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DISCUSSION: ELITE SITES, POLITICAL LANDSCAPES AND LIVED EXPERIENCE IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

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Abstract. This concluding discussion draws together themes discussed through the volume, and tries to place them in a larger framework. This larger framework engages with the context of the sites within the Weald and in turn within the British Isles as a whole. It uses the approaches of lived experience to present a fresh understanding of the four sites in human terms, and situates the sites in a broader frame of changing landscapes and environments in south-east England and beyond.

In this concluding discussion, I want to try to draw together some of the strands running through previous chapters, and set them within a larger framework. There are three governing themes to this chapter. First, all four of the sites that are the subject of this volume need to be placed in their landscape and regional context, with reference to their long-term geological and environmental history. Second, we need to tie this wider history in to the agencies and lived experience of each place. In other words, we need to understand each place in human terms. Thirdly, and finally, we will broaden the canvas to make some general comments on cultural process and transformation in south-east England in the later Middle Ages and beyond.

Geology and Landscape

I take as my starting point the underlying geology of south-east England. I invite the reader to look carefully at a map of the geology of Britain, and look at the place of what are now the south-eastern counties of Kent and Sussex within that geology (Fig. 12.1).

The geology of Britain as a whole has a distinctive pattern: the layers of rock that make it up are tilted, in such a way that older and harder rocks are close to the surface in the north and west, while the south and east have a surface geology of younger and softer rocks (Fig. 12.2). Consequently, as any visitor to or inhabitant of Britain will have noted, the physical landscape of the south and east is softer, less rugged and mountainous than the hills and mountain ranges of western and northern England, Wales and Scotland. This distinctive pattern has been hugely significant in many different ways in British and world history. For economic historians, it determined the presence and distribution of raw materials (coal, iron ore) needed for the Industrial Revolution. For intellectual historians, the observation and developing understanding of this geological pattern framed the 19th-century intellectual understanding of geological time and its implications for evolutionary process (Winchester 2001; Weiss 2011). For historical geographers and landscape historians and archaeologists, it was and remains central in the powerful and continuing perception of distinctive and contrasting Highland and Lowland Zones in the 'personality of Britain' (Fox 1938).
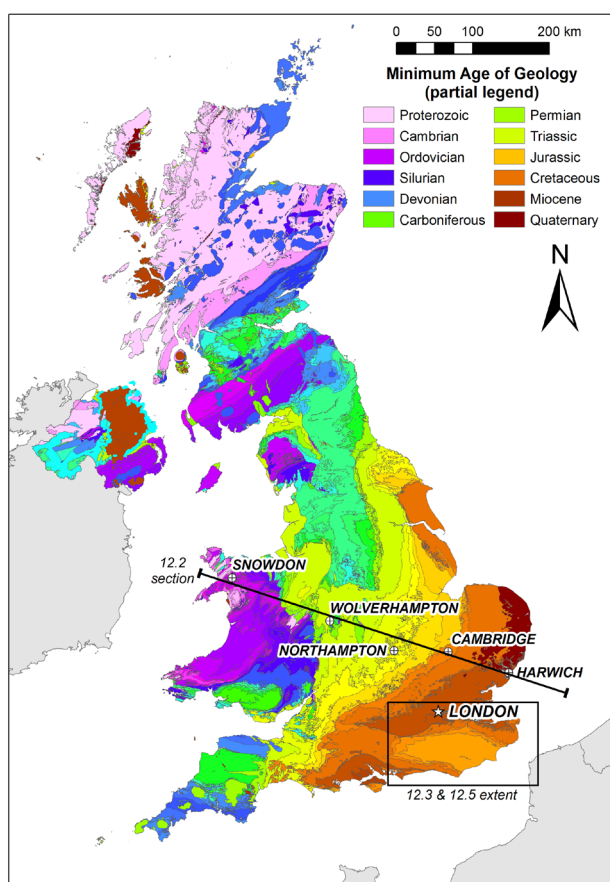
Fig. 12.1: Geology of Britain, with position of section 12.2 indicated. Based upon DiGMap625 layer from BGS, with the permission of the British Geological Survey.

The area south and east of the Thames Valley lies firmly within what the great Cyril Fox called the 'lowland zone'; its geological makeup is distinctive (Figs 12.3 & 12.4; Fox 1938). Millions of years ago, the layers of chalk and sandstone that underlie the area that is now south and east of London formed a dome or 'anticline'. Glacial action shaved off the top of this dome, exposing the tilted geological layers beneath: the topmost layer of chalk, and underlying layers of sandstone and clay.

These layers then eroded differentially, creating the chalk ridges we know today as the North and South Downs, and further bands of sandstone running within those ridges. Within the semicircle formed by these ridges, post-glacial deposits of gravel and particularly clay formed. Today we know these central areas, within the great chalk and sandstone crescent, as the Sussex and Kentish Weald.

Thus, someone who travels from north to south from London to the south coast, across the Sussex and Kentish Weald, moves first backward and then forward in geological time. Crossing first the high chalk ridges of the North Downs, they come down onto a ridge of greensand. Descending this in turn, they come to the claylands of the Low Weald. Rising up then to the sandstones of the High Weald and Ashdown Forest, they drop down again before coming finally to the chalklands of the South Downs and to the famous chalk cliffs of the coast.

The land was affected by glacial action during the Ice Age. The glaciers left gravel deposits in their wake. The land was also cut by the action of rivers, creating river valleys that in some cases, for example the valley of the Rother, were much more pronounced than they are today. We have seen how at Bodiam, there are at least 10 m of alluvial deposit on the floodplain; if we were to form a mental picture of the Rother Valley some thousands of years ago, before these deposits were laid down and with the surrounding hills a little higher before erosion, we would see a landscape that was much sharper, less soft, even rugged. These valleys became flat floodplains and, where they met the sea, extensive areas of tidal estuary and marshland developed.

One of the results of this distinctive set of geological processes is a set of places that exhibit great ecological diversity within a very few kilometres of each other, and which consequently have been of the first importance in the history of science. The naturalist Gilbert White's observations of the natural history of Selborne, in the county of Hampshire close to the Sussex border, were significant in part because of Selborne's position at the western extremity of this geological formation, where chalk, greensand and clayland meet. Charles Darwin's
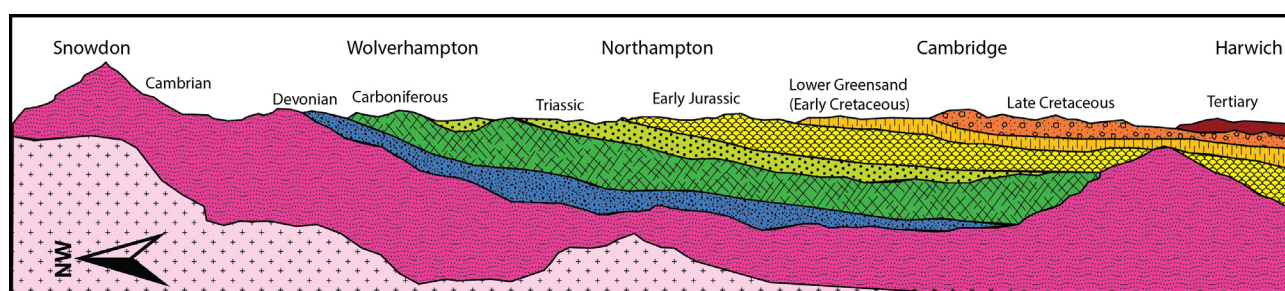

Fig. 12.2: Simplified section through the geology of Britain from Snowdon to Harwich, with vertical scale exaggerated.

