



Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Charactersation Project Report (Stage 1 Baseline Mapping)

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Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

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1. Project summary

This report provides a summary of the Stage One assessment for Herefordshire's Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project and respects the methodology developed in previous studies in Hampshire, Sussex, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Stage One aims to provide the initial baseline mapping of historic farmsteads, their current state and an initial appraisal of character from the mapped distribution. This work has been based on available historic and current mapped evidence. It is expected that Stage One will lead into a further programme of work (Stage Two) combining additional sources of information and fieldwork to enhance understanding of the surviving historic farmstead resource.

The principal funding partners in this study are Herefordshire Council and English Heritage.

2. Project background

Herefordshire is located within the West Midlands Region and has an area of 2,180 km². The county is comprised of 240 parishes and borders Wales to the west, Shropshire to the north, Worcestershire to the east and Gloucestershire to the south. The major river flowing through the county is the Wye, with other significant rivers such as the Lugg draining into it. The population is approximately 170,000 with a population density of 78 people per km². Agriculture remains an important sector within the county's economy.

Herefordshire contains a diverse range of geology. The pre Cambrian and Cambrian igneous rocks of the Malvern Hills, in the east, are estimated to be around 620 million years old and are amongst the oldest rocks in Britain. The geology gets progressively younger as you proceed from the northwest (Silurian) to the southeast of the county, the newest strata (Carboniferous) occurring on the fringes of the Forest of Dean. The sandstones and shales of the Devonian dominate the central part of Herefordshire.

Areas of both the Malvern Hills AONB and Wye Valley AONB lie within the county. Other distinctive landscapes include the Black Mountains, which is contiguous with the Brecon Beacons National Park; the Woolhope Dome, a Silurian limestone inlier; and the northern fringes of the Forest of Dean. Historically Herefordshire has been one of the main focal points for traditional orchards and for traditional hop yards.

The diversity of the county's geology, soils and landform, has had significant influence upon the development of agriculture. Consequently this project aims to consider how landscape character; its physiographic and cultural elements, have influenced settlement pattern and farming.

Herefordshire has a rich and varied historic environment. In terms of designated assets the county possesses 270 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 24 Registered Parks and Gardens (201 Parks and Gardens have been

recorded in the Unitary Development Plan) and 5939 Listed Buildings. This represents only a portion of the nationally and regionally important monuments in the County.

The location, form and fabric of the county's historic farmsteads reflect the long history of farming and settlement in the English countryside, and play an important role in defining landscape character. The English Heritage and Countryside Agency publication 'Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings' (2006) recognizes the important contribution that farmsteads make to the landscape, and identifies the need to understand the "character, condition and sensitivity to change" of these buildings in order to inform policy development.

Herefordshire's stock of traditional farm buildings are subject to a variety of pressures, as the farming sector restructures in the face of changing global markets, Government policy and EU-funding regimes. This stage 1 project aims to consider the percentage of historic farmsteads that retain their use as an agricultural building, that are now being utilised for a non agricultural purpose and that have been lost as a result of urbanisation and/or changes in the agricultural economy.

It was estimated that there may be about 6,500 historic farmsteads in the County, giving an average density of 3 farmsteads every square kilometre. These are poorly represented on the County's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The following table refers to the number of different farm building records currently recorded on the SMR.

Historic Farm Building	Number
Barn	381
Cow House	3
Stable	16
Granary	5
Farmhouse	74
Farm	154

The SMR building records provide basic information on building type and period, plus a description. It is clear, given the above records that:

- There is limited information to inform the sustainable development or conservation of historic farm buildings, including their distribution, character, significance and the impact of development on significance and character.
- There are inadequate tools and methodologies for consistency in development control.
- There is uncertainty among owners stemming in part from inadequate information and advice.

- There is imprecise information for targeting of resources, particularly in reference to agri-environment schemes.

3. Research Aims and Objectives

The principal aim of this project has been to provide a consistent mapping of historic farmsteads and provide an indication of the level of survival. This mapping will underpin a Stage 2 project that will provide a more detailed understanding of historic farmstead character and survival at a landscape scale across the county of Herefordshire, in order to inform policy, management objectives and interpretation. The collation and analysis of data in this project will then be applied to a range of scenarios, including:

- Enhancement of the SMR, by assessing the current record and by adding a GIS distribution map of all the historic farmstead sites identified by the project.
- Land use policy and planning (including Supplementary Planning Documents).
- Provision of information to inform Planning Advisory support and advice in Herefordshire.
- Provision of an evidence base to support Local Development Frameworks, and to provide the context and guidance for applications relating to individual historic farm buildings and their potential use/reuse.
- The sustainability of rural settlements.
- Inform targeting of Higher Level Environmental Stewardship in Herefordshire and to assist landowners, managers and advisers with applications and Farm Environment Plans.
- Methods for a more integrated approach towards understanding the significance of farmsteads in their landscape context.
- Provide a contributory source of information that can be set against the completed Herefordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation and further enhance our understanding of this characterisation

The objectives of the Stage 1 project were:

- To provide a consistent mapping of historic farmstead distribution and survival, identifying patterns at a landscape scale.
- To provide an initial analysis of historic farmsteads at a landscape level through comparison with readily available characterisation data

including the Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Joint Character Areas.

- To produce a report summarizing the results of the mapping and the initial analysis.
- To provide a baseline mapping of historic farmsteads that will underpin future analysis and inform policy and practice, through highlighting priority areas for research and monitoring, conservation, restoration or enhancement.

4. Methodology

The Stage One project has been delivered by digitizing historic farmsteads in MapInfo v.6.5 GIS, indicating the location of farmsteads using the 1st edition, 4th edition and modern Ordnance Survey (OS) maps as primary sources to create a distribution map for the county.

Digitised records have been divided into two (colour coded) categories:

- Farmsteads identified as such on the 1st Edition OS map (1884 – 1886) and/or 4th edition OS maps (1930s), but absent from modern mapping. (Red)
- Farmsteads identified on the 1st Edition OS map, 4th edition OS map and the modern OS map. (Blue)

The following types have been included in the digitised record:

- Farmsteads
- Isolated traditional farm buildings
- Common Edge Smallholdings
- Manors
- Any other residences that may have traditional farm buildings e.g. vicarages, estates.
- Digitised records have been cross-checked with the Herefordshire SMR and with the English Heritage Listed Building GIS layer.
- The digitised record has an associated attribute table that includes the Primary Record Number, location, farm name, primary map source, survival (presence on 1st edition, 4th edition and modern OS mapping), confidence level for agricultural function (On a simple scale 1-3; 1 = high confidence to 3 = low confidence), and listed building number (where appropriate).
- Additional attributes from the English Heritage Listed Building dataset have not been extracted and added to the Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads attribute table as originally envisaged in the

project design. This dataset was not available at the time of creating the attribute table and with the agreement of English Heritage has been moved to the Stage 2 phase of the project. These additional attributes will be extracted to provide a time-depth element to the initial mapping highlighting the period of the building.

- On completion of the mapping a short report has been produced. This report has provided appropriate statistical information recorded during the project and has provided an initial appraisal of observed patterns. These observed patterns have been compared against the Historic Landscape Characterisation, Landscape Character Assessment, Joint Character Areas and other physiographic information. A limited set of detailed maps has been produced, focussing in on sample areas that emphasise some of the key observations made during the project and highlighting key issues for further study.
- Jeremy Lake, English Heritage is co-ordinating an input from Peter Bibby analysing the digitised layer against available datasets highlighting present use and status (e.g. conversion of property for residential use, farm business use or commercial use). This will form a future appendix to this report.
- The Stage 1 project has provided the baseline mapping for further analysis that will characterise and explore the level of survival of farmsteads at the individual and landscape level. This Stage 2 project will be implemented on completion of Stage 1 and the methodology and mechanism for delivery will be discussed and agreed with Jeremy Lake (English Heritage Characterisation Team) and the West Midlands regional team of English Heritage.

5. Results

At the conclusion of the Stage One project 3589 records were generated increasing the number of known farmsteads and farm buildings in the Sites and Monuments Record by almost 3000 records. This was a lower figure than that envisaged in the project design reflecting the greater than predicted dominance of low farmstead density areas such as river valleys and areas subject to land re-organisation prior to the publication of the Ordnance Survey first edition. Herefordshire had been subject to a significant amount of land re-organisation prior to the Parliamentary Inclosure Acts and therefore an earlier period of historic farmstead loss is likely to have occurred that is not recorded in the current programme of mapping. Interrogation of earlier mapping, such as tithe apportionment maps is likely to produce a number of additional historic farmstead sites and a sample of parishes could be investigated at Stage 2 to assess this.

Analysing the data generated from the Stage One project and looking broadly at the statistics for Herefordshire we are able to draw some conclusions relating to density and survival of historic farmsteads within the county. The average density for the county (3588 farms/2180 km²) is 1.64 farms per square kilometre. The general pattern of distribution is a low-density spread of historic farmsteads across the county with localised areas of higher density; for example, the Golden Valley/Black Mountains and the Frome Valley (figure 2). Figure 1, which shows the density plotted against the size of parish, illustrates that it tends to be in the smaller parishes that a higher density can be found and there is a general trend that as the size of parish increases then the density of farmstead decreases.

