

Research Toolkit

a toolkit
for wooded landscapes

Historic Environment Awareness Project - led by East Sussex County Council and involving West Sussex County Council and Kent County Council, as part of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme.



Researching a wooded landscape

You may have already used our Survey Toolkit or Identification Toolkit, to find, record and identify archaeological features. This Wooded Landscapes Research Toolkit will help you to find out about the past events which created those features – it will flesh out the human side of the story.

Introduction

The Wooded Landscapes Research Toolkit will help you to research the history of an area which is now wholly, or mainly, wooded. Wooded landscapes may have been tree-covered for centuries or be recent plantations, but either way, the land will have changed ownership and usage over time.

The toolkit points you towards sources of information and where they can be found. It also tells you where to go for additional help. The toolkit has been created by the **Historic Environment Awareness** (HEA) Project, a project led by East Sussex County Council's Archaeology Team within the **Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme**. The Project is supported by English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Weald Forest Ridge covers parts of East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent (**see area map**) so information is provided for sources in all three counties. Although this is a specific area, the types of sources and where they can be found should be applicable for research elsewhere within the South East of England.

The **Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme** enables people to access, enjoy and understand their local landscape; take part in caring for it and leave a legacy for future generations.

The Scheme is led by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit. See www.highweald.org for more information.

Acknowledgements

Many people have worked on this Toolkit.

It was initially put together by Lyn Palmer of East Sussex County Council's Archaeology Team and members of the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum; special mention should be made of members David Brown, Vivienne Blandford and in particular Roger Cockett, who arranged the many primary sources into understandable themes.

Dr John Williams, formerly Kent County Archaeologist, and Christopher Whittick, Senior Archivist at East Sussex Record Office, also provided valuable advice on sources.

The first draft was tested by a group of woodland owners of Waste Wood, near Buxted. They provided feedback and highlighted areas that needed clarification.

Dr Nicola Bannister, Landscape Archaeologist, read through and commented on the final draft.

Section 1 - How to use this Toolkit

IMPORTANT - How to navigate around the pdf version of this document

There are several sections in this Toolkit, which can be read as and when you need them.

If you are reading this on a computer, you can **click on the section** you need in the **table of contents** below to go straight to it. If navigating this way it may be worth remembering the **contents page starts on Page 4**.

When using hyperlinks within the document use **Alt + left arrow to return the page you were previously reading**.

You can also use the **bookmarks within the pdf** to find your way around; to show bookmarks click the page icon on the upper left of your screen, it looks like a page with a blue ribbon bookmark hanging over it.

The icon above it (page with no blue bookmark) will display thumbnails of the pages with their section and page numbers.

NB depending on how your computer is set up, you might need to hold down the ctrl key at the same time as you click.

Page numbers are displayed in the bottom right hand corner, the large faint number in the top right is the section number.

Please report any broken links you find in this document to info@highweald.org, many thanks.

The toolkit also has many hyperlinks to other places in the document, such as the **[glossary](#)**, and to external websites, which will open in your internet browser.

These appear in a blue, bold font, as the 'glossary' example above.

Click on them (or ctrl + click, depending on your computer set-up) to go straight to the linked place/website.

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Section 2 - What do I want to find out?

It is a good idea to have some objectives in mind. There are numerous different questions which you could follow up in your research.

You may wish to know how long your wood has been in existence: is it the last remnant of a larger wood which has disappeared? Was it at one time cleared land used for other purposes but since overgrown or planted? What activities have been carried out in it, such as coppicing, charcoal burning, pasturing of livestock or iron working?

You will want to know the names of the owners or of the people who worked in the wood and something of their lives, and of the part your wood played in them. You could focus on the routeways which cross it, perhaps long disused: what did they link to and why? And you will want to appreciate how your wood fits into the wider surrounding landscape.

This could have changed considerably over time whilst the wood remained a fixed reference point for generations of local people living nearby. Or perhaps not!

Your wood may be young – but the land still has a history that can be researched.



Section 3

- Introduction to the history and archaeology of the Weald Forest Ridge

This section provides an overview of the area's present landscape and how it was formed. It is followed in Section 4 by a [timeline](#) with links to summaries of the archaeological remains.

The landscape of the Weald Forest Ridge

The character of a landscape is underpinned by its geology and soils, the slope and height of the ground and its water and drainage systems. These in turn influence the colonising vegetation and wildlife. The type of resources available for exploitation by people in that landscape will depend on its character.

The 'Wald' or Weald, is an Old English name, meaning 'high wooded country'. The character of the Weald Forest Ridge is very distinctive, and the archaeological remains found there reflect this.



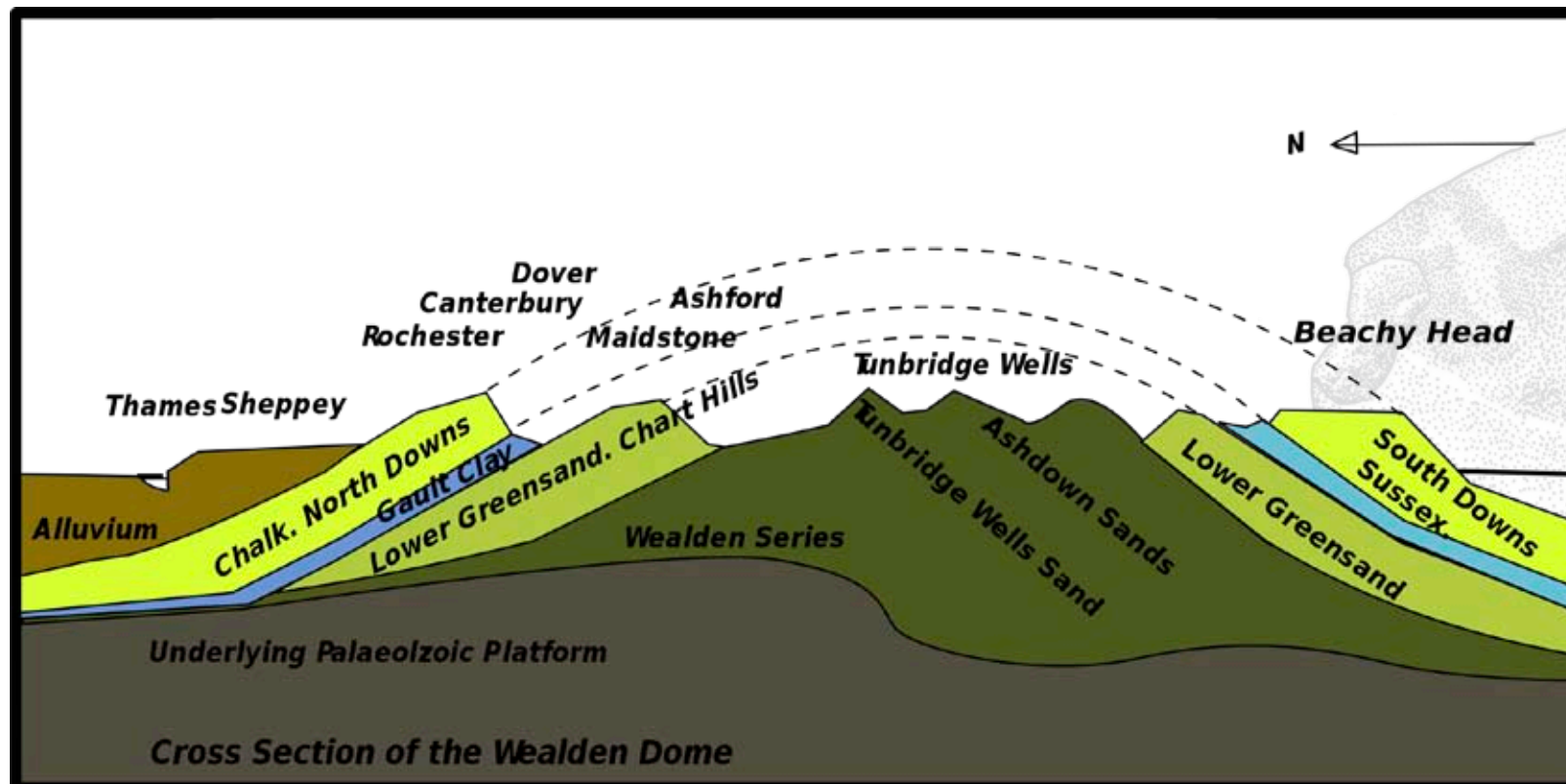
Geology and topography

How the Weald Forest Ridge was formed

The Ridge has a complex geology of layers laid down up to 130 million years ago. The oldest rocks on the Ridge were laid down on the bed of a slow-moving river and comprise sands, silts and clays. Over time, some of the sands and silts were formed into hard rocks.

Eventually the land started sinking and the sea flooded this area. During this time the calcareous (calcium-containing) shells of tiny sea creatures built up a thick layer. About 70 million years ago the area was squashed from the north and south and all the layers were pushed up into a long dome shape, known as the 'Wealden anticline'. The top of the dome, which was soft chalk, got washed into the sea by rain. All that is left are the edges, which are now the North and South Downs.

In between the Downs the now-tilted layers were partly worn away, leaving the hard rocks of the Ridge (the river bed), which is where Ashdown Forest is now. At 241m, the highest part of the Ridge is nearly as high as the Downs. Its prominence in the landscape, together with its natural resources, has meant that people have been active in the area since early prehistory.



Sandstone and clay

The sandstone and clay have eroded at different rates, a process that produces ridges and steep-sided stream ravines, known as gills. The area has unique sandstone rock outcrops, significant sites for prehistoric archaeology.

The soil is sandy and acidic on parts of the high ground, whilst the clay can be waterlogged and heavy or dry and hard. Much of the Weald Forest Ridge's landscape is not ideal for agriculture: the fact that it has not been ploughed or improved for grazing has contributed to the survival of large tracts of woodland, heaths and wood pasture.

The 'Wadhurst Clay' soil contains iron ore in the form of nodules, or in flat seams. This was extensively mined for iron production in the past. The original wooden structures of the earliest inhabitants of the Ridge were later replaced by stone (sandstone) or brick (clay) taken from the layers still left sticking out on either side of the Ridge.

Water

The Ridge is an important water catchment area for the rivers Arun, Adur, Ouse, and Medway. The headwaters of these rivers are formed by many gill streams cutting deep, steep-sided valleys.

Chalybeate streams, which contain salts of iron, run red through the Ridge.

Vegetation

Woodland

The original vegetation of the Weald Forest Ridge after the last Ice Age would have been steppe grassland. This was gradually replaced by woodland, broken up by grass glades, open bogs and marsh areas – the 'wildwood' as it is known today. Some clearance would have taken place in the prehistoric period, but the Weald was still known as a vast wooded area by the Romans ('Silva Anderida') and the Saxons ('Andredswald'), stretching westwards from modern-day Hampshire to Kent.

Woodland still covers 40% of the Weald Forest Ridge, in comparison to the national average of around 9%. Much of the Ridge's woodland is classified as Ancient Woodland, meaning it has probably existed since at least 1600AD.

Heath

As well as being heavily wooded, the higher ground of the Ridge contains the largest amount of open heath in the south-east, with gorse, bracken, bogs, scattered trees and bare sandy patches. Heath is the result when woodland is cleared for grazing. The subsequent exposure and poor quality soils make it difficult to cultivate.



Fields and hedges

Around the Ridge's settlements a network of meadows, pastures, hedgerows and **shaws** creates a small-scale, intimate landscape with a 'patchwork quilt' effect.

Land use over time

The mosaic of landscape elements described above is the result of many different land-uses over time.



These include:

Creation of Medieval forests

The Weald Forest Ridge contains four medieval Forests. St Leonards, Tilgate (formerly Worth), Ashdown and Broadwater (formerly Waterdown) Forest.

‘Forest’ did not mean a wooded area in the modern sense, but a place set aside for deer hunting. Around half the area of Forest on the Ridge in William the Conqueror’s time was in fact heath. The ‘forested’ landscape of Ashdown Forest did not impress William Cobbett some eight centuries later, who described it in the 19th century as *‘the most villainously ugly spot I ever saw’... ‘barren soil, nasty spewy gravel, heath, and even that stunted’*.

Today Ashdown remains largely heath, and to modern eyes appears a beautiful place. The other three Forests are a mix of ancient woodland, heath and plantation.

Creation of deer parks and chases

Deer parks were a 'must-have' status symbol during the 12th – 19th centuries and wealthy landowners created these by enclosing land within a 'pale'. Many parks were maintained despite great agricultural changes and now contain trees centuries old, known as veterans.

Commoning of livestock

Turning livestock out to feed on **Commons**, in the Forests, chases and deer parks was a widespread practice. 'Wood pasture' was a system of managing trees and grazing animals on the same land, practised for centuries on the Ridge. Trees were cut on rotation by **pollarding**, producing foliage out of reach of animals. Many veteran pollards, often oak or beech, remain today, particularly in St Leonard's Forest.

Place names today reflect access to the commons and corralling of livestock in words such as 'hatch', 'gate' and 'pound'. Chelwood Gate and Colman's Hatch were entrances through Ashdown Forest's park pale.



Creation of formal landscapes

From around 500 years ago, the Weald Forest Ridge was settled by influential families who created many of the historic parks visible today. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries formal gardens became increasingly numerous as the railways opened up the landscape as a place to live for well-off people who needed good access to London. Rhododendron and azalea collections thrived on the acid soils. The escape of these plants into the wild from containment within managed parkland has caused problems for some areas of the Ridge, blanketing woodland and suppressing the natural vegetation.

Travelling the routeways and high ground

The drier parts of the Ridge provided important communication routes from early prehistoric times. Promontories on high ground were established as hill forts during the **Iron Age**.

The Ridge was a destination for animal drovers, who brought herds from the South and the North East to feed in and around the area's woodland. The network of routes established by the **Saxon/early Medieval** period laid the foundations of the present-day road network and settlement pattern.

By the **Tudor period**, ridgetop settlements had been established, benefiting from drier, open ground with more accessible trading routes.

Mining for Minerals and Stone

Iron ore was mined from the Wadhurst clay in which it occurs and clusters of small rounded minepits are still visible today. **Iron smelting** began in the area in the second century BC and was particularly important in the Roman and Tudor periods. The forges and furnaces were located alongside streams draining from the Ridge.

LiDAR surveys have revealed that the Forest Ridge is covered in small pits and larger quarries, where stone, clay, marl (a soil improver) and iron were dug out. Many of the grand houses of the Forest Ridge are built of sandstone from local quarries. Many routeways have quarries beside them, where stone for metalling the route was easily hauled.

Water Management

Numerous ponds exist in the Weald Forest Ridge, some of which are flooded pits and quarries, whilst others were deliberately made 'hammer ponds', made for the iron industry. Ornamental lakes in formal gardens and reservoirs were created, in some instances using gill streams or altering existing hammer ponds. Ponds for livestock were created on drove routes and on commons.

Creation of Plantations

Deliberately created and managed woodland has existed for many centuries for timber and fuel. **Coppice** woods provided charcoal for the iron industry in particular. When the commoning of livestock declined, many landowners planted up the former wood pasture and heaths. Conifers and plantation oaks replaced some of the coppiced woodland, in particular after World War II as a result of Forestry Commission planting. In the early 20th century the pasturing system disappeared completely; the remaining commons became scrub-covered, evolving into the densely wooded landscape seen today.



Timeline

- Timeline of human activity on the Weald Forest Ridge

There is very little evidence of the earliest species of *homo* (humans) in the Weald Forest Ridge from the period known as the Palaeolithic – the ‘old stone age’. Throughout most of this period, south-eastern England was joined to the continent, providing a land bridge across which people could walk.

However, elsewhere in Kent and Sussex, we are lucky to have evidence of their activities. Boxgrove in Sussex and Swanscombe in Kent are both famous for finds of bones and tools used by these early people, at around 500,000 and 400,000 years ago respectively. Neanderthals may have arrived here around 100,000 years ago, as their tools have been found in Dartford, Kent.

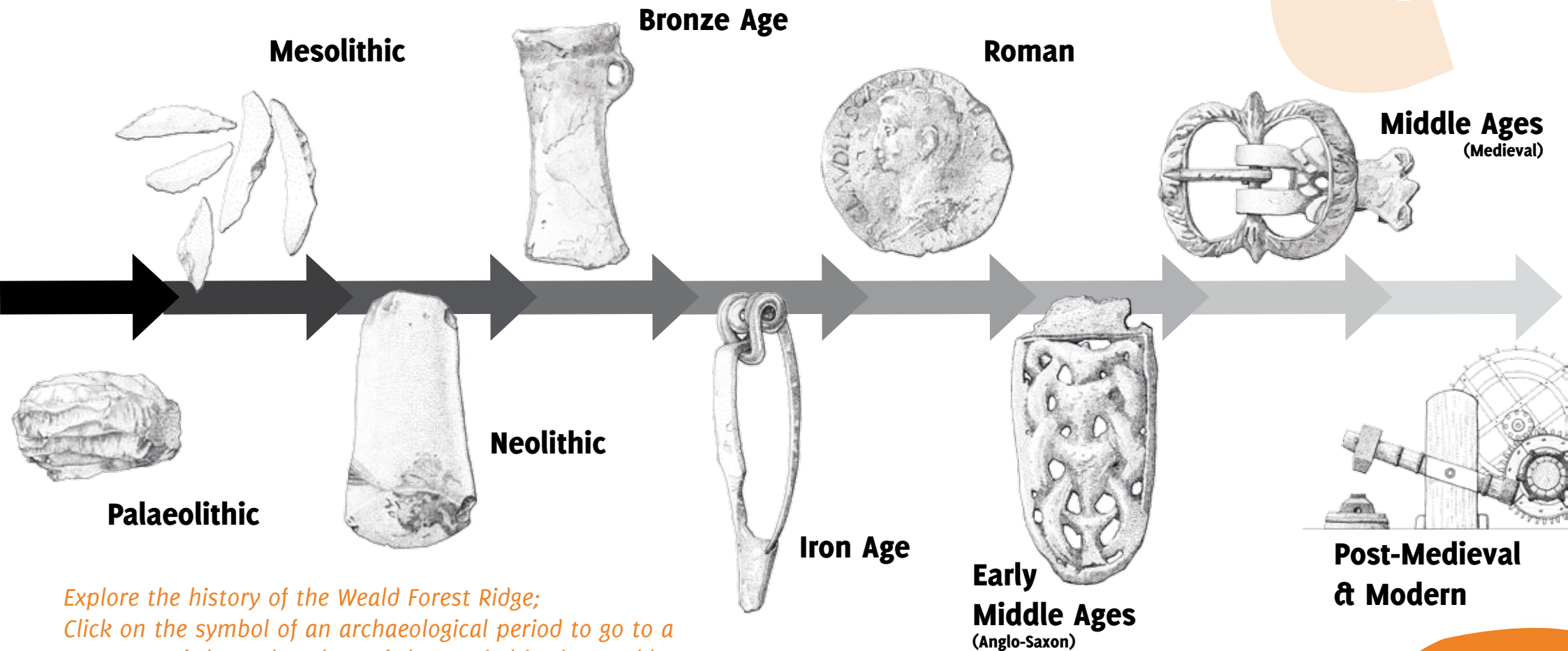
Truly modern humans – *homo sapiens* – didn’t arrive in Britain until 30,000 years ago. Over the next 20,000 years, the temperature fluctuated. During the coldest periods, ice covered much of Britain. People may have left and returned several times as the ice froze and melted. By 12,000 years ago, the ice was retreating northwards for the last time. Woodland began to colonize South Eastern Britain, replacing the cold steppe tundra which had covered the landscape.

