

Commuter Routes to Leisure Facilities:

Walking the South Downs Way through Painting

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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To Jon, Joe, Hannah and Rosie

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Abstract

The focus of this practice-led research is the landscape of the South Downs National Park, examined through painting. The study will take the reader on a walk, through paintings, along the South Downs Way, walking from the seventeenth century through to today. In so doing it will examine land management and behavioural patterns through deep mapping and bricolage to identify sequences and models that have contemporary relevance, such as the impact and influence the *picturesque* has had on contemporary landscapes, considered through historical aesthetics bound up in pastoral paintings, used strategically to promote on-going ideals.

To frame the investigation, I employed the checkpoints for walkers found in the *2016 Official South Downs Way National Trail Guidebook* to locate paintings that are now collected within the Digital-Art-Index (DAI) - a database of landscape paintings featuring the national park constructed as part of this research. This framework enabled me to demonstrate, through painting, a palimpsest of social history relevant to contemporary concerns. The visual analysis also led to a deconstruction of key components of these paintings and how a cultural response to landscape through painting is shaped by taste thereby influencing the way landscape is viewed and interpreted today.

To recognise detail and to structure my argument, I walked the 100-mile South Downs Way National Trail, along with other paths in the National Park. The slow acts of walking and painting brings to the attention detail, involving topography, weather, flora and fauna, nuances observed and sensed, informing preparatory work in the field and painting in the studio, as well as endorsing detail found in paintings in the DAI database.

The act of walking also established a theory concerning car parks performing as ancestral portals, with tributary processional-paths leading mourners to places where they can maintain a bond to the deceased. This is manifest by being able to anticipate when a car park is close and can be witnessed by the increase in volume of people on the path. Demonstrating that few people walk far from their cars would suggest that a right to roam would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape. Landscape also affords a connection through death to the natural world, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, forming new arguments surrounding how and why ancient sites are being accessed and used today.

Throughout this investigation painting is foregrounded and analysed as a means of investigating the South Downs National Park landscape, offering ways to measure change, by catching sight of the past through historical paintings and texts, resulting in a contemporary body of work that is

firmly rooted in the present, reflective of the past and combined with reimagining a future. The research establishes for the first time a link between a national park and paintings of the same landscape held in regional art collections, which brings to prominence the importance of ownership and access to public places, specifically footpaths and regional art galleries.

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Abbreviations

DAI = Digital-Art-Index

HCT = Hampshire Cultural Trust

IWM = Imperial War Museum

NT = National Trust

RA = Royal Academy

SDNP = South Downs National Park

SDNPA = South Downs National Park Authority

SDW = South Downs Way

Chapter 1

Introduction

This research explores the potential for painting to interrogate landscape in novel ways, through fieldwork by walking the 100-mile South Downs Way National Trail as well as other designated paths within the national park. Studio practice and the slow act of painting (Cass et al, 2019) which offers the opportunity to reflect and respond to place and landscape through walks undertaken, combined with comparisons made to paintings of the same landscape found in the Digital-Art-Index (DAI). A database of landscape paintings featuring the landscape of South Downs National Park which is an area of land covering nearly 630 sq. miles (1,630 sq. km) occupying large parts of East and West Sussex and Hampshire.

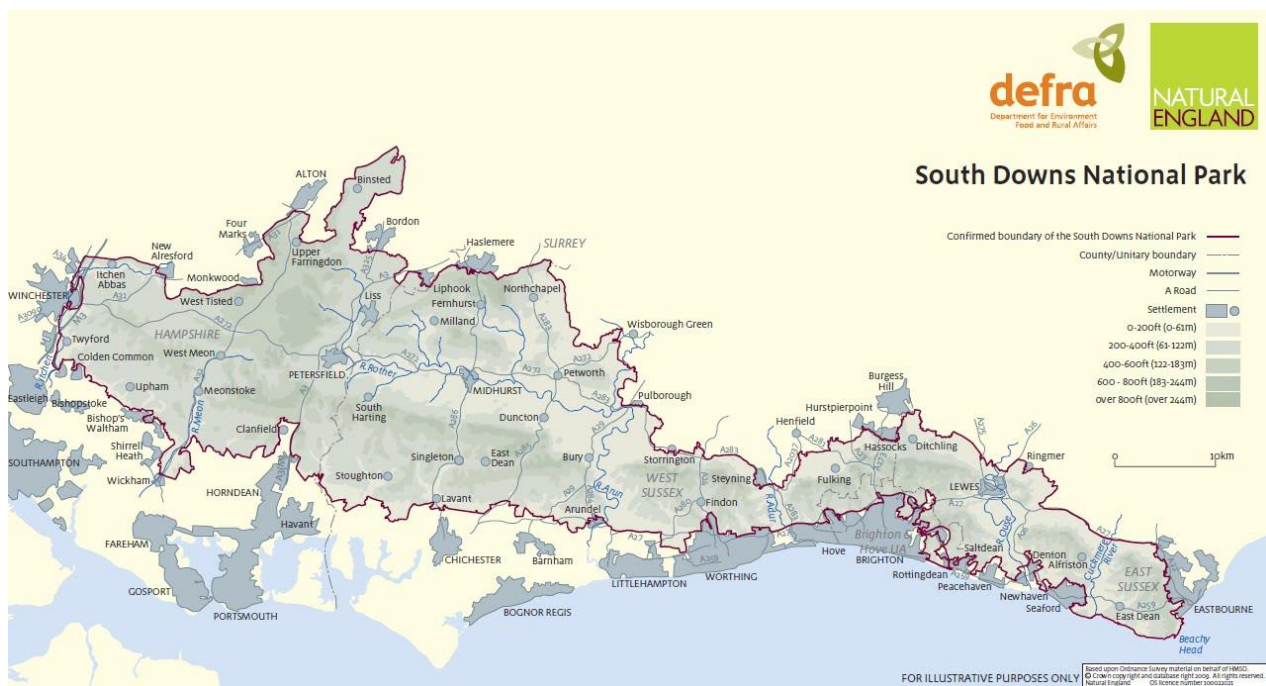


Figure 1. SDNP. Natural England. 2021

The investigation will address this landscape using a timeframe that spans pre-history through to the formation of the South Downs National Park in 2010, to the present day. It will examine how the South Downs has been interpreted by painting from 1660, the earliest painting found of this landscape, through to 2021 and identify genres including; land management, access and death. It

examines the past to inform the present, directed by painting as a means of addressing contemporary concerns with a focus on the future.

Resulting in a body of work that interrogates, through deep mapping, specific landscapes. As well as coalescing information obtained by walking and bricolage less familiar landscapes, thus forming an expansive overview of the SDNP. Applying experiential research with scholarly enquiry, the research aims to reimagine landscape through the act of painting:

Painting is a reflective and meditative practice which dramatises an ongoing tension between the materiality of the actual pigment and the fictive depth or space it represents (Pooke, 2011, p.75).

As Pooke acknowledges, the tension between materials¹ and *fictive depth* or layers of narrative imbued into one place, the painted surface, permits the chronicling of information. Incorporating information that is symbolic of the landscape combined with allegorical and topographical expressions that reflect contemporary concerns, brought together into one place, establishes an opportunity when the painting is displayed for avenues of discussion to take place.

Research began with a pilot study *Lost Path Cheriton* (fig.8) in the autumn of 2018 by employing deep mapping to investigate a path in the village where I live in the SDNP. At the same time investigating other paths many of which originated as desire lines, shifting in location as the Enclosure Acts² took force to become synthetically constructed routes to accommodate land ownership which today defines and dictates the movement of walkers, by herding visitors along well maintained, designated footpaths, permissive paths, bridleways, green lanes, and restricted byways.

Following the pilot study, I walked the 100-mile South Downs Way National Trail in 2019 over the course of the year, as well as visiting galleries and art collections in Hampshire and Sussex, then on March 23rd 2020, the country experienced the first national lockdown, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This international crisis immediately affected access to the countryside, experienced on a local level by a collective fear evident in my village through local vigilantism³ as well as

¹ The choice of materials for this research are specific and will be described in more detail in Chapter 5

² The enclosures which although occurred in a less formal way from as early as the twelfth century, were historically called *Inclosures* became established practice through acts of parliament from the seventeenth century (UK Parliament, 2021)

³ Local vigilantism observed on the village Facebook page, through the posting of images of non-residents parked for a walk.

observed nationally through media coverage, making me reconsider how the countryside is managed and who benefits from it.

The lockdown afforded an opportunity to focus on painting, archival research, and walking for my one hour's exercise⁴ where I observed the scale of overcrowding in certain places, combined with litter, more than human's venturing into towns and cities and a sudden quietness. This unexpected shift presented a new phenomenon that when combined with my analysis of landscape through painting, Gilbert White's letters⁵ and the DAI made me re-evaluate not only my practice but the investigation, as a result a restructuring took place.

1.1 Thesis Overview

The thesis is divided into ten chapters, ending with references and an appendix of graphs showing pictorial results from the DAI.

Chapter 1. Introduction includes the questions that direct and support the research undertaken for this enquiry.

Chapter 2. Methodologies and Methods, justifies the multi-faceted approach used to undertake this investigation.

Chapter 3. Politics of Walking, analyses in more depth access within the SDNP.

Chapter 4 Framing the Landscape examines what *landscape* means today.

Chapter 5 Account of Painting Practice is an overview of my painting practice including the bodies of work made for this investigation.

Chapter 6 Land Skip Land takes the reader on a walk, through time and space along the SDW using paintings from the DAI that match walking checkpoints found in the National Trail Guidebook, presenting an historical account of the landscape through painting from 1660 to the present day.

⁴ Government advice (Bell, 2020).

⁵ Gilbert White is a pioneering English naturalist who lived within the bounds of the SDNP in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 7 Facing Both Ways employs the Greek god Janus to look back and forth along the SDW as well as to the future and the past, investigating theories including the picturesque and the moon, to form an overview of the SDNP.

Chapter 8 Death on the Downs investigates the connection between memorials to the deceased through the phenomenological practices of walking and painting, offering an insight to our understanding of ‘the common place’ and its broader cultural narrative.

Chapter 9 Conclusions evaluates the research undertaken including the results from my exhibition *Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*, presenting outcomes as well as asking further questions.

Chapter 10 Contributions presents the impact this research will have on peers and policy as well as providing future plans to make aspects of this research available to a wider audience.

1.2 Research Questions

The questions that direct and underpin the range of research activities in this thesis are,

Q1. Can the exploration of landscape through the narrative of archival research, presented via painting, have any bearing on contemporary concerns and behavioural patterns?

This question relates directly to the building and collating of the DAI, from which information has been analysed and interpreted. The combining of historical paintings with studio practice as well as cross-referencing historical and contemporary texts has informed research activities and outcomes.

Q2. What is the connection between landscape features such as memorials to the deceased and contemporary walking as a method of research within the South Downs?

Walking is one of the foundation methods of research which from the start of this enquiry in response to this question identified the memorialising of the dead in the landscape, an ancient tradition still active today. The question became more complex when considering concepts of decay through rewilding and how notions of tidiness, aging and death are managed.

Q3. How can the process of painting articulate the transcendental experience when out on location? How and why must the experience be shared in a non-hierarchical way?

Articulating complex narratives through painting offers the opportunity to transcend societal structures, specifically in relation to experiences observed and sensed whilst walking, by framing arguments into paintings, a universal language, that permits debate on a broad level.

Q4. How can the embodied practices of painting in relation to walking offer insight to our understanding of ‘the common place’ and its broader cultural narratives?

This question refers to how embodied practices of walking and painting, position the researcher in a place where information is registered first-hand and from which arguments can be observed, recorded and responded to, on a very broad level.

Q5. How do the different chapters of the sociohistorical timeline impact on the interpretive development of landscape painting?

Finally, this question draws together how I have collated paintings in the DAI, in a linear timeline in the Chapter 6, *Land Skip Land*, from which I have been able to render specific detail which not only informs the development of landscape painting but how the landscape is viewed today.

Chapter 2

Methodologies

2.1

Framework

Painting, walking, deep mapping, bricolage, and the DAI have all contributed to framing arguments in response to my questions set out in the forthcoming chapters, attesting to the impact painting has had on the way landscape is viewed today, countered by an innate sense of ritual, observed through death, played out in the natural environment, forming a dilemma regarding an aspiration for tidiness with a longing for unbounded connectivity.

The investigation is framed around the SDW footpath moving to Paul Millmore's 2016 *South Downs Way*, Official National Trail Guidebook, at the start of lockdown. The guidebook offers a *Distance Checklist* of locations for walkers when walking the SDW, signposting indicators from which I could isolate paintings from the DAI and is how I framed the research and the forthcoming chapters.

There are eleven sections in the guidebook, for example the first is Eastbourne to Alfriston covering 10.6 miles (16.09 km), this first walk is broken down into six *Distance Checkpoints*, Eastbourne, Birling Gap, Exeat, Westdean, Litlington and Alfriston. Each of the checkpoint locations has a corresponding painting in the DAI. The matching of *Distance Checkpoint* and painting occurs all the way to the Hampshire/Sussex border. The ten walks average 10 miles (16.09 km) the eleventh walk is a footpath and bridleway to avoid the Seven Sisters cliffs but includes Windover Hill and the Long man of Wilmington. The guidebook framework not only permitted a connection between walking and the DAI, but at the beginning of lockdown created a momentum where I investigated through painting iconic locations along the SDW from each of the eleven sections.



Figure 2. Five of eleven paintings. 2020 [Egg tempera, oil, chalk gesso, birch plywood. 30cm x 30cm]
Catastrophic Shift (Seven Sisters), *Litlington White Horse (fig.46)*, *Devil's Dyke*, *Chanctonbury Ring*, *Winchester*

The correlation between my painting practice, the checkpoints and DAI are interwoven throughout the following chapters, *Land Skip Land*, *Facing Both Ways and Death on the Downs*, each chapter directing the reader along the SDW, from Eastbourne to Winchester, always walking in the mind's eye from East to West, signifying a sense of time by walking the path through historical paintings as well as a shared appreciation of walking in the footsteps of others, witnessing esoteric traces and uncanny features.

Land Skip Land begins by investigating the oldest painting in the DAI, followed by paintings of Winchester and Eastbourne, these two places bookend the South Downs Way footpath. The chapter then takes the reader on a walk along the SDW from Eastbourne to Winchester via paintings corresponding to place⁶ and time, walking from the seventeenth century through to today, examining farming practices, land management and industry, to identify patterns and sequences that have contemporary relevance with regards to the landscape of the South Downs.

Facing Both Ways uses the mythology attributed to the Roman god Janus who was able to look in both directions, which I have applied through narrative, looking back to Eastbourne whilst walking forward to Winchester as well as back and forth through time. Using paintings from the DAI to articulate arguments, including the profound impact and influence the *picturesque* has had on contemporary landscape with regards to aesthetics bound up in the pastoral, used strategically to promote on-going ideals. The chapter also traces the legacies of avant-garde creatives who lived on the Downs at the turn of the twentieth century as well as how the moon, a seductive symbol is used in times of national crisis and upheaval. An example is the paintings made during World War II an event that delayed the landscape becoming a national park by seventy years.

⁶ Identified using the SDW 2016 National Trail guidebook

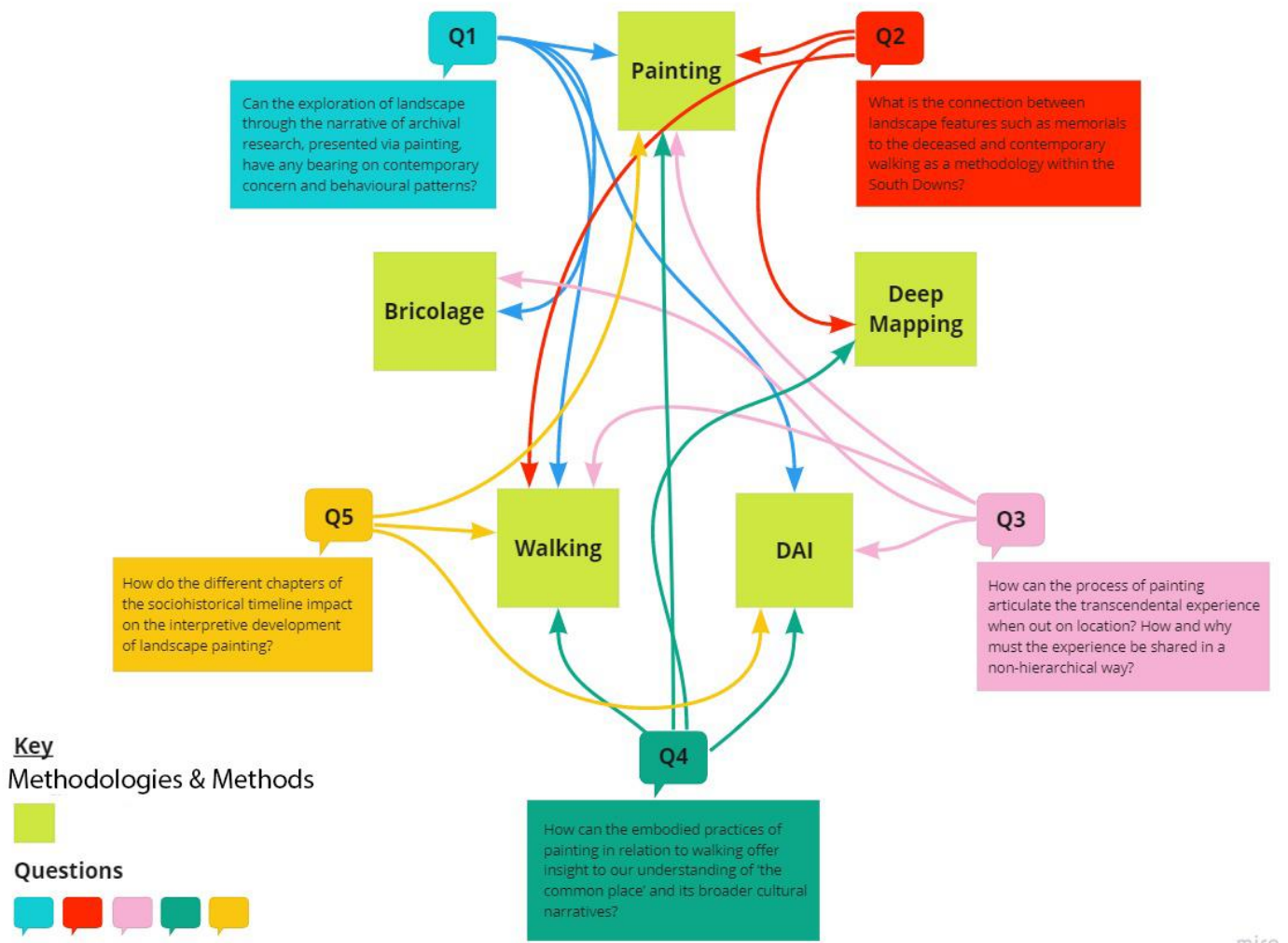
Death on the Downs is an account of observations and research carried out whilst walking the South Downs Way in 2019 and was the first chapter undertaken for this thesis. The experience of walking, observing, drawing, painting, and photographing the breadth of the National Park, formed a narrative that has echoed throughout this practice-led research. Reflecting on the South Downs in terms of death and renewal, from the chalk substrata which is made up of millions of dead sea creatures to the monuments littered along the South Downs Way path, including Neolithic burial mounds and contemporary memorial benches. The chapter considers how landscape affords a connection through death to the natural world, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, forming new arguments surrounding how and why these ancient sites are being accessed and used today.

2.2 Methodologies & Methods

To undertake this research, I implemented a combination of methodologies and methods including, painting, walking, deep mapping, bricolage, and the DAI each approach never used in isolation but coalesced to provide a rich overview of the South Downs landscape. Subsequent to the diagram below which demonstrates how the methodologies and methods have been integrated (fig.3) is a breakdown of each.

The first three are integral to the research, the methodology painting forming a rich investigative framework both through practice as well as the scrutiny of historical paintings in the DAI is followed by walking and the DAI, methods that support painting through both practice and analysis. The methodologies Bricolage and Deep Mapping support an array of methods including conversations with Park rangers, gathering brochures, taking photographs, visiting curators and collections and was implemented from the outset, whilst Deep Mapping was undertaken during periods of focused fieldwork.

Figure 3: Demonstrating the Links Between Methodologies, Methods & Questions



miro

Figure 3. Diagram Demonstrating the Links Between Methodologies and Questions. 2021 [Digital image]

2.3

Painting as Practice Research

Painting is a core research methodology, acting as an investigative framework as well as an historical lens, drawing on texts by Isabelle Graw (2018), Grant Pooke (2011), James Elkins (2019), Todd Bradbury et al (2019) and Malcolm Andrews (1999), the texts, open dialogues between painting as an alchemical transcendence, “Alchemy and studio art exist” (Elkins, 2019, p.40) and rhetorical narrative, in as much that a painting is an object signifying symbolic metaphors that can be interpreted not necessarily how the painter intended, but nevertheless propelling a line of reasoning:

A painting is an object – of a rather peculiar sort – which refers both to itself, and to things outside itself. It is never only an object and never only an image. (Pooke, 2011, p.75)

This symbiotic rational is a valuable vehicle through which complex arguments can be established, this is because the formalities of reading a painting are universal and are as much about taste and opinion as they are about intension. This includes how I have read the paintings in the DAI concluded through landscape detail in my own painting, significant clues the viewer will draw on when interpreting the painting, affording a sense of connection when a landscape is identified, an argument examined in more depth in Chapter 4 *Framing the Landscape*, Chapter 6 *Land Skip Land*, and Chapter 9 *Conclusions*, where I have been able to analyse through painting, audience viewing figures, specifically the popularity of local landscapes to Winchester, which are missing from the DAI now represented in my concluding exhibition *Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*.



Figure 4. Rose, M. 2021. *Full Moonrise in January, Old Winchester Hill*. [Oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 90cm x 60cm].

The act of walking through a familiar landscape as well as recognising a landscape *walked in*, in a painting creates an uncanny bond or familial recognition⁷, intensified when analysing paintings in the DAI against the SDW path, offering a reconsideration of the place I was looking at by comparing in my mind's eye features in the painting to what I remembered or could see in a digital image. The quality or genre of the painting becoming immaterial as the eye scans the surface for clues⁸, the title of the painting triggering an initial response, combined with the date forming an investigation through which I based the paintings *Beacon Hill* (fig.66) and *Cheesefoot Head* (fig.141)

Through the act of painting both familiar and unfamiliar landscapes the relationship between painting and the texts became profound, generating pathways of conflicted knowing not unlike the dialogue between Tilley (2004) and Ingold (2004), in that the shape of painting practice is debatable in addition to the irony of it being systematic, for, without certain formulas, structures and methods the painting would not exist. But how a painting becomes manifest is contentious, using accepted

⁷ Experienced when I walked into Hampshire from Sussex specifically from Old Winchester Hill onwards.

⁸ The act of scanning for signs and clues is something everyone has had to do during the pandemic, to enable safe navigation through familiar territory which is exhausting compared to the comfort of being-in or seeing a familiar place.

phrases such as *flow*, or as Jackson Pollock stated, “painting has a life of its own” (Bradway et al, 2019, p.24) demands further scrutiny of Elkins, but with a mindful eye on the craft that painting is, bringing the argument back to the realms of practice and knowing:

The fundamental problem with any debate over painting is that the term is used to refer to very different things. Sometimes it designates a medium; at other times, a genre; or it serves as an umbrella term for technique. (Graw, 2018, p.142)

Certainly, the paintings made throughout this enquiry oscillate between memory of the experiential to scholarly, combined with text, photography, and politics as well as implementing field and studio practice. And yet a paintings manifestation relies on a broader analytical principal including that of my peers combined with historical landscape painters. The paintings, therefore, are an original contribution to knowledge, by framing the landscape of the SDNP, thus forming a survey of this landscape including contemporary concerns.

The paintings for this research also fill locational checkpoint gaps found in Hampshire along the SDW not represented in regional collections, identified when analysing the DAI against the National Trail guidebook. One of the checkpoints *Old Winchester Hill*, I had already been investigating through deep mapping, but the others although locationally close, were not landscapes I had considered painting, but in so doing I have connected checkpoints as well as landscapes that feature tumuli, carparks, paths and roads, coalescing perspectives, landmarks, seasons, nature and industry, always with the chalk geology echoing through the surface, not unlike Gault’s 1994 painting (fig.63).



Figure 5. Missing checkpoints bookended by Annabel Gault’s painting (fig.63) and my painting of Winchester from (fig.2).

The act of painting, combined with scholarly activity, has enabled a means of decoding experiential research, by unifying potentially different or conflicting themes into one space. Therefore, the

paintings are in dialogue with *place*, and with other painters, interpreted through the canon of landscape painting. The fact that paintings are then presented as recognisable objects, permits an interaction between the viewer and the painting in a non-hierarchical way, opening channels of personal interpretive opinion.

The choice of materials attributed to my paintings reflects the geology of the landscape as well as transcending what might be classed as ancient ecclesiastical resources and processes into paintings representing, *common places*, that hold meaning and reverence, for example landscapes featuring tumuli, today contain carparks and contemporary memorials, are in essence as vital as churches and cathedrals which are often found to have been built on top of tumuli or holy wells⁹. Christian buildings that are powerful institutions dictating behavioural patterns, access and wealth. Therefore, by forging a relationship through materials consisting of chalk, rabbit skin glue, eggs, gum Arabic, pigment, oak galls, metal leaf, wood and handmade paper, I am redirecting a historical narrative to contemporary concerns, by re-evaluating what is considered precious and worth valuing.

My intention of using these materials in response to landscapes where there are multi-focal memorials, is a way of inferring historically precious materials, in a non-hierarchical way, signifying a levelling of what is, in a very real sense, value and hierarchy as well as institutional and personal entitlement, played out in the landscape through access and permission. Issues which are current and that have been further exacerbated by the pandemic. Furthermore, by using ancient materials has eliminated the use of plastic, a deliberate and conscious decision, in response to the climate emergency, as well as forging a relationship between the earth and the land through uniting the slow act of walking with painting.

Therefore, to successfully use these materials was by handling them, “knowledge [is] generated through action and reflection” (Barrett, 2010, p.5). This theory is also expounded by the anthropologist Tim Ingold, in the book, *Tools, Language and Cognition in Human Evolution*, drawing on Heidegger’s theory of tacit articulation or ‘sight’ (Bolt, 2010, p.30) which denotes [for example] the innate ability to draw and paint which increases with confidence the more one practices and understands the materials. Bolt explores this further through “praxical knowledge” [or] “handlability”, [which through the repeated handling of materials, tools, and processes affords a] “shift in knowledge” (Smith and Dean, 2009, p.6).

⁹ Winchester Cathedral is built on a holy well, Cheriton church is built on a round barrow.

The more I handled the materials, the more there was a *letting go* or *flow* (my italics), where I can anticipate what the materials will do, which ultimately propels my research, enabling me to “explore, reveal and inform” (Stewart, 2010, p.128). Revealing investigative research through the act of painting, explored by walking and archival research which ultimately is transcended through the process of painting, permitting an obscure dialogue with the viewer.

The more explicit research of specific places through walking, combined with cross-referencing the DAI, resulted in an overview of the SDNP landscape in total, enabling strands of knowledge to influence further research or directional analysis. This approach, coalesced with in-depth knowledge of processes and materials, sanctioned opportunities for tacit intelligence to open new directions for practice and thought, “the painting has a life of its own” (Bradway, et al, p.24), permitting an intuitive way of working where the handling of materials in response to processes and subject performs in a circular trajectory, facilitating emergent outcomes, in the form of richly layered topographical paintings, employing altered perspectives, the concept of an ambiguous space achievable through distorting principals founded in *picturesque* theory:

ambiguous space, one that defied gravity. I wanted it to be impossible for the viewer to know where they stood in relation to the action, (Pooke, p.112).

The ambiguous space in painting is the simultaneous disclosure of a horizon line, subterranean and arial views (fig.135) offering the viewer a way *into* the painting whilst at the same time disorientating the landscape by creating a *contemporary picturesque* an approach used by artists including Ivon Hitchens (fig.102) and Annabel Gault (fig.63) correspondingly the viewer can read my paintings by situating themselves within the landscape the paintings represent, more so if they know the landscape. For example, having walked the SDW, I was able when analysing Gault’s painting to positioned myself (in my mind’s eye) on the opposite side of the A3 in the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, where Gault would have been able to view Butser Hill and the A3, although I have imagined Gault situating her painting from this location, she may well have done so from her imagination. Likewise, most of my paintings are made from a vantage point that I have remembered, attributing nuances toward nature or in some instances manmade features as well as including esoteric detail in the form of ley lines and ghosts.

2.4 Contextual Analysis of Walking

Walking, unlike painting, is not my creative practice, but a combined research method acting alongside the DAI, deep mapping, and bricolage. Walking is the experiential act to accomplish first-hand data gathering. Had I not walked the SDW, I would not have noticed the trail of memorials to the dead or have been able to anticipate when we were close to a carpark due to the sudden volume of people on the path, and in accordance with Lucy Lippard (Solnit, 2001, p.76) I was able to reimagine my walking when painting, as well as use my mind's eye to compare landscape locations with historical paintings, painted at the same place on the SDW.

Walking as a method is the fulcrum between painting and the DAI. Apart from the physical act of walking, I employed several approaches, including the use of maps, both historical and modern, brochures, local guidebooks including the Official National Trail Guidebook, government policies, white papers, Acts of Parliament, together with archaeological data from Historic England, local archaeological societies and museums were employed along with seminal texts about the subject. Allied to this are conversations with the Park rangers and my walking companion¹⁰, a qualified lowland leader who co-coordinated the SDW walk as well other significant investigatory field exercises sanctioning a profile of the physical landscape of the SDNP from which I could extrapolate information now manifest in the paintings and this thesis.

The act of walking the SDW established a correlation between texts, paintings, photographs, maps, and the landscape itself. Walking as previously mentioned, became the fulcrum between painting and archival research as well as highlighting inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic, and the local need to access the countryside. Walking also became an esoteric act of weirdness, walking in the footsteps of others, walking through time and space, it heightened anticipation especially as we neared car parks, and at times became pure enchantment principally when we encountered wildlife:

There is usually a good reason for following in a particular direction linking places in a serial trajectory, and the more people who have shared in the purpose of the path the more important it becomes. Paths form an essential medium for the routing of social relations, connecting up spatial impressions with temporally inscribed memories (Tilley, 1994, p.31).

¹⁰ Rosie Tugwell

The exact origin of any of the more ancient of these paths is difficult to date, due to archaeological contexts being missing, but the vast majority of the paths would have started as desire lines, joining a place of residence, (initially temporary, later permanent), to a site the user wished to be (Hindle, 1993, p.18). From pre-Saxon times land became enclosed and access routes were formed between the enclosures (Bannister, 2010). Later these routes would have acted as commuter tracks conveying a multitude of workers, livestock, and materials to and from home and worksite and later still with the coming of motorised transport the more popular of these tracks were converted to turnpike and then highways (Hindle, 1993, p.47).

Tilley maintains, once a path has been walked there is an uncanny ability to recall the journey, this phenomenon was explored by Rebecca Solnit, who described art critic Lucy Lippard, as being able to reimagine her walks in England, when walking in Manhattan, (Solnit, 2001, p.76). This evaluation was further explored by Frances Yates' theory of memory, through the ancient Greek complex memory system, which was of great importance, since prior to reading and writing, memory was fundamental as a means of navigating the landscape (Solnit, 2001, p.77) It is perhaps prescient, that the study of footpaths is called *hodology*, (*from hodos*, the Greek for path), which is also a term used in neuroscience for neural connections.

Our connection to, and ability to recall paths must be of significance, especially in a time when we are becoming increasingly reliant on technology as a means of navigation, therefore decoding the landscape is of less importance. This implies there is a greater risk of getting lost, both in ourselves as well as where we are, which is the subject for the painting *Lost Friends* (fig. 126):

Human activities become inscribed within landscape such that every cliff, large tree, stream, swampy area becomes a familiar place. Daily passages through the landscape become biographic encounters for individuals, recalling traces of past activities and previous events and the reading of signs – a split log here, a marker stone there (Tilley, 1994, p27).

The theory of remembering or visually recalling landscape is a key aspect to my studio practice. Prior to the planned walks, *checkpoints* were deliberately incorporated into the route, acting as reminders to stop, thus permitting a focused examination of the location¹¹. Without these reminders on the map, it is very easy to keep going. Stopping takes practice, but the act of stopping enables

¹¹ I walked with an experienced map reader, DofE Lowland Leader, Rosie Tugwell, who planned the breaks to coincide with archaeological features or pertinent views.

both landmark and landscape-detail to become embedded in the memory, reinforced by fieldwork. The confluence of methods attributed to walking is significant, bipedal motion is a luxury, as is social class, therefore approaches attributed to walking are varied, whether walking in protest, an act of remembrance, charity, investigation, performance, pilgrimage or merely going from A to B require different mindsets which deliver various outcomes.

Despite the South Downs being the most heavily populated of the national parks in this country, with over 110.000 living in the market towns, and 1.97 million living on the doorstep (SDNPA, 2012). The SDNPA's biggest challenge is inclusivity and attracting those living on the periphery into the Park.¹² With huge conurbations leading up to the edge of the Downs, attracting a balanced population of walkers is an undertaking which the rangers have risen to, through access for all, but as was made clear to me, is an ongoing endeavour. The most noticeable aspect of walking the SDW is the amount of leisure activities, such as hang gliding, mountain biking, trail runners, hikers, Duke of Edinburgh participants and walkers¹³, which costs money whether for suitable footwear or wet weather attire, reflected by an observed sense of belonging.

2.5 Digital-Art-Index [DAI]

Through the creation and interpretation of the DAI (Table.1) a database created in order to be able to compare key information and individual components within paintings featuring the SDNP landscape. The spreadsheet is a record of both the painting and specific information held within the painting, including individual visual components of the artwork, such as the weather and the presence or absence of particular features were logged to allow quantitative analysis¹⁴ and were selected to allow changes in the landscape to be identified on a temporal and locational basis.

The DAI permits a number of paintings, housed in different galleries across the country, covering centuries of work, (the earliest painting in the DAI is from 1660¹⁵), to be compared side-by-side and

¹² Conversation with Andy Gattiker, National Trails and Rights of Way Lead at SDNPA and Ben Bessant, SDW Ranger.

¹³ Observed when walking the SDW in 2019

¹⁴ Please see appendix

¹⁵ John Dunstall, c1660 *A pollard oak near West Hampnett Place* [Watercolour on vellum]. British Museum (fig.15)

has enabled the creation of a profile of the SDNP from the 17th century to the present day. The images are hyperlinked from a spreadsheet which identifies criteria against which a number of comparisons can be made. For example, the popularity of a location as a basis for an artwork throughout the period covered, can determine accessibility issues, population dynamics, ecological change, etc.

Pallant House Gallery in Chichester provided digital images of the artworks within their collection, and where this was not possible the works were digitally photographed. This process was then repeated at Southampton City Art Gallery, and the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne. These galleries are the major galleries within and at either end of the National Park. Throughout the process of walking the SDW, independent galleries were visited as well as collections pertinent to the research, including, Petworth House, Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, and the De La Warr Pavilion. Visits to other galleries would have continued had it not been for the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in March 2020 preventing such visits.

Online sources were then explored to locate other images, notably Art UK, the online database that contains artworks from public art collections in the UK. However, working with gallery collections has demonstrated some gaps in the Art UK database. Further work with the collections at Tate, British Library, V&A, and the National Gallery will be undertaken in the future to further add to the DAI. By drawing attention to these omissions further relevant artworks within the galleries have been found, generally untitled but with the location known to the curators.

In total the DAI has 35 filterable fields, “biased” (Manovich, 2020, p.3) toward this study. While most of the fields are objective i.e. is a component present or not, some of the criteria are subjective, for instance recording how the land is used within a landscape when there are several land-uses. Likewise determining the season according to the fullness and colour of the vegetation:

What is chosen as objects, what features are chosen, and how these features are encoded [original italics] - these three decisions are equally important for representing phenomena as data and, consequently, making them *computable, manageable, knowable and shareable* [original italics] through data science techniques. (Manovich, 2020, p.4)

Initial study of the data revealed that there was an intriguing gap in paintings of the Hampshire Downs. An enquiry regarding this was made to the Hampshire Cultural Trust curator to which the curator then replied with links to their historical and contemporary collections, where a limited number of paintings of Winchester and the Hampshire Downs could be found. While this *filled the gap* to a degree it is still noticeable that the Hampshire Downs are represented far less than the Sussex Downs.

Artist	Title	M/F	Date	Location	Gallery	Medium	Figure	Shephd
Henry, George	Hikers at Goodwood Downs	M	ND	Goodwood	Sheffield	Painting	Y	N
Hill, Adrian Keith Graham	Farm at Singleton	M	ND	Singleton	Gallery Oldham	Painting	N	N
Hill, Anthony	Wilmington Giant	M	ND	Wilmington	Towner	Drawing	Y	N
Hine, Henry	Rainstorm	M	1890			Painting	N	N
Hitchens, Ivon	Sussex, Spring	M	1933	Sussex		Painting	N	N
Hitchens, Ivon	Waterfall Terwick Mill	M	1945	Terwick Mill		Painting	N	N
Hitchens, Ivon	No 7 Splashing Fall	M	1947	Terwick Mill		Painting	N	N
Hitchens, Ivon	Didling on the Downs	M	1920's		Laing	Painting	N	N
Hitchens, Ivon	Oak Tree in Purple Woods	M	c1959		Pallant Ho	Watercolour	N	N
Hitchens, Ivon	Sussex Landscape	M	ND		SCAG	Painting	N	N
Holding, Edgar Thomas	Nightfall in the Arun Valley	M	ND	Arun Valley	Aberdeen	Painting	N	N
Holding, Edgar Thomas	A Farm in Sussex	M	ND	Sussex	Towner	Watercolour	N	N
Holloway, Edgar	Wolstonbury	M	ND	Sussex	Ferens AG	Painting	N	N
Holloway, Edgar	Near Arundel	M	ND	Wolstonbury	Pallant Ho	Drawing	N	N
Houseman, Edith Gifford	Near Arundel	F	1929	Arun Valley	Towner	Watercolour	N	N
Hubbard, Eric Hesketh	Charlton Forest from Goodwood	M	ND	Goodwood	Hastings Museum	Painting	N	N
Hubbard, Eric Hesketh	The Cuckmere Valley	M	ND	Cuckmere	B & Hove	Painting	Y	N
Hubbard, Eric Hesketh	Snow at Littleton	M	ND	Littleton	Towner	Painting	Y	N
Hulme, Frederick William	Scene in Sussex	M	1867	Sussex	Leicester	Painting	Y	Y
Humphreys, David W P	Summer Landscape	M	1970		Worthing	Painting	N	N

Table 1: Rose, M. 2021. *Digital-Art-Index*, section. [Screenshot]

One of the filters is the gender of the artist which, after analysis, clearly demonstrated the unsurprising underrepresentation of women in regional collections, accounting for only 12% of the works¹⁶:

Despite the many advances made by women in the artworld over the years, a gender imbalance persists, particularly at, and beyond, the mid-career stage (Bonham-Carter, 2011).

