedgerow trees helped to preserve a ‘bosky’ appearance which had much in common with the Normandy *bocage*. Hedgerows and copses give much of the region an enclosed, intimate atmosphere. In contrast, south Warwickshire developed a classic *champagne* or ‘champion’ landscape: open fields were extensive around tightly nucleated villages and although some of the fields were turned into large stock enclosures around the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, accompanied by the desertion of many villages, the countryside remained one of open vistas broken only by the regular hedgerows of parliamentary enclosure.

Here, and everywhere, regional distinctiveness has been eroded in modern times. Not only have building styles given way to ubiquitous modern design but farming has been increasingly affected by artificial subsidies. After the

1. D. Hooke, *Warwickshire's Historical Landscape. 1: The Arden*, Birmingham 1993.

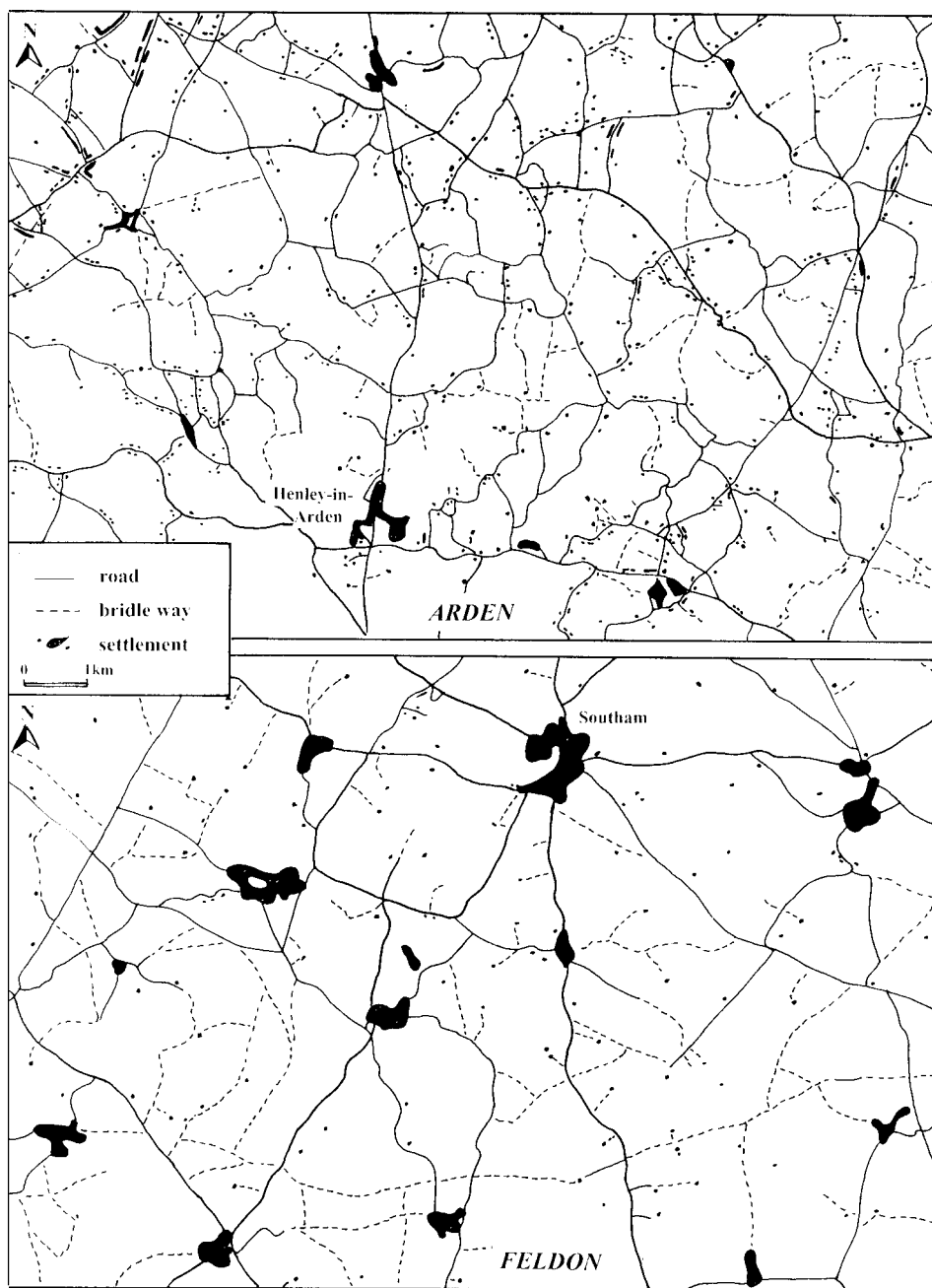


Figure 1. Contrasting road and settlement patterns in Warwickshire (1970s). The characteristic pattern here is already being eroded as roads have been lost in Arden but settlements extended, while in the Feldon most of the outlying farms post-date parliamentary enclosure. A new motorway has now been pushed through this part of Arden, further destroying the ancient patterns.

