

High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

GIS character component data



***NB:** It should be noted that these data are not a comprehensive inventory – or a complete record – of the most valuable features in the AONB; rather they should be treated as indicative and based on currently available information. These data are therefore provisional and may be subject to update or change without notice. They are intended to be used as an alert to the potential presence of significant features in the landscape.*

metadata: ancient woodland

Our woodland data

Woodland, and particularly ancient woodland, is an integral part of the High Weald landscape. Ancient woodland – defined as land that has been continuously wooded since 1600 AD – is estimated to cover 27,276ha, or 19%, of the entire AONB. By comparison the national average is just 2.68%. Of this total area, around 67% is thought to be Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, with the remaining 33% constituting Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites. Our ancient woodland data describes the geographic extent, location, density, distribution and pattern of ancient woodland across the High Weald AONB.

For more information on the history, management and ecological value of ancient woodland in the High Weald, have a look at [The Woodland Story](#).

How it was created

Our ancient woodland data is a subset of the Natural England's National Ancient Woodland Inventory (for more information on this data and to download a complete copy, visit [Natural England's GIS boundary datasets page](#)). The data itself was created using a peer reviewed method that involved a combination of checking for the presence or absence of woods on historic maps (a method often referred to as "map regression"), botanical surveys of plants indicative of ancient woodland (known as ancient woodland indicator species), examination of aerial photography, and by gathering information about the wood's name, shape, internal boundaries, and location relative to other features.

Historic maps used for this comparison include the [Ordnance Surveyors Draft \(OSD\)](#), which dates from c.1800, [the parish tithe maps](#), and [the OS Landmark Epoch series](#), which dates from between 1843 to 1893, depending on the location. The resulting dataset illustrates the distribution and pattern of ancient woodland across the AONB.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an "alert layer" in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

For more information on the Ancient Woodland Inventory data and to download a complete copy, visit: http://www.gis.naturalengland.org.uk/pubs/gis/tech_aw.htm

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report "The Making of the High Weald": <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a wide range of information and guidance on woodland management, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/woodland-1.html?limit=20&limitstart=0> & <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management/woodland.html>. For general woodland management advice the following documents are of particular relevance: the "High Weald Land Manager's Pack" on woodlands, the "Woodland in the Weald" habitat leaflet, the Forestry Commission's "So, you own a woodland?" guide, and the Woodland Trust's "Ancient Woods: A guide for woodland owners and managers".

Also of relevance is the report "Eco-camping in the High Weald AONB: A review of the potential environmental impacts and recommendations for future development" which can be downloaded from the evidence section of our publications library: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports.html>

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, ancient woodlands – visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: historic field boundaries

Our historic field boundaries data

Historic field boundaries – a term that refers to field boundaries that have been in existence since before the 20th century – are an integral part of the High Weald landscape. Our historic field boundaries data allows these features, or character components, to be mapped across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Our data is not, however, an inventory of original boundaries. It is a record of current boundaries that appear to have survived unchanged since the baseline historic map source (i.e. between 1843 and 1893). This approach has identified about 16,000 field boundaries that match the historic record, approximately 36% of the total number of fields analysed.

For more information on the history and origin of historic field boundaries in the High Weald, have a look at [The Field and Heath Story](#).

How it was created

Our historic field boundaries data was developed by comparing modern Ordnance Survey “Master Map” data with boundaries marked on historic maps to determine the presence or absence of these features in today’s landscape – a process known as “map regression”.

The historic maps used for this comparison were [the OS Landmark Epoch 1 and 2 County Series maps](#), which date from between 1843 to 1893 (depending on the location). The resulting dataset illustrates the distribution and pattern of pre-20th century field boundaries across the AONB based on currently available information.

It should be noted that this dataset is provisional and will likely evolve as research brings new information to light.

How it’s used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald’s natural beauty and landscape character, providing an “alert layer” in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report “The Making of the High Weald”: <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to historic field boundaries in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-field-and-heath-story.html>

For information and guidance on hedgerow/historic field boundary management, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/grassland.html>. Of particular relevance is the “High Weald Land Manager’s Pack” on hedgerows and the “Hedges in the High Weald” habitat leaflet.

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, historic field boundaries – visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: heathland

Our heathland data

Heathland is a valuable habitat and an integral part of the High Weald landscape. Our heathland data allows this feature, or character component, to be mapped across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Our data is not, however, a comprehensive inventory. Nor is it a record of the most valuable heathlands in the High Weald. Rather it should be treated as indicative, providing an initial representation of the distribution, density and pattern of heathland across the landscape of the High Weald.

For more information on the history and origin of heathland in the High Weald, have a look at [The Field and Heath Story](#).

