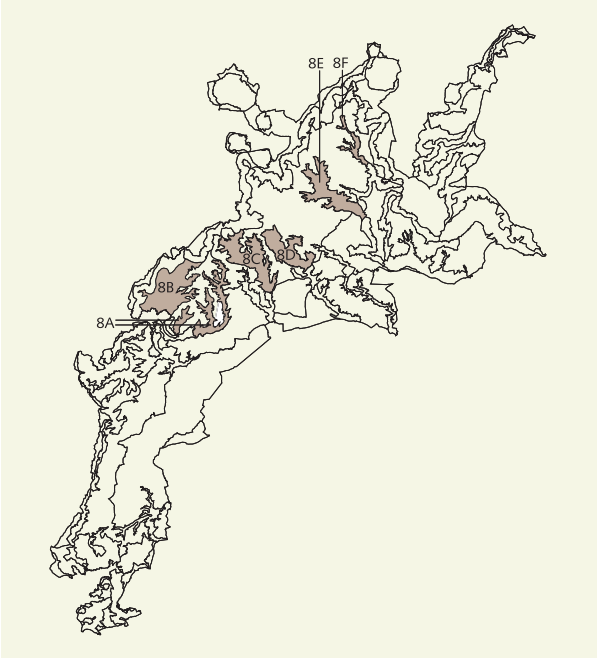
8 HIGH WOLD VALLEY

Character Areas

8A Toadsmoor, Holy Brook and Upper Frome Valleys
8B Painswick and Slad Valleys
8C Upper Churn Valley
8D Upper Coln Valley
8E Upper Windrush Valley
8F Upper Dikler Valley



Key Characteristics

- Predominantly dry or ephemeral flow headwater valleys with generally broad valley form and shallow slope profiles;
- incised valley form below heads of valleys with often steep, convoluted valley sides dissected by minor watercourses and distinctive convex profile at transition with the High Wold;
- sections of pronounced valley form meanders with distinctive interlocking spurs, disproportionate to size of rivers and streams;
- extensive areas of predominantly broadleaved woodland cloaking sections of the valley sides, particularly across the steeper sections;
- areas of open pastoral farmland extend between the wooded slopes, and along valley bottoms, together with pockets of arable land, particularly on the shallower slopes;
- pasture predominantly comprises improved grassland, together with occasional remnants of unimproved and calcareous grasslands;
- intermittent stone built villages occupying secluded locations in valley bottoms, often in association with a bridging point, and on valley sides;
- occasional farmsteads and isolated buildings within the more open valley sections linking to farmed areas on the adjacent High Wold;
- occasional private parklands and gardens associated with country houses;
- limited road network within valleys, generally confined to a single valley bottom road, or routes that cross the valley;
- deeply incised and inaccessible wooded slopes extending across some valley sections; and
- sheltered, visually contained and intimate setting of remote upper reaches of valleys.

Painswick and Slad Valleys

- Wider and complex valley form to Painswick Valley and its tributaries, but with steep and convoluted slopes, separated by intermediate ridges that project into the main valley form;
- rich pastoral and secluded rural character with intermittent consolidated areas of arable land; and

- **significant areas of registered common land and ancient semi-natural woodland in the upper reaches of the Painswick and Slad Valleys.**

Landscape Character

A series of rivers rise in the High Wold, and flow across the plateau within distinctive valley formations. Although they share a common source area for their headwaters, the rivers belong to the two separate catchments of the Thames and Severn. As a result, the valley alignments display a radial progression from south-east as they flow towards the Thames, through to south, south-westwards and westwards towards the Severn.

The sequence of Thames tributaries comprises the Rivers Churn, Coln and Windrush, and its tributary the Dikler. These all flow in broadly north-west / south-east aligned valleys. The River Leach is also a Thames tributary, its course located between the Coln and the Windrush. Its headwaters are insubstantial within the High Wold, however, with the valley form only becoming significant within the adjacent landscape type of High Wold Dip-Slope. (See Landscape Character Areas 10E and 12C)

To the west of the Thames tributaries a series of tributaries flow south and south-westwards into the River Frome, and eventually to the Severn. These comprise the south-west aligned Painswick and Slad Valleys systems on the western limit of the main area of High Wold, and the sequence of more confined mainly south flowing valleys of the Toadsmoor, Holy Brook and Upper Frome Valleys that rise on the perimeter of the detached Bisley Plateau section of the High Wold (Landscape Character Area 7B). The east-west aligned section of the Frome valley above Chalford, into which the smaller watercourses connect, is also included within this landscape type.