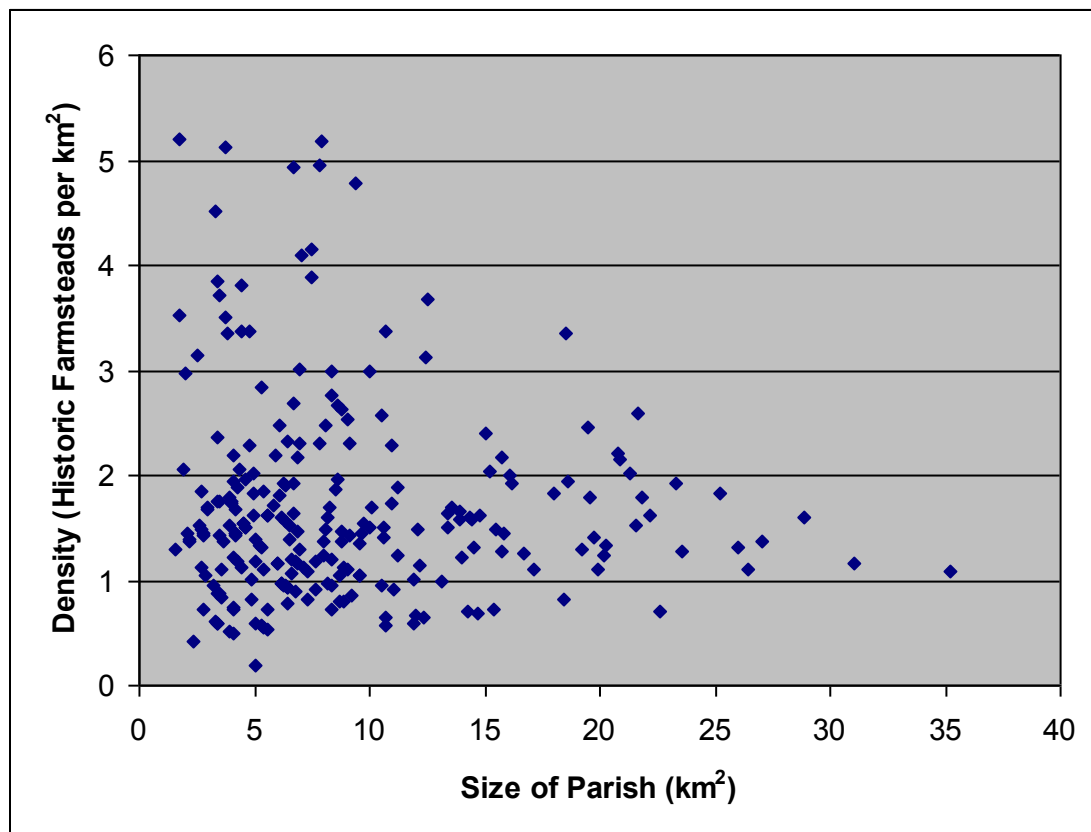


Figure 1: Farmstead density against size of parish

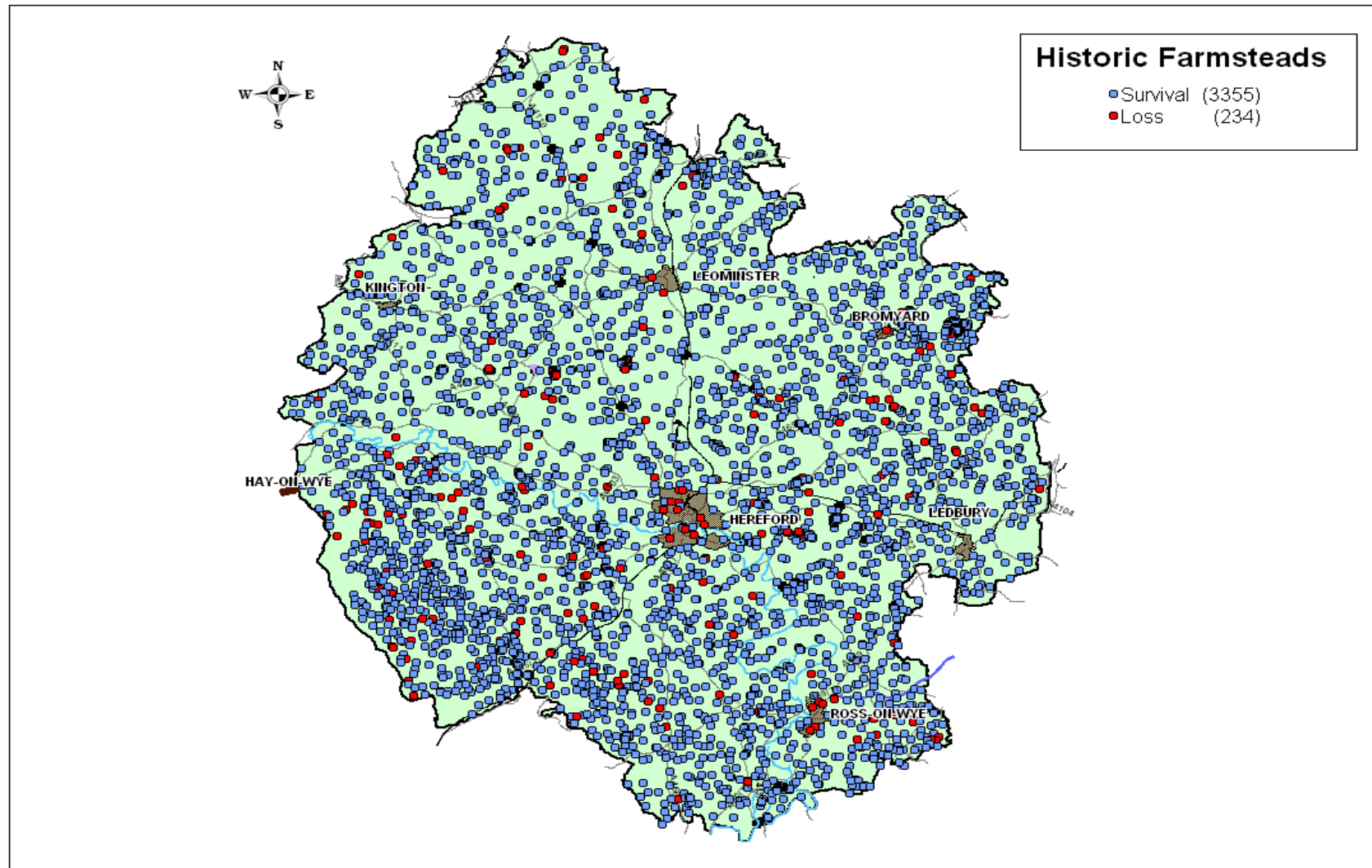