Geological Groups of Kent and Sussex: Name and Lithology

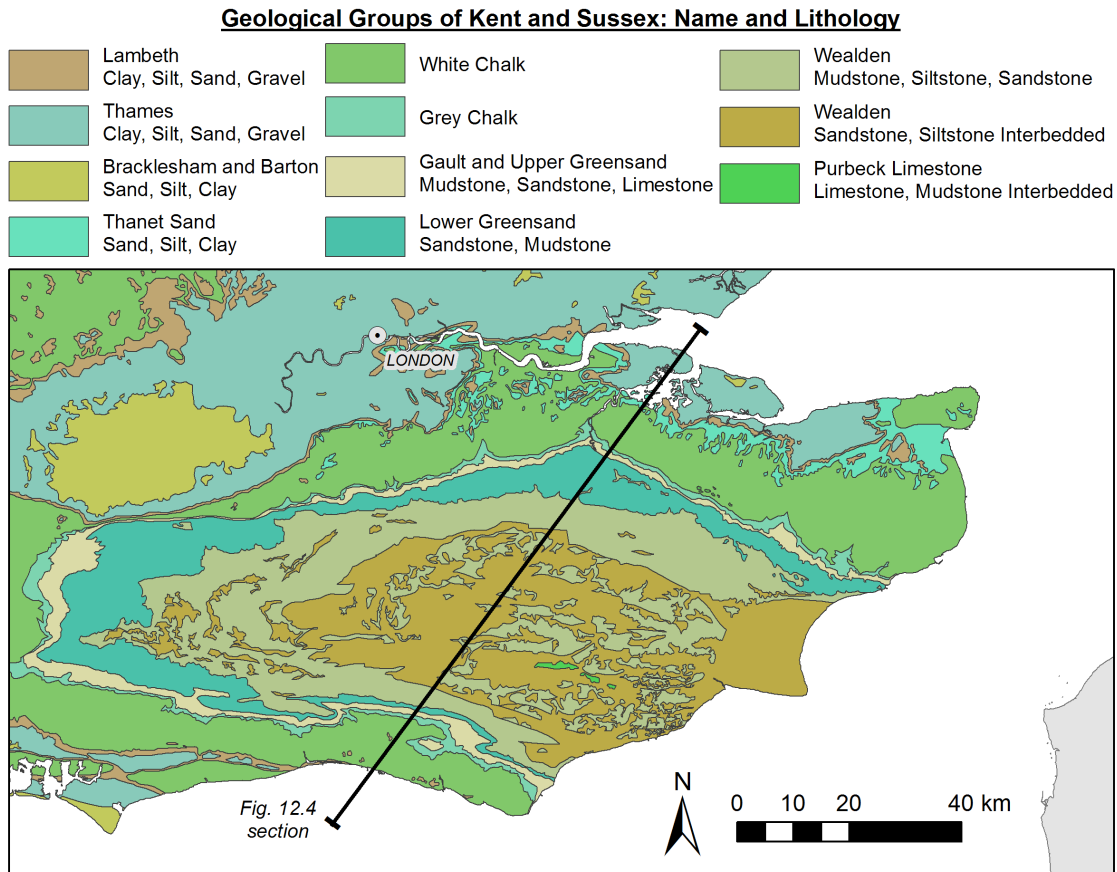|	
Lambeth	Clay, Silt, Sand, Gravel
Thames	Clay, Silt, Sand, Gravel
Bracklesham and Barton	Sand, Silt, Clay
Thanet Sand	Sand, Silt, Clay
White Chalk	
Grey Chalk	
Gault and Upper Greensand	Mudstone, Sandstone, Limestone
Lower Greensand	Sandstone, Mudstone
Wealden	Mudstone, Siltstone, Sandstone
Wealden	Sandstone, Siltstone Interbedded
Purbeck Limestone	Limestone, Mudstone Interbedded

Fig. 12.3: Geology of the Weald.

home on the North Downs, at Down House 14 km north-west of Knole, meant again that he was able to observe a particularly diverse ecology and landscape on his famous Sunday walks while his family were attending church. Standing on the Downs and looking across the Weald, Darwin observed how the great dome had eroded away and estimated the length of time that it must have taken to do so at hundreds of millions of years (Johnson 2010c; Weiss 2011). More infamous are the post-glacial gravel deposits at Piltdown, 30 km south-east of Scotney, which in all probability afforded Charles Dawson the opportunity to plant his forged remains of early humans (Russell 2004).

Human Landscapes: Second Nature

The physical landscape created by these geological processes afforded different kinds of human landscape in its turn. The historical geographer William Cronon calls such landscapes 'second nature' (Cronon 1991: 56). What Cronon means by this is that these landscapes appear 'natural' to the observer – the field patterns, areas of woodland and forest, roads and communications are external and 'given' to the modern person, whether local or a visitor. At first sight, they are natural, just the way things are, and this 'natural' impression is deepened when the fields, woods, roads and communications are used and experienced on a daily, quotidian basis. However, all these elements were and are in fact products of human agency. Field patterns, areas of woodland, roads and communications may have been laid down hundreds or even thousands of years ago. Human responses may have been determined to a greater or lesser extent by factors such as geology or climate, but they were and are nevertheless products of human agency, of women and men making their own history.

The light soils of the chalk downs afforded open landscapes, relatively easy for prehistoric settlers to clear of woodland and to farm but not as potentially fertile as the heavier claylands. The central sandstone ridge of the High Weald had heathland which became medieval 'forest'. In between, the claylands of the Weald had a variety of soils including heavy claylands that were potentially fertile, but poorly drained. These heavy soils were difficult to work before the advent of mechanised agriculture, and they could also be difficult for travellers to get across, particularly in cold or wet conditions. The famous 17th-century writer of early agricultural and other how-to manuals, Gervase Markham, devoted an entire book to the problems of farming in the Weald (Markham 1625).

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In the first half of the 20th century, archaeologists and historians told a distinctive story about how the Wealden landscape developed, as part of a wider story about prehistoric Britain as a whole. In his classic *The Personality of Britain,* Cyril Fox painted a powerful national picture across the British Isles (Fox 1938). As we have seen, Fox divided the British Isles as a whole into a Highland Zone to the north and west, and a Lowland Zone to the south and east. The differences between the two zones were not simply ones of physical geography and climate; they were also related, in Fox's vision, to relative proximity to Continental Europe and the consequent ease of what he called 'penetration' of peoples and ideas.

Within the Lowland Zone, Fox suggested that the chalk ridges were cleared of woodland first by incoming prehistoric settlers, and that these ridges, for example the North Downs or Cambridgeshire south-east of the Fenlands, became important zones of movement and communication between different regions. He noted the existence of ancient trackways running along these ridges. Alongside and below these routeways running along the downlands, Fox assumed that there were large tracts of dense, impenetrable forest, with, he believed, little evidence of human settlement to be found therein. Fox noted the distribution of burial mounds and archaeological features as known to him, which in their concentration upon the ridge, appeared to confirm his picture (Fox 1922, maps 1-5).

In the vision of Fox and his earlier 20th-century contemporaries, the Weald and other areas of lowland below the downs and ridges were seen as a particularly dense mass of impenetrable forest. It was this forest that Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlers penetrated and

settled. Early medieval documentary records appeared to confirm this picture. Scholars working with early charters and other texts found few specific references to early settlement inside the Weald.

More recent work has heavily qualified this picture: the distribution of prehistoric and Roman settlement at a national scale has been reassessed (Bradley & Fulford 2008; Bradley 2014). For Cyril Fox and his generation, archaeological sites did appear to concentrate on the chalk downlands, but over fifty years later, we can see that this distribution is more apparent than real: there is plenty of archaeological evidence for early human settlement away from these areas, but it is more difficult to see and to map given variation in terrain and underlying soil.

At the same time, the underlying vision driving Fox's model, with Anglo-Saxon settlers clearing the hitherto untamed forest and making a home, has to modern eyes a decidedly colonial ring to it. It echoes the subjective experiences of settler colonists in different contexts, in North America, Africa and elsewhere. In other words, it seems to say more about the cultural values of earlier 20th-century Britain and British perception of settlement in her colonies around the world than it does about the prehistoric past.

It was certainly a view which held and continues to hold great cultural resonance, from the dark forests in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* to JRR Tolkein's *Wild Wood* to WG Hoskins's embrace of this vision in his classic *The Making of the English Landscape* where he wrote, referring to the Anglo-Saxon period, of 'the first men [*sic*] to break into a virgin landscape' (Hoskins 1955: 18; discussed further in Johnson 2007). Sir Arthur
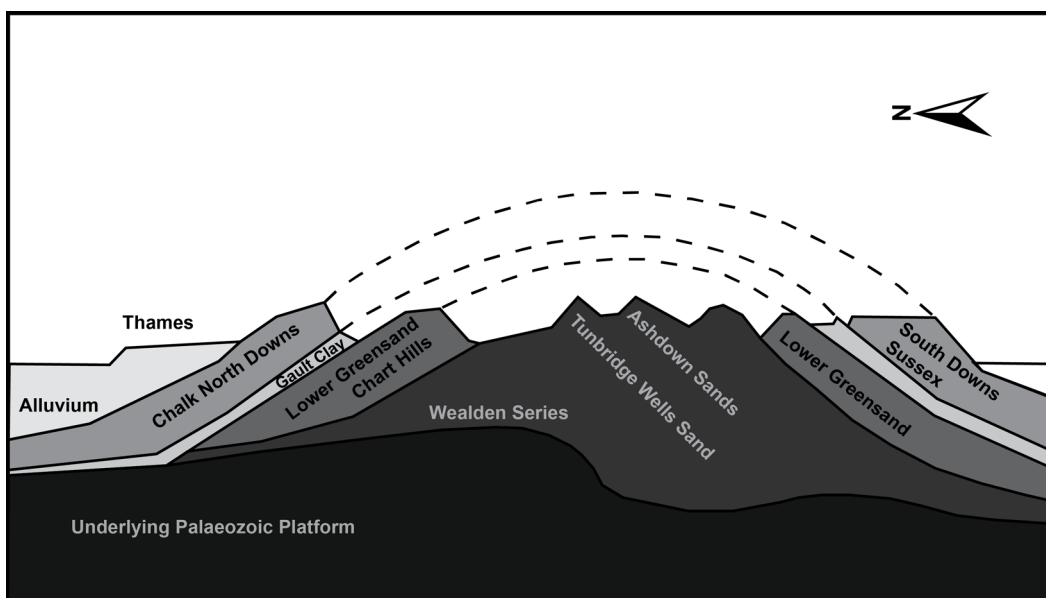

Fig. 12.4: Simplified section through the geology of the Weald, with vertical axis exaggerated.

Conan Doyle made the Weald the dark, forbidding backdrop to several Sherlock Holmes stories, though he gave it an industrial twist:

> *Alighting from the small wayside station, we drove for some miles through the remains of widespread woods, which were once part of that great forest which for so long held the Saxon invaders at bay – the impenetrable 'weald', for sixty years the bulwark of Britain. Vast sections of it have been cleared, for this is the seat of the first iron-works of the country, and the trees have been felled to smelt the ore…*

(Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventure of Black Peter*; Conan Doyle 1981 [1904]: 563-4)

The early medieval Weald was seen in this earlier view to be gradually cleared and brought under cultivation in a piecemeal process some centuries after the end of the Roman period, starting with the creation of north-south drove roads from the higher and more open chalklands into the Wealden forest for the pasturing of livestock. Cattle and sheep were moved seasonally, in this view, to summer pastures in Wealden clearances in the woodlands, and then back to the older estate centres based on the downlands and coastal areas to the north and south. This pattern of transhumance meant that as manorial estates defined by these movements became formalised, they had a tendency to be fragmented, combining lands inside and outside the Weald often quite a distance apart. Many Wealden settlements may have originated as summer sheilings or 'dens', linked to these older estate centres (hence the frequency of the –den place-name: Tenterden, Newenden, Iden).