From around 11,000 years ago, as Mesolithic hunters arrived, we can begin to piece together the story of human activity in the Weald Forest Ridge.

Click on the name of an archaeological period to read a summary of the archaeology of that period in the Weald Forest Ridge.

Timeline

- Timeline of human activity on the Weald Forest Ridge



Explore the history of the Weald Forest Ridge;
Click on the symbol of an archaeological period to go to a
summary of the archaeology of that period in the Weald
Forest Ridge.

Press 'Alt' + left arrow to return to this (the previously viewed) page.

Section 5

- What are primary and secondary sources?

Sources of historical information are classified into primary and secondary. Your research will use both, probably looking at secondary sources to begin with, but with increasing use of primary sources as your investigations expand.

A **primary source** records actual observation of the event it describes, an original document produced or kept by people who lived at the time of its making.

Original documents can be family records, such as letters, photographs and wills, estate archives such as rentals, surveys, account books, maps and deeds, or administrative records, including documents produced by government or civil organisations, such as census returns, tithe maps, tax assessments and Ordnance Survey maps.

Memories – oral accounts – are also a primary source. However, don't assume that all primary sources are accurate – diaries or interviews may be quite wrong in their assertions, though they are nevertheless primary sources.

Primary sources were compiled for a specific reason, and it probably won't be the one for which you want to use them. They are 'raw' data and will need interpretation. However, they can also provide information which does not relate directly to the compiler's task, for example, a receipt for materials may tell you what industrial processes were taking place.

Modern archaeological excavation or survey produces primary sources, such as artefacts or site plans. These are then interpreted within reports on the investigation, which are, in turn, secondary sources. Similarly, **LIDAR** images are primary sources, but any interpretation of the features shown on them will be a secondary source.

Some primary sources can be difficult to find and interpret, and documentary research gets more difficult the further back you go. It may take time to become familiar with the writing styles of previous centuries. Discovering an interesting nugget of information in your record office can be very exciting though – very much like detective work!

A **secondary source** is an assessment or an interpretation of information from primary sources or other secondary sources.

Published histories, internet sites and reference books are examples of secondary sources. A web search of **useful sites** should be one of the first places to look. However, you should be aware when using these or any source that the evidence can be used to present many different interpretations, with facts even omitted or misunderstood.

Secondary sources can be very ancient – for example, Lambarde's History of Kent written in 1576, or Horsfield's History of Sussex of 1835 – or very recent, such as modern newspaper articles.

Depending on their purpose, newspaper articles can also be primary sources. Births, marriages and deaths, sports scores, sales adverts and so on are factual and primary. However, reviews and comments are personal opinion and should be regarded as secondary.

Ideally all research would be based upon primary sources, but there is no point in repeating work which has been done already. Local interest groups may have produced guides or histories about their subject area. Rural industry or trade, ecology or family history are all subjects in which you may come across reference to your wooded area. A good publication will contain source references so that you can follow up any useful pointers.

Most importantly, you should:

- **Record your source, its location and reference in detail, so that future researchers will know where your information originated.**
- **Assess how reliable each of your sources is.**

Section 6

- Making a start

Just as with researching family history, there will be sources that are easily found, especially on the internet, and sources that need tracking down in archives. Before you begin, you will need to know some basic information about your area to locate it during research.

Land boundaries

Your first step is to work out which parish your wood is in. Records were often created and preserved on a parish basis. Record offices usually keep their holdings in the same groups in which they acquired them (such as family collections) but even if holdings are separately indexed, they will probably be in parishes.

Locate the wood on the modern Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map (Explorer). The parish boundary will be marked by a line of black dots and will be named in large grey capitals as PARISH NAME CP. CP stands for civil parish.

Be aware that ancient ecclesiastical parishes were established in the 12th and 13th centuries, but modern civil parishes came into existence at various dates following the Local Government Act of 1894. Most have much the same boundaries, but sometimes there are substantial differences. Earlier books and information sources refer to ecclesiastical parishes. Modern ones refer to civil parishes. You should find out if there were any parish boundary changes which affected your wood and when they took place.

If your wood crosses a county boundary, this is shown by a line of grey dashes and dots. Each county record office generally stores material relating to its own county, so records for an area which crosses a boundary may be in either.

Grid references

You may need to know the National Grid Reference, as this too will be needed when requesting information from some sources. The National Grid is shown on the 1:25,000 map as a grid of blue lines, numbered at the map margins. The grid reference for any 1 kilometre square on the map is the position of its bottom left hand corner – the SW corner. For researching an area of landscape such as a wood it is best to work out the grid reference of its centre point, so look at [using grid references](#).

Now that you know the exact location of your wood and its place in the surrounding area, you can start looking at [historic maps](#). You can also contact the [Historic Environment Record](#) to find out what is already recorded about the archaeology of your area.

Looking at existing histories will be the next step, although researching a wooded area presents particular challenges. Local histories don't mention woods very often as their writers are more concerned with people, property, settlements, or industry. A history of an estate might make some mention of its woodland, but historians have tended to assume that few events of interest take place in a wood!

From this point onwards you will be led in different directions depending on what you've uncovered. You could, however, adopt a 'scatter gun' approach to research, as well as a more directional one.

'Scatter gun' research

The old [antiquaries](#) had to read through all of the documents they studied, simply to see what they contained. Although many deeds followed standard forms, this was still a huge amount of work. By the 19th century, document collections were beginning to be catalogued and printed. Indexes to their contents were usually compiled as well and saved researchers much time. Now, with the advent of digitised documents, on and off the internet, searches are even quicker and easier.

It is now possible to search through the whole of an archive or a website for references to a place name or a personal name with a few keystrokes. Sometimes the result is the whole text of a document, sometimes just the fact that one exists. A search will miss references which are buried within a record or if there are errors in transcription or variations in a name. Sometimes the references which are found are incorrect and out of context. But it is certainly very easy to produce a list of references to a name.

A collection of scattered references doesn't make a history in itself of course, but the technique can provide new researchers with an encouraging start and show the type of records which are productive and their possible date range.

Don't be put off by the archaic and unusual names of some records that you may find. You may not have come across these types of records before, know what they are about or how they can help you with your research, so look at Section 8, particularly (2) for some explanations.

As an example, a search for the parish of Buxted on The National Archives website produced references to the following:

AD 1000 – 1200	48 documents
AD 1200 – 1400	130 “
AD 1400 – 1600	274 “
AD 1600 – 1800	916 “
AD 1800 – 2000	1,751 “

A similar search for Buxted on the British History Online website produced references which included the following less well known archives:

- Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland
- Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward I
- Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300-1541
- An abstract of Feet of Fines for the County of Sussex
- Abstracts of Inquisitiones Post Mortem for the City of London
- Petitions to the Pope
- Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House
- A collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe

ALWAYS note down all the sources that you find and/or use. If you write up your research you will need to reference them to allow future researchers to discover where your information originated.

Section 7 – Secondary sources and where to find them

Databases

Historic Environment Record (HER) – your first stop

Each county within the Weald Forest Ridge has a Historic Environment Record (HER), a searchable database maintained by the archaeological team within the County Council. It was formerly known as the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The HER contains archaeological sites and finds, buildings (listed and non-listed), information on archaeological investigations that have been carried out, and information on written sources relating to the historic environment.

Your wooded area and its surrounds may have some HER information. Few woods have had their archaeology recorded, but finds of objects, industrial sites or details of investigations into nearby places may exist.

Contact the HER for the county where your area of interest lies early in your research, to find out what heritage information has already been recorded there. Contact details for the three HERs which cover the Weald Forest Ridge HERs are given under '*The Written Word*' in [Section 7](#).

You can access the Kent HER on the KCC website at www.kent.gov.uk/HER. Using this online facility, you can pinpoint an area. You can do a simple search by keyword, type of artefact, time period or parish. An advanced search lets you search also by grid reference, site or find type. A map search facility will identify archaeological sites and buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and historic landscape characterisation. You can also look at historic maps of the area from 1871 onwards and aerial photos taken in 2003.

The East Sussex HER is accessible through the [Heritage Gateway](#) website search page. This will provide a list of known records and a location on Google maps. The Kent HER is also accessible on Heritage Gateway.

You need to access information on the West Sussex HER by contacting the county's HER Officer, since this county currently has no publicly accessible online database.

However, for all three counties, you can request information from the HER Officer about an area for personal research, which they will send to you. You will need to provide them with a **grid reference** at the centre of your area, the name of the area if it has one, or a nearby settlement. They will need to know how wide a radius you wish to have information on from the central grid reference. A 2km radius should cover most wooded areas. You can always ask for more information from a wider surrounding area if you want to broaden your search in the future.

You will receive a map, with recorded sites and finds located on it and an accompanying list. The list will also tell you of any archaeological works done in the area – known as 'events' – and give the reference number of the relevant report. The HER summarises reports, but you can usually read the original copy. Many are digitised and can be sent to you, or paper copies can be viewed. Kent's HER is in Maidstone, East Sussex's is in Lewes and West Sussex's is in Chichester.

HER Officers are constantly updating their records as new data is received. Information not yet loaded onto the HER may exist (in particular 'grey literature' which is unpublished reports), so it is worth asking for a list of these.

The HER record is not exhaustive, but should provide an overview of the area and may point the way to further research. Remember though, that many wooded areas have never had any archaeological investigation within them, so their archaeology will not be recorded and the information you receive from the HER may be quite sparse.

HERs also hold other data such as **LiDAR**, aerial photographs, historic Ordnance Survey maps and **Historic Landscape Characterisation**. Look up these sources below for information about obtaining the data.

Environmental information

magic.defra.gov.uk [NB there is no 'www' in this website address]

You can find out whether your wooded area is designated as ancient woodland by looking at the magic website. The Weald Ancient Woodland Survey in Kent and Sussex has recently remapped all the ancient woodland, taking into account survey and historic maps, and has also included areas under two hectares. Select the Interactive map and then Habitat Inventories.

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage (EH) has several sites providing information, which interlink with each other in various ways.

These include:

Pastscape

www.pastscape.org.uk

English Heritage's national historic environment database.

EH Archives

www.englishheritagearchives.org.uk

Photographs and documents of England's buildings and historic sites

The National Heritage List for England

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england

A new database which brings together information on all nationally designated heritage assets in one place for the first time.

It includes:

- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Protected Wreck Sites
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Registered Battlefields

National Monuments Record

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/archives-and-collections/nmr/enquiry-and-research-services

Heritage Gateway

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

A database which, as well as giving you HER information for Kent and East Sussex, has Parks & Gardens, National Monuments Record (NMR) database of archaeology, buildings and the NMR excavation index, Images of England (contemporary photos of listed buildings) and Viewfinder (historic images).

Your county's Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record often hold different records, so it is worth looking at both. In particular, the West Sussex HER is not online, but you may find some information on your area of interest in this county through Heritage Gateway.

Access to Archives (A2A)

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

A database within the National Archives website holding index lists of many of the documents which exist in county record offices. Searchable by record office, area, place, keywords, parish and date range. 90% of the documents held by East Sussex Record Office are summarised through A2A. Although the Kent History and Library Centre (KHLC) and West Sussex Record Office have contributed to A2A, each maintains its own online catalogue, although that of the CKS contains only a small proportion of its holdings.

Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)

www.finds.org.uk/database

A database of finds, reported to, and recorded by, the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for each county. Finds are often made by members of the public and the majority are by metal detectorists.

Kent and Sussex both have FLOs.

You may discover that the land near your woodland has a concentration of a particular type, or age, of find – for example, medieval horse fittings, indicating an ancient routeway.

Ideally, all PAS finds will also be recorded on that county's HER, but it is worth looking at the PAS database in case they have not yet done so.

The written word

These sources can be found in the record offices, public libraries and the collections of the county archaeological societies. For the Weald Forest Ridge area, the record offices are in:

Maidstone for Kent (Kent History and Library Centre - KHLC)

www.kentarchives.org.uk

Lewes for East Sussex (East Sussex Record Office - ESRO)

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/useourarchives

Chichester for West Sussex (West Sussex Record Office - WSRO)

www.westsussex.gov.uk/ro

Generally, administrative boundaries are no barrier to the movement of people and goods, and for social and economic life, the county boundary between Kent and Sussex has been of little significance. The historians of both counties will be of interest in general research of wooded landscapes.

'The Sussex Historian's Handbook' (2000), compiled by John H. Farrant, is an invaluable tool for finding both historic and more recent written sources, listing publications from the early 16th century up to 1994. It can be accessed on the library page of the Sussex Archaeological Society's website, www.sussexpast.co.uk. The Sussex Archaeological Society covers both East and West Sussex.

Types of written secondary sources include:

County Histories

Many county histories, some written in the 19th century, tend to focus on large historic buildings, such as country houses, and the families that occupied them. They also detail the buildings and workings of religious institutions. Although they are unlikely to say much about woods, they can provide background information on a particular location.

For Sussex, the principal county-wide source for local history is the [Victoria County History \(VCH\)](#), important for parish, town and particularly manorial histories. However, there is no VCH for the Rape of Pevensey, the northern part of which was within the Weald Forest Ridge. Thomas Horsfield's 'The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex' (1835) is an earlier volume, representing the old county historians, followed by M. A. Lower, who wrote 'A Compendious History of Sussex' (1870).

For Kent, the three volumes of the VCH did not progress beyond the Romano-British period, although Volume 3 covers industries and the Domesday Book. Edward Hasted's 'History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent' (2nd Edn. 1797-1801) is therefore the first source. There are many later works on both counties, but few have the same depth.

The Historical Atlas of Sussex, edited by Kim Leslie and Brian Short, and the Historical Atlas of Kent, produced by the Kent Archaeological Society, span the earliest prehistoric occupation of the counties through to 20th-century social, political and economic themes. They are well worth looking at for general background to an area.

There are some good modern overviews of the Weald area, such as Peter Brandon's 'The Kent and Sussex Weald' (2003). Other titles which deal with the wider area are Peter Brandon & Brian Short's 'The South East from AD 1000' and Peter Brandon's 'The Making of the Sussex Landscape'.

Although histories of particular woods are hard to find, many histories of [forests](#) are available. For example, there are substantial articles on Ashdown Forest by Turner in Volume 14 of Sussex Archaeological Collections and by Straker in Volume 81. For the Wealden forest in Kent there is Witney's 'Jutish Forest' (1976). Alan Everitt's 'Continuity and Colonisation – the evolution of Kentish settlement' (1986) is another useful book.

County society publications

Other useful sources for background information are the journals of the **Sussex Archaeological Society** (covering both East and West Sussex) and the **Kent Archaeological Society**, Sussex Archaeological Collections (SAC) and Archaeologia Cantiana (AC) respectively. Both cover a wide range of history and archaeology and have been published annually since the middle of the 19th century.

SAC is indexed in five 25-volume indexes, up to Volume 125. A list of articles is on the SAS website; follow the link on the Library page 'Complete list of articles to 2010'.

The **searchable contents of AC** are online on the Kent Archaeological Society's website, where they are also gradually uploading past articles. The complete set of AC, up to 2005, is available to members of the Society as a CD.

The **Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society's** annual journal 'Sussex Industrial History' has particular relevance to the area of the Weald, as does the publications of the **Wealden Iron Research Group**.

Local history and archaeology publications

Within the Weald Forest Ridge there are many local groups, and individuals, who have published research on their area.

A list of the Sussex groups and websites can be found at www.localhistorylink.com/sussexG.html.

A list of the Kent groups and websites can be found at www.localhistorylink.com/kentG.html.

Many local groups have their own website and their publications may be listed there.

Section 8

– Primary sources and where to find them

Research of primary sources is mainly done using archive material, by visiting local or national archives or through websites with original material uploaded.

It's possible to distinguish three main classes of records and the broad reasons for consulting them. These are:

- 1) topographic records (mostly map-based or visual)
- 2) owner and occupier records
- 3) taxation and valuation records

Types of records within each class are detailed in this section in the suggested order which you might look at them. Some types appear in more than one class.

Where to find records

The archives and websites where records may be looked at change over time. Some records can be seen on several websites, but usually only one archive holds the original records. Always consider first who created that type of record and where it would have been kept at the time it was made.

Nowadays the main archives are local authority record offices, The National Archives (TNA), the British Library (BL), and a few university and cathedral libraries. Certain records are held by public libraries and museums and some records are held privately. Most church records have now been deposited at local authority record offices.

For the Weald Forest Ridge, the record offices are in Maidstone for Kent ([Kent History and Library Centre - KHL](#)), Lewes for East Sussex ([East Sussex Record Office – ESRO](#)) and Chichester for West Sussex ([West Sussex Record Office – WSRO](#)). You may, however, find that the trail leads to archives stored elsewhere in the country, particularly if a landowner's main residence wasn't in Sussex or Kent.

Record offices store everything by source, rather than by subject as libraries do. Unfortunately there will be no section on woodland history!

Printed copies of records

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the Record Commissioners and the Public Record Office (predecessors of TNA) transcribed and/or translated many of their collections of central government records. These printed volumes should be available in record offices and larger libraries. The Kent and Sussex archaeological societies have transcribed and/or translated many of the written records relating to their counties. These have been printed in their annual transactions or in their records series. These volumes are available in record offices and libraries or can be bought secondhand.

On-line copies of records

A very small proportion of the holdings of both national and local repositories are available as online images, but lists of records, often very detailed ones, appear on the website of TNA. TNA's own holdings are listed in its online catalogue, and its website hosts [Access to Archives \(A2A\)](#), which lists and summarises many of the records held by record offices and archive centres throughout the country, including Kent and Sussex. The online lists of individual record offices may be considerably different from the A2A list, so look at both. These lists can be used to identify documents which can either be brought out to be looked at in the record office, or ordered as images from the record office's reprographic service.

If you're not sure from your website search whether a record office or archive holds a type of record, email them and ask. Your enquiry will be passed to someone qualified to help you.

Many records are available online in summary form (some originally in Latin are available in English). Actual images can often be bought as internet downloads, though they won't always be very legible.

Inspection of original records

Records not available on the internet can usually be seen by visiting the search rooms of the archive where they are kept. Details of the location, opening times, contact information and holdings of all UK record offices are available on ARCHON at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/. It is essential to contact most record offices before you visit, as access details vary between them. Many require a County Archive Research Network (CARN) ticket, which can be used at most local record offices, but not at TNA or the British Library which operate their own admission systems. This is normally issued on your first visit but will require proof of identity/address and signature and in some cases two passport-sized photographs.

If you're unsure about using a record office, ring them and ask.

Unofficial online copies of records

Some university, commercial and amateur web sites do a great job of reproducing (and explaining) records, especially central government ones. We list a few of them in [Section 10](#). Be warned that some websites on the internet are unreliable or misleading. Without experience of the subject it may be hard to recognise these.

