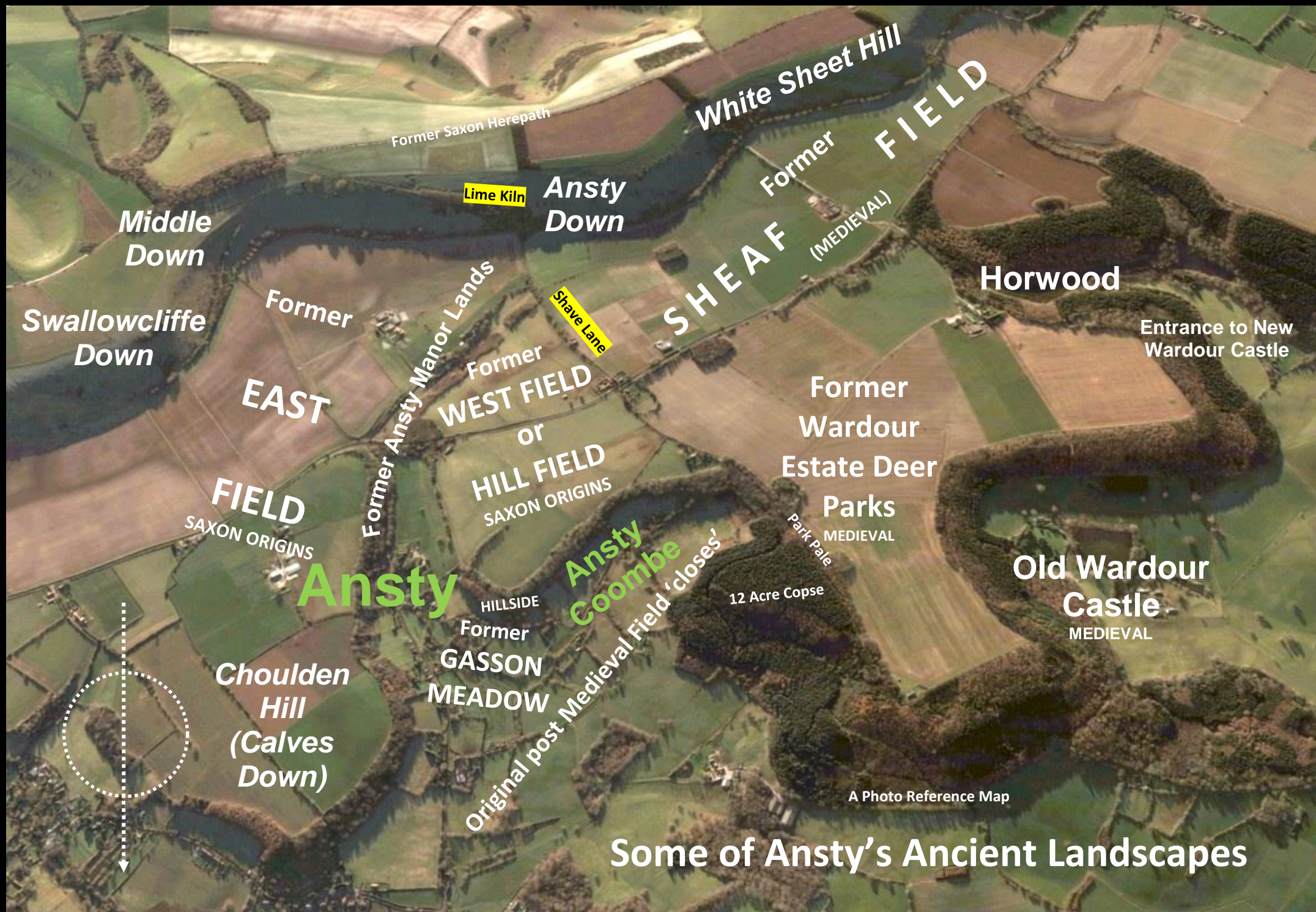


# Discover Ansty's Ancient Landscapes 1

In this series of photo-information we choose well-known areas of the Ansty Parish and investigate the history and geography of the surrounding landscape. This set looks at Shave Lane: its origins and setting and a former lime kiln.



Some of Ansty's Ancient Landscapes



# Shave Lane

01/2017

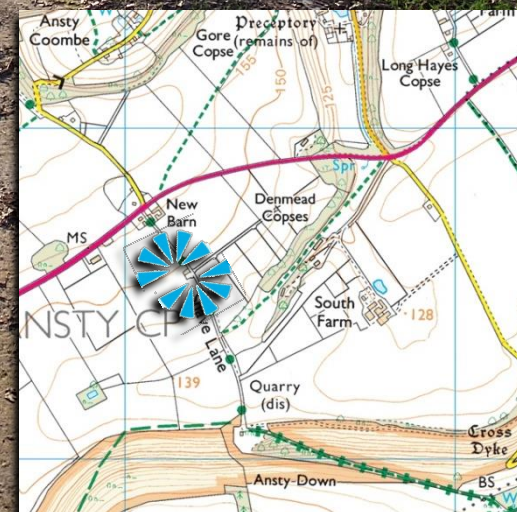
Shave Lane links a network of routes around Ansty that harks back to times of many centuries ago.

The lane both connected and divided a medieval landscape between two open field systems the Sheaf (or Shave) Field on the west and the East Field on the opposite side.

Earlier land inclosures saw Denmead Copses reserved for the Lords Arundell of Wardour (probably for game cover) whilst Ansty Manor farm (which also belonged to the Wardour Estate) farmed tracts of land immediately surrounding Denmead Copses.

*Left-* view looking up Shave lane towards New Barn and the A30.

*Right-* view looking down Shave lane past Denmead Copses on the left and Ansty Down straight ahead.





# Old Manor Farm Inclosures



This is a view looking north east from Shave (formerly Sheaf or Share) Lane below New Barn. The very term 'New Barn' readily indicates that this part of the landscape had already been 'inclosed'. Sometime before 1769 these fields were part of Ansty Manor Farm. In the distance, to the right, the very tops of the trees of Long Hayes Copse can be seen.



# Old Sheaf Field 1

These two views depict what was once part of the medieval open field system of Ansty known as Sheaf Open Field. Various sources indicate the Sheaf Field was also referred to as Shave Field or even Share Field.

*Right-* A view looking south from the A30 over land belonging to a fruit and vegetable growing business. Still successfully growing crops on fertile land based on underlying Greensand rock means that this land has been under continuous tillage for many hundreds of years.

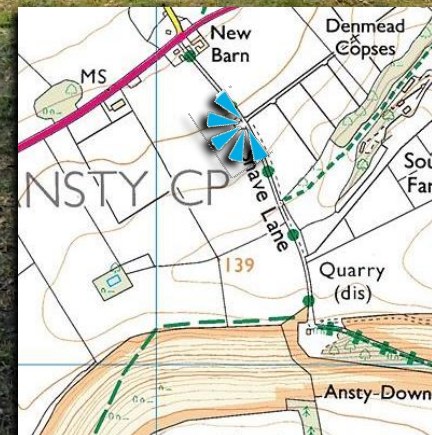
In the distance can be seen Ansty Down, part of dramatic line of chalk downs that make this area so outstanding.



*Main picture-* This is a view looking south west from Shave Lane over a vast area of gently sloping land – almost a bench- of Upper Greensand rock which continues to run north only to drop down into the Vale of Wardour. The slope edges, not as dramatic as the chalk escarpments, are marked by forests stands (often of planted conifers but not exclusively) and deeply entrenched ‘coombes’ with sunken lanes and streams that become numerous on the lower slopes in wet weather.

As far as the eye can see in this view, this flatbed area was the medieval Sheaf, Shave or Share Open Field.

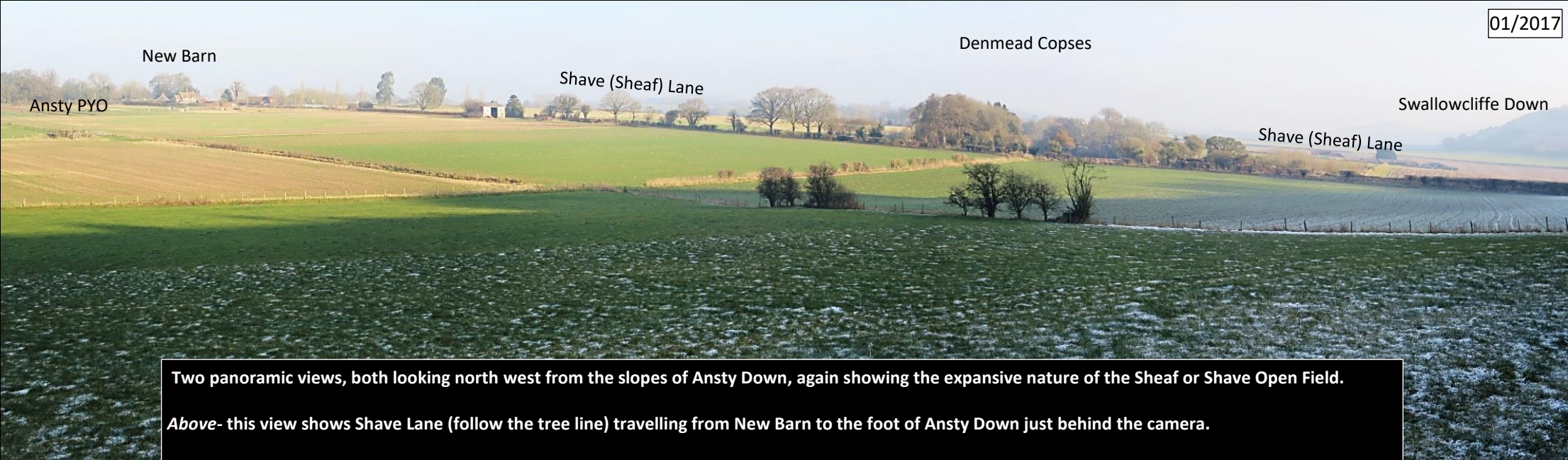
Note the hazy Ansty Down to the left morphing into White Sheet Hill behind the square patch of trees in the centre.