The river valleys generally share the same pattern of incised valley form with often steep, and occasionally very steep valley slopes, and gentle convex profiles at the junction with the High Wold. The valley sides are further dissected by secondary valleys that link into the main river, some of which are dry. In contrast, some of the upper sections of the valleys, particularly at the head of the Thames tributaries, display a broader and more gently sloping valley form. Although physiographically a High Wold valley, the Painswick Valley, is also distinguished from the other valleys in this landscape character type by its deep but much broader form separated by distinctive intermediate ridges that project into the main valley. In common with the other valleys, it displays the same pattern of convoluted valley sides.

The valleys have a sheltered, and secluded character distinct and separate from the more open and extensive High Wold that define their limit. The valleys display a mosaic of land uses, with a mix of predominantly broadleaved, and sometimes ancient, woodland clothing the steeper slopes and forming a backdrop to the areas of predominantly pasture land. Arable land is present, generally in small consolidated holdings and principally occurring on the shallower valley slopes, or connected to farms occupying the High Wold edge. Within the Painswick Valley, however, mixed pasture and arable is more prevalent, with a rich mosaic of hedged fields and copses providing enclosure. While woodland is present it is principally confined to extensive stands at the head of the valley, and on the intervening ridges.

Although not extensively settled, a number of stone built villages and hamlets occupy the valley bottoms, such as Duntisbourne Leer. Both clustered and dispersed settlements occupy the valley bottoms and hillsides, together with dispersed farmsteads that often connect onto holdings on the High Wold. Settlement is more prevalent within the broader Painswick Valley, although absorbed by the scale of the valley system.

The sheltered location has also favoured the establishment of large country houses and associated parkland and these occur within many of the valleys.

Physical Influences

The High Wold Valleys generally rise on the Inferior Oolite, with river erosion cutting through these strata to expose older rocks including the Lias Group. Within the river valleys to the east of the Frome, erosion of the Inferior Oolite, together with the general south-easterly dip of the strata, has resulted in the exposure of progressively younger Middle Jurassic strata with a narrow band of Fuller's Earth separating the Inferior from the Great Oolite Series. Although limited in extent alluvial deposits are important within the valley bottoms creating richer soils within the localised flatter areas of land. The western valleys are mainly confined to the Inferior Oolite. Outcrops of harder bands of the Oolitic limestones, as well as exposure of the older Marlstone Rock, has resulted in the formation of locally prominent benches, particularly within the Painswick Valley.

Geological faulting and fold structures have further influenced the course and form of the river valleys. The Painswick Stream has exploited the axis of the Painswick syncline, while in other valleys the alignment of the river course deflects from the general south-easterly trend across the Dip-Slope to follow pronounced fault lines, such as in the Upper Churn.

The present valley morphology that characterises the High Wold valleys, and indeed the lower sections of the river courses in the case of the Thames tributaries, is considered to be attributable to the effects of conditions prevailing during and at the end of the cycle of glacial periods. Although ice did not extend as far south as the Cotswolds, superficial deposits indicate that it extended into the Vale of Moreton, and permafrost conditions would have been extensive. At each retreat of the ice caps, the considerable increase in river discharge arising from glacial meltwater streams would have scoured the existing valleys within the relatively smooth surface of the Dip-Slope and carved deeper and more incised valley profiles. The distinctive valley form meanders that are evident today, particularly within the Thames tributaries, are attributable to the erosive capacity of these more substantial rivers. While the incised valley forms and pronounced valley meanders remain, they are now occupied by 'underfit' rivers and streams with a much depleted discharge capacity. Indeed, many sections of the rivers, particularly to the east, show evidence of ephemeral flow.

As a consequence of the valley formation, distinctive interlocking spurs, steep incised valley sides and rounded convex slope profiles at the transition onto the High Wold are recurrent features. The limiting effect of the steep slopes has precluded extensive agricultural use, except in the Painswick Valley where a mosaic of mixed pasture and arable covers the valley slopes and basin feature. The shallower sloping sections of some of the upper reaches of the Thames tributaries are also able to support more extensive areas of arable cultivation as well as pasture, and merge with land uses typical of the surrounding High Wold. Elsewhere, many sections of the valley sides are clothed in woodland, much of which is broadleaved, including some notable stands of ancient woodland, although coniferous plantations also occur. The dense woodland cover is particularly notable within some of the smaller and more incised valleys.

