

5.1 Key Landscape Character Assessment Terms

Analysis - the process of dividing up the landscape into its component parts to gain a better understanding of it.

Approach - the step-wise process by which landscape assessment is undertaken.

Assessment - term to describe all the various ways of looking at, analysing, evaluating and describing the landscape.

Character - a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Characteristics - elements or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Characterisation - the process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Elements - individual components which make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

Features - particularly prominent or eye catching elements, such as tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Land cover - combination of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.

Landform - combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.

Landscape - primarily the visual appearance of the land including its shape, form and colours. However, landscape is not purely a visual phenomenon. The landscape relies on a range of other dimensions including geology, landform, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture and cultural associations.

Objective - method of assessment in which personal feelings and opinions do not influence characterisation.

Subjective - method of assessment in which personal views and reactions are used in the characterisation process.

5.2 Other Technical Terms

Adit Mining - method of mining used by many Freeminers where the Coal Measures dip gently enough to be entered through mines driven into the hillside.

Alluvium - sedimentary deposits resulting from the action of rivers, including those laid down in river channels, floodplains, estuaries and lakes.

Alluvial Fan - a fan or cone shaped mass of material deposited by a stream where it emerges from the constriction of a narrow valley at the foot of hills and debouches on to a plain.

Ancient woodland - land continuously wooded since AD 1600. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, usually with a high diversity of flora and fauna.

Anticline - an arched fold or up fold in the strata of the earth's crust. Because denudation generally attacks the arches of folded structures faster than it does the down folds, it is common for these to become the location of valleys which in time expose the core of the anticline.

Assarting - the process of clearing woodland or waste land for cultivation, associated particularly with the 12th and 13th centuries.

Biogeography - the study of areas with a distinctive flora and fauna.

Breccia - an Italian term used to describe rock composed of cemented angular clastic fragments possibly derived from material deposited during a volcanic eruption.

Bronze Age - a cultural phase in humankind's evolution when alloying of copper and tin was perfected. Metalworking technology and new types of flint tool and pottery design were introduced at the start of this period. Changes in society were reflected in the emergence of new burial techniques, particularly round barrows. In the Middle Bronze Age cremation replaced inhumations and in the late Bronze Age social and economic changes led to the abandonment of old funerary rights in favour of less traceable rites.

Calcifuge - refers to plants which prefer acidic soils and cannot exist on chalky or alkali soils.

Carboniferous - period of the Palaeozoic era following that of the Devonian and preceding that of the Permian. It ranged from about 345 million years to about 280 million years BP. Economically the Carboniferous is the most important of the systems as it contains most of the world's coal reserves and other deposits such as oil and iron ore.

Carr - woodland in waterlogged terrain. Characteristic species include alder, willow and willow.

Chartism - a movement established and controlled by working men in 1836 to achieve parliamentary democracy as a step towards social and economic reform. The 'Charter' made six political demands but the organisation was Utopian and naive in the belief that constitutional reform would automatically provide socio-economic betterment.

Chert - a hard siliceous rock that occurs as bands or layers in sedimentary rocks. Flint is a variety of chert.

Clastic - detrital materials consisting of fragments of broken rocks that have been eroded, transported and re-deposited at a different site.

Coppicing - the traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down near to the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots that can be harvested.

Denudation - general term to denote the action of laying bare by the washing away of surface materials. In geomorphology the term is used to include all processes which cause degradation of the earth's surface.

Devonian - the fourth geological period of the Palaeozoic era, extending from 395 to 345 million years. It comprises both marine and continental deposits, the latter being referred to as the Old Red Sandstone.

Diamicton - the unlithified equivalent of a diamictite, itself a lithified, conglomeratic, siliciclastic rock which is unsorted, with sand and/or coarser particles dispersed through a mud matrix.

Domesday Book - conceived by William the Conqueror at Christmas 1085 in Gloucester, the survey was the most comprehensive and detailed record compiled anywhere in Europe in the Middle Ages. The survey's primary purpose was to provide maximum yield from land tax. The name arose in the 12th century to signify, like the day of judgement, there could be no appeal from its verdict.

Drift Deposits - geologically recent material overlying solid geology and including glacial and fluvo-glacial deposits remaining after the retreat of ice sheets and glaciers, material deposited by rivers, including river terrace deposits and peat.