Settlement expansion continued, in this earlier account, with the process known as 'assarting', a term taken from medieval documentary records (Brandon 1969; Witney 1976). This process of 'colonization' (as it is habitually termed by local and landscape historians and archaeologists: cf. Everitt 1986) was deemed to have unfolded in the centuries before 1300. The governing view of medieval colonisation of primordial forest was also derived in part from a scholarly methodology giving priority to documentary evidence, in which the first documented reference to a location such as a farmstead or hamlet was equated with the creation of that farmstead or hamlet. Since many individual farmsteads and settlements in the Weald first appear in tax records of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, these first recorded dates were sometimes taken as indicative of 11th-, 12th- and 13th- century colonisation (cf. Brandon & Short 1990: 49-55; Mate 2010a). Much colonisation may well have taken place centuries earlier

in the middle Saxon period, before feudal record-keeping, and much of the land colonised had been under cultivation in earlier periods of climatic optimum in the Roman and prehistoric periods.

More recent scholarship has not entirely overturned this picture: clearance of land, and patterns of transhumance, clearly played an important role in the creation of the landscape and in the formation of the second nature of Kent and Sussex. However, the picture has been heavily qualified and reframed. Assarting was an important process in medieval Europe generally; documentary references to assarting or its equivalent are found in the 11th to 13th centuries across England and much of the rest of Europe; and assarting did involve the bringing of uncultivated land under arable cultivation. In this sense, the settlement of the Weald of Kent and Sussex is one small variation on the theme that runs across medieval Europe in the centuries up to c. 1250, of a climatic warm period, of population rise, of greater social complexity with the emergence of 'feudalism' however defined, and of settlement and agricultural intensification (Hatcher & Bailey 2001; Graham-Campbell & Valor 2007).

There was no such thing as an original primeval forest; medieval woodlands were characteristically heavily managed throughout their history, through coppicing, pollarding and other practices, and were also the focus of different kinds of property and use rights, for example pannage (the right to graze pigs or other animals in a wood) or rights to collect firewood (Rackham 1990). These rights were often referred to by people in the Middle Ages as 'customary' and ascribed to tradition, and their emergence into the documentary record does not have a straightforward relationship to their prior existence. In other words, the first documentary reference does not necessarily equate to a date of origin. When the documentary record, then, shows us a more populated landscape in the Weald as the Middle Ages advanced, it is not necessarily indicating expansion of settlers into uncultivated primordial forest, but rather a more complex picture of an evolving property and agricultural regime, in which social practices of settlement and agriculture were being drawn more and more into the net of legal relations which were written down as part of feudal record-keeping. Michael Clanchy (1979) discusses the wider cultural context within which more and more documents were being generated in the centuries before 1300.

Given that documentary traces are very often in the form of tax records, the first documentary reference to

a place, then, has more to do with its first inclusion within a system of extraction of rent, rather than first settlement as such. In other words, assarting as it is discussed by documentary and landscape historians can be seen as not simply or only the colonisation of virgin forest or uncleared land, but rather the bringing of this land under an organised feudal regime of the organised extraction of rent. Assarting, then, is about changing and intensifying regimes of property and power as well as agricultural expansion.

The eventual outcome of this process was an earlier 14th-century Wealden landscape that was quite distinctive compared to other areas of England and north-western Europe, in the form both of its physical landscape and the affordances of that landscape, and its social relations. The heavy claylands were suitable for the raising of cattle and sheep; however, arable was also an important element of the economy (as indicated by the pollen evidence discussed in Chapter Four, and also by the presence of a number of substantial barns that survive: Martin & Martin 2006: 36). The legal conditions of many manors, as they had evolved through the process of assarting and through the fragmentation of holdings, gave many tenants considerable independence. This meant that after the demographic contraction of the Black Death, they were able to accumulate land under relatively 'free' conditions of tenure. In other words, rents paid by peasants to the manorial lord were not as onerous as in other areas, and tenants enjoyed relative security of possession; they could not easily be evicted or have their rents arbitrarily raised. These 'yeoman' tenants often lived in isolated locations of individual farmsteads and small hamlets away from churches and village centres, and their houses were surrounded not by open fields or by common land, but rather by enclosed fields and woodlands.

After the Black Death, many hundreds of the post-1348 farmhouses built by these relatively independent, prosperous and secure farmers were substantially built in timber framing and still survive today as occupied 'vernacular' houses and farmsteads (Everitt 1986: 55; Pearson 1994; Martin & Martin 2006); many of these vernacular houses can be observed in the settlements and landscapes around Bodiam, Scotney and Ightham. Their occupants were frequently engaged in market relations; the sheep and cows they kept produced dairy products and wool for sale. Many households in the region were also engaged in industrial production. This industrial production included charcoal burning, the production of pig iron, and glass (Cleere & Crossley 1985). All of these activities used large quantities of wood, which was in good local supply.

However they were created, areas like the Weald continue to be highly distinctive today. First, as Conan Doyle observed, they are areas with much woodland. Second, nucleated villages are relatively rarely found within them or are of more recent origin. Churches are often isolated, and farmsteads are either in isolated locations, cluster in small hamlets, or are strung out along routes that run along ridges (such as the east-west ridge of Ewhurst Green, just south of Bodiam). This dispersed pattern contrasts strongly with the classic nucleated English village (Rippon 2008; Roberts 2008). Third, also absent are the large 18th- or 19th-century fields that replaced the open field systems of the sort seen in the English Midlands and northern France; instead, patchworks of smaller, enclosed 'ancient' fields are the norm. Fourth, travel and communication across this landscape in the Middle Ages was via narrow, winding and often sunken lanes (making waterborne transport, whether along rivers or around the Kent and Sussex coast, all the more important). These routeways either run north-south, with possible origins in early medieval transhumance as drove roads, or east-west, along the tops of the gentle ridges of the High Weald.

Bordering the Weald to the north were the greensand (sandstone) ridges. These ridges were less potentially fertile than the Weald itself, but more open. Many areas of the greensand were particularly suitable for the development of parkland and 'forest'. Medieval forests should not be thought of as natural woodland: rather, they were often composed of heath, pasture and woodland, subject to distinctive forms of medieval 'forest law' (Rackham 1990). Forests and parklands were managed for the grazing and hunting of deer, as well as for the production of other resources such as wood and timber, as discussed at Knole in Chapter Seven. As such, they were a particular and contested focus for class conflict, between lord and peasant over who had rights (to collect firewood, to graze pigs on the acorns from oak trees, to hunt or to poach…).

The areas of tidal estuary, coast and marsh formed another distinctive zone. They were open on the one hand to schemes for draining, and on the other hand, they were especially vulnerable to climate change, weather extremes and changes in sea level and currents. At different points in the Middle Ages, both Pevensey and Romney Marshes (Fig. 2.1) had areas that were drained and turned into farmland through a variety of collective and individual efforts, only for sea walls to be breached and land return to marsh or to the sea itself during the adverse climatic changes of the 14th century that marked the onset of the 'Little Ice Age' (Grove 1988; Mate 2010b). Sea walls required large inputs

of labour, which was in short supply after the Black Death. This 'precarious fertility' (Everitt 1986: 60) was exploited by corporate institutions acting as landlords such as Christ Church Canterbury, institutions centred in other parts of the region, who grazed large flocks of sheep on the reclaimed land. The most notable artefacts of these changes are the position of the old ports of Rye and Winchelsea. Both were important ports in the 12th and 13th centuries whose merchants traded via the English Channel with the North Sea and Baltic in one direction and France and the Atlantic in the other. The site of Winchelsea was moved after the older site had to be abandoned; the harbours of both sites silted up after the 14th century and both towns now sit 1 to 3 km inland (Martin & Martin 2004; Long *et al.* 2007).

Elite Sites in the Landscape

If we want to engage with the sites of Bodiam, Scotney, Ightham and Knole, this very distinctive landscape context, a combination of what William Cronon would call first and second natures, is the first fact to be considered. Of the four sites, the location of three is very striking in terms of the junction of different landscapes. Bodiam is at the junction of Weald and marsh; Knole and Ightham are at the junction of Weald and sandstone ridge. Scotney sits in the middle of the Weald, but is itself in an isolated location, and like Bodiam, sits very close to the Sussex/Kent border.

All four sites sit within the interstices of the geography of medieval lordship and administration. Most obviously, the boundary between the counties of Kent and Sussex runs through the middle of the Weald. Settlement in the Sussex Weald tends to be linked to settlement further south on the Sussex coast and downlands; conversely, settlement in the Kentish Weald links northwards to the North Downs and river valleys of northern Kent (Everitt 1986). Subdivisions within the counties make this picture still more complex and fragmented (Fig. 12.5). In the Middle Ages, Sussex was divided into six 'rapes', or feudal lordships. The origins of this division lie before the Norman Conquest, but the lordships were at the very least modified by William the Conqueror after 1066. Now each lordship was set up with a distinctive set of elements: a chief castle and town (Chichester, Arundel, Bramber, Lewes, Pevensey, Hastings), access to the coast and coastal resources, corn-producing villages on the downlands, areas of parkland suitable for hunting, areas of the Weald for grazing and other resources… the political boundaries of the rapes, then, with the partial exception of Hastings, run in a ladder-like form across the grain of the landscape as defined through geological zones, with the boundaries running north-south across the east-west lie of the landscape.