Figure 2: Historic farmstead map showing survival (blue) and loss (red)

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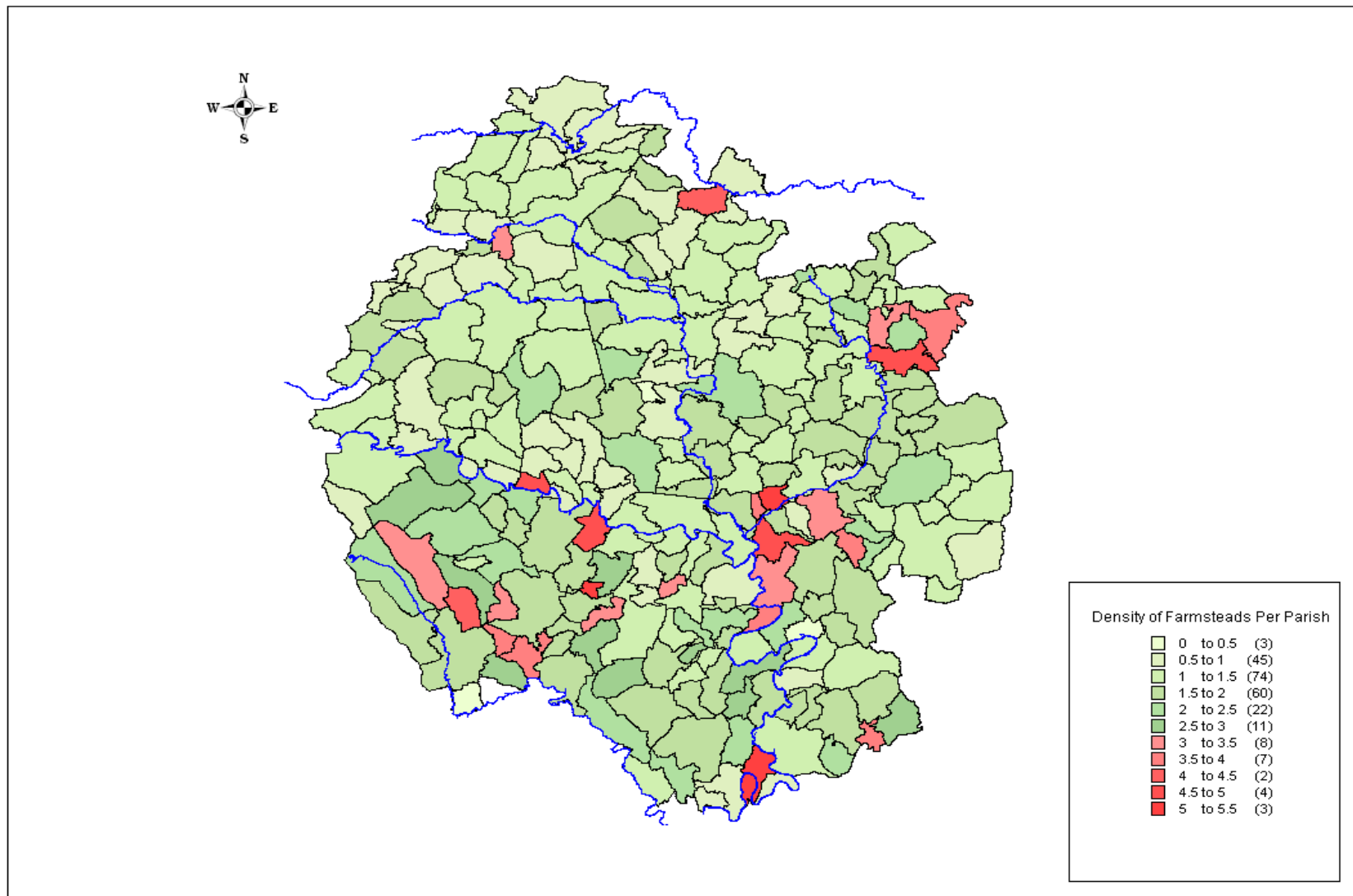