Following the initial visit to Towner Gallery, the curator sent through a document of all the artworks pertaining to the enquiry, it was evident there were works by women that had not been

¹⁶ This betters The National Gallery London which has less than 1% (The National Gallery)

photographed/digitally recorded, compared to all the men being recorded. I requested that this might be remedied, and the curator went back during lockdown to the gallery to photograph the work. These new digitized images were then added to the DAI and the percentage of women represented within increased.

Being able to arrange landscape paintings into formulas has emphasised the coding through which paintings can be interpreted e.g. landscape genre and subject, location, medium, style, date, which have permitted the tracing of the *picturesque* through which landscapes both painted and real are compared. This coding of landscape through painting has forged ideals, that have impacted on the way landscape is viewed today which will be further examined in Chapter 6, *Land Skip Land*.

At the start of the investigation, I maintained a blog to corral my findings as well as reflective diary entries made whilst walking the SDW and used to describe outcomes specific to experiential research. The diary entries have been integrated into the thesis chapters using a different font to identify a personal distinctive voice, demonstrating first-hand experience or observation, including where appropriate, phenomenological research methods. The blog also contains technical information regarding techniques and processes that are integral to my painting practice as well as explorations I was carrying out in the print room on campus prior to lockdown combined with journal articles and texts pertinent to the research.

The blog was the first repository for the DAI, offering a platform where I could experiment with a formula and layout. The fact that I was operating without guidelines “research people typically start with existing research” (Manovich, 2020, p.3), meant the DAI moved from the blog to a spreadsheet, going through two updates before finally the spreadsheet was transferred to OneDrive, as such:

Datasets are not just any collections of some information, they are objects structured in ways that allows them to exist within a computational medium (Manovich, 2020, p.4).

Placing the DAI onto OneDrive has allowed me to share the spreadsheet with the hyperlinked paintings with various parties, permitting focused conversations to take place. The paintings and the filters on the spreadsheet meet criteria pertinent to the study and are fixed, but as Manovich

states “limitations can often be easily corrected” (p.3), which in this instance is accurate, as fields can be changed, whilst the paintings remain the same.

2.6

Bricolage

Bricolage is described by Weinstein and Weinstein as a methodology of research whereby the bricoleur employs a variety of methods in response to a specific question or set of questions:

In creating a bricolage, the bricoleur appropriates available methods, strategies and empirical materials or invents or pieces together new tools as necessary (Weinstein & Weinstein 1992: cited in Stewart, 2010, p.127)

This approach to research was first applied by Claude Lévi Strauss in ‘The Savage Mind’ (1962) to expand taxonomic structures imposed on non-Western cultures which isolated meaning through language thus disregarding significance. The text makes clear that there is “no precise equivalent in English” to ‘bricolage’ (Lévi Strauss 1962, p.11) although it is equivalent to an “odd job man” specifically someone who uses their hands to solve a problem, unlike the precision of an engineer. It is this heterogeneous, problem-solving method of working that elicits connections and insights by way of comprehending the world from an anthropologist’s viewpoint including the esoteric:

Mythical thought is therefore a kind of intellectual ‘bricolage’ – which explains the relation which can be perceived between the two. Like ‘bricolage’ on the technical plane, mythical reflection can reach brilliant unforeseen results on the intellectual plane (Lévi Strauss, 1962. p.11).

This argument is one that runs through this thesis and will be further examined in Chapter 8, *Death on the Downs* whereby comparisons are made between contemporary memorials to the deceased and Neolithic tumuli, considering how and why landscape is accessed and used today.

Organisations including funeral services are built around biased societal structures, therefore by employing bricolage as a methodology within this qualitative investigation affords a broader interpretation of the materials gathered, including data generated by the SDNPA in relation to analysis of historical paintings in Chapter 6 *Land-Skip-Land*.

Investigating paintings in a forensic way has permitted discrepancies to surface, for example, today the Downs are portrayed in advertising as rolling open landscapes, whereas on closer scrutiny the images demonstrate vast monocultures devoid of people and wildlife, compared to historical paintings. This analysis reflects Foucault's later theories concerning ethics based on the marginalisation of "dominant knowledge" (Rogers, 2012, p.12) referred to by Rogers in comparison to Kincheloe (2001), "for Foucault and Kincheloe, the culturally elite's control over the means of knowledge production has meant insights from the margins of societies have been subjugated" (Rogers, 2012, p. 12), this was evident in the Glover report "Proposal 9: New long-term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors and Proposal 16: Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes" (Gov.UK, 2019), both proposals can be investigated by adopting bricolage as a methodology, specifically by examining advertising employed by the SDNPA to attract visitors.

Analysing materials such as advertising, in what Denzin and Lincoln describe as 'reflexive' which "not only highlights how human positioning influences the research processes, it exposes how an object of inquiry can be interpreted from multiple vantage points" (Rogers, 2012, p.4), for example by examining tourist information brochures and websites I was able to identify a demographic the SDNPA were appealing to as well as scrutinise the landscape the promotional images were set in, the politics of both changing over the course of this enquiry, summed up in Chapter 9 *Conclusions*.

By adopting a bricolage research methodology, I aimed to explore the contradictions and complexity of meaning-making processes which are bound by contemporary structures, by drawing together experiential as well as investigative methods to create a woven, as well as layered inquiry. Research began by walking as well as by talking to park rangers about the entire SDNP landscape whilst at the same time investigating maps and paintings featuring the same landscape, evaluating journal articles and books allied to the investigation, combined with examining how I can integrate ghost presences into landscape, all the time gleaning as much information as possible in response to my questions about the landscape of the SDNP examined through painting.

This expansive way of gathering and generating information to shape focused arguments is prevalent throughout the enquiry, my aim to create a visual overview of the SDNP landscape including the chalk ridge that I walked along, and the Weald¹⁷ an area of land between the South

¹⁷ Weald in Anglo-Saxon signifies forest

Downs and the North Downs¹⁸, making sense of how the landscape has been interpreted and altered to inform future decision making.

2.7 Deep Mapping

Deep Mapping is a model of research that has “no formula” (Biggs, 2014), but draws on layers of data including maps, folklore, text, artworks as well as experiential, first-hand investigations, has enabled a focused investigation of specific places on the South Downs, in particular *Lost Path Cheriton* (fig.8) and *Old Winchester Hill* (fig.13)

The combining of experiential practice-led research with a scholarly investigation about specific landscapes resulted in my turning to contemporary anthropologists and archaeologists, Tim Ingold and Christopher Tilley whose enquiries address both methodologies, situating *landscape* through both a geographical and cultural context as well as addressing belief patterns and political bias. Tilley placing an emphasis on phenomenological research whereas Ingold, theoretically draws on experiential data but moves his argument forward through academic meanderings. Most notable are the tensions between these two academics resulting in slippages of knowing, significantly the relationship between humanity and landscape, whether haptic or coloniser (Harmansah, 2001), a theory mapped through the paintings in the DAI in addition to contemporary dialogues about science and nature¹⁹.

Deep Mapping & Bricolage

Deep Mapping is comparable to Bricolage both are applied research methodologies that I have implemented in both a focused and expansive way about landscape and place. It is evident that *landscape*, *place*, and *environment* are all interpreted differently depending on the academic genre. From an art historical point of view, I have taken the meaning of *landscape* to signify not a

¹⁸ A blue ridge features in many paintings of the South Downs, a depiction of either the North or South Downs chalk ridge.

¹⁹ Nature will be further examined in Chapter 4 *Framing the Landscape*

lived place but something we look at (Harris, 2018). *Place* I have interpreted as more personal, employing an ethnographic approach to investigate *place*, specifically in the pilot study *Lost Path Cheriton* (fig.8) and *Old Winchester Hill* (fig.13), but also the term will be used to interpret other's places based on their description (Biggs, 2010), forming unstable theories founded on secondary narratives.

Finally, "environment implies a mutually affective relationship between the 'organism' and it's environing 'current field' of significance" (Andrews 1999, p.193), it is noteworthy that Andrews argues that the artist uses landscape as a motif and is therefore not taking into account the *environment* [my italics], Andrews expands this theory by stating:

when a landscape becomes an environment, the relationship must change: the scenic sense would then be only one of many ways in which what was landscape becomes holistically the current field of significance (Andrews, 1999, p193).

This implies that paintings taken out of their context can be used to inform a meaning not based on the artists original intention, but through the perceived environment constructed by the coding of the landscape which is a useful interpretation both in relation to my paintings and those in the DAI. To conclude, I have not made a deep map of the SDNP landscape, but pockets of deep mapping have informed how I have interpreted the landscape as a whole, including burial, industry, geology, folklore and access.

2.8 Methodologies & Methods Concluded

These methodologies and methods have resulted in a body of paintings about the SDNP landscape. Collecting data was through deep mapping and the pilot study at the beginning of the research followed by a year-long investigative programme of research directed by walking, painting and bricolage. Lockdown, due to Covid-19 forced an evaluation at which point I turned to historical texts and online archives, as well as forging links with peers.

Evaluation and analysis signified a point when bricolage as a methodology contracted as did walking, at which point painting became prominent along with deep mapping. Deep mapping

through painting the landscape at Old Winchester Hill was combined with paintings made by walking in my mind's eye the SDW through the directive of the National Trail Guidebook while at the same time making comparisons with paintings held in the DAI to the letters written by Gilbert White²⁰.

The impact of lockdown affected how I managed my research methodologies and methods, painting although prominent became integral, through restriction of movement, forging new ways of working, for example turning to historical text combined with the DAI allowed me to keep walking from memory along with focused field work, permitting nuanced comparisons between the past and the present with the aim of reimagining a future landscape.

²⁰ Gilbert White was one of the UK's first ecologists, who lived at Selbourne in the SDNP in the 18th century

Chapter 3

Politics of Walking

The SDNP is a heavily restricted landscape to walk in or access, illustrated by Government maps in relation to the 2020, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW), which permits public access to land, mapped as open country. Maps of all the national parks in (fig.6) demonstrate land where public access is allowed, coloured yellow, (Gov.UK/open access). The area designated as 'open access land' within the SDNP is minimal, illustrating not only the extent of private ownership, but marginal public access, compared to the other national parks, who, in accordance with the CRoW Act, close access during specific times of the year when, for example, there is grouse and deer shooting.

An example of the exploitation of restrictions allowed by the CRoW Act is in operation at Cheriton²¹ Wood (fig.97), closed between 1st July to the 1st February each year. The direction given is for "public safety and land management, specifically game bird management" (2006040060 Summery for Public Consultation, Prepared by SDNPA). This ancient 91-hectare woodland is closed to rear pheasants, combined with shooting, an example of how "Britain's National Parks are a farce: they're being run for a tiny minority" (Monbiot, 2018). Monbiot in the article was targeting how land management favours productivity for the landowner as opposed to supporting biodiversity, including the collusion landowners have with agencies supposed to protect and encourage wildlife, but also tailoring a landscape to privilege a minority.

Figure 6. not only demonstrates how much of the SDNP is privately owned but how the CRoW Act, in partnership with the SDNPA, is being used to deprive access and encourage what is termed by the campaign group *Wild Justice* as the "unlawful" (Weston, 2020) release of game birds, as the bird's impact on biodiversity has yet to be fully assessed.

²¹ Cheriton is my home village where I undertook the pilot study *Lost Path Cheriton*

National Parks in England Indicating the CRoW Act in Yellow



Figure 6. CRoW & Coastal Access Maps. Natural England. 2021 [web image]

This enquiry has occurred at a point in history where access to the countryside is more contentious than ever. By employing a broad analytical approach there is no doubt that walking has been and still is a motivational act geared toward reform and enlightenment. Research also permitted a comparison between what the SDNPA aspires to compared to what is happening on the ground through grassroots action currently taking place, by the authors Nick Hayes and Guy Shrubsole, who instigated a peaceful mass trespass²² on the South Downs:

Here in Sussex the limited right to roam on unimproved down pasture and heath introduced in the year 2000 has brought only minor enlargements of access land. Most of our countryside, including most of our Downs, remain inaccessible. This includes areas which are officially 'access land' but can only be accessed through trespassing! (Landscapes of Freedom, 2021).

The politics associated with walking include pressing debates about inequality, prejudice, vulnerability, and health; experienced and observed first-hand by walking both the SDW, and other footpaths in the SDNP.

Certainly, there are assumptions about who can walk where, particularly on private land, which is now being addressed through the campaign group *Landscapes of Freedom - Right to Roam*. Access is an ongoing problem for the SDNPA, who every year must negotiate the rerouting of permissive paths linking the SDW, because of events on private land, to the point that a section of the footpath is planned to be permanently rerouted²³.

The political act of walking, including why walking is so intrinsically important, is an ongoing method of action and debate, first brought to the nation's attention in 1932, the year of the mass trespass at Kinder Scout in the Peak District, where six regional walking federations came together to protest land ownership and access. At the time, 90% of the UK, was in private ownership (Solnit, 2001, pp.162–167). That same year in July, 16,000 people caught specially commissioned trains from London to the market town of Steyning in Sussex to see the sun rise at Chanctonbury Ring (Macfarlane, 2012, p.317). Although the latter was a commercial venture, the appetite for walking out, into the landscape, as a demonstration against inequality²⁴, or to reconnect with nature, is a

²² Nick Hayes and Guy Shrubsole founded the campaign group Landscapes of Freedom/Right to Roam the first trespass was on the 24th July 2021 at Pangdean Bottom on the South Downs

²³ Conversation with Andy Gattikus, Head Ranger at the South Downs National Park

²⁴ Jarrow March 5-31 October 1936, organised protest against unemployment and poverty (Collette, 2011)

cultural trend, that will need exploring in more depth particularly in light of the pandemic and the newly formed campaign group, *Landscapes of Freedom – Right to Roam* (see footnote 22).

Today, it is estimated that half of England is owned by less than 1% of its population (Evans, 2019) and yet, more than ever, there is an insatiable appetite for being out in the landscape. As previously mentioned, the SDNP compared to other UK national parks has more limited access because of private ownership. According to the website *Who Owns England*, “a quarter of the South Downs National Park is owned by twelve landowners, including Viscount Cowdray who owns, 16,500 acres, Duke of Norfolk (Arundel & Angmering Estates) 16,000 acres, National Trust 15,151 acres, Baron Leconfield (Lord Egremont) Petworth Estate 14,000 acres” (Shrubsole, 2018).

The stewardship of a colonialised landscape can be traced back in England to William the Conqueror. It is estimated that 30% of England “rests in the hands of the feudal Norman ‘cousinhood’ “ (Adams, 2019), apparent today by vast estates owning much of the South Downs, where feudal systems are still present, determined by tied cottages and access rights.

The combined effect of the pandemic with the drive toward exercise and reconnecting with nature, has fuelled arguments regarding access. I have witnessed first-hand, vehicles queuing for space in car parks, as well as bumped up onto verges as people jostle for space, before being directed along paths to designated locations.

Car parks now provide interpretation boards, brochures, bins, picnic benches and increasingly the request for parking payments. The herding or corralling of humans along designated paths on the South Downs, not unlike livestock, must invariably have a detrimental effect, explored in Nick Hayes book *Trespass*, making clear the fencing out of people creates partition, a severance that disassociates a connectedness to the land, together with how the land was acquired in the first place. Hayes challenges what land ownership means and how it “impoverishes” society by removing what is “our common inheritance” (Atkins, 2020), therefore do we care less for that which we perceive as not belonging to us?

Chapter 4

Framing the Landscape

This chapter sets out to establish what *landscape* is, by determining a framework where historical narratives are identified, which has enabled comparisons to be made in response to current behavioural concerns and patterns, as well as framing how painting can offer insight to our understanding of ‘the common place’ and how different sociohistorical timeframes impact on or are interpreted by artists. This also includes the cultural impact landscape painting-ideology, has had on the way landscape is interpreted and viewed today.

To investigate this focus, I turned to influential books including Malcom Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* and Susan Owens, *Spirit of Place*, these two books alone established a background within which to orientate the investigation, added to this the Yale Centre for British Art and a joint publication by the Paul Mellon Centre, *Landscape Now* (2018) which features scholars including Tim Berringer, Alexandra Harris, Anna Reid, and David Matless. Allied to art historical research, I included archaeological and anthropological texts by Christopher Tilley and Tim Ingold. This combined approach between an art-historical and experiential, established a relationship between practice-research, painting, walking and scholarly activity.

The first British painting attributed to the genre of landscape was made c1620 (Owens, 2020, p.10) prior to this, landscapes were contained as background detail. Currently the word landscape in art, refers to several sub-categories of the genre, including conceptual, ecological, and figurative. Key arguments arose from the above-mentioned scholars including by Ingold who stated in *The Temporality of Landscape* that landscape cannot exist without people:

Landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left something of themselves (1993, pg.1).

Ingold expands his argument further by introducing other interpretations e.g., “the landscape tells – or rather is – a story” (1993, pg.1), and introduces concepts of a naturalistic and culturalistic view of landscape, considering what landscape is *not* [my italics], and uses various analogies without,

unfortunately, concluding with a definition but rather a collection of concepts. His initial argument is upheld by Andrews who confirms that landscape within an art historical framework is only landscape because of the evidence of human activity, offering examples including a painting by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Good Government in the Country* 1338-40 (Andrews,1999, p.152) (fig.7). Andrews supports his argument by including Kenneth Clarks analysis that this painting is the first landscape painting of its kind, offering an allegorical, natural depiction of good land management, including figures, entitled or not, to fractions of the land as opposed to a purely symbolic painting (1999, p.154):



Figure 7. Lorenzetti, A. 1338. *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*. [Fresco]. Palazzo Pubblico Siena Italy

Thus an early capitalist, 'urban-centred linkage with the commercialised countryside' (Andrews,1999, p.154).

Thereby as a result, highlighting a consumerist society thriving from or off a feudalist infrastructure, depicted by the walled cityscape isolating the managed countryside. Ingold states landscape is not *nature* (my italics) "the world of nature is often said, is what 'lies out there' "(Ingold, 1993, p.154) which he expands through a dualistic explanation of "object and subject, material and the ideal, operational and cognized, 'etic' and 'emic' " (1993, p.154) whereas Andrews implies that nature is an "entire system of things" (Andrews,1999, p.193) which follow a natural law, compared to landscape which "is the scope of nature, modified by culture" (1999, p.93).

Does Ingold's use of the term *out there* represent *other* in a phenomenological sense or, as depicted in Lorenzetti's painting, a concept represented by a wall keeping *out there*, out there in a managed/adapted format? Or might *out there* be an internal place which is umbilically connected

to the *out there*, since landscape is a personal view built up of layers of embodied experience combined with culturalistic views of the subject? (Landscape Imaginary, 2021):

What makes the vista complicated can be something internal – the complicated attitude with which one sees it (Bradway et al, 2019, p.311).

The assessment of what landscape and landscape art is or has been, is currently being challenged within the political climate, questioning the impact human intervention and interpretation has had on the earth. The debate is framed within a conjectured sub-epoch to the Holocene called the Anthropocene, a period in history that has a debatable starting point (Matless, 2018) and carries as its premise that human activity has left a distinctive mark on the geologic record of the earth (Matless, 2018).

We are in the midst of a new era of place perception in Britain. Questions of what landscapes mean to us, who sees them, and what they are for, are all being debated now with an intensity perhaps unmatched since the first great age of domestic tourism, landscape painting, and aesthetic philosophy in the late eighteenth century. (Harris, 2018)

Harris's sense of urgency concerning landscape and what it means both now and throughout its historical legacy is mirrored by Andrews, "as a phase in the cultural life of the West, landscape may already be over" (Andrews, 1999, p.22).

This statement raises questions about how the DAI might be used in the future. The word *landscape* might now appear to be an inappropriate label based on its current meaning in relation to artists making political artworks, demonstrating ecological and social damage and destruction. However, throughout the texts the word landscape has a common understanding on a broad level and is used as a reference point from which to deconstruct meaning.

Tilley aims to reconcile this debate via the theory of phenomenology as a means of exploring the word landscape in relation to what it means to being human, and how the two are inseparable, inasmuch that landscape and its constituent parts, (space, place, locale), are experiential. Tilley refers to phenomenology as a philosophy to structure first-hand or primary experience of a landscape and the intention this experience has on practical outcomes,

drawing conclusions from theories formulated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This approach is in line with his exploration of landscape through experiential research:

The landscape is an anonymous sculptural form always already fashioned by human agency, never completed, and constantly being added to, and the relationship between people and it is a constant dialectic and process of structuration (Tilley, 1994, p.23)

Tilley references Ingold who states that the landscape is a “cultural construction” (Tilley, 1994, p.23) by which we decipher or interpret data on both a personal and shared basis. The relationship between the texts is human agency in relation to landscape through both a phenomenological and ontological exploration.

The combining factor is that the word landscape is now interpreted to mean a man-made environment whereas originally it depicted or meant a region, this however still does not take into account allegorical or political intentions that are demonstrated through a multitude of layers which Andrews explores in depth:

Landscape art (...) has from early on been implicated in nationalistic, imperialistic and socio-economic ideologies, and often most potently so when, superficially, least touched by suggestions of any political agenda. This is not a matter of past history only. The heightened consciousness in the western world about the environment in the late twentieth century makes us increasingly aware of what, in different ways, has always pertained: landscape is a political text (Andrews, 1999, p.175).

Landscape is a political text to be read, evident by the transformation of the landscape over thousands of years and is manifest both in the landscape as well as historically through paintings. As previously mentioned, “the nature of the land was tacitly understood by the kind of labour represented” (Owens, 2020, p.39) inasmuch that the “country (pre-1620) was not landscape, it was land” (Owens, 2020, p.37) the action or species depicted, would have formed an implicit picture, identified, and reimagined by the viewer.

Over the past three hundred years this connectivity has been eroded creating a displacement. As a result, landscape painting has required different, more overt codes for the viewer to interpret and yet landscape can be both what we experience as well as what is represented, two versions of the

same narrative. From this it could be concluded that contemporary landscape painting is registered on what we 'know' through experience as well as historical coding handed down.

Finally, Alexandra Harris brings the argument full circle, by examining Ivon Hitchens paintings, in the book *Ivon Hitchens Space through Colour*, which accompanied the exhibition with the same title at Pallant House in 2019. Harris describes Hitchens paintings as being about *place* but classifies them as landscapes, arguing that landscape is as much to do with a fixed place and the artist's innermost belief as it is of a *view* (Harris, 2018).

Identifying Hitchens in this way is counter to art historian Colin Wiggins, who in response to the same exhibition, specifies Hitchens paintings, as "identifiably English compositions" connecting Hitchens paintings with *conventional* landscape compositions, following the formula of the *picturesque*, established in the eighteenth century, identifying Hitchens influences through Gainsborough, Constable and Turner. Wiggins then further investigates these influential artists, identifying their influence as *Claudian*, after Claude Lorrain and the *classical landscape* (Wiggins, 2019)

This argument is fundamental in that here is an artist who was clearly influenced by the Claudian tradition, identified by Wiggins, yet simultaneous to this Harris describes Hitchens landscape paintings as personal representations through *place*. Both scholars agree Hitchens painted landscapes, using both the established *picturesque* formula combined with genius loci or spirit of place:

Momentous times lie ahead for landscape art and its history, which is after all nothing less than the story of how we have looked about us on this earth (Harris, 2018).

Which, more than ever, is vital, by means of influencing change, through disruption to the canon. Ivon Hitchens, was among the first to disrupt formulas associated with landscape painting, described by Christopher Neve who visited Hitchens studio stating that:

he painted watching the landscape more than the canvas...representing what he saw rather closely and certainly not as inventing abstract systems of loosely brushed colour (Neve, 1990, p.176)

Hitchens worked directly onto a propped canvas close to the ground, seemingly immersing himself and painting into nature, drawing on rules taught to him at the Royal Academy Schools in 1930 (Khoroché, 2009, p.184) expanded through Modernism, his landscapes can be interpreted by the viewer because of their inherent *picturesque* formula, but they also offer an esoteric expansiveness, forming another layer within the historical timeline, transcending what was an established way of looking into an experiential process. This approach to painting has evolved further still, to the present day, in response to new technologies, threats, and politics.

A manipulation of signs and symbols...and the viewer an active reader of messages rather than a passive contemplator of the aesthetic (Pooke, 2011, p.118).

It could be argued that compared to the way landscape was interpreted pre 1620 when the action of the person or animal determined what the landscape looked like, today landscape paintings are interpreted through an established visual vocabulary recognised through the canon, combined with the viewers own experience of the landscape and their *view*.

Chapter 5

Account of Painting Practice

Chapter 5 presents an overview of my painting practice and the bodies of paintings made during this practice-led research period, examining how embodied practices of research have resulted in identifying cultural trends whilst on location, surveyed through painting, both in the field and studio. Trends including the situating of memorials to the deceased, boundaries and access as well as geographical features such as the Seven Sisters and the M3 motorway.

It was the experiential act of walking that promoted the ability to visually recall places, prompting tacit investigations through the act of painting, this first-hand approach to gathering material is implicit to this enquiry. The first year focused on walking and painting, this changed after the near completion of the DAI at which point, I could start cross-referencing. As a result, situating my paintings within a historical framework as well as affording a combined *place-based* approach.

There are five bodies of work:

1. *Lost Path Cheriton*, a pilot study at the start of the research.
2. (Chapter 1. Land Skip Land) Significant locations found on the SDW identified using the National Trail Guidebook
3. (Chapter 3. Death on the Downs) Ancient memorial sites.
4. Deep Mapping & gaps in paintings of specific locations along the SDW in response to the DAI and the National Trail Guidebook.
5. Responding to selected landscapes in Gilbert White's letters.

Drawing on influential British modernist painters including the Neo-Romantics as well as British/Irish abstract painters, including Gillian Ayres, Peter Lanyon, William Crozier, Ivon Hitchens, Patrick Heron, Frank Bowling and Keith Vaughan and contemporary artists Eamon Coleman, Harold Mockford and Ursula Leach. It is these artists and their embodied approach to painting combined with an ostensibly freely expressed immersion of subject, addressing, landscape, time, memory, and human presence, that I have examined and responded to through painting.

The term *freely expressed immersion* alludes to my interpretation of the above artists approach to the subject of landscape painting. Each painter navigating their own *way-in* in their painting-process, whether in Harold Mockford's approach by applying pigment to a surface before flipping the oil-wet board onto a blanket before beginning to paint, completing the painting when it has reached its "perfect moment of strangeness" (Cooper, 2012, p.7) or carefully constructing the composition in a sketchbook prior to beginning, a process employed by Keith Vaughan (Tate), whatever the process there is an inherent individual formula situating these artists paintings beyond the realms of pastiche but as extensions of themselves.

The paintings made for this research shifted in approach as the investigation moved between the experiential act of walking and archival investigations. For example, the texts employed, reveal landscapes that I know and have walked, but in making the paintings I move from memory, photography, and preparatory sketches before painting beyond the planning stage to a point where a narrative about a place is metaphorically represented through pigment combined with my own physicality imbued on the surface of the painting:

It is through the act of painting-putting brush to canvas or panel-that the painter's person appears to be brought into play, creating the phantasmatic impression of a presence that turns out to be an absence (Graw, p.51).

Consequently, it is movement mapped in paint across a surface indicating the artists presence not unlike a path where human and more than human presence is encoded, leaving topographical ancestral echoes that I have endeavoured to capture by manifesting my own movement, through the tracing of path-patterns and landscape features in paint.

1. Research began with the pilot project *Lost Path Cheriton*, in 2018, about a path that had been blocked, owing to the building of a new housing estate, in my home village in the SDNP. The painting (fig.8) challenges politics of ownership, access, elitism, and class. The path which started out as a desire line for timber yard workers, had been in existence since 1875 (Culpin,1999, p.65) and was a well-trodden unofficial, unrecorded path, with access gates and deliberate gaps in hedges to accommodate the route.



Figure 8. Rose, M. 2018/20. *Lost Path Cheriton*. [Egg tempera, oak gall ink, charcoal, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 3 X 1.21cm x 61cm]

The painting after preparing the chalk gesso ground, began as a physical attack, including walking on the surface whilst pouring hot gesso, followed when dry by applying a hand-sander to indicate wear and tear of footfall. Materials used were sensitive to place, e.g., oak galls from the boundary hedge made into ink, charcoal representing the charcoal burners who annually made camp in the adjacent fields in the 1800's (Culpin, 1999, p.66). The painting hovered in a semi state of completeness until the first lockdown, when there was a quieting in the landscape, quieter than before the timber yard, before industrialisation, as quiet as the last ice age.

This landscape preceding the industrial revolution, was noisy with nature, but industrialisation has deadened biodiversity, so the quietness I could hear was resolute, uncanny, weird, and unnatural, as a result I dulled the surface of the painting, burying overt marks so as only traces were left, echoes of the past, an unfathomable unreliable memory.

Lost Path Cheriton, tells the story of a deliberately blocked path, obstructed with cut brambles and brash filling gaps in the hedges. This then became a subject, since hedges form most of the

boundaries in Hampshire, acting as ancient signifiers of enclosed land, that in the dead of winter offer skeletal Prussian-blue/burnt umber silhouettes with Alizarin crimson tangles of brambles.

Bone Winter (fig.9) is one of a series of watercolour and oak gall ink paintings that chronicle boundary hedges made on location as well as in the studio. The title *Bone Winter* comes from the term 'cold to the bone' or colloquially 'shrammed' meaning a penetrating chill, that can be both emotional as well as physical.



Figure 9. Rose, M. 2019. *Bone Winter*. [Watercolour and oak gall ink, on watercolour paper. 30cm x 42cm]

The pilot project explored an area of the South Downs close to home and is about *place*, but as walking commenced in 2019 and research expanded the paintings took a nuanced turn toward the esoteric, uncanny, weird, and eerie, on account of experiential and scholarly research associated with local history about the paths, combined with geological phenomena, ancient monuments, invisible transmissions, and the ghosts of whose footsteps I was walking in.

2. The announcement of the first full lockdown in March 2020, meant I had to reconsider my research plans. *The SDW National Trail Guidebook*, offered a framework, not only for walkers, where the use of checkpoints identifies distance and time, but prominent landscapes that I could isolate and paint. Beginning with the most iconic landscapes along the SDW, including the Long Man of Wilmington, Litlington White Horse, Chanctonbury Ring, Devils Dyke, and the Seven Sisters. Initially relying on photography and field sketches, but as lockdown ensued, I turned to memory, it appeared that as my movements became restricted, my imagined/remembered

landscapes became an expansive alternative, where I could draw together imagery through process and research.

The word *ground* is used to describe both a painted and geological surface, in this instance, chalk, composed of minute marine organisms, foraminifera, coccoliths and rhabdolites (Geology Science, 2021) forming the significant geological makeup of the SDW. Once the chalk is ground to a powder and combined with rabbit skin glue it converts to a viscosity which can be built up, layer after layer fashioning a marble white, smooth plaster surface, but time, as ever, is of the essence, each layer whether painted or poured must be completed over a matter of days. If left to dry-out, flaking or cracking will occur not unlike the sensitivity of the landscape.

Cold and marble hard, the seemingly imporous chalk surface is applied to both paper and wood, but when scrutinised, miniscule holes, not visible when standing at a distance are spread like pinpricks, forming a celestial surface, ready for pigment which is made-up of coloured powder and egg-yolk, gum Arabic or honey, that slides seductively across the picture plane.

The pigment or tempera is a versatile medium that can be watered down to a liquid or used as a thick paste, secreting depth, and radiance, never failing to surprise, especially during times of overt atmospheric pressure, including freezing which causes the tempera to separate and crystallise, or if very damp, forming pustules of blue/green mould that spread across the surface.

The act of painting can only occur after preparation, a result of perfecting processes, trialling surfaces and mastering tools, combined with tacit knowledge. This way of working is an implicit language where I can articulate more than what the landscape *looks* like, by including esoteric nuances where time of day and shifting perspectives are played out across the surface of the picture plane.

The landscape painter Eamon Colman²⁵ states, “painting is a slow process”, using raw materials, he disclosed that some of his paintings take years to complete, building up layers before applying a hand sander and scrapers to wear away the surface, a method I used for the painting *Lost Path Cheriton* (fig.8) although for Colman the complex layering is aimed at determining the fragility of the earth in respect of the climate emergency, but also as a means of interrupting the concept of what he calls an “eighteenth century landscape painting” stating that “landscapes aren’t pretty”²⁶

²⁵ Eamon Colman is a renowned Irish painter and elected member of the Aosdána.

²⁶ Extended ongoing phone conversations with Eamon Colman about practice through process, materials, and subject (13th May 2021)

key to my argument and the disruption of the notion of the *picturesque* which I discuss in detail in Chapter 6 *Land Skip Land*.

Working from memory combined with myth, folklore, archaeological data, etc has contributed to a tension between figuration and abstraction a phenomenon I explored prior to this investigation by examining Ivon Hitchens paintings and locating the exact spot from where the paintings were made. This close analysis of an artist's approach to landscape painting combined with scrutinising the paintings of the above-mentioned artists, specifically, William Crozier, Patrick Heron, Frank Bowling, Keith Vaughan, Eamon Coleman, and Ursula Leach, all of whom filter recognisable landscape features into their abstract painting, whether arial harbour views, landscape motifs or screen-printed maps. Each of these artists seduces the viewer through the expressive movement of pigment whilst at the same time rooting their emotive exploration back to reality through recognisable features.

The tension a painting offers by including recognisable filterable information, makes the brain scan for information, a characteristic applied to my paintings, where motifs, colour and perspective combined with materials, scale, and title offer decipherable nuances that when blended determine a specific landscape, whether informed through walking, archival research, or both. The impetus to include transitory visual stimulus and fleeting reminiscences is explored by the practice-theorist Neil Thompson in his analysis of imagination process through primary and secondary perception:

As an artist paints a portrait, she continuously and subconsciously uses primary imagination to blend senses from her environment (the feel of the canvas, the colour of the paint, etc.) with various memories in such a way that the layer of paint on the canvas is not a static and meaningless object. Instead, it has emergent meaning and possibility (Thompson, 2017. p.237).

Thompson expands this philosophy by integrating secondary perception, triggered by suggestion, and recalled in the mind's eye, "secondary imagination is distinguished from fantasising because it establishes a link between what is perceived to be 'real' or 'true' and that which is considered totally 'fictive' or 'false' "(2017, p.238). Hence walking the South Downs Way, was an experiential lived event, in addition to heuristic research with scholarly activity. Thus, combining both primary and secondary perception. For example, the Neolithic burial mounds would originally have been striking chalk white monuments, which I can imagine, having seen the now, grass covered tumuli.

Translating thought process through pigment establishes an ephemeral certainty for the painter,

which is also transient because the painting will only be glimpsed, like all things, thus becoming a secondary image for someone else. Although if I were to describe the content of the painting, the listener's imagination would draw on their experiential notion of what is being communicated and the landscape will become their conviction, therefore the choice of medium, scale, pigment, and title, establishes signs that will be read and interpreted by the viewer, as a result, creating "a new territory" (Turps Banana, Issue 24, p.46).

The ambiguity in my painting permits an indiscretion toward linear time, biodiversity, and mapped landscapes. Constructing a veil between the viewer and my intention, between one world and another, the lived experience and observed content as well as drawing on the canon where I can elicit historical narratives by switching between periods and genres which are set out in *Land Skip Land*, taking the reader on an art historical ramble through time, which I have exploited in my painting to signify immersion and detachment from nature through framing my paintings both in the manner of John Dunstall (fig.15) who observed and used landscape features as metaphor or Eric Ravilious (fig.44) who akin to Dunstall forged a narrative through landscape whilst at the same time applying techniques derived from *picturesque* theory, which today could be argued distance the viewer from the landscape and nature.

3. Relying on memory combined with framing my argument about memorial sites led to the investigation of tumuli or burial mounds, which are recurrent features found along the SDW. Mindful how the viewer enters the painting I was determined to combine multiple ethereal perspectives when painting these ancient monuments, exploring the notion of looking through the topsoil into burial chambers combined with patterns of sound such as owls calling one and other or the murmuration's of rooks as they settle for the night, as well as employing familiar landscape features such as trig points and paths.

4. It was whilst I was investigating the tumuli at Old Winchester Hill, that I began to draw down information from the DAI and could see gaps in landscape checkpoint locations on the Hampshire Downs, making two further paintings, *Beacon Hill* (fig.141), and *Cheesefoot Head* (fig.142), two chalk out-spurs after Old Winchester Hill, both with tumuli and car parks, prominent signifiers in my investigation.

5. Finally, most of my research had up until 2020 consisted of walking and responding to the chalk ridge, but I was mindful of the surrounding heathland and Weald, places I was unable to visit because of restrictions put in place because of the pandemic. Therefore, at the height of the

lockdown, I turned to Gilbert White's letters, which filled gaps in landscape knowledge, as well as offering insights to the representation of flora and fauna in historical paintings combined with robust descriptions of the once abundant wildlife in the SDNP.