In addition to remnants of ancient woodland, the valleys also support intermittent areas of calcareous grassland generally associated with valley bottoms, but also at the transition areas onto the High Wold forming remnants of former commons. The calcareous grassland at Cranham Common, and at Sheepscombe in the Painswick Valley, is particularly noteworthy.

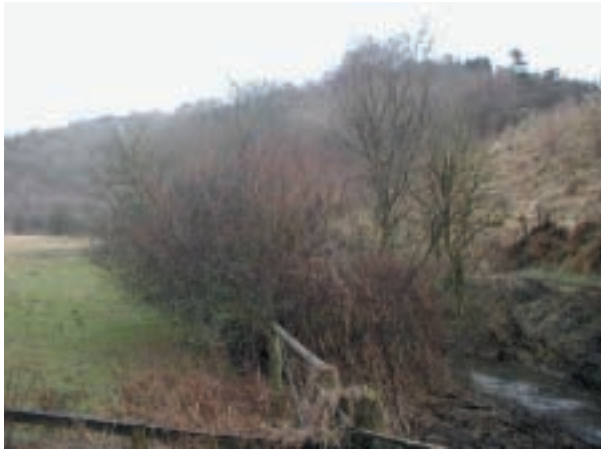
Human Influences

It is highly probable that the High Wold valleys have been favourable areas for occupation for a long period as a consequence of the locational advantages offered by the combination of a more sheltered location, the availability of water, and ease of access onto the more open and easily cleared High Wold. Furthermore, although the extent of flatter land is limited within the valley bottoms, the presence of deeper and richer soils derived from alluvial deposits also provided areas for cultivation and grazing.

Although physical evidence of occupation within the valleys from the early periods of occupation is limited, the occasional long barrows, pillow mounds and tumuli that occur within a number of the valleys confirm that man was present from as early as the Neolithic, and it is probable that small settlements were established within the valleys from this period, many relating to spring lines as well as the main river source, and also fording points across the rivers. The evidence will have been obliterated, however, by successive periods of occupation building over previous settlements. Settlements within the valleys now mainly comprise dispersed villages and hamlets that are primarily linear or radial. Farmsteads and individual dwellings are also frequent occurrences within the landscape type, and as with the villages and hamlets, are most frequently found on the valley bottoms, terraces and hill crests of the valley slopes.

The shallower upper sections of the Thames tributaries and the broader basin of the Painswick Valley would have been suitable for cultivation and grazing from the earliest period of occupation of the Cotswolds. In contrast to this, the sections of very steep slopes that occur within many of the valleys will have always been a major constraint to clearance and development, both from these early phases of occupation and indeed through to the present time. Much of the woodland within the valleys is associated with these steep slopes, and includes intermittent and sometimes substantial stands of ancient woodland within all of the valleys. While the tree cover is likely to have been felled and replanted as an ongoing process of woodland management, it is nevertheless probable that woodland will have clothed some of the steepest slopes almost continuously.

A number of designed parklands and historic buildings are located within the valleys, their location and layout taking advantage of the sheltered microclimate of the valley, deeper soils, and a secluded wooded setting.



Character Areas

8A

Toadsmoor, Holy Brook, and Upper Frome Valleys

In common with other High Wold valleys the Frome and its tributaries rise close to the escarpment, with a cluster of springs feeding into the Frome to the north of Brimpsfield, approximately 1.5 km (1 mile) east of the escarpment at Birdlip. At the head of the valley, slopes are shallow and the valley form wide, but this is soon replaced by a deeply incised valley with slopes averaging 1 in 5, and locally steeper up to 1 in 3, for the length of its course south to Sapperton and west to Chalford. Likewise, the Frome's subsidiary valley that extends up to Climperwell Farm, east of the Cranham Wood section of the escarpment, and the courses of the Holy Brook tributary and Toadsmoor Valley to the west, also display deeply incised valley form below the initial more gently sloping heads of the valleys.

Woodland cover is a notable feature of these valleys, and the Upper Frome together with its upper tributaries, have a particularly extensive cover of woodland throughout their courses. While intermittent open sections occur, the overall character is that of a deeply wooded and secluded valley. Similarly the Holy Brook valley to the west supports an extensive network of woodland although the east facing slopes of the valley are generally open, presenting a notable contrast between the two sides of the valley. Extensive woodland also cloaks many of the slopes of the shorter Toadsmoor Valley, and in contrast to Holy Brook Valley, is mainly confined to the west facing slopes. Much of the woodland is broadleaved, although coniferous stands do occur.

