

Section	Section Title
4.	Understanding and Conserving the Historic Environment

Project

PA No.

Historic Environment Awareness Project


PA 27

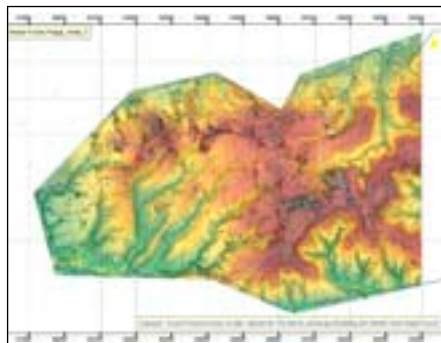
Highbrook Smokery Restoration

PA 29

Heritage Advisory Visits

PA 62

Understanding and Conserving the Historic Environment		PA 27
Project Name	Value	
Historic Environment Awareness Project	£ 244,394	
Delivery Partner	Project Aim	
	<p>To enable local communities to develop increased awareness, understanding and improved management of the historic landscape and environment of the Weald Forest Ridge area through delivery of a programme of identification (assessment & research), evaluation (mapping & survey), management (advice & guidance) and promotion (information and increased understanding).</p>	



What Was Delivered?

Introduction: The Historic Environment Awareness (HEA) Project was developed as a pivotal project in the overall LP Scheme, and its delivery exceeded all expectations of how archaeology and the historic environment could underpin and support all other heritage aspects of the WFR LPS. With match funding from English Heritage, EH played a key role in shaping the detailed project design, and adapting planned outputs to meet heritage need.

Key to successful delivery was the appointment of a Project Officer – Lyn Palmer – to a contract eventually extended to 3.5 years. Originally a 0.6 FTE, this post was also extended to 0.8 FTE half way through the project: to reflect the increased time demands of the increasingly successful delivery. Lyn’s post was guided by a Steering Group made up of English Heritage, the three county authorities, and various voluntary sector and community organisations’ representatives.

LiDAR: The first output was the undertaking of a LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) aerial survey of the whole Weald Forest Ridge. LiDAR is a very sensitive laser technique that produces Digital Terrain Models, accurate up to ±7cm! Previously unseen earthworks and other archaeological features are revealed – especially in heavily wooded areas.

The survey was unfortunately split over two late winter seasons (early 2009 and 2010), rather than the planned one; which led to re-programming of other project activities. Forest Research undertook the commission and provided results in GIS and hard-copy, atlas formats. These were embedded in the respective County Historic Environment Records (HERs) and made publicly available in downloadable jpeg format at www.highweald.org/look-after/archaeology/lidar-images.html.

A key HEA volunteer transcribed the LiDAR images for some 60% of the Scheme area: marking up innumerable features for future groundtruthing. Whilst the LiDAR did not reveal any immediately noticeable, previously undiscovered large features, the discoveries were more subtle but just as interesting. A landscape was revealed that has been continuously

Key Outputs

- 1 Project Officer employed.
- 1 LiDAR survey undertaken over 328km² area.
- 3 downloadable toolkits produced: survey, identification and research.
- 1 set of “Cab Cards” produced, with 4,000 print run.
- 2 site-based, schools’ KS2 archaeology study packs produced.
- 2 specialist case study reports commissioned and produced.
- 11 site surveys undertaken by 11 community groups, including 7 training sessions.
- 52 presentations delivered to 2,225 attendees.
- 1, one-day Archaeology Conference organised, with 183 attendees.
- Community-based archaeology forum developed as legacy organisation.

altered and shaped through time: with quarries, routeways and boundaries – both extant and lost – visible, and previous settlement patterns traceable. The LiDAR also provided impressive landscape-scale images of the entire WFR, particularly illustrating the topography and dendritic drainage systems.

Toolkits: Three toolkits were produced that were the crux of the project and engendered maximal community involvement. Whilst three separate documents, they are inextricably linked with much cross-referencing.

The **Survey Toolkit** covers three levels of investigation. Level One separates natural from man-made features; aiming to raise interest and encourage further investigation. Level Two requires completion of individual recording forms, and the collation, summation and submission of results to the HER. This level is mostly targeted at future site surveying by community groups. Level Three/Four targets more detailed surveys.

“We are really pleased to have had the opportunity to be part of this project.... It has given us the chance to understand our woods much better and to think about them in a way we may not have done before. ... We can now recognise and respect our archaeological features – indeed, we feel quite proud of them! We now feel like a real community... The owners are now a lively community, who meet regularly to discuss management of Waste Wood as a whole”.