last World War there was an attempt to increase self-sufficiency in agricultural products but it was largely due to EC subsidies that vast tracts of land were newly broken up to grow grain, often dependent upon huge quantities of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. In particular, the downlands of southern England that had remained open sheep pasture for nearly a thousand years experienced the effect of the plough. Old chalk and limestone grasslands are now a threatened environment and, with them, the fauna and flora they supported; archaeological features have been lost for ever. Everywhere across lowland England ancient hedgerows and trees have been uprooted to make way for the machinery necessary to produce the grain which is no longer needed in such quantities. There have been changes in animal husbandry, too, – indoor stock barns now dwarf ancient farmsteads and animals kept in large numbers in close confinement, whether they be cattle, pigs or poultry, or even fish, require more and more antibiotics to keep them alive. These pressures have been felt across Europe – one searches in vain in many areas of Normandy for examples of its once-famous *bocage* landscape. Voices have been raised against the medical dangers to people of raising stock by modern factory-farming methods, something we have experienced to our cost in Britain with the recent BSE problem. Now the introduction of genetically modified crops raises the need for more urgent research if whole areas are not to become devoid of habitat value, change rotations essential to maintain wildlife, or lead to the release of uncontrollable plants across the countryside.

Conservation measures

In view of these pressures, it is perhaps all the more remarkable that measures taken to counteract the effects of the worst of these practices are indeed beginning to make an impression. I shall deal first with the physical or morphological landscape – both from a visual and environmental aspect – before looking at more human/cultural issues. The quality of the landscape cannot itself be examined outside a cultural context for we decide the priority we give to conservation and the type of landscape we wish to conserve. It is also a reflection on our present-day attitudes as to how much we value landscape quality within our lives and how much funding we can direct towards such measures as may be necessary to protect this.

Firstly, like other European countries, we designate some areas for special protection. Since ‘The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill’ be-

came law in 1950 we have created our National Parks. All but the most recent one, the Norfolk Broads, lie in the west of England and Wales and tend to contain most of our 'wilder' mountain areas. Subsequently, stretches of countryside designated as 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' have extended the range into the rest of England but, again, often incorporate the more hilly regions. It appears that hilly land, which continually gives changing vistas of broken countryside, is a preferred English landscape – it is certainly the one most extolled in literature and poetry. From the gentle 'blue remembered hills' of A.E. Housman (Shropshire along the Welsh Borderland) to the wild moorlands of the Brontës which form the backcloth for the tortured human souls in 'Jane Eyre' or 'Wuthering Heights', hills and uplands figure large in our national literature.

Wildlife habitats which receive a measure of protection run from National Nature Reserves through Environmentally Sensitive Areas down to the more local Sites of Scientific Interest. Government funded bodies such as the Countryside Agency and English Nature supervise the management and funding of these designated areas in addition to normal planning controls.

One scheme run by MAFF (the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food),² Countryside Stewardship, targets particularly vulnerable landscapes at a more local farm level and promotes good land husbandry that is acceptable to both the landowner and the general public, assisted by government funding. I have mentioned the chalk and limestone downlands which figure highly in one such targeted landscape – calcareous grasslands – but other categories include old grasslands, old orchards, lowland heaths and historic landscapes as well as the more varied upland, coastal and waterside landscapes. Special attention, too, may be paid to urban fringe and educational landscapes, field boundaries and verges. Agreements are drawn up which establish the main objectives to be addressed upon each holding and a management plan is produced by collaboration between the landowner and the regional officers. These normally include attention to the landscape: promoting landscape enhancement which is in keeping with regional characteristics; maintaining the quality of an ecologically sound and sustainable environment; preservation of historical and archaeological features; and the promotion of better public access.

I have recently been involved in a scheme to monitor the success of Stewardship and the quality of these agreements, primarily from an historical point of

2. MAFF, *The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, information and how to apply*, London 1999.

view. Many of these landscapes are rich in historical or archaeological features, from the ancient field systems still occasionally preserved under the grasslands, the barrows which reveal prehistoric activity on the much diminished lowland heaths to the remains of post-medieval industry. Rich historical landscapes are preserved in parklands, the main type of landscape classified under the scheme as an 'historic landscape'. The parklands are often multi-layered landscapes: a medieval deerpark, perhaps with such features as moated warreners' lodges, fishponds and a pale to retain the deer, may have continued its life as an eighteenth-century ornamental park, or a new park may have been laid out over a medieval field system, perhaps involving the displacement of a medieval village and conserving the ridge and furrow of the medieval fields; many parks experienced bouts of farming within them, sometimes for agriculture but usually for stock rearing, but the later parks were often associated with a large country house and this has preserved them to the present day, often with the accoutrements that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century design involved: lakes and cascades, ornamental bridges, 'ruins' and temples recalling the supposed virtues of an earlier age.

