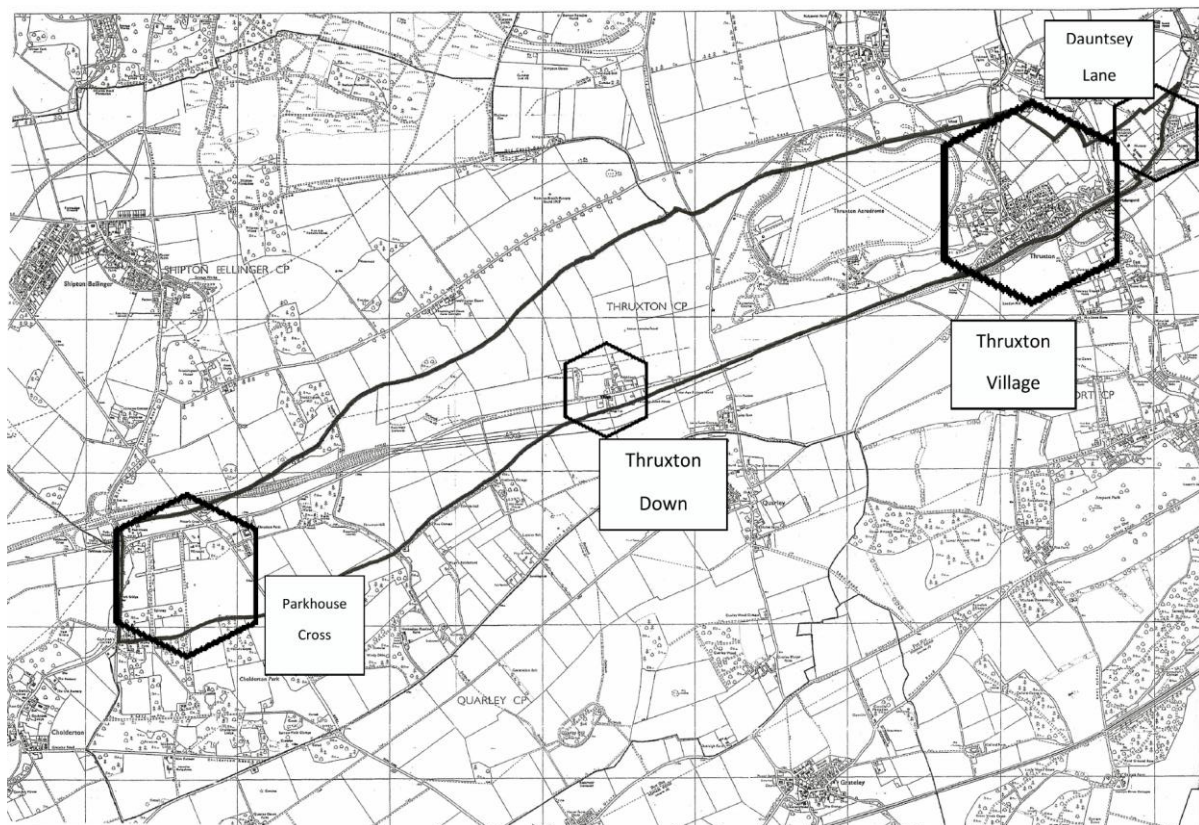


Thruxton Down

and

Parkhouse Cross



Thruxton Parish

Prepared 14 July 2016

Last revised 02 October 2016 (V7)

Land appraisal

Index

Index	Page number 2
Introduction	Page number 4
Location	Page number 4
Topographies	Page number 4
Land Usage	Page number 5
History	Page Number 5
Chalk grassland	Page number 5
Land Classification	Page number 6
Set aside	Page number 6
Aquifers	Page number 7
Bore-hole	Page number 7
Antiquities	Page Number 7
Ley lines	Page Number 8
Cultivation	Page Number 8
Habitat & Wild Life	Page Number 9
Hedgerows & trees	Page number 10
Other Considerations	Page Number 11
Commercial usage	Page number 11
Historic buildings	Page number 11
Monuments	Page number 13
Find spots	Page number 14

Acknowledgements

Appendix 1	Page Number 17
------------	----------------

Photographs

Index	Page Number 18-21
-------	-------------------

Place check

Q and A place walk-a-bout

Page number 22

Other considerations

Arguments to discuss

Page number 27

Introduction

This document refers to Thrupton Down and Parkhouse Cross that collectively comprise 50% or more of the Thrupton Parish land area. The Parish is located in the North West corner of the County of Hampshire, bordering the County of Wiltshire¹. The Parish is approximately 4.50 miles long x 0.75 miles wide at its extremities.

Location

Thrupton Down extends from the western edge of Thrupton Airfield (Kimpton Lane) westwards to the A338 road running North/South from Marlborough to Salisbury, and is bordered from the North by a fence-line adjacent to Snodington Lane, and to the South (partially) by the A303 road².