Woodlot owner in Waste Wood

Production of the Survey Toolkit was a two year process of drafting, testing with community groups, and revision. Nine different groups were involved at eight different locations across the three counties of the Scheme area. In particular, there was a focus on Waste Wood: a 90ha wood-lotted ancient woodland on the southern margin of the WFR, and with 19 different owners. The Scheme brought these owners together; from disparate neighbours to a coherent group of landowners sharing common objectives for their wood’s cross-compartment archaeology.

Experience showed that some elementary “how to survey” and “how to interpret LiDAR” training helped community groups get the best from the Survey Toolkit. All necessary forms to complete and submit as HER records were included in the Toolkit.

Whilst written for High Weald woodlands, the Survey Toolkit has proved to be applicable nationally, with the Woodland Trust using it as a good exemplar practice.

The **Identification Toolkit** is a user-friendly and informative tool, which uses flowcharts to identify a range of common, and not so common, features that can be found within the WFR’s woodlands. However,

the majority of features are common to most woodland throughout the UK, so the Toolkit is widely applicable. The features are both “of the wood”, i.e. relating to past woodland management, and “in the wood”, which could relate to pre-woodland agricultural practices. Iterative testing and revision by community groups and the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum were again crucial in the production of the final Toolkit. Additionally, illustrations were generated by an ESAMP volunteer (see PA45, Training and Skills) to show what many of the features might have looked like when first created.

The HEA Project recognised that access to clear and usable HER information, as well as an understanding of wider research avenues, were barriers to

“As part of an ongoing community archaeology project in Kent, we have been using the HEA toolkits to groundtruth LiDAR. The toolkits are absolutely superb and well worth looking at.”

Community Archaeologist on national network

local communities engaging in heritage research. Hence, a **Research Toolkit** was produced, with sections on: the HER; WFR landscape development; primary and secondary research sources; useful weblinks; and specialist summaries of the WFR’s archaeology. The Toolkit also encourages desk-based research; before, during and after field surveys enabled by the other two Toolkits.



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East Sussex County Council

Feature Identification Charts

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.

All Toolkits had a minimal print run – to place them in essential locations, such as County Archaeological Depts. and Record Offices – and were always designed to be predominantly accessed via web download. Their chief location is on the SEWAF website (www.sewaf.org.uk/surveying-and-lidar).

“LiDAR has been a fantastic tool for community engagement, generating much enthusiasm, as it reveals previously-hidden archaeology – a process with parallels to the excitement of excavation.”

HEA Project Officer

Cab Cards and Schools’ Toolkits: Two further, toolkit-related outputs were produced: one an additional element of work at the end of the Project.

The **Cab Cards** are handy, square-format, spiral bound cards – designed for machine cabs. They were produced to raise awareness and ensure proper, non-damaging management of archaeological lumps and bumps by woodland workers. Simple line drawings advise on damage mitigation, and photos and reconstruction illustrations identify the five most commonly visible features found in woodlands. The Cards have been distributed widely to Delivery Partners, woodland businesses, and key organisations – such as the Forestry Commission, Natural England and Woodland Trust.



Whilst all the toolkits engaged adults, only the Identification Toolkit was accessible to children – a key audience for heritage engagement. Consequently, **toolkit-based teaching resources** were developed and placed at two existing locations for schools’ educational visits in the WFR: the Ashdown Forest Centre and Buchan Country Park. Using LiDAR, historic maps and survey equipment, specific site features are located, identified and surveyed by the target KS2 audience.