Reading White's letters introduced me to a man, who, like William Cobbett traversed this landscape, giving accounts of places on the Downs including where I live, thus presenting a view of the South Downs through the eyes of an eighteenth-century scholar. As well as offering a key to comprehending the loss of biodiversity. White also offered insight to the contemporary disconnect with the visceral of day-to-day living, his letters are filled with morbidity, conversed in an unsentimental way, whilst acknowledging the fragility of existence.

White's letters and my imagination led to unnaturally vibrant paintings but the continuing conversation with Eamon Colman resulted in him telling me about Werner's Nomenclature of Colours first published in 1814 (fig.11), providing a taxonomic system to scientifically identify colours without ambiguity. Charles Darwin, who was influenced by White, used Werner's colour descriptions in his records during his voyage on HMS Beagle (Syme, 1821). The colour descriptions are all based on the natural world, for example "Egg of largest Bluebottle or Flesh Fly", combining the descriptions in White's letters with Werner's colours has completely altered the tone of the work, articulating a more authentic visual analysis of selected letters, executed in an abstracted contemporary format.



Figure 10. 2021. *Letter 17 – June 1768*, [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on, birch plywood 60cm x 35cm]

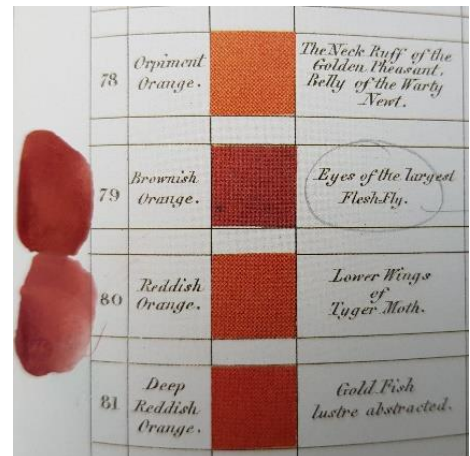


Figure 11. *Page from Werner's Nomenclature of Colours, including pigment testing.* [Digital Image]

Recurring throughout my practice are motifs, including the moon, sometimes combined with a chalk path, both phenomenon artists and wayfarers have employed throughout the centuries. Today the moon symbolises continuity and connection which is examined in Chapter 7 *Facing Both Ways*, in the section *Moonscapes and Chalk* which unites romantic artists who have used the moon to signify different phenomena. The chalk geology in moonlight offers a seductive sensation used by artists including Harold Mockford (fig.82) to articulate topographical landscape features, which he implements to lead the viewers eye through the landscape.

Deep mapping through painting the landscape at Old Winchester Hill, a hillfort with tumuli, that historically would have glowed chalk white, mirroring burial pits beneath, spheres in the landscape echoed by the moon, with chalk path-lines leading the eye through the landscape, not unlike a *picturesque* painting. This ancient landscape became a place where I investigated contemporary concerns, including class status through memorials and public access exacerbated by Covid-19.

The result of not being allowed to visit Old Winchester Hill can be observed in the paintings *Old Winchester Hill with Orange Moon* (fig.12) painted before lockdown and *Old Winchester Hill* (fig.13) painted during lockdown.

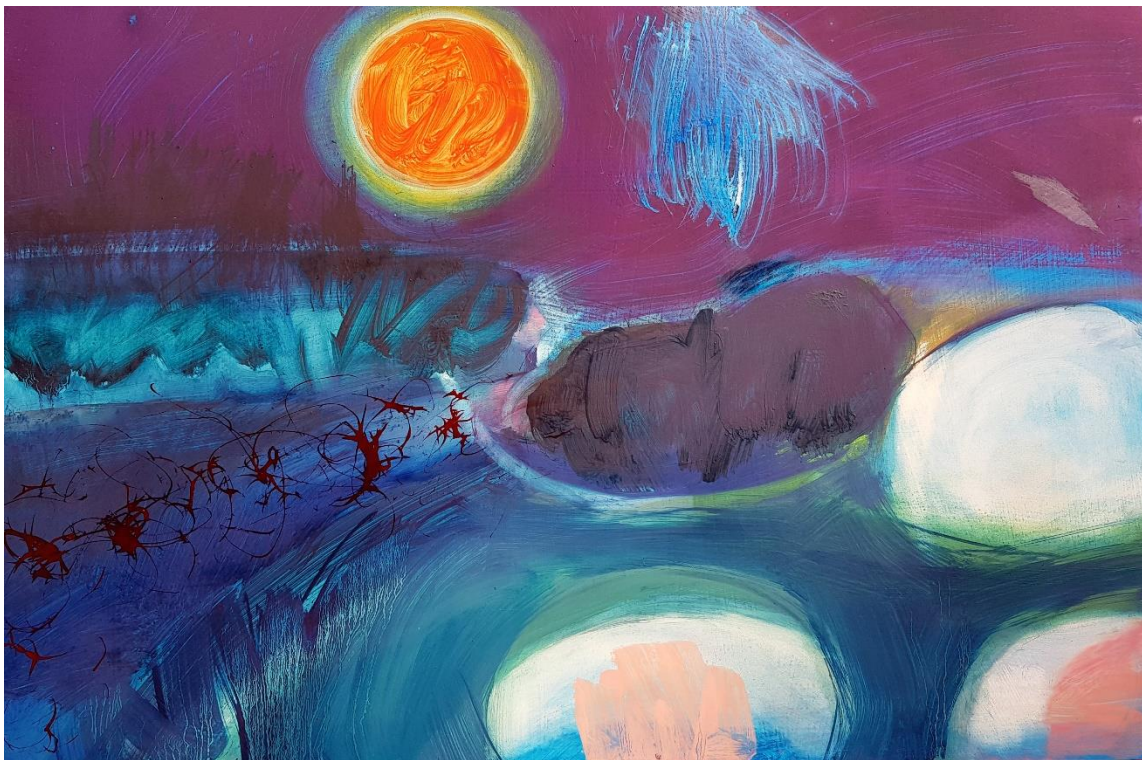


Figure 12. Rose, M. 2019. *Old Winchester Hill with Orange Moon*. [Oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 92 cm x 61 cm].



Figure 13. Rose, M. 2021. *Old Winchester Hill*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso, gold leaf on birch plywood 121cm x 125cm].

Old Winchester Hill with Orange Moon (fig.12), is painted as if rooted in the landscape, standing on one of the tumuli, looking toward the horizon whereas in *Old Winchester Hill* (fig.13) the viewer is hovering with a birds-eye perspective, both paintings exhibit the same detail, but where the first is set in the landscape the second appears to float and yet there is still a horizon line, the concept of shifting perspectives, might be read as offering alternative ways of accessing the landscape an argument pertinent today through campaign groups protesting a Right to Roam and rewilding.

Chapter 6

Land-Skip-Land



Figure 14. Map of the SDW with paintings from the DAI, placed to correspond to the Distance Checkpoints for walkers in the National Trail Guidebook. [Digital Image]

What matters in painting is *pushing* the mundane toward the instant of transcendence. (Elkins, p188)

Introduction

This chapter will answer Questions 1 & 5, by investigating to what extent the exploration of landscape through the narrative of archival research, presented via paintings has on contemporary concerns and behavioural patterns. By taking the reader on a walk, through time as well as space, along the South Downs Way, National Trail. Combined with exploring how different chapters of the

sociohistorical timeline impact on the development of landscape painting, and what that means today.

To frame these questions, I turned to the *National Trail Guidebook* which suggests checkpoints from where walkers can calculate walking distances. A selection of these checkpoints, situated chronologically from Eastbourne is used to identify corresponding paintings in the DAI, which as a result has sanctioned visual analysis combined with focused research, involving field and studio painting, contributing to a deeper understanding of the South Downs landscape.

Using methodologies set out in Chapter 2, this chapter will explore what connections there might be between contemporary walking practice and painting in response to the ancient pathways on the South Downs. Furthermore, this approach will offer the opportunity to consider my practice as a landscape painter in relation to historical predecessors, and contemporary peers. The chapter will also offer an insight into changing land-use as revealed through the paintings from restoration England, via the enclosures, to urbanisation, including industry and the effects of the climate emergency and the argument for rewilding.

For many theorists including Tilley (1994), Ingold (2010), and Biggs (2007), phenomenological perspectives of paths and landscape are synonymous with the identity of people and place and can only be appreciated by movement. Janni argues that paths through the landscape become pivotal in the construction of place and identity and argues that paths can be conceived of as a list of places structured in a particular order (Witcher, 2009). The list in this chapter follows the *distance checkpoints*, in the *South Downs Way, Official National Trail Guide* (Millmore, p.11) against which, paintings from the DAI have been assigned.

The list follows the path from East to West and has been validated by walking, painting, and cross-referencing the DAI. The analysis through painting has permitted a deeper understanding of this specific landscape, since painting can reconcile the experience with literature, folklore, custom and the esoteric, presenting more than a photograph (Elkins, p.xv) conceivably a palimpsest of data, or *deep map*, permitting the integration of arcane specifics that when coalesced, facilitate an analysis of the landscape, where patterns emerge of natural metaphors, indicating social uncertainty, changes in land-use, and perspectives influenced by technology.

The esoteric detail is significant, countenancing the ever-shifting layers of data (Biggs, 2007), decoded by means of historical signifiers embedded in the psyche (Damisch, 2005, p.264), explored by re-examining the transcendental, weird and eerie set out by Elkins (2019) and Fisher

(2016) combined with arguments presented by Bender (1993) and Ingold (2010) regarding the shaping of a landscape, which can be described as:

never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group or nation state (Bender, 1993. p.3).

The shaping of the landscape can be traced by walking on the actual path as well as through an historical art ramble by way of the paintings in the DAI. But, before commencing the hundred-mile walk let us begin with the earliest painting in the DAI, *A pollard oak near Westhampnett Place, Chichester c1660* by John Dunstall (fig.15). The season is early spring, the path or track appears extremely wide with dried mud, including deep-rutted furrows where the wheels of carriages and carts have navigated their way through, but there is more to this painting, the subject matter and the date correspond directly to the restoration of the monarchy after the Civil War in 1651.

Charles II hid in an Oak tree in Boscobel Wood in Shropshire before being pursued South to Shoreham in Sussex passing through Chichester (Gordon, 2020), Dunstall's painting symbolises life and death, past and present. The abundant ivy signifying binding, everlasting fertility (Symbol Sage) demonstrating Dunstall as a Royalist. The magnificent Oak fills the painting, its significance is the security an oak represents, in this instance by safely harbouring Charles II, prior to his reinstatement, a magisterial tree, diminishing the pedestrians, signifying symbolically the monarchy's all-encompassing importance as nation provider.

By including the word pollard in the title, Dunstall demonstrates a tradition dating back to the Neolithic (Watkins, 2003, p.2) where pollarding was used to provide fodder for livestock as well as firewood. To celebrate the restoration of the monarchy on 29th May 1660, Charles II birthday, a public holiday was declared, *oak apple day*, members of parliament and the general population, wore sprigs of oak (Gordon, 2020)



Figure 15. Dunstall, J. c1660. *A pollard oak near West Hampnett Place* [Watercolour on vellum]. British Museum

Today the route Charles II took from Boscobel Wood in Shropshire to Shoreham is a 625-mile Long-Distance Walkers Association footpath (fig.17), which comes within five miles of the village of Cheriton (where I live) and where on 29th March 1644 the Battle of Cheriton was fought and won by the Parliamentarians, a pivotal battle shaping the future of parliamentary democracy. In the painting Battle of Cheriton, (fig.16) I have used in a similar vein to Dunstall, symbolism to represent activities. The painting is mapped out using the shape of the Battle of Cheriton walking trail, as seen on an Ordnance Survey map, and includes the River Itchen in pale blue flowing north/south through the village. After the battle, North End Lane ran with blood and was known for centuries as Blood Lane. The dead were buried in Cheriton Wood along with a mass grave in a round barrow off Lower Lamborough Lane (Culpin, p.35)



Figure 16. Rose, M. 2018.
Battle of Cheriton [Egg tempera, chalk
gesso on plywood, 100cm x 90cm].



Figure 17. Public Domain. 2008. *Monarch's Way*. [Digital
Image].

The dark blue on the painting represents both the sky and the water in the chalk substrata offering an arial and subterranean view. This perspective is an important consideration in my paintings and corresponds to how Doreen Massey and Barbara Bender describe landscape, as "Undisciplined" (Biggs, 2007) an ever-shifting palimpsest of time, space, nature, and culture, each of these complex adjectives demanding more attention to meaning.

Beginning & End

The symbolism associated with the pollarded oak would have been immediately comprehended up until the mid-nineteenth century. Today Oak-Apple Day is rarely remembered, apart from, the Chelsea Pensioners, who wear sprigs of oak to commemorate Charles II, their founder.



Figure 18. Lane, O. 2020. *Oak Apple Day/Founders Day 29th May* [Digital Image].

However symbolism associated with the oak, runs deeper than the restoration of the monarchy, wearing the oak signified the coming of spring, the triumph of good, feasting and celebration as well as punishment for anyone not participating (Project Britain) The inherent ability to decode signs is a long established concept, but current thought argues that through industrialisation aspects of semiology have elapsed or are dormant and that a re-evaluation is required; for example, Ingold argues that the relationship between walking, drawing, writing, and painting is the ability through meditation to recall imagery, aligning the supposition of depiction, in accordance with Elkins, that the finished *picture* reveals only a partial glimpse of what was there, whilst at the same time disclosing so much more:

To walk is to journey in the mind as much as on land: it is deeply a meditative practice (Ingold, 2010, p.18).

The reflective mental wandering associated with writing and painting is a thoughtfulness aimed at reawakening experiential imagery stored in the imagination, including terrain, weather, light, and temperature. Some are fleeting glimpses, others firmly lodged. Walking the SDW in 2019 permitted observations relating to these transitory thoughts as well as to a deep consideration of the landscape, embracing economic, political, and social aspects, including the detritus of modern-day living, echoes of a military past, leisure-pursuits, memorials, and contemporary technology, (in the form of phone-masts and wind farms), each and all defining how this landscape has been shaped as well as how it is currently being used (Bender, 1993, p.246).

Landscapes contain the traces of past activities, and people select the stories they tell, the memories and histories they evoke, and the interpretive narratives they weave to further their activities in the present- future (Bender & Winer 2001).

The topographical phenomena of the landscape, running along the South Downs Way, can be considered by employing paintings from the DAI. Starting and finishing with the city of Winchester and the town of Eastbourne, both places bookending the SDW national trail ²⁷. These two nineteenth century paintings of Winchester (fig.19) and Eastbourne (fig.20) draw on a pastoral, arcadian interpretation of the landscape, a romanticised notion of the countryside, fulfilling formulas established in the late seventeenth century by Dutch and Flemish artists, (Owens, 2020, p.98) endorsing a method, that was formally shaped, by William Gilpin, demonstrating the three-element principal of the picturesque, *foreground, intermediate and distant view*. (Owens, 2020, p153)

The first painting, *Winchester from the South* was painted by Tobias Young in 1803 and depicts a view of Winchester from the Compton end of what is now St Cross Road. The ancient track in the foreground of the painting, evident by its chalky deep-cut sides, was created by constant footfall

²⁷ It is notable that Winchester has never had a designated art gallery although it has had an art school since 1870 (Winchester School of Art). The art collection associated with Winchester is held as part of Hampshire Cultural Trusts estate. Eastbourne does have a designated gallery, Towner Gallery, established in 1923 as a result of a bequest by Alderman John Chisholm Towner (Towner). Through expert procuring by curators including William Gear RA (Brown, p.114), Towner now has 500 works of modern British Art including the largest collection by Eric Ravilious. As previously mentioned, there are notable gaps in landscape painting resulting in fewer representations of the South Downs in Hampshire.

and carriage wheel (Rackham, p.122), Winchester was not only the ancient capital of Wessex, but an important trading post between the port of Southampton and London, the track, now St Cross Road, runs parallel to the M3, combining both commuter and leisure activities not unlike Young's nineteenth century painting.



Figure 19. Young, T. 1803. *Winchester*. [Painting]. Hampshire Cultural Trust



Figure 20. Paris, L. 1852. *The old town of Eastbourne*. [Watercolour]. Towner Gallery

The South Downs landscape was not ideal for the *picturesque* formula. The gentle rolling hills did not offer the aesthetic drama or balance William Gilpin recommended in his instructional essays created between 1768 and 1776. The essays offered not only guides to landscape drawing, but how to look at the landscape (Owens, 2020, p.152) Gilpin's essays were eventually made into instructional books reinforcing principles inspired by Claude Lorrain who a hundred years earlier had captured the imagination and fascination of affluent British tourists who bought his paintings when on their *grand tours*.

Lorrain's evocative Italian landscapes followed Northern European principles, his paintings were not only rich in content but formulaic making them hugely influential (Owens, 2020, p.110). By contrast Gilpin found the English landscape, as previously mentioned, unruly, often despairing of nature and "her" randomness, but this was a period in which classification was paramount to enlightenment, which established a mindset, that as a result, has forged a legacy for designing and maintaining order in the landscape (Owens, 2020, p.153).

In c1750 the Chichester based artist George Smith, painted Cocking Millpond (fig.22) following the same *picturesque* formula, a style, he and his brothers, became renowned for (Pallant House) In his painting, Smith demonstrates how artists remodelled the landscape to suite the taste for

Italianesque landscape painting, by transforming what is a relatively benign landscape into one with drama, including cliffs and trees that form a frame, with water leading the eye through the landscape into the distance. In reality, Cocking, which is situated on the South Downs Way, between Bignor and the Devil's Jumps is a typical Sussex village, observed in the 1907 photograph/postcard (fig.22).



Figure 21. Smith, G. c1750. *Cocking Millpond*. [Painting]. Pallant House Gallery



Figure 22. 1907. *Cocking Millpond*. [Postcard].

Smith's stylistically constructed landscape is orientated towards the pastoral in keeping with his influences - Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin. The concept of a contrived view, corresponds directly to the politics of the day and the enclosure of land. Prior to 1750, yeoman or tenanted farmers cultivated strips of land, a practice dating back to the twelfth century, but from the 1750's, enclosure by Parliamentary Act became statutory (UK Parliament) landowners maximised their land-owning rights by enclosing what they considered to be their land as a way of increasing rents to maximise profit:

From the 1750's enclosure by Parliamentary Act became the norm. Overall, between 1604 and 1914 over 5,200 enclosure Bills were enacted by Parliament which related to just over a fifth of the total area of England, amounting to some 6.8 million acres (UK Parliament. 2021)

It was during the eighteenth century that vast wealth was brought into the country from companies such as, the East India Company, enabling landowners not only build estates but to force those who had lived on the land for generations off and into the new industrialised cities. The devastation and turmoil was unprecedented:

The new money that had flooded England, brought in on the back of African and Indian labour, was the same money that partitioned English commoners from their livelihood and land...Slavery was an extreme version of a time-honoured hierarchy in England: its impetus was profit, its disguise was race, but its mechanism was class (Hayes, 2020, p.149).

The paintings made by both Young and Smith were aimed at a wealthy market, following *picturesque* principles. What began as an elite visual language, became prosaic as a middle class emerged through industrialisation. Young's painting of Winchester is stylistically very similar to Smith's, with activity in the foreground including a mature tree with its roots forging down into the left corner, whilst the canopy rises high out of the picture plane. The intermediate view in Young's painting is of Winchester Castle on the left and St Catherine's Hill on the right, before the eye is led into the distance via the white limestone of Winchester Cathedral.



Comparison between Figures 19 & 21

Young lived in Southampton (Bryan, p.737) therefore this view may well have been familiar to him when he visited Winchester. Although painted 217 years ago the landscape is still recognisable

not only because of the buildings, but by its familiar shape, observed in (fig.23) taken from the Hockley viaduct, built in 1891, strengthening the argument that the viewpoint was from an elevated position situated along the ancient St Cross Road.



Figure 19. Young, T. 1803. *Winchester from the South*. [Painting]. Hampshire Cultural Trust

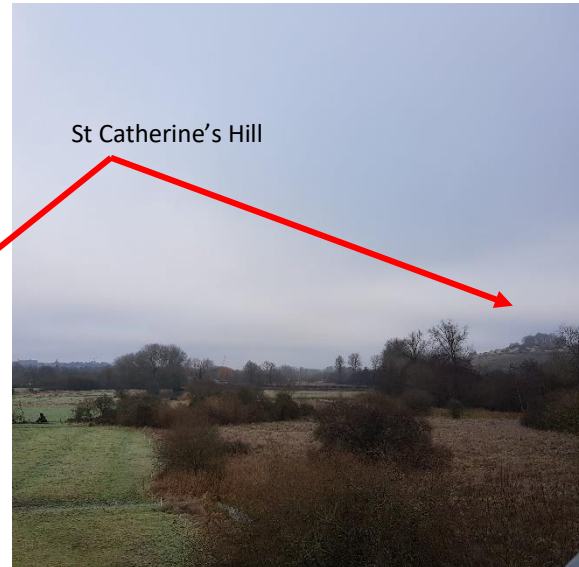


Figure 23. Rose, M. 2021. *View from Hockley Railway Viaduct*. [Digital Image]

The land surrounding Winchester is still mostly agricultural, the mixed-mosaic farming which is evident in Young's painting has been replaced by intensive arable farming. Vast sweeping open fields with managed copse and sections of maize providing cover for game birds. One such farm on the outskirts of Winchester at Cheesefoot Head, has the added advantage of a natural amphitheatre where farming is integrated with country sports and entertainment.



Figures. 24 & 25. Chapman, S. 2020. *Shooting party near Cheesefoot Head*. [Digital Image]

Winchester and the locale are mapped in me, having grown up in this area, attending Winchester School of Art and now living eight miles east of the city it is easy to orientate myself within a landscape of historical paintings, but harder in real life, either because of busy roads or being forced to trespass, but knowing that the ancient paths were used by Romans, Vikings and Civil War soldiers, pilgrims, drovers, charcoal burners as well as characters including William Cobbett, Gilbert White, Jane Austen and John Keats, all of whom have shaped this landscape, through movement, writing, and art, forming a complex subconscious or possibly a profoundly mapped narrative.

This is compared to my unfamiliarity toward Eastbourne, heightened by the novelty of walking along a cliff before heading inland. It was not until I reached Butser Hill on the border of Hampshire that a feeling of comfort and local inquisitiveness became apparent. Did I become less vigilant, did I stop looking,

was I relying more on my local knowledge? there was certainly a shift, now evident through my writing and artwork. How strange to have a deep connection with the land and yet to be totally unaware, I knew I could not have walked the route the other way, always knowing I wanted to walk the 100 miles back home.

Familiarity and place can be found in the watercolour paintings by Louisa Paris, selected from the DAI to represent Eastbourne (fig.20). Paris akin to nearly all Victorian women artists was considered an amateur, "In mid Victorian England, amateur, when used in conjunction with female, was a derogatory concept" (Borzello, 1995, p.23). However, Paris's paintings confirm the relaxed ambiance of this seaside destination, made popular during the Regency period when three of King George III's children visited, after which the location was extolled as "The Empress of Watering Places" offering medicinal advantages and healing properties (Surtees, 2002, p.57) Paris's painting is situated as if looking down from a cliff, a slippage of chalk or possibly quarrying can be seen by a semicircle of chalk ellipsing the bottom right corner of the painting, with treetops rising through. In the middle distance, drawing the eye through the painting, is a church tower, signifying the town of Eastbourne. To the north, east and west are windmills, with sheep in the foreground, a rural combination summing up the ancient industries that defined this landscape.

Surrounding the windmills is a patchwork of small arable fields, no doubt supplying the mills. Left of centre is a portable stool, parasol, and bag, each has its own shadow, indicating a warm day in the height of summer apparent by the tree's abundant foliage. Paris writes in her notes that she was accompanied by two others, F & E. The empty stool, and parasol indicate a presence yet oddly there are four potential people in this painting, the artist, whose stool is abandoned, the two others and the viewer, we are together looking out towards Eastbourne whilst all around us, life is carrying on.

The ethereal human presence in Paris's painting acts as a conduit towards the harmony of the *Picturesque* (Andrews, 1999, p.143). Unlike the rugged industrial landscapes of the North; the South Downs chalk geology offered a predominantly rolling-green, sheep-grazed view. The most prevalent industry after Neolithic flint mining was chalk quarrying leaving white scars hewn into the landscape. With few roads prior to World War II and only a branch line to Eastbourne opening in 1849 the Sussex Downs were a world away from intense industrial landscapes and smog filled

cities. Paris's home was London, but she and her mother and other family members holidayed in and around the Southeast of England (Borzello, 1995 p.11). The conversational style Paris employs in her paintings acknowledges, at times, an incongruity or awkwardness between mankind and the landscape.

An example of this strangeness can be observed in the watercolour painting *Toward Beachy Head* (fig.26). Beachy Head is a short walk West along the beach from Eastbourne and it is here that Paris has painted a top hatted gentleman, sitting looking at a painting of what appears to be, a version of the third painting in John Martin's, Judgement series *The Great Day of His Wrath*, that at the time was touring the country. Described as a highly Romantic painting expressing "the sublime, apocalyptic force of nature and helplessness of man to combat God's will" (Tate) one wonders whether Paris saw the gentleman's incongruity, making a knowing acknowledgement toward her own subjugation. Her side-on representation of this man sitting in a deckchair, diminished by the cliffs and the approaching tide is contrasted to Casper David Friedrich's, *Wanderer above the Sea of Mist* (fig.27) where the figure of a smartly dressed gentleman is looking out across what we imagine to be a sublime landscape. "The arresting urbanity of the man's clothing and slim cane marks him off as something wholly alien to this environment" (Andrews, 1999, p.143).



Figure 26. Paris, L. *Toward Beachy Head* [Watercolour]. c1854. Towner Collection



Figure 27. Friedrich, Caspar David.
Wanderer above the Sea of Mist
[Painting]. 1818.
Kunsthalle Hamburg



Figure 28. Rose, M. 2019. *Man, in suite & brogues with umbrella on the SDW, between Ditchling Beacon & Devils Dyke.* [Digital Image]

The perception of man, as alien, who must conquer the *other* most notably *nature* (Andrews, 1999, p.145) is now a rhetorical argument, given that nature's "carelessness" (1999, p.145) toward man, depicted in mid eighteenth-century sublime paintings, is now countered by man's carelessness or disregard of nature, the result being, contemporary paintings, challenging what is happening because of this disregard, and the very real and terrifying *sublime* of the climate emergency. And yet, Paris's top-hatted gentleman looks weirdly vulnerable to the point of comic, contradicting Friedrich's Romantic figure, poised on a precipice, commanding an emotional and dramatic view,

not unlike an incongruous character I photographed on a remote part of the SDW, miles from a carpark, carrying an umbrella, and wearing brogues and a suit (fig.28) more consistent with Paris than David.

The vulnerability of Paris's gentleman appears now a contemporary reflection of what is a fast-eroding landscape. The use of clothing to depict class was a tool frequently employed in paintings, including, dress suits, top hats as well as uniforms signalling control and power. At the turn of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, when industrialisation tore through the landscape:

The sheer scale and momentum of house-building and industrialisation that in the late Georgian and Victorian eras had so rapidly and irreversibly changed the character of Britain had created an ever-widening gulf between city and country and upset the old balance between manufacturing, trade and agriculture. From an urban vantage point, the hardships of rural life were often overlooked and the country - in particular the non-industrialised south of England – began to be perceived as a site of unchanged national identity. People began to value the landscape, not only for pragmatic reasons but for emotional ones too (Owens, 2017, p.221).

The South Downs as a *site of unchanged identity* is a cultural trademark, still being exploited today, but in the nineteenth century, as life moved from agricultural to industrial, the combination of pragmatism with emotion led to the emergence of the first folk revival including the founding of organisations that aimed to gather and protect customs and traditions (The Folklore Society).

Accounts of customary wisdom became tangled with emerging science and industry, challenging long held religious beliefs, as a result unsettling established paradigms. The blending of myth and science can be observed in Gilbert White's letters, written a century earlier. White weaves local apocryphal stories with scientific observations. The result of traditional customs being contested, and class status challenged forced an emergence of narratives grappling with the psychological, combined with the supernatural, characterised as Gothic, a coalescing of Romanticism and fictional horror to frame or comprehend "moments of transition...or bring together radically different times" (Bowen, 2014).

For example, in the 1882 ghost story Pallinghurst Barrow, set on the Hampshire Downs at the site of a fictional long barrow, the protagonist Rudolph Reeve (fig.29), is drawn on Michaelmas Eve, to a long barrow and reciting words from a fairy-tale he had been reading opens the ancient tomb where he is met by Neolithic ghosts.



Figure 29. Illustration from the book Pallinghurst Barrow by Grant Allan 1892 artist unknown

Reeve manages to escape with the help of a sixteenth century ghostly gentleman and once back in the safety of the manor house his hostess's daughter recounts a rhyme taught to her by a Romany woman summing up his exact experience (Owens, 2020, p.222). This ghostly tale conjures up man's inadequacy against nature, the Neolithic ghosts were described as having "intangible hands" and "incorporeal fingers" (Owens, p.223) as if describing composted ivy or decaying woodland branches and the news that a Romany woman and child knew all along, undermines Reeves status in the landscape. He was inadequate, compared to the wisdom of woman.

This story demonstrates the weird, "a presence that does not belong" and the "eerie", the sensation of something either being present or absent (Fisher, 2016, p.61), both sensations relying on a familiar or known experience explored in Sigmund Freud's 1919 essay *The Uncanny*. The essay begins by situating the term within the realms of *aesthetics*, a combination of both visual and emotional (Freud, 1919, p.1):

the "uncanny" is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something known to us, once very familiar (1919, p.2).

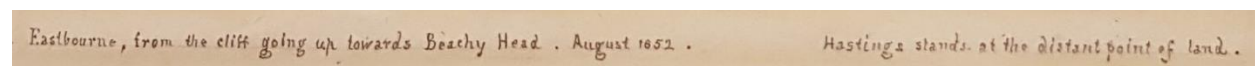
In this instance the combined comfort of a fairy-tale and the English landscape, both familiar narratives are considered "heimlich" or *homely*, the crux of Freud's analysis matched with "unheimlich" or *unhomely*, both adjectives connected to the description in the story that takes place on Michaelmas Eve. What happens next might be a dream or an extension of the fairy-tale, but there is an unsettling twist, in that the hostess's daughter recounts back to Reeve his experience

told to her by a Romany woman. The fact that these female characters knew what had happened, meant on some level they were concealing information which is both “unheimlich” (unhomely) and powerful, as a result undermining Reeve and unsettling the reader:

for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign but something familiar and old – established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression (1919, p.15).

Therefore, it is the disturbance of the familiar, in this instance the force of nature assimilated through the description of the ghosts combined with the hidden potency of woman; narratives which were (and still are) prevalent, “Ghosts, like gothics, disrupt our sense of what is present and what is past, what is ancient and what is modern” (Bowen, 2014), which could be argued are being expanded today with science forming potent arguments surrounding time and space, narratives assimilated in paintings, by combining the esoteric with traces left in the landscape forming mapped representations, including clues about the history of a place or the whereabouts of the artist as well as everyday methods in land management and local biodiversity, which the viewer will interpret based on their own knowledge.

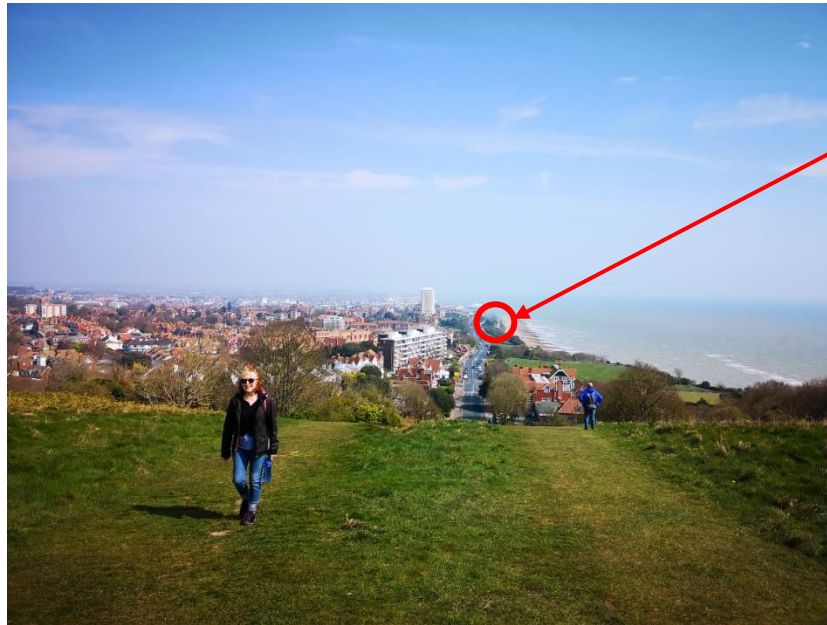
Weird presences can be seen in Paris’s paintings and those of her contemporary John Bennetts, of Martello Towers. Both artists climbed up the steep cliff toward Beachy Head from the town of Eastbourne, stopping before reaching the top to look back East, towards Hastings, which is on the far peninsular, and mentioned in Paris’s note (fig.30) accompanying her painting (fig. 32)



Eastbourne, from the cliff going up towards Beachy Head. August 1852. Hastings stands at the distant point of land.

Figure 30. Paris, L. 1852. Text on the painting, *The old town of Eastbourne*. [Watercolour]Towner Gallery

In both Paris and Bennett's paintings (figs.32 & 33) Martello gun towers are featured. The towers were a chain of defence evenly spaced around the headland, built between 1808 and 1812 against the threat of Napoleonic forces (Historic England) with one remaining in the town called *The Wish Tower* (fig.31).



Martello Tower
(The Wish Tower)

Figure 31. Tugwell, R. 2019.*Eastbourne*. [Digital Image].



Figure 32. Paris, L. 1852. *The old town of Eastbourne*. [Watercolour]. Towner Gallery



Figure 33. Bennett, J. 1850.*Eastbourne*. [Painting]. Towner

Both artists capture this line of defence which stops at the foot of the cliff before the start of the cliff-path, now the start/finish of the South Downs Way, which takes the walker up and away from the bustle of a busy town.

The incredible panoramic views of the ocean to the left, as we start West on the 100-mile journey home is mesmerising, making what might be considered an arduous walk across the Seven Sisters effortless.

Before setting off, on the journey home, a final painting from this period is a Regency portrayal of the Devil's Dyke a distance checkpoint between Clayton Mills and Southease. The conversational style of this painting is similar in manner to Paris's paintings, demonstrating a landscape in full convivial tilt (fig.34). The narrative speaks of gaiety, societal aspiration, and leisure pursuits (Tate), belying the Napoleonic wars, social unrest, and poverty. The scene illustrates social aristocracy, with a hint of industry in the distance, as a plume of smoke or steam rises into the clouds.



Figure 34. NA. ND." *Regency rank and fashion put Devil's Dyke on the tourist map*". [painting]. National Trust

Walking Home

Every journey is made through a succession of pictures.

(Horace Walpole in Owens, 2020, p.107)

Having set off from Eastbourne on the 15th April 2019, we walked up and over the Seven Sisters cliffs, the tops named Went Hill, Baily's Hill, Flat Brow, Flagstaff Brow, Brass Point, Rough Brow and the bottoms, Michel Dene, Flat Hill Bottom, Flagstaff Bottom, Gap Bottom, Rough Bottom, Limekiln Bottom and Short Bottom. Struck by the complete openness of the path, (fig.36) a swathe a springy tight grass, with scoured chalk scars where people have walked. Beyond is the sea and a misty horizon line.

The first distance checkpoint in the South Downs Way Official National Trail Guide is Birling Gap, where we stopped at the National Trust tearoom, once a former hotel.

Birling Gap is an odd hamlet, nestled at the foot of *Gap Bottom*, consisting today, of a row of nineteenth century coastguard cottages, National Trust visitors centre, shop, and café, behind which are randomly placed dwellings. This part of the Sussex coastline was bought by the Sussex Downsman in the 1920's (NT) during a time of intense house building, owing to entrepreneurs purchasing land prior to planning regulations. The land was often raffled, auctioned, or sold off as individual plots offering opportunities for many to leave the city as well as to find a home between and after the Great War's (Brandon, 2006, p.168) but this sudden surge in development was also met with local hostility:

As the Rottingdean folk singer and farm worker Jim Copper watched Peacehaven [a town along the coast] appear, he lamented, "Ouses,'ouses,'ouses...it makes me prostrate with dismal" (Hopper, 2017, p.46).

In response to this egalitarian approach to housebuilding, organisations including the Council for the Preservation (Protection) of Rural England emerged (Brandon, 2006, p.170) campaigning for stringent planning regulations aimed at prohibiting *urban sprawl*. In some respects, and unknown at the time, this fragile, fast eroding landscape would have had devastating consequences had people been permitted to develop the coastline. Today this landscape is managed by the National Trust who are working collaboratively to maintain not only habitat for species including fulmars and kittiwakes but the safety of tourists.



Figure 35. Knight, E.L. ND. *Birling Gap*. [Painting]. Towner Gallery

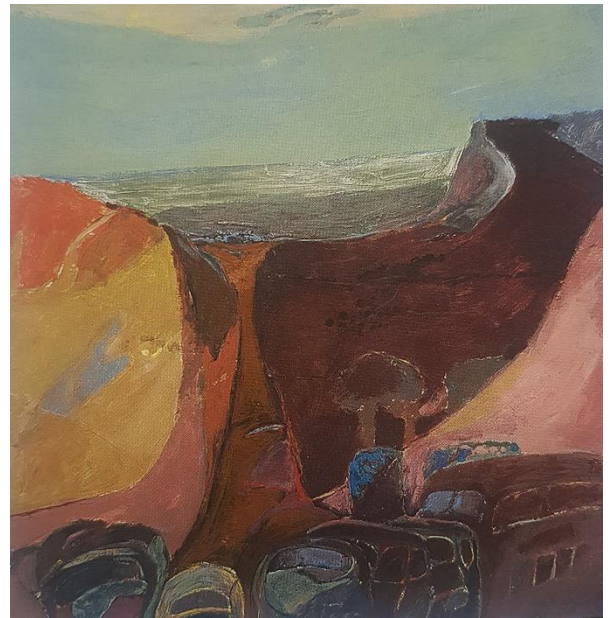


Figure 37. Mockford, H. 1969. *Cars at Birling Gap*. [Painting]. Towner Gallery



Figure 36. Rose, M. 2019. *Wide path leading to Birling Gap*. [Digital Image]

The rapid speed at which the coastline is eroding has enacted the *Shifting Shores Policy* (NT) accepting that in the future there will be no buildings at Birling Gap.

Edward Loxton Knight's serene painting of Birling Gap (fig.35) not only shows a path leading over the cliffs, but telegraph poles evenly spaced, as though following the same line. The telegraph

poles in Knight's painting echo the shape of the rolling Downs by creating punctuated uprights, signalling human presence and industry. Comparing Knight's painting to a photograph taken in 1934 (fig.38), where the telegraph poles are leading in from the opposite direction, the calm of Knight's paintings is contrasted by the volume of tourists, made possible by the motorcar.

Since the photograph was taken the cliff has eroded beyond the second cottage (Brandon, p.169) the paintings and photograph offering a glimpse not only of a bygone era but a vanished landmass (fig.36).

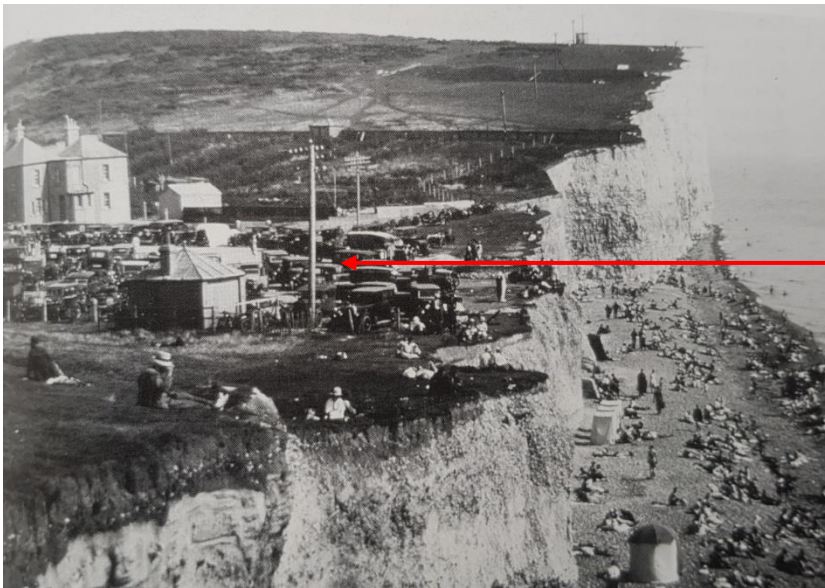


Figure 36. Rose, M. 2019. *Birling Gap*. [Digital Image]

Figure 38. *Birling Gap*. c1934 [photograph] from the book, *The South Downs* by Peter Brandon. [Digital Image]

Birling Gap is a place where artists have gathered, including Jean Cooke, who rented a coastguards cottage looking out to sea after the cottage she originally rented from the National Trust was demolished as a safety precaution against advancing coastal erosion (Vann, 2008). The pace at which the coast is being eroded is reflected in the whiteness of the cliffs. These iconic cliffs are now receding “10 times faster than they have over the past thousand years” (Carrington, 2016). A direct result of climate change, rising seas, fiercer waves combined with the mismanagement of coastlines and isostatic rebound (Carrington, 2016).



Figure 39. Cooke, J. ND. *Cave Painting I*. [Painting].

Cooke made an entire body of paintings about Birling Gap including a series of cave paintings which have a weird calmness. Weird because of the cave's presence, a portal to a view of the sea and the horizon and eerie because of a profound absence:

In *Cave Painting I* (fig.39), undated, the sense of being enclosed is quite overwhelming, and yet there is nothing oppressive about it: instead the sea, and the sexually compelling imagery of a dark, cool cave, give it a primal sort of freedom that attests not only to the removal of physical constraints, but to the solace that comes from a retreat deep into one's own psyche (Hallett, F. 2019).

The hypnotic calmness of Cooke's seascape is a beguiling, claustrophobic entrapment against the forces of nature, offering both a compelling and terrifying view, compared to Knight's more benign view with tonally muted colours, affording a gentle quietness. Both paintings embracing *the calm before the storm*, an antithesis to Harold Mockford's 1969 animated painting (fig.37) of the same location, where the viewer is sitting under the café porch with cars parked in front, in the distance the choppy sea is painted at a slight tilt causing the viewer to feel the swell as it crashes against the cliff edge.

Mockford has inverted the colours of this landscape creating an oppressive atmosphere, as if a storm is brewing, with a dark shadow at the seas edge, creating the feeling of a strong inward rolling swell, an appropriate metaphor, as today the carpark is behind the café and the National

Trust has had to remove part of their building as a safety precaution. The view Mockford painted has vanished into the sea, but the claustrophobic bustle, enforced by the cars, funnelling their way off the painting toward the viewer can still be felt,

Setting off from the bustle at Birling Gap, we head down the last sister towards Cuckmere Haven, a floodplain of meandering oxbow rivers, the path takes us north and downward towards the river valley, almost immediately we were out of the wind, not before intercepting a herd of Belted Galloway cattle, perfect for upland, windswept cliffs. This beautiful herd, still with their winter coats were inquisitive about our dog, but shy of us. Before we headed downwards, the view was spectacularly unusual, with a white cliff in the distance, the estuary with the setting sun, glowed amethyst and blue.

The point at which the cliffs open into the Cuckmere River estuary the SDW turns inland, towards Exceat, and the Seven Sisters Visitors Centre, the second distance checkpoint in the guide. In the painting *Exceat Farm and the Cuckmere Valley* (fig.40), Frank Short RA has painted the estuary from the perspective of looking inland, whilst standing on the mudflats when the tide is out (fig.41) this unfinished painting is looking north, the dark horizon line at the bottom of the Down, on the right, is the path we inadvertently took instead of taking the SDW, which is the chalk white path leading downward from the ridge in the painting.

We followed the path downwards until we came across a very busy signpost which we photographed (fig.42) because of the amount of information it had on it, as a result missing the path we should have taken. We were now, not on the SDW, but following the estuary round to the car park and the end of the first day's walk.



Figure 40. Short, F. ND. *Exeat Farm and the Cuckmere Valley*. [Painting]. Brighton and Hove



Figure 41. Rose, M. 2019. *Cuckmere Estuary Mudflats*. [Digital Image].



Figure 42. Rose, M. 2019. *Busy Signpost*. [Digital Image].

From *Exeat Farm*, the South Downs Way continues in Short's painting as a faint line leading vertically up to the brow of the hill. From the top of this hill is the spectacular view of Cuckmere Haven (figs. 43 & 44), affording the eighth most popular painting location in the DAI.



Figure 43. Rose, M. 2019. *View of Cuckmere from SDW*. [Digital Image].



Figure 44. Ravilious, E. 1939. *Cuckmere Haven*. [Painting]. Towner Collection

After the steep uphill climb from Exeat Farm there followed a descent through woodland into the village of West Dean. East and West Sussex both have a West Dean, dean deriving from the old English denu, meaning valley (Lambert). Walking back up onto the Downs it is possible to catch a glimpse of the Litlington White Horse. Litlington is the penultimate distance checkpoint, before reaching the town of Alfriston.

The white horse appears like a ghostly stencil on distant hills, a weird echo of the man-made set within what is free-roaming, sheep-grazed hills. Weird because of its presence ‘that which does not belong’ (Fisher, 2016, p.61) like the Wilmington Giant who features on the corresponding South Downs Way bridleway path.

The use of chalk motifs in Ravilious’ s paintings creates a sense of the uncanny, where the familiar is unsettled or disturbed, “the weird brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it, and which cannot be reconciled with the “homely” (even as it’s negation)” (Fisher, p.10). These ancient motifs are in essence a familiar part of a chalk landscape and yet like folklore are sustained by generations, each acting as custodians, altering the carvings through their care, as a result the original meaning is diminished, and the makers lost in time.

The act of carving through topsoil to reveal the chalk substrata as a *ground* is the reverse of how watercolour artists, including Eric Ravilious paint. For Ravilious, the white paper is the *ground*

which is either masked or left exposed as pigment is applied and the painting is built as observed in the painting of Cuckmere Haven (fig.44), here Ravilious has handled the paint, not unlike his white horse paintings, the dynamic oxbow shape dictating the composition, balanced by the patterns in the landscape and the corresponding tone of the foreground and sky.



Figure 45. Rose, M. 2019. *Litlington White Horse*. [Digital Image].

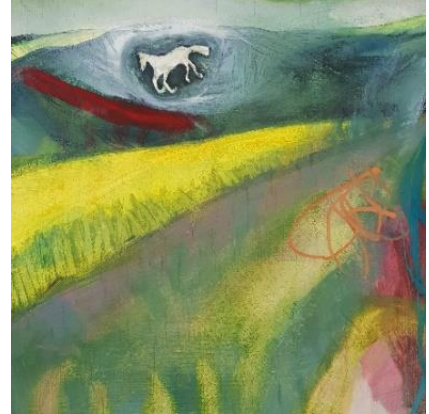


Figure 46. Rose, M. 2020. *Litlington White Horse*. [Egg tempera, oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood 32cm x 30cm].

Eric Ravilious' s 1939 Train Landscape depicting a white horse in Wiltshire created an immediate sense of familiarity through style and shape as well as a closeness to the chalk landscape. Both Ravilious and I stopping still, Ravilious in the train carriage and me on the path, but whereas Ravilious' s horse is also standing still, a moment in time on the eve of World War Two (Russell) mine is a ghostly transient horse (fig.46), an apparition in spacetime.

Water Meadows

The next checkpoint is Alfriston, captured in Harold Joseph Swanick's, Impressionist painting (fig.47). Swanick stands in the water meadows on a blustery spring day, painting a scene of the distant church situated at the end of the meandering river Cuckmere. The SDW path follows the bend of the river echoing the footsteps of a pilgrim trail established in the fourteenth century between Battle Abbey and the shrine of St Richard at Chichester Cathedral, (Chichester Cathedral, 2018) Alfriston offering a midway pilgrim hostel built in 1345. Another religious house constructed c1400 is the Alfriston Clergy House, the first building "saved for the nation" by the National Trust in 1896 (NT)



Figure 47. Swanick, H. J. c1896. *Alfriston*. [Painting].
Towner Gallery



Figure 48. Tugwell, R. 2019. *Alfriston*. [Digital Image].

Swanick and I both stopped at the same place to capture the same view (fig.48), although my stopping was fleeting, as I used my phone, not unlike an eighteenth-century Claude glass to frame the scene. At the time I was unaware of Swanick's painting, but both of us must have observed something pleasing about the way the river leads the eye through the landscape,

toward the church and beyond, to the chalk ridge on the South Downs.

Is it pleasing or is it a way of looking, now so embedded in the subconscious as a formula for aesthetic pleasure that there is seemingly no depth of consideration, unlike the deliberate photographing of Naples yellow reeds with their rich alizarin crimson water-soaked stems, running along this same stretch of river (fig.49)



Figures 49. Rose, M. 2019. *Alfriston*. [Digital Image].

The water meadows at Alfriston (fig.50) are a feature of the chalk landscape, along with the water meadows in and around Winchester. Winchester Cathedral was once “in danger of complete collapse” because of waterlogged foundations (Winchester Cathedral) had it not been for the deep-sea diver William Walker. The chalk acts as an aquifer allowing controlled flooding to occur through a series of sluice gates, known as “drowning.” This ancient farming method benefitted pasture for grazing, controlled flooding, and stopped stagnation by keeping the water moving; flowing “on at a trot and off at a gallop” and

are “among the most distinctive and pervasive features of the chalkland river valleys” (*Historic England, 2014, p.5*).

‘Yf there be any running water of lande floode that may be set or brought to ronne over the meadows... they will be moche the better and it shall kyll, drowned and dryve away the moldy-warpes and fyll up the lower places with landes and make the ground even and good to mowe. All maner of water be good so that they stande not styl upon the ground....’ (p.7. John Fitzherbert *The Boke of Surveying and Improvements, 1535*).



Figures 50. Rose, M. 2019. *Alfriston Water Meadows April*. [Digital Image].

Agriculture

The notion of saving and protecting the fast-diminishing rural way of life had an underlying nuance towards the end of the nineteenth century, mirrored by the establishing of organisations whose sole aim was to protect and rescue, is endorsed by artists including Swanick, who captured the transition in rural farming as it moved towards mechanisation.



Figure 51. Grace, A F. 1886. *Clayton Mills*. [Painting]. Brighton and Hove *white patches are tape covering damage.



Figure 52. Grace, A F. c1880. *Steyning*. [Painting]. Brighton and Hove *white patches are tape covering damage.

A contemporary of Swanick, although twenty years his senior is Alfred Fitzwalter Grace who also lived and worked in Sussex and painted two other *distance checkpoints*, *Clayton Mills* (fig.51) and *Steyning* (fig.52). In the painting *Clayton Mills*, Grace is signifying to the viewer a classic downland view of the chalk ridge and the Weald lowland as well as age-old farming methods specific to this region, sheep and grain.

This historic farming tradition follows the same sequence of events, where sheep graze and fertilise the poor upland soil where the mills are located to catch the wind, whilst the corn was grown in the lowland valleys where the soil was rich due to controlled flooding (Brandon, 2006, p.62) but in districts without floodplains an alternative to enriching the soil had long been established and can be seen in the painting *Clayton Mills*. Here the shepherd has his crook in one hand and is corralling or gesturing with his other, as another shepherd and their dog walk toward him.

This is an evening scene because what the shepherds are about to do is drive the flock down from the hill-pasture, (some sheep belonging to the lord of the manner others belonging to tenant farmers) and bring them together into fallow fields. The sheep are then tightly corralled using wattle fences, where overnight they trample and fertilise the ground creating a perfect tilth for sowing grain. In the morning, the shepherds would take the sheep back up onto the hills, moving the folds before a repeat the following evening (Brandon, 2006, p.62)

By contrast, Grace's late summer painting *Steyning* (fig.52) depicts farm labourers in the Adur river valley, bringing in the harvest. This busy scene with *Steyning* in the background, includes men, women, old and young, managing cartloads of hay whilst the weather is fine, but where to? The river Adur is deep (fig.53), once carrying large vessels into a Saxon port.

To better understand the painting, I made a reconnaissance visit to Steyning in 2021, where I could see that the market town is surrounded by water meadows with tributaries leading off the Adur into fields (fig.54), making crossing relatively easy, as well as making sense of Grace's painting.



Figure 53. Rose, M. 2021. *River Adur at Steyning*. [Digital Image].



Figure 54. Rose, M. 2021. *River Adur tributary at Steyning*. [Digital Image].

Grace's paintings offer vital indicators toward *place* and the management of the land. By revisiting the landscape around Steyning, I could make sense of the activity in the painting as well as observe farming methods. Reading paintings in this way, dissolves nostalgic ideals or prowess, by shifting the focus toward how the land was managed. As with all the paintings in the DAI, they have been systematically deconstructed enabling a critical evaluation which can be cross referenced against historical genres as well as the actual places:

Just as the shepherd of the classical pastoral tradition had offered a glimpse into a timeless world, so the image of the rural labourer became imbued with the ideals of the harmony of a pre-industrial Golden Age (Elson et al. 2017, p.17).

These agricultural paintings offered a genre that epitomised stability at a time when there was huge industrial upheaval as well as a challenge to the social order (Elson et al. 2017, p.19). Rural communities compared to new urban districts maintained hierarchical social orders with a lord of the manor and tenanted farmers and labourers, thus reinforcing the status of the landowner, making the subject popular and saleable.

Today historical agricultural paintings offer a key to philosophies surrounding rewilding. Analysis of the paintings opens conversations about plant life, farming methods, scale, and access. The decision at Knepp, a former arable and dairy farm belonging to the Knepp Estate, situated on the border of the SDNP, was not an aesthetic one, but driven by finances. Farming as it stands today is unsustainable, the scale at which farmers operate demands continual mechanical upgrading to increase yield, as a consequence pushing many out of business:

From just over 7,250 farms in Sussex in 1965 there were by late 1980's, fewer than 4,500 and these were mostly much larger and focused on arable (Tree, 2018, p.33).

These colossal arable farms with machinery to match have, through their intensive approach, combined with fertilisers, depleted not just the soil but entire ecosystems:

Since the 1930's, 97 per cent of the UK's wildflower meadows – 7.5 million acres – have been lost, mostly ploughed up for arable, fast growing agricultural grass and forestry (Tree, 2018, p.45)

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (Tree, 2018, p.7) with a seemingly awkward disconnect between the land and many communities bordering the National Park. The decision made at Knepp has created a nationwide conversation. This conversation could be further fuelled by deconstructing historical paintings and seeing them not as nostalgic triggers but as a set of clues to reshape the landscape, a conversation that has the potential to be rolled out publicly as many of these paintings are held in the public domain:

In general, the more species living in an ecosystem, the higher its productivity and resilience...The greater the biodiversity, the greater the mass of living things an ecosystem can sustain (Tree, 2018, p.5).

“The mass of living things” (Tree, 2018, p.5) is without doubt diminished beyond any modern-day recollection, but there is an opportunity to glimpse natural abundance, through historical paintings and text. Gilbert White, the prominent eighteenth-century English naturalist, who lived just inside the border of the SDNP at Selbourne, describes the noise of doves taking flight as “their rising all at once was like the sound of thunder heard remote” (White, p.112) or flocks of birds over a mile in length. Such abundance, including profusion, meant proximity with species, both human and more than human was unavoidable, including their death. Death featuring systematically in White’s letters, combined with tales of connectivity to the natural world. In his 1794 illustration (fig.55) animals and foliage are everywhere, White being such a man of precision, it is fascinating to look at this drawing as a true record of the time.²⁸

²⁸ Further analysis of White’s research will feature later in the thesis.



Figure 55. White, G. 1794. *C H White with Dr Woods Fifield Rectory Selbourne*. [Pen and ink wash].
Hampshire Cultural Trust

Industry

The commercially popular Victorian agricultural paintings were based on the seventeenth century Claude Lorrain formula, establishing an argument that there were no reputable British landscape painters prior to this time. A contentious debate remonstrated during the unrelenting misery of the first half of the twentieth century, when the mundane or *the everyday* became an important factor in landscape painting, whether through the fear of it being culturally lost (Harris, 2010, p.11) or the familial comfort it afforded.

To counter this argument, the art historian and curator W. G. Constable (Harris, 2010, p.128), in response to Roger Fry's 1934 *Reflections on British Painting* which challenged the merit of British painters in preference for Renaissance artists, stated in a catalogue accompanying the Royal Academy exhibition, *British Art c1000-1860*, that English painters had the capacity to respond to their surroundings, suggesting that:

Their art, he wrote, is an answer to 'the physical and emotional call of a particular place, person or social group' (Harris, 2010, p.129)

a view many other artists at the time, including John Piper and Paul Nash were articulating. Nash wrote emphatically that he was a modern master connected to his ancient ancestral past, which echoed through his paintings which are rooted in distinctive places or *genius loci* (Harris, 2010, p.129). This alternative association with landscape resulted in a shift in focus, where the landscape could be observed without any of the canonical filters. An example being an industrial landscape, captured in Duncan Grant's paintings *Lewes Landscape* and *Chalkpit Lewes* (fig.56 & 57) a move away from nineteenth century sublime industrial landscapes, offering an everyday view of the redundant Offham quarry on the outskirts of Lewes, closed in 1870 (SDNP, 2017). Lewes being the next *distance checkpoint* in the National Trail guidebook, after crossing the busy A27 before walking onto Ditchling Beacon.



Figure 56. Grant, D. 1933/4. *Lewes Landscape*. [Painting]. Leicester Museum & Art Gallery

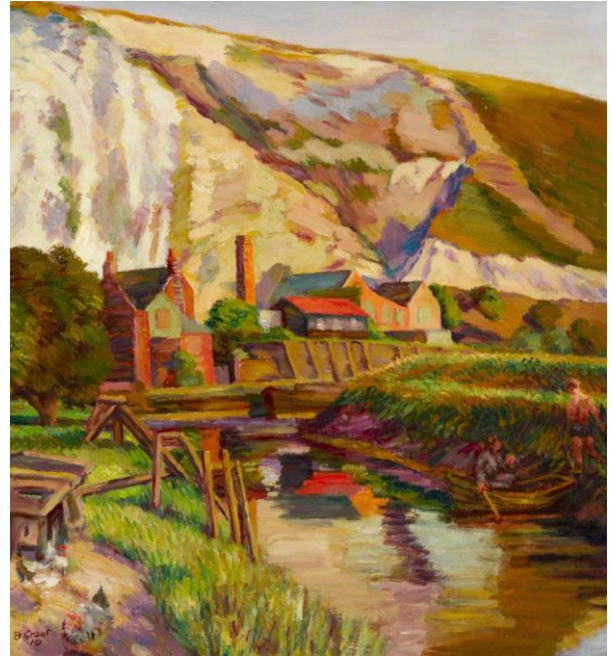


Figure 57. Grant, D. 1951. *Chalkpit Lewes*. [Painting]. Southwark Art Collection

Chalk quarrying was a major industry on the Downs employing thousands of men. The chalk was quarried from the slopes and then burnt in kilns to create lime which was used to manufacture cement or as a soil improver as well as to soften drinking water (SDNP, 2017). Chalk quarrying occurred across Sussex and Hampshire, observed today by the white scars cut into the green slopes of the Downs, appearing in 37 paintings in the DAI.

Grant's Post-Impressionist style echoes his European training and influential friendships including that with Roger Fry (Harris, 2010, p.110), using what might be considered bold colours compared to Swanick's pared back, limited palette. Both paintings have a carefully constructed composition, the buildings in the midground dissect the painting, with the sky and gate in the 1933-4 painting forming opposing diagonals, the gate in the 1933 painting emphasises a deadness, forbidden entry, shut-up and closed, even the colour palette is subdued with slubby greens and salmon pinks compared to the brightness of the same 1951 composition (fig.57), which includes two figures, one person in a rowing boat, the other a muscular young man wearing swimming-trunks, the diagonal of the gate has gone allowing immediate entry to you the viewer on the opposite side of the river, tantalisingly close. There is an exhilaration defined by the colours and movement of the water, spring is in the air.

Six miles from Offham along the South Downs Way is Amberley, where there is another quarry (fig.58) painted in 1945 by Donald Chisholm Towner; whose father John, established the Towner Art Gallery (RA, 2020). The quiet palette, reminiscent of the chalk topography belies the life of the landscape, determined by the hewn marks left in the chalk, smoke billowing out of the chimneys and looping tracks left by vehicles entering and leaving, the same oxbow shape is continued by the river Arun, leading the eye through the landscape to the distant chalk ridge.

Towner's landscape articulates a desolation with scarred and pocked surface marks, where absence proclaims the landscape as a metaphor. The perception of using the landscape in this way, although following a tradition, also addresses the power of the canon and how canonical rules filter into everyday doctrines, forming deep connections which when disturbed, raise questions about the way in which the landscape is used and viewed.



Figure 58. Towner, D. C. 1945. *Chalkpit Quarries Amberley*. [Painting]. Brighton & Hove

Nearly Home

As the walk moves through time in the DAI along the SDW, into the twenty-first century it is plain to see that social anxieties are played out through landscape painting (Elson, et al, 2017, p.17). For example, in response to the climate emergency artists including Julian Perry, Judith Tucker, Helen Thomas and Benjamin Deakin are painting edge-lands, unnoticed and undervalued plant life, or fantastical landscapes, a genre of painting where the sublime and the everyday come together in the form of a critical narrative, drawing attention to the climate emergency and the world around us.

These artists have been able to step outside of the conundrum around “The Nature of Nostalgia” (Elson, et al, 2017, p.101) by drawing our attention to the recognisably mundane, emphasising incongruities and slippages in the nature of nature, “when the rural is eulogized, the urban becomes lamented” (2017, p.101). An argument heightened by Covid-19, elevating social injustices concerning food and space, a subject that preoccupied nineteenth century painting through depictions of gleaning, harvest time, logging and the notion of the rural idyl, but the complexities surrounding twenty-first century communities whether urban or rural are multifaceted, and:

not merely a result of cerebral thought processes, but of a much richer, more complex and more multi-dimensional set of relationships, arising from dynamic, ongoing interactions rather than disembodied concepts passively absorbed from some alien site of cultural production. (Elson, et al, 2017, p.67)

These contentious lived experiences are being addressed by artists and therefore must at some point become embedded in a shared consciousness not unlike how the appreciation of a view became a standard, which is now being challenged through movements including rewilding:

we certainly treat art – and painting in particular – like a knowing and thinking agent capable of effecting change (Graw, 2018, p.58)

Painting is a medium to communicate complex intentions, as Graw argues, using the Michel Foucault term, “formation” (Graw, 2018, p.14) a theory significant to how the DAI can be read in response to structures observed within the canon of historical painting. Foucault’s theory is focused

on “care of the self” (Infinito, 2003, p.155) which is bound with the ethics of how others are treated which in turn is driven by politics in a reciprocal fashion and is why institutions/organisations/ must be held to account when it comes to contextualising historical artworks depicting narratives that are no longer ethically appropriate.

It is through painting which as Graw argues is subjective²⁹ combined with Foucault’s theoretical work concerning “human freedom” (Infinito, 2003, p.155) that allows “us to conceive of changes, openings, and boundary shifts, alongside aspects that persist over time” (Graw, 2018, p.14), that painting can identify transformations and trace societal amendments, paradigm shifts as well as everyday incremental modifications, that when brought together and filtered provide overviews concerning the human condition, biodiversity, technology etc. What is complex are the ethics associated within painting, and how what the artist is inferring through paint in one lifetime, is read by the viewer in another.

A historical painting will have nuances that the contemporary viewer may not be able to interpret, but the subject of the painting will have significance if taken at face value. Who is in the painting? What is happening in the painting? What does the landscape look like? etc. Therefore, deconstructing painting in this way informs contemporary structures based on current ethical thinking.

Accepting that structures are an inevitable aspect of existence, signal alienation and exclusion for many. Transcending societal structures through painting has the potential to challenge the validity of the status quo, by filtering data through the presentation of painting, a tangible medium that can inform conversation as well as track change.

Many of today’s structures/systems were established as the West became industrialised are now being challenged, embracing the validity of foundational belief structures/systems which is at the forefront of much of today’s science in relation to ancient knowledge. The historian and art critic, James Elkins in his book, *What Painting Is*, theorises Carl Jung’s philosophies concerning alchemy, a subject that shaped Jung’s hypotheses in relation to the *collective unconscious* (Jung, 1967, p.46) where Jung made global connections through symbols identified in different cultures, drawing together belief systems including Christianity, Tibetan Buddhism and Pueblo and Navaho ceremonies.

²⁹ In the footnotes Graw challenges Clement Greenberg’s “essential norms or conventions of painting” (2018, p.29)

Jung's theories are allied to Ingold's 2010 analysis between walking on the ground and walking in the imagination, in *Ways of mind-walking: reading, writing, painting*. In the journal article Ingold employs a Jungian approach by examining the commonalities *between* walking in the landscape and walking in the imagination. Ingold's analysis crosses continents, timeframes and cultures, incorporating nuances taken for granted in the form of thoughts/images demonstrating that for the most part we are never truly present, or as Elkins stipulates, "we are all blind to a degree – even when our eyesight is functioning perfectly" (Ingold, 2010, p.15) accounting for how when making a journey the brain can transcend to contemplate complex states, including other places as if opening fissures, or liminal spaces, between the acts of walking, reading or painting.

Jung, Ingold and Elkins have formed opinions surrounding how patterns and marks represent important ancestral information offering a link not only with the past but nurturing present generations through a sense of belonging and community, revealing information through encoded acts comparable to an ethnographic map:

Painting is to paint, to estimate the shapes of things and really obtain them, to estimate the beauty of things and reach it, to estimate the reality of things and grasp it. One should not take outward beauty for reality; he who does not understand this mystery, will not obtain the truth, even though his pictures may contain likeness (Ingold, 2010, p.23).

This quote by Ching Hao at the end of Ingold's article captures how physical materials can transcend thought, articulating the gap between figuration and abstraction, "'Likeness,' responded the old man, 'can be obtained by shapes without spirit, but when truth is revealed, spirit and substance are both fully expressed' (Sirén 2005, 234-5)" (Ingold, 2010, p.23). It could be argued that Ingold is the fulcrum between Jung and Elkins, offering both a material and spiritual interpretation of transcendence through alchemy, for Elkins alchemy is situated within the realms of earthly materials that transcend thought/spirit through the medium of paint, compared to Jung's theories which are rooted in consciousness.

The blending of materiality and consciousness is made prescient by the advancement of science and technology which today is making tangible what could only have been imagined, offering a reconsideration toward ancient theories concerning interconnectedness, patterns, and life cycles, which artists are now deconstructing and responding to.

In 2014 the artist Rosie McLachlan was artist in residence at CERN and interviewed particle physicists, concerning the deepest laws of nature:

Everything inside you is 13.78 billion years old, and it will always exist, until the end of the universe. It will just change its form. It will not be us anymore, it will be something else, some other object, living or dead...it could be a rock, the atmosphere, but it will always be here (McLachlan, 2020)

This profound concept feeds directly into *genius loci* in as much as mapped connections explored through landscape painting, are in some cases more than detached pictorial observations, but visceral reflections made through walking and being in a certain place. Peter Iden's painting *Path to Bignor* (fig.59), (Bignor being another of the *distance checkpoints*), focuses on Stane Street, a Roman road running from London to Chichester. *Stane* is the old Norse word for stone, afforded at the time, an alternative from the muddy track seen in John Dunstall's 1660 painting (fig.15). Parts of this 41-54AD road are still intact (fig.60) and make up a section of the SDW path leading us towards Hampshire.



Figure 59. Iden, P. c1960. *Path to Bignor*. [Painting].



Figure 60. Rose, M. 2019. *Stane Street SDW*. [Digital Image].

Walking this section of the South Downs Way was one of the wettest walks I did for this research (fig.62), but the comparison between walking on treacherous slippery chalk (fig.61) to walking

on stone (fig.60) was notable, with the width of Stane Street to accommodate carts and chariots.



Figure 61. Rose, M. 2019. *Bramber to Bignor, chalk & rain. SDW.* [Digital Image].



Figure 62. Tugwell, R. 2019. *Bramber to Bignor SDW chalk path.* [Digital Image].

Iden's semi-abstract painting (fig.59) captures both the straightness of the Roman road combined with the agricultural landscape it is set in. The distant dark blue/green ridge of either the North or South Downs can also be seen in Towner's painting (fig.58) as well as in digital images, is typical of this landscape, alongside patterns found in the ploughed fields, the line and shape of the hedgerows, paths, tracks, and traces. Bignor was Iden's *place* making a vast body of paintings about this landscape.

Experiential knowing through being, walking, drawing, and painting a landscape have been characterised by artists using expressions in paint as shorthand to signify the esoteric, including weather conditions, cloud formation, time of year or day, for centuries, whether in sketchbooks³⁰ or later in paintings. The emphasis on the ephemeral, now depicted through abstraction is defined as art "not attempting to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead applying shapes, colours, form and gestural marks to achieve its effect as a result of Modernism, a genre that at the turn of the twentieth century reflected new technology, materials, techniques and theories" (Tate)

³⁰ J.M.W. Turner and John Constable both used gestural mark-making in reference to land/sea/scape conditions which can be seen in the sketchbooks held in the Tate collection.

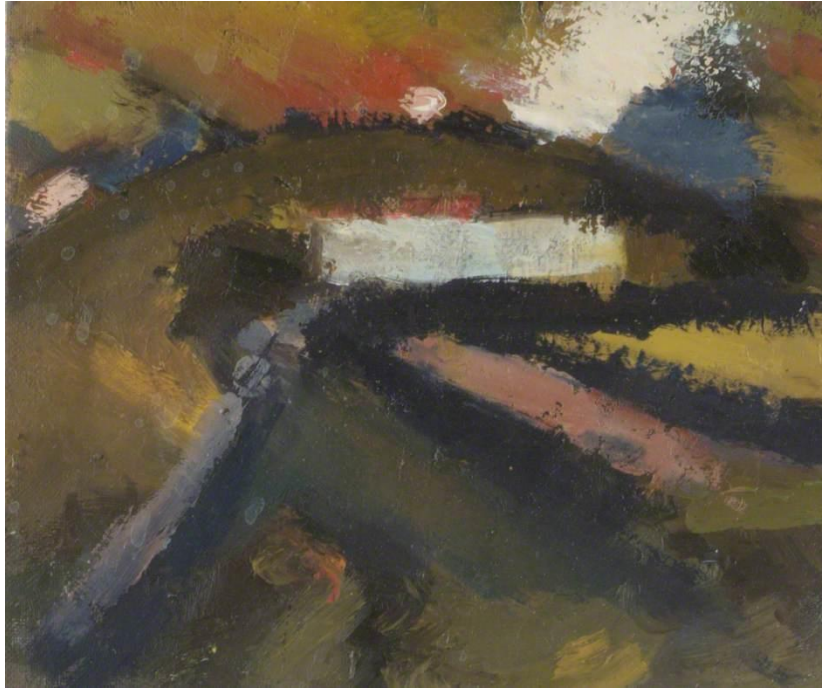


Figure 63. Gault, A. 1994. *Path on Butser, Afternoon, June 1994*. [Painting]. Hampshire Cultural Trust

The earliest abstract paintings in the DAI are Edward Burra's 1941 painting *Blue Baby, Blitz Over Britain* (fig.102), painted near Rye and Ivon Hitchens 1944 painting *Waterfall at Terwick Mill* (fig.103), these very different semi-abstract paintings still maintain the shape of the South Downs landscape, as do all the abstracted landscapes in the DAI, including Annabel Gault's *Path on Butser, Afternoon, June 1994* (fig.63) detailing the inescapable patterning and colour of the Downs:

First abstract painting was 'historicist' – suggesting an understanding of history and cultural development as linear process – and second it was essentialist – the belief that painting had an 'essence' which was somehow locatable and achievable. (Pooke, 2011, p.76)

The theory that a painting can be both historicist and essentialist is examined in Chapter 2, 2.3 *Painting as Practice Research* observed in Gault's painting (fig.63), by way of conventions of the *picturesque* observed by a horizon line, with the grey A3 road leading the eye through the painting allied with socio-geographical indicators, the chalk embankment where the A3 has been cut through the landscape and the underpass distinguished by a flesh coloured brushstroke indicating human and more than human passage into the underbelly of the landscape, either side are the

rolling Downs and rapeseed fields. Gault painted this landscape from the corresponding hill on the Sussex side of the A3, looking toward Hampshire.

Buster Hill when walking along the SDW, is accessed via an underpass taking the walker under the busy A3 arterial road between Portsmouth and London.

It is weird walking under the A3, into the belly of the underpass which acts like a liminal or processional space between the undulating, wooded, wildness of Sussex into a gentler more formal, semi-urban landscape of Hampshire.

Gault's painting is the last to correspond to the SDW *distance checkpoints* before reaching Winchester. Butser Hill is three miles on foot from Buriton where the SDW originally finished/started when it first opened in 1972, the width of the A3 representing the true distance separating Gault's painting and the SDW's original start/finish. Looking at the map created for this research (fig.14), Gault's painting acts as a symbolic sentinel to the county border, the A3 a line drawn, signalling not only the divide between counties, but a change in tone, both geographically and culturally.

The SDNPA permitted me access to their head office in Midhurst at the start of my research, to view a map which was first surveyed in 1873, re-levelled in 1925 and revised in 1932. The map depicts the original route the SDW was going to take. It is evident that the path started in Eastbourne (fig.64) and finished in Salisbury having joined the Clarendon Way at Winchester.

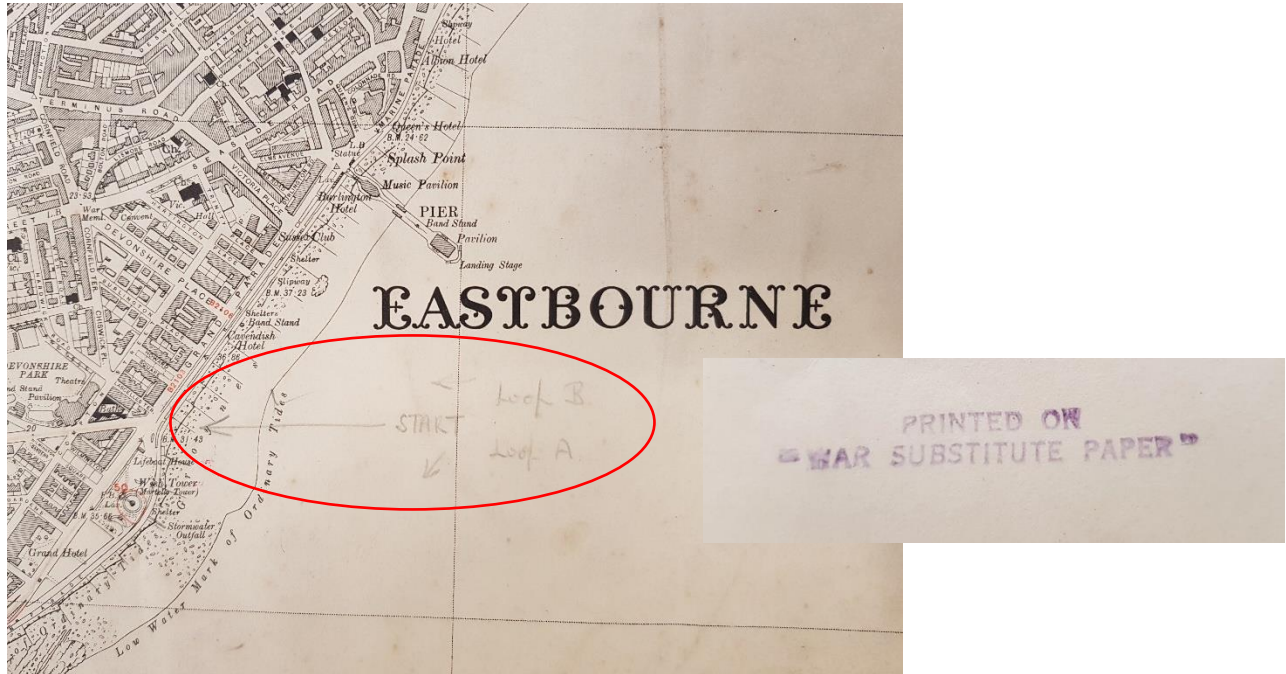


Figure 64. Director General of the Ordnance Survey. 1946. *National Parks in England and Wales*. Surrey: Crown.

The SDW was not approved until 1963, opening officially in 1972, at the time finishing at Buriton on the Hampshire/Sussex border (close to where the last painting in the DAI was made) the trail was later extended to Winchester in 1987 and the landscape the path traverses finally made a National Park in 2010.

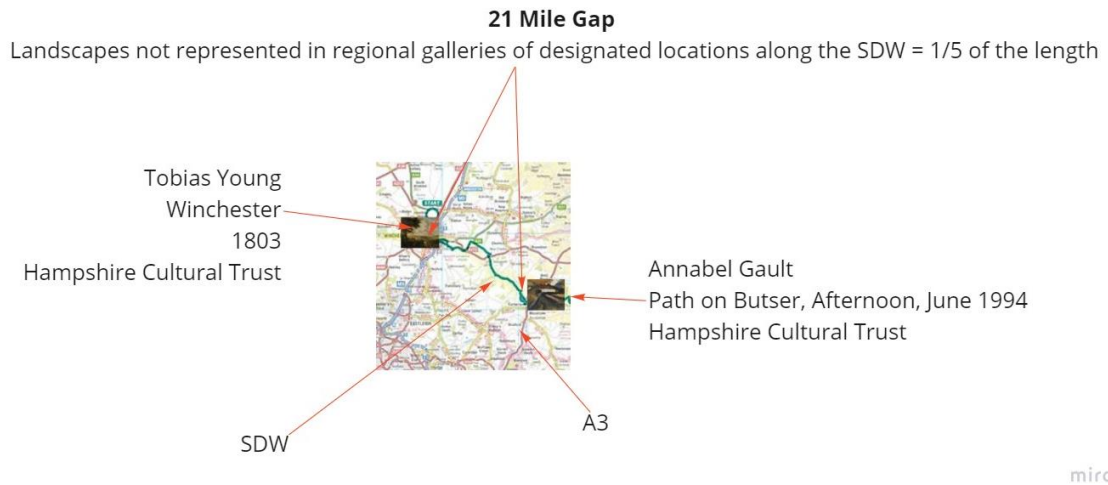


Figure 65. Rose, M. 2021. *Section of the SDW between Buriton and Winchester*. [Digital Image]

After Butser Hill there are six more *distance checkpoints* in the National Trail guidebook including Old Winchester Hill, Beacon Hill and Cheesefoot Head, prominent features in the South Downs landscape. Paintings significant to Hampshire, missing from regional collections, noticeable by their absence in the DAI (fig.65).

Gaps in the Hedge

The gap in paintings relating to prominent locations along the Hampshire section of the SDW is undeniable, identified through archival research, although it must be stated that this does not mean paintings do not exist of these places, or that there are no artists, merely the fact that there is no cohesive collection policy to frame this landscape.

At the beginning of this research and before walking the SDW, I walked without knowing the significance of the missing places to three of the locations from my front door, having read poetry and prose by Edward Thomas, who would walk from his home not far from me on the Hampshire, Sussex border to places as far as Wales, the home of his ancestors.

To Thomas, paths connected real places, but they also led outwards to metaphysics, backwards to history and inwards to the self (Macfarlane, 2012, p.26)

Thomas's walking and prose dealt with deep investigations into 'disconnection, discrepancy, and unsettledness' (Macfarlane, 2012, p.25) not the pastoral, but life issues, that when walking, for me, dissipate.

In response to walking to these locations I made a series of paintings, two of which are Beacon Hill (fig.66) and Old Winchester Hill (fig.67) a third St Catherine's Hill (fig.68) is beyond Cheesefoot Head closer to Winchester seen in Tobias Young's painting in (fig.19).



Figure 66. Rose, M. 2018.
Beacon Hill. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso, gold leaf & screen-print on plywood 121cm x 121cm].



Figure 67. Rose, M. 2018.
Old Winchester Hill. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso, silver leaf & screen-print on plywood 121cm x 121cm].



Figure 68. Rose, M. 2018.
St Catherine's Hill. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso, copper leaf & screen-print on plywood]. 121cm x 121cm].

I also painted Cheesefoot Head (fig.69) from a highpoint at Longwood. A painting capturing the Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn during the Winter Solstice in 2020



Figure 69. Rose, M. 2020. *The Great Conjunction Cheesefoot Head*. [Egg temper, chalk gesso, Khadi paper 41cm x 30cm].

Walking on the full moon is a ritual I have been doing since the start of my research and had anticipated continuing this monthly walk, as well as in-between times throughout the academic year, 2019/20 walking to and at Old Winchester Hill, as a method of deep mapping a less familiar location in preparation for a series

of paintings. Walking in all weathers and at all times of day and night, my car often the only one in the carpark, although occasionally I would see a photographer with his long lens capturing atmospheric moments, both of us annoyed with each other's presence, but the Covid-19 pandemic changed everything, lockdown meant I had to stay local so stopped traveling to Old Winchester Hill.

As restrictions eased and upon returning to Old Winchester Hill, I found I had to queue to get into the carpark, I did not know how I felt, part of me was cross that there were so many people visiting my place, but then I felt pleased that this landscape is offering consolation. In early summer 2020 I decided to abandon my fieldwork and paint the Bronze age burial site within the Hill Fort from memory, a place in my estimation more sacred than Winchester Cathedral. Using traditional ecclesiastical materials³¹. Equinox, (fig.70) captures the four barrows, with flesh tones indicating the interred bodies. Gold-leaf systematically shaped with a goose feather creates an irregular pattern over the top of the barrows, symbolic of the sounds of owls calling one and other. This is a night-time, winter painting,

³¹ The materials are important to my process, reflecting the geology of the landscape as well as demonstrating mediaeval practices most notably found in ecclesiastical locations. My paintings represent ancient sacred sites, still used today as places to memorialise the dead, given reverence through my choice of materials and processes forming the argument that this landscape is more precious than the cathedral.

the cold yew wood with dark red brambles, turquoise lichens, and shaggy green moss.



Figure 70. Rose, M. 2020. *Equinox (Old Winchester Hill)*.
[Egg tempera, chalk gesso, gold leaf on birch plywood 121cm x 125cm].

The DAI has also identified an intriguing gap in subject matter, paintings featuring the numerous burial mounds or barrows, ancient monuments that are spread along the course of the South Downs Way and throughout the National Park. Only one painting is featured in the DAI, used as an illustration on the information board at the Devil's Jumps (fig.71) creating a weird phenomenon where time collapses or at least becomes slippery. The painting has been photographed and is displayed at the entrance to this historic site.

Documenting the photograph of the painting on the information board for this research, my digital image illustrates both the painting, a reimagining of what the landscape looked like thousands of years ago and the landscape that I was standing in, a *landscape* that has hardly changed. In the catalogue *Matter/s of Chalk* (Lee et al., 2021) the artist Joanne Lee, writes of 'quarrying the library of philosophy and querying the feelings of place' could this painting of the Devil's Jumps be where

the DAI and the path meet, where narratives are played out, each individual involved in creating an outcome whether a burial mound, path or painting, chronicled in the DAI dancing through time whenever an indexical search takes place. Lee continues with a quote from Donna Haraway, Professor in the History of Consciousness:

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties (Lee, p. 14)

All this matter is woven into a mass of knowing and unknowing, connections and threads, coincidences and ghosts, patterns and repercussions, tracks, and traces connected in time and space; a hodological rootedness to place and people, flora and fauna.

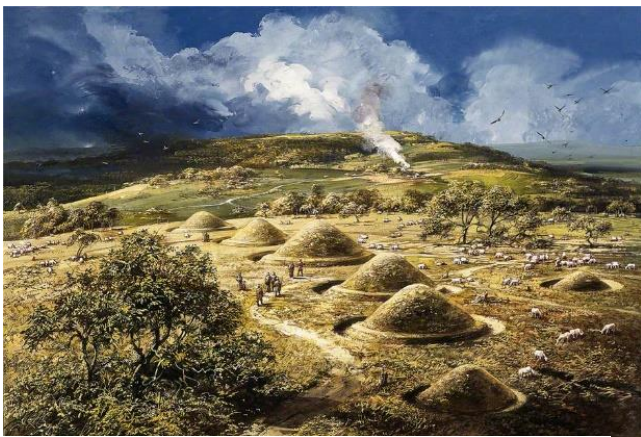


Figure 71. Codd, M. 1996. *Devils Jumps, Treyford*. [Painting]. The Grange

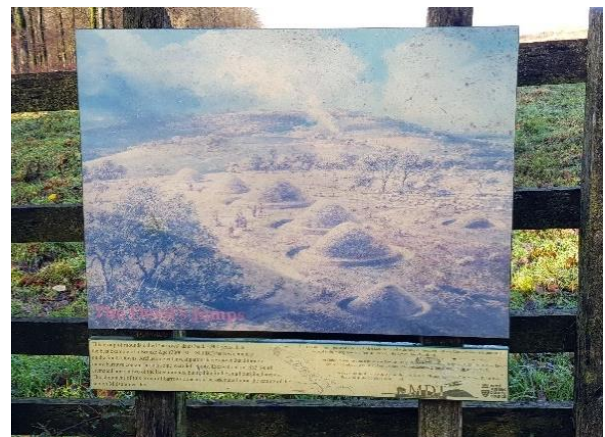


Figure 72. Rose, M. 2019. *Devils Jumps, Information Board*. [Digital Image].

This weird phenomenon also indicates the inadequacy of photography, a medium I have used throughout this project as a means of evidencing my walking as well as a documentary record for making paintings at the beginning of this research.

Photographing a landscape which I then compare against paintings in the DAI has proved to be uncanny, especially when I know I have been standing or sitting in exactly the same place as artists such as Eric Ravillious. My photographs or digital images appear to capture an exact moment in time, whereas the paintings offer an insight into more than the view, including current trends and thought processes.

What photographs seem particularly inadequate to document is the *complex experience*. They do convey rather precise information within their frame and moment in time, but until one has seen the motif itself, extended in depth and breadth, one will not feel its attraction, nor sense the effect of change of season or point of view, nor grasp how pressing is the translation of deep space on to the flat plane of the canvas (Andrews, 1999, p.199).

The concept of deep space, quoted in Andrews, 1999, can be explored further, through the painting, *Midsummer at the Devil's Jumps* (fig.73). Having read the description on the Devil's Jumps information board, alleging that the Bell Barrows become aligned by the sun during the midsummer equinox, a phenomenon that appeared unbelievable, demanded further investigation, culminating in a focused fieldtrip on the solstice (fig.74),

The sun a huge orange globe hung in the sky radiating a transcendental light aligning all five Bell Barrows. To the left of the sun was a crescent moon which reminded me of Turner's painting, The Lake Petworth: Sunset, a stag drinking (fig.84), until this day I thought Turner had made up the anomaly of a crescent moon and setting sun. In the distance was the sound of owls calling each other, we sat there, the warmth of the sun against our skin as we watched it sink below the horizon (extract from my diary entry, 20th June 2020)

So many layers of perceptive data, that only by being on location and experiencing the phenomenon of the sun setting, as if lowering itself slowly behind and in-line with these ancient monuments can an unravelling begin to happen, before threads can be reconnected.



Figure 73. Rose, M. 2020. *Midsummer at the Devils Jumps*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on birch plywood]. 121cm x 121cm

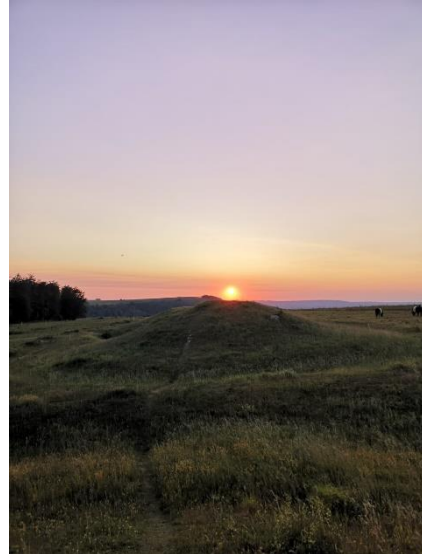


Figure 74. Rose, M. 2020. *Summer Equinox at the Devils Jumps*. [Digital Image].

End & Beginning

This journey through time in the DAI begins in 1660 and ends in 2021, but the paintings representing the SDW begin in 1803 and finish with my filling locational gaps along the SDW. This assimilation of three hundred and sixty years connected by walking and painting, is made tangible by traceable connections explicit through the integration of all five methodologies. The investigative properties in each of the approaches has created an inclusive picture of the SDW. Re-walking from memory, my way through the paintings set along the footpath forced an appraisal of the landscape the path is set in, as well as bringing into focus details only identifiable by walking.

Through the paintings in the DAI an argument emerged surrounding agency and the contemporary significance of genius loci in relation to Elkins appraisal of painting as an ancient alchemical tradition. Mark Fisher also takes on established principles surrounding the weird and eerie by re-examining the meaning from Sigmund Freud's *unheimlich* (Fisher, 2016, p.9) switching the theory from a subliminal phenomenon to a physical manifestation, consistent with Jung and Elkins division between materials and consciousness:

the eerie might seem closer to the *unheimlich*, than the weird, the eerie is also fundamentally to do with the outside, and here we can understand the outside in a straightforwardly empirical as well as a more abstract transcendental sense (Fisher, 2016, p.11).

Transcendental in relation to genius loci, regarding a deep connection to place, not disconnected by means of canonical fashion. Before the term *landscape* was identified c1620 (Owens, 2020, p.10) land was simply represented by the action in the picture of what was happening at a specific time of year (2020, p.39) In other words land was woven into the fabric of being, there was no nature or landscape, only survival and being, observed in (fig.75) a c1050 manuscript of men hunting wild boar in an oak woodland.



Figure 75. Unknown. C1050. *Anglo-Saxon calendar and computistical material*. [Manuscript]. British Museum

To explore this argument, I will veer off the South Downs Way, but stay within the South Downs National Park, to the village of Selbourne, where Gilbert White lived and wrote. His letters have given an insight into life in England before the term *landscape* became mainstream. I turned to White at the height of the Covid-19 lockdown, as his letters offered the opportunity to interpret local landscapes experienced whilst walking, through the eyes of an eighteenth-century scholar, revealing what it might have been like to live during a period in history when there was an abundance of wildlife, fleetingly glimpsed in eighteenth century paintings.

The abundance in biodiversity described by White and witnessed in early paintings in the DAI, includes a way of life aligned to the almanac, as a result the year was set out according to natural rhythms, a theme running through many of the landscape paintings in the DAI. As paintings have become more abstract, and the landscape more intensely farmed, built-up and motorised, artists appear to have maintained a recognisable progression in shape, colour, and subject matter, whilst at the same time relying on the viewers interpretation of the painting, based on an established canonical formula not unlike earlier allegorical readings. In other words, there is an inherent ability to read a landscape painting based on what we have been taught combined with what we know.

This shared experience can be profound, as complex ideas are situated in a way that interpretation becomes a personal journey for both artist and viewer, combining the everyday and esoteric as well as drawing attention to global and local events, which is what I was able to do when interpreting White's letters. For example, flooding is a huge *local* environmental problem on the lowlands of the

South Downs. The village of Lavant just outside of Chichester assumes its name from naturally occurring springs:

We have had a very wet autumn and winter, so as to raise the springs to a pitch beyond any thing since 1764; which was a remarkable year for floods and high waters. The land-springs which we call *lavants*, break out much on the downs of Sussex, Hampshire, and Wiltshire. The country people say when the *lavants* rise corn will always be dear; meaning that when the earth is so glutted with water as to send forth springs on the downs and uplands, that the corn-vales must be drowned; and so it has proved for these ten or eleven years past (White, p.165).

The painting *Lavants – February 1774* (fig.76) visually describes the water cycle, rising through the chalk aquifers, an annual occurrence in an around the month of February, before evaporating and falling again as rain.

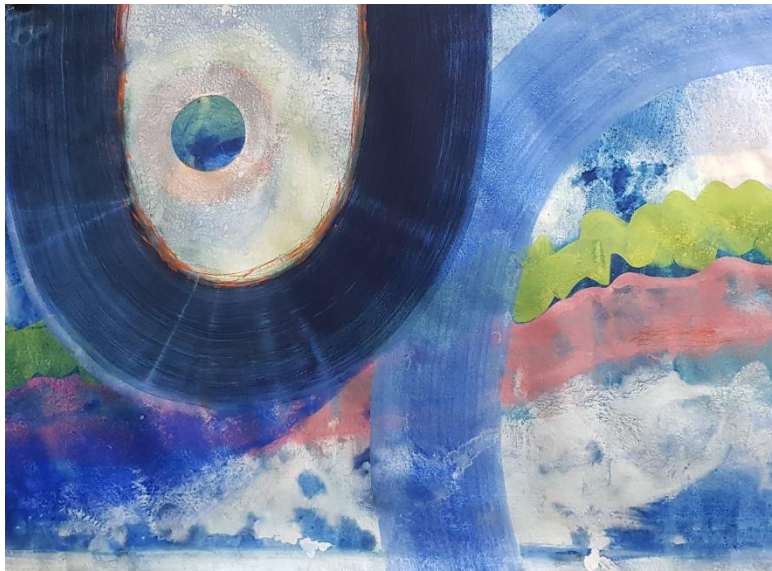


Figure 76. Rose, M. 2021. *Lavants, Letter 19 – February 1774*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on Khadi paper 100cm x 60cm].

Articulating complex subject matter through painting; for example the climate crisis, where artists are engaging within their own locales, opens the conversation by drawing attention to actual events in a non-hierarchical way, not unlike White and his letters or the artists who have painted views

from the SDW, each capturing a moment in time, as a consequence, offering a glimpse into the past which can be used to inform the future.

This chapter has explored the landscape of the South Downs through archival research by examining paintings in the DAI in response to a selection of checkpoints along the SDW National Trail. As a result, patterns emerged including the way in which contemporary landscape is viewed, based on the formula of the picturesque, situating landscape as an aesthetically organised template. This mindset is now being disrupted through traditional land management approaches in response to rewilding and the climate crisis. Paintings which were popular in the nineteenth century based on their nostalgic overtones are now useful examples demonstrating what the land looked like as well as the methods used to manage site-specific locations.

The controversy surrounding rewilding, ties in with arguments about the natural process of decay and dying, which will be examined in Chapter 8, *Death on the Downs*. Nevertheless, by leaving habitats to die and regenerate encourages species, and promotes a more biodiverse environment, which has positive ecological cumulative results. It was only by walking that I could cross reference the paintings with the landscape they are situated in, offering an opportunity to assess how the land was managed historically compared to today.

Fieldwork supported studio practice, facilitated the opportunity to respond to specific locations and themes as well as addressing gaps in knowledge, and of paintings not represented in regional collections of specific places on the Hampshire Downs. Each of the missing locations has Neolithic burial sites combined with carparks and information boards blending the contemporary everyday with historical monuments set in managed landscapes. As a result, I turned to deep mapping as a means to investigate these places, implementing a sequence of shifting perspectives through which the viewer can navigate the surface of the painting, amalgamating topographic data with symbolic gestural references, every detail significant to the place.

The non-representation of the Hampshire Downs in regional collections could be argued is a result of Winchester not having a gallery or collection policy³² (Rodda, 2021). Raising, the question as to whether an historical lineage of paintings of specific places promotes aspirational legacies based on vicarious ownership, as a result facilitating a local desire to *look after* the landscape as well as opening conversations about access and biodiversity.

³² Conversation with Kirsty Rodda, curator Hampshire Cultural Services

Chapter 7

Facing Both Ways



Figure 77. Rose, M. 2020. *Facing Both Ways*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso, metal leaf on birch plywood 35cm x 30cm].

Introduction

The present can only be understood if we continue to keep the past in view.
(Graw, 2018, p.17)

The Greek god Janus was able to look forward into the future and back to the past. The paintings I am making today reflect this ability by looking through the eyes of artists whose interpretation of the landscape set within the South Downs National Park informs what the landscape looked like as well as assenting the trajectory of movements which offer a glimpse of future artistic trends.

Janus could also control the opening of doorways and gates, a metaphor illustrating a moment in time when Covid-19 restricted access to this popular path by enforcing lockdown on March 23rd 2020, prompting unforeseen outcomes including local vigilantism³³, heightened intersectional inequalities, accelerating romantic notions of pre-modernity and concerns surrounding deep-rooted formulaic opinions of landscape, established in the eighteenth century, now manifest in a post-colonial landscape, privileging the few.

I can only imagine what it must have been like pre-Industrial Revolution based on ancient maps and artworks combined with the now eerie silence imposed at the start of lockdown, but I can look up at the moon and the stars and know they are the same everywhere since the beginning of time and I can follow the ancient paths in the footsteps of my ancestors and imagine a greener more connected future.

This chapter will explore how painting articulates the transcendental experience summarised through fieldwork gleaned whilst out on location in 2019 and reshaped in the studio. The hypothesis that painting activated by the artists memory (artists including myself), metamorphosed by the viewer, generates fissures in both time and place:

Like many others, I consider that relationships might be with places as much as with people. I would argue that visual investigations actually become a kind of interrogation of place: operating as a journey to the past through an embodied investigation in the now (Tucker, p.81).

Certainly, analytical explorations of place through traces of human activity, offer portals to the past, through both real and imagined scenarios. Physical marks such as paths, monuments and views are bodily incorporated into landscape paintings, a move away from “disembodied marks” (Elkins. p. XVII) found on computer/phone screens. The *slow* working in the studio relies solely on experiential memory combined with documentary evidence. To accompany this investigation there

³³ Villagers monitoring vehicles and walkers which is then registered on the village Facebook site.

will be a survey of some of the artists who have painted the South Downs which will be evaluated against current ecological trends and online advertising.

For example, by examining how pastoral paintings have perpetuated an arcadian myth used in contemporary advertising, whilst at the same time offering vital clues to historic land management in relation to the current movement towards rewilding. The chapter will also address how and why the Downs became accessible which ultimately delayed the landscape status, as a National Park by seventy years, whilst weaving in contemporary concerns including Brexit, the significance of the moon combined with a chalk landscape, access, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

To carry out this investigation, material was collected whilst walking, alongside archival research which has enabled me to situate my paintings. Drawing on artists who built their practice around the eighteenth-century theory of the picturesque, has proved thought-provoking, allowing me to formulate my own contemporary approach by expanding the principle by means of incorporating combined perspectives, including topographical, unified with traditional landscape views.

Covid-19 impacted my original plan, of re-walking the South Downs Way, taking with me images of paintings from the DAI back to their original viewpoints, from which I would make new work. Therefore, during lockdown, I used sections in the National Trail Guidebook as well as iconic landmarks, to determine which places to respond to in the form of painting.

A major creative influence is the artist Ivon Hitchens who lived in a secluded area of Sussex in the SDNP. Hitchens paintings characterise both *place* and landscape through painting, intriguingly intersecting the *picturesque* formula with abstraction by using gestural brush marks and tonal colours to exemplify light and dark which he developed through researching the Japanese theory of Notan (Khoroché,2009, p.21) as well as combining shape and line.

Hitchens' process of painting has directly affected how I decode the South Downs into paint, by keeping in mind the atmosphere of a locale as well as the time of day, weather, and terrain all of which coalesce to inform abstracted transcendental interpretations of the South Downs. My paintings are situated within a hybrid post-conceptual, new-romantic genre, reflecting on the spirit of a place or *genius loci* as well as incorporating recognisable landscape features and ecological nuances which are referenced by titles and materials, offering a narrative on contemporary concerns and behavioural patterns.

Arcadia on the Downs

In order to disrupt as well as to add ways of visualising the South Downs today, compared to how the landscape has been viewed and used historically, is to deconstruct the vast body of paintings held in regional collections. Through these paintings it is possible to chart cultural shifts as one generation flows into the other, offering balances and counterbalances from which each period draws from, or reacts to the other. For example, one way of imagining the South Downs is through certain iconic paintings depicting salient imagery, synonymous with this specific landscape, shaping not only the way the landscape has evolved³⁴ but creating an idealised view now sold through advertising³⁵.

For example, in John Linnell's 1854 painting *Storm Coming over the Sussex Downs* (fig.78) Linnell captures ominous dark clouds brewing on the horizon, beyond the Weald in late summer. The river has dried up and sheep are lazing under a thicket or scrub. This type of habitat, a river with soft banks allowing animals to drink, and scrubby bushes is now virtually unheard of on the South Downs as most of the rivers are canalised which combined with intensive farming has essentially altered the biodiversity and shape of the landscape³⁶.

The SDNPA in response to the *rewilding* movement, a revolutionary ecological philosophy started by Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree at their Knepp estate, on the border of the SDNP, is slowly gaining momentum, contesting the established formulaic view of the English landscape, which echoes back to arguments previously outlined in the chapter *Land-Skip-Land*. Rewilding at Knepp began in 2000 with the SDNPA now taking full advantage of the undeniable outcomes:

Restoring biodiversity in the South Downs will require a mixture of approaches including: more nature friendly farming; taking some land out of production; better woodland management; and making our river valleys more natural (Lee, 2020).

This description by the SDNPA about biodiversity is consistent with how the landscape is set out in Linnell's painting, in what might be described as untidy, inadvertently hinting at a richer more abundant ecosystem. Fundamentally this painting is about a shepherd guiding his flock back to safety from the incoming storm, its appeal functioning on many levels, from the popularity of the

³⁴ Hundreds of years of grazing animals has created the chalk grassland habitat.

³⁵ South Downs National Park Authority advertising

³⁶ Overview examined in the book *Wilding* by Isabella Tree

subject during the height of the Industrial Revolution (Art, UK) to religious overtones, but most of all it shows a classic view of the South Downs including rural life and associated romanticised comforts.



Figure 78. Linnell, J. 1854.
Storm Coming over the Sussex Downs.
[Oil on canvas]. At: Victoria Art Gallery
Bath. BATVG : P : 1954.26



Figure 79. Purkiss, A. K. *National Park Authority Learning Zone*. Digital Image.

It is undeniable that the Downs appear as an Arcadian landscape, depicted in historical paintings and literature as a fecund, bountiful place. The seduction of the Arcadian genre was first employed by sixteenth century Romantic artists including Nicolas Poussin (National Gallery 2016-20). Deconstructing Poussin's painting, *The Arcadian Shepherds*, the French philosopher Louis Marin, hypothesises that painting is self-referential (Graw, 2018, p.55) in this instance the painting being about mortality. The fact that paintings are decoded on a meta level is equivalent to advertising, for example, when an image is repeated there comes a point where the message becomes subliminal enabling a layering of other meanings, whilst the original concept remains intact. Over time reinforced imagery creates a belief system which demands to be challenged.

One such image is Frank Newbold's *interwar* travel poster³⁷(fig.80), which was used in 1942 "to arouse patriotic feelings for an idealised pastoral Britain" (IWM) the poster, retitled from 'The South Downs' to 'your Britain *Fight for it Now*' signifies a rural way of life unchanged for centuries, portraying a shepherd bringing home his flock, not unlike Linnell's painting, to the safety of the farmstead, and yet 1942 was the year the blitz ended, having decimated major cities across the

³⁷ "One four travel posters, unchanged to arouse patriotic feelings for an idealised pastoral Britain" (IWM) Newbold joined the war office in 1942 as an assistant designer.

UK, 43,500 civilians were killed (IWM) war propaganda was a way of manipulating the masses (Blitz Spirit, 2021)



Figure 80. Newbold, F. 1942. *Fight for it Now*. Poster. IWM

A 'landscape', cultivated or wild, is already artifice before it has become the subject of the work of art (Andrews, 1999. p.1).

The notion of a pastoral, arcadian landscape is a myth that continues to be espoused as a means of control and containment. A formula that originated in painting, now used as propaganda in agriculture and stewardship, maintaining a perpetuated hierarchy of tenure where the land is held in possession by a privileged few. Access to the terrain is borne out of negotiation, whilst maintenance is a cross societal "collective mania for tidiness" (Feral Practice, 2020) now being challenged by the rewilding movement, where landscapes are left to be reclaimed by nature, coupled with native species being reintroduced testing notions of disorder and belonging.

When Linnell made his painting, the Downs were relatively isolated, time had stood still for a little longer compared to other parts of nineteenth century industrialised Britain, making *picturesque* paintings like Linnell's popular (Wiggins, 2019). The style and subject Linnell employed had been evolving since the early seventeenth century, establishing what is now an accepted view of this landscape, a view that is frequently exploited for tourism in the twenty-first century. And yet on closer scrutiny, the contemporary digital image (fig.79) also includes scrub/thicket the same as

Linnell's painting, but in the digital image the scrub is used as a boundary/hedge marker, demonstrating land ownership, unlike in the painting where there is no significant boundary, countenancing the individual freedom to roam.

Farming methods began to change at the turn of the twentieth century, as mentioned in the previous chapter, along with an increase in motorcars and tourism, this was noted in 1918 by The Congress of the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies who declared that:

The South Downs in an open condition is a matter of national importance and interest, some of the finest scenery of the Southern Counties, deplores the recent and growing tendency to enclose the Downs, thereby depriving the public of their treasured and immemorial custom of wandering over these beautiful uplands (Brandon, p.165).

Today walkers are directed along the National Trail with tributary paths leading off, some permissive others legally protected for the public. The concept of roaming freely is almost unimaginable if it were not for historical paintings and literature. There is no doubt that sheep farming shaped the South Downs and that historical paintings capture a 'view' but as Angus Carlyle points out, the permissive footpaths can be closed at any time; we tread a crafted route that obliges the landowner (Carlyle,2020).

By comparison to the landscape in Linnell's painting, the South Downs today is intensively managed and can only be appreciated from the prospect of a well-trodden path.

Seductive Ambiance

The chapter title, *Facing Both Ways* is a quote by John Betjeman, describing his thinking whilst he was assistant editor of the *Architectural Review* in 1933 (Harris, 2010, p.44) describing how he was able to write about the new international style whilst incorporating the English vernacular. This ability to look in both directions as well as to challenge the status quo epitomised avant-garde communities established between the wars on the South Downs in Sussex.

Members of the communities were known to, and influenced, one another, and they responded to the exhilarating and unnerving experiences of living in the modern world through experimenting with new forms and reviving old ones (Wolf, p.8).

The West Dean Estate, home of the deceased Edward James, poet, art collector, and visionary, sponsored Betjeman's first book of poetry. The estate was given by James to a charitable trust in 1964, having written to Aldous Huxley of his fear that the war will have impacted on many traditional arts and crafts. The college opened in 1971 with the foresight of establishing:

the highest quality education in arts and conservation...champion traditional art and craft practices and advance the care of heritage objects (The Edward James Foundation, 2020)

Thirty-four miles along the South Downs Way, from West Dean, is the village of Ditchling, where ten years after Edward James was born, in 1917, Eric Gill established The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, an artist's community founded on the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, with the motto 'men rich in virtue studying beautifulness living in peace in their houses'. The Guild functioned until it was wound up in 1989 (Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft), the legacy of this controversial community is now enshrined in a contemporary art gallery and museum. Seventeen miles along the path from Ditchling is Charleston Farmhouse the rural retreat for the Bloomsbury Group established by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant in 1916 and now also a charitable trust, 6.8 miles from Charleston is Monks House at Rodmell, once home to Virginia and Leonard Woolf now a National Trust property, 1.6 miles from Charleston is Furlongs, the shepherd's cottage rented by Peggy Angus who hosted artist gatherings including Eric Ravilious, John Piper, Herbert Read and many more.

On the border of the South Downs National Park between West Dean and Charleston a community was established in 1923 by Vera Pragnell who on her inheritance and inspired by the Christian pacifist William E. Orchard bought a roadside house which she named *The Sanctuary* along with fifty acres of land. The Sanctuary's door was never locked offering sustenance and a bed to all, a community was established which included artists of all disciplines as well as avant-garde activists and nudists (Storrington Museum). Added to this is the Glyndebourne festival which opened in 1934 and Farley House the home of Roland Penrose and Lee Miller, the latter three establishments bordering the National Park, hosting influential and prominent artists.

Within a radius of thirty miles there was an abundance of creative communities demonstrating alternative ways of living, that challenged Edwardian moralities, as well as confronting theories around creativity and art, embracing European Modernism as well as rekindling ancient crafts and customs (Wolf, p.8).

Opposing life in the modern industrial city, some especially in the 1910's and 20's, cast the Sussex countryside as a kind of arcadia (Wolf, 2017, p.9).

Whilst most treated this area of Sussex as a retreat from the city and the ravages of war their artwork was in no way a pastoral representation, but often avant-garde interpretations of people and places, challenging set notions of the rural idyll and contemporary life.

The affluent cosmopolitan creatives caused a disconnect that still simmers under the surface of the chalk downland, by commissioning and hosting émigré's, shielding conscientious objectors, and celebrating sexuality. The dual lure of voyeurism and enthralled fascination, combined with abhorrent disregard concerning ethnicity and sexuality bound up with landscape and place, is now as much to do with tourism as it was with nimbyism.

For many artists during the war the Sussex coast was a threshold or 'inbetween-ness' (Wolf, p.32) a coastal doorway from Europe, captured in David Jones poem *In Parenthesis* (1937):

the 'spilled bitterness' he describes enters his watercolours, sea and sky washing over window frames. Jones's coastal views are reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's meditation on Sussex as a threshold between England and Europe (Wolf, p.32).

The concept of a threshold or ‘in-betweenness’ reminded me of the appropriation of central reservations, carriageways, and laybys on the A roads where I live in the SDNP. Twice in 2019 when the Government thought the country was about to exit trade deals because of Brexit. ‘In-between’ places were requisitioned, coned off, and portable variable message boards were installed, warning of long delays. In theory, the none-places would become lorry parks to accommodate European and International haulage as it backed up from the docks at Southampton and Portsmouth due to unresolved jurisdiction, displacing drivers/travellers, and their consignments³⁸.

The *Brexit*³⁹ standoff with Europe became side-lined by the Covid-19 pandemic, which at the start of this global crisis eclipsed every political or newsworthy event whilst at the same time highlighting inequalities.

Paintings tackling or reflecting on crisis whether ecological, humanitarian, local or global, fall between Realism, New Romanticism and Constructed Realism. Artists draw on historical formulas or points of reference to create dystopian landscape paintings detailing brutally realistic observations or surreal montages where the artist has “travelled with their imagination” (Deakin, 2020) across consumer-greedy, brash, nihilistic landscapes, which are then reconstructed, by suggesting appealing painterly surfaces that on closer inspection refer to a broken society.

³⁸ The queues of lorries did not happen, but the coning off of the dual carriageway did, to create Covid-19 testing stations for the lorry drivers in 2019/20.

³⁹ Withdrawal of the UK from the EU

Moonscapes & Chalk

A symbol used consistently in paintings is the moon, representing different phenomena, during periods of technological/human turmoil. The moon combined with the luminosity of chalk-downland is a particularly seductive subject, associated with the re-emergence of Romanticism in 2005 (Bradway, 2019, p.141) falling in-line with the creeping awakening of ecological disaster and the rise of the new Anthropocene epoch. The painting style is an extension of British Surrealism and Neo-Romanticism and could be argued is an approach that never went away but was marginalised by postmodernism.

The prominence of certain artists and genres governing the art market, especially in the 1980's, created taste vacuums now described as *unconscious bias*, maintaining an already established stronghold preventing those who were marginalised their full potential (Graw, 2018, p.41). But it is the augmentation of Romanticism in the face of the climate emergency as well as the demand for parity that is fuelling the mandate for change, reflected in many of today's New-Romantic paintings.

Romanticism is the deep rooted "personal feeling and interest in the natural world" (Tate) using embodied methods to reinforce experiential research applied in both literature and art. Heuristic reconnaissance is a familiar thread running through each Romantic period, with the moon appearing to change significance in-line with each seismic shift, whether emphasising industrial change or signalling death. The contemporary role of the moon as a motif might be argued is to demonstrate continuity or rhythms, a reminder of a pre-technological world where gardeners' almanacs, decision making, as well as medicinal practices revolved around astrology and the moon (Page et al, 2018).



Figure 12. Rose, M. 2019. *Old Winchester Hill with Orange Moon*. [Oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 92 cm x 61 cm].

The painting, *Old Winchester Hill with Orange Moon* (fig.12), investigates what would have been c3,500-year-old chalk-white burial mounds, the view is semi topographical working both flat and vertically, endorsing field sketches undertaken whilst standing on a barrow. In the painting the viewer is hovering, not unlike a drone or a bird, over ancient Bronze Age tumuli. Field sketches were made as the moon rose over the horizon overshadowing what was, until then, a magnificent winter sunset, rising steadily, then hanging vast, a huge orange glowing orb. The sound of owls from the yew wood calling one and other, are represented by white ephemeral lines made by dipping a white goose feather into oil paint. This painting is as much about a landscape entering wintertime as it is about the moon, the sense of quiet, contrasted to the exposed tangle of red brambles against the blue-green coolness of the yew, a chalk white path circumnavigating the woodland, omitting the well-trodden directional track through the barrows. The viewer is immersed in this landscape, not directed by means of a path.

Chalk on a bright moonlit night as demonstrated by our Bronze Age ancestors and their site-specific burial mounds would have dazzled. This use of chalk and the moon is a concept employed well into the seventeenth century when paths were mapped out using mounds of chalk either side of a

track to indicate the paths presence at night, the chalk mounds were called *down-lanterns* (Ekirch, p.35) making night-travel easier. The Lunar Society, a group of eighteenth-century intellectuals, would meet on the full moon, not for any esoteric reason, but purely logic as it was easier to see their way home (Lunar Society).