Figure 3: Historic farmstead density map per parish

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When looking at the survival of historic farmsteads it is clear that a large percentage; 93.2% of farmsteads have survived through to the present day as farmstead sites, although it should be noted that loss may be greater as the methodology used in this mapping does not take into account the possibility of loss of historic fabric through later rebuild of farm complex's or conversion to residential use. This will be examined in greater detail in Stage 2. 92.8% of all records are survivals through the whole mapping period (from 1st Edition OS to modern mapping) and this again may indicate that the principal period of loss has already occurred before the publication of the Ordnance Survey 1st edition. Loss stands at 6.8%, the bulk of loss 5.8% being in the post WWII period with the intensification of agriculture and amalgamation of farms.

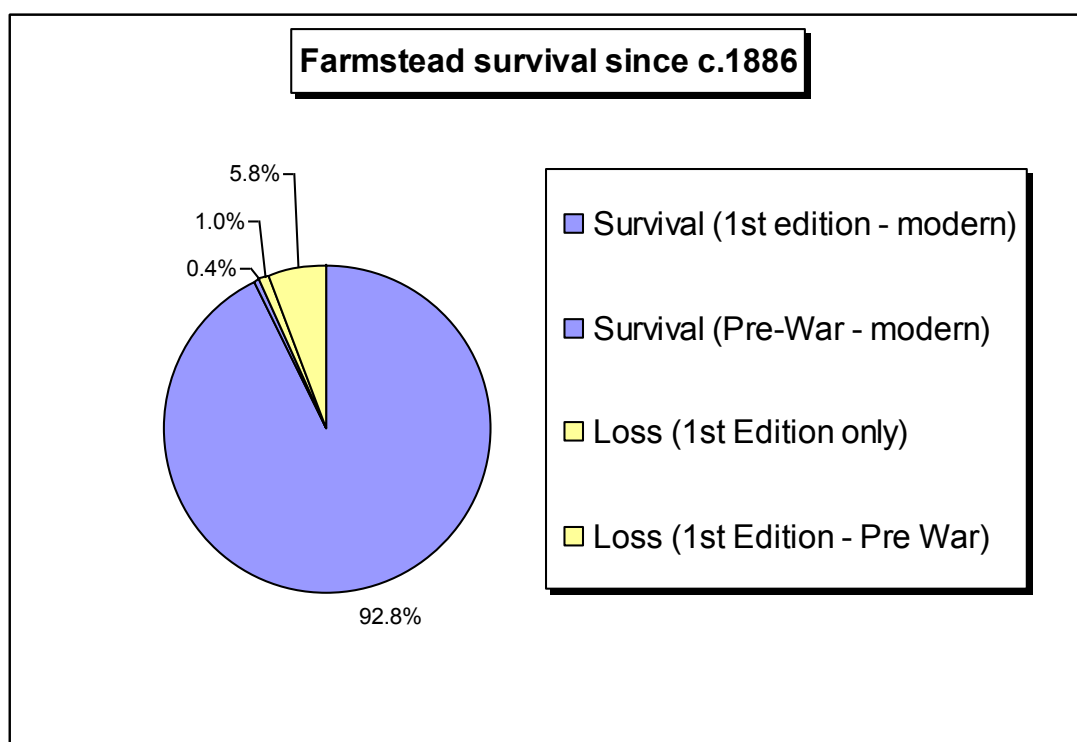


Figure 4: Farmstead survival since c.1886

On analysing the distribution of loss in the County (figure 2) it is evident that these are largely localised to discrete areas. These areas include the loss of common edge smallholdings, such as at Westhope, Weobley Marsh and Tarrington; in urban areas, such as Hereford and Ross; and in the Black Mountains and the Golden Valley. It is however, common edge smallholdings that appear to account for the majority of the losses in the county. Changes in seasonal agricultural labour and quarrying in the 20th century have meant a decline in incomes to this sector of the population.