There are some notable areas of ancient woodland, eg east of Frampton Mansell to Pinbury Park within the Frome, and also within the Toadsmoor Valley. Intermittent areas of calcareous grassland also occur, the majority of which are designated as SSSIs.

There is a notable absence of settlement or roads within the Upper Frome and Holy Brook valleys, imparting a strong sense of seclusion. Apart from Caudle Green located near the head of the Frome Valley, occasional small settlements hug the upper slopes of the valley, such as Sapperton, Edgeworth and Miserden, and Waterlane and Througham in the Holy Brook Valley. Where they do occur, roads cross rather than follow the valley bottom and many sections are only accessible by footpath. In contrast, the valleys of the Frome to the west of Sapperton, together with the Toadsmoor Valley, have a more settled character. Settlements extend along the valley bottom and sides such as Oakridge and Frampton Mansell within the Frome Valley, and Eastcombe within the Toadsmoor. Roads also follow sections of the valley bottom and sides. Nevertheless, the concentration of woodlands within these latter valleys continues to absorb the settled character and retain a sense of seclusion.

There are a number of parks within the Frome Valley the most notable being the Registered Garden of Misarden Park. Located to the east of Miserden village, Misarden Park occupies a secluded location, surrounded by extensive woodlands that extend across the valley slopes and bottom. In addition to the designed gardens, a series of valley bottom lakes have been created within the course of the Frome. The Park contains a number of important archaeological features notably a motte and bailey, a tumulus and pillow mounds, which together are indicative of a long period of occupation. Other Registered Gardens that occur within the valleys comprise Pinbury Park and part of the Edgeworth Estate within the Frome, and Lypiatt Park within the Toadsmoor Valley.

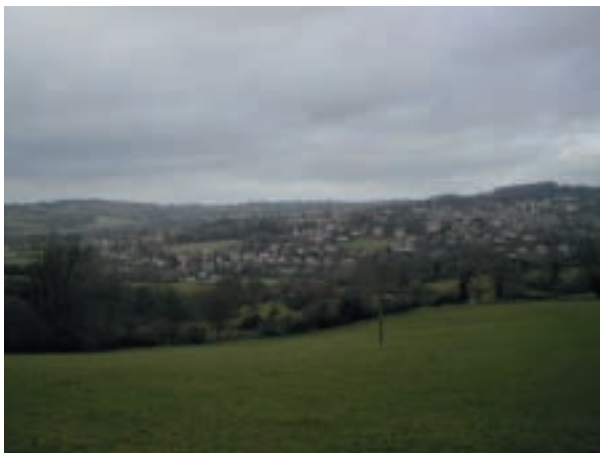
The eastern section of the Thames and Severn Canal extends through the Upper Frome Valley. To cross the high ground, Sapperton Tunnel was constructed. This impressive feat of engineering was completed in 1789, and at 3,109m

long, it is one of the longest transport tunnels in the country. However, the prohibitive cost of maintaining the tunnel led to its closure in 1911. The entrance at its western side is framed by the imposing Gothic style Daneway Portal, carefully restored in 1996 by the Cotswold Canals Trust.

8B
Painswick and Slad Valleys

In contrast to the other High Wold Valleys the Painswick Valley is much broader in form with major secondary embayments that extend close to the escarpment.

The major folded structure of the Painswick syncline has had a significant influence on the valley morphology. The Painswick Stream has exploited the synclinal structure and eroded back through the Oolitic Limestone to create a bowl like valley, the headwaters cutting back almost to the escarpment edge. Secondary headward erosion by the Wash Brook, a tributary of the Painswick Stream, has resulted in two principal valley heads, while a third smaller re-entrant occurs to the east at Sheepscombe. No High Wold exists on the western boundary of the Painswick Valley. Instead there is a notable ridge between these two landform units defined by Scottsquar Hill, Huddinknoll Hill and Cod Hill and eventually to High Brotheridge. The Painswick Stream and the Wash Brook are separated by a prominent projecting ridge that extends southwards from Painswick Hill on the escarpment edge at 283m AOD down to the settlement of Painswick. The ridge is underlain in part by the more resistant Marlstone Rock Formation that outcrops below Painswick and forming a notable bench. To the east, the Wickridge Hill ridge, rising to 232m AOD, separates the Painswick Valley from the Slad Valley.