The artist Andy Goldsworthy made two significant moon and chalk artworks on the South Downs. The first *Moonlit Walk* 2002, opened on the full moon and then monthly on the full moon for a year, taking full advantage of the luminosity of the chalk. He was further commissioned by the *Strange Partner's* programme (West Dean) to produce fourteen huge chalk balls (fig.81) that mark a five-mile trail from Cocking to West Dean College. Quarried locally, the chalk boulders have been placed across the landscape to create a trail that meanders through woodland, wide open paths, country lanes and the manicured grounds of the West Dean estate. The boulders are astonishing and appear as if they have fallen from space not unlike a meteor (West Dean) or possibly a calcified moon that has grown out of the earth.



Figure 81. Rose, M. 2020. *Seven of the Fourteen Chalk Stones, from the Andy Goldsworthy Chalk Stone Walk*. [Digital Image].

The chalk boulders perform a weird interrelationship between earth and sky, night and day, natural and manmade, with tool marks still visible on the surface of the stones, whilst at the same time nature has quickly occupied both the exterior as well as surrounding them with vegetation and in

some instances freezing conditions after rain has caused the stones to spilt open rendering a more natural form, a move away from the industrious marks back to a naturally occurring shape that will one day disappear not unlike the steadily eroding cliff face of the Seven Sisters.

The chisel marks on the boulders echo a deeper meaning associated with the moon, indicating “industrialisation, modernity, time, nature and change” (Pasachoff et al. 2001, p.25) the way artists have employed the moon resonates back to early obsessions with capturing the moon as a way of preserving it, or as a reminder that “moonlight is brighter than torches and therefore brighter than industry” (Eales, A, 2020), this was especially significant during early industrialisation and the introduction of street light and the fear that the moon would disappear altogether (Pasachoff et al. 2001, p.37).

Walking on the Downs at night, the chalk does have a spectral quality, especially in crepuscular light, heralding an almost blue/pink iridescence distinguishable in paintings, alongside “flashes of deep blue, before [the night sky] turns to black” (Hayes, 2020, p.107), which is evident in Harold Mockford’s landscape paintings of the South Downs (fig.82), which have an eerie, transcendental quality often depicting a crepuscular glow including a *deep blue* light with an anticipatory sense that the moon is never far from sight.



Figure 82. Mockford, H. 1991. *The Long Man*. [Oil on canvas]. Government Art Collection

A century earlier the Impressionist painter Edward Stott came to prominence capturing rural domestic and agricultural life in the heart of the Sussex landscape. Unlike the eerie, unsettled characteristic of Mockford's paintings, Stott created a warmth or homecoming which was at the time very popular, romanticising what were harsh working conditions.

Represented in the painting *Changing Pastures* (fig.83) is a young woman herding cattle from one field to another, the season is late spring, there is abundant foliage on the trees, daffodils at the water's edge and daisies scattered underfoot. The herd is a considerable size and meanders back following the bend in the river, in the distance lights glow from a cottage as the moon rises over the Downs. This method of farming is now widely endorsed in response to nutritional decline in pasture due to over-grazing (English Nature) associated with intensive farming which began during and after World War II (BBC, 2005).



Figure 83. Stott, E. 1893. *Changing Pastures*. [Oil on canvas]. Tate Collection

The trajectory and influence from one generation to another is undeniable but how the moon sits within our consciousness can be identified through mythology and metaphor and can be traced back through artworks and storytelling. Today the moon acts as a reliable constant in an unpredictable world, captured in paintings during all its phases. The Romantic movement in the nineteenth century embraced new responses to nature. Artists such as, John Constable, J. M. W.

Turner, William Blake, and Samuel Palmer all painted the South Downs and the moon. Turner and Blake shared the same patron, Lord Egremont. Turner a regular houseguest making numerous paintings and drawings in and around the area where Ivon Hitchens lived one hundred years later.



Figure 84. Turner, J M W. 1829. *The Lake Petworth: Sunset, a Stag Drinking* [Oil on canvas]. Tate Collection
(There is a small crescent moon in the top left-hand corner of the painting).

William Blake, lived for a short period by the sea at Felpham in Sussex, describing the landscape, as “the sweetest spot on earth” it is here that he saw “visions of Albion” and “marked the beginning of the most important period in his life” (National Trust, 2018). On his return to London, it is said that he continued to use the Downs as a motif along with the sea, but it is the moon in Blake’s work, used over again, representing inner worlds and hidden meanings. Blake was seemingly obsessed, from rendering mapped moonscapes not unlike Galileo’s *Sidereus Nuncius* (fig.85) to the cry of a child in *I want I want* (fig.86).



Figure 85. Blake, W. 1795. *The Song of Los*. The British Museum



Figure 86. Blake, W. 1793. *I Want I Want*. [Engraving]

At the end of Blake's life he was discovered by a group of artists calling themselves 'the Ancients'. One of them, Samuel Palmer, lived on the North Downs, a chalk ridgeway with the same sedimentary formation, on the other side of the Weald from the South Downs. Palmer, along with his father-in-law John Linnell, illustrated a way of life that was on the point of turning from peaceful ruralism, into industrialisation, a pattern of existence that had correspondingly informed the ecology of the Downs, famous for its springy grassland created by grazing sheep over thousands of years, a habitat described by the botanist David Bellamy as "Europe's Rainforest" (SDNP, 2020) the result of Neolithic and Bronze Age forest clearance, now one of the UK's "rarest habitats" (SDNP, 2021).

And yet the moon in these early Romantic paintings responds to industrialisation, Linnell and Palmer were both influenced by Blake and Turner and illustrate, in their artworks, the moon as a motif representing *home coming* and *comfort*, compared to their European contemporaries, such as Caspar David Friedrich who depicted the moon as melancholy, and slightly sinister, hanging in misty Gothic landscapes. Romanticism reappeared again, after World War I with Neo-Romanticism when the moon symbolised a different nuance. The war artist and Neo-Romantic Paul Nash is referenced in the book *Unit One*, in 'hidden landscape', how he:

recalls the hidden land that is gleaned in the work of Turner, Blake's ancient Britain, Albion, and the *renewed* task of the landscape artist. Nash's endeavours have often been read as Blakean, as seeking the spirit of the land or place, the *genius loci* (Reid, Issue 10).

In the mid 1930's Nash made paintings on the Jurassic coast, the same geological feature as the South Downs further along the South Coast in Dorset. The inclusion of the moon in Nash's paintings is contrasted to the honouring of nature of early Romanticism, this time using the moon to convey a deep sense of melancholy or foreboding death, whether eerily located over a battlefield or symbolising his own impending demise. (fig. 87)

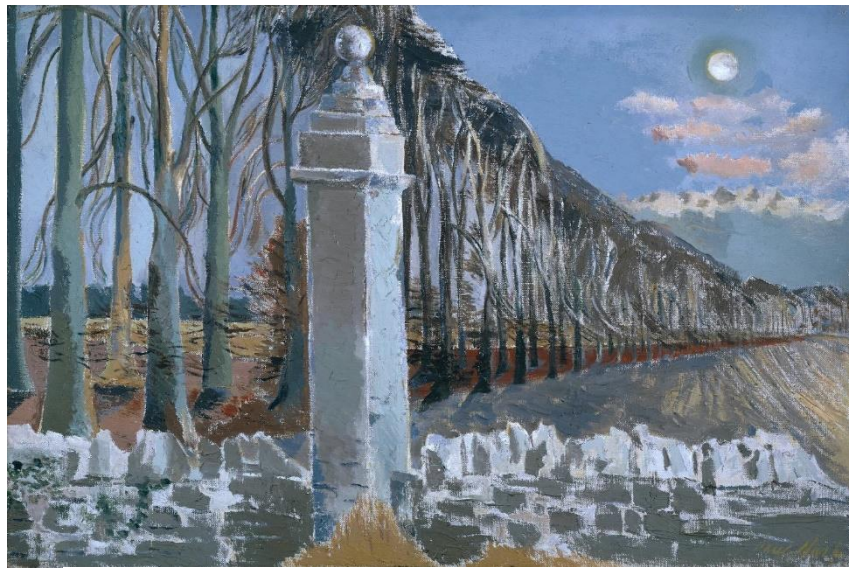


Figure 87. Nash, P. 1932-42. *Pillar and Moon*. Tate Collection

One of Nash's students at the Royal College of Art was Eric Ravilious who made copious artworks on and about the South Downs which include the moon. Ravilious captures the rhythms and patterns of everyday life, adapting mundane features that perform as vital compositional elements. Painting with an *almost empty brush* or *dry brush* allowed the white of the paper to echo through, capturing the exposed chalk on paths and in fields. Referenced in the way I use chalk gesso, by rubbing back and erasing pigment or deliberately leaving the gesso exposed of paint.

Today the moon and stars are celebrated through the Dark Sky's festivals (fig.88), held every year in National Parks across the country, raising awareness of light pollution and the wonder of the universe.



Figure 88. Dark Skies Festival SDNP. *Halnacker Windmill by Moonlight* [Digital Image]

The moon first appeared in my work in the summer of 2018 at the start of my research. Walking every month on the full moon with three other artists based in Wales, Cornwall, and Sussex we walk at the same time but apart. To begin with I walked between two long barrows in the village where I live on the South Downs, the following year I decided to walk every month on Old Winchester Hill an Iron Age Hill Fort. Walking as the moon rises, I can predict where best I can see it, which paths the moon will follow and which trees I can catch a glimpse of it through. Walking at night in the same location, I feel as if I have built up a relationship with the moon and get a sense of total delight when it appears.

I walked on the full moon on, 12th December 2019, the day of the general election, when the wind and rain made the terrain almost impossible, slipping and sliding in mud, falling over, being

buffeted by gusts of wind, I had a sense I was experiencing an in-the-moment weather metaphor, but in hindsight it was a prediction of what was to come, with only two months of walking at this location before lockdown on March 23rd, the full moon was on the 24th March 2020.

Leisure on the Downs during Covid-19

23rd March 2020, the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced on television that a “lockdown” would be enforced. People had to stay at home, apart from shopping for food and one hour for exercise, with the caveat to ‘social distance’ two meters apart, excepting those you live with.

Everything stopped, traffic stopped, aircraft stopped, machinery stopped, it felt as if the world had stopped.

Anxiety and fear aside, it was a relief to stop on March 24th the sun shone through the bedroom curtains, but if I kept my eyes closed, I could imagine it was a snow day, a world wrapped in a blanket of quiet. Walking the footpaths in and around the village for my one hour’s exercise, the situation felt surreal. Whilst out walking nothing had changed apart from vegetation which was now blossoming into full-blown springtide. Relieved at having completed my fieldwork the previous year, perturbed that walking the South Downs Way in one go would now have to be abandoned, everything was the same but different.

The sudden quietness allied to the lack of freedom made me consider the concept of nostalgia and what it means to painters who are often searching for something that no longer exists. In a weird way I was living in a dual nostalgic/futuristic moment-in-time, the quietness predates the sawmills of 1800 (Culpin, p.62) ironically chronicled in the pilot study Lost Path Cheriton (fig.8) and reworked on VE Day 8th May 2020 when the country was partying in lockdown.

On reflection I quietened the surface of this painting, both colour and marks by adding more layers of watery pigment, moving backwards and forwards, the huge brush tracing the paths and

footsteps from my imagination. This was now, not only the first painting for this research project, but a breakthrough painting, the opportunity to reflect and rework, to abandon photographs and field sketches, although both important aspects of field research, painting was now endorsed by my imagination and memory.

The sudden quietness through enforced lockdown had an immense impact not only on humans but on wildlife, the silence of motor vehicles and aeroplanes created a calm serenity which appeared to be appreciated countrywide, the stillness allowed birdsong to take precedence. A tranquillity predating mechanical noise, described by the artist F. L Griggs as before World War I, after which, the pastoral was irretrievably disturbed.

Griggs an engraver inspired by Samuel Palmer (Neve, 1990, p.42) was commissioned in the early 1900's to illustrate a series of travel guides called *Highways and Byways*. This commission became Griggs life's work travelling all over the country, observing, and methodically rendering what he saw. In the summer of 1903 high up on the South Downs, Griggs captured Sussex in all its pre-war glory, "No traffic to speak of, no arterial roads, no pylons" (Neve, 1990, p.37) Griggs made copious drawings of drovers' lanes cut deep into the chalk by the passage of footfall, cart, sheep, and shepherds. He drew country churches, buildings that interested him and the classic Downland open view, but most of all, he was able to capture what Neve describes as "atmosphere" (1990, p.37). It is through the engravings that you get a sense that Griggs was desperately holding on to a fast-disappearing way of life:

The England he wanted to preserve was silent and secret, hushed in twilight, sunk under hot afternoons or under snow, a place of accumulated history and gothic buildings, hidden or partly hidden beneath ivy or behind walls (Neve, 1990, p.42).

This *atmosphere* that Griggs was capturing was set to change after World War I, when his engravings become darker and as Neve observes "an artist can have a view of a place that is stronger and more permanent than the place itself" (1990, p.43). In other words, Griggs landscapes did not change in his engraved world, motorcars continued to be non-existent, his was a pre-war world of quietness.

Ithell Colquhoun another artist extremely sensitive to sound and mechanisation having lived and worked in London and Paris, had abandoned the surrealist movement to explore her own more esoteric approach to painting, moving permanently Cornwall in 1957, having acquired a studio-shack in Lamorna during World War II. Colquhoun devotes an entire chapter, *Bride of Quietness*, in her book *The Living Stones*, the slow infiltration of everyday sounds appear to be an assault on her senses:

It is only within the last fifty years (the book was published in 1957) that noise has become a menace in everyday life; it has come suddenly and may as suddenly depart. The countryside is waiting indestructibly to suddenly return where urbanization has encroached upon it, lurking only just beyond the last houses of a suburb, the confines of a village, or just out of earshot of a busy main road. There it crouches, weird, untamed, in a profound sense unknown, ready to reclaim its own from the pride of man (Colquhoun, 2017, p.99).

How could Colquhoun have contemplated that the noise would suddenly depart or even that the countryside is merely lurking in the wings, which has been evident by wild animals venturing into towns and cities during *lockdown* (Weston, 2020). The gradual rise of over-stimulation, whether it is constant noise or a packed diary has escalated over time, the abrupt action of stopping for many people has proved in equal measures, stressful and a relief⁴⁰

On May 10th, Prime Minister Boris Johnson gave limited details about how the different measures of lockdown would be eased. From the 12th of May it would be possible to drive for no more than an hour to meet another person from a different household outdoors and walk at a social distance of two meters. On the 19th May I met a fellow artist at the carpark at Old Winchester Hill (fig.89), we had already planned to walk East towards Meon Springs along the SDW. The amount of people and cars was unexpected, the fact that we walked away from the hillfort, past the coffee van (fig.90), before walking down into the valley where there were very few people was a relief.

⁴⁰ Personal observation of friends and family



Figure 89 & 90. Rose, M. 2020. *Old Winchester Hill carpark and coffee van*. [Digital images]

The gradual easing of lockdown and reopening of business⁴¹ meant traffic noise began to escalate, this escalation signalled a return to life as we knew it, but like Griggs and Colquhoun, we now know what silence sounds like. The artist and academic Joanne Lee began recording the pandemic in a Facebook Covid-19 diary and describes her thoughts about the gradual build-up of traffic in her daily bulletin:

Later, a little way past Stacey Bank on Loxley Road, there's a tawny owl hit by a car lying dead in the gutter. I am so sick of cars and motorbikes and lorries at the moment. I hate their noise, pollution and danger. When I hear later on the news that car showrooms are going to be amongst the first retail premises to open I am very depressed at the thought (Lee, 2020).

⁴¹ First lockdown in England 23rd March 2020, plans to ease lockdown announced on 10th May 2020, phased reopening of schools 1st June 2020 parts of the country remained in lockdown. Second lockdown 5th November 2020, third lockdown 4th January 2021 (Institute for Government, 2021)

Depression and bewilderment are now a low-grade constant in most people's lives with many grappling for answers. In the chapter *Melancholy and the Limestone Landscape*, Neve categorically states that nothing can compare with war for changing perceptions of the land, and yet what he says resonates in a minor way to the Covid-19 pandemic:

In the artists sorrow he does see the landscape quite differently, as a place no longer safe. It harbours darkness. Its woods threaten and constrict. The old style and the old order, once so reassuring, is broken down, cracked up, walled in (Neve, 1990, p.42).

Certainly, people felt walled in, desperate to escape to beauty spots, which not only change the dynamic of a place, but add an uneasiness of contamination⁴². The once quiet carpark at Old Winchester Hill, as previously mentioned, is now always full of vehicles, as a result the place feels different, but then most people feel different due to changes in lifestyle.

The SDNPA undoubtedly had to change its approach to leisure and tourism in response to lockdown. Their website featured a high visibility strapline that ran along the top of the page offering a COVID-19 Government Update as well as 'tips' to *avoid popular hotspots* (SDNP, 2020) which is difficult as many of the carparks are located close to chalk out-spurs along the South Downs Way path, nearly all close to tumuli with ancient paths leading to the carparks, which in turn attract, cluster points for cyclists, walkers, hang-gliders, trail runners as well as contemporary rituals to the deceased, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 8 *Death on the Downs*.

From observation it appeared people were attracted to these locations; the paths hold a transcendental bond to both nature and the deceased a ramification the authority will struggle to manage having noted traffic queuing to access carparks as well as vehicles bumped up onto verges⁴³

The observed and experiential reality of desiring escape into nature is reflected in the expression of current artworks focused on the natural world, arguably a fusion of Romantic-Realism. Paintings by Linnell and Stott which were popular during the Industrial Revolution fell out of favour after the Great War when Modernism offered utopian and innovative ideals as well as, "a rejection of history and conservative values (such as realistic depiction of subjects)" (Tate) Certainly, the interwar years provoked inspirational thinking and innovative theories, from education through to the

⁴² Landowners put signs on gates reminding the public about contamination from the Covid-19 virus

⁴³ Volume of visitors is unprecedented, certainly not witnessed previous to the pandemic.

economy, the drive for a different way was curtailed, but not stopped by World War II - the seeds had been planted and appear now to be germinating in response to the pandemic combined with the climate emergency.

Since I wrote this draft in the summer of 2020, the country has been through three national lockdowns. The second lockdown announced on the 31st October as a "circuit breaker" ended on December 2nd included a complex tier system. Tier 1: Medium Alert, Tier 2: High Alert, Tier 3: Very High Alert, Tier 4: Stay at home. The Prime Minister's optimism did not correspond to science and the speed at which the virus spread, forcing another lockdown on January 6th, 2021 at which point there had been over 100,000 deaths. Easing was permitted on March 8th when schools returned in England, but the entanglement of leisure and landscape is ongoing, with people needing to get out of their homes not just for exercise but for mental wellbeing. Carparks remain full and organisations including Natural England are exploiting the opportunity to raise funds, by situating voluntary parking charges (fig.91)



Figure 91. Rose, M. 2021. *New voluntary parking charges sign at Old Winchester Hill carpark*. [Digital image].

Corralling the public along designated paths, profiteering from misfortune by suggesting that payment is made in order to visit what is ostensibly a public space demonstrates the complexities surrounding access to the countryside.

Close to the Edge: war and destruction along the South Downs Way

The impact of World War II altered the entire infrastructure of South Downs landscape beyond, in many places, recognition and as a result delaying National Park status by seventy years. John Dower's 1945 White Paper *National Parks in England and Wales* (fig.92) and Sir Arthur Hobhouse's 1947 report which was the basis for the 1949 *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act* recommended the South Downs as a designated National Park (Brandon, 2006, p.190).

This decision was possibly made in-light of what the landscape looked like prior to 1939, but the assessment to define the South Downs as a National Park may have been halted or redacted by the landowners themselves who held governmental positions and feared an invasion of the general public:

the prevailing philosophy was that the public constituted a threat to the countryside and must therefore be corralled away from its woodlands, lakes and plains into areas specifically designated for recreation (Hayes,2020, p.265).



Figure 92. Ministry of Town and Country Planning. 1945. *National Parks in England and Wales*. London: Home Office.

The devastation to the South Downs landscape because of World War II, took a generation to assimilate and recover from.⁴⁴ The South Coast was the first line of defence combined with rich arable land, that at the outbreak of war, the government advocated for intensive farming, which was a success, with yields matching pre-war importation (Brandon, 2006, p.182), but with the

⁴⁴ Based on the timeline of Government reports

threat of invasion, the Downs along the South Coast became battle-ready (fig.93) with military camps, the requisitioning of farms and villages for training purposes, new metalled roads, and defence systems. The once inaccessible South Downs where walkers were free to roam became a warren of military roads. Ancient paths and drovers' tracks were metalled and have remained so altering what was a remote landscape. (Brandon, 2006, p.182)



Figure 93. Puttnam, Len A, (Captain). 1940. *South Downs near Arundel*. whole: glass. IWM H 2965

Winchester having been a “major transit location for the Western Front during WW1” (Morton, 2020) was again during WWII, with troops stationed across the region. A carriageway of the Winchester bypass was occupied by Churchill Mk IV tanks (fig.94) ready for the invasion of Europe during *Operation Overlord* on the 6th June 1944.



Figure 94. Hardy, B. (Sergeant). 1944. *Tanks on Winchester Bypass*. whole: Nitrate. IWM H 38510

Prior to the invasion, General Eisenhower addressed the forces at Cheesefoot Head (fig.95) a natural amphitheatre found on the outskirts of Winchester⁴⁵ offering a perfect parade ground as well as an open-air theatre. In 1944 Joe Louis fought in an exhibition boxing match to entertain troops⁴⁶. It is through archival photographs, and paintings, that a view of the South Coast landscape can be observed as a first line of defence, against the threat of a German invasion. Thousands of troops were stationed billeted from Kent to Cornwall:

⁴⁵ This iconic location is not represented in regional galleries and therefore not in the DAI.

⁴⁶ Fifty-four years later this landscape is again used for entertainment, Creamfields Festival, followed by Homelands Festival and then in 2009 Boomtown Fair, a festival that in 2019 hosted 58,000 ticket holders, 17,999 crew and 1,000 residents (Matterley Bowl) because of these events at Cheesefoot Head the SDW is annually rerouted.



Figure 95. Tugwell, R. 2019. *Information board Cheesefoot Head*. [Digital images].

The beaches were no-go areas for most people. Barbed wire defenses stood between the sea and the promenades, and heavy artillery lined our seafronts. The Home Guard were prepared for invasion too. They had been trained in unarmed combat and booby trap techniques. In the event of a breach of our coastline, it would be their job to ambush the invading forces.

Sussex towns and villages suffered heavily from enemy bombing raids, especially in 1940 and 1944. Hundreds of civilians were killed, thousands hospitalised, and many lost their homes. Especially scary were the daylight 'tip and run' attacks when enemy aircraft would fly in low dropping bombs and machine-gunning people in the streets.

Although many civilians were evacuated from Sussex, the population increased as the military were barracked throughout the county. Troops from around the

world, including Canada, America and Poland served in the region (East Sussex County Council).

The bewildering incongruity of war is captured by Ravilious' s wartime paintings, in *Coastal Defences* (fig.96), a seemingly calm summers night looking down into the bay from the cliffs, but this is not at all a *calm* time. The painting captures the moment small boats leave the jetty, motoring out to sea without lights, the sea a greasy mirror pool. Echoing the trajectory of the boats-wake is a search light, creating a dynamic intrusion that picks up the white of the chalk and the ocean spray, an eerie calm before the storm.



Figure 96. Ravilious, E. 1940. *Coastal Defences*. Watercolour painting. IWM Art LD 566

Twenty-one miles of sea divides the English coast from mainland France. Targeted air raids could be strategized against but German bombers offloading bombs on their dash back to Germany after a raid, has left bomb-craters littered across Hampshire and Sussex⁴⁷ (fig.97).

⁴⁷ There are bomb-craters in the village in which I live, and I see them regularly when out walking



Figure 97. Rose, M. 2020. *Bomb crater Cheriton Wood, now used as a mountain bike ramp.* [Digital image].

On close inspection this landscape is littered with war detritus, including concrete anchor points, pillboxes, ammunition stores and mangled pieces of metal. The starker reminders are the memorials erected by landowners and county councils to those who lost their lives, including small, enclosed graveyards to overseas forces found high up on the Downs (fig.98 & 99).



Figure 98. Rose, M. 2019. *On SDW between Ditchling Beacon and Devils Dyke*. [Digital image].



Fig 99. Rose, M. 2019. *Memorial to soldiers killed in training during WW II*. [Digital image].

Some of the most significant are those found at the side of the path, including one to Hauptman Joseph Oestermann (fig.100) a Luftwaffe pilot shot down and killed on the first day of the Battle of Britain.



Figure 100. Tugwell, R. 2019. *Memorial to Hauptman Joseph Oestermann West Sussex*. [Digital image].

The memorial to the young airman Oestermann is located on the SDW at Treyford on the West Dean estate which we encountered when we walked from Cocking to Buriton on the 29th November 2019. This small flint memorial was festooned with poppies and two large wreaths, walkers were leaning in to read the plaque which I thought was to commemorate a recent loss of life. My companion took the photograph because I felt I didn't want to intrude, but on later inspection realised the age of the memorial. What is so moving is that the memorial is so well tended a reflection that all lives are precious regardless of nationality.

The artworks from this period include official war illustrations depicting everyday activities associated with war, comprising of paintings by Eric Ravilious and Dorothy Coke. Coke's paintings demonstrate her exquisite draftsmanship and eye for detail, and are filled with figures, creating a narrative of everyday activities carried out during this period.



Figure 101. Coke, Dorothy J. 1940. *ATS 11 O'Clock Break*. [Watercolour]. IWM Art LD

ATS 11 O'Clock Break (fig.101) could be a group of women standing on the balcony at the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne, if it were not for their military uniform. The view of the Downs and relaxed

conversation is a reminder that the ordinary rituals of living continue as reassuring rhythms, even in times of deep crisis.

Contrasted to Coke's work is Edward Burra who, because of travel restrictions during the war, was confined to his home in Rye (Culture 24, 2011). Burra's discordant, surrealist approach to painting captures an atmosphere of fear and dread, *Blue Baby, Blitz Over Britain* (fig.102) features a Beelzebub wreaking death and destruction. Henry Moore shaped figures cower in terror amidst the ruins whilst on the horizon black smoke billows out over the Downs.



Figure 102. Burra, Edward. 1941. *Blue Baby, Blitz Over Britain*. [Watercolour, gouache]. IWM Art.

Finally, there are artists whose paintings during the war period appear not to waver from their subject matter or style. Ivon Hitchens⁴⁸ is a case in point. Hitchens was never invited to become a War Artist unlike his contemporaries John Piper, Graham Sutherland, John Craxton, John Minton, Ceri Richards, or David Jones (Khoroché, 2009, p.74) Hitchens prior to World War II,

⁴⁸ Hitchens was age 46 at the outbreak of WW2, his health was not considered robust enough for active service, previously working in hospital supplies during WW1 (Khoroché, 2009, p.15)

shared a studio with Henry Moore in London, but was bombed out in 1940, prompting a move to Petworth in Sussex where he had formerly bought woodland along with a Gypsy caravan. It appears that from the moment he moved to Petworth his paintings took on an “uprush of energy”,

Clive Bell wrote (1942): ‘To have made progress during the last years an artist must be capable of living, as an artist should, for and by his art: Ivon Hitchens has made more than progress, he has made a leap forward’ (Khoroché, 2009, p.72).

Hitchens paintings proved very popular with a succession of one-man exhibitions at the Leicester Galleries beginning in 1940 as well as numerous group-shows. Scrutiny of his paintings reveals an intense abandonment or possibly an exuberant confidence once he had moved out of London. However, his palette during this period features dark contrasting tones (fig.103), a quality manifest in his paintings that during this time appear exaggerated including domestic scenes, harbouring dark backgrounds.



Figure 103. Hitchens, Ivon.1944. *Terwick Mill No.7, Splashing Fall*. [Oil on canvas]. Laing Art Gallery

The popularity of Hitchens paintings during the war years might have reflected a mood, offering an echo-chamber of flux, semi-recognisable landscapes formed out of the tradition of the picturesque, discordant-harmony with portals of light.

Back & Forth

The opening quote for this chapter states that to understand the present we must maintain a grasp on the past. To investigate this theory, I have employed Janus as a metaphor having been forced by Covid-19 to cancel my visits and walks on the SDW. Instead, I have chosen to look behind at what I have learned by walking the path, as well as to the future, to what may be, when a degree of normality returns.

To accommodate the phenomenon of the pandemic, I analysed paintings in the DAI, researched artist communities who lived on the Downs and their ongoing legacy. Themes that emerged are repetition and cyclical occurrences observed in paintings concerning symbolism, ecology, land use and farming-methods, as well as the requisitioning of peripheral land during periods of turmoil and using the moon as a motif in paintings, a sign of continuity and its unyielding link to tides and time.

Cyclical rhythms feature explicitly, for example, by artists using the moon to symbolise embodied ways of existing, demonstrated through their painting. Whether to express a comparison to mechanisation or as a celebration of rebirth and continuity. The way landscape has been manipulated as a mechanism to uphold and reflect perceived core values in both times of war and peace, as well as to maximize prosperity by charging fees to use what is technically a public space, is played out through the depiction and view of the landscape used in advertising, based on age-old indicators.

This chapter has witnessed through an exploration of landscape painting, a view implemented to coerce as well as promote deep felt emotions, both in peace and wartime. It is noticeable the disconnect associated with death, ritual, and regeneration, tied up by a reticence to allow access to the landscape through ownership by those who hold influential positions, perpetuating contemporary concerns about who the National Park is for.

Reflecting on the paintings I have made in response to the landscape of the South Downs, I have not deliberately left out signs of industrialisation, analogous to F. L. Griggs, but rather, subconsciously not seen the signs of industrialisation, looking beyond what in my lifetime has

always been there, in so doing my aim is to reimagine and disrupt how the landscape might be viewed in the future.

Chapter 8

Death on the Downs



Figure 104. Rose, M. 2019. *Ditchling Beacon*. [Digital Image].

Introduction

This chapter investigates the connection between memorials to the deceased through the phenomenological practices of walking and painting, offering an insight to our understanding of 'the common place' and its broader cultural narrative.

Aspects concerning this line of research have been investigated by Tim Ingold in, *Ways of mind-walking: reading, writing, painting*, introduced in chapter in Chapter 6, *Land-Skip-Land*, by exploring the question between the physical act of walking compared to walking through experiential memories stimulated through reading, writing, listening to music, and painting, where Ingold made comparisons between European medieval scholars and Aboriginal Yolngu elders describing their ability to:

inhabit their paintings much as the monastic practitioners of medieval Europe would inhabit their scriptures, walking in their minds the original, creative walk of the ancestors and, in so doing, bringing it forward into the present so as to give sense and direction to their lives (Ingold, 2010, p.17).

I question whether this theory can be transferred to the placement of objects in the landscape, at a specific location, holding meaning for individuals as well as connected groups. Offering a way-*in* to significant places as well as human presence, that will be read, especially by passers-by who will possibly be able to identify with the object, concluding its significance, as well as for some, providing a point of emotional reference. Thus, forming a connection to place through a bonded object or action, which on the South Downs is bound by access.

The control of human, more than human, and access is flawed, but that has not stopped man from trying to organise and manage from the Neolithic, through to today, in the vane hope of maximising productivity and wealth. It might be argued that siloing everyday natural conditions, including death, into conveniently managed programmes, is space and cost effective. Yet with the emerging fissures in human emotion, it could be argued, are mirroring the natural order of things.

Death, birth, and life are not, and never have been tidy, but there are processes that are inherent and natural, including ritual, custom, decay, and renewal. What happens when a natural occurrence is sanitised, and control is taken away from the individual or community?

Every acre of this tiny, densely populated land of ours has been observed, considered, valued, reckoned, pondered over, owned, bought, sold, hedged – and there's a dead man buried under every hedge you know (Bender, 1993)

This quote is about contested landscapes, relating directly to the Enclosures Acts from 1604 to 1914 and the division of land across England, but for this chapter, *Death on the Downs*, it is a stark reminder of the politics associated with landscape and that life and death leave reminders on the surface of the earth which have an unfathomable relationship with the ground below and the sky above.

Bender, in her introduction, begins by discussing the complexity and power of landscape (Bender, 1993, p.1) and how in pre-modern Europe and in other cultures, what lies beneath and above the

surface is of consequence, but for contemporary Western societies she argues landscape is egocentric. This model of thinking explains how contemporary Western society is now disconnected from the land and that landscapes are only observed through the aesthetics of a view, a systemised mode of looking, established through theories founded on the *picturesque*.

Previously mentioned in Chapter 6 *Land-Skip-Land*, the *picturesque* forces a disconnect to the land, by implementing codes of looking. This assessment is picked up by Ingold who expands the argument by examining essays by Kandinsky and his analysis of reading paintings, explaining that there are two distinctions 'inside and outside' (Ingold, 2010, p.21). Outside is comparable to looking through a pane of glass or more bluntly reading descriptive codes akin to the *picturesque*, compared to an inner reading of the artform, resonating on a profound experiential level, forming a deep connection, where what is being experienced whether a painting, music or nature, employs the imagination:

We must recognise in the power of the imagination the creative impulse of life itself in continually bringing forth the forms we encounter, whether in art, through reading, writing, or painting, or in nature, through walking in the landscape (Ingold, 2010, p.23).

It is the continual bringing forth of imagination and memory that informs my paintings, forming a body of work that required the ontological experience of the one-hundred mile walk along the South Downs Way, where very quickly I become aware that the landscape has been, and still is being used to memorialise the dead, including the scattering of ashes, memorial benches, wind chimes, bunches of flowers, cairns, stone monuments, and tumuli to name only a few signifiers.

What follows is an account of the memorials and signs found whilst walking the South Downs Way and questions as to why they are there, and what they mean today. Investigating folklore and customs surrounding death, including the ghosts connected to place and space, as well as exploring the wider impact of the death of a landscape and inherited memory associated to place:

All landscapes...are saturated with the sedimented traces of innumerable pasts deposited over lifetimes (Biggs, 2005).

The Chalk Talks

Death is ubiquitous across any landscape through the death of animals, vegetation, and the slow demise of minerals. It can also include the death of villages, place names, paths, and customs. It took walking the SDW in the footsteps of others to arrive at such an explicit subject. It also appeared that the more a person walks and observes, the more inescapable the matter becomes. There is no avoiding the memorials, monuments, and mementos, to humans, animals, and the land, with earthworks and structures dating from pre-history to the present day.

January, fog hangs across the landscape, hawthorn is jewelled with droplets from the moist air (fig.104), visibility is poor on this miserable day on top of Ditchling Beacon, the third highest point on the South Downs. But - why had someone carelessly thrown a bunch of daffodils onto the ground? who would leave flowers at this desolate location on such a dismal day? And why is there a sticky cement substance on the edge of the ridge? (fig.105)

The penny drops in a moment of horror-stricken, self-conscious, realisation, the cement-like substance was someone's ashes and the strewn daffodils, ceremonial offerings to honour whoever's cremated body. Mortified and embarrassed at having taken lots of photos on my phone of this weird sight not registering for one moment the fact that it was a memorial gesture, and that my behaviour might be considered inappropriate.



Figure 105. Rose, M. 2019. *Ditchling Beacon Cremation*. [Digital Image].

The complexity of feelings is summed up by a description of the uncanny in the chapter ‘Tender Bodies’ by Niamh Downing, the thread running through the chapter is the symbiosis of life through decay:

The uncanny is ‘a disturbance...of proper names’, ‘a crisis of the natural’, ‘a matter of something gruesome or terrible’, ‘a feeling of something beautiful but at the same time frightening’, ‘something that should have remained secret and hidden’, it is also ‘never far from something comic’ (Royle, [no date] cited in Heholt & Downing, 2016, p.80)

Death and landscape are synonymous, “death affirms the continuity of the progenerative process” (Ingold, 2000, p.143) all the more, that the geology of the South Downs, a chalk landscape formed sixty million years ago is composed of microscopic shells of amoebic fossils and the calcareous remains of coccoliths, informing the skeletal whiteness tantamount to this famous landscape, redolent in artworks and literature and always apparent on worn paths and ploughed fields.

Walking this landscape in the footsteps of others, observing the myriad of ritual memorial sites from Bronze Age tumuli to strewn daffodils, it is hard not to contemplate the bodies that died and have no memorial. Boxgrove Man, *Homo heidelbergensis*, was ‘tall and imposing’ and the first English human skeletal evidence from c.500,000 years ago (Hendry) his tibia and teeth were found on what was then a shoreline near Chichester but is now a village eight miles inland.

Boxgrove Man's people were short-lived before the Anglian glaciation made survival impossible, although habitation was back on these shores within 400,000 years, evolving through time and space, birth and death, recurring wars and natural decay, Romans, Civil War, the old and weary, birds, sheep, insects all decayed back into the land which is the crux of Downing's chapter as she explores the ecological uncanny through Jim Crace's book *Being Dead*:

the human entanglement with other bodies: plants, animals, microorganisms that make up what Crace refers to as 'landscape' (Heholt & Downing, 2016, p.82).

It is this entanglement with nature and the permission to allow death a presence in the landscape that is pertinent. The social and cultural geographer, Avril Maddrell maintains that by the 1990's death had been removed from society and organised into municipal graveyards (2016, p.506) this tidying up of death is reflected in the way England's landscapes have been lately managed:

We have become as intolerant of natural processes of decline and decay...as we are of our own aging and dying (Tree, 2018, p.47).

An example of this is the mass felling of Ash trees on Harting Down to combat Ash dieback, which is a devastating sight, not only because of the felling of mature trees but also the decision by the National Trust to leave some of the brash and trees to decay back into the ground. At first sight the trees and brash look untidy, messy, and disorganised, but this approach to managing land creates a rich biomass that encourages new life.

It is undeniable that life and death are messy, but streamlining, tidying, managing, and controlling these natural occurrences has a detrimental effect - both on the landscape and human psyche.



Figure 106. Rose, M. 2019. *Log Harvester, Harting Down, South Downs Way*. [digital image].



Figure 107. Rose, M. 2020. *Harting Down with Log Harvester*. [egg tempera, oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 30cm x 30cm].