The sites of Bodiam and Scotney Castles arose and developed as places of importance in the later Middle Ages, within the interstices of this system, at a social level below that of the great lordships. Knole and Ightham, in Kent, had a different set of antecedents, but in their origins were also below the very highest level. At Knole in the mid-15th century, James Fiennes was in the process of building a double-courtyard house before his execution, and the great family who came to own Knole, the Sackvilles, started as a more modest Sussex gentry family in the later Middle Ages (Saul 1986). It is part of the popular image and identity of Ightham that its successive owners never aspired to build a house or castle of the first rank. In Chapter Ten, Eric Johnson explored how moated sites in the Weald could be understood as a general phenomenon; part of
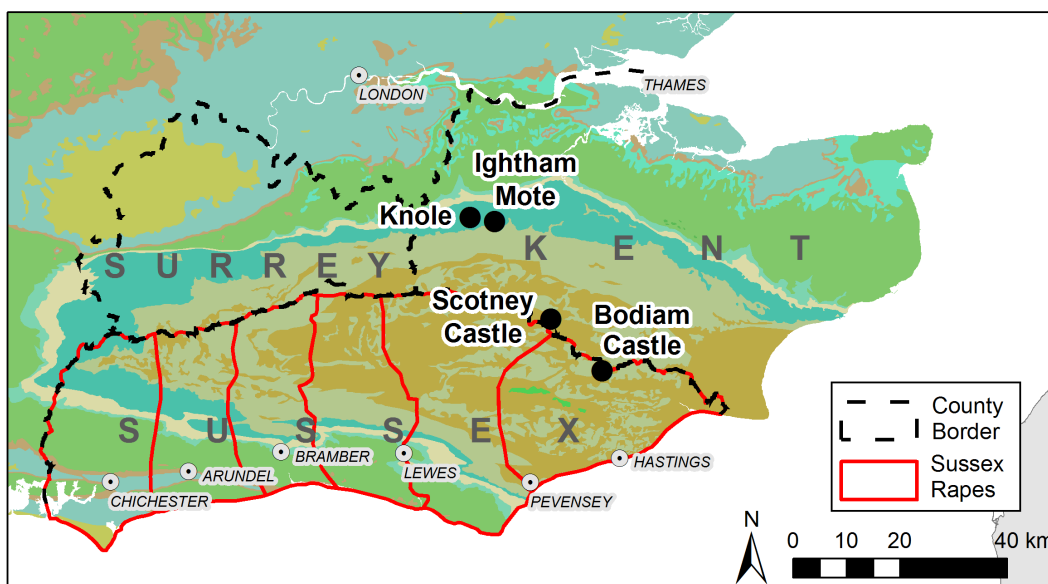

Fig. 12.5: Bodiam, Scotney, Knole and Ightham, mapped against the underlying geology and the boundaries of Kent, Sussex and the rapes of Sussex.

understanding Bodiam, Scotney and Ightham is to see them as examples of this wider class of monuments, albeit particularly large and impressive ones.

So far, this discussion has emphasised the importance of placing all four sites in the context of the long term and of the regional landscape of south-east England. I will now turn to each site in turn to make more particular comments about their position in terms of region, landscape and long-term development.

Weald, Marsh and Greensand

An understanding of Bodiam Castle as a site should start, if not before, then at the outset of the Bronze Age and with the environmental record. The results of coring and excavation (Chapter Five) have shown that this was the point at which peat formation came to an end, and alluvial deposits began to build up in the river valley. It was at this point that the distinctive form and rhythm of the Bodiam landscape was created. Before this moment, the Rother Valley was quite rugged; now it developed as a valley that was from time to time under water or a tidal estuary, alternating with drier and warmer climatic periods when it reverted to river and floodplain. This rhythm at Bodiam between water and land continues. If the River Rother was tidal estuary or marsh up until and beyond the end of the Middle Ages, it was drained in the post-medieval period and used as the fertile plain it is today (Eddison 1985; 1993). However, if climate change continues, it is very possible that the Rother Valley at least up to Bodiam will revert to being tidal or even be permanently under water within a century or so.

The 'Bodiam' place-name, as recorded in the Middle Ages, refers directly to this position between land and water. It connects the Old English personal name Boda with –ham indicating a settlement; the form Bodihamme, which is recorded in 1259, probably indicates 'land hemmed in by water' (Mawer *et al.* 1929-30: 518).

The location of Bodiam, at the head of a tidal estuary in the later Middle Ages, has been seen as a defence against the French. This volume deliberately refuses to take a view on this proposition, as the whole thrust of what we have been trying to do in this project is to get beyond the false, misleading choice of a 'military versus status' opposition. It may be worth noting that there is a more obvious point in the landscape to construct a defence against an invading or raiding force up the estuary, at the end of the peninsula projecting into Romney Marsh, at the site now known as Castle Toll (Fig. 2.1).

Indeed, here, there is a 12th/13th-century motte-and-bailey castle, itself placed within an earthwork identified as the possibly unfinished defences of an Anglo-Saxon burh (Davison 1972). This site was excavated in 1965 and again in 1971 (King 1983: 232).

The riverine location of Bodiam links in one direction with Romney Marsh, the ports of Rye and Winchelsea, and the English Channel beyond. From Rye and Winchelsea, goods including grain, timber and especially fish were transported, not just up and down the Channel, but around the coastline of Kent to London – the impassable nature of the Weald making this a more economical route to the capital. Goods also flowed inwards; wine and fish were imported from a range of French Atlantic ports (Martin & Martin 2004: 8); the fish would be destined especially for Battle and Robertsbridge abbeys.

Romney Marsh was transformed in the period after 1348-9. First, as we have seen, climatic deterioration led to destruction of sea barriers and a return of much of the marsh to its former state. Second, much of the highly fertile land on the marsh, formerly controlled by landowners such as the great institutions of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, was now leased out. Peasant landholders could now accumulate substantial holdings by taking advantage of the post-1348 demographic decline and also this leasing-out (Draper 1998), though much of this engrossing and formation of substantial farms, often seen in a wider context by economic historians as proto-capitalist, did not fully unfold until the late 15th century (Gardiner 1998).

However, the River Rother and its floodplain also links Bodiam in the other direction. Upriver is the Cistercian abbey of Robertsbridge, founded in the 1170s and with eight monks in 1418 (Page 1907: 71-4). Edward Dallingridge, his son John, and his wife Elizabeth Wardedieu, were all buried at Robertsbridge. Part of John Dallingridge's tomb effigy still survives, and is on display at Bodiam Castle; it has been misidentified in the past as Edward's (Fig. 12.6). The Dallingridge family were patrons of Robertsbridge. The patronage of the Dallingridge family flowed up the river, while water flowed both down the Rother and also along the artificial leat that Dallingridge constructed to feed the mill pond.

Where Bodiam sits at the junction of Weald and marsh, Knole and Ightham sit at the junction of Weald and greensand. Both sites should be understood in this context. Knole stands on top of the greensand ridge; its park, the largest surviving medieval deer park in England, overlooks the clayland of the Weald to the south. As

Fig. 12.6: Mutilated tomb effigy of Sir John Dallingridge, on display at Bodiam Castle.

Chapter Seven has shown, the decision by Archbishop Bourchier and before him James Fiennes to develop the site of Knole was tied up with the creation and expansion of a deer park of immense size. The landscape of the greensand ridge, with its light soils and heathland, was particularly appropriate for such a deer park.

The understanding of Knole is also tied up with the complementary nature of the site to the nearby archbishop's palace at Otford. To the casual observer, the proximity of the two archiepiscopal palaces of Otford and Knole is surprising. Otford is a large double-courtyard house, built by Archbishop Warham in the earlier 15th century, only 6 km to the north of Knole (Fig. 12.7). Little remains of Otford Palace above ground save part of a gatehouse, a tower, and fragments of the intervening range, now reused as a row of private houses. Otford is in many respects very similar to the house that Bourchier constructed at Knole. However, its placing in the landscape is very different.

Alden Gregory (2010) suggests that the two houses of Otford and Knole need to be understood in terms of complementary functions. In his view Otford was the administrative and 'public' centre, while Knole was intended to be a 'private' place for the Archbishop's

repose. Again, this suggestion has great merit, but it has a geographical and landscape component that lies behind the expression of Archbishop Bourchier's personal preferences. Otford sits astride east-west travel and communication routes, most obviously the Pilgrims Way to Canterbury, and was part of the very earliest phase of post-Roman settlement of the Kentish landscape. By contrast, Knole and the associated small town of Sevenoaks sit in an elevated location astride north-south routes; the unusual place-name Sevenoaks suggests it may have originated in the pre-Conquest period as a meeting-place by seven oak trees, at the intersection of a north-south drove road and an east-west ridgeway (Everitt 1986: 209, 269). Contemporaries commented on this more elevated location and in particular the marshy and less salubrious nature of Otford.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, Ightham sits at the bottom of a small north-south valley, again carved out of the greensand ridge. It is the carving-out of this particularly small and occluded landscape that gave the opportunity to furnish a moat for the house, and at that point or later, create a series of ponds or water features, including the mill pond. A few hundred metres south of the house, the ground falls to the claylands of the Weald. While the house is situated at the bottom of the valley, numerous surrounding points in the immediate landscape offer panoramic views east and south over the Weald (Fig. 12.8). The development of settlement at Ightham up to the early 14th century, including the creation of the original moated site, is not at all clear. However, the house is sited on the main route southwards from Ightham church that leads into the heart of the Weald, very possibly another north-south drove road in origin.