In addition to the principal watercourses within the Painswick Valley catchment, numerous springs emerge along the middle valley slopes from which a myriad of minor watercourses further dissect the valley slopes creating a complex rolling and locally folded landform.

Much of the Painswick Valley is under mixed, mainly improved, pasture and arable production within both irregular enclosed fields particularly to the north-east of Painswick, and more regular medium scale fields to the west, particularly below Cud Hill where arable is more dominant. Such field patterns reflect the response to 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure of both unenclosed cultivation patterns and former common pastures. Fields are enclosed by a mix of hedgerows and stone walls which together with the numerous hedgerow trees and field copses provides a sense of rural intimacy.

The principal settlement within the Painswick Valley is Painswick itself occupying a distinctive elevated position on the lower slopes of Painswick Hill ridge. Other villages and hamlets are scattered through the Valley, notably Whiteshill, Pitchcombe, Edge and Sheepscombe. The majority of buildings within the Painswick valley are constructed from locally quarried limestone that weathers to a silvery colour making the local buildings particularly distinctive.

While woodlands occur throughout the Valley, the valley slope woodlands are the most notable feature, particularly those at the head of the valley surrounding Cranham at Buckholt Wood, Saltridge Hill and Sheepscombe further south. Together these form notable skyline woodlands from within the valley. The Painswick Hill ridge also supports notable stands of woodland. Much of these more extensive areas of woodland are classified as ancient woodland.

The woodlands at Buckholt Wood, and continuing round the valley head to Sheepscombe, are designated as a National Nature Reserve in recognition of the considerable ecological importance of both the ancient woodlands dominated by beech with some ash, pedunculate oak and sycamore, and some areas of calcareous grassland. Much of this is also designated as a SSSI.

The Registered Garden of Painswick House, including the restored Painswick Rococo Garden, is set within an impressive parkland setting and woodland overlooking the Wash Brook Valley, and is a notable feature immediately to the north west of Painswick.

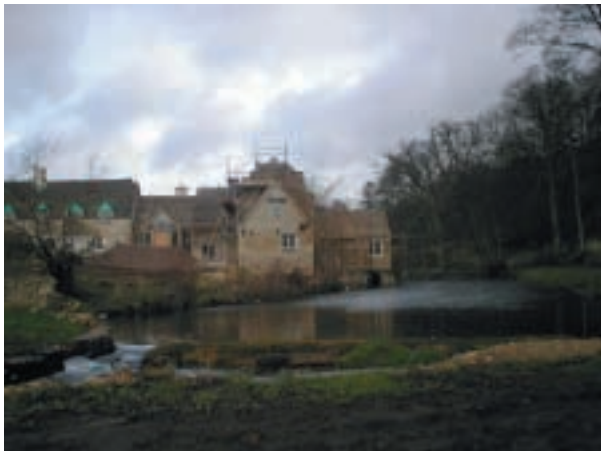
The south-west aligned Slad Valley is located to the east of the Wickridge Hill ridge. The valley is deeply incised throughout its length, but it is at the head of the valley that the incised nature is particularly pronounced. Here a series of subsidiary streams, including the Dillay Brook, feed into the Slad Brook, to form a remarkable network of deeply dissected valleys, with much of the very steep slopes clothed in broadleaved woodland. The secluded network of 'Upper Slad' valleys are only accessible by foot, and examples of some of the more isolated and hidden parts of the Cotswolds. Further woodlands occur within the main valley, with an almost continuous cover of woodland on the upper north-west facing slopes of the valley.

Below these woodlands much of the valley slopes are under agricultural cultivation with a predominance of improved pasture within regular fields.

The Slad Valley is the setting of Laurie Lee's 'Cider with Rosie', which records the author's childhood days growing up in the village of Slad before the Second World War. The images portray a pastoral retreat. Since this period the valley has experienced some changes to the sense of peace and tranquillity, not the least being the effects of traffic on the B4070, which connects Stroud to Birdlip and follows the valley bottom and upper slopes. Despite these influences, the valley retains a quiet and remote character.

