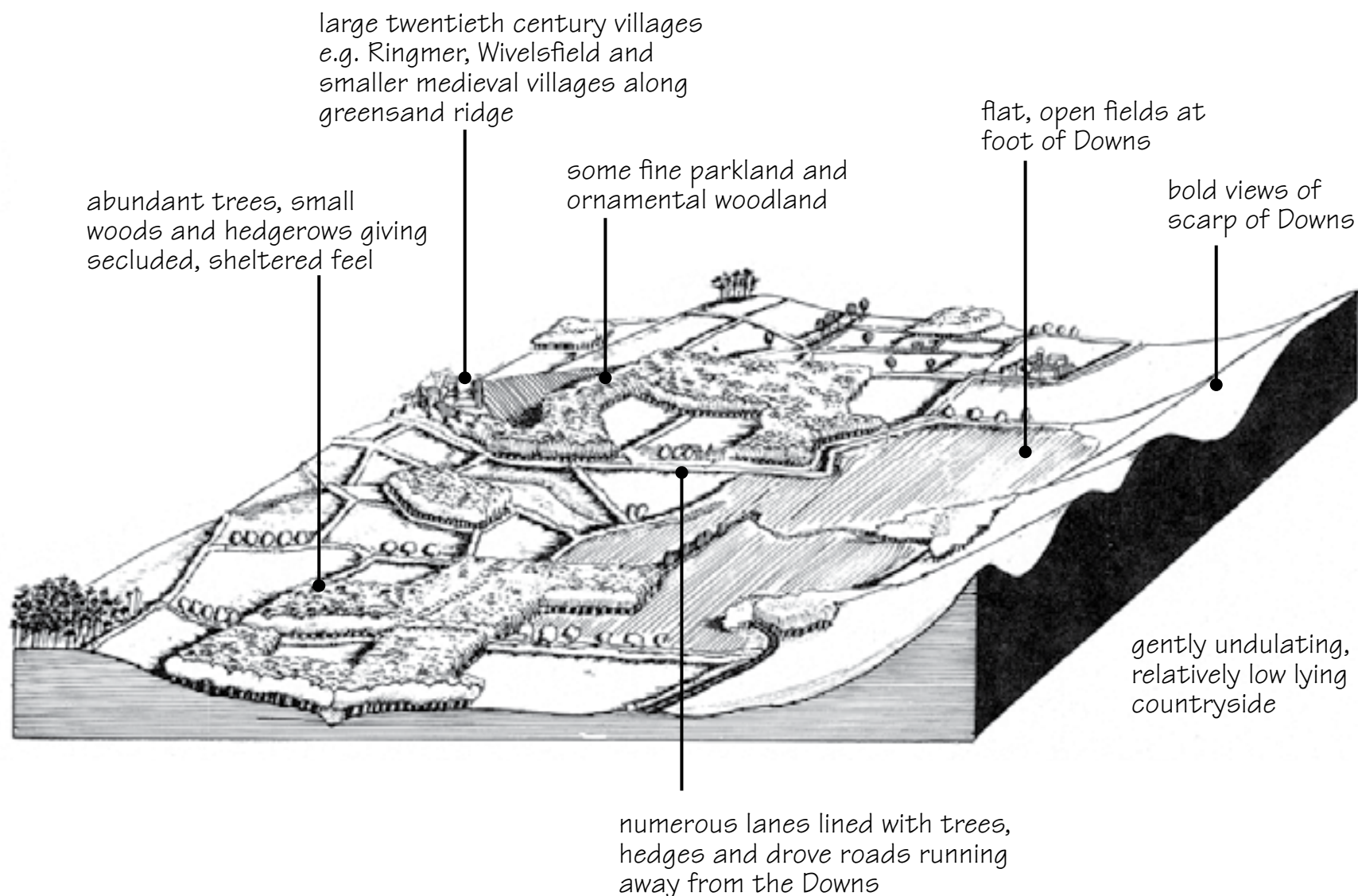


Western Low Weald



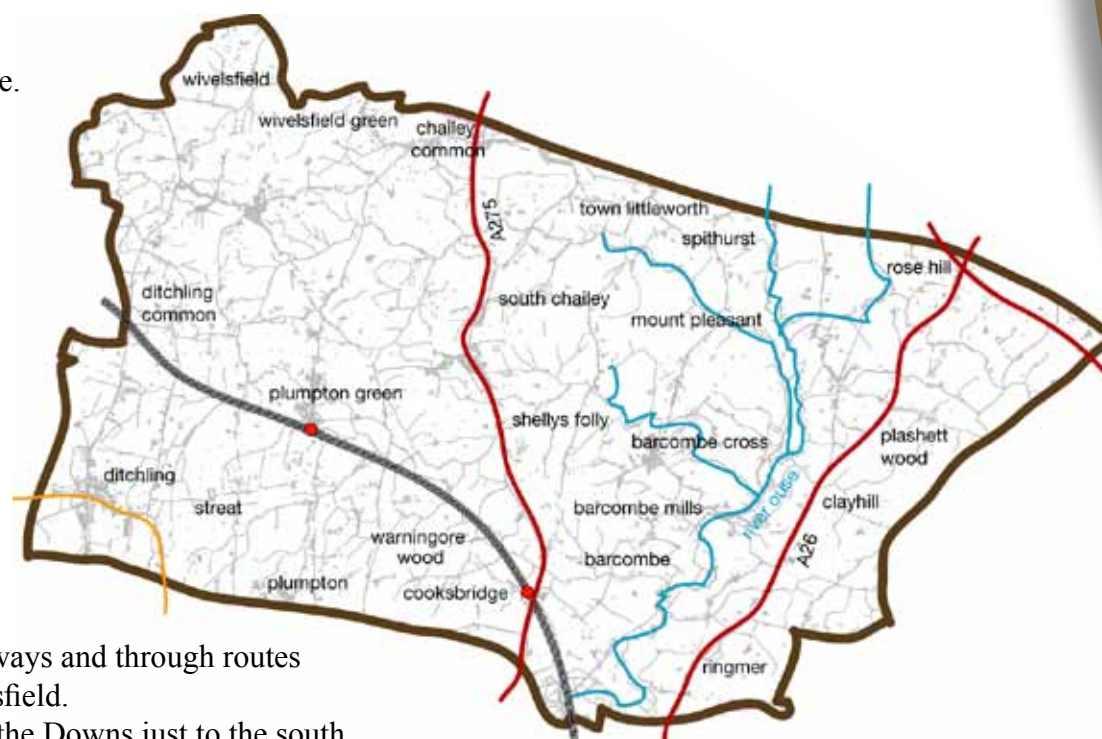
Western Low Weald

The low lying clay vale stretches from the foot of the Downland scarps to the High Weald, between Ditchling and Ringmer in the south and North Chailey and Isfield to the north. Its abundant trees and hedges, combined with undulating landform create a sheltered, secluded countryside with a strong landscape structure.



Characteristics

- Gently undulating, relatively low-lying countryside.
- Abundant trees, with small woods and hedges, several large areas of woodland.
- Abundance of oak in woods and hedgerows, also field maple and hornbeam.
- Designed landscape and some fine parkland and ornamental woodland.
- Flat, open areas around the River Ouse provide a contrast to and a setting for the Downs.
- Gentle, winding, partly tree-lined rivers and streams.
- Small attractive villages, and their flint churches are on higher ground, particularly along the greensand ridge running parallel with the Downs, for example Ditchling.
- Larger 20th century villages have grown near railways and through routes for example Ringmer, Plumpton Green and Wivelsfield.
- Frequent uninterrupted views of the bold scarp of the Downs just to the south.
- Rich, secluded, sheltered feel due to combination of gentle relief and abundant small woods, trees and hedges.
- Pattern of parallel lanes running from the Downs.



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Western Low Weald

Special Features

- Large woods, for example Plashett, Warningore.
- Some heathland at Ditchling Common, Chailey Common.
- Clunch barns e.g. at Hamsey.

Problems, pressures, detracting features

- Pressure for expansion of the larger villages.
- Loss of hedges and hedgerow trees, also many hedgerow trees are very mature and will die off soon.
- Loss of trees along rivers, especially the Ouse, due to maintenance regimes.
- Intrusive waterworks plant at Barcombe Mills.
- Some farms have ugly modern buildings and associated clutter.
- 'Gentrification' and 'suburbanisation'.
- Horsiculture, especially in Ditchling area.
- General development pressure due to non-AONB status.