The area grid reference(s)

The following are references for the actual Hamlet of Thrupton Down:

Easting	426445
Northing	144467
Latitude	51.198814
Longitude	-1.622885
Grid	SU 264444
UTM Ref	30U 596216 5672835

Topography

At the eastern extremity of Thrupton Down (Thrupton Airfield bounded by Kimpton Lane), the land elevation is 107 m AMSL (**A**bove **M**ean **S**ea **L**evel), rising to 154 m AMSL at the high point between the Airfield and Parkhouse Cross, and falling to a level of 93 m AMSL at its western extremity i.e. Parkhouse Cross (A338 road).

¹ Area map 1 page 1

² Area map 1 page 1

Land Usage

The land is almost exclusively used for agricultural purposes; grazing for cattle³, Alpaca's⁴, occasionally sheep⁵, for arable usage such as growing oilseed rape⁶, cereals⁷, kale, and grass. Additionally, there are paddocks set out for equine use⁸.

In addition, straw and hay⁹ are harvested from the land in and around the Parish. This is processed into bales and subsequently distributed to locations as far away as Cornwall. Many of the bales are stored at Thrupton Down while awaiting distribution.

Interspersed in the landscape is a sprinkling of houses; 12 residences in Thrupton Down (1 used as offices), and 16 in Parkhouse Cross (2 used commercially).¹⁰

History

History indicates ongoing agricultural use of this area for a thousand or more years. Its land usage is also influenced by the neighbouring Salisbury Plain and Porton Down areas of natural importance.

Chalk Grassland

Thrupton Down bounds the Salisbury Plain unimproved chalk grassland area. The wide expanses of grassland here support a wonderfully rich diversity of plants, birds and insects. This is the largest remaining tract of chalk grassland in North West Europe and is situated within the largest Military Training Area in the United Kingdom.

20,000ha of the training area was notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1993 due to this herb-rich chalk grassland. This was followed in 1994 by notification as Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA) and candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) under European Legislation. As a result of these notifications it was agreed between English Nature (statutory advisors to Government on nature conservation) and the Ministry of Defence that a management plan was needed for the Training Area.

At that time there were 42 tenant farmers and licensees, most of them farming both fully tenanted (Schedule 1) and licensed land (Schedule 3), the former being mainly arable, the latter grassland. The military training area is not fenced apart from a few permanent pens and any grazing occurred within temporary electric fences.

³ See Photograph 1 Page 18

⁴ See Photograph 2 Page 18

⁵ See Photograph 3 Page 18

⁶ See Photograph 4 Page 18

⁷ See Photograph 5 Page 19

⁸ See Photograph 6 Page 19

⁹ See Photograph 7 & 8 Page 19

¹⁰ As at July 2016

Parts of East Salisbury Plain and the periphery of Central and West comprise areas of grassland currently managed for grazing pasture and hay-cutting, whilst the middle of Centre and West are ungrazed.

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of England and Wales

Thruxton Down land is generally considered to be in the range of Grade 3 and Subgrade 3a.

Descriptions are given below of the ALC land categories:

Grade 3 -good to moderate quality agricultural land. Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

Subgrade 3a - good quality agricultural land. Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Subgrade 3b - moderate quality agricultural land. Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

Set-aside

The Government are actively mindful of the need to conserve natural habitats for birds, insects, wild-life and plants, and so set-aside became compulsory in 1992 for arable farmers as part of the MacSharry reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. It was originally set at 15% and reduced to 10% in 1996. Following the introduction of decoupled payments in 2005, farmers who had historically claimed set-aside were awarded a number of set-aside 'entitlements' equivalent to the area they had previously set-aside. In order to receive payment on these set-aside entitlements, an equivalent number of hectares had to be removed from agricultural production.

Set-aside land was shown to be an effective way to improve soil chemistry and increase biodiversity on arable farmland, especially on 5-year non-rotational set-aside. Such set-aside is actively encouraged in Thruxton Down.

Aquifer

The Hampshire Chalk forms a predominantly anticlinal structure which dips southwards beneath Palaeogene cover into the Hampshire Basin and northwards into the London Basin. It forms a regionally significant aquifer for potable and agricultural use and also provides base flow to the Rivers Test and Itchen, which are used extensively for fishing. Analysis shows that groundwater is typical of unconfined Chalk groundwater, of Ca-HCO₃ type.

Human impact is most plainly visible in the distributions of nitrate in the groundwater. These are regionally high, with one analysed source having groundwater above the EC/national drinking-water limit of 11.3 mg L⁻¹ as N and time-series data demonstrating an increase in concentrations in some ground waters over the last few decades. The widespread presence of nitrate indicates the extent to which the aquifer has been and continues to be influenced by farming practices.

Borehole

A borehole (water extraction well) was excavated in Thrupton Down (Grid ref SU 264 445) in 1988 to provide water to cattle troughs throughout the (Racedown Dairy) farm. The bore was drilled to a depth of 190 feet (borehole log provided¹¹), and a 3 phase electric pump (capacity 1100 gallons per hour) was installed to abstract the water to two reservoir tanks which subsequently gravity fed water to the various water troughs in the farm.

