

## Wiltshire and Swindon's Historic Landscape...

In April 2012 the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project was launched. The intention of the project was to study the whole county and to identify the historic and archaeological processes which have influenced the modern landscape.

This work should help in understanding the evolution of the settlements and countryside and to identify what we can see that is typical and what is unusual.

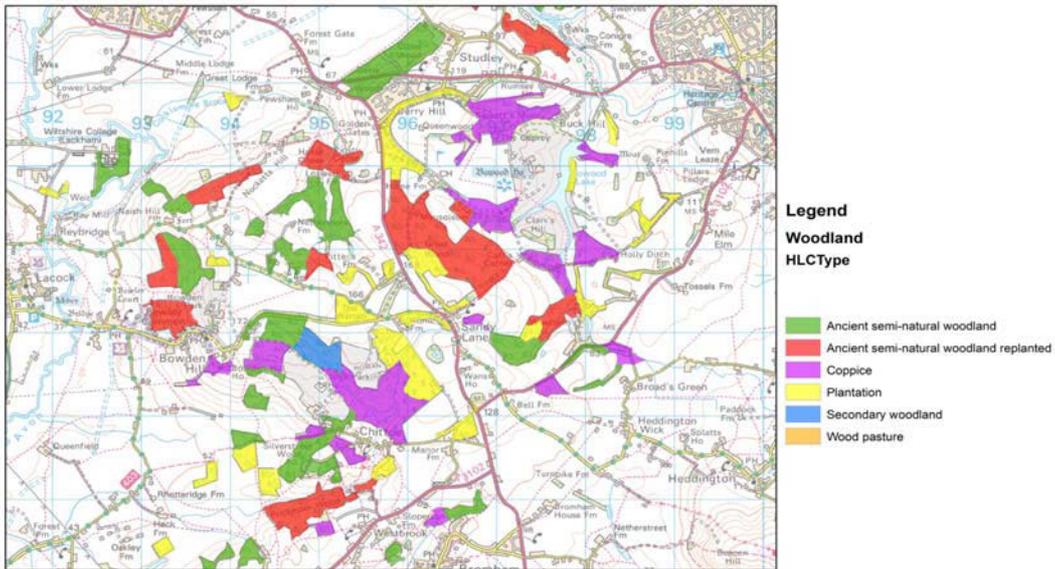


*Above: A snapshot of an industrial landscape. This is Caen Lock outside Devizes, which was part of the Kennet and Avon Canal*

*Left: An unusual agricultural landscape. These post medieval water meadows survive near Downton*

Now, two years into the project, real progress is being made in analysing the areas where we live, work and visit within Wiltshire. Currently, an area of c.194,000 ha (1940 km<sup>2</sup>) has been characterised. This includes many of the well-known urban and rural landscapes that we all know and enjoy – such as Salisbury Plain and Swindon. Data exists for many of the parishes, and the coverage is expanding all the time!