# Old Medieval Sheaf Field - Panoramic Views

01/2017



Two panoramic views, both looking north west from the slopes of Ansty Down, again showing the expansive nature of the Sheaf or Shave Open Field.

*Above-* this view shows Shave Lane (follow the tree line) travelling from New Barn to the foot of Ansty Down just behind the camera.

*Below-* A 'fish eye view' of the mediaeval Sheaf Open Field which exploited a very large tract of gently sloping land between Shave (Sheaf) Lane acting as the western boundary; the A 30 (former summer herepath) as the northern boundary; the foot of the chalk escarpment acting as a southern boundary; to beyond Horwood where the Ansty Parish boundary is located, running between the top of White Sheet Hill and the A30 (summer herepath) on the western side.

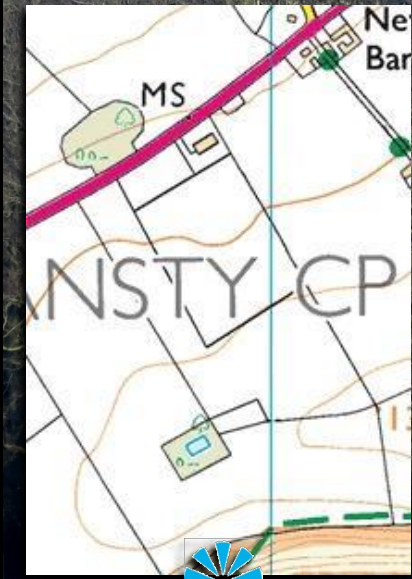
01/2017





# Ansty Pick Your Own

01/2017



This view is looking north over the top of the well-known local establishment known as Ansty Pick Your Own (PYO). It is a Farm Shop specialising in the growing of a variety of fruit and vegetables for the public to pick or buy freshly picked from the Farm Shop.

This rural business more than pays a passing curtesy to the land husbandry that existed for hundreds of years during medieval times when tenant landholders from Ansty were working their scattered strips of land or selions throughout the Sheaf Open Field of Ansty (as well as other fields).

<http://anstypy.co.uk/>



# Ansty Down

In mid-medieval times and later, sheep and corn husbandry was practised on Ansty Down and on the wide greensand terrace that straddles land north and south of the 'summer herepath' (now the A30). By the late 17th century there was still around 770 acres of commonable arable and pasture in the shape of three 'open' fields: East Field, Hill (or West) Field, Sheaf, (Share or Shave) Field plus the grassy slopes of Ansty Down. In the 16th century large tracts of these slopes were apparently still subject to common rights, but private land 'inclusion' had made inroads.

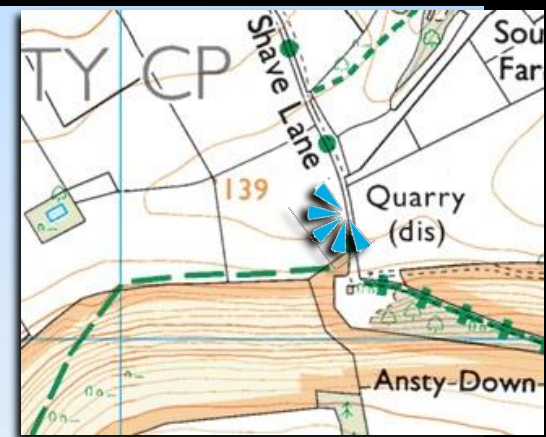
Wool gradually became the backbone and driving force of the medieval English economy between the late thirteenth century and late fifteenth century and at the time the trade was described as "the jewel in the realm"! As the wool trade increased the great landowners including Lord Arundell, abbots and bishops began to count some of their wealth in terms of sheep!