8C
Upper Churn Valley

The River Churn rises in the Inferior Oolite at vicinity of Seven Springs, close to the section of the escarpment between Hartley Hill and Wistley Hill. The cluster of springs the feed into the river are at approximately 215m AOD and considered by some to be the true source of the River Thames since Thames Head to the north of Kemble is at a lower elevation at approximately 115m AOD. The col between the south flowing headwaters of the Churn, and the north flowing Lilley Brook that dissects the escarpment, is a mere 100m in width. Here, the High Wold plateau that would have once separated the two river catchments has been eroded. To the east and west of the Churn, however, the High Wold plateau defines the limit of the Upper Churn catchment, with its series of watercourses that feed into the main river, and extend southwards to the village of Rendcomb at the transition to the Dip-Slope.



The general trend of the catchment is typical of the Dip-Slope valleys with a general north-west / south-east alignment. Above the village of Colesbourne and close to the confluence with Hilcot Brook, the Churn's principal tributary, the main river assumes a distinctive east-west course. This is attributable to its exploitation of a fault line, the pattern repeating further upstream where minor tributaries feeding into the river follow a similar course

The upper reaches of the Churn from Colesbourne to Seven Springs is generally more open and with a gentler valley form profile than in the lower section of the valley, particularly on the eastern / northern side of the valley. There is extensive pastoral land throughout the valley, interspersed with valley bottom woodland copses and riparian vegetation. The stone built villages of Coberley and Cowley are notable settlements on the lower valley slopes. A series of lakes have been created along the course of the Churn at Cowley, which together with designed parkland planting extending across the west facing valley slopes above Cowley Manor, form a notable feature. To the east of Coberley the sites of the lost medieval villages of Coberley and Upper Coberley are visible as humps and hollows within a small tributary valley.

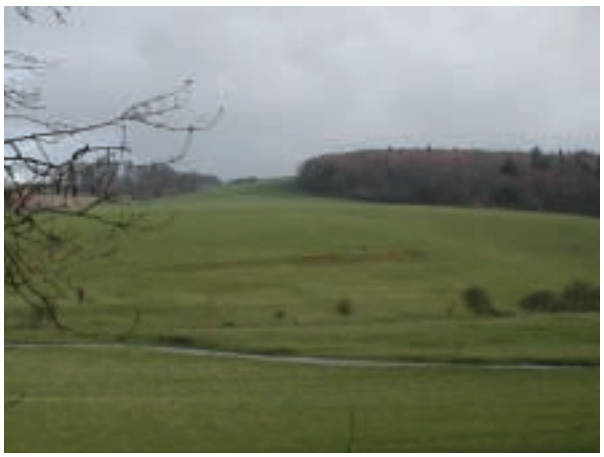
The north-south flowing Hilcot Brook flows within a steep-sided valley. Although there are areas of pasture within the valley, the dominant land use is woodland forming part of an extensive commercially managed woodland estate. The intermittent valley pastures are therefore enclosed by dense woodland. There is a general absence of settlement

with a few isolated farms. The overall character of the Hilcot Brook Valley is that of a very secluded, remote and peaceful wooded valley.

Below Colesbourne, and the confluence of the Churn and Hilcot Brook, the river follows a north-south alignment within an enclosed valley form. The land use is a mixture of predominantly pastoral farmland, together with extensive areas of woodland. There are extensive areas of ancient woodland throughout the valley notably at Old Park, Clifferdine and Iffcomb Woods to the south of Colesbourne, at Hilcot Wood above the smaller tributary valley, and Cowley Wood in the upper reaches.

Parklands and estate managed land is also a notable feature of the Upper Churn valley, notably to the east of Cowley Manor, at Colesbourne Park within the Hilcot Brook Valley, and the Marsden Manor and Rendcomb Estates in the lower reaches of the character area. The imposing stone built Rendcomb College, set amongst a parkland setting on the upper west facing slopes of the valley above the village of Rendcomb, is a particularly notable local feature within the valley. These areas of parkland and estate managed woodland planting, together with the mosaic of extensive woodlands, imparts a well-managed character.

8D
Upper Coln Valley



The Coln rises in the vicinity of Brockhampton to the south of the Winchcombe embayment. This upper section of the valley through the villages of Sevenhampton and Syreford is deeply incised, but southwards through Andoversford it assumes a much broader valley form. This uppermost reach of the Coln has been included within the High Wold, and only to the south of the settlements of Foxcote and Shipton is the more expansive form of the valley considered in detail

as a separate valley character area. South of Withington the river flows across a succession of Inferior and Great Oolite strata in a narrow, steep sided valley.