The reservoirs are located about 1 mile West of the pump to a location towards the Western edge of the Thrupton Down area, and are situated at the highest point of the Parish. These consist of two blockwork tanks¹² containing overflow and shut-down mechanisms as necessary. An abstraction licence is in place.

Many of the troughs are no longer in use, and the Environment Agency now consider the abstraction volume to be small enough to no longer warrant annual inspections.

While this borehole is the only known abstraction well in Thrupton Down, others do exist in the immediate locality.

Antiquities

Arrowing its way from east to west runs the course of an ancient Roman roadway known as the Port Way. Little exists of it today although a map or aerial view reveals it clearly and several modern roads and tracks follow its course. It was one of the major east-west routes used by the occupying Roman armies of the first few centuries A.D., running from Silchester in the east through to Old Sarum, and on

¹¹ Borehole log page 14

¹² Photograph 9 page 20

towards the south-west. With the departure of the Romans its importance reduced and long sections of it were abandoned in early Saxon times.

Over a number of years, metal detection experts have trawled the land of Racedown Dairy, thought to be the path through which the (Roman) Port Way passes, unearthing many Roman items of interest, all of which have been catalogued and reported to the relevant authorities. The pattern of finds clearly demonstrates the early settlement of Romans in the area. It is believed that Roman settlements were common to the Thruxton Down area for many years and fell into disuse when the Romans dispersed. See also page 13 "Monuments".

Ley lines

Ley lines are alignments of places of significance in the geography or culture of an area, often including man-made structures. They are seen as ancient, straight trackways in the British landscape.

The phrase was coined in 1921 by the amateur archaeologist Alfred Watkins, referring to supposed alignments of numerous places of geographical and historical interest, such as ancient monuments and megaliths, natural ridge-tops and water-fords. In his books *Early British Trackways* and *The Old Straight Track*, he sought to identify ancient trackways in the British landscape. Watkins later developed theories that these alignments were created for ease of overland trekking by line-of-sight navigation during Neolithic times, and had persisted in the landscape over millennia.

In *City of Revelation* (1973) British author John Michell theorised that Whiteleaved Oak is the centre of a circular alignment he called the "Circle of Perpetual Choirs" and is equidistant from Glastonbury, Stonehenge, Goring-on-Thames and Llantwit Major. The theory was investigated by the British Society of Dowisers and used as background material by Phil Rickman in his novel *The Remains of an Altar* (2006).

Such a Ley line is thought to run from Stonehenge eastwards through Thruxton Down towards London.

Cultivation

A large proportion of Salisbury Plain supports upright brome *Bromus erectus* species rich grassland, within which a continuous floristic variation is seen. A widespread type on the Plain is characterised by an abundance of red fescue *Festuca rubra*, crested hair-grass *Koeleria macrantha*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, common rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* and dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*. The high constancy of this last species is a distinctive feature of the upright brome grasslands on Salisbury Plain and is otherwise only known from one other site in Hampshire.

Where upright brome is less dominating, plants such as small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia* and horseshoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* are characteristic associates. The rare and notable plants which occur here include burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata*, slender bedstraw *Galium pumilum*, field fleawort *Senecio integrifolius* and the nationally scarce British endemic early gentian *Gentianella anglica*.

Particularly associated with long established turf on thin rendzina soils, and rabbit grazed areas of the eastern and central ranges, are low-growing perennials including

squintwort *Asperula cynanchica*, chalk milkwort *Polygala calcarea*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule*, wild thyme *Thymus praecox*, the nationally scarce bastardtoadflax *Thesium humifusum* and purple milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* in its most southerly British station.

Devils-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and betony *Stachys officinalis* are all abundant and exemplify the oceanic character of the chalk grassland on the Plain, a feature which is confined to south-west England. Similarly restricted is a community in which dwarf sedge *Carex humilis* forms a conspicuous component. This type of grassland has its stronghold in Wiltshire and occurs on the less disturbed areas of the central ranges.

Habitat & Wild Life

Barn Owls have inhabited the Racedown Dairy area of Thruxton Down for many years, and have nesting boxes situated in one of the barn buildings, and have successfully nested for a number of years. The owls are often seen hunting at low level around the various paddocks and fields and returning to the barns to feed their young.

Little Owl (rare breeds) nests have been installed in one of the barns, by the Hawk Conservancy, several years ago, and the Little Owls have successfully nested (but not in the boxes) and have bred every year since. It is understood that these owls are fairly rare and their continued occupation is most welcomed in the Parish, and is to be preserved.

Additionally, a Kestrel nesting box was installed, again by the Hawk Conservancy, several years ago. This is sited within a tree within the Parish. It is confirmed that the nest is active and each year a clutch of eggs have been hatched and 'flown the nest'.

All of these activities are monitored by the Hawk Conservancy at close-by Weyhill.

Finally, there are numerous sitings of hunting birds, including occasionally Red Kites, and often those birds released by the Hawk Conservancy for display purposes.