There are also many non-governmental institutions involved in the conservation of the historic or cultural landscape, one of the most effective being the National Trust which, by purchase and bequest using funds derived from its membership, investments and legacies, is now one of the largest landowners in England and Wales. Initially set up to preserve 'lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest' for 'the benefit of the nation'³ it now has many historic properties in its possession, often with historic or restored gardens, most of which are open for public enjoyment and educational purposes. For many years Fountains Abbey, its ruins standing within the parklands of Studley Royal in Yorkshire, has been the most visited property. In the late 1980s the Trust stepped up its purchases of long stretches of the English and Welsh coastline in a programme known as Operation Neptune and by 1987 owned one in every six miles of the coastline. Since then, the designation 'Heritage Coast' encompasses land held by both local authorities, public bodies and private landowners to produce (with the minimum of external funding) management plans and guidance for some 1,500 kilometres of coastline.⁴

3. M. Waterson, *The National Trust, the First Hundred Years*, London 1994, p. 52.

4. Countryside Commission 1992, *Heritage Coast in England: Policies and Priorities* 1992, CCP 397.

The contribution of academic research

What, then, is the contribution that academic research can make? There are three main spheres of activity that I should like to mention, some of which I recently discussed at the session of the Permanent European Conference for the Study of the Rural Landscape held in Norway in the autumn of 1998.

Firstly, there is *the Maintenance of Biodiversity*: It is necessary to understand how past landscapes were managed in some detail if biodiversity is to be maintained: habitat is as much a human construct as a natural one. It is no use, for instance, reinstating a flower-rich water meadow if it is not to be managed appropriately (i.e. mown at the right time so that flowers can set seed and with restrictions upon grazing); woodlands cannot merely be planted but must be managed to provide the appropriate changing habitats required by the resident flora and fauna.⁵ With many species, large-scale threats to habitat caused by ever-expanding human communities, such as the increased extraction of water, the break-up of former pasture, the drainage of wetlands, the eradication of the winter food supply as a result of autumn ploughing, etc, are aspects with which we are familiar, but the life cycle of some species has been shown to be closely related to local factors and here current research is revealing detail which enables us to manage habitats correctly. The dormouse, for instance, is quietly vanishing not because its favourite foodstuffs – the hazel, honeysuckle and bramble – are in short supply but because these plants no longer form a part of woods managed primarily for timber.⁶ Planted rows of trees exclude the light and such undershrubs are considered unproductive species, to be removed as they take up valuable space. There have to be older trees present to provide suitable nesting holes and cool crevices on the ground for hibernation – all within perhaps one hectare of woodland. Some creatures have a life cycle that is incredibly complex, depending upon the close juxtaposition of one or two species, and any change in land use can upset the delicate pattern. Knowing how land was managed in the past and the techniques that were in use can offer invaluable advice and guidance.

5. K. Kirby, 'Judging woodland management by tradition or by results', *Woodland in the Landscape: Past and Future Perspectives*, ed. by M. A. Atherden & R. A. Butlin, Leeds 1998, pp. 43-59.

6. P. Bright, P. Morris, & A. Mitchell-Jones, *Dormouse Conservation Handbook*, English Nature, Peterborough 1996.

One venture, which has aided both the ecological and visual enhancement of the landscape, has been English Nature's Veteran Trees Initiative. Most veteran trees survive in parkland landscapes where trees were anciently pollarded to provide a source of timber that could not be reached by grazing animals. These are small but not insignificant contributions to the historic landscape and it seems true that 'the features responsible for ecological importance and aesthetic appeal are not so very far removed from each other'.⁷

It has recently become policy to extend woodland in the U.K. A new National Forest has been designed to link the former old wooded areas of Needwood Forest in Staffordshire and Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, taking in on the way the degraded area of the former coalmining and industrial region of the south Derbyshire and Leicestershire coalfield.⁸ Many other community forests are planned, often close to urban conurbations, and these will entail the planting of millions of new trees with a strong preference for native species, with oaks preferably grown from the acorns gathered from native trees.

Recent legislation in England now offers greater protection to hedgerows. These act as valuable wildlife corridors, especially in a countryside increasingly used for intensive agriculture. Paradoxically, it is the new enclosure hedgerows which were planted in the course of parliamentary enclosure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that enjoy greatest protection for, although the enclosure acts have only recently been invoked as a legal protection measure, they ordained that such hedges should be maintained. Normally, these were single-specie plantings of hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*, many of which have become ragged, gappy and neglected over the years as they no longer fulfil any agricultural function and, indeed, are nuisance barriers drawing up nourishment and inhibiting the free movement of the large-scale farm machinery required for land under arable.