The northern portion of the character area is significantly less wooded when compared to the south. North of Withington the most significant areas of woodland occupy the upper valley slopes, steep landform and riverside locations. These tend to be ancient broadleaved woodlands although coniferous planting is also significant. Between these limited areas of woodland, particularly on steeper landform poorly suited to intensive grazing, linear tracts of calcareous grassland are evident. South of Withington, woodland cover is more extensive, with Withington and Chedworth Woods cloaking much of the valley sides above the level of the floodplain. These represent extensive areas of ancient broadleaved woodland and are dominated by broadleaved species although areas of mixed woodland and coniferous plantations are also evident, and indeed dominant in some views.

Between areas of woodland the valley sides are managed as improved pasture and divided up by a network of hedgerows. On areas of gentler landform arable farming is also evident although this is not prevalent. The floor of the valley is flat and represents a narrow alluvial floodplain through which the Coln meanders gracefully. These areas are managed as seasonal pasture and are subject to periodic flooding. As a result, post and wire fences are used to divide up fields rather than hedgerows.

Numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows are located within woodlands on the upper slopes indicating that the Colne valley was extensively settled in prehistory. Later sites of historic interest include the impressive remains of Chedworth Roman Villa and those of a further villa site at Compton Grove. To the east of Cassey Compton a lost medieval village is visible as humps and hollows beneath closely grazed riverside pastures above the level of flooding on the northern bank of the Colne. A more recent landscape feature preserved as earthworks runs along the

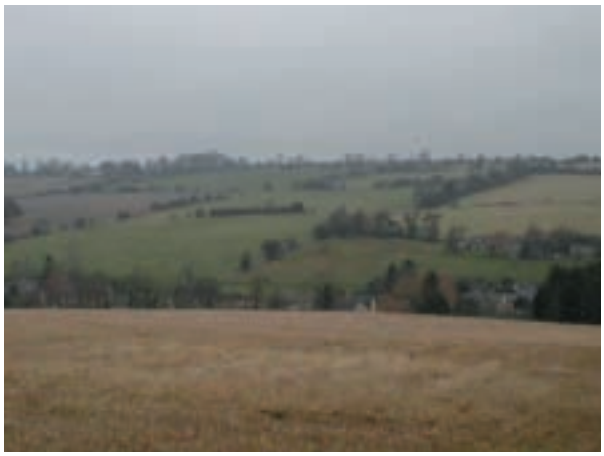
base of the valley, and within Chedworth Woods. This linear feature is a disused railway. Its course through the woods has been protected as a Nature Reserve due to the fine rock exposures and fossils along its route and the variety of grassland and woodland flowers that have colonised it.

The landscape retains a strong rural character. The main settlements in the area are Withington, which straddles the Coln, and Compton Abdale, located at the head of one of its main tributary valleys. Beyond these settlements the landscape is sparsely settled with a small number of isolated farms located throughout the landscape. These are generally sited along lanes off the main arterial routes through the valley.

8E
Upper Windrush Valley

The phsyiographic source of the River Windrush is close to Oat Hill, south of Broadway Combe, where a broad and shallow sloping valley penetrates close to the escarpment edge. The valley is dry throughout this upper section, however, and not until a small secondary tributary near Taddington joins the valley to the north of Taddington is there a surface watercourse. The entire river valley southwards from the village of Ford, and then south-eastwards to Bourton-on-the-Water, displays underfit characteristics, with the wavelength of the valley meanders out of proportion to the small scale of the river. Indeed, secondary small-scale meanders are evident along the course of the river. The distinctive asymmetrical valley profile in the section between Temple Guiting and Naunton is also a classic example of uniclinal shifting with steeper west facing slopes resulting from the tendency of the river to cut sideways as a result of the dip of the underlying strata.

With a few notable exceptions woodland cover within the Upper Windrush Valley is sparse and confined to sections of some of the steeper valley slopes. The extensive and predominantly broadleaved woodland to the west of Kineton is notable, and classified as ancient woodland. Similarly the section of Guiting Wood that lies within the Upper Windrush Valley catchment is also ancient woodland although now largely replanted with conifers. Areas of calcareous grassland are scarce, but there are linear patches along some sections of the valley bottom.



Land use within the Upper Windrush is a mix of improved grassland for grazing, and arable, the latter particularly prevalent to the west of Kineton where large-scale rectilinear fields extend down to the valley bottom. The effect of the parliamentary enclosure pattern is evident throughout the valley due to with the majority of fields being regular in shape.