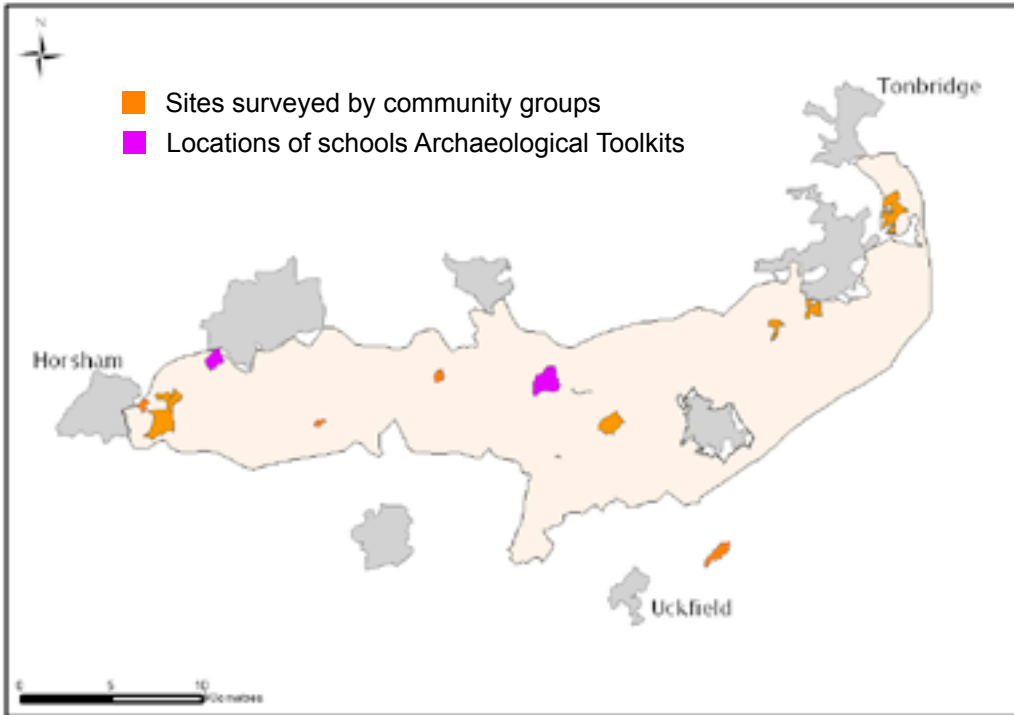
“Our methodology and standards are being applied in heritage and landscape management elsewhere in the south-east and the UK.”

East Sussex CC Archaeologist

Resource Assessments: Two consultants were appointed to undertake specific contracts, in part assessing knowledge enhancements utilising LiDAR, and involving extensive community involvement and surveying.

The first contract involved analysing the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) of the whole WFR, with an in-depth analysis of one parish – Maresfield in the centre south of the WFR. The whole WFR work confirmed the area as an essentially





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rural landscape dominated by woods, fields, heaths, and scattered settlement. The parish-level survey showed that people’s perception of their landscape closely mirrored the desk-based analysis of the historic character, although the complexity of the HLC concept was clearly a barrier to community participation.

The second assessment involved analysing existing HER data, combined with the project’s LiDAR survey, to enhance knowledge of the Ashdown Forest Pale (the boundary of the medieval deer park), and was backed up by community-led surveying of the Pale’s form and location. A fascinating suite of results was produced: the most definitive piece of work to date attempting to identify the course and surviving elements of the Pale.

Promotion and Publicity: Inherent in the HEA Project was the need for communication and presentation of both the Project and its results. The Project Officer gave numerous presentations to local history and archaeology groups, where LiDAR was clearly an extremely effective engagement tool.

To aid publicity for the HEA Project, and its diverse results and outcomes, a one-day Conference was jointly staged in February 2011 with the Sussex Archaeological Society. “The Archaeology of Wooded Landscapes” saw eight papers presented – by national specialists through to local volunteers – and was overwhelmingly positively received by the 183 delegates. Additionally, the Project Officer took a stand at a regional Wood Fair in autumn 2011: raising woodland archaeology awareness and promoting the toolkits and cab cards.

In a project as diverse as the HEA, there were inevitably numerous unplanned, but very important, outcomes. County HERs were enhanced through the site surveys undertaken to test toolkits, and HER Officers were involved in testing survey forms and trained in LiDAR interpretation. Follow-on site surveys were undertaken using LiDAR – to add value and further data to existing surveys on such sites as Ashdown Forest, Old Lodge and Broadwater Warren: often linked to Higher Level Stewardship schemes. Some sites incorporated LiDAR and archaeological research into their interpretation to visitors. And the Project even made Radio 4, when a listener’s question about enigmatic circular bank features on Ashdown Forest resulted in a six-minute location item on LiDAR and medieval rabbit farming!

For a more detailed write-up of the HEA Project please contact : county.her@eastsussex.gov.uk.



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What Does the Future Hold?

With the HEA Project delivery mainly aimed at resources' production, there has been an inevitable legacy focus from the outset. The LiDAR survey, three toolkits, Cab Cards and schools' resources have all been placed in appropriate locations for access by professionals and the public – both physically and electronically. These resources will continue to be promoted and distributed, mainly co-ordinated by East Sussex CC's Archaeology Section. Already, they are being used by other organisations as examples of best practice, such as the Woodland Trust using the toolkits for national woodland archaeology work.