Older hedges, resulting from ancient enclosure or from piecemeal enclosure in the later Middle Ages, are much more species rich and offer a valuable habitat to plant and animal life. It has been reckoned that some one million

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7. T. Wall, 'Strategies for nature conservation in parklands: some examples from Moccas Park National Nature Reserve', *Parklands – the Way Forward*, ed. by D. J. Bullock & K. Alexander, English Nature Research Report no. 295, 1998, p. 45, citing R. Mabey, *The Common Ground. A place for nature in Britain's future?* London 1980.
 8. Countryside Commission, *The National Forest: the Strategy*, CCP 468, Cheltenham 1994; D. Hooke, 'The historical landscape regions of the National Forest', 'The National Forest: from vision to reality', ed. by P.M. Wade, J. Sheail & L. Child, *East Midlands Geographer Special Issue*, vol. 21, part 1, 1998, pp. 23-30.



Figure 2. Field patterns preserved by boundary walls and hedges: a) Medieval strip field systems fossilised on the edge of Goss Moor, Cornwall; b) Medieval assarts within the Forest of Neroche, Somerset; c) Enclosed strips near Chelmorton and Flagg in the White Peak, Derbyshire; d) Fields of parliamentary enclosure, south Gloucestershire Cotswolds.

kilometres of hedges have been lost since 1955, although official figures suggest a reduction from a loss of 9,500 km per annum between 1984-90 to 4,400 km per annum in 1990-93.⁹ But many hedges were quietly removed in the past and detailed local studies show just how great this loss has been. If the number of species growing in a hedge is any real indicator of age, some of the hedges were as much as a thousand years old. Now, new regulations are in force and research can help to identify those hedges which, because of their age and location, are the most valuable from both an historical and ecological point of view. I am currently beginning such a study in central Warwickshire. Here many of the hedgerows do date from the period of parliamentary enclosure but there are others that reflect the earlier Tudor enclosures made for stock rearing and, towards Arden, still older hedges that may have been planted around medieval assarts from woodland and heathland. Sadly, few of the hedgerows noted in the boundary clauses of the pre-Conquest charters of the west midlands appear to have survived but to the west of the river Severn, in Worcestershire, some of the hedges may go back to this early period.¹⁰

Hedgerow survival brings me to the second area in which academic research can assist in the conservation of the rural landscape, namely *the Identification of Regional Character*. Field boundaries are but one feature contributing towards this but are a most significant one. It is not only the nature of the field boundaries themselves that helps to give local distinctiveness but also the shape and pattern of the field systems they reflect (Fig. 2). In some regions ancient patterns of strip fields are still fossilised by hedges and walls dating back to medieval times, such as the pockets of strip fields still occasionally found in Cornwall, often surviving on the fringes of the more remote moorlands. Enclosure of strips in the middle ages produced the almost unique pattern of linear walled enclosures characteristic of large areas of the White Peak in Derbyshire. The aratral curve of a plough ridge produced by ploughing with a medieval ox team may be preserved in a later enclosure hedge – the variety of patterns is a rich component of the English countryside. Indeed, the *bocage* field pattern identified in the Warwickshire Arden is mirrored in many other areas where

9. C. Barr, M. Gillespie, & D. Howard, 'Hedgerow Survey 1993', Report produced by Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (Merlewood), Nature Environ. Res. Coun., 1994.

10. D. Hooke, *The Anglo-Saxon Landscapes of the West Midlands: the Charter Evidence*, British Archaeological Reports 95, Oxford 1981, pp. 248-54.

fields were similarly assarted from woodland and waste – such as in the Marshwood Vale of Dorset or around the Forest of Neroche in Somerset.

Boundaries are but one type of feature producing countryside character and other features include road and settlement patterns, building materials and dominant vegetation types. It is, however, one thing to classify landscapes by their present-day visual appearance, breaking them up, for instance, into physiographic units such as ‘wooded scarplands’ or ‘riverine pastures’ but this provides a mere superficial impression and does little to preserve the more subtle features which give each region its own specific identity unless there is a greater understanding of how these landscapes evolved. This is necessary in order to guide land management, especially in a changing agri-environment, and to ensure the conservation of a landscape that promotes both a sense of identity and of well-being. Ecologists in general know that the habitats they study are hugely influenced by previous land use but many landscape assessments frequently look little further than the visual aspect.

Although every county in England maintains a Sites and Monuments Record of archaeological sites – and even that is under threat in some counties – few extend to historical landscapes and the data-base has not been established. ‘The Countryside Character Map’,¹¹ a project instigated by Michael Dower, former Director General of the Countryside Commission, is a précis of suggested landscape regions across England but is no more than a beginning. A number of counties are now preparing more detailed studies and under the instigation of English Heritage are attempting to make use of more historical investigation.¹² (I have recently been involved in a study of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and colleagues are carrying out other national studies for English Heritage which will feed into county data.)