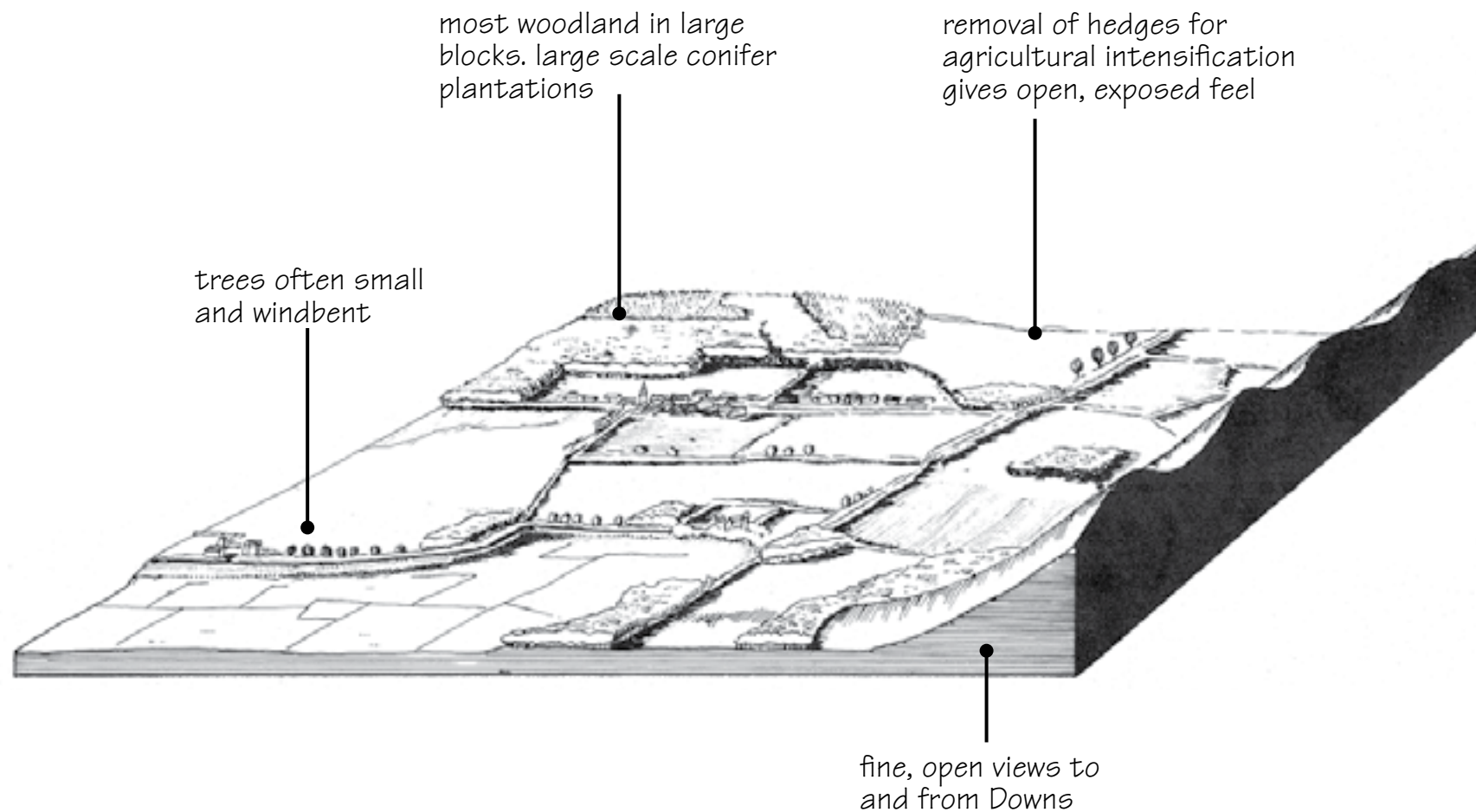
Vision

A rich, secluded, high quality lowland landscape of abundant woods, trees, tree-lined streams and hedges framing glimpses of the Downs. Strong village communities, containing fine tree/building compositions, but also offering peaceful, remote areas. Retention of long unspoilt views to the Downs. A strong landscape structure to accommodate pressure for change and development.

Landscape action priorities

- Establish strong, final development edges for larger villages, with new tree planting.
- Prepare village tree conservation plans.
- Prepare farm conservation schemes to conserve the essential landscape structure of hedges, trees and small woods, and improve screening of modern farm buildings.
- Management of river and stream channels, especially conservation of riverside trees.
- If major development is in prospect, carry out detailed advance landscape assessment and planning followed by a bold advance tree planting structure.