Fig. 12.7: The north-west tower and part of the surviving north range of Otford Palace, Kent. Photo by Matthew Johnson.

Fig.12.8: View south over the Weald, as seen from the top of the greensand ridge between Knole and Ightham. Photo by Matthew Johnson.

Scotney (Chapter Six) can be seen as the exception within these four sites. It stands well within the boundaries of the Weald, with no clear connection or intersection with other kinds of landscape. Scotney does sit in a boundary location, very close to the Kent/Sussex border and at the intersection of lands belonging to several different manors. The early owners of Scotney are missing from the Sussex Lay Subsidy Returns, which suggests that they may have been living across the border in Kent in the early 14th century. Scotney also has no associated village; the settlement of Lamberhurst is over a kilometre away to the north-east. It is difficult now to mentally reconstruct the medieval context of Scotney, after its 19th-century re-landscaping and the creation of the artificial reservoir of Bewl Water to the south, but the overall impression is of quite an isolated location away from the key nodes and routeways of political power and economic flows.

Scotney's owner in the 1370s, and the builder of the tower and other features on site, was Roger Ashburnham. Ashburnham was not a knight. He, Dallingridge and Etchingham could be seen as three key players in local politics, often named together in documents of the time. Again, Ashburnham's social and political networks certainly reached beyond the Weald into south-east England as a whole: Ashburnham was Commissioner for Walls and Dykes on Romney Marsh (Martin *et al.* 2011: 323), and the place-names Scotney Marsh and Scotney Court Lodge testify to links between Scotney and Romney Marshes (Spencer & Woodland 2002). Knole was owned by Roger Ashburnham in the 1360s, at a time when, prior to the building of Fiennes and Bourchier, it may have looked like Old Soar Manor (Gregory 2010: 11), or like the kitchen-hall-solar block at Ightham before it was extended into a full courtyard.

Agency and Lived Experience

So far, in this discussion, I have moved from the very large-scale in terms of time and space, from geological time and the British Isles as a whole, down to regions, second nature and down to human landscapes and the role of our four sites as nodes in particular kinds of networks. I now want to move in the other direction, upwards from the ordinary experiences of individuals.

All four sites are traditionally explained in terms of the agency of elite men. The term 'agency' refers to the aims and goals of individual social actors, and the practical strategies and actions taken to achieve those aims and goals. The broader terms of this agency are clear. All four sites are witnesses to the biographies of men of the later medieval gentry or knightly classes, seeking to materialise the rise of their position in society. Men like Dallingridge, Ashburnham, and Couen have been variously described by traditional historians as upwardly mobile, new men, ambitious, engaging in conspicuous consumption. They were not quite from the upper aristocracy, but the next rung down. They acquired political power and cultural capital through participation in the practice of war, advantageous marriages, shifting political alliances both local and national, and service to the King; and they framed their identities and self-image around contemporary values of elite masculinity, for example ideas of honour and the defence of honour (Radelescu & Truelove 2005; Neal 2008).

Honour was a concept that brought together ideas of status, of martial valour, of prowess in activities like hunting and jousting. Honour was a concept that articulated a structured set of symbols, which were expressed for example through violence. Defence of honour, of one's family and lineage, one's community and one's position at the head of it, was fundamental to the self-image of these men. Elite buildings, among other things, expressed and materialised a powerful idea of honour and defence of that honour, from landscape setting to heraldry to battlements to location and orientation. As I argued in my book *Behind the Castle Gate*, castles and houses acted as stage settings against which elite identities were played out (Johnson 2002).

We can extend this discussion, and give it a landscape context, by relating it back to region and place, by thinking about the networks created and maintained by these elite men, and the role of the four sites as key nodes in those networks, places that maintained their power and framed their social identities. Most obviously, all four sites are within 80 km of London and the political opportunities afforded by the court. At a deeper level,

we have seen how the fragmented landscape of the Weald offered opportunities for aggrandisement below the level of the great feudal lords, and this is what we see at our four sites.

At Ightham, Thomas Couen pursued a strategy of social aggrandisement by working an intersection of national, regional and local scales. His family came from the west Midlands, where he spent his earlier life. Through his participation in the system of raising troops to fight in the French wars, he came to have a house and a network of contacts in London. We will never know the precise reasons for his decision to purchase the manor of Ightham, but it represented a shift of Couen interests from the west Midlands to the Kentish Weald, a region he probably first visited *en route* to the coastal ports and embarkation for French expeditions (Minihan 2015). Greater proximity to London may also have been a factor. The purchase of Ightham seems to have been part of a larger intention to settle in that area, only interrupted by his death; one might have expected someone of his background and stature to go on to rebuild the modest manorial structure at Ightham.

It may well be that the reason Ightham was not rebuilt by Couen as a more impressive structure, another Bodiam or perhaps more realistically another Scotney, is to do with the contingencies of inheritance and life cycle. Members of late medieval elites made decisions to build at key moments, often just after an advantageous marriage, at the conclusion of successful military career, or after a death and ensuing inheritance. Thomas Couen died in 1372, of natural causes, on board a ship at Winchelsea waiting to go to war in France; he was buried in Ightham church, where his fine alabaster effigy still survives below a stained glass window he also commissioned (Fig. 12.9). Ashburnham and Dallingridge, on the other hand, lived to a relatively advanced age by the standards of the time and built or rebuilt at a relatively late stage in their careers and lives.

At Knole, Chapter Seven discussed how Archbishop Bourchier's post-1456 building campaign was prefigured by construction on the site initiated by Sir James Fiennes after his purchase of the site in 1445. Fiennes came from a family with origins in the gentry classes. His main seat was at Hever, in the middle of the Weald, 15 km south-west of Knole (Hever was later to attain popular fame as the seat of the Boleyn family). He represented Kent as a Member of Parliament before promotion to the House of Lords in 1457; he became an important national figure and member of the King's inner circle, and a steward of the archbishop' estates, before being caught and executed by Jack Cade and his fellow rebels

in 1450. Fiennes also owned estates in Romney Marsh, allegedly acquired through bullying and intimidation (Nigota 2004; Grummitt 2010: 242-7). His brother Roger built Herstmonceux, a quadrangular moated castle in brick often compared to Bodiam, which sits on the edge of the Weald west of Hastings. Herstmonceux was again located at a junction of landscapes, with a now drained tidal inlet of Pevensey Bay to its south-west, and had a deer park (Martin & Martin 2006: 13). However, like Couen, Fiennes never completed a great house: his building campaign at Knole was brought to an abrupt halt by his death.

Dallingridge's personal biography is well known and has been told and re-told in narrative terms several times; the most complete account has been given most recently by Dan Spencer. His career and biography illustrate the intersection between war and violence, structures of political power and authority, and personal and dynastic wealth through landholding. Dallingridge did military service from 1360 onwards, that is from about age thirteen, in France, and possibly also in Ireland and Italy (Spencer 2014: 84). He went to Scotland as part of Richard II's expedition in 1385; and was appointed captain of Brest 1388-9. His military activities probably ended with the French truce of 1389.

Dallingridge's political and administrative appointments show him working between the local community on the one hand, and national politics on the other. In 1380 he was appointed to oversee defences of New Winchelsea; he was wounded in this year during one of the French attacks. He also served as a commissioner of array in 1377, 1385, 1386 and 1392, and as Member of Parliament in nine of the thirteen parliaments held between 1379 and 1388. He was responsible for enforcing the oaths of the Merciless Parliament in

Fig. 12.9: Tomb and effigy of Thomas Couen, died 1372, Ightham church. Photo by Matthew Johnson.

1388, and led a group of chamber knights in regularly attending the King's Council in 1389-90 and 1392-3 (these are the periods for which we have records; he may have filled this role at other times; Saul 1997: 267-8). He also switched allegiance from Arundel to the King at a critical moment: he may have been active militarily on behalf of the Appellant lord Arundel in 1387 but came over to Richard in 1389. His rise meant that Arundel's influence was reduced in the eastern part of Sussex (Saul 1997: 267-8, 372).

The listing of this string of appointments conceals a complex and changing political strategy. From 1377 onwards, Dallingridge engaged in his campaign against the great magnate and King's uncle Gaunt, leading to prison in 1384. One view of the location of Bodiam has been suggested by John Goodall, following a suggestion by Charles Coulson (Coulson 1992: 105-6; Goodall 2011: 314; see also Walker 1983). Dallingridge's grandfather was from Ashdown Forest, in the High Weald to the west of Bodiam and Dallingridge's earlier career had one focus in the political disputes in the area. Ashdown Forest was a key arena in Dallingridge's political manoeuvrings of the 1370s. It was the location where Dallingridge chose to commit trespass against John of Gaunt, and murder one of his foresters, in a calculated move to confront Gaunt's power in the area. Goodall suggests that the subsequent imprisonment and trial of Dallingridge, and eventual reconciliation with Gaunt, afforded a political settlement in which Dallingridge remained a force in the area but built his seat some distance away from Ashdown Forest, at Bodiam, on the Kent/Sussex border. Goodall writes that 'Bodiam looks suspiciously like the physical product of this reconciliation' (Goodall 2011: 314).

Goodall's suggestion is a good one, but again, I draw attention to the underlying social, cultural and landscape factors at play in this political game. Ashdown Forest is part of the High Weald, an area subject to the forms of forest law discussed above. The move away from Ashdown Forest was also a move into a different kind of local economy and landscape. More generally, we observed above how Bodiam was one of a class of sites that sit within the interstices of the feudal system of Sussex rapes. It is unusual in that, as discussed in Chapter Two, it was a manor that was not divided between spatially disparate holdings; the distinctive form of the manor, and the weekly market and annual fair, marked out the site as a key 'bottleneck'. Comparative anthropology has identified bottlenecks of this kind as key nodes in the negotiation of cultural and economic power (Earle 2011).

At Bodiam, the decision to build seems to be correlated with particular moments in the life cycle. In 1377 his father-in-law died, and his estates, including Bodiam, passed to Dallingridge; in 1380 his own father died, leaving him with a huge increase in wealth. Dallingridge sold various Midlands estates in 1382, possibly to fund his building campaign.

Spencer looks at the famous licence to crenellate in context: licences of this kind were mostly awarded to gentry and lesser peerage. The wording is distinctive, authorising him to

> *strengthen with a wall of stone and lime and crenellate and construct and make into a castle his manor house at Bodyham, near the sea in the county of Sussex, for defence of the adjacent county and resistance to our enemies*
>
> (cited in Spencer 2014: 81)

The wording may be to do with his changing relationship with Arundel: Dallingridge wanted to portray himself as leader and protector of the local community at an historical moment when Arundel was unable to do so.

The heraldry above the north and south gates at Bodiam references Dallingridge's political alliances and networks across the political landscape and can be seen as a self-conscious visual expression of those networks (Figs 12.10 & 12.11). Heraldry, by the later 14th century, was a complex visual system expressing and differentiating between different noble and gentry families; its use was closely tied up with elite values of

Fig.12.10: Heraldry above the south gate, Bodiam Castle. Dallingridge's helm above; below, two shields now blank, and between them the arms of Sir Robert Knollys Dallingridge's war captain in France and owner of Derval. Knollys' arms are couché *or tilted (i.e. as carried by a mounted knight).*

Fig.12.11: Heraldry above the north gate, Bodiam Castle. Dallingridge's helm above; below, his arms flanked by those of Wardedieu (the family of his wife Elizabeth) and Radynden (the family of his mother Alice).

honour and identity. Dallingridge was without doubt intensely aware of the importance of heraldic symbols in the maintenance of political identities. He testified in the famous Scrope *versus* Grosvenor case, lasting for five years and involving hundreds of witnesses, fighting over who had the right to display the arms *Azure a Bend Or* (Spencer 2014: 84). For Edward's son John Dallingridge, heraldry was a matter of honour serious enough for him to offer to settle a dispute over coats of arms by combat (Saul, Mackman & Whittick 2011).

Above the north gate, then – facing into the Weald – Dallingridge's own arms and helmet were juxtaposed with those of the Wardedieu family from whom he inherited Bodiam, and the local family Radynden; the southern gate – facing towards the river valley, the port, mill and mill pond – again bore Dallingridge's helmet, above the arms of Knollys, his war captain in France.

Elites and Commoners

So far, this discussion has focused on the agency of elite men. However, buildings and landscapes are the product and outcome of the practices of women, men and children of all social classes and identities. Archaeologists and historians often forget this very simple fact, talking of who owned that manor or who built this building.

Commoners most obviously intrude into the documentary narrative told by historians through the narratives of peasant revolts. Sussex and especially Kent were areas that were particularly politically conscious and prone to revolt in the later Middle Ages. Historians have generally attributed this record of disruption to

the presence in this area of classes of commoners, in particular relatively affluent and assertive peasants, craftsmen and tradesmen. After the demographic collapse of 1348-9, these commoners took advantage of the shifting balance between the supply of and demand for land and labour. They became much more affluent and politically assertive, seeking to throw off feudal shackles and assert rights that they claimed as customary.

The most famous of these uprisings is the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, in which peasants from Kent and Essex marched on London. The immediate causes of the revolt were various, and it was eventually suppressed; but the peasants' demands included the abolition of serfdom (the unfree status of some peasants), and the revolt is now celebrated as a key event in popular and radical history. The radical cleric John Ball famously preached to the rebels:

> *When Adam dalf, and Eve span, who was thanne a gentilman? From the beginning all men were created equal by nature, and that servitude had been introduced by the unjust and evil oppression of men, against the will of God, who, if it had pleased Him to create serfs, surely in the beginning of the world would have appointed who should be a serf and who a lord*

(Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana,* cited in Dobson 1970: 375)

In 1381, after the Peasant's Revolt, Dallingridge played an active part in its suppression and in later commissions to punish those involved (Spencer 2014: 57). Almost as famous is Jack Cade's rebellion of 1450 (most famously, if quite inaccurately, depicted in Shakespeare's Henry VI, in which Cade is eventually killed by the Kentish yeoman Alexander Iden at the Sussex village of Heathfield: Johnson 2010b: 127-8). The Cade rebellion was directed in part at unpopular advisers to the King, of whom Sir James Fiennes was one; he was seized by Cade's followers following their entry into London, given a brief trial, and summarily beheaded, leaving his house at Knole unfinished. Bodiam and Knole, then, were directly involved in the class antagonism of the later Middle Ages; more broadly, all four sites were centres of elite power and authority.

However, these particularly sharp intrusions of commoners into the affairs of elite political history are only the tip of the iceberg. In the Introduction, and in a number of the following chapters, we talked about the idea of lived experience. The theoretical literature

behind this concept is vast, and the related concept of phenomenology and its application to landscape archaeology has been highly controversial (a few points in a vast literature are: Tilley 1994; 2004; 2008; Thomas 1999; 2001; Bradley 2000; Ingold 2000; 2010; Brück 2005; Hamilton *et al.* 2006 and Bender *et al.* 2007; for critical assessment see Fleming 2006; Johnson 2007; 2011 and Barrett & Ko 2009).

In the Introduction, we defined lived experience as being about:

• A focus on the everyday – the ordinary routines of work, how people moved around and acted upon landscapes and buildings on a day-to-day basis.
• A focus on the local context – the immediate and regional landscapes around the different sites.
• Meaning as about the subjective experience of different individuals and groups, both elite and commoner, women and men.
• A focus on practice – how the experience of places is bound up with what people do at those places.
• A focus on the senses: how places were experienced through the body.
• Cultural biography and the long term: how buildings and landscapes change through time, at a series of scales, from the daily, weekly, seasonal, to change over millennia.

It is worth pausing for a moment to review why, in the view of this project, understanding lived experience is so important to the study of late medieval buildings and of archaeology generally (see also Johnson 2007; 2010; 2013). One of the key developments in archaeology in the last generation is that it is necessary to explore questions of mentality and of meaning – 'their' view of 'their' world. The problem is that such a project is very difficult. How do we know what is going on between the ears of the person sitting next to us, let alone someone who has been dead for hundreds of years?

A particular problem is the recovery of meaning for different social groups – different classes, different genders, different ages. What the landscape of Scotney may have 'meant' will vary, according to whether one is talking about Roger Ashburnham, a medieval monk, a peasant woman, a visitor from France, one of Ashburnham's children, a household servant…. Each will have had their own view, a viewpoint conditioned by, among other things, their social position, whether and to what degree they were literate, their different experience of Scotney as a place of leisure, a working landscape, or both, and so on.

A second problem has been that an emphasis on lived experience has often been presented, or interpreted by others, as an alternative to an emphasis on environment and ecology. Those advocating a lived-experience approach have often sharply denounced what they see as an inhuman environmental determinism. Conversely, those stressing the environment have seen lived-experience approaches as unduly subjective and disconnected from the 'real world'. Subjective and objective, ideal and material, culture and environment – these are often presented as either/or oppositions. This binary opposition is misleading and unhelpful, just as the military/status opposition has been shown to be misleading and unhelpful.

A third problem: much of the literature has made the misleading claim that lived experience involves a rejection of evidential criteria, that lived experience approaches represent an unwarranted push beyond what can be directly observed. In fact, it represents a return to elements that are more directly observable, particularly if as archaeologists we play to our strengths and take care to think in material, archaeological terms. We can never see 'status' or 'conspicuous consumption', but we can and do see fields, hedges, fences, and the paths and routeways between them.

I reviewed much of this theoretical literature a few years ago (Johnson 2012b), and went on to discuss its application to medieval buildings (Johnson 2012a). One of my conclusions was that new digital technologies offered exciting ways of exploring lived experience, as Catriona Cooper demonstrated in Chapter Nine. A second conclusion was that ideas of lived experience and a stress on economy and ecology in the landscape were often presented as competing, contradictory ideas, but in fact they are complementary. On the one hand, human experience of the landscape is immediately and undeniably subjective. Medieval peasants did not respond to the graphs of climatic deterioration so lovingly compiled by modern historians of climate; they responded to the weather, and to their subjective perception of the weather. On the other hand, the daily routeways and practices of people of all social classes were not somehow ethereal or ritual; they were predominantly those of work, bound up with the hard practical necessities of making a living, often in conditions of great poverty and hardship.