Walking 12 miles from Cocking to Buriton in November, we walked into darkness, walking high up over the chalk ridge and into woodland, the mud was at times impassable because of heavy plant vehicles used to fell and haul lumber, forcing us to walk in the fields by the side of the path. Once in the dense woodland, which the vehicles were steadily clearing as they made their way from the road, we were somewhat alarmed to see they were still working in the dark (fig.106).

Sinister green-yellow spiders' eye lights penetrate through the trees not unlike the Martians in H. G. Wells 'The War of the Worlds'. My painting, Harting Down with Log Harvester (fig.107) began with a layer of egg tempera, but the finish did not reflect the brutality of artificial light combined with the noise and destruction made by these colossal vehicles. The addition of oil paint augmented a shiny viscosity increasing the surface disturbance as well as accelerating the required movement

needed to transform the tangle of brambles into bloodied barbed wire caught between the two remaining trees.

By contrast to a remote and wild place, the SDNP is very organised and easy to navigate, unlike other National Parks where compass bearings and map reading is essential. The South Downs is adequately signposted, it is also very managed and the most populated National Park in the UK (Heaseman and Findlay, 2018). To access the SDW, examined in Chapter 6 *Land-Skip-Land*, the walker leaves the town of Eastbourne and climbs up a steep wide open coastal path onto the Seven Sisters cliffs, after approximately eight miles the path moves inland following the river Cuckmere before joining a chalk ridge that the walker follows all the way to Winchester.

The chalk ridge which can be seen from busy 'A' roads drops in and out of river valleys and acts as the coastal vanguard. *The Way* as it is called in the National Trail Guidebook (2016) takes the walker through farmland, nature reserves and villages. The chalk ridge offers spectacular views out to sea as well as across the Weald to the North Downs, these views remain with the walker for miles. It is the sense of elevation that enables a feeling of remoteness and freedom as well as providing the perfect location for the multiple radio masts that generate, when seen, a sensation that we are not alone.

Walking along a path with its origins set in pre-history as well as walking through a geospatial set of data, traveling through and around us. These invisible ghost voices (Jenkins, 2013) formed of electromagnetic radiation so intimately concealed that in many instances may never reveal themselves, except through a disturbance in our cells (Reality check team, 2019), transmitters (figs. 108 & 109) communicating so much silent noise offer an "eerie incursion of the unknown...a gap of silence" (Fisher.2016, p.20) observed but not heard, the only sound on the chalk ridge is the unrelenting offshore wind and skylarks.



Figures 108 & 109. Rose, M. 2019. *Radio masts SDW Beddingham Hill near Firl*

Transmitters and masts have a long history on the Seven Sisters with concrete traces left along the cliff-top, anchor points for colossal Radar's used during World War II as part of the Chain Home defence system. During the Cold War, a vast bunker with corridors and rooms was excavated out of a cave under Beachy Head, originally the cave was used in the 1800's to shine lights to warn vessels blown off course during storms (Blackiston, 2001).

All this going on above and below, ghost-traces of the past, voices in cyberspace, energies unknowingly encompassing us, is revealed in the film *Robinson in Ruins* (Keiller, 2010). Patrick Keiller reminds the viewer of the precarious and volatile landscape we live in and that the romantic view of a rural landscape holds an opposing reality.

Keiller interweaves global industry with bucolic scenes, encapsulated on the South Downs by the offshore, coastal views of the vast *Rampion* wind farm (fig.110), with its complex cabling running under our feet as we walk over the cliffs. Strangely the name *Rampion* is a wildflower found in abundance on the Sussex cliffs, not only is it the county flower, it is also known locally as the 'Pride of Sussex' (Owen, 2017).



Figure 110. Rose, M. 2021. *Rampion Wind Farm*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on Khadi paper. 50cm x 30cm].

Could it be, that by naming something so ghostlike and unfamiliar with a recognisable popular emblem, the developers wanted to facilitate a sense of closeness to the local landscape which, as Downing intimates creates a weird distrust:

Intimacy with nature is always troubled by that disturbing feeling associated with the uncanny (Heholt & Downing, 2016, p.82).

The familiar making the unfamiliar friendly or acceptable, not unlike the term 'uncanny valley' 'where something moves from one category to another' (Lay, 2015) creating a momentary disconnect, even revulsion, once reality hits home and the connection is made.

The offshore windfarm shines like a ghostly glittery miasma on the horizon-line, ever-present until we turn inland. In my painting *Rampion Wind Farm* (fig.110), I wanted to depict what is impossible to photograph, since what is picked up by the camera is just a shimmery distant haze, made weird

by knowing there is a connection from the windfarm through a distribution network operating somewhere under my feet.

Hodological Space

Through the act of walking the SDW, the walker encounters evidence of so many ghosts and so much death. The trail which the SDNPA call their *jewel in the crown*⁴⁹ is a constructed path running, for most of its length, East/West along the ridge intersecting more ancient significant paths running North/South connecting the Weald to the coastal plain, industry and ports.

There is an uncanniness to this East/West path, perhaps because it possess the ghost paths of so many ancient tracks dating as far back as the Neolithic and include; Stane Street (fig.60), a Roman road with raised cobbled sections still visible and in use; Juggs Road, a medieval drovers road used by women to transport fish; the Monarchs Way, an escape route employed by Charles II, and The Shipwrights Way (fig.111), a track utilised to transport timber from forests for ship building on the coast. These, as well as the many un-named drovers' roads, holloways, boundaries and green lanes offer an ongoing reminder of the industry, battles, and people.



Figure 111. Rose, M. 2019. *Shipwrights Way*. [Digital Image].

⁴⁹ Conversation with Andy Gattiker, National Trails and Rights of Way Lead at SDNPA

Whereas once these paths were commuter routes, used by everyone everyday going to and from work, today industry is more covert or discreet using pipelines, cabling, and cyberspace whilst the paths are used by those who can afford the leisure time and wherewithal to access the landscape.

We knew while walking along the South Downs Way when we were getting close to a carpark by the number of people we intercepted, and the increase in the number of memorials. Carparks are now a community-foci with mobile cafes and ice-cream vans. It was next to the carpark at Ditchling Beacon that the cremation ashes were found and at Bo-Peep carpark that *Mums* bench is situated (fig.112).



Figure 112. Rose, M. 2019. Bo-Peep carpark, *Mum's Bench*. [Digital Image].

The controversy surrounding benches is a national one with headlines including “National Park says no more ‘sombre’ memorial benches” (Herbert, 2002) or “Memorial benches – inspirational reminders or grave eyesores?” (Saner, 2018). This complex cultural phenomenon is difficult to navigate especially as Sussex’s local authorities have provided bus stops and picnic benches at designated highpoints or beauty spots where the car parks are situated.

Maddrell explains the incidence of memorial benches and tributes to the dead, are ways in which individuals are able to continue the bond or relationship to the deceased, (2013, p.502) arguing that death is an everyday occurrence that has been marginalised in the West (2013, p.506) due to government health policies and urban planning (2013, p.204) Maddrell also compares religious customs stating that in countries including Japan and China the dead live on through home alters

as well as a shared belief in spirits and ancestors, whereas in the West the dead are *gone* or *finished* (2013, p.204).

Therefore, by taking back control of a loved one's place of rest or creating a memorial gesture whether it is a bench, tree, windchime or bunch of flowers, the bereaved has an opportunity to personalise their grief, thus 'continuing bonds,' and a relationship is maintained and acts as:

a 'memory object', 'linking object' or as what is identified as a 'passage landscape' (Maddrell, 2013, p.203).

It is important to note that the memorials observed along the SDW are neither age, species, or gender specific but act as a conduit, keeping the person or animal alive to the bereaved as well as acting as emotional reminders to passers-by. There is a compulsion to read memorial tributes combined with a feeling of voyeurism, especially when there are other walkers around. The complexity of emotions to look, but not for too long, along with empathy and distaste connects with how these memorials have been written about in the newspapers, corresponding to the controversy about the trees left to rot on Harting Down, both subjects causing media outrage.

The indicator that carparks now perform as portals to the deceased, facilitating solace and connection, even an emotional homecoming, where the bereaved leave their cars, then walk a processional-path to the place where ashes have been cast or a memorial has been left acts as a *homecoming*, described by Freud as familiar or native (Freud, 1919, p.2). The opposite is unfamiliar or uncanny: an unsettled feeling of being somewhere familiar or recognisable but with a sensation of unease or fear (1919, p.1), this could be the reason why, for some individuals, the huge municipal graveyards, although familiar, have no sense of homeliness or relationship, thus the only way to maintain a 'continuing bond' is to locate a place of mutual connection.

The processional-paths radiating away from the carparks with their individualised memorials stimulate irrational feelings of the uncanny, inasmuch that the memorials are inescapable, potent objects of contemporary emotion that the passer-by is forced to engage with, even if only peripherally. This uncomfortable entanglement with someone else's grief or state of being is sanitised when there are hundreds or thousands of years between encounters.

One way of trying to comprehend behaviour patterns through landscape on the South Downs is via the project *Secrets of the High Woods* a partnership project between the SDNP, Chichester District Council, Historic England, the Forestry Commission, and the National Trust. Archaeology

for the site, an area between the A3 and the river Arun, began in the 1950's but because of dense forestation, archaeologists were thwarted as well as frustrated as they could see there were well-preserved field systems, earthworks and boundaries (Cunliffe, 2017) yet it was not until 2011 and the use of LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) that archaeologists were able to identify traces in the landscape that have been hidden for thousands of years (SDNP,2017). The time-deep (Bone, 2016) investigation was able to comprehend the landscape from prehistoric farming, through to Bronze age burials, Norman deer parks and beyond. Raising more questions than answers, it is evident that the landscape has been managed either for farming or recreation and that people and animals lived and died together for thousands of years.

Evidence suggests that rituals surrounding death act as a way to maintain a bond to the deceased or a 'liminal, third emotional-space' (Maddrell, p.511) where loved ones can retain a bond through personal even intimate gestures placed in the landscape, arrived at by walking processional-paths that radiate away from the carpark offering a doorway in and out of the spirit world.

Whether it is the spirit world, cyberspace, or time, everyone has a different relationship with each of these phenomena. Cyberspace is slowly replacing carbon-based industry, but both rely heavily on the measurement of time to be able to organise workforces and global trade deals. The act of walking through time and space along these ancient paths, imagining when time was measured by daylight was specifically symbolic when crossing from the Eastern Hemisphere to the Western Hemisphere on the South Downs Way, traversing the Prime Meridian near Virginia Woolf's home at Rodmell. This imaginary line running from the North Pole to the South Pole, divides the eastern and western hemispheres of the earth and was negotiated in 1884 in response to the Industrial Revolution and the efficiency and control of commerce. (The Royal Parks, 2020).

It was at marker post TQ4005 (geography, 2001) (fig.113) we found a cairn of flints. Not having any idea what this contemporary ritualistic cairn meant, my companion and I ceremonially placed a flint onto the carefully constructed pile, both of us felt odd or possibly uncanny because neither of us had a clue as to what or who we were honouring (at the time), but we felt compelled to join in the publicly constructed memorial to ritualistically commemorate what we now know is time.

On reflection we were commemorating, lack of time, misuse of time, passage of time, time and place, time honoured traditions, which through efficiency and commerce have blocked important paths of communication whilst at the same time opening a billion others.



Figure 113. Rose, M. 2019. *Greenwich meridian marker post SDW*. [Digital Image].

Beachy Head

As previously mentioned, the reaction of wanting to join-in, pay respect to, or scrutinise memorial tributes placed in the landscape is complex. Beachy Head, the first significant landmark on the SDW, from the East, is littered with memorials; from bunches of flowers to a colossal World War II monument. The location is the highest chalk cliff in Britain with a drop of 162 metres and is one of the world's most notorious suicide spots (Inside Out, 2003). The significance of both landscape and suicide has made this place a major tourist attraction, where it is possible to observe coachloads of tourists, including some desperate to get a perfect family portrait of their loved ones whilst teetering on the edge of this imposing cliff (fig.114), intensifying the seduction and popularity of death.

Mark Fisher's book, *The Weird and the Eerie* focuses on these two title words in the opening chapter, stating they equate to strangeness not horror, and that there is an undeniable attraction to forces that are beyond our imagination, possibly even a compulsion to experience, momentarily a sense of dread. (Fisher, 2016, p.20)



Figure 114. Barlow. A. 2018. *Walker's dice with death on cliff edge, just days after collapse*. [Digital Image].

Research into the phenomenon of suicides at Beachy Head introduced the term suicide tourism (Murphy, 2018) used specifically in the tabloid press to describe people who travel long distances to a specific location to kill themselves. This sort of reporting has proved to encourage potential suicide victims, with clusters of events occurring in response to media coverage (Surtees, 1982).

Other studies have specified the various approaches used to end life, including driving, jumping, and stepping off the cliff-edge often leaving bottles of alcohol, cigarettes, and mobile phones (Hunt, 2009). Yet for some, preparation prior to jumping is considered and thoughtful, with shoes neatly placed together and clothes folded. The photographer Wendy Pye, whose work focuses on the ambiguous time between life and death, has captured some of these belongings in her artwork, *Liminal* (Hopper, 2017, p.236) (fig .115).

Pye's photographs are quiet and composed, portraying both an intimacy combined with an overwhelming emptiness, between personal carefully arranged items and the vast open landscape. Opening narratives about the people these lives belonged to, the stories they had to tell and the now complete stillness and calm after such a violent and complex act.



Figure 115. Pye, W. *Liminal-1*. [51 x 51cm C-type print Edition of 10].

The white cliffs, seen for many, are their first or last glimpse of England and contributes to the historic name Albion, named by the Romans, *albus* from the Latin translation meaning white (Clifford and King, 1988), featured in the title of Justin Hopper's book *The Old Weird Albion* which begins with the suicide of his step-grandmother at Beachy Head in July 1932 (2017, p.237). The book is a personal journey using the South Downs Way as a narrative to contemplate Hopper's

existence. Had his step-grandmother not killed herself and the grandfather remarried, Hopper would not be who he is now.

Through investigative work, including finding snippets from the local Gazette, Hopper discovers that Doris, his step-grandmother, initially survived the fall and was rescued along with her handbag, but later died in hospital. Hopper dwells on Doris's handbag, was she clutching it, did she leave it on the cliff-edge, reminiscent of the neatly folded clothes in Pye's photographs, the handbag is significant, possibly because it is such a mundane item – a domestic decision made before such a brutal act.

Beachy Head is a strange place, it is not a beauty spot where you might scatter ashes, but it is a monumental place to remember our war dead, who seem, sadly eclipsed by the fact that this location is an active place of death. In 2012 a six-tonne monument was airlifted onto Beachy Head, dedicated to the 55,573 who died in Bomber Command during World War II, the monument is also dedicated to the 11,000 who became prisoners of war (BBC, 2012) (fig.116).

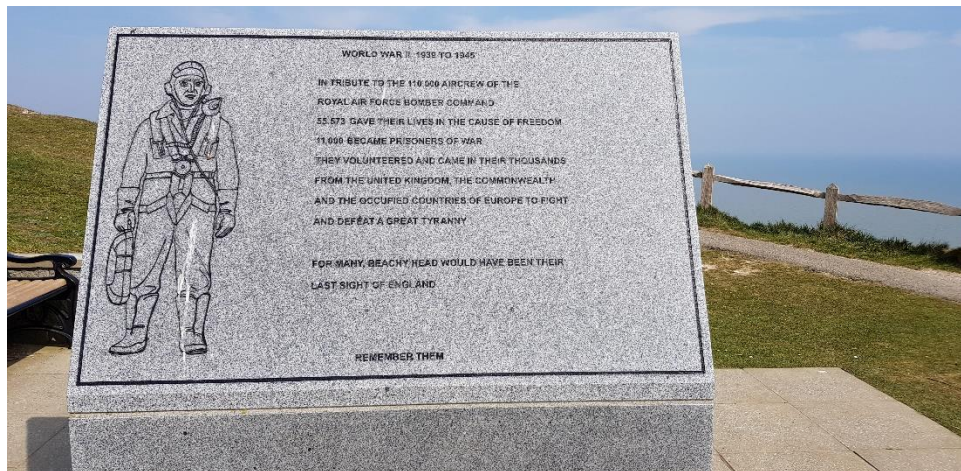


Figure 116. Rose, M. 2019. *RAF Bomber Command Memorial*. [Digital Image].

The last section of the inscription on the monument reads, *For Many, Beachy Head Would Have Been Their Last Sight of England* which gives a compounding impression to this notorious landmark. In May 2018 Eastbourne District Council removed all permanent and semi-permanent plaques, mementos, and plants, stating that the offerings encouraged others to end their lives (Telegraph, 2018) which is supported by evidence gathered in the 1982 medical journal, stating that death attracts death (Surtees, 1982).

It might be considered weird that so much death is situated in one spot, but research dictates, that easy access, (the site has a regular bus service), and media coverage all contribute to the location attracting so many suicides (Surtees, 1982), but it is not eerie as there are so many tourists, a grand view of Eastbourne and a nearby pub with a huge layby to accommodate coaches, but it is weird, Fisher describes *weird* as:

that *which does not belong*. The weird brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it, and which cannot be reconciled with the “homely” (even as its negation) (2016, p.10).

Therefore, Beachy Head is a weird place, a standalone place, a place that is difficult to describe, corresponding to the conundrum Mark Fisher had with the words *weird* and *eerie* in relation to Freud’s theories concerning the *uncanny* which Fisher describes as the *strange within the familiar* (2016, p.10). Fisher also challenges Freud’s essay ‘Das Unheimlich’ stating that Freud himself is an unreliable narrator, providing glimpses from an outer perspective through psychoanalysis to an inner unsettled psychological world, which he resolves when describing the word weird, since it is the glimpses or fissures that lure, thus inviting a morbid curiosity that in this instance attracts so many day-trippers. Fisher further examines the word *weird* describing it is as a “montage of meanings” (2016, p.11). On reflection, Beachy Head is a complex montage of meanings, it is a surreal place that draws together the monumental, tragic, and voyeuristic.

Perhaps the local authority needs to reassess how the Beachy Head landscape is managed and provide alongside the war memorial a public place/space/memorial acknowledging suicide in a secular way which might offer a:

liminal ‘Third Emotional Space’ that affords public mapping of private emotion (Maddrell, 2013, p.511).

Close to the war memorial is a plaque with a prayer (fig.119) aimed at individuals contemplating suicide, but there is nothing for the bereaved. Maddrell explores the placing of private memorials and the impact it has on the public, stating that such landscape provocations are contentious, causing public outrage by offending for a variety of reasons including landscape aesthetics, emotional distaste, and religious transgression. Having said all this there are still bunches of flowers left on benches (fig.118), tied to the fences as well as chalk stones making the shape of

hearts (fig.120), therefore the semi-permanent memorials are still very much in evidence making claim to an unresolved problem that, for the council, will not go away.

At the heart of this is a dialogue about the “absence of presence” (Maddrell, p.501) exacerbated on Beachy Head by the very public, presence of absence.



Figure 117. Rose, M. 2019. *Bench Memorial 2*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on birch plywood 30cm x 30cm].



Figure 118. Rose, M. 2020. *Bench Memorial 2*. [Digital image].



Figure 119. Rose, M. 2019. *Prayer Memorial Beachy Head*. [Digital Image].



Figure 120. Rose, M. 2019. *Chalk Heart Beachy Head*. [Digital Image].

The emotional volatility at Beachy Head is evident by its human relationships not only as an extraordinary tourist attraction but because human interaction has intensified coastal erosion.

Scientists can confirm that the cliffs are deteriorating ten times faster today than at any other time in the past few thousand years because of human management (Hurst et al, 2016). This was magnified on 3rd April 2001 when a 70-metre chalk stack called the Devils Chimney (fi.122) collapsed in what the Independent newspaper describes as a *spectacular rock fall* crashing into the sea (McCarthy, 2001).



Figure 121. Rose, M. 2019. *Beachy Head Lighthouse*. [Digital Image].

Figure 122. Rose, M (my mother). 1954. *Beachy Head Lighthouse and Devils Chimney*. [Photograph]

The newspaper manages to weave global warming, beauty-spots, and suicides into two paragraphs. This fusion of death, landscape and mystery is a perpetual journalistic source of material, including a statement by a White Witch to the author Tom Hunt for the Guardian newspaper, declaring that, “ley lines create bad energy on the cliff-top” (Hunt, 2009), this conjecture has been used in both tabloid and local press, a phenomenon identified on a ley-hunters map,

where it is clear there is a convergence of four ley-lines at this precise location (fig.123) (Shropshire History).

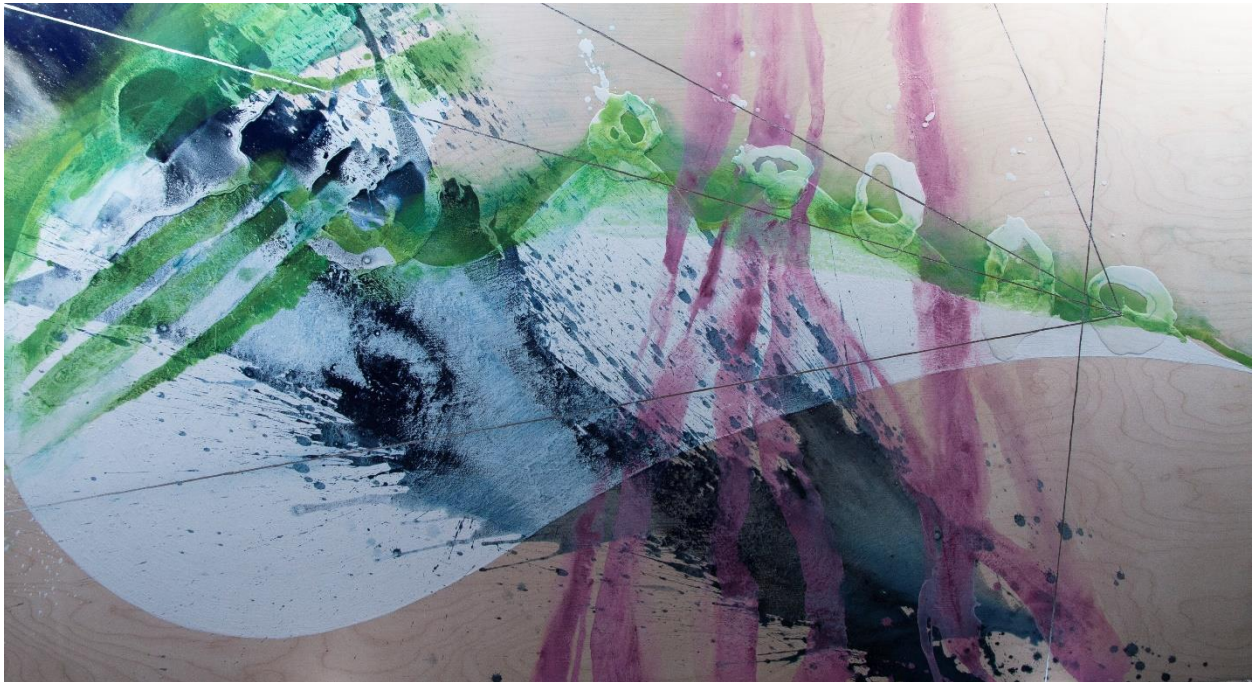


Figure 123. Rose, M. 2019. *Seven Sisters with Ley-lines*. [egg tempera, metal leaf, chalk gesso on birch plywood 214cm x 122cm].

The painting *Seven Sisters* (fig.123) depicts the chalk cliffs with an intersection of ley lines mapped directly onto Beachy Head. The painting illustrates coastal erosion through the violence of the waves against the chalk cliff face, combined with two endangered species, the chalk grassland on top of the cliffs and the kelp forest off the coast.

Foci & Loci

Ley lines are straight lines that link tumuli, beacons, burial sites, holy places including wells and cairns and many other features in the landscape (Watkins, 1925, p.viii). The start of the SDW at Eastbourne, splits in two with a bridleway and cycle track offering an alternative to the pedestrian route across the Seven Sisters cliffs, meeting up again at Alfriston. North-west of Beachy Head on the bridleway is the Long Man of Wilmington, a huge chalk figure carved into Windover Hill and discussed by Alfred Watkins in his seminal book *The Old Straight Track*. Watkins describes the chalk figure as holding two sighting staves as a means of measuring straight lines (Watkins, 1925, p.53)⁵⁰



Figure 124. Ravilious, E. 1939. *The Long Man of Wilmington*. [Watercolour].

In 1939 Eric Ravilious painted a watercolour of the Wilmington Giant. Unknowingly I sat in the same place as Ravilious and can attest that the view has changed very little over the past eighty years. (fig.126)

⁵⁰ The theory of ley lines predate Watkins book *The Old Straight Track* and remain an area of contention.



Figure 125. Rose, M. 2020. *Long Man after Ravilious*.
[Egg tempera, oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 30cm

Ravilious would have sat just off Chapel Hill Lane in Lullington, possibly behind a hedge shielding himself from the stiff late-summer breeze which is visible by the clouds scudding across the sky and the movement of grass and corn, ripe for harvest. World War II officially started on the 1st September 1939, this painting depicts a sense of foreboding, the grey clouds coming in off the channel, barbed wire corralling the artist and the food supply, watched over by an ancient giant whose formation date is contested (V&A, 2020) but nevertheless a protector of the landscape.

The grey shape next to the Long Man, in Ravilious' s painting is a copse or scrub (fig.126), he also differentiates the very top of the hill which is an early to middle Neolithic long barrow (Historic England, 1981). It is unnerving to contemplate that Ravilious was lost in action off the coast of Iceland working as a war artist three years later having sat in such a tranquil location capturing a very English sense of menace through the depiction of a landscape.



Figure 126. Rose, M. 2019. *The Long Man of Wilmington*. [Digital image].

On the 30th September 2019 I was in conversation with the photographer Allan Granger at a Towner Gallery event in Eastbourne with reference to the South Downs landscape that we were both making work about, later that day Granger led a circular night walk in silence and without torches from the church at Lullington over Windover Hill, finishing at the Long Man pub.

The time I had between the talk and the walk I used to investigate the Long Man of Wilmington with the aim of sketching on location. Like Ravilious' s painting, the day was showery with a brisk wind, I did not have Ravilious in mind when I set about sketching, it is only on reflection and examining his painting that I can see we were sitting in very similar places, tucked away out of the wind, just off the road almost eighty years to the day.

*This collision in spacetime, in a landscape defined by chalk and paths, tumuli, ditches, and drawings cut into the substrata, aligned to a disposition of loss, is a concept I aimed to capture in the painting *Lost Friends* (fig.127). Inspired by the night walk,*

the experience felt ritualistic and at times weird, but as previously mentioned, we are never far from comic, because it was not long before the group became separated, and in an attempt to find those missing, the group leaders stood on top of the long barrow and shone their phone-torches.

The sight of insignificant figures with their insignificant lights searching for what on reflection appeared more than the group; perhaps seeking an answer at a crossroads in time.

The concept that phones have memory activated by nearby masts enabling global communication and here we were unable to find each other. Standing in complete darkness, wind and rain now driving in, we took shelter in the lee of the barrow, now a nationally important unexcavated site (Historic England, 1990), where buried deep beneath would be skeletal remains of entire communities or possibly the chosen few, nevertheless evidence demonstrates that these sites were ceremonially ritualistic where our ancestors celebrated and communed with the dead.



Figure 127. Rose, M. 2019. *Lost Friends*. [Oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 61cm x 91cm].

The ongoing fascination with ancient burial sites is summed up in Watkins's introduction, as he quotes from W.H. Hudson's 1903 book *Hampshire Days*:

We sometimes feel a kinship with, and are strangely drawn to the dead, the men who knew not life in towns, and felt no strangeness in sun and wind and rain. In such a mood on that evening I went to one of those lonely barrows (1925, p.vii).

Tumuli are the common name for Barrows and other earth/stone covered burial sites which in the UK date from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age (3800 – 1400 BCE). Archaeological classification lists fourteen varieties with many of these visible along the South Downs Way (Historic England, 2018). The common *Round* barrows are scattered along the ridge and are protected ancient monuments, landowners are by law obliged to take care of them, some are easy to see whilst others are tucked away in woodland or on scarp edges, the more significant are fenced off with interpretation boards.

The Devil's Jumps (fig.128), unlike Old Winchester Hill where the tumuli are modest Round barrows visible from a distance, are by contrast accessed through woodland from the SDW path and consist of five immense Bell barrows which align on Midsummer's day as the sun sets. The Bell barrows are eerie, possibly because of their surprising scale, looming up from the earth, as we came out of the woodland, viewed against the backdrop of the Weald, they certainly have a sense of mystery, Fisher in a continuation of his analysis of the word *eerie*, states that:

Fundamentally [it is] to do with the outside...we find the eerie more readily in landscapes partially emptied of the human. What happened to produce these ruins, this disappearance? What kind of entity was involved? What kind of thing was it that emitted such an *eerie cry*? (Fisher, 2016, p.11).



Figure 128. Rose, M. 2019. *Devils Jumps*. [Digital Image].

As Fisher explains, the eerie is not found in a domestic space, it is found in a place where questions are raised. The evidence of an ancient people dating back thousands of years draws into question human agency and the hierarchy still set within tribes or communities, combined with a continued and unresolved desire to honour the dead. These patterns or rhythms permit the ghosts of the past to haunt the present, made more evident when connected to contemporary questions challenging who can place memorials where and by whom:

Capital is at every level an eerie entity: conjured out of nothing, capital nevertheless exerts more influence than any allegedly substantial entity (Fisher, 2016, p.11).

Capital does play a part when it comes to who can put what where, this argument dates from prehistory with designated individuals entitled to specific burial rights. The placing of monuments and memorials today is more complex, not only is it to do with land ownership, but public taste making the subject contentious (Maddrell), however wherever they are placed they are usually in a prominent position in the landscape.

The debate can be explored further since one of the unforeseen consequences of encouraging people from the cities and towns that surround the South Downs into the National Park combined

with municipalisation of burial, is that people are choosing specific locations for ashes to be scattered or the placing of personal memorials:

The landscape is never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and stipulated, whether as individual, group or nation state (Bender, 1993, p.3).

Therefore, it could be argued that people need to have a sense of ownership or even an ancestral connection to the landscape. The ancient churches and graveyards set within the South Downs span centuries with many built on ancient ceremonial sites including tumuli and wells. The buildings themselves include evolved vernacular, from the Saxon period and beyond. Living on the South Downs, as parishioners, there is an inherent right to be interred in the local churchyard. These churchyards with their ancient yew trees and crumbling tombstones, benches and wildlife are for many a haven for reflection and solace. A complete contrast to the municipal sites that are regimented with row upon row of graves often within earshot of the busy roads that afford access.

With the population expansion and a recognition for local amenities (including shops and surgeries), within new towns non-denominational graveyards should have been included. For thousands of years, tribes, communities, invaders, conquerors, and societies have adapted ceremonial burial customs to appease the people, it is clear there is a fissure in what has been provided compared to what is wanted.

Cernunnos and the Road Home

Throughout this chapter I have pieced together information corresponding to the methodology assigned to bricolage, but in some instances, I have turned to deep mapping, which uses site-specific information to build a precise picture of a place, including folklore, artworks, maps, and oral histories. One such place, rich with historical layers is Chanctonbury Ring, a prehistoric hillfort and local landmark, where there have been UFO and faerie sightings as well as locals levitating and witchcraft (Ghostly Admin, 2012).

In the centre, at the top of Chanctonbury Ring are Bronze Age Round barrows, dykes from the Saxon period and a Roman temple dating between the first and fourth centuries BCE (Brandon, 1998, p.8). The *Ring* was conceivably defined by the original ramparts of the hillfort, but for hundreds of years it has applied to a ring of Beech trees, a controversial planting by Charles Goring in 1760 (Brandon, 1998, p.8). Most of these ancient trees were blown down in the great storm of 1987, but new trees were planted and there remains a small woodland.

Arriving here on one of the hottest days in late summer 2019, which was also the day of the Trailwalker Challenge (fig.129), this hot bright, busy landscape (fig.130), appeared incongruous to Robert Macfarlane's account of walking on Chanctonbury Ring.



Figure 129. Tugwell, R. 2019. *Oxfam Trailwalker Challenge, Chanctonbury Ring*. [Digital Image].



Figure 130. Rose, M. 2019. *Chanctonbury Ring*. [Digital Image].

In the book *The Old Ways*, Macfarlane was not only walking ancient trails, but often in the footsteps of artists and writers. On this occasion he was tracing the footsteps of Laurie Lee, who wrote about Chanctonbury Ring in *As I walked Out One Midsummer Morning*; Lee writes movingly about the vagrants, or *tramps* as they were called in the early 1930's, men walking the ancient paths some desperately seeking work up and down the country whilst others were professional *tramps* living from hand-to-mouth rotating the seasons from village to village (Macfarlane, 2012, p.315).

Whilst sleeping out on Chanctonbury Ring, Macfarlane, writes of a terrifying first-hand experience. His description of events corresponds perfectly to Fisher's earlier description of the *eerie*:

I heard the first scream at around two o'clock in the morning. A high-pitched human cry protracted but falling away (2012, p.318).

once home Macfarlane discovered a wealth of stories, mostly relating to summoning the devil, which apparently can be done if you walk or run around the Ring seven times, although it is not clear whether this is clockwise or anticlockwise, but once summonsed the Devil will offer you a bowl of soup, milk, or porridge in return for your soul (Sussex Archaeology). The roots of this story are hard to pin down, one explanation on the Sussex Archaeology website is that the Devil is linked to the Roman god Mithras and the complexity of mixing paganism with Christianity.

That there has been so much activity for so many thousands of years at this location, is evidence that for one reason or another people are drawn to certain sites.

The Devil in myth, folktales, songs, and place names features a great deal in Sussex, whether he is flinging clumps of earth from his spade to create Chanctonbury Ring, whilst at the same time creating the Devils Dyke and other land features (National Trust). The relationship between the Devil and Sussex is thought to be because it was one of the last counties to conform to Christianity (Simpson, 1973, p.62) as well as having dense forest in places combined with being notoriously marshy and therefore difficult to navigate.

In folklore the Devil is attributed to nature and wild places⁵¹. One conjecture is that the ancient paths travelling North/South previously mentioned might have created an inherent fear. Certainly the place names are abundantly Devil inspired including, Devil's Dyke, Devil's Book, Devil's Ditch,

⁵¹ Enchanted Environments Eco-Criticism & Folklore Studies, symposium March 2020 - conversation with Professor Darren Oldridge, specialist in sixteenth and seventeenth-century religious history who confirmed that places referring to the Devil were often wild, forested, natural places.

Devil's Bog, Devil's Road, Devil's Race, Devil's Jumps, Devils Rest, Devil's Bottom, Devil's Chimney and Devil's Footprint to name only a few from the list on the Sussex website (Sussex) you can go fruit picking with the Devil, summons him, make a pact with him, the legends and stories are endless and seem somewhat tangled in archaeology creating fissures in time and space.

In 1982 the discovery of a coin with the head of Cernunnos was found in West Sussex. Cernunnos is a pagan god "master of wild places and things" (Mythopedia, 2019) the coin, one of fifty found in and around the locale was created between c.50 BCE and c.30 BCE (Rudd, 2009) during the Roman occupation of Europe, possibly belonging to wealthy Gallic war migrants. The South Coast was and is a coastline wrought with piracy, invasion, migration, and trade. Prior to WWI, invaders, traders, and everyday workers headed inland, up over the chalk ridge, into the forested, marshy Weald, for many, the unknown. The impact of navigating through this landscape for whatever reason might have been considered perilous, therefore it is understandable why the landscape needed taming:

Places are always marked by what has gone before, by the people who populated and shaped the environment in many different ways, by the weather of millennia, by the habitations and actions of the non-human (Heholt & Downing, 2016, p.2).

Even though a landscape may have changed beyond recognition, in this case the South Downs, place names, stories and beliefs are discernible and are continually evolving based on what has previously gone before. We are currently at a global tipping point where human behaviour has been detrimental to the natural world, manifest by an inability to deal with death, whether it is the death of a person, more than human, or landscape unless through a corporate third-party.

In recent history it was World War II, as mentioned in Chapter 7, that had the biggest impact on the South Downs altering what was a remote landscape as well as destroying beyond all measure features such as the Devil's Dyke. The Canadian army having used the location as a training ground. Prior to World War II the Devil's Dyke was immensely popular, captured in the painting *Regency rank and fashion* (fig.34) featured in Chapter 6.

During the Regency and Victorian era, it was estimated that 30,000 visitors arrived daily (National Trust). John Constable wrote in a letter to his friend and confidant John Fisher, "we went to the dyke" the "most grand" a landscape (Feaver, 2006), referring to the "longest, deepest and widest 'dry valley' in the UK, created during the last ice age by melted ice-water shaping its way South

through the chalk” (Whitman & Haggart, 2018, p.17). This remarkable landscape has undergone so much superficial transformation or historical mini deaths with clues and remnants left as one era flows into another.

The day that Constable visited, he describes to Fisher, as a beautiful hot day and that his family are happy, he also writes that there was a lot of “footfall” which was hardly surprising with two bandstands, camera obscura, observatory, railway-station, cable car and steep-gauge railway, as well as an Iron Age hillfort, Roman Villa, round barrows, and archaeological evidence of an early medieval mass burial site (National Trust).

The hot day and the wide vista were not inspirational for Constable, comparable to my visit to Chanctonbury Ring, in the searing heat with hordes of visitors. By comparison, the Devils Dyke on a wet misty day in 2019 is a bleak place with a bus turning circle and a 1960's chalet styled pub, it is a place of signs, traces, and monuments to a bygone era, almost unimaginable had it not been for the paintings, early photographs and films available on the National Trust website. Walking through the mist we could not help but notice a group of young people, their hoods up to stave off the rain (fig.133), some were playing football (fig.132) while others just stared into the abyss.

