

Branscombe Project / HEAPS Fixed Point Photography

Photography by Chris Bass

Background.

Branscombe Parish Council has an extensive photographic archive which is administered by the Branscombe Project. The archive contains many images of village landscape, land-use, settlement and industries. These serve as a tremendous archival resource providing a visual record of the changes that Branscombe has undergone in the last 150 years.

In 2013, the Branscombe Project was involved in a HEAPS project created by English Heritage and the AONB. One aim, was to use the archival images and combine them into a new Fixed Point Photographic project that records changing land use.

What is Fixed Point Photography?

Fixed Point Photography is the processes where images are taken at a regular interval (Once per quarter) from a fixed point in the landscape. By taking the same images at regular intervals, they can then be compared and changes in land use and development recorded.



Bridge View archival image

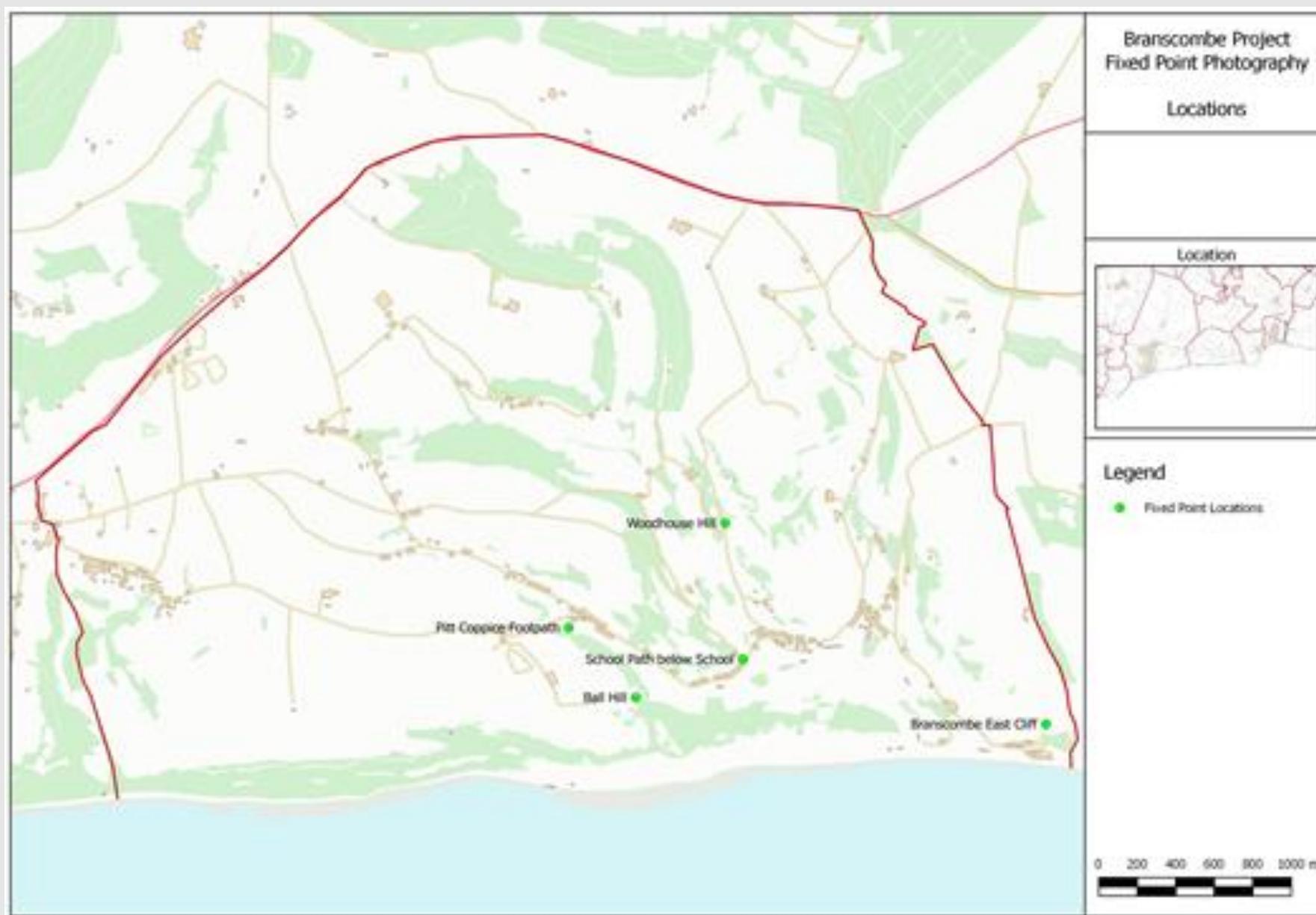


Bridge View January 2020 image

Location Identification.

