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## **Historic Environment Action Plan West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge**

**Isle of Wight County Archaeology  
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**October 2008**

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## **HEAP for West Wight Downland Edge and Sandstone Ridge.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This HEAP Area lies to the south of the *West Wight Chalk Downland* with which it shares some characteristics. Part of the Area takes the form of a secondary sandstone ridge below the chalk ridge. The Area is bounded to the south by the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* and to the south and east by the *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel Area*.

Historically the settlements of Mottistone, Hulverstone, Brighstone and Shorwell exploited not only this Area but also the *West Wight Chalk Downland* and the lower-lying land within the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone*. The settlements themselves straddle the boundary between this Area and the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone*. For the sake of convenience these settlements are described in this HEAP Area document even where they fall partly outside the Area but they are also referred to in the HEAP document for the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone*.

Distinctive characteristics of this Area include its hilly topography, surviving archaeological earthworks and many Rights of Way, some of which are *hollow ways*. Historic settlements and buildings are a key characteristic of this Area, as are historic parks and gardens. Historically, there was much unenclosed rough grazing land within the Area and remnants of this survive or have been restored, for instance on Mottistone Common.

This document identifies the most significant features of the historic landscape within this Area, discusses the most important forces for change and considers management issues. Actions particularly relevant to this Area are identified from those listed in the Isle of Wight HEAP Aims, Objectives and Actions.

### **ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT**

#### **Location, Geology and Topography**

- This HEAP Area stretches from Compton in the west to Carisbrooke in the east.
  - From Compton to Shorwell it comprises a ridge of Ferruginous Sands and other Lower Greensand Series rocks to the south of the *West Wight Chalk Downland* and running parallel to the chalk ridge.
  - From Shorwell to Berry Hill the ridge (known locally as 'Gore') is composed of Upper Greensand running to the south of the Chalk.
  - From Berry Hill to Whitcombe Cross the geology is Upper Greensand lying to the east of the *West Wight Chalk Downland*. However, the topography becomes more complex, comprising both high ground and steep sided combes.
  - The southern side of the Bowcombe Valley, included within this HEAP Area, is also on the Upper Greensand but is of lower altitude.
- In the west of the Area there are fairly steep slopes, rising to a maximum altitude of 137m OD at Grammar's Copse.
- Between Shorwell and Chillerton there are steep slopes on the south side of the ridge with a maximum altitude of 148m OD at Sheard's Copse, descending to c.40m OD in the Chillerton valley and then to c.30 m OD at Sheat.
- To the north of Gatcombe there is flat low-lying land of c.40m OD close to the Bowcombe valley-floor, rising gently to 105m OD near Vayres Farm before dropping steeply to the Whitcombe Road.
- There is no running water on the higher ground within this Area.
  - Settlement occurs on the spring line or where streams occupy small valleys e.g. at Brighstone.
- Soils are poor and acid between Compton and Berry Hill. From Chillerton to Carisbrooke soils are light and on the eastern edge of the Bowcombe Valley they are fertile, much of the agricultural land being classified as Grade 2.
- This Area includes a very short segment of coast at Compton Bay.