Helpful hints

You will save a lot of time (and travelling), if you look for records online first. If you have any doubts about transcripts or proper names, if you need a fuller text, or if you simply can't find something, then visit the archive.

- Catalogues and lists compiled by TNA and other record offices, and transcripts and translations published by county archaeological societies and record societies are mostly very reliable, but you must make sure whether or not place names have been modernised.
- More and more material is being put on the internet, but the amount remains a tiny proportion of what is available. There are also many types of online records which we haven't described here; the **scatter-gun approach** described in Section 6 can often find a few which you'll find helpful.
- Finally, remember that records are primary sources which their creators made for their own purposes and not to assist you!



Classes and types of record

It can be daunting when you start using archive material. There are many different types of record and some have names which are unfamiliar today.

We have listed most types of record in each class and have briefly explained what they are, to familiarise you with each one. If you want to find out more about a type of record in classes 2 and 3, the link will take you to a more detailed description.

Very early records were written in old forms of Latin – few people can read them today. We have stated which records this might apply to, in particular those in class 2 – owner and occupier records. However, some have been translated and summaries of many can be found on various websites.

1) Topographic records

These records describe the appearance, character, shape or relationships of a site or area. They don't (always) give information on the interests or interactions of people with the site or area.

It is a good idea to look at maps early in your research. They're a quick way to trace an area of woodland back as far as the end of the 18th century, and can provide even earlier information.

Modern maps

The Ordnance Survey 'Explorer' map 1:25,000 scale (approximately 2½ inches to a mile) is a good starting point. This will show civil parishes, woodland, contours at 5 metre intervals, and much more. Not all woods are named and a lot of fine detail is left out, but you should be able to see how your area fits into the surrounding landscape, its special character, and features such as water courses.

The larger scale Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 'Landplan' map is the largest scale OS map showing contours. OS Landplan can be bought at Mapping and Data Centres. The nearest centres to the Weald Forest Ridge are located at Uckfield and Paddock Wood.

Maps can be ordered online at www.shop.ordnancesurveyleisure.co.uk.

Historic maps

Once you're familiar with the modern outline of the wood and have some idea of its features, you can work backwards through time on maps. Ordnance Survey maps have been produced for the Weald Forest Ridge area in several different versions over the last two hundred years. The earliest Ordnance Survey map was the 'one inch to a mile' map which became available in the decade after 1810. The one-inch maps went through many revisions; they are particularly useful for dating large scale changes such as roads and railways. Ask at your county record office or local library about these. They can also be bought as **David & Charles** reproductions from the internet.

The one inch maps were based on Ordnance Survey manuscript drawings, The Forest Ridge area is covered by six of these drawings at scales of 2 inches and 3 inches to a mile, which date from 1789 to 1808. Each drawing is on the British Library website at www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/index.html.

The Kent HER holds the drawings on microfiche. East Sussex and West Sussex HERs have them digitised. They are also available to view in some county record offices. ESRO has surveyor's drafts both digitally and on paper and WSRO has them on paper. KHLC does not hold them. The first of the larger scale 'County Series' maps (25 inches to a mile and 6 inches to a mile) are known as the First Edition. The initial survey began in the 1860s but did not reach Sussex until 1873. Revisions were done in the 1890s (Second Edition), 1900s (Third Edition) and 1930s (Fourth Edition). After World War II, revisions were done every 10 years.

Each HER and record office holds the County Series maps.

A comparison of modern with historic maps can reveal changes to the outline of the wood or to routeways crossing through or surrounding it, or show that buildings may have once existed.

Tithe maps

Important early maps are the surveys made under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. The purpose of the Act was to convert agricultural tithes due to the church or tithe owner into rent charges, based on the annual prices of certain crops. By ancient custom, Wealden woodland was not subject to the payment of tithes, but woods in bordering districts were.

An accurate map was produced for each Weald Forest Ridge parish, at roughly 25 inches to a mile, with a list (known as an apportionment) of owners, occupiers, name and description of the lands, state of cultivation, acreages and rent charge payable. Woodland was shown on the maps, though internal features of woods might not be. Most of the work had been done by 1842 and a few maps were produced earlier than 1839. Tithe maps were large enough to depict every field and building.

Copies of each tithe map on CD-ROM for parishes in West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent may be bought from the record offices. In some instances the apportionment has been transcribed (written up) and you will need to ask for this separately. If it has not been transcribed it can be read at the record office. ESRO and WSRO have transcribed all the apportionments. Many of the Kent apportionments are online, being gradually transcribed by the Kent Archaeological Society.

Enclosure maps

Mostly dating from before the middle of the 19th century, these maps record the enclosing of land and so can reveal old boundaries, commons and so on.

Enclosure had largely occurred in the Weald Forest Ridge area before the advent of **Parliamentary enclosure**, so only later enclosures are likely to be recorded on such maps. It is worth checking to see if the land you are interested in appears on one of the very few enclosure maps that exist. This will need to be done in the respective record office as there is no online database.

Terrier maps within the ESRO and WSRO will tell you the precise areas covered by pre-tithe maps.

Estate maps

Before the days of the Ordnance Survey and the Tithe surveyors, even minor landowners often commissioned surveys of their estates. If you are lucky, your wood will be represented on a map lodged with the record office.

Estate maps from the 17th century are rare, but from the 18th century are more plentiful. They show whatever was of interest to the landowner, and usually included woodland. The map would centre on the landowners estate, but the names of surrounding landowners were usually shown and can prove very useful. Occasionally you find wood felling rotation schemes marked on estate maps, which can be a wonderful insight into the age of veteran trees in the wood today.

In later years, landowners would adapt the local Tithe Map or Ordnance Survey map to show their land.

Deposited Plans

These plans, lodged at county record offices with the records of the **Quarter Sessions**, show the course of proposed railways, canals, turnpikes and bridges from the late 18th to early 20th centuries. The plans often provide a useful bridge between the tithe surveys of c.1840 and the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1873, though only in long, thin corridors of land.

Sale catalogues

Land Agents valuation books in the record offices are a useful source. The deposited archives of solicitors and estate agents can provide information about land transactions. Catalogues printed for the convenience of buyers at property auctions from the 18th century; until c1840 would require a special survey for a map of the property; later, would adapt the tithe survey map or early Ordnance Survey map.

Old county maps

Whilst not giving you any detail of your area, these may provide an overview back to the 16th century. For good quality images of old maps of the whole county of Sussex, the University of Portsmouth has these at:

www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap

An extensive list (carto-bibliography) of existing old Kent maps is at: www.OLDKENTMAPS.CO.UK

The Sussex Record Society has produced a book 'Printed Maps of Sussex', describing all the printed maps produced between 1575 and 1900.

Historic Aerial Photographs

These go back as far as the 1920s (oblique photos – taken from an angle) in small numbers, and from the 1940s onwards (vertical photos – from straight above), to within the last few years. As with maps, they can be useful for investigating changes to the extent of a wood. They can also reveal felled areas, any buildings which may have existed and even crop marks in surrounding fields, indicating past activity which may link to the wood.

All three HERs hold collections of aerial photographs, some digitally and some as hard copies. You can visit the HER offices to view the prints.

- Kent HER has hard copy vertical photos from 1946-47, 1961, 1967, 1972, 1985, 1990, 1995. They also hold digital photos from 2003 and 2008.
 - East Sussex HER has vertical (from straight above) photos from 1947, 1999 and 2006, and a small selection of 1950-1970 oblique (from an angle) photos.
 - West Sussex HER has vertical photos from 1947, 1991, 1997, 2001 and 2007.
- All three Record Offices also hold collections of aerial photographs.
- The Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone holds county-wide aerial photos from 1945-47 and 1951.
 - East Sussex Record Office in Lewes holds aerial photos from 1946 to 1973, both county-wide surveys and surveys of particular areas.
 - West Sussex Record Office in Chichester holds photos from 1947, 1949, 1971, 1981, 1986-88, 1991, 1997 and 2001.

The National Monuments Record also holds a collection of aerial photographs. Look at the Pastscape website and then EH Archives.

LiDAR

LiDAR – light detection and ranging – uses an airborne laser scanner to ‘see’ through the trees, producing an image revealing the shape of the ground below. It is invaluable for discovering and accurately locating archaeological features in woodland. The Weald Forest Ridge has a complete LiDAR survey.

The images will show you shapes such as banks, mounds, hollows and levelled areas. It is only by going into the wood that you may be able to identify the purpose of these historic features and perhaps their relative age. The images will not tell you anything about who built the features, why and when. Your research into past use of the wood and its surrounds may give you clues about these questions though, enabling you for example, to match boundary banks with long-vanished field systems shown on old maps.

The **Historic Environment Awareness** project has made the **Weald Forest Ridge LiDAR** available online at www.highweald.org.

Photographs, postcards, engravings, paintings and drawings

Unlike images of urban locations which include recognisable landmarks, it is difficult to identify one wood from another in images if the wood is not named. However, you may for example, come across photos of charcoal workers in your area, or portraits of wood owners.

The Museum of Rural Life at the University of Reading, www.merl.org.uk, has a national collection of photographs which include agriculture, landscapes and rural life, the farming press and records of Britain’s leading agricultural engineering firms. The catalogue is not searchable online. West Sussex Library Service and Picture Collection maintain a large collection of historic images containing some 1.5 million items dating from the 16th century onwards.

Place-names

It is worth doing some research into woodland and settlement place names. They may give you a clue to past management or changes in land-use. Minepit, Furnace and Staves Wood tell you something about the way in which the wood was once used.

Sometimes woods were named after people who owned them or were tenants, or after the nearby settlement.

Settlement names can reflect woodland cover or type. For example, the Old English word *hyrst*, (wooded hill) is seen in High Hurstwood and Ashurst, and *leah* (woodland clearing) at Nutley and Tudeley.

Modern place-name spellings can be misleading and names may also have been changed. Study of old maps and documents may give you any former names and also the date that a wood was first recorded.

There are several general works on place-names including:

Ekwall, E (1960) *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, Oxford University Press

Gelling, M (1983) *Place-names in the Landscape*

Gelling, M and Cole A (2000) *Landscape of Place-Names*, Martin Tyas

Smith, A H (1987) *English Place-Name Elements (Parts I & II)*, Cambridge University Press

More specific to Kent and Sussex are:

Mawer A & Stenton F M. (1929) *The Place Names of Sussex (Parts I & II)*, Cambridge University Press

Wallenberg, J K (1931) *Kentish Place Names* and (1934) *The Place Names of Kent*. Both of these are hard to find except in Record Offices.



(2) Owner and occupier records

These records describe ownership, occupation transfer, inheritance, tenancy, rights and duties in relation to a site or area. Here we have given you a brief description of each – the links will take you to a more detailed description in Appendix 1.

The Domesday Book

William the Conqueror's aide memoire on what lands he had given to whom. Readily available and in English translation but goes into few details.

Charter Rolls

Records of Crown grants; also used to record official inspections of private grants. 1199 – 1517 are printed, except from 1216 – 1226. First 17 years are in Latin.

Patent Rolls

Wide variety of grants, licences etc issued by the Crown and open to public inspection. 1201 to 1595 are printed, the first 32 years in Latin.

Deeds enrolled on the Close Rolls

Sealed writs and orders from the Crown to individuals. 1204–1509 are printed, the first 68 years in Latin. Content rarely topographical, but from the late 14th century, private deeds were sometimes copied onto the back of the rolls.

Catalogue of Ancient Deeds

Mostly conveyances, also covenants, bonds, wills etc; from various sources. From late 12th century to 1603. English translation, but often with no dates.

Manorial Court Rolls

Proceedings of private manorial courts. The court leet dealt with behaviour and breach of the peace; the court baron with agricultural custom and practice. Few are printed. In Latin from 13th century – 1733, then in English until 1922.

Early transfers of land ownership: deeds and fines

A fine was a device for securing land ownership through a fictitious law case in which a plaintiff claimed ownership of land and a defendant conceded it to him for a payment. From late 12th century – 19th century and in Latin. Sussex & Kent Record Societies have printed English translations.

Later land transfers: leases, releases, entails, uses, trusts, settlements and mortgages

Legal devices to transfer land whilst avoiding services, taxes, or publicity; also to keep land within a family, to use as loan collateral or to gain rent from it. Not printed, and in Latin until the 18th century.

Some further points about deeds

County record offices hold large collections of deeds from landed families and solicitors. Deeds will often include details of abutments (adjoining properties). Deeds relating to property adjoining the land you are directly interested in may have valuable information.

It was rare that woodland was conveyed by itself as it was usually part of other property, such as a farm. Covenants in leases may tell you about timber for repairs or other work.

If the land you are researching was in the possession of an estate, deeds may exist for several centuries. They often detail the leasing of land between owners and tenants and provide information on the development of the properties forming part of the estate.

Inquisitions Post Mortem (IPMs)

A person holding land from the king owed feudal services when he died. The IPM was a survey of the extent of their lands and the name and age of the next heir were noted. 1236 to 1391 and 1485 are 1509 printed in English; Latin 1377-1485.

Wills and administrations

The records of most wills were proved at Diocesan Courts, the larger estates at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury from 1383 to 1858 and at the Principal Probate Registry from 1858. NB until 1660 owners of some forms of land could not dispose of them in their wills. Not printed. Generally English after c1500.

Probate Inventories

List of moveable goods in the house, mentioned in a will. Depending on the date, these goods might not be bequeathed with the property.

Estate Records (particularly Duchy of Lancaster Records)

Instructions, accounts, bills, receipts and plans needed for the running of an estate tend to be kept together. Might give details on woodland. In English, all dates, unprinted.

Sale catalogues

see (1) above

Trade and Commercial Directories

Many directories, such as Kelly's and the Post Office, are online through a University of Leicester project www.historicaldirectories.org. They generally do not list farm labourers or other such workers until the 20th century, but can give an indication of employment patterns.

Electoral Registers from 1832

Registers of Parliamentary electors were produced annually since 1832 (with a few exceptions), changing as the franchise widened. Older records are most likely to be in the County record offices.

Census returns

A listing of everyone in each dwelling on census night, carried out annually since 1801, except in 1941. Data for the first 3 censuses is not preserved except as total numbers for the districts. From 1841 to 1911, National Archives has made census returns available online via various commercial websites – there may be a charge.

Oral History

Talking to local people cannot be overestimated, although memories can be distorted. Aside from personal experience of the way a landscape has been used over time, stories can be handed down through generations – the World War II bomber that crashed nearby, or the now-vanished settlement for instance. It is worth checking to see if any record has already been made of your area by a local history, or special interest group. The Oral History Society, www.oralhistory.org.uk, tells you how to collect oral histories and how to use and look after the information.

(3) Taxation and valuation records

These records describe the value of land to the owner or occupier, to the crown and to other authorities.

The Domesday Book

See (2) above.

Manorial Court Rolls

See (2) above

Estate Records – particularly Duchy of Lancaster Records

See (2) above

Church Records – Parish

Records of Diocesan court business, faculties granted to parishes, visitations and inspections; transcripts of parish registers should be present from 1598.

Church Records – Diocesan

Records originally kept by the diocese – bishop's registers, parish register transcripts, Compton census, diocesan administration, records of ecclesiastical courts, wills, inventories.

Other Church Records

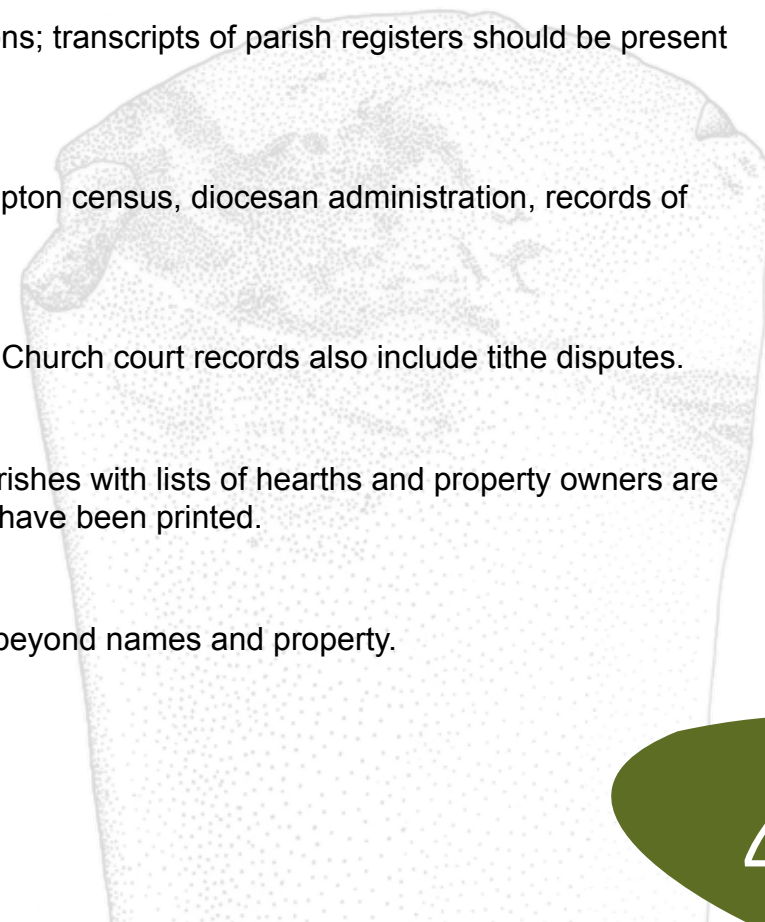
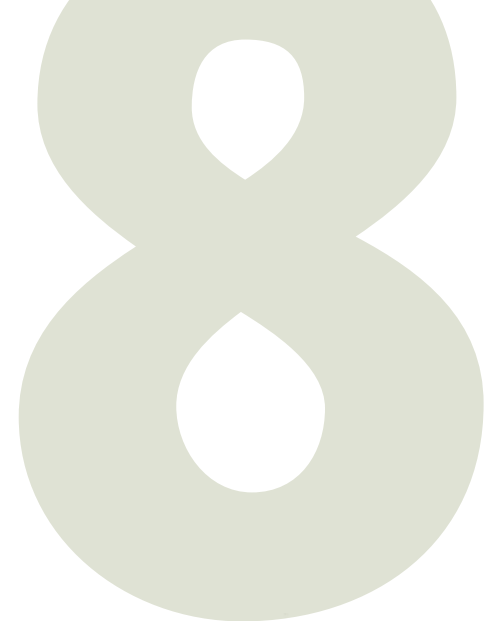
Minor matters might be dealt with in the archdeaconry court instead of going to the bishop. Church court records also include tithe disputes.

Hearth Tax Returns

A national tax on the number of hearths, only ran from 1662 –1689. Parishes or parts of parishes with lists of hearths and property owners are sometimes separate from lists of payments. Actual addresses are not given. Some returns have been printed.

Land Tax

A national tax on occupied land from 1693 to 1963. The lists do not give much information beyond names and property.



Rate Books

Parish tax on value of occupied land and buildings from the 16th century until the 19th or later. The rate books do not give much information beyond names and property.