How it was created

Our heathland dataset was created as part of the Conserving the Weald's Heathland Heart project (also known as the Weald Heathland Initiative), which ran from 2000 to 2006. During the course of this project areas of heathland were digitised – principally using polygons from the Ordnance Survey's Master Map data – where the project was actively engaged with landowners or other organisations (such as the Forestry Commission, the RSPB, Ashdown Forest etc.) in providing advice, guidance, or grants for restoration work. Areas of heathland were also digitised where remnant heathland was identified using historic map evidence and ground-truthing and aerial photo interpretation.

These data should be treated as provisional, as the extent and condition of heathland can change relatively rapidly if a cessation or change in management occurs.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an "alert layer" in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report "The Making of the High Weald": <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to heathland in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-field-and-heath-story.html>

For a general introduction to heaths and fields in the High Weald, visit:

<http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-field-and-heath-story.html>

For information and guidance on heathland management, visit:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance.html>. Of particular relevance is the “High Weald Land Manager’s Pack” on heathland and the “Heathlands in the High Weald” habitat leaflet.

For more in depth information specifically relating to the interface between heathland and woodland (i.e. wooded heaths), see the “Wooded Heaths in the High Weald: A research project to further the understanding of the ecology and management of the woodland / heathland mosaic” report available from the evidence section of our publications library:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports.html?limit=20&limitstart=20>

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, heathland – visit:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: wildflower grassland

Our wildflower grassland data

Wildflower grassland is a valuable and increasingly rare habitat and an integral part of the High Weald landscape. Our wildflower grassland data allows this features, or character component, to be mapped across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Our data is not, however, a comprehensive inventory. Nor is it a record of the most valuable grasslands in the High Weald. Rather it should be treated as indicative, providing an initial representation of the distribution, density and pattern of wildflower grassland across the landscape of the High Weald.

For more information on the history and importance of wildflower grassland in the High Weald, have a look at [The Field and Heath Story](#).

How it was created

Our wildflower grassland dataset was created as part of the Weald Meadows Initiative, which ran from 1996 to 2010. During the course of this project fields were digitised – principally using polygons from Ordnance Survey Master Map data – where the project was actively engaged with the landowner, providing advice, guidance, grants, harvesting re-seeding etc. The wildflower grasslands identified may include a combination of unimproved and semi-improved grassland

These data should be treated as provisional, as the extent and condition of wildflower grassland can change relatively rapidly if a cessation or change in management occurs.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an "alert layer" in our GIS system that can highlights the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report "The Making of the High Weald": <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to wildflower grassland in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-field-and-heath-story.html>

For a general introduction to heaths and fields in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-field-and-heath-story.html>

For information and guidance on grassland and wildflower meadow management and creation – for land owners and managers – visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/grassland.html>. Of particular relevance is the “High Weald Land Manager’s Pack” on meadow grassland, the “Wildflower grasslands in the High Weald” habitat leaflet and the various “Information Sheets” on meadow management and creation.

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, grassland – visit:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: water

Our water data

The High Weald's water systems – encompassing ponds, openwater (bodies of water larger than ponds but which are not reservoirs), reservoirs, and watercourses – are an integral part of the High Weald landscape. Our water data allows these features – or character components – to be mapped across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

How it was created

Our water data was created by extracting all the water-related features from the Ordnance Survey's Master Map data that fell within the High Weald AONB boundary. The resulting dataset describes the geographic extent, location, density, distribution and pattern of these features across the area.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an "alert layer" in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report "The Making of the High Weald": <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to landform in the High Weald – which touches on gill watercourses – visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-landform-story.html>

For information and guidance on management around rivers, wetlands and ponds, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/ponds-a-wetlands.html>. Of particular relevance is the "High Weald Land Manager's Pack" on rivers, the "High Weald Land Manager's Pack" on pond management and the "Ponds in the Weald" habitat leaflet.

For information on how the rivers in the AONB might be best managed in the future to sustain and enhance their natural physical characteristics, see the "High Weald AONB Integrated Catchment Management & River Restoration Study" available from: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports.html>

For information on the significance of ponds in the High Weald landscape, as well as recommendations for achieving biodiversity gains, see "The national context for the conservation of ponds in the High Weald AONB, with a particular focus on the Brede River Catchment" report, which is available from the evidence section of our publications library: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports.html>

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, rivers, wetlands and ponds – visit:
<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: geology

Our geology data

The High Weald's geology data – encompassing the area's distinctive sandstone outcrops as well as bedrock geology – is an integral part of the High Weald landscape; indeed, geology arguably represents the most fundamental component of the landscape and the basis for all other components. Our geology data allows these features, or character components, to be mapped across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

How it was created

Our ponds, rivers and reservoirs data was created by extracting water-related features within the High Weald AONB boundary from the Ordnance Survey's Master Map data. The resulting dataset describes the geographic extent, location, density, distribution and pattern of these features across the area.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an "alert layer" in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report "The Making of the High Weald": <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to landform and geology in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-landform-story.html>

For information and guidance on the management of sandstone geology and outcrops visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance.html>. Of particular relevance is the "High Weald Land Manager's Pack" on sandrock and the "Sandrock in the High Weald" habitat leaflet.