## Defining Attributes and Principal HEAP Types

- The western part of this Area comprises enclosed fields (mainly of *small-medium* and *medium* size), open land on Mottistone Common, plantation woodland at Brook Hill and Grammar's Common and some uncultivated slopes between Brighstone and Shorwell.
- A narrow strip of unploughed grassland survives at the crest of the ridge to the east of Shorwell but most of the land comprises enclosed arable fields of *small-medium*, *medium* and *large* size.
- Between Berry Hill and Sheat Manor, on the downland-edge slope around Chillerton, the land is mainly in arable use with *small-medium* and *medium* sized fields but there are some smaller, irregularly shaped fields within a network of hollow-ways and tracks.
- Small fields around Gatcombe graduate into the *small-medium* and *large* arable fields on the flat land of the Bowcombe Valley.
- The Area as a whole contains a mix of *field pattern* sizes that is broadly comparable with that for the Isle of Wight as a whole
  - However, the percentage of *large field patterns* (by area) is lower than for the Island as a whole (14% compared with 21%).
  - This reflects the difficulty of creating large fields on sloping ground.
- In the western part of this Area a string of settlements lie at the base of the sandstone ridge on the spring-line.
  - These settlements of Hulverstone, Mottistone, Brighstone and Shorwell are at the interface with the South West Wight Coastal Zone.
  - The only farmstead isolated from other settlement is Compton.
- In eastern part of Area the settlements of Chillerton and Gatcombe lie in valleys between the chalk and the higher ground of the sandstone ridge.
  - There are *dispersed* farmsteads at the southern edge of the sandstone slope on the interface with the *South Wight Sandstone and Gravel Area* (Ramsdown Farm, Lower Rill, Upper Rill and Loverstone Farm).
  - There are a few *dispersed* farmsteads and houses to the north of Gatcombe (Garstons, Vayres Farm, Lake Farm and).
- Significant historic houses include Brook Hill House, Mottistone, Northcourt, Gatcombe, Sheat and Great Whitcombe Manor.
  - Mottistone and North Court have notable gardens whilst Gatcombe is set in parkland.
  - Early 20<sup>th</sup> century mansion of Brook Hill House is surrounded by wooded grounds.
- The southern edge of this Area is defined by the B3399 which runs through Hulverstone, Mottistone, Brighstone and Shorwell.
  - Minor roads define the southern and eastern edges of the Area between Berry Hill and Sheat and from Sheat to Whitcombe Cross.
  - Stawberry Lane (Mottistone) and Lynch Lane (Brighstone) cross this area, linking the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* with the *West Wight Downland*.
- Rights of Way run along the sandstone ridge from Compton to Brook, from Combe Farm to Shorwell and from Shorwell to land above Sheard Copse.
- In the western part of the Area many Rights of Way run from south to north across the sandstone ridge, often forming distinctive *hollow ways*.
  - Historically these Rights of Way connected the cultivated lands of the South West Wight Coastal Zone with manorial common grazing on the downs.
- The long distance 'Shepherds Trail' runs along Dark Lane between Carisbrooke and Gatcombe and continues past Gatcombe and Chillerton.
  - A short section of the 'Worsley Trail' also passes through this area.
- More Rights of Way are named in this Area than in other HEAP Areas.
- There are forestry plantations on Brook Hill, Mottistone Common (now largely cleared) and Grammar's Common.
  - Small area of *ancient woodland* at Sheard's Copse. Small copses on south-east slope below Berry Hill.

- Ornamental and planted woodland around Gatcombe House. Small 'hangars' dominated by beech above Whitcombe Road.
- Valley-floor HEAP types have been identified only beside the Buddle Brook, north of Brighstone (*secondary woodland* and enclosed pasture/meadow) and beside Lake Farm, near to Whitecroft (enclosed pasture/meadow).