England has a particularly well-documented history. We have detailed boundary clauses describing estates across the country from the eighth century onwards, which give remarkable insight into the nature of the early medieval countryside. (These have been the subject of much of my own research.) The Domesday Book of 1086 provides us with another invaluable source of evidence for territories and landownership at the time of the Norman Con-

11. Countryside Commission & English Nature, *The Character of England*, Cheltenham & Peterborough 1996.

12. Cornwall County Council & Countryside Commission, *Cornwall Landscape Assessment*, 1994 Truro.

quest, and from then on documentary records come fast and thick. Much of this material has still to be researched in detail.

Thirdly, similar research can contribute to *the Recognition of Cultural Heritage*. It is necessary to understand the complex strands of the cultural heritage if this is to be interpreted, whether this is in a museum situation, where a complex historical situation is being conserved or interpreted to the general public, or as part of a more general appraisal of landscapes expressing regional or national identity.

An increasing number of studies are being carried out to map the historical landscape of local regions in order to provide the background to the cultural history of such areas. I have recently undertaken, for instance, a study of the Severn Gorge area in Shropshire (Fig. 3).¹³ This is seen as the ‘birthplace’ of England’s Industrial Revolution and, against a backcloth of woodland and mineral resources, and water for power, one can study the entrepreneurs such as John Wilkinson and Abraham Darby who developed industry through their inventions and investment, and the associated culture of the working man, the rise of Methodism and a vibrant local culture. Industry here had suffered serious decline by the middle of this century but today, the Ironbridge Gorge is a World Heritage Site. With so much surviving evidence of its industrial past, including the first iron bridge, devised and built by Darby in 1779, it has a cluster of museums which offer detailed expositions of the area’s development in different specialised industries; moreover, the Ironbridge Institute is a serious academic establishment which researches the area’s evolution, maintains historical archives and offers training and tuition at a university postgraduate level. From being a rundown area of abandoned coal workings and old metal works and pottery factories, this is now a much sought after place to live, its prosperity largely based upon the carefully directed industry of today – tourism.

The impact of leisure activities and tourism

This study brings me to another type of pressure influencing landscape management – the countryside as a place of leisure activities. Unlike many

13. D. Hooke, ‘The historic land use and cultural landscape of the Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale area’, unpubl. report for The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust 1998.