With regard to animal life, there are many sightings of deer, foxes (not usually seen but detected by smell!), rabbits and badgers (again not usually seen but detected by scratchings and droppings). Many make use of the open country side for their continued existence.

From the Hawk Conservancy:

There are four nest boxes for raptors at Racedown Dairy (1 x Kestrel, 1 x Little Owl, 2 x Barn Owl). Usage and productivity of these boxes has been as follows:

Barn Owl 1 - Has remained unused for nesting but is used by Barn Owls as a roost site. The straw in this barn has been used as a nest location by Barn Owls.

Barn Owl 2 - Was installed in 2010 and has been used for nesting in four of the last six years, producing at least eight chicks.

Little Owl - Has remained unused since its installation in 2010. Little Owls do use the site and have been recorded on numerous occasions. The nest site is likely to be in a natural cavity at the site.

Kestrel - Has been used in each of the last three years, producing 12 young.

Alongside these raptor species, other significant bird species present (and observed to be nesting) at the site include several included on the 'Red List' (i.e. Birds of Conservation Concern):

Skylark (30% decline between 1995-2014),

Corn Bunting (34% decline)

Linnet (25% decline)

Yellowhammer (14% decline)

Hedgerows and trees

In and around Thruxton Down, fields and paddocks are generally demarked by post and wire fencing with mixed species of hedge, principally hawthorne with bramble and a sprinkling of other plants; average 1800 mm high AGL and average 1500 mm wide at waist level.

Deep root plants such as hedgerows, trees and bushes are difficult to establish in the chalk grassland due to the sparse topsoil covering. Those trees and hedrows currently visible have been established over a period of 50 years or more, and the propagation failure rate for deep root planting is in excess of 50%, hence short root crops can survive and propagate without problem.

Other considerations

Given that the primary air-flow is predominantly from the south-west, over Thruxton Down and on east-wards, the principle Airfield runway alignment is East – West, meaning that take-off and landing are corridors over Thruxton Down land.

The implications are that in the event of an engine failure on either take-off or landing, the aircraft has a reasonable chance of survival given the open nature of the surrounding countryside beneath and around the flight path.

Commercial usage

While the principal land usage Thruxton Down and Parkhouse Cross is agricultural, interspersed in the landscape is a sprinkling of houses; 12 houses in Thruxton Down, and 16 in Parkhouse Cross.

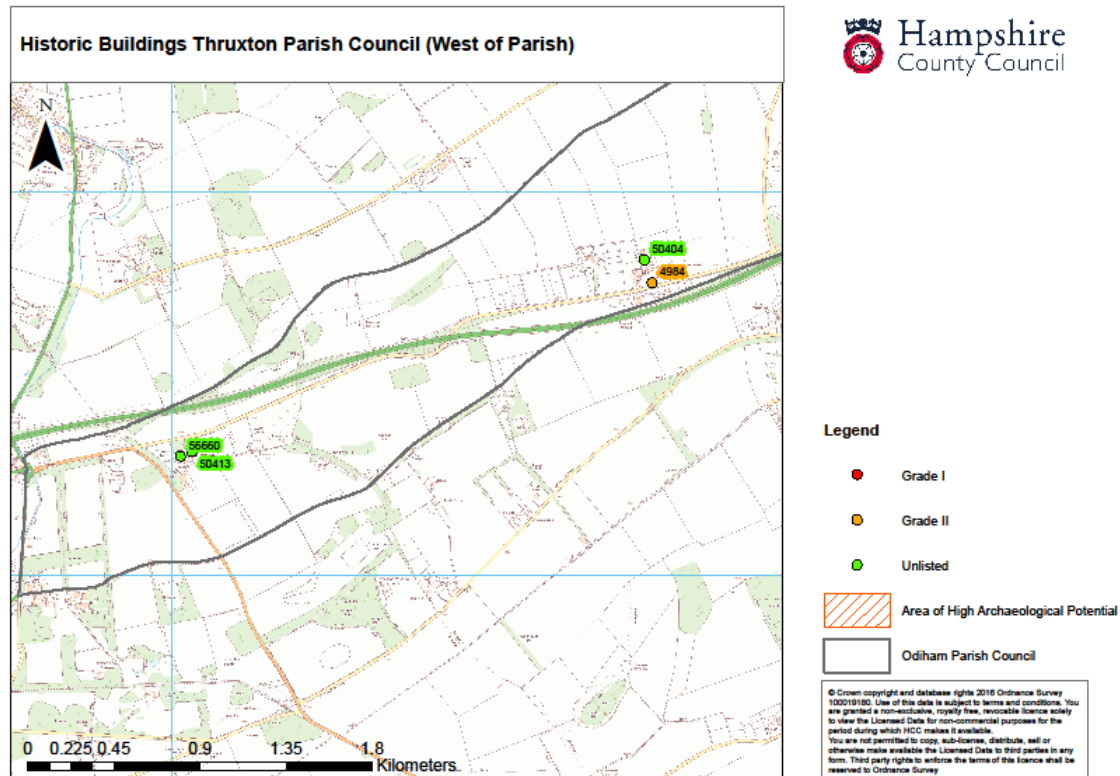
Within this distribution are several commercial operations, aside from the farming that forms the majority of the region's activities. These other businesses are:

- Motel (at Parkhouse Cross)
- Kennels (at Parkhouse Cross)
- Ambulance administration (at Thruxton Down)

Otherwise there are several "self employed" operations which sustain employment within the area but which, by necessity, incorporates travelling beyond the boundaries of the Parish.