### Principal Historical Processes

- At the end of the Ice Age Britain's climate warmed and most of the landscape became covered in woodland.
- Earliest *Neolithic* farmers on the Isle of Wight cultivated small areas of cleared woodland on chalk downs and greensand from 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.
  - Neolithic people in this Area constructed Mottistone Longstone (a *long barrow* with *megalithic* entrance stones)
- Much of the chalk and greensand remained wooded until the succeeding *Bronze Age* from c. 2300 BC when extensive clearance took place, allowing grazing and cultivation.
  - Several *round barrows* in this Area provide evidence of Bronze Age land use.
  - Loss of tree cover led to leaching of impoverished sandstone soils and creation of heathland in some places, such as Mottistone Common.
  - The enclosure of possible *Iron Age* date on Castle Hill may be evidence for stock farming in this period.
  - Rock Roman villa was sited on the northern edge of this HEAP Area at the interface with the *West Wight Chalk Downland*.
  - An Anglo-Saxon cemetery of late 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century date has recently been discovered near Shorwell and suggests the possibility of early Anglo-Saxon settlement nearby.
  - In Anglo-Saxon period the main estate centres of West Wight were situated on the edge of the *West Wight Chalk Downland* (Calbourne, Bowcombe) or beside tidal inlets in the *Northern Lowlands* (Freshwater, Shalfleet).
  - However, several settlements in the western part of this Area have 'tūn' place-name elements (Compton, Hulverstone, Brighstone and Limerstone.)
  - Tūn is an Old English place-name element and generally has the meaning of 'farmstead'.
  - Margham (forthcoming 8.8.1) has linked tūn place-names on the Isle of Wight with the fragmentation of large Mid-Saxon estates when farms subsidiary to the main estate centres became more independent.
- The name of Mottistone does not include the tūn place-name element but means 'the stone of the speaker(s) or pleader(s)' (Kökeritz 1940, 165)
  - The 'stone' was probably the *Neolithic* Long Stone at Mottistone which was apparently being used as a moot or assembly point in early Anglo-Saxon times.
- The manors of Gatcombe, Whitcombe, Sheat, Loverston, Compton, Combe (in Brighstone) and possibly Brighstone itself are recorded in Domesday Book.
  - The Brighstone and Gatcombe/Chillerton areas are amongst the 2km squares on the Island showing relatively high 11<sup>th</sup> century populations, as recorded in Domesday Book (Margham 1988, 56-60).
- The parishes of Brook, Mottistone, Brighstone, Shorwell and Gatcombe, all including land in this HEAP Area, were created in medieval times by the sub-division of larger parish units.
  - To the south of Gatcombe there were detached portions of the parishes of Carisbrooke and Wootton. The settlement of Chillerton was divided between these two parishes.
- By the time Gatcombe was taken out of Carisbrooke Parish an *open-field system* had been developed on the sloping land occupying the eastern side of the Bowcombe Valley. The dog-legged boundary between the two parishes ran between blocks of *open-field* strips.
  - The cultivation of strips of land on the steep slopes to the south of Chillerton led to the creation of *strip lynchets*.
  - Much of the *open-field* belonging to settlements in the western part of this HEAP Area was in the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* but there also seem to have been some blocks of *open-field* within this Area e.g. to the west of Northcourt.

- This Area is closely linked to the *West Wight Chalk Downland* and in medieval and early post-medieval times much of this Area and of the *West Wight Chalk Downland* was unenclosed grazing land.
  - Tenants of Mottistone Manor, for example, had rights of common grazing both on Mottistone Down (within the *West Wight Chalk Downland*) and on Mottistone Common, within this Area (Currie 1999, 22).
  - The parish boundary between Mottistone and Brighstone passed through the middle of Grammar's Common and therefore tenants of one of the Brighstone manors as well as tenants of Mottistone Manor must have had rights of common grazing here.
- Largest settlement within Area is Brighstone.
  - The OS 1793 map shows Brighstone as *polyfocal* in form, including a nucleated cluster around the church and other settlement clusters to the west and south of this main settlement focus.
  - The earliest part of Brighstone Church dates from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 98).
- Shorwell was a spring-line settlement focussed on Northcourt Manor and on the church, which is first mentioned between 1181 and 1185 when it was in the possession of Lyre Abbey (Hockey 1981 no 174).
  - The OS 1793 map shows Shorwell as a *double-row settlement* extending from North Court to the church.
- Mottistone is shown as a church-manor complex on the OS 1793 map with nine buildings beside the main road, including the church and manor house.
  - The church may have had Norman origins although no part of the present structure predates the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 163-164).
- By the time of the OS 1793 map Gatcombe consisted of two elements, a church-manor complex and an *interrupted-row settlement*.
  - The church may have originated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century or earlier although nearly all of the surviving fabric is of later date (Hockey 1982, 6).
- The OS 1793 map shows Chillerton as an interrupted-row settlement.
- Only four houses are shown at Hulverstone on the OS 1793 map (a decline from the six buildings mentioned in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Royal Survey) but at least seven buildings are shown at Limerstone.
  - Evidence of early quarrying to south west of Carisbrooke Castle at Rancombe and Gatcliff and to south of castle near Vayres Fam may be linked with work on Carisbrooke Castle in medieval and Tudor times (Tomalin 2003).
  - Sand pits on Mottistone Common and near Coombe Farm cannot be dated but do not appear to be shown on early maps.
- Enclosure of *open-field*, open grazing land and commons took place in post-medieval period and most of the open fields within this Area had been enclosed by 1793.
  - The *demesne* land to the south-east of Bowcombe Farm had been laid out as large enclosed fields by 1560 (Notes on Royal Survey IWCRO).
  - In the former open field shared between the parishes of Carisbrooke and Gatcombe the position of individual strips can be seen in the complex parish boundary shown on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6 inch map of 1866.
  - Common open grazing still existed in 1793 on Brook Hill, Mottistone Common, Rowdown, and to the west of Shorwell.
  - Part of Grammar's Common within Brighstone Parish had been enclosed and divided into small plots by 1793. These plots were presumably shared out between tenants with rights of common grazing.
  - The Mottistone part of Grammar's Common is shown as rough ground on the OS 1793 map but had been divided into closes by this date.
- In 1567 Thomas Cheke rebuilt the main wing of Mottistone Manor House. A recent study suggests that the south wing may be slightly later (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 165).

