

# Case Study

## Scheduled Monuments:

### Restoration & Management of Heyshott Down cross-dykes

#### Background

Scheduling is the selection of nationally important archaeological sites. Only deliberately created structures, features and remains can be scheduled, the decision being made by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Scheduled monuments are not always ancient or visible above ground. Currently, there are almost 20,000 Scheduled Monuments on the list ranging from prehistoric standing stones and burial mounds, through to the many types of medieval site - castles, monasteries, abandoned farmsteads and villages - to the more recent results of human activity, such as collieries.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Cross-dykes are substantial linear earthworks comprising one or more ditches arranged beside and parallel to one or more banks. Current information favours the view that they were used as territorial boundary markers, probably demarcating land allotment within communities, although they may also have been used as trackways, cattle droveways or defensive earthworks.

Cross-dykes are one of the few monument types which illustrate how land was divided up in the Prehistoric period.



#### The project

The Heyshott Down cross-dykes were officially scheduled in 1963 and are located on the South Downs Way, 1 mile south of the village of Heyshott in West Sussex. When assessing the site, Rangers from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) recognized that the earth works were vulnerable to tree damage (root growth and the risk of wind throw). This project sought to remove that risk, establish long term sustainable management of the site and increase its visibility to users of the South Downs Way which bisects the monument.

The Cowdray Estate initiated this project by clearing trees from the southern section of the site in 2006, funded by the commercial value of the timber removed. Yearly management was carried out by the SDNPA Central Area Ranger team and Volunteer Ranger Service. This involved the clearance and removal of vegetation from the banks and ditches of the monument in summer.

In 2017, a funding opportunity from Natural England enabled fencing to be installed, which would allow Richard Marks, a tenant farmer, to graze the site with sheep. Consent for fencing was sought from Historic England and was then installed using locally sourced chestnut posts; driven, rather than dug into the ground, in-keeping with the rural character of the site. A grazing management plan was agreed detailing the timing, stock type and duration of grazing on the site.

The financial cost of fence installation was £4,450. This was funded by a grant from Natural England for £3,000; £950 from SDNPA, and £500 in staff and machinery time from the Cowdray Estate.

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“This project has been a great example of partnership working to protect the special qualities of the National Park.”

Matthew Dowse, SDNPA Ranger (Central area team)

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## The outcome

The various works undertaken on this site have gone a long way towards achieving and securing the favourable condition of the scheduled monument.

- Felling the trees that were situated on the southern section of the Heyshott Down cross-dykes have prevented damage to the earthworks from tree roots and burrowing animals. The removal of trees also results in the site being more visible to users of the South Downs Way.
- Installing a fence line around the section has enabled the grazing of sheep, thus minimizing the risk to the site for the short term. Inspections of the site following the introduction of livestock indicate the formation of a greater expanse of grass than was previously present.

This project aligns with the South Downs National Park Authority's first purpose: To conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the area. The project was born out of research and field surveys assessing the status of scheduled monuments throughout the South Downs.

## The future

The SDNPA will continue its programme of assessing all scheduled monuments throughout the National Park and submitting resulting data to Historic England.

The SDNPA strongly values and encourages partnership working as more can be achieved. However, working in partnership requires additional time allocated for consultation and reaching consensus on methodologies and desired outcomes. Consequently, applying for scheduled monument consent can be a lengthy process.

The long term success of the Heyshott Down project will depend on the continuation of grazing management of the site. It has therefore been imperative to have a grazing management plan, agreed and signed by all involved parties.

For further information on this project, please contact Matthew Dowse, Ranger (Central Area):

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**The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2014–19** sets out a shared vision for how we all would like the National Park to be in the future. It includes 11 long-term outcomes, and provides a framework for communities, landowners, charities, businesses and public bodies to work together to make this vision and these outcomes a reality.

**This project successfully achieved the following PMP outcomes:**

**Outcome 1** - The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by effectively managing the land and the negative impacts of development and cumulative change.

**Outcome 4** - The condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their settings (including monuments, buildings, towns and buried remains) is significantly enhanced, many more have been discovered and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SDNP-Partnership-Management-Plan-2014-19.pdf](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SDNP-Partnership-Management-Plan-2014-19.pdf)