Estover - ancient right to collect brushwood in the forest.

Fluvo-glacial - processes and landforms related to the action of glacial meltwater.

Forester - this term applies to people born within the Hundred of St. Briavels (effectively anywhere in the forest). Foresters are granted certain rights which date to Norman times including the right to turn their sheep out to graze freely in the woodlands. Rights also allow Foresters to turn their pigs out into the forest in the autumn months to feed on the acorns. Sheep keepers are known locally as Sheep Badgers.

Fossiliferous - term used to describe rocks rich in fossils, the remains of living organisms preserved by natural causes in crustal rocks.

Freeminer - anyone born in the Forest of Dean within the Hundred of St. Briavels, and who has worked in a mine for a year and a day, may open up his own coal mine. Freeminers rights date back several hundred years and were enshrined in Law by various Acts of Parliament between 1819 and 1906. It is thought that Freeminers were granted their rights as a reward for services during Medieval wars when they acted as Sappers, soldiers who tunnelled beneath enemy positions.

Fulling - mechanical means of processing wool cloth. After woollen cloth has been woven, its fibres are loose, airy and unmeshed. The cloth also contains a significant amount of oil and grease which inhibit the binding action of dyes. Fulling involves pounding the cloth to mat the fibres together and cleansing to remove natural oils and greases. Originally cloth was beaten manually. However in the 12th century fulling mills, consisting of huge water powered hammers, were introduced to Britain.

Geomorphology - the scientific study of the origin of landforms.

Geology - the study of the origin, structure, composition and history of the Earth together with the processes that have led to its present state.

Gale - term used to describe the right to mine an area. The principal officer of the Forest, whose duty it is to grant the Gales, is the Gaveller. The tract of land granted is said to be galed and the grantee is called the Galee.

Glacial - term used to describe a cold phase during an ice age.

Hercynian - mountain building episode of Carboniferous/ Permian times.

Hillfort - any hilltop fortress although term usually applied to defensive sites of the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age. Some hillforts may have been permanent settlements, but many were temporary refuges.

Iron Age - a cultural phase of humankind's evolution when technical improvements in iron-working enabled iron tools and weapons to replace those of the preceding Bronze Age. Population growth led to competition for land and the development of a more territorial society. Improved farming technology and scarcity of land brought about the cultivation of heavier and poorer soils.

Karst - a term used to describe terrain created by limestone solution and characterised by a virtual absence of surface drainage. Clints and grikes together make up a limestone pavement, a feature of karst scenery.

Mesolithic - an archaeological term meaning 'middle stone' age and used to describe the culture achieved during the early Post Glacial when mankind had moved from herd- hunting practices of the upper Palaeolithic, but had not yet discovered or adopted the use of agriculture.

Metallurgy - science of extracting and working metals.

Moot Hill - Anglo Saxon term to describe a public assembly to decide legal and administrative issues. Inhabitants of an area had a duty to attend their local Moot. Prominent hills were often the sites of such meetings.

Motte-and-Bailey Castle - the earliest form of Norman castle. These were established along key communication routes after the conquest. An inner courtyard was protected by simple earth and wooden defences.

Neolithic - an archaeological term used to describe the 'new stone' age. This applies to the culture achieved during the middle Post Glacial when mankind had begun to polish and grind stone artefacts (a technological advance from the bashing and flaking of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic). The Neolithic also saw the introduction of agriculture.

Open Field System - well established means of land management during the medieval period and was widespread across much of lowland England. The unit of cultivation was the strip which varied in length and width depending on local conditions. The strips were grouped together into furlongs and a number of furlongs formed the field. The up and down ploughing of the strips threw soil into the centre of the strip and over time created the distinctive ridge and furrow landform which may be used to identify remnants of open fields in the landscape today.

Ordovician - the second geological period of the Palaeozoic that includes rocks that were formed between about 525 million and 440 million years ago.

Orogeny - a major period of fold-mountain formation, during which the process of orogenesis occurs. Such a process includes folding, faulting and thrusting often as a result of plate tectonics.

Outcrop - the area where a particular rock appears at the surface.

Palaeolithic - an archaeological term used to describe the earliest form of human culture. The earliest toolmakers lived during the Pleistocene in Britain after the main glacial periods had passed.