"The volunteers have put in a lot of time and some have developed a real interest and knowledge in archaeology."

HEA Project Officer

Enhancement of the HERs of Kent, and East and West Sussex resulted from the various surveys conducted across the WFR; mainly as an outcome from the toolkit testing undertaken. Additionally, the profile of the HER was raised considerably by the HEA Project, and many community groups and amateur archaeologists are now more likely to feed their survey results into the HERs, ideally using the forms from the Survey Toolkit.



Numerous areas for further work and research were identified during the Project, and resources will be sought to enable these to happen beyond the work of enriched community groups. For example, many more questions have been raised about the Ashdown Forest Pale, and a community-based HLF bid is already being mooted for research into the area's fascinating medieval rabbit economy.

But the main sustainability and legacy for the HEA Project has been the strengthening and formalisation of the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum. Before project delivery, SEWAF was a fledgling, volunteer-run Forum; aiming to enhance communications between woodland owners / users and archaeologists / historians – through meetings, debate and the web.

"This project has been hugely beneficial in helping people understand their local landscape heritage and to engage with, and enjoy it more."

English Heritage

The Forum members were heavily engaged in testing toolkits and producing the Cab Cards – ensuring accessible, non-specialist language was used. In return, the HEA Project affiliated SEWAF to the Council for British Archaeology, produced a promotional flyer





for the organisation, set up a new website with a document library, set up an e-mail communication ring, and generally guided development and the establishment of a small steering committee.

SEWAF will act as a mechanism to ensure a legacy of more community engagement and partnership working with archaeologists. It is well placed to use all of the HEA products and help maintain their value, well beyond the life of the WFR LPS. Additionally, four geographically spread SEWAF members hold sets of survey equipment, available for loan to members wishing to investigate their local landscape.

"The toolkit-testing surveys revealed a history of an industry that is now almost forgotten – of charcoal-burning, processing timber by hand, iron-making as well as ancient field systems, and is real living history."

Woodlot owner in Waste Wood

"The HEA Project has opened our eyes to the opportunities for more archaeological survey work aided by your toolkits."

Balcombe History Society

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Partnerships

- ✓ Balcombe History Society
- ✓ BTCV
- ✓ Centre for Kentish Studies
- ✓ Conservators of Ashdown Forest
- ✓ Crowborough History Society
- ✓ ESAMP
- ✓ East Sussex Records Office
- ✓ English Heritage
- ✓ Esus Forestry Training
- ✓ Forestry Commission
- ✓ Friends of Ashdown Forest
- ✓ Hadlow College
- ✓ High Weald AONB Unit
- ✓ Horsham & District Archaeology Group
- ✓ Horsham District Council
- ✓ Horsham Green Gym
- ✓ Horsham Historical Society
- ✓ Kent Archaeological Society
- ✓ Kent County Council
- ✓ Kent High Weald Partnership
- ✓ North Downs Young Archaeologists' Club
- ✓ Nutley Conservation Society
- ✓ Nutley Historical Society
- ✓ Plumpton College
- ✓ RSPB
- ✓ Sussex Archaeological Society
- ✓ SEWAF (South East Woodland Archaeology Forum)
- ✓ Small Woodland Owners Group
- ✓ Sussex Wildlife Trust
- ✓ Tonbridge Historical Society
- ✓ University of Sussex
- ✓ Waste Wood Owners Group
- ✓ West Hoathly Conservation Group
- ✓ West Sussex County Council
- ✓ West Sussex Record Office
- ✓ Wealden Iron Research Group (WIRG)
- ✓ Woodland Trust

Match funding : English Heritage, plus volunteers.

Understanding and Conserving the Historic Environment		PA 29
Project Name	Value	
Highbrook Smokery Restoration	£ 14,852	
Delivery Partner	Project Aim	
Highbrook Village Hall Management Committee	To preserve a historic industrial building, to raise awareness of its former use, and to adapt it for the benefit of visitors to the area.	



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What Was Delivered?

Located next to the Church near the centre of the hamlet of Highbrook, the unlisted Smokery is thought to date from the 1780s and have been used for the smoking of locally reared meat, before the days of refrigeration. Having already fallen into a state of disrepair, it was gifted to the Village Hall Management Committee in the 1980's. Initial repairs were undertaken in 2004, prior to the WFR LPS: with a new roof to make the building watertight.

