

**PVM            Pang Valley - Middle**

**Historic Character**

This is a rural zone containing the historic settlements of Hampstead Norreys, Yattendon, Eling and Frilsham. Historically, the zone was a mix of open fields on the slopes and common meadow grazing on the valley floor. The majority of open field was enclosed by the 18<sup>th</sup> century into regular and irregularly-shaped fields, suggesting that they were created through a mix of agreement between farmers and piecemeal enclosure. Most meadowland was also enclosed by this date, the majority into pasture fields, but some land at Frilsham became water-meadows. The large remaining areas of open field and meadow at Hampstead Norreys were enclosed into fields by act of Parliament in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Woodland was not widespread. Most woods were large ancient woodlands and lay between Hampstead Norreys and Ashampstead. Areas of ancient and other old woods existed around Yattendon. Yattendon Park was the only parkland in the zone.

There has been major change since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Most historic fields have been altered into fields better suited to modern agriculture, largely through removal of historic field boundaries. Many enclosed meadows were also reorganised, and water-meadows at Frilsham have been converted to arable fields. The construction of the M4 further contributed to change by disrupting and truncating fieldscapes. Changes to fieldscapes have created a more regular landscape than had previously existed. Large areas of conifer plantations have been created north of Frilsham and Yattendon, on areas that were fields. The increase in tree-cover has created a previously absent, visually enclosed feel to these parts of the zone. Significant settlement growth has occurred at Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys from the 1960s onwards. New housing at both locations is typified by small estates and large detached houses. Some new housing, mostly detached large houses, has been created at previously unsettled locations.

**Historic Environment**

HER records are fairly evenly distributed and the zone was covered by the Berkshire Downs Survey and partially by the National Mapping Programme, limited other archaeological work has been carried out. There are four scheduled ancient monuments in the zone; Hampstead Norreys motte, Eling Roman villa, Grim's Ditch and a bowl barrow near Everington.

Evidence of prehistoric activity is not very common. Palaeolithic material has not yet been found in this zone and Mesolithic finds are scarce and limited to a single flint tool found at Yattendon. Early Neolithic to early Bronze Age flintwork has been found near Frilsham, Four Points and Beche Farm, but it is unclear what kind of activity these artefact scatters represent. Bronze Age activity is much better documented. Several definite and probable round barrows, including the scheduled Everington barrow, exist on the upper valley slope between Hampstead Norreys and Frilsham. Bronze Age finds have been recovered from several locations and two hoards with material of this period have been found. A hoard of 60 weapons and tools was found during construction of Yattendon Court in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A hoard containing a mix of Bronze Age and Roman items and a single medieval find was found at Calvesley's Farm in the 1980's. Bronze Age items, including a head-dress and other rare artefact types, were the largest component of the hoard, but it is unclear when or why it was deposited. The only Iron Age material that has been found in the zone is a few sherds of pottery from the Calvesley's Farm hoard site. Cropmarks of field systems of probable later prehistoric/ Romano-British date have been mapped across the northern part of the zone.

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Significant Romano-British features, including a villa at Eling exist, but activity is not widespread over the zone. Eling villa was found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; further research and finds have shown it to be within an enclosure and to have hypocausts and mosaics, a bath-house and tomb were also discovered nearby. The site has not been fully excavated and its date and whether any preceding Iron Age settlement existed are unknown. The enclosure, villa and bathhouse are scheduled, but the tomb lies outside the scheduled area. Several Romano-British items were amongst the Calvesley's Farm hoard and evidence of a building of this period was found in the same area. A scatter of building material has been found near Banterwick Farm but nothing is known of the kind of building present.

The only evidence of early medieval activity comes from documentary sources. Yattendon, Hampstead Norreys and Frilsham were all recorded in Domesday. Very little is known of the nature or extent of each settlement, although the early settlement at Frilsham is thought to have been around St. Frideswide's Church. It is not clear if there was settlement at Everington in this period

Late medieval features are dominated by buildings and earthworks. Frilsham church is largely 12<sup>th</sup> century in date. Hampstead Norreys church is also mostly 12<sup>th</sup> century and the nearby Manor Farm is an early 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building. An earthwork mound exists in Park Wood south of the village. Its date and function have been much debated, but the current interpretation is as a motte. Yattendon church was built in 1450 and five timber-framed houses dated to c.1500 exist in the village. A settlement existed at Wyld Court, but was deserted by the early post-medieval period. Very little is known of this settlement and no surface traces of it have been observed. A manor house, fortified in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, existed at de La Beche. Although the house was demolished, earthworks of the moat and house platform are visible at the site. The manor house also had a deer park and it is thought that this many have been the land south of the house, up to and including Beche Park Wood, between Haw Lane and the Aldworth-Ashampstead road.

Post-medieval records are of industrial sites and buildings. The 19<sup>th</sup> century watermill at Frilsham has been converted into a house; it is unclear if this was on the site of an earlier medieval mill. A structure interpreted as a windmill base was found during construction of Yattendon Court in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Parts of a wheelwright's yard, including sawpits and tools were recorded in Yattendon. Earthworks from woodland industries have been mapped in Park Wood/Down Wood south of Hampstead Norreys. A brickworks existed north of Beech Wood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it is unclear if features relating to it survive. There are over 50 listed buildings and the vast majority are in Hampstead Norreys and Yattendon. Most listed structures are 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century domestic buildings although a significant number are 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings. The three churches and some of their tombs are also listed. The historic cores of the villages of Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys have been designated as Conservation Areas.

A Second World War airfield was established north-west of Hampstead Norreys from 1940. Elements of the base survive, including pillboxes, runway fragments, structures in Beech Wood and military buildings incorporated into Haw Farm, and further features are visible as cropmarks.

### **Historic Environment Potential**

The archaeological potential of the zone is varied and deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date are likely to exist across much of the zone. The preservation of deposits may be varied as ploughing since the medieval period could have truncated archaeological layers. Deposits relating to early occupation may survive within historic settlement nuclei and any such deposits

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could be crucial to understanding the development of settlement in this zone. The historic building stock is fairly well-studied but it is possible that further significant buildings or structural elements may be identified.

### **Historic Environment Action Plan**

#### Conservation Issues

- Zone retains a strong character related to historic processes and land-use.
- There is continued development pressure in the area. This could result in a loss of character.
- Intensive modern agriculture threatens the resource on buried archaeological sites.
- Maintenance of the surviving earthwork monuments.
- Historic building stock is poorly understood and little protection is currently afforded to this resource.
- Conservation Area appraisals and management plans are required for Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys.
- Management of woodlands, conservation of surviving ancient woodlands and replacement of plantations with more mixed tree coverage.
- Management of surviving WWII airfield features.

#### Research Priorities

- Does the paucity of evidence for the earlier prehistoric period represent a genuine picture of the level of activity in the zone in this period?
- Can the context of the Yattendon Hoard be better understood?
- Do the locations of the Bronze Age burial mounds tell us anything about the use of the landscape in this period?
- Is the mound in Park Wood a Bronze Age burial mound?
- What was the status of the villa complex at Eling? Does it relate to any pre-existing later prehistoric settlement activity?
- Does evidence survive on the nature and origins of the medieval settlement?
- Does archaeological evidence survive for the medieval settlement at Wyld Court?
- Do medieval features and deposits relating to the high status settlement at De La Beche survive?
- What are the origins of the brick works in the zone? How significant were they and where were their main markets?
- Can the post medieval industrial activity in the zone be better understood through detailed survey of woodland areas?
- What are the date, function and significance of the historic buildings in the area?
- Can archaeological study of the WWII airfield features advance our understanding of military strategy?