Eastern Low Weald



Eastern Low Weald

This area is more open and exposed than the western low weald, with many more flat, treeless areas. It contains the large woodland areas of Abbot's and Vert Woods, which are mainly conifer plantations. Running from Ringmer in the west to Polegate in the east the area contains the Glynde Reach, the upper Cuckmere river and Arlington Reservoir.

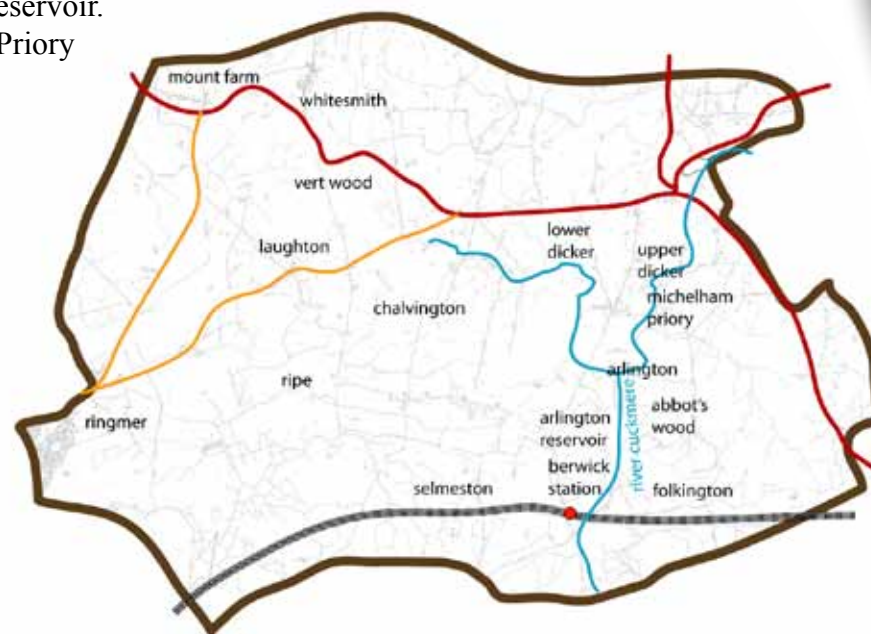


Characteristics

- Significant areas of flat, nearly treeless country with remote windswept feel.
- A greater area (15%) is under woodland than in the Western Low Weald but, by contrast, nearly all of this is in large blocks over 2 Ha. About half the woodland is coniferous.
- Hedges and hedgerow trees are slightly less abundant, and trees are often small and wind-bent.
- Ancient pathways cross the area, including ancient Drove roads running North and South across the Low Weald.
- Fine, open views of the Downs.
- Small, remote and largely unspoiled rural villages.
- Historic designed landscapes and parkland.
- Small, winding, partly tree-lined streams, notably Cuckmere River, but also many artificial, straightened drains and channels.

Special Features

- Ancient pathways cross the area, including ancient Drove roads running North and South across the Low Weald.
- Arlington Reservoir.
- Michelham Priory



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Eastern Low Weald

Problems, pressures, detracting features

- Hedge and hedgerow tree decline leading to loss of landscape structure.
- Increased demand for recreational use.
- Increase in field sizes.
- Increased levels of traffic on minor and major roads.
- Unsightly farm buildings and battery units.
- Highly visible power lines.
- River and drainage channel management affecting trees and vegetation.
- Projected A27 improvement on southern edge.
- General development pressure for housing, farm diversification and commerce.

Vision

A more open landscape than the Western Low Weald, with fine views of the Downs and a sense of remoteness, but with a restored and strengthened tree/wood/hedge structure particularly near built-up edges and large modern farm buildings. A strong landscape structure to accommodate pressure for change and development.

Landscape action priorities

- Farm conservation schemes, with emphasis on restoration of hedges and hedgerow trees, screening of farm buildings, conservation of old pasture and drainage channel/river valley enhancement.
- Village tree conservation schemes.
- Encourage new woodland planting in selected locations, to increase cover in anticipation of future development pressure, and absorb enhanced recreational activity.
- Restore or strengthen broadleaved edges to coniferous plantations.
- Protection and enhancement of designed landscapes and features of archaeological significance.