Pannage - ancient right to graze pigs in the forest.

Peat - unconsolidated black or dark-brown soil material consisting largely of slightly decomposed or un decomposed fibrous vegetable matter that has accumulated in a waterlogged environment.

Pedology - the scientific study of soils.

Permian - the final geological period of the Palaeozoic era extending from about 280 million years ago to 240 million years ago. It succeeded the Carboniferous and preceded the Triassic.

Perry - fermented drink made from pears. The name derives from 'prige', the Saxon for pear although the first reference to making a fermented drink from pears was by Pliny.

Pleistocene - the first epoch of the Quaternary which loosely corresponds to the Ice Age.

Pericline - a crustal fold structure in the form of a dome or basin in which beds dip inwards around a central point or outwards in the case of a dome.

Quaternary - the younger of the two geological periods of the Cainozoic. This was the era which saw the appearance of mankind.

Ramsar - Ramsar sites are areas of land listed as Wetland of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention 1973).

Riparian - riverbank habitats.

Scowles - term used to describe the site of surface iron ore extraction dating from the Iron Age to the early post-medieval period. These features range from shallow, often interconnected pits to deeper, irregular treches with exposed rock faces. Over the years these have been colonised by scrub and woodland and are often hard to discern in the landscape.

Scree - an accumulation of fragmented rock waste below a cliff or rock face formed as a result of weathering of a rock exposure.

Semi-natural vegetation - any type of vegetation that has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.

Siliceous - rocks that contain an abundance of silica.

Silurian - the third of the periods of the Palaeozoic succeeding the Ordovician and preceding the Devonian and lasting from 440 million years ago to about 395 million years ago.

Slade - local term used to describe a deeply incised valley.

Squatter Settlement - a concentration of makeshift dwellings on public or private land which is neither owned nor rented by the builders/ occupants. It is a feature of the period of population pressure in England in the 16th and 17th centuries when extensive encroachment on manorial wastes occurred. It was a commonly held belief that a cottage erected on wastes overnight entitled its builder to undisputed possession and rights to land as far as an axe could be thrown.

Stratigraphy - the structure produced when sediments are laid down in horizontal layers (stratum). The term may be used to describe the stratification of solid geology, drift and soils.

Strike valley - a valley which has been eroded along structural lines that lie parallel with the regional strike of an area.

Syncline - a downfold or basin-shaped fold of crustal rocks in which the strata dip inwards towards a central axis.

Topography - term used to describe the surface features of the earth's surface.

Tufa - sedimentary deposit formed around a spring of calcareous groundwater. It is generally found in limestone regions where it infill cavities.

Turnpike - a gate across a highway preventing passage until a toll has been paid. Turnpike roads were administered by turnpike trusts which were authorised by a private act of parliament in 1663 to levy tolls for maintenance of the highway. This replaced the parochial maintenance system and substantially improved communications in England.

Triassic - the first geological period of the Mesozoic era, extending from about 240 million years ago to about 195 million years ago. It succeeded the Permian and preceded the Jurassic. In Britain it consists mainly of shales, red desert sandstones, marls and pebble beds. This period witnessed the evolution of the reptiles and the earliest known dinosaurs.

Vernacular - built in the local style, from local materials.

Veteran Tree - a tree which is of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition.

Water Meadow - water meadows are provided with channels to carry water on to the pasture and then to drain it off again with the intention of keeping a trickle of water flowing through the roots of the spring growth to warm them and protect from frosts. The result is faster grass growth and an earlier first bite - several weeks earlier if the spring is cold. For over 300 years water meadows supplied early grazing and the first, most valuable hay crop. They have almost all ceased operation due to the cost of the labour required to maintain them and the difficulty of working them with machinery. In many instances all that remains of water meadows is the banks and ditches that controlled the water. These often only survive where pasture has endured and protected the earthworks from ploughing or development.

5.3 Abbreviations

AOD - Above Ordnance Datum

ASNW - Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

AW - Ancient Woodland

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

BP - Before Present

BAP - Biodiversity Action Plan

cSAC - Candidate Special Area of Conservation

GIS - Geographical Information System

KWS - Key Wildlife Site

pSAC - Provisional Special Area of Conservation

SAC - Special Area of Conservation

SPA - Special Protection Area

SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest