

IF Inkpen Fields

Topography, Geology and Soils

This is an area of undulating plains sloping gently upward towards the foot of the Hampshire Downs scarp to the south. The geology is entirely formed by chalk which gives rise to fine silty rendzinas. This area is unlike the adjacent *Valleys South West* HECA in geology, soils, relief and historic land-use. It shares many similarities with adjacent landscapes in Wiltshire and is more probably a continuation of these.

Historic Landscape

This area was part of an open field system in the medieval period but had been enclosed into fields by the 18th century. The early enclosures in this area were large and regular in shape which suggests that they had been enclosed in one phase following an agreement between farmers and landowners to rationalise holdings in the common fields. Several field barns were set within these enclosed fields and the name of one, Taylorslot Barn, further supports the idea that this area was enclosed by agreement. It is unclear to which settlement this open field system belonged; it lay within Inkpen parish which otherwise lacked open fields and may represent fields farmed from Inkpen. It also abuts the open fields of Ham in Wiltshire and may represent a continuation of these.

Modern Landscape

Around two-thirds of the fields in this area have been altered, the majority through boundary removal, creating very large arable fields out of what were already large fields. The rest remain as regular early enclosure fields. Tree plantations have been made in this area, introducing a previously absent wooded element to the landscape. All plantations are small and rectilinear in shape, perhaps created for game coverts or shelter belts, but do not fit with the established grain of the landscape.