Historic Buildings

Hampshire County Council have identified several buildings within the Parish, three of interest but unlisted, and one listed Grade II. The locations are plotted on the following map.



- **Grade II listed:** Racedown Cottage

Site: 4984

Map: SU 426511 144525

HOUSE: Listing Post Medieval cottage. Early C19. Rendered walls and thatched roof. Symmetrical front (south) of 2 storeys, 3 windows, with a west side outshot. Hipped roof, with catslide to part of the rear and brought to a low eaves above the setback outshot. Most of the walling is rendered (on cob) but the east side of the front is flint with brick quoins, cambered arch, and bands (all painted). Casements: one old casement in the east gable. Wood porch with cusped bargeboard to the gable, patterned head to the oval arched doorway, and vertical boarding to the sides.

- 1800 to 1835

- **Un-listed:** Racedown Dairy

Site: 50404

Map: SU 426470 144645

METAL WORKERS WORKSHOP: Altered Modern Dairy converted to metal working site.

- **Un-listed:** Thrupton Farm

Site: 50413

Map: SU 424104 143644

HOUSE: Change of use Modern Barn converted to 2 dwellings, now called Jackdaws and Homewood Cottage - 1996

EVENT BARN Built Post Medieval - 1540 to 1900

- **Un-listed:** Thruxton Farm

Site: 56660

Map: SU 424047 143620

SOURCE: Barns at Thruxton Farm, Cholderton Road, Thruxton, Hampshire - 2005

STATUS Unlisted Building

MODERN EVENT Building Survey

Building recording carried out by Wessex Archaeology in October 2004, prior to their conversion.

- 2004 EVENT BARN Built Post Medieval Two barns. It is likely that the barns were present on this site from the late C18 or early C19 although the current buildings are probably late C19 in date, replacing earlier buildings to meet the changing needs of the farm. Barn 1 (on the north side) is constructed from red bricks laid in Flemish garden wall bond. The timber roof structure has been constructed of machined timber. Barn two is present on the west side of the yard. It is rectangular in plan with a single pitched roof, which is covered in slates on the west slope and asbestos sheeting on the east. - 1767 to 1899

EVENT HOUSE Change of use Modern Barns converted into residential dwellings.

- 2005

Monuments

In and around Thruxton Down and Park House Cross, fields and paddocks have been identified as having findspots (identified in blue) and monuments (identified in brown), The locations are identified on the following map.



Site: 22216 – Thruxton Down

Map: SU 42696 0145220

Finds of Roman pottery, no details available. (1967) – Roman 43 – 409

Site: 22235 – Thruxton Down

Map: SU 42495 0144270

Four Iron Age beehive pits were revealed in gas pipeline construction in 1969, produced a number of finds (B-D). Unassigned Early Iron Age. No other details.

Finds: Burnt flint – early iron age -800 to 42

Animal remains Bone – early iron age -800 to 42

Site: 22263 – Parkhouse Cross

Map: SU 42449 0143680

A Bronze Age bronze palstave axe found during earth moving works in c.1910. No further information available. (1956)

Finds: PALSTAVE BRONZE – Early Bronze Age -2200 to -801

Site: 22825 – Parkhouse Cross

Map: SU 42487 0144310

Finds of Roman pottery, no details available (1967)– Roman 43 – 409

Site: 22828 – Parkhouse Cross

Map: SU 42470 0144000

Earthwork feature observed on an AP dated 1946 (Modern)

Bronze Age ranch boundary earthwork, consisting of 2 ditches either side of a bank stretching (on SU24SW) from SU2465 4435 to 2499 2351. Part of a (c)0.8m earthwork, of which this is the N end, associated with Quarley Hill hillfort and other ranch boundary systems. Damaged in places by ploughing - 1967.

'Quarley Low' linear ditch. Double ditch one V-shaped with rounded base was 2.4m wide and 1.2m deep. A sherd of Romano-British pottery provided terminus post quem.

Site: 30262 – Parkhouse Cross

Map: SU 42470 0144000

One sherd of Romano-British pottery recovered during excavation of Bronze Age ranch boundary – Roman 43 - 409

Site: 32346 – Parkhouse Cross

Map: SU 423760143250

Linear ditch; identified by R Palmer who interprets this feature has having a Bronze Age origin. - Early Bronze Age -2200 to -801

Site: 32435 – Thruxton Down

Map: SU 42633 0144800

N-S curvilinear feature interpreted by R Palmer as a linear ditch. Roman 43 – 409

Acknowledgements for contributions: (In no particular order)

Hawk Conservancy
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Jason Moos
Bill Shearing
John Davis
Keith & Alison
Internet
The Parish Council
TVBC
Hampshire County Council
The committee

Photographs

Index

Photo 1 (Footnote 3) - Cattle occupying land to the north east corner of Thruxton Down. The animals are rotated from field to field as circumstances require and annually.