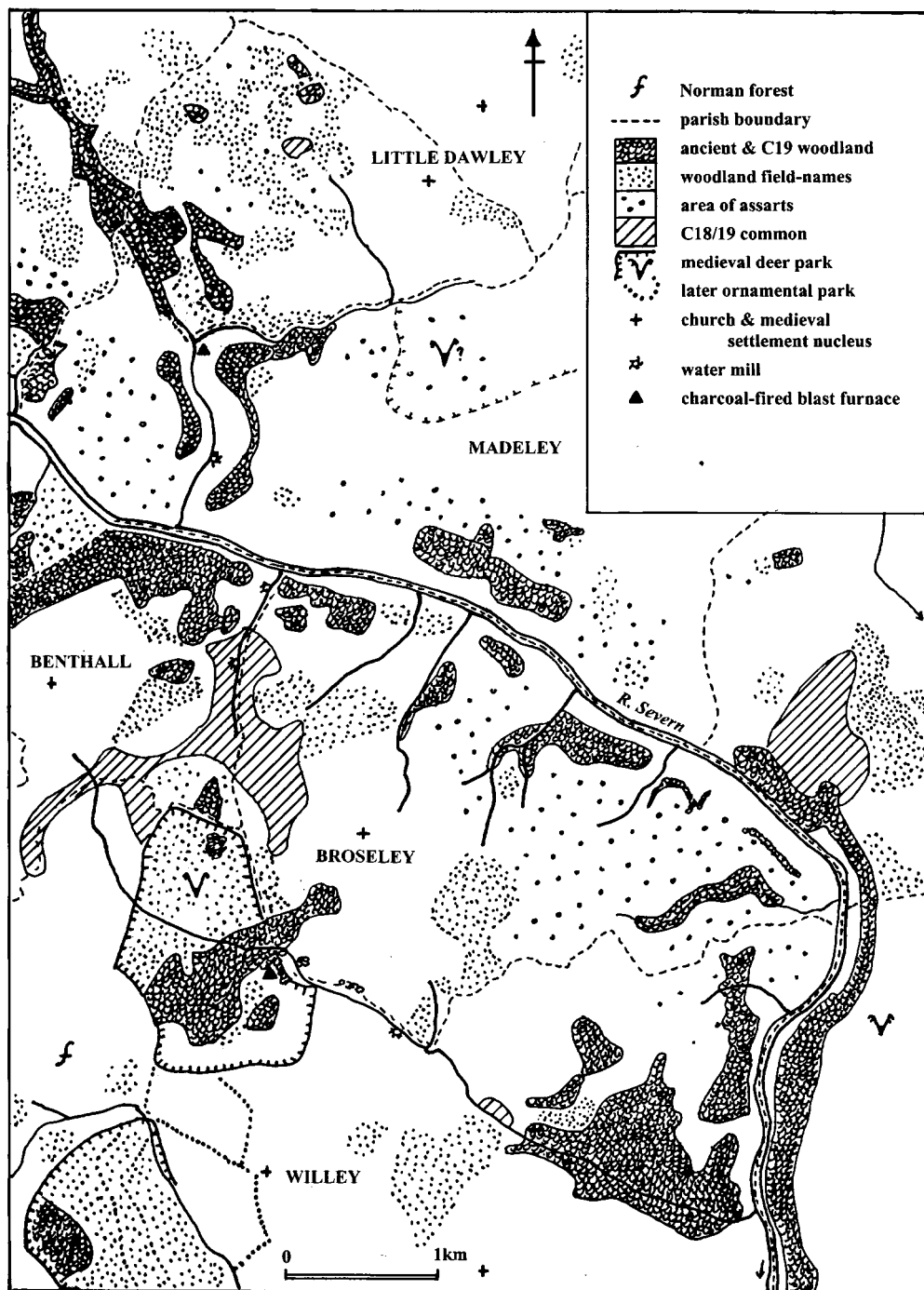


Figure 3. The Ironbridge Gorge district: the landscape of the Industrial Revolution.

European countries, England has no history of folk-right, the ‘right to roam’ so eagerly sought by today’s rambling societies. Access to the land in historical times was largely confined to the local community exercising specific rights – the right to pasture the waste, collect wood from the demesne, lord’s waste or woods for fuel, the making of implements, the building and repair of houses, and the making of hedges; turbary was the right to take peat or turf for fuel. The desire for greater public access has, in England, been largely a nineteenth- and twentieth-century phenomena. The public found their voice in the late nineteenth century, at a time when living conditions in the rapidly expanding industrial towns were at their worst but the new railways (and the bicycle) were providing a means of reaching the countryside beyond. As the upland moors had been taken over as grouse moors or enclosed for sheep the availability of open places had declined dramatically. But so far the demand for unqualified access to open places has remained unfulfilled.

Today, the view that the countryside should fulfil the requirements of leisure pursuits is extremely influential. It was, indeed, one of the basic principles of the National Parks Movement, and of the Countryside Commission which succeeded it, to both ‘conserve the beauty of the English countryside and to help people to enjoy it’. But where should this stop? When the National Parks were set up the pressure of visitor numbers that would follow was never envisaged. The Lake District and the Peak Park experienced at least 12 million visitor days in 1994, including people holidaying within the parks or visiting for the day. These parks lie close to the old industrial regions of the North and offer a much appreciated chance of fresh air and wild scenery – scenery and landscape followed closely by fresh, clean air are the main aspects visitors claim to enjoy.¹⁴ But high visitor numbers are associated with problems of the wear and tear of footpaths and increased traffic on the roads – 91% come to the parks by car, some 40% to walk over the hills but some 32% merely to drive around to look at the scenery. There is an insatiable demand today for leisure access to the countryside.

Long distance footpaths have been established across many parts of England, although they have attracted so many visitors that erosion is now a severe problem, especially along the Pennine Way. The coastal path running for 965 kilometres around the south-west began its life as a footpath used by the coastguards to combat smuggling during the Napoleonic Wars but has now been

14. Countryside Commission, *Visitors to National Parks – summary of the 1994 survey*, CCP 503, Cheltenham 1997.

resurrected and improved to provide a wonderful and ever-changing route along the varied south-western coastline. Long-distance footpaths are now numerous, from major ventures such as that which runs through the Welsh Borderland along Offa's Dyke to local County Council initiatives such as the West Worcestershire Way running between Herefordshire and Worcestershire along the spine of high land which marks this boundary from Kinver in the north to the Malvern Hills in the south.

The growing emphasis upon leisure has produced many new conflicts which will have to be resolved.¹⁵ Holiday villages such as Center Parcs are large-scale commercial ventures which need careful placing within the countryside; others prefer to own their own 'second home', a practice which puts house prices way out of reach of the local populace and can kill village society; theme parks, often developed on country estates to bring in the money needed to keep these going, attract vast numbers. Urban areas are fringed with golf courses whose manicured and weedkilled turf cannot support wildlife, coasts and lakes have marinas, woods are used for war games, rally driving and motorbike scrambling. Many of these sports are noisy and offensive to the country dweller and have to be sited with extreme care. Festivals and pageants often permit deeply rooted traditions to thrive but disturbing legal procedures have attempted to distinguish between the acceptable and the less acceptable (New Age travellers are reviled by many who abuse the countryside in more 'legal' ways.)