- Medieval manor houses were the homes of local lords but also functioned as working farms from which the manorial land was managed.
  - Compton Farm, Limerstone Farm and West Court (the latter two buildings lying just beyond the southern boundary of this HEAP Area) have retained their character as working farms to the present day.
  - Other manor houses were transformed into grander houses in post-medieval times.
- Sheat Manor (Gatcombe) is a moderate-sized manor house built by the Urry family c.1605 (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 151-152).
- The manor of North Shorwell or North Court was held by the nuns of Lacock from the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the Dissolution.
  - The present house at North Court was built in 1615 by Sir John Leigh on the site of an earlier manor house and is the grandest surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century house on the Island (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 274).
  - There are surviving garden features at North Court dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The overall garden design is of late 18<sup>th</sup> century date with later modifications.
- The mansion house at Gatcombe was built by Sir Edward Worsley in 1751 on the site of an earlier manor house, using locally quarried Upper Greensand (Brinton 1987, 26).
  - A large area of parkland is shown on the OS 1793 map, much of it to the east of the public highway.
  - Parkland and grounds were re-organised by 1843. Public highway was moved eastwards away from house and parkland area reduced.
- In 1861 the Mottistone Estate was bought by Charles Seely, a wealthy incomer living at nearby Brook House (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 163).
  - In 1925 General Jack Seely (grandson of Charles Seely and later the 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Mottistone) commissioned his architect son John Seely to restore Mottistone Manor, then used as a farmhouse.
  - The Mottistone estate was acquired by the National Trust in 1963.
  - Mottistone Manor Garden was created by Lady Nicholson in the 1970s.
- Brook Hill House was built from 1901 for Sir Charles Seely (son of Charles Seely of Brook House). The architect was Sir Aston Webb.
  - The house was built on the rough open grazing land of Brook Hill.
  - The grounds incorporated the existing Hill Plantation to the north of the house and additional woodland was planted to the west of the house.
- Forestry Commission planting on Mottistone Common and Grammar's Common took place in first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Plantations on Mottistone Common were damaged by storms of 1987 and 1990 and most trees were cleared subsequently.
  - Trees were removed from archaeological monuments such as Mottistone Longstone, the large round barrow on Mottistone Common and the Castle Hill enclosure by the National Trust and Wight Conservation..
  - Several new archaeological earthworks were discovered as a result of tree clearance.
  - Heathland is now being re-established by the National Trust and Wight Conservation on Mottistone Common and Castle Hill.
- Agricultural intensification in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the loss of field boundaries in some places, particularly in the Bowcombe Valley and to the south-east of Chillerton.
- Residential growth at Brighstone, Shorwell and Chillerton in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century has enlarged these villages and modified their historic character.

#### **Archaeology and Built Environment (Details in HER)**

- The Longstone on Mottistone Common - remains of a *Neolithic long barrow* with surviving entrance stones.
- Large *Bronze Age round barrows* on Mottistone Common and Grammar's Common. Remains of three Bronze Age round barrows on ridge to east of Shorwell
- Earthwork at Castle Hill - possible Iron Age stock enclosure (Currie 2003).