Intensification of agriculture also contributes to this process of loss, with historic farmsteads being combined to create larger, more viable farms. Historic farmsteads in urban areas have become redundant due to loss of farmland through encroachment of urban areas into the landscape and re-development of areas to house the growing population and industry.

The higher than average initial density of historic farmsteads in the Golden Valley and the Black mountains and subsequent loss through farm amalgamation account for the loss of farmsteads in these areas.

Tarrington Common Case Study



Figure 5: 1st Edition OS Map (1887)

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The example of Tarrington Common illustrates the general pattern observed for common edge smallholdings throughout the county. A total of 20 common edge smallholdings are recorded on the 1st edition OS map (figure 5). On the last OS map prior to the Second World War (1928), 17 smallholdings remain and by the modern mapping only 8 remain. This illustrates a trend of abandonment in the post Second World War period, which is consistent with the decrease in agricultural labour requirements.

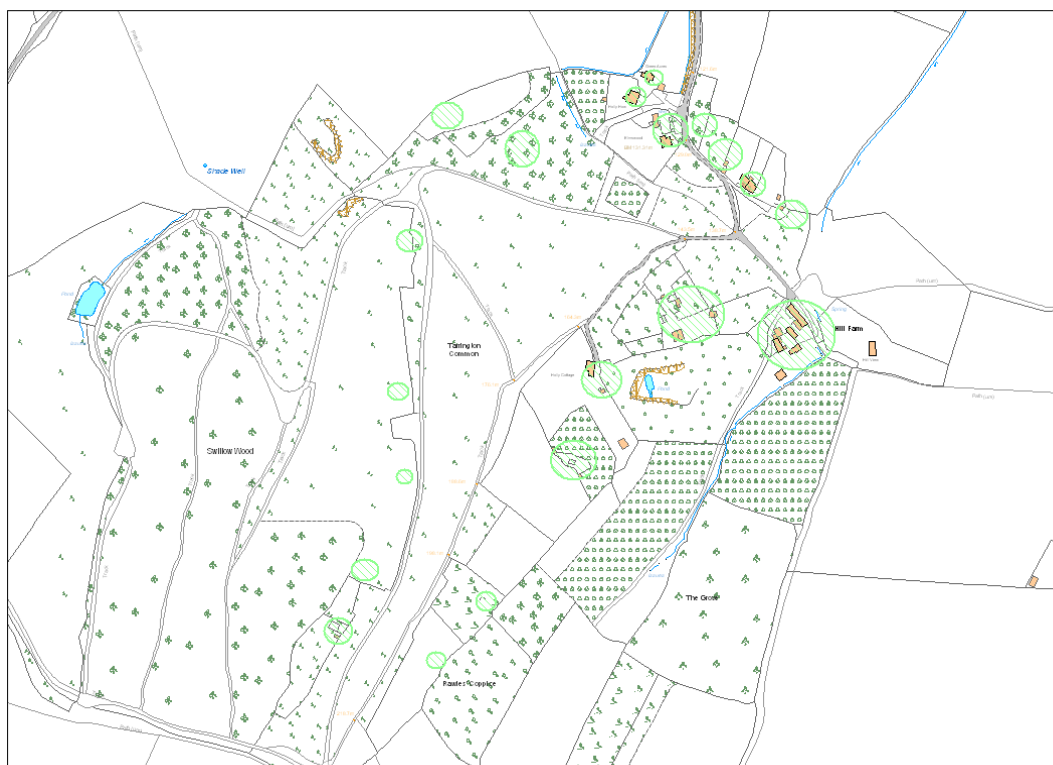


Figure 6: Modern OS Map

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Historic Landscape Character

The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) for Herefordshire was interrogated and compared against the results of the historic farmsteads mapping. Table 1 shows the density of historic farmsteads compared against the broad HLC type. It is clear from the results that the processes that have driven the inherited character of the landscape as reflected in HLC have also affected the historic farmstead density.

Table 1 and figure 9 shows the results of comparing densities of HLC types against the average density for Herefordshire (1.64 farms per square kilometre). Above-average results include codes B, D, J, U and L. The classifications for B and D are of contour defined enclosures (B) and enclosure of common arable fields (D). Both these HLC types are classed as part of the retentive HLC types. These are among the HLC types that have seen the least adaptation and re-organisation and where the ancient pattern is still dominant. They are areas where smaller land holdings with small field parcels are still apparent. J, U and L are classed as adaptive landscape types. L is the adaptation of an earlier enclosure system, principally the adaptation of areas like those coded B and D and therefore the density is lower than these areas.. J - which displays the highest proportion - comprises the intake or encroachment upon former non-enclosed land and therefore includes the high densities associated with common edge smallholdings already noted in the preceding sections. U represents a similar process to that of J with

smallholdings developing along the fringes of upland areas along the Black Mountains and Malvern Hills.