However, the Management Committee still wanted to complete a full restoration of the Smokery – to be able to open the building for public use and interpret its history – and hence this community-led project became integrated into the LPS. In 2009, the Committee appointed a building conservation specialist contractor to undertake a suite of external and internal works. These included brickwork repair and re-pointing with lime mortar; a new oak door and window; replacement internal timbers and ceiling; a new, quarry-tiled floor; and lime-plastered walls.

Key objectives of the restoration were also to make the building available for use by the public – specifically as a shelter for passing walkers on the adjacent public footpath – and to increase knowledge of the heritage importance of the building. Consequently, a bespoke circular seat was installed within the Smokery: for people to rest, admire the building, and maybe eat their picnics on a day's exploration of the Weald Forest Ridge! Additionally, an interpretation board – largely researched by the Management Committee and designed by a local artist and resident – was produced and installed. This interpreted the building's history and its heritage role in the landscape, as well as highlighting linkages to the local Rights of Way network.

Finally, an "official opening" event was staged in Spring 2010, when many of Highbrook's residents attended a ceremonial key-turning to mark the completion of this community-led project.

Key Outputs

- 1 historic building restored and opened to public access.
- 1 interpretation board installed.
- 1 public celebration event staged, with 25 attendees.

"What a relief to be able to sit somewhere comfortable waiting for summer to arrive!"

Duke of Edinburgh Award participant in (the wet) summer of 2012!

"Although its original purpose was very different, it's very satisfying that the Smokery can at last be used by local people and visitors to the village. It was even Santa's Grotto at the latest Highbrook Christmas Market!"

Highbrook Village Hall Management Committee member





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What Does the Future Hold?

With the Smokery held in trust for the benefit of the village, the Village Hall Management Committee will continue to manage the restored building in perpetuity. This includes opening up the building each weekend for public access.

Delivering the project within the WFR LPS clearly inspired the Committee members to consider and engage more with their local heritage. Whilst benefits may be mainly intangible, it is clear that heritage will be a more major consideration in their thoughts and actions - on both an individual and village basis.

“Local people have been key to the Smokery’s restoration – the very people who understand what makes their local landscapes a special and distinct part of our natural and cultural heritage.”

Mid Sussex District Council Councillor

On a site visit in 2011, English Heritage advised that the Smokery might be suitable for listing, and suggested the Village Hall Management Committee consider an application. Whilst this hasn’t been done at the time of writing, it would be a worthy outcome of the Smokery restoration project.



Partnerships

- ✓ Mid Sussex District Council
- ✓ West Sussex County Council
- ✓ Trustees of Highbrook Village Hall

Match funding: Gatwick Airport Community Trust, Mid Sussex District Council, West Hoathly Parish Council and West Sussex County Council.

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Understanding and Conserving the Historic Environment		PA 62
Project Name	Value	
Heritage Advisory Visits	£ 13,023	
Delivery Partner	Project Aim	
	To inform and enthuse land managers and parish councils about the special qualities and unique heritage of Weald Forest Ridge sites.	



What Was Delivered?

Heritage Advisory Visits were detailed heritage and land management visits offered to landowners across the whole of the Weald Forest Ridge, who owned more than one acre of land. Given the area's character attribute of scattered farmsteads and small landholdings – many sub-divided and owned by “incomers” to the High Weald countryside in recent years – this project was devised to raise awareness of the rich heritage assets that many landowners could unknowingly own, and advise them on how best to manage this unique heritage.



Delivery was through a Cultural Landscape Advisor: employed by the High Weald AONB Unit through a diverse funding package, and “bought in” at cost by the Heritage Advisory Visits project to deliver the 26 specific visits.

Through a wide range of promotional techniques – such as targeted mailouts of a promotional leaflet, e- and web articles, and including word of mouth recommendations – half-day site visits were arranged. On each visit, the landholding was walked, heritage features – such as wood banks or unimproved meadows – were identified and, very importantly, introductory advice was given on how to conserve and enhance these features. This advice could range from specialist surveys needed, grant aid available, and potential contractors to employ.

Additionally, each visit was preceded by site-specific research, using the HWU's extensive GIS resource. Hence, each visit included looking with the owner at historic maps, aerial photographs and LiDAR (see PA27, Understanding and Conserving the Historic Environment); within an extensive Powerpoint presentation detailing the historical development of the High Weald, its key character components, and extensive access to further information.