It is, however, those activities which carry visitors off the beaten track which are likely to cause the greatest problems. Some sectors of the public demand greater access for scramble bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles, claiming that they are seeking to restore ancient trackways and bridle-paths – but these were routes for local farmers and traders on foot or horseback and today's traffic is very different. It would be a sorry state of affairs if a history which limited access had to be resurrected to control such demands.

Perhaps the greatest hope for leisure pursuits in the countryside is through information and education. Academic researchers have already done a great deal by making their knowledge available to an ever-widening audience – such writers as the late W. G. Hoskins¹⁶ or Oliver Rackham¹⁷ have conveyed

15. G. Clark, J. Darrall, R. Grove-White, P. Macnaghten, & J. Urry, *Leisure Landscapes*, Lancaster 1994.

16. W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, London 1955.

17. O. Rackham, *The History of the Countryside*, London 1986.

their love and knowledge of the history of the countryside to many and there is considerable scope for more informed and readable literature – indeed, as academics I feel we have a duty to produce popular work of this nature, never mind the requirements of the various university research assessments. Visitors derive satisfaction from receiving information that helps them to understand and appreciate the landscape. We are also probably richer intellectually and emotionally if we feel a part of our surroundings.

There is currently great interest across Europe in the recognition and preservation of national and regional cultural identity and the European Landscape Convention set up by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) and aimed at safeguarding the quality of regional cultural landscapes will hopefully be accepted by many member states in the next few years. Still, the data base has to be produced for such landscapes to be recognised and mapped and here again academic researchers must play a vital role. In Denmark you have your new interdisciplinary centre for landscape studies, the Centre for Strategic Studies in Cultural Environment, Nature and Landscape History, based at Odense University, and the Winand Staring Centre at Wageningen in The Netherlands is currently mapping European cultural landscapes, but in-depth studies will need to continue in all localities.

Landscapes of national identity

Finally, I present a sketch of one region, which figures high in many English people's image of a truly English landscape – the north Cotswolds. Today this area is viewed nationally and internationally as the quintessential English landscape. Efforts to protect this landscape were in force by the early 1940s and it was here that the Council for the Protection of Rural England had its roots.

The region is part of the long escarpment of oolitic limestone that runs across England from Dorset to Yorkshire. In north Gloucestershire the honey-coloured rocks have been used everywhere to produce the warm-looking village buildings which cluster along the springline at the foot of the scarp slope or huddle for shelter into the valleys of the dip slope, used too for the occasional outlying farmhouses and barns on the more exposed wold. They have replaced the monastic granges and vaccaries that were used seasonally for the great medieval sheep flocks or were added to make use of the exposed slopes when they enclosed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The

dissolution of the monasteries released land and wealth which supported a growing number of country squires and lesser landed gentry, their country houses adding to the rich building fabric of the region's vernacular architecture. The most prosperous period for the Cotswolds was the Middle Ages when the area supported a thriving woollen trade and cloth industry, the wealth of its merchants expressed in the buildings of its churches. Industry itself later moved from the high Cotswolds to make use of the water power available along the dissected scarp to the south-west.

The region has been favoured by royalty and the aristocracy intermittently since at least Anglo-Saxon times when the kings of Mercia maintained a royal seat at Winchcombe; Henry VIII's wife Katherine Parr lived at Sudeley near by and today Prince Charles has his house at Highgrove in the south Cotswolds. General appreciation of the Cotswold landscape is not, however, as long established as many today would think. The bleak windswept uplands were not to the eighteenth-century taste, which preferred the deliberately conjured pastoral image of the landscaped park with a rolling greensward set with scattered trees or groves and the occasional Classical or Gothic ruin. The Cotswolds presented a farmed landscape and, in spite of its intermittent links with royalty, was very much the landscape of the common man – of the village scene and the agricultural labourer. It was partly the rise of the Arts and Crafts movement which began to glorify this image and to present the area as some kind of rural idyll that represented either an escape from increasing nineteenth-century industrialisation or a retreat to a rural haven:

Who will fly with me westwards to the land of golden sunshine and silvery trout streams, the land of breezy uplands and valleys nestling under limestone hills, where the scream of the railway whistle is seldom heard and the smoke of the factory darkens not the long summer days?