- Buried remains of Rock Roman Villa, excavated in 1970s.
- Ploughed Anglo-Saxon cemetery site of late 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century date discovered recently near Shorwell. Evidence for at least eight graves with early Anglo-Saxon grave assemblages (DCMS 2007).
  - Secondary Pagan Anglo-Saxon burial recorded in the *Bronze Age* burial mound of Sheards Barrow to the east of Shorwell.
- Remains of medieval field system with *strip lynchets* (cultivation terraces) to south of Chillerton.
- Medieval parish churches, all with later additions and restoration, at Mottistone, Brighstone, Shorwell and Brighstone.
- Historic buildings within this Area are mainly of local Greensand, including the distinctive orange-brown Ferruginous Sandstone.
  - Mottistone Manor, North Court, Westcourt and Sheat Manor are of 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006).
  - Limerstone Manor and Compton Farmhouse also date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Mansion houses at Gatcombe and Brook are of 18<sup>th</sup> century date.
- Chalk blocks are commonly used within this Area for cottages and farm buildings, particularly at Brighstone, Hulverstone and Limerstone (Brinton 1987, 26).
  - Many cottages within historic settlements have thatched roofs.
  - There are examples of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century estate cottages within this Area (e.g. at Shorwell and Mottistone).
- Great Whitcombe Manor is a brick and stone house of 18<sup>th</sup> century date.
- Brook Hill House is of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

#### Relationships with other HEAP Areas

- This HEAP Area has a close relationship with the *West Wight Chalk Downland* and with the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone*.
- The manors within this Area held land on the *West Wight Chalk Downland* where manorial tenants had common grazing rights.
  - Individual downs are still named after the manor to which they belonged (e.g. Compton, Mottistone, Brighstone, Limerstone, Northcourt and Chillerton Downs).
- Drove ways led from the settlements, farms and fields onto the downs, creating the present Rights of Way pattern.
- Much of the medieval *open-field* land belonging to the settlements within this Area was situated in the *South-West Wight Coastal Zone* and is described in the HEAP document for that Area.

#### Time-Depth

- Restored heathland on Mottistone Common and Castle Hill provides a link with a historic landscape that originated in prehistoric times, continued to be a significant feature in the medieval landscape and survived until 20<sup>th</sup> century afforestation.
  - Earliest archaeological features on this restored heathland are the *Neolithic* Mottistone Longstone, a large *Bronze Age round barrow* on Mottistone Common and the possible Iron Age enclosure on Castle Hill.
- The origins of existing settlements on the southern edge of this Area can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times by means of place-name evidence.
  - However, there are likely to have been spring-line settlements in this Area in prehistoric times, exploiting grazing land both within this Area and on the chalk downs.
- Trackways may have linked prehistoric settlements with the chalk downs.
  - It is possible that the *hollow way* leading from Mottistone to the Longstone on Mottistone Common (Right of Way BS 43) may follow a prehistoric route but only the southern part of this route appears to be shown in the same position as today on the OS 1793 map.