At all four sites, and in the study of medieval buildings more generally, there are particularly good reasons why we should think about lived experience. First, as I observed in the Introduction, much of the debate about medieval buildings has hitherto been unanswerable,

in part because it has focused on issues of intention. What did Dallingridge really intend when he built Bodiam? Arguably, we will never know the answer to this question, because 'intention' is a very difficult thing to observe directly. We will never be able to see what was between Dallingridge's ears; his intentions and priorities are unlikely to have remained the same over a ten-year building campaign; and 'intentions' can be unconscious or semi-conscious in nature.

Second, the building and rebuilding of these sites and landscapes was not carried out by single individuals. Bodiam was not, strictly speaking, built by Dallingridge; Knole was not built by Bourchier; all four buildings and landscapes were constructed by a team of skilled and unskilled workers. Anyone who has participated in a major building project, whether as patron, architect, client, craftsman or unskilled labourer, knows that the final result is not so much the product of a single individual volition, and much more a complex and ongoing negotiation between architect, different specialist builders and clients (a point that is brought out well through the interactions of the different craftsmen recorded by the *Time Team* special on the Ightham Mote restoration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B9WPT5gyNk, accessed 9th May 2016). Major building projects in medieval and early modern England were even more so (Salzman 1952; Airs 1995). The modern idea of architect was a development of the Renaissance, and individual craftsmen brought their own agency and signature to the building, literally so in the case of the more than twelve masons' marks at Bodiam, and more broadly so in terms of the variation in treatment of stylistic and decorative details at all four sites.

Third, all these buildings and landscapes were built and rebuilt, used and reused through time. The later medieval phases of all four sites were structured and constrained by material elements from the deep past, ranging from the natural topography through the traces of several millennia of human settlement, to the presence of earlier buildings on or near the site. Conversely, all four sites were maintained, extended, reused in different ways from the later 14th century onwards. They have a distinctive cultural biography and derive their character, in part, from the reuse and patina of the ages.

Women, Men and Children

We can start by considering the daily paths and practices of different people at Bodiam. These can be mapped out, as they have been in Fig. 12.12, building on the survey results outlined in Chapter Four. We can start with the mill. The precise location of the mill itself was discussed earlier; there is no documentary reference to the identity of the miller but the normative expectation would be that, like most professions in the Middle Ages, he would be male and would live with his family on the site of the mill (Holt 1988). The mill leat, or artificial stream that fed the mill pond, ran for some kilometres to the west, being diverted from the river on the lands of the Abbey of Robertsbridge a few kilometres upstream of Bodiam. Robertsbridge was reached by boat or barge up the river; water flowed from Robertsbridge to power the mill, while patronage from the Dallingridge household flowed in the other direction, as did their deceased bodies destined for burial at the abbey.

The residents of Bodiam village brought their corn here to be ground into flour for bread, but a proportion of the ground flour would be held back for the lord's use, in accordance with manorial sanction and custom. The mill was one way, in classical feudal theory, of extracting rent in the form of flour from tenants (White 1962). Careful analysis of documentary references to milling indicates a great deal of variation around this norm, and a degree of conflict between peasant and lord (Holt 1988: 36-54). So we can visualise women and men carrying sacks of wheat and flour back and forth along the tightly defined causeways to the south of the castle between mill pond and harbour next to the diverted course of the River Rother, and we need to visualise the castle as it was viewed from the south-east not as it is today, sitting in splendid isolation, but as having a watermill in the foreground, either of stone or more likely of timber-framed construction. It must be remembered that a mill was not just a machine – it was a symbol of manorial lordship, prosperity and harmony (as it is presented for example in the Luttrell Psalter: Camille 1998: 212-3) and of a variety of theological and symbolic meanings (Worthen 2006).

Some of these sacks of corn and flour may then have been loaded on to barges and boats at the wharf. Again, the normative expectation would be that harbour masters and manorial officials at the wharf would be men, but the everyday labour may well have been mixed. The wharf was also the nexus of other flows of goods. Fish were probably transported inland from the coast. Iron working took place to the north and quantities of pig iron were probably carried on horses, mules and carts down this Roman road running north-south before being shipped out to the coastal ports of Rye, Winchelsea and the English Channel (Crossley 1981, fig. 29; Cleere & Crossley 1985).
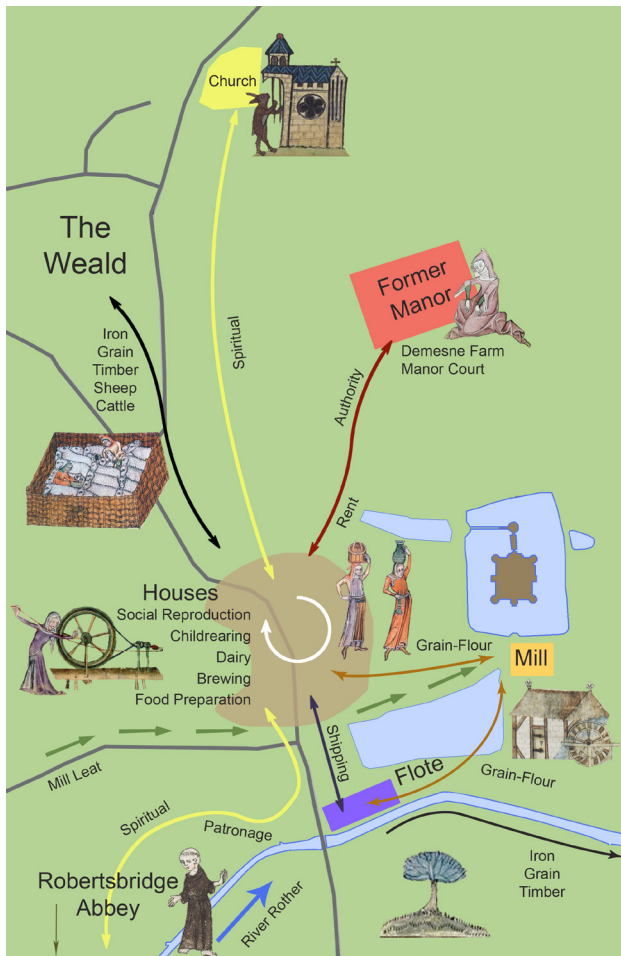
Fig. 12.12: Schematic representation of some of the activities and flows around Bodiam Castle. All images from the Luttrell Psalter (1325-40), © The British Library Board MS42130, apart from the church (Walters Ms. W. 102, Book of Hours, http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode) and monk (MS. Bodl. 264, fol. 22r; The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford).

A third site of work lies at the summit of the slope north of the castle courtyard: the earthworks famously interpreted as a 'viewing platform' overlooking the castle from the north. We have seen that while Dallingridge built the castle, the manorial buildings remained in use as a cluster of farm buildings, and possibly also as stables serving the castle. Most elite buildings of this period have two courts, upper and lower, and here at Bodiam this earlier site had the functions of a lower court, with barn, byre and other buildings. Manorial courts also continued to be held here, at which the officials and the heads of household within the manor would gather to make legal and administrative decisions (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 32).

A fourth site of work was the 'village' itself. As noted in previous chapters, this was more a small row of peasant houses than a typical medieval village. The ladder-like arrangement of property boundaries implied a division into front space and back space – though on this orientation, the houses faced towards the road and turned their backs on the castle. Only one of this row of houses survives from the Middle Ages, the early 16th-century house at the top of the row, a typical house for its time. Its name, 'Ellen Archer's', is likely to be of post-medieval date. These houses acted as nodes that drew in different materials from across the landscape, and then transformed those materials through gendered labour. The Weald was a relatively affluent area in this period, due to the production not just of corn but also dairy products – butter, milk, cheese – also wool and meat from sheep and cattle -- and of course iron. Dairy and industrial products were extracted from the surrounding fields, orchards, and woodlands through the work of women and men, gathered and brought into these households, and there processed. As with the milling and iron production, we have no direct evidence of who participated in such production at Bodiam, but the normative expectation would be that household production of this kind was women's work (Goldberg 1997; Graham 1997). So these houses themselves acted as gendered micro-landscapes, within which women did the cultural work of transforming nature into food and other products for the table and the market.

This discussion has two critical implications for the way we see Bodiam. First, the 'castle' itself appears rather detached from the bulk of this activity. Peasants worked in the fields and in the village, women and men took corn to and from the mill, barges were loaded and unloaded… with the castle itself rather detached, rather like a hole in a doughnut. All of this east-west and north-south activity and movement, the back-and-forth of human bodies, beasts of burden, the carts they were pulling and the goods they were carrying could be monitored from the walls of the castle, but the castle itself, and the elite household inside its walls, could be argued to observe but also to be set apart from this landscape of work.

Rather than seeing Bodiam as a series of facades within a designed, ornamental landscape, I am sketching out for the reader a place where the castle courtyard and towers sat perhaps somewhat in isolation within a busy set of flows of people and goods that moved around their perimeters. The castle is in this sense a set of resources to be drawn upon – the numerous lodgings were probably never fully occupied.

The second implication is that when we start to think about the place in terms of lived experience, it is not at all clear what the term 'the castle' might refer to at Bodiam. The term is generally used to refer to the

courtyard, towers and gatehouses, but we have seen that the curtain walls and what they contain may be best seen as an inner court, with stables and other ancillary buildings elsewhere, perhaps up with the manor court on the hill. What is generally termed 'the castle' might be better seen as a kind of large 'gloriette', detached and set off from everyday activities by its moat and elaborate and circuitous entrance arrangements.