Each landowner was presented with an interactive, pdf version of their own, specific presentation. This included hyperlinks to historical information, downloads of habitat management advice (such as Natural England's Bracken Management Guide), and details of available grant aid opportunities.

Site visits' feedback was overwhelmingly positive: with all respondents prepared to recommend a visit to friends, and landowners feeling they'd almost doubled their understanding of their property's heritage value as a result of their visit.

Key Outputs

- 26 site advisory visits undertaken: looking at historic and current land management.
- 26 bespoke presentations given to land owners / managers receiving visits.

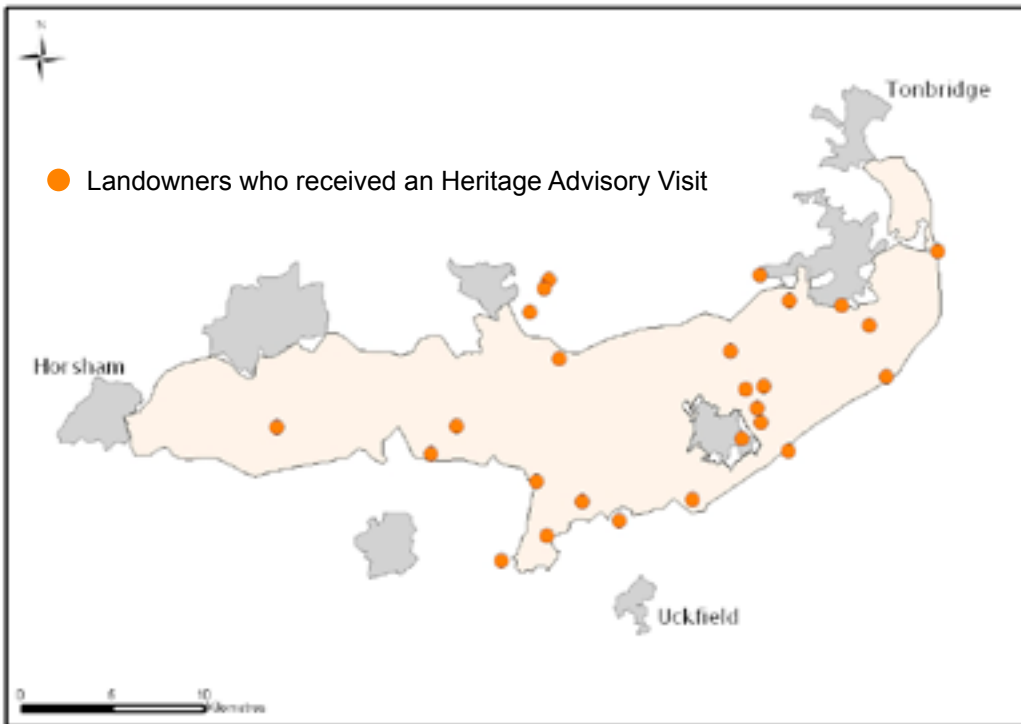
“The Cultural Landscape Advisor was very helpful and gave us a much better understanding of the history, present and best future for our land. Thanks.”

“The Advisor pointed out several historic features that I would never have noticed myself, such as medieval wood banks.”

“Some of the historic information provided was very specific and detailed. We hadn't found out anywhere near as much detail through our own research.”

Recipients of Heritage Advisory Visits





What Does the Future Hold?

The high quality, highly informative, bespoke presentations to each landowner were themselves a legacy output. But, much more importantly, they have provided a huge amount of information on grant aid, training courses and further information that beneficiaries can access into the future.

Every landowner who provided feedback said they would undertake future training events. Additionally, many will change their land management practices. Both are excellent outcomes for the project.

Already, the HWU has established a follow-on project called Living Woods – supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This focuses specifically on woodland and has been rolled out across the whole of the High Weald. The Cultural Landscape Advisor from the WFR work has been appointed as the Project Officer, ensuring continuity of knowledge and experience gained within the WFR LPS.

“One of our Management Plan objectives is to increase residents’ contributions to the AONB’s conservation and enhancement, and this project - with its direct advice to landowners - has achieved so much through such a straightforward approach.”

Director, High Weald AONB Unit



Partnerships

- ✓ East Sussex County Council
- ✓ Historic Environment Awareness Project

Match funding : Natural England and Interreg.

Contact

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