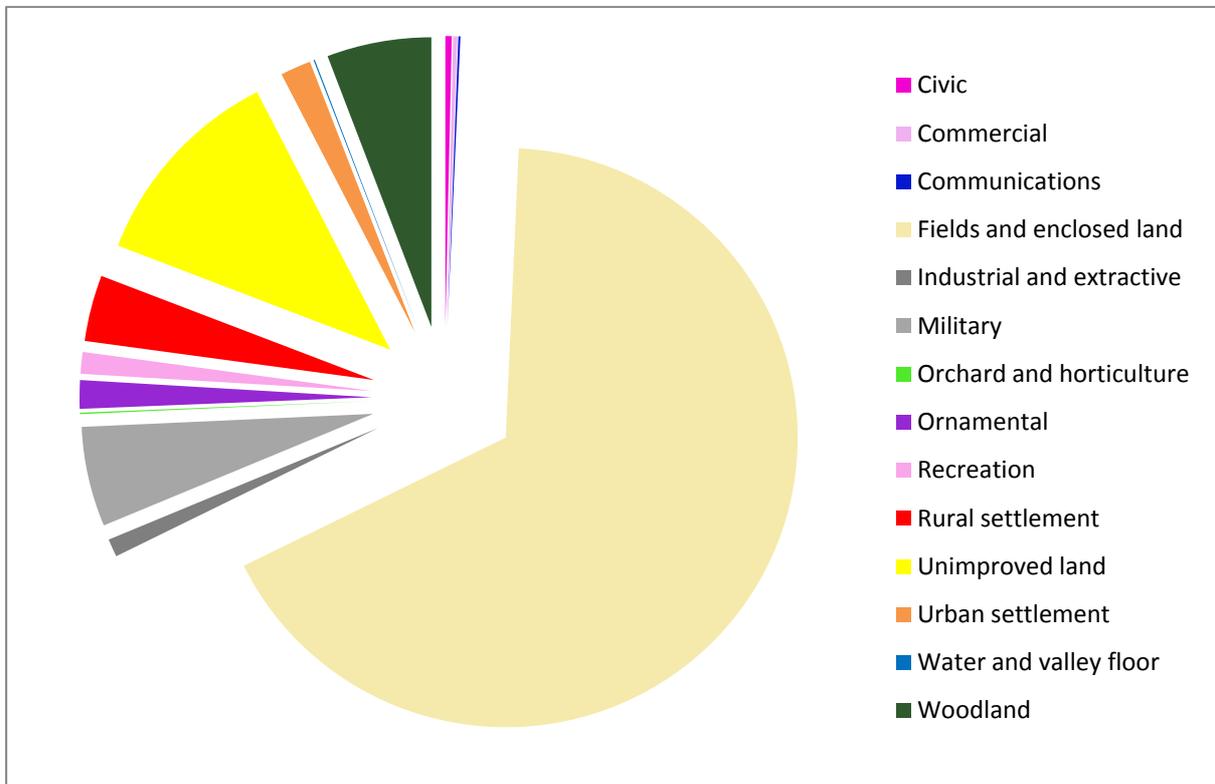
The data created by this historic landscape character study will help to shape future decision making in the county, as well as enabling management and research into the diverse landscapes that exist in Wiltshire. Once complete it should prove an interesting resource to a wide variety of researchers; and it will be made available for the use and enjoyment of all.



*A map showing the various types of woodland that have been identified by the project*

This information on the landscape has been collated from a variety of sources including aerial photographs, historic OS mapping and data held on the [Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record](http://www.wiltshireandswindon.gov.uk/EnvironmentRecord), which has a new website available online at: <http://bit.ly/1epJEt4>

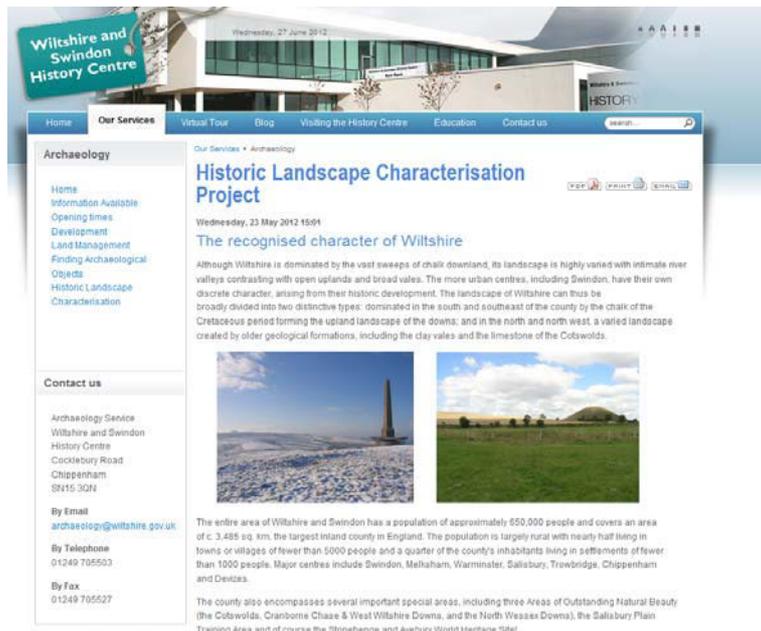
The research will go towards producing a website and hardcopy report that will provide descriptions/images of the landscape, narratives relating to its evolution, relationships between man and the landscape, challenges to our current conceptions and much more.



*The break-down of the current character of Wiltshire by broad landscape type*

So for instance, you will be able to find out where medieval strip fields survive, what areas of woodland clearance (assarting) look like, whether the military really have changed the landscape of Salisbury Plain, how Chippenham has grown since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and whether water meadows are rare. This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what you might be able to find out about Wiltshire!

In the meantime, our [preliminary project webpage is up and running](#), and is updated regularly so please check it out at: <http://bit.ly/1mIRTWi>



*The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Landscape Characterisation web page!*

If you would like more information about this exciting project or wish to [contribute some photographs of the Wiltshire landscape](#) then we'd be delighted to hear from you.

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