We can make very similar observations about later medieval Scotney. We can trace daily paths and practices at Scotney with less confidence, given the very extensive 19th-century re-landscaping and the more ruinous nature of the castle itself. Scotney is also a more difficult and complex landscape to understand given the lack of an adjacent village or settlement; the village of Lamberhurst is a kilometre away. Chapter Seven showed how there are nevertheless traces of water features and the site of a mill in the river valley, and it established the boundaries of a deer park on the ground above and to the west of the castle; and the outer court at Scotney has a collection of farm and other ancillary buildings.

The common denominator at all these sites is that by refocusing comments away from specific institutions often designated through documentary references (manor, demesne, mill), and thinking instead about movements, flows and work practices between these sites, we bring human beings more closely into focus. We see the landscape in dynamic terms, or as what the anthropologist Tim Ingold would call 'taskscapes', rather than simply or only as a series of static institutions (Ingold 2000; Edgeworth 2011). It is also a view of the landscape which resonates strongly with, for example, the idealised image of the medieval estate presented in the Luttrell Psalter, made some decades earlier (Camille 1998).

Designed Landscapes?

Seeing landscapes in terms of lived experience in this way makes a significant contribution to the ongoing debate over the presence and nature of 'designed landscapes' in the late medieval countryside.

If buildings are actually produced through a complex process of collaboration and agency, the same is also true of landscapes. What this means is that, in a sense, all medieval landscapes are designed. Village layouts, field systems, routeways, fishponds and other hydraulic features, are all created, maintained and inhabited through conscious human agency and practice. There is no *a priori* distinction to be drawn between

vernacular, working landscapes on the one hand, and polite, 'aesthetic' landscapes on the other. Indeed, one could go further and suggest that modern conceptual divisions of this kind are an historic creation, in part of the Renaissance, in part of the 18th century (Johnson 2007), and as such cannot be meaningfully applied to medieval conceptions of landscape.

In this sense, all four sites sit at the centre of a designed landscape – a designed landscape that is also a working landscape. However, a consideration of lived experience suggests that there were important and subtle differences in the ways landscapes were experienced and understood at different places. Most obviously, the experience of the deer park at Knole was bound up with its association with the world of the Church, as argued in Chapter Seven. The landscape at Ightham, discussed in Chapter Eight, has a complex series of water features, but these may well have been created in a piecemeal fashion, in line with the development by alteration and accretion of the house itself.

Afterlife

The first part of this chapter engaged with the long-term and the way the landscape was structured in terms of geological time and in prehistory – it is equally important to consider the life of all four sites after the later Middle Ages. These are all sites that continued to be inhabited through time, right up to their present role and identity as National Trust properties. As a general theme, long-term cultural biography is an important element of the overall heading of lived experience. In other words, if we are interested in people's embodied understandings of and practices around places, we also need to think about how these understandings and practices changed generation by generation, as different people brought different ideas into dialogue with a place. The process, over the decades and centuries, produced new meanings for any given place – manor house to castle, castle to Renaissance palace, house to Romantic ruin, palace to tourist attraction.

Lived experience also implies maintenance. If places now have well-preserved medieval remains, it is, in part, because they were carefully maintained that way in the centuries after the Middle Ages. At Scotney, Ightham and Bodiam, the water features, left to themselves, would have partially or totally silted up over time. Maintenance of this kind is itself a meaningful action, implying a sense of memory and continuity and, of course, necessitating substantial financial and labour input. Again, at Knole, the medieval deer park survives and continues to be maintained, albeit in a heavily modified form.

Ightham is a place with a strong image of continuity: guidebooks and popular accounts see this as a place where little happened. This perception is linked to its isolated location and lack of ambitious owners, a place that each generation has rebuilt and reformed, without the site undergoing a radical transformation. The discussion in Chapter Seven implies that this is not the whole story at Ightham. First, the medieval landscape should not necessarily be seen in terms of the isolated and secluded setting that we see today, with its dominant tree cover. The 3D topographical reconstruction showed us that different approach routes, both along the east side and the west side of the valley, may well have commanded important views at critical points in the landscape, Second, the house was significantly expanded towards the end of the 15th century when it acquired an outer courtyard; the main approach to the house was altered by these new buildings and there is the possibility that this major transformation was accompanied by changes in the surrounding watery landscape.

Scotney was transformed from a castle/fortified house in the 1630s by the wholesale rebuilding of the central range into a Classically-proportioned building (Martin *et al.* 2011; 2012). This building was never finished, leaving Scotney for some centuries as a collection of fragments. With the laying-out of the 'picturesque' landscape of Scotney, and the building of the New House, the old castle became an element of that landscape. The modern visitor to Scotney descends from the New House into this secluded area, tucked away and partially hidden by trees, and accompanied now by a Henry Moore statue on the adjacent island.

Bodiam appears, at first sight, to be a classic single-phase site. However, we saw in Chapter Three how the building itself may well have been occupied into the earlier 17th century, and went through several significant phases of restoration. The castle is covered with thousands of graffiti. The graffiti are important markers of identity in their own right; they include a member of the Shelley family, and a Canadian soldier from the first world war (Cooper 2010).

The successive restorations and alterations of all four sites from the 18th century onwards tie all four sites in to a much wider set of colonial and national relations. Bodiam was restored in the 1830s and again in the 1920s. In 1829, it was saved from destruction and purchased by John 'Mad Jack' Fuller. Some of Fuller's accounts survive; they indicate that he made a substantial financial input into the restoration of the castle and the re-landscaping of its setting, though the specifics of the work that he financed are difficult to trace with certainty on the ground (Holland 2011). Fuller owned the nearby estate at Brightling, where he built a series of follies. The Fuller family's wealth came from a combination of interests in gun manufacture and in plantations in Jamaica (Crossley & Saville 1991); Fuller owned 44 slaves at the St Catherine and 209 slaves at the St Thomas-in-the-Vale estates (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/search/, accessed 11th June 2015). Fuller was Member of Parliament for Sussex and spoke in the House of Commons against the abolition of slavery, making the claim that many slaves in the Caribbean lived in better conditions that 'were equal, nay superior, to the condition of the labouring poor of this country' (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39364?docPos=4, accessed 11th August 2015). Fuller was known as an 'eccentric' and continues to attract a cult following, with a local Morris dancing team named after him.

The restoration of Bodiam by Lord Curzon can also be argued to tie into global and colonial themes. Curzon was Viceroy of India between 1899 and 1906. At the end of his tenure, Curzon returned to British politics as a Conservative and Unionist; the restoration work at Bodiam in the 1920s unfolded while he was a key player in national politics, a senior figure in the Tory party and the House of Lords. Curzon restored a series of 'national monuments', including Walmer, Bodiam, Tattershall, Kedleston and Montacute House; the latter four he bequeathed to the National Trust.

At this time of his viceroyship, British colonial administration in India expressed itself culturally through 'ornamentalism', including architectural references to castles and other medieval monuments (Cannadine 2001). Curzon passed an Ancient Monuments Bill providing for the restoration of the Taj Mahal and other monuments, and creating the post of Director-General of Archaeology, subsequently and famously occupied by Sir Mortimer Wheeler. David Cannadine argues that British imperial administrators saw their colonial subjects not as exotic or 'other', but rather in the same terms as the British lower classes. There is certainly a hint of paternalistic imperialism in Curzon's comments on his attempted drainage of the 'tiltyard' (actually mill pond) and his desire to bring the civilising game of cricket to the Bodiam villagers:

> *The Tilt Yard gave a good deal more trouble… Cherishing the innocent belief that this piece of ground, if drained and levelled and turfed, would provide an excellent cricket ground or recreation ground for the village, I set about its reclamation.*

The result was a disastrous failure… my praiseworthy desires for the recreation of my fellow-parishioners at Bodiam have proved altogether abortive…

(Curzon 1926: 100-1)

Scotney and Ightham were also heavily re-landscaped in the 19th century. In all three cases, re-landscaping along 'picturesque' principles involved the creation of expanses of grassland, areas of woodland, the careful setting of the building at the centres of views, and the layout of pathways and carriage drives designed to show off the site and landscape sequentially and to best effect. The landscapes created appear natural, but are in fact the product of human artifice. Given that this is the case, it is not surprising that scholars visiting these sites – Bodiam in particular -- have been immediately attracted to ideas of carefully manipulated views and contrived settings.

Knole is the exception here; its landscape does not have the appearance of being transformed in the 19th century. Such a statement does need to be heavily qualified: there are a number of buildings, paths and routeways that have been laid out, much of the estate now has a substantial estate wall, and the inner area of the gardens has been subject to continual transformation over the

centuries. Knole's relative lack of transformation in terms of both its landscape and the building itself after the early 17th century is, of course, part of the identity of the place, most famously celebrated in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography* (Woolf 1928), routinely cited as a feminist and modernist classic, in which the eponymous hero(ine) is seemingly blessed with immortality but who changes from a man to a woman part way through the book. Knole is Orlando's country seat and is the central and defining place in the novel; at times, the 'biography' in the title seems to refer as much to the place as to Orlando him/herself.

Bodiam, Scotney, Knole and Ightham should be thought about in terms of their key and distinctive location in the landscape; their nature as landscapes of work and of movement of a diversity of social classes and identities; and their change and persistence over the long term, and at a series of scales. The survey results from all four sites, when combined with the 'grey literature' and our understanding of the wider landscape, paint a compelling picture of these elite sites in terms of their lived experience. It only remains in the Conclusion to make some comments about the wider theoretical parameters within which this understanding should be set.