Tithe surveys circa the 1840s

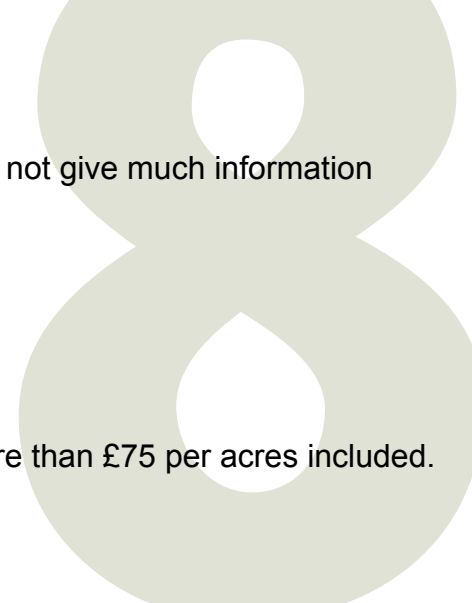
see (1) above

Land Valuation Survey of 1910

Survey in 1910 of property and land, including timber and fruit trees. Only properties over 50 acres and worth more than £75 per acres included. Produced Record Map, Field Books and a Valuation Book.

National Farm Survey 1940-1943

Survey in 1940-43 of farms of all kinds over 5 acres, covering tenancy conditions, state of the land, equipment, power supply, weed infestation, crop averages and livestock numbers. Produced a map of the farm.



Section 9

- Organisations and people who can help with your research

West Sussex Record Office (Chichester)

www.westsussex.gov.uk/ro

records.office@westsussex.gov.uk

01243 533959

East Sussex Record Office (Lewes)

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/useourarchives

archives@eastsussex.gov.uk

01273 482349

The Kent History and Library Centre (Maidstone)

www.kentarchives.org.uk

archives@kent.gov.uk

01622 694363

South East Woodland Archaeology Forum

www.sewaf.org.uk

info@sewaf.org.uk

This group is made up of those with a common interest in the history and archaeology of wooded landscapes. They meet informally twice a year and also have field trips to interesting sites. Members of the Forum are trained in woodland survey and can help you to make a start on this as well as advise on research techniques and sources.

Sussex Archaeological Society

www.sussexpast.co.uk/research

The SAS has a Research Officer who can be contacted for help, on research@sussexpast.co.uk. The SAS library is housed within their premises in Lewes.

Kent Archaeological Society

www.kentarchaeology.org.uk

newsletter@kentarchaeology.org.uk

The KAS Information Officer can be contacted to provide further information about research, on newsletter@kentarchaeology.org.uk. The KAS library is housed within Maidstone Museum.

University of Sussex

www.sussex.ac.uk/cce

cce@sussex.ac.uk

01273 678300

The Centre for Community Engagement runs a wide range of courses about both the archaeology and history of the county throughout Sussex, including practical training courses in archaeology.



Section 10 - Web resources for research

General and multi-source websites

National Archives

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/searchthearchives

Apart from saying what exists and describing classes of records, they do in many cases calendar (précis) particular records. Their in-depth research guides are a great introduction to administration records, the systems which produced them and the uses to which they can be put.

Access to Archives (A2A)

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

A database within the National Archives holding indexes to, and in some cases full texts of, many of the documents which exist in county record offices.

Pastscape

www.pastscape.org

English Heritage's National Monument Record. Information on archaeological, architectural and maritime sites.

Heritage Gateway

www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway

Access to some County HERs and other sources of information on the historic environment.

West Sussex Past Gateway

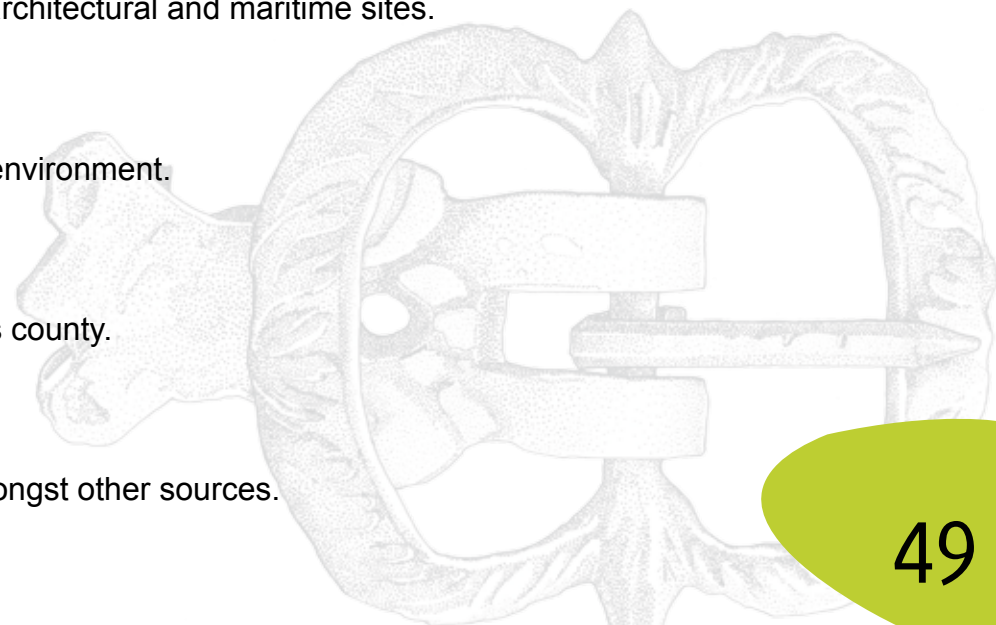
www.westsussexpast.org/gateway

A searchable web gateway for databases and information on the heritage of this county.

Here's History

hereshistorykent.org.uk

Search for people or places. 'Places' provides directories and historic maps amongst other sources.



Sussex Archaeological Society (Sussex Past)

www.sussexpast.co.uk

Links through the library page to the Society's Library index and to an index of Sussex Archaeological Collections. The Sussex Historian's Handbook is a very helpful reference to sources on a wide variety of topics. However, none of these provide access to original material.

Kent Archaeological Society

www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/research.htm

More than 17,000 pages of research, transcribed records of Monumental Inscriptions, Medieval and Tudor Wills, Place Names, Visual records and much more. No mapping.

Ashdown Forest Conservators

The historical minute books of the Board of Conservators, dating from the late 1880s onwards, are available as searchable pdfs.

www.ashdownforest.org/news/conservator_meetings_archive.php

Websites with aerial photographs

Historic aerial photographs of Sussex are available from the University of Sussex geography resource centre at:

www.geog.sussex.ac.uk/grc/info/airphotos-historic/1940/index.html

If you are willing to pay for photos they can be obtained from:

UK Aerial Photos

www.ukaerialphotos.com

and

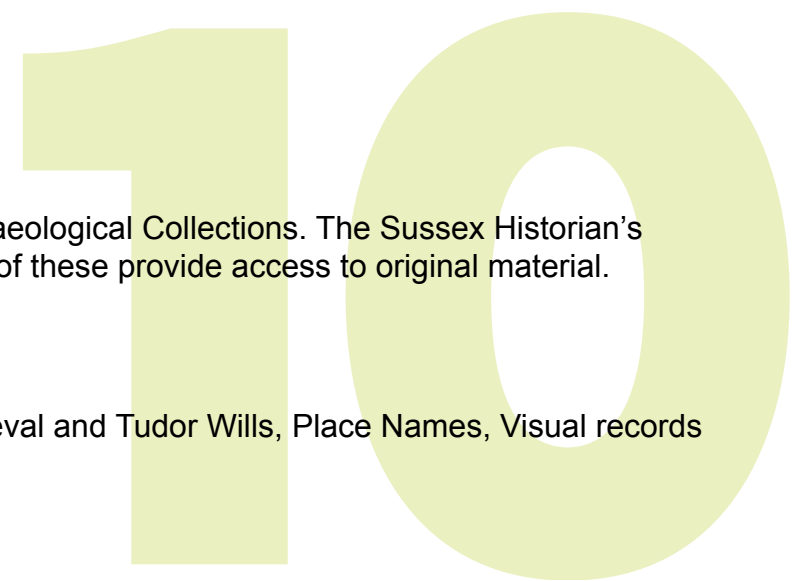
Historical Aerial Photography

www.oldaerialphotos.com/index.cfm

National Monuments Record Aerofilms archive

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/archives-and-collections/nmr/archives/photographs/aerofilms

Plans to scan and upload photos are underway. Dating from 1919 to 2006, the collection includes the largest and most significant number of air photographs of Britain taken before 1939. These are of urban, suburban, rural, coastal and industrial scenes. Currently viewing has to be done at the NMR in Swindon.



Viewfinder

viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/

Historic photographs of England dating from the 1850s.

Websites with historic maps

The **British Library** has a helpful article on maps for research purposes:

www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/maps/catsourcedating/cartographicdating.html

Generally, free map websites only give a small part of the map on screen at one time, so you have to download a map in pieces, one screen shot after another. (Press the Print Scrn key, open a new file in Photoshop or Word and paste in the clipboard contents.)

OldSussexMapped

www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/sussex.html

British History Online

www.british-history.ac.uk/map.aspx

This is free, and does both 1:2,500 and 1:10,560 OS maps (basically revised versions of the first 1860s edition). Their coverage at 1:10,560 is complete for Kent and Sussex. However for 1:2,500 it is very patchy, with seven sheets for Sussex and none for Kent.

A Vision of Britain Through Time

www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/index.jsp

Free, but only covers the 1840s and 1920s OS inch to a mile maps and a 1930s land utilisation map.

New Popular Edition

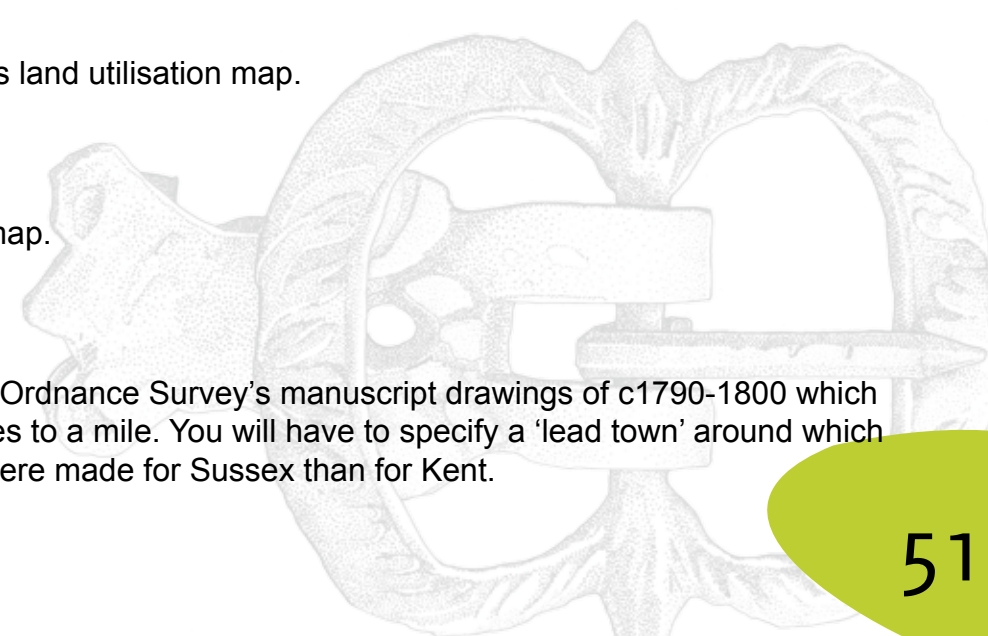
www.npemap.org.uk/

Free, and specialises in the 1921 'New Popular Edition' of the 1" to a mile OS map.

British Library

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/

This free online collection used to be called Collect Britain. It contains all of the Ordnance Survey's manuscript drawings of c1790-1800 which predate their published maps. They are at various scales, generally 3 or 4 inches to a mile. You will have to specify a 'lead town' around which each set of drawings was made, but there is no list of towns. Fewer drawings were made for Sussex than for Kent.



Section 11

– Summaries of the archaeology within the Weald Forest Ridge

It is not possible to be precise about the start and end of some of the conventional divisions of archaeological time, particularly for the earliest periods, so there is overlap between some of the summaries below.

Palaeolithic

c.750,000 – c.11,000 years ago

Dr Matt Pope

Senior Research Fellow (Boxgrove Project), Institute of Archaeology, University College London

The Palaeolithic, or Old Stone Age, period in Britain covers the archaeological record for hunter-gatherer groups from their first appearance around 750,000 years ago up until the end of the last Ice Age around 11,000 years ago. It covers a range of technologies left behind by human species, including *Homo Antecessor*, *Homo Heidelbergensis*, Neanderthals and anatomically modern humans, *Homo Sapiens*.

The Palaeolithic is divided into Lower, Middle and Upper periods. The Upper Palaeolithic starts around 35,000 years ago, when *Homo Sapiens* was the only human species left in Britain.

Given the great age and relatively simple lifestyle of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer groups, virtually the only archaeological finds from this period are stone artefacts. These were used for a range of tasks, including as hunting gear, butchery knives and processing tools.

The Palaeolithic record of the central Weald is both poorly researched and understood. Gathering together the known evidence, it is possible to say that, compared to other areas of the south-east region (the coastal plain, chalk downland and major river valleys), the central Weald is an area with few Palaeolithic finds and no properly investigated evidence of the environment of the time. Partly this is undoubtedly because the evidence simply does not survive.

The area is dominated by sandstone geology which gives rise to ridges of bedrock cut through by deep, ravine valleys. These valleys tend to be narrow and constricted and contain deeply buried layers of sediment deposited by water during the Palaeolithic period. The valleys are unlikely to be used for commercial development, nor are they easily accessible to the mining industry for stone or mineral quarrying, so the buried remains within them are rarely exposed. The plateaus and ridges above the valleys are heavily wooded and are also under-developed by housing, industry and quarrying.

The sediment in these valleys may survive undisturbed from the Palaeolithic period but this has yet to be proved. Where the deep valley sequences have been investigated, they appear to have been flushed through by meltwater when the last ice age ended. They therefore contain little potential for the survival of the oldest deposits. Deposits relating to the end of the last ice age may survive as the lowest deposits at the base of rock outcrops known to contain Mesolithic archaeology (10,000 – 6000 years ago). The potential for the survival of Upper Palaeolithic artefacts has been demonstrated by finds from Stonewall Park, Kent.

The Weald Forest Ridge area has produced some surface finds of Palaeolithic material. These are a handaxe from **Isfield**, and possible handaxes from **Windy Ridge Farm, Hartfield** and from **Heathfield**. Middle Palaeolithic finds are restricted to a flint flake from **Forest Row, Ashdown Forest**. Late Upper Palaeolithic finds were discovered at **New House Farm, High Hurstwood**.

Aside from broad geological associations, these have all been casual finds and were not recovered from secure contexts (in a layer that has not been disturbed). Future research must now determine if the comparatively poor record of Palaeolithic finds in the Weald Forest Ridge landscape is really a result of past human behaviour, in which the central Weald was marginal, or if it is a result of preservation and research history.



Mesolithic

c.9000 – 4000BC

Dr Richard Carter

Associate Tutor, Archaeology, Centre for Community Engagement, University of Sussex

The Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age (c. 11,000 – 6,000 years ago) is the period from the end of the last ice age until the beginnings of farming. In northwest Europe around 12,000 years ago most of the ice had melted and this era is characterised by a changing environment as sea levels and temperatures rose, creating a wetter and milder climate. Approximately 8500 years ago Britain became separated from mainland Europe with the flooding of the North Sea, English Channel and slightly earlier, the Irish Sea. Mean summer temperatures 6000 – 8000 years ago were 18 to 20 degrees centigrade. Open conifer forests of pine, birch and juniper were replaced by mixed deciduous woodland of lime, elm, oak, alder, hazel and later, ash. The coastline length increased dramatically creating rich habitats and the colonisation of a diverse array of terrestrial and aquatic animal species. The late Mesolithic hunter-gatherers who inhabited this landscape would have been very aware of this rapidly evolving environment, as sea-levels rose by up to 3.3cm per year. In other parts of NW Europe settlements have been tracked moving inland along peninsulas to accommodate these rises.

People relied on hunting, fishing and gathering in this topographically diverse environment. There were no longer the large herds of reindeer and horse found on the open ice age plains to track and hunt. Individual animals were now targeted, such as red deer, roe deer and wild pig, in the gradually expanding forests. Mesolithic people are likely to have used the many watercourses to navigate their way through this landscape, occasionally creating clearings to attract large herbivores for the purposes of hunting.

This new hunting strategy meant a change in the toolkits and weapons used to kill and process prey. Very small flint flakes known as microliths are characteristic of the Mesolithic era. Narrow blades, for example, were used as barbs in arrows and as saws. Other blades were possibly used for skinning, awls were made for boring holes in hides and wood and scrapers for wood and antler working and food preparation. Bands of people were still relatively mobile at this time and moved seasonally through the environment exploiting resources as and when they became available. Some groups may have made regular residential moves whilst others used more permanent base camps to extract specific resources at temporary, possibly overnight, camps.

It is likely that many of the Mesolithic sites found on the Sussex High Weald are these specialist camps. The acid soils of the Weald mean that generally only flint artefacts survive. There have been many isolated finds on the Weald Forest Ridge, but where targeted excavations have taken place often thousands of pieces of struck flint are found. The source of these flints is likely to be the North or South Downs.

This archaeology can be found anywhere between a few metres below present ground level or on the surface, depending on surrounding topography and biological factors.

Excavations at **High Rocks near Tunbridge Wells** and at **Hermitage Rocks, High Hurstwood**, in the 1950s and 70s respectively, revealed many microliths and other flint tools together with hearths, suggesting temporary short-stay hunting camps. Quantities of struck Mesolithic and Neolithic flint have also been recovered from outcrops in **Tilgate Wood, Balcombe** during the 1930s and more recently at **Rocks Wood, nr Lye Green** in 1982 and **Eridge** in 1999.

The most recent investigations of prehistoric human presence on the Weald Forest Ridge has been at **Chiddinglye Woods Rocks, near West Hoathly**.

Excavations at Chiddinglye Woods Rocks, West Hoathly, 2009



Earlier excavations by Ian Hannah in 1931 had identified 'five probable Mesolithic rock shelter sites' at the complex from surface or very shallow finds. Excavations in 2009 by Karine LeHe-garat from the University of Sussex revealed flint artefacts, charcoal, pottery and hazelnut fragments. Unfortunately the Mesolithic flintwork was mixed with the later Neolithic pottery throughout the 1.5 metre trench. Apart from **Hermitage Rocks**, none of the finds from these excavations were found *in situ*, i.e. there has been some movement from where they were originally deposited. It is reasonable to suggest that most, if not all, sandstone outcrops along the Weald Forest Ridge have the potential to yield similar evidence of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer activity.



Engraving of unknown date at Chiddinglye Woods Rocks, 2011

Despite the sporadic nature of Mesolithic research along the Weald Forest Ridge, renewed interest nationally in Mesolithic studies has enabled local archaeologists to better understand hunter-gatherer behaviour in this area. It is likely that these sites were seasonal hunting camps visited temporarily by bands of people travelling inland either from coastal or Low Weald sites. Alternatively these highly visible locations may have acted as 'markers' in a very wooded landscape and operated as aggregation sites or even 'signposts' as a way of navigating across the Weald.

Comparisons with sandstone outcrops at Fontainebleau in France have revealed considerable amounts of Mesolithic/Neolithic rock engravings beneath overhangs. There is no reason that this should be restricted to the continent and the potential exists for discovering similar engravings at Weald Forest Ridge sites. Globally these sites are extremely rare and a finite resource; their role in how our ancestors lived and moved about the landscape should not be under-estimated.



Neolithic

c.4500 – 2500BC

Professor Peter Drewett

Emeritus Professor of Archaeology, University of Sussex

The Neolithic (c. 4500 – 2500BC) sees the arrival of agriculture into Britain, together with the introduction of pottery and polished stone tools. For many years archaeologists have been uncertain whether the change to the Neolithic involved large scale migrations from Europe or the introduction of crops, domestication of animals and new ideas through trade and other forms of contact. It is now becoming evident that there are greater similarities than formerly thought between pottery, stone tools and particularly animal bones in the Middle Neolithic of northern France and the Early Neolithic of Britain. The sudden increase in population and dramatic economic and social change at the start of the Neolithic is now seen by a number of archaeologists as best explained by a large influx of farmers from mainland Europe.

The Neolithic on the South Downs of Sussex is dominated by communal monuments, the causewayed enclosures (large ditched enclosures with many gaps in the banks and ditches), long barrows (mounds of chalk covering the bones of ancestors) and flint mines together with finds of pottery, spreads of flint tools and waste, pits and polished stone tools. If migrants entered Sussex, the Downs are where they are most likely to have settled and farmed first. Early farming was, however, always a somewhat precarious way to provide food, involving battles with the weather, pests and soil erosion. Hunting and collecting wild plants remained important ways to obtain food throughout the Neolithic.

As far as we are currently aware the Weald Forest Ridge has no communal monuments in the form of causewayed enclosures or long barrows. There are, however, a number of finds of stone axes, spreads of flint tools and waste and a little Neolithic pottery. It is likely that hunting and ways of collecting wild food that developed in the Mesolithic continued throughout the Neolithic. Indeed both the rock shelters with Neolithic pottery finds and most of the flint tool scatters are sites also occupied in the Mesolithic. Both the rock shelter sites and the streamside flint scatters could be part of a long established strategy for observing and hunting migrating herds of animals.

The Neolithic sites in the Weald Forest Ridge fall into four main categories. Firstly, there are occupied rock shelters in which flint-work and pottery have been found. Secondly, there are concentrations of flint tools and waste flakes generally found as surface scatters. These, by Downland standards, are usually quite small, consisting mainly of waste flakes but occasionally with arrowheads, axes, scrapers, and blades. Thirdly, there are individual finds of stone axes and arrowheads. Finally, there are possible track-ways which, if originally hunting paths, probably date back to the Mesolithic.

The rock shelters at **High Rocks** were excavated by James Money but were found to have been disturbed, with late Mesolithic flintwork in the same layers as Neolithic pottery. Pollen from plants which grew near the rock shelters in the past indicated continuous woodland conditions dominated by oak but with some birch, yew, hazel and beech. No evidence of clearance was found. Round based Neolithic pottery from the site was dated to about 3320 BC. Two leaf shaped arrowheads and a scraper were also found. This low density of pottery and flintwork suggests a temporary woodland hunting camp.

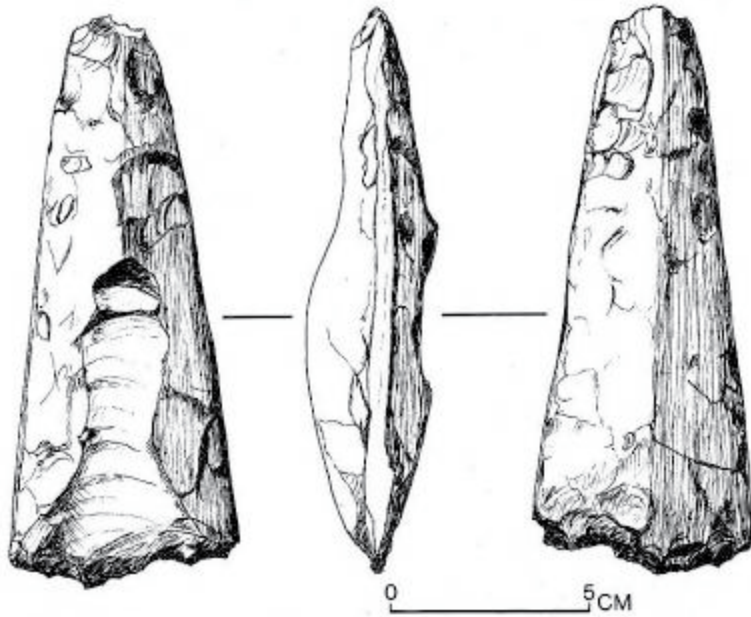


High Rocks rock shelters, Tunbridge Wells, occupied in the Neolithic

A recent (2009) excavation of a rock shelter at **West Hoathly (Chiddinglye Wood Rocks)** by Karine Le Hegarat produced a somewhat similar picture. Two test pits again indicated some disturbance but located Early Neolithic and later Neolithic Peterborough Ware pottery together with three flakes from polished stone tools and a leaf shaped arrowhead.

Although surface scatters of Neolithic flint work have been found widely distributed across the Weald Forest Ridge the concentration in the **Forest Row** area is notable, being discovered by C.F.Tebbutt during an eight year period, 1966-74. This survey was particularly important as it suggests that similar densities of flintwork could be found across the Ridge. C.F.Tebbutt found some thirty sites with Neolithic flintwork, with the highest densities being along the tributaries of the Medway River at **Brambletye Farm**. All these scatters of flint tools and waste flakes are fairly small but are important in their location. Tebbutt noted they had long views "needed to watch wild animals and domestic herds". One suspects that these open sites functioned with the rock shelters in hunting strategies.

The possible Neolithic trackways through the Weald Forest Ridge, together with a wide but low density distribution of axes and arrowheads, the use of rock shelters and scatters of flint tools and waste flakes in riverside locations with long views, all suggest a continuation of Mesolithic hunting practices throughout the Neolithic.



Neolithic polished stone axe from Hand Cross (drawn by Hilda Holden)



Bronze Age

2500 – 700BC

David Lea

Researched Bronze Age activity in the Weald for his MA at the Centre for Community Engagement, University of Sussex

The Bronze Age spans the period 2300 – 700BC and is defined by the first use of metallic implements and jewellery. The first metals introduced to this country were copper and gold, and the widespread availability of metal tools was gradual, as demonstrated by the continued production of finely crafted flint items such as the Barbed and Tanged arrowhead (although the quality of the worked flint drops off remarkably with the greater availability of metal). The effectiveness of the copper tools was improved by the addition of tin and other metals to the copper to make bronze; the comparatively short period prior to the introduction of alloys is increasingly being referred to as the Chalcolithic, or Copper Age. What do we know of the people during the Bronze Age along the Weald Forest Ridge? The Weald is often regarded as an impenetrable forest, but this is far from the truth, since from Neolithic times through into the Bronze Age, woodland clearance took place along the Forest Ridge, providing areas for both hunting and later farming.



View from the barrow at Four Counties car park on Ashdown Forest

The trails of discarded Barbed and Tanged arrowheads clearly demonstrate the presence of Early Bronze Age people along the Weald Forest Ridge, indicating the continued practice of hunting parties entering the Forest Ridge from the North. The largest trail runs from the Redhill/Reigate area southwards onto the Ridge south of Crawley. It spreads along the western third of the Ridge where a number of barrows are located, although little evidence of these barrows can be seen today. The other trail of arrowheads leads from Tunbridge Wells to the Ashdown Forest where there is another concentration of Early Bronze Age activity.

The most visible features in the landscape are the round barrows and the field systems that are the result of permanent farming practices. The barrows had many functions; their construction shows that display was an important feature, for instance, the barrow near **Lower Beeding (Money Mound)** was formed from layers of turf and coloured sand. Apart from providing a dramatic focal point in the landscape, views from the barrows can be equally spectacular. The barrow groups on the south facing slopes near **Duddleswell** have clear views of the South Downs.

The barrow at the **Four Counties car park**, on a high point in the Ashdown Forest, has views of the South Downs and also striking views of the North Downs. Many barrows are located close to water sources, including those in the Ashdown Forest, which may indicate a ritual significance. The most accessible barrow to visit is close to the **Four Counties car park**, marked by a solitary tree.

A change to burial practices occurred around 1400BC, when cremation became the primary funerary practice. The ashes were contained in either a bag or ceramic urn and then interred in cemeteries, which have left no visible mark on the landscape.

Settled farming practices became more common with the introduction of long-term field systems. Some of these are still visible today and may have had an associated settlement close by. Associated with the barrow groups on the south facing slopes near Duddleswell lie the remnants of prehistoric lynchets (field boundaries) of a type consistent with the Bronze Age; further lynchets lie adjacent to the barrow at the **Four Counties car park**. Whether these fields indicate a permanent settlement or seasonal use is unclear as no settlement sites are identifiable along the Forest Ridge.

The metalwork found along the Forest Ridge comprises almost exclusively bronze axe heads, their age range spanning the entire period. The majority of the axes come from around the two areas mentioned above, from Horsham to Handcross and the Ashdown Forest including Crowborough. Around **Handcross** two hoards of bronze metal have been found, one of which contained bracelets of a type (Sussex Loops) believed to have been produced near Brighton. This, together with a further example having been found on the North Downs, would seem to indicate that Handcross formed a transit point for communication across the Weald.



Examples of the finds found along the Weald Forest Ridge are on display in Tunbridge Wells Museum, and other finds form part of the collections of the British Museum, Horsham Museum, Lewes Museum and Brighton Museum.

Flint Barbed & Tanged Arrowhead, found in Newlands Road, Tunbridge Wells and on display in Tunbridge Wells Museum

Iron Age

800BC – AD43

John Manley, Honorary Research Fellow, Sussex Archaeological Society

The Iron Age is conventionally dated from approximately 700BC to the Roman annexation of southern Britain in AD43. As the name suggests, the diagnostic marker of this period is the appearance of iron, either in tools or weapons, although the amount of iron in circulation must always have been small. Not surprisingly, given that the Weald was a source of iron in subsequent periods, the first evidence for the smelting of iron can be found on the Weald Forest Ridge towards the end of the Iron Age. The other major site type, of which there are five examples in, or very near the Weald Forest Ridge, are hillforts. There are also a few stray finds of Iron Age date, such as coins. Taken together, this meagre evidence does not suggest intensive settlement, but it is from this we have to build a picture of Iron Age activity in the Weald Forest Ridge.

The five hillforts in the Weald Forest Ridge are, from west to east, Philpots (West Sussex), Garden Hill, High Rocks, Saxonbury (East Sussex) and Castle Hill (Kent). These are just a few examples of the approximately 3,300 hillforts in the rest of the UK (excluding Northern Ireland). Although called 'hillforts' by archaeologists, this category of site includes a wide range of earthwork enclosures, of different shapes and sizes. There has been much discussion of hillforts, with earlier explanations of them as essentially fortified Iron Age towns giving way to the idea of some of them as 'central places' controlling surrounding territories. More recent notions see them as intermittently occupied places where a variety of seasonal and communal activities, including rituals, took place. Inevitably the Weald Forest Ridge hillforts have been associated with the 'control' of iron-working. The reality is that there is no 'one size fits all' explanation for hillforts, and each needs to be considered on its own particular evidence.

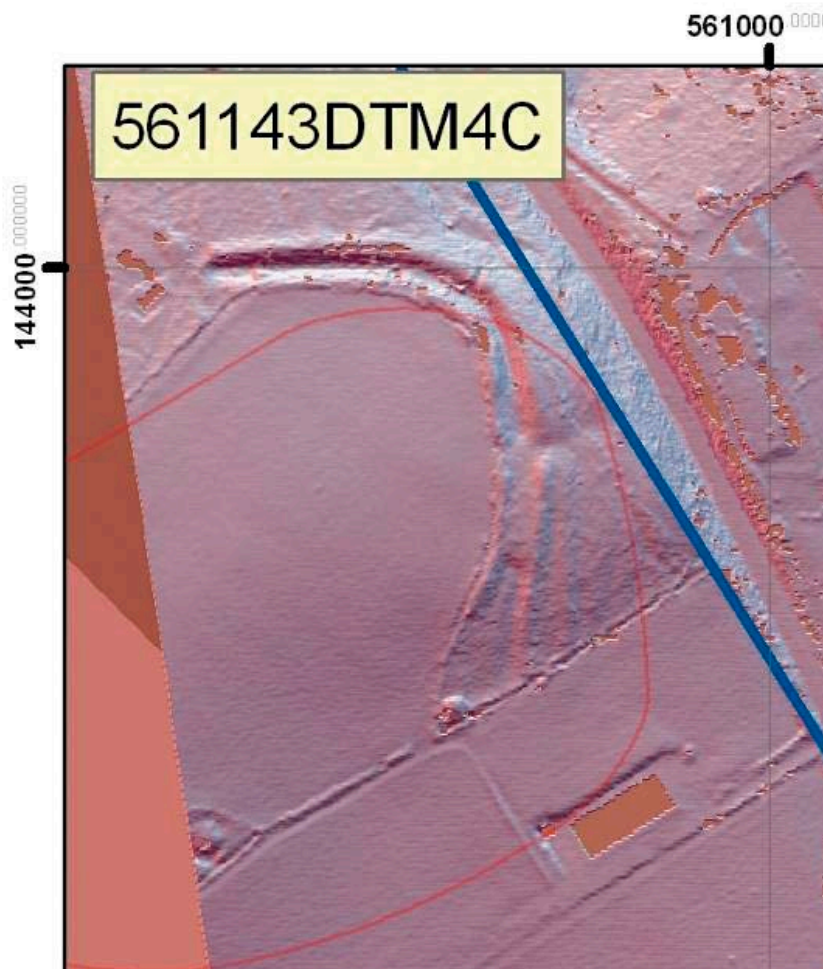
The evidence from our five hillforts is as follows:

Philpots, (west of) West Hoathly: Probably dates to the Late Iron Age, although there is no direct dating from the site itself. Situated on a promontory of Tunbridge Wells sand, it is enclosed by a bank and ditch on its north-eastern perimeter. Two entrances have been noted. The most striking feature of the site is that the promontory at its south-eastern end is formed by impressive rock outcrops, which contain the celebrated 'Great Upon Little' limestone formation, a place of curiosity since at least the 17th century, and no doubt earlier.

Garden Hill, (south-west of) Coleman's Hatch: The most extensively excavated of our hillforts. The Iron Age occupation featured two timber round-houses with evidence for both roasting and smelting of iron ores. Interestingly, in the Roman period, occupation continued and included a badly built bath-house. Perhaps this represents an attempt by some high status indigenous inhabitants to display their sense of what it meant to be 'Roman' (see also next section).

High Rocks, (west of) Tunbridge Wells: Essentially a promontory hillfort, with a principal entrance through enclosing banks and ditches on the south-eastern side. The site is most noteworthy because, like Philpots, it features spectacularly weathered sandstone outcrops, on its north-western perimeter, and it is hard to escape the notion that the hillfort was placed here because of these rocks. Today, the rocks are used as the backdrop for wedding photographs. In the Iron Age equally irregular or seasonal communal activities may have taken place there.

Saxonbury, (south of) Tunbridge Wells: Essentially a 'contour hillfort', where the enclosing bank and ditch follows a contour around a rounded hill-top. Excavations in the late 1920s examined the encircling bank. Later occupation is indicated by a 1st century AD Roman coin, and a Gothic folly (tower) was erected in the early 19th century.



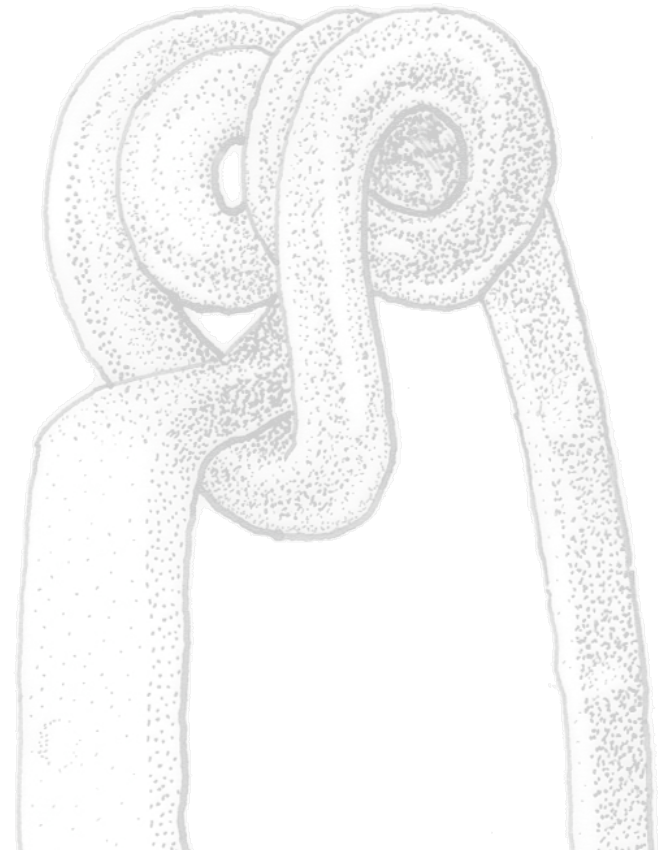
Castle Hill, (south of) Tonbridge: Two small hillforts, the south-western one may have succeeded the north-eastern one, dating to the Middle Iron Age. Much has been made of their 'strategic' siting, controlling the north-west/south-east route followed by the modern A21, and the upper reaches of the Medway.

The defences of Castle Hill, shown on a LiDAR image. The A21 runs diagonally on the site's eastern side.

Iron-working sites: There are a few locations which have produced definitive evidence of iron-working in or near the Weald Forest Ridge. These include the already noted **Garden Hill**, two sites near **Rotherfield**, one **near Maresfield** and also at **Eridge Park, south of Saxonbury**.

In the Iron Age, as in other periods, there was no easy separation of ritual from everyday activities; the sacred and the secular threaded through everything that local people did. It is, therefore, possible to make a case for some of these sites, especially High Rocks and Philpots, as predominantly locations for 'special gatherings', whether seasonal events related to the agricultural calendar, or ritual activities associated with the worship of the ancestors, or rites of passage (coming of age ceremonies) took place. All such gatherings were no doubt enhanced by the extravagant and challenging presence of unusual rock formations.

In similar vein, there is plenty of evidence from around the world for the magical aura afforded to iron-workers and smiths. Obtaining small amounts of workable iron by the transformation of solid ores into molten material through the application of heat was likely to be viewed as a mystical process by the wary uninitiated. It also produced a valuable commodity for use or exchange. Daily lives on the wooded Weald Forest Ridge, whether occupied seasonally during the drier summer months, or all-year-round, were therefore peppered with ritual observances as much as governed by the necessary activities of food and tool procurement, and shelter.



Roman

AD43 – 410

David Rudling, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, Centre for Community Engagement, University of Sussex

Introduction

The coming of the Romans to Britain in AD43 resulted in major changes in the social and economic environments. The results of these changes, together with others in technology, make the period of the Roman occupation one of the most distinctive times in the history of south-east England. Thus, peace under the Romans meant that defended settlements such as hill-forts were no longer necessary, whilst new economic demands, such as military and urban markets, resulted in a massive and early expansion of the Wealden iron industry. Indeed, knowledge about the indigenous iron industry in our area and the potential to develop it may have been one of the main attractions to the Romans of colonising Britain.

The size and importance of the Roman Wealden iron industry, together with the absence of any associated towns, has led to the suggestion that the region may have formed an Imperial Estate, restricting civilian exploitation of the area. This Estate perhaps comprised two main groups of iron-works, a western 'private' zone and an eastern area linked to the Roman fleet (the Classis Britannica). In addition, the Weald Forest Ridge and other areas of the Weald probably acted as a boundary between the tribal territories of the Regni and the Cantiaci (or Cantii) who respectively occupied the modern counties of Sussex and Kent and had their capitals at Chichester and Canterbury.

Roads

The Weald Forest Ridge is crossed by two major north-south orientated Roman roads. Both of these roads linked nearby iron-works to London to the north and to Hassocks and Barcombe respectively to the south, where they intersected with the Greensand Way which runs east-west just to the north of the South Downs.

At **Barcombe** both roads also intersect with the tidal river Ouse which was probably used to transport iron by boat to the coast. A part of the London-Barcombe road at **Holtye**, which was surfaced with iron slag, is available for public viewing. Other unexcavated parts of this road may be observed on **Camp Hill, Ashdown Forest**. Other roads and tracks would have linked various iron-works to the roads, an example being a road from **Galleypot Street to Wych Cross** which probably served the site at **Garden Hill**.



Garden Hill, Hartfield: Roman bath house. Hot room left, cold room right, cold plunge bath foreground.



Iron-works

The many iron-works of the Weald Forest Ridge form parts of the 'western private zone' referred to above. They lack evidence (ie clay tiles stamped CL BR) linking them with the Classis Britannica. Some of these sites were very large, such as that at Bardown just to the south-east of the Forest Ridge, although here the discovery of tiles stamped CL BR indicates that this site was associated with the Classis Britannica. Such sites comprised areas of iron production: ore quarry pits (as also at **Tugmoreshaw, Hartfield**), furnaces for roasting the ore, smelting furnaces (or bloomeries), forging hearths and slag/rubbish heaps, minor roads and tracks, and residential areas. At the Iron Age hillfort site at **Garden Hill, Hartfield**, some iron workers had access in the second century to a rectangular timber building and an attached masonry bath-house. The large iron works at **Great Cansiron, Hartfield** may also have included a bath-house as nearby was a tiler which produced a wide range of tile types including those needed for a Roman under-floor heating system /baths. A major activity associated with the iron industry would have been woodland management to produce fuel and charcoal.

Cansiron Farm, Hartfield: Roman tile kiln viewed from firing chamber, with stoke -hole and furnace at top of image (scales: 2m long).

Rural settlements

Whilst Roman iron-works are fairly common discoveries in the Weald Forest Ridge, evidence for settlements and sites not associated with the iron industry are rare. Based upon available evidence it appears that there is a general absence in our survey area of rural villas, native farmsteads and field systems. The nearest traces of possible agricultural activity lie to the south with the discovery of corn-drying ovens at **Uckfield** and **Burgess Hill**. Other activities may have included forestry, charcoal making, hunting and perhaps woodland pasture for cattle and pigs.

The end of Roman activity

Whilst for unknown reasons the eastern group of iron-works had largely been abandoned by the mid-3rd century AD, the western group of such sites continued longer, with some sites continuing into or throughout the 4th century.

Early Middle Ages (Anglo-Saxon)

c.410 – 1066

Dr Mark Gardiner

Senior Lecturer in Medieval archaeology, Queen's University Belfast

The Early Middle Ages used to be called the Dark Ages, because the 'light of Roman civilization' vanished from Britain. We now see it as a period with a pattern of life quite different from the Roman era, but not necessarily worse. However, when we come to examine the remains from this period in the Weald, it really is a dark age for another reason: there is very little archaeological evidence in this area. Most of the archaeological remains have been found beyond the Weald, on the chalk downland and in the coastal areas of Kent and Sussex. It is much less clear what was happening on the Forest Ridge in the period between the end of Roman rule and the Norman settlement.

The population in Britain went into a steep decline during the late Roman period, a fall that continued in the 5th and 6th centuries. Farmland in the Weald, with its heavy, difficult-to-work soils, was abandoned in favour of the lighter land elsewhere. Scrub grew up and then developed into woodland in the area of the former fields. Traces of such fields have been found beyond the Forest Ridge area in woodland in Kent. The Weald did not develop into a tangled and impenetrable woodland as earlier writers imagined. It would have had areas of dense, mature wood, but in other parts there would have been more open land, particularly on the Forest Ridge where the soils were poor. The *feld* element, in the place-names Hartfield, Maresfield, Mayfield and Rotherfield, means 'open country', in contrast to the surrounding woodland. Frant means 'the place overgrown with bracken', again suggesting more open land. Grazing by deer, and also by domestic pigs and cattle, helped to limit the development of young trees and ensure that the woodland remained open.

Archaeological evidence from Sussex suggests that the Weald was used for its various resources by 5th- and 6th-century communities in the south of the county. Clay was dug and pottery made using the abundant fuel from the woods. Stone was chosen for millstones. It was perhaps in the woods of the Weald that the red deer, the bones of which were found in settlements such as **Bishopstone (near Newhaven)** and **Botolphs (near Steyning)**, were hunted. These early post-Roman communities may have worked the ore in the Weald to make iron. However, the only certain archaeological evidence is a little later and comes from a site at **Millbrook on Ashdown Forest**. A furnace and forge was found dating to the 9th century. It indicates that iron production was on a very small scale. Pottery found on the iron-working site provides a link with communities on or near the North or South Downs, since it incorporated flint grits found in those areas.

The most important resource of the Weald was the woodland pasture it offered. Much of the landscape in Surrey to the north, Kent to the north-east and Sussex to the south is still notable for its lines of nearly parallel roads and tracks. Animals were driven along these into the Weald

during the summer months to graze. Yet, although these trackways occur just beyond the Forest Ridge area, there is no parallel network on the high ridges themselves. The conclusion seems to be unmistakable. The poor soils of the Forest Ridge were avoided in preference to better land to the north and south.

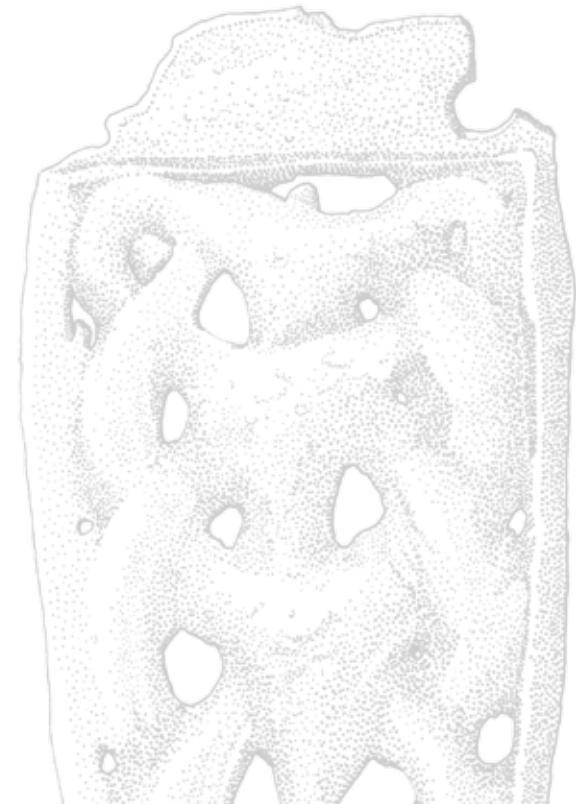
The summer animal pastures in due course became permanently occupied farmsteads. Yet the high ridges continued to be one of the last areas in the Weald to be widely settled. There are two strands of evidence which support this conclusion:

- Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, exceptionally records some places in the East Grinstead area because of a territorial reorganization. None of these places were on the high ridges.
- Ashdown Forest and St Leonard's Forest were used for hunting in the later medieval period precisely because there was so little farmland there. They remained largely unsettled until the thirteenth century.

By the 11th century, as the population began to increase again, settlement developed to the north and south of the Forest Ridge and was beginning to encroach upon the higher land itself. The splendid church at **Worth** on the outskirts of Crawley, probably dating to the second half of the 11th century, is a clear testament to a well-established community in the heart of the Weald. It must stand for other churches in the area which were subsequently enlarged and re-built. All evidence for their early origins has now been lost.



Worth Church



Late Middle Ages (Medieval)

1066 – 1500

Dr Mark Gardiner

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Between 1086 – the date of Domesday Book – and 1300, the population of England increased three-fold. The poor soils of the Forest Ridge may have been largely avoided when there was better land available but, as the pressure on resources grew, it began to be more intensively exploited. Even so, the Forest Ridge included some of the largest unenclosed areas of 'waste' or uncultivated land in the south-east England. This made it particularly attractive, both for hunting and for the common grazing of the animals of peasants from the surrounding district.

The term 'forest' found in St Leonard's Forest, Ashdown Forest and Waterdown Forest refers not to woodland, but is applied to areas outside (*foris* in Latin) the common law and managed for game. Rather confusingly, none of these places was strictly speaking a forest, since only the king could create such an area. However, the feudal lords of the rapes – the five or six districts in which Sussex was divided – exercised exceptional lordly powers and formed forest-like districts in these upland areas. The forests were established in order to conserve the deer for hunting and for woodland to provide them with cover or 'vert'. In order to do this, the establishment or 'assarting' of farmland was strictly regulated.

Few archaeological remains survive from the period of hunting and grazing in the 11th and 12th centuries. We are even uncertain of the location of the hunting lodges which must have been used by the lords of the rapes, though it is probable that there was one at **Maresfield** and less certainly at **King's Standing**. The clearest archaeological evidence of the use of the area for hunting are the long boundary banks, once topped with a wood fence or pale, which were established, probably in the 13th century, to keep the deer from escaping. These separated the area for hunting and grazing and from the farmland beyond. Entrance to the forests through the boundary banks was through gates or 'hatches', some of the names of which still survive.

The other clearly visible evidence for hunting in the forests is not related to large game animals, but to rabbits. These are the artificial mounds known as pillow mounds, constructed for rabbits to burrow. Medieval rabbits do not seem to have been as robust as their modern counterparts and not only had to be provided with a bank into which to dig, but sometimes even with stone-lined burrows within the mounds. The mounds may belong to the 17th century when many rabbit warrens were created on the Forest Ridge. However, there had been rabbits in **Bewbush Park** in St Leonard's Forest in the late 13th century, and it is likely that some of the mounds are late medieval in date. Examples of these mounds have been found in **Worth Forest**, on **Marden's Hill near Crowborough**, south of **Hindleap Farm near Wych Cross** as well as many other places.

The most impressive remains of iron-working belong to the 16th century, when water-powered blast furnaces were introduced into the Weald. The scale of this later work has often over-shadowed the appreciation of the earlier, medieval bloomery sites. Bloomery iron-working uses a much lower temperature. Field-work in the Forest Ridge area has shown that there are many bloomery sites, identifiable by the presence of iron slag, often revealed at the edge of streams or where the ground has been disturbed. One of the outstanding questions for archaeologists is the scale of the late-medieval iron industry. The most extensively excavated site at **Minepit Wood**, north of Crowborough, had a timber-framed building of the 14th or 15th century with a smelting furnace. The industrial building was comparable in size to a substantial house and therefore represents considerable investment. That site, at least, was certainly not operated by peasant smallholders.

The sites of houses of the late medieval period are difficult to trace. Some still remain as timber-framed standing buildings, but the sites of most have been lost, often abandoned as the population contracted in the later 14th and 15th centuries. The houses of the wealthy gentry were commonly surrounded by moats, a sign of their status as much as a serious defence against assault. The sites of these are more conspicuous.

Close to the 17th-century ruins of the great house at **Brambletye in Ashurstwood** is the moat which was the earlier site of the manor house held by the St Clere family. In the same way, **Gravetye Manor** seems to have superseded the moated site known as Little Gravetye. The sites of the houses of peasants are more difficult to locate, often marked only by scatters of pottery which are turned up by the plough. Houses at **Lines Farm near Parrock in Hartfield** were discovered in this way, but many more still remain to be found.



*Map of the manor of Rotherfield
Ref ACC 363/111, East Sussex Record Office*



Post-medieval and Modern

1500 – present day

Luke Barber

Research Officer, Sussex Archaeological Society

Introduction

Between 1500 and 1950 there was a dramatic increase in the use of the area for a number of different activities. Most of the archaeological remains you can see today are from this period and the variety is quite astounding. Although now peaceful, during the 16th to 18th centuries the area was an industrialised rural landscape with many more people creating a lot of noise and pollution. Even in the 19th century some industries continued but improvements in agriculture and communications brought changes, including an increasing number of landscaped gardens. This quiet idyll was to be punctuated by military activity in the 20th century.

Industry

Mining and Quarrying

Iron ore extraction increased during the 16th to 18th centuries to feed the expanding iron industry. Many circular depressions still visible today mark the site of small minepits where ore was extracted (eg **Minepit Wood at Herons Ghyll**). But it was not just iron ore that was extracted. There are numerous pits and quarries of varying sizes all over the area. These were dug to extract sandstone, limestone, marl (a 'chalky' soil), sand/gravels and clay for a variety of uses including building, road construction, agriculture and ceramic production. Most are difficult to date, but 19th century maps clearly show many were still in use at this time.

The Iron Industry

Reliance on water to power the furnaces and forges meant ironworks had to be located in the stream valleys (see The Wealden Iron Industry). Extensive earthworks often survive of the dams (bays) to create mill ponds, various spillways and leats to control the water. As the ironworks required power for a considerable period of time many sites constructed further ponds (pen ponds) upstream of the main mill pond to ensure they would not run out of water.

The area has a number of blast furnace sites, often only marked by a bay and scatters of slag on the surface. However, excavations at **Maynards Gate** and **Pippingford** furnaces have shown substantial remains often survive. Both these sites were involved with the production of cannon and the remains of a gun-casting pit and boring mill (for boring out the centre of the cannon) were located. The forge sites are as numerous as the furnaces, but only the 16th/17th century example at **Ardingly** has been excavated.

Ceramic Industry

The clay, sand and wood in the area provided the essential raw materials for the production of bricks, tiles and pottery. Pottery was made at a number of sites including the excavated 16th century kiln at Lower Parrock, Hartfield. Brick and tile would have been made in clamp kilns during the 16th and 17th centuries. They were needed for the upgrading of medieval timber-framed buildings as well as the construction of new houses. Such kilns often leave slight remains: none have yet been identified. The industry expanded during the 18th and 19th centuries, with numerous brickyards appearing across the area. These contained permanent kilns and other structures, such as pug-mills for mixing the clay, and are evident on both historic maps and as surviving remains. Although the number of sites dramatically decreased during the 20th century, bricks/tiles are still made in the area today.

Woodland management

Woodland was essential in providing timber for construction and charcoal for fuel. The latter was crucial for the iron industry which used vast quantities. As such, woodland was a precious resource that was managed. Areas were marked out with boundary banks and ditches, with coppiced woods for charcoal production being commonplace. Charcoal burners worked to convert the wood to charcoal using clamp kilns. These were often positioned on platforms terraced into the slope, many of which are still visible. Timber for the construction of houses, ships and smaller items was also in demand and trees were often sawn into planks by pairs of men using sawpits. One man worked the saw from above, while the other was underneath in the rectangular pit. Sawpits are also quite common earthworks within the area today (eg three at **Old Lodge Nature Reserve, Hartfield**). Although the demand for timber dropped in the 20th century it was again used extensively during the Great War when vast quantities were needed to build army camps and trenches.

Other Industries

Although cloth manufacture was a major industry in the Weald during the 16th to 18th centuries, the main area of production lay to the east of the High Weald. Despite this, some remains of the industry are present in the Forest Ridge, most notably the early 18th century water-powered fulling mill excavated at **Ardingly**. This site re-used that of the earlier iron forge. Corn-milling was common in the area, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries. Most mills were water-powered, often utilising old ironworks, but there was also a scatter of windmills. Some mills survive still, including the watermill at **Sheffield Mill, Fletchling** and the early 19th century windmill at **Nutley**.

Agriculture

Although the area does not contain good soils, agriculture was always undertaken. During the 16th and 17th centuries farms were small and many smallholdings were worked by individuals also employed in other industries. Larger farms were often involved with pastoralism and a number of earthwork enclosures in the area may relate to this (eg a 100 x 90m example at **Danehill**). These farms developed through the 18th and 19th centuries with more land being cleared/enclosed and improved. Such improvements included better drainage and the spreading of lime (or marl) on the soil to make it less acidic. The latter involved the burning of chalk or locally excavated limestone in limekilns, a number of which still remain (eg **Ann Wood, Maresfield**). The area still possesses a number of farms with 18th and 19th century barns, cattle sheds and other buildings.

The cultivation of hops increased during the 17th century and this gave rise to the oasthouse, used for drying the hops; a number of 18th/19th century examples survive in the area. The hop industry declined during the 20th century. Another common activity between the 16th and 18th centuries was the continued construction of pillow mounds (artificial rabbit warrens). These mounds, sometimes over 100m long, 7m wide and 1-2m high, are common in the area, with over 35 known examples. The rabbits provided both meat and fur to local and regional markets.

Domestic Houses and Gardens

The Forest Ridge is fortunate in having surviving houses (or remains of) spanning the entire period. These demonstrate a variety of social levels and construction techniques. The largest houses, usually of the landed gentry, include examples at **Old Buckhurst** (built prior to 1528) and **Wakehurst Place** (built 1590). There are also a number of 16th and 17th century houses built by the ironmasters including **The Moat, Gravetye Manor Park** (a timber-framed example built c 1500) and **Lightlands, Frant** (a stone example built c. 1541). The remaining early houses of substance are normally those associated with yeoman farmers.

Between the later 18th and early 20th centuries there was an increase in the number of new large houses being built, or old ones being remodelled. These include well-known examples, such as the later 18th century Gothic mansion at **Sheffield Park**, as well as lesser known houses built by families who had made their wealth in industry and commerce during the 19th century. These individuals could create a retreat for themselves in the country while still having good links to London by the spreading railway system.

Gardens and landscaped parks were usually associated with the larger houses with smaller formal designs giving way to 'enhanced' sweeping natural views during the 18th century. Fine examples are present at Sheffield Park Gardens though here, as frequently elsewhere, later changes have sometimes obscured the earliest designs. Numerous new gardens and/or redesigns of earlier ones were created during the later 19th and early 20th centuries including those at **Rotherfield Hall, Wakehurst Place, Nymans** and **Standen Gardens**.

Less well represented are the early timber houses of the poorer people. This is mainly the result of them not being worth adapting for later use. Workers houses of the 18th and 19th centuries, built of the more durable brick, are more common. Ironworkers and charcoal burners would have lived by their remote furnaces and kilns for considerable periods of time in temporary camps. These may be visible at some sites as terraces and scatters of pottery but none have yet been excavated.

Communications

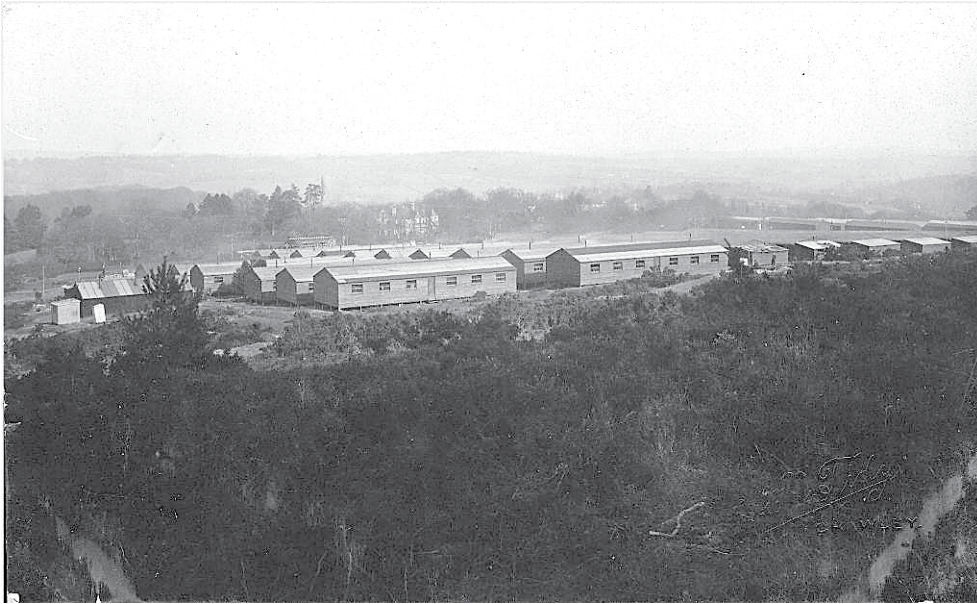
The area was notorious for its poor roads that were often impassable during winter. Minor tracks served the managed woodlands, farms and ironworks, often with stone or brick culverts/bridges carrying them over the numerous streams. Traffic quickly eroded these tracks to form hollow ways, many of which can still be seen. Slag waste and quarried gravels were put down to improve their surfaces but water transport was always easier if it was available. Serious improvements to the roads only began during the 18th and 19th centuries by which time the iron industry was on the decline.

During the 19th century the railways spread out from London and in their attempt to reach the ports and seaside resorts, crossed the Weald. This allowed easier movement of goods and people. Settlements expanded as people could now commute to the capital and wealthy families established new prestigious houses and gardens. The retraction of the network in the later 20th century has left a number of disused branch lines with their associated landscaping and structures.

Military

The area has seen sporadic but intense periods of military use, most of which has left traces in the landscape. Perhaps the earliest activity relates to the Napoleonic camps of the late 18th century. Little now remains but rows of circular mounds, the remains of field kitchens, still visible at some sites including **Broadwater Forest, Frant** and **Camp Hill, Maresfield**.

There is far more evidence from the Great War. Soldiers were accommodated in tented and hutted camps at **Forest Row** and **Crowborough**, the latter still in use by the army. The training given to recruits included digging practice trenches similar to those they would be fighting in when they went to the war. These now infilled trenches can still be seen in many areas as sinuous, zig-zag and crenellated lines of depressions. Unsurprisingly, some of the most extensive are close to Crowborough camp. Shooting practice was also undertaken on a number of firing ranges, some of which were of 19th century origin. Many of these sites survive today, with low wide banks marking the firing positions and taller steeper banks marking the target butts (eg **Old Lodge Nature Reserve, Hartfield**).



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World War I army camp at Crowborough

World War 2 saw more military use. A scatter of pillboxes, part of a north-south defensive line, includes examples at **Rotherfield** and **Fletchling**. Camps were established both on the heathland and within grounds such as **Sheffield Park**. The build-up of men and equipment for D-Day was dispersed and hidden in the forest where concrete roads and hut bases can still be found. Forward airstrips were also established including an example at **Wych Cross**. The new defensive and practice positions were unlike those of the Great War. Short slit trenches were dug, either straight or L-shaped, and these are common earthworks. The training also left behind unexploded grenades and mortars that should be left well alone if discovered.

Religion and commemoration

Although most churches in the area have medieval origins many have post-medieval rebuilding and/or additions. These represent changes to High Weald society, often reflecting the increase in population and wealth brought to the area by industry. Other churches and chapels are wholly of post-medieval build, including the later 19th century estate church at **Wych Cross**. There are a number of high status memorials and tombs within churches such as those of the **Sackvilles at Withyham**. Later memorials are to be found in the churchyards, where the headstones tell many tales from the later 17th century onwards.

The Wealden iron industry

Jeremy Hodgkinson

Chairman, Wealden Iron Research Group 1981 – 2005

From pre-Roman times until the 18th century iron was produced on the Forest Ridge. For two periods – in the first two centuries of the Roman occupation and during Tudor and early Stuart times – the Weald, of which the Ridge is a part, was the main iron-producing region in Britain. Visualising this former industry in what is now a landscape of small fields, heathland, woods and gills is difficult, but in that countryside exist all the necessary raw materials that allowed iron smelting to be carried on for over 2000 years. The geology of sands and clays yielded the iron ore, as well as the stone and brick from which the furnaces were built; the woodland provided the fuel, in the form of charcoal; and the numerous small streams and valleys ensured that motive power for bellows and hammers was available.

Julius Caesar first drew attention to the iron being produced in Britain, and archaeologists have found local evidence from the late Iron Age at sites near **Eridge, Rotherfield, Hartfield** and **Maresfield**. When the Romans invaded in 43 AD they found a well-established local tradition in iron making, using small clay bloomery furnaces. A large number of these sites have been recorded across the Ridge, only about a quarter of them being dated so far. With growing markets generated by the building of towns, villas and farms, the Romans encouraged this native industry. Sites from the period have been found particularly in the eastern part of the Forest Ridge area, around **Crowborough**. The Romans may have administered production in the area from **Garden Hill on Ashdown Forest**, where remains of a bath house have been excavated (see Roman summary).

We know little about iron making in the Weald in Saxon times, the only securely dated site from the period being found just north of **Nutley**. The technology employed to smelt iron there in the ninth century was primitive compared with that used in the Roman period up to a thousand years earlier. The industry receives only one mention in the Domesday Book for Sussex, at a location near **Forest Row**.

However, during the Middle Ages iron production grew steadily, concentrated more in the northern part of the Weald. Accounts have survived from 14th century works at **Tudeley** in Kent, and excavations have confirmed medieval references to iron makers around **Crawley** and **Horsham**, bordering the Forest Ridge area. Towards the end of the period, water power began to be used for forging iron, heralding the introduction of the blast furnace. One of the earliest of these was set up by the Crown at **Newbridge, on Ashdown Forest**, and its earthworks can still be seen.

Introduced from northern France, and operated by skilled, immigrant workers, the blast furnace was a much larger and more permanent structure than the bloomery; instead of a few kilos of iron being made, daily output was nearer a tonne. More ore was required, as was more charcoal, and the need to operate the bellows by water power, instead of by hand, meant that ponds had to be created to store the water. In addition, the higher temperatures in the furnace meant that a different type of iron was being produced, and a second process – the forge, with its own pond and supply of charcoal – was needed to refine the iron.

By the mid-16th century there were 50 furnaces and forges, and a quarter of a century later that number had doubled. Their locations can still be recognised where place names that include 'furnace' or 'forge' elements can be found. All over the Weald, the effects of the iron industry were being felt, with large numbers of people employed in digging ore, cutting wood and transporting both raw materials and products.

Most furnaces made 'sows', or lengths, of iron for refining, but from the 1540s a small number began to make cast-iron cannon, a product that grew to be a profitable export. Improvements in house design led to the building of chimneys, and the need for iron firebacks to protect the brickwork; many Wealden farmhouses contain examples of these decorative and functional plates. In several Wealden churches are iron memorials; the oldest dated example, of 1570, is in **East Grinstead**, while there are notable examples at **West Hoathly** and **Frant** (although the latter are concealed beneath a carpet). As competition from imported iron increased, the Wealden ironmasters began to concentrate increasingly on gun founding. One of the earliest such sites was at Worth, active in the 1540s; **Hamsell furnace, near Groombridge**, by contrast, was still producing guns two centuries later.



Examples of Wealden guns are to be found all over the world, wherever Britain fought or traded. Eventually, the onset of the Industrial Revolution took heavy industry to the coalfields, and the last furnace in the Weald closed in 1813.

And where have the remains gone? Building stone was too valuable in the Weald to be left unused, so the works were dismantled, and the woods grew back over the former sites. Only the tell-tale slag, the waste from the smelting process, and some of the hammer and furnace ponds are left to remind us of a once-great industry.

A hammer pond, the water held back by a large dam, known as a pond bay. © James Cope

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Section 13

Glossary

13

Ancient woodland

Woodland which has been in existence as woodland from at least 1600 until the present day. The wood may now be a plantation though, rather than in its original form – see PAWS.

Assart

Assarting was the clearing of forest land for agriculture or other purposes.

Antiquaries

Investigators of archaeology during the 19th and early 20th centuries, before modern techniques and theories created the perspective we have today.

Round Barrow

A burial mound built in the Bronze Age, 2500-800BC. Occasionally they contain no burial, whilst some contain more than one, inserted into the mound after the original burial. Different styles of round barrow were built, the most common in Kent and Sussex being the 'bowl' barrow. Within the Weald Forest Ridge, the majority that are known about exist on Ashdown Forest.

Braided Trackway

Created by travellers moving sideways to avoid deep ruts and mud, so that over time, several tracks form running roughly parallel to each other.

Calendar

In archive records, a précis or summary of what is contained in a series of records.

Cant

An area of coppice or other deliberately created planting. Usually demarcated by cant markers, often stubs.

Charcoal Platform

A circular or oval platform, usually levelled out of a slope down to a stream, for building a charcoal clamp. Vary in size from 4-10m across. Vegetation there is often different from that surrounding.

Commons

A tract of land used collectively by a local community of those with commoner's rights, for purposes such as grazing and collecting fodder.

Coppice

A tree which has been cut to just above the ground so that it sprouts many branches. The resulting slender branches can be used in a variety of ways.

Copyhold tenure

Those originally granted by the lord of a manor to his villeins. After villeins became free of liability to labour service, copyholds could be bought or sold or inherited.

Customary tenement

A form of tenure or land-holding.

Culvert

A construction of brick or stone which channels a watercourse under a track or path.

Deer Park

An area of land enclosed for the purpose of keeping, and hunting, deer.

Enclosure

Dividing off a piece of land from the 'common' land, which had previously been available to all. A process with its origins in the 13th century, enclosure has meant different things at different times.

A desk-based study which uses many strands of evidence, but primarily maps, to produce an overview of the landscape based on the way it has been used through time.

Forest

The original term referred to land set aside for the King, for hunting.

Furlong

A measure of distance equivalent to 1/8th of a mile or about 1/5th of a kilometer. The furlong represented the length of a ploughed furrow in one acre of an open field – a medieval communal field that was divided into strips.

Gill

Sometimes written as ghyll (a Victorian affectation), gills are streams with very steep sides, typical of the Weald. The geology of sandstone and clay bands erode at different rates, causing the water to cut through them. Gills are important sites for ecology, supporting rare ferns and bryophytes.

Glebe

Land belonging to the church.

Grips

Relatively shallow and modern drainage channels, which often run into each other at right angles or in a herringbone pattern.

Historic Landscape Characterisation

A desk-based survey which maps how the landscape today has been shaped by historic processes.

Holloway

A route which has become hollowed out over time by the passage of feet and hooves, rather than deliberately created. Usually happens on slopes, where water has run down and hastened the process.

Leat

An artificial watercourse, especially one which supplied a watermill or mill pond.

LiDAR

A technique which 'sees' through the trees. Lasers are pulsed from a plane to the ground. The return of the lasers is collected as strings of numbers, which are then modelled as two dimensional images. The last return of the lasers is used to create a DTM (Digital Terrain Model) image, stripping away the trees and vegetation and revealing the bumps and hollows of archaeological features.

Long Barrow

A Neolithic (4500 – 2500BC) burial mound of a long oval/rectangular shape, up to about 100m long and 20m wide. None are known within the Weald Forest Ridge, although probably the earliest group in the country are in the Medway Valley in Kent.

Lynchet

A step in the level of sloping ground, which forms gradually at a boundary. The earth moves downslope to build up against a fixed wall or hedge, forming a positive lynchet. This is particularly evident where fields are ploughed over a long period of time. A negative lynchet forms at the top of the slope where earth has moved away from the boundary.

Park Pale

A high bank built to enclose an area of land set aside for the estate owner's hunting. The bank, usually with fencing, hedging or deadwood laid on top, had a ditch on the inside of the Park, making escape for deer more difficult.

Parliamentary Enclosure

Later enclosures of fields which took place in the 18th and 19th centuries under specific Acts of Parliament brought in between 1750 and 1860.

PAWS

Plantation on Ancient Woodland. Usually conifer plantation after clearance of the deciduous woodland. Much took place shortly after WW2.

Pillow Mound

A purpose-built warren for rabbits, who were valuable for their fur and meat during the 12th-18th centuries. Usually long, narrow and about 1 – 1.5m high, with a ditch running down the lengths. Introduced by the Normans, these Mediterranean animals needed protection from the damp and cold of British weather.

Pollard

A tree which has been cut just above head height, resulting in a thickened trunk and multiple branches. The resulting new growth is out of reach of browsing animals. Often associated with wood pasture and sometimes used as boundary markers.

Pond Bay

A dam constructed to hold back water. The waterflow is then regulated to turn millwheels for use in milling or other waterpowered functions.

Prehistoric

The time before written records began, roughly before the Roman invasion. Archaeologists have to rely on 'material culture' – the things that people made or altered – to tell them about life in this period.

Presentments

A list of matters to be dealt with by a court.

Prospect Mound

A conical mound up with a flattened top, enabling good views of the surrounding countryside. Typically built during the 16th to the 19th centuries by estate owners undertaking the gentrification of their property.

Quarter sessions

Local courts traditionally held four times a year in the County town. They were ended in England in 1972.

Ridge & Furrow

Parallel mounds of earth with hollows between, left by ploughing.

Sawpit

A rectangular hole, about 3 – 4m long by 2m wide, dug so that wood could be sawn by a workman referred to as the topdog (above) and the underdog (below) with a long two-handled blade. Recognisable today as a shallow hollow with a mound on the downslope side, usually near a track.

Shaw

A small strip of trees bordering, or between, fields, too wide to be called a hedge but too narrow to be called a wood. A notable feature of the Weald, where they provide corridors for wildlife and may contain well preserved archaeological features such as banks and ditches.

Socage tenure

A form of early freehold, initially of lower status, which did not have any feudal services attached, though it might have labour or monetary obligations. Freeholds were tenures held by freemen, with no end date, such as a lease would have. After feudal tenures were abolished in 1661, socage became the ordinary form of tenure.

Stub

A tree that is cut at about 1-1.5m, higher than a coppice but lower than a pollard. Often used as boundary markers in the past and visible today on boundary banks.

Terrier

A register recording details of property ownerships and use (from the Latin 'terra' meaning 'land').

Tithe map

Maps from the surveys made under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836, often the earliest source of mapping of agricultural and wooded land. The purpose of the Act was to convert agricultural tithes due to the church or tithe owner into rent charges, based on the annual prices of certain crops.

TNA

The National Archives. Sited at Kew, London, where many records from around the country are kept.

Transcript

A written-up version of a historic document, easier to make available online or in printed form.

Tree throw

The semi-circular hole left in the ground where a large tree has fallen.

Water catchment

An area from which water drains downhill into a river, lake or other body of water.

Weald

The 'Wald' or Weald, is an Old English name, meaning 'high wooded country'. Used to refer to the high land between the North and South Downs and stretching from Hampshire to Kent.

Wood pasture

Widely spaced trees, often oaks, under which animals graze and eat the acorns.

Appendix 1

- More detailed information about primary records

Owner and occupier records

The Domesday Book

A survey of England ordered by William the Conqueror in 1086 which gathered the names of landholders and the amount of their land, tenants and occupiers of the land and the type of land and its resources. It also listed some buildings. Changes in ownership after 1066 are also noted. Domesday provides basic and limited, but very early, information on land use and settlement patterns. It should be regarded with caution however, as the information can be misleading.

Domesday had no direct follow-up in medieval times, but the continued distribution of Crown lands in the 12th century is set out in the Red Book of the Exchequer (printed in Latin in 1896) and the Crown's annual income from land in 1129/30 and from 1155/56 onwards is listed in some detail in the Pipe Rolls (variously printed in Latin in 1833, 1844 and later).

Domesday is widely available, as county volumes in bookshops, archives and libraries, and online through The National Archives (TNA) website.

Charter Rolls

Since the time of King John (reigned 1199-1216), Royal charters recorded grants of lands, liberties, or privileges etc made by the Crown. They were also often used to confirm earlier grants made by others. They may be the earliest surviving reference to an estate. In a few cases they describe it field by field and can obviously be very valuable for research. Copies were made on rolls preserved in the Chancery and now in TNA. They were written in Latin so you will need some experience to read the originals.

Charter rolls from 1199 to 1216 have been printed; despite the abbreviated Latin which the printing reproduces, it will be worth having a shot at deciphering any reference you find in the index. There were no rolls for the next 10 years. Charters from 1226 to 1517 have been printed in abbreviated form in English and are indexed. The printed volumes are available at TNA at Kew and in most record offices and larger libraries. For further information go to: www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/guide/rol.shtml#charter which gives a link to the TNA web site.

Patent Rolls

Letters Patent were public announcements of a wide variety of acts and appointments made by the Crown. They include grants and leases of land, grants of wardships, confirmations of charters and many other matters. Occasionally they are very detailed and informative. Copies were made on rolls preserved in the Chancery and now in TNA. They were written in Latin so you will need some experience to read the originals. Patent rolls from 1201 to 1232 have been printed; despite the abbreviated Latin which the printing reproduces, it may be worth looking at any relevant reference you find in the index.