For more general information on the value, uses and history of sandstone outcrops – as well as some of the threats they face and advice on interdisciplinary approaches to their management and conservation – see "The High Weald Sandstone Project" report and the "Geology and Geomorphology of the High Weald" report, which are available from the evidence section of our publications library: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports.html>:

The Strategic Stone Study provides information to help stone masons source appropriate local stone for historic renovations:

http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsUK/buildingStones/StrategicStoneStudy/EH_project.html

See also the English Heritage publication “Identifying and Sourcing Stone for Historic Building Repair” (visit: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/identifying-and-sourcing-stone-for-historic-building-repair/>), which recommends criteria and processes for sourcing replacement stone, including:

- evaluation of existing stonework
- sampling and identification
- examination and analysis
- criteria for selecting replacement stone
- sources of stone
- obtaining stone for repair

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, sandstone outcrops – visit:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: historic routeways

Our historic routeways data

Historic routeways – a term that encompasses a variety of old communication routes – are an integral part of the High Weald landscape and are often still visible in the landscape today, with many remaining in use as roads, tracks and paths. Our routeways data attempts to capture this historic network, creating a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent, location, density, distribution and pattern of historic routeways across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

For more information on the history and origin of routeways in the High Weald, have a look at [The Routeways Story](#).

How it was created

Our historic routeways data was developed by comparing modern Ordnance Survey road data with communication routes marked on historic maps to determine the presence or absence of routeways in today's landscape – a process known as “map regression”.

Historic maps used for this comparison with modern roads were the [Ordnance Surveyors Draft \(OSD\)](#), which dates from c.1800, and the [OS Landmark Epoch series](#), which dates from between 1843 to 1893 (depending on the location). The resulting dataset illustrates the pattern of historic communication routes across the AONB based on currently available information. It should be noted that this dataset is provisional and will likely evolve as research brings new information to light.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an “alert layer” in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report “The Making of the High Weald”: <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to historic routeways in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-routeways-story.html>

To download “High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Historic Routeways Survey Pack”, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/routeways.html>

For general land management advice, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, historic routeways – visit:
<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>

metadata: settlement

Our settlement data

The High Weald's settlements – encompassing towns, villages and isolated farmsteads – are an integral part of the High Weald landscape. Our settlement data allows these features – or character components – to be mapped across the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

How it was created

Our settlement data was developed by comparing modern Ordnance Survey with a range of historic maps to determine the presence, absence and form of historic farmsteads in today's landscape, as well as characterise the stages of development of a number High Weald settlements. This method of comparing modern and historic maps in order to determine change or locate historic features is known as “map regression”.

Historic maps used for this comparison with modern roads were the [Ordnance Surveyors Draft \(OSD\)](#), which dates from c.1800, and the [OS Landmark Epoch series](#), which dates from between 1843 to 1893 (depending on the location). The resulting dataset illustrates the pattern of historic communication routes across the AONB based on currently available information. It should be noted that this dataset is provisional and will likely evolve as research brings new information to light.

How it's used

These data help spatially represent the High Weald's natural beauty and landscape character, providing an “alert layer” in our GIS system that can highlight the presence of potentially important features in the AONB. In doing so these data help support the objectives laid out in the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) and should be used in combination with this document.

Learn more

To learn more about how these features – or character components – were identified please see the report “The Making of the High Weald”: <http://www.highweald.org/420-home/research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

For a general introduction to the history of settlement in the High Weald, visit: <http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/landscape-stories/the-settlement-story.html>

For information and guidance on historic farmsteads, visit <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/historic-farmsteads.html>, where you can download the “Kent Farmsteads Guidance” and associated documents. The “Kent Farmsteads Guidance” aims to inform and achieve the sustainable development of farmsteads, including their conservation and enhancement.

Also of relevance is the “Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in the High Weald AONB” report (<http://www.highweald.org/about-the-high-weald-unit/our-role/420-home/research->

[reports/475-historic-farmstead-character.html](http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/475-historic-farmstead-character.html)) and the “Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in West Sussex” report (<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/1038-historic-farmsteads-and-landscape-character-in-west-sussex/file.html>).

For general land management advice visit: <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management.html>

For a range of publications and report relating the landscape of the High Weald AONB – some of which relate to, or touch upon, historic farmsteads – visit:
<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications.html>