HLC Code	Count (Farmsteads)	Area / Sq km	Average density / Sq km
A	6	4.82	1.25
B	204	69.24	2.95
C	59	49.97	1.18
D	737	316.81	2.33
E	12	10.37	1.16
F	289	222.48	1.30
G	925	696.61	1.33
H	119	95.76	1.24
J	150	28.87	5.20
L	920	523.75	1.76
P	6	12.77	0.47
U	87	32.32	2.69
W	23	70.83	0.32
Z	53	34.58	1.53

Table 1: Historic Landscape Character calculated by density

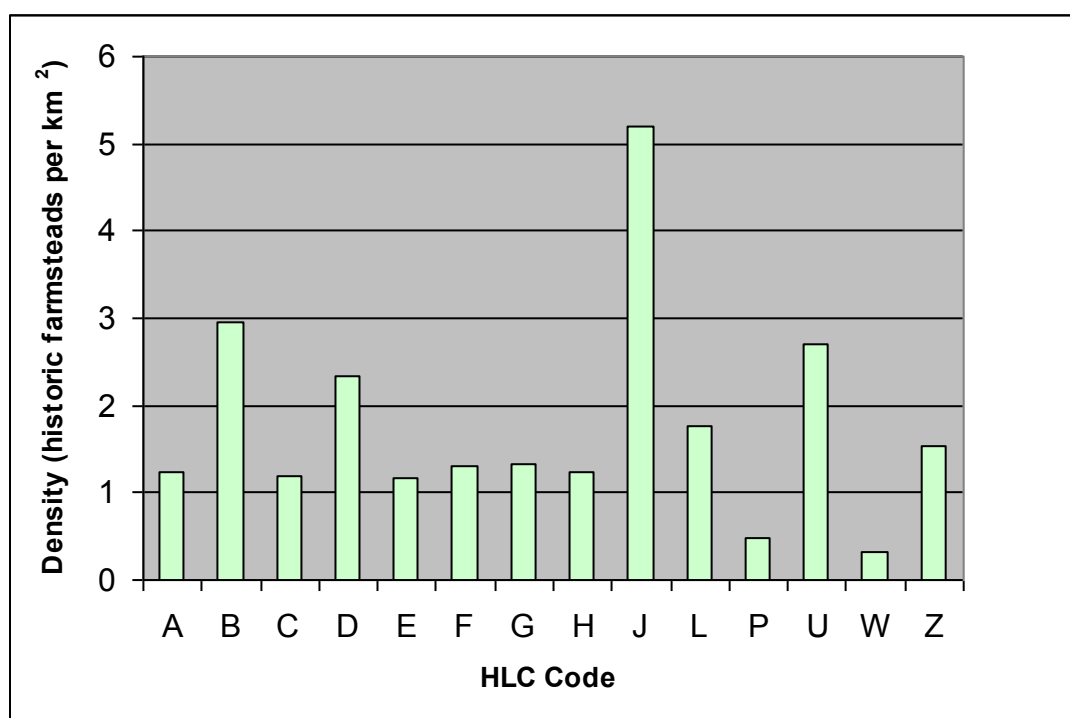


Figure 9: Chart showing historic farmstead density compared against Historic Landscape Character code

The table of results also shows that there are two HLC types that are substantially under the average, these are codes P and W. The classification P is for area's retaining historic parkland, these could include the retention of

a medieval park or a later landscape park. W or Woodland is for areas of significant woodland, which are either the retention of historic woodland or more recent plantation woodland. Both of these HLC types are well below average density, which is to be expected from the historical processes that have resulted in their creation.

Joint Character Areas

Name	No of Farmsteads	Km/Sq	Av Den Km/Sq
Black Mountains and Golden Valley	585	259.74	2.25
Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills	309	271.27	1.14
Herefordshire Lowlands	1251	847.97	1.48
Herefordshire Plateau	459	275.01	1.67
South Herefordshire and Over Severn	821	423.54	1.94
Malvern Hills	64	54.55	1.17
Forest of Dean and Lower Wye	92	41.53	2.22
Teme Valley	8	6.40	1.25