- Many existing Rights of Way are *hollow ways* that are probably of great age although usually they cannot be accurately dated.
- These *hollow ways* were almost certainly in use by medieval times.
- Many footpaths, bridleways and byways marked on the Isle of Wight Council's Definitive Rights of Way Map are shown on the OS 1793 map.
- Several Rights of Way within this Area are named on the OS 25" map of 1909 or on the OS 1:10,000 maps dating from the 1970s/1980s.
  - Common Lane seems to have been a droveway leading on to Grammar's Common.
  - Rowdown Lane leads from Brighstone village to Rowdown, an area of rough open grazing on the sandstone ridge.
- Hoarstone Lane also leads up to Rowdown.
  - The name hints at a possible prehistoric monument in this area, although none exists today.
  - However, in 1919 a possible Bronze Age urn cremation was found in a slight bank at the top of Hoarstone Lane.
  - The Swainston Estate Survey of 1630 refers to a 'greate Broad Stone' in a barrow on the top of Limerstone Shute but 'Limerstone Shute' is more likely to be Right of Way BS 32 than Hoarstone Lane.
- Pumpfold Lane is a continuation of Hoarstone Lane lead from Rowdown to the chalk ridge. It may have been associated with a medieval pinfold or animal pound.
  - In medieval times Hoarstone Lane and Pumpfold Lane may have formed a droveway along which grazing animals could be transferred from the chalk downs or Rowdown to the open fields south of Limerstone Road, when these fields were opened to grazing animals after the harvest.
  - Rights of Way BS 32 and SW9 may have had a similar function.
- Hollow Lane to the south of Chillerton, as its name suggests, is a pronounced *hollow way*.
  - The byway named on the 1:10,000 OS map as Snowdrop Lane leads from Gatcombe onto the chalk downs but this name is given to an adjacent track on the 1907 OS 6" map.
  - Dark Lane runs from Whitcombe Cross to Gatcombe and is a *hollow way* for much of its length. In medieval times it may have been a significant route from Carisbrooke to Gatcombe.
- Some sections of medieval parish boundaries are preserved as field boundaries.
  - Right of Way BS 45 preserves a short section of the Brook/Shalfleet Parish Boundary.
- The plans of existing settlements may be of medieval origin, although first clearly depicted on the OS 1793 map and modified by later infilling and enlargement.
- Compton Farm, Chillerton Farm and Loverstone Farm may be on the sites of manorial halls that existed by the time of Domesday Book but other farmsteads away from main settlements are first recorded in medieval or post-medieval times.
- In the Bowcombe Valley and to the west of Shorwell surviving boundaries and Rights of Way define areas of medieval *open-field* that were enclosed in the post-medieval period.
  - *Strip lynchets* to the east of Chillerton are the remains of medieval *open-field strips* much damaged and reduced by 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture.
  - Some field boundaries were created when areas of common grazing were enclosed (e.g. to the east of Grammar's Common).
- Earliest buildings are the parish churches, of medieval origin with later additions.
  - Earliest secular buildings are of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century date but many farmsteads and cottages date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as do the mansion houses of Gatcombe and Great Whitcombe, whilst Brook Hill House dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Gardens at North Court include formal elements possibly of 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century date but the main design is of late 18<sup>th</sup> century date.
  - Surviving area of parkland at Gatcombe was originally laid out in 18<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Mottistone Manor Gardens were created in 1970s and modified c.2005.

- Forestry plantations and *amalgamated fields* provide evidence for 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape change.

### **Contribution of Historic Landscape to Present Landscape Character**

- Present landscape of this HEAP Area exists as direct result of historic processes over a long period of time and many of these processes have left visible traces in the landscape (see section on time-depth)
- Archaeological monuments, historic Rights of Way, open land, field patterns, historic settlement patterns, historic buildings and historic parks and gardens contribute significantly to present landscape character

### **Values, Perceptions and Associations**

- Many people perceive this HEAP Area and the *West Wight Chalk Downland* as having a similar character. They merge into one another and share characteristics such as easy access on Rights of Way, tranquillity and fine views.
- The high ground of the West Wight, including this HEAP Area, is perceived as a valuable tourist asset
- Surviving areas of open land, particularly Mottistone Common, are valued for their ecological and historic landscape significance
- The Long Stone at Mottistone is valued and visited by the public as well as by archaeologists.
- Mottistone Manor Garden is appreciated both by local residents and by tourists.
- Ship carvings on buildings made of chalk blocks are associated with this Area, particularly with Brighstone village.
  - The carved ships date chiefly from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century and may be the work of local fishermen and other sailors (Jones 1889, 30-31).
- A small rocky outcrop to the south of Limerstone Down and immediately west of bridleway BS 32 marks the site of an old stone quarry.
  - 'Coombe Tower' is marked here on the 1866 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 6" OS map, as is the quarry.
  - An undated photograph in the *HER* shows the tower to be a large cairn.
  - It appears to have been erected by Elizabeth Bull (responsible for the landscaping of North Court garden from c.1800) in memory of her sister Catherine (Williams 2008).
  - It was dismantled in World War 2 and today the site is indicated only by greensand rubble.
  - It has been suggested that Combe Tower was the site of a beacon named as 'La Wyrde' in a document of 1324 (Kökeritx 1940, lxxviii).

### **Research and Documentation**

- Historic Environment Record is basic resource for archaeology, built environment and historic landscape character (includes HLC layer).
- Archaeological and Historical Landscape Survey of Mottistone Manor Estate owned by National Trust (Currie 1999).
- Shorwell Parish Landscape Character Assessment (Isle of Wight AONB Partnership 2005).
- A leaflet on Shorwell's buildings has been published by the Isle of Wight Conservation and Design Team following a community project (Isle of Wight Council 2007)

### **Amenity and Education**

- Tranquil rural Area.
- Good access via Rights of Way, making this Area a valuable amenity for walkers, although some Rights of Way may not be as well known and well used as others.
- No commercial tourist attractions within the Area although Mottistone Manor Gardens (owned by the National Trust) are open to the public.