The vast mist filled grey abyss, on a day not unlike the one on Ditchling Beacon when I came across the cremated ashes, was heavy with moisture and melancholy, a landscape emotion explored in the book *Weatherlands* by Alexandra Harris. One of Harris's earliest examples is a c.190 AD, Roman mosaic unearthed at Bignor, twenty miles East along the SDW from the Devil's Dyke, where a Roman artist has portrayed the season *winter* (fig.131). Harris describes how this early artist depicts what is a bleak time of year:

Heavy brows and sunken eyes give the face its melancholy. A hand pokes out from swathes of woollen cloak to hold up a bare branch (Harris, 2016, p.20)



Figure 131. Richardson, Rolf. 2008. Bignor Roman Villa, *Winter Mosaic*. [Digital Image].



Figure 132. M Rose. *Playing football in the mist near the bus stop at the Devils Dyke*. 2019. [Digital Image].



Figure 133. M Rose. *Hooded figures at the Devils Dyke*. 2019. [Digital Image].

This hooded figure created nearly two thousand years ago echoes the hooded figures observed at the Devils Dyke with their absorbent hoodies, a reminder of how landscape can create displacement and how clothing can interrupt perception. It is plausible that if the young people were Duke of Edinburgh students with outdoor clothing and backpacks there would have been no incongruity.

Fixed mindsets about who belongs where combined with what the landscape should look like are today being challenged. A way in which I have approached this is by decoding artworks including paintings, posters, and online media, observed in (figs.134 & 135), looking as much at who features in the images as at the landscape, they are in.



Figures 134 & 135. National Trails. [Digital Image].

As we walk from Sussex into Hampshire, monuments to the dead become few and far between, there is still an abundance of round barrows dotted either side of the South Downs Way, but benches and memorial stones, plaques and flowers become less obvious, most possibly because the land is privately owned or owned by the MOD (Ministry of Defence). One such MOD site is HMS Mercury a Navel communications and navigation school decommissioned in 1993 when 55 acres of the southern side of the site became The Sustainability Centre with a natural or woodland burial site (Sustainability Centre). Maddrell investigates “woodland cemeteries” (2013, p.509) affirming that plants can be interpreted in very personalised ways, someone’s favourite tree, flower, shrub, planted to honour that person becoming a manifestation of the deceased:

Continued *presence* through their very life (of the plant) growth, longevity, and permanence, with their characteristics embodying ‘aspects of personal

and cultural memory, thereby facilitating and sustaining relationships beyond the grave' (2013, p.109).`

The woodland burial site is less than two miles away from Old Winchester Hill an ancient Bronze Age burial site and Iron Age hillfort (fig.136).



Figure 136. Rose, M. 2020. *Wolf Moon, Old Winchester Hill*.
[Egg tempera, metal leaf, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 35cm x 30cm].

The proximity of the two burial sites built a millennium or more apart reveal a continuum of natural rhythms. The woodland graves are concealed and subtle compared to the still huge mounds of earth, that according to archaeologists on the interpretation board, would have been left *chalk white* and have stood proud against the surrounding landscape. Bodies interred into the earth detectable by either monumental earthworks or today in the woodland by Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) (Ministry of Justice, 2009).

The landscape at Old Winchester Hill is equidistance from the Sussex border (where paintings captured in the DAI come to an end), and Winchester the official finish/start of the SDW. Walking into Hampshire, the landscape quietens:

In Hampshire, the Way has no obvious ridgeway to follow, so it's cobbled together from a patchwork of scrappy trackways and walking paths (Hopper, 2017, p.119).

Although there are still tumuli spread along the path, such as those at Beacon Hill which the path traverses close to a seventeenth century public house called The Milbury's situated on Millbarrow Down, an intersection of ancient trackways surrounded by Bronze Age burial mounds. Interpreting this landscape is complex, the sense of connection through painting is missing, but there is a familial connection, having lived in the area for many years.

Throughout this investigation there is an ongoing question about *legacy of place* through experiential patterns, which in respect of Winchester, could be argued to be in plain sight today, through its ecclesiastical relationship with the monarchy and government, upheld by the patronage of land. In other words, since the year 676, there has been a Christian church in Winchester, with its roots firmly in pagan culture, the original church was built on a holy well (Winchester Cathedral). Hence it is hardly surprising folklore in Hampshire is thin, compared to Sussex, one of the last counties to convert to Christianity. Therefore, as Christianity took a stronghold in terms of power and wealth in Hampshire, so the surrounding landscape subdued in accordance with doctrine.

The Cathedral's dioceses today reaches as far as the Channel Islands, Surrey, London, and Sussex and is the oldest and most expansive in England. It is unrelentingly commercial and hugely profitable. And yet the cathedral has been attacked, put under siege and nearly sank into the floodplains. The first recorded attack was by Vikings in 860 and then again in 879 (Winchester Cathedral, 2015) then during the Civil War, Oliver Cromwell's army in 1642:

Stabled their horses in the cathedral and deliberately damaged the medieval stained glass around the building, as well as adding graffiti to the walls, breaking bits off statues and knocking over the Mortuary Chests containing the bones of early Kings (Winchester Cathedral, 2015, p.2).

Although the stained glass was replaced, the bones to this day remain in a muddle, while Tate Britain staff discovered musket-ball holes in a statue of Charles I, when the statue was on loan from the Cathedral for the exhibition *Art Under Attack* (Sharpe, 2013).

It is notable that in the painting *Cromwell's Troops Entering Winchester* (fig.137) the road the artist George Arnold has depicted appears to be the same as that in Tobias Young's painting (fig.19) examined in Chapter 6, both artists adding *picturesque* flourishes to their paintings of the old St Cross road leading to London, via Winchester from Southampton, now replaced by the M3, which controversially superseded the Winchester by-pass.



Figure 137. Arnold, G.1810. *Cromwell's Troops Entering Winchester*. [Painting]. Hampshire Cultural Trust

The building of the M3 caused one of the biggest landscape battles played out in modern times - the battle of the Dongas in 1992 (fig.138), named after the Matabele word for gully (Vidal, 2012). The building of the M3, to save a few minutes journey time (Guardian, 2012) from using the Winchester bypass, set a precedent for anti-road campaigning but sadly did not save Twyford Down adjacent to St Catherine's Hill which was sliced in half, decimating, and destroying two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, two Scheduled Ancient Monuments and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Therefore, to access Winchester and the finishing point at the City Mill from the South Downs Way, the walker must cross the M3 via a narrow pedestrian concrete bridge (fig.139)



Figure 138. Hiraethifield. 2009.
Remembering Twyford Down (M3)
road protest [Digital Image].



Figure 139. Gellatly, A. 2019. *M3 from*
pedestrian bridge. [Digital Image]

That the 100-mile South Downs Way walk should end with the harsh reality of concrete and cars is deflating. Compared to the Eastbourne end, where you are either going up or coming down an open hill to or from the coast, is an example of how vested interest has ‘funnelled’ access by implementing policies devolved of inclusivity but driven by power, as a result marginalising residents, walkers, habitat, and ecology.

In conversation with SDW rangers they mentioned that they would like to see a three-mile-wide green bridge built across the M3 with the SDW finishing/starting at St Catherine’s Hill not the City Mill in Winchester. This would solve the problem of the path being rerouted at Cheesefoot Head during festival time but one of the main problems, apart from finances, is access through Ministry of Defence land that has active shooting ranges, the legacy of an impenetrable city continues. As one archaeologist explained⁵² Winchester has spent thousands of years keeping people out and hosts six independent military museums demonstrating its historical stronghold.

This stronghold can be seen in Baigent’s painting to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Victoria (HCT), *View from Airing Ground*, (fig.140) illustrating the Peninsula Barracks, now private flats, as well as housing Winchester’s Military Museums.

⁵² Conversation with archaeologist Paul McCulloch BA MCIfA



Figure 140. Baigent, R. *View from Airing Ground (Winchester)*. [Painting]. Hampshire Cultural Trust

The arguments running through this chapter examine the connection between landscape features such as memorials to the deceased and contemporary behavioural patterns, Maddrell makes clear the importance of continuing bonds to the deceased through shrines and memorials, but continuing bonds to landscape or understanding ‘the commonplace’ is more nuanced. Tilley maintains that:

Locales are places created and known through common experiences, symbols and meaning (Tilley, 1994, p.19).

Hopper in his account of walking the SDW described Winchester as if watching from another century, certainly his experience was not a common one, watching two Wykehamists, pupils from the oldest English public-school debating with two of their masters.

And yet Hoppers disconnect refers to Hayes argument in the Introduction, that severance dissociates connectedness, thus impoverishing society. Hayes was discussing access to the land, but this notion could be translated to specific places and people.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

In the conclusion I want to consider the implications of this research, considering first what painting has meant, from a practitioner's perspective, throughout the PhD to the inference of analysing hundreds of paintings featuring the SDNP landscape underpinned by texts that deconstruct painting both philosophically (Elkins, 2019) and politically (Graw, 2018).

This chapter will summarise major themes running through the thesis beginning with painting, followed by an analysis in response to the exhibition *Facing Bothe Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*. This is then followed by two of my key methods *walking*, without which I would not have been able to confirm or deny detail when analysing paintings in the *DAI* a method created to be able to compare historical landscape features in response to contemporary concerns including rewilding and access to the countryside.

Finally, I will reflect on the consequences of death and decay in the landscape and how by maintaining a continuing bond or third emotional space (Madrell, 2013, p.203) observed whilst walking the SDW through monuments and memorials, not only raises questions about tidiness through idealised notions of what a landscape *should* look like, but also about access and ritual.

Painting

This practice-led investigation began in the field, moved to the studio, and finished, for me, in the gallery, but may continue for others by inference of technology and digital information stored on viewers phones by means of the QR codes and NCF tags used in the exhibition to link the paintings which then triangulated them back to the landscape or a historical painting of the same place.

It might be considered that my painting begins by walking, both as a physical act as well as re-walking the same path from memory before stepping into the studio. Perhaps this move into a working space is akin to walking from one world to another, as a practitioner there is a sense of slowing down or a shift in pace. However, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, we might also

consider that painting begins long before the step into the studio but rather, it began with a first step out of the car onto the South Downs Way.

But is this really where my painting starts? Might my paintings be considered a small additional steppingstone in the long history of landscape painting and land art, the materials from burial mounds and the QR codes that this footpath has inspired? I want to ruminate on where the origins of my painting might actually start, so as to remind the reader of my title: *Commuter Routes to Leisure Facilities: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*.

That long historical trajectory has been collated into a body of paintings tracing the landscape along the SDW from Eastbourne and the Seven Sisters in the East to Winchester and the M3 in the West. In addition, SDNP landscapes presented in historic texts or areas of land interrogated through deep mapping. Beginning with an attention to the materials selected; chalk, pigment, and wood, natural resources, vested in place and history, that take time to prepare adding another layer of slowness before attending to recurring themes including tumuli, paths, ghosts, and wildlife. The paintings evolving as research progressed, forming richly layered, complex and composite surfaces where I have been able to examine arguments as well as sanction answers to my questions by reimagining the landscape.

Significantly the impact my paintings elicited during the exhibition through feedback from data gathered by Hampshire Cultural Trust (figs.146 &147), demonstrates that painting is non-hierarchical as well as an egalitarian, universal visual language for change. The former debate regarding the legacy of painting is clearly outdated and merely a moment in the historical canon, “painting has regained both cultural relevance and legitimacy” (Pooke, 2011, p.117), arguably more so than ever, as a means of measuring change through analysis presented in the DAI as well as a vehicle by which change can be articulated, through contemporary painting.

It was also through the act of painting that I was able to investigate *picturesque* theory, by comparing paintings I made before and during lockdown discussed in Chapter 5, *Account of Painting Practice*, where because of lockdown I was not able to access Old Winchester Hill. My painting perspectives shifted to a multifocal or unfixed perspectives not unlike John Dunstall’s 1660 pre-*picturesque* painting of *A Pollard Oak* (fig.15), both Dunstall and myself have used motifs in our painting to symbolise areas of concern, in Dunstall’s case his allegiance to the Crown and God, in mine, death and transcendence through nature, both of us giving vital clues toward land-management through the inclusion of landscape features combined with titles and location.

In less than a hundred years from when Dunstall created his painting of the Oak tree, English painting style shifted towards a classical aesthetic attributed to Claude Lorrain, whose paintings were collected by wealthy aristocrats on their *grand tours* of Europe (Owens, 2020, p.107). It was this combination of the classical aesthetic combined with wealth that altered the interpretive appreciation of the English landscape by creating the *vista* or *long view* following a formula set out in renaissance painting (Tipping Points, 2021).

The hypothesis of a classical view was formalised in 1768 by William Gilpin, in essays where he describes “rules of picturesque beauty” (Owens, 2020, p.152) which remain embedded in the way landscapes are viewed, decoded, and taught today. Consequently, the concept of an ideal landscape is a fictional aesthetic based on renaissance geometry and principles and as such not a place necessarily abundant with species.

This argument is now being addressed by myself and other artists in concurrence with the campaign to *Rewild* by disrupting the *view*, both in the landscape and in painting. A reaction to how the physical landscape appears in historical paintings compared to how it might look in the future through farming practices, the introduction of species and vegetation planted or left to decay. By disrupting perspectives, the historical opinion of what a harmonious landscape should look like, now invites the question as to what the landscape needs to look like for recovery and regeneration:

Painting...has no fixed conceptual concerns or conceptual limits either. Nor is it a language in any simple sense. More a loose collection of vague and continuously evolving quasi-linguistic possibilities at work against an historical and social background which is, itself, characteristically unstable (Pooke,2011, p.72).

Interpreting painting is unstable (Pooke, 2011), therefore cross-referencing historical and artistic references is a principal factor in this research, whether through archival texts, photographs or paintings, ways of evaluating the landscape have filtered into my paintings which when exhibited together have created a model of conviction or a sense of *place* about the landscape set within the SDNP.

Paintings & Exhibition

The paintings created during this research were exhibited at the Discovery Centre, Winchester (31st August 2021 – 11th September 2021) in *Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*. The exhibition invites the question whether it is possible to reimagine the landscape of the SDNP, by raising concerns about access, rewilding, death, and decay. Of the thirty landscape paintings exhibited, three⁵³ are of the missing checkpoint locations found when cross-referencing the DAI (detailed in Chapter 6 Land-Skip-Land). The discovery that paintings representing the Hampshire Downs stop on the Hampshire/Sussex border where the SDW originally started/finished when it first opened in 1972 contributes to my hypothesis that Winchester, the county Capitol, deflects free access and creative representation through its religious and military history.

Through painting the checkpoints of *Cheesefoot Head* (fig.142) and *Beacon Hill* (fig.141) I have addressed the imbalance, by continuing the path of paintings along the SDW which stopped with Annabel Gault's 1994 painting (fig.63) on the Hampshire/Sussex border before crossing half the county before reaching Tobias Young's 1803 painting of Winchester. I had without knowing already painted one of the missing checkpoints *Old Winchester Hill* (fig.13), through the methodology of deep mapping. That these landscapes of the Hampshire Downs are absent in regional art galleries, demonstrates the break in continuity of paintings of the prominent chalk spurs and associated tumuli, found along the SDW which are now popular tourist attractions with carparks and information boards.

⁵³ I painted three missing landscape checkpoints, but only two were exhibited.



Figure 4. Rose, M. 2021. *Full Moonrise in January, Old Winchester Hill*. [Oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 90cm x 60cm].



Figure 141. Rose, M. 2019. *Beacon Hill in the Snow*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 122cm x 100cm].



Figure 142. Rose, M. 2019. *Cheesefoot Head*. [Egg tempera, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 122cm x 100cm].

If it had not been for coalescing methodologies and methods I would not have found the gap in paintings along the SDW, yet at the same time by implementing this multi-layered approach the paintings exhibited were able to take the viewer on a metaphorical walk through the SDNP landscape, through winter and summer, day and night encountering ghosts, ley lines, hedges, and tumuli all subjects that feature throughout this research, beginning with the pilot study *Lost Path*

Cheriton (fig.8). This painting is about the blocking of a path by the landowner filling gaps in hedges through which the path once proceeded. Other paintings examine the esoteric nuances of walking in the footsteps of others *Shadow Walkers* (fig.150) as well as tumuli and ley lines (figs.73&123) which are landscape features and phenomena that feature not only in the physical landscape, but in newspapers, folklore, photographs, and paintings.

These paintings evolved through walking the SDW and the interrogation of the DAI, manifesting the opinion that triangulation using near-field communication (NFC) and quick response codes (QR) would add more layers of knowledge for the public.

To access information the camera app on a smartphone or iPad scans a code displayed on a discreet cardboard square next to the painting (figs.143 &144) linking the device to the relevant website, permitting the viewer to make comparisons either between my painting and a historical painting of the same landscape or a view of the physical landscape the painting represents.

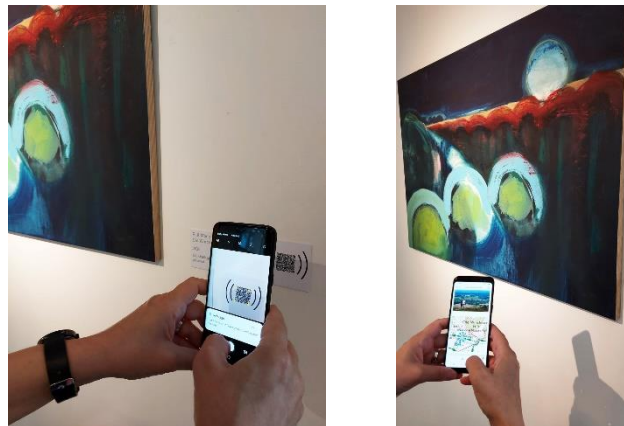


Figure 143 & 144. R. Tugwell. *Using a QR code to locate a GPS location for the painting Full Moon Rise in January, Old Winchester Hill. 2021. [Digital Image].*

By connecting the paintings in the exhibition back to their physical landscapes, as well as offering the viewer the same view painted by a different artist, has brought the title, *Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting* and its relationship with walking and the DAI to life, by offering the viewer an opportunity to look back through time as well as to a potential future. Most significantly, my paintings acting as a conduit to the landscape of the SDNP.

The opportunity to look at the same landscape throughout history, in some instances from the same location, and how it has been painted by different artists over decades and then to relate that same place to the physical landscape today through the lens of my paintings, permits another layer of experience, (discussed in Chapter 7 *Facing Both Ways*), by generating fissures in both time and space, where comparisons can be made between how the landscape has been managed, how it is presented today and what is needed for the future, thus, transforming an apparent static exhibition into a multifaceted interactive space.

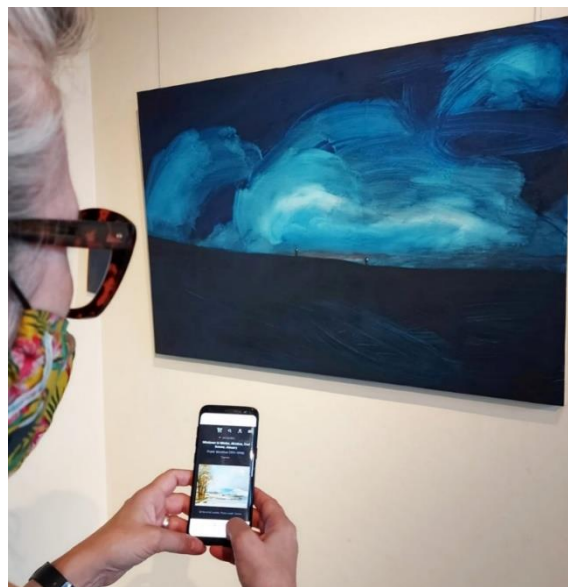


Figure 145. R. Tugwell. *Using an NFC tag to link to a historical painting of the same landscape (Windover Hill), painted by Frank Wootton in 1945. 2021. [Digital Image].*

The act of switching views between the intricate surface of a painting which has been slowly built up over time compared to instant on-screen images affirms the relationship between the paintings, digital technology and the viewers eye tracing the paths in my paintings the same way as my hand had traced them earlier. The indexical marks of the body captured in the painting continued on a screen, technology reinforcing research methodologies, confirming that paintings too contain huge amounts of data such as materials, subject and intention. All this combined with how the viewer interprets what they are looking at and the comparisons they will make between the physical surface of the painting and an online screen image.

The exhibition, which opened as restrictions due to the pandemic began to ease attracted 980 adults and 182 children⁵⁴, with NCF tags and QR codes accessed 111 times. Prior to the exhibition opening, museum attendants were given guidance notes about the paintings as well as instructions on how to use the tags/codes, which meant questions from visitors about the technology, processes and subject matter could be answered.

How did we measure use of the QR Codes and NFC Tags?

- NFC Tools and NFC Tagify allow you to scan the NFC tag and get a clue of how many times it has been accessed; it however does not include details of who the users are.
- Our NFC Tag memory allowed us to find that the paintings with tags, were accessed in an average of 37 times. We calculate that QR codes were used three times more NFC tags. An average of around 1.11 captures per QR code in the exhibition.
- Just as a note, 980 adults and 182 children visited the exhibition, which lasted just over 6 weeks.

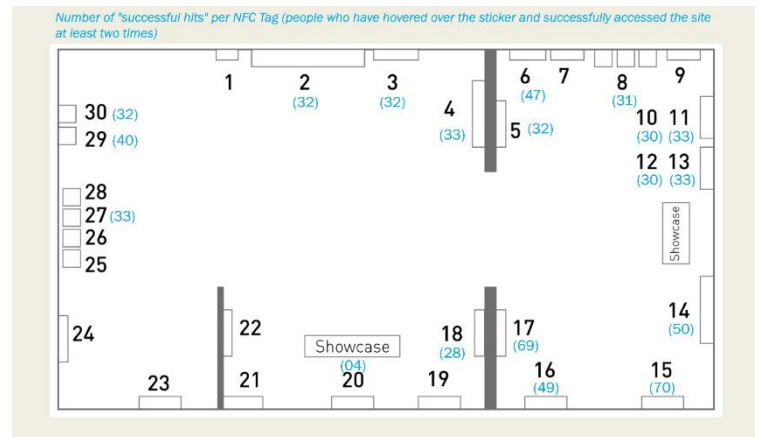


Fig 146 & 147. G. Giron. 2021. *Hampshire Cultural Trust slides, explaining the use of QR codes and NFC tags in relation to the paintings in the exhibition, Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*. [Digital Image].

Results, based on visitor attendance, revealed that the paintings with tags were accessed on average 37 times throughout the exhibition (fig.146) with 111 combined views. What is significant is that the painting with the most views is *Old Winchester Hill* (fig.147), followed by the *Devil's Jumps* and *Cheesefoot Head*, two of these locations *Old Winchester Hill* and *Cheesefoot Head* are very local to Winchester and are not in any regional art collection. Considering that the country was coming out of lockdown it is understood that many visitors were local to the city and that these visitors compared and viewed mostly local landscapes, reinforcing the argument that cities and towns should have designated art galleries with robust collection policies.⁵⁵ This was examined in Chapter 6 *Land-Skip-Land* in response to my questions about archival research and contemporary concerns presented through painting. This is now apparent through the viewing figures from the

⁵⁴ Information gathered by HCT attendants combined with data from the NCF tags and QR codes.

⁵⁵ Collection policies anchored within institutions of expertise, not local councillors/administrators. Refer to Southampton City Art Gallery collection policy.

exhibition affording the potential for galleries to facilitate conversations about subjects including the climate crisis, rewilding and access, through the platform of painting.

That the exhibition created conversation, not only in the gallery setting, but in a series of interviews appearing on Hampshire County Council's digital publication *Culture on Call*⁵⁶ released over the duration of the exhibition with the aim of widening participation. The interviews offered a considered response to the themes running through the exhibition which were also discussed on *Winchester Today* radio station, *ArtsPlus* programme where the methodology of bricolage was brought to the fore as questions shifted between rewilding, trespass, the cathedral and regional art collections, all from the perspective of the paintings in the exhibition, clearly demonstrating that "painting is not just an act of cultural archaeology or ritual nostalgia" (Pooke, 2011, p.118) but an opportunity to acknowledge the past whilst reimagining the future.

Walking

Echoing throughout this research is the act of walking on the South Downs, in all weathers, seasons, times of day or night. Most notably East to West along the SDW which today is a busy tourist attraction and the pride of the SDNPA offering a place for contemporary leisure pursuits whilst at the same time directing me over and along Neolithic, Roman and medieval paths running North/South that were originally commuter routes, inasmuch that trade was their *raison d' être*.

Making sense of these paths, both ancient and modern, through walking and painting has offered an insight to our understanding of 'the common place' by being able to examine aspects of social geography embracing industry and class (Massey, 2009) scrutinised in paintings depicting chalk quarrying as opposed to today's discreet industries circulating in and around us, for example the painting *Lost Friends* (fig.127) addresses the phenomenon of communication and navigation in the twenty first century compared to ancestral abilities to communicate and navigate without technology. Likewise with how clothing signifies belonging observed in the Roman mosaic of the cold and miserable hooded figure (fig.131) compared with teenagers playing football in the rain at the Devil's Dyke (fig.132). This argument was examined in Chapter 6 *Land-Skip-Land* in response to Louisa Paris's painting of the top hatted gentleman on the beach (fig.26), whose clothing signifies

⁵⁶ <https://www.cultureoncall.com/q-a-with-artist-melanie-rose/>

a disconnect, dovetailing into the affordability of contemporary leisure pursuits and accompanying appropriate clothing allowing for a more comfortable experience of the landscape for longer periods of time.

Walking reflected many of the arguments put forward in my questions about contemporary concerns and behavioural patterns which was then intensified by restricted movement at the start of lockdown⁵⁷ and witnessed by the lack of public access to the countryside and the arguments regarding who belongs where. It was at this time *Trespass* (2020) and the year before lockdown that *Who owns England* (2019) were published offering a detailed historical narrative about land access and ownership in England, the two authors Hayes and Shrubsole have gone on to form the campaign group *Landscapes of Freedom, Right to Roam* with their first modern day, mass trespass above Brighton (fig.149) discussed in Chapter 3 *Politics of Walking*.

The trespass occurred as I was cross-examining images between DAI and the SDNP website, noting for the first time, breaking the apparent mould of using white middle-aged walkers (fig.134), an advertisement depicting young black walkers (fig.148). Covid-19 had brought to the fore inequalities, many spearheaded by the Black Lives Matter movement, which has challenged not only organisations such as the SDNP, but the West Dean estate who are now investigating colonial ties within their collection as well as their grounds and gardens, a case in point taken up by Professor Corrine Fowler, in a “row over the National Trust’s efforts to explore links between its properties and colonialism” (Doward, 2020).

That the status quo is being challenged signifies a gradual transformation, as organisations gather momentum, observed at the mass trespass where groups including Traveller Pride and Black Girls Hike gave speeches, an indication toward the taking back of inherent attributes most notably to the land.

⁵⁷ Lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic.



Figure 148. South Downs National Park Authority. 2020. *South Downs Way*. [Web image]



Figure 149. Landscapes of Freedom. 2021. *Peaceful protest at Pangdean Bottom, South Downs*. [Whatsapp-image-2021-07-24-at-20.46.061]

Walking and painting has permitted my creation of a new visual profile of the landscape of the SDNP, forging a link between public rights of way and regional art collections, making possible an analysis of cultural narratives principally *legacy of place*, social geography, and industry. The paths and paintings offering an understanding of broader cultural narratives.

Digital-Art-Index

The DAI is a method that can allow for quantitative analysis of a collection of artworks that would not ordinarily be in the same location at any one time or have immediate access to. As a result, the creation and interrogation of the DAI has been central to this research by framing a specific landscape, from where I have been able for instance, to identify where paintings of the landscape stopped on the Hampshire/Sussex border, which coincides with where the SDW path stopped when it first opened in 1972, before being extended to Winchester in 1987. I have identified that Sussex is well represented by paintings and attributed this to regional collections and the diverse creatives who lived and worked on the Sussex Downs.

That there is this gap in paintings representing the checkpoint locations on the Hampshire Downs is clear from the DAI. The research has shown that a contributing factor is Winchester never having had a designated gallery or collection policy whereas the Towner Gallery acquired local landscapes over the years by artists including Eric Ravilious, Harold Mockford and Peggy Angus which

contribute toward a contemporary overview or deeper understanding of how the landscape is viewed today. That landscape paintings *are* held in regional galleries promotes a deeper understanding of specific places, in non-hierarchical ways, by being available for everyone to see.

This is not to say artists did not live in Hampshire or that there are no paintings of these landscapes, rather that we need to question the affective potential of historical landscape paintings have for local communities. I have identified the value of landscape paintings to a researcher but on a local level recognising a piece of art depicting the landscape where you live has the potential to initiate conversations about wildlife, ownership, and land management. From this research it can be seen that a connection exists between the absence of representative regional collections and a paucity of educational and research opportunities.

Notwithstanding this, the landscape paintings captured in the DAI do offer a way to assess how the landscape was managed in a non-hierarchical way. By the inclusion of filters in the database specific details contained within the artworks and pertinent to certain landscapes at exact points in history, such as flora or fauna, river management or farming methods which can be isolated. Detailed information can be measured without assessing the paintings genre or popularity, purely by a taxonomic basis, offering clues toward biodiversity which can be used, for instance, in rewilding projects.

The opportunity to identify land management techniques as well as observe the abundance of flora and fauna through analysis of historical painting is a useful tool but combined with how paintings are decoded redirects the investigation back to Paul Nash and genius loci in the chapter *Facing Both Ways* and the argument concerning how landscape paintings are viewed today which will have an impact on the perception of what the physical landscape *should* look like.

Theories bound up in *picturesque* philosophy distance the viewer from nature by framing the view in such a way as to create a disconnect, but by recognising this detachment, painting also has the potential to close the gap between the viewers assessment of what the landscape *should* look like, based on an evolving shift in land management and the artist altering their perspective. I have already established in Chapter 4 *Framing the Landscape* that picturesque formulas percolate abstract landscape painting, creating a tension between figuration and abstraction, curious fissures between intention and interpretation offering a speculative space for debate by directing the argument to a new *contemporary picturesque* that the viewer can read based on the canon. This has the potential to challenge how the landscape is represented which in turn will impact on how the painting is read.

By using the filters in the DAI I was able to identify patterns such as, the most popular place in the SDNP to paint and the number of paintings in regional galleries of the SDNP by women. I could also draw conclusions between scholarly research and the paintings I was looking at, for example a model to emerge was that of a relationship between the moon and chalk, having read Pasachoff and Olson, *Depictions of the Moon in Western Visual Culture* (2020) allowed a relationship to be drawn between the chalk geology and the moon which when combined reveal an increase in paintings of the moon during periods of extreme upheaval, such as the Industrial Revolution, the two World Wars and now with the climate crisis, signifying continuity in nature's ebb and flow as well as redirecting the viewer back to the natural world through natural cycles involving death and decay.

Death

Natural cycles, death and decay feature throughout this research, from the geological makeup of the chalk, to walking in the footsteps of others through time and space (fig.150), all the time navigating the complexities of memorials which punctuate the SDW contributing to an ongoing dilemma of landscape aesthetics which were heightened when the country went into lockdown with restricted travel, local vigilantism and an amplified awareness of wildlife and litter. These were exacerbated by the corralling of walkers along designated footpaths, forcing clusters of movement in and out of overflowing carparks, revealing how much of the South Downs is privately owned, contrasted with an urgency to connect with nature.



Figure 150. Rose, M. 2019. *Shadow Walkers*. [Oil, chalk gesso on birch plywood. 90cm x 60cm].

The desire to get out into the countryside was observed when walking the SDW and demonstrated by the volume of people on the path as we neared carparks and the confluence of contemporary memorials at historic archaeological sites. That these carparks are sited near chalk spurs high up on the ridge with magnificent views, ancient woodland and historic monuments illustrates that these places have been visited for thousands of years, emerging in lockdown as even more popular, hence the sudden appearance of suggested carparking payment alongside information boards, brochures, picnic benches and bins. Visitor exploitation by treating the landscape as a theme park (Monbiot, 2018).

Commercialising the landscape creates a weirdness around both the land and the ancient monuments sited within it, “a presence that something does not belong” (Fisher, 2016, p.61). This is examined in Chapter 8, *Death on the Downs* and observed when I visited Chanctonbury Ring the day of the *Trail Runners Challenge* or Constable’s lack of inspiration at the Devil’s Dyke at the

time a highly commercialised landscape, or the weird feeling at Beachy Head which hosts coach laybys, bus stops, picnic benches and a pub, but is also a notorious suicide destination.

These hybrid, weird places with echoes of an ancient past are framed in such a way as to place the individual into the category of a visitor who has come to *look at* the landscape as opposed to offering a sense of *being in it*, which for many is why they might be there. Possibly to maintain or create a bond, either to nature or to the deceased, by walking to a certain location, to be in the presence of, or to place a memorial as a way of keeping a loved one close or a third emotional space (Madrell, 2013, p.203) which is akin to how ancient monuments performed, as compelling signifiers in the landscape, presenting today a reason to walk to a certain place. Well-worn paths demonstrate that carparks act as portals to the deceased both contemporary and ancient. Radiating away from the carpark these tributary processional-paths end at either the ancient monument or a 'special place' close to the carpark and confirm that visitors remain close to their cars, (and memorials).

Chapter 10

Contributions

The contribution to knowledge from this research is a visual footprint of the SDNP landscape observed through paintings from 1660 to the present day. Research concluded with the exhibition *Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting*, (the result of research questions set out in Chapter 1 *Introduction*), addressing complex subjects including death, and access to the countryside, along with contemporary philosophies shaped by the *picturesque*, forming a constellation of phenomena articulated through painting, constructing an impact about how the landscape of the SDNP is viewed.

Facing Both Ways: Walking the South Downs Way through Painting exhibition, is the result of embodied slow acts, of walking and painting. Walking as a research method permitted a first-hand experiential understanding of this specific landscape which I was able to draw-on and interrogate through painting. The act of painting, a methodology that heralded methods including directly mapping through paint the shape and pattern of the landscape when on location, to tracing the landscape from memory as I re-walked paths in my mind, analogous to concepts discussed in Chapter 6, *Land-Skip-Land*, where Elkins and Ingold correlate a transcendence of materiality and consciousness.

Reimagining SDNP landscapes through painting, having walked, photographed and drawn specific places, required detailed recollection, including sensory experiential phenomena, time of day, temperature and sound. Fleeting memories embedded in the psyche are recalled and made manifest through the implementation and application of materials. Every decision when making one of my landscape paintings has relevance, from the scale of the surface to selected materials and tools, will alter depending on what is being communicated.

The body of paintings made for this research span places in the National Park as well as locations identified against *Distance Checkpoints* in the South Downs Way, National Trail guidebook. Painting began with a pilot study in the village where I live and which included deep mapping to uncover historical data that I could apply through my choice and application of materials, examined in Chapter 5 *Account of Painting Practice*. Making paintings about familiar, new to me and iconic places, such as the Long Man of Wilmington, meant identifying a consistent formula whereby,

alongside materials and scale, a code emerged where certain pigments symbolised specific features or brush movements implied sound or movement, including my own movement through the landscape, each decision founded on memory combined with a bricolage approach to research whereby folklore and historical detail reinforced as well as skewed pictorial narrative, establishing a palimpsest, each layer informing the other, the painting dictating direction and narrative.

A narrative brought to life through the exhibition, where placed next to the paintings were NCF and QR codes demonstrating how a gallery setting can integrate geographical place with painting, in this case the SDNP and historical paintings held in regional art galleries, via contemporary paintings in the exhibition of the same place. The relationship I have made between a national park and paintings held in regional collections is distinct, and yet:

A landscape painting is not a representation of a landscape but rather something that, in being constructed out of pieces of representation, or possibly just echoes of former representations, kindles an experience of its own – one that, as those fragments of resemblance suggest, is somehow like an experience of nature (Bradway et al, 2019, p.24).

Constructed representations have informed the analysis of paintings held in the DAI and as a result shaped my approach to painting through walking, deep mapping, and bricolage. The DAI model is an opportunity for scholars to cross reference paintings, applying filters to meet their investigation. However, the DAI's full potential is achieved when experiential and scholarly comparisons can be made.

The questions raised in the Introduction concerning archival research and transcendence, through structures in painting concerning landscape aesthetics, are mirrored through renaissance ideals reinforced through *picturesque* theory contributing to the way land is accessed and managed today. A legacy of indiscriminately accumulated land that is controlled by a minority, is today the focus of controversy whether concerning wildlife, access or equality, subjects that can be deconstructed and observed through painting.

Patterns of behaviour witnessed and experienced whilst walking the SDW include observing when a carpark is nearby by the increased volume of people on the path and a proliferation in the number of memorials to the deceased. This not only signifies how carparks act as portals, but how arterial paths radiating away from carparks afford ritual, processional-paths. The *detection* through the volume of people and detritus, that carparks are close by, should have implications for future policy regarding access. The coalescing of footpath and road adjacent to ancient monuments also

signifies that these sites have always afforded a thoroughfare, attracting visitors for thousands of years, indicating a primordial need to connect to certain landscapes which should be acknowledged through management plans.

Having witnessed the above combined with the 'type' of walker on the more remote sections of the SDW, most notably trail walkers/runners, cyclists and Duke of Edinburgh students, demonstrates two phenomena, one; that people do not walk far from their cars, (for many reasons) and two; when walking remotely, clothing, footwear and equipment are signifiers of privilege. From these observations and the experience of Scotland, where the right to roam is enshrined in law, it should be appreciated that the countryside will not be ruined by masses of people trampling over it, and that if, like Scotland, the English Government sanctioned the right to roam, the implication will afford a collective responsibility or a shared sense of ownership, through legislation, education and belonging.

Forging connections toward the landscape and nature is a phenomenon traced through the paintings both in the exhibition and in the DAI. Significantly the employment of the moon as a motif during periods of unrest, but also as an irresistible subject when combined with the chalk landscape, a consideration regarding how geology affects the interpretation of painting. A potential research feature if all the National Parks were to have their own DAI.

The implication of my research is the potential for the DAI as a website that correlates National Parks, (or other landscapes), with regional art galleries. Ideally this website will be held in the public domain, working closely with park authorities to address areas of interest, such as forestry, walking, geology and farming etc.

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Appendices

Statistical analysis derived from the Digital-Art-Index
(correct on 12th October 2020)