Table 2: Historic Landscape Character calculated by density

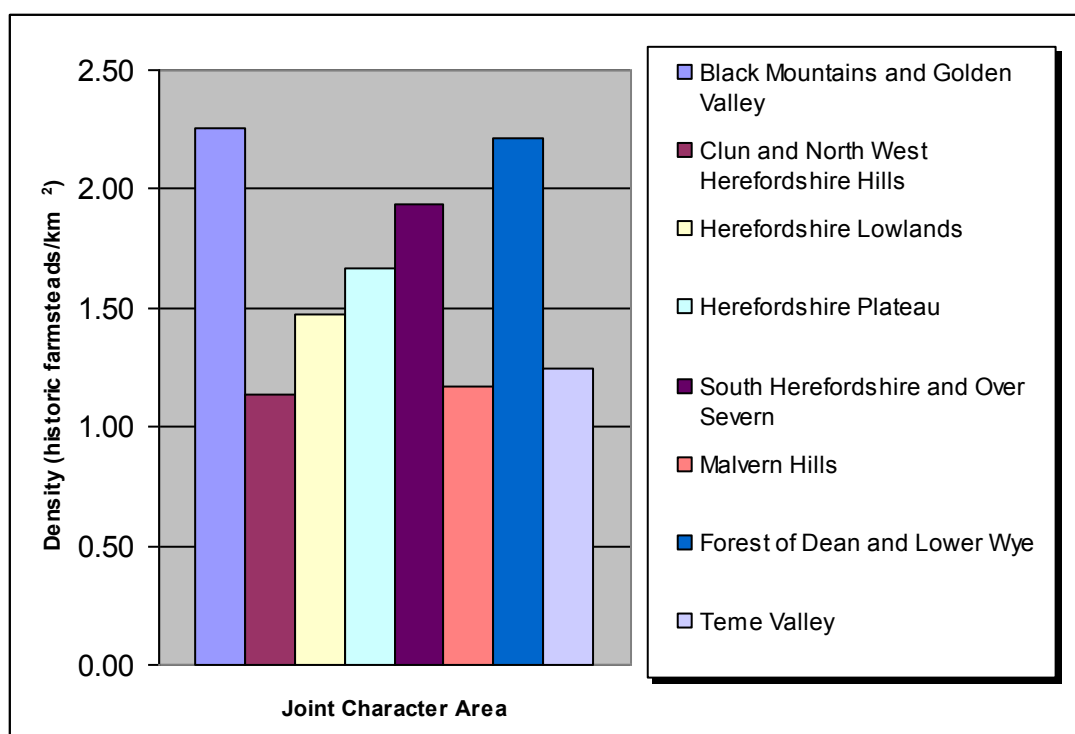


Figure 10: Chart showing Joint Character Area density

The analysis of historic farmstead density against the Joint Character Areas for Herefordshire does not identify any strong correlation. In a national context, Herefordshire stands out as having a complex mix of settlement type and density in relationship to an equally complex mix of piecemeal enclosure of dispersed blocks of common grazing and arable, and of anciently-enclosed fields. Roberts and Wrathmell (let me know if you do not have ref) note how well these patterns are preserved in a national context. So for me the patterns

pose questions resulting from a mix of factors – farm size, social and settlement structure and soil fertility (very high in Golden Valley and much of the plain). I will see if we can get national figures on densities of listed buildings and farmsteads per sq km and JCA, which would help provide context to the stats that we can then provide resulting from farmsteads mapping. Densities range from 1.14 for Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills to 2.25 for the Black Mountains and Golden Valley and are therefore not significantly distinct from the average of 1.64 for the county.

The higher density for the Black Mountains and Golden Valley JCA supports that observed both in the parish and HLC analysis.

6. Conclusions

The results of the Stage 1 mapping provide the basis for the initial appraisal of historic farmstead distributions within the county of Herefordshire and have in general supported previous understanding and datasets such as the HLC. In summary the main findings of the Stage 1 mapping are:

- 3589 historic farmsteads have been recorded for the county
- The average density is 1.64 farms per square kilometre
- The footprint of the majority of historic farmsteads (93.2 %) have survived through to the modern period
- The highest densities are in those landscapes that retain an ancient landscape pattern or represent the enclosure of common land (small strip fields, meadow and common grazing land?)
- The lowest densities are in areas of woodland and parkland, but are also lower than average in survey-planned landscapes
- The greatest amount of loss of historic farmsteads has been in areas of common edge smallholdings
- There has also been more loss of historic farmsteads on the urban fringe and in areas where there is an initially higher than average density (Black Mountains/Golden Valley area)
- The majority of loss has been in the post Second World War period

Most importantly, the Stage 1 mapping provides the initial baseline dataset that will allow further study and characterisation. This in turn will help to identify the priorities and policies for future conservation and management of the resource. It is envisaged that the current study will be followed by a second stage. This next stage will characterise the farmsteads based on plan form, introduce planning data indicating rate of loss of historic character and setting, and listed building data that will help bring a time-depth to the results. A second stage could also review in a sample of parishes the earlier tithe mapping to assess this as a potential source of additional historic farmsteads and in identifying earlier processes of loss.

7. Project Personnel

Natalie Preece, Project Archaeologist, conducted the mapping and preparation of the Stage 1 report. Neil Rimmington was responsible for project management and report editing.

8. Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of Jeremy Lake, English Heritage and members of staff from the English Heritage West Midlands region, in particular Amanda Smith. We would also like to acknowledge the co-operation of colleagues in our neighbouring counties of Worcestershire and Shropshire who have provided advice and guidance from their Stage 1 mapping of historic farmsteads.

9. Bibliography

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