- However, the settlements of Shorwell, Brighstone, and Hulverstone are very well visited and valued by tourists for their historic buildings and facilities such as pubs, tea gardens and shops.
  - Brighstone Museum is a community-run facility telling the story of village life and farming.
- Historic landscape offers good opportunities for field education of both school children and adults due to the existence of archaeological earthworks, time-depth, excellent views of other HEAP areas and the interaction, historically, of this HEAP Area with adjacent areas.
- Good opportunities for community projects interpreting this HEAP Area by creation of trails using local Rights of Way.

### **Features of Particular Significance within this HEAP Area**

- Mottistone Common.
- Mottistone Longstone, Mottistone Common Bronze Age *round barrow*, Grammar's Common Bronze Age *round barrow* and Castle Hill enclosure.
- The Pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery discovered recently near Shorwell is of great significance and requires detailed academic study within a national context.
- Historic Rights of Way, including *hollow ways*.
- Historic settlements of Mottistone, Brighstone, Shorwell, Gatcombe, Chillerton and dispersed farmsteads.
- The built environment of the historic settlements within this Area is particularly strong and traditional in character. It includes:
  - Parish churches of medieval origin at Shorwell and Gatcombe
  - Concentration of high status buildings within, or adjoining this Area, including the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century manor houses of Mottistone, Northcourt, West Court, Limerstone, Sheat and Hulverstone, 18<sup>th</sup> century mansions such as Gatcombe House and Brook House, and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Brook Hill House
  - Distinctive vernacular farmsteads and cottages.
- Significant historic parks and gardens at Northcourt, Gatcombe and Mottistone.
- Fields on east side of Bowcombe Valley where existing boundaries relate to medieval and post-medieval land use, although much modified.
- Remains of *strip lynchets* to the south of Chillerton.

## **VULNERABILITY**

### **Rarity and Typicality**

- The Longstone is one of only three *Neolithic* burial monuments on the Isle of Wight.
- Regenerating heathland of Mottistone Common will contribute to a habitat that is now rare on the Isle of Wight, although once common.
- *Strip lynchets* to the south of Chillerton are an example of an earthwork type that can now be seen in only a limited number of places on the Isle of Wight.
- Early garden features at North Court, including grass terraces and mount, are rare nationally and unique on the Isle of Wight.

### **Coherence**

- This HEAP Area has retained a greater degree of coherence than many other areas, despite the accelerating pace of agricultural change and alterations in traditional land uses. The rural nature of the area with its attractive historic settlements, minor roads and Rights of Way contribute to this overall cohesion. Modern development has considerably modified the character of historic settlements but the basic historic settlement pattern is still intact.

### **Condition and Fragility**

- Archaeological earthworks on the Greensand are vulnerable to erosion from weather, animals and human feet. Mottistone Longstone is particularly fragile and there needs to be ongoing monitoring of erosion at this monument.
- Strip lynchets at Chillerton have been damaged by boundary removal and are not protected by scheduling.
- Recent tree planting on Rowdown has altered the historic landscape character of this rough open ground.

### **Overall Survival**

- The framework of this HEAP Area has survived well although many land parcels have been subject to change of use and modification of field boundaries over time.

## **CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

### **Forces for Change**

- Climate change may not have significant adverse effects on the historic landscape character and ecology of this Area
  - However, there is likely to be an increased risk of fire on heathland sites.
  - More information on the possible impacts of climate change on the protected landscapes of the South East can be found in a recent report funded by SEEDA (ADAS 2006).
  - The likely impacts of climate change on the historic environment in general are discussed in a report by English Heritage (2007).
- Possible increased recreational use of this Area.
- Possible new tree planting schemes.
- Future agricultural change, in response to market forces and to Government schemes such as Stewardship, may have positive or negative impacts on the historic landscape.
- Infilling and limited development within historic settlements.
- New grant-funded community projects within this Area.