To identify suitable locations within the village for use as a fixed point, the village photo archive was examined and locations where several images exist were selected.

In January 2014, 5 fixed points were identified and with the landowners permission, a fence post holder was installed at each to allow the mounting of a modified monopod (i.e a single leg of a tripod). A digital camera with a wide angle lens was then used to capture an initial set of photographs.



The locations were chosen to give the best views over extensive parts of the Parish.

Since 2014, every 3 months a new set of photos has been created. To date 24 images have been taken at each of the 5 fixed point locations.

Image Processing.

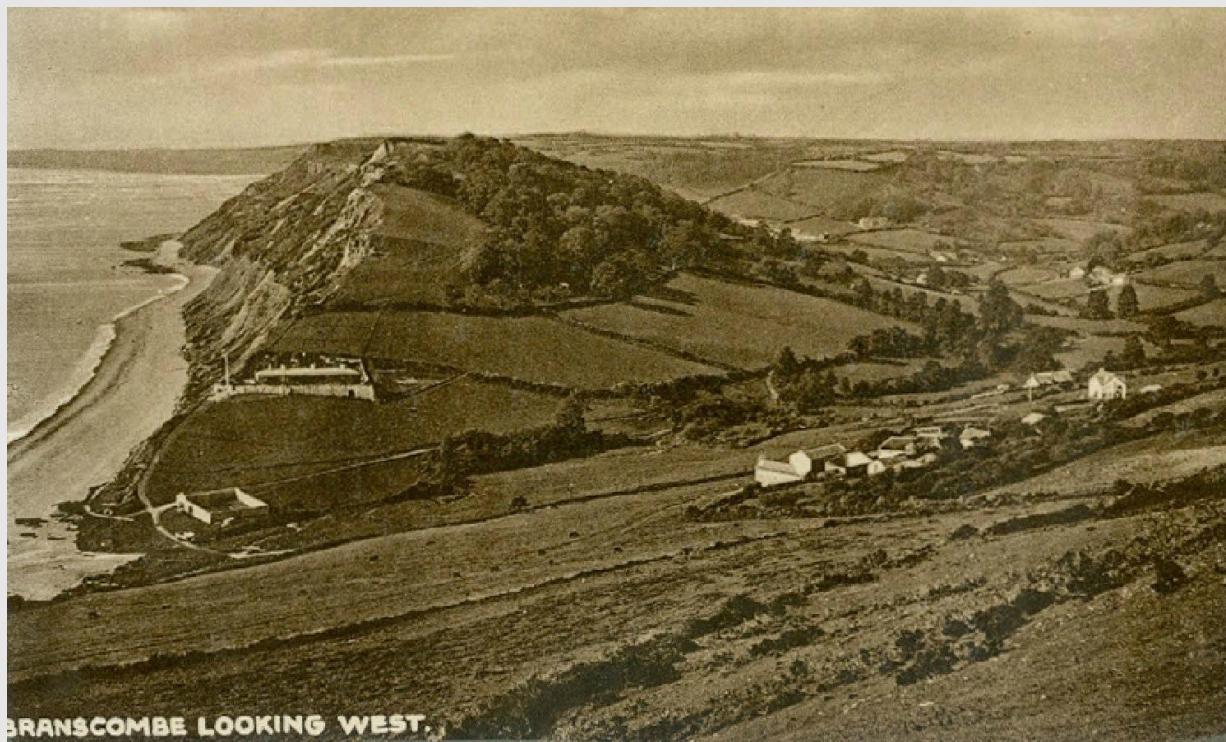
Each image is a high definition panoramic image. The final images are actually a composite of up to 5 individual images that are then stitched together using computer software. This allows a much wider field of view to be captured in a single image and more information recorded. The images can then be viewed and magnified on a computer monitor or printed in large format. The images are quite large, approx 35mb in size.



Landscape Change.

When comparing the historic images against the modern ones, one thing that stands out is the noticeable increase in vegetation cover and the amount of tree cover. This is particularly evident when viewed from the East Cliff especially when looking across to the west side of the valley, where a large clearing on the cliffs is now covered by mature tree growth. Changes in land management, implementation of farm stewardship schemes and dare we say it climate change, have all played their part in changing the appearance of the landscape.

The amount of changes is endless when you start combing through the photographs. See if you can spot more differences in the images below.



East Cliff archival image



East Cliff October 2017 image

Another of the most noticeable changes since the start of the Fixed Point Photography project has been how the winter storms of 2014 affected the access road to the beach chalets and how much narrower this road has become.



East Cliff 2014 image



East Cliff 2020 image

Spot The Difference

The below set of images show the changes through the years overlooking the Street area of Branscombe. How many differences can you find ?



2014



2017



2015



2018



2016



2019