Patent rolls from 1232 to 1595 have been printed in abbreviated form in English and are indexed. The printed volumes are available at TNA at Kew and in most record offices and larger libraries. For more information go to the TNA website:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/royal-grants.htm

The (Calendars of) Patent Rolls from 1216 to 1452 are also available at the University of Iowa website: sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/patentrolls/search.html

Deeds enrolled on the Close Rolls

Letters Close (meaning 'sealed') were writs and orders from the sovereign to individuals. They are not directly relevant to land, but might order an Inquisition (see below). Copies were made on rolls preserved in the Chancery and now in TNA. They were written in Latin so you will need some experience to read the originals. Much more useful are the copies of private deeds which may be found written on the backs of the Close Rolls for safe keeping, which increase in number from the later 14th century until by the 19th century the enrolment of deeds was the sole purpose of the rolls.

Close rolls from 1204 to 1272 have been printed; despite the abbreviated Latin which the printing reproduces, it may be worth looking at any relevant reference you find in the index.

Close rolls from 1272 to 1509 have been printed in abbreviated form in English and are indexed. The printed volumes are available at TNA at Kew and in most record offices and larger libraries. From 1509 annual indexes are available at TNA.

For more information go to: www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/guide/rol.shtml#close which gives a link to the TNA web site.

The (Calendars of) Close Rolls from 1244 to 1509 are also available at the British History Online web site (on payment of subscription) at www.british-history.ac.uk/statepapers.aspx.

Catalogue of Ancient Deeds

These are deeds older than 1603, most being conveyances particularly of former monastic land, which were preserved in several offices of State. Deeds from the late 12th century to the early 17th century have been printed in English and are indexed. They are available at TNA at Kew and in most record offices and larger libraries. Some help may be found at:
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/religious-houses.htm

The complete Catalogue of Ancient Deeds is also available at the British History Online web site (without subscription) at:
www.british-history.ac.uk/catalogue.aspx?gid=119

Manorial Court Rolls

In medieval times, all land was technically within the jurisdiction of a manor. Manors did not always fit neatly within parish boundaries. Besides being farming settlements, manors had powers to hold courts, levy dues and impose penalties. Documents recording manorial court business often survive and can be very informative.

These can include court rolls, surveys, steward's accounts and presentments, amongst other items. They were written in Latin until 1733 (with a brief English phase from 1653-1668), so these originals are hard to read unless you have some experience. Seek advice from your local record office about translation.

The custom of most Wealden manors deemed the Lord to be the owner of timber growing on customary tenements. The cant books of manors contain frequent entries of the grant of Licences to tenants to cut timber and wood, either for repairs to their houses and buildings, or for sale. The type of tree is often specified.

TNA maintain a Manorial Documents Register, containing information about the nature and location of surviving manorial documents. It isn't yet available online for Kent or Sussex, but a microfilm can be seen at the TNA. It is arranged alphabetically by county and then by manor. A separate index shows which manors lay in which parish.

East and West Sussex Record Offices are working on a Sussex Manorial documents register, but there is no such project for Kent.

Early transfers of land ownership: deeds and fines

In early medieval times the king and his immediate 'tenants in chief' (TiC) were reluctant to lose control of land or income from it. However, land became increasingly easy to transfer as the centuries went on. When a tenant of the king or of a TiC died, their land could not be transferred by will but descended according to custom (see Inheritance of land under the common law below). The tenant's lord could claim certain payment of 'relief' on the inheritance. Land could be transferred during the tenant's lifetime however, by a gift in return for payment.

If A (a tenant of the king or of a TiC) transferred land to B, then B became the 'sub-tenant' of A. After a Statute of 1290, B replaced A as the tenant. The transfer of the land was done by a ceremony, 'livery of seisin', which continued, in some circumstances, even if in a minimal form, until property law reform in 1833 – 45.

It was not essential to make a written record of the transfer until the Statute of Frauds of 1677. The simplest record was a written deed of gift or 'feoffment', usually endorsed with a note that livery of seisin had been given. To give greater security of tenure, the written record could be in the form of a 'fine', or 'final agreement' (finalis concordia) – a fictitious legal action in court to sell the land, in which the 'plaintiff' (the buyer) alleged that the 'defendant' (the seller) had agreed to convey property but had failed to do so. The seller then acknowledged that the land really belonged to the buyer, who paid him the purchase money. Fines were written on one parchment in triplicate, which was then cut into three by a wavy cut or 'indenture'. Each party kept one part and the court kept the third, the 'foot' of the fine. The indenture meant that all three parts could be fitted together to prove their authenticity.

The TNA have the courts' copies of fines from 1195 to 1833 and they are printed up to 1216. The county record societies in Kent and Sussex have summarised and indexed many of the feet of fines. These are available in print in their Records volumes but not yet online.

You should search for all the fines for your area of interest as they sometimes give useful detail, but don't expect too much. Many are ambiguous. For further information see these TNA research guides:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/land-conveyances-deeds-title.htm

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/land-conveyance-feet-of-fines.htm

Helpful advice on feet of fines is also given at: www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/index.shtml

Later land transfers: leases, releases, entails, uses, trusts, settlements and mortgages

To avoid paying feudal dues to a feudal lord a 'conveyance to uses' might be employed. This conveyed the land to a group of people (effectively trustees) 'to the use of' the person who actually owned it. Provided that if any trustee did die another person took their place, the law assumed that the group lived on for ever, so there was never an inheritance from which the lord could claim payment of relief.

The practice was abolished by the Statute of Uses 1535 but it allowed a new practice, 'Bargain and Sale'. Under this, A agreed to sell land to B, and if B paid the purchase money, he would get the land. Such bargains and sales had to be publicised by enrolment in court at Westminster or before a county clerk of the peace.

In order to evade these provisions and allow land to be sold secretly, the practice of 'lease and release' was devised. The seller granted the buyer a lease for one year in return for a nominal payment. The effect of the 1535 Statute was that the next day the seller could give the lessee (his buyer) a release, i.e. a deed of grant. Such leases and releases are often still found together and of course are actually sales. The practice was very commonly used from around 1670 until property law reform in 1841 made the lease unnecessary.

A genuine lease occurred when an owner parted with land for a limited period for a yearly rent, and sometimes an additional payment called a premium. A lease could be for a life, or several lives, or for a period of years.

The descent of land could be 'entailed'. This meant it was limited to a designated class or line of heirs such as males, or the daughters of a particular wife. A landowner could also create entailed land by a 'conveyance to uses'. Later owners of the land often found former entails inconvenient and were able to remove or 'bar' them, either by using a fine, or by a 'common recovery'. This was a fictitious action in court in which the buyer, 'the demandant', brought an action against the seller, 'the tenant in tail', claiming that he had been ejected by a fictitious person called Hugh Hunt. The vendor then called upon another person, 'the vouchee', to support his ownership, but this person would never appear and the land would be awarded to the purchaser in default. In both fines and recoveries, the land would then be awarded without the restriction of the entail.

Many landowners would frequently raise money by using their land, or part of it, as security for repayment. The deed of mortgage will look very much like a normal conveyance or a normal lease, but the key point is that it always ends with a proviso that the property shall be conveyed back, or the lease surrendered, if mortgagor repays the sum at a stated time. In practice the Court of Chancery would be very lenient about late repayments.

A trust enabled a landowner to keep his estate within his family and descendants and to make sale difficult. Trusts were another consequence of the Statute of Uses. The estate would be settled on (conveyed to the use of) trustees, in trust for the testator in his lifetime, then to his male heirs successively or his female heirs if there are no more male heirs and finally to his heirs according to the custom of the law. In practice, his eldest

son would then bar the entail with a 'recovery', but the family lawyer would ensure that the estate was again settled in trust for the next generation.

For further information see these TNA research guides:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/land-conveyances-deeds-title.htm

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/land-conveyance-trust-deeds.htm

Some further points about deeds

County record offices hold large collections of deeds from landed families and solicitors.

Deeds will often include details of abutments (adjoining properties). Deeds relating to property adjoining the land you are directly interested in may have valuable information.

It was rare that woodland was conveyed by itself as it was usually part of other property, such as a farm. Covenants in leases may tell you about timber for repairs or other work.

If the land you are researching was in the possession of an estate, deeds may exist for several centuries. They often detail the leasing of land between owners and tenants and provide information on the development of the properties forming part of the estate.

Inquisitions Post Mortem (IPMs)

When a tenant in chief (anyone holding land directly from the king) died, writs were sent out requiring a survey (Inquisition Post Mortem) to be made of all their lands in each county (whether held in chief or not). The value of the land, rents and services and the name and age of the heir were noted. These survive at TNA from 1236 to around 1640. They were in Latin and you won't find it easy to read the originals unless you have some experience. However, the Inquisitions are essential for establishing successions of land ownership (strictly tenancies at this time). They were accompanied by 'extents' of the major land holdings, which are accounts of the arable, pasture, woodland and so on. So, if printed copies are not available, it may be worth the attempt.

IPMs from 1236 to 1391 and from 1485 to 1509 have been printed in abbreviated form in English and from 1377 to 1485 in Latin. The printed volumes are available at TNA at Kew and in most record offices and larger libraries. There are helpful web pages at: www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/guide/ipm.shtml and www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/inquisitions-post-mortem.htm

The (Calendar of) Inquisitions Post Mortem from 1216 to 1307 is also available on the British History Online website (without subscription) at: www.british-history.ac.uk/search.aspx?query=inquisitions+post+mortem

Inheritance of land under the common law

Under medieval common law a man could dispose of his land during his lifetime, but not by his will after his death. Inheritance of land held by military or socage tenure was governed by male 'primogeniture', the right of the eldest son to inherit his father's land. Males excluded females, an eldest brother excluded younger ones, but all daughters would inherit equally. A dead heir was represented by their descendants, so the daughter of a dead eldest son excluded a younger son.

But, in Kent and some other areas, the custom of 'gavelkind' required that land held by socage tenures and some copyholds descended to all sons equally. In Kent many families tried to avoid division of lands by 'disgavelling' them, or by settlement on the eldest son. Military tenures were not affected by gavelkind.

Inheritance of land was subject to a widow's right to 'dower' during her lifetime. This often amounted to a third of the land and in the case of intestacy, the Statute of Distributions of 1670 provided that a widow had one third of an estate and the children two thirds.

Disposal of land by will before 1858

Under the Statute of Wills of 1540, holders of lands by military service could dispose of two thirds of them by will. The remaining third passed to the heir under common law. Holders of land by socage could dispose of all their lands by will. This freedom was extended to all landowners after abolition of military tenures in 1660. When land was held by feoffees to uses, testators could effectively dispose of their land by will including instructions to their feoffees in their testaments.

From early times, the authenticity and validity of a will had to be proved in court, which is the meaning of probate. Before 1858, the majority of wills were dealt with in archdeaconry or diocesan courts. Records of these probates should be found in county record offices.

The Prerogative Court of Canterbury was available for probate of estates covering more than one ecclesiastical jurisdiction or if executors wished to restrict local knowledge of their affairs. Contemporary registered copies of PCC wills from 1383 to 1858 are held in TNA and you can download copies for a small sum.

If a landowner died intestate, the heirs would apply to the same ecclesiastical courts for letters of administration, which would allow them to manage the estate. The following TNA web pages are helpful for wills and administrations before 1858:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-person/willbefore1858.htm?WT.lp=rg-3109
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/wills.htm
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/wills-and-probate-records.htm

Disposal of land by will after 1858

The Principal Probate Registry began work in January 1858 and from then on, all wills were proved there. Copies may be obtained from the Court of Probate in London. The following TNA websites are helpful for wills and administrations after 1858:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-person/willafter1858.htm?WT.lp=rg-3147
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/wills-death-duty.htm

Probate inventories

These are lists of property, which accompanied wills and grants of administration (where there was no will).

They provide a record of someone's personal estate at death, although they often include only goods and leases and not landholdings. They survive (for differing periods) at TNA and local record offices, and are indexed by name, parish and trade.

Electoral Registers from 1832

Registers of electors in Parliamentary elections have been produced annually since 1832. There are some exceptions: there were no registers 1916 – 17 and 1940 – 44. There were two registers a year from 1919 – 26 and 1945 – 46. They list all electors by parish or electoral district. The power to vote changed over time – in 1832, males with larger properties could vote, in 1867, all male householders, in 1918, all men over 21 and women over 30, in 1928, everyone over 21, and in 1969, everyone over 18.

Census returns

These lists, compiled every ten years of all people within a property. For censuses from 1841 to 1911, National Archives has made census returns available online via various commercial websites – there may be a charge. They include a name, relationship to the head of the family, marital status, age at last birthday, gender, birthplace, and most interestingly, occupation. It is possible to identify people named in woodland accounts, to see whether they were locals or from further afield and if the occupation ran in the family.

Estate Records

(particularly Duchy of Lancaster Records)

One of the most fascinating elements of estate records are the day to day accounts, detailing expenditure on the land and houses. Other information can include details of rents, surveys and correspondence. Typical estate management of the 17th to 19th century saw agricultural

land let out, but woodland, a valuable resource, retained by the landlord.

Within the Weald Forest Ridge, the area now known as Ashdown Forest was from medieval times one of the estates of the Duchy of Lancaster and was known as Lancaster Great Park. Any researches in and around Ashdown Forest should thus include the records of the Duchy, most of which are at TNA – there are four lists published of these. Copies of many such documents relating to the Park are at the East Sussex Record Office however.

Taxation and valuation records

These records describe the value of land to the owner or occupier, to the crown and to other authorities.

Church Records – Parish

These can be useful for researching the social history of an area. At parish level, the best known records are those of baptism, marriage and burial. They should begin in 1538, but are more often only found from 1558, the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. Even so, many are missing. From 1598, transcripts should also be available in the diocesan records, though these too may be incomplete.

Churchwardens' accounts begin earlier, in the late medieval period, but of course very few have survived. Early accounts will be in Latin. They cover matters such as maintenance and furnishings of the church, the financing of these activities and sometimes contracts with builders and craftsmen for work on the church.

Churchwardens' accounts are more numerous after the Reformation and their responsibilities developed into the vestry system. From the 17th and 18th centuries vestry minutes dealt with poor relief, highway maintenance, provision of lock-ups, stocks and pillories and pounds for stray animals. Overseers of the poor were appointed; their accounts are usually separate from vestry minutes. Until 1834 they provided parish poorhouses. From 1894, civil parish councils took over responsibility for civil functions, leaving the vestry, and from 1921, the parochial church councils, to deal with church matters.

Parish records should be in the county record offices. The library of the Society of Genealogists also holds many transcripts of parish registers and Medway Archives have page images of the parish registers of Rochester Diocese available online. Amongst private websites www.ancestry.co.uk (premium membership) and www.familysearch.org/eng/ have parish register data for many parishes.

Parish records may also include glebe terriers. Glebe was land allocated to supplement the income of the parish priest (later the incumbent). The priest might sub-let part of it. Surveys of the parish glebe and other possessions of the clergy were first made in 1571 and at intervals

afterwards. Glebe terriers may name tenants of the land and adjoining property, and give information on strips and furlongs if the parish had open fields. Glebe land usually stayed in church ownership and so may indicate where field strips were in former open fields. Other indications include place and field names and former glebe barns.

All the Sussex glebe terriers are in WSRO, those for the diocese of Canterbury are in the Canterbury Cathedral archives, and those for the diocese of Rochester are held in the Medway Record Office.

Church Records – Diocesan

Records originally kept by the diocese include bishops' registers and other records (mainly to do with church administration), parish register transcripts (as above), the Compton census (attendance at church), records of diocesan administration, faculties, subscription books, ecclesiastical visitations (periodic parish inspections) and records of ecclesiastical courts together with wills, inventories and other probate documents.

The bishop's records might include details of faculties and mortgages relating to the repair and maintenance of churches and parsonage houses, especially after 1776.

Diocesan records are now in county record offices, including those of exempt jurisdictions or peculiars. The peculiar of South Malling, which is a part of the secular estate of the archbishops of Canterbury, comprises an irregular strip of land from Lewes, through Buxted to Mayfield and up to the Kent border. The originals are at Lambeth Palace Library and microfilms at the CKS Maidstone. Records of the rest of Canterbury diocese are in the Canterbury Cathedral archives. The Rochester diocese records are at the CKS Maidstone.

Other Church Records

Minor matters might be dealt with in the archdeaconry court instead of going to the bishop. Church court records also include tithe disputes. Archives from parishes which belonged to monastic or collegiate foundations or to great estates will probably be at TNA, the British Library or in a few private archives.

Some helpful information is given by the National Archives at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=051-drcp&cid=0#0

Hearth Tax Returns

This tax was collected from householders for a short period between 1662 and 1689, based on the number of fire hearths in a property. The records provide numbers of hearths and the amount of tax subsequently paid, enabling a guess at the size and importance of a property and

therefore the social standing of the occupants. The hearth tax does not include the very poor. Some exemption certificates survive; a very few include trades.

Useful information can be found at the Centre for Hearth Tax research: www.roehampton.ac.uk/hearthtax/

Land Tax

Land tax records are useful for finding out about the owners and occupiers of property before the 19th century. They date from 1693 to 1963 but their survival can only be guaranteed between 1780 and 1832. The tax was paid according to the size of the holding at a rate set by Parliament each year. During the period 1780 to 1832 inclusion on the land tax list provided evidence of the right to vote, so people were willing to pay up and the records are fairly complete. Before 1780 only occupiers are named. Thereafter, the lists for each parish gives the owners or occupiers names and the amount of tax paid. However, with the introduction of electoral registers in 1832 the lists become more fragmentary. Land Tax records can be found at county record offices.

Rate Books

The rate was a parish tax based on the yearly value of all occupied property – dwellings and land. Parish rates were made compulsory in the 16th and 17th centuries until 1868 and continued on a voluntary basis until the 20th century. The books tell us which properties were occupied and by whom, and some evidence of their status. It is also possible to trace the movements of people.

General rates superseded poor rates after 1925, with the local authority taking responsibility for the rate books. The books that survive provide information on the size and value of properties and when they were first lived in. Rate Books can be found at record offices.

Land Valuation Survey of 1910

Called the 'New Domesday Survey', this assessment of property and land, which included timber and fruit trees, was made by the Inland Revenue for the purpose of a proposed tax on land values. Only those who had more than 50 acres of land or land worth more than £75 per acre were assessed.

For each income tax parish the records consist of a 1908 Record Ordnance Survey map, Field Books and a Valuation Book. Each property or parcel of land is numbered on the map and boundaries are indicated. The Field Books contain descriptions and occasionally a detailed plan of each property plus its relevant valuation details. These two records can be seen only at the National Archives (Class IR 58 and IR 124):

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/localhistory/gallery1/valuation.htm

The Valuation Books, known as the Domesday Books, are at local record offices, and contain a brief description of the property, its actual address and map reference, plus the names of the occupiers and the names and addresses of the owners.

National Farm Survey 1940-1943

Every farm and holding of five acres and more was surveyed, including those of market gardeners, horticulturists, and poultry-keepers. This provided information on conditions of tenure and occupation and on the natural state of the farm, including its fertility, the adequacy of its equipment and of its water and electricity supplies, the degree of infestation with weeds or pests, and the management condition of the farm. The survey included the complete 1941 June 4th census return for the farm, including statistics of crop acreages and livestock numbers and information on rent and length of occupancy, and a map of the farm showing its boundaries and the fields contained in it. Holdings of one to five acres, representing less than one per cent of the total area of crops and grass, were subject to a separate survey. The original records can be seen at TNA.