Photo 2 (Footnote 4) – Alpaca herd in paddocks to the eastern end of Thruxton Down.

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3 (Footnote 5) – Sheep often graze at Thruxton Down and Parkhouse, usually on an ad-hoc rotational basis.

Photo 4 (Footnote 6) – Aerial view of the Thruxton Down area of the Parish, showing oil-seed crops, cereal and grass. Chalk can be seen underlying the planting. Crops change from season to season, and from year to year.

Photo 3



Photo 4

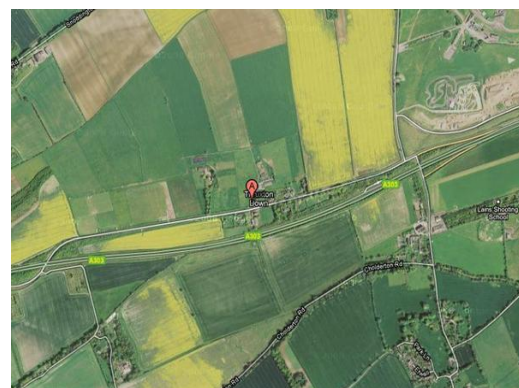


Photo 5 (Footnote 7) – Cereals being harvested; crops can be wheat, barley, oats, oil-seed and so forth.

Photo 6 (Footnote 8) – Many acres are designated to equine use, owners renting paddocks and stables for horse upkeep, grass keep, and training. Horse numbers vary over the years.

Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7 (Footnote 9) – Incoming straw bales being off loaded into open barn(s) from transporter.

Photo 8 (Footnote 9) – Straw bales being out loaded from barn to transporter for delivery to locations as far away as Cornwall.

Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9 – 13 (Footnote 13) – samples for antiquities unearthed at Thruxton Down generally in the area directly to the north of Racedown Cottages.



Photo's 9 - 13





Place check

To address the issues arising in the Neighbourhood Plan, the following questions are addressed as a result of the place check review and discussion, following the walk-a-bout.

What makes Thrupton Down a special or unique place?

- Open chalk down-land landscape, rolling countryside, interspersed with mainly deciduous hedges and trees.
- Long open vistas with a number of significant vantage points, farms nestled in locations that are not obtrusive or prominent.
- Areas of the landscape that are accessible and areas that are not, apart from prominent positions.
- The agricultural use of the landscape over many decades has significantly contributed to the landscape as it is today.
- The few small hamlets that exist are nothing more than a handful of houses or even a single dwelling.
- Well defined field enclosures.
- No significant industrial or domestic development, what does exist is related to agriculture in the main.
- A lack of public access due to a lack of public footpaths.
- Business premises are predominately agricultural related, and are in keeping with the locations, with the exception of one at Thrupton Down and a Hotel at Parkhouse Cross, both are in keeping with the locations and are not intrusions
- The area viewed is typical of the countryside within North West Hampshire and of Wiltshire to the West, i.e. Salisbury Plain.
- An interesting variety of wild-life (deer, foxes, rabbits etc.) and birds (owls, little owls, kestrel etc.) inhabit or nest in the area.

Why does it look the way it does?

- The current look of the open landscape will have changed little since its formation, mainly due to the underlying chalk being close to the surface, and agricultural methods that have contributed to its preservation.
- The difficulty of establishment of shrub layer and trees due to the shallow growing media has been a main contributor to the continuance of the open landscape, with its mix of agriculture, arable and livestock.
- A lack of domestic and industrial development apart from a handful of agricultural buildings.
- A few small holding type operations at Thrupton Down give a slightly different feel to the broadly open landscape but still engage the general agricultural usage.

-
- Lacking in coniferous trees and hedges due to the soil type being chalk down land.

What local activities or events have made it like this?

- Original formation would have played a significant part of the area being an open landscape, and the continued agricultural activities in harmony with the nature of the ground and surroundings.
- Mainly arable farming interspersed with some livestock husbandry
- Most buildings would have been associated with agriculture, and were built alongside the original arterial road being the A303.

Why do we like this place?

- It is a beautiful open rolling landscape, with huge skies and distant views, interspersed with hedge lines and few individual trees and copses.
- It is very peaceful and tranquil, with little intrusion from locals or visitors.
- It is 'England's Green and Pleasant Land' which we are fast losing
- It is home to much wildlife that enjoys an undisturbed existence and is allowed to live and survive and thrive without hindrance from man.
- It has access from the road running through it so access is naturally restricted which makes the area so special
- It usually has a fresh breeze blowing in view of the topography and this give a very refreshing feel to the area
- Agricultural activity that takes place is undertaken in a well-managed way with care and consideration for the countryside, as demonstrated by copses allowed to develop and enhanced through indigenous planting in some areas, which provides habitat for the varied species.
- An informal agricultural feel to some farm buildings and yards that give a relaxed feel to them

What do we dislike about the area?