This part of the land once reflected Wiltshire's classic 'Chalk' country in the south as opposed to the 'Cheese' country in the north of the county. Ansty Down was a sheep-and-corn area and in the 16th century most of the land was held by the Wardour Estate. Tenant family and part-time farm tenants working these lands formed the bulk of the population in the 16th -17th century. By the 18th century private farms occupied most of the farmland as the process of land enclosure (usually on a private basis) went on unabated and the fortunes of the 'small copyholder' or lease farmer diminished quite rapidly. Indeed by 1769 much of the lands seen in the 3 previous pages were under the jurisdiction of Ansty manor operating as a capitalist farm. By 1811 common husbandry had ended everywhere in Ansty mainly under private agreement.

In this area shown in the picture, sheep were fed on the grassy slopes by day and were folded at night on the tillage (mainly on the greensand bench). The chief crops at the time were barley and wheat with horse and plough tilling the land. Sheep (and sometimes cattle) grazing is still evident on these slopes today.

## Chalk Escarpment

Upper Greensand 'bench'



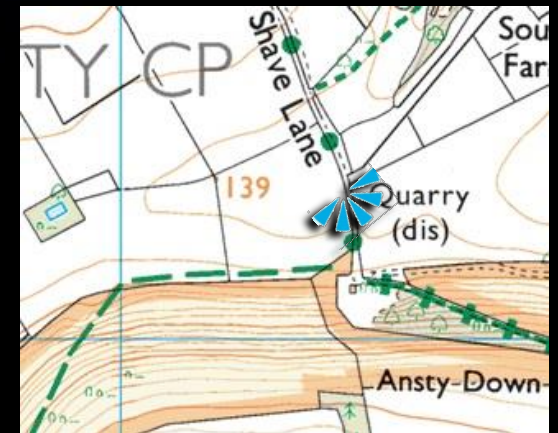


# Ansty Down above Shave Lane



This view picks out in silhouette the steep face of Ansty Down at the foot of Shave Lane (now classified as a byway) before it contours up the slopes to reach the original 'winter herepath' at about 700 ft. This herepath continued to be a major drove road and then a horse and carriage route with teams travelling between London and Exeter via Salisbury.

The chalk face here climbs almost 200 feet from base to the top with the trees adding extra height. The low mid-morning January sun is still struggling to climb above the tops: hence the frost on this cold day never melted in the shade.





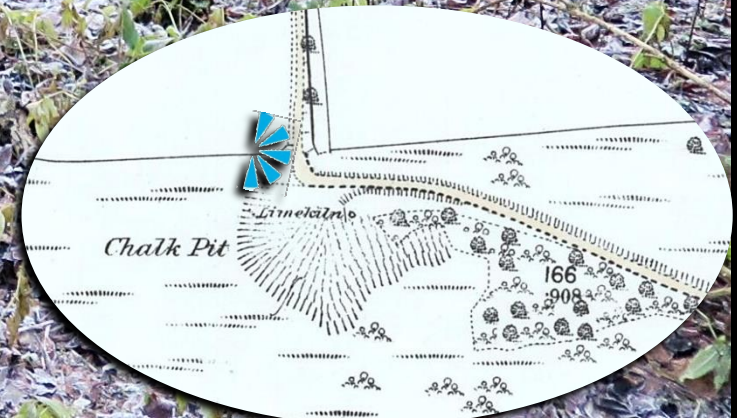
# Ansty Down: Old Lime Kiln 1



**Main picture-** Hiding at the foot of Ansty Down, where Shave Lane starts to ascend the slopes to the top byway is a small piece of industrial archaeology. Not obvious to people travelling up or down Shave Lane, but tucked away opposite the cruck of the bend and hidden by undergrowth are the remnants of an old lime kiln.

The frosty conditions on the day these photos were taken made walking a real pleasure! Usually in January it is very wet here!

**Right-** the position of the lime kiln as marked on the 25 inch to 1 mile OS map extract surveyed in 1886. No contours on this map! Shave Lane is clearly marked.





# Ansty Down: Old Lime Kiln 2

01/2017

Steep quarry face

Greensand blocks

remnants of kiln

Former bridle road tracked  
SW from Shave Lane and up  
over Ansty Down as on this  
1896 OS map survey.

**Main picture-** This limekiln (outlined and covered in brambles) was probably constructed of indigenous greensand blocks (see inset) in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. By lighting fires using brushwood in these kilns and adding crushed chalk through the top, lime was produced. It was mainly used as a fertilizer to 'sweeten' the soil in the arable fields below the downs.

The small field kiln might have looked something like the drawing in the other inset. It is about 2.5m (8 ft) high with a size 3.6m (12 ft) base. *Sketch shown here on the right inset was drawn by Titus Thornber.* The chalk was obtained from the chalk pits elsewhere like similar to this have slumped and collapsed as they weathered.

There was another farm based lime kiln at nearby Horwood.

