Twitter Thread by Tim Sykes



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I’ve enjoyed reading @AlexJLanglands The Ancient Ways of Wessex & learned how #chalkstream #winterbournes & #springs have influenced our culture & cultural heritage - #Ridgeway paths that are now #NationalTrails

Perhaps old news to many, but new to me so here’s a short thread…

Our #ridgeway paths are a bundle of numerous routes which I always assumed followed the high ground for strategic purposes & avoiding the muddy clay vales. Timperley & Brill (1965) described our #ridgeways as literally high ways, although they could have called them “dry ways”.

Langlands (2019. p14) explains that #ridgeways or watershed-ways were used out of necessity to avoid #winterbourne streams, springs and wetlands lower down the escarpments & that in summer when the #winterbournes were dry travellers could use routes along the lower slopes....

Quoting Grundy (1918. p70-72; downloadable on Google), Langland calls these lower routes #summerways and suggests there are summerways parallel to nearly all of the great #ridgeways - twin summerways and ridgeways

Looking at the Downs near Whitehorse Hill, the B4507 road follows the escarpment at a relatively steady height just above the spring line - almost a dot-to-dot line linking spring heads and their #winterbournes - could that be the old #summerway I wonder?

Interestingly, there is another albeit minor footpath even lower down the slope, virtually in the Vale, that also parallels the B4507 and #ridgeway. That seems to link villages, despite having to cross numerous streams.

#LandscapeArchaeology

#summerways maybe a good example of how chalk #winterbournes & springs influenced contemporary culture - transport routes, landuse etc- our cultural heritage & modern recreational pursuits, albeit one that is not widely broadcast

#culturalecosystemservices #landscapearchaeology

Grundy (1918. p70) says that the ridgeway (watershed-way) owes its genesis to the necessity of avoiding streams. Have we mapped our #summerways across the Chalk & do our #ridgeway #NationalTrails & AONBs celebrate them? Could we do so & show people our amazing #winterbournes?

More about the #summerways of Hampshire on-line:

Hawkes, 1925. ‘Old Roads in Central Hants’, Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Arch Soc, 9, 324–33 ;

Grundy, 1918. ‘The Ancient Highways and Tracks of Wiltshire, Berkshire and Hampshire...’, Arch Jn, 75, 69–194

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#NationalTrails #Ridgeway #summerways #LandscapeArchaeology #chalkstreams #springs
#winterbournes