- To be clear, nothing exists to dislike about the area, one could say that more footpath access would be useful however as stated elsewhere this would reduce the experience of peace and tranquillity. It would also be detrimental to wildlife and habitat, and possibly injurious to agricultural activity.

What can we make more of/what potential is there to enhance the place?

- One may consider increased access through provision of new foot paths however this would damage the very nature of the area as it currently exists, given that the land is agricultural and therefore under cultivation.
- The suggestion of enhancement would suggest that something is lacking when in fact, the area has all that is required in that it is a very peaceful open landscape, being used for exactly what was intended, agriculture and the

provision of food. Most facilities are accessible from near-by towns and villages.

How accessible is the place? What limits how easy it is to get around?

Is the place pedestrian-friendly, or vehicle-dominated?; Are there adults and children who use the place to walk or cycle to work, to school or to the shops; for exercise and leisure; for play or pleasure, to meet, and to enjoy?; Places where the speed of traffic needs to be reduced; Places where new routes and connections are needed; Ease of crossing roads and streets; Pedestrian and cycle crossings: well positioned or lacking; Is the place welcoming to new visitors, as well as under-represented groups?; Walls, fences, guardrails, steep gradients and other barriers to movement; Car clubs, car club parking spaces and electric car charging points; play streets, and home zones.

- The area in question is very accessible to get to by road and car, few if any foot paths exist across the agricultural land as mentioned above, however if this was opened up, it would spoil the very nature of many years of restricted access
- Very good pavements exist alongside the roadway that runs through the area, by and large they are well maintained
- The road itself is very straight, long and open and does lend itself to speed, however due to the lack of traffic, to cross the road is not a problem for pedestrian safety
- No formal public car parking exists, however this is not a problem due to lack of requirement, no shops or recreational facilities etc. Informal car parking is possible on wide open verges that are back of pavement in several places.
- Walking, cycling and horse riding is possible due to the nature of the verges back of pavement being wide and open and the lack of traffic is possible.

How understandable is the place? Does anything make it confusing?

Consider issues such as: How easy is it to find your way around: are there landmarks, buildings, works of art, or other features creating views and helping people find their way around?; Signs: too many or too few, appealing or garish, uniform or clashing; Street and building names: clearly visible or not; Plaques and information boards; Lighting to help people find their way around, highlight landmarks and attractive buildings, or disguise eyesores.

- The area is very understandable due to it being mainly open agricultural land.
- Signposts exist on the road junction coming off the main A303 to other villages outside of the parish and to Thruxton Down itself and further afield.
- Signage to the Thruxton circuit is more than adequate and informative along with the industrial estate nearby.
- Road signs are in need of a clean which is symptomatic throughout the parish.
- The balance of road signs is adequate and do not form an intrusion.
- Under normal circumstances household signage could be improved so that it makes for easier to find properties, however in view of so few properties this is not an issue.
- Street lighting is not available but this has two advantages 1) beautiful night sky views in less cloudy conditions and 2) any nefarious activities are highlighted by the need to use torches!

How well does the parking work?

Consider issues such as: What types of parking are there (on street parking, surface car park, multi-storey car park, undercroft or mechanised parking, parking on front gardens, parking courts, garages and car ports, etc.? Which are more successful, and why?

- Car parking does not appear to be an issue on the day of the visit /walk round, no cars were parked on roadways or in dangerous situations.
- All properties have sufficient car parking for their own usage, many enjoying more than adequate space and access
- Some with vehicles parked, that seem not to be in use and are stored.
- Parking and storage for the agricultural holdings was/is more than adequate and some is very well ordered, some not so, however that is the very nature of agricultural holdings.
- How can the place be made more accessible and more welcoming?
- Due to the agricultural nature, it is arguable that more access is not required since it is more than likely to be detrimental to the peace and tranquillity and habitat, as mentioned previously in this document.
- A more welcoming place could be achieved by interpretive boards to explain about the open chalk landscape and its features, however since very few people would have reason or desire to visit the area itself, it would likely as not be a waste of resource.

What makes this place – and its street(s) and public spaces – safe and pleasant? What detracts from that?

Consider issues such as: the mix of uses, is there sense of ownership by the whole community, is the village inclusive, and does the village feel safe throughout the day? Vacancy rate of the buildings, Condition of the buildings.

- Due to the very rural nature of the area the feeling of safety, peace and tranquillity already exists. This is due to very few people in real terms, a very open landscape that is easily viewed from any location.
- The very rural nature could give rise to an unsafe area in dark winter months, however due to most occupants residing in the area knowing and supporting each other, again this is unlikely to be an issue.
- Speed of road traffic could be an issue, however due to the small amount of traffic this is unlikely to be the case.