### **Management Issues.**

- Despite the limited number of archaeological earthworks in this Area erosion is an issue because the sandy soils are particularly susceptible to wind erosion, animal erosion and erosion by human feet.
  - Erosion has become a particular problem in the vicinity of the Longstone but the National Trust has carried out restoration work.
- The National Trust and Wight Conservation, working closely together, have introduced grazing regimes to Mottistone Common and Castle Hill involving cattle and New Forest ponies.
  - The purpose of grazing is to maintain the heathland that has become re-established following the clearance of conifer plantations.
  - There have been some problems with New Forest ponies gathering around the Longstone but these have been addressed by the National Trust.
  - Other archaeological earthworks do not appear to have been adversely affected by grazing regimes but will require monitoring.
- Where possible, archaeological sites should be taken out of cultivation. Farmers and Landowners may wish to enter into *Higher Level Stewardship* or *Local Management Agreements* as appropriate.
  - The Shorwell Anglo-Saxon Cemetery site would benefit from this approach.
- Need to assess the current condition of Chillerton strip lynchets on the ground and to recommend protected status if appropriate.

- Need for academic assessment of material from early Anglo-Saxon cemetery near Shorwell and for field evaluation of this site.
- Need to ensure that character of historic settlements is conserved and enhanced whilst providing some affordable housing for local people.

### **Conservation Designations**

- All of the HEAP Area is within the *AONB*.
- The very small coastal section of this HEAP Area is within the Tennyson *Heritage Coast* and also within the South Wight Maritime SAC.
- Seven *Scheduled Monuments* fall within this HEAP Area, these being the Mottistone Common round barrow, the Longstone, Castle Hill enclosure, Rock Roman villa, a round barrow east of Stone Place Farm and another at Sheards.
- The Shorwell *Conservation Area* and parts of the Brighstone and Carisbrooke *Conservation Areas* fall within this HEAP Area
- 69 *Listed Buildings* include Mottistone Manor, North Court, Sheat Manor, and Whitcombe Manor; Gatcombe House; and farms at Combe (Brighstone), Stone Place (Shorwell), Chillerton, Compton, Gatcombe and Froglands.
- North Court is on the *English Heritage Register* of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- Gatcombe and Mottistone Manor are on the Isle of Wight Council List of Historic *Parks and Gardens of Local Interest*.
- There are no SSSIs falling mainly within this HEAP Area.
- Nine *SINCs* are within this HEAP Area, including open land at Mottistone Common, Compton Marsh, Buddle Brook, Hollow Lane Chillerton and Ramsdown Copse.

### **FUTURE MANAGEMENT**

The Isle of Wight HEAP Objectives and Actions are set out in a separate document. These objectives and actions are generic and many of them are relevant to all HEAP Areas. Actions that are especially relevant to this HEAP Area include the following:

- A14.** Complete Rural Settlement HEAP.
- A16.** Complete character appraisals for all existing and potential Conservation Areas.
- A17.** Investigate and record condition of all archaeological earthworks within the Open Land and other HEAP Types.
- A18.** Complete Open Land Type HEAP, building on earthwork condition survey and setting out best management practices.
- A22.** Complete HEAP for Parkland/Designed Landscapes.
- A23.** Complete HEAP for Roads, Lanes, Tracks and Rail Lines.
- A24.** Complete field survey of historic Rights of Way.
- A31.** Encourage detailed field survey of selected earthworks and features.
- A34.** Advocate protection of buried archaeological features within cultivated land.
- A35.** Promote conservation of historic farm buildings and ensure that character is maintained if converted.
- A36.** Support maintenance of downland and heathland by appropriate grazing regimes.
- A37.** Support proposals for reversion of cultivated land, improved grassland or plantation woodland that will result in restoration of historic downland or heathland.
- A38.** Support proposals which minimise damage to archaeological earthworks from agriculture, recreational activity, forestry or rabbits, and improve settings of earthworks where necessary.
- A41.** Ensure that woodland and forestry planting and management conserves historic landscape character and does not damage archaeological features.
- A49.** Inform the national protection programmes by reviewing significant archaeological sites.
- A51.** Support the conservation of historic parks, gardens, cemeteries and public open spaces, including appropriate restoration plans.