So wrote J. Arthur Gibbs¹⁸ who moved to the Cotswolds in the 1890s to adopt the lifestyle of the country squire. William Morris, a leading light in the Arts and Crafts movement, acquired his second home at Kelmscott in the upper Thames valley in the early 1870s and was one of those who 'discovered' the Cotswolds. But it was C. R. Ashbee, the founding member of the Guild and School of Handicrafts, who moved his workers and their families here from

18. J. A. Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village*, ed. by A. Sutton, Stroud 1988, p. 15.

the East End of London in 1902 so that they could participate in the inspiration offered by this rural environment. Their work marked a return to pre-industrial methods of designing and building furniture etc by hand, which left room for personal creativity. Their new home was Chipping Campden, in the eastern part of the north Gloucestershire Cotswolds. Today the whole area is a centre for the sale of nineteenth-century and antique English furniture. In 1906 Sir Edwin Lutyens bought and restored the village of Upper Slaughter and gradually old buildings everywhere were conserved – William Morris himself founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Artists, musicians and poets followed, with a colony of artists established at Broadway, still a centre of fine art, it was at Bledington in Oxfordshire that Cecil Sharp collected the local folk music which has remained at the heart of the English folk tradition; Vaughan Williams composed music at Down Ampney and a plethora of Cotswold poets extolled the virtues of the area in all its changing seasons:

An open gate, a field new ploughed,
The wind north-east upon the hill¹⁹

Since then the area has continued to be perceived by many as a kind of timeless rural retreat, ‘a world that is rare, precious, vanishing’, as portrayed in the writings of Laurie Lee:

Most of the cottages were built of Cotswold stone and were roofed by split-stone tiles. The tiles grew a kind of golden moss which sparkled like crystallised honey.²⁰

One strand of the conservation movement has been to preserve the age-old link between nature and humanity,²¹ expressed so harmoniously here, and the region was declared an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1966. The old open sheepwalks have long since gone and the area remains predominantly under arable but as Environmentally Sensitive Area grants are available for

19. F. Mansell, ‘Winter’, *Forest and Vale and High Blue Hill, Poems of Gloucestershire, the Cotswolds and Beyond*, selected by Johnny Coppin, Moreton-in-Marsh 1991.

20. L. Lee, *Cider with Rosie*, London 1959.

21. Countryside Commission, *The Cotswold Landscape*, CCP 294, Cheltenham 1990, p. 31.

land management, augmented on many farms by Stewardship agreements, stone walling is being repaired, woodlands and shelter belts replanted; planning constraints on building development are maintained and much use made of local stone for restoration and rebuilding. The area has continued to attract visitors in considerable numbers. A long-distance path follows the Cotswold crest but the byways and footpaths are accessible to all and at all seasons the villages are thronged with visitors – congestion can be a severe problem in the summer season. As in many other areas, the setting up of bed and breakfast accommodation and farm shops is a form of farm diversification, which makes a significant contribution to a farmer's income and the villages undoubtedly gain financially from tourism. Even the large estates benefit from opening their houses and gardens to the public and developing leisure attractions such as falconry centres etc – ventures which fit in with the quiet enjoyment of the countryside. This is a fragile countryside but for the moment, at least, land managers, farmers, villagers and visitors are apparently working together to preserve the character of this region.

But what a great deal remains to be done by researchers, practitioners, land managers and farmers alike.

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Resumé

Forholdet mellem forskning og landskabsforvaltning i England

Det engelske landskab er i høj grad formet af landbruget og dets skiftende produktionsmåder. På grund af større maskiner og moderne produktionsmåder er landskabet i disse år udsat for et stort pres og store forandringer.

Det er på denne baggrund at foranstaltninger til at imødegå de værste effekter samt beskytte tilbageværende kulturmiljøer er igangsat. Sådanne foranstaltninger inkluderer nationalparker med vægt på naturen og programmer som skal hjælpe landmænd til at forstå værdien af det kulturhistoriske landskab. Private organisationer, såsom The National Trust, er også blevet dannet, disse har i stor udstrækning fokuseret på historiske bygninger men er også begyndt at opkøbe kyststrækninger.

Hvad kan forskningen bidrage med? Først og fremmest kan forskere undersøge og synliggøre de processer der sikrer landskabets biodiversitet. Det er også vigtigt at identificere regionale forskelle i landskabets brug, såsom markafgrænsninger og tidligere brug af landskabet. For det tredje kan forskning skabe større forståelse for den kulturelle arv, som landskabet er.

I dag er det ikke kun landbrug og industri som influerer landskabets udseende, forskellige fritidsaktiviteter betyder at mange områder der er henlagt for deres naturkvaliteter er i fare for at blive ødelagt fordi de ikke kan tåle den megen trafik og aktivitet.

Til sidst er det på sin plads at minde om at landskabet ofte bliver brugt til at definere nationalkarakteren, det er samtidig vigtigt at forstå at dette er en kulturel konstruktion som skifter sammen med resten af samfundsdebatten.