How successful are the streets and spaces underfoot? What could be improved?

Consider issues such as Pedestrian routes; materials; Cleanliness and maintenance; Drainage and Verges and planted areas

- Footpaths are not in a poor state of repair, nor is the road surface, the only right of way across one small corner is a typical part metalled track, (green lane) all are fit for purpose, although some localised potholes exist, however nowhere near the issue that exists in other parts of the parish.
- Pedestrian routes are clearly defined and easy to use, no real evidence of overgrown hedgerows from gardens or agricultural land, save one small area, which will likely be rectified during the coming hedge cutting season.

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- Drainage grids on the rural roads could benefit from clearance and opening up, however no evidence existed of flooding apart from one low lying area alongside the Thrupton Race Track.
 - Planting does not exist on any verges due to the rural nature and the issue of establishment of trees on the chalk.

How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?

- Relatively minor items of cleaning of road signs, clearing road grids/drainage
- Reduce speed on the road through Thrupton Down.

How do people enjoy nature here? What is missing?

Consider issues such as Parks, or other green and open spaces; Biodiversity; Green corridors along natural features or roads, rivers; trees; planting; Allotments; Hedgerows; Sports grounds; Nature reserves. Also consider the quality of places.

- Through walking and observing and limited access, increased access will change the overall current balance which will damage habitat and effect the wildlife.
- In view of the above we should ensure the status quo.

What makes this place planet-friendly? How are scarce resources wasted?

- Resources are not wasted in this particular area, since it is agricultural land, interspersed with copses and hedgerows, copses only being planted on land that is not able to deliver crops.
- Without knowing the detailed agricultural management plan and inputs for the area in question it is not possible to say if we are making best use of our scarce resource in agricultural terms, however from our over view look during the visit the land is being made good use of in terms of production. Farming activities are carried out in accordance with DEFRA rules.
- Set-aside land was shown to be an effective way to improve soil chemistry and increase biodiversity on arable farmland, especially on 5-year non-rotational set-aside. Such set-aside is actively encouraged and adopted in Thrupton Down.

Alternatives to the private car and local access issues

Consider issues such as: Is walking and cycling made easy and attractive?; Is public transport within easy reach; Are car sharing schemes in place?; Are shops, parks and community facilities within walking distance?.

- Bus services do not serve the area in question, so alternatives to cars are cycles, horseback or walking.
- Car sharing is not in place, presumably due to the very rural nature and geographic spread of the area and dwellings, and the diverse destinations of those travelling.
- Local shops are not within easy access by any other form of transport other than car, and even if a bus were provided it is hard to see how this would be viable due to the disparate spread of dwellings.

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- No formal parks or recreation areas exist in the area in question, however the countryside provides several countryside opportunities for recreation, the main current one being that of equestrian.

What other features makes the place planet-friendly?

Consider issues such as: Habitats encouraging biodiversity: water, hedges, trees, unmanaged land, wildlife corridors.

- Habitats are well catered for in that the area is very rural and the agricultural use of same would appear to take account of trying to farm with habitats in mind, demonstrated by areas being allowed to develop as copses and headlands being allowed to be rough in some fields and some mown for access.
- Hedges and trees exist as per comments mentioned earlier in this document, however this is a typical chalk down land landscape and should be preserved as such to ensure continuity and benefit for generations to come.

Any other considerations which may be relevant?

- Other considerations revolve around the very nature of the area visited, to make change and increase access and change usage or develop, will have a very detrimental effect on a very beautiful rolling chalk landscape that is so typical of north Hampshire. Increased public access development etc. will change the very nature of what is a very natural area of outstanding natural beauty.
- There are a few possible "infill" sites at Thruxton Down, such as the paddock between Racedown Dairy and Windwhistle; next to Downlands; between Potala and Thruxton Down House. All of these spaces are, though, actively engaged in agriculture and horticulture firmly in keeping with the nature of the district. There are no "large gardens" that might be identified as a development potential, but clear demarcation between "garden" and "farm use" is clearly visible on the ground.
- Agricultural activities at Thruxton Dawn and Parkhouse Cross are not isolated open space farming communities; we are surrounded to the North, the South and to the West (Salisbury Plain) which are in sympathy with our land usage and husbandry.
- In order to appreciate the full extent of land usage for this part of the parish, it would be of benefit to obtain aerial photographs of the land. Three sites or locations were identified as being ideal:
 1. An area immediately to the North of Racedown Dairy where cattle usage, equine usage, alpaca farming and crop harvesting are clearly identified.
 2. An area immediately above the reservoir tanks showing extensive arable cultivation together with two small holdings for equine, goats and poultry activities.
 3. Above the A338 to the south of Parkhouse Roundabout to illustrate the extensive agricultural use of the land.

- However, it is not possible to obtain such aerial photographs at Parkhouse because (military operations) of the proximity of Boscombe Down (east-west flight path), and the aerial corridor from Wallop to Everleigh (north-south flight line).