Settlement is principally confined to the valley bottom and lower slopes thus occupying secluded and sheltered locations close to water. A network of roads traverses the Upper Windrush Valley, and although some sections of the valley remain isolated, much of the catchment is served by a local road network connecting the string of villages within the main valley, and also the settlements at the head of the tributary valleys at Hawling and Guiting Power. The name 'Guiting' is frequent in the upper reaches of the Windrush. The name derives from the Anglo-Saxon 'gute' meaning to flood indicating that settlements were prone to seasonal flood waters. Fords are frequent crossing the slow shallow river; many are marked by an old stone farmhouse. The medieval packhorse bridge close to Guiting Power is also a notable landscape feature.

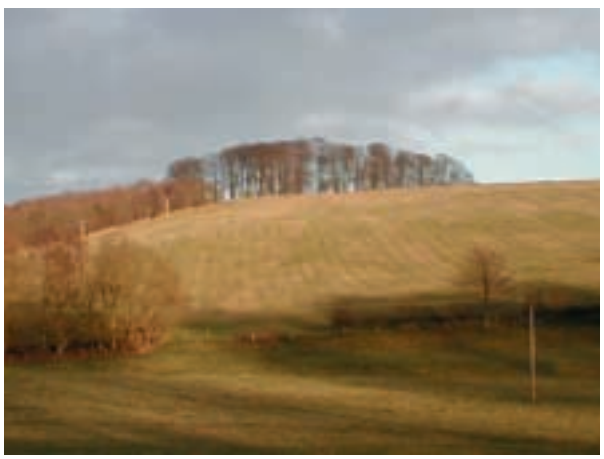
There are limited surface features of archaeological interest but the site of the medieval village of Lower Harford, adjacent to a fording point across the Windrush, is of interest and designated as a SAM.

Two notable recreational paths pass through the character area comprising sections of the Windrush, and Wardens' Ways.

8F
Upper Dikler Valley

The River Dikler is the principal tributary of the River Windrush, rising close to the escarpment in the vicinity of Broadway Woods. In its upper reaches the valley form is broad and open, and slopes are shallow. The connecting watercourses that feed into the headwaters of the Dikler are also insubstantial and in many instances dry. Within a kilometre or so, however, the valley assumes a narrow and very incised form, the section between Jockey Stable Cottages southwards to Hinchwick Manor being particularly notable.

South of The Warren the valley is dry throughout the remainder of this character area, and noticeably broader. North of The Warren the river flows across the relatively less permeable Cotswolds Sand, but near The Warren, an east-west fault across the valley has lowered the outcrop of the Inferior Oolite so that it forms the bedrock to the river course. As a consequence of the more permeable nature of the rock, the watercourse passes underground. Two substantial and incised valleys link into the Dikler from the west, south of Bourton Down and west of Hinchwick, both of which are dry



The effect of underfit valley morphology is particularly well displayed in this upper reach of the Dikler (see description under Physical Influences). Pronounced valley meanders are evident in the section from Jockey Stable Cottages south to The Warren. In contrast the watercourse is small and insubstantial.

Woodland cover is particularly extensive in the northern section of the valley, and includes areas of ancient woodland, much of it hugging the steep valley slopes and extending into the tributary valleys. A further concentration of woodland occurs in the vicinity of The Warren at the confluence of the dry tributary valleys. Although predominantly broadleaved, there are also stands of coniferous plantations especially within the Hinchwick Hill tributary. To the south of The Warren, however, the valley is more open with occasional geometric and mainly coniferous woodlands. The land use beyond the woodland areas is mainly improved grassland although arable land also extends into the valley bottom in the southern section where slopes are gentler and the valley bottom widens. Linear patches of calcareous grassland also occur in these valley bottoms.

Settlement and roads within the valley is sparse, emphasising the secluded nature of the valley, confined to intermittent individual properties and farm holdings. Occasional local roads cross the valley but much of the upper section is inaccessible, with limited footpaths.

An isolated Registered Garden is located at Spring Hill House, hidden within the folds of one of the upper tributaries. The 'planned' woodland structure is notable but not visible in longer distance views. Other features of greater antiquity comprise a group of tumili within woodland south of Hinchwick Manor Farm, and the line of the Roman Road Ryknild Street which crosses sections of the tributaries, including the grounds of Spring Hill House.

A number of small, disused quarries occur within the valley, but are insignificant features. The now disused military camp at the head of the valley adjacent to the A44 next to the Cross Hands junction is contained by woodland, and its